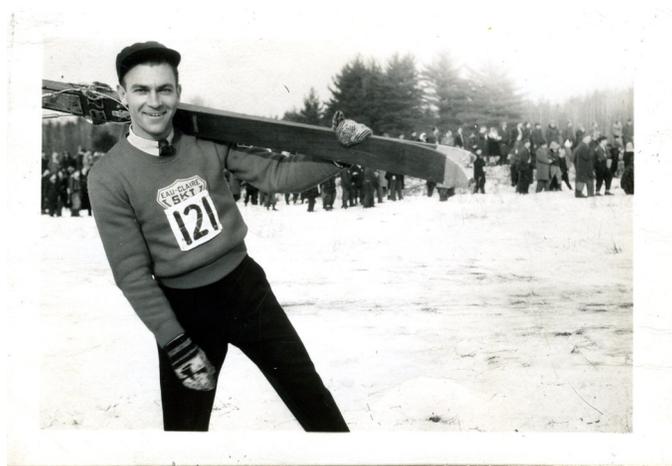


# Vern Powers Ski Jumping Career 1936-1963



**This document** is by no means a full accounting of all Vern's ski jumping history. Vern skied in many more tournaments than those listed here. There are likely some inaccuracies. This document is simply a compilation of the written and pictured information I inherited after Vern's death, and the stories I remember him telling. It will always be considered a work in progress.

-Ron Powers

**The cover** of the book shows Mt. Washington ski slide in Eau Claire, WI, where Vern began his ski jumping career. However, his interest in ski jumping began at a very early age, much as it did for most of the boys growing up in Vern's Shawtown neighborhood.

The picture on the right shows Vern at 7 years old skiing off a home made jump located on the neighboring Bunce farm. (Vern later married Ardis, once of the Bunce girls.) If a kid was lucky enough to have an old pair of skis, he spent most of the winter building and skiing off jumps like this. That's how Vern and his friends passed through their childhood winters. If one were to walk to the top of the hill behind Vern and turn around, one would be looking down the Mt. Washington ski slide in Eau Claire, WI.



A junior ski club called the Flying Eagles was forming at Vern's former Mt. Washington elementary school, where they were building a junior jump. However, Vern had already begun hanging around the big slide known by the locals as "The Mountain," which referred to Mt. Washington. It was located on the western edge of Shawtown and had a ski jump for senior jumpers. During the winter of his 14th year Vern began skiing at the Mt. Washington jump and did quite well.. Vern skipped over becoming a junior jumper with the Flying Eagles after he was asked at age 15 to join the senior club as a member of Class C.

The picture on left shows 15-year-old Vern in front of his home on Francis Street as a new member of the Eau Claire Ski Club. That winter he took 2nd place in his first tournament at Mt. Washington.



**Vern rides** the Mt. Washington slide above.

**Right:** Vern Powers, Marcille Bunce, and Don Hotejec.



OFFICIAL PROGRAM

ANNUAL

**Ski Tournament**

SPONSORED BY

**Eau Claire Winter Sports Club**

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Eau Claire Ski Club and the Chippewa Valley Ski Club have recently merged and have become a part of the newly formed Eau Claire Winter Sports Club, under the sponsorship of the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

**Sunday, January 8, 1939**  
2:00 P. M.

**Mt. Washington Slide**  
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

SANCTIONED BY CENTRAL U. S. SKI ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

## The Winner Skims Off Devils Hollow Ski S

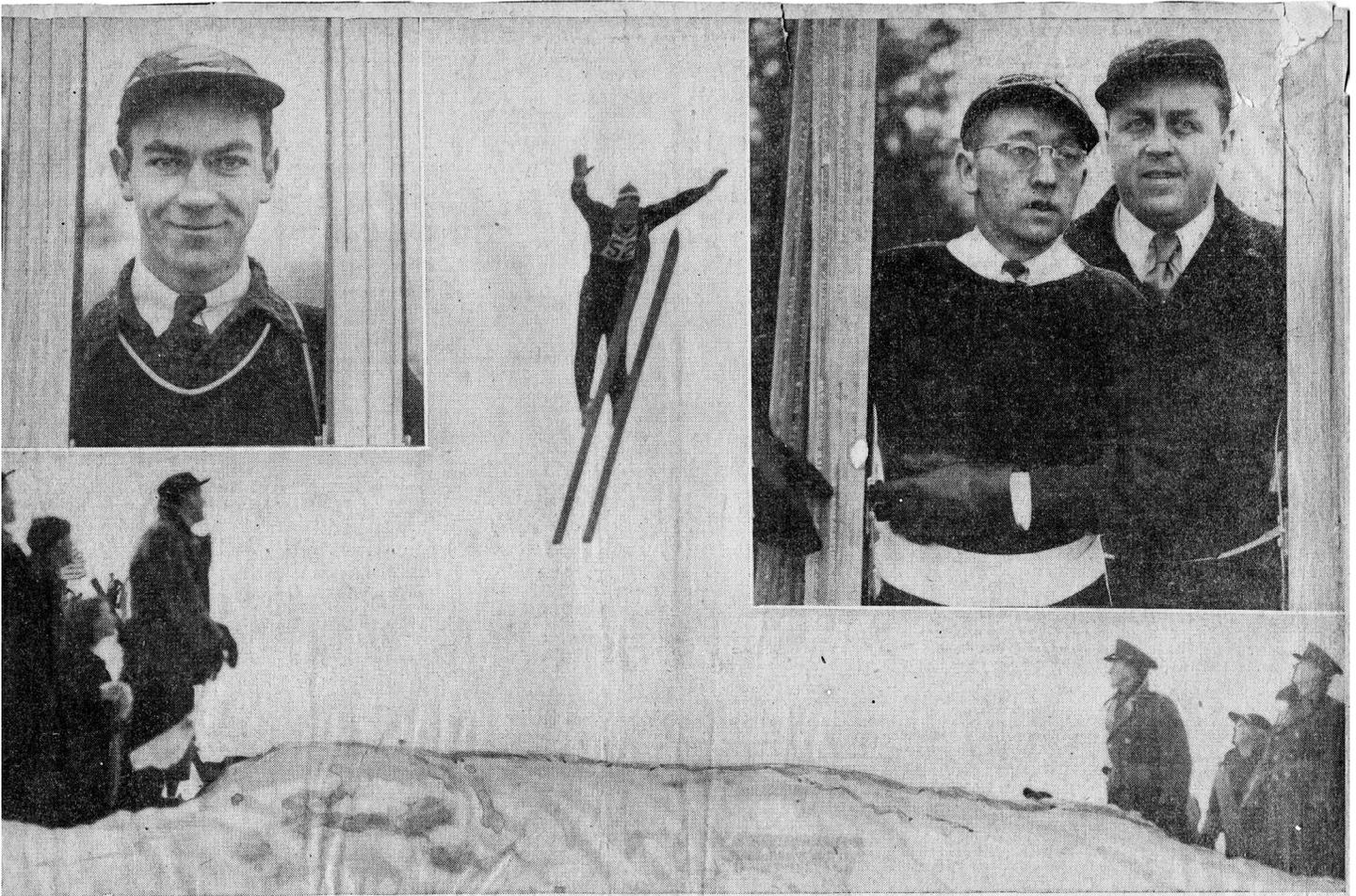


### **Vern improved**

**quickly** and took second place at both Wisconsin Rapids and Menomonie. He followed that by winning Class C at Seymour Hill in Eau Claire and also at Devil's Hollow in Oconomowoc, WI.

Those wins vaulted Vern into Class B.

# Devil's Hollow in Oconomowoc, WI



COONEY SKI CHAMPIONS—Conquering a slide made by a mixture of manufactured and natural lumps captured titles in the fourteenth annual Milwaukee-Oconomowoc Ski club tournament at Devil's Hollow Sunday. Walter Bistila, shown in action, bagged the class A title and also sailed 126 feet to a new hill record. **Vernon Powers**, upper left, won the class C laurels, and **Jorgen Johansen** and **Ole Besseberg**, left to right, upper right, tied for the senior crown.

Sentinel photos.





**Part of jumping** in tournaments was making exhibition rides as a way to attract the public and keep them at the tournaments in the cold weather. Vern and his ski pals often did double jumps. In the picture above, Vern is on the right, and Lee Hoff is on the left. Riders needed a lot of confidence in each other to perform this jump.

However, the double jump paled in comparison to the diamond jump, where 3 separate tracks were laid down side-by-side on the jump. The maneuver would require 4 jumpers. One would lead in the center followed by two on the outer tracks, followed by a fourth on the center track. All 4 jumpers would be on the scaffold within inches of one another. They would hit the takeoff almost simultaneously, and fly through the air in a diamond formation. It was critical that each man make a stable landing. Vern completed the Diamond Jump at Strum with Bob Fleming, Mickey Hotejec, and Ralph Pope. No photographs are available of that event.

**As a side note:** I can remember jumping at a junior tournament on Mt. Simon Hill in Eau Claire. There was some talk going around that some guy was going to jump off the big hill on just one ski. We all crowded at the end of the outrun to watch the guy fly through the air, make a perfect landing, and make a perfect stop at the end of the outrun—all on one ski! I was flabbergasted to see that it was my dad (Vern). That won him the admiration of all my friends.



# Vern Powers Class C Ski Tournament Summary

Year	Class	Placed	Distance	Hill Name	Location
1936	C	2nd	Age 15	Mt. Washington	Eau Claire
1936	C	4th		Old Hill	Whitehall
1936	C	7th	Nationals	Red Wing	Red Wing
1936	C	3rd		Wis. Rapids	Wisconsin Rapids
1937	C	2nd	104-106	Wis. Rapids	Wisconsin Rapids
1937	C	1st	110 (longest)	Semour	Eau Claire
1937	**First rider to ride big hill under lights				
1938	C	1st		Devil's Hollow	Oconomowoc
1938	C	2nd		Menomonie	Menomonie
1938	C	3rd		Strum	Strum
1938	C	7th			
1938 - Completed Diamond Jump at Strum with Bob Fleming, Vern Powers, Mickey Hotejec, and Ralph Pope					
1938	C	1st	110 longest	Seymour Hill	Eau Claire WI
1938	C	1st	98-102	Devil's Hollow	Oconomowoc WI
1938	C	2nd		Menomonie	Menomonie

# Battle Creek Park Slide in St. Paul, MN 1939



**The Central United States Championships** were held on the above slide in 1939, where Vern won Class B. He would go on to win Class B on this hill again in 1940 and in 1942 at the International Meet held here.

## OFFICIAL SCORE CARD

### INTERNATIONAL SKI CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT

Sunday, February 1, 1942, At Battle Creek Park Ski Slide

Sanctioned by the National and Central U. S. Ski Associations  
Auspices of SAINT PAUL SKI CLUB and  
SAINT PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL ASSOCIATION

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**BUY DEFENSE BONDS AND STAMPS!**



**At New London, WI (left) in 1940 Vern placed 5th.**



**Vern placed 2nd at Whitehall in 1939.**



**Vern jumps for 3rd Place at Mt. Washington in 1939**



Vern Powers, Jim Running, and Walter Nelson at Iron Mountain, MI on Feb. 11, 1940.



**In 1941** Vern took 4th place in Class B at Iron Mountain, MI with jumps of 220 and 223 feet. The following year he would jump his personal career best at Iron Mountain.



**Iron Mountain Slide in 1940**

**In 1941** Vern took second place at both Beloit and Eau Claire. He followed those tournaments with winning Class B at Wolverine Hill in Ironwood, Mi and at Mount Valhalla in Washburn, WI. He also won 2nd place at Whitehall, WI.



*Beloit Old Henderson slide. Brown at knee*



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*MOUNT VALHALLA*

*WASHBURN, WIS.*



**The United States National Ski Jumping Championships** were to be held in Seattle, WA in 1941, and Vern learned that he was qualified to go. He would be sponsored by the ski club, but he would also need to solicit donations on his own. He was concerned that he might not raise enough money to go, but friends and community members came through for him and sent him to Seattle. It was an exciting trip for a young man who had never been more than 200-300 miles away from home. He had never seen the mountains, and he was amazed at the amount of snow there. He would later learn that mountain skiing offered some unique surprises that he had not yet encountered.

**SKI PRICES**

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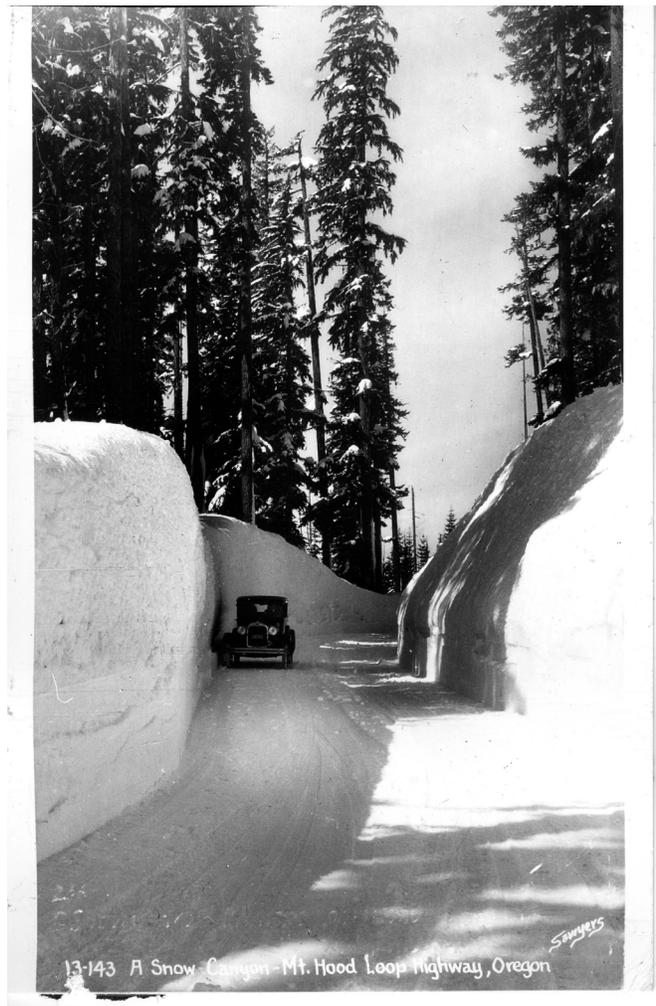
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7 Foot	Skiis,	complete	with	straps,	etc.	\$2.85
6½ "	"	"	"	"	"	2.60
6 "	"	"	"	"	"	2.10
5½ "	"	"	"	"	"	1.85
5 "	"	"	"	"	"	1.00
4 "	"	"	"	"	"	.85

All Skiis have been treated with linseed oil. May be painted in any desired color.

Made of oak. Also birch or pine if desired.

