

ADVICE TO AUSTRALIAN XC SKIERS USING WAX SKIS IN CLASSIC RACES.

1. Arrive at least 2 hours before start time.
 2. Have something to eat and drink 2 hours before start (not milk or fatty foods).
 3. Enter and collect your race number. Ask for program/or your start time for interval start races.
 4. Organise your gear and clothing - only wear what is necessary for the weather conditions.
 - Take extra dry gear up to start area to wear after the race.
 - Also take a drink to have 20-30 min. before start and for after the race .
 - Remember to take all your grip waxes. The snow maybe colder at the start compared to the snow around the car park
 - Clean rags, hand cleaner, gas torch and scrapers.
 - If you have them, an extra pair of skis to test waxes.
 5. Arrive at the start area 1- 1½ hours before the start - set up your 'camp' area in a protected area - maybe erect a 'tent fly' if it is raining or snowing.
 6. Study start area and particularly the finish area. Ski through these areas to become familiar with them. It is your responsibility to know the track layout for your event - look for your course turn off and lap signs - if more than one loop is used for all classes.
 7. Ski the track
 - Study and practice difficult sections
 - Look for differences in snow conditions etc. - dry snow on southern slopes or under shade in trees.
 - Look for slopes that will thaw out (melt) first due to exposure to the sun. **Important** if these slopes are uphill sections of the course (track) you must aim to wax for these sections or be prepared to herring bone, double pole or modify your technique - possibly ski outside the set tracks.
- Note:** You may have skied the course by skating, using waxless skis or a test wax on your old skis.
8. Return to the start area and begin preparation of test or racing skis.

- a) Look at possible changes in weather
- b) Try to estimate how snow will thaw by looking at snow in tracks in sunny exposed areas.
- c) Make sure you have used a good solvent to remove any traces of glide wax - preferably the night before the race.
- d) Waxes should be applied to a perfectly clean and dry base.
- e) The kick zone should be sand papered or roughened to guarantee better adhesion of wax.
- f) Iron in the first layer of wax if you are not using a base binder stick or klister wax.
- g) Apply a layer of wax and test for grip.
- h) Look to other experienced skiers/coaches for advice.
- i) If it slips, apply a thicker layer or the next softest wax or extend the length of waxed pocket.
 - Note:** it could be your technique.
 - Do not kick back (late kick)
 - Do not lean too far forward or you will continue to slip

If you believe you do either of the above two points, wax your skis a little further forward of wax pocket*

* This should be determined at home with paper test and marked on right hand side of the skis.
- j) More thin layers are better than one thick layer.

Note: The grip zone starts at the heel of the boot and extends 35 - 60 cm forwards toward the ski tip.

9. Take your last drink 20-30min before start. 'Go bush' (toilet) if necessary. Tighten shoe laces and adjust pole straps to gloves/mittens that you will wear.

- Decide on whether you will wear:
 - A hat or headband
 - Visor or glasses
 - Wind proof jacket (only necessary in very poor conditions)

10. Go and ski those uphill sections of the course close to start area that are exposed to the sun. Test your final wax choice - preferably no later than 30 min. before start.

11. Return to the start for final waxing or adjustments. Think about how you will ski the course.

12. Warm up wearing your tracksuit or wet weather gear 15 min. minimum before start time.

- Practice each technique you will use in the race.

13. Change ready to race 5 min. before start in poor weather conditions leave all warm up gear on until 2 min before start. Keep your skis moving. It is now too late to change waxes. You must make your skis work - or change to waxless skis. It is your decision.

14. START AND DURING THE RACE

i) Mass Starts - try to stand in a prepared track - keep waxed skis moving.

ii) Interval Starts - keep watching the numbers of skiers as they start.

- Go to start 1-2 min. prior to your start time, keep waxed skis moving.
- Start fast, 4-5 quick running or double pole strides to accelerate to racing speed.
- Then settle down and think about good technique and rhythm.
- Do not go out so fast that after 2-3 min. 'lactic acid' in muscles causes you to slow down.
- After 5 min. of good skiing, aim to push hard up the hills and over the tops
- Tuck and rest on downhills to recover for more fast and strong work on flats and uphill.
- Corners: as you approach each corner be confident and know that you have successfully completed the turn in practice. Do not think 'I might fall' - if you do, you will fall.
- Passing - call 'track' at least 5 metres before slow skiers - if they do not move to the left, skate to the right and pass them quickly.
- Do not call 'track' on downhills.
- Choose the opposite track to slow skiers already on the downhill.
- If you fall on downhills, do not rejoin the track until you reach the flat section of the course.
- On uphills, if you are slipping, stand up more erectly - do not lean forward. Hill bound, and if necessary ski out of wet slippery track in the fresher, drier snow - should give better grip.

- If skis grip too much or ‘ball up’, keep ski soles in contact with the snow - do not lift.
- Ski over bushes or spectator’s skis or poles to help clean snow from wax, then keep skis gliding.
- If skis have a little too much grip, do not run or ski bound uphill - this will only make the ‘balling up’ worse.
- Push hard to finish. Do not think about who you have passed or who has passed you. Undoubtedly you will lose concentration and fall.
- At Falls Creek, tuck from the top of the race line to finish line.
- At finish, move away from finish line. Remove your number and take a drink.
- Do not ask officials for your time while the race is in progress.
- Put on extra clothing, have something to eat and drink and go for a cool down ski.
- If your wax did not work perfectly, ask other skiers ‘what wax did you use?’ Look at the bottom of their skis and see how thick or how long their wax was applied - swap skis if this is possible, and re test.
- Be satisfied that you did your best. With the wax and your fitness, and technique skills available at that time
- If you set mini goals before the race eg. not to fall or not to give up, were you successful?
- Your overall place is not all that important if you know that you did your best - considering your level of fitness and present skills.
- Remember the snow conditions can vary so times cannot really be compared between various race days. There are not world record times for any distance in XC skiing as there are for swimming and athletics.

15. AFTER THE RACE

Fill out a race evaluation sheet if possible.

- Note all good points and also where you lost time.
- What plans will you make to overcome problems and lost time?
- Write down how you hope to achieve this.

16. Note: Every competition is no more and no less than another chance to do your personal best.

- Each event will add to your race experiences and you will benefit from races if you record some information.
- Record the weather and wax used on race evaluation sheets. This will be vital for future races where you may have to wax without assistance.
- Note the snow conditions and how quickly/slowly they changed as people skied the tracks or as the day became warmer.

But above all else, have fun. If it is no longer fun to compete, ask yourself ‘why should I bother’?

17. XC skiing is a sport for all people of all ages. You may one day represent

- Your school
- Your club
- Your state
- Or even your country

XC skiing takes time to learn. For those who persevere there are many rewards, not simply medals and prizes, but the possibilities of a longer and healthier and very active lifestyle.

Bob Cranage, Level 3 XC Coach.

For further advice on storing and waxing your skis do not hesitate to contact the staff at SNOWGUM Wodonga

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