



NRM

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN



WINTER 2014 NEWS

Volume 31

Number 2



LETTER FROM THE NRM PRESIDENT

Welcome to winter! What a crazy and wonderful season it has been so far. Between the cold temps of early December and early February, the January thaw and the excellent snow season, things within NRM seem to be doing pretty well!

Kicking off the season this year with Fall Fest and all the incredible feedback we received from you about your experiences set the bar for a great season. With the busy Christmas season over, prep clinics, exams, Children's and Freestyle Specialist clinics have been happening all over our division. NRM also was blessed with the ability to have Tony Macri, a National Team AASI Member, do a free education clinic for our snowboard membership at Bridger Bowl in January. To those of you who are new members, new Level I's, or have achieved one of the specialist credentials, welcome and congratulations! And, with the second scholarship deadline this month, we look forward to helping even more of you to achieve your goals of certification and education.

In the last part of January I was able to hit the road for the first part of my road trips around the division visiting our member schools. Over six days, I skied six mountains and drove 1099 miles! What a wonderful experience to meet and talk with all of you, hearing your stories, seeing the terrain that you teach on and the challenges you face.

This year in particular, NRM has a real desire to hear your stories and your PSIA/AASI experiences. With two different task forces at work, we are looking to hear from you. From your exam and or education experiences to what you would like to see our Snow Pro Staff provide, let

us know! And give it all to us...the good, the bad, and the ugly. We are looking to see if and how we can change our education and certification processes to create a better experience for you as the member, as well as understanding how we can add more value. If you have a moment, please email our office and give us your feedback and your stories. We can't do this without you! As some of our amazing Snow Pro Staff and I continue to hit the road and come visit your mountains as NRM Ambassadors, don't be surprised to hear us ask for your stories and experiences. Also, be on the lookout for an online survey to be coming to your inbox...

As it is time for me to head out the door to another day of instructing and skiing powder, I would like to thank so many of you for all the work you do for the division. Outside of our incredible Executive Director, Meghan Larson, all that happens is done on volunteer time. To each of our committee chairs who organize the yearly event schedules and handle the staffing of the events, you are amazing and thank you for your passion, dedication, and time that you give to NRM. To those of you who freely give of your time and money to go on the road as ambassadors for NRM, thank you! To each of our committee members, board members, task force members, and all others who volunteer in any way, thank you. NRM would not be the same without the blessings of your time and passion.

May the second half of the season bring all of you incredible moments in your teaching and riding!

Sincerely,
Shannon Griffin, PSIA-AASI NRM President

IN THIS ISSUE:

Mid-season Chair Reports, Spring Event Calendar, Poaching Ski Instructors to Coach Ski Racing
NRM Board of Directors Election Info & Candidate Statements, and more

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The Northern Rocky News is published twice a year by PSIA-AASI NRM and the PSIA-AASI NRM Education Foundation. Members are encouraged to submit articles and photos. Educational articles earn three credits. Letters to the editor and response to

articles are also encouraged. Content can be sent to turi@psia-nrm.org

EDITORIAL POLICY: All submissions will be edited for content, clarity, accuracy and to fit available spaces. Not all submissions are guaranteed inclusion. Ad rates are based on \$200/page.

ALPINE CHAIR REPORT

By Jim Anderson, NRM Alpine Chair

We are halfway throughout the season, and things are off to a great start. Prep clinics have been held at Big Sky Resort, Red Lodge Mountain, Terry Peak, Bridger Bowl and Discovery Ski Area. Additionally, many Alpine level I exams have been held introducing approximately 67 new members to PSIA-AASI Northern Rocky Mountain as of February 1. We would like to extend congratulations and a big welcome to those new members!

Mid-season training for the Alpine DCE staff was very productive and continued to build more consistency amongst the team with regards to evaluation and teaching methods. The recent cold snap affected many areas, so much so that resort closures forced the cancellation of NRM events. Fortunately, due to an awesome membership and supportive ski areas, we were able to adjust dates and locations and reschedule most of the cancelled prep clinics and exams. As always, the Hiking and Skiing Lone Peak event March 12 and 13 looks to be great fun this year and will be even easier now that a lift ticket at Big Sky Resort encompasses what was formerly Moonlight Basin. Sign up early as space is limited.



A reminder to those attending clinics and exams: please be sure to register for events **two weeks** in advance. This will ensure that there is room for you to attend, as well as give the NRM Office enough notification to determine if an event has enough participants to continue.

I look forward to seeing you on the slopes. Enjoy the rest of the season!

SNOWBOARD CHAIR REPORT



Ben participating in NRM's first snowboard adaptive clinic

By Ben Daniel NRM Snowboard Chair

Wow, mid-winter already! It sure has been an eventful, fun, cold, warm, rock hard and fluffy, at times, winter so far. I hope you all have managed to stay on the healthier side and are on your way to attaining your goals for the 2013-14 winter season.

