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32 DEGREES

THE JOURNAL OF PROFESSIONAL SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTION | WINTER 2011

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32 DEGREES: The Journal of Professional Snowsports Instruction

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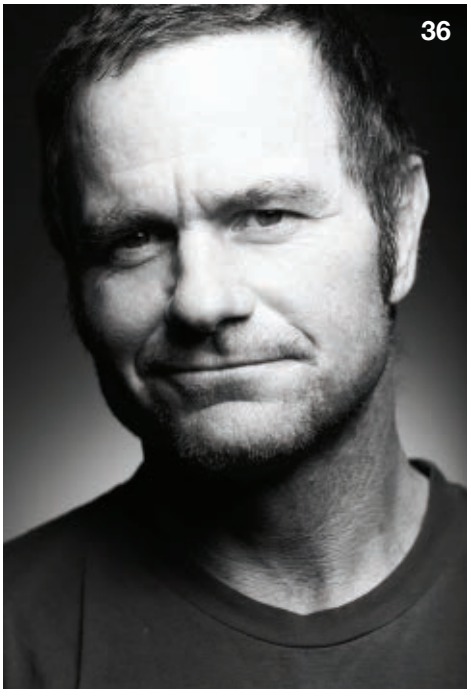
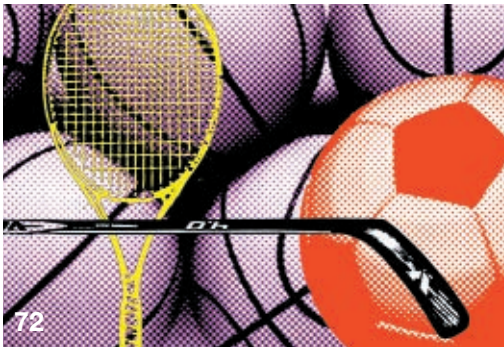
Winter 2011

COVER SHOT: PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team Coach Bill Bowness is in the driver s seat at California s Squaw Valley USA. Photo by Scott Sady.





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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Thankful to Be Part of the Passion

By Eric Sheckleton
PSIA-AASI Chairman of the Board

Happy birthday, PSIA! It's hard to believe that we have had a national association for 50 years, but you know what they say . . . time flies when you're having fun.

We've come a long way since seven ski instructors met in Whitefish, Montana, in 1961 and formed the Professional Ski Instructors of America. Our association has accomplished many great things, like creating a well respected education model focused on the student, forming a distinct but equal snowboard association, and growing the membership to its current hallmark of more than 30,000. PSIA-AASI is poised to bring about even more great things in the future—all in service to its members and their role in helping people experience the joy of skiing and riding. This is a good time to celebrate our roots, and the 50/50 event in Snowmass, Colorado, this coming April is the perfect place to celebrate.

As I reflect on the roots of PSIA-AASI, I am struck by the fact that this is truly a member-driven association. Throughout our history, passionate instructors have become passionate members—many of whom have taken on leadership roles to help the association evolve and improve. My personal path is a testament to the value of access to these members and leaders, and what impact they can have on an individual member and on the association as a whole.

I must admit, I am a relative newcomer to the association. I was lucky enough to start my instructing career in, of all places, Whitefish, Montana, in 1994. I was trained as a snowboard instructor by Michael Shaw, a member of the PSIA Snowboard Team (that's not a typo, AASI wasn't formed until 1997). His training and guidance helped cement my love of teaching and set me on a path for personal growth.

A few years later, when Mike had the opportunity to coach for Denmark at the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, Japan, PSIA-AASI's Northern Rocky Mountain Division held a tryout for his position on the Snowboard Team and the association's Snowboard Committee. (At the time, the association's snowboard and nordic teams—as well as the Junior Education Team—were selected to be committees and teams with division representation.) I had the honor of being asked to fill the positions and soon found myself involved in developing AASI and writing the first snowboard standards, manual, and video. It was amazing to be exposed to leaders—both at the national and division levels—on the board, committees, and teams, many of whom became close friends. In fact, I still look forward to hanging out each year with former Snowboard Team Coach Randy Price and current Snowboard Team Coach Lane Clegg.

Throughout our history, passionate instructors have become passionate members.

During that time, I was struck by the level of passion and dedication that was commonplace among the leaders of the association. In fact, I witnessed this same passion and dedication in many of the members I came in contact with as I toured the nation providing snowboard clinics/exams, attending the Rider Rally, and taking numerous alpine, nordic, adaptive, and children's exams and clinics.

This access to the passionate members and progressive thinkers, challenged me to stay involved in both snowboard education and the governance of our division. When Joan Rostad decided to step down from the national board of directors, she looked to me as a possible replacement. Thankfully, the Northern Rocky Mountain board decided to approve that recommendation and the rest is history (a history, by the way, in which I had the pleasure of serving on the same board as former PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team Assistant Coach Jerry Warren and past presidents and chairmen John Armstrong and Ray Allard).

Members join the association for a variety of reasons, but one of the most important is the access to other members who share the passion for snowsports and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth. I am so thankful that I get to share my passion with the visionary leaders on the national board, the dedicated staff of our association, and the amazing team members that drive our education and stoke for skiing and riding. On top of all that I get to ride with passionate members all across the country. What could be better than that?

The 50/50 Celebration will be an amazing opportunity to share your passion with members from all over the world. Who knows, you might even get to share a few turns along the way. We will even be providing the first 50-year membership pins at the event. It will be a great time to share stories from the past and create more memories for the future. I look forward to seeing you there. 32°

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"WHEN EARLY SEASON IN EUROPE LAST WINTER WAS DRY AND COLD, BRITISH COLUMBIA GOT POUNDED WITH SNOW. HENRIK WINDSTEDT AND I HOPPED A PLANE AND TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE GREAT EARLY START."
- MATTIAS FREDRIKSSON

PHOTOGRAPHER: MATTIAS FREDRIKSSON. SKIER: HENRIK WINDSTEDT. LOCATION: WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA.

Believe It!

By Stephen Helfenbein

I am a professional ski instructor and I have a confession. I am two skiers!

I was a "freeskier" before such a category was fashionable and a legitimate brand of skiing. Growing up skiing the mountains of Aspen, my friends and I shredded powder, pieced together top-to-bottom jump runs, and straight-lined chutes. In college I became a ski instructor to support my habit. After college I moved to Utah and managed to shape a career.

As I further immersed myself in the profession I recognized a problem, and began to feel conflicted and divided against myself. One half most identifies with being a freeskier. That means that I don't care about *how* I'm doing *what* I'm doing. I just want to jump, go fast, and push my comfort zone.

Stephen Helfenbein balances two identities.

Ben Attridge

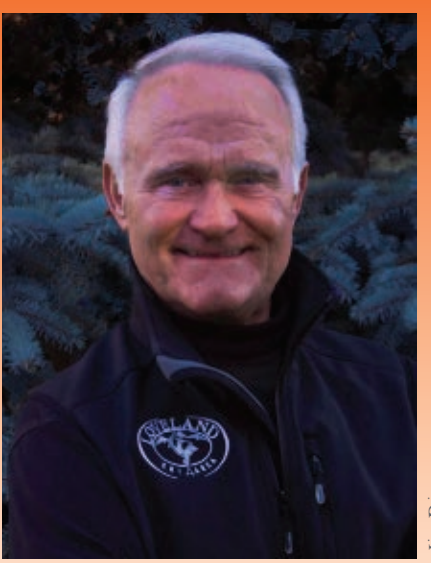
My other half is definitely a ski instructor. I want to know everything there is to know about *how* to turn a pair of skis, I want to do it as *well* as humanly possible, and I want to *show* other skiers how to do the same.

My core skiing belief is an ongoing attempt to reconcile my two inner skiers: unbridled fun versus critical analysis, creativity versus discipline, what versus how. This belief was put to the test in 2008 when I got to participate in the selection process for PSIA's Alpine Team.

What PSIA-AASI Has Done For Me

What a ride it has been! I joined the Midwest Division of the United States Ski Association in 1962 when I started teaching for Walter Neuron at Snow Trails Ski Area in Mansfield, Ohio. Skiing was the hottest thing in the neighborhood in those days. We taught thousands of first-timers how to slide down the hill. Our 300 vertical feet made for perfect teaching slopes, better than the beginning areas of some the big mountains in the East or West. Those years still rank among the happiest of my life.

Walter was an Austrian and he was Jewish. He and his family escaped to America in the late 1930s. He taught for Hannes Schneider in North Conway, New Hampshire, and served in the 10th Mountain Division in Italy. We spent hours on the hill trying to perfect the Final Forms" of the American Ski Technique. Walter was relentless and he made young professionals of us all. As a member of PSIA I was certified at the Associate level, at Michigan's Boyne Mountain in 1965. That pin meant almost as much to me then as my college diploma. I still ski every spring with Niels Keiper and Paul Goszyk, best friends from those early days.



Jim Disney

I went to work for the Loveland Ski School when my wife Ginny and I moved to Colorado some years ago. This will be my sixth season at Loveland. We are a family. PSIA keeps me striving for professionalism, and the certification process keeps me humble, more humble that I ever wanted to be. As I write this, I am in a University of Colorado class about the technology of skiing, taught by Ron LeMaster. What a privilege it is to learn from some of the best in the business, like Ron, Annie Emich Black, and Bob C. Barnes. And I am friends with the likes of Bob Booker, Don Davidson, and Harry Covington, all life-long professionals in our sport. They are inspiring.

What has PSIA done for me? It s my fountain of youth, dude! I'll be 68 soon but I'm still young, sort of, and PSIA's training assures that my students have the opportunity to make skiing one of the treasures in their lives as it is in mine. Thanks for everything PSIA!

Michael Wagner
Loveland Ski Area, CO

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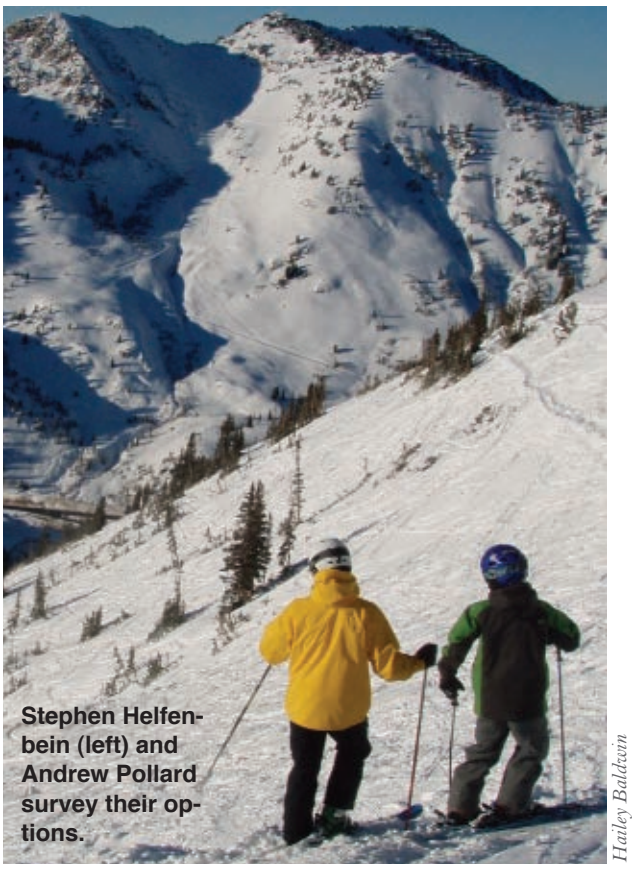
This was my first national tryout and I was in completely foreign territory. I had the highest estimation of the competitions' skiing and teaching abilities. I presumed to be in the company of skiers and teachers who would wield our shared fundamentals with the finest accuracy and creativity. Forget the outcome! I was simply stoked to be there and soak it all in.

After several exhausting days of demanding skiing tasks, the focus shifted to teaching. The assigned task for the final day filled me with anticipation. It was the perfect task: teach your core skiing belief to your peers. I couldn't wait to experience the ideas my peers had solidified during their careers. Most of all I was curious. What would these folks' beliefs reflect more: the how or the what of skiing?



Stephen Helfenbein (left) and Andrew Pollard survey their options.

Hailey Baldwin

"Belief" is a loaded word and one should use caution applying it too literally, especially in an attempt to express a core skiing belief. Belief is synonymous with words like opinion, conviction, or a way of thinking. It is likely to be used when discussing religion, philosophy, or politics. For me, skiing is religion, philosophy, profession, and recreation all at the same time. That belief is the best form of expression.

Beliefs are not easily formed nor are they to be taken less than seriously. They don't come from

The most effective teaching represents the equilibrium of the two opposites: fun with some analysis, creativity and discipline, what and how.

reading a textbook or arise from what you heard someone else say. A belief springs from a more personal place. Beliefs are born from questioning and struggle, then molded by intellectual and physical tests. It is a way of thinking you own completely. Instead of narrowing focus on a finite topic, a belief helps shed light on a spectrum of possibilities.

I observed my peers reveal their beliefs. By day's end, my impression was that they believe "the what" of skiing is carving on groomed snow. They also believe that how we carve is a priority, and to be trained with drills. The drills narrowed focus to precise body positions at very specific moments of time. The teaching was top notch and my skiing improved that day. I took away learning that already helped propel me to another level.

Despite the increased understanding, something about the experience just didn't sit well with me. Inside me a duel was raging. The freeskier was beating the tar out of the ski instructor! *"What does any of this really have to do with shredding down a mountain?"* The ski instructor was sticking up for himself though. *"Don't you remember? Better 'how' improves 'the what.'"* Any hope of reconciling my two halves was being seriously challenged.

For days my "What does it all mean?" crisis continued.

Is good skiing all about doing a bunch of drills? Are ski instructors out of touch with skiing? Does our profession believe more in the deconstructionist techy bits of skiing, leaving us alienated from the more soulful "Go out and shred!" whole?

Slowly a more useful question emerged. "What is the point of our profession?"

A ski instructor's function in the ski industry should be twofold. First, we should help create skiers by breaking things down into digestible bits that lead to incremental improvements. Second, we should inspire other skiers with our own skiing! The best ski instructors are masters at doing both.

The most effective teaching represents the equilibrium of the two opposites: fun with some analysis, creativity and discipline, what and how. This balance can be obtained by any dedicated pro. But we all need to do a more consistent job of celebrating the larger picture of skiing! We should be coaching the mechanical aspects of skiing, like "Where are my hands relative to my torso?" But then let's quickly apply it to some of the limitless inspiring outcomes of good skiing, like how that will help you have more fun in deeper snow, improve fluidity through the trees, or enhance control after landing a jump. Let's highlight the outcome!

The wrangling between my two inner skiers goes on, but what helps me is something I heard years ago about musicians working to master the art of classical piano. For years and years the pianists work to hone the fundamentals, and the primary practice is attempting to master the works of great composers. It isn't until they're able to accurately replicate those works that they're considered ready to conceive and write their own music. The intent of that message absolutely applies to what we should strive for every day on the snow.

Without doubt, both mechanical and technical must be mastered. Yet pure practice shouldn't be the goal. We must strive, shred, and smile as we hone those skills and work to be the trained maestro who is ready to rip a new line.

Stephen Helfenbein's "How" personality is the certification training manager for Alf Engen Ski School in Alta, Utah. His "What" personality is the head coach of the Alta Freeride Division and Alta Performance Ski Camps.

CORRECTION

In "Go to the Poles for Better Power and Alignment" (Fall 2010) the name of PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor Josh Fogg was misspelled. *32 Degrees* regrets the error. 32°

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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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

More Social Than You Can Shake a Stick At

Communicators of the snowsports world, unite!

PSIA-AASI has unveiled a social media platform designed just for you (and some 30,000 of your closest instructor friends and colleagues.) Called "The PSIA-AASI Community", the site allows PSIA-AASI members to maintain a personal profile, post information to share, create blog entries, communicate on-on-one, and comment on a wealth of topics presented in specific communities, discussion boards, and libraries. Get in on the ground-floor, beta version by logging on to the member's area at www.TheSnowPros.org and clicking on the link for The Community in the PSIA-AASI Member Services Web Portal.

U.S. Ski Hall of Fame Announces 2010 Inductees

World Champion ski racer Daron Rahlves; one of the world's most noted big mountain skiers, the late Shane McConkey; and iconic skiing legend Glen Plake are among a roster of six skiers and builders named as inductees to the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame's Class of 2010.

They will be joined by Paralympic medalist and World Champion Muffy Davis; national skiing champion from the 1960s and '70s and 1972 Olympian Bobby Cochran; and noted sports builder and Sun Valley (Idaho) owner Earl Holding. The class will be inducted on April 2, 2011, at Sun Valley. The event

HOT

La Nina. Big forecasts for the Pacific Northwest look to create epic conditions.

Groomers! New rocker technology being incorporated into frontside skis and snowboards is making corduroy cool again.

Registering early for the PSIA-AASI 50/50 in Snowmass, Colorado. Go to www.TheSnowPros.org for the deets, and check out the ad bonanza on pages 41, 42, 45, 47, 49, and 51.

Ripping up your local hill on a sweet new setup from one of PSIA-AASI s Official Suppliers. You ve committed www.TheSnowPros.org to memory, right? Go there and check out the pro offers.

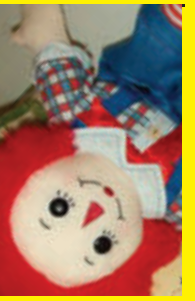
NOT

Warm weather getaways. Ride while the snow is falling. You can get warm all summer long.

Flat landings. But if you want to start popping air, take it to the park, my friend.

Missing out on the most epic shred fest in the history of snowsports instruction.

Blaming your gear for getting tossed around like a rag doll. It isn t your tune that makes you out of breath in the bumps, pal.



is part of a week-long celebration of skiing history, including Sun Valley's 75th season as a major ski resort.

"This year's Hall of Fame inductees include some great diversity in contributions to our sport," said Hall of Fame Chairman Bernie Weichsel. "Each shares in common a great passion for skiing and each has made a tremendous difference in bringing recognition to this lifelong sport enjoyed by millions around the world."

#Hshtags and U

If you are on the Twitter, make the most of it. Set your sights (and 140 characters) on #gowithapro for insights on great lessons or something sweet to help a student. Use #fifty50 to sling some noise about PSIA-AASI's upcoming spring bash in Snowmass, Colorado. No idea what that means? Check out the chatter at www.twitter.com/thesnowpros. 32°

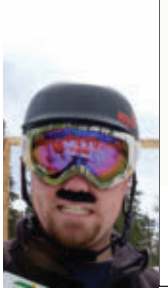
Where Do You Read *32 Degrees?*

WIN!

Jimmy Brokaw, a Level I alpine instructor in Washington State writes: "The fall issue of *32 Degrees* had just arrived in my mailbox on the eve of a skiing trip up the Muir Snowfield on Mt. Rainier, so I threw it in my bag. Being early October, the snow was still firm when I reached the snowfield, so I pulled the magazine out and waited for the sun to soften the snow into beautiful corn. As it turned out, I got an opportunity to keep my legs in ski shape during the off-season, and got to exercise my teaching brain at the same time!"

If you read your mag somewhere equally cool, snap a picture 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 of the epic locale, to lineup@thesnowspros.org.

LOCKER ROOM TALK

	NAME/ CREDENTIALS	MEMBER SINCE/ DIVISION/ CERT	INFUSING STOKE ON MY GUESTS AT...	IF YOU HAD A THEME SONG, WHAT WOULD IT BE?	BEST PSIA-AASI MEMBERY	SKIING/ RIDING ON
	**Jennifer Landieu**	1995/Rocky Mountain/Alpine III	Breckenridge Ski and Ride School, CO	Shoot (Chute?) to Thrill – AC/DC	The exhilaration of passing my Alpine Level III on the first try	Volkl Aura
	**James J. Nolan**	2008/Eastern/ Alpine I	Ski & Snowboard Schule, Horberg, Austria	Z-Cars Theme (Johnny Todd) – Frank Kidson	Skiing with Matt Boyd (PSIA Alpine Team) in Austria.	Salomon V 3 s
	**Matt Rinkin**	2004/Eastern/ Snowboard II	Looking for a job in the East	Weightlessness Skunkhour	Level II exam in 2004. Traveled to Breck with a big group. We all passed. We had a great time. We drank beer!	Burton Custom X
	**Dallas Germundson**	2001/Western/ Snowboard II	Arizona Snowbowl Ski & Ride School, AZ	Things I ve Seen – Spooks	When I went for my Level II at Sugar Bowl it was raining really hard. We asked our boss if AASI would postpone the exam and he said, No, just bring two jackets, a garbage bag, and a bar of soap.	Lib Tech Jamie Lynn

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PRO FILE: JENNIFER SIMPSON

PSIA Alpine Team Member

Randy Bachman

Standard stuff, Jennifer, how did it all begin?

My dad has been a skiing fanatic his entire adult life, so he started me skiing on our driveway when I was about two. I then progressed to skiing at Mt. Hardscrabble, in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, and later switched to Christie Mountain in Bruce, Wisconsin. We were a farm family, so Dad worked for the ski patrol and, later, the ski school so we could afford to ski as a family.

I started teaching skiing at Big Powderhorn Mountain in Michigan when I was a high school freshman. I think I had the best job of all my friends in school. I remember seeing PSIA Alpine Team members around at PSIA-Central events while still in high school and thought, *"Man, would that be a great job!"* Over time I lost hope of getting on "The Team," and then after college I started to realize that with enough hard work that dream job might still be possible.

And when you re not skiing, you re an emergency room nurse, right?

I never thought being a nurse would be such a great complement to being a ski instructor, but it is. Working as an ER nurse not only pays the bills and provides health insurance, it also makes me appreciate the joy of working in the ski industry. On the other hand, as I tell my hospital co-workers, I don't need to worry about getting frostbite while working in the ER.

What have you learned in the ER that makes you a better instructor?

In the ER I see a lot of suffering and am forced to realize that there are no guarantees in life. On the other hand, I have met many people who live with strength and grace despite the hardship they face—it's truly inspiring. These encounters fill me with hope for humanity. It's cheesy, but true. Being an ER nurse brings perspective to my life.

Word on the street is that you ve got a strange phobia. Is that true?

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FRESH START: IS THIS THE NEW GOLDEN AGE OF SNOWSPORTS INSTRUCTION?

Millennials, the Model for Growth, and an Increasing Focus on Beginners Could Give Snow Pros the Tools to Increase Conversion

BY PETER KRAY

Following the second best season for skier and snowboarder visits in the history of U.S. snowsports—with the *Kottke National End of Season Survey* reporting 59.7 million skier/snowboarder visits last year, only 1.2 percent off the all time record of 60.5 million visits set in 2007–08—it may seem as if ski and snowboard areas really have weather and recession-proofed their operations.

"It was kind of a stealth season in the way that the preliminary results turned out," said Nolan Rosall, of RRC Associates. That firm produces the *Kottke Survey* for the National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), and released the findings in May at that association's annual convention and trade show. "The ability of the industry to perform well in a difficult economy and without the catalyst of exceptional snow points to the underlying enthusiasm of snowsports participants and the resilience of their participation in a suboptimal environment," Rosall said.

Vikki Fairbank, Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort

Experienced instructors team with beginners for a winning combination at Massachusett s Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort.

