

#175

## Barbara Cochran Williams

Born: 1951

*One of four Cochran children, Barbara and older sister Marilyn, and younger brother Bob were team members at the 1972 Olympic Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan.*

Barbara Ann Cochran was born January 4, 1951, in Claremont, New Hampshire, and has come a long way in skisport since her first race at six years of age.

Barbara Ann, also a Silver Medalist in Slalom at the 1970 F.I.S. World Championships and member of the 1974 F.I.S. Team, began skiing at about four years of age. She won her first championship at the age of 15 in the Giant Slalom of the 1966 Junior Nationals at Winter Park, Colorado. In 1970, she finished 5th overall in the World Cup with a 2<sup>nd</sup> in Slalom and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Giant Slalom. In 1971, she won back-to-back World Cup races (Slalom and Giant Slalom) at California's Heavenly Valley. In 1972, she returned from Japan to receive the Billy Kidd Award, the Coronet Skier of the Year Award, the Vermont Athlete of the Year Award, and the Beck International Trophy.

The women's skiing events of the 1972 Sapporo Olympic Winter Games wound up in dramatic fashion when Barbara Ann Cochran won the Slalom Gold Medal. This triumph, combined with Susan Corrock's Bronze Medal in the opening Downhill, saved the day for American skiing.

Barbara, one of three members of the Cochran family on the United States Ski Team (older sister Marilyn and younger brother Bob also competed) proved the class of the field in the two-run Slalom and margin of victory over France's Daniele Debernard was a mere two-hundredths of a second - 1 :31.24 to 1 :31.26.

Cochran carried the Stars and Stripes during the impressive closing ceremonies. Behind her came five other young women who had won medals in speed and figure skating; also the Silver Medalist ice hockey team. The procession of athletes had team rooters whistling the old Maurice Chevalier favorite, "Thank Heaven for Little Girls (and Big Ones, Too)."

Standing 5 feet 1 inch in ski socks, Barbara weighed in for the 1972 Winter Games at 112 pounds. From Richmond, Vermont, she had been coached in the beginning by her dad, Mickey Cochran. The latter became head coach of the U.S. Alpine Team in 1973 and once again directed the racing family, including Lindy Cochran of the "B" Team.

Barbara's Gold Medal was the first won by an American in 20 years. Back in 1952, Andrea Mead Lawrence had won two Gold Medals in Norway, while the 1928 Winter Games in Switzerland had seen America's first Gold Medal in skisport captured by Gretchen Fraser.

When Barbara Cochran retired from the World Cup circuit at age 23, she had won 345 points, more points than any other U.S. skier, male or female, had ever accumulated in skiing history.

Barbara Ann Cochran was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1976.

