

Not all ski deaths are counted by NSAA

By Vernon Silver, Bloomberg

There's a grim certainty that comes with the start of a fresh U.S. ski season: Inevitably, for a tiny number of those who take the slopes, winter fun will end in deadly tragedy. Counting just how many perish in accidents is a job that falls to the skiing industry itself, and the tally stops short of trying to reflect each and every death on skis.

The statistics compiled by the National Ski Areas Association exclude a range of deaths, including those that happen outside commercial ski slope boundaries, those who ski after normal operating hours, victims of heart attacks on the slopes, participants in competitions, and ski area employees who die on the job. This means that Ian Lamphere, 35, who died while skiing in Colorado this April, didn't make the count. Nor did the four snowboarders who died with him. The group was out of ski area boundaries when an avalanche claimed their lives at Loveland Pass.

Over the past decade the NSAA's count has averaged 39.6 annual snowboard and skiing deaths in the U.S., or 0.69 deaths per million skier visits.

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