



Region Update

By Kathy Brennan
Eastern Region CEO

Just a little bit of news you should know:

Member/Event Numbers

While member numbers are lagging slightly behind last year, I'm confident that more snow in the Mid-Atlantic than we have seen in years, combined with good snowmaking temps in the Northeast, will set us up for another successful season.

With a schedule of 680 events for this season, we have already conducted over 100 events for more than 1,800 participants. This success is attributed in large part to successful early season events including the Snowsports Management Seminar, Children's Academy, Trainer's Academy, and the Eastern and Summit Academies (formerly known as ProJam and the Master's Academy.) We also have more than 3,600 total participants registered for events this season, making me confident we will hit our target of 5,000 event participants this winter.

I know there are concerns related to our policy change to deny requests for weekend Level I assessments this season. While some weekend in-house events were ideal for the members at their home resort, it also meant other members, who also desired weekend Level I assessments, were

dissatisfied because they were unable to enroll. To support everyone's needs, we have scheduled 90 Level I assessments throughout our region, with 30 occurring on weekends. Hopefully these events are situated within a reasonable driving distance from your home or work. Next year, the events will rotate to another location within that area. We truly hope this schedule will meet the needs of more of our members. We appreciate your support as we



work toward the best ways to meet the needs of all our members. Also, we encourage everyone to register early for those coveted weekend events.

Scholarships

Our Scholarship Committee has completed the awarding of the 2024-2025 member scholarship applications. After a thorough and considerate review of the 203 applications received, they elected to award an average of \$176 to 171 members. Total scholarship dollars awarded increased by 6% to \$30,120.

# AWARDS	AWARDED	SCHOLARSHIP
124	\$20,790	General Member Scholarship
16	\$3,190	NextCore Next Steps
8	\$1,270	Women's Scholarship
5	\$1,070	James Leader Memorial
5	\$1,070	Russell Fleming Memorial
3	\$590	Terry Fund
3	\$590	James Kapp Telemark
2	\$480	Burbridge Memorial
3	\$720	Hetrick Scholarship
2	\$350	Employee Scholarships
171	\$30,120	Totals

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the members of the scholarship committee who volunteered their time and energy to review the applications.

The office is currently reviewing the Winter Scholarships for member schools, futures camps, promising snowpros, and reinstatements. New this year, a Snowboard Futures Camp, and a Women's Performance Camp were added to the Winter Scholarship options. Funds will be made available to members and member schools when these reviews are complete.

Congratulations to all of the scholarship winners and thank you for taking advantage of this valuable member benefit.

Listening Tour

My Listening Tour for the 2024-2025 season began by attending our Golden Learniversary event at Belleaire January 15 - 16. During this exciting new event we celebrated the first assessment conducted in the Eastern Region 50 years ago. During this celebration it was an honor to hand-deliver 50-year pins to two members who attended that original event. We also celebrated all the new Level I Alpine and Snowboard members who earned their certification.

My next stop will be part of a return to the south at the end of January. During this tour I plan to visit Liberty, Cataloochee, Appalachian Ski Mountain, Hatley Point, and Massanutten. Other stops planned for this season include King Pine, Burke Mountain, Pat's Peak and more. Please follow my tour on social media at #kbslisteningtour.

I hope I'll get a chance to slide with you during one of my many stops. Please do not hesitate to come and chat with me, I welcome hearing how we may continue to increase our value to you. Best wishes for a great season! <<

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General Information

Submission of articles, photos, or other items for publication is invited. Articles are not to exceed about 1000 words. Receipt of submissions will be confirmed to the writer. Upcoming deadlines are published in each issue of *SnowPro*. Material should be sent to "SnowPro Editor" at: psia-e@psia-e.org as an MS Word document attachment.

All submitted material is subject to editing and, possibly, a writing process. Its use, whether solicited or not, is at the discretion of the editorial staff. All published material becomes the property of PSIA-E/EF. Articles are accepted on the condition that they may be released for publication in all National and Regional publications.

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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Mid-Winter Board Report

By Peter Howard

PSIA-AASI Eastern Board Chair.

Greetings Eastern Members. This mid-winter Board Report is being written in December just before our biggest event and the largest gathering of Snow Pros in the country this season.

National Alignment. It is a credit to our region and our Eastern Office Staff that the Eastern Academy happens. The event is supported by a reservation system in Colorado and National Team Members from across the country. I bring this up because it is a fine example of the increasing national coordination that is hopefully improving the member experience. Across the country Education Staff members of all regions are receiving training about educational events and exams emphasizing the same way performance is coached and examined. This would pertain to all disciplines and all aspects of the Learning Connection Model.

National CEO. In early 2025, Jeff Lifgren was selected as the National CEO and began his role on January 13, 2025. We wish him the best and look forward to the trend of continued coordination between all regions and the supporting role of the National CEO and National Office.

Recent Board Meeting. Your Eastern Board of Directors held its fall Board meeting in Pennsylvania. Several snowsports directors and vice presidents were invited. Among other

subjects they shared that the length of the snow sports season was shrinking. In some cases, it was as short as 10 weeks. This affects the value equation of becoming a member of PSIA-AASI. We hope seasons will be longer, but we need to be cognizant of this trend and provide significant value to entice new and maintain existing members.

Board Elections. By the time this is read the Election for the Zone 1 Board seat will be underway. Also this spring, two appointed at large seats will be filled, and a new Board Chairperson will be appointed to a two-year term. This turnover refreshes the perspective of our Region and allows other people to participate in the leadership of our organization.

Two-way Communication. One of my favorite quotations is from Allen Greenspan. "I know you think you understand what you thought I said but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant." This so embodies the challenge of communication we all face as we go about the work of coaching snowsports. Both in our organization, and with our customers, resides the inherent assumption that communication has happened. When we engage in meaningful two-way communication with others we begin to unscramble Mr. Greenspan's words. May our organization and our snowsports work reach a new level of understanding this season. ☞



Pats Peak topped the charts with the highest number of participants at the combined Snowsports Management Seminar, Eastern Trainer Academy and Children's Academy events at Mount Snow in early December!



Think About an Educational Event

By Mark Aiken

As a children's examiner on the PSIA-AASI Eastern Advanced Children's Educator (ACE) Team and a member of the PSIA Eastern Alpine Development Team, I attended separate early season trainings for both teams. At these education staff trainings, team leaders shared messaging from our organization's regional and national leadership.

Two of my takeaways from the trainings seemed relevant for Eastern Region members – particularly newer members thinking about going for their Level I certification or their CS1 accreditation. Because newer members may not have access to the *SnowPro* and other sources of information (and because they may get much of their info by talking to more experienced colleagues), it's important that all of us provide accurate information.

Takeaway #1

- Level I assessments are no longer “educational and assessment” events; they are assessments. Candidates must come prepared, or they will be less likely to meet the standard.
- At Children's Specialist 1 accreditation events, while still “educational and assessment” events, the “assessment” side is more heavily weighted than ever before. Unprepared candidates are less likely to meet the standard.

Unlike previous seasons when members could attend Level I assessments underprepared and still emerge successful, moving forward, candidates need to have baseline knowledge to pass. It is important that experienced members who lived through those “easier” times don't misinform new instructors who hope to achieve Level I certification. Bottom line: candidates need to be prepared, or they might not pass. Same for CS1.

Takeaway #2

A new member's first experience with the organization does not *have* to be an assessment event. Members could opt to take a preparation clinic that specifically aims to prepare participants for Level I or CS1.

- *Level I Assessment Prep*. This two-day prep clinic is run by examiners who run Level I assessments. They will share everything you need to prepare for your Level I assessment. If you are connected with a snowsports school and have received on-snow training in preparation for an assessment, a Level I Prep is not required ahead of a Level I assessment. But it is available, and I recommend it – especially if you are nervous or unsure of whether you're ready. Also, the Eastern Region website has excellent information on its “certification and professional development pathways” with many resources aimed towards prepping people for Level I. Click for [Alpine](#). Click for [Snowboard](#). Click for [Telemark](#). Click for [Cross Country](#).
- *Children's Specialist Prep*. This two-day prep clinic is run by the ACE team children's examiners who run the CS assessments. They cover real and ideal, the CAP model, Movement Analysis, and teaching – in short, everything you need to be successful at a CS assessment. Also,

the Eastern Region website has excellent information on its “educational pathways” with many resources aimed towards prepping people for “certificate based” programs like Children's Specialist or Freestyle Specialist events. Click for [Children's](#).

You Don't Have to Do an Assessment!

But what if you just want to learn, you might wonder? What if you don't want to do an assessment? There are many educational clinics not geared towards specific assessments but rather toward helping members deepen their technical understanding, teaching, skiing or riding skills, and professional knowledge. They address teaching topics, movement analysis, freestyle, and your personal skiing and/or riding – for example, Movement Analysis 101 and 201, Skier/Rider Updates, Snowboard Teaching Improvement, and Alpine Practical Teaching. They help members become better skiers, riders, and teachers. Check out this selection of educational events and check the Eastern Region calendar for dates and locations (and hundreds of other events too).

- *Children's Teaching Focus Clinic*. This two-day event focuses on how to identify and meet the goals of both students and parents while creating engaging and exploratory learning experiences tailored to the kiddos in your lessons. It's also a ton of fun and led by an ACE team children's examiner.
- *Alpine Intro to Freestyle*. A one-day event that covers skills needed to play and teach in terrain parks.
- *Trees and Steeps*. Offered (separately) to skiers and snowboarders: avoiding crowds and communing with Nature is one reason many of us love snowsports. It's an amazing experience shared with other snow pros!

Ski the Field Guide

Finally, I must mention an event I am particularly proud of – *Ski the Field Guide with Mark Aiken*. This one-day clinic, held at Stowe, VT on March 18, brings pros together to ski children's drills and activities straight out of *Teaching Children Snowsports: Alpine Field Guide* with the co-author of the *Field Guide*. (That is, with me!) If you want to know what drills to do with kids (or if you want ideas for your teaching segment at CS1 or CS2), participate in this event! ☞

Looking for an event?

Check out the schedule at:

<https://easternsnowpros.org/calendar/>
Check in periodically for changes and additions.



The Eastern Development Team: What it Takes to Join

By Keri Reid

Eastern Director of Education and Programs

I was standing on Hayride at Stowe, performing movement assessment on my peers in front of some of the most respected selectors in the East. It was one of the most intimidating moments of my life...and one of the most exhilarating. This was a Development Team Tryout, my chance to showcase the skills necessary to join the future of the Eastern Education Staff. The experience is taxing emotionally and physically: from the event itself (two full-days under the microscope) to pre-event preparation and training for both the skiing and teaching components of the selection. While I had support ahead of the event, knowing a few things ahead of time would have helped me understand not only the tryout but the road ahead. If you have interest in pursuing this goal soon, I have boiled down the knowledge I gained both from my personal experience and my current role leading the Ed Staff to three points.

Everyone Feels as Nervous as You.

Everyone at the selection deals with anxiety and nerves – including the selectors! There is no denying the heightened emotions at an event like this. It's not unlike the nerves of an assessment, which is something that you would have experienced before if you make it to a Development Team Tryout. Remembering to have fun can make all the difference. Some of the best tryouts I witnessed or was a part of were full of peer encouragement and camaraderie; team-up and tackle it together, if only emotionally. You don't need to be an island. As for the selectors, it may surprise you to know just how much anxious energy they are also managing. They all very much want you to succeed, because when you do our organization greatly benefits. Work to develop a strategy to manage stress enough to allow you to perform to the best of your ability – this will enhance your experience at the selection. I hope the knowledge that everyone deals with it will give candidates some degree of comfort.

