



***Special Olympics***

**SNOWBOARDING COACHING GUIDE**

Planning a Snowboarding Training & Competition Season



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### Goals

Realistic yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to the motivation of the athlete both at training and during competition. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans. Sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Please see the Principles of Coaching Section for additional information and exercises on goal setting.

### Benefits

- Increases athlete's level of physical fitness
- Teaches self-discipline
- Teaches the athlete sports skills that are essential to a variety of other activities
- Provides the athlete with a means for self-expression and social interaction

### Goal Setting and Motivation

#### Developing Self-Confidence through Goal Setting

Accomplishing goals at practice through repetition in settings similar to the competition environment will instill confidence. Setting goals is a joint effort between athletes and coaches. The main features of goal setting are:

1. Goals need to be structured as short-term, intermediate and long-term.
2. Goals need to be viewed as stepping stones to success.
3. Goals must be accepted by the athlete.
4. Goals need to vary in difficulty — from easily attainable to challenging.
5. Goals must be measurable.
6. Goals need to be used to establish the athlete's training and competition plan.

Athletes with or without an intellectual disability may be more motivated by accomplishing short-term goals than long-term goals; however, do not be afraid to challenge athletes. Include athletes in setting their personal goals. For example, ask the athlete, "How far do you want to jump today? Let's see how far you jumped at the last practice. What is your personal best? What do you think you can do?" Awareness of why the athlete is participating is also important when setting goals. There are participation factors that may influence motivation and goal setting:

- Age appropriateness
- Ability level
- Readiness level
- Athlete performance
- Family influence
- Peer influence
- Athlete preference

#### Performance Goals versus Outcome Goals

Effective goals focus on performance, not outcome. Performance is what the athlete controls. Outcomes are frequently controlled by others. An athlete may have an outstanding performance and not win a contest because other athletes have performed even better. Conversely, an athlete may perform poorly and still win if all other athletes perform at a lower level. If an athlete's goal is to run the course in a certain time, the athlete has greater control in achieving this goal than winning. However, the athlete has even greater control of achieving a goal if the goal is to finish the course using the correct form. This performance goal ultimately gives the athlete more control over his/her performance.



### Motivation through Goal Setting

Goal setting has proved to be one of the most simple and effective motivational devices developed for sport within the past three decades. While the concept is not new, today the techniques for effective goal setting have been refined and clarified. Motivation is all about having needs and striving to have those needs met. How can you enhance an athlete's motivation?

1. Provide more time and attention to an athlete when he/she is having difficulty learning a skill.
2. Reward small gains of achievement in skill level.
3. Develop other measures of achievement outside of winning.
4. Show your athletes that they are important to you.
5. Show your athletes that you are proud of them and excited about what they are doing.
6. Fill your athletes with self-worth.

Goals give direction. They tell us what needs to be accomplished. They increase effort, persistence and the quality of performance. Establishing goals also requires that the athlete and coach determine techniques for how to achieve those goals.

### Measurable and Specific

Effective goals are very specific and measurable. Goals stated in the form of "I want to be the best that I can be!" or "I want to improve my performance!" are vague and difficult to measure. It is positive sounding but difficult, if not impossible, to assess whether they have been reached. Measurable goals must establish a baseline of performance recorded during the past one or two weeks for them to be realistic.

### Difficult, but Realistic

Effective goals are perceived as challenging, not threatening. A challenging goal is one perceived as difficult but attainable within a reasonable amount of time and with a reasonable amount of effort or ability. A threatening goal is one perceived as being beyond one's current capacity. Realistic implies that judgment is involved. Goals based upon a baseline of performance recorded during the past one or two weeks are likely to be realistic.

### Long- versus Short-Term Goals

Both long and short-term goals provide direction, but short-term goals appear to have the greatest motivational effects. Short-term goals are more readily attainable and are stepping stones to more distant long-term goals. Unrealistic short-term goals are easier to recognize than unrealistic long-term goals. Unrealistic goals can then be modified before valuable practice time has been lost.

