

Susan Hornbogen  
HS 481  
Journal Entries

**Nov. 11, 2001** – The pressure is on to complete my ski jumper interviews. I went to Peter White Public Library and asked for any archive material they had on ski jumping. The librarian gave me 3 large folders of stuff to go through. About an hour and half later, I had copied some newspaper clippings with the names of Jack Bietala and Jim Lawson in relation to jumping.

The folders were a great source of information. Prior to looking at them I had no idea about the impact jumping has had on the area. I learned that the sport came over with the Norwegians and was called skee. By the time I finished, I knew all about the Bietala family and felt much more informed about jumping.

The old photos in the archive folder gave me the idea to ask about clothes and equipment. The change in the style of jumping was evident in the photos and triggered another question. Also I remembered watching the ski jumping during the last (?) winter Olympics; especially the Japanese team and the discussion about the style they used.

**November 12, 2001**- I contacted both Jim Lawson and Jack Bietala and both agreed to meet with me at the Ski Hall of Fame on Tuesday.

Jim Lawson couldn't hear me and stated he had a hearing problem. I ended up speaking very loudly into the phone to make sure he understood who I was and what I wanted. He seemed a little flustered that the interview was actually taking place but agreed to meet with me at 10am tomorrow. I will have to remember to speak directly to him if he is hard of hearing.

Jack Bietala was also a bit flustered but it was because he was trying to get everything ready for two weeks at deer camp. He wanted to put off the interview until after the hunting season but I said the class would be over and it would be too late. I gave the option of choosing any time between now and November 15<sup>th</sup> even if it meant skipping a class or giving up a substitute teacher job. Lucky me. Jack choose Tuesday afternoon when I told him I was speaking with Jim Lawson in the morning.

**November 13, 2001-** While setting up in the Ski Hall of Fame library, I met Ralph Bietala who had just finished his interview. Somewhere in the exchange the name "Hammerlegs" came up. I asked about it because I thought it was Mr. Lawson's. Ralph Bietala told me not to believe anything "Roxie" said. They were laughing the whole time and it was obvious to me that they had known each other for a long time. I had some time before Jack Bietala came and I used it to look at the photo albums in the library. Most of the pictures were in the Peter White folders and there were some I hadn't seen. The question about bindings came up when I noticed a type different from others I'd seen in the photos.

**November 20, 2001-** I made an appointment with Dr. Magnaghi for three o'clock this afternoon to interview him in his office.

**December 4, 2001-** I indexed all my interview tapes today. It was kind of fun to listen to these voices again and I now understand the power of these tape- recorded interviews. I found myself smiling in some places as I remembered what we talked about. The place were 'Roxie' Lawson mentions he might cry is particularly memorable because it is an example of how events in your life follow you through and have an impact. I think what

amazes me the most is the friendships that started in the neighborhood hills of Ishpeming are still intact today. For many, friendships are transient because of our mobile society and this lifelong knowledge of one another is becoming more rare.

# 'Big Name' Performers Will Assault American Record Set By Torger Tokle In '42

ISHPEMING, Feb. 18—The greatest field of ski jumpers ever assembled for an American championship meet of any description — 125 leading riders, representing the United States, Norway, Sweden and Austria and paced by former champions and the most outstanding jumpers of three of those nations—will assault Ishpeming's majestic Suicide hill next Saturday and Sunday in the official 1947 National Ski Association championship tournament.

Actually all the name jumpers of the postwar era, including a six-man Norwegian team, Eric Lindstrom, four-time Swedish champion, and America's outstanding competitors, will leap for fame and glory in an attempt to exceed the Suicide hill record of 250 feet, the all-time American record of 289 feet, established by the late Torger Tokle at Pine Mountain in 1942, and to reach the much-coveted 300-foot mark—the goal of all riders in America for nearly a decade.

