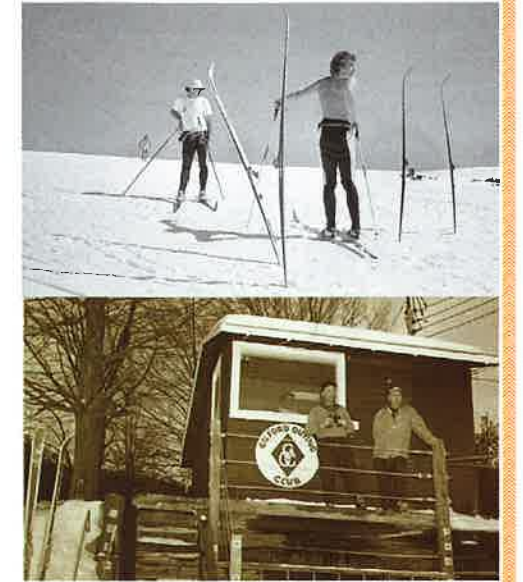




# MARTY HALL

**“Mister XC” sparked early U.S. cross-country efforts and Bill Koch’s Olympic silver; through four decades, he drove innovation in every corner of the sport.**

Marty Hall boldly led the U.S. cross-country program onto the international stage in the 1970s, and it quickly paid off with the country’s first (and until 2018, only) Olympic medal in the sport, Bill Koch’s silver in 1976. Over the next four decades, Hall would push and prod in every way possible, from training to racing, grooming to trail design, equipment to waxing, and marketing to spectator-friendly race formats. The U.S. had fielded skiers in Olympic cross-country events since 1924, but it was a part-time endeavor when Hall entered the scene in the late 1960s, initially coaching the U.S. women, led by Martha Rockwell, in the 1970 World Championships and the 1972 Olympics. Two years later, Rockwell would achieve a major U.S. breakthrough, finishing 10th in the 1974 World Championships. Hall would become the first full-time paid U.S. Cross-Country coach in 1973, and in 1976 Koch would shock the nordic world by winning Olympic silver in the 30-kilometer. Hall encouraged Koch to take an early start number to capitalize on colder, faster snow conditions and to make his move on the downhill sections, and the lanky, iconoclastic Vermonter responded. With Hall’s support, Koch



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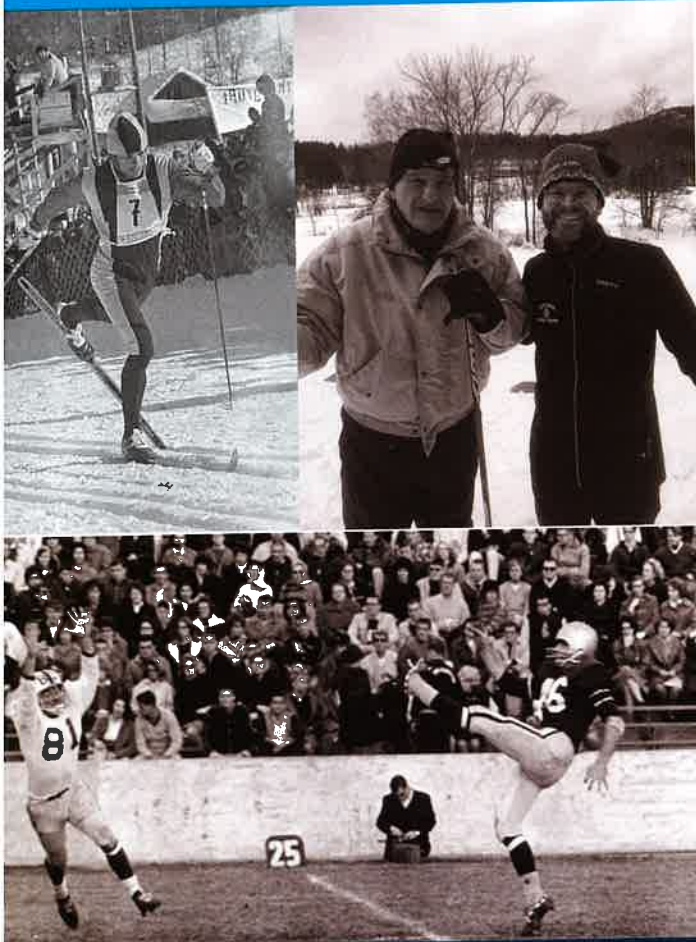
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experimented with radical formulas in ski preparation and technique, introducing skating to the World Cup in 1977 (it became its own discipline in 1982) and winning the 1982 World Cup overall title.

