

the **pro rider**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SNOWBOARD INSTRUCTORS | WINTER 2008

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the pro rider

winter 2008

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10th
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anniversary

Cover photo of Cam Hunter, a Level III snowboard instructor and staff trainer at Colorado's Breckenridge Resort, by Scott D. W. Smith



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the pay thing

Much of the feedback your board of directors receives—especially from younger AASI and PSIA members—is about instructor pay rates. Often discussed in meetings and forums, the topic rarely gets a full hearing with concerns viewed objectively from all angles. It's a complex issue in which taking a stand one way or the other can put one at odds with employers, employees, friends, or professional associates.

Some members believe PSIA-AASI's leadership should lobby for higher pay. It's important to note, however, that the association is not a union and has a long-standing policy of not engaging in collective bargaining. Indeed, our particular non-profit classification prohibits it.

Other members say they can't justify renewing their membership because they don't make enough to pay dues or attend events, that the expense of certification cannot be recouped, or that membership benefits do not offset the cost. Since the perceived and realized benefits of membership are highly subjective, that subject merits its own discussion. (See the upcoming [winter 2008] issue of *The Professional Skier*.)

We've all stood before a large group and done the math. If "X" number of people have paid retail price "Y," and you make "Z," then the resort's gross profit for that particular lesson is pretty high. But this has to be balanced against the times you teach small groups or when guests have not paid full retail (through package plans, multi-lesson discounts, etc.). In those instances, your pay may not even be covered. Often, an even higher expense than payroll is the snowsports resort/school overhead, with liability insurance

and worker's compensation far above the norm. Include clerical and supervisory staff, uniforms, physical plant space and maintenance, etc., and net profit is not so high.

Resort and corporate owners do aim for reasonable profit margins from schools as part of a complex formula involving all departments, which, in the end, produces a fairly modest profit for a resort's bottom line. A weak snow year or some other internal or external event can often result in a year of loss. A bonus season might produce good profits, which are often plowed right back into the business for new lifts, snowmaking, etc.


Resorts are finding fewer U.S. citizens willing to accept instructor positions and have to hire foreign workers through limited visa programs. If they raise pay to attract more domestic labor, they have to either absorb the differences (reducing profitability) or raise prices, which can decrease lesson sales. At a seminar last fall, National Ski Areas Association President Michael Berry explained the prevailing free-market model. A small local area, whose customers are school kids in discounted programs—and whose instructors are part-time and local—is not going to be able to, or have to, pay high rates. Conversely, destination areas that are hard to get to and expensive to live at are going to attract a high-end clientele and have to pay higher wages to attract full-time instructors. NSAA's Industry Wage and Salary Survey clearly shows these types of differences in various parts of the country.

Keep in mind that the snowsports business is not high paying at any level. Your boss and his/her bosses are also working in a job that pays less than similar ones

in other businesses. They're there for the same reasons you are; the people, the lifestyle, the mountain, and the experience.

We can choose to be brain surgeons, hamburger flippers, or snowboard instructors (or a brain surgeon who teaches part-time). We can choose to work in one location or another. We can take actions that will make us more valuable employees. If you love the job but aren't making it in your current situation, don't blame the industry; set yourself up for success by making necessary changes. Experience and certification usually command more pay. Maybe the expense of getting certified won't be offset in one season, but the longer your career, the more difference it will make. As for income from tips, you're obviously going to fare better with a well-heeled private clientele than with bunch of 12-year-olds in an evening school program. But your people skills, teaching skills, and other attributes make a difference too.

PSIA-AASI is committed to providing the resources and training that help make its members more valuable to snowsports schools and the overall recreational community. In addition, during the recent insurance crisis, we made a case with insurers and resorts that a staff of PSIA-AASI members likely experiences fewer liability issues than a staff of non-members. Research conducted in Utah and Colorado also suggests that guest return rates are higher when the teaching staff is certified.

Clearly, every time a valid case can be made—either within one school or throughout the country—that PSIA-AASI members improve a resort's bottom line, the more they will be valued. When value is added, one can hope higher pay won't be far behind. 

A close-up photograph of a man wearing a white racing helmet and large goggles with blue and white patterns. He is making a peace sign with his right hand. The background is blue with repeating 'SMITH' logos and skull-and-crossbones icons.

PHENOM AND HOLT

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HOW DID WE GET HERE?



J. RANDY PRICE

As a member of the AASI Snowboard team since 1996—and team coach since 2000—Randy has been part innovator, part cat herder. He's been snowboarding for 22 years, which is how long he's been teaching the sport. Randy currently lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and lists his area affiliation as "wandering aimlessly."

First snowboard: Snowtech (a HUGE name in snowboards back in the day!)

Top snowboarding moments:

1. My first year teaching I had a student who received "lessons until he could ride" as a birthday present from his wife. We went out every morning for an hour or so for a few weeks, until he was comfortable on his own. He was determined to get it and I was determined to not let him fall. This student taught me that anyone can learn to ride; he started snowboarding on his 80th birthday.
2. Riding with the national team members, Alpine, Nordic and, of course, Snowboard. Looking around at the variety of styles and

seeing their smiles as they rip off unbelievable moves on crazy terrain is the thing that keeps me working on my own riding. One day at a random mountain I looked up through a bunch of avalanche debris to see the Alpine Team rocketing through it as if it were waist-deep pow. It was awe-inspiring.

Most humiliating snowboarding moment: I had a private-lesson client—a cute private-lesson client—and I was holding her hands as she learned to sideslip. (Yes it was necessary; sometimes we just have to do those things.) I was uphill of her, so she was on her toes. Well, she caught her edge, and SLAM! I tried pulling my hands away but she just locked onto me and pulled me down.

Finally I got my hands free but ended up with my face in her crotch and my arms kind of splayed out between and under her legs. I'm, of course, on her board so she can't move; and her legs are on my arms so I can't move. About that time a ski school clinic skis by, with each instructor just looking down at me in this precarious situation. No one offered help, but almost everyone had a comment.

Training goals for the season: I want to get back to exploring mountains, venturing off into tight trees and finding out what's over that roll. I want to work on getting crazy flexible and strengthening my ankles. The lower I can make that move the less time I need for planning.



LANE CLEGG

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

been riding for more than 20 years, and teaching for 19.

First snowboard: The first one I actually owned (I borrowed a lot) was a K2 Gyrator back in about 1986.

Top snowboarding moments:

1. One of the countless "top 10 days of my life" at Snowbird when it was dumping so hard I couldn't see, but it was so deep it didn't matter.
2. Any of the few rare days I get to ride hard with friends who are now scattered across the country. We know each other's riding so well that we dare play high-speed follow-the-leader through trees, and trust each other so much we allow each other to spot landings off cliffs which we then take sight unseen. There are very few people I trust to do either of those things, so any of those days is exceptional.

Most humiliating snowboarding moment: When I was spit at from someone on the lift while snowboarding down through Alta ski area. The jeers we got from the lift were one thing, but that was a little over the top.

Training goals for the season: Continue to improve my ability to connect with athletes on the psychological level and help them mentally (and physically) conquer their hurdles.

Are you old enough to remember the dark days? When there were no corked 720s? No backside lipslides? No full-on Euro carves or towering pow plumes sprayed off the heelside? No ... *gasp!* ... snowboarding? ■ Yes, it's true. There was a time when people had to rely on skis to have fun on snow. Harsh. Snowboarding owes much to the wild pioneers who first strapped a wood slat to their feet and cast their lot with gravity, but the sport would probably have gone the way of lawn darts if it weren't for the people who figured out how to ride, then figured out how to teach others how to ride. Early snowboarding instructors were often new converts themselves, but soon they were hooked ... and determined to hook everyone else who was brave enough to sign up for a lesson. ■ It took a while for snowboarding to emerge from the shadows cast by the skiing monolith. Indeed, in the early days snowboard instruction was a specific discipline within the Professional Ski Instructors of America. But a decade ago, the riders—having forged their own identity and proved their staying power—got their own home, the American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI); and their own magazine, *The Pro Rider* (TPR). ■ In honor of AASI's 10th anniversary, TPR asked several longtime snowboarding instructors to recount their early days in the sport and share insights on how snowboarding and the righteous calling of snowboard instruction have evolved. From out of the dark days these men and women—and countless others—emerged to help usher snowboarding into the light.



SANDRA GUZMAN

Sandra teaches at Utah's Snowbird Resort and is an examiner and clinic leader for Intermountain Division. She is Level III certified in snowboarding and alpine skiing, and is a Level I nordic instructor. Sandra is also accredited in fundamental freestyle and children's instruction. Initially a ski instructor (for 22 years), she's been teaching snowboarding for 19 years.

First snowboard: Sims Halfpipe 145

Top snowboarding moments:

1. Touring with friends in Chamonix, France
2. Racing with friends for first tracks in Mineral Basin on a stellar powder day (over 3 feet) at the 'Bird
3. Dropping El Chimenea couloir in La Parva, Chile

Most humiliating snowboarding moment: Only one? Here's a favorite: a huge, full-layout dive off my snowdeck while coming down (of course) the beginner run, in street clothes. Guess it got hung up a bit in the 3 to 4 inches of powder.

Training goals for the season: New lines, always new lines! Seamless fluidity at speed through all terrain/conditional variances. Peace ... and powder. Share this experientially with my clients and instructors.



AMY LOUISA

A Level III snowboard instructor at California's Mammoth Mountain, Amy is also an examiner, trainer and children's clinician in AASI's Western Division. An Australian, she's been snowboarding for 12 years, and teaching the sport for 10.

First snowboard: Morrow Lunch Tray 137

Top snowboarding moments:

1. Any bluebird powder day
2. Passing exams
3. Riding with friends

Most humiliating snowboarding moment: I hit a powder jump during a training clinic, landed fine, but then hit some traverse ruts. I smacked my knee into my face and broke my nose.

Training goals for the season: Make my clinics more interactive and fun, and still get across the information that I want. Also get in more riding.



ROB BEVIER

Rob, a Level III instructor, teaches at Okemo Mountain in Vermont. He is an examiner in AASI's Eastern Division and has been teaching snowboarding 15 of the 18 years he has been riding.

First snowboard: Burton Air. It was second-hand, bent, and ugly—but was it ever fun!

Top snowboarding moments:

1. Poaching Alta during the last team tryouts!

2. Breaking a rear hard-boot binding bail at 40 mph while taking my level II exam—behind and on a crash course with Gordon Robbins at Stowe, Vermont.
3. Each time I showed my girls what this snowboarding thing was all about. They were 2 years old.

Most humiliating snowboarding moment: There are so many choices, it's difficult to pick just one. Okay, during examiner training way back in the day I did a full-on flyswatter crash in front of the entire education staff—again at Stowe, Vermont. I really need to stay away from that place.

Training goals for the season: Be able to ride at a level that is acceptable as an examiner and not get broken again.

continued



LOWELL HART

An AASI trainer/examiner in Rocky Mountain Division and two-term member of the Snowboard Team (1988 to 1996), Lowell is on staff at the Vail Ski and Snowboard School. Lowell has been riding since—get this—1968 and has been teaching snowboarding since 1985.

First snowboard: Brunswick Snurfer Super Racing Model

Top snowboarding moments:

1. Setting the world record for high-altitude snowboarding, on Aconcagua (Argentina) in 1988.

2. Climbing/snowboarding the world's highest active volcanoes, in Ecuador in 1990.
 3. Representing the United States at Interski, in Nozawa, Japan in 1995.
- Most humiliating snowboarding moment:** Before we were allowed to use the lifts at Stowe, we convinced a kid to help us smuggle our boards up the mountain for Easter sunrise service, gift-wrapped as a "present for grandma." We were almost as stoked to have put one over on management, as we were to free ride without having to hike. But our delight soon turned to disappointment because the entire mountain was coated in a sheet of impenetrable ice; which was unrideable on the early gear. After flailing down the top of the trail we hiked back up and took the lift back down.

Training goals for the season: Backcountry guide certification and free-style accreditation

THE BURNING QUESTIONS

When and where did you learn to snowboard? And what got you into it?

LOWELL: My first time was in 1968 when I rode a friend's Snurfer down a powder slope in his backyard. I snurfed occasionally for the next several years, but didn't start riding seriously until the equipment evolved. In 1983, I started riding all day, every day, in Stowe, Vermont.

In those days snowboarders weren't allowed to use the lifts; we had to hike. We wanted longer rides and better snow so we started hiking and riding the ski trails at Stowe, always in search of powder because it was much more fun to ride soft snow on the early equipment. Despite frequent appeals to Stowe's management to allow us to use the lifts, as boarders we were banned from the mountain. The ski patrol had standing orders to bust us for theft of service and criminal trespass if they caught us on the slopes. It was an ongoing game of cat-and-mouse: always trying to avoid "the man" while poaching the best snow on the mountain.

When a storm was forecast we'd hitch a ride with the grooming crew, sleep on the floor of the Octagon, and catch first tracks at dawn. It was especially satisfying to blast turns in virgin powder right under the lift. Even though we were banned from the mountain, you would always hear cheers from the chairs as we rode past.

RANDY: I learned to snowboard at Purgatory in Southern Colorado in the winter of 1985.

SANDRA: 1986 at Park West, a.k.a. Wolf Mountain, a.k.a. The Canyons, a.k.a. who knows what their new name will be with the new acquisition. A friend who was one of the early snowboard instructors used to let me borrow his gear. I didn't have any Sorels but I have small feet, so I just wore my ski boots unbuckled and adjusted the wire bails (remember those?) to fit around them. He'd give me a few pointers. I'd go out and beat myself up until it hurt too much to ride anymore, then I would ski for the rest of the day. Next day, back at it. Sometimes I would rent a board from a local shop, but I would have to remove all the skegs so the thing would turn on groomed terrain.

ROB: It was 1989 in Bromley, Vermont. I was not one of the originals in that area, with this guy named Jake Carpenter at Stratton making all the waves and setting the pace. I just got sucked into the sport like all the rest.

I got into it because it looked really fun; the people were relaxed and approachable, not stuck in their ways. It was new, really difficult to learn at the time, and a challenge—you know, something out of the normal day-to-day ski thing.

LANE: I started riding with buddies on borrowed equipment back in the '80s. We started off just hiking and then did resort riding once it was allowed at a couple places, like Brighton and Park West (now The Canyons).

Eventually Snowbird opened some of their lifts to snowboarding and we began riding/teaching there. At first it was just something cool to do with your friends, and it felt pretty good in the pow. Pretty soon it became more fun than skiing, and I was hooked.

AMY: I was a lift operator at Perisher Blue in Australia in 1995, and decided snowboarding looked pretty cool. I taught myself how to sideslip and went everywhere for about a week. Then I decided it was time to get a lesson and learn how to turn. I got beat down so hard, so many times, but I still love snowboarding.

Why did you become an instructor?

RANDY: Beer money and a free pass. My check didn't cover my bar tab for several years, but the season pass enabled a lot of days on snow!

LANE: They needed someone to teach snowboarding and I was already teaching skiing at Snowbird. It was something different to do, which made it fun, although there weren't many lessons at first. We would start off the day in snowboard boots and by the end of the day had probably switched back and forth from ski boots four or five times, trying to find some work.

ROB: You know the old joke: "What's the difference between a snowboard instructor and a beginner?"

"About 10 minutes."



ROB

Well, that rang pretty true for a while. Your boss would come up and say, "I have someone who wants a snowboard lesson and I saw you messing around with a board a few days ago. Get your butt on a snowboard and show the client what you know."

SANDRA: I got into ski teaching in college for the free lift pass and loved the access to the mountain. When I got hired as a ski instructor at Snowbird (longer season, steeper terrain!), and they found out I could snowboard, I was immediately pressed into service. It didn't matter that I was pretty much self-taught and had no clue how to go about introducing someone else to the sport.

AMY: Teaching was definitely the rock star job on the hill. I had done my time on lifts and inside work, but being on snow everyday looked pretty good. It was, and still is.

LOWELL: In 1984 I started riding at Jay Peak, one of the first mountains in New England to allow snowboarding. We were some of the very first riders on the mountain, and skiers were constantly stopping us to ask about snowboarding. Most of them

LOWELL



had never seen a snowboard before. Many were eager to try it. It was clear to me that snowboard lessons would be very successful. So with a friend I helped start a snowboard school—one of the first—at Jay Peak.

We convinced the management to offer a "learn to snowboard" weekend in March of '85. Jake Carpenter at Burton sent some demo gear. Many people learned to ride that weekend—probably more in spite of my teaching than because of it. Even so, the weekend was such a success I continued instructing through the end of the season. The next season we launched a full-service snowboard program: lessons, rentals, retail, and snowboard certification (when first allowed, most areas required each rider to demonstrate an appropriate level of skill and awareness in order to use the lifts and slopes).

How has the approach to snowboard instruction changed over the years?

RANDY: Are you kidding?! My first board had five metal fins and no sidecut. It wouldn't turn. Learning to ride in the '80s was a survivor scenario. You buckled your victims (students) onto their boards, literally with Fastex buckles, and headed to the top of the mountain. Two to three hours later, when you got to the bottom of the mountain, they could either snowboard or they were never going to try it again.

It's funny, though, how some things stick around. We used to have people stand with most of their weight on their front foot because their front foot was more or less in the center of the board; the back foot was right at the tail. Now we stand pretty centered on the decks, but you still hear instructors telling students to put most of their weight on the front foot.

AMY: When I started, we weren't encouraged to ask students what they wanted to learn. "You are in the level 2 class, you WILL learn how to turn." Nowadays every lesson is different—because of who is standing in front of me, what they want to learn, and what they bring to the table.

LANE: In the beginning there was no real approach to teaching. We were making it up as we went along, using our students as guinea pigs (unbeknownst to them). As there became a bit

continued

SANDRA

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of a system to it, we were able to predict the outcome of our students and knew about how far they could go.

Then, as the equipment became easier to ride and more user friendly, we adapted our teaching methods to take advantage of some of the characteristics built into the boards—sidecut, a more centered stance, and flex patterns. This allowed us to help our students progress that much faster from rank beginner to someone making turns.

LOWELL: In the earliest days, you learned about teaching snowboarding through intuition (read: trial and error—often at the expense of your students). You tried to describe and demonstrate things that worked for you, but without a deep systematic knowledge of snowboarding, biomechanics, teaching, or learning. As snowboard instruction developed, there was much more shared knowledge, resulting in better training for aspiring instructors and more consistent positive experiences for guests.

These days, whether you are a new or seasoned instructor, you can benefit from participating in excellent training programs and by checking out websites, DVDs, magazines, books, and other resources.

SANDRA: I think we have shifted from teaching people “progressions” to introducing them to gear and sensations and becoming interactive with the terrain. We introduce people to freedom, creativity, and understanding versus one specific technique.

ROB: Well, we got organized for one thing. Back in the day (I love to be able to say that; it makes me sound old), we shared what seemed to work with each other in clinics and exams. I remember in my first exam the examiner asked me how he was doing. I was worried about how *I* was doing, so what could I say?

A consensus was rare and what worked one week was “old school” the next. Remember, this was before AASI’s inception. Once we got some organization behind us we were able to get together and come to what I call “Violent Agreement.” That’s where everyone is saying the same thing—but from different perspectives—and they don’t see that they’re actually saying the same thing. Someone had to put it all down on paper and let each individual say, “See, I told you I was right!” That was AASI’s job in the beginning. It has been a bumpy road, but many people pulled together and got it done.

What, in your estimation, has been the biggest change in the evolution of snowboard instruction?

LANE: There have been several big changes, probably the biggest being the concept of twisting the board to create an outcome. Many, if not all changes, were driven by the technology evolving. The idea of twist would not have been possible on the earliest boards, because of their design.



LOWELL: I can’t say as there has been any single earth-shaking change. Rather, just like in riding, there has been a steady progression from the earliest days to the present, as people have benefited from the work done by those who came before them and then built upon it.

During the earliest years we were simply trying stuff and seeing what worked. We were also borrowing heavily from ski and other sports instruction models. The development of training programs and other educational resources (by AASI and other organizations) has been the most important change for snowboard instruction, in that it ensures that guests work with trained professional instructors and have a high-quality experience right from the start.

SANDRA: I would say the biggest change is the availability of instructional material: be it the many international manuals, freestyle how-to’s, kid-specific information, websites, forums, and the many qualified, talented and dedicated instructors out there on the hill.

