Ice Capades

Three outdoors projects for snowy days

Illustrations by Damien Scogin

WEBER SHIH

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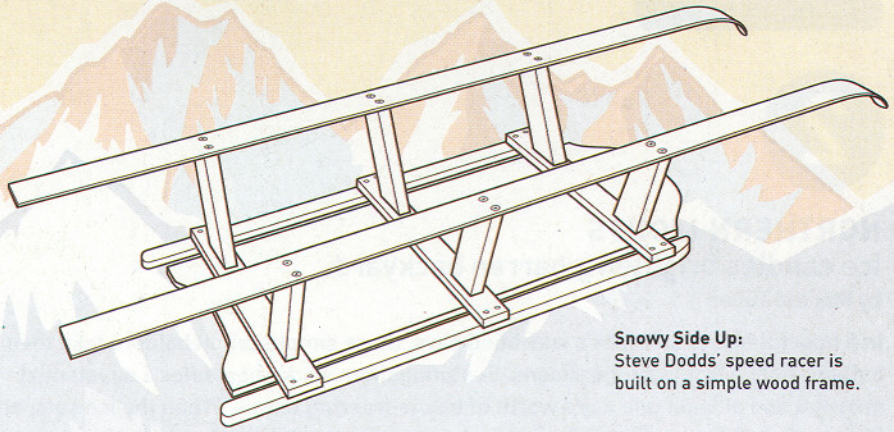
TICKET TO RIDE

Build a sled from retired winter gear.

by Steve Dodds



Snowy Side Up: Steve Dodds' speed racer is built on a simple wood frame.

Skis are like computers. One year you're sporting the sleekest, most aerodynamic pair, and by the following winter, they seem as sluggish and dated as last year's iMac. Rather than ditching your high flyers after just a few seasons, turn them into this speedy sled. Even if they're no longer fit for a black diamond, they can still shred.

SKI SLED

$45 + skis

INGREDIENTS:

- ☐ Pair of downhill skis
- ☐ Car polish (optional)
- ☐ 8' kiln-dried 2" x 4" (as straight as you can find)
- ☐ 6' 1" x 3" maple
- ☐ 2' x 4' 1/2" plywood
- ☐ 8' 1" x 2" maple
- ☐ Enamel paint or polyurethane
- ☐ 24 2" #12 wood screws
- ☐ 15 1" #8 wood screws
- ☐ 12 1 1/4" #8 wood screws

TOOLS:

- ☐ Screwdriver
- ☐ Dust mask
- ☐ 150- and 220-grit sandpaper
- ☐ #0000 steel wool (optional)
- ☐ Chop saw or miter box
- ☐ Handsaw or jigsaw
- ☐ Pencil
- ☐ Tape measure
- ☐ Circular saw
- ☐ Electric drill and bits
- ☐ Saber saw or coping saw
- ☐ Combination square
- ☐ 2 bar clamps
- ☐ Paintbrush

MAKE IT

1. Using a large screwdriver, remove the bindings from the skis. **2.** If the skis are badly scratched up, put on a dust mask to protect your nose and mouth, and lightly sand the tops of the skis with the 150-grit sandpaper, then the 220-grit sandpaper. Buff the tops with steel wool and apply a layer of car polish. Use the fine sandpaper and steel wool to clean any rust from the steel edges. **3.** To make the legs of the sled, use straight, kiln-dried 2" x 4" framing lumber (look for a KD stamp on the wood). Equally thick hardwood could also be used for extra strength. Set your saw or miter box for 22.5° and cut the wood into six 7" lengths. Carefully locate the cuts to avoid splits, knots, or other weak points in the finished part. The more precisely you cut the legs, the easier it will be to assemble things later on. **4.** Set one of the legs upright on top of the ski, mark the width of the ski on the leg, and use a handsaw or jigsaw to trim off the extra wood. Trim the other legs to match. **5.** Attach three legs to each ski. Look for a painted stripe on the top of each ski near where the center of the binding was located. Position the middle leg here and the other legs 16" from it on either side. Draw a line across the bottom of each ski at the center line of each leg. You should have three center lines drawn across the bottom of each ski. **6.** Each leg is attached with two 2" #12 screws. At one of the center lines, pre-drill and countersink a screw hole ¾" from each edge of the ski. The holes through the ski should be just large enough for the screw to pass clean through without the threads biting. **7.** On the bottom of one leg, draw a line down the center and mark a point ¾" from the outside edge. Pre-drill a screw hole at this point. This hole must be small enough for the threads to bite but large enough to keep the leg from splitting. **8.** Attach the leg to the ski with a screw. If necessary, twist the leg so that it's aligned properly with the ski. Then pre-drill a second screw hole in the bottom of the leg by drilling through the second hole in the bottom of the ski. Install the second screw so the leg is fully attached, and repeat the process on all the other legs. **9.** Cut three 20 ½" lengths of 1" x 3" maple, and sand them well. These will serve as crossbars. **10.** The tops of the legs should sit 2" in from the ends of the crossbars. Pre-drill the bars and the tops of the legs as you did with the skis and the bottoms of the legs. Install two 2" #12 screws through the top of the bars down into the tops of the legs. **11.** Using the circular saw, cut the deck (or seat, for you non-skaters) from high-quality ½"-thick plywood. To start, it should be 16 ½" x 44". On top, mark the center lines of the crossbars. At each mark, draw a line across the width of the deck. Lay out and pre-drill five screw holes along these lines. **12.** Using the saber saw or coping saw, trim the corners of the deck to remove any sharp corners. Sand the deck using 150-grit sandpaper, then 220-grit sandpaper. **13.** Position the deck on top of the crossbars, making sure the rows of screws are centered on the bars. Using the deck as a template, pre-drill the screw holes into the front crossbar. Install one 1" #8 screw and rely on your combination square to double check that everything is still straight. Then drive the remaining screws into the front crossbar. **14.** Repeat the process for the other two crossbars. You will likely need to twist and clamp the pieces to make everything align properly. Because there is camber in the skis, your deck might have an arc in it. **15.** Cut two 41" lengths of the 1" x 2" maple. These will serve as side rails. Round over the ends with the saber saw or coping saw, sand them, and clamp them into place at the ends of the crossbars. Pre-drill and screw up from the underside of the crossbars into the rails. Use two 1 ¼" #8 screws at the end of each bar. **16.** Paint or polyurethane all of the exposed wood. Once it dries, run for the hills.

{ TIP } *Be sure to take it easy on your first few runs to make sure that the sled is structurally sound. It has the potential to go really fast, so choose an unobstructed course with plenty of run-out area. And don't forget your helmet!*

KATE FRANCIS