

PREMIER
ISSUE!

THE JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTION | FALL 2008

32 DEGREES

WATCHING THE COMPETITION

What instructors can learn by seeing
what the pros are throwing down

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**PSIA-AASI SELECTS
NEW
NATIONAL TEAMS**



YOUNG AT HEART
3 PROGRAMS THAT
CAPTIVATE KIDDOS

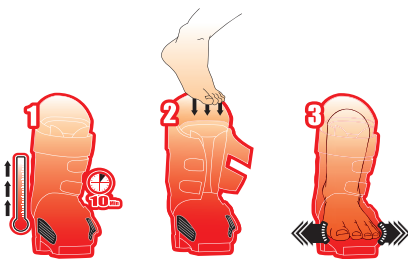


TEACHING TIP:
HOW OUTRIGGERS AID
DIRECTIONAL MOVEMENT





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- PASCAL PALLATIN, APINE SKI BOOT PRODUCT DEVELOPER

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Spencer Tamblyn, a halfpipe and freestyle coach for the USASA PacSun national team and Steamboat Springs (Colorado) Winter Sports Club catches the action at the U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix staged at Killington Resort in Vermont.

Photo by Tobias Nielsen.



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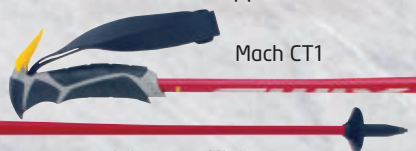


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- Develop personally and professionally
- Create positive learning experiences
- Have more fun

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What's New? Actually, Quite a Lot

By Ray Allard,

PSIA-AASI President and Chairman of the Board

I'm honored to report that the PSIA-AASI Board of Directors has reelected me for another two-year term as president. While many of our energies during my first term were directed toward large structural/internal issues, we were mindful of maintaining high levels of membership service and benefits, as well as producing and/or updating quality materials and programs. The board appointed task forces and approved proposals that have sown the seeds for future offerings, and I'm pleased that I'll have the opportunity to oversee activities that will have a positive, direct impact on the membership.

Craig Albright (Operations VP) and **Eric Sheekleton** (Executive VP) were also reelected. **Jerry Warren** has stepped down as Communications VP and has been replaced by **John Peppler**. The main change in board membership is that **PSIA-NW Representative John Weston** has been replaced by **Ed Younglove**, former Presidents' Council chair. **Skip Dickel** from Central Division is the new Presidents' Council chair and an ex-officio member of the board. Having little turnover at the governance level these past two years has helped keep the organization on an even keel as we dealt with some big changes.

And just what are those changes? For starters, we have further reconfigured our relationship with National Ski Patrol (NSP), resulting in completely separate staffs and operations for both organizations. Each now occupies its own floor within our jointly owned office building, with the National Ski Areas Association remaining a tenant on the third floor. Also, PSIA-AASI and NSP each occupy one half of our jointly owned warehouse. What this means to the average PSIA-AASI member is that, from our back office to the front, every employee, operation, and resource is now dedicated 100 percent to the service of PSIA-AASI. While the staff is smaller, and some valued

employees have moved on, we were fortunate to retain nearly all our key employees. We realized many economies of scale with NSP over the past two decades, and still enjoy a strong bond as "sister" organizations, but it is clear that both associations are now better positioned to pursue their individual agendas.

I hope you have all read July's *PSIA-AASI Education E-Blast*, as it reported on numerous activities, projects, services, and materials of interest to all disciplines. Log on to our website (www.psia.org or www.aasi.org) if you missed it. A few additional items: **Beth Fox** (from Rocky Mountain Division) was reappointed as the adaptive representative to the Education Advisory Committee (EAC), and **Grant Nakamura** (from Central and Northern Rocky Mountain Divisions) replaced **Nelson Wingard** as the children's representative. A new board task force is compiling information on divisional accreditation programs, with a goal of creating some standardization and establishing reciprocity among divisions wherever possible.

A record-breaking 139 candidates—from all nine divisions—took part in PSIA-AASI's National Teams Selection in April, and I'm especially excited about the new teams chosen. They bring a lot of new blood into the mix as we develop our message for the next four years and look forward to the next Interski, to be held in Austria in 2011.

You've no doubt noticed that this magazine has a new name and look. While *The Professional Skier (TPS)* and *The Pro Rider (TPR)* have served us very well, both were due for a redesign in order to remain contemporary and engaging. The redesign and name change to *32 Degrees: The Journal of Professional Snowsports Instruction* better reflect the snowsports industry and the diversity of teachers in our associations. *TPS* was perceived as an alpine magazine

and *TPR* came out only once per year. The idea is for *32 Degrees* to feature information for most, if not all, disciplines in each issue, and to bring instructors more in touch with the industry in which they work. We will be publishing three issues a year and changing the delivery schedule to better coincide with the snowsports season (October, December, and February).

PSIA-AASI is also retooling its website presence in a redesign that will deliver a comprehensive and interactive website that meets the information and content expectations of our diverse audiences. Watch for significant website upgrades in graphics and content this fall, and new tools introduced during the course of the season and beyond. The overall strategy is to deliver information more consistently throughout the year, and create better synergy between the website and association magazine. Continuing the topic of things to come, the basic architecture of our new association management system is nearing completion, but many of the elements that will be most obvious to members will most likely not be launched until next year.

Last season was a strong one for most of the country, and surveys sponsored by the National Ski Areas Association indicate that the industry saw a record number of skier/rider days. For us, this translated into an increase in new members and good retention of current members. We welcome those who have joined our ranks and thank those who continue to support us by maintaining their membership status, some for over 50 years!

Worth a read: an article by **Rick Kahl** in the "Speak Out" section of the July issue of *Ski Area Management* magazine addressing the balance between snowsports school profit margins, H2B visa issues, and the industry objective of bringing more new participants into snowsports.

Here's to another great season! 

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Be The Change

What You Can Do About Global Warming

By Tony Case

It's been decades since Mahatma Gandhi made his now-famous statement, "Be the change you want to see in the world," but his directive seems particularly relevant today as people come to grips with global climate change.

In the Pacific Northwest—where I live and teach skiing—at least three of the last 10 winters have been of the El Niño variety, which means a drier, milder season with less snow than usual. Even during the 2006 season, a year when much of the country envied our snowpack, our total numbers were down between 25 to 30 percent from average snow levels just 60 years ago. (While the local data exists, debate continues as to whether the change in snowpack is due to long-term climate change, or to other regional or global climate cycles.^{1,2})

Climate change hits different parts of the country in different ways, but one thing mountain environments across the world have in common is that they're undergoing huge fluctuations from historical norms. I believe this is an issue that hits all snowsports professionals where they live.

For many of us, doing something about climate change is a lot like thinking about getting into shape for the coming season: it's a daunting prospect, and there seem to be a million reasons why we don't jump right in and alter our behavior. Resolving to do something to help fight climate change requires taking a realistic look at how we live our lives . . . and committing to personal changes. And the longer we wait, the harder it is.

In my opinion, the real issue is not whether individuals can do anything that will have a significant positive effect on climate change, but rather what the consequences might be if people like you and me don't bother to do anything. If those of us involved in snowsports hope to see a future for our way of life and a profession we love, we have to educate ourselves

and our clients about how to effect positive change. And let's be honest here, lean snow years and dwindling glaciers have basically served as a canary in a coalmine when it comes to warming on a global scale. Bigger, more drastic problems could be ahead. Not being able to ski or snowboard is going to seem trivial if food production begins to fail, oceans swallow up coastal regions, and deserts begin to expand.

What follows is a short list of actions you can take to help slow the rate of climate change. My intent is not to provide a comprehensive list of life-altering choices, but I would like to make some suggestions on how to make some personal choices with regard to climate change.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Get educated.

See Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth* (if you haven't already). It's full of eye-opening information, and whether you agree with all the data or not, it's bound to get you thinking about how you live your life and what kind of effect you're having on the environment. In terms of other media, it's hard to find a magazine or bookshelf these days that doesn't feature a headline or title that calls attention to "green" issues, but some sources can be more concise and helpful than others. Lester Brown, Paul Hawken, and Bill McKibben have written extensively on the issues of the environment and sustainability, and the online magazine *grist.com* is an excellent (and often humorous) source for environmental news.

Take some time to learn about conservation and recycling. If you don't already recycle, seek out local recycling programs (or start one, if your town doesn't already have one).

2. Change fuelish habits.

Carpool or ride a bus to work (unless, that is, you're lucky enough to live within walking distance of your home snowsports area). The biggest contributor to global warming is the carbon generated by the fossil fuels we burn in our vehicles. The next time you're in the market for new wheels, consider hybrid technology.

Take fewer plane trips. Carefully plan your errands so that you take fewer trips around town. Learn to appreciate the backcountry around your local ski area: hike for some turns once in a while and enjoy the solitude. In the off-season, find

a sport that doesn't require a motor, e.g., mountain biking, rock climbing, or kayaking.

3. Make your consumption align with your values.

You can choose to buy your gear from progressive-thinking companies such as Patagonia, which has a record of promoting environmental education and activism. Make a habit of looking into other companies you buy from; find out if they have any "green" policies when it comes to manufacturing their products. Where do the materials in your gear come from? And do the companies you patronize have any plan for reclaiming their products after you wear them out?

Do the companies you deal with donate a portion of their profits to environmental causes? For example, PSIA-AASI suppliers Patagonia and Turtle Fur are members of 1% For the Planet, an alliance of businesses that donate a portion of their net revenues to environmental causes. On another environmental front, cold-weather accessory manufacturer BULA recently announced that it is donating 2 percent of the proceeds from its "green" product sales to "Keep Winter Cool" a joint initiative between the Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) aimed at raising visibility and public understanding of global warming.

When you travel to snowsports at areas beyond your own, look for resorts that are part of NSAA's Sustainable Slopes environmental charter. (You can find a list at www.nsaa.org/nsaa/environment/sustainable_slopes/endorsing_resorts.asp.)

4. Do your duty.

No one relishes the thought that the gas or the jet fuel burned to get to the slopes contributes to environmental change. How then can you cope with the queasy feeling that by taking transportation that burns fossil fuels you're destroying the very thing we all love? As it turns out there are lots of ways to support the development of energy sources that do not rely on petroleum, sources that could provide our transportation and manufacture the gear we use on the hill. Take advantage of



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"Green Power" purchase options if offered by your local utilities. Look for, and support, local companies that have switched a portion of their energy consumption to renewable sources.

Carbon credits are a popular means of mitigating the ill effects of our fossil fuel use, and you can check out www.climate-crisis.org to find out how little it costs to offset carbon dioxide emissions by making investments in renewable energy sources. In fact, many resorts now use "green tags," a concept pioneered by the Bonneville Environmental Foundation, to help guests offset the carbon impacts of their travel to and from the slopes.

5. Walk the walk.

I think we face the possibility of losing our credibility as professionals unless we take a proactive stand on this issue. Our clients likely care about the mountain environment; otherwise they wouldn't be spending their time and money to let us help enrich their experience. Students hear the same news we do and many share our concerns about climate change.

We are in a unique position, as teachers, to pass along positive values. Regardless of the level or age you teach, your clients look to you as someone who understands the mountain environment. Through knowledge and sensitivity toward that environment, you can provide nothing less than an alternative way of looking at the world.


For its part, NSAA offers its own environmental charter which works to:

- Educate guests about the potential impacts of climate change; and how they can help reduce greenhouse gases.
- Raise policymaker awareness of the dependence of winter sports on natural ecosystems and the potential impacts of climate change on the winter sports experience.

- Advocate the national reduction of greenhouse gases through legislative, regulatory, or voluntary measures.
- Support sound, science-based solutions to climate change, including the use of renewable energy technologies.
- Partner with organizations and agencies to help reduce emissions and increase energy efficiency; invest in more efficient products, practices and technologies.

6. Recognize that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

It's an old slogan, but it's true. Paralysis in the face of mounting evidence is as ineffective a response to global warming as driving solo in a Hummer up to the pass every weekend. Individual actions do add up to make a difference. And in this election year, it hardly needs to be said, vote for candidates and initiatives that support the environment.

If we truly believe in the PSIA-AASI vision of "Inspiring a lifelong passion for the mountain experience," we need to start finding ways to use that passion to preserve the snowsports experience for our own future, as well as for those who will come after us. 

Tony Case is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor at Stevens Pass and Crystal Mountain, Washington, as well as an avid backcountry skier. He hopes that his two daughters, and their daughters, will be able to enjoy the mountains as he has.

Endnotes

1. Mauri S. Pelto, "Snowpack Variations in the North Cascades," in online article from the North Cascade Glacier Climate Project, updated April 11, 2008, http://www.nichols.edu/departments/glacier/snowpack_variations_in_the_north.htm (accessed September 3, 2008).
2. Philip W. Mote, et al., "Declining Mountain Snowpack in Western North America," *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 86, no. 1 (January 2005), http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/admin/publication_files/resource-1699-2005.06.pdf (accessed September 3, 2008).

What PSIA-AASI Has Done for Me

I have been involved in AASI since my first season teaching at Jiminy Peak, Massachusetts, in 1996. I'll never forget that year; I thought getting a job as an instructor would be easy, but Jiminy was the fourth place I applied and the only one not to reject me. The next season I applied at Stowe, Vermont. They told me I wouldn't be a shoo-in, but when I showed them my Level I card I got the job. After Stowe, I went to Australia, where my training as a member of Eastern Division's education staff enabled me to run the hiring clinics and train their instructors for certification. I had come a long way.

AASI gave me a chance to travel elsewhere too. With my AASI credentials I have worked at a camp in Argentina, shadowed an exam in New Zealand, and even used my connections to try indoor and dry hills in England.

Believe it or not, the biggest thing AASI has done for me is help me become a high school teacher. I met my future boss at a pipe clinic that he was taking and I was running. When the clinic ended, he suggested I work with him, coaching a snowboarding team out of Gould Academy in Maine. After my first season as a coach, I began looking into how I could become a year-round employee. They suggested I try to become a math teacher at Gould. But I worried that I wasn't qualified. In the interview we talked about teaching, and I spoke about what AASI taught me. Safety, fun with learning, teaching concepts, teaching styles . . . it all applies directly to the classroom, except it is even easier there. Nobody gets lost, hurt, or scared in a classroom. I got the job. I get to snowboard six days a week, and, five years later, it is by far the longest job I have ever had besides working as an AASI-certified instructor. Yes, AASI led me to become a school teacher—a goal that previously seemed very far away. Thank you AASI!

Dave Lynch

Gould Academy (and new member of the AASI Snowboard Team)

Reach Out in 'Your Space'!

32 Degrees welcomes your views! Feel free to write a letter to the editor, opine on a topic near and dear to your heart, or submit an essay on "What PSIA-AASI Has Done for Me." Submissions to the "Your Space" department may sent by fax (in care of 32 Degrees) to 303-987-9489, by e-mail to 32Degrees@thesnowpros.org, or by conventional mail to 32 Degrees, 133 South Van Gordon Street, Suite 200, Lakewood, Colorado, 80228-1700. Please include your full name, address, and daytime telephone number.

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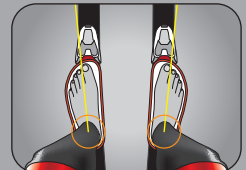
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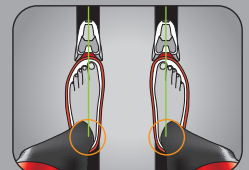
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PSIA Loses Two of its Elder Statesmen

2008 witnessed the passing of two notable figures in PSIA history—Don Rhinehart and Einar Aas.

Don Rhinehart, 80, died of cancer on March 15. A veteran ski instructor, Rhinehart settled in Sun Valley, Idaho, in 1961, where he served as supervisor of the Sun Valley Ski School. That same year, he and six other dedicated ski instructors gathered in Whitefish, Montana, to form the Professional Ski Instructors of America. They set to work on creating PSIA's unique American Ski Technique, which evolved into what we know today as the American Teaching System.

A memorial fund has been set up in Don Rhinehart's name by the Professional Ski Instructors of America to annually award a scholarship to a deserving local skier, instructor, or coach to attend a PSIA certification program. Tax-deductible contributions in his memory can be made to PSIA Northern Intermountain Division, Education Foundation, Box 548, Burley, ID 83318. Charitable gifts to the Hospice of the Wood River Valley and Camp Rainbow Gold are appreciated.

Einar Aas, who served on the PSIA Board of Directors for many years and was board president from 1981–82, died July 13, 2008, at his home in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, after a prolonged illness. He was 73.

A native of Norway, Aas moved to the United States in 1962 and was certified by PSIA in 1964. In 1968 he opened Butternut Ski Shop in Great Barrington and became the director of Butternut Ski School.

Within PSIA-Eastern, Aas served on the board of directors for 29 years, starting in 1973. He was also president of that board. Aas was awarded lifetime membership in PSIA in 2002.

PSIA-AASI Announce Staff Changes

The Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) have made several staffing changes as PSIA-AASI and the National Ski Patrol (NSP) finalized reorganization, resulting in independent operations.

PSIA-AASI welcomed the following individuals to its staff, effective July 1, 2008: Tom Spiess, Director of Finance and Chief Financial Officer; Chip Powers, Accounting Manager; Kennon Warner, Director of Information Services; Karen Hagaman, Director of Meetings and Conventions; and Max Felix, Warehouse Manager.



Hot

Not

**Summer Skiing:**

Record snowfall this winter made for a great summer, with Snowbird staying open until June 22, Aspen's surprise re-opening June 13–15, and the best summer snow at Mt. Hood since 1999.

Pre-Season Conditioning:

Get in shape! Work out with your fellow instructors or create your own program so you won't have to waste your first on-snow day stopping every 10 yards to wait for the lactic acid to drain.

Pro Deal:

Think of it as a pro partnership. It only works if both parties keep up their end of the bargain. See page 54 to learn more about what you can do to make the most of your pro offers.

Movement Matrix:

We're talking about a revolution; at least in the way that we can view and share snowsports instruction materials. See the details on page 46.

Ski/Board Technology:

New season = better gear. Want to know what technological innovations will benefit you the most? Your favorite rep or retailer knows what's up. Again, see page 54 for tips on getting in good with pro suppliers.

Winter's Still Far Off:

Even with the late closings and great summer snow, next winter is still too far away, and the airfares to Oregon or the Southern Hemisphere . . . ouch!

Getting Hurt Out of the Gate:

Riding the couch watching ski flicks doesn't count as pre-season training. This is a sad truth that causes extreme soreness just days into the season if you're not prepared.

Pro Steal:

Abusing pro deals is not cool. Buying gear for friends and family . . . NOT part of the program. Play by the rules, conveniently laid out for you in this issue, on page 54.

One-Dimensional Learning:

Only using one resource for your training severely limits your professional development. Instead, get ahead of the game by utilizing all PSIA-AASI instructional materials and on-snow training.

Talking About "New" Shaped Skis:

It's 2008, people! We've been riding these for over a decade—they're great, but they're not new, so stop introducing your lessons with a sidecut spiel. See page 83.

"These individuals have demonstrated extraordinary professionalism during the consolidated PSIA-AASI and NSP relationship," said PSIA-AASI Executive Director Mark Dorsey. "I couldn't be more pleased that they are going to remain in these positions with PSIA-AASI, ensuring seamless service to our membership and the industry and facilitating a smooth transition with NSP."

New to the association is Ben Roberts. Recently hired as PSIA-AASI Education Coordinator, Roberts replaces Jen Kling who left PSIA-AASI in late spring to pursue a doctorate in philosophy.

Roberts was recently named USSA's Disabled Coach of the Year for 2008. Prior to his work with U.S. Skiing he taught at Big Sky, Montana, while also working as a member of the education staff in the Northern Rocky Mountain Division of PSIA-AASI.

"Ben is a tremendous addition to our staff,"

said Dorsey. "His five years of experience as a national-level coach with the U.S. Disabled Team as well as his snowboard and alpine teaching background will complement our already strong education department."

Also new to the association is Meghan McCarthy. McCarthy joins the team as PSIA-AASI Marketing Coordinator, replacing Blair Bucklin who recently moved East to be closer to her family.

Originally from Boulder, Colorado, McCarthy grew up skiing with her family at Keystone, Colorado. She is returning to the Front Range from the Vail Valley where she worked as a freelance writer and marketing communications consultant. McCarthy is an alpine instructor at the Vail Snowsports School.

"I'm excited to have Meghan join the team," said PSIA-AASI Marketing Director Andy Hawk. "She brings great skills to the organization and unrivaled passion for snowsports."

Random Examiner



In each issue of 32 Degrees, the Random Examiner will be exploring someone or something about our organization that is, well, random. In this issue, Random meets up with a born-again greenhorn instructor from Montana who is looking to be a threat on the 2012-2016 PSIA Alpine Team.

Random Examiner: Please state your name and occupation for the record.

Kate: Kate Howe, alpine instructor, Bridger Bowl, Montana; personal performance coach; mother of two.

RE: Let's get right down to it . . . word on the street is that you just started teaching in 2006, and you are planning to make the PSIA Alpine team in 2012. How is that going to work?

K: You bet! I heard about the team about a month after I started teaching, and I knew: that's it, man. I want to do that. No question at all. I'm a training junkie; I used to be a figure skater and rock climbing coach, and so I started training for skiing. Now I'm hard into my program.

RE: Program?

K: Yeah. I'm skiing all the time, and I'm lucky enough that incredible mentors are popping up and helping me get there. I have a support group of phenomenal teachers, mentors, and friends who are hucking me down the hill all year round. It's awesome.

RE: Who is on "your staff?"

K: A LOT of people! I'm very lucky. One is Megan Harvey, a mentor and total energy source. She served three terms on the PSIA Alpine Team. I first skied with her at PSIA National Academy in Snowbird in 2006. I showed up on AT gear, all I could afford at the time. I told her I wanted to be on the team. By the end of the Academy week, Megan had given me a pair of her skis and committed to help me dial in my skiing.

RE: So, how is it all going?

K: It is awesome right now. I've been to two National Academies in Snowbird, and I was fortunate enough to get to hang out at this year's PSIA-AASI National Team Selection in Mammoth. I've met so many people through PSIA who are willing to help me out. Like I said, it is excellent right now.

RE: So you showed up to selection four years early? Why?

K: A lot of the coaching I do centers around the mental program you need to be on to achieve great things. Knowing that I'll be going through the process in four years, I wanted to learn as much about what to expect as possible. And, it was a great week of spring skiing.



Megan Harvey



Random Notes: Look for Kate's new member recruiting poster in a locker room near you.

I LOVE MY...



don't leave much time for everything else. Oh, and my daughter, Amelia. —Rob Sogard, PSIA Alpine Team

... industry. I have never found anything that fit better than snowboarding for me. The lifestyle, the people, the attitude all combine to make this an awesome thing to be a part of. This industry seems to attract people with a genuine attitude of caring who are interested in getting the job done. —Lane Clegg, AASI Snowboard Team



... job as the snow-sports director of the adaptive program at Loon Mountain, New Hampshire. Every day I am able to share my passion for the outdoors



through sport, and show that there's so much life to live beyond disability. Where else could I ski, downhill mountain bike, hike, kayak, hand cycle, and water ski for work? —Geoff Krill, PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team

... home ski resort,

Big Sky, Montana, because the lift takes you all the way to the top and the hiking is downhill. Some days it's 3:30 in the afternoon and we're skiing untracked wind-blown snow within sight of a lift.



All you can do is laugh. Where is everybody and why is the "secret stash" out in the open? I'm not sure of the answer, but it's fun to ride the lift back up and get one last run. —Tom Marshall, PSIA Nordic Team

25

Skiers, adaptive skiers, snowboarders and nordic skiers, of 139 candidates, who made it through the super-competitive selection process to join the PSIA-AASI National Teams.



Jonathan Selkowitz

Pro File: Gregg Davis

How are skateboarding and snowboarding related?

Skateboarding, like snowboarding, is a free-and-open, independent sport. It lets you just go out and express yourself with your friends and push each other to get better at something. In snowboarding, we're just sliding down the hill on a silly little stick. The whole point is to have fun.

What gave you the idea for SkateboardPrograms.com?

When they built the skatepark in Breckenridge, my friend Angus and I would skate the park a lot and ended up skating with all the kids. A lot of the beginner skateboarders were intimidated by the other skaters and it seemed like they needed some guidance. That's how we came up with the idea for SkateboardPrograms.com, which helps towns with skateparks to set up programs for kids and teens. We also do private lessons, kids' skateboard lessons, weeklong day camps, skate trips, adult and women's clinics, and skate coaches training. Growing up, skateboarding really helped me to find who I am and make me into a better person because of the challenge of it and the positive interaction with other skaters. It kept me out of the petty cliques at school. We wanted to do the same for our local kids.

Do you have any "pre-game rituals"—things you do before you go out to teach?

I always try to get in four or five runs before work. It's good for the soul.³²

Did it slide well?

No. But soon after we discovered that the snowboards we "invented" were much worse than the snowboards Burton was already producing. It was 1984; I saw a Burton catalog and I knew I wanted one. Snowboarding was my way of skateboarding in the winter.

When was the first time you rode a snowboard at a ski area?

1984 at Alpine Mountain in the Poconos in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

What did you learn first—snowboarding or skateboarding?

Skateboarding.

Did the one lead to the other?

Yes. Actually my skate buddies and I "invented" snowboarding by taking a skateboard deck, screwing on bicycle inner tubes for bindings, and riding it backwards with the tail forward down the hill across the street from my house in suburban Pennsylvania.

Check out the Level Pro Shop at www.psia.org and www.aasi.org or contact your local Level pro rep.



more at: levelgloves.com

LEVEL

Lineup

ROAD TRIP WORTH TAKING:

*Eastern Division's Snow Pro Jam/
Master's Academy*

*Mount Snow Resort, Vermont;
December 8–12, 2008*

Easterners, are you looking for a fabulous way to kick off a great new season? Take a trip to Eastern Division's Snow Pro Jam/Master's Academy—what better way to get focused, gear up, or begin preparing for exams, while having a fantastic time to boot? Pro Jam/Master's Academy is the gathering spot for nearly 500 ski instructors, sponsors, and guests from all over the East Coast.

Held at Mount Snow Resort, located in beautiful southern Vermont, you will en-

joy warm hospitality, the Grand Summit Hotel, and excellent ski terrain (with more than \$3 million invested in snowmaking improvements last season).



Courtesy of Mount Snow Resort

PSIA-certified Level I and Level II members ski with course conductors from Eastern Division's education staff at Pro Jam, and PSIA-certified Level III instructors ski with members of the PSIA Alpine Team at Master's Academy. Each day of skiing is followed by an après ski activity culminating in a dinner and dance on Thursday evening. Trust us, the "Pro Jam experience" is not one to be missed—see you there!

