The History of Snowboarding
Snowboarding has been around since the 1920s, when boys and men would tie plywood or wooden planks from barrels to their feet using clotheslines and horse reins in order to steer themselves down hills. Modern snowboarding began in 1965 when Sherman Poppen, an engineer in Muskegon, Michigan, invented a toy for his daughter by fastening two skis together and attaching a rope to one end so she would have some control as she stood on the board and glided downhill. Dubbed the "snurfer" (combining snow and surfer), the toy proved so popular among his daughter's friends that Poppen licensed the idea to a manufacturer that sold about a million snurfers over the next decade. And, in 1966 alone over half a million snurfers were sold. In the early 1970s, Poppen organized snurfing competitions at a Michigan ski resort that attracted enthusiasts from all over the country. One of those early pioneers was Tom Sims, a devotee of skateboarding (a sport born in the 1950s when kids attached roller skate wheels to small boards that they steered by shifting their weight). As an eighth grader in Haddonfield, New Jersey, in the 1960s, Sims crafted a snowboard in his school shop class by gluing carpet to the top of a piece of wood and attaching aluminum sheeting to the bottom. He produced commercial snowboards in the mid ’70s. During this same time, Dimitrije Milovich—an American surfing enthusiast who had also enjoyed sliding down snowy hills on cafeteria trays during his college years in upstate New York—constructed a snowboard called “Winterstick,” inspired by the design and feel of a surfboard. Articles about his invention in such mainstream magazines as Newsweek helped publicize the young sport. In 1979, the first ever World Snurfing Championship was held at Pando Winter Sports Park near Grand Rapids, Michigan. Jake Burton Carpenter, came from Vermont to compete with a snowboard of his own design. There were many protests from the competitors about Jake entering with a non-snurfer board. Paul Graves, the top snurfer at the time, and others, advocated that Jake be allowed to race. A “modified” division was created and won by Jake as the sole entrant. That race was considered the first competition for snowboards and is the start of what has now become competitive snowboarding.
Also during this same period, in 1977, Jake Burton Carpenter, a Vermont native who had enjoyed snowboarding since the age of 14, impressed the crowd at a Michigan snowboarding competition with bindings he had designed to secure his feet to the board. That same year, he founded Burton Snowboards in Londonderry, Vermont. The “snowboards” were made of wooden planks that were flexible and had water ski foot traps. Very few people picked up snowboarding because the price of the board was considered too high at $38, but eventually Burton would become the biggest snowboarding company in the business. In the spring of 1976 Welsh skateboarders Jon Roberts and Pete Matthews developed a plywood deck with foot bindings for use on the Dry Ski Slope at the school camp, Ogmore-by-Sea, Wales. UK. Further development of the board was limited as Matthews suffered serious injury while boarding at Ogmore and access for the boarders was declined following the incident. The ‘deck’ was much shorter than current snowboards. Bevelled edges and a convex, polyurethane varnished bottom to the board, allowed quick downhill movement, but limited turning ability.
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Competitive Events

Slopestyle: Competitors perform tricks while descending a course, moving around, over, across, up, or down terrain features. The course is full of obstacles including boxes, rails, jumps, jibs (includes anything the board or rider can slide across). Slope-style contests consist of choosing your own line in a terrain park using a variety of boxes, jibs and jumps. To win a slope-style contest one must pick the best and most difficult line in the terrain park and have a smooth flowing line of tricks performed on the obstacles.

Big Air: Big air competitions are contests where riders perform tricks after launching off a man made jump built specifically for the event. Competitors perform tricks in the air, aiming to attain sizable height and distance, all while securing a clean landing. Many competitions also require the rider to do a trick to win the prize. Not all competitions call for a trick to win the gold; some intermittent competitions are based solely on height and distance of the launch of the snowboarder.

Half-Pipe: The half-pipe is a semi-circular ditch or purpose built ramp (that is usually on a downward slope), between 8 and 23 feet (7.0 m) deep. Competitors perform tricks while going from one side to the other and while in the air above the sides of the pipe.

