PSIA AASI
NORTHWEST

Winter 2010
Issue #2 2010/11 Season
PNSIA-EF

NW snowsports Instructor

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TIPS & TRICKS FROM YOUR PEERS

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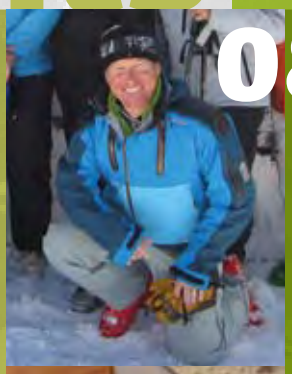

COVER
Chip Kamin, Selkirk Powder Company Guide ...eh um... working. Photo by Jon Dodge

CERTIFICATION IS A DYNAMIC PROCESS

by Chris Thompson, PSIA-NW Certification Vice President

All disciplines – alpine, snowboard, telemark, track and adaptive – have an approved exam program. Upgrades are implemented on a regular basis to ensure that the exam programs meet the current PSIA/AASI National Standards. The Alpine exam has most recently been upgraded with a newly revised PSIA-NW Certification Guide which was made available on-line at psia-nw.org in early November. Additionally the Snowboard National Standards have been updated.

Certification is designed to test levels of achievement; from your early skiing days and through your first class assignment as a new instructor and beyond. The skiing module is a test but should be viewed as a fun challenge, not unlike skiing with your peer group at your home area. In the teaching module, you are not only sharing information with your peers, helping them to understand what and how to teach, but also improving their skiing performance at the same time. Most snowsports schools as well as the division offer "exam prep" clinics. Realistically, all clinics are skiing/riding and teaching improvement opportunities and as a result should be seen as having an underlying exam focus.

The exams are based on National Standards developed and adopted by the National organization. These standards can be found in each of the PSIA-NW Certification Guides, at the psia-nw.org website or PSIA/AASI National website at thesnowpros.org.

In addition to the National Standards, each of the nine divisions, from East to West, utilizes the skills and teaching matrix, visual cues, etc. as resource exam material. Divisions typically break down the exam into modules – a written test, a skiing test and teaching/professional knowledge test.

To meet the needs of our predominantly part time snowsports instructors, the Northwest division has opted to host the exams in an accessible and affordable manner; a one-hour written exam module; a one-day skiing/riding module and a one-day teaching and professional knowledge module. Pre exam clinics, while strongly recommended, are not required. Once you have passed the written module, you are ready for the skiing/riding and teaching modules.

The spring exam series, held at one or more resorts in each region of the division, provides ample opportunity for testing. The exam dates are listed at psia-nw.org in a calendar or list view, and in the 2010/11 Season Guide which was published in the Fall 2010 issue of the NW Snowsports Instructor newsletter. Please refer to the Season Guide or website to plan your skiing/riding and clinic needs accordingly.

The skiing/riding and teaching modules each are lead by two examiners. In addition, you may have an examiner in training or a training director observing the exam process. This past season, we restructured the alpine teaching module enabling the two examiners to stay together throughout the day to ensure consistency, where both examiners are able to observe each candidate during the entire exam day. Although it is recommended that you prepare for two long teaching segments, you may only have one long segment, with a shortened movement analysis directed practice teaching opportunity.

This season, the primary focus has been the alpine skiing module – now listed as Skiing Skills & Technical Understanding in the Alpine Certification Guide. The Level II and Level III skiing modules continue with the same number of skiing tasks as the past few seasons. However, the tasks are now broken down into Skiing tasks and Exercises & Versatility tasks. This was implemented to help you understand that the latter were selected to test your overall skill blend but are also there for you to use as skiing improvement and skill development training tools. Once again, the tasks are used to evaluate a candidate's mastery of skill blending, and depending on conditions of the day, not all tasks may necessarily be performed.

Also, there is now a technical component to the skiing module. As noted in the exam guide: "During the day, the examiners and examinees will discuss the technical skiing elements to ensure understanding. This does not influence the overall grade but provides an opportunity to rehearse the understanding of each of the selected tasks enabling performance as well as goal setting."

This summer the alpine certification guide was rewritten to give it more of an educational focus as well as a "how to" guide. Redundancies have been removed; each chapter is more specific to the level. One of the major changes is in the Reference Chapter which is now Reference and Resource. One element of change is the addition of a list of proven exercises that are linked to a document that describes the exercise and lists the primary skill or skills affected.

Currently there are twenty alpine examiners, nine snowboard examiners, four telemark examiners, four track examiners and two adaptive examiners in the NW. These examiners, Technical Team members and all of the Divisional Clinic Leaders are well versed in the exam process and are there to help you succeed. In addition to all the written materials, these dedicated individuals are great resources, and are always eager to answer your certification related questions. Simply go to psia-nw.org, navigate to the "Who We Are" menu, then choose your discipline for a complete list of divisional staff.

Looking forward, updates will be made to the Alpine and Snowboard Exam Task DVDs. We will also be adding additional resources and links to training aids which will be useful in your day to day teaching/coaching, and to help you better prepare for your exam. Remember, the exams seem like a long way off but they are coming up quickly, so get ready.

Chris Thompson is the PSIA-NW Certification Vice President, an Alpine Examiner, Founder and past Head Coach of the PSIA-NW Technical Team. He is also the TD for Schweitzer Alpine Racing School and a ski school trainer at Schweitzer Mountain Resort, Idaho. Email him at mistert@nctv.com

PUTTING THE "ME" IN TEAM

by Tyler Barnes
PSIA-NW
Communications
Vice President

The key to the success of this organization is the work that you and I do to advance snowsports education. The operative word here is "advance" because as you know, "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten."

So ask yourself what do you do as a snowsports educator that would benefit others who do the same? A super easy way to contribute to the people (the snowsports instructors) that make up your organization, is to share an educational article or cool teaching trick, like the Snow Pro Tips, Featured Articles and Contributions that were submitted for this issue of the newsletter. These authors took the time to share some great information with you, that may "advance" the way you share your passion for the mountain experience!

Another great way to "contribute" is to share your ideas and concepts with key people who can make things happen. These key people are your regional board representatives, who represent you and your region. The Executive Committee as well as the entire PSIA-NW Board of Directors are all volunteers who devote countless hours to the success of this not-for-profit organization in support of what you do. They are the primary starting point for fleshing out and cultivating your ideas into the advancement of snowsports education.

We are in the process of creating a "workflow" for you and your ideas to flow freely from concept to implementation, but not without due diligence. There are a myriad of ideas, concepts and programs that are "in the works" so it is important to know how your "super cool new idea" may impact or enhance existing programs and how your idea fits in with the mission of your organization.

If you have a "great idea" we want to hear from you! Check the psia-nw.org website for details about how to get your "new idea" into action.

Tyler is an instructor and trainer at Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort, is a member of the PSIA-NW Technical Team, and an Alpine Examiner. He is also the owner of a print-and-web design company who produces this publication and the psia-nw.org website. Email tyler@509design.com.

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It's More than a Card

When I was asked 4 years ago to help teach some young kids to snowboard my response was, "Don't you need to be qualified to teach?" The answer I got was, "Not really,..." Well, before I took on that task I learned of AASI and PSIA, their certification standards and instructor levels. To my surprise the support I've received in my certification quest has been more than expected. Not only have I been impressed with the depth of knowledge my AASI-NW clinicians and tutors share, I also look forward to the feedback received after each certification module. The challenge of AASI certification each season has made me a better instructor and rider, so this season I'm looking forward to what AASI/PSIA-NW has to offer. Should be fun!

SPRING SYMPOSIUM

It seems like a long way off, but it's just around the corner. Starting planning now for the Party of the Season @ Mission Ridge! Check on-line and book lodging now!

April 15-17

Upcoming Events & Clinics

Be sure to check the Season Guide in the Fall 2010 issue or the website for more details about these and more clinics and events:

CS, FS, SS Foundations	Jan. 28
Winter Blast	Feb. 7-8
Immersion	Feb. 9-11
Exam CP @ Schweitzer	Feb. 11
Exam CP @ Stevens Pass	Feb. 25
Exam CP @ Bachelor	Feb. 25
Exam CP @ Meadows	Feb. 27

JANUARY IS LEARN TO SKI & SNOWBOARD MONTH

WHAT IT IS

Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month is a national initiative celebrated in January that encourages kids and adults to learn how to ski and/or snowboard, or improve their skills by taking lessons from a professional instructor. Governors in 16 states proclaimed January as the time to learn how to ski or snowboard! Now more than 300 ski and snowboard areas throughout the U.S. offer free and reasonably priced lesson programs during January as part of this initiative to get more Americans on the slopes. The LSSM website offers a comprehensive listing of more than 300 U.S. participating ski areas offering great deals on lessons, and all includes key information on being prepared for your first day on the slopes with a full menu of information with links to our key partnering organizations. Find a participating ski area near you, and this January, learn how to ski or snowboard!

More than 300 resorts in the U.S. will offer learning programs that are part of Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month. Information is located at www.skiandsnowboardmonth.org.

Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month is an industry initiative organized by the National Ski Areas Association, the Professional Ski Instructors of America, the American Association of Snowboard Instructors, SnowSports Industries America, the National Ski Patrol, numerous state and regional resort associations, rep associations, retailers and the snow sports media.

"Humans Were Never Meant to Hibernate"

GLEN PLAKE RETURNS AS AMBASSADOR

Lakewood, Colorado, November 4, 2010

Glen Plake joined with a number of industry supporters to "officially" launch Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month 2011 at the Boston Ski and Snowboard Expo November 11-14. Plake, who represents Elan and Dalbello, is returning this year as an Ambassador for the initiative and will help promote Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month (LSSM) with consumers and with media professionals. He made a number of appearances last year on behalf of the initiative via Elan and Dalbello.

"I can't wait for the snow to fall and I urge people of all ages come out to take ski and snowboard lessons his year regardless of ability," said Plake. "I had a blast last January and am looking forward to Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month 2011."

The world famous "extreme" skier travels throughout the U.S. and Europe encouraging children and adults to enjoy snow sports for recreation and fun. His signature Mohawk haircut makes him instantly recognizable by skiers and snowboarders wherever he goes.

BODE MILLER TO SERVE AS AMBASSADOR

Lakewood, Colorado, November 15, 2010.

Olympic Gold Medal winner Bode Miller will serve as an Ambassador for Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month (LSSM) organizers announced today. He is sponsored by the HEAD Ski Company, also a sponsor for LSSM. Miller joins Ambassador Glen Plake.

Miller is the most decorated U.S. Skier of all time. He is a five-time Olympic medalist: Gold (Combined), Silver (SuperG), and Bronze (Downhill) in Vancouver 2010; Silver (Combined) and Silver (Giant Slalom) in Salt Lake City 2002. Bode has two overall World Cup Titles (2004-05 & 2007-08, four Discipline Titles: Giant Slalom in 2003-04, SuperG in 2004-05, SuperG in 2006-07, and Super Combined in 2007-08.

Overall, Bode has 32 career World Cup wins and ranks seventh with most wins in Alpine Skiing history among males. He has the most World Cup wins in the history of American alpine ski racing - with four World Championship Gold Medals in Downhill, Super G, Combined, and Giant Slalom. He is one of only two men to win a World Cup race in all four disciplines in a single season (Downhill, Super G, Slalom, and Giant Slalom). Bode holds the record for most consecutive races skied – 136 (March 2002 – Jan. 2006).