Registration for the Pro Jam and Master's Academy opens September 22 and closes November 17. For a complete event schedule and special registration policy information, see the PSIA Eastern Division website, <http://www.psia-e.org>.



H2B* visas going to Vail Resorts snowsports schools. As of publication, no visas, of the 1,900 requested by the resort (the majority of which were denied), had been obtained for any foreign instructors.



LOCKER ROOM TALK

On my iPod

Sports figure I'd like to see in action

If I'm not skiing or riding, I'm...

Favorite boots ever worn

	Robin Barnes Alpine Team	Bryon Friedman*	Wayne Gretsky. Think he'll come back to play just for me?	... riding bikes	Nordica Doberman 150 flex
	Michael Rogan Alpine Team	Don't have an iPod	Tiger Woods	... playing golf or playing with my love, Robin Barnes*	Nordica Doberman 150. They fit my feet perfectly — no grinding.
	Ross Matlock Nordic Team	I think my kids have my iPod	Cadel Evans*	... thinking about it	Asolo Extreme Racer
	Eric Rolls Snowboard Team	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Jeremy Jones*, slaying urban rails	... playing music with Holden Young and Bill Franklin*	Burton SL6 — first year issued



FYI *Bryon Friedman is a U.S. Ski Team athlete and musician who

*Cadel Evans is an Australian pro cyclist.

*Jeremy Jones is a pro snowboarder.

*Together, Young, Franklin and Rolls form the band, Holden Young Trio.

released his first album, "Road Sodas," in 2006.

*What is an H2B?

A working visa that allows foreign nationals to be temporarily employed in the United States. With Congress placing a cap of 66,000 on the number of H2B visas granted each year in this country, many snowsports schools that have come to rely on their usual share will struggle to meet seasonal staffing needs.

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Josef "Pepi" Strobl

Jean-Pierre Vidal

Tommy Moe

Kjetil Andre Aamodt

12 World Cup victories

2002 Olympic Slalom Champion

1994 Olympic Downhill Champion

Most medals in skiing history:

8 Olympic medals, 12 World Championship medals

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*Riders have to deal with
all sorts of variables,
including weather.*

YOU, ME, AND THE GRAND PRIX

An Instructional Take on Competitions

Text by ERICA MARCINIEC

Photos by TOBIAS NIELSEN

As ski and snowboard instructors we share the mountain and our love of snowsports with many people—from the weekend guests who flood resorts with business during hectic holidays to the diehard snow bums out for early morning runs to colleagues waiting in line for their students to show.

And depending on the area where we work, there's a good chance that many of us also share the hill with competitors and coaches during races and freestyle events. Whether standing with one's class on the sidelines or talking with competitors who are hiking the halfpipe for practice runs, mixing with and watching competitions can actually be a good learning opportunity for instructors.

I found this out firsthand last March when my old stomping grounds of Killington Resort, Vermont, hosted the final stop of the 2007/2008 Chevy U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix. Featuring halfpipe and slopestyle competitions, an overall tour purse of \$300,000, and a Chevy Avalanche for each of the two tour winners, the Grand Prix drew top-level riders from throughout the United States and abroad.

It was late in the season so a long

list of instructors had signed up for the extra work, filling roles from slippers and starters to security and hospitality. A few even labored into the night, setting up flood lights on the new Superpipe — an 18-foot-tall, 440-foot-long beauty that everyone was dying to hit. In the process, they managed to see the whole event, from practices to qualifiers to finals, mingling (and sometimes riding) with the competitors, and gaining an appreciation for life on the pro circuit.

COMPETITION AS LEARNING

Encouraged by my boss, Eastern Division AASI examiner and development team coach John Hobbs, I spent three days traipsing around to investigate how an exhibition of the most extreme moves on and above snow could benefit instructors in their approach to teaching. What could the Grand Prix teach those of us in the business of teaching people how to snowboard?

"Absolutely nothing," one young instructor told me, grinning. It was Saturday night, and we were waiting to see if the halfpipe finals would still go on despite a dense fog. The indie rock band Shiny Toy Guns had played and a few people were sliding down the slopestyle course while others launched snowballs at the TV cameramen. My colleague may have been poking fun at me with that answer, but the response and the whole rowdy scene got me thinking about snowboarding's rebellious side. It's one of the reasons I swapped my skis for a snowboard 17 years ago—and it's one that still motivates new riders (and more than a few instructors) today.

During the slopestyle on Sunday, I smiled as a man behind me exclaimed, "Oh! He fell right off the balance beam!" Meanwhile the kid next to him was watching and pointing, naming the maneuvers, telling dad which riders weren't going big enough and which ones had sketchy landings. Both father and son were engaged and excited, each in their own way.

The lesson I pulled out of these observations is that by figuring out what

IDEA #1: Watching the riders and the crowd at a competition clues us into the fact that people are motivated to snowboard for many different reasons. By getting to know our students first, we can tailor the content and delivery of instruction accordingly.

drives our students we, as instructors, can discover better ways to guide them. When a "rebellious" teenager comes out for a lesson, for example, adopting the cool snowboarder persona probably goes a long way toward keeping the student's interest. Alternately, a vocabulary lesson might help the spectator-dad connect with his son's interest in the sport.

"Each student has individual needs that must be addressed," explained former Killington instructor Stan Marciniec. "As they progress in the sport their needs change."

The Grand Prix was a motivator for all levels of riders, including would-be competitors and instructors. "I'm inspired to learn more, that's for sure," said Noah Prince, who has been teaching at Killington for seven years. "You don't get to see this [kind of thing] every day to figure out how to do the tricks." For instructors, competitions can provide an opportunity to analyze movements and work out tricks—not only for the sake of their own riding, but for teaching upper level students as well.

Personally, I have to train my brain to recognize anything more than a 360-degree rotation. Was that a frontside or backside spin? Did the rider grab the toe edge or the heel edge? Ride switch or regular?

EXERCISE



Here's a chance to do your own movement analysis. Use the ATML Method™ to describe what's going on with speed, pop and spin (SPS) in each phase.

TEACHING REVOLUTION

The ATML Method™ is a great tool for analyzing freestyle movements. By looking at what a rider is doing at each stage—the approach (A), takeoff (T), maneuver (M), and landing (L)—we can break down a trick in order to identify and communicate the necessary movements to our students. The model is used to describe each stage in terms of speed, pop, and spin. For instance, did the rider have enough speed in the approach to reach the landing? Was the rider in the preferred "zero-spin" alignment on the takeoff for a straight air, or did a countered alignment cause him or her to be thrown off balance in the air?

John Hobbs is quick to point out that the ATML Method can be used to analyze not only a beginning freestyle student's singular approach, takeoff, maneuver, and landing, but also a pro's combination trick. A 270-degree rotation

IDEA #2: Competitions are an opportunity to do advanced movement analysis, to watch others, and figure out how to stomp new tricks.

onto a box followed by a boardslide, for example, features a full ATML cycle just to pull off the 270 maneuver and land on the box, followed by another maneuver (the boardslide) and landing. (That's ATMLML!) Using the model in this way can help an instructor break down even the most complex tricks in order to come up with a proper action plan for advanced students.

Like instructors, competition judges have to do movement analysis (MA) for each rider. Judges look for amplitude; travel distance; grabs (type, hold time, style, variety); rotations (direction, number, vertical axis); and execution (takeoff, maneuver control, and landing) in each of the tricks that makes up a rider's line through the course.

Coaches and competitors have to know how to do MA too. During the men's halfpipe finals, for example, riders were commenting on their opponents' runs—cheering when someone busted out a big Switch Alley-Oop McTwist and groaning empathetically when another rider sketched the landing after a good run. In the end, Louie Vito took the men's tour title with a front 10, cab 10, front 9, back 9, front 7. Second was Greg Bretz—and on a board he cracked in practice and then fully broke during the competition, no less.

Instructor Sabina Shulz did her own MA as she watched Olympic gold medal-

ist and Vermont native Kelly Clark take the tour title over Ellery Hollingsworth in the women's division. Trick-wise, Shulz commented, Hollingsworth actually had a more technical run, throwing down a front 7, cab 7, front 5, back 5, front air to Clark's front air, back 5, front 5, back air, front 7. (That's one cab 7 extra for Hollingsworth.) What set Clark apart, however, was her amplitude. Conversations like this help instructors apply their learning at the highest levels, and lead to a deep understanding of the concepts that underlie our teaching.

In an effort to find out more about how the competitors analyze their own moves, I went directly to the source. To get good amplitude in the pipe, competitor Theodore "T.J." James said it all comes down to four things: "speed, line, pumping, and committing."

While T.J. was quick to point out the mechanics of halfpipe riding, his friend and fellow competitor, Skyler Thomas, added one more element to the mix. "It's very psychological," he said. "You have to be able to go big. A lot of it is in your head."

John Hobbs agrees. "Mostly at this level what I overheard from coaches and riders giving each other tips and egging each other on was way more psychological than instructional," he said. "It's certainly a big role in instruction that we don't always focus on."

IDEA #3: Boosting riders psychologically is key to growing good, confident skiers and snowboarders at all levels.

RIDING MASLOW'S MOUNTAIN

Whether coaching a seasoned athlete or teaching a first-timer, instructors should keep in mind that students have a wide range of psychological needs that must be satisfied before learning—or top-notch athletic performance, for that matter—can take place. In snowsports instruction, we describe these needs using a model adapted from twentieth-century psychologist Abraham Maslow. At the base of "Maslow's Mountain," a person's most basic human needs are physiological, including the need for food, water, and shelter. It almost goes without saying that a student who hasn't had a good breakfast or a good night's sleep is likely to have a harder time learning to ski or snowboard.

After our basic needs, according to Maslow, is the need for safety and security. For example—is the lip too soft for a safe takeoff? Competitor Clair Bidez had this safety concern during Friday night's halfpipe practice, but it didn't stop her from taking third on Sunday (after the snow hardened up, incidentally). Competitors have to work with all sorts of psychological variables that are in turn dependent on the world around them, and it's the job of the coach to recognize and respond to those needs. Ditto for snowboard instructors.

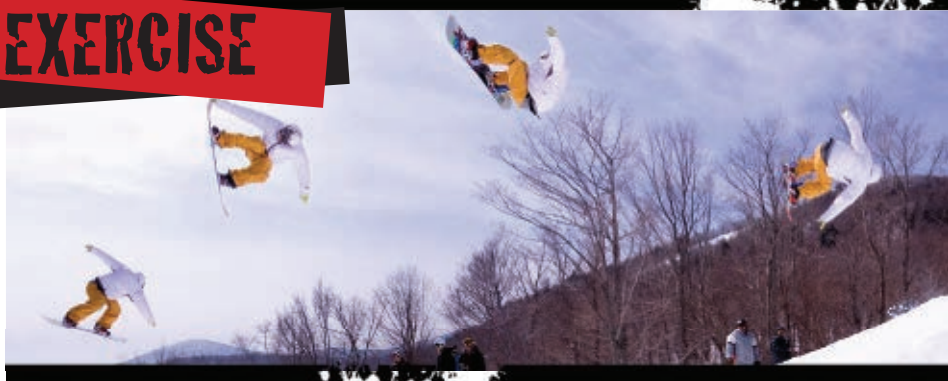
"Safety is an attitude," explains J. Randy Price, 2000–08 AASI Snowboard Team coach. "People feel safe when their leader is making good choices. That's how a great instructor gets someone to attempt a maneuver on terrain that is intimidating."

On the topic of helping students feel safe in a lesson, Price shared some advice from former AASI Snowboard Team



Greg Bretz took 2nd in the halfpipe—on a board he cracked in practice, no less.

EXERCISE



You think you're good? (Movement) analyze this one!

member Mikey Franco. "Exude confidence," he said. "If you're not confident, why would your students be? It's your tone, how you stand, eye contact, everything your presence exhibits." Price also suggests that instructors should "provide students with the information that made you choose where and why you're doing something . . . and illustrate good practices."

When climbing "Maslow's Mountain" we find the need to belong. Competitor Connor Leach, 16, extended this feeling in a heartfelt way to local rider Will Steller, 11, when he gifted him his signed Grand Prix bib. Since Steller himself was headed to the 2008 USASA Nationals at Copper Mountain, it "pumped him up big," as his mom, Killington ski instructor Joanne Steller, put it.

That sense of belonging is the same reason people ride in a "posse." It feels good to belong to a group. In the same way, a group lesson is a perfect opportunity for teamwork. Teammates support each other on the competition circuit, and team-building activities in a lesson—such as having each student choose a funny name or encouraging the group to cheer each other on—can do wonders for strengthening a student's sense of belonging.

After belonging, self-esteem is the fourth tier of Maslow's Mountain. In a nutshell, people perform better when

they feel good about themselves. Above that is self-actualization, the mountain's peak. Whether referring to a competitor's award-winning run or that "Aha!" moment when things fall into place and a student (or instructor) realizes what it is he or she likes so much about the sport; self-actualization is the goal for which all riders strive.

ASSIGNMENT FUN

Just as I was starting to get too bogged down in technicalities, however, former instructor Bob Evegán reminded me that there's one more need that snowboarding fulfills, regardless of whether you're teaching the sport, learning to ride, or trying to score a shiny new set of wheels. "It's all about fun," he chided me. "That's the basis of it."


"[Competitions like the Grand Prix are] both a culmination for some riders and a starting point for others," says veteran instructor Chuck Janisse. "The Louie Vito's of the world have gone through a long process. A spectator watches and says, 'I want to do that,' and it starts the process for him. It's a cycle."

Oftentimes that's where the instructor comes in. When a student gets jazzed at the competition and wants to learn how to "spin cab 5 off the big booters," the instructor is responsible for slowing things down and helping him or her work up to it—an approach known as "Easy Style It" (one of the four tenets of the freestyle safety initiative known as Smart Style). To do this, we can start by teaching prerequisite skills such as flat spins, ollies, and switch ollies (if the student's ready), making sure he or she knows how to navigate a park safely and

exactly when it's okay to step it up.

Instructor Lucille Rogoff can relate to the Easy Style It approach, having learned to ride not too long ago herself. "[Competitions] can be a motivating factor for students, especially kids. But you need to know how to turn before you can do any tricks. Shaun White turns. He doesn't just 'fly' out of the halfpipe," she said.

When it comes to the distance between the world-class snowboarding and the general public, the instructor plays a vital role in bridging the gap. Whether helping a beginner to pull off that first turn or coaching an athlete to make a play for the podium, a good teacher can make all the difference.

From any vantage point a competition such as the Grand Prix can be a learning opportunity like any other on-hill experience. Using these kinds of experiences to inform his or her own teaching is the mark of a talented instructor. As the Latin proverb goes, "By learning you will teach, by teaching you will learn." 

An AASI Level III and PSIA Level I-certified instructor, Erica Marciniak grew up skiing at Killington, Vermont, where she got her start teaching skiing before she started teaching snowboarding. Moving west, she taught at California resorts—including Alpine Meadows, Bear Mountain, and June Mountain—before returning home to Killington for the 2007–08 season.

smart STYLE

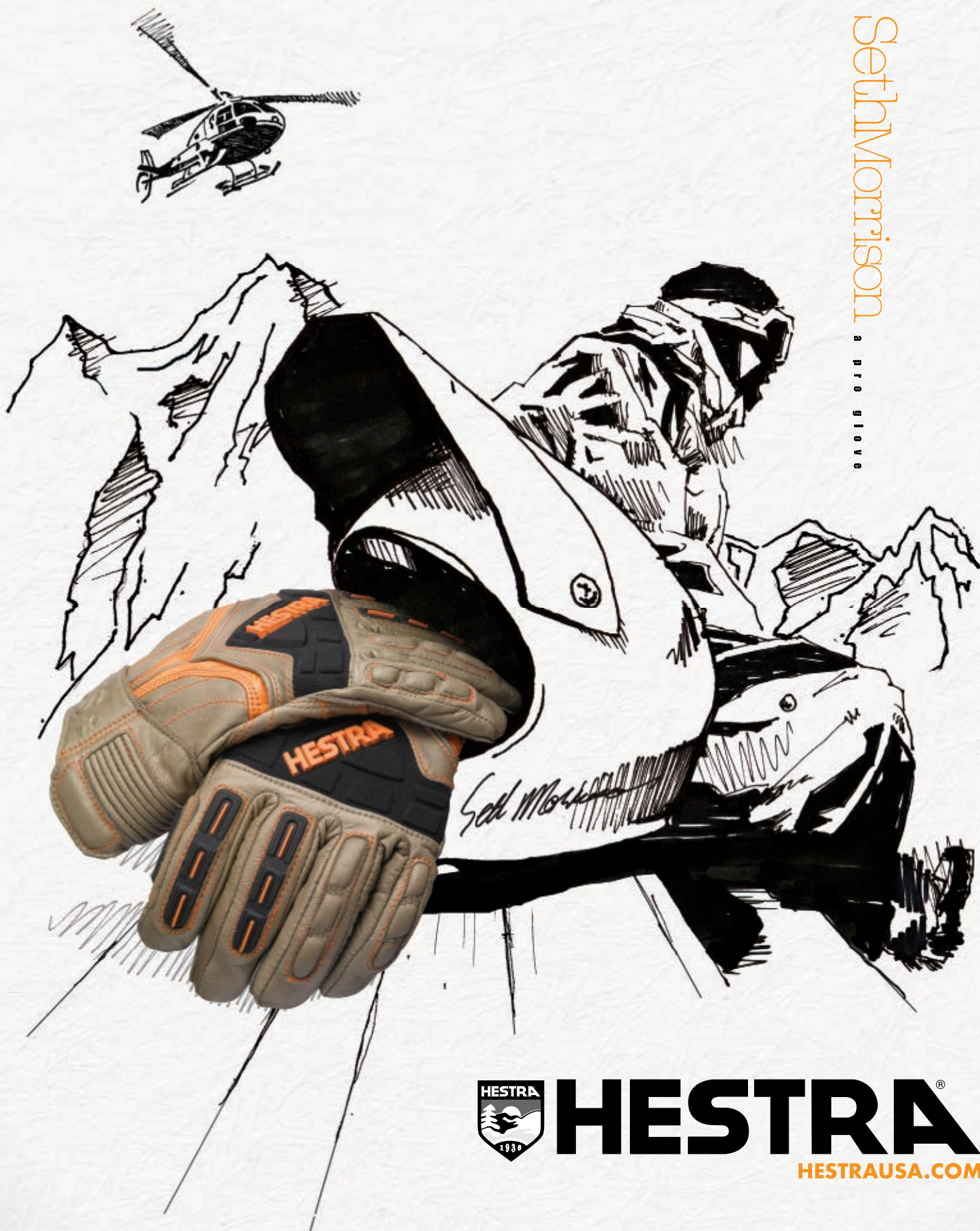
For more on terrain park safety, check out the Smart Style information—and video—in the "Safety and Education" link at

www.nsaa.org.

Also surf over to www.terrainparksafety.org.

IDEA #4: By spreading Smart-Style—park etiquette and proper pacing—the instructor helps to keep our parks fun and safe for novices to pros.

Seth Morrison
a pro glove



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ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT HOWARD

PHOTO INSPIRATION BY FLIP MCCRICK

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS SUGGEST THAT AN AUTHORITY FIGURE'S UNIFORM buys

an instructor two to three minutes of unconditional attention from wide-eyed students. By the end of that short grace period, though, the leader will either have established credibility or will be fighting an uphill battle to regain a meaningful connection with guests. The cost of failing to generate rapport quickly and well is probably bigger than you can guess!

Webster's defines rapport as a "harmonious, sympathetic relationship" or "accord." Although rapport-building is an ongoing process in which the instructor gains or loses rapport one conversation at a time, the opening moments of a relationship are key in establishing credibility. Attention and awareness are the currencies of power in the process.

So the question is, how does an instructor create rapport in the setting of a lesson? Here are a few suggestions, which happen to form the foundation of many so-called "Smile School" techniques:

- Remove your hat and sunglasses when greeting students.
- Learn names.
- Shake hands.
- Ask where your guests are from.
- Seek out students' expectations.
- Inquire about hobbies or experiences that may help connect students with snowsports.

While such basics of rapport-building are easily remembered and executed, the results that really count in creating connections with your students emerge from other and complementary qualities. It's as much about how you say it as it is what you say. Susan Scott, the author of *Fierce Conversations*, describes rapport as the act of "coming out from behind yourself, into the conversation, to make it real." The connecting energy, rapport, or chemistry among people is hard to describe, yet when you see it, you recognize it. As a keen observer of human behavior, I see teachers and coaches who are masterful at rapport do the following:

- Express a genuine interest in the other person (i.e., it's not about "me").

The Art Of Relationships:

Bring Your Authentic Self to Class

Text by HORST ABRAHAM

Photos by BRIAN W. ROBB



Attention Is The Currency of Power

Snowsports are fraught with both perceived and real dangers, and the existence of trust between an instructor and a student is a major factor in building a functional relationship between the two. If the instructor fails to bring his or her authentic self into the process, relationships will remain formal and distant, and attention from the student will be elusive. On the other hand, if the student doesn't openly and honestly share thoughts, feelings, needs and goals, the learning process will, at best, be "average."

The emergent trust in a teacher-student relationship becomes a powerful bond as well as the basis for a productive collaboration. From rapport arises trust, from trust comes caring, and from caring comes the desire to be attentive to others.

— Horst Abraham

- Use full-body listening (i.e., body language that shows you're listening).
- Show a sincere desire to hear and understand the other person; using questions and paraphrasing to ensure that you understood the other person correctly.
- Make "real" eye contact, no matter how brief.

GET REAL

One of the most effective qualities of skilled relationship-builders is that they don't typically use any of the above as techniques. Instead, these individuals create truly effective rapport as an authentic expression of their interest in the other person.

At the risk of repeating myself, I want to stress that it's less about what we say as it is how we say it. Our intent and the focus of our energy and attention is what really matters. In that sense, rapport and relationships are built or diminished one conversation at a time. Whether consciously or unconsciously, people pick up on subtle nuances embedded in our verbal and nonverbal messages. For a teacher, there's no such thing as an insignificant conversation. For something a teacher may have said

and forgotten, a student may still be in therapy about!

All this is to say that while connecting with another person on a mechanical level is something that's easily learned, connecting in an authentic manner is another thing. Some people are naturally gifted at the art of relationship building while others will find the process forever cumbersome and stressful.

The following are some things to focus upon and questions to answer for yourself when working on relationship-building:

- Do you genuinely care about the people you're teaching? If you really care, you will find the right tone of voice; the right words.
- Have you parked your "ego" at home? Not doing so may prevent you from finding the "we-energy" in the process.
- Have you checked your face to see whether your caring and enthusiasm actually shows?
- Are your verbal and non-verbal messages congruent?
- Are you committed to making this encounter the best ever?
- Are you listening because you are actually curious to learn what others say, do, and feel?

- Do you address students as if they matter? How will you know they know that you care?
- Do you have a need to be "in control" of every aspect of the lesson? If so, the lesson is doomed to failure or simply becomes boring for the students!
- Obey your intuition! When you care your intuitive senses will be alert and you will know what to do.
- Are you ready to learn as much or more than the student(s) will? What am I learning right now?
- Do you "ask" more than you "tell"? During learning segments of the lesson, does the student "talk" at least as much as you do?

In case you are puzzled over the significance of that last bullet point, consider this: A person's behavior is the net result of how he or she thinks and feels, two functions a teacher is only privy to if the student is willing to share unspoken feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions. While working on the behavioral level may yield some results, spending complementary time on what can only be accessed by asking questions (about thoughts, feelings, beliefs, assumptions), yields sustainable results and a great deal of student autonomy. Teaching from the right mix of "ask" and "tell" requires a different mindset on the part of the teacher, as well as different skill sets.

For example, you might ask something like, "Out of everything I've thrown at you, what's been the most or least helpful? What gets in the way?" or "Given that we've been working hard for a while, do you have the stamina to go on—or should we ease up a bit and rest or play?" Other helpful questions might be: "In what ways might your goals have changed since we started?" or "Rate your stress level for what we are doing right now: Is it high, medium or low?" or even "What amount of tension works best for you?"

In using questions in the instructional process, try to develop a broad and varied repertoire to help give voice to

what the students think and feel. Knowing when to “tell” and when to “ask” is a matter of experimenting many years and preparing well for lessons—something very few instructors do.

After years of teaching on the slopes and in classrooms, I know when I’ve done a good job not just by how students have progressed, but also by the degree of my exhaustion. Being fully authentic and present as a teacher is mentally and emotionally tiring.

HUMILITY BREEDS EFFECTIVENESS

In his book *Good to Great*, business consultant Jim Collins defines the highest level of leadership as the paradoxical confluence of an “unrelenting eye on the desired outcome, coupled with humility.”

In the context of snowsports instruction, the term humility represents the notion that during our encounters with students there are only so many “teachable” things.

“Be kind and forgiving,
as everyone is fighting a
great battle.”

~ Philo of Alexandria

It can be argued that some of the most significant things in any lesson are only learnable, but not teachable. If you were to agree with this assertion, how would this insight change the way you teach? My most important answer to this question is that lessons catering to learning, by definition, must be collaborative in nature: both instructor and student(s) share the responsibility for learning and results.

If you end up with students who look for John Wayne-like instructors who give themselves away to the illusion that learning is predominantly an “outside-in” process, reviewing the “learning contract” (see the “Drafting the Teacher-Student Contract” sidebar) might have to replace idle chatter during the lift or gondola ride.

AN INSTRUCTOR SELF-CHECK

Self-awareness—knowing how you impact others—is key when building relationships. In that sense it can be argued that an instructor’s self-awareness is as important as the instructor’s awareness of her or his students. An instructor does not have the luxury of either becoming self-absorbed, or to lose him/herself in the student’s experience alone. The magic arises from the awareness of experiencing both—simultaneously! That is part of the paradoxical challenge of coaching and teaching. The following are examples of self-check questions master teachers ask themselves periodically during a lesson:

- Am I showing up authentically, or am I merely coasting, hiding behind my “badge” and the pretense of assuming to know what’s going on?
- Am I really hearing what is said or implied, and am I reading nonverbal messages accurately?
- How does what I learn by watching and listening influence my teaching? Am I driven by my agenda or the “progression?”
- Am I effectively dealing with the diversity of each student’s personality, learning style, and rate of progress (if yes, how so?), or am I engaged in a one-size-fits-all approach?
- How effective am I in helping students bond with each other and foster infectious, positive group dynamics? What am I doing to generate collaborative spirit?
- Am I reinforcing student achievements, behaviors, and efforts, no matter how big or small? Am I specific in acknowledging progress and results?
- Am I getting students to offer up insights about how they think and feel? What am I doing to make that happen?
- What am I paying attention to? What am I not paying attention to?
- What are my best students doing and what is my plan for them?