How can you help yourself attain those goals you are working on? Ride switch more often. Get out to ride in the "worst" conditions, staying safe, while pushing yourself to ride icy bumps with more confidence. Do self MA to get more comfortable in off-piste crud and chunder. Explore your range of motion to dial up your own

intensity, improve your balance and begin to stomp those rodeo 7s, cab 3s, slide a box and/or to feel more steezy (style with ease) when you ride.

How can we, as Snowboard Pro Educators, help each other attain our goals together? Get together with your trainer, co-workers, friends, mom...and shoot video. This is a great tool to improve your MA and personal riding skills. Get creative and help train each other to be trainers. Dork out on the lifts and come up with new, more fun ways to help humans perform the same old tricks, whether they are connecting their first turns or playing with dorsiflexing their lead ankle to initiate their toe-side in steep bumps. Chair rides are great for doing MA on gapers and steezy riders below...I saw this, it caused that, lets play with... We don't necessarily speak in very technical terms with our clients, usually not advised, but we do in our exams (mostly because the terms and technical knowledge help us develop our tool box to make us better at coaching) so practice with your peers, the only ones who will care or know what the heck you're talking about.

Speaking of goals, we've been attaining several so far on the snowboard education side, nationally, within our division - and also personally. Several representatives from NRM and I made it to the National Fall Conference in Copper, CO on October 24-27 and the Rocky Mountain (RM) Education Staff Training at Loveland, CO on October 27-29. As a result of our efforts at National there have been a few changes made to the AASI National Standards in the riding section that were approved by the National Board on Feb. 2. These changes are primarily in terms of language clarification in order to improve understanding of what is required division-to-division and person-to-person to attain each level.

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CHILDREN'S CHAIR REPORT

By Jill Imsand-Chumbley, NRM Children's Chair

Welcome to 2014. This winter has been great so far. I hope that winter decides to stay awhile longer, turning into a spectacular spring. This season started out as a busy one for the children's staff starting with two groups of Children Specialist 1 and one group of Children's Specialist 2 at Fall Festival. Along with the Children's Specialist events we also had a variety of elective children's clinics at Fall Fest. We had our first ever area trainer clinic and hope to expand this clinic in the coming years helping train more area trainers how to train their children's staff. This clinic had great reviews so look for it again next year at Fall Fest!

After a busy Christmas season we had a few in-house Children's Specialist 1 events. February we had a Children's Specialist 2 scheduled at Big Sky. In March we have a Children's Specialist 1 scheduled at Lost Trail. If there is an event you would like to see on the schedule for Children's Education, please let me know and we can try to make it happen.

See you on the slopes!



CS2 participants pose for a photo

FREESTYLE CHAIR REPORT

By Matt Larson, NRM Freestyle Chair



NRM Iron Team

Register On-line. Ed credits are available, if you are interested.

After ProPark is a FS1. The FS1 is entry-level education for those interested in freestyle safety for their guests and improving guest experience in beginner lessons. Information can be found at psia-nrm.org at the calendar of events. Also coming up are FS2 and FS3 in Jackson Hole, which will be March 3 and 4.

This year we are including video as an evaluation tool for movement analysis during Freestyle Specialist Events. The inclusion of video was discussed at the national fall conference at Copper Mountain during discussion of Freestyle Standards. These videos can be seen on the NRM Iron Team Facebook page. Check it out. For those of you not on Facebook, there soon will be a YouTube Channel to view the PSIA-AASI Freestyle Video Library. From the Iron Team: "It was a pleasure to have those of you who participated in freestyle electives at Fall Fest last December. Hope to see you at an FS1 soon!"

Congratulations to new FS1s of the 2013-14 season!

There are many events coming up for the NRM Freestyle Program over the next couple months. At the end of February, we will be at Great Divide for ProPark sponsored by MSAA and Great Divide on February 25. This year the Iron Team will have some information on Terrain Based Teaching and Trends in the snowsports industry as well as be providing coaching to participants looking for some feedback. Remember, all NRM members are invited, and this event is FREE! Great Divide is located near Helena, MT and will be open only to participants of ProPark!



find us on facebook

facebook.com/PSIA.AASI.NRM

NORDIC CHAIR REPORT

By Stew Chumbley, NRM Nordic Chair

New blanket of snow has fallen across the Northern Rocky Mountain Division. It appears we keep having the mercury disappeared out of our thermometers. Our Cross Country and Telemark programs had a strong start to the 2013-14 season. Many members have been taking advantage of the cross-country events hosted by NRM across the state. Brenda Winkler has been busy educating and certifying new instructors.

