

Waking Them Up

Jens-Martin Johnsrud water skied for Norway — now he goes all the way to promote an up-and-coming sport.

BY ERIC BUTTERMAN

From the moment he strapped on skis as a young boy growing up outside Oslo, Norway, Jens-Martin Johnsrud has always had a love of water sports - who can blame him? After making Norway's national team in 1999, the 25-year-old was dead set on his passion one day becoming a career. But little did he know that it would take shape in the creation of sports equipment and helping to spearhead a new activity: wake skiing.

WaterSki magazine: What made you decide to start your company, Stereo Skis?
Jens-Martin Johnsrud: I started out talking with friends about designing wake skis.

They didn't really take it seriously, but I did. Eventually my partner, Christian Heaara, who's also from the Norway national team, joined me in trying to make this sport take off. It was such a great feeling to see our skis sell out.

WS: What are the chances of this sport really taking off?

JMJ: I think it's a sport that can parallel wakeboarding. Look how fast snowboarding caught on. The reason people will choose this sport is because the skis are light, so it's easier to learn, and bindings are supported easily. You can also progress faster in this sport because you're spinning symmetrically. Once they give it a try, they won't be able to stop!

WS: Talk about the skis you offer.

JMJ: We have two models. The basic model is called the Standard and has one fin on each end. Our advanced model, the Eight, has a different rocker line and two fins for each end. The Standard is \$380, and the advanced model will be about \$500.

WS: What are the best tricks in wake skiing?

JMJ: There are so many; new ones are being invented all the time. You can do 540s, 720s — it's really unlimited. It's front rolls and back rolls also, but there's one a team rider came up with, the B-spin. It looks like a flat spin 360, but he

completely stretches out. It's amazing.

WS: What are you doing to promote wake skiing?

JMJ: We're probably going to hold a tournament at the Orlando Watersports Complex sometime in May ... we're doing video blogs on the site to let people see new tricks and places we ride. We want them to see it's not just a sport but a culture.

For more information on Johnsrud's company, visit stereoskis.com.



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