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Robert L. “Barney” McLean
Born: 1917

Robert L. “Barney” McLean's father made him his first pair of skis when his family moved to Hot Sulphur Springs, Colorado when Barney was four. By the time he was thirteen, Barney captured the Western Boys' Ski Championship, his first major championship.

Robert Lloyd McLean, better known in the skiing world as “Barney,” was born in Lander, Wyoming, in 1917. His father made him his first pair of skis when Barney was four.

In 1935, Barney won the National Class “B” Jumping Championships at Canton, South Dakota. A week later he was moved up to Class “A.” The same season he placed second in the Hot Sulphur Springs Winter Carnival jumping competition in Class “A.” Barney then placed sixth at the tryouts for the Olympic Jumping Squad at Salt Lake City, Utah. However, a week after the tryouts Barney broke his leg in a jumping meet at Anaconda, Montana, spoiling his chances to accompany the Olympic Team to Germany.

His friends talked him into trying downhill and slalom racing. From that point on, jumping took a backseat. He won his first giant slalom at Berthoud Pass in 1937. In 1938, Barney placed tenth in the overall standings in the Harriman Cup Race and third in the Amateur Division. He finished seventh in the Harriman Cup Race and second to Dick Durrance in the Snow Cup Race at Alta in 1941.

The first major victory for Barney in 1942 was the Jeffers Cup Race at Sun Valley, in which he placed first in slalom, first in downhill, and third in jumping to win the three-way combined. In the Eastern Downhill and Slalom Championships at Mount Mansfield, Vermont, he placed first in downhill and second in slalom. He was first in downhill and third in slalom for the combined and won the Harriman Cup. In 1942, the National Downhill and Slalom were held at Yosemite, California. Barney won the three National Amateur crowns and tied for the Open Slalom, placing third in the Open Combined.

In 1945, the army flew him from Edmonton, Alberta, where he was stationed at the time, to Utah to compete for the Alta Cup, which he won. He also won the Alta Cup in 1942. At the 1946 National Championships in Franconia, New Hampshire, Barney won the Amateur and Open Alpine Combined titles. That same year, he won the first of the Roch Cup downhill races in Aspen. At the Harriman Cup races in 1947 at Sun Valley, Barney won the slalom, winning over the powerful Swiss Team that included Karl Molitor.

McLean was captain of the 1948 United States Olympic Ski Team and competed in the alpine events. In the last international race, held in Pontresina, Switzerland, before the Olympics, Barney won the downhill, was third in the slalom, and first in the combined. At the 1948 National Championships in Sun Valley, Barney was second in slalom and tied for second in the alpine combined. He was also second in slalom and second in the alpine combined at the 1949 National Championships in Whitefish, Montana.

Barney went on to coach the 1950 F.I.S. Team at the World Championships in Aspen, Colorado. He then moved to the Veterans' Class, placing first in downhill at the National Veterans' Downhill and Slalom Championships at Aspen in 1956 and first in slalom at the Veterans' Nationals at Sun Valley in 1958.

After retiring from competition, McLean became active in the Southern Rocky Mountain Ski Association, working with junior ski programs and on course setting, including the men's giant slalom course at the 1960 Olympics in Squaw Valley, California.

Robert L. “Barney” McLean was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1959, the International Legends of Skiing Hall of Fame in 1996, the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame, and the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame. In addition, he was honored by *Sports Illustrated* magazine as one of Colorado's top athletes of the century.

