

birkie news

Looking for a few hints before you hit the Trail?

Birkie Axioms offer insight of veteran American Birkebeiner skiers

Whether you're about to ski your 34th Birkie or your first, any skier can benefit from lessons learned by fellow skiers.

The following "Birkie Axioms" have been put together by Birkie buddies Ed Ero, Mike Tarnow and Tim Burke. The three have a Web site, Birke Web (www.birkieweb.com) on which they share their Birkie experiences and give a bit of advice.

Their axioms (axiom: an established rule or principle or a self-evident truth) are as follows, as reprinted with permission from their Web site:

1. Ski your ski

The plan is to get the most glide possible. The Birkie requires that you keep a flat ski at all times. Try to step as far up the hill as you can, stepping out on a flat ski. This way you can get some glide going up the hills. When you have your leg extended and the ski is on its edge, you should be stepping up the hill onto your other ski. When choosing a pair of skis for the race, pick out a brand that is soft through its first third. The ski should also be the longest length that you are com-

fortable with going up hill. Most of your energy is used going up the hills, but you still want as much glide as possible going down hill. Shorter skis go up hill easier, but longer skis go faster down hill. Tarnow.

2. Conquer the hill

The Birkie is a very challenging and demanding race course — up hills and down hills are legendary! Skiers of all abilities have been humbled by one of the most difficult races on the Worldloppet ski tour. Never stop your forward progress! If its an uphill, apprise the hill as you ski to it. Find the subtle nuances of the hill's terrain, and use those to your best advantage. Look where other skiers have gone, and depending on your wave, don't get caught behind slower skiers even if it is the most opportune path up. Attack the uphill but be careful not to overdo it and lose precious energy needed for later in the race! The attack attitude is simply stated: "Don't let the hill beat you — you beat the hill." On the down hills do not be afraid to "let your skis run" (see Axiom 1).

While this may seem treacherous at times, especially with twisting turning hills and many other skiers in sight, the Birkie usually has a new uphill to attack immediately following! See Axiom 3 but remember to ski in control and now is not the time to ski beyond ability and training. Ero.

3. Use your momentum

It takes a lot more energy to accelerate after a slowdown than to work to maintain speed. If you have the energy and balance, try to skate all but the steepest down hills. On hills too steep to skate down, break into a skate as soon after the bottom as you can handle it. Skate or step turn around corners rather than snowplowing to maintain momentum. The track may be faster than the skating lane at times. Knowing how to marathon skate in a fast track is useful for overall speed as well as in passing slower skiers on the side. Find a group of skiers that are slightly above your ability and ski with them. They will pull you along as well as act as drafting for you. Burke.

4. High tech

If you are committed to racing, you need to invest in not only good skis, but you need good poles and preparation equipment. This includes waxes and base preparation equipment. The texture of the base is as important as the wax. Toko makes a very good rilling tool that rolls over the ski. This tool makes a pattern that is broken up; somewhat like a tire. This rill takes the water off of the bottom of the ski so that the friction is reduced. More rill on warm days, less on cold. High tech extends to the waxes. Generally in the midwest, the days are cloudy and the snow has a lot of moisture. The flour waxes are necessary to go fast when the humidity is high. Tarnow.

5. Manage your hydro-carbs

This section discusses both hydration and carbo loading. Both need to be considered prior to your race. Current carbo loading technique for a marathon has you eating many meals for during the last few days before the race. This is more important than eating a huge meal the night

before the race. However, Milan Baic, an elite citizen racer from Traverse City, says that he eats a plate of spaghetti for each 10 K and he seems to do OK in the races. Hydration also needs to be increased prior to the race. If you are going to ski the race in less than four hours you really do not need to eat during the race, but you sure do need to drink. I suggest a minimum of two glasses per aid station and never ever pass up an aid station without taking at least one glass. I suggest trading off between the energy drink and water. A couple of GU are good during the race, but make sure that you drink a lot of water soon after eating it; timing is everything. Tarnow.

