



## ROUTESETTING CLINIC (SCCR)

created within the project

**“European system for training of sport climbing coaches and route setters”**

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## Key objectives

In the vibrant and evolving world of competition climbing, routesetting stands as an art form and a technical skill crucial to the sport's progression. However, in many developing national federations, access to skilled routesetting knowledge and resources remain limited, hindering the growth of proficiency in their climbing communities. Recognizing this disparity, these base level clinics intend to bridge this gap by tailoring to the specific needs of setters in these regions.

The purpose of this clinic is to develop routesetters expertise in competition routesetting and give them the opportunity to build their career path. Graduates of this program will then be valuable assets for national federations in raising the quality and level of competitions and athletes.

### AIMS:

- To offer routesetting education appropriate for national level competition setting.
- To offer an opportunity to practice setting alongside skilled athletes to maximise feedback.
- To facilitate development of a network of routesetters within a NF to exchange creative ideas and best practices.

## Clinic design

**Skill Development:** The primary objective is to equip routesetters in developing national federations with the essential skills and knowledge needed to become proficient at competition routesetting. The clinics will led by experienced setters, participants will learn about setting basics – logistics, equipment and gear management, route and problem management, product management, the creative process behind routesetting, kinematics in relation to routesetting and trends; safety and risk mitigation, role of the routesetter and communication skills, career path development.

**Routesetter Empowerment:** By fostering local routesetting talent, the clinics aim to empower routesetters to create and maintain their own diverse setting styles.

**Inclusivity and Diversity:** IFSC is committed to promoting inclusivity and diversity within the routesetting community. Inline with application criteria for the new level system, participation in the clinic must be balanced, or near to balanced, between male and females.



Long-Term Impact: Beyond the clinics, the aim is to establish lasting partnerships between local climbing organizations and gyms to provide ongoing support and resources for routesetting development. By building sustainable networks and sharing knowledge, the clinic hopes to catalyze continued growth and innovation in setting within these communities.

The clinic spans two immersive days, designed to offer participants a comprehensive understanding of basic routesetting principles and hands-on experience. It includes practical application sessions with athletes and may culminate in setting for an event if time and resources allow.

Having athletes present at the practical sessions of the clinic enriches the practical experience by providing routesetters with invaluable feedback and interaction. Participants can collaborate with climbers of varying skill levels, receiving immediate input on route difficulty, movement flow, and overall route enjoyment. This enables routesetters to refine their skills through iterative adjustments and improvements. A collaborative approach not only enhances the learning experience but also fosters a sense of community between routesetters and climbers, creating a relationship that fuels innovation and growth. There is often quite a divide between routesetters and climbers brought about by ethical issues within the competition scene, however, this immediate feedback and input is critical for the development of the routesetters skills.

There is also the option to set for a competition held at the conclusion of the clinic. This allows routesetters to apply their creativity and technical expertise in designing routes tailored to the competition's specific requirements. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to develop route management and leadership skills during an event.

## Prerequisites/selection of candidates

Participants for this pilot clinic will be nominated by the Greek National Federation. Athens, Greece has been chosen as a prime target for the clinic by both the IFSC and SCCR due to significant developments, supported by Olympic solidarity funding. Eight routesetters with commercial experience participated, four females and four males.



## Clinic content

*„It is not about being a strong climber, you need to feel the movement. “ Percy Bishton*

### Part 1: Role of routesetter and setter management

Duration: 60 min

#### Competition management

Outline best practice examples from experience, pitfalls and advantages of how to choose a setting team.

Optimal number of route setters is 5-6 with 4-5 days of work to set a world cup (26-36 boulders, depends on if qualification has 1 or 2 groups). More is harder to coordinate, less could lead to early skin loss and time pressure.

#### Roles within the team

Detail the roles and give examples from practice for each point. Discuss how these relate to specific NF's situation, challenges which occur, personal communication, conflict resolution.

- Routesetter – the setter putting the holds up and down, creating problems, forerunning and feedback on each others problems,
- Head Routesetter – responsible for overseeing the routesetting team, setting, forerunning, grading, route management, communication with competition facility and competition officials, maintaining time schedule, responsible for safety and risk mitigation.

#### Career path development within NF/IFSC

Outline the new level structure and update on the latest developments from IFSC & Routesetters Commission

- 1) Commercial setter
- 2) National setter



- 3) Continental setter (IFSC diversity program/IFSC aspirant)
- 4) IFSC junior setter
- 5) IFSC setter
- 6) IFSC chief setter

- If you are not active for 2 years, you will go down in the IFSC route setting structure.
- Write as many emails as possible to get attention and new contacts.
- Take as many opportunities as you can for competition routesetting, guest routesetting, courses and clinics, working alongside coaches, routesetting exchanges.