## Engen, Barber, Lindstrom

The star-studded entry list includes such outstanding jumpers as the national open champion, Alf Engen, Sun Valley, Idaho; former national champions Merrill "Mezzie" Barber, Brattleboro, Vt., and Walter Bietila, Ishpeming ace now riding for Iron Mountain; Eric Lindstrom, who already has annexed the Central Ski association championship during his short stay in this country; the great Arnholdt Kongsgaard, Norwegian power jumper reputed to be the peer of the late Torger Tokle; Kongsgaard's fellow countrymen, Harald Hauge, Ragnar Baklid, Gustav Naum and the Norwegians riding for Norge Ski club, Cary, Ill., William Gundersen and Birger Arneson.

Ishpeming's championship contenders include Ralph Bietila, Jim Lawson, Joe Perrault, Wilbert Rasmussen, Clarence Hill and others.

Only plucky Art Devlin, national amateur champion of Lake Placid, N. Y., will be missing from the field which will assault famed Suicide Hill, rebuilt this season to make a 300-foot jump safe and entirely possible.

Devlin was scratched when he leaped 286 feet at Leavenworth, Wash., early this month and suf-

## TWO-DAY CLASSIC

Under regulations of the National Ski association, the national meet will be a two-day affair, with Class C and senior riders competing at Suicide Saturday afternoon, and Class B and A riders jumping Sunday afternoon.

ferred a badly wrenched right leg—the jump exceeded the hill's capabilities. Devlin landing in the transition between the landing and the outrun. He fell beyond the landing slope, standing long enough, how-

hill record, only three feet short of the American mark.  
New Record Possible

Although Devlin is out, there are at least a dozen riders in the national field capable of bettering the American record. Suicide Hill now has 325 feet of landing, an adequate transition, and if snow conditions permit, it is entirely likely fans next weekend will see a new American record.

With such stars as Kongsgaard, Baklid, Hauge, Lindstrom, William Gundersen, Engen, Arneson, Ralph and Walter Bietila, Lawson, Perrault and Rasmussen in the field, fans can be assured the talent is there to produce a hill record, an American record and possibly a 300-foot jump if the weatherman favors Ishpeming's big meet next Saturday and Sunday.

And to top it off, there is always the possibility such veterans as Sverre Fredheim, Ted Zoberski, Roy Laramie, Roy Bietila, Eugene Wilson, Ellsworth Mitchell, former Class B national champion, and Percy Crosby-Smith may hit the takeoff just right and soar to unexpected honors in the face of competition thrown at them by the current leaders in the world's most spectacular and thrilling sport.

## 36 Experts In Class A

Thirty-six experts are entered in Class A, the top class of the meet. Three riders, Engen, Merrill Barber, and Art Grandstrom, of Everett Ski club, Washington, will compete in the open division.

Rivalry in Class B is sure to be intense and exacting, with 45 of the nation's best performers, including Jack Levendowski, Austrian rider competing for the Wausau, Wis., club, in that division.

Paced by Ishpeming's Wilbert Rasmussen, present holder of the American Class C and Suicide Hill record of 250 feet, established on his first jump here last season, and Iron Mountain's George Pera and Dave Freeman, Class C rivalry will be heated. Thirteen "C" competitors are entered.

Considerable interest is being shown in Class C and senior division rivalry this season and particularly in the national classic.

Led by George Kotlarek, Duluth, who has proved that he can still keep pace with hot Class A stars, the senior division will be a battle royal.

Many senior riders are only a year or two out of top-notch Class A tournament competition, and many of their jumps will be the equal of even the current Class A field. Kotlarek will have to contend with such formidable senior stars as George Gundersen, Norge Ski club; Knute Johnson, Longview Ski club, Dubuque, Ia., and Gogebic's Earl Minkin and Walno Weimer.

Every event that has preceded the Ishpeming classic is regarded by the riders themselves as just a warmup for the national championship. It is a foregone conclusion that each rider will be out to stretch for the greatest possible distance of which he is capable the day of the meet.

Each rider, who knows by his own analysis of his ability and experience what he is capable of doing, will go "all out" to be the rider of the meet who will break Rasmussen's record and possibly Tokle's American mark.

