

Sticky Snow

The snow conditions were a bit tricky today with 7 cm of new snow fallen at about minus 2 C warming to just below 0 degrees C. Tracks warmed quickly, glazing in the sun but with powder in the shade. Waxless skis were icing up with a build up of snow while waxable skis would not grip well in the sun but almost come to a stop in the shade when it hit the powder. These are among the most difficult waxing conditions, so what to do?

With waxless skis you want to put a rub on (liquid) glide wax on both the glide and grip zone so that the snow does not stick and build up.

With waxable skis you want to clean the wax zone then put a couple of layers of the appropriate grip wax in the grip zone. In this case a VF 60 (equivalent to 0 to plus 2 degree new snow wax) in the grip zone. You need to put this grip wax on very thinly and very evenly, just enough wax that the snow crystal penetrates when you want to grip but thin enough that it releases and does not build up when you want it to slide. You need to either use a heat gun or a iron to put the grip wax on or you won't be able to put in on thinly or evenly enough. After you do that you need to cool the ski outside and put a cover wax like Start Black Magic Hi Fluro on top of the cold VF 60 to both help with the icing and to grip in the glaze parts of the track. Heat up the Start Black Magic and apply it on the cold VF 60. Using the least amount of heat and pressure possible, smooth the Black Magic over top of the VF 60 without mixing the two waxes together. Again a thin, even smooth application is crucial to prevent icing. Cool the grip wax before skiing or it will ice.

With both waxable and waxless skis, in order not to slow down abruptly when you run into either powder or moist patches of snow, first the skis has to be the right camber for your weight so that the wax pocket does not drag when your weight is distributed evenly over both skis. And you should structure the glide portions of the skis so that excess moisture is moved away from the skis when you hit the moist patches of snow.

So the right skis, the right wax plus the correct application of the wax and you'll have a great gripping and gliding skis, even in these difficult conditions.