

In our 6<sup>th</sup> weekly VARA series, Holmenkol takes a look at making your speed skis run.

Got Speed? Eastern & mid-western USSA clubs (understandably) spend less time on speed training and racing than western programs do. In fact, many of you may have recently received your new or “loaner” speed skis in anticipation of upcoming races. But do not fear – speed can easily be found with just a few minutes every day from now until the races.

Most likely, you only have one or two pair of speed skis. Let's assume the ski is fully prepped (stone-ground, angles set, sidewalls prepped, etc.). You'll need to start by ensuring a clean ski, so perform a hot scrape cleaning to be certain.

The first step is to “set” the skis temperature range. “Setting” the range of the ski refers to the process of repeated waxing of the base with just one type of basic wax (warm or cold). This will allow the ski to run fastest in that temperature range. This

is done when you don't have a selection of pre-tested skis to choose from. A good guess for Le Massif, Okemo, & Lake Placid is snow temp.'s colder than -8C.

You'll need about 200g of BetaMix, which is a special cool temperature hydrocarbon wax. It takes about 25-30g per wax session.

Apply your sidewall tape to the speed skis, preventing wax from running down the side of the ski. Next, drip a copious amount of BetaMix onto the skis, and begin to hot iron the wax into the ski. Remember to use only tip to tail action with the iron, and get the whole ski hot (liquid wax along its whole length). Set the iron to ~130C. Be patient, as speed skis are thicker and contain more metal than your GS & SL skis, so they take longer to heat up.

Set the speed skis aside and let them cool overnight.

*Old skis:* When you return the next day, add a little more wax to the layer you already have, and without scraping or brushing, re-wax the

skis as you did the day before.

*New or freshly ground skis:* When you return the next day, use a sharp scraper to remove the excess wax. Keep scraping until nothing comes off, then begin brushing, using a stiff brush (brass) from tip to tail. Now add more wax, re-heat, and come back tomorrow.

The number of times you repeat this simple procedure limited only by how much time is available before the speed series. The more heat cycles you can put the ski through, the more wax will penetrate, effectively setting the skis temperature range for the race series. We choose BetaMix because it is a wide ranging wax (-8 to -16C snow temp) and because we are looking quickly to the eastern speed races in January & early February.

Now you are ready to race wax the night before the big day and be assured that you will be fast!

Remember that 1 speed run on aggressive snow can tear through your

race wax, all your base wax, plus the base material itself. The more time spent on initial “waxing in” the ski will pay off in less wear after that winning DH run!

*Dave Peszek is the product manager for Holmenkol USA, and a member of the World Racing Service Team. He can be reached at [DPeszek@UvexSports.com](mailto:DPeszek@UvexSports.com)*