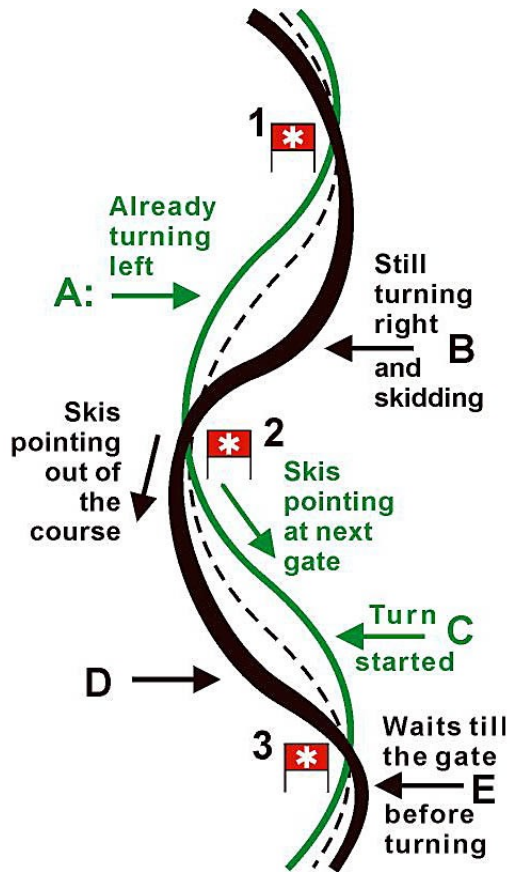


Picking the Best Line

by Emilio Trampuz

During a recent PACRAT race, we saw a racer go really wide, skidding as he went. Immediately following him, a good racer (I believe it was Dale Parshall) came down the same course and cut a faster line, carving the arc instead of skidding. They both left visible trails, as shown here.



The **dotted line** is an average path.

The good racer, in **green**, leaves a clean, thin track.

The "bad" racer is shown by the thick **black** line; the uneven thickness indicating skidding.

It was amazing to see that at the same spot, point A, the green racer is already turning **left** while the black racer is still completing his **right** turn and scraping off speed by skidding at point B to get back into the course before the next gate. This is called "**being late**" in your turns. The black racer waits until he is at the gate before he starts the next turn ("E"). Then there's not much time left to complete the turn before the next gate.

The green racer sets up for the turn **early** (at "C"), and starts a very **gradual** turn, arcing his way around in a fairly **wide-radius** turn. A wider radius means a straighter line.

Notice the green racer **plans** his turns so that by the time he/she reaches the gate, his/her skis are already pointed toward the next gate. Meanwhile, the black racer's skis are still pointing to the outside of the

course, and he has to try to whip them around quickly, making jerky zig-zag turns.

So, be more like the green racer. Plan your turns, look ahead. Start turning before you reach the gate, taking a slightly higher path. Have your skis pointing to the next gate by the time you pass by the current gate. And don't let the skis skid too much. Dig the edges in by keeping your hands forward, applying more of your weight on the front end of the turning ski.