The NES Telemark group just completed their training this January at Lost Trail. It was an excellent time for our group to get together. We hope to continue to have training in January in the future. I think we are already looking over the trail maps of Discovery and Maverick Mountain.

I just returned from Seeley Lake, Montana and completed the first Children's Specialist 1 on the trails. This was an excellent event. Seeley Lake has a very impressive children's school program established with most of the school headed out to their trails every Thursday. The XC trails were pristine. I would like to thank The Lodges at Seeley Lake for letting us stay in their awesome cabin on the shores of Seeley Lake. Keep your eye out for XC races in Seeley.

Many events are still to come in 2014. Come join your NES team for a day on the trails.



Participants in NRM's first Nordic CS1 at Seeley Lake

ADAPTIVE CHAIR REPORT

By Diana Proemm, NRM Adaptive Chair

As the weather is -29 degrees, it makes me realize how much I appreciate +29 degree weather. Our adaptive participants struggle with cold temperatures, and it's always such a bummer when a program has to be canceled due to extreme cold temperatures.

On a positive note, though, we had a successful adaptive snowboarding clinic with Josh Spoelstra. We had eight people attend both days at Bridger Bowl in early January. We now have implemented snowboard tethering into our Eagle Mount program. Here is a quote from one of the participants:

"Super stoked from the adaptive snowboard session with Josh. The tools I gained I plan to use even with my guests who do not fit in the adaptive demographic. The tethering skills we practiced brings a high sense of safety to the participant (my personal experience)."

- Matt Larson, NRM Freestyle, Snowboard and Children's Ed Staff

Our "hidden disabilities" clinic took place at Fall Fest, and it turned into a collaborative participant effort with many learning opportunities.

Coming up this winter we have an Adaptive Level I scheduled (Intellectual Disabilities) March 29th and 30th at Discovery Basin.

Please contact me with any questions.



SNOWBOARD CHAIR REPORT (continued from page 3)

language clarification in order to improve understanding of what is required from division to division and person to person to attain each level. Our AASI National web team will update the document online soon. That being said, National was a big success, so much so that the US Congress has taken note of AASI, a group of so called “slackers” getting things done!

Matt Larson and myself stayed in CO to partake in the Fall Fandango, RM’s Ed Staff Training, as representatives of NRM. It’s great to see how similar we view what is necessary to attain snowboard certifications despite the differences in our processes. Plus we got to borrow some creative, innovative, fun ideas to share with all of you.

Idea sharing continued on day one of the NRM Snowboard Pro or Division Clinician Examiner (DCE) and DCE In-Training (IT) Fall Training. This event focused on the new changes to the language in the riding section of the National Standards and calibrating what the standards are within the staff, so that wherever and whomever we give an exam to, despite the individual processes, we maintain the same riding, knowledge and teaching standards. We also had a mustache contest that I wish we had more photos of! Train the Trainers at Fall Fest had a small turn out, but a large amount of information exchanged. I encourage each Snowsports Program to send a trainer, or your snowboard representative, to this event in order to get together for an idea exchange, to help us all stay connected, contemporary and included in the development of snowboard education.

During Fall Fest we hosted a Snowboard (SB) Level 2/3 Prep and a few other events. Again, numbers were low for our various continuing education snowboard sessions. Please let NRM know any ideas you have to spark attendance to this once very popular event. Thank you!

Bridger Bowl hosted two super fun, educational, snowboard events in Jan. First, an Adaptive SB two-day clinic with former AASI National Demo Team member Josh Spoelstra, who taught us great

new techniques for snowboarding while tethered to people to help them be safe and have fun while they slide on skis, snowboards or in a sit ski. Next, Bridger hosted a current D-Team member, Tony Macri, to share his wisdom and help spark some fresh ways to connect with our clients while keeping them moving and improving. A big thank you goes out to Bridger Bowl for hosting the events, to Diana Proemm and Shannon Griffin for helping to make these events come to fruition and to Josh and Tony for flying out to share their knowledge and help fuel our passions!

There were also well attended Level 2/3 Preps at Big Sky and at Terry Peak recently. We are looking forward to a great turn out in Red Lodge Apr 4-6 for the SB Level 2/3 Exams. I hope those of you who plan to participate in the exams are well on your way to completing your workbooks, you can download them at psia-nrm.org/Snowboard/sb_cert.htm. Get together with others who going for their 2 or 3 cert and talk through some of these questions, email someone who can help with the questions you aren’t sure about, just get started, the sooner the better. Deadline is Mar 3, 2014 for the workbooks.

I said it before and I’ll say it again, we are only as good as our contributors. So, be active, write articles, get involved, go to meetings, participate in events...create events, email me any Snowboard Education Event topics you’d like to see offered at a venue of your choosing next season. We will do our best to offer and hold any event that has, at a minimum, six participants signed up for the event two weeks prior to the event start date.

