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Halvor Halstad

Born: 1905 Died: 1990

Halvor Halstad devoted his life to support skiing in some manner or another. He was a ski jumper at age ten, competing in Norway in the junior ranks for eight years.

Born in Norway (at that time, ski jumping capital of the world) in the year 1905, Halvor devoted practically his entire life to some phase of skiing. He was one of our country's first real skiing "personalities."

Halvor skied to school (school suffered when the snow flew!). At the age of 10, he learned to jump and competed in Junior Jumping Norway for the next 8 years. An average jumper, he was still able to place near the top with some consistency. He once placed 28th in a field of 1,200 – not too bad!

Immigrating to the United States in 1923, Halvor first lived in Southern California. Next, he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he joined the

Norse Athletic Club. He won the first twelve mid-west jumping tournaments he entered!

In 1930, Halvor moved to Salt Lake City where he joined the newly-formed "Professional Ski Association." Under the direction of Lars Haugen, eight jumping hills were constructed, the first major hills in the West. At Lake Arrowhead, the hill was called "Halstad Hill" in Halvor's honor. Halstad was instrumental in the design and construction of the Big Pines Hill, which held the American Record during most of the years of its active existence during the 1930s.

The period from 1930 to 1936 was the prime era of the "Professional" jumpers. Halvor Halstad was among them. They created a fever of interest as they introduced ski jumping in the West as an exciting winter sport.

In his best days, Halvor seemed always to be opposed to Alf Engen in his tournaments, beating him in several, but more often second by small margins. Halvor's special style always made him popular with the spectators. His sheer nerve earned him the nickname of "Dynamite." When hill conditions were less than ideal, Halvor was always the one called upon as "tester" of the hill – and he never refused.

Professional skiing did not prove the monetary success as hoped and the "professionals" were allowed to regain their amateur status. Halstad again became an amateur in 1936, was injured, but competed on a limited basis. He became more deeply involved in the nordic combined events and in the instruction of juniors in the sport. He helped to build many small hills for the juniors at Lake Arrowhead, Big Bear Lake, Mt. Lassen and Mt. Shasta.

In 1951, Halstad competed at the Olympic Team tryouts on a manmade hill of artificial snow which he helped to construct at the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds at Pomona, California. He earned the nickname of the "Flying Grandfather" and was so announced during the meet. He competed every evening and finished third overall.

Halstad's last jumping competition, ironically, was again facing Alf Engen on "plastic" snow at Mt. Baldy in Southern California during two summers in the late 1950s.

In the spring of 1958, Halstad's services were again needed and requested. He worked for the Winter Olympic Committee in preparation for the staging of the 1960 event at Squaw Valley, California. Incidental to his stay there, he constructed a small junior jumping hill at the request of Wayne Paulsen which later became very popular.

Halstad then devoted much time and effort to the further instruction of junior and beginning cross-country skiers in the Barton Flats area of the San Bernardino Mountains. During the winter of 1974, Halvor took part in the "Race for Light" at Breckenridge, Colorado. This event was for blind cross-country skiers from the United States, Canada, Norway, and Africa.

In January 1976, Halstad was again involved in the national jumping and cross-country championships on the Olympic hills and courses of Squaw Valley, California. At 71 years young, Halvor helped in the maintenance and supervision of the Olympic-class jumping hills and acted as hill captain for the events. He was mainly responsible for the excellent design and maintenance of the cross-country courses.

Halvor enjoyed skiing at every opportunity – alpine or cross-country. California's Mammoth Mountain or the Lake Tahoe complex were his favorite locales. He was still skiing at the age of 71, most certainly a tribute, not only to Halstad, but to the sport of skiing itself!

Halvor Halstad was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1977.