

## 1960s Experiments with Equipment

Future snowboard pioneers begin tweaking designs and equipment

While Sherman Poppen and the Snurfer were starting to enjoy popularity with kids nationwide in the 1960s, there were also others who had similar ideas and began experimenting with the idea of snowboarding. Still very much in its infancy, snowboarding techniques and equipment were off to a slow – but sure – start.

After M.J. “Jack” Burchett started sliding down snowy hills on a board with clothesline and horse reins to steer in 1929, it took another 30 years for any additional modifications. How many people can say they invented a new piece of sports equipment in middle school? Tom Sims can. In Dec. 1963, Sims made one of the world’s first snowboards in a 7<sup>th</sup> grade woodshop class in New Jersey, calling the product a “skiboard.” As a skier and skateboarder who was already constructing his own skateboards at age 13, the skiboard came naturally. This equipment, made of a three-foot piece of wood, aluminum sheeting, a carpeted top and simple bindings, allowed the rider to continue skateboarding while on snow.

Sims further tweaked designs and construction throughout the 1960s. Using fiberglass left over from building surfboards, he produced the first fiberglass snowboard in 1969 at age 18.

Meanwhile, Jake Burton, future founder of Burton Snowboards, rode around on Snurfers and modified them throughout the late 1960s. Other future snowboard pioneers and icons were also exploring and adjusting techniques to gliding down snow sideways, setting the stage for a huge snowboarding boom in the 1970s and ‘80s.

### References:

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- Paul J. MacArthur, “The Top Ten Important Moments in Snowboarding History,” 2/5/10, Smithsonian.com
- “History of Snowboarding,” <http://www.randomhistory.com/history-of-snowboarding.html>