9 Steps for Creating Class Engagement

1. Thank everyone for showing up—and mean it!
2. When introducing yourself, display self-confidence in what you do without being cocky about it. Remember the magic of humility.
3. Huddle up for the introductions so everyone can see and hear everyone else. Remembering names will be easier if everyone shares something memorable about themselves.
4. As the instructor, provide a general tactical plan for the class.
5. Scan clothing and equipment to make sure students are properly outfitted.
6. Ask students to state their specific expectations to provide you with the opportunity to organize a lesson plan, arrange partnerships, and plan for route and timing.
7. Acknowledging stated expectations, give a preview of your lesson plan beyond the general logistics plan shared earlier. Show how student input has already influenced the lesson plan.
8. Listen carefully to every class member and pay attention to both what is said and what is not said. Paraphrase what you have heard. Group dynamics in beginning stages are as critical as they are fragile.
9. Define roles, responsibilities, and boundaries that are necessary for safe learning.
— Horst Abraham

- What are my weakest students doing and what is my plan for them?
- How am I differentiating my feedback to students depending upon their needs?
- How am I doing in terms of managing the pace and energy in the class?
- How well do I remember and re-state each student's goals and motives for being here?
- Is it time for focused work, play, pause, adventure, or lateral learning?
- What conversations am I avoiding right now?

SUMMING UP

After the more than five decades of teaching and facilitating, I'm still in frequent contact with many of my students. With some of them I've built life-long friendships (heck, I'm now godfather to some of their children and grandchildren). With others I've formed business relationships that extended well beyond our time on the slopes.

While preparing to write this article, I asked former students to help me understand what, exactly, had helped forge such lasting bonds. One said, "You helped us draw a connection between success on the slopes and success in life and business." Another offered, "I learned to effectively manage my fears and anxieties!" while one other said I'd helped make his winter visits "an integral part of my life and enjoyment."

Yet another said, "You were unrelentingly honest with us, something that allowed us to re-calibrate whether we were in the pursuit of realistic goals". One student even said, "You helped my wife and me re-energize our life; making us realize that before we worked with you on snow we were, at best, roommates, not lovers and confidants." (Whoa! How did I do that!) And, yes, there were the students who reminisced how we were able to "bring the mountain to its knees," skiing in places they previously only heard about in bars and never thought themselves able to master.

The overarching message from these reports seems to be that snowsports are formidable activities, rich in adventure, full of therapeutic value, fostering a bond among people on many and deep levels, as well as being a great medium for learning many transferable lessons. When a lesson ends and both instructor and students share the glow of adventure and accomplishment, how can you put a price on that? **B2**

A lifetime member of PSIA-AASI, Horst Abraham is certified at Level III alpine and snowboard and Level II nordic. He served as PSIA's vice president of education from 1971 to 1982. Also fully certified in Germany, Austria, and France, Abraham has taught on three continents and in four languages. Off snow, he now teaches at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan, and the Katz School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh. He commutes to work from Eagle, Colorado, where he lives with his wife, Kit.



Eye contact promotes a connection.

Drafting the Teacher-Student Contract

A key aspect of building a high-performance relationship with students is accomplished by formulating the "rules of engagement" and "defining roles and responsibilities." While the use of the term student/teacher "contract" might sound a bit formal, it nonetheless emphasizes the importance of agreeing on how the lesson will unfold. The instructor's obligations include the obvious: set direction, provide expert guidance, and maintain responsibility for safety, timing, and logistics; When describing the student responsibilities, linger conversationally until you are assured that their responsibilities are seen as important if not critical to the success of the lesson. When the "contracting" is done right, most students respond to the invitation to play an active role in the process with excitement. The essence of this process might be akin to Home-Depot's mantra: "You can do it, and I can help!"

— Horst Abraham

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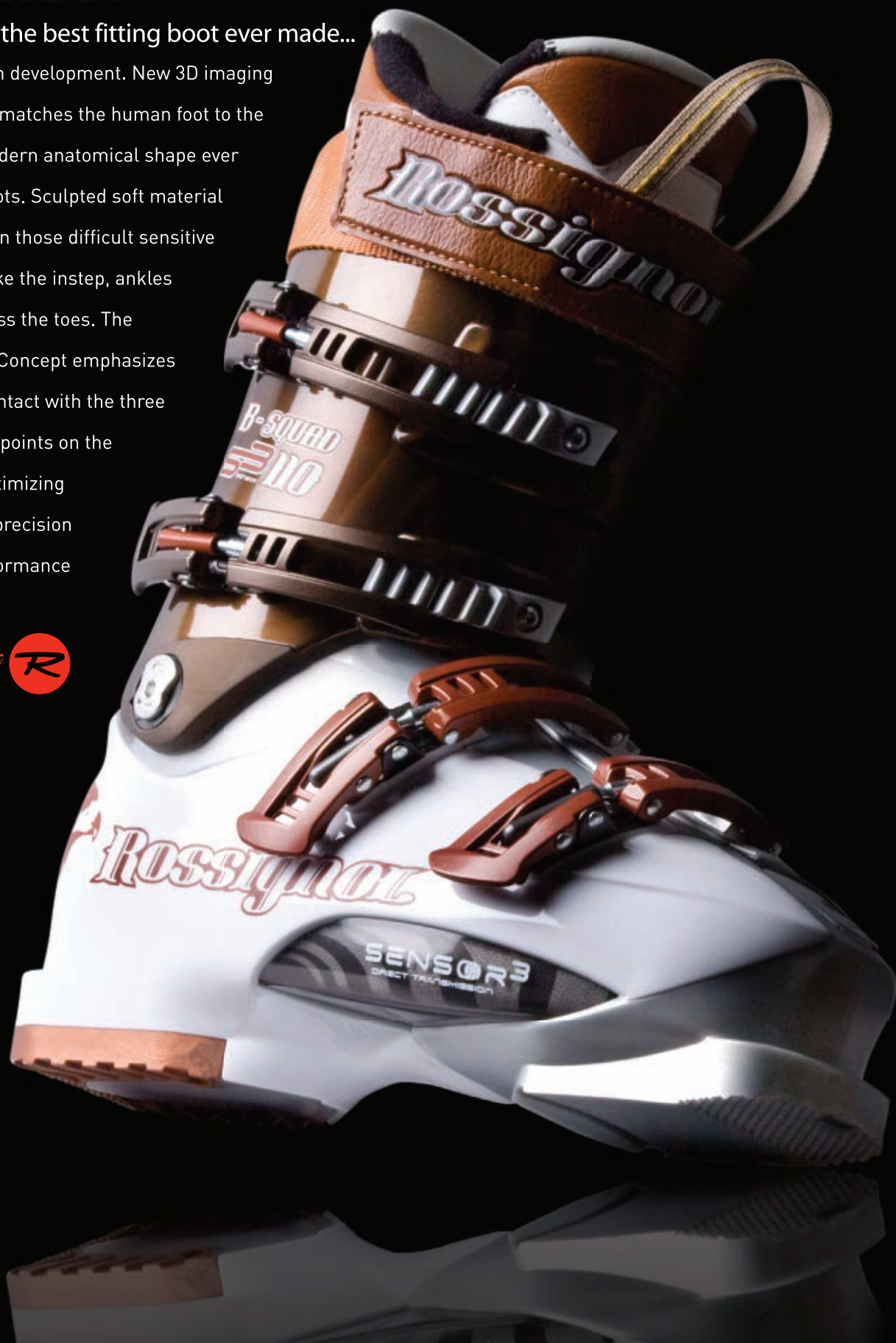


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National Team Selection Attracts Top Instructors

“To a new team and new friends,” toasted a group of candidates for the AASI Snowboard Team, some of whom ended up making the new team—and some of whom did not.

Text by ERICA MARCINIEC

Photos by JONATHAN SELKOWITZ

It was just after 8 p.m. on Friday, May 2. Candidates for all four disciplines of the PSIA-AASI National Teams—alpine, snowboard, nordic, and adaptive—had been gathering for the previous hour on the third floor of the Main Lodge at Mammoth Mountain, California. They’d assembled in anticipation of who would be named to the teams that help develop and carry forth PSIA-AASI’s educational focus both domestically and abroad. Team members are responsible for charting the course of snowsports instruction for the next four years by working with snowsports schools nationwide, conducting clinics, and serving as the public face of the organization.

Amid an atmosphere charged with energy, Teams Manager Katie Fry stood before the assembled crowd and took the mic. “I want to congratulate all of you for having the courage to step up and take this opportunity, [and] for putting yourself in front of all of these selectors for the last five days,” Fry said, choking up a little as she related her own experiences with the selection process from her terms on the alpine team and the buildup of nerves and excitement that goes with it.

This was the first year Mammoth hosted the National Team selections (which are traditionally held at Snowbird, Utah). The new venue was a change, especially considering the week’s variable conditions. Still, most were enthusiastic about the challenge.

“It’s been phenomenal,” said snowboard team selector Tom Vickery. “We’ve had everything from frozen-crud bumps and coral conditions to soft spring bumps,” he said, emphasizing the fact that candidates had nonetheless risen to the occasion.

That they did so comes as little surprise. National Team candidates are an accomplished group in the snowsports industry. They are examiners, coaches, program directors, and Level III-certified instructors (a minimum requirement) from all nine divisions of PSIA-AASI. An even more expert group is called upon



Charlie MacArthur demonstrates his telemark technique.

to score them—"selectors" consisting of current and past team members, national and international coaches, and several PSIA-AASI division examiners. It is the selectors' job to separate the very best from the best, and that's no easy task.

"There are a lot of good skiers here, that's for sure," said Western Division examiner Bud Heishman, who came out to support PSIA-W team skiers as they ran through the giant slalom (GS) course on Wednesday. "It's a tough decision for the judges. Every little turn, every little bobble is going to count because everybody is so close."

In total, 139 people—the biggest candidate pool in PSIA-AASI history—tried out for the 2008–2012 teams, with 25 getting the good word that they'd made it.

SKIING 'THE NASTY'

The selection process for the PSIA Alpine Team was organized near seamlessly—with all 94 alpine candidates being led by local guides to stations around the mountain. At one location, skiers were asked to make short-radius turns in a long-radius track in a task lovingly nicknamed "Pain-in-the-S Turns."

"I think part of the scheme is to be able to tactically shape an uphill turn and a downhill turn without throwing the tails out," said candidate Steve O'Connor from Killington, Vermont, when asked to explain the purpose of the exercise. "It's good for versatility. If you're skiing off piste on something nasty you need to be able to do just about anything."

At another station candidates had to do just that—ski off piste on "something nasty," which in this case consisted of a windy, rock-solid yet bumpy northwest-

facing pitch. The task was to make multiple sets of six to seven turns connected by "lane changes."

"That was probably the most difficult task for me," said Kipp Ertl from the Rocky Mountain Division, which had record snowfalls this year. "I haven't seen snow like that for a while, so that was a little bit different and a little tricky."

Other tasks included medium-radius turns without poles, dynamic short-radius turns, round bump turns, "diamond funnel" turns, and GS racing, to name a few.

For the first time, PSIA also included a freestyle elective, with one "park and pipe freestyle specialist" being named to the 2008–2012 Alpine Team. Selector Finlay Torrance set the bar high for aspiring specialists, instructing them to hit the big tabletop jumps switch and to spin over every one of them.

FIRST ADAPTIVE TEAM SELECTION

This year marks the first time that a selection was held for a separate adaptive team. Previously, Disabled Sports—Far West trainer and Western Division examiner Bill Bowness, who rides a mono-ski, served as an appointed member of the PSIA Alpine Team. Bowness is back for the 2008–2012 term, this time as coach of the new PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team. Three candidates came out for the new team—two of whom ride mono-skis and one who rides a snowboard.

The mono-skiers took part in the same tasks as the alpine team candidates for the better part of the on-hill assessment, with Ray Watkins, head coach of the U.S. Disabled Alpine Team, assisting



Alpine candidates get direction before their descent.

as a selector. Tasks included round turns down steep off-piste pitches in addition to sessions in the park and pipe.

Snowboarder Brent Kuemmerle, whose right leg is fitted with a prosthetic below the knee, tried out in the hopes of advancing snowboarding in the adaptive world. Kuemmerle runs the snowboard program for Discovery Blind Sports out of Kirkwood, California. He was asked to demonstrate his skills for selectors from both adaptive and snowboarding disciplines.

"[You use] a lot of the same techniques . . . to make a board turn—whether it's a ski or a snowboard," said candidate Geoff Krill, when asked to compare the two disciplines.

Krill, who is the adaptive program director at Loon Mountain, New Hampshire, was thrilled to be a part of the first adaptive team selection process. "It's good to test those boundaries—to show what you can do and what this machinery is capable of," he said, pointing to his mono-ski. "The reception from the snowboard, nordic, and alpine groups has been incredible."

The formation of a PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team marks a major step forward in the evolution of teaching disabled sports, laying the groundwork for increased participation in the national team selection process by adaptive snowsports instructors.

'BOARDERS: OUTSIDE THE BOX FROM DAY ONE

Snowboard candidates were fortunate to have selectors determined to calm anxieties, which they did by cracking lighthearted jokes while leading small

"I came to the national team tryouts because I saw some of the team members riding in the Midwest and their influence on the industry and I wanted to be part of it."

*~Snowboard Team candidate Cameron Hunter
Breckenridge, Colorado*

groups of riders around the mountain. A total of 27 snowboarders tried out for six slots on the AASI Snowboard Team. Creativity was a common thread in all riding tasks.

In Monday's "off-piste" group, for example, the assignment was to use as much terrain as possible. Selectors watched for balance and versatility as some riders hit the bumps switch, among other creative exhibitions. "We've seen 540s, 360s over rocks, and big giant ollies up onto rocks," commented selector and team coach J. Randy Price, who hands the baton to Lane Clegg of Snowbird, Utah, this year after eight years leading the AASI Snowboard Team.

A slopestyle competition was on the agenda for the freestyle group, with all team candidates required to run through tabletop jumps, big park rails, boxes, and other features. "Be creative," Clegg told candidates. "Don't [always] look at things the same way."

Riders had another chance to showcase their freestyle skills on Tuesday. "We've got to spin; it's the only thing that'll separate us [from the other candidates]," said Robin Tencick from Copper Mountain, Colorado—one of three women to try out—before attempting a 360 over the first jump. Afterwards it was on to the halfpipe, where at least one candidate flew as high as seven feet past the lip despite wind gusts as strong as 50 miles per hour.

On Wednesday, each rider was asked to choose a specialty from four options—backcountry, all mountain, big park, and jib park. Tasks varied for each group.

In the backcountry group, for example, riders were called upon to demonstrate avalanche expertise.

"There's been a huge jump in the levels of riding," said candidate Gregg Davis from Breckenridge, Colorado, who served on the 2000–2004 team. "Younger and younger kids are coming to try out," he said, indicating 21-year-old Cameron Hunter, also from Breck. "It's been like riding with a bunch of my buddies; it's been so much fun."

NORDS GET AWARD FOR INCLUSIVENESS

"Yeah, Leadfoot!" nordic team candidates cheered as a comrade demonstrated dynamic short-radius turns. The exercise came after another task called "The Shuffle," the goal of which was to make as many sliding steps as possible throughout the course of a turn without pausing.

With nicknames like Leadfoot, Dashboard Darryl, Sandbagger Dave, Straight Line, Short Stuff, Angel, and Giggles, the 15 nordic team candidates built team spirit from the start. Four candidates were selected in the end. "Inclusivity is a big thing for nords," said eight-year team veteran J. Scott McGee, who takes over for Craig Panarisi as coach of the nordic team this year. "It's kind of a shame we have to cut folks."

Team candidates spent Monday doing telemark drills before moving to a track at Red Lake Tuesday and Wednesday. The 2008 selections saw an increased focus on freestyle skating and classic

in-track, commonly referred to as "cross-country." Assisting with the selection process was Bryan Fish, a cross-country coach with the United States Ski and Snowboard Association.

"I loved the cross-country area that they had set up; the format was just absolutely perfect," said candidate Warren Souther.

"Mammoth Mountain has been an incredibly good host," agreed McGee, commending Tamarack Cross Country Ski Center director and former U.S. Ski Team Coach Ueli Luthi for preparing the spring track. "Red's Lake made a great venue."

TOP TEACHERS MAKE THE GRADE

After a series of cuts Tuesday and Wednesday, the 51 remaining candidates spent the final days of the selection process on teaching and learning activities, in-depth interviews, and group project assessments while selectors tried to determine who would make the best fits for the 2008–2012 PSIA-AASI National Teams. Interview topics included behavior-based questions relating to teaching scenarios, customer service ethics, and job perception. On-hill tasks involved movement analysis and teaching clinics geared toward an audience of instructors and trainers.

Among the tasks was a 6 p.m. round-robin-style station activity, with each station representing a different challenge aligned with what national team members will be expected to do during their 4-year term. At one station, for example, candidates discussed topics culled from PSIA-AASI's online discussion forums; at another they drafted correspondence to new suppliers touting why the team member would be a valuable affiliation for the supplier.

"It's more than a job interview and it's not an exam," commented PSIA-AASI Executive Director Mark Dorsey. "It's not the fastest time wins or the biggest air wins; it's really [about] consistent performance over five days—five days of *Survivor* meets *American Idol*," he said. "It's pretty demanding."

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"I would just like all of us—regardless of the outcome of tonight—to be proud of ourselves and to continue to grow and mentor each other," Katie Fry said as she prepared to announce the 2008–2012 national teams. "I think that's what really keeps this industry, this association, this vocation that we all love and do so strong. We're all in this together."

After all was said, done, and scrutinized, 14 out of 94 alpine candidates were selected to serve on the PSIA Alpine Team, under the direction of Rob Sogard, who returns as team coach. The team is made up of seven incumbents, one former team member, and seven newcomers. Those returning to the team are Rob Sogard (coach), Jeb Boyd, Nick Herrin, Dave Lyon, Bobby Murphy, Doug Pierini, and Michael Rogan. Jim Schanzenbaker, who served on the team from 2004–2008, regained a spot on the team and is joined by first-term members

Dave Lynch hugs the heelside



"AASI coaches and instructors are responsible for getting thousands of new riders into snowboarding each year. Their dedication and commitment to the sport is exceptionally valuable. Burton appreciates this commitment and the love for the sport these individuals have, and commend their efforts to continually strive for excellence. Attending the tryout process and supporting the candidates allows us to say thank you for everything they do."

~Shaun Cattanach
Resort Programs Manager, Burton Snowboards

Robin Barnes, Matt Boyd, Mike Hafer, Eric Lipton, Dave Lundberg, David A. Oliver, and Jennifer Simpson.

Rogan, who was named team captain, is the first non-coach team member to serve four consecutive terms. Jeb and Matt Boyd are the first brothers to serve on the team, and Oliver was selected as the team's first-ever freestyle specialist. In addition, the selection this year of Dave Lundberg marks the first time the offspring of a former alpine team member has made the squad. Dave Lundberg is the son of Max Lundberg, who served in the late 60's and mid 70's as both member and team captain of what was then called the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team.


The AASI Snowboard Team is made up of Lane Clegg (coach), Scott Anfang (who returns for his second consecutive term), Gregg Davis (a member of the team from 2000–2004), and newcomers Dave Lynch, Tom Morsch, Eric Rolls, and Josh Spoelstra.

J. Scott McGee (coach), David Lawrence, Tom Marshall, Ross Matlock, and Charlie MacArthur comprise the new PSIA Nordic Team. McGee and Matlock are team veterans, whereas MacArthur is the first person to have made the PSIA-AASI national teams in two different disciplines, having served from 2000 to 2004 as a member of the PSIA Alpine Team.

Representing a major step forward in the evolution of teaching disabled snowsports, the PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team consists of Bill Bowness, with

Geoff Krill joining him as a provisional team member.

Including coaches, the new teams hail from the following divisions: Rocky Mountain (10), Western (6), Eastern (6), Intermountain (4), Northwest (2), Northern Rocky Mountain (1), and Central (1). In October, team members will reunite at Copper Mountain, Colorado to train, develop educational materials, and plan activities and new directions for the next four years.

After the team announcement Friday night, the collective sigh of relief was as tangible as the anxiety in the air that preceded it. One way or another, the 139 contenders for the 2008–2012 national teams most likely share the sentiment expressed by adaptive team candidate John Swartwood from Windham Mountain, New York, when he said simply: "This has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience." 

Erica Marciniak has been skiing for 23 years, snowboarding for 17, and teaching both disciplines for nearly as long. She is certified at Level III in AASI and Level I in PSIA. After a hiatus in the flatlands of Los Angeles—during which she taught 2nd grade before starting a small communications business—Erica is happy to be roaming the mountains once more.

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Meet Your New National Teams

by JOANNE CORSON

Associate Editor

photos by JONATHAN SELKOWITZ

Although nobody got voted off the island or walked away with a multi-million-dollar record contract, this year's PSIA-AASI National Teams Selection process was chock-full of challenges and excitement. After five grueling days, 25 courageous women and men were left standing, ready — along with their manager and four coaches — to represent the public face of our association. Meet your new PSIA-AASI 2008–2012 **Alpine**, **Nordic**, **Snowboard**, and **Adaptive** Teams.

KATIE FRY (TEAMS MANAGER)



Skiing since 1971, Katie began to settle into teaching in 1987 when she first joined Colorado's Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass, where she

has now been the managing director for three years. Katie's positive public image has landed her spots on ESPN ski programming, the movie *Aspen Extreme*, and membership on the Volkl/Tecnica Carver Girl Team. A PSIA Alpine Team member from 1996 to 2004, this is now her second term as teams manager. Katie loves being a twin to her sister Megan, who was an Alpine Team member from 1996 to 2008.

BILL BOWNESS (COACH)

In 2004, Bill was awarded the first-ever adaptive slot on the PSIA Alpine Team, promptly earning the respect of fellow team members for his ability to instruct able-bodied alpine skiers of all



levels just as well as adaptive skiers. To quote from one of his ski tips, "The similarities between the skiing techniques of a sit-down mono skier and his or her stand-up peer are more numerous than the differences." Now Bill has become the first coach of the new PSIA Adaptive Team for 2008 to 2012. Bill has traveled the world as a silver and bronze medal-winning Paralympic athlete and an adaptive ski clinician in Korea and Spain. Currently technical director at Disabled Sports-Far West (formerly Tahoe Adaptive Ski School), he also owns and operates the Unlimited Skiing water ski school.

LANE CLEGG (COACH)

A member of the AASI Snowboard Team from 1996 to 2000, Lane rejoins the team this year as its coach. Lane is a Level III instructor and the head coach of the Snowbird (Utah) Snowboard Team. He is a trainer at Park City Mountain Resort in Utah and an examiner and clinic leader for Intermountain Division. Lane's



been riding for more than 20 years, and teaching for 19. His first snowboard—dating back to 1986—was a K2 Gyrator. In his spare time, Lane owns and manages a cattle ranch.

SCOTT MCGEE (COACH)

Scott has been involved in skiing and outdoor education since his college days, when he supervised the telemark and cross-country ski programs for the legendary Dartmouth Outing Club in New Hampshire. He's employed his certifications in teaching, avalanche, and guiding throughout the Rocky Mountain West for resorts, colleges, private outfitters, and several renowned Outward Bound schools. A racer for and past president of the U.S. Telemark Ski Association, Scott enjoys applying high-end technique in all-mountain skiing and teaching. A Wyoming all-season mountaineer, Scott works as training manager for Jackson Hole's Mountain Sports School and guides with Exum Mountain Guides in the Tetons. His latest passion is backcountry skate skiing, and he has posted over 18 trans-Teton tours on light gear, and other distance tours around the West. This is Scott's third term on the PSIA Nordic Team and his first year as coach.



ROB SOGARD (COACH)

Rob was on the PSIA Alpine Team from 1996 to 2004, and this is his second term as alpine team coach. His teaching career began in 1983 at Wilmot Mountain in Wisconsin, where he was a staff trainer and USSA Masters race coach. In 1987, he moved to Utah's Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort, where he has been ever since. Teaching skiing and positions as children's school supervisor, training coordinator, and private lessons manager have lead to Rob's current job as the assistant director for personnel and coordinator for resort guest services. Summers are for biking and golf; and, having recently sold all of his windsurfing gear, Rob is waiting for 2-year-old daughter, Amelia, to take up kite surfing.



SCOTT ANFANG

Now in his second term on the AASI Snowboard Team, Scott first began snowboarding 20 years ago in Minnesota and has been a member of AASI since 1996. He was instrumental in developing the freestyle accreditation program in AASI's Rocky Mountain Division, where he is also a certification examiner. For 10 years, Scott enjoyed back-to-back seasons, splitting time between Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and Queenstown, New Zealand. In New Zealand, Scott helped found the Instructor Training Company, an 11-week program for people who want to become snowboard instructors. Scott now lives full-time in Steamboat with his wife and two children, where he is the snowboard school technical director and terrain park manager for Steamboat Ski Resort. Scott likes to swap tales with fellow Steamboat resident and 75-year-old Snurfer pioneer Sherm Poppen, who tries to match his number of years to his number of days on snow each season.



ROBIN BARNES

Robin has been a ski instructor and trainer at California's Heavenly Ski Resort since 1989. She is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor, PSIA-Western Regional Demo Team member and PSIA Western Division Tech Team member. Robin is certified as a personal trainer by the American Council on Exercise and owns Tahoe Outdoor Fitness in South Lake Tahoe, California. A migrant snow-seeker, Robin spent 16 seasons instructing in Portillo, Chile. She speaks both Spanish and Portuguese, and has twice earned a spot on *SKI Magazine's* Top 100 Instructors list. This is her first term on the PSIA Alpine Team.



JEB BOYD

After 18 years at Loon Mountain and Booth Creek Resorts in New Hampshire, Jeb made the leap to start his own company—Arc2Arc, LLC., which serves as a resource to the ski industry. There



he puts his business administration degree and years of diversified experience to good use with this unique, dual-focused business. When not consulting with other resorts, he is busy developing the Arc2Arc Alpine Training Center, a comprehensive and innovative coaching and training service for recreational, amateur, and professional skiers in Lincoln, New Hampshire. Jeb currently lives in Thornton, New Hampshire, in the heart of the White Mountains with his wife Holly and son Tucker, where they enjoy liquid sports all year round. This is his second term on the team.

