

100 YEARS OF BAREFOOT HISTORY

By John Cornish, Betsy Gilman, and Tony Klarik

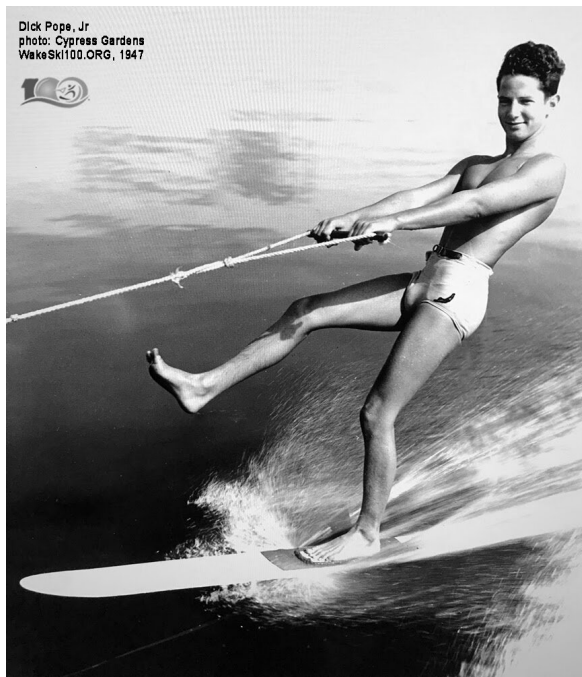
1940s

Waterskiing Video (1940-49) <https://youtu.be/fvL1vDjmyYg>

1940 Jack Andresen patented the first trick ski, a shorter, fin-less water ski.

1945 Shoe Skis. Ralph Hept > Chuck Sligh

c1947 Freeboards first appear on film, with riders (Dick Pope, Jr. & young girl) stepping off the binding less ski while wearing shoe skis. The push for smaller and smaller skis would lead to the natural conclusion of no skis at all. But in the meantime. Cypress Gardens skiers had everything in place to take a step of faith. The men who first rode on bare feet would step off in a similar fashion to the shoe ski step off. Time for gliding souls.



The freeboard step off ski was an important development for barefoot water skiing

1947 Go Boat – The Power to Pull

Brief development of boats leading to enough speed: first tow was also a function of speed

1947 (March) A.G. Hancock Barefoot Water skis by stepping off a ski and travels a few hundred yards. - Stew Macdonald inspired?

(March 6) Dick Pope, Jr. is the first to be photographed barefooting

Jr's father Dick Pope, Sr. uses his media machine at Cypress Gardens in Central Florida to spread the news far and wide with photos, print stories, and newsreels. Jr's feat becomes an international sensation.

The bond of boom and barefooter begins with the very first shots. The Miss Cover Girl photo boat at Cypress Gardens was rigged with boom(s) for perfectly placed pictures.

*Australians have stories of early barefoot water skiers but lacks documentation as with Hancock

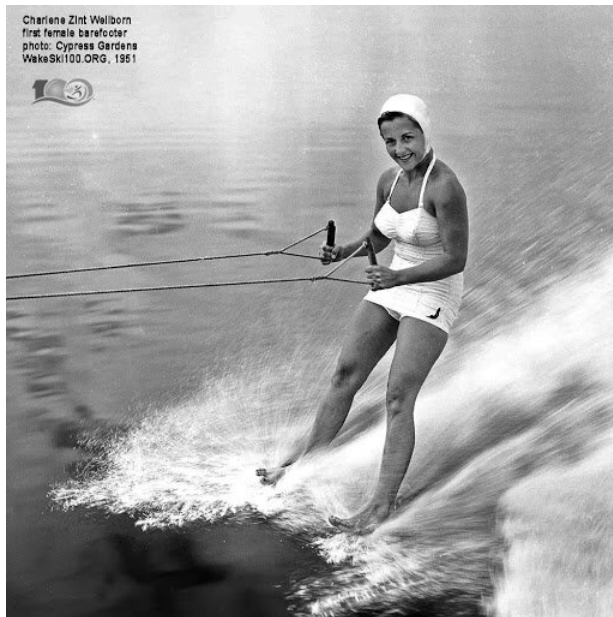


Dick Pope Jr is the first to be photographed barefoot water skiing. Images of his amazing feat go far and wide thanks to his father's worldwide media promotions for Cypress Gardens.

1949 Dick Pope held the first barefoot competition (endurance) in conjunction with the Dixie Water Ski Championships at Cypress Gardens. At the time there were only 12 people in the world who could barefoot, 10 from the USA, and 2 from Mexico. Emilio Zamudio (Mexico) took top honors with 3 laps, followed by Dick Pope Jr. who made 1½ laps. According to Zamudio the engraving on the trophy reads “World Champion Barefoot Skiing Florida Cypress Gardens 1949”

1950s

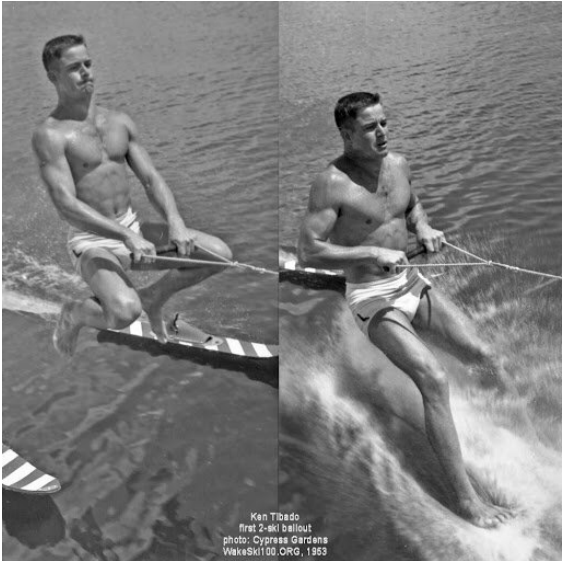
1951 Charlene Zint Wellborn became the first woman to barefoot water ski. She went on to perform at Cypress Gardens, and a newsreel of her skiing was even on an episode of the iconic TV show [M*A*S*H](#), where her performance with Stew MacDonald was described as “patriotic, aquatic, ecstatic, and acrobatic!”



