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Edmund Couch

Born: 1906 Died: 1985

Ed Couch fell in love with ski jumping at an early age. His contributions to skisport range from tow-strap beginnings as a seven-year-old in the Colorado snows of 1913 to international renown as a designer of ski jumping hills.

Ed Couch Jr. was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1906, and traveled west with his parents when his father was transferred to Pike National Forest in Colorado as a ranger. The elder Couch made a pair of skis to get around the grounds, and Ed realized that skiing was fine entertainment in this rather desolate area. Couch entered the University of Denver and skied for the ski team for two years, and then moved on to the University of Wisconsin and competed in jumping in the National Ski Association's Central Division. After he graduated in 1934, Couch continued to jump until a broken leg terminated his ski jumping career. He became a jumping judge and ski hill designer. Steamboat Spring's Howelsen Hill was one of Couch's early designs, and jumps of 300 feet and more were possible.

Ed Couch did the preliminary investigation for the Ski Flying Hill at Ironwood, Michigan in 1946, but it was determined the American jumpers were not ready for a hill where 450-foot plus jumps were possible. However, the big hill became a reality in 1972, and Couch did the final design on the project. Here the national teams of the U.S. and Canada vied for honors against skiers from the F.I.S. nations.

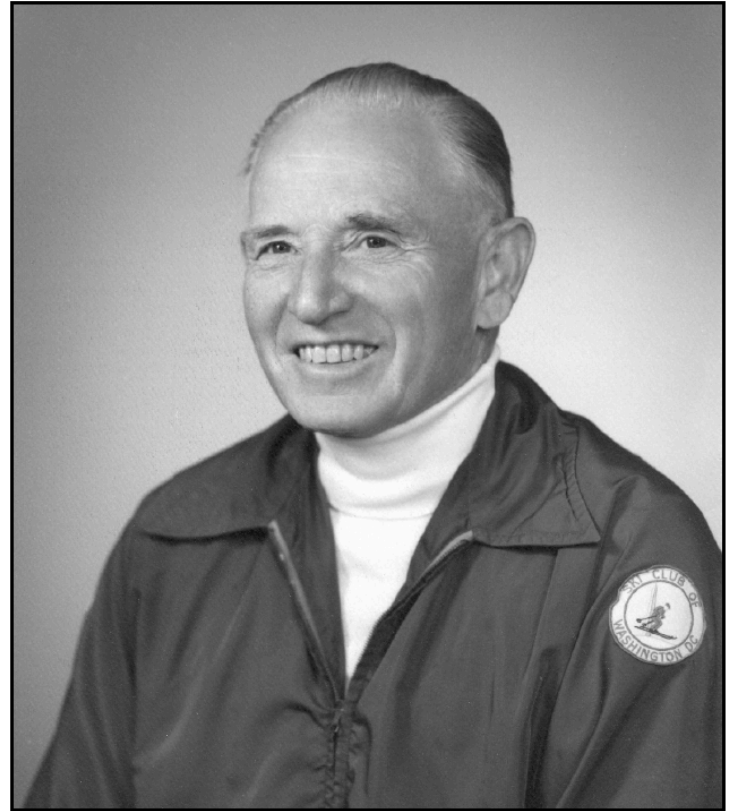
The sport of ski jumping has come a long way since Ed Couch became a sports builder back in Whitehall. Jumps designed by him decorate the landscape in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, and many other locations. The sport was well-served when he became a certified ski judge in the Central Division, and the Eastern Amateur Division. He received National Card No.9 as a memento of those days – a credit to the NSA and the USSA and the idolized nordic venues.

Other highlights of Ed's career include:

- Chief ski jump designer for the Denver Olympic Committee
- Designed and directed the construction of the first "man-made-snow" ski area below the Mason-Dixon Line at Shawneelan, Virginia, in 1958
- Worked on the original reconnaissance for Squaw Valley in 1957 and directed the final review of planning in 1958
- Became a member of the Ski Club of Washington, D.C., in 1947, serving as president for two terms and elected an honorary member in 1957 for work in developing ski areas for skiers in the capital area
- Designated by Arthur Barth, the NSA President, as an F.I.S. Judge in 1948
- At the completion of active military service in 1947, returned to the Office, Chief of Army Engineers, Washington, D.C., and immediately resumed active participation in the divisional and national engineering committees

Edmund Couch retired as an internationally recognized ski jumping hill designer. He advanced through the ranks as a competitor to chairmanship of the USSA's Ski Hill Engineering Committee.

Ed Couch was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1976.



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Grissinger Studio