**Skiis also made to order.**



# Eau Claire Winter Sports Club

INCORPORATED

... AFFILIATED WITH ...  
CENTRAL U. S. AND NATIONAL SKI ASSOCIATIONS

EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN



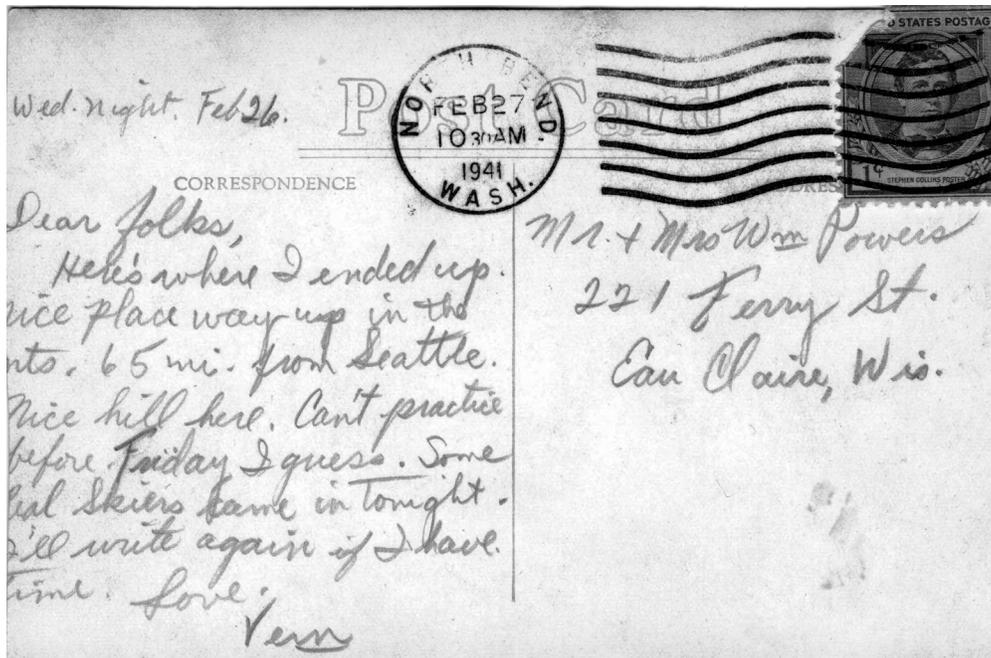
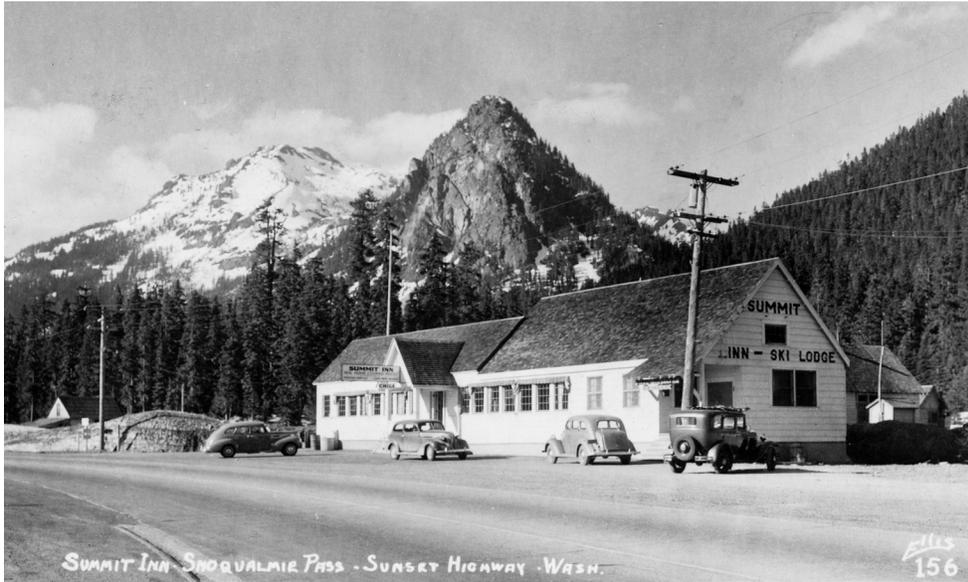
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Inasmuch as Vernon Powers of this city has demonstrated exceptional ability as a skier in this city and at the several tournaments in which he has participated, representing Eau Claire, the winter sports enthusiasts feel that he should be given the opportunity to participate in the National Ski Tournament to be held in Seattle, Washington. This is an opportunity for everyone to help a young athlete of this city to spread the name of Eau Claire on the Ski records of the far West.

O. P. Hoff	13.00	Pete Spencer	1.00
E. C. Emerson	2.00	Loren Schell	1.25
Don Emerson	1.00	Thos P. Hagen	1.00
Chamber of Commerce	15.00	Nick Campbell	1.00
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		H. Fleming	1.00
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		1395 Friends	.25

**Vern headed out** to the Snoqualmie Ski Bowl, located in mountains of Hyak, WA, which is just east of Seattle. Once he arrived, he sent the postcard below home to his parents. Postmarked Feb. 26, 1941, it reads, "Dear Folks, Here's where I ended up. It's a nice place way up in the mountains 65 miles from Seattle. Nice hill here. Can't practice before Friday I guess. Some Real Skiers came in tonight. I'll write again if I have time. Love, Vern





**Vern was a favorite** to win Class B at the nationals. He was in first place after the first jump and seemed on the way to a big win. However, the mountain air played a trick on him during his second ride. He hit an air pocket and suddenly seem to lose all of his lift. He was able to remain standing, but was disappointed to drop back to 6th place.



ORGANIZED IN 1905  
Affiliated with  
National Ski Association  
Central U. S. Ski Association

# NATIONAL SKI JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIPS

## FEBRUARY 7-8, 1942

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January 8, 1942.

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Mr. Vernon Powers  
221 Ferry Street  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Dear Vernon:

Thanks for your kind letter of the 6th as well as for your kindness in sending the photo. This I plan to use in news publicity, once the entry blanks come through.

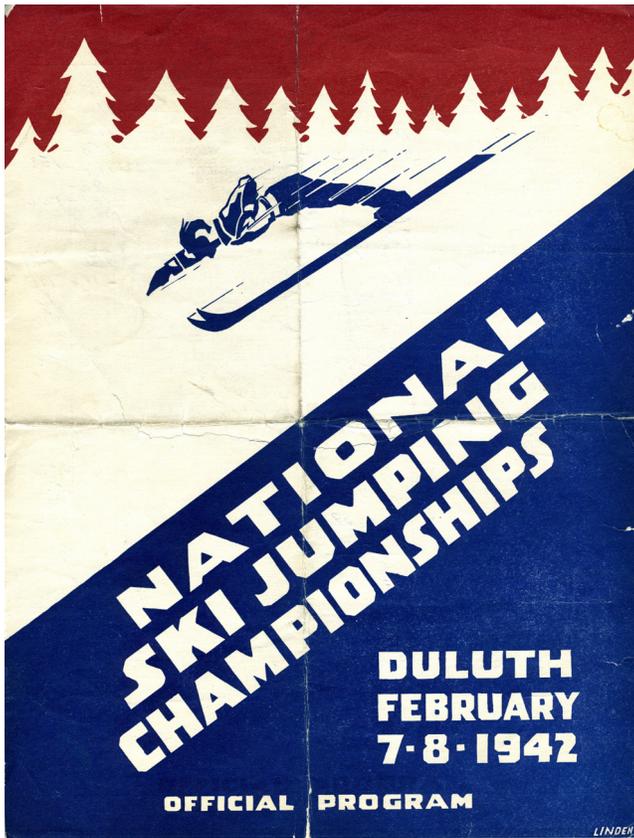
Glad that you liked our hill a year ago. It will be even better this year because we have done a lot of work in connection with the hill and the large parking areas.

Will be looking for your club to send your entry on to us and will be glad to see you when the National rolls around.

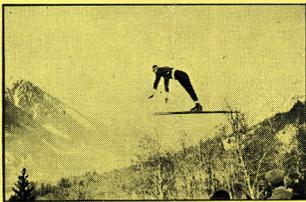
Thanks again for the photo.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,  
*Harold*  
Harold A. Grinden, Sec.



SEVENTH ANNUAL  
**SKI TOURNAMENT**  
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1942  
 WOLVERINE HILL



—Aspires—  
**GOGEBIC RANGE SKI CLUB, INC.**  
 Sanctioned by Central U. S. Ski Association  
 IRONWOOD, MICHIGAN

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COMPLIMENTS  
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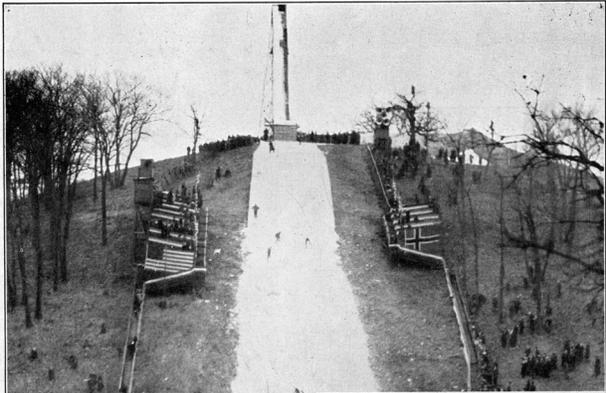
WE FEATURE  
 WHITE STAG SKI TOGS  
*Colenso's*

After a disappointing 8th place in the National Ski Jumping Championships in Duluth in 1942, Vern went on to Wolverine Hill in Ironwood, MI, where he had won the year before. He placed second with a pair of 196 foot jumps. His Class A idol, Torger Tokle, was there and jumped 216 feet.

Norge Hill in Fox River Grove near Chicago, IL was next and Vern placed 5th there.

**OFFICIAL PROGRAM**  
**NORGE**  
 SKI CLUB

**36th ANNUAL SKI TOURNAMENT**  
 Sanctioned by the Central Ski Ass'n of America • Affiliated with the National Ski Ass'n of America




**NORGE HILL**  
 Fox River Grove, Illinois  
 JANUARY 18, 1942  
 Price 15c

NORGE SKI TEAM—Standing (left to right): O. Kumpu, G. Orms, captain; M. Witzgen, G. Paulsen, E. Jacobson, B. Engedahl. Seated (left to right): O. Besseberg, H. Jansen, M. Cook

OFFICIAL PROGRAM



**Central United States Championship**  
 Sunday, January 25, 1942  
**BIG HILLS MEMORIAL PARK**  
 Beloit, Wisconsin

Sponsored By *Beloit Ski Club*  
 Sanctioned By U. S. Central Ski Association  
 Hamman Printing Co., 144 State St., Beloit, Wis.

**The 1942 US Central Championships** were held at Big Hills Memorial Park in Beloit, WI, where Vern got 2nd place with jumps of 171 and 165. Ray Nelson of Beloit beat him with 2 jumps of 166, but better style points. Ray won a pair of skis for first prize, and after the tournament Ray brought the skis over to Vern and handed them to him saying, "You beat me. These skis are yours."

Vern thanked him for his kindness, but refused to take the skis. He told Ray that style points are part of the game and that Ray deserved to get 1st place, even though Vern had out-jumped him.



MILWAUKEE-OCONOMOWOC

**SKI CLUB**

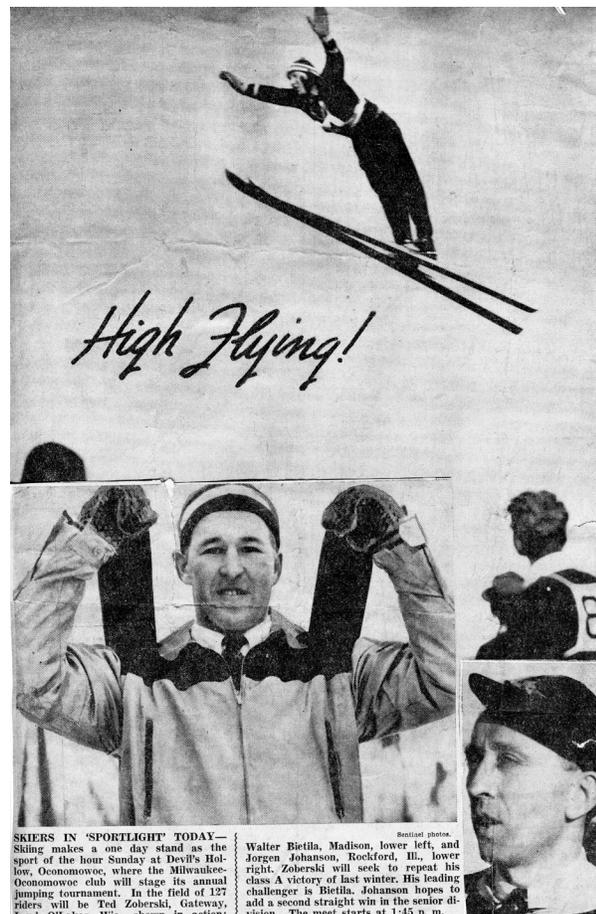
SIXTEENTH ANNUAL

*Ski Tournament*

... Including ...  
 WISCONSIN OPEN STATE CLASSIC COMBINED  
 CROSS COUNTRY AND JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIPS  
 Cross Country — Fox Hill, West Bend, Wis., Sat., Jan. 10, at 2 P. M.  
 Admission Free

— Jumping —  
**DEVIL'S HOLLOW, OCONOMOWOC, WIS.**  
**SUNDAY, JAN. 11, 1942**

At 2:00 P. M.  
 Admission, Jumping Event, Oconomowoc:  
 Adults 75c Tax Included Children 25c



**SKIERS IN 'SPOTLIGHT' TODAY**— Sking makes a one day stand as the sport of the hour Sunday at Devil's Hollow, Oconomowoc, where the Milwaukee-Oconomowoc club will stage its annual jumping tournament. In the field of 127 riders will be Ted Zoberski, Gateway, Land O'Lakes, Wis., shown in action; Walter Bietila, Madison, lower left, and Jorgen Johanson, Rockford, Ill., lower right. Zoberski will seek to repeat his class A victory of last winter. His leading challenger is Bietila. Johanson hopes to add a second straight win in the senior division. The meet starts at 1:45 p. m.

## Powers Wins Class B at Ski Tourney

Severson Second in  
Class C; Hagen  
Places Fifth

OCONOMOWOC, Wis., Jan. 12. (AP)—The Flying Bietila brothers of Ishpeming, Mich., monopolized most of the honors at the annual Milwaukee-Oconomowoc Ski club jumping tournament yesterday, taking two first places and a second. A crowd of 2,500 was attracted to the meet.

The Wisconsin open state classic event was won by Warren Gilbertson, of the Wisconsin Hoofers club, Madison, who edged out Lawrence Maurin of the host club.

Here's what the Bietilas did: Walter Bietila, 25, won the Class A championship with jumps of 103 and 105 feet.

Roy, 21, finished second in the same class. He had marks of 104 and 106 feet but Walter's point score was higher because of better form.

Ralph, 17, youngest of the brothers and holder of the national Class C title, won the C championship with leaps of 91 and 96 feet.

Leonard, 32 oldest of the quartet, was a strong challenger for the senior title but fell on his second jump.

Ingvar Arneson, of New London, Wis., topped the senior class while the Class B title was won by Vern Powers, of Eau Claire, Wis.

Ted Zoberiski, of the Gateway Land o' Lakes club, and Charles Seftivec, of the Wisconsin Hoofers, defending Class A and Class B champions, respectively, both fell on their second jumps. Neither was injured but the mishaps eliminated them from any chance of repeating.

### Class A

1. Walter Bietila, Wisconsin Hoofers, Madison 103 and 105 feet—154.9 points.
2. Roy Bietila, Ishpeming, 104-106—149.7.
- Fritz Pohlman, Beloit, Wis., 98-104—142.2.
4. Jim Running, Beloit, formerly of Eau Claire, 92-98—138.8.
5. Bruno Saari, Ishpeming, 87-94—130.6.

### Class B

1. Vern Powers, Eau Claire, 98-102—144.1.
2. Gordon Robare, Munising, Mich., 96-99—142.3.
3. Walter Nelson, Beloit, 94-102—140.2.
4. Jim Lawson, Ishpeming, 100-101—139.

Tom Hagen, Eau Claire, 94-97—138.2.

