

The 2001 Winter X Games

Since its inception in 1995, the Extreme Games competition has been a highly anticipated event for both competitors and spectators. Sports giant ESPN sponsors the yearly event, now known as the X Games, and provides a venue for athletes once considered to be unworthy of widely broadcast international competitions.

This year more than 350 athletes will go for the gold at Mt. Snow, Vermont, Feb. 1-4. The X Games features competitions like BoarderX, Slopestyle, Superpipe, SkierX, Ski Boarding, Snow Mountain Biking, Snowmobile Snocross and more bone-jarring, blood pumping events. The Games will be televised from Feb. 2-6 on ESPN, ESPN2 and ABC. Last year the X Games drew more than 80,000 to southern Vermont, and more than 20 million television viewers tuned in to check out this collection of young, dedicated, and fearless participants. *Steamtunnels* had a chance to talk to a few athletes in this year's games.

April

Pro Boarder and Mountain Biker

Age: 25

Home base: Big Bear Lake, Calif.

Accomplishments: 1999 1st Place in American Snowboard Tour Boarder Cross in Bear Mountain, Calif.; 1999 1st Place in downhill snowbiking at the Boarder Cross/Moto Cross Competition in Mammoth Lakes, Calif.; 2000, 9th Place in Snowboarder Cross in the Winter X Games.

April Lawyer is more than just a pro boarder, she's a renaissance woman with lots to offer. At 15 she began snowboarding, and at 20 she added mountain biking to her repertory.

Competing in Big Air, Slopestyle and Boarder Cross has given her a competitive edge that should serve her well at Mt. Snow.

"I was born on April Fool's Day so my whole life is a joke," quips Lawyer. Also known as "Apes," the Californian is a pro boarder, mountain biker, and all-around stuntwoman. April has been competing since 1997 in the X Games for snowboarding and snowbiking, as well as the Swatch World Cup Boardercross Tour, the Mammoth Boardercross and Motocross, and the Norba National Series, all highly regarded events in the pro world.

April trains relentlessly, combining snowboarding with grueling sessions in the gym and on her mountain bike, which, she says, "compliments my snowboarding because it keeps me from getting burned out."

Advice: "Put a beat to what you're doing. I visualize what I want to do and then put a beat to it from a song I like, then I find that I'm relaxed and I perform well."

Future plans: "Sometimes I think I'd like to settle down, but then I'm home for a month and I go crazy!"

Influences: Boarders Barrett Christy and Leslie Olsen, who have helped pave the way for other women riders.

In her CD player: The Deftones.

Side project: Mavenn, her own fashion line for active men and women, will be making its debut shortly. •



Isaac Hernandez/Mercury Press

Skogen



Perhaps best known for the "skodeo," a combination rodeo-flatspin 540 trick, Skogen's skiing style pushes the limits and introduces new tricks and ski prototypes.

Former Slopestyle Boarder turned Pro Big Air Skier

Age: 22

Home base: Olympic Valley, Calif.

Accomplishments: 1st in 2000 Core Games, Big Air Discipline, in Japan

After three years of full time snowboarding Skogen Sprang went back to his childhood sport, skiing, and has become one of the most innovative sportsmen in the industry. Perhaps best known for the "skodeo," a combination rodeo-flatspin 540 trick, Skogen's skiing style pushes the limits and introduces new tricks and ski prototypes (most recently the 176cm twin tip ski for park, halfpipe, and all mountain skiing). Sponsored by Line, Skogen has been skiing for 18 years, and though he loved snowboarding and attributes his ability to pull off crazy tricks on skis to the sport, he feels most attuned to skiing, and plans to spend the next year focusing more on back-country skills. When he's not on the mountain, Skogen weight trains, skateboards, and messes around on the trampoline. In the summer he extends his activities to motocrossing and mountain biking, as well as swimming. "They all add to your athleticism in different ways—you can apply skills from one sport to another, especially speed and agility." His growing fame and talent has led him to do other cool things like writing short pieces for *Freeze* magazine (a skier mag), and working with Line Skis. Look for Skogen in the Big Air competition, and if you're lucky you'll catch a "skodeo" in action. •

Courtesy of X Games

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