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Reidar Andersen
Born: 1912 Died: 1991

Reidar Andersen was truly one of the world's greatest jumpers, having won the prestigious King's Cup at the Holmenkollen three times, in 1936, 1937, and 1938.

Reidar Andersen was born in Norway, and like nearly all of the youngsters in his native country, he was on skis almost before he could walk. He developed into a top ski jumper in Norway and was a Norwegian Olympian during the 1932 Winter Games at Lake Placid, New York. In 1939 he was invited to North America to participate in a ski jumping tour. Reidar won every event in which he jumped, eighteen in all. This was truly a remarkable feat.

World War II intervened in this man's rather brilliant career, and the Nazi occupation caused Norwegian sports to either disband or go underground. A group arose during the occupation of the Nazis, which called itself the "Snoballen." It was formed to combat the Nazi attempts to control the Norwegian National Sports.

After the war Reidar Andersen and a group of these "Snoballen" toured the United States, and a press release from the Royal Norwegian Government on January 28, 1948, stated:

Reidar Andersen, Norwegian Olympic coach and top combined-event specialist arrived in New York on January 19th to head a seven man Norwegian team which will compete and instruct ski jumping and cross-country during the coming seven weeks. The six other members of the group which includes Willy Lorentzen, Hans Kaarstein, Ernst Knutsen, Hans Jacob Haanes, Arne Sletten, and Per Aas, were chosen by the Norwegian Ski Association to make the American trip and are scheduled to arrive on February 3rd. All are representatives of the war-famed "Snoballen" (Snowball) group which arose during Norway's occupation to combat Nazi attempts to control the Norwegian national sport.

The leader of the visiting team, Reidar Andersen, is one of Norway's truly great skiers. Thirty-six years old, five feet ten inches in height, and weighing 170 pounds, Andersen has held fast to his top-flight status for well over a decade. He is three-times winner of Norwegian Holmenkollen Championships (1936, 1937, 1938), a feat which no other skier has ever able to equal. When he toured the United States and Canada in 1939, he swept every event in North America including the United States and Canadian Jumping Championships, and returned to Norway with a bag of over 100 trophies. His longest jump of 99.50 meters (340 feet) was made at Planiza in Yugoslavia. The "Snoballen" group, Reidar Andersen a member, which is a group of Norwegian top jumpers which traveled under the direct sponsorship of the Eastern Ski Association and, participated in meets at Greenfield, Massachusetts (February 9, 1948), Brattleboro, Vermont (February 15, 1948), Lake Placid, New York (February 28-29, 1948), and Laconia and Gilford, New Hampshire (March 5-6, 1948). Between competitions, the team worked with the various ski organizations, aiding in instruction and demonstration to further the sport of ski jumping in the Eastern United States.



Reidar Andersen— Norwegian Olympic Ski Team Exhibition, Jump 215 feet

Andersen is a staunch advocate of skiing as a means rather than an end in itself, and is convinced that Norwegian groups such as the team he heads can do much to popularize cross-country skiing in the United States. "It calls for a maximum of participants," stresses Andersen, "and a minimum of spectators."

Reidar Andersen lived in retirement in his native Norway and was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame.