

The Cutting Edge – Sit Ski Slalom by Pat Messner

It's another hot day at the lake and you are out skiing with all your buddies. Last summer was a time for firsts and you are now able to do a sit ski deep-water start on your own and can "rip" around the lake till you drop!

"What's next?" you ask. Let me answer that for you. It's time to cut across the wakes and learn how to slalom. You begin by making sure you're upper body is forward onto your knees and that your hands and handle are down by your feet. Keeping them low will allow the ski to track better to the left or right.

Next, turn your head and shoulders towards the direction you want to go and lean away from the boat. Do not lift your hands and turn them in the direction you want to go. This will cause an opposite affect and the ski will end up pointing in the other di-



rection. Continue to keep your lean and look in the direction you are going until you have gone completely through to the other side of the wake.

It is important to try and keep the ski on edge during the entire process so

that you slice through the wake. If your ski remains flat on the water you will receive a lift from the wake, making it difficult to maintain position, and often ending up in a head first fall.

At first, just try and get to the other side without worrying how far you go out from the side of the boat. Eventually, the cut should progress to at least 45 degrees. Once there, allow yourself to drift and to begin turning back. As the ski begins to turn, move your hands and handle to the opposite side of your legs and turn your head and shoulders. You should now be looking to go in the opposite direction.

It is important that you try to keep the ski on edge all the way through both wakes and over to the other side. If this is difficult for you and you are thrown off balance, just stop, reposition yourself and continue on. You may want to increase the boat speed a little in order to make the wakes smaller, thereby making it easier to keep the ski on edge.

Remember to start small and in control. Just cut out to one side and take your time before skiing back the other way. Progressively learn to cut harder and wider using as much body strength as you can. The cut should lead into the turn and back into the cut.

Before you know it, you'll be a real slalom skier and can think about moving into the slalom course. I can

just hear you saying, " National Team. Here I come!"

Pat Messner is Canada's National Adaptive Team Coach and operates Mesle Water Ski School. She welcomes queries for further coaching tips at 613-253-0500 or via their web site www.waterskirideau.com.