## Foreign Ski Aces To Live In Fire Hall

ISHPEMING, Feb. 18 — Every metropolitan center has an "international house" of some description. Ishpeming will have one during tournament week. All the foreign jumping stars here for the big meet will be housed together at the Ishpeming fire hall, where comfortable quarters, complete with showers and other facilities have been provided.

A great feeling of "one with all" exists among the Scandinavian skiers in America. It's not a clique. The young men just want to get together to talk things over and compare notes about America, how things are going in the old country, about U. S. skiing in general and about their chances on Suicide hill this weekend.

It all started when Erick Lindstrom, Swedish champion, who jumped in Ironwood last Sunday, asked Ishpeming Ski club officials if he could be

"Swell," said Eric, who has been competing successfully in this country all season.

And then William Gunderson, Norwegian riding for Norge Ski club, Chicago, took off for Brattleboro, Vt., to meet his six comrades, who flew here from Norway Feb. 9 and got the plane kinks out of their legs on Merrill Barber's home hill in Brattleboro last Sunday. Gunderson will come here with the traveling sextet — four star riders and two expert slalom and downhill champions.

Just for the record, here's the makeup of the Norwegian team, whose unusual (to an American) names already are causing confusion. As reported to the Ishpeming Ski club by the National Ski association, they are: Harold Sandvik, team

captain; Arnholdt Kongsgaard, Harold Hauge, Ragnar Baklid, Class A experts and Norway's best, and Kristofer Berg and Jens Prytz, two outstanding slalom and downhill artists.

## All "Comforts Of Home"

These six, plus Lindstrom and Gunderson and possibly the lone Austrian, Jack Levendowski, riding for the Wausau, Wis., club, will be quartered at the fire hall. In case you're wondering about the "comforts of home" provided in a fire hall, fear not for the welfare of the Scandinavians during their stay here. Firemen do all right! Visit your local fire hall and see.

All other visiting riders in the meet will be quartered in the spacious Knights of Pythias rooms (35 to 40 capacity) and at the Anderson hotel, Ishpeming. Double bunks were procured from the Boy Scout camp, and Marquette prison cots, blankets and mattresses are being used at the ski riders' headquarters.

Riders are like everyone else, regardless of his respective calling. When men have something in common — and believe us, these daredevils do — they like to stick together.

# Americans Stress Distance In Skiing, Norwegian Says

M.S.F. 29 47  
By CHARLES CHAMBERLAIN  
Associated Press Staff Writer

ISHPEMING, Feb. 27—(AP)—The difference between ski jumping in this country and in Norway or Sweden is the emphasis the Americans place on distance of leaps rather than form, in the opinion of members of the Norwegian ski team. Their views are regarded as good an explanation as any why the national jumping championship at Suicide hill here has been postponed the last five consecutive days because of strong winds.

The scaffold, where the riders begin their downward slide, and the takeoff, where they leave the "in-run" and zoom into space for their jump, have both been heightened on Suicide hill this season in an attempt to get leaps of 280 to 300 feet.

## U. S. Likes "Power Jumpers"

The 300-foot mark never has been reached in America, but has been surpassed on at least three non-tournament slides in Norway. The world's record is 350.69 feet, set in 1938 by Joseph Bradl of Austria at Planica, Jugo-Slavia. The best distance ever reached in America was 289 feet in 1942 by the late Torger Tokle at Iron Mountain.

"Americans like to watch power jumpers get big distances and they do not care so much for form," said Gustav Raaum, 21, the youngest member of the touring Norwegian squad. "That, primarily, is the greatest difference in skiing here and in Norway and Sweden. Our technique or style is basically the same. In Norway tournaments we cannot compete on hills unless they meet certain measurement requirements which hold the jumps under 300 feet."

## 275 Feet "Suicide" Limit

All the riders awaiting good weather to participate in the national ski jumping tourney agreed

that a 300-foot leap on Suicide hill would be impossible, but that under ideal conditions a 275-foot jump might be made. The hill record is 250 feet, set last year by Negau-nee's 16-year-old Wilbert Rasmussen.