To add to the optimism, it wasn't just pass holders and diehards bucking the economic downturn and quirky El Niño snowfall patterns. Rosall also reported that not only did every region (except the Northeast), see substantial gains in skier visits, but lesson volume also increased by 9.2 percent, according to a survey conducted across a sample of 84 unnamed resorts in the U.S. Those same resorts only saw a 3.2 percent increase in visitation, which equates to a 5.8 percent increase in visitor lesson volume.

"These findings suggest an increased willingness of visitors to make ancillary purchases in the 2009–10 season, in contrast to sharp cutbacks in the 2008–09 season in response to the recession," the *Kottke Survey* states. "The results are also clearly positive for the long-term health of the industry."

Vikki Fairbank, Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort

Add in the fact that the absolutely ginormous Generation Y (individuals born after 1980), or Millennials—estimated at between 70 to 100 million strong depending on the ongoing impact of immigration—are beginning to make their on-snow presence felt, while the kids that will make up Gen Z (individuals born after 1991) are still being born, and it would be easy to just hit auto-pilot and wait for the new skiers and snowboarders to keep rolling in.

But some very dark clouds remain on the horizon, such as the accelerating loss on the slopes of the Baby Boomers (the generation of Americans born during the Post WWII "Baby Boom" that lasted into the early 1960s). And the fact that their grandkids and great-grandkids—those multitudes that make up Gen Y and Gen Z—have an entire Internet's worth of competing entertainment and networking options. More racially diverse than any other generation in America's history, they have fewer and fewer nearby feeder hills to quickly introduce them to snowsports (see http://www.nsaa.org/nsaa/press/industryStats.asp), and diminishing options for actually getting to a mountain. Even more important is the fact that of those people who are inspired enough to try snowsports, after that first day only a fraction return.

HALF FULL VS. HALF EMPTY

In a conversation for the Fall 2010 edition of *32 Degrees*, regarding how the rise of rocker ski and snowboard technology could and should increase snowsports participation just by making it easier to learn, Mike Porter made an interesting observation about future generations. He said, "From what I'm seeing, kids' ski schools are growing."

Porter, the former director of the Vail and Beaver Creek Ski Schools, and a former coach of the PSIA Alpine Team, is also a keen observer of America's snowsports generations. He said, proportionally, Gen X'ers are out-skiing Baby Boomers as an overall percentage of their demographic. Gen X is just a much smaller generation. If that proportionality holds, Porter theorizes, Gen Y and Gen Z really should provide a significant uptick to snowsports participation.

"What isn't helping conversion," Porter said, "is that a lot of the best terrain for beginner slopes have hotels and condos on them."

History appears to support Porter's theory. Kelly Davis, director of research for SnowSports Industries America (SIA) said, "A theory of consistency might be a more accurate term." Davis said that income and education remain her most consistent indicators of who will ski and snowboard, and that's been proven over time. In research over the past 20 years, she said those two factors have been pretty much "color blind."

"It's like there's a group of people who, no matter what, will be going downhill fast on something."—*Kelly Davis, director of research for SnowSports Industries America*

"The population of who skis and snowboards has stayed really stable," said Davis. "Snowboarding only added, at best, 1 million participants to the market, and everyone else seems to have been pre-destined to be it there. It was just a matter of which equipment they would choose to be on. It's like there's a group of people who, no matter what, will be going downhill fast on something."

According to the *SIA Snow Sport Participation 2010* study, the total number of individual participants in all six snowsport disciplines—alpine skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, freestyle skiing, and telemark skiing—is 20.5 million, or 7.3 percent of the total U.S. population

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(A survey from the National Sporting Goods Association, measuring only downhill skiers from 2000 to 2009, put that number at between 2.6 and 3.0 percent of the total population). The SIA study found that even though nearly 60 percent of America's skiers and snowboarders are concentrated in 10 states, they still managed to grow alpine skiing participation by 5.5 percent and snowboard participation by 3.7 percent from the 2007–08 to 2008–09 seasons.

In projection models based on those findings, Davis said that all other things being equal, the population boom could correspond to as much as a 30-percent increase in snowsports participants over the next 40 years, "barring major social, environmental, or economic disruption," she said.

In a worst-case scenario, by the 2020—21 season—only a decade away—skier/snowboarder visits would drop to 41.1 million.

Not so fast say the powers that be at the National Ski Areas Association. Why? Because out of all those potential new skiers and snowboarders that actually do give snow sliding a shot, very few of them stick around.

"Very little progress has been made in increasing the participant base," according to NSAA's own *2009 Growth Model*, which reports overall annual growth in skiing and snowboarding specifically at only 1.2 percent from 1997–98 to 2007–08. The problem, according to the findings in the *Growth Model*, is that "We've made very small gains in conversion and experienced significant declines (in) core retention." Particularly in the beginner conversion rate, which only increased from 15 percent to 16.7 percent in that same period of time.

In the corresponding worst-case scenario, the accelerating dropout of aging skiers, erosion of retention, and lack of beginner conversion will result in an annual 2.5 percent decline in the on-snow population. If that were to occur, by the 2020–21 season—only one decade away—projected skier/snowboarder visits would drop to 41.4 million.

Unless, of course, ski areas and their on-staff snow pros can help us keep the riders we have, and turn even more first-timers onto the fun. From the *Beginner's Cookbook* (a list of 10 fundamentals for converting beginners to full-timers) to the overall strategy laid out in NSAA's *Model for Growth* NSAA President Michael Berry is adamant that ski resort operators need to get intimately involved in the long-range success of their ski and snowboard instruction programs.

As he said at that Orlando convention in May, "For the decision makers at ski areas across the country, this has got to be priority number one."

THE FRONTLINES OF CONVERSION

At areas where management, snowsports schools, and even the grooming and equipment rental staff have teamed up to create a better beginner product, the results have been startling. Massachusetts' Jiminy Peak, Vermont's Stowe,

Q & A WITH NSAA PRESIDENT MICHAEL BERRY

Courtesy of NSAA

It was May of 2000 when National Ski Areas Association President Michael Berry introduced the *Model for Growth*, a critical analysis of the many challenges facing the future of snowsports, especially the ability to maintain a consistent participation rate. Now, a decade later, Berry says converting new skiers and snowboarders remains the most critical issue, with snow pros on the frontline in helping affect the industry s long-term success.

PSIA-AASI: As far as the sheer number of future participants in snowsports is concerned, how high are the stakes right now?

MICHAEL BERRY: Fostering participation by kids and teens remains critical to the long-term health of the industry. Kids aged 17 and under have represented about 30-percent of our annual skier/snowboarder visits for the past four seasons, so this is at least some indication that on the national level, we re at least holding our ground in attracting youth. However, some regions have experienced slight decreases in youth participation, which is an area of concern.

Nevertheless, within the past three seasons the industry has had two of its best seasons on record, including the all-time high of 60.5 million visit set during the 2007–08 season and last season was the second best season on record at 59.8 million skier/snowboarder visits. Much of our recent success is the result of Baby Boomers remaining active in their older years, and also due to increased frequency of our core participants those die-hard skiers and riders who own season passes. Yet as we look toward the future, it s apparent that a redoubled focus on trial and conversion is essential, particularly as Boomers and core participants drop out.

PSIA-AASI: What s working? Who is creating the Best Practices for getting and keeping more people on the hill?

MICHAEL BERRY: Ski areas are acutely aware of the importance of creating loyalty

Indiana's Perfect North Slopes, Alaska's Eaglecrest, California's Northstar-at-Tahoe, and Utah's Park City, just to name a handful, have all reaped the reward of putting proven, experienced people in charge of their beginner programs.

"It's a resort-wide effort," said Vikki Fairbank, supervisor of GET Skiing at Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort. "All of this has to start from the top and work its way down. If you don't have a CEO or president or general manager supporting this, then you won't have the staff to make it happen."

Fairbank said at Jiminy a mix of often seasoned, designated beginner instructors, a segregated teaching center, and a first-time experience that starts with those instructors meeting their students at the rental shop has resulted in the area's conversion nearly doubling in the past season. From 2008–09 to 2009–10, Jiminy's first-time conversion rate jumped from 15.8 percent to 27 percent for skiers, and from 8 percent to 14 percent for snowboarders.

You have to identify the instructors who really want to teach beginners.

"You have to identify the instructors who really want to teach beginners, because they have to have a passion for what they're doing," said Fairbank. "We can do a lot to get people here, but if they get here and have a bad experience, then our chance is gone."

Incentives, including cash bonuses for instructors who generate return visits and discounted tickets and rentals for the consumers taking a second or third lesson, are the norm in successful beginner operations. At Park City, class size is also an important part of the equation.

"One of the things the *Model for Growth* has shown us is that we can't do things the way we always have and expect to be successful in the long run," said Tom Pettigrew, Park City director of Skier Service and also of the Park City Ski and Snowboard School. "We looked at our kids' classes, specifically our beginners' classes, and they were just too large with up to nine or 12 kids in each class. We decided to limit those classes to five kids or less, so that the kids would be comfortable, and our instructors could focus on teaching instead of counting to make sure that they've got everyone."

What worked for beginning kids, the Signature 5 Program, worked so well that Park City began to offer maximum class sizes of five students to all ages and abilities. Pettigrew said that despite some initial concerns over staffing and scheduling, the five-person class has become an integral part of Park City's snowsports learning program.

"I think five is a really nice number in terms of bonding with the other people in your class, and getting personalized instruction. Having four six-person detachable chairs also means that the lesson can continue on the lift," Pettigrew said. "And with the proliferation of shape skis and the work we have done with Burton and their updated LTR (Learn to Ride) program over time, we've really been able to focus on increasing conversion and retention."

Shaun Cattanach, Burton Snowboards resort programs manager, said it is that exact management to instructor to

among their skiing and riding guests, and there is a lot of ingenuity out there on how to go about creating that reality. But the fact remains, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Each area is as unique as the people who run them, so what works at one ski area might be a colossal failure at another. The ski area operators know what works best within their operation.

One thing that we at NSAA encourage is information sharing among our member resorts, either through Conversion Case Studies that we publish in the *NSAA Journal*, or through various sessions that we host at our Winter Conferences and National Convention. NSAA members can access our Conversion Case Studies on the member side of our website (www.nsaa.org) to gain some ideas of what s worked for other resorts.

PSIA-AASI: How does Learn to Ski & Snowboard Month add to the equation?

MICHAEL BERRY: Learn to Ski & Snowboard Month aligns perfectly with the industry s goals of attracting and retaining new skiers and snowboarders. This is a grassroots initiative that was borne through the collaborative efforts of ski areas and state and regional ski associations, and we applaud their efforts. (See National Campaign s message: Take a Lesson on page 32.)

Last year, more than 30,000 lessons were given as part of this initiative, and we re looking for those numbers to grow this season as we celebrate Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month 2011.*

PSIA-AASI: How do snowsports instructors and resort management work together to build a common future, as well as immediate returns from their snowsports schools?

MICHAEL BERRY: Certainly ski and snowboard schools are a main focal point when speaking of growing participation, and repeat visitation. Obviously the interaction and overall experience our skiing and riding guests have with ski and snowboard instructors are key toward realizing this goal.

Having said that, it s also clear that every ski area department whether it s the parking lot attendants, to snowmaking and grooming, to food and beverage, and even the cleanliness of the bathrooms can affect a guest s overall experience. A lousy experience in the parking lot can sabotage the guest experience well before that guest ever makes it to the ski or snowboard lesson, so ski area operators are looking to all departments to deliver.

Nevertheless, because of the nature and duration of the guest interaction, resort operators expect more from their ski and snowboard schools, and instructors. They expect them to make the sale.

Ski area operators are looking for their instructors to not only deliver an exceptional lesson experience, but to develop broader connections with their students to help drive repeat visitation and ultimately turn those students into lifelong skier and snowboarders that will continue to visit that resort, or any resort, for many seasons to come.

Peter Kray

**PSIA-AASI efforts enabled development of promotional materials for Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month.*

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN'S MESSAGE:

'TAKE A LESSON'

Call it the Got Milk? campaign for snowsports. With the tagline, Humans Were Never Meant to Hibernate, Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month (LSSM), is a national public relations effort aimed at dramatically increasing the number of people, and lessons, on the slopes.

It absolutely is something that s designed to drive more people to PSIA-AASI, said LSSM Director Mary Jo Tarallo. We are expecting to reach as many never-ever skiers and snowboarders who need beginner lessons as we are expecting to reach lapsed skiers and snowboardersw ho could definitely use a refresher on the latest in equipment, and technique."

Encompassing the entire month of January, LSSM originally debuted in 2007. But it was last season that the initiative achieved its greatest success. In January 2010, more than 300 ski resorts and nordic centers in 23 states participated, and, Tarallo reports, more than 30,000 lessons could be directly tracked as occurring as the result of the formerly titled Learn a Snow Sport Month.

By building on that success, and increasing cross-promotional opportunities, Tarallo hopes that this season will produce even better results. It really is supposed to be a grassroots effort, which means that it s up to everybodya nd in everybody s best interestt o help get the word out, Tarallo said. I look at it like a potluck, where if all the resorts and instructors and equipment manufacturers bring a part, then it's much more likely to be a big success.

Across the country, regional ski area associations are stepping up to increase the impact. In combination with its 5th grade passport program, in January 2011 Colorado Ski Country USA will offer a complimentary ski lesson and rental equipment to any 5th grader who is new to the sport. Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont are offering several free-ski packages, as well as deals that are available in all three states.

Jen Butson, director of public affairs for Ski Vermont, said that making it as easy as possible to get on the snow is the mantra in the Green Mountain State. Ski Vermont offers a variety of beginner programs so that there are no excuses or barriers, Butson said. This season, that includes a free week lesson and lift ticket promotion to kick off the month, as well as Bring a Friend, Two for One, and Road Trip promotions, which include a specially priced lift, lesson, and rental package at Mount Snow, Okemo, and Stratton.

LSSM spells out in their marketing materials that, New participants are urged to take beginner lessons from a professional instructor as a way to learn best practices. And that, Current participants are encouraged to hone their skills with advanced lessons or take up an alternative snowsport. But that doesn t guarantee that ski schools will reap a new bumper crop of January lessons.

People have to take charge at their own mountains, and use the PR materials we re providing them to tailor that to exactly how their mountain wants to make an opportunity out of this, Tarallo said. We re helping provide the tools, but it s up to all of us to help make this work.

For more on the program, special regional initiatives, and materials you can use to promote your own snowsports school, go to www.skiandsnowboardmonth.org.

P eter Kray

student to gear relationship that is going to spell success—or failure—for our industry on the mountain.

"Everyone needs to remember that we're offering a leisure activity," said Cattanach. "You don't need skiing or snowboarding to survive. It's not food. It's not water. A pair of skis is not going to shelter you from a storm. And if we're not giving people real measurable returns on their investment in our sport, then they're just as likely to go golfing, or to Disneyland."

But while Burton can provide the gear and help with the on-hill expertise, Cattanach said it's the changing mindset at resorts that will have the longest lasting impact on who is on the slopes in the years to come.

"It's too easy for a resort to look at a ski school as a short-term profit center, and to try and get as much out of our guests—whether that's selling them a condo or an extra night's stay—than it is to see our guests as a long-term investment that will benefit everyone," Cattanach said. "But it is the folks who are doing everything they can to make sure that first resort experience is the absolute best experience who are going to see the best payoff in the long run."

What worked for beginning kids, the Signature 5 Program, worked so well that the Park City Ski and Snowboard School began to offer maximum class sizes of five students to all ages and abilities.

WHERE EDGE MEETS SNOW

Through it all, it's the snow pro who is always going to have the biggest impact on who returns to skiing and


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snowboarding after that first, second, or even third lesson. And with an entire association built around meeting each student's individual needs, the challenge for the future is an especially welcome one.

"What I'm most fired up about right now is the idea of how we can incorporate freestyle into beginner lessons," said Ben Roberts, PSIA-AASI education manager. "Whether it's a little 180 on the flats, or a little jump, I think the ability to understand exactly what our guests are coming to us for, and being able to provide as much of that experience as their ability allows is exciting."

Mixing methodology with immediate results, and practical pieces of the puzzle with enjoyment are all key to perfecting the blend between the technical and mental aspects of instruction.

"I think the biggest question at the end of the day is if they had fun," Roberts said. "That comes from listening and communicating with students, and meeting people where they are coming from. Are you helping them find joy, or just showing them yours?"

Which, despite the gravity of the discussion, is the real reward of successful ski and snowboard instruction—the idea that every great class not only produces a new customer, but also a new source of enjoyment and freedom for someone, and maybe even a brand-new friend.

"I don't think you can take any customer for granted," said Mark Dorsey, PSIA-AASI's executive director. "With four to five generations on snow right now, there have never been more diverse needs to be met, so many definitions of a great experience on snow. Our ongoing challenge is to find out what attracts them to winter sports, and what keeps them."

Finding the answer to that question is the beauty at the beginning of every lesson. How do we make this sport something that they always want to do? How do we get more people psyched about snowsports? Or, as Dorsey said, "make the experience awesome?"

"We start by talking with each student about what they are going to be in for and check that against why they came, we deliver perfectly, and we thank them for coming and invite them to return. If we do that, then we keep guests coming back," said Dorsey. "And with all these opportunities occurring right now, it's more important than ever that our members are the focal point, because they are the best possible ambassadors for the sport, and for each individual hill and mountain." 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.*


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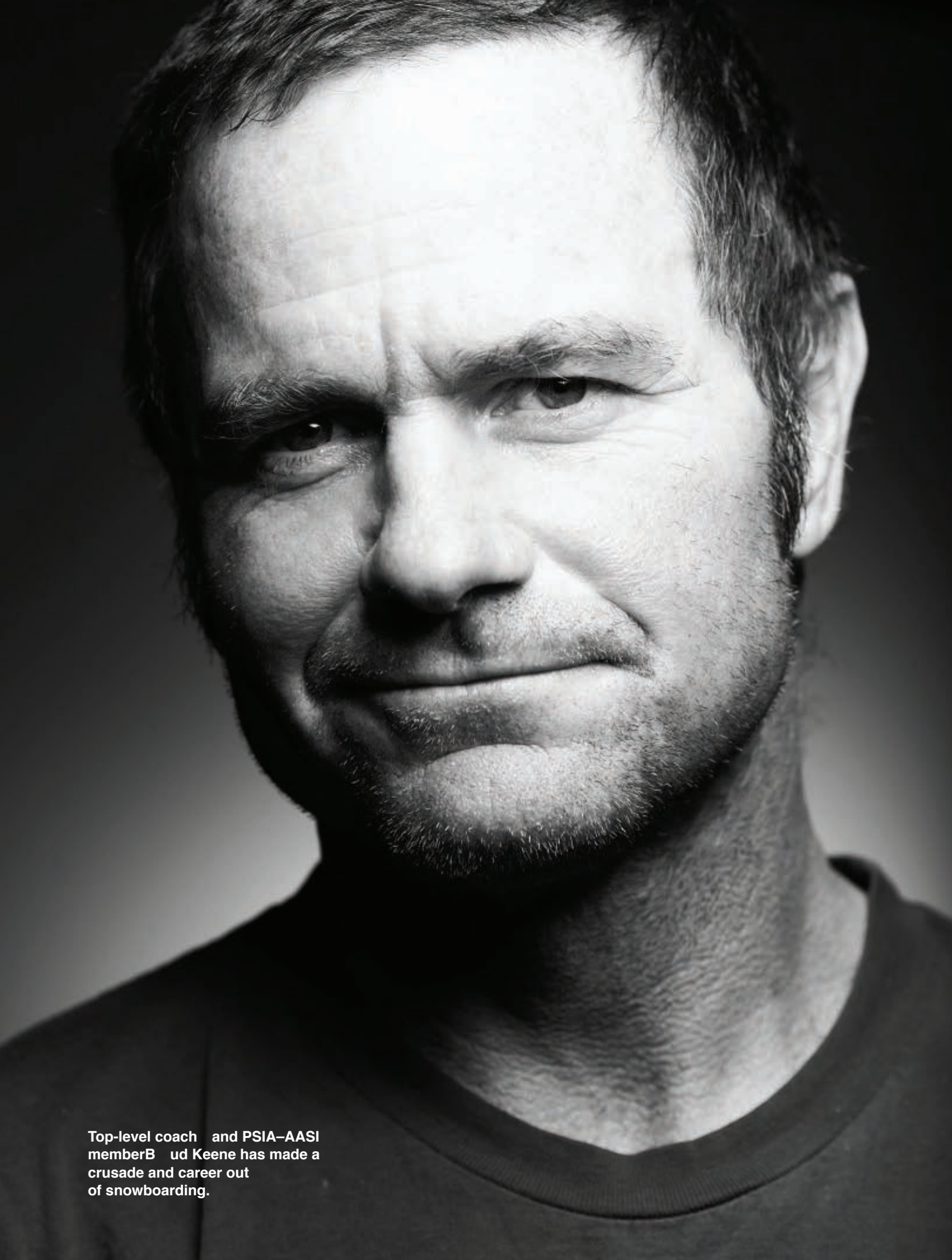
Make a Career Out of Snowsports Instruction: Find Your Purpose. Create Your Goals

By Kelly Coffey

When Shaun White stood at the top of the Cyprus Mountain halfpipe, preparing to drop in for his gold-medal run at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, he kept one hand on his knee and one fist clutching the jacket of longtime coach Bud Keene. Maybe he held onto Keene's jacket for balance while standing on his heelside edge, staring at the ground, visualizing every hit of the run he was about to do.

Perhaps because of the pressure of the Olympics—and of being Shaun White and of having everyone's expectations on his shoulders—he just needed a

Monte Isom/Sportschrome



Top-level coach and PSIA–AASI memberBud Keene has made a crusade and career out of snowboarding.

Peter Foley

Olympic gold medalist Shaun White confers with coach Keene.

physical reminder that right behind him was someone who knew what he was going through. Because Keene had stood at the top of many halfpipes before, waiting just behind the greatest snowboarder in history as he prepared to deliver another sport-changing performance.

Keene, who has coached White through two Olympics, watched his own career evolve as a snowboard instructor and coach, traveling the world making first descents, and helping Burton Snowboards in the company's infancy. The snowboard pioneer and top-level coach has been involved in the progression of the sport every step of the way.

There was never a clear target Keene aimed for—how can there be when you're a part of pioneering a new sport? But that doesn't mean he drifted aimlessly from job to job. His entire career has been guided by his own compass point: to grow and progress the sport of snowboarding.

"I have been on a crusade from day one to spread this sport, make it better, and make it more fun," Keene says. "This has been a career path for me since I signed on."

If you're going to make ski or snowboard instruction a career instead of just a transitory job, you'll need to find *your* career purpose to guide you. That purpose needs to be larger than yourself and bigger than the job you do each day. Only then will you see a path that will keep your career headed forward. Only then will you be able to make clear decisions when new opportunities appear.

WHAT S YOUR PURPOSE?

To truly make a career out of this job, you need to look beyond today's lesson and this season's accomplishments. Sure, you need to learn to deliver great lessons every day, but every now and then it's important to stop merely navigating through the trees. It's time to get a bird's-eye view of the forest.

Maybe your career purpose is to grow the sport. Maybe it's to make people as passionate about the sport as you are. Maybe it's to help people have great vacations. Maybe it's to help others make a career out of their passion.

