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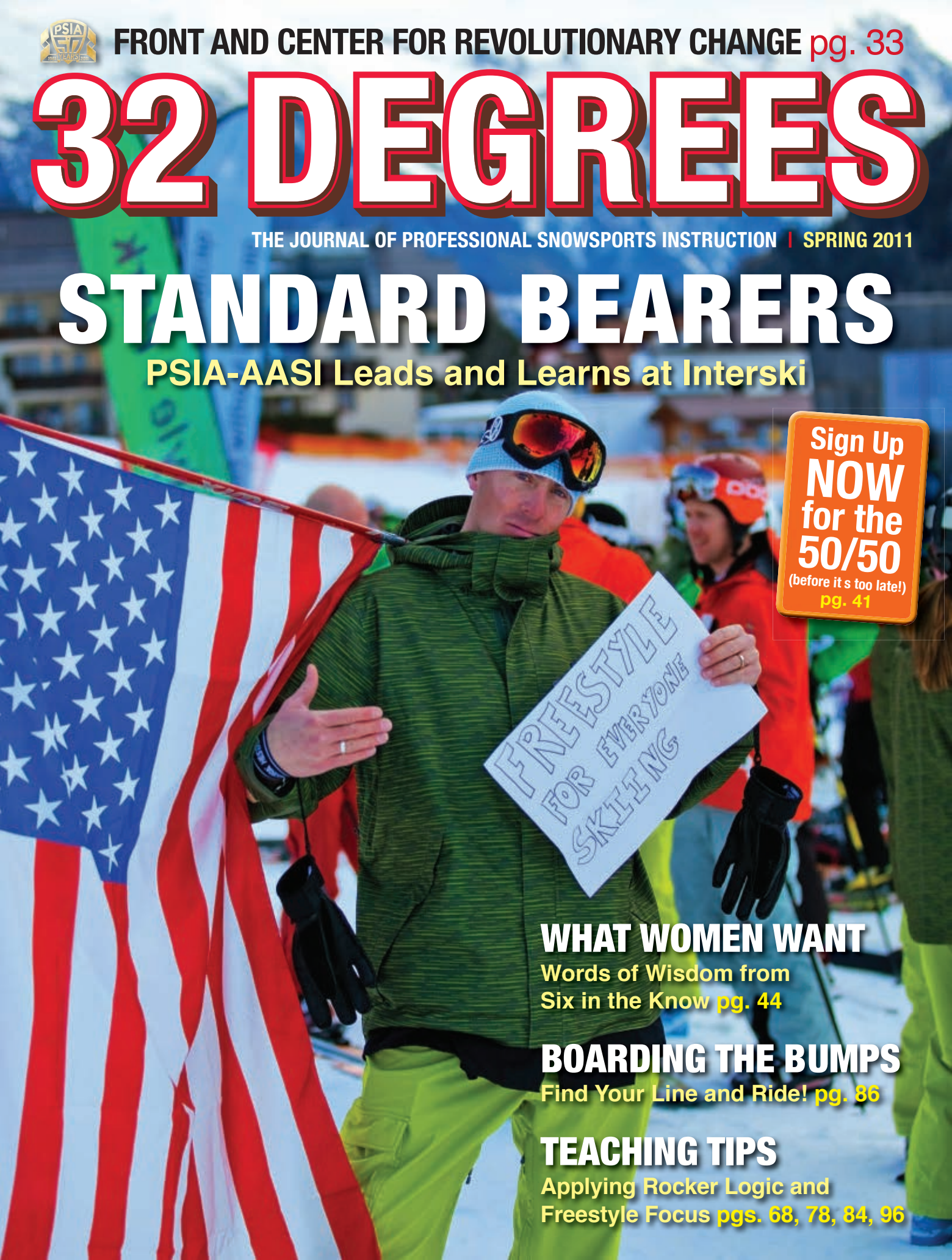
32 DEGREES

THE JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTION | SPRING 2011

STANDARD BEARERS

PSIA-AASI Leads and Learns at Interski



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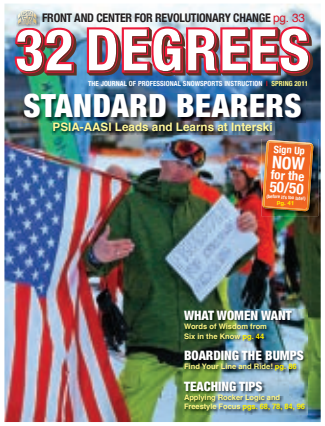


COVER SHOT: David Oliver is all about representing the American teaching perspective at Interski. Photo by Cesar Piotto.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Working Together to Succeed

By Eric Sheckleton
PSIA-AASI Chairman of the Board

If you've been following PSIA-AASI on Facebook, Twitter, and www.TheSnowPros.org, you'll know that Glen Plake and Daron Rahlves—two icons of American skiing—have joined our association and are in hot pursuit of full certification. In fact, Plake completed his Level I certification in January and, at press time, was studying to take his Level II exam. Both mentioned the value of instruction and a desire to improve their interaction with guests and clients as a primary reason for joining PSIA-AASI. What a cool recognition of how far we have come!

That said, we must also understand that we need to keep moving forward if we want to continue to build recognition of our value to the industry.

As I mentioned in my previous commentary, I am a relatively new member of the association, having joined just 16 years ago. (That might mean old-timer status in some associations, but not one that in April will honor more than 100 individuals who've been with PSIA since it started 50 years ago.) Interested in the evolution of our association, I'm really enjoying Peter Kray's wonderful articles on our past and those figures who truly made a positive impact for all of us.

It's important to understand where we've come from—and how we got here—but I tend to be more of a forward thinker and like to consider where we might be in the *next* 50 years.

Hopefully you have noticed some exciting changes and improvements recently. The new-generation *Movement Matrix* is significantly enhanced and expanded. Our website now offers access to The PSIA-AASI Member Community, an extensive social-media network where members can interact with and share information with each other in ways previously beyond our reach. Events throughout the nation are now posted online and members can register and pay for these events no matter where they live. These changes and many more are moving us toward a more consistent—and richer—member experience. They support high-quality services that carry across divisional boundaries. This direction is where I see our continued growth for the next 50 years.

What would it mean for our national association and all nine divisions if we were to truly begin acting like one organization? I believe we would become an organization that provided high levels of service to all members, regardless of discipline or division; we would have high standards for all products, programs, and services, including a professionally recognized credentialing system; and we would utilize advances in technology to benefit all members and the industry as a whole.

A consistent level of service would mean that any member, anywhere, could expect a similar experience from their membership as every other member. The products, services, and support offered to each member would be guaranteed and would be of a similar quality anywhere in the country. For example, there would be a phone number to call year-round and someone who would pick up and have answers on the other end of the line. A snowboarder in Idaho could register and pay for a clinic in California and have the fees and credits transfer automatically. Members should be able to expect a certain level of service for their dues and we will be more successful at exceeding those expectations when we work together to do it. You might think of it as a "think globally, act locally" strategy, in which divisions continue to do what they do best—provide personal contact

By acting as one association, we can work more closely with the rest of the industry to test advances in equipment and figure out how they apply to our students in lessons.

with and support of members—and the national organization provides resources that enable us all to operate more effectively and deliver more value.

I believe our education and certification programs would be better recognized if they were more consistently presented and administered. Of course, terrain and snow conditions vary across the country—which requires some adaptation in educational clinic content and exam formats. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't work together to develop more consistency within training materials and exams.

We're in the process of implementing a Strategic Education Plan involving all nine divisions and the national association, which, in part, seeks to address these very issues. Here are two particularly relevant quotes from the plan's overview:

Standardization and consistency are two hallmarks of a national professional education and certification program and are essential to its universal acceptance. Failure to adhere to established standards or to ensure consistency when implementing training and/or credentialing processes can lead to inconsistent outcomes which can diminish the perceived value of the training and associated certification.

At best, these inconsistencies diminish the perceived value of PSIA-AASI credentials with area management, school managers, and the membership. The value of certification is not immediately evident to an increasing number of stakeholders and there is an increasing perception among resort management that certification awards do not consistently correspond to the job of teaching snowsports.

As previously mentioned, we have made progress in using advancements in technology to share information with members. At the same time, we continue to see technological advancements in the equipment with which we slide on the snow. In the future I hope we will be better able to identify and understand trends and put them to better use for our members and guests. By acting as one association, we can work more closely with the rest of the industry to test advances in equipment and figure out how they apply to our students in lessons. This will aid the industry and allow our members to be at the cutting edge when working with students.

I'm reminded of a famous statement Benjamin Franklin is said to have made at the signing of the Declaration of Independence: "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately." We have come a long way as nine divisions (from an original group of six) and a national association. I believe we can go a lot farther as one association with nine divisions. It is going to take improved communication, increased collaboration, and perhaps even some consolidation when appropriate, but the result will be worth it in the end. 32°

LETTERS

I'M A BELIEVER!

I am writing to voice my connection to Stephen Helfenbein's "Believe it!" (Fall 2010, Your Space). As a young member of this fantastic organization and even more fantastic group of people—what is a great organization without great people? Non-existent, that's what!—I found a lot to connect to in Stephen's words.

I'm 24 and have being skiing for 20 years, and instruct at the mountain where I learned to ski. I am a freestyle skier (don't hate me—I bought my first set of twin tips at the ripe old age of 12). Having grown up racing, I trained in Whistler while the big guns (J.F. Cusson, Shane Szocs, Mike Douglas) were shredding the "snowboard parks" on Horstman Glacier. While I was struggling with my mechanics and trying to find my angles, I saw these guys doing anything and everything they could to break the mold of skiing. I was awestruck.

Two years later I was doing switch 540s and 720s and loving every minute of it. I began "instructing" the kids at my mountain and volunteered for the park and pipe crew. Gone were the days of angles, hand positioning, apexing, and fall lines. I still raced NASTAR and shredded the whole mountain on a daily basis, but the shift from focusing on body positioning in turns led to focusing body position in the air and at take-off/landing.

I decided that the only way to move West and do what I love is to be serious about doing it professionally. I figured my best shot would be to join PSIA and become a certified professional. That first year of instruction, clinics, and "critical assessments" really opened my eyes to what a true skiing professional is.

I passed my Level I alpine exam on the first try and that's not to say it wasn't difficult. Back were the angles, hand positioning, and placements I had left over a decade ago. I thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to future assessments and exams, but it had me thinking: What is hand positioning really going to do for me? I can shred anything without hesitation. I use multiple styles (hop turns, short/long radius carving, slalom turns, switch skiing and butters) to get down any run.

I questioned my motives during that assessment, but it solidified what I wanted: to be the best all-around skier I can be while helping people I'm teaching. I want to share and show them something I'm passionate about and hope to ingrain the same passion in them. This is accomplished by teaching people the mechanics and theories that have been handed down through 50 years of excellence while still having fun doing it!

The freestyle accreditation program will give me the opportunity to straddle the lines between what our core teachings are and what I have found to be the spark that lights my skiing wick.

Chris Young
Ski Roundtop, PA

NEW MEMBERS, FAMILIAR NAMES

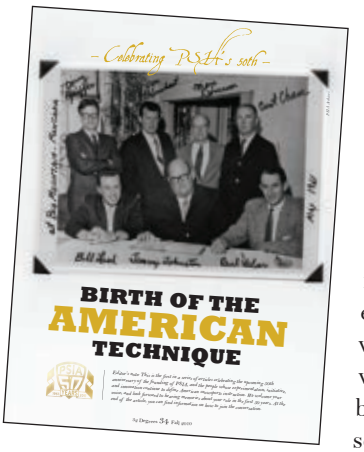
I was thrilled to learn that Glen Plake and Daron Rahlves have joined PSIA-AASI and am quite sure that the membership is just as excited as I am. Having one of the most decorated racers in USSA history and one of the most recognizable wild snow skiers in the world join our teaching family adds immeasurably to PSIA's credibility and is a morale booster for rank-and-file members.

I would like to extend warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to both for what they will bring to our association. Imagine what fun it will be to clinic with them! When can I sign up?

Michael Patmas, MD
Squaw Valley, CA

TEACHING AMERICANS TO SKI

There's a back story to Peter Kray's article "Birth of the American Technique," Fall 2010). True, the founders of PSIA were radicals in 1960 and all credit to them for the hard work involved in publishing a first: *The Official American Ski Technique.* Looking back now, and as an instructor then, there were problems. First, PSIA was formed as a national organization of individual certified instructors and had no affiliation with the existing divisions. Many workaday ski teachers wondered about the benefits of paying two seperate sets of dues.



Second, Bill Lash's comments notwithstanding, *The Official American Ski Technique* was an attempt to standardize ski teaching across the country. That was a good idea. The 8th Interski and the North American Ski Instructor Congress (NASIC) in 1970 showed American ski teachers that good ski teaching was more than mechanical; it could be a progressive way to acquire a set of skills.

In the late 1960s a next generation of "revolutionaries" in every division began to talk to each other about their common interests. Jim Riley, then president of the Rocky Mountain Ski Instructors Association, was particularly active. His vision and energy brought European demo teams to NASIC in Aspen in 1970. The Austrian State Ski School invited a group of American instructors to join those from other nations to learn their latest methods. From France Georges Joubert's jet turns caught the imagination. It was clear that ski teaching was evolving.

Horst Abraham became the best person to re-think and codify an up-to-date American Teaching Method. The emphasis changed from perfecting technical forms to a student-oriented methodology.

No doubt some of PSIA's pioneers felt arrows in their backs. A new PSIA board

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FULL CAM camrock

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CAMBER: 8mm | ROCKER: 0% | WEIGHTED SNOW CONTACT: 100%

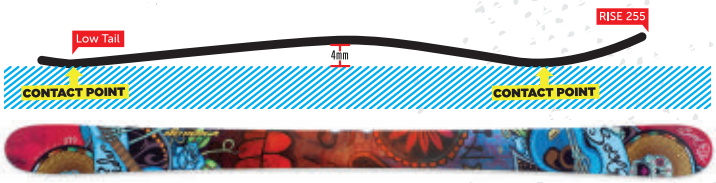
TWIN POP camrock

The Twin tip POP ski is designed to deliver stability at high speeds in the pipe and deliver incredible "pop" for max elevation off features in and out of the park.

CAMBER: 3mm | ROCKER: 10% | WEIGHTED SNOW CONTACT: 90%

SLOW RISE camrock

Slow Rise skis combine the proven benefits of full cambered skis with a shovel specifically designed to aid flotation in powder. They will not dive in the fluff or sacrifice performance on packed snow.



LONG CAMBER: 4mm | ROCKER: 20% | WEIGHTED SNOW CONTACT: 80%

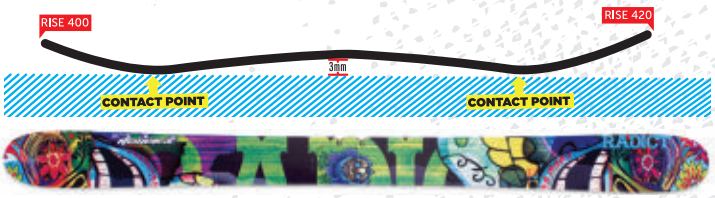
EARLY RISE camrock

Early Rise skis move a more traditional contact point back on the ski approximately 25%. This increases flotation in powder and also makes the ski easier to initiate or "stivot" into turns.

SHORT CAMBER: 3mm | ROCKER: 35% | WEIGHTED SNOW CONTACT: 65%

HIGH RISE camrock

High Rise skis are purposely built for skiing deep powder. But with a short bit of camber they still manage the entire mountain admirably.



SHORT CAMBER: 3mm | ROCKER: 50% | WEIGHTED SNOW CONTACT: 50%

Endorsed by PSIA Team Members:
Robin Barnes, Michael Rogan, Mike Hafer, Geoff Krill and Jim Schanzenbaker.

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was elected with members representing the divisions; an important step toward changing PSIA to a national umbrella organization. Now the divisions work together as part of PSIA-AASI for all snowsport instructors. The American Teaching Method has standardized ski teaching. These are good things.

Thanks Horst, Jim Riley, and all those in the divisions who joined together to make a better PSIA.

Mark P. Addison
Boulder, CO

THE EARLY ADAPTIVE MOVEMENT

I read and enjoyed the adaptive snowboard article by Mike Horn in the Winter 2011 edition of 32 Degrees. I have been encouraged and pushed to put the historical portion in order.

PSIA's first national adaptive presentation was held in Aspen's Paepcke Auditorium in 1963. Aspen hosted Interski in 1968, and the original adaptive skiing and teaching manual was handed out in three languages. The demonstrators were from three states: Washington, Oregon, and Colorado.

Two World II above-the-knee amputee (AK) veterans gained full certification (level III), in 1961 and 1965. Both veterans had to teach amputees and regular students how to ski. In 1964 they participated in an amputee ski race held at Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood, Oregon. In 1965 the Portland, Oregon chapter of the Junior Chamber of Commerce copyrighted the Amputee Ski Technique, known as "the other white book." [The original "white book" was *The Official American Ski Technique*, co-written by Bill Lash and Paul Valar—Ed.] The JC's and The Flying Outrigger Ski Club supplied the only outriggers used to teach amputees to ski

The Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce awarded the Portland chapter the International Humanitarian Award in Tel Aviv, Israel, in the field of rendering humanitarian assistance to the mentally or physically handicapped.

For 24 years, the Department of Veterans Affairs and Disabled American Veterans have been sponsoring week-long winter sports clinics with attendance reaching about 400 participants. They are taught skiing, snowboarding, sit skiing, sled hockey, and other winter sport activities. Jim Martinson was the first person while on active military duty to be approached about adaptive skiing at Madigon General Hospital by Brigadier General Richard I. Crone. Martinson went on to win the 1992 gold medal in the Downhill sit ski event.

The early history should be made correct for those that made it happen and no longer with us to speak up. I have tried to give only partial chronicle of the early adaptive snowsports history.

Lee Perry
PSIA-Northwest Division
Member of DAV Chapter I
Portland, OR

What PSIA-AASI Has Done For Me

I was not the best skier hired my first season, but my trainers communicated that they were willing to help me become a stronger skier because I had enthusiasm and some natural teaching ability. They immediately put me in touch with PSIA.

I pored over PSIA training manuals, watched all of the videos, and attended as many PSIA events at my home hill and all over the state as possible. My desire to be a part of the sport as a fully certified instructor only increased from each effort; the experience more motivating than any college class I had ever takena nd frequently more challenging.

My first exam was a positive, learning experiencet he way a good test should be. During that first year, I found that the blend of wisdom and dynamic learning sessions offered through PSIA prep courses and the exam combined to give me a distinct advantage with my studentsb ut I was still too new in the sport to identify exactly why.

Courtesy of Kirsten Struve-Texler

It was during my sophomore year of teaching that I started to understand the PSIA advantage. My students were frequently guinea pigs for new exercises I was gathering from PSIA events, and they loved being a part of something that was scientifically quantified butm ore importantlyf un! That second year, the fun-factor that I gathered from my PSIA events spilled over into daily teaching, and my "bag of tricks" grew. I had confidence in the lessons I was teaching, and could see that my students really had a great time. Level II was another challenge, but a fun learning experience nonetheless. Preparation for my full certification the following year brought even more commitment to my career. What I was gathering from PSIA events was much more than book learning, it was a gleaning of information from other professionals in the sport who had different viewpoints and experiences than my peers at my home hill. This broadened the lessons I provided.

Passing my full certification that year was so much more than being about a pin and a certificate; it was about becoming a strong skier and a valuable resource for my students. And it was about making a true connection to the sport on a national level.

Despite not being the best skier when I started teaching skiing, the reason my skiing excelled to the level that I was able to pass my Level III certification within three years is because of the training from PSIAI owe you guys (and gals) a lot!

Kirsten Struve-Texler
Vail, CO

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Interski Chaos and Pride

By Ellen Post Foster

PSIA-AASI Archives

Brad Foster

Ellen Post Foster (fourth from left and adjacent) almost got left at the lift at the 1983 Interski in Sesto, Italy.

As PSIA-AASI's Teams left in early January for Interski in St. Anton, Austria, I felt a thrill of excitement for the team members stemming from my own experience. I hope they had an adventure as extraordinary and memorable as mine.

In 1983, Interski took place in Sesto, a small village in the Italian Alps. The U.S. National Demonstration Team, as it was called then, was housed at the end of a long valley. One road and a network of cross-country trails led to the demonstration hill at the other end of town. As the time for our on-snow presentation drew closer, it became apparent that our transportation was late or not coming at all. Chaos ensued as team members pulled off outer layers and stripped down to their uniforms. I was still trying to figure out what was going on when I realized that we were going to take the cross-country trails into town. I started off a step behind, already near the back of the group, and was quickly passed by the last two team members. For about three miles, I poled and skated for all I was worth with only one thought in mind: don't lose sight of the red-white-and-blue-clad skier ahead of me.

The demonstration hill finally came into view and I raced for the Poma lift as the crowd applauded the team that preceded us. I slid up to the lift, glanced uphill, and saw my nearest team member reaching the top. The team was getting into position for our opening run. Spring-loaded platters passed over my head; I'm 4-foot 10-1/2 inches tall and those Poma platters were out of my reach. The lift operator stood with his back to the lift, leaning on a wooden fence, watching the show. Gasping for breath, I tried yelling to get his attention. Unsuccessful, I slid over to him and pounded on his back. He turned, recognized my uniform, grabbed a platter for me and gave me a hearty shove to hurry me along.

As I was pulled up the track and away from the crowd, my breathing and heartbeat slowed. I looked back at the flags from skiing nations and the people from all over the skiing world. I could feel the excitement of anticipation for what my country was about to contribute to skiing. Exhilarated and filled with pride, I reached the top and slid into place just as everyone pushed off in unison to the music of Neil Diamond's "Coming to America." 32°

Ellen Post Foster served two terms on the PSIA National Demonstration Team (1980-1988).

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 be 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. Please include your full name, address, and daytime telephone number.**

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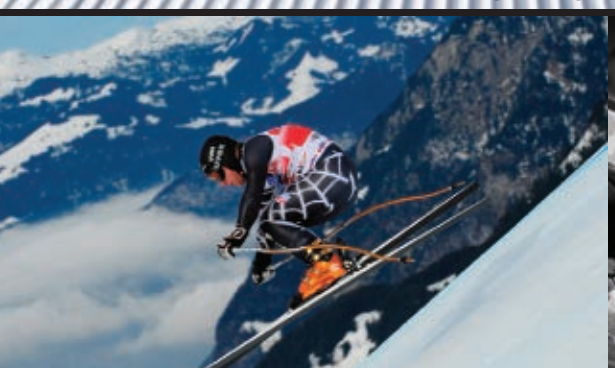

LINEUP

Sign up online

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Facebook/Twitter

Just a casual reminder that PSIA-AASI is on Facebook and Twitter. Join our social networking communities online at www.facebook.com (search for The Snow Pros) and www.twitter.com/thesnowpros. It s a great way to connect with fellow instructors and the greater snowsports industry.

NEWS OF NOTE

50/50 Keynote Has a Keene Focus!

When Bud Keene talks, Olympic and X-Games Gold Medalist Shaun White listens. And in April, so can you! Keene—widely regarded as the most successful and knowledgeable snowboard coach in the history of the sport—will be the keynote speaker at PSIA-AASI's 50/50 Celebration Banquet, Wednesday, April 6.

Keene was introduced to snowboarding by former PSIA Snowboard Team member Lowell Hart in 1984 in Vermont and in 1985 became a snowboard instructor at California's Soda Springs and Boreal Ridge. Upon moving back to Vermont in 1987, he taught snowboarding at Stowe and became a PSIA snowboard examiner in 1989. He also helped write PSIA's first snowboard instruction manual.

Monte Isom / Sportschrome

After riding competitively, Keene launched into a coaching career with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association and for more than a decade has been an instrumental force in the medal-winning heroics of America's top competitive riders, including Shaun White and Louie Vito.

For more on PSIA-AASI's 50/50 Celebration, including the banquet, go www.TheSnowPros.org.

