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**John Bower**  
Born: 1940

*John Bower was born in Auburn, Maine, and first stepped on skis at age 14 months. He eventually rode them to the absolute summit of competitive achievement, from that first ride down Brand's Hill in Auburn in 1942, to the triumph in the 70<sup>th</sup> Holmenkollen festival in 1968, which is indeed quite an accomplishment. Always an excellent nordic competitor, accustomed to winning ski events, this may have seemed just another win at first, but the ski world was in shock to realize that such an accomplishment was possible by a non-European.*

In his early skiing days, John was an excellent four-way skier and competed in four-way events through high school. In his junior year, he won the Junior Nordic titles in cross-country and nordic combined while skiing for the United States Eastern Amateur Ski Association, the event that focused attention on Bower on the national level.

In 1962, John made the F.I.S. team for the World Ski Championships at Zakopane, Poland. In the swing around the European circuit, Bower made good showings, in fact as good as any American skier had ever done in Europe. John then headed for his first try at the famed Holmenkollen events. The results, an 11<sup>th</sup> place in cross-country, 5<sup>th</sup> in jumping and 6<sup>th</sup> in nordic combined, shocked the European ski world. Bower had taken 6<sup>th</sup> place in this prestigious event on his first attempt, the best ever by an American, and he was virtually an unknown. Not for long, however!

In 1963, John won his first European event, a win in the nordic combined in Lappeenranta, Finland, as well as a 2<sup>nd</sup> place at Kuovola, Finland. Back to the United States, he enjoyed his most fruitful year, winning National Nordic Combined Championships in Franconia, New Hampshire. He graduated from Middlebury that same year, and went off to fulfill his ROTC obligation of a two-year tour in the army.

Assigned to temporary duty with the Olympic Team in 1964, John skied on the United States Olympic Nordic Ski Team, placing 15<sup>th</sup> in the nordic combined in the Innsbruck Olympics.

John competed for the United States at the F.I.S. Championships in Oslo, Norway, in 1960, placing 16<sup>th</sup> in the nordic combined. He returned to the United States and won the National Nordic Combined title, successfully defending it in 1967. In 1968, Bower was again named to the Olympic Team, taking 13<sup>th</sup> place in the nordic combined. The action then moved to Oslo, and the Holmenkollen, where he made ski history by capturing the coveted crown, the King's Cup.

In 1969, Bower returned to his Alma Mater, Middlebury College, as the ski coach. He then coached the United States Ski Association Nordic Team. Later in 1975-1980 and 1988-1992, he was Nordic Director for the United States Ski Team.

John Bower was elected to the U. S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1969, for his outstanding performances, culminating with his King's Cup win at the Holmenkollen.

