NORDIC CAMPS
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32 DEGREES

THE JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTION | SPRING 2009

GO FOR IT!

DRIVING LESSONS FOR DYNAMIC TURNS

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32 Degrees

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32 Degrees

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SNOWSPORTS 360

Cover Shot:
PSIA Alpine Team member Nick Herrin rips at Washington's Crystal Mountain.
Photo by Scott D. W. Smith.

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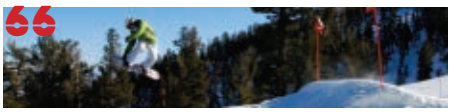

DEPARTMENTS & COLUMNS

President's Message

Do We Count?

By Ray Allard
PSIA-AASI President and Chairman of the Board

Relax. That headline isn't leading you to arithmetic; I'm asking a rhetorical question about whether PSIA and AASI really matter in the larger scheme of things. Do we make a difference? All organizations are expected to cater to their members, but many exist solely for that purpose. Certainly membership service is a priority, and we believe our high retention rates reflect our efforts there. But as a nonprofit association with an affiliated educational foundation, there is an expectation that we will also contribute to the greater good of the public and the snowsports sector in particular.

We certainly matter to the millions of people who take lessons in this country each season. In fact, as I pointed out in the last issue, one of the primary reasons for the associations' formation was to provide more consistent instruction to the skiing (and later, the riding) public. As the primary source of educational materials and clinics on snowsports instruction in the United States, PSIA-AASI skiing/riding concepts and beliefs form the core of what is taught. While some resorts choose to attach proprietary labels to their instructional offerings, they are, in fact, usually based on our materials, even when employed by instructors or schools that are not PSIA-AASI members. Whenever we can make learning easier and more fun, the rest of the industry (resorts, manufacturers, sister organizations, etc.) benefits.

And we matter to resorts and their snowsports schools, not only for our educational offerings, but for our universally recognized standards for instructor certification. These standards significantly ease the processes of hiring and training. Our recruitment materials and programs, as well as the "Go with A Pro" collateral, provide added value.

The National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) also derives benefit from its affiliation with us, as a tenant in a building we own with National Ski Patrol, as a partner in the Growth Initiative, through the publication of resources for terrain park users (e.g., the *Park and Pipe Instructor's Guide*, the *Get a Clue* booklet, and *Tip of the Day* cards), and via the content and presenters we provide for NSAA seminars. PSIA-AASI's financial and content support of NSAA's Smart Style and Lids on Kids further demonstrate our commitment to consumer education and safety.

We've mattered on the international scene for a long time. The United States was one of the first countries to stress the importance of a student-based approach to teaching—and one of the first to emphasize that form should follow function instead of advocating an arbitrary technique.

We've also mattered on the international scene for a long time. The United States was one of the first countries to stress the importance of a student-based approach to teaching—and one of the first to emphasize that form should follow function instead of advocating an arbitrary technique. The skills concept—and later, lateral learning—were two American ideas that were picked up by several other nations. The Movement Matrix will turn heads at Interski in 2011. Snowboarding started in this country, and because PSIA-AASI embraced it early on, we were able to greatly influence how the instruction of the sport has evolved.

The racing community has partnered with us frequently over the years, both at the division and national levels. It regularly acknowledges and seeks out our expertise in teaching.

We didn't come up with the concept of teaching winter sports to people with disabilities, but we did help bring it into the mainstream. Today, several thousand people with physical or mental challenges are able to enjoy snowsports. In addition, more PSIA-AASI instructors are prepared to deal with the milder issues of autism, attention deficit disorder, and other disabilities in non-adaptive classes.

There's a reason many manufacturers extend professional discounts to PSIA-AASI members. We make a difference. Not only in terms of the ready market we provide but, more important, in terms of our influence on retail sales. On several occasions throughout my career I've seen newer or smaller companies that partnered with us realize huge surges of growth, leading some to become industry leaders within their niche.

It's easy to think of other situations in which we contribute to the greater good of the snowsports community, but I've discovered that our reach extends even further. For instance, I've had educators in other fields tell me they've found that ideas from our *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors* can easily be applied to their work environment.

So, does PSIA-AASI count? Do we make a difference? You bet, both as individual members as well as the collective "we." Inspiring passion for the mountain experience while providing recreation, fun, and adventure matters to many individuals and organizations beyond our immediate circle, and to society in general.


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Letters

Slalom to the Rescue

Congratulations on *32 Degrees*, a very well laid out publication with terrific content! I thought the piece on Masters Racing ("Hone Your Skills with High-Speed Thrills," winter 2009) was well done (no surprise coming from an old ski racer).

During the holidays, my 83-year-old father (National Ski & Snowboard Hall of Famer Tom Jacobs) was carving a few turns at New York's Gore Mountain when he was struck from behind by a teenage girl on a snowboard. It was a nasty collision, and when Tom finally collected himself well enough to check on her condition, he asked her, "What happened?" The girl responded, "Gee, you turned!" I have a feeling that this is not an uncommon occurrence at the resorts these days.

The point is this: The vast majority of skiers and snowboarders truly do not know what it means to "turn on demand," and the result is that mid-slope collisions are on the rise. Why is this? Could it be that people aren't taking enough lessons, or that the freeride culture of "straight lining" has become more pervasive (and dangerous)? In my humble opinion, one reason is because there is little access to running gates for the masses at the resorts. There is NASTAR, which is a fine program, but something more is needed. Specifically, slalom!

Consider the amount of money the resorts spent to build, maintain, and staff terrain parks that are open to the public at no additional charge. Why, then, are the resorts charging their customers to run slalom courses, especially now that inexpensive, safe, and convenient brush markers are readily available? Perhaps an even more important question is, why aren't more snowsports schools actively and consistently promoting slalom courses to teach essential turn-on-demand skills in ALL of their lessons (skiers and snowboarders alike). Add an automatic timing system and the activity becomes a heck of a lot of fun, because it provides an objective score to challenge yourself with and measure your improvement in linking dynamic turns.

Slalom courses (set with brush markers and made available FREE on a daily basis) could be the key to teaching more guests to ski in control. And perhaps they should be a function of the snowsports school (not the race department)!

– John Jacobs
Queensbury, NY

What PSIA-AASI Has Done for Me

Health, fitness, and a great appreciation for life have come from my being a part of PSIA. As an organization, PSIA opened the door to an extended family and a multitude of ways to play (not all of which have been on the snow).

I began skiing in eighth grade, riding the school ski bus to Mission Ridge Ski Resort in Washington. I had a lot of fun skiing through high school, but gave it up to pursue other interests in the desert of eastern Washington.

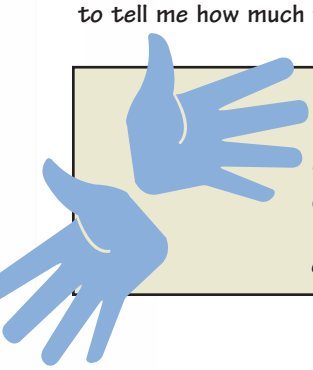
Chance and foul weather led me back to the sport at age 23. A couple of the guys I skied with were instructors, so with some encouragement (and the opportunity to save a few dollars in lift tickets), I signed up for the ski school hiring clinics. Had someone tried then to tell me how much that one decision would eventually change my life and lifestyle, I would never have believed it.

Mission Ridge Ski School was under the guidance of Gordon West, whose incredible talent, enthusiasm, and energy for skiing spilled over and into his staff of instructors. I was soon introduced to a group of people, some twice my age and older, who were ripping it up and truly sharing their passion and love of winter and skiing with anyone who would listen. I was hooked again from the get-go. What started out as a lark became the open door to many wonderful experiences.

With Gordon's encouragement, I started on the path toward certification at the end of my first season. Every PSIA event created new friendships, and with those came more reasons to give back and share with my fellow instructors. Options for involvement appeared in many different ways over the next couple of decades, but whether I was a leader or follower, participant or organizer, campaigner or skeptic, one element remained unchanged: I always have felt like part of the family and believed others cared and looked out for my well-being and success.

More than the tangibles are the intangibles that have come from sharing a few turns, enjoying some laughter, and getting to know so many people over the last three decades. Without the PSIA link, I would have missed out on meeting so many wonderful people. My great appreciation goes out to my friends and colleagues for challenging me to think, react, question, and look toward being a part of the solution, for helping me to become a better person and someone who searches for ways to help others be successful in their pursuit of the perfect turn.

Calvin Yamamoto
PSIA-NW Clinician and Examiner
Mission Ridge Ski and Snowboard Resort
Wenatchee, Washington



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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Professionalism: What Does it Mean to You?

By John Armstrong

We instructors hear the word "professionalism" on a regular basis. Despite the references to it during exams, in clinics and lessons, and even when asking snowsports school directors for a raise, you'd be hard-pressed to find within PSIA-AASI's written materials a code of conduct for instructors or even a definition of professionalism. There's no better time than the present to think about remedying this situation for our associations.

Many professions have formal codes that include guidelines of behavior, often calling for a high quality of service and a commitment to the ethical treatment and safety of their clients. Both PSIA and AASI have a variety of these kinds of statements scattered throughout the associations' literature: there's a "Responsibility Code" for mountain practices, and an emphasis on "safety, fun, and learning." Our association's manuals contain chapters on etiquette and best practices, but there is no clearly defined and formal professional code of conduct at this point.

Although it's probably a safe assumption that the vast majority of the membership shares a basic, integral code of professionalism, perhaps it is time that the membership collected its thoughts into a single statement. It's hard to live up to the promise of the associations as a professional snowsports teacher if the expectations of the job are unstated, unknown, or simply assumed.

All conversations must begin somewhere, so let me use this opportunity to get the ball rolling in print. Anyone who wants to chime in can take up the topic in the "Professionalism" thread I've started in PSIA-AASI's online Member Forum. (For members who'd like to get involved in the discussion—and I want to encourage everyone interested to do so—please log onto the PSIA-AASI member forum at www.thesnowpros.org).

When we think of a professional, we often consider *how* the work or performance is delivered at least as much as *what* is being delivered. We know that the way in which ski and snowboard teaching is done affects the outcome of the lesson tremendously. A lot of work in PSIA and AASI instructor development has focused on student-centered methodology, atmosphere, and experiences. In fact, PSIA has led the way for many ski-teaching nations in the world with its presentations on methodology at Interski since at least 1975.

The content of the *Core Concepts* manual illustrates the strength of our methodology. We have studied relationships, experiences, and learning, and have focused on such areas as knowing ourselves, being honest with ourselves about teaching, connecting with our students, and knowing who they are and how they prefer to learn. We have come to understand how emotions affect learning and have structured our lesson plans to make the most of these ideas. We have been concerned with developing trust, breaking the ice, and communicating expectations to our students in addition to interpreting behavior and getting the student involved in his or her lesson on a number of levels.

Ace Kvale

Our style of feedback reflects what we have learned about our students, and this information becomes meaningful and effective. In the end our focus on methodology has helped us develop lasting memories and meaningful experiences our students want to repeat time and time again. If they don't return to our school and our mountain, we'll be out of a job eventually. For these reasons we should incorporate the above aspects of our methodology as part of our code of professionalism. While it may be acceptable in other countries to teach skiing and snowboarding without asking instructors to embody these qualities, that's simply not acceptable in our associations.

When, in 1961, the founders of the Professional Ski Instructors of America formed and named our organization, they were making a clear statement about the quality of the teaching to be offered by its members to the skiing public. After all, as early as 1952, Bill Lash (one of PSIA's seven founders and PSIA's first president) opined that the very existence of skiing in the United States could well be dependent on quality personnel in its ski schools. Lash and his fellow founders—Jimmy Johnston, Paul Valar, Doug Pfeiffer, Don Rhinehart, Max Dercum, and Curt Chase—were concerned with the quality, safety, and consistency of the lesson experience for students who had begun to travel to different resorts around the country.

As I see it, those PSIA pioneers were already giving a lot of serious thought to what it meant to be a professional all those years ago. They were focused on service to others, developing entry requirements, forming systems of testing based on theory, problem-solving, and applying technical principles on the mountain. The fledgling profession of snowsports instruction demonstrated early on a culture of professionalism.

Basketball legend Julius Erving, a.k.a. "Dr. J.," once said that being a professional means "doing all the things you love to do on the days when you don't feel like doing them." While that's certainly true, I'd add that professionals who are also snowsports teachers need to be responsible, accountable, ethical, and have a well-developed sense of risk management. Such individuals are typically courteous, good listeners, and can actually be very entertaining—at least some of the time, if not the majority of the time. Indeed, professionals are known for their enthusiasm and pas-

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sion for their sport and the act of sharing it with others. When many or all of these characteristics are present, the professional instructor becomes not only a role model (or even a mentor), but one who—to borrow from PSIA-AASI's vision statement—is a source of inspiration for the mountain experience. In other words, a member of the associations not only practices what the profession does but what the *profession is.*

In PSIA-AASI "professionalism" signifies conduct and performance consistent with the principles of ski and snowboard teaching as demonstrated by an instructor's character, enthusiasm, competence, ethical conduct, service, and respect for the student. If we are to be considered professionals, we should be known for:

VISION

We will inspire a lifelong passion for the mountain experience in our students by creating enjoyable, positive learning experiences in a spirit of service to others.

SAFETY

We will know the hazards of the mountain and follow safe teaching and class-handling practices with our students. We will strive to never place our students in danger during the course of a lesson. We shall follow the intent and detail of "Your Responsibility Code" in every respect with our students.

METHODOLOGY

We will focus on forming lasting relationships and positive learning experiences with our students. We will work to understand our students, their emotions, learning styles, and their reasons for taking a lesson in the first place.

In addition, we will structure lessons that are fun and provide an accelerated learning environment by developing trust and confidence. We will present feedback in clear, positive, and meaningful language. We will strive to help students create lasting memories that will hopefully make them want to repeat their on-hill experiences again and again.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

We as instructors will need to practice personal mastery of our disciplines, and remain current in our educational and certification requirements. We will be knowledgeable in the most current PSIA-AASI national and division directions of technique and methodology.

SUMMARY

To my way of thinking, professionalism means exhibiting conduct and performance consistent with the principles of ski and snowboard teaching as demonstrated by an instructor's character, enthusiasm, competence, ethical conduct, service, and respect for the student, the mountain and the snowsports family.

What do you think? To share your perspective on this discussion, don't forget to visit the "Professionalism" thread on the PSIA-AASI Member Forum. I'll look forward to finding out what professionalism means to you. 32°

John Armstrong is the director of corporate training at California's Mammoth Mountain. He served as PSIA-AASI president and chairman of the board from 2000 to 2006.

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NEWS OF NOTE

PSIA-AASI Announces Staff Changes

With the New Year come a couple of new faces at the PSIA-AASI national office in Lakewood, Colorado. Earl Saline, PSIA member since 1992, has joined the national staff as education manager. Saline grew up in Seattle, Washington, but moved to Colorado in 2002. An AASI Snowboard Team member from 2000 to 2004, he holds the PSIA-AASI Level III certification in alpine, snowboard, and nordic. Together with fellow education manager Ben Roberts, the two oversee the collective education programs of PSIA-AASI.

Executive Director Mark Dorsey sees Saline's addition as one more support beam in the association's framework. "Earl's extraordinary resort background and broad association experience put PSIA-AASI in a strong position to grow and develop our educational programs," said Dorsey. "He and Ben bring years of industry leadership and enthusiasm to the team."

Jessie Halverson rejoins the staff of PSIA-AASI as the communication department's associate editor. Halverson worked for PSIA (and National Ski Patrol) for three years in the late 1990s before leaving to obtain a graduate degree. Her editorial experience includes a stint at the *Vail Daily* as well as several years as an advertising copywriter in northern Colorado.

"I'm delighted that Jessie has rejoined the PSIA-AASI staff," said Communications Director Wendy Schrupp. "She represents an invaluable blend of journalistic skill, snowsports savvy, and instinct for what it takes to make the association's communication strategies click."

Stu Campbell, 1942–2008

The snowsports community has lost a remarkable man whose ability to scribe elegant lines extended with ease from snow to paper. On December 4, 2008, author and former PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team member Stu Campbell lost a 20-year battle with cancer at his Vermont home. He was 65.

Campbell grew up skiing in Bennington, Vermont, and was a four-event ski racer (slalom, giant slalom, cross-country, and ski jumping) while a student at Middlebury College.

After graduating from Middlebury and obtaining his master's degree from the University of Vermont, Campbell taught English literature and coached skiing. He later settled in Stowe, Vermont, where he worked as technical director of the Sepp Ruschp Ski School. During the late 1970s, he moved from Stowe to Heavenly Valley, California, to serve as director of skier services. For more than a dozen seasons, Campbell oversaw Heavenly's ski school, other skier services, and an active race department.

Campbell's extraordinary grasp of the technical elements of skiing and ski instruction led him to positions within PSIA as a Demonstration Team (now the PSIA Alpine Team) member, co-chairman of the technical committee, and examiner with PSIA-E. Campbell also wrote for *SKI* magazine, where he was the technical and instruction editor from the mid-1970s until his death, penning everything from quick tips to feature articles. In addition, Campbell authored a number of ski instruction books, including *Ski with the Big Boys*, *The Way to Ski*, and *Good Things to Know about Gliding on Snow*.

In September, the Vermont Ski Museum awarded Campbell the first Paul Robbins Ski Journalism Award for "lifetime commitment to ski journalism with ethics, humor, and good taste." Upon receiving the honor, Campbell told the gathering at the museum to "get up on the mountain and make lots and lots and lots of turns. Every turn you make is good for the soul."

—submitted by Tim Petrick

Hot Not

Tight Base Layers. Tight enough anyway that they do not fall off. Check out the performance base layers on page 46.

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Shipping gear ahead of time. You can ship your skis or board for less than it costs to pay airline baggage fees. Check out FedEx, UPS, or the U.S. Postal Service for more info.

Three-digit airline baggage fees. Traveling round-trip with snowsports equipment could cost you upwards of $100!

from the jibber's pocket

Photos courtesy of David Olivier

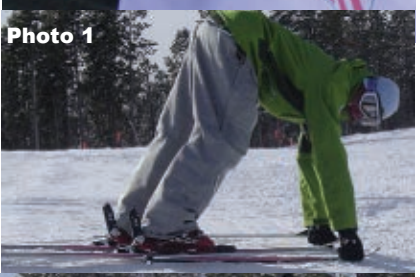


Photo 1


Photo 2

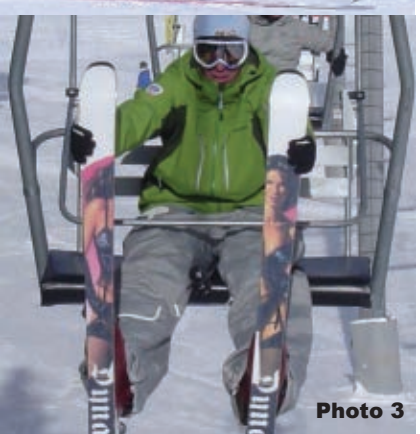


Photo 3


Photo 4

Welcome to the freestyle section of *32 Degrees*, where PSIA-AASI team members will dig in their pockets to help answer your questions about freestyle-inspired topics that are not normally covered in division or national clinics.

Let's start with a question from Clark Stewart in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, who writes: "Hey, Jibbers, how can I practice my grabs without falling on my face in the park?"

Well, Clark, you have obviously fallen on your face a few times to arrive at a question such as this. So let us begin by saying we hope you're okay. Getting down to business, we'd encourage you to start out with the first step of the Smart Style freestyle terrain initiative: Make a Plan. You need to figure out what grab you're trying to perform, what it looks like, what it feels like, and, finally, what happens to your body when you attempt to perform it.

Let's take a fun grab like the "truck driver." First, start low and slow by reaching down and making the grab while standing still (photo 1).

Next, play with a mobile-yet-simple grab by performing the grab with one half of your body—while the other half of your body keeps skiing, unaffected by the motion (photo 2). Doing this on both sides separately will give you an idea of what the move does to your body.

Finally, take it to the air, but not just any air. Look for controlled air, like the kind you get on the chairlift. That's right; practice your grabs on the chairlift (photo 3). You've got plenty of hang time. (Remember to be safe and put the comfort bar down.) From your nice cushy seat on the chair, you can work on your timing. Make sure you count 1-2-3 and then 3-2-1 for all the stages of the grab: 1) the jump or P.O.P. to get in the air, 2) the cannonball position (the basis for every grab), and 3) the grab, in this case, the truck driver. Then work back through the count to reach the landing posture.

After playing with the timing and chairlift grabs until you're comfortable, take it to the jumps (photo 4). Remember, the grab time is directly proportionate to the amount of hang time you have, so be ready for a quick grab and then let go. You can hang on longer with the more air you get.

Hope this helps. Stay safe and keep jibbing!

—The Jibbers

[If you have a question for The Jibbers, send it on in to: lineup@thesnowpros.org.]

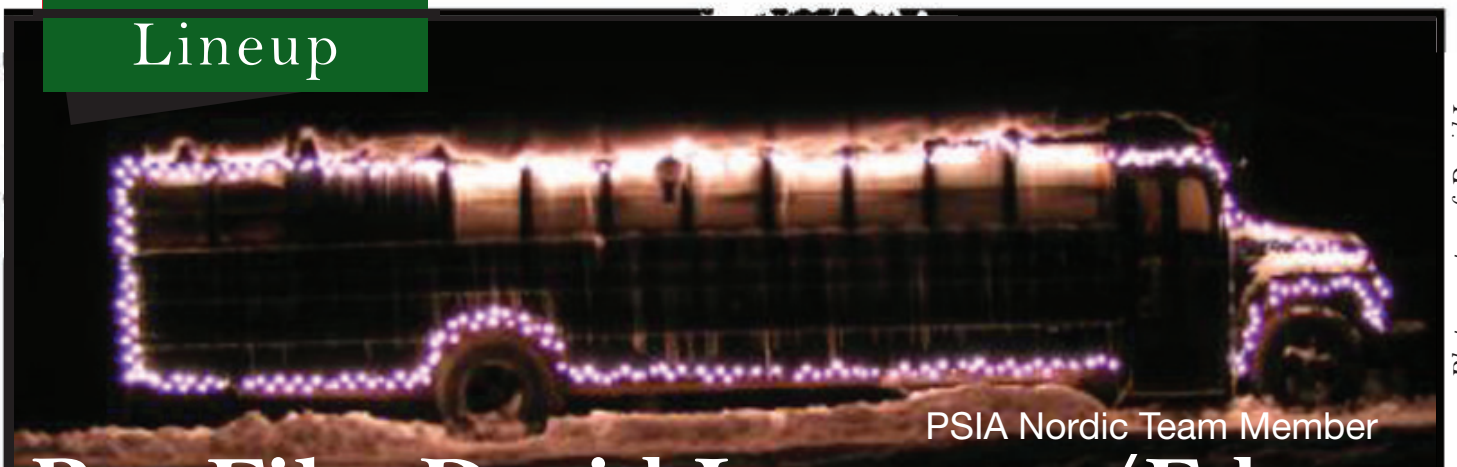
Photos courtesy of Rossignol

ROSSIGNOL

Location: France, but for your purposes, Park City, Utah
Years in the biz: 102
Website: www.rossignol.com
Team members: Nick Herrin, Dave Lyon, Josh Spoelstra, Scott McGee, Tom Marshall, Charlie MacArthur, David Lawrence, Ross Matlock
Why they rock: Rossignol defines mountain cred. Their "Pure Mountain Company" features products for snowsports enthusiasts in every category—alpine, nordic, and snowboard.
What you may not know: Rossignol has found its way to the podium in every major event, in every discipline, over the course of this season.