As a snowsports program, apply for a grant to pay for the event or as an individual apply for a scholarship for any NRM snowsports event, see our website for more details: psia-nrm.org/ef_scholarships.html

Stay healthy, connected and fresh!!! Hope to see you at an event or just out shredding soon!!!!





2013-2014 PSIA-AASI NRM Event Calendar

Dates and locations are subject to change. View NRM website www.psia-nrm.org for updates. Event details, prices and online registration info will be available starting in October. In the meantime please direct any questions or requests for clinic topics and/or locations to the NRM office at info@psia-nrm.org. We look forward to skiing and riding with you this season!



ALPINE

Mar 1-2	Level 2/3 Exams	Red Lodge
Mar 4	Ski Like a Girl	Bridger
Mar 6-7	MSAA/NRM Level 1 Exam *	Lost Trail
Mar 10-11	Level 2 Exam	Garmisch
Mar 12-13	Hiking & Skiing Lone Peak	Big Sky
Mar 13-14	Level 3 Exam	Garmisch
Apr 5-6	Level 2/3 Exams	Big Sky
Apr 6-7	Level 3 Exam	Bridger
Apr 7-8	DCE Hiring Event	Big Sky
Jun 21-22	Camping & Skiing Training	Beartooth Pass

SNOWBOARD

Mar 6-7	MSAA/NRM Level 1 Exam *	Lost Trail
Mar 12-13	Level 2/3 Exams	Garmisch
Apr 4-6	Level 2/3 Exams	Red Lodge

NORDIC

Mar 7-9	Telemark 2/3 Exams	Big Sky
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KIDS (multi-discipline)

Mar 8-9	Children's Specialist 1	Lost Trail
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FREESTYLE (multi-discipline)

Mar 15-16	Freestyle Specialist 1	Lost Trail
TBD	Freestyle Specialist 1	Sleeping Giant
Mar 3-4	Freestyle Specialist 2/3	Jackson Hole

ADAPTIVE

Feb. 26	Adaptive Alpine Level 1 Prep Clinic	Bridger
Mar 3.	Adaptive Alpine Level 1 Prep Clinic	Bridger
Mar 29-30	Adaptive Alpine Level 1 Exam	Big Sky



*MSAA and NRM are sponsoring a FREE Alpine and Snowboard Level 1 Exams at Lost Trail. A \$60 refundable deposit is required to register. If cancellation becomes necessary within 48 hours of the event date, the deposit will be forfeited.

Additional clinics may be held "in-house" at area snowsport schools. These clinics are held at member schools specifically for that school's staff. Check with your school's director for schedule and availability.

Event Registration Policy

Registration is open up to two weeks prior to event start date. Payment is due two weeks prior to the event start date. A \$50 late fee applies to payments within two weeks of event start date. If payment is not received by the event start date, registration will be canceled and individual will not be allowed to attend event.

Registration within two weeks of the events start date is on a space available basis and will not be guaranteed. If participant numbers have not reached maximum, registration may be allowed and will incur a late registration fee [\$50].

Minimum and Maximum Participant Numbers and Policy:

The minimum number of participants for an event is six. If there are fewer than six individuals registered for an event two weeks prior to the event, the event may be canceled or rescheduled.

The maximum number of participants is ten for educational clinics and eight for exams. If registration numbers exceed these maximum numbers an additional clinic/exam groups may be created provided the new group numbers meet minimum number requirements.

Cancellation & Refund Policy

Should cancellation become necessary seven days or more before the event, your registration fees will be refunded less a \$10 cancellation fee. Within seven days of the event half of the registration fee will be refunded. No refunds will be given if requested on the day of the event or later. All requests must be made directly to the NRM office.

2014 PSIA-AASI NRM BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS:

The following two PSIA-AASI NRM members have thrown their names into the hat for the upcoming Board of Directors Election. Please review their statements and cast your vote by March 31.



ANTHONY BROWN

Hello to the membership of PSIA-AASI NRM, I have had the honor to serve Northern Rocky Mountain Division as a member of the Board of Directors and as your treasurer. With both of my terms coming to an end this spring, I would once again like to have the opportunity to serve as a board member for another three years.

I have had the great pleasure of being a part of creating a stable financial foundation for our division in three ways:

1) Establishing mandatory investments into a rainy-day fund to secure the long term viability of the organization, 2) Chairing an NRM Finance Committee that is actively involved in the budgeting process and creation of a more streamlined accounting process, and 3) As treasurer, making sure we stay efficient and transparent in our financial obligations.

I also had the privilege and honor of representing Northern Rocky Mountain on a national level when I was asked to sit on the governance task force. This task force was successful in bringing about change in the way national board members (divisional representatives) are appointed to the national board.

I appreciate your support in this election and, if elected, look forward to serving our division once again.