During wind-testing trial runs yesterday, 22-year-old Odd Harsheim of the Norwegian team took a bad spill and suffered a fractured bone in his left shoulder. A physician said he probably would be out of action the remainder of the season.

# Ishpeming Youngsters Ski Almost Before They Walk

1947  
By Staff Correspondent for Milwaukee Journal M.S. Mar 4

ISHPEMING—This little northern Michigan mining city is the closest thing to Norway, in the production of young ski jumpers, that exists on this side of the Atlantic ocean and the reasons may be seen along any road—ski tracks down a small slope to little mounds of snow where youngsters have made their own jumping slides to the size they desire.

Ishpeming is a cluster of old mine locations—National, Cleveland, Salisbury, Greenwood, Barnum, Clarksburg and many others. Around each mine houses sprang up and although these have run together into one city, many houses have no other address than Salisbury location or National Mine location, etc. Every one of these locations has a half dozen improvised ski jumps on natural hills, with here and there a small scaffold to take advantage of a good landing slope which lacks an upper hill. After school and week ends, the youngsters swarm on these little hills.

That's the way it is in Norway. John Eilertson, of East Stanwood, Wash., a Class A jumper in the national meet, remarked about it. No Wonder They're Good

"My grandfather used to tell about the jumping knolls along the slope between his home and school," he said. "Going home from school, the boys would ski up the slope to jump off a knoll, ski along the sidehill to get above the next, and so on. There were nine of them between his house and the school. A kid who made those nine jumps every day off nine hills was bound to be a good jumper."

The avid interest of youngsters is responsible for the fact that Ishpeming, cradle of the United States Ski association in 1904, is the most prolific producer of ski jumpers of any community in America. The Ishpeming Ski club sends more riders to more meets than any other club in the country. It had 18 entrants in the national tournament this year — more than any other club and

represented other clubs. And a few riders, better than some of the entries, returned from war service too late to qualify.

This representation was not due to the fact that the tournament was held here, for a jumper had to qualify for the national by placing among the first 10 in a tournament on a hill rated good for 150 foot jumps.

## Lad Jumped 250 Feet

The latest outstanding product of the backyard "kid" hills is Wilbert Rasmussen of near-by Negaunee. Ishpeming runs annual tournaments for boys too young to compete in Class C. A boy has to be 16 to be registered as a C jumper.

Some boys came to the men who run the junior tournament and said they knew a boy over at Negaunee who was jumping "good." They were told to bring him in, and did. He was Rasmussen, then 15. He won the junior tournament and was invited to compete for the Ishpeming club in the big tournament on Suicide hill—the first since the hill was enlarged—he jumped 250 feet for a new hill record, and none of his elders was able to equal it.

Joe Perrault, generally recognized as Ishpeming's most promising jumper and respected by the visiting Norwegian skiers as their most dangerous competitor in the national tournament, conducts a class once a week on his own initiative. Kids are hero worshipers and up here the topnotch ski jumpers are the heroes, so Perrault is a big attraction. He has 25 to 40 youngsters on hand for his classes at the winter sports area just outside of town, which has the Teal lake jump, good for 60 feet, and the Baby lake jump, good for about 150.

By the time the boys go to Joe, they are ready for Teal hill. Their backyard and neighborhood ski jumps range from tiny knolls from which they jump eight or ten feet up to hills good for 25 or 30 feet.

## Kids Have "Know-How"

The writer stopped at Salisbury location to watch a dozen lads on a hill after school. They got around on their skis agilely. They knew how to pack the hill by walking up it, pounding the edges of their skis into new snow spread on the landing slope. They knew how to restore the take-off and argued a bit about the amount of rise it should have. Then they stuck a twig at either side of the take-off so it would be clearly visible from above, and up the hill they went to line up for their turns at jumping. They knew form, too, and told each other to "lean in more" and "not to jackknife."