<https://youtu.be/Cp6v7S5aeHk>

*Charlene Wellborn rides the water at forty miles an hour without the aid of skis. You can license this story through AP Archive. Charlene Wellborn on M*A*S*H (Season 10, Episode 5 “Give’em Hell, Hawkeye”*

1953 Ken Tibado, barefootin two ski jump out



Ken Tibado
first 2-ski jump out
photo: Cypress Gardens
WakeSk100.ORG, 1953



Ken Tibado



Ken Tibado
first barefoot beach start
photo: Cypress Gardens
WakeSk100.ORG, 1955

1955 Ken Tibado used a long running start off the beach to get as much speed as possible before hitting the water. A brave move in nothing but a pair of shorts

1957 Deep Water Start invented by Joe Cash



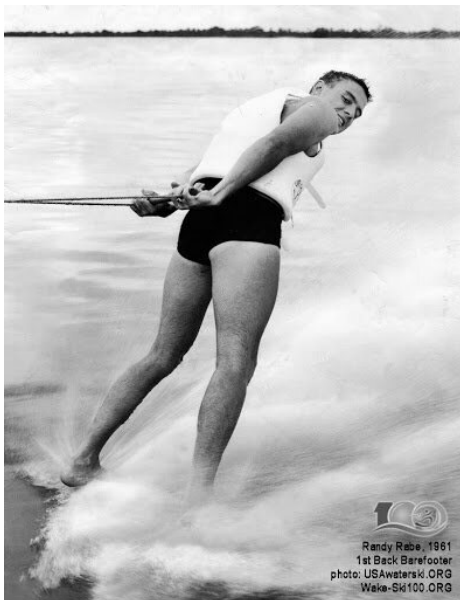
All around waterman Joe Cash did it all, Master's slalom Champion, World record Jumper, and barefoot pioneer.

c1955-1959 First Australian woman barefooter Betty Leighton & Betty Wheeler. In 1960 these two along with Jackie Sidwell barefooted for 30 seconds to become the first women in a State Australian Barefoot Club



First woman barefooter, Betty Leighton on the Hawkesbury River, NSW, Australia

1959 (June) Randy Rabe was the first to backwards barefoot by stepping off of a trick ski at 40 mph



TOP 100 PHOTO LINK: <https://wakeski100-new.squarespace.com/barefoot-entries/rabe-first-backwards>

1960s

1960s: (summary) Performers at Cypress Gardens in central Florida and Tommy Bartlett's in Wisconsin Dells gave thousands of ski shows featuring barefoot water skiing.. Barefooting continues to be popularized worldwide through Dick Pope's media machine at Cypress Gardens. In 1964 Cypress Gardens ties with the Grand Canyon as the #1 US tourist destination.

1960 Terry Vance invents tumble turn

The "tumbleturn" was invented purely by accident in 1960, when Don Thompson and Terry Vance were performing a double barefoot routine, on the lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. As Vance stepped off his skis, he began to fall, but while he continued to hang on, his feet spun around, returning almost in front of him. Thompson, still on his skis, reached over and pulled Vance's legs around, so that he could stand up.

1960 Randy Rabe – front and back toe holds? (according to waterskibarefott.eu)

1963 First Australian Competition: 38 competitors

1964 Don Thomson successfully practiced with a 130 pound sandbag to convince Dick Pope, Sr (founder of Cypress Gardens) to let him try a tandem ride.



Don Thompson & Joline Nathy performing the first documented piggy back ride

1964 First Barefoot Jump – Geoff Nichols, Australian

The earliest barefoot jumps were performed down under, mounting a flat surface on top of a 55 gallon drum filled with air for flotation



Australian Geoff Nicols performs the first documented barefoot jump

1965 Rope on Toe – Graham McPherson, Australian (need photo)

Backwards one foot – Col Watson, Australian

1966 Jumping at Australian Nationals



David Hamilton Australian Side Slide

1967 Garry Barton develops the Barefoot Water Ski Wetsuit

Thicker neoprene in vital areas such as the Back, Chest and Butt – Adjustable Draining Leg Straps –

Locking Collar and Chest Velcro Zip locks.

First manufactured commercially by Ron Harding Wetsuits – Sydney Australia – 1967

(Prior to the barefoot wetsuit water skiers barefooted in one and two piece dive suits and basic wetsuits for water skiing and surfing)

The basic design that Garry Barton designed during 1966 and 1967 is still being used more than 50 years later in 2019, by wetsuit manufacturers worldwide.

1968 Rope in Teeth one foot – Peter Forrester, Australian

Rope one foot backwards – Erwin Luthiger, Australian

First Australian woman to barefoot backwards – Mary McMillan



Mary McMillan does a 1 foot backwards in 1968 Mary was an all around skier and champion speed skier.

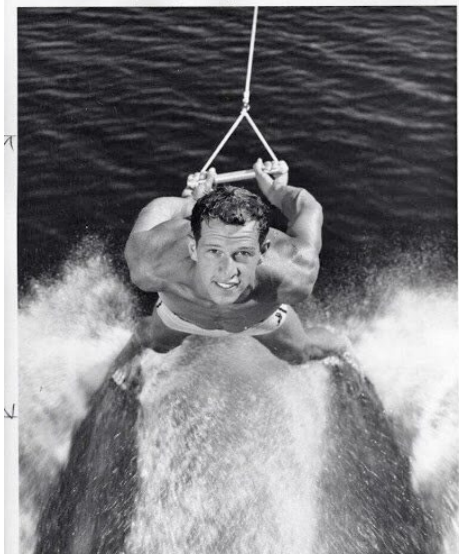
1968-1971 Garry Barton develops the RIGID HANDLE

Developed because it was impossible for a barefoot water skier to recover from a backwards toe hold position. Early prototypes were made with wooden broom handles, garden hose and then electrical conduit. Garry used his new handle to be the first person to recover from a back toehold in 1971.



A comparison of the new rigid handles (front and back toe) to the early style all rope handles

1968 One such performer at the Gardens was barefooting's first star, Don Thomson, the first to do surface turns back and front in the early 1960s. In this all time classic shot Don teamed up with Red McGuire aboard the Miss Cover Girl sky tower, to create advertising magic for Jantzen.