Instructors who have a clear career purpose and clear goals spend more of their energy advancing toward that purpose. Less time is spent floundering or expending energy on activities that have no relation to their career.

Don't assume this is the path to effortless success. Doubt, failure, setbacks, and lagging motivation will always be a part of your career path. Those with a clear purpose rebound quicker after they collide with adversity.

Your purpose transcends the boundaries between your careers on snow and off it—and actually links them together. This is as true for those who spend two winters a year on snow as it is for those who instruct as a part-time passion. To be successful in his snowsports career, Keene tapped his engineering background as well as his strong people skills to achieve success whether he was teaching a lesson, giving an inspirational lecture, or consulting on a board design.

Keene first tried snowboarding in February 1984, inserting ski boot liners into his Sorel boots and duct taping them tight. Before resorts allowed snowboarders onto their chairlifts, Keene and his friends hiked his home mountain of Stowe, Vermont. He started teaching snowboarding in 1985 in California, returning to instruct at Stowe in 1987, the first year that resort allowed snowboarders on their chairlifts. Keene joined PSIA in 1987 and became an examiner in 1989.

"I have been on a crusade from day one to spread this sport, make it better, and make it more fun. This has been a career path for me since I signed on."
—Bud Keene

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From that modest start, Keene discovered his career purpose: to influence and grow the sport. That focus led to a close friendship with his neighbor, Jake Burton Carpenter, and eventually to being in charge of White's stunning Vancouver performance. Talk about influence.

Even though Keene became a snowboard examiner for PSIA's Eastern Division in 1989 (AASI hadn't been formed yet), it wasn't until 2002 that he finally realized he could make snowboarding a year-round career. That's the year he became the head coach of the U.S. Snowboarding Team.

He is currently the head coach of the U.S. Snowboard Development team and continues to be White's personal coach for the U.S. Team.

GOALS MOVE YOU FORWARD

Your purpose acts as a compass to steer your career, and, like Keene, you need to make goals that advance you in that direction. Your goals flow from your purpose—goals are the rungs you climb to reach toward your career purpose. That goal might be achieving the next level of certification or increasing your return-student rate this season. Or it might include accomplishments in your off-snow job due to skills you developed as an instructor.

When you have a defined career purpose with tangible goals attached, your lessons are more than one-day affairs. Without a clear target, you might look at teaching today's beginner lesson as only a chance to get through the day and make a little money. With a purpose, you'll likely see that lesson as a piece of something much larger: maybe it's a chance to hone your movement analysis skills . . . to help the next generation's Shaun White nail a new trick.

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS FOR TOMORROW S JOB

Keene credits the movement analysis technique he uses on White and other competitive snowboarders with what he learned as an examiner with PSIA and later with PSIA-AASI. "It gave me a framework to break it down and look at different skills in context," Keene said.

It doesn't matter if he's watching a beginner struggling to link turns on a green run or White working his next new trick, the process is the same for Keene.

Case in point: In July 2009, Keene and White were at Mt. Hood, dialing in the tricks White would use in the upcoming Vancouver Olympics. White dropped into the halfpipe, lining up for a cab double cork 1080, but didn't land the trick. Keene saw that while approaching the wall on the flat-bottom of the halfpipe, White broke at the waist to absorb the pressure instead of bending his knees in a stronger stance.

The issue wasn't White in the air, it was in his riding during the approach to the trick—the same riding mechanics that an average snowboarder uses to get down a blue run. "It was a very generic riding fix. I didn't even talk about the trick. That's more edging pressure control, and balance," Keene said.

Keene had a purpose that drove his career. This let him focus on developing the skills he would use throughout his career and jump on the right opportunities as they came about. "I bought a house and raised a family by snowboarding," he said.

See, it can be done. 32°

Kelly Coffey is a training manager at Colorado's Breckenridge Resort and an alpine freestyle examiner with PSIA-AASI's Rocky Mountain Division. He's on a lifelong quest to figure out how to make a career out of his passions.

Four Steps to Discovering Your Career Purpose

Chances are your purpose and values have already played a role in getting you this far in your career. Even without being conscious of it, your purpose shaped the decisions and actions you made through your jobs and how you spent your free time. The challenge is now digging that purpose out of your subconscious. This discovery process requires both active thought and passive reflection.

STEP ONE: Reflect on what parts of your job you like most. In what situations are you most successful? What days were you most passionate about instructing? Identify the specific elements of those experiences that made you the happiest. What do these experiences have in common?

STEP TWO: Grab a notebook and pen and head to a quiet spot. Write at the top of the page this question: "What is my career purpose?" Brainstorm as many answers as you can, not worrying about how valid those answers are or how cheesy any of them sound. Give yourself at least 20 minutes to do this exercise.

STEP THREE: Put the notebook away. Now that you've let your mind chew on this question for some time, it's time to let your subconscious get to work. Stop thinking about your career purpose and let your mind go to other thoughts. Now that you've spent time studying the trees, it's time to let your mind return to the forest. It will take time to get the appropriate distance from the topic. But it will come sometime when your mind's relaxed. Maybe that will be on a quiet chairlift. Maybe that will be as you're drifting off to sleep.

STEP FOUR: It may take weeks or months, but at some point you will discover your career purpose. When that happens write it down. Stick that paper in a file and refer to it every couple of months. You need to remind yourself of that purpose every now and then, so that you can steer your decisions in line with your purpose. *Kelly Coffey*

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...

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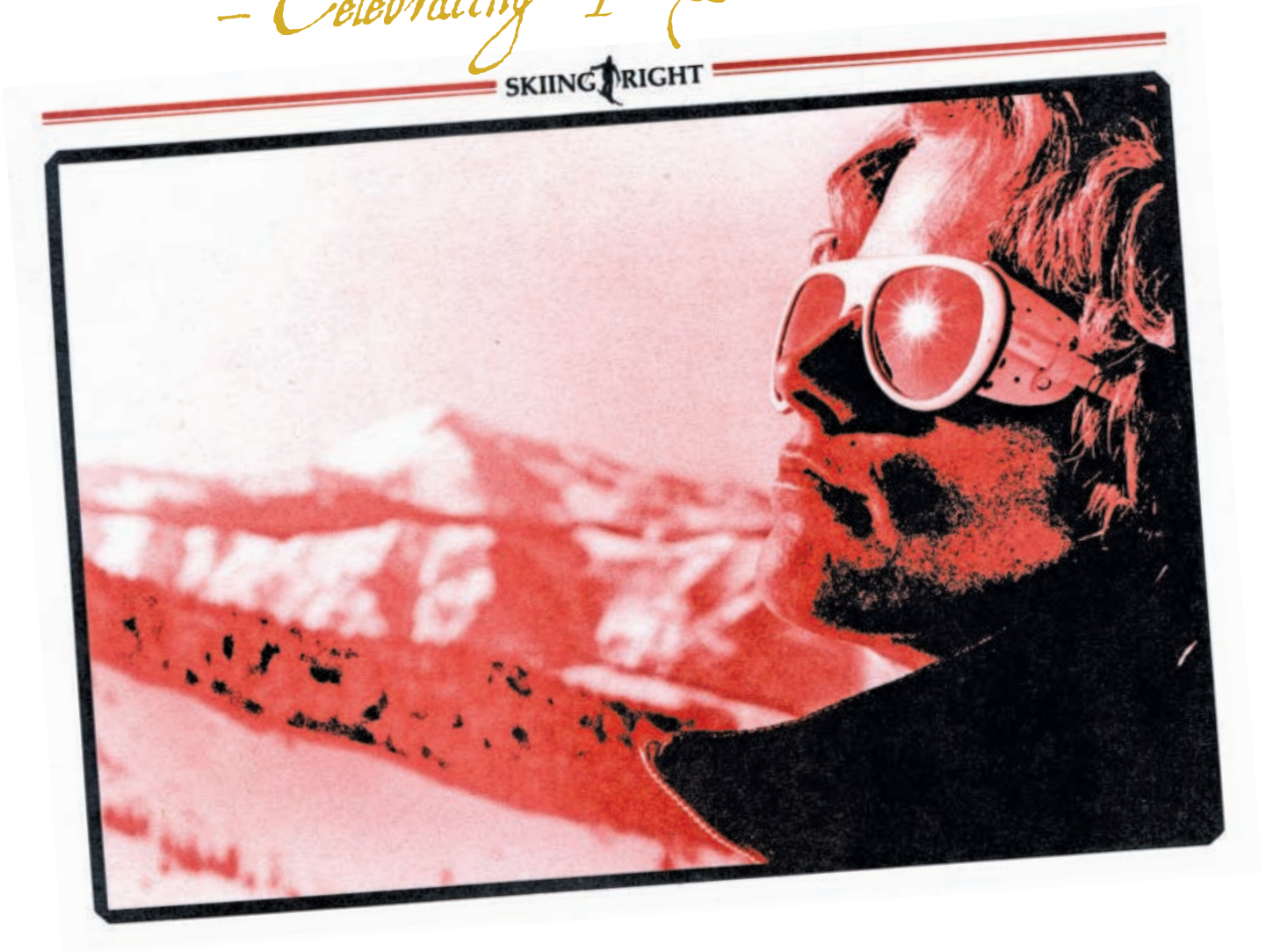


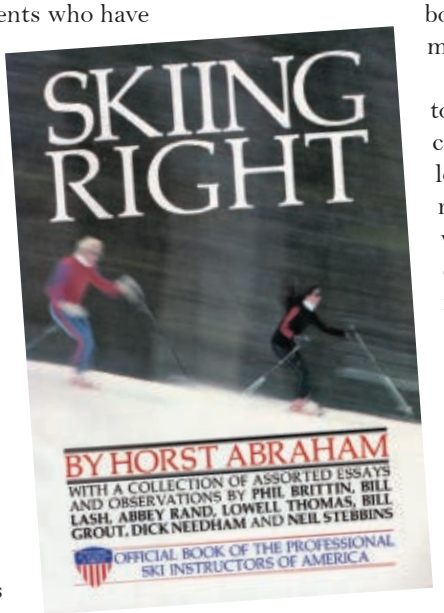
HORST ABRAHAM AND THE SKI INSTRUCTION RENAISSANCE

(Editor's note: This is the second 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

Published as the "Official Book of the Professional Ski Instructors of America" in 1983, *Skiing Right* is nothing less than the culmination of a ski instruction Renaissance. Written by Horst Abraham, a recent inductee into the Colorado Ski ansd Snowboard Hall of Fame, the book compiles a little more than a decade of legendary ski instruction innovation, especially in regard to the basic mechanics of the sport and the psychology of learning.

Abraham's own thanks to all of the students who have "allowed me always to remain a learner," at the beginning of the book, is not only a telling testament to not only the tone of *Skiing Right*, but also a call-out to all of the lesson-seekers who fuel the snowsports instruction profession and a challenge to instructors to be lifelong learners as well. It emphasizes the very focus on observant, interactive, student-based teaching that has propelled PSIA's international impact. And as much as it is a nostalgic timepiece for the fashions of the 1970s—note the groovy Yellow Submarine-style graphics and sunshine-glinting-off-the-sunglasses photographs—the book is also a clarion call for the mental and physical breakthroughs possible via sound instruction. It essentially summarizes a wildly inventive period in American snowsports.



"There were so many exciting things going on at that time that the use of the term 'Golden Era,' is so true to the spirit of free thinking that was present everywhere from academia to sports," Abraham said during a recent interview from his Colorado home. "It was so exciting to be around all these people who were looking at skiing from the mechanical side, and from the psychological side, and from the student's point of view. They were all bringing in new ideas at that time, and it became this vortex of innovation where everything just coalesced."

For that to happen, though, some of PSIA's original members had to be moved out. Barely 10 years after the creation of the association in 1961, founding fathers such as Bill Lash, Paul Valar, and Jimmy Johnston had already become the old guard. Radicals and revolutionaries themselves when they sat together in a room in Whitefish, Montana, on a cold spring day in May and voted to independently form PSIA, Lash and Valar in particular were now seen as inhibitors to the growth of ski instruction. "Finished, or Final Forms," was the name of the alpine albatross that was hung around their necks.

Doug Pfeiffer, himself a founding member of PSIA who became editor of *Skiing Magazine*, wrote in the November 1969 issue, "I have not followed the how-to-do-it dogmas of the PSIA's American Technique. Like many other certified ski teachers, I have felt that its emphasis on final forms was keeping ski teaching in this country in the Dark Ages."

In his defense, Lash, who with Valar had published *The Official American Ski Technique* in 1964 (ski instruction's famed 'White Book'), which depicted finished forms, said it was an attempt to not only establish a level of consistency, but also a standard of excellence. He wrote in a 1994 paper titled *The PSIA Beginnings*, "This concept of finished forms caused confusion. Many instructors failed to even read the book. Yet, they wanted no part of anything that hinted of a universal teaching system. The American Technique was not fixed methodology. Ski instructors today claim that this book was an attempt to unify teaching methodology. It was not."

But the European-based ascription to an aesthetic of on-snow drills and compulsory practice was seen as no longer relevant to ski instruction, or realistic. And even more importantly, with new mountains opening; new, easier skiing equipment being introduced; and a rapidly growing ski population; finished forms did not reflect the new spirit of innovation and adventure spreading across the slopes, but felt like more of a hangover from skiing's European roots.

"The big thing we talked about was that they [finished forms] weren't real anymore," said Ray Allard, immediate past chairman of PSIA-AASI's board of directors. "We were already so beyond that technically that it became unreal to try and make the student perfect a finished form. The idea was already that you were teaching for fun, and for the student. You were teaching for the situation, and the person who really brought that to the forefront was Horst."

FROM SKI PSYCHOLOGY TO SKILLS

The title of *Skiing Right* refers as much to skiing well as it does to engaging the right hemisphere of the brain while on the slopes. While addressing right-brain activity such as dreams, "drawing, craft works, and creative thought" in a section titled "A Turn to the Right," Abraham writes, "In skiing we draw on the right brain capabilities of holistic perception, rhythm, spatial relationships, and simultaneous processing of many inputs."

Abraham, who had trained as a ski instructor in Austria before moving to the United States, admits a particular dislike for that era's dogmatic instruction styles of Europe. First as the technical director at Vail, and then beginning in 1971 as the education director of PSIA, he created a loose collective of ski instructors charged especially with exploring the more "holistic" aspects of the sport.

"The idea that we depended on Europeans for the thinking and methodology of skiing was distasteful to us,

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.

1974 training run for Chris Ryman (left) and Jerry Warren, members of the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team.

Courtesy Mike Porter

and we thought that if Europe was not the answer, then what was?" said Abraham. "At that time" he added, "we had this great group of people like Jerry Warren, Werner Schuster, Max Lundberg, and Juris Vagners—the later of whom worked for Boeing and brought a very sobering perspective on the mechanical level—and so many others who all thought in such wonderful ways in terms of seeing the possibilities of skiing. Everyone was spreading their wings, and it was a tremendous opportunity to sit in the middle of that."

On the psychological side, W. Timothy Gallwey and Robert Kriegel had written the book *Inner Skiing* in 1977, and were enormously influential in regard to the PSIA interpretation of the mental aspects of mastering a sport. Gallwey, who had also written *The Inner Game of Tennis*, was responsible for terms such as "healthy fear," and "breakthrough run," working their way into the vernacular of glisse. Equally important at the time, however, and serving as the left-brain balance to the new creative spirit, was the technical methodology that was rapidly taking shape in the form of PSIA's skills concept—a triumvirate of technical focuses on a skier's rotary movement, edging, and pressure control—with balance as the core.

"The most innovative thing we did was establishing the new student-centered teaching theory, and the skills concept actually supported this because it was so customer driven," said Mike Porter, who was part of the breakthrough PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team that put the two new theories together so famously at Interski in Czechoslovakia in 1975, and was team captain when they did it again at Interski in Japan in 1978. "I think the most important thing is still *how* you teach, and then *what* you teach. But [the skills concept] let us focus on *where* people wanted to ski, and *how* they wanted to ski it."

He added that, "All the outcomes of skills-based instruction are based on what the consumer wants."

The skills concept gave instructors real-time teaching tools to work on particular aspects of each student's skiing, on any kind of slopes.

"It was this great time of evolution," said Porter. "Freestyle was really happening, and people like Warren Witherell were writing books like *How the Racers Ski*, people were skiing bumps, grooming equipment was coming out, the equipment was improving, and 'Skills' gave you a system where you could respond to all of that."

"The idea that we depended on Europeans for the thinking and methodology of skiing was distasteful to us, and we thought that if Europe was not the answer, then what was?" — *Horst Abraham*

PUTTING THE SHOW ON THE SLOPES

That head-to-ski mix of psychology and skills formed the basis of the breakthrough American Teaching Method™ (ATM). But even the Americans didn't know exactly what they had just yet. Taking a demonstration team—including such instructional icons as Porter, Chris Ryman, Bruce

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.

Bruce Bowlin, Scooter LaCouter, Bill Duddy, Max Lundberg, Paul Jones, Mike Porter, Gene Christiansen, Jerry Warren, Jens Husted, Chris Ryman, Steve Bratt, and Jim Hinman.

Stowe Resort Photo

Front row: Shawn Smith, Ellen Post, Dee Byrne, Carole Levine, Walt Chauner, Back Row: Chris Ryman, Jerry Warren, Paul Jones, Kent Stevens, Mike Porter, Dave Merriam, Tim Petrick, and Victor Gerdin.

Above: PSIA's 1975 Interski Team put in some training time at Vermont's Stowe Resort. Right: The 1987 Interski Team was lookin' good in the red, white, and blue.

Bowlin, Jerry Warren, Jens Husted, Scooter LaCouter, Jim Hinman, Steve Bratt, Billy Duddy, and Paul "P.J." Jones, with Max Lundberg acting as coach—to the 1975 Interski in Czechoslovakia would be their first chance to really put their show on the slopes.

As Porter remembers it, the team used Alta's old ski instructor jackets for uniforms and sewed American flags on the back. Everyone bought matching black pants before heading out to Stowe for a final practice session, and were still plotting their presentation on the plane to Europe.

But when they got there, with their loose, open style and infectious energy, they were the only presenting country that actually skied the same way they taught.

"We were extremely well-received," said Porter. "Instructors from all the other countries came up and said, 'You guys are so lucky, you got to ski. We had to demonstrate.' And the French did 20 minutes of progression, then 10 minutes of how they actually ski at the finish."

In regard to PSIA's skills concept in particular, the Europeans may not have been completely sure of where the Americans were heading with their new methodology, but they were moved by it.

"Some of the Europeans didn't understand it initially. They didn't know exactly what the hell we were doing," Bruce Bowlin said. "But they liked it. Basically, I think it made movement analysis obviously easier. It made it so that you could look at a skier and see what they were weak in, and design a program just to fix that."

It was nothing short of a revelation back in the United States. By November, even *Sports Illustrated* was lauding the new "American Technique." After witnessing the rapid on-snow progression of some of his staffers after just a few hours with the PSIA Alpine Demonstration Team *SI* Publisher Jack Meyers wrote, "The American Technique is so easy to follow and master that he (Max Lundberg) never doubted it would pass our staffers' test. Lundberg's system offers solace for skiers everywhere. Anyone who has ever despaired of skiing well should give it a try. It works."

In addition to a feature article, a several-page, Leroy Nieman-esque collage of caricatures of Demo Team members performing high-speed maneuvers followed. Under the title, "Easy As One Two Ski," it argued that "the tyranny of one slavish technique or another" was killing skiing, until "to the rescue came the U.S. demonstration team, 10 easy riders showing off the wide-stance, hang-loose style that promises to revitalize the sport around the world."

It did, especially in America. The Demonstration Team became an active outreach component of PSIA, working together year-round instead of just prior to Interski to

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

Paul Jones, Tim Petrick, Bruce Bowlin, Michael Hickey, Jens Husted, and Mike Porter (in back).

Above: Color coded red for edging at the 1979 Interski in Zao, Japan.
Right: Mike Porter and Max Lundberg in Japan, 1979.

help develop, define, and present innovations in instruction. By the time they got back to Interski, in Japan in 1979, the team had color-coded their skills concept presentation, with instructors in red sweaters demonstrating edging movements, dark blue sweaters for rotary, and royal blue for pressure control, all in presentations, according to Porter, based on "What does the consumer want?"

By the 1980s, adaptive programs were on the rise, nordic was undergoing a resurgence from telemark to the track, and women-specific ski programs were booming from coast to coast. A new wave of women instructors, including Demo Team members such as Ellen Post (now Post Foster), Dee Byrne, and Carol Levine would ensure that the evolution of ski instruction truly was a "holistic" pursuit. And, of course, to start the decade, there was *Skiing Right.*

"It wasn't our quest when we set out to best other nations. It was more about finding our own American way," Abraham said when remembering Interski 1979. "Coming to America" (by Neil Diamond), that was our song. It meant to us that we Americans are here to ski free, rhythmically, and joyfully. That song sort of carried our spirit in our presentation, and as we looked around at our audience, we saw how they had caught the fever, too." 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 blog leading up to PSIA-AASI s 50/50 celebration in the From the Wire section of the PSIA-AASI website at www.TheSnowPros.org. 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.

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THIS PARTY HAS BEEN 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING.

PSIA 50 YEARS 1961 2011

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SnowSports 360

TACTICAL TEACHING FOR AGGRESSIVE STUDENTS

By **MIKE HORN**; Photos by **ALEX FENLON**

Arms reaching out high and wide, skis engaged in a shaky power wedge, a seemingly out-of-control skier points it down the fall line. Three more dressed in the same fatigues follow suit, and you realize these are not skiers dressed up in the latest faux-camo fashion. It's the Special Forces, and they are learning to ski so they can travel in mountainous regions in Afghanistan and beyond. Many have never donned skis before, yet they're moving downhill in a loose, snaking formation, 65-pound packs on their backs, and holding their own on scrubbed-off hardpack. It's a sight to behold.

Judging by their aggressive-yet-calculated approach, it's apparent that far from being reckless, these skiers are well versed in directing their skills at achieving a particular goal, whether it's skiing the steeps, or pushing the speed envelope. The best example of channeling skier aggression into a goal-oriented system *is* military ski training. The military is first and foremost interested in progressing from point A to point B, as quickly as possible, versus achieving the perfect turn or experiencing the ultimate powder day. It's a means to a calculated end versus your standard skier or snowboarder whose priority is to have the best experience possible.

Gates Lloyd is a PSIA Level III instructor and examiner in Rocky Mountain Division, and he's worked with the Special Forces on snow on a couple occasions, both in Breckenridge and Crested Butte, Colorado. More recently, he helped create a custom Level 1 course for the Special Forces, and educated their examiners on how to develop an internal skiing skills department.

It doesn't require the same patience as working with civilians, Lloyd said, but taking a tactical approach is still key. You're not going to "wow" these beginner skiers with hot chocolate and Magic Carpet runs.

"The way to maintain their attention and motivation is to tell them: 'When you're teaching your crew, this is really important,'" Lloyd said. "It was very clear that their responsibility to their group superseded fatigue, boredom, or anything else. What really stands out is their focus on getting the job done right for their buddies."

"They would do anything you asked them to," Lloyd continued. "There was no 'This is a little steep for me.' If they fell down, no one cared. But they weren't just balls-out skiing and making bad decisions either."

