

## **Lowell Whiteman School's Michael DeGrandis Making Freestyle Name for Himself**

Just one year after destroying his clavicle in a jumping accident, Lowell Whiteman student Michael DeGrandis is proving what determination, hard work, and joy can do for a freestyle student-athlete.

DeGrandis, a senior who has boarded all four years while at Whiteman, has had a remarkable year on the Freestyle circuit. Like nearly all of Whiteman's student-athletes, he competes for the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club, finding the energy and enthusiasm to work hard in the classroom and in the moguls, his preferred Freestyle event. Unsure of what to expect this year after his injury, he has been a remarkably consistent performer for SSWSC Coach Erik Skinner (himself an LWS alum). "DeGrandis is hard to beat when he's on his game," says Skinner. And lately, he has really been on his game.

DeGrandis just returned to Steamboat from the NorAm circuit, which is a level below the World Cup tour. After competitions in Calgary, Park City, Quebec, and Killington, Michael emerged as the second-ranked US male, and fifth overall. His NorAm experiences will surely help him over the course of the coming weeks, when he will be in three major end-of-year competitions: the US Junior Nationals here in Steamboat next week; the Junior Worlds in Finland; and the US Nationals in Stratton at the end of March.

"This is my first year doing the full NorAm circuit, so I'm just trying to have fun with all the competitions," said DeGrandis while he was back at school last week. Missing as much school as he has is all part of the plan, and LWS's academic program supports student-athletes, allowing them to drop two classes in the winter so they can focus on their athletic pursuits. "My teachers have been very flexible. They aren't applying pressure, and know I'll get the work done at the appropriate time."

Even with his attention fixed on competing at the highest level possible, DeGrandis earned a spot on the Headmaster's List for Academic Distinction for the second trimester. He carried a 92% in his academic courses over the 10-week period. His father, Mike, is as proud of that as he is of Michael's on-snow accomplishments. "We couldn't be happier," the senior DeGrandis says. "We're thrilled he's been healthy, and he's shown great maturity. It's clear that Michael enjoys what he's doing, and that's what really matters." Making his parents equally proud is the fact that Michael has been accepted by two of his top-choice colleges: Denver U, where he has hopes to continue skiing competitively, and CalPoly, which accepted him into its prestigious engineering program. "I haven't made up my mind about next year yet. But right now, I'm just really having fun doing what I'm doing," DeGrandis says. For those who believe that attitude is 90% of the game, it's clear that DeGrandis will be a success for a long long time.

The Lowell Whiteman School is an independent, college-preparatory secondary boarding and day school offering a curriculum of rigorous academics, foreign travel, competitive snow sports, and wilderness experiences. LWS is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and accredited by the Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS). Founded in 1957 by Steamboat pioneer Lowell Whiteman, today the co-educational school

draws students locally, nationally and internationally to its campus. For more information, visit [lws.edu](http://lws.edu) or call 970.879.1350.



Michael DeGrandis flies high above Steamboat at a recent practice session.