PEAK PERFORMANCE

July 2015

Skiing Sand Dunes
Grass Skiing
Mind over Matter

Improving the Skills
Riding a Shopping Cart
NASTAR

“...enlightening read for over 6 years!”
Photo on the Summit

My friend, Alex Nicholson from Leadville, CO, took this photo on the top of Snorkel Door on the East Wall at Arapahoe Basin. I like this photo because it overlooks Loveland Pass which is a common backcountry ski area for this county.

I’m Ashley Auman and I have lived in Summit County, Colorado for three years. I work as an EMT and play as a skier, runner and beginner mountain biker. I am an Appalachian State University (ASU) Alumni, and skied for the ASU Alpine Ski Team for four years (Go Apps!). I call North Carolina home; Beech Mountain taught me at a young age to love skiing and being in the mountains.

Arapahoe Basin is hands-down my favorite ski area in the county because of its challenging terrain and local vibe. If you’re looking for in-bounds steeps, great snow and even better people, check out “The Legend,” Arapahoe Basin.

From the Top

By Witold Kosmala
The Publisher and the Editor of Peak Performance Gazette
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III
Ski Instructor, Coach and Trainer mostly in NC
K2 Ambassador

We all walk our own walk of life. This journey is different for each one of us, but we have one common love – sports and snow skiing in particular. All these other things we do so that we can ski. A lot of cross-training is going on now during the summer months, as well as all sorts of other preparations for the winter season. I know a number of our readers who have undergone surgeries right at the end of ski season, just to give themselves enough time to recover before the snow flies in the Fall. In fact, I am one of these people. In May I had a total hip replacement in my right leg. Now I am learning how to walk. I will tell you more about all this in the September issue.

Mike Simmons had his leg lengthened. He will share with us his out of this world experience in the next issue of Peak Performance. Jen Pinkus talks about he serious hurdle in life in this issue on page 11. If you or someone you know had a surgical experience about which they would like to share with our readers, please, write me at Kosmalaw@bellsouth.net.

We can serve as a support group for each other. We all need a boost every so often. Whatever it is that you are trying to overcome, I hope you will and that you will be ready when slopes reopen. Now, some of you are/will be skiing in the southern hemisphere, so time for recovery and for preparations is shorter for you. There are a number of ski camps going on in South America and New Zealand as well as on glaciers around the world. You should look them up and go, if at all possible. We just mention two such camps in this publication.

Speaking about this publication, I hope you are one of our regular readers. If not yet, I welcome you now. This is our 58th publication and I am so excited to share it with you. Peak Performance Gazette is published in July, and then monthly from September to April. It is wonderful to read what people from all over have to say about skiing or things pertaining to skiing.
Perhaps you might like to look at the ARTICLE INDEX prepared by Gordon Carr of Sugar Mtn. Resort in NC. All the great articles are listed there.

To find the INDEX and all issues of the Peak Performance publications, use one of the methods below.

• Use the dropbox www.dropbox.com/sh/wirz16pznpho63i/PQr004dmUj
• Go to the website www.peakperformancegazette.com
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• Go to my webpage www.mathsci.appstate.edu/~wak/
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It is so exciting to have a summer issue pertaining to snow skiing. There are few of those going around. But, skiers are not meant to hibernate in the summer time. We read, train, cross-train, recover, prepare and do all we can to be ready when the slopes open. Have you ever skied on send? How about on grass? You need to read about this further in this gazette.

My hopes are that this gazette will serve you as an outstanding reading material. Hopefully these publications will make your passion for skiing grow, bring you awareness, improve your technique, and take you on the hill more often the next season. If you are planning on going for the next certification level, perhaps reading material covered in Peak Performance Gazettes will help you accomplish your goals. Most of all, I kindly ask you to share this publication with your friends and employees.

Please, take a minute and write me at the address given above. Tell me what you think about this gazette. Perhaps you would like to get involved and share your knowledge with other skiers. Write an article, share a photo, tell us about your unusual or funny experiences, post an advertisement, send a donation. I would love to hear from you. Take a part and help me make these publications unsurpassed.

I hope you will also take a moment and LIKE us on Facebook. Please, spread a good word about this gazette. Don’t forget about the 4th of July. Reflect on it and of course, go to see fireworks. I close you with a question: Does England have a 4th of July? (Answer is below.)