Sincerely,
Anthony Brown



MEGAN ZILZ

My name is Megan Zilz, and I am a ski instructor at Bridger Bowl and have been a member of PSIA, NRM division, since 2010. Prior to becoming a full-time ski instructor, I spent 22 years in the corporate world. My experience includes management consulting and change management for Accenture, business development, sales and global alliances for Oracle, and strategy and marketing for Sprint/Nextel. In my last role at Sprint/Nextel, I was director of marketing for the western geographical third of the company. I believe that I have a good

cross-section of skills to offer the NRM division of PSIA, coupled with a great love of all things "snow". I love teaching skiing (favorite job ever!), am not afraid of hard work and a challenge, and want to give back to the organization and people whom I believe made becoming a ski instructor one of the great decisions of my life!

Sincerely,
Megan Zilz

There are two (2) candidates running for two (2) open seats on the PSIA/AASI Northern Rocky Mountain Board of Directors. Once elected, the new board members will take office at the spring 2014 board meeting and serve a three-year term.

Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters before the end of February. Ballots must be returned (postmarked by) to the NRM office by March 31, 2014. Results will be announced mid-April.

Current Board of Directors and Term Expiration Date

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| • Craig Beam | 6/15 |
| • Anthony Brown | 6/14 |
| • Mike Ewing | 6/16 |
| • Dick Fast | 6/16 |
| • Chris Kronebusch | 6/16 |
| • Heidi Maier | 6/14 |
| • Sherrie Nevill | 6/15 |

In addition to electing two board members, the following officer and chair appointments will take place at the spring board meeting:

- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Children's Chair
- Nordic Chair
- Snowboard Chair

Details on responsibilities and eligibility can be found in the NRM Bylaws and NRM Rules and Regulations (links available at www.psia-nrm.org on the NRM BOD page).

As an organization we are only as strong as our membership. Additional volunteers willing to share their expertise and contribute to the success of NRM are welcome. If you have experience with accounting, human resources, fund raising, marketing, writing, photography, graphic design, web design, legal services, or other fields, we encourage you to get involved. Help grow and improve NRM and uphold our vision and mission:

Vision: Inspiring a lifelong passion for the mountain experience.

Mission: We support our members, as a part of the snowsports industry, to:

- Develop personally and professionally
- Create positive learning experiences
- Have more fun



Snow sports professionals inspiring a lifelong passion for the mountain environment.



TYPICAL CAR BUYING EXPERIENCE

DO LARGE AMOUNTS
OF RESEARCH

AND

PRACTICE CAR SALESMEN
AVOIDANCE TECHNIQUES

Rush Out To Car Lots AND

SIT THROUGH CAR SALESMAN
CAR OPTIONS SPIEL.

TEST DRIVE

AND

NEGOTIATE

With Salesperson.

GO THROUGH FINANCING OPTIONS,
WRANGLE FINAL PRICE AND INTEREST RATE

ENDURE DEALER

AND

Haggling

&

INSPECT NEW CAR TO MAKE SURE IT IS WHAT YOU BOUGHT.

FINALLY!

YOU OWN A NEW CAR.

SUPER VIP SUBARU BUYING EXPERIENCE

LOG IN AT THESNOWPROS.ORG

(GO TO PRO OFFERS)

Complete
SUBARU VIP FORM

PICK UP SUBARU

VENTURE TO CLOSEST

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THE ROAD TO A NEW SUBARU IS BUMP-FREE. Thanks to your PSIA-AASI membership, you could save up to \$3,300 when you buy or lease any new, unused Subaru at our special VIP pricing. That could mean a savings of \$1,300 – \$3,300 off MSRP* (depending on model and accessories), plus any applicable incentives. Log in at TheSnowPros.org and click on "Pro Offers" for all the details. Or call the PSIA-AASI member services specialists at 303.987.9390 with any questions. Subaru and PSIA-AASI — it's a smooth ride ahead.

POACHING SKI INSTRUCTORS TO COACH SKI RACING

By Paul Mannelin, NRM Alpine Ed Staff

Purpose:

1. Get PSIA certified instructors interested in coaching ski racing in USSA Northern Division
2. Get PSIA certified instructors interested in USSA coaching certification/coaches education

My name is Paul Mannelin, and I've been fortunate to be involved in ski teaching and ski coaching in both the Central Division and Northern Rocky Mountain Division of PSIA. I am writing this article to ask those in the ski instructing community to consider alpine ski coaching. Why consider coaching, you may ask? This is a great question!

What are the rewards of coaching?

I have been coaching since 1992 and, by far, the best reward I've received to date is the relationship I've been fortunate enough to develop with athletes over that time period. The ability to see these kids grow up around me, often from age 6 or 7 through college and beyond, and the bonds created is priceless. The greatest reward in coaching skiing is the ability to do something you are passionate about, while positively impacting the lives of young athletes in your hometown. Being able to see these kids accomplish things they didn't know they could, and being a key part of this is something I'll cherish forever.

