

Ottawa Ski Club News

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TRAINING FOR SKI RACING

To the young men who are preparing to fight the battles of their Club, and who look to the Dominion Championships as their ultimate goal, the following suggestions are offered, in the hope that they may help them to achieve their ambitions.

Remember that ski-running is pre-eminently a game of skill and daring, among all athletic pastimes. Wind and muscle also play a part, no doubt, and this part is no mean one, as no weakling ever won a ski race, but wind and muscle without skill and daring do not go far, except on a course devoid of difficulties. But the contestants may be sure that the course to be laid for the Dominion Championships will exact from the participants, as it always does, a maximum of skill and of daring.

In the very great majority of cases, if not in all cases, the race goes to the good skier—to the man who stands where others fall, to the man who dares because he has confidence in his skill and takes a hill at full speed while others check themselves timidly, to the man who can jump and who can turn when circumstances require that he should do so.

Remember the championships of 1922 when Frank McKinnon, that great skier, rode standing and unconcerned the Montreal Ski Club jumping hill which had been transformed into a sea of icy craters by the tramping of many thousands of feet the day before, thereby gaining several minutes over all other opponents who sat or fell all the way down. Remember our own City Championship race in 1923 when, out of seventeen contestants who took the icy slopes of the great Camp Fortune hill, only two Kenneth Fosbery and E. Condon, remained standing, and these two were respectively first and second in the race. And last year's City Championship, when Louis Grimes and Jack Bourgault went through the Swift Death ravine without a fall, and came first and second in the race. These men had no more wind and no more muscle perhaps than others, but they had skill and that daring that skill alone can give.

The writer has in mind a hill at Chilcot's Lake, when a group of skiers shrank back at the sight of steep icy slopes where huge boulders stuck out, here and there all the way down. A great skier was there, Adolf Olsen, who took the hill at full speed, skillfully navigating between the rocks, and when at the bottom jumped over a fence three feet high. Adolf Olsen never lost a race.

To the young men who are training, we would say therefore: Never lose an opportunity of improving your skill, and you will acquire confidence and daring. Do not forget that you will always lose more, far more time through a fall than you will gain through superior speed over flat country. In other words, no matter how speedy you are on a flat or undulating trail, if you cannot take obstacles—if you are not a skier—you cannot expect to win on a skier's course.

Strive to acquire that long, easy swing which covers the most ground with the least exertion; develop your endurance, and make sure that your strength will not fail you, but above all, develop your skill.

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SNOW COLOR

By Lloyd Roberts, Ottawa Ski Club

I am a skier of sorts. I doubt if anyone will ever dub me an expert. I ski in winter for the same reason as I walk throughout the rest of the year—to hobnob with Nature where she is still "natural," absorb her moods and, if possible, discover a few of her secrets. I have no ambition to break records and win cups. I am not so much a "sport" as I am an explorer, an adventurer, triumphantly satisfied if I succeed in finding a new trail or a fresh color scheme or even snow shadows a little bluer than I've ever seen them before. I am not a misanthrope—Heaven forbid!—but I have no compunction in surrendering the trail to those exuberant bands of winter revelers hurrying toward a destination. The wilderness is timid in winter as in summer, shouting jars upon its serenity. Even though there be few birds and animals to take offence there is always that intangible something called "atmosphere" that haunts the silent places and retreats before the presence of man. To really know it one should search alone.

Before skis came to Ottawa the Gatineau hills were but a summer resort, closing down at the first snow flurry and inaccessible till spring. Now it lies open the year round, and winter has lost most of its sting. Let the asters fade and the leaves fall, the fires of autumn burn down to a grey ash, the dancing waters go into their icy shell and the cold and silence of outer space descend upon the roofs of man, there is still gladness and rare expectation in the lure of the winter trails, their white magic and their stark simplicity.

It was cold, so cold that trunks cracked like intermittent rifle shots and patches of bared rapid smoked like hot cauldrons. The sky was bluer than any pottery out of Delft. The forest floor, buried knee deep in snow crystals, near at hand scintillated with multi-colored flames, farther off cooled into the palest of mauve embers. On either side the trail bristled an interminable array of tall grey saplings. Being noon their fine shadows lay on the snow like spider webs. In spite of the distant throb of subterranean waters the air was as still and brittle as glass, as though a sudden shout would bring it tinkling about one's ears. Presently a faint *hush, hush* blurred the silence. Two figures appeared. They were stooping forward, their mittened hands grasping short bamboo poles, their legs thrusting forward as in the act of skating. Their red and green sweaters and caps made violent splotches of color in the snowscape. At the base of a great granite boulder they stopped, slipped their feet from the skis and upended them in the drifts, scooped a deep hollow in the snow and lit a fire. The orange flame licked hungrily at the rock and recoiled to flood the hollow with generous heat. A tin kettle is suspended over the fire; hemlock branches, broken from a neighboring thicket, form an odorous divan; from the recesses of a kitbag appear wholesome victuals.