Ways to Prepare

There are opportunities to help you prepare. Alpine members can attend the annual Development Team Prep event (February 10-11 at Hunter). Summit Academy, Dynamic Diamonds and Intensive Stance and Alignment can also be great events for alpine skiers to consider when preparing to take the leap at a Tryout. Snowboard members can look to the Level III Prep (February 10-11 at Mount Snow or February 26-27 at Hunter) for the best opportunity to practice high level movement analysis, slide on challenging terrain, and teach strong riders. Skiers and riders alike can seek an opportunity to attend a Futures Camp, a director nominated, scholarship funded event designed to elevate Level II and Level III members pursuing a position with the Eastern Education Staff. The Women's Performance Camp, another scholarship supported event, is also designed to boost future leaders in our profession. Futures Camp nominations and Women's Performance Camp applications closed on January 5, 2025, but knowing this can be a multi-year journey, it's good to think ahead to the next year! For all disciplines, if you can swing the time and cost, getting out to National Academy or the Rider Rally offers high potential for a skills boost. Outside of the organization's events, your best bet is to slide, teach, and train as much as your schedule and body will allow. There is no substitute for mileage doing the job.

Not Level IV.

Finally, the Development Team Tryout is a job interview, not the fourth "level." Knowing this can inform not only your approach to the event, but also your ultimate decision to pursue it. In my opinion, the best way to prepare for an employment opportunity is to take a deep dive into the position.: The job description reads as follows:

Summary: *Eastern Education Staff are the most visible representatives of PSIA-AASI, delivering education events and conducting assessments across one of the largest Regions in the country. Serving over 10,000 members, Education Staff members should demonstrate the highest professional standards, reflect and teach the philosophies of the Association, and positively promote PSIA-AASI in general.*

Responsibilities

- Conduct education events and assessments.
- Complete all relevant attendance, forms and follow-up with the Eastern Region Office as necessary.
- Promote the curriculum, community and professional development pathways of the organization.
- Provide inspirational written, verbal, and visual communication to all members.
- Commit to lifelong learning, remaining current to the standards and continuously striving for personal improvement.

Qualifications

- Minimum PSIA-AASI Level III certification in their primary discipline and Children's Specialist II
- Actively working for a snowsports school or resort
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to communicate utilizing modern communication methods and platforms

It's important to note that the geographic spread of our Region requires travel, sometimes long distances. As we strive to offer our events at the lowest possible pricing to our members, this means that our Education Staff members room at double occupancy and carpool where possible. It makes for a tight-knit team and makes good social skills a must on and off the hill. Work commitments vary by discipline and can range from five to fifteen days a season; more than the minimum is always appreciated!

Our Development Team Tryouts are generally scheduled on a biennial basis. This year, the Eastern Region will be hosting the following:

*Adaptive Development Team Tryout: Waterville Valley, NH
March 25-26*

*Cross Country Development Team Tryout: Trapp Family Lodge, VT
March 1-2*

*Snowboard Development Team Tryout: Killington, VT
March 17-18*

*Telemark Development Team Tryout: Killington, VT
March 18-19*

Without a doubt, that tryout at Stowe was a pivotal moment in my career, and I have confidence it will be for this year's hopefuls too. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our Office if we can provide any additional information to support your journey. To those trying out this year: best of luck and have a blast! ☺



What Keeps You Coming Back?

By Kathy Brennan
Eastern Region CEO

Once again, our Eastern Academy (f/k/a ProJam) was a huge success. The event is the largest gathering of Snowsports Instructors in the country, and this year, 670 members and staff gathered for a full week of activities. Although the calendar forced the event to bump into the holiday week, the timing did allow Killington an extra week to lay down more snow as they prepared for the busy vacation period ahead. Conditions were fantastic and there was ample room for groups to spread out and practice. But what's amazing, is all these participants commit to gathering for five days in Vermont, in December, when it is just as likely the conditions may be dubious, at best. At this year's event, I was counting my blessings at how well things were going, thankful that Mother Nature was cooperating, and it occurred to me... "Why *are* all these people here? What keeps them coming back?"

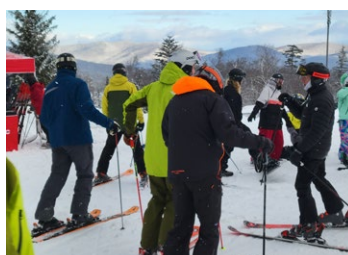
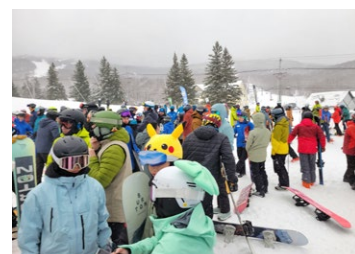
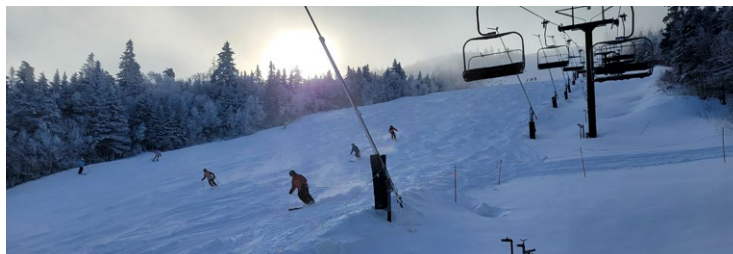
One thought I should acknowledge. Some members may wonder why I am dedicating so many words to an event that sells out year after year? After all, they might say, isn't it difficult enough to get into the event as it is? One, the event is so successful and inspirational, I feel it is valuable to explore this success. And two, I feel like the event exemplifies some of the best aspects of our Learning Connection model.

To answer my questions, I took the opportunity to chat with various members. For example, Marc Angelillo from Sugarbush and Stowe, this year's Summit Award winner, said that returning to the event has become a ritual. "Being a part of this organization, sharing and celebrating what we all love to do is always the highlight of the beginning of every ski season," he said, adding that participating in the mid-week electives, finding out what is new with teaching models, and fine-tuning his on-snow game makes the week complete. Marc also values the opportunity to inspire and motivate others.

I also chatted with "Dr. Dave" Berger a Telemark skier from Big Boulder and Blue Mountain. "It certainly includes the educational and training aspects," Dr. Dave said of his love for the event. "But even more important is renewing the relationships that transcend what sliding gear you're wearing on your feet or your experience level. The number of friends I've made at that event boggles my mind, largely because all the disciplines meet together and spread the "one team" spirit." Dave shared that one friend, Brian Nuss, only lives a few miles away, yet they typically only see each other once a year - at the Academy.

Over lunch, I chatted with Ellen Beck's group who had elected to participate in a Women's group. Joy Jucker and Kimberly Coxe said the length of the event - five-days - makes the drive from Tennessee and North Carolina worth the effort. The group agreed the camaraderie creates a safe space where they are more likely to try something they wouldn't do on their own. They felt the dynamics in an all-female group are different than in a group of men, and when someone says "You got this," they trust that their teammates understand how they are feeling at that moment.

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Many participants of the Adaptive Academy were from the Vermont Adaptive program, including Sarah Keith who generously brought a van load of equipment for the group to use for the week. This group appreciated the depth of training, the opportunity to pick each other's brains, and learn new tips. Exposure to many different instructors and ideas help them to adapt their lessons to their student's needs and goals.

Giovanni Cofré, and the rest of Brian Donovan's Snowboard group, were quick to point out it's the fanboy celebrity of our Ed staff but also riding with other friends who they only get to see at PSIA-AASI events. Echoing what I heard from other groups, they shared that Eastern Academy is an amazing way to kick off a season. Highlighting that they are so busy during the season, Eastern Academy is the only chance they have to focus on their own training. Shana Boscak noted that if there is some way we can involve their children, it may be a way to attract more people to the event.

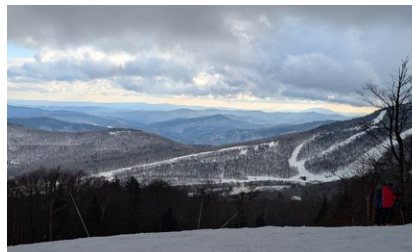
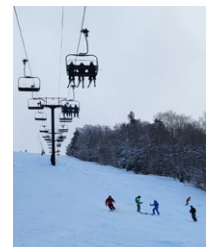
One comment that I found particularly heartwarming came from a first-time attendee who participated in the Level II college. They said they didn't know what to expect from such a large event and imagined the worst. Instead, they found small groups, appropriate terrain and a comfortable environment. Despite the size of the event, they felt seen and known.

I still remember my first Killington ITC (Instructor Training Course) more than twenty-five years ago, before the event was renamed ProJam, and now the Eastern Academy. My course conductor was long-time examiner Dutch Karnan. I signed up for a Level III prep group and most of the participants in my group were like me, part-time instructors taking a week of their vacation time to get ready for the season ahead and have a training plan to prepare for their exams. A crew from my home resort shared a house to keep expenses down. It was one of the most impactful weeks of my ski instructing career. The value of five whole days in a row to train with like-minded people, with guidance from an expert, was unmatched. This on top of the opportunity to spend time with old friends and make new ones – laughter, camaraderie, exercise, fresh air – for me, it was time and money well spent.

It's nice to see that twenty-five years later, participants are still feeling and experiencing the value I derived from this event. But whether you can make the commitment to a five-day Academy, or you do one day a year, the experience is often the same. What makes our organization so unique is its diverse membership brought together by a common passion for sliding on snow and sharing that knowledge, experience and joy through instructing.

It is no wonder PSIA-AASI has earned its reputation worldwide for its student-centered approach and upped its game with the Learning Connection Model and the People Skills. As most any Snowsports Director will tell you, you can be the best skier or rider on the hill and/or the most knowledgeable technician of the sport. But it's your ability to build and maintain trust with your students that keeps them coming back for more.

A big shout out to our amazing PSIA-AASI office staff, dedicated and talented education staff, all of the Killington employees and to you our members for supporting the Eastern Academy and all of our wonderful events throughout the season. «





AROUND THE EAST

Snowsports Management Award Winners!

Annually the early season Snowsports Management Seminar brings together snowsports leaders from across the region to participate in indoor and outdoor sessions that provide directors, trainers, and supervisors with information to bring back to their home resorts and apply to the management of their snowsports schools for the upcoming season.

Also during the seminar, we take the opportunity to recognize exceptional leaders within our region.



2024 Double Diamond Honoree: Dan Hogan, Windham Mountain Club, NY

DOUBLE DIAMOND AWARD, first introduced in the 23-24 season, is presented to an emerging leader in our industry who is nominated by their staff and/or peers for demonstrating innovation, growth, leadership, and exceptional contributions to their snowsports school.



2024 Snowsports Leader of the Year Honoree: Cindy Bartlett, Bousquet Mountain, MA

SNOWSPORTS LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD – In recognition of an outstanding snowsports school director/manager. This award acknowledges a career during which they maintained, and continue to maintain, the highest standards in snowsports school management, their outstanding dedication to their instructors, commitment to their school, contributions to our organization (both regionally and nationally), and impact on the snowsports industry. This leader is nominated by their staff and/or peers. This award is inspired by Einar Aas, Ron Kubicki, Freddie Anderson, Dave Merriam and all of the amazing leaders who have impacted and shaped the snowsports industry in the Eastern Region.



For a complete list of previous winners go to: <https://easternsnowpros.org/membership/schools/awards/> <<



Dan Hogan



Cindy Bartlett



Eastern Academy Award Winners!

Each season, during our Eastern and Summit (f/k/a Pro Jam and Master's) Academy events, the Education Staff select dedicated participants to be recognized for their outstanding commitment, effort, passion and spirit. This year five amazing members were honored. Learn more about the awards and the deserving award winners below.



