

The PennStater

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We've got a pop quiz for you about Penn State's claims to fame. Put your calculators away and your backpacks under your desks.

You have 45 minutes.
Begin now.



Kyle Barnoff

SIX YEARS AGO, KYLE BARNOFF WATCHED IN envy as skiers in professional videos performed tricks, spins, and slides that pushed the limits of the sport in their day. Today he's making the videos that could send a new generation of emulators downhill and into the air.

The film that set Barnoff down his current path was *Ski Movie One*—now considered a seminal historical piece of Barnoff's sport: freeskiing. In short, freeskiing is the X Games version of skiing, focused on jumps and tricks performed with punk rock panache. And it has grown rapidly in less than a decade of existence. "It's funny to look back at [*Ski Movie One*] now," says Barnoff, a junior petroleum engineering major, "because all the tricks they do are so primitive."

For the tricks he pulls these days, Barnoff trains to stave off sprains and strains. He runs to prepare his lungs for higher altitudes and does a regimen of "core" exercises—strengthening the hips, back, and abdomen—to add the lift and agility needed for the more radical body-bending moves. These include the cork (a backwards-leaning spin), the safety grab (gripping the skis in mid-air), and the disaster (intentionally landing a jump on the downslope of a railing). Barnoff pulled off a version of this last move—complete with a 270-degree revolution—for third place at the Stoneham Rail Jam, a competition in Quebec, last January. Even better than claiming 12 top-three finishes in competitions last year was earning that spot in Quebec against semipro riders, some of freeskiing's upper crust.

Barnoff, a State College native, now can claim being among the legions of sponsored athletes, with support from both Vox Hats, a clothing company founded last year by Penn State student Rachel Skolnick, and Roundtop Riders—a coalition of friends and fellow riders whom Barnoff has skied beside for years. You can find many rough-cut videos of

Barnoff in action at sites like newschoolers.com, and he and the Roundtop Riders (www.roundtopriders.com) released their first official video in September, with Barnoff working both behind the camera and in front of it.

Even after graduation, while he's busy tapping oil fields, he says he won't let go of freeskiing. Which just means that job offers from Houston won't carry as much weight as those from, say, Denver or Salt Lake City.

—DAN MORRELL