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Yes, England has a 4th of July, and the 5th and the 6th and so on. Ha, ha, ha.
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Patrick Rice - Coach
Main Course

"Putting the S in Sand" –
Skiing the Great Sand Dunes

By Ted Gwathmey

One of the items on my bucket list that I have wanted to check off for years is skiing the Great Sand Dunes. Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is about 20 miles Northeast of Alamosa. I had driven by it many times on the way to and from ski adventures to Taos and occasional ski race trips to Durango Mountain Resort, although I remember it as Purgatory.

My son is a Boy Scout and this spring his troop planned a trip to go camp out and hike the Sand Dunes. I jumped on the opportunity and immediately started researching. I had heard that people sprayed silicone on their bases, but my digging revealed other practices. I was surprised to learn that you could buy special waxes for that purpose. Other people recommended various lubricants, some of which might require some explaining if your significant other found them in your possession. Although, it might be fun at a later date to test all of these creative solutions, I was concerned that bringing KY jelly to a scout outing might be misconstrued.

My research revealed that Kristi Mountain Sports in Alamosa rents “Sand Boards” and they provide their version of sand wax when you rent one. I called them up and asked them if I could buy just the wax and they said no problem. Because our time was going to be limited, a forty mile round trip journey to go buy $17 worth of wax was out of the question. I paid an extra $4 and had them ship it to me. The wax is $1.75 per puck and shipping to Denver was about 4 or 5 bucks. I bought 10 pucks and that was more than enough. The box arrived in plenty of time and it contained these little wax pucks a little bigger than a Carmex container. I did not try hot waxing my skis with the wax, because they recommended it as a rub on wax. Looking back on the experience, I think hot waxing would be a waste of time because the sand takes it off so quick.

With the wax figured out, I loaded up a few pair of Head Mojos that I still use when I get the urge to hit some Suburban Urban in South Denver. The bases were dry as a bone, and the edges were on par with 3 year old rentals. If you are going
to ski dunes and you are concerned about the tune on your skis, we need to have a talk. I took a larger pack than just a
day pack because I wanted to hike up in regular shoes and put my ski boots in the pack. That turned out to be key,
because hiking in the sand is not easy. Attaching your skis to the sides of your pack and using your poles to stabilize
yourself while you hike is the way to go.

Before we started hiking the dunes we spoke with one of the rangers at the visitor center, and asked him where the most
common spots were for skiing and boarding and he pointed them out. While we were on our climb we weren’t shy about
getting intel from other people who were trying to board the dunes. We learned that the darker sand areas were where
there was a higher moisture content. Though these spots were easier to hike on, we were warned that skiing or boarding
over them could be lethal. We avoided them as much as possible but the few times we skied over a small darker patch, it
was like skiing over pine tar in the spring.

We did not hike all the way to the top of the dunes because the pitch at the top is not as steep and isn’t really skiable.
The most skied and boarded slopes are on the front side, but I was told that there is some steeper stuff on the
back. That is a long hike and you would have to hike back up to the top to ski back to the parking lot. There may be
a way to drive around closer to the back of the dunes, but it requires 4 wheel drive with better than average clearance.

We arrived at a point where we felt we could get some good turns in. My son and I were skiing and another scout brought his normal snowboard. We thoroughly rubbed the wax on our bases from tip to tail. With that done, we set our POV camera and pointed them downhill. There was a moment of apprehension as the skis struggled to gain momentum, but then the wax broke and the speed picked up. For non-tech heads, wax often has a breaking point, it seems slow until your speed increases to a certain point and then it kind of shifts into overdrive. The initial friction made it feel as though this was going to be a way different experience than skiing on snow and I found myself doing some 80’s style unweighting combined with some 60’s style hip rotation. I was also leaning back too much, to counter the unnatural friction. It didn’t take long to realize that, once the speed picked up, the skis behaved very similar to how they would on a freshly groomed run in the spring. I got my hips forward, and gave up the groovy rotary push off I had been doing. Less was more and I started feeling the tip flex on short radius turns. The skis were carving underneath me with subtle ankle roll and limited upper body movement. It was actually skiing.