MATT BOYD

Matt joins his brother Jeb on the team this year, adding to a long list of accomplishments they have shared. After growing up skiing at a small hill in Pennsylvania, Matt moved to New Hampshire, where he worked at Loon Mountain for nearly 12 years. He is now Vice President for Arc2Arc, a company founded by Jeb, which provides alpine training and resort consulting. He has been named one of *SKIING Magazine's* Top 100 Instructors in North America. Matt lives with his wife and two girls in Thornton, New Hampshire, where they enjoy waterskiing, wakeboarding, cycling, and of course, skiing!



GREGG DAVIS

Gregg has been an instructor at Colorado's Breckenridge Ski and Ride School for the past 15 years. An AASI member since 1995, an examiner for AASI-Rocky Mountain since 1996, and an AASI Snowboard Team member from 2000 to 2004, Gregg has a long history with the organization. He created the first-ever AASI Freestyle Accreditation Program and has participated in the development of many other AASI manuals and materials. Nine years ago, Gregg started an educational and charity organization called Skateboardprograms.com, which helps communities develop their own skateboard programs. Gregg also spends time creating websites and blogs, and is a



founder of MySnowPro.com, a networking website for skiing and snowboarding instructors.

MIKE HAFFER

Mike joins the PSIA Alpine Team after almost 10 years on the PSIA-Western Regional Demo Team and PSIA Western Division Tech Team. For the past two years he was alpine vice president for the Western Division, but stepped down before national team selection. He is the assistant manager and technical director for the Northstar-at-Tahoe Ski and Snowboard School as well as a trainer at the North American Ski Training Center, based in Lake Tahoe, California. He regularly contributes articles to *The Edge*. Mike resides in Truckee, California, with his wife, Pam, and 1-year-old daughter, Isabella. He enjoys mountain biking, road biking, and windsurfing.



NICHOLAS HERRIN

A ski instructor since 1994, Nick began in Washington State at Ski Acres Ski Area (now known as Summit East), working for John Mohan's Ski School. He then spent nine years teaching at Big Sky Resort in Montana, where he ran the training program at the Big Sky Ski School. After that, he moved south to Colorado to work as the assistant director to teammate Bobby Murphy in running the Telluride Ski and Snowboard School. Still in Colorado, Nick is now the director of the Ski and Ride School at Crested Butte Mountain Resort. He has won several 1st and 3rd place finishes in National and World Powder 8 Championships. Nick spends his free time on his cross or mountain bike and when he can sneak away to the coast he enjoys kite surfing. He is also a competitive unicyclist and is currently working on juggling while cycling! This is his second term on the team.



GEOFF KRILL

Geoff Krill is a provisional member of the newly-formed PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team and the snow-



sports director at the White Mountain Adaptive Snowsports School at Loon Mountain, New Hampshire. He is a member of the White Mountain Adaptive Snowsports School's Team Scream, the first 100 percent-synchronized sit-down mono ski team to compete in the World Alpine Ski Championships. Geoff loves sharing his passion for the outdoors through sport, and enjoys downhill mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, hand cycling, water skiing, and off-road wheelchair racing.

DAVID LAWRENCE



New to the PSIA Nordic Team, David began skiing at age six at Wintergreen Resort in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

Specializing in track, he is a full-time cross-country ski instructor for the Methow Valley Ski School in Winthrop, Washington. He is a contributing writer for *Master Skier* and has helped rewrite the Northwest Division certification standards. David is in the outdoors nearly 365 days a year. He and his wife have through-hiked the entire Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada and then bicycled across the country from Washington to Virginia, covering nearly 7,000 miles under their own power. They now own Pangaea River Rafting near Missoula, Montana, and operate white-water rafting trips on the Clark Fork, Blackfoot, and Spokane Rivers.

ERIC LIPTON

A new member of the PSIA Alpine Team, Eric was introduced to skiing by his father who has been a PSIA-certified instructor for 40 years.



Eric currently teaches at both Blue Mountain in Pennsylvania and Beaver Creek, Colorado. A graduate of Penn State, Eric ski raced as one of five members of their nationally ranked United States Collegiate Ski Association ski team. He is also the race coordinator and competitor for the annual Sol Lipton Run Fest, a half marathon, 5K, and 1.5K fun run now in its 28th year. Eric likes mountain biking and skateboarding in the summer, and he's the fourth generation to operate his family's furniture business.

DAVE LUNDBERG

Dave has been skiing in the state known for "the best snow on earth" since he was 4 years old. He is currently training coordinator and ski school supervisor at Park City Mountain Resort in Utah. He is very involved in the PSIA- Intermountain Division, holding positions such as team manager, certification manager, and division education and certification leader. Dave spent two years in the Philippines as a missionary before attending Brigham Young University. New to the team this year, he is a second-generation PSIA Alpine Team member, following in the footsteps of his father, Max.



DAVE LYNCH



New to the AASI Snowboard Team this year, Dave first got on snow at age 8 at Mt. Cranmore in New Hampshire. He continues to ride and teach in New England as the snowboard coach at Gould Academy as well as instruct inside the classroom as an Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus and physics teacher. Dave has been an AASI examiner for 10 years and a member since 1997. He has traveled around the world to such places as Australia and Argentina as a guest coach and staff trainer, helping other instructors reach their goals.

DAVE LYON

Dave's love of skiing and ski racing was instilled in him largely by his mother, who was a member of the Canadian National Alpine Ski Team in her youth.



Dave had a successful racing career at the University of Wyoming. Named NCAA All-American three consecutive years and Rocky Mountain Overall Champion twice, he later coached the school's development team.

In 1985, Dave was named to the U.S. Ski Team, where he achieved career-high national rankings of 5th in slalom and 15th in giant slalom. He then raced on the Pro Tour until 1990. In 1994, Dave took over the family ski school and founded Dave Lyon Summer Ski Camps. In his

free time, he leads ski and ski racing clinics, coaches football, and chases his two boys all over the mountain. Dave returns for his third term as a member of the PSIA Alpine Team.

CHARLIE MACARTHUR



Charlie has been instructing and training in telemark, alpine, and snowboarding for 27 years at the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass and is a PSIA-Rocky Mountain Division examiner. A member of the PSIA Alpine Team from 2000 to 2004, and now a member of the PSIA Nordic Team, Charlie is the first person ever to serve on two different PSIA national teams. In the summer, Charlie runs the Aspen Kayak Academy and has been certifying and coaching students and instructors in the art of river running, freestyle, and racing techniques since 1990. His latest passion is the new sport of stand-up paddling (SUP), which combines elements of nordic skiing, surfing, and kayaking.

TOM MARSHALL

Tom is a new member of the PSIA Nordic Team. He works full-time at Big Sky, Montana, where he first started instructing in 1999. He grew up in Boise, Idaho, and cross-country raced out of Bogus Basin through high school. At Dartmouth College he raced on the cross-country development team while majoring in engineering.



While working a couple of seasons at Mt. Hutt in New Zealand he met his Aussie wife Mary. Tom is a current alpine examiner in the Northern Rocky Mountain division and is in training to become a telemark examiner as well. He usually waits for the lifts to shut for the season before going touring, but then takes advantage of the late snowpack held in Montana's mountains.

ROSS MATLOCK

Skiing and PSIA is a family affair for Ross Matlock, who is back for his second term on the PSIA Nordic Team. Wife Jill Sick-





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Photo: Frank Shine



PSIA ALPINE TEAM

Katie Fry - Teams Manager
Bobby Murphy - Alpine Team

els Matlock was a PSIA Alpine Team member from 2000 to 2004 and they're raising a couple of little rippers of their own. Ross is convinced that kids can and should learn to telemark at an early age, and has launched a children's telemark program at Crested Butte Ski School, where he currently instructs. He has also helped organize several telemark festivals, including the U.S. Telemark Slope-style Championships and Tele X festivals in Crested Butte, the Telemark Free Ski Championships, Mountain Adventure Seminars, and Grand Targee Telephoria. Ross has been a ski school director, clinic leader, telemark instructor and backcountry ski guide in his native Australia. His globe-trotting adventures are numerous, ranging from skiing the Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt, a skin track in the backyard of the Ryounkaku Lodge in Hokkaido, Japan, and heli lifts in Valdez, Alaska.

TOMMY MORSCH



Tommy has been a snowboard instructor at Bristol Mountain in New York for 10 seasons, the snowboard supervisor for seven seasons, and the terrain park manager for the past five. He has assisted with the development of programs such as Park Runners, a 12-week course focusing on freestyle fundamentals, as well as helping with Bristol's first snowboard freestyle team. Tommy's knowledge of terrain parks has contributed to the massive growth of Bristol's park, which in only five seasons has grown from just a couple of basic features to more than 35 features, including a 425-foot halfpipe. This is his first year on the AASI Snowboard Team.

BOBBY MURPHY

For someone whose first turns, at age 8, were in Evanston, Illinois, on Mount Trashmore — a 100-foot-vertical garbage dump converted to a sledding hill by virtue of a rope-tow—Bobby's come a long way. While attending college at the University of Iowa he taught skiing at Chestnut Mountain, in Galena, Illi-



nois. During those four years, he worked his way through PSIA certification and landed on the steeps of Crested Butte. (Just a slight change in vertical!) For 10 years, from 1991 to 2001, Bobby moved up through the ranks at the Crested Butte ski school, becoming ski school manager in 1999. But the allure of Telluride was too much to resist, and he moved there to instruct in 2001, being tapped for ski and snowboard school director in 2003. This year Bobby moved to Keystone Resort where he is now the director of skier services. This is his second term on the PSIA Alpine Team. He and his wife Jen have two daughters, Ella and Anja, who probably won't be learning to ski on a trash heap.

DAVID A. OLIVER



A new member and the first park & pipe specialist on the PSIA Alpine Team, David began teaching in New Mexico at Taos Ski Valley and later at Angel Fire Resort until his move to Colorado. For eight years he has been an instructor, lead freestyle trainer, and children's trainer at Breckenridge Ski and Ride School. He developed the freestyle education program and has been the lead freestyle examiner for PSIA-Rocky Mountain for the last five years. He also assisted in developing the "Get-A-Clue" and "Go With A Pro" PSIA-AASI campaigns. David has competed for three years as a Breckenridge Demonstration Team member and in seven out of the last eight U.S. Freeskiing Opens.

DOUG PIERINI

After part-time seasonal work at Plattekill Mountain Ski Area in New York and racing for the Rutgers University Ski Team, Doug worked at Squaw Valley Resort in California and Steamboat Resort in Colorado for two years, before moving to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. While teaching at Jackson he raised more than \$5,000 for Teton County Search and Rescue by setting a record for the most trams skied in a business day. He was also an active competitor on the freeskiing tour from 1997 to 2000.



In 2003, Doug took a job as ski and snowboard school director at Sierra-at-Tahoe, California, and in 2007 moved to the north side of Lake Tahoe. He is currently the director of resort services and ski school at Alpine Meadows Resort and Homewood Mountain Resort. Doug has taught at Mt. Buller in Australia and in Portillo, Chile. A sailboat captain and avid racer, in 1998 he captained a 60-foot ocean-racing sailboat to victory in the classic Newport-Bermuda race. This is Doug's third term as a PSIA Alpine Team member.

MICHAEL ROGAN



Those who have worked with Michael (who has taught skiing since 1985) value him for his extraordinary skiing and technical ability as much as for his solid communication skills. Numerous photos of him in action accompanied the book, *Good Things to Know about Gliding on Snow*, as well as educational articles in *SKI Magazine*, where he is now director of instruction. Michael has also worked as ski school director at Hotel Portillo in Portillo, Chile. This is his fourth consecutive term on the PSIA Alpine Team (a record for a non-coach member), and this year he was named team captain. When not ski instructing or training at Heavenly Ski Resort in California, Michael enjoys mountain biking and golfing.

ERIC ROLLS

New to the AASI Snowboard Team this year, Eric grew up riding in upstate New York and continued snowboarding throughout college in Vermont. He followed his passion for the sport and began instructing in New York and throughout different parts of New England. Eric's experiences with teaching and being on the AASI-E education staff eventually led him to coaching, and he's currently a head coach for Steamboat Springs Winter Sports club in Colorado. In the summer, Eric travels and plays the drums with the band, The Holden Young Trio.



JIM SCHANZENBAKER



Jim did not begin skiing until age 18, but it took him only a few years to achieve PSIA Level III alpine certification along with AASI Level II snow-

board certification. He has instructed at Bear Mountain, California; Breckenridge, Colorado; Big Sky, Montana; and is currently instructing and training for the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass, where he has been since 2000. He has also taught at Coronet Peak in New Zealand. Jim and his racing partner Andy Docken have won the U.S. Powder 8 Championships and placed 2nd at the World Championships. Jim was on the PSIA Alpine Team from 2000–2004.

JENNIFER SIMPSON

Jennifer began instructing 15 years ago in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She now teaches skiing in Minnesota at Hyland Ski and Snowboard School and




in Colorado at Vail Snowsports School, where she's been for the past three seasons. Jennifer has been an examiner for the PSIA-Central Division since 2001 and was elected to their education and certification committee in 2007. A registered nurse, Jennifer also works in the emergency department of the Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville, Minnesota. When she has free time, which isn't very often these days, she enjoys biking, reading, and redecorating her home. This is her first term on the PSIA Alpine Team.

JOSHUA SPOELSTRA

Josh is head snowboard trainer at Heavenly Resort in California and an AASI-certified Level III examiner, freestyle examiner, and adaptive examiner. He is in charge of professional development for AASI-W, a member of the AASI-W committee referred to as "The Posse," and is a member of PSIA-AASI-W adaptive committee. A longtime wilderness leader in climbing, mountaineering, cav-



ing, whitewater rafting, and ropes-course instruction, Josh has level I and II avalanche certification, is a wilderness first responder, and holds certificates in vertical rescue, cave rescue, and swiftwater rescue. He starts his mornings as the on-mountain host for *Another Heavenly Morning*, reporting daily weather and snow conditions. This is Josh's first year on the AASI Snowboard Team. He and his wife enjoy riding, climbing, biking, and surfing, and live in South Lake Tahoe with their dog. 

COLOR KEY

Blue - Alpine Team
Green - Adaptive Team
Orange - Nordic Team
Red - Snowboard Team

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HITTING THE TARGET

Set Goals the Right Way to Launch Your Career

by KELLY COFFEY

If I was going to find out how to make a career out of ski instruction, it would be here: Mammoth, California, during PSIA-ASSI's 2008 National Team Selection.

Ninety-four talented alpine candidates showed up at Mammoth, all with the same goal: make the Team. These last days of April were the beginning of the weeklong tryouts, but, for each of us, they ended a much longer path of training for this specific achievement.

Following that multi-year path through certification and to national selections led me to discover this: if I want to most efficiently forward my ski career, I need to set the right targets. These motivate us to

action and keep us on the right track—but only if they're specific and measurable.

PSIA's path to certification automatically created those goals for me in the first years, and the selection process did the same most recently. Now, to avoid foundering without direction, I need to think beyond certification and making the alpine team and craft larger ambitions for myself.

Setting goals is "integral to consistent improvement," says Dr. Shawn Worthy, a clinical psychologist and professor at Metropolitan State College of Denver. Worthy, whose areas of expertise include sports psychology, has conducted a number of performance-oriented studies of

skiers and other athletes.

I always strive for consistent improvement—after all, I want to be the best instructor I can be. But what does that mean? How will I work toward that end? How will I know when I've achieved it? The truth is, by phrasing my goal ambiguously, I can't.

On the other hand, when I sent my sights on making the national team, every morning that I woke up I knew exactly what I needed to do that day to best prepare myself for the tryouts—just as I did whenever I trained for a certification exam. It might have been to watch video and work on my movement analysis. It might have been to get out early to



Five years of training paid off for new PSIA Alpine Team Member Jennifer Simpson.

Jonathan Selkowitz

ski frozen bumps. Even though I did not make the team, going through the process made me a far better instructor.

"You really want a discrete and tangible goal. One that is observable. One that is quantifiable," Worthy says. "This way you can map each step required to accomplish that goal."

There's something about the national selection process, as there is with every PSIA certification exam: a concreteness that makes it easy to figure out exactly what you need to do to get to that level—a deadline, a location, specific tasks, specific skills measured.

New PSIA Alpine Team member Jennifer Simpson set a good example for mapping her route to joining the team, committing to train five years in advance. When Simpson wasn't teaching near her home base of Burnsville, Minnesota, she spent a good chunk of each winter commuting to Colorado to teach at Colorado's Vail Ski Resort and the Peak Performance Ski Camps. When she first set her focus on the tryouts, making the national team "was an 'oh, that would be really cool' goal," Simpson says. "It became more specific and real as it got closer."

Once she set that intention, it became clear how she would have to structure those next five years in order to achieve it. Knowing she needed to become faster and more dynamic on her skis, Simpson dove into racing. She took time off work to travel to a number of race camps in the winters and summers. She participated in any race series she could find.

As 2008 came closer, Simpson narrowed her focus to training more specifically for the national selection process. She created checklists of ski tasks she needed to train for and even gave herself a reading list that ranged from PSIA manuals to books on sports psychology.

There's something about the national selection process, as there is with every PSIA certification exam: a concreteness that makes it easy to figure out exactly what you need to do to get to that level—a deadline, a location, specific tasks, specific skills measured.

Like Simpson, I used the national selection criteria to measure my skills. In past exams, I always felt weak with my teaching segment and movement analysis. The weakness boiled down to discomfort when presenting information to my peers. To improve, I snatched every opportunity to practice in front of my fellow instructors. I even stepped up this past season to organize extra trainings within my ski school that would let me practice more. These are things I wouldn't have done had there not been such a big goal looming at the end of the season.

Because I committed to training for a shot at making the PSIA Alpine Team, I developed skills to a degree I never would have otherwise. Though I didn't make the team, I still get to keep those skills. I'm now in a better position for my other goals: becoming an examiner for Rocky Mountain Division and taking on more of a leadership role within my ski school.

Goals provide the map—whether for a specific exam or for a more individualized accomplishment. "If you don't have a clear idea of where you are going, then you're rudderless," Worthy says.

Setting specific, measurable goals is crucial to forwarding our ski instruction careers, and PSIA has a certification process with built-in ladder rungs to our larger professional objectives. However, while being a PSIA-certified Level III instructor is a great accomplishment, it is not the end-all-be-all of ski instruction. What are we going to do once we reach our Level III? What are we going to do once we make the national team? Once you've reached that top level, how do you keep advancing in the ski instruction field? The most accomplished instructors I know have had to move beyond those set goals and move into the unknown to create their own.

If we learn how to create goals the right way, some day we'll look back on a career of great achievements. ■

Kelly Coffey is a trainer for the Vail Snowsports School. His goal is to stay healthy throughout the 2009 season.

Be SMART About Your Goals

Somebody at some point created the "SMART" mnemonic to describe the right way to set goals. It's been used so much for motivation, management, and personal success topics that nobody knows who first came up with it. If you craft your goal to meet these five qualities, you'll have a strong roadmap to reach it:

SPECIFIC—Phrase your goal clearly and in well-defined terms. Rather than say, "I want to improve my bump skiing," go for specifics and proclaim, "I will ski the Knee-Crusher Trail at a Level III standard by April 31, 2009."

MEASURABLE—Have an endgame or result in sight when setting goals. Otherwise, how will you know if you've achieved them? Did you pass your cert exam in April? Did you beat your student-return percentage from last season?

ACHIEVABLE—Olympic gold may have passed you by. But becoming an examiner in your division or a trainer at your mountain is certainly within your reach. Find that balance between stretching yourself and breaking yourself.

RELEVANT—Your goals need to be consistent with what you ultimately want to accomplish. Drinking a gallon of milk in an hour may be a goal, but how will it make you a better skier?

TIME-BOUND—Create a deadline. Nothing helps you get out of bed early on a frozen morning more than a looming deadline.

— Kelly Coffey

GET WITH THE PROGRAM

Catering To Kids

by ALISON CLAYTON-CUMMINGS

The word on the street—as well as at the industry tradeshow and in ski and snowboard school locker rooms—is that the future of the snowsports industry is in lessons for children. Capture the kids and you gain a lifelong enthusiast. Capture the kids and you gain the parents, since parents usually go where the kids are happy, learning, and having a blast. Few of us in the business can afford to ignore these facts.

Snowsports school managers—and, indeed, the instructors who work for them—know that it's important that kids have a great time on the mountain. They have to be psyched to participate in the programs the school offers.

And just how do you go about doing that? Outlined here are just three of the many approaches that ski schools are taking to create children's programs that are innovative, creative, and educational. Take a minute to catch up on what Beaver Creek, Colorado; Stratton Mountain, Vermont; and Deer Valley, Utah and, bring to the table. Ski school directors might find something to incorporate into their own program to give it a boost. And children's instructors might get some great ideas on which to build lesson content.

[a day in the park]

Colorado's Beaver Creek Resort has made a positive impact in the area of park and pipe instruction, with their Parkology program getting raves from the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) as the "Best Freestyle Terrain Safety Program" in 2006. Offered to skiers and riders ages 3 to 17, Parkology is a weekly instruction program that gradually introduces students to the art of enjoying terrain parks. Kids develop park and pipe skills, practice proper park etiquette, and learn to compete at appropriate levels.

Beaver Creek also offers the Talons Challenge. This ski and snowboard school program is offered as a test of athleticism and skill for all ages. Due to the steep terrain involved, the minimum ability level for participation is Level 5 (in this case a beginning parallel skier with experience on black-diamond trails). To complete the Talons Challenge, participants ski 13 trails, accumulating 23,722 vertical feet—with an instructor who uses a special checklist to sign off on each of the trails the child skis or rides. A student has the entire season to complete the challenge and submit the signed checklist to the Beaver Creek Ski and Snowboard

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles touting innovative snowsports programs throughout the country. In coming issues, 32 Degrees will highlight offerings in other disciplines and specialties, including adaptive, snowboarding, nordic, senior, and women's programs

School. Prizes are awarded upon completion of the challenge.

What you can do:

Beaver Creek is a large destination resort with lots of terrain for children to explore. But even if the area where you teach is considerably smaller, you can easily incorporate this type of challenge into your programming.

Consider selecting a series of trails at your area, making a map and checklist, and having completed entries submitted for a weekly prize drawing. The trail series can be determined by difficulty, or by similar names, or by progressive difficulty. If your area is small, the checklist could include all the trails.

Be creative and use a format that is unique to your particular area. This snowsports school-administered program will bring kids back time and again so they can get their cards completed in order to qualify for and receive a prize.

[environmentally conscious]

At Vermont's Stratton Mountain, a resort-wide effort to be more "green" has resulted in stepped-up recycling, initiatives to reduce fuel and energy consumption, a no-waste staff cafeteria, a no-idling policy, and carpooling programs. Stratton has also adopted an environmental theme as its basis for teaching kids. An educational focus that encourages kids to be responsible stewards of the earth spans both on-snow time and indoor time, including check-in and lunch breaks.

In lessons for the 4- to 6-year-olds, group levels are divided by animal names. Mice are the beginner students, who graduate to Squirrels, then Rabbits. The animals get larger and mightier as the kids' skills develop, with Bears topping the list as the most advanced.

Where the mice live in the winter, what rabbits eat, how much a bear weighs,



Chad Schmidt, Beaver Creek, Colorado



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One of the more popular activities details the varieties of animal scat!

and similar information is provided to the instructor to help create an educational environment-oriented resource for their students. Used as icebreakers, lesson themes, or storylines for activities and adventures, the animal facts are presented in a way that creates awareness of the surrounding woods and its inhabitants. As the children progress through the different levels, they learn to respect animal habitats and appreciate the importance of leaving green space in the world for wildlife.

Resources for children ages 7 to 12 have a mountain theme. Group names are derived from some of the largest mountains in the world, on different continents. Again working from fact sheets, the instructors teach the kids about the locations of the mountains, their peak elevations, and other special features. The mountain theme helps teach children about the world around them, offers perspective on mountains in relation to Stratton, and informs kids about different mountain culture and geology.

For the periods of time when the kids are indoors, either during their lunch break or in times of inclement weather, instructors make use of "activity boxes" to keep the children occupied and engaged. Developed to help teach kids about nature and our responsibilities in caring for the earth, activities include making castings of animal tracks or learning about population density in deer herds. One of the more popular activities details the varieties of animal scat!

Each box includes an instruction sheet for the teacher and all the materials needed to complete the project. The duration of activities ranges from 15 minutes to an hour, and instructors are encouraged to use the boxes as frequently as their time allows.

What you can do:

We can all develop a "green culture." Make activities relating to environmental awareness lively and attention-grabbing for younger kids and participatory for

older kids. Create workbooks or other materials that allow for the concepts and lessons to be taken home or back to the kids' schools. To all the kids you ski or ride with, spread the message of how important it is to care for our earth.

For insights on other environmental initiatives at work within the snowsports industry, click on the link labeled "The Environment" on the NSAA website at www.nsaa.org. There you'll find information on "Keep Winter Cool," a program developed by NSAA and the Natural Resources Defense Council to, as NSAA puts it, "raise visibility and public understanding of global warming and spotlight opportunities that exist right now to start fixing the problem." An offshoot of this program is NSAA's Green Power Program, which promotes renewable energy credits as a means to offset energy use at snowsports areas.

[historical context]

Utah's Deer Valley Resort combines the natural element with a lesson on the region's mining history. A poem that stars the children's program mascots introduces the hard-working miners to the forest inhabitants, who have decided that skiing is fun for everyone! The line, "They have worked so hard to find treasures, yet they've never learned to ski" sets the tone for the raccoon, bear, deer, and eagle to entice the miners into trying skiing. The poem is part of a coloring book that provides a quiet indoor activity that produces a take-home memory.

On-mountain theme areas focus on the mascots using the natural terrain features abundant at Deer Valley. Each area is named for a mascot, Silver's Aspen Slalom, Ruby's Tail, and Bucky's Backyard, to name a few. Silver's Aspen Slalom is a slalom course with banners that encourage the kids to follow the gates. Ruby's Tail and Bucky's Backyard are natural luge-type runs that allow kids to ski over "Whoop-Dee-Dos." There's also Quincy's Cabin, where kids can peek in the windows to see what Quincy the Bear is up

to, whether he's sleeping in his bed, having breakfast, or doing chores. (Instructors stage Quincy's activities before the kids arrive.) At Ruby's Roost, children can climb atop a deck to locate pictures of squirrels, birds, chipmunks, and other small animals placed in the trees by the staff. This activity helps kids identify animals and get a look at where they might live and play.

These areas give kids and instructors secret, kids-only environments. Skiing skills get an extra boost when instructors take their young students to specific areas that feature child-friendly terrain features appropriate to the skill level of the group.

Deer Valley also organizes "Theme Weeks" designed to create an atmosphere of animation and excitement. The revolving weekly themes are geared for multiple ability zones, so all the kids can participate.