The resources available now are significantly improved. The evolution of snowboard instruction has been exactly that: we started from scratch, then some of the educational pioneers got things on paper, a few videos came out, then came the revisions, another manual, then a few more revisions. Keeping the educational material relevant to an ever-changing sport is a perpetual task.

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AMY: Availability of knowledge. When I started teaching I had to go to the ski instructors to get answers to my questions. "So, I've got this kid . . . What do I do?" was an average, everyday question from me. A lot of the questions I was asking now have answers that are easily available and are very relevant to snowboarding: Why can't that 4-year-old turn like me? Why do chicks ride different from guys? Why is one board better in the pipe than another?

RANDY: In the first 10 years it was equipment—sidecut, camber, highbacks, metal edges, boots with support. In the next 10 years it was the mass of people that came into snowboarding. For several years it was only the most athletic that even considered trying snowboarding, then everyone showed up and instructors had to change the pacing and the methods of communication. They had to actually teach how snowboarding worked.

I guess there was a revelation somewhere in the early '90s when we, as instructors, actually learned how we snowboarded. It took a few more years before we learned how to teach it.

ROB: The equipment, for sure. It was not uncommon for a first-timer to come to a lesson on the exact same gear you were on as the "expert." Nowadays—with the whole "Learn to Ride" thing—it is soooo much easier to learn and to teach. The broken wrist syndrome was caused by a board that wasn't soft enough or had no forgiving design. It wasn't uncommon to hear the staff talk about how many they "broke" on a busy weekend. That doesn't happen today; it's way more user friendly.

What has been the greatest innovation in snowboarding or snowboard instruction; the thing that made you say, "I wish I'd thought of that!"

LANE: There have been so many, some built upon the other innovations. The idea of having inserts in boards so that you could have semi unlimited binding-placement options was really foreign. When we first started out, we would stand on our boards and outline our feet with a marker to show where we wanted our bindings to go. We would then drill holes and mount the boards using all manner of screws. Now we have almost unlimited stance options with the hole patterns that come on boards.

Or take sidecut; when we started out there was very little, and turning was done by pushing our boards where we wanted them to go (we, of course, called it steering). Then sidecut was added and all of a sudden we could use edge angle (in combination with everything else) to create turns. Or high-back bindings, or cap straps, or . . .

SANDRA: I wish I had thought of the forward-swivel binding for ease in skating through the lift lines. Right.

I like to think I'm being creative all the time. I try to come up with different approaches, games, sensations, and experiences specific to who I am teaching. I will, however, unabashedly admit that when I come across some other instructor's super cool way to teach X-Y-Z, I will snag it, use it, mix it up, and make it my own—of course, letting them know how good their gig is.



AMY

I encourage any of the instructors involved in training to explore and share ideas with their peers. I learn something every day from riding; no matter who I ride with, their experience, or ability.

AMY: Wrist guards, butt pads, helmets that look cool (and have headphones built in), and baggy pants. But most of all, the equipment in general has gotten soooo much better, and has made it easier for everyone to improve. Technology has really helped our sport be more accessible to everyone.

LOWELL: In terms of equipment, it'd be highbacks on bindings, metal edges on boards, UHMW [ultra-high molecular weight] bases, high-performance shapes, and flex patterns. With regard to teaching, I'd say AASI's Snowboard Teaching System, slam-free approaches to learning, and the use of video and computer technology to enhance learning.

ROB: The trick ditch, a.k.a. the halfpipe. That venue alone brought snowboarding into the living room of a non-snowboard-educated populace that would have not have even known of its existence prior to witnessing the antics in the pipe.



DOUGLAS BERNARD

What impact has the popularity of freestyle and park-and-pipe riding had upon snowboard instruction?

RANDY: Unbelievable! Too much to really describe; 10 years ago they were called snowboard parks, now they're terrain parks. It didn't just change snowboard instruction, it changed snowsports instruction. Everyone wants to fly/spin and ride a rail.

LOWELL: It has been huge. From the first issues of *Absolutely Radical* to Greg Stump and early snowboard films, to Winter X-Games and the Olympics, freestyle snowboarding has captured the imagination of millions of people, which in turn has excited interest in the sport.

AMY: I like it that in all levels of certification there are freestyle elements. Kids want to learn how to grind and jump before they can even stop. I think it's great.

It keeps the sport relevant. They see Shaun White on TV going HUGE in the pipe, and want to be able to do the same. So even at a low end we can teach them how to do butters, ollies, nose rolls, and 50/50s on a box. It keeps them coming back for more.

LANE: It's made us look at terrain very differently. Instead of thinking that a beginner run needed to be a certain pitch or

flatness, we started looking at using terrain variations to help the student. This extends all the way up the teaching progression in terms of introducing freestyle-type moves to most of our students, even if we don't necessarily go into the park to do them. It's the idea of getting our students excited about the prospect of doing "freestyle" no matter their age or ability.

ROB: Everyone wants to be Shaun White or Hannah Teter, whether they can turn and stop or not. It has brought us mass amounts of business, but it also brought us challenges within the insurance/risk management world.

With the popularity of freestyle and the speed with which it happened, it has become increasingly important to make sure your staff is dishing out correct information, while not sounding like a lawyer.

SANDRA: FS and park/pipe are a huge draw for our sport and most mountains, even non-mountains, if you consider some of the innovative terrain parks and features in flatland areas. That aspect of the sport has inspired and cultivated an open-ended aspect of riding. What's next?

On the flip-side, amazing media availability has people watching the tricks without understanding the fundamentals. They're giving up solid all-mountain ride time in favor of "the scene." You can jump from day one if you want, but screen time does not translate directly into motor skills without hill time. Also—and unfortunately—perceived liability and insurance companies are dictating how we, as instructors, can participate. This resort management challenge effectively determines to what degree we can genuinely assist our students.

What's the most unusual and ultimately ill-advised teaching tactic you've come across?

RANDY: The hand drag stop; or any variation of dragging your arms to help your board turn or stop.

LANE: I have heard someone teach a rodeo using the phrase "roll up to the lip of the jump and, at the last minute, turn slightly and hook your heel edge in the snow; then just look back between your bindings and spot your landing." It might work, but the possibility for catastrophe is high.

SANDRA: Using poles to teach adults. Granted, gear has come a long way since that tactic.

LOWELL: Well, the instructor who knocked himself unconscious twice in one season while demonstrating jumps off the money booter probably warrants mention. However, I think the most common ill-advised tactic I've seen is for instructors to bring their beginner students up the hill before each student has mastered the fundamental skills necessary to control their speed and direction. This can result in painful slams, increased likelihood of injury, and lost opportunities to create lifelong riders.

ROB: I remember—and still have the scars to prove it—an exercise where I was asked to release my uphill edge, sideslip downhill and engage my downhill edge, then finish the turn.

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After failing miserably a few times at that, we ramped it up a bit and added some speed. Not a pretty sight! We thought that one through a bit and came up with a revised, less deadly tactic.

What has surprised you the most as the sport of snowboarding has evolved?

RANDY: The continued growth of terrain parks has shocked me. Not because of liability, but from the standpoint of fun; with all the natural terrain available it blows my mind how many snowboarders choose to hike all day for a launch ramp or 40-foot piece of rail.

LANE: How mainstream it got. I often joke that had we known how many people would be doing it, we would have sabotaged more lessons to keep the numbers down. It's really cool to see all segments of the population out enjoying the same thing I do, but on one level I miss the exclusivity.

SANDRA: That some people and mountain resorts still think it is a "fad."

LOWELL: How fast it grew. As the equipment evolved and areas allowed lift access, I knew snowboarding would quickly become popular. Even so, I'm still surprised at how quickly it took off. When we were first hiking the slopes and getting hassled for riding, I never imagined we'd soon see snowboarding receiving prime-time coverage on ESPN's Sports Center or featured in the Winter Olympics.

AMY: I was watching TV the other day with the sound off. There was a tennis match just finishing up. The guy who lost was being interviewed by the reporter, when all of a sudden he grabbed the microphone out of the reporter's hand and walked over to do an impromptu interview with the winner. They were joking around and obviously having a good time. It reminded me of the footage from the top of the pipe at the Winter X-Games.

The way that our out-of-control, banned-from-the-resorts, rat bag, punk, rule-breaking culture has influenced the rest of society in such a positive way is what surprises me the most.

ROB: How good the young kids are in the park. Man, there is nothing more depressing than getting your butt kicked by some 10-year-old kid. Rails and big jumps are where you cut your teeth today.

As an instructor, what has been your greatest resource or inspiration?

SANDRA: The mountain. And my students.

LANE: It would have to be the concept of building a better mousetrap. I've always felt that there has to be an easier way to do things—anything. So I applied that to snowboarding right off and tried to change how we were teaching to improve the outcome.

AMY: The greatest resource has been the trainers that I have had along the way, as well as my peers. The greatest inspiration is my clients. People ask me if my job gets boring, because I repeat the same lesson over and over. I tell them that if I choose to be



RANDY

an instructor who presses "Play" and says that same stuff as yesterday, then I would be bored and would have given up long ago. The thing that keeps me fresh, is knowing that no two people are alike, and if you spend the energy and the time to find out who is in your lesson—and then twist your brain to tailor the lesson to their needs—it is very rewarding.

LOWELL: Like most instructors, I'm thrilled to share the excitement when people challenge themselves and do something they've never done before. Whether it's with beginners excited to control their speed and direction, or with experienced riders excited to hike and ride secret powder stashes or near-vertical chutes, it's an electric moment when someone with a challenging goal ultimately "gets it."

Other sources, no less profound, include the people I work with and being able to ride great snow, every day, on unbelievably beautiful mountains.

ROB: My greatest resource has been my coach in college. Snowboarding was not around then (heck, dirt was just invented),

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the figment

keir dillon



THE FIGMENT: KEIR DILLON. STYLING: JESSICA HARRIS. HAIR: JESSICA HARRIS. MAKEUP: JESSICA HARRIS. PROP STYLING: JESSICA HARRIS. SET DESIGN: JESSICA HARRIS. COSTUME DESIGNER: JESSICA HARRIS. GROOMER: JESSICA HARRIS. PHOTOGRAPHER: JESSICA HARRIS. ART DIRECTION: JESSICA HARRIS. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JESSICA HARRIS. PRODUCED BY: JESSICA HARRIS. WRITTEN BY: JESSICA HARRIS. DIRECTED BY: JESSICA HARRIS.



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GREAT MOMENTS

in Snowboarding History

BY STEVE LYSAKER, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Beginning

1917-1918: Longing for the invention of cafeteria trays, soldiers stationed in Europe during World War I stand surf-style on barrel staves and ride them downhill for recreation.

1929: M.J. "Jack" Burchett binds plywood plank to feet with clothesline and horse reins, attempts to glide down snow-covered hill. Great Depression puts damper on national quest for radness, stifles potential trend.

1938: Chicago resident Vern Wicklund allegedly descends small hill on homemade, snowboard-like sled. At the 2000 Snowsports Industries America show, Burton Snowboards unveils what is purported to be footage of this historic event (although some attendees believe the film a hoax). Wicklund and coinventors Gunnar and Harvey Burgeson were

granted a patent for their device—which features footstraps and an upturned nose eerily similar to early Burton models—in 1939.

The 60s and 70s

1963: Eventual industry legend Tom Sims crafts a "skateboard for snow" in his New Jersey junior high shop class using pine, carpet, and aluminum sheeting. The finished product bears no resemblance to the assigned birdhouse.

1965: The Snurfer is created by Michigan-based chemical engineer Sherman Poppen, who bolts two skis together and attaches a rope to the front tips for steering. Patented by Poppen and produced by Brunswick, the Snurfer sells more than a million units in the ensuing decade, spawning organized races with cash prizes. Future ESPN executives take note, begin fretting over



marketability of the name.

1974: Based on designs he made with New Jersey surfboard shaper Wayne Stoveken, Dimitrije Milovich receives a patent for

a "snow surfboard," which would evolve into the metal-edged Swallowtail. Soon after, Milovich founds Winterstick and receives national attention in *Newsweek*, *Powder*, and even *Playboy* (although despite its name, the board does not receive centerfold treatment).

1975: Bob Weber is granted a patent for a "mono-ski," the design for which features sidecut and releasable boot bindings. Calling the device a "ski board," Weber would later approach Sims—then at

the forefront of the California skateboarding craze as the owner of Sims Skateboards—about making his idea a reality.

1977: After years of riding and tinkering with Snurfers, John “Jake” Burton Carpenter—freshly graduated from New York University—moves to Vermont and begins producing laminated hardwood boards with water ski-style bindings that increase the rider’s control and the board’s maneuverability.

1977: Milovich receives confirmation from resort insurance carriers that snowboards are considered directional devices and are covered under liability policies. Resort managers slap collective forehead, mutter a pre-“Simpsons” “D’oh!”

1978: Alta, Utah, ironically (and unwittingly) becomes a snowboard testing ground when Chuck Barfoot, a longtime friend of Sims and a lead craftsman for Sims Skateboards, heads to an area near the resort’s boundary with Snowbird to try out the physical manifestation of Weber’s ski board: the Flying Yellow Banana. Alta management considers focus group to come up with an official name for the abominable practice of standing upright on a single board and sliding downhill so they can ban it.

1979: Armed with Wintersticks, Bob Klein, Terry Kidwell, and other high school-age Lake Tahoe locals create what is widely considered to be the first snow-based halfpipe. Word spreads, and by the early 1980s the site in California is a mecca for trailblazing freestyle boarders.

The 80s

1981: Twelve burgeoning riders, many with creatively handmade equipment (like bungee cord “bindings”), take to Colorado’s Ski Cooper for King of the Mountain, the first organized snowboard competition, which includes slalom and freestyle events.

1982: Snurfing enthusiast Paul Graves arranges the National Snosurfing Championships at the Suicide Six Ski Area in Vermont. Media coverage of the sport intensifies, as *Sports Illustrated*, the *Today* show, and *Good Morning America* among others report on the contest. Although no governing body exists at this point, competitions continue to spread across the country.

1983: The competition between competitions heats up as Carpenter organizes the National Snowboarding Championships (later called the U.S. Open Snowboarding Championships) at Snow Valley, Vermont, and Sims holds the first World Snowboarding Championships (a.k.a. The Worlds) at Lake Tahoe’s Soda Springs Winter Resort.

1983: Partnering with Burton, Vermont’s Stratton Mountain launches the first snowboard school.

1983: Inspired by a Winterstick Team demonstration at France’s then-new Les Arcs 2000 resort, Frenchman Régis Rolland trades his skis for a Swallowtail and a starring role in *Apocalypse Snow*. Equal parts kitschy melodrama and extreme action, the film follows Rolland as he tries to escape an evil gang of monoskiers. The movie spawns two sequels and remains a touchstone of snowsports filmmaking.

1984: Snowboarding goes Hollywood as Bond, James Bond, rides in “A View to a Kill” (with Sims as one of the stuntmen for Roger Moore’s 007).

1985: Washington’s Mt. Baker, one of the few areas to allow boarders at the time, hosts its first Legendary Banked Slalom. Although no longer held on Super Bowl Sunday, the slalom is still an annual event and has grown so legendary that many riders have to be turned away.

1985: *Absolutely Radical* (later *International Snowboard Magazine*) becomes the first publication exclusively devoted to snowboarding. Knowing his audience, publisher Tom Hsieh jam packs the mag with pictures.

1985: Carving boards emerge in the United States and Europe as Mike Olson of Gnu and Serge Dupraz, then with Hot Snowboards, release decks with parabolic sidecuts, the influence of which extends to—brace yourself—alpine skis.

1985: The first signature snowboard, bearing Lake Tahoe wunderkind Terry Kidwell’s name, is introduced by Sims. The board is also notable for being the first freestyle model with a rounded tail.

1987: Due to the growing popularity of the sport and requests from manufacturers for snowboard-specific training, Professional Ski Instructors of America begins developing an education program for snowboard instructors.

1987: Twin-tip and freestyle boards emerge.

1987: *Parade* magazine declares snowboarding the worst new sport of the year. Snowboarders declare *Parade* lamest magazine of all time.

1989: Arapahoe Basin, Colorado, hosts the first snowboard instructor certification program, with 14 riders in attendance. Many of those pioneering educators go on to contribute to PSIA’s *Snowboard Ski Instruction Manual*, which is modeled after the *Alpine ATS* book and published later the same year.



continued

The 90s

1990: The first PSIA Snowboard Team, comprised of 13 riders from various divisions, is created.

1990: Picking up the pieces from the short-lived National Association of Professional Snowboarders, more than 100 riders from five nations form the International Snowboarding Federation (ISF), conceived as a sanctioning body for international competition operated by and for riders.

1990-91: Courting a constituency that's multiplying like Viagra-addicted rabbits, Colorado's Vail Resort and California's Bear Mountain develop obstacle areas for snowboarders. The terrain park bandwagon quickly fills to capacity.

1993: Despite the existence of competitive governing bodies like ISF, the International Ski Federation (FIS) votes to recognize snowboarding and plan its own World Cup tour. The move is not immediately embraced by the boarding community (legendary Norwegian rider Terje Haakonsen would boycott the 1998 Olympics over FIS involvement). FIS retains its control of the sport in international competition, while the ISF folds in 2002.

1993: PSIA produces the *Snowboard Skiing* manual. Although "Snowboard" receives top billing, "Skiing" gets a larger font. "Snowboard" pouts in trailer, vows revenge.

1994: International Olympic Committee demonstrates pulse, cultural awareness in naming snowboarding an official Olympic sport.

1994: Ride Snowboards hits the NASDAQ stock exchange, becomes first snowboard company to go public. Many riders mark the marriage of snowboarding and Wall Street by locking themselves indoors, awaiting inevitable plague of locusts.

1994: Boards designed specifically for women—including Sims' Tina Basich and Burton's Shannon Dunn pro models—hit the marketplace.

1995: Snowboard instructors attending the International Ski Instructors Congress held in Nozawa, Japan, are initially told they will not be permitted on the demonstration hill. Event officials eventually reconsider.

1997: AASI is officially established as a brand, complete with snazzy, award-winning logo.

1997: U.S. Skiing changes its name to the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) after becoming the official national governing body for snowboarding.

1997: Snowboarding helps usher in the inaugural Winter X Games with slope-style, boardercross, big air, and halfpipe events.

1998: *The Pro Rider* debuts. Some hail the launch of a snowboarding magazine with an educational bent, others complain of too many words.

1998: AASI Snowboard Team contributes to the *Snowboard Manual*, and in a bloodless coup bars "Skiing" from the title.

1998: In Nagano, Japan, halfpipe and giant slalom become the first snowboarding events at a Winter Olympics.



The 00s

2002: U.S. riders Ross Powers, Danny Kass, and J.J. Thomas sweep the Olympic halfpipe event in Park City, Utah, pushing snowboarding firmly into the mainstream and forcing awkward exchanges with Katie Couric and Matt Lauer.


2002: Just one year after opening its slopes to snowboarders, Aspen reaches an agreement with ESPN to host the Winter X Games for the next seven years.

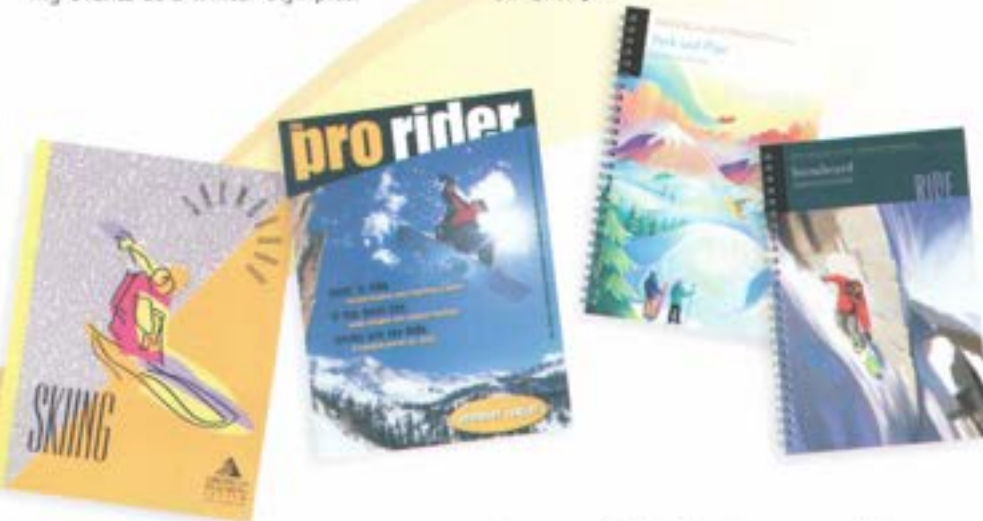
2003: AASI's *Snowboard Movement Analysis Handbook* is published, giving snowboard instructors a tool nearly as indispensable as their pocket drivers.

