

# Zones! Ski

Eaglecrest Snowsports School 2020-2021

## What are Zones?

The Zone System is a tool that Eaglecrest Snowsports School will use to more accurately identify and categorize student skill level. Each Zone contains specific skills sets which students work on.

## Why Zones?

The Zone system provides instructors, office staff and supervisors a universal language to describe the skill level of our students. In turn, communication among us all will become more efficient and have more clarity.

With a new Point-of-Sale/Reservations System (InTouch) our office staff is able to efficiently track our students' skill progression in more detail. Students purchasing Daily Lessons will be assigned to a lesson "Zone" which matches their skill level (based on initial assessment by office staff OR on noted recommendation from the student's instructor from a previous lesson). Zones will also provide a more accurate "starting point" (skill-wise) and increased accuracy in class groupings for daily lessons as well as multi-day/week programs.

Something that will surely not change: Instructors, along with their support team (co-instructors, trainers, supervisors, etc.), will continue to decide the pace at which students' skills will progress them from zone to zone and how the lesson is constructed.

Continued conversation, training and clinics will be provided to our Instruction Team as we adopt this new classification system.

## The Breakdown of the Zones

Provided is an overview of the Zone system and how we will view each Zone within the context of Snowsports School lessons. Classes will be broken up into Zones so that each class will begin working on the skills of their assigned/anticipated Zone. A lesson may see students progressing through several Zones, while some may not.

Note: The specific skills and teaching methods will vary among disciplines and teaching styles/techniques, but the general methodology behind each Zone is consistent.

**Zone 1: First-Timers/"Never-ers"** - This is the very first Zone, and as you might expect it is for students who have *never* been on skis. In a Zone one class, we begin teaching people the very basics:

- Intro to equipment and how to put it on
- Intro to terrain/environment
- Intro to language/terms
- Static exercises on flat ground in their equipment
- Rotary movements on flat terrain
- Rotational control intro (wedge) stops/turns
- Wedge Variations
- Straight run (one foot in, one foot out) flat terrain
- Side step/herring bone
- Intro to straight run
- Using terrain to stop/slow
- Looking where they are going/spatial awareness

Most students will move out of zone one within the first lesson.

**Terrain for Zone 1:** Flat Terrain (Beach)

**Zone 2: Speed control!** - In Zone two we have students who have taken one, maybe two lessons. They may have some difficulty with riding a chairlift, but are familiar with their equipment and can move around and stop on flats and gentle slopes. Lesson focus will be on speed control and linking turns on a gentle slope. Some of the big ticket skills for Zone two are:

- Speed control with ability to stop
- Turn variation with slight direction changes
- Intro to chair safety
- Can load/unload Porcupine Chairlift safely
- Intro to slipping/traversing
- Stopping with a turn to both sides
- Intro to linking turns
- Linking turns around obstacles

Often a Zone 2 class will move into Zone 3 within the lesson

**Terrain for Zone 2:** Intro to Porcupine (Muskeg/Easy Green)

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**Zone 3: Turning!** - By Zone three both skiers are using the Porcupine Chairlift independently. They should be able to link turns stop in control at all times, and get up independently after a fall. Zone three focuses on introducing difficult greens and various turn sizes on all of the Porcupine Area:

- Using Varied turn shape on easy terrain
- Intro to all groomed terrain on Porcupine Area
- Basic skidded turns around obstacles
- Linked skidded turns around obstacles
- Link skidded turns of various sizes on various terrains
- Can get up after a fall
- Able to put gear on without assistance
- Stop in control at all times/safely in group
- Intro to off-piste and terrain features on Porcupine Area
- Can load/unload Porcupine independently

Students are ready for Zone 4 when they are able to turn on both edges/sides and can link a few turns together.

**Terrain for Zone 3:** Muskeg-Intro to difficult greens (Dolly Varden/Stickelback)

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**Zone 4: Making tracks!** - Zone four skiers are those who are proficient in all Zone 3 skills. This Zone focuses on turn shape linking turns of different sizes together, then applying those skills to more challenging terrain. The general skills for Zone four are:

- Proficient in all Zone 3 skills
- Can load/unload Porcupine independently
- Reducing wedge
- Parallel traversing
- Link skidded turns of various sizes
- Pressure control (CM, BOS, F&E) movements incorporated
- Increase blending of edging/pressure movements with rotary
- Introduction to new terrain-Sneaky/Sourdough

**Terrain for Zone 4:** Solid Porcupine, Sneaky-Intro of difficult greens/new terrain

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**Zone 5: Taking it up the Mountain!** - Zone five focuses on old tricks in new terrain, and new tricks on old terrain. By this point our guests can turn confidently on Green terrain and easier Blue runs. What we will do is take their skills into more difficult Blue terrain and Green off-piste/gladed runs, and work on new skills in familiar terrain.

- Intro to more difficult Greens
- Working on Z4 skills on new/steeper terrain
- Intro to mastering Hooter Chairlift
- Becoming proficient with parallel turns
- Navigating through Green/Blue gladed trails
- Intro to edge control/parallel (hockey stop, carving, turn shape)
- Increase edge control on various terrain
- Intro to ski poles/ski pole action

Guests are ready for Zone 6 when they are confidently linking turns down Blue runs, are able to use dynamic movements in their skiing, and have begun to venture into Black terrain.