Photos courtesy of Rossignol

Top left: *Xavier Bertoni, X-Games Gold Superpipe;* Top Right: *Lindsey Vonn, 1st 2009 FIS World Championship Downhill Val d'Isere;* Bottom left: *Ralph Backstrom, 2nd North Face Masters of Snowboarding;* Bottom Right: *Virpi Kuitunen, 1st Tour de Ski Val Di Fiemme*



Photos courtesy of David Lawrence

PSIA Nordic Team Member

Pro File: David Lawrence/Edna

Editor's note: The blurb about David's Daily Driver in last issue's Lineup sparked some interest, so we figured we had better get the full scoop on Edna.

So, David, what inspired you to live in, of all things, a bus—a bus, for that matter, with a name?

The story of Edna starts with meeting Brooke. When I first met Brooke, it was on the river. After a few dates, I shared one of my deepest secrets: I wanted to live in a bus. She looked me dead in the eye and said, "Me too!"

We're pretty sure most dates would end with a remark like that, but go on . . . where did you find Edna?

We got her at a government surplus auction. I was trying to be cool and calm because it was my first live auction, and I told Brooke to do the same. But when I made the first bid, I felt her jumping up and down behind me, screaming, "We're going to buy a bus!" I told her to be cool, but she kept jumping and screaming. In the end, we won the bus for $1,500.

Is it drivable?

Yeah, we drive the bus, a 1986 International diesel, from Montana to Washington every fall before the weather gets bad. She runs great, starts easy, and loves to stretch her legs on the open road. But we only drive her twice a year, once in the spring to move to Montana, and then again in the fall to move back to Washington.

How did you go about making it livable?

We spent that first fall ripping out seats, putting up cedar walls, laying the floor, and installing a birch-faced ceiling. Then we moved the bus to Winthrop, Washington, where we teach cross-country skiing. We spent the first winter cold and dirty. We didn't have lights, refrigeration, or dressers. We had a wood stove for heat, but we only had green wood to burn. Boiling water took hours.

So, you really do live there in the winter?

The first winter was tough, but the next summer we installed a kitchen, a refrigerator, dresser, and drawers. The following winter was easier; we learned how to gather dry wood in the fall and started to thrive in our 200 square feet of comfort. We also learned the difference between what we want and what we need.

And plumbing is not one of those things?

We never did install indoor plumping. Since the bus is 100 percent snowed-in during the winter, we realized we couldn't move the bus to empty the wastewater tanks. Instead, for two years we used an old outhouse from the '70s, complete with a half moon. The following winter we upgraded; now we use a rented portable toilet during the winter. It's still cold, but it's a lot closer to the bus than the long walk to the outhouse.

What's the summer like?

The living is easy. We run a rafting company in Montana called Pangaea River Rafting, where we built an office with electricity, running water, and a complete bathroom. Instead of poaching showers at the local resorts like we do in winter, we use our own shower in the Pangaea office. And instead of cleaning dishes with a teapot, we actually get to use a sink with a faucet.

Just in case people aren't already floored by the fact that you live in a bus, tell us what it's like now that you have a new addition to your family.

After two months of living in the bus with a 3-month-old child during a cold, Cascade Mountain winter, with our curtains frozen to the windows and our buns frozen to the outhouse seat, I can officially say that raising a baby in a bus is awesome! 32°

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MOD.ULA.TION

bollé

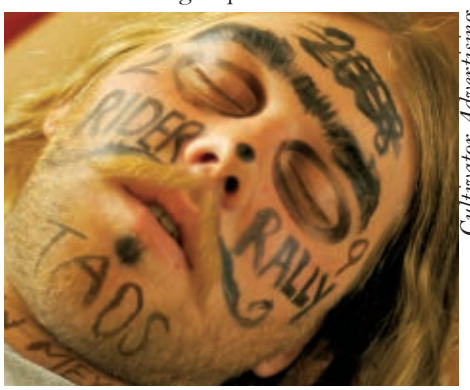
SUNNY, CLOUDY, SHADY, SUNNY: LIGHT CONDITIONS CHANGE, MODULATOR LENSES ADJUST ACCORDINGLY. THE NOVA.

ROAD TRIP WORTH TAKING:

Rider Rally
March 28–April 2,
Taos, NM

Dude-bro, it's gonna be so sick to show Taos what they've been missing! As if it weren't already sweet enough that AASI members have this rad event every spring, this year it's being held at Taos—which, until March 2008, was off-limits to snowboarders.

For five days, come and hang with the AASI crew for clinics, parties, and tons of freeriding on this boarder-undiscovered territory. Be sure to visit www.thesnowpros.org for more information and to sign up.



Cultivator Advertising

Reason to get excited. . .

And we mean really, really, really excited, because PSIA-AASI has a new online home! If you haven't already paid a visit to our new cyber digs, check out www.thesnowpros.org for all things ski and snowboard instruction.

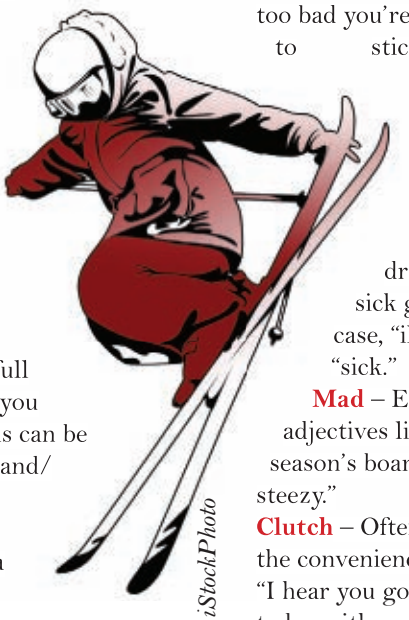
Browse discipline-specific information, bone up on cert standards, read *32 Degrees* via a digitized flipbook, manage your account, access pro offers, shop the *Accessories Catalog*, get the latest industry news and more . . . just check it out for yourself!

B R O C A B

Brocab is short for brocabulary, or bro vocabulary. To those of you less bro'd out, as they say, than others, brocab refers to those terms frequently used between bros, or pals, even gals—usually younger than 25. (Though, in a mountain town, no age limit applies.)

Even the most novice brocab linguist can identify bros by their typical salutation, "Dude" or "Bro." What follows is often brocabulistic, leaving the less linguistic a bit confused.

Here, as promised in the winter 2009 issue of *32 Degrees*, is your clue-in to basic grom-speak (synonym for brocab), so when someone calls you "baller," you can know that it's okay.



iStockPhoto

Grom – If you teach kids you have classes full of them every day. If you don't teach kids, groms can be best defined as young and/or inexperienced individuals, marked by an affinity for slang and a style of dressing and behaving that you may find perplexing.

Baller – One who exhibits an attitude of confidence and conviction and generally makes everything they do look really cool. "What do you think of our instructor?" "Man, he's so baller." Or, if you really like something, you may refer to it as "baller." "Did you check out the new website, www.thesnowpros.org, yet? It's totally baller, bro."

Steeze – Can be used to indicate your "thing," as in "Snowblading is totally my steeze." Drop the last "e" and add a "y" and you've got yourself one steezy adjective. "Her snowblading style is super steezy."

Stoke – This indicates your enthusiasm for something. Your stoke may also be infused, as in "*32 Degrees* infuses your stoke for snowsports."

iStockPhoto

Dope – No, we're not talking about dope as a noun; this kind of "dope" is an adjective used to describe something that's re- ally, really cool. "Dude, that cap is so dope. Where'd you pick that up?"

Sick – Does not mean "ill" (although the terms can be used interchangeably in brocab context). Used as an adjective to describe something spectacular. "That line looks so sick (ill), dude." "Yeah, too bad you're not baller enough to stick it."

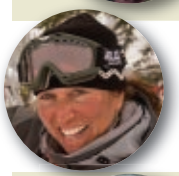
Sick gnar – When "sick" just isn't enough to describe that line, replace with "sick gnar." "The line I'm dropping is totally sick gnar." Note: In this case, "ill" cannot replace "sick."

Mad – Elevates the status of adjectives like "steezy." "This season's board graphics are mad steezy."

Clutch – Often used to emphasize the convenience of something. "I hear you got some extra help today with your lesson." "Totally, bro. Having an assistant is so clutch when you've got a dozen kids under age 10."

Rad – This term has been around longer than most of the people who use it. If all else fails, and you're not sure if something's sick, clutch, or baller, go with "rad." "Little Johnny made some rad turns today."

LOCKER ROOM TALK

	Member since:	Skiing/Riding on:	I never head to a resort without my:	Après ski drink	If I'm not skiing or riding, I'm. . .
 **Megan Harvey** Aspen Highlands Alpine Examiner and former PSIA Alpine Team Member	1989	Blizzard 8.7 and Blizzard G Force Sonic	Ski boots. I take them carry-on.	Cranberry juice with a lime	. . . taking photographs and spending time with my dogs.
 **Eric Sheckleton** PSIA-AASI Board of Directors' Executive Vice President	1994	Burton Custom Wide	 Gerber (the tool, not the baby food)	Whatever beer is on the table (or the cheapest if I am buying)	. . . doing something fun with the family.
 **Stacey Gerrish** Beaver Creek Snowsports School Training Manager	1990	Atomic — either slalom or Snoop Daddy	Boots, skis, and heated boot bag filled with hat, gloves, goggles, neck gaitер, and a bit of cash.	 Pomegranate martini	. . . dreaming about skiing.
 **Fili Islas** Steamboat Ski & Snowboard School Alpine Instructor, Level II	2001	 Nordica Jet Fuel or Speedmachine Mach 3	Ski boots is the obvious answer, but pain pills, too!	Water	. . . thinking about skiing or watching a ski training video. I'm sick.

Sporting Assumptions Make Perfect Practice

Text by RON SHEPARD

An engineer, a swimmer, a golfer who bowls, a fly-fisherman, a mountain biker, and a mother take a lesson one day. Their instructor says, "Hi, I'll be your instructor for the day. Tell me a bit about yourself and what you like to do . . ."

That sounds like the lead-in to a joke, but the truth is, instructors who are serious about customizing lessons to their students' individual learning preferences will find valuable cues in the hobbies and diversions of their guests. We often ask "What else do you enjoy doing?" as a means for building rapport, but what do we do with the information? Creative instructors relate the movements of skiing to the practiced sport or activity. If there is artistry in lessons that reference (and transfer) fine motor skills from sport to sport, there is genius in applying the nature of a pastime to the process of a lesson.

So you interview your guests by way of introduction, and somewhere along the way you make a few assumptions about the individuals in your group. For example, if you were asked to stereotype an engineer, besides visualizing the pocket protector full of pens, what would you immediately suppose? That he or she would be analytical, sequence-oriented, highly technical in discussions? How about a road biker? What information do you assume when you teach cyclists? You might relate the motion of pedaling to skiing, and liken the "body language" in biking to balancing movements skiers make on the snow. In fact, you can easily envision, relate, and transfer skills from outside activities to skiing, but a road biker is saying more about himself than simply, "I am reasonably fit (and I shave my legs)."

Road riders tend to rejoice in the flow and continuity of their rides. They immerse themselves in the cadence of spinning pedals, the ribbon of the road, long, inspired grinds and longer straightaways. Some road bikers retreat into a trance-like inner dialog, while others converse with fellow riders, putting their pedaling efforts on autopilot. Neither type actually focuses on the "what" or "how" of pedaling, which is as automatic as breathing. Bikers may have their own name for being in "the zone"—similar to the "runner's high" experience—just as people who swim laps use continuous, cyclical rhythms to transport themselves into a rushing, singular existence.

What They're Telling You

Students' descriptions of their pastimes (and what they like about them) can help you make inferences about their personalities, learning, and practice preferences. The six students mentioned in the opening scenario help illustrate this concept. Take the fly-fisherman, for example. These anglers embrace the ritual of their sport. They enjoy connecting with nature, and complex technology is an affront to the artistry of their pursuit. You can see the simplistic beauty of fly-fishing, from the knowing way these anglers scout locations to the skillful, flowing casts that define the sport. Relating the soft precision of snowsports skill blends to the mastery of fly-fishing, you can note the importance of connecting movements and flow in both activities, and you can respect the fly-fisherman's own sense of performance.

The fisherman still experiences one cast at a time, during which each attempt delivers instant, useful, and largely intrinsic feedback: Either the fly landed where it should have, or it did not. It landed hard, or it landed gently. The swimmer or biker, on the other hand, depends upon the repetition of his or her actions for feedback and outcome, and coaches refer to the effort and result of a set, rather than a single cast, swing, or throw.

In another example, the golfer might see each turn as an independent performance. A golfer can look behind him- or herself after each swing at the driving range and ask, "How was that?" The coach or instructor can then offer encouragement or a slight adjustment. Internally, the golfer expects that a change in grip or stance will have a direct and noticeable effect on the next swing or shot. Golfers know they can select a club to best fit

Photos by iStockPhoto. Photo montage by Nikki Selene Lamagna

the occasion, and they appreciate tactics and the chance to pre-assess a situation, literally planning their attack or mapping their course.

Similarly, bowlers may experience repeated, singular effort, but they lack the golfer's set of tools to vary each shot. The golfer selects a club; the bowler makes physiological adjustments to get a strike or turn a split into a spare. The golfer may benefit from hearing "Short-radius turns will work best here," whereas the bowler may respond to "You'll want to use quicker actions as you release, guide, and edge your skis." I don't bowl, but I know that bowlers experience and imprint cause and effect. I can guess that a bowler will respond to actions, rather than "turns." Thus, "a little more spin" or "a touch less follow-through" may be phrases that will strike a chord with a bowler. Both the golfer and the bowler are results-oriented, and expect to register change in concrete ways just as they experience a birdie or a strike. Both also know that change takes time, and a great shot on one hole or perfect roll on one frame does not guarantee one on the next.

I learned all of this on the gondola at Utah's Snowbasin Resort as those six students described their "other" activities and what they enjoy about these pursuits. These six were the unwitting cast of the yet-unwritten joke, and the students who helped me to see a pattern in their preferences. Threaded into the background of the conversation, I heard teaching concepts terms echoing in my mind—concurrent versus terminal, extrinsic versus intrinsic. I began to understand that these terms represent more than just forms of providing feedback; they describe preferences for receiving it as well. (For greater detail on types of feedback, see the PSIA-AASI *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors* manual.)

The mountain biker said she bikes with her dog. She likes the strategy of mountain biking—where every dip, corner, boulder, and log present a fresh problem to overcome. She enjoys watching her dog play alongside, demonstrating its own athleticism on the trail. She finds pleasure in ending up sweaty and exhausted, although she said she doesn't notice fatigue while on the trail. This conversation with the mountain biker helped define the practice sessions for the lesson.

How to Use What You Hear

I decided to take the mountain biker (with the group in tow) on an adventure, through a variety of terrain. We sought out bumps, dips, and drop-offs. Our rhythm sections varied, with short turns leading to long, sweeping arcs. We sensed that our skis were tools we rode, but also that rode beneath us, simultaneously connected and distinct. When we finally stopped, panting, I asked her, "Is that like mountain biking to you?" "Exactly," she said, grinning, "just like mountain biking."

As a group, we looked for practice scenarios that drew upon the preferences of one another. The swimmer and road biker preferred extended practice sessions, with few or no stops, while the golfer (who also bowls) predictably sought feedback between turns, and did not mind stopping immediately if a tweak or enhancement needed to be addressed. Equally predictable was that the golfer wanted his feedback while stationary, not in the midst of a turn. "During the turn," he said, "I'm listening to my own voice interpret what you just told me to do."

The road bicyclist and swimmer mentioned their own preferences for feedback. Swimmers, like golfers, may prefer to listen to an inner voice repeating what they heard, rather than hear their coach speaking alongside. On the other hand, the bicyclist is often social in his rides, and can chat, absorb, and apply his feedback while in motion.

In the course of this discussion, the non-athlete of the group suddenly lit up and said, "Me, too! I totally can talk and act at the same time; that's me we're describing!" It came to light that our "just a mom" was actually a hiking, snowshoeing, former dancing, karate-chopping mother of three. She enjoys activities that are social, continual, and prolonged, but not competitive. We had identified her preferred form of practice. Further, we found that karate gave her a voice, a growl, and a "Hiyah!" to employ when fear got in the way and she needed to press ahead. We used this voice throughout the day.

Close Is Good Enough

Your assumptions about the nature of any particular activity do not require that you experience the activity first-hand, only that you can relate to the activity and adapt its flow to your lessons. You may not always be dead-on; I golf, for instance, but I also water ski and mountain bike. I prefer to digest extrinsic feedback, and then evaluate intrinsic feedback. I want to know what to do *before* the situation, learn what I did *after* the situation, but hear nothing other than my own inner dialog *while* I'm doing it.

My practice style is identifiable right there: I truly can't hear instruction in the heat of the action. My eyes are on the next buoy, transition, or obstacle, and I want feedback on the whole picture, rather than on my every turn. For the record, I also will go back and try it again, and again, until I clear the obstruction. But you could probably guess that about me.

In making assumptions, you may not always get it right, but you get closer. Student-centered teaching demands that you tailor your lessons not just to the "seer," the "thinker," and the "watcher-doer," but to the mode, rhythm, and flow of each student's preferred form of practice (See "Dissecting the Sports," page 23). You can start by analyzing the other sports you participate in to determine how the elements of each influence the way you like to ski or ride. By drawing connections between snowsports and the other pursuits and interests that help make each person unique, you'll be able to come up with the uniquely appropriate focal points that lead to personal breakthroughs.

Ron Shepard is the snowsports director at Michigan's Crystal Mountain Resort. He is a PSIA-certified Level III instructor and examiner.

Dissecting the Sports

To heighten your awareness of sports assumptions, spend some time analyzing other sports and activities, and envision how they are learned, practiced, and performed. Don't be afraid to get it wrong: The exercise is in the exploration, the outcome in heightened awareness. Just envision a sport and its movements—and think about how that relates to skiing.

Be sure to determine whether your students prefer to practice their sport or simply play it; otherwise you may end up totally missing their style. For instance, in the midst of a game, lacrosse and hockey players expect constant action and maintain vigilant awareness of their surroundings. In practice, though, they may just repeat shot after shot from one location on the field or rink. Sports such as basketball or soccer keep moving until something interrupts the action, e.g., a goal (which, in a skiing context, could relate to positive feedback at the bottom of a mogul run) or a time-out (in a ski lesson, perhaps a clarification, adjustment, or even a fall). As a snowsports instructor, you can start with basic assumptions about virtually any activity, so long as you pay attention to each student's individual needs and then adjust accordingly.

BASKETBALL:
A basketball player expects to move continually, and to be able to see, plan, and execute while moving. Since basketball is a team sport, and players frequently "call the ball," you could logically assume that a basketball player hears cues while moving, and senses the instructor's location and actions as they occur before him or her. You may ski along with a basketball player and give indicators such as "more," "earlier," or "rounder," cues that relate to topics discussed between practice sessions. Rather than the "follow me" directive, a basketball player may prefer that you occasionally flow into and out of his or her line of site, providing a visual cue and then permitting individual performance.

SOCCER:
Like basketball, soccer requires the player to make sense of both internal and external information. Players may compartmentalize techniques and tactics more, as a soccer player's zones are more clearly defined. Both soccer players and basketball players expect continual movement with varied levels of intensity. These athletes may want to ski over a transition rather than stop, look, plan, and execute.

TENNIS:
Tennis players love ball machines like batters love cages. The idea of repeating the same sequence appeals to most tennis players, so an entire lesson of short, round turns is within the realm of possibility, followed by another lesson focusing solely on race starts, over and over and over again.

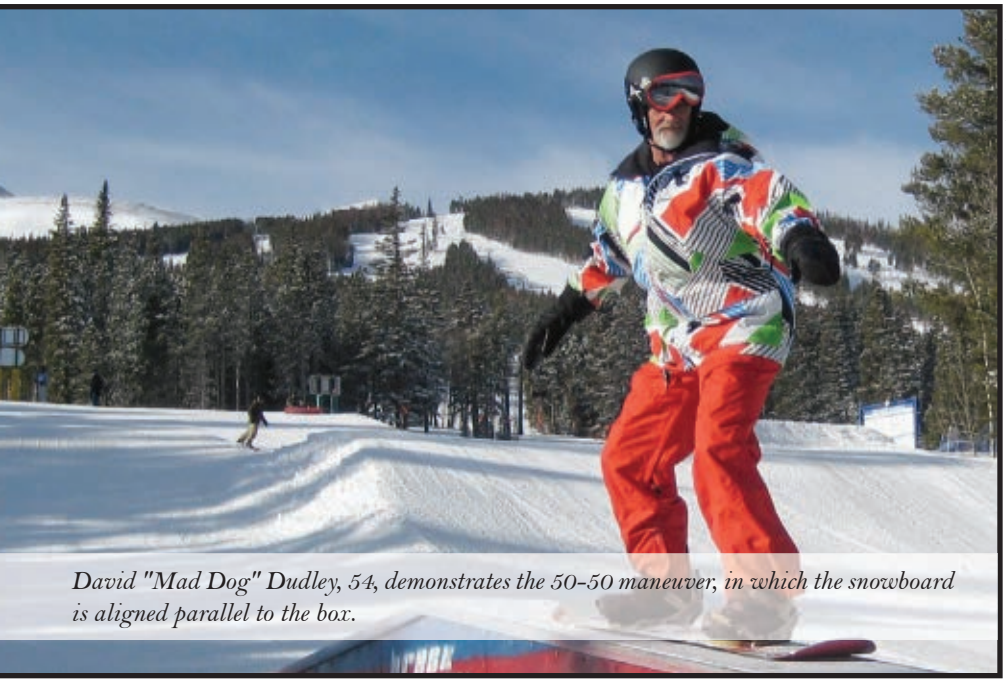
POOL:
Imagine a student who understands that each "shot" is both an individual performance and a set-up for the next. Pool players sense cause and effect, as well as the nuances that affect an outcome. To discuss skiing with a pool player, you might isolate specific movements, and then practice them as individual performances, but the pool player is still going to hear and expect you to say "so that you can . . ." as a supplement to the information.

FOOTBALL:
Football players expect a plan, and are going to act based upon a combination of 1) actions and directions that were described before execution, and 2) events and input that could interfere with or interrupt the performance. Avoid talking alongside a skiing football player since he's already reciting the play in his mind, sensing the factors that will affect the outcome, and adjusting accordingly.

— Ron Shepard

50-50 OVER 50: WHY SHOULD KIDS HAVE ALL THE FUN?

Text by ERICA MARCINIEC



Erica Marciniec

David "Mad Dog" Dudley, 54, demonstrates the 50-50 maneuver, in which the snowboard is aligned parallel to the box.

One of the first tricks a rider might learn to do on a box, a **50-50** involves sliding straight down the length of the feature with the board or skis aligned parallel to it.

The slogan "Trix are for kids" might sell cereal, but it isn't something 64-year-old snowboard instructor Chuck Janisse plans to apply to his riding anytime soon.

Janisse slid into the spotlight during a freestyle clinic last year at Vermont's Killington Resort when he jumped on a funbox, executed a flawless frontside boardslide, and stomped the landing like it was nothing. A motley crew of snowboard instructors, we ranged in age from 18 to 64 and had anywhere from 2 years to 25 years of experience in the sport, counting among us several "sick" park riders as well as timid newbies. And Chuck had just upped the ante for us all.

"For some reason I have this facility with rails," says the sexagenarian. After rekindling an old passion and becoming a snowboard instructor two years ago, he signed up for PSIA-AASI Eastern Division's "Old Farts Park and Pipe Clinic," which has since been renamed to the more politically correct "Low Key It." In the capable hands of AASI clinicians, he was surprised at how easily park skills came to him.

For Janisse, a 50-50 is like…well… child's play—and his success is far from an anomaly. In fact, he joins a growing number of "grays on trays" who rip in the park—and who might take exception to being singled out because they're over 50—an age which, incidentally, I chose solely because of how well it goes with the title of this article.

Originally a derogatory name used to refer to adult snowboarders as young as 20 years old, the term "grays on trays" has since been repurposed as a title of pride, according to the website www.GraysOnTrays.com, which touts itself as an "online resource for adult snowboarders and adults who are interested in riding, whether novice or advanced." The Grays on Trays website offers a sense of community, and, much to its credit, encourages riders to take lessons (and includes a shout-out to AASI and PSIA). The site uses 30 as its low-end age cutoff, in part because of the Baby Boomer slogan, "Don't trust anyone

In a boardslide, the rider slides the length of the feature with the board or skis aligned perpendicular to it. In a frontside boardslide the rider's body faces up the hill; in a backside boardslide the rider's body faces down the hill.

over 30." Ageism dates back a long time, apparently—and by this definition, at 34 years old, I'm gray too!

FREESTYLE IS FUN

So why attract "older" guests to take a lesson—a freestyle lesson, specifically? For Janisse, who was busy investigating how to set up a homemade rail in his backyard the last time we spoke, the answer may be as simple as having some fun.

"A lot of people think that freestyle is something they can't do; that it's out of their league; that if you're over 23 they won't let you in a terrain park or something," Janisse says. However, he points out that as more and more older people are getting into it, they might find that they "enjoy doing some of these things—because they really are a lot of fun."

"Age is in the mind, it's not in the body," says AASI Snowboard Team member Dave Lynch, who ran the Old Farts clinics during the event's first two years. "If you want to learn something and learn it safely, there's a way to do it. Those clinics were all about taking such small steps that you couldn't fail; you have a 100-percent success rate and you can move on from there." One of his fondest memories was teaching a 62-year-old who had never jumped before to do a shifty over a 4-foot table. "He was ecstatic," Lynch says.

TAKING BACK THE MOUNTAIN

According to the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA) 2008 National Demographic Study, the proportion of ski area visits by skiers and riders age 45 and over has grown substantially during the past 10 years. Among 55 to 64 year olds, the proportion of visitors has doubled since the 1997–98 season.

Instructors, industry leaders, and those who started snowboarding in the sport's early years can be counted among the growing number of grays on trays. As we get older, we're bound to see increasing numbers of "mature" park riders, with skill levels ranging from first-timers to experts. For this reason, there are also higher-level lessons to be taught to older snowboarders—riders who want to hone their skills to be competitive in the United States of America Snowboard Association's Legend (40–49), Kahuna (50–59) or Methuselah (60+) age divisions, for example.

DO IT FOR THE KIDS

When asked how common it is to see older generations in the park, a young rider at Colorado's Breckenridge Resort replied that he often sees "45-year-old dads hitting the features with their kids." On another informal chairlift interview, a 42-year-old dad, whose first snowboard was a Snurfer, talked about "running block" for his son in the park—in other words, making sure both his son and other riders practice park safety by waiting their turn to hit the various features.

The comments are consistent with an observation the NSAA demographic report for 2008 calls the "three-generation phenomenon," in which older skiers and riders continue to take part in snowsports alongside "persons young enough to be their children and grandchildren." Since knowing how to navigate a park safely is a skill in and of itself, it's one that is worthy of understanding by all age levels—particularly if they will be riding there together.

"If older generations are safe in the park, they are more likely to introduce their kids and grandkids to it; it can

David "Mad Dog" Dudley — Chuck Janisse

Erica Marciniec — *Forrest Baker*

only help the sport in the long run," says AASI team member Lynch, who believes that park enthusiasts stand to benefit from such multi-generational relationships. "If a grandfather is pulling for a better park, then his voice is heard louder than an 18-year-old's would be," he says.


Erica Marciniec

Mad Dog turns it sideways and nose-slides the kink box.

GROUP LIKE MINDS TOGETHER

So how do we cater freestyle lessons to the wide range of learners encompassed by the term grays on trays?

According to Lynch, there's something to be said for homogenous groups wherein the participants share something in common with one another. It's why women's programs work, and why we usually teach children separately from adults. In homogenous groups, it's easier to tailor instruction to address the developmental characteristics of different age groups and genders.

These characteristics are outlined in PSIA-AASI's CAP model, which divides age and gender-specific attributes into cognitive (C), affective (A), and physical (P) realms.

On the cognitive side of the CAP model, the news is good for older adults, at least according to "Understanding Senior Skiers: Developmental Intelligence and the Senior Skier," an article by Peggy Connor in PSIA-AASI Western Division's Fall 2008 issue of *The Edge* newsletter. Connor cites research from Dr. Gene Cohen's book, *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*, which shows that developmental intelligence, defined as the "maturing of cognition, emotional intelligence, judgment, social skills, life experience and consciousness," improves with age. That would suggest that senior riders are uniquely suited to learning new tricks!

AASI's *Snowboard Instructor's Guide* states that "groups of seniors often enjoy the social aspects of riding, [so] encouraging this will keep them involved in learning and continuing with the sport." This is an example of an affective characteristic—and arguably the one at the heart of the Old Farts/Low Key It clinics' success.

"It's a better environment to work in—with peers—versus being intimidated by 16-year-olds overdoing it," Lynch explains. "It was really interesting to have these old guys just being a bunch of old guys together. A couple of the guys actually made up Old Farts T-shirts and mailed them around, they were so stoked on it."

HAVE A 'SESSION'

While homogenous groups can help provide a safe and comfortable learning environment, it is often the case that freestyle clinics and lessons attract a wide range of ages and ability levels. By establishing a team atmosphere and using the CAP model to differentiate instruction for individual students, an instructor can nonetheless create a successful experience for all. "Students can be working on different skills while riding the same terrain feature," says AASI Snowboard Team member Gregg Davis. "The lesson can become a 'session' where people of different abilities can cheer each other on."

In considering the physical side of the CAP model, it's important to note that while muscle strength and bone density tend to decrease with age, the human body nonetheless responds remarkably well to regular exercise, a good diet, and a healthy attitude. As with any student, a careful assessment of the person's physical condition helps us decide where to start the lesson—with flatland freestyle exercises on green runs, for example, or by heading straight to the park. If the client has an injury or other preexisting condition, pick an exercise that won't exacerbate it. How athletic he or she is—and how the individual is feeling that day—will determine the lesson's pace.


Erica Marciniec

Mad Dog rides the battleship rail in Breckenridge's El Dorado Park.

OLLIE OVER MENTAL BARRIERS

AASI Snowboard Team member Josh Spoelstra notes that instructors and clinicians may first need to help older

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students get over a cognitive barrier—that "I can't" notion—by inspiring them to realize "that their bodies can do it even if their minds don't want to." Spoelstra says that one way to do this is to "balance the fun factor with the professional factor that older adults often look for in a lesson or clinic by building trust and establishing a safe learning environment.

"One of the things I like to do to get people confident about their riding is to ask them to describe one of the best days they had on the hill," he continues. "Sometimes you can bring them back to their heyday and what it felt like. Bringing the client into that positive mental attitude allows the confidence to build so they are able to progress."

Nina Michel, snowboard training supervisor at Breckenridge Resort, describes a similar cognitive barrier among women. "Adult female snowboarders sometimes feel like freestyle is outside their realm of possibility because the only images they see are from the Winter X Games or someone going huge," she says. "They don't see the small parks, so they think freestyle is not for them."

Like Lynch, Michel has seen great results from grouping like minds together. "Women-specific freestyle clinics and/or events are great environments for introducing 'old ladies' to the park," she says. Such clinics, which are often taught *by* women *for* women, "become highly supportive environments that by their nature acknowledge, accept, and move beyond the underlying notions of what we should or should not be doing . . . and the fear and risk that accompany freestyle."

Michel, who recently celebrated her 40th birthday, has been snowboarding since 1994. She started riding in parks a few years ago after friends—and the growing demand for freestyle lessons in the industry—inspired her to give it a try. Since then, she has mastered a variety of box tricks, not to mention 25-foot table jumps, although she's toned it down a little since becoming a mom. "Priorities change," she explains. "It's a personal choice; you have to set your own limits."

HELP STUDENTS SET LIMITS

The idea of setting one's own limits is a simple but critical one. In fact, many adventure sports programs promote "Challenge by Choice" (an experiential learning concept developed by Massachusetts-based Project Adventure, Inc.) as a guiding principle. As Michel explains, "We teach the skills and reinforce to our students that they have the skills, but they pick the level of the challenge. It's not a dare or a choice by us as instructors as to what they are ready for; it's up to the student." That said, she does not hesitate to recommend that adult female riders give freestyle a try if they haven't already. "It's fun," she says, smiling.

Instructor David "Mad Dog" Dudley, also from Breckenridge, has a 64-year-old client who can ride a 12-foot halfpipe and 50-50 a box thanks to his careful coaching. For his teaching progression on the box, Dudley starts with one-foot-out exercises on the flats before using a "hands-on" approach on the box itself. In this way, he makes sure his client is relaxed and gets a feel for the maneuver before actually trying it by himself.

"I use the ATML Model™ in every park lesson," says Dudley, who next demonstrates each part of the task himself—using just enough speed in the approach (A) for a good takeoff (T), riding onto the box with a flat board, doing the 50-50 maneuver (M), and then absorbing the landing (L) as he comes off the end. When it's the student's turn, he lines him or her up on the approach and sends the individual slowly across. Dudley himself is 54, a transplant from Ohio who learned to snowboard at age 46 and is now an AASI-certified Level II instructor. Even though his daughter tells him he's crazy and that it's time to move back to Ohio, Dudley is hooked on the sport and making sure other people get hooked on it as well. Dudley reminds us that breaking the goal into small, accomplishable tasks helps to ensure a client's safety while building the confidence that he or she needs to be successful.

SAFETY IS THE FIRST PRIORITY

Obviously, tackling a jump or rail is not without its risks. "Shin guards, impact shorts, and helmets are highly recommended for 'old farts' in terrain parks," Janisse says. It's probably good advice for anybody, really.

Since safety is the order of the day, make sure students are well versed in park and pipe etiquette. Coach them on

Photos 1 and 2: Chuck Janisse, 64, knows that when you're sliding a rail, it's wise to stay on your trajectory. If it throws you off the feature early, go with it and plot a safe landing. You can hit the rail again next time. • Photos 3 and 4: Janisse conquers the rainbow box in Timberline Park at Killington, Vermont.

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David "Mad Dog" Dudley started snowboarding at age 46. Now 54, he's an avid freestyle enthusiast and Level II-certified snowboard instructor at Breckenridge Resort in Colorado.

Erica Marciniec

the wisdom of NSAA's Smart Style tips (outlined on signage at terrain parks and available online at www.nsaa.org/nsaa/safety/smart-style). A related online resource for park pointers is the *Freestyle Terrain User's Guide* found at www.terrainparksafety.org.

If you're an older instructor just learning to spread your freestyle wings, you might want to ease into it by finding a less-than-crowded park where you can learn at your own pace or by simulating a simple box in the comfort of your own backyard by turning a snowboard upside down and riding the flat base of it.

Introductory freestyle programs are offered at the division level by PSIA-AASI as well as by individual resorts as a prerequisite for bringing clients into the park. To learn freestyle from the book, pick up the PSIA-AASI *Park and Pipe Instructor's Guide*; there's even a glossary so you can brush up on the lingo. Before you know it, you might find yourself teaching flat spins or ollies to fill up those final 10 minutes of a lesson, opening a new door of interest and excitement for any number of clients.

AGE IS IN THE MIND

In his book, *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, mind/body medicine pioneer Deepak Chopra presents the idea that to experience youthful longevity well into our adult years, we need to reject the belief system that our bodies must grow old and frail and instead accept a new paradigm that age truly is in the mind.

If there's anyone who exemplifies this belief, it is riders like Chuck Janisse, David "Mad Dog" Dudley, and all the quote-unquote "grays on trays" who are out there killing it in the park alongside the 16-year-olds, thereby pushing the boundaries of what we—and they—believe to be possible.

An AASI-certified Level III snowboard instructor (and PSIA Level I-certified ski instructor), Erica Marciniec has worked at resorts in both the Eastern and Western divisions of PSIA-AASI. After spending the 2007–08 season at her home mountain of Killington, Vermont, she has moved west once more and is now teaching full-time at Breckenridge Resort in Colorado.


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Double H Ranch Camp Shares the Winter Magic

by LINDA T. SMITH

Jim Smith

Double H volunteer instructors help a student negotiate one of the area's two runs.

While film buffs around the world mourn the September 2008 death of acting legend Paul Newman, so too does the adaptive snowsports community—for reasons his other fans might not be aware of.

In his life beyond the silver screen, Newman was not a skier but a race car driver who loved adventure and attributed his successes to the benevolence of luck in his life. In gratitude for this luck, he committed himself to creating memorable and adventurous experiences for children, especially those to whom life had been less kind. And so, in 1988, he founded The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, the first in what is now the world's largest family of camps for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses. Double H Ranch, the second camp in the 11-member Hole in the Wall Association of Camps, is the only one that provides children with the opportunity to experience the magic of snow.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Seventeen years ago Charles R. Wood, an upstate New York entrepreneur and philanthropist, discovered a defunct dude ranch in the Adirondacks. Sensing that it would be a fitting venue for a camp similar to the original Hole in the Wall Camp that Newman founded in Connecticut, Wood persuaded the actor to help fund the project, which came to be called the Double H Ranch. (The ranch gets its name from an H-shaped tree on the

Courtesy of Double H Ranch

Actor and Double H Ranch co-founder Paul Newman.

property; the "Double H" represents "health and happiness.")

Five years later, Wood found himself at the base of the Ranch's overgrown mountain—barely discernable as a one-time ski hill, the only real giveaway being a decrepit two-person chairlift off to one side. Next to Wood stood Gwen Allard, executive director of the PSIA-Eastern Educational Foundation and founder of the Adaptive Sports Foundation in Windham, New York, to whom he posed a simple question: "Is this thing worth refurbishing?" Allard took one look at the general lay of the land and responded, "You probably have one of the best adaptive teaching slopes in the Northeast."

This was all Wood had to hear. His passion was building, promoting progress, and creating a better experience for the Double H kids. Numerous supporters, including the Eastern Ski Writers Association, National Ski Areas Association owners and operators, and ski industry manufacturers, jumped on board and together contributed more than $300,000 worth of in-kind gifts and services to ready the mountain. Today, the winter program gives children an opportunity to take advantage of their Adirondack environment and makes the Ranch a year-round destination.

On Saturdays and Sundays through the end of March, the drone of the chairlift is background noise to the hoots and hollers of thrill, achievement, and encouragement from 30 students and an equal amount of volunteer instructors and National Ski Patrol members populating the slopes (yes, there are now *two* trails!) of the Double H Ranch in Lake Luzerne, New York. Unlike summer, when the many volunteers supplement year-round and hired summer staff, the winter program is driven by a group of more than 140 special and dedicated volunteer instructors and patrollers.

As a Double H Ranch employee, I've been fortunate enough to spend time with this incredible group of people on snowy weekends. "Magical" is a word frequently used by campers, families, volunteers, and staff alike to express the feelings they get from the moment they turn into the winding road that leads to the camp.

And magical is the word that best describes this program. Yes, the stated goal of the program is to teach a lifelong skill and give families an opportunity to enjoy the thrill of winter sports together. (The Ranch also hosts five Family-Sleepover Weekends during the season.) But it's the magic that takes place on that mountain every minute of every hour that is immeasurable for everyone involved: the students, families, volunteers, and staff members.

I can't begin to understand the behind-the-scenes requirements that must be met to execute an adaptive winter sports program. At the beginning of the day as students are fitted with equipment and paperwork is completed, I sense the intensity and concentration that fills the equipment room. I've never experienced a more impressive example of teamwork than when watching three to four instructors working to ensure the comfort of a nonverbal monoskier with cerebral palsy. The virtues of patience, flexibility, and creativity are tested by the perpetual challenges that arise when working with adaptive

The Value of Volunteering

Sometimes it's difficult to determine whose lives are more enriched by the experience, the campers or the volunteers. Double H volunteer instructors had this to say:

"One of my students told me he didn't know he had a disability until his mom told him, then [he] asked me if I thought everyone had a disability. It was a wonderful conversation, and he taught me more in a few hours than I have learned in a very long time."

"Double H is the happiest place I have ever been. I wish I had the strength and time to do more."

"I had a great time working with the children and the ski instructors. Everyone is very supportive and a lot of fun to be around. You couldn't ask for a better combination."

"THE BEST THING ABOUT WINTER IS YOU DON'T HAVE TO WAIT A YEAR TO COME BACK TO THE DOUBLE H RANCH."

—Nicholas S., winter sports enthusiast and Double H summer camper

"Just making the turn off of 9N onto Hidden Valley Road sends an amazingly wonderful feeling through my body from head to toes."

—Allison, a winter sports enthusiast's mom

Emo Castle

New York's Double H Ranch is the only Hole in the Wall member camp to offer an on-snow experience.

Jim Smith

Swooping down the slopes is fun for all.

skiers and riders, but good humor and rapport-building rule the day.

The kids who participate in the winter program typically have serious illnesses or conditions such as neuromuscular disorders, autism, HIV/AIDS and other immune disorders, cancer, hemophilia, and sickle cell anemia. The diversity of the children on the hill on any given day adds to the program's individuality and creates its own kind of magic. A case in point is the following moment, described by a Double H volunteer instructor:

"Each time [my nonverbal 14-year-old student with autism and I] rode the chairlift, I pointed out a piece of adaptive ski equipment to him and explained how it enabled someone who couldn't walk to ski independently, like he had learned to do. At the end of one ride, a nonverbal student strapped in a monoski waited for his instructor to fit the outriggers. My student skied over, leaned down, and grinned at the boy, then turned to flash me a radiant grin. Pure joy! For the first time I saw him 'communicate' with another ski student at Double H."

At the end of the day, as the last ski is accounted for and placed on the rack, the last glove found and returned to its rightful owner, a final congratulatory hug given to a boy who for the first time in three years skied down the mountain unassisted, and a tear of happiness shed by an instructor—or an observer like myself, who doesn't really know quite why the tears are coming—you can't imagine a more magical way to spend a snowy winter day.

Double H Ranch is committed to continuing the legacy of our co-founders, Charles R. Wood and the late, great Paul Newman. To learn more, log on to www.doublehranch.org. 32

Linda T. Smith works in development at the Double H Ranch in Lake Luzerne, New York.

Jim Smith

It's sometimes hard to tell who enjoys themselves more: the students or the instructors.

Emo Castle

A young skier enjoys winter in the Adirondacks with a little help from Double H instructors.

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SnowSports 360

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles touting innovative snowsports programs throughout the country. In the 2009–10 publishing season, 32 Degrees *will highlight offerings in other disciplines and specialties, including adaptive, senior, and women's programs.*

GET WITH THE PROGRAM

Camping with the Nords

by J. SCOTT MCGEE

Most people probably equate "full immersion" with foreign-language classes—or maybe even baptisms. But all across the country, and indeed the continent, the inspired people who create nordic ski programs know that full immersion can be a springboard toward mastery of the sport.

Most nordic camps combine a full-immersion crash course with a technique brush-up. The great camps, however, are set apart by their "value-addeds," whether these involve esteemed instructors, camp timing (early to mid-season or pre-marathon), purpose (fundraiser or product demos), training techniques such as video sessions, or location. So whether you hope to dial up your V2, nail your selection of kick wax, ski with an Olympian or PSIA Nordic Team member, or see yourself on the small screen, these camps offer something for everyone. Those of you looking to help your own nordic center enhance its offerings might learn a few things from these programs of the pros.

[West Yellowstone Fall Training Camp]

Some 26 years ago Dick Hunt, an Olympic hopeful speed skater, found his way to West Yellowstone, Montana, for some early-season cross training. When he got there, the U.S. Nordic Ski Team was cruising around, having finally found a destination for dependable November snow. Hunt and another local diehard nordic skier, Drew Barney, saw an event in the making and the following year assembled seasoned coaches and athletes to put together a three-day program over Thanksgiving.

The camp in "West" was a smashing success, and today the Yellowstone Ski Festival has become the marquee early-season event after which so many others are modeled, with 100 to 150 regular attendees. The festival is held in conjunction with a couple of USSA and U.S. biathlon races, attended by college teams from across the country as well as the U.S. Ski Team and international athletes. Two of the event's core attractions are the on-snow demos (a chance to try the latest and best equipment for free) and the indoor expo, which gives participants the opportunity to talk to product representatives. Scores of other skiing enthusiasts hit the Rendezvous Trails during Turkey Day weekend to be a part of the whole happening and get on snow for the first ski of the year.

Thanksgiving camps and venues that emulate West's success include those at Colorado resorts such as Crested Butte, Devil's Thumb (near Winter Park), Steamboat Springs, and Telluride; Silver Star in Canada; and even the Holderness Junior Nordic Ski Annual Thanksgiving Camp at the Van der Linde International Ski Training Center in Burke, Vermont. To garner signups year after year, these camps need a snow backup plan. In West Yellowstone, it's the "Plateau," a system of logging roads on Yellowstone's Pitchstone Plateau; in Crested Butte, it's Kebler Pass, rated one of Colorado's top scenic drives. Both venues are about 1,000 feet above the host towns. December camps, which don't rely as heavily on early snow, include Nordic Heritage Ski Centre in Presque Isle, Maine; Snow Mountain Ranch near Winter Park, Colorado; and the Oregon Fall XC Ski Camp in mid-December at Mt. Bachelor in Bend, Oregon.

Highlights of the West Yellowstone event include a large-group indoor introductory session held each morning and afternoon before heading out on the snow. Coaches focus on one technique per session (e.g., double pole kick or V2 alternate), and participants rotate through six coaches during the three-day camp (two per day), and 10 in the five-day camp. Evening sessions cover the latest in waxing and training, and a keynote speaker rounds out the Saturday night send-off. Campers and athletes in training all find a way to enjoy turkey in West Yellowstone to refuel after a hard day's ski, or to burn off during the rest of the weekend or season.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

While you may not be able to mimic West's (mostly) predictable early season-coverage, you can put together a complete program (pre-snow, on-snow coaching, and après-snow) and invite product vendors to host demos at your mountain. Find out what your audience wants and cater to their specific interests.

[Crested Butte Nordic]

Crested Butte, Colorado, has built a reputation around its 100-participant Thanksgiving camp, which attracts skiers from Colorado and northern New Mexico. Attendees can be characterized as a "Masters" group, some of whom are in it for the race coaching, while others come just to start their season off right—and have a great time.

