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Casper Oimoen

Born: 1906 Died: 1995

Casper Oimoen was on skis at age four and was already a fine ski jumper by the time he reached his teens. He emigrated to the United States in 1923, and settled in the Minot, North Dakota area, and proceeded to take the sport of ski jumping by storm. His career spanned nineteen years and was spectacular in the late twenties and early thirties.

Casper Oimoen was born in Norway in 1906 and immigrated to the United States in 1923. Like most Norwegian youngsters, Casper was on skis about the time he could walk and developed into a fine ski jumper in his early teens. Upon his arrival in the United States, he settled in Minot, North Dakota, and proceeded to take the ski jumping sport by storm. His career spanned nineteen jumping seasons and was spectacular.

In the late twenties and throughout the thirties, Oimoen entered over two hundred tournaments and won over ninety-five percent of them, including the national Ski Association National Jumping Tournaments in 1930, 1931, and 1934. His record of ski tournament wins in 1929, 1930, and 1931 has never been equaled by any American.

His finest hour came as a member of the United States Olympic Ski Jumping Team of 1932 when he placed fifth in the Special Jumping against the world's best at Intervales Hill at Lake Placid, New York. This was particularly gratifying since, although he had been selected for the 1928 Olympic Team and was set to compete at Davos, Switzerland, he was informed that his American Citizenship papers were invalid. Olympic officials declared that Casper was not a citizen of the United States. It seems that when Oimoen arrived from Norway in 1923 some immigration officials misunderstood his name and spelled it Simoen instead of Oimoen, so when Olympic officials checked his credentials they found the error, and they ruled he was not a United States citizen. Even the personal intervention of President Calvin Coolidge came too late to allow Casper to compete at the 1928 games. This was a great disappointment to Casper and the United States Team, since Oimoen was at his peak and could well have won a medal in the games.

After the 1928 season, Casper married and became a father less than a year later. He claims the responsibility of a family took him into the contracting business, and he never really reached his potential as a ski jumper. Despite a growing family, Casper did continue to compete when possible, and he remained competitive enough to make the 1932 Olympic Team where he officially placed fifth, but felt the judging was unfair and should have won a bronze medal. He continued to compete on a part time basis and was named Captain of the United States 1936 Olympic Jumping Team, where he placed thirteenth of eighty competitors. Casper was a most graceful ski jumper as well as a powerful one. The most enviable record of fourteen National, Divisional, or State Championships, six new hill records, and being named to the "All American Ski Team" in a three year period have never been, nor is it likely to be, equaled.

Casper Oimoen, based on his amazing athletic ability, was named to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan, in 1963, the twenty-fifth person to be honored.

Casper retired from the contracting business and retired to Ashland, Oregon, in 1964.