Like Lloyd, Brian Maguire is a PSIA Level III certified instructor and is the Mountain Sports School Director at Wyoming's Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. Maguire said there are frequently soldiers learning to ski at Jackson Hole, and it's amazing what they achieve in a matter of a few days.

"In three days these guys go from never having skis on their feet to descending most of Jackson, and even going out into the backcountry," he said.

According to Maguire, generating motivation is never a problem. "The challenge is keeping them from being too motivated—they don't want to learn one thing, they want to take three bounds at a time. The attitude is incredible. Fear of injury doesn't come across their mind. All the stuff you prepare to do in regard to safety is really just a waste of time with these guys."

Maguire related one of his favorite stories. "It was 15 to 20 degrees below zero, and these guys are just barely making their way down. One guy skis up and says to another, 'You've got frostbite on your face.' He responds, 'Yes Sir!' They tend to be a little overzealous if anything, and they have the physical wherewithal to handle it."

They tend to be a little overzealous if anything, and they have the physical wherewithal to handle it.

That doesn't mean there aren't challenges to teaching soldiers—or for that matter, any aggressive athlete. Lloyd said he had to be wary of how hard he pushed them, because they will go to the brink.

"Telling them, 'This is going to be important to your buddies—that was easy to overdo. You're in the thralls of working with this great group of people, but it was easy to push too hard.'"

In such a goal-oriented environment, instructors often learn from teaching ski lessons to Special Forces soldiers. "Looking at these guys who put it all on the line, it is inspiring," Lloyd said. "It puts some perspective on what I do for a living."

LET S GET TACTICAL

No matter how athletic your student, your average civilian skier won't be inspired to "do it for their buddies." But it still comes back to setting goals and taking a strategic approach that fits the client. Instructors like Lloyd and Maguire use the lessons they learned from the soldiers to better serve hard-charging students, whether it's a competitive volleyball player from California, or a soccer star from Boston. At the end of the day, it comes down to creating a great experience, and acknowledging what works for the volleyball player might not carry over to inspiring the soccer star. A tactical approach is essential, as is the ability to adapt on the fly. Lloyd and Maguire offered these thoughts on their tactics for teaching.

Goal Orientation

Lloyd said, "The first thing I do is make sure that the lesson outline is goal oriented; identifying goals clearly is critical to this group of people because they are a very highly motivated. Those goals are going to be determined by the group and the instructor. And it's important to go back and re-verify, 'this is where my plan is,' and ask, 'Has the plan shifted?' You also need to remind them about the relevance of each step.

"That group, in my experience, needs those goals clearly defined. Sometimes you have to take the time to get there."

Right Tools for the Job

"As a ski instructor, you need to fit what's in your toolbox with your audience," said Lloyd. "It doesn't do any good to take a tool and apply it to a job if it's irrelevant. Ask, 'What's going to be most beneficial for them on a given day?' What tools are you going to use?"

SnowSports 360

Create a Positive Experience

Maguire finds, "If you get an aggressive student in the right age demographic, you can create an experience for them that is maybe more what will hook them on the sport in the future, by paying a little less attention to perfection. Someone who is fit and aggressive, they can work on the perfection part later."

Constant Assessment

"The process of assessment is ongoing, moment-to-moment, within a run, on the micro and macro levels," Lloyd said. "I believe in being transparent—this is what we're doing and this is why. I once got great advice from a guy—halfway through the lesson—go talk to the guy that's paying the bill, and say, 'This is where


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we stand, this is where we want to go, how do you feel about how this is going so far?'"

Maguire said, "You need to make sure you're reading the clients right. You need to check for understanding a lot, and see what's captivated their interest."

You need to make sure you're reading the clients right. You need to check for understanding a lot, and see what's captivated their interest.

Adapting to Meet End Goal

Tactics for teaching aggressive civilian students include a focus on the experience and fun factor in addition to skills-driven goals. According to Lloyd, "It is different from a group as unified in their purpose as the military.

The goal is to have a good time as a family or group of friends. To facilitate an excellent experience, that might mean less talking, more skiing. With some miles, good times, and good turns, people get tired, and I go from teacher to coach. The end goal—did they have a great time? Did mom and dad feel the kids are safe? Did they get to see the mountain? Did they learn the skills to improve?

"I can be a teacher, a coach, a guide, a concierge . . . , If it means they are going to have a good time, I'm all for it," Lloyd said.

Ultimately, as Maguire said, "The objective is getting them back to the hotel feeling good."

Unlike the military, which skis for a greater purpose, the public expects to have a good time no matter what. And, Maguire joked, "They don't say 'Yes Sir' when you tell them they have frostbite." 32°

Mike Horn lives, rides, and writes in Crested Butte, Colorado. He is cofounder of StokeLab Media LLC (www.stokelab.com), rider in chief for Backcountry Magazine, *and an editor at the* Crested Butte News.

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SnowSports 360

WEREN'T YOU A STUDENT ONCE?

By **PETER HOPPOCK**

The memory of a difficult challenge you overcame often leads to giving your best lessons. When you relive the process by which you overcame your fear of steep and icy conditions, you may find hidden within that struggle the right combination of psychological insight and movement self-analysis to lead your students through the same path to success.

Or you might have been the recipient of a lesson when the transformation from struggle to delight occurred. The point here isn't to remember what the instructor taught you. It's to remember what you "went through." Remembering what you were taught is of course useful, but it's not really your own; in the end, it's just words. But if you can relive what you felt—*how you felt*—the experience will not only encompass what the instructor did, but deeper personal issues that are at the heart of all significant learning.

Challenging conditions? Call on your learning experiences.

Sherri Harkin

LIKE IT WAS JUST YESTERDAY

The value of past experience hit me full-force a while back when I led a group of Midwesterners out West. They were eager to tackle some challenging conditions and terrain: black and double-black pitches with two feet of heavy powder that had been cut up the previous two days. There were also hidden treasures underneath the surface: bumps, old crusty snow, and the occasional icy patch. Hey, never mind the clients—this was going to be a struggle for me!

As a Midwesterner myself, I took quick inventory of my own abilities and options. I'd been skiing in this goulash of white a couple days already with some success. Now there was another foot of soft stuff—should I go back to Powder 101? Boring. Maybe we could just ski and I'd give the occasional tip? Too haphazard. Maybe everyone would be just fine without me—and we could have a glorious day putting in significant vertical!

When I looked at their faces—nervous and excited—separated from mine by the heavy falling snow, I saw something I hadn't expected to see: myself. I realized while learning the area during the previous two days, I had been going through a process that was exactly what I wanted my group to go through.

I had been reliving all my struggles, re-acquainting myself with movements and tactics I rarely had the opportunity to put into practice. I had just spent a couple days "learning" all over again! The excitement I had felt over those two days, the pure joy—that's what I really wanted my group to feel. I thought what better way to help ensure that than to go through that process with them.

I had brought my Midwestern hard-snow, long-leg, short-leg movements to the mountains and had to change my tactics. As I watched my group, I relived

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skier: Doug Pierini - PSIA Demo Team photo: Jonathan Selkowitz

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the adjustments I had made the previous two days; from grinding out turn after turn heavily flexed through most of the arc, thighs burning, with a mix of edging and pressure control—to a more narrow-stanced, evenly weighted, turn predicated on a combination of rotary movement and pressure control.

I watched—*and I remembered.* Not just the previous two days, but all the struggles and accomplishments I had been through related to these conditions. That's when I decided that my class would be better served by my flipping through the pages of my own history than by mentally turning the pages of an instructional guide.

A quick inventory of their sensations confirmed that I was on the right path. Responses from the group were "My thighs are killing me already," or "I can't seem to turn in this stuff," and "I can't get my balance right."

To these responses I replied, "I know exactly what you're feeling."

A day of guided discovery began. I remembered my early struggles and said, "I don't want you to think you have to change the way you ski to have fun in these conditions. Let's just look for the right combination of movements that you already know, but are not aware that they will work for you here."

We skied. A lot. I relived my own experiments and asked, "What if you forgot all the forced flexion and extension you are used to and just turned? What if you focused more on the femur and less on the feet"?

And we skied. A lot. When we stopped I asked, "What if you could feel as tall in the fall line as you do standing up right now? By keeping your thighs more vertical for longer?"

And we skied a lot more. We might have had lunch. I forget.

"What about in the transition between turns?" asked one instructor. "Isn't there flexion and then extension as you start the new turn?"

I remembered the process I had gone through and asked, "What if you just kept turning and let your feet tell you when to relax and when to extend?"

And we skied . . . and skied. And I asked, "So what do you think?"

"That's a lot of rotary," one said. "I thought you had to have a lot more up and down in powder." Another added, "I'm hardly using my poles."

"And how do you feel?" I queried.

"Less tired" . . . "It's easier" . . . "My thighs aren't killing me," came the replies. And the defining phrase from the group of that day was: "More turning equals less burning."

I couldn't have written out a lesson plan that worked as well, or driven an entire day's worth of skiing. As a capper, the group eagerly agreed to have the person who fell first buy beer for the group at the end of the day. I knew we'd had a good day, but the laughter and smiles seem a bit exaggerated until I realized that I was the one who'd taken the first tumble!

AH YES, THE AUSTRIAN

As it turns out, an even more distant memory saved the day on another occasion. I was giving a lesson with a woman who wanted to ski steeper slopes with her husband, but who was afraid to commit her center of mass (CM) downhill for the upcoming turn. She was fine on the blue slopes but even easy blacks scared her and she reverted to jamming wedge turns, weight back and fulcrum-powered. It reminded me of one of my ski experiences as a preteen.

I thought back to the lesson in which a "caring" Austrian pro had taken my rental poles in frustration, pulled the cap handles off, and proceeded to bend and twist the top portion of the shafts until each broke. He then replaced the handles, each pole now at least a foot shorter. He bellowed, "Und now you vill reach down zuh hill, yah? I place zuh paper down here und you stab it!" He was reminding me that we had been using the pole as a parks attendant might use his pick for trash pick up! And the next time I "reached" down the hill to "pick up the

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trash," my turns began more easily.

I was not about to turn all Austrian foot soldier on this female student. But when I thought about her needs now and my needs back then, I realized could use something that flowed from that lesson. The success of that early lesson came when I reached so far with that shortened pole that my body straightened out. The result was that my edges released, the turn began and flowed easily as a result, and I stayed ahead of my skis.

So I asked her, "Could you imagine yourself being as straight and as tall as the ski pole when it actually touches the snow?" That is exactly what I had felt long ago.

She said yes and we began again on blue terrain. Then I asked, "Could you imagine your body and the ski pole being at the same angle when the pole touches the snow?" Again that is what I had felt long ago.

She had been used to crouching when she touched the pole forward and to the inside of the upcoming turn to avoid committing her CM, so the next few dozen turns were a voyage of discovery. There were awkward moments when her edges released when she wasn't ready and she found herself turning earlier in the process. On the blue terrain, she thought this was "exciting," and she was beginning to enjoy moving more freely, using—instead of fighting—gravity.

"Could you imagine jumping across a four- or five-foot gap toward where you are going to touch the pole?" I asked her. That is what I had felt years ago. She said she'd try. "So do everything except the actual jump," I added. That appealed to her.

We progressed on terrain that grew from blue to black. Her movements were a bit exaggerated for the terrain we started on, but I could see—and she could feel—how easily and quickly her edges released, and she could turn powerfully through the fall line without fishtailing, staying ahead of the turns.

The skill shift from blue to black came almost unnoticed. She realized instinctively that she needed to do "way less" on the blue terrain. In the end, she said that even if she never really got used to black terrain, the feeling of being able to guide a turn from start to finish was thrilling.

This lesson wasn't cut from a template—it came from my experience. And it was more satisfying because of it.

When you are freeskiing next time, or when you're facing a challenging group or private lesson, take a moment to explore your feelings, to delve into your own past. You may be surprised how rich and varied your own experiences are, and how useful they can be. 32°

Peter Hoppock is a PSIA-certified Level III alpine instructor at Wilmot Mountain in Wisconsin. He is nearing the end of a 30+ year run as a member of the Central Division education staff.


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ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE... AND SLOPE AT INTERSKI

By EARL SALINE, PSIA–AASI EDUCATION MANAGER

In just a few weeks, PSIA-AASI will be sharing its passion and love for snowsports with the rest of the world at the International Ski Instructors Congress, otherwise known as Interski 2011. Our uniquely American snowsports culture will be profiled by the PSIA-AASI Teams as they share their knowledge and skills with dozens of international delegations January 15–22, 2011, in St. Anton, Austria. More than 30 U.S. representatives will present at and bring back information from Interski.

With 36 member countries expected to participate, Interski is an awesome opportunity to see and hear firsthand what's happening with snowsports education in those countries. Four main themes will color each country's presentations:

- Snowsports and educational aspects and developments
- Snowsports for all ages
- Snowsports and emotion
- Snowsports social environments and integrations

The PSIA-AASI teams developed 20 topics focused on those themes, all with PSIA-AASI members in mind. Because these topics are of interest for our members, the themes will be pertinent not only as the group shares its presentations with our international colleagues but as PSIA-AASI's alpine, nordic, snowboard, and adaptive teams refine the content they'll share in clinics on American soil—and snow—throughout the season. Each topic for Interski is being developed for on- and

The PSIA Teams are heading to Austria in January for Interski 2011.

Ron LeMaster

off-snow presentations and clinics for our members.

The U.S. delegation will present a keynote address, an indoor workshop, and several on-snow workshops. Presentations will focus on:

- Snowsports for All Ages: Trends in U.S. Snowsports and PSIA-AASI's Role in the U.S. Snowsports Industry. (This will be one of eight keynote addresses for the entire conference.)
- Connection: Using PSIA-AASI Tools to Connect With Your Students (indoor workshop)
- Utilizing Freestyle to Develop Skiers and Riders (on-snow alpine and snowboard workshop)
- Coaching Coaches and Kids (on-snow nordic track and skate workshop)
- Evolution of Teaching: Embracing Innovations in Technology
- Adaptive Snowsports in the U.S.: Different Tools, Same Outcomes (on-snow adaptive workshop)
- Adaptive Snowboarding in the U.S. (on-snow adaptive workshop)

Another high-return payoff for attending is what PSIA-AASI members learn from their international colleagues. PSIA-AASI delegates will spend time talking with their global colleagues about their particular systems, the challenges and opportunities they face, and how they are addressing these. From these interactions all participants have another valuable source of great ideas that can positively affect teaching globally.

Once back in the United States, PSIA-AASI Team members will share what they learned at Interski as they head out on the road to conduct clinics at various member snowsports schools and areas. What they learn at Interski will help PSIA-AASI become even better as it continually strives to connect and retain the diversity of guests who come to us to learn a snowsport.

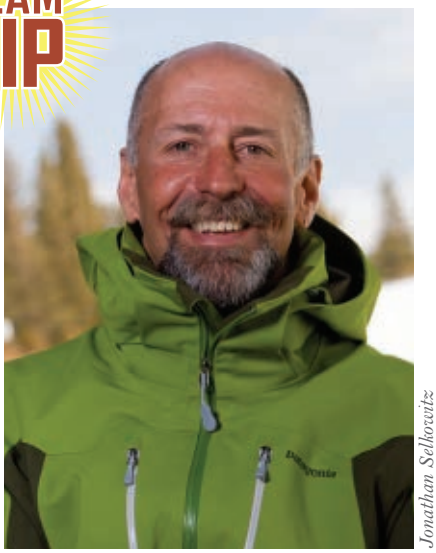
PSIA-AASI—and PSIA in particular—has a long history with Interski. In 1968 the event was hosted at Aspen, Colorado; in 1975 PSIA debuted the skills concept to the rest of the world at Strbske Pleso, Czechoslovakia; and in 1979 PSIA shared the American Teaching Method (ATM) with our international friends and colleagues at Zao, Japan. Today, both the skills concept and ATM are alive and well, and are the foundation of modern snowsports instruction in the United States. History will be made at Interski 2011 as U.S. representatives present and collect information internationally in all of the snowsport discipline areas that PSIA-AASI represents.

What will come out of Interski 2011? Stay tuned and ask a team member! Look for more information in the Spring 2011 edition of *32 Degrees* and online at www.TheSnowPros.org. 32°

Web Extra

For more information on PSIA-AASI's plans for Interski 2011 and beyond, log on to www.TheSnowPros.org and look for the "Web Extras" link in the section for 32 Degrees.

TEAM TIP



Jonathan Selkowitz

Outriggers for Turning: As Simple as 1, 2, 3

By **BILL BOWNESS**

This is for all the geeks out there. Those of us who need to completely understand a movement before being able to use or *teach* that movement. The rest of you may find clarification that puts what you see or feel on the hill into a new perspective. In this case, the topic is outrigger use and accompanying physics.[1]

Just as poles serve a variety of uses for the stand-up, "two-track" skier, so do outriggers for the adaptive skier who uses these "poles with ski tips." Outriggers—or riggers, for short—are indispensable for propulsion on the flats, maintaining balance, influencing pressure and edging movements, and other uses beyond the scope of this article.

One of the primary benefits of outriggers is to affect rotary movements. Even within the "outrigger disciplines"—three- and four-track, as well as mono and bi skiing—riggers are utilized differently as an aid to rotary. Three-track and four-track skiers may use outriggers as a rotary enhancer, as a primary turning aid, or not at all, depending on their ability or inability to use leg or torso rotation. Mono skiers depend on their outriggers to develop rotary. Sure, some mono skiers can complete a series of "wiggle turns," using their hips and lower trunk, and many can carve a series of turns without riggers. However, to link multiple, round, completed turns, a mono skier needs outriggers. If you don't believe it, try taping round salad bowls to a mono skier's riggers and see what his or her turns look like! ("Yeah, it's been done!")

Physics tells us that there are at least two ways to increase torque (rotary) through outrigger use:

1. The more perpendicular to the direction of travel the edge of the outrigger tip is placed on the snow, the greater the effect it will have on rotary.
2. The farther away from the skier's axis of rotation the edge of the outrigger tip is placed on the snow, the greater effect it will have on rotary.

Al Hanner

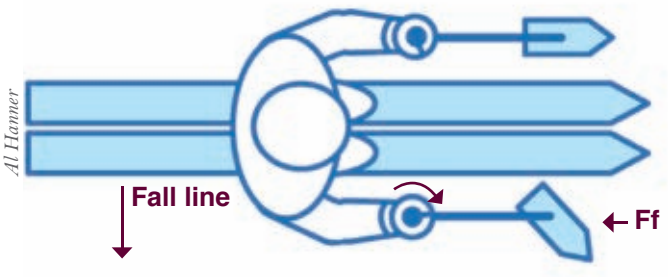


Figure 1: This beginner skier is turning the doorknob with the right outrigger. Note the lack of upper body counter.

If you believe in these "truths," let's look at a progression of outrigger use for students who rely on outriggers to affect rotary (i.e., mono skiers and four-trackers who are unable to leg steer). And, to make it even more interesting—and applicable—let's examine three levels of students: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

I should mention that this article outlines the physics underlying the techniques and movements related to outrigger use, not the details of the techniques and movements themselves. The actual blend of movements and the degree to which they are made will vary considerably based on the type of skier, level of injury, and equipment used (as well as degree of skill, speed, and type of turns).

BEGINNER ZONE: PHASE ONE OUTRIGGER USE

Adaptive students at the beginner level (equivalent to a

[1] The physics-related material within this article is adapted, with permission, from "Centerline Outrigger Usage," a December 1998 whitepaper presented by Level III adaptive and alpine instructor Will Rahill to PSIA-AASI Western Division's Adaptive Committee and Tech Team.

Scott Sady

When used appropriately, outriggers provide a significant turning aid.

"wedge-turn skier" in a non-adaptive context) most commonly make use of an outrigger technique known as "the doorknob move," "twist the wrist," or "pointing the tip/handle." Their first introduction to turning with riggers is to externally rotate the inside (downhill) arm and outrigger so that the outrigger tip diverges from the direction of travel.

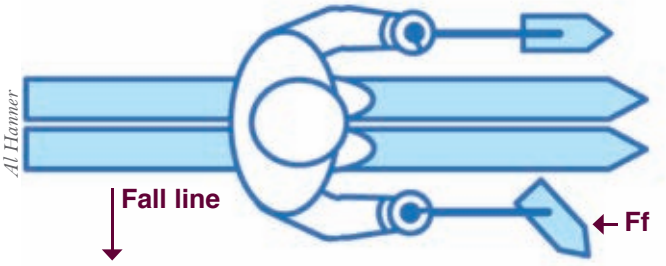
The movement of turning or twisting the wrist outward is similar to turning a doorknob. The direction you might give your student is, "point the rigger handle or ski tip where you want to go." This movement pattern is known to all good outrigger skiers and is the building block to all subsequent outrigger progressions.

While not a strong rotary mechanism, the twisting the wrist movement has a rotary effect because it creates differential friction. The outrigger that is turned outward creates friction because the edge of the rigger engages the snow. The additional friction causes rotary because it is on a lever arm out away from the skier's center of mass (axis of rotation).

When one outrigger creates more friction than the other, it causes a rotary force (torque) within the skier. When accompanied by a strengthening of the core and, to a small extent, some turning through the torso by whatever muscle power is available, this deliberate outrigger movement and the resulting friction help set up a turn.

To offer an analogy, if you are paddling in a canoe and you drag your paddle in the water on the right side of the boat, the boat will turn right because of the additional friction on that side. The farther out you stick your paddle the greater the rotation you experience. If the paddle-dragging analogy seems offensive to you (skiing is a sliding sport, not a "dragging" sport!), try imagining the rudder of a boat smoothly slicing through the water and turning the boat. Both work on the same principle, i.e., differential friction. Motion follows the path of least resistance! For that matter, two-track skiers are doing the very same thing when they turn their skis.

This first phase of outrigger use is not an efficient rotary mechanism. These skiers must hold the outrigger "open" throughout the shaping phase of the turn or they will stop turning. However, by not moving their mass laterally they maintain a very stable position.



Al Hanner

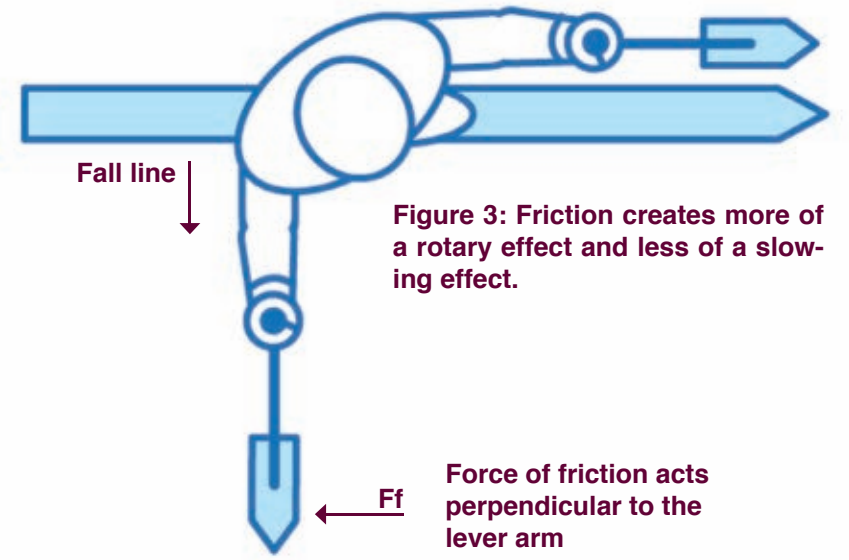
Figure 2: The force of friction (Ff) acts parallel to the lever arm (the skier s arm plus outrigger) to create more of a slowing effect and less of a rotary effect.

