



Madison Nordic Ski Club  
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# MADNORSKI News

News for members of the Madison Nordic Ski Club

November 2007 Vol. 27 No. 2

## Getting Prepared for the Nordic Season



**Dirk Mason and Walt Meanwell**

Too Busy Roller Skiing – Can't Write Now. Come to Vendor Fair for all the latest news.

The harvest moon is the tell tale sign that the ski season is fast approaching. As you are busy finishing up those preseason projects. The MadNorSki Board and many MNSC members are

busy getting things in place for the upcoming season.

We extend many thanks to Elver workday organizer, Tom Kaufman, and all those folks that helped out. As our Trails Committee discovered with their survey, this effort is a huge help for the masses that ski Elver every season. The Trails Committee is working hard to improve area trail conditions this winter. Thanks to everyone that responded to the survey, your input will be very helpful.

Ben Neff, our newsletter editor is always looking for good articles. Thanks to Walt, *Cross Country Skier* sponsored article competition for

*MadNorSki News*. Submit an article by the newsletter deadline each month to participate in the competition. See the article in this issue for details and help spread the Nordic word.

Dick Steinle and Harry Spehar have taken the baton from John Riley and have been running with it full speed ahead with organizing the Vendor Fair (our Nov. meeting), advance the vendor discount program and gather all those great door prizes. Join us and your fellow MadNorSkis at the Vendor Fair. Don't forget to say "thanks" to Dick, Harry and the Vendors for making this a great event.

## Skate Technique: Refining Your Low Gear for Climbing

### **Yuri Gusev**

V1 is the first gear in the skating transmission. It is used when climbing steeper hills where V2 or V2 alternate bogs the engine down. As skiers become stronger it is reserved for very steep up hills.

There are three areas of focus to properly executing the V1 technique; body position, timing and power.

### **Body Position**

Body position in all sport is important for enabling the athlete to apply power to each motion effectively and efficiently.

**Feet:** Center the weight across the whole foot, with slightly more than half

of the weight toward the ball of the foot. If the weight is too far forward it will cause the ski to plow. If it is too far back it will force the hips back and make the skier carry more weight on the quadriceps. The skier's weight will shift toward the forefoot as the ski is set down and will quickly shift back across the whole foot for the majority of the push phase of the skate. At the end of the push the weight will again tend toward the front of the foot but most of the power comes from skating off the whole foot.

**Ankles:** The bend in the ankles is vital to positioning the skier in a powerful pushing position and into a position that prevents the ski from stalling out as it moves across the snow. The angle at the ankle is dependent primarily on

terrain - the steeper the terrain the more acute the angle at the ankle. Also, the more force the skier is attempting to deliver the deeper the angle will be.

**Knees:** Generally skiers struggle to get the proper angle at the ankle rather than at the knee. What results is a knee angle smaller than the ankle angle, which places the skier's weight behind the feet. This loads a great deal of weight on the quadriceps, and diminishes the amount of force applied to the push. The skier can think of driving the knee forward or pressing with the knee to accomplish this position.

**Hips:** The hips must be over the feet.

*Continued on page 4*

# Trails Survey Results at November Meeting

## Brock Woods

Almost one third of MNSC members responded to the club's 2007 web-based ski trail survey in September. (Those of you with survey experience know this is a very good response rate.) Your Trails Committee is now analyzing the large volume of data collected and assembling the appropriate information to share with each local park to help it better meet the trail needs of Nordic skiers in the Dane County area.

The quantitative data present a clear picture of what members feel about ski trail grooming in the past. The many written responses provide both a variety of thoughtful suggestions about what might be done to improve this work, as well as interesting information about members' local bush-whacking preferences! Much of

this data will be presented visually and/or in written form at the first club meeting in November so be sure to come to see for yourself what the data show. We'll also have drawings from all survey respondents for the three \$50 gift certificates!

Meetings with park personnel need to applaud work well done, but also point out perceived weaknesses in their trail work, coupled with specific suggestions and brainstorming about how to improve. Before, during, and even after these meetings the committee will be looking for ways our club can help each park do better, so even though the current survey is closed, please look at the data and consider offering your new ideas for club help to any committee member!