Colorful and controversial, Hall was ahead of his time. As the first paid professional, he pioneered the programs that became standard, including sports medicine and psychology, dryland and on-snow training, race protocols, on-site support (waxing, timing, feeding, medical, research), certification for coaches and officials, and education. He redesigned the trails at Telemark Lodge in Wisconsin for Tony Wise to make them wider, easier to groom, faster and more exciting, and teamed with Sven Wiik to perform similar work on the fabled American Birkebeiner. At the 1988 Calgary Olympics, he raised the specter of blood doping with the then Soviet Union's dominant results—drawing immediate scorn but long term vindication.

Hall was an incredibly gifted natural athlete himself, and those talents bloomed when his family left Queens when he was 8 years old and moved to New Hampshire, where they would become founding members of the Gilford Outing Club, which would also include future Olympians Penny Pitou and Dick Taylor. Starting out on pine skis with a leather strap, Hall would develop into a four-event skier at the University of New Hampshire, finishing as the runner-up "Skimeister" in the 1961 NCAA Championships. Despite previously having played no organized football ("My mother wouldn't let me"), Hall was a walk-on who became the team's standout punter, placekicker, defensive back, halfback and leading scorer; he was also an acclaimed sprinter on the track team.

Through an unusual confluence of events—including "academic sabbaticals" that led to a "15-year plan" to graduate from UNH with a degree in physical education, plus a beneficial stint with the U.S. Army and its biathlon program—Hall became the leading cross-country coach with the U.S. Eastern Amateur Skiing Association in the late 1960s. He was soon the pied piper



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of New England nordic skiing, rigging up a track sled to bring game-changing grooming to the region's race trails.

After leading U.S. efforts through the 1970s, Hall went on to serve as chief coach of Cross Country Canada from 1981 through 1989, and as director from 1989 to 1992. He was a self-employed consultant through the 1990s, designing the 1995 World Championships course at Thunder Bay, Ontario, helping introduce the short-course format, with racers regularly passing through the stadium so spectators could follow the action. Hall also served as a TV broadcast analyst for those World Championships and the 1994 Olympics. He returned to his roots by serving as the head cross country coach at Bowdoin College from 2000 to 2007.

Due to his heavy travel schedule, Hall and his wife Kathy, a former schoolteacher, opted not to have children. They've been married for 51 years. In his free time, Hall became a prolific writer, expressing his forward-looking opinions for a variety of nordic publications, and also managed to repeatedly win his age class in the Birkebeiner, often by outlandish margins.

Hall's email address best sums up his four decades of dedication. It reads: MisterXC.

### Career Accomplishments



- 1970, 1972:** Women's Cross Country Coach, U.S. Ski Team
- 1973-75, 1977-78:** Head Cross Country Coach, U.S. Ski Team
- 1976:** First full-time U.S. Men's Cross Country Coach, U.S. Ski Team
- 1976:** Bill Koch wins Olympic silver medal (only U.S. cross-country Olympic medal until the women's team sprint gold from Jessie Diggins and Kikkan Randall in the 2018 Games)

**1981-89:** National Ski Team Chief Coach, Cross Country Canada

**1989-92:** National Teams Director, Cross Country Canada

**Birth:** Sept. 3, 1937 (Upper Darby, Penn.)

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