Related NW Websites:
Ski Idaho: www.skiidaho.us
Ski Montana: www.skimt.com
Ski Oregon: www.skioregon.org
Ski Washington: www.skiwashington.com
Ski the NW Rockies: www.skinwrockies.com

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SUBMISSION DEADLINES

For more info go to
www.psia-nw.org/newsletter

Fall Issue (Sep – Nov),
Ad Reserve by August 1
Articles, Snow Pro Tips by August 15

Winter Issue (Dec – Feb),
Ad Reserve by October 1
Articles, Snow Pro Tips by October 20

Spring Issue (Mar – May),
Ad Reserve by January 1
Articles, Snow Pro Tips by January 20

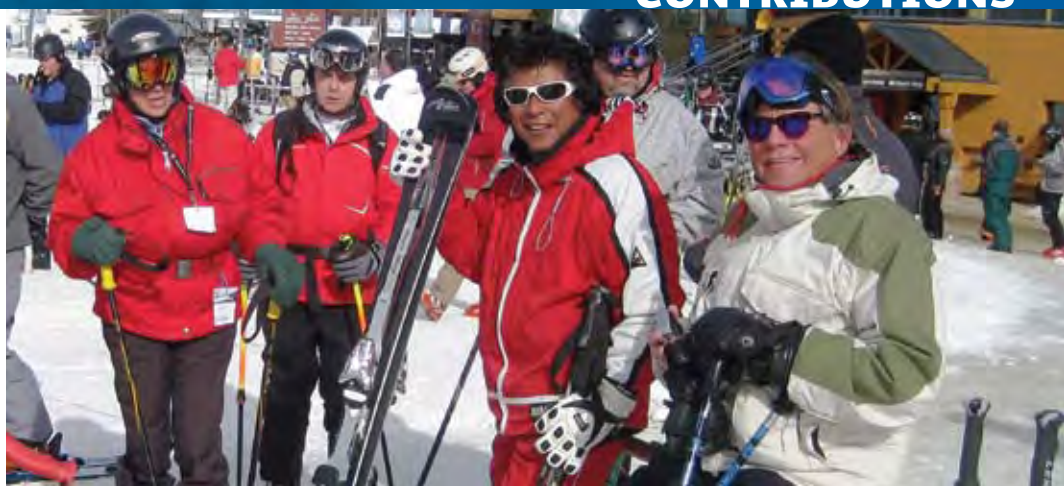
Summer Issue (Jun – Aug),
Ad Reserve by May 1
Articles, Snow Pro Tips by May 20

CONTRIBUTOR GUIDELINES

The *NW Snowsports Instructor* is published four times per year. This newsletter will accept articles from anyone willing to contribute. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit all submissions including advertising. Articles should include the author's name, mini-bio and portrait image suitable for publishing (if available). Please submit all content, articles and photos as attachments via email or contact the editor for other options. All published material becomes the property of PSIA-NW. Articles are accepted for publication on the condition that they may be released for publication in all PSIA National and Divisional publications. Material published in this newsletter is the responsibility of the author and is not necessarily endorsed by PSIA-NW.

A TOUCH OF THE PAST AND A HINT OF THE FUTURE

by Ed Kane



Last season I was at Winter Park resort with the North American Ski Journalists. I got there just as the SIA on snow demos were ending and just before a storm blew in so that we could enjoy some new snow over packed powder. The highlight of the trip, however, was the opportunity to spend the day with a role model from the past and to try out what could turn out to be the next advancement in ski technology. The role model is Wayne Wong and the new twist in skis is the "Anton Ski Active Suspension System."

I started skiing seriously in the early 1960s and started teaching in the mid 60s. This was a very creative time period in the history of skiing in the US. PSIA was becoming actively involved in creating guidelines and materials that would unify the teaching approach throughout the country and the world was becoming aware of our instructional philosophy through our involvement in the semi-annual international Interski meetings. Skiing for the general public was also beginning to mature and grow through the influence of magazine publications, films and TV. In this latter venue much of the material was provided by a small group of very imaginative and high energy skiers known at that time as "Freestylers."

One of the most colorful of these was Wayne Wong a Northwestern native (if you count BC as part of the Northwest). His long black hair, sun glasses, bandanna, winning smile and flashy skiing caught the imagination of the skiing public including me. I spent a lot of time in the early '70s trying to master his style and tricks (the worm turn was about my only success). Wayne was Certified by the Canadian Ski Instructors Alliance at the age of 16 and in 1975 he was part of the Canadian Inter-Ski Demo team. He won the first "Freestyler of the Year" award in 1972, was Europa Cup champion in 1973, Rocky Mountain freestyle champ in 1973 and Japan International Freestyle champion in 1975. If you check out the latest Winter 2011 issue of 32 Degrees you'll see some vintage photos of that era. He was inducted into the Canadian Ski Hall of Fame in April 2009 for his influence on skiing culture. Wayne continues to be actively involved in the ski industry and hasn't lost much of his ability, stability and flash over all the years as can be seen in the accompanying photos. It was truly a memorable experience skiing with him for the day.

The reason we were able to spend the day with Wayne was that he is promoting a ski line that is viewed as the next step into the future of skiing. He and Anton Wilson were at Winter Park for the SIA show demonstrating their new line of skis (www.antonskis.com). To be perfectly correct, they would be better described as a ski with a built in suspension system shown in the photo below.

This was developed by Anton in an effort to get a better ride on skis and to enable the user to more easily make carved turns. The ski is a shaped wood core wet glass wrap which is quite soft in both flex and torsion. A suspension system is mounted to this ski which consists of an adjustable base plate upon which the bindings are mounted and a composite spring system anchored near the tip and tail of the ski. The base plate can be adjusted to put more load into the tip and tail which also increases the camber of the unloaded ski. The combination is an adjustable ski with a range of characteristics intended to make the ride smother and keep more of the ski in contact with the snow especially while turning.

We got to spend the day skiing with Wayne and Anton exploring the design on the groomed runs, in the trees and in the bumps. During that time, Wayne spent time coaching some of the group on achieving more efficient movements to get more performance out of the skis. Midway through the day we started to play with the adjustment mechanism so that we could experience the performance differences. I found that on the softest setting the system was quite responsive and very stable at moderate speeds on soft snow and in the bumps. The turns for the most part were carved and required very little in the way of extreme stances or movements to hold a nice arced turn. However, at higher speeds on steeper terrain they tended to be a bit unstable, chattered a bit and it was difficult to hold the intended line. In the afternoon, after increasing the stiffness through the adjustments in the suspension system these latter turns in the steeper terrain were much more comfortable.

On the whole, the ski/suspension system seems to perform as described by Wayne and Anton. It is likely that, if these catch on, the general public may find something of this nature a less challenging way to experience efficient skiing movements early in their learning experience. Such innovations may be able to bring more growth and retention in the skiing population. However it must be noted that currently these skis are in the "designer" category of skis due to their high price point which is driven primarily by the intensive touch labor required to install the suspension system. I for one will watch the development and acceptance of these in the market place. In the meantime, I was lucky enough to spend the day experiencing a hint of the future.

Ed Kane is a Snoqualmie Region Board Representative, past PSIA-NW President and is currently the Training Director for Ullr Ski School.

Selkirk Powder guide Jon Dodge leads the group down a powder bowl.

Pinch Me, I'm Dreaming

A CLINIC TO REMEMBER

by Nils Riise photos by Chip Kamin

When I got the call to confirm my two day member school clinic at Schweitzer, I had no idea what I was in for. I was totally stoked to be leading a Telemark clinic and an Alpine clinic all in the same weekend, let alone what I actually experienced. The call came just two days before I was supposed to leave for Idaho, so I wondered if the clinics had been cancelled. But, come to find out, at the end of that phone call I had entered into a whole new level of stoke.

I had been informed by the Schweitzer Snowsports School clinic organizer, that they had received a substantial amount of snow over the last week, and with clear weather in the forecast, we're changing plans. He asked me if it was o.k. with me if one of the clinic days took place in the backcountry. I then proceeded to tell him that I was ready to work with his folks needs anywhere they saw fit and that I would bring my skins and backcountry ski gear. He said, "That won't be necessary, 'cause we have arranged a snow cat for you and your group." I thought, "Really, snow cat skiing for a member ski school clinic? No Way!"

"Are you serious?" I said. "Yup, just arrive at the ski school at 8:00 am Saturday morning ready to ski powder. See you then!" Chip hung up. I had just walked into a dream clinic. Cat skiing all day - on the house, coaching folks on powder skiing and getting paid? Wow, pinch me, I'm dreaming! Here's how it all went down:

During my drive out there, in the back of my mind I kept on doubting that the snow cat trip was actually going to happen. So, I arrived early to make sure this all just wasn't a hoax. "Maybe someone was just playing a big joke on me," I thought. Was I actually about to embark on a snow cat trip for a member school clinic? I had no idea what to expect. How and where were we going to access this Schweitzer backcountry? From my previous experience with cat trips I was ready for a 30-60 minute van ride to our pick up point. I was just told to show up and follow along with the rest of the group.

After our avalanche safety briefing, we were all gathered at the clock tower in the base area for our van ride or whatever the next phase in the trip was and along comes our lead guide, Chip Kamin. "O.K. you guys, are your transceivers on? Are you all ready to go?" he says all nonchalant. At this point, I am still looking around for our ride. Then, Chip proceeds to announce to the group, "Let's head over to the Great Escape Quad and get up to our starting point, we've got to meet up with our other guide, Ken." At this point I ask the clinic participants, "Where are we going, how are we getting to the snow cat?" They all just looked at me kind of funny and said, "We're starting up on top." For some reason, I just didn't pick up on the fact the cat skiing operation actually operated from the top of the ski area. Go figure - duh, Nils. I guess it had been a while since I had skied Schweitzer. Big changes – what a cool concept, sure why wouldn't it be based on top, right?

As we crested the top of the Great Escape Quad, there it was, all gleaming in the morning sunlight, sitting proud and awaiting our arrival, Selkirk Powder Company's snow cat. Again I'm thinking, "O.k. now, pinch me again – really? This is so rad, I can't believe it." All you do is ski off the quad and slide straight ahead to the Selkirk Powder Lodge and "boom" you're ready to go.

After meeting Ken and a short meeting about the day's logistics we were traversing out to our first pitch. The experience to this point had been so low key and enjoyable. Chip and Ken had done such a great job prepping and briefing the group that we all just flowed right into the forested backcountry like a pack of hobbits. I got so wrapped up in the experience of ripping pow in the sunshine with these great people that I almost forgot that I was supposed to be giving a clinic. I realized I had to quickly figure out how to set the stage for learning without constraining the excitement everyone had for skiing untracked powder in the sunshine all day. It worked out great.

We had a total of eight people and would be making at least eight or nine runs, so at the very least I figured I could coach each person one on one, one run at a time. How it worked out was actually a combination of that idea and intermittently working in two to three person pods. I grouped the pods according to ability for some runs and also gender. I wanted to make sure that the women in the group felt supported to move down the hill and learn at their own pace without the testosterone driven vibe of the guys. But then, I also had to keep the dudes in the group happy too. So, my approach with them was around giving them focused and concise coaching, so as not to affect their unbridled energy and flow. This was also the first time I had worked with people skiing on rockered skis too. What those skis can do for flotation is amazing. A couple of the women in the group were skiing on the rockered skis without much experience or confidence in powder. The results they achieved after just a couple runs of coaching were quite remarkable.