### Positive versus Negative Goal Setting

Positive goals direct what to do rather than what not to do. Negative goals direct our attention to the errors we wish to avoid or eliminate. Positive goals also require coaches and athletes to decide how they will reach those specific goals. Once the goal is decided, the athlete and coach must determine specific strategies and techniques that allow the goal to be successfully attained.

### Set Priorities

Effective goals are limited in number and meaningful to the athlete. Setting a limited number of goals requires that athletes and coaches decide what is important and fundamental for continued development. Establishing a few carefully selected goals also allows athletes and coaches to keep accurate records without becoming overwhelmed with record keeping.

### Mutual Goal Setting

Goal setting becomes an effective motivational device when athletes are committed to achieving those goals. When goals are imposed or established without significant input from the athletes, motivation is unlikely to be enhanced.

### Set Specific Time Lines

Target dates provide urgency to an athlete's efforts. Specific target dates tend to eliminate wishful thinking and clarify



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which goals are realistic and which are not. Timelines are especially valuable in high-risk sports where fear often promotes procrastination in learning new skills.

#### Formal versus Informal Goal Setting

Some coaches and athletes think that goals must be set in formal meetings outside of practice and require long periods of thoughtful evaluation before they are decided upon. Goals are literally progressions that coaches have been using for years, but are now expressed in measurable, performance terms rather than as vague, generalized outcomes.

#### Team versus Individual Goals

While team goals appear to have great importance for team sports, the reality is that most team goals can be broken down into individual roles or responsibilities. Each player must achieve these individual roles or responsibilities for the team to function effectively.

#### Goal Setting Domains

When asked to set goals, athletes typically focus on the learning of new skills or performances in competitions. A major role of the coach is to broaden the athlete's perception of those areas, and goal setting can be an effective tool. Goals can be set to enhance fitness, improve attendance, increase intensity, promote sportsmanship, develop team spirit, find more free time or establish consistency.

#### Goal Setting

Setting goals is a joint effort between the athlete and coach. Following are the main features of goal setting:

##### Structured into short-term and long-term

- ♦ Stepping stones to success
- ♦ Must be accepted by the athlete
- ♦ Vary in difficulty – from easily attainable to challenging
- ♦ Must be measurable

##### Short Term Objective

- ♦ Learning snowboarding in a fun environment.

##### Long Term Goal

The athlete will acquire basic snowboarding skills, appropriate social behavior and functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in snowboarding competitions.



### Assessing Goals Checklist

1. Write a goal statement.
2. Does the goal sufficiently meet the athlete's needs?
3. Is the goal positively stated? If not, rewrite it.
4. Is the goal under the athlete's control, and does it focus on that person's goals and no one else's?
5. Is the goal sufficiently important to the athlete that he or she will want to work toward achieving it? Does he/she have the time and energy to do it?
6. How will this goal make the athlete's life different?
7. What barriers might the athlete encounter in working toward this goal?
8. What more does the athlete know?
9. What does the athlete need to learn how to do?
10. What risks does the athlete need to take?



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#### Planning a Snowboarding Training & Competition Season

There will be many different skills to teach riders during the course of a season. A season-long training plan will help coaches present skills in a systematic and effective way.

#### Essential Components of Planning a Snowboarding Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in, and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. Please refer to the noted sections in each area for more in-depth information and guidance on these topics.

