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Wallace (Buddy) Werner

Born: 1936 Died: 1964

Wallace "Buddy" Werner was born in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, in 1936. He was among the finest four-event skiers this country has ever produced. A skier who grew up on Steamboat Spring's Howelsen Hill, Buddy later decided to concentrate on the alpine phase of competition.

Wallace "Buddy" Werner grew up in a skiing family in which the three children of Hazie Werner – Buddy, Gladys, and Loris – reached the top. Hazie herself began skiing at age 62 and operated the concession at Steamboat Spring's Howelsen Hill. Her husband Ed was a good skier who spent many hours on the slopes with the children. After his death, times were hard, and the children had to earn their own money. Ed's influence set the Werner children on the right track. Buddy was a three-time Olympian. He first represented the United States at the 1956 Olympics at Cortina, Italy; the second time was at the 1960 Olympic Games at Squaw Valley, California; and the third time was at the 1964 Olympic Games at Innsbruck, Austria. Buddy represented the United States at the F.I.S. Championships in 1962. He was "Ski Athlete of the Year" in 1959.



Buddy never won an Olympic or F.I.S. medal. This was due partly to bad luck. He was injured during the 1960 Olympic Games at Squaw Valley, where he was favored to win, but despite his disappointment at not coming home with a medal, Buddy's attitude did not change. He was, among other things, the glue that held the United States Teams together. Buddy was always willing to help a teammate perfect a technique, coach someone who was having trouble, or listen when someone needed to talk. He was the one person on the team revered by athletes and coaches alike. Everyone loved Buddy!

That is why, shortly after Buddy announced his retirement following the Innsbruck Olympics, the ski world was shocked to hear that he and a skiing companion, Barbi Henneberger, had been trapped in an avalanche near St. Moritz, Switzerland. Despite immediate rescue efforts, both Buddy and Henneberger were found dead. The world lost a great skier on April 12, 1964, at St. Moritz.

Buddy Werner was posthumously elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in Ishpeming, Michigan, in 1964.