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Ragnar Omtvedt
Born: ? Died: ?

Ragnar Omtvedt won the National Ski Association national jumping titles and the Canadian Ski Association title. Along the way, he set a number of hill records across North America and two World Distance records.

Ragnar Omtvedt was a native of Oslo, Norway, who came to the United States in 1912 to compete in the Norge Ski Club championships. Omtvedt never went back to Norway; rather, he chose to remain in the United States, first settling in the Chicago area and later moving west to Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Ragnar won the National Ski Association Class "A" jumping championships in 1913, 1914, and 1917, the Class "B" championships in 1922, and won the Class "A" championship of the Canadian Ski Association the same year.

Always a "go-for-broke" type jumper, Ragnar set many hill records around the country. He established world distance marks of 169 feet during the National Ski Association Nationals at Ironwood, Michigan, in 1913, and 192 feet 9 inches at Steamboat Springs, Colorado, during the 1916 ski season. Ragnar's jumping career in America spanned twelve years until it came to an abrupt end at the 1924 Winter Olympic Games in Chamonix, France. A bad fall on the 70-meter jump left the athlete partially paralyzed. Unfazed, he took up cross-country skiing to keep in condition.

Ragnar Omtvedt's record alone establishes him as one of the top ski jumpers ever to perform in North America. Another accomplishment was to establish Revelstoke in British Columbia, Canada, as the site of the then greatest jumping hill in the world. When he first saw Revelstoke in 1914 as a member of the Norge Ski Club and the first "big hill" jumper to visit the area, Omtvedt immediately realized that a well-designed hill on the area's huge slope would be a record-setter. He proved right. In 1921, Henry Hall, a native of Ishpeming, Michigan, then living in Detroit, set a world mark of 229 feet. Nels Nelsen, a youthful protégé of Omtvedt, broke the mark at Revelstoke once again, in 1925, by establishing a new world record of 240 feet.

There is little doubt that Ragnar Omtvedt made his mark on ski jumping in North America. His career, though shortened by injury, was truly brilliant.

Ragnar Omtvedt was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1967.