We were with a larger group of kids and adults so we did not get to loiter as much as we would have liked. We never
hiked back to our original starting point, but were able to ski 4 decent sized faces on the way down, with only short
traversing hikes in between. I was happy making Warren Miller powder turns while my son eventually went with a suicide
Super G turn which, I was convinced, would result in an involuntary gymnastics floor routine. Somehow we all stayed on our feet so I cannot report on the experience of wiping out on sand, but hyper-exfoliation would probably be the best word to describe it.
We were told that the procedure was to re-wax before skiing each face and we followed this protocol. It was pretty clear that the wax comes off pretty quick. A few times I attempted to 180 and make some switch turns. The wax did not seem to like this very much, and it only worked on some of the steeper faces. We gave some of the wax to other kids in our group who were trying to sled using regular plastic sleds. The results for them were not nearly as positive. They couldn’t get going fast enough for the wax to break.

The adventure definitely met and surpassed my expectations and I would highly recommend it. There are places to camp around the dunes, and you can actually camp out in the park. I would call them before your adventure to get details and latest conditions. By that I don’t mean getting the powder report, but rather temperature, bug situation and water and campsite availability. We camped at the Sand Dunes Pool in Hooper, Co. The pool was fun and the kids liked it, but I had 2 of the worst nights sleeping there. They are supposed to close at 10:00 PM, but they had after hours parties both nights we were there. Also, the camping area is surrounded by hot springs ponds. It was 20 degrees F the nights we camped, but it felt like 20 below due to the increased humidity from the hot springs. Instead of camping in Southern Colorado, I would have thought that I was camping in Northern Maine in November; except for the surreal experience of the dinner plate sized frogs croaking all night. It turns out that they survive in the hot springs ponds all year round.

Link to video: https://vimeo.com/125480879

Bio: I am a 30 year veteran of the Vail Ski School. I am PSIA level III certified and USSCA Coaches level II. I was the first alternate for the honor of being the Colorado Ski Ambassador to Japan, behind Chris Anthony, who was somehow immune to the voodoo doll I tried to use on him. I skied for the Vail Demonstration Team for 10 years, was on the team that won the World Syncro Skiing Championships in 1992. I was featured in Town and Country magazine. I skied for Warren Miller in the movie "50", and most recently I have coached freestyle skiing for the Vail Development Team since about 1995. I supervised a team that was responsible for prepping the snow for Denver Big Air in 2011. As you can see from the photo below it was a hands on job. I am presently trying to open a water ramp ski jumping facility in Denver geared towards everyone, especially those from my generation who still like air; just not hospital air. It features a unique design that will dramatically decrease the impact of hitting the water, and this will make it an activity that not just the young and crazy can enjoy. The business will be called Huck and Splash and will be designed and built with the goal of opening more of them in other metropolitan areas.
Grass Skiing down
Sugar Mountain Resort, NC

By William Mauney

I get pretty bummed out that all the snow is gone when Spring comes. Apparently a guy by the name of Richard Martin was too and instead of complaining about it he invented the first pair of grass skis back in 1966. Originally it was a popular way for snow skiers to train during the off-season, later becoming a sport after gaining popularity. In the 70’s and 80’s several Southeastern resorts featured races and offered rentals during the “off season”. Bryce Resort in Virginia still offers summer grass skiing and boarding (which came out in the 90s). In fact, when I was in school at Appalachian State University around 1998, my buddy Dave and I would drive over to Beech Mountain, NC to take advantage of their dirt slalom track. Dave’s mountain board was not easiest thing to control but it certainly was fun.

It wasn’t until hearing from folks at Sugar’s Ski School did I learn that grass skiing was popular at Sugar and Beech years ago. I went to Len Bauer, Sugar Mtn Ski School Director for my first pair of 1978 Rollka Grass Skis made in Italy, I then waited patiently for July to roll around, that is the hard part as we all know. After locating a proper hill that with a smooth run out and was covered in soft, freshly mowed grass, I gently pushed over the edge. Point them straight, they go. Tip, roll, or angulate both legs to put the skis on “edge” and initiate a turn. Use rotation too in the lower half to get the skis across the fall line and slow down/stop. Sounds easy right? Well, it kinda is. Due to the tracks you’re not going as fast as you might be on snow skis. The turns are large radius and because the skis don’t “skid” across the grass, there’s less rotation. The tracks like grass, cut grass. Rocks and dirt can stop you slowly or abruptly. Losing a ski is not fun so making sure they fit properly first is crucial. Most lock on like modern day ski blades and are non-releasable.

