

Equipment Expense and Payback

I was asked today about my fancy Swix Force 10 and Star CT-1 poles. You might have notice the aerodynamic Force 10 poles that I use for classic skiing which is shaped like a wing for better aerodynamics and minimal use of materials. First of all do these expensive poles make a difference and are they worth the cost? I guess it all depends on the skiing experience that you are seeking. I have 20 plus year old racing skiis that I still use every season. They cost probably less than \$300 new and conservatively I've used them about 600 times already (20 years times 30 sessions/year - I have other skiis that I use during the season as well), so they've cost me about 50 cents/use so far and the cost/use is decreasing each year. Top of the line race skiis nowadays cost upward of \$800, but I expect that I would get well over 800 sessions out of them, so cost per use will be less than a dollar/use. If you discount them over the life of the product (over 20 years), it'll be less than \$40/year. Those Force 10 and Star poles are about \$400/pair, guaranteed against defects or they will replace them free. The last pair of poles I had before these poles were the Excel Black Feathers. I use those poles for well over 20 years (and they are still very good poles that I now use for roller skiing). So cost/use is expected to be less than 50 cents/use or less than \$20/season.

Do they make a difference? In a word, yes. Folks that have not tried them are always amazed at the lightness, and out and out better performance of this top of the line equipment compare to lesser equipment. It's the difference between driving a Maserati or Ferrari to a family car or truck in performance. Now I can't afford the Maserati or Ferrari but I can afford top of the line ski equipment. So if you are looking for speed and performance, are not too hard on your equipment (ie don't have too many garage sale type of falls/season - although they do stand up surprisingly well), then yes they are worth it at less than \$60/year. However for some people, a family car or truck is exactly what they are looking for...ps, I'll be conducting an advance ski care and waxing clinic on Saturday Feb. 5th from about 1 to whenever up at NP. Cost \$20.

Ask me about the differences in race skiis versus other skiis and about the differences in various poles