Don Thomson famous backwards barefooting image

1969 Backwards Beach and Deepwater Starts – Garry Barton, Australian

Garry being an instructor of martial arts understood pain and also from his championship days road cycling. The months of pain now started on the water pioneering a new barefoot start – Backwards!

Garry persevered for nearly a year many times every week with different speeds and techniques until he finally stood up backwards barefoot for the first time.

This was in very early 1969. (He also used rubber thongs as well as a cricket box that he wore in the groin of his wetsuit to lessen the pain whilst perfecting this new start method)The water ski world was totally amazed when he performed this new backwards start method in public for the very first time at the Australian Barefoot Water Ski Championships at Manly Dam in Sydney, Australia on May 03, 1969.

In 1972 he perfected backwards one foot stand ups both from deep water and the beach.



Garry Barton performs the first backward beach start in the Barefoot Water Ski Championships at Manly Dam in Sydney, Australia on May 03, 1969

1970s

1970 First female jump in NSW Australia, Haidee Lance, not in competition as it was banned

1971 First recovery from backwards toe hold – Garry Barton, Australian



Garry Barton with his original rigid handle design, allowing him for the first time, to recover from the backwards toehold position

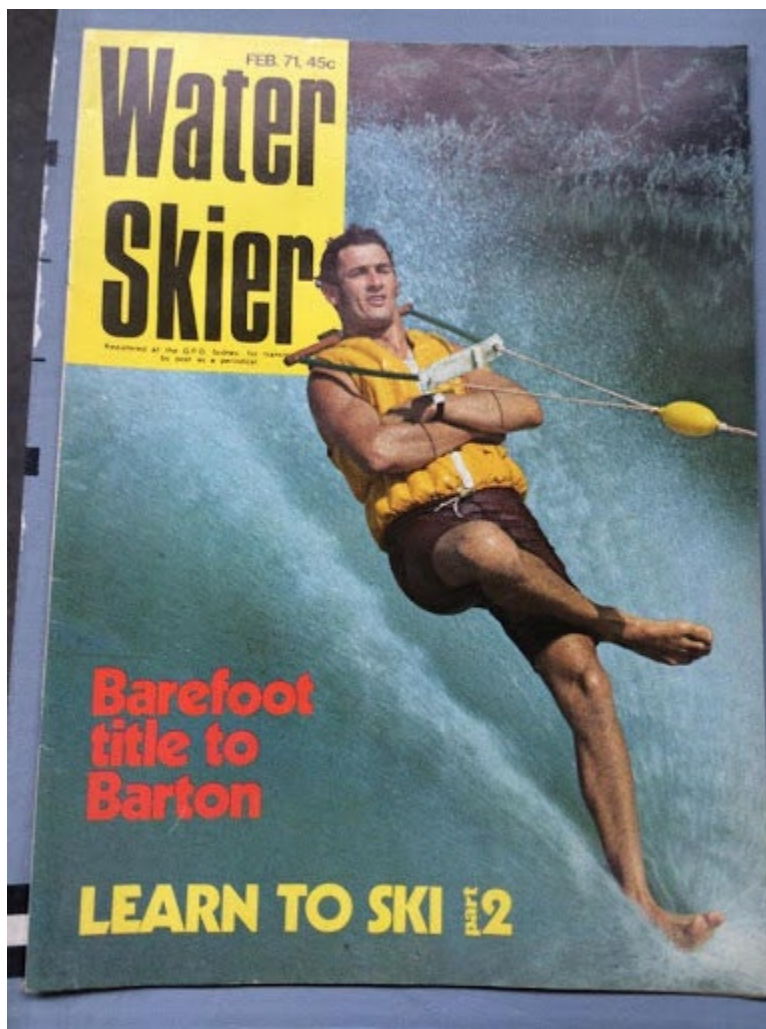
1972 NEW MOVE: feet to feet toe turns both front to back and back to front – Garry Barton, Australia

1972 Barefoot Slalom Innovation- Garry Barton

Barefoot Slalom had also become stagnant and in 1972 Garry Barton pioneered and was the first ever in the world to execute one foot forward barefoot slalom.

Also during 1972 he introduced backwards barefoot slalom both on two feet and one foot but he was not given approval to do these in competition by the Australian Barefoot Water Ski Club as they said it would give him an unfair advantage!

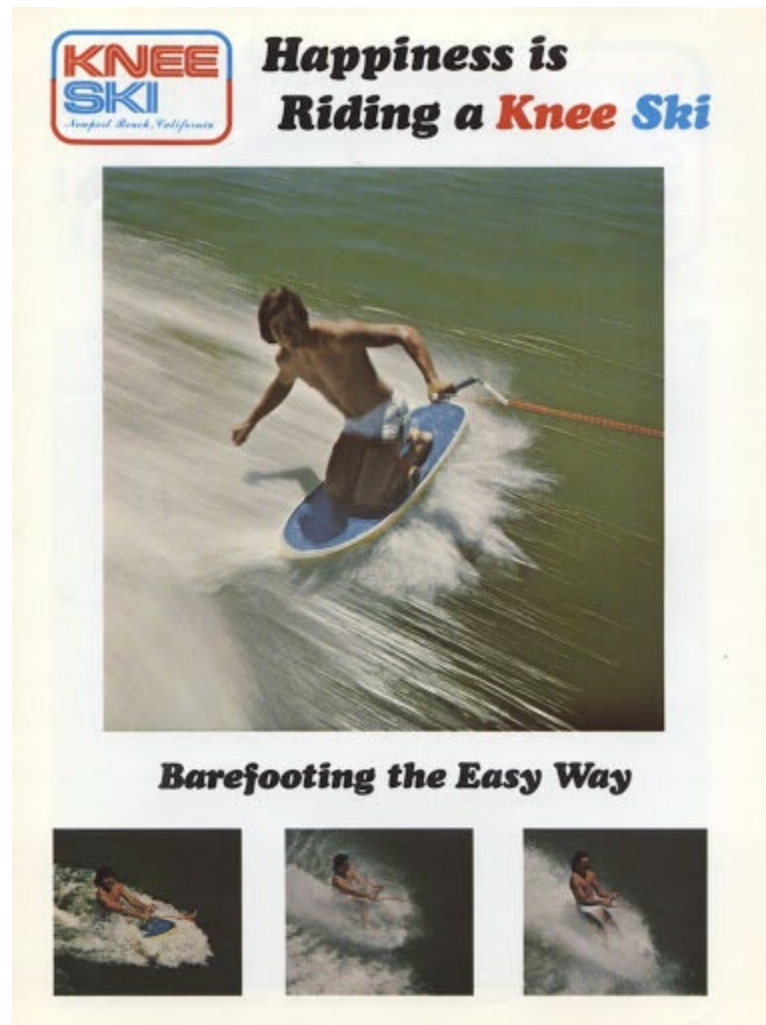
However this backwards barefoot slalom was then approved during 1973, the year after Garry had retired from the Australian Nationals competition in open men's division! (Garry was undefeated overall in any competition from 1969 to 1972)



