

Book Review: The Illustrated Guide to Snowboarding

Kevin Ryan's The Illustrated Guide to Snowboarding offers one of the most useful guides to snowboarding for people from any level, whether beginners wanting to learn more about the sport and get their techniques sharpened, up to instructors and professionals seeking to further hone their skills on the slope.

Reader reviews and feedback on this book showed that it has a lot of useful drills featured that helped them improve their game immensely after repeated practise. The drills are written in a step by step fashion that seems ambiguous at first, but makes complete sense once you actually try them out. Furthermore, the book's coverage is all-encompassing, including tips for beginning, to intermediate, to advanced skill levels.

The approach taken by the author is both humorous and scientific, employing small drawn illustrations to show drills and techniques. While there are few actual pictures involved, these hand drawn illustrations are funny to look at and yet maintain a good degree of accuracy in portraying the skills and techniques being demonstrated. The author uses a lot of jokes and quips interspersed with facts and the illustrations are likewise a mix of serious, factual ones and cute, cartoony renderings of snowboarding stuff.

Most professional instructors in snowboarding who read this book found new drills and skills they could teach their classes inside the beginner sections, so this book's coverage is quite extensive. Furthermore, the author knows that certain skills can ONLY be conveyed through actual practice and demonstration, so he goes out of his way to state when certain skills are best acquired through a snowboarding instructor.

One of the sections that a lot of readers will probably find useful is the chapter on snowboard care and maintenance. Where most how-to books devote footnotes or at best, a few pages to the care and maintenance of equipment, Kevin Ryan actually goes out of his way to write an in depth full chapter on tips for taking proper care of your snowboard.

There is even a section on the ergonomics of skateboarding, covering the proper way to carry and ride a board to minimize the physical strain on the snowboarder. This also includes explanations on the physics and mechanics of snowboarding. While not exactly necessary for most people, this chapter is useful for people who are more technically inclined, like say, industrial designers who might be out to design a new type of snowboard.

Unlike some instructional books, this book does not seek to replace the need for

an instructor, but instead seeks to augment and expand on the knowledge gained from working with a good qualified snowboarding instructor. For those who insist on learning everything from a book and doing it themselves, however, the book's attention to detail and exhaustive explanations of the mechanics of snowboarding are actually enough to let them get by and teach themselves through practice and repetition.

This book is 336 pages long, and it's first edition was published by the renowned book company McGraw-Hill back in 1998. Despite being published 8 years ago, to this day it remains one of the most popular and sought after instructional books for snowboarders. No matter what your skill level, it's guaranteed that you will benefit from reading this book that is already considered a classic "encyclopedia" in the sport by avid snowboarding enthusiasts.