

Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing

Ski Tips & Techniques

SEPTEMBER 2010 - THE ROCKERS ARE COMING!

The Rockers are coming and I don't mean middle aged, spandex wearing, big haired heavy metal aficionados.

At the end of last season I commented briefly on my first full season skiing on rockered skis. I felt that they provided a number of benefits over traditional powder skis. There are a variety of rocker designs from extreme tip and tail rocker to minimal tip only designs. The bottom line to this design is that rockered skis employ a pre bend in the skis similar to a rocking chair.

Since 2003 when the late Shane McConkey introduced the first rockered ski, this design idea has taken powder skis by storm.

The benefits of this design were originally aimed at expert big mountain extreme skiers. The skis float better, maneuver more easily and allow for greater speeds. Also, because the amount of ski contacting the snow in very steep terrain is decreased, the edges are less "hooky" providing a more stable platform.

What wasn't conceptualized at the time was how this ski would work for the weekend powder hound or the week long heli skier. But what worked so well for the extreme skiers has proven valuable for the average powder seeker.

The rockered shape allows for easy turn initiation, great flotation, and a natural athletic stance. No sitting back, no aggressive upper body movements, no feeling of your feet caught in cement. Lower angle powder and tree skiing are also easier as the skis are maneuverable and quicker due to more tip flotation. In last year's powder ski test held in Blue River for Ski Canada, rockered skis were the overwhelming favorites amongst the guides testing the skis.

The best part of this design is great face shots and effortless all day powder skiing. So grab your Van Halen tour jersey and your rockered skis, ski season is right around the corner.

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