

Ski Tips



(Sixth in a series of eight articles on all phases of skiing. Authors are ski instructors of various ski areas and resorts in the Upper Midwest.)

By EARL HAMMER

Deepwood Ski Area

If you never have been on skis before, don't try to ride up a ski tow until you have had some instruction on the use of skis.

For your own good and safety, you should be familiar with the fundamentals of skiing before you try to ride a ski tow. If for no other reason than it will take you to the top of a higher hill than you'll want to, or should try to ski down.

To ride up a rope tow, the first thing to do is to be sure that all of your clothing is tucked in, your parka at the waist and your scarf. This is to prevent any loose ends from becoming twisted onto the rope.

Next, approach the moving rope with your skis going in the same direction as the rope is, in other words, parallel to the rope. Start moving with the rope before you take hold of it, and when you do start to grasp the rope, let it slide through your hands. Then gradually tighten your grip (like letting out the clutch when driving a car).

After you have started to be pulled up the hill by the rope, put the hand farthest from the rope behind you so as you grip the rope with this hand, you can lean most of

your weight against that arm. This saves using too much of your strength in hanging onto the rope, and ending your day of skiing with the feeling that one arm has been pulled out inches longer than the other one.

If you do fall down when riding up a ski tow, the first thing you should do is to get yourself and your skis and poles out of the way of other skiers coming up behind you. Then, don't try to get back on the rope. Instead, ski back down the hill and start over again.

Another word of caution, good sense and common courtesy. When you reach the top of the hill and let go of the rope, ski away so other skiers will have room to get off the tow. In the same department, when starting up the tow, get in line and get ready before it is your turn to start your ride up.

As with all phases of skiing, your ability to ride a ski tow with ease can only improve with practice. Ski tows are provided so that you can get as much downhill skiing in a short time, an hour or two, as you could in a whole day, if you had to climb back up the hill each time you skied down.

If in doubt about how to ride a ski tow, just watch the people who are doing it. It's easy and will greatly increase your fun of skiing.

NEXT: Tips for ski competitors by Oscar Cyr of Pine Bend.