

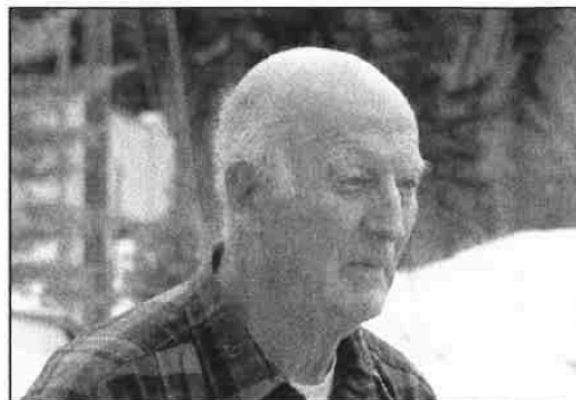
#312

## Edward Scott

Born: 1917 Died: 2004

Taken from a nomination letter to U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame, sponsor – Lynn H. Johnson

*Scott Poles are a household name to the American skier. The story as to why that came about begins in the ski area of Sun Valley, Idaho.*



Edward Scott was born on July 11, 1917, in New York and received his first pair of manufactured skis for Christmas in 1932. He began work in the ski shops of New York City and riding the ski trains out of Grand Central Station in the mid-thirties. After World War II Scott went west to work at California's Sugar Bowl.

"Ed" Scott came to a small community in Idaho to establish a ski shop in 1949. During that time, the management at A. Harriman's Sun Valley Resort had realized the importance of inviting two types of people who would lend notoriety to this remote ski area destination. The first were movie stars, and the second were a number of the top ski racers in the country. Care had to be given not to turn the ski racers into professionals, as the International Olympic Committee was very strict in policing their amateur rule. The twelve or so top racers who made their home in Sun Valley were given work in the evening, so that they could train daily on the mountain that dwarfed the resort. Ed Scott's abilities to keep the racers on the mountain free of equipment concerns started him on the road to becoming the ski equipment expert so many knew him to be. The piece of equipment Ed noticed he was having to repair most often was the ski pole. The likes of Jack Reddish, Gretchen Frazer, Dev Jennings, Dick Movitz and other teammates came by, almost daily, to have their baskets, shafts, and handles repaired. Ed and this group of finely tuned racers also became aware that the swing-weight of the poles they were using had a detrimental effect on the quickness of their turning ability. After searching the market for a pole that would match the ability levels of his famous clientele, and coming up empty, he decided to put his inventive mind to work. Up until then, few people spent a great deal of time really thinking about what made a great ski pole. Most ski equipment inventors were concerning themselves with the intricacies of skis and ski boots, paying little attention to the ski pole and more importantly how it affected skiing. There were some innovative parts on some poles, but none came even close to satisfying Ed or these finicky ski racers. The modern ski pole was about to be created!

Ed's friend, Warren Miller, was instrumental in finding a company that could make what Ed considered a suitable shaft from stiff, un-jointed, large diameter, thin-walled, tapered, 2000 series aluminum. It would have a durable hollow steel tip for lightness. The grip was to be molded from vibram, ( a type of rubber) creating finger notches and canted forward for better leverage. Olympian, Tom Corcoran, in returning a broken test pair, proved that just bending the shaft in a vise weakened the shaft, and so different methods were used to accomplish the desired results. Ed also added an adjustable strap for variable glove sizes.

The basket on Ed's pole got considerable attention, as this was the cause for excessive swing-weight, poor durability (as the pole banged against the bamboo racing gates) and aerodynamic drag. Some of the more durable baskets of the day were so stiff they would actually hold the tip of the pole off the snow, causing the pole to glance off, rather than engage. Ed made the diameter of the basket a small 4¼ inches, the same standard used today on many ski poles. He reduced the spokes to three to lighten and cause the basket to be more flexible than the standard four spokes popularly used. Ed molded, into the rubber spokes, a rubber basket keeper at the center which had a hole much smaller than the diameter of the shaft. The metal ring completing the basket was molded into the spokes. The whole basket assembly was one piece, a major improvement for pole maintenance and weight reduction. The basket had to be hammered onto the shaft, which gave it great staying quality. Minimizing the number of spokes also enhanced the aerodynamics. Ed's pole became a huge success and still is, almost half a century later.

Ed went on to improve other areas of ski equipment, leaving his creation, Scott USA, to let others more attuned to building corporations take over. Not unlike a father delivering his child to the world, he proudly watched his protégé grow.

Edward Scott was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1999.