2004: Addressing ongoing demand for more instructor resources, AASI unveils its *Focus on Riding* DVD and the *Children's Ski and Snowboard Movement Guide*.

2005: The *Park and Pipe Instructor's Guide*, developed jointly by PSIA and AASI, begins to find its way into the homes of many a snowsports instructor—temporarily quieting anticipation of Sony's PlayStation 3 gaming system.

2007: USSA breaks ground on the Center for Excellence in Park City, Utah, which will house high-tech training facilities for team members and affiliated clubs across the country.

2007: AASI publishes the *Snowboard Instructor's Guide*, and braces itself for a buying frenzy the likes of which hasn't been seen since Suzanne Somers' debut on QVC. 



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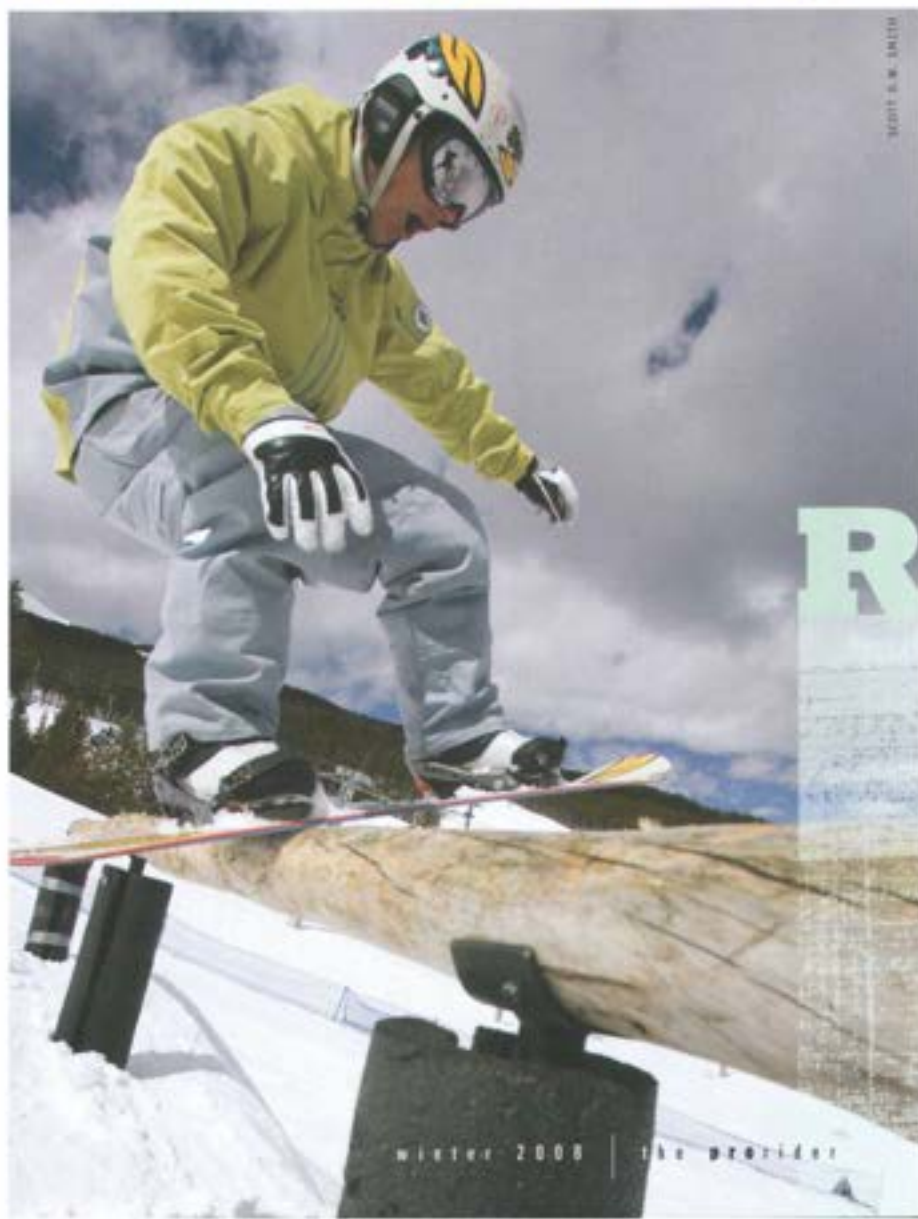
53 Tips that Rip!

(AND SOME THAT MAY EVEN SUCK!)

Let's face it; most tip lists suck. Why? Because not every tip works every time. Tips are just that—tips, not commandments. Conditions, weather, and all kinds of student-related stuff—skill level, style, stance, body type, attitude, and level of fatigue—effect whether a given tip will work.

Sure, you can memorize tips or etch them into stone if you want to, but that ain't gonna turn you into Moses! For some students, a tip could make their day. For others, well, a tip might do just about as much good as putting a Band-Aid™ on a gaping wound. As the instructor, it is up to you to figure that out.

But you have to start somewhere, right? So, for better or worse, here is a list of tips from five members of the AASI Snowboard Team. Depending on how you apply them, they'll either suck or be sick. Choose wisely.





PHOTOS BY ALI KEMIS

Flatland

- For a smoother ollie, initiate with a slight movement of pressure toward the nose of the board before rocking back toward the tail.
- To pivot the board quickly, actively push the legs in opposite directions in a scissoring motion.
- If you find yourself having a hard time with edge transitions or getting the board off edge in any condition or pitch, try

some flat ground 360s. Lots of them. Spin both ways; it'll improve your sense of where your edge engages, when it releases, and how much or little edge it takes to get that sucker to turn.

- When doing butters and presses, focus on flexing one leg and extending the other while keeping your hips level. This will help you quickly and easily get your weight over the tip or tail (or anywhere in between) while maintaining an upright upper body.

- For a smooth backside spin, spring off your toeside. Frontside, spin off your heels. To add frontside kick to the spin, twist the board at takeoff.
- When spinning, take everything along for the ride—shoulders, torso, hips, head, and board. If you only spin with your head, you are leaving the rest behind.
- When unsure of how fast you need to go to make the landing, ask others for advice or “shadow” a rider who has been hitting the jump with proper speed (but be sure to pull out of the approach before takeoff). To dial in further, take into consideration the other riders’ weight and board condition as compared to yours.

Jumps

ails

- When hopping onto a rail or rocking kinks, match the bottom of the board to the pitch of the rail, making adjustments in the lower body (ankles, knees, and hips) in addition to leaning with the upper body.
- Approach the rail so your trajectory is directly in line with the rail. If your initial trajectory is off, don't fight it; just slide off the rail and try again.
- Ride a flat board, base to rail. Never use your edge to slow down or carve a turn on a rail or box.
- When exiting switch from a boardslide, slowly rotate your shoulders around through the slide—as if you're doing a sluggish 180.

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Steeps

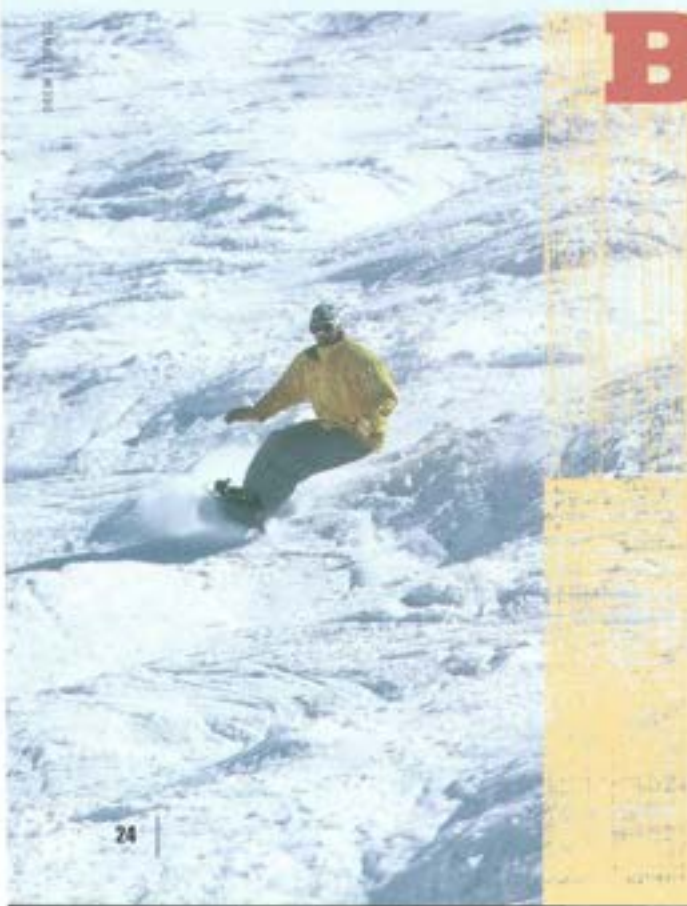
- If you find yourself constantly chattering out on steep pitches at high speeds, it may be because you are pushing too hard against the snow by extending your legs forcefully through the end of the turn. Push until you feel the chattering begin, then lighten up by relaxing your legs through the transition into your next turn.
- Are you always landing on your heelside and butt-checking off big cliff drops? Check your alignment. In the air, if your upper body is cocked to the heelside your board will unwind underneath and you will often butt-check the landing with your board sideways to the fall line. Landing this way leads to sore backs and snow enemas. If you are lined up closer to neutral, your board will land straight down the fall line and give you the opportunity to scrub speed on either the heelside or toeside—not with your rear end.
- As you change edges on steep terrain, expect a quick acceleration down the slope. Feel the rush! Enjoy it. Speed control comes at the finish of the turn; bring the nose back up the hill. Skid if you need to.
- If you have a hard time completing your toe turns in the steeps (but also in crud or bumps) spend a few weeks always stopping on the toeside. You'll get in the habit of allowing your board to come around and gain confidence by having your back downhill.
- When carving on steep terrain, one way to control speed is to continue turning until the board is traveling slightly up the hill. Making a transition at this point will scrub speed without skidding, encourage an earlier edge engagement, and promote speed control throughout the next turn.



Bumps

- For learning short turns, imagine that your hands, arms, and shoulders are in line with a chairlift line. Then you can turn just the legs and hips underneath you. The upper body just stays in the middle of each turn and when the tension builds up in the mid section, like in a golf swing, it will help you move/unwind the legs and board toward the new turn. Go low bro.
- For a smooth line in bumps, imagine the path beer would flow if a huge keg was dumped at the top of a run. Not quite ready for that? Try going over one bump and absorbing it with the legs. Then go around the next one . . . over one . . . around one. Get a nice rhythm going . . . over one . . . around one . . . over one . . . around one.
- Teach students to improvise, adapt, and overcome challenges. Practice drills in which students turn at every other bump for 10 turns, then every bump for 10 turns. Do bump garlands in both directions. Pick a turn with a consistent radius and make uniform turns regardless of the bump line. Students will become comfortable making turns everywhere (troughs, crests, backsides, etc.), becoming better overall riders.

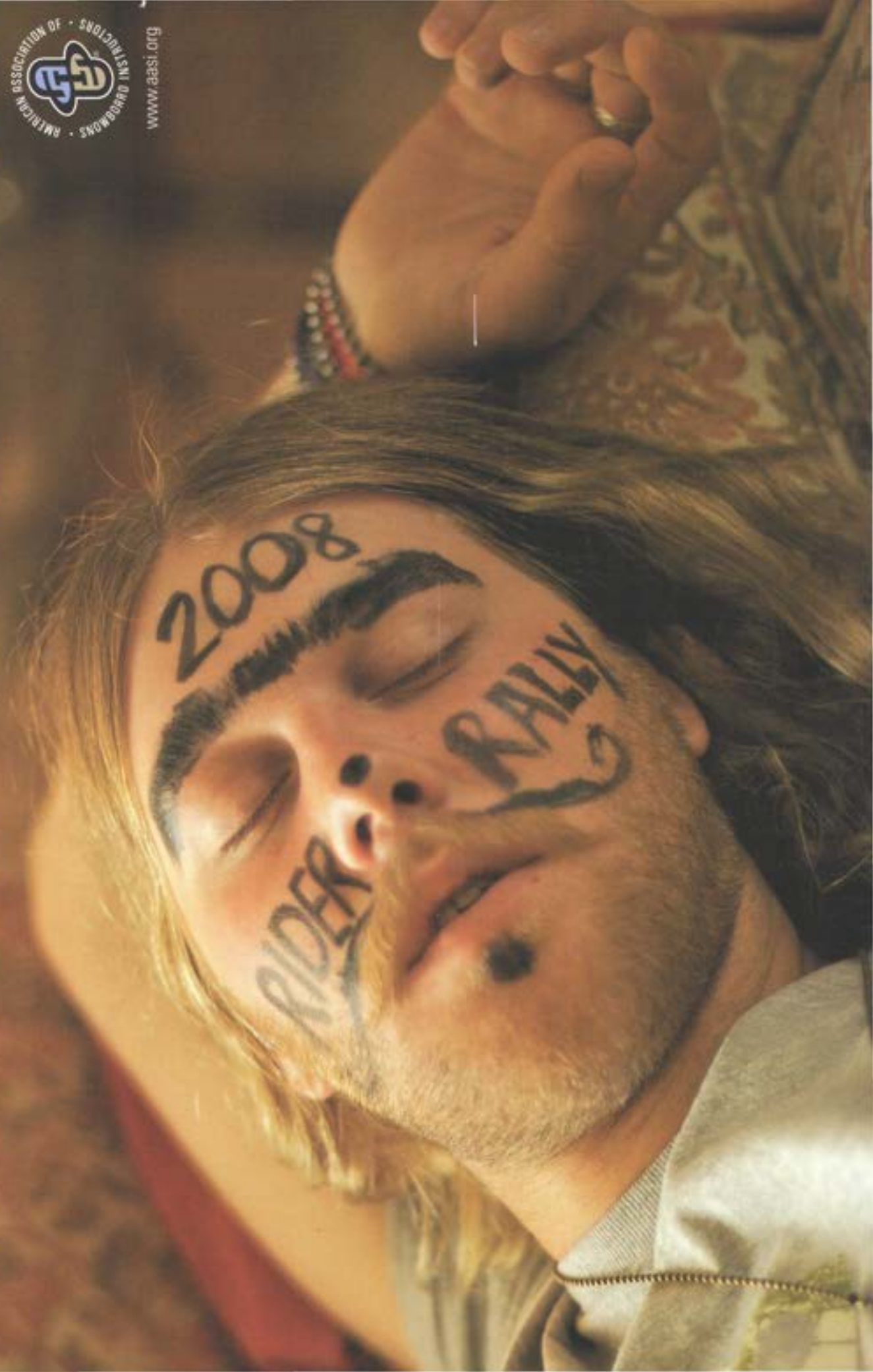
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The Rally is a five-day event. The third day, April 23, is a free day. Participants can explore the area, free-ride at Mammoth, visit the village or participate in any number of other activities.

There will be four full-day clinics given during the Rally. Please write your top two clinic topics for each day on the sign-up form. If you want to repeat something, and it's offered, go for it. This year's clinic sign-up can be found on the AASI website, www.aasi.org or will be sent to you upon request.

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Contact Kim Seevers or Jen Kling with any questions about the event: kseevers@thesnowpros.org, jkling@thesnowpros.org
Contact Karen Hagaman with any questions about lodging, etc.: khagaman@aasi.org

Return the following application by e-mail khagaman@aasi.org, fax 1-800-222-4754 or mail by Monday, March 10, 2008 to:

2008 AASI Rider Rally Registration, Attn: Karen Hagaman
133 S. Van Gordon St, Suite 101, Lakewood, CO 80228

PERSONAL DATA (PLEASE PRINT): *Please read the application very carefully and complete all information.*

Date _____ T-shirt size (S, M, L, XL, XXL - circle one).

AASI Certification Level: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ National ID# _____

Name _____ Gender ☐ M ☐ F

Division/Affiliation _____

Mailing Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____ E-mail _____

If paying by check, make payable to ASEA-EF: Check # _____ Amount \$ _____

If paying by credit card: Name and address of the credit card owner is required ONLY if different from above: Please print.

Name _____ Address _____ City/State _____

(as appears on credit card)

☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

Amount \$ _____ Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

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(signature required)

Release Form: In consideration of acceptance for enrollment in the 2008 AASI Rider Rally,

(please print name) _____

hereby releases and forever discharges American Snowsports Education Association (ASEA) and American Snowsports Education Association-Education Foundation (ASEA-EF) (also American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI)) from any and all liability arising out of the operation of sponsoring said Rally to be held in Mammoth Mountain, CA, April 20-25, 2008. Applicant hereby acknowledges that participation in the Rider Rally is solely at his/her own risk, and as a condition of participation in said Rally, Applicant agrees to hold ASEA/ASEA-EF harmless from any liability resulting from injury or damage suffered by the Applicant as a consequence of participation in said Rally. Applicant hereby relinquishes and assigns to ASEA/ASEA-EF all rights to the use of Applicant's name and likeness or pictorial representation in photographs, motion pictures, or other representations concerning Applicant's participation in said Rally.

I hereby state that I have fully read, understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

Applicant's Signature _____

Date _____

In case of an emergency, please notify

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____



THOMAS FICCHER/REUTERS

Powder

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- Ride faster! Powder snow is much slower to ride than packed snow. If you ride fast enough, you can glide almost effortlessly through turns. However, if you ride too slow, you will bog down and have to work to make turns. Bummer.
- Powder riding is all about the float. If you put the board on edge too much in turns, it will act like a knife and you will sink. Think surfboarding. Keep it flat to float and guide it with the legs, bruddah!
- Use gravity and the fall line. The added friction and unpredictability of soft snow can frighten students into making quick, choppy turns. For a graceful and more powerful turn, encourage shaping turns with a long arc into the fall line.
- If you ride in a duck stance, be kind to your knees. When shifting tailward (for example, in deep powder), don't tuck the rear knee toward the front knee. Instead, flex the rear knee over the rear toes.
- Before a day of riding deep powder, take the time to move your bindings tailward, so that you increase the surface area of the nose and worry less about digging the tip of the board into the snow and tumbling down the slope like a human tomahawk.



MICHAEL H. SMITH

Pipe

- Unless you're competing in the X Games, keep your first pipe hit mellow and plan on building amplitude in subsequent hits.
- Landing high up the wall on the vert is a whole lot smoother than landing in the tranny, flatbottom, or deck.
- Practice "halfpipe drop-ins" at the bottom of the pipe. It's usually less crowded, and the hike up is a whole lot shorter.
- Don't fight the flow; flatten your board as you ride up the halfpipe wall.
- In the halfpipe, you can manage student expectations by dividing the pipe into zones: flatbottom is green; tranny is blue; vert is black; and above the lip is double black. That way, for example, a rider who is comfortable on blue runs can be content changing edges in "the blue zone." Looking at the pipe in this fashion also encourages students to understand that attaining air out of the pipe may be possible for some intermediate riders, but *blasting* out of the pipe is generally an expert-only skill.
- To avoid a pancake into the flatbottom, ride out of the pipe on an imaginary wall with no pop or snap off the tail.

Trees

- Riding through trees on a gentle slope may seem the easy way to get into the "tree thing," but flow and momentum are as important as line. To move from line to line, don't look for "low angle." Instead, look for "wide open" if you're just getting into tree riding!
- Use little squiggle turns when you don't want to change your line but you do need time to find your next turn or slow down.
- When riding pow in the woods, you can ditch speed by pushing down on your tail at the end of a turn. Think of a boat in the water; if everyone is sitting in the stern of the boat, it will not go very fast. This will let you slow down without completing your turn.
- Don't look at the trees; look for corridors between trees. Some of the best lines are diagonal corridors where you are slashing through the glades like a surfer on a point break.