Tero Repo

Courtesy of US Ski Team

Two Icons of American Skiing Join PSIA-AASI

Among PSIA-AASI's newest members are two men whose names—and influence on alpine skiing—are recognized throughout the world. Glen Plake, the mohawk-wearing icon of freestyle skiing, and Daron Rahlves, the most decorated American male downhill and Super G skier in history, joined the association this season. Both are attending PSIA clinics and pursuing PSIA alpine certification. In fact, Plake and his wife, Kimberly, completed their Level I certification in January and, at press time, were studying for their Level II exams. (Want to see Glen's exam results? Log on to www.TheSnowPros.org and check out the "Web Extras" for *32 Degrees*.)

Plake currently serves as an ambassador of the industry-wide Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month, and Rahlves shares his ski racing knowledge with the ski academy and ski team at California's Sugar Bowl Resort. For more information, check out the press releases in the PSIA-AASI Info Center at www.TheSnowPros.org.

REASON TO GET EXCITED: THE PSIA-AASI COMMUNITY!

THE PSIA-AASI COMMUNITY IS A GREAT SPOT TO KEEP TALKING ABOUT SKIING AND RIDING ALL YEAR LONG. LOG ON TO WWW.THESNOWPROS.ORG AND ACCESS THIS NEW SOCIAL MEDIA TOOL FOR MEMBERS THROUGH YOUR MEMBER PROFILE.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Beginning with the 2011–12 winter season, **Vail Resorts will launch a fitness assessment program** for employees in ski patrol, ski and snowboard school, and mountain safety (for whom skiing and riding is an essential function of their job). This spring, those employees will have the opportunity to try the fitness assessment on a voluntary basis. As part of this initiative, Vail Resorts will provide wellness and training opportunities for employees to improve their overall fitness. "Given the demands of their roles, our skiing and riding professionals are athletes that need to be at a high fitness level to perform their jobs, said Blaise Carrig, co-president of Vail Resorts Mountain Division. "The fitness assessment is designed to ensure that our staff can meet the demands of their roles and will provide valuable information to help them be safe and excel on the mountain. The fitness assessment is also part of our company wide wellness initiative.

WIN!

Where Do You Read *32 Degrees?*

Scott Taylor, a PSIA-certified Level III alpine and Level I telemark instructor from Wolf Creek, Colorado, took a warm-weather trip this winter: "My wife, Sarah, and I spent five days fishing in the Everglades! Based out of Everglades City, we searched for tarpon, redfish, and snook, in one of the world's most important ecosystems."

Fish on!

If you read your mag somewhere equally cool, snap a picture and send it in. You might just win a $25 gift certificate for the PSIA-AASI *Accessories Catalog*. Submit your high-resolution photo, and a tale about the epic location, to lineup@thesnowpros.org.

HOT

Rocking hard at the **PSIA-AASI 50/50 in Snowmass**, Colorado, April 4–9.

Rolling into a mud season fitness routine to get into even better shape for next year. Bonus: Shred the southern hemisphere!


Portillo, Chile

Spring clinics and **road trips!** Getting out and exploring another resort in your area.

NOT

Hearing about it, wishing you d been there, and not understanding the jokes for the next 50 years. Come for a day, come for a week. **WWW.THESNOWPROS.ORG**

Slacking, lounging, bumming, or otherwise setting yourself up for heartache or injury by letting it go over the summer.

Hanging close to home, waiting for the lifts to stop turning.

HELP A BROTHER OUT

Ullr's leadership of snow culture is often misunderstood, and even debated, outside of his shred kingdom . . . and who knows, maybe it is all made up. But after 50 years of observing the snow god's righteousness, PSIA-AASI is sure you've got photo evidence to prove he has been an influence on the way you roll. Send your best pow pow and party pics to lineup@thesnowpros.org. Be sure to tell us what we're looking at. If you can't remember, make it up . . . for all we know, Ullr slings burgers at Mt. Brighton.

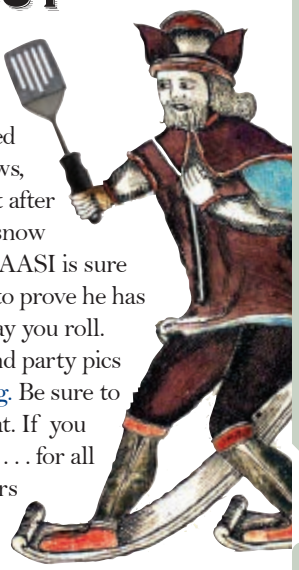


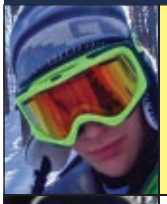
Illustration by Dave Allen

WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT ONLINE

@rebekahnice: Had a blast learning to snowboard today @ redriverskiarea Shout out to the best instructor Tom Yates!!! #gowbhafro

Mike Furgal Just set the DVR up to record it. Want to check out friends Matt and Jeb! (via Facebook. Mike is stoked to watch go with a pro television on New England Sports Network.

LOCKER ROOM TALK

	NAME/ CREDENTIALS	MEMBER SINCE/ DIVISION/ CERT	SEASON GOAL	MUST PURCHASE THIS SEASON	BEST PSIA-AASI MEMORY	SKIING/ RIDING THEME SONG
	**Dusty Lott / Alpine I / Children s Accredita- tion**	2009 / Central	Alpine Level II and Freestyle Accreditation	New park boots from Rossignol	When I had my first freestyle lesson and the kid was only 12. By the end of the lesson he was doing 180s and grinding a mini rail!	Intro to White Washed *August Burns Red*
	**John Kirby / Alpine III**	1994 / Rocky Mountain	Great memories for my guests and some face shots	New boots and some rockers	Several years ago a lady in her late 20s came up to me with her young daughter. She gave me her name and reminded me that she was a student of mine when she was a little girl and wanted her little girl to have a lesson with me.	I ve Got Friends *M anchester Orchestra*
	**Jasmine Reichardt / Alpine III**	2000 / Western	To become a trainer at Heavenly and AASI	I always need socks!	The most recent was in a clinic last year with Blaire at Sierra-at-Tahoe. Blaire is an amazing trainer and we had a funtastic day learning flips in the powder and discovering new training techniques. I m so happy he s back in the game and I can t wait to ride with him again this year.	Rise *Boy Sets Fire*
	**Emily Safter**	2008 / Northwest	Snowboard I	New bindings	Sprinting in full gear and doing a penguin dive to chase after a runaway snowboard (not belonging to one of my students, mind you) that was headed down the mountain. I did catch it.	Sleepyhead *P assion Pit*

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PRO FILE:
DOUG PIERINI
PSIA Alpine Team Member

Steve Lapkin

Talk about how you got started skiing and teaching.

I've been skiing since I was three. We would travel from New Jersey up to Plattekill Mountain in New York every weekend. My parents were part-time ski instructors so it only made sense for me to move out West and do it full time.

You re the director of skier services at a major resort (Colorado s Breckenridge Ski Resort). What s that like?

It is a dream job for me. I enjoy being part of a business that can affect so many people in such a positive way. I have a strong team around me that has a great deal of passion for skiing and snowboarding, which is contagious. Plus, it seems the closer I go to the East Coast, the more Yankee fans there are.

How does sailing tie in to your passion for winter?

You know, sailing has always been a great complement to skiing for me. Friends ask me how I can live in the middle of the country when sailing is such a big part of my life. I have always sailed and will always sail. Nearby Lake Dillon has a yacht club and there is active racing during the summer, and there are always opportunities for us to go on family trips to the water.

What did you learn off the hill that is applicable to teaching people to ski?

To quote *Aspen Extreme*, "Skiing is the easy part." There is so much that goes into teaching skiing or snowboarding that has nothing to do with the "what." We teach people, not a system. If you don't connect with the student and build a trusting relationship, you won't be able to teach them anything. I think ocean racing has taught me more about trust than anything else. If you can't trust the guy on your watch at night in the middle of a storm in the Gulf Stream, you might as well say goodbye. It may sound on the extreme side of things, but it is the same thing, especially when you have a student that is balancing fear with the desire to learn.

What is something that most people who know you may not realize about you?

I can bench press 385 pounds and run the 40-yard dash in 4.3 seconds. Well, maybe not. I do have an MBA and a past life as a bartender, sailboat rigger, and sailing coach. When I was younger, I had to choose between being a professional skier or a professional sailor. I did not want both to be a career and I definitely made the right choice. I'm not sure why doctor or lawyer was not on that list.

What else should we know?

I have a three-year old son and a five-year old daughter, and a wife (Leigh) who is also a ski pro and the best teacher/trainer I know. She and I met in a ski town, working for a ski resort, and I can't think of a better place to raise kids than in a ski town like Breckenridge. 32°


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Photo: Jenny Fellows. Launch to new levels in your skiing, check out *TOTAL SKIING. A new book* by NASTC Director, Chris Fellows, order a copy at www.skiNASTC.com.
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WHY THEY ROCK: Rival's success in illuminating the personal sacrifice of athletic achievement is why they have become the storytellers of choice for organizations like the NCAA, NHL, and more than a half dozen Olympic governing bodies and iconic brands like Reebok, Verizon, Qwest, the U.S. Army, and others. Rival is the official production company of PSIA-AASI, and is currently working on their third year of PSIA-AASI's *Go With a Pro* television show.

Scott Sady

Matt Fults films AASI Snowboard Team member Josh Spoelstra for a *Go With A Pro* segment.

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW: Rival's critically acclaimed 2009 film *The Battle of Comm Ave — Boston University vs. Boston College* was featured on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal* and was reviewed at length by *The New York Times*, among other noteworthy publications. 32°

THE 82TI HAS BEEN DEVELOPED BY TEACHING PROS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

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"We worked closely with product guys to develop a ski that would be dynamic at any speed and in any condition, we finally have a ski that's fun at 4 or 40 mph. There is no question that I ski better and have more fun teaching on the 82Ti, it's truly an extension of my body." - *Nick Herrin, PSIA Alpine Team*

"This ski is perfect. I'll ski on the 82 Ti in anything."
- *Dave Lyon, PSIA Alpine Team*

ROSSIGNOL

PSIA Nordic Team member Charlie MacArthur plies the pow.

SIDE-COUNTRY TACTICS

Top Tips from the Wizards of Off-Piste

UNTRACKED SNOW IS THE DREAM OF EVERY experienced skier and snowboarder. And with the ongoing evolution of rockered skis and snowboards, as well as the increasing number of backcountry access gates leading from ski resort boundaries off into the wild "sidecountry," realizing those dreams just keeps getting easier.

But the ease of access hasn't done anything to minimize the danger of off-piste snow, from avalanche, unmarked obstacles, and, especially, the lack of ski patrol. Sound route-finding, terrain choice, and, yes, the ability to ride in conditions groomed only by nature are still skills only achieved through years of experience and lots of trial and error. So as snow depths keep getting deeper, we asked some of the top names in sidecountry and backcountry instruction just how they are best utilizing the powder hunger to take their students' skills to the next level.

BY PETER KRAY

Cesar Piotto

THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

Stephen Szoradi is a PSIA-certified alpine ski instructor who also works as a guide for Aspen Alpine Guides and the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass.

Ross Matlock is a member of the PSIA Nordic Team who teaches at Colorado's Crested Butte Ski and Ride School. He also has experience as a ski school director and clinic leader.

J. Scott McGee is the coach of the PSIA Nordic Team. The manager for the Mountain Sports School at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, he also guides with Exum Mountain Guides in the Tetons.

Mikey Franco is a former member of the AASI Snowboard Team. Also a former guide with Alaska Rendezvous Heli, he is the co-founder of Worldwide Tribes, an international adventure service.

Chris Fellows is a former two-term PSIA Alpine Team member and the author of two books, *Tactics for All Mountain Skiing* and the recently published *Total Skiing.*

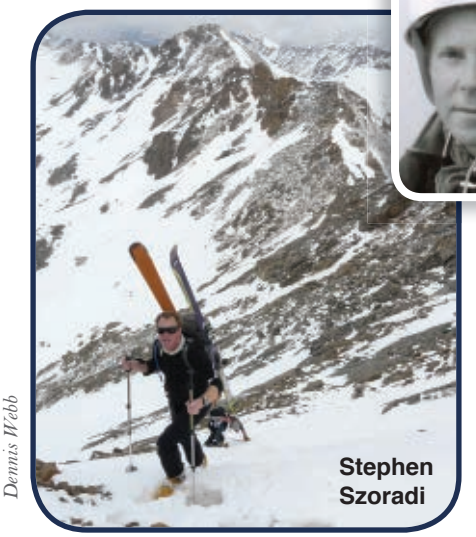
Charlie MacArthur is a current member of the PSIA Nordic Team and a former member of the PSIA Alpine Team. He has been instructing for 27 years at the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen/Snowmass and is a PSIA-AASI Rocky Mountain Division examiner.

Craig Panarisi is a former five-term member of the PSIA Nordic Team (1988–2008), who served two terms as team coach (2000–08). He is currently the snowsports school director at Vermont's Stratton Mountain Resort.

32 DEGREES: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE MORE RECURRING CUSTOMERS YOU'RE APT TO SEE?

As a year-round guide service permitted primarily in the White River National Forest we have clients who climb peaks in the summer and ski the backcountry in the winter. Aspen Alpine Guides (AAG) can now work with existing clients on mountain (wearing our red ski school jackets) and, if appropriate, take them out of bounds on our guide permit. Appropriate terrain is important as well as all of our internal requirements for medical training, avi training, and skiing ability. In any case we are now able to show our clients new ways of experiencing skiing.

— *Stephen Szoradi*


Stephen Szoradi

Dennis Webb

In the Crested Butte Ski School, we don't have sidecountry to speak of out of the resort. The terrain is too steep and doesn't allow for good out-of-bounds skiing. That being said, I still have a couple of clients who love to go backcountry skiing. These are folks who have been coming to the Butte for a number of years, taking lessons, and have progressed to a stage where they want a little more soft-snow action. What I do with these folks is take them out of the resort into the tons of great backcountry we have near Crested Butte. I do this through the Crested Butte Mountain Guides.

— *Ross Matlock*

There are only a few areas here in the East that actually have a real sidecountry component, and that's just as often a little tree shot or a clearing somewhere. So the folks that we see most often who are trying to create a backcountry experience are actually hiking up the ski area before the lifts open each day. Whether they're skinning up or hiking up with crampons, they're out there in the wind and cold making sure they get in first tracks to start their day. — *Craig Panarisi*


Stephen Szoradi

32 DEGREES: HOW DO YOU ASSESS CLIENTS (EITHER BEFORE AND/OR ON THE SNOW) FOR SIDECOUNTRY SKI AND SNOWBOARD ABILITY?

We have a few pat questions that clients answer when they book, but the real shakedown takes place in person, with questions like: How many years and where have you been skiing/riding? What kind of terrain do you like to ski? Have you done other guided skiing? Where and how much?

Sometimes this is enough to head out the gates from the top of the mountain, but, if not, a warm-up lap inbounds—on champagne corduroy, a few fresh inches, or the off-piste—is the ideal way to assess how clients will handle current conditions beyond the gates.

— *J. Scott McGee*

At Jackson Hole, all I need to do is take them on a tram lap. I can find every bit of terrain and every kind of snow condition to get an idea of what will happen when we leave the gates. But I can usually sort it out on a short run from the Tram to the upper Rock Springs backcountry gate. — *Mikey Franco*

With the new relationship of AAG guides who are also ski pros, we have found it very easy to work on skills in the controlled environment of on-mountain skiing and then, if appropriate, take clients into the sidecountry for skiing on our permit. At the moment, we have use of areas bordering all four of the Aspen/Snowmass mountains. This is particularly good for us because it offers terrain that can be from 18 to 55 degrees, which enables us to work with skiers of all abilities. — *Stephen Szoradi*

Because there's so much emphasis on technique here in the East, we

tend to see some very capable hard-snow skiers, but skiers who are not necessarily able to make the kind of schmear turn that you'll want to have in your toolkit in deeper snow. So what I like to do is just take them out for a couple of runs

Photos by Jonathan Selkowitz

where you mix up the variety of the terrain and see how they handle going from the glades to the groomed and back again. That way I can at least see how they handle different situations.

— *Craig Panarisi*

A quality school will look at the level of overall fitness and skill to determine if you are capable of taking on the level commitment needed for the run/runs planned. Being in good shape will ensure that your fun factor stays high. No one likes to struggle due to poor technique or fitness.

We also like to get an aerobic, strength, mobility, and technical picture before we recommend a sidecountry adventure or intensive performance session. For the longer and more committed sidecountry runs without immediate access to get back in-bounds, ski ability should fall in the advanced range; for the less rigorous runs intermediate skills are required. Bringing a beginner into out–of-bounds terrain can result in frustration and potential injury for both student and instructor.

— *Chris Fellows*

32 DEGREES: HOW DO YOU PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS FOR THE SIDECOUNTRY (GOALS, WARM-UP TERRAIN, TECHNIQUE DISCUSSION)?

Sidecountry is tricky because it has the appearance of being just close enough to the inbounds ski areas that it might feel safe when, in fact, there is little safety difference between side- and backcountry skiing. We prepare our clients with practical avi skills for working with beacons, probes, and shovel techniques. Terrain selection, as discussed in the AIARE (American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education) curriculum, is also great way for us to show clients safe routes. If we reinforce the basic backcountry skills early on, there is a better chance that their sidecountry ambitions will be more successful. — *Stephen Szoradi*

As part of a sidecountry skills checklist, you should make sure your client can:

- Traverse across steep slopes
- Parallel turn with a pole plant
- Ski short turns in the fall line
- Perform linked short turns on 35- to 45-degree slopes
- Perform linked turns in variable snow
- Perform kick turns to escape tight spots
- Self-arrest with a ski pole
- Ski with a pack on
- Demonstrate solid knowledge of transceiver use

For me, a sidecountry adventure with a client would involve the following:

1. A guide/client meeting to talk about conditions of the day, objective and subjective hazards, route, and timetable.
2. Checking equipment and getting client's signature on the release form.
3. Transceiver discussion and practice
4. Runs within the resort to screen students, check equipment, practice technique, and warm up.
5. Discussions on the difference between skiing with an instructor on the groomed versus with a guide out of bounds
6. Descriptions of down skiing versus up skiing
7. Self belay practice
8. Mental adjustments for out of bounds skiing
9. Technique adjustments
10. Recovery and efficiency tactics
11. Debriefing session
12. Equipment return
13. Parting words

— *Chris Fellows*

Avalanche awareness is my top priority. Traveling in avalanche terrain requires knowledge, practice, and sound decision making. Teaching the importance of terrain, weather, and snowpack is an important aspect of our training. This helps to create a better understanding of the decisions I have to make. It will also help clients when they are not with me, either inbounds or out, to hopefully make better choices. Technique discussions are short and sweet. "Do this," "Try this," "Stop here," "You ripped that". . . I keep the coaching to a minimum. Out there, it's game time. — *Mikey Franco*

Photos by Shaun Cattanach

When we have lessons where people are getting ready for sidecountry or backcountry terrain, it's usually because they are getting ready to go to Europe or Jackson Hole on vacation. So what I'm trying to do is kind of artificially create an environment that prepares them for dealing with both the external and internal distractions that might occur once they're in a real backcountry kind of situation. I talk a lot about tactics, and try and take them into steeper or more wooded terrain where they have to make more short turns.

It's nice if you can get them into a run with a little bit of a "pucker factor" where they have to make that one crux move. But

in general I think it's also about getting them to realize that they don't have to set their edge up so high in the turn. In crud and powder it's more of a ski transfer than a hard edge. I like to say that I'm teaching them how to "slarve." — *Craig Panarisi*

Each guided party gets a safety briefing, including beacon function, what to do if caught in, witnessing, or responding to an avalanche.

Our inbounds terrain provides quite a few test pieces at each ability level, so checking folks out inbounds is both an assessment tool, and a skill building opportunity. A few degrees of steepness make a big difference on a black diamond (or harder run), so identifying pitches of graduated steepness at your area—an inclinometer helps—can provide the instructor/guide with a roadmap to increasing difficulty. You can gradually add difficulty by choosing

Luca Diana Photography


Grant Bishop

lines with obstacles—like rocks, drops, and trees—that will also reflect ability in OB snow, as well as build confidence and technique for a more untracked experience.

Since rescue in a more remote setting is much more complex, guides need to reset client expectations to take their terrain aspirations back a couple of notches. The "cost" of a small mistake that leads to an injury is much greater in the backcountry, so a more conservative approach is in order.

— *J. Scott McGee*

32 DEGREES: SAFETY, INSTRUCTION, FUN—HOW DO YOU BALANCE ALL THE VARIABLES ONCE YOU'RE THERE?

For me, I am in full guide mode and it's all about being safe and having fun. That's why I like to get my clients skiing ability to be at a level to where I don't have to think about that. There are way too many other things to manage in the backcountry and this is a big task.

— *Ross Matlock*

I take a bunch of different approaches:

- Talk about and re-create the mindset and strategy from the training sessions.
- Select the right music for the day—calm for the apprehensive, upbeat for the hungover.
- Plan the line for safety and confidence.
- Only focus on one technique while in open terrain and mainly in the first few turns.
- Audibly whoop it up in the pow.
- Ski close enough behind them to yell encouraging slogans in foreign dialects: "Yer doin it, Yer doin it!!"

— *Charlie MacArthur*

Most people want to ski powder and maximize vertical once they get out there, but being able to enhance their experience with a few pointed tips can make their day. Keep new ideas to a minimum (one to three) since "practice" time is not as available as when riding lifts between runs. Less experienced skiers and riders can be overwhelmed by the many variables the backcountry presents so it's important not to overload them.

Instruction is often the key to enhancing safety. Falling midslope is a bigger trigger than making turns down it, and a "skier down" spends more time exposed to a potential slide. The likelihood of making it through a hard section with confidence can be enhanced with some targeted technical or tactical coaching, increasing safety and fun in the process.

— *J. Scott McGee*

32 DEGREES: HOW DO YOU USE THE TERRAIN TO TEACH NEW TACTICS?

One key is to simulate harder terrain inbounds—especially if you can relate the practice run to a real one you hope to ski with clients—and providing tactics to move through a crux. For example, you might say, "See those two trees down there? They represent the entrance to the choke on the chute you want to ski. Start to tighten your turns as you approach the 'chute,' slow down enough to see what's below, and stop if need be. Then point it through the crux with one big right turn until you can break into rhythmic turns into the opening below."

Lead up to this by practicing each of the parts beforehand, and use the same shot a few times to enhance/cement the learning, and wire the reflexes to respond predictably. There is a tendency to want to advance through terrain when many clients would enjoy more success and confidence from "nailing" the line after repeated practice.

— *J. Scott McGee*

Some of the terrain-specific things I tell students are:

- Carry speed through the flats.
- Practice linking turns through alternating tight and open trees while focusing on looking into the large "living rooms" that lie just beyond the tight spots.
- Practice "porpoising" your skis and boards in and out of deep snow.
- Use big-mountain tactics like porpoising over questionable lumps in the snow to avoid possible dangers.

Photos by Cesar Piotto

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✦ Ski on side hills to practice staying out of creek beds.

I also find a short, steep hill with a safe run-out and teach self-arrest techniques.

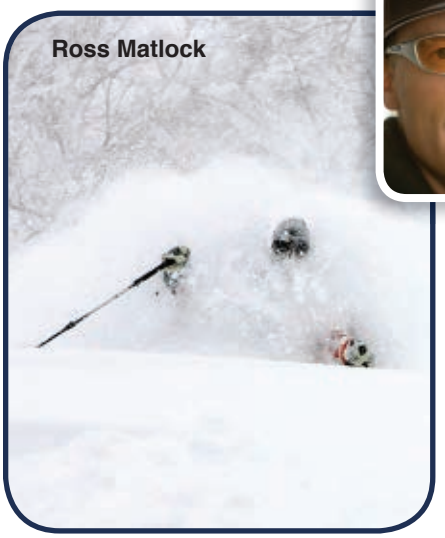
— *Charlie MacArthur*

I'm a snowboarder, so I can answer that in two words … FALL LINE! Find waves, lips, and wind drifts and slash and burn! I also believe (most of the time) that it's a sin to walk past powder to find powder. Fortunately, the masses don't agree with me there, so I have a ton of powder stashes that people just turn a blind eye to. — *Mikey Franco*

32 DEGREES: WHAT'S THE MOST ENJOYABLE ASPECT OF TEACHING ON THIS TERRAIN?

The thing I most enjoy is that it's coaching in every sense. Your work with a customer is usually culminating here in the backcountry. I love seeing the look in their eyes when you walk past something so steep or deep that it scares them. And you point it out with "That's next week's goal." — *Mikey Franco*

There is something about skiing untracked powder that gets the people really excited. To be a part of this experience is awesome and



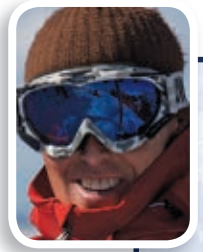
Photos by Andrew Burr

can provide some of the most enjoyable teaching moments. — *Ross Matlock*

32 DEGREES: HOW DO YOU DEFINE A GOOD DAY?

My guests and myself are able to select tactics and attitudes that the conditions dictate, not the other way around. Double gratitude for when all the conditions come together for safe conditions and magic corn and blower days!!

