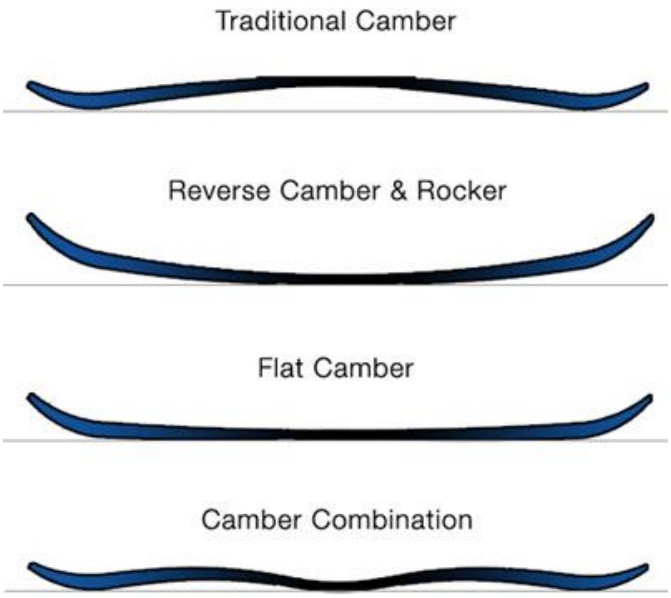
Find the Right Snowboard Gear

There are some challenges when it comes to finding the right gear. For younger smaller kids that can rip there are not a lot of options. All the kids boards seem to be geared towards kids who have never snowboarded before. For bigger older kids it feels like there are too many options. Kids and adults who are looking for performance are going to be looking for a medium stiff to stiff traditional cambered board. Cambered boards are built for maximum performance. We are athletes so performance is what we are looking for. As kids get older and start to specialize in certain areas of riding they may choose a little different board. Use this guide to help you find the right board, boots, and bindings.

Boards

There are a few things to pay attention to when choosing a board. Camber profile, flex down the length of the board, flex across the width (twist), side cut, length of the board and I am sure we can think of some more. We will focus on a few of these to help you find the right one.



camber refers to the curvature of a board along its length.

Traditional Camber:

Pros-Offers stability, pop, and control at high speeds making it ideal for intermediate and upper level park, pipe, boardercross, and Big Mountain riders.
Cons- for smaller kids and lower level kids a traditional camber board offers little forgiveness when catching an edge as weight is distributed more evenly along the edge. (examples are burton Protest, Unity's high end boards,

Donek, and Salomon Villain).

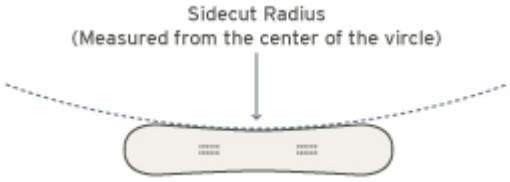
reverse camber
Pros- moves edge to edge quickly as it has little edge contact with the snow so it can pivot. Also is very easy to press and floats in the powder. This would be a very specialized set up for high end rail riders or ideal for smaller kids (7 and under), low level riders, and recreational backcountry enthusiasts.
Cons- Does not have enough edge contact for park, pipe, boarderx, and high end big mountain riders.

Flat Camber
The flat base offers decent purchase on harder conditions while still having some of the float characteristics of the reverse camber boards.

Camber combo
Like the flats, the camber combo has characteristics of both reverse and traditional camber boards. Camber combo is unique in that the pop zones (traditional camber zones) can be under foot or outside of the foot, changing the way a board rides. pop zones under foot can make a longer board ride shorter, making it ideal in trees and powder riding. A lot of high end big mountain riders prefer this set up. Pop zones outside the foot can make a smaller board ride longer, making it ideal for park pipe riders. Camber is still the ideal set up for most serious park pipe riders. (examples are all Never Summers, Libtech attack banana, most Burtons)

Boards can also be directional or twin. this refers to the sidecut of the board and also the flex of the board.

Directional- this can mean either of 2 things. 1-the board changes stiffness from nose to tail, 2-the sidecut of the board is set back towards the tail. changing stiffness from nose to tail means that the nose is softer than the tail to initiate turns easier this is Ideal for Big Mountain, Boarder X, and some pipe riders.



having the sidecut radius set back means that the center of the circle is closer to the tail. This allows the board to have a stronger finish in a turn. This is important for big mountain, boarderX, and prefered by some pipe riders.

Directional boards can still be ridden switch.

