



Barefoot Skiing

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About the Tutorial

Barefoot Skiing is a sport in which a skier has to ski on shallow water. The skier clutches the holder of the rope which is attached on the bottom of the boat. The skier has to balance on the water surface by standing on the skis and the motorist has to drive the boat in water. There is a viewer who sits with the motorist and observes the momentum and storm.

In this tutorial, we will discuss the fundamental rules of Barefoot Skiing including its playing methodologies.

Audience

This tutorial has been prepared keeping in mind that the requirement of readers who are keen to understand the sport of Barefoot Skiing. It is meant for anyone who wants to learn the basics of Barefoot Skiing.

Prerequisites

Before proceeding with this tutorial, you are required to have a passion for Barefoot Skiing and an eagerness to acquire knowledge on the same.

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1. Barefoot Skiing – Overview

Barefoot skiing is an adventurous water sport which is popular in coastal countries. In this sport, the skier holds a rope which is attached to the boat. The sport demands the athlete to be on his/her ski. The speed of the boat depends on the weight of the athlete.

The aim of this sport is to enjoy yourself in the deep water by wearing skis on your foot and to float over water through a boat. The sport is very encouraging hence; lots of people try this out in their adolescence. The best part of this sport is that there is no age limit and both men and women can participate in this sport.



A Brief History of Barefoot Skiing

Barefoot aquatic skiing sport was first addressed by **Ralph Wilford Samuelson**. The water skiing sport was first induced in the chain of Lake City, Florida.

- The first person who played this aquatic sport was 17-year-old **A. G. Hancock** in the year of 1947 and **Richard Downing** was the first photographer of that event. Richard Downing took the photos of the ski along with the boat.
- The first woman player of this sport was **Charlene Zint** in 1951.
- During the 1950s, a new approach was added to this sport. **Ken Tibado** came up with two-ski jump and in 1958, **Joe Cash** came with deep water start.

- The **Tumble-turn** device was first introduced in 1960 when **Terry Vance** stepped-off with his playmate **Don Thomson**.
- The first backward bare footer was **Randy Rabe** who came up with the backward ski technique in the year of 1961.
- The first famous person was Don Thomson who performed both back-to-front and front-to-back retraction in a drive at Cypress Garden in early 1960s.

2. Barefoot Skiing – Playing Environment

Barefoot skiing is a water sport, so the environment demands presence of large water surface upon which a player can surf. Generally, lakes and oceans are the primary choice for this sport.

The area should be approved by the concerned ocean department for gaming purpose. It means that some lakes and oceans are prone to danger due to water animals like sharks, whales, etc. Therefore, it is ensured that the playing environment is safe enough for the race to go on.



Weather forecast is also equally important before starting the match because once the lake or the ocean have high tides due to rains or storms, it becomes difficult to cope. Therefore, most of the times, the race is organized in the Summer season when the weather is clear and suitable for the race.

3. Barefoot Skiing – Equipment

In this chapter, we will discuss about the equipment used in Barefoot Skiing.

Shoe Skis

Shoe skis are a few inch long and wide and are mostly used for training purpose. The speed in this case is lower than that of barefooting because of the increased lift provided by the surface area.

Boats

A boat or other towing object is necessary to play this sport that can catch-up the speed of 30 to 45 mph. There are some specific boats which are built only for the purpose of bare footing that can run fast due to small wakes.

Handle and Ropes

The skiers use a rope with handle. The rope is connected to the boat and the skiers hold the handle. The rope also has a safety release which is used to disconnect the rope and the boat. The length of the rope with handle can be of 75 feet. The rope is either made up of nylon or poly E or spectra whereas the handles are coated with plastic.

Personal Flotation Device

It is an optional device for skiers. The skiers and bare footers wear a flotation device or padded wetsuit.

Barefoot Wetsuit

Wetsuit helps like a safety jacket. It is made up of a polychloroprene synthetic rubber which maintains the stability and flexibility over wide range of temperature. It helps the players to float.