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JOHANNES WILHELM/REUTERS

Teaching

- When teaching a group of children, work with them during introductions to make a list of guidelines for the day. That way, the kids will feel connected to the "rules" and will be more likely to respect them.
- If students on rental boards drop you on the flats, the time to tune is long past. Tune your edges and wax your board at least once a week.
- Good instructors should be able to dial in a rider's stance quickly, keeping in mind that centering the foot on the board is *mas importante*. If the ball of the foot is over the middle of the board it is going to be very difficult to make a toeside turn.
- When teaching riders, use terms like "front foot" and "back foot," "toeside" and "heelside," "leading shoulder" and "trailing shoulder." By avoiding words like "left" and "right" there will be less confusion for regular- and goofy-footed riders in the same class.
- When setting up stance, go a bit on the wide side as opposed to a bit too narrow. Usually this will help get riders balanced better than if they are forced to stand very tall with feet close together. And they will look cooler; is that so bad?
- See if you can avoid the word "work." People go snowboarding to have fun so why would they want to *work* on something? Opt instead for phrases like, "Play with this thought," "See if this makes it easier," "I have fun trying to . . ." or "My favorite way is . . ."
- On their first day, beginner snowboarders who suffer from a "goofy/regular dilemma" may benefit from taking out a twin tip board with stance angles of +6/-6.
- Just when you think you've provided enough practice time, have students practice some more. Be sure to give them some movement-specific feedback.




- Your students are always communicating with you, but not always with words. Pay attention to body language, group interaction, and how they respond to the cues you give them.
- Before you try to change what students are doing, tell them what they are doing and what the effect is. After all, maps with a "You Are Here" sticker are far easier to use than ones without!
- If you take something away from a rider, you have to replace it with something else. For example, if riders are turning the snowboard by swinging their shoulders in the direction of the turn, you will need to do more than ask them to ride with their arms by their sides. Try giving them something tangible to shoot for, like trying to turn by twisting the board with their feet.
- If beginners are constantly leaning back toward the tail of the board, move them to less intimidating terrain (even if the terrain that you are on does not seem intimidating at all to you). Things to check for might be steepness of pitch, traffic, others in the runout, or lack of runout.

GENERAL

- Mix it up. Change the size of your turns and change the part of the run you ride on.
- Using upper body movements that complement lower body movements often allows for more dynamic riding than snowboarding with a motionless upper (or lower) body.
- Riding ice? Why? Stick to the sides of the run where the scraped-off snow tends to end up. Or, if you have to ride ice, try to keep your board "quiet." Excessive skidding will be very loud and uncomfortable.
- Practice visualization. See your tricks, airs, and landings before you stomp 'em.
- Use your body like a spring. As the terrain drops away, extend to maintain pressure. Flex to absorb overloads of pressure.
- Never stay in one position. Focus on "balancing" rather than simply staying "in balance." As terrain is constantly changing, so should your movements.

- Cross train. If you like riding groomers, ride the bumps twice a day. If you like riding in the park, ride steeps twice a day. If you like riding bumps, ride the park twice a day. You will improve and you will feel the difference.

There you go! Fifty-three tips that rip and a few that just may suck—depending on all the many variables that come into play during a lesson. Maybe one of these will help your students make a breakthrough of epic proportion—maybe. If you want to add some tips of your own, log into the Snowboard Discussion Forum at www.aasi.org and share your beta in the "Tips That Rip" thread.

If you can't get enough, hook up with one of your AASI Snowboard Team members at a clinic. No clinic near you? Talk to your supervisor about booking one. Or rock out to the AASI Rider Rally coming up this April at Mammoth Mountain, California. How's that for a ripping tip? 

AASI Educational Materials



Item #126



Item #122



Item #152



Item #183



Item #160



Item #F29



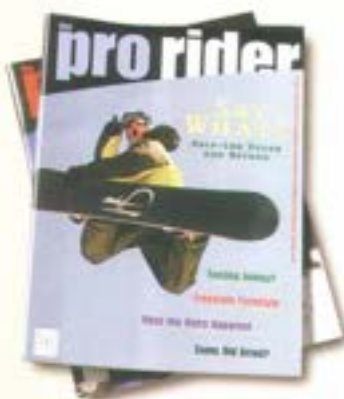
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You can purchase these well-written educational resources through the PSIA-AASI *Accessories Catalog* or www.aasi.org. Now go see if you can finally get algebra to pay off.

snowboard team gives AASI an edge

BY EARL SALINE

Here it is, the middle of August, and I'm writing about snowboarding. Something must be wrong—there's green grass everywhere, people in shorts and T-shirts are playing golf, biking, and generally frolicking around in summertime bliss. However, I know I'm not the only one thinking and writing about riding. There are at least seven others doing the same.

What makes these folks unique is that they are doing so not just for themselves, but for all AASI members. The AASI Snowboard Team works year-round to bring new ideas and education to the membership. The current team has been on the job since April 2004, and those members are nearing the end of their four-year term. In April 2008 AASI will select the next generation.

what is the team?

How many of you didn't even know this team existed? I would bet there are a few of you out there, so here's the scoop. The teams have worked hard for the past 16 years raising the educational bar and awareness of snowboard instruction throughout the industry. In having a hand in everything from the *Snowboard Sking* manual (1993) to the brand-new *Snowboard Instructor's Guide* (and offerings in-between, such as the *Snowboard Manual*, *Snowboard Movement Analysis Handbook*, *Focus on Riding DVD*, and "Go With a Pro" materials), members of AASI's Snowboard Team have helped drive snowboard teaching to where it's at now.

At the most basic level, the team consists of six snowboard instructors and one



THE 2004-2008 AASI SNOWBOARD TEAM (L-R): MIKEY FRANCO, CHAD FROST, SPIKE EISENMAN, K.C. GANDEE, BUTCH PETERSON, SCOTT ANFANG, AND COACH J. RANDY PRICE

coach. Team members can be from virtually anywhere in the nation, but must be AASI-certified Level IIIs with at least five years of teaching experience. Most team members are also division clinic leaders and examiners. They have a proven track record of teaching guests and educating other instructors. The group's interests are as multi-faceted as the sport of snowboarding itself, from mountain park riding to backcountry extremes.

The team is also one of the faces of AASI. Team members bring a personal touch to the organization, meeting and interacting with snowboard instructors throughout the country. They may use e-mail and the "Discussion Forums" at www.aasi.org to reach out as well, but the biggest splash is almost always created in person. The team is also a big force in

the overall snowsports industry, representing the roughly 5,000 members of AASI, for sure, but also the 28,500 members of PSIA-AASI as a whole.

The next team will continue to be multi-dimensional with respect to riding skills and industry expertise. The PSIA-AASI Board of Directors has also made it a priority to have adaptive experience and children's expertise included in the makeup of the new team. Freestyle and all-mountain riding proficiency are standard expectations.

I surveyed some past and current team members to find out why they wanted to be a part of the team, and here's what they wrote:

Mikey Franco, current two-term AASI Snowboard Team member: "It was the next step, the next challenge, and a way to

really (or so I thought!) have an effect on snowboard teaching in America."

K.C. Gandee, current AASI Snowboard Team member: "I wanted to be able to affect the direction of our organization from the highest level, and I wanted to eliminate the dumb stereotype of instructors being jargon-using, hardboot-riding dorks (although we all know this is stupid, the general population doesn't). It was also a personal challenge to see if I could perform at that level. Lastly, I rode for a day with then Snowboard Team member Gregg Davis in Virginia when I was a Level II instructor. He inspired me for years to come. I wanted the opportunity to do the same for others on a national level."

Scott Anfang, current AASI Snowboard Team member: "First reason: to be more involved with snowboarding and learn more about the organization. Second reason: to meet and ride with other instructors at the tryout with the intention of getting on the team to continue working and riding with more instructors."

Shaun Cattanach, former AASI Snowboard Team member, "I was pushed into it by former team member Brian Spear."

what's the point of the team?

As you might gather from the previous paragraphs, one of the team's core purposes is to propel snowboard education. Whether in the form of a nationally-oriented item, like a new manual, or a new concept that's in development, the team delivers the message. Team riders are there to help you become better riders and teachers.

They also are utilized when AASI interacts with snowboard manufacturers, particularly sponsor companies. They have worked at Transworld Snowboarding Conferences and at the U.S. Open Snowboarding Championships. You will see them at national events like the Rider Rally and local events like the Spring Symposium held at Washington's Mission Ridge.

To get a perspective from the PSIA-AASI Board of Directors and the various division presidents, I asked what the purpose of the team was, in their view, and what they felt was the greatest opportunity for the next team. Here are some of their responses:

Jerry Warren, PSIA-AASI Board of Directors communications vice president, puts it this way: "To blend passion for the sport with professionalism. To show the fun along with the responsibility. To stimulate interest in guests and other professionals, to continue to learn and improve performance—at any level. They have an opportunity to strengthen AASI's purpose and build a connection and unity in each of the nine divisions. They go out of their way to lift the performance of others. When the water in the lake goes up, all the boats rise together!"

Neil Bussiere, PSIA-AASI Western Division president: "... the purpose of the Snowboard Team is to foster and share a passion for snowsports instruction by allowing very talented educators to shine as ambassadors of sliding. The team concept allows these individuals to reach as many instructors and students as possible by creating exciting forums for learning at numerous venues across the country and even aboard. The biggest opportunity for the team going forward is to expand their reach and target prospective new membership in order to spread this passion. The continued growth and development of the talent within AASI is crucial to enhancing the value of the association for our members, the public, resort management, and our sponsors."

Kris Hagenbuch, PSIA-AASI Rocky Mountain Division president: "To develop, educate, and train what is cutting-edge with riding and how to teach it, factoring in what else is going on in the world of snowboarding. To come up with clear, concise, and consistent direction for our membership as they address such ques-

tions as what is your message, what is your charge, where are you going, and what is your plan to get there?"

Bottom line... the team exists to serve the members, students, AASI, and our industry sponsors. They are the ambassadors of stoke, spreading the word of AASI.

what makes a good team member?

Any time you ask "What makes a good team member?" you're bound to get a variety of answers. Depending on who you talk to, a good team member could be your personal riding coach in the morning and a business consultant in the afternoon.

Regardless of the "role" each team member plays, he or she must possess excellent communication skills. By excellent, I don't mean just knowing the latest slang. They need to be able to clearly communicate ideas and concepts to a very broad audience in person, in print, and on video. They must be able to relate to a first-time student, a first-season instructor, and a resort general manager. This takes experience and knowledge of snowboarding, resort operations, and the greater industry. This allows them to discuss trends and opportunities intelligently and professionally. Your average team member may be a hard-core rider but he or she is also a professional and works hard to elevate the perception of snowboard instructors across the industry. You work hard at your job and play an integral role in growing the sport, and the team wants the rest of the world to know that!

Team members must also be passionate and inspiring. Their personal charisma and leadership skills need to compel others to be their best, make perhaps uncomfortable changes in their riding, and push personal limits. I think of it as "intentionally inspiring and unintentionally leading." I know that I am more willing to try something new if the person leading believes

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in what he or she is saying and believes in me. These folks have often driven positive changes and snowboarding growth within their schools, resorts, or divisions.

Riding skills are an important tool in a good team member's arsenal. Steeps, park and pipe, and pretty much anything we slide sideways on (terrain and tools) are all fair game to team members. They need to be able to step up to any situation and rule it. Teaching snowboarding is about movement and doing. Talking only gets us so far, so team riders need to be able to put words into actions, actions that make others say, "Holy cow, I want to ride like that."

Organizational and improvisational skills are vital to successful team members. There are many projects and tasks that come their way over a year, and they need to uphold their commitments, follow through, and meet deadlines. Not only must they be able to flow and adapt to different situations, they also need to be able to keep track of what they are doing and where they are going. Changes happen constantly, on snow and off. Group sizes go from 4 to 14 in the blink of an eye. Instead of a riding improvement clinic, it's now a kids' clinic, and "can these three skiers come along?" Improvisational skills allow a team member to maintain focus and accomplish their mission while having fun!

Here's what team members have to say about what good team members are like:

Mikey Franco: "The desire to give others what has been passed on to you: knowledge and experience of teaching and riding all over the world."

Shaun Cattanaach: "Obviously being a well-rounded rider and instructor is critical for a team member, but the ability to find something within each person you clinic, teach, and/or examine and bring that out is really important. Sometimes it's as simple as building confidence so a student can try more challenging terrain; other times it's pulling the knowledge from a



THE 2000-2004 AASI SNOWBOARD TEAM (L-R): MIKEY FRANCO, EARL SALINE, COACH J. RANDY PRICE, CHAD FROST, SHAUN CATTANACH, GREGG DAVIS, AND ROB BAKER



THE SNOWBOARD TEAM—UNDER PSIA GUIDANCE—IN 1996 (L-R): TRAVIS THELEN, J. RANDY PRICE, BRIAN SPEAR, COACH MIKE SHAW, LANE CLEGG, JIM MOROCCO, JOHN TICKNER, SCOTTY MARION, AND MARIO ZLATARIC

candidate that they may be too stressed to vocalize. Regardless of the situation, being able to identify that key insight, trait or need is the thing that will set apart a good instructor from a great one."

K.C. Gandee: "One common aspect of the team is that no one is afraid to speak out about what they are thinking. Although some team members are more outspoken than others, everyone has a concept of what AASI is or should be and we share these concepts constantly. Another thing we have in common is

creativity. I've never been surrounded by such creativity before, whether on the snow or off."

Scott Anfang: "Dedicated. There are great perks to being on the team—I fully enjoy it. It's like a full-time job, but without full-time pay. You must be dedicated and willing to put energy and time forward without wanting money in return, and get your satisfaction from putting out a good quality product or being involved in a project. Don't take this the wrong way, as

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QUASAR PINSTRIPE/VERMILLION GUN



QUASAR WESTERN/AMBER GUN



SIMMER LEOPARD/CITRUS GUN



NOVA BLACK/MODULATOR VERMILLION

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CHAD OTTERSTROM
TEAM RIDER



BOA SHINY BLACK/MODULATOR POLARIZED GRAY

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bolle

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a team member you do get a paycheck for working events, traveling, etc. . . ."

As a past team member (2000-2004), the qualities I enjoyed most in those around me were humility, passion, openness to new/different ideas, desire to learn, desire to improve snowboard teaching, and respect for each other.

looking for a few good riders

Have you got what it takes? When you read the preceding qualities do you think of yourself? If so, then I strongly encourage you to think about seeking a spot on the AASI Snowboard Team. Male or female, it doesn't matter—if you've got the skills and talent check out the "National Teams Selection Overview" materials available through a link on the AASI homepage (www.aasi.org). Before submitting application materials, all candidates must first make it onto a division nomination list due at the national office by December 31, 2007. Contact your division if you have questions about the process for getting nominated.

The next team will be selected in May 2008 at Mammoth Mountain, California. We are really fortunate to have Mammoth hosting this event. There will be access to not only all the great natural terrain, but also all the man-made terrain Mammoth is famous for. The pipe and park are legendary and will really allow those of you with the skills to show your stuff.

The national team selections will start April 27, 2008, and those who get the nod to attend can expect to ride in groups with various selectors. Before the first-round cut, candidates will ride the park, pipe, steeps, and groomers. At some point, there will be an opportunity to lead the group on snow and offer tips to improve performance in a specific arena. Depending on format this may happen early or later. Other tryouts have involved indoor presentations and interviews. Remember, this is

a job interview and candidates are being evaluated virtually all the time.

conclusion

For me, being on the team was a fantastic opportunity to meet and ride with great people all over the nation. From riding a hill with 240 vertical feet in Ohio to the big mountains of Alaska, there was no better experience. The chance to exchange ideas and get feedback from some of the most passionate snowboarders alive was amazing. Having the opportunity to author the *Snowboard Movement Analysis Handbook* and impact AASI on a national scale was a chance of a lifetime. Being invited to share people's mountains and see them through their eyes and experiences made me appreciate what a cool thing we do and how lucky I really am.

Snowboarding is about sliding over a frozen surface with a huge smile on your face, and teaching is about helping others discover why your smile is so huge. The team is all about these two key things.

Butch Peterson, current team member, summed up his feelings this way:

It was late Saturday night, or early Sunday morning in the northern reaches of Michigan—Boyne Highlands to be exact. Completely sated after a festive banquet that featured awards mixed with tap dancing, the Midwest PSIA and AASI revelers gathered in the bar while a classic rock cover-band gleefully banged out AC/DC's "Hell's Bells."

A frigid gale blew off the Great Lake, coursed through the shuddering aspens, and swept tiny snowflakes across my face. Unknown to all, I sat hidden between two snowbanks, dressed in a neon one-piece; cracked, old-school UVEX goggles; and a red bandanna tied around my knee, waiting patiently outside the lodge for the next song to begin.

As the first chords of a Lynyrd Skynyrd tune reverberated through the lodge, I busted into the bar, staked out some room

on the dance floor, and started into a breakdancing routine I had not performed since high school. Some might claim that breakin' to Skynyrd is a lesson in futility. After about five moves, I proved it. While I was attempting a poorly balanced headstand headspin, I feverishly decided it was time to get out—the sooner the better.

But the band played on, and I was worried that if I cut out mid-song, the crowd, who now gathered around my dance circle gazing silently as I hacked my way through a rusty robot maneuver, would think I was not quite the caliber of an AASI Snowboard Team member if I gave up. So I danced on.

As I continued poppin' it, lockin' it, and polishing the floor with my backspins, the fatigue of the preceding long travel day and a nine-hour brutally cold day on snow started catching up with me. I was quickly running out of moves and not even the three Red Bull and vodkas I had during dinner could keep my energy and breakdancing spirit alive. The band must have seen me struggling, but instead of helping me out with a merciful segue, they started picking up the pace of Skynyrd, effectively pushing me into an anaerobic nightmare.

I would like to say I pulled it all together, holding onto the last chord, but alas, like a wounded Michael Jackson pet monkey, I stumbled out of the barroom in a tortured moonwalk.

Outside, resembling a neon pink and green ostrich, I stuck my sweaty head into a snow bank. The unforgiving Midwestern cold was soothing, and I paused a moment to consider what brought me here. While my breakdance may not have had the effect I had hoped, at least the day on snow was a success. Had it not been for the AASI Snowboard Team, this all never would have happened. ☐

Earl Soline is a former Snowboard Team member (2000-2004). He is currently manager of the adult instruction program at Winter Park Resort in Colorado.

make it fun and success will follow

BY DOUG RADEFELD

Striving to improve my teaching and that of the instructors I train each year, I started thinking back to the best lessons and clinics that I have taken or given. Was there a common theme or characteristic that made them effective? I asked some of my clients that question and reviewed feedback forms from previous AASI exams and clinics to see if anything stood out. The overwhelming answer was, "They were fun."

My best experiences—as well as those of my clients and instructors—all revolved around how much fun we had. Some remembered a specific task or trick because it was a milestone in their learning, but almost everyone recalled having a good time at a lesson, clinic, or, believe it or not—an exam.

Safety, fun, and learning: as simple and obvious as these three core values of snowboard instruction seem, one of these basic concepts is often lost in the education process. I was once told these tenets are in this order for a reason, and I couldn't agree more. Every lesson should be safe above all else. Next, it should be fun. No one comes snowboarding hoping for a terrible time. If we stay safe and have fun in the lesson, students will feel comfortable and the learning part comes easy.

So what drains the fun from a lesson? Well, it can be a lot of things, from the mood of the instructor on a given day, to a bout of harsh, misery-inducing weather, to the occasional button-pushing malcontent. In the end, though, the instructor bears the responsibility for keeping the lesson fun and the students engaged. Although each situation is unique, in a survey of



COURTESY OF BOB RADEFELD

clients and instructors I've worked with the following items were named as definitely not fun:

- Too much talking
- Overusing technical terms
- Robotic presentation/canned lessons
- Failing to cater to students
- Lack of instructor engagement

Every instructor has been guilty of at least one of the previous at some point. The key to a fun lesson lies not only in recognizing these traps, but finding ways to maneuver around them. Following are some ways to move away from the mundane and phase in the fun.