Is alpine race coaching for you? Are you....

1. Passionate about the sport of skiing?
2. Energetic!!!!
3. Well organized?
4. Able to influence young athletes in a positive manner, both on the hill and off? Are you a good role model?
5. PSIA certified and interested in continuing to learn?
6. Did you come from a racing background (great or small)?

Notice that a racing background is last on the list? While strong skiing skills are crucial for demonstrating a solid picture to aspiring ski racers, a long list of racing credentials and accomplishments certainly are not necessary for an entry-level coach. Certainly, at the U8 age group, a CS2 carries as much weight as having a few years of F.I.S. racing experience on a resume. Passion for the sport and being able to impart that passion to young athletes is incredibly important to the craft of ski coaching!

If I've never raced before, how can I contribute? One of the greatest deficiencies in our coaching ranks is qualified coaches that are willing to work with younger athletes. For me personally, the ideal candidate for an entry-level coach in my program would have at least a PSIA level 2 (I would love to see PSIA level 3 on a resume!) certification along with a CS 1 or CS 2. It often is easier to train an entry-level coach with a strong ski instructing background to become a coach than a good athlete with little teaching or coaching experience. A comprehensive knowledge of alpine racing tactics, while certainly necessary, is not the only (or even the most important) qualification needed for coaching athletes just getting into ski racing. USSA Level 100 certification addresses many of these issues and is a great two-day clinic to get you up to speed! In many clubs, including ours, the Level 100 is given in-house and offered free of charge at the



beginning of the ski season to all coaches who don't already have it.

What do you as a PSIA certified ski instructor bring to the table in the coaching world?

1. A knowledge of ski instructing. You know how to teach.
2. A knowledge of how the human body moves in space relative to a ski turn; which parts of the body do what at which part of the turn.
3. Fundamental movement analysis skills, a good eye.
4. Good group management skills.

How do I get involved?

I've often heard ski instructors tell me, "I would love to coach ski racing, but how do I get started"? Probably the same way you were hired as a ski instructor! Contact your local USSA club and pop your head in. Tell the head coach you're interested in coaching and would love to be a part of their coaching team. A face-to-face meeting goes a long way, especially if you've never met! Volunteering to help at races is often a great way to get your foot in the door. Race organizers are always looking for people to be gate keepers, hand timers, assist with course set up and tear down, and to run the business end of a shovel or rake. Volunteering is also a great way to introduce you to the alpine race environment, and you get a free lunch! For a list of USSA ski teams in your area, visit www.northernussa.org/teams.

Do you think "coaching isn't for me, but I'm interested in USSA Certification to continue my education"? USSA Level 100 is a fantastic way to continue your professional development and often offers a different perspective on topics you may have covered already in clinics. I fully encourage PSIA members to consider USSA clinics, just as I encourage USSA certified coaches to pursue PSIA clinics. The cross-pollination of ideas is not only healthy, but vital for both organizations!

You may read this and think, "He's trying to poach all of our best talent." Well, yes I am. It's shameless, I know, but we need the help and the upside for you is huge!

In closing, I would like to ask you to consider coaching skiing and ski racing. You can contribute more than you know, and the relationships you build will last a lifetime. It's a fantastic job!

Paul is Buddy Werner Program Director; Big Sky Ski Education Foundation, Ski Instructor, Big Sky Mountain Sports, and PSIA/NRM Alpine Examiner



BEST SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS YOU ENCOUNTER ON THE HILL

By Stephanie Prince, PSIA-AASI Special Projects Editor

Is “Problem Solver” a skill listed on your resume? If not, it probably should be. Instructors deal with all kinds of interesting issues that arise in lessons. Take, for instance, the couple that signed up for lessons together, but whose tempers flare when one progresses faster than the other. Or the independent-minded teens who try to give you the slip every chance they get. And what about the family that wants to stay together despite varying skill levels, equipment, and terrain preferences or the flu-ridden child who throws up on you – on the lift?

Here are some instructors’ best solutions to these common challenges you might encounter out there in the expansive, unpredictable world of ski and snowboard instruction.

SURVIVING THE SPLIT

At some point, you’ll find yourself teaching a group of students with varying athletic and ski or snowboard abilities, wondering how you’ll cater to all of them. “You could have one student with little or no athletic ability in the same lesson with a world-class figure skater. Both of them on skis for the first time, but you can only imagine how much faster the skater will progress,” points out Level III Alpine instructor, Gary Elliott from Mammoth Mountain, CA. Here’s some insight from seasoned split survivors.

