

## Innovative, open source SCARPA Beta Test helps put three Terminator X NTN boots on table Fall 2009

Contributed by Administrator  
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BOULDER, Colo. - After putting thousands of user days on its new Terminator X series telemark boots through an innovative beta test program that solicited the involvement of consumers this spring, SCARPA reported in early June that tester feedback is overwhelmingly positive about its 2009 NTN-compatible boot series, and that problems with the Fall 2008 boot series have been fully addressed.

Changes made to both molds and plastics in the Terminator X series resulted in a beta test during which testers were unable to replicate cracking problems that occurred in some production boots this past winter. In terms of flex and stiffness, the new boots are unchanged from their predecessors. Those qualities drew universally high praise in the current season from consumers, athletes and media testers. Beta testers echoed those sentiments.

SCARPA's beta test collected extensive field data. Testers provided logs on what days they skied, for how long, and under what conditions (air temperature, snow conditions, bindings setting, skis and style of skiing). Testers were required to provide data logs at the end of the test, and contact SCARPA immediately with any major problems.

"SCARPA's DNA is interchangeable with innovation. While 75 mm telemark bindings are far from dead, we believe NTN represents the most innovative, performance-driven binding technology for telemark skiing looking forward, so we are committed to building the best boots for this powerful new system," said Chris Clark, director of marketing and winter product development for SCARPA North America.

"While there are often huge challenges associated with being a leader in creating new technologies, and that's been the case here, SCARPA is - and always has been - committed to getting it right and standing behind our products," Clark said. "That's what this beta test program was all about. We're excited to put three NTN boots on the table for this coming fall that get it exactly right. And we thank the folks who participated in this beta program for helping us make sure of that."

This past December, some consumers began reporting their boots were cracking at the base of the toebox at the interface with the sole welt, despite extensive in-house and athlete testing done in prior years. The cracking was the apparent result of a combination of factors: the forces the more powerful NTN binding was putting on the boot, the durometers of the new triple-injection construction, and the mold-interface locations.

While the cracking was only seen in a small percentage of boots sold (some people cracked multiple pairs while others were unable to crack a pair at all despite repeated attempts), SCARPA ceased selling NTN boots mid-winter. It asked retailers to return unsold boots, and initiated a process for consumers who had cracked boots to return them while keeping them skiing during the season.

Unable to replicate the cracking with extensive lab testing or through on-snow testing by its in-house team, SCARPA turned to a beta test involving the very consumers who were experiencing problems, giving them the option to be involved or not. The goal of the program was three-fold:

- To keep people who purchased SCARPA boots skiing during the winter season.
- To generate as much user feedback as possible during a shorter-than-normal window for testing.
- To fully stand behind its products.

While awaiting arrival of beta test boots, SCARPA replaced boots for many early adopting consumers with existing Terminator X products to keep them skiing, with the understanding that it was a temporary fix and that they would receive boots with a permanent solution to the problem prior to the following ski season.

All people who cracked boots were invited to participate in the beta test program. More than 50 percent accepted, including a number of ski patrollers using NTN gear, as well as several people who cracked multiple pairs of boots earlier in the season. SCARPA also included a number of its pro ski athletes and others in the beta test program.

Consumers who broke boots, opted not to participate but who want replacement boots will receive new boots before the start of the Fall 2009 ski season. Consumers who participated in the test may keep their boots, backed by full SCARPA warranty, or they may return them for a pair of Fall 2009 production boots when available.

Information collected by SCARPA over the last six months indicates that boots with cracking problems either failed very quickly in their lifespan, or they didn't crack at all. There has not been a recall of Terminator X products that have not cracked. However, SCARPA continues to stand behind all Terminator X products moving forward.

For Fall 2009, SCARPA is one of three manufacturers building boots for the NTN binding system, which is manufactured by Rottefella. Along with addressing the problems in current year products, SCARPA for the coming fall will offer the Terminator X, Terminator X Pro and Terminator X Comp down to shell size 24.5, extending size options for telemark skiers interested in NTN.

For more information about SCARPA, visit