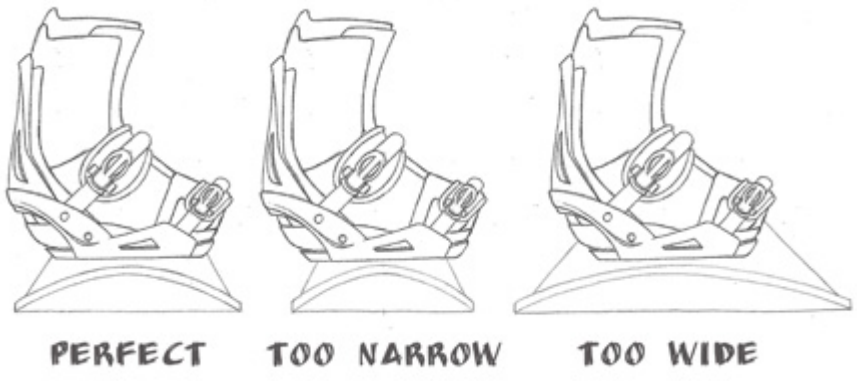
Twin- A true twin means that the board is exactly the same on the nose and tail. Sometimes boards are referred to as directional twins, meaning that they have a softer nose than tail, or that the inserts where the bindings attach are set back closer to the tail. Twin snowboards are ideal for Park Pipe Riders. Directional Twins are prefered by some big mountain riders.

The Flex of the board can be along the length and across the width. Flex across the width is referred to as twist.

stiffer flex- offers more stability at higher speeds. Ideal for Park, Pipe, Boarder X and Big Mountain. A stiff flex makes the board harder to twist to initiate turns at slower speeds making it harder to ride trees and moguls. Rail riders also prefer a softer flex to get better presses.

Choosing the right size- A board does not know how tall you are but it does know how much you weigh and how big your foot is. Ideally a board is between your shoulders and nose. If you are light for your height you are looking in the shoulder range. If you are heavy for your height then closer to the nose. Shorter boards also tend to spin easier but have less edge in the snow for control at higher speeds.

You also want to make sure your boots and bindings fit on the board just right. Your heels and toes should hang over the heel and toe edge equally and as little as possible. you don't want to come up short of the edge as it will make it too difficult to tilt the board, and you don't want to have too much toe and heel drag as you will not be able to tilt the board enough.



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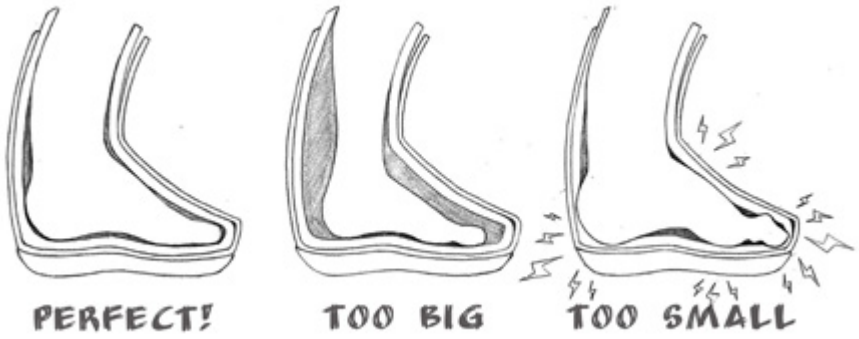
Boots

Finding the right fit is important. Make sure you put the boots on in the store and walk around for 5-10 minutes. The boots should be snug as they will pack out and break in, but they should not cause pain. Push your shin into the tongue of the boot so that the heels of the boot lift in the air. when you do this make sure that your heels, inside the boot, do not move more than about an inch. The Heel needs to be locked into the boot as best as possible, but again, no pain.



Just like boards stiffer boots help at higher speeds, and softer boots help at lower speeds. Different from boards, stiffer boots can make it harder to bend your ankles thus reducing your ability to manage pressure by moving up and down.

Stiff boots are more Ideal for boarderx, and racing.

Most park pipe and big mountain riders prefer a medium stiffness. this allows them to have some support when tilting the board on edge and some mobility to manage pressure and tweak their grabs.

Rail Riders, lower level snowboarders, and smaller kids (Less than 70lbs) like softer boots.

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Bindings

Bindings are very similar to boots regarding stiffness. When choosing bindings you should put your boot in the binding to see how it fits, this can affect wear and tear on both the boot and the binding. Many different binding companies have different features for adjustments. People with bigger feet like bindings that have a few adjustment options for heel and toe drag. The most important adjustment is the forward lean adjustment.

Forward lean forces a rider to bend their knees and ankles. This can help a rider lever a board over to the heel edge but it can also limit your range of motion. If a binding has aggressive forward lean the 0 setting may be too much for some preferences and body types. Slopestyle and Big Mountain riders are typically into a moderate forward lean while pipe and boarderx riders like a little bit more aggressive. Rail riders like very little forward lean, this helps them keep the board flat on gnarly rails.