Like most Thanksgiving camps that live by the weather, the event has a great

backup plan in case of low snow totals . If the fall snow gods don't deliver to town, Kebler Pass and the nearby Irwin Lodge catch the westerly storms, get early snow, and hold it well. It doesn't hurt that the nearby town of Gunnison often claims "coldest spot in the country" honors. Last year, while Crested Butte reported some 440 inches of the white stuff, Kebler Pass, just 7 miles to the west, logged over 1,000 inches! This past Thanksgiving, with snow on the pass and grass showing in town, the camp started up high on Friday. Snow fell through the weekend, closing the pass to access by skiers on Sunday but also leaving enough snow to groom in town.

The camp format is familiar enough: one day of classic and one day of skate skiing, with initial groupings of beginner, intermediate, and advanced skiers. Video analysis for intermediate and advanced groups provides targeted and immediate feedback. There's also a free waxing clinic in the evening, with assistance with kick wax before the classic sections. Great coaches include Kendall Butts (former PSIA Nordic Team member and former Olympian) and Ingrid Butts (former Olympian), Rebecca Dussault (former Olympian), Ross Matlock (PSIA Nordic Team member), Jesse Crandall (former coach of Colorado's Western State College), and nordic center staff, most of whom are certified by PSIA.

The camp includes a Saturday night banquet and silent auction, which benefits the Nordic Council, a nonprofit organization. The event culminates in a 5-kilometer classic and 5-kilometer skate race on Sunday morning. Later this year Crested Butte Nordic will also host the first annual "12 Hours of Crested Butte," on March 14, 2009. Solo, duo, and quad teams, as well as costumed competitors, should make for an interesting, if not grueling, event. To learn more about Crested Butte nordic programs, check out CBNordic.org.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
While you can't install a 10,000-foot pass near your resort, you may be able to find a backup venue so that your organizational efforts and the good faith of your attendees are not lost if your primary venue is snowless at event time. "Pulling it off" goes a long way, and people really appreciate the fact that *your camp* takes *their vacation* seriously.

[Steamboat Nordic Camp]

One of the most successful camps occurring outside of the Thanksgiving week is Colorado's Steamboat Nordic Camp, now in its sixth year. Since its inception, the camp has grown each year with 2008 being the first time the camp filled to capacity with 100 participants. The two-day format focuses on technique improvement for classic and skate skiers, and the camp caters to all skill levels—beginner to advanced (race-oriented).

Held in mid-December, the camp gives participants the chance to kick off the season and work on technique. The low coach-to-skier ratio (one coach to six skiers) allows for individualized attention and feedback through tools such as video analysis.

Top-notch coaches on hand include Todd Lodwick (former U.S. Nordic Combined Olympian), Sarah Konrad (former U.S. Ski Team Olympian), and Justin Easter (NCAA All-American and former Subaru Factory Team Member). Industry reps from Fischer, Swix, Toko, Atomic, Salomon, and Rossignol are present with demo gear and helpful info.

In addition, Steamboat runs another successful program also in its sixth year, the Women's Fitness and Skill Building Clinics. Held on Friday mornings for four consecutive sessions, the women-only event focuses on fitness and skill building. Participants are grouped according to ability and ski with the same group throughout the four sessions. Coaches, however, rotate so that participants are exposed to a variety of teaching styles, information, and feedback. For details, go to TheNordicLink.com.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
While you can't always bring in former Olympians from next door, you probably can find some talented heroes not too far afield (and perhaps even book the

Steamboat Nordic Camp's low coach-to-skier ratio fosters individualized attention.

Courtesy of Steamboat Nordic Camp

services of PSIA Nordic Team members). Beef up your roster to draw in the crowd. Consider including lunch to create a more inclusive social atmosphere that will get people networking, talking about skiing, and having a great time together.

[Lake Placid's Olympic Sports Complex]

The Olympic Sports Complex (OSC), a legacy site from the Winter Games held in Lake Placid, New York, promotes nordic skiing and recruits young talent to sports of all kinds. The focus of the OSC programs described here is to provide sports opportunities to kids in rural upstate New York, many of whom come from lower-income families, and to other targeted populations like seniors. Want to know how they do it? Read on.

In the roll-up to the1980 Olympics in Lake Placid, the U.S. Olympic Committee put a lot of money into creating local and regional opportunities for children to develop sports skills in Olympic events. The OSC assembled a variety of programs to fill a niche for the customers and/or instructors and coaches, from youth recreational and racing groups to senior programs for individuals who still want to ski every day but can't because they need partners and a "safety net" rather than just company.

In addition, the OSC created a nordic ski "social club" for folks who either alpine skied and wanted to cross country or who already skied cross country but wanted to make new friends, which made for a good partnership with the alpine ski area. Don't be afraid to let your clients tell you what they want; new programs can be created when clients know they can form their own group or design their own program.

According to Rebecca Dayton, marketing manager for the OSC, the Trailmarkers Program for third-grade classes is the most popular. "We weren't reaching our own regional people, and had no new growth. We are pretty rural, with a lot of lower income areas. When we offered to provide gear, lessons, and trail passes, we got 10 kids in the first year. Seven to eight hundred kids come each winter now. We've been very successful in growing the awareness of the programs and hopefully growing the sport and bringing up new skiers, some of whom will someday compete."

Dayton relates that cultural barriers must be overcome to involve some families: "Sometimes it's a struggle to get parents in this 'snowmobile-culture area' to get kids involved in skiing. But now three elementary schools in the area have their own programs. There are currently 50 kids in the six-week beginner programs, many of whose parents don't ski at all."

For adults, the OSC offers programs for women and seniors, but the most unique is probably the "Be a Biathlete" program. Attendee numbers for the skiing and rifle-shooting event started growing astronomically for this program, and classes fill as soon as they're offered. Non-skiers try it, sometimes with an "I'm-just-here-to-shoot-the-gun" attitude. They learn to ski so they can do biathlon in the next session.

Dayton says the series-type program is one of the keys to success. "When people are in traditional lesson formats, they trail off, but when it's a multi-week event, they come every week. Our challenge is 'How do we reach out to groups who rarely take lessons, or who have been skiing for a long time but never take lessons?'"

As for staffing, Dayton says the program is lucky to have retiree-instructors, who provide a measure of continuity. Attendees now come to ski with the individual instructors. Although not all of them are PSIA-certified, staffers are almost all educators of some stripe (former teachers, coaches, instructors, etc.), so they can take the ball and run with it. In the local view, the best benefit of PSIA involvement is teaching skiers and new instructors how to teach.

Courtesy of Steamboat Nordic Camp

Camp attendees have the opportunity to get insider tips from industry representatives.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
Overcome cultural barriers by providing easy entry into the sport and getting everyone involved. Seek out the grants that let you really reach your local base, a great long-term investment. Design programs targeted at different populations and then market to your base to get folks out in adequate numbers to pay for all your efforts.

[Five Fields Farm]

The story behind this small operation with big kilometers is a good read in itself. According to local apple farmer Tom Gyger, Maine is home to a rapidly developing biathlon program with quite a remarkable history.

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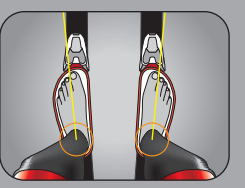
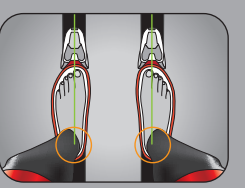


NATURAL FOOT STANCE



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So whether you hope to dial up your V2, nail your selection of kick wax, ski with an Olympian or PSIA Nordic Team member, or see yourself on the small screen, these camps offer something for everyone.

Video analysis helps campers dial in their technique.

Courtesy of Steamboat Nordic Camp

Pineland Farms was originally a farm, but in the 1940s was converted to a home for the "feeble-minded," sponsored by a private agency. After operating for more than two decades as a home, the farm was abandoned. The Libra Foundation later invested $40 million to restore the farm, putting in 15 kilometers of trails and adding a cattle operation. Located in Aroostook County, the largest county east of the Mississippi, Gyger calls the farm "a gorgeous place."

The area was settled by Scandinavians with a strong skiing tradition that manifested itself in the stated purpose of the nonprofit Maine Winter Sports Centers (MWSC)—to restore skiing as a way of life. With that goal in mind, the MWSC bought two small alpine ski areas in the region and invested in infrastructure and improvement at these and other cross country areas.

The Libra Foundation was formed by a woman named Elizabeth Noyce, the ex-wife of the founder of Intel, to fund causes throughout the state of Maine. Let's just say she had a very good divorce attorney. She left a legacy of winter sports centers, which has been the genesis of the recent spate of biathlon activity in Maine. Together, the Libra Foundation and Maine Winter Sports have established world-class biathlon centers, which have hosted World Cup biathlon events. And as a result of the Libra-MWSC partnership, US Biathlon events also came to be at Pineland Farms.

Gyger's acreage happens to abut a 450-acre parcel of the Loon Echo Land Trust trail system. On the advice of a relative, he started cutting trails through his own orchard. These connect with roads built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which developed trails and roads during the 1930s. Gyger himself runs Five Fields' nordic operation. He was already doing well when the Libra Foundation whacked in 15 kilometers of trails within 15 minutes of his customer base at Five Fields ski area.

Okay, so you're saying, "Nice story, but where's the program?" After a period of stagnant growth, the Maine Winter Sports Center devised a nine-day program, which opened with a biathlon one weekend and closed with a dogsled race the next. Gyger went to town, making trails and building a couple of needed bridges, and now the course is world class. After a successful race that impressed even the European athletes, the MWSC got on board with hosting another biathlon at Five Fields. This biathlon has become a regular event and the MWSC Biathlon Camp an outgrowth of the annual event. The biathlon camp focuses on technique, tactics, shooting, and strategic training for competitive as well as recreational athletes. For more information, go to FiveFieldsSki.com.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Highlights to this story include creative conversion of agricultural to off-season recreational use to capitalize on what the land has to offer, involving one very generous donor to help create a world-class venue. The result? Major races that spawned interest and an affiliated camp designed to meet the needs of those eager to improve. Maybe you can work toward the same harmonic convergence where you live.

[Conclusion]

To make the most of what differentiates your resort, take note of how these areas played to their strengths.

1. Generate enthusiasm before or early on in the season.
2. Know your core demographic and design programs that will meet their needs.
3. Enlist local celebrity coaches and athletes whenever possible.
4. Create series-type programs to keep skiers coming back for more.

By championing your area's unique features and cheerleading the sport, you'll help to (in the words of the Maine Winter Sports Center's purpose) "re-establish skiing as a lifestyle"—and give yourself a little job security in the process! 32

J. Scott McGee is the coach of the PSIA Nordic Team, currently in his third term on the team. During the winter, McGee works as senior manager for Nordic, Guides and Training at Wyoming's Jackson Hole Mountain Resort; during the summer, he guides for Exum Mountain Guides. He loves the preseason and post-season camps and clinics that fuel skiers' passions for the sport.

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SnowSports 360

EMBRACE TEACHING
That Magnifies and Uplifts

by JERRY WARREN

Cesar Piotto

Let's be honest. In the grand scheme of things, what's more important, the person or the turn? I know: carving turns on morning corduroy or laying those boards over on the steeps and then feeling them come around and back under you is exhilarating. As teachers we know how correct ski technique feels, and we want our guests to share these great experiences and feelings.

Of course, this requires that our students and guests ski a certain way, doesn't it? Well, maybe. We know that improving performance can be very uplifting, "magnifying" us in all aspects of our lives. To magnify a person suggests that he or she is uplifted by the experience, enlarged, noticed, and focused on, and that even though the outcome may not exactly hit a bull's-eye at first, the student loves the learning process.

Any effective teacher wants what is best for the student. Yet in our zeal for the welfare of guest performance, the quest to teach the perfect turn may overpower the students' reality. Like an athlete who loves to train, the love of learning is connected to the love of sport during the learning/teaching process. A coach of young runners may tell his or her athletes to run five laps as a punishment for showing up late to practice or not performing well. How much better would it be to coach young athletes who are so magnified by running and learning that the real punishment would be to *not* be allowed to run those five laps? Do you see the change in message here? In the latter, the "punishment" reinforces the concept that running or skiing is the reward; depriving the athlete of the chance to run or ski is the punishment.

Let's dig a little deeper.

Do you know that most youth would rather play on a losing team than sit on the bench of a winning team? You see, for some, playing is winning and sitting on the bench is losing. Wanting to play well, with proper technique, is important, but first you have to play and you have to want to play.

Playing can be a lifetime motivator. We do not stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing. The process of becoming a better player requires hard work, commitment, good technique, and such. However, it all centers on the fact that what does not

magnify and uplift is not lasting and edifying, and that which does not edify is of little value in the long run.

According to an old Buddhist proverb, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." A while back I was coaching a group of folks in a special skiing seminar that involved indoor workshops as well as the coaching time on the hill. During an indoor workshop at the beginning of the seminar, one of the participants seemed a bit cautious. I wanted to know her and her skiing goals, so I asked open-ended questions that probed beyond the normal surface answers. This line of questioning resulted in what is called the "Why Pyramid," designed to magnify each student in any program of learning. The Why Pyramid concept takes a performance goal, representing the base of the pyramid, and—through a coach-student exploration of "whys"—discovers a deeper and more meaningful goal at the top of the pyramid. When we discover the why of a skiing performance goal (or any goal for that matter), we can more effectively understand that the person is more important than the turn. The result of the Why Pyramid search and my subsequent teaching methods became vital to the success of this woman, and my success as a coach.

This particular student was very committed to the skiing program, and I was eager to meet her expectations, so I asked her, "Why are you taking this seminar?" Pretty basic question, right? Almost too basic if I had stopped with her first answer, which was, "To learn how to carve." Great, now at least I knew that to meet her expectations I had to get her carving turns. Because I'm the type of person who likes to "look under the table to see what I'm missing," I delved deeper: "Why do you want to be able to carve your turns?"

Those of you who have taught skiing for a while might supply a variety of answers to this question, to include being able to leave a narrow track in the snow and maintain speed while turning both ways. This student's answer likely didn't match yours. After all, it was hers—based on her understanding of skiing and what carving does. My student answered that she wanted to learn to carve so that she would be able to ski with more control. It was a great answer, and certainly a good skier can gain control by carving, but the real motivator goes deeper than that (no pun intended).

I asked her another "let's really get down to it" question: "*Why* do you feel you need more control?" She said she wanted to have more control because she would like to be able to ski steep terrain. Well, now we were getting to it! Can you imagine how I might have spent my time with her on the snow if my only objective was to teach her to carve? We would have spent a good portion of time on gentle, flat terrain to facilitate the introduction of carving skills. Certainly, being able to carve may result in being able to ski steep terrain in a dynamic and exciting way; however, my experience indicates that this may have been the long route to gaining more control on steep terrain. By asking enough questions to get to her underlying motivation, I was able to tailor my lesson to address her true performance needs.

Trying to understand what she was really after was vital to the simplicity and love she desired for her skiing experience. That's the way skiing was for me when I was newer to the sport, and I bet that simple magic of skiing existed for you as well. When I first started skiing, I felt that I could see more and experience life more fully because I cut through the clutter of complexity and focused on the fundamentals of simplicity. When I started skiing, I didn't learn to *know*, I learned to *do*. We should never forget emotion and common sense in the midst of our technique, diagrams, and equations. Change is not often a function of skill, but rather a function of motivation. The "why" is the motivator.

Let's continue.

Control on steep terrain has a relationship to carving, but teaching this student to ski steeps in control wouldn't really address what this earnest woman was after. What I was learning by talking to her gave me insight into why this individual couldn't ski steep terrain under control based on her understanding of skiing at that point. I had learned this much in the dialog already, so I thought, let's give it another shot. I asked—you guessed it—"*Why* do you want to be able to ski steep terrain?" Her answer immediately took us away from the technical (the turn), and closer to the heart of the

matter. She wanted to be able to ski steep terrain because that's the type of terrain her friends ski, and she wanted to be able to ski with her friends. My job as her coach was to do anything to assist her ability to be able to ski with her friends. For many of us and our guests, the lesson objective can be distilled to a concept that's literally this simple.

You may think that this is the end of the story. The Why Pyramid gave me, the coach, a broad sense of the many movements and turn options that would help this person, but that understanding was still incomplete without the answer to my next questions, "*Why* do you want to be able to ski with your friends? *What* happens when you are with them? How do you feel? *Why* do you feel that way?" I told her I would love to help her accomplish some of these goals immediately.

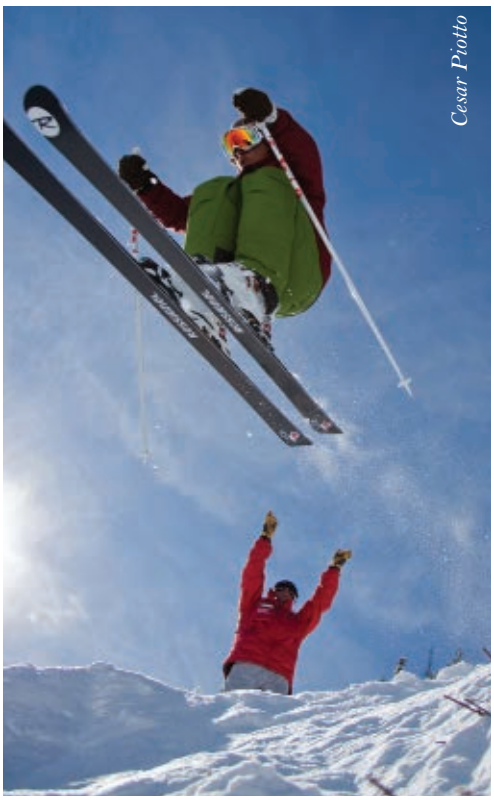
You can see that the answer goes much deeper than the response to "why do you want to carve?" Only after diving several questions deep do you begin to reach the heart of the things that makes us all tick. The experience reminded me that as instructors we really can't afford to justify the hard-core "the turn is the most important thing" type of coaching for probably 90 percent of our guests. The other 10 percent, if we really knew these students, would still fit into the same motivator category as the 90 percent, even if they want to be faster racers, make more consistent turns, etc.

This student answered the longer "why" question as follows. When she is with her friends she has fun, is supported by them even when she shows her weaknesses, and is challenged by them. She feels valued, even loved. In short, she feels magnified by her friends. That's why they fit the title of "her friends."

Let's restate the Why Pyramid findings. She initially expressed a desire to learn to carve, so that she would have greater control. She wanted greater control so she could ski steeper terrain. She wanted to ski steeper terrain so that she could ski with her friends. She wanted to ski with her friends because she feels magnified by them, enlarged upon, noticed, uplifted, and accepted.

So now I ask, what would have happened if carving had remained my primary and highly devoted focus? Again, she wanted to be with friends because they magnify her; she had been struggling to make this connection (with various levels of discouragement) because she just couldn't get the carving thing going too well.

Most struggling students don't have a learning disability; they have a learning *difference*. However, many teachers have teaching disabilities. As teachers (instructors, coaches, or any name you want to tag onto what we do to help people improve their skiing performance), are we really our students' *friends* like this woman needed? The application of effective ski technique helps determine where we can ski, which assists who we can ski with, which can be—and should be—a magnifying process.


Cesar Piotto

The true master teacher does not wait to magnify a person at the end of the learning process as some big reward. He or she knows that magnifying needs to happen at every step in the process; praise before perfection stimulates the deeper motivators of our students. Magnifying someone is not a philosophical or psychological cop-out to teaching good solid skiing movements and seeking strong improvement in performance, by any means. We certainly can't just justify a feel-good lesson and leave out the performance improvement. But the reality is that when you really get down to it, people who learn to carve their turns may not necessarily enjoy skiing more, because the process has beaten them up. Trust is the single most important ingredient—the starting point—of every meaningful relationship.

This is a plea to all of my fellow professionals to recognize that we really can't justify missing the mark in who we, as people, really are. I can absolutely justify hard-core hammer time with skiing movements and technical instruction. However, I can only justify it if the immediate outcome is a person who feels magnified, not one year or five years from now, but today, in the process of becoming better. Goethe once said, "The things that matter most must never be at the mercy of things that matter least." A teacher should, whenever possible, go beyond the surface meaning of skiing improvement to understand the skier motivation suggested by the Why Pyramid. The journey *and* the destination are both measures of success, when properly managed and enjoyed together.

In other words, regardless of how we justify a hard-core focus on technique in our performance coaching, we must not do anything that at the end of the day does not uplift the person. We must strive to magnify each person we coach or teach. When we're able to magnify our students so that they love the learning process, our guests will know they have just been the beneficiaries of a master teacher. 32

Jerry Warren is the director of skiing and mountain operations at Utah's Sundance Resort. He was a member of the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team from 1974 to 1988 and served as assistant coach of the team for eight of those years. Warren co-authored two PSIA national teaching manuals and served as the association's vice president of education for three years. He presently serves on the PSIA-AASI Board of Directors.

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SnowSports 360

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?

Base Layers Go High-Tech

by MEGHAN McCARTHY

Call them wellness gear, conditioning wear, performance equipment . . . whatever. Just try not to refer to them as plain old tights.

Much more than a pair of stockings or long johns, the base layers currently hitting the market represent a whole new generation of high-tech, sophisticated snowsports apparel. Beyond insulation, they promise compression, support, and stability, to suggest just a few of the benefits. So, as a snowsports instructor, what does the advent of such garments mean for you?

Okay, so maybe it's not an advent. And maybe you've even pulled on a pair of these superhero-looking leggings and gone for a run or two. Such apparel has come to the mass market in one form or another, thanks to companies like Nike, Adidas, and Under Armour. But, what's becoming more common are companies—science-based from inception—that exclusively manufacture such products. Unlike the compression and support products you may already be familiar with, companies such as Opedix Labs, CW-X, and Skins got their start in this category, and have set the industry standard for such garment technology. What's more, these three companies design products specifically for snowsports.

BASE LAYER BASICS

Now for the nuts and bolts. What, basically, *are* these high-tech layers . . . and why do they deserve the attention of snowsports professionals? Among the many instructors won over by the new undergarments, some will tell you that they personally wear them because they can ski or snowboard stronger, longer, and recover faster. Others will say that they give them to clients who, in turn, have been able to go stronger and longer in lessons, which means "cha-ching!" for instructors and resorts alike if these layers give guests a few extra days on the hill.

In any case, it would seem that benefits abound from the technology woven into these specialized base layers. As you might expect from products borne of separate research and development teams, the technology varies from company to company—with each one offering something a little different for hardworking bodies. Although independent studies on *general* compression wear exist, the snowsports-specific research cited here comes from the companies themselves. So until further studies are available, it's up to you as the consumer to judge base layer merits for yourself.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

The newest company to develop a support system for winter sports enthusiasts is Opedix Labs. Wellness Gear, its line of apparel, is what is called "Evidence-Based," meaning that the company's genesis, and that of all its products, lies in medicine. Developed in 2003 with the Steadman Hawkins Research Foundation (SHRF) biomechanics research laboratory in Vail, Colorado, Opedix Labs is the brainchild of Kim Gustafson. A Vail ski instructor with several knee surgeries behind him, Gustafson wanted an alternative to the bulky, heavy brace he was used to wearing. What resulted was not a replacement for a prescribed mechanical brace, but a comfortable knee support system integrated with everyday apparel.

In coming up with ideas, Gustafson and Michael Torry, Ph.D., the director of the biomechanics research lab at SHRF, wanted to develop a product that could go to production and retail shelves without FDA approval.