Garry Barton, Australian Barefoot Water Ski Champion and IWWF Hall Of Fame Pioneer magazine cover 1972

<https://youtu.be/8oWmdmxSmec>

Barefoot water skiing Timex watch commercial from 1970 with Garry Barton from Australia' Timex'



Knee Ski by Mike Murphy – world's first water ski kneeboard – promoted as barefoot training device.

1973 Around The Boat – Garry Barton, Australian

It is believed that Garry Barton was also the first water skier to ever accomplish this on his bare feet and not on a water ski! his 360 degree whirl amazed the crowds during the 1973 ski show at the Moomba Water Ski International in Melbourne, Australia.

1973 Rope on Toe Deep Water Start frontwards – Paul McManus, Australian

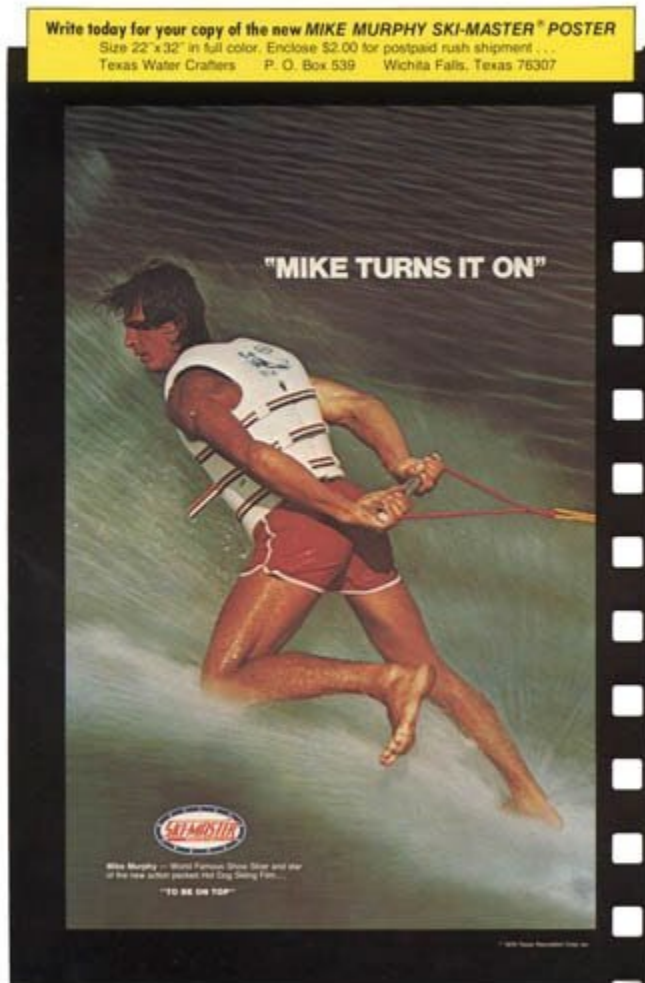


1973 Cypress Gardens "Up From Down Under", Australia vs USA Barefoot Tournament competitors and officials

1973 Up From Down Under Film from Cypress Gardens (Paul Gerresh)

<https://youtu.be/o8ZB3rCGTDg>

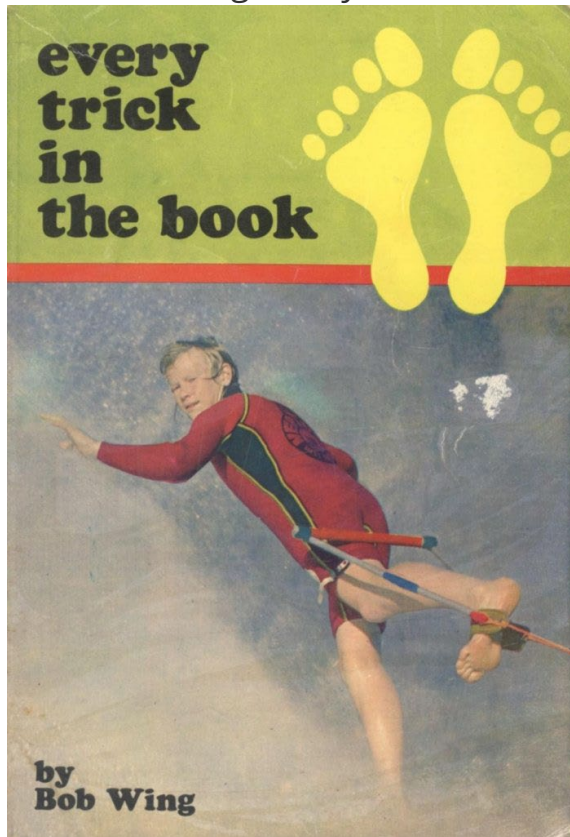
1976 Mike Turns it on barefoot poster by Ski Master



1976 Mike Botti in a poster ad for Ski Master Inc.

1977 First toe turn front-to-back by Alan Moffat from Australia

1977 Bob Wing "Every Trick in the Book"



"Every Trick In The Book" instructional book by Bob Wing featuring Robert and Brett Wing

1978 American Barefoot Club is formed under the auspices of the American Water Ski Association. First edition of the American Barefoot Rules are established.

1978 Correct Craft develops the Barefoot Nautique, the first towboat designed specifically for barefooting. The first model was used to pull the first US Nationals.

1978 Correct Craft attempts to develop the first commercially available barefoot boom. Made of stainless steel, its high cost, proneness to bend (unlike aluminum) and Correct Craft's attorney's opinion that it is too high of a risk, the boom is never brought to market.

