Four years ago Fischer began testing skin ski technology. This was nothing new for Fischer, their old Mohair skis of the 1970's won multiple Worldcups and Marathons. This time around, the goal was to have the glide of a waxable ski with the crampon like grip that comes with skin technology. That is definitely what was achieved with the new "Twin Skin."

What makes Fischer’s Twin Skin different from other skin skis on the market? First and foremost is the glide. It is pretty much a given that all skin skis are going to have excellent grip. Compare all the models head to head and excellent grip is a universal. Fischer is set apart by how their version glides: faster, smoother and easier than the other offerings out there. How is this achieved? Simple, Fischer cut
cavities into its ski for two separate Mohair strips. The cavities are deep at the beginning of the kick zone which means less of the strip is exposed. The cavities are shallower under the ball of the foot which makes the Mohair thicker toward the back. This is just like a well waxed classic ski, thin layer of wax at the beginning of the wax pocket with a thicker layer right under foot. Other Skin Skis have the same amount of skin from front to back. The Fischer Twin Skin changes height from front to back which means far better glide. It also helps that Fischer is the only company offering skis with skin technology that changes the lengths of its skins for the different lengths of its skis.

If you go to a demo and compare the glide of different skin skis by double poling or descending a gentle downhill, the difference in glide will not seem too great between the different brands. When your weight is centered above the ski the glide can be pretty equal regardless of what a brand does with its skins. However, when you are diagonal striding and putting your weight forward onto the gliding ski, you will find Fischer’s Twin Skin glides much faster than other skis with skins. This is especially noticeable when climbing gentle uphills, the Twin Skin glides while the others stall out.
If ever there was a category of ski that benefits from the adjustability of NIS plates, it is the skin ski category. You can always play with how long, short or thick you apply grip wax or klister to a ski. The location of skins on a ski cannot be adjusted. However, if your skin ski has a NIS plate, you can easily move that binding fore and aft to get the optimal combination of grip and glide. The temperatures went up during testing on the Dachstein Glacier which meant warmer and slower snow. We moved the bindings back a couple of clicks on the NIS skis and they kept the same level of grip and glide they had in the cold and dry conditions of the morning. The skis without NIS plates were at a huge disadvantage. We had to leave the bindings in the same location with the flat skis and their glide greatly suffered because of it. Until you get the chance to ski a specific pair of skin skis, you won’t know what the ideal binding location will be. This category of ski needs NIS to get its best performance.
As the conditions changed, it was imperative to move the bindings

Fischer’s new twin ski, available at US retailers December, 2015

All in all, it was a great day on the Dachstein and all the skis were a lot of fun to test. This is an exciting category of ski and it was great to see Fischer bring in some new technology for an established concept.