"We wanted something that people didn't need to see a doctor to have it prescribed," says Torry, adding that the idea of compliance was paramount in the early development phase—people won't wear something that's not comfortable, and the benefits of these products depend on athletes using them over a period of time. "With knee braces, people put them on, and then take them off before they should.

"This is like a long-term, you-gotta-stick-with-it diet," says Torry. "The true value is in wearing it day-in and day-out for years."

The reason being that the patent-pending sling and anchor design of the knee support system—which wraps the joint with extra-strong fabrics much like a brace—unloads the knee joint, thereby reducing wear and tear. Outward movement of the knee is lessened, which has the effect of unloading the medial (inner) portion of the knee.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION . . .

For Opedix Labs and Steadman Hawkins, however, the key is prevention. If you've had significant knee trauma in the past and have had a brace prescribed, Opedix and the other products mentioned here are not going to stand between you and reinjury. The same goes for those whose knees are intact. Torry equates the philosophy behind the decision whether to wear a knee support system to using sunscreen: "If I wear these will I not get injured or develop a problem? If I wear sunscreen

Winter sports enthusiasts have long been accustomed to baggy, fleecy numbers that hang on the body. So convincing folks to slip into something tight is the crux.

everyday, will I not get cancer? Maybe, maybe not, but I've probably improved my odds."

In the meantime, Opedix Labs and SHRF are making a dedicated effort to create awareness and encourage people to invest in prevention. With 60 to 80 percent of the population over 60 getting arthritis in the knees, according to Torry, there's not really much to lose by sheathing your legs in the S1 or S1 Pro, both snowsports-specific products that feature moisture-wicking properties and provide insulation.

Instructors seem to agree. Brett Smith, an instructor for the Vail Snowsports School (which, incidentally, endorses Opedix Labs), wears the gear and recommends it regularly to others. Initially attracted to this type of apparel by an article he read touting the kinesthetic benefits of compression gear, he believes that his use of the Opedix Labs knee support system improves consistency of performance and delays the onset of fatigue. Amy Novak, a part-time instructor at Vail, agrees, "They protect my knees and keep things from bouncing."

When asked what she likes most about wearing them, Novak emphasizes "the feeling of safety."

This "feeling"—often identified as safety or security—is a common way of describing an experience with compression or otherwise supportive base layers, and was more than evident in reactions from instructors when asked about the gear of another player in the compression wear field, CW-X.

TO THE TAPE

CW-X, part of Wacoal Corporation, a well-known Japanese lingerie manufacturer, introduced its products to the U.S. market about five years ago. Since then, they've garnered a cheerleading squad that rivals all, with many instructors saying that they'd never even consider outfitting for the slopes without their CW-X.

What makes CW-X unique is the patented Conditioning Web™. This system is based on kineseotaping, which tapes muscles in specific ways to stabilize and support the joints and muscles and aid in circulation. The concept of such support in apparel started at the Wacoal Human Science Research Center in Kyoto, Japan, where researchers study support, function, and proper fit—essentially all the ways in which fabric can play a role in stabilizing the anatomy. So when a Wacoal employee injured her knee in a ski accident and had to go in for taping every few days, she and her colleagues were inspired to create a kineseotaping system that could come on and off with ease, thus the invention of the webbing and CW-X.

The Conditioning Web is sewn on top of tights in anatomical places, and stretches longways, but not sideways, to limit lateral and medial movement. According to Oleg Shikverg, sales director at CW-X, the gentle support provided by their tights creates better circulation, offers support to the muscles, and limits muscle vibration, thereby encapsulating energy for greater efficiency. Shikverg specifically recommends the Insulator Conditioning Wear for instructors due to its insulating properties.

"For skiers, there is a feeling of greater stability," says Shikverg of the Conditioning Web. "Muscles are supported throughout the day so they don't have to work as hard. The leg burn just isn't as bad."

BYE-BYE BONK

Leading the unofficial CW-X cheerleading squad is Deb Benson, owner of Girlz on Edge Ski Excursions for Women. She likes her CW-X gear so much that she would never even consider suiting up in anything else. Benson, who had an ACL

How High-Tech Base Layers Stack Up

Opedix Labs S1 Tights

To learn more about Opedix Labs and see other products, visit www.opedix.com. Pro offers can be accessed at www.sportstarprosales.com. (Usergroup: PSIA, Passcode: 20085250)

CW-X Insulator Stabilyx™ Tights

To learn more about CW-X, see other products and access pro offers, visit http://support.cw-x.com/. (User: psia, Password: proform)

Skins Snow Long Tights

To learn more about Skins, visit www.skins.net. Rocky Mountain Division members can access pro offers by contacting David Decker at david.decker@skins.net.

replacement a few years back, bought the tights in an attempt to overcome the fatigue she was experiencing in her rehabilitated knee.

"I was frustrated that my repaired knee became fatigued way before my healthy knee, and I was ending my ski day sooner than I wanted to," says Benson. "The first day out in the CW-X tights there was a very noticeable difference. I was psyched and I was hooked!"

Benson counts her CW-X apparel among her equipment, looking at her ensemble as gear rather than base layers. "When I pack for a ski trip or clinic, my boots have always been the most important thing on my list, and now my CW-X has equal importance," she says.

Denise Vance, an alpine instructor at Deer Valley, Utah, is also a big fan of CW-X's entire line, wearing them beyond the slopes. "They are fabulous. I won't go back to other forms of tights," she says, adding that she uses both the tights and tops while golfing, running, biking, hiking, and snowshoeing, in addition to skiing.

"I feel like I have energy all day," says Vance. "I don't feel like my muscles tire out as badly as they did in other tights or base layers… I don't bonk out."

What it means to not "bonk out" in scientific terms, according to a French study of compression apparel published in the *International Journal of Sports Medicine*, is 36 percent lower oxygen usage and 26 percent greater efficiency when wearing CW-X compared with traditional apparel, says Shikverg.

These are huge numbers for snowsports instructors, whether factored out over one day or an entire season. And for clients, CW-X may result in a world of difference, especially for those who are unaccustomed to rapid changes in altitude and activity. Both Benson and Vance rave to coworkers and clients about their experience with CW-X, adding that the fabric, CW-X's proprietary Auto-Sensor™ material, is insulating and moisture wicking to help maintain a comfortable body temperature in both harsh and mild conditions.

"For ski instructors, the key is, how do you stay in boots and skis longer while being comfortable?" queries Shikverg. "Being on the snow for a long period of time is tough, so any piece of equipment that can help you stay warmer and create stability and efficiency to muscles during the day will result in less fatigue. Snowsports instructors are much better off with this than with a loose-fitting base layer."

And there's the rub. Winter sports enthusiasts have long been accustomed to baggy, fleecy numbers that hang on the body. So convincing folks to slip into something tight is the crux. But look at it this way: If it allows you to do your job longer and better, or allows your clients a few extra runs, you have to figure that your newly sleek physique is covered by a waterproof layer anyway. Perhaps it's worth the "men in tights" look.

Courtesy of Opedix Labs

The Opedix knee action support system is analyzed in a bi-plane fluoroscopy system at the Steadman/Hawkins Research Laboratory.

Vance urges a trial, saying, "They really feel great on and I feel good doing activity in them . . . I would tell more people to try them, because until you put them on, you have no idea how good they feel."

FOCUS ON BLOOD FLOW

Good feelings bring us to Skins. Like Opedix Labs and CW-X, Skins has a snowsports-specific line, and like the aforementioned companies, they feature their own unique garment technology, a gradient compression system. For those of us who spend more time on snow than in the lab, that means that the apparel is not uniformly tight. Rather, Skins apply the highest levels of compression on the muscles that are farthest away from the heart, which in turn optimizes the body's flow of blood back to the heart (venous return) for reoxygenation.

Another thing that this seven-year-old Australian company has in common with our two other subjects is that it has its roots in science, specifically the therapeutic world. Skins was founded by a husband and wife team with a physiotherapy and chiropractic background. The duo had a keen understanding of medical compression and figured there had to be an athletic application for its circulation-enhancing benefits, and thus Skins were born.

Designed specifically to increase the optimization of blood flow and reduce muscle vibration, the tights promise to increase strength and power and improve endurance, but also offer a recovery benefit for athletes who wear them post-activity. This recovery component is especially intriguing for recreational skiers and snowboarders who plan on a week's worth of skiing or riding only to be wiped out by day three. According to Jon Graff, brand manager for Skins USA, and the studies done by the company, if Skins are worn during après, they will help the body flush out lactic acid and other metabolic waste products that cause DOMS, or delayed onset muscle soreness.

"On average, there is about a 60 to 80 percent reduction in DOMS if you recover in Skins for four hours after athletics," says Graff.

According to a company-commissioned study, wearing them en route to your destination won't hurt either, as they are well suited to travel and the prevention of flight leg edema and deep vein thrombosis. Skins, in fact, has a travel and recovery line. But, back to snow, their snowsports-specific products are designed with skiers and snowboarders in mind. Like the company's other fabrics, which are moisture wicking and include antibacterial treatment, the Snow range also features a brushed interior for greater softness and loft, design elements like reduced knee articulation so fabric doesn't gather when knees are bent, and a three-quarter length option for those who don't want an extra layer inside boots.

"Once I wore them, I knew they worked," offers Leon Littlebird Desmoineaux, a trainer at Colorado's Arapa-


PROFESSIONAL SKI INSTRUCTORS OF AMERICA
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SNOWBOARD INSTRUCTORS
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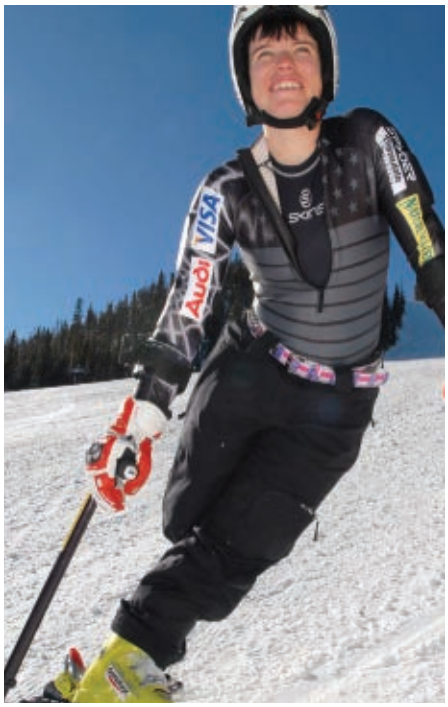

David Lissy, Table Mountain Photography

Paralympian Allison Jones sports Skins at Winter Park, Colorado.

hoe Basin Snowsports School, who was initially attracted to the gear by the promise of enhanced performance. "Once I get in my Skins in the morning, I start feeling ready to ski. During the day I stay on top of my game and can look forward to a late afternoon steep and deep run. Skins have set a whole new level of performance for me."

Australian studies—the company has only been in the U.S. market for a year-and-a-half—support the experiences of pros like Desmoineaux. And while any tight layer might feel as if it's providing some benefit, no other product features the graduated compression of Skins. Woven from eight strands intricately knit together, the tension of each individual piece can be controlled in eight different directions, allowing for the selective compression.

"What we are doing is wrapping the major muscle groups of the body, and in doing so, the compression that occurs aids and supports the muscle, preventing vibration. Muscle vibration, in high impact sports, ends up being a predecessor for a lot of soft tissue injuries," says Graff.

Although any compression garment can do that to some degree, it's the "warp-knit" construction of Skins that allows for the optimized circulation that's behind the benefits of wearing the tights.

"I could squeeze myself into a small pair of tights and get a compression effect against my body, but it's too much compression or too little compression, which has no benefit or a negative benefit," says Graff. "The secret weapon is graduated compression, which allows this circulation to occur."

Like any unfamiliar piece of equipment, Skins are an adjustment.

"You have to get used to having something tight on your body. But once you get used to skiing or cycling or hiking with them, you feel weird without them," says Desmoineaux. "Skins work!"

THE IMPORTANCE OF FIT

Regardless of which style and type of garment you choose, fit is critical. Opedix Labs, CW-X, and Skins have specific fit guidelines to help consumers select the right size.

"Our studies have shown that there is a fine line between a compression tight that fits correctly and one that is too tight. If it's too tight, it cuts off circulation," says Shikverg.

Graff agrees, "It's important to get the right fit. Ninety-five percent of the time we're pretty close, recognizing that people's bodies are different."

According to Shikverg, CW-X fits about 90 percent of the active population, noting that stretch of the fabric accommodates a wide range of body types and sizes.

While Opedix has less active paneling, meaning that there's little threat of cutting off circulation with fabric that's too tight, the anchor points of the sling must wrap the anatomy in the correct places.

Getting the right fit is not as complex as it sounds. But it does suggest the responsibility that an individual should take in selecting from the available options in the compression, stability, wellness, etc. category. Provided that the gear fits correctly, anyone can safely suit up. And while each company's respective marketing schemes show that these are geared for the slightly more seasoned pro, Graff jokes that "they're for anyone with circulation"—cautioning, however, that improper fit could impede circulation and muscular support rather than help it.

In the end, it's truly up to each individual to decide what's best for him or her. William Kraemer, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology at the University of Connecticut, has been doing research on supportive garments since 1989. And while he agrees that such apparel can impact performance, he says, "One has to look at the demands of a sport and then see how compression technology and garments can contribute to a positive influence, as not all sports or activities are equally affected by general design and makeup, which is becoming more customized for use."

Despite overwhelming positive studies and reviews on the garments, others still question whether their use could contribute to complacency on the part of the wearer. Terri-Ann Giandomenico, who provides ski conditioning classes for Vail Snowsports School, asks, "Don't you think it might give you a false sense of support? In the case of a knee injury, I believe you should rely on strengthening as opposed to a brace or supportive tights."

Certainly, neither Opedix Labs, CW-X, nor Skins suggests that use of their products will help an athlete overcome or prevent injury. The bottom line? As with any equipment, use your discretion when making a selection, paying particular attention to fit and comfort. Opedix Labs, CW-X, and Skins all offer something different depending on personal needs and preference.

And really, if it can't hurt, what's the harm in wearing something if it makes you feel like a superhero? The placebo effect alone of slipping into a pair of techy skivvies seems well worth the investment. And an investment it is; performance layers don't come cheap. (For pros, it's a slightly different story, thanks to these companies' pro offers [see "How High-Tech Base Layers Stack Up," page 47].) But it's a small price to pay for being able to leap over moguls in a single bound, or charge through powder at the speed of lightning—even if you only think you can. 32

Meghan McCarthy, a PSIA-certified Level I instructor for the Vail Snowsports School in Colorado, is the marketing coordinator for PSIA-AASI.

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SnowSports 360

STRETCH

To Stay Healthy and Strong

by LLOYD H. MULLER *and* JILL WILLIAMSON

Photo 1

Maurissa McCarthy

Eat right to stay trim. Check! Do cardio training to condition the lungs and heart. Check! Work out with weights to build strength. Check! Stretch before and after exercise to aid in flexibility and hopefully help prevent injury. Hmmm . . .

Although sometimes neglected in favor of more movement-oriented segments of the exercise regimen, stretching your muscles is one of the more important rungs on the fitness ladder. And while it's a great idea to stretch every day, it's even more critical to do so before and after any day on the hill, regardless of whether you're teaching or skiing/riding for fun. Skiing and snowboarding involve constant contraction of some muscles and relaxation of others. While this is what movement is all about, one potential downside is muscle tightness—which can contribute to falls and up the ante on the potential for injury. Snowsports enthusiasts with limited flexibility are at higher risk of tearing muscles in the event of a spill, and a torn muscle will sideline even the most devoted among us. As the adage goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Stretching is an excellent way to increase flexibility, and there are several different types of stretching. Proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation, commonly known as "PNF," uses contraction and relaxation together to further stretch muscles and is typically performed with a trainer or fitness partner. Static stretching, on the other hand, can be a solo exercise at home or on the slopes; it involves a slow, gentle movement to stretch and hold the position for about 20 to 30 seconds. This article will detail proper technique

for this type of stretching. The exercises described here can be performed anywhere or anytime to great benefit for any skier or snowboarder, so feel free to share them with your students.

Although past fitness tenets recommended stretching the muscles *prior* to working out, we now know that stretching cold muscles is an outdated practice that may actually result in injury. That said, dynamic stretching—gently moving the muscles through their range of motion—can be incorporated in a warm-up, before activity. Helping the body to get the blood flowing is important prior to any type of stretching.

The best time to practice intense static stretches is after moderate to heavy exercise, when the muscles are already "warmed up." Because skiing and snowboarding contract many of the muscles, stretching after exercise will lengthen them out again, facilitating recovery and minimizing lactic acid buildup to prevent soreness. Before stretching, jog a little or perform a toned-down version of your favorite cardiovascular activity. During the snow season, you might try skate skiing for 5 to 10 minutes or taking a few beginner runs to wake up those muscles.

For the stretches that follow, a general rule of thumb is to hold the target position for 30 seconds or more, then relax and repeat. This allows the muscle cells to fully recover from each stretch. Extend your muscles until you feel mild discomfort, but never push until you feel pain.

Start with the upper leg. While skiing, the quadriceps ("quads," i.e., the muscles on the front of the thigh) and hamstrings (the muscles on the back of the thigh) work together. When the leg is bent at the knee, the quadriceps lengthen while the hamstring contracts. And after a day on the slopes, both are sore. The hamstrings are "tight" and burning, and you may have difficulty straightening your legs. Poor hamstring flexibility can lead to back problems later on, so taking measures to improve hamstring flexibility definitely offers long-range benefits. The quads are fatigued; they could use a deep tissue massage. The "value version" is to take a tennis ball or rolling pin and roll it on your quads as you're relaxing in front of the television.

A common method used to stretch a hamstring is to lie on the floor against a convex corner or doorway (photo 1). Place one leg up against the wall and rest the other on the floor while trying to move your body as close to the corner as possible, keeping the upward leg straight. People with limited range of motion will find they need to be a couple inches away from the wall, but with practice, and as flexibility improves, they will be able to move closer to the wall. Because the hamstrings have been contracting all day, stretching them will allow them to return to their normal length. Gentle and regular stretching will loosen tight muscles and reduce muscle soreness.

An excellent quadriceps stretch is one that you see other skiers do all the time. While standing, they raise a ski behind and rest it on its tip in the snow. Off snow, you can perform this stretch by raising your foot behind you and holding it with your hand. There are two movements to this stretch: first, push the foot into the hand to stretch the lower quad. Next, bring the foot up close to the buttocks to stretch the upper quad. This could be done after a quick warm-up but before you hop on the chairlift to take advantage of the six inches of fresh powder. Gentle


Photo 2

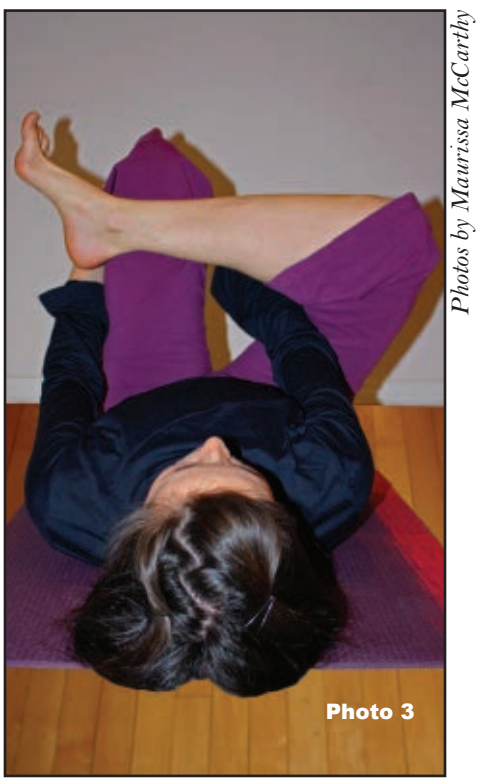


Photo 3

Photos by Maurissa McCarthy

Although sometimes neglected in favor of more movement-oriented segments of the exercise regimen, stretching your muscles is one of the more important rungs on the fitness ladder.

squats are also helpful for "waking up" the quadriceps muscles before going out on the slopes.

A word of caution for the quads: remember, they have been "stretched all day" on the slopes, so light stretching is usually enough. If the quads are really tight, stretching may make things worse. Again, try rolling a tennis ball or rolling pin along the quads to work a world of wonders on sore muscles.

Next, move to the inner thighs. A simple and symmetrical stretch for the inner thigh is to place both legs up against the wall while lying on the floor (photo 2). Slowly open your legs as far as they can go in very gentle movements. This stretch works small muscles that can tear easily while trying to support the weight of each leg. If you need to, support your legs with your hands. Remember to hold the stretch for 30 seconds, relax, and then go back into the stretch.

Then turn your attention to the hips or glutes (i.e., the buttocks muscles). There are two nice stretches for this area. In the first, you'll want to lie on the floor with your right leg crossed over the left. With your right hand, reach between your legs and grab your left hand under your left leg. Press your right elbow against your thigh while pulling your legs toward your body (photo 3). If you can't bring your legs toward you, place your right leg over your left and press your right leg away from you. Be sure to switch directions, putting the left leg over right.

The second stretch is known as the "pretzel," shown in photo 4. While sitting up, cross your right leg over your left, keeping the left leg straight. Bring your left arm around your right knee, and reach your right arm around behind you as far as you can. Gaze past your shoulder, open up your chest, and bring your right knee in toward your body. In addition to loosening up your hips and glutes, the pretzel is a good stretch for your upper and lower body in general.

Finally, move to the calf. Lean against a wall with one leg extended behind you. Bend your knee and push the heel down toward the floor (photo 5). By keeping the leg straight while still pressing with the heel, you'll stretch both the upper and lower calf muscle. Bending the back leg will stretch a different part of the calf, so perform this exercise both with the straight back leg and the bent leg. You can also use stairs to stretch the calf muscles. Place the ball of your foot (right behind the big toe) on the edge of the step, and then lower your heel as far as you can go.

Remember, stretching should be a major component of every good fitness program, so don't save these stretches for just the snowy months. Use them all year round to maintain flexibility and prevent injury. These simple exercises can be effectively used at home or, with a bit of imagination, adapted well to slopeside training. And if you felt better after practicing these stretches, consider adding a yoga class to your schedule. With regular stretching and exercise, you can stay slope-ready for years to come. 32

Lloyd H. Muller is a Level II alpine instructor at Whitetail Ski Resort in Pennsylvania. He has 20 years of teaching experience in both Europe and the United States.

Jill Williamson, MS, CPT, NASM, is a personal trainer and an adjunct professor in the health and physical education department at Maryland's Anne Arundel Community College.

