



(<http://www.apexsnowboard.com/>)

Home (<http://www.apexsnowboard.com/>) » Graduated Plate System ([graduated-plate-system.html](http://www.apexsnowboard.com/graduated-plate-system.html))

Graduated Plate System

GPS: Graduated Plate Sequence - A Common Sense Approach to Plate Systems

Update: Since Mark Fawcett wrote this guide to snowboard plates, Apex Sport and Kessler has released the Gecko Plate in the "Butterfly Risers" category. Here's what Mark Fawcett said after riding for a season on prototype Geckos:



"I don't want to ride my Kessler banked slalom board without them. Such a great setup."

Read more about the Gecko Plate here. ([apex-kessler-gecko-plates/](http://www.apex-kessler-gecko-plates/))

It's been almost four years since Canada's Secret Weapon hit the race scene disguised under duct tape. Later released as the Apex Race Plate, the composite snowboard plate has forever changed what's under a World Cup rider's feet. Naturally, developing racers want to jump on the same gear the pros ride. But wait a minute. World Cup racers have experience, coaching and tech support that's not always available to young racers. They also have access to hundreds of hours of on snow training time to adapt to new equipment.

So what's a rising star supposed to do? How does the young, developing racer make sense out of the dozens of plate offerings without breaking the bank through trial and error?

How about a logical and economical approach to moving onto plates? Mark Fawcett has come up with something he calls Graduated Plate Sequence or GPS for short. While some riders may be skilled and strong enough to jump onto a full isolation plate right away, GPS offers a practical and economical approach to moving into the plate world.

The Various Plate Systems

1) Butterfly Risers



Risers like the K. Plate Speed and Gecko Plate offer an excellent first step for those wishing to soup up their ride. These simple riser plates distribute pressure along a greater distance of edge, yield

extra height for less boot drag, and provide the rider more leverage over the edge. They are light, easy to install, and user friendly. A good rider will get used to these in no time. They are perfect for junior riders, women's SL and GS and men's SL up through Nor Am racing level. They even have a few World cup victories chalked up from this past season (C. Calve PSL Moscow).

2) Semi-Isolation Plates

The VIST and the Kessler K. Plate World Cup are the best known examples of these plate systems. They offer the next step in separating you from the violence your race board endures while cranking turns. This system acts as a riser, and decouples linearly from the board. This plate system can work for advanced racing women on their GS boards (overall Crystal globe winner), and is a staple on the world cup for men's SL. While the VIST system has been around longer, the Kessler K. Plate offers some advantages of simplicity of design, ease of mounting (only 8 screws) and is width adjustable.



3) Isolation Plates

The ultimate decoupling system. As the board bends linearly in a turn, this carbon plate remains flat. This both separates you from the vibrations and chatters below and allows the board to bend freely, yielding more confident, faster riding. This baby is not for everyone. It can be difficult to control at slow speeds and not quite as "definite" as a simple riser. Once up to speed however, its performance is undeniable. More World Cup wins than you can shake a stick at, and don't forget about that 2010 medal that started it all.



Many composite isolation plates have hit the market since 2010, I'm still partial to the original – the Apex. It's proven, reliable and continues to win World Cup. It is the difference maker for advanced Men's riders and strong Female GS riders.

GPS: Graduated Plate Sequence

Start with step one – ride your SL board naked and mount a simple riser plate on your GS board. Once you get accustomed to each setup, move to the next step.

Step One

SL Board: No plate

GS Board: Butterfly Risers

Step Two

SL Board: Butterfly Risers

GS Board: Semi-Isolation Plate

Step Three

SL Board: Semi-Isolation Plate

GS Board: Full Isolation Plate

Every rider is different and your mileage may vary. Speak to your coach, assess your abilities and try to demo equipment before buying. And of course, training, conditioning, solid technique and coaching win out over equipment every time. Make sure you take care of the fundamentals before looking to "buy" a winning ride.

- Mark Fawcett



About the Author

Mark Fawcett is a two-time Olympian with 14 World Cup snowboard victories. Since 2005 Mark has been the Canadian National Alpine Snowboard Coach. In 2009, Mark was awarded the Petro-Canada Coaching Award of Excellence. Recently, Mark launched his own unique brand of powder specific snowboards - Fawcett Boards.
(<http://www.fawcettboards.com>)

Stay in Touch

Newsletter

Keep up on our always evolving product features and technology. Receive special offers and be the first to find out about new products. [Subscribe to our newsletter. \(mailing-list.html\)](#)

Contact Us

Address: 5205 Harvester Rd., Unit 7

Burlington, ON L7L 6B5, CANADA

Phone: 1-416-551-4714 or 1-888-552-4714

Email: info@apexsnowboard.com (<mailto:info@apexsnowboard.com>)

Follow Us



(<http://www.apexsnowboard.com/>)

© Copyright 2015. All Rights Reserved. [Privacy Policy \(privacy-policy.html\)](#)