

#132

## Dorothy Hoyt Nebel

Born: 1905 Died: ?

Nomination letter submitted by Patricia Peterson

*Dorothy Hoyt Nebel was fascinated with alpine skiing. She became a school teacher, but took time off to go to Europe to ski, where her skiing vastly improved.*

Dorothy Hoyt Nebel was a 15-year-old high school student in Schenectady, New York, when she first took to skis back in 1920. A living legend of the winter world, her 52-year career encompassed all phases of the fast-flying sport. Many believe her record is unequalled when it comes to a spread across the divisional, national and international levels.

Dot Hoyt as a school girl knew no skiers, but nevertheless, was fascinated by ski jumping hills and cross-country touring trails. Her father purchased a pair of skis because Dot wished to participate, and together they made bindings to keep them on her feet. Better still, there were Norwegians who had a jump in a nearby public park – and Dot took to the slide after the boys finished practice on cold, snowy days. What's more, she was better at it than many of the other participants in what was supposed to be a manly nordic art. Dot's first alpine ski pointers came from Otto Schniebs, when the famed Dartmouth College coach came to talk to the club. She already was racing against the men, there being no girl competitors in those days in the north woods. By that time Dot had become a teacher in the Schenectady school system, but in 1936 took a leave and went to Europe to ski. The big mountains and the well-conducted standard races of the internationally famous snow sport resorts soon improved her skiing.

The following winter Dot raced again with the men; her prowess observed by Roland Palmedo of the ski team committee. Soon the Schenectady school teacher was recommended for the United States Ski Team – and she ended up in Europe for the 1938 F.I.S. Championships. Team manager Alice Damrosch Kiaer reported in the *American Ski Annual* that "Dorothy Hoyt justified our choice by beating the other new girls."

For the 1938-1939 ski season, Dot switched from the Eastern Amateur slopes to those of the Pacific Northwest, a move made possible by an exchange program operating between Mont Pleasant High School in Schenectady and Garfield High School in Seattle, Washington. She taught math, coached a girl's team and raced herself as a member of the Washington Ski Club. She won the Christmas Race at Sun Valley, Idaho, the Arnold Lunn Trophy at Mt. Hood, the Silver Skis at Mt. Rainier, the PNSA Slalom Championship and, following high placings in the National Alpine Championships at Mt. Hood, was named to the 1940 United States Olympic Ski Team. But the Olympic Winter Games were called off because of World War II.

Back to Schenectady for the 1939-1940 season, she organized high school races of local teams while also finding time to compete in divisional events. At Pico Peak she swept the Eastern Amateur Women's Combined Downhill and Slalom Championships, setting a record down Sunset Schuss and having no trouble whatsoever in the slalom. And she sprang another repeat performance in 1941 when the Eastern Women's Championships were decided at Waterville Valley, New Hampshire.

Dot opened the 1941-1942 season as a Class "A" National competitor. The season's only international event saw the United States Women's Team defeat the Canadians at Lake Placid, NY, with Dot winning the downhill. Next time out Dot won the Eastern Women's Veterans' Class Championship – and then she married Charles Nebel, an electrical engineer and recreational skier.

Soon Dot was back in the snow country – teaching at Pico Peak at the request of owner Janet Mead. With Ski School Director Karl Acker and most of the male instructors off to the Mountain Troops in Colorado, Dot coached Andrea Mead as America's future double Olympic Gold Medal winner pointed for the big time. And she also managed the U.S. Girl's Team for continuing Canadian-American team competitions.

Soon Otto Schniebs asked Dot to teach at Gore Mountain, North Creek, New York, where within a year she took over management of the ski school. Next she helped form the New York State Professional Ski Instructors' Association.

She was rated as the grand gal of the USSA when it was known as the National Ski Association of America and was a top instructor and member of the Professional Ski Teachers of America. More than 50 years of skiing combined into a competitive and sports building career.

Dorothy Hoyt Nebel was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1972.