WANT A FUN WAY TO VISUALIZE A SLALOM COURSE? PRETEND YOU'RE BOBSLEDDING!

build rapport

Ask students their name, where they're from, how long they've been snowboarding, or whatever else comes to mind to show you care and are interested in them as people and not just a paycheck. Here are some examples of ways to keep this more fun and less like the beginning of a calculus class.

- **Pair up:** Have the students pair up, learn about each other, and then introduce their partner to the group. The exercise will build community in the group and help everyone meet at least one new friend.

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- **Ramp up the random:** Encourage students to add a piece of random info to their introduction, like what they had for breakfast or their favorite animal. This can help you remember each student and usually adds some disarming comedy to put the group at ease.
- **Make snowballs:** Ask your students to make as many snowballs as they want in one minute. Most will make as many as they can, assuming a snowball fight is about to ensue. Instead, when each student introduces themselves, have them include one personal fact for each snowball they made.

encourage goal setting

Let students tell you their aspirations for the lesson and beyond. You may not be able to teach a 900-degree spin on their first day, but you can teach them balance, turning, and 180s, explaining that these lay the groundwork for those 900s. When addressing student goals, apply the following tenets to keep things on track.

- **Be candidly honest:** Students will appreciate a realistic conversation about the steps to reach certain snowboarding milestones, delivered in a caring way. Remember, everyone progresses through those steps at a different rate. For example, I learned 360s in both directions on my first day, but it took almost a year before I learned to turn with confidence. This would be the opposite for most students, but that doesn't make it impossible. Don't discourage ambitions just because you didn't easily obtain them—they may be quickly reached by someone else.
- **Employ needs-based teaching:** Create an action plan of what the student needs to learn in order to reach his or her goals. If a student wants to ride the double-black-diamond runs and loves to bomb every other hill at



STRIVE FOR MILES OF SMILES.

the resort, he or she probably needs help making turns for speed control, not confidence for a faster rate of descent—the latter would just be a waste of time and money.

- **Use stepping stones:** Let's go back to the first-day beginner who wants to learn 900-degree spins; if you say it's impossible he or she will be turned off immediately. Explain that riders have to know how to turn in order to set up their approach to the jump and that, similarly, balance is a key component of takeoffs and landings. Let your student know that you will teach some spins at the end of the lesson once he or she is comfortable on the board. That should keep the rider excited. Small ollie 180s and flat spins—starting at 180 degrees and working toward that goal of 900—are relatively easy once balance, twist, and basic turns are conquered.

invoke the two-minute rule

At the beginning of the lesson tell your students they get to throw snowballs at you if you talk for more than two minutes. No one will ever actually time you, but once you've rambled beyond the group's tolerance level for sitting in the snow, you will know it's time to move on. Here are some ideas on how to shorten those explanations.

- **Demo, demo, demo:** Most of your students sit in a classroom or office

much of the week, so when they go riding, they don't want to sit for an hour on the snow and get lectured; it's cold and boring. Quickly explain the task in its simplest form, ask for questions, and then demonstrate it. Have the students try it and then provide feedback and ask for questions again. Demo the task a second time with the students watching from a different vantage point. The need for more explanation will come out in conversation, so be sure to encourage all questions.

- **Use the lifts:** Use the lift lines and lift ride for lengthy discussions and explanations. Nothing is worse than spending 10 minutes discussing a topic at the bottom of the hill, then getting in line only to wait 15 minutes before you can actually try what you've learned. Seek out the students who want more discussion and ride the lift with them, so the extra explanation doesn't impede the other students' ride time.
- **Apply guided discovery:** Upon surveying my peers and students about fun lessons, a common story kept cropping up. Almost all of their favorite lessons had the instructor giving them different riding tasks and then asking what they thought about the outcomes. I've found that what resonates most with students—more than any lecture—is learning through experience and coming to workable conclusions on their own.

be enthusiastic

Enthusiasm is key to any successful lesson, but, granted, it's sometimes hard to maintain the same level of stoke when you're on your fifth beginner lesson of the day. Remember, however, that it's the group's first lesson of the day and they paid good money to have fun and learn. Excitement and positive thinking are contagious, so

be jazzed from the start. The group will often take over doing the work of making the lesson fun. Here are two simple ways to convey enthusiasm.

- **Smile:** It's cliché but it works. If you smile, your students will know you want to be there with them.
- **Be a clown:** During introductions, I have done cartwheels, clapped and yelled, and run around my students like a clown at the circus. This works best for kids and teenagers in group lessons, but even adults like a toned-down version. Know your audience; this may turn off the occasional slightly uptight student for a second, but once you fade to a normal level he or she will understand you're just excited to be there.

K.I.S.S.

Keep it simple, stupid. It is important to understand the physics, biomechanics, and AASI concepts when snowboarding and teaching snowboarding. The key is to explain the relevant information to students in ways they understand, not in a way to prove how smart you think you are. Keep in mind the following "principles."

- **Simplicity, please:** Avoid technical jargon when simple words will work just as well to make your point. Avoid acronyms. Although we all know what AASI and STS stand for, the student has no idea and doesn't really care.
- **All of the above:** See the "Demo, Demo, Demo," and "Guided Discovery" concepts mentioned previously—they are also ways to K.I.S.S.

use your senses

Students will get to hear you talk a lot, but they'll learn better and have more fun when they have all their senses stimulated. Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning should be tied into every lesson, and here are some fun exercises that can help you focus on certain areas.

- **Eyes wide shut:** Have a student briefly close his or her eyes while rocking back and forth to find their centered/balanced or "happy place" on the snowboard.
- **Seeing-eye rider:** Have advanced students pair up with a partner on beginner or easy-intermediate terrain. One student closes his or her eyes and makes different-sized turns while the other student serves as a guide. The guiding student must be sure to give the "blind" student plenty of time to make the next turn and avoid obstacles. Discuss what the students felt and heard while riding. Then switch partners and repeat. [Note:

Would you have more fun if the instructor catered to your wants and needs or if you got the canned generic lesson? Do you want a lethargic, tech-talking, one-run-the-whole-lesson instructor, or one who is excited and gets you excited to get out there to learn and enjoy the mountain experience? When you pay for a clinic, which type of clinician do you hope you get? Give your students that instructor.

least on freestyle

Everyone likes freestyle. Not everyone wants to hit huge jumps, or ride the pipe, but flat spins, ollies, 180s, and manuals/presses are relatively easy for all levels. Add these and other skill-appropriate

At the beginning of the lesson tell your students they get to throw snowballs at you if you talk for more than two minutes.

this should only be used for very advanced riders, such as other instructors in a clinic.]

- **Sounding board:** Make one turn at a time and while turning have students listen for the sound the board makes in the snow. Less sound means more carving. Follow up by looking at the line in the snow to reinforce what was heard.

follow the golden rule

When it comes to having fun in a lesson, perhaps the most helpful advice is to follow the Golden Rule of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." If you just spent \$50 to \$600 for a lesson, how would you want the instructor to treat you? How would you want that instructor to treat you if you were the same age, had the same experience level, and the same goals as the rest of the group?

elements of freestyle in all your lessons, even on the first day. I guarantee your students will be talking about their first flat spin 180 at school or the water cooler at work on Monday.

conclusion

When I was growing up, my mother always told me that "funner" and "funnest" were not words. While this may be true, I hope this article will help remind you to make each lesson, clinic, or exam you teach funner than the one before and the funnest your students ever had. ☺

Doug Radefeld is an AASI-certified Level III snowboard instructor and examiner for AASI's Central Division. He is a certified judge, active participant, and former Nationals winner with the United States of America Snowboard Association. He teaches at Boston Mills/Brandywine Resort in Ohio.

don't stop at 'what,' give them the 'how'

BY K.C. GANDEE

Raise your hand if you've ever been witness to a scenario like this: You're riding the chairlift over the beginner area. You see a dude (for this story we'll call him Wild Dog; WD for short) teaching his buddy how to snowboard. WD is rockin' the latest trendy snowboard fashion: thick, horizontal-striped hoodie; Army-style gloves; and skin-tight jeans. And he definitely hasn't had a haircut or a shower for weeks. Maybe months. His buddy is sitting on the hill covered in snow and sweat, and it looks like he's taken a beating. WD yells "Do it like this!" as he slides away from his buddy and executes a flawless toeside turn to a stop. WD's buddy stands up, points his board downhill, jerks his board sideways, and sneaks up on his toe edge only to let the heel edge dip enough to hook up for the crowd-pleasing mousetrap. WD laughs maniacally and yells "Almost, dude! Next time, do it like this!" as he again executes a beauty of a toeside turn.

As an instructor, you've no doubt already thought of at least three things that you would have done differently than our hero, WD. You might have given your buddy a different angle from which to see your demonstration. Maybe you would've held his hands. Perhaps you would've said, "You're going to have to tip your board up a little higher next time."

If you've thought of any of the above, I salute you! But what really separates us as professional AASI instructors from the wild animals (or Wild Dog in this case) is the ability to communicate not only what our students need to do to be successful, but more importantly how they need to move in order to be successful. By now, we all know the "what"—it's the board performance that the rider needs to execute: twist, tilt, pivot, bend or some sequence thereof. Sprinkle in some cues on timing, intensity, and duration, and we've gotten off to a great start. Now comes the secret ingredient: how to do the movement.

As AASI-certified instructors, we know a rider can move in different ways to create board performance. For any given board performance, there are several movements that can be used to obtain the desired outcome. It's up to you to know which one will be best for your student for the particular activity. Let's look at a couple of ways WD could've helped his buddy a little more.

For a toe turn, WD wants his buddy to tip his board up on his toe edge, so we've identified the "what": tilt. For the "how," let's try something that will set up the rider for great success in the future: let's ask him to drop his shins toward his toes, as if he's going to fold his feet right into his lower leg, Transformers™ style. Another way to think about this movement is to ask the rider to push his knees out over the toe edge. By doing this, the rider will move his body out over his toe edge, and the board will tip up, enabling him to begin to turn without as much of a chance to give himself a concussion. Once



IF THE STUDENT IS UP FOR IT, HANDS-ON TEACHING CAN HELP INSTILL HOW TO MOVE AND SLIDE.

PHOTOS BY JACK AFFLER


the rider masters this movement, a closing of his ankles, he'll be able to make fine adjustments from that joint in the future, enabling him to take giant steps toward ripping it up with WD in the terrain park.

So WD is starting to pick up what we're laying down with his buddy. By watching how we approached his friend, with a "how," he's beginning to understand its importance. For the heel turn, WD decides to ask his bro to start to turn the snowboard by twisting it (the "what"). He asks his buddy to pull his leading hip into the direction of his heel turn, while at the same time pulling his toes up toward his shin (the "how"). "Yep, it's almost the exact opposite of the toe turn move," he says. "Once your board begins to turn, you're going to do the exact same movement with your trailing leg." The rider practices these movements with WD's

assistance while standing still, and then executes them perfectly while moving on the snow. He is clearly stoked, although still sweating profusely.

Wild Dog is doing pretty well at instructing his friend now (after learning from us, of course). His buddy is turning into a shredder and is starting to stare at the superpipe. So Wild Dog decides to teach him how to pump the transition of the pipe wall. He takes him to a trail with rollers and says, "We're going to rock back over the tail of our boards to get some speed through these rollers. We'll pump our boards by making our leading leg longer, moving our hips over our back foot on the way up the roller. On the way down the back side, we're going to push slowly down on our back leg, slowly making it longer to bend the board. When we stop pushing down with our trailing leg, the board will

unbend and shoot us forward!

So Wild Dog has upped his game—now he's communicating the "what," giving hints for timing, intensity, and duration, and, more important, he's teaching his buddy how to get the desired outcome. If the instructor in you is screaming out "What should WD work on as he continues to grow as a coach?" I applaud you again! Wild Dog's challenge for the future is to treat each lesson on a case-by-case basis. He might explore when the "how" is needed by watching the rider's reaction to the "what." He may learn that sometimes an awesome demo is enough. But now he knows to always keep the "how" in mind for those that need it. 

K.C. Gandee is a staff trainer at Vermont's Okemo Mountain Resort, as well as a member of the AASI Snowboard Team.



The advertisement features a black helmet cam system with a lens and a control unit. The control unit has a small screen showing a first-person view of a snowy mountain trail. Below the helmet, there is a small black remote control with two buttons labeled 'STOP' and 'REC/PAUSE'.

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4-step drills to amp up skills

BY JEFF "J.B." BRIER

I've been lucky to ride and train with some of the best coaches in the country, and they always share some little nugget of information or a fresh perspective that adds to my own bag of tricks while inspiring ideas for new exercises.

I've "stolen" many of these observations and tips and applied them to different riding situations in my own lessons and clinics to help riders reach their goals. Following are a few fun tasks that came out of my experience and experiments on snow.

Before jumping into the drills, however, it's important to remember that

it can be challenging for students to learn the subtle blend of body movements (i.e., flexion/extension and rotation), performance concepts (i.e., pivot, tilt, twist, and pressure distribution), and center-of-mass (CM) control necessary to generate the desired outcome. It can be equally challenging for instructors to present this information in a way that's clear to students without overwhelming them. When using one of the drills detailed here—or one of your own design, for that matter—make sure that you can not only use the exercise to good effect in your own riding,

but that you also know how to relate it to your students' riding.

spin through the bumps

This exercise is exactly what it sounds like: multiple flatland spins (in both directions) through a mogul field. This might sound like suicide for a beginning rider, but it's actually pretty simple and a lot of fun.

An effective way to combine flexion/extension with pressure distribution, CM flow, and edge control, this drill can improve riding in a number of settings beyond the bumps, including steeps, trees, ice, and even in the park. In addition to getting students to "feel" the snow and react to terrain changes from these sensations, the exercise encourages independent leg movement, use of torsional flex (or twist) to release the edge and pivot to direct the board down the slope, and fore-aft pressure management to help initiate and finish turns quickly and efficiently. A four-step plan would unfold as follows.

1. Warm up

Start with multiple flat spins in both directions down a groomed slope of comparable pitch to the mogul field you'll use. This not only gets everyone warmed up, but also helps students find a rhythm and become comfortable with the movements they'll be using in the bumps.

2. Test the waters

If possible, move to a smooth slope adjacent to the moguls and do flat spins in one direction along the edge of the mogul field and the groomed surface. Encourage students to start in the flat and, moving at



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a moderate pace, dip into the moguls and back out again. Repeat this portion of the drill, but have students spin in the opposite direction from the first attempt. Continue this step until the students choose to stay in the moguls for a majority of the slope.

3. Full commitment

The next runs should start with the smaller moguls and take place largely in the middle of the bumps. The flat spins from step 2 should be repeated, but this time there is no bail-out area.

4. Increased challenge

Once students have mastered spinning in both directions through the mini-moguls, you can add speed and bigger bumps to the mix. Make sure your riders get plenty of "rest" time; this is especially important after increasing the speed of mogul spins, which can cause dizziness.

Throughout the exercise, encourage students to keep their torsos and heads up (you don't want to see a lot of bending at the waist) and to maintain "soft" legs while controlling the board from the ground up (no arm swinging to help direct motion). Also, keep an eye on spacing for student safety; don't let folks get too close, as dizziness can take over after a few spins.

Remember, this should be more like playing than doing a drill, so have fun and break it up with some real runs (maybe even get dizzy yourself).

toe/heel-edge backside 180 half-spin smears

Although the name may be a mouthful, this is actually a simple exercise that boosts skills in several freestyle and free-ride areas, particularly rails, boxes, kickers, and natural jibs and hits.

Blending two different drills shared in separate clinics by former Snowboard Team member Earl Saline and Rocky Mountain

Division trainer Mike Markowitz, the goal here is to practice backside 180s from both the toeside and heelside edges while underspinning the 180 (at least at the beginning). Initially, the rider will spin 90 degrees of the 180, "smearing" the rest. Over time, the smear portion will decrease as the student spins closer and closer to the full 180.

This task helps students develop the ability to maintain CM flow during jumps and over jib features, as well as hone edge control, flexion and extension movements, pressure distribution, and general confidence with spins and jibbing. When practicing the following progression, start on either the toeside or heelside edge, work through the steps, then repeat with the focus on the other edge.

1. Starting point

Have students begin by standing still on either the toeside or heelside edge on a gentle slope. Since they'll be moving in a traverse, the starting point will be slightly diagonal to the fall line. Have them jump up and spin backside 90 degrees. They'll want to land with as low an edge angle as possible and smear (flat spin) the remaining 90 degrees to complete the move and ride away switch.

2. Jumps to smear from a traverse

This is essentially the same as step 1, but this time the riders should start traversing before executing the jump and 90-degree backside spin. They should land as in step 1, smearing the last half of the 180. As students become more comfortable with this move, encourage more rotation in the air, eventually leading to the completion of a smearless, airborne 180.

3. Jumps to smear down the fall line

Once students are comfortable starting the jump from a traverse, encourage them to jump while moving slowly down the fall line. Over a series of tries, students should

gradually spin more of the 180 in the air and smear less of it on the ground.

4. Complete 180s off kickers and natural hits

When students are confident and can consistently demonstrate the backside 180 from both edges, progress to trying the maneuver over a small roller or kicker. Have the students gradually increase speed, rotation in the air, and hangtime.

Encourage students to land "soft," keeping the board as flat as possible with reasonable absorption from the legs and with the CM balanced evenly over both feet. Like the mogul exercise, advocate shifts in fore-aft movement to aid the smear and finish; you want students to ride out the 180 without flailing their arms to guide the motion. In addition to mastering the backside 180, your students will also have just learned and practiced the moves they'll need to perform frontside board-slides and backside lipslides.

popping wheelies

Although centered around a single maneuver, this drill builds up to a combination of movements through its four steps. The purpose is to use a "wheelie" to initiate transition to the new edge and transform basic riders into dynamic turning machines. (Yes, I know, snowboards don't have wheels; the idea is to not perform an ollie—no air here.)

This exercise helps riders develop leg flexion and extension skills. It also encourages them to use their lower bodies to direct pivot and twist moves by focusing board control at "ground level." Another benefit of this drill is that it can improve the timing and strength of flexion and extension moves in dynamic turns while helping students maintain a balanced CM as they transition between edge changes.

continued



PHOTO 1



PHOTO 2

continued from page 41

The rider will move more fluidly down the mountain, with braking/bracing postures replaced by flowing movement patterns. The fore-aft elements of this drill promote better use of the entire length of the board throughout the turn.

1. Wheelie transitions prep

On a gentle, groomed slope, have students pop a wheelie as they move in a traverse across the fall line. The riders should yank up the front foot and ride the tail of the board briefly before setting the nose of the board back on the snow several times in succession across the slope. (While not performed in a traverse, the move shown in photos 1 and 2 is a close approximation of the wheelie maneuver.) Once they're comfortable with the wheelie move, have students quickly flex their front legs just prior to the instant the nose makes con-

tact with the surface (they may not show a wide range of motion at this point). Have students again perform a series of wheelie/flex moves in a traverse across the fall line; the goal is to have them initiate a new turn right after the wheelie/flex motion. Shaping the turns from this flexed stance almost forces the use of twist to guide the board downhill (it's okay if students stay low through the turn; flexion and extension will be added in the next step). As students get used to the balance, edge control, and CM flow that are part of this move, have them really pull the front leg up and lift the tip of the board as high as possible.

2. Wheelie transitions with flexion and extension

Have students continue to pop a wheelie before each edge change, but this time have them flex their front leg completely

for an increased range of motion by the time the board gets set back on the ground. In other words, set the tip of the board down while flexing the front leg as much as possible, as shown in photos 3 and 4. Have students practice several of these moves in a row along a single traverse. After they become adept at this wheelie/deep-flex move, have students start to turn the board once its tip is set back on the snow. Direct the riders to gradually extend both legs throughout the turn, finishing completely extended before attempting the next wheelie. Generally, students will need to stay lower longer, as the first reaction to the flexion/extension timing is to pop to full extension almost instantly after starting the turn.

3. Linked wheelie transitions

Beginning with large-radius turns, have students perform the wheelie with flexion/extension move from step 2 in a series of



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4

PHOTOS BY SCOTT B. M. SMITH

linked turns. Encourage more gradual leg extension during the initial efforts (that is, stay lower longer).

