

Simon Ashton (right) muses on the difficulties of passing BASI Grade 1



I am currently attempting to pass my BASI Grade 1 Technical, which I have now failed twice. Each of my final reports highlighted the same technical faults that I also see in many dry slope skiers.

My first problem is the width of my stance: I ski with my feet three or four inches apart. I am now desperately working on this. I think variability of terrain, the speed you can ski on a dry slope and the amount of grip you can create are an issue here.

Variability - most of the time we dry ski on a flat unchanging surface (although the occasional seam can catch you out). Changes in snow texture, death cookies, piles of powder etc are not there to unbalance, so we can easily get away with a narrower platform.

Additionally the dry slope surface will only provide so much of a platform before the skis break away. We therefore tend to keep our feet under the body rather than use appropriate lateral body movements and leg lean. To generate effective leg lean a wider stance is required to allow the joints and legs to move.

To ski effectively with a wider stance all the joints in the legs need to be flexed appropriately; we need to make like the ubiquitous goalkeeper position loved by all instructors. We can then stretch and flex, apply pressure and change the edge.

This leads to my second problem. Because dry slopes are uniform, and a lot of us have restricted lateral movement and have limited speed due to the dry slope environment - we are very static on our skis and have a limited range of movement.

But how can speed affect range of movement? Speed is great when skiing; not only for the fun factor but also for the forces we can create when moving our skis across our line of momentum. As we go faster we can use these forces to drop into the turn more and so move our feet further away from the body laterally. The further the feet are away from the body, and the wider the stance the more the inside leg has to bend. But on a dry slope we are limited in the speed we can achieve by the length, steepness and amount of grip of the slope.

So on dry slopes we need to work on increasing movement in the legs. I prefer to do this in two ways:

1. Use exercises to increase movement, whether the legs are moving laterally away from the body or working under the body.
2. Use variability of terrain - use any bumps, waves, halfpipe etc you have. Mountains are intrinsically variable places. Get those legs working; it will pay dividends later on.

Freestyle Brits storm in at Tignes – page 22

Clubs benefit as Royal Marines get training boost

The Royal Marines now have a state-of-the-art facility for military ski instruction since Snowflex was installed in August at the Scottish base RM Condor, Arbroath, Briton Engineering has announced.

The new slope will offer innovative ski surface technology, providing the Royal Marines with a UK training facility more akin to snow-covered mountains.

The Royal Marines are one of the few military services trained to ski, and have had an artificial slope on the Royal Marines Condor base since the mid-1970s. The slope is a deck construction, until recently covered in obsolete material.

The MoD development will also benefit the local community clubs that currently use the slope. The local kids' club and club for the disabled will be able to use the latest technology, benefiting them and arming them with personal skills and qualities for life.

■ The Snowflex slope at Ski Rossendale is to have a new rail installed. The success of the slope with one of the steepest jumps in the country has had rave reports by the riders and skiers, industry professionals and slope owners.

Receivers move in, but skiing continues

Wycombe Summit Ltd went into administrative receivership on 15 July 2003.

The centre is continuing to trade and operate as normal and is looking forward to a successful winter season.

Wycombe Summit Ski and Snowboard Centre is England's longest dry slope and world class ski and snowboard school.

With a 300-metre main slope, 100m trainer slope and several nursery areas with three lifts, all floodlit and fully lubricated,

Wycombe Summit boasts unparalleled facilities for both the complete beginner and the more experienced.

Children are well catered for with the Big Foot Club running at weekends and ski bobs available for the younger children. It is an ideal birthday party location for all ages.

There's also a special schools out programme to watch out for providing extra fun and activities for the holidays. The Summit café bar is open all day for delicious food and refreshments.

And it's all set in 70 acres of woodland where visitors can also take part in orienteering.

GRABS

Mute: Opposite hand grabs the ski in front of the binding. The legs are then pulled up behind the body bending at the knees. This helps create a big cross shape behind and to one side.

The non-grabbing arm is often held up in the air. This is apparently getting Old Skool (it's been done for a few years now) unless Canadian J F Cusson does it then it's "cool".

Simon Ashton, with technical help from **Tom Last** and **Andy Bennet**, continues the

Blogger's Guide to New Skool

New Skool Mute: As above except much smaller cross and tweaked well to one side.

Safety: Same hand grabs same ski under boot on the outside edge of ski (Boarders call this an Indie grab).

