



CHALLENGE

MAGAZINE

DISABLED SPORTS USA • FALL '06

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"IF I CAN DO THIS, I CAN DO ANYTHING." SM

Hitting the Slopes with Adaptive Adventures All Mountain Ski Camps

The 2007 ski season looks to be the biggest and best ever for the Adaptive Adventures All Mountain Camp Series. These specialty camps are designed for intermediate and advanced skiers with physical disabilities to push their limits, improve their ski skills, and establish new friendships.

Featured events in the 2006-2007 series include the annual Vail All Mountain camp, Stars of Tomorrow youth ski camp, Sarah Will Monoski Camp, and Steamboat All Mountain camp, which features Powdercat skiing on the final day of the event. Sponsored by Steamboat Powdercats, the trip enables skiers of all abilities to access some of the most pristine backcountry in Colorado as they ski on fresh snow that would normally be off-limits to disabled skiers, making for a very unique experience.

In addition to these marquee events, Adaptive Adventures will continue to support other organizations throughout the country to create and enhance similar ski camps. This year, collaborations will include the 7th Annual "Expand Your Horizons!" ski camp in Telluride, hosted by Telluride Adaptive Sports, and the 4th Annual Great Lakes Monoski Madness Camp, hosted by Courage Duluth. For these two camps, Adaptive Adventures will provide organizational and technical assistance to improve overall participation and quality. Throughout the ski season, Adaptive also offers resources to a number of other specialty ski events by providing instructors, volunteers, equipment, and administrative assistance.

"What originally began as one collaborative camp in

Telluride has since turned into a defined product with growing demand by adaptive skiers from across the country. As the camps have grown, we have started to include a wider range of disabled individuals, such as men and women of the armed forces and children," said Matt Feeney, Adaptive's ski school director.

"If it's not one of our four marquee events, Adaptive's involvement

varies from event to event and includes arranging transportation, soliciting donors, recruiting participants, offering instructors and volunteer assistance, and providing adaptive ski equipment."

Feeney co-founded Adaptive Adventures in 1999 with Joel Berman, who currently serves as the organization's executive director. Both men know first-hand the importance of increasing awareness and participation in disabled sports and outdoor recreational events.

"Matt and I are able to put together a camp for adaptive athletes through the eyes, mindset, and experiences of individuals living with physical challenges. This makes our All Mountain camps a one-of-a-kind experience," said Berman.



Photos courtesy of Adaptive Adventures

Early on, Berman and Feeney believed that offering ski camps would be a great way for adaptive skiers to improve their skills, as well as meet individuals facing similar challenges in a fun, social setting.

"If you get the right people in the right setting, everyone feeds off each other and pushes one another to be better. There's just a lot of camaraderie and spirit at the camps between skiers of all abilities, including newly injured veterans, individuals born with disabilities, and all of the staff and volunteers," said Feeney.

Unlike developmental ski camps that focus mainly on racing,

Adaptive's All Mountain camps highlight high-end recreational skiing and concentrate on skill development, while seeking a variety of terrain and conditions. The focus of Adaptive's All Mountain camps is on technique and adaptability rather than speed.

"Many ski areas offer wonderful beginning programs in adaptive skiing, but we try to take our participants' skiing experience to the next

level by creating a truly unique experience for participants, volunteers, and the community," added Feeney.

Taking the camps "to the next level" is done through the use of top-level coaches and skiers, with and without disabilities. This season's camps will feature top names such as Sarah Will (13-time Paralympic Gold Medalist), Greg Mannino (Gold Medalist and World Champion), Bob Emerson (ex-member of USDST), Dan Metivier (ex-member USDST), and Kevin Jardine (ex-coach USDST). In addition, all of the camps feature disabled skiers from around the United States, including Iraq-war veteran Ed Salau, a resident of North Carolina.

In 2004, Salau lost his left leg while serving our country.



While recovering at the Walter Reed Medical Center, he learned about Adaptive's All Mountain camps through a brief distributed to patients at the center. Six weeks after his injury, Salau was in Vail skiing for the first time at the Vail All Mountain camp, without so much as a prosthetic leg or any previous skiing experience.

"Thanks to Adaptive Adventures, I was introduced to adaptive snow skiing, and I've had the awesome opportunity to get the wind back in my face and have a blast doing it," said Salau. "The mentoring that I received from Adaptive's staff and volunteers has truly changed my life. The reason I will keep coming to the camps is that we are taught advanced techniques and receive personalized training like every other able-bodied person."

Adaptive Adventures' All Mountain camps welcome disabled members of the military, both young and old. Several of



the camps raise money specifically to sponsor the participation of disabled armed forces members and their families. Adaptive Adventures also provides resources to national disabled veterans at events such as The Disabled American Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass and The Hartford Ski Spectacular in Breckenridge, both in Colorado.

"The focus of the camps is on having fun with other skiers, regardless of ability, and our goal is to make people better skiers in all conditions and on all terrain,"

noted Berman. "At Adaptive Adventures, we believe freedom comes through mobility, and skiing is certainly one of the sports that makes this idea a reality."

To learn more about the upcoming 2006-2007 Ski events or to sign up to attend, visit www.AdaptiveAdventures.org or call 866.679.2770

TASP Disability Awareness Project Becoming an Annual Tradition



Telluride Adaptive Sports Program (TASP) continues its Disability Awareness Project, which has proven to be an educational success over the past two years. This innovative program exposes local school students to people with disabilities, and to TASP's adaptive ski program. Through learning activities conducted in the classroom and on the slopes, students are introduced to adaptive equipment and teaching techniques and to folks who have physical and cognitive disabilities. The Disability Awareness Project teaches kids that people with disabilities are regular people who enjoy activities, such as skiing, as much as they do. Telluride Intermediate School fifth graders and Telluride Mountain School seventh graders participated in the formal training. Sixth graders, who participated last year, were offered an optional refresher course. All students may volunteer as peer ski buddies for children with disabilities. The seventh graders skied with the Navajo group from St. Michael's School and several sixth graders skied with the Wounded Warrior's Project for troops wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq. The program is funded by Just for Kids and the Telluride Foundation.



Photo courtesy of Skye Thompson

Ski Camp at Telluride Adaptive Sports

Telluride Adaptive Sports' ski camp, "Expand Your Horizons!," is designed to broaden the skiing potential of intermediate to advanced skiers by offering a variety of coaches and styles who emphasize good technique. By experimenting and practicing new and different technical skills, breakthroughs and improvements occur each day. The idea is that a few new racers may be identified in the process. This year's camp is slated for Feb. 5-8, and includes video analysis, a NASTAR race, a tour of the ski mountain, individual feedback, and après-ski events!

Cost of the program is \$325 for four days, and includes lift tickets. Participants who cannot attend the entire four days can pay \$100 per day, which also includes a daily lift ticket. For family members or friends who accompany skiers, the cost is \$30.

For more information, contact Ryan Keyes 970.728.7537, or email tasp@tellurideadaptivesports.org.