## Part 2: Route management

Duration: 90 minutes

### Preparation before event

- Always speak with the organizer first, due to the logistics of the event. You need to know from where athletes will come out to the boulders, spectators place, boulders order, scanning of the holds (needs to be done before you take down and mark the boulders).
- Be informed on what equipment and kit they have, will provide and what state it is in, how holds will be transported, agree on prior cleaning etc, specific gym considerations for scheduling and other limitations.
- Consider if you need to take your own routesetting gear.
- Make analysis of the climbers attending competition before you start route setting to know how to prepare boulders better (start list).
- Plan the works ahead. Most common is to set competition backwards – finals, semifinals, qualification. Second most common is to set semifinals, finals, qualification.
- Remember you are setting for everyone, not just top-level athletes. Make some easier boulders in first round (qualification) so everyone enjoys the event.



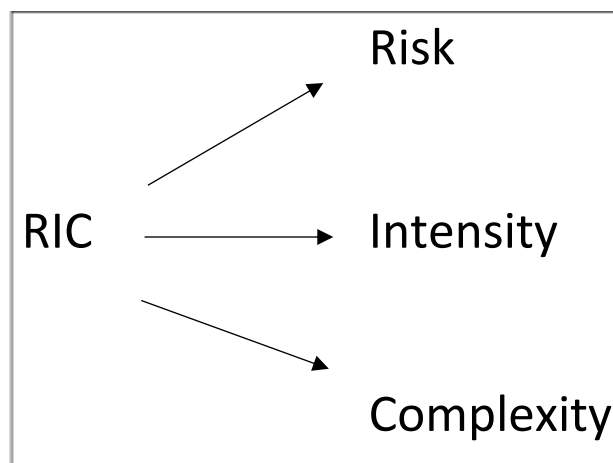
- Safe some material for the qualification before setting to make sure, you will have enough.

### Plan of setting

- Draw the plan of competition wall, where boulders are going to be.
- Devise level of boulders
- Divide style of boulders/moves

### Guidelines

- If you set a move no one in team could have done, it is most probably too hard.
- If you nearly do the move, evaluate your actual shape again and compare.
- Copying moves from other climbers? → Yes, why not. This could help you to understand a new style.
- When you are route setting for a competition (or simulation), always evaluate three basic factors known as RIC = risk, intensity, complexity.










## Routesetting progress - Square system

When everyone chooses their place on the wall and style of the boulder, follow the „square „system.

Everyone will know how the setting is going and in what stage the boulders are.

Progress step	Square system indication
1) Mark horizontal line on a sheet after you set the boulder.	
2) Add vertical line if you tested the boulder and feels adequate to you for the specific round.	
3) Add second horizontal line if every other route setter tested your boulder and everyone agrees your boulder is good to go. Then evaluate the boulders on RIC scale.	
4) Finish the whole square if you marked your boulder properly and took a photo of it.	
5) Cross the square if you took down the boulder and stored to the storage area – wall is clean for another boulder.	



### Part 3: Safety and risk mitigation

Duration: 60 minutes + practical experience. Specific for bouldering. All participants will have commercial experience so will come with a basic level of risk mitigation knowledge for the commercial environment.

- Be aware of the facility's risk assessment policies and procedures
- Test the landing zone. Safety of the athletes comes in the first place!
- Place big volumes with other setters.
- Use light soft impacts rather than hard impacts (elbow and shoulders protection). If you don't have gloves, at least chalk up often – sharp holds will not be slipping out of your hands that much.
- Use gloves while manipulating with holds – saves the skin for further testing.
- Ladder safety
- Clear mats of equipment and tools prior to testing
- Take care with placing high profile volumes and big holds low down – fall zone risks.
- Pay attention to how your fall zones affects neighboring problems.



## Part 4: Competition setting basics

Duration: 4-5 hours each day, total 8-10 hours. This part of the clinic is the practical component, delivered on the boulder wall with athletes present for feedback. Applying concepts from route management and safety and risk mitigation. Additionally, setter management into practice if ending the clinic with a competition.

Link to clinic video showcasing the practical sessions is available on the World Climbing Academy platform.

### Kinematics and trends:

- Concept of creating a problem with a specific movement component/intention
- Practical sessions to practice creating specific types of moves.
- Balance of aesthetics vs movement proposition vs safety (Also RIC)
- Discussions/practice on how to link moves together to achieve a successful problem design
- Experiment with movements and hold placement, removing, rotating...
- Discussion of latest trends in comp setting
- Discussion/practical examples of physical and technical requirements of different types of moves and importance of balancing these (RIC).
- Identification of own setting strengths and areas for improvement
- Cultivation of own setting style

### Climbing styles of boulders/moves

- |                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Crimpy                    | • Inversion             |
| • Slab                      | • Face out              |
| • Balance                   | • Contortion            |
| • Power                     | • Jamming               |
| • Compression               | • Pockets               |
| • Electric („quick hands “) | • Stemming              |
| • 3D (big volumes)          | • Full contact          |
| • Coordination              | • Dynamic               |
| • Volumes                   | • Skate                 |
| • Ambiguous                 | • Old school/new school |