A Canadian Ski Council "Did you know?" Poll Bulletin – 2018-19 Season Pass Purchase Intentions[1]

The information presented here is based on a poll in field 15 March to 1 April 2018 with a sample of 741 respondents The Canadian Ski Council's Snow Sports Panel includes participants from all regions of Canada and is constantly being added to. Please contact the Canadian Ski Council at info@skicanada.org if you are interested in more information and how your organization can participate in this initiative.

Spring Season Pass Sales - Is your ski area in the game? If not, why not?

Almost 7 in 10 respondents (69%) indicated they intended to purchase a season pass for themselves, or others in their family, for next season (2018-19). Intentions are significantly higher among those holding a 2017-18 season pass (93%), empty nester households (80%), and those with household incomes of $150,000 and up.

Among those planning to purchase a 2018-19 season pass, spring is when most (71%) intend to do so; very few (3%) expect to wait and purchase in season. Those who intend to wait seem to be less interested in purchasing a full access, unrestricted season pass with privileges.

Those planning on purchasing in the spring are mainly interested in a full access pass (56%) though other pass types are also of interest. While only 1 in 5 indicate interest in purchasing a more restricted pass types (i.e., mid-week or night passes) in the spring, this may be a function of ski areas not including all pass types in their spring sales campaigns. One in five also indicated an interest in multi-resort passes and frequency cards/discount lift card/pass booklets. Given this it may be worthwhile for ski areas to broaden the pass mix featured in their spring campaigns.

Those purchasing in the spring were asked to rate the importance of seven attributes regarding their decision to purchase a season pass product in the spring. As the data in the following table attests, money is a key driver with the '*cost savings of spring early bird passes*' and '*value for the money*' having the highest scores on importance. Other attributes listed are likely important to the overall pass purchase decision but are not drivers of spring sales.

Attribute	% Score as Extremely Important (9 or 10)	% Score as Extremely Unimportant (0 or 1)
Cost savings of spring early bird passes	75%	1%
Value for money	70%	1%
Ski area is located close to my home	52%	6%

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Family / friends are purchasing a season pass	15%	31%
Ability to use the pass at several different ski areas	8%	37%
Predicted snow conditions for next season	5%	36%
Status of owning a season pass	4%	74%

Respondents were probed more deeply on value and asked to indicate which of three factors was most important in assessing the value of a season pass:

- The price and only the price.
- The number of ski days at full ticket price to breakeven on your purchase.
- The number of available ski days (lack of blackout dates) that the pass provides.

It would seem that skiers and boarders do the math – 56% indicated that they looked at the number of ski days it took to breakeven when assessing value. The number of available ski days (i.e., a lack of blackout dates) was the factor chosen by the fewest (15%).

There were some interesting differences in profile and behaviour when it came to these choices, specifically:

- Those assessing the number of days to breakeven were more likely to have higher incomes and to be spending more on a pass ($900+)
- Those indicating the number of available ski days as most important were more likely to be empty nesters and less likely to be expert skiers/boarders.

Respondents anticipated spending either $701 or more (52%) or $100 – $500 (42%). Few indicated a likelihood of spending $501 –$700, potentially because this is not a price point for many season passes. Those living in western provinces (BC & AB) indicated a higher likelihood than those living elsewhere to spend $701+ when purchasing a season pass in the spring – probably a function of higher pass prices in the west than elsewhere.

Not surprisingly, most (67%) of those intending to purchase a pass indicated they expect to ski 16+ days next season; however almost a third (31%) indicated they would likely only ski 6 to 15 days.

Now what? Ask yourself …

- Are you doing a spring sales campaign for next season's pass products?
    - If not, why not? A majority of skiers and boarders are willing to purchase then, why not capitalize on the good feelings they are having and get then to pre-buy.
- How restrictive is your spring campaign when it comes to the product offering?
    - Could you include the full range of pass products if you are not already doing so?
- How does your early bird spring pass campaign tap into what current skiers and boarders are looking for?
    - Do you do the breakeven calculation for them?
    - Are you up front about any black-out dates
    - Is the early-bird price guaranteed to be the lowest possible price

For more information on the CSC's other Survey Polls such as On-Mountain Safety, Winter Travel Intentions and Summer and Autumn Ski Resort visit intentions, please contact the Canadian Ski Council at: info@skicanada.org