After gaining some confidence, I skied off Tom Terrific and later down NorthRidge. Each run presents the grass skier with issues. Unforeseen rocks in deep grass on Tom can cause problems and gravel along switchback makes skiing the top of Sugar not really worth it (except for jumping off the rock in July!). From 3/4s down it’s pretty good. Sugar Slalom is really perfect for grass skiing. The wide slopes and cut grass coupled with a decent pitch makes this section the most fun. When it flattens out at the bottom you’re pushing until you get to the top of Birch. Beech Mountains’ slopes would also be a great place to grass ski. In fact, I believe that’s where the majority of races and lessons were held back in the 70s and 80s. My best experience on grass skis was at Sugar’s Octoberfest. Riding the lift up and hearing the comments from folks who had no clue that these things even existed, it was comical to say the least. Being able to grab a beer at the bottom after having a solo run down Sugar – it doesn’t get much better than that…unless you’re with all your friends of course! Lots of info about grass skiing can be found online or through our local gurus and Sugar and Beech (I’m sure you know who they are). New companies and technology are making this sport easier, safer and less expensive. I would love to see more people out there skiing all year long. With proper gear and technique this is a great way for us to get back on the hills we love. You’re legs will thank you when the snow starts falling again! Here’s an edit from a summertime run down Sugar with the one and only Tim Westveer. Hope you enjoy!
https://vimeo.com/42871887

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Ski Instructor and Coach
PSIA-E Alpine Level II/AASI Level I
GRASS SKIING AND BOARDING

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Want to try something you can’t find anywhere else in North America? Grab your ski boots and head on out to Bryce Resort, VA. The weather may change, but that doesn’t change our passion for skiing and riding.

The sport of Grass Skiing is physically challenging and demanding and it is recommended for participants to have an athletic background before attempting this activity. You must be 12 years of age or older to participate in this activity.

First-Time Participants must take a mandatory lesson taught in our beginner area. Some riders may find themselves able to explore Redeye after instruction.

Experienced skiers and mountain boarders will be able to ride up our brand new scenic Quad Chairlift, and then take on the Redeye trail and explore it on their own.

Mountain Boarding is a fun and exciting way to take your snowboarding skills and still make some runs during the summer months.

Invented in Colorado, this sport does not require the leg strength of Grass Skiing but does require a lot of flexibility and a strong sense of balance.

Skateboarding and Snowboarding experience is recommended to be able to ride a Mountain Board.

Newcomers must take the mandatory 1 hour lesson in our learning area but after that, riders are free to explore the Redeye trail with their new set of wheels.

2015 Hours of Operation

Open Monday & Wednesday 10AM - 2PM
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Reservations Required - Please Make Your Reservation By Clicking
Mind Over Matter

By Jennifer Pinkus

On April 8th I left ski school early because I had shooting pains up my back and electric shocks in my lower right abdomen. I never had quit teaching early before, let alone abandon my clients at lunch, gone to patrol, and never come back. I have to thank patrol for convincing me to call my supervisor and for letting them take me to the hospital, skis and all. They even walked me to Dr. Downey’s (the general surgeon) office.

I had recently visited my general practitioner thinking I had a hernia. She had recommended seeing a physical therapist and getting Dr. Downey to check my stomach. I had put it off, as the tear didn’t seem very big, and wasn’t really causing me pain, until now. Well, or so I thought.

Dr. Downey was nice enough to squeeze me into his busy schedule, instead of sending me to the ER, despite the fact that I was curled up in a ball moaning in pain. After a quick examination, he concurred with my general practitioner that the hernia was minor and not the cause of the problem. He also confirmed that he did not think it was appendicitis. He said if I had appendicitis pain for two weeks, I would probably be dead. I think he had a prognosis in mind before the CAT scan, but was waiting for evidence.

It all happened so quickly! I went from being a healthy ski instructor, who skinned up the mountain twice a week, and ice climbed on my days off, to a cancer patient. “The bad news is that you have cancer. The good news is that it is probably curable.” I sat there in shock not knowing whether this was a bad dream or reality. “Cancer! There must be some mistake!”

“It looks like Hodgkins Lymphoma. If I had to pick a cancer out of a hat this would be a ten.” To him it was like I won the lottery. To me it was like I just got sentenced to death. “Hodgkins is curable and does not come back. Quit work and plan to be in the hospital getting scans and blood tests. Then we will do a biopsy. We can fix your hernia too. You will have to wait a few days to get the results.” I called Sandor to pick me up and then I cried.