FREE HEEL AWARD

In memory of Kare Anderson, to recognize a Telemark instructor who strives to inspire, share, and promote the free heel skiing experience. Presented to John Deddens, from the National Ski Patrol – Southern Division, by Miccy Stone.



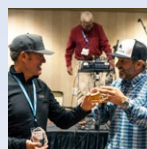
NO LIMITS AWARD

In recognition of an Adaptive Instructor who displays outstanding commitment to helping others break barriers and enjoy the freeing experience of sliding on snow. Presented to Katie Ahern, from Vermont Adaptive, by Norm Staunton.



SHRED AWARD

In recognition of a Snowboard Instructor who shows true passion and commitment to snowsports and who promotes the spirit of snowboarding both on and off the hill. Presented to Justin Whalen, from Holiday Valley, by Brian Donovan and Tom Vickery.



SUMMIT AWARD

In recognition of a Level III Instructor for their pursuit of advanced training, a superior level of professionalism, and dedication to the future of snowsports. Presented to Marc Angelillo, from Sugarbush, by Jeb Boyd.



ZIPPERLINE AWARD

In recognition of an Alpine instructor for their enthusiasm, continued development, and contributions to snowsports. Presented to RB Powell, from Tussey Mountain, by Mike Duricko.

Congratulations to all of the award winners and thank you for your dedication to our sport!

If you are interested in previous award winners, you may view the list here: <https://easternsnowpros.org/calendar/feature-events/masters-academy-snow-pro-jam/projam-awards-winners/> If you were a previous award winner and your name is not listed, please contact us. <<



Northern New England (Zone 1) Board Selection Seat

By Kathy Brennan
Eastern Region CEO

THE ELECTION FOR THE NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND ZONE BOARD SEAT IS NOW LIVE! If you are an eligible voter living in ME, NH or VT, or you designated a snowsports school in one of those states as your snowsports school/teaching affiliation, you will receive an e-mail by February 12 with a personal invitation (including login instructions) to vote in the Northern New England zone election for the PSIA-AASI Eastern Board of Directors for a three-year term beginning spring 2025. If you believe you are an eligible voter and did not receive an e-mail with log-in instructions, please contact Operations Director Jodi Bedson at jbedson@psia-e.org.

We have five candidates running for the Northern New England seat. Candidate profiles are displayed in alphabetical order on the election website and reverse alphabetical order here. Candidates will also be given the opportunity to give a brief statement at the end of the Virtual Membership Meeting on February 12 (more information on page 9). Voting concludes on March 2, 2025, and results will be announced by April 1st.

Candidate Profiles

Northern New England Zone Board Candidate: Burleigh Sunflower

State of Residence: VT

Snowsports School Affiliation:
Stratton Mountain Snowsports School

Certifications:
Snowboard Education Staff, Snowboard LIII,
Alpine LII, CS2, FS1

Background & Qualifications:



Simply stated my background is one built almost entirely focused around snowsports instruction. My very first job at the age of 15 was teaching skiing in the SkiWee program at Blue Mountain, PA. I loved every minute I was at the mountain, building friendships, developing my teaching and on-snow skills, and building the foundation of knowledge and expertise that has

allowed me to become the instructor, coach, educator and person I am today.

Over the years I have worked, trained and studied to become a Snowboard Level III, Alpine Level II, Children's Specialist 2, Freestyle Specialist 1. I am a current Snowboard Examiner, a former Advanced Children's Education team member and a former elected member of the snowboard steering committee.

This life in snowsports also opened doors to experiences which have enabled me to grow in ways that I never would have predicted. I've been able to build skills as a Supervisor, Manager, Trainer and Director at different snowsports schools. These leadership opportunities have lead to pivots to roles in Marketing first at Bromley, then Okemo, Vail Resorts Eastern Region and finally my current full-time role as a Marketing Cloud, Strategic Account Manager with Inntopia.

On the PSIA-E Board of Directors I would draw upon my lifetime in snowsports education, resort leadership and marketing experience to help guide my work with PSIA-E. I would draw upon the relationships I have built with leaders at resorts across Zone 1 (Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine). I would draw upon my life experience of owning and helping to run a small business in rural Vermont and my continuously growing knowledge of the resort and travel industry in New England and across the country.

I believe my background and unique lifetime of experience would help to benefit our organization and I believe I can put my specific skill set to work to benefit our members in Zone 1 and beyond.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

My background and experiences have shaped who I am and will inform my decision-making in this or any role. A critical aspect of my current approach is empathy. Having "walked in the shoes" of the professional instructors who comprise our membership has given me a well-rounded understanding of our profession. Therefore, my decisions are and will continue to be guided by both my personal experience and the experiences of those I represent.

These conversations shape my vision for the organization's future, which I've outlined in the following key goals:

National Alignment: Ensuring the Eastern Region maintains its identity and values while aligning with national standards. The "Ice Coast" is the backbone of PSIA/AASI and snowsports history, bringing incredible members and ideas

to the table. We must continue leading these conversations during alignment.

Sustainable Business Model: Shifting focus from member acquisition to healthy retention. While some churn (approximately 1,000 members annually) is inevitable, we must strengthen our efforts to retain the members we've worked so hard to bring into our organization.

Enhanced Member Value: Delivering greater value through continued development of both educational and non-educational offerings. I believe members seek value not just from discounts, but from our core asset: our education staff. We must continually evolve our offerings to ensure members have access to the best, most engaging, helpful, and beneficial offerings. Our industry is constantly evolving, and we need to stay at the forefront of this so guests at our collective resorts are always getting the best.

Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency: As costs rise, ensuring the organization remains fiscally transparent and responsible. Alongside providing value, we must operate as leanly as possible to maximize members' return on investment.

My experience running a ski and ride school, working for a resort-focused company with universally used marketing solutions, and owning/operating a small business has equipped me with the skills to effectively and impartially address these issues and many others for our membership and organization.

I hope you'll give me the opportunity to represent you on the board.

Sincerely,
Burleigh Sunflower

Northern New England Zone Board Candidate: Richard Pierce

State of Residence: NH

Snowsports School Affiliation:
New England Disabled Sports

Certifications:
Adaptive LI

Background & Qualifications:



I have been teaching Adaptive Skiing since 2011 - I was so enthralled, I got my Level I in 2012 - I couldn't get enough of it, the most lessons I taught in one season is 100, that has lessened somewhat over the years but not my enthusiasm - I teach the entire spectrum of all the Adaptive

Disciplines, at my previous program I lead all the training clinics as well – I am currently consulting with specific staff at Cranmore to assist them in dealing with Adaptive Issues – I have obviously kept up with all the training requirements to maintain my Level I, beyond that I have attended Ski College at Killington and the Adaptive Events at Breckinridge on two separate occasions - I became known for my work with the visually impaired, one of my VI students I taught to ski stayed with me over 10 years, we ended up joining the Cranmore Race Team, I brought him to Breckinridge and we took the Gold as part of a team effort.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

I am extremely pro PSIA, I strongly believe in having a common platform for all of us to teach from – My goals for PSIA, would be a reflection of my own struggles – Quite frankly, I am a capable skier and I have failed Level II twice – To this day I still cannot put my finger on the problem – One of the reasons I moved to NEDS was that I lacked mentorship for my own progression where I was teaching – This can be an extremely frustrating endeavor – I have had to reach out to other mountains to seek coaching, but that lacks consistency – I wish to make PSIA available and achievable for all those that wish to pursue it.

Northern New England Zone Board Candidate: Ben DeBenedictis

State of Residence: VT

**Snowsports School Affiliation:
Stowe Mountain Resort**

**Certifications:
Alpine Education Staff, Alpine LIII, CS2**

Background & Qualifications:

This is my 13th year of membership with PSIA East. I am an Eastern Examiner as well as a two term Eastern Team member. I grew up in the industry teaching my first lesson at Bretton Woods at the age of 14. I am currently the Ski and Ride School Training Manager at Stowe Mountain resort. In my role at Stowe I manage staff training, the race department, and our seasonal programs. As a manager working for Vail Resorts, I have developed strong financial management and human resource skills.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

As a Zone 1 Board member I would focus on supporting the newest members of our organization. I feel it is essential that we adapt to the changing demographics of snowsports instructors. Over the last several seasons our industry has seen a significant shift from full-time to part-time pros. In order to ensure the long-term viability of our organization we need to welcome and retain these part-time instructors. I would also advocate for increased simplicity and ease of access to our education materials.

My approach to this role would be with curiosity and an eagerness to learn. My goal is to increase the inclusivity of our organization. Thank you for considering me for a seat on the PSIA East Zone 1 board.

Northern New England Zone Board Candidate: Tera Adams

State of Residence: VT

**Snowsports School Affiliation:
Adaptive Sport at Mount Snow**

**Certifications:
Adaptive Education Staff, Adaptive
Snowboard LIII, Snowboard LIII, Adaptive
Alpine LII, Alpine LI, Telemark LI, CS2, FS1**

Background & Qualifications:

I believe that the most valuable asset of this organization is its members. My diverse background in the organization (AASI LIII, Adaptive Snowboard LIII, Adaptive Alpine LII, Alpine LI, Tele LI, CS 2, FS 2, Adaptive Ed Staff, member of the Board of Directors) has provided me with a broad connection to our membership.



This connection has shaped my view of the organization, influenced my perception of the value of the organization, and continues to inform my work within the field. In addition, I have over a decade of experience working with in the nonprofit sector.

Statement of Philosophy & Direction:

Our individual unique backgrounds are what make this collective whole so strong. Someone once referred to the field of snowsports instruction as the land of misfit toys. While I believe that we all are a little weird in our own right, we are also a field made up of skilled, curious, and passionate individuals.

I look forward to another term of assisting the Eastern region in being not only leaders with the organization but also within the field of snowsports. As the larger organization changes and morphs in search of sustainability and relevancy, I am excited to help direct Kathy and the team that is driving the East towards a leadership position within that change. By being leaders of the change, we will be able to make sure that the needs of the Eastern members are considered as the organization grows and evolves. <<

OPEN AT LARGE BOARD SEATS

In addition to our four Zone elected seats, the Eastern Region Board of Directors also includes four At Large members who are selected by the existing Board based on their diversity of thought, expertise and experience. For this year, two At Large seats are open. Nomination forms are due to 3/31/25 at 11pm. For more information or to submit a nomination go to:

<https://fs9.formsite.com/PSIA-AASI-E/Nomination/index>

OFFICIAL NOTICE

PSIA-AASI Eastern Region Annual Virtual Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 7PM (EST)

Join Zoom Meeting:

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89123970633?pwd=bXaehbZVCTQDQ9OnLL4o3aSzvtb1bm.1>
Meeting ID: 891 2397 0633 | Passcode: 059716 | Or Dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)**

During this meeting, hear about the state of our organization and future plans from the CEO, Kathy Brennan, and representatives from the Board of Directors. Also, take this opportunity to ask a question or make a suggestion. At the finish of the call, Zone 1 Board Representative candidates will have the opportunity to make a brief statement.





AASI Winter Update

By Brian Donovan

AASI-E Coordinator and Examiner

PSIA-AASI Snowboard National Team Member

Greetings AASI Community! It's 2025! It's the middle of winter already, we're sliding at our resorts, we're fresh through teaching during the holidays, and it's time to finalize your plans for education and certification this season. We kicked off the season with Eastern Academy at Killington, VT. Here are some photos from the event.



An Eastern Academy snowboard group at Killington, VT.



The Eastern Academy snowboard groups enjoying the photo booth at the awards banquet.

Looking ahead, here are some details to help you maximize your season this winter!