I found that regardless of what kind of skis my people were on that day, how I coached them didn't really change. The basic concept of keeping the feet working together under the body in the powder still holds true, as well as using simultaneous feet and leg movements for steering, pressuring or edging – this was paramount for their success. That said, what I noticed the most, when working with the women who had minimal experience in the powder was that the rockered skis allowed them to experiment more freely with changing their technique without the fear of falling or losing control. Also, the feedback they experienced from the ski/snow interaction was positive and immediate. Meaning, they improved quickly and went from being unbalanced and inconsistent with their turns, to putting together full length rhythmical series of turns together without falling.

Another simple element that I worked on with everyone in the group was focusing on complementary hand and arm movements. One of the most important elements of powder skiing technique is a strong and rhythmical pole plant. So, what I introduced to them was what I call the ready pole concept. We began with making shallow turns in the falline on low angle terrain. Then, we focused on swinging the inside hand, arm and pole directly down the fall line ahead of the current turn shape in preparation for the next pole plant. As the skiers gained confidence with this concept we experimented with steeper longer pitches and added a little more shape to the turns to control speed. The result of this little drill promoted continual directional movements of the center of mass toward the new turn and kept the skiers balanced over their feet. And of course, a strong inside half resulted, which positively affected their balance over their line of action and hand and arm movements that compliment body movements.

Progressively throughout the day the smiles got bigger and bigger by focusing on these two concepts – Continuous and simultaneous movements of the feet and legs timed with a strong rhythmical pole swing and pole plant.

At the end of the day, we all had bonded well together and had a fabulous day. The powder mystery had been solved for some and the hunger for powder in a low snow year had been satisfied for all. For me, I had one of the best days of my coaching career as well as a powder day that easily rated in my top ten days of all time.

I am so thankful to the staff at Schweitzer Ski and Snowboard School for including me on their cat trip and to Chip and Ken of Selkirk Powder Company for making the whole day cool, groovy and safe. I look forward to working with all of them again. Cheers.

Nils Riise is the Training Director & Adult Ski School Supervisor at Stevens Pass, he has been teaching skiing for 27 years, and is a PSIA-NW Technical Team Member, as well as an Alpine and Telemark Clinician. Email him at nils.riise@stevenspass.com

Post comments @ psia-nw.org

A MEMBER BENEFIT: AN ACCESSIBLE BACKCOUNTRY EXPERIENCE

by Chip Kamin

As Tara Seymour clearly pointed out in her article in the Fall 2010 issue of the NW Snowsport Instructor "Buried Alive but Lived to Tell" skiing in the backcountry or side country should not be taken lightly. I agree, that as professionals we all have a responsibility to acquire basic backcountry awareness (i.e. buddy system, tree wells, etc), especially if we are prone to let our skis run out of bounds.

The Northwest has many opportunities for backcountry and sidecountry experiences (i.e. resorts with open boundary polices) but to have a snow cat waiting for you at the bottom is a unique opportunity. In addition to this unique experience, it is also a PSIA-NW member benefit similar to your lift ticket discounts.

As a certified ski instructor for close to 40 years, during my first trip out west I discovered what real skiing was all about: powder, back country bowls and trees. I have seen technique and teaching methods change many times but the one thing that does not change is the excitement of skiing or riding untouched powder snow.

The west side of Schweitzer Mountain has the equivalent acreage of the Back Bowls of Vail, Colorado. The Selkirk Powder Company has permits for guided cat skiing with a maximum of 10 clients and over 3,000 acres of what ever Mother Nature has to offer. Schweitzer Mountain is unique in the fact that the skiable terrain is located in the Selkirk Mountain Range. Normally you think of all the helicopter operations in Canada being based in the Selkirks, however the Selkirks actually start right in Sandpoint, Idaho!

Normally when teaching students they need to be good intermediate to expert skiers to go off-piste. Being a strong intermediate however does not mean that you can ski or ride the un-groomed well. In fact, as you know, there is a big difference in the skill set required to ski or ride groomed slopes vs. powder slopes. In conjunction with the Schweitzer Snowsports School the Selkirk Powder Company has started a special learn to ski and ride powder programs.

It can be difficult as an instructor to teach powder skiing on conventional slopes. Either the fast grooming machines or the energetic locals tend to track out regular runs very quickly. Since there are thousands of acres with just a handful of customers, the terrain can accommodate beginner powder skiers and riders. If you have a client who wants to learn to ski powder this is an ideal place to do it.

As you know from reading Nils' article, he joined me for a day in the back country. His comment card read "One of the top 10 powder experiences of my life." Nils was able to coach off-piste techniques as I guided the group to the cat.

The terrain is not especially avalanche prone but all skiers and guides wear beacons, and know how to use them. The guides carry safety equipment including shovels and probes, and we have a guest or tail gunner carry an extra shovel and probe. The terrain is a blend of open logging cuts and naturally treed, predominantly, west facing slopes. The typical vertical per run is 1,500 feet with the longest run over 2,000 feet of 30 degree bliss. There are low angle, open slopes perfect for perfecting powder skiing and snowboarding, as well as steeper treed slopes and bowls that continually put big smiles on everyone's faces.

(continued on next page)

The Schweitzer Ski School clinic group lead by Nils Riise are all smiles!

Chip Kamin @ work. Photo by Jon Dodge

(continued from previous page)

One of the pleasures of the Selkirk Powder Company is that you are based at Schweitzer Village. The first run of the day starts after a 30 minute orientation session in the Day Lodge. This is followed by a 6 minute chair lift ride to the top of Schweitzer where you meet your guide and go through a safety check. You then ski off the back side of the mountain for your first run to the snow cat waiting to whisk you back to the top for another adventure.

Depending on the speed of the group and the conditions you can get 9 to 12 runs in a day. Lunch is provided as well as drinks and treats. I personally would like to invite all the instructors from the Northwest to try our back country, off-piste skiing or riding. We have worked out a special member rate for PSIA/AASI members. You need to call in advance to book the rate and have appropriate credentials with you at the check in.

The Selkirk Powder Company offers you a real opportunity to get into off-piste skiing or riding in a friendly environment with all the amenities of a major resort 15 minutes from your last run.

I believe having a good understanding of what lies just off the boundary of your resort is part of being a well rounded instructor. Being able to talk about snow safety, avalanche awareness and good back country travel is something all PSIA/AASI members should be acquainted with.

Chip Kamin is a former Central Division Alpine examiner and a PSIA-E member for over 40 years. Currently he is an Idaho Guide for the Selkirk Powder Company. Find out more on-line at their website: www.selkirkpowderco.com

FLEX DRIVE

Text by Greg Dixon Photos by Zack Jones

I was first introduced the term "flex drive" while in a track clinic with David Lawrence, currently a member of the PSIA National Nordic Team, a few years back. The topic at hand was that of propulsion, and how track skiers utilize both extension as well as flexion movements to create additional glide on their skis. Not having the benefit of constant vertical descent and thus often opposing gravitational forces, it is important that track skiers direct every movement they make in an efficient manner to maximize glide. The extension movement is a more obvious one. As you "push" off a leg or extend your arms to pole you move your body forward. As important as the extension movements are, they are only one half of the equation, and will only get you so far so fast. The flexing movements are the other half of the picture that need to be utilized in order to increase performance.

The mechanics behind the flex drive, as it pertains to track skiing, is that as the skier extends off one leg they transfer their body weight to the new leg. As they land on the new leg they use flexing movements from the ankle, knee, hip, and spine to drive the center of mass forward and create a longer, continuous glide. When performed correctly the skier is able to utilize every movement they make to create forward motion, thus increasing efficiency and limiting the use of excess energy.

In the downhill ski world less emphasis is placed on how much energy we utilize when skiing down a run. With gravity creating all the propulsion needed, the downhill skier is often more concerned with speed control and how to avoid an excessive pace on any given slope. Instead of using all of their movements for forward motion, the downhill skier often tries to resist the directional pull of gravity and will utilize braking movements that send their body back and away from the desired direction of travel.

As gravitational pull is resisted, more and more energy is consumed by the skier that will often lead to exhaustion and limiting performance. Other detriments in utilizing braking movements are that the skier will often put themselves out of balance as they push themselves away from their skis. While out of balance the skier's ability to create adjustments for terrain and remain in control are compromised. A cycle of inefficiency is created, where the skier tends to fight their way down the hill rather than flow with it.

The track concept of flex drive is one that can be as useful to the downhill skier as it is to the track skier. All the movements that are made should direct the skiers mass towards, rather than away from the desired direction of travel. As the downhill skier creates extension movements from their joints, those movements should direct the center of mass forward in order to keep up with the pace and path that the skis are taking through the snow.

From this extended alignment, the skier is open to utilize flexing movements to continue their path through the turn and maintain travel with the skis. Flexing from the ankles, knees,

The skier enters the shaping phase of the turn using extension movements where the outside leg lengthens. Skiers Greg Dixon and Karin Harjo.

hips, and spine the skier can direct their center of mass in a forward manner and create propulsion through the finishing part of the turn. This will allow for a smoother ride over terrain, as balance is maintained over top the skis, and the ability to make adjustments is enhanced.

Speed control is dictated by the path you direct your skis through the snow rather than the use of exhausting braking movements. The ability to flow takes over the desire to fight.

At a basic level, the use of properly timed and directed flexing movements, simply help to maintain balance while in motion and increase efficiency in our ride. Beyond that, these movements can be utilized to enhance the performance and dynamic capacity of our skiing. As the track skiers use the flex drive to create additional propulsion, the downhill skier can use the same movement to generate speed, and allow for quicker entry from turn to turn. The skier can use the flexing of the joints to propel their mass forward and actually drive the skis rather than just stay on top of them. A deep ankle bend will allow the skiers mass to move closer to the tips of the skis, the closer to the tip the skier moves their mass the more they are driving the ski forward.

If the skier works this forward motion diagonally across the skis, as opposed to just forward, they will also be able enter the next turn with less effort, and will have greater ability to dictate what path their skis take through the next turn. It is this continual drive forward that creates fast, fluid, and agile skiers.

The idea of flex drive embodies the concept of efficient movements. All the movements that we attempt to make while creating our path across the snow should be done with the direct intention that they are useful to us and do not hinder us from our desired outcome. Consider this as you are creating your own path, what decisions are you making to direct yourself along your path and are they truly moving you in the direction you want to go.

Greg Dixon is a PSIA-NW Telemark Examiner and DCL. He teaches for Mt. Bachelor Snowsports School, in Central Oregon. Email him at dixongregory@hotmail.com

Special thanks to Zack Jones for the photos. See his work at www.zackjonesphoto.com

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As flexing movements are created they help direct the skier's mass forward along the intended path of travel.

An increasing bend in the ankle joint allows the skier to drive the center of mass forward.

It's More than a Card

I never knew I wanted to be a ski instructor. I did know that I didn't want to sit in an office all day. After working an office job for 7 years I decided to move from Sydney Australia to the mountains of New Zealand. I landed a job in the kids ski school, became a ski instructor with NZSIA, and met my hubby (a total ski school junkie) who shipped us off to Colorado and now Alaska. I joined PSIA in 2003 which is when I really learned how to ski and teach skiing. In Alaska training is not as accessible to us but our ski school and PSIA are great at persuading awesome trainers to visit us. Who wouldn't want to visit Alaska after all? After being an instructor for 11 seasons I can't think of anything else I would rather be doing.