— *Charlie MacArthur*



What makes a great day? When the mountains let me tap into the "greater mind"—as Dolores LaChapelle put it in her book, *Deep Powder Snow.* It is that moment when all the stars align and you are void of the constant daily minutia that can clog your natural pathways to feeling connected to your environment.

Your first sidecountry experience can be over-stimulating and intimidating, but a good guide/ instructor can facilitate a seamless and unencumbered journey into pristine out-of-bounds stashes that let you connect to the "greater mind" that lies beyond the ropes.

Imagine being slowly funneled into a singleness of purpose that directs the syncing of your body with nature's free rides available on any snowy mountain. This is a peak moment!

— *Chris Fellows*

32 DEGREES: ON OFF-PISTE SNOW, WHAT'S SO COOL ABOUT YOUR GEAR?

Rocker, rocker, rocker. It's also a must to have a free-pivot telemark binding. — *Ross Matlock*

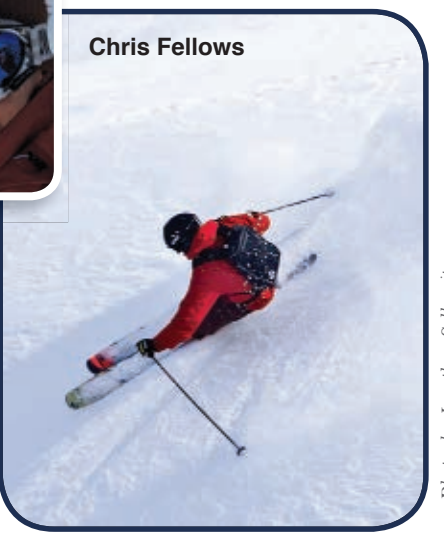
FAT twin-tip rockers. Last year I started skiing on a pair of Salomon Shoguns kitted up with step-in AT bindings. I had a big-ass smile etched onto my face for days.

Other than a good-fitting pair of skis and a digital/analog beacon, the rest can be fairly simple. The Ava-Lung packs are nice also, but light works best for me. We have a few guides on tele gear and a boarder or two on the roster. Split boards have come a long way and helped get riders off of snowshoes and into skinning. — *Stephen Szoradi*

32 DEGREES: WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN TEACHING IN THE SIDECOUNTRY?

I think about my clients long-term goals and what's the next adventure that will keep them psyched to keep pursuing their backcountry aspirations.

— *Scott McGee*



Photos by Jonathan Selkowitz

I think about serenity. I strive to take my crew to spots I know will be empty of people. Feeling like we are in a true wilderness is important to me. I want them to feel like we are on our own in the most beautiful place we can be. And surfing our way home is a beautiful thing.

— *Mikey Franco*

Where to get the best hot bowl of soup. — *Stephen Szoradi* 32°

Peter Kray is the special projects editor for 32 Degrees, *focusing on emerging snowsports trends, on-snow innovations, and the PSIA-AASI 50/50 Project. Kray skis, telemarks, and snowboards out of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is the founder of Shred White and Blue (www.shredwhiteandblue.com), a media and apparel company celebrating American boardsports.*

Web Extra

Is the sidecountry calling your name? Log on at www.TheSnowPros.org to check out some great gear options—and a training course that's tailor-made for PSIA-AASI instructors—in the "Web Extras" for 32 Degrees.

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Make a Career Out of Snowsports Instruction. Apply Your Passion to a Year-Round Gig

By Kelly Coffey

Want to go to New Zealand, tour the country, discover off-the-beaten-path ski areas . . . and get paid for the whole trip? ¶ Relax, this isn't the first sentence of the latest scam; it's the type of phone calls Peter Oliver has received from magazine editors much of his career. Currently a PSIA-certified Level II cross-country instructor and manager at Ole's Cross Country Ski Center in Warren, Vermont, Oliver has made his career by combining his dual passions for skiing and writing, channeling that energy into authoring articles for *Skiing*, *Ski*, *Powder*, *32 Degrees*, and a handful of books.

Magazines pay Oliver to travel the world and write about skiing. He's gone to the world's iconic resorts and to ski areas far off the beaten path. He's been on assignment above the Arctic Circle in Finland, down south to Chile, and over to the Old World's glamorous resorts. Throw in the occasional heli-skiing trip to British Columbia and you have a not-too-shabby lifestyle.

Oliver combined his careers with style. If you're looking to thrive in your career as a snowsports instructor, you can follow his lead and find the connection between your summer and winter professions, and turn your winter job into a year-round career.

FIND THE SYNERGY

Out of all the challenges to making a living out of snowsports instruction—and there are many—perhaps the most difficult to overcome is the need to find work 12 months a year. Here's the harsh reality of being an instructor in the big, cruel world: no matter how hard you work, no matter how well you do each winter, when the snow melts you're out of work.

Dennis Curran

Not many people make a career working only five or six months out of the year. So many promising instructors have given up when faced with this obstacle, deciding instead to join the "real world." There, twelve-month positions are the rule, not the exception, and paychecks are as consistent as a newly groomed slope. It's an alluring pull away from the dream of living the mountain lifestyle and working on the snow every day.

Of course many instructors manage to overcome that seasonal nature of the job and forge a solid career based upon their passion for snowsports instruction. How did they do it? Look in any ski school locker room and you'll get a dozen examples or more: the snowboard instructor who applies his honed guest service skills into his landscaping business; the real estate agent whose advanced sales skills helps get her ski students excited about taking more lessons.

Every example is different. There are as many solutions to that year-round dilemma as there are instructors who've managed to solve that challenge.

What do you do to fill up the rest of the year? You'll end up leaving a lot of potential earning, and job satisfaction, on the table if you remain passive about your off-season work, bouncing from off-season job to off-season job with no roadmap in mind. And if you're looking to flourish in this career, not just survive, you need to create a link between your non-winter job and your wintertime snowsports career. You'll find yourself in the right place when what you accomplish in the winter enhances your summer job, and what you do in the summer enhances your winter job.

Observe Oliver's professional trajectory.

GETTING PAID TO DO IT

Oliver's writing ambitions began when he worked on the staff of his high school literary magazine. Several years later he whipped out articles for his college newspaper at the University of Pennsylvania.

Once Oliver finished college, he pursued his writing career in New York, where he first worked for *Scholastic*. That job gave him a foothold into the print media industry, allowing him to network and build up his resume of articles. The topics he wrote about as a freelance writer jumped from genre to genre, but he found himself steering toward travel and the activities he personally enjoyed: skiing, golf, and cycling.

In the mid-1980s Oliver's ski background and contacts with editors led him to skiing's premier magazines: *SKI*, *Skiing*, and *Powder*. It was at that point he found himself traveling the world, skiing exotic places . . . and getting paid to do it. At his traveling peak, Oliver typically made 10 to 12 ski trips a year, across the globe. He's interviewed giants of the sport like Tommy Moe, Bode Miller, and Daron Rahlves.

CHOOSING A ROUTE

If that same summer-winter synergy is the goal, how do you get there? Freelance writing may not be your path, but there are plenty of routes to take to achieve the same result. If you have a way with words (and are rock-solid with deadlines) freelance writing might be right down your alley, but there are plenty of routes you can take to achieve the same result. Look at your locker room examples. You likely have coworkers that spend their summers as golf pros, landscapers, real estate agents, backcountry guides, or even chase the winter to the southern hemisphere. The key is less in the specific summer occupation, but what you do with that job and how you identify opportunities within that job.

Case in point: Oliver writes a column on cross-country skiing for his local paper. That gig is small potatoes compared to feature stories in national publications, to be sure. He writes it, he says, because he sees it as an opportunity to

promote himself as a local expert on skate-skiing and drive business to Ole's. That column is a true tie-in between two seemingly separate careers.

THE PAYMENT IS NOT THE PAYCHECK

After years of racking up the frequent flyer miles, Oliver now spends more time closer to his home in central Vermont. He's combined a smorgasbord of passions—cross-country ski instruction, organizing bicycle competitions, and regular writing assignments—into a satisfying year-round career.

"All of it is involved in activities I like to do. That's the big payoff," he said. "It's not like I'm working two desk jobs."

Oliver's strength is writing what he knows. Now that he's on the inside of the ski industry as a resort manager, he writes more articles for trade publications like *32 Degrees* and *Ski Area Management*. His insider knowledge continues to make him the go-to guy for the ski test issues for *Outside* and others.

Those ski test assignments in particular illustrate the synergy between his two professional lives: he wrote those articles for the consumer, but he leveraged heavily from his industry knowledge of product design to communicate the technical features of the latest skis, boot, and bindings.

While much of his writing is focused on snowsports, he's usually writing those articles in the summer months when the snow has long since melted. "May, June, and July are very active writing months," Oliver said. "That's when the (ski magazine) lead times are, even though it is about winter things."

There are challenges to make a career out of snowsports instruction. For the glamorous lifestyle you appear to lead to outsiders, you also seem to work extra hard to make all the pieces fit together. Obstacles are large, but these challenges aren't insurmountable.

"Appreciate the fact that you're doing something you love," advises Oliver. "The payment is not the paycheck. The payment is the experience of doing something you love." 32°

Kelly Coffey is the training manager for the Breckenridge Ski and Ride School and is an alpine freestyle examiner for PSIA. He's spent his career picking the brains of the most successful pros in the industry to steal ideas on how to make a career doing what he loves.

HOW TO PUBLISH AN ARTICLE

Thinking about writing for *32 Degrees* or another of your favorite magazines? It's not as out of reach as you first might think. Here are some tips to increase the likelihood of seeing your words in print.

WRITE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

Like building up mileage in your students skiing, a daily writing habit is the best way to improve your own writing skills. With that practice, you ll better be able to string words together to create a coherent story that people want to read. Focus on keeping your writing simple, clear, and organized. "Just get in the habit of writing," said Oliver. "The more you write the more you can own the words you are writing."

WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

There are things you have expertise in: snowsports instruction, delivering exceptional customer service, the ability to communicate with a wide spectrum of people. When you tap into those as a topic, or a similar passion, your audience will see that you own the details. Your pre-article research will be more targeted, allowing you to dig up the gems that will make your writing shine and hook editors on your skills. When you speak your readers' language, you ll have a far better connection to their motivations for reading the article.

KNOW THE PUBLICATION

The right article submitted to the wrong magazine won't go far. Like a guest-centered lesson, your article needs to focus on the reader.

To hit the reader s motivations, make sure you know the magazine, the topics it focuses on, and why those readers pick up that magazine. Before you approach a publication with an idea, spend some time on its website. Hunt around until you find its submissions guidelines or media kit—which will likely offer details about its audience, its frequency, and sometimes provide details about special features or editions that have already been planned but not produced. Look for ways you can help the editorial staff make upcoming issues a hit. If your article answers the reader s needs, then you re far more likely to earn a published article than one that is rejected for being off the mark. *Kelly Coffey*

You'll end up leaving a lot of potential earning, and job satisfaction, on the table if you remain passive about your off-season work.

What were you doing in 1961?

Bonanza was a big TV hit.

Approximately 3 million people skied.

Popular drink: Martini.

Skis made from fiberglass.

Snowmass is still just a dream waiting to happen.

Barbie and G.I. Joe were a hit.

PSIA was founded in Whitefish, Montana, to support snowsports instructors and grow the sport.

First PSIA meeting in Alta, Utah.

THE PSIA-AASI 50/50 CELEBRATION IS COMING...

Go to www.TheSnowPros.org to learn more.

PSIA 50 YEARS 1961 2011

What were you doing in 1971?

A gallon of gas cost 40 cents.

The Partridge Family ruled TV.

Snowmass sees the first moon boots hit the après ski scene.

Popular drink: Whiskey Sour.

Foam core skis introduced.

Bell-bottom pants, platform shoes, and leisure suits were all the rage.

PSIA gets rocking with the Skills Concept.

THE PSIA-AASI 50/50 CELEBRATION IS COMING...

Go to www.TheSnowPros.org to learn more.

PSIA 50 YEARS 1961 2011

– Celebrating PSIA's 50th –

Pre-Interski tele training.

Tom Lippert

HISTORICAL LINKS TO REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

(Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles celebrating the upcoming 50th anniversary of the founding of PSIA, and the people whose experimentation, initiative, and innovation continue to define American snowsports instruction. We welcome your voice, and look forward to hearing memories about your role in the first 50 years. At the end of the article, you will find information on how to join the conversation).

By Peter Kray

Every decade it seems as if there is a new revolution in snowsports, from the equipment to the terrain to especially how skiing and snowboarding are taught. For half a century now—from that day in May 1961 when the Professional Ski Instructors of America first formed in a cold cafeteria in Whitefish, Montana, to the present day—every 10 years there has been another quantum leap forward in snowsports instruction in the United States.

In the 1960s, PSIA's founders envisioned the beginning of an American technique. In the 1970s, new innovators such as Horst Abraham, Max Lundberg, and Mike Porter electrified the world with the effective simplicity of the Skills Concept, as well as a focus on the needs and specific learning methods of each student. Snowboarding exploded like wildfire in the 1990s, and from 2000 to 2010 the entire snowsports landscape was transformed as terrain parks sprang up, backcountry gates were opened, and on-piste grooming reaped the rewards of snowguns and snowcats gone high-tech.

Now, with the advent of rocker technology, every ski and snowboard instructor in America can sense that we are on the verge of something new, of another exciting leap into "What's next?"

Historians keeping score will notice the 1980s have gone missing from that sequence of events. That's because, unlike other decades marked by a decidedly forward lean into the future, the biggest on-slope innovations in the 1980s were deeply rooted in the past.

Nordic, skiing's original technique, experienced a boom—with the advent of skate skiing to an especially passionate revival of that graceful swoop of a turn, the telemark. Adaptive skiing, first popularized by wounded 10th Mountain Division veterans of WWII who refused to let injuries and amputations keep them from the slopes, welcomed a new wave of instructors and instruction styles, as well as incredible improvements in the quality of equipment. And women, who had been on the snow just as long as any men, were skiing their way onto the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team, taking more leadership roles in the hierarchy of PSIA, and developing breakthrough women's ski programs and writing new instructional books.

In mainstream society, it was the era of MTV, Live Aid, *The Simpsons*, Michael Jackson, Molly Ringwald, Indiana Jones, and rap. But on the slopes, more than being about "What's next?" the passion of The Eighties was focused more on finding out "What have we missed?"

American Bill Koch started the skating craze.

THE NORDIC BOOM IN SKATING, TELEMARK

In *Skiing Right*, the famous compendium of skiing and ski instruction written by Horst Abraham and published by PSIA in 1983, PSIA co-founder Bill Lash writes, "The word 'ski' is the Norwegian name for a snowshoe that was used by the northern nations of the Old World . . . it is found in the English words skid, skip, skiff, slide, and skate." And from the beginning, skiing was more about survival and transit—sliding across the snow on a hunt or on the way to a battle—than it was about speed and descent.

Even into the '70s, nordic skiing was still regarded as a form of winter hiking or deep-snow strolling here in the United States. But two events occurred in that decade that reminded America that free-heel skiing was also very much a sport. The first was the rise of Bill Koch.

A cross-country innovator who grew up in the windblown winters of Vermont, Koch made history as the first North American to win a medal in cross-country skiing at the Winter Olympics when he took silver in the 30-kilometer race at Innsbruck in 1976—a feat that went unrepeated for 34 years, until the U.S. Nordic Team's recent multi-medal performance at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics.

"When Bill Koch won the silver medal in Innsbruck, by skating instead of striding, he started the whole skating craze," said Urmas Franosch.

An instructor, patroller, and cross-country shop owner in the '70s, Franosch made the PSIA Nordic Team in 1996. The athleticism and technique required for skating, said Franosch, created a new generation of cross-country skiing students—and new opportunities for instructors from Minnesota to Montana. Even now he marvels at how a lone American like Koch had such a deep impact on the deep traditions of nordic skiing.

"By the late '80s, skating had surpassed track skiing as the most popular style, and there was more pressure on cross-country ski centers to prepare the track," said Franosch. "It's ironic that Koch is an American, and yet he's one of the most pivotal figures in the sport."

But Koch wasn't alone in trying to redefine free-heel skiing in America. Almost simultaneously across the country, skiers were re-embracing one of skiing's original turns, the telemark. Developed by Norwegian Sondre Norheim in the mid 1800s, a century later both the aesthetic and athletic aspects of the telemark turn ignited the passions of expert skiers at many of the country's most difficult slopes.

"Telemark skiing in the 1970s was re-invented independently in a half dozen scattered, isolated mountain towns that at first were not in communication with each other," writes Jeffrey R. Leich, director of the New England Ski

What were you doing in 1981?

Raiders of the Lost Ark hits the big screen.

The term "internet" was first mentioned.

Alpine Springs and High Alpine areas are open at Snowmass.

Popular Drink: Long Island Ice Tea.

Vibration absorbing system in skis introduced.

The compact disc revolutionized the music industry.

Horst Abraham introduced *Skiing Right* with increased focus on how students learn.

PSIA-AASI Archives

PSIA makes the scene with a telemark demo at the 1983 Interski in Sesto, Italy.

Courtesy of Doug Pringle

Doug Pringle (in back) has made adaptive skiing his life s work.

Museum, in the organization's 2010 spring journal. He states, "The Crested Butte pioneers were the first revivalists," adding that soon after, "telemark skiing began to evolve in places like the Adirondacks of New York, Whitefish, Montana; Alta, Utah; and the White Mountains of New Hampshire."

At first, telemark was about utilizing lightweight cross-country equipment to get to the fresh powder in winter's snow-laden forests, as celebrated in books such as Steve Barnett's *Cross Country Downhill*, published in 1978 with a hands-high, free-flowing photo of the author on the cover. But at ski areas, the zealots were increasingly pushing for the right to ride the lifts, and facing a reluctance that would foreshadow the difficulties that snowboarders first had getting accepted on the slopes.

"I remember when we got to Interski in Italy in 1983, and we basically did an all-telemark demonstration," said Tony Forrest, the coach of the original PSIA Nordic Team, which was formed in 1979 with one member from each of PSIA's nine divisions ensuring a well-rounded mix of classic and skating styles, as well as telemark.

"All of the other countries were making group tracks, and we were the only country that asked to use the lifts," Forrest said. "And when we were done, there were a lot of Norwegians and Scandinavians coming up to us saying, 'We remember that turn. We did that turn first.'"

By 1985, PSIA would publish *Cross-Country Skiing Right*. Covering everything from technology to how to tour, it represented the increasing breadth of the association's involvement in the proper instruction of every form of snowsports.

ADAPTIVE EXPANSION: GRAVITY CREATES FLIGHT

After Doug Pringle lost a leg in Vietnam, he remembers sitting in a bed in Letterman Hospital in San Francisco when some WWII 10th Mountain Division veterans came in and showed a movie of a one-legged skier. A West Point graduate who failed horribly the one time he tried skiing while at the Academy, Pringle said his first response had been, "I couldn't ski on two legs, how I'm ever going to do it on one?"

But when his fellow wounded veterans returned from their first trip, talking about bars and girls and that gravity-fed feeling of freedom, he said, "Well, where do I sign up?"

That sense of energy, of possibility, inspired adaptive ski instruction's new wave of converts. Once they realized how the slip of the snow and the pull of the planet could expand the world of any adaptive skier—be they blind, autistic, para- or even quadriplegic—then they were hooked.

"It literally changed my life," said Pringle, president of Disabled Sports USA Far West. "I had no choice but to spread the message once I first felt that sense of mobility, freedom, speed, and exhilaration that can't be duplicated in any other sport. It became my life's work."

As was the case with the growth of telemark, throughout the '70s there was a groundswell of adaptive ski chapters across the U.S. Sleeping on friend's floors, traveling from resort to resort, and, like those first free-heelers, having to prove again and again that they weren't a liability on the chairlifts, "We became the apostles, the emissaries of adaptive skiing," Pringle said. "Many took it as a mission to see what they could get going in their own community, and that's how the chapters sprang up."

But even as the number of instructors began to grow, the equipment was struggling to catch up. In 1970, Swiss electrician Hans Schmid, inspired by watching skiing amputees, demonstrated his monoski design. And in the early

What were you doing in 1991?

Nirvana kicks off the grunge era.

The cast of *Friends* provide evidence that you can live the high life without actually having to work hard... but instructors had known that for years.

Aspen Extreme...*Dumb and Dumber*... enough said.

Shaped skis begin to attract attention.

Snowboards become mainstream.

Popular drink: Sex on the Beach.

PSIA gets behind snowboarding in a big way, leading to the launch of the American Association of Snowboard Instructors.

Tom Lippert

Disabled ski champion Diana Golden leads the charge in a pre-Interski training run in 1990.

Scott Markewitz

No glass ceilings for former PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team member Dee Byrne.

years, almost any adaptive skier had to, at some point, master the ability to merely stand up. It wasn't until Pete Axelson, an engineer who had sustained a spinal cord injury in a climbing accident, began to develop his own mono-ski designs into the '80s that it became possible for virtually every level of adaptive skier to enjoy the experience of the slopes.

"At the beginning, the state of instruction was just awful. We were duct-taping people into boots and throwing them onto chairs, and really just trying to achieve that sensation of sliding with anyone who had the *cojones* to keep trying to stand up," said Katherine Hayes-Rodriguez, who, in California with Pringle, would become one of the pioneers of the adaptive mountain descent.

With Pringle leading the way after he earned his Level III ski instructor's certification on one-leg, Hayes-Rodriguez helped develop the methodology and standardization of adaptive instruction that they would present to PSIA. As the '80s dawned, they wanted to prove the method to their madness, and to be recognized as professional instructors themselves.

"It became important to me to have PSIA endorse what Doug and Katherine had done because they had worked so hard to prove that they were professional ski instructors, and educators of the industry," said Gwen Allard, who as the first full-time executive director of PSIA's Eastern Division had been an early and extremely effective champion of bringing adaptive instruction under the PSIA umbrella. "And to me, that was what PSIA was formed to represent."

Allard said one of the greatest rewards for incorporating adaptive programs into PSIA occurred at Interski in St. Anton, Austria, in 1991, when the late Diana Golden, who amassed an astounding 19 gold medals in the U.S. Adaptive Alpine Championships, led the U.S. Demonstration Team down the slope.

"From a distance people couldn't tell that she had only one leg, but as the team got closer you could hear the murmur of conversation beginning," Allard recalled. "And when she finished with the crispest turn that just threw snow into the air, well, the crowd just exploded after that."

MAKING THE TURN: GRAVITY S EQUAL RIGHTS

Of course women have long shared the slopes with men, and competitively had more of an impact on the international scene much earlier than the men here in the U.S. Gretchen Fraser was winning Olympic medals at the St. Moritz Winter Olympics in 1948, and Andrea Mead Lawrence won two gold medals at the 1952 Winter Olympics in Oslo, Norway, while the men would have to wait for their first breakthrough at the 1964 Games at Innsbruck.

On the instruction front, women were earning their U.S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association certification as early as the 1938–39 ski season, and, according to E. John B. Allen's book *Teaching and Technique,* in 1949 President of the New York State Professional Ski Instructors Association Dorothy Hoyt Nebel was already arguing for a standardization of American teaching technique.

There were women on the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team at Interski in Aspen in 1968, but at the time the team still disbanded after each event. Karen Hollaus in the Midwest and Elissa Slanger in California—both PSIA examiners—were equally influential through the '70s and up into the present, but in ski lessons, men were still teaching all of the advanced classes, and almost all of the adult lessons. In the '80s that changed for good.

