

Welcome to the 1st in a series of articles designed for the Stowe Reporter's VARA page. In these articles, I will attempt to explore and inform our readers about the intricacies of alpine ski tuning.

The focus of this week's article is on your preparation as an athlete. Take a moment to think about your efforts to reach your current level of success in racing—summer camps; dryland all the time; ski academy; equipment; travel; and last but not most important: the combined dedication and effort of the coaches and athletes themselves to achieve personal goals. These components and others form the training base for all athletes, much like the base of a pyramid. The stronger and wider the base of support in that pyramid, the higher your results will be.

The best training simulates racing in its intensity and efforts, allowing the athlete to go racing with exceptional confidence. However, one important aspect of equation is usually overlooked: the ski preparation.

Unfortunately, most athletes neglect their skis until the night or two before a race, frantically attempting to make them fast at the last moment. Often times, this can be more detrimental because the skis are changed so much that they feel different at the race.

As an athlete or a race parent, your goal should be to keep all of your skis in race ready condition, all the time. Easier said than done? Read on...

The average national team ski service man has roughly 20 pairs of skis per athlete to handle. Each service man has from 1 to 5 athletes, depending on the group (speed or tech, men's or women's, A team thru D Team). During summer, fall, and early season testing and training, they may put 4-6 pairs of skis per day on the hill for the athlete to use. Each night they have their work cut out for them, but they are able to keep all the skis in (for our purposes) race ready condition every day. Each technician will therefore spend about 20-30 minutes per pair

of skis to keep them tuned & waxed during training periods.

You can achieve the same consistency in your training by simply allocating the same 20-30 minutes per day to maintenance of your skis.

Daily maintenance should go something like this:

1. dry off your skis and binding/plate combination
2. Use a stiff fiber or brass brush from tip to tail clean out the ski's structure of wax & dirt.
3. Use a polishing pad (Scotchbrite) on a handle from tip to tail to "speed up" the structure each day.
4. re-polish all 4 edges using your angle guide with medium then fine diamond stones; then again using an Arkansas stone
5. apply Holmenkol sidewall tape and perform a hot scrape cleaning of the ski using Holmenkol Care Wax (cleans dirt

- from base every day); scrape and brush while hot
6. apply Holmenkol Betamix (cold snow) or alphamix (warm snow) training wax.
 7. Return about 5-10 minutes before training the next day, scrape using a sharp scraper, then brush extensively to a high polish using Holmenkol brushes.
 8. Be sure to scrape your edges and sidewalls of wax.
 9. Go train fast!
 10. Repeat every day.

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