

SKIING

The ski hill vocabulary

By WILF BORMANN

Skiing techniques and ski equipment do have a past, or a history, an interesting generalization becomes apparent.

This is best explained by the fact that equipment always had a direct bearing on technique; and conversely, technique has always dictated the need in equipment.

So in the last 70 years, since skiing became our present day down-mountain mania, we also developed a language of skiing terms, or a so-called glossary of ski terms - brought about by the influence of ski instructors, the different techniques they used over the years, the different methods, the approach, the modern manufacturing methods, and a never ending desire by human beings to define anything that exists.

I will only go into the present day terms, the ones we use in our instructional program at the hill, and finally the ones which define the ski conditions at the different areas, and the ever so true snow reports. Words such as christies, compression, corn snow, or rotation can be pretty meaningless, and still they are used every day; the instructors use them, better skiers use them, and we would like nothing better than to make you, one of us.

The credit of interpretation goes to the Canadian Ski Instructors Alliance, and their instructional book "The Canadian Ski Technique" and this is what they mean when they say:

ANGULATION - Bending of the upper body sideways from the waist, in order to move the skiers body weight laterally. This can also be achieved in a lesser degree by a rolling of the knees into the hill.

BANKING - The leaning of the body to the inside of a turn beyond the angle which counterbalances centrifugal force.

BLOCKAGE - The term used to describe a stopping of motion of a particular part of the body in a turn, usually it refers to the hips.

CHRISTIE - The shortened form of Christiana. The term used for turns where the skis are skidded around and kept together. In the intermediate stage they are combined with the open stem.

DOWNHILL SKI - The ski which appears at any given line closest to the bottom of the hill, or slope.

EDGE CONTROL - The angle between the bottom running surface of the ski and the surface of the snow, controlled by the movement of the knees, ankles and the inclination of the body.

FORWARD LEAN - The leaning of the body forward from the

ankles causing the body weight to fall toward the balls of the feet.

GLIDING - A smooth descent on skis, at slow speed without any evidence of braking.

KNEEPUSH - The motion of pushing the kneecaps forward over the toe of the boot.

ROTATION COORDINATED - A rotation in the direction of the turn but never ahead of the lower body.

STEERING ACTION - The turning of the skis into the desired direction, achieved by lowering the body slightly and angulating to the outside, pushing the knees over the toes, and rotating them gradually in the direction of the turn. The feet apply rotary action inside the boots, against the sidewall in the direction of the turn while the heels slip away.

TRAVERSE - To ski across the hill in a downhill angle.

UNWEIGHTING - The temporary lightening of the skies by reducing the effect of gravity on the body weight. This is accomplished by either a rapid flexion or drop, called down unweighting, or a lowering of the body preceding a rapid-up motion or extension called down up unweighting.

NOTE - Columnist Bormann is ski school instructor for the Grande Prairie Ski Club.