

MT. MANSFIELD SKI CLUB BULLETIN

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SNOW REPORTS

Now and then there apparently develops some confusion over the matter of snow reports relating to northern New England. Cries of fraud from skiers mingle with accusations of mistreatment from ski centers, until the whole affair ends in a barrage of mutual re-crimination and internal wrangling. With many skiers in the metropolitan areas depending upon the weekly bulletins for planning their week-end outings, it is a problem which of course demands more than cursory attention from the various agencies responsible for disseminating this information. But it also is necessary for the skiers themselves to use a little judgment in interpreting the reports, and to appreciate the impossibility of preparing comprehensive statements of conditions which are accurate for more than a day or two in advance.

Snow reports provided by ski centers to such distributing agencies as newspapers and railroads are not, or should not be, forecasts of week-end conditions, but simply statements of conditions existing at the time the report was filed. As such they are given probably without exception in the best of faith. Substantial errors result from several persons reporting individually at any center without comparing their findings, from incompetent observers, from attempts on the part of anyone to forecast conditions, from arbitrary selection of data or an incomplete digest of data on the part of the distributing agency. None of these things is beyond the control of those responsible.

Skiers, on the other hand, should not consider that snow reports are infallible guides to what they will find several days later. There are too many variables involved. To say that skiing is good, fair or poor is meaningless. To report as of an entire region on the basis of one observation point is of no value. The fellow who is forced to confine his skiing to distant places over week-ends must be willing to take some chances without complaining that he has been duped. Generally during the winter months there is snow in northern New England, and when there is snow it is possible to ski. Just how the skiing may fit into every preconceived idea of what is good or bad naturally is impossible to determine.

A.W.C.

THE SKI SCHOOL

It has been announced by the U.S. Amateur Ski Association that the annual course which it sponsors for amateur Instructors will be conducted this year by Sepp Ruschp at his ski school in Stowe. This is an honor for Sepp, and a splendid time ahead for those who will take

the course.

During the week after Christmas, if I have not forgotten the figures, Sepp and Jacques and Ali gave among them over five hundred ski lessons. The school is clicking perfectly, and everyone is enthusiastic over the way it is being run.

EXCURSIONS

The Club's cross country excursions will commence the first Sunday that there is snow cover enough in the open areas adjacent to the mountain. These excursions, as has been said, will be suitable for novices capable of a five to seven mile tour. Advance details will be given in the Burlington Free Press winter page on the preceding Thursday, and also they will be posted in the various Stowe hotels and homes catering to skiers. The meeting place for all tours will be at the Toll House at ten o'clock, so if you should miss any notices you will be able to get information there.

DEVELOPMENTS — PAST AND FUTURE

(Continued) The achievement of the sixty-five miles of ski trails on the eastern side of Mt. Mansfield during the past six years followed no definite plan, but proceeded rather from a sort of blind groping in a welter of constructive criticisms, tempered somewhat by material and financial obstacles. Favorable natural conditions, combined with the cooperation of skiers and others interested in winter recreation, have resulted in a fairly versatile skiing development.

Varied Downhill Trails

The Nose Dive is one of the outstanding racing trails in the East, and several major competitions have been held on it, besides having been designated as an official USEASA time-trial run. The Nose Dive, together with the Chin Clip, Bruce and Steeple, provide for the time being at least adequate facilities for the expert and the racer.

As to intermediate runs, although we have a total of thirteen miles listed, there seems to be some differences of opinion regarding their merits. While it is true that improvements, particularly in width, can be made, the region is not entirely devoid of facilities suitable for the average downhill skier, with trails such as the Merrill, Houston, Edson, Luce Kill, Forks, and the Toll Road with its shortcuts.

The novice runs also total about thirteen miles in length, with the Toll Road (without the shortcuts), the unplowed section of the Smuggler's Notch Road, and the Ranch Road being the most used. These of course were built to serve another purpose, but make excellent runs for novices because of smooth surfaces, gentle turns, and good widths.

