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**The history of snowboarding**

**By Jakob Jelling**

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How a piece of wood changed world history.

Many times someone doing something a little different and having his or her ideas catch on has changed history. The pasteurizing of milk to prevent spoiling and contamination is a perfect example. Snowboarding was also the result of someone doing something a little different. In a few short years we have taken a crazy idea and turned it into a household word and created a culture and language around it. Snowboarding has become an Olympic event and has even forced us to ask ourselves questions about our society when we use the phrase "Smoke a fatty for Rebagliati".

The history of snowboarding officially begins in 1929 with a man named M.J. Burchett. For some unknown reason, perhaps a dare from friends or the result of drinking, Mr. Burchett changed history when he cut a plank of plywood and secured it to his feet using a clothesline and horse reins. This humble beginning changed history forever.

Not much changed for snowboarders until 1965 when Sherman Poppen invented a toy for his daughter and eventually marketed it. His "Snurfer" consisted of 2-ski bound together with a rope at the nose of the skis to hold on to. This idea caught on fast and Mr. Poppen sold half a million of his Snurfers by 1966. Mr. Poppen helped create demand for his product by holding contests for Snurfers. Jake Burton took part in many of these competitions until he broke his collarbone in a car accident.

Snowboards as we know them came into existence in 1969 when riding down snowy hills on a cafeteria plate in college inspired Dimitrije Milovich. Mr. Milovich decided to make snowboards that were based upon the design of a surfboard but worked the same way skis did. In 1972 Mr. Milovich started a company called Winterstick and really fired up the idea of snowboarding until 1980 when he left the industry. To this day Milovich is seen as a very important pioneer in the industry.

In 1977 Burton came back to his first love, the Snurfer. After completing university, Burton moved to Vermont and needing to make some money, started to produce Snurfers again. Burton's snowboards were made of laminated wood and he shocked the world when he won a Snurfer competition on his

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own board. One major reason for Burton being able to win the competition was the skiing styled binding that he added to his boards thus allowing him to control them much better.

During this time Burton had on major competitor, Tom Sims. Sims borrowed from skateboarding technology to create his own version of the snowboard. Sims snowboards came from an idea he had in shop class when to glued carpet to the top of a piece of wood and aluminum sheeting to the bottom of the board.

In order to showcase their innovations, Burton and Sims held the first ever snowboarding competition in Vermont in 1982. This competition was more of a survival contest as the runs where icy kamikaze runs. This event helped to launch the magazine Absolutely Radical that became the International Snowboarding Magazine.

Snowboarding technology continued to improve, as did the fame of its competitions. The competitions became so popular that the International Snowboarding Federation was formed to help judge competitions. In 1998 snowboarding made its grand entrance into the world of the Olympics at Nagano, Japan.

This too was a controversial time. The IOC dismissed the ISF and instead had the Federation Internationale de Ski over see the events. While this policy is still in effect to this day, tensions are easing between the two factions and things are running much smoother.

Of course no history of snowboarding would be complete with out mentioning Rebagliati in the 1998 Olympics. Rebagliati, a Canadian from Whistler BC, won the gold medal that year but later tested positive for trace amounts of marijuana and was stripped of his gold medal. Rebagliati appealed the ruling and won since marijuana is a controlled substance, not a banned substance and is not a performance-enhancing drug. This event helped to decriminalize marijuana in Canada and caused many people to rethink their position on marijuana. "Smoke a fatty for Rebagliati" was a common phrase to show support for Rebagliati and show support for the reforming of the Canadian laws.

Snowboarding has come a long way in 70 odd years. Snowboarding started as a crazy idea that only fools would try and has become an accepted Olympic event due to its popularity. Arguably, snowboarding is the fastest growing sport and industry. Few other innovations have caught on this fast or have become an Olympic sport so soon.

Jakob Jelling is the founder of <http://www.snowboardinghelp.com>. Please visit his website to discover the world of snowboarding!

**Attention All Skiers: Try Snowboarding!**

**By Martin Stoleman**

Do you love winter? Or, more importantly, do you love spending time in the cold winter weather? If so, and you are looking for a great new activity to try this winter, consider snowboarding.

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For many people, the idea of snowboarding sounds dangerous, like it was only for crazy teenage boys. The idea of skiing down a large hill or mountain sounds scary enough and the idea of doing it with a snowboard sounds too hard to be tried. If these are your thoughts, you should think again. Whether you have been skiing for years or if you have never made it down a winter mountain, snowboarding can be a great way to spend winter days.

If you have been a skier and are thinking of branching out into the world of snowboarding, congratulations. The best advice I can give you is to be patient. Because snowboarding is similar to skiing and yet very different, some people who ski well will find that snowboarding comes naturally and quickly while others will find the learning process grueling and frustrating. Stick with it because eventually the tricks of snowboarding can come to almost anyone.

If you have never been a skier, have no fear. Having a skiing background is not always necessary or even beneficial in learning snowboarding skills. You, a non-ski expert, may actually pick up the techniques of snowboarding much easier than your skier friends. After some time you may find that snowboarding fits you like a glove.

Allow me to offer a couple of words of advice to anyone, ski expert or not, that desires to enter the world of snowboarding. First, do not expect to jump on a board and pick up the skill all on your own. Most people will benefit greatly from taking snowboarding lessons at least to learn the basics of the sport. So do not hesitate to sign yourself up for a lesson or two before you head out to the slopes.

A second and perhaps more important piece of advice is simple: rent. Resist that temptation to run out and buy the latest board and snowboarding gear just to look like a seasoned pro on the slopes. On your first few times out you should rent equipment and take the time to learn what kinds of boards best meet your needs. By renting you can avoid making a costly mistake that will leave you frustrated later.

So, whether you have been skiing for years or not, when winter comes around again make the choice to learn a new skill. Who knows, snowboarding could fast become your favorite source of winter fun.

Martin Stoleman loves to write about all of his favorite sports and activities. He has recently fallen in love with snowboarding himself. Check out

for more details about

this great sport.



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