# Hill Tops Class A Riders In State Ski Championships

## 220-Foot Leap Scored By Bietila

MJ 1-10-55

ISHPEMING — Under conditions which would have forced cancellation of a meet on the old hill, ski riders made their 1955 competitive debut on Suicide Hill Sunday in the Michigan state ski championships.

Coy Hill topped the Class "A" field and Larry McTavish, Duluth, took top "B" honors. The two tied for "most graceful" honors.

A gusty north wind and a heavy Saturday night snow fall made jumping conditions unpredictable, held the crowd down considerably and forced cancellation of jumps by less experienced riders.

### Bietila Jumps 220 Feet

The question of the revamped hill's effect on the record at Suicide remained unanswered, but bright possibilities were shown, when Ralph Bietila took "long standing" honors with a 220-foot leap, despite adverse conditions and some trouble on the takeoff.

Ray Gauthier, Ishpeming's National Class "B" champion, edged Don Packmeyer of Ironwood for second place in Class "A" and Jackie Bietila was a close second to McTavish in "B". Dean Polanka of Duluth was third in Class "B" and a fourth Minnesotan, Duncan McTavish, was eighth in "B." Dave Mukavitz and Bob Carl of Ironwood placed fifth and seventh in Class A.

Will Rasmussen got off two of the longest jumps of the day, but fell on a 218-foot second effort, to place fourth. Wearing colored glasses, for the first time, Ralph Bietila misjudged his landing on the first jump, fell, and did not make a second round jump. The longest effort in Class "B" was Jackie Bietila's 205, which he duplicated beautifully in the "long standing" jump.

Clem Packmeyer of Ironwood suffered a broken shoulder and a cut on the head in the only acci-



WILBUR RASMUSSEN shown clearing the "bump" before landing on Suicide Hill in yesterday's state ski championship tournament. —(Mining Journal photo.)

dent of the day, as he lost pressure just after the takeoff and cartwheeled down the slope, narrowly missing more serious injury.

The results, including distances on the two jumps, and total points, follow:

Class A			
Clarence Hill	217	203	146.3
Ray Gauthier	196	190	134.9
Don Packmeyer	185	198	134.3
Wil Rasmussen	216	218*	129.7
Ken Racine	179	188	128.5
Dave Mukavitz	173	190	126.7
Rudy Maki	199	204*	120.8
Robert Carl	153	167	117.9
Rod Johnson	169*	169	98.6
Robert Anderson	169	178*	97.9
Class B			
Larry McTavish	189	202	144.5
Jack Bietila	186	205	141.5
Dean Polanka	179	191	130.2
Allan Chapman	184	167	129.3
Clarence Rivers	164	166	119.5

Carl Lemin	159	163*	97.4
Ron Portale	166*	148	92.3
Duncan McTavish	192*	192*	92.

(Asterisk indicates fall).

### 14 Riders Win Prizes

Hill and Larry McTavish had 70.0 scores on form.

Fourteen riders shared in prizes donated by local merchants and awarded at a meeting held after the meet at the Ski Hall of Fame. The five-man Duluth contingent, and the two judges, Sam Davy and John Osterman of Ironwood, added their approval of the hill remodeling job, when they spoke at the post-meet meeting.

Funds from the meet will help send Ishpeming Ski Club riders to tournaments this winter, but, because of the relatively small crowd, other fund-raising events may be necessary.

## 'New' Suicide Hill Tested; 'Vast Improvement' -Bietila

MJ 1-3-55

ISHPEMING — Ralph Bietila of Ishpeming, former Olympic ski team member, described revamped Suicide Hill as "a vast improvement over the former hill to aid the younger jumpers" after he and nine others rode the hill for the first time.

While the giant hill is rough, and needs a couple of days work before next weekend's Michigan state championships, Bietila leaped 210 feet. Wilbur Rasmussen

broke track on the "new" hill with a jump of 180 feet.

The landing was in good shape for one of the earliest opening dates for jumping on Suicide Hill in many years. Many area riders will be trying the hill this week in preparation for the coming meet.