Activities include embarking on scavenger hunts, making snowcones, and running races on the beginner hill and in the Whoop-Dee-Do area. Themes include "The Wild West," which enlightens participants about Utah history, and Pirate Week, a contemporary favorite thanks to Johnny Depp and the Pirates of the Caribbean movies. Theme Week activities allow the staff to work together with their groups in the afternoons and provide a showcase for parents to observe their children's progress.

What you can do:

Take the lead from Deer Valley and create a coloring book! Choose a suitable theme from local history or use something else the kids and staff can be passionate about. Animals, plants, the environment, recycling, music, and movies are all good choices. Maybe there is a local hero, product, or activity that would make a useful theme.

[conclusion]

Every snowsports school is looking to latch onto a share of the population that skis and/or snowboards, so it makes sense

to put our best foot forward with innovative, creative, and educational programs for everyone, but children in particular. It's not necessary to have a huge budget to incorporate special themes, kid-centric terrain features, and broad-based education into children's snowsports programs. It is necessary to provide value for the parents by offering children's lessons that are based on skill development, fun, and expanded horizons.

When schools succeed in creating excitement, motivation, and a passion for being on the snow, children will put skiing and riding at the top of their list of fun things to do in the winter. They'll want to keep coming back for more, bringing mom and dad when they do! What could be better for the long-term success of the sports and industry we love? **32**

Alison Clayton-Cummings is the manager of junior programs at Vermont's Stratton Mountain, a PSIA-Eastern examiner, and a former coach of Eastern Division's Advanced Children's Educators. In the 1990s she was a member of PSIA's Junior Education Team.



SnowSports
360

Alison Clayton-Cummings

Take off their training wheels.



There's a whole lot more to a mountain than bunny slopes and packed-powder groomers—decidedly much more. And helping students learn to conquer challenging terrain or tricky conditions requires specialized knowledge. This new manual can help instructors teach skiers to make the most of moguls, steeps, powder, chutes, and ice. *Tactics for All-Mountain Skiing* can be ordered through www.psia.org or the PSIA-AASI Accessories Catalog. It's essential reading if you want to help your students really take off and fly.



www.psia.org

DO YOU KNOW The Movement Matrix?

by KIM SEEVERS
PSIA-AASI Education Director

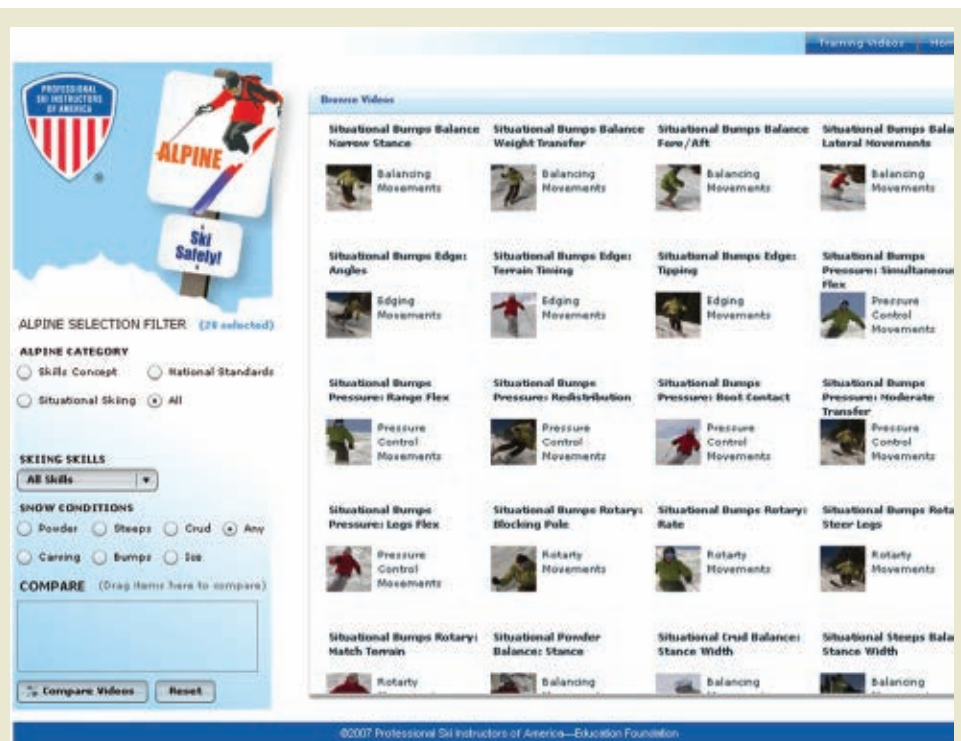
DO YOU KNOW . . . about the newest PSIA-AASI education product, the Movement Matrix? In a world where information travels around the globe with a single keystroke, PSIA-AASI has embraced a new method for delivering teaching and training information as it is developed.

The Movement Matrix was introduced in December 2007, and received strong member support in its first season. The first edition was an alpine program, and with the enthusiastic reception of that product the national snowboard and nordic teams began developing their own versions of the matrix while the alpine team members continued working together to create new material for theirs.

DO YOU KNOW . . . what the Movement Matrix is? The matrix is an online educational resource full of information—written, audio, and visual—that can give your personal skiing a shot in the arm, boost your professional knowledge, and help you add to your bag of teaching tricks. This innovative web tool brings PSIA written materials to life right before your eyes.

The alpine matrix features more than 500 short videos with voiceovers describing the skills concepts and the application of those concepts in a variety of skiing conditions. Also included are handpicked drills that help promote skilled movement for the various skiing conditions and situations targeted. A visual representation of the alpine national certification standards was added in March.

Ned Crossley, an instructor/trainer from Windham Mountain, New York, and an education staff member for PSIA-Eastern, says, “Movement just doesn’t



Introduced in December 2007, the Movement Matrix is the newest PSIA-AASI education product. The Movement Matrix is an online educational resource that can help your personal skiing, increase your professional knowledge, and help your teaching.

translate to words very well. The matrix gives us a way to see what we’ve been reading about for so many years. It validates all our previous manuals.”

DO YOU KNOW . . . what the matrix can do for you? The Movement Matrix is like a personal trainer for ski teachers. As a teacher, it is essential for you to boil down all the information you have in your head to the one small focus that your client needs most. How sweet would it be to have hundreds of tips available to you in

one place and in written, visual, and audio form? Enter the Movement Matrix.

Gregg Davis, an AASI Snowboard Team member from Breckenridge, Colorado, thinks the new snowboard component (available late fall, 2008) will “spark ideas and help instructors create new approaches to their teaching. It will allow members to get a look at the different styles of the various team riders and to analyze their visual differences.” Crossley adds, “The Movement Matrix is a way of bringing the PSIA and AASI team mem-

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bers right into your living room. The association has figured out how to share the team with the membership; skiing and riding in all conditions, on all kinds of terrain. But it doesn't stop there, because then the team members tell us what they're thinking about while they're doing it. Life doesn't get much better!"

DO YOU KNOW . . . how easy it is to use the matrix? You may be one of those people who shy away from anything computer-based. The Movement Matrix is designed to be intuitive and easy to maneuver so that even the most computer-illiterate member can navigate the site. Most computer users have discovered the glorious convenience of shopping online. The Movement Matrix operates like the shopping sites that show you all their products, then allow you to make selections until only the type of product you're interested in purchasing is shown. This web

HAVE YOU HEARD . . . what your peers are saying about the Movement Matrix? If not, the time is ripe to talk to some Movement Matrix enthusiasts for their perspective on using this exciting new interactive tool for professional and personal development.

Rob Sogard, adult program manager at Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort and head coach of the PSIA Alpine Team, talks about how his alpine school used the matrix for training last season. "In my experience as a snowsports school trainer, I watch a lot of people go to their exams without ever looking at the national standards. Those candidates don't know what the standards say or mean," says Sogard. "They don't have a good feel for what their examiner will be looking for in their skiing. The videos in the matrix give the certification candidate a picture of the standards to which they'll be examined at all three levels of certification."

According to Sogard, the greatest thing about having a visual reference for the national certifications standards is that it can help shape the expectations of a candidate long before he or she goes to an exam.


they say about tipping—and compare them. We can look at when and where tipping should occur and then move on to look at its application in a variety of conditions. We can take it out of exam context and put it into a skiing context or vice versa."

DID YOU KNOW . . . that the AASI Snowboard and PSIA Nordic Teams are working hard to get their Movement Matrix up and running for you for the 2008–2009 season? In addition, the PSIA Alpine Team is developing drills to enhance your bag of tricks for teaching in the beginner/novice zone as well as the intermediate zone. For alpine school trainers, tips and suggestions for preparing your certification candidates will be available.

STILL NOT POSITIVE THE MATRIX IS FOR YOU? Go to the home page of www.psia.org, look for the Movement Matrix section, and take the tutorial. It'll give you an idea of what's included in the Movement Matrix as well as show you just how easy it is to navigate your way through the site.

If you're not sure whether your computer will support this innovative educational tool, this page also gives you the specs for what's needed to run the program. The Movement Matrix is available to PSIA-AASI members for a yearly fee of \$14.95. For information on ordering it, see the 2008–09 *PSIA-AASI Accessories Catalog* or visit the online store.

Most education experts agree on six basic observations about the learning process: 1) learning requires motivation; 2) learning requires repetition; 3) learning occurs through association; 4) learning occurs through the use of the senses; 5) people vary in how they learn information and skills; and 6) learning styles are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. If you believe that learning best takes place through these three styles and you haven't explored the Movement Matrix yet, you should check it out soon. The matrix will supplement your library with pictures and words; a great revelation in PSIA-AASI learning!

"They say a picture is worth a thousand words," concludes Ned Crossley. "If that's true, then the Movement Matrix is worth a billion words!" 

The matrix will supplement your library with pictures and words; a great revelation in PSIA-AASI learning!

resource offers more than 500 30- to 60-second videos that give a succinct visual image of the American Teaching System skills in action in a variety of conditions and situations; ice, bumps, crud, carving, steeps, powder, etc. A video picture of the alpine national certification standards, featuring 100 videos of certified Level I, II, and III instructors and national team members, helps PSIA-AASI members understand what their examiners will be looking for at a certification exam. The best part? There's no downloading hassle—you cover the \$14.95 yearly access fee and within minutes you'll be connected to the matrix from your member page on the PSIA-AASI website. It's as simple as carving a beautiful turn on perfectly groomed terrain!

Eastern Division's Crossley agrees that this element of the Movement Matrix can be an extremely important part of a candidate's exam preparation. "The contrast in the visual demonstrations between the certification levels is a positive and valuable tool," he said. "Having an understanding of the difference in skill level will help candidates appreciate the quality of movement in better skiing."

Sogard recounts the different ways he has used the matrix in his training at Snowbird, saying, "I can pull a Level III national standards edge-control video that talks about tipping the skis. We use that as the jumping off point for discussion and watch the related video. Then we pull up the edge-control videos in the skills concepts section and check out what

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SUPERSONIC LESSONS

Demand A Plan

by ERIC CHANDLER

There you are, skimming the tree-tops at 500 miles per hour. You sense the enemy surface-to-air missiles trying to find you and shoot you down. Just a few more miles and you'll reach the target area. Uh-oh. Looks like some enemy fighter planes on the radar. This is going to be a rough day.

No, you didn't pick up the wrong magazine. This jet fighter training scenario has more to do with snowsports instruction than you might think.

As an instructor pilot in the F-16 Fighting Falcon who also happens to be a cross-country ski racer and volunteer coach, I've found that there are striking parallels between PSIA's American Teaching System (ATS) and the methodology I use to train my fellow fighter pilots. The most important part of a pilot's training mission is the debriefing, in which we build upon lessons learned. Sound familiar? It should. Lessons learned are an equally important part of PSIA's Teaching Model.

[parallels in planning]

To help build success among pilots, I make use of a Mission Planning Cycle that, like the Teaching Model, offers a means to develop a game plan for the task at hand (fig. 1a). Replace the word "Flight" with "Lesson" and you'll start to see the similarities. The correlations become even clearer when you swap out the mission plan's main headings for corresponding elements in that part of the Teaching Model known as the Teaching Cycle (fig. 1b). (For more on these elements, see chapter 5, "The Teaching Model" in PSIA's *Alpine Technical Manual*, second edition.)

Air Force flight training tends to be more driven by external objectives than

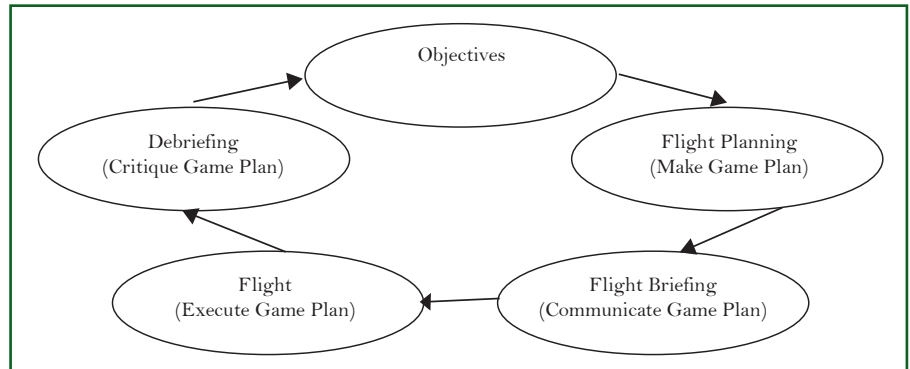


Figure 1a: Mission Planning Cycle

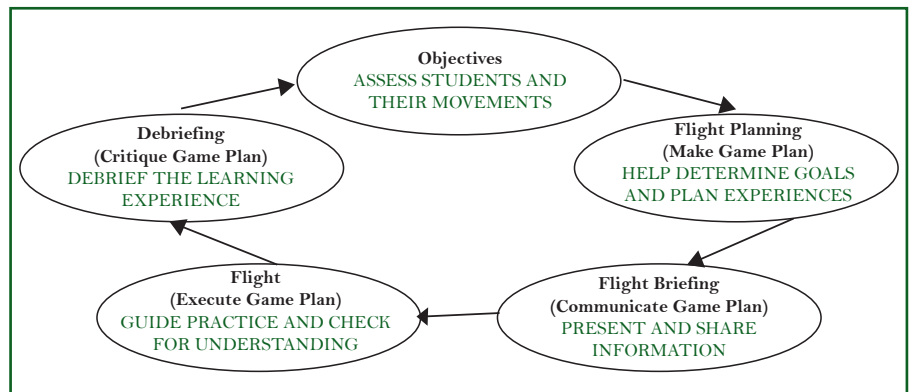


Figure 1b: Mission Planning Cycle with Teaching Cycle Elements

student-centered snowsports lessons are, but the overall process is very similar. See figure 2 for a direct comparison of the Mission Planning Cycle and the instructor behaviors outlined in the American Teaching System. I've used this process thousands of times, on thousands of flights. Much like the Teaching Model, it can be used for tackling both big picture, long-term challenges and very small scale, short-term skill issues. Incidentally, these similarities apply whether you're teaching classic, skate, tele, or even alpine or snowboarding lessons.

[the plan in action]

Okay, so the first thing to do when undertaking your mission (be it in-air or on-snow) is determine the objectives. These must be clearly defined and measurable. "Do your best!" is a good philosophy, but it's not a good objective. "Defend the airport from attack for one hour" or "Improve weight transfer and commitment to each ski during the diagonal stride" are good examples. Every time I fly, I stand in front of the room and write my objectives on a dry-erase board. Ski lessons tend to be more fluid and less academic than that—

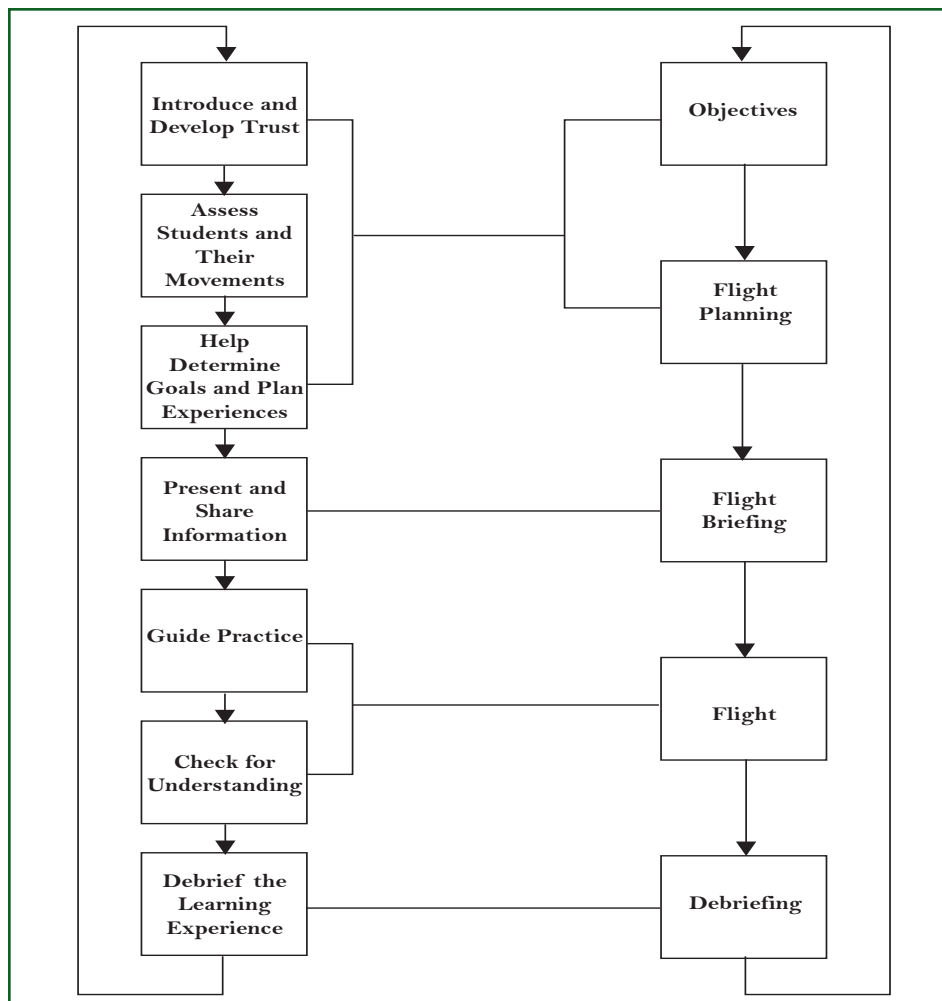


Figure 2: ATS Teaching Cycle (Instructor Behavior) Compared to Mission Planning Cycle

and student collaboration is key—but the importance of the objectives is the same. This is equivalent to “Determine Goals and Plan Experiences” in the ATS Teaching Cycle.

Next, conduct flight planning to meet objectives. For a combat pilot, it might mean planning what path you take to the target to avoid enemy aircraft and surface-to-air missiles. For a ski instructor, it means understanding the student’s goals and motivation for the lesson and tailoring the lesson accordingly. Terrain selection is a big part of this. For example, a nordic student might appear tired and unmotivated, so you may choose to work on the diagonal striding in a flat spot instead of a hilly area. This is the same as “Introduce the Lesson and Develop Trust” and “Assess Students and Their Movements” in the Teaching Model.

Third, you need to do a flight briefing. Before a flight, I deliver an hour-long

briefing to the pilots I’m leading. For a ski instructor, this is the “Present and Share Information” step of the Teaching Cycle. This may entail a clear, concise verbal description of the general flow of the day’s lesson, including a specific discussion of how to properly transfer weight to each ski during the diagonal stride.

Fourth, take flight. As an instructor pilot leading a practice mission, I need to do exactly what I planned to do to achieve good training for my new, young wingman. As a ski instructor, you “Guide Practice” and “Check for Understanding” throughout the lesson.

You can provide instant feedback to your students on how well they are striding on their classic skis and ask them if they are feeling an improvement in glide and kick. In many ways, ski instructing during the lesson is easier than flight instructing: You can talk face-to-face instead of through a radio and you

aren’t traveling at insanely high rates of speed!

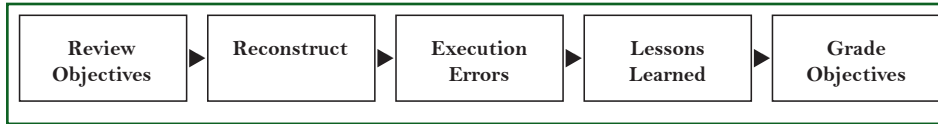
So you fly. Or you spend the day outside with your diagonal-striding students on the trails. Your muscles are tired and your students want to rest. This is true for both flight and snowsports instruction. You’re at a crucial point. Whether you just pulled 9 G’s in a dogfight or just finished a ski lesson, you’re pooped. Time to buck up and start the debriefing. This is the same as “Debrief the Learning Experience” in the ATS Teaching Cycle. Interestingly, the PSIA Internet Learning Center (found online at www.psia.org) uses the same terminology as the Air Force and calls this step “Debrief and Closure.” In my opinion, this is the most important part of any flight or ski lesson. It’s also the part that’s easiest to skip.

Use the debriefing process (fig. 3, page 52) to remind everyone of the objectives. Here’s where you reconstruct events, figure out execution errors, derive those all-important lessons learned, and end by assessing how well you met the objectives. You might begin by reviewing a mental checklist of objectives (or maybe even a list of goals you’ve actually written down) and remind yourself what you wanted to do. Without being judgmental, simply reconstruct what happened during the lesson and ask students for their own assessment of what they’ve learned. If you have video of a lesson, it may be very clear what took place and what execution errors were made in learning diagonal stride technique. Next, the most important step is to pull out lessons learned.

[banking on lessons learned]

What exactly is a lesson learned? Well, it’s essentially a declarative statement that tells you specifically how to correct an execution error. Some instructors may think that execution errors and lessons learned are the same thing, but they’re not. Any chimpanzee can simply list what the student may have screwed up. You make your money as a coach or instruc-

Figure 3: Debriefing Process for Snowsports Instructors



tor by finding the root cause of an execution error and coming up with a lesson learned that fixes it.

For example, let's say that in reconstructing a nordic ski lesson you deter-

mined that a student was proficient at diagonal striding when he warmed up by first doing diagonal stride exercises without poles. In contrast, when he didn't practice without poles he skied poorly. The execution error, you might surmise, is that this student didn't transfer his weight properly from ski to ski when skiing with poles. Some instructors would stop here, review their objectives, and call it a day with a simple pronouncement of "You didn't commit your weight to your skis. See you next lesson!" Those would be the chimps who gloss right over the most important element of the debriefing process (see fig. 4).

The most important part of any method is to create and pass along to your students those critical lessons learned.

mining that a student was proficient at diagonal striding when he warmed up by first doing diagonal stride exercises without poles. In contrast, when he didn't practice without poles he skied poorly. The execution error, you might surmise, is that this student didn't transfer his weight properly from ski to ski when skiing with poles. Some instructors would stop here, review their objectives, and call it a day with a simple pronouncement of "You didn't commit your weight to your skis. See you next lesson!" Those would be the chimps who gloss right over the most important element of the debriefing process (see fig. 4).

Ah, but you're not a monkey. You're a professional snowsports instructor! The hard work comes in finding root causes and fixing them. Going back to the previous example, when the student warmed up without poles he performed better

when using poles. A good lesson learned might be: "Warm up without poles in a flat area before diagonal striding with poles." An easy trick to make sure you're creating valid lessons learned is to say, "Next time I will _____." Whatever you use to fill in the blank becomes one of your lessons learned. When your student reviews the lesson he can think, "Next time I will . . . warm up without poles in a flat area before diagonal striding with poles." You want your student's lasting impression to be the voice of his instructor, describing concrete ways to improve. He can take these directive statements of lessons learned with him wherever he goes; to another lesson or to a practice session on the trails.

You aren't deriving lessons learned when your student recounts things like "weight between skis" or "dragging trail foot." It will be obvious that you're only listing execution errors when you use this trick. For example, this sounds silly: "Next time I will . . . weight between skis."

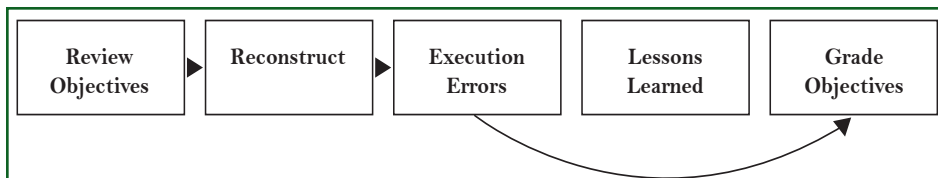



Figure 4: Debriefing Process for Chimps

[coming in for the landing]

The Teaching Model—and particularly the Teaching Cycle—of the American Teaching System is a useful way to develop instructor behavior. As an Air Force instructor pilot, I use a process very similar to that used by snowsports professionals throughout the land. The most important part of any method is to create and pass along to your students those critical lessons learned. While it might appear more linear than ATS methods that emphasize teacher/student collaboration and revisiting various strategic elements as need be, there are still plenty of opportunities to change course and modify tactics in the pursuit of various objectives.

By the way, your students aren't the only ones who stand to benefit from lessons learned. Instructors, too, gain important strategies and experience over time. Making note of your own lessons learned and maybe debriefing with a colleague or trainer can help—regardless of what discipline you teach or whether you're a rookie or veteran. That's what PSIA and AASI are all about; coming together to share the best ideas and get better at helping students learn.

So, whether your aim is to develop mission-ready pilots who are prepared to defend the nation in high-performance jet aircraft or just teach a snowsports lesson that will have a meaningful impact on your students, the same methodology can apply. You too can become a fighter pilot of the trails! 

Eric Chandler (below) is a lieutenant colonel in the Minnesota Air National Guard, and has been an F-16 instructor pilot since 1996. A longtime ski racer and volunteer KidSki coach at Minnesota's Snowflake Nordic Center, he has completed the American Birkebeiner cross-country ski race six times. Chandler lives in Duluth, Minnesota.



John Klatt

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PRO FORM LOVE:

The More You Give, the More You Get

by MEGHAN MCCARTHY,
PSIA-AASI Marketing Coordinator

Winter is snowflakes away. Ski and snowboard shops are piled high with the latest equipment, and your favorite manufacturer's rep probably has a garage full of sweet rides. And you, lucky instructor, are privy to the best deals in the industry. But, like any privilege—and a great privilege it is — pro deals must be handled with propriety and care. That means using common sense and minding your manners.

Perhaps more aptly named pro partnerships, pro deals represent just the beginning of relationships that are meant to be cultivated, bringing mutual benefits to both parties. In other words, picking up your new gear at the beginning of the season merely initiates your responsibility to the supplier that's giving you the hookup. Simply grabbing your order and hitting the road, never to be heard from again, isn't cool, and everything from instructors' poor attitudes to outright abuse of these programs jeopardizes this perk for everyone.

