

4. That in selecting Chairmen for Womens' Committees the Divisions endeavor to appoint, if possible, women who are in touch with competition and competitors.

Note: The National Women's Committee was dissolved in 1960.

Period of National and Collegiate Experience

Increased facilities, better technique, more competitors, greater use of knowledge, more pressure and demands imposed by self, loomed over the sport. It had matured to almost a full-time business to prepare a team for international competition. That is, during the season before the Olympics, fund raising and selection were major factors of concentration. The skiers, generally, had worked for many years to reach this ultimate point in competition.

While the National Ski Association and the Olympic Ski Games Committee were considering a budget of \$37,500 to \$50,000, the competitors were priming for the principal tryout races: the Harriman Cup and North American Championships in the West; the National Championship and American International races in the East. The National Junior Championships, and the National Giant Slalom Championship at Seattle, Washington were also potential "battle grounds". The outcome of these races, sanctioned by the National Ski Association, largely determined the selection of the International Alpine Team. During the 1955 selection year, all of these races were held in March and April. They were held late in the season after competitors had time to "work up" to the concentrated weekly schedule.

The American International Downhill and Slalom Meet was held at Stowe, Vermont. This event was called "Starr's Circus" because Cornelius V. Starr of the Mt. Mansfield Corporation had imported the top European talent for the event. It enjoyed higher prestige than the United States Nationals and the entry list, even for the women, was of considerable size and talent. On the distaff side of the ledger, it appeared to be an easy competition; however, this was not actually the case. Andrea Mead Lawrence topped the field in a clean three-way sweep. Interspersed in the lists of standings were the familiar names, names of future Olympians, and names of those who were considered "of the racing age." Katy Rodolph (Wyatt Wegeman) was second in the combined scoring and Skeeter Werner, third. The number of women competitors was running noticeably higher.

One seventeen year old was exceptionally busy trying out. However, Penny Pitou (Zimmerman) appeared to thrive on competition. As a member of the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association Junior Team, she traveled to Whitefish, Montana where she was outstanding and won both the girls' downhill and slalom events.

Betsy Snite (Reilly), the other seventeen year old hopeful, had her day too. The Helms Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, California named her Junior Woman Skier of the Year for 1955 and presented her with the Andrea Mead Lawrence Award.

The Harriman Cup and the National Giant Slalom Championship were not so well attended by the women. The champions seemed to be content to let their accumulated records stand and not tamper with their chances to make the team. This was not as true of the men who represented a larger field of competitors.

In Olympic alpine competition, combined scores were no longer tabulated; the emphasis was on the best three individuals in each event. During the tryout season, however, the United States Olympic Ski Games Committee gave the following notice:

... Olympic team members would be chosen according to the combined score of each competitor's best five out of six races, regardless of other considerations. Meanwhile, the group of alpine technical advisors appointed by the committee had been urging competitors to risk falling and go all-out for the spectacular performances, rather than to try for good averages. The technical experts, all of them old hands at racing, had recommended that the statistical results be subjected to qualifying interpretation, and consideration be given to brilliancy, future potential, winning ability and other subjective factors. If the object was to have winners in the Olympics, the advisors felt, winners and potential winners should be picked for the team. The committee, on the other hand, maintained the statistical method was the only fair one, and that any other criteria would be open to reproach on the ground of favoritism.

The controversy almost led to the exclusion of Bud Werner from the team and it took a compromise, settled three weeks later, to put Bill Beck on the team. Resolutions, such as were made at the Eastern convention, demanded that the Olympic Selection Committee "be composed of people with national competitive experience and that the United States Olympic Ski Games Committee adopt 'selection rules that apply to skiing'. The question of how to choose United States' teams was perplex.

The Olympic Committee accepted the recommendations of the women's technical committee. Fortunately, the selections of the technical committee coincided with the numerical standings of the candidates, for the women's field of those eligible was less crowded than the mens'. Representing the United States in 1956 were: Catherine "Kay" Rodolph (Wyatt Wegeman), Andrea Mead Lawrence, Penelope Pitou (Zimmerman), Betsy Snite (Reilly), Dorothy Modeneso Surgenor, Gladys "Skeeter" Werner, and Jannette Burr Bray as alternate. Friedl Pfeifer was Coach and Dorothy "Dodie" Post (Gann) was Manager for the women.

The Seventh Winter Olympic Games was to open in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, with the lighting of the traditional Olympic flame on January 26, 1956. Out of some thirty nations, the American contingent of women were odds-on favorites.

Working two years in advance, John Clair, United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association Vice President and Chairman of the United States Olympic Ski Games Committee, had a proposed budget of \$56,000 and each division was set a quota for funds to work towards. Assisting nobly with this effort was Lowell Thomas, who served as Chairman of the Finance Committee. Life Magazine, Time and Sports Illustrated also cooperated by running stories and "tear sheets" for readers to use in sending in funds.

By November, 1955 only \$30,000 had been raised. However, the budget had been lowered to \$53,000 with the dropping of the post of general manager and one competitor. In the past, the drives had been successful so that the effort did not seem to be extreme. In 1948, the general Olympic Fund of the United States Olympic Committee paid a considerable number of bills. The team had only \$20,000 when it left for Europe, which was not enough to pay the boat fare. In 1952, however, the United States Olympic Ski Games Committee raised \$52,000 and no funds from the general Olympic Fund were needed.

The import for the desire to be financially independent was that by supplying the entire amount to the teams, the Olympic Committee did not assume