

NDC Thunder Bay Athlete Interest Article: Roller Skis

By: David Askwith



Our training for the winter during the summer months consists of a few core activities running, ski walking and roller skiing as we get closer to the winter we begin to try and emulate skiing as much as possible. The best activity for doing this is roller skiing it is about as close as you can get to skiing without snow. Roller skis really haven't been around for very long the first pair was made in the 1930s. They weren't common until the need for good summer training grew as cross country skiing gained popularity and became a more common type of competition in the 1950's. From the 50 until the 70's lots of experimentation to find the best way to mimic skiing with roller skis occurred until some what of a standard emerged in the early 70's. There were definitely some strange ideas that didn't stick as you can see in the left image below.



A experimental set of roller skis



A version moving towards today's skis

Soon after the standard for skis developed roller ski races began. At first just as training for racing in the winter but slowly gain popularity as its own discipline. There are a few different kinds of skis today including skate, classic and off road skis. The off road skis are definitely not a common thing to see and I have never actually tried a pair but they definitely seem like an interesting idea. I am sure they would be very useful if you didn't have access to asphalt roads.



COMMUNICATIONS



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Though roller skiing is the most similar type of training to mimic being on snow it has its differences. In roller skiing your power transfer is far more efficient compared to skiing on snow. On classic skis you will also always have perfect grip that can cause skiers to develop some bad technique habits. Since you don't need to have your body in the perfect position to get grip efficiently as you would when skiing in the winter. They may not be perfect but they are the best we have so I am very grateful to have them as a training tool.



A modern pair of classic roller skis



Another example of vintage roller skis



Off-Road roller skis