1978 First U.S. Barefoot Nationals, August, Waco, TX. First US Barefoot Team is selected based on performances at the Nationals.

1978 First World Barefoot Championships held in November, Canberra, Australia, 54 barefooters from 10 countries broadcast on Australian TV. Brett Wing and Colleen Wilkinson winners



1978 American Barefoot Club under the American water ski Association patch. Qualification was to barefoot for 1 minute. Minutes above the 1 minute was indicated by small number patches that could be sewn on with the patch. Photo courtesy of John Cornish



The American Barefoot Club under the American Water Ski Association later also had 3 levels of proficiency badges for barefooters who were judged and performed prescribed tricks. Photo courtesy of John Cornish

First Barefoot Water Ski World Championships 1978, Canberra, Australia.
<https://youtu.be/7yqccMDPqMg>

This is the first Barefoot Water ski Championship held in 1978 in Canberra, Australia <https://youtu.be/jYvbXFZymIE>

1978 Barefoot video featured Brett Wing, who was fresh from his World Championship win along with Kim Lampard a future champion from Australia. <https://youtu.be/RdanAdD22s4>



1978 John Hacker, Australian, coach and barefooter makes the cover of Spray as a pioneer super star.

1979 John Hacker, Australian Barefoot Ambassador, coach and barefooter publishes a "Step-by-Step Barefoot Water Skiing" how to book using stick figures in the illustrations. (11" x 17" paperback) A very interesting and helpful book at the time. It was done in cooperation and distribution with the American Barefoot Club.

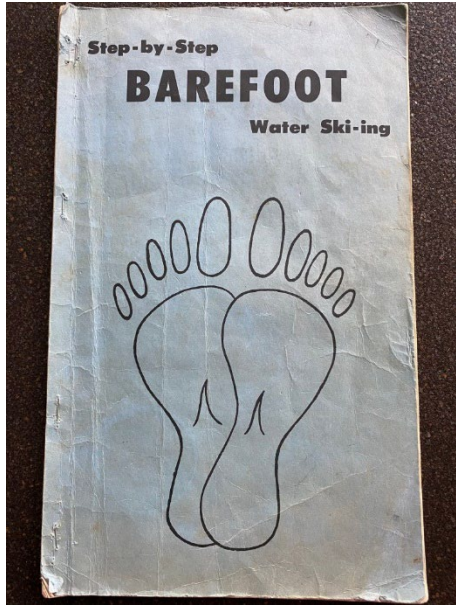


Photo courtesy of John Cornish

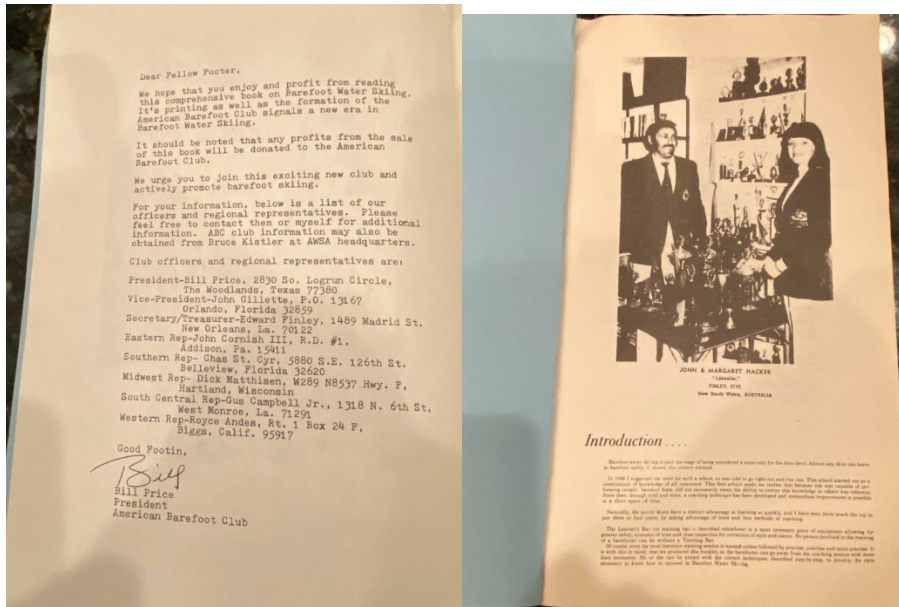


Photo courtesy of John Cornish

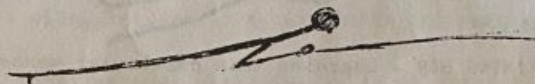
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TUMBLETURN START

EQUIPMENT - Barefoot wetsuit with buoyancy vest underneath to help minimise the water turbulence felt on back
A 12" (300mm) handle is best to learn with, as this keeps arms close together and there is less chance of handle catching on parts of body during the spin around.

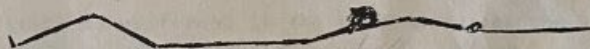
STEP 1 Head down, chest out, keeping arms bent so handle is up near chest as power is applied, you will then lift out of water onto elbows. Plane to about 20 mph (32km) and then roll over, letting arms stretch out full length and raise head upwards through arms during roll over so it is not caught in water.

Diagram 8*



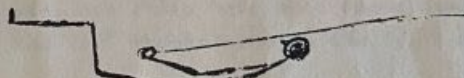
STEP 2 Build up speed to normal barefoot speed - if bouncing of body occurs, slightly bend knees and press heels into water.

Diagram 9*



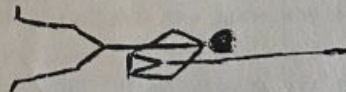
STEP 3 pull arms directly over head, down to about waist line 6-12" (150-300mm) away from body, at the same time bring knees to 90° bend (NB - head to be kept off water at all times as this is the stage where the neck can receive a nasty jar if contact is made with water). Back should be slightly arched so planing is on centre of back.