## Dirk Mason

The MNSC Board formed the Trails Committee at the end of last season to foster improvements in our area trails. The committee has been working to understand the skiing community's use and perspective of the current trails. Thanks to everyone who participated in the online survey. The committee is currently evaluating the responses and formulating a game plan to improve the trails throughout the Madison region.

The committee would like to extend thanks to Pete Anderson for managing the survey. For additional information about committee activities contact Committee Chair, Brock Woods. Trails Committee: Pete Anderson, Jim Coors, Margaret Monahan, Mark Plane, Mark Plane, Tom Schirz, Claire Seguin, Dick Steinle, and Nancy Wiegand.



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## 2007–2008 Calendar



### November

- 12 Club Meeting; 7:15 p.m. Social begins at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Center
- 27 Tuesday Nordic Night at Tyrol Basin; open-ski at 6 pm, race at 7 pm

### December

- 4 Tuesday Nordic Night at Tyrol Basin; open-ski at 6 pm, race at 7 pm
- 6 Board Meeting; 6:45 p.m.
- 10 Club Meeting; 7:15 p.m. Social begins at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Center
- 11 Tuesday Nordic Night at Tyrol Basin; open ski at 6 pm, race at 7 pm
- 15 MadNorSki Bus Trip to ABR in Ironwood, MI
- 18 Tuesday Nordic Night at Tyrol Basin; open ski at 6 pm, race at 7 pm

Come ski with us!



### January

- 5 MadNorSki Bus Trip to Minocqua Winter Park
- 3 Board Meeting 6:45 p.m.
- 7 Club Meeting; 7:15 p.m. Social begins at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Center
- 8 Elver Park Race Series; 6 p.m. registration, 7 p.m. Race
- 15 Elver Park Race Series; 6 p.m. registration, 7 p.m. Race
- 22 Elver Park Race Series; 6 p.m. registration, 7 p.m. Race
- 29 Elver Park Race Series; 6 p.m. registration, 7 p.m. Race

### February

- 5 Elver Park Race Series; 6 p.m. registration, 7 p.m. Race
- 7 Board Meeting 6:45 p.m.
- 11 Club Meeting; 7:15 p.m. Social begins at 6:30 p.m. Lussier Center
- 12 Elver Park Race Series; 6 p.m. registration, 7 p.m. Race

Board Meeting	Club Meeting	Meeting Theme	Meeting Agenda
Thursday, Nov. 8	Monday, Nov. 12	New gear, pre-season activities	TBD
Thursday, Dec. 6	Monday, Dec. 10	Pot Luck	TBD
Thursday, Jan. 3	Monday, Jan. 7	Waxing for racing and recreation	Wax Demo
Thursday, Feb. 7	Monday, Feb. 11	Birkie stories	Juniors fund raiser
Thursday, March 6	Monday, March 10	Racing wrap-up Pot Luck	Election of officers

## It's Not About the Money

### Dirk Mason

Club Membership drives all things. When you forget to renew your membership there are repercussions in the XC ski community that go far beyond the financial implications for MadNorSki.

For example; when we are lobbying the Mayor, the Cities of Middleton and Madison Parks departments, the County, or the State for more grooming time; it carries a lot more weight if we can point to a large body of MEMBERS who would benefit.

Politicians and public servants base increasingly scarce resource decisions on things that can be numerically quantified.

In our dealings with the D.N.R., W.I.N.N. W.N.S.F. and a myriad of other players that influence things like trail maintenance, A.T.V. usage on trails, grooming, snow making and a myriad of other issues; it is critical to be backed by a large membership base.

Your membership is important. Take 2 minutes to join so that your voice can be heard.



2007–08 Board

### Presidents

Dirk Mason: ddmason@charter.net  
Walter Meanwell: waltmeanwell@tds.net

### Vice-president

Tom Kaufman: runski@charter.net

### Treasurer

Duncan Bathe: bathe@sbcglobal.net

### Membership

Reg Breskewitz: bruske@surgery.wisc.edu  
Margie Sprecher: margies@tds.net

### Race Directors

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### Publicity

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### Advertising/Promotions

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### Newsletter

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### Director of Instruction

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### Youth Ski Chair

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### KidSki Chair

Mark Webber: webber@chorus.net

### Social Director

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gbartholomew@fmserv.com

### Webmaster

Craig Heilman: craigh@bugsoft.com

### WNSF

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### FunSki

Walter Meanwell: waltmeanwell@tds.net



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When it comes to body position this is accomplished with knee drive, maintaining the proper ankle and knee angle, and keeping the upper body in a "C" position. High hips position the femur bone nearly vertical, thereby supporting body weight on bone structure instead of on musculature.