Photo 4 — *Maurissa McCarthy*

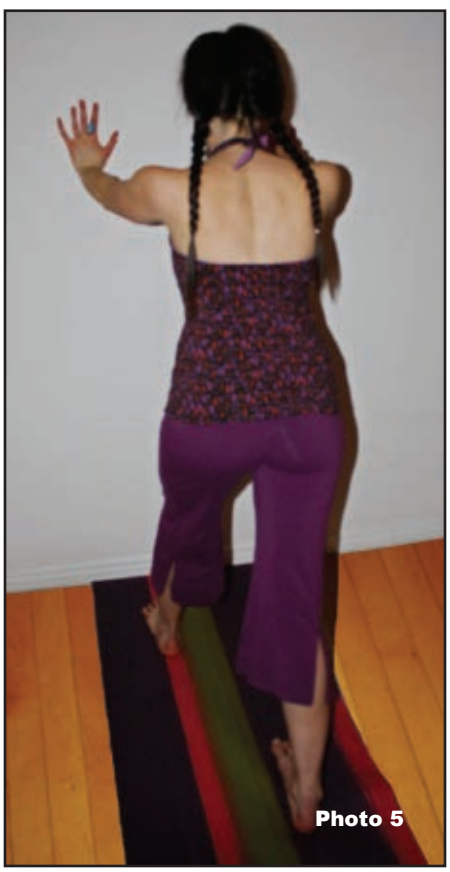


Photo 5 — *Maurissa McCarthy*

PSIA-AASI FINANCES

Are On Solid Footing

by CRAIG ALBRIGHT
Vice President, Operations

As I wrote last season, the 2007–08 fiscal year presented many challenges, most notably the final steps involving the separation of operations from those of PSIA-AASI's longtime partner, the National Ski Patrol, as well as significant staff transitions and considerable investment in information technology. We also anticipate that significant upgrades to the PSIA-AASI website and implementation of new and much-needed association management software will be concluded by the end of the 2008–09 fiscal year. (Much of the investment in that development began during the 2007–08 fiscal year.)

In the face of such major changes, I'm pleased to inform PSIA and AASI members that both associations remained on solid financial footing during fiscal year 2007–08. Responsible leadership and management on the part of the national board of directors and our professional staff made this possible. PSIA-AASI continues to focus its efforts on member benefits and services in assisting you in your role as a teaching pro.

The following summarizes information drawn from an independent auditor's consolidated report of the associations and the American Snowsports Education Association Education Foundation (ASEA EF) for the 2007–08 fiscal year that began July 1, 2007, and ended June 30, 2008. All figures show combined gross income and expenses for PSIA-AASI and ASEA Education Foundation. To understand how revenue is generated and distributed, please consult the accompanying financial charts.

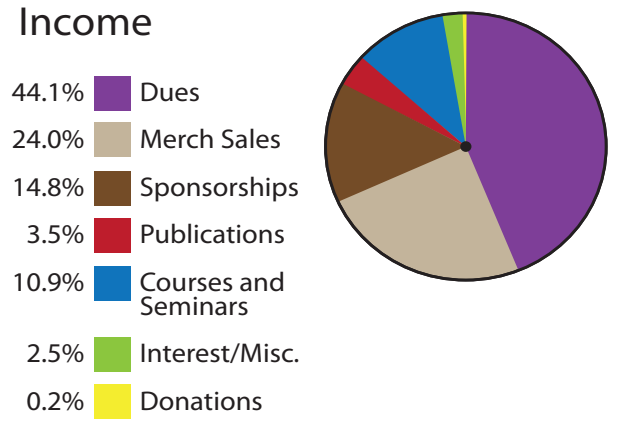
REVENUE

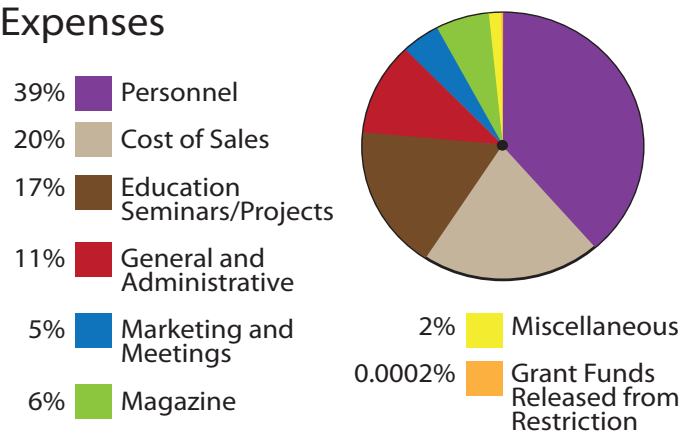
Revenue for the 2007–08 fiscal year was about even with that of the previous year: $2,641,130 in 2007–08, compared to $2,499,059 in 2006–07. These figures reflect gross revenue to the association.

Membership dues last year accounted for 44 percent of PSIA-AASI's total income, meaning that the membership contributed 44 cents for every dollar of the associations' income. The remaining 56 cents was generated through sales of catalog items (24 cents), sponsorship revenue (15 cents), advertising (3 cents), and education seminars (11 cents). Interest and miscellaneous revenue represented the remaining 3 cents. Last year, dues accounted for 46 percent of revenue, meaning that PSIA-AASI increased the amount of non-dues revenue in comparison to what was raised last year.

The board of directors feels it is important that non-dues income remains tied to the activities of the membership. Some examples of the sources of that income include specially priced merchandise available through partnership programs and the *Accessories Catalog*, educational materials, and activities such as the PSIA National Academy, the AASI Rider Rally, and the promotion of the value of membership to area management, suppliers, and the public.

(continued on page 82)





Don't Forget the Fun Factor

by JOSHUA SPOELSTRA

Team Tip

As PSIA-AASI members, we aim to instill in our guests a lifelong passion for the mountain experience. That's a great mission statement. Dissect our actual product, though, and you'll discover that we're in the business of providing fun! We can analyze movements to the Nth degree, strive to progress, and get uber-techy about the whole thing. But at the end of the day, it's all about fun!

Fellow instructor Craig Smith put it simply: "We're getting paid to teach people how to have fun sliding down the hill on wooden and plastic sticks." Let's not forget that or overcomplicate the matter.

PSIA-AASI core values are described as "safety, fun, and learning" (in that order). I love to remind myself of this throughout the season. Without safety, snowboarding and skiing are not much fun. And what's the point of learning a sport if it's not fun? Regardless of the type of lesson—snowboard, skiing, kid, adult, group, or private—fun is the goal.

Adaptive lessons are no different. One of our primary goals in an adaptive class is to get students skiing and riding as independently as possible. During mono-ski (sit down) lessons, we try to get students to control the equipment on their own and ski without our assistance. In a stand-up lesson with a student who requires tethers, we try to help the person progress to where he or she no longer needs tethering. It's a reasonable aspiration but one that's not always possible.

Keep in mind that not all students have the opportunity to get up to the mountains on a regular basis. And despite how much we love to see every student improve, defining a lesson in terms of progress alone can cause us to lose sight of the fun factor.

In some cases, our students may have a degenerative disease or progressive disability. The student's condition may cause him or her to regress in ability level. In this situation, we especially have to remember that fun takes priority over learning. Revisit the PSIA-AASI core values mentioned above. It's not a mistake, typo, or coincidence that fun is second only to safety, while learning is third in priority. Fun is serious business.

Fun Factor #1

The first step I take toward creating an enjoyable lesson is to ask the student what he or she wants to do. I call this "discovering the student's fun goals," also known as fun factor #1. As instructors, we should be able to give students some fun parameters from which to choose. Asking for each student's input directly ties in with building rapport and setting goals, two things we should already be doing at the start of every lesson. For example, if I'm teaching a bi-ski student who has just learned to make instructor-assisted turns on easy terrain, I will mention several potential goals: The student may want to learn to ski without my assistance, try out a new run, or even check out the terrain park and ride a box. Which one of these choices is progress? Simple. They all are. And if you let your student choose the goal, he or she is more likely to enjoy the lesson.

Fun Factor #2

Whatever the lesson, ask yourself fun factor #2, "Is my student having fun?" It's a question that should be at the forefront of our minds when teaching. People don't like learning about something they have no interest in, so it's up to us to keep things interesting.

Laughter and smiles are telltale signs that your student is having a good time. What about other signs? Losing track of time is a great one. Always wanting more is another—another run, another tip, another lesson. I love seeing my students ask for more.

Craig Smith

A couple of years ago, I had the privilege to coach an amazing first-time mono-skier. After six hours of instruction, split over two days, he was riding the equipment better than I've ever been able to. (Humbling.) At the end of the lesson, he looked at me quizzically and asked, "One more?" We rode until last chair, and he still wanted more.

Sometimes you'll need to look for more subtle cues. In some cognitive adaptive lessons, you'll have to pick up on the small hints clients are offering, i.e., body language. Are the arms open or closed, mouth clenched or relaxed, head tilted forward, or sideways and back? These nuances will confirm whether the student is having fun. Tone of voice is huge, too. You can always tell what someone means to say by his or her tone.

During one of my lessons I was blessed with the presence of Daria, a cute little 10-year-old girl with severe autism. For the first couple of hours, she was less than excited about learning to snowboard; she just loved the *idea* of snowboarding. Every time I tried something, I would look for the subtle cues, eye contact, body position, tone of voice, anything. Then, out of left field, she told me how amazing opossums are, describ-

ing in detail their size, average weight, lifespan, everything. Perfect! It just so happens that, when learning S-turns, snowboarders strangely resemble opossums scurrying through the woods (just one of those techy tidbits you pick up as a PSIA-AASI instructor).

All of a sudden, learning to turn was the coolest thing since sliced bread, and sideslipping was as dead as disco. And did you ever notice "opossum" rhymes with "awesome"? In a not-so-subtle cue, Daria was soon filling the whole Tahoe Basin with high shrieks: "Awesome as an opossum! Awesome as an opossum!" while simultaneously screaming S-turns down the hill. Good enough sign for me; Daria was undoubtedly having fun.

Fun Factor #3

Finally, ask yourself one other question, "Am *I* having fun?" This is fun factor #3. If *you're* having a good time teaching the lesson, chances are your student is having fun too. Really, what's not to like about the job? Outside, fresh air, eager students, new snow, sunshine and blue sky . . . just another day "at the office."

Every now and then, though, you may encounter gale force winds in subzero temps or little Tommy who'd rather go inside to play snowboarding on his new Wii video game.

Here's a quick tip for those rough-weather and/or stubborn-student days: Remember *why* you ride or ski. When rough days threaten to stifle the passion you have for the sport, take a little trip down memory lane. I absolutely love to ride. And when my stoke starts to deplete, all I have to do is recall the reason I got into this sport; even stubborn students can't take that away from me.

In inclement weather, use your time outdoors. Go ride, especially when bad weather hits. Few students want to sit around outside, getting pelted with freezing rain or hurricane winds. (I know I don't. Where's the fun in that?) Keep the talking to a bare minimum and just ride. Save the discussion for the indoors, where you can escape the weather and warm the belly with some hot chocolate.

Remember, fun is contagious. If you and your lesson are lighthearted and fun, the student can't help but follow suit. Structure your lesson with these three points in mind:

1. Ask your student what he or she wants to do.
2. Ask yourself, "Is my student having fun?"
3. Ask yourself, "Am I having fun?"

If you can get your student to designate his or her own goals and then have a great time working toward those goals—and you, too, have fun with the process, learning is inevitable. Let's not complicate the simple goal of having fun; after all, we're just "sliding around on wooden and plastic sticks." So go have fun!

Joshua Spoelstra is the head snowboard trainer at California's Heavenly Resort and a member of the AASI Snowboard Team, a Level III examiner, freestyle examiner, and adaptive examiner. Spoelstra was the first AASI instructor to receive AASI adaptive Level III certification.

Team Tip

Don't Be Afraid of Commitment, Just Over-commitment

by ERIC LIPTON

No matter what you've heard, today's hottest skiers aren't afraid of commitment—to the next turn, that is.

While skilled at moving the center of mass (CM) from the inside of one turn to the inside of the next turn, many advanced skiers can perform this move quickly and explosively to tip their skis from one set of corresponding edges to the other. Such tipping of the skis engages the edges to enter the new turn as quickly as possible.

Sounds great, right? Not necessarily. If the skier's CM moves too laterally too quickly without a proportionate dose of forward movement, he or she risks laterally "overcommitting" to the new turn. Such overcommitment to a new turn can put the skier out of balance and limit his or her options for deciding how to develop the turn. Additionally, the skier in such a situation often loses the ability to manage pressure or adjust to undulations in the terrain.

Overcommitment creates a situation in which the skier is locked into a predetermined turn radius that's earned the disparaging nickname "park and ride." The term refers to the fact that the skier loses the advantage of control over the skis and often turns into a "passenger" on his or her own boards.

MAKING A COMMITMENT

Near the completion of a carved parallel turn, the student's CM or hips are uphill of the edged skis (note: for ease of describing this drill to students, I suggest using the terms "CM" and "your hips" interchangeably during the lesson). During such movement the student should feel his or her lower legs pressing forward and uphill into the boot cuffs. To move accurately and powerfully into the next turn while avoiding overcommitment, encourage your students to begin the next turn by directing the CM forward and diagonally—not laterally—into the new turn. Such movement will engage the edges and allow skiers to bend the front of their skis to arc into the fall line with accuracy, stability, and power.

When the CM moves forward, thus positioning the skier's hips over his or her feet, the pressure applied to the ski tips will cause those boards to begin shaping the turn as soon as the student rolls onto the new edges. By getting the student to roll the feet, ankles, and knees from old edges to new, the movement basically clears the way for the CM to move diagonally into the new turn.

Photos by Kate Spurling

Want to arc into and through the fall line with accuracy and strength? Move your center of mass forward and diagonally into the new turn. This puts you in balance over the new outside ski as your feet and lower legs roll the skis to their new edges.

SHUFFLING THROUGH TURNS

1. On comfortable terrain have your students practice skiing long radius linked turns while continuously shuffling their feet back and forth. The goal of the exercise is to maintain consistent shuffling through all parts of the turn. If at one point in the turn the skier is unable to maintain the shuffle, it could mean that his or her hips have fallen behind the feet. To maintain the shuffle during the edge change, the skier will need to move his or her CM forward so that it leads the feet into the new turn. Without a strong forward movement of the CM, it can be difficult to shuffle the feet through the initiation phase of the turn.
2. To focus primarily on the initiation phase of the turn, have your students shuffle their feet until they reach the fall line. At that point, ask them to stop shuffling and parallel ski to complete the turn.
3. If any of your skiers find it difficult to maintain their shuffling through turn completion, you can modify the exercise to accommodate them. Encourage skiers to shuffle only from the fall line through turn completion, or have them continue to shuffle through all parts of the turn.

MOVING TOWARD COMPLETION

As with the initiation phase, each skier's CM must continue to move forward over the skis through the completion phase. Too much knee flexion at turn completion, without the benefit of appropriate ankle flexion, will cause the hips to retreat and make it difficult to maintain the shuffle. At the completion phase, it's vital for the skier to maintain strength through the length and skeletal alignment of the outside leg to keep the hips balanced over the outside foot. By maintaining a strong outside leg while simultaneously flexing through the ankle, skiers can maintain balance against the outside ski and will have greater capacity for moving accurately into the new turn.

In order for your students to use the skis as they were designed, each skier's CM must move to the inside of the turn. Such a movement requires a certain level of commitment, and it's important to remind skiers that while their skis are moving forward through the snow they must continue to move forward with them.

By helping students find the strong forward component to their turns, you'll increase their ability to stay balanced over their skis. In maintaining balance skiers aren't locked onto a specific edge angle or a predetermined turn radius, and they can control how quickly or slowly the turn develops.

By teaching your students to move forward over their skis, they'll enjoy greater control over edge angle with the lower legs and will maintain power and fluidity as they arc into and through the fall line. They'll also do their parts to keep the dreaded "park and ride" off the hill.




Kate Spurling

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Turn Initiation 101:
Start with the Ball of the Foot

by PATRICK HUNTER

In the not-so-distant past, the world of carving was dominated by expert skiers on 220-centimeter boards flying down the mountain. Thankfully, shaped skis made their debut in the mid-1990s, drastically rewriting the rules of carving. Now it's a technique enjoyed with equal fervor by intermediate skiers (and even some beginners) on super sidecuts half as long as the skis of their predecessors.

However, just because beginner and intermediate skiers are now able to carve doesn't necessarily mean they understand the forces at work. To help my students grasp the concept and learn to exploit the ski design for their carving benefit, I encourage a little "foot play."

As an instructor, I discovered time and time again that many of my students didn't know the first thing about carving. And not understanding this skill would keep them from becoming advanced skiers. So when shaped skis became available, I saw an opportunity. With the really short super-sidecut skis (120 to 140 cm), average skiers could carve a ski turn without shooting down the hill at Mach 2. The challenge for me was to use these new shapes to teach intermediate-level students how to cut cleanly and securely through the snow.

First, let me offer this disclaimer: carving does not replace skidding. For example, even in World Cup ski racing, carved turns are mixed with skids (or drifts), and often the two skills combine in the same turn. To help intermediate students advance and improve their all-mountain skills, ensure that your skiers understand both concepts.

Back in the mid-1990s, Warren Witherell visited my home ski area, Snowmass, while promoting his book *The Athletic Skier*. We were able to join the author—a legendary ski coach who helped found the Burke Mountain Ski Academy and turned out generations of top American ski racers—on the hill for a few tips. In one of his key points, he emphasized the need to move the pressure that's under the foot to the ball of the foot when starting a turn. I tried it, I liked it, it worked. (Witherell and fellow coach Olle Larsson have promoted this forward movement for years; it was detailed more recently in *The Professional Skier* by former PSIA Alpine Team member Deb Armstrong ["Where Are You Going? A Look at Directional Movement," fall 2006].)

I started thinking about the technique involved. When carving, the skier engages the edge of the ski at the tip, and then drives the rest of the ski through the same spot. The tip needs to "take a bite." Because the tip of the ski is a relatively long way from the foot, the skier needs to shift some of his or her weight forward onto the ski while simultaneously starting to tip the ski on edge. I decided to use this information in my classes by focusing on the ball of the foot, emphasizing the section of the ball just behind the big toe (fig. 1).

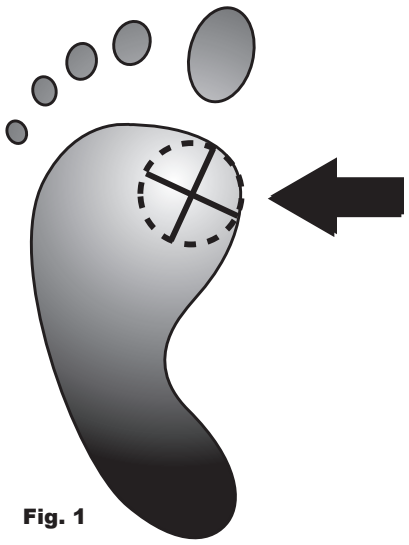

Fig. 1

TO THE SNOW!

Start this particular class lesson by drawing an oversized foot in the snow (the "white board") with your ski pole, toes and all. You'll find that many folks aren't entirely familiar with the term "balls of the feet," so put a large "X" right behind the big toe. Then have your students actually rap their ski poles against the inside edges of their boots to feel that precise point (photo 2).

Next, encourage them to experiment by pressuring this spot, first with one foot, then the other. Remind them that they shouldn't be stepping or lifting, just shifting from the inside of the right foot to the inside of the left foot. This gets your students focused—possibly for the first time—on the sensations at the bottoms of their feet.

Now take the class to a part of the hill with a very slight grade, preferably something with a runout to a flat area. Have your students adopt a wide track stance (to better emphasize the inside edges), and then ask each skier to slide forward in a straight run. On your signal, ask each individual to press the ball of one foot (the "sweet spot" right behind


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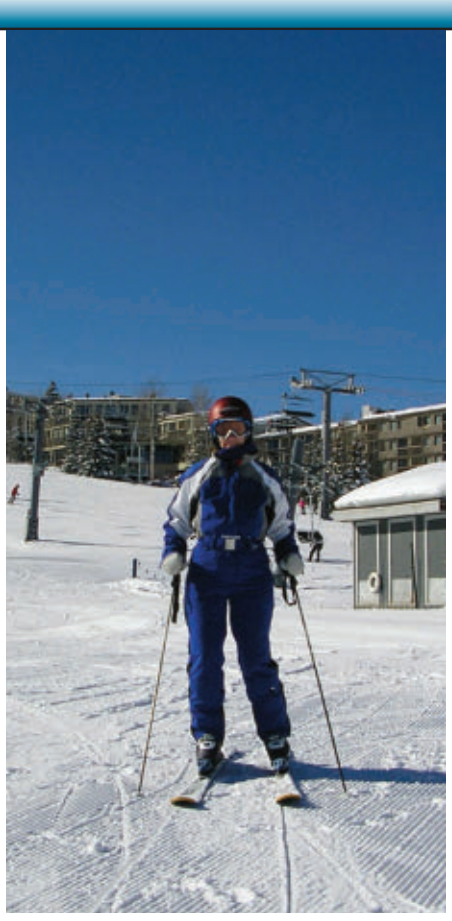
The sensation of exerting pressure on the ski is frequently new to students, who are often a little startled, almost as if they put their foot down on a hot plate.

Photo 2



Photos by Patrick Hunter

the big toe), *and wait* (photo 3). Waiting requires a certain amount of Zen. To help students hold the stance, I sometimes take my skis off so that I can run around and coach them through this part of the lesson.

Please note that I did not demonstrate a turn. Experience has taught me not to introduce a preconceived notion: students who think they're supposed to turn will subconsciously twist their feet. Shortly thereafter, we were witnessing carved turns. The sensation of exerting pressure on the ski is frequently new to students, who are often a little startled, almost as if they put their foot down on a hot plate. Let the turns continue to a stop up the hill. Point out the acceleration that begins as the skier starts to slide downhill, followed by the deceleration that takes place after the skier completes the edged turn.

Flat slopes, of course, are the only kind on which to start a carving lesson. And that goes for any level of skier. Too much pitch can be a distraction and will often evoke ineffective habits of experienced skiers, or frighten new skiers. On a flat hill, acceleration is not an issue, allowing students to focus their attention on the new sensations you're setting up for them to experience.

As you move this exercise to the trails, you'll find it very easy to tell when your skiers are on the spot because their stance changes immediately. Backseat drivers who previously favored leaning against the back of their boots for support will shift their bodies a few inches forward, causing their hips to align over the balls of their feet.

Point out that this realignment moves the shins to the fronts of the boots, an advantageous position that will help your students progress to the next level of proficiency (and beyond). Have the class take a few easy runs to get comfortable with their new spot in the driver's seat. If you see some of your students falling back behind the ball of the foot, ask them to envision thumbtacks behind their calves to reinforce the idea of moving forward over the skis (photo 4).

After your students have grasped this concept, it's time to get more specific. Next, discuss the need to shift the weight to the ball of the uphill foot when preparing to start the next turn. From a neutral stance between turns, the skier should look downhill in the direction of the coming turn, and then begin to pressure the new outside ski. In other words, the student is moving from pressuring the old outside and downhill ski to pressuring the new uphill and outside ski. This, of course, promotes an early edge change.

Make sure your students are not picking up the downhill ski, or even shifting the body uphill. They should be standing on both feet, but redistributing their weight, changing the emphasis from the old outside ski to the new outside ski. Even though we ski with both feet, we still ski from "foot to foot." We use the inside ski, no doubt, but first we need to depend on the outside ski to push us through the turn.