Diagram 10*



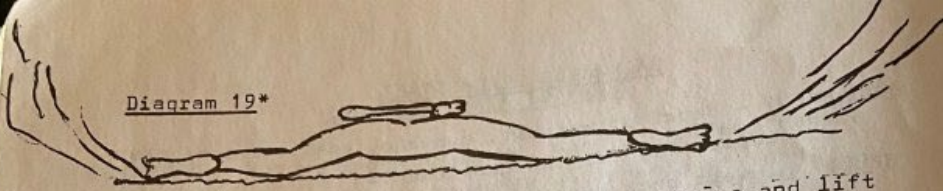
STEP 4 to turn around, simply move handle approx 6" (150mm) to the side in the direction of turn, and water pressure will automatically spin body around without further effort.

Diagram 11*



STEP 5 to complete turn, handle must be brought back to centre of body at waist level half way round (if you don't, your feet will finish both on one side of rope). This is the point where most difficulty is experienced. To assist, practise on the floor with handle connected to large rubber bands

Diagram 19*



STEP 4 To obtain barefoot position, bend knees and lift up bottom - do not stand up with straight legs. Stance will be with chin near water and bottom in air. As the bottom rises the feet automatically come around slowly gripping the water. By bringing legs closer together you can lift up head and obtain backwards barefoot position.

Diagram 20*



BACKWARDS DEEPWATER START

STEPS As for Backwards Beach Start EXCEPT to come out of the water you need to put head down and stretch out whilst being pulled out of water, and it is rather easy to lose correct body position and bounce. Try Beach Start first and gradually work down into deeper water for Deepwater Start.

BACKWARDS STARTS FEET OFF


APPLICATION - most skiers prefer to learn with foot off the rope from the beginning, as this makes them stretch out and not rely on the rope for assistance. Some plane to barefoot speed by pushing down on the rope and their shoulders. This does work, except it can lead to oscillation problems during the transfer from feet-on-rope, to feet-off-rope position. It is sometimes helpful in feet on rope start to just hook one foot over the rope - this lines up the body with boat and as power is applied, take foot off and hold feet about 3-6" (75-150mm) either side of rope. The transition to feet off is then made easier, as the same body position is experienced on take-off and planing.

Photo courtesy of John Cornish

1979 A new product the Hydroslide kneeboard is successfully promoted by Danny Churchill. Early advertising for the board (and other brands that follow) almost always include promotions regarding using it as a training device to learn how to ride. This very early ad for Hydroslide features barefoot speed world record holder Lee Kirk. Kneeboards are the hottest ride in towed water sports in the 1980s, and thousands of people use their kneeboard to learn how to barefoot for the first time.


You'll flip over

Hydro Slide



The new Hydro Slide® , constructed of the strongest yet lightest materials available, has become the fastest selling product in the world of waterskis. Acclaimed by professional ski instructors as a superior training aid for beginning skiers, the 100% flexible construction of the Hydro Slide® makes skiing simple and safe. Towed by as little as 10 hp, the versatility of the Hydro Slide® is amazing. Whether slalom, tricks, jumping or freestyle—the Hydro Slide® is a superior performer. Endorsed by the world's most accomplished barefooters, the Hydro Slide® is unquestionably the finest barefoot training device available.

The Hydro Slide® is bringing the water ski world to its knees!

 **portugal company, inc.**
15261 Boyle Avenue, Fontana, CA 92335
(714) 823-1393

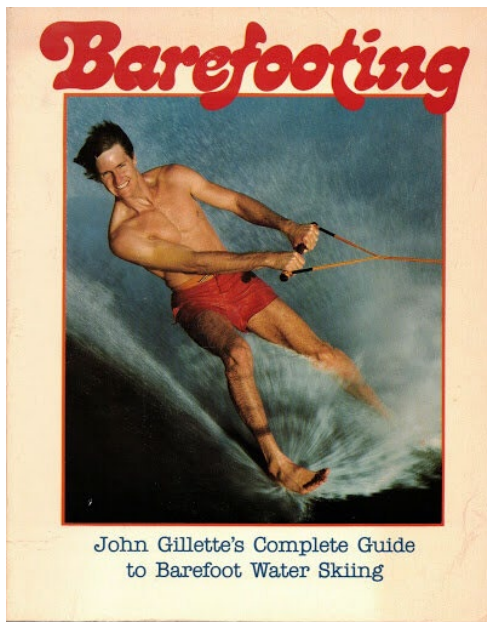
Printed in the U.S.A.

Upper right corner: using the Hydroslide as a barefoot training device. The explosion of popularity of kneeboarding in the 1980s is boon to teaching new barefooters.



1997 (May) Mike Botti, *Spray Magazine's* first American barefoot Superstar, center fold.

1980s



1980 John Gillette book "Barefooting" was a paperback book that featured history, how to, and general information pertaining to all aspects of barefoot water skiing.

In Search of Glass

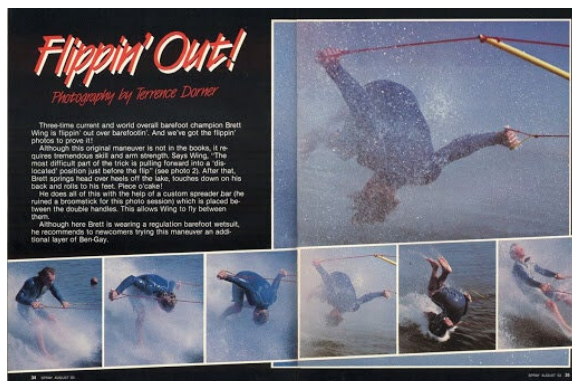
<https://youtu.be/niSKEQzi1B8>

Great barefooting video shot at Cypress Gardens. Featuring Barefooters:

T.J. Beatty, Rob Bemman, Betty Bonifay, Lisa Emry, Mark Voisard, Sally Winter

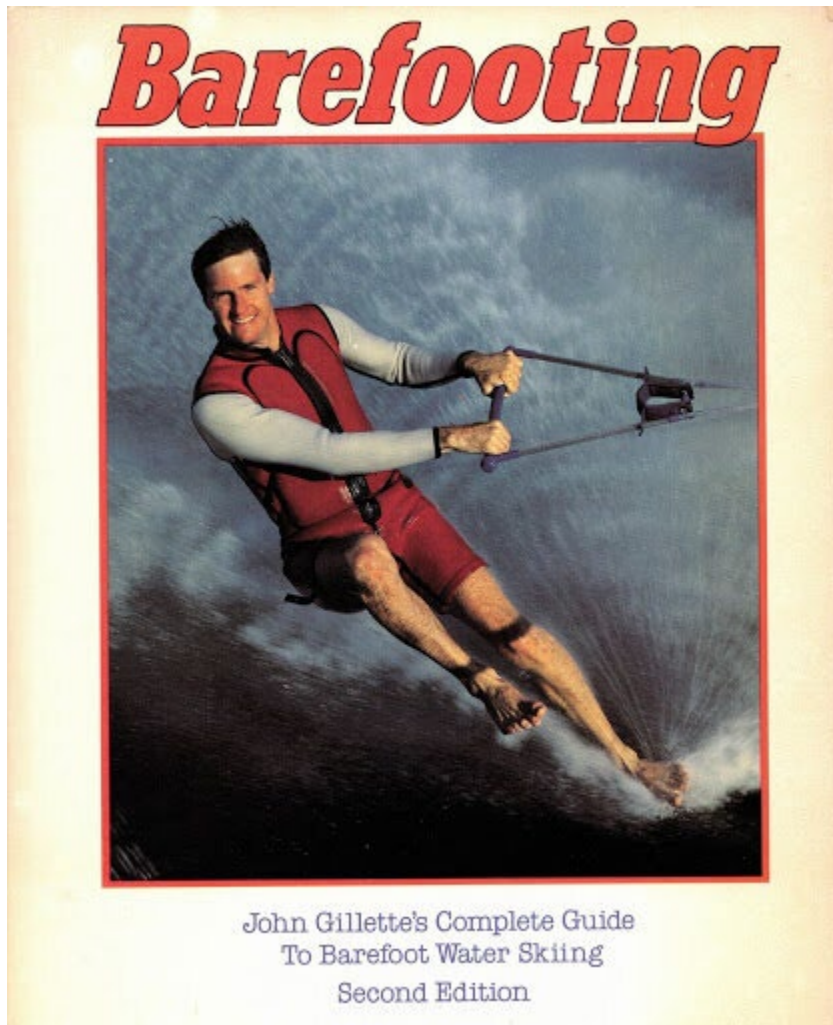


1982 Raging Bull Ron Scarpa popularizes the side slide...with style!



1983 Brett Wing sequence doing a front flip with a special handle

1987 Ron Scarpa jumps out of a helicopter 67 feet above the water and barefoots away for the Guinness Book of World Records at the 1987 US Barefoot Nationals, Owego, NY. It was covered and televised by the Guinness Records TV Show <https://youtu.be/D8AmB2Oo6yo>



1987 John Gillette's 2nd Edition "Barefooting" book.

Ron Scarpa comes up with a winning commercial for Mountain Dew, Water skiing behind a Horse. Watch! <https://youtu.be/AsjX6xa7Lfc>

1989 Dave Reinhart in James Bond, License to Kill
<https://youtu.be/W3FaK6butYA>

One of the world's best water skiers Dave "The Dog" Reinhart doubles for Timothy Dalton in this classic 007 escape stunt. From scuba diving to "barefooting", while dodging bullets, and a highflying finale.

1982 Lori Powell recognized as the first female jumper in the world when she was allowed to do a demonstration jump at the World Barefoot Championships in Acapulco

1989 Scott Pellaton's World Record Barefoot Speed Run 135.74 mph. A record that still stands today. <https://youtu.be/zmYsSW-EqYE>

1990s

Early 1990s Early 1990s Water Ski Magazine promotes Barefooting instructional books and video alongside growing list of different things to ride. (WSM April 1992)

1990 Mike Seipel lands first inverted jump in competition at the World Championships. Casey Scalise (USA) was a forerunner for the jump event and also successfully landed an inverted jump.

1990 Hot Rock N' Feet II video featuring Mike Seiple, Lane Bowers and others

The image shows the VHS cover for the video "HOT ROCK N' FEET II". The cover is split into two main sections. The left section is a white box with black text containing promotional information. The right section is a blue background with a photo of Mike Seipel performing a water skiing stunt. The title "HOT ROCK N' FEET II" is written in large, stylized pink and blue letters across the top. The Barefoot International logo is in the top right corner. The text "BAREFOOT WATER SKIING" is written vertically on the left side of the right section. The name "Mike Seipel" and "Two Time World Champion" are at the bottom of the photo. The VHS logo and "STEREO" are at the bottom left. The website "www.WakeSlid100.org" is at the bottom right.

HOT ROCK N' FEET II

Video Craft Productions

BAREFOOT INTERNATIONAL

BAREFOOT WATER SKIING

HOT ROCK N' FEET II

BAREFOOT INTERNATIONAL

PRESENTS

Two Time World Champion Mike Seipel

DIRECTED BY SCOTT GRAY

BAREFOOT WATER SKIING

www.WakeSlid100.org

BAREFOOT INTERNATIONAL Ltd.
is proud to present this hot barefoot waterski music video, "Hot Rock'n Feet II."

This exciting video will thrill you with never-before-seen, close-up shots and angles of some of the most incredible stunts ever performed on water by some of the best barefoot waterskiers in the world, including the **Two Time World Barefoot Champion, Mike Seipel**. With its "hot rock'n" soundtrack and its nonstop waterski action, this video will leave you breathless.

The action begins when a nerd visits Barefoot International Waterski School in West Palm Beach, Florida for an unusual day of waterskiing lessons. Little does he know that he is about to experience a day that will change him forever. In this video you will follow Matt, the backward and skeptical student, through an incredible day of barefooting, boogie, babes, sun and fun beyond his wildest dreams. Not only will Matt learn to barefoot ski, but by the end of the day he will be transformed into a "Barefootin' Bad Boy!"