**Core/Back:** The upper-body, from tailbone to head, should form a soft "C" shape. Think Neanderthal man, big foot, gunslinger. Do not think of the Queen of England or of the postural advice of your parents. This "C" position will help keep the hips over the feet, relax the lower back as well as position the muscles of the core to apply force to the poles. This "C" can be either very shallow leaving the skier upright, or rather pronounced putting the skier in an aggressive forward position. The depth of the "C" is dependent upon terrain. Most skiers will adapt a more up-right, shallow "C" position as the terrain becomes steeper. Folding at the waist into an "r" position is the most common error skiers make. This forces the hips back and generally increases the angle at the ankle.

**Shoulders:** Shoulders should be rounded leaving the arms hanging

free and loose in front of the body. Even skiers who ski in a very shallow, upright "C" position should have a forward attitude at the shoulder. This position allows for a smooth pendulum swing of the arms as well as a good position from which to apply both body weight and force to the poles.

**Arms:** In the neutral or starting position the arms should hang loose from the shoulders. The angle of the arms at pole plant should enable the skier to apply maximal force with the core and back as well as the weight of the upper body to the poles. This means that the hang arm will be no greater than 90 degrees at pole plant. The push arm should be slightly lower and more forward, placed in a similar position to diagonal stride. The angle is much bigger. At pole release the hands should be low. The follow through of the arms is dependent upon speed and terrain. The faster the skier is moving the longer the follow through. Because V1 is used in steep terrain it is most likely that follow through will be short and hand return immediate. Remember that the V1 technique uses an offset position of the hands. The high hand belongs to what's called the hang arm. The hang arm delivers most the poling power. The hand should be

close to the head at the initiation of the poling motion. The other hand is planted lower. Be watchful that this hand does not creep too far across the skier's body.

### Timing

In all techniques the whole body works together to transfer the skier's weight from ski to ski and down the track. The V1 technique is described in terms of the hang arm. If it is the skier's left hand that is placed high and next to the head at the start of the poling motion, the hang side (also called poling side) is the left side.

On the poling-side the entire upper body and poling-side leg push simultaneously down and over to transfer weight to the non-poling side. There is little to no time spent inactively gliding in the V1 technique. As soon as the skier's weight is shifted onto the non-poling side the arms begin to swing back up and forward as the skier begins the push-skate back onto the poling side. When the skier transfers weight back to the poling side the poles and poling-side ski meet the snow simultaneously. While for some skiers the poles plant a little earlier

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## Calling all Wordsmiths

### Walt Meanwell

*Cross Country Skier* magazine is providing the club with \$200 to encourage club members to submit articles for the newsletter. We are still working out the final details but that money will go towards prizes and each article published in *MadNorSki News* this season will get an entry in a drawing for those prizes.

If you haven't looked at *Cross Country Skier* lately it might be time to take another look at it. The writing tends to be pretty clean and crisp and there are several interesting X-C related articles in each issue, along with plenty of great photos. Check out the latest issue at [crosscountryskier.com](http://crosscountryskier.com)

Articles should be submitted in a word processing format (not e-mail text) to [ben.neff@tds.net](mailto:ben.neff@tds.net). Deadlines for upcoming issues are Nov 23, Dec 21, Jan 22 and Feb 22).

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than the ski, and for others the opposite is true, for most it is simultaneous. In all cases the push from each leg is as equal, smooth and powerful as possible and the use of the upper-body is dynamic through a relatively shallow compression and short follow-through.

### Power

Power results from force applied quickly. Power relies on being in a position that allows both the application of a skier's strength and the application of that strength over a short period of time. The above description of body position aims to put the skier in that position. Timing allows power development while maintaining the forward momentum of the skier.

The effective, efficient and repetitive application of power to the skis and poles is the goal of learning proper technique –including body position and timing. Once the skier can grasp the idea of proper body position it must be ingrained through repetition. This

repetition will also develop the strength it takes to maintain this position and develop power from it. The practice of proper timing will help develop the speed of force application.