FEEDBACK MODEL RELOADED

a communication framework

by Rick Lyons photos & illustration by Tyler Barnes

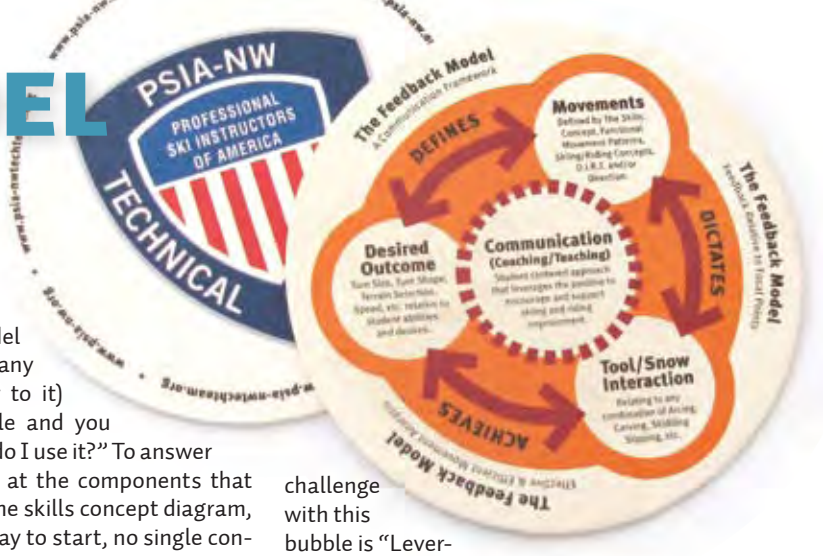
In 2007 the PSIA-NW Technical Team crafted the feedback model to help with the organization of information while assessing skiing/riding performance and to provide clearer, concise feedback. We introduced the model on a coaster, if you recall. That was a big hit, as people remember "the coaster" for some strange reason. Funny how that works. Maybe we should put my wedding anniversary or my wife's birthday on a coaster, too!

What you may, or may not recall, is the article published in October 2007 in the Early Winter Issue of the NW Snowsports Instructor describing the feedback model and how you could use it.

We have now been working with and using the feedback model going into our 4th season. Let's "reload" that article and update it with lessons learned and how the adoption of the model has progressed thus far.

Throughout the rest of the article I will add comments and notes to the originally published 2007 article. Here we go.

The model does not tell you how to conduct movement analysis in the sense of a method of observation (i.e. top down, bottom to top, whole to parts, or parts to whole, etc.). Its design is to help with what to do with the information after you have gathered it. Much of the information will sound familiar or something you already do; the goal of utilizing the model is consistency in your organization of information regarding and surrounding the areas of tool performance, movement patterns and desired outcomes and the delivery of that information.



At first glance the model (or feedback tool as many on the team also refer to it) may seem rather simple and you may ask yourself "How do I use it?" To answer this question let's look at the components that make up the tool. Like the skills concept diagram, there is no prescribed way to start, no single concept is more important than another and you cannot rely solely on one concept to be successful in your analysis and subsequent teaching or coaching. The model is cyclical and you may begin the process at any of the bubbles. For this discussion let's follow the order of Communication-> Desired Outcome –> Tool/Snow Interaction-> Movements. We've found this to be a nice introduction to the process and one you may be able to utilize more quickly.

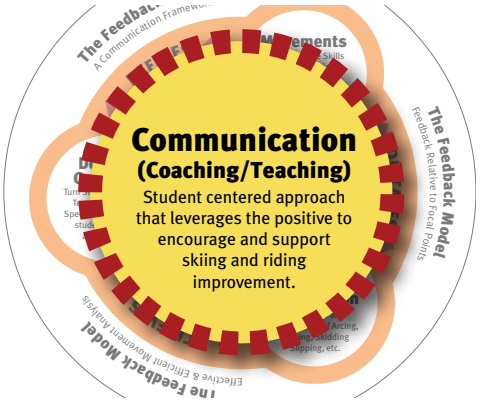
Reloaded: I have found that sharing the concept of the model with my students, early in the lesson, can really help establish the lines of communication. I may not use the language described in the model directly but definitely the ideas. I find myself drawing the model in the snow on a regular basis with my students, this way we both know the areas the feedback will touch.

Communication

The center of the model - the "Communication" bull's-eye, is likely the most important component of the model though it leverages the other pieces to be effective.

Without good communication the model breaks down. If we are not connecting, even the most accurate feedback will have little or no effect. The challenge with this bubble is "Leverage the Positive." If you have been teaching for years you may be familiar with other language like, "error detection, fault correction or ineffective cues." We have been trained for years to look for issues and give information like "stop that", "don't do this" or "you are still doing that thing."

For some, pointing out what is wrong is the preferred feedback. For most of our clients this is likely not the case and if the feedback has a negative tone, especially at the beginning, we may be shutting down the lines of communication and in fact may cause them to stop doing what is working well. The concept of "leverage the positive" is to look for what is working well and enhancing it



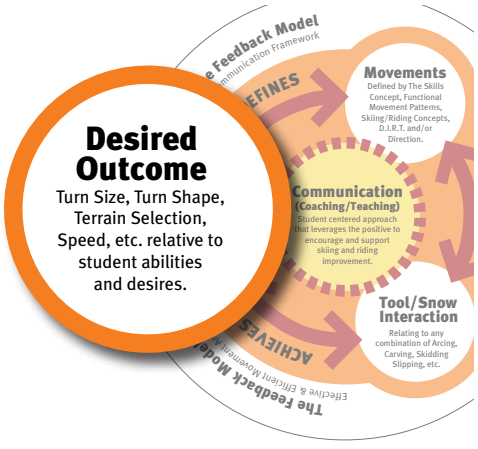
such that it helps reduce the issues. If you do in fact prefer to be told what you are doing wrong, communicating that to your coach would be considered leveraging a positive relationship.

Reloaded: Don't forget communication is not just verbal. We receive information from Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic means. I have found that touch can not only give my student feedback but I too get feedback that they understand. Ever ask you student to press their shins into the tongues of their boots? Ever stick your fingers in their boots to have them squish? You can even touch that muscle on the outside of the shin and ask them to "fire it" and "relax it" as the movement you are asking them to make facilitating the contact. Now you both know the muscle is firing. That's communication!

Desired Outcome

The next bubble to examine is "Desired Outcome." This bubble is key to providing accurate feedback that connects with the receiver.

Have you ever been working on a specific movement and have someone give you feedback, out of the blue, about something completely different? If we don't know the student's intent, then giving feedback may have little or no meaning. If the student's goal is to work on steering the feet and legs under the body and he receives feedback about hands, carving or edging, if that feedback is not tied back to the goal then it is ineffective. This falls right in line with good teaching; we always try to determine/establish goals with our students and often need to adjust those goals or create sub goals as a path to achieving the larger goal. Likewise, when providing feedback, if we tie it back to the desired outcome then the receiver will be more willing to accept and understand the feedback we provide.



Reloaded: If you are working to develop movements/skills, having clearly defined outcomes is paramount. As my use of the model has grown I have found myself getting more and more specific at defining the desired outcome. When presenting the drill or task, if I describe and show the outcome to the student, then have the student describe the desired outcome with me demonstrating it, this can really help anchor the concept. Then I help them with their demonstration of the desired outcome until they can perform it by themselves.

Tool/Snow Interaction

The next bubble "Tool/Snow Interaction" is often an overlooked or minimally discussed area.

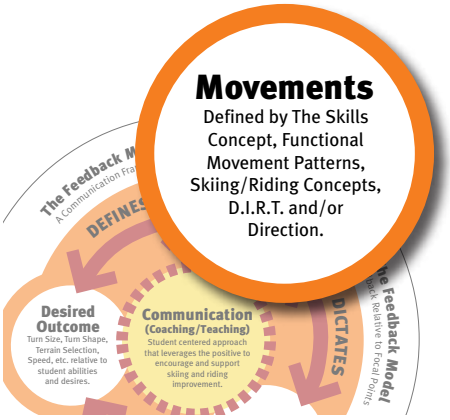
This could be termed the "Effect" bubble. What did the ski or board actually do in the snow? Was the turn round? What do the tracks look like? At what part of the turn do the edge(s) engage? Is the turn skidded, slipping or carved? Looking for the effects can lead us towards more accurately assessing achievement of the desired outcome. For example, if the desired outcome is a carved turn in which the edge(s) are engaged immediately, then we should be looking at the top of the turn as well as the fall-line and finish. Do the tips lead the tails? Is the turn "C" shaped where the top matches the bottom? Is the track generally the same width top to bottom? If so, great! If not, where was it good and when did the good begin and end? Armed with this information we can now move into determining the cause.

Reloaded: Overlooked? For sure! Ask yourself – "Did I relate that to tool/snow interaction?" After integrating the model into my feedback process I have an increased awareness of tool/snow interaction feedback usage. I have observed it being used less in intermediate and advanced zone lessons, whereas the beginner zone tends to discuss this interaction much more frequently. "Tip your ski to step sideways up the hill." "Step you skis across the hill." "Can you make your skis into the shape of a slice of pizza?"

Movements

The last bubble "Movements" is the bubble where many of us tend to dwell, perhaps even too much. This could also be called the "Cause" bubble.

This bubble is where a large number of tools exist we are familiar with: The Skills Concept, Functional Movement Patterns, Skiing/Riding Concepts, Fundamental Movements and more. In our previous example, the carved turn, we can start looking for movements associated with the effects we noted. Let's say the track was not quite "C" shaped and the top width was wider than the bottom. This would indicate the top part of the turn was being twisted of steered off. Knowing this we could start looking for movements that would cause the twisting/steered top. Or to "leverage the positive" look for the movements when the track is achieving the goal, then keying on those "good" movements change the Duration, Rate, Timing or Intensity to help achieve the goal throughout the turn.



Reloaded: Most instructors and students want feedback in the "Movements" bubble, this is the how part of the puzzle, so spending time in this area is required. Don't forget the other "bubbles," in fact leveraging them will strengthen your feedback.

It is important to understand the model is a balance and blend of the three concepts: ***Desired Outcome, Tool/Snow Interaction and Movements*** and that they are always changing depending on the student and the situation presented to you as an instructor. It is your understanding of that information which makes this model work. From the new instructor to the seasoned pro, the Feedback Model allows each to apply the information received and use it successfully. As your knowledge base and experience grows so too will the level you are able to use and apply the model.

We're not trying to recreate the wheel, in fact these concepts have been around for many years and have been brought together and organized in such a way so they can be used effectively while consistently giving well rounded feedback to those you are working with.

Reloaded: The Feedback Model has helped me grow into a much more effective instructor and coach. It may be more appropriately named "The Feedback Tool" because it is something in my toolkit that I utilize on a daily basis.

Rick Lyons is a PSIA-NW Technical Team member, Alpine Clinician and Examiner. He teaches at Mt. Hood Meadows, Oregon. Email him at rick@psia-nwtechteam.org

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SNOW PRO tips

CAT TRACKS HIDEAWAY

Alpine Tip by Andy Collin

I'm not talking about the easiest way down from the top of the lift, but another kind of cat track. While I would love to take credit for this tip, I learned it from Rick Lyons. When I shared the magic with Tyler Barnes, he said he thought he remembered passing this disappearing act along to Rick. I'm sure that they would both agree that this great nugget of tribal knowledge belongs to us all. This little trick won't make you a better skier but it can make your day on the mountain a bit more comfortable, will allow you to get a bit more mileage out of those expensive ski boots and potentially keep you safer when walking on slippery surfaces.

