

TIPS ON TRAINING



By
Gault
Gillespie

Canadian Cross-Country
Champion, 1939, 1940.

Winner of the Canadian cross-country championship for the past two years, Gillespie, Laurentian-born skier from Prefontaine, gives some timely tips on how he prepared himself to reach National triumphs. This winter he has departed from the amateur field, joining the ranks of the instructors at the Alpine Ski School, St. Margaret's, Quebec.

A COMPETITIVE skier has to keep himself fit all year round. The finest training for a cross country runner in summer is swimming, about three quarters of an hour daily with no break, before breakfast or before supper. Another exercise which I found very good was to get two paddles and a canoe, put one in each hand and paddle along as if you were skiing.

About the first of October, I start to run about an hour nightly, very slowly at first. As the days pass I keep running faster, but never force myself. I climb mountains with two ski poles and a pair of heavy boots on.

Each day I run about six or seven miles a day, mostly uphill, but more than an hour. When the snow comes, I train on skis, and make about ten or eleven miles a day.

I always eat solid food from November the first on, such as oatmeal every morning. It is important that the oatmeal should be eaten with milk and not cream, which is too rich and fattening.

Before a race, I eat a rare steak—not medium done. A race is usually held around 11 or 12 o'clock, so breakfast should be eaten about 7.30 a.m., then a steak *only* around two hours before racing.

I taught myself how to run. In 1936, when they held the Olympics in Germany, I saw a movie of a cross country race, with a Finn doing the fast running

step. After that I practised this running for a whole year, and in 1938 I started to make progress. The running step is done kicking the back end of your ski backwards and putting all your weight on the opposite ski and single poling strongly.

Concerning the difficult question of pace, every race I entered I always studied the course before I started. If the race started off half flat and then a hill, I would run fast to get my second wind before reaching the hill. A racer mostly tells that he is making progress by passing other skiers. If they smile or have a surprised look, you know you are getting on.

I would say that waxing is half the race. It took me seven years of racing to depend on my waxing. My best experience with waxing was at Banff last winter when I won the Dominion championship. The race was run in a round circle in three laps. When the race started at 12 o'clock the sun was quite hot, but up on the mountain the snow was dry, and down below it was very wet. I prepared for all this by waxing my skis first klister, and then damp snow and dry snow wax, rubbing it into each other and rubbing paraffin on my skis with another coat of all-snow wax. I rubbed all that in with my hands, and all along the sides of my skis I put klister. This all worked very well and I had no trouble with my wax or skis. We had twenty-four starters. Only twelve finished because of bad wax, so every ski runner should learn just as much about waxing as running. A badly waxed pair of skis will make the best ski runner lose a race.

The best amateur racer in Canada just now is Conrad Delisle of Quebec. If Bob Johannsen was in Canada I would class him best, as he was always to the fore. Delisle did very well last year, and I class him the winner this winter in amateur running.