

#117

Ron MacKenzie

Born: 1903 Died: 1978



For nearly sixty years, Ronald MacKenzie played a major role in the development of recreational and competitive skiing as a teacher, coach, planner, builder, organizer and promoter.

Ronald MacKenzie was well-known and respected from his own small mountain village, to the inner circles of the F.I.S. and worldwide Olympic Committees, not only for his contribution to the sport, but also for his attributes as a person. Ron spearheaded a twenty-year drive to secure a major ski development on the state-owned lands of New York at Whiteface Mountain at Lake Placid. This involved first a campaign for the passage of a necessary constitutional amendment, then untiring efforts to obtain funds from the State Legislature, and finally direct involvement in laying out the trails and acting as an overall advisor on actual construction.

As a member of the Adirondack Mountain Authority, which operated Whiteface during its first ten years, MacKenzie also helped plan a second state ski operation at Gore Mountain. Both were highly successful.

In addition, MacKenzie planned and supervised construction of a new system of cross-country trails at New York State's Mount Van Hoevenberg Recreational area near Lake Placid, which were designed for ski touring by the public, and have been used for National and International competitions. He also acted as a consultant in design and promotion of several private alpine areas.

In 1937, MacKenzie organized the Lake Placid Ski Patrol and was received national appointment #201.

Ron was a charter member of the New York State Winter Sports Council, founded in 1940 to foster the sport of skiing by offering a forum to bring together its commercial and non-commercial aspects.

After twenty years of work with youth training programs, MacKenzie was selected as coach-manager of the United States F.I.S. World Championships in Sweden. Director of Competition for the 1950 F.I.S. World Nordic Championships and Chief of Course for the Cross-Country events, he was both a certified United States Ski Association Jumping Judge and a certified Alpine Official.

Always involved with the "politics" of skiing, Ron was a delegate from his area to every F.I.S. Congress and United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association meeting and a host and delegate to a number of United States Ski Association Conventions.

Beginning in 1955, Ron was a mainstay, serving with distinction, as a member of the Lake Placid Winter Olympic Organizing Committee in preparing and presenting unsuccessful bids for the Games of 1960, 1968, 1972, and 1976, and finally reaching success with the 1980 Games at Lake Placid.

Unfortunately, Ron did not see the 1980 Games. After long hours spent supervising construction in preparing the Lake Placid area for the 1980 Games, he collapsed and died during the christening ceremonies on the new 70-meter jump, while 150 Lake Placid residents and friends looked on. Skiing lost a great man on December 23, 1978. A tribute to MacKenzie's organizational skills was the success of the games despite his loss.

Ron MacKenzie was elected to the National Ski Hall of Fame in 1971.