- Warm-ups
- Previously taught skills
- New skills
- Competition experience
- Feedback on performance

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember – when creating a training session using the key components, the progression through the session allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

1. Easy to difficult
2. Slow to fast
3. Known to unknown
4. General to specific
5. Start to finish



Principles of Effective Training Sessions

<b>Keep all athletes active</b>	Athlete needs to be an active listener
<b>Create clear, concise goals</b>	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them
<b>Give clear, concise instructions</b>	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction
<b>Record progress</b>	You and your athletes chart progress together
<b>Give positive feedback</b>	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well
<b>Provide variety</b>	Vary exercises – prevent boredom
<b>Encourage enjoyment</b>	Training and competition is fun – help keep it this way for you and your athletes
<b>Create progressions</b>	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully</li> <li>• Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it</li> <li>• General to specific – this is why I am working so hard</li> </ul>
<b>Plan maximum use of resources</b>	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
<b>Allow for individual differences</b>	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities





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### Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

- Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
- When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
- Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
- Review intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- Alter the plan according to weather in order to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
- Change activities before the athletes become bored and lose interest.
- Keep drills and activities brief so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise, even if it is rest.
- Devote the end of the practice to a group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun, always giving the athletes something to look forward to at the end of practice.
- If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
- Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next session.



### Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of snowboarding. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Snowboarding is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

- Establish clear rules for behavior at the first practice, and enforce them.
  - Keep your hands to yourself.
  - Listen to the coach.
  - When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look and Listen
  - Ask the coach before you leave the group, enter the course or ride off on your own.
- When the weather is poor, have a plan to immediately remove athletes from inclement weather.
- Make sure athletes bring water to every practice.
- Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
- Have a screwdriver or multi-tool available for on-hill adjustments.
- Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
- Choose a safe area. Do not practice in areas with rocks or holes that could cause injury. Simply telling athletes to avoid obstacles is not enough.
- Practice on slopes that are appropriate to the skill level of your athletes and out of the way of other snowboarders and/or skiers.
- Walk/ ski/ snowboard the slope and remove unsafe objects. Remove anything that an athlete may run into.
- Review your first aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first aid and CPR on or very near the slope during practice and competitions.
- Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning of each practice to prevent muscle injuries.
- Train to improve the general fitness level of your riders. Physically fit riders are less likely to get injured. Make your practices active.



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#### Snowboarding Attire

Appropriate snowboarding attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, you should discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, blue jeans are not proper snowboarding attire for any event. Explain that the athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or collegiate snowboarding training or competitions, and point out the attire being worn. You should set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Clothing must be appropriate to the weather conditions. Incorporate the “25° F rule” when training and competing. This means that if the temperature outside is 40° F (4.4° C), dress as if it is 65° F (18.3° C). This is how warm you will feel from the heat generated by your workout. It is best to dress in layers so you can add or subtract clothes as needed. Always bring too many clothes instead of too few.

#### Socks

Socks are a personal preference, but it is suggested that a wool or blended-material ski or hiking sock be used for snowboarding. Definitely avoid cotton socks, because they absorb moisture, are poor insulators and will result in blisters. It is recommended that liner socks made of synthetic or natural fibers be worn underneath insulated socks. The liners will help wick away perspiration and moisture from the foot and add more insulation layers of air. The liners will also absorb the friction between the feet and outer socks to prevent blisters.

#### Boots

Proper snowboard boots are perhaps the most important piece of equipment a snowboarder will own. Years ago, simple Sorel or pack-type boots were used. Today, sport specific snowboard boots are both available and recommended. Snowboard boots are made specifically to fit into today’s snowboard bindings, and to give more support as well as better alignment than pack-type boots. The extra expense of purchasing these boots is well worth it.

Certain types of step-in bindings require the use of a compatible step-in boots, as discussed in the Binding Systems section below. Make sure all of your pieces fit together properly before going to the hill.

Snowboard Boot



Alpine Snowboard Boot



Alpine Boot Profile





### Choosing Proper Boot Fit

Boot fitting is best done by a reputable shop technician. If you will be fitting boots for your athlete, try to keep the following suggestions in mind. Boots should fit snugly, but should not pinch at any one point. When the athlete is laced in and standing erect, the toes should touch inside of the front of the boot. Have the athlete then stand with feet approximately shoulder width apart, and bend at the knees. When the athlete is lowered into this position, the toes should not touch in the front of the boot. Try NOT to purchase boots with extra room, as they will tend to pack out and become roomier with use.

