

Ford Sayre BKL Wax and Tool Quick Reference Sheet

By Hannah Chipman (Ford Sayre Alum, 2020)

Wax (Swix brand, see note on names below)	GLIDE Skate skis. "Tips/tails" of classic skis			KICK Middle "kickzone" of waxable classic skis. Waxless/fishscale skis don't need it!					
	Different color blocks for different temperatures			Comes in tiny cans, different colors for different temperatures. Labels are helpful.					
	<p>Blue (CH/PS 6)</p> 	<p>Purple (CH/PS 7)</p> 	<p>Red (CH/PS 8)</p> 	<p>Blue (V30)</p> 	<p>Extra Blue (V40)</p> 	<p>Special Violet (V45)</p> 	<p>Violet (V50)</p> 	<p>Special Red (V55)</p> 	<p>Red Silver (V60)</p> 
Tools to put wax on:	<p>Iron (not the same as a clothes iron!)</p> 	<p>Wax Bench/Table*</p>  <p>*Can improvise your own with blocks and clamps if you're handy</p>	<p>Cork - opt for the synthetic cork rather than natural cork.</p> 						
Tools to scrape wax off:	<p>Rectangle scrape & plastic putty knife</p> 	<p>Stiff (copper/brass) & Soft (nylon) brushes. Combo or 2 separate.</p> 	<p>Putty knife</p> 	<p>Groove/All-Purpose Scraper**</p>  <p>** use a separate scraper for kick and glide, otherwise your glide zones will get sticky :(</p>					

Note: This year, Swix redid their glide wax lines. CH wax, as it was called previously, or PS wax, new this year, are both good basic options.

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Remember: Skate skis ONLY use glide wax, Classic skis need BOTH glide and kick wax: glide on tips and tails, kick in the middle 'kickzone'

How to Find Your Kick Zone (classic only):

Your kick zone should be the middle part of the ski that doesn't touch the snow when you're gliding (weight on both skis), but does when you shift all your weight onto one ski, compressing it. If your kick zone is too long, some of the sticky kick wax will be touching snow when you are gliding, and this will make it hard to glide, which is frustrating. If your kick zone is too short, there's not enough kick wax to grip the snow when you do try to kick, and so you will tend to slip. To figure out where your kick zone should be, we do something called 'the paper test'

- Find a clean smooth surface, like a thin carpet or wood floor, and put your skis down on it
- Place an index/business card underneath one ski, right under the binding
- Have the skier stand on both skis with their weight evenly distributed between them (to simulate gliding)
- Slide the index card under the ski as far forward and as far back as it will easily go, marking where it stops on each end with a sharpie on the side of the ski. Switch the index card to the other ski, and repeat this process to mark that ski as well. Ta da!
- Sometimes the paper test doesn't work perfectly, so if you're slipping a lot while kicking, you may need to make your kick zone longer

Applying kick wax (classic only, do every time you ski):

- Check the temperature and consult the temperature ranges on the cans of kick wax to pick the right one for the day
- Peel back the foil around the wax with a fingernail or the lid until some of the sticky wax is exposed
- Firmly rub the kick zone of your ski with the cork a few times to warm it up a bit, then rub the wax onto the kick zone like a crayon
- Cork in the layer of wax: rub the cork back and forth vigorously over the wax -- you're trying to create a lot of friction to melt/spread the wax
- Repeat this process 2-3 more times for each ski, for a total of 3-4 layers of wax on each ski

Removing kick wax (do as needed before applying new kick wax, or when waxing for a race):

- Usually, kick wax wears off over the course of a ski, so it's usually fine to just put new wax on over the leftovers the next time you ski
- If there's a lot left and you're using a different wax (maybe it was warm last time and now it's cold), you should clean off the old wax first:
 - Hold the putty knife/scrapper at a 10-20 degree angle to the ski, and press down gently.
 - Maintaining steady gentle pressure, run the scrapper from the start of the kick zone to the end, pausing to get scraped-off wax out of the way as needed.
 - Run your kick groove scrapper down the portion of the groove that is in the kick zone to get gobs of wax out of the groove
 - Repeat with putty knife and groove scrapper until most of the wax is gone and the kick zone feels mostly dry, not sticky/waxy

Applying glide wax (entire skate ski, tips/tails of classic skis -- NOT the kick zone, do every week or so, before races, as instructed by coach):

- Check the weather forecast for the next week, choose the wax with the closest temperature range (or what coaches said to use). Glide wax is much less temperature-sensitive than kick wax, so it will still work okay to ski on blue wax when it's red temperatures, etc.
- Clip/clamp ski into place on wax bench. Heat iron to temperature listed on the wax box (generally, colder wax requires hotter iron, etc)
- To avoid getting glide wax in the kick zone of classic skis, it can be helpful to cover the kick zone in masking/blue painting tape

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- Hold iron in one hand over ski, hold wax against iron for a second or two, then rub melted portion against ski, leaving behind a layer of wax (like you're "crayoning" the wax onto the ski).
- Alternate technique: hold wax against iron over ski, allowing melted wax to drip onto ski, moving iron down the length of ski, 1-2 drips/inch on either side of groove. This method uses much more wax than crayoning, but is helpful with colder waxes.
- Run iron over the dots/layer of wax, melting them into a smooth clear-ish layer of wax on the base of the ski. Keep the iron moving to avoid burning the base of the ski. Always run the iron from the tip to the tail of the ski. Resist the urge to go back to that spot you missed until the ski is cool to the touch.
- Run your groove scraper down the groove to clear out wax that may have melted into it
- Take ski off bench and leave to cool (put outside for faster cooling, or go do other things, like putting glide wax on other skis)
- Once the base of the ski is cool to the touch, clip/clamp back onto wax bench, and begin scraping off wax with rectangle scraper
- When you're not getting noticeable amounts of white wax scrapings anymore, switch to brushing, first with stiff brush, then soft

Wait, you ask, why am I taking off the glide wax before I ski?

- Glide-waxing skis is mostly cleaning off dirt that accumulates while skiing, by putting wax on, and then scraping wax + dirt off.
- Un-scraped skis are REALLY REALLY slow, so it's important to scrape as much of the wax off as you can, even if you feel like you're undoing all the good work you just did putting the wax on. Glide-waxing may seem like it does nothing at all, but it does actually make your skis speedier :)

Quick Summary of Waxing Steps

Kick Waxing <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Choose the wax for the day (temperature)- Peel back foil- Crayon on & cork in, 3-4x each ski- "Thin to win" - one thin layer, cork in well. Then repeat as necessary. This is better than one thick, clumpy layer.- Have Fun Skiing!!!	Glide Waxing <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Choose the wax for the week (average temperature range)- Ski on wax bench, tape over kick zone if applicable- Using iron, drip/crayon glide wax onto ski- Melt dots/crayon layer into smooth, clearish wax layer- Scrape groove clear, let ski cool- Scrape off wax, then brush off wax (stiff brush)- Final polish with soft brush- Have Fun Skiing!!!
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Most of all, don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask questions!! Many skiers, including me, the author of this reference sheet, started skiing with no idea whatsoever how to wax, with parents who hadn't skied or hadn't really dealt with wax before. Waxing can seem intimidating, but there are lots of friendly people you can turn to for help.