Padded Shorts

Padded short is not a mandatory equipment but is worn by some skiers and bare footers to perform tumble turns and deep water start.

Booms

Booms are used for gaining more tricks about skiing. Booms are used for the players to ski directly at the side of boat. It is a rod which hangs over the side of boat. As a result, it helps the bare footer to balance their body weight with the rod.

4. Barefoot Skiing – Starting the Race

When you are floating in water, you have to balance in the same way as you balance on a wakeboard. The main thing is to relax your body and let your feet on each edge.

- Let the boat gently pass forward and then you start to proceed.
- Place your two feet on the horn of the boat.
- When the boat picks up speed, the wakeboard will begin to plane off.
- For stability, keep your feet on the nose of the boat and let the board take off. Tell the boat driver to reduce the speed if the board is about to bounce.
- When the board is stabilizing, you have to down your feet in front of water.
- At that moment, the motorist will increase the acceleration. Keeping your feet on the top of water, shift your weight on to that.
- If water gets sprayed on your face, just feel calm and check all impulse.
- Let go of the boom and flatten your feet out. You have to put more weight on your feet accordingly to the increase in the boat speed.
- You have to feel wakeboard drift out behind you. Now you have to support your own weight.
- Push your hip and back straight to water. Once you feel you have done much, run over the water. Bend your knees and allow yourself to sink down into water and do it again.

A wakeboard is easier to balance when you maintain good balance between two legs. This is the best way to learn how to stand up first time. Don't attempt without practice, otherwise the boat will take off leaving you in an awkward position.

5. Barefoot Skiing – Backward Ski Boarding

There are three simple steps for Backward Ski Boarding:

- Lay on your belly and control the slip
- Passing from the slip to backwards barefooting area
- Turn while skiing forward

Lay on your belly and control the slip

- Accede onto belly and lock your ankles on the bottom of the rope. Locate the helve between two legs and catch it with the hands.
- Drift on your back and go to a deep exhalation and acquiesce. Keep your body, arm, and leg in a perpendicular position.
- The coachman should take out from water in a nice way.
- The water edges are breaking all over your knee. The speed will be 10-12 mph.
- You should push your chest against water which will help you to breathe.
- You should stay fixed on your belly, as it will help you for jumping and controlling your balance. Once you are fit on this point, take out your feet from the rope and bend your leg.
- Dislocate your toes back towards ankles which are more important, otherwise they will go in a row.
- Bend in exterior 45-degree angle. Now you can move into water gently a little wider than hips width. One foot at a time in hooked and obtaining the feeling of water touch.
- Once you are fit on the accurate position of water, you can stretch your feet.
- You should not drive against the water and twist your toes down.

You should be able to ride for 30 second once you are set on both the feet. If you can't control, you are not allowing to rotate your feet. You will not be getting any points if you pull in your arm.

Passing from the slip to backwards bare footing area

The most important factor you will need to know is **Break**.

- A **break** is allowing your hips to push upward to the sky and pushing your chest and chin down.
- When you break and feel your upper body lifting you, start to pull your leg closer which will help you to stand. Rotate your feet and knee inwards.

- The most important agent in breaking point is to wait and allow the boat to do the work.
- At no point during this stage, you should try lifting your body or head and try to stand. Most people don't bother to wait and that is bad.
- Rotate your feet inward and push your hips upward till you feel the water on your chin. You should continue on bending knees.

Turn while skiing forward

You have to keep focus and keep yourself in a solid position. If you maintain this, you are in backward bare footing.

- Your knee should bend into an athletic position with your arm straight and glued to your butt.
- If the handle is far from the butt, you will be pulled out over the back much easier.
- If you are accelerating all over, get off those toes and ski flat on your feet and use the whole surface around yourself. Your feet will allow you to float in water, rather than pushing the water.
- If the boom is not high enough, it will make it harder for the skier to get up. The bigger boom will make it inflexible for the skier to put his feet in the water. He might end up dumping them into the water. The boom should take a seat around the skier height when the skier is in backward position.



