

Get PHAT At Vermont Ski Resorts

Fox 44 News
Burlington, VT

January 17, 2009

Smuggler's Notch has started a safety related trend that's spreading to other Vermont ski areas. It's one they're proud of and they don't mind if it gets to their head or yours for that matter.

Smuggler's Notch is a P-H-A-T, PHAT place to ski and ride. PHAT as in Protect your Head At All Times, by wearing a helmet.

"Off a jump, pretty much did a flip and landed on my head and like banged against the floor," Rider Brandon Caron said.

Caron has been snowboarding for years, and on occasions like that he's glad he uses a helmet. He's not alone.

"During a family video I wanted to show off and I was like trying to go off a huge jump and actually wiped out, and if I wasn't wearing my helmet I would have hit my head on the ice," Rider James Margolies said.

The PHAT program isn't meant to scare people away from the slopes, or to encourage recklessness while wearing a helmet. Director Robert Williams, MD and other involved just want to help make the sport even safer.

"Estimated that if everybody wore a helmet when they ski or snow board it would eliminate 7,700 head injuries nationwide," Williams said.

The Vermont Snow Sports Research Team has been monitoring helmet use at Smuggler's Notch in Jeffersonville for a few years, and has been trying to promote it. During this time the number of people wearing helmets increased, about 90% of kids at the resort wear them, and more adults are too.

"Between 70 and almost 75 percent of our most targeted adult riders wear helmets and we're very pleased about that," Williams said.

That's about twice the national average. There are also other benefits to wearing one.

"I think people have realized that not only are they safe but their comfortable, their warm, their dry," Operations Director, Steve Wry said.

Other Vermont resorts are also promoting helmet use with the PHAT program, and Williams will be working with the national ski patrol to reach more people across the country.