Remind students that the ball of the foot behind the big toe (the "sweet spot") is not positioned in the center of the ski. The big toe is above the inside half of the ski, almost over the inside edge. As a skier comes out of the old turn, or traverses the hill, the uphill ski is still on the old uphill edge. When the skier presses down on this spot, he or she initiates the edge change. The uphill ski starts to flatten as the skier presses that edge down

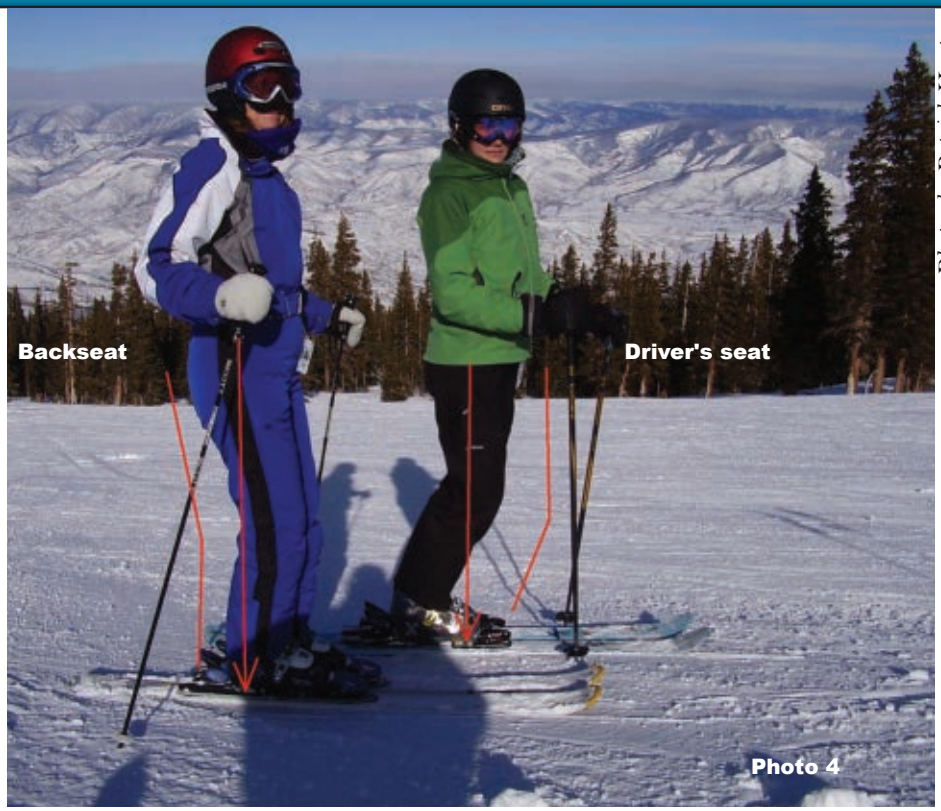


Photo 4

Photos by Patrick Hunter

into the snow. Flattening the uphill ski serves to break off the old turn and allows the skier to direct the tip into the new turn.

'STACK THE BONES'

Now that your students understand turn initiation, teach them to work that new inside edge. This takes muscle and determination. Take your students to a flat spot and have them remove their skis. While standing flat on the snow, ask them to start with even weight on both feet. Then have them press down behind the big toe on the left foot (photo 5). Make them aware of how the left leg reacts to the added pressure and explain that there is a kinetic chain: The ankle firms up. The lower leg muscles tighten up. Further up, the tension will run into the hip and they'll feel some weight there. This is often described as the "stacking of the bones" concept. Kinetically speaking, by pressing the ball of the foot right behind the big toe, you prepare everything you need to control that ski as it goes into and through the turn.

But wait, there's more. We have learned that pressuring the sweet spot starts moving the body weight forward. So what happens when you start your skis into a carved arc down the hill? You accelerate. Ever ride standing up in a bus or subway? What happens when the vehicle starts moving? If you aren't expecting it, you might stagger backwards. Next time you hear the motor rev up, however, you do the smart thing: you lean forward in anticipation of the acceleration. A ski turn is the same. Good skiers move forward, anticipating the acceleration of gravity. Pressuring the ball of the foot aids in that forward movement and keeps the skier in balance.

By giving your students a simplified focus and verifying the results, you've started them on the path to learning a valuable new skill. You haven't overburdened them with jargon, and by keeping things simple you've kept them from overthinking their turns. Have your students take their foot play down the hill to reinforce the new sensations they've just learned, build their confidence with carving, and experiment with yet another tool to use on the mountain.

Be sure to let your students know that this episode of "foot play" just scratches the surface; there's more to feet-based mechanics than they can imagine. But of course, you can't give away all the secrets in the first lesson. 32

Patrick Hunter, a.k.a. "Parabolic Pat," is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor at Snowmass Ski School in Aspen, Colorado.

Photo 5

Team Tip

Zen and the Art of Micro-Pivot Slips

by CHARLIE MACARTHUR

One of the more challenging aspects of telemark and alpine skiing is to initiate steering with the legs. Freeheelers and downhillers alike often twist their hips and shoulders into the turn first, with skis following after. It's a powerful way to produce spinning tricks or emergency stops, but this method generally disrupts the flow of the turn transition, especially when it comes to shorter turns. Therefore, early and smooth tracking as well as bending of the skis from turn to turn requires the subtlety and efficiency of steering with the legs and feet.

Traditionally, nordic and alpine instructors have taught leg steering by encouraging students to engage in hockey slides, hockey stops, and pivot slips. These are all great drills for tele skiers because each move allows the hip to eventually turn across the fall line to simulate what happens in all turns.

But what if we could isolate the movements of leg steering first and then add in the eventual passive hip movement? Micro-pivots allow this kind of isolation.

To practice the kind of footwork you'll use to create micro-pivots, sit on a chairlift and extend your legs to a point where your feet are up off the footrest by a few inches. While doing this, though, make sure not to lock your knees; instead, keep them lightly flexed. With your feet about hip-width apart, engage your legs and feet to aim your skis directly up to a 12 o'clock position. Then slowly rotate your skis from side to side, somewhere between a maximum swing of 10 to 2 o'clock and a minimum of 11 to 1 o'clock. During this exercise you'll want to keep your rear end still and planted firmly against the seat while confining the movement to your legs.

Then take these micro-pivots to the snow. A simple way to make sure that your hips don't move during a micro-pivot is to use your poles as a movement indicator. Rather than hold your poles in your hands, you'll wear them around your waist—connecting the poles by looping the wrist strap of one pole around the basket of the other (photo 1). Secure each pole's opposite end by looping its strap over the tip of the other pole. If the poles are too loose over your waist, you can tighten the fit by twisting the wrist strap before looping it over the basket. Make sure the center point of the poles is level over your hip bones in the front and aligned along the top of your sacrum in the back. (Note: if you choose to use this drill with students, you'll


Photo 1


Photo 2


Photo 3

want to get approval to do so from your ski school before encouraging skiers to wear ski poles around their waists during the lesson.)

Next, move to a groomed green run and ski straight ahead. Once you're moving, pivot your skis slowly and minimally to and from either side of 12 o'clock (about 10 degrees to each side). Then slowly increase the amount of pivot to 11 o'clock, and then on to 1 o'clock (photo 2). Slow pivoting requires more control and helps to reduce the tendency to twist the hips.

While micro-pivoting, your movement-indicator pole setup will give you immediate feedback with regard to your hip movement. Experiment with holding the pole ends in order to isolate your hips from twisting or tipping motions.

Generally, such micro-pivots reveal a skier's need to adjust fore, aft, and laterally along the skis until he or she can pivot from the middle of the foot. The next move is to alternate the micro-pivots with small telemarks (i.e., one ski leading the other), and find out how far your skis can rotate on your imaginary clock face before your hips start to turn (photo 3). This exercise will show you how much you can turn just the legs without engaging the hips.

Finally, once you've isolated steering within the lower legs, it's time to try a hockey slide and eventually move on to pivot slips. When trying out such moves, don't forget to release the downhill edge as the legs and feet begin their rotation back toward 12 o'clock. Such a release should occur prior to the lead change in your tele turns. Now make some low-intensity short turns on groomed, green terrain with skis turning to about 9:30 (photo 4) and 2:30 (photo 5) across the fall line. Take note of how much the poles rotate from right to left or left to right: during short tele turns your hips should rotate because of leg rotation and necessary lead change, not because you're turning your skis with your hips.

Maintaining disciplined action in the lower legs and control in the hips are key to creating more options for yourself in the trees, bumps, tight chutes, and all short-radius turns.

Charlie MacArthur teaches at the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass in Colorado, and is a PSIA-RM (telemark and alpine) examiner. A member of the current PSIA Nordic Team, MacArthur also served on the PSIA Alpine Team from 2000 to 2004.

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photos by Cesar Piotto

Stack the Odds Against Injury, 10 Percent at a Time

by JOSHUA SPOELSTRA

Team Tip

Anyone have an insatiable desire to go ride? How about make progress? Of course you do. And don't injuries suck? No need to answer. All of us sideways stick-riding rippers detest surrendering to the powers of being broken off, reduced to the life of couch riding. Yet, it's common knowledge that snowsports are associated with a certain level of risk. So what do we do with this funny little quandary? Over the years, I have relied on a little recipe that maximizes progression while minimizing injury. I call it the "10 Percent Rule."

Simply put, warming up isn't essential, it's necessary to stay in the game. Sure, you can go huck yourself, pray with diligence, and hopefully land a few good tricks. But that will only take you so far. Before you know it, ligaments scream, bruises appear, and gross, gooey fluids take over your body like an alien from a low-budget '70s sci-fi flick. You are now officially broken off and will suffer from sofa-surfing-itis.

To keep this ugly picture from becoming reality, warm up through small, progressive steps, 10 percent at a time. According to The Stretching Institute, a company established in response to a steadily increasing occurrence of sport-related injury, "Warming up increases the body's core temperature and muscle temperature, and increases blood flow, heart rate, and respiratory rate."

After a good stretch session, take your first run of the day at 50 to 60 percent of your ability level. This will get the blood and oxygen running through your veins, which fires up the brain, lubricates your joints, and heats up your muscles. The less-than-aggressive run lets your mind and body warm up together, and gives you time to gauge the conditions of the day. Should you run into any trouble, such as ice or someone cutting you off

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Photos by Craig Smith

on the trail, you still have 40 to 50 percent in your reserves to pull through any incident that may come along.

Once you have a warm-up run under your board, bump it up 10 percent. The accompanying photos offer an example of how a 10-percent-at-a-time warm-up might progress. In the terrain park, start by scoping everything out first, especially if you haven't hit a certain feature before. For jumps, I usually start off straight airing the smaller ones. Then in the next run, I throw some comfortable spins on those same jumps and start straight airing the bigger ones. By the third or fourth run through, I spin the larger kickers.

By now I've given myself plenty of time to warm up to the features while simultaneously warming up my mind and body. The gradual warm-up can have you running at full force by the fourth or fifth run of the day. You're now both mentally and physically on top of your game. Alert and focused, you know you have the ability to reach peak performance—without pulling any bodily appendage out o' whack, which would threaten to take you out of the game entirely.

There's nothing worse than when the mind and body are fighting each other. I call this the "Kiss of Death." An internal struggle defeats any chance of progression. The mind won't fire information quickly enough, and the body reacts completely opposite to what the brain is asking for, or just doesn't react at all.

By following the simple 10 percent rule, you give your mind and body appropriate time in which to work together. The body is warmed up enough to receive and process all the information through the senses. The mind has had time to get on track with the body. Now the mind is able to interpret incoming information and send the right response back to the body.

Dan Edwardes, an avid "freerunner" (you know, those guys in tiny shorts who run everywhere looking like Jackie Chan), wrote, "A good warm-up period . . . acts as a transitional stage from the fairly random thought-process of everyday living to the highly focused and committed intensity best employed for training. It encourages concentration on your physical self and helps you get 'in sync' and collect yourself for the demands you are about to place on your body."

Whether you're just dipping your toes into teaching the sport, or are a seasoned veteran, the 10 percent rule can apply to you. I've been using this helpful formula for many years, and it has helped me—and those with whom I shared it—avoid injury through years of teaching and competition.

Take my recipe for success, go out, and have fun with it. Give yourself enough time to warm up before pushing your boundaries. Avoid the Kiss of Death by letting your mind and body warm up with each other. Take a moment as you reach your peak performance. Then watch your riding progress to the next level as your body stays in one piece. 32

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Joshua Spoelstra is the head snowboard trainer at California's Heavenly Resort and a member of the AASI Snowboard Team. He has a minor in human kinetics and is an AASI-certified Level III examiner, freestyle examiner, and adaptive examiner.

Book Reviews

By Mike Shank

The AASI Snowboard Instructor's Guide

Leave it to the American Association of Snowboard Instructors to craft a meticulous piece of writing whose main plot centers around snowboard instruction. It is a book about them, for them, written by them. It may seem a little insider for some readers, and that's because it is. But this reviewer found a whole new world opening up in front of him. This page-turner combines the best of AASI's Snowboard Teaching system with the latest advances in riding and current knowledge. Take off your gloves when reading it, as turning the pages will be much easier. The book truly is an essential guide to help AASI instructors deliver snowboard lessons with precision and personality. Not to mention, it has lots of nice pictures and line drawings. It's the book your entire crew will be excited about. And it will even fit in your cargo pocket.

★★★★ 1/2

Why Reference Alignments Work

by SCOTT ANFANG

The problem with most snowboard tips is that they tend to go to one extreme or the other, offering too little information or going so overly technical that you get lost. The tips featured in mainstream consumer magazines range from "Go faster than you think, look over, 'think five,' and stomp the landing" to a description so technical that you need a physics degree to make sense of the centrifugal force, tangents, and circumduction moves. The reference alignment tip featured in this article is my attempt to find the middle ground between these two extremes.

Dave Thomas

Whether deep in powder or above it, riding in alignment means you're ready for whatever happens next.

Let's start with a little background information. You were no doubt introduced to reference alignments during the AASI snowboard certification process. Some riders struggle to understand reference alignments; others use them to ride but don't put any extra thought into dissecting the movements themselves. Watch the pro riders in a big air contest, though, and you'll notice that they tend to demonstrate similar body positions and stances during jump approaches and takeoffs. Do you think they all took the same AASI Level I clinic? I think not! The reason pro riders appear to ride alike is because a balanced and aligned stance is what allows the rider to create enough power to land the jump.

The three reference alignments can be found in AASI's *Snowboard Instructor's Guide*, and are as follows:

1. Front Foot – The rider's shoulders, hips, and knees are aligned (i.e., "skeletally stacked") perpendicular to the front foot.

2. Board/Terrain – The shoulders and hips are centered over the rider's split and aligned with the terrain where the board is traveling or about to land.

3. Center of Mass (CM) – The CM is between the feet and over the board or turning edge.

Believe it or not, my 2-year-old daughter helped me come up with the idea of offering the "why" behind reference alignments. You're probably wondering, "How can a 2-year-old help write a snowboard tip?" It hit me when Ashley asked, "Why, Daddy?" I have never had a snowboard instructor ask me "why" or "how" the reference alignments work. They all just look at me and say, "I know what the reference alignments are." To satisfy one of my 2-year-old's favorite questions, here are why and how reference alignments work.

Front Foot: If the shoulders, hips, and knees are aligned perpendicular to the front foot, the rider will be in balance. A rider who is in balance can create power, which is why more aggressive riders can charge down the hill and still look smooth.

Board/Terrain: The shoulders and hips are centered over the rider's split and aligned with the terrain. In terms of the board-to-body relationship, they all must be traveling to the same place. If the rider's front shoulder goes up or down, the front foot should follow suit. Again, I hear my little girl ask, "Why?" Because if you want equal flexion and extension throughout your joints, your ankles, knees, and hips must adjust to accommodate the terrain under your feet. If your joints are moving in different planes, you will have uneven flexion and/or extension, resulting in loss of power

Photos by Dave Thomas

Knowing when to be in and out of alignment allows for explosive turns like this one and keeps your speed up for the next turn.

or range of movement. If the previous description seems overly technical, try thinking of your joints as pistons in an engine. Things work great when the pistons are moving up and down the same distance every time, but bend one piston and you'll notice a drastically different result. When the pistons no longer move together as one unit, the car will run inefficiently or stall out.

Center of Mass: The CM is between the feet and over the board or turning edge. In order to turn, you need to move your CM away from the board and into the direction you want to go.

Let me tie all this together. I look at it this way: the upper body needs to stay in alignment for the rider to stay in balance. All of the turning and steering forces need to come from the lower body; shoulder movement alone will not turn a snowboard. When the rider is balanced, he or she can move up and down, flex and extend, and really begin to work the board. When you know how to work your board, you'll have control over your CM in order to put it wherever you want it. And when you can move your CM within the various planes, you'll become a more versatile and skilled snowboarder.

Remove one link from the chain, though, and it all falls apart. And that is why we need to break down the movements and explain to our students that all three of these reference alignments have to work together.

While I don't think it's necessary for snowboarders to move like robots and ride 100 percent of the time in alignment, you do need to know how to best position your body and where to put your board to stay balanced and ride with power. And that, my fellow riders, is why I teach reference alignments!

Scott Anfang is a second-term member of the AASI Snowboard Team. He is the snowboard school technical director and terrain park manager for Steamboat Ski Resort in Colorado.

360s Make Advanced Lessons Fun for Kids of All Ages

by BILL CLAIRE, *with* SONJA ROM

Young people ages 4 to 18 make up approximately 65 percent of all the students taking lessons at snowsports schools in this country. Knowing that this age group accounts for a clear majority of such lessons, the question becomes this: As an instructor, what can you do to keep the younger, more advanced students excited about attending lessons?

The answer to that question is to give eager young pupils something fun to try. Enter the 360. From our experience, teaching 360s quickly and easily captures the attention of even the most reluctant students. The best part is that not only are 360s fun, they can also help transform students into more versatile skiers.

The 360 lesson and its variations have been in existence for many years. The blending of movements that result in a 360 allow you as instructor to reinforce the four skiing movements—collectively referred to as "B.E.R.P."—used to complete this maneuver while maintaining ski-to-snow contact. If you're not familiar with this acronym, the mere sound of it might put you in the mind of a combination of burgers, enchiladas, radishes, and pizza. In reality, though, a 360 drill requires students to refine their balance, edging, rotary, and pressure control movements. Therefore, when it comes to the successful completion of 360s, B.E.R.P.-ing is not only allowed, it's *encouraged.*

REVIEW TIME

To begin the lesson, your best bet is to dish up a review of the drills that hone the skills needed to complete a 360. Try an on-snow refresher that includes the use of garlands, sideslipping, the "falling leaf," pivot slips, and hockey stops. You might even want to start skiers practicing some of these moves in their boots—but without skis—on a slope. Ski-less repetition can help ensure that students correctly understand the fundamental movements *before they put on their skis.*

Start with garlands: the release and re-engagement of edges helps students flatten their skis on the snow. After a sequence of garlands, it's easy to turn the focus of this introduction to the subject of sideslipping, which further emphasizes the use of the feet and ankles in edging movements. Let your students practice getting the skis absolutely flat so the edges don't catch during rotation in the 360. Make sure that the terrain and snow conditions are conducive to this task. Have the kids race each other to see who can slip the farthest and the fastest.

Once you've covered garlands and sideslipping, leading your charges through a "falling leaf" pattern will reinforce fore and aft pressure control movements. Have them practice moving their tips and tails as far up and down the fall line as they can. Adjusting pressure from the tips to the tails of the skis, while maintaining good balance, is integral to initiating and completing 360s.

Now that you've finished with the falling leaf, you can work with students on pivot slips. Using pivot slips can be critical in developing upper and lower body separation. Skiers' feet, ankles, and hips need to move independently from the torso. You'll want to emphasize to students that they need to maintain a stable upper body facing down the fall line while their feet, legs, and hips turn the skis under them.

Finally, working on hockey stops with your students will reinforce the importance of re-engaging the edges at the end of the drill. Hockey stops also help to make for safe finishes.

Keep in mind that some kids, depending on their age and stage of development, will not look like adults when performing the aforementioned tasks.

Reviewing such movements will help your skiers either build or refresh the proprioceptors they've developed within their feet and ears. While having students practice these moves, you'll want to get them to ski backwards in a wedge or open parallel position. You can reassure students performing this movement for the first time by joining them in skiing backwards. Do your best throughout to reinforce the need for skiers to use pressure control movements while progressing from their toes to the balls of the feet to their heels.

TRAIN YOUR PILOTS

Using props with younger students can make practicing pressure control movements easy and fun. To create such a prop you will need something that holds its shape, is easy to carry, and is about 24 to 30 inches long. One prop that has worked well is a section of a broomstick

Real guy case study No. 0042: Steve Pennebrook
Occupation: Vail Ski Instructor

Doesn't dread stiffness from that first week of the season

Enjoys "spiritual" moments before the lifts open

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Increased longevity on the slopes for years to come

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or bamboo poles cut in half. Sonja Rom and Sandy Krisher, ACE Team Members extraordinaire for PSIA-Central, recommend using plastic golf club tubes cut down to about 30 inches in length. These plastic sections are light and safe—for example, they will bend if you fall on them. (Before adding any prop to a lesson, make sure your ski school is okay with its use.)

Ask your students to use the prop to mimic a "control stick" on an old-fashioned airplane. (You know, the control levers you see in old World War I movies or in the "Peanuts" cartoons where Snoopy is a flying ace.) Have them hold the bottom of the "stick" close to their knees with the top pointing out ahead. Skiers shouldn't squeeze the stick with their knees, though; they just need to keep it in that orientation. To maintain the stick correctly, students need to grasp it with both hands on the top half just like they were flying Snoopy's imaginary Sopwith Camel.

Once you have your students at the top of a gentle slope, take a look around the immediate vicinity and make sure there is no traffic: safety has to be your first priority, and giving your students lots of room is key. Start the next part of the lesson by asking your students to flatten their skis and glide in a straight run. Encourage them to stand balanced over the middle of the skis in an athletic stance. No wedges, please! In the case of adverse weather and snow-surface conditions, you can have students widen their stance to create a more stable platform.

THE TAKE-OFF

Let students know that this is the moment of truth, the beginning of their 360 adventure. To start, have skiers hold the control stick upright to mimic the motion necessary to maintain a level position (photo 1). Then ask them to move the top of the control stick forward in the movement that simulates making the "plane" dive toward the ground. The forward motion of the stick will encourage the skiers to press their weight (i.e., their center of mass) forward onto the balls of their feet and thus weight the tips of their flattened skis.

Encourage skiers to keep the chest, chin, and head up instead of gazing down at the tips of their skis. To carry the metaphor further, tell them that as pilots they need to look out the cockpit window at the horizon instead of at the ground.

Next, have students move the top of the stick in the direction they want to turn and look over their shoulder in that direction as though they were looking for a plane behind them. At this point encourage students to slide the now-lightened and flattened tails of their skis around, pivoting on their skis, while steering into the turn with their feet, knees, and hips (photo 2). This rotary movement will give students the momentum to move through the first 180 degrees of the turn. Students should finish this part of the drill facing up the hill as they ski backwards on their descent. You'll want to ski in a wedge or open parallel backwards down the hill to reassure those of your students who are unfamiliar with skiing backwards.

If a student has trouble performing these moves, make sure that the individual is balanced between left and right skis and that he or she is not engaging the edges. After having students practice this, take a moment to let something sink in: you just had students practice four vital phenomena—balance, edging, rotary,


Photo 1


Photo 2


Photo 3

and pressure control movements—all in one task, without ever even having to utter those terms.

FULL CIRCLE

To help students build on what they learned from the first part of their flying drill, ask them now to pull back on the stick while keeping it aimed in the direction of the turn, moving their weight over, or just in front of, their heels (photo 3). The movement of the feet helps to release pressure that has been built up on the front of the skis, and now places it squarely on the skis' rear. Encourage students to complete the 360 by rotating the tips of their flattened skis (photo 4). As skiers move through the spin, make sure they remain balanced in an athletic stance over their skis (remember—they can't steer from the backseat).