INTERMEDIATE ZONE: PHASE TWO OUTRIGGER USE

This phase marks the appearance of countering, best introduced after the skier is making varied-size turns on beginning intermediate terrain. Think of this skier as a wedge christie skier.

Countering for a skier using outriggers is the same as for a two-track skier. Throughout the shaping phase of the turn, the upper body and arms remain stable, quiet, and oriented toward the next turn while allowing the lower body and ski(s) to continue turning through the completion of the turn. As the lower body continues to turn, the ski(s) move in an arc, away from the upper body and inside (downhill) outrigger. The amount of upper/lower body separation corresponds to the size of turn the skier makes.

For instance, in a long-radius turn, a skier is only slightly countered, and therefore places his or her downhill outrigger more forward toward the tip of the skis and less down the fall line. In a short-radius turn, the skier keeps the upper body and outrigger moving directly down the fall line (legs turning underneath the body).



Al Hanner

Figure 3: Friction creates more of a rotary effect and less of a slowing effect.

The longer lever arm created by the rigger, arm, and shoulder increase the effect of torque on the skier.

Countering, in conjunction with twisting the wrist, enhances rotation in a couple of different ways. First, it stretches the muscles of the lower torso to their longest length so that they can exert the most power to assist in turning the ski(s). (Think of stretching the muscles like a rubber band.) Second, it allows the outrigger tip to make contact with the snow farther away from the skier's axis of rotation. The longer lever arm created by

NON-TECH **TRANSLATION**

BY DENISE BOWNESS

Bill is a techie. I am not. However, I have gotten pretty good at translating his tech stuff into something useful for me.

We all understand that we should use the lowest possible body part to turn our skis, but not everybody has enough muscular strength or control to steer their skis with their legs. These skiers need outriggers to help make their turns.

Simply stated, outriggers affect rotary movements through friction. By turning one outrigger tip outa way from the skiert he edge of the tip drags in the snow and creates friction, which causes the skier to turn that direction. And, the farther away from his or her body the skier places the outrigger tip the stronger the turning movement. By combining these two movements, adaptive skiers can control how much rotary they apply.

Beginner skiers make a first turn ("wedge turns" equivalent) by twisting their arm, wrist, and outriggers outward. If they are riding a flat ski, that wrist twist is all they need to make a turn. They don t have to lean, tip, or turn their body, just stay on a flat ski and point the rigger tip where they want to go. It's a nice stable position because they don t move their upper body.

As the skier gets better (wedge christie-level skier), they should add upper/lower body separation to their repertoire. Just as all good stand-up skiers remain countered as they ski so should adaptive skiers. As a skier with outriggers counters, the outrigger tip ends up being placed on the snow farther away from the body, which makes for a much more efficient turning position.

To really use outriggers efficiently, skiers can start their turn with a reach, or p rojection, down the fall line. This is usually done by advanced skiers and is not a move to teach beginners. However, this reach allows the skier to get a ton of rotary with just a quick "touch" of the rigger to the snow. The skier gets a lot of turning power without much friction (slowing).

If this doesn t make sense, go out and try some outriggers and see for yourself how they work Or . . . read the techie version!

Denise Bowness is a PSIA-AASI-certified Level II adaptive instructor, and occupational therapist. She is married to the "Techie" Bowness, Bill.

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the rigger, arm, and shoulder increase the effect of torque on the skier. Third, countering with the outrigger places the force acting on the lever arm (the snow friction) more perpendicular to the lever arm. This causes the friction on the outrigger to create more of a rotary effect and less of a slowing effect. With this increased rotary efficiency, the skier does not need to maintain outrigger contact with the snow as long as he or she did when using the first phase of rigger use—but achieves as much or more rotary effect.

ADVANCED ZONE: PHASE THREE OUTRIGGER USE

This phase offers an opportunity to introduce "the reach." Reaching with the outrigger toward the new turn in an active crossover is associated with a dynamic parallel skier. This projection of the upper body down the hill creates a quick and efficient movement into the new turn.

Reaching with the outrigger toward the new turn in an active crossover is associated with a dynamic parallel skier.

By extending the torso, arm, and outrigger the skier's rigger contact with the snow moves farther away from the axis of rotation. The increased efficiency of this elongated lever arm allows minimal contact of the outrigger with the snow while developing incredible amounts of torque. This allows the skier to shape the turn without significant friction or slowing.

This final phase is a combination of the prior aspects of outrigger use; twisting the wrist outward, skiing into a countered position with the outrigger, and, finally, reaching with the upper body and outrigger down the hill.

The next time you are out with a skier using outriggers to turn, try to identify if he or she might be able to use a turning power other than the rigger. If not, maybe you will be able to identify if that student is using the riggers to their full potential! 32°

Bill Bowness is the coach of PSIA-AASI's Adaptive Team. In the winter he lives in Truckee, California, and is the technical director of Disabled Sports-Far West. He also owns and operates the Unlimited Skiing water ski school in Brandon, Mississippi.

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TEAM TIP

Jonathan Selkowitz

Go Beyond Fit to Athletic

By **ROBIN BARNES**

If you're like many instructors, you spend a lot of time off snow thinking about how you can work on your conditioning to reach maximum performance on snow. ¶ In addition to incorporating traditional strength training and aerobic activities into your fitness schedule, spend some time training to improve your athleticism. Skills like reactivity, quickness, agility, and coordination are paramount to good athletic performance on the mountain, but it takes a special brand of athleticism to serve you well in varied conditions on unpredictable terrain. A marathon runner, for example, may be incredibly fit, but since the movements of running are linear and repetitive rather than multi-planar and reactionary, he or she may lack athleticism on snow.

Top-level skiing requires good decision-making as well as athleticism.

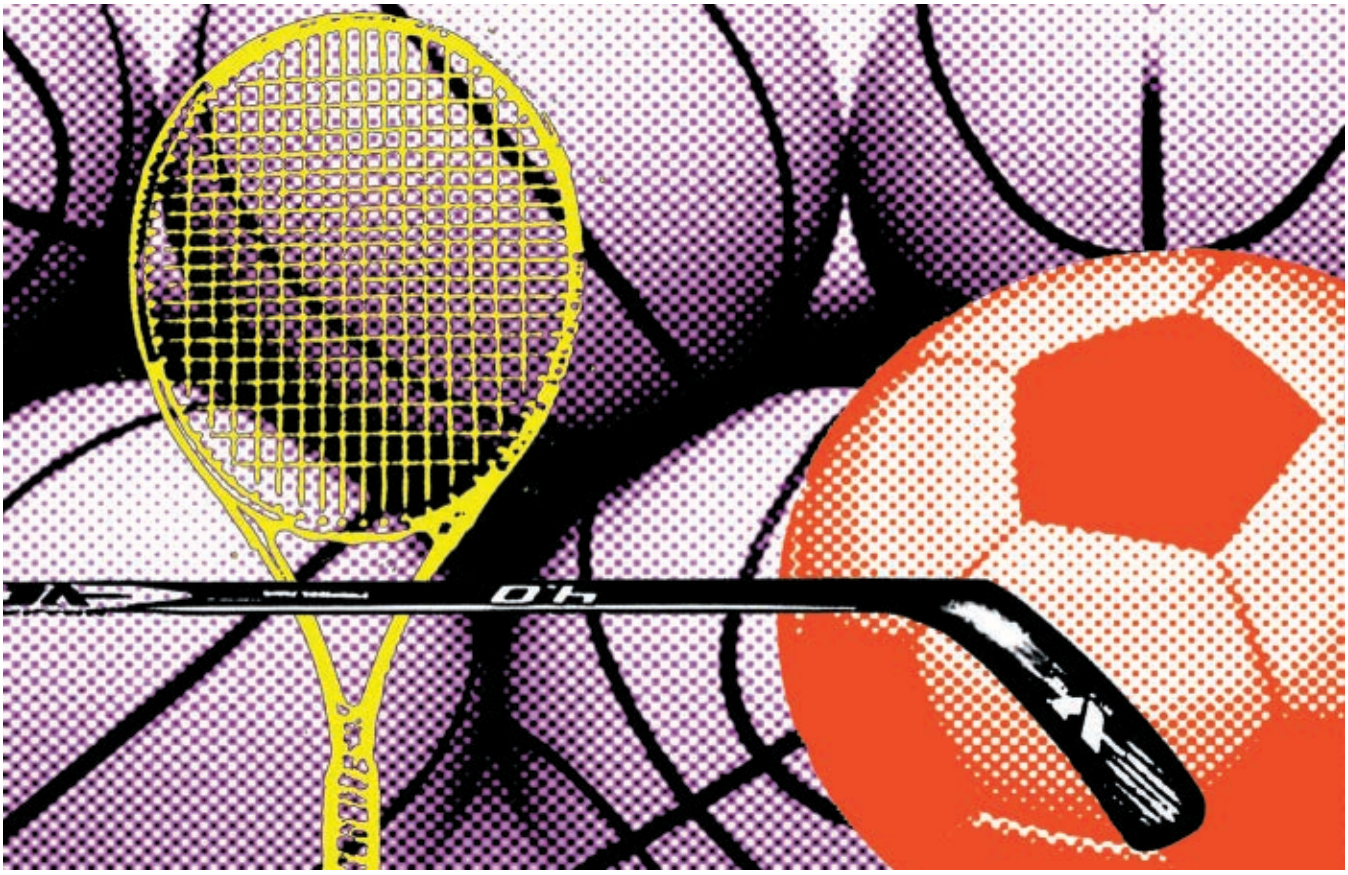


Illustration by Dave Allen

Sports such as indoor soccer, tennis, hockey, and basketball all test our ability to move in different directions quickly, respond to stimuli, and make good decisions about where and how to move, and at what pace.

Regardless of the time of year, participating in an athletic sport (even at a basic level) and adding agility, quickness, coordination, and reactivity workouts to your conditioning program will help you develop athletic skills for skiing.

SOCCER SUCCESS

Like the time you spend on the slopes, indoor soccer challenges both your fitness and athleticism. Sudden stops and starts, extended sprints, ball control . . . add it all together and you have a cross-training activity that's nearly guaranteed to exhaust both your muscles and your mind.

Soccer also helps develop foot skills used to control the ball. As you go from dribbling to passing to kicking, your foot and ankle go through a huge range of motion and develop touch and accuracy of movement. You've heard of skiers described as having "smart feet"? Soccer is one of those sports that will help you develop those smart feet.

TENNIS, EVERYONE

We've probably all said to a student at least once in our ski teaching careers, "Get in a basic athletic position, as if you were playing tennis." As you're waiting for a serve, you keep your center of mass over your feet, hands in front, major joints flexed, body moving at all times, and eyes scanning for where the ball will go.

You're alert, focused, and in a position ready to move in any direction on demand. As you move from one side of the court to the other, you'll likely extend off of your "outside" leg to make that directional change, sometimes explosively, sometimes with quick little steps.

That move off the outside leg is very similar to skiing movements, whether you're braced against the long outside leg in a long GS turn or nimbly moving off of it as in a short-radius turn. Also, as you strike the ball your core muscles should be strong and active in helping transfer power to the ball. When skiing, your core provides significant stability while your legs work, and sometimes when your upper body gets unruly, that core strength is what allows you to pull things back together.

HOCKEY TALK

Another sliding-on-slick-surfaces sport, hockey strengthens your ankles, knees, quadriceps, and gluteals. The edge control developed on a pair of hockey skates is hugely beneficial to skiing. In hockey, there are times when you're sprinting, say in a breakaway, and want to dig the edge in to push off without slipping. Other times, you need to feather the edge and drift sideways a bit. All these movements have direct crossover to skiing.

Top-level skiing requires good decision-making as well as athleticism.

Skating fast requires that you move your center of mass ahead of your feet. Cornering requires that you tip both lower legs to put both skates on edge (sometimes balancing against only the outside leg, sometimes against both). A solid hockey stop requires good edging skills and upper/lower body separation. Lots of good will come out of time spent on the ice.

GO TO THE HOOP

Basketball's jumps and blasts of speed easily transfer to the varied terrain and conditions that you're likely to encounter any time you put the skis on. Playing in a basketball game also obligates you to be aware of your positioning and make quick decisions about where and how you're going to move based on anticipating where the ball will be.

Skiing a mogul field has many of the same requirements: you must focus your attention on where you are at the moment and scan the terrain for what sorts and shapes of bumps exist—as well as skiers or riders you may need to avoid. That information helps you to plan your movements fast, slow, forward, and backward.

SPORTING CHANCE

In each of these sports, you don't need to play in a competitive game to reap the benefits of the athletic potential each offers. With basketball you can play one-on-one if that better fits into your game plan. The most important idea is that you get out and move fast, slow, forward, backward, sideways, powerfully, and gingerly. Variety of movement is the name of the game.

Outside of sport, there are also myriad drills and activities you can do to develop the reactivity, quickness, agility, and coordination needed to improve your athleticism. Agility ladders offer a fun way to work on quick-footedness and agility. As you move your feet in a predetermined pattern though the confinements of the ladder, your precision and quickness will improve. Search online for agility and reactivity drills. You will find all sorts of options, some that require basic equipment, some that require nothing more than a little open space.

The next time you're wondering how to get (and stay) in condition for whatever the hill brings you, consider how you can add athletic development to your early- and mid-season conditioning. Find activities that involve changes in direction, variations in speed, quick decision making, and quick feet. The time you invest will return the favor on the snow (and help make sure you're fit and athletic enough to go the distance). 32°

PSIA Alpine Team member Robin Barnes is ski school director in Portillo, Chile, a certified personal trainer, and a ski teacher at California's Heavenly Ski Resort.

Help Your Legs Assert Their Independence

By **ROBIN BARNES**; photos by **MICHAEL ROGAN**

"Turn your legs under a stable upper body." If you're an alpine ski instructor you've long heard and read these words—and likely uttered them to students many times. But do you know—really know—what this means and how it's accomplished? ¶ If not, maybe it's time to train your body to see and feel what it's like to turn your legs independently of the upper body. Due diligence in developing (or redeveloping) the ability to separate the turning movements of the upper and lower body is paramount to being a really good, versatile skier.

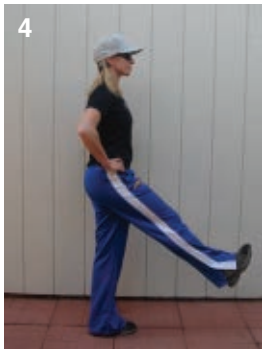
For the purposes of this article and the drills included, consider the upper body to include the pelvis. Turning the legs independently of the upper body refers to either twisting the femurs within the hip socket in a more "steery," skidded turn or allowing the skis to arc around in a turn without the pelvis/upper body following that arc, as in a more "carvy" turn. There are unlimited variations, of course, that span a continuum from pivoted to carved turns, but in all good skiing there is undeniably a separation of movements from how the femurs move inside of the hip sockets versus the pelvis and femurs moving together as one unit (photo 1).

To turn their legs independently of the upper body, skiers need to be able to do two things: rotate the

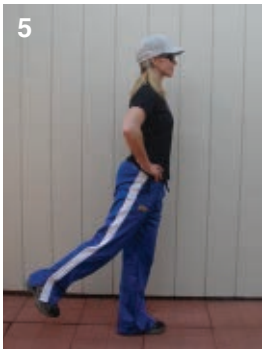

1


2


3



Flexion



Extension

Abduction/Adduction

Internal Rotation

External Rotation

femurs, and stabilize the pelvis and upper body. First, let's clarify what the hip joint is and pinpoint where it is. Put your hands on your hips *where they flex* (photo 2), versus on top of the iliac crest of the pelvis (photo 3). Basically, where your pants wrinkle across the front of your hips is where your hips flex.

This is where the head of the femur (the ball) and the acetabulum of the pelvis (the concave surface, or socket, of the pelvis) make up the hip joint. This ball-and-socket joint allows for flexing, extending, abduction and adduction, as well as internal and external rotation (photos 4–8).

To get a better sense of hip movement, try to isolate the turning movements of the femurs/legs without allowing the pelvis to become involved in the turning movement. Start with these basic exercises (which can be done in street shoes or in ski boots):

1) ROTATE THE FEMURS

In what I call the Charlie Chaplin position, stand with your ankles, knees and hips slightly flexed and put your hands on your hips where they flex. Rotate your legs in opposite directions so that your toes are pointed outward as much as is comfortable (photo 9). From this position, keep your left leg and foot stationary and slightly lift the right foot off the floor and turn it to make it parallel to the left. Try to keep the center of your foot in more or less the same spot on the floor and twist on the axis of the right leg (femur), rather than pivot around the toe or heel of the right foot. Return to the Charlie Chaplin pose. Again, twist the right leg to put the right foot parallel to the left (photo 10).

Don't move your pelvis *at all* while you're twisting your legs. Remember the goal is to turn the femurs in the hip socket. Keeping your hands on your hips where they flex will help to clue you in to when and if the hips move or "come around" (photo 11).

The only part of your body that should move is below where your hands are positioned on your hip joint. If you can do this movement without the pelvis/hips/upper body moving, you have successfully turned the femurs independently of the pelvis. It's a good idea to do this in front of a mirror or a person who can give you feedback as to whether or not the hips come around as you turn your leg.

Go back to your Charlie Chaplin stance and do the same thing on the other side, keeping the right foot stationary and turning the left foot to parallel. If you feel comfortable doing one side at a time and you're getting feedback (from a mirror or onlooker) that your pelvis is

not moving, try alternating sides—that is, Charlie Chaplin, move the right foot to parallel with the left, back to Charlie Chaplin, move the left foot to parallel with the right, back to Charlie Chaplin.

Practice this a bunch, tuning in to the idea that your femurs are rotating inside of the hip socket. You'll also notice that if you do not allow your pelvis to turn as you turn your leg, you'll end up with "tip lead." That is, although the feet will be parallel, the inside foot is slightly ahead relative to the outside foot.

Lack of hip flexibility can make this exercise (and real skiing) more difficult, and awareness of that tightness is critical. If you're physically unable to create the upper/lower body separation described in this article, you might consider an exercise program designed to increase flexibility. Tight hips inhibit performance on and off the hill and can lead to orthopedic problems down the road. (For two key hip stretches for skiers, see "Stretch Your Performance Through Hip Flexibility" on page 79.

2) STABILIZE THE PELVIS

The Charlie Chaplin exercise helps demonstrate how femurs rotate in the hip socket. Now let's explore how to stabilize the pelvis, the base of the upper body.

Go back to the Charlie Chaplin position. As you turn your right femur to put the right foot parallel with the left, feel as though you are rotating the left side of your pelvis to the right (photo 12).

The right femur will be rotating counterclockwise as the left side of your pelvis is "rotating" clockwise. If you keep your left foot stationary as you tighten the muscles around your pelvis *as if* you're rotating it clockwise, your hips/pelvis will not actually move, but there will be a fair amount of muscular tension as the muscles are isometrically contracted to stabilize the pelvis. One side is turning against, or in opposition to, the other. Here's a quick biomechanics review: an isometric contraction is when a muscle generates force without a change in length. (Throughout this article the word "rotating" is in quotation marks when referring to the pelvic rotation in opposition to the femur. That is because, as mentioned above, the pelvis physically will not actually rotate, but you'll feel and use strength as if you were rotating it in order to stabilize it and prevent it from "coming around" as in photo 11.) As with the first exercise, when it feels like you're having success on one side at a time, try alternating.

The outcome here is that the pelvis is stabilized muscularly, giving the outside femur something to turn against. This is not a movement that will be easily observed, rather it is a sensation that you will *feel*. If you do not actually stabilize the pelvis, and the pelvis/hips move, that *will* be observed.

Done correctly, you will just see and feel the legs turn independently of the pelvis and upper body. This is similar to when you are teaching students to turn their legs, it's difficult for the untrained eye of the student to see that the legs are turning. But it *is* easy to see when more than just the legs turn, for example when the upper body also turns.

The muscular tension that you create to "rotate" the inside half of the pelvis should be significant. You'll feel isometric contractions of the muscles that wrap around the pelvis, anteriorly, laterally, and posteriorly. The amount of strength to stabilize your pelvis and

upper body so that it doesn't rotate and square up to your skis while skiing is significant also. Be strong in practicing these movements. If you did, say, 20 repetitions in a row, you would feel somewhat fatigued in the muscles surrounding the pelvis, as well as in the abdominal area (which contributes to the stabilization).

TAKE IT TO THE SNOW

Wedge Turns

To apply this exercise on snow, go to a gentle beginner run and focus initially on turning one side against the other. Put your skis in a large wedge position, and start with a left turn. Begin to slide down the fall line, and simultaneously rotate your right femur counterclockwise while you "rotate" the left side of your pelvis clockwise (photo 13).

Use the same muscular strength from the Charlie Chaplin exercise (or more) as you turn the leg in opposition to the pelvis, creating separation between the upper and lower body. Reverse those movements going to the right. Practice this while linking very slow, very muscularly active turns with a large wedge.

When I practice this, I imagine that I have a joint down the center of my pelvis—say, from my navel to my pubic bone—that allows me to fold my pelvis in half. Of course the pelvis doesn't bend like that, but I imagine that I'm tightening the muscles that I'd use if I could fold it in half as I rotate one femur clockwise against the opposite side of my pelvis, which is "rotating" counterclockwise.

It's easy to do these wedge turns and rely on simply pressuring the outside ski to make a turn. Pay particular attention to the way you rotated your femur in the Charlie Chaplin drill and emulate that while doing these wedge turns. One side twists while the other side stabilizes.

It's also important not to give up the stabilization of the pelvis just before changing direction. When coaching this, I often see the skier do great job of stabilizing one side and turning the other. Then, just before the edge-release movement, he or she releases that tension of the pelvis and lets it come around ever so slightly instead of being super disciplined and holding that pelvic alignment through the edge-release movement.

These wedge turns will create a countered stance throughout the turn as the leg is steered more than the pelvis/upper body. If you've talked about skiing into and out of counter before, this is it. The real deal.

Spend a few runs working on these deliberate wedge turns before moving on. The muscles surrounding your hips will probably get fatigued. That's okay. I'm not professing this as a relaxed, easy way to ski. It's a way to ski to develop strong alignment over your outside ski. It's a way to set yourself up for a really solid entry into a new turn.


14a


14b


15

In addition, it's a way to prevent yourself from turning your whole body as a unit, which can cause you to lose balance over the outside ski and create myriad ugly movements that happen as a result of not being able to turn your legs beneath a stable upper body. Turning the entire body may appear easier but it has a very short shelf life when you encounter terrain, snow conditions, or timed runs that present consequences for bad movement patterns.

Parallel Turns

Staying on a gentle run, phase into making slow, skidded, open-parallel turns with the same focus of turning the outside femur in opposition to the inside half of the pelvis (one goes clockwise, while the other goes counterclockwise). Keep the same muscular tension in the muscles that wrap around the pelvis while you rotate the outside femur.

