

DIMITRIJE MILOVICH & WINTERSTICK

Countless children of all generations have improvised techniques to coast down hills, even standing up to make the experience that much more thrilling. But not many have used that as an inspiration to create a snowboarding company. Enter Dimitrije Milovich, founder of Winterstick snowboards. While attending Cornell University, Milovich would slide down snowy hills while standing up on cafeteria trays. After making contact with Wayne Stoveken in 1970, who mentioned “snow surfing” in *Surfing* magazine, Milovich tried out “snow surfing” with a board and was hooked.

Milovich dropped out of college in 1972 and moved out west to pursue snowboard prototypes, testing them in Utah powder. Stoveken and Milovich obtained two patents for Snow Surfboards in 1974, opened up shop in Salt Lake City, and began selling Wintersticks – boards with foot straps and no rope. By 1975, Winterstick and Milovich had earned the attention of *Newsweek*, *SKI*, and *Playboy* magazines. His ability to market a modern snowboard grabbed everyone’s interest, and Milovich didn’t just slap a couple of wooden boards together. He revolutionized the essential features of snowboards, using a polyethylene base, polyurethane middle, and fiberglass.

When orders began stacking up, Milovich formed Winterstick Company in 1976. He used two different models, the Roundtail and the Swallow Tail, which was split in the back to help in deep powder and provide control.

Convinced that he just had to show up and Wintersticks would practically sell themselves, Milovich was heartbroken at the 1977 SIA and NSGA shows when the industry and buyers did not show much interest in Winterstick boards. However, partly thanks to the *Apocalypse Snow* movies, the Winterstick brand had gained a fan base in Europe.

After some difficulty during the early 1980s, Milovich closed Winterstick by 1986-87, and instead opened Radius Engineering. But in 1994, Winterstick was revived by a Utah sports retailer. They began by focusing on the heart of the original Winterstick: riding in the backcountry and inspiring others to enjoy the spirit of snowboarding. Even the famous Swallowtail board was brought back to life.

Today, Winterstick Snowboard Company concentrates on “individuality, innovation and performance.” A 2007 partnership with Wagner Custom factory in Colorado allows for hand-crafted, powder-focused designs – all powered by solar and wind energy. Although Dimitrije Milovich is no longer involved with Winterstick, it is clear that the original founding passion for the boards lives on.

Sources included:

“Snowboarding: It’s Older Than You Think,” by Paul J. MacArthur. *Skiing Heritage Journal*, March 2009.

Winterstick.com, “Winterstick’s History,”
<http://www.winterstick.com/info.php?info=history>

Colorado Ski & Snowboard Museum archives