### Seniors

1. Ingvar Arneson, New London, 94-96—142.5.
2. Arthur Nerowetz, Norge, Chicago, 92-92—134.1.
3. Ole Besseberg, Norge, Chicago, 80-90—133.1.
4. George Gunderson, Norge, Chicago, 84-95—132.
5. Tom Nelson, Beloit, 87-94—131.1.

### Class C

1. Ralph Bietila, Ishpeming, 91-96—136.3.
- Oscar Severson, Eau Claire, 89-92—135.6.
3. Bob Tomlinson, Kiwanis, Iron Mountain, Mich., 89-96—130.7.
4. Gale Eymmer, Kiwanis, Iron Mountain, 89-96—126.7.

Devil's Hollow in Oconomowoc was Vern's next tournament where he took first place in Class B. He followed that with another win at Battle Creek Park slide in St. Paul MN. The Very next tournament at Whitehall, WI was Vern's first entry into Class A. He was now skiing in the same class as some of the greatest skiers in the nation.

Below a jumper sails off the Battle Creek Park slide in St. Paul, MN



## Vern Powers Class B Tournament History

<b>Year</b>	<b>Class Placed</b>		<b>Dist</b>	<b>Hill Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
1938	B	7th	177-176	Beloit	Beloit WI
1939	B	1st	CUSSA Title	Battle Creek	St. Paul MN
1939	B	2nd	167-169	Whitehall	Whitehall WI
1939	B	3rd		Mt. Washington	Eau Claire
1940	B	5th		New London	New London WI
1940	B	1st	135-135	Mt. Washington	Eau Claire WI
1940	B	1st	192	Battle Creek 2-2-40	St. Paul MN
1941	B	4th	220-223	Pine Mountain Slide	Iron Mountain MI
1941	B	7th		Beloit	Beloit WI
1941	B	2nd	171-165	Beloit	Beloit WI
1941	B	2nd		Eau Claire	Eau Claire WI
1941	B	1st		Washburn	Washburn WI
1941	B	1st	181-183	Wolverine Hill	Ironwood MI
1941	B	2nd	167-169	Whitehall	Whitehall WI
1941	B	6th	192-186	Snoqualamie Bowl	Seattle WA
**National Tournament: Longest jump in Class B was 201. Class A skied on a different hill.					
1942	B	8th	166-175	Duluth (Nationals)	Duluth MN
1942	B	2nd	196-196	Wolverine Hill (Tokle 216)	Ironwood MI
1942	B	5th	136-145	Norge Hill	Chicago
1942	B	2nd	171-165	Big Hills Pk - Centrals	Beloit WI
1942	B	1st	98-102	Devil's Hollow	Oconomowoc WI
1942	B	1st	168-172	Bat. Crk. Internat. Champ	St. Paul MN

Walter Beitela had longest in A - 179

## Vern's First Class A Tournament

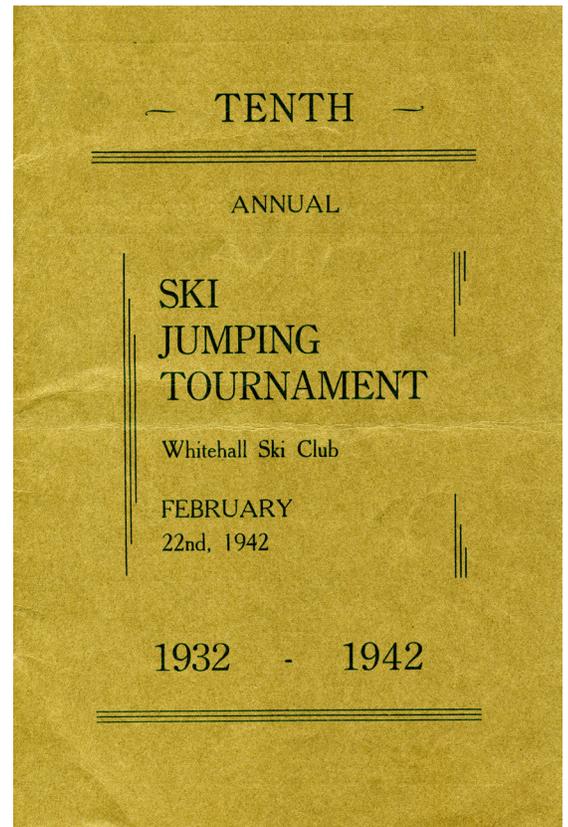
Whitehall, WI

Hill Record : 200ft.

Vern Jumped 192 ft. - Longest Jump of the Day

4th Place

Vern outjumped some of the nation's top skiers at Whitehall, but he had never been as stylish as some skiers. Although he often outjumped others, they would move ahead of him in the final standings because of their higher style points. One thing in his favor is that he almost never fell.



❧

## Whitehall Ski Club

1942

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Roy H. Matson,  
Vice President  
Henry Klein, Secretary  
Kenneth Swenson, Treas.  
Dr. Anton Vold, Director  
D. A. Bensed, Director  
H. N. Larson, Director

❧

Hill Record—200 feet,  
set by Eugene Wilson  
on January 4, 1941.

❧

Scaffold—114 feet high,  
270 feet from the end of  
jump to the dip.

❧



**In 1942** Vern headed back to the huge Pine Mountain Slide at Iron Mountain, MI. Here he had the greatest thrill of his skiing career when he jumped his personal best of 275 ft. during practice. Although his longest jump during the tournament was 257 ft., that mark was the longest jump ever by an Eau Claire skier at that time. It stood for 6 years until Billy Olsen surpassed it by jumping 271 ft. at Iron Mountain in 1948.

The previous year, the American Distance Record had been set here by Alf Engen at 267 feet. Vern's 257 foot tournament jump was just 10 feet short of Engen's historic jump one year earlier.

**Vern was in awe** during that tournament as he stood at the top of the gigantic iron Mountain slide, sandwiched directly between his two greatest idols, Walter Bietila and Torger Tokle.

**A side note on Torger Tokle:** Back then, most skiers in the ready track at the top of the box would push the backs of their skis hard against the back of the box in order to thrust themselves forward on the start as fast as possible to get extra speed for distance. Vern watched Torger Tokle, on at least one occasion, stand up straight on the upper half of his downward run on the scaffold in order to break his speed so that he wouldn't out jump the hill. That's how confident and powerful a jumper was Tokle.



**Leading Class A Contenders**



**WALTER BIETTILA**  
U. S. Navy Air Corps



**TORGER TOKLE**  
Brooklyn, N. Y.



**TED ZOBERSKI**  
Gateway, Land of Lakes, Wis.



**ART DEVLIN**  
Lake Placid, N. Y.

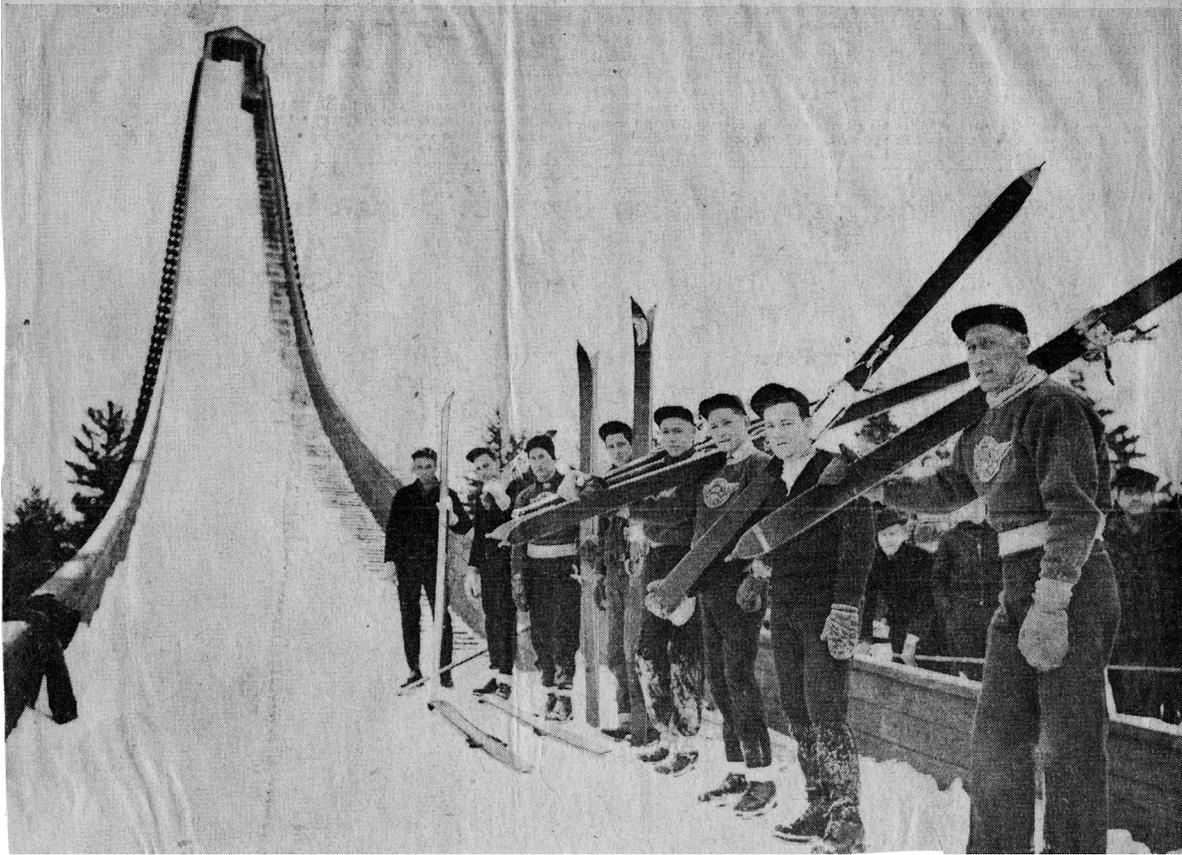


**ALF ENGEN**  
Sun Valley, Idaho



**ROY LARAMIE**  
Iron Mountain, Mich.

*Iron Mountain Becomes the Ski Capital of Nation Sunday*



Pictured on the left is Vern and his long time teammate, Jim Running. Jim was a very stylish skier. Vern often outjumped Jim, but Jim would often place higher than Vern because of his higher style points. Jim and Vern were always trying to outscore each other, but they were just good buddies in a friendly rivalry.



**Vern returned to Eau Claire** and a tournament at Mt. Washington "The Mountain," where he finished in second place in Class A.



Left to Right: Unknown, Marv Piper, Oscar Sever-  
son, Ardis Bunce, and Lee Hoff

**Changes were taking place** in the world, and Vern was called upon to serve his country in the U.S. Army Air Force. His sweetheart, Ardis Bunce, who had attended many of his ski tournaments, agreed to marry him in Lincoln NE before he was deployed to England, France, and Germany as the Crew Chief on a Republic P-47 Thunderbolt Fighter Bomber. There would no more ski jumping until 1946.



OFFICIAL PROGRAM  
**BELOIT SKI CLUB, INC.**  
**ANNUAL SKI CLASSIC**  
**Sunday, January 13, 1946**  
**BIG HILLS MEMORIAL PARK**  
**Beloit, Wisconsin**

SANCTIONED BY U. S. CENTRAL SKI ASSOCIATION

\*\*\*\*\* OFFICERS \*\*\*\*\*

OVE OLSEN, President	
ERLING ELLINGSON, Vice-President	G. VAN KUREN, Trustee
ERNEST SCHUMACHER, Secretary	O. HATLEN, Trustee
REIDAR STRANDMOE, Treasurer	C. HANSON, Trustee
WALTER NELSON, Ski Captain	H. SKINNES, Trustee



Vern at Beloit - 1946

After WWII ended, Vern wanted to get Eau Claire skiers jumping again. In 1946 he got Bob Anderson, Puck Lahner and J. Mon together and headed to Beloit.

Vern was very excited to start jumping at the same level he had jumped before the war. If Vern had one signature move in ski jumping, it was that he just never fell. That day in Beloit he had one long jump, but he fell on the other try.

# Winter Sports Club Plans Ski Activities

The Eau Claire Winter Sports club held a special meeting Tuesday evening at the request of Dr. E. C. Enerson, president, and decided to launch a busy program of skiing for Eau Claire and vicinity.

With between 10 to 20 acres of ideal downhill and slalom slopes adjacent to Eau Claire, and a ski tow only waiting to be again set in motion, the club proposed to make Eau Claire a leader in this outdoor sport.

At the meeting was Harold "Bud" Gelein, Eau Claire's director and coordinator of athletics. Gelein, at the close of the meeting, said he believed that with proper cooperation Eau Claire can promote skiing on a big scale.

Dr. Donald Brinkman, recently returned after service with the U. S. navy, presented the aims and purposes of the club and forecast a

great future for skiing in Eau Claire.

Meanwhile, the club members have been active in outside tournaments. Jan. 13 the club entered five skiers in the Beloit tourney in which Bob Anderson of Eau Claire placed fifth in Class C with jumps of 160 and 175 feet. Vern Powers suffered a slight mishap but made one of the longest jumps of the day.

This Sunday the club will enter eight riders at the Wisconsin Hoofers tournament at Madison and the following Sunday will find the club represented at the Duluth, Minn., tournament.

All interested skiers are requested to get in contact with Dr. Enerson, Ralph E. Gilbert, secretary, at the American National Bank building, or Vernon Powers, hill and ski captain.





**Vern returned** to the Battle Creek Park slide in St. Paul, MN. It was a hill that he had won on in 1942 in Class B. It was a steep landing hill with a very sharp dip at the bottom. It favored a long jumper with a steady landing, making it perfect for Vern. However the Battle Creek tournaments of 1946 and 1947 were not so kind to Vern. His best in those 2 years was a 10th place finish.

A visit to the Duluth, MN slide provided a better result, where he took 6th place.

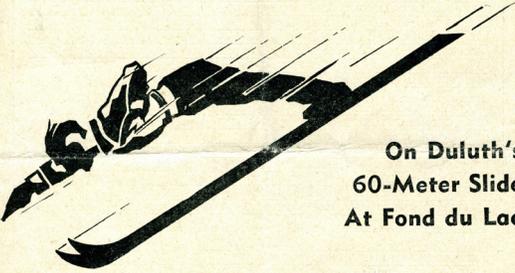


Vern Powers at Duluth

\* \* \* PROGRAM \* \* \*

## MEMORIAL SKI JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Honoring the Memory of Skiers who lost Their Lives in World War II



On Duluth's  
60-Meter Slide  
At Fond du Lac

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1946**  
2:00 P. M.

\* \* \*

— Sponsored By —

### Duluth Ski Club

With Assistance of the Duluth Junior Chamber of Commerce

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— HILL RECORD: 203 FEET —

Established by Torger Tokle, Norway Ski Club, New York, on Sunday, February 2, 1941. Tokle was killed in action in Italy as a member of the 10th Division.



Duluth Slide

— EIGHTH ANNUAL —

# SKI TOURNAMENT

Sunday, February 17, 1946  
WOLVERINE HILL



Auspices  
COGEBIC RANGE SKI CLUB, INC.  
Sanctioned by Central U. S. Ski Ass'n  
IRONWOOD, MICH.

---

COMPLIMENTS OF

## IRONWOOD CAFE

STEAKS FISH DINNERS  
SHORT ORDERS

WM. KALLAS, Prop. 114 AURORA STREET

**Vern had won** at Wolverine Hill in Ironwood, MI when he was in Class B. During the competition there in 1946, he had to settle for 8th Place due to a shorter first jump.