### Snowboarding Attire

Incorporate the three-layer system. It's simple and it works well.

#### Inside Layer

The inside (or inner or base) layer is the wicking layer. Long underwear made of synthetic materials, natural silk or treated materials will remove perspiration from the body. Both the upper and lower body should be covered by a wicking layer. A shirt that covers the neck and fits snugly at the wrists is an effective way to conserve body heat.

#### Middle Layer

The middle layer should be an insulating layer and consist of wool (sweater or pants), fleece (top or bottom) or treated material. Synthetic insulations or phase-change treatments have also proven to be lightweight yet very effective. This layer provides warmth by trapping a layer of air around the body. Note: Except in extremely cold conditions, the legs do not need and would be constricted by this layer.

#### Outer Layer

Wind and snow are blocked by the weatherproof outer layer. For the legs, snowboard pants are appropriate. If snowboard pants are not available, choose looser-fitting synthetic sweatpants. A snowboarding or ski jacket works well on top. Clothing made with laminates that are waterproof, windproof and breathable (allowing perspiration to leave the body) can be useful. Be aware that absorbent clothing such as cotton sweatpants will provide little protection from the wind and cold. Snowboard specific pants and jackets have many useful features that make snowboarding more comfortable.

Consider the ability of your athlete and the weather when deciding upon clothing for competition. For optimal competition, strive to dress your athlete in clothing that is lightweight, breathable, layered and slick on the outer surface, and that allows unrestricted movement. Do not neglect an extra set of warm, dry clothes to change into for athletes whose competition clothes will get wet with perspiration and/or snow after competition.





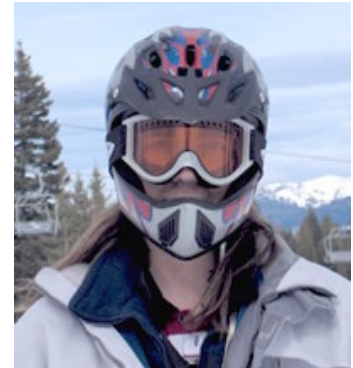
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#### Accessories

Gloves or mittens with the same three layers—synthetic base, thermal insulation layer and wind/waterproof outer layer—are especially appropriate for snowboarding due to the amount of direct contact with the snow. Snowboard specific gloves or mittens are best. Snowboard or ski goggles are recommended to protect the eyes from damaging ultraviolet rays, glare, wind and falling snow. Polarized lenses will cut glare, and high-quality goggles will be less likely to fog. Remember that if the goggles fog up, a goggle-friendly soft handkerchief should be used.



#### Helmets

A helmet approved for alpine ski racing by Federation International du Ski (FIS) is required on all people in official training and competition, for all ability levels in all events.





## Snowboarding Equipment

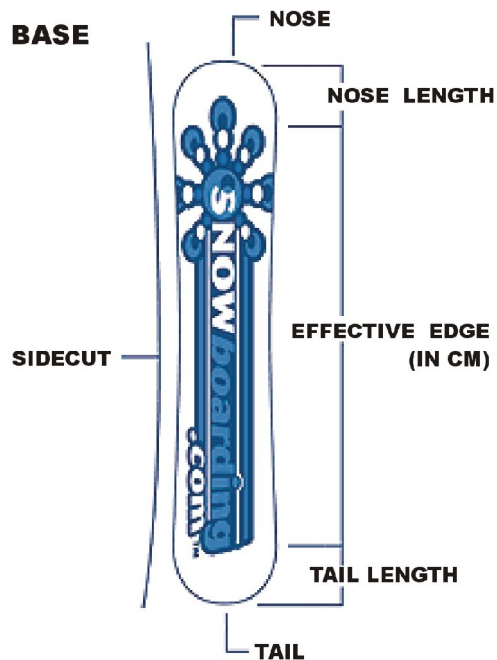
Special care should be taken when choosing equipment for your athlete. There are many inferior types of boots and snowboards available on the market today. This guide will help you to choose equipment that will not only enhance the learning and performance of your athlete, but will help to ensure safety as well.