Keeping one's gear in good working order is of paramount importance and making certain your boots are in "class A" condition should be high on everyone's list. "Cat Tracks" and / or "YakTrax" (available in your most current accessories catalog from PSIA), a wonderfully clever and ridiculously simple accessory, are more important than most of the stuff we cram into our pockets or packs while on snow. Keeping your boot bottoms flat and appropriately thick will insure safe and secure binding contact and assist in one's ability to stand on a flat ski – two critically important aspects of what we do as skiers.

The benefits of boot bottom protection are undeniable and when skiing at Timberline in the summer, protecting this surface can be as valuable as a dependable edge. Walking to and from the chair lift will destroy your boots in short order. Winter skiers who gear up in the parking lot or who spend time on harsh surfaces like concrete and even carpeted surfaces in the lodge should also make this comparably small investment. Spending $12-$17 Cat Tracks / $15 YakTrax will, without question, add life to your boots and aid in keeping precision in your turns.

But what the heck do you do with these things while skiing? And then when you are ready to use them the twisted rubbery mass threatens to dump everything else in one's pockets out onto the snow when it's time to walk the grit and concrete.

Three simple steps, that should be stated on the packaging (but are not), allow you to discretely carry and store these devices hassle free. You won't even know that you have them with you.

Step 1: Once removed from your boot bottoms, lace a Cat Tracks /YakTrax through the loop at the top of your boot tongue and set the toe piece "spoon-like" inside the heel piece.

Step 2: Give it a twist and pull the heel/toe piece sections vertically.

Step 3: Tuck the heel/toe sections up under the powder gaiter of your ski pants. Now readjust your ski pants so that you don't look like a rookie.

This is such a cool tip you can easily share it with your lesson clients too! You're welcome! And make sure, when you next see Rick or Tyler that you give them some credit for this little gem, too. ❄

Andy Collin is a Training Director for Timberline Lodge Ski and Snowboard School, is PSIA Alpine Level III certified and teaches at both Timberline and Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort on Mt. Hood, Oregon. Email him at acollin@aol.com

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EARLY SEASON CONDITIONS

Alpine Tip by Terry McLeod

Hopefully you have been involved in some type of regular exercise program to help you be in shape as soon as the hill opens, but whether you have or not, the early season is a great time to hone in on your conditioning as a foundation for the rest of the season. Often when ski areas first open they only offer a few green or blue runs which isn't nearly as exciting as what we'd hoped for, but by making a few modifications to your skiing patterns you can turn this limited terrain into a great training venue.

Since these runs are pretty mellow there is less likelihood of pushing yourself too hard and pulling or straining muscles that are unfamiliar with skiing movements. This easier terrain gives you a chance to ski longer and gently build an endurance base. There are two ways to accomplish this: ski longer between stops, and ski longer hours than you would be able to on harder runs. By skiing with fewer stops or even non-stop runs you will both increase your muscle strength and subconsciously find a more efficient stance to ski with. If you have committed yourself to skiing the whole run but your legs are burning by halfway down, you will make adaptations to ease the strain on your muscles and become more efficient.

With the less challenging terrain your overall intensity will be lower which can allow you to ski later in the day with less risk of fatigue induced crashes. Although you don't want to ski so much on the "boring" terrain that it leads to burnout earlier in the season, by spending more time on the easy runs now you can be in better shape to enjoy your favorite runs as the snow deepens.

Another training tip for reduced terrain is to make a type of turn other than what you naturally tend to do. Lots of short radius turns make the run last longer and require more exertion and therefore more muscle building. Skiing very slowly will challenge your subtle balancing movements and raise your awareness of stance and timing issues. Deliberately continuing turns further across the fall line than normal will push you into different duration and pacing of movements. All of these things will lead to increased versatility which means you'll have a greater ability to adapt to whatever is thrown at you during the season.

While it's probably not worth ditching work to come put these ideas into practice, perhaps it will provide a bit more value for early season terrain options and help you see the value of spending some focused time before the holidays, so that you can really maximize your ski days once the heart of the season is here. In the mean time keep lifting weights and stretching and we'll see you on the hill soon.

Terry McLeod a PSIA-NW Technical Team Member, Alpine Examiner and Clinician. He is also the Snowsports School Director at Schweitzer Mountain Resort. Email him at tmcleod@schweitzer.com

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DON'T WASTE IT

Alpine Tip by Dave Lucas

There you are dropping through the trees; taking face shot after face shot. Or maybe you just finished a great bump run. In either case you're now at the bottom of the area looking at some flats before you get to the lift for another epic run. Don't waste it.

Flat terrain presents a great opportunity to train and to test your skills. I think that I learn more about edging when I'm skiing on a flat ski than I do skiing on a high edge angle. I never miss the opportunity to practice my wedge christies and pivot slips at the bottom of the run. Because it's flat, likely there won't be any bumps and that makes skiing on a flat ski easier. Now that pivot slips are a part of level II and level III exams, improving your rotary and edging (and de-edging!) movements will be important foci in your training.

As you practice these tasks, take your time to feel your femur turning in your hip socket rather than turning your hips and legs at the same time. Separation of upper and lower body function is very important to success in both of these turns. Ask a friend to watch you or video you and then give you feedback on your success. You will find that your rotary movements are integral to your edging movements.

You can also practice these movements at home in front of a mirror. Find a spot where you can see your hips in the mirror and where the friction under your feet is low enough that you can easily twist your feet. You might place a piece of paper under each foot or put on a pair socks to reduce the drag and make it easier. Watch your legs and hips to see how far you can turn your legs in the hip socket before your hips start to move, too. Start out with small movements and increase your range of motion as your skills improve. Visualize tightening your core abdominal muscles and pointing your knees to the left and the right without pointing your hips in the same direction.

As you get more and more comfortable with these turns on the snow, you can up the difficulty by slowing down your movements and your speed. In other words, if you think that you are doing well: try it slower. Practicing these movements and tasks every day will yield great results as you incorporate them into your everyday skiing.

Dave Lucas is a PSIA-NW Technical Team Member, Alpine Examiner and past PSIA-NW President. He teaches for Team Lyon at Stevens Pass, WA. Email him at dave@eventhorizonfarm.net

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TOP 10 WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Compiled by Tyler Barnes

Winter conditions call for different driving tactics, just like different snow conditions and terrain require different skiing and riding tactics. Here are a few gentle reminders (some funny, some serious) as you prepare for the up-coming winter season:

1. **Leave early for the mountain.** It's not worth putting yourself and others in a dangerous situation just to save time. Plus, if you're late to line-up your instructor peers will be more ticked off at you than management because they had to take your assigned class ... boo!

2. **Chill with the road rage.** If the conditions are challenging for you, just think how they are for everyone else. The multi-week busses and your 9am private will probably be late too, so relax!

3. **Don't be overconfident with four/all-wheel drive.** It won't help you stop any faster, and the body panels dent just as easily as two-wheel drive when you hit the snow bank, making you even more late and your peers even more ticked off (see #1 above).

4. **The car behind you can't stop.** Winter road conditions result in longer stopping distances for you and the car behind you! Just because you have ABS does not mean the car behind does!

5. **Expect the unexpected.** Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These all have potential to develop black ice and people who are unfamiliar with the mountain do weird things here ... like make unexpected u-turns, stop in the middle of the road when deciding whether to turn here or park there and etc. Be ready for the flat landers to surprise you!

6. **Think tray of food.** Avoid abrupt actions while steering, braking or accelerating to reduce the chances of losing control of your vehicle!

7. **Look past the car ahead of you.** Actions by other drivers (#5 above) will alert you to problems and give you extra time to react.

8. **Don't use cruise control or overdrive.** Don't let your car make a bad decision for you like downshifting on ice. Been there, not cool!

9. **Watch for visual cues** of temperature and snow condition changes. The transition zone from deep packed snow to deep slush can be the most treacherous, like on the way home when you are tired!

10. **Pass with courtesy.** If you pass another vehicle be sure you have adequate distance to travel well ahead them before you move back into the their lane, because the shower of sand, gravel and rocks you spray damages the vehicle you just passed. And you may be parking next to this person once at the mountain, and they may even be your client! A ding in the windshield caused by your instructor is great way to insure no tip. True story.

Tyler is an instructor and trainer at Mt. Hood Meadows, Oregon is a member of the PSIA-NW Technical Team, is an Alpine Examiner and Clinician. Email tyler@psia-nwtechteam.org ... He is also a notorious backseat driver; just ask Rick Lyons or Jeremy Riss.

Post comments @ psia-nw.org

Shortening the stance to absorb the terrain.

SUCK IT UP IN THE BUMPS

Telemark Tip by Greg Dixon

When it comes to snowsports, telemark skiers don't have a lot of advantages. We only have half a binding, our boots bend where they shouldn't, and we are forced to do lunges all the way down the hill so we won't faceplant. There is however one advantage telemark skiers do have; that is our range of motion. Due to our flimsy gear we are able to utilize all of our joints right down to our toes. This is a huge advantage when the terrain gets bumpy and we're looking for a line through a mogul field. The telemarkers range of motion allows them to swallow up bumps and make for a smooth direct path. The ability to bend our boots above our toes gives us one extra joint with which to absorb terrain. It also allows the knee and hip joints a little extra range of motion while still maintaining an effective stance.

To fully take advantage of this benefit the mogul field should be approached with the mind set that the legs are going to be actively shortening and lengthening to match the terrain. As you approach a mogul the upward slope is going to want to push your skis up towards your body. At this point you should be actively flexing your joints, from the toes up through the spine, in order to allow your skis to absorb this upward force. The legs should move up towards the body, rather than the body dropping down to meet the legs. Be aware to flex just enough so that the skis maintain contact with the snow, but still allow you to float over it without interrupting your forward movement.

Lengthening the legs to maintain ski to snow contact.

As you continue to flow over the mogul, the terrain is going to drop away as you roll over the downward slope. At this point lengthen your legs in order to maintain contact and a consistent pressure between your skis and the snow. Maintaining contact with the snow aids in speed control as well as enhancing the progressive nature of your pressure control movements. Keep in mind that as you are extending the legs out, the center of mass needs to move forward rather than back away from this extension, as to avoid excessive braking movements. Finishing with the legs in an extended position you are lined up to absorb the next mogul with enough flexion to continue your smooth ride.

Choosing to take this approach, when telemarking in the moguls, you will find that is easier to take a more direct line down the slope. The train of thought is less resistance or braking and more glide and continuous motion. Use the freeheel to your advantage and learn to utilize the full range of motion that it offers.

Greg Dixon is a PSIA-NW Telemark Examiner and DCL. He teaches for Mt. Bachelor Snowsports School, in Central Oregon. Email him at dixongregory@hotmail.com

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PROGRESSION TEMPLATE

Snowboard Tip by Steve Frink

When we are out there making the magic happen the trick up our sleeve is using Progressions to build the skills needed to reach a goal. Their buddy can tell them to go for it; students are coming to the pros for a little more. Many of these progressions involve making turns.