**Vern was looking forward** to returning to Iron Mountain and challenging his career best jump of 1942, when he set the record for the longest jump by an Eau Claire skier. However, with jumps of 201 and 203 feet, the old snap from 1942 just wasn't there, and Vern missed placing in the top six.

*The Kiwanis Ski Club*

presents the



Central U.S. Ski Ass'n. Champion Tournament

Combined with open  
*Jumping Tournament in Class A*  
(Sanctioned by the Central U.S. Ski Association)

**March 3rd, 1946**

---

KIWANIS SKI CLUB OFFICERS

ELMER KNUTSON, Pres.	DON SMITH, Corresponding Secty.
EINO ECKLOFF, Vice Pres.	WALTER BRATTLUND, Treas.
JEAN UREN, Secty.	BERNADETTE LUKE, Recording Secty.
MAUNO PERA, Hill Captain	

U. P. Office Supply Co. Ir. Mt.



**A group** of skiers from Eau Claire participated in the Wisconsin Hoofers Ski Meet at Muir Knoll in Madison, WI. There is no information available regarding the standings of the tournament.

In late fall of 1946, Vern became a father, resulting in responsibilities that would curtail the amount of ski jumping competitions for him.

**1947** - A return to the Battle Creek Park slide in St. Paul for the U.S. Central Ski Jumping Championships resulted in a 10th Place finish for Vern.

Vern entered a tournament at his home hill at Eau Claire, where he took 3rd place, beating his pals Jimmy Hendrickson and Jim Running. At another tournament at "The Mountain," Vern placed 2nd.

He again skied Big Hills Park in Beloit, WI, and Wolverine Hill in Ironwood, but no statistics are available on those tournaments.



Vern and son, Ron

## Wilson and Severson Star At Eau Claire

**Eau Claire, Wis., Jan. 26**—Eugene Wilson won the first Class A Jumping meet held by the Eau Claire Winter Sports Club since before the war. Wilson easily took Class A competition but it was young Oscar Severson of the home club who put on the most spectacular show.

After an outstanding jumping career as a Class C skier and a member of the old Flying Eagles Junior club of Eau Claire, Severson returned to competition today in Class B. He has retained his outstanding jumping style and excellent control and he was adjudged today the most graceful skier of the entire tournament.

The largest crowd of fans ever to witness a jumping meet in this city gathered today in the forty degree sunshine to watch a good meet held on a well prepared slide. There was little snow in the area other than that used in preparing the slide.

The jumping meet today climaxed the Eau Claire Winter Carnival week. All proceeds of the week from the Carnival will be used to further Junior skiing in the Eau Claire district and to build a steel scaffold on the Putman Hill here where jumps of from 200 to 250 feet will be possible when the hill is completed.

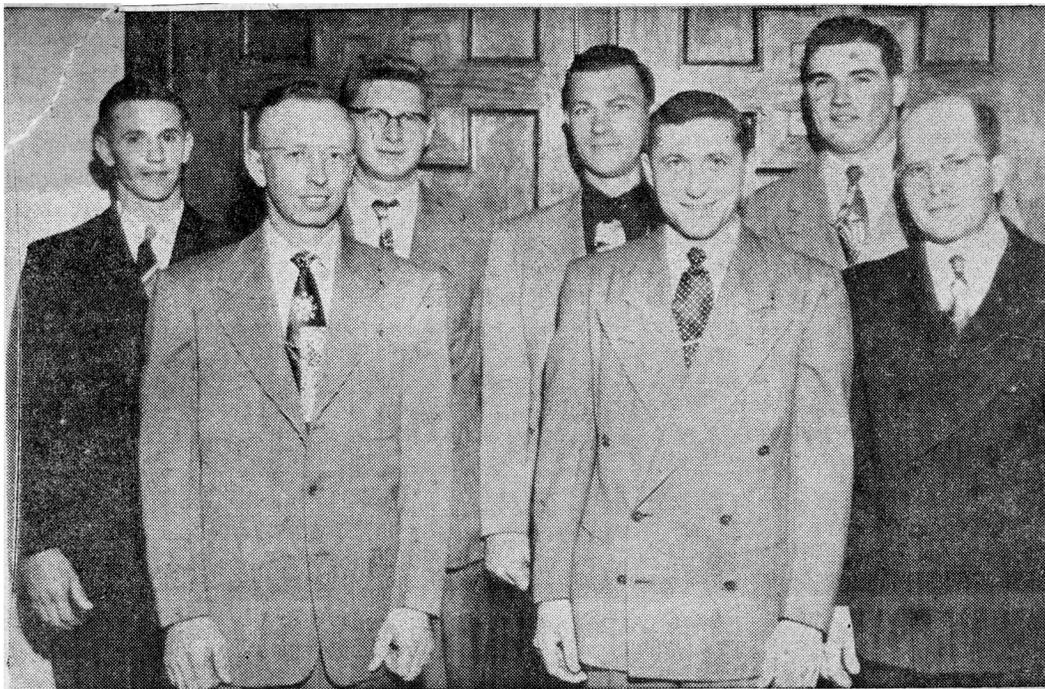
CLASS A		
	Distance	Points
1. E. Wilson, Norge	109-116	149.1
2. H. Feddick, Duluth	104-115	144.1
3. V. Powers, Eau Claire W.	109-110	144.1
4. J. Hendrickson, Eau Claire W.	107-111	141.9
4. R. Enersen, Norge	101-106	141.1
6. J. Running, Eau Claire W.	106-104	140.1
CLASS B		
1. O. Severson, Eau Claire W.	107-102	150.2
2. W. Duckwitz, Wis. Hoofers	96-99	141.7
3. L. Severude, Eau Claire W.	97-100	140.8
4. R. Mittelstadt, Eau Claire W.	98-99	139.5
5. L. Soler, St. Paul	96-97	139.4
6. R. Narowitz, Norge	93-91	138.7
7. C. Olson, Bush Lake	97-99	138.6
8. Curtis Bestul, Wood	103-100	138.3

(Continued on Page Three, Column One)

**Vern served** as Eau Claire Ski Club President for 1950-51.

In 1951, Vern skied in Class A in tournaments at both Wolverine Hill in Ironwood, and Pine Mountain in Iron Mountain, MI. No results of those tournaments are known. However, they are the last known tournaments in which Vern skied in Class A.

Vern and Ardy Powers at Iron Mountain on right.



**Ski Club Officers—** Shown above are the officers recently elected by members of the Eau Claire Ski club. The new officers are: (from left to right) Bob Lawler, hill captain; Curt Bestul, hill engineer, Don Enerson, vice-president; Vern Powers, finance officer; Marvin Piper, treasurer; Robert Donaldson, president; John Freid, secretary.

Wednesday, April 25, 1951.

## Vern Powers Class A Ski Tournament Summary

Year	Class	Placed	Dist	Hill Name	Location
1942	A	4th	192-184	Whitehall 2-22-42	Whitehall WI
1942	A	6th	257-238	Pine Mountain	Iron Mountain MI
1942	A	2nd		Mt. Washington	Eau Claire
1946	A		170-Fell	Beloit (1st after War)	Beloit WI
1946	A	10th		Battle Creek	St Paul MN
1946	A	6th	177-177	Duluth	Duluth MN
1946	A	8th	155-172	Wolverine Hill	Ironwood MI
1946	A		201-203	Pine Mountain	Iron Mountain MI
1946	A	5th	99-99	Hoofers Muir Knoll	Madison WI
1947	A	10th	165-156	Battle Creek	St. Paul MN
1947	A	2nd	109-110	Mt. Washington	Eau Claire WI
1947	A	2nd	73-75	Menomonie	Menomonie WI
1947	A			Big Hills Park	Beloit WI
1947	A			Wolverine Hill	Ironwood
1950-51	Club President				
1950	A	2nd		Devil's Hollow	Oconomowoc WI
1951	A			Wolverine Hill	Ironwood MI
1951	A			Pine Mountain	Iron Mountain

**The first evidence** of Vern moving into Veteran's Class comes from his entry into a tournament at Brokaw, WI in 1954. Brokaw is just on the northern edge of Wausau. Vern won Veterans class on the Brokaw jump in 1954, 1955, 1956, and 1957. He took second place in 1958.

As a family, we spent many of our winter weekends traveling to ski tournaments. Brokaw was one I remember well. I think my dad liked it because he won there so often. It wasn't always trophies and medals for winning. Prizes were often awarded, such as ski equipment or small home appliances.

#### **LONGEST JUMP BY EC SKIER**

- 443: Reed Zuehlke, Obertsdorf, Germany, 1984
- 404: Dave Tomten, Ironwood, Mich., 1978
- 393: Bill Olson, Obertsdorf, Germany, 1952
- 297: Bill Olson, Iron Mountain, Mich., 1950 (U.S. record)
- 283: Jimmy Running, Iron Mountain, Mich., 1950
- 279: Bill Olson, Iron Mountain, Mich., 1948
- 271: Bill Olson, Iron Mountain, Mich., 1948
- 257: Vern Powers, Iron Mountain, Mich., 1942
- 250: Jimmy Hendrickson, Iron Mountain, Mich., 1939
- 250: Jimmy Hendrickson, Garmisch, Germany, 1936
- 244: Jimmy Hendrickson, Big Pines, Calif., 1935 (U.S. record)



**BIRD'S EYE VIEW**—This was the scene facing ski jumpers as they started their run down the Brokaw scaffold and hill during Sunday's Valley Winter Sports Club tournament at Brokaw before an estimated 1,700 onlookers. In flight as the picture was taken is Loysi LeMere, local rider who competed in the Senior Class. Winner of Class A was Gerald Gauthier while Dave Stork, Rothschild, took honors in Class C. . . . Record-Herald Photo

**There is a large gap** of information available on Vern's ski jumping between 1948 and 1955. It may be that Vern just did not place high enough in tournaments to register in the local papers, or that there were just gaps in his participation during that time. Demands on his time were likely greater from both work and family. He became self-employed and opened up his own automobile service station in 1951.

HOME OIL CO. **ANNOUNCES**

The leasing of their Harding Ave. Mileage Station (Formerly Zida's) to



**Vern Powers**

Vern has been in the service station business in Eau Claire for over 12 years and guarantees you satisfactory service in his new Mileage Station

Station Open 7:00 A. M. to 9:00 P. M.

**SAVE MONEY**

Buy Gas for 2c per Gallon Less from Vern

HARDING AVE. & MARGARET STREET



**Vern and Ardy** had 3 children, Ron, Pam, and Ann by 1951. Jody, a 4th, came in 1959. Vern was a devout family man, and that may have curtailed the amount of skiing he could do.



**In the late 1950s** the Beloit slide was dismantled and brought to Eau Claire and assembled by Eau Claire Ski Club members on the far northern end of what is now called Stein Boulevard. Once the jump was operational, the club moved over to the new hill. The new Eau Claire Ski Club hill was called Hendrickson Hill, in memory of Jimmy Hendrickson, one of Vern's Eau Claire Ski Club teammates. Jimmy lost his life in a ski jumping accident on Norge's Cary Hill near Chicago.



Vern took 9th place in both 1958 and 1959 on this hill, but finished at 15th in 1960. He was also Hill Co-Captain that year, and on the board of directors the previous year.





Men of the wind are Ted Zoberksi (left) of Ironwood and Jimmie Hendrickson of Eau Claire, two of the midwest's leading ski jumpers. —Journal Color Photo

## NATALIE BAILEY WILL JUMP HERE

### Other Skiers Sign Up for Tourney Sunday

Interest in the Chippewa Valley club's annual ski tourney at See-More hill Sunday—already at a maximum—was enhanced yesterday with the announcement that Natalie Bailey of the St. Paul Ski club will make exhibition jumps.

Known as the only "lady jumper" in the Central Ski association, she is a new member of the St. Paul club. She is an exceptional performer on skis.

Other entries from St. Paul who will appear here include Dean Linnerooth, Edward Zaspel and Walter Mueller, Class B; Harry Southward and Luke Solar, Class C.

A number of riders from the Eau Claire ski club also are entering the tournament. They include Fritz Mittelsteadt, Art Pope, Doug Kellog, Lloyd Madson and Lawrence Shelly, Class B; Vernon Powers, Bob Fleming, Ralph Pope, Class C; and Erick Gynild, Senior class.

## Ski Tourney Draws 25,000



Twenty-five thousand winter sports enthusiasts are shown here as they watched some of the world's greatest skiers perform in the International Ski Tournament on Cary Hill, Fox River Grove, Ill. The meet title was won by Norway's Olympic champion, Birger Ruud, with a mark of 172 feet.

A couple of good finishes came Vern's way in 1961 when he took 2nd at Iola, WI and 2nd at Mt. Washington. He also placed 5th at Rushford, MN. In addition, he entered tournaments at Hendrickson Hill in Eau Claire and Battle Creek Park in St. Paul, MN that same year.

# Domer Wins Jr. Class at Iola

IOLA (Special) — Larry Domer, Eau Claire, turned in the longest jump of the day while soaring to the Junior Class championship in the Iola Invitational ski-jumping tournament here Sunday.

Domer leaped 142 feet on his first ride and then came back with 141 to pile up 141.0 points and easily win the Junior title. He had nearly a 13 point margin on runnerup Jim Helgeson of Iola.

**SVERRE FREDHEIM** edged Eau Claire's Vern Powers for the Veterans Class title. Fredheim soared 124-126 for 141.7 points while Powers followed with 124-123

for 133.3. Thor Evenson, Eau Claire, was sixth.

Don Larson, Eau Claire, was fifth in Junior Class with jumps of 121-124 for 123.2.

Bob Strassman just missed giving Eau Claire a second title as he finished second to Dick Foster, Minneapolis, in Class B. Foster leaped 134-138 for 141.8 points while Strassman totaled 141.4 on jumps of 140-129 feet.

Ragmar Oby, Chicago, won the Senior Class title with jumps of 133 - 141 feet for 145.5 points. George Carter, Eau Claire, placed third.

## IOLA RESULTS

Veterans Class	Jumps	Style	Pts.
Sverre Fredheim, Unatt	124 126	64.5	141.7
Vern Powers, E. C.	124 123	57.0	133.3
Archie Lowman, Racine	118 121	55.5	129.6
Luke Soler, St. Paul	111 118	56.0	127.2
Tommy Hagen, Iola	134 137	40.5	123.6
Thor Evenson, E. C.	112 109	53.5	122.5
Junior Class			
Larry Domer, E. C.	142 141	61.0	141.0
Jimmy Helgeson, Iola	128 130	55.5	128.4
Ralph Lovsted, Westby	122 124	55.0	124.5
Lee Olson, Wis. Rapids	123 126	53.5	123.8
Don Larson, Eau Claire	121 124	54.0	123.2
B Class			
D. Foster, Minneapolis	134 138	63.5	141.8
Bob Strassman, E. C.	140 129	64.0	141.4
O. Hyggen, Chicago	130 136	61.5	138.1
Don LeVair, Minneapolis	130 137	59.5	136.4
Walter Koshen, Racine	135 130	58.5	134.8
L. Kiermas, Navarino	132 129	58.0	132.8
S. Faulkenhaug, Rockfd	121 132	57.0	129.9
R. Stafsilien, Westby	111 134	55.5	126.2
Tom Meis, Eau Claire	115 120	58.0	125.8
Senior Class			
Ragmar Oby, Chicago	133 141	65.5	145.5
George Carter, E. C.	127 122	37.5	110.4



## Vern Powers Veterans' Class Ski Tournament Summary

Year	Class	Placed	Dist	Hill Name	Location
1954	Vets	1st		Brokaw by Wausau	Brokaw WI
1955	Vets	1st		Carver Lake	Mpls. MN
1955	Vets	1st		Brokaw by Wausau	Brokaw WI
1956	Vets	1st		Brokaw by Wausau	Brokaw WI
1957	Vets	1st		Brokaw by Wausau	Brokaw WI
1958	Vets	1st + MG		Brokaw by Wausau	Brokaw WI
1958	Vets	9th	136-128	Hendrickson Hill	Eau Claire WI
1959	Vets	9th	143-152	Hendrickson Hill	Eau Claire
1960	Vets	15th	105-104	Hendrickson Hill	Eau Claire
1961	Vets	2nd	124-123	Iola	Iola WI
1961	Vets	24th	129-110	Battle Creek Park	St. Paul MN
1961	Vets			Hendrickson Hill	Eau Claire WI
1961	Vets	2nd	81-81	Mt. Washington	Eau Claire WI
1962	Vets	5th	92-85	Rushford	Rushford MN

1950-51 Club President

1955 4th Highest Club Jumper

1959 On Board of Directors for Ski Club

1960 Co-Hill Captain



# Night Jumping Returns

By Ron Buckli  
Leader-Telegram staff

Vern Powers was the first one to ride the hill under lights. "The hill was not completely ready and it was kind of rough," said Powers, 81. The hill was the 40-meter Mt. Washington jump and it was one of the largest in the area 65 years ago. The Eau Claire Ski Club was preparing for the United States' first ever night ski tournament under the lights on February 28, 1937. "It was a great experience," recalled 85-year old Fritz Mittelstadt, who also jumped in the competition.