Boardercross: In Boardercross, also known as “Boarder X” and “Snowboard X”, several riders (usually 4, but sometimes 6) race down a course similar to a motorcycle motocross track (with jumps, berms and other obstacles constructed out of snow on a downhill course).

Big mountain & Freeride: A big mountain contest is one that takes place in open terrain, and challenges riders to find their way down the mountain with the most style and difficulty. Big mountain events usually take place in powder snow conditions in closed off areas of resorts or in the backcountry.

Rail Jam: A rail jam is a jib contest. Riders perform tricks on rails, boxes, pipes, wall rides, and several other creative features. Rail jams are done in a small area, usually with two or three choices of features for the rider to hit on a run. They are sometimes done in an urban setting, due to the relatively small amount of snow required.

Slalom: Slalom snowboarding is akin to slalom skiing, where riders must complete a downhill course constructed by laying out a series of gates; they must pass between the two poles forming the gates. As with skiing, there are several types of courses: slalom, giant slalom, and super G. In slalom, boarders race downhill through sets of gates that force extremely tight turns, requiring plenty of technical skill. Giant slalom uses a much longer course with gates set further apart, resulting in even higher speeds. Super G is the fastest of all, with speeds of up to 45 mph.
The snowboarding way of life came about as a natural response to the culture from which it emerged. Early on, there was a rebellion against skiing culture and the view that snowboarders were inferior. Skiers did not easily accept this new culture on their slopes. The two cultures contrasted each other in several ways including how they spoke, acted, and their entire style of clothing. Snowboarders first embraced the punk and later the hip-hop look into their style. Words such as "dude", "gnarly", and "Shred the Gnar" are some examples of words used in the snowboarding culture. Snowboarding subculture became a crossover between the urban and suburban styles on snow, which made an easy transition from surfing and skateboarding culture over to snowboarding culture. The early stereotypes of snowboarding have been known to be "lazy", "grungy", "punk", "stoners", "troublemakers", and numerous others, many of which are associated with skateboarding and surfing as well. However, these stereotypes may be considered "out of style". Snowboarding has become a sport that encompasses a very diverse international based crowd and fanbase, so much so that it's hard to stereotype such a large community. Reasons for these dying stereotypes include how mainstream and popular the sport has become, with the shock factor of snowboarding’s quick take off on the slopes wearing off. Skiers and snowboarders are becoming used to each other, showing more respect to each other on the mountain. "The typical stereotype of the sport is changing as the demographics change". Snowboarding culture thrives in the communities.

Snowboarding in the Media

Snowboarding films have become a main part of progression in the sport. Each season, many films are released, usually in Autumn. These are made by many snowboard specific video production companies as well as manufacturing companies that use these films as a form of advertisement. Snowboarding videos usually contain video footage of professional riders sponsored by companies. Snowboarding films are also used as documentation of snowboarding and showcasing of current trends and styles of the sport. Snowboard magazines are integral in promoting the sport, although less so with the advent of the internet age. Photo incentives are written into many professional riders’ sponsorship contracts giving professionals not only a publicity but a financial incentive to have a photo published in a magazine. Snowboard magazine staff travel with professional riders throughout the winter season and cover travel, contests, lifestyle, rider and company profiles, and product reviews. Snowboard magazines have recently made a push to expand their brands to the online market, and there has also been a growth in online-only publications. Popular magazines include Transworld Snowboarding (USA), Snowboarder Magazine (USA), Snowboard Magazine (USA), Whitelines (UK), Pleasure (Germany), Method (Europe), Onboard (Europe), WhiteRoom Magazine (BG), Snowboard Canada (Canada), NZ Snowboarder, (New Zealand) and Snowboard Colorado, (USA). Snowboarding video games provide interactive entertainment on and off season. Most games for this genre have been made for consoles, such as the Xbox and PlayStation. A plethora of online casual snowboarding games also exist. More recently games in this genre have been made for mobile devices.