

THE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL

SKIER DEVELOPMENT: SELECT DRILLS TO ENHANCE SKILLS

by TONY D. CRESPI, TECHNICAL EDITOR

I do not know if artists have days when they cannot get it right, but skiers certainly do. Some days, it just seems, the mountain can feel less than hospitable to the art of carving a turn.

Certainly, during an off day, certain hesitancy is understandable. After all, it would be foolish to expect our muscles to always remember the intricate movement patterns required for black diamond skiing.

How, though, can skiers cope? How can skiers turn visual images of clean, sharp, turns into reality? The ideal way, of course, is to start in good condition. That's one key. Another key? Good skiers often practice skill-building drills.

Here is one opening tip to remember before you explore our triage of pointers: keep it fun. That is, enjoy yourself. Play. Laugh. Smile. Grin. And do not take it very seriously.

Keep things in perspective. We are not learning surgery. We are simply practicing drills that can enhance your skiing skills. Try not to lose sight of that. So smile, grin and keep it light.

Ski School Pointer: Turning To Long Turn Success

What kind of turns do you like best? Short turns? Long turns? Most skiers tend to prefer certain kinds of turns. But different kinds of turns demand different kinds of skills. You probably already know that, but we sometimes forget it after a busy summer away from the mountain.

"It works on your ability to meter out rotary movements," reflects John Baymore, a division clinic leader for PSIA, the assistant ski school director at Bromley Mountain and a sufficiently gifted pro. "Turning longer helps you focus on the precision. Look at the track of your skis and make sure you see a roundish shape rather than a straight line or straight skid. Look for an arc as the shape."

Stop a moment and mentally select your favorite turn. Think about the kind of snow and terrain that you like to ski. It is best to refine skills on snow and on terrain where you feel most comfortable. This diminishes the mental component to the game.

As a general rule of thumb, it's a good idea to start practicing slow, "long" turns. That's right. Long, round, clean, turns! Even if you prefer short turns.

Long turns are a great warm-up.

To start, find well-groomed snow on moderate terrain. Try to ski slowly. You can turn up the volume later. Initially, try to emphasize weighting the outside, downhill ski.

Stay loose and relaxed.

As you initiate each new turn, keep emphasizing the weighting of the downhill, outside ski. Take your time. Keep your hands forward. Try to feel the snow.

Fine-tuning long turns is a critical ingredient to advanced skiing. Just as tennis players must maintain certain basic skills to stay on top of their game, the accomplished skiers know that the long turn is the foundation for advanced skiing skills.

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Ski School Tip: Set the Accelerator To High Performance

Some people think that better means faster. But that is not necessarily true. One important skill to refine involves speed control.

To refine your speed control, think about modifying the shape of your turns. That is to say, if you find yourself motoring along at a pace that is simply too fast, try to give your turns a more pronounced "C" shape.

Too often, people simply traverse straight across the hill, using a quick jamming, slamming, action to turn direction. But, straight traverses linked together with quick jamming changes in direction do not provide the same kind of speed control, rhythm and smooth fluid feeling that a round arc-shaped turn can accomplish.

"Speed control is vitally important," emphasizes long-time PSIA course conductor and veteran PSIA Examiner Charlie Rockwell, the director of education at Bromley. "It is so important to work on the skill blends, feel comfortable, and choose a speed at which you can most comfortably advance."

"People often thinking increasing skill is going faster, but always going warp ten is not ideal," emphasizes Baymore. "We ask our pros to keep the same movements but go slower. And slower. How slow can you go while accurately blending skills and actually keeping a simultaneous release of both skis into the turn? Speed can hide a multitude of inaccuracies."

To refine your turn shape, start by choosing a favorite run. Choose a place you are "really" comfortable. Then, try guiding your skis from one turn into the next, giving the turns a definite round, C-shaped arc. Practice one or two turns at a time as you begin. See how much speed dissipates if you actually overturn, turning "up" the hill at the end of the turn. Gradually start to link more and more turns together.

**BE AWARE,
SKI WITH CARE,
KEEP IT FUN**

To be sure, speed is an elixir. But it can also be intimidating. The key to black diamond skiing is to learn how to control that speed. One strategy is to work on modifying the shape of your turns.

Make your turns C-shaped. Whether you are enjoying shaped or traditional skis, learning to execute different shaped turns can help give you better speed control.

WATCH THAT ACCELERATOR.

