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Anders Haugen

Born: 1899 Died: 1984



Anders Haugen practically grew up on skis and was a good competitive jumper in his native Norway. In 1909, he followed three siblings to the United States, settling first in Criston, Illinois, and later in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he jumped for the Milwaukee Ski Club. He was named to the 1924 US. Winter Olympic Team, the first of the modern Olympic games, which was held in Chamonix, France.

Anders Haugen is the first American ever to win an Olympic medal in ski jumping competition. This occurred during the first Winter Olympics which were held in Chamonix, France, in 1924. Haugen was also named to the 1928 U.S. Winter Olympic Team.*

Anders was born in Bo, Telemark, Norway, in 1889, and like every Norwegian youngster, was on skis as soon as he could stand up, using them not only for recreation, but out of necessity, such as going to the market or traveling back and forth to school. He states that he “grew up on skis,” and his record attests to the truth of this. He began jumping very early in his youth and was an excellent jumping competitor in his native country.

In 1909, at age 19, Anders decided to immigrate to the United States to join his two brothers and a sister who had come here a few years earlier. He settled in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area, promptly joined the Milwaukee Ski Club, and began his competition in the United States, which was most certainly distinguished.

In 1910, the Milwaukee Ski Club built a jumping slide at Lake Nagawicka. Undoubtedly, Ander's outstanding ability had considerable effect in prompting the club to build the slide. The first competition was held on the slide on January 2, 1913, and Haugen won that event. The Milwaukee Ski Club voted Anders an honorary lifetime membership.

In 1924, Anders was named to the American Ski Jumping Team that was to compete in the Olympics in France, and was also named team captain. He was credited for making the longest jump during competition.

Haugen also had the longest jump in the Special Jumping event, but a miscalculation of points by the judges placed Anders Haugen in fourth place. Only the first three places received medals.

Fifty years later, in 1974, the error was discovered, and it was determined that Haugen should have received the bronze medal instead of Thorleif Haug, the original man awarded the medal. *The Norwegian government brought Anders and a small delegation to Norway where he was awarded the medal by Haug's daughter, Anne Marie Haug Magnussen, thus rectifying the error after fifty years.** At the time Haugen was living in Lake Tahoe, California, and was a member of the Auburn Ski Club.

At the age of 91, Anders still skied in the San Bernardino Mountains near Yucipa, California, where he lived.

*Anders Haugen, America's first Winter Olympic medal winner,** and four time U.S. National Jumping Champion, was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1963, along with his brother Lars Haugen.



A. Haugen – Chamonix '24

Note: *This is a strange story. As told in the biography, Haugen placed fourth, after Thorleif Haug, in the Special Jump at the 1924 Olympics in Chamonix according to the judges. Some fifty years later it was discovered that an error in computation had been made and that Haugen should have been awarded third place and the bronze medal. Despite the fact that Haug's daughter gave her father's bronze medal to Ander Haugen, that was purely an act of kindness but completely unofficial. The hard fact is that to this day, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) does not recognize the error as such and the official Olympic records still indicate that Thorleif Haug, in fact, is the winner of that bronze medal.*