

# SKI RACING®

April 7, 2011 Volume 43  
Issue 11 skiracing.com

The Journal of Snowsport Competition

# Spring Loaded

**From Stratton to Switzerland, athletes  
give it one last go for the 2011 season**

▼  
Masters Nationals

▼  
NASTAR Nationals

▼  
Freestyle Nationals

▼  
Nordic Nationals

▼  
Alpine World Cup Finals

▼  
Summer camps...and more!



Chuck Patterson carves on Starr Surf Skis.



## SHOOTING STARR

Has former moguls skier Jason Starr found a new frontier for skiing? BY BRYCE HUBNER

**In case you** missed the Waxroom report earlier this season, on Jan. 20, freeskiier and pro surfer Chuck Patterson skied the most famous big waves on the planet at Maui's epic break, Jaws (yes, skied) — a place where waves can literally surpass the height of a 10-story building. Strapped to Patterson's feet that day? A pair of surf skis designed and built by former freestyle skier Jason Starr.

"When Chuck surfed that legendary break," says Starr from his home near Burlington, Vt., "it was a huge day for skiing, because it's a whole new arena for the sport."

Starr, a newspaper journalist by day, has spent more than a decade divining, designing and constructing Starr Surf Skis, and though he wasn't alone in wanting to ski waves, it's his design that's made it a reality.

"I have to say that Patterson, along with other people like pro skiers Mike Douglas and Cody Townsend, also had the idea to ski waves on their own," Starr says. "[Over the years], we all came together through the grapevine, basically, and realized that we were working on the same thing."

The idea hit Starr in 1998 during a trip to Santa Cruz, Calif., a year after he graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder's journalism school.

"I had road-tripped from Boulder and it was the first time I ever



# Role Model



**Jason Starr skis frozen water at Colorado's Monarch Mountain...**



**...and steps into liquid on Lake Champlain.**

surfing," Starr says. "I had an experience that was probably a lot like other skiers', standing sideways on the board thinking, 'I should be skiing this right now.' As a skier, when you go down the face of anything, you want to be skiing it. That was the genesis of the idea to ski waves."

But it wasn't until many years later that he'd fully committed to building a surf ski prototype.

"In 2004, something changed and I just decided that somebody absolutely had to ski waves," Starr says. "From there on I committed myself to making it happen one way or another. It's been a labor of love the last five or six years."

Starr says Starr Surf Skis' first "real breakthrough" came in 2009, when the aforementioned Townsend and Douglas went to Maui and experimented with a variety of wave skiing setups, having excellent results with Starr's creation.

"Townsend and Douglas had success in Hawaii with that prototype," Starr says. "Then Chuck was inspired by them, got in touch with me, and we had another round of developing the skis to make them better. We partnered with McDermott's

Shapes of Maine to build the skis Chuck used at Jaws."

Starr, 35, grew up in the Boston area, learned to ski at Attitash, N.H., and then joined the freestyle program at Loon as a teenager.

"I primarily focused on moguls, but also competed in aerials," says Starr, who made it to the junior nationals level and skied alongside guys like Jonny Moseley and Evan Dybvig.

"College was essentially the end of my freestyle career — I competed in a few ski cross and big mountain events, but that's it," Starr says. "I skied every chance I got, though, and at that point I was really in skiing for the adventurous side of it. Colorado turned me into a powderhound."

While at CU's school of journalism, Starr spent time as an editorial intern at Skiing magazine when the publication first relocated from New York to Boulder, and Starr says that his passion for skiing has informed many of his post-college journalism career moves.

"I worked at the Summit Daily News in Frisco, Colo., after I graduated from CU," Starr says. "I was a sports reporter and

then a sports editor and I've been at it ever since — always in newspapers. In [those early days] I worked a lot of nighttime hours so that I could ski — didn't want to miss any powder days."

After stints at daily papers in Summit County and Salida, Starr and his wife, Leah, moved to Vermont in 2007 to give New England life a go. When he's not plugging away at business related to Starr Surf Skis, he's working for Lynn Publications, which produces several northern Vermont papers.

Starr says that the most important thing in his journalism work is consistency, something he learned a lot about as freestyle skier.

"When you're skiing moguls, everything is changing, and you have to adjust on the fly all the time, yet you have to find a way to be consistent with your turn," Starr says. "You have to identify and commit to a few important things [in your skiing technique to help you accomplish that consistency]. It's the same being a professional journalist: You have a set of basic tenets which might allow you to deal with a difficult interview when you're not getting honest answers, or a story that doesn't come together like you thought it would. You can always come back to basics and be consistent. I put my trust in that to create quality work."

You won't find Starr shredding Maui's Jaws with Chuck Patterson anytime soon, but you might spot him stand-up paddleboarding or wake-skiing on the waters of Lake Champlain, or skiing powder at Smugglers Notch. Or visit [starrsurfskis.com](http://starrsurfskis.com) to learn more about skiing waves this summer. **SR**