Ski School Tip: Getting in Balance for the Season

One of the most unsettling feelings for a skier is feeling out-of-balance. Whether sliding out of control on ice, or feeling out of sink in the moguls, good skiers seem to have the knack for staying in balance.

"This is a critical skill," emphasizes Rockwell, who has trained, tested and been involved in certifying ski pros at resorts throughout the East. "People often are falling in or out of balance. It can be a fundamental component to help refine balancing."

"To refine balance I dial the speed way down and find easier terrain," adds Baymore. "If you want to be accurate, you need to know when things break down. During the first days of a season, if you dive into terrain for which your body may not be ready, you are primed for failure. We need to find what feels good. I ski conservatively and try to make sure I am initiating turns appropriately. I try not to impress anybody. I work on accuracy! Then I build off of that and turn it up as my muscle memory returns."

The next time you go skiing, before you take your first run, take a minute and regain your balance. To start, find a flat piece of snow. Then, after putting on your skis and before you start down the mountain, slowly rock forward in your boots, and then rock backward. Start slowly. As you move forward, feel the front of your boots touch against your shins. Then, very gradually, rock backward.

Like a swing move forward and back.

Gradually reduce the range of motion, until you find your center of balance. Practice before the first few runs. Practice mid-mountain and feel that centered position.

For intermediate and advanced skiers, gradually move this drill from a standing position to a skiing position. That is, on moderate, groomed terrain, while executing several long traverses, gradually rock forward and backward. As you ski, try to find that position which feels most comfortable. Initially, try several slow turns rocking forward. Then execute several turns rocking slightly backward. Then try skiing in a centered, position, square with your body and skis.

One hallmark of an accomplished skier is a centered, square stance. Refine your balance. Stop. Stand still. Gradually rock yourself forward and backward. Find your centered position. Then, try to keep that feeling on the mountain.

BE AWARE. SKI WITH CARE. KEEP IT FUN.

Technical Editor Tony D. Crespi has served as both a ski school supervisor and development team coach. A frequent contributor to publications throughout snow country, his column is published throughout the season.

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RENT EQUIPMENT THE EASY WAY, IN YOUR ROOM, WITH SKI BUTLERS

PARK CITY, UT – Ski Butlers is proud to announce Telluride as its newest location, opening for the 2008-09 ski season. “We are excited about our expansion into Telluride. It is a great opportunity to offer another world class ski destination to our customers,” said Bryn Carey, founder and President of Ski Butlers.

Founded four years ago in Park City, Utah, Ski Butlers has become the leader in in-room fitting. Ski Butlers serves over 25 resorts in California and the Rocky Mountains, including the top eight in SKI Magazine’s Top 50 Resort Rankings. In addition to its extensive network of resorts, Ski Butlers has designed the industry’s most user-friendly reservation system that allows customers to create accounts and store their information online from vacation to vacation and resort to resort.

Skiers and snowboarders visiting these major ski resorts across the U.S. can enjoy hassle-free in-room fitting of ski and snowboard equipment without leaving their accommodations. This new service is growing increasingly popular among skiers and riders in the know. Ski Butlers, an innovative leader in the ski delivery business, stresses that this is a high quality service without a big price tag.

“Our goal is to take the stress out of renting skis and all the hassles associated with going to a rental shop, standing in line, and lugging all the equipment back to your lodging. Now you can set up an appointment and a team of qualified ski technicians will come to you at your convenience,” said Carey. Words like convenience and stress-free are normally not associated with ski rentals.

As airlines continue to raise their baggage fees, ski rental delivery is becoming more and more popular among people in the know. “Most airlines are charging anywhere from \$15 to \$50 per checked baggage,” says Carey. “For skis, airlines are charging \$100 to \$175 one-way, which could cost up to \$350 round trip just to check your skis. With our high quality equipment and hassle-free service, it is almost a no brainer.”

Currently, Ski Butlers operates at the following locations: Heavenly, Kirkwood, and Sierra in California; Aspen, Snowmass, Highlands, Buttermilk, Breckenridge, Keystone, Copper, A-Basin, Telluride, Vail, Beaver Creek, and Arrowhead in Colorado; Park City, Deer Valley, The Canyons, and Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons in Utah; Jackson Hole in Wyoming; and Whistler/Blackcomb in British Columbia.