The next week was the worst week of my life. Not only did I feel like a lab rat, but I had no work to distract myself. I had to prepare to be cut open so the doctors could decide if I would live or die. Life seemed surreal. I felt like I was an outsider in a small town that I had lived in forever. I wanted to hide in a corner, run away! Instead, I climbed and biked and climbed some more, thinking I might not ever have a chance again.

I woke up Friday to three scars on my stomach and a port on my left upper chest for chemo. I guess this was really happening. After that life continued to go downhill. The cells were not Hodgkins, but Follicular Lymphoma, a cancer that is treatable, goes in remission, but will come back for the rest of my life. A second opinion involved driving to Denver for a bone marrow biopsy and the discovery of faster growing cells.
This was the cause of concern. My slow growing indolent A cells, that would involve anti-body treatment and no hair loss had transformed. I now was diagnosed as having indolent A cells in my stomach and aggressive B cells in my groin, chest, and left buttock. This would mean having a stronger chemo treatment, including the anti-body Rituximab, and would result in low blood counts and hair loss. Life seemed to be falling apart. I could no longer postpone treatment. I would start that Monday and Tuesday in Vail and then drive to Denver that Wednesday to have another biopsy. This would confirm that I did indeed have a mixture of slow growing and fast growing cells and that R-CHOP chemo was the correct approach.

Needless to say it was a long week. I did not know how I would react to the chemo and the anti-body, so they dripped them into me over the course of two days. The drive to Denver was not pleasant on Wednesday and the drive back even worse. I slept the rest of the week. Despite feeling awful, starting the process was better than the anxiety caused from the anticipation. For me, ignorance was not bliss!

The week of chemo I was tired and achy. It was comparable to having the flu, but much worse. I was hot, cold, nauseous, and bloated. Each day got better. The second week, I was functional, but needed to be near a toilet at all times and everything tasted and smelled like metal. The third week, I was biking and climbing and almost signed up to race in the GoPro games. Being sick becomes relative. What used to be a bad day was now a good one.

I even felt like I was riding fast as I was fifteen pounds lighter and well rested. I lead every route that I usually follow at our local crag, and even went for a run, something I never do. But just as I started to feel normal, it was time to get knocked down again. Yesterday, I had my second round of chemo. I have less cells in me so that means there should be less debris and toxins to get rid of. Hopefully, that means a bit easier of a recovery.

Today I gardened, babysat, and rode my mountain bike, not bad! I am worked and exhausted and feel pretty sick, but I made it through round two! I know I have a long battle ahead. The effects of chemo are cumulative, so unfortunately, I have to prepare to get sicker before I get better. I just have to keep telling myself that I am not getting poisoned, I am killing the poison that is in me. I can choose to stay home and feel sick and sorry for myself or get out there and try to keep my life as routine as possible. I choose the latter.'

I believe in mind over matter. If you are feeling lazy or sad or think you just can’t go on, know that life could be worse. It is important to rest and be good to your body, something at which I am not very good. But, we are stronger than we think, both mentally and physically, so keep pushing on. Carpe a diem might be trite, but maybe not under my circumstances. Seize the moment; work hard, play hard, and laugh hard. You never know what tomorrow may bring.

Jen lives in Vail, Colorado with her dog Lucy. She teaches skiing in the winter and guides mountain biking and rock climbing in the summer. In her spare time she likes to take pictures and write children’s books about her adventures.
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Package cost: $3,400 (double occupancy)
Single occupancy fee $170 - Airfare not included
Chris@chrisanthony.com
Ski Portillo, Chile
Twelfth Annual Superstars Ski Camp: August 8-15, 2015

The camp is open to a maximum of thirty advanced skiers.

Professional coaches will again include Chris Davenport, Mike Douglas of Whistler, BC, Ingrid Backstrom of Squaw Valley, CA, Wendy Fisher of Crested Butte, CO, Jess McMillan of Jackson, WY, and Chris Anthony of Vail, CO, Chris@chrisanthony.com and www.chrisanthony.com/. The camp will also feature a professional photographer, who will document in stills and video the entire experience for the guests. The Superstars Camp is geared towards advanced to expert skiers looking to take their skiing to the next level with expert coaching on the techniques of steep skiing, terrain recognition and management, proper mechanics, as well as good old powder skiing.

To book this amazing skiing experience, guests should first book a Ski Week at Ski Portillo with Odilia Briones odilia@skiportillo.com or Carolina Acuna carolina@skiportillo.com. A seven-day ski week includes accommodations, lift tickets and four meals daily. After getting a hotel confirmation, please email Chris Davenport at chris@steepskiing.com to confirm your place in the camp.

