

Glen Eden starter programs on during National Ski Week

By GERRY TIMBERS
Herald Sports Editor

The success in recent years of Canadian Ken Head, Steve Podhorski and Todd Brooker on the slopes of Europe creates an impression that Canada has emerged as a world leader in skiing.

But while nothing breeds success like winning, the impression is a little misleading. Especially at the grass roots level, where a dynasty is truly constructed. While still at the infant stage in Canada, though, the sport is rapidly increasing in popularity. According to the Canadian Ski Council, there are 4.5 million skiers in the nation, one million of whom live in Ontario.

Gearing up for skiing

Use this checklist on pre-season equipment condition before you go:

- BOOTS**
- Liners are dry and clean. No mildew, cracks in the tongue, foam or flow material leaking into seams.
 - Shell soles are clean and not badly worn; original surfaces at toe and heel are undamaged for good binding interface.
 - Buckles are in place and unbroken.
 - No cracks or broken rivets in shell; snow dam still seals toe adequately.
 - Boots still fit closely and comfortably.
- BINDINGS**
- Bindings close smoothly on boots.
 - No corrosion evident; toe unit rotates smoothly.
 - Antifriction pad clean, unscored.
 - Mounting screws are tight.
 - Ski brake or safety strap operable and undamaged.
 - Ski shop has checked clearances, lubricated and approved bindings for use.

- SKIS**
- Bottoms flat, not railed or convex.
 - Bottom edges sharp, smooth.
 - No rust on edges no evidence of edge pulling out.
 - No deep gouges in base or sidewalls.
 - Top edges deburred, no evidence of edge pulling out.
 - No evidence of warping or delaminating.
 - Tip and tail protectors deburred, no evidence of structural damage where they adhere to ski.

- POLES**
- Poles straight, no cracks or deep gouges in shafts.
 - Baskets whole, unbroken.
 - Grips seated firmly.
 - Straps unbroken.

Expert ideas on equipment

Experts say your height, weight, skill level and the kind of skiing you'll be doing should be considered in outfitting yourself with cross country ski equipment.

These experts offer the following guidelines:

Fitting Skis - With your feet on the floor, raise one arm straight up in the air. Generally, the pair of skis whose tips come closest to hitting the wrist of your upraised arm will be the right size. There are exceptions to the rule, though: If you are particularly light, you will want a slightly shorter ski because you have less weight to be distributed on the ski and if you are heavier than normal for your height, you will want a slightly longer ski to spread your weight over a longer ski surface. Ask your salesperson about the paper test ... a method of determining the ski's stiffness to your body weight ... the important factor to good grip and effortless glide!

Fitting Boots - Like any athletic footwear, a cross-country ski boot's performance depends on good fit. It should fit comfortably like a good walking shoe. It should be snug around the heel so your foot doesn't lift when kicking, and it should have adequate room in the toe so circulation is not impeded or cut off.

Fitting Poles - With your feet flat on the floor, raise one arm straight out from your body. The poles that come between the armpit and shoulder are the right length. Cross country poles are longer than those used in downhill skiing because the arm motions are different. Good cross country skiing technique relies somewhat upon propulsion from the arms. Longer poles are needed to provide this push throughout each full stride.

There are a number of special events planned for National Ski Week at Glen Eden. They include two nights of skiing with reduced rates on the lift and on equipment rental. There will be a special day for senior citizens, late-night skiing, a torch-light parade and free video instruction for beginners.

The week kicks off Saturday, January 21, with a special package for beginners. The deal includes rental equipment, a lift ticket and a lesson, for \$12.

Glen Eden will accommodate the senior crowd the following Wednesday with a two-for-one deal; two can ski for the price of a single lift ticket.

The 'Never Ever Ski Package' will be available to novice skiers on Friday, January 27. The offer includes cut-rate lessons and ski rental. The next night Glen Eden will offer late-night skiing. A lift ticket will cost just \$5, and it will be good 9 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Finally, Sunday, beginners will be able to benefit from a free video analysis by one of the area's 65 qualified instructors. A camera crew will video tape your run down one of the 11 shops, after which an instructor will critique your style.

While programs such as National Ski Week do attract new people, Leeming realizes the healthiest way to increase the Alpine and cross-country population is to present an attractive lessons plan.

The 65 Glen Eden instructors will give out more than 13,000 lessons this year. There are more than 1,000 youngsters taking lessons at Glen Eden on any given Saturday, as the area continues to work hand-in-hand with community recreation departments.

"It's very important for us to have a highly-trained teaching staff, to present an interesting lesson," Leeming said. "Our children's programs here are very popular. We try to make the lessons fun, and appealing. That way we are going to hold on to those new skiers for life."

Ski...make friends, take friends!

NATIONAL SKI WEEK • JAN. 21-29



Glen Eden ski instructor Bill McDonald gives a few pointers to a ladies beginner's class on a recent Thursday afternoon. Glen Eden will be offering special programs throughout National Ski Week, January 21-29. (Herald photo)

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