More than six decades later, the club will stage another night tournament under the lights, this time at 90-meter Silver Mine Hill on Friday, January 25. In 1937, a field of 120 jumpers, some of the best from the midwest, showed up for the historic event during the hayday of ski jumping. Lighting was provided by the Eau Claire Senior High electrical department and lit up the Shawtown area of the city. It drew contrasting views. "The hard part was the lighting," said Mittelstadt, who retired as U.S. Chief of Nordic Officials 10 years ago. "They had a string of lights and it was a little difficult to judge the end of the takeoff as far as I was concerned. Once you got onto the landing hill, it was OK." Powers remembered the lights as quite adequate.

"Officials say that visibility will be eminently satisfactory," reported the Eau Claire Leader. Powers said that the slide would vault the jumpers high in the air over the landing hill. "We had quite a flat to cover on top so we often built up the takeoff to get over," said Powers, a member of the Eau Claire Ski Club Hall of Fame. "Once you got over you could go a ways down." The club plowed out 15 acres at the bottom of the hill to allow spectators to watch from their cars should they wish and a crowd of 3,000 showed up for the unique event.

It was figured that the night-time snow would increase the speed of the jumpers and that the hill record of 149 feet would be broken. It didn't turn out that way, although the record was approached. Eugene Wilson, Coleraine, Minn., had the long jump of 144 feet but finished second to Sverre



Fredheim, U.S. Olympic jumper from Minneapolis at the time. Fredheim had jumps of 137 and 142 feet. Eau Claire's Jimmy Hendrickson, who was a member of the U.S. Team that jumped in the Olympics in Germany a year earlier, took part but apparently fell and did not place. Max Raentsch, Minneapolis, won Class B with Raymond Nelson of Strum seventh and Art Pope of Eau Claire eighth.

Powers, only 16 at the time, had a good day, placing third in Class C, or Boys' Class, with rides of 119 and 125 feet. Roy Laramie, Coleraine, took first with a long jump of 131 feet, and Walter Nelson, Strum, was second with Ralph Pope of Eau Claire fourth. City riders swept the first three places in Senior Class with winner Henry Fleming followed by John Olson and Vic Jensen. "There was some falls, but I remember standing all three of my rides," said Mittelstadt, also a member of the Eau Claire Ski Club Hall of Fame. Jumpers at Silver Mine Hill this month will go twice as far and more on the Olympic-sized jump.

The club, which annually holds tournaments on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, decided on a Friday night event to avoid conflicts with a Continental Cup meet at Westby the same weekend and the NFL semifinal games on Sunday. "We've been kicking around the idea of a night tournament for a number of years," said Dino Amundson, ski club hill captain. "With some recontouring and other hill work, we felt it is now possible."

There will be permanent poles for security and lighting at strategic places on the hill and portable lights on the slide. Amundson said the club is investing an estimated \$10,000 into the overall project.

"We also have a commitment from four Russian and Ukrainian jumpers who will be here," Amundson said. That includes Vladimir Glyvka, a member of the Ukrainian Ski Team who set the Silver Mine Hill record at 308 feet last year.

There is also the possibility that some foreign jumpers scheduled to compete in the Continental Cup meets Saturday and Sunday at Westby may be here for the Friday night event. Friday's tournament will be followed by a second tournament Saturday afternoon.

*(Left) 40-meter Mt. Washington Ski Jump as the Eau Claire Ski club prepared to host the first night tournament in the United States on Feb. 28, 1937*

*(Right) The front of the program promoting the 1937 ski jumping tournament held at Mt Washington that featured 120 jumpers.*

# ANNUAL SKI TOURNAMENT

SPONSORED BY  
EAU CLAIRE SKI CLUB

SANCTIONED BY U. S. CENTRAL SKI ASSOCIATION

SUNDAY EVENING — 7 O'CLOCK

Under Flood Lights



MT. WASHINGTON SLIDE

EAU CLAIRE, WIS.

# Eau Claire Ski Club

P.O. Box 735, Eau Claire, WI 54702

November 21, 1991

Vern Powers  
6171 Hillside Park  
Eau Claire, WI. 54703

Dear Mr. Powers:

The Eau Claire Ski Club is proud to announce that you have been selected for membership in the Eau Claire Ski Club Hall of Fame.

Members are being honored in three categories: athlete, club builder and early era.

This years new members include:

Athlete - Ted Lahner, Vern Powers, Curt Bestul

Club Builder - Ron Buckli

Early Era - Thomas Hagen

Formal induction will take place at the club's Hall of Fame dance to be held at Westgate Sportsman Club, Saturday January 11, beginning 8 P.M. Inductees will also be introduced at the club's LaMoine Batson Memorial Tournament the following day at 1 P.M.

We hope that you or a representative of your family will be able to attend.

Sincerely,

*Paul Seipel*

Paul Seipel (P.S.)  
Hall of Fame Chairman



# EAU CLAIRE SKI CLUB HALL OF FAME



*Vern Powers*

January 11, 1992

ATHLETE



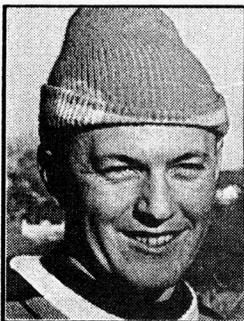
# EAU CLAIRE SKI CLUB HALL OF FAME

Ted Lahner, the 1954 national Junior Class champion, and Vern Powers, whose career spanned nearly three decades, have been named as athletes to the Eau Claire Ski Club's Hall of Fame.

Joining them as club builders are Curt Bestul, who also excelled as an athlete, and Ron Buckli, Leader-Telegram sports editor who has covered the local tournaments for the past 35 years.

Entering in the early era category is Thomas Hagen, who stood out as a jumper and also served as club builder in the early 1900s.

The four modern entries bring the Hall's total to 23 members. They will be honored at the club's Hall of Fame induction ceremonies Jan. 11 at Westgate Sportsman Club. The annual ski jumping tournament at Silver Mine Hill will be held Sunday, Jan. 12



## Ted Lahner

One of four brothers to excel at the sport, he grew up in the Mount Washington area and began jumping at an early age at the Fourth Ward School slide.

After an outstanding career with the Flying Eagles junior club, he moved to the Eau Claire Ski Club in 1952 and a

year later, at the age of 16, took part in the national championships at the 90-meter slide in Steamboat Springs, Colo. He had the second longest jump in his class (273 feet) but a fall cost him a second-place finish.

In 1954, he won the national Junior title at Ishpeming, Mich., with jumps of 209 feet and 199 feet. Moving to Class B, he won at Eau Claire's Hendrickson Hill in 1955 and in the nationals at Leavenworth, Wash. He had the longest jump (280 feet) in his class but fell.

He was second at Eau Claire in 1956 and in the national championships at Westby and he tied Class A champion Keith Zuehlke for the longest jump of 201 feet but fell on his second ride.

Elevated to Class A in 1957, he suffered a broken collarbone at Ishpeming, but came back the next year to enjoy his finest season.

In the Central championships at Hendrickson Hill, he stunned the field (which included former Olympian Bill Olson and ex-national champion Zuehlke) to win easily with jumps of 183 feet and 177 feet, the longest of the day. A Milwaukee sportswriter tabbed him the "Flying Bartender."

Later in the season, he went to Iron Mountain, Mich., to place third in the national championships, won by Olson. Zuehlke was fourth in a dominating showing by the Eau Claire Ski Club.

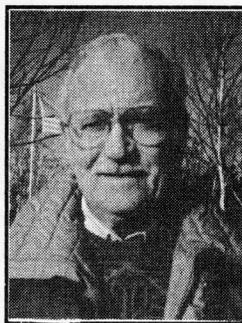
In 1959, he staged a sizzling duel with Olson for the championship at Hendrickson Hill, jumping 197 feet to tie the hill record. But Olson was declared the winner by .2 of a point although he had shorter jumps.

Later that season, he took part in the pre-Olympic meet at Squaw Valley, Calif., and placed 13th in an international field. He was the seventh-ranked American.

In 1962, on leave from guard duty at Ft. Lewis, Wash., Lahner a great all-around athlete placed fourth at Eau Claire. The same season, he won the Northwest Division championship at Mt. Hood, Ore.

He continued to be a top competitor through 1964, when he retired after 12 years of jumping. He also excelled as a professional baseball player and played on 10 state championship fastpitch softball teams.

Lahner, 55, introduced the current "fish style" of jumping with arms pinned at his sides in the 1950s and was labeled the "Human Torpedo." Always a fearless, daring and long jumper, falls cost him many honors.



## Vern Powers

One of the few city jumpers who did not begin with the Flying Eagles, Powers joined the Eau Claire Ski Club at the age of 15 in 1936 and by the time World War II arrived, he was jumping with some of the best skiers in the world.

After becoming a top finisher in Midwest tournaments, he went to Seattle, Wash., for the national championships in 1941 and after the first ride, he was in first place in Class B. On his second ride, he hit an air pocket and nearly fell, but still finished sixth.

At the peak of his game in 1942, he went to the huge slide at Iron Mountain and jumped directly between two of the greatest skiers of the day the legendary Torger Tokle and Walt Bietila. While Tokle was setting the North American record at 289 feet, Powers turned in a respectable jump of 257. It was the longest jump ever by a city skier at the time.

He said his biggest thrill came that morning when the hill was icy and most of the top jumpers wouldn't ride. Jumping with Jim Running, he had a near-record practice effort of 275 feet.

World War II robbed him of his best jumping years. He served with the Air Force in Europe but returned to continue his career in 1946. He jumped in Class A through the mid-1950s and then entered Veteran's Class for several more years before retiring in the 1960s.

Powers, 71, won championships in all four classes of competition A, B, Junior and Veterans. As a long and spectacular jumper, he ranked as one of the city's more successful and popular skiers of his day.

# Powers has fond memories

By Ron Buckli  
Leader-Telegram staff

He never made an Olympic team. He never won a National championship — or a Most Graceful trophy.

But for 30 years — spanning the golden era of the sport — he was one of Eau Claire's most successful and popular ski jumpers.

"I was always a long jumper," he reflected this week. "I was not as graceful as some but I was steady and I seldom fell. And that says something for the conditions we skied under back then."

Vern Powers is 61 years old. He'll be at Silver Mine Hill Sunday. As the riders speed down the chute and explode into the air, he'll be reminded of days of yesteryear — the days he was setting sail with some of the greatest

jumpers in the world.

"I still go to the tournaments," he said. "I'll be there Sunday. It gets in your blood and you never lose that."

Powers won championships in all four classes of competition — A, B, C and Senior — beginning as a 15-year old in 1936 and continuing through his years in Veteran's Class in the 1960s.

He remembers the day in 1942 when he outjumped some of the nation's top skiers at Whitehall. His jump of 194 feet vaulted him into Class A.

He remembers the time he jumped aboard the train with Jim Running and headed for Seattle. And he remembers the time he jumped directly between the two greatest jumpers of the day.

It was in 1941 that the 20-year old Powers joined Running on that train heading west for the National cham-

pionships in Hyak, Wash.

"After the first ride, I was in first place," he recalled. "But on the second one, I hit an air pocket. I wasn't used to that mountain skiing. I got my points down. I stood, but I was out of kilter."

While Running placed second, Powers still finished a very respectable sixth in that tournament as the legendary Torger Tokle sailed to a new North American distance record of 288 feet.

Powers most memorable performance? That was the following year at the gigantic new slide at Iron Mountain, Mich.

"I'll never forget that," he said. "I skied directly behind Walter Bietila and directly in front of Torger Tokle. They were the two greatest ski jumpers of the day."

While Tokle soared to a new record of 289 feet, Powers was settling for a creditable jump of 257 feet.

"I felt pretty good just to be able to ride between the two greatest jumpers in the country," he said. "What do you do? When they call your name, you go."

Powers rated the two among the best he'd ever seen. "Tokle was a tremendous jumper. He was awful wide on his landings, like me, but he could do things nobody else could do. He could jump far — very far — and stand."

He also skied with such jumpers as Eugene Wilson, Sverre Fredheim, Reidar Andersen and Birger Ruud. "I guess Ruud would have to be the best," he admitted.

But more than anything else, he remembers that day at Iron Mountain. "Jim Running and I went out there the morning of the tournament and took some practice rides," he recalled. "It was icy and a lot of the big guys wouldn't ride. I had a ride of 275 feet and that was the biggest thrill I ever had."

Powers was at the peak of his game when he went in the Air Force in October of 1942. He became a crew chief on a P-47 fighter-bomber, went to Europe through the war and earned the bronze star.

"I don't know if I'd ever been an Olympic jumper or anything like that, but I was finished first, second or third in most of the tournaments before I left," he said.

When the war ended, he remembered getting Gerry Chamberlain, Jack Moore, Bob Anderson and Darrel Lahner and heading for a tournament in Beloit with inadequate equipment.

"We got skiing going again that winter (1946)," he said. "I skied Class A until I was 32, then I went into Veteran's Class."

Of his four children, Powers oldest was a boy. "Ron skied in the Flying Eagles and did real well there for awhile," Vern said.

Vern was one of the few old-time ski stars that didn't get his start with the Flying Eagles.

"I would just ski around, build bumps on the hills and jump. And then I got up to the Mountain one year and they asked me if I wanted to join the Eau Claire Ski Club."

## Powers

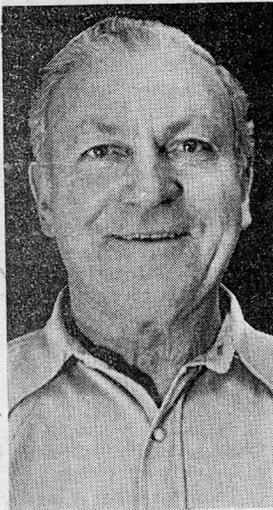
Continued from Page 1C

He claims it's a completely new sport nowadays. "They've got hills now, really fine hills," he said. "They're big and they're fast and they're really safe."

"It's altogether different skiing. You're not jumping, you're ski diving and flying — not jumping. You've got to earn your way. On those older hills, they used to shoot us out high in the air onto flat landings and sharp dips."

