



#305

Warren Witherell

Born: 1935

Information submitted in a nomination letter to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame: sponsors – George Rau, and Chris Jones

Warren Witherell has been one of the most dynamic individuals in the sport of alpine ski racing in America for the last thirty years. As a coach, he and his assistants developed not only racers who dominated eastern alpine skiing, but went on to the U.S. Ski Team and World Cup success.

In 1960, Warren Witherell began coaching at Northwood School in Lake Placid, New York. Witherell played a major role in the development of Ni Orsi, Rebel Ryan, Mike Raymaley, George Glaser, Jon Joy, Steve Travis, Finn Gundersen, Roby Politi, and other Junior National Team members. His skiers dominated New York State racing, finishing 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th in the 1964 Jr. Eastern Downhill, and had a group of “Junior A” racers who regularly beat the best

college skiers in senior events.

Many of Warren’s often revolutionary approaches to alpine ski theory were derived from his competition and coaching experiences in water skiing as a World Champion.

Prior to his founding of Burke Mountain Academy in 1970, the first Alpine Training Center in the United States, junior ski race training was pretty much a weekend sport and national and international success was only possible for those who grew up in ski resort communities. The academy concept proved to be so successful both athletically and academically that it has been widely copied throughout the country and is now the premier source of outstanding racers for the U.S. Ski Team. The academy became the training base for a host of soon to be National Team skiers including Martha Coughlin, Becky Dorsey, Viki Fleckenstein, Holly Flanders, Mary Seaton, Gail Blackburn, Cathy and Geoff Bruce, Cary Adgate, Peter Dodge, Eric Wilson, and Steve Murphy. Providing teenagers with the chance to become world class athletes while pursuing the highest academic goals, has been the focus of Warren’s life.

Experienced coaches Chris Jones and George Rau were brought to Burke by Warren. A core group of young coaches were also developed including Finn Gundersen, Marty Heib, and Chip Woods who later on became USST coaches. Warren was the person in charge in developing the technical and coaching theories that provided a foundation for the success of so many Burke skiers from 1970 to the present, including Olympic Gold Medalist, Diann Roffe.

Always willing to share his technical knowledge, his books, *How Racers Ski* and *The Athletic Skier* (co-authored with David Evrard) were widely successful and contributed enormously to the technical knowledge of the alpine community in the U.S.

Over the years, Witherell was a regular clinic leader at coach’s clinics throughout the country, as well as PSIA and ski school events. Through force contributions to the world of organized ski racing, including the USEASA, the USSA and the Vermont Racing Association.

Warren Witherell was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1998.