The driver speed depends upon the size of skier and should not exceed 28-32mph. If the skier is not in correct position, he can face difficulties.

- **Planning stage** – If bouncing occurs at 10-12 mph speed, then you are going too fast.
- **Standing speed** – It depends upon the weight of skier. Most people up to 200lbs will be able to do backward bare footing at no more than 32mps. The speed will increase after several miles of travel on their feet. Do not try to go back on one foot. It should be done on shoe skis.
- **Ending the pass** – When the skier is going forward, he cannot see the end of turn. At this situation, the skier has to move straight forward. The skier should know the end point and should take some time without losing speed suddenly.

6. Barefoot Skiing – Rules

World Barefoot Council determines all the rules of this sport and implements this successfully all over the world. New rules of Barefoot water-ski became effective from 1st January 2010.

Some of the important rules of this sport are as follows:

- Turn-around time of this sport will be decided by the chief judge with the recommendation of tournament director.
- Just before the passing of skier, the communication judge present on the boat may allow maximum up to 1 minute to change gear or to replace any broken parts.
- At the end of the emergency minute, if the skier does not able to start the pass, he/she will be disqualified from the sport.



- Each tournament consists of 3 phases:
 - Elimination round
 - Semi-final round
 - Final round

Everyone participating in the sport is eligible to compete in the elimination round.

- A run-off is used in case of a tie but the score obtained through it is not included in the main score of the championship.
- If two teams are competing, if there will be a tie between them, then both will go to the semifinal round but if there are more than 2 teams in the tie, the chief judge will decide whether to send all of them to semifinal round or none.
- To become winner in the final round of the competition, the skier must maintain a positive score in the elimination round.
- In case there is a tie in the final round, then:
 - Each skier in the jump category will be allowed to jump 3 times to break the tie.
 - Each skier belonging to slalom group will go through two passes until the tie breaks.
 - Each skier belonging to tricks group will go through two passes until the tie breaks.
- If the skier is found not wearing safety equipment while playing, then he/she may be warned followed by disqualification from the sport. Each team can keep two reserve players with them.

7. Barefoot Skiing – Champions

International Water-Ski and Wakeboard Federation is the governing body of this sport and holds the responsibility of organising its tournaments all over the world. Apart from this, every country has its own governing body to monitor this sport.

Here is a list of some of the competitions of this sport:

- World Barefoot Water-Ski Championship
- Montana Barefoot Championship
- American Barefoot Water-Ski National Championship
- Australian Barefoot Water-Ski National Championship

Let us now discuss briefly about some of the champions of Barefoot Skiing.

Lori Powell

Lori Powell is from USA and her first participation in water ski tournament was in 1977 in which she won a trophy in Junior Girls Tricks. Her father was her first instructor who gave her training in water skiing tricks.

In 1981, she participated in South Regional Championship and won it. In the same year, she participated in National Championship in which she got second rank in tricks and overall championship.

In 1982, she participated in Barefoot Nationals Tournament and got second rank. In 1983 also, she won Barefoot Nationals Title. In 1988, her dream of winning the overall Barefoot Worlds Title came true.

Jennifer Calleri

Jennifer Calleri is from USA and was born on 4th August 1969. She started learning barefoot skiing at the age of ten and was further trained in a ski school.

In 1984, she participated in Open Women's division in National Championship and got the third rank.

In 1985, she participated in Barefoot Water Ski Championship and won a silver medal. In 1988, she won Open Women's overall title. She set 50 world records between 1988 and 1996 and remained undefeated.

Nadine De Villiers

Nadine De Villiers is from South Africa and was born on 17th July 1982. She competes under tricks category. She made a highest score of 3290 under this category in Freestate Barefoot Championships in Feb 2000.

She also made a record score of 3320 under same category at Gauteng Barefoot Waterski Championships in the year 1988 at Pretoria, South Africa.

In November, 2013, her name was included in the Waterski and Water Federation's Hall of Fame.