A first-timer needs to stop, then figure out how to turn the other way, then link them up, leading eventually to carving, dynamic riding, etc. Turn progressions are what we will deal with here. We will look at the similarities all turning progressions have and show how to use those similarities as a template when building other turning progressions.

Whenever you are teaching a new turn, variations of the same drills will create a nice three step progression. Start with a static exercise to familiarize students with the new move, then a directional sideslip and/or a garland to try the new skill in motion, and then the edge change for the completion/initiation phase. Each new turn a student learns can follow that same 3 step progression.
So first determine what a student needs. Let's assume they are skidding and want to carve so they need to ride the edge.

Fill in our 3 step progression template: Static, Garland, Edge Change.

First Turns Need: Confidence working the brakes (completion of the turn), Change direction (control phase), Switch edges (initiation phase)
Progression:

1. Static: Practice edging then add a directional Sideslip; now we have added motion
2. Garland: Now we are creating turns, progressively getting closer to the fall line.
3. Edge Change: Board is going in a straight line (no sideslip), ok now the front foot changes, then the back foot and you are turning (twist)

Carving Turns Need: Less Skidding, More carving, Better edge control
Progression:

1. Static: Practice balancing on the edge.
2. Garland: Balance on the edge and let the sidecut create your turn shape, progressively getting closer to the fall line.
3. Edge Change: use twist not pivot and you are onto your new turn.

Dynamic Turns Need: Retraction
Progression:

1. Static: Draw turns in the snow that demonstrate offset.
2. Garland: Extension in the belly to load up the board and retraction and feel some rebound. Use the rebound to get a split second on the new edge.
3. Edge Change: Now use retraction in the fall line.

Steve Frink is a PSIA-NW Snowboard Examiner, Clinician, Stevens Pass Snowsports School Manager, and Stevens Pass "retro day" contest winner. Feel free to email him at stevefrink@gmail.com

Post comments @ psia-nw.org

BALANCE IS THE KEY TO EFFICIENT SKIING

A Senior Moment by Ed Kane

Building on my last article, let's explore some on snow drills that will enhance balancing skills in senior skiers. These drills are best practiced on easy terrain we typically just schuss across. The goal is to do these drills often enough on gentle terrain so that each time they are practiced the skier is not fearful or encumbered by the terrain. As the skier becomes more comfortable with the drills a "poised" mental and physical state indicates improvement in the balancing movements.

Since age is typically related to stamina, efficient movements will increase the senior skier's ability to maintain performance levels throughout the day. Recovering from being out of balance consumes large amounts of energy and requires muscle strength to do so. A well balanced skier with an effective stance will experience much less fatigue in the thighs if they maintain balance over the whole foot and apply pressure to the boot tongues, which improves skeletal alignment opposed to leaning against the backs of the boots and using the thigh muscles to remain upright.

Several exercises (below) can be used to enhance balancing movements and skills at any level of ability, and are especially effective for beginners or for senior skiers who are trying to climb to the next level. These should be introduced on relatively flat, groomed terrain. As the skier begins to master the ability to stay balanced over the whole foot, move to gradually steeper terrain and in more difficult conditions. Awareness of shin and boot cuff contact is paramount. Best learning takes place in conditions that slightly challenge confidence rather than overwhelm.

» **Tip Push/Pull:** standing on flat terrain, have a partner slide tips of both skis back and forth a small distance while the skier maintains balance over both feet. Note: the skier (left) does not flex joints together to maintain stance and balance (hips and knee flex/extend more than ankles) whereas the skier (right) maintains stance/balance via functional tension of her muscles to maintain proportional flex of ankles, knees, and hips. (Fig.1 & 2)

Fig. 1

Fig.2

Fig.3. One ski traversing

» **Shuffle:** on a gentle slope, alternately shuffle both feet back and forth while gliding down the hill.
» **One-ski Glide:** glide down a gentle slope alternately lifting one ski and then the other while keeping the lifted ski parallel to the slope. Note: ankle, knee and hips flexion helps maintain balance while gliding forward.
» **One-ski Traverse:** on downhill ski with uphill ski lifted and parallel to slope. (Fig.3).
» **Straight Run, One-ski Hops:** hop from ski to ski, while gliding on only one ski between hops - Note: this is a Level I task).
» **"J" Turns:** from the fall line on one ski, make a single turn in one direction (complete both directions, then try to accomplished the J turn on either the inside or outside edge).
» **One-ski Turns:** turns on the outside ski with the inside ski lifted and kept parallel to the slope (Fig.4). Then try turns on the inside ski with the outside ski lifted and kept parallel to the slope.

Fig.4: Author one-ski skiing on outside ski

» **Slow Turns:** linked parallel turns at very slow speeds on flat terrain.
» **Uphill Ski Turns:** make a series of linked turns on a gentle slope; start by lifting the downhill ski before initiating the turn, then initiate turn from the uphill, weighted ski. HINT: To enhance balance, gently place the uphill edge of the inside ski on the snow prior to lifting the new inside ski and starting the new turn.

Special thanks to Candice McIvor, Nanci Pererson-Vivian, Justin Peterson and Wayne Bruning for their help in illustrating this article.

Ed Kane is a Snoqualmie Region Board Representative, past PSIA-NW President and is currently the Training Director for Ullr Ski School. Editor's Note: The recently revised PSIA-NW Alpine Certification Guide has a new Resources Section which contains many of the tasks Ed has mentioned.

Post comments @ psia-nw.org

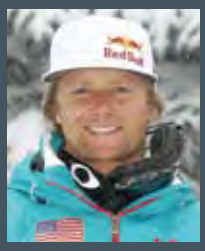
Did you know?

Glen Plake Joins PSIA-AASI. November 29, 2010 – Lakewood, CO.

As a natural extension of his role as a snowsports ambassador, one of the most recognizable professional skiers in the world has joined the association long known for its members' commitment to fueling the public's passion for skiing and riding. The legendary Glen Plake recently joined the Professional Ski Instructors of America-American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI).

Plake has proven himself as a pioneer of freestyle skiing in America and currently serves as an ambassador of Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month (LSSM), a public initiative to encourage others to get involved in snowsports, making him a natural fit as a member of PSIA-AASI. Plake is planning on participating in PSIA clinics and obtaining PSIA alpine certification this winter.

"When it came down to it, I decided it was time to practice what I've been preaching for all these years ... take lessons," said Plake. "I'm thrilled to join PSIA-AASI for the opportunity to fill my own toolbox with some new tools, as well as the opportunity to stoke the masses on the value of professional instruction."



Daron Rahlves Becomes a Member of PSIA-AASI. November 30, 2010 – Lakewood, CO.

The most decorated male American downhill and Super G skier in history is adding another credential to his impressive snowsports resume. Former U.S. Alpine Ski Team member, Daron Rahlves, is now a member of the Professional Ski Instructors of America-American Association of Snowboard Instructors (PSIA-AASI).

Rahlves, a freestyle skier, former alpine ski racer, and Olympian plans to participate in PSIA clinics and obtain PSIA alpine certification this winter.

"As I continue to evolve my career as a professional skier, I'm often asked for tips from the people I ski with. PSIA clinics and certification offer the opportunity to reinforce my foundation of instruction knowledge, and I can't wait to get started," said Rahlves. "Looking back at my accomplishments as a ski racer, the coaching I received was crucial to my success and I look forward to passing that knowledge along to others."

COOKING WITH KATE

today's special: turn transitions

by Kate Morrell photos by Ron LeMaster

This article is essentially about turn transitions, and specifically how they relate to making carved turns on groomed terrain. As you may know, the turn transition is that portion of skiing that is from the exit of one turn, to the beginning of the next (see Fig 1). I like to think of turn transitions as the main course when it comes to cooking up a well carved turn and want to share a few important ingredients that all of us as ski professionals need to be able to apply and comprehend when cooking up a good transition.

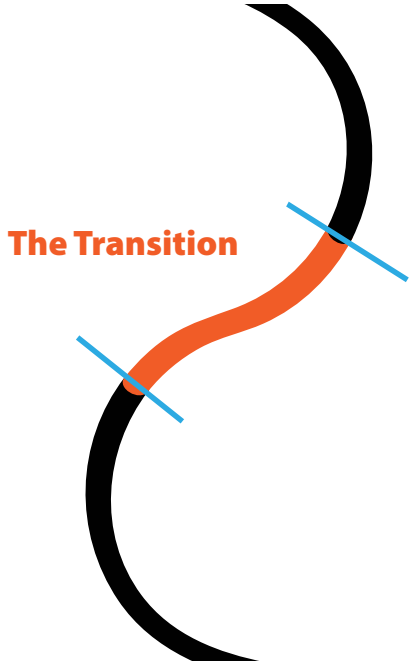


Figure 1. The turn transition

These ingredients are early pressure, moving through a balanced athletic position, and maintaining cuff pressure to both cuffs. This is not something new, or exciting, or a fad concept that will go away over time but is something that makes up the most critical part of the turn. Skiing well in the transition makes the rest of the turn pretty easy which is why the best ski racers in the world fight to be good at it and spend the better part of their careers working on it.

Ingredient 1: Early Pressure

The transition is where a skier establishes early pressure to the new turning ski. The earlier that pressure can be established, the higher up in the turn we can begin to carve the ski to the fall line. Yes, for sure, 100%, believe me that establishing early pressure is what we want to do when carving turns. The more pressure we can take care of before the fall line, the less pressure we have to deal with after the fall line. We want to minimize pressure as much as possible after the fall line because that is where the pressure is the greatest.

Excessive pressure after the fall line is one of the major reasons turns break down and flow from turn to turn is disrupted. By "turns breaking down" I mean skidding, losing the downhill edge, bracing against the outside ski, holding onto the turn too long for speed control, traversing, ski chatter, etc. - the list goes on. In effect, excessive pressure after the fall line hinders the ability to flow smoothly into the next turn.

To establish early pressure, we first need to be **"thinking"** early pressure as we are exiting the turn. (Fig. 2: Slalom (SL), frame 5 and Fig. 3: Giant Slalom (GS), frame 11). With the knees and ankles flexed, feel for the uphill edge of the new turning ski and begin to transfer weight to it (Fig. 2: SL, frame 6 and Fig. 3: GS, frame 12). Continue pressuring the new uphill edge as the center of mass moves forward along the path of the ski.

Ingredient 2: Balanced Athletic Position

Time out! It's already too hot in Kate's kitchen. I can feel the resistance and panic from some of you already regarding the term "balanced athletic position." Let me get this out of the way so you all can read freely. Yes, of course we want to be balanced and athletic through the entire turn, and no, this is not suggesting any sort of static skiing. This balanced athletic position is a **"checkpoint"** in the transition to look for in other's skiing and strive for in our own. OK, now you may continue reading about a balanced athletic position as it relates to turn transition.

Figure 2. Early pressure begins in frame 5, weight transfer begins in frame 6. Skier Benjamin Raich of Austria. Photo sequence by Ron LeMaster

As our skis flatten out and we change edges, we must be able to ***move through*** a balanced athletic position (Fig.2: SL, frame 1 and between frames 6 & 7 and Fig.3: GS, frame 6 and between Frames 13 & 14). How we change edges is for another time but we should all agree to some degree that the knees and ankles are rolled and the center of mass moves forward along the path of the skis crossing over in the direction of the new turn.