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U.S. Ski Team to Manage NASTAR

By USSA

SAN FRANCISCO (May 4, 2015) – Two of the most well known brands in ski racing, the U.S. Ski Team and NASTAR, have entered into an agreement to raise the profile of ski racing in America under which the U.S. Ski Team will assume operational control of NASTAR. This integration with NASTAR is designed to capitalize on the global success of U.S. Ski Team athletes, bringing greater awareness to the sport and value to the industry, while motivating participants of all ages to get involved in ski racing.

The announcement was made Monday at the National Ski Areas Association annual convention in San Francisco by U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) President and CEO Tiger Shaw, along with Active Interest Media (AIM) President and CEO Andy Clurman. AIM presently owns NASTAR, SKI and Skiing magazines and Warren Miller Entertainment. The USSA is the parent organization of the U.S. Ski Team and manages grassroots, development and elite ski racing programs across America.

NASTAR, which began in 1968 under the wings of SKI Magazine and its editor John Fry, is a recreational ski racing program in place at 115 resorts nationwide with over 165,000 racer days each year. Using the NASTAR handicap system, skiers at local resorts can compare their times against those of top U.S. Ski Team athletes.

The USSA and AIM have executed a letter of intent, which includes the USSA assuming operational control of NASTAR beginning this year, including program and event management as well as sponsorship and media rights.

“Being able to integrate NASTAR directly into our programs will allow us to better include competitors of all ages, encouraging them to expand their participation in ski racing and connecting them with USSA clubs and racing system nationwide,” said Shaw. “It brings together two of the strongest brands in ski racing and will help us to not only engage a new generation of ski racers, but also to have significant impact by extending our brand to new fans and USSA members.”

The partnership is a vital part of the USSA’s efforts to activate more young skiers into the sport across America. It expects its integration with NASTAR to help grow awareness and to serve as a recruiting tool for the USSA’s 400+ local clubs across the country.

“Through our involvement for many years with NASTAR we’ve seen its potential in getting kids excited about the sport and creating a lifelong, family activity at ski resorts,” said Clurman. “The transition of program management from Active Interest Media to the U.S. Ski Team will bring benefit to all of us in the industry by associating the two brands together and making NASTAR a more distinct part of the Team’s athletic pipeline.”

U.S. Ski Team athletes like World Cup winner Steven Nyman, Olympic champions Ted Ligety (pictured on the right) and Julia Mancuso, World Champion Daron Rahlves and U.S. champion Kaylin Richardson and others have played a role as NASTAR pacesetters or ambassadors. The Team plans to further integrate more athletes into the program, as well as keeping a strong focus on NASTAR’s biggest event, the NASTAR National Championships held each March.

“NASTAR is where most ski racers in America, including myself, were introduced to the
thrill of going fast and competing on skis, by challenging our friends and family on the course,” said Olympic champion Ted Ligety. “NASTAR has always been a gateway to more competitive skiing so the partnership with U.S. Ski Team is an obvious one to help broaden the pathways to become passionate about this awesome sport.”

“We see great growth potential in NASTAR paired with the U.S. Ski Team brand,” said USSA Chief Marketing Officer Michael Jaquet. “It’s a natural fit for our Team sponsors who want to reach a larger audience including the thousands of families with kids engaged in ski racing.”

Active Interest Media, with its industry-leading print titles and genre-defining feature film division, will continue to lead the promotional and marketing efforts for NASTAR in partnership with U.S. Ski Team. AIM will also become an official sponsor of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Teams and will activate its brands across the portfolio of opportunities at the USSA. The agreement enables both companies to not only leverage the NASTAR brand in and out of the ski and resort industries but also create opportunities for other partnerships.

In its tenure since 1968, NASTAR has introduced millions to ski racing and been a consistent asset for hundreds of resorts nationwide.

The program will be administered through the USSA’s events department, which has a strong background in managing major national and international events. The USSA is presently engaged in an operations transition plan with AIM. For more information on NASTAR contact USSA Vice President, Events Calum Clark (cclark@ussa.org).

