

For our 3rd week's VARA race page installment, we will discuss the art of the hot scrape clean, used every day after skiing and discussed briefly in our first article.

Most folks think only of cleaning the ski after a slushy day in the spring, when the base develops a layer of black gunk. In reality, every day you ski the base is picking up dust, dirt, grease, oil, pollen, etc. from the snow.

The purpose of the hot scrape cleaning is simple – to remove the dirt, old wax, & fluoros from the pores of the base. These pores are what hold the wax in the ski, and anything other than clean wax will make you slow.

If you have used fluoro-carbon wax for any reason, it is imperative that you perform these steps after skiing. "Fluoros" are excellent at repelling water and dirt, so you will not see much dirt come out of the ski; however, fluoros will quickly clog the pores of the ski, preventing wax from penetrating, and they must be removed. At

World Cup level, technicians view the use of fluoro waxes as a specialty item, and will often perform 3-4 hot scrape cleanings to be certain that they are completely removed from a ski after its use.

To perform a hot scrape cleaning, you will need the following items:

1. natural fiber or stiff brass base brush
2. Holmenkol Care Wax
3. Pac-Man Scraper Sharpener
4. Scraper
5. Fiber Fleece
6. Racing Waxer Iron, bench, vises

Using the base brush, work the ski with strong pressure from tip to tail. Be sure to use the brush in just 1 direction (it helps to put an arrow on the top of the brush). When you are unable to remove any more with the brush, "dust" the wax & dirt particles from the ski using the Fiber Fleece. Now, wipe your iron's base clean. Next, melt the care wax onto the ski using your waxing iron. Be sure that your iron is a ski wax iron and temperature controlled, so it does not overheat

and burn the base and the wax. Top technicians like irons that have extremely accurate and stable temperatures for better results. For softer waxes (like care wax), use about 110C. Run the iron from tip to tail only, at an even steady pace, about 6-8 passes. The ski should reverse its camber and the wax should be liquid along the whole length of the ski. Now, take your sharp scraper (scraper should be almost as sharp as your edges!) and scrape the hot liquid wax off the ski from tip to tail, about 5 passes. Re-sharpen your scraper after each pass using the scraper sharpener. You will notice the contaminants in the wax you are removing as you perform this step. Next, re-brush and Fiber Fleece dust the skis, and then wipe clean the iron's base. Now you are ready to apply the next day's training or racing wax.

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