Caps and mitts are removed. One of the hikers is a girl. Her cheeks are rosier than rouge could have made them, her eyes brighter than those touched with belladonna. Breeched and bobbed, much like her male companion, she seemed a far cry from her sisters of paint and powder, "pictures" and pink tea.

"How cold do you think it is, Jack?"

"Ten below anyway."

"And here we are, dining out of doors, warm as summer! I used to long to streak south at the first cold spell, and now you couldn't bribe me to leave. Do you imagine there is any spot in the world more beautiful than this right here and now?"

"Under the circumstances, no," and he smiled playfully.

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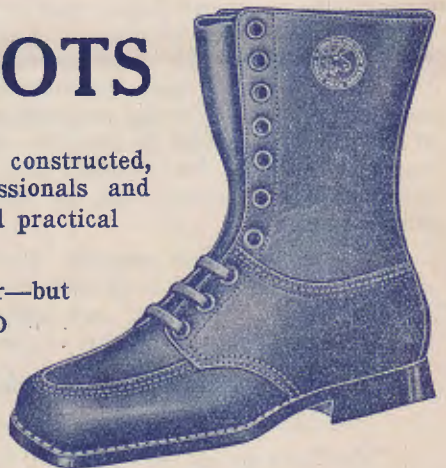
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"Talk about California, Palm Beach, the Riviera and all that sort of thing! Give me the Gatineau hills on a bright crisp day in midwinter. Well, seeing that we're ten miles from anywhere we'd better be moving."

Two minutes sufficed to break camp, to abandon this cozy nook in the white wilds. Someone had been over the trail before that morning and his tracks made easy going. On the level they moved with an easy effortless swing, on down grades they tucked their poles under their arms and skimmed as lightly as Mercury himself. And always the sun glinted back from the multi-colored crystals, the slim grey trunks slid across the speckless blue, blobs of pink and grey-green granite here and there bulged from the hillside; clumps of evergreen, crusted with snow, made sharp contrast and variation in the color scheme. Not a sign of life or movement anywhere—except for tiny strings of hieroglyphics marking the passing of small furred rangers, and the two smooth ski grooves winding and dipping away before them

When the sun neared the horizon its colors began to run, staining the lower sky levels with crimson and orange, even tinging the snow with violet and turquoise shadows. The upper heavens carried a beryl green for an hour after the last red had gone, and then the deep night blue, perforated thickly with stars, closed down upon the solemn hills.

Now the two figures moved like shadows among shadows. Their skis seemed to have come to life, to be urging them forward at reckless speed. On the steeper slopes they seemed to leave the trail and to be floating, dreamlike, over the hills and hollows. Objects leaped out of the gloom and passed, the snow rose in a fine spray to sting their cheeks, and the stars swung back and forth above the crooked trees. And finally warmer, redder lights appeared among the lower stars—the lights of windows in distant cottages, then the strings and clusters of lights of city streets, and the moonlike face of a tower clock. They paused, to look back toward the black and grey wilderness, superb in its quiet sleep, then slid downward toward the bright and beckoning flames of man.

Winners of Last Saturday's Race:—Seniors, 1st, Ken West, 35 min. 25 sec.; 2nd L. Audette, 36.13; 3rd J. Bourgault, 36.24; 4th F. Amyot, 38.23; 5th L. Bishop, 40.58. **Girls** (same course) K. West, 54.02; M. Benedict, 56.37; Helen Stevens, 60.30; H. Campbell, 62.18. **Novices** A. Grant, 38.51; J. Murray, 39.30; S. John, 41.20.

Positively no guests at High Lea and no unaccompanied guest at any lodge from now on.

Events this week—Races for **Seniors, Juniors, Novices and Girls**, Wrightville to Ironsides, this coming Saturday. Report to Eric Roy, at 3 p.m.—Night hike to High Lea this coming Thursday. Same trail. Get off car at corner Montcalm and St. Joseph. Go three blocks up Montcalm, then turn left, one block left then turn right. Follow the lanterns from there on.—Hostesses for this week-end: Mrs. L. P. Whyte and Mrs. H. G. Barber.

Your racing Committee has decreed that, so far as preliminary races are concerned, a **junior** is one who has never won a prize and a **novice** is one who has never entered a race. According to this, the first preliminary race was won by **A. Gordon** for the juniors, not by G. B. Jost, because Jost is a veteran skier who has barrels full of cups and medals at home. This is all very well, but the racing committee should have made this clear sooner, and Jost, who was announced winner will get a prize as well as Gordon, even if your Editor has to pay for it.

Well, it was a bit sticky last week-end, but are we not glad we were out after all? Is it not better to have stuck and won out than never to have stuck at all? The trouble is that between the wax that slips back and the snow that sticks, it is pretty much like between the devil and the deep sea. Here is a wax recommended by our friend Jack Bourgault, who claims that it never slips back. You can "go

back" on him if it does:—Melt $\frac{1}{2}$ sq. inch of paraffine in one small cupful of pine tar, and add a pinch of salt. Apply very thin.

