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To: CCBC Office
Subject: Cold Weather Guidelines for Athletes, Coaches and Race Organizers

Cold Weather and Competitions

Cold weather guidelines for coaches, skiers and race organizers are posted below and on the CCBC website at: <http://www.crosscountrybc.ca/risk-management>.

Coaches and skiers have a responsibility to know the rules of our sport and to be informed about appropriate cold weather protection measures. Race organizers are responsible for recommending cold weather protection measures to both officials and competitors when the temperature is colder than -15.

Cold Weather and Hypothermia

Winter weather and cold temperatures pose a very real danger for everyone involved in activities outdoors. For more information click on: <http://www.crosscountrybc.ca/risk-management>

Risk Management: Cold Weather and Competitions

In most regions of Canada severe cold weather can occur when a competition is being held. Because of the potential risk involved, coaches should (1) prepare their athletes for this possibility in advance, and (2) take certain precautions when dealing with such situations.

Developing athletes don't usually have access to the high tech clothing that can provide them with the best protection from the cold. Most individuals cannot afford clothing of this kind if they are going to outgrow it in a year, and as a result this age group may often be more vulnerable to severe weather conditions than adults.

To help you educate your athletes the following list has been developed for a handout.

Cold Weather Tips for Your Athletes

The following guidelines will help your athletes deal with conditions of extreme cold weather:

- Don't be afraid to wear extra clothing during a competition. In cold weather conditions, vests can be an important addition and it may also be reasonable to wear two layers of synthetic (polyester) underclothing. Balaclavas, neckwarmers and windproof briefs may be warranted as well. Wear a warm hat and substitute racing gloves for warmer mitts. Even older athletes at high level events may choose to compete with warm ups on, especially if there are long fast down hills and windy sections along the course.
- Male athletes should always consider wearing windproof underwear if they are wearing a lycra racing suit.

- Creams, lotions and jellies can reduce the direct exposure of the skin to the air. However, to be effective they must not have a water base. Many athletes have had success with petroleum jelly and Dermatone.
- Ski glasses/goggles can keep the wind out of your eyes, but they can also cause a "wind tunnel" effect on other parts of your face. For eye comfort, blink more often than usual. This is particularly true if you wear contact lenses.
- Individuals have a different tolerance to cold weather. Consider this when you make your decision on what to wear, or whether to enter the competition or not. For more information on cold weather and exercise induced asthma, refer to section 8.1.5 of the NCCP ICC Reference Material.
- If you are 10 years of age or younger and the temperature is going to be colder than -15C at start time, you should seriously consider not entering the race.
- Take extra care that your nutritional needs are met before the morning of the race.
- Bring extra foods and fluids to the race site in case there is a delay.
- Ensure that your warm up is done correctly. If you are following a proper warm up routine you should be physically prepared for your race and able to ski at the appropriate pace right from the start. Regardless of the temperature, the "feeling" should be the same. What changes as the temperature drops is how the warm-up is done to get and maintain this "feeling". Typically a good warm up increases the core temperature, uses muscles and techniques at the intensity level required during the race, and sets the appropriate arousal level without your being fatigued at the start. On a cold day you may wish to cut the warm-up short because you are afraid of becoming cold. However, your warm up should be long enough and intense enough for you to break into a sweat. To maintain this warmed-up state, you need to minimize the amount of time you are in damp or wet clothing. In these conditions a well-prepared athlete will put on dry gloves/mitts, underwear, hat (and perhaps socks) after the warm up and before the start.
- Due to the conditions, you should change at least your gloves and hat, and other wet clothing as well if you possibly can, as soon as you have completed your race and before you do your warm down.
- Keep in mind that cross-country skiers are at risk in cold weather situations because exhaustion and dehydration are both influencing factors with respect to hypothermia. In such conditions, it is especially important to do your warm down with another skier. It is possible to be in the early stages of hypothermia, to be unaware of your condition, and to ski onto an unused part of the course.
- Take responsibility for your own safety.

