Waxing Demo for beginners
Feb 27th 2022, Tom Holden

1.Equipment

- Paper (shop towel from a hardware shop)
- Wax remover, Varsol and proprietary ski wax removers, liquid or spray-on
- "Cork"
- Plastic scraper with sharp edges. (not metal since they can score the ski base)
- Waxing Iron

2. Waxes

(Only Swix waxes are available locally but there are many good brands, such as Rode, Rex and Toko. I tend to stick with one brand since I know how they perform)

a. Hard waxes for grip/kick

- Green V20, Green -8 to -15C
- Blue V30, Blue -2 to -10C
- Purple V40, Violet 0 to -3C
- Red V50 0 to +2
- Base wax

b. Spray-on or solid Glider waxes for good glide. I would only apply new glider once or twice a season. They help with the glide but are not crucial for a beginner.

- Blue for cold
- Red for around 0C

c. Klisters for abrasive or icy conditions and spring skiing

- Universal klister, -3 to +10C (tube version and spray version)
- Blue 0 to -12C,
- Purple -4 to +3C

3. The wax pocket

The wax pocket is the part of the ski under the camber where you put grip/kick waxes.
It extends from the back of the binding (the heel) to about 30cm in front of the binding (the toe). The idea is that when the ski is gliding in groomed tracks the centre of the wax pocket is off the snow and when the ski is stationary during the kick phase, when all your weight is on one ski, the wax can contacts the snow and static friction stops it slipping back. Mark the wax pocket with marker on the side of the ski for convenience.

4. Waxing the ski

Remove the old wax with the scraper and wax remover and wipe the base with the shop towel so that it is clean and dry. I tend to use Varsol for the heavy lifting, then the proprietary wax removers (Swix or Toko) to clean off the residues from the Varsol.
Crayon in the wax of the day covering the wax pocket evenly. Cork in the wax so that it is smooth. Alternatively, iron in the wax and then cork it in. One probably gets a more even coverage using an iron. Leave it for a few minutes to cool if you have used an iron then apply a second layer, cork it in, and then third layer.

Glide waxes improve the glide because they are moisture repellant and reduce friction with the snow. The object is to get the wax into the pores on the ski base. Glide waxes come as blocks or spray-on. Hold the block of glider to the waxing iron and drip the glide wax onto the base outside the wax pocket and then iron it in to get

complete coverage and leave until it is cool to the touch. Then scrape off as much as you can with the scraper to leave the base smooth. You need to put quite a lot of pressure on the scraper to get the bulk of the glide wax off. Clean off the residues of the glide-wax and perhaps polish with a plastic brush.

When do you use base-wax in the wax pocket?

When the snow is abrasive (for example, last Thursday) it will remove your wax quite swiftly. Base-wax is very tough, adheres well to the base of the ski and holds the wax of the day in place. Base wax is quite sticky and you press the open end of the tube to the ski and then smooth it out with the waxing iron and rub it in with the cork. Leave the skis to cool and harden outside for ten minutes and then apply the wax of the day over the top. If the wax of the day does wear off the base wax will give some grip

When do you use klisters?

When the snow has gone through 0C a few times the shape of the snow crystals transform from a snow-flake shape to more like a little abrasive ball or pellet (like last Thursday). This constitutes the conditions for spring skiing. Hard waxes do not grab the pellets very well and then klisters come into their own with excellent grip and great glide. They can extend the season by 3 weeks or more. They come in a tooth-paste-like tube or spray-on and are extremely sticky. You should warm the klister tube a little, squeeze out several drops along the wax pocket, iron it in and then smooth it out with your thumb for even coverage or with spreaders provided. There are various temperature ranges like hard waxes but the most usual is called “universal klister” which covers a wide range of temperature. It is easy to remove klisters with Varsol and proprietary wax removers. Klisters worked well for example last Thursday. If fresh snow is falling below 0C the fresh snow just clumps up but if the conditions are such that all the snow is wet, say +3C, they work well. As a rule if your skis are warm, say you have driven to your destination with the skis in the car, leave them to cool down to ambient temperature before setting off otherwise they will clump up. I tend to use open trails in spring time, such as snowmobile trails or the CP line, since the Spoon trails tend to accumulate bits of bark and leaves and needles with warmer and windier weather

Can you put soft waxes over hard waxes? Yes.

What do I do when skiing on skied-in, not machine groomed, trails in the bush?

The above tips apply to skiing on a groomed trail. In the bush the skied-in trail will be relatively soft and snow will contact the ski over its whole length. Then I wax the whole length of the ski for grip.

Why does my wax never work well with my new skis?

It could be technique! When you kick down on your skis your weight should be over the ball of the foot which is at the centre of the wax pocket and not over the heel which is at the back of the wax pocket. It could be that the skis are too stiff! You might try extending the wax pocket forward to get a better grip.

5. Supplies

Gearheads in Petawawa have the best local supply of waxes (Swix) and other ski items. Alternatively, try the website www.skiwax.ca , which is run by a former racer, Andy Shields, from Thunder Bay. You will be helping someone from the skiing community not a megastore. They have a wide selection of waxes, Rode, Toko etc and other useful items such as good gloves, mitts and boot covers.