The longest jump recorded on Suicide Hill since the 1946 remodeling was 261 feet, posted by Arne Hoel, a Norwegian.

## Bietila Saga Continues



1951 PAUL BIETILA

ISHPEMING, Feb. 13 — One of the most thrilling chapters in Ishpeming skiing annals was written by a family known as the "Flying Bietilas."

More hill records have been broken and tournaments won by this family than by any other in America's ski history. And the saga is by no means complete. The Bietilas are still very much in prominence on the American skiing scene and likely will remain for many years to come.

### Two Youngsters Launch Careers

Of the original six brothers — Anslem, Leonard, Walter, Paul, Roy and Ralph — three are still competing. They are Roy, Ralph and Walter, who recently came out of retirement and will compete in tryouts for the 1952 Olympic team.

In addition, two youngsters — Leonard, son of Leonard, Sr., and Jackie, son of Anslem — are beginning their careers as ski jumpers.

### Strange Coincidence

By a strange coincidence, the Bietila family moved into a home vacated by the Halls, Ishpeming's other great skiing family, after the Halls left here to take up residence in Detroit.

Some skiing experts rate Walter the greatest skier among the Bietilas but Walter himself re-

gards Paul as the finest skier ever produced in America.

### Paul's Great Record

Paul, the fourth son in the family of seven, died on Feb. 26, 1939, the victim of a skiing accident. He was nearing his 21st birthday. He held nine individual hill records and was unquestionably the best ski jumper in America at the time of his death. He began competing when he was a mere child and by the time he was 12, he had established a boys' world record at Suicide Hill. In 1933, when he was 15, he broke his own record by jumping 196 feet at Ishpeming. In 1935, he stretched this to an amazing 208 feet.

Paul attended the University of Wisconsin. He represented Wisconsin at the International Intercollegiate Ski Meet in Brattleboro, Vt., in 1938, and won first place.

It was while making his final jump at the American National Ski Meet in St. Paul on Feb. 5, 1939, that Paul crashed into an iron restraining post at the edge of the runway. He struggled valiantly for three weeks to recover from the accident, only to succumb on a Sunday 12 years ago.

# ORY

Al Vincelle, also named squad, won in Class "C". s year, won in "B", in the

1955 found him reaching r weather conditions. Jack Erickson "Junior A", and

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the spotlight in 1961 by ons. Kotlarek finished a

inland and Pekka Tirkko- te-two and again Kotlarek

umping competition served Olympic hopefuls.

**OODS**  
ISHPEMING



Members of the famous "Flying Bietilas," of Iron Mountain, and Roy of Ishpeming and pictured here with their mother, are (top, from left) Leonard and Ralph of Ishpeming, Walter (bottom) Anselm of Ishpeming.

## Ralph Last Of Bietilas Still On Skis

ISHPEMING — Ralph Bietila of Ishpeming, the last jumper in "America's greatest ski jumping family," will be a leading contender in the Paul Bietila Memorial tomorrow and the national jumping competition Sunday.

For almost four decades, "Ma" Bietila has sent at least one of the "Flying Bietilas" to every major ski jumping tournament in America.

Ralph, the last acting participant of the "Flying Bietilas," now jumps in the veterans' class and is the defending national champion.

Perhaps the greatest jumper of the six brothers was Paul, who died as a result of a jumping injury which occurred at St. Paul, Minn., in 1939. The annual Paul Bietila Memorial is conducted in his honor.

The family tradition started with Anselm, the oldest brother, who lives in Ishpeming. His son, Dr. Jack Bietila, also a ski jumper for several years, is president of the Ishpeming Ski Club, which is hosting the national jumping championships and the 60th anniversary celebration of the United States Ski Association this weekend.

The tradition of top-notch jumping was carried on by Leonard, who lives in Ishpeming.

Walter, who now lives in Iron Mountain, is the only jumper Ishpeming has ever sent to three Olympic games. He jumped on Olympic squads in 1936, 1948, and 1952. Actually, he was a member of four Olympic teams, but the 1940 Olympics were cancelled because of World War II.

