



MONTH OF NOVEMBER
EAST vs. WEST
from
VARA Youth Coordinator, Alex Krebs



Thanks to KMS, this month's sponsor, click the logo to find out about their upcoming camps and Boost Program!

Wow, the Month of October flew by! Alex's email about the East vs the West is very timely as clubs and programs are preparing for their fall on snow training blocks. Anyone in the east knows that options

in New England

are slim for fall training this time of year. So, many are westward bound, enjoy, but head back home to the Green Mountains for some lessons in developing grit and perseverance.

Julie Woodworth - VARA Executive Director

EAST vs. WEST



East: Cold, firm and fast



West: Warm, soft and forgiving

East vs. West. It's not just ice vs. powder.

The differences between skiing in the East and West are significant and many: altitude, acreage, snow and weather are all different, dramatically so at times.

We have all heard the argument that the West has BIG mountains and SO much more skiing than the East and how on earth can we, here in the East, compete with that? I will tell you how. Eastern skiers form a type of mental toughness (GRIT-which will be discussed next month) to deal with the different types of weather and snow conditions Mother Nature sends our way!

Eastern skiers all have stories of fighting through miserable, face-stinging icy winds and generally wetter conditions that are more common at Appalachian elevations (usually between 1,000-4,000 feet) than in the higher, drier climates of the Rockies, where lifts carry skiers well beyond 10,000 feet above sea level. When it rains in the east, you wear a garbage bag. When the wind-chill factor drops below zero, or when you are getting pelted with sleet or freezing rain, you dress appropriately and get out there-all of this makes you tougher. You can't wait for a "blue-bird" day-Eastern skiers cannot be that picky.

Some of the best competitive skiers the United States has ever produced - Mikaela Shiffrin and Bode Miller, for example - grew up carving turns in the Northeast, where skiers learn by necessity at an early age the kind of knee angle and weight transfer required for setting an edge in hard pack or ice.

Most of the trails in the East are carved out below the tree line and are well defined. Because Eastern ski areas rely heavily on snow making, venturing into the trees, even for the best skiers, can be difficult and dangerous much of the year, though certainly possible

after a blizzard or later in the season during a good snow year. It takes real skill to be able to maneuver your way down through those Eastern trees. So, when snow conditions allow for "off piste" skiing, take advantage of it. Ditch the race skis and gates and use Mother Nature's obstacles to hone in on your quick reaction skills.

For the most part snow making has made the conditions in the east very dependable. We have those blue sky, corduroy mornings, a powder day here and there. They may not be as abundant as out west but it makes them that much more appreciable and enjoyable. A combination of snow making and late winter snowfalls can make for a longer spring skiing season and spring skiing, when the snow really softens up can be exceptional in the East.

Learning to ski in the East is not easy, it's darn right tough. Eastern skiing builds confidence and comfort in adverse conditions. It also breeds and demands the skills to ski almost anywhere in any condition. Want to ski race in Europe? Better prepare by skiing the East where you need edge precision, quickness and mental vigilance. Racing conditions in the East and Europe are very similar-ice, crust, snow-powder, crud, flat light, fog, rain, sun and anything else thrown in, you just need to be ready for anything, enjoy it and have FUN doing it!

While western skiing has all of its positives and is great in its own and unique way, let's not forget about what we have here in the East. For all of the reasons explained, Eastern skiing makes you a better skier.

Next article-GRIT

The East has big mountain skiing too!



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