Produced by Video Craft Productions, Inc.
Executive Producer, Barefoot International Ltd.
Writer, Director, Scott Gray
Cover Photo by Tom King

SPONSORED BY:

Raptiles
VALEO
Barefoot International
LIFE'S A BEACH
YAMAHA
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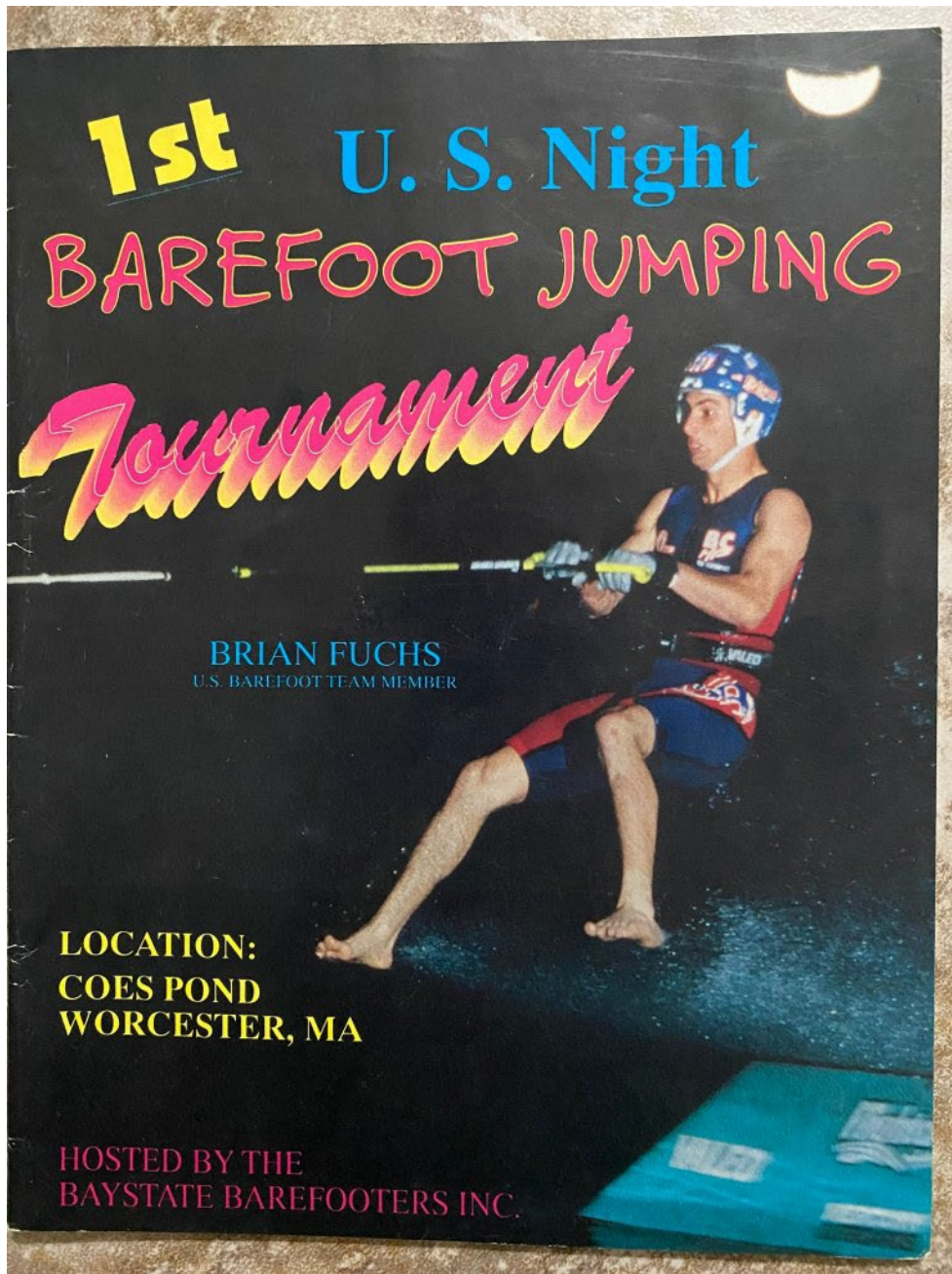
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Original copyright infringement is investigated by the FBI and may constitute a felony with a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine.

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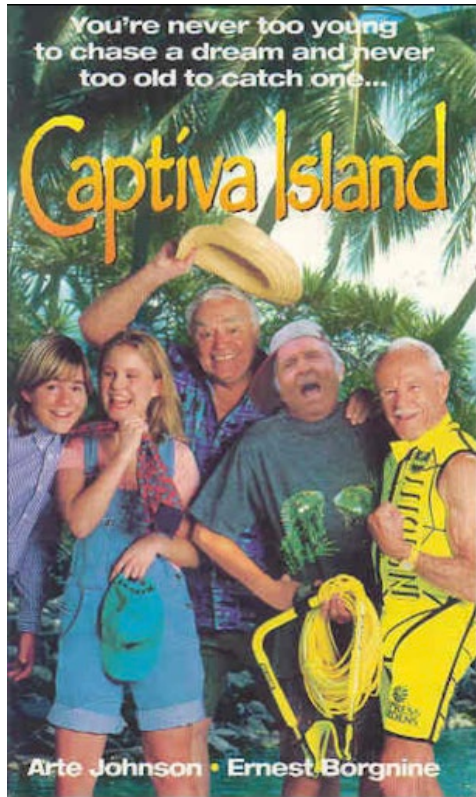
VHS STEREO

1992 6 year old Mikey Caruso and 77 year old Banana George Blair show their barefooting <https://youtu.be/qTLKgCR1hul>



1993 The first sanctioned "Night Jumping Tournament" held in MA, USA program cover.

1995 Very first X games (Providence, Rhode Island, USA) Australia's Justin Seers wins gold in the combined skills jumping event. <https://youtu.be/pEAl-sLKnw4>



1995 Banana George stars in "Captiva Island" feature film with Ernest Borgnine and Artie Johnson

2000s

2000 - Flight Worlds Banana George Exhibition Tooth hold @ 85 + Interview on ESPN

<https://youtu.be/Yk669JRI7vA>

The Banana Man on ESPN...with his trademark flying ramp start and front tooth hold...all at 85 years old! More Great Water Skiing: Wet & Wild Water Ski Playlist...

200X First "Backbreaker" barefooter wears a harness and tows a jumper off the ramp, a new act for show skiing.

2004: Dean Lavelle Develops Double tower for Barefoot International – Dean develops the tall tower to help get even bigger air on his wakeboard, but barefooting and hydrofoiling take notice. Barefooting permits this equipment to be used in completions

2004-2005 Andre De Villiers -develops freestyle with the use of the tall tower.



The high tower now most commonly referred to as "The Fly High"