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Albert Sigal

Born: 1893 Died: ?

Albert Sigal was the president of the Yosemite Ski Club for ten years, during which time he served the National Ski Association as both vice-president and president, and was divisional chairman of the National Ski Patrol System.

Whenever early skiing is a subject of conversation among a generation of elders along the Pacific Coast, many references are made concerning the part which Albert Sigal played in furthering the sport of skiing. His interest was helped along by his two sons who were California Junior Champions at age 15 and 16. Junior skiing was a neglected issue until older skiers, such as Sigal, took it under their wings. He also took upon himself the role of creating a united divisional organization and brought into its fold many smaller ski clubs and groups which today have grown into one of the largest divisions of the National Ski Association.

Albert Sigal, as president of the Yosemite Ski Club, used this as a base for the selling and molding of the unity which had been lacking for quite a few years during the infancy of skiing in the West. Mr. Sigal remained as president of his club for a period of ten years, during which time he became in turn a divisional chairman of the National Ski Patrol System, a vice-president and president of the National Ski Association, a member of the executive committee of the United States Olympic Association, and chairman of the United States Olympic Association, and chairman of the United States Ski Games Committee for the 1948 Winter Games at St. Moritz.

Sigal's work for skiing among all these segments won for him two important awards – the "Ski Patrolman of the Year" award by the National Ski Patrol System, and the Julius Blegen Award of the National Ski Association in 1953, the award reading "For outstanding service to U.S. Skiing."

Albert's activity as a member of the National Ski Patrol System contributed great value to skiing. On a trip to Washington for the Ski Patrol System, he and Minot Dole arranged to be the recruiters for skiers to set up the Ski Mountain Troops. When training in the West, the U.S. Air Force began to have crashes or accidents in the coastal ranges, and were unable to reach these wrecks. Sigal set up a search and rescue program with the 4th Air Force in San Francisco, which operated very efficiently and was credited with saving personnel who otherwise would have perished in the cold and snow. The National Ski Patrol System awarded Sigal its gold merit star for this service in 1943-44.

Sigal's service to skiing in connection with Olympic activities paralleled his efforts in other ski fields. When named as chairman of the United States Ski Games Committee in 1947-48, he immediately set in motion, with one or two assistants, a program for fundraising and equipment furnishings which resulted in a citation from Avery Brundage, president of the United States Olympic Committee, who stated, "Never before has the National Ski Association responded so well, and I am sure that this was due largely to your diligence." Mr. Sigal was also appointed manager of the United States Ski Team for the 1948 Olympic Games held in St. Moritz. However, business prevented him from going, and a substitute was elected.

Mr. Sigal's Olympic activity was again noticed when he assisted in bringing the VIII Winter Games in 1960 to Squaw Valley and as a director of the Organizing Committee for the Games. His knowledge and efforts concerning skiing played an important role in the success of the Winter Games.

Albert E. Sigal was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1971.