The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) is the national governing body of Olympic skiing and snowboarding. It is the parent organization of the U.S. Ski Team, U.S. Snowboarding and U.S. Freeskiing. Developed to facilitate participation in national and international competition, the Olympic sports organization provides structure for competitive skiing and snowboarding. From grassroots programs to governance of sport, management of rules, competitions and athletic rankings, the USSA oversees athletic pipelines for development in the sports. With a vision to make the USA the best in the world in Olympic skiing and snowboarding, the USSA provides leadership and direction for tens of thousands of young skiers and snowboarders who share an Olympic dream while maintaining a strong adherence to core values. The USSA, established in 1905, operates out of the national training and education facility, the Center of Excellence, in Park City, UT. For more information see http://ussa.org/.

**Dry-Land Training**

**What does a shopping cart have to do with skiing?**

By Witold Kosmala

PSIA-E Alpine, Level III

Ski Instructor, Coach and Trainer mostly in NC

There is simply not enough that can be said about shopping carts. In grocery stores, their main purpose is to conveniently put groceries in. But, there are lots of other uses for these carts. Yes, in last few years I relied on them to hold me up, since my hip could not do that for me and ski boots were left in a locker. Also, having kids, it never failed, but they always found those carts a lot of fun to drive as well. Or better yet, they enjoyed pushing a cart from one person to another. Amazingly, the cart would drive really well when pushed by its handle, but would not ride good when pushed backwards. It would make a surprising turn and nearly tip over. OK kids – that’s enough. From now on, a cart becomes a skiing learning tool. Since I don’t have access to forklifts, shopping carts will just have to do.

For our latest dry-land training I went to a local Lowe’s grocery store in Boone, NC and talked to the manager by the name of Robert Edmisten. He was most kind to let me check out a cart from his store for our ski training. He helped me put it in the car, since I was not about to do it myself and look like a thief.

This particular training session was a little different. We normally just pushed a cart in a building once forward and then
backward to see the huge difference in cart’s behavior. Do we want steering in the front or in the back? Other days we would run behind a cart and then step onto it and glide. The cart going forward was always stable and well behaved, but the one going backwards was extremely unpredictable and wanted to turn unexpectedly and fall on its side.

This time, since weather was really nice, we took the checked-out cart on a hill. Perhaps a big mistake since some of us nearly killed ourselves. The goal was to experiment with stability when riding the cart forward versus backward. The hill was probably a little too steep for this experiment since the cart picked up good speed very quickly. Also, since we were using a cart with shorter wheelbase, standing on it and gliding was a real challenge.

First, going forward was no problem, except for occasional steering in order not to go off the road. There was actually a nice place to put the feet on the cart’s bottom frame.

However, going backward was drastically more difficult and dangerous. First of all, the cart wanted to slip out since there was no good place for the feet, and then, since the wheelbase was so short, much of the body had to be over the cart in order for it not to fall backwards. (Good for preventing “sitting back.”) Secondly, the cart would furiously turn and fall over with no warning.

Riding a shopping cart relates directly to skiing. If the cart is ridden forward as intended, it reflects skiing where steering is in the front on nice and solid edges. It feels stable. The cart going backwards is like skiing on a flat ski where the turns are

I am going forward. Here you can see me comfortably riding the cart down a steep incline. Word of warning: wheels are small and may misbehave when hitting a rock or a crack in pavement. (Photos taken by Alina Kosmala)

Now I am riding the cart backwards. This is more dangerous then skiing. This photo was taken right before the cart swung to the right throwing me onto the road. You can see the wheels are turned just a bit resulting in an upcoming sharp turn. Also, short wheelbase with lower basket made it difficult to find proper footing far enough forward so the cart on a steep road would not jet out from under me. Knee and elbow pads would be recommended since a fall should be expected.
all skidded and giving no support. The skis are steered in the back, resulting in an uncontrolled over-steering.

Of course, whichever end of the cart goes first, to stay on top of the cart the body has to be forward. Wow, another biggie in skiing.

Training

Improving the skills

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III
Ski Instructor, Coach and Trainer mostly in NC

It is customary to label edging (E), pressure (P) and rotary (R) as 3 skills used in skiing, where balance can be considered as an “ability.” (Do I hear any static from anyone???) Some people will really give you a hard-to-negate argument why they think balancing should also be called a skill. In fact, PSIA used to think so as well. For instance, let’s say that Joe has ability to balance when standing on one leg. But, when Joe practices standing on one leg, he will get better at it in time. He will be able to stand longer, more solidly, more regularly. Does this mean that Joe improved his balance? Does it mean that now he is more *skilled* in balancing on one leg? Or, does it mean that Joe improved on his reflexes and taught his toes and the rest of his body how to react with more accuracy to control his balancing? In that case, he improved his pressuring skills.

