

#184
Cindy Nelson
Born: 1955

First named to the U.S. Ski Team in 1971, Cindy Nelson is one of the best international racers ever for the U.S. A bronze medalist for the United States at the 12th Winter Olympics at Innsbruck, Austria, in 1976, Cindy was rated the top down hill racer on the team.

Cindy Nelson was born in Lutsen, Minnesota, in 1955. Cindy's family owned and operated the ski area in Lutsen. She was skiing at age three and began competition at age eight. An all-around sports woman, she was coached by her mother until she was ten years old. Then, a coach by the name of Heli Schaeffer came to the Lutsen area and taught Cindy and a group of 18 Lutsen youngsters the basics of Alpine Ski Racing and physical conditioning.

Under Heli's coaching, Cindy advanced to make her first Junior National Team when she was twelve. The event took place at Stowe, Vermont, in 1967. Cindy made four more junior Olympic Teams.

Cindy had her share of skiing injuries – three broken ankles and nine knee surgeries – during her career. Each time she recovered more strongly than before.

During her ski racing career, she became the first American to be named to four Olympic teams – 1972, 1976, 1980, and 1984.

Missing the 1972 games due to injury, she went on to compete in the next three Olympic Games and four Alpine World championships in 1974, 1978, 1982, and 1985. In 1974, Nelson broke the great Annemarie Moser-Proell's winning streak to become the first U.S. racer (man or woman) to ever to win a World Cup downhill. She went on to become the first American to win four major Alpine medals (1976 Olympic Bronze DH, 1976 F.I.S. Bronze Comb., 1980 F.I.S. Silver Comb., 1982 F.I.S. Silver DH)! Cindy also won the first ever World Cup Super G ever raced. She earned several World Cup discipline titles and the title of National Champion seven times. Cindy competed in all five of the alpine disciplines and retired one of the finest skiers to ever compete!

Today, she is still active in the ski world and her other passion is golf. The owner of Cindy Nelson Ltd., she is a motivational speaker and is available for personal appearances. Interested in non-profit organizations, Cindy is a trustee board member of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Foundation and the Steadman Hawkins Sports Medicine Foundation.

Cindy is probably one of the best female skiers ever produced in this country. Some of her many honors follow: 2002 Colorado Ski Hall of Fame, 2002 Olympic Torch Bearer, 1997 Halva Skiing Award Nominee, 1990 Minnesota Sports Hall of Fame, 1989 First Female Chief of Course for an Alpine World Championship, 1980 Southland Olympian Award, 1976 U.S. Ski Writer's Association Outstanding Competitor Award, 1976 Wheaties Box Featured Athlete, and 1976 U.S. Olympic Team Flag Bearer.

Cindy Nelson was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1976.