What were you doing in 2001?

The iPod!

Everybody Loves Raymond on TV.

Aspen Skiing Company is awarded the 2001 Golden Eagle Award for Overall Environmental Excellence in the Ski Industry.

Popular Drink: Mojito.

Some of you still had a one piece suit... and you totally pulled it off.

PSIA-AASI turned 40 and has regretted not having a bigger party ever since. SO...

THE PSIA-AASI 50/50 CELEBRATION IS COMING...

Go to www.TheSnowPros.org to learn more.

PSIA 50 YEARS 1961 2011

One important benchmark was reached in 1980 when Carol Levine and Ellen Post (now Post Foster) made the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team. They were joined by Dee Byrne in 1984. Rather than filling any pre-set quota, all three had to work to earn a spot.

"When I made the Alpine Team in 1980, I had to deal with more than being a female trying out for a previously all-male team. At 4' 10" tall and 95 pounds, I didn't come close to the stereotypical stature of a Demo Team member," Post Foster said. "After I was chosen, I was told that I qualified using the same criteria that was used for the men."

Post Foster recalls that in order to earn respect when out giving clinics to other instructors across the country she always had to ski harder than anyone else, and be spot-on with her methodology. But the student-centered instruction method at the core of American ski teaching meant that focusing on how women learned and excelled was as relevant as any question ever asked. For Levine, there was a sense at the time that "women could ski strong and not have to ski like guy, or like their husband, but just by skiing for themselves."

In 1979, Slanger, along with former manager of *SKI* and *Skiing* magazines Dinah Witchel, published *Ski Woman's Way* based on a series of ski weeks Slanger was hosting at Squaw Valley. It helped form the basis for recognizing the different psychological and physical aspects of female skiers, and inspired teaching seminars and equipment innovations that are even now continuing to develop. (For more on Elissa Slanger, see "What Women Want," on page 44.)

What is interesting to note is that many, if not all, of the women who helped build the standards for ski instruction in the U.S. felt less like pioneers and more like winter athletes who were just helping their sport follow its natural course.

"Regarding growing up in this business as a 'woman,' I'm thankful not to have a story illustrating how I 'broke through the glass ceiling.' Yet I know it is not very dramatic," said Byrne, who is the director of the snowsports school and race programs at Squaw Valley U.S.A. "It was more about doing a good job and taking pride in having the skills to be effective. That was always the point."

It was the basis for a decade that substantially increased the number of ways that professional ski instructors could teach snowsports—and especially the number of people they could teach. After yet another 10 years of incredible innovation, you might think the pace would back off.

But even as the '80s wound to a close, the sparks of winter's biggest revolution since the very start of skiing—the advent of snowboarding—were being fanned at skis hills from coast to coast. And if the passion for skiing burned like a woodstove stoked for a frigid winter's night, the one-board revolution would land on those flames like a can of gas. Resisted at first by ski areas and skiers alike, it would take the intervention of PSIA, and the subsequent formation of the American Association of Snowboard Instructors, to help the

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN 2011?

THE PSIA-AASI 50/50 CELEBRATION!

Snowmass, CO April 4-9, 2011

You, your family, and your friends are invited to join PSIA-AASI in Snowmass, CO, for the biggest party in the history of snowsports instruction. This massive celebration includes six days of parties, powder, eating, drinking, singing, reminiscing, skiing, riding, learning, sleeping, spa-ing, and whatever else it takes to throw down in the name of five decades of instruction past and decades yet to come.

Visit www.TheSnowPros.org for the latest pre-event info.

THIS PARTY HAS BEEN 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING.

PSIA 50 YEARS 1961 2011

PROFESSIONAL SKI INSTRUCTORS OF AMERICA

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SNOWBOARD INSTRUCTORS

www.TheSnowPros.org

the new sport gain access to the lifts (see "PSIA Helps Riders Make the Scene").

And so the evolution and revolutions continue, with PSIA-AASI decidedly not content to take a backseat. 32°

Peter Kray is the special projects editor for 32 Degrees, focusing on emerging snowsports trends, on-snow innovations, and the PSIA-AASI 50/50 Project. Kray skis, telemarks, and snowboards out of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is the founder of Shred White and Blue (www.shredwhiteandblue.com), a media and apparel company celebrating American boardsports.

GET MORE HISTORICAL NUANCE ONLINE

Read Peter Kray's profile of PSIA co-founder Curt Chase in the "web extras" for *32 Degrees* at www.TheSnowPros.org. While you're on the website, read Kray's blog leading up to PSIA-AASI's 50/50 celebration in the "From the Wire" section. Be sure and take a look at the post titled, "The 50/50 Blog: What Story Do You have to Tell" to see how you can join the conversation and share your own personal moments in the ongoing history of snowsports instruction. For more about the upcoming fantastic PSIA-AASI 50/50 Celebration in Snowmass, Colorado, April 4-9, check out the 50/50 page at www.TheSnowPros.org.

PSIA HELPS RIDERS MAKE THE SCENE

In the history of sports, it's hard to imagine a more radical innovation than the introduction of snowboarding. Maybe the advent of mountain biking to cycling comes close, but in the '80s, in just a few short years, after centuries of riding two planks, skiers suddenly found themselves sharing the snow with winter surfers riding just one board.

Seen as a revelation by an exponentially growing number of converts each season, resort managers and old school purists resisted it, refusing to let the "unskilled" riders on their hills. And it wasn't until boarding was embraced by the PSIA, given a methodology and an instructional progression, that boarding gradually began to be accepted, paving the way for yet another on-snow Renaissance—one which would change the sport forever.

"For the first three years I snowboarded I had to hike the mountain," said Bud Keene, one of America's original snowboard instructors (and a former PSIA Eastern Division examiner) who went on to become a coach for the U.S. Snowboard Team and helped superstar Shaun White grab two Olympic gold medals in 2010.* "It certainly had a little bit of the outlaw image at the start, coming as it did from skate and surf culture, but the intolerance in the beginning just helped push that through the roof. That ready-made conflict gave the sport a kind of romanticism that just pushed the needle up a lot."

For Keene, who was first introduced to snowboarding in Stowe, Vermont, by another pioneer of instruction, Lowell Hart, the idea that snowboarders lacked technique only made him want to perform even better, whether that was in the moguls, the steeps, or even on the ice. Along with Hart, it also drove him to professionalize the sport as much as possible.

"It was Lowell who understood from the beginning that if we wanted snowboarding to succeed, we needed to go to the resorts with an instruction plan, and an equipment plan, and, most importantly, a way to make it profitable," said Keene. He said that as the two began to develop that strategy, they were happily surprised to find other like-minded people around the country, such as Tom Long, Ray Sforzo, Dave Alden, Randy Price and Tom Vickery—the "Johnny Appleseeds" as Keene calls them now. With longtime PSIA member Juris Vagners, several of them went to Copper Mountain, Colorado, for a week of concentrated on- and off-hill brainstorming in 1987, from which they finally emerged with PSIA's first instructional snowboard manual.

After that, certification began to follow, and a formalized concept of snowboard instruction began to take hold. "In 1989, we held the first snowboard certification at A-Basin, and certified 12 people," said Vagners. "They sort of formed the core for the national organization, and they took off from there."

As Vagners explains, along with the sheer radical differences between snowboarding and skiing, resorts were especially cautious about the sport due to insurance concerns. It was only through the advent of snowboard certification, and lessons, that areas across the country began to let riders onto the chairs.

Despite all this activity, snowboarding risked being an afterthought in an alpine organization, so in 1997—after lengthy conversations with snowboarders, snowboard companies, and resorts—PSIA formed the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) as a second brand within the association. Now snowboard design influences both ski and resort innovation at an unprecedented pace—from fat skis to halfpipes to rocker. It seems like we might still be mired in some kind of straight-ski backwater if it weren't for the development of skiing's own surfboard.

Early snowboarding strategist Dave Alden.

Tom Lippert

"When we started out the equipment sucked, we were wearing Sorels instead of [snowboard] boots, and we had to fight for the right for areas to allow us on the hill," said Price. "But by the time we talked to PSIA, they were so excited about snowboarding—and guys like Juris Vagners and Horst Abraham were so helpful—it really felt like we all wanted to reach the same goal. After that it all happened so quickly, that if you were a snowboard instructor you were booked all day, and barely had time to come off the hill." *Peter Kray*

* Bud Keene will present the keynote address at PSIA-AASI's 50/50 Celebration Banquet April 6 in Snowmass, Colorado.

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WHAT WOMEN WANT

WISDOM FROM SIX WHO SHOULD KNOW

BY KRISTA CRABTREE

Women-specific snowsports programs have taken the country by storm. Learning a few practical tips on how best to teach women will keep them coming back to your program or resort—and that's sure to pay dividends on down the line and throughout the industry.

One of the best ways to find out what women want from a program is to, well, ask them! Karen Suing, a former participant of Vail's Her Turn women's program had this to say about program: "I believe women's programs are fun, productive, and provide a truly supportive and comfortable learning environment for women looking to advance their skills as well as network with other ski enthusiasts."

Suing's feedback reflects what so many women are seeking in the snowsports industry: an opportunity to learn and have a great time on the slopes. The popularity of women's programs continues to grow and nearly every ski resort offers some type of class, camp, or weekend. Women's programs are good for business and present an added bonus: Exceed women's expectations and they will most likely return with their friends and families.

Here's the challenge: How do you engage women and keep them coming back to your program and resort for more? You don't have to be a woman to relate to one, but you do need to consider some key components of what the majority of women need or want from a lesson. Anyone who has worked extensively with women knows this is no small task. To say that all women learn a certain way, desire a certain thing, or even have the same body type is incorrect. But it's safe to say—particularly when talking about gear—that women are not small men and have different needs. Every woman is unique both physically and emotionally.

There are tendencies, however, which are backed by the anecdotal evidence of many pros who teach women, that shed light on how women learn and what they desire. The instructor's challenge revolves around one essential principal reflected in Suing's comment: how to best provide a supportive and comfortable learning environment.

Here, six pioneers and passionate advocates of women's snowsport programs share their advice on how to create the best learning environment for women. Instructors will find time-tested tips and






thoughts—as well as a few secrets—from these top female pros on the history of women's programs, physiological differences between men and women, how to address women's psychological needs, and how to conquer fear.

ELISSA SLANGER

Founder of Woman's Way Ski Seminars and early proponent of women teaching women.

HERSTORY

Twenty five years ago, Elissa Slanger worked her way up to examiner in a predominately male sport. After becoming concerned that women often found learning to ski to be painful and humiliating she founded Woman's Way Ski Seminars, which grew into a national program. She also collaborated with *Skiing Magazine* contributor Dinah B. Witchel to write *Ski Woman's Way*, one of the first books to make the distinction that women should be taught differently than men.

"In 1975, I was a fully certified instructor in the Squaw Valley Ski School, an examiner, and was on the board of directors of the FWSIA [precursor to PSIA-W]," says Slanger. "I was one of the very few women in any of those positions—which is hard to believe now. At that time women taught children—period. Squaw was one of the first places that let women teach everyone."

Two things caused her to recognize that women needed something different than the usual ski school lessons. One of these was that the handful of women instructors in the ski school did not feel comfortable in training clinics. "Secondly," she says, "many of the women I taught commented on how nice it was to take a lesson from a woman—that they felt I could relate to them—and a man or two said they wanted to sign their girlfriends up for lessons because they thought I could turn them on to skiing again."

In 1975, with permission of Squaw's ski school director, Slanger created a ski week for women taught by women in the school. "About nine women showed up and had such a great week that they asked me to do it again," recalls Slanger. "For the next ski week they all came back and brought friends."

Word spread and soon other ski areas were asking Slanger to run programs for them. "I started doing it all over the country," she says. "At each area I trained instructors. I tried to eliminate performance pressure, use self-discovery, and create a very supportive atmosphere."

Slanger developed an instructor manual, then her book—which was touted for its advice on self-discovery, creating a supportive environment, and alleviating performance pressure.

PHYSIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Jeannie Thoren started working with women in the 1980s after realizing that by moving her bindings forward she forever changed her skiing for the better. She has since worked with numerous ski and boot manufacturers and runs women's camps and seminars across the country.

A pioneer in women's skiing, Thoren developed the Thoren Theory as a way to help women improve technique through equipment modification. To explain the differences between many men and women, she uses the imagery of a pear. "Though some women have an athletic female body type with narrow hips, in my experience 80 percent of women have a pear-shaped body that is wider at the bottom than the top," says Thoren. "Men tend to be the opposite."

Women generally have smaller shoulders then men, explains Thoren, and because women are built to bear children, they usually have wider hips. "When most girls go through puberty, their hips widen and their weight goes to the rear in all sports for the rest of their life," she says. Wider hips mean that women's thigh bones angle toward the knees in a more pronounced angle—what is called the "Q-angle." The knees collapse to the inside and when they flex forward, the knees go in—causing the hips to go rearward. "That's why you see so many women in the sitting-back, chair position," says Thoren. "This can affect upper-end skiers, but it really devastates entry-level and early intermediate skiers."

Thoren's discovery helped create what is now commonly referred to as a "woman-specific forward mounting position,"

JEANNIE THOREN

Developed theory to help women improve technique via equipment modification.

and most ski manufacturers move the ski binding mounting position forward by 1–1.5 centimeters to help put women in a more aligned position relative to their body shape.

The Minnesota-based Thoren doesn't stop at the Q-angle, however. She advises that other factors, such as the tendency for women to have lower calf muscles and thinner ankles than men, can be addressed by women-specific boots made with lower-cut, scalloped boot cuffs. "That's why it's so important to look at your student's equipment and make recommendations or send them to a qualified bootfitter," says Thoren.

PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

Annie Emich Black is a 33-year veteran ski instructor, examiner, and lead trainer for Keystone's Betty Fest Weekends for Women. In the summer, she runs women's mountain bike clinics.

"Unfortunately many women don't think of themselves as athletes and, therefore, don't have a lot of confidence in themselves," says Emich Black. "The primary goal when teaching women should be to increase their confidence." She asserts that, as caregivers, women are typically "givers" who likely were busy taking care of their family long before they even got to the

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ANNIE EMERICH BLACK

Believes the most important goal for instructors who teach women is to help them increase their confidence.

slopes. Or, says Emich Black, "they may have been injured in the past or may not be in as good as shape as they'd like and may have some fear that they may or may not be able to articulate."

Emich Black says that women have different emotional needs than men, and instructors can help them achieve their goals by considering the following tactics: Build a relationship. Knowing and using your student's name is critical when teaching women. Women want to be looked in the eye and feel like they are connecting with you. Ask open-ended questions and sit back and listen. Find out why they're here, where they're coming from, what happened the last time they went skiing—and really find out. Practice guest-centered teaching. After you develop a relationship, identify and facilitate motivational needs—then address movement needs.

Be compassionate and empathetic. If your student seems frightened or expresses fear, identify with her fear and say "I understand what you're saying; I've felt the same way."

Make realistic goals. Break your student's goals down to attainable steps. Together, build a step-by-step progression, which will lead to her desired outcome.

MERMER BLAKESLEE

Instructs with a focus that women want to improve each day, yet they often pull back when on snow with men.

OVERCOMING FEAR

Mermer Blakeslee is an examiner in PSIA-AASI's Eastern Division, a former member of the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team, and director of the Power Learn Program at New York's Windham Mountain. She also authored *In the Yikes! Zone: A Conversation with Fear*, a groundbreaking work on how fear impacts snowsports lessons.

According to Blakeslee, studies show that women want to learn and be better than they were yesterday. "Women push themselves really hard in an all-female environment," she says, "and yet often the same women who get really courageous with other women tend to retreat in a co-ed environment. Women want to feel comfortable while learning, but also tend to want to be pushed."

There are times, she says, when even the most courageous student freezes with fear. Here are Blakeslee's suggestions to help students through a fearful moment:

Acceptance. Don't question or dismiss your student's fear. Help her accept her feelings for what they are without judgment. Don't say, "You can do it, it's easy. We did it yesterday." Sometimes that can work, but it can create even more of a chasm between what the student feels at the moment and what she is supposed to feel. Instead say, "I know you're frightened, but we're going to deal with it right here."

Lower the task. In this step, the technical aspect is to protect your student's fore/aft balance. You don't want the person's fear to put her in the back seat because then she's actually in trouble. The psychological aspect is to lower the perceived challenge, but not the skill.

For example, if your student is frozen at the top of a cornice, suggesting a sideslip can protect her fore/aft balance and maintain forward momentum. This is not to say she sideslips all the way down, but she does so until she feels comfortable and starts skiing again. If she is still frozen, try this last-resort panic technique: encourage her to breathe hard and audibly. It also helps if you stay in front of her and lead the way.

Raise the task in small increments: Let's say you've gone off a cornice in a sideslip. Instruct your student to slowly turn her sideslip into turns. Usually this happens naturally as she gets more comfortable.

Go back into the comfort zone. Let her relax and take her into easier terrain so that she can feel good and build up a little desire for another "yikes" experience.

INGIE FRANBERG

Recognizes that women seek instruction to gain confidence, improve, and have fun.

SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES

Ingie Franberg has worked for Vail Resorts for several decades and is the general manager of the Lionshead Adult Snowsports School. She is also the director of Vail's long-standing women's program, Her Turn.

"Most women join a program because they want to improve, gain confidence, and have fun," says Franberg. Here is her advice to help instructors meet these common goals:

- As the organizer/manager, assign instructors to the program who love to teach women and are truly committed.
- As instructors, give individual, specific feedback often and encourage feedback to you as well, as you are there for them.
- Involve the group in helping each other. This can make them feel important and foster a supportive atmosphere.
- Be flexible with your lesson plan and have Plan B, C, and D

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EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

A fully certified instructor/trainer at Heavenly Resort in California and Mt. Hotham in Australia, Heidi Ettlinger organizes PSIA-Western Division's Women's Camps for instructors.

HEIDI ETTLINGER

Focuses on creating the right environment to help instructors deliver "mini-makeovers" with clients.

"Instructors who understand how to create an optimal environment for 'mini-makeovers' are the most successful," suggests Ettlinger. Here are her five tips to enhance the experience for participants in a women-specific program:

1. As a staff, share the same fundamental teaching strategies. Work as a team daily to check in on splits and customize the plan for the day.
2. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your program. Often the weakest link is the initial administrative piece of taking the reservations and compiling the necessary details to make sure you have enough staff for potential splits in ability. Assign a single point person to answer questions.
3. Word of mouth is your strongest arm for marketing. Make every effort to meet and exceed women's expectations and they'll bring their friends to the next event.
4. Plan après-ski sessions. Bring the group together with drinks and hors d'oeuvres, a video medley, or equipment chats.
5. Prepare a special closing to the event. A simple "award" presented by each coach is a great way to let women know you valued their commitment to the program and look forward to seeing them again.

No matter if you're teaching an hour lesson to a female never-ever or a week-long women's program, top pros agree that women are looking for a supportive environment where they can learn, have fun, and feel like they can connect with others. If instructors practice guest-centered teaching, as Emich Black recommends, then women will most likely feel as if their emotional needs are met on the slopes and be open to challenging themselves and improving their skills. That is a common goal shared by all, no matter what their body looks like. 32°

Krista Crabtree directs the women's program at Colorado's Eldora Mountain Resort and the She Skis Women's Ski Testing Clinics held each February in Vail, Colorado. A PSIA Level I instructor, Crabtree is a former SKI Magazine *editor with 11 years' experience as a club-level USSA race coach.*

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Sverre Liliequist makes light of untracked snow in the Mount Titlis backcountry. Engelberg, Switzerland. OSKAR ENANDER

SnowSports 360

2011 INTERSKI PUTS THE EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION

By **PETER KRAY**; Photos by **CESAR PIOTTO**

Long after the glow of the fireworks, fresh snow, and new friends made on the slopes of St. Anton, Austria, at the 2011 Interski Congress have faded to embers, the international impact of what was taught, discussed, and cross-pollinated will still be growing. That's because this Interski—perhaps more than any other in the 60-year history of this event—marked the beginning of a new era in country-to-country cooperation.

"It really has become focused on the sharing of different teaching perspectives and the instructors' overall relationship to the snowsports industry," said PSIA-AASI chairman and leader of the U.S. delegation Eric Sheckleton. "The quality of seminars, lectures, and clinics presented this year was exceptional."

Sometimes seen as a kind of snowsports instructor's Olympics, when countries came just to wow each other on the demonstration slopes with their hot feet and latest techniques, this Interski placed a focus on information and education. Sure there were several nights under the lights when Slovenians (tuxedo-clad, skiing to the James Bond theme); techno-synced Japanese; hard-rocking Swiss; Argentines, Italians, Americans; and teams from 38 countries in total went rocketing down the demonstration slope in front of huge crowds, hitting ridiculous speeds in tight formations. But out of the nearly 2,000 instructors in attendance, most seemed even more thrilled to hear what all of the other countries were teaching.

The sign says it all in two languages!

"There is always an interesting clash between some of the national teams at an event like this," said PSIA Alpine Team Captain Michael Rogan. "Some come here completely focused on what they are going to do in the demo, while a lot of others are here more for the instructional component and all of the information that's here for sharing."

In both aspects—informational and instructional—the PSIA-AASI Teams brought their A-game. Their own workshop day on the third day of the Congress brought a standing-room-only crowd to the indoor presentation. Immediately afterwards, PSIA-AASI's contingent sent out more than a dozen on-snow clinic groups, in which various team members dissected America's latest innovations in how to teach nordic skiing to kids, incorporate freestyle into ski and snowboard lessons, and develop new teaching methodologies in adaptive snowboarding.

Across disciplines, the PSIA-AASI demonstrations on the impact of rocker technology felt like an especially prescient message from the future of ski and snowboard instruction. Meanwhile earlier benchmarks, such as America's development of student-centered teaching, and the skills concept—first presented at Interski in Czechoslovakia in 1975!—continued to appear in the baseline of other countries' newest methods of teaching. And in a youth-based program that ran alongside the event almost every day, team members volunteered to participate in teaching trainloads of kids who came up to St. Anton as part of the host country's initiative on reaching children.


Indoor presentations drew big crowds.

"Our teams kept stepping up, whether it was making the extra effort to teach classes or taking time to get to know other countries perspectives in depth," said PSIA-AASI Executive Director and CEO Mark Dorsey. "It really helped out the Interski organizers, and showed just how committed the team members were to immersing themselves in the event, and to exploring all the opportunities they have for instruction."

Echoing this sentiment, PSIA-AASI International Vice President John Armstrong, a veteran of seven Interskis, said, "This was far and away among the top performances I've ever seen from a U.S. team."

Eric Rolls offers a hands-on learning experience.

Said PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team Coach Bill Bowness—who paired with Adaptive Team member Geoff Krill to lead the U.S. down the demonstration slope at warp speed—the joy of sharing America's latest methodologies was one of the greatest aspects of Interski for him. "My highlight was presenting," he said. "It (felt) great to finally get out and do what we do so well."

THE PSIA-AASI PRESENTATION

PSIA-AASI set the stage for a meaningful Interski from the get-go with presentations—anchored by a keynote address by Dorsey—that emphasized how American teaching concepts and strategies drive quality lessons on the hill. (To watch this and other key Interski presentations go to www.youtube.com and enter TheSnowPros [one word] in the search field.) There was certainly a buzz in the air among Rogan, Bowness, AASI Snowboard Team member Josh Spoelstra, and PSIA Nordic Team member Ross Matlock during their indoor presentation. The packed house of instructors from such countries as Switzerland, Korea, Finland, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, and Japan helped stoke it, as did the excitement around the topics the Teams were presenting.


Bill Bowness and Geoff Krill in synchro cruise control.

"They worked so hard over the past year to put these presentations together—they actually prepared twice as many topics but only had time for half of them," PSIA-AASI Education Manager Ben Roberts said. "The last couple months they've been completely focused on dialing them in. And the good news is that all of the content influences the clinics that team members have led and continue to lead across the country this season."


Michael Rogan promotes a culture of connection.

Including adaptive snowsports, getting kids to cross-country ski, and incorporating freestyle at all levels, as well as embracing new technology (i.e., rocker), the topics also covered PSIA-AASI's overall culture of connection. "Our focus is on a partnership of learning," Rogan told the room of instructors. "It's about building a relationship between what our students bring to the table and how we meet their needs."

