

Snowboarding history

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As the excitement of fall winds down, many people fall into a depression. The leaves are gone, the woods are desolate, and the chill of winter air has crept upon us. While most people find this sad, I find it exciting! Why? Because it is time for my favorite sport, snowboarding. Snowboarding's a new, challenging sport that's attracting new fans from all around the world. It has really changed since it was first invented. It's become one of the largest and fastest growing sports in the world. Everywhere, people, including myself, are waiting for the snow to get a chance to go snowboarding.

Snowboarding is the cross between surfing and skateboarding. Snowboarding used to be known as a child's sport, but now has evolved into a great sport. Since it was first invented, it has changed from a child's sport to a new competitive sport that is great for both men and women. Some people saw snowboarding as an alternative to skateboarding, skiing, and surfing. People who could not afford to buy surfboards, like Jake Burton, used snowboarding as an alternative. Skateboarders saw snowboarding as a new sport that they could make their mark on.

Nobody knows who truly invented the first snowboard. But in 1929, M. J. "Jack" Burchett invented one of the first snowboards. He used clothesline and horse reins to secure a piece of plywood to his feet. Thirty years later, Sherman Poppen, a chemical gases engineer invented "The Snurfer" as a toy for his daughter. He made the "snurfer" by bounding two skis together and putting a rope at the nose, so that the rider could hold it and keep it stable. Poppen licensed his idea to a manufacturer when his daughter's friends wanted a "snurfer" too.

In 1966, “ the snurfer” sold over a half million times. In 1979, Poppen left the snowboarding business after Jake Burton came up with the bindings and went back to his old profession. Jake Burton, another inventor of the snowboard, became interested in snowboarding after taking part in Poppen’s “ snurfer” competitions that were organized by Poppen. His parents wouldn’t buy him a surfboard so riding the “ snurfer” was a new and cool thing to do. In 1977, after he finished college, Burton moved to Londonderry, Vermont to make different types of the Snurfer.

He made his first board out of laminated hardwood. In 1979, while at a Snurfer competition, Burton shocked everyone by using his new board that had the first binding. It made a big difference that allowed him to control the board and made it easier to beat the other riders. In 1969, Dimitrije Milovich, after he got the idea from sliding down a hill on a cafeteria plate in college, started making snowboards. His snowboards were based on surfboards combined with the way skis work. In 1972, he started a new company called “ Winterstick”.

He produced lots of snowboards and even got articles in magazines like, “ News Week”, “ Playboy”, and “ Power”. In 1980, he left the snowboarding business, but was still known as a very important pioneer of the sport. At the same time that Jake Burton was producing his snowboards Tom Sims produced his first snowboards in 1977. Sims was an avid skateboarder who made a “ snowboard” in a junior high school shop class. He made his out of carpet wood and aluminum. He glued some carpet to the top of a piece of wood and put an aluminum sheet on the bottom.

He started making snowboards in 1977 in his garage with his friend and employee Chuck Barfoot. Barfoot actually made the boards and came up with the “ Flying Yellow Banana”. It was a skateboard deck on top of a plastic shell with skegs. During 1980 Sims signed a skate-snowboarding deal with a big company called Vision Sports. Signing the deal helped Sims get out of his financial problems, but his friend Barfoot, was left out and tried to go into business for himself. He couldn’t compete with big competitors like Sims and Burton.

The first modern competitive snowboarding contest took place in Leadville, Colorado in 1981. Then snowboarding competition took off from there and became worldwide. In 1982, the first national snowboarding race was held in Suicide Six, outside of Woodstock, Vermont. Because of the conditions of the hill, the goal of the race appeared to be mostly just surviving the race. The race was on a steep icy downhill run called “ The Face”. Paul Graves put it on and Tom Simms and Jake Burton competed. Doug Bouton won first place overall.

This race marked the last time that snowboards and snurfer’s raced together. In 1983, Jake Burton puts on the national snowboarding championships in Snow Valley. A couple of months later Tom Sims holds the inaugural World Snowboarding Championships at Soda Springs Ski Bowl in Lake Tahoe. That contest featured the first contest with a half pipe. In 1986 the World Snowboarding Championships moved from Soda Springs to Colorado. In 1986, a new European snowboarding generation launched. Then the Europeans began to organize their own regional events like the Swiss Championships in St. Moritz. In 1987, a group of riders and manufacturers

formed the N. A. S. B. A. (National Association of State Boards of Accountancy) whose main goal was to create a unified World Cup tour with the Europeans. In 1988 N. A. S. B. A. got its wish and the first world cup was held in both Europe and the United States. It was the most expensive snowboarding contest ever. In 1994 everybody was happy because snowboarding was declared a Winter Olympic sport. It was finally accepted as a real competitive sport and was first seen in the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, Japan.