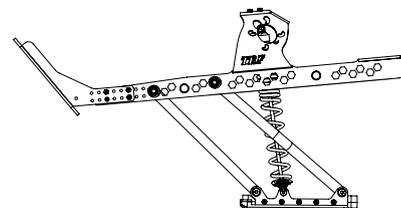




Cam Shaw-Doran designs and builds custom monoskis that ease the burden on disabled skiers.

PHOTO: Paul Hayes

THIS SKI SAVES LIVES



THE DESIGN:

Cam Shaw-Doran worked with a team of engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the basic design of his custom-made monoskis to create a lighter, more efficient, more comfortable product. With no formal engineering training, Shaw-Doran learned throughout the process.

"I was one of those kids who would take things apart and see how they worked," he says. "I spent a lot of time driving down to MIT to discuss ideas."

THE CONSTRUCTION:

The result is an aluminum frame that allows a skier to maintain an efficient skiing posture—high in both comfort and control. There are myriad ways the monoski can be customized and Shaw-Doran often spends several hours working directly with skiers before they take their first runs, changing the angle of how the bucket attaches to the frame, moving the footrest, or adjusting the shock for the type of skier and terrain.

THE GIFT:

Owen Anketell, who has a rare genetic disease that limits his lower body strength and mobility, rides a Turtle Ridge Foundation monoski, recognizable by its bright green frame. A Paralympic hopeful, the 15-year-old had outgrown his kid-sized monoski a couple of years ago and was stuck in limbo between the too-small monoski and the standard adult-sized one he wasn't yet big enough for. Inspired by Anketell's dilemma, Shaw-Doran designed a ski built specifically to fit the young skier. Now, Anketell can be seen arcing smooth, fast turns down New Hampshire's Loon Mountain and hitting small airs beneath the lift.

"Skiing was fun on any ski, but this one's so much easier," says Anketell. —M.M.M.

BUILDING A BETTER MONOSKI

Turning paralysis and pain into skiing and happiness

By Meghan McCarthy McPhaul

Cam Shaw-Doran's job combines a skier's passion, a tinkerer's joy, and a philanthropic mission that strikes an intimately personal chord. As the director of development for the Turtle Ridge Foundation—a nonprofit started by his childhood pal, Bode Miller—Shaw-Doran spends his days building custom monoskis and driving around the country to give them away to adaptive programs and individual skiers.

"I do this because I can, and I feel like if I can, I should," says Shaw-Doran.

There is joy, of course, in the giving, but Shaw-Doran knows what it's like to be on the receiving end, too. Paralyzed from the chest down at the age of 18 in a 1997 car accident, he felt as if he'd been left on the sidelines by his disability. Growing up in the shadow of Cannon Mountain, New Hampshire, Shaw-Doran learned to ski as a kid and made the switch to snowboarding in his teenage years. A lot of things changed after his accident. He had to rely on others to get anywhere and do anything. He felt like he'd lost his independence. Skiing gave it back.

About two years after he was paralyzed, Shaw-Doran started skiing through a local adaptive program. It was rough going at first, but once he learned how to balance and ride a monoski, his disability—and his worries—faded to the background, at least on the slopes.

"Skiing changed my life," says Shaw-Doran. "[After my accident,] I got out there, and I was skiing, and all of a sudden I was happy again."

In recent years, monoskiers have thrown backflips, joined the X Games, ventured into the backcountry, and upped the competitive racing ante. That movement has been tempered, however, by the struggles adaptive skiers face with the cost, availability, and logistics of getting into a monoski that works for them. A single monoski costs upwards of \$6,000—and that doesn't include the price of the ski, the binding, or the outriggers monoskiers use to balance. Many adaptive programs allow participants to use equipment on hand, which is hugely beneficial for occasional skiers or those just learning how to ski. For a more committed skier, however, that's like getting set up on rental gear every time you want to ski.



PHOTO: Paul Hayes

Seeing Shaw-Doran's frustration as he struggled to get back on the hill, a group of friends set out to raise the money he needed to purchase his own monoski. The friend who closed the fundraising gap was Bode Miller, who back then was just starting to make a name for himself in ski racing.

When Miller and his family founded the Turtle Ridge Foundation in 2005, its mission—to help provide sports and recreational activities to young people and the disabled community—was, in large part, inspired by the struggle Shaw-Doran had experienced in returning to an active

lifestyle after a life-changing injury.

Initially, the foundation gave monetary donations to adaptive programs to use in purchasing monoskis. But they soon realized it made more sense to design a TRF ski they could build and donate directly. They hired Shaw-Doran to design the TRF ski in 2010, and since 2012 Turtle Ridge has given away more than 35 monoskis to individuals and adaptive sports programs around the country.

"Seeing first-hand the difficulty Cam experienced with his equipment, the cost and lack of accessibility, we all agreed it was something we could get excited about changing," says Kyla Miller, Bode's sister and executive director of TRF. "We consider the TRF monoski the best available. And by cutting out the middleman, we've also made it much less cost prohibitive."

TRF raises most of the funding for the monoskis at the Foundation's annual Birds of Prey VIP reception in Beaver Creek during the World Cup races there. That event also marks the culmination of what has become a yearly pilgrimage for Shaw-Doran, who delivers the monoskis throughout the country.

"I don't want people to be held back by monetary circumstances, because skiing is going to change their lives. When I get out of my chair and into my ski, I'm less disabled. I'm ripping down the hill just like you are," he says. "I say it can change a life, but really it can save somebody's life."