Roy Bietila, another championship jumper, also was a member of the 1940 team. He lives in Ishpeming.

Ralph also is an Olympic jumper. He competed in the 1948 and 1952 Olympics.



## ISHPEMING SKI CLUB PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Ishpeming is the home of one of the oldest ski clubs in North America. The Norden Ski Club was formed here in January, 1887. The club was made up primarily of Norwegians who brought their skiing tradition to the Ishpeming area.

The first ski jumping tournament was held February 25, 1888. Ole Sundlie of Ishpeming won the first gold medal issued in the United States for ski jumping, with a jump of 35 feet. That medal is on display in the National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming.

On April 18, 1901, the present day Ishpeming Ski Club was formed. Carl Tellefsen, originally from Trondheim, Norway, was named its first president. In those early days "sküing" meant one thing: ski jumping. Jumping hills were located throughout the Ishpeming area. Hills with such names as "Superior," "Brasswire," "Rocky," and "Jackson Hill" were scenes of jumping tournaments before the present location of Suicide Hill was found in 1926. Credit for discovering this location goes to Pete Handberg and Leonard Flaa, then active officers of the Ishpeming Ski Club.

The first construction of this facility was completed in 1926. More recently, the hill underwent a major renovation in 1972 with a new scaffold and take-off being built. Since that time work has continued on the parking lot area and other support facilities.

The Ishpeming Ski Club continued to produce national and international class ski jumpers. Walt Bietila was on the 1936 Olympic team; Paul Perrault and Ralph Bietila jumped with the 1948 Olympic team; and Ishpeming was again represented on the 1952 team by Ralph Bietila, Wilbert Rasmussen and Paul Perrault. Rudy Maki was on the 1956 team. Jon St. Andre was a member of the 1960 Olympic team and Jack Bietila was named an alternate that year. Jerry Goyen jumped with the 1964 Olympic team.

This year, for the XIII Winter Olympic Games, Jim Grahek was a member of the U.S. Olympic team and jumped at Lake Placid, N.Y. Of the 13 Winter Olympic Games scheduled since 1926, Ishpeming Club riders have been in eight of these events.

Ishpeming has also been the home of national champions. Conrad Thompson in 1904, Ole Westgaard in 1905, Coy Hill in 1952, and Rudy Maki in 1955. In Veterans Class, Ralph Bietila took national honors in 1963 and Coy Hill in 1964 and 1970. Don Hurst of Marquette was Veterans National Champion in 1969, 1971 and 1973.

Today, the ski club continues to field riders in all classes. The club also sponsors an active "Pee Wee" and junior jumping program for youngsters. Jumping hills for all of these classes are located in the Suicide Bowl area. These jumping hills and our snow conditions combine to make this one of the finest training and competitive facilities in the United States. The ski club continues to recruit and encourage young skiers to develop into serious jumping competitors.

Currently under consideration are proposals to purchase additional jumping skis and equipment for junior skiers who show incentive and willingness to train. Additional "neighborhood" jumps are also being considered to further encourage development of this sport.

Cross-country skiing continues to grow in the Ishpeming area. Our trail system, both in the Suicide Bowl area and the Cleveland trail, have been the sites of U.S.S.A. sanctioned races, as well as a number of collegiate races. Like the jumping facilities, these trails and our snow conditions make Ishpeming an outstanding Nordic training and competition area. The Ishpeming Ski Club has been represented in most Central Division Cross-Country ski races.

With continued development and use of these facilities, the Ishpeming Ski Club looks forward to again producing National Class competitors in Nordic skiing.

The ski club currently consists of over 150 members of all ages. Membership is not limited to residents of the Ishpeming area. Anyone interested in Nordic skiing is invited to join this record of success and contribute to the growth and development of Nordic skiing. Through your membership you will support the continued maintenance of the cross-country trails and ski jumping facilities. In summary, the future of the ski club, and Nordic skiing, both recreational and competitive, in the Ishpeming area, is dependent on an active and growing club membership.



