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Robert Reid

Born: 1898 Died: 1990

Robert H. Reid was the first American-born athlete to puncture the myth of an eternal Scandinavian supremacy in Nordic ski competition. Reid performed brilliantly in cross-country events in the United States and Canada. His duels with John Satre, one of the "ironmen" of the day, and one of Europe's best athletes, sprinkled the record books for nearly a decade. After his Olympic competition, Reid competed in races of lesser importance in the local area, but as late as 1938 at age forty, Reid still retained enough kick to win the Berlin Ski Club Championship.

In 1924, Robert H. Reid was the 26-year-old langlaufer who won the National Cross-Country Championship at Brattleboro, Vermont. Before and after that signal triumph, Reid competed brilliantly in America and in Canada against the era's best langlaufers.

Reid capped his outstanding competitive ski career by winning a berth on the United States' 1932 Winter Olympic Ski Team and running in the 50km cross-country event at Lake Placid.

Reid was born in the skiing stronghold of Berlin, May 27, 1898, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Reid. He was a contemporary of Ski Hall of Famer Alf Halvorson. Graduating from Berlin High in 1916 and a youthful apprenticeship in nordic skiing, Reid commenced serious competition with an entry in the Canadian Championships at Montreal in 1921. He finished 9th in the 11-mile cross-country.

In 1922, he took seconds in ten-and-eight-mile races at Gorham, New Hampshire. In 1923, despite a dislocated shoulder, he was third in the 20-mile Mt. Washington Race which was won by Rolf Monson. The following year, with the Weeks Trophy up for grabs in the Mt. Washington event, Reid won it, setting a new record in the process.

Also in 1924, the same year he won the National Cross-Country Championship, Reid was second in the Canadian National Championship at Shawbridge as well as winning the Nansen Ski Club Championship at Berlin.

Rupturing himself in the 1925 Vermont Championship in which he took second place, Reid was laid up the rest of the year.

In 1926, there was a 100-mile Portland, Maine, to Berlin, New Hampshire, race which Reid won. That same year he was second to John Satre in the Mt. Washington Race.

The 1927 National Cross-Country Race at Steamboat Springs, Colorado, saw John Satre again edging him for first place. At Ottawa, in the Ontario Championship, Reid led the field. The Berlin 11-mile Cross-Country Championship of that year saw John Satre winning it, Reid second and Ottar Satre third. Reid won the 1927 Canadian Cross-Country Championship.

He was 34 when he made the 1932 Olympic Ski Team.

After that he competed generally in races of lesser importance, but as late as 1938 still retained enough kick to win the Berlin Club Championships.

Reid was noted in his racing heyday for his remarkable endurance. He gained it from long and continued tramps in the North Country woods in his capacity as a surveyor for the American Realty Company.

While the Portland, Maine, to Berlin, New Hampshire, 100-mile marathon of 1926 was impressive because of the distance involved, the Mt. Washington to Berlin race was a particularly grueling 23 miles. Entrants started at Mt. Washington's Half-Way House and covered a tortuous up-and-down course en route. Reid's record of 2 hours and 55 minutes still stands.

All these more dramatic contests only served to hone Reid to a winning edge for a national and international competition.

Robert Reid, one of North America's first truly great cross-country competitors, was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1975.