Powers ran a service station in town for 30 years but now works with his brother in a dry goods company.

And, up until three or four years ago, he was downhill skiing. He stills wants to get out the slabs to this day. It's in his blood.



Vern Powers

...as a footnote to the Vern Powers story, he took the first night ride in U.S. ski jumping history on a big hill..at Mt. Washington in the late 1930s..and, oh yes, the winners..Tomten in Vets, Mike Shupien in B, on a limb with Mattoon over Olsen in Junior..and Zuehlke..who else?..in A..and we think Reed can pump a 276-footer out of it this year.

**Other than baseball players,** there weren't many sports stars in the 1930s and 1940s. However, there were some true "rock stars," or heroes, in the sport of ski jumping. Vern's number one hero was Torger Tokle. Vern had read about about Tokle's prowess as a ski jumper and tried to follow his achievements. Vern would have given anything just to meet him. Little did he know back then that one day soon he would be standing on the top of the gigantic Iron Mountain slide sandwiched between Torger Tokle and Walter Bietla. Talking with them before and after the tournaments was an unbelievable thrill for Vern. In comparison it would be like competing with, and getting to know personally, some of your favorite sports stars of today.



**Tokle** won numerous ski prizes in Norway, now competes as an amateur member of the Brooklyn Ski Club of Brooklyn. He is unmarried, has already taken out first pa



*North American Ski Record Broken by Tokle*

**TORGER TOKLE**, a Norwegian immigrant living in New York, is shown soaring to a new North American ski jumping record of 288 feet off the new slide in the Snoqualmie bowl near Seattle, Wash. This leap helped him win the national championship Sunday. Tokle eclipsed his own record of 273 feet made Feb. 9. —AP Wirephoto

**Tokle Sets Record  
on 288 Foot Jump**

# TOKLE SHOWS TOP SKI-JUMPING FORM

## MAGIC-EYE SHOTS OF CHAMPION

In ski jumping more than any other sport, the individual is on his own. Roaring down a ramp at faster than 50 m.p.h., sailing into space and landing far below on a steeply pitched slope, the ski jumper uses his skis as wings and his arms as his helm. He is a combination of courage, skill and muscle.

Best ski jumper in the U. S. is a 22-year-old Norwegian carpenter named Torger Tokle. In the two years he has been in this country Tokle has won 23 out of 26 meets, now holds the American record of 273 ft. Below, in a magic-eye sequence, Tokle makes a 203-ft. jump on the new 60-meter hill at Duluth, Minn.

In Picture No. 1, Tokle starts down the ramp, picking up speed for his flight. In Nos. 2 and 3 he

takes off. Contrary to popular belief, the ski jumper does not jump. Rather, he takes full advantage of his forward speed by lifting himself from ankles and thrusting his chest forward like a diver executing a swan dive. This makes his line of flight in an upward direction. Most important part of the entire jump is the take-off because it determines length of jump and how the jumper will land. It is also the greatest thrill.

In Nos. 4 through 9, Tokle in full flight counteracts air pressure by leaning far forward over his skis. He uses his arms to maintain proper balance. In Nos. 10 to 12 Tokle lands with his knees bent and one ski ahead of the other to take up the shock. For more magic-eye pictures on Tokle's jump, see page 61.





*Jan. 1956. Ski lunch*



**SKI MEET COMMITTEEMEN**—Eau Claire Ski Club members who have important roles in staging the tournament at new Hendrickson Hill here Sunday are shown going over assignments with President Orv Gynnild (left) who is general chairman. Others in front row are (left to right): Don Walker, registration; Vern Powers, communications; Don Enerson, banquet and judges; and Bob Middlestadt, dedication. In the back row (left to right) are Keith Zuehlke, hill work; Ralph Anderson, tickets; Gale Skamser, programs; Dale Severson, decorations; Marv Pieper, tickets; and Jim Severson, prizes.

# FLYING BIETILAS LEAD SKI MEET

Take Two First Places  
and One Second At  
Devil's Hollow

Oconomowoc, Wis., Jan. 12 (P)—The Flying Bietila brothers, of Ishpeming, Mich., drew the attention of 2,500 spectators at the annual Milwaukee - Oconomowoc Ski club jumping tournament at Devil's Hollow Sunday as they took two first places and a second in a field of 130 riders.

Walter Bietila, representing the Wisconsin Hoofers club, of Madison, won the Class A championship with jumps of 103 and 105 feet. Roy Bietila had marks of 104 and 106 feet, but finished in second because Walter's form was judged better. Roy's second leap was the best of the day, but 20 feet below the hill record.

Ralph Bietila, youngest of the quartet and winner of the national Class C title at Seattle last year, won the C title here with leaps of 91 and 96 feet. Leonard Bietila, oldest of the brothers, fell on his second jump spoiling any chance at the senior title.

Summaries of the jumping events follow:

## Class A

1. Walter Bietila, Wisconsin Hoofers, Madison, 103 and 105 feet—154.9 points.
2. Roy Bietila, Ishpeming, 104, 106—149.7.
3. Fritz Pohlman, Beloit, Wis., 98-104—142.2.
4. Jim Running, Beloit, 92-98—138.8.
5. Brunt Saari, Ishpeming, 87-94—130.6.

## Class B

1. Vern Powers, Eau Claire, 98-102—144.1.
2. Gordon Robare, Munising, Mich., 96-99—142.3.
3. Walter Nelson, Beloit, 94-102—140.2.
4. Jim Lawson, Ishpeming, 100-101—139.
5. Tom Hagen, Eau Claire, 94-97—138.2.

## Seniors

1. Ingvar Arneson, New London, 94-96—142.5.
2. Arthur Nerowitz, Norge, Chicago, 92-92—134.1.
3. Ole Besseberg, Norge, Chicago, 80-90—133.1.
4. George Gunderson, Norge, Chicago, 84-95—132.
5. Tom Nelson, Beloit, 87-94—131.1.

## Class C

1. Ralph Bietila, Ishpeming, 91-96—136.3.
2. Oscar Severson, Eau Claire, 89-92—135.6.
3. Bob Tomlinson, Kiwanis, Iron Mountain, Mich., 89-96—130.7.
4. Gale Eymar, Kiwanis, Iron Mountain, 89-96—126.7.
5. Walter Alexander, Munising, 87-90—125.2.

# BIETILA TAKES CLASS A TITLE

But Gets Competition From  
Unidentified Norwegian  
Riders.

Beloit (P)—An atmosphere of international mystery was present yesterday when two only partially identified royal Norwegian air force pilots placed second and third to Walter Bietila, of Ishpeming, Mich., in class A of the Central United States Ski championship.

The two were announced to the crowd of 2,000 who witnessed the meet as "Ola" and "Sigurd." They escaped from Norway, home of skiing, after the Nazi occupation and made their way to Canada. Their last names were withheld to protect their relatives who are still in Norway.

They gave Bietila—who won his third major meet in as many weeks—some close competition. Bietila leaped 179 feet on his first try and 185 on the second. The distances, together with form rating, gave him 230.5 points.

Ola had a pair of 179 foot jumps for 227.1 points and second place Sigurd, jumps of 176 and 173 feet for 222.4 points and third.

Bietila's second leap was the best of the day, but it was far under the hill record of 212 feet held by Eugene Wilson, of Coleraine, Minn., who placed fourth behind "Sigurd." Damp snow hampered competitors.

Other winners were Raymond Nelson, of Beloit, class B; Ralph Bietila, of Ishpeming, class C, and Ingvar Arneson, of New London, Wis., senior division.

The summary:

Class A  
Walter Bietila, Ishpeming, Mich., 179-186—230.5.

Ola—, Little Norway, Canada., 179-176—227.1.

Sigurd—, Little Norway, Canada, 176-173—224.4.

Eugene Wilson, Coleraine, Minn., 176-173—222.5.

Jim Running, Beloit, 176-172—212.6.

Class B  
Raymond Nelson, Beloit, 166-166—212.6.

Vernon Powers, Eau Claire, Wis., 171-165—209.3.

Henry Hanson, Minneapolis, 172-160—208.1.

Charles Sedevic, Madison, Wis., 153-172—206.7.

Jack Paquette, Iron Mountain, Mich., 166-162—204.9.

Class C  
Ralph Bietila, Ishpeming, 168-174—218.2.

Gale Eymar, Iron Mountain, 161-163—202.3.

Charles Plater, St. Paul, 152-151—200.4.

Oscar Severson, Eau Claire, 144-145—159.9.

Ray Krause, Duluth, Minn., 156-157—159.4.

Seniors  
Ingvar Anderson, New London, Wis., 153-151—216.9.

Ernie Jacobson, Chicago, 149-148—212.2.

Odin Utegaard, Whitehall, Wis., 145-148—208.8.

Leonard Bietila, Ishpeming, 145-144—207.2.

Knute Johnson, Beloit, 143-138—205.3.

# WALT BIETILA ENTERS EVENT

Gets Week End Release  
From Navy for Iron Moun-  
tain Affair.

Iron Mountain—The entry list for the all-star ski-jumping classic on Giant Pine Mountain slide, where Sunday the cream of the nation's crop will aim at 300 feet, grew more impressive today with the entries of six more Class A stars.

Walt Bietila, toast of Ishpeming's famous family, filed his entry from Glenville, Ill., where he is training to swap his "wooden wings" for "wings" in the U. S. Navy air corps. The Navy has granted him a week-end release to compete in the classic.

Roy Laramie, another Crack A rider, entered from the Kiwanis Ski club, of Iron Mountain. Beloit's entry list received today, included three more A contestants—Jim Running, Fritz Pohlman and Roy Nelson. Eau Claire has also entered its Class A threat, Vernon Powers.

With more entries coming, here's the star-studded field which is lined up to date: Torger Tokle, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Elf Engen, of Sun Valley, Idaho; Art Devlin, of Lake Placid, N. Y.; Ted Zoberiski, of Land o' Lakes; Walter Bietila of U. S. Navy air corps; Roy Laramie, of Iron Mountain; Vern Powers of Eau Claire, and Jim Running, Fritz Pohlman and Roy Nelson, of Beloit.

The leading C entry to date is Gale Eymar, of Iron Mountain, who last week edged out Ralph Bietila for the title in the Ishpeming meet. Ralph, Roy and Leonard Bietila are also expected to enter.

The two leading senior class contestants entered so far are Ernie Jacobson, of Chicago, and Walter Brattlund, of the Kiwanis ski club here.

With the bulk of the entries yet to arrive, Jack Paquette of Iron Mountain, and Walter Nelson, of Beloit, are the leading B riders.

Ted Zoberiski, who holds the hill record here of 273 feet, arrived here Monday for a series of tune-up rides before the big event.

**DON'T MISS THE . . .**  
**9th Annual SKI Tournament**  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 at 1:30 P.M.**  
**AT WOLVERINE HILL**

UNDER AUSPICES OF  
 GOGEBIC RANGE  
 SKI CLUB, INC.

**Nationally Known  
 Riders to Compete**

Approximately 100 riders  
 will be on hand to at-  
 tempt breaking the hill  
 record of 215 feet . . .  
 don't miss this afternoon  
 of thrill!



**ADMISSION**  
**ADULTS**  
 89c plus  
 17c Fed. Tax **\$1.00**  
**CHILDREN**  
 42c plus  
 8c Fed. Tax **50c**

- ★ **CANTEEN SERVICE**  
 Hot Dogs and Hot Coffee  
 will be served at the  
 hill canteen!
- ★ **SUPERVISED PARKING**  
 By police officers at the  
 hill site!
- ★ **DRESS WARMLY**  
 Dress for the occasion!

**SKI DANCE**  
**SATURDAY NIGHT**  
 9 P. M.

**MEMORIAL BUILDING—Ironwood**

Admission, Couple 75c  
 Stag . . . . . 50c

**Orchestra Music for Dancing**



**Central Jumpers  
 Eligible To Enter  
 National Listed**

**Wausau, Wis., Jan. 24**—The following list of Central U. S. Ski Association registered ski jumpers are declared eligible to enter the 1947 National Jumping Championships at Ishpeming, Michigan, February 22 and 23.

This is the first list and includes skiers who have proved themselves eligible through placing in one of the first ten places in their respective classes at sanctioned Tournaments of the Association in 1946 and through the sanctioned Tournaments of January 12 and January 19 of 1947.

Additional qualification for entry in the National Championships may be achieved in sanctioned Tournaments, approved by the Ski Jumping Committee, of January 26, February 2 and February 9. In accordance with the action of the last Convention the Committee may rule out competitions on very small hills as qualifying contests.

Further lists of qualifying ski jumpers will be issued as the contestants qualify for possible entry in the remaining tournaments.

The following and subsequent lists do not indicate these skiers have been entered in the National Championships. It does indicate the entries of these skiers will be accepted for competition by the host club if they are filed correctly and in the usual manner by the skier's club. Entries of skiers not listed will not be accepted.

Respectfully submitted,

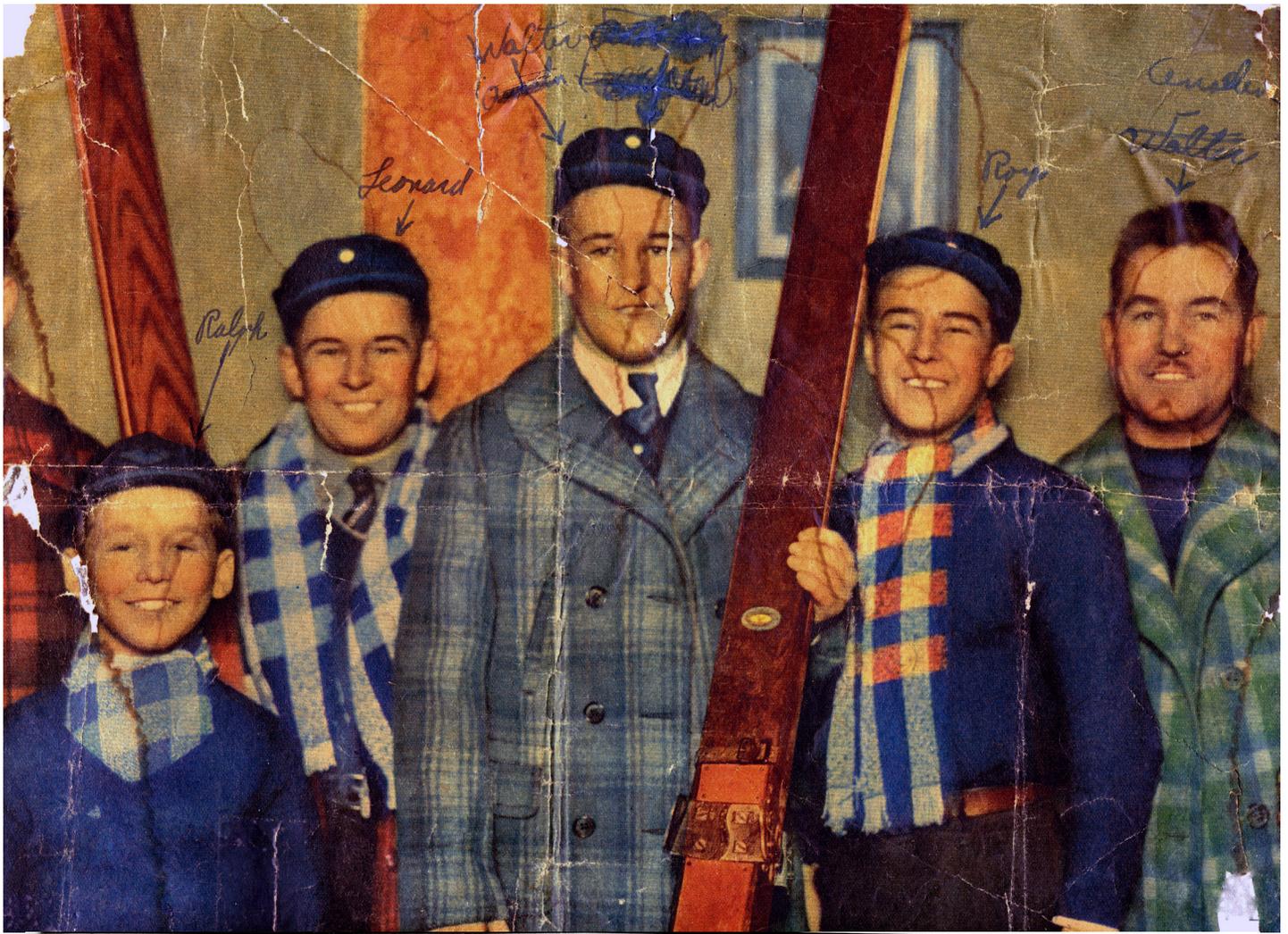
Arthur J. Barth, President  
 George Morissette, Secretary  
 Central U. S. Ski Association

