

HOW SKIERS ARE STUPID ABOUT SNOWBOARDING

(Night Presents)

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I know that even before you start reading this, you skiers are already a little ticked off. After all, you think the snowboarders are dumb. I am not saying snowboarding is better than skiing, that's not what this article is about.

As I drive to Lake Tahoe week after week, year after year I have noticed an interesting phenomenon. Not only are there more snowboards on the roofs of cars than before, but also the number of co-mingled roofs, that is, snowboards and skis together, has increased. At the present I would say it is at least 35-50%.

If you are a skier and you ride with boarders, you may be stupid about snowboarding.

Firstly I am presuming that you want to stay with your boarder friends on the mountain. If this is the case you need to realize some things about boarding you maybe ignorant of. Your snowboarding friends may not tell you this information so that's why I am writing it. This article is not about misunderstanding snowboard language or styles it's about understanding a little more about snowboarding so that you can ski with your snowboard friends.

Waiting

Yes you may have to wait at times for the boarders. Of course we boarders also wait for you. After we put our boots on we can actually walk somewhat normal, unlike the Frankenstein -type gait typical of skiers. “Hey wait for you at the top of the stairs.”

Getting to the ski area

Boards are wider and generally have more bulky bindings. Take this into account when loading your roof rack or putting it into the car. Protect the base; you can't put the two bases together like skis.

Getting on the lift

Yikes you are a skier, you just click in and push into the line. Wait a minute where is your boarder friend? Oh yeah he is attaching his front binding to his foot. Then attaching a leash. Then he has to push with his back leg to the lift line. It looks clumsy because it is clumsy. On some lifts the approach is uphill, we really enjoy that. Ok now it's time to get on the chair. Some boarders prefer a particular position on the chair. Did you think to ask, of course you didn't! Of course, it is the boarders' job to tell you if their verbal skills permit. I usually like the right most position because I buckle in on the chair. Then *I have to wait* for my skier friends exiting to put on their poles.

Getting off the lift

Of course snowboarders have more problems than skiers doing this. Have you ever tried getting off the lift with only one foot snapped in? It's not that easy sometimes you fall. It does get easier with experience. So give the boarders their space. You may even ask if they have a problem getting off (that is getting off the lift). Many skiers will ask which direction a boarder is getting off on, this is good. My favorite answer is, "just which ever way I don't fall".

GOING DOWN

OK skier, you are off the chair and ready to go, maybe you even started down the hill. Wait a minute your snowboarder friend is just buckling in. Do not get too far away, that is unless you are trying to ditch them. If the snow is particularly chunky or weird the boarder may especially have trouble getting in the binding, particularly if it is a step in type. Newer boarders will probably have more trouble with the bindings.

Going up

On the trails skiers need to be cognizant that **snowboards do not like to go uphill**. Therefore if you are riding together, do not make sudden decisions about switching trails or directions without understanding the slope. If it is an upgrade or flat, this can be problematic for boarders. You need to think about this ahead of time.

Recommendation: You may let them lead the way or discuss the direction you are going **before** you go.

Flats

You two plankers you are so cavalier with your poles and all!! Flat spots and flat traverses are difficult for boarders and they can get stuck and may have to take one or both feet out. This becomes more of a problem when the snow is warm. Be aware of this.

Recommendation: Let them lead the way so you can assess their progress. Lend them a pole or pull them while you are skating or going by. If you know the area well, advise the boarder when they have to pick up speed.

Catwalks

By this I mean the really thin trails that lead back somewhere. It is not that difficult for skiers to go pretty much straight down. After all you are on two skis with poles. Boarders, on the other hand, usually like to keep stable by switching edges, which may mean going a little side to side on these narrow areas. Give them space and, if passing, call out which side you are on.

Blindside

Because snowboarding mechanics are different than with skiing, there is an approximate 120 degree 'blind spot' on the boarders back side. This creates plenty of problems on the hill, because an unusual effort needs to be made by the snowboarder to turn and look. Of course if you have great neck motion, by seeing your chiropractor regularly, you can move your head to this blind spot easier. It really is the job of the snowboarder to look, but, as we all know, that does not always happen. So if you are passing, or on the same trail as a boarder and in this 'blind' area, be cognizant that they may not see you. Call out if it looks like they are too close.....nicely.

Communication

If you are skiing and talking to a snowboarder, there is a good chance they cannot hear you. In my experience, snowboards make more noise on the snow and this interferes with hearing what you are saying.

Stopping

Again, you skiers have poles; you can stop, rest and remain upright easily. The reason you see so many boarders sitting is that it is much more difficult to stop and stand in one place on a snowboard, particularly on a slope. When I do try to stop, frequently there is some slipping going on, again making it more difficult to converse. When you get started again, you'll have to wait for the boarder to get up.

Moguls

Again the presumption is that you are trying to ski with your boarder. You may want to check with them if you are going down some gnarly bump run. Most snowboarders do not like these.

Ice

If the conditions are icy, the snowboarder is distinctly disadvantaged. After all we only have a single edge, which is generally shorter. Also there are no poles. Be aware of these factors when skiing with a boarder.

Radios

These little things can be really annoying, BUT they can also be great. If you lose your snowboarder (or other skier) you can contact them. That is, unless you are at a giant resort like Heavenly and they happen to be over a ridge. Make sure you have specific frequency you are tuned into. Also a protocol like turning the radio on after 5 minutes of being apart is a good idea.

Clothes

Yes the pants and gloves need to be waterproof. Loose fitting clothing works better in boarding. While the gap in styles has become more narrow, there are some different requirements for the snowboarders.

Well, hopefully this will help you and your snowboard friends to ski better together. With your boarder friends ,understand them, pity them, laugh at them, or my suggestion, just have fun with them!!

Be on the lookout for the upcoming article' HOW SNOWBOARDERS ARE STUPID ABOUT SKIING".