Go from making five to six wedge turns to five to six slow, parallel turns. Then go back and forth between wedge turns and parallel turns. As the skis are facing opposing directions in a wedge, it is easier to tune into these oppositional movements with the femur and pelvis. As the skis become parallel, it becomes more challenging. Take your time. When you feel like "the wheels begin to fall off the cart" in parallel turns go back to wedge turns to seek the same strength of the pelvis that you felt in the beginning (Photos 14a, b).

So far, I've pretty much ignored the fact that the inside femur rotates too. In my experience, upon applying this focus back into parallel turns, the skier naturally turns both femurs appropriately. To develop a solid separation in which the outside and inside halves of the body work in opposition to one another, I believe it's safe to temporarily focus on only turning the outside femur. I don't foresee this creating a bunch of power wedgers flying down the hill.

Wedge Javelins

I really like how wedge javelin turns force me to stabilize my pelvis and turn my legs independently of my upper body. Begin these turns in a large wedge position, again with a turn to the left. With your skis pointing downhill, start to slide and pick up your left ski. Stabilize the left side of your pelvis as if it were "rotating" clockwise while you turn the right leg so that the right ski tip turns underneath the left ski (photo 15).

Mission critical here is that rather than crossing the left ski over the outside one, you turn the outside ski tip underneath the inside ski tip that is in the air. A still photograph of both outcomes would look the same. However, in the former, the counter is *manufactured* by turning the body to the outside of the turn. In the latter, the outside leg turns more than the (stabilized) pelvis and upper body and we ski *into* a countered position.

It isn't until after the fall line that the counter is created. Sort of like real skiing! Continue the same focus as all of the exercises above by stabilizing your pelvis to give the outside leg something to turn against. The leg turns clockwise and the pelvis "turns" counterclockwise and vice-versa.

As in the wedge turns, it's important with this exercise to hold the pelvic alignment you have created through the edge change and not give it up at the end of the turn.

As you're completing the turn and your inside ski is in the air, hold onto that strength in the inside half of your pelvis as you place the inside ski back on the snow to a parallel position. Don't allow your pelvis/hips to "come around." Move across your skis to change edges with that alignment intact. Then you'll pick up the inside ski again, keeping the musculature surrounding the pelvis strong and steering the outside leg beneath that inside ski tip again.

Getting After It Turns

I'm a big believer in developing new movements while skiing slowly and deliberately. That said, at some stage

Stretch Your Performance Through Hip Flexibility

In skiing, as in life, it's good to be flexible.

As mentioned in the accompanying article, the muscles surrounding your hips should get a pretty good workout from the drills I've outlined. One of those muscle groups is the gluteals (buttocks muscle). This is the single largest muscle group in our body and it plays a major role in pelvic stabilization and in femur rotation, so it makes sense that we would want to employ it for strong, dynamic skiing. The muscles in the front of the hips also play an important role (iliopsoas, tensor fascia latae).

Here are two valuable stretches to incorporate into your regular flexibility training and which specifically may feel good after playing with the movements in this article. (If you have some joint limitation that prevents you from doing these stretches or causes any pain, do not do them. There are many alternatives that can be found online if you search for gluteal stretches or hip flexor and tensor fascia latae stretches. Consult your doctor or a physical trainer to determine which ones are most appropriate for you.)

Michael Rogan

Gluteal Stretch

Lie on your back and bring your right knee toward your chest. Grab your shin with your left hand and your thigh with the right hand as you press the right thigh over toward your left shoulder. Focus on moving your femur across your body to stretch the outside of your hip without pulling your shin. Keep your shoulders and hips on the floor. Hold this stretch for 30 to 45 seconds and repeat three or four times. Switch sides.

Michael Rogan

Hip Flexor Stretch

Kneel on the floor with your left foot behind you on a bench (or pressed against a wall). Use a mat or towel beneath your knee for cushioning. Move your right foot forward until the shin is vertical. Tighten the gluteal muscles of the back leg and gently move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the front of your hip. This may be enough of a stretch for you. If you are comfortable with more stretch, extend your left arm straight up so that your fingers are pointing up toward the sky. Hold for 30 to 45 seconds and repeat three or four times. Switch sides.

Robin Barnes

in the learning process, we need to progress to dynamic skiing because that's what is fun.

In faster, carved turns the same premise holds for turning the outside half of the body in opposition to the inside half. In a carved turn, you won't be actively twisting the outside femur, but as you tip the ski on edge and stand against it, the femur is still rotated in the hip socket (albeit less than with a skidded turn) and the ski will bend and arc around.

As the ski arcs out of the fall line — and as far across the hill as you're going to take it—employ the same concept as in the slower turns. If it is your right, outside ski, for example, that is arcing back across the fall line, it is the left side of your pelvis that is "rotating" clockwise to the right. It is the left half of your body (your pelvis initially) that is stabilizing, so your legs have something to turn against. The more forces you create via speed, pressure, etc., the more muscular tension involved in stabilizing the pelvis (photo 16).

As in the progression from wedge turns to open parallel turns, if you're losing the sensation and upper lower body separation with speed, slow things back to the wedge javelins (or wedge turns) until you dial it back in, and then turn up the speed bit by bit.

Remember the importance of not giving up the stabilization of the pelvis and the resulting countered position just before changing direction. As you complete the turn and the skis arc back across the fall line, stay strong with that alignment as you release and change edges. Letting go of that alignment and allowing the pelvis to face the outside of the turn at initiation will create a countered position in the top part of the turn. This leaves you little range of motion to ski into a countered position as the turn develops. Rather, hold onto that alignment through the edge change. Essentially your upper body will be square to your skis upon entry into the fall line, at which point you continue to turn your skis more than your upper body and pelvis so that—by the turn finish—the strongest countered position is established.

16

CONCLUSION

There are lots of exercises and drills for training your upper and lower body to move independently of one another. Pivot slips, for example, are a perfectly appropriate drill option—often used to either develop the ability to turn the legs or to create an awareness that the whole body is turning as a unit, requiring corrective action. However, at some stage in the learning process an understanding of the biomechanics involved in turning your legs without involving the upper body is paramount to successful execution of any drill—and certainly to successfully coaching the concept.

Focusing specifically on how the femurs turn inside the hip sockets and how the pelvis/upper body is stabilized will undeniably improve your execution of drills such as pivot slips. Most important however, is that the awareness and ability to isolate those movements and to incorporate them into all levels of your skiing will have you skiing stronger, with more technical precision. In the end, that always equates to more fun. 32°

PSIA Alpine Team member Robin Barnes is ski school director in Portillo, Chile, a certified personal trainer, and a ski teacher at California's Heavenly Ski Resort.

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TEAM TIP

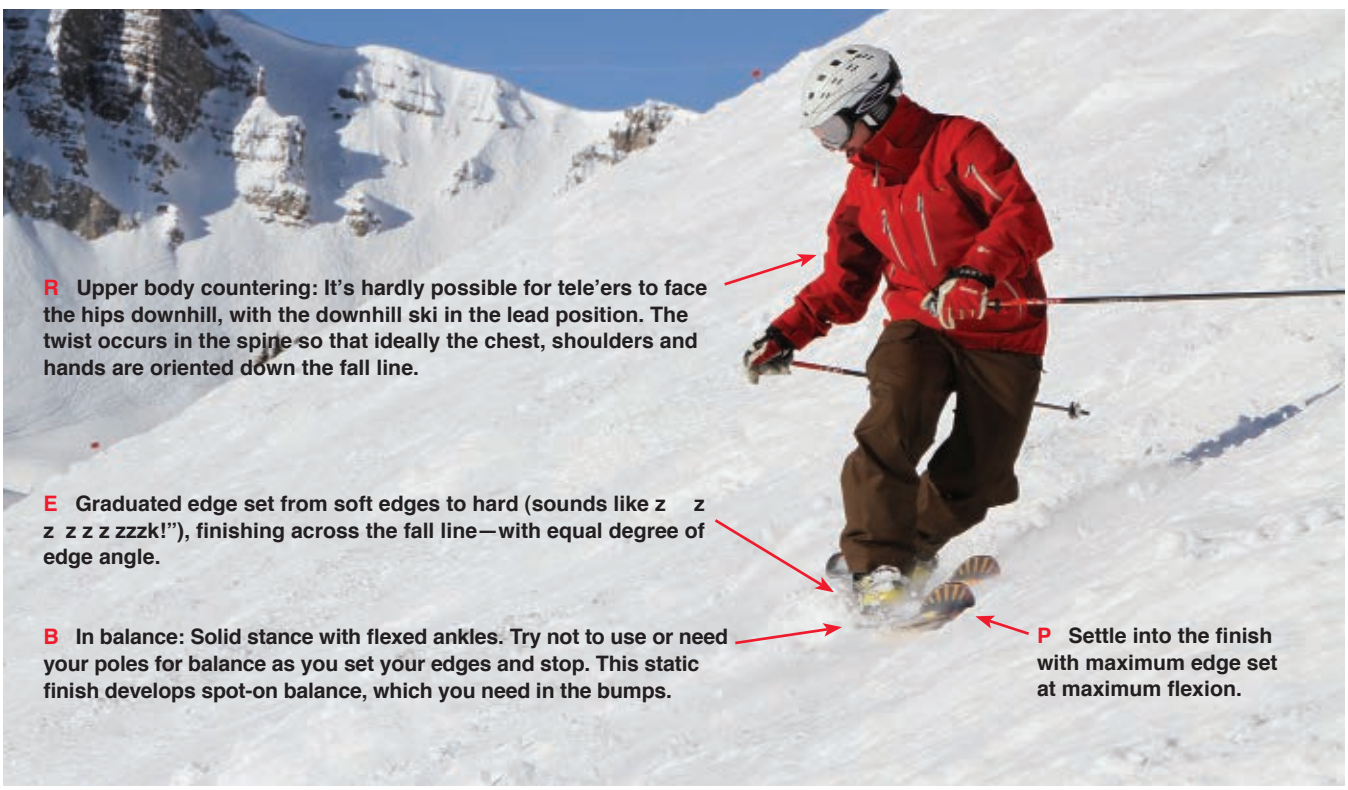
Jonathan Selkowitz

Go Agro in the Bumps to Control Speed

By J. SCOTT McGEE

There are as many ways to telemark the bumps as there are to roast a marshmallow, and everybody seems to have their own way. Some light it on fire, while others look for the slow, even roast. If you've read this far, you've likely stood by that fire, but for your students just getting into skiing bumps they might be just warming up to the idea, and a little timid about getting burned. Here's an approach to help them manage speed, boost confidence, and develop flow while mastering moguls.

The hallmarks of this progression are the Agro Stance Hockey Stop, the Silly Slide, and the Chute Drill. The agro stance is a solid-turn-finish, go-to position for recovering balance, managing speed, and preparing for the next turn. It is a collected, flexed, ready position for regaining control, and staying ready to move into the next turn—or both. When strung together, these drills pave the way toward fluid and rhythmic free-heel turns in the moguls. Practicing the agro stance in bumps can help skiers nail every turn from the top to the bottom of the run,



Luca Diana

whether it's powder-bump heaven, icy steeps, or mogul mank.

The agro path provides stepping stones toward mogul skiing and is a useful route for beginning and intermediate bump skiers because of the focus on countering, edging, speed control, and accuracy. It represents a great way to hone in on a specific line through the bumps. The agro progression outcome is to be able to stop at the top of every mogul—giving skiers options and the ability to alter or regain this line at will. The agro line takes them down one side of the bump, toward the flatter trough where the hockey stop finish offers speed control and options—to slow down, tighten the line or change lines.

The agro path in that terrain helps skier keep speed under control, and develop the best set of brakes they can have, even in uneven bumps. The progression path consists of three on-groomer steps: Hockey Stops, Silly Slides, and a Chute Drill, followed by skiing bumps of graduated steepness and depth.

THE HOCKEY STOP

Hockey Stop practice starts easy, with skis pointed slightly downhill in a tele stance (45 degrees across the fall line). Next, have skiers start in the fall line, and when they have mastered this encourage them to start alternating sides. (A related drill that might follow is to start across the fall line in a stationary telemark position. Now hop and land with set edges slightly downhill from the starting position. Students should be careful to maintain the telemark position and to land in balance without slipping, sliding, or skidding. This develops effective flexing and extending and extending with both legs, as well as awareness of the edges.)

SILLY SLIDE (A.K.A. PIVOT SLIPS)

After students master the Hockey Stop and engaging their edges they are ready for the Silly Slide, which emphasizes edge release and starts with a sideslip—a practice step that can be added for the unfamiliar. The Silly Slide is simply a set of linked pivot slips, where the center of mass travels in a straight line, at a constant speed, while the feet switch leads as they turn across the hill to the left, through the fall line across the hill to the right, and down the hill. Follow this checklist for ideal Silly Slides.

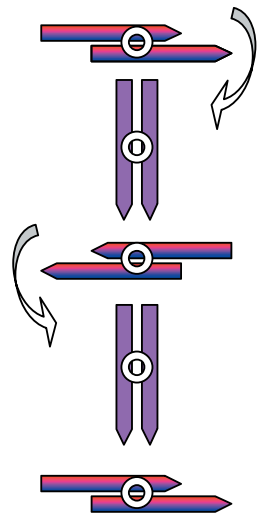
❑ **Balance:** In balance in a solid stance.

❑ **Edge:** No edge set—skis go across the fall line, through the fall line, and back across the fall line the other way. The edges stay soft, never increasing the angle—just enough edge to keep from catching, ingraining edge-change finesse.

❑ **Rotation:** The upper-body counters while the feet maintain an even rate of rotation, and skis remain parallel the whole time.

❑ **Pressure Control:** Barely settling—just enough to facilitate countering. (Countering is easier with more flexion in the hip joint.)

Remember, the center of mass is moving *straight* down the hill. If the skier is moving across the hill, there's a good chance that more countering movements will expedite the turning of the skis underneath a stable upper body.



Graphic by S. McGee

THE CHUTE DRILL

The Chute Drill is great practice for—wait for it now—yes, the chutes. Split the difference between Hockey Stops and Silly Slides and you have the drill. The movement is basically rhythmic short-radius turns in a corridor, with edge-set speed checks and downhill pole plants.

IN THE BUMPS

Once students have mastered the Chute Drill, try it in small-sized


Luca Diana

The tele sideslip in mixed conditions is a staplet he s ideways straight run, a solid core, matching edge angles, parallel skis, and a visual upper body focus down the fall line. Note the pile of snow building below the downhill ski, adding to the challenge. Step over this pile, or switch directions to "get past the fluff."

Teetering! Do you notice the tips in the air? If the tails are too, turning the skis is a cinch, making this a great way to start a turn.

Luca Diana

moguls. First, find an easy bump run (not too steep, or deeply troughed). Have skiers stand on top of a bump, where they have room to get into a solid agro stance. If the tips or tails are off the snow, starting the next turn gets even easier.

Tell them to look for their next stop, on top of the bump below. They should inch forward until they are teetering on the edge of the mogul. Next, they should move into the turn, tipping the tips into the trough, and finishing the turn in an agro stance on top of the intended bump. Just like in the chute drills, encourage students to anticipate the next initiation with a downhill pole plant. Practice in sets of 10, until tipping into the turn and finishing agro become second nature.

Stopping on top of each bump before continuing down the hill allows a careful, deliberate approach. Linking controlled stops is the next step.

Looking ahead for the next mogul, skiers simply let their pole touch the snow with the agro edge set, and lead from one agro stance toward the next bump. As they gain proficiency, they'll be able to increase speed and tempo while maintaining control. Have them practice linking controlled turns until they're ready for bigger bumps or steeper slopes.

Stopping on top of each bump before continuing down the hill allows a careful, deliberate approach.

Take the agro approach to harnessing speed control for both safety and confidence. Once skiers can stop on a dime on groomers and release their edges at will, put it together with fluid motion in the Chute Drill. Then take it into the bumps. From this foundation of movements for bump skiing, students can branch out and learn other movement patterns and lines through the bumps. And the best part is that demonstrating and practicing these drills dials in your own skills, making you a master of the moguls, and giving you a season pass to the whole mountain. 32°

J. Scott McGee coaches the PSIA Nordic Team and works as Jackson Hole Mountain Sports School's senior manager for nordic, training and guides in Wyoming. A former telemark competitor, he now dreams of perfect corn on spring backcountry skate ski tours. McGee spends his summers guiding climbs in the Tetons for Exum Mountain Guides.

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Give Students the Skills to **Keep Moving Forward**

By **STEVE HINDMAN**; photos by **SUE HINDMAN**

The phrase "bend the knees" is a tired instructor cliché, yet today's ski teachers often repeat other mantras such as "get forward," "stay forward," "move forward," and "be forward" without offering the reasoning behind such admonitions. Although helpful specifics such as "bend your ankles" or "keep your hands up" usually accompany these directions, what's often missing is a definition of *forward* as it applies to sliding on snow, why you want to be forward, and how to stay there.

It s all about being and moving forward.

WHAT IS FORWARD?

It's more useful to focus on outcomes and capabilities than specific positions when defining forward while sliding on snow. What instructors and others describe as forward is being in the sweet spot, where you can do what you want or need to do without needing to first spend time and energy moving back over your foot or feet.

The exact position of the sweet spot changes during the different phases of a skate, stride, or turn and in response to terrain and conditions. What doesn't change is that you can increase or decrease speed, continue straight ahead or turn, and make any other adjustments you need or desire without having to first do something else when you are in the sweet spot. When your students feel the ski become alive and be responsive, when they feel light and have a sense of floating, they have found the sweet spot. Once students find it, they've become skiers for life.

STAY IN THE SWEET SPOT

Finding and staying in the sweet spot requires comfort with sliding on skis and a feel for where to be, which come from putting in the kilometers. Set up your students to discover their sweet spot with explanations, exercises, and feedback that keeps them moving forward with their ski throughout each stride and skate.

Although long and fluid glides are one of the goals and the rewards of finding the sweet spot, solely focusing on glide—by skiers and instructors—leads many skiers to pause after moving onto each ski. This is like getting a flywheel


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up to speed and then letting it slow way down before doing something to get it going again. (If you are unfamiliar with flywheels, they are relatively heavy wheels used to maintain steady and continuous motion in engines and other machines.) While it may be nice to rest while the flywheel slows down, it takes a lot of energy to get it back up to speed, creating a fast/slow rhythm that's opposite of the delightful flow that's essential to discovering and staying in the sweet spot throughout each skate or stride.

Mountain bikers, like nordic skiers, know the value of staying in the sweet spot while negotiating curvy and undulating trails. One secret to riding with flow through a trail full of rocks, roots, climbs, and curves is sustaining a fluid and consistent rhythm by "spinning," that is, using a relatively high and consistent pedaling tempo—much like a flywheel—in order to retain power, stability, and momentum while picking a line and floating over, through, or around the terrain or obstacles.

Put the momentum of the flywheel and the power and stability of spinning into your skate or stride with more frequent (i.e., higher tempo) but less intense efforts as you move from ski to ski. In other words, *don't work so hard!*

When you want to speed up or when the trail goes uphill, increase your tempo instead of your effort. When you crest the hill or get up to speed, slow down the tempo and stretch out a bit into each glide.

Help your students find their own tempo and rhythm that maintains a relatively consistent speed at a relatively consistent level of effort by inviting them to:

- take short "steps" to create long glides,
- do something to move the body and/or ski forward at all times,
- move to the next ski just before the effort in each stride or skate noticeably increases, and
- pole to enhance glide and the leg push, not to push the body onto the next ski.

Help them avoid:

- taking big steps or strides in an attempt to create long glides,
- pushing back instead of moving forward,
- passively riding a ski,
- digging in and grunting it out, and
- relying on the poles to move onto the next ski.

Take short strides to create long glides: Swing each ski beneath you just in time to c atch you as the last kick propels you forward. Be sure to move onto a flexing ankle as you move from ski to ski and flex sharply at the knee and ankle to keep moving forward as the ski stops to grip the snow during each kick.

When you want to speed up or when the trail goes uphill, increase your tempo instead of your effort.

DISPEL MISCONCEPTIONS

Skiers come to lessons with a wide variety of ideas about what they should be doing: some are helpful, some are not. Many of these ideas come from images of classic skiers in full extension and skate skiers sprinting for the finish line. With these images in mind, students often push the new ski forward or focus on pushing back to create the dynamic positions and motion seen in magazines and videos.

With no concept of continually moving forward to stay in the sweet spot, skiers try too hard to fling either their ski or themselves forward to emulate the images that attracted them to the sport. When they do, they often end up stuck between their skis by overstriding or when their ski washes out as they try too hard to kick in the diagonal stride or to push off for the next skate.

Another common misconception is that the primary purpose of each pole push is to move the skier onto the next ski. Students who think this way are easy to spot; bent at the waist and behind their foot at the end of each pole push, struggling to get onto the next ski and up any hill.

These are a few of the misconceptions students bring to lessons. To help your students find their own sweet spot—where their skis are alive and they can float forward—ask them what they think they should be doing and what they think good skiing looks like. Then help them examine the assumptions behind their ideas and images and offer new ways to think based on the following.

Short Step, Long Glide

Over-striding (in classic or skating) is probably the most common way to end up behind the foot and out of the sweet spot. It is caused by a lack of balance in beginner skiers or a misunderstanding of the relationship between glide and stride length when a skier is willing and able to

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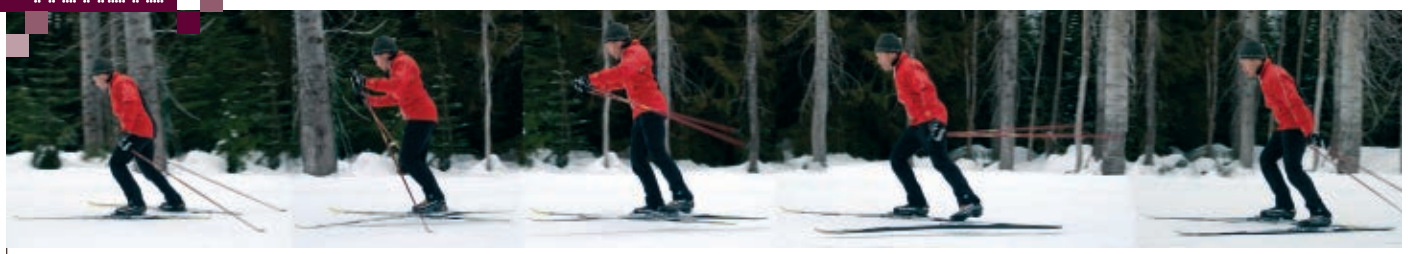

Move quickly from ski to ski and ride the glide forward. Move onto a flexing ankle as you bring each ski in and beneath you just in time to avoid any pause in your continuous forward motion, then extend toward where your next ski will be before you pole. Adjust the timing and depth of each pole push to avoid getting stuck on one ski too long. (The right ski in the right frame is off the snow and unweighted and the left ski in the left and final frame is off the snow and unweighted.)

ski on one ski at a time.

Although it's true that more glide results in a longer stride or skate, most students get this backward and attempt to lengthen each stride in hopes of creating more glide. When they do, beginner skiers uncomfortable with gliding on one ski end up between their feet. Skiers willing and able to glide on one ski at a time end up *behind* their new foot. Both beginners and more experienced skiers will create more glide and be able to stay in their sweet spot by focusing on moving their *core* forward instead of the new ski.

