



It's Almost Here

By Brian Zongker, NSP

Once again, the beauty of living in the White Mountains of Arizona is that you get to celebrate all four seasons. Everyone has his/her favorite and you all know that mine is winter. Well, winter is almost here and, as usual, I am very excited. Not to shovel my driveway or trudge through the snow carrying firewood but to enjoy the winter wonderland that is the ski mountain. What will it be like this year? Nobody knows for sure. What will Mother Nature bring in terms of snow fall? Anyone's guess. The Farmer's Almanac is predicting cold and snowy and cold and wet for Arizona. I'll believe that when I see it! I try never to get my hopes up too early or dashed too soon. When I'm sliding on it; then I will know; then I will believe.

This year poses a unique challenge as, last year, my snowboarding season met a sudden stop, literally...on a tree. This year, after surgery and months of rehab, I just don't know what to expect. Doc says by the time the snow flies, I will be good to go and I believe him. Physically I am strong and mentally I am ready, I think... No, I am ready.... Wait... What? The bottom line is that you never know for sure until you are there in the moment. I can hardly wait for the moment.

I had a dream that I was on the slopes for the first time since impact and everything was fine and normal. But will it really be? Talking to others who have experienced similar situations, reactions vary. Some say that they felt strong physically but weaker mentally. Basically, they were afraid to ski or ride like they would normally. There are countless winter sport professionals who have faced injuries. The adage is not if, but when and how bad. Look at Lindsey Von, the famous US Women's Ski Team Olympian. She has hurt her knees so many times, she has probably lost count. Probably didn't realize that she had that many knees. Yet she is up and racing time after time and still winning. It all boils down to fear. If you are afraid,

you will hesitate and, if you hesitate, that is when things go bad. At the end of the day, you must realize that you have put in the work and your body is healed and you are ready to go. Kind of like riding a bike except, instead of a bike, I have a snowboard.

People ask me if I am ever going to snowboard again? I look at them somewhat perplexed and say... "Yeah! Of course, I am (duh)." Then they say, "Well, I bet you won't ski in the trees again." My reply is, "Why would I ski anywhere else?" They say, "You're getting too old for that." Now they're just pissing me off. You see, I feel that I am barely half way through my winter sports career and this was just a bump in the road. If I can't go and do the things I love to do up there, then what is the point? I guess, if I ever reach that point, I will buy a beach house and take up surfing. I'll keep you posted on my progress, but until then.... Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!