However, whatever your belief is according to where “balance” stands in skiing, we can still discuss ski technique in view of only the 3 above listed skills. More accurate these skills are, the better skier’s performance is going to be.

It is not simple to improve in all skills all at once. Often we might want to isolate and exaggerate a particular skill (skills) in order to work on it (them.) Having less to think about, can help to concentrate harder and more effectively on fewer concepts. Overloading our minds will not do anything positive for us. However, isolating one needed skill to work on is practically impossible, so perhaps exaggeration is a more appropriate term to use. In standing across a ski slope on our skis we mostly demonstrate skill of edging, right? Pressuring is still involved since we can tip a little more over one ski then the other, resulting in applying more pressure to that one ski. We can be leaning more forward, which would result in pressuring tips of skis more then tails. Just to be able to keep skis on their corresponding edges, there needs to be some toe pressure applied to the corner of the boots on a steeper terrain and practically none on bunny slopes, but, none-the-less we might say that edging is a more dominant skill over pressure when we are simply standing across a beginner slope.

But, what about a rotary skill while standing across a hill? Should we say that there should be no form of any steering or pivoting so this skill is not present and thus eliminated from this task? Or is it true that not applying any twisting is also a form of a rotary skill? Let’s look at another drill to make this idea more clear.

Our currant task is to traverse an intermediate slope on clean edges. That is, make railroad tracks across an intermediate slope. We will probably want to say that this drill involves only edging and pressuring with NO rotary movements. However, many skiers have difficulty with this task. Even if you physically point them at a gentle angle across the fall line, angle their body to exhibit proper edge angles and proper pressures, and then let them slide, in matter of moments their skis slip out in the tails. Why is that? I don’t think it is because they cannot hold the set-up position that you put them into. I think it is because the slope has some pitch to it and it provokes them to engage their steering reflexes. They simply cannot NOT steer their skis. Pushing out their heels is just something ingrained into their skiing. So, should we say that skill of rotary is also needed in performing our traversing drill? That is, not engaging rotary is actually a rotary skill. The bottom line is: railroad track traverses (like all railroad tracks) are difficult mainly due to poor rotary skills because skiers have hard time blocking them, eliminating them. Just like silence is a speaking skill. How many people say, umm, amm, ehh, and make other noises while making a speech? They simply cannot shut up. Turning off a skill is part of that skill. Like adjusting amount of water coming out of a faucet is faucet’s skill, including being able to cut off flow of all water. After all, who likes dripping faucets?

Since the ability to not perform a certain skill is also a skill in itself, it is very difficult to exaggerate one skill to work on while keeping others to the minimum. But, a quality instructor needs to be able to do that in order to be an effective coach. So,
if someone has problem with rotary movements, especially with excessive skidding and over-steering, railroad tracks would be a good drill to work on for a while, since rotary needs to be turned off. Not an easy task for this person.

What I would like to do is for the next several issues of Peak Performance to list drills that would exaggerate one or two skills, while keeping the others to the minimum. There are 7 possibilities, let me list them by listing the exaggerated skills:

E (edging)
P (pressure)
R (rotary)
E and P
E and R
P and R
E and P and R

We will start next month with the first one – edging. If you have some suggestions pertaining to any of this, please, write me at Kosmalaw@bellsouth.net.

Turn to Wisdom

• I don’t know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow.
• Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
• Don’t worry about old age; it doesn’t last that long.

Deep Stuff

Is it good to worry? Why, or why not?

Thoughts for the Month

• Can one ever have a kind of a “backseat” position when skiing as I am demonstrating in the photo?
• Why is your ski outfit so very important?

Elaborations on last month’s Thoughts for the Month.

Question. What does a shopping cart have to do with skiing?
Answer. See article on page 17.

Question. What are some differences between AWD and 4WD cars?
Answer. See an article in a future issue of Peak Performance.
Question. Is there a particular way that ski boots should be placed in a locker?

Answer. Definitely upside down; hopefully high up. Be careful how you brace them so they do not shift when locker is closed or bumped. You do not want melting snow to go inside them.

Question. What creates higher edges towards the end of a cross-over turn: angulation or inclination?

Answer. Angulation.

Question. Why do beginners look down at their skis?

Answer. See an article in a future issue of *Peak Performance*.

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**The Bottom Line**

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