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## Carl Tellefsen

Born: 1854 Died: 1908

*Carl Tellefsen is often referred to as the "Father of Organized Skiing in America." He was the driving force and one of the founders of the National Ski Association.*

Carl Tellefsen was born in Trondheim, Norway, on September 29, 1854. An active outdoorsman, skiing was his passion from the time he was able to walk until his death in 1908.

Tellefsen was one of the organizers of the Trondheim Skilber Forening and later the Trondheim Ski Club, one of the most famous in Norway. In 1884, he became the first president of the Trondheim Ski Club and served until 1887, when he emigrated to the United States.

He settled first in Toledo, Ohio, but moved to Ishpeming, Michigan, where he was employed at the Ishpeming National Bank. He arrived in Ishpeming on March 14, 1888, too late to take part officially in that year's tournament. He made an exhibition jump of 42 feet 6 inches at the Lake Angeline Hill, jumping with elegant style. It was the longest jump of the day.

Unfortunately, an extended period of inactivity in the Norden (Ishpeming) Ski Club occurred from 1889 until 1900. Tellefsen and his friends decided to hold a "National Ski Day", and successful tournaments were held in 1901, 1902, and 1903.

On February 22, 1904, the 14th annual ski jumping tournament of the newly renamed Ishpeming Ski Club was a huge success.

That year Tellefsen initiated moves that resulted in the formation of the National Skiing Association. An excerpt from the official minutes of a meeting of the Ishpeming Ski Club Board of Directors held on January 23, 1905, at Mr. Tellefsen's office in Ishpeming, Michigan, follows:

*Mr. M. M. Duncan, who was present at the meeting, suggested that a National Ski Association be organized and called the 'Central Union Ski Association,' with headquarters at Ishpeming.*

*Moved and supported that the president call a meeting of the different ski clubs on the twenty-first day of February 1905, for the purpose of organizing a National Association.*

*The following committee was appointed to arrange for said meeting - Carl Tellefsen, M. M. Duncan, Fred Braastad, J. S. Wahlman, George A. Newett, J. C. Greenway, and Eric Hoyseth.*

That meeting was held in Ishpeming as planned. Tellefsen served as its first president, until his untimely death from cancer in 1908.

Tellefsen's driving energy and dreams were vital for the newly formed national organization. He and his stalwart group of friends proved to be the cement that held the organization together. His foresight, labors and spirit of fair play carried this organization through its infancy and gave it a firm foundation on which the present day USSA still stands. He richly deserves the title, "Father of Organized Skiing in America."



*Photo by Homburg Studio  
Leonard Flaa with the Tellefsen family at  
the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame.*

He was the first member elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame, in 1956.