“Years ago, my ski school director held a pro clinic called “Coaching to the Split” – still the best pro lesson I’ve ever attended. You’re generally dealing with one of three things: speed split, technique/ability split, or anxiety split. We all have various drills to deal with these; so figure out what kind of split you’re dealing with, and coach to it. In a speed split, for example, have the faster guys make big, wide S-turns, ask the slower ones to make shorter turns, and the rule is no one passes anyone else. The faster guys learn speed control, the slower guys don’t get embarrassed by the faster guys passing them, and everyone skis better!”

– Gerry Bell, *Alpine Level II; Sunday River, ME*

“Have the more advanced students do all of the exercises and runs switch. This keeps the beginner terrain from getting too boring.”

– Ben Baldassare, *Snowboard Level I, Alpine Level I, Children’s Specialist 1; Homewood Mountain Resort, CA*

“Make the best of it and don’t let your frustration show on your face, because your students will see it. Keep the terrain geared to the lower end of the group, but focus on skills and drills for the students who are more advanced.”

– Ryan Ellison, *Alpine Level II; Deer Valley, UT*

“Attitude and common goals are more important than ability in assessing the cohesiveness of a group. There may be a significant difference in ability, but common motivation, attitude, and physical ability. If the ability is just too much, and you can’t find someone to split the group with, seek out terrain where you can alternate working on specific tasks (like advanced and intermediate trails that intersect) with the individuals in the group.”

– Sherman White, *Alpine Level III; Smugglers’ Notch Resort, VT*

“Splits challenge us to use our full bag of tricks. Different variations of similar drills, creative use of terrain, having students learn from each other, and practicing tasks with variations of D.I.R.T. [duration, intensity, rate, and timing] are all things that help me

deal with splits. Open conversation with your group can help highlight similarities and differences in technique and skill. Often, the more advanced students can share information and techniques that have helped them. Students who ski slower may have good turn shape and speed control, which can help others concentrate on more accurate movements. Split lessons require us to be creative in order to be relevant to every student in the group.”

– Eriks Grivins, *Telemark Level 1, Alpine Level I, Snowboard I; Stevensville, MT*



TOUGH TEENS

You might encounter some disrespectful or uninterested teenagers in your lessons. Whether you’ve got a flight risk or one you just wish would disappear, keep your cool and give them some sense of independence.

“The main reason teens are apt to try to ditch you is that you haven’t done an effective job of finding out what their goals and motivations are, and then designing the session around

those goals. This can be tough with teens, who are probably not skiing or riding with you of their own free will, but if you take some time, show respect for their objectives, and maybe ask for some time to show them that you do care about them, most of them will stick with you.”

– Sherman White

“My dog needs discipline, exercise, and affection – and so do teens. When they’re unruly, ask yourself, ‘What are they looking for?’ Then, in a professional way, give it to them. Discipline? Try this: ‘Guys, every year I have one group who thinks I don’t mean what I say. This year, it looks like it’s going to be you. Do you really want to test me?’ Exercise? They want to ski, so let them! Within sight, and in control, of course. Let them watch you ski, while you give a few – very few – pointers on how you’re doing it. They learn new dances watching the other kids; they’ll learn skiing watching you. Affection? Teenagers are usually so self-absorbed they internalize every criticism they receive and brood about it ad infinitum. However, they can go for weeks on the most modest positive reinforcement. So give it to them: ‘Sue, that was exactly what I was talking about; great job!’ ‘Bill, that’s part of it, it’s a big step up; let’s keep it going!’ Teens are not difficult duty – just think of my dog example!

– Gerry Bell

“I like to show them something they cannot do, like a ballet trick (I used to compete in freestyle). Then they may continue to bug you to teach them how to do it. Above all you have to keep them from being bored. Challenge them. They have to think they are going to miss out on something if they leave. Find out what they are interested in and try to bring it into the lesson. Put them out in front and let them lead the class. Keep them engaged.”

– Gary Elliott

THE FLU-RIDDEN KID

Has this happened to you? A young student turns to you on the chairlift and says he or she isn’t feeling well; and before you can get them somewhere safe, they’ve puked all over you. Maybe they didn’t necessarily vomit, but you could tell the little guy wasn’t doing well. What is best way to handle that?

“The answer is not ‘Clean him up, clean yourself up, get him back to the lodge, and pawn him off on someone else.’ Honestly, were you ever six years old? More than feeling sick and lousy, the kid is probably humiliated. How would you like to be treated in that situation? How would you like your child or your grandchild treated? The answer here isn’t about ski instruction – it’s about compassion. Try this: ‘Billy, do you feel better now, or do you still feel bad? I want to get you back downhill so we can get you feeling better and call your parents. Do you think you want to ski back with me, or would you like an adventure ride on a sled?’”

