

Taking The Handle With You

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This subtle difference in position can be achieved by making sure that you take the handle with you when you make your first move to start cutting.

Over the last couple of years I have been seeing more and more jumpers with the tendency to leave their chest open to the boat in their cut to the jump. Perhaps this is partly due to the bleed over of *West Coast Slalom*, or it is just the realization that the new, longer jumpers – although much better in the air and safer – are in fact harder to turn. But whatever the reason, the one thing I know is that if you get to the bottom of the ramp and your skis are pointing toward the top left corner, and your chest is pointing to the boat, you will not come off of the ramp very well.

In past articles I have talked about “following your tips” with your knees, hips, chest and eyes. Lately I have had some success with jumpers by having them work on “taking the handle with them” when they begin their cut to the ramp. This is true from anything from a single cut to a double cut. The first two photos show one cut with an “open chest” position and the other is a more “closed off chest” following my tips.

Now I can hear some of you saying, “I don’t see any difference between these two pictures!” But if you look closely you will see that in the first picture my right hip is set back and most importantly that my left ski is wider and more in front than in the second picture. This will continue to get worse as I cut to the bottom of the ramp, and when I have impact on the ramp I will lose body position, energy and lift. Or more easily said... I will lose distance because my skis are going to slide on the ramp surface.

This subtle difference in position can be achieved by making sure that you take the handle with you (see pictures 3-6) when you make your first move to start cutting. Many jumpers tend to leave the handle where it is and start cutting by

lowering their bodies or squatting a bit. By doing this, the handle actually begins to move higher up the body toward your chest and you will naturally start to rotate your chest toward the boat so that you have maximum support from the rope. This rotation then leads to the body position in the first picture.

To avoid this, when you start your cutting move, make sure to take the handle down and in the direction you want to go. You will find it much easier to follow your tips. By doing this your hips will stay in line with your tips and your chest can follow as well. Your skis will stay closer together and slide less on ramp impact. Now like most things in life, some of this is good for you, but if you take it too far it will start to work against you. Your handle is in most instances a reaction to what you’re doing with your body, so you want to make sure that you take the handle with you, but you don’t want that movement to be all your technique is about. Think of it more as an aid, than a crutch.

Freddy Krueger is sponsored by MasterCraft Boats, Zero Off Speed Controls, D3 Skis, OJ Props, Body Glove Wetsuits, Nightmare 13 and Masterline USA.



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