

Downhill skiing and snowboarding

Read the text and fill in the gaps with the following terms:

Slope, history, army, bindings, running surface, half pipe, disciplines, slalom, edge, snow, equipment, downhill

Downhill skiing and snowboarding are winter sports which both involve the movement of a person

on 1)

snow

with the help of skis or a snowboard attached to the skier or snowboarder with bindings. The skier or snowboarder goes down a slope, either off-piste or down a prepared course. While skiing is a sport with a long tradition and a rich 2)

history

, snowboarding arrived on the slopes much later. Both forms of sport are favoured as a recreational past-time. They are considered to be the most popular winter sports and are major economic factors for the countries of the Alps.

The Norwegian province of Telemark is considered to be where skiing first originated. From the 19th century, skis were used for transport, primarily by the 3)

army

. In Czech lands skis were introduced in 1887 when Josef Rösler Ořovský founded the first ski club. The attempts to include skiing as an Olympic event intensified in 1925, which was the year the Olympic Congress met in Prague. "The Week of Winter Sports" had been held in Chamonix a year previously and this was retroactively considered the first Winter Olympics. Nowadays, the various events organised in the Winter Olympics include the 4)

disciplines

of

slalom, 5)

downhill

, giant slalom, super-G slalom and combined race. In addition to these, there are also a number of other disciplines such as aerial skiing, moguls, and the half-pipe.

The

necessary 6)

equipment

for skiing includes skis, poles, boots, bindings, helmets, clothing, goggles and gloves, which vary depending on the discipline. The skis, which are the most important piece of equipment, come in a variety of shapes and sizes. However, they all have a 7)

running surface

which ensures smooth movement on the snow and a metal 8)

edge

Snowboarding is a relatively new sport popular with the younger generation. For enthusiasts, it is not just a sport, but a year-round lifestyle. Snowboarders have a unique sense of style, choice of terrain, and equipment. More conservative snowboarders are content to use a prepared slope whereas those who are prepared to take risks prefer the back-country or a snowpark, where they can show off their tricks, jumps and moves. Snowboarding has a short history. It began in the 1960s in the USA, where a surfer, Sherman Poppen, made a "snurfer" for his children. This forerunner to the snowboard was two skis screwed together. Later, a wider board was added, on which one could go down a slope, moving in a similar way to a surfboard or a skateboard. For control, a rope was tied to the nose of the board. Over time, bindings, inspired by water skis, were attached to the board. It wasn't until the 1980s that the first secure 9)

bindings

actually allowed the snowboarder to steer the board on hard snow, in difficult terrain and at high speeds.

At the time, snowboarding was considered a passing trend which had nothing at all to do with serious sport. Ski resorts were reluctant to allow snowboarders onto the lifts or the 10)

slopes

. However, in the 1990s it became as popular as skiing. Skiing technology was quickly borrowed by the snowboarding industry, which helped it gain popularity. The first snowboarding competition was won by Tom Sims, in Colorado in 1981 who finished ahead of Jack Burton, another leading name in snowboard history. Snowboarding was finally introduced to the Winter Olympic Games in 1998. At that time there were only two events, the giant slalom and the 11)

half-pipe

. In 2006, the snowboard cross was added to include three disciplines for snowboarders. Besides these 3 Olympic disciplines snowboarders compete in many others. These include for example, parallel 12)

slalom

, parallel giant slalom, "Big Air" where the snowboarder performs acrobatic jumps and the increasingly popular "Slopestyle", combining tricks and downhill.

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