4. *Linked turns*

This step transitions from the wheelie to real riding with the same moves from the previous steps, but this time riders should try to keep the nose of the board on the snow. (It's okay, however, if the nose rises up slightly when first shifting from step 3 to step 4.) The wheelie should transform into a light shuffle, with riders moving the board slightly out from under their CM (weight toward the tail) and then back under the CM as they flex their front leg in preparation for edge change. Again, start with large-radius turns and gradually funnel the students to medium- and short-radius turns as they become more proficient with the move. When the students seem ready, you can even translate this exercise to different terrain.

It's great for moguls, steeps, trees, and switch riding.

At the start, make sure students maintain consistent timing for extension throughout the entire turn. As ability permits, encourage students to experiment with quicker and slower extension timing. This will help them learn to control turn radius and modify timing to adjust to different terrain, like moguls, chop, powder, ice, and trees. Again, discourage students from using arm swing to aid turn initiation. Like the 180 smear drill, this can be practiced both regular and switch.

rocket transitions

The first time I tried this move, I got a huge rush and was surprised with the power I got out of my board; it rocketed into a turn with so much force that

I was almost thrown off.

Think about beginners on the bunny hill who get locked in on their edge during an attempted turn and lean *woady* back out of fear. What happens? Once the edge angle is high enough and the snap at the tail of the board comes into play, they make an almost 180-degree turn up the hill (on edge!). This "power" is the fun that's in store when you unlock the capabilities of the entire length of the board. This activity also helps riders initiate carved turns with more intensity as well as tighten the overall radius of their turns. In addition, it has a heavy focus on fore-aft timing, combined with edge angle (tilt) and torsional flex (twist) while helping students develop trust and commitment to moving their CM aggressively down the mountain.

continued

The movements for this exercise are similar to the wheelie drill, but are specifically applied to carving situations. Here, riders will "shuffle" the board back and forth underneath them at certain points of the turn using fore/aft moves to create the desired effect. The shuffle timing is combined with appropriate edge change movements, and the next thing you know, the board is like a rocket ship on rails.

1. Static team shuffle

Team up students in pairs, and have the partners stand facing each other on a flat part of the slope; one student should hold out his or her arms and make fists with both hands, which the other rider will grasp and "lean" on with his or her hands. This gives the stationary student a chance to observe the other rider practicing the move, while the rider making the maneuver doesn't have to worry about falling. Then have them practice the shuffle, moving the board back and forth underneath their hips. Take the shuffle move through a few toeside and heelside traverses to get students comfortable with shuffling the board while in motion themselves.

2. Team shuffle and turn initiation

Team up boarders on a flat slope to practice the shuffle move as in step 1, but this time have them perform the move first on the toeside edge of the board, then repeat on the heelside edge. Have students increase the edge angle as they max out with the shuffle move over the nose of the board.

First, have students use their feet, knees, and hips to edge the board. For riders who are more advanced or pick this up quickly, add to the task by having them start with the front foot and knee and follow up with the back foot and knee. All moves here should be from a flexed stance, which helps promote a twisting movement of the board into the turn.

3. Shuffle at turn initiation

Now the pairs can be separated, with students starting in a toeside or heelside traverse (I recommend a heelside traverse-to-toe-turn for the first few tries) and initiating the turn after the shuffle move by pulling the board back under the CM and carrying that momentum into the turn. Practice the maneuver several times from both the toe and heelside. Gradually limit the shuffles to one move before engaging the new edge (this more closely mimics what happens in actual riding).

4. Aggressive shuffle and turn initiation

Use the same moves from step 3, but with higher degrees of intensity. Riders should initiate turns in this step from a flexed stance (the lower the better). The aggressive edge engagement will come from movements in the feet, ankles, and knees. The goal is to get as high an edge angle as possible just after the shuffle move. Then the fun begins. As students get rocketed into sweet arcs across the snow, they can amp it up even more with higher edge angles and getting the board further under their CM when starting the new turn.


Throughout this drill, make sure students keep their boards completely on the ground. Encourage riders to maintain a lower stance with flexed legs as they add more aggressive edge angles and increase the degree of shuffle movement toward the tip of their boards. This helps them "handle" the new forces generated by this move. As they become more confident, have riders make the moves more aggressively, with the highest edge angle and greatest degree of fore or aft movement possible while avoiding a nosepress or wheelie. You can also experiment with the effect of aft moves at turn initiation. This will have an almost opposite effect on the turn, actually slowing the turn initiation and creating a wider turn radius.

drill bits

If you encounter a student or two who has trouble executing the latter steps of an exercise, it's usually due to one specific component that can be addressed on an individual basis with a separate exercise before returning to the progression. For example, if a rider keeps blowing up in the moguls with flat spins, it's highly likely that he or she needs a quick refresher on flexion and extension movements before returning to spins. A simple, moderate traverse across the mogul field—focusing on the proper joint movements—can resolve this challenge.

I recommend presenting drills like the ones listed here as opportunities to experiment and play with snowboarding skills and concepts. Students should be given plenty of riding time in order to interpret and apply the moves with different levels of intensity, timing, and duration. Through experience, your students will gain an understanding and awareness of how new moves relate to their own style of riding and to various terrain.

Simply dealing with similar challenges lesson after lesson can motivate you to come up with your own ideas and drills to help students achieve their riding goals. Take the time to assess what your students need to do to stay on the path toward achieving their goals. Develop or tweak drills specifically for them.

Remember, if you have a good idea or feel like you're onto something, keep at it; it can sometimes take a season of tinkering before everything clicks. And when it does, make sure you share your discoveries with the rest of us so we can all keep filling our collective bag of tricks. 

Jeff "J.B." Brier is an AASI-certified Level III snowboard coach and PSIA-certified Level I nordic coach. He is currently the snowboard technical director at 7 Springs Mountain Resort in Pennsylvania.

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national dues increase slated for 2008-09

BY CRAIG ALBRIGHT, PSIA-AASI OPERATIONS VICE PRESIDENT

Sure, a dues increase is a touchy subject, kind of like the last Chicago Cubs World Series win (1908, for those keeping score), but unlike rooting for the Cubs, your investment in PSIA-AASI means many happy returns. Membership dues are a primary revenue source for the association (43.6%). While none of us wants to dig deeper into our pockets, our dues enable PSIA-AASI to fulfill its mission: to support us in our personal and professional development and provide us with educational tools to create positive learning experiences and have more fun.

With that in mind, the PSIA-AASI Board of Directors has approved an increase of \$10 in national dues—from \$40 to \$50—for the 2008-2009 season, effective July 1, 2008. As you might expect, inflation is a factor, but that's only part of the story. The need for the increase is the result of a confluence of factors (more on those later). Whatever the reasons, PSIA-AASI must be able to fund its education programs sufficiently and provide much-needed services to its divisions and individual members. And it's only fair to note that PSIA-AASI dues increases at the national level are rare occurrences; in fact, there have been only two in the past 17 years. The following discussion provides more details on the issues that are forcing the increase as well as a brief refresher on the benefits these additional funds will support.

changes in NSP relationship

After an unprecedented period of administrative consolidation with the National Ski Patrol (NSP) that lasted some 17 years, that relationship is changing, requiring

each organization to absorb the infrastructural costs they formerly shared.

Looking back, it's important to note that the consolidation has been extremely beneficial to PSIA-AASI on the whole. PSIA-AASI was able to increase the professionalism of its staff, dramatically increase member services, and move from virtual bankruptcy to sound financial footing. Over time, however, each association has developed its own goals and aspirations. Eventually, PSIA-AASI and NSP may have needed to hire more staff dedicated to each association's needs. Unfortunately, instability was the catalyst.

During the past two-and-a-half years, NSP has faced a member lawsuit, dealt with a rapid and nearly complete change in the composition of its national board, employed three executive directors (including its current director), and seen five board chairs. NSP's governance issues began to take a toll on senior staff and significantly reduced their effectiveness in working on behalf of PSIA-AASI. Stephen Over, the longtime executive director for both associations, left NSP in December 2005. Mark Dorsey, Over's successor and the shared executive director, resigned from NSP in January 2007 to work solely for PSIA-AASI. The PSIA-AASI Board of Directors was and is deeply concerned about the real and potential impact NSP's many changes would have on PSIA-AASI if the situation were to continue.

Initially, the PSIA-AASI board hoped to reach agreement with NSP on how best to manage the remaining staff while NSP filled a number of vacant NSP-only positions, including the NSP executive

director. However, NSP sought more independence in specific functional areas, resulting in separate administrative, communications, marketing, and member services departments. Fortunately, experienced staff members who were formally shared with NSP came to work solely for PSIA-AASI. Accounting functions, warehouse fulfillment services, and information technology continue to be shared with NSP, at least for the foreseeable future.

In the short term, this creates additional financial strain as both organizations incur the increased costs of separating specific functions. In the long term, however, the separation of this relationship allows staff to focus exclusively on key PSIA-AASI projects.

software upgrades

For several years the PSIA-AASI board and the divisions have been requesting services that the association cannot adequately provide without investing in a significant upgrade of association management software. Most of the association's divisions use the current system to track membership information. Unfortunately, the software requires substantial staff time to maintain the status quo and develop web services. Also, the current software package is nearly 10 years old and unsupported, meaning that it won't meet the association's needs in the near future, creating considerable problems for the divisions as well as the national office.

Having postponed this expenditure for as long as possible, the board has approved the purchase of the new software. Unfortunately, due to the current

situation with NSP, our association must now bear that cost on its own. On the upside is the fact that the software will enable a more seamless flow of information between divisions and with the national organization, and allow PSIA-AASI to improve membership services and accuracy of information.

cost of doing business

No matter how much we may wish otherwise, the increased cost of doing business cannot be overlooked. The pressures of inflation have real effects on our organization, to the tune of 4% annually. The \$40 in national dues that PSIA-AASI members paid in 2003 (when the association passed its last increase) is worth \$31.30 today. That means the organization has to collect \$50.60 to have the same buying power, assuming 4% inflation.

Although PSIA-AASI raises more than \$1 for every national dues dollar collected, we cannot position the association to become overly reliant on non-dues revenue. Why? Because non-dues revenue is a somewhat arbitrary source of income from year to year, forcing us to rely on factors beyond our complete control. Having unrealistic expectations about non-dues sources of income would only jeopardize core services, including administrative functions necessary to a functioning central office; the management of financial data and reporting; the ability to facilitate membership communication and service; and the ability to support marketing, sponsorship, and advertising functions.

supporting your division

The majority of revenue going to the national organization is spent on activities such as publishing *The Professional Skier* and *The Pro Rider*, developing and publishing education materials to support education and certification; maintaining member records; fielding member inquiries; publicizing the value of professional

instruction to the industry, international organizations, and the public; and creating web-based resources and benefits—notably member-only promotional and professional discount programs. However, tens of thousands of dollars go toward division-specific activities.

The national organization funds training and development of the PSIA and AASI national teams, whose members feature prominently in division clinics. Each division also receives a subsidy each year to encourage visits by team members. These two budget items alone amount to approximately \$86,000. In addition, the national organization finances annual gatherings of division presidents and executives,

committee activity such as that regarding snowsports school management, and typically funds an annual examiner's college within a discipline—all of which add up to about \$28,000 a year. PSIA-AASI also provides free access to video and photo images as well as access to resources for the national marketing initiative known as "Go With A Pro." Further, the association recently launched new member recruiting resources at no cost to the divisions, and in some cases paid for development and production of local recruiting materials. These are but a few examples of how PSIA-AASI supports your division.

return on your investment

The most important rationale for the increase is the continued service improvements offered to all members. Whether it's a national marketing campaign to heighten awareness about the value of snowsports instruction, additional online services that enable you to access services

from your division or the national office more readily, or even pro form availability to help you manage the costs of your profession, the value of PSIA-AASI membership continues to increase.

The board has demonstrated excellent stewardship by approving the \$10 increase in national dues for the 2008-2009 season. Please note that each and every national board member is either a ski or snowboard instructor himself, and knows full well the importance of keeping dues as low as reasonably possible.

The group does not take its responsibilities lightly and has undergone considerable deliberation on the matter for the past several years, exhausting all

PSIA-AASI must maintain the momentum it has developed over the years, and the dues increase is essential to that endeavor.

other viable alternatives. In essence, the board is simply not willing to put the association's infrastructure in a vulnerable, financially tenuous position. PSIA-AASI must maintain the momentum it has developed over the years, and the dues increase is essential to that endeavor. The factors mentioned in this article are not going away, and the association must continue to make ends meet and provide the services each member deserves.

"It all comes down to the value you feel you're getting for that \$50," said Ray Allard, PSIA-AASI president. "When you pay for dinner at a restaurant or buy a ticket for a concert, you get an immediate return. But when you pay dues to PSIA-AASI, you get long-term as well as immediate benefits—particularly in terms of promoting snowsports instruction and the value of instructors to the industry and the public. All in all, the benefits of membership far outweigh the cost of dues."

We hope you agree. 

Stroke Claims Former Board Member Jeff Patterson

With sadness we note the passing of Jeff Patterson, a tireless force in snowsports instruction, who succumbed to a stroke on November 12, 2007, at the age of 43. Patterson distinguished himself as a member of PSIA-AASI, serving in a variety of capacities for working instructors throughout the United States.

Patterson served on the PSIA-AASI Board of Directors from 2003-06, and for several seasons was the lead examiner/Snowboard Committee chair for Rocky Mountain division. A trusted reviewer for *The Pro Rider* and Vail Resorts' training manuals, he was known for his breadth of expertise as well as his tremendous enthusiasm for snowboarding and skiing.



Patterson began his career in snowsports instruction at Spring Mountain (Pennsylvania) in 1987. He went on to work at Blue Mountain and Montage, then moved to Vail, Colorado, in 1993.

He was involved in PSIA-AASI snowboard programs from their inception, sometimes joking that he was at the very first level III snowboard exam offered by the Eastern Division—and also at the second. That was one of the few times Patterson didn't quite meet the mark, and he went on to set a standard for excellence in teaching and instructor training. He was certified at Level III in snowboarding, Level II in alpine skiing, and had also earned children's and freestyle accreditation.

Patterson liked to challenge the status quo and while he vigorously worked to serve the association's members, his focus first and foremost was on creating great relationships with his students. He will be remembered as a loving husband and father, a teacher's teacher, role model, mentor, and a beloved friend and riding companion to many, many people. ☘

AASI Unleashes New Snowboard Manual

Snowboard instructors rejoice... and reach for your PSIA-AASI *Accessories Catalog*. The American Association of Snowboard Instructors has just published the *Snowboard Instructor's Guide*.

This new text presents AASI's Snowboard Teaching System (STS), a contemporary picture of educational necessities. The STS includes three main concepts—riding, teaching, and service—as well as concepts addressing board performance, movement, and the learning process. Numerous photos and descriptions of movement and performance clarify key elements of efficient riding. The *Snowboard Instructor's Guide* is available through the *Accessories Catalog* and the online member store at www.aasi.org. ☘

READY TO RIP? JOIN THE AASI RIDER RALLY

Sure, those famous swallows will return to San Juan Capistrano in mid-March, but a month later birds of a different feather will flock to California's Mammoth Mountain for Rider Rally 2008. Scheduled for April 20-25, the Rider Rally will feature five days of riding, learning, and general merrymaking, AASI-style. The legendary gathering, hosted since 1999 by AASI's Northern Rocky Mountain Division, is now a national event. Clinics focus on pipe, park, all-mountain riding, steeps, bumps, and trees, so there's something for every rider. See the registration form on page 26 or online at www.aasi.org. The website also has clinic sign-up sheets. ☘

READY FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP? TEAM SELECTIONS SLATED

AASI Snowboard Team contenders will gather to show off their riding and teaching skills at the AASI national team selections slated for April 27-May 2, 2008, at Mammoth Mountain, California. The event will be held in conjunction with the selections for the PSIA Alpine, Adaptive, and Nordic Teams.

Divisions must report their nominations in writing to the PSIA-AASI office by December 31, 2007. The national office must receive completed candidate applications by 5 p.m. (MST) February 29, 2008,

sent to the attention of: Kim SeEVERS, PSIA-AASI Education Director, 133 South Van Gordon Street, Suite 101, Lakewood, CO 80228.

Those selected for the national team can expect to spend at least 30 days a year for the next four years participating in team activities aimed at supporting AASI programs and elevating the standards of snowboard instruction throughout the country. For more information, including how to apply, please visit www.aasi.org. ☘

Lane Clegg Named New Snowboard Team Coach

A member of the AASI Snowboard Team from 1996 to 2000, Lane Clegg rejoins the team this year as its coach, replacing J. Randy Price, who has chosen to step down. Clegg is a Level III instructor and the head coach of the Snowbird Snowboard Team. He is a trainer at Park City Mountain Resort in Utah and an examiner and clinic leader for Intermountain Division. ☘

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add pro style to jibs

a counter-intuitive solution

BY JEFF "J.B." BRIER

Crack open any snowboard magazine these days and you can't miss the shots of pros jibbing with awesome style: their airborne forms tweaked to intense degrees as upper and lower bodies twist in opposing directions.

Just check out photo 1 to see the counter-rotation I'm talking about. Looking at such images through the eyes of a snowboard instructor, though, might have you thinking something like this: "That kind of thing is way too advanced; there's no way those kinds of moves would ever apply to my students. They just want to successfully make it across a jib feature."

If that's what you're thinking, you may need to start reconsidering what you're teaching. This is a case where studying the techniques of the pros can dramatically improve your clients' jibbing performance in the park. Common first-time board- and lipslide issues can be avoided by adding a bit of pro "steerz" to the mix.

a trio of challenges

I often observe three common challenges—although there are others—with novice jibbers (and experienced ones too) that the pro-style moves can help solve:

1. *An inability to maintain a board- or lipslide along the length of a box or rail.* Although landing completely sideways, students often unintentionally over-rotate past 90 degrees well before they reach the end of the feature (photo 2). The result is that the rider typically slides off the side of the rail/box in the direction of the over-rotated spin.
2. *An inability to rotate 90 degrees for a*



PHOTO 1

board- or lipslide. Riders experiencing fear and tension often find it difficult to rotate enough to get the board completely sideways over the feature. When the rider is under rotated, one foot is generally farther away from the centerline of the jib feature and, therefore, the center of mass (CM) is not centered over the feature. Though at the opposite end of the rotation spectrum compared to the first example, the result for the boarder is often basically the same—gravity takes over and he or she ends up slipping off one side of the feature before the end of the jib.

3. *Hucking the rear leg (i.e., powering around the board's tail) instead of using both legs and hips to perform the desired maneuver.* This semi-nose-roll-type move can interfere with an



PHOTO 2

appropriate line or projection of the rider's CM while mounting and/or sliding over the feature. Even if the rider appropriately rotates for the trick, he or she will often still smear off to one side or the other.

COURTESY OF REDAL

MARK SAUTER

Whether a student suffers from one of the previous jibbing issues (or any combination of the three), the result is typically the same: the rider fails to slide sideways along the length of the feature.

counter-intelligence

When talking about adding pro-style to your clients' jibs, it's important to define a few terms so that everyone's on the same page when it comes to the descriptions used in this article. Two terms that are sometimes confused in snowboarding lingo are "counter" and "counter-rotation." A position rather than an actual movement, counter describes a rotated relationship between the upper and lower body during the maneuver. (Note: the concept of counter can also result from counter-rotational movement.)

On the other hand, counter-rotation describes a rider actively twisting the upper body in the opposite direction of the lower (photo 3 to photo 4). The easiest way to view counter-rotation is when someone does a "shifty" in either direction (photo 5). This is a great trick to try on small kickers in order to give your students valuable practice with this type of movement. To relate the pro-style concept

to your student's jibbing efforts, you can say: "Riders will use counter-rotation during the takeoff portion of the jib and land on the feature in a countered stance."

watch your backside

The four basic board- and lipslide moves that lend themselves to the counter-rotating pro style are the frontside lipslide, the frontside boardslide, the backside lipslide, and the backside boardslide. The terms "frontside" and "backside" don't indicate the direction of spin during maneuvers, nor do they describe the direction the rider faces when on the feature. Instead, these terms identify the side of the feature the rider approaches in order to perform the intended trick. Frontside board- and lipslides start with the rider's toe-edge

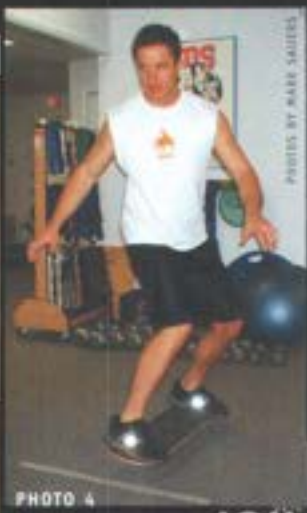
facing the feature (photo 6). Backside board- and lipslides begin with the rider's heel-edge facing the side of the feature (photo 7).