Power is developed on the poles through the application of body weight to the poles. This happens through the dynamic use of core, back and to a lesser degree the arms themselves. A lot of power comes from the upper body in the V1 technique. Some skiers rely more on the upper body than others. A common mistake is to let the use of the legs suffer by focusing too much on using the upper body. Ideally, as is the case with all techniques, the whole body not only works together, but the work of one complements and aids the work of the other.

Power to the skis is achieved through a push position similar to that used by speed skaters.

Whereas in the classical diagonal stride the ski must stop for the kick, in skating the skis must never stop. The biggest error in V1 power application

is a weak-side –strong-side approach. This means relying on the poling side to build momentum or power and using the non-poling side as a recovery side. This results in a loss of momentum on the recovery side. It is much more efficient to maintain momentum than to build it, lose it, and build it again. This is similar to what cyclists call peddling in squares – where you only apply force on the down stroke. The best cyclists apply force around the whole circle resulting in smooth continuous power and often (as in the example of Lance Armstrong) at a higher cadence.

While the cyclist peddling in squares can still rely on the downward bound leg to apply force while the upward bound leg “rests” the skier has nothing to maintain momentum with while on the “recovery side”. Generally the weak-side approach means the skier will stand up or peg-leg on the recovery side leg. The weak-side ski decelerates as the skier stands up on it.

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## Gifts for X-Country Skiers

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## A Productive Day at Elver

**Tom Kaufman**

On a beautiful October afternoon 15 smiling MadNorSki volunteers came out to Elver Park to work on the trails. We picked up trash, cut back weeds and brush, and removed some of those pesky base “structuring” rocks. The City Parks Department has done a nice job of keeping the grass mowed and the trails a bit wider than in previous years. We are still asked not to remove the leaves as the City feels that the leaves help prevent trail erosion. Always a bone of contention in as much as there are frequent leaves coming through our sometimes thin snow cover, we did not remove the leaf cover. The Elver trails look great. They are as ready for that first snow fall as we are. Thanks to everyone who helped. Your work is appreciated by the entire Nordic skiing community.



Good body position: note the knee and ankle bends, soft "C" curve in back, and forward hip position.

Photo: Steve Hoffman



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To correct this the skier must focus on driving with the non-poling side knee as soon as that ski hits the snow and until weight is transferred back to the poling side. The skier may look as this concept as a volley of the body weight back and forth, like a tennis ball, in which the legs are the rackets. Being dynamic with the return of the arms to the poling side and synchronizing that arm swing with the skate will help maintain momentum on the non-poling side.

A large part of power development comes from weight transfer. This could easily be put in the "body position" section. Optimally the entirety of the skier's weight must be over the gliding / pushing ski for the skier to both glide with relaxed balance and apply maximal power to the skate. In skating, weight transfer is achieved through the shifting of the hips from side to side. Many focus exclusively on shifting the weight with the upper body. This can result in a tipping or twisting of the upper body but no real weight transfer. The body's mass is best

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moved by shifting the hips.

In all skate techniques complete weight shift (where the skier is actually directly on top of the ski at the beginning of the push phase) can compete with the need to shift weight more quickly to avoid bogging down on steeper terrain. This is especially true in the V1 technique because it is used almost exclusively in steep terrain. One way to accomplish both good weight transfer and maintain momentum is to keep the feet in a wide position (never letting the feet come close together). When this is the case the skier's body will stay inside the feet and the skier will never be directly on top of the ski. Weight shift will still be effective however, so long as the hips are shifting from side to side and pushing against one ski and then the other.

### Training/Racing

Technique is the tool you use to apply your fitness to the sport. Technique is the screwdriver, fitness is what you use to turn the screwdriver, ski racing is the job you are trying to accomplish. With technique training you are simply

trying to develop a good tool to help you get the job done. But fitness comes first. If you are fit enough you can drive the screw into the board with no screwdriver at all. There are many examples of skiers with inefficient technique winning even World Cup ski races—in other words skiers who can drive the screw with no screwdriver—they do this with fitness.

All technique work must be done in conjunction with and as an addition to preparation aimed at aerobic, anaerobic or strength oriented training. Do not mistake having a nice tool chest with being a good carpenter.

### Conclusion

Proper body position enables proper timing—both of which enable effective, efficient application of power.

*From USST Cross Country Technique Fundamentals CD-ROM  
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