

THE B.I.S.C.C. SKIING WHITE PAPERS

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COMMON-SENSE SKIING SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Very few recreational skiers make any worthwhile improvement in their skiing once they are past the basic ski-school lessons.

In my experience this results from two things – firstly, while skiing is simple it is neither easy nor obvious and little progress will be made without good teaching (and many ski-schools do not provide this); and the second reason is that hardly anyone takes a methodical approach to improving their skiing.

Most folk seem to believe – wrongly – that “getting the miles in” will make them good skiers. It will not, it will simply deeply embed seriously limiting habits of survival which will usually break down when the goings gets tough.

Instead, why not “take your skiing to pieces”? Analyse it by looking at different sectors of it, and then choose only one sector at a time to be improved upon. You simply cannot work on more than thing at a time; if you try you will simply not be able to change anything effectively. All you will do is get frustrated.

The British International Ski Coaching Club (BISCC) [click www.biscc.org.uk] has promoted for its members, the use of highly qualified coaches who take an organised approach to skiing development, and one of the key elements of strategy is to identify different areas of skiing and only work on one at a time.

Skiing can usefully be broken down into five different areas. These are :

- **Comprehension** – do you have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the processes involved in skiing to enable you to contextualise those processes and relate to the other four areas?
- **The physical** – are you strong enough, agile enough? Do you have enough stamina?
- **The tactical** – do you know how to handle difficult situations ? Can you assess a slope for its steepness? Can you recognise difficult snow before you get to it? Can you select suitable slopes for yourself? In other words can you *manage* situations for your best advantage?
- **The technical** – the issues of technique. Are you capable of making the movements while in motion which you need to make, in order to get your skis do what you want them to do?
- **The psychological** or emotional – for example do you have the beliefs you need? Are you able to be calm enough? Can you concentrate when you need to? Are you mentally resilient in the face of protracted or difficult periods or challenges? Can you handle “failure”? How is your mental toughness?

Few people get the mixture right. But *you* could.

To make a start at changing your skiing for the better, you could do worse than first of all to ask yourself “What’s blocking me?” You’ll find no shortage of answers probably, but don’t let that depress you, just grab a piece of paper and write the above five elements as headings across the top. Sort the “blocks” into columns below the headings. Don’t attempt to prioritise them at this stage, just get them identified and down on paper.

Already you will have the beginnings of a meaningful approach to making your skiing experience a better one. Now you can go through each column and put them in some kind of order of importance. You don’t have to be expert to do this, just rely on your own instinct, after all it’s *you* we’re talking about here.

Once you’ve done that, pick out the column you think you’d like to start with. Then commit to that column for the time being, don’t switch from one to another. That done, make a choice of the “blockage” from that column that personally feel is the one that needs knocking-over first. Commit to that one “block” and start expanding your knowledge of it. Be honest about it, and really investigate it. Get to know it well.

If you need help, get yourself to a good coach and work it out with her/him.

If you take your skiing a step at a time like this, and stay committed you’ll make more progress than you ever thought possible.

Good luck and good ski learning.

The British Int’l Ski Coaching Club (B.I.S.C.C.) provides a variety of skiing course weeks, which include training **on**-piste *and* off-piste skiing.

If you would like to know more **email us at “skiing@biscc.org.uk “** and we will have a coach make contact with you and discuss how we may be able to help. If you want course information email **courses@biscc.org.uk** or visit **www.bobski.com** where a course list is published.