**CLASS A**

- Ahiers, Paul, St. Paul S. C.
- Bietila, Ralph, Ishpeming S. C.
- Bietila, Roy, Ishpeming S. C.
- Bietila, Walter, Kiwanis S. C.
- Dagget, Arthur, Wis. Hoofers
- Enersen, Ralph, Norge S. C.
- Feddick, Herbert, Duluth S. C.
- Fredheim, Sverre, St. Paul S. C.
- Hansen, Henry, Bush Lake S. C.
- Hendricksen, James, Eau Claire W. S. C.
- Jansen, Howard, Norge S. C.
- Laramie, Roy, Longview S. C.
- Lawson, James, Ishpeming S. C.
- Mitchell, Elseworth, Ishpeming S. C.
- Nelson, Raymond, Beloit S. C.
- Perrault, Joseph, Ishpeming S. C.
- Powers, Vernon, Eau Claire W. S. C.
- Roecker, Robert, Duluth S. C.
- Riley, Robert, Itasca S. C.
- Running, James, Eau Claire W. S. C.
- Sedivic, Charles, Norge S. C.
- Wilson, Eugene, Norge S. C.
- Wingsnes, Martin, Norge S. C.
- Zoberski, Ted, Gogebic Range S. C.

**CLASS B**

- Anderson, Robert, Eau Claire W. S. C.
- Bergstrom, Norman, Kiwanis S. C.



1942

Leader and Telegram Photo.

**SKI TOURNAMENT WINNERS.**—Top finishers in the Central U. S. Ski association jumping tournament held Sunday at the Mt. Washington slide here, concluding event of the Eau Claire Winter sports week, are pictured as they appeared at the post-tourney banquet Sunday evening at the Tagles hall. The tournament and banquet were arranged by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Winter Sports club.

The winners, left to right, in front row: Bill Duckwitz, Madison, second in Class B; Lyle Engedahl, Eau Claire, fourth in Class C.; Rolf Enersen, Chicago, fourth in lass A; Eugene Wilson, Chicago, first in Class A; Herb Feddick, Duluth, tied for second in Class A; Vern Powers, Eau Claire, tied for second in Class A; Dick Zuehlke, Milwaukee, third in senior class; Olaf Hatlen, Beloit, first in Senior class.

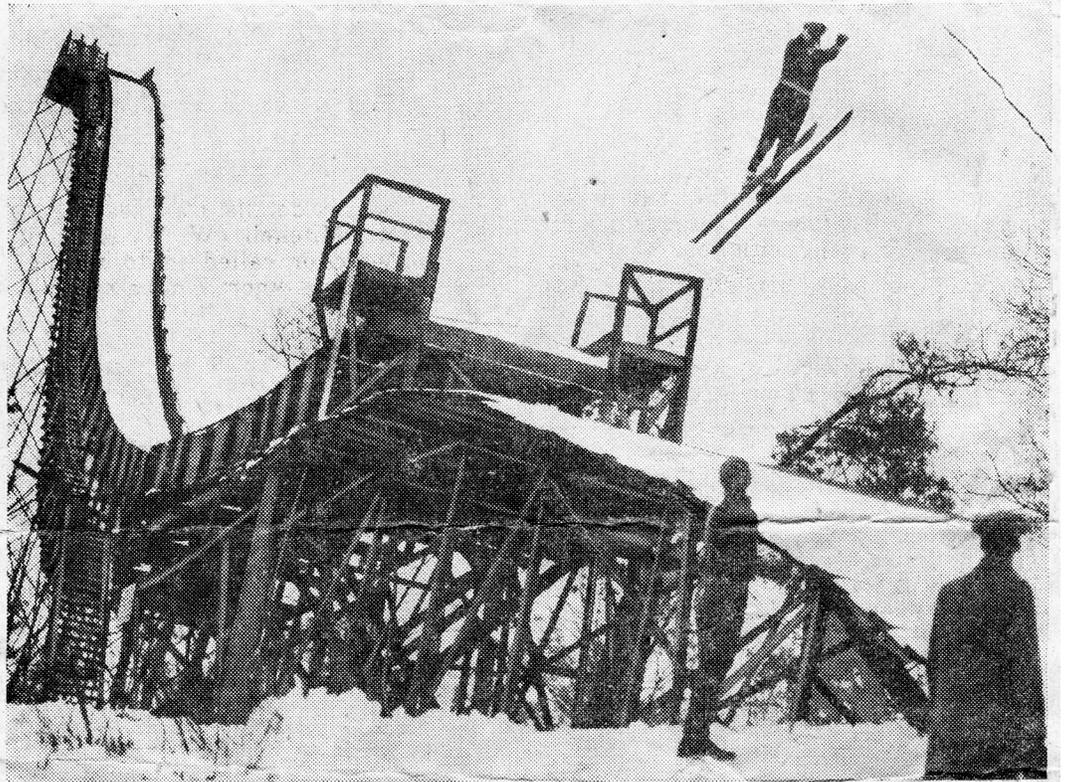
Back row, left to right: Robert Nerowitz, Chicago, third in Class C; Luke Soler, St. Paul, fifth in Class B; George Lahner, Eau Claire, second in Class C; Oscar Severson, Eau Claire, first in Class B; Billy Olson, Eau Claire, first in Class C; Marty Katzmarek, Duluth, third in Class C; Jimmy Hendrickson, Eau Claire, fifth in Class A; Jim Running, Eau Claire, sixth in Class A, and Gjardar Iverson, St. Paul, second in Senior class.

# Where Storm Wrought Damage

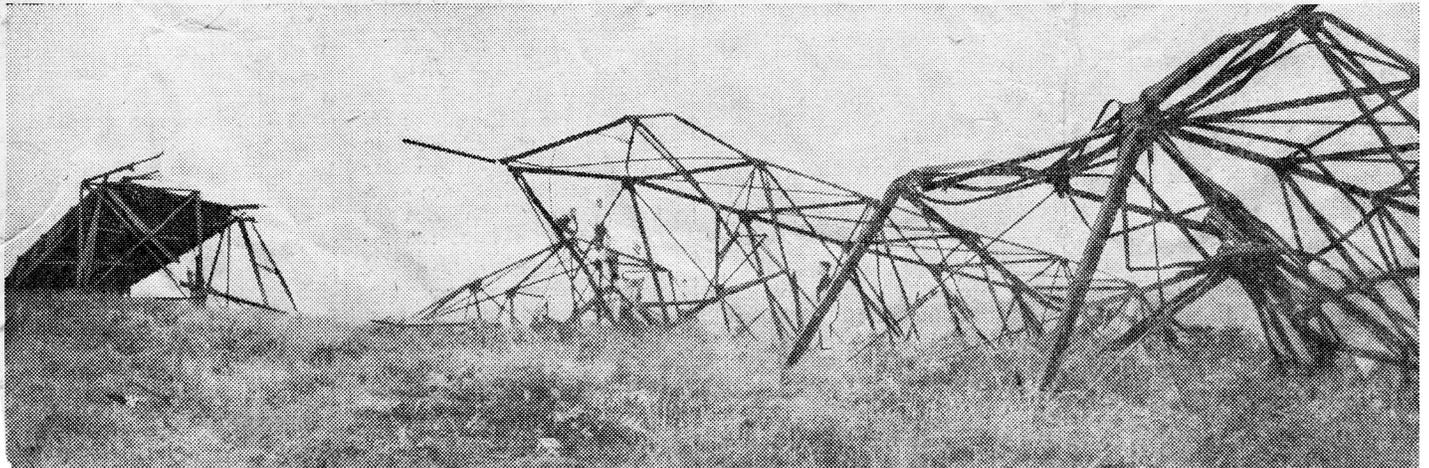
## Bush Lake Ski Jump Collapses Before

The Bush Lake ski slide, scene of many national tournaments, such as shown at right, was blown down Monday afternoon in a wind and rain storm in that area.

It lay today in a wreckage of twisted metal as shown below.



## After





**Left:** Vern and Art Pope doing Double Jump at Mt. Washington.



All jumpers on lower 3 photos are Vern Powers, locations unknown.





Leader and Telegram Photo.  
**SKI TOURNAMENT VIEW.**—A picture snapped from the take-off point atop the Mt. Washington slide shows part of the crowd estimated at 4,000 persons which saw the Central U. S. Ski association tournament Sunday, climax event of Eau Claire's winter carnival week. The rider far down way has his skis spread wide to check his momentum before spilling into a big pile of hay which is the end of the ride for all 135 competitors. The skiers jumped under hazardous conditions on the snow and icy slope. Buses and cars which brought the big crowd to the tourney can be seen in the background.



Mt. Washington Slide in 1936



Suicide Hill in Ishpeming, MI



*one from Beloit*

*Old Hendrickson slide before*

**Left:** Old Hendrickson Hill before the replacement from Beloit.



**Right:** Vern Powers (left) and Art Pope on Chippewa Valley slide.



Don Hotejec and Vern Powers at Strum in  
1939-40



1940



Vern Powers - Location Unknown

# American Ski Jumping Hall of Fame



**On October 12, 2019,** Vern Powers was inducted into the American Ski Jumping Hall of Fame. His son, Ron, and Ron's wife, Dianne, were in attendance to accept the award in behalf of the family. The ski on the left is the induction award with pictures as follows: 1) Vern at Mt. Washington, 2) Vern on right and Lee Hoff on left performing double jump at Mt. Washington, 3) Vern at Iron Mountain, MI, 4) Vern at age 15 in front of family home on Francis Street in Eau Claire, WI.



Vern's Great Grandchildren, Aria, Arthur, Cecil, and Bryn with ASJHOF award.

**Vern was asked**, at age 15, to join the senior Eau Claire Ski Club in 1936. He competed for the next 26 years, and won championships in all four classes.

In 1938 Vern was the first skier in the U.S. to ski under lights on a senior hill (Mt. Washington). He was often introduced over the PA at tournaments as, "Vern Powers, the Power Jumper." He wasn't the most stylish skier out there, but he seldom fell. He could jump far, and his recorded jump of 257 ft at Iron Mountain in 1942 was the longest jump ever recorded by an Eau Claire skier. That record stood for 6 years until Olympian Billy Olsen surpassed it in 1948.



## Addendum: The Short Ski Jumping History of Vern's Son, Ron Powers



**From the time** that I was just a few years old, my dad encouraged me to ski. He got me an old pair of used skis with pointy tips and leather toe straps for my boots. We had a short, but very steep hill that had been made when fill was brought for building our house on a lot that was not at street grade. He tried to help me get started, but it usually ended in frustration for me, mostly because I think the hill was too steep. I can still remember trying time after time to ski down that hill without falling, but I could never seem to do it. I would get so angry that I would take each ski off and throw it as far as I could. I wanted so badly to show him when he came home from work that I could stand up going down the hill.



**One day something clicked**, and I could stand it all the way down. I was so excited that I rode down over and over again. When Dad came home from work it was already dark, but I was waiting for him. I showed him what I could do, and he acted very proud of me. Without even going into the house he grabbed a shovel and built a little snow jump on the flat just past the dip in the hill. When I rode down again, the jump threw me for a loop. The frustration started all over again. However, as time went on, I figured it all out and was soon building my own little jumps on our hill and other hills in our neighborhood. Pretty soon, other neighborhood kids brought skis, and we were building little jumping hills all over the place.

**When I started** school at Mt. Washington 4th Ward School, I learned that it had a ski jump. There was a large, wooden ski scaffold towering above the playground. The landing area was part of the bank of the large hill on which our school sat. There was a street crossing right at the bottom of the hill, so the City of Eau Claire had to close that street in the winter. Jumpers would sail off the jump, hit the landing hill, ski across the street and fly right down the alley across the street. In the winter, you might see 25-30 pair of jumping skis lined up and leaning on the wood braces under the ski jump. As soon as recess began, kids would fly out the door, wax their skis, and start ski jumping. When I got old enough to jump, I always tried to get to school early so that I could store my skis under the jump in a spot away from the sun. The sun softened the wax on the skis, slowing your speed on the jump, and decreased jumping distance. Carrying those heavy oak skis 0.6 mile each way on my shoulder every day was not very easy, but it all seemed worth it when I sailed off that jump.



**Fourth Ward Schoolyard Jump -- Birthplace of the Flying Eagles**

**The youngest kids** would be lined up to ride down the landing hill only. Others would be climbing the steep scaffold with skis on their shoulders to take their turns at flying off the jump. Usually, one of the students would take responsibility by standing near the end of the jump, directing the skiers with a flag. After a few jumpers had a turn, the flagger would stand in front of the jump and hold the flag steady as a sign that the younger landing hill riders were going down the hill. The rule was that no skier could descend either the jump or the landing hill until all fallen skiers were cleared out of the way. However, not all kids were reliable flaggers. In second grade, I was one of the kids who rode down the landing hill only. I had never made it the full distance without falling. However, I had seen my neighbor, Ray Perry, go off the jump one day. Right then I decided that I could do it if he could. Determined, I carried my skis to the top of the scaffold. When it was my turn, I was given the “all clear” flag and pushed off the top. As I flew through the air, a wonderful feeling came over me, and I knew I was going to love ski jumping... that is until I saw the kid laying in a heap in front of me at the bottom of the hill. I was petrified. When I landed on my skis, my gaze was locked on the kid right in front of me. I flew past him just as he dove out of the way, running over the backs of his skis. As I zoomed across the street and down the alley, the realization finally hit me that I had made it. I had flown off the schoolyard jump and stood up all the way. I was in second grade, but I was no longer one of those little kids who only rode the landing hill and fell down most of the time. From that day forward, I rarely fell while ski jumping.

**When I got home from school** that day I was bursting with pride. I wanted to tell my mom about it, but I wanted to tell my dad first. My dad was an active competitive ski jumper. We spent most winter weekends going to ski tournaments where my dad was competing. Although he never said it, I always felt that he was disappointed in how slowly I developed in most sports. He thought that he could just tell me or show me how to do something, and I should be able to do it. He had built me many jumps on the hills in our yard, but I always had difficulty mastering them. But now I had something important to tell him. I had sailed off the schoolyard jump and stood it all the way. In addition, I had gone off two more times and stood it both times. I just knew he was going to truly be proud of me. When he came home, I jabbered incessantly, giving him a blow-by-blow account of all three of my jumps. The thing I remember most is the look in his eyes. They were glowing with pride. He didn't just look at me. He saw me...me. It is a strange and wonderful thing for a child to have the full, undivided, adoring attention of a parent. It was a feeling I will never forget.