**Terrain for Zone 5:** Green and Blue Terrain

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**Zone 6: Growing on that Confidence!** - By the time students get to Zone six they are turning with efficiency, carving their turns on Green and Blue terrain, use dynamic movements in their skiing, and can consistently navigate Blue off-piste terrain. Zone six is about getting students out of their comfort zone. Taking existing skills and changing the terrain pitch, conditions, features, etc. This is also the point where a student may specialize their skills progression to fit their skiing style. The skills for Zone six focus on refinement and on how to safely ski on the upper mountain under varied conditions:

- Proficient in Zone 5 skills on Blue Terrain
- Parallel turns of various sizes on all Blues
- Using Zone 5 skills in various terrains (bumps, powder, crud, etc.)
- Ski pole action becoming more effective
- Introduce blending of skills on groomed terrain

**Terrain for Zone 6:** Groomed/Ungroomed Blues/Intro to Black

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**Zone 7: Not necessarily Zoned Out!** - Zone seven brings students into the realm of all-mountain skiing. Students should have *all* basic and intermediate skills mastered by Zone seven. Here we are working on more specialized skills and goals to fit the style and preferred terrain of our students:

- Discuss turn shape, phases of turn
- Carved parallel turns of various sizes on Blacks
- Speed control in steps
- Proficient at blending of skills (ice, powder, steeps, bumps)
- Know and practice responsibility code

**Terrain for Zone 7:** Black Terrain

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## How will Zones be assigned?

The initial guesstimate of a student's Zone will take place when they purchase a lesson. The Admin staff will be equipped with the same Zone reference tools that are provided to instructors. Zone descriptions will also be displayed publicly to help students self-assess and better understand what our Snowsports School Team means when we discuss the zones with students and parents.

The SSS window will be tracking each student's Zone so that, should the student return for another lesson, we will know exactly where to place him/her. However, we will need Instructor input to make the Zone tracking as accurate as possible. You can help us by recording your students' Zone progress at the end of your lesson and reporting that information to your supervisors or SSS window. With accurate tracking we can reduce shuffling of students during lessons, splits and more!

We all can agree the best assessment for a student's skill Zone will take place on-snow during a lesson. That being said, **Instructor feedback is an integral part of the Zones System and the success of our students.**

## How will Zones affect our lessons?

Primarily, Zones will be used to categorize students into their classes. You can expect your class assignments will now be grouped by Zone. Instead of receiving a "Hooter class", in which you know all of your students may have experience skiing Hooter (but not necessarily how well they can ski it) you may be assigned to a "Zone 5 class." Why is this any different/better? With a specific "Zone" description, there is a clearer vision of what skills your students actually have rather than a part of the mountain where they may "feel comfortable" skiing; providing a safer starting point for us all.

The decision to transition a student to a new Zone will be based on their skill progression and ultimately, the instructor's judgment. How you will teach a lesson within a Zone(s) is up to you and your personal styles. The Zones are not

intended to change how you teach, but rather, to provide skill-based classification and identification system with which we can all use to more efficiently and clearly communicate.

## The next steps?

This outline has introduced the ideology behind the Zones, what it is we hope to gain from them and also provided general descriptions of each Zone. Looking forward, we will build upon this foundation with:

- Discussions/Clinics - on & off snow
- Reference Materials – Handouts (physical or digital versions) and Booklets (pocket-sized!)
- Opportunities to provide feedback as we grow into this new system

## Instructor Zones Booklets!

As the season commences, each instructor will be provided with a Zones Booklet to carry with them throughout their lessons. Inside each booklet will be:

- The 7 Zones
- A page for tracking student's progress (optional)
  - Also for tracking the names and number of students in your class
- A notes page
- A SSS products pricing cheat sheet
- Emergency information/resources

The booklet will be designed to serve as a reference guide to assess your students' skills, help plan your lesson progressions, and provide you with language for your discussions with students, parents, and other instructors. Aiding conversation regarding an individual or group's progress using the same language as other instructors, supervisors and admin staff will use.

It may also allow you to better define splits within the class to a supervisor or another instructor with whom you want to swap students or team-teach with, and allows the supervisory staff to better manage the class groupings in longer, multi-day/week programs.

These are our initial thoughts as to how the booklet will improve the overall lesson experience for our students. Please feel free to examine other avenues in which this booklet could be useful to you and share!

## Your Feedback is encouraged.

Are you feeling a little Zoned-Out?

We know you have questions and ideas about the Zone system. We want to hear them! We encourage you to tell us your constructive thoughts and ideas on how the Zones are working for you and the School.

The best way for us to keep track of and utilize feedback is via e-mail. If you would like to share a thought or comment please e-mail Erin Lupro [Erin.lupro@skieaglecrest.com](mailto:Erin.lupro@skieaglecrest.com) or Nick Lemrise [Nick.Lemrise@skieaglecrest.com](mailto:Nick.Lemrise@skieaglecrest.com) We look forward to hearing your thoughts.