But, opportunities abound if we play by the rules! So, to help you make the most of the deals to come, here are some tips and expert advice to guide you in developing your professional partnerships.

Before you even consider making the appropriate calls and connections required of a pro deal, ask yourself, "Why do I get a pro deal?" If you're thinking that it's your right as a snowsports professional to get gear at a discount, think again. The United States Constitution and its amendments guarantee your basic rights, but nowhere does it mention snowsports equipment. It's a distinct privilege, one that you're encouraged to make use of, as long as you do so appropriately. Which introduces rule number one: your

pro deal is for you. Not your kids or your neighbors. You.

"Professionals must be appreciative of this privilege and not abuse it," says Dennis Gaspari of Dynastar. "They should never brag of the 'deals' they receive to people outside of the industry, nor should they exploit the generosity of the manufacturer or dealer by purchasing products for friends or family."

Everything from instructors' poor attitudes to outright abuse of these programs jeopardizes this perk for everyone.

Admit it, you've at least thought about getting some gear for your sweetie, and there's definitely a known perpetrator somewhere in your locker room. But, this kind of underhandedness rubs retailers and manufacturers the wrong way, and may ultimately kill the deal.

You may be thinking, "What does this have to do with me? I play by the rules." And, certainly, most instructors do. But, even if you're not one to abuse pro privileges, you still may not be living up to your end of the deal. The word "deal" does imply that everyone involved receives some benefit. So, if you can't give inquiring minds more information about your equipment and where to buy it, you're not acting on behalf of the company who gave you the discount in the first place—a responsibility you assumed the day your gear hit the snow. You are, after all, a highly visible walking, talking instruction manual about all things snow-related.

Manufacturers issue pro deals to support individuals who make big contributions to our industry. On their end, they hope to see increased business as a result

A Six Pack Goes A Long Way...

Take a look in your locker and make note of your favorite gear. Research through the web, your area rep, or a casual walk through town to find out who stocks the stuff you love.

Introduce yourself to the retail team early in the season, before it gets busy. Find out who does what. Giving your client a name at the shop makes you a local-knowledge hero.

Take time to learn about the services offered in the shop. Do they have a bootfitter onsite? Will they hand-tune your clients' skis? What do they have in their demo fleet?

Don't take your clients into the shop and ask for a discount. You've already helped your client by taking them directly to the source. Bumming the retailer to infuse stoke on your client will send you to the bottom of the bro list quick.

Groupies hang with jam bands, not in ski and board shops. Stop in and say hello, know the crew, but don't overstay your welcome.

Make sure your retail pals know that you teach and what certifications you've received. It is about working smarter, not harder, in a mountain town. After all, they've got to recommend *somebody* for that five-day private lesson.





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You can also check out the **PSIA-AASI Accessories Catalog** for Patagonia apparel selected especially for instructors. Either way, you'll find some of the nicest outdoor gear on the planet, available to you as a professional courtesy through the Patagonia Pro Purchase Program. **patagonia**

of professional exposure. But if that exposure ends with a big question mark, you've just dropped your end of the bargain.


"I think pros owe it to any company they use to know where the products are sold within 20 miles and how to get

to keep on hand when your guests want more information about your gear. And you can also show your support for your favorite manufactures and retailers by offering to help out with demo days, promotions, product testing, feedback, or escorting your clients to a local shop for a consultation.

Experts in the pro deal world agree that there needs to be a better understanding from all sides for these relationships to work. As snowsports pros, we can't con-

aware of that fact in regards to their actions and behavior," says Gaspari, adding that, "Professional snowsports instructors are a highly visible and inspirational group of individuals who work hard to promote our sport. Their association with our products helps to validate our performance as well as gain us great exposure to the general skiing consumer."

This kind of appreciation for your role as a snowsports professional will continue to grow, along with your perks, provided you follow proper etiquette when it comes to pro forms and always, always, always remember to show your appreciation. Whether you do it by learning more about your local retailer, making a referral, or just proudly representing your favorite brand, make sure your professional partners know how much you value their support.

This season, if not before, plan on stopping by your favorite retailer just to talk shop, or drop off a six-pack for your rep. Little things go a long way and if we do our best to keep up our end of the deal—and that means giving more—we'll find that we get more, too. 

Make sure your professional partners know how much you value their support.

there," says Andy Marker of Patagonia. "Know where to refer people and go to the store that sells the gear you use. Meet the owner, the manager, the clerks and let them know that you proudly wear their brand."

Marker also suggests grabbing some business cards or other sales materials

trol how manufacturers offer pro deals, or how retailers respond to our inquiries, but we can control how we support the industry by demonstrating appreciation and acting as brand ambassadors.

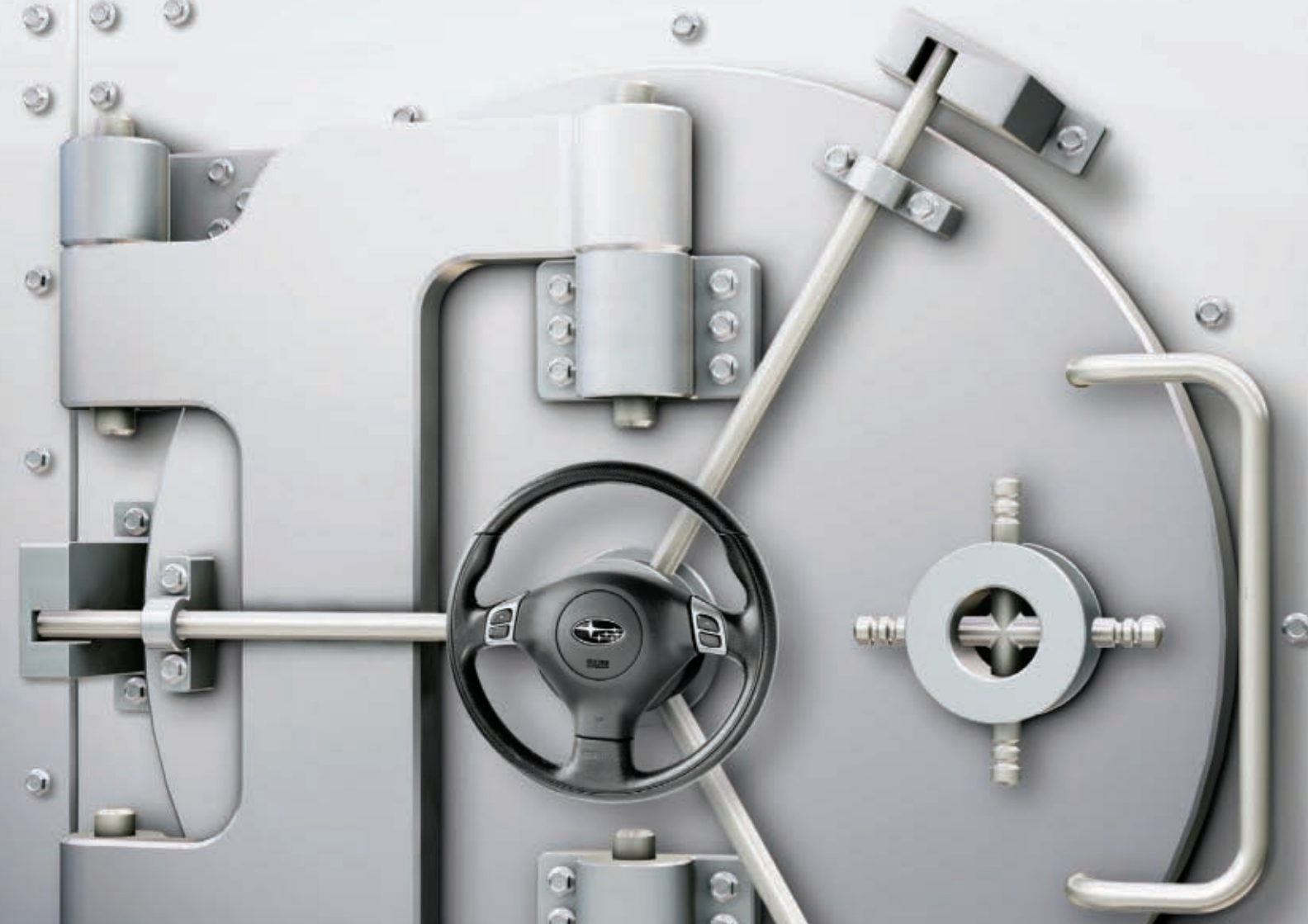
"Pros become an extension of the brands they represent and the dealer they patronize, and therefore should always be

**CAPTAIN D'OH!
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Many pro offers can be accessed directly through the Members Only section at PSIA.org or AASI.org. Just log in through your member profile and follow the links for promotional offers.

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Use Outriggers to Develop Strong Directional Movements

by GEOFF KRILL

When teaching about the benefits of shaped skis, one of the major challenges is getting the student—whether he or she is disabled or not—to develop strong directional movements. Shaped skis are all about getting on edge early and trusting that the skis will be there for you throughout the course of the turn.

All of us have experienced fear when it comes to moving out over the top of the skis and have had to take that leap of faith. For most skiers, this move is counterintuitive to what feels safe and comfortable. The result is a student who banks into the hill or shapes the majority of the turn through the bottom phase. How do you help your student get over this fear?

For me, the answer came during a lesson with Brian, a visually impaired skier I'd worked with for a number of years. Here I was, asking a student with no vision to trust that if he moved his weight

You put a pole out there, and in an instant it is gone. With outriggers, it's a different story.

out over the skis in the direction of his pole touch he would not fall; instead his skis would carve in a beautiful arc and he would meet up with them again in perfect balance at the bottom of the turn.

"Yeah, right," said Brian.

Achieving trust and commitment to directional movement is a problem for many sighted skiers, so this reaction wasn't surprising in a skier without the benefit of sight. But then a solution dawned on me. Why not use hand-held outriggers? As adaptive instructors know, these crutch-like tools with the flip-up ski tip on the end are used by many types of disabled skiers to aid balance and offer a stabilizing point of contact with the snow. As it turns out, they



Jessica Tidswell

proved a perfect temporary replacement for Brian's conventional poles.

A standard pole touch with an outrigger has one major advantage over a similar move with a conventional pole: the outrigger offers a base of support during its brief contact with the snow, enhancing the feeling of balance for the user. You put a pole out there, and in an instant it is gone.

With outriggers, it's a different story. After all, they were developed


to help disabled skiers stay in perfect balance over the course of the turn—by allowing them to adjust that balance at a moment's notice without compromising body position.

The outriggers gave Brian the stability he needed to let the skis do their thing as he edged early and moved out over the top in the direction he wished to turn. Once he was confident that his skis wouldn't bail on him, he was able to perform the same movements with conventional poles.

If a student is hesitant to commit to directional movement, take a tip from Brian and me (and keep in mind that this works with any two-track standing skiers who use poles, not just those with vi-

sual impairment). Replace your student's poles with outriggers and encourage your student to focus on reaching (with the outrigger) into the direction of the new turn. It is okay for the student to feel as though he or she is out of balance and will fall over. After a few turns, that will subside—your student will feel the outrigger helping with recovery from directional movements made too early or late in the turn.

Focusing on larger and larger reaches down the hill, have your student experiment with how a greater reach affects edge angle and turn shape. You will see a comfort level develop as the student realizes the outriggers can actually prevent a big fall. Half the battle is in realizing that a turn can be made while moving directionally out over the skis.

Once the student feels this sense of balance and control, it's okay to reintroduce the poles (kind of like taking the training wheels off a bike). The outriggers help establish trust—once he or she is out of the fear zone, it's easier to coach your student onward toward success. 

Geoff Krill is a provisional member of the newly-formed PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team and the snowsports director at the White Mountain Adaptive Snowsports School at Loon Mountain, New Hampshire.

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Team Tip

Use Patient Movements for Quick, Accurate Turn Shape

by NICHOLAS HERRIN

Imagine making a short turn. When describing it, what are the first words that come to mind? I'll bet a few that pop up are "quick" or maybe "fast." One of the hardest parts about matching a short-radius turn to the terrain is controlling the rate at which you make your rotary movements. This is an important part of moving with your skis and staying in balance through all three phases of the turn (initiation, shaping, and finish)—in any size turn.

However, timing is especially difficult to master in short-radius turns. When performing this drill, start with large-radius turns and gradually go smaller, so you can practice matching movements to different size turns.

More often than not, rotary movements aren't timed correctly or at the right rate, causing one of the three phases to be rushed or even skipped. Slowing down the rate at which you turn your legs allows you to move directionally through the turn, staying better aligned and balanced over your skis.

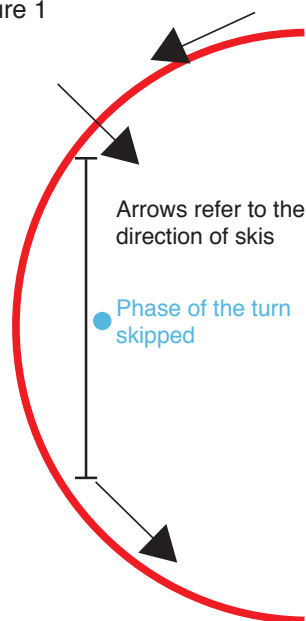
Consider figure 1. If rotary movements are made too quickly through a turn, notice how much of the turn is skipped—a quick rate of pivot in the initiation phase causes the entire shaping phase to be lost. Ultimately, this doesn't allow you to control speed through turn shape. Instead, speed is controlled by means of braking and bracing movements applied throughout the bottom half of the turn.

The following two steps will help you control the rate at which you use rotary forces, allowing you to stay better balanced and move with your skis. (And once you get these mechanics nailed down, you'll be that much more prepared to share the magic with students.)

STEP 1:

Think about skiing in a box. How is that possible? Actually, it is a great visual tool used to create more patience through all

Figure 1



three phases of the turn. The goal is to etch a nice, round arc within the box; being sure to travel through the upper corner, touch the side, and then travel through the lower corner.

Focusing on these three parts of the box will help slow down the rate of your rotary movements. Take a look at figure 2, where the arc of the turn fits perfectly into the box. Compare figure 2 to figures 3 and 4. Figures 3 and 4 are perfect examples of what happens when you rush the turning rate of your skis. Instead of traveling through a continuous arc, the turn shape has two straight lines before and after the quick pivot—leading to more speed and a tendency to become misaligned and rely on braking movements to control velocity.

STEP 2:

Start to focus on the side of the box. This is when your skis are facing straight down the hill. At this point of the turn think about pausing—that will slow down how quickly you turn your skis across the hill. It sounds crazy, I know. Many people think they are going to be moving too

Figure 2

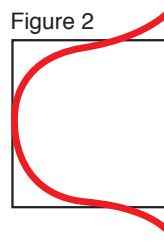


Figure 3

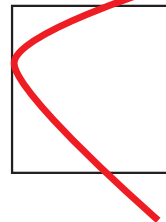
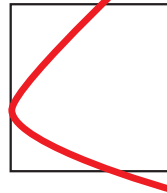



Figure 4



fast, but this is not the case. Pausing gives you time before and after the apex to slow down the rate of your steering so you can get as close to the corners of the box as possible. The direct result is a rounder turn shape with more control.

Slowing down the rate at which you rotate your legs will give your body time to stay aligned over your skis by allowing the duration and rate of the movements to match in all three phases of the turn. Slowing down the rate at which you turn your skis will allow your body to travel with your skis rather than bracing against them. In the end you control your speed in a short-radius turn through turn shape rather than braking maneuvers, distributing rotary movements through all three phases of the turn rather than just one specific phase. This results in consistent shape and speed from turn to turn. Less work! More control! More fun! 

Nick Herrin is returning for his second term on the PSIA-AASI Alpine Team and is director of the Mountain School at Colorado's Crested Butte Mountain Resort.

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Match the Terrain to Take Control

by DOUG PIERINI

How many times have you come over a bump or drop-off only to find yourself on your ski tails and accelerating uncontrollably, wondering if you're going to set any speed records before the madness ends?

Go ahead. Admit that this exact scenario has happened to you, although hopefully you were able to regain balance and find your happily-ever-after ending. Abrupt changes in the pitch of the hill have the potential to derail balance and throw skiers into the back seat. To steer clear of high-speed flailing—and help your students do the same—you may want to focus on balance in motion and more specifically, terrain matching—in which you adjust body position and base of support (the skis) to account for the shape and pitch of the snow surface.

Balance in motion is relatively simple in concept, but it's a little more difficult to put into practice. That is, until you realize that the key is to be proactive and anticipate the terrain. Think of it this way: if all we do is react, are we really in control?

In my own skiing and in lessons, I address the need to look ahead, plan ahead, and move in direct correlation to what the slope dishes up. That promotes the balance and terrain matching that are hallmarks of dynamic skiing.

For a different take on it, imagine what would happen to a skateboarder if, when dropping into a halfpipe, he or she stood straight up-and-down instead of leaning into the pipe. The skateboard might make it up the other side, but the rider probably wouldn't. Pitched backward in the transition, the rider would likely land in a heap on the bottom of the pipe.

Skiing is similar. When you bring a student up a chairlift for the first time, what's your standard instruction for getting off the chair and heading down the ramp? "Lean forward." If your student

doesn't lean forward, he or she will fall backward as the slope falls away. That forward lean is an example of terrain matching.


To help students learn to ski, we teach them to stand in the center of their skis. To teach them to turn, we show them how to move to stay balanced and how to use the whole ski, not just the tails or tips. This is another example of terrain matching, except the beginner hill is usually a smooth, consistent slope.

Again, terrain matching is simply the idea of adjusting body position so that your base of support matches the shape and pitch of the snow surface. Sometimes a little geometry enhances understanding of this concept. In essence, the skier's base of support should be parallel to the surface of the snow to take advantage of the whole ski. To remain in balance over the skis, the skier's body needs to be perpendicular to the base of support on a fore-aft plane. Visualize a straight line drawn through the skier's feet and hips, meeting the skis at a right angle (*photo 1*).

The gist is that as the base of support matches the terrain, the skier adjusts body position to remain perpendicular to that base. Consider a skier negotiating a bump field. As the bump drops off on the downhill side, the skier must move forward to keep the skis parallel to the snow surface and his or her body balanced over the skis. Otherwise, he or she shifts back onto the tails of the skis, and the skis make a break for the base lodge.

I teach students to press their toes down the back side of a bump to keep their skis in contact with the snow. This works well as a teaching cue, but they

also need to understand that the idea is to keep both the ski and body matched to the terrain. And that sometimes, pressing the toes is not enough. The more extreme the change in terrain, the more the skier needs to move his or her core forward to stay in balance. Or alternatively, pull the feet under the body to regain that balanced stance.

Terrain matching is nothing new, but when understood and appropriately performed, it can take your skiing and your students' skiing to a new level. Teach your students to think proactively and anticipate the terrain ahead. By staying with or ahead of the terrain, your students can avoid feeling—or looking—as if their skis are going to beat them to the base of the mountain. 

Doug Pierini, a three-term member of the PSIA Alpine Team, is the director of resort services and the ski and snowboard school at California's Alpine Meadows Resort and Homewood Mountain Resort.



Jonathan Selkowitz

The author demonstrates how skiers match the terrain by staying perpendicular to the slope.



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Time Your Lead Change for Stability Off-Piste

by TOM MARSHALL

Team Tip


When teaching an accomplished tele skier, do you ever find that the person handles groomed slopes with grace but tends to struggle on steeper, off-piste terrain? If so, here's a visual cue that may help you identify the restricting movement pattern that's keeping your student from reaching his or her full potential.

Watch for the moment when the feet pass each other in the turn. If a student is struggling, I usually find that his or her feet pass during the first third, or initiation phase, of the turn. The tele stance is a stable fore/aft position, and when the terrain becomes more difficult it seems like a good idea to get into that position as soon as possible. However, rushing the rate of lead change is a mistake. The PSIA *Nordic Technical Manual* states: "The lead change (moving from one telemark position to another through a transition) is smooth and continuous, with both feet in unison," (page 12 under "Balancing Movements"). This implies that the lead change will take place in the shaping phase of the turn, which is the specific visual cue to watch for.

In the middle of the shaping phase, or apex, of a turn, both skis are pointed down the fall line with the least amount of snow resistance. Don't confuse resistance with pressure—the skis are definitely being pressured at this point in the turn. To help you visualize this, imagine a motorboat going straight at high speed—the water resistance on the hull is slight compared to when the boat turns. So, in tele skiing, we should strive to have our stance in the most vulnerable position (with our feet next to each other) during the moment of least resistance—when the skis are going straight down the hill.

When the lead change is rushed there are at least two negative consequences. First, it is impossible to have a "smooth and continuous" lead change, thus resulting in a static tele stance. When the

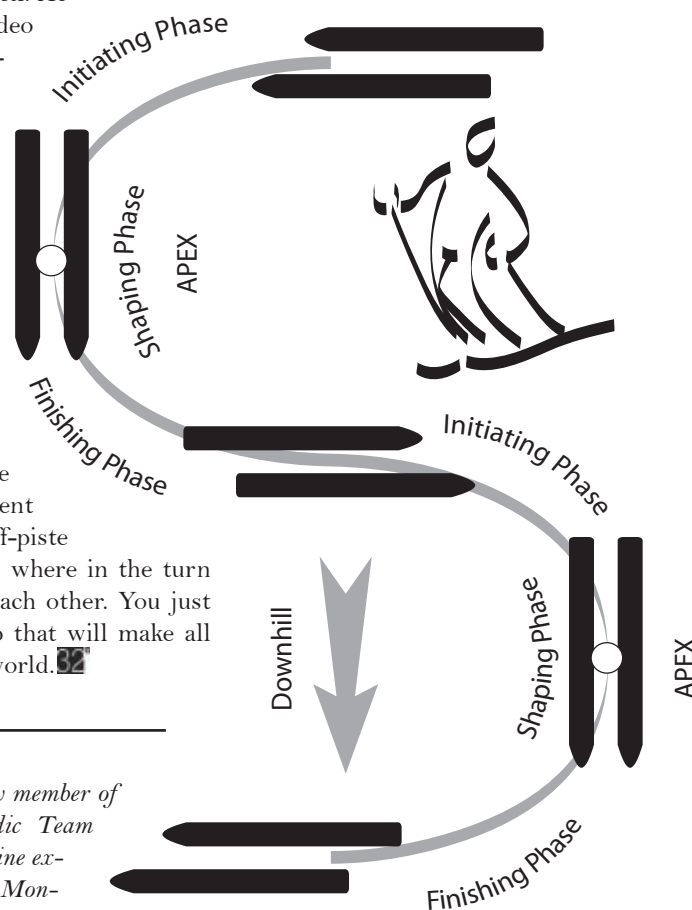
shuffle movements pause, it is more difficult to balance. Second, at the moment the feet pass, the fore/aft stability is at a minimum—if this occurs before the apex, there will be more snow resistance on the skis, contributing to instability. Therefore, the quick tip is to suggest that your student slow down the lead change and attempt to have the feet pass in the apex of the turn. Giving this feedback sets up an easy movement analysis opportunity—continue to observe the feet, looking for the new movement pattern.

Keep in mind that this tip is specific to the situation—I don't mean to say that the feet should always pass exactly at the turn apex. Actually, in watching video of good telemark skiing, especially on groomed snow, it is apparent that the feet usually pass before the apex, but still in the shaping phase. Remember that timing problems are most pronounced when the feet pass in the initiation phase. So, the next time a tele student struggles in the off-piste steeps, take notice of where in the turn his or her feet pass each other. You just might have a new tip that will make all the difference in the world. 

Tom Marshall is a new member of the PSIA-AASI Nordic Team and a PSIA-NRM alpine examiner and trainer at Montana's Big Sky Resort.



Tim Sattelmeyer



Want to Be Fast? Don't Be Lax About Waxing

by DAVID LAWRENCE

As an instructor at Methow Valley, North America's second largest nordic area, I'm just as likely to be inside waxing skis in the rental shop as hitting the tracks with students. When waxing during shop hours, I'll often look up to see a hovering customer who's curious about my waxing techniques or wanting to borrow a little time on the bench.

Lending time on the bench is rarely inconvenient, and always instructional. Not only do I get to see how other skiers are waxing their skis, I almost always get engrossed in a wide-ranging waxing conversation. If there's one thing nordis like to talk about more than their skis, it's the wax they put on their skis.

The proper wax, expertly applied, will literally carry a nordic skier far and wide. On the flip side, those who give short shrift to the art of waxing and the Zen of ski maintenance won't get the grip or glide they desire.

So, with the perspective gained from years behind the bench, I offer the following tips and insights for nordis who want to be wiser about waxing. This article will just cover some basics of base care and equipment options. In the winter issue, I'll get into specific technique.

Tip #1: Keep your bases clean!

For a waxing fanatic, ski racks have got to be the worst invention since neon spandex. If you want a heinous base prep, just put your skis, base up, in your ski rack and drive from your house to the ski hill.

Guess what? You know all that nasty road grime that dirties your windows? It also ends up all over your skis, waiting to be placed on the snow and then impregnated into your bases when you click in and ski off!

Be sure to put your skis in a ski bag before latching them onto the side, back, or roof of your vehicle. A ski bag is a good idea even if you pack your skis inside your vehicle.

On any ski trip, everything gets piled into one heap inside the car. Then you need to get something, and inevitably a bunch of your stuff knocks around on your skis. Keep those skis bagged and keep them protected!

Another must is to wax your skis before putting them away for the summer. Just hot-wax a nice, thick coat of cheap wax on the base (Swix's "Warm Temperature" or "Yellow" wax will do) and leave it. Don't bother to scrape, polish, or brush the layer of wax.

That wax will keep your bases clean and protect them from oxidation (which appears as a dull whitening of the base material). When putting your skis away between seasons, nothing is better for them than a thick coat of summer wax. Make sure you do it.

**If there's one thing
NORDS LIKE TO TALK
about more than their
skis, it's the WAX they
put on their skis.**

Tip #2: Buy the right equipment!

Don't wait, do it right now. Go online and spend what's left of your "stimulus check" on the right waxing equipment.

One of the biggest obstacles to achieving maximum ski performance is a lack of proper equipment for the job. You'll need the following:

1. A wax bench with ski profile and vise.


2. A waxing iron. Be sure to get a waxing iron, not a used clothes iron. This is one of the most important investments you make. Overheating the bases is the number one mistake made by waxers. Get an iron in which you can control the temperature.

3. Several scrapers. The most versatile scrapers are the ones that are about 4 millimeters thick, because they're thin enough to bend slightly but rigid enough to stay straight when necessary.