Feature events, locations, and dates:

- **Freestyle National Academy.** This amazing event started two years ago as a gathering that will travel throughout the nation each season, and it's the Eastern Region's turn to host! Copper Mountain, Colorado and Woodward Park City, Utah were past host locations, and this year it is coming to Killington Resort, Vermont March 3-7, 2025. This week-long event is full of two- and three-day PSIA-AASI freestyle events including **Freestyle Specialist prep events**, and **Freestyle Specialist 1 and 2** assessment events. Come for any or all of this Academy and be around other AASI members exploring the terrain parks at Killington, earn CEUs, and possibly earn a new Freestyle Specialist accreditation. We will have PSIA-AASI National Team members joining our Eastern Education Staff to run the events and assessments all week long. Come experience the third annual Freestyle National Academy at Killington in March!
- **Jay Peak Trees and Steeps Camp.** February 24-25, 2025
- **Snowboard Education Staff Development Team Tryout.** Killington, VT, March 18-19, 2025 (See additional article in this issue of *The SnowPro*)
- **Freestyle Camp and Women's Freestyle Camp.** Mount Snow, VT, March 20-21, 2025
- **AASI 20+ Year Member Event.** Sugarbush, VT. April 4, 2025
- **AASI Spring Rally.** Sugarbush, VT. April 5-6, 2025
- **Snowboard Last Laps.** Killington, VT. April 19-20, 2025

Level II Assessments:

- Hunter Mountain, NY. February 26-28, 2025
- Killington, VT. March 10-12, 2025

Level III Assessments (more details below):

- Movement Analysis and Technical Understanding Assessment. Killington, VT. January 29
- Teaching Assessment. Killington, VT. January 30
- Riding Assessment. Killington, VT. January 31
- Movement Analysis and Technical Understanding Assessment. Killington, VT. March 10
- Teaching Assessment. Killington, VT. March 11, 2025
- Riding Assessment. Killington, VT. March 12, 2025

Looking for the most up-to-date information about your Snowboard certification pathway? Click here and explore: easternsnowpros.org/education/snowboard/

Assessment Prep Events

"Does this event count as a prerequisite for a Level II or Level III Exam?"

We get asked this question more than any other question. Here is a list of the events that count as prerequisites for Level II and Level III Exams:

- Level II or Level III Assessment Preps
- 2-Day Teaching Improvement events
- 2-Day Movement Analysis events
- 2-Day Riding Improvement events
- 2-Day Member Customized Events focused on any of the above topics

Other elective events from the Event Schedule do not count as prerequisites for certification assessments. This is to ensure that you are taking events that will best prepare you for certification and give you all the necessary information, feedback, and experiences that will help you to train for your next level of certification.

This doesn't mean that you won't learn lots at the other elective events or camps on the AASI Event Schedule. It just means that the content won't be as focused on preparing you for a certification assessment as it would be if you attend a prerequisite that is designed specifically to prepare you for an assessment.

"Can I attend a Level II or Level III Assessment Prep event if I'm not sure I am going to attempt the actual assessment?" YES! You don't need to be planning on taking your Level II or Level III Assessment to attend an Assessment Prep event. You read that right! While these events are designed to help you prepare for different levels of certification, you can attend these events regardless of your intent to attend the actual assessment this season, next season, or anytime soon. Sometimes members attend these events to get a better understanding of what the assessment is all about, to get feedback on what they need to continue working on, or to better understand how to help train others in their ride school that are planning on attending an assessment. Regardless of your motivations, you will learn and improve your own skills and understanding of the certification process and assessments.

PSIA-AASI Member Pro Offers

Do you know about all the amazing Member Pro Offers and discounts on gear that you're eligible for? Don't spend any more of your hard-earned money than you must by taking advantage of the member discounts that you earn through your PSIA-AASI membership. Visit your account at members.thesnowpros.org and check out the deep discounts available to you in the Pro Offers section.

Remember: Follow the rules and maintain proper etiquette!

- Don't share your Pro Offer discounts with friends and family unless the rules specifically state that you are allowed to do so. Ignoring this rule is the easiest way to lose these discounts.

- If you go into a retail store to try on gear, don't leave the store a mess and don't waste the time of the staff in the store if you don't plan to make any purchases. Be discreet, make sure things fit, and be gone.
- Don't brag to retail employees about how you're going to use your Pro Offers to get a better deal online.

Level III Assessment Reminder

The Eastern Region will be testing a new version of the Level III Assessment as we move towards PSIA-AASI national alignment in the winter of 2026-2027. If you're planning on taking a Level III Assessment this season, make sure you brush up on the details below:

- The Level III Assessment will be three days **AND** three modules. You can take all three days back-to-back or take any of the individual modules/components in single-day increments. You can take the modules in any order that you wish. As you pass modules of the assessment, you can bank them and not need to be re-assessed in the future. You must pass all three modules to earn your full Level III certification. You do not need to do all three modules in the same week, month, or even season. You can choose to focus on specific parts of the assessment, or you can focus on the entire assessment as a whole. You can take different modules at different times to fit your personal educational journey. The goal is to give you options and set you up for success in your certification path. One module assesses Movement Analysis and Technical Understanding skills; one module assesses Teaching and People skills; and one module assesses Riding skills. Professionalism and Self-Management will be assessed every day at all modules, and you'll receive a score on this each day.
- You will have two Examiners with your group all three days and those Examiner pairings might change day-to-day. This is exciting! You'll have two Examiners evaluating you, and the Examiners will be working together to score and deliver feedback to all participants. No, the assessment will not be twice as hard because there are two Examiners. It simply provides all candidates with two Examiners to be able to hear, see, and evaluate everything going on, multiple opportunities for the group to see demos performed by both Examiners, and a consistently fair and impartial assessment experience for all candidates as Examiners will have the opportunity to align to the National Standards by working together.
- The Eastern Region (which has the largest number of members of any region) will be leading the charge nationally by working to evolve the Snowboard Assessment process. This is the reason we are one of the Regions adopting and testing the new assessment process ahead of the 2026-2027 national alignment deadline. This shows dedication from the leadership of the Eastern Region office staff to leading toward a unified national assessment process in the future by making sure that our Region is actively involved to bring the best education and certification experience to our members!
- There will be a price increase but read on before you get too worried. The Eastern Region believes in the value these changes will offer and recognizes they come at a substantial cost increase. As we transition to the modular format with two Examiners and a more aligned price structure, the Eastern Education Foundation will support those for whom the price increase causes undue hardship. **For this year only**, members registering for any or all Snowboard Level III Modules can access preferential rates here: <https://fs9.formsite.com/PSIA-AASI-E/GOFORIT-EasternAASI-LIII/index>.

• Want to learn even when you're not on snow? Think E-Learning!

Visit thesnowpros.org for an extensive list of E-Learning courses that you can take to get Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and to remain current and active as a member. Life gets busy, injuries occur, and the unexpected happens. Don't stress if you're unable to do an event this season. Check out the catalogue of E-Learning courses and take care of your needed CEUs from your computer, tablet, or phone. If you have questions, you can call the Eastern Region office staff at 518-452-6095.

If you are attending an on-snow event this season, here are some top insider tips to make the most out of your experience:

Do:

- If you're attending a Level II or Level III Assessment, do remember to take the prerequisite event. Make sure you attend a qualifying prerequisite to help you prepare (Prerequisites are listed above).
- Recruit friends to attend events with you. You can keep travel and lodging costs at a minimum when you travel in packs. You can also take advantage of weeks where multiple events are going on simultaneously at the same resort so that everyone can attend something that helps them progress!
- Try something new! Don't just sign up for the same event that you always attend. Explore the entire Event Schedule and try something new!
- Pick a host mountain that you haven't ridden at and have a new experience! Take advantage of the clinic to explore a new destination and meet new friends! Go explore one of our many member schools and locations this year!
- Communicate with your AASI-E Ed Staff member about your goals at the event. Let them know what you're hoping to get out of the event, let them know what you've been working on, and be open to receiving feedback!
- Get rest and take care of yourself when attending an event. Not often do people ride hard for multiple days in a row. Make sure you can maximize your enjoyment at your event by being well rested and ready to go each day.
- Be present and enjoy yourself! Leave the stress of your everyday life at home and enjoy your snowboard vacation! Completely immerse yourself in an opportunity for your own personal riding and teaching development!
- Bring lots of layers, extra socks, multiple pairs of gloves/mittens, and spare goggle lenses. Nothing will ruin your event like not having the proper gear to enjoy yourself.

Don't:

- Don't sign up for an event simply because your home mountain is hosting it. Do take events that you're interested in and go explore a new mountain (see "Recruit friends" above).
- Don't go to an event and try to change the focus from the topic that everyone else signed up for to a topic you really wanted it to be. Our AASI-E Ed Staff members do their best to meet everyone's needs, but don't try to change an event's focus; it's not fair to the other attendees. Instead, simply sign up for the event you really want to attend.

That's all for now! As always, thank you for being members of the AASI community! Thank you for teaching snowboarding! Thank you for all the lessons that you are going to teach this winter and all the students that you'll share your passion with! The AASI Examiners and I are psyched to help you on your own personal and professional journeys in the snowboard industry and we can't wait to ride with all of you again soon! See you soon! ❄️

AASI Development Team Tryout

By Brian Donovan

AASI-E Coordinator and Examiner

PSIA-AASI Snowboard National Team Member

Attention All Level III Certified Snowboard Instructors! We are continuously seeking talented, passionate, and inspirational AASI members to join the AASI-E Education Staff. We will be hosting an AASI-E Development (“Dev”) Team Tryout March 17-18, 2025, at Killington, Vermont. The two-day tryout process will be open to any AASI Level III certified instructor in good standing. This is a prime opportunity for candidates to display their talents and potentially be selected to be part of the AASI-E Education Staff. Before you commit to the tryout, there are some important things you should note:

- You should be an inspiring instructor, clinician, rider, and AASI member! This goes without saying. You should already be a leader within your own Ski/Ride School. You should want to share your knowledge and experience with others as we all strive to continuously improve our snowboarding skills and ability to teach others. Remember: being part of the Education Staff is about working for our members to help them get better at teaching snowboarding and at riding their snowboards. This job is the same as teaching snowboard lessons (it’s not about YOU...it’s about the people standing in front of you!); the only difference is that your students are instructors.
- You should be very familiar with the PSIA-AASI Snowboard National Standards, Snowboarding Fundamentals, and Performance Guide. As we evolve our educational models, you should be familiarizing yourself with this content and embodying it in your teaching and clinics.
- You should be riding at the Level III Riding Standard consistently all over the mountain (steeps, bumps, trees, groomers, jumps, boxes/ rails, etc.). In your riding, you should be able to demonstrate the differences between extending edge changes, flexing edge changes, and retracting edge changes.
- You should know that this is a job and a large time commitment. You should have availability to be on snow and to keep your skills sharp. Development Team members should plan to be available for at least 10-20 days of on-snow training and understudies each season (where you shadow an Examiner running an event/assessment) while they’re on the Dev Team. We want to be upfront with you on this commitment, so it is not a surprise.
- You should love to travel...on a budget. The Eastern Region is enormous! We host events from Maine to Tennessee. If you are selected to the Development Team, you should be prepared to visit new resorts and put mileage on your vehicle. You should have a reliable form of transportation. You’ll want to ensure that you’re able to travel to all these new resorts safely and reliably.
- Being on the Dev Team is very similar to an internship, and much of your time spent on the Dev Team doesn’t come with a big paycheck...to start. You will attend an annual Ed Staff training, paid at an hourly training rate with expenses reimbursed. You have four years to complete ten required understudies (compensated with an hourly training rate, but with no expenses reimbursement). And you will

have the opportunity to attend events free of charge. Quality coaching, knowledge, and improving your skills through understudy opportunities is the compensation you will receive. As you demonstrate your ability to run educational events for the membership, you might be promoted to examiner and then you will start to earn a regular paycheck for all the events you run, and you will be reimbursed for your travel and expenses.

