

## Tethering (instructor assisted)

Tethers are used to help students guide their board in a certain direction, start and follow through with their turns, thus helping control their speed. Tethering allows the instructor to be close to the student in a hands-off manner.

- For the safety and enjoyment of your student, instructor as well as other skiers, the instructor will follow the responsibility code while tethering.

### **There are several attachment location for the tethers:**

A seat harness can be used, attaching the tethers on in the front and back of the harness with a ½ wrap around the front of the student's body (in riding position). This attachment allows the instructor to help turn the student's hips, thereby allowing him to control the students speed by helping them to finish the turn for speed control.

A tethering clamp can be attached to the nose of the snowboard. If this is not available try using a C-clamp. When working on sideslip or falling leaf maneuvers, clamps can also be attached to the tip and tail of the board.

Attaching the tethers to the board affects the swing weight of the snowboard and how effective the board turns. Tethering from the nose of the board creates a greater leverage factor providing better turning ability than attachments that are placed farther back on the board or on the lead foot. **Be aware that the tetherer can easily throw the student off balance.**

**The actual act of tethering is an art form**, which takes a lot of practice. Developing a high level of competence before using tethers with a student is critical for safety and success.

A sign of good tethering is when the student cannot tell if he/she is being tethered.

Tactical sensitivity and tether handling includes positioning of the instructor as well as good coil-spring movements (flexion and extension movements of the lower arms, wrists, hands, and fingertips) and wrap system to deal with slack in the tether lines.

The tethers should never drag on the snow, have too much slack, or prevent the board from turning when initiated by the student.

**Riding skills** required to tether a student are: solid balance with a quiet upper body, precise speed and directional control, confident switch riding, performing heel-side slides and falling leafs equally well in both directions and riding synchronized with the student.

**The tetherer should not have to consciously think about his own movements in any situation and be able to focus 100% on his student.**

**Instructor positioning:** The need for tethering is relative to terrain, riding ability, the student's and/or instructor's desired outcome and speed. The instructor should always be above and behind the student. He is either tracking / following the student or riding synchronized, uphill of the student. The instructor either stays in a heel-side accelerating falling leaf or makes turns simultaneously with the student.

**For the safety and enjoyment of your student, yourself as well as other skiers, the instructor will follow the responsibility code at all times while tethering.**

## Tethering Specifics for Sit-Down Equipment

In tethering bi-skis from a board as well as skis, safety is always the first concern and appropriate skill level of the instructor is a must to keep the team safe.

If the adaptive student can't fall over and self arrest, due to fixed outriggers, severe judgment issues or other circumstances, the instructor becomes the braking system for the bi-ski. If the instructor is the sole command of a bi-skier on the slope, he/she must maintain tether contact at all times. **Key points to remember when attaching the tethers to the bi-ski and the instructor:**

- A redundant = 2 point attachment is required to the equipment, Bi-ski as well as to the tethering instructor. This can be achieved by attaching two independent tethers to wrists with a girth hitch, in direct contact with the skin beneath your gloves and jacket.

The instructors' stance on the snowboard should be solid and permit them to ride with either end of the board forward, thus good switch riding is a must. A stable upper body and good hand position will help with control. A symmetrical board might work best, since alpine carving boards and race boards can present problems.

Tethering a bi-ski from a snowboard is best done using the heel-side falling leaf technique. The tethers are held in both hands, hands positioned in the power zone between hips and shoulders, elbows slightly in front of the hips for maximum strength and control.

The position of the instructor is uphill and inside the students turn. The tetherer should anticipate the next turn and move in that direction slightly before the student starts the turn. Calling out turns or watching the student for clues, such as head, shoulder, torso and arm or outrigger movements can help anticipate turning. When low tether tension is required, as in flat terrain, a lightweight or near independent student, the instructor might link turns behind the bi-ski with the goal of reducing the tetherer's speed while maintaining proper positioning.

Stopping the bi-ski while tethering can be simply a matter of applying additional heel-side pressure, increasing the edge angle to come to a stop. If the tetherer is in direct alignment behind the student, the student is least likely to tip over. Alternately the instructor can stop or slow down the student by turning the bi-ski into the hill.

The tetherer can restart by seat-assisting until the team reaches a comfortable speed, then cast the student forward and resume tethering. This may be a preferred method especially if there is no assistant available.

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## Seat-Assisting a Sit-Ski.

When seat assisting a student in sit-down equipment, the instructor needs to ride close enough to be able to grasp the sit-ski with their hands. The instructor then tilts or twists the rig so that it turns and slows down. This is done as smooth as possible when instructor and student coordinate their movements.

It is also helpful to wrap the tethers around the instructor's wrists/hands, one or more wraps, so they do not drag on the snow and get in the way.

Seat assisting should never be done without tethers or a safety strap attached to the bi-ski, especially when using fixed outriggers. Should the instructor fall, the bi-ski with the student can accelerate down the hill uncontrolled.

Seat assisting is made easier if an extended handle is attached to the back of the sit-ski seat. The instructor controls speed through turn shape. Learning to skid the equipment through turns will help keep the speed down.

The instructor controls speed most effectively when riding the toe edge and varying the toe-edge angle. While riding the toe side, the instructor can also create a braking wedge between their snowboard and the sit-down equipment by extending the back arm and shortening the front arm.

While seat assisting on the heel side edge is possible, the instructor is usually in a much more vulnerable position.

**End-Around Technique:** The instructor, on their toe edge is in a parallel position to the student on the outside/downhill side of the turn. He/she then needs to switch his/her position from one side of the seat to the other side while moving. This is accomplished by initiating the next turn, then going to heel-side inside behind the bi-ski. As the sit-down equipment goes through the fall line, the instructor walks their hands, (thus their body) around the back of seat, breaking in a heel-side sideslip if needed, then finishing the turn with a quick pivot to toe-side. This put the instructor back in a parallel position on the downhill side of the sit ski.

Some mono-skis & dual-skis stick out much further from the back of the seat than a bi-ski, making this maneuver very difficult if not impossible. If a hop over the tails of the skis is needed, but cannot be done appropriately, without disrupting the rhythm & flow of your student, do not do it.

**Synchronized or Dance Technique:** The instructor grasps the front of student's seat with one hand and the back of the seat with the other. While making linked turns, the instructor rides along the same side of the sit-ski the whole time. The instructor does the steering, by tipping or rotating the sit equipment to one side or the other and making simultaneous edge changes as the student and can assist with some balance.

While this technique is difficult on any but the gentlest terrain and the instructor needs to have very strong riding skills, it can give the student a feeling of 'support' emotionally, as well as physically and allow the instructor to give immediate, eye level feedback to the student.

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