Highlighting all the intricacies involved in responding to the broad diversity of its customer's needs—from the background of its students to the equipment they can be riding to America's vast variety of terrain—Rogan emphasized the versatility of American instruction. He also invited everyone to check out the resources available to PSIA-AASI members on the website at TheSnowPros.org, and explained that all the attendees would have access to PSIA-AASI's member-only material online until March 1. "It's well worth a look folks," one member of the New Zealand Team wrote in his blog from St. Anton. (It's worth noting that, for the first time, PSIA-AASI members were able to follow Interski—taking in the images and the instructional insights it represents—as the event unfolded via the PSIA-AASI website, the PSIA-AASI Community, and the association's Facebook group (TheSnowPros) and Twitter posts,

SnowSports 360

among other communication channels.)

Once on the snow, the crowd °seemed to double, especially for the adaptive workshops on snowboarding. "At Vancouver Island where I teach, we're always trying to blend the best teaching methods," Canadian Team member Mike Bray said of an adaptive snowboard clinic being led by AASI Snowboard Team member Scott Anfang. "Everything I'm hearing right now is giving me information that I'm excited to take back home."

Helping other teams understand how an adaptive rider might best experience the sensation of beginning to carve, Anfang led team members from Canada, Croatia, and Switzerland through a clinic that was as informative as it was fast-moving. At the same time, Teemu Lehmusto of Finland was following Alpine Team members Mike Hafer and David Oliver into the terrain park and looking for new techniques to take back home. "Our goal is to make the learning environment as simple and as exciting as possible," said Lehmusto. "The idea that adding freestyle to the lesson can make it more fun and motivating for the student is something that I really wanted to hear more about."

And in telemark and alpine, there was a large contingent of instructors interested in hearing how the U.S. is handling the advent of rocker and "early rise" technology (see "Rocker Goes Richter" in the Fall 2010 edition of *32 Degrees*) in their teaching. Following Alpine Team members such as Bobby Murphy and Jim Schanzenbaker—who broke a binding and watched a ski porpoise away down the off-piste in the expansive terrain off St. Anton's Rendl Gondola—the international crew was almost exclusively on carving skis, but still game to try and simulate the edge-free initiation of "slarving" turns.

Most interestingly, the majority of other attendees still see rocker as freeride-specific. And given the lack of freeride terrain that countries outside North America, France, Switzerland, and Austria possess, most have yet to incorporate rocker into their own instruction. The idea that, in the long run, rocker might actually benefit beginners and intermediates the most still felt like a revelation to many of them.

"I was looking forward to attending this clinic because of the perspective it brings to working with the growing number of skiers we see who want to go off-piste," said Jakob Janck—one of five Dutch Team members who attended Schanzenbaker's clinic. All concurred that the idea of using rocker as a tool for intermediates was something of an instructional epiphany to them. Said Janck, "The idea that this can be important for up-and-comers is good to learn."

PSIA's telemark clinic draws them in.

Several of the clinics lasted well past their scheduled finish time. And the on-hill interactions between the PSIA-AASI Teams and their international counterparts was declared a success by everyone—especially in the way that it validated many of the instructional initiatives that the PSIA-AASI Teams have taken. "In some of the other clinics I've taken here so far, people are present but they're not engaged," said Matlock. "Today, they were all engaged. You could see it in their eyes. I think that's a strength of ours—to get everyone participating."

Added PSIA-AASI Education Manager Earl Saline, "While other countries often look to learn from what the U.S is doing, instructors in the U.S. are also looking to improve themselves. By understanding what our colleagues are

doing and why they do it that way we have more knowledge to use when assessing ourselves. We didn't go to *prove* ourselves, but rather to *improve* ourselves."

KIDS ARE THE FUTURE

Despite, or more probably because of the fact that this Interski was held in the cradle of ski instruction,—the hometown of skiing pioneer Hannes Schneider, with its bare, expansive slopes, storybook hotels, and laid-back infatuation with skiing and snowboarding—the Austrian hosts seemed eager to give their guests a stage on which to shine. Their demo slope was perfect, complete with a giant screen and a custom soundtrack song. The hotels and coffee houses were warm and welcoming. And throughout the week, the Interski Snowsports School hosted kids from all over Austria for lessons.


Kids in control.

A kind of multi-cultural mix of both students and instructors, several delegations provided some of their top instructors for a full day on the slopes of St. Anton. From the very first day, PSIA Alpine Team members David Oliver and Nick Herrin, as well as AASI Snowboard Team member Josh Spoelstra, joined representatives from Hungary and the tiny country of San Marino in teaching kids from Innsbruck and Bregenz.

"We're talking about the future right here," said Spoelstra. "It's great that we get to spread the message of snowboarding, because the more we get these kids stoked, the more the industry will benefit. It's good for everyone."

Alberta Ferrari of San Marino said she was excited to teach kids from another country because she thinks, "It's important for kids to have different experiences with different teachers." She added that, "With all of the different languages and countries that represent snowsports, it's fun that these kids get to experience that right away."

Of course it being Austria, rather than encountering a group of newbies and youngsters like they might have expected, the first group of kids that hit the slopes was comprised of a large group of young teenagers who were more than ready to rip the upper mountain. Rather than teaching how to ride the lift, Spoelstra quickly found himself demonstrating how to ollie and ride switch, while Oliver was hardly making turns trying to keep up with several of the fast-skiing girls in his group. Said Oliver with a smile, "We're definitely working on some rotary skills, but there's nothing wrong with their edging."

Herrin, after several attempts to stay with his group on-piste, opted for a series of several off-piste laps just to "tire them out before lunch." Interski and St. Anton treated the kids to lift tickets and free lunch along with the classes, and they probably went home with more energy than the instructors they raced from chair to chair. "It was a lot more skiing than I thought I was going to get today," Herrin admitted after they were gone.

The actual practice of teaching kids paired well with some of the more interesting kid-based theories that appeared in presentations. In particular, Germany's "Kids Are the Future" program, which focuses as much on the skills as it does the social and psychological benefits of riding, mirrored the PSIA-AASI freestyle-for-kids demonstration. And Sweden unveiled a plan to get all of the country's 4th graders out on snow in a new initiative that resembles America's 5th Grade Passport Program. Austria also presented a terrain park program on utilizing props such as bamboo poles for kids to hold to help stabilize their balance and accelerate their tabletop and rail riding.

WRAP UP

Overall, the entire event infused the PSIA-AASI Teams with some well-earned pride in the development of their own methodologies, as well as great new ideas to present in their clinics throughout the spring and on into next season.

"The entire event was like having one of those great locker room discussions with the entire world," said Alpine Team member Matt Boyd. "Interski


Making a grand entrance with rocker.

truly transcends borders and brings the world's alpine nations together to move our sport forward."

"It was a great exchange of information," agreed Alpine Team member Eric Lipton. "The nations in attendance really came here to share and learn, not just to demonstrate technique."

Of course that thrill of skiing on the stage of the demo slope never gets old, as attested to by Teams Manager Katie Ertl who said, "Standing up there with all of the lights and the crowd and the Tirol entrance bubble that you ski through onto the slope was fantastic."

But the power of sharing of information will more than likely be the lasting contribution of Interski 2011—especially for many of the team members who were attending Interski for the first time.

"The whole event really opened my eyes to how the entire international community is constantly developing snowsports instruction," said AASI Snowboard Team member Tommy Morsch. "I think as a team we're coming away from the event feeling like there are many areas where we're a little ahead of the curve, and we're happy there was so much interest in our clinics. But there were also a lot of things for us to learn, and it's great to be going home with this deeper sense of connection." 32°

Peter Kray is the special projects editor for 32 Degrees, *focusing on emerging snowsports trends, on-snow innovations, and the PSIA-AASI 50/50 Project.*

To get in on the educational excitement of Interski 2011,

be sure to attend PSIA-AASI s 50/50 Celebration in Snowmass, Colorado, April 4 9. Much of the instructional insights we took to and brought back from I nterski will infuse that event on snow and through indoor presentations. And look for more Interski goodness here:

- PSIA-AASI s website (www.TheSnowPros.org)
  - Blogs in From the Wire.
  - The Interski Community within the PSIA-AASI Member Community (accessed through the Member Services Portal)
  - Web Extras in the *32 Degrees* section
  - The Photo Gallery on the home page
- TheSnowPros on Facebook
- @thesnowpros on Twitter
- YouTube
- This and future issues of *32 Degrees*

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SCENES FROM INTERSKI 2011 CAPTURE THE

Cesar Piotto

Josh Spoelstra speaks the universal language of stoke as he prepares to explore the slopes of St. Anton with local youths who were taking part in the Interski Snowsports School.

Cesar Piotto

Charlie MacArthur takes in a clinic hosted by the Norwegians.

Cesar Piotto

Robin Barnes soaks in the sights, sounds, and overall Interski experience.

Cesar Piotto

Just another moment in the Austrian sun for Matt Boyd.

INTERNATIONAL VIBE & INSTRUCTIONAL VISION

Cesar Piotto

Geoff Krill (pictured with Adaptive Team Coach Bill Bowness) takes his custom wheels out on the town in St. Anton.

Josh Spoelstra

AASI Snowboard Team members Gregg Davis and Tommy Morsch test the rarified air of St. Anton during demo night.

Cesar Piotto

Jim Schanzenbaker sets the stage for a PSIA history lesson.

Cesar Piotto

Ross Matlock talks rocker tactics with his Interski group.

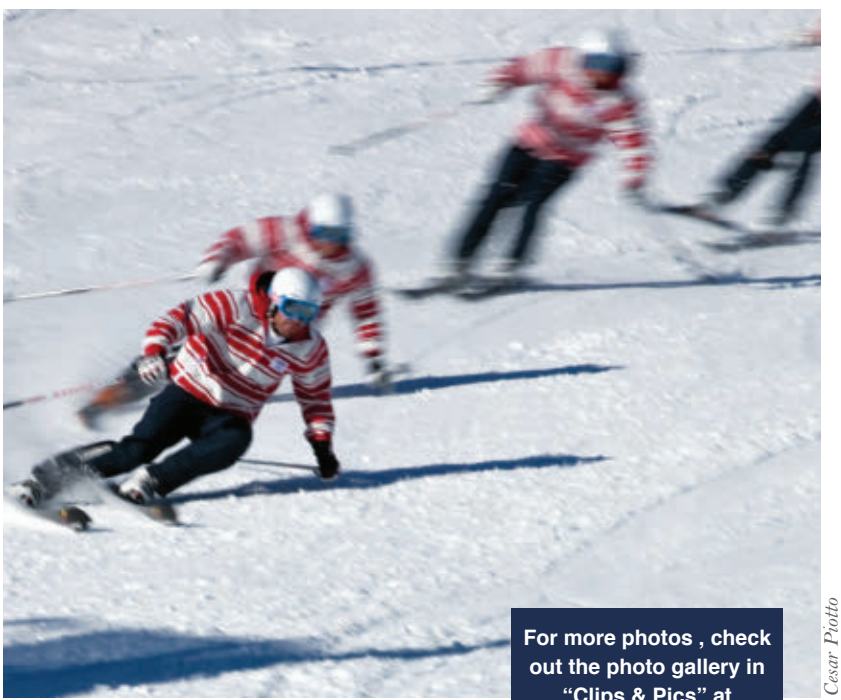
SCENES FROM INTERSKI 2011 CONTINUED

Cesar Piotto

Front row: Doug Pierini, Scott Anfang, Alpine Team Captain Michael Rogan, Gregg Davis, Bobby Murphy, and Eric Rolls. Second row: Dave Lynch, Nick Herrin, Robin Barnes, Geoff Krill, PSIA-AASI Education Manager Earl Saline, PSIA-AASI Education Manager Ben Roberts, Adaptive Team Coach Bill Bowness, Josh Spoelstra, Tommy Morsch, and Dave Lundberg. Third row: Eric Lipton, Matt Boyd, Nordic Team Coach J. Scott McGee, Jennifer Simpson, and Jeb Boyd; Back row: David Lawrence, Dave Lyon, Tom Marshall, Snowboard Team Coach Lane Clegg, PSIA-AASI Executive Director and CEO Mark Dorsey, PSIA-AASI Chairman Eric Sheckleton, David Oliver, Alpine Team Coach Rob Sogard, Teams Manager Katie Ertl, Mike Hafer, and Ross Matlock. (Not pictured: Charlie MacArthur, Jim Schanzenbaker, and PSIA-AASI International Vice President John Armstrong.)

Cesar Piotto

David Lawrence gathers his group for a cross-country clinic.



Cesar Piotto

France shows its skill on the demo hill.

For more photos , check out the photo gallery in "Clips & Pics" at www.TheSnowPros.org.

MOVE IT! USE FUN AND GAMES TO AID MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

By **KEVIN JORDAN**

Illustration by Dave Allen

The ability to successfully analyze a student's movements is one of a ski instructors's most important skills. So why is it that getting good at it is about as much fun as a voluntary root canal? The following activities and games can jazz up those movement analysis (MA) study sessions—making them more engaging *and* effective.

Regardless of the system or methodology you use for movement analysis, you'll want to practice saying what you see out loud. After all, the goal is to tell your students—as clearly and confidently as possible—what you observe in their skiing or riding so they'll understand why they should change or refine a particular movement pattern. (And when pursuing certification, as much as we'd prefer that examiners have telepathic powers, candidates do need to give voice to what movements they see during the movement analysis portion of the exam).

GO TO THE FILM

Does your ski school offer organized MA sessions where you can go watch videos or DVDs of skiers and discuss what you see? These are great training opportunities, but you may be intimi-

dated if the group size is too large or if you lack confidence in stating what you are seeing.

Early on in my instruction career at Aspen/Snowmass, I was a little rattled by the group size in these sessions and could not form the words quick enough to express what I was seeing. By the time I knew what I was going to say, someone else was already talking about the skier or rider in the video! There's no reason, however, that you can't conduct the same movement-review process on your own—away from the madding crowds.

Developing an eye for movement analysis is all about practice, practice, practice—so talk to your area trainers or examiners to see if they have footage you can borrow. Another great option is PSIA-AASI's *Movement Matrix*, the web-based education resource that, for an annual subscription of $14.95, puts hundreds of terrain- and skill-specific video clips and other training tools at your cyber fingertips. You can also find lots of good skiing and riding footage through Internet searches on YouTube, Google, and EpicSki.

Look for footage in different types of terrain and snow conditions, and narrow your search to clips that are short enough so you can have video constantly playing. For example, on YouTube you can hit the replay button to watch a clip over and over again. In addition, you can use the progress bar to start the clip over or set it up to play from a particular point. Thus, use video clips that are seconds rather than minutes in length to hone your analysis.

Another option is to set up your own study group to watch footage with other instructors who may be going for the same certification level. Every so often, try to get a trainer or examiner involved in this study group to make sure your group is on track. If you have a mentor at your home area, ask him or her to help you. As you ride the chairlift together, ask your mentor to point out someone to watch and then do a quick MA on that skier or rider. You can also do this with other instructors as you ride the lift. The goal is to paint a picture of what the skier or rider is currently doing in his or her body to create the on-snow performance you observe.

Get even more out of your practice time by scheduling one-on-one MA video-review sessions with a mentor or trainer. Your eye for movement analysis will quickly get sharper, and your mentor will benefit from practicing his or her MA skills and the line of questioning that steers you along the right path. It's usually a win-win scenario.

Of course, it's not just your eyes that should get a workout. The path to better MA skills can involve other senses besides sight. If you can't accurately see what a skier or rider is doing, try to imitate that person in order to mimic the movement and create an analysis.

Another exam strategy, since there is pressure on the candidate in the exam setting, is to stand up and talk with your hands and body. Show an examiner what a skier or rider is doing by demonstrating the movements. In essence, for those instructors who are not visual, *sensing* the movement by imitating or demonstrating it can help them understand what is happening and explain it to another person.

There's no reason, however, that you can't conduct the same movement-review process on your own—away from the madding crowds.

MORE FUN WITH VIDEO

Earlier in my career I trained for the trainer's exam offered by PSIA-AASI's Rocky Mountain Division, which is similar to divisional clinic leader exams held in other regions of the country. Movement analysis was definitely an area of weakness for me, so I worked on it. Using a DVD with short skiing clips, I'd watch each clip a few times at regular speed. While I watched the DVD, I'd talk into a mini voice-recorder about what I was seeing. When I finished, I would replay the video clip in slow motion and listen to what I'd said. It was sort of like checking the answers to all the math problems in the back of a math textbook.

This technique helped me get rid of the uncertainty in my voice. When I started I would use a lot of filler words and ambiguous statements like, "um," "ah," "so," "maybe," "I think," "probably," "I guess they are. . .," "He may be doing this," "She may be doing that." The more I practiced, the less I used these words and the more confident I sounded—because I was *becoming* more confident and improving my eye for movement analysis. Soon, it was second nature to start off with, "What I see is. . . ." This way I could focus my peer's or my examiner's focus on exactly what I was observing.

This also helped me practice MA without using notes or writing things down. At most levels of certification it is acceptable to take notes of what you are seeing and then refer to those notes to help you do your analysis. However, once you work toward exams beyond Level III and become a trainer, you generally don't have the luxury of taking notes about the skier or rider you're observing. Thus, start with written observations if you need them and then see if you can work your way up to ditching the notes entirely (except for the mental ones in your head).

YOU SANK MY M.A. BATTLESHIP!

Another strategy to develop your MA eye is to turn practice into a game. Josh Fogg (a fellow trainer at the Ski and Snowboard Schools of Aspen) and I developed "Battleship MA" while we were

working in Las Lenas, Argentina, in 2007. Think of this game as a hybrid between the Milton Bradley games Battleship™ and Guess Who™, in which two opponents each have an identical board with game pieces unseen by the other player.

The object in Battleship is to locate and sink your opponent's battleships, whereas in Guess Who you use deductive reasoning to identify a character of your opponent's choosing. We called our game "Battleship MA" because when we put our laptops back to back, it would look as if we were playing the real game.

In order for this game to work, each player needs the same video footage. Josh and I both had copies of the same video of skiing clips and we would play it simultaneously on our individual laptop computers (muting the volume because the music could be a clue as to the skier's location on the DVD). One person would describe a skier while the other person would listen and try to find that skier based on the description.

The feedback is immediate, based on whether the person listening to the description can guess which skier is being described. True to the lingo of the original Battleship, a correct guess meant that you "sank" the other player's skier. The game requires some props, like the same video footage and two computers or two DVD players, but it's a lot of fun—turning MA practice into a game rather than a chore.

FREEZE FRAME

Another activity that makes a game of MA practice is "Freeze Frame." While watching a video of skiers or riders, preferably a clip you're unfamiliar with, hit "pause" and—based on what you've seen so far—predict the person's future movements. And, no, you don't need a crystal ball or a Flux Capacitor time machine to do this!

To "win," describe what the skier or rider is doing statically in the picture and then predict what will happen next to his or her skis or board and body based on the still image. This provides great practice for developing a better understanding of cause-and-effect relationships.

Over time, you'll be able to see what a skier or rider is doing and how that will affect the very next frame of the video. Another variation of this game is to use photographs and describe the skier or rider in the still position. To up the accuracy ante, try describing one point in the subject's turn.

The feedback is immediate, based on whether the person listening to the description can guess which skier is being described.

ROUND ROBIN

For a great game to play with a small group, try "Round Robin," which sprang to life at a movement analysis session I attended at the home of PSIA Alpine Team member Jim Schanzenbaker. The alpine version of this game is played with three people, each of whom represents a different element of the skills concept: edging, rotary movements, or pressure control. Everyone watches a video of the skier at the same time and then one person describes the elements that relate to his or her skill pool. For example, say I go first and describe the edging movements I see. The next person would describe the observed rotary movements and then tie what he or she said about rotary into what I stated about edging.

The group then considers whether the second person's description of rotary supports or discounts what was said about edging. Then the next person describes pressure control and how that supports or disproves the comments about rotary.

Finally, the person who went first ties his or her comments about edging into what was said about pressure control. The snowboarding equivalent of this game, by the way, might entail individual instructors taking on the movement concepts of flexion, extension, and rotation or the performance concepts of twist, tilt, pivot, and pressure. Freestyle-minded instructors could even use the Round Robin game to analyze approach, takeoff, maneuver, and landing movements.

Round Robin is basically a round-the-room exercise that enables the players to become trial lawyers and provide evidentiary support or proof that what was said before about a previous skill is true or false. This game is great for building awareness of cause-and-effect relationships and, more important, establishing connections between how one skill impacts another skill or skill pool. In other words, participants gain a better understanding of how the skills intermingle.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, movement analysis is an important element of snowsports instruction. It's a skill we practice every day on the hill, and every time we observe and describe movements we get a little better at it. Once you hone the model or system of movement analysis that best suits your style, keep practicing it and you will be well on your way to confidently passing along helpful observations to students—and passing the MA portion of any certification exam that may be on the horizon. Best of luck, and bombs away for playing Battleship MA and other games to develop your movement analysis skills! 32°

Kevin Jordan is the children's coordinator at Aspen/Snowmass's Buttermilk Mountain. He is an alpine, children's, and freestyle examiner for PSIA-AASI'S Rocky Mountain Division and an avid Battleship MA player. A frequent contributor to 32 Degrees, *Jordan also writes for* Examiner.com *as well as the* Denver Ski Instruction Examiner *and the* National Ski Instruction Examiner.

SnowSports 360

ENHANCED SERVICES, PROGRAMS DRIVE PSIA-AASI PROSPERITY

By **Ed Younglove, PSIA-AASI Treasurer**

The Great Recession continued into 2009–10, presenting PSIA-AASI with a number of financial challenges. With the economic climate in such turmoil, one might think that PSIA-AASI would struggle, yet the association prospered. Here is why:

- Membership reached a record high of 30,203! This marks the first time PSIA-AASI has broken the 30,000 member barrier.
- We've secured increased participation by sponsors, resulting in more programs for members and higher non-dues revenue for the association.
- We've improved existing services and launched new services to improve member access to the association and to each other.

PSIA-AASI remained on solid financial footing during fiscal year 2009–10. The national board of directors and our professional staff made this possible through responsible leadership and management. PSIA-AASI continues to focus its efforts on member benefits and services in assisting you in your role as a teaching professional.

The following summarizes information drawn from an independent auditor's consolidated report of PSIA-AASI and the PSIA-AASI Education Foundation (the Foundation) for the 2009–10 fiscal year that began July 1, 2009, and ended June 30, 2010. All figures show combined gross income and expenses for PSIA-AASI and the Foundation. The accompanying financial charts may help you understand the discussion that follows about how revenue is generated and distributed.

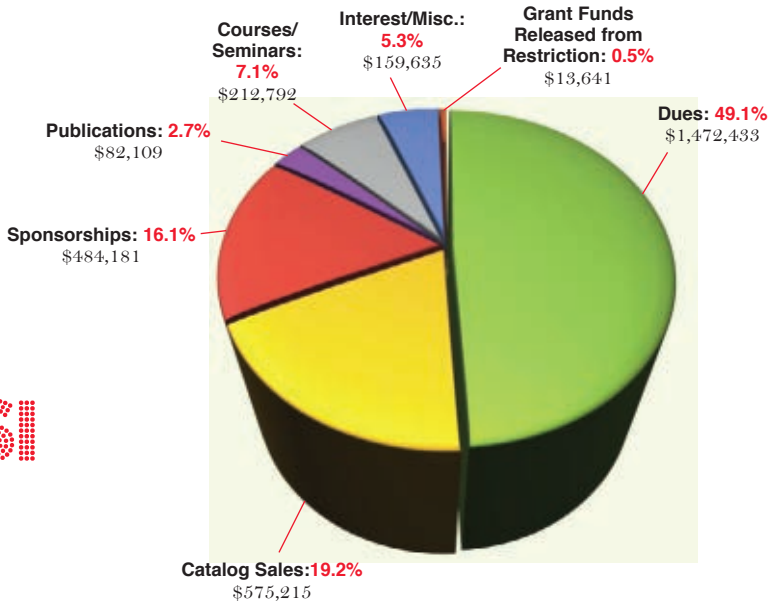
REVENUE

Revenue for the 2009–10 fiscal year was up 4.7% from the previous year: $3,000,006 in 2009–10, compared to $2,865,460 in 2008–09. These figures reflect gross revenue to the association.

