

Last Season in The United States

By Frank Elkins, Sports
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AIDED by unusually favorable snow conditions, ski-ing, which has forged ahead at a rapid pace during the past decade, enjoyed without a doubt the best year of its history here in the United States this past season.

Particularly was this true in the East, where an unusually long winter permitted the extensive program of jumping, downhill, slalom and cross-country races arranged by the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association to be carried out in full.

That the interest in the sport is keen is demonstrated by the huge crowds attending the various tournaments, and even stronger evidence is the fact that people were going out in increasing numbers to try ski-ing themselves. The excursion trips initiated years ago by the Boston & Maine Railroad to ski-ing centres in Vermont and New Hampshire proved of high success last year, many thousands—dubs and experts alike—making the jaunts to the White and Green Mountains.

Even the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad had to acquiesce to the demands of the metropolitan skiers, who pleaded for an expeditious way to travel to the various ski-ing spots. The result was a series of excursions launched from the Grand Central Depot to Norfolk, Conn.; Pittsfield, Mass.; the Poconos and New Hampshire. In each instance the requests for passengers' tickets far exceeded the supply available, and the seating capacity of the trains was filled many days in advance.

The department stores in New York, whose volume of business can most always be utilized as a barometer for other parts of the country, also felt the increased popularity attendant on the thrilling sport. A survey revealed that the purchases of ski materials this year were almost 125 per cent higher than in 1934, also a boom year for ski-ing.

So sweeping has been the enthusiasm of winter sports devotees the past season, that for the first time probably in their history hundreds of summer hotels have foregone boarding their doors. Instead, they remained open and did a flourishing business in catering to the vast army of winter sports enthusiasts. This most certainly was an emphatic indication of the wide-spread interest in ski-ing.

With the 1934-35 campaign being a pre-Olympic season it was only natural that the eyes of ski-ing enthusiasts would be focused on the Olympic trials with the National championships and sectional title tournaments coming in for their share of support.

The performances of Roy Mikkelsen, Pacific Coast expert, easily overshadowed the work of any other skier. The Auburn (California) Ski Club representative jumped as he never jumped before and pitted against the cream of the country, scored 224.10 points, three more than his nearest rival, Sverre Fredheim of Minneapolis. Casper Oimoen, perennial titleholder, had to be content with number three position.

Ottar Satre of Salisbury, Conn., whose family are recognized as pioneers in the sport here in the East, showed extreme adeptitude in another field, cross-country running, as well as jumping. Known as an expert "langlaufer," the Connecticut ace provided the feature performances in the cross-country world.

He first won the National langlauf crown at ten miles at Canton, S.D., won the Beck trophy for the combined tests at Lake Placid and also took premier honors at the Olympic combined tryouts, which included both jumping and cross-country. Another surprise was Richard (Dick) Parsons, clubmate of Ottar. Setting a terrific pace all the way, he upset Magnus Satre, six-time holder of the National title, in taking the 18-kilometre race at the Lake Placid Club.

The Olympic ski jumping trials resulted in Sverre Fredhime of Minneapolis winning the first place laurels on the giant Ecker Hill in Salt Lake City. Hannes Schroll, Austrian skier, was the acme of perfection in taking both the slalom and downhill races at Rainier National Park, Wash. Robert Livermore of Boston was second in the former with Richard Durrance, sensational Dartmouth star, third. Durrance also placed runner-up to the Austrian in the downhill contest.

Ski-ing activities on the other side of the Ocean were featured by the record-breaking accomplishments of two Norwegians, Reidar Andersen and Olaf Ulland. Andersen was the first to send the world's record jump of 301.76 feet, established by the likable 1932 Olympic champion, Birger Ruud, in Jugoslavia in 1934, into the discard. He shot through the air the incredible distance of 311.60 feet on March 17 last, also at Jugoslavia.

His glory was short-lived, however, for on the same day, Ulland registered a remarkable flight of 324.6 feet during an international exhibition at Pointe Di Legno, Northern Italy. The distance of this phenomenal jump can be more appreciated when the football supporter will realize that the leap is longer than the length of a gridiron.

Casper Oimoen rung up a new United States long distance mark of 255 feet on February 3, at Big Pines, California, leaping 252 feet on his first attempt. This broke the mark of 240 feet established a year before by John Elvrum. On his second effort, Oimeon went three feet further.

So with the passage of the 1934-35 season, winter sports devotees are not lingering on past performances but instead are getting their ski boots oiled, their skis waxed and making plans and preparation for what appears to be another record-breaking year, 1935-36, for the King of Winter Delights—Ski-ing. Skaal!