Cold Weather Considerations for Race Officials That Coaches Should Know

- The basic considerations for determining postponement, alteration or cancellation of a competition are:
 - temperature;
 - wind;
 - the duration of exposure;
 - shelter, clothing and other protection against the cold; and
 - the ability of the organizers to meet the extra demands required to ensure the safety of everyone involved.
- Always take into consideration the age and experience level of the field of skiers when determining whether to alter or cancel a competition. The rules that govern "races" were established for experienced, healthy elite athletes at high level competitions. -20C is the coldest temperature at which you can hold the event. Under some circumstances, modifications or cancellation should occur at temperatures warmer than -20C.
- Adequate controls must be established to insure the recommendations are being followed and the health and safety of competitors are protected.
- It is possible to have a situation where it is best to cancel the events for athletes ten years of age and younger, shorten the distances for remaining athletes 18 years of age and younger, and retain the events originally scheduled for older athletes. For example, if the temperature is between -15C and -20C, whether other factors such as wind chill are involved or not, you may wish to shorten some distances (i.e. a 5 km event for Juveniles could be shortened to 3.5 km), while retaining the original distances for the adult categories. Or, you may choose to shorten the distances for all age groups.
- The Jury has the option of delaying the start time if it appears that the temperature will rise to an acceptable level later in the day. This decision can create new problems, however, and should be

carefully thought through. It is possible that skiers will be at greater risk skiing at -19C after an extended period of repeated delays, (i.e. 2-3 hours) than they were at -21C two or three hours earlier.

- Some additional factors to consider before delaying the start time would be:
 - Is there adequate shelter for all the competitors close by the staging area, or will they be cramped into crowded, humid vehicles for an extended period of time with no place to change their clothes before they compete?
 - Will there be food and fluids available at the race site that all the competitors can access? For example, athletes may have traveled two or three hours to get to the race site that morning and they may not have the extra refreshments they will require for a lengthy delay. They may never have been to this race site before and they may not have been aware that refreshments were not available at the site.
 - Each of the above could influence how well the athlete handles the cold temperature when the race finally does get underway.
 - If there is any possibility of a delayed start, enough advance warning must be given to the coaches and athletes to allow them to make appropriate decisions regarding warm up routines.
 - Ensure an adequate supply of wool blankets and refreshments (drinks prepared at the correct temperature!) at the finish line.
 - Station someone trained in First Aid at the finish line. Have them (1) check each athlete for frostbite, and (2) ask each athlete a few questions to check out their responses.
 - One of your greatest frustrations will be the variations in the temperature readings between one thermometer and another. Long before you host your event select a reliable model and purchase enough of them to cover all the bases.
 - Don't hold the competition unless you are prepared for the conditions!
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Did You Know??? (For Canadian Competitions)

Races

315.9: With air temperatures below -20C (temperature measured at the coldest point of the course and without wind factor) and competition distances less than or equal to 15 km, the Jury must postpone or cancel the competition. With competition distances greater than 15 km and temperatures less than -18C without wind factor, the Jury must postpone or cancel the competition.

For Atom and Pee Wee age groups, with air temperatures below -15C (temperature measured at the coldest part of the course and without a wind factor), the Jury must postpone or cancel the competition.

With any difficult weather conditions (eg. strong winds, high air humidity, heavy snow, icy track conditions), at any air temperature, the Jury may, on consultation with the Team Leaders of the participating teams and the doctor responsible for the competition, postpone, cancel or shorten the competition.

Loppets

388.2: Between -15 and -25C,

If the temperature level is forecast to be between minus 15° and minus 25° C at any point on the course, recommendations regarding cold weather protection should be made available to the participants. Under such conditions it is the responsibility of the participants to seek the information and to follow the recommendations given by the organizer

388.3: Minus 25° C and below

If the temperature in a major portion of the course is -25C or below, the competition shall be delayed or cancelled.

Excerpts from CCC Rules & Regulations (2017)

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