

By: Brian Rice II

10/12/25

Flyin Ryan Adventure Scholarship Grant

Personal Essay

Hello I am Brian Rice II AKA (Flyinbrian) and this is just the beginning of my story.

Being a part of the Ski and Snowboard Club Vail (SSCV) athlete program has been one of the most important aspects of my life. Since joining at the age of 13, it has not only shaped me into the snowboarder I am today but has also played a vital role in my growth as a person. SSCV has provided a supportive community and access to world-class coaching that has pushed me to chase my goals at the highest level of the sport.

One of my proudest accomplishments to date is winning an international Continental Cup in New Zealand, where I competed against and beat current and former Olympians. That victory was more than just a medal, it was a moment of affirmation that I have what it takes to compete with the best in the world.

Among all the incredible experiences I've had in snowboarding, my favorite adventure was traveling to Japan for my first backcountry trip. I was there to film with Burton Snowboards, and it opened my eyes to a whole new side of snowboarding. Being in deep powder, surrounded by the natural beauty of the Japanese mountains, and capturing it all on film was both humbling and exciting. An experience I'll never forget.

Throughout my journey, I've been fortunate to have several mentors who have shaped my path. Nichole Mason, a former U.S. Team coach, taught me the importance of precision in my riding, while also helping me develop a positive mindset by reminding me that there's always something to learn from every experience. Chris Laske, SSCV's head coach and program director, has been a mentor and role model since I met him at age 11, he even taught me how to wakeboard. His guidance has helped me develop strong competition strategies that have led to real success. Andy Weber has also played a huge role, teaching me the importance of physical fitness, recovery, and how to understand my body as a high-level athlete.

The next big chapter in my snowboarding journey is one that this scholarship would help bring to life. I am preparing to travel to China to compete in my first international Olympic Qualifier on the World Cup circuit in Big Air. Representing the United States on that stage means everything to me, and this event is a critical step toward reaching my dream of competing in the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan. If I qualify, I

would have the chance to become the first Black snowboarder to compete in the Olympic Games, something I would be incredibly proud to represent.

Ryan's Core Principles deeply resonate with me. They reflect the values I live by both on and off the mountain: positivity, purpose, and discipline. These principles remind me to embrace the journey, stay grounded, and be intentional with every opportunity that comes my way.

Preparing for this adventure is a full-time commitment. My off-snow training includes a rigorous weekly schedule: strength training three times a week, balance and stability work twice a week, trampoline sessions for air awareness, and agility training. Financially, I'm building a detailed budget to account for travel, gear, and competition expenses. I also take on freelance cleaning jobs in my community—working around my training schedule—to help raise the funds I need.

None of this would be possible without the support of my parents. From the very beginning, they've believed in me and sacrificed more than I can express. My mom moved to Colorado with me from the age of 13-17 while my father and sister lived in Michigan. She worked here at Copper Mountain as a lift operator and many other positions to get me accommodation and the best opportunity for training. They have both worked multiple jobs to offset the financial burden of my training camps, competition costs, and the occasional hospital bill. While at the same time finding a way to put my little sister through college at Indiana State University to help her reach her goal of becoming a Pediatrician to help children.

Everything I do from the training sessions to the late-night jobs, from the small wins to the international competitions is driven by my passion for snowboarding and my desire to reach the highest level of the sport. This scholarship would be a crucial step in helping me get there, and I'm ready to take it on with everything I've got.