

Breaking It Down

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Fall is here, the season is coming to an end and you are trying to squeeze in your last sets for the year. Instead of trying to cram in one final practice personal best for the year, let's look at the big picture. While it can be a thrill to practice those short line sets, it is more important to finish the season maintaining the good form you spent all summer establishing. By finishing the season working on your opening passes and keeping good rhythm and body position in the course, you are creating muscle memory. This is the muscle memory your brain will pull from at the start of next season. So do your future a favor and kick start an easy 2013 by finishing 2012 as good as you started it. Let's review my favorite excerpts from this season's articles to give you some keys to work on while you finish up this year's skiing.

January/February - In Line

As you complete the turn you should end up in a balanced position over your ski. To be balanced on your ski requires many things, but the most crucial being that everything is moving the same direction at the same time. A balanced position is found when you are in a shoulders over hips over feet position, referred to as in line. If all those things are in line and moving together you are being as efficient as possible on your ski. If any one of these elements is ahead of or behind the other, you are fighting yourself and not in control of the direction you are taking. Being in line allows you to ride your ski in the way it was designed and wastes less energy while fighting your way cross-course. Once you have established this out of your turn it is imperative that you hold this position all the way through the second wake and then move outward, still in this balanced position.

May/June - Being Connected

Chances are you have heard this term before, but what does it mean? Put simply, being connected means that there is no separation between your hands and your body. When there is a separation between the two, it results in an inadequate pull from the boat. Getting a strong pull from the boat is necessary to get speed across the course and arrive at the next buoy. To establish this connection you have to move through the turn and have your hips move up to the handle from the start. If you turn and then try to establish this position it is too late and more than likely you are being pulled out of position by the boat. At the finish of the turn, focus on bringing your free hand to the

handle simultaneously as your ski is coming back under the rope. When done correctly you will feel your hips and hands connecting at the finish of the turn. During this phase, focus on relaxing your arms as you use your core to keep your hips up to the handle. If this move is done correctly you can then adequately build speed cross-course from a connected position.

July/August - Line Tension

Skiing with a tight line is critical, especially as the rope gets shorter. With a tight line it is possible to move through the turn with speed. Without a tight line you are forced to wait at the buoy for the line to get tight before moving through the turn. To maintain line tension you must be aware of the direction you are taking at all times. Similar to speed maintenance you don't want to lose direction off the second wake. After you make a balanced move away from the boat be aware of what your hands are doing. If your hands stop moving away they are more than likely going back toward the boat. Work on effectively keeping two hands on the handle longer. This will keep you more balanced on your ski as well as keep you moving away from the boat with a tight rope. When your free hand comes off, move it away from your body while simultaneously moving your handle hand constantly away from the boat until it is time to turn. When turning, reconnect your hands with your core while carrying speed cross course to optimize tight-line skiing.

Nautique Boats, Radar Skis, O'Neill Clothing and H2OProshop sponsor Brooks Wilson. Check out his Web site - thewilsonbros.com and follow @The_Wilson_Bros on Twitter.