Similarly, "boardslide" and "lipslide" describe the movement of the board as it passes over and onto the jib feature. For instance, during a boardslide the nose of the board passes up and over the feature. In a lipslide the board's tail moves up and over the feature.

With the terminology explained, it's helpful to also define the tricks themselves:

► **Frontside Lipslide**—The student's toe edge faces the feature during the approach and the board's tail is lifted

continued





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up and over the rail/box to complete the maneuver (photo 8).

- **Frontside Boardslide**—The rider's toe edge faces the feature during the approach and the board's nose is lifted up and over the rail/box to complete the maneuver (photo 9).
- **Backside Lipslide**—The student's heel edge faces the feature during the approach and the board's tail is lifted up and over the rail/box to complete the maneuver (see photo 9 again, but imagine an approach similar to photo 7).
- **Backside Boardslide**—The client's heel edge faces the jib during the approach and the board's nose is lifted up and over the feature to complete the maneuver (photo 10).

Pros use counter-rotation to add style to their jibs, and you can watch them in really tweaked-out moves reaching with one hand/arm toward the nose or tail of the board. For example, riders generally extended their front hand/arm (and shoulder) toward the tail of the board during frontside lipslides (see photo 8). In front-side boardslides, the rear hand/arm (and shoulder) reach toward the nose of the board (see photo 9). A backside lipslide also involves reaching the rear hand/arm toward the nose of the board. Finally, the backside boardslide will send the front hand/arm reaching for the board's tail (see photo 10). The counter-rotation move

can solve all of the issues described at the outset of this article. The problem is that a lot of students are taught to orient the entire body sideways over the board, and such an arrangement can set a bad precedent during the first attempts of any such tricks. Although these moves require some work and practice, students will have a lot of fun and will likely have more success incorporating counter-rotation into basic maneuvers.

pro style in action

When your students can easily ride 50/50 on simple rails or boxes in addition to performing straight airs over small kickers, the following four steps can provide an excellent foundation for learning pro style. While working with your students on the suggested steps that follow, you'll want to give riders plenty of practice time at each level before moving on. There's no need to rush anyone past his or her performance and comfort levels.

1. Introducing counter-rotation

Start with a static exercise in which your students practice counter-rotation in both directions by simply jumping with or without their boards—preferably on a flat surface (photos 11 and 12). While out of their bindings, students can also practice counter-rotation by using the board as a make-believe feature (photo 13). Have riders focus on the board to help demonstrate the degree of movement necessary for success. I encourage my students to

get their feet/board to 90 degrees (compared to their starting point) and twist their shoulders as much as possible in the opposite direction during this stage.

To practice counter-rotation with the board on, students can work on a fake rail drawn in the snow to create a similar awareness of orientation with respect to a "feature." Make sure you direct your clients to pull their legs up while performing the counter-rotation move.

2. Making trial runs

The next step is to have the student literally walk through the move, again on relatively flat terrain and using the board as the feature or with an extremely low beginner rail. An option for riders at this step is to attempt the moves while riding down a fake rail drawn in the snow on a very gentle slope.

At this point you can spend some time appealing to your students' comfort levels by having them practice shifties over some small kickers. This will help riders increase their comfort and confidence in pulling their legs up while rotating the upper and lower body in opposite directions. The moves can also add a bit of fun and relaxation before hitting the real features.

3. Static jumps on a rail and/or first attempts with slow movement

Depending on the skill and confidence of your students, you will probably want to start with static rail/box jumps. (You

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can skip to the next section regarding first attempts at full speed if student skill levels allow). Start the riders alongside an extremely low beginner feature and have them practice jumping onto and landing on the feature using the new, counter-rotation move. This gives the student a chance to focus solely on the pro-style move when jumping onto the rail without the added fear of down-hill motion.

The rider could also try a ride-on jib, starting with half the board on the snow and half hovering over the jib feature, and doing the static jump, then gradually moving to one side or the other of the feature and jumping completely up onto or over the jib.

Once he or she demonstrates higher levels of skill and confidence, the student can attempt the movement on the same feature with a shortened approach. Such trial runs will serve as preparation for the entire maneuver, but the emphasis needs to be on slower speeds while starting at a relatively short distance above the feature. If you see a student performing the moves well but stalling out on the feature, that's a positive sign that the rider is ready to add more speed.

Note: To help reduce the fear factor, you may want to "spot" your client during these static jumps and/or first attempts (photo 14). Once a student demonstrates some success, all you need to do is provide feedback and encouragement while remaining close by. (As improvement occurs your spotting can be less obvious while you stand nearby in order to jump in and help in any slam situations.)

4. Attempts at normal speed and . . . tweaking it out!

At this stage, your student will start each attempt from what experienced riders would consider a more standard approach point above the feature. It should only take a few tries for the pupil to gain



comfort and confidence with higher levels of speed. You may want to remind him or her that nothing is different about these efforts compared to the first attempts, other than the speed factor.

After several successful attempts at "regular" speed, you can judge for yourself when to encourage students to tweak out the "pro style" to greater degrees. Basically, it's now time to set your riders up for their first photo shoot.

The counter-rotation, pro-style move can simultaneously limit and allow for a certain amount of board pivot, meaning that there's less potential for over- or under-rotated attempts. The maneuver also provides more control with the degree of desired pivot (board rotation) so that the rider can confidently attempt "crooked" slides in the future. Since the pro-style movement incorporates both legs and hips, the rider is less likely to pull a "huck the back leg/tail of the board" move, which will help him or her center and project the CM over the feature with more control and precision. Over time, the rider's mastery over the CM provides a gateway to performing tail- and noseslide variations.

An added bonus to developing pro-style skills is that students are now set up to easily add spin variations when exiting their jibs. Starting off in a countered arrangement on a feature provides enough pre-wind to spin off the end of the feature.

points of emphasis



While having students practice counter-rotation moves both on and off features, there are a few concepts that you should reinforce.

- Encourage students to land on both feet evenly in order to stay centered and maintain balance over the feature.
- Encourage riders to pull their legs up while in the air so that their board can easily clear the feature during takeoff.
- Encourage clients to use their abs/hips/upper legs to drive lower body rotation.
- Make sure that your students absorb landings on the jib feature.
- On the approach, it's okay to start slightly to one side of the center line of the terrain feature and gradually move farther away (increasing degrees of frontside or backside experience).
- Watch students' takeoff timing. Emphasize that patience is the key, and that it's best to wait until the front foot is almost past the beginning of the feature before making the jump.

—Jeff "J.B." Brier

conclusion

Most of your freestyle students watch with gaping jaws when Shaun White or Jeremy Jones clear huge, intimidating rails with style. Rarely do they think that they themselves are capable of such feats. Now that you've introduced counter-rotation into their jib lesson, they'll be able to translate the dream moves of the pros into terrain park feature reality at their local home mountain. ❧

Jeff "J.B." Brier is an AASI-certified Level III snowboard coach and PSIA-certified Level I nordic coach. He is the current snowboard technical director at 7 Springs Mountain Resort, Pennsylvania, and former Central Division examiner and lead snowboard trainer at Breckenridge, Colorado.



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summertime shredding?

roll with it!

BY K.C. GANDEE

Whether snowboarding is more firmly rooted in surfing, skateboarding, or skiing depends on who you ask. It's certainly possible to see the influences of each: For surfing, one need only ride powder or look at a pintail board. The legitimacy of snowboarding as a mainstream sport manifested itself in the U.S.'s gold-medal domination of the Olympic halfpipe, a skateboarding invention. And without doubt, snowboarding would not be where it is today without borrowing from ski technology and culture.

But everyone who rides knows that snowboarding merely sprung from the foundation of these others and is truly its own sport. Further proof of this may lie in a strange place: on pavement.

Whereas some early snowboards were created to duplicate the sensations of surfing or skateboarding on snow, several devices have been spawned in recent years that attempt to simulate the feel of snowboarding on dry land. That's right. It's now possible to replicate snowboarding on pavement . . . with the added adrenaline rush of dodging traffic.

While purists might argue that snowboarding should stay on snow, as an AASI-certified instructor or coach you may see these hybrids as a valuable summertime training tool that can help your students improve their riding skills in preparation for the corduroy days to come. With that in mind, a group of dedicated instructors, examiners, and coaches (photo 1) gathered in August to put several of these snow-inspired skate decks to the test to see how AASI concepts like tilt, twist, bend, and pivot would work on concrete.



PHOTO 1 THE TESTERS (L-R): MAIA HANFRAN-SANFORD WITH FREEBOARD; GREG FATIGATE WITH LONGBOARD; K.C. GANDEE WITH T-BOARD; HOLLY ANDERSEN WITH T-BOARD; DYLAN SANFORD WITH FREEBOARD; AND JAMAL REID WITH RIPSTICK

ripstick and wave

The Ripstick and Wave are two different products, but their design is so similar we decided to test them in the same category. Both boards consist of two foot platforms connected by a torsion bar; each platform has an inline-type wheel mounted on an angled caster toward its rear.

The idea with these very directional boards is to twist the foot platforms opposite each other to propel the board forward (photo 2). Turning occurs when the board is tipped; the board's turning radius can be tightened by twisting the board through the turn. 360s are possible by twisting the board's foot platforms to extreme levels. Aside from packaging and graphics, the main physical difference between the boards was that the Wave seemed torsionally stiffer and more appropriate for larger or stronger riders.

Although the Ripstick and Wave got

the most chuckles of all the boards at first glance, the overwhelming sense from the testing team was that they could be excellent training tools for riders looking to improve their footwork during the off-season. As tester Greg Fatigate, a member of the AASI-E development team and an instructor at Smuggler's Notch, Vermont, put it, "Whoever thought that looking like a kook would be this much fun?"

An instructional DVD is included with both boards, and each teaches new riders to work the board by twisting their shoulders and hips back and forth, just as a snowboard instructor might have advised his or her students back in the day. The DVDs also informed users that the boards will make S-shaped turns when ridden properly. Sound familiar?

This shoulder-twisting method was used by nearly all of the testers to get started on the Ripstick and Wave, but once



a good feel for the boards was developed, the riders who really had them dialed were able to quiet down their upper bodies and focus on ankle movement with supporting moves coming from the hips and upper body (photo 3).

The group consensus was that these boards would be great for working on twisting movements, specifically independent foot movement. While it was easy to twist the board with the front foot, all of the testers had to work to move the back foot as well. Switch footwork could be another training focus, but since both the Ripstick and Wave are directional, the rider would have to stop, dismount, and start again after literally switching stance.

That said, the boards also have good freestyle training potential. Flat spins can be accomplished by holding the board ends twisted in opposite directions, and if the tail of the board is twisted "downhill"

once a turn has been started, the board will drift sideways and provide a sensation very much like a boardslide on snow.

Despite the merits of both boards, several testers mentioned that instructors should be cautious about recommending the Ripstick or Wave to students as they may cause riders to cement bad habits, such as starting turns and maintaining turn rhythm with the use of a top-down movement pattern. Students should be instructed to lower their waists and actively move their legs, not their upper bodies. And it should be noted that only the bravest of the test team took the Ripstick or Wave downhill, as both boards lost considerable stability at speed. "I will never go downhill on one of these again," said team member Jamal Reid, AASI-E freestyle-accredited coach at Vermont Academy. "Ever."

Testers believe the Ripstick and Wave

would be best suited for riders who live in primarily flat areas as well as riders who would benefit from developing stronger twisting movements from their feet up. Both boards retail for \$99. For more information on the Ripstick, visit www.ripstickusa.com; for more on the Wave, check out www.streetsurfing.com.

freebord

Perhaps the strangest looking of the boards tested, the Freebord was the only deck that used bindings and the only deck that could simulate skidding.

The Freebord features a slightly concave wood deck with no tip or tail shovel. Each end of the board features wide, traditional-style skateboard trucks with a twist: a spring-loaded, 360-degree pivoting caster wheel. These casters can be adjusted to bring the individual wheels closer to or farther away from the deck (photo 4).

continued



PHOTO 4: FREEBORD



PHOTO 5



PHOTO 6A

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When riding the Freebord, the board travels on one set of yellow, outside wheels (which the company refers to as the board's edge) and the set of red, center wheels (the board's base). Once on the board's edge, a rider can rotate his or her hips and legs and actually pivot the Freebord into a skid, using the uphill (yellow) wheels to create friction and slow the board's progress downhill. Just like riding a snowboard, the rider then pivots the board back into the direction of travel, moves his or her center of mass (CM) over the board and into the next turn, and skids around the next arc (photo 5). This provides a thrilling ride very similar to snowboarding and leads to another Freebord exclusive: the ability to stop on a hill without bailing.

The Freebord's potential as a snowboard training tool lies in its capacity to skid. By finely countering the upper and lower body to rotate the hips, riders can steer the Freebord into a controlled, shaped turn (photo 6a-c). The test team found that the Freebord had many of the same reactions as a snowboard as well. If the rider is not properly centered when stopping, the tail of the Freebord slides out. When rolling from one edge to the next (and with the Freebord, there really

is a roll as the rider transitions over the center-mounted wheels) the rider must either push his or her hips into the new turn or push the shoulders into the new turn, which can leave the person in a broken-at-the-waist position.

For a training focus, the test team recommended working on pivoting the board with both legs, maintaining a low stance with a flexed front leg and trying to avoid steering with only the back leg. This encourages speed control through turn shape rather than the braking heelslip-to-toeslip motion we see on the hill all too often. An additional benefit of the Freebord is its twin-tip shape and performance, which allow riders to switch stances and movement patterns as they would on a snowboard.

The bindings on the Freebord do involve an adjustment period, and the mindset of a rider learning to Freebord must be that of a snowboarder, not a skateboarder. I ended up riding the Freebord with the center wheels mounted closer to the deck and drilled new binding holes to match my snowboard stance. The test team also noticed that no additional stopping power was gained when pressing on the uphill edge of the Freebord with greater intensity; either the brakes are engaged, so to speak, or they are not. "It'd be twice as

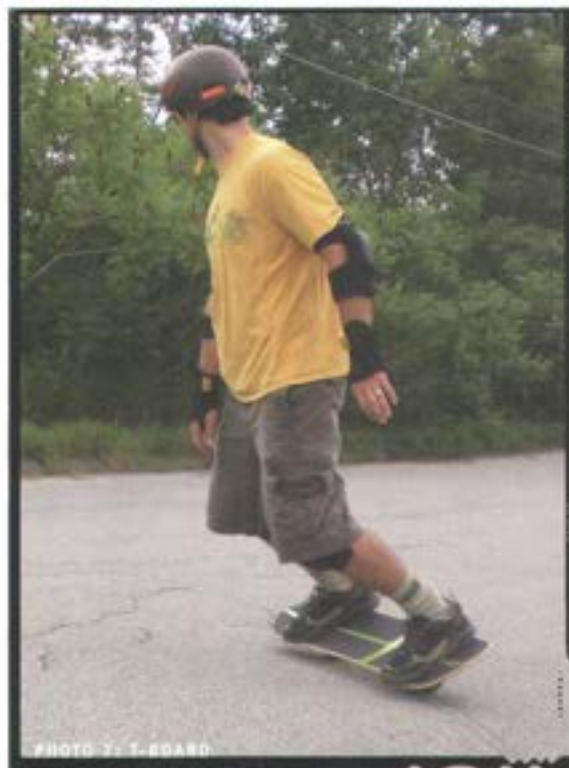
awesome with real snowboard bindings," noted team member Dylan Sanford, of the AASI-E education staff and a head coach at Okemo, Vermont, "and twice as scary."

Like snowboards, the Freebord has greater stability moving downhill with speed and is not usable on flat pavement. A final word of warning regarding the Freebord: It is a very realistic snowboard experience, including the distinct possibility of catching a downhill edge. Riders should start small and work their way up, just as in a beginning snowboard class.

The test team would recommend the Freebord to riders who may benefit from practicing pivot movements from their hips and/or making better use of both legs. The Freebord can handle just about any hill or pitch and maneuvers like a snowboard. After learning how to use it, several testers made controlled runs down very long, steep hills that they would not have tried with other boards tested. Freebords start around \$200, and a discount is available to AASI members; visit www.freebord.com for more information.

t-boards

We tested two types of Tierney Rides T-Boards, the downhill model (which features a longer wooden deck and two center-mounted rubber "Indy" wheels)



and the street model (which has a shorter twin-type deck and polyurethane wheels). For our AASI-centric purposes, we'll focus on the downhill version here.

The T-Board's design is unique, with its thick wheels and longboard-esque appearance. The directional front wheel is mounted on a thick, heavily tensioned caster, which steers into a turn when the board is tipped on edge. The rear wheel does not move, but tracks the front wheel. Testers found that the more the board is tipped, the more the front wheel turns and pulls the back wheel. This provided exhilarating sensations when carving at speed downhill and left some interesting marks on the pavement (photo 7). Due largely to its turn-key operation, the T-Board turned out to be the favorite of the testers ("Can I keep it?" asked Holly Andersen, an AASI-E examiner and author of AASI's *Snowboard Instructor's Guide*). It was simple to get going: just point the board downhill and tilt it to turn, almost exactly like carving a snowboard on the freshest, most perfect corduroy imaginable (photo 8a-b, page 60).

Tierney Rides claims the rubber wheels of the T-Board will not slide out regardless of how hard the board is worked, a claim we put to the test. The board passed, but

it should be noted when tipped over too far the wooden deck will contact the pavement and stop the board, propelling the rider over the nose of the deck and into a slide for life on the street—an urban form of "booting out."

As a training tool, the T-Board would be most valuable for helping a rider practice tilting the board. It is possible to stay in a perfectly neutral position; using only the lower legs to tilt the board toeside and heelside (upper-body leading movements do not help in any way). Unlike traditional longboards, which rely on trucks to create sidecut and turn shape, T-Boards rely on the rider tipping the board to shape the turn and create sidecut.

Additional training could focus on body position in the transition between turns. In testing, the rider was able to obtain ridiculously slow speeds by lowering his or her CM in transition and immediately tipping the board at the start of the new turn, allowing for a very tight turn shape. In fact, one tester could actually control his speed as well on a T-Board as on the Freebord using this method (though stopping was still not possible on the T-Board without turning uphill or bailing). As with the Freebord, the T-Board would not be

valuable as a snowboard training tool on flat ground, so I wouldn't suggest recommending it to clients from Florida.

T-Boards seem best suited to riders looking to work on stacking their bodies when tilting the board and initiating turns with their front feet. T-Boards are super fun on long, mellow cruising hills. T-Boards sell for around \$240, and Tierney Rides offers a discount to AASI members; visit www.tierneyrides.com for more information.

Flowboard

The Flowboards we tested received the most looks from passing traffic due to their far-from-conventional design. We tested two Flowboards: a 36-inch deck and a 42-inch deck, both made of seven-layer maple and featuring the Deep Carve System (DCS), Flowboard's truck design.

The DCS consists of two rounded trucks, each with seven inline-style wheels. The idea behind the design is pretty simple; as the rider tilts the board on edge, the board

continued

continued from page 59

rides on different sets of wheels, with each new set having a tighter sidecut the farther the board is tilted on edge. Both boards we tested handled similarly, with the 36-inch Flowboard being snappier and having a tighter turn radius and the 42-inch board feeling more stable at speed.

At first glance, the Flowboard would seem best utilized as a tilt training tool. And while it would no doubt be useful for that purpose, the test team found real value in using the board to manage forces (pressure). We found that the boards could be tipped to extreme angles with incredible turning radius. (We also found that if we were not prepared, we would be ejected from the boards because they tracked so well at high angles.)

To be successful at piloting the Flowboard through a tight arc, the testers found that they needed to position their bodies well inside the turn before tipping the board up to create the turn shape. The old-school style of leaning the whole body gradually into the turn simply didn't cut it; the Flowboard necessitated more dynamic riding.