4. A scraper sharpener. Some nordis overlook the importance of a sharp scraper, but this tool is a must. Why? Because using a dull scraper to shed your skis of hard wax made for cold temperatures takes much more effort than it should. Also, sharp scrapers do a better job of slicing off unwanted "base hairs" that can slow a ski. Keep your scraper sharp and you'll be in the waxing room for less time and leave with faster skis.

Nordic

For a **WAXING FANATIC**, ski racks have got to be the worst invention since **NEON SPANDEX**.

Having fast skis takes commitment. Not only does it require time and practice in the wax room, but you must also get yourself mentally prepared to invest some money in the right equipment. This fall, before the season starts, get what you need. There's much more to learn, but this will get you off to a good start for a fast ski season. 

David Lawrence is a full time ski nordic instructor in Washington's Methow Valley and a new member of PSIA's Nordic Team. David coaches the local nordic team and leads skate and classic clinics throughout the Northwest. During the summer, David owns and operates Pangaea River Rafting near Missoula, Montana.

5. Two brushes: a copper brush and a horsehair brush. If I could have only two brushes, these would be the ones. The copper brush gets most of the wax that the scraper leaves behind and does an excellent job of exposing the base's structure. The horsehair brush puts an unbeatable finish on the skis: smooth, polished, and fast!

6. Lots of wax. If you're buying the Swix line of waxes, go with Ch 10 (yellow), Ch 8 (red), and Ch 6 (blue) in large blocks. With these three waxes, you can wax for almost all conditions. Buy in bulk so you don't feel the need to skimp or conserve wax by not waxing. Base saturation and repeat waxing are the best things you can do to "cure" your bases. In curing your base, you load layers and layers of wax the course of a season until the bases hold wax even on the longest of races. One constant problem for waxers is simply not waxing. Buy it and use it.

7. A wax box. Go to any hardware store and buy a large tool box to house your new equipment. Be sure to buy your equipment and bring it all to the store to make sure it fits into one box. A good box does as much for your waxing equipment as a good ski bag does for your bases.



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Play with Pivot to Create Carving

by GREGG DAVIS

What is carving? When a snowboard is turning on the snow, it can only be doing one of two things: carving or skidding. A carve is when the tail follows the tip through the same line in the snow. A skid is when the tail does not follow the tip, but is farther down the hill, and the board has some amount of sideways slippage. There's one board performance factor involved that we generally don't consider as a part of skidding and carving: pivot. But it's really a larger component than many of us think. Carving versus skidding is all about the direction the board is pointed compared to the direction the board is travelling.

Said another way, if the board is pointed in the direction it's moving, it can do nothing but carve, or straight-glide on a flat base. But if the board pivots toward the inside of the turn, it's no longer pointed in the direction it's moving, and therefore can only skid (if it's on edge), or catch the downhill edge (if it's flat). To make the board carve or skid, play with controlling pivot in the board by using your legs.

During some large turns on an easy groomed run, make a "scissoring" movement with your legs in opposite directions, to control the amount of skid. If you pivot the board during your turn and point it farther up the hill, it will skid more, or leave a wider track in the snow. It will also be louder. If you pivot the board and point it farther down the

hill, it will move toward a carve, and skid less. It will also be quieter. Keep in mind that during this exercise, the pivot point is between your feet, at the center of the board, so that the "scissoring" movement comes from both legs actively moving in opposite directions. It's not just a back-foot movement. Try pivoting the board with your legs and pointing it far enough down the hill that it makes a thin line in the snow, carving. Now, take it one step further. Can you start a skidded turn, and move the board into a carve by using only this pivot move? How about starting a turn in a carve, and using the pivot move to change the carve into a skid during the turn?

WHAT'S THIS FOR?


Use an almost flat, but carved, edge in the halfpipe. This helps you carve across the flat bottom to maintain speed. But many riders hold a high amount of tilt even as they move up the walls. Sometimes, especially on the heelside wall, this causes a skid to happen right before take-off and throw the rider off-balance. Use the anti-pivot to prevent the tail of the board from sliding down the pipe wall before you take off. While rising up the wall on an edge, reduce the tilt of the board while using the anti-pivot to maintain a carve, even as the board gets closer to flat. This little move will prevent the skid that sometimes creeps into the backside air.

Create better edge-hold while carving on a groomed trail. This one is all about fun. We all know that falling over when your carved turn doesn't hold is no fun. But what if you could do something, independent of the more common—"pressure control movements"—that we all use to maintain a carved turn, to add edge-hold to your carves? Start with the exercise above, moving a skidded turn into a carved turn. Then carve the entire turn from the edge change through to the finish, and while you're in the carved turn

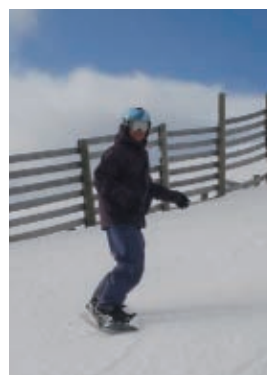
use your legs to pivot the board in to the carve. Use both legs to create a pivot point between your feet. You'll feel the tail grip, instead of slipping down the hill.

Use a powerful edge-set for ultimate control when jumping in the terrain park. Becoming familiar with the subtle feelings of the board's direction of travel compared to the direction it's pointed will accelerate your comfort and control when catching air in the park.

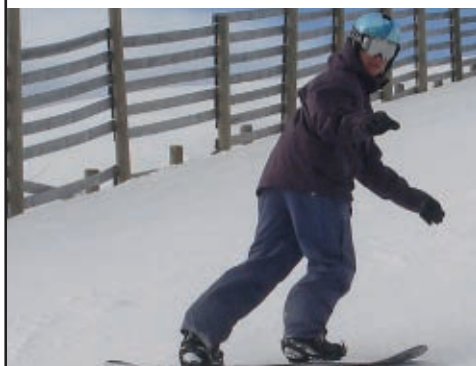
Try setting an edge and being aware of the board's direction while you practice jumping off a toe-edge on some easy rollers. Then take it to a familiar jump. Just like in the halfpipe, leaving the ground from a board that is skidding across the snow can lead to disaster. Even if the board is generally flat, a slight edge-set can help the takeoff be more precise and predictable.

It's fun to play with using pivot to control the amount of skid in a given turn. Of course, we all use a blend of pressure control, tilt, and other movements to manage board performance. But the anti-pivot for a carved turn and a pivot move for a skidded turn go back to the basics of a carve and a skid: the direction the board is pointing compared to the direction it's moving. Have fun playing with these movements! 

Gregg Davis is a returning member of the AASI Snowboard Team, having served on the team before from 2000–2004. He is an AASI-certified trainer, examiner, and instructor at Breckenridge Ski & Ride School in Colorado.



photos by Nev Lapwood





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Stand and Deliver: Seven Tales of Stance and Setup

by THE AASI SNOWBOARD TEAM

One of the most unique things about snowboard equipment is that individuals have the choice to set up their gear however they want. Some people get all tech on their setup, some adapt to however it was configured when their brother handed it down to them, and others just know what feels right for their body and how they want to ride. Freedom of choice and expression is what snowboarding is all about.

Instructors, however, are in the unique position of setting up their boards for personal riding triumph but also being asked by students to suggest options for how they might set up their gear for maximum success. If you or your students are investigating ways to get the most out of a snowboard—depending on terrain, conditions, and, of course, personal preference—here are some insights from no less an authority than the AASI Snowboard Team.

ERIC ROLLS

I like to find a blend of tech for performance and what feels right; then switch it up on myself once in a while. As we Goofy-footers are slowly plotting world domination, it is important to note that some individuals prefer skating Regular and riding Goofy or vice versa. Personally, I skateboard Goofy using my right foot to push (Mongo), and snowboard Goofy pushing with my left foot. My point here is to encourage people to do what is comfortable for them.

For snowboards I have many preferences, depending on the type of riding. I don't like getting too caught up with changing my board every time I ride different terrain, but it is great to have the option. For my all-around board, I opt for a directional shape and flex pattern

and a board length around 154 centimeters. In this design, the sidecut is placed back from center and the flex pattern is not symmetrical throughout the board as a true twin would be. I prefer a stiffer, snappy tail for poppin' ollies and braking with the tail via aft movements.

I also enjoy a true twin shape with a directional flex pattern. This is a great jib setup because it can be set up true twin—centered over the sidecut—but have a stiffer tail for poppin' higher off the tail. Usually switch ollies aren't as powerful anyway, so the softer nose is fine when doing ollies switch. A stiffer tail can allow the board to settle down flat again when landing off-balanced toward the tail.

For powder and big-mountain riding, a tapered board set back considerably is a huge advantage. No more back-leg burn. Those Big Pow days can be tough if you're rockin' a short jib stick set up to ride twin. Setting the stance back allows the nose to float closer to the snow surface and naturally shifts your weight back toward the tail. I like the severe taper boards that have a wider nose for float and a shorter narrow tail for creating a climbing angle to stay on top of the powpow. For powder, I personally enjoy a board with a progressive flex pattern—soft in the nose and increasingly stiffer toward the tail. The soft nose allows the snow to

flex the tip upward, helping it stay on top of the snow. The stiff tail lets you pop off cliff drops, point it down pillow lines, and get good rebound with dolphin-style turns.

Of course, it's not all about the board. As the equipment closest to the body as it transfers energy toward the board, the boots are hugely important. They have to fit properly and have the right performance credentials if you (or your students) want to reach higher goals in riding. For instant adjusting, I like quick-lacing systems like those offered by Burton. As instructors, we could be on snow, in our boots, up to eight hours a day (and that's not even including après with your clients or coworkers). I highly recommend custom insoles for full-time comfort. Adding stiffeners in the tongue of the boot can make a pair of boots last and perform through the warm spring days of the season.

Binding designs are also key, and they've come a long way since Sherm Poppen installed staples for grip on his Snurfer. Many of the current brands have similar features that help with performance. To reduce drag and bulk, I try to go with the smallest binding I can get away with. For my size-10 feet I use a medium binding. I like a medium-to-high forward-lean setting because it allows me to get quick response when I'm transferring pressure from my leg, through the highback, to the edge. I find forward lean is helpful for leveraging onto the heel edge while still keeping the knees bent. To further help transfer pressure/energy to the edge, I adjust the highbacks to be parallel to the heel edge. This also allows me to move fore and aft without resistance from the highback. It's good for poked out Indies (not Tindies) or grabbing tail.

Binding placement can differ so much from rider to rider. There are a few guidelines for figuring out binding placement (for example, matching your stance

width to the distance from your knee to ankle), but, really, it's all about what's most comfortable for the individual rider. Some people's bodies are aligned differently than others. Through the years I've changed my stance quite a bit. I rode 0-degree angles on both bindings for the first couple years. It made sense and was comfortable to me at the time. I gradually moved more directional as I started going a lot faster and riding more challenging terrain, and it felt better to orient my shoulders down the hill.

However, watching the pros do tricks switch inspired me to try a duck stance, and I have never gone back. Riding duck gives me an increased feeling of symmetry with my front and back leg, allowing me to be extra versatile. I like the way a duck stance places my knees wider apart. For me, it offers increased stability when getting low to the board.

This year I narrowed my stance width to 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches and increased the split in my angles, settling on positive 15 degrees in the front and negative 9 degrees in the back. Having a super-wide stance

and an extreme split in angles can create undue stress on your joints if your body isn't lined up that way. I like to change my stance occasionally because repetitive movements with the same stance can invite injury. Studies have shown that women who wear high heels frequently and for long periods actually lengthen some muscles and tendons while shortening others. (The Achilles tendon, for example, has been known to shorten in high-heel wearers.) It can be suggested that very repetitive use of an extreme stance width and angles could do the same with snowboarders. Another outcome is that the knees can take the brunt of the stress.

I'd say the bottom line is that riders should understand that the way they stand on a board influences performance, and then express themselves through their own personal style and setup. People describe snowboarding as having freedom. The famous jazz pianist, Duke Ellington, used to say, "If it sounds good, it is good." I've put a twist on his words, saying "If it feels good, it is good."

SCOTT ANFANG

The main thought going through my

head when I set up a new board is "I really hope I set this up in the right direction and like this board, because I don't want to be wasting my time now or on the mountain tomorrow." Here are a few guidelines I follow so that doesn't happen.

Given all the board designs there are in the world, it's sometimes hard to figure out what the best option is for what you want to do and where you want to go. You have twin, directional, and directional twin, plus a lot of time the graphics are no help in telling you nose and tail. That's where I start: "What shape does the board have?" and "Which way is the nose?"

The answers to those questions give me some details to work with. As far as angles, I pretty much ride the same angle no matter what the setup: between positive 18 to 12 on the front foot and nega-

CATCHING A HEEL CUP PUTS YOU ON YOUR BUTT REAL FAST, AND I THINK IT'S EASIER TO FEATHER A TOE EDGE THROUGH THE SNOW.

tive 9 to 12 on the rear foot. I like these angles because the setup is still slightly directional to the true lead foot, but the negative keeps me more squared up to the edge of the board. This helps with lateral movement and "across-the-board" style, without having to use my whole body for rotation.

I normally keep the stance width between 21 and 22 inches, measuring from center of disc to center of disc. I will go with a narrower stance for cruising or powder and go slightly wider for all-mountain jibbing and park riding. Twenty-one inches is really not that narrow, at least for my style and riding preference. I feel this allows me to maximize both my flex and extension move while keeping a solid stance for balance.

Choosing the placement in relation to the sidecut really depends on the type of board. With a tapered directional board I normally start with a reference stance and put the front binding one hole out toward the nose to get slightly wider and position me further over the nose. On a directional board I will try to place it to the center of the sidecut, which will be slightly back from the true center of

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Snowboard



Douglas Bernard

the board. On a twin-tip I will place it slightly back from center because I like strong fore movements in my riding (and if I don't do this I end up going over the handlebars).

I always try to ride boards that are wide enough to allow me to mount the bindings in the center position of the insert. So, in terms of lateral placement, heel to toe, I try my best to keep it centered. When I do have to decide, I like to have a little more overhand on the toe than the heel. Catching a heel cup puts you on your butt

real fast, and I think it's easier to feather a toe edge through the snow.

At AASI Team Selection I was riding a Burton X8 157, twin tip. My stance width was 21 1/2 inches, center of front binding to nose of board 20 inches, and center of rear binding to tail 19 inches. As you can see, I have a slightly longer nose than tail on a twin board, putting me back on the center of the sidecut, right where I want it so I can move forward and be aggressive without going over the nose.

LANE CLEGG

I ride all kinds of boards, from twins to directionals and from pipe to powder. Of the boards I ride the most, I generally ride centered stance (equal tip and tail). I do this on twins but also on several directional boards, as I like the way they ride being placed in front of the sidecut center. On my pow boards I generally ride centered on the sidecut. I have been lucky to have the opportunity to help test boards for Burton. They will often send me a deck with no markings (including no reference stance or an indication of what type of board it is) and I get to play around with stances to figure out how I like the board best. It's a great way to feel

how differently a board will react with small changes in binding placement.

I center my feet on my board between the edges so I have equal toe and heel drag. For angles it's usually somewhere between positive 6 and 12 on the front foot and negative 6 and 12 on the back foot. Width usually hovers around 24 inches (or as close as the inserts will allow me to get to that). I am digging the new single channel binding mounting system, called the Infinite Channel System (ICS), on the Burton boards as I can adjust my stance width to play with performance.

As for why I choose these settings, it's all based on what feel I want out of the board. On a pow board I usually ride centered on the sidecut and usually those boards have a set-back sidecut. This gives me a cool-feeling, "centered" stance while cruising through the pow (that way my back leg doesn't get so tired). I ride twins centered because I love the way they feel exactly the same forward and switch. As for directional boards, I often ride them centered as well because I like the way the board hooks up in a forward turn a tad faster and in a switch turn a little more mellow. In addition, if your tip and tail are similar length it makes it a bit easier to land switch in pow or soft snow.

My stance width is determined by where on my feet I want to stand. If it's too narrow I find myself trying to balance on the outsides of my feet and I never feel very centered or balanced (try standing with your feet together and doing anything!). If it's too wide, I find that the opposite is true—I am standing on the insides of my feet and my knees tend to hurt. I find the stability from a wide stance is strong, but limited for all-around riding (great for rails—not so good for pow or steeps). What is interesting is how small an increment is noticeable. If I change my stance or ride someone else's board, I will notice something as small as a half-inch difference.

My angles are kind of random—sometimes I throw something on like + 6/-6 and it just feels like my feet are too parallel so I will shoot them out a bit. Sometimes it doesn't feel strange though, so you never know.

GREGG DAVIS

When I snowboard, I like to be comfortable. The most important thing for me

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is that I achieve the greatest range of movement in my body, while standing on my board. I've slowly moved my binding angles and stance width over the years, a few degrees at a time.

When I feel like my legs and feet want to be in a slightly different place, I give it a try. If it's too much of a change and it feels weird, I back it off a bit. Stance angles are all about comfort for me, and stance width is about riding as wide a stance as I can to get the most leverage for manipulating my board, while maintaining range of movement.

With that said, I ride a 22 1/2-inch stance width, and my binding angles are 24 degrees in my front foot and negative 12 degrees in my back foot. I'm five feet seven inches tall, and 22 1/2 inches is the widest stance I can get without feeling like I'm limited in how far I can flex and extend my legs. With this wide stance, I feel like I have the most leverage and range of movement fore and aft on my board. I can move the pressure from nose to tail with more precision because of my wider stance, and can move further back and forward while still being able to return to a centered stance when needed.

All my life, I've walked with my toes pointed outward. My stance angles are a direct result of trying to get as comfortable as possible—to a neutral position according to my own body. My "split," or the difference between my binding angles is 36 degrees. While this may seem like a lot for most people, it feels natural to me, and I've slowly moved to this position over the years with small adjustments according to my comfort level and range of movement available with my existing angles. If you watch me walk, you'll see that my "split" is probably very close to 36 degrees.

My stance choices are all about comfort and range of movement.

DAVE LYNCH

This past season I was on the Burton Custom Wide 157 with size 9.5 feet, and medium bindings. The medium bindings are the most important part of the setup—they're just big enough to squeeze my boot into, and because of this snug fit, I barely need to cinch up my straps—there is no slop. Many people wonder why I use the wide board with such average-size feet. I have to admit, I started



Dave Lynch

Jonathan Seltowitz

Snowboard

cific and odd as this may sound, I am one of the chosen who have their second toe longer than their big toe. Negative 9 degrees allows both of these toes to be right on the edge equally. They are my balance and power toes. It may just be mental, but it works for me.

The last thing I worry about is my stance width. I tend to start the season relatively narrow, but as my muscles and ligaments get used to the stance (the strength and flexibility required), I tend to widen it. This widening allows for additional stability and balance, but takes more energy than I probably had at the beginning of the season. The overall keys for me are the fit between the binding and boot, and the magic negative 9 degrees.

TOMMY MORSCH

I am pretty picky and stubborn about my stances. People who ride my board don't like how I have it set up. Why? Everyone is different—our physical abilities and limitations, the boards that we ride, and

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the kind of riding we do.

First, my bindings are currently 21 ¾ inches apart (center to center). The reason I ride this stance is that it's comfortable for me. If I ride much wider it bothers my knees, and I start to lose some flexibility. If I ride much narrower than that, I start compromising my balance.

I ride with my front foot at positive 9 degrees and the back foot at negative 3 degrees. Normally I walk pigeon-toed; a huge duck stance doesn't work for me. Keeping my angles close to zero puts my toes and heels over the same part of the effective edge, which in turn gives me a similar feeling toeside and heelside.

I place both bindings more toward my toe edge than my heelside edge. I was playing around with this one day and found out that I didn't heel-cup out as soon! And with small feet I still didn't have toe drag.

As far as setting my bindings back toward the tail, I don't. One reason is that I ride on the East Coast, so powder days are rare. I like having the same size nose and tail. I find it works well in the park, groomers, moguls, and glades. If you place your bindings toward the nose, it is easier to get an early edge engagement. If you set your bindings back, you can get a better grip at the end of a turn. I feel that if I am centered, I get the best of both worlds. I don't have to move as much fore and aft through a turn to get a good edge set.

I ride this setup because it is comfortable and lets me have a good range of motion on the board.


JOSH SPOELSTRA

Twenty years into it and I still mess around with my setup. Why? Because my riding and physique change throughout the year. I start out the season, though, by finding a "one quiver" board, something that has the dimensions to do it all. In one day, I want to be able to teach a lesson; ride some powder; throw down some soul carves on the corduroy; and roll through the park, normal or switch, on- or off-piste. In Tahoe, I can do all that with a board between 156 and 159 centimeters. Because Tahoe has fairly dry snow compared to the Northwest, and I'm only five feet eight inches tall, I don't need a longer board for the ungroomed. But I'm also 165 to 170 pounds, so I need something

with substance. With only a size 8.5 boot, I don't need a wide board.

Riding and teaching switch quite a bit, I love having a directional twin. They have twin shape and centered hole patterns, yet are stiffer in the tail. I generally ride centered on my board, and my stance width is dictated by the comfort of my knees and ankles, my riding style, and my weight. Too narrow, and I don't feel comfortable on boxes and rails; too wide, and my knees and ankles start to scream, so I take a width of 22 ½ to 23 inches. This allows my ankles and knees to flex without writhing in pain, and gives me a nice stance for boxes and rails. It may be a bit wide for some to decamber the board in a carve, but, like I said, I'm around 165 pounds. No problems.

Angles of my bindings are a huge deal for me. I've had tons of problems with my ankles in the past, so I ride with some pretty big angles: 21 degrees in the front, and negative 18 degrees in the back. This reduces the strain put onto my lateral ligaments. Like I said, I love to ride switch, and with the bigger angles my calf and Achilles help compensate for my ankle ligaments. Since my calf and Achilles are getting such a workout, I ride with very little forward lean on my highbacks. I don't have problems bending my knees, so I generally don't need the assistance of my highbacks. I also don't want massive forward lean while jumping onto rails and boxes. Low highback lean assists with a flat foot for those features.

With ankle problems come foot problems (yeah, they're pretty screwed up, too), so I make sure I have good toe ramps under my feet. This engages the shin muscles, helping to protect my ankles. Also, I have two different-sized feet (1 ½ sizes different), so I put a toe ramp farther into my right binding for the smaller foot. That gives me equal pressure on both feet. Then, I take my boots to my favorite Tahoe bootfitter. I walk in with a boot a half size too small for my left foot, one size too big for my right. Hours later, I come out with fitted boots—stretched and padded in all the right places—and footbeds that make my feet happy. By far, the boots are the most important component in my setup. (To all those companies that say their boots are ready to wear right out of the box all I can say is, "You've never seen my feet!") 

Jonathan Selkowitz



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Riders Rally . . . Because that's what we do!

text and photos by ERICA MARCINIEC

Snowboarding is not always easy. For instructors who like to push themselves, it's usually a challenge. And sometimes, it can be downright scary.

If I were to pick one term to describe my first run at the 2008 Rider Rally, held April 20–25 at Mammoth Mountain, California, scary is it. The last stretch of the Panorama gondola ride is breathtakingly high, and if that weren't enough to take one's breath away, the steep, impenetrable boiler plate on Cornice Bowl certainly was. Fortunate was the rider with a finely tuned edge; less fortunate were the rest of us.

Terrified to turn, I got on my heel edge, really low, and butt-checked my way down in a directional slide as I fought to maintain control of a falling leaf. And I *like* ice.

The group seemed pretty beaten afterwards, but K.C. Gandee—one of the three AASI Snowboard Team members leading the event—launched into a jump progression in the smallest park off Discovery Chair, and his near maniacal energy and exuberance for snowboarding did wonders for group morale. By lunchtime, we were all tweaking and boning out our tricks with big smiles on our faces.

The fact of the matter is that sometimes you have to rally together to find the good stuff. That's snowboarding, and that's what the Rider Rally is all about.

First held in 1999, the Rider Rally was the brainchild of then AASI Snowboard Team member Eric Sheckleton, who started it as a freestyle-focused event for members of the Northern Rocky Moun-

tain (NRM) Division. In 2000 the rally was opened up to all AASI divisions, with NRM at the helm until the event went “national” this year. Past rallies have taken place at Big Sky, Montana; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Mammoth Mountain, California; Breckenridge, Colorado; Snowbird, Utah; and Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Today, the Rider Rally gives participants the opportunity to explore new

**BY LUNCHTIME, WE WERE
ALL TWEAKING AND BONING
OUT OUR TRICKS WITH BIG
SMILES ON OUR FACES.**

terrain alongside members of the AASI Snowboard Team, which this past spring included outgoing coach J. Randy Price and then-team members Chad Frost and K.C. Gandee.

“You get to come ride with the snowboard team at a mountain you don't know,” said Phillip Howell, snowboard school director at Boston Mills-Brandywine Resort in Ohio, a mountain that has 240 vertical feet, 300 snowsports instructors, and sells 14,000 lessons weekly. “We have a large, educated ski school, but we have to go out to a big mountain to further our riding training.” When asked what he thought of the first run, Howell replied with a smile, “It got everybody moving and thinking. It was fun.”

Many of the folks who come to the Rider Rally return year after year, with some in attendance as long as eight and



K.C. Gandee is all about the stoke.



nine years. "Big Joe" Fucci, a former instructor at Stratton Mountain, Vermont, has attended all but one. The Rider Rally at Big Sky was one of his favorites; participants went cat riding followed by dinner with the cat operations crew in a yurt up on the mountain. The last time he was

at Mammoth, the skies dropped three feet of snow.

But every year is different. This time, riders spent the first day and a half experimenting with techniques to handle the frozen, variable crud before a Tuesday afternoon hike to Lincoln Peak served up

some steep, sun-warmed snow. Wednesday was a free day; a hardy few rode out a windstorm that rolled in and were rewarded with a couple inches of powder, while others spent the day golfing in nearby Bishop. Thursday morning the hunt was on for wind-blown powder, and by Thursday afternoon, the clouds gave way to sunshine that refused to quit, closing the week out with the slushy spring snow for which Mammoth is famous.

Among this year's 22 participants was a large and rowdy contingent from Bridger Bowl, Montana, in addition to quite a few Eastern Division members. Participants roamed the mountain in small groups exploring areas of interest to them.

"I've been practicing my freestyle," said Missy Cashman, a Level II instructor at Bridger Bowl, who works as a radio deejay when she's not snowboarding or teaching others to snowboard. "I came here to get more comfortable in the air. Now that I'm here, I'm stoked. It's only going to get better and better." Cashman also went to Mammoth to party, soon emerging as one of the ringleaders of Thursday's costumed on-hill antics, which included at least four snowboarding superheroes taking turns hitting the



Ready to ride in style: Alison Ford, J. Randy Price, and K.C. Gandee

Snowboard

park and pipe while attempting not to get tangled in a long velvet cape.

