

## Bjorger Pettersen



Inducted CSHF: 2007

Hometown: Norway; Prince George, BC

Date of Birth: February 23, 1942

Affiliated Discipline(s): Coach, Official, Builder, Cross Country

Active Career Date(s): 1957-

FIS Code: n/a

Club: Hickory Wing Ski Club, Inuvik Ski Club, Caledonia Nordic Cross Country Ski Club

Bjorger Pettersen was born in Norway and immigrated to Canada with his family in 1953. They settled in Prince George, British Columbia, where his father, John, profoundly influenced the development of cross country skiing both locally and throughout the province. Following in his father's footsteps, Bjorger Pettersen expanded the tradition to encompass development of the sport provincially and internationally. Bjorger spent his life working full-time with cross country skiing and was a pioneer of this sport in Canada. He was a successful leader and groundbreaker as a coach, administrator, official, race organizer, ski industry developer and as Canada's first full time professional in Nordic skiing.

After a short racing career winning the Western Canadian Championships and finishing 6<sup>th</sup> in the Canadian Championships he was named to the 1963 Canadian Olympic training squad. In 1962, while training in Europe he was injured, returned immediately to Canada and went full time into coaching and working with cross country skiing. Firstly, he had an extraordinary career as head coach of the CSA's Western Division. Next he was hired to manage, develop and coach the successful TEST program; the program that became the North American leader and where he from the small town of Inuvik put 7 out of 9 cross country skiers on the 1972 Olympic team. After coaching the Canadian Junior team for two years, he was promoted to head coach/program director of the National Ski Team for 6 years. He completed his coaching career by part-time coaching his BC ski team for 7 years.

Along with his coaching years, Bjorger also built a leading Canadian sporting goods importer and distributorship company, Vikski Canada Ltd. that was a first in Canada to supply a full line of cross country equipment. This company was followed by other service companies for cross country skiing.

As a ski official and race organizer, Bjorger organized and promoted the first International FIS sanctioned cross country and biathlon races in Canada, with competitors from many foreign countries. His most noteworthy being: 1965 FIS North American Cross Country and Biathlon Championships; 1967 FIS Centennial Races; World Cups; World Junior Championships and the Top of the World annual championships.

Bjorger was Canada's FIS representative on the FIS cross country committee for 27 years, sitting on all major committees and on the Executive Board representing the Over Seas countries for 16 years. He was FIS Technical Delegate at 3 Olympics, Chief of Race and Venue Manager at the Calgary Olympics and has worked or attended 12 different Olympics.

### Awards Summary

1988 Air Canada Awards for the Top Sport Official of the year in Canada

1991 Dave Rees Awards, Cross Country Canada

1993 Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada

1994 Canadian of the Day, 1994 XVII Olympic Winter Games, Lillehammer, Norway

1999 Canada Ski Council Award

2000 Canadian Ski Council's Millennium Award for developing and leaving a legacy for Canadian Skiing

2000 Named as one of three Honourable Lifetime Members of the FIS Cross Country Committee

## Career Milestones

- 1957 Assisted in the founding of the Hickory Wing Ski Club, Prince George, British Columbia and served as club coach from 1959 to 1963.
- 1957-63 Won the Northern British Columbia Championships for seven consecutive years. In 1961, he won the Western Canadian Championships. His competitive career ended when he seriously injured his Achilles tendon in 1962 during summer training exercises.
- 1960 Worked and lived with the Olympic Organizing Committee for the 1960 VIII Olympic Winter Games, Squaw Valley, USA.
- 1962 Attended first Canadian coaching school for cross-country skiers. Named coach of Canada's Western Division including British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories.
- 1963-1966 Chair of Cross Country, British Columbia. Program Director, Western Division, Canadian Ski Association.
- 1963 Chief of Competition, Western Canadian Championships.
- 1965 Chief of Competition, Canadian National Senior Championships.
- 1966-1967 Vice-Chair, Cross Country Canada.
- 1966 Chief of Competition, Canadian National Senior Championships.
- 1967 Chief of Competition, Centennial North American Championships (the first sanctioned FIS cross-country race held in Canada).  
Co-founder of the Inuvik Ski Club, Northwest Territories.  
Named Program Director & Head Coach of the Territorial Experimental Ski Training (TEST) program.
- 1969 Owned and operated Ranch of the Vikings recreational cross-country ski area in McBride, British Columbia.  
Formed a Nordic equipment importing company, Viski Canada Ltd.
- 1971 Assistant Technical Delegate, Canadian National Senior Championships.
- 1972 Head Coach & Manager, Canadian Cross-Country team, 1972 XI Olympic Winter Games, Sapporo, Japan.  
Founded the Yellowhead Ski Club, McBride, British Columbia.  
Appointed a member of the FIS Cross Country Committee.
- 1976 Chairman, Cross Country BC (until 1978)  
Appointed British Columbia Division Head Coach (until 1982)  
Attended 1976 XII Olympic Winter Games as Canada's representative at FIS meetings.
- 1977 Technical Delegate, Canadian National Senior Championships.
- 1978 Chief of Competition, Western Canadian Championships.
- 1980 Technical Delegate, Jury Member for Nordic Combined, 1980 XIII Olympic Winter Games, Lake Placid, USA.
- 1981 Chief of Competition, Canadian National Senior Championships.
- 1982 Jury Member, World Ski Championships, Oslo, Norway.
- 1984 FIS Executive Member at 1984 XIV Olympic Winter Games, Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, part of the Calgary delegation (OCO).  
Principal of Viking Sport & Recreation Consulting design team for the courses for cross-country and Nordic Combined, Canmore, Alberta for the 1988 XV Olympic Winter Games.
- 1986 Appointed Cross Country Venue Manager by OCO 88 and Chief of Competition for the cross-country events.
- 1987 Member, Cross Country Canada National Ski Team Committee (until 1991), Chair, National Ski Team Committee 1988, 1989.  
Chief of Competition, pre-Olympic World Cup meet, Canmore, Alberta.
- 1988 Chief of Competition, Cross Country events, 1988 XV Olympic Winter Games, Calgary, Alberta.
- 1989 Chief of Competition, World Cup event, Canmore, Alberta (last World Cup race to be held in Canada until 2005).
- 1992 Assistant Technical Delegate & Jury Member for Nordic Combined at 1992 XVI Olympic Winter Games, Albertville, France.
- 1993 Assistant Technical Delegate, World Championships, Falun, Sweden.
- 1994 Technical Delegate & Jury Member for Nordic Combined at 1994 XVII Olympic Winter games, Lillehammer, Norway.
- 1997 Retired from FIS Cross Country Committee and Executive, installed as an Honorary Life Member of FIS.

*Please Note: The ski information gathered here is compiled from a number of sources; it may not be inclusive of all accomplishments.*

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