- The AASI-E Development Team is not AASI Level IV. The Development Team tryout is a *job interview* for a position as part of a travelling snowboard school for instructors. You should know this coming in. At the Dev Team Tryout, you will be spending two days and evenings teaching, riding, running clinics, giving indoor presentations, being interviewed, and displaying to the selection committee what qualities and skills you bring to the table that would benefit the membership of the AASI-E community. The selection committee will be looking for talented individuals that can become the AASI-E Examiners of the future.

When you register for the event, you will be asked to prepare and submit the following materials prior to the tryout:

- A snowboard industry resume and cover letter
- A writing sample that could be used in a future issue of the *SnowPro* newsletter
- Professional references
- You may be asked to submit video of your riding prior to tryouts, so be prepared for that possibility.

The timeline from Dev Team tryout to becoming an Examiner typically looks like this:

- You are selected to become a Dev Team member at a competitive tryout! Heck yes! Nice job!
- You spend 2-4 seasons on the Development Team training to become a better clinician, rider, coach, and instructor. You write articles for the *SnowPro*. You understudy Examiners running clinics and assessments. You attend annual training sessions and contribute to Education Staff conversations, homework assignments, and production of content for the membership. You have your performance and development annually assessed by the AASI-E Teams Coach and Steering Committee.
- If the AASI-E Steering Committee feels that you are developing the skills to become an Examiner, you will be elevated to Examiner, and you’ll start getting paid to run events! Heck yes! Nice job! You typically spend 2-4 years in this tier attending annual trainings, writing articles, contributing positively to the AASI-E Education Staff and community, running education events, running Level I assessments, and learning how to run and score Level II and Level III assessments. Your performance and development are assessed annually by the AASI-E Teams Coach and Steering Committee. As you gain experience and the confidence of the AASI-E Steering Committee, you eventually get tapped to lead Level II and Level III assessments and a wider variety of educational clinics. The AASI Examiner Coach and Steering Committee continue to review your performance.

If you’re still reading and you’re still interested, check out the AASI-E Event Schedule, sign up, and we’ll see you in March! ⬅



FREESTYLE



Prioritizing Pop

By Steve Franklin

Aired spins are some of the most fun and accessible tricks to riders interested in freestyle. As students begin to learn aired spins off small jumps, I often see them focusing almost solely on rotating various parts of their body to get that spin around. They twist and contort their body with maximum intensity, almost totally forgetting to pop. By prioritizing

pop movements, students can more easily capitalize on their rotational movements to achieve more balanced and controlled spins. I organized all of the movement patterns through the lens of ATML – Approach, Take-off, Maneuver, Landing – below.

Steve Franklin prioritizes pop.

Photo: Ian Boyle

Understanding the pop movement pattern

- *Approach.* A smooth flex of the legs loads the pop. You have to get down to get up!
- *Take-off.* An intense extension of the legs allows the release of built up pressure to get airborne.
- *Maneuver:* Retracting the legs before the apex of the air creates stability and control in the air.
- *Landing:* A slight extension of the legs before landing, sets up the ability to absorb the impact when coming back down to the ground.

This movement pattern is critical to aired spins for several reasons. Aired spins require pop to get airborne, otherwise they are ground spins. The flexion and extension of the legs creates and releases the necessary energy to get airborne.

Flexion/extension pattern helps maintain balance and control

- During the approach, flexing allows the rider to stay balanced directly over their snowboard and make subtle edging movements to control their set up turns.

- As the rider extends while moving up the lip of the jump, the additional pressure helps the board maintain its line and prevents skidding and pre-spin.
- While in the air, retracting the legs helps keep the board underneath the rider creating added stability and balance.
- Extending the legs in anticipation of the landing and flexing upon landing allows the rider to absorb the impact in a while staying atop their board and ride away smoothly.

Flexion/extension pattern maximizes the effectiveness of rotational movements

- The flexed position during approach helps the rider pre-wind their spin. Flexing the leg joints makes it easier to rotate the spine in anticipation of the spin.
- As the rider extends at take-off, they maximize the energy created while unwinding their spine. This effect can be compared to stretching a wet dish towel while twisting and wringing out the water.
- Pulling the legs up to the body helps release and manage all the rotational energy created at take-off. This flexion helps unify the upper and lower body and puts the rider in an advantageous position to begin to slow their rotation.
- As the rider extends their legs in anticipation of the landing, they have increased ability to rotate their lower body separately from their upper body. This “scissoring” allows them to slow the spin while preparing to absorb the landing.

It is important to note that these movements are all linked together and work cyclically. For example, when the body lengthens and stretches at take-off, the legs and board then rebound up to the body. The cause-and-effect relationship between flexing and extending is similar to how a Slinky stretches and the springs upward. Prioritizing pop by utilizing flexion and extension is key for having stability and control while doing aired spins.

Simply put, more up and down helps you spin round and round. ☞



Welcome Webinar

PSIA-AASI Eastern Region and the National organization based in Lakewood, CO provide many great resources – when you know where to look. Continuing this season, to help members maximize the value of their membership, the Eastern Region is hosting a **FREE** monthly Welcome Webinar. Invites are sent to all members who join in the previous month; however, anyone (including a prospective member) is welcome to participate in this webinar.

The purpose of the Welcome Webinar is to provide information about our organization’s structure and mission, show how to use our websites, register for events, find resources, and participate in our community.

We also invite any questions participants may have.

The webinars run on the last Wednesday of every month at 7:00PM EST. There is no registration, participants do not earn CEUs. The first 100 people to log onto the Zoom call can participate. The call-in information remains the same each month. The next call is January 29th.

Welcome Webinar Zoom Info

January 29, 2025 at 7PM EST, Zoom Meeting ID: 890 4571 7732, Passcode: 666130

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89045717732?pwd=NjludTFFUHBqQmpKT0YvL2tuSFh2Zz09>

Or Dial in - 646 558 8656

PSIA-AASI offers many amazing educational and credentialing events, access to world class education materials, great deals on the equipment, and a wonderful community of like-minded snowsports enthusiasts.

Join me for the Welcome Webinar to learn how to take advantage of all these opportunities!

The Backyard Jump: A Love Story

By Greg Fatigate

Snowboard Examiner Coach

All I ever needed in my life to fall in love with snowboarding began with a small side hill jump located at Schaghticoke Middle School in New Milford, CT. A few friends and I would grab whatever we had to slide on. In the early days it was a plastic sled, and over a few winters it evolved into waxed skateboards, and eventually proper snowboards. I'd say that the hill at the middle school and the jump was all I ever needed to learn. I was so motivated then (and now) to have a Craig Kelly-style method-air that I would hike over and over all afternoon long just to try one more time.

There was nothing technical about the experience that I found to be the base of my love of snowboarding: A straight glide, a visual point to aim for, bend my joints to set up, jump at the lip, land, make a turn to a stop, try again. It occurs to me more today that the most important aspect of that process was the one I took for granted: *Try Again*. I was motivated to try again, over and over. I would go back up and:

- Find a new way to approach the jump that would create a traversed approach and a traversed landing.
- Build a second jump that I would have to remain stable for after landing the first
- Start from higher up to carry more speed
- Try a trick like a 180

The jump at the middle school was not some monstrous cheese wedge that we see in pro videos. It was a small pile, barely up to knee height, often shoveled up with our boards or sleds. But to all of us in our early tween years, it was massive. In our heads this was clearly the jump that would connect us with the world of snowboarding that we envisioned. And thus we would be motivated for that most important aspect of learning: *Try Again*. No one told us to try again. We did so because what we were attempting was relevant to our goals. It was engaging.

Fast forward to over half-a-lifetime of teaching snowboarding, where at times I have been frustrated that the students in my group “just aren't listening” or “aren't motivated to learn”. In other words, they aren't motivated to try again. What I wish to scream from the mountain tops to my early snowboard career self: Discover what the students' goals are and make the activity relevant and engaging to those goals. A standard J-turn might not be relevant to my student until they understand how J-turns connect to their goals. If I make a small pile of snow and lightly shape it as a jump where the student needs to go straight and then turn slightly to hit the small jump (J-turn) on terrain that is safe for them, that J-turn just became relevant.

When I was learning to ride back in the day at the local middle school hill hitting that little jump, I had no idea that I was hitting it using all the foundational elements I use today when teaching new riders. A straight glide to gain speed, a little bit of movement across the board and along its length to challenge my balance, a J-turn after landing, and a sideslip to start. When we built a new jump, I had to traverse into it. In the end I connected it all together, motivated the whole time. Everything I teach today was present when hitting those jumps.

Nowadays when I have a student or groups who have a similar motivation that I had years ago, I've found myself doing the same for them. In a safe and appropriate spot, I make a small little pile in an area with easy run-out for the group to hit. They engage in all the activities that tend to be foundational in the beginner experience, but most importantly, they come to a stop, unstrap, and head up again. All in the effort to connect learning to their goals and take on that critically important element for learning: to *Try Again* ☄️

In Memoriam



Marcel Gisquet

By Mike Racz

Alpine Level III, Stratton, VT

We lost a dear friend, mentor, and leader in the Stratton Mountain Sports School last year. Marcel Gisquet died last March doing what he loved most, skiing. Marcel was a long-time Level III member of PSIA and Stratton ski instructor.

When the news was posted on social media, I saw a comment asking who Marcel was. I decided to write the following poem:

Marcel

Madonna, Ringo, Tiger and Marcel.

Even without last names we know them well.

Marcel did not have the others' fortune or fame.

He is a legend at Stratton just the same.

Always willing to share to share his knowledge and skill.

He got things done through pure force of will.

We will miss Marcel with his beautiful smile.

That flowing grey hair and understated style.

Our memories are our keepsake with which we'll never part.

Although we won't see him on the slopes.

He will remain in our heart. ☄️



Russell William Swanson

Russell W. Swanson, 81, of Charlestown, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, September 9, 2024. He was the husband of Evelyn R. (Gustafson) Swanson for 53 years. Born in

West Warwick, he was the son of the late Ragnar W, and Marie-Anne (Parent) Swanson.

Russell was an electronics technician for Electric Boat for 41 years and a Vietnam War Era Navy Veteran. He was a ski instructor at Yawgoo Valley Ski Area for 37 years; a member of the VASA Order of America; President of the Warwick Ski Club; a member of the golf league at Elmhurst Country Club and enjoyed bowling at Wickford Lanes.

Besides his wife he is survived by his daughter, Kristen Lynn Flower and her husband Lee of Exeter, Russell's adopted son; his sister, Alice Shiel and her husband Tom of Warwick; his brother, Paul Swanson and his fiancé Bonnie of FL and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to St. Andrew Lutheran Church, 15 E. Beach Rd., Charlestown, RI 02813 or the American Parkinson Disease Assoc., P.O.Box 41659, Providence, RI 02940. ☄️

In Memoriam



Hubert Seemann

Hubert Seemann, 96, of Bally, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, December



10th, 2024. He was the beloved husband of the late Marilyn (Broadbent) Seemann. Born in Aising, Germany, he was a son of the late Josef and Anna (Antesburger) Seemann.

Hubert attended an academic boarding school in Freising, Germany for secondary school. His studies were interrupted at age 17 when he was drafted into the German paramilitary and served a few months before becoming an American POW. He was captured twice by the Americans. After his release, he finished his secondary studies and transferred to Freising Teacher Training School. He became an educator throughout Bavaria- his last position in Ramsau. He was an avid mountain climber and was a member of the Bergwacht— German mountain rescue unit. He was also a licensed sail plane pilot and founded a flying club with his friends.

In 1952, Hubert came to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar. He eventually emigrated to the US in 1956. He continued his teaching career, first at the Carson Long Military Institute in New Bloomfield, PA, and then for the Upper Perkiomen School District. At Upper Perkiomen, he began as a reading specialist at the Red Hill and Green Lane Elementary Schools, then became the Middle School principal, and finished his career as the district's Director of Curriculum. During this time, he received both a Master's and a Doctorate in Education and Clinical Psychology from Temple University. Dr. Seemann retired from the school district in 1993.

