



PROVIDING EDUCATION, CERTIFICATION, AND  
RECOGNITION TO USSA CLUBS AND COACHES

The recent announcement of the partnership between USSA and PSIA/AASI is a huge step forward for snowsports education in the US. While there is a lot of symbolic significance of this partnership, there are many tangible effects that will greatly improve the art of snowsports instructions for all professionals, regardless if they are a instructor working with beginners new to the sport or a coach working with elite level athletes at the Olympics.

In the past history of snowsports education in the US, PSIA/AASI and USSA evolved as very separate organizations with very different focuses. The Vision of PSIA/AASI is to “inspire lifelong passion for the mountain experience.” One of their missions is to “create positive learning experiences.” Finally, one of the big buzz words in the instructor world is retention. How does this support USSA’s Vision to “make the United States of America the best in the world in Olympic skiing and snowboarding?”

Many of our future Olympians are going to learn to ski or snowboard through a “positive learning experience.” If they are going to remain in the sport long enough to develop into an elite athlete, they will need a “lifelong passion for the mountain experience.” Many of these future athletes first contact with snowsports will be through a PSIA or AASI instructor. That experience will go a long way towards determining if that kid retains an interest in the sport. It’s simple math, the larger the pool of potential athletes who are retained in the sport by positive learning experiences, the better chance USSA has of developing a few of them into Olympians and X-Games champions.

PSIA/AASI have developed enormous resources to support their vision and mission. There is no question that strong fundamentals are the foundation of great skiers and snowboarders. Many of the resources that PSIA/AASI develops are critical to teaching and ingraining a thorough grasp of the fundamentals into skiers and snowboarders. USSA can now use these resources to help our clubs and coaches continue to ingrain those fundamentals so their athletes can progress through the phases of development. Over the course of the coming months and years, you will see these resources such as videos, drills, or exercises become an integral part of the USSA National Training Systems.

The newly announced partnership between PSIA/AASI and USSA has plenty of historical and symbolic significance between the two main snowsports education organizations in the US. It signifies a shift in the thinking of snowsports education as both groups now recognize the other’s key role in developing elite athletes in conjunction with a lifelong passion for snowsports. This will serve to raise the visibility and importance of skiing and snowboarding in the US sports landscape. It’s the sharing of resources and institutional knowledge that will truly have an impact in the long term. We have no doubt that this partnership will have a lasting impact on USSA’s ability to attract, retain and develop new skiers and snowboarders to the highest levels of the sport.