I continued ski jumping throughout my elementary school and junior high years after the junior slide moved up next to the senior slide on Mt. Washington. My friends all ski jumped and we always had a fun time. Every night it was carry your skis 0.6 mile, get in as many rides as possible, and carry your skis back home. As skiers carried their skis back up the long icy steps to the top of the hill, tradition was to pause and look up at the judges' stand. If the coach looked away, you just kept walking up.



**One day** a wonderful thing happened. When I got to the judges' stand, Ray Schulte, our coach, gave me a tip to improve my jumping. I went up and tried it. On the next walk up he gave me another tip. From that day forward, Ray coached me. He never turned his back again. Suddenly, his help paid off, and everything started working. Soon I was lucky enough to win 1st and Most Graceful at Mt. Washington and 1st at Westby in class C-2, which meant I was on the smaller hill. But as soon as I had a little success for the first time, the club transferred me up to the big hill. I continued to place in the top seven, but I was back in the middle of the pack again.

**I was lucky** to be chosen to ski in the Central US Championships in Rushford, MN. It was icy on practice day, and I took advantage of it. My jumps were as long as anyone in the field, including the great Billy Bakke. On tournament day, there was a really strong headwind blowing right up the hill. I had never jumped in such a wind, but I was confident that I was going to be one of the top finishers. When I hit the takeoff, my skis flew right up in my face, and I struggled throughout the flight. Stung by the disappointment, I had no stomach for the second ride, and it showed. To make matters worse, my mom and dad secretly drove down to watch me jump.



**FLYING EAGLES** — The Flying Eagles team entered in the Central U.S. Junior ski-jumping meet today at Rushford, Minn., is shown above. In the back are (left to right) Tom Bjrnton, Steve Riedel, Rick Hense, John Bjrnton and Ron Powers. In the front are Tom Strassman and Rick Phillips. Missing from picture was Dick Han-son.



**JUNIOR SKI MEET WINNERS** — Top finishers in the Flying Eagles junior ski tournament at Mt. Washington Hill Sunday are pictured above. In front row are Class D leaders, DeWayne Stendahl, Tom Bjornton and Larry Shipman. Next are Class C-2 leaders, Dave Jentlie, Rick Garlie and Ronnie Powers. Next are Class C leaders Mike Smith, Rick Phillips and Charles Anderson. In back row are the Class A and B leaders, Dick Hanson, Jerry McCove, Mike Pope, Mike Olson, Curt Anderson and Peter Mikkelson. All are from Eau Claire except Mikkelson and Stendahl of Westby.

## Flying Eagles, EC Juniors Divide Honors in Ski Meet

Dick Hanson of the Flying Eagles edged Jerry McCove of the Eau Claire Juniors for the Class A championship of the Flying Eagles Ski Club tournament marked by close competition in ideal weather at Mt. Washington Sunday.

Hanson scored 136.9 points to win by two-tenths of a point over McCove.

Peter Mikkelson of Westby shaded Curt Anderson of the Eau Claire Juniors by 1.9 points to win the Class B crown. Mikkelson jumped 96 feet, one foot short of the hill record, and led all jumpers in scoring with 137.5 points. Anderson scored 135.6 points.

Charles Anderson of the Eau Claire Juniors won the Class C championship with 129.3 points. In second place was Rick Phillips of the Flying Eagles with 127 points.

Mikkelson was the most graceful rider among Class A, B and C jumpers on the big hill.

Ronnie Powers of the Flying Eagles won Class C-2 honors with 134 points and jumped 54 feet to top all efforts on the small hill. In second place was Rick Garlie of the Eau Claire Juniors with 130.2 points.

Larry Shipman of the Eau Claire Juniors shaded Tom Bjornton of the Flying Eagles by 1.8 points to win the Class D title. Shipman scored 132.8 points to Bjornton's 131.

Shipman and Powers tied for most graceful rider on the small hill with 56.5 form points. Powers' jump of 54 feet was 13 feet short of the hill record.

Eau Claire's two junior clubs came out almost even in the competition. Hanson and Powers winning championships for the Flying Eagles and Charles Anderson and Shipman for the Eau Claire Juniors.

4. Mike Fletty, E. C. Jrs. .... 126.9
5. Bruce Everson, Flying Eagles ... 122.7
6. Andre McMullen, Flying Eagles ... 121.6
7. Mike Fiore, Flying Eagles ... 121.4

CLASS B		
Name	Club	Points
1. Peterson Mikkelson, Westby		137.5
2. Curt Anderson, E. C. Jrs.		135.6
3. Mike Olson, Eau Claire Jrs.		133.7
4. Dave Stafflen, Viroqua, Wis.		128.2
5. Mouse Kent, E. C. Jrs.		126.3
6. Bob Felton, Eau Claire Jrs.		123.5
7. Bob Gynliid, Eau Claire Jrs.		123.1
CLASS A		
1. Dick Hanson, Flying Eagles		136.9
2. Jerry McCove, Eau Claire Jrs.		136.7
3. Mike Pope, Eau Claire Jrs.		133.0
4. John Bjornton, Flying Eagles		132.1
4. Steve Riedel, Flying Eagles		132.1
6. Dick Jensen, Flying Eagles		128.0
CLASS C		
1. Charles Anderson, E. C. Jrs.		129.3
2. Rick Phillips, Flying Eagles		127.3
3. Mike Smith, E. C. Jrs.		121.8
4. Dale Gibson, Flying Eagles		121.5
5. Jack Everson, E. C. Jrs.		120.7
6. Ron Rudi, Westby		119.2
7. Tom Strassman, Flying Eagles		117.3
CLASS C-2		
1. Ronnie Powers, Flying Eagles		134.0
2. Rick Garlie, E. C. Jrs.		130.2
3. Dave Jentlie, Flying Eagles		128.3
4. Del Grrud, Flying Eagles		128.0
5. Mike Christopherson, E.C. Jrs.		126.9
6. Steve Coach, E. C. Jrs.		126.4
CLASS D		
1. Larry Shipman, E. C. Jrs.		132.8
2. Tom Bjornton, Flying Eagles		131.0
3. DeWayne Stendahl, Westby		130.4



**MT. SIMON JUMP**—The first Indianhead junior ski-jumping meet of the season will be held at the Mt. Simon hill, home of the Eau Claire Junior Ski Club, hosts for the meet Sunday afternoon at 1:30. The skier in flight is Fritz Schroeder.



**FLYING EAGLES** — Members of the host Flying Eagles Ski Club who will compete in Sunday's Regional meet at Mt. Washington are, front row, (left to right) Bruce Everson, Rick Phillips, Jim Bushendorf, Tom Strassman, Del Grorud, Gerry Potter. Back row, John Bjornton, Rick Hense, Dick Hanson, Ron Powers, Jan Phillips, Dave Jentlie and Dale Gibson.

**JUNIOR WINNERS** — Top placers in Sunday's Indianhead junior meet at the Mt. Simon hill are shown above following the meet. In the front are (left to right) Tom Bjornton, FE; Mike Lahner, Jrs.; Tom Strassman, FE; Rich Phillips, FE; Dave Gentlie, FE and Charles Anderson, Jrs. Back row, Jerry McKove, Jrs.; Dick Hanson, FE; Mike Pope, Jrs.; Peter Mikkelson, Westby; Jon Kent, Jrs.; and Mike Olson, Jrs.

**CLASS D (11 years and under)**

- 1st—Larry Shipman, Eau Claire Jr.—134.6.
- 2nd—Mike Lahner, Eau Claire Jr.—130.7.
- 3rd—Tom Bjornton, Flying Eagles—129.5.
- 4th—Steve Lawler, Eau Claire Jr.—126.4
- 5th—Paul Harris, Eau Claire Jr.—124.9
- 6th—Steve Beaulieu, Eau Claire Jr.—124.2.
- 7th—Dave Hansen, Flying Eagles—123.6

**CLASS C-2 (12 and 13)**

- 1—Rick Phillips, Flying Eagles—135.6
- 2—Tom Strassman, Flying Eagles—134.2
- 3—Dave Gentlie, Flying Eagles—132.2
- 4—Ron Powers, Flying Eagles 131.6
- 5—Scott Groves, Viroqua, Wis.—131.0
- 6—Jill Everson, Eau Claire Jr.—130.8
- 7—James Bushendorf, Flying Eagles—128.2.

**CLASS B-2 (14 and 15)**

- 1—Eugene Moe, Eau Claire Jr.—129.2
- 2—Tom Giese, Eau Claire Jr.—122.0
- 3—Dale Larson, Eau Claire Jr. 120.7
- 4—Richard Steinke, Eau Claire Jr.—119.7.
- 5—Jim Sprouse, Westby—119.5
- 6—Gordy Petschow, Eau Claire Jr.—115.3.
- 7—Jim Berg, Eau Claire Jr.—91.5.

**CLASS C-1 (12 and 13)**

- 1—Charles Anderson, Eau Claire Jr.—123.6
- 2—Ron Zirngible, Eau Claire Jr. 111.2
- 3—Bob Walters, Eau Claire Jr.—110.0
- 4—Mike Probst, Stevens Point—107.9
- 5—Mike Smith, Eau Claire Jr.—106.2
- 6—Pat Giese, Stevens Point 103.4
- 7—Jack Everson, Eau Claire Jr. 99.8.

**CLASS B (14 and 15)**

- 1—Peter Mickelson, Westby, Wis.—141.6
- 2—Jon Kent, Eau Claire Jr.—130.7
- 3—Mike Olson, Eau Claire Jr.—130.2
- 4—Dave Stafslien, Viroqua, Wis.—128.4
- 5—Paul Moehle, Eau Claire Jr.—121.0
- 6—Bob Stokes, Eau Claire Jr.—116.2
- 7—Gary Baaken, Westby, Wis.—114.9

**CLASS A (16 and over)**

- 1—Dick Hansen, Flying Eagles—139.4
- 2—Jerry MacKove, Eau Claire Jr.—136.8
- 3—Mike Pope—Eau Claire Jr.—136.4
- 4—Peter Crooker, Eau Claire Jr.—132.8
- 5—Jim Kent, Eau Claire Jr.—132.1.

**MOST GRACEFUL RIDERS**

- Small Hill—Tom Strassman—Flying Eagles.
- Large Hill—Peter Mickelson, Westby, Wis.

# Eau Claire Ski-Jumpers Cop Honors at Westby

WESTBY (Special) — Eau Claire Junior Ski Club riders won three first places and the Flying Eagles one in the Indianhead ski-jumping meet here Sunday.

The Eau Claire winners were Mike Lahner, Class D; Charles Anderson, Class C-1 and Jerry MacKove, Class A, all of the Jr. Club and Ronnie Powers, Class C-2, of the Flying Eagles.

**ONLY IN CLASS B** did an Eau Claire skier fail to win. And then champion Peter Mikkelson of Westby was pressed hard by Jr. Club rider Curt Anderson, a close second.

Mikkelson and Anderson tied for Most Graceful honors and were the day's two top point-getters. The Westby lad leaped 73-76 feet for 135.7 while Anderson hit 71-72 for 133.9. Mike Olson of the Jr. Club was third and Rick Hense, Flying Eagles, was fourth.

MacKove nipped John Bjornton and Dick Hanson to win the Class A crown. He leaped 73-74 feet for 131.1 points. Bjornton had 74-73 for 130.1 and Hanson 70-73 for 129.9.

**IN CLASS B-2** Charles Anderson had 124.8 points on rides of 64-62. Rick Phillips of the Flying Eagles was a very close second with 68-67 for 124.5. Jack Everson, Jim Wright and Mike Smith, all

EC Jrs., followed for an Eau Claire sweep.

Powers had rides of 35-33 feet for 129.9 points in winning the B-2 title. Jim Bushendorf, Flying Eagles, was second with 31-28 for 128.2.

Lahner reeled off rides of 26-27 feet good for 128.9 points to cop Class D. Larry Shipman and Jack Zirngible of the EC Jr. Club followed. Lahner was Most Graceful on the small hill.

**CLASS D**

Mike Lahner, E. C. Jr. . . .	26	27	128.9
Larry Shipman, E. C. Jr. . . .	31	28	127.7
Jack Zirngible, E. C. Jr. . . .	30	24	126.2
DuWayne Stendahl, Westby . . .	34	26	125.5
Tom Bjornton, Flying Eagles . . .	25	24	121.2
Andre McMullen, Eagles . . .	30	30	120.0
Steve Beaulieu, E. C. Jr. . . .	26	26	119.6

**CLASS C-2**

Ronnie Powers, Eagles . . .	35	33	129.9
Jim Bushendorf, Eagles . . .	31	28	128.2
Terry Starrbakken, Westby . . .	32	26	125.9
Duane Larson, E. C. Jr. . . .	33	34	125.6
Steve Schultz, E. C. Jr. . . .	32	37	124.7
Scotty Groves, Viroqua . . .	32	30	124.1
Douglas Rislove, Rushford . . .	32	33	124.0
Most graceful on small hill, Mike Lahner, E. C. Jr.: 63.0.			

**CLASS C-1**

Charles Anderson, E. C. Jr. . . .	64	62	124.8
Rick Phillips, Flying Eagles . . .	68	67	124.5
Jack Everson, E. C. Jr. . . .	60	56	117.3
Jim Wright, E. C. Jr. . . .	63	53	111.8
Mike Smith, E. C. Jr. . . .	48	55	110.9
David Anderson, Westby . . .	F63	69	106.1
Ron Zirngible, E. C. Jr. . . .	43	55	105.4

**CLASS B**

Peter Mikkelson, Westby . . .	73	76	135.7
Curt Anderson, E. C. Jr. . . .	71	72	133.9
Mike Olson, E. C. Jr. . . .	70	70	130.5
Rick Hense, Flying Eagles . . .	69	71	127.0
David Stafslien, Viroqua . . .	58	62	124.6
Jan Kent, E. C. Jr. . . .	60	64	120.7
Gary Bakken, Westby . . .	58	68	120.3

**CLASS A**

Jerry MacKove, E. C. Jr. . . .	73	74	131.1
John Bjornton, Flying Eagles . . .	74	73	130.1
Dick Hanson, Flying Eagles . . .	70	73	129.9
Steve Reidel, Flying Eagles . . .	69	71	125.5

Most graceful on big hill was a tie between Curt Anderson and Peter Mikkelson with 65.0.

**The ski jumping collage on the back cover** was commissioned by the owners of the former Embers America Restaurant in Eau Claire. Sherry, the owner, contacted my dad, Vern Powers, to see if he had any ski jumping pictures they could use to show the transition from the old to the new in senior level ski jumping at Eau Claire. She wanted to display that information in the restaurant. He provided her with the pictures in this collage, and when their store closed, the picture came back through my cousin, Paul, to me.

**Please refer to the following picture guide:**

**Upper Left:** Vern Powers on the right and Lee Hoff on the left completing the double jump (Vern also completed the Diamond Jump at Strum with Bob Fleming, Mickey Hotejec, and Ralph Pope.)

**Center Left:** Jim Wright (Eau Claire Juniors) riding Little Hendrickson.

**Lower Left:** Hendrickson Hill from the air

**Center Color:** Silvermine (skier unknown)

**Lower Center:** Vern Powers. (Would have been preWWII)

**Upper Right:** Hendrickson Hill - Vern Powers on landing hill.

**Lower Right:** Vern Powers on left and Jim Running on right.