A few things need improving at the High Lea, and they are being attended to. The first is the **ventilation**, of which there is none, but there will be some next time. The second is **boots**, of which there are too many. You **must** take off your boots before entering the ball room, otherwise you will be refused admittance. The third is **1926 badges**, of which there are too few. Please see to it that you and your lady friend have yours this Thursday or you will be left out in the cold. Also note that food is **made to be eaten**, not to be thrown on the floor, that all tables and chairs will be removed in the future, and that supper will be served at 10 p.m. sharp. Remember also that this year's membership card will admit you at the Club house any time during the week, or on Sundays.—

Tid-bits—"Joe" reports that there is a particularly wicked fence in some field, just after you scramble out of the Chelsea brook. "It grips you by the seat of your trousers, you know, and won't let go. I tell you, it is a bad one."—Let it be tearfully recorded that Eric and George were seen taking the bus at Old Chelsea, on Sunday.—A lady complains that the bridge on the Canyon trail was made for racing skis, not for skis of average width. Is the lady quite sure that she 'used her skis only when passing over the bridge?

Ski Exchange—Dalton McCarthy took someone else's poles at Camp Fortune because someone else took his. He is willing to re-exchange (Q. 1199)—Louis Grimes has a pair of boots for sale. Call him up Q. 1443.—Another pair of boots, size 5, practically new, may be had at C. 3082.—**Found** at Ironsides (Jan. 9th) a change purse containing car tickets and real money. Phone K. G. Chipman R. 3440.—**Lost** on Pink Lake Trail, a white hand-knitted mitt. Phone Mrs. Semple, Q. 6747.—**Lost**, Sunday Jan. 16th between Chelsea and Pink Lake, navy blue French cap with Lady's 1926 badge attached. Phone Q. 3430.—A very good map of the Camp Fortune district may be had at Holbrook's (2 floors above McGiffin's). You might pay your fees while you are there, too.

A new and wonderful trail has been made, starting from Old Chelsea and going to Camp Fortune through the fields at the foot of the mountain. Let us take you over it. Will you come? Unless an announcement to the contrary appears in Saturday morning papers, three busses for old Chelsea will be reserved, leaving city (corner Sussex and York) at 9 a.m. **Frist come, first served**. If the busses are full, you can still take the train at 9.30 a.m. Guides will be in attendance at Old Chelsea. Do come!

The rain that is falling as we pen these lines (Monday) might discourage those who are pessimistically inclined, but experienced skiers know that a warm rain leaves the snow in a honey-combed condition, ideal for ski-ing. Try it on your city lot, and do not forget that the snow is three times deeper in the bush than it is in the city.

The East-side Lodge. Seventy-five people were there last Sunday, crossing over from Kirk's Ferry, and they are still raving about the lodge, the hills, the wonderful scenery on the trails, and kicking about the small size of the stoves in the lodge. What about cold dogs for a change? Hard to provide cooking facilities for a big crowd, you know.

McClosky's hill—A stopping place has been secured at the end of the ridge, for those who wish to take the Blanchette's trail or the McClosky's hill. It is the old Bradley's Farm, now belonging to C. MacDonald. This house can be reached by two roads, one starting from about 50 yards east of the McClosky's house and the other one from two-thirds of the way up McClosky's hill. Both roads will be blazed with red bunting next week-end. Better bring a cold lunch when you go there.

EXCHANGES

"Even before the dawn commences the evacuation of the city. Along every road leading out of town, humanity streams out towards the enchanting country around Stockholm, and by the time the first rays of sunlight are broken up between snow-laden fir and pine and begin to play hide-and-seek amidst the diamonds in the snow, the most wide-awake and the keenest of the inhabitants are already miles outside the confines of the city. These are the vanguard of the capital's ski-shod army; they lay their tracks, they range over the virgin surface of the snow-clad country, they lead the way and make room for the great main army of men, women and children, young and old, who sally forth on slender, feathery skis towards all the points of the compass to spend a healthy, happy day playing in the lap of Nature." (From "Sweden, the Land of Winter Sports.")—Say, they are enthusiastic over there, eh? And they can put it in print too! The early rising is the part that appeals to us particularly. Better try it next week-end and see if you can write gems like this for the circular.

FEES—Have you paid yours Unusual facilities have been provided this year for the payment of fees and it is hoped that our members will avail themselves of them. Fees may be paid and application forms may be secured at the Dominion Bank (Corner Sparks and Bank St.,) the Royal Bank, Sparks St., (Third teller's wicket), the Bank of Toronto (Union Station), J. A. D. Holbrook's office (2nd floor above McGiffin's store, Sparks St.), Miss Mildred Ashfield, 150 Third Ave. Out of town membership, \$1.00.

All communications regarding this circular to be addressed to "The Editor, O.S.C. News, P.B. 65, City."

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