The Ultimate in Touring Terrain

Judging from the usage which they now receive, the thirty-five miles of touring trails in the Stowe-Mansfield region will be entirely adequate for some time to come. Perhaps this apparent lack of use is due to the fact that touring is as yet practically unknown to the great majority of skiers. However, it is believed that this phase of sport is due for a big increase in interest. The existing trails in the Wade Pasture, Luce Hill and Stowe Hollow sections give access to large areas of open and semi-open slopes which were once farmland, and provide the ultimate both scenically and otherwise for the cross country skier.

Most Popular Areas

The Nose Dive and the Toll Road so far have carried the bulk of the ski traffic, and appear likely to do so in the future for they are centrally located, easily accessible, and between them well suited to accommodate all classes of skiers. They provide a way to climb to the top of the mountain, which apparently is the ambition of every skier visiting the region, and at the junction near the top there is a stone shelter with a caretaker. At the foot of each are good parking facilities, open ski tow slopes, ski schools, and warming shelters serving refreshments, while nearby are The Lodge and Barnes Camp, Both the Nose Dive and the Toll Road are safe enough for their own particular type of traffic, and each has good snow conditions.

Another popular area, having a somewhat different appeal, is the Ranch Valley. Here activity centers around the Ranch Camp, which provides a good headquarters for skiers desiring to visit not only Mt. Mansfield itself, but also the Luce Hill and Lake Mansfield sections. The Ranch Valley is well supplied with trails for all classes of skiers.

A Great Deal to be Done

Each year maintenance operations are continually improving the condition of all trails. There still is a great deal to be done along this line, however. Among the major improvements and additions which seem desirable for immediate future consideration are:

1. A first class novice run of ample width, moderate grades, easy turns, and not over a mile in length.
2. At least one more intermediate run
3. The widening and lengthening of the Merrill Run, which would include the development of the large open area above Taft Lodge. This area approaches more closely to a spring skiing field than any other location on the mountain.
4. The development of a large forest-slalom area on both sides of the Nose Dive just below the corkscrew turns.

Cooperation Must Continue

In conclusion it may be said that the Stowe-Mansfield region is fairly well developed at the present time for current skiing needs. So far as natural features are concerned, its potentialities are almost unlimited. What is important is a continuance of that cooperation between the various interested agencies which has been to fruitful

during the past six years.

Charles D. Lord

SKI TEAM

The Club will pay the entry fees of all qualified ski team - members for meets authorized by this committee. In order to be eligible for the team, you must write to me as requested in previous - Bulletins so that your name will be on file. Entry fees should be paid by you and you will be reimbursed by the Club on presentation of your claim through me.

The Vermont Slalom Championship will be held in Woodstock on January 15th. The points later will be combined with the results of the downhill race to be run on the Nose Dive in February. Team members are urged to enter this race. Entry blanks will be found in THE SKI BULLETIN for January 6th. Send them directly to Woodstock, and advise me that you have done so. Transportation of course must be furnished by each individual, although if you have no way of getting there let me know.

It is desired to provide opportunity for team members to enter as many unclassified races as possible. Since I do not always see notices of these events until rather late, I shall appreciate receiving word from any member who may hear of them. It is not expected that Time Trials can be held until after the middle of the month.

O. Abbiati
Chairman Ski Team Committee
90 Circle Street
Barre, Vt.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Thanks to Mrs. Healy Bashaw of Stowe and her committee, the Club's New Year's Eve dance was a tremendous success. Until Mrs. Bashaw came to our rescue, it looked as though we should be obliged to cancel this annual event. As it turned out, everyone had a great time and the treasury was bolstered by \$145.46. Miss Margaret Woods, Mr. Harry Pike, Mr. Bashaw and Richard, and John Gale assisted Mrs. Bashaw.

It has just occurred to us (the editorial us) that no mention was-made in the last Bulletin about accidents. Now in this day and age, when one cannot go skiing without falling over a ski-patrolman every other step, one never, never should forget the more serious angles of this sport. Because if you do, as sure as anything you will find yourself trussed up on a toboggan and being asked to show your skiing license.

Send contributions for the Bulletin to the editor, A.W.Coleman, 25 Liberty St., Montpelier, Vt.- for heaven's sake.

IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO, SEND YOUR DUES TO THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
(Miss Margaret L. Woods, Waterbury, Vt.) AT ONCE.