– Gerry Bell

“With younger kids, it’s important to make them feel like it’s not their fault. Usually this situation is a result of parents putting them into class when they don’t feel well. This can be

avoided by asking questions at lineup while their parents are still there, like ‘What did you have for breakfast this morning?’ If they say ‘nothing,’ ask them if it’s because they don’t feel well. Then question the parents a bit more.”

– Sherman White

“This would be a great time for a hot chocolate break for the rest of the class. You need to go in to clean everyone up and notify the parents. Do whatever is necessary to keep the child from feeling guilty or bad about what happened. A lot depends on the child. Is it a little girl who is very emotionally upset over the incident or a little boy who thinks it is funny? The child and the parents should make the decision whether to have the child continue with the class. If the child appears too sick to continue, could be unsafe riding a chair, or could be a health risk to the other children then the ski school should not allow the child to continue with the class.”

– Gary Elliott

“With a flu-ridden kid, call your supervisor and have them cover for you while you clean the puke off of the kid and yourself. Then call a parent and see where they can meet you to pick up their child and rejoin your class ASAP. That night, be sure to wash your uniform and call the parents to see how the student is doing. Letting them know you care should be a priority.”

– Anne Royar Kerber, *Alpine Level II, Children’s Specialist 2; Snow Creek, MO*

COUPLED BLISS (NOT)

Let’s face it, couples that ski together don’t always stay together. You can’t be their marriage counselor, but you can do your part to make sure their lift ticket doesn’t double as an express ticket to divorce court.

“Separate them. The better one is exasperated that the less-experienced one isn’t getting it (probably because they are following the better one’s failed attempt at teaching). The less-experienced mate is frustrated, embarrassed, and probably angry (and maybe ready to give up the sport.) Keeping them together is like smashing two pieces of plutonium together; worst case is an atomic explosion, best case is you die of radiation poisoning. So alternate your attention: ‘Bob, make the short turns we talked about down to the trail sign while I work with Sally a bit.’ Then, ‘Sally, practice the turn initiation we practiced while I work with Bob on his pole touch.’ Above all else, end the lesson on a slope where they can ski together comfortably, have fun, and enjoy each other. That’s why they took the lesson!”

– Gerry Bell

“You are the coach, guide, and boss of the lesson. You may need to call a time out, and do some counseling if their behavior is getting in the way of having an enjoyable, productive time, which won’t happen if you just let them go.”

– Sherman White

continued next page

"Give the slower-progressing student easier tasks that can be completed successfully and give the faster progressing student tasks that are a little more challenging. The goal here is to make it appear that they are both doing equally well. Complement both of them equally on their success. Do whatever is necessary to keep one of them from thinking they are falling behind. Emphasize that couples may learn differently and progress at different levels, but there is no reason they cannot eventually reach the same level. Remember who won the race between the tortoise and the hare. Usually men will show more physical ability and women more technical ability. Don't be afraid to point out the different strengths of each skier and always keep it positive."

– Gary Elliott

FUN WITH FAMILY DYNAMICS

"Make them a team! Start with a slope for the lowest ability, describe the task, and say, 'Chuck, show your Mom how it's done.' Then, 'Mom, show Chuck what you learned from him.' Go from there, working your way to a common-denominator slope they can all enjoy together. This situation isn't really about ski instruction; it's about psychology. You have to deal with people the way they are, not the way you'd like them to be."

– Gerry Bell

"A lot depends on the ages of the kids and what the goals and motivations of the family are, which will likely differ from one family member to the next. You need to actively involve yourself in helping them define a reasonable goal for the session. Is it to coach the parents in how to teach their kids? Is it for everyone to find some improvement in their skiing? Or are they looking for a knowledgeable guide who can show them appropriate, fun places for the whole family to enjoy? Ask questions."

– Sherman White

"The key here is that they want to stay together. Most important, keep them on safe terrain but do fun things with them. Play games. Create some friendly competitions between the family members. Let each person have a chance to lead the group. Keeping safety in mind, give them challenging tasks on easy terrain. You might want to consider taking them into a freestyle park if one is available and you can do it safely. Some can go over small jumps while others ski around them. Select terrain that will satisfy the higher-level skier but still be safe for the lower-level skier. Look for a run that has been partially groomed on one side so that some can ski the groomed side and some the side with bumps."

– Gary Elliott



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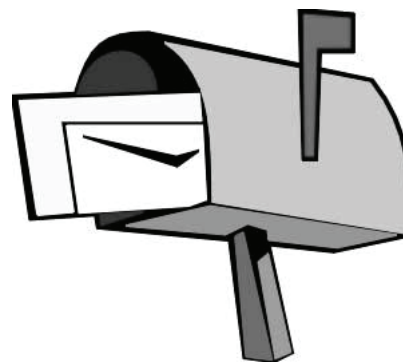
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