



ATHLETE

2024–25 NSP Athlete Program Recap

The inaugural season of the NSP Athlete Program has been an incredible journey. Our athlete-ambassadors balanced podiums with patrol shifts, leadership with competition, and outreach with education. Across snow and dirt, they showcased the values of NSP: service, safety, skill, and community.

Charlie Bernicke – Freeride Skiing | Patrol: Grand Targhee (WY)

Charlie balanced a full winter of patrolling, coaching Freeride and competing. He broadened his perspective with a patrol exchange at Revelstoke and Kicking Horse and skied iconic Natural Selection and Ozone FWT venues, valuable experience even when results didn't match expectations. In the summer, he continued his commitment to public safety as a wildland firefighter with the Snake River Hotshots.

“This season didn’t go as planned on the competition side, but it was still an incredible winter spent patrolling full-time, coaching Freeride and experiencing unforgettable terrain through a patrol exchange at Revelstoke and Kicking Horse.” – Charlie



Samantha (Sam) Braden – Alpine Skiing & XC/Gravel Bike | Patrol: Wintergreen (VA)

Sam's year spanned both skis and bikes. She finished 6th overall in the Southern Division in alpine, completed a 90-lb rucksack challenge in honor of the 10th Mountain Division and a fallen mentor, and called Wintergreen patrolling her “happy place.” On the bike, she stood on the Beaver Blitz podium (3rd), served two weeks as a CIT at the Southern Alpine Racing Camp at Mt. Hood, placed 17th at Endurance Mountain Bike Nationals in Roanoke, and took 3rd in her category at the SM100K despite a mid-race flat. She spoke at the Southern Division Conference and was honored as the Southern Division Outstanding Young Patroller of the Year, later earning Runner-up for the 2025 National Outstanding Young Adult Patroller Award.

“This was a good and tough season, but I’m proud of the effort. Racing kept me challenged, and patrolling provided a second home.” – Sam



Mackenzie Case – Freeride Skiing | Patrol: Labrador Mountain (NY)

Mackenzie leaned into a season of training, patrolling, and freeride competition, stringing together more features to push into harder lines. She competed in five IFSA events, earning 2nd at Whiteface and 4th at Gore Mountain’s first-ever New York Freeride comp. She helped raise \$5,000 for her patrol at LabFest and settled into a new patrol shift with momentum.

“This season was full of training, patrolling, and freeride competitions. I focused on linking together more features to ski a harder line while still having so much to improve upon.” – Mackenzie



Dan Linden – Freeride Snowboard | Patrol: Loveland (CO)

Dan paired a consistent freeride season with high-visibility avalanche dog work alongside Bandit. He stacked podiums across IFSA events including wins at Copper (2*) and Taos (2*), a 2nd at Taos (4*), and a 3rd at Copper (3*) - finishing 13th overall in North America. Beyond competition and patrol, Dan and Bandit (his Avy Dog) represented avalanche safety at the Colorado State Capitol for the Ski Safety Awareness Breakfast hosted by Colorado Ski Country USA, meeting newly elected

state senators and representatives, fielding questions about patrol work and avy dogs, and spotlighting the role of snowboard patrollers in snow safety.

“I’m grateful for a job that provides me with unique opportunities that support patrolling and our industry.” – Dan



Alex Maresjo – Alpine Ski Racing | Patrol: Bogus Basin (ID)

Alex balanced a heavy speed calendar with regular patrol service at Bogus Basin. On the racing side, he stacked Super G and Downhill starts, clinched the National Speed Series title for his class for the third straight year, and won his class at the National Championship at Gore Mountain, capping his best overall Speed Series campaign to date. On the hill, he kept the focus on public safety and the everyday work of patrolling, carrying NSP values from the race venue back to his community.

“We are on the hill to serve the public and help them in what is possibly their greatest time of need, we work hard to train the next group of future patrollers to be ready for this, and in between we get to patrol the mountain, having fun, doing what we love the most, skiing.” – Alex



Michelle McGee – Freeride Skiing & Mountain Biking | Patrol: China Peak (CA)

Michelle split her year between snow and dirt - and service. On patrol, she assisted in several critical-care rescues and trained new candidates in sled handling. Early bike results included 4th overall at the Pine Flat Road Race and 2nd elite women's at Kenda Cup XC despite mechanicals. She then stacked two standout endurance efforts: 5th in the pro field at the Downieville Classic and 15th overall at the Climb to Kaiser (155 miles, 15,000+ feet of climbing, ~10 hours). She bike-patrolled at China Peak for the California Enduro Series, served as a medical course marshal at Sea Otter, and is preparing to instruct at the Women's Toboggan Clinic.

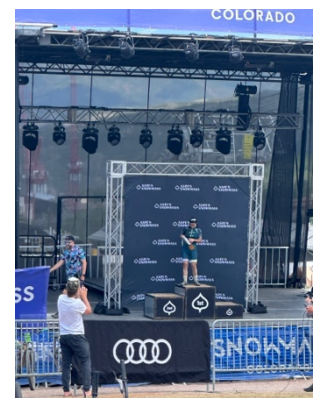
"As a mother, the hardest part was handling incidents involving injured children. But I was grateful to be there to help." – Michelle



Maddie Miller – Backcountry, Skimo, Endurance & XC MTB | Patrol: Bryan Mountain (CO) & NSP Education Director

Maddie raced across backcountry/skimo and bike, while shaping NSP education nationwide. On snow she finished 4th at Power of 4 (Aspen), won the Women's Team Division at Tellurando (Telluride), and stacked podiums in the Rise n' Shine and Eldora skimo series, all in her first season patrolling with Bryan Mountain. On the bike she took her lessons forward - steadying at the Snowmass 50 as the only woman to podium, then landing 3rd at the Big Sky Biggie behind two sponsored pros after a reset from a tough GoPro Games pro-field start. As Education Director, she led the Cycle C refresher (and took it herself), contributed to OEC's 7th-edition update, and designed leadership content tying avalanche, MTR, decision-making, and wellness together.

"Between health struggles and tough races, I pushed through. Closing out the season with a win made it all worth it." – Maddie



Looking Ahead

This season proved that NSP athletes are more than competitors—they're patrollers, educators, mentors, and community builders. Their stories brought new audiences to NSP, supported recruitment, and reinforced the purpose behind the red jacket. Here's to deeper outreach, bigger goals, and more shared wins in 2025–26.