To correct or prevent over-striding, ask students to move to the next ski sooner with a smaller stride or skate. This simple focus will help newer skiers get comfortable with moving from ski to ski long before they have the experience and skills to succeed with one-ski-only balance drills. More experienced skiers will discover how moving their body forward with each kick or skate push-off—instead of just their ski—can create the glide they desire.

Moving Where You Want To Be

Moving from ski to ski is a bit like playing pool: your current shot isn't a good one unless it sets you up—in a good way—for the next one. Likewise, a great push-off or a long glide is pointless if it puts you out of position to instantly move the new ski forward. To set up the next "shot" on snow, help students begin moving their belly button (and everything attached to it!) toward their next ski as soon as they move onto and over each "new" foot.

Direct them to use the next kick or skate push-off to move toward where the next ski will be when it swings in beneath them, already up to speed and moving in the direction of the next glide. (Photos 1 and 2.) (Note: more change of direction from glide to glide will occur from skate to skate than from classic stride to classic stride.)

Help students identify and eliminate any pauses that occur after moving onto the next ski that keep them from moving toward where they are going. Pausing after moving onto the new ski may be a habit from when they were learning, used to rest or re-establish balance, or be caused by a misconception that pausing to glide makes skiing more fun and less tiring. Eliminating any pause will drastically reduce the

A Fine Balance: Forward Thinking About Staying Forward

The following are drills you can use to help students get a sense of balance and learn how to adjust over one foot:

- Identify where and when each stride or skate begins to feel like a lot of work, and use that cue as the signal the move to the next ski.
- Put the ski down sooner in each stride or skate to keep the skier moving forward.
- Kick sooner (classic or skate).
- Flex the ankle while swinging the ski in or forward to lift its tip.
- Drive the rear leg forward to get it up to speed before weighting it.
- Move the body forward with each push-off instead of stepping forward in each stride or skate.
- Move onto each ski with a flexed ankle.
- Recover the poles sooner.
- Plant and use the poles sooner.
- Swing the elbows and hands farther forward than feels normal.
- Swing the elbows forward during pole recovery and swing them back past your hips and up to the sky at the end of a complete pole push.
- Focus on the crunch when poling (avoid breaking at the waist).
- Double pole in varied terrain long enough to get tired.
- Single pole in varied terrain long enough to get tired.
- Swing the elbow(s) forward and then quickly stop them to feel the skis jet forward, in both the double and single poling.
- Actively compress and release the camber during the classic and skate kick and use the rebound to move to the next ski.

Encourage the skier to find dead spots—i.e., spaces where he or she is doing nothing to keep the ski moving—and fill those spaces in with ankle, knee, trunk, and hip extension, or extension forward from the ankles, or anything else to keep the ski and the skier moving forward. *Steve Hindman*

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effort it takes to stride or skate, and instantly improve your students' grip on classic skis and their edge grip during the skate push-off.

POLE TO ENHANCE GLIDE

Swinging the arms and hands forward without moving the body forward is probably the second most common way skiers end up behind their foot and out of the sweet spot, followed closely by squatting while trying to pull their body forward and back into the sweet spot. To avoid both, focus your instruction on the forward recovery and pole timing. (Photos 3 and 4).

The forward pole recovery should be quick. It begins while the skier is supported on one ski and ends after weight is transferred onto the next ski. The depth of each pole push should match the length of the glide on that ski. With less glide, the pole push will stop sooner to allow time to extend on the next ski before needing the next pole push to maintain or enhance the glide on the new ski. (Photo 5).

More glide provides more time to increase both the extension before the pole plant and the depth of the pole push. This timing is crucial and tricky. To nail it, coach your students on the following poling principles.

Keep the effort in each pole push very light until the timing is established.

Concentrate on crunching over the poles (shoulders to rib cage, ribs to pelvis). Add shoulder, arm, and hand extension only when there is time to do so without delaying the move to the next ski.

In faster conditions, use the poles or pole to push the center of mass forward and to keep the ski moving forward after leg and hip extension have been com-

Photo 1: Skier in motion forward with left ski swinging forward and beneath the skier, coming up to speed and into position to carry the skier into the next stride.

Photo 2: Skier in motion forward and up the track with right ski coming forward and beneath the skier, coming up to speed and into position to continue to carry the skier forward.

Photo 3: Over-striding and over-poling : Pole and ski pushed forward and ahead of the body.

Photo 4: Body over foot and ski as pole is planted.

Photo 5: Poles brought forward in time to plant at the height of ankle, knee, and hip extension and before the ski begins to slow from the last push-off.

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pleted on each ski. These principles apply to both double poling and skating where both poles are used at once and the diagonal stride where one pole is used at a time.)

In slower conditions, limit the extension prior to the pole plant and the pole push to the initial crunch to avoid being caught behind the foot when it is time to move to the next ski.

On very steep hills, focus on a quick and forceful pole recovery that drives your elbows and arms forward. Deemphasize the push back on the poles and focus instead on moving your body past your pole(s) with your leg push.

Regardless of the amount of crunch and follow-through (from none to complete), swing the elbow(s) and hand(s) well out in front of your body with each snappy recovery.

On very steep hills, focus on a quick and forceful pole recovery that drives your elbows and arms forward.

Plant your pole(s) with some bend at the elbow(s) but don't be afraid to extend your arm(s) as long as your body comes forward with your hand(s).

When you can extend your shoulder, arm, and wrist after the initial crunch, focus on swinging your elbow back and then up to the sky, keeping your hand high as it passes your thigh. Extend your forearm at the end of the poling motion only after your elbow has swung up and behind you.

Avoid extending your arms and hands in the direction of the pole baskets, which tends to pull you behind your feet.

Following these guidelines puts you in a powerful position over your poles, in which both your weight and your larger torso, core, and leg muscles can be used in addition to your shoulders and arms to help keep your ski moving forward. 32°

For more great glide tips log onto www.TheSnowPros.org and look for the "Web Extras" link in the section for 32 Degrees.

Steve Hindman, a former member of the PSIA Nordic Team, currently teaches skate and classic skiing at camps and clinics throughout the Northwest and teaches alpine and telemark skiing at Stevens Pass, Washington. He is the author of the recently updated Cross Country Skiing: Building Skills for Fun and Fitness *and is the instructional editor for* Cross Country Skier Magazine.

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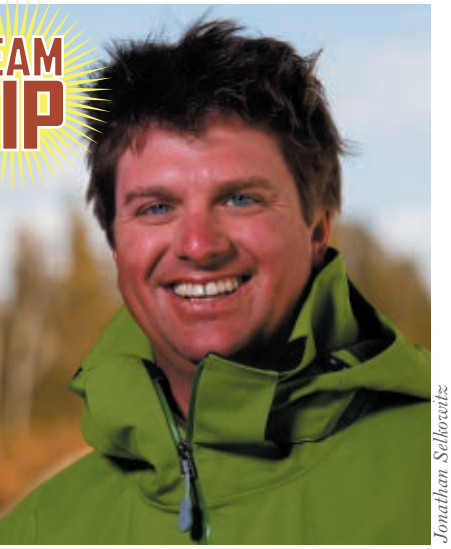

Jonathan Selkowitz

Dip Into the Adaptive Snowboarding Realm

By **SCOTT ANFANG**

Ever wonder what your life would be like without snowboarding? A horrible nightmare, right? Sadly, that's reality for some people. ¶ Some choose not to snowboard; others would like to try but think it's not an option for them. Fortunately, more and more people are challenging their perceived limitations, including greater numbers of the adaptive and disabled population.

Adaptive programs have been around for years, and some of the most amazing instructors I have met have been involved in the adaptive side of snowsports. There's something special about the individuals who are drawn

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to adaptive snowsports instruction; it's as if they want to help defy the odds, to create something that shouldn't be. Me? I just wanted to be able to bring snowboarding to those who want to make it part of their life.

Adaptive snowboard programs have introduced me to some of my most grateful guests and most rewarding times on the mountain. I've ridden with people who were told they couldn't snowboard for one reason or another, and to be involved with getting them out there on the hill, helping them to defy those expectations . . . the feeling is almost indescribable. It's challenging, and hugely rewarding.

If any of this sounds interesting, why not see what it takes to sign on with your local adaptive program? I challenge you to take the first step, which is just expressing your wish to get involved. Next, learn a bit as you go. There are some great adaptive snowboarding materials out there, including PSIA-AASI's *Adaptive Snowsports Instruction* manual and the PSIA-AASI-Rocky Mountain Division's *Adaptive Snowboard Resource Guide*. Of course, if you're like me, you'll find that the most rewarding learning opportunities will come through hands-on experience. You'll quickly discover that no two adaptive lessons are the same.

Most of the adaptive snowboard lessons I have taught went something like this: "Wow, that's really what you have going on? And you want to learn to snowboard? Sounds crazy, but let's figure out how to make this work!" The process resembles most snowboard lessons: assess the student, figure out motivations and goals, keep in mind medical conditions, safety concerns, equipment issues, and go from there.

So which adaptive students might best benefit from using a snowboard as a tool of choice? I've only come across a few situations where using a snowboard seemed to be a better option than any other type of snowsports equipment. For example, people with incomplete spinal cord fracture (or any other situation where there is strength but lack of fine motor skills) and those with impairment in one leg or one side of the body, whereby two independent pieces of equipment may be harder to control than a single piece of equipment. Likewise, some above-the-knee amputees who have weaknesses in their "good" legs might be better off on a single platform of support, rather than two skis.

Snowboarding can also be a good option for those who can remove their prosthetic limbs to get direct contact with the equipment and lower their center of gravity, thus enabling more control. There are also indications that some people with autism are good candidates for snowboarding, in part because of the sensory and auditory stimulation of a board moving across the snow.

There are no rules for who might do better on a snowboard and who might wish to opt for other equipment. As long as the approach is safe and meets the needs and wants of your guest, you'll be supporting a learning experience. This is why in adaptive snowboarding you see some weird stuff, like alterations and additions to equipment, boots backwards with prosthetics, binding angles not set up in a traditional way . . . the list will continue to grow as the adaptive snowboard world grows.

PERSONAL PREFERENCE

The reason people choose snowboarding over skiing is mostly a matter of personal preference: some individuals just want to snowboard rather than ski. For them, it was an internal motivation, even though, physically, riding may be the bigger challenge.

I've taught many students who had skied prior to sustaining the life-altering injury. When I asked why they wanted to ride, here are some of the answers I was given: "I skied before my injury and I know how good of a skier I was and what I was capable of then. But I had no preconceived notions going into snowboarding." "Snowboarders always look like they're having more fun." I have

also been told that it seems like there are more options in snowboarding—forward, backward (or switch), plus the basic ground tricks like flat spins, and riding banks on the side. I'm not saying that riding is better than skiing, but if a guest favors snowboarding over skiing, whatever the reason, let's get him or her out there enjoying what our sports and resorts have to offer!

Again, every lesson is different, which can be a plus and a minus. But if taking on a challenge and to talking things out to figure out alternatives to each situation sounds intriguing . . . if you enjoy coming up with creative solutions to mind-bending issues, then adaptive snowboard instruction might be just the ticket to keep you interested and engaged. Who knows? It might open up a new world of appreciation for this great sport.

One other note: since I've been teaching adaptive snowboarding, my able-bodied snowboard clientele has grown. I've gained knowledge and expertise, and the ability to see things differently and stretch outside the textbook progression based on the limitations or movement patterns I see in my clients—proof positive that everyone wins when you dip into the realm of adaptive snowboard instruction.

IN SHORT

1. You can help someone more than you will ever imagine, simply by getting involved.
2. The adaptive world is coming to snowboarding in droves. Let's inspire snowboard instructors to cross over to the adaptive to help create more snowboarders, regardless of what limitations or challenges lie in the way.
3. Getting involved with adaptive snowboarding will make you a better boarder because you'll encounter challenges that you might not see in your daily snowboard lessons.
4. Figure out what being a snowboarder means to your students, and then help them get there. Keep in mind that what you think a snowboarder is and what your student thinks a snowboarder is might be completely different. Move them in the direction they want, educate them, and let them form their own opinions.
5. Most important, keep it fun! Able-bodied or adaptive, the real reason everyone rides is to have a good time. 32°

Scott Anfang is in his second term on the AASI Snowboard Team. He is a member of Rocky Mountain Division's snowboard and adaptive snowboard staff and a full-time snowboard instructor and trainer at Colorado's Steamboat Resort.

Adaptive snowboarding will be a PSIA-AASI presentation topic at the 2011 Interski in St. Anton, Austria. For more information—and more insights from Snowboard Team member Scott Anfang—log on to www.TheSnowPros.org and look for the "Web Extras" link in the section for 32 Degrees.

Make Every Turn Count: Therapeutic Riding, Skiing Critical for Soldier Rehab

By **MIKE HORN**

I first met Jeff Rogers on a flight from Denver to Gunnison, Colorado. We sat side-by-side in a shuddering, well-traveled puddle jumper, and talked our way through the turbulent half-hour flight. It was fall, and most of our conversation revolved around snowboarding.

Nathan Bilow Photography

Iraq war vet Jeff Rogers' first snowboard exposure was through the Wounded Warrior project and Crested Butte s Adaptive Sports Center.

Rogers, a 24-year-old Iraq War veteran, was on his way back from the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago where he was participating in a research study on new prosthetic arm technology. Rogers is a wounded warrior; he lost his right arm, amputated above the elbow, after an EFP (Explosively Formed Penetrator) device exploded and propelled a "massive copper bullet" into his truck while he was working a security detail in Iraq.

"The only one that made it into the truck basically flew right through my elbow," he said. "Besides that; my right leg was pretty much amputated above my knee, it destroyed my femur. I had this overwhelming feeling that I needed to keep my leg stabilized."

Because he did, doctors were able to save his leg. "Everyone else got out on leave . . . my First Sergeant came and said, 'It's great to see you standing up. We thought you lost your leg.'"

Rogers first visited Crested Butte Mountain Resort in February 2008, when he learned to snowboard through the Wounded Warrior Project and Crested Butte's Adaptive Sports Center (ASC). His occupational therapist had told him, "Everyone should go on one of these trips." So he did, even though he admits he "wasn't really feeling it."

All it took was a few days on snow. Rogers moved to Crested Butte. In spring 2009 and last winter he volunteered with ASC to earn his season's pass, and banked 50–55 days of riding—all while attending classes at Western State College (though he kept all his

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classes to two days a week to maximize slope time). For him, snowboarding is "really good therapy."

"Everybody gets so sick of their recovery processes, they just need a break," he said. "It's a big confidence booster—I never thought I'd be able to do these things. It helps get people motivated on life again."

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A story like Rogers' makes you realize the significant role recreation plays in rehabilitation, both mental and physical, and how much skiing and snowboarding, in particular, aid in the process. This connection between recreation and rehabilitation was discovered largely during the Vietnam War, and those veterans deserve a lot of the credit in the development of adaptive and disabled sports programs.

Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA), of which the Adaptive Sports Center in Crested Butte is a chapter, was established in 1967 by disabled Vietnam veterans specifically to serve those injured in war. Kirk Bauer, 62, the executive director of the 104-chapter organization, lost a leg during an ambush while serving in Vietnam in 1969. He was twice awarded the Bronze Star for heroism: the Army Commendation Medal with Valor Device, and the Purple Heart for injuries sustained in combat.

In the fall, when we talked, he was fresh off a successful summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro. He said skiing was an important aspect of both his initial and long-term recovery. "Skiing was the sport I was introduced to while recuperating from a grenade blast suffered in Vietnam," Bauer said. "It completely lit my fire. Skiing is a really critical part and invaluable as a sport for rehabilitation. For people with a mobility impairment, there aren't a lot of options in the wintertime. People would tend to just stay inside."

But, Bauer said, that's not the case with snowsports.

"With skiing and snowboarding, gravity is helping to reduce the effect of the disability. I don't care what your disability is, you can go skiing," he added. "Almost anyone with any injury, they can ski. It is a very accessible sport."

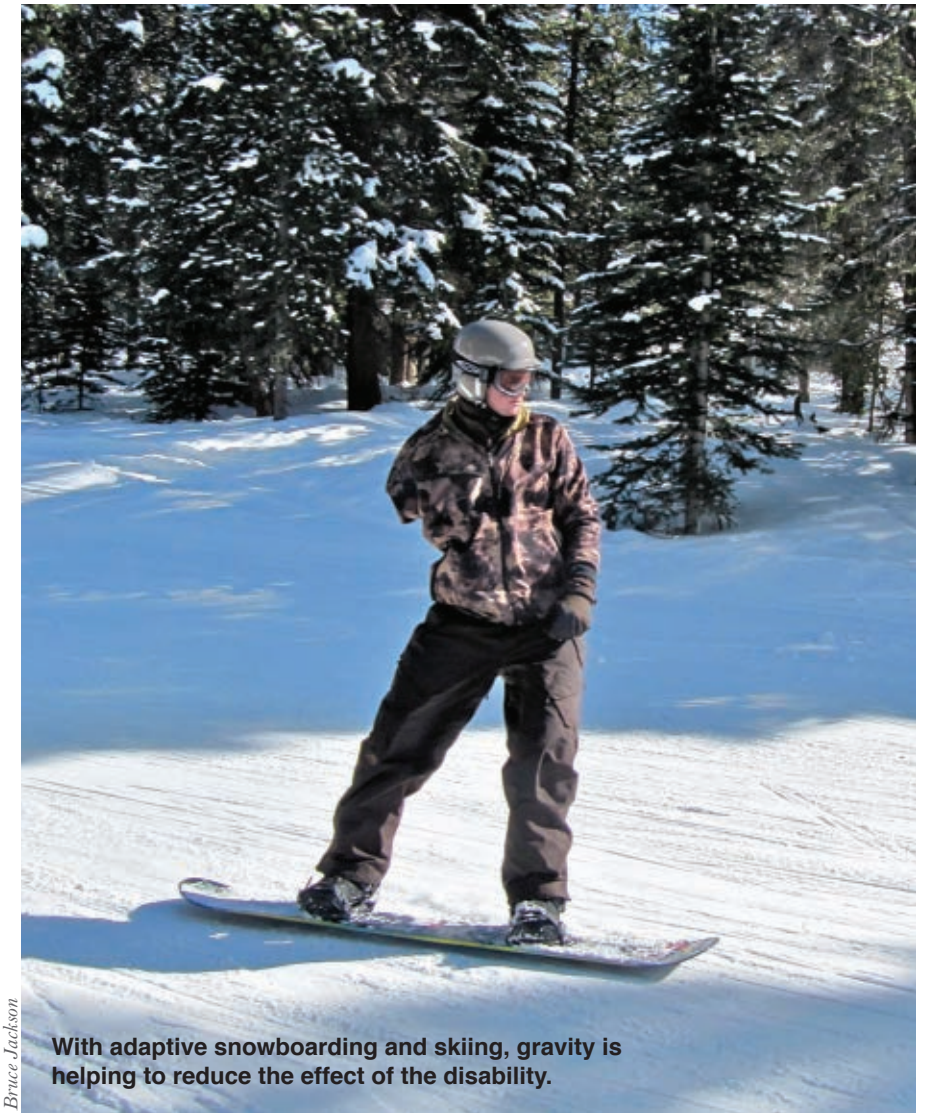
According to Bauer, DSUSA's relationship with PSIA goes back to the early 1970s when the Far West and then the Eastern divisions of PSIA started adaptive teaching programs. Bauer and 12 others were among the first disabled skiers to get PSIA certified as professional ski instructors. He said by aligning with PSIA and standardizing adaptive-teaching techniques, DSUSA enhanced its credibility and improved recruitment for its programs.

Other groups during that period helped the advancement of adaptive sports opportunities for disabled veterans. In 1970, the National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD) was formed to provide therapeutic recreation as a one-time ski lesson for children with amputations served by the Children's Hospital of Denver. Now they too work with disabled veterans.

Everybody gets so sick of their recovery processes, they just need a break.

Another program—the Adaptive Sports Foundation (ASF) in Windham, New York, founded in 1980—hosts winter events and programming for veterans as well. The mission of the non-profit Wounded Warrior Project is simple and straightforward: to honor and empower wounded warriors. They achieve this in part by providing some of the funding and support to introduce and enroll service men and women in these programs.

Over the last year, the ASF, along with the Wounded Warrior Project, hosted five Support Our Troops events, and collaborated on Project Odyssey, a therapeutic program for service members with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injuries. Project



Bruce Jackson

With adaptive snowboarding and skiing, gravity is helping to reduce the effect of the disability.

Odyssey was created to support warriors in their recovery from combat stress. It provides an outdoor rehabilitative retreat that combines adventure challenges with opportunities for peer support.

THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

Kim Seevers, operations director at the Adaptive Sports Foundation, explained the many benefits and goals of therapeutic recreation. "We had a lot of troops tell us it kind of gave them back the ability to be healthy and active, and that in turn helps their mental outlook. The obvious benefit is the physical activity and possibly a reintroduction to a sport they either did before they were injured, or never did before. The programs get them outside, and get them active, some very quickly after their injury."

Seevers, a former education director for PSIA-AASI, said the scenery and cold-weather thrill of being outside are just as important as the recreation aspect.

"You hear over and over, they're not laying in bed feeling sorry for themselves. It's such a new aspect of their life they don't really think beyond the injury and what they'll be able to do again," she said. "Programs like ours open their eyes to the whole gamut of activities they can participate in."

For Rogers, that eye-opening experience included linking snowboard turns on his first day. He said, "Snowboarding is one of the only activities where I don't think—or at least my mind isn't wrapped around stupid sh*t. It's relaxing, and invigorating."

The NSCD taught more than 23,000 lessons last year in a variety of activities, and according to Beth Fox, operations manager, "Skiing and snowboarding are a huge part of what we do."

That includes two winter ski and snowboard Wounded Warrior camps, as well as implementing a holistic therapeutic vision that focuses on having fun, but achieving goals as well.

"People come to us and we ask, 'What are your goals—physical, cognitive, and emotional?'" explained Fox. "It's about understanding how we can use skiing or snowboarding to reach this therapeutic goal. Can they get through life without skiing? Sure. [But this] is about building skills for life using sport as the modality."

When asked what is unique about NSCD's programming, Fox replied: "The difference is that some of these outcomes are byproducts of sports, but it's a planned byproduct from NSCD. What do you want out of this? What are your goals? We set up activities specific to developing those skills. The thing about sports is they're fun, we're out there, having a good time. We're not making this guy or gal walk between the parallel bars; they're out there, getting the wind in their hair."

Fox said that each generation of wounded warriors helps to improve the equipment and programs for the next generation. She said, "There will be new innovations with new veterans, new skiing techniques . . . the mono-ski came from the vets tinkering in their garage."

And she said that with the shutdown of combat operations in Iraq, there will be more soldiers with a need for recreation therapy as part of their rehabilitation.

"Many of the veterans are going to adaptive programs because of the funding that's come from the Wounded Warrior Project, and warrior transition units," Fox said. "The adaptive agencies are working with the armed forces and with different bases around the country to get some programming going for these guys."

Each generation of wounded warriors helps to improve the equipment and programs for the next generation.

Networking can be as crucial as the recreational aspects on snow.