In addition to his extensive teaching career, Hubert was the original Director of the Ski School at Doe Mountain Ski Area (now Bear Creek Mountain Resort). It was there that he launched the first in the area adaptive skiing program for wounded warriors returning from Vietnam to the nearby Valley Forge Army Hospital. He also worked with the Pennsylvania Special Olympics, the Boy

Scouts, and those who are visually impaired, teaching many with disabilities to ski. Hubert became active in NASTAR racing and received many gold and silver medals at various competitions. He was a member of the National Ski Patrol, Professional Ski Instructors of America Eastern Region, and in 2013 was inducted into the Pennsylvania SnowSports Hall of Fame.

After retiring from teaching, Hubert became a German speaking flight attendant for US Airways, traveling on international routes from 1995-2001.

He was a member of the Grundsow Lodge, #7, East Greenville. He was a storyteller, enjoyed traveling, and was gifted at making personal connections with everyone he met. He was known to make small drawings and illustrations that he gave as tokens of his friendship. His kind smile and sparkle in his eye will be missed by many around the world.

Hubert is survived by children: Maria Doe of Philadelphia, Lisa, wife of Michael Endy of Geigertown, PA, Hubert Seemann, Bertram (Karen) Seemann and Marilyn A. Seemann, all of Bally; grandchildren: Michael Endy, Zachary (Jen) Endy, Dr. Katherine Doe (Darragh Smith), Hilary Doe, Megan Doe, Wesley Doe, Hubert J. III, Ashley (Cole) Spielman, Matthew Seemann (Rachel Shallue), Alyssa Seemann, and Owen Seemann; great grandchildren: Carter and Colin Endy; and siblings: Alfred Seemann and Anne Kirchbeck, both of Germany. He was predeceased by a daughter, Valerie, a grandson, Joshua Seemann, and his siblings: Ernst Seemann, Josef Seemann, and Elenore Stoffer.

Friends may visit on Saturday, January 18th, 2025, at Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church 610 Pine Street Bally, PA 19503, from 9:15 AM until 10:45 AM, with a service to follow at 11:00 AM.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to either the US Olympic & Paralympic Foundation, P.O. Box 70359, Philadelphia, PA 19176-0359 or to a favorite charity of your choice. To offer online condolences, please visit his "Book of Memories" at falkfuneralhomes.com. ☹



Patrick Henry Tamminen

Patrick Tamminen, 69, a resident of Pennington, NJ, and Norway, ME, peacefully passed away on January 4, 2024 in the comfort of his

home. Born in Winsted, CT, Pat led a life steeped in a multitude of diverse passions.

A proud graduate of the Hartford Conservatory of Music and Berklee College of Music, Pat was a skilled and dedicated drummer and percussionist. His talents took him across New England, the Mid-Atlantic regions, and the UK, where he played and recorded with numerous jazz and R&B bands.

Beyond the world of music, Pat's zest for life was evident in his variety of interests and endeavors. Pat was an avid skier and Alpine Level III member of the Professional Ski Instructors of America. His enthusiasm for skiing and commitment to sharing his knowledge as a ski instructor at Blue Mountain, PA and Sunday River Ski Resort, ME exemplified his love for both the sport and teaching. In addition to skiing, he loved playing golf and cruising in his beloved Volkswagen R32. He embraced life with a spirit of adventure and joy.

Above all, the lights of Patrick's life were undeniably his surviving wife, Cherie, and daughter, Hannah. Their strong bond was built on unwavering love and support. Pat's most cherished moments were those spent with his family – attending baseball games, embarking on scenic hikes, going to theme parks, taking the boat out on the lake, visiting Hannah during her time in California, and enjoying the beautiful sunset views over the lake while indulging in cheese & crackers and a cocktail.

Predeceased by his parents Herman and Carmella (Diulio) Tamminen, Patrick was the brother of Anita (deceased), Richard, Janet, Peter (deceased), Susan and John, and uncle to numerous nieces and nephews.

As we reflect on his life, we remember the music he shared, the slopes he conquered, and the enduring love he felt for his family and friends. ☹



From Training to Teaching

By Bonnie Kolber
PSIA-AASI E ACE Team Coach
AASI-E Examiner and
Eastern Team Member

Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't," claimed Mark Twain. Last week I rolled right from running a Children's Specialist event where we brainstormed how to connect with students and relate desired movements to their hobbies and interests, into a weekend long lesson with a 12-year-old boy. I know this stuff works – I coach it all the time – but it was still shocking to see how much the theoretical concepts and scenarios we had been practicing translated into reality on the slopes.

This tween was into theater and plays basketball and tennis. He had grown four inches and three boot sizes since I saw him last winter and had inherited his dad's old stiff camber board from twenty years ago – quite a change from the forgiving board he had learned on and ridden his first black diamond on last season. With all this in mind, we agreed to start on the beginner slope to "get our legs back under us." Knowing he is a theater buff, I gave cues to remind him how to time specific movements to smooth out his turns. He was eager to get back on the bigger lifts and harder trails, but I wanted his buy-in to stay on the mellow trail, where we could experiment and explore how much he could possibly flex the new boots and twist the stiffer board. We played with bending the board into nose and tail presses, all contributors to re-establishing his balance and boosting his self-esteem. We discussed how, when you learn lines for a play, at some point you don't have to think about the words anymore because you know them by heart. I was able to relate this to the cognitive – associative-autonomous stages of motor skill learning, and he agreed to practice for a couple more runs on the beginner slope until he felt comfortable balancing and actively steering the new board so that he would be less likely to revert to old patterns like kicking the tail of the board around when we got on steeper terrain.

We gradually worked our way back up to the top of the mountain and were riding blues, but he

was still struggling to flex into the front of his boot and tended to keep his shoulders open to the nose of his board with an extended front leg. Knowing that he also plays sports, I asked him to imagine dribbling a ball around the nose of his board to the toe side. To keep the focus on the lower body, I had him tap the outside of his front boot from toe to heel and then back from heel to toe where I wanted him to feel pressure through the turn. I drew a picture of the phases of the turn in the snow to illustrate the timing of the sensations of his foot in the boot. Then, I asked him to trace the same shape through the turn as he dribbled an imaginary basketball around the nose of his board all the way to his toe edge. This kept him flexed as he changed edges and was an effective reminder to keep his shoulders and hips aligned with the working edge. I asked him to reflect if he could feel a difference, and he said he felt more balanced, that the turn came around quicker, and he felt more in control.

In this real-life example, I drew on a few allies of snowsports instruction: Maslow, Piaget, Fitts and Posner, and Kohlberg, as well as knowledge of human development. Can you identify where in the story these wise guys show up? Are there other models or theories that you noticed that relate to the PSIA-AASI CAP model or Learning Connection Model?

Applying these concepts to real lessons with real students actually works! Taking the time to connect with your students enhances not only the trust and rapport and FUN you can have; it also enriches the teaching experience and creates a partnership in the learning experience.

Here are some questions/ideas you can ask to start learning about your students' interests:

- What was your favorite thing you did this summer?
- What do you like to do when you're not skiing/riding?
- What is your favorite subject in school?
- Have you seen any good movies lately? Read any good books?
- Do you have any pets? Siblings?
- What do you think you want to be when you grow up? What you want to study in college?

It seems simple, but making a conscious effort to learn about your students can spark a thought or theme that will help you connect with them



Eastern Region ACE (Advanced Children's Educators) trains at Mount Snow



ACE Team planning for Kids Academy and children's tracks at the Snowsports Management Seminar

and help them learn. Even if you don't know anything about what they are interested in – ASK THEM and take the opportunity to collaborate on imagery and themes. I happened to grow up doing theater, but I know nothing about hockey. How do you stop? With a horseback rider - how do you turn the horse? With a poet – can we come up with a catchy rhyme, or is there a rhythm to the lines? With a pianist – how do you use those pedals? Keep your mind open to how student interests can relate to skiing or snowboarding, both in terms of lateral learning to draw on what they already know how to do, and in terms of engaging their interests and imagination to develop more sense of play in lessons.

If you want a chance to dive deeper into the CAP model and explore creative teaching methods to enhance the skiing and snowboarding learning experience for all ages, look for Children's educational and specialist events on the PSIA-AASI Eastern Region event calendar. Making the most of every opportunity to apply these models and theories, both in events and actual lessons, will lead to surprisingly effective real-life results! ☞

Finding the Fun

By *Brendan Burdick*

PSIA-AASI-E ACE Development Team member

What activities do you engage in for fun? And just as important, *how* do you engage in those activities? What makes skiing or riding fun for you? Do you slide as an excuse to explore the mountains? Are you chasing better times in the course or higher spins in the park? Are you looking for an excuse to hang out with friends? *What type of skier or rider are you?*

Fun is a powerful way to create emotional relevance and enhance skill acquisition. Just as recognizing our own emotions is necessary for influencing the emotions of our guests, recognizing our own default approach to fun can help us tailor student-centered lessons for guests whose relationship with or beliefs about fun may differ from ours.

Our resources *Teaching Snowsports* (pp 38-39) and *Teaching Children Snowsports* (pp 109-113) talk about four types of fun. **Hard fun** can include tasks or drills with a high skill ceiling. The joy stems from overcoming a challenge or adversity. We can tap into **easy fun** by exploring little shots in the woods or engaging in the joy of exploring ambiguity and “figuring it out.” **People fun** might be partnered guided discovery or discussions, or activities that engage in teamwork or rivalries through games. And **serious fun**, engaging your lifestyle skiers and riders and seeking flow states, seeking identity.

As I gained experience as an instructor, I was so excited to share my burgeoning technical mastery that I began defaulting to hard fun. My students who enjoyed tasks with a high skill ceiling improved, but students who were there to ski with friends or explore hidden paths through the woods were often bored or frustrated. Only once I refocused on the student instead of the subject could the subject click consistently. I’ve observed the

same trajectory in many more experienced members. A more deliberate engagement with the different types of fun can allow us to better connect with the guest.

Asking our students *what* they engage in for fun allows us to choose an appropriate theme for guests rather than forcing something from our bag of tricks. A teenager will likely roll their eyes at a progression based around *Bluey*, for instance. Asking our students *how* they engage in fun is can be illuminating and can prevent us using our own fun styles as the default, missing the opportunity to create a real connection for our guest.

A people fun student might be all about playing a game of *Minecraft* cooperatively with their friends. An easy fun *Minecraft* player probably plays on peaceful difficulty and is happy to just explore the virtual world, whereas a hard fun player may spend an afternoon automating resource farming with some complicated contraption. A serious fun player will show up in branded merchandise and can probably tell you their three favorite YouTubers.

So many ways to play! None of these are mutually exclusive. Asking our students “What type of video gamer (or golfer, or competitive quilter) are you?” can lighten the work for us as instructors. If we know nothing about video games, we are not at a dead-end. We can still suss out how they engage with fun. Familiarity with the subject is not required. The fun is universal.

When we center our lessons on our guests’ relationships with fun, we can influence how they think and feel about skiing or riding. If we meet our students where they are, we set everyone up for success. The next time a student replies with interests you know nothing about ask the deeper question of *how* they engage and what they enjoy about their activity, rather than stopping at *what* they engage in. Use their default fun mode to inform your teaching style and explore different types of fun. ☞☞

CALLING ALL FUTURE PROS

The *SnowPro* publication is featuring pictures of our Future Snow Pros.

What did their very first day sliding on snow look like?

Share their adventure!