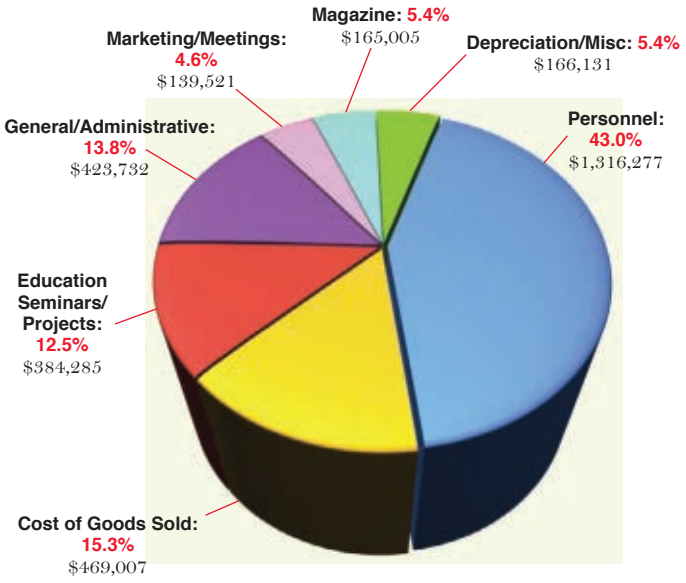
Record membership meant increased dues revenue. Yet membership dues last year accounted for less than half—49 percent—of PSIA-AASI's total income. This means that the membership contributed 49 cents for every dollar of the associations' income. The remaining 51 cents was generated through sales of catalog items (19 cents), sponsorship revenue (16 cents), advertising (3 cents), and education seminars (7 cents). Interest, miscellaneous revenue, and grant funds released from restriction represented the remaining 6 cents.

The board of directors feels it is important that the organization's income activities reflect its values and 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. Catalog sales

INCOME: $3,000,006



EXPENSE: $3,063,958



rebounded from the prior year, although interest income continued to be low because of economic conditions.

EXPENSES

Expenses in 2009–10 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 $3,063,958 in 2009–10, compared to $2,840,501 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. One of our primary goals 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 2009–10 fiscal year, 18 percent of total expenditures, i.e., 18 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 82 cents of each dollar spent roughly broke down into: personnel (43 cents), cost of catalog sales (15 cents), marketing and meetings (4 cents), general and administrative expenses (14 cents), and depreciation/miscellaneous (5 cents).

Overall, the associations' operations finished the year with a loss of $63,952. However, this figure doesn't mean a cash loss of that amount. Depreciation accounted for $154,860 of losses tallied, and is a *non-cash* expense. This impacts assets more than cash.

Total assets—otherwise known as member equity—increased from $3,234,795 in 2008–09 to $3,422,803 in 2009–10, primarily due to investments in technology and infrastructure to better serve you.

The associations' good financial health is due largely to the efforts of former PSIA-AASI Operations Vice President Craig Albright, who did terrific work overseeing financial issues during the past several years. His work, and the hard work of your board of directors and the association management and staff, keeps PSIA-AASI moving in the right direction.

If you have questions or would like additional information about the PSIA-AASI financial statements, please go to www.TheSnowPros.org to see a copy of the 2010 Annual Report. If you would like a copy of the 2009–10 audit, please write to:

Ed Younglove
Treasurer
PSIA-AASI
133 South Van Gordon Street,
Suite 200
Lakewood, CO 80228

INTERSKI TEAM TIP 2011

Share Shred Love with Adaptive Students

By **JOSH SPOELSTRA**

Jonathan Selkowitz

Everyone who signs up for a snowboard lesson comes from a different background, a different set of blueprints that helps shape who they are. But there's one constant: they want to ride! And AASI-certified instructors help make that happen, no matter the students' age, ability . . . or disability. ¶ Central to the message that the AASI Snowboard Team delivered at the 2011 Interski this past January is the idea that AASI-certified instructors are in the corner of every rider, including individuals with physical or cognitive disabilities. That's a great thing, because with snowboarding firmly planted in the mainstream (yes, rebels, it's true) those in the adaptive community are just as inspired to try snowboarding as able-bodied people. Amen to that my snowboarding brothers and sisters!

One message the AASI Snowboard Team presented at Interski—and will carry forward in lessons and clinics here at home—is based on four simple goals: 1) treat each student as a future snowboarder, regardless of ability; 2) embrace the notion that "less is more"; 3) make use of teaching methods and tools that aid riders with disabilities; and 4) help students be as independent as possible.

LESS IS MORE

One thing that's both cool and a little daunting about teaching adaptive snowboarding is that there are lots of equipment options that can help students learn and progress. While it's smart to stay on top of advances in technology and tools of the trade, it's even more important to stay focused on the student. In other words, know your equipment options but avoid letting the lesson be more about the gear than the guest you're teaching.

The old adage "less is more" rings true for many circumstances in adaptive snowboarding. There is definitely some amazing technology and gadgetry available, but before you haul out a piece of equipment and introduce it to your student ask yourself, "Is this really needed?" Sometimes the answer is yes, but there are instances when cumbersome equipment can be overkill for those students who might not need a lot of assistance.

METHODS AND TOOLS

A close friend of mine with many hours of adaptive teaching under his belt has never used any special equipment in any of his adaptive lessons. He does rely on something almost every snowboard instructor uses on a regular basis: "The Dance." That is, the hand-to-hand contact with which instructors help guide students and keep them upright and balanced on their boards. While The Dance might not work in every adaptive lesson, it's often a good fit for students with visual impairment, certain cognitive disabilities, and even physical disabilities such as multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy.

Stand-up outriggers (as opposed to the shorter versions used by sit-skiers) can also be a helpful tool. This is especially true for students whose leg strength, balance, and mobility might be compromised—such as students with paralysis, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, Huntington's disease (a neurodegenerative disorder that affects cognition and muscle coordination), and Friedreich's ataxia (a disorder that can affect the nervous system, resulting in—among other symptoms—muscle weakness in the arms and legs). Riders with leg-length differences, leg amputation, and those who've suffered a stroke or traumatic brain injury can also benefit from the boost in stability that outriggers provide.

Riders using two outriggers are generally encouraged to place the back outrigger on the toe edge and the front outrigger on the heel edge. The "ski" of the toeside outrigger (back hand) is placed between the bindings, with the ski of the heelside outrigger just at or in front of the front binding. The rider generally uses the downhill outrigger to initiate the turn and the uphill outrigger to provide stabilization and aid body position over the new edge.

Snowboard instructors can also find tethers, or reins, to be particularly helpful when teaching adaptive riders,

Larry Pierce / Steamboat Ski Resort

AASI Snowboard Team member Scott Anfang uses T he Dance to help guide the ride.

because they offer a way to help students turn and control speed. Instructors typically use two tethers, with one end of each clamped to the snowboard (at tip and tail or both at the tip) or the student's feet. The other ends are held by the instructor. From a position above or behind the rider, the instructor is able to help guide turn shape and speed by using the tethers as reins.

Tethers require more independence from the student than outriggers do, generally. The rider should be able to stand without aid. They are often a good option for individuals with less severe physical disabilities, those with visual impairments, and students with cognitive disabilities.

Similar to tethers, a "horse-and-buggy" setup helps instructors determine turn shape and speed for the student. This device is made of two 3- to 6-foot lengths of bamboo connected at one end to a bicycle inner tube. The tube is looped so it's taut around the student's hips, with the bamboo poles trailing behind the student, one on the toeside and the other on the heelside.

The horse-and-buggy provides a more rigid connection between instructor and student than tethers do. Guiding the rider from behind, the instructor is able to help the student turn, slow down, and, if necessary, get going again.

Other pieces of specialized equipment include the Rider Bar (an upside-down, U-shaped stabilization bar that mounts under the bindings and extends to waist height, which the rider pushes or pulls to aid balance and movement to the toe edge or heel edge) and the Sno-Wing (a large, eye-shaped "ring" placed around the student's waist, which gives an instructor or team of instructors various handhold points by which to guide the rider).

INDEPENDENT THINKING

In adaptive snowboarding, we want our students to learn to ride and we want them to ride as independently as possible. As you might imagine, there are tons of factors that come into play when determining how independent any given student can be. Questions to ask yourself include the following:

- Can specialized equipment or equipment modifications aid riding development?
- Can I reduce the amount of equipment or its constrictiveness down the road?
- Can I follow a particular progression that would help the student graduate from the use of adaptive equipment altogether?

For instance, the student might start with a Rider Bar and move to a Sno-Wing. Or—within an open-ended span of time and lessons—you could start with a Sno-Wing, progress to the horse-and-buggy, move on to tethers, then introduce outriggers, followed by The Dance. From hand-to-hand help, the rider might progress to complete independence. There can be a lifetime of ongoing progression to help the rider be independent or, as I like to say, "as independent as possible."

The bottom line? If someone wants to learn how to ride, be there for them—no matter their age, ability, or demographic; whether they wear skinny pants or baggy pants; or if he or she is a park-rat wannabe or future backcountry slayer. And, especially, be there for them if they're willing to defy a disability to join the snowboarding scene. You're teaching a snowboarder, pure and simple. As with any student, use whatever knowledge, tools, and resources can help make for the best possible experience on snow. Keep 'em shredding! 32°

Josh Spoelstra is a member of the AASI Snowboard Team and the training manager at California's Heavenly Resort. He is a snowboard, freestyle, and adaptive examiner for PSIA-AASI's Western Division.

Web Extra For more on the adaptive instructional insights PSIA-AASI presented at Interski—and will make available to members in upcoming clinics—see Adaptive Team member Geoff Krill's Web Extra article on movement corollaries between the adaptive and able-bodied snowsports worlds. Log in at www.TheSnowPros.org, click on the link to 32 Degrees in the Professional Education tab, then click on "Web Extras."

INTERSKI TEAM TIP 2011

Jonathan Selkowitz

Rocker Your World (And Get Students In on the Ride)

By **JIM SCHANZENBAKER**; Photos by **CESAR PIOTTO**

With the rocker revolution in ski design at full throttle and volume, this is an exciting time to be exploring this technology and how it's impacting a huge spectrum of skiers—including our students. ¶ But before delving into how you can incorporate these tools into lessons (a topic the PSIA Alpine Team presented at Interski 2011 and will take into clinics here at home), let's take a minute to look at the differences in rocker characteristics.

In general terms, "rocker" describes a variety of bend profiles that manufacturers are putting into their skis these days. The first and most simple of the design characteristics is early rise, which means that the point at which the ski rises up off the snow is farther back from the tip than with a "traditional" ski. When this concept is applied to both the tip and tail of a ski, most would consider the profile rockered. The most dramatic application of this is when the bend from the tip and tail reaches all the way to the center of the ski. I like to think of this as "full rocker." Two

It s a slide;
it s a carve...
it s a s larve!

other adaptations are when the middle of the skis are either completly flat or bent with traditional camber, while still incorporating early rise in the tip and tail. Figure 1 shows a few of these combinations.

A "full rockered" ski (fig. 1a) would excel in crud and powder type conditions because this profile is conducive to maximum float and maneuverability. A ski with the combination of rocker at the tip and tail and camber in the middle (fig. 1b) is going to offer a nice blend of extra surface area when going off piste and the power/stability of a carving-type ski when on piste. The ski that is flat in the middle (fig. 1c) will provide more stability than the full rocker when on piste and less rebound than its cambered sibling.

When considering all these variables you should also give thought to the width of the skis in which this technology is being applied. A good rule of thumb is that "the wider the skis, the better they are for deeper snow." On the opposite side of the spectrum, we

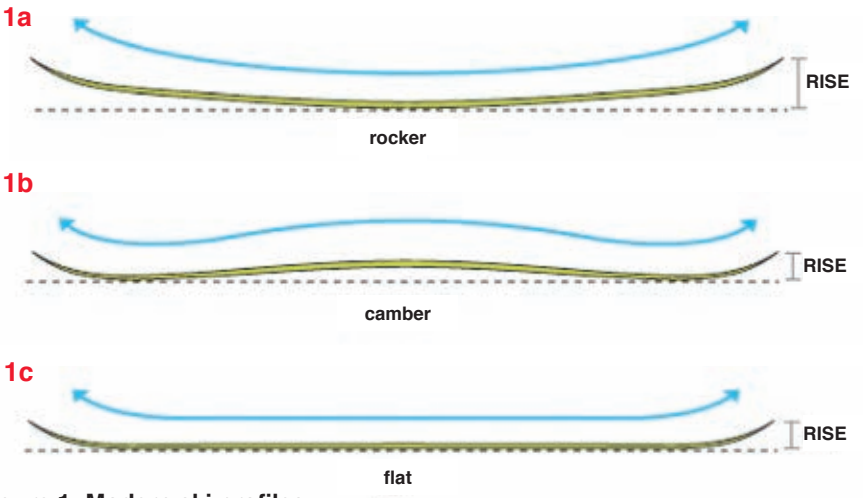


Figure 1: Modern ski profiles

are also seeing some of this technology being used in skis for beginners and intermediates. These skis capitalize on rocker technology to create easier turn entry and support continued mobility throughout a turn. This combination provides outstanding control and makes it easier for skiers to link turns.

With students, one of the keys is to teach good skill development. First, assess the tool someone comes to the lesson with—like you've always done. Just understand that if someone is on rocker skis he or she may experience a different reaction from that tool than if it had a traditional cambered design.

When working with beginner skiers, recognize that they will experience

enhanced maneuverability from a short length and the ease of turn entry from the rocker ski tip. Teach good steering mechanics as a primary foundation for control and security. Traditional exercises like bow ties, falling leaf, and skidded uphill turns will be easier on this technology than on traditionally cambered skis.

In introducing these types of exercises focus primarily on getting students to develop effective leg turning. If skiers can isolate the rotation in the legs and limit rotation in the pelvis or shoulders, they will be able to access linkability from turn to turn and better turn shape to control their speed.

As you get into the intermediate realm of skiing, skiers really want to begin exploring more of the mountain. This is where rocker skis at fatter widths come into the picture, since they allow skiers to access a much broader scope of the mountain and at an earlier stage. Among the fundamental things to have your clients work on in cruddy snow are sideslipping exercises, medium-radius skidded turns, and shorter pivoted turns. Through these types of exercises skiers will more quickly relinquish the need to hold onto an edge for security and realize that added mobility can offer them great speed control and the option of choosing their path down a slope (that is, not letting the mountain or snow conditions dictate where they go).

All of this previous work should set skiers up to enjoy the vast array of big mountain skiing. As you take more advanced skiers into steeper and more variable terrain, you can focus on tactical decisions like line choice, speed checks, and negotiating/incorporating obstacles. Once skiers develop an understanding of speed control and mobility they can then playfully add more speed, which may take them more down the hill in a typical turn. Or they'll find out that speed isn't always associated with carving. Letting go of the edge starts to change the path down a slope, which gives skiers more choices of where and how to get from point A to point B. In lessons, encourage student to mix round turns with some straight sections that involve skidding.

A fringe benefit is that getting comfortable with these choices opens the door to freedom when skiing moguls or trees. Skiers will find that *they're* in charge, instead of feeling like they have to settle for what the environment might normally require.

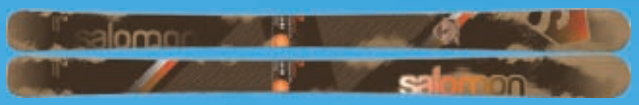
Like the shaped ski revolution of the 1990s, rocker technology is making an impact in a broad range of applications worthy of checking out and understanding. So go have fun skiing on some of the latest shapes and sizes and remember to teach sound skill fundamentals to offer your guests the best experience possible. 32°

Rocker skis allow skiers to access a much broader scope of the mountain at an earlier stage.

Jim Schanzenbaker is a two-term member of the PSIA Alpine Team and a two-time USA Powder 8 champion (2002, 2009). He also teaches full time for the Aspen Skiing Company as a ski and golf professional.

A rocker ride can help intermediate skiers conquer crud more easily.

SENTINEL



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- RICK ARMSTRONG

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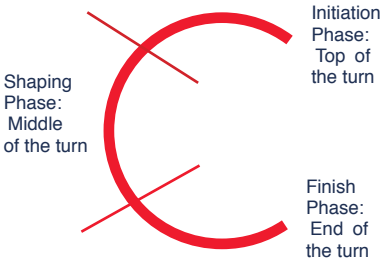
Shape It or Lose It!

By **MEGAN HARVEY**; Photos by **CESAR PIOTTO**

We have all heard the term "speed control through turn shaping." We tout it every day to our students and our exam candidates. But what does that phrase really mean? How do you obtain speed control by shaping the turn? ¶ A better question might be: How and when do we use our skis properly to actually create shape in a turn? As teachers, we have broken a turn into three phases: initiation, shaping, and the finish. The shaping phase is where we find the fall line of the turn, but in reality this tends to be the least "shaped" part of our turns.

When your skis are pointed straight down the hill, the opportunity to accelerate is greatly increased and if you stay here for too long, you will get going faster than you want to. Because of a fear of going too fast, most students react to the possibility of speed by twisting their skis quickly through the fall line, so that their skis are facing a more civil direction across the hill. But recall the phase name of the turn that you or your student just skipped through to get our skis across the hill—it is the shaping phase of the turn.

This part of the turn gives roundness and speed control to turns. When you bend your skis properly in the shaping phase, you move more accurately in the direction that you want to go by creating shape within your turn. This is the part of the turn that allows you to flow from one turn to the next with seamless effort. If you skip or move too quickly through the shaping phase, skiing becomes a job with a lot of extra movements, wasted energy, and lack of good ski-to-snow contact.



If you commit more time and energy to creating accurate ski performance in the shaping phase, you will notice that turns get rounder and the opportunity for speed control increases. But spending more time in the fall line, with your skis pointed down the hill, takes more than simply mustering the nerve to resist turning your skis quickly across the hill to get out of the fall line.

To set yourself up for success, you have to make active moves and have purposeful intention—both physically and mentally—while you are in the initiation phase and the shaping phase of the turn to get the benefits and performance that you want from the skis.

INITIATION PHASE

To actually have a middle of a turn (a shaping phase), you must set yourself up for success in the top part of the turn with an initiation phase. Most people move right through the middle of the turn by pushing their feet and skis out and away from their core at the start of the turn. By pushing with their feet and skis away from their core, they push their skis to a platform with edges. People may do this because they are on terrain that intimidates them or because this was how they learned to get their skis on edge. An example is a "windshield wiper turn," where the ski tails move faster than the tips through the first two-thirds of a turn. To avoid this "pushing" of your skis to get to an edge, try to "pull" your skis up onto their edges at the start of each turn. To make this happen, movements need to start at the feet and go up the chain up through legs and the body. Here are two great exercises to help you understand the concept of pulling your feet up onto their sides and pulling your skis up onto their edges at the initiation of each turn.

Table Tipping Exercise

You can do this indoors or out, but make sure that you are in your ski boots and that you are on flat, non-slippery terrain. Find two tables or two benches to stand between, then space the tables a bit more than arms-distance away from you and stand dead-center between the tables in a parallel and athletic stance. Tip from table to table, catching yourself on each side with your hand on the table (photos 1, 2).

Try not to push yourself off the table with your hand and arm to get to the other side. Instead, roll your feet and ankles inside your boots and tip your legs to get to the other side. Allow both

Photo 1

Photo 2

legs to tip toward the new table and allow your hips to travel across or over your feet to get to the new table. Don't reach with your arm first, but, rather, allow the movements of your feet and legs to take you to the table.

Go back and forth several times and recognize that you are not pushing your feet out from underneath you to get from one side to the other. Instead, you are rolling your body and center of mass from one table, across the bottoms of your feet to the other table, and effectively pulling your feet up onto their sides. As you get more comfortable with the exercise, begin to place your hand forward of your body on the table (at 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock), to incorporate a movement of "forward and across your skis."

Ski Away from the Line

Take the table tipping exercise out on the snow and ski it into reality. A great way to measure if you are pulling your skis onto their edges is to "ski away from the line." On groomed terrain, stand in a parallel stance with both skis across the hill. Recognize that the uphill edge of the uphill ski leaves a line in the snow (photo 3).

Every time you start a turn, your job is to roll your skis across their bases to the new set of edges and steer your skis through the new turn, without letting the tails of your skis cross the line that your uphill edge of your uphill ski leaves in the snow. Try it from a stationary stance first, then—remembering the old "patience turns"—bring it into your regular skiing at regular speeds. If you're skiing with a partner, ask him or her to follow you and to look at your tracks in the snow and be your coach. If you are skiing alone, visualize this line in the snow and try your hardest to move away from the line, with your body and your skis, each time you start a turn (photo 4). Keep in mind that this is a move forward and across your skis to change edges—not just across your skis.

These two exercises help you get on your edges more effectively in the top third of the turn, so you can pressure your skis earlier in the turn. The ability to engage and bend your skis early in the turn will allow the shaping phase of the turn to be more effective.

Photo 3

Photo 4

SHAPING PHASE

By getting on a clean set of edges and having your weight forward in the initiation phase of the turn, you now have a more accurate ski performance in the top of your turns. You have set yourself up for the shaping phase to become a place to shape the turn. The middle of the turn is so often the part of the turn that our students rush right through, yet this is the part of the turn that can be used to give turns the power and shape that can effectively carry the skier across the hill. To shape the middle of the turn, or to continue what we started in the top of the turn, we need to have some purposeful intentions.

Drive your Energy Forward

If you have kids, can you remember the feeling and sensations in your body when you went to pick up your two year old? You likely weren't rigid—lifting with all of your might like you would if you had to pick up a piano on your own—but you had some tension in your arms and core and legs. We could call it "functional tension" because you are strong but can still move fluidly and with suppleness.

This is the kind of tension that skiers need in their body when they are driving through the shaping phase of the turn. So try this; when your skis are pointing straight down the hill, drive your body straight down the hill with intention and purpose so that your energies continue to move you forward along the length of your skis (photo 5). The word intention implies "done by design." It is as if it is an invisible force (think *Star Wars*!) that can give you a resolve to your actions. Consider it a purposeful determination. If you continue to move forward with your skis and drive your energy, muscularly and mentally, in the direction that your skis are moving, two things will happen:

- Your body will continue to move forward with your skis through the arc of the turn, and
- Your skis will continue to bend with the tails of the skis following the tips of the skis through the turn, and your skis will carry you across the hill more effectively as you come out of the shaping phase and into the finish phase of the turn.

Drive Through the Cuffs

One question might be "If intention simulates an invisible force, and I can choose to mentally drive my energies down the hill, how do I get my body to physically drive forward and down the hill in the fall line of the turn?" This is where body awareness and sensations come in to play.

Drive your legs through your boot cuffs rather than into your boot cuffs.

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Photo 5

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muscles and make up a large, powerful, and useful part of our physical body. Try driving the outside hand, arm, shoulder, and the outside half of your torso (oblique muscles) straight down the hill when your skis are pointed straight down the fall line. When I say "the outside" half of your body, I'm referring to the side of your body that is stacked up over the outside (downhill) ski. If you are turning to the left, drive the right half of your body straight down the hill during the shaping phase of the turn. By focusing on having "functional tension" in your arms, shoulders, and core—and by driving your energies straight down the hill for that split second that your skis are pointing down the hill in the fall line—you will hold yourself in that part of the turn for a split second longer and allow your skis to continue bending and arcing through that middle portion of the turn (photo 5).

A measurable way to practice working through the shaping phase of the turn is to go out on the hill early in the morning, when the lifts first open, and get on a freshly groomed slope. Find a cat track that is one track wide and use that as a corridor. With a little speed, see if you can get your skis to move from one edge of the cat track to the other side of the cat track without traversing the width of the track.

Look back up the cat track and view your ski tracks. If your skis are bending throughout the entire turn, you will see a c-shaped turn with no traverse at the top or the bottom of the "C" and you will also see your tracks run down the edge of the cat track for a moment before they come back across the hill. If you see a "box" shaped turn ([ ]), you are staying in the shaping phase of the turn too long. If you see what some people call a "Z" shaped turn or something that looks like two/thirds of a triangle (≤) then you are not spending enough time in the shaping phase of the turn.

