



https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/news/index.ssf/2017/11/ski_opening_poconos_north_jers.html

My Poconos Mishap

Michael A Thornton

September 5, 2018

My Poconos Mishap

The winter of 2017 was an exciting period in my life. I decided in September that I wanted to do something adventurous for the upcoming Christmas-vacation season. I went online and found a great deal for a ski trip to the Poconos Mountains. The deal included airfare from Jacksonville, Florida to Scranton, Pennsylvania. It also included a 4-star hotel and a really good deal on ski lessons. The price for the entire package was just \$500.00. Despite the low price, I realized I didn't have enough funds. I spent the next 2 months saving every dime and managed to acquire the necessary finances for the trip.

As December approached I really got energized about my upcoming Poconos adventure. The Poconos mountains lie right smack dab in the middle of northeast Pennsylvania's Monroe, Carbon, Pike, and Wayne counties, and feature lots of rolling hills, waterfalls, vibrant woodlands and 170 miles of flowing rivers (Poconos 2018). I had chosen the Poconos as my trip destination for these attributes and because it is well known as one of the most amazing ski destinations in the States. The resort features over 163 trails to ski on spread across 2500 acres of land providing an optimal environment for skiing no matter what level skier you might be. (Poconos 2015). December 18th came quicker than I thought. I jumped in a cab arrived at JAX and boarded my American Airlines flight. After checking in to the Hilton Doubletree I headed to dinner around 8 pm ate and turned in for the night. I could barely sleep; my body was full of nervous energy.

The Sunrise snuck up on me surreptitiously, like a little boy trying to scare his sleeping sibling – morning was here. I sprung out of the hotel bed landed in my clothes and darted for the door. I was too excited to eat breakfast; fortunately, the Doubletree is well known for its front-desk chocolate-chip cookies. I grabbed two put on my helmet and goggles and headed for the slopes. My new sporty gold and black ski gear was fitting me perfectly and one could have not asked for a more beautiful blue-skied sunny day to slide down some powder. I was set for a whole day of skiing ecstasy.

I headed for the ski instructors office to meet my instructor. I had debated whether or not to get ski lessons. But after a bit of Google searching on the 'net I came across an article that said, "Taking ski lessons is especially important for new skiers. "Learning how to fall correctly and safely can reduce the risk of injury". "Even experienced skiers can improve by taking a lesson" (Skiing Injury 2018). That convinced me to do the right thing. After a bit of training with my ski-sage, I was up on my feet ready for a try at the "real thing". My first few trials down the slope were amazing. What an exhilarating experience. Just you, your skies, the passing arctic breeze, a bit of anxiety, and pure unadulterated thrill are how I would sum up that initial experience. After my early success, I found myself feeling a bit cocky and confident about how proficient I was at skiing. I had never been skiing before and already I was doing it like a pro. I really think it was this overconfidence that led to what happened next. My next slope started as usual with a gradual accelerating descent down over the fine particles of white crystals. As the run continued, however, the slope on this new trail unexpectedly grew steeper, with sharply curved passages over deep snow and with the dense presence of multiple tall trees and vegetation. I missed a turn and was immediately launched airborne. As I sailed

through the frigid air I didn't see my life pass before my eyes. Instead, I saw a large Douglas fir getting ever closer and closer until finally the tree and I violently collided. My left shoulder was crushed when the tree personally introduced itself upon impact. The pain in my shoulder was one of the most concentrated forms of bodily discomfort I had ever been subjected to in my short time here on Earth. If it were not for two good Samaritans who happened to be skiing by me a few moments after my mishap, I might have never got back to civilization to seek medical care. The hotel ambulance, sirens blazing, sped me off to a nearby medical center where I received treatment. With despair my highly anticipated ski adventure had come to an abrupt close, sending me sadly and unwantingly back home. Almost a year later, my shoulder has fully recovered and despite the mishap, I still look forward to my next opportunity to breeze down the smooth Poconos slopes.

- 1) Poconos 2018
<https://www.poconomountains.com/about-the-pocono-mountains/>
- 2) Poconos 2015
The Poconos: Pennsylvania's Mountain Treasure
Michael P. Gadomski
Schiffer Publishing, Limited, 2015
208 pages
- 3) Skiing Injury 2018
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/staying-healthy/skiing-injury-prevention/>