This balanced athletic position has the center of mass over the feet with the ankles flexed. The angle of the spine matches the shin angles as we strive to keep the hands out front helping to maintain balance. It is only from this balanced athletic position that we can react well to the next turn. I can carve, steer, pivot, whatever. A balanced athletic stance is best seen in Fig.2: SL, frame 1 and in Fig. 3, GS, frame 6.

Ingredient 3: Cuff Pressure on Both Cuffs

This is another critical ingredient and you need to pay close attention. Maintain cuff pressure on both cuffs while changing edges and extending into the new turn (Fig.2: SL frame 7 and Fig.3: GS, frame 14). As we change edges, having both cuffs pressured does not mean that the feet are weighted equally. With our center of mass continuing forward along the length of the ski, the new turning ski (uphill ski) becomes weighted and cuff pressure to that ski is due to that weight transfer. Cuff pressure to the new inside foot is created mostly by actively flexing the ankle and resisting early ski lead (Fig.2: SL, frame 7).

If you stand on one foot, bend the ankle of the lifted foot and pull it back an inch or so you're in the ball park of getting the feeling. This is very important because ***if we transfer weight to the new turning ski and relax our inside ankle without bending it and keeping it back, the inside foot moves forward causing the inside half of our body to slide forward much too early in the turn.*** When the inside half of the body moves forward too early, the result is skiing in the back seat and being too far inside. Back and inside is a difficult position to recover from and keeps us from being able to move smoothly into the next transition.

Said another way, when we cross over our feet we must actively bend our new inside ankle. To accomplish this, it helps to actively pull back the inside foot and lift the inside hip thus helping to maintain proper alignment and a strong inside half (Fig.2: SL, frames 7 & 8 and Fig.3: GS, frames 14 & 15).

Those are the only ingredients you get today but there are more I am excited to share later. What I've done here is give some tips that will aid in a strong transition and with the photo montages we have some checkpoints to look for when clinicing, teaching, watching video, etc. This all happens incredibly fast in real time and these checkpoint body positions should not hinder fluid movements in our skiing. What I'm trying to say is that I don't want you skiing across the hill frozen on your uphill edge waiting to turn or frozen in the athletic position in the transition. I do want you to start familiarizing yourselves with these concepts and to start incorporating them into your own skiing, clinic, and lesson scenarios.

One more thing and then we can chill. As I mentioned, the transition happens incredibly fast and you will not always be able to identify these key components even in the best skiers so don't get overly critical if you don't see it happening in every turn in your skiing or the groups you are working with. Pressuring the uphill edge before the skis flatten will not always happen. Especially in slalom and giant slalom. Things are happening too fast and there isn't always time.

Benjamin Raich of Austria (photo montage skier) has Olympic gold medals in the giant slalom and slalom, has won 35 World Cup races and has been on the podium 85 times. He is truly one of the best and he is able to demonstrate these transitions nicely for us in GS and slalom. He is truly the man.

The point is that having the ability to focus on these ingredients in longer, slower turns gives us an awareness of what is ideally happening between turns and position checkpoints to look for and move through in our own skiing.

I look forward to cooking this up on the hill with you and adding more ingredients in the future. I encourage you to shoot me an email for further discussion or questions this might raise. Thanks for your time in reading this. I hope you liked it!

Kate Morrell is a PSIA-NW Technical Team member, Alpine Clinician and the Head Junior Coach for the Meadows Race Team on Mt. Hood, Oregon. Email her at kmorrell@hevanet.com

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Editor's Note: Special thanks goes to Ron LeMaster for use of the photo montages. Ron has spent more than 30 years as a ski instructor and race coach. He is a technical advisor to the US Ski Team and the Vail Ski School and has contributed to PSIA educational materials. His latest book Ultimate Skiing is a "must have" for your skiing library. See more montage images at www.ronlemaster.com.

To purchase a copy of Ultimate Skiing contact the PSIA-NW office. For this and additional titles just call the office or log onto the website and download a Bookstore Order form and fax it in. Your PSIA-NW bookstore purchase directly supports your Northwest Division.

Pink Elephants & Flaming Ducks

A BEAR IN TENNIS SHOES

Children's Tip by Brad Jacobson
Introduction by Tyler Barnes

At the 2010 Technical Team tryouts at Mt. Bachelor Brad shared this song with the tryout candidates and selectors - talk about an ice breaker, group interaction and a good laugh! Apparently Brad sings this songs "a lot" at Mt. Bachelor when out with kids lessons. It's not uncommon for people to stop Brad and say, "Oh, yeah, I know you ... you're the bear song guy." It is such a great song that kids of all ages (including 30 full-grown adults at the tryout) can sing along and enjoy!

It's a repeat song, which means the leader sings the fist line of the first verse, and the others repeat it. It goes like this:

The other day (group repeats), I met a bear (group repeats), With tennis shoes (group repeats), a dandy pair (group repeats).
All sing together: "The other day, I met a bear... With tennis shoes, a dandy pair."

He looked at me (group repeats), I looked at him (group repeats), He sized me up (group repeats), I sized up him (group repeats).
All sing together: "He looked at me, I looked at him ... He sized me up, I sized up him."

He said to me (group repeats), "Why don't you run? (group repeats), I see you don't (group repeats), have any gun (group repeats)."
All sing together: He said to me, "Why don't you run? ... I see you don't, have any gun."

So I did run (group repeats), away from there (group repeats), and right behind (group repeats), me came that bear (group repeats).
All sing together: "So I did run, away from there ... and right behind, me came that bear."

Ahead of me (group repeats), I saw a tree (group repeats), A great big tree (group repeats), oh golly-gee (group repeats).
All sing together: "Ahead of me, I saw a tree ... A great big tree, oh golly-gee."

The only branch (group repeats), was 10 feet up (group repeats), I'd have to jump (group repeats), and trust my luck (group repeats).
All sing together: "The only branch, was 10 feet up ... I'd have to jump, and trust my luck."

And so I jumped (group repeats), into the air (group repeats), But I missed that branch (group repeats), away up there (group repeats).
All sing together: "And so I jumped, into the air ... But I missed that branch, away up there."

Now don't you fret (group repeats), now don't you frown (group repeats), 'cuz I caught that branch (group repeats), On the way back down (group repeats).
All sing together: "Now don't you fret, now don't you frown ... 'cuz I caught that branch, On the way back down."

The moral is (group repeats), no shocking news (group repeats), Don't talk to bears (group repeats), in tennis shoes (group repeats).
All sing together: "The moral is, no shocking news ... Don't talk to bears, in tennis shoes."

That's all there is (group repeats), there is no more (group repeats), Unless I meet (group repeats), that bear once more (group repeats).
All sing together: "That's all there is, there is no more, Unless I meet, that bear once more."

The end, The end (group repeats), The end, The end (group repeats), The end, The end (group repeats), The end, The end echo).
All sing together: "The end, The end, The end, The end ... The end, The end, The end, The end." ❄

Brad "Jake" Jacobson is a PSIA-NW Clinic Leader, AASI Level I, USSA level 400 (National Level), and Training Director for Mt. Bachelor Snowsports School. Email him at jake1@teleport.com

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NEVER LET THEM SEE YOU SWEAT

Children's Tip by Janet Shofstall

Sure this is just an advertising slogan yet it's also helpful when teaching children. Think back to your own school days when there was a substitute teacher ... you remember ... I thought so; torment time. Kids have an innate sense of vulnerability and insecurity. Setting up the lesson atmosphere with safety, FUN and learning are key to a successful lesson.

We all know that creating a safe and comfortable environment are the beginnings of all great experiences. For now I want to get to the fun part. No surprise.

Think of teaching kids snowsports as an opportunity to be a kid again. Sure, we need to be professional and take the task seriously. The parents/guardians have bestowed upon us the hugest of responsibilities; we're taking their kids out into a weird and wonderful, maybe new world.

Find a balance in how you interact between the more serious parent/teacher relationship and the more playful student/teacher relationship. With your young students be a leader, a ring leader. Essentially a ring leader is the fun director. A good fun director is also having fun, maybe the MOST fun of everyone. Allow yourself to be and act a little silly and ridiculous.

One of the highest compliments a child can give me is, "You're funny." So, get out there and be a little crazy with your next kids' class. If you're having fun it's no sweat. ❄

Janet Shofstall is a PSIA-NW Alpine Clinic Leader and Examiner. She teaches at HooDoo, Oregon. Email her at jshofstall@bendbroadband.com

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FIRST TURNS

Children's Tip by Kim Petram

Developing efficient movement patterns in children is encouraged but we all know how hard that can be at times given a child's physical and cognitive developmental stage. The ability to actively steer the inside leg is an efficient movement pattern that is encouraged early in alpine skiers.

The next time you have a novice skier try this when you are ready to introduce steering (assuming you have successfully navigated through flatland maneuvers already): in your area's beginning zone

with terrain that has only the mildest pitch have your student do a gliding wedge focusing on a narrow wedge with flat skies. Identify a landmark for the child to steer towards for right turns and left turns. From the narrow gliding wedge on flat skis have your student steer (turn, point) their inside foot from the glide towards the landmark.

They will naturally turn in this direction, you don't have to coach the nuances of inside versus outside leg, setting the child up for success by telling them what to steer their foot towards will be sufficient. Repeat this movement often, alternating between left and right turns, reinforcing the steering movement by doing one turn only at a time. Usually, the child does not realize that they are focusing on only the inside leg but you are encouraging dynamic movements that set the foundation for future growth.

Once the child can steer in both directions in a narrow wedge and on flat skis then add linking the turns together with a new focus of steering both feet and legs in the directions of intent.

Kim Petram is a PSIA-NW Clinic Leader and PSIA-NW Children's Committee Chairperson. Email Kim at kim@petram.org

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TURN AND TALK

Children's Tip by Linda Cowan

Have you ever asked your class a question to check for understanding, only to get blank looks and silence in return? I have ... but I have also learned that silence teaches me a great deal about my students. Silence indicates that either I have not been explicit enough in my teaching, or that my students do not feel comfortable or confident enough with their new found skills/information to share in front of their peers.

Now, we teach a sport, which means we should be moving, sliding, gliding and riding ... not standing around all day talking ... but, there are times when I need to know what my students are thinking. Knowing what they think, and how they perceive the information I am conveying to them helps guide my teaching, and planning for my next steps. But, how can I get them to share when I'm met with silence? My remedy: "Turn and Talk."

I often choose to ask questions at the bottom of a run after new learning has taken place, to get an indication of their understanding of what I've just asked them to do. When we are standing together and I get blank stares, I choose to follow the strategy of "Turn and Talk." There are a couple of ways to incorporate this strategy. One option is to ask them to pair up, ride the chair together and have a conversation about my question on the ride up, but both partners are asked to be prepared to share their insights when we group up at the top. Another option is to simply have students turn to a neighbor right where we are and talk through their thoughts with another student.

"Turn and Talk" has multiple benefits. First, it gets the students talking about what they are learning. If they are shy, they can listen to their partner talk first, and gain more insight before they share. Second, sharing to one other person is much less threatening and intimidating than to a whole group, especially if no one knows anybody. Third, if I ask everyone to turn and talk as a group, I can listen in on a few comments and get a quick assessment of their understanding without even having to ask anyone to share out back to the group.

I need to know what my students are thinking in order to make responsible decisions but at the same time I do not want to take away valuable practice and adventure time. "Turn and Talk" is a quick strategy that gets everyone participating and beginning to take ownership for their new learning while also helping inform my teaching of what to do next and why.