Pat Bittle

SPIRIT ON THE SLOPES

Most adaptive programs tend to be male-dominated programs because of the ratio of male-to-female veterans, however work is being done to provide women-specific programming as well. This is a priority at ASF in Windham, New York.

"With the new women's programs, the women all talk about how their rehab is kind of male oriented," explained Seevers. "They come here and there are 10 to15 women together, and they sit and talk about how you get prosthetic limbs to fit a high heel, things I never thought of. You can see, it's predominantly a male world in the rehab facility."

Networking, for both men and women, is nearly as important as the recreation component of these programs, according to Seevers. "The troops that have had their injury for a while can talk to the newly injured ones, about things like the benefits they're eligible for, because we've got some Vietnam veterans and they talk to these guys about the benefits and education they're getting."

According to Seevers, once they're out on the slopes, these wounded warriors not only bring out the best in themselves, but all the people around them. It makes people think twice before complaining about the snow conditions, when they're skiing alongside veterans who made untold sacrifices.

"It brings out the patriotism of people," Seevers said. "When we do our winter weekend on the slopes, or we're in the lift line, people stop and say thank you to them, that's a good thing for them. Even if someone doesn't support the activities over there, they still appreciate their service and what they've done."

Rogers is just happy to be snowboarding, and appreciative of the people who taught him how to ride. Of the local adaptive program he said, "I think they're doing a pretty top-notch job. They've got it down to a science."

As for the future of these programs and getting more disabled veterans on snow, DSUSA's Bauer sees a number of opportunities. One important component he notes, is the further development and refinement of equipment and advances in prosthetics.

And, he believes, "Snowboarding is going to get more popular. We want to see snowboarding in the Paralympics." 32°

Mike Horn lives, rides, and writes in Crested Butte, Colorado. He is cofounder of the StokeLab Digital Media Project (www.stokelab.com), rider in chief for Backcountry Magazine, *and an editor at the* Crested Butte News.

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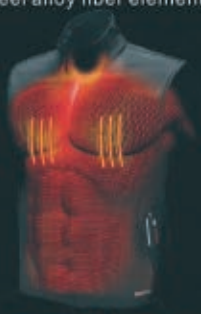

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When Fun Only Goes So Far, Intrinsic Motivation Can Produce Lasting Results

By **MARK AIKEN**; photos by **JARED VINCENT**

As a new ski instructor, I came upon what I considered to be a genius idea. In order to get kids in my lesson groups to do what I wanted, I rewarded them with candy. ¶ During lessons, I silently patted myself on the back. How simple it was! How brilliant! Not only did my students listen and try hard, they liked me too. "Amazing," I told my colleagues. "There's nothing I can't accomplish with a group of kids and a pack of Skittles."

Before long, however, the luster wore off on this game. For one, my stash of sweets was finite, and sometimes it wasn't pretty when I ran out. Worse, I found myself dealing with sugar highs and sugar lows. Most disappointing of all, though, I discovered that even kids being rewarded with candy tire of an activity if it does not engage or interest them.

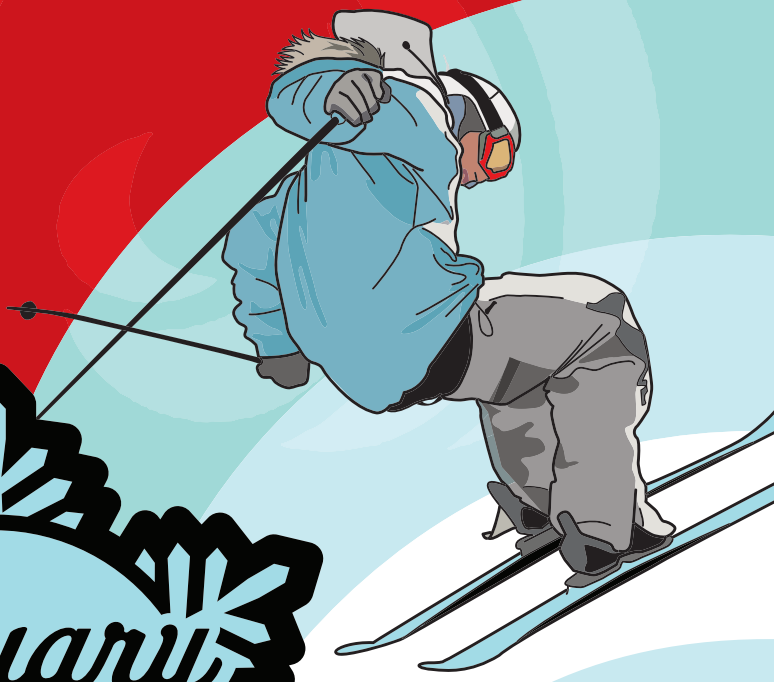
I found myself searching for answers to a profound question: if dangling candy in front of kids won't work, what will?

How many times have ski and ride instructors told students, particularly children, "Work on this now, then later we'll . . . go to the park, ski a woods trail, take the chairlift, play a game, ride a black diamond, hit a jump, take a break, or get promoted to the next level." These—along with offering candy as a reward for a certain behaviors, of course—are examples of extrinsic rewards. All are probably effective ways to accomplish short-term outcomes.

What would happen, however, if instructors approached lessons with a farther-reaching perspective and with a goal of achieving longer-range results? Instead of attempting to motivate students extrinsically, what if we tried to promote a lesson environment where students were driven from within?

Kids may enjoy a candy bribe, but other motivation is what truly keeps them coming back.

Anne Wescott Dodd, senior lecturer emerita at Bates College, in Lewiston, Maine, has been a schoolteacher at elementary, secondary, university, and graduate school levels. She has served as a school principal and the chairperson of the education department at Bates. Her essay "Engaging Students: What I Learned Along the Way" originally appeared in the college textbook *Educational Leadership* and has



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been reprinted in other texts as well. In it she writes:

> Instead of thinking in terms of making learning *fun* (extrinsic motivation), [effective, veteran teachers] look for ways to make assignments and activities that are *engaging* (intrinsic motivation) . . . . Effective teachers know that to become engaged, students must have some feelings of ownership—of the class or the task—and personal power, a belief that what they do will make a difference.

For nearly my entire instructing career, my mantra has been "safety, fun, and learning." Is it possible that my "fun" approach all these years has been off base? Would I be better served, instead of motivating students extrinsically, to try to promote an environment where students are driven from within? Would my efforts then potentially reach a wider population and have deeper results?

I decided to track Dodd down at Bates. "I know nothing," she says, "about skiing." She does, however, know a thing or two about teaching, having been in education for 48 years.

"Fun shouldn't be the goal," Dodd says. "When people do things for a reward, when the reward is taken away they won't do it anymore." On the other hand, says Dodd, leading lessons that promote intrinsic motivation produces results that are long lasting. "You want to find ways," she says, "to get people invested in something in a personal way. If it's an internalized goal from which they see benefits for themselves, they'll get more deeply involved."

A believer in Ben & Jerry's mantra—"If it's not fun, why do it?"—I admit to having some skepticism as I listened to Dodd. I tried to think of situations in my life that weren't necessarily fun, but my experience was meaningful enough that I wanted more. When I was 10 years old, I cried while reading Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*. Was it "fun" reading about a dog being abused by his owner and then running away? No, but I couldn't put the book down and for years read every London story I could find. What about tear-jerking movies? Like the final scene of *Forrest Gump* when Forrerst visits Jenny's grave to tell her about their son. I remember looking around the theater and seeing grown men blubbering! Fun? Uh, no. But did they love *Forrest Gump*? Of course they did.

Snowsports may stir other responses in students that are just as meaningful as having fun, such as the sense that they're rewarding, challenging, captivating, interesting, and moving. These responses, like fun, fall under the umbrella of "engagement." Engaged students become driven from within to learn, participate, and improve. Rather than trying at all costs to make lessons fun, we might think instead about promoting an interest in learning and an overall love of snowsports.

> **"To motivate and engage students, teachers must create a classroom environment in which every student comes to believe, I count, I care, and I can."**
>
> **— ANNE WESCOTT DODD**

Instilling intrinsic motivation comes more from the approach an instructor takes and from the atmosphere that the instructor creates. Here are four ideas to foster that positive atmosphere:

1. Even group lessons should be about *individual* students and their goals,
2. Coaches should connect with students and help them connect with one another,
3. Having students learning and explore as a team deepens the personal investment of students, and
4. Giving students a hand in their own learning allows them to feel a stronger sense of ownership.

ALL ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL

The introductory and assessment phases of lessons are often discussed as important in figuring out what content a lesson will cover and in uncovering who students are and how they learn. There is a lot more to these early phases of a lesson. Says Dodd, "To motivate and engage students, teachers must create a classroom environment in which every student comes to believe, 'I count, I care, and I can.'" If an instructor's interest isn't genuine, trust is never established, and the game is lost before it ever started.

"You want to find out what kids think," Dodd says. One tool that she uses in her classroom settings (that may not be available to instructors on the snow but that we can perhaps learn from) is free-writing exercises. She has students write their goals—long-term, mid-range, and short-term—so that she knows what her students hope to learn.

I have seen instructors in season-long lesson programs at my home resort have students put goals on paper. Instructors in every lesson verbally discuss goals and outcomes on the snow, but what Dodd is searching for is a way to reach deeper inside her students' minds. In a season-long situation, written goals will shed light on what students want to accomplish, and they will give students and instructors the opportunity to reflect on progress over a period of time. Dodd emphasizes the power of written conversation. "When a teacher writes back," she says, "that demonstrates an interest in the student."

Although instructors teaching daily lessons may not have the time or resources to embark on a written exploration of student goals, Dodd's message is clear: take an interest in your students, what they think, and what they hope to achieve.

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structors must, to some extent, leave behind their own preconceived notions of what each lesson will cover. "The student's goals should be paramount," says K.C. Gandee, former AASI Snowboard Team member and now the director of snowboard programs in Vermont's Killington Mountain School. To determine students' goals, Gandee simply asks "What are your goals?" But he also recommends observing students, their interactions, and their actions—which sometimes speak as loudly as words.

Focusing on student goals rather than on instructor-imposed objectives creates lessons that are more meaningful to students. According to Gandee, an instructor can tell she or he is addressing student goals according to how the student is being motivated. "If I have to dangle a carrot or some sort of reward in front of them in order to get them to do something," says Gandee, "then I don't know if I'm really accomplishing their goals."

MAKE CONNECTIONS

According to the CAP model, older kids, say ages 7–14, want to fit in and belong. It is therefore important for instructors to help find common grounds among students in the group—and between instructor and student.

Interactions of this nature are not restricted to the early phases of lessons; obviously, they continue throughout. I cringe when I watch groups unload at the top of a lift (even a shorter lift like a Magic Carpet or Mighty Mite), ski or ride in a "snake" or "train" formation to the bottom. Where, in this scenario, is the camaraderie? Where is the social interaction? Even younger students, whose ultimate need, according to Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, is for attention rather than belonging, need interactions. While I am not advocating that instructors stop their groups and talk forever on the sides of the trail, I do encourage re-grouping often.

Those conversations at these meetings don't need to be limited to snowsports. The best instructors connect with students at all levels, and they encourage students to connect and compare experiences. On lift rides, give students small tasks. Ask them to watch skiers below them. Or ask them to think of their favorite movie character or Roald Dahl book. Then meet mid-run and discuss what they come up with. Great instructors make students feel comfortable by finding common ground; then they help push comfort zones and build new skills.

The Silver Ski Game at Stowe allows young skiers to have a say and a purpose . . . and fun!

PLAY LIKE A TEAM

"Most kids that I work with want to be part of a club," says Gandee. Team-building activities are one way to establish a team atmosphere in lessons. Jenni Jubok, a Level II-certified alpine instructor at Stowe, found herself working with local kids who returned repeatedly. Jubok wanted these frequent flyers to log mileage, but not necessarily on more difficult terrain. She therefore dreamed up an initiative at Stowe that she called the "Silver Ski."

The Silver Ski is hidden in the area where most lessons take place. Any group that finds that ski returns it to the Adventure Center, puts their name on it, and, best of all, gets to re-hide it wherever they choose.

While aspects of the program are examples of extrinsic motivation (the reward of getting one's name on the ski, the reward of hiding it again), the program also fosters team play and problem-solving. "It builds awareness of their surroundings," says Jubok. "They are looking for something that doesn't belong. They spread out over a trail. They designate meeting places where they come back together to plan their next move." Jubok's groups, and any groups that search for the Silver Ski, work together, plan together, and succeed together.

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Jubok advises that you don't need a silver ski hidden in the woods in order to promote this sort of collaboration. "Design a scavenger hunt," she says. Or better yet, have your group design a scavenger hunt. One group can leave messages and clues around the resort in the morning. A second group with a different coach can collect the clues and messages in the afternoon. Dodd says, "Kids need to develop self-esteem. People build self-esteem by meeting challenges, overcoming them, and experiencing successes." These successes, says Dodd, feel good. These positive feelings will bring people back—even more than having fun.

STUDENTS TAKE OWNERSHIP

In a lesson, there is no limit regarding how students may learn the movements that pertain to snowsports—or from whom. Setting up scenarios where students learn from one another (and not just from the instructor) allows students to own the material. "Be specific in asking them to *de*scribe each other and not *pre*scribe," says Gandee. Having students watch each other and talk about what they see has dual results. One, everyone gets feedback. And two, everyone begins to develop an eye for movements.

Sessioning is a great way to introduce new material or new movements. Whether your group is learning to grind on a box for the first time, making its first toe-side turns, or making its first straight runs, turn them loose to experiment on their own. First, select terrain that is safe and appropriate (keeping in mind other groups that may be trying to operate nearby), and make sure that everyone in the group understands where you will be working/playing. Second, demonstrate what the end result might look like. Then let them go, and watch the learning begin.

The first thing you'll notice as students start to experiment are different approaches to learning. Some students will dive in. Others will stand back, watching and scratching their heads. Still others will discuss the activity with a neighbor.

"Almost always," says Gandee, "you'll see people helping each other." One student might give advice to another; other times, students will cheer each other on. Sometimes Gandee asks a successful rider what she or he did, then points the student toward another who hasn't quite mastered the new movement. "I'll say, 'Awesome, why don't you go share that with Joey?'" says Gandee.

Whether it's learning a trick in the park, using partners as sideslipping spotters in a beginning snowboard lesson, or cruising a trail in a "circle-ski" format, putting students on both sides of the teaching-learning spectrum empowers them.

Inevitably, in this format, the group will splinter. Don't worry; instructors needn't fear a little bit of organized chaos! "Sometimes we end up where I expected or it might go in a totally different direction." says Gandee. Large groups might break into several small groups. "There might be five or six different outcomes so I just try to float between groups and whatever good energy they have going, just continue to go in that way," he adds. It isn't obligatory that everyone in a group learn at exactly the same rate or that everyone leave a lesson with the same takeaways.

In order to ensure that your lesson doesn't get out of control, remember to regroup with your students throughout this process. Ask one group what has helped them achieve success. Ask another what is challenging. What does help students take ownership of their learning are settings where they make discoveries, help each other, and go at a pace that they are comfortable with. Whether it's learning a trick in the park, using partners as sideslipping spotters in a beginning snowboard lesson, or cruising a trail in a "circle-ski" format, putting students on both sides of the teaching-learning spectrum empowers them.

The idea that learning should be fun has guided my instructing career for nearly two decades. I have built a bevy of games, jokes, and activities geared toward making people laugh and have fun. Now, however, I have shifted my ultimate goal: to provide lessons that are engaging. Fun is often a side-product of engagement. "Every little thing that a child or a student achieves is like one more little block in their sense of competence and control of the world. And it makes them hungry to want to do more. That, really, is what intrinsic motivation is," says Dodd.

As we share our passion for snowsports with guests, we can take some of what Dodd and other teachers have learned about teaching in the classroom. And maybe you will begin to suspect what I do: that Dodd may know more about snowsports instruction than she gives herself credit for. 32°

Mark Aiken is a Level III-certified alpine and Level I snowboard instructor who supervises in Vermont's Stowe Ski and Ride School. He is a member of Eastern Division's Accredited Children's Education Team. When he is not on the snow, he is a freelance writer, having published in Vermont Magazine, EatingWell, The New York Times, *and others.*

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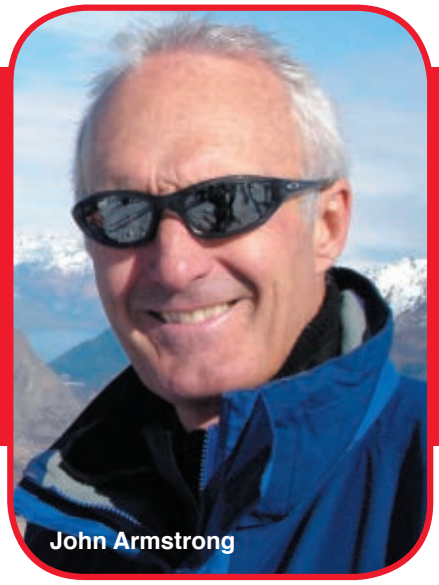
John Armstrong

AmericaT he Fun Starts Here

By Peter Kray

When it comes to freestyle skiing, snowboarding, and surfing in particular, I think we—Americans—not only invented those sports, but continue to be the driving force behind their evolving inspiration, innovation, and culture. Add in how we've super-charged the stoke behind big mountain and telemark skiing, and we might as well be exporting rock and roll with all of the fun and excitement that we help put on the slopes.

My research into the history of American snowsports instruction for the 50/50 project (see page 43) has only promoted that belief. This is especially true when I look back to the 1970s, when PSIA innovators like Horst Abraham, Mike Porter, Chris Ryman, Max Lundberg, Jens Husted, and Jerry Warren put the customer first and created an entirely new, entirely holistic method of teaching that finally combined both psychology and the streamlined technique-based methodology of the skills concept. If there has been a more revolutionary moment in defining the way ski that snowboard lessons are taught around the world, I haven't found it.

Far from being an isolationist, I invite any skier and every snowboarder to come on over to the U. S. of A and throw their own fashion, finesse, and fresh culture into our on-hill melting pot. In that rock and roll analogy, the Rolling Stones and The Beatles sure went a long way toward changing how we play music, but we were Elvis first. And to be honest, things were pretty boring before that.

The Sport is Bigger Than One Slope

By John Armstrong

America has always been a leader precisely because of its willingness to welcome new ideas—especially from other countries. Don't forget that Horst Abraham was an Austrian who came from the old school first, and then to America where he began to work his magic. Skiing came here from overseas, and it was that energy of two cultures bumping against each other—the military model of Austrian teaching and the straight-to-the-point parallel mentality of America—that created the original tension and energy that led to the skills concept. To me, that meshing of ideas is what creates innovation, and whether it's from Italy, France, Austria or even New Zealand, instruction needs those new ideas to constantly be refreshed.

Early international instructor congresses were originally competitions, where each country tried to show that their method of instruction was the most sound by demonstrating with the best looking skiers. But in the late 1970s and early '80s, when we realized we skied quite similarly, the distinguishing point became *how* we taught, not necessarily *what* we taught. As a result, the U.S. had lots of different technical looks and outcomes as we wanted to meet the guest expectation relative to turn shape, speed, snow conditions, and terrain. It helped us clarify how we needed to be diversified and make a point of teaching and demonstrating the whole teaching and technical gamut.

But now, America can no longer lay claim to being the melting pot. The *world* is now the melting pot. Right now I'm watching video from the national teams training in New Zealand where the whole snow world is going every summer to see exactly what the latest techniques are in World Cup slalom and downhill skiing. And snowboarding, a distinctly American innovation, is not 100 percent dominated by Americans, just as we are more competitive with other countries in alpine and nordic now. Everyone is influencing each other, which improves the experience for them all. To be isolationist in the digital world because we think we already know it all is a bit of a conceit. But to say we still want to know what everyone else is up to, well, that's showing real confidence in what we've already got. 32°

John Armstrong, the former PSIA-AASI president and current international vice president for the association, originally hails from New Zealand. 32 Degrees *Special Projects Editor Peter Kray does not. He was raised in Denver, Colorado, and now calls Santa Fe, New Mexico, home. They will be sharing a hotel room at Interski 2011 in St. Anton, Austria, where this continuing conversation is sure to generate content for the PSIA-AASI website (www.TheSnowPros.org).*

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.

WINTER 11 AD INDEX

THROUGH THE **LENS**

Former PSIA Nordic Team member Steve Hindman earns his turns with a trek up the shoulder of Wallaby Peak, in Washington's North Cascades. Worth the hike, don't you think? Photo by Todd Eastman.

WINTER WISHES

Doesn t everyone have snow dreams? You know, the halfpipe looking as smooth as rolled fondant laid down on the *Cake Boss*. Brand new rocker gear stashed in your locker. Perfect wax for a 30-kilometer loop, with the lung power to sizzle it off. Walking into a Level 8 private lesson on a bluebird day after a monster front has pushed through. While all of those would set our hearts racing, our biggest dream is hearing from you. Here are four ways you ll make our dreams come true:

LESSON LEARNED **T ell us about your l ight bulb moments or snowsports life lessons learned the hard way.**

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

THROUGH THE LENS **S ubmit a great shot that really captures the essence of snowsports or snowsports instruction. (Digital pics have to be 300 dpi or more.)**

INQUIRING MINDS **Chime in with your take on a pressing issue of the day.**

INQUIRING MINDS

In our Fall 2010 edition, we asked pros to share their best "aha" moment they experienced while teaching last season. Gerry Bell, PSIA-certified Level II alpine instructor at Maine's Sunday River Ski Resort, realized that not only do instructors need to coach the way guests learn, but also the way they think, in their language. He writes:

"I was coaching a group of MIT graduate students one busy weekend when the question of edge angle came up. Hyper-analytical learners that they are, they wanted to know the 'proper' angle their edges should have to the snow surface. After I elicited guesses ranging from 10 to 45 degrees, one young woman said, 'I don't think it's constant; it increases to a maximum, then decreases to zero at the end of the turn, then increases to a maximum the other way in the next turn.'"

"I think you're onto something," I said. "If you plotted your changing edge angle on a graph, what would you get?" She replied, "I think it would look like a sine wave."

Instant and total comprehension on 11 faces! Followed almost immediately by a big step up for everyone! This fall, I've been reviewing my old math and physics textbooks—yes, Newton's laws of motion, vector diagrams, and conservation of angular momentum. For this year's MIT Weekend, I'm really going to be ready!"

Well done, Gerry! Now for our next "Inquiring Minds" question:

What's been your most successful step to gain repeat customers?

Send your submissions to 32Degrees@thesnowpros.org, with the subject line L ast 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.

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

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Rossignol's PSIA Purchase Plan:
Go to **www.TheSnowPros.org**. Simply log into the MEMBER SERVICES page and click the link for PRO OFFERS to access the latest from Rossignol.

AVENGER 82 TI: "THE SKI" FOR PSIA

"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

Dear Subaru,

"I got my first Subaru when I was four years old. It was a go-kart that I won in a contest. Years later, I'm the proud owner of two Outbacks and looking to add another! I still wish I had that BRAT, though!" - Reid J, Rockford, IL.

Love. It's what makes a Subaru, a Subaru.

SUBARU

Tell your story at subaru.com/dearsubaru