Evan Novom, 20 months
Mt. Blanc, Québec

Share your child’s or grandchild’s very first day on snow, submit their image:

<https://fs9.formsite.com/PSIA-AASI-E/FuturePro/index.html>



Liam Bristol
2 years
Windham, NY



Lilly Calitri
2 years
Gunstock, NH



Luna Forte
5 months
Blue Mountain, PA



Sophie Karol
5 years
Loon Mountain, NH



Harper Rebel Swick
5 years
Greek Peak, NY



Addyson Wells, 16 years
*Note: first day as a new pro
Greek Peak, NY

Thank you to everyone who submitted a picture, we love seeing your future snowsports enthusiasts enjoying their first day. We didn’t have space for all of the submissions, but we have retained them to use in the future if possible.



Education Foundation Donors

The PSIA-E Education Foundation expresses its sincere appreciation to the following members who have contributed at least \$20.00 to the Eastern Education Foundation through the annual dues “add-on” program and standalone donations from May 1, 2024, to January 15, 2025. Since no dues or program fees go to the EF, contributions are the primary source of support for the Foundation and its scholarships. Thank you!

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ADAPTIVE AIRTIME

Gains From Working with an Adaptive Program

By Mary Ellen Whitney

PSIA/AASI Adaptive Board of Educators

Director for STRIDE Adaptive Ski Programs at Jiminy Peak Mt. Resort, MA; Titus Mountain in NY, & Catamount Mountain, NY

I recently participated in the Women Crush Winter Webinar Series as a panelist representing the adaptive discipline (the other panelists were a snowboard examiner Bonnie Kolber and alpine examiner Christa Ross) with Kathy Brennan facilitating. The topic was Exploring Other Disciplines. We discussed the benefits of exploring different disciplines such as alpine, snowboard, telemark and cross country skiing. One of the questions posed to each of us was: *Describe your experience at a high level, or benefits gained, from exploring other disciplines.*

Exploring adaptive skiing reveals both the physical and mental benefits that come with mastering challenging environments through adapted equipment and techniques. The experience is marked by innovation, resilience, and the spirit of inclusion. Adaptive skiing programs allow individuals with various diagnoses—from mobility impairments to sensory or cognitive challenges—to experience the joy of skiing in ways that are personalized to their needs. As a sport learner with a diagnosis, you gain:

- **Skill Development and Independence.** Learning alpine, cross country, telemark skiing and snowboarding in adaptive settings promotes physical strength, balance, coordination, and confidence. Adaptive equipment such as sit-skis, outriggers, or tethering systems empower athletes to develop skills autonomously, boosting independence and self-efficacy.
- **Camaraderie and Community.** Adaptive skiing fosters a strong sense of community. Athletes often form bonds through shared challenges and experiences. They create supportive networks to feel a sense of belonging, reducing isolation and enhancing mental well-being.
- **Resilience and Overcoming Challenges.** The adaptive skiing experience is filled with challenges, from navigating complex terrains to overcoming fears and building trust in adaptive equipment and guides. Skiers and snowboarders gain resilience and confidence, translating to greater confidence in other areas of life.
- **Inclusivity and Awareness.** These programs raise awareness among the broader skiing community, fostering inclusivity. As adaptive athletes participate and succeed on the slopes, they challenge stereotypes and inspire others with and without disabilities.

When you cross over to the adaptive world to become an educator for a program, exploring adaptive indeed enhances a wide range of skills that go beyond the technical aspects of teaching skiing or riding. Engaging in teaching someone in this unique and supportive environment fosters growth in your own journey in education in several key areas:

People Skills

- **Empathy and Perspective-Taking.** Working with skiers with disabilities broadens understanding and deepens empathy. Observing their unique challenges, instructors develop a more profound respect for individuals' diverse experiences and capacities.

- **Patience and Adaptability.** Supporting learners with different physical and cognitive needs requires a patient, flexible approach. Learning how to adjust pace, expectations, and instructions cultivates patience and a readiness to meet others where they are.
- **Bias Reduction and Inclusivity.** Exposure to adaptive skiing helps dismantle preconceived notions about ability, fostering a more inclusive mindset. Seeing adaptive athletes thrive on the slopes challenges biases and broadens the perception of potential and inclusivity in sports.

Teaching Skills

- **Enhanced Communication Skills.** Teaching adaptive lessons often requires simplifying complex language or using non-verbal communication methods for clearer understanding. This teaches instructors to communicate precisely and with increased clarity. Eighty percent of adaptive lessons are diagnoses of neuro-developmental or cognitive impairments.
- **Active Listening and Observation.** Instructors develop stronger listening and observation skills to identify each skier's unique needs to plan a lesson. They learn to pick up on subtle cues from their students, becoming more responsive and attentive.
- **Adapted Teaching Techniques.** In adaptive settings, traditional teaching methods often need to be rethought or modified. This forces instructors to expand their "bag of tricks" using tactile guidance, visual aids, or equipment adjustments and promotes creativity in teaching for transfer.
- **Teaching for Independence.** Adaptive skiing encourages empowering students to take control of their experience and choices on the slopes. Teaching for independence and self-confidence, even within modified or assisted frameworks, becomes an important skill.

Technical Skills

- **Advanced Understanding of Equipment and Adaptations.** Exposure to a variety of adaptive tools and devices broadens technical expertise. Instructors learn about the functionality of sit-skis, outriggers, tethering systems, or bi-skis, deepening their knowledge of how these tools influence skiing mechanics.
- **Biomechanical Insight and Movement Analysis.** Teaching adaptive skiing requires a nuanced understanding of movement patterns, balance, and the fundamentals of skiing and snowboarding beyond the fundamentals. By analyzing how different physical conditions affect movement, instructors gain refined biomechanical insight and enhance their movement analysis skills.
- **Technical Terminology for Inclusive Coaching.** In adaptive settings, instructors learn new terminology specific to adaptive skiing and snowboarding, which improves their vocabulary and understanding for more inclusive coaching.

Cross over to adaptive disciplines, where instructors and participants alike develop a well-rounded set of interpersonal, instructional, and technical skills, enhancing their ability to teach, connect, and foster an inclusive community on the slopes. Visit your nearest adaptive program and ask if you can mentor, shadow or join! <<



Winter 24-25 Mentorship Update

By Matt Lyerly

Mentorship Program Coordinator

Alpine Level II, Children's Specialist 1, Freestyle Specialist 1

Massanutten Resort, VA

Greetings fellow snow pros, It sure seemed like this season got off to a fast start, especially compared to recent ones here in the east. My first turns of the season featured 7-degree temperatures and a snow surface that alternated between fluffy powder-like and velvety soft grooming. It's the kind of weather we haven't had much of in recent Decembers (or really at all here in the south/mid-atlantic), and it gives me hope that winter 24-25 will be one to remember.

This season's mentorship program (version 4.0) is up and running. We have 99 total participants this year, our biggest version of the program yet. Perhaps what I'm most proud of, however, is the participation from our awesome mentors. Over the past few years, we have had the following mentor counts:

- 2021-2022 – 25 mentors
- 2022-2023 – 28 mentors
- 2023-2024 – 44 mentors
- 2024-2025 – 40 mentors

Pretty good! But check this out. We've had the following number of return mentors each season:

- 2021-2022
- 2022-2023 – 8 returning mentors (or a 28.5 percent return rate)
- 2023-2024 – 13 returning mentors (or a 29.5 percent return rate)
- 2024-2025 – 26, returning mentors (or a 65 percent return rate – wow!)

The fact that so many mentors are returning to participate says a lot about the value this program can provide. Yes, mentees can certainly benefit. But did you know that mentors get a lot out of this thing too? In addition to making simply making a difference in our region, many mentors have told me they were able to improve their people skills and practice movement analysis. Not bad!

In addition to the success of the current program, I had the pleasure of serving as a panelist in the 2024 Snowsports Management Advisory Council (SMAC) session on mentorship. In this discussion, panelists took part in a Q&A related to all things mentorship. We addressed over 100 participants from across the country who included Level III skiers and snowboarders and snowsports school directors. As panelists, we shared the details of our programs, offered thoughts about what makes certain pairings click, and answered questions submitted but the listeners. It was a really cool experience that I viewed as a win for me personally, but also for this program. Without such awesome participants, I wouldn't have had nearly as many ideas, quotes, and anecdotes to share about what makes a successful mentorship program.

Special shout out (and GOOD LUCK!) to all participants in this year's program. Each of you – as well as our Eastern Region – is better off because of your participation. Thank you! ☺☺



Cross Country at SMS

By Mike Innes

XC Assistant Coordinator and Education Staff Member

Each year the Eastern Region of PSIA-AASI convenes the Snowsports Management Seminar (SMS) for industry professionals to learn from each other and to bring the latest techniques, ideas, trends and regional information back to their mountains. I'm excited to report that for the first time ever, Cross Country was featured during the Seminar with an on-snow session in the morning followed by an afternoon round table discussion.

Cross country skiing offers another way to enjoy sliding on snow, which can also be a workout for the mind and body. Supporting newcomers to this sport is an exciting opportunity to lay solid foundations for learning and personal growth. At the Seminar, a mix of ski school supervisors and resort managers learned effective beginner cross country ski progressions, drills and games that set newcomers up for success and fun out on the trails. We ended the day in a roundtable, hearing different ideas for programming, community building, and learning packages to keep people engaged with their mountain and the sport.

Participants in the XC track could elect to participate in a cost-effective one-day session. Optionally, they could register for the full two-day program and join other indoor or on-snow topics on day two. This inaugural track was a resounding success. We are already planning for the 2025 seminar as we look forward to making stronger connections with our cross country community. If you are a cross country instructor or you operate a cross country center please plan to join us. ☺☺



YOUR TURN

The Your Turn section is an opportunity for members' voices to be heard. Submissions are welcomed and are subject to editing (and in some cases the opportunity for the author to workshop a piece with editorial staff). Opinions expressed may not reflect the views of PSIA-AASI or all of its members.

My Most Difficult Student

By Michael Breeden
Alpine Development Team Member
Liberty Mountain, PA



I generally consider myself a good coach, capable of connecting with anyone. However, one student has consistently tested my coaching abilities. To give a little background he is a long-time instructor I started working with when he was a new L2 that was training for L3. He's a self-proclaimed thinker and prefers auditory instruction. He loves working with different coaches and attends a lot of different educational events. He has solid movement analysis skills and can identify the cause-and-effect relationships in his students. The problem was when it came to his own performance on snow, he needed constant feedback from a coach on every movement, joint flex, and timing during the turn. Once a clinic was over, he couldn't sustain the learning process on his own. He lacked the ability to self-coach!

The student I have been describing is actually me. I am by far the most challenging student that I have ever tried to coach. I really struggle with understanding how my body is moving or what position I'm in and what I need to adjust to come closer to the ideal movement patterns. Even when shown a video of my performance I gained insight to the past, but I couldn't apply that knowledge to improve future turns.

Some time has passed since I started trying to coach myself in earnest. While it has been slow, I have continued to practice self-coaching, and my skills have developed. I can now instantly adjust my movements based on the feedback that I am getting from the equipment and snow. I have better understanding of my body positioning and how it is moving through space. Last season marked a real turning point for me: I often preferred my own coaching to that of another coach! I would use others to confirm my thoughts and coaching cues instead of relying on them to inform me in the first place.

Without needing someone else to coach me, when the snow changes or I get some feedback from my equipment that tells me that I need to

make an adjustment, I can adapt immediately. Instead of experiencing bad days or even just tough runs on the snow, I now at most have a few bad turns, before I'm able to make necessary refinements for better performance. This ability has been instrumental in helping me to progress my skiing and to become more versatile when the conditions change.

For those of you who, like me, find self-coaching challenging, I have compiled a list of tips and tricks that have helped improve my skills along the way.

Approach self-coaching as you would any other lesson.