Pollard or Parallel: Same hand grabs same ski under boot but on the inside edge.

Critical: Opposite hand grabs inside edge under boot.

Tail: with skis crossed grab outside of the tail of the ski on the same side.

Toxic: with skis crossed grab inside

Model skier mixes it with 'the blokes'

I've been skiing all my life (well, since I could walk) and started competing slalom as soon as I could tell my left from right, blue from red. But it wasn't until this year I truly became a "skier"!

About two years ago I was doing a slalom race at Rossendale when someone suggested I should have a go at moguls. Being a gymnast they thought I would be good at it ... how wrong they were!

As I battled my way down the waves with my slalom skis and 130cm poles, I resembled a cat being thrown out of a window as I flew off the ramp and just about made it across the finish line!

I stuck at it and went along to a few more competitions and really started to enjoy it, just doing small jumps and pottering down the moguls.

After a while I realised that doing more

Emma Lonsdale, (right) aged 19 and one of the few females in the England Freestyle Ski Team, gives a girl's eye view of the discipline after summer training in Tignes



freestyle meant my racing and general skiing was improving, and I started to do better in slalom competitions again.

I have now retired from serious alpine competitions to make time for freestyle and am trying all the different aspects of freestyle. I've just completed my first season – I got to ski six days a week for five months and try my hand at half pipe.

In two years, I managed to get into the English Freestyle Ski Team, become British moguls and skier cross female champion and get sponsored by Fat Face last autumn. This spring Fat Face gave me a great opportunity to go to Iceland and Greenland to do a photo shoot for their winter catalogue. All of a sudden I'm a ski model, too!

I also worry that I'm becoming an adrenalin junkie. I thought that, as I got

older, big ramps would scare me more and I would become more timid. But the opposite has happened; the more I ski the more confidence I build and the less scared I become!

I feel that there are huge opportunities for girls in this sport. It's a hidden Mecca where you get to ski with your own style and gain respect for your individuality. Not just left right left right, blue red blue!

Now I'm not suggesting you all swap your lovely skintight cat suits for baggy pants straight away, I'm just suggesting you try freestyle then make your own minds up.

As long as you don't mind being surrounded by blokes, involved in a very male-dominated sport, and don't take anything anyone says seriously (except maybe the coaches), you'll love it.

Freestyle Brits raise a storm in Tignes

British Freestyle skiers stormed Tignes this summer, training in the bumps and funpark on the glacier, which has melted back to record levels.

Simon Bates (26, Edinburgh, British Moguls A Team) regained the Men's Moguls Champion title after knee surgery prevented him competing in the 2002 event.

Tom Last (18, Sheffield, British New Skool Development Team and English A Team) continued his winning streak from the Saas Fee Ride two weeks before, beating team-mate Andy Bennet into third place.

Emma Lonsdale (19, Settle, English Freestyle Team)

was the top female in both Moguls and Big Air.

■ The two leading members of the recently formed British Freestyle New Skool Development Squad both scored top three places at the successful Saas-Fee Ride 2003 event in mid-July.

Tom Last (Sheffield/Line Skis, Nike, Silver Cartel, Optic Nerve) shared the overall honours with Markus Kaiser. Last's compatriot Andy Bennet (Nottingham/Line Skis, The North Face, Silver Cartel) took third place.

■ Andy David 23 from Derby, achieved a credible seventh in the finals, which was a personal best performance.

of the tail of the ski on the same side.

Method: as per Mute Grab but do not cross the skies (keep them parallel).

Japan: opposite hand grabs inside of ski just behind the boot (apparently to be "cool" the legs should not be kicked out to the side).

Taipan: with crossed skis right hand grabs left ski behind your back on the inside edge.

RAIL GRINDS

Rails come in a number of guises and shapes. Some you can slide straight on to, others you have to go off of a ramp to gain enough height to reach.

Vertically curved rails are called Rainbow rails. Battleships are shaped like half a hexagon. Kinks are kinked, roller coasters, well, look like roller coasters. Basically they are in any shape you want.

Outside the park, skiers grind rails (on steps). Entry on to rails is either

switch or regular, with rotations, grabs etc. The same is done off. Some even flip on and off.

The rail can be ground on two feet or on one foot, some with flat skis some with edged. You can jump from one foot to the other and even 180°, 360° etc and carry on grinding. Only problem is when falling off rails (and on to them) it can hurt a bit!

Next Issue: Jumps

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