

## Business and Sports

### An Interview with Bode Miller, Champion Alpine Skier



Bode Miller

**EDITORS' NOTE** Bode Miller is an American Alpine skier who won six Olympic medals, more than any other male American skier. He also won the men's World Cup overall championship in 2005 and 2008. Miller was born in the heart of the White Mountains and initially lived in a house with no electricity or running water. After his parents divorced, his mother moved him to nearby Cannon Mountain and often left him in the care of the ski school staff. He began skiing competitively at age 11. A natural athlete, Miller earned all-state honors in high school in soccer and tennis and was an accomplished golfer. Ultimately, he decided to focus on skiing. He first made the U.S. ski team in 1998 and competed that year in the Nagano (Japan) Winter Olympics, where he failed to win a medal. At the 2001 Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS) World Ski Championships in St. Anton, Austria, he tore ligaments in his left knee in a racing crash, but he rebounded to collect silver medals in the giant slalom (GS) and the combined event at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. In 2011, he won his 33rd career World Cup race, a downhill event. Miller skipped the 2013 World Cup season to recover from knee surgery. At the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, he won a bronze medal in the super-G to become the most-decorated American Olympic skier of all time. In addition, at age 36, he became the oldest individual to win an Olympic medal in an Alpine skiing event. Miller missed the beginning of the

2014–15 ski season while recovering from back surgery. During his first race of the season, a super-G event at the World Championships in February 2015, he crashed and severed a tendon in his right leg, forcing him to miss the remainder of the World Championships. After not being able to return to the racing circuit for two years, Miller officially retired from competitive skiing in 2017 and then joined the National Broadcasting Company as an analyst for the company's Olympic skiing broadcasts. Miller's autobiography, *Bode: Go Fast, Be Good, Have Fun*, which was written with Jack McEnany, was published in 2005.

#### When did you know that you had a passion for skiing and a desire to be the best in the sport?

I developed a passion for skiing as a young child. Before I started public school, I would walk about a mile from our rural home in New Hampshire through the woods, then hitch a ride up to Cannon Mountain. I was homeschooled at that time, which freed up time to enjoy the sport, and I would capitalize on second-hand equipment from swap meets to use when needed. My desire to win was initially fueled by desperation, honestly, as local ski races I competed in for elementary school students offered a full season ski lift ticket as first prize. I wasn't the best of the best at that point but was able

to win that race a couple times with the motivation to earn that pass access that I otherwise couldn't afford.

#### What were the keys to your success in the sport and what set you apart from the competition?

Firstly, I'm hyper-critical of my performance in all aspects of my life, and have always held myself to the highest standards for everything I set out to achieve, but balance that drive with reality. While I believe that's mostly innate, outside of the obvious decades I spent training, I have learned how to harness a very specific, valuable mindset that allows me to max out on intensity and focus which I attribute to my success.

#### What interested you in business and did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit?

While traveling across the globe, I was thankfully exposed to brilliant business leaders with expertise in many industries who inspired me to think more strategically about my future beyond the slopes. While I was still competing, I also had the opportunity to weigh in on several products along the way which sparked my interest in moving into the realm of business and entrepreneurship.

#### Will you highlight the launch of your new tech venture, SKEO, and your vision for the business?



Revo x Bode Miller No 1 Blue Water lens



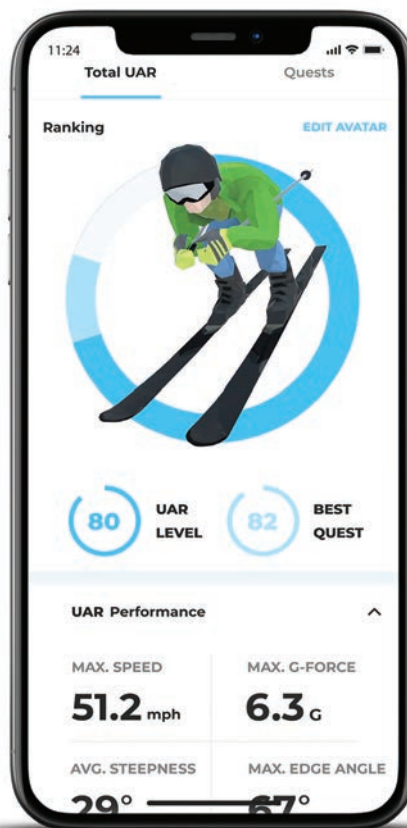
The SKEO app records skier performance, including from optional wearable sensors, and gives the skier real-time feedback and instructions to improve performance and safety

I teamed up with Snowcookie Sports CEO, Dr. Martin Kawalski, to recently launch SKEO, a digital ski platform that finally allows skiers to objectively measure their performance, improve their skills, exchange stats and access coaching tips through our free app which can also be paired with wearable sensors for more detailed and immersive assessments. Our goal for the platform is to help people better understand and develop their skiing technique with inspiration to improve, have fun and mitigate risk of related injuries. Our proprietary algorithm fine-tunes body position, edge control and improves safety, giving all skiers tools to safely take every edge they've got.

In terms of where we're headed, we're working to further develop our wearable technology for next season and will be releasing a premium version of the app as well. Until now, there really hasn't been any comparable technology that offers instruction and access for everyday skiers like we've seen in other markets such as cycling, running, yoga, etc. There also hasn't been a social network dedicated to snowsports until now, so we envision SKEO becoming the go-to for education, community engagement and meaningful connection within our space.

**You serve as Global Ambassador for Revo. What interested you in working with Revo and how do you focus your efforts in this role?**

I've always been a huge fan of Revo, given their heritage as one of America's longstanding independent eyewear retailers. I continue to have a deep appreciation for solid products that are proven to perform, so when I was approached by Revo to collaborate as their new global ambassador of winter sports, it was a



no-brainer to join their team. The technology and innovation they drive is unmatched in my opinion, so I was thrilled to team up on our first capsule collection of goggles that are available today – the first of many collaborations to come. My role at Revo is to not only promote the brand as an ambassador, but to also serve as a true partner, weighing in on product development and offering creative solutions before we

go to market. I really enjoy working with the Revo team as well, which is so important to me.

**How did your experience on the slopes impact your views on running a business and how did it shape your management style?**

Throughout my career, I was always looking to improve or modify my skill set to be more effective as a ski racer which is the same approach I take in business today. It seems very common for people to find themselves in positions that don't really align with their greatest talents, so finding ways to help them develop those skills to perform, or identifying the right role for them, is a really important part of leadership in business.

**During your career, you were always known to push yourself to get better and to focus on the next competition. Were you able to enjoy the process and take moments to appreciate what you accomplished?**

You're not wrong – I have always been a forward-looking person who tries to stay focused on what's next. That said, yes, I was mindful to ensure that behind closed doors with my close family and friends, I took time to humbly celebrate the triumphs along the way as they really did transform my life.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers, whether it be in sports or business, and what do you see as the keys to success?**

I think you have to have a deep passion for what you're doing and truly enjoy it. This doesn't mean that there won't be very difficult times filled with frustration along the way, but the passion and love for whatever you are doing will catalyze the motivation you'll need to stick with it and achieve success. ●