Every turn has a shape to it. The question to ask yourself is "What is that shape and does this turn shape benefit my desired outcome?"

Every turn has a shape. Ask yourself What is that shape? Does it benefit any desired outcome?

THE FINISHING PHASE

The focus so far has been on the first two phases of a turn, so now you might be asking, "What about the last third of my turn?" Most people skip the first two-thirds of the turn and focus all of their energies on the last one-third of the turn with high edge angles and braking movements. If you focus more actively on the first two-thirds of a turn, you will find that the finish of the turn takes care of itself. You will have so much shape and speed control from your early actions that the end of the turn will become the place where you "let go" of your edges and move toward your new turn, rather than hang on to your edges and try and control things from your old turn.

Every skier has a different reason for wanting to make a turn. A racer wants to increase speed and accelerate down the hill faster that anyone else. A mogul skier needs rhythm and athleticism while managing terrain and bumps. A powder skier is looking for grace and face shots. But in the end, we all want to get down the hill with a certain amount of control and with a minimum amount of effort. We tout the term "speed control through turn shaping" and it can have tremendous meaning.

When done well, it can create wonderful outcomes. But do we really practice what we preach? Get out there and add some shape to your turns! 32°

Megan Harvey is a ski pro and trainer for the Ski & Snowboard Schools of Aspen, a 10-year member of the PSIA Alpine Team (1998–2008), and a lover of all dogs.

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INTERSKI TEAM TIP 2011

Jonathan Selkowitz

Tele Bindings and Rocker: Complimentary Designs

By **TOM MARSHALL**

Not many years ago, bent skis were seen as broken and were sent back to the manufacturer in hopes of getting a new pair on warranty. Now companies are taking advantage of pre-bent skis, by utilizing rocker (reverse camber) technology in their ski designs. ¶ As it turns out rocker skis help address a particular issue in telemark skiing; rear ski tip pressure caused by telemark bindings. This topic, which the PSIA Nordic Team presented at Interski 2011 in St. Anton, Austria, is proof positive that "rocker-ology" is not limited to alpine skiers and snowboarders.

All tele bindings have some sort of spring mechanism that holds the boot in the toe piece. When a skier shuffles into the tele stance the rear heel lifts off the ski, the springs are compressed,

Rocker skis float in an extremely friendly n on diving way that allows a more centered stance in powder or crud.

Tom Marshall

Tom Marshall

To aid student understanding, give a quick demo to show how the trailing rocker ski minimizes tip pressure.

and this force is translated to the front part of the ski. With older equipment, that ski will likely submarine under the surface of the snow in all but packed-powder conditions.

Why does this matter and how does it relate to rocker skis? This rear-ski tip pressure caused by tele bindings can cause some difficulty when skiing off piste. As the rear ski dives it's harder to maintain fore/aft balance and the rear ski can cross over the tail of the lead ski, or sometimes it just gets caught in the snow.

Rocker skis keep the tip further up in the snow, shortening the lever arm, and minimizing the tip pressure caused by the bindings' springs. Unlike alpine skiing where you can lean back to reduce tip pressure, in a tele stance there will always be some tip pressure on the rear ski.

PSIA Nordic Team member Ross Matlock came up with easy demonstration at the autumn team training to illustrate the problem. Have one person stand with skis on, then shuffle into a tele stance, keeping the weight on the front leg. Then have a tester feel the pressure change by putting his or her hand between the tip of the rear ski and the snow. It is important that the skier keeps the rear ski just off the snow so that the pressure is isolated to that of the ski binding/boot interface.

Rocker skis neutralize rear ski tip pressure created by binding springs in the lead change with some great results. This allows skiers to explore a variety of terrain sooner because it is easier to balance, easier to release the edges, and easier to steer the skis. Traditional camber skis—especially the stiffer ones—require a certain amount of pressure to bend, which requires a certain amount of speed. Skis that are already bent can be skied at much slower speeds with quality ski-to-snow interaction—which is great for both the student and the instructor. Basically, rocker skis make skiing easier because it is less difficult to access and blend all the components of the Skills Concept.

The performance of the tip of the leading ski also floats in an extremely friendly "non diving" way that also allows a more centered stance in powder and crud. Rocker tele skis also allow skiers to have a more similar skill blend between skiing on a groomer and in wind-affected powder. For example, stance width doesn't have to narrow off-piste so much because the rocker skis allow more independent leg action. In addition, the distance fore/aft between the feet can be more similar, when on traditional camber skis sometimes it had to *increase* in the powder. You can also be more forward in all conditions and less guarded because it really is hard to stuff either tip in the snow. This similarity in movements makes it easier for the intermediate to take the known groomer slope to the unknown powder stash, and allows the expert to ski faster with more control than ever before.

Try out some rocker skis and go find some difficult snow to ski. The wetter the powder, the stiffer the wind crust, or the chunkier the crud the more you will notice the positive effect the rocker has on reducing the tip dive. Just like the sign says at the top of the lift, "Keep Your Ski Tips Up!" 32°

Tom Marshall is a PSIA Nordic Team member who teaches at Big Sky, Montana. He regularly skis cross-country at Montana's Lone Mountain Ranch, and is also an alpine and telemark examiner in PSIA-AASI's Northern Rocky Mountain Division.

Go to BAT: Skiing's Triumverate of Balance, Alignment, and Timing

By **PETER OLIVER**; Photos by **JULIE SHIPMAN**

One of the great challenges for any instructor is keeping a client on message once a lesson is over. Learning to ski is a process of continuing education. ¶ If a skier leaves a lesson with clear goals in mind and a set of equally clear exercises for achieving those goals, the value of the learning process soars. So here's the system I've devised. First, come up with a clever acronym with impregnably mnemonic power. Acronyms are gimmicky but effective in jogging the memory. Second, give clients well-defined exercises to work on, on and off the snow, since not everyone has 24/7 access to the trails.

The BAT basics are interelated; good balance comes from good alignment and the combo of the two provides a solid foundation for good timing.

I devised an acronymic little jingle—"go to BAT"—that can apply to nordic (skate, cross-country, or tele) and alpine skiing. The B is for balance, the A is for alignment, and the T is for timing. The staying power of BAT comes from its application to all types of skiing and almost any athletic endeavor, including golf, tennis, and running.

One of the beauties of BAT is that anyone who has done anything remotely athletic can relate to it in some way. It's also a great way to relate nordic principles to alpine skiers giving skating a try, and vice versa.

Here are a few ways I apply the BAT concept to skate skiing. It isn't etched in stone, so take this as advice and fiddle with your own interpretations, either for nordic or alpine skiing.

Keep in mind that the BAT basics are inseparably interrelated; good balance comes from good alignment, and the combination of the two provides the solid foundation for good timing. Still, it is easier for students to grasp the basics by focusing on one element at a time.

BALANCE

Balance is the centerpiece of the BAT triptych, because efficient and powerful athletic movements are impossible when out of balance. Cross-country skiing—skating or classical—has an added balancing challenge that many other sports don't: it's all about balancing on one foot/ski.

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Photo 1

Photo 2

In photos 1 4, PSIA Nordic Team member David Lawrence coordinates the timing of his skiing (leg) movements and poling (arm) movements.

Ole Mosesen, the man who founded the ski center where I work in Vermont, famously said that "all good skiing is one-legged skiing." In other words, the foundation of good cross-country skiing is balancing comfortable on one foot/ski, then transferring that balance comfortably and completely to the other foot/ski.

Various one-legged balance exercises can be practiced on and off snow. Start simply, by standing on one foot (or ski) and establishing a balanced posture. It is important here to emphasize to clients that the hips must move laterally in the direction of the grounded foot, a fundamental balancing move many skiers fail to make.

Relax into your one-footed balance by feeling the micro-movements of muscles and tendons in your feet and ankles dissipate. This is your body's way of calibrating balance. The human body was designed to balance on two feet, not one, so at the start this will feel inherently unnatural and uncomfortable.

Switch feet and do the same thing on the other side, then add small hops from one foot to the other, trying to maintain balance throughout. The elegant fluidity of technically sound skaters comes not just in maintaining one-footed balance but in maintaining transitional balance. One of the biggest problems student skaters have is essentially falling from one ski to another, rather than making a balanced transition between the two.

Once one-footed equilibrium is established, throw in some skiing-related movements that can disrupt balance. Arm swings (double or alternate), fore and aft leg swings with the unweighted leg, passing a light weight from arm to arm circularly around your body, whatever. Make it fun. Make it silly. But make the exercises as closely related to skiing movements as possible.

ALIGNMENT

All alignment starts with a neutral athletic position, including comfortable knee flexion, hips aligned over the boots, spine angle approximating the shin angle with forward flexion, head upright and relaxed. It's almost identical to the neutral position in many other sports—an alpine skier, a golfer at address, a football cornerback waiting for the offensive rush.

In skate skiing, that neutral position reinforces two key principles. First, proper hip and head positions and proper spine angle allow the skeleton, which doesn't tire out, to do most of the basic weight-bearing. Second, it puts key muscles—quads and core muscles—in a locked and loaded position, ready to fire.

There are, of course, complications. Alignment is trilateral, important on three axes: fore-and-aft, side-to-side, and torsional. Video can be especially helpful in diagnosing problems with the first two, although torsional misalignment is often the most difficult to detect.

Even with a low-res video camera, some of the most fundamental corrections are relatively easy to illustrate. Lagging hips, inefficient arm positions when poling (usually too straight at the elbow), dropped head, and hips stuck in the middle are among the most common defects I see. Alignment is in constant flux, and at any point in that sequence, there is theoretically a positional ideal. Using stop-action with video is a great way of isolating poor alignment at any point within the sequence. Golf instruction has used this method to the point of almost numbing redundancy, but skiing has been slow to catch up.

I often upload video sequences to clients, via e-mail or YouTube, with analysis. I remind them that tiny mistakes in alignment can cause huge losses in power and efficiency, and almost-good alignment just isn't good enough.

TIMING

Timing, of course, involves movement—or more precisely, the coordination of several movements. In skate and classic skiing, timing exercises really break down into two basic categories. The first is coordination between

Photo 3


Photo 4

skiing (leg) movements and poling (arm) movements. The second is in the transfer of balance, from being fully committed to one ski to becoming fully committed to the other.

Timing is fundamentally a matter of constant realignment and re-balancing as the body moves through an athletic sequence. Poor balance is probably enemy number one to good timing. But poor alignment can screw things up mightily, too. Imagine, for comparison, driving a standard-transmission car if the driver's seat is too far forward or back. It becomes much harder to apply the right timing and pressure to gas pedal and clutch if your legs are always reaching or you're too scrunched up.

Timing is fundamentally a matter of constant realignment and re-balancing as the body moves through an athletic sequence.

The most common, and easily correctible, timing problem in skating that I see is early poling on V1, effectively turning V1 poling into V2 alternate. (V1 timing involves poling only when either the left or right ski hits the snow to glide; V2 timing doubles the poling action by poling just before the left ski *and* then the right ski hit the snow to glide.) To synchronize the timing I encourage vocalization, having skiers make a sound—"dah" is as good as any—every time poles and one ski hit the ground. It provides powerful reinforcement for making properly timed pole plants.

And you don't need snow or even poles to practice it. On dry land, swing your hands down from a forward catch position and simultaneously stomp on the ground with one foot. Let out a nice, firm "dah" each time you stomp. (This behavior might alarm friends or innocent bystanders, so I recommend doing it in the privacy of your own home.)

This vocalized exercise can produce noticeable improvements once back on snow. Of course you can reconstruct vocalization patterns to reinforce timing for any poling, V1, V2, or V2 alternate. You can also do this off-snow with poles, while hiking or walking outside.

The BAT concept has broad application. I have just touched on cross-country possibilities here, and it certainly can be applied to alpine or tele instruction as well. Play around with it. And remember that the three components are syllogistically interconnected. Proper balance, proper alignment, proper timing: an inseparable team.

Living in a valley with so many talented alpine skiers, I often try to convince my gravity-enslaved friends that cross-country skiing—skate skiing in particular—can make them better skiers in general. In skate skiing, balancing must happen on the ultra-slender platform of 40-45mm wide skis. More important, there is no stiff boot locked at the heel that makes quick alignment or balance adjustments easy. Put simply, skate skiing enforces a very precise execution of BAT basics, and any Alpine skier can learn from that.

Alpine and nordic skiers share much common ground in their skill sets, and BAT basics offer a common language to share. If simple take-home exercises are incorporated in spreading the BAT gospel, the extent of that sharing—and the impact of the concept—will reach that much farther. 32°

Peter Oliver has written about skiing and outdoor sports for more than 30 years. His articles have appeared in Ski, Skiing, Powder, Ski Press, Outside, Backpacker, Bicycling, The New York Times, *and many other publications. He is also the author of six books, most recently* Stowe: Classic New England. *He lives in Warren, Vermont, and is a PSIA-certified Level II nordic instructor.*

INTERSKI TEAM TIP 2011

Jonathan Selkowitz

Give New Riders a Feel for Freestyle

By **TOMMY MORSCH**

Some of your newbie snowboarding students probably want nothing more than to pull off their first toeside turns, while others want to head straight for the park. No problem! ¶ By incorporating freestyle into even the most basic of snowboard lessons you can teach solid fundamentals *and* give both camps what they want. That is, to learn, have fun, and be part of the snowboard culture. The AASI Snowboard Team took this message to Interski, and, of course, it's a prime part of the work we're doing here in the U.S.

Remember that feeling you had the last time you and your friends were

César Piotto

To kick up the freestyle fun factor on green terrain why not introduce nose rolls?

Tommy Morsch

hiking a feature and you landed a new trick? You were stoked! And so were all the people around you. The energy level skyrocketed! That's why people snowboard and come back time and time again.

We need to create, in our lessons, that same type of energy, and there's no reason not to start with that very first lesson for beginners. We want our first-timers to develop a good stance and balance . . . and what do riders need to successfully navigate a beginner box? STANCE and BALANCE! Woo-Hoo! Yes, I do believe that beginners can slide a box, and this is how:

On terrain that's flat or has just a very slight angle, talk briefly about stance and have your students set their boards upside down in the snow (using the bindings to anchor the board as firmly into the surface as possible). Ask students to stand on the board as if they were strapped in. Encourage them to jump up and land in a balanced stance back on the board. Have them walk along the length of the board, getting a feel for how slick it can be.

Then have them sprinkle some snow along the base, run toward the board, and slide across it as if they were sliding across a sheet of ice. (As a safety measure, on their first few run-and-slides have them start slow and step up onto the board, raising their feet only slightly higher than the board. You want them to gently glide across the board, not jump up high and stomp down.) This gives your novice riders a feel for the sliding sensation they'll experience on a box—as well as the stance and balance that makes for a successful slide.

The next step is to have your students strap into their boards and practice some straight glides—again on very gentle terrain. Once they're good to go for more stance and balance work, head for a snow-level box that, ideally, is set up with a natural run-off on a beginner hill. If no such feature exists at your area, you can fashion a reasonable facsimile with lengths of bamboo placed in the snow. (You can even make your own fun box by countersink screwing an 8- to 10-foot strip of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic onto two similar lengths of PVC pipe. The HDPE should be at least ¼-inch thick (1/2-inch HDPE is more durable, but heavier). For more specifics on this type of "portable terrain feature," check out the archive article from *The Pro Rider*, available as a Web Extra in the *32 Degrees* section of www.TheSnowPros.org).

Now students can do their straight glides right over this type of feature! Before learning to turn or edge, they will already have successfully slid a box.

The more quickly riders flex that ankle, the faster and more powerful the nose roll will be.

Just think; only a few minutes into the lesson and the group is cheering each other on, creating that fun freestyle atmosphere. You have them hooked and they're already playing with a couple of the fundamental skills they'll need to eventually ride the rest of the mountain. Keep that level of energy going!

With riders who have a bit more experience but want to kick up the fun factor on green terrain, I love to introduce nose rolls. What's really cool is that this can mark the first time students are able to blend all the board performance concepts—tilt, twist, pivot, and pressure control! Not only that but this exercise also works on fore and aft movements, and rotary movements.

As before, this approach promotes a fun freestyle vibe that can't help but boost your students' stoke for riding. Start the nose-roll exercise in a flat area, letting clients play with pressure distribution. Have them flex their lead knee and shift their hips over the nose of the board, aiming to get the tail slightly off the ground. (Their backs should be perpendicular to the snow.) Encourage riders to feel where the pressure is on their lead foot. Next, while still stationary, have them rotate the pressure on their front foot from their toes to the outside of their foot and over to their heels.

Ask them to try those steps sequentially, then put them into motion following a straight glide into a heelside turn. Show riders how to load up the nose of the board (timing is everything) in a smooth motion, as the board is almost perpendicular to the fall line. The key here is to practice, practice, and practice some more.

Now add in the rotation of the feet: As students start that heelside turn, they'll want to move the pressure from the balls of their feet to their heels (they should feel that in their boots). As they're doing that, coach them to load up the nose of their board, and, just as their weight is getting over the nose, guide them to flex their lead ankle (engaging that part of the edge). The nose of the board will slow down, and with no pressure on the tail it will rotate downhill.

The more quickly riders flex that ankle, the faster and more powerful the nose roll will be. Once the group has the idea, let them play with these movements at their own pace. You can be cheering them on and bouncing between each one, giving individual feedback.

The point is that we are teaching solid fundamentals, but by adding freestyle to your lessons you can repackage your presentations to make them more fun and exciting for your client. And that means more fun for you and return business for your mountain. A win-win-win scenario for sure! 32°

Tommy Morsch is a member of the AASI Snowboard Team and an examiner for PSIA-AASI's Eastern Division. He has designed and built terrain parks for the past nine years and is currently the terrain parks manager and snowboard director at Bristol Mountain Resort in New York.

For some more insights on how best to present the exercises outlined here—and pointers on how to build a "portable terrain feature"— log in at www.TheSnowPros.org and check out the "Web Extras" for *32 Degrees*.

A Snowboarder's Survival Guide to Riding the Bumps

Text and photos by **K.C. GANDEE**

"Seriously? We're going to ride down that?" ¶ I could barely hear my buddy Josh's words over my own heavy breathing. It was 1998 and we were staring down Couloir Extreme at Blackcomb, British Columbia. We peered over the edge where the slope changed in a heartbeat from flat as a board to 45 degrees and littered with moguls. Huge moguls, small moguls, medium moguls . . . all moguls. It'd been a week since fresh snow had fallen on this pitch and it was a death zone of bumps and troughs. 1,000 vertical feet of them, with no break in the madness.

"We didn't come all this way to ride blue groomers, did we?" I called back as I scoped my line.

Neither of us talked about how terrified we were, but in our home shredding grounds of Virginia, moguls were optional. That is, if there were moguls to be found at all. In fact, the closest we usually came to moguls was a big "crowd pleaser" jump in the spring when the landing zone turned into a series of bombed out craters.

We looked over the edge of the couloir for 15 minutes, though it felt like an hour. Finally, we dropped in. I've never taken such a beating as I did that day on that slope. A newly minted Level I instructor at the time, I didn't have any idea what would happen when I dropped in . . . nor that I could have prepared for that terrain at my home mountain, even if I didn't have moguls.

Luckily, this doesn't need to happen to you or your students. Heed the following advice from some of the best in the business and you'll be dialing the bumps—whether off-piste, in the woods, or down the zipper line—in no time flat. Or, at least not flat on your back. By the way, this article addresses tactics that

As part of a solid bump run, Joe Jones has lined up his snowboard with a banked line through this section of moguls.

two different riders use in the bumps. As conditions change, tactics may change. Remember that there is no single way to ride. Different strokes for different folks, conditions, and situations.

THE BANKED SLALOM LINE

Moguls can form anywhere on the mountain, so riders need to be prepared for them. "The glades create some of the best bump riding because of multiple people taking the same lines to avoid trees or other obstacles," says AASI Snowboard Team member Eric Rolls. "Oftentimes the bumps in the woods are actually a series of banked turns."

To ride this type of bump, Rolls uses an edge angle that nearly matches the bank of the snow. But the success of the turn happens in the approach. "With full, C-shaped turns in these banked areas, it's best to approach slightly across the fall line to line your board up to the entrance of the curve," he advises.

Once your board is lined up with the curve and matched to the snow, you just need to get your body inside the bank and hang on. Line is critical for this kind of bumped banked slalom.

An easy way to practice this type of bump riding is to find a section of steep, groomed pitch. Lay down a nice round track for your students to follow. Begin with easy, wide, long turns. Then have the riders focus on matching their board's line to yours, specifically at the beginning of the new turn. As you progress down the hill, make the turns tighter, especially at the beginning.

To match your turn shape, the riders will need to move their hips farther and faster into the new turn. Be sure to look for these movements and provide adequate feedback. On the groomed slope, the rider should tip the board higher and higher from the snow to create the sharp turns. Another option


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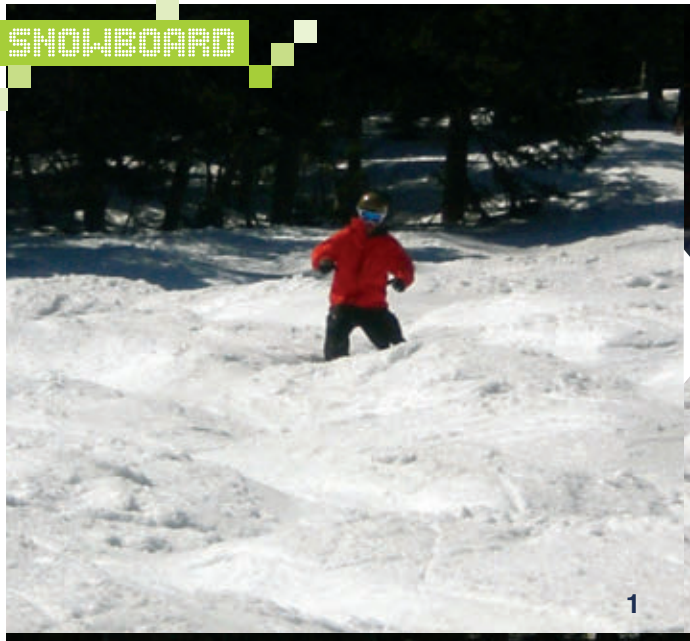
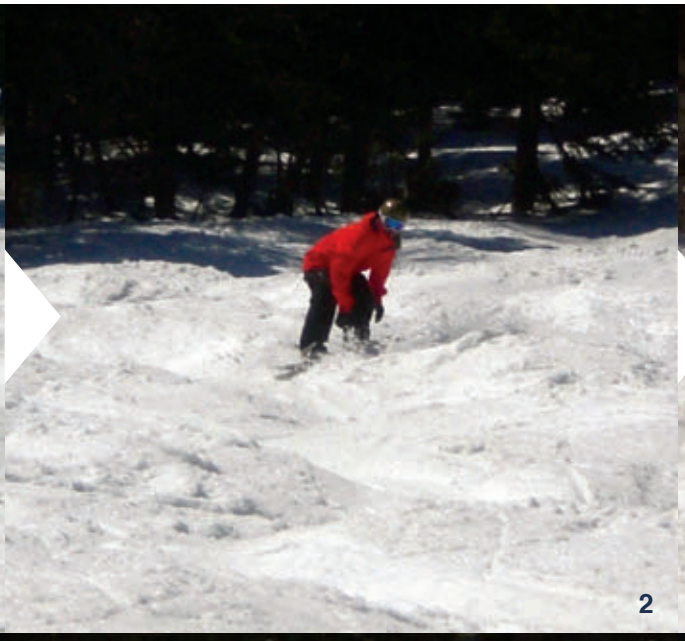
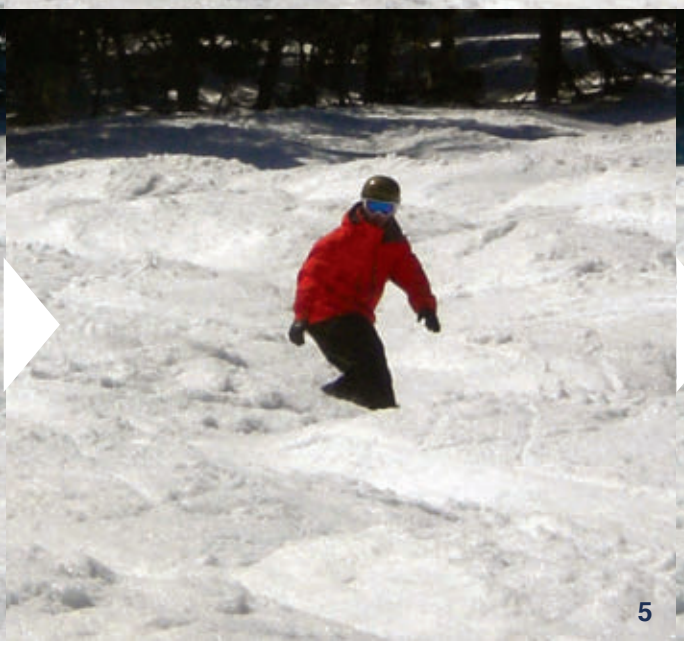
Photos 1-3: Ted Fleischer has aligned his upper body with the direction of the fall line in the belly of this turn. His body and board complete the turn, then he rotates his shoulders into the new turn/ direction of the fall line from a flexed stance.







is to keep the edge angle low and skid the turns around.

