

How tech is making snowboarding even more awesome

September 18 2012, by Joel Willans



Credit: John Lemieux

Snowboarding might be all about stamina, balance and instinct, but the sport was born in a Eureka moment of inspired thinking. Way back in 1965, a big hearted guy called Sherman Poppen fastened two skis together and attached a rope at one end, so his daughter could glide down a hill in Muskegon, Michigan.

Named the snurfer, in homage to snow and surfing, the contraption sold

over a million in the next decade. Snowboarding has changed a heck of a lot since then. What hasn't changed is the way inspired thinking keeps making it more awesome.

Get on board

Take the board. Back in 1977, when Jake Burton started his company, he introduced the Backhill, a narrow board with single strap bindings. After experimenting with materials from surfboard foam cores to fiberglass, he eventually chose wood.

Fast forward thirty-five years and Burton is one of the world's largest snowboard and snowboarding equipment manufacturers. It's also one of Nokia's partners, and together the companies have been thinking of ways to use mobile tech to benefit snowboarders.



Credit: John Lemieux

Give me five!

The first real fruits of this collaboration began a couple of years back when Nokia introduced Push Snowboarding. This snowboarding tech is built around five key measurements: heart rate, rush, speed, orientation and pressure. By adding a sensor to a snowboarder's kit, it's possible to see what's happening physically and mentally to snowboarders as they do their coolest tricks.

Harri Holmsten, ex pro snowboarder and Nokia partnership manager who worked on the project, is full of enthusiasm: "By using the smartphone, something we all carry around, as the core to this, we developed technology that lets snowboarders relive their ride in amazing detail once they've finished. It gives them a whole new perspective."

Top shots

But Nokia and Burton's collaboration doesn't stop there. As a sponsor of the Burton Open Global Series (BOGS), one of the most progressive competitive snowboard series in the world, Nokia is working its tech magic to help snowboarders on an ongoing basis.

At the European Open earlier this year, Nokia rigged eighteen Nokia Lumia smartphones to a specially created rig. The aim? To record snowboarders' trampoline jumps in a 180-degree bullet time shot. As you can see, not only did the resulting films look incredible, but they also provided an invaluable insight to boarders about how their tricks looked and what they could do to improve them.

The speed way

The most recent Burton event, the first annual Burton 'High Fives' in Wanaka, New Zealand, was a snowboarding show like no other. For the

first time ever, it combined traditional snowboarding action with unique off-snow team challenges like riders knife throwing and car racing. Winners got to choose the order for halfpipe and slopestyle.

Nokia also helped out by installing Lumia smartphones in race cars so team members could watch and help their team members drive. And if that weren't already cool enough, competitors got their hands on the just released Nokia x Burton Insulator Case. Thanks to special layering, the case keeps your mobile warm in sub zero temperatures and can extend battery life up to 50%!

As for the future, Harri says the companies have some exciting plans, which could well make mobile tech an integral part of snowboarding in the future. Big words, but if the past is anything to go by, mobile technology has a big part to play in an awesome sport becoming even more awesome.

Source: Nokia

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