

This week, our 4th in the Stowe Reporter's VARA race page, we will cover the concept of race and training skis.

By now, most everyone has their new skis for the season. Northern N.E. has been lucky to have good snow, so most of us haven't chewed up our investment on the hard granite that lurks beneath.

Were you lucky enough to get both "racers & trainers" this season? Do you only train on your trainers and race on your "good" skis? If so, I encourage you to shift your thinking.

Spending equal time skiing on all of your skis will allow the bases to "run in", effectively making them faster. How, you ask? Your new skis (or skis fresh from the stone grinder) have sharp peaks and valleys in the structure of the base. The structure is designed to enable the channeling of water along the length of the ski, much like a car tire. The difference is that you want the structure to channel just the right amount of water for the situation,

but without the grip of a car tire! By skiing all of your skis equally, you will allow the sharp peaks and valleys to become more rounded, thus faster at channeling water. You can also speed this process up by using a stiff fiber or brass brush to "round out" the valleys and a green abrasive pad to "knock down" the peaks.

By spreading the ski time out on all of your skis, you will also "wear" them out at a slower pace. This is especially important on today's training courses with SL skis, where the intensity and abrasion on the base of the ski is extreme. Many racers who fail to do this end up with a training ski that has a round bottom and a racing ski that is still factory flat. This makes for interesting skiing on race day when the feel of the ski is completely different. You should make it a habit of checking all your skis once per week with a true bar to get a handle on the amount of base "wear." Remember, the plastic base should be completely flat from edge to edge, along the

whole length of the ski. Only the steel base edge itself should have any bevel to it (usually about the thickness of a dime or less under one side of the true bar while the other is flush against the steel). If your skis vary from this description, get them to the stone grinder.

The daily cycle of touch up tuning and waxing will contribute to faster skis, too. Every time the base is heated, cleaned, waxed, and cooled, it gets harder & faster. Plus, you are causing the training wax to further penetrate to the depths of the ski base, giving a faster ride. Most World Cup speed skiers use skis that are at least 1 season old, as they are significantly faster as a result of being "waxed in." If you only break out your "race" skis on race day, it is likely that your training skis are faster as they have been waxed more!

Holmenkol does not recommend the use of fluoro enhanced training waxes, unless you are having a time trial (in appropriate weather conditions). Extensive testing has revealed that continuous use of

fluorinated training waxes (even those deemed “low fluoro”) contributes to blocking the pores of the base, which reduces wax absorption.

Dave Peszek is the Holmenkol Product Manager for the USA, and a member of the Holmenkol World Racing Service Team. Questions? E-mail dpezek@uvexsports.com