- Set appropriate goals for the time that you have and vice versa.
- Structure your session with a clear beginning, middle, and end—whether it lasts all day or thirty seconds.
- Create an appropriate learning environment. Set specific goals and choose appropriate tasks and terrain for your practice.

Utilize our fundamentals.

- Apply the Teaching, People and Technical fundamentals to your self-coaching. Remember, you deserve the same quality of coaching that you provide to others.

Follow the OBSERVE, EVALUATE, PRESCRIBE model of movement analysis (Refer to your *Technical Performance Guide* for more details).

- Engage as many senses as possible to perform the movement analysis. Notice the sound of your equipment on the snow, what you can infer from the snow spray, the tracks in the snow, and where you feel the heaviest in the turn or the flex in your body, for example.
- Use your technical fundamentals to assess your movements in relation to ideal performance, focusing on how they affect your equipment.
- Identify specific aspects of your performance to improve and create practice strategies for both isolated movements and those blended with others.

Reflect on your sensations and experiences.

- Give yourself time to reflect upon your experiences and sensations. Consider what went well and what was within your control that could be improved. Much of our

learning takes place after the performance is over in this period of reflection, helping to identify important takeaways.

- Be as kind to yourself as you would to any other student. Celebrate progress, learn from setbacks, and remember that mastering any skill takes time and effort.

By embracing self-coaching, I have been able to navigate challenges and achieve growth in my skiing journey. I hope these tips help to develop your own self-coaching skills, enrich your experience on the slopes and push your performance to the next level. ‹‹



Once Upon a Now

By Tina Buckley
Alpine Examiner,
Advanced Children's
Educator (ACE)
Blue Mountain, PA



Once upon a time there was a young high school girl in Germany who wanted to spend a summer travelling. She decided to earn the money for flights and through sharing her passion for skiing at a local ski school that winter. She mainly worked with younger guests and provided instruction in week-long courses over the Winter break. That girl was me.

Fast forward to the now. I still teach and coach and share the stoke. Just recently I shared it with 10 instructors at the Kid' Academy at Mt. Snow. Our theme was "Instructor for a Day, Coach for Life!" With that in mind, we talked about the fun in lessons and what it takes to create fun.

One of the biggest takeaways was that you must have some form of challenge in every game to make it fun. Imagine playing Monopoly and every player gets a hotel or a street handed to them every time they pass GO. We then focused on staying active in the lessons, which does not necessarily mean going fast all the time. We looked for a "hole in one" slope! In other words, I gave the group the task of looking for something that I knew was there (in this case a hole that I discovered on a previous run). That created curiosity and spatial awareness, and it slowed down the group without mentioning the word 'slow'.

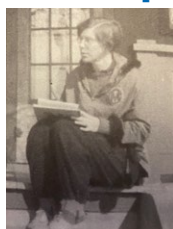
Another subtopic was team building, which led into finding similarities and creating sliding related activities with common characteristics in mind. We played with 4'11" turns (that is, shorter than shorts). Then we challenged each other to make even shorter short turns.

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Time management was the last part of the Academy, and we went on a ‘German Highway’ with no speed limit and no straight roads, starting at the on-ramp (intro to lesson), speeding up and enjoying the ride on the highway with all its turns (Activities) and road constructions and detours (modifications) and getting ready for the off-ramp/finishing up the lesson. Cool stuff. One discussion we had was about the amount of time you spend working on skill development within your lesson. I do not want to give you an answer but challenge you to discuss this with your trainers or with the ACE team. And maybe even share your findings at the next Kid’s Academy.

Thinking back to when I started instructing (the girl in Germany), I tried to make it fun and to include all my students in the course. We skied, played games, had lunch together and skied again. At times I had to work on my time management: one time my group had such a great time that I arrived at the return meeting point thirty minutes late. Although I left an impact, (judging by the smiles on their faces and the fact that they gave me a stuffed animal for my birthday) and was able to ski more challenging terrain with them on subsequent days, I learned that timeliness was also key. While I have no means to find out, I would like to know how many of my students are still enjoying this sport or even sharing it with their children or family members. So please remember, when you go out on snow to teach, you might only have that student for your lesson, but your impact can become the “Coach for life.” ☺

History of the First Ski Patrol: Schenectady Wintersports Club



Lois Perret, leader of Schenectady Wintersports Club’s First Aid Committee

By Jim Schaefer
Alpine Level I
Royal Mountain, NY



Lois Perret places a rescue toboggan

Dave England’s Your Turn article in the Fall issue reviewed Minnie Dole’s role in the formation of the National Ski Patrol and the 10th

Mountain Division. My mother Lois Perret was another groundbreaker when it comes to modern on-the-hill safety.

My father Vincent J Schaefer, founding director of the Schenectady Wintersports Club (SWC), read a report of accidents and injuries among skiers taking Snow Trains from Boston to New Hampshire in 1932. He was determined that SWC efforts to popularize Snow Trains from Schenectady should not be deterred by thoughts about risk of injury to skiers. In 1933 he asked Lois, a registered nurse and active member of SWC, to head up a “First Aid Committee.”

Lois organized what became a prototype for future ski patrols: recruitment of competent skiers, completion of standard Red Cross training, a focus on possible skiing injury, assembly of bandages, splints and related medical equipment in a portable kit to be carried while skiing.

The First Aid Committee was in place for the Snow Train that brought skiers to North Creek on March 4, 1934. (It was scheduled earlier in the season, but snow conditions caused a delay.) That day, 378 ski enthusiasts travelled to enjoy trails on Gore and Pete Gay Mountains and slopes in the North Creek Ski Bowl.

First Aid Committee members were instructed to “patrol” each of the downhill runs, to aid any injured skiers, and then to “sweep” all trails before the train left the station. These are everyday standard operating procedures for modern patrol organizations, but at the time these functions – and the terminology – were groundbreaking and new.

No skiing injuries were reported on New York’s first Snow Train in 1934.

During the Snow Train Era, there was an increase in the number of trained patrollers, an “on-call” doctor was made available, rescue toboggans were painted white with red crosses on the sides, chains and bars were attached to the sleds for better maneuvering, and tall huts were stationed high up on the trails for storing First Aid supplies. North Creek’s Dr. Jimmy Glenn invented a wooden hinged box device to stabilize ankle or leg injuries on the slope. The box was labeled Gore Mountain Ski Club to ensure its return.

Last year, the Mount Mansfield Ski Patrol celebrated its 90th birthday and its status as the

first ski patrol organization, citing documentation from 1934 as evidence for its claim as the first. In his 2007 article in a special issue of Journal of the New England Ski Museum celebrating the National Ski Patrol and ski patrolling in America, Jeffrey Leich wrote that the 1934-1935 Mount Mansfield Ski Patrol functioned “in a form that stressed trail advice and tips on waxing techniques over first aid training and skier rescue, reflecting the minimal need for that sort of service required by the very low skier numbers of the time.”

By contrast, Leich wrote that the SWC fielded a “fully-formed ski patrol – (that) was not only ahead of its time in its procedures and equipment, it was (also) revolutionary in that it was organized and led by a woman, something that would be exceedingly uncommon for decades in ski patrolling.” Leich added that the MMSP numbers significantly decreased in 1936 when the organization began to require a Red Cross first aid course be passed by all members. Remember that such a credential was a core value of Lois Perret’s First Aid Committee.

While the Mount Mansfield Ski Patrol was a groundbreaking organization whose founder went on to establish the National Ski Patrol, it is known that the Schenectady Wintersports Club’s First Aid Committee was performing the same (and possibly more specific patrol-type) activities at the same time as – or even prior to – Mount Mansfield’s. And all of that resulted from the Ski Patrol effort led by registered nurse Lois Perret (Schaefer) in 1933. ☺

We Can Do Hard Things: Blending Learning Connection Skills to Tackle Difficult Lessons

By Erik Timmermann
Alpine Development Team member
Stowe, VT

Last spring National Team member Keith Rodney asked me, “What was your best lesson this year?”. Later he asked, “What was your hardest lesson this year?” After some reflection, I realized they were the same lesson! It was springtime in Stowe, and we were having a wet late-season snowstorm. With new snow, I took an abbreviated lunch to fit in a run before lineup. It was windy and the snow had really been

building up as I skied down toward lineup. The snow was heavy and dense, and my skis crept along slower and slower until I was almost walking downhill.

Knowing that our afternoon lessons are for beginners only, I knew it was going to be a tough afternoon. This was not beginner snow.

As I poled through the slushy new snow toward the blue suited circle of instructors, I could see that they were all looking at me. Our supervisor Ryan stepped out of the circle with a knowing glance and said, "I've got one for you."

Ryan led me over toward a cluster of dark suited figures surrounding a sobbing high school-aged girl. They told me her story of two previous attempts to ski – one a school trip and one an ill-advised and terrifying attempt by a parent to teach her. Ryan pulled me aside to whisper that, in addition to the challenging weather conditions, our Carpet lift for beginners had gone down with a mechanical issue. Could I handle it, he asked?

I knew I would need to make a Learning Connection this afternoon. I told him I was willing to do the best I could.

I led her over to some chairs in a quiet, less stormy spot where she could collect herself and talk. Technical and teaching skills weren't going to matter at first; I needed to establish myself as an empathetic and trustworthy expert on the sport she was trying. The little things become paramount in a situation like this. I rolled up my pant legs and showed how my boots were buckled, that no pants were stuffed in my boots, and so forth. She pulled up her pantlegs to reveal pants, long johns, and jumbled socks all stuffed inside her boot cuffs. We rectified this situation, straightened her boot tongues which were overlapped wrongly (as often happens), and rebuckled her boots. Now that her lower shins weren't in excruciating pain, I told her the truth: "Nobody ever said learning to ski is easy," I said. "But I've never met anyone yet that can't learn to ski."

She was now ready, and I surveyed the task ahead of us. The carpet was down, and with all the new snow the beginner area was too flat for gravity to do its magic. I decided to skip much of the "boot games" and walking around I might normally do, and we began scootering on one ski, stepping through turns and making stars on the ground. I skipped any tech talk, and we just experienced sliding on snow. Soon we were trekking on two skis across the barren tundra of a beginner area and began to herringbone up the abandoned carpet area. At the top we turned around and our first straight run was more like an easy walk down the hill, because the snow stuck to our bases an inch thick.

As we finished our first "run," a well-intentioned parent came to check on her and ask if she could help. We sent her to the pro shop for a scraper and rub-on wax." It is hard to teach someone to stop (and to turn) when they can't go. We did another walk up and down the little hill and then scraped and waxed her skis. We walked up again and now instead of walking down we could push with our poles and slide. Baby steps!

Next, we went to a usually-too-steep-for-beginners pitch. We sidestepped up, and, once we were at the top, we still had to push as hard as we could with our poles to go fast enough to practice a wedge stop. Soon we were making S-turns down the slope. I served as her personal course slipper, clearing a path for her with the widest wedge that I could and after awhile there was enough of a track to snake down the slope without having to push.

That's when the wind really got strong and knocked out power to the whole resort! That gave us a new opportunity. With the lift knocked out we could walk up a little bit and practice making turns on the (slightly) steeper beginner slope. Just as she was getting comfortable the power came back on, and she was ready to ride the lift. I didn't need to teach her anything on her run down from the lift as she had already learned the skills she needed to navigate the terrain. With everybody having given up on the lift reopening we got to ski down in the storm by ourselves. Right down to her waiting family! I don't know who was more pleased — my student who had conquered her fears, her family who could now do family ski vacations without worrying about what she would do, or myself for realizing that, in the Learning Connection, there are different skills that instructors need to develop. In this case, I found the right blend of People, Teaching, and Technical skills and ended with a happy student, an ecstatic family, and a gratified instructor who made the best of a difficult teaching situation. «

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