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Choosing equipment-- a must for cross country

by Terri Howell

Last week you decided to take the big step into winter and try your legs at cross country skiing. But this week, you decided the sedentary life in your nice warm toasty house is a better way to spend the winter anyway.

Your problem? You're probably one of these people that collected together enough cash for

a cross country ski outfit, trotted over to your local sports store and left again in a hurry.

What frightened you away was the myriad of different colours and makes of skis, the rack of seemingly millions of ski waxes, and the rows of different makes and kinds of ski boots.

It's not as hard a choice as it seems at first glance.

If you take the time to ask, you'll probably come away a satisfied customer and will shortly become a satisfied skier as well.

Rick Newman, from Twin Lakes Sports says he helps everyone that comes into his store wanting cross country ski outfits by carefully explaining everything that is available, weighing the advantages and the disadvantages and leaving the final choice up to the customer. But for you shy ones, Rick offers this advice.

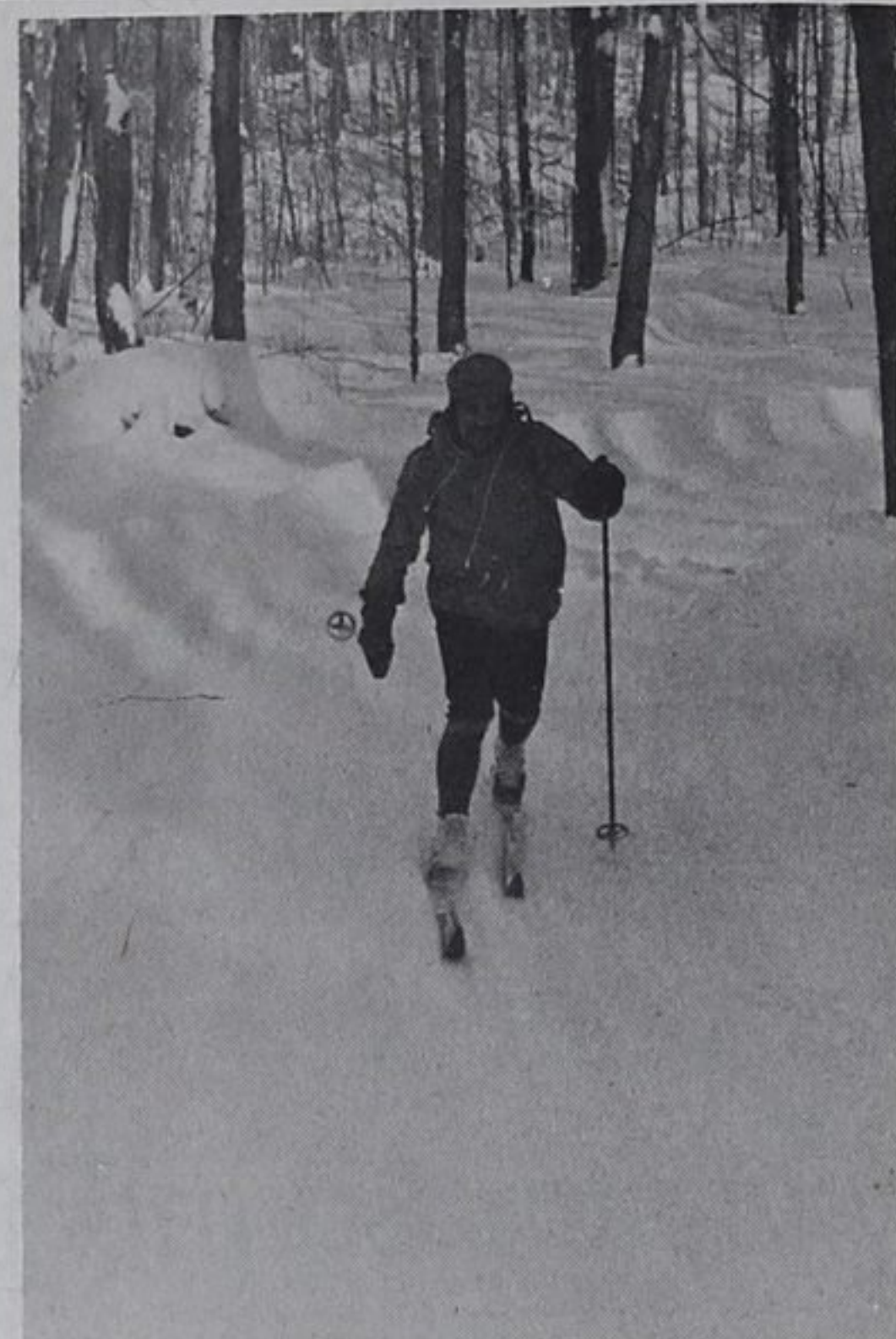
Two kinds
There are basically only two kinds of skis—fibreglass and wood. If you decide on wood skis, you can look forward to a bit of work and upkeep.

Rick says if you want a top-of-the-line wood ski, you should buy skis with hickory bases and lignostone edges. Hickory skis are the most durable of the wood skis. The lignostone edges provide a harder edge which doesn't wear as fast as other edges. Lignostone, according to Rick, is just various wood fibres compressed together to form a hard surface.

If you're looking for a cheaper wood ski—try ash bases. Rick says ash is an inexpensive softer wood. The draw back however, is that they are more apt to break when you're skiing along a trail for the first time and slam tips first into a tree. Ash skis are also not advisable for a heavy person.

If you're a lazy man but still want wood skis, then a ski is available made of different laminations of wood with a special base which doesn't require the wax that the other skis do.

This ski, according to Rick, is commonly known as the "fishscale" ski. The scales take over from the wax, gripping



On the trail

One of 780 cross-country skiers that visited Horseshoe Valley Ski Resort on the weekend glide down a gentle slope. The recent snowfall brought the skiers out in droves with the resort owners expecting more and more skiers during January and February. Horseshoe Valley has cross-country trails to suit the expertise of any skier.

Staff photo

the snow and stopping something that more

professional skiers call "back slip". In layman's terms, they keep you from sliding backwards down hills, and help you get more traction.

If you're not too confident and picture yourself hanging from tree branches or face first in snow drifts—better stick to a fibreglass ski. Rick has no qualms about standing on the end of his fibreglass skis and bending the tip to the ground. You would never do that with a wood ski. The base of fibreglass skis, are similar to down hill skis. Rick calls it a P-
Tex base.

Step-tex base
Like the "fishscale" base in wood skis, there is a similar base in fibreglass skis called a Step-Tex base. Rick says the steps in fibreglass are deeper than the Wood fish scales helping to give even better traction.

The advantage of

cont'd p. 19



But first the equipment

Rick Newman from Twin Lakes Sports, explains "everything you always wanted to know about cross country skiing but were afraid to ask." Newman reports that cross country ski package

sales have been on the increase in the last couple of years, as more and more people learn how to enjoy Midland's long, long winters.

Staff photo

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