Linda Cowan is a PSIA-NW Technical Team Member, Alpine Clinician, Examiner in Training, and is as a 5th grade teacher at Woodmore Elementary School in Bothell, Wa. Email Linda at lindacowan1@mac.com

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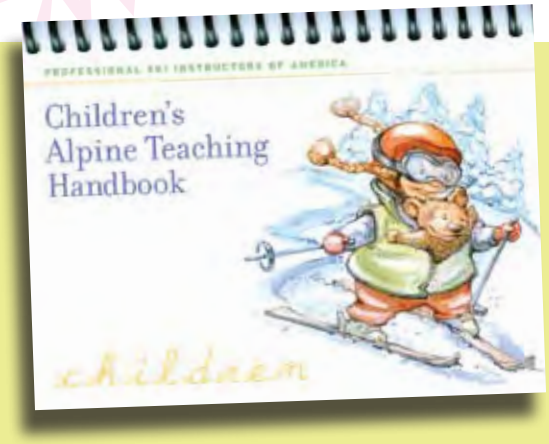

CHILDREN'S ALPINE TEACHING HANDBOOK

Book Review by Ed Kane

This is the newest handbook from the PSIA/AASI. It is available from the PSIA-NW office for $20 (plus tax and shipping). It is a spiral bound 314 page manual small enough to fit in one of the inside pockets of your parka, and appears to be intended as an on-hill reference for lesson planning. It provides very good supplementary material when used in conjunction with the Children's Instruction Manual, 2nd Edition (2008).

To help put these resources in perspective, it would be useful to point out that the 2008 Manual is quite comprehensive and covers in detail most of the aspects of teaching snowsports to children. What the manual lacked was comprehensive coverage of all the little tricks and systematic approaches that experienced instructors have developed and used over a number of years of teaching.

To put it in other terms, the manual was a sparsely equipped tool box while this new handbook provides many of the tools necessary to be an effective children's teacher. On the whole, this handbook provides an excellent supplement to the manual and should provide a great deal of value as the instructor gains experience and skills.

The format of the handbook is very similar to those put together by the Vail/Beaver Creek snowsports schools. The first 77 pages cover much of the material that is contained in the manual in outline form. Therefore, the reader needs to be familiar with the contents of the manual to fully comprehend the handbook messages. For the experienced instructor, this provides a very concise and useful summary of the concepts necessary to conduct an effective class. The remainder of the handbook "provides practical and comprehensive tools that will prove invaluable when teaching alpine skiing to children of all ages and abilities." There are 3 major sections, one each to cover the learning/teaching zones: Beginner/Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. Each zone has a unique color tab to facilitate easy, quick referencing.

Each of these sections contains material on: Movement Blends to Develop; Stepping Stones to Anchor Movement Blends; and an outline of material to cover as the class progresses through each of the zones. These are contained in 3 subsections or levels. Each level description contains: a description of the skiing assessment; a description of the desired outcomes; and a sequence of objectives that will help the class progress through this level. Each objective is defined and is followed by a description of: Learning terrain; safety tactics; movement blend priorities; suggested drills and adventure; and a nicely organized table that covers some of what could be encountered during exploration of these drills and adventure including; common difficulties; possible causes; and some recommendations for each objective.

Ed Kane is a Snoqualmie Region Board Representative, past PSIA-NW President and is currently the Training Director for Ullr Ski School.

RIDER RALLY RECAP

by Terry McLeod

In March 2010 I attended the AASI Rider Rally held at Copper Mountain, Colorado. For those who know me this might seem quite strange since I am primarily a skier and have snowboard gear that's almost as old as the sport itself. However, this year there was a free ski/terrain park group offered for alpine skiers and that is what motivated me to make the long drive halfway across the country to attend.

For those not familiar with it, the Rider Rally is loosely modeled as a National Academy for snowboarders; four days of on-snow clinics, evening events and after hour socials all hosted by members of the National Demonstration Team. This year the indoor sessions were held at Woodward at Copper each evening. This is a new facility that has mats, trampolines, foam pits, skateboard parks, and Snowflex™ for indoor skating, skiing, riding, and jumping. It's pretty hard to describe how incredible this venue is, and we had the run of it every night. This photo below gives you an overview but for a better idea it's worth surfing around their website: www.woodwardatcopper.com.

Usually we think of training/educational events as being important because of the topics they cover, the quality of the clinicians, the opportunity to learn new teaching methods and skiing techniques. These are all important and do comprise the largest portion of the information that I came away with, but not far behind were all the conversations and insights that came from hanging around other teachers, trainers, supervisors and managers from resorts all over the country. Whether we were sitting on a chairlift or a bar stool, it was easy to go down the path of "what do you do at your area?" on topics that ranged from line up methods to pay systems, beginner terrain and techniques to staff training and development. Sometimes you ended up feeling like it would be so great to teach at that person's area because of some cool feature, while at other times it was very encouraging to realize that I didn't have to go back home and live under the giant corporate thumb that they have to deal with. By the end I was able to come home with at least three different things from these conversations:

1. Best practices (a team of staff from several departments who confer on terrain park features and design for example).
2. Dreams of what we can try to develop over the long run (terrain that's easy to access but out of the way with low-end, progressive beginner jumps and rails).
3. Appreciation and relief that I'm in a more casual, Northwest, work environment (I don't pay taxes on the coffee cup I'm given for employee appreciation day).

Returning to the topic of on-snow clinic content, the biggest concept that I left with is how possible and important it is to break down a new trick or feature into very small increments that build on each other and create success at every step along the way. A lot of the freestyle crowd has a fairly go-for-it outlook on sports and it's easy to get caught up in this when teaching ("here's a couple pointers, now you just need to commit!").

Presumably though, the people who are willing or motivated to take a lesson may be somewhat less inclined to just "go big," after all, they're coming to us for advice. Either way, when we take the responsibility of guiding people through maneuvers that are challenging for them, we owe it to our students to make it safer and easier than if they were on their own. Here are a couple of outlines as examples.

360 Off a Jump

Whirly birds/Surface 360's on the snow
- » Skis parallel
- » Both skis on the ground
- » Whole body rotation
- » Smooth rotation without stops/jerks

Timing the Surface 360
- » With marks in the snow
- » With terrain variations

Add minor pop motions
- » While staying on the snow
- » Coming slightly off the snow

Time the pop movements
- » With marks in the snow
- » With terrain variations

Go to a small jump, surface 360 beside the kicker/rolling over the knuckle (no air)

Time the spin to finish on the landing
- » Add minor pop motions
- » While staying on the snow
- » Coming slightly off the snow

Time the pop to the knuckle
- » Be sure to match the landing angle
- » Butter out most of the spin

Straight air off the kicker for speed check, Time spin and pop with take off.
- » Land between 90-180 and butter out
- » Land 180-270 and butter out
- » Land 270-360 and butter out
- » Land 360, stomp, and claim

Obviously it could take some time and several runs to work through all of this, but that time and mileage is what keeps things both safe and successful. Here's a sample for an "urban on" to a box or rail, where you approach it from one side and use a slightly directional jump rather than coming at it dead center. If students are learning this move they already have some basic box riding skills, so we won't repeat all of those steps for this progression.

Urban/Street onto a Box

(can also be used for lip slides)
Review the solid stance that you'll use while sliding the box.
- » First on snow
- » Next on a line in the snow
- » Then on the box using a normal "straight on"

Woodward at Copper is a year round snowboard and ski training camp dedicated park and pipe progression. The photo below is of "The Barn" where they have 6 Olympic grade Flybed trampolines with three that go into foam, 2 foam pits that are 22 ft. x 22 ft. x 7ft. deep, Trampoline Harness System, 18' Tumble Track into Foam, 54' x 22' Spring Floor, plus tons of different foam mats for safety and training. Check it out at www.woodwardatcopper.com

Introduce nose and tail presses as a way to adjust/correct while sliding the box
- » On the snow statically
- » On the snow while sliding
- » Step onto the box and do the movements without sliding
- » Slow speed sliding presses using a straight on

Adjust your approach to the box so that you're in line with one side of it, rather than centered
- » Hit the box by landing on just one side of it, usually a steel bar/rail
- » Nose and tail press the side bar of the box

Introduce "directional jumping" for take off
- » Statically, check for proper landing position
- » Sliding and jumping onto a line in the snow

Walk the takeoff of the box from the side that you'll be jumping from
- » Check distance from box (side, laterally)
- » Check direction of trajectory

Approach & takeoff from the side (urban on)
- » May need to make a sequential jump initially if speed is slow
- » Works towards a simultaneous jump at take off
- » Adjust take-off trajectory as needed
- » Use press moves as needed
- » Smile big and say "Woo Hoo!"

Another obvious fact is that you need to have available and choose appropriate features for learning new tricks. Just like in all snowsports instruction, we need to be on comfortable terrain (features) when introducing new movements and/or maneuvers. There's nothing wrong with returning to that big, wide flat box in the kiddie park, or that short, flat jump to teach and practice new moves.

In summary, the Rider Rally is another example of an event that serves to inspire on multiple levels and it has provided me with more tools to coach and connect with students in the terrain park environment. I encourage you to move outside of your normal training group and take advantage of the many higher end training events that are available, whether it's through PSIA/AASI regionally or nationally, or other organizations like USSA, USASA, National Sports Center for the Disabled, National Ski Patrol, American Avalanche Institute, American Mountain Guides Association, or anything else. ❄

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Post comments @ psia-nw.org

PNSIA-EF SCHOLARSHIP INFO

Need some help paying for an educational event, exam or manual? The Pacific Northwest Snowsports Instructors Association - Education Foundation (PNSIA-EF) is just the place to find some financial support for your professional development. Any Northwest member in good standing is eligible to apply for a Tuition / Registration Fee Scholarship. The member will be responsible for lift tickets, transportation, lodging, meals and pay his/her own other miscellaneous expenses.

To apply for a scholarship, please follow these simple steps:

- ☑ Be a member in good standing: which means your Membership Dues and Educational credits are current.
- ☑ Complete and submit the scholarship application.
- ☑ Obtain the necessary letters of recommendation.
- ☑ Obtain from your Snowsports School Director a completed director's statement document.
- ☑ Submit your Event Application 30-days prior to the event you wish to attend.
- ☑ Write a short article suitable for publishing in the NW Snowsports Instructor newsletter summarizing the event you attended.

For a complete list of details including the application forms go to www.psia-nw.org, then go to the "Member Benefits" menu in the navigation, then Scholarship Application.

Selection will be based upon such factors as:

- ❄ Financial need
- ❄ Contributions that the candidate has made to his/her Snowsport School
- ❄ Whether this educational opportunity will help promote the mission of the candidate's Snowsport School in a positive way.
- ❄ The candidate's explanation of how the scholarship would benefit him/her
- ❄ Past experience and contributions to Snowsport School and community

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FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS MISS OUT!

This year we are helping our newer, motivated members attend Symposium 2011 at Mission Ridge by helping lower the cost barrier to attendance. Your hoody purchase proceeds will be earmarked to be given to newer PSIA-NW Member instructors from your school to help reduce the cost of attending Symposium. In addition to your hoody purchase proceeds, we are working with your school director, training directors and/or divisional clinic leader to help members apply for $150 scholarships towards the event fee, too. So what are you waiting for! Buy a unique PSIA-NW hoody, tell us what school to earmark your proceeds and help our newer members get excited about our great snowsports community and PSIA-NW events.

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