Time should be taken with your athlete to help him or her try on all equipment in a dry indoor environment prior to on-snow training. Spend some time showing your athlete the various parts of the snowboard, bindings and boots as well as any winter clothing that is to be worn. Prior to on-snow training, your athlete should be comfortable with wearing and adjusting clothing, and should be familiar with the process of putting on boots and getting into bindings.

### Snowboards

There are three types of snowboards available today: freestyle, freeride and race boards. All use similar types of construction. It is suggested that a reputable board shop be consulted when purchasing a new snowboard. There are many snowboards on the market made of plastic that are not allowed at ski areas. A good quality snowboard will be constructed like a ski. It will have metal edges and a P-tex base. Consult a reputable shop in your area if you aren't sure. If your athlete will be using a snowboard that has been handed down or given to him or her, it is suggested that it be taken to a certified technician to be tuned and checked for proper fit and safety.

### Parts of a Snowboard

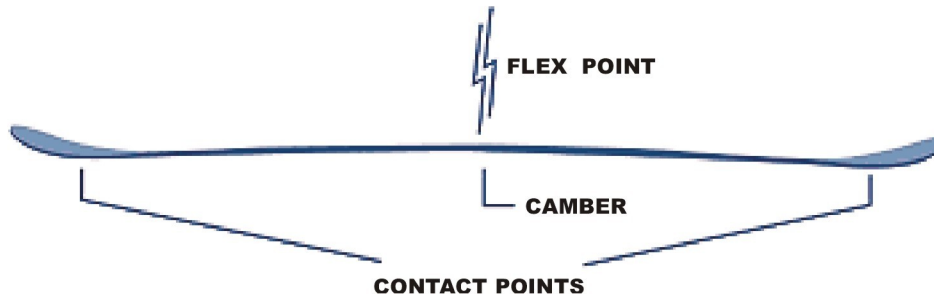




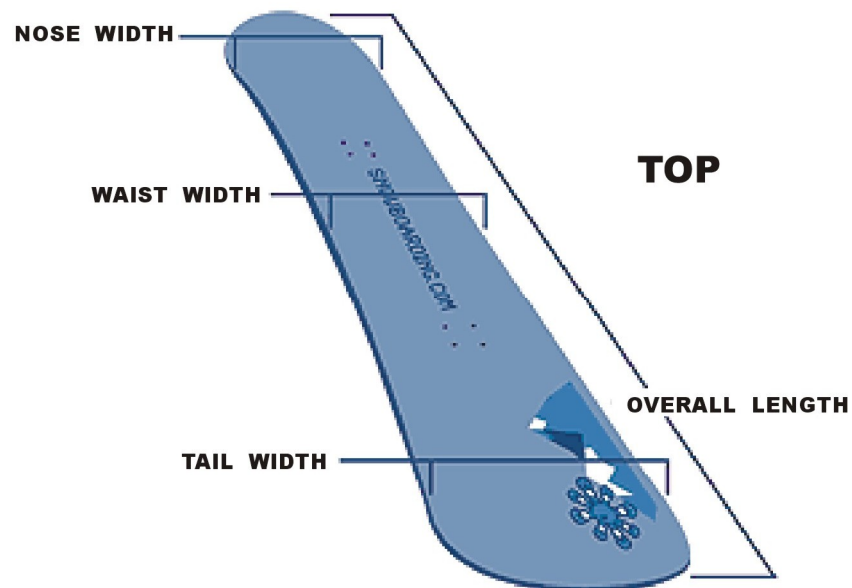
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Side View



Top View



(Pictures are provided courtesy of [www.snowboarding.com](http://www.snowboarding.com) )





### Freestyle Snowboard

Freestyle boards are the most popular and most widely used. While there are many types of freestyle boards, they tend to have similar characteristics. They are wider, more stable and more forgiving to ride. Freestyle boards are usually symmetrical in shape both from tip to tail and from side to side. They have a softer flex, which makes them easier to turn. Both ends have a shovel, and these boards are constructed to be ridden both forward and backward (fakie). This type of board is suggested for the beginning rider.