Ski Butlers features high quality equipment from industry leaders like Rossignol, Volkl, Nordica, Dolomite, Marker, Fischer, and Elan in five performance levels: sport, high performance, and high performance plus for adults, and junior and junior performance for children 12 and under. As a full service rental shop, Ski Butlers also rents helmets, boot dryers, and two-way radios.

When the ski technicians arrive they are supplied with a variety of sizes and types of skis and boots, which guarantees proper fit. “Everyone was happy including the veteran skier in our bunch who promised me equipment delivery would not work because her boot size was very hard to get just right. Your team had plenty of extra boots on hand and fixed her up in no time,” commented Mr. Bill Houghton of Atlanta, Ga.

In-room fitting is a new concept being driven by today’s guests who want to maximize their vacation time and experience. “Renting skis has always been the major drawback of our ski vacations,” stated Mike Wilson of Cincinnati, Ohio. “Your over-the-top service has turned that painful experience into one that is truly enjoyable. Thank you for making our vacation to Vail that much better.”

In addition to renting equipment, Ski Butlers carries an extensive line of accessories, including goggles, sunglasses, sunscreen, lip balm, gloves, hats, neck gators, and hand and toe warmers.

For more info, go to www.skibutlers.com or via an easily found link on the homepage of www.skiernews.com and you can call Ski Butlers at 1-877-754-7754.

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COLORADO SKI COUNTRY REPORTS • WHAT'S NEW AT THE RESORTS - continued from page 6

“COLORADO SKI COUNTRY USA” REPORTS ON IMPROVEMENTS

Continued from Page 6.

Here is the continuation of the listing of some of the participating Colorado resorts and their improvements for the 2008-09 winter season.

Not all ski resorts in the state of Colorado are members of Colorado Ski Country USA as a result only members are listed.

POWDERHORN

Powderhorn will expand its terrain, adding two new ski trails for the 2008-09 ski season. Both are expert runs on the mountain’s West End. Along with new terrain, a new Magic Carpet surface lift is installed for this winter in the ski school learning area.

Real estate developments progress at Powderhorn and have grown to include the Condos at Wildewood and homes in Wildewood subdivision.

PURGATORY AT DURANGO MOUNTAIN RESORT

Purgatory at Durango Mountain Resort is deep into its 25-year mountain master plan with numerous “villages” already under construction and inhabited. The most notable is the first phase of Purgatory Lodge, set to open this winter in the heart of Purgatory Village. The new lodge is home to upgraded skier services and amenities, fractional ownership and slope side lodging, the new Purgatory’s Day Lodge, and the exclusive Durango Mountain Club.

Peregrine Point is just steps from Purgatory Village and offers the first whole-share opportunity at the resort in more than 20 years. The resort is also moving forward with additional village expansions. Tacoma and Engineer Village are already homes to many vacationers, while future plans call for three more villages in and around the resort.

On the mountain, Durango is in the final stages of approval of their environmental impact statement regarding on-mountain improvements. Once approved, the resort will begin installing a new high-speed quad in the Legends area, and moving the current chair to replace Chair 4 on the front side. New tree trails are planned for the Legends Area, as well as additional beginner and intermediate access routes. The resort also plans to add “subways”, a European method of access for skiers and boarders on relatively flat terrain. Upgrades to snowmaking include expanding their capability by at least 50 percent which will add 200 acres of snowmaking.

STEAMBOAT

Over the past three seasons, more than \$27 million in on-mountain improvements have been made to the Steamboat Ski Area, including more than \$4 million invested specifically for the upcoming 2008-09 winter season. Steamboat’s on-mountain momentum augments nearly \$8 million in completed and planned public revitalization projects, which are named Steamboat Unbridled.

Bringing mountain services downtown for the first time, Steamboat Ski & Sport Downtown will occupy 1,670 square

feet in the new Howelsen Place development in Old Town Steamboat. It is located in the high-energy retail environment on 7th Street between Lincoln and Yampa Avenues. Steamboat Ski & Sport Downtown offers convenient access to rentals, retail, official logo merchandise, lift tickets, and ski and snowboard school products. It also houses the comprehensive vacation planning services of Steamboat Central Reservations.

Approximately one-third of the resort’s ski rental fleet has been revamped. This winter, a \$250,000 will go toward new skis from the best in the industry, including a selection of the latest equipment from Salomon, Rossignol and Volkl. The new skis will be spread across the resort’s Ski & Sport locations in Gondola Square, Sheraton Hotel, Ski Time Square, Steamboat Grand and downtown.

