The F.I.S. Downhill Racing Meeting at Murren last winter was a great success in spite of the traditional bad weather which we have learned to associate with the F.I.S. The surprise of the meeting was the brilliant performance of the French, who jumped in one season from a fifth class ski-ing power to a first class ski-ing power. I need not inflict details on you, for these may be known to you.

The British teams suffered a catastrophic series of misfortunes both before and during the race. Miss Jeannette Kessler broke a leg and R. E. Gardner had to retire owing to an injured back. In the Straight Race Peter Lunn was tenth, 16 seconds behind the winner, the best British performance in a F.I.S. Straight Race since Mackintosh finished second in 1931.

Lukin Robinson did reasonably well in the F.I.S., but he is not as yet in the same class as his brother Peter who put up such an astoundingly good performance the previous winter.

The best British performance last winter was to the credit of the British Universities Ski Club. They entered a team for the Winter University Games and won as a team the Straight Race and the Slalom, and also produced the individual winner in Bill Clyde.

Peter Lunn won the Roberts of Kandahar, his third successive entry, and the Prince Chichibu for the third time in succession. Miss Jeannette Kessler won the Swiss Ski Championship. She was outstandingly our best lady runner at the time of her accident, and we are all wondering very much whether she will regain her old form for the Olympics.

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A Golden Rule of Slalom

By Peter Lunn

THE golden rule of slalom racing is to make all your turns as gradual as you can, and to do them as much as possible by steering and not by swinging.

This point is illustrated by the diagram, which shows two ways in which the pairs of flags A, B, and C can be taken. Track beta shows the incorrect method; the racer has rushed straight up to the B pair, turned sharply in them and then gone straight on to the C pair.

This track is bad for two reasons:—(1) If the slope is steep or the snow icy, it would be very difficult to hold the turn and there would be a serious risk of being carried down the hill below the C pair; (2) The change of direction at the B pair is so sudden, that the runner inevitably loses the greater part of his impetus and speed.

The alpha track represents the ideal line from the A pair through the B pair to the C pair.

In order to obtain the most gradual turn, you must start at the top flag of the A pair (A1), cut as closely as possible the near flag of the B pair (B2), and finish beside the lower flag of the C pair (C2).

Similarly a racing motorist, who has the road to himself, takes a bend from right to left by swinging out to his right before the bend, then coming across to the left of the road so as to cut the corner, finally ending up on the right hand side of the road; he thus takes the corner in the smoothest possible manner.

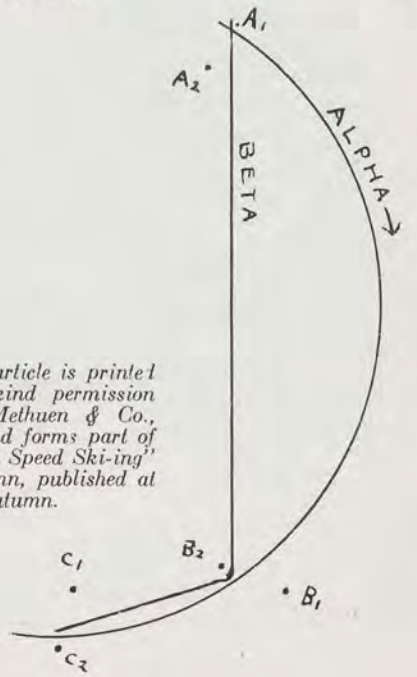
The ideal line on the diagram through the three pairs of flags A, B and C would, therefore, practically go through the three points A1, B2 and C2.

The most gradual line through these or any three points is the segment of a circle, that is the alpha track in the diagram; this fact can be proved mathematically, as also that it is possible to draw the segment of a circle through any three points.

We have seen that by taking the beta track the racer lost nearly all his speed over his sudden change of direction in the B pair. The man who takes the alpha track, on the other hand, changes direction very gradually, doing about three-quarters of his turn before he reaches the B pair, and he consequently loses the minimum amount of speed.

The alpha track, therefore, represents the ideal line from the A pair through the B pair to the C pair; this track would, of course, have to vary slightly according to the arrangement of the flags above and below.

I realize that an exact calculation of this type, to discover the ideal line through three pairs of flags, cannot be carried out on the ski-ing slopes, but if the runner knows exactly how to do it in theory he will be able to do it approximately in practise. It is illogical to argue, as so many people do, that because one cannot do a thing exactly in practise it is a waste of time to work out exactly how to do it in theory.



The above article is printed through the kind permission of Messrs. Methuen & Co., publishers, and forms part of a book, "High Speed Ski-ing" by Peter Lunn, published at 3s. 6d. this autumn.