Another useful aspect of the Flowboard was its stability. Riders were able to experiment with fore-aft movements through turns. We found that by beginning a turn over the front foot and scooting the board underneath us so that we finished the turn lined up over the rear foot, we were better able to manage the forces being generated through the turn. Several testers felt this is the same motion they use in short turns on steep pitches. We were not able to replicate these types of motions with any success on the other boards.

The test group would recommend the Flowboard to riders who tend to park on an edge and ride it out. In order to really



PHOTO 8A

rip on the Flowboard, riders must learn dynamic movements. We'd also recommend the Flowboard as a versatile board that skates flats, turns like a snowboard, and doesn't break the bank. Flowboards sell for about \$90; for more information, visit www.flowlab.com.

longboard

As comfy as an old pair of skate shoes, all of the testers felt at home on the traditional longboard-style skateboard we included in the test as a "control" device, of sorts. By far the most versatile tool tested, the longboard allowed for reasonable speed control on hills and a smooth, stable ride on flat ground and up small hills.

As a snowboard training tool, the standard longboard would be best utilized in understanding pressure. Since the board relies on its trucks for sidecut and turn shape (and can only tilt so far), the testers enjoyed changing their stances on the board to see how and when they applied pressure to an "edge" changed the board's turn.

The longboard would be worthwhile as a summer snowboard training tool, not to mention transport; few of the other



PHOTO 8B

boards could hold a candle to it for getting from Point A to Point B, and it was just plain fun.

wrapping it up

Since few clients can afford to throw down for summer trips to Mt. Hood and since pretty much everyone has pavement, consider steering students with a warm-weather snowboarding urge to one of these decks. Each has its own benefits for keeping riding muscles and movements primed for the first chairlift of winter, and each one is almost as much fun as snowboarding.

Of course, I would be beaten (and severely) by several of the testers if I didn't mention that nothing beats a street skate deck for learning better ollies, grinds, and jibs. But if you're looking for a freeride training tool for those snowless seasons, look no further. **W**

K.C. Gandee is a member of the AASI Snowboard Team and a staff trainer at Okemo Mountain Resort in Vermont. He would like to thank the test-team members for their help with this article.



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but he taught us to look—and understand—what was going on while people were coming down the hill. I know he never had a thought about snowboarding, but, wow, could he get us to understand how a tool like a snowboard could work wonders when put on the feet of someone with talent!

My inspirations are my girls (Ellen, age 12, and Samantha, age 10). I try to keep up with them and share the love I have of the sport. They dig coming to work with dad. I thought going to work with my dad was some kind of punishment.

RANDY: Listening to really innovative instructors. Unfortunately, far too often they're not the lead trainers at areas but the instructors that are constantly booked for privates. They are the guys and gals whose clients seem to be always having a great time. Watching those instructors has given me more insight into what makes a great adventure than the clinics I attended.

I also love shadowing first-year instructors; they come up with the best stuff 'cause they're just making it up. It doesn't always work, but when it does it can be brilliant!

On the space of one day, what is the most helpful thing an instructor can do to improve his or her ability to teach snowboarding?

ROB: Listen; just listen carefully! Listen to what the students' motivations, wants, and needs are. Even if their expectations are way off, give them a glimpse of what their alter ego really wants.

RANDY: Remember that your client is on vacation; it's about having a good time and laughing. Don't get too caught up in achieving goals. If you keep moving toward a goal but make sure that both you and your student are enjoying a great day on snow, the learning will happen.

LANE: Spend some time with a mentor or peer and really try to gain an understanding of the mechanics involved in what you are teaching. Once you have that knowledge, it allows you to tailor your lessons to different types of students, different terrain, or different goals using your ingenuity and resources.

LOWELL: That really depends on the instructor, as we all have different strengths as teachers—and at least as many areas we could improve. It's not by accident that AASI trains instructors on a wide range of essential knowledge and skills that relate to teaching snowboarding. Safety awareness, knowledge of guest service and group dynamics, awareness of physics and mechanics, and a solid understanding of teaching and learning, to name but a few, are all extremely important.

Generally, I'd say that it helps all instructors—from first-year pros to Snowboard Team members—to humbly realize that they have lots to learn, and to strive to identify and improve those areas in which they might not yet be highly skilled.

SANDRA: Walk a mile in your client's shoes. Whether that be literally swapping gear and feeling what they feel, checking out the performance capabilities of their equipment, or getting

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AN AASI REMINISCENCE

started teaching as a way to get a free pass, before there was even a snowboard certification option for instructors. I know, that makes me just younger than Randy Price and dirt, but I didn't get to choose when I was born.

Anyway, I took my Associate Cert (early name for Level II) exam at Vail in April of 1990, close to a month after the resort I was working at had closed for the season. I wore Sorels with the original felt liners and rode a sweet florescent Kemper 165 Freestyle. I passed my Level III exam in January of 1991 at the first official Level III offered for the Rocky Mountain Division. My gold pin was in the shape of a shield, said PSIA on it, and had a picture of a snowboarder doing the most horrendous heelside turn you've ever seen.

Back in the "old days," the crew going to the clinics and exams seemed to really live the "dirtbag snowboarder" lifestyle. I remember seeing people piled on the floors, sleeping anywhere possible just to save their money for cheap beer and maybe a little food. There was a tight-knit feeling of camaraderie to the whole thing, which is one of the main reasons I stayed involved. I guess I still am in it for the people, although I don't enjoy sleeping on the floor nearly as much anymore.

I came to the East Coast around the same time AASI was born, in 1998. I had the privilege of being involved with developing the original manual and video, although it's a little embarrassing to think I had already been teaching for almost 10 years by that point. The start of AASI was also the beginning of the next chapter of my professional instructor life. I became an examiner, was a guest freestyle coach for the AASI Snowboard Team, and then became a full-fledged member of the team. I'm still an examiner and stay involved with the Snowboard Team, but now I talk more smack about it than actually doing it. The price of getting old I guess.

Looking at the members from the other side of the clinic or exam now, I still see the camaraderie at events. New friends being made, fire-hazard head counts in hotel rooms, a love of snowboarding being shared, cheap beer being drunk. I guess some things don't change, and for that I'm glad. Happy B-day AASI, we're lucky to have you.

—Shaun Cattanach, AASI Eastern Division Education Staff
and former member of the AASI Snowboard Team (1996–2000)



Book Reviews

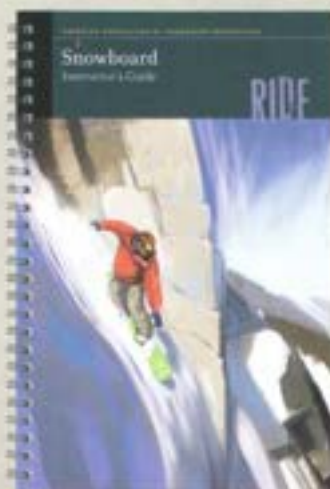


By Mike Shank

The AASI Snowboard Instructor's Guide

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

★★★★★ 1/2



into their head to understand their mood, motivation, fear, excitement, etc. You'll find something that will help it click for your student—and that, in my opinion and, more importantly, theirs—makes you a better snowboard instructor.

AMY: Participate in a clinic. Even a skiing clinic. Don't just listen to the content of the clinic, but have an opinion of the clinician. Did he or she get to know you? How did the person do that? How did the clinician develop group rapport? Did he or she identify your learning style? Were you given positive feedback? Did this clinic leader create an environment where you felt comfortable speaking up?

Then go home and work out what you would have done. If the clinician was abrupt with you, think about if you are that way with your guests. If the clinician ignored you, consider whether you sometimes do that. If the clinician was helpful and encouraging, ask yourself "Am I that supportive of my students?"

How have student demands and expectations changed over the years?

AMY: I think it's not so much the demands and expectations that have changed, but the clientele that has changed. When I first started teaching it was mainly young guys who were willing to learn the hard way. They would crash and burn so often, I would wonder if they would come back the next day.

Now I teach a wide range of people. Mums, granddads, tiny kids, TV-watching kids, and families learning together. Due to the fact that snowboarding has infiltrated pop culture, people are more aware of what is involved. I think this makes their expectations more realistic than before.

LANE: Our first students knew they were in for a hard time. They came with an expectation of bruising (or breaking) themselves, and often didn't show up until the last day of their vacation because they figured they could climb onto the plane in any condition. It was good, however, in that knowing how painful it would be, they still came to the lesson and were extremely determined to "get it."

Nowadays it seems that people often only want it if it's easy. They want the "no fall" lesson that is pain-free and has them turning within the first hour. It's the "Why can't daddy buy me a 540?" idea: if I pay more, why can't I just be able to do it without the pain and suffering that go along with learning a new sport?

SANDRA: Hmmm. I have noticed that many students are less motivated to work a little to get it. They expect to ride all-mountain and throw-down 3s and 5s as soon as they strap in. That may not necessarily be snowboard-specific, though. Maybe it's our societal instant-gratification mechanism.

RANDY: All the vids showing that snowboarding is about flying and spinning do not help. Sure it makes students show up, but turning and stopping are not high on the "I need to know" list.

LOWELL: I think guests have come to expect high-quality professional instruction—from beginner lessons to advanced

riding—in each and every lesson.

ROB: People used to come to me and say, "I don't want to die on this thing." Today, they are much more savvy to what's going on, and because they know more about it they also expect it to happen faster. They have bigger expectations and less time to invest in those expectations.

What's in store for snowboard instruction? That is, what trends or student demands will be driving technique and teaching tactics in the coming years?

LANE: The freestyle trend will continue for even more of the population. People outside the "park rat" type want to hit jumps, ride the pipe, and check out the rails. The good news is that resorts are aware of this trend and many are building "progression parks" that allow people to learn and experience those elements in a safe manner.

AMY: Kids, kids, kids, kids, kids, and more kids. Lots of tiny, tiny kids learning to snowboard. Kids who have never skied, learning to snowboard. And families wanting to ride together.

LOWELL: I think it's changing most quickly right now as we begin to realize the exciting opportunities afforded through video and computer technology to enhance our students' experience.

Video is a powerful tool for instant on-hill analysis, and in the near future I think we'll see most instructors using video cameras in their lessons. After the lesson, an instructor can upload footage to YouTube or burn DVDs for guests to share with family and friends. Instructors are starting to realize the opportunities afforded by social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook to reach and communicate with clients.

As video MP3 players become increasingly popular we'll soon see the development of instructional podcasts that students can refer to on the hill, while they train. It's a tremendously exciting time to be involved in snowboard instruction as we transition to Snowboard Instruction 2.0.

ROB: If I were starting all over I would definitely look to know all there is to know about kids, the aging population, adaptive populations, and women's trends. Besides that, I would be fluent in Spanish and have enough of another language mastered to get by in a pinch. Teaching guys in their 20s in English is so over. Yes, it is still a big part of the sport today, but the horizon is looking much different in terms of who we will be teaching in the future.

SANDRA: I think that is up to us. What do we want out of our sport? Where do we want to take our own personal riding? And how do we want to share that vibe with the public? They are coming to us for the stoke.

Yeah, sure, they saw some sick footage and came for a lesson after getting spanked by the mountain, but they come to us for the sheer exhilaration of really getting that first turn, drop, rail, chute, mountain ethos, secret stash, notoriety, camaraderie, you-name-it because you define it.

RANDY: Ask a 14-year-old. 



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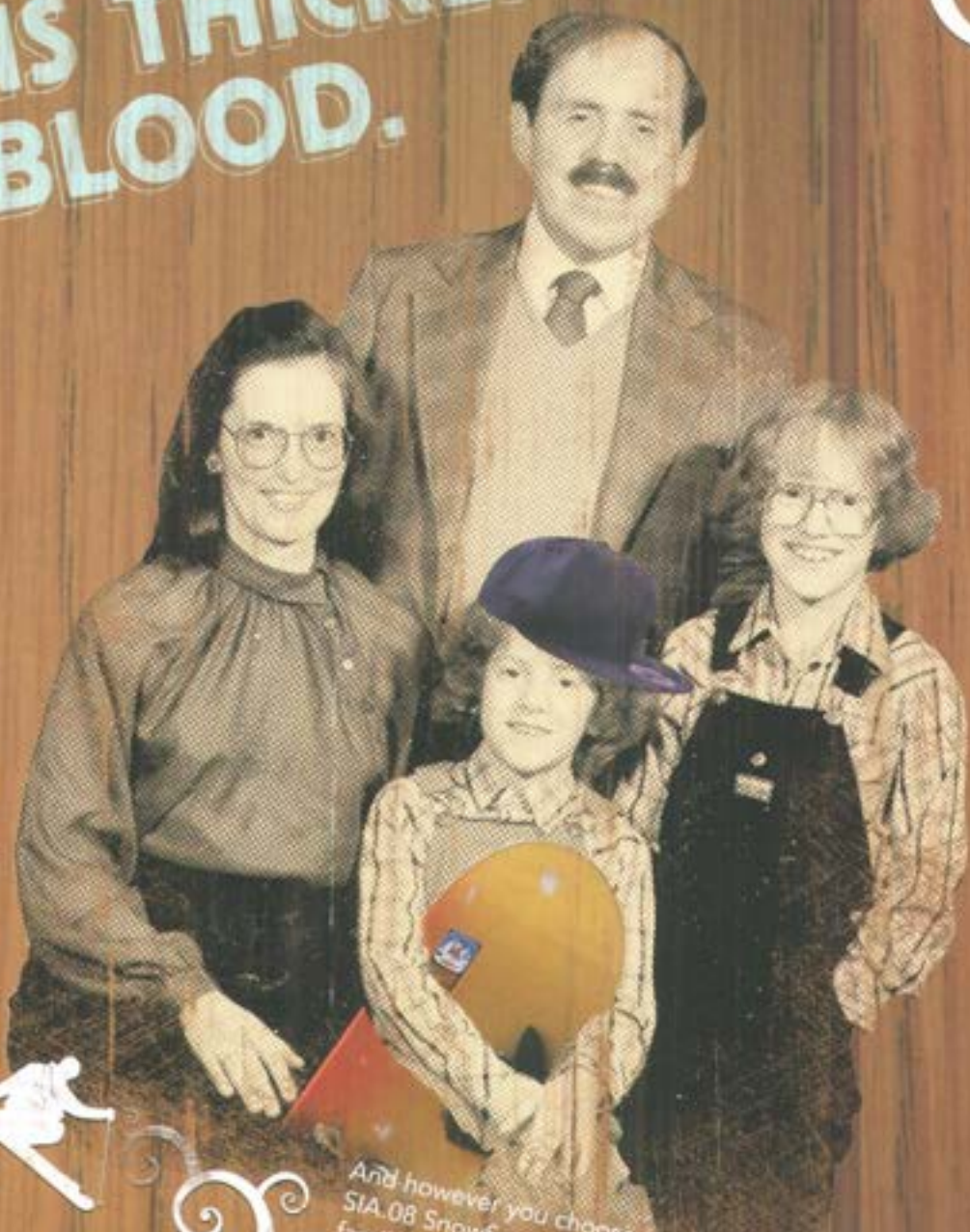
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MOST TREASURED POSSESSION:
MY COCCYX

How did you get hooked on snowboarding?

When I was in high school, I was self-absorbed and would have done anything for attention. I wanted to be the coolest, hottest, greatest. Of course, no girls were snowboarding then, and in my quest to be the center of attention, I knew I'd have to learn to do the trendiest thing on earth. Little did I know that this is a sport that deepens even the shallowest of people.

What led you to become an instructor?

I needed a lift pass. And quick.

What's your favorite thing about being a snowboard instructor?

I love to see the "eureka" moments in students, whether they're learning simply how to stop, or whether they're doing their first flawless lipslide.

What's the best advice a fellow instructor ever gave you?

"Never poach a hot tub. You never know what's in there, and you might find yourself being poached."
—Barry McKay, Driggs, Idaho.

What's the best advice a student ever gave you?

"Get me to a bathroom now, because I'm about to ruin your day."
—Caleb Hurst, age five.

What's the best thing that's ever happened to you in a lesson?

Last year, I was able to tell all my students that I had been invited to the USASA National Championships, and had clenched the bronze medal in boardercross. The best thing that's ever happened to me was when a six-year-old student looked up and told me that she wanted to be a racer, just like Miss Bethany, when she grows up.

And the most heinous?

Ah, yes. The day I didn't accept student Caleb Hurst's "advice."

What song title best describes your first day as an instructor?

Fats Waller's "Your Feet's too Big."

What song title best describes your philosophy on life?

Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World."

What's the biggest sacrifice you've ever made for your profession?

The pride that I started out with was stripped away pretty quickly. There's not much room for selfishness in teaching. But it was a positive loss, because pride doesn't do much for anyone, anyway.

Describe (in 75 words or less) the perfect day of teaching.

Two feet of fresh. Beginner or rock star. I just want to be out there with them.

What's your favorite childhood memory?

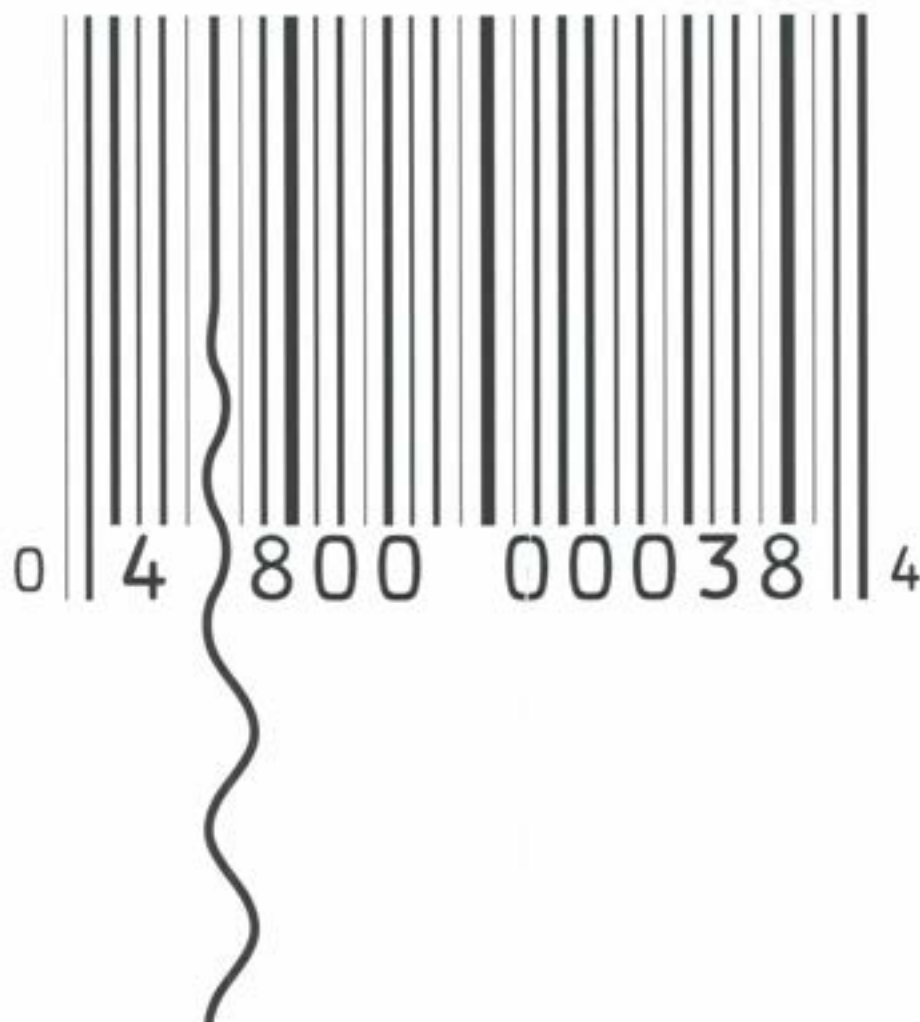
It sounds cliché, but it truly was the day my Dad dropped everything to take his girl snowboarding.

What did your parents really want you to do with your life?

They really wanted me to write my own script. Thank goodness.

Finish this joke: How many snowboard instructors does it take to change a lightbulb?

Ten: One to screw it in, and nine to stand by and applaud: "There you go! You're doing it! Great job! That's the way! Perfect! You're amazing!"



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