Steamboat’s snowmaking system has undergone dramatic improvements as new pipe was placed extensively on Right-O-Way, See Ya, Bashor, Lower Vagabond and Lil Rodeo. Maintaining its industry leading snowmaking position, the new pipe is ductile iron pipe from U.S. Snow Pipe, utilizing the latest in snowmaking technology. An arsenal of low-energy, high-efficiency snowmaking guns will be implemented. These guns use 30 percent less energy than conventional guns while producing the same amount of snow.

The resort’s remote parking facility, the Meadows, will expand by more than 38,000 square feet on the north end. The new expansion will be able to accommodate 200 additional free parking spaces.

SUNLIGHT MOUNTAIN

Sunlight Mountain Resort will be undergoing significant change in the near future. The resort is in the midst of a proposed base area development project as Sunlight aspires to create a village that is a year-round mountain playground.

TELLURIDE

Part of Telluride’s \$4.4 million capital improvement program for this season includes new terrain in Revelation Bowl, located on the back side of Gold Hill. As guests make each turn, descending the 800 vertical feet of Revelation Bowl, the massive 2,000-foot rock wall on the opposite side of the drainage, grows larger, reaching up to the 13,472-foot La Junta Peak and the 13,555-foot Wasatch Mountain. To the skier’s right, the 13,446-foot San Joaquin Ridge keeps watch over the entire Bear Creek Basin, and to the skier’s left the town of Telluride peeks out 3,000 feet below. All of this is overlooked by the San Sophia range. From the top of the new Revelation lift, skiers and riders will be able to choose ridgelines in either direction, offering steeper pitches and rock features on the far sides of the powder bowl. The center touts an expanse of rolling, advanced terrain with a groomed path for cruising.

Revelation Bowl will have four trails, all advanced to expert terrain. A new lift, aptly titled Revelation Lift has been constructed to access the new terrain. This locally manufactured Leitner-Poma quad-lift cost \$2.2 million and can service 1,200 people per hour.

Also this season, two new restaurants will open.

WINTER PARK

Winter Park Resort is continuing a major expansion with The Village of Winter Park Resort coming on board for the 2009. Estimated at \$30 million for construction, 30,000-square-feet of new retail, rental, restaurant and living space will encompass the Village area.

Additionally, Winter Park Resort is building a new \$5.8-million Village Cabriolet to transport people from their free parking lot near the Vintage Hotel to the heart of the Village. The Village Cabriolet is an open-air gondola and has a capacity of 2,800 people per hour via 39 cabins. Skis, snowboards, wheelchairs, and mountain bikes can be transported on the cabriolet in a matter of minutes. There will be no charge to ride the Village Cabriolet.

As part of Winter Park Resort’s Connexion platform designed to inform, involve and educate resort employees, guests and the community about the environment, 200 additional mega watts of wind energy credits will be purchased to offset the added energy used to operate the new lift.

In total, Winter Park Resort will purchase 600 mega watts to operate the new cabriolet, Super Gauge, Eagle Wind and Panoramic Express lifts.

The Lofts at Winter Park are 14 new high-end condominiums being built above The Village at Winter Park Resort. Additionally, 200 new units were completed in the Spring with the opening of Fraser Crossing and Founders Pointe.

For the upcoming season, Winter Park Resort has purchased more than a quarter million dollars worth of new gear to update the quality of their rental offerings. All rental skis will be under the new Salomon Syncro rental system that means fast fitting and a more efficient rental process. In addition, Winter Park Resort is adding 250 more kids skis, boots and Burton snowboards. All renters receive free “ski up” storage at the base of the slopes.

A new Mountain Adventure Center located at Winter Park’s base will offer hundreds of demo skis, on-snow valet, and complementary Smith blue-tooth helmets.

WOLF CREEK

Wolf Creek is investing \$1.5 million in on-mountain improvements for the 2008-09 ski season. Included in the season’s enhancements is the LEED guided expansion of the Raven Day Use Building, located at the top of Raven Quad.

This information is provided by Colorado Ski Country USA (CSCUSA) is the not-for-profit trade association representing 22 ski and snowboard resorts in Colorado. SKIER NEWS edited the information to conform as best as possible to AP standards and to fit in the allotted space.

Information about CSCUSA and its members can be found at www.ColoradoSki.com.

This information can be found in its entirety in the online press room at <http://media-ColoradoSki.com>.