

#218

John Balfanz

Born: 1940 Died: 1991

John Balfanz was one of the best ski jumpers to ever come out of the American program, and in his career set two North American distance records and won all eight of the tryouts for the 1962 F.I.S. Jumping Team which competed at Zakopane, Poland.

John Balfanz, born June 23, 1940, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was introduced to the sport of ski jumping at the age of six. He won his first competition in an age group at the age of seven.

John competed for the Minneapolis Ski Club in the Central Division of USSA from that time until his retirement from the sport following a serious injury just after the 1968 Winter Olympics.

The following is a brief chronological history of his ski jumping accomplishments.

- 1956 1st place CUSSA Ski Jumping Championships
- 1957 U.S. Army- no competition
- 1962 1st place all 8 of the Tryout Jumping Tournament for the F.I.S. Jumping Team, Zakaopane, Poland

Set new North American Ski Jumping distance record of 323 feet at Westby, Wisconsin

7th in F.I.S. sanctioned Jumping Meet at Lahti, Finland

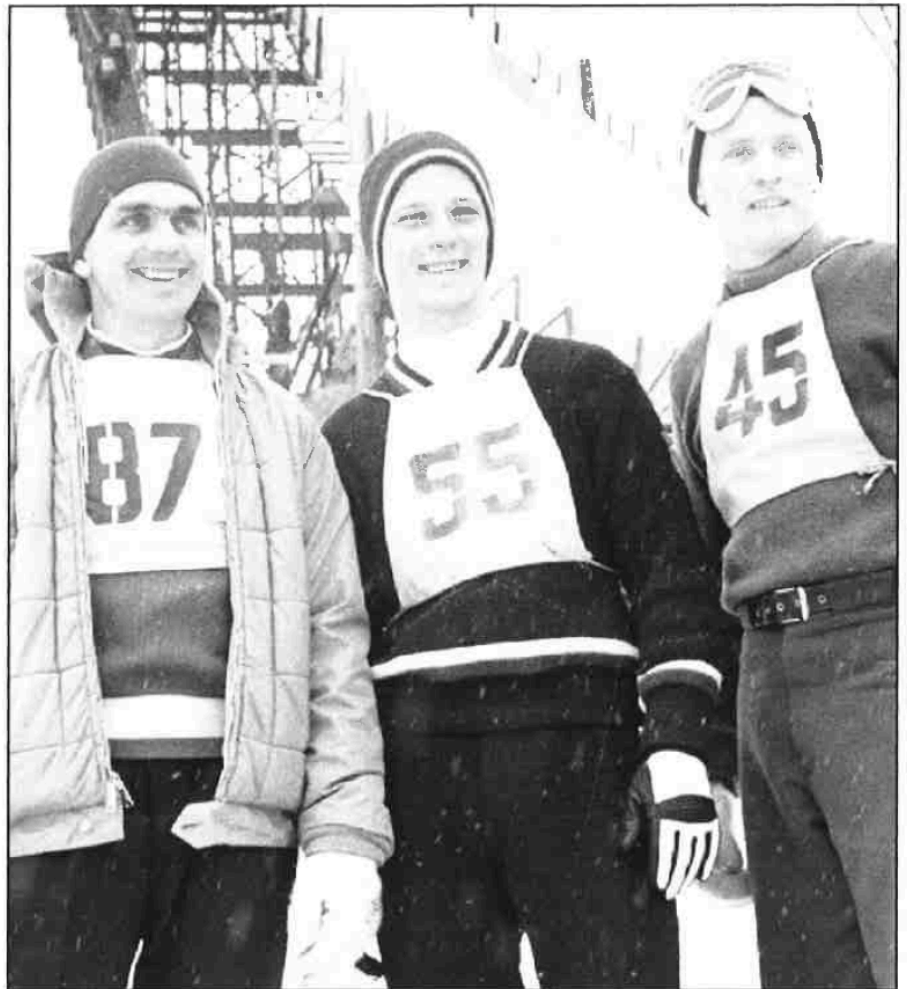
- 1963 2nd Holmenkollen Ski Jumping Festival
- 3rd Bischofshoven, Austria (German-Austrian Springer Tournament)
- 5th Innsbruck, Austria " " " "
- 6th Garmish, Germany " " " "
- 7th Obersdorf, Germany " " " "
- 4th Overall " " " "

In 1963 John competed in 17 major international competitions throughout Europe winning two of these events. He established new distance records on three European jumping hills. Of the 17 competitions entered, John placed no lower than 7th in any of them.

Placing 2nd in the Holmenkollen was the highlight of his outstanding year.

- 1964 1st ALL U.S. Olympic Tryout Jumping Competition
- Member of U.S. Olympic Team, Innsbruck, Austria
- 10th Olympic 70 Meter Ski Jumping Competition
- 1st 90 Meter F.I.S. Competition, LaBrasus, Switzerland
- 1st 90 Meter F.I.S. Competition, Garmish, Germany
- 1st USSA Jumping Championships
- 1st North American Jumping Championships

John C. Balfanz was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1980.



L to R: Gene Kollarek, John Balfanz, & Larry Bergh