Students should wrap up the 360 by moving the control stick back to the start position, with their weight centered over the skis (photo 5). Each skier should finish in a balanced, athletic stance with shins pressed against boot cuffs, and with chest, chin, and head up (photo 6).

Although older teens might not want to use a prop, you can get them to make all the same movements and simply have them visualize using a control stick. Some teens relate well to the idea of using a metaphorical control stick for their metaphorical vehicles if only because many digital games require the use of a joystick. In fact, using visual cues and keeping hands free—that is, working without poles—is often easier for some teenagers because it enables them to focus on the movements.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Once your students master a single 360, have them try several in a row. Most students will want to lead with their strong side, but encourage them to try starting in the opposite direction to get them to build balanced skills on both sides of the body. Encourage students to initiate with an aggressive uphill turn, flattening their edges with skis perpendicular to the fall line, and completing the first half of the 360 with rotation.

Next, have them do a 180 and ski backwards for a few feet, then go back in the same direction from which they started. Then encourage skiers to do a 270 by completing three-quarters of the spin, then ski forward into a garland. Complete several of these "270 garlands" in each direction. By varying the degree of spins and coupling the movement with a garland, you will help students get comfortable with all different types of moves in both directions, building skills equally on both sides of their bodies.

When working with a group of young skiers of differing ages you'll likely have to vary your approach throughout, depending on the level of development of each skier. Your job will be to adapt the lesson to address the CAP model (i.e., the cognitive, affective, and physical aspects of all ages and levels present).

For example, very young students may not have the fine motor skills to effectively manage the movements necessary to accomplish a full 360. This is especially true if these skiers haven't yet mastered oppositional movement directionality (the ability to separate upper and lower body movements) or good coordination.

Youngsters between the ages of 10 and 12 typically relish competition. Therefore, you could take a group of these young go-getters aside and ask


Photo 4

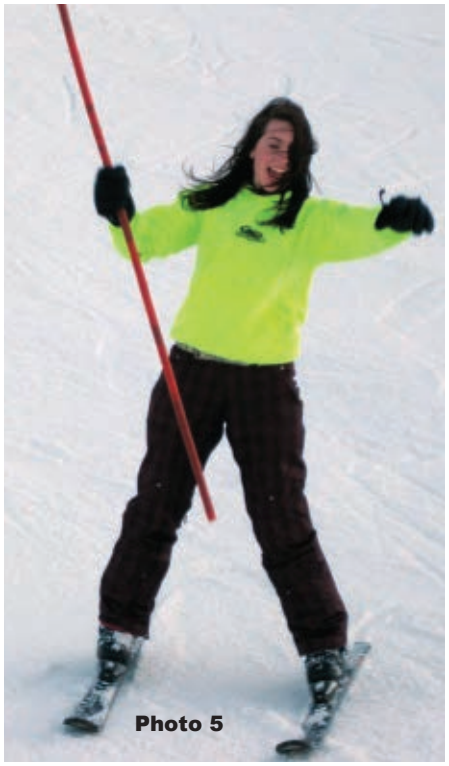
Photo 5


Photo 6

Photos by Bill Claire

them to see who can do the most 360s in succession. Or ask them to see who is the fastest at completing a full 360.

Finally, teens can be the most peer conscious of all the younger student groups. You can fulfill their need to belong by praising the successes of teenage skiers when you vocally reward them in front of the entire group. Conversely, you will need to quell or control ridicule if one or more have trouble executing a 360. Because the teenage years are often characterized by swift growth, some students may have trouble dealing with coordination issues. Make sure you provide moral and instructional support when frustrations arise.

CUSTOMIZE WITH STYLE

In addition to the differing levels of development that occur through various age groups, you should also bear in mind that you'll be dealing with students of various multiple intelligences (MI). To speak to a variety of MI, carefully choose a series of descriptive words to engage a "linguistic" learner. Alternately, you'll have the best luck addressing a "spatial" learner by using a clock-face metaphor to describe where the student's skis should move. If you're dealing with a "mathematical" learner, a logical numerical progression describing the same movement might work best for this student.

With a "musical" learner, try using a pattern from a popular song to imprint the specific points of a drill. For a student who thinks and learns in "spatial" terms, you can paint a picture in words of what the student is likely to experience during the movement.

By customizing each approach to the various MI's, you can frame movements in ways that best suit each student's learning style. Keep in mind, though, that no one skier will ever strictly learn in one style or another. Blending your instruction through a variety of intelligences can often be the most effective approach.

When you're dealing with a large group and have only limited time, you may want to simply do what you can to cover all types of "cognitive" learning by addressing the "doers," "watchers," "feelers," and "thinkers" among your students. For the thinkers, explain all of the movements in detail. For feelers, describe the sensations of the shin moving first against the tongue of the boot, then talk about what they'll experience when the calves move against the boot spoiler. For the watchers in the group, demonstrate left and right 360s, and give a clear view of the approach as well as the departure. For the doers, you can allow them to sit through all of the other descriptions, but with these kids it's often best to let them go—and like the famous Nike ads—"just do it!"

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Great athletes in every sport have one thing in common: they practice the fundamentals again and again and again. This includes top stars such as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, and Hermann Maier. Jordan's extraordinary athletic prowess allowed him to execute the fundamental basketball skills of footwork, dribbling, passing, and free throws with grace and seeming effortlessness. But these were things he practiced, to perfection, every day he was on the court.

Explain to your skiers that there's one surefire way to become a Michael Jordan on skis: through practice, practice, and more practice. When they've started to feel comfortable with their 360s, excellence is theirs for the taking if only they repeat their moves until they're doing rotations in their sleep.

Skier should start repetitions of their 360s on a flat part of the run-out on their favorite hill, at the top of a trail, or even in the middle of a run. Emphasize that they should make sure the coast is clear before they begin, and that using a clear area on the hill will give them the space necessary to repeat the moves they need to refine.

Because 360s employ all four fundamental skiing movements in one

task, practicing them prepares your students to handle many different situations with ease. The 360 skills establish fundamentals for success when skiing moguls, trees, or steeps; recovering balance on a race course; and even riding rails, halfpipes, and other features in a terrain park.

Next time you face a large class of intermediate to advanced skiers who might appear to be less than enthused to be in another lesson, enlist the 360 to pull them back in. How can you go wrong with a drill that gets students to build on what they already know, introduces an element of novelty that piques the imagination, and refines movements that will come to their rescue in varied ski conditions and terrain? Even Michael Jordan would tell you that his star didn't rise overnight.

CONCLUSION

One statistic we've heard is that 85 percent of people who try skiing for the first time never return to try it a second time. In his recent book *Tactics for All Mountain Skiing*, former PSIA Alpine Team member Chris Fellows offers the following explanation for this phenomenon: "These individuals drifted away from the sport because they never got hooked! They never enjoyed a defining experience that etched an indelible mark on their soul and bound them to the fraternal group of diehard skiers."

With that in mind, think of teaching 360s as your opportunity to create lasting memories and providing a hankering for the slopes among the students in your classes. Make your lessons epic for all of your students, thus etching that "indelible mark" by challenging students while they build skills they'll use over a lifetime of skiing.

RESOURCES

This progression is a culmination of ideas and input from fellow instructors, PSIA education staff, members of PSIA-Central's ACE Team, PSIA-AASI's *Children's Instruction Manual*, *Alpine Technical Manual*, *Park and Pipe Instructor's Guide*, and *Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors*, and, most important, willing students who've helped refine it. It really all began in 1974 during fall dryland training, on a plastic mat, among the hills surrounding the Cuyahoga River, with an affable-yet-demanding Austrian instructor named "Ziggy" who showed Bill how to do his first 360. 32

Bill Claire is a PSIA-certified Level I instructor with Parallax SnowSports, a traveling ski school based in Columbus, Ohio. His ski teaching career began in 1974.

Sonja Rom is a member of the PSIA-Central Division education staff, and has been an instructor since 1978. She currently teaches at Perfect North Slopes in Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

Got Soul?

by ROSS MATLOCK *and* BEN ROBERTS

Jonathan Selkowitz

Ski resorts of yesteryear were small operations, each with their own unique flavor and defining attributes. Today, with many resorts owned and managed by multimillion-dollar corporations, the skiing and riding public often encounters a more homogenized snowsports experience. PSIA Nordic Team member Ross Matlock laments the change; PSIA Education Manager Ben Roberts sees it as resorts giving customers what they want.

ROSS SAYS:

Last summer, while mired in the type of monotonous work that nearly encourages wandering thoughts, I came to a disheartening realization: our resorts are losing their soul. Drop me blindfolded into any of the major resorts across the country, and I would struggle to identify where I stood. Like the interchangeable strip malls we see on the outskirts of towns and cities across America, we see the same cookie-cutter base area development in our ski resorts.

We are losing the soul of the snowsports industry to the world of "Sameville." Developers who think they have the formula for success are sucking the individuality out of our ski towns, turning them into another Wal-Mart where the layout never varies. Walkways and courtyards are home to chain retail shops that sell the same T-shirts you could buy in any resort across the country.

Drinking establishments with instant spray-on "old ski town" appeal and excessive prices play Muzak on loudspeakers. Guest service agents badger you with another handout, energy bar, or sunscreen promo. Corporate logos adorn every available location . . . and be careful to walk around the well-placed four-wheel drive on display in the main courtyard.

Resort food completes the soulless experience. Cooks who look like they just got out of high school and would rather be anywhere else serve generic stadium food to the masses at ridiculous prices.

Soul cannot be sprayed or painted on. It can't be bought or sold. It develops over time and is heavily influenced by locals and the people around. We need the funky eating places that have been a part of the fabric and unique to the resort since its beginnings, the strange coffee shops that serve locally backed produce from hidden alleys, the base area pubs that offer real history, good food, and live après music played by a local musician who can actually interact with the audience.

iStockPhoto

BEN SAYS:

It's easy to rip on destination resorts and their generic plazas and bars, the surly fry cooks, and how all of the funky mountain towns have been commoditized into logo'd Potemkin villages. Ross, I get annoyed by the same things you do, but I don't see that our resorts have "lost soul." Soul for me is about enjoying the mountains, and no matter where I go to ski or ride I see a lot of people having an absolute blast.

Personally, I don't think all large "corporate" resorts are marching in lock-step down the same path to ruin. Some get it right and offer a great experience on and off the mountain. Others have sold themselves out for the quick buck, but these resorts will be forced to learn from their mistakes. Meanwhile, the small, non-corporate local hills will continue to do whatever it takes to stay in business and show people a good time.

Ross, you say that resort food completes the soulless experience. I bought my first burger at a resort 26 years ago as a 7-year-old kid, and I felt just as ripped off then as I do now. This is not a sign of the times; it has always been this way. The only difference I see is that now when I visit the same resort, I have a choice between the cafeteria and several upscale establishments offering full menus of equally overpriced (but much tastier) burgers. I also look for the funky coffee shops, bars, and family-run restaurants—and I almost always find them.

And what about the surly cooks and lift attendants who look like they would rather be somewhere else? I know exactly where they'd rather be, on the mountain skiing or riding instead of working their low-paying jobs. These people have made choices and sacrifices to live in the mountains. Where you see a cranky employee, I see a future local, someone who wants to be in the mountains (and on the snow) as much as I do.

The thing is, I don't think this "soul" really has much to do with the towns, plazas, and restaurants. I've skied all over the world and seen people having a great time skiing and riding no matter where they were, whether they were old-time locals or tourists out for their first ski vacation. I have had just as much fun skiing at tiny little Willard Mountain in New York or Terry Peak in South Dakota as I have at the corporate mega-resorts. And the chili tasted pretty much the same wherever I went. 32

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Mammoth: Its Wild, Wooly Adventures Enthrall

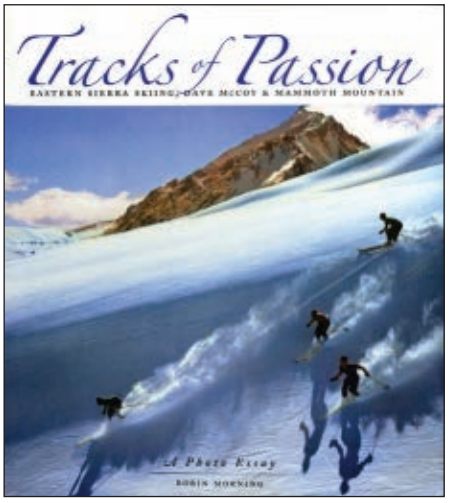
by CHRIS I. LIZZA

Robin Morning. *Tracks of Passion: Eastern Sierra Skiing, Dave McCoy & Mammoth Mountain*. Mammoth Lakes Foundation/Mammoth Ski Museum, 2008. 368 pages. $75.

Since the 1992 publication of Rick Richards' profile of Taos Ski Valley's founder Ernie Blake, *Ski Pioneers*, dozens of well-researched skier biographies and ski area histories have found their way to the coffee tables of America's ski chalets. The latest entry into the field, weighing in at just under six pounds, is the monumental, inch-and-a-half thick *Tracks of Passion*, a photo essay of early skiing in California's Eastern Sierra, the much-ridden slopes of Mammoth Mountain (like Taos, one of the last family-owned ski resorts in the United States), and the remarkable, inspiring journey of Mammoth Mountain's founder and operator, Dave McCoy.

While Mammoth Mountain has been enjoyed by generations of racers and other skiing professionals who appreciate the abundant snows, extended seasons, and accommodating hosts, the resort remains relatively unknown to all but the loyal Southern California skiers who flock to its 3,500 acres of riding terrain and 30 lifts each winter weekend. Former U.S. Ski Team member and author Robin Morning shows that today's Mammoth is the result, and a reflection, of the unfaltering optimism of the barrel-chested, square-jawed McCoy—and the hundreds of captivated skiers who stayed to help after being inspired by his exemplary work ethic, enthusiasm for skiing, and humble personality.

Dave's story (he was never referred to as "Mr. McCoy") is a riveting American tale of an only child born into a family struggling through the heart of the Great Depression. When Dave was a youngster, the family lived in a series of tent camps as Dave's father sought work and Western riches, first in the oil refineries of El Segundo and then on the road projects of California's burgeoning Central Valley. After his father abruptly abandoned the family in the autumn of 1930, Dave—then a freshman in high school—was sent to live with his grandparents in the coal-mining town of Wilkerson, Washington, not far from present-day Crystal Mountain. There, his grandfather taught him the basics of fly-fishing, and a classmate introduced



him to skiing. One summer, Dave and a pal drove a Model A that they had rebuilt to the Eastern Sierra to visit family friends. There he met some local hydrographers whose job was to measure the seasonal snowfields for the distant city of Los Angeles. Viewing the alpine glaciers perched high above the sweltering Owens Valley, Dave vowed that this was where he would make his home.

The Eastern Sierra proved ideal ski terrain. The floor of the Owens Valley was easily accessed with a modern highway from where one could merely drive up one of the deep canyons until snow was reached to begin a ski expedition or operation. Dozens of rope tows, and rope-tow operators, could be found in the pre-World War II era, and this epic tome's author painstakingly located and included photos of many of these "lost" ski areas of the Eastern Sierra and the inventive contraptions that passed as an "upski." Dave's tows, however, were the first in the region to serve the public, and because of his mechanical skills, they worked the best. With his roving Forest Service permit allowing him to set up weekend tow operations anywhere in the region and his dream job as snow surveyor taking him to remote Sierra passes, Dave soon became one of the top skiers, and ski racers, in California.

Recognizing the post-WWII boom in skiing, the U.S. Forest Service sought to meet growing demand by issuing a prospectus for a destination ski resort on Mammoth Mountain. Dave, who had operated tows on Mammoth's north slope in the fall and spring when it became accessible, was the only one to "bid" on the project. The so-called experts of the day had determined that Mammoth was too remote, too windy, too high, and received too much snow to become a viable ski area. By Thanksgiving of 1955, Dave had quit his hydrographer's job and installed a surplus double chairlift on Mammoth Mountain with little more than a handshake and a can-do spirit. When in the ensuing years it came to erecting a tower, grooming a run, or fixing a machine, Dave relied largely on innovation and improvisation. A favorite photo sequence shows the construction of a latticed gondola tower. Lacking a crane big enough to set the entire tower, Dave had the crew build the top half upside down, then he devised a cantilever system to pivot the top half of the tower into place using a bulldozer to pull the cable uphill and bring the tower sections together.

Typically, construction management consisted of Dave starting the project and then turning it over to the local race

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kids (including the book's author Morning) who had been training in the mornings on the summer snowfields. By midmorning, the snow softened too much for racing, and the young skiers went to work driving loaders, operating backhoes, and pouring cement under the tutelage of their coach, foreman, and mentor. What could be more fun?

And the race team was more of a race *family*. Dave had married a local cheerleader named Roma, and they soon had six kids running around their home in the former ski lodge at McGee Creek. Several of the McCoys and other local kids became U.S. Ski Team members, and Dave's fame as an inspirational coach spread. He was frequently dubbed head coach of the Far West and Western States teams, and athletes came from around the country to Mammoth to train with Dave. While Roma knit the team sweaters, the kids collected the honors: Poncho McCoy appeared in a mid-air tuck on a 1968 cover of *SKI*, and Penny McCoy won the only U.S. medal at the 1966 World Championships in Portillo, Chile. The most famous Mammoth racer, however, was Jill Kinmont, who was being touted as the next Andy Mead in ski publications and *Life* magazine. Just days after appearing on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, Kinmont crashed at a race in Alta and suffered paralyzing injuries. Her determination to recover and contribute, no doubt learned from her years as a Mammoth racer, was well portrayed in the feature film *The Other Side of the Mountain*.

As in Richards' *Ski Pioneers*, the story of a resort founder and his mountain is told by the people who lived it, but this book's artful layout creates an elegant scrapbook that draws the reader into each little escapade. Morning's intimacy with the characters allowed her to collect previously unseen images and untold tales of adventure and camaraderie that were shared by Dave and his devotees. The author's own able writing is used sparingly to introduce each chapter, with every one of these introductions accompanied by a lovely, hand-tinted historical image. Additional text comes from letters, news clippings, and quotes from those who were there.

Various sections of the book describe the development of the lifts, the personalities of the ski schools, the daring of the ski patrols, the resourceful engineering, and the challenges presented by copious snowfalls that have shaped the modern resort of today. *Tracks of Passion* is the warm, personal album of an extended family brought together by a love of skiing, a wonderment of the High Sierra, and a deep respect for an enthusiastic leader who created one of the biggest ski resorts in the nation. 32

Chris I. Lizza lives in California and has had a long affiliation with Mammoth Mountain. In his youth he was a junior ski racer at Mammoth, and has served as a member of that resort's professional ski patrol for the past 20 years. Lizza is the author of South America Ski Guide.

(continued from page 55)

EXPENSES

Expenses in 2007–08 included general operating costs as well as the costs of publications, marketing, the cost of catalog goods sold, insurance, education committees and programs, training programs, teams, research and development, legal and accounting activities, and member services. Those expenses totaled $2,785,822 in 2007–08, compared to $2,473,674 last year.

All of PSIA-AASI's expenditures support the associations' overall educational and promotional goals—and our fundamental commitment to serve members—by carefully directing those expenditures to address membership needs at the divisional, national, and snowsports area levels. A major aim is to enhance educational products and support education programs as well as the work of our committees and teams. This commitment was illustrated by the fact that during the 2007–08 fiscal year, 23 percent of total expenditures, i.e., 23 cents of every dollar, was directly related to the associations' education programs as represented by training and events, teams, committees and programs, and publications.

The remaining 77 cents of each dollar spent roughly broke down into: personnel (39 cents), cost of catalog sales (20 cents), marketing and meetings (5 cents), general and administrative expenses (11 cents), and miscellaneous and insurance costs (2 cents).

Overall, the associations finished the year with an operating loss $144,692. These losses are due primarily to personnel shifts resulting from the split with NSP and capital investments in information technology. Total assets—otherwise known as member equity—increased from $2,507,734 in 2006–07 to $2,645,724 in 2007–08.

If you have questions about the PSIA-AASI financial statements or would like a copy of the 2007–08 audit, please write to:

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With the slowing economy, everyone's cutting expenses wherever possible. PSIA-AASI is hoping you can help us trim our editorial budget via the "Write a Caption/Submit a Pic/Share Your Anecdote" contests. If your submission is chosen, you could score some merchandise from the *PSIA-AASI Accessories Catalog*.

Send along a memorable recollection from a lesson or a photo that will prompt your fellow instructors to come up with some knee-slapping captions. Or if your photo is worth a bit less than a thousand funny words, submit a caption for the photo that appears below. You could help the editorial staff fill one more page in this captivating magazine and put yourself in the running for the $25 *Accessories Catalog* gift certificate awarded to the winning entry in each category (anecdote, photo, and photo caption).

E-mail entries are preferred and may be sent to 32Degrees@thesnowpros.org with the subject: Last Chair. Digital photos should be approximately 4 by 6 inches 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. You don't have to be 18 to win, but you do need to be a PSIA-AASI member to enter.

Photo by Hannah Grills; submitted by Ken Mattson

Winning Captions Winter 2009

THE WINNER

Clark Kent—in his early days as Superman—experiments with different methods as he gets comfortable with flying in Smallville.
—Nancy E. Cook, Mount Snow, VT

Runners-Up

1. This snowboarder discovered the "subtle difference" between the Hello Kitty Ski and Board Package and the Heli Ski and Board Package offered by the Almost Extreme Heli Aviation Company. It was less of an adventure than the free kite.
—Nick Nastase, Timber Ridge Ski Area, MI

2. Johnny's paraboarding experiment was not going very well.
—Troy Pfuntner, Swain Resort, NY

3. Another funny-car drag racer converts to a snowboard.
— Ray Dupree, Brundage Mountain Resort, ID

4. My snow buddies are going to be sooo envious of the air I'll get now!
—Mark Autry, White Pass, WA

5. Now THIS will improve my hangtime!
—Lou Conter, Retired from the Ski Club of Washington, D.C.

Actual Caption

Shiann Chamblin, snowsports school supervisor at Homewood Mountain Resort in Lake Tahoe, California, serves up some springtime fun.

Last Chair

Winning Anecdote

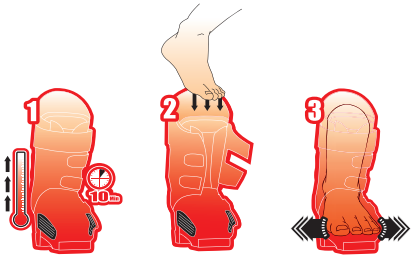
Gordon S. Hamilton
Snowshoe Mountain Resort, Roanoke, WV

The chairlifts at my home ski area, Snowshoe Mountain Resort in West Virginia, are equipped with bars that can be lowered to help secure guests in the seats. Before allowing a beginner's class to use the chairlift, I review the proper way to load, ride, and unload. The ride portion of the review includes the instruction to reach up and pull the bar down after everyone is seated. Just after a male guest and I had been seated in a chair, I reached up, turned my head to my passenger, and asked, "Are you ready for the bar?"

He replied, "Not until after this class is over."

Matt Evans

FALCON CS PRO



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- PASCAL PALLATIN, APINE SKI BOOT PRODUCT DEVELOPER

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