For my good friend  
Melanie

From

Ralph Bieltla

# PAUL BIETILA MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT

The first Paul Bietila Memorial Tournament was held at Suicide Hill on Washington's Birthday in 1953 with Lloyd Sewerud, 1960 Olympic jumping team coach, taking first place honors in the senior (now veteran's) class. In Class 'A' competition, appropriately enough, **Paul's brother Ralph** in 1975 inductee into the National Ski Hall of Fame) won first place honors with Ishpeming's Rudy Maki top jumper in "C" (now junior class).

That first meet came one week short of 14 years after Paul died. In that span, the feats and possibilities of the bright young athlete grew into legend and that legend still grows.

The legend is combined with what "could have been," for Paul, just under 21, was without doubt the best young ski jumper in America at the time of his death. He was just ten years old when he first jumped off Suicide Hill in 1928. At 15, he jumped 196 feet on the big slide for a boys' world record. In the next years, he set and re-set 14 distance records on midwestern hills.

He was to be a member of the 1940 Olympic jumping squad, but those games were canceled when Russia and Finland went to war.

Paul wouldn't have made the games anyway. Competing in the National Tournament at St. Paul, Minn., Feb. 5, 1939, he hit ice on a practice jump and skidded into a restraining post. A valiant fight for life ended February 26, 1939.

And so this meet in his honor continues.

In 1954, Wilf Rasmussen returned from the Army to reassert his mastery of Suicide Hill with Class 'A' first place jumps of 222 and 218 feet.

Stretching jumps to 237 and 230 feet, Rudy Maki won Class 'A' honors in 1955. Jack Bietila topped 'B' and Willie Erickson won 'Junior A'.

In 1956, tournament honors went to the first man to bring the "flying fish" style to Suicide Hill; Esko Mominen of Finland.

In 1957, Finland's Antti Hyvarinen led an all-out assault on the Suicide record book

soon tipped the 250 foot mark to win the junior class.

Art Toke won the 1958 event, which was held in combination with the International Ski Federation tryouts.

Finland's Kalevi Karikinen won the '59 meet while Gene Kotlarek topped Class 'B' with a leap of 250. Kotlarek also won the 1960 meet.

In 1961 and 1962, Japanese and Finnish riders dominated the meet.

The 1963 Bietila Memorial was part of the meet used to select the U.S. Olympic team.

Kotlarek led the 1964 senior class while Ralph Bietila won the veteran's class.

Yutaro Kasaya soared to a hill record of 277 feet to easily top a large field in the 1965 tourney.

Ishpeming's late ace, John Carello, took top junior honors in 1966 while Finland's Harri Juusilainen and Keijo Laiho finished one-two in 'A'.

Dave Lundmark of Duluth won the 1967 Class 'A' event while Billy Olson won the veteran's class.

Duluth retained the title in 1968 when Dave Hicks took first place honors.

Japan's Nobukazu Saito soared to first place honors in Class 'A' in 1968.

The hill record was stretched to 278 feet in 1970 when Norwegian Frithjof Prydz soared to 278 feet.

The Paul Bietila Memorial title returned to an American in 1971 when Adrian Watt won.

Finnish star Juhani Rousiainen topped a star-studded field in 1972.

Jerry Martin captured top honors in 1973 when he set the current hill record of 284 feet. Dr. Don Hurst captured the veterans' title that year.

1974 saw U.S. ski team member Jeff Wright battle gusty wind conditions to take top honors. In a grim twist of fate, Wright was killed in January, 1975, while practicing for a meet in Brattleboro, Vermont.

The meet was dominated by Gary Napalov of the Soviet Union in 1975.

Hill record-holder Jerry Martin resumed his mastery of Suicide by winning last year's meet.

This year more history is very likely to be made as the top ski jumpers gather at Suicide Hill to match the jumping spirit of the man the tournament honors — Paul Bietila.

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