### Freeride Snowboard

Freeride boards look similar to freestyle boards, but usually are not symmetrical from tip to tail, and they place the rider slightly behind the center of the board when riding. Sometimes referred to as “directional,” these boards tend to have a stiffer, less forgiving flex and are meant to be ridden primarily in one direction (although they can be ridden fakie).

### Race Snowboard

Race boards tend to be narrower in shape and are usually slightly longer. They generally have a stiffer flex, and while these boards offer a higher level of performance, they are more difficult for the beginning rider to use, and are reserved for more advanced riders. These boards are made in both symmetrical and asymmetrical styles. They tend to have a shovel only on the nose and are made to ride only in one direction.







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### Binding Systems

There are three types of binding systems on the market today. They are the ratchet-strap binding system (the most popular in use today and the most readily available), the step-in binding system and the hard plate system.



### Ratchet-strap Binding System

The most widely used binding on the market today, this system incorporates the use of snowboard boots that are fastened into the bindings by using two or three ratchet straps. This system was one of the first used, and continues to be the most popular. The advantages are availability and cost. These bindings will most likely be the easiest to find at a reasonable cost. The major disadvantage is that they are the most difficult to get into and out of.

Care should be taken when purchasing this type of system, in that many cheap plastic imitations are available. Care should also be taken to ensure that the boots purchased are compatible and fit securely into the binding. Once tightened, the boot should fit snugly, and it should not move around in the binding when fastened in.



### Step-In Binding System

This is a relatively new system. It offers a significant advantage in terms of getting in and out quickly. The major disadvantages are availability and cost. Each step-in system requires a specific boot and the accompanying hardware. Step-in systems are made so that the boot can be secured without having to bend over. Some types of step-in systems tend to accumulate snow, which makes them difficult to use. Ask your shop if you're unsure.





### Hard Plate Binding System

While easy to get into, this system is the least common among snowboards, and the most difficult to find. It also tends to be more difficult to use and more expensive. A plate system utilizes a hard, ski-type boot that locks into a plate binding. While these bindings are more performance related, they tend to be more difficult for the novice to use. Hard plate bindings are often the system of choice for serious snowboard racers.

Each of the snowboard binding systems available has its own advantages and disadvantages. The primary consideration should be purchasing quality equipment that will be the safest, most durable and most convenient to use for your athlete.



### Choosing Proper Snowboard Fit

Each board has characteristics that determine how it will perform for different people. Longer boards are more stable, while shorter boards will be easier to turn. Wider boards are more stable but aren't as performance oriented. Softer flexing boards are more forgiving and better suited for smaller riders. A stiffer board is more difficult to flex and will be better for heavier and stronger boarders. In general, a board when set on end should reach a point somewhere between the rider's chin and nose. Again this is a generalization, and care should be taken to match the board to the size, strength and type of rider.

### Protective Equipment

The sport of snowboarding often involves falling down. Some basic protective equipment can make falling safer and less painful for the athlete. A good helmet is very important to protect the head during all kinds of falls and is required for training and competition. The helmet should be tight enough that it doesn't move if the athlete shakes his or her head, yet not so tight as to be uncomfortable. Looking for helmets in a reputable ski shop is recommended. A set of knee pads and/or wrist guards will also help the athlete avoid injury. Some ski shops will sell wrist guards that fit under gloves, but any skateboarding or rollerblading wrist guards will work. Optional equipment to consider: thigh and tailbone pads (such as a hockey girdle) and goggles.



**NOTE:** If renting equipment or attire from a mountain or ski rental facility, make sure you are fitted by a trained professional as they will get you outfitted with the most appropriate equipment for yourself or your rider.

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