



LINDA GUERRETTE

THE ARC OF INTERSKI:

How International Event Improves YOUR Member Experience

By Peter Kray

While much of your life in winter may revolve around your local ski or ride area, in late March the epicenter of ski and snowboard instruction worldwide will be 100

miles north of the Arctic Circle as Interski 2023 converges on Levi, Finland. The PSIA-AASI National Team will be there in full force, building upon the educational tenets it's known for at home and abroad.

Held every four years, the Interski Congress brings instructors together from around the world to share educational innovations and top teaching techniques. It offers the PSIA-AASI National Team an opportunity to compare our teaching curriculum with the approaches of other countries and bring home new ideas to improve PSIA-AASI members professional development.

For more than half a century, the event has provided PSIA-AASI with a stage on which to introduce breakthroughs – such as the landmark Skills Concept, which focused on the fundamentals of pressure control, edging, and rotary movements. Interski also allows let us finetune America's ongoing focus on “student-centered teaching,” which puts the emphasis of each lesson on the students' experience and what motivates their learning. Here's a closer look at the

big ideas the last four Interskis produced and how these concepts impact how you ski or ride, teach, and train.

Beginning at Interski 2011, in St. Anton, Austria, and continuing into Interski 2023 – which takes place March 26-31 at Levi Resort in the Lapland region of northern Finland – PSIA-AASI's embrace of student-centered teaching has taken quantum leaps, especially in how the association meets the needs and goals of each student as the learn discipline-specific technique.

The following timeline of the innovations PSIA-AASI brought to each of the previous three Interskis – including Ushuaia, Argentina in 2015, and Pamporovo, Bulgaria in 2019 – illustrates how that message has evolved, and how each event has provided tangible, state-of-the-art resources for PSIA-AASI members.



SCOTT MARKIEWITZ

PSIA-AASI Adaptive Team members at Interski 2011.



CESAR PLOTTO

AASI Snowboard Team member riding at Ushuaia, Argentina.

INTERSKI 2011, ST. ANTON, AUSTRIA

Theme: Do It. Feel It. Be It.

Big Idea: PSIA-AASI will teach any student, in any discipline, on whatever equipment they choose to ride.

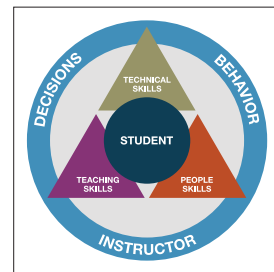
- ▶ PSIA-AASI was the only country to bring a team representing every discipline – including adaptive, alpine, cross country, snowboard, and telemark – embracing every aspect of the snowsports experience.
- ▶ PSIA-AASI and France were the only countries to hold on-snow fat-ski clinics to explore new equipment designs.
- ▶ PSIA-AASI also focused on freestyle ski and snowboard clinics to celebrate individual expression.
- ▶ **How members benefited from the event:** The PSIA-AASI National Team was asked how they help members present specific technical “how-to” information for each snowsports discipline. In response, the association developed new technical manuals for alpine, cross country, snowboard, and telemark instructors, clarifying the basic concepts of good technique.

INTERSKI 2015, USHUAIA, ARGENTINA

Theme: Ski and Ride at the End of the World.

Big Idea: Introduction to the Learning Connection Model.

- ▶ PSIA-AASI presented a holistic overview of good teaching, which emphasizes that great lessons rely on the instructor’s ability to offer a blend of people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills.
- ▶ PSIA-AASI reinforced its commitment to freestyle instruction with expanded indoor and on-snow clinics.
- ▶ Taking the international lead for adaptive instruction, PSIA-AASI introduced the first iteration of what would become the *Fundamental Mechanics of Alpine Skiing Across Adaptive Disciplines*, which would also later inform the seven different online e-learning courses, including *Teaching Adaptive Snowsports*.
- ▶ **How members benefited from the event:** Inspired by conversations that occurred during the event, PSIA-AASI produced the *Teaching Snowsports Manual*, the *Freestyle Technical Manual*, and the *Adaptive Alpine Technical Manual*.



The Learning Connection Model

INTERSKI 2019, PAMPOROVO, BULGARIA

Event Theme: Future. Snowsports.

Big Idea: The future of instruction lies in using people skills to build a deeper connection between the instructor and student.



The PSIA Cross Country Team in Bulgaria.



The AASI Snowboard Team is primed for Interski 2023 taking place in Levi, Finland.

- ▶ The PSIA-AASI National Team members asked themselves, “What makes a great snowsports instructor?” to showcase the ongoing development of the Learning Connection Model.
- ▶ This event showcased the ONEteam concept – the national team’s approach that focuses on cross-discipline communication, collaboration, and consolidation to support greater consistency and enhance the member experience.
- ▶ Team presentations included an emphasis on children’s instruction, especially in snowboarding, with the AASI Snowboard Team teaching both indoor and outdoor classes to Bulgarian schoolchildren that incorporated training aids developed by Burton as part of its Riglet Park experience. Indoor presentations showcased how PSIA-AASI’s digital platform opens the door for members to earn continuing education credits online, and also how people skills are as accessible and trainable as good technique.
- ▶ **How members benefited from the event:** After the event, PSIA-AASI developed *Teaching Children Snowsports* and expanded e-learning courses to enhance professional development opportunities.

INTERSKI 2023, LEVI, FINLAND

Event Theme: The Guest Experience Is Everything.

Big Idea: How instructors continuously adapt their approach to remain student-centered.



- ▶ At this event, PSIA-AASI is poised to offer significant contributions on the guest-experience event theme, including indoor and on-snow presentations on such topics as creating community, collaboration and adaptability, people skills, and how the outer ring of the Learning Connection Model – Instructor Decisions and Behavior – impacts the guest experience.
- ▶ PSIA Alpine Team member Ann Schorling will present a keynote address at the event – “Increasing Gender Equity in Snowsports Instruction” – on how the snowsports industry can promote growth by appealing to the interests of women who ski and ride, or want to learn to ski and ride.

- ▶ **How members will benefit from the event:** PSIA-AASI has created a wealth of member resources in the span of the last four Interskis, in service of the Learning Connection Model, new certification standards, performance guides, and ongoing e-learning opportunities. All are available to members right now, and they will be in the spotlight during PSIA-AASI’s Interski 2023 presentation. Our association’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion will also factor into conversations and collaboration at Interski and beyond.
- ▶ “Where we go in the future will be based, in large measure, on what we learn in Finland,” said PSIA-AASI National Team Coach Jeb Boyd. “A lot the breakthroughs that moved PSIA-AASI forward were formed by the team attending this event.” **32**

Peter Kray is the lead writer for PSIA-AASI, focusing on emerging ski and snowboard trends, education, and on-snow innovation. He skis and telemarks out of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is the author of *American Snow* and *The God of Skiing*.
Email: pkray@thesnowpros.org

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Come March, PSIA-AASI will share event news from Levi, Finland, on PSIA-AASI’s social media channels, and on the Interski page. Use these codes to stay up-to-date.

#Interski2023



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