

Skiing Simplified – Ski Racing – Fast Turns

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The purpose of this document is to describe fast turns by contrasting them with the best ways to slow down. I believe knowing how to slow down efficiently and effectively will also teach you how to make fast turns.

Gravity

Avoid gravity when slowing down, and use gravity when making fast turns. More specifically, at the apex or top of the turn avoid gravity when slowing down and use gravity when making fast turns. Using gravity to make fast turns means: using gravity to pull you down and around the turn. Avoiding gravity to slow down means: putting on the brakes towards your momentum at the apex of the turn slowing down, while you are extending and before you enter the difficult pressure part of the turn. Using gravity means rolling downhill over the downhill ski into the turn (before the turn laterally without turning the skis so the skis will cause the turn). Using gravity means staying on that old downhill ski until the pressure part of the new turn (then rolling laterally downhill to the new downhill ski which rapidly becomes the old downhill ski if you link the turns). Using gravity means to set your weight right over the center of both skis, then roll both skis over to maximum edge, then get long as you can before you get the pressure. Get long as you can while keeping both skis on max and equal edge, then finish the turn (pressure part of the turn) by starting the next turn while coming back together (compressing or retracting the extended downhill while extending the uphill knee without turning the skis waiting for them to turn themselves) over the center of both your skis.

Working Hard

Working hard means: moving over your feet laterally from max edge and max extension to max edge and max compression of the knee or retraction. Slalom teaches hard work, but it then applies to all the events. Working hard also applies to both fast turns and turns where you slow down. Since the end of the turn is the same for both, knowing how to slow down efficiently and effectively will teach you how to make fast turns.

Apex of the Turn

The key point, the apex of a turn is easy because there is less gravity or momentum to fight. You want to work hard from side to side (foot to foot) before you have to fight the pressure at the end of a turn. The end of a turn is the same whether slowing down or going fast. In both cases, slow down and turn before the pressure of gravity.

Flats and Steeps (Extensions and Retractions)

If you are on the flat, working hard means: to aggressively extend laterally (against gravity) at the apex ahead of the pressure, skating or accelerating down the hill. If

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you are on the steep, working hard means: aggressively shortening the downhill leg (with the help of gravity) to max edge and max compression or retraction. Between flat and steep use both extension and retraction together, to the max.

Arcs and Angles

When slowing down the turn shape is an angle like an “L”. When speeding up the turn shape is an arc like a “C”. When creating that angle, make it sharp. When creating that arc, make it smooth. The slowing down is done before the angle with the skis across the momentum line or slightly back uphill (back-slipping) to keep the weight forward so you can make that sharp angle. The speeding up is done before the arc also at the apex of the turn by aggressive extension or retraction keeping the weight forward so you can make that smooth arc.

Footwork

The difference between slowing down and speeding up in the turn is in the footwork. In other words, the footwork is opposite. When slowing down, you move (work hard laterally or uphill) from the downhill foot to the uphill foot (which becomes the new downhill foot). The opposite footwork when speeding up at the apex with fast turns, you move (work hard laterally or downhill) from the uphill foot to the downhill foot (which becomes the new uphill foot). In both cases, you move from a shortened leg to a shortened leg, while lengthening the other leg and keeping feet apart. This lateral footwork begins as soon as you clear the gate. The lateral footwork relates to your momentum at that time you clear the gate. So, it is a down hill in a fast turn and uphill in a decelerating turn. For example: in wide swinging slalom turns on the steep, the lateral move is right down the hill without turning the skis so their side cut makes them swing out around the gate. The wider the swing the more you need to delay the hips from initiating the turn. When you delay the hips that delay is balanced with a little counter rotation of the upper body (outside hand into the gate counters the late hip at the gate as required for clearance).

Feet Apart

It is easier to move laterally with your feet apart, the uphill knee bent as much as possible without bucking you off, and the uphill foot back with the downhill foot so the skis work together. In this position with your feet apart and uphill knee bent, it is easy to pressure the front of both skis at the beginning of the turn and pull that pressure when it is not needed.

Summary

The purpose of this document is to describe fast turns by contrasting them with the best ways to slow down. When slowing down the turn shape is an angle like an “L”. When speeding up the turn shape is an arc like a “C”. When creating that angle, make it sharp. When creating that arc, make it smooth. Slow down before the angle and speed up before the arc. Because working hard applies to both fast turns and speed control, I believe knowing how to slow down efficiently and effectively will

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also teach you how to make fast turns. The difference is at the easy apex of the turn where you either avoid gravity to slow down or use gravity to pull you around the turn.