Others, like Bridger Bowl Snowboard School Supervisor “Steve-O” Craig, used the opportunity to get ready for the 2008–2012 AASI National Team selection, which were held at Mammoth the following week.

“Traditionally the Rider Rally is really open,” explained Gandee, who wore a thigh-length, neon green “Adventure Snow Club” parka cinched at the waist on Thursday. “It’s one of the things that sets it apart from very structured clinics and exams.”

When asked what he thinks makes the Rider Rally stand out, Eastern Division examiner and Hunter Mountain Vice President John Ianelli said, “I think the success of this event [has a lot to do with] always going to a different resort. “It’s a good opportunity to ride a resort I’ve never been to.”

Alison Ford, director of snowboard training at Whitetail Resort, Pennsylvania, suggested that event organizers give the East Coast a try. “It’s a different kind of riding in the East,” she said. Another logical choice would be Bridger Bowl, Montana, considering it is home to one-third of this past year’s participants.

Although I didn’t hear of anyone having their face “decorated”—as illustrated in the print advertisement for the 2008 Rider Rally—there was definitely some lively and risqué banter from the NRM crowd, with a four-square tournament for free swag, a pizza party, and a night on the town counting among the highlights of the après-ride scene.

The Rider Rally is definitely an AASI event worth experiencing, but be forewarned. As Jan Lee, a former snowboard school supervisor at Idaho’s Schweitzer Mountain, said, “Once you’ve attended one, you come back every year.” ❧

Erica Marciniec has taught snowboarding and skiing in PSIA-AASI’s Eastern and Western divisions. She credits her love of snowsports to her dad, who she says “forced her to hike bootpacks and drop into steep, rocky chutes” from a young age.



(Above) Alyssa Burzynski, 16, was the youngest participant at the 2008 Rider Rally. She came with her dad, Andre. Father and daughter enjoy both snowboarding and skiing, with skiing’s freestyle revolution sparking Alyssa’s newfound interest in the sport.



(Left) Big Joe Fucci, 56, has attended all but one Rider Rally.

(Below) Steve-O Craig, snowboard supervisor at Bridger Bowl, Montana, nails the tree jib.





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Motivate Children for a Guest-Centered Experience

by JIM JONEZ

Sometimes young students simply don't know what they want.

Let's say you're introducing yourself to a group of 9-year-olds at the outset of a morning lesson when you ask the group, "What would you like to get out of today's class?" The responses range from silence and puzzled expressions to a chorus of I-don't-know's. Finally, one youngster chimes in with "I'm just here because Mom and Dad put me here." While you've been trained to teach a guest-centered lesson, you quickly discover that the children in the group can't express their motivations the same way adults do.

How do you teach a guest-centered lesson when your guests can't even verbalize what they want? As an instructor, you should be prepared to observe what students do (and don't do), as well as what

they say (and don't say) to determine what they need from your lesson. Students who may not know what they want depend on you to figure out what they need.

PSIA's *Core Concepts* manual clearly details a guest-centered model for ski and snowboarding instruction that encourages instructors to listen to their guests and "let their input shape the experience." An engaged instructor who carefully observes students' learning patterns can play a central part in helping to create an experience that is both enjoyable and educational. The challenge of accurately identifying a young student's motivations needs to be a part of every lesson. Not only is this kind of teaching and observing good for the snowsports industry in

general, it's an excellent way to make your own experience as an instructor more rewarding and fulfilling.

GUEST-CENTERED MODEL

Guest-centered instruction is a basic concept that requires getting the initial approach right in order to find success. During recent years at Colorado's Winter Park Resort, a guest-centered teaching philosophy has evolved. The changes have resulted in an inimitable snowsports experience that students want to repeat. Instructors at the resort follow a model that's simple, flexible, and effectively meets guests' needs in all situations. The model involves three basic elements of the lesson experience: motivation, movement, and knowledge. The instructor in turn must identify what the student brings to the lesson and then facilitate improvements for each element throughout the course of the lesson. In examining this idea I will focus specifically on the motivation element and how to identify and facilitate that motivation specifically for children.

An adult skier might say, "I want to improve my ability to make parallel turns on a blue slope." Such a clear identification of the student's motivation can give an instructor the opportunity to craft a lesson that facilitates fulfillment of that

Being guest-centered is central to success.



Wendy Scipione

motivation. In this case communication between student and instructor can help clarify how the student's understanding of what makes a parallel turn and how changing the student's movement patterns will relate to his or her stated motivation. Such a dialogue can lead to an individualized lesson plan that should give the student exactly what he or she needs to accomplish the goal at hand.

WHY CHILDREN DON'T CONNECT

When you're leading an adult lesson, a good place to start is to ask questions that can aid in identifying your student's motivation for joining the lesson in the first place. "What do you want to get out of our time together today? Why are you here? What would make this a successful lesson for you?"

Although the ability to answer such questions can make teaching lessons for grown-ups a whole lot easier, children usually aren't able to respond to these kinds of queries. In a general sense of education, the K-12 school teacher's equivalent of these questions might be something along the lines of: "Well, boys and girls, what would you like to learn today in reading?" or "What words should

be on the spelling list this week?" Traditional grade school curricula, however, are not geared toward a guest-centered experience, a philosophical difference that means that snowsports instructors have the advantage of being able to give young skiers and riders a sense of ownership in their learning experience.

BRING OUT THE MOTIVATORS

There are three major points of motivation that drive students to want to learn a sport and improve at it: to have fun, build confidence, and develop skills. With experience, instructors can learn how to read which motivator (or a combination of the three) needs to be addressed. The trick is to identify the student's motivation and then help him or her meet that goal in order to satisfy the original reason for taking the lesson.

When it comes to using fun as a motivator, most instructors would probably agree that this one comes naturally. By using the idea of having fun as a starting point, you can work toward fulfilling a student's expectation with ease by simply joining in. When you directly ask the student if he or she is looking to have fun on the slopes, you can validate an affirma-

tive response with something like this: "That's great; I'm here to have fun, too." Now, what would make this the most fun skiing day that you have ever had?"

When working with a "fun-motivated" student, you should focus less on progressions, skills development, and knowledge transfer, and put your energy into creating a fresh experience that's full of surprise and self-discovery. You could take the youngster to new trails and ski them in ways they've never tried before (within reason and the bounds of safety, that is). Identify a novel task that's within easy reach of the student's skill, and demonstrate how it can be achieved.

An important element of such a lesson will be to register student feedback in terms of success. One way you can do this is to use your ski pole as an imaginary "fun meter" and ask your students to measure the level of fun during certain parts of the lesson. You could hold the pole horizontally and then move it in an upward arc to mimic the movement of a

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needle on a gas gauge. Use anything that provides input that will help you meet the motivation by adjusting the lesson to meet the student's needs. At the end of the lesson you can close with an explanation of how the student actually learned something in the middle of all the fun, pointing out where he or she improved or found success on snow.

After fun the second biggest motivator is confidence bred by a sense of security and skill. For many young athletes a typical response to the question of where to ride or ski would be to say, "I just like to stick to the greens." The operative word here is "just." Such a student recognizes and clings to his or her comfort zone. As with the fun zone of motivation, though, your follow-up response as the instructor will be critical in pinpointing the source of this kind of motivation. You could say, "Well, you've come to the right place. We'll ride together wherever you want to go." Tell me what you like best about green runs. Are they a good place for

"Wow, I like this run because it's less crowded." You can expand on such an affirmation with something like this: "See how well you progress when you ride on a trail that you like?" Close the lesson in a way that encourages self-assurance by making a comment like, "As you ride more, you will become confident on all types of trails."

The third big motivator for students is skill development. When you start class with a line like "What do you want to learn today?" your student might respond with, "I want to be able to keep up with my friends." When you hear a conditional response similar to this, you can further clarify the student's motivation with additional questions: "What would make you better able to do that? Do you want to ski steeper runs? Ski faster and in control? Ski longer without getting tired?" Whatever comes up through such lines of questioning can provide a good method of getting a "read" on students when it comes to goal setting and helping with the lesson planning phases of the teaching cycle.


When students provide additional information, you can craft a learning experience to match. Depending on the type of skill the student identifies, you can draw from a set of lesson designs that emphasizes balancing movement, edging movements, or whatever facilitates the specific skill needed to match the identified motivation. Avoid teaching a canned level-5 ski lesson (or whatever level applies to the student); that definitely would not fit the guest-centered model. Rather, focus on teaching the student, who happens to be at level-5 skiing ability.

To keep the lesson on track and maintain a semblance of spontaneity, you must constantly interact with the student, seek feedback, and move on to the next activity when he or she is ready for it. Maintaining an awareness of the student's motivation means explaining how each activity directly ties into the individual's motivation: "Do you notice that when you're balanced it takes less muscle strength to make the turn? This means you will be less tired and can stay with your friends for the whole day." Just as with chasing fun and maintaining one's comfort zone, building skills is an excellent excuse for staying motivated on the hill.

THE PAYOFF

The guest-centered teaching model is here to stay in the world of snowsports instruction. As instructors, we know how to structure lessons that will meet the adult learner's motivational needs, but meeting children's needs requires added creativity. With kids we need to be prepared to anticipate what the student cannot articulate.

Your children's classes will probably always include those students who were just dropped off to give their parents adult ski time, but why not seize this opportunity? Dig deep to discover what each student would like to learn (even if he or she needs help figuring this out). Then give these students a lesson to tell their friends about.

The payoff for you as an instructor is a lesson that will flow naturally because it is based on the student's motivations, and the youngster is more likely to come back for—and be more excited about taking—another lesson. Isn't it great when parents enroll their kids in class because little Billy or Jenny wouldn't stop talking about what a great time they had, how much better they're skiing, or how they're no longer afraid to tackle the intermediate slopes? Teaching is certainly a guest-centered experience, but wouldn't hearing this in turn make you more excited to teach your next kids class? 

Jim Jonez is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor who identifies and facilitates the various motivations of children (and adults) participating in winter sports at Winter Park, Colorado.

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DIG DEEP TO DISCOVER WHAT EACH STUDENT WOULD LIKE TO LEARN (EVEN IF HE OR SHE NEEDS HELP FIGURING THIS OUT).

you because you can control your speed there?" At this point you're speaking the child's language.

Understanding a student's fear factors will help you determine a comfortable zone in which to challenge that student and maintain his or her interest through the lesson. Introduce progressions and exercises that establish success early and build in easy increments. Reinforce any achievements and repeat those activities to instill confidence.

As you help the student overcome barriers, you will likely see a huge positive response. Be sure to vocally recognize such occasions and tie them back to the identified motivation.

For example, a student might say,

Après Ski Debate: Have shaped skis made us lazy?



Participants: A Norwegian ski sweater (NSS) and high performance half-zip (HZ)

technique development since the GLM. And anytime you can innovate with learning tools, it makes you smarter.

Innocent bystander: So, I roll up to the bar after work and these two instructors are debating the merits of shaped skis. I'm like, "What is this, 1996?" But, eavesdropping can reveal a lot, and as it turns out, they weren't reconstructing an old debate, rather, reviewing where technological innovations have taken the sport.

The guy in the Norwegian ski sweater, tipping back the beer, claims that shaped skis have made skiers lazy, while the guy in the high performance "I'm-still-wicking" half-zip, swilling a martini straight up, refutes his every claim. Here's what unfurled after I happened upon their conversation . . .

HZ: Lazy! What are you talking about? Lazy is your client who ditches you at 10 a.m. for the spa. Anyone who spends an entire day with planks strapped to their feet will never be defined as lazy. Shaped skis have simply changed the way we move, so what could be misconstrued as lazy by an ignorant elitist is actually highly efficient.

NSS: Efficient? Keep telling yourself that. Efficient is defined as requiring less energy output, or less work, thereby making anyone who opts for sliding on snow in such a manner—and I've seen your clients banking down the hill—completely lackadaisical. That means lazy, in case your vocabulary matches the fitness level required to turn a pair of sidecut planks.


HZ: I beg your pardon, but efficiency doesn't make for lazy skiing, it makes for smarter skiing. Shaped skis are the greatest advancement in learning and

NSS: GLM! The Graduated Length Method? Are you kidding? And you're arguing for the superiority of shaped skis? They demand so little and skiers respond by doing even less—leaning to one side does not equal carving.

HZ: But, a skier who properly carves on shaped skis totally rips, and with a lot less work than you'd have to put into the same outcome on straight skis. It's evolution . . . survival of the fittest. Not laziness. What's resulted from improved equipment is a greater chance that more skiers will reach a high level of performance, retain the skills and enjoy skiing for much, much longer. If it weren't for shaped skis, you'd already be retired!

NSS: Speak for yourself. And anyway, what your clients think is high performance is simply the technology making up for the fact that they don't have to have any real concept of technique. Idly making minor adjustments to weight and edge angle does not a World Cup skier make.

HZ: I'll give you that, however, when the refined technique is applied correctly—meaning not more or less work, just different work—the outcome is much higher performance than ever could have been achieved on classic equipment.

NSS: So, if I concede to that fact, and agree that when the skis are used to their full advantage, shaped skis have not made us lazy, but smart, efficient, finely tuned skiers, will you buy the next round? 



NERD ALERT:

Facts you'll need for your own après debate . . .

The Graduated Length Method:

The GLM (Graduated Length Method) of ski instruction was developed by Cliff Taylor in 1959 and grew popular among both instructors and beginner ski students in the 1960s. "If all you had to do was wax the bottoms of your shoes and use the shoes for skis, you could learn in 10 minutes and have instant skiing, truly," said Taylor in 1970's *Ski GLM* by Morten Lund. The program was designed to solve the same problems of beginner retention and application of new ski technology we grapple with to this day.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

In 1963, Rossignol built a resin ski called the Strato 102, featuring radical sidecuts and quick response characteristics. According to Horst Abraham in *Skiing Right* (1983), this ski was a precursor to today's technology, introducing progressive techniques that involved less vertical movement, more edge carving, and quicker turning. The beginning of laziness? Depends on which side of the debate you stand.

Of Instructors and Coaches

By Ben Roberts,
PSIA-AASI Education Coordinator



Jessica Tidswell

When asked to come up with *32 Degrees'* first offering for its "Coach's Corner" department, I figured this would be a great opportunity to write about the differences between snowsports instructors and coaches. I've spent roughly equal portions of my career as one or the other, and this is a common topic of chairlift conversation.

I've encountered two main perspectives. The first is to see the roles as being very different, but best defined by the nature of the person being taught or coached. The second perspective is that the two roles are mutually exclusive and that it's difficult if not impossible for a coach to be a good teacher and a teacher to be a good coach.

My belief is that instructors and coaches have more in common than most of us realize. When you boil each job down to its essence, teaching and coaching snowsports are basically different versions of the same thing. Working in the same sports, we all work to help people improve and achieve their personal goals.

Personally, I've found that working as both a instructor and coach has helped me perform better in each role. I have learned to pay closer attention to the goals and obstacles facing my students or athletes and how the information I provide and suggestions I make affect the outcomes for my students and athletes.

The obstacles that stand between a student or athlete and his or her goals are diverse, but there is little difference in how they affect the student or the athlete. These obstacles fall primarily into the following categories: movement patterns, physical conditioning, tactics, equipment, experience, psychological preparation, and age/injuries. It is the job of both instructors and coaches to assess these

obstacles and work with their students and athletes to plot the most effective course for change.

The coach and instructor must pay careful attention to how these areas interact with each other. Focusing on a student or athlete's obvious weakness without paying attention to the other variables that affect performance is a common mistake.

There are some key differences between instructors and coaches, differences that point to areas where we can learn from each other. In my opinion, some of the ways in which coaching varies from instruction include the following; maybe you've noticed the same things.

NATURE OF THE WORKPLACE

In what I think is the biggest distinction, coaches tend to work as part of a team of coaches, while instructors tend to work independently. During a typical training or race day, there will almost always be more than one coach on the hill, and responsibilities often overlap.

Instructors, in contrast, are usually on their own. Once introductions between instructor and client are made or the group leaves the lineup, the next several hours or days are the instructor's. Instructors must never forget that they are a part of a team, while coaches could, at times, learn to be more self-reliant.

TEACHING STYLE

Instructors are expected to make change easy for students; coaches, on the other hand, are expected to tell athletes what to change and then leave it to them to go do it. When things are going well this model works fine, but I think instructors can stand to learn a lesson from coaches: In some instances an instructor needs to step back and let the student grapple with a concept or adjustment so the student can truly "own it." When a student starts to struggle, many instructors succumb

to the urge to pile on more and more information, making the situation even worse.

The flipside is that it is easy for a coach to let an athlete flounder, but if the athlete struggles with a challenge for very long he or she probably needs more information or a change in focus. In essence, the athlete at this stage needs to be taught rather than coached.

DURATION OF RELATIONSHIP

Coaches generally work with athletes for longer periods of time than instructors do with students. An athlete will often work with the same coach or coaching group for years, which creates a familiarity and a pace of information that ideally allows the athlete to make steady progress. In contrast, instructors may spend a week with the same student or group each year. This can cause the instructor to aim for quick fixes or inflated accomplishments to make the students feel good about their week.

Coaches do this too, but when working with the same athletes day in and day out they soon learn that a quick fix or fake compliment can have a negative effect on an athlete's long-term progress—and the coach's credibility.

On the other hand, a coach who offers words of encouragement or who takes a few extra runs with his or her struggling athlete to straighten something out can have a huge effect on an athlete.

NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP (PART I)

Coaches are advocates for their athletes. In the competitive environment, coaches not only coach their athletes but also represent them on race juries and at team captains' meetings. They have the opportunity to speak for fair-

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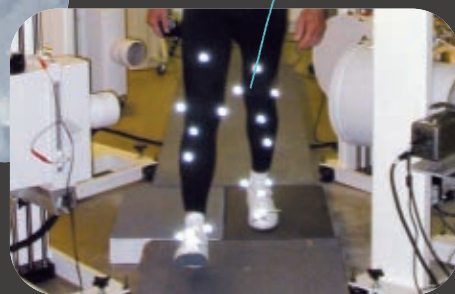
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ness and safety. A coach who points out a safety issue will often be expected to pick up a shovel or drill to help fix the problem.

There is a dark side to this advocacy, in that sometimes coaches must pull an athlete from a competition to ensure his or her safety. Instructors could learn from both of these situations to become better advocates for their students and to not be afraid to make an unpopular decision in the interest of their student's safety. As instructors, we tend to view our students as customers. However, when they ask for something unsafe or unrealistic it is better to draw a line, rather than to make promises that may be unsafe or impossible to keep.

In situations where a problem for a student relates to an area of resort operations the instructor should be ready to step in and help. Depending on the situation this could mean offering a helping hand to a lift operator or making suggestions to area management. Remember, it is almost always best to offer solutions rather than simply point out problems in these situations. Because of the nature of the competitive arena, it is a necessity for coaches to offer these solutions and help implement them.

NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP (PART II)


When a coach dates an athlete; he or she is fired, when an instructor dates a student, he or she is applauded at the next lineup. In all seriousness, both the student/instructor and athlete/coach relationships are characterized by tremendous closeness and trust. These relationships come

with a lot of responsibility and require respect, so always remember what is appropriate and know your boundaries.

FOR ALL THEIR DIFFERENCES, INSTRUCTORS AND COACHES SHARE AT LEAST ONE SIMILARITY: **EVERYONE WANTS TO TAKE THE CREDIT.**

For all their differences, instructors and coaches share at least one similarity: everyone wants to take the credit. We want the accomplishments of our students and athletes to be our own accomplishments, but in reality, a student or athlete's success and accomplishments belong solely to the individual. We must be proud of our role in helping but resist the urge to overstep this boundary.

At a race a few years ago an athlete I know won. According to the athlete the race was won despite poor coaching advice and a slow pair of skis. According to one of the coaches, it was won due to good coaching despite slow skis and mistakes made by the athlete. According to the athlete's technician, the race was won due to fast skis despite poor coaching and the athlete's mistakes. Cause and effect are often in the eyes of the beholder. A former colleague of mine likes to say, "Don't take the credit if you can't take the blame." The only way to win at this game is not to play.

I hope these thoughts have been helpful. As a journeyman coach and instructor these are some of the ideas I ponder in my quest to improve and grow. I've made a lot of mistakes as both an instructor and coach, but I've learned from every one of them. In the end, that's a lesson—and a winning strategy—we can all adopt. 

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P.O. Box 161097 ♦ Big Sky, Montana 59716
www.yellowstoneclub.com



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Ski & Snowboard School

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Live & work in Crested Butte, CO

Ski and Snowboard Instructors

Looking for an exciting winter teaching in the Rocky Mountains? Come and join the Crested Butte Ski and Ride School! We're committed to continued education and training in order to provide the highest level of teaching and guest service to visitors of Crested Butte Mountain Resort.

PSIA Level 1, 2, and 3 Certified Ski Instructors

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For more information visit our website at www.skicb.com/jobs

or contact Nicholas Herrin

Director of the Ski and Ride School
nherrin@cbmr.com or 970.349.2224.
EOE.



JOIN ONE OF COLORADO'S TOP PROGRAMS

The Steamboat Ski & Snowboard School is hiring for the following positions for the 2008-09 winter season:

Children's Alpine INSTRUCTOR

positions available in our
Kids' Vacation Center

Alpine and Snowboard INSTRUCTORS

Certified and Non-Certified positions available

Send your resume to:

Human Resources

Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation

2305 Mt. Werner Circle

Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

email: HR@steamboat.com

fax: 970-871-5130

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Sugarloaf Ski & Snowboard School

Instructors needed

- Full and part time positions available
- Work with adults or children
- Spend your days skiing or riding
- Earn a season's pass (minimum day requirements)

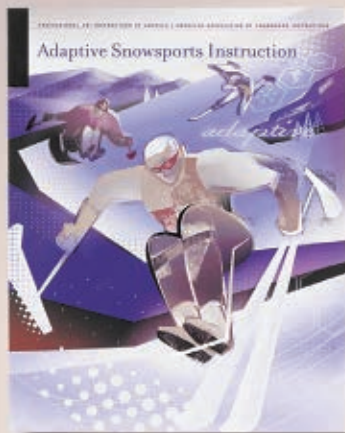
If interested call 207.237.6924 or send your resume to:

Perfect Turn

5092 Access Road

Carrabassett Valley, ME 04947

PSIA-AASI Education Materials



item #131

THE ADAPTIVE SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTION MANUAL. EVERY GREAT CAUSE HAS ITS MAGNA CARTA.

It takes a special person to be an adaptive instructor. It is a calling. And, it comes with as many challenges as rewards. The *Adaptive Snowsports Instruction* manual is your comprehensive resource for how to present exceptional alpine, snowboard, and nordic adaptive lessons. From detailed descriptions of the latest adaptive equipment and skiing/snowboarding techniques to an up-to-date synopsis of developments in stand-up and sit-down sliding methods, the manual is a vital teaching resource. You can purchase the manual online at www.psia.org, www.aasi.org, or through the PSIA-AASI *Accessories Catalog*. You already have the calling. Now get the book.

Adaptive

LAST CHAIR



Write a caption for this photo!

We're All in This Together

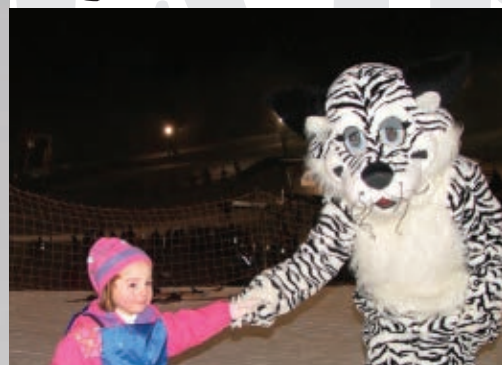
This is your magazine. Why not help us make it great? Write a laugh-out-loud caption for the accompanying photo, share your funny or touching story from a memorable lesson, or send a goofy photo to use for the caption contest.

Winners for each category—caption, anecdote, and photo—will receive a \$25 gift certificate for the PSIA-AASI Accessories Catalog. E-mail entries are preferred and may be sent to 32Degrees@thesnowpros.org with the subject: Caption Contest. Digital photos should be approximately 4 by 6 inches or larger at a resolution of 300 dpi. Standard mail entries should be sent to 32 Degrees, 133 South Van Gordon Street, Suite 200, Lakewood, CO 80228. Only entries from PSIA-AASI members will be considered.

WINNING ANECDOTE:

David Lawrence, Methow Valley Ski School, Winthrop, WA
One of the "weirdest" things I ever encountered in a lesson came courtesy of a gentleman who hadn't done much cross-country skiing before, but you could tell he thought he was God's gift to our sport. He came into the ski shop complaining that his skis were really slow and sticky. (This was not unusual due to the warm snow that was falling.) I asked for his ski so I could apply a little glide paste onto the bottom. Looking at the bottom of the ski, I noticed black, tacky wax tip-to-tail underneath the entire ski.

"What's all this stuff on the bottom of your ski?" I asked. "Wax," he said, and pulled from his pocket a stick of kick wax. God's gift to cross-country skiing had just loaded his no-wax, fish-scale skis, which require no kick wax, full of the slow and sticky stuff.



courtesy of Sonja Rom

winning captions spring 2008 (TPS)

THE WINNER:

Realizing his future is in peril, Siegfried and Roy's tiger, Montecore, works on his "softer side."
—Carolyn Pope, Beaver Creek, CO

Runners-up

1. The chairlift sign said, "Beware—Snowcats May Be Encountered at Any Time."
—Allen Layman, The Homestead, Hot Springs, VA

2. "Dad, this is just stupid and embarrassing. Why can't you dress like the other instructors?"
—Gerry R. Fitzgerald, Mount Spokane, WA

3. Dora the Explorer and Snowball announce they will enter the next "Dancing with the Stars" competition.
—Kennon Warner, Lakewood, CO

4. "Jeez . . . Level I cert, \$6.50 an hour, and I wear this—I gotta get another job."
—Jan-Carl Aserlind, Copper Mountain, CO

5. How many more of these stuffed-animal-photo-ops will I have to endure for the sake of my parents' happiness?
—Michael Zeugin, Whiteface Mountain, NY

Actual Caption

Sonja Rom, a children's instructor at Indiana's Perfect North Slopes Snowsports School, is quick to lend students a helping paw.

rule the Mountain.

Duke • Baron • Jester • Griffon

The Family Jewels

Last year we introduced The Duke, the realm's first true freeskiing binding with alpine touring (AT) capability, and The Jester, for optimum pipe/big mountain retention. This year, they are joined by The Baron and The Griffon; two lesser royals but no less worthy. Welcome to the family.



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Duke

Baron

Jester

Griffon

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