6. Relax and have fun

Do not take any of this too seriously. This is a part of your life that you chose to do. No one is making you do this. It is a crazy and grueling sport. What they say is true. Just finishing the race should be sufficient. A good placement or a PR is always great, but having fun and enjoying yourself enough to come back next year is more important. John Bruder, an

orthopedic surgeon from Traverse City, says, "You should start off slow and then back off." Have a goal, but be realistic. If your skis are not working like they should, if your motor is misfiring, stop pressing, back off and enjoy the race. Tarnow.

7. Find your mantra

Skiing the Birkie can and should be spiritual. First, its repetitive and second, you are sharing the experience with 8,000 other skiers. By effectively managing the other axioms, skiers have described a state of inward peace and oneness during and after the race. By listening to your inner voice, your mantra will become apparent. Go with it! Let it carry you. By being balanced and centered you will be transformed from the here and now to the true magical experience of the Birkie. Remember, however, this is what has been described as "Birkie Fever." I trigger my Mantra by listening to the wind, feeling my heart, using my will and opening my mind. Ero.

CXC offers skier services for big Birkie weekend

Central Cross-Country Skiing Association (CXC) will present bike raffles, silent auctions, race day waxing, clinics, seminars and a large sale during Birkie weekend.

More than \$4,000 worth of raffle prizes have been donated by CXC sponsors

Schwinn and Saris. The first place prize is a choice between a 2007 Schwinn Peloton high performance full carbon fiber road race bicycle and 2007 Schwinn Fastback CX high performance cycle cross bicycle.

Second place will receive the remaining bike. Third place prize is a Cycle Ops fluid bike trainer and the fourth place prize is a Saris Bones Cycle rack.

All prizes will be raffled off on Saturday night at Telemark Resort at the awards ceremony. Ticket holders need not be present to win. Tickets will be sold at the CXC Skiing booth at the Birkie Expo at Telemark Resort and at the awards ceremony.

Silent Auction

A silent auction will feature a state of the art Erikson high performance road and mountain bike — custom fit, titanium bicycles with top end components, hand built one at a time by Kent Erikson in Steamboat Springs. Each bike is valued at \$7,000. Bids can be placed at the CXC Skiing booth at the Birkie Expo in Telemark Resort.

Waxing

"We have the experience and expertise to make your skis as fast as they can be and beyond that," said CXC Executive Director Yuriy Gusev. "CXC Ski Team head coach Bryan Fish will lead a group of

experienced waxers to get the job done for your skis.

"CXC Ski Team took 30 out of 108 podiums in the 2006-2007 season and CXC Ski Team athletes are our favorites to win the Birkie this year," Gusev added.

Skiers can drop off their skis at Telemark on Friday for pickup later in the day or at the start area Saturday morning. There will be a free pair of ski ties for each wax job.

Clinics & Seminars

For the second year, CXC will present Birkie seminars at the Telemark Resort Ski Expo Friday from 2-6 p.m. Ski Technique clinics will be run by the CXC Ski Team Olympic

Development Program athletes and coach.

2 p.m.: Skate Technique (on snow) for beginner, intermediate and advanced skiers (meet by Salomon tent at the demo area).

3 p.m.: Classic Technique (on snow) for beginner, intermediate and advanced skiers (meet by Salomon tent at the demo area).

4 p.m.: Nutrition for Endurance Sports with Pete Anderson, nutrition scientist, UW-Madison, in second floor lobby outside of restaurant

5 p.m.: Designing Your Training Plan with Bryan Fish, CXC ski team head coach, second floor lobby outside of restaurant.

go directly to promote skier development in the central region.

CXC Skiing is recognized by the United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) as the sole regional organization governing cross country skiing in the 10-state central region of the United States.

CXC Skiing provides an organization which enables athletes, coaches and officials to achieve excellence in cross country skiing through education, cooperation, communication and competition.

CXC Skiing oversees youth programs, supports the Junior Olympic Qualifying system, Central Collegiate Ski Association, and Senior-Master skiing; provides education for athletes, coaches and officials; coordinates competitions; trains Olympic caliber athletes; and is the Midwest pipeline to the US Ski Team.

CXC is a 501c3 non-profit corporation and accepts tax deductible donations for program enhancement from all sources.

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