Once you take these movements into the woods, the riders will make similar movements with the hips, but the board should match the slope of the banked turn. Though the same focus on line and movements work, the turns end up being much quieter as the riders now guide the slide through the banked turn instead of creating big angles between the board and snow.

The sound of the turn can be great feedback for riders at this point. Let them know that a loud turn means something isn't right and they should ask you for feedback. A loud turn likely means they're getting on their edge late.

By extending the legs through the turn, the rider will be able to flex again at the end of the turn to absorb impact.

Just as you did before on the groomed pitch, set up in the bumps by laying down a line for your riders to follow. "Having loose ankles will allow the board to flatten to the banked surface" says Rolls. On the groomers, riders will need to stay strong in the ankles to make the turns happen, so be sure to keep an eye for this difference once you move into the bumps.

THE HIGH AND OUTSIDE LINE

Tom Vickery, who coaches AASI examiners in Eastern Division, also enjoys riding the bumps in this manner—

Shaun Cattanach hammers through these bumps by absorbing—letting his legs flex as they contact a bump.

what he calls the "high and outside line." For Vickery, it's important to find a more neutral body position in the control phase of the turn. "That way, if I need to make an emergency move while my board is pointed down the fall line, I have it (i.e., the necessary range of motion)," says Vickery.

To make this happen, Vickery focuses on rotating his upper body into the new turn as he quickly retracts both legs at the close of his old turn. Once he begins extending his legs into the new turn, his lower body catches up, allowing him to attain that athletic stance in the middle, control phase of the new banked turn.

To practice this skill, help riders first master "softening" both legs at the completion phase of a turn, as the board points across the fall line. Although many riders travel through the bumps by actively loading and releasing the board, Vickery lets gravity load the board (a more passive option) as he moves down hill and into the bumps. By letting his legs soften, his hips move downhill over the board and into the new turn naturally, with little or no effort. This movement blend is more nimble than the active and powerful "load and release" approach.

The best terrain on which to master this skill is a small spine or mini-pipe often found in terrain gardens. Have the students try to keep their head and shoulders at the same distance off the snow while softening their legs and letting the board come up over the spine or the lip of the mini-pipe.

As the riders become comfortable with these movements, instruct them to add a slight rotation of the upper body into a new turn at the peak of the spine, when their legs are the shortest. This move will align the rider's shoulders with the fall line and create the tension with which the rider turns his or her legs and board through the next turn.

Remember, this is a subtle movement—you're not trying to have riders fully separate their upper and lower bodies. Rather, you want the riders to create a tension in their core, which will assist the start of the new turn and allow the lower body to catch up.

TAIL SHIFT

Another key to Vickery's success in the bumps is fore/aft movement over the board through the turn. "I like to put a lot of weight on the tail of the board by extending my legs while moving my mass back over the tail," he says. "When I do this, it allows for an easier recovery if I end up becoming late and crashing into a bump."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Shaun Cattanach blends all of the techniques together beautifully. As he finishes this banked turn through the bumps, he is lining up his board in the direction of the next banked turn. In photo 2, Shaun is flexed, changing edges, and has rotated his shoulders to the direction of the fall line. In photo 3, Shaun has turned his board using his legs as he has extended them. He has moved his center of mass over his rear foot and is preparing to flex again to close out the turn.

With his body lined up over the tail of the board, it's easy to see how he can recover. Imagine a rider sliding through the bumps with his or her weight over the front foot. If the rider slips into a mogul from above, all of the momentum will be smashed into the pile of hard snow, likely resulting in the rider coming to a stop quickly, possibly with the front knee hitting his or her chin!

Now imagine the same line with the rider's hips stacked over the back foot of the snowboard. He or she will still need to absorb the impact, and momentum may just be re-directed as the tail of the board comes to a stop while the nose is allowed to continue and most likely drop downhill. This permits the rider to recover and continue without coming to a dead stop.

To help riders dial this move, teach them to tail press anything at anytime! Try coaching riders on flat terrain in straight runs, or on easy boxes in the terrain park. Ask them to do a wheelie or tail press by quickly shifting their hips toward the tail of the board. Once their hips are back over the back foot, ask them to give a push down on their back foot. It's the push on that back foot while their hips are over the tail of the board that will really help.

Since this movement sequence can be especially difficult on the heelside at the close of the turn, try coaching riders through a series of turns and ask them to do this tail press at the end

of each heelside turn. The focus here should be on separating the end of the heelside turn from the beginning of the toe turn. In the bumps, riders all too frequently begin toe side turns by hyper-rotating their upper bodies into the turn, which causes their hips to rotate, extends their back leg and prevents them from effectively pressing the tail of the board. Coach riders to complete that heel turn and tail press to gain speed control before going into their toe side turns.

LOW CHANGE

A major key for both Vickery and Rolls is changing edges from a lowered stance (one of the more critical aspects of riding bumps). In order to make any of the moves described here, a rider must have the ability to change edges with flexed legs and lower hips. If a rider is tall, with legs extended, it's going to be difficult for him or her to make the extending moves necessary to get the hips inside the new turn early, shift the body of the tail of the board, or absorb terrain variations in the moguls.

"I'm focusing on controlling the skid with extending moves, not rotational moves," says Vickery.

There are many different ways to practice this skill, but my favorite involves beginning at the top of the hill on flats, before moving down the hill. Ask riders to get low in a neutral stance, then dive forward onto the snow off of their toeside edge. If they try it from a tall position, they'll end up with some pain from the landing. If they are low and extend into the dive, it won't hurt a bit!

After a couple of practice dives, divide the group into pairs with a "diver" and a "spotter," both of whom will participate without their boards. Ask the riders to hold hands so the spotter can prevent the rider from falling over. Have the rider start the move from the same low stance, but instead of diving his or her entire body, to try to push the hips in the same direction before the shoulders. This is what the move should feel like while riding. Have the partners switch roles, then go through the same progression on the heelside.

Trying this in the bumps is much more dynamic (as both legs will have to work independently), but from this edge change position the rider will have more options for speed control. "By extending the legs through the turn, the rider will be able to flex again at the end of the turn to absorb impact," adds Rolls.

LINKING IT UP

No matter how well we plan our lines, Murphy's Law always seems to rear its ugly head. In fact, most bump lines change with pitch, snow conditions, and traffic. Banked turns, abrupt steep moguls, and even gaps will often present themselves. A rider who has mastered changing edges from a low and flexed position while lining the board up with the path of travel and fully separating the upper and lower body will be the most versatile and, therefore, the most successful.

By practicing the techniques used by AASI Snowboard Team member Eric Rolls and Eastern Division Examiner Coach Tom Vickery separately, riders will be able to put them together, changing their style as the terrain demands. Like most other aspects of snowboarding, these movements can and should be practiced by students all over the mountain before you aim them down the steepest bump run at the hill.

I know this lesson from experience. I returned to Blackcomb in 2001 with Josh and several others. Over the three seasons leading up to my redemption, I had practiced diligently. I rode the trees and banked turns of early snowboard cross courses, honing my line choice and board placement. I found terrain features to absorb. I pressed boxes and rails like it was my job.

It didn't take long until we were again standing atop Couloir Extreme. Josh and the others peered over the edge, wondering if they were actually going to ride the pitch. While they were talking and thinking, I wasted no time. I strapped in and dropped without hesitation. 32°

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Kid's Credential: The Path to Children's Specialist

By **PATTI OLSEN** and **KIM PETRAM**

Those who teach children to ski or ride know what a unique experience it can be. Which is precisely why instructors benefit from having a foundation of consistent instructional standards on which to build their lessons. ¶ With the creation this year of national Children's Specialist 1 (CS1) and Children's Specialist 2 (CS 2) credentials, PSIA-AASI outlines core educational components that children's educators should know and apply in their snowsports lessons for children. Developed with division input, the standards outline key criteria that each of the association's nine division must include in their Children's Specialist programs, but also provides the leeway for divisions to tailor training for children's instructors as they see fit. (All current national certification standards—including Children's Specialist and those for the Alpine, Cross Country, Telemark, Snowboard, and Adaptive disciplines—are available on PSIA-AASI's website (www.TheSnowPros.org). This unified knowledge base represents a significant development in the evolution of children's snowsports instruction in the United States, so here's a rundown of how it came to be.

TRIAL AND ERROR

Children have progressively become a core demographic for snowsport instruction, however there were few pathways early on for sharing child-specific knowledge across divisions. This led instructors to create activities to improve skill sets in isolation. They'd watch each other and, at their breaks, discuss what worked and what didn't. Through trial and error, one instructor might offer a new activity that had helped children be more successful (or warn against those that missed the mark). The best activities were shared and patterns emerged to create better lessons for children.

As snowsports evolved and technology improved, educational advances kept pace. The instruction of children became more organized, with children's SkiWee programs serving as one example of this evolution. Evident of this aspect of instructional evolution, the first national PSIA Children's Committee meeting—held in conjunction with the inaugural Children's Symposium—was held in Colorado in 1989, with representative from each of the nine divisions present.

To further address the educational training criteria being developed,

Sherri Harkin

PSIA-AASI has created new standards for children's instructors.

PSIA created the Junior Education Team (known as the JETs). This team, made up of some of the top children's snowsports teachers in the country, traveled to ski schools throughout the United States to provide educational clinics and seek new and innovative ways of teaching children. Each year, the JETs hosted a symposium on child-specific education for instructors from across the country, with themes based on prevailing theories and concepts for educating children.

In the late 1990s, the Children's Committee and JETs met with ski school directors from throughout the country, who wanted more information on child-specific terrain features and how to attract and retain more children's instructors in their schools. At the time, lessons for children represented a significant portion of all ski school business nationwide. As snowboarding burst upon the scene, these percentages rose. With the support of the directors, the Children's Committee proposed an accreditation program for children's instructors and worked in concert with the JETs to create a child-specific program to use in day-to-day teaching and to recognize those instructors who specialized in teaching kids.

EVOLUTION OF ACE

From children's education programs already in place, a template began to take shape as information was shared across the divisions. This collaborative sharing eventually led to each division creating its own children's accreditation programs. Most divisions originally called their program the "Accredited Children's Educator" or ACE program. The ACE programs continued to evolve into events highlighting the mastery of teaching theory and content relevant to children's development as well as cognitive, affective, and physiological needs related to skiing and riding.

Fast forward to October 2008 when PSIA-AASI gathered key children's snowsports educators in a group charged with developing a children's credential that would be recognized across all nine divisions. A new name, Children's Specialist, was adopted and the group agreed that there should be two levels of Children's Specialist: Children's Specialist 1 and Children's Specialist 2. After much discussion, attendees determined that the prerequisite for Children's Specialist 1 would be a Level I certification in any discipline, with a Level II certification required prior to participate in a Children's Specialist 2 program.

Continuing the work begun at the 2008 meeting, a subgroup formed in fall 2009 to identify how to implement the new specialist program in ways that would still meet the needs of all nine divisions

Over the years, the divisions had taken their children's programs in slightly different paths, creating division-specific programs and accreditations. As the group evaluated the variety of programs, it became clear that instead of trying to figure out how to make one national program, the divisions would be better served if a national standard

were created that addressed core educational components children's educators should apply daily in teaching children. The standard would outline key criteria that each division must include in their CS program but also free divisions to continue their unique programs as they saw fit. As a guideline, the task force looked to the national standards for snowboard instruction that were also being developed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In drafting the Children's Specialist standards it became evident that very clear guidelines for measuring understanding should be included. In keeping with PSIA-AASI's standards for alpine and snowboard instructors, the national standards for children's instructors uses "Bloom's Taxonomy" (developed by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom) to organize educational objectives according to their cognitive complexity. Hence, by means of Bloom's Taxonomy , the standards address levels of learning and understanding (i.e., competencies), from the most basic to advanced in order to develop fair and accurate assessments.

Bloom's Taxonomy helps clarify the "level of knowledge" a participant should have as a Children's Specialist 1 and 2. For example, the successful Children's Specialist 1 will demonstrate the knowledge and comprehension of the relevant technical terms, concepts, and models. The Children's Specialist 2 will demonstrate the application and analysis and the ability to synthesize and evaluate the relevant technical terms, concepts, and models. (For more information, log on to www.TheSnowPros.org and check out the Web Extras in the section for *32 Degrees*.)

In 2010 the PSIA-AASI Board of Directors approved the national Children's Specialist standards (as well as the AASI Snowboard and reformatted PSIA Alpine standards), recognizing the input from all divisions and a broader review audience. This past summer, a task force group set to work on developing a pool of workbook questions for the Children's Specialist 1 and 2 programs to which all divisions would have access. From this bank of questions each division will be able to decide which to use for its workbooks in the way that best suits their program and still have enough to include fresh questions periodically.

The CS 1 curriculum focuses on the novice to beginning zone while the CS 2 addresses concepts from the novice/beginning zone through the advanced zone for all children up through teens. Children's Specialist 1 and 2 workbooks are expected to be completed with a minimum of 80% of answers correct.

APPLIED WISDOM

Throughout development of the Children's Specialist standards the task force groups honored the core curriculum that is special and unique to master children's educators , including the theories of:

- The aforementioned Benjamin Bloom, who has provided the framework to measure levels of understanding;
- Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, who more clearly defined the stages of development based on the age of a child;
- American humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow, who has helped us understand that a secure and safe environment helps children develop a sense of well-being; and
- American developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, who reminds us that peer pressure for preteens or "tweens" influences their behavior.

In addition, the standards address:

- The CAP Model which, with its emphasis on cognitive, affective, and physical development, helps us understand what a child thinks, how they feel, and how they move, and
- PSIA-AASI's Teaching Cycle—with its "Play," "Drill," "Adventure," and "Summary" components—which allows instructors to move children around the mountain in predictable ways.

It's important to acknowledge that PSIA-AASI's divisions have contributed information from their past programs and experiences to build the Children's Specialist 1 and 2 standards and programs. One of the important things the National Children's Task Force realized was that the process for each division may be different due to geography, membership, etc., but the outcome needs to be the same: child-specific education that develops better children's instructors.

In order to fulfill the Children's Specialist standards you may notice changes in your division to existing programs or even new components added to the children's programs. At the end of the 2010–11 season the Child Specialist standards will be re-evaluated and changed where needed. The task force welcomes feedback from the membership as this specialist program evolves.

Gratitude is certainly due to all the snowsports instructors who helped develop and implement the original ACE Programs. Most skiers and riders acknowledge Sir Isaac Newton as the scholar who helps us understand forces in movement, but he also famously noted "If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." The children's program today is only as strong as it is because of PSIA-AASI's history of development and growth. Thanks to all who went through the ACE program, and check with your division office to learn how your existing ACE fits as the Children's Specialist program moves forward.

What started out as an intuitive feeling followed by plenty of trial and error has blossomed into a PSIA-AASI's newest nationally recognized credential. All of you who love teaching children should be proud! 32°

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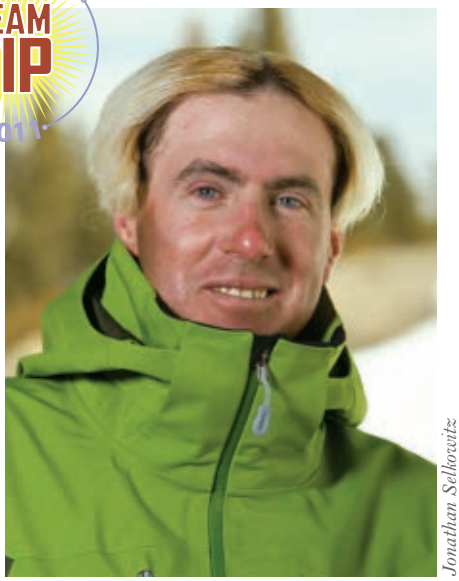

Jonathan Selkowitz

The Road to Retention? Freestyle!

By **DAVID OLIVER**

Across the country there is a growing trend by instructors to spice up lessons by using freestyle elements. ¶ While not everyone may be onboard with incorporating freestyle into traditional lessons, freestyle has been around since the first instructor decided to add unconventional movements to their teaching tool box. At its heart freestyle means that anything goes; there are no rules or boundaries. And that's one of the messages the PSIA-AASI Teams took to Interski 2011 in January.

Freestyle elements allow guests to be more actively involved in the learn-

Interski attendees take a turn at using an upturned ski as a rail feature during boot work.

Cesar Piotto

ing segment of the lesson. When it comes to skill development, thinking outside the box is essential to change—and enhances the guest's experience by using a teaching style that *includes* the guest in the development of the presentation. The upsides? Guests gain a stronger connection to the action, while the instructor creates more interest in lessons, growth in returns, and greater retention.

One of the freestyle elements being added to the lesson package is the idea of *sessions*. This is a group vibe that freestyle skiers and riders create in the terrain park. Anyone who has spent time near your resort's terrain park, local skateboard park, coastal surfing break, or kayak-friendly eddy or river wave has caught a glimpse of a session in action. Sessions involve group dynamics where there is no clear leader and it's all very exploratory. For instructors, generating the session mentality is where we move into a realm where we don't know exactly where the lesson will take us.

While there is no clear leader of the session, the most skilled of the group (usually the instructor) tends to become a facilitator as to what is happening. That said, students still look to the instructors as the leader. What changes is the instructor's behavior and group-management tactics—moving toward a much looser format—but there is still structure, just not as obvious.

Pose games of skill and, more important, use those games to test skills in a fun way. Your role becomes that of the person who's loudest and most stoked for what is happening, being energetic and vocal for the performances of the others in the session.

Regardless of skill proficiency, those involved in the session explore movements and define their own experience. By establishing this session environment we create energy that includes everyone participating as a unified exploratory group. Everyone is experiencing the same thing equally and on their own terms as skills are developed.

FREESTYLE AND ATML

Another freestyle contribution to focus on is the ATML Method™, which forms the foundation of park and pipe skiing and riding. As you explore using ATML as a teaching style (breaking the freestyle tactic into the approach, takeoff, maneuver, and landing) focus on the task or skills in many different ways instead of using it to break down park features. Establishing a skills focus becomes the maneuver. Guests don't care how they get to the maneuver; they just want to get there. Instructors become a facilitator of the approach, takeoff, and the landing of the learning segment with everyone experiencing the maneuver together.

Boot work is a fundamental for a Level 1 progression, setting the guest up to develop skills that are needed for the transition to one- or two-ski movements. With boot work as a focus, play with some drills that are traditional and then add a freestyle element to them to create a freestyle boot drill.

For instructors, generating the session mentality is where we move into a realm where we don't know exactly where the lesson will take us.

For example, traditional and freestyle techniques both focus on balancing movements, rotation, edging, and pressure management. If we go through a traditional boot drill presentation we find a command/task type of scenario were the instructor is showing the guest a movement pattern and then having the group perform the task. Examples of traditional boot drills are bow ties in the snow, balancing on one foot, or even carving the half circle in the snow.

Taking the boot drills as the "maneuver," you can began to repackage the presentation and add a freestyle element, such as "the ski as a rail feature." Simply flip one ski over and stick the bindings in the snow (tie the brakes with rubber bands so skiers don't get stuck on them).

See if the guest can slide the ski with their boots. Can they hop on it, over it, slide it forwards or backwards—or sideways? When they can do this on one foot or both feet you can even have them try to spin them around while on the ski. The options and possibilities are endless.

Incorporate the exercise in a session setting, allowing guests to experience the boot drill with those group dynamics. Let the guest pick what maneuver he or she feels comfortable with, and encourage every attempt with enthusiasm. With this example of having the focus of boot work and generating a session you make the guest feel like an equal player in the lesson and recognize that there was no wrong way to complete the task.

When you take your lesson tactics outside of the traditional methods and look at the mountain as a playground or a space to be explored with enthusiasm and energy, you will bring the freestyle experience to your clients. This allows for a greater number of possible outcomes. It becomes an endless experience that the guest can join in on at any time. After all, what we are ultimately giving the guest are options that help them generate as many positive experiences as they can.

Throughout PSIA's 50-year history of instruction, one thing remains consistent: We got here by teaching people well and progressing our sport along the way. The growth of the industry and our sports depend on our instruction remaining grounded in the skills concept, but also in being innovative in finding new ways to engage clients and keep the lessons fun and fresh. 32°

David Oliver is a member of the PSIA Alpine Team who recently participated in the 2011 International Ski Instructors' Congress (Interski) held in St. Anton, Austria. He instructs at Colorado's Breckenridge Ski & Ride School.

Information That Stays With You

Introducing the Movement Matrix. The Movement Matrix is the premier online video source for PSIA-AASI members to perfect alpine, snowboard, and nordic instruction methods. Featuring live-action learning modules for skills concepts, situational skiing and riding, drills, and certification standards, it's the perfect complement to your manuals. For an annual subscription fee of $14.95, you'll have access to a fully customizable tool to help you filter thousands of selections and find real-life explanations. **Log on to the Members Only section at www.TheSnowPros.org and subscribe today.**

PROFESSIONAL SKI INSTRUCTORS OF AMERICA

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MAGAZINE INDEX

This index is a partial listing of articles published in 32 Degrees since the magazine s launch in fall 2008. PSIA-AASI members may access full electronic versions of each issue online at www.TheSnowPros.org.

SPRING 11 AD INDEX

THROUGH THE LENS

Snowsports industry icon—and newly certified ski instructor—Glen Plake surveys the terrain in St. Anton, Austria, while attending Interski. Photo by Bert Saxby.

OUR SEASON OF DELIGHTS

Jennifer Pinetas

Many Americans seem glum about the ongoing snow piling onto sidewalks, streets, and rail tracks in their home town. What s up with those frowns? We understand that the goodness can float down quietly, as if in stealth mode, or arrive screaming like a banshee. No matter how it s delivered, we find ways to reap the rewards. Give us a slice of your season by selecting one of these options:

INQUIRING MINDS Give us your take on a pressing issue.

THROUGH THE LENS Send in a great photo that captures 1/1000 of a second in the life of a snowsports instructor. (Digital pics must be 300 ppi or larger).

LESSON LEARNED You re the instructor, but clients can often deliver an unexpected lesson in return. Tell us what they ve taught you.

LAUGH TRACKS Share the hysterical anecdote that made them all bust a gut at apr s.

Send your submissions to 32Degrees@thesnowpros.org, with the subject line Last Chair. PSIA-AASI members whose contributions make it onto this page will win a $25 gift certificate to the PSIA-AASI *Accessories Catalog*. Bring it on, people.

INQUIRING MINDS

In our Winter 2011 edition, we asked about how instructors have succeeded in gaining repeat customers. Christina Cartier, a PSIA-certified Level III alpine and Level II nordic instructor at Jackson Hole Ski Resort, shares these approaches that have helped her bring guests back for more:

"There needs to be chemistry with clients, just like in any relationship. And if I can create an aha moment on the first day, that's a strong start. And if it's a moment in terms of enhancing their skills they're like 'this person really helped me.' That really helps cement a relationship.

"PSIA-AASI's focus on safety, fun, and learning made a difference for me too. The day I really began to focus on the fun helped improve my return rate. I remind myself that it's ultimately what many of them are here for—the fun part—when I may have focused too hard on safety and giving a 'good' lesson."

Thanks for sharing your experience, Christina! Our next "Inquiring Minds" question is:

How are you helping clients adapt to rocker technology?

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