

# MY EXPERIENCES AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

By M. G. PUTMAN

Representing The Toronto Ski Club at the Olympic Games at St. Moritz, February, 1928

**A**BOUT the latter part of December last upon hearing that I had been one of the skiers chosen to represent Canada at the Olympic Games, naturally the first thoughts were to put on the ski and get down to real hard training.

Consequently most of the time preparatory to leaving for St. Moritz was spent on the ski, and through the courtesy of the Ottawa Ski Club training was done over their trails; I had the pleasure of shooting and climbing the Canyon Trail many times when it was at its best.

Training on the ocean trip was more or less brought to a standstill, being confined to pacing the deck and indulging in deck games. However, this lack of real facilities was more than offset by the ever exhilarating salt sea air which seemed to brace one up with every breath.

The ride through the Alps after leaving Basle at the Swiss border was just one thrill after another. One was amazed to learn that in this vicinity and through the foothills of the mountains, snow came very seldom. From Basle in a few hours Chur was reached, where a change was made to electric trains for St. Moritz. Almost immediately you were twisting and turning and climbing through the mountains. By the time St. Moritz was reached many of us were complaining of headaches and ringing sensations in the ear due to the high altitude and rarefied air. The majestic beauty of the Engadine far surpassed our expectations and mere words would not begin to describe its many wonders.

At St. Moritz the skiers and skaters were quartered in the Kulm Villa, a quaint artistic cottage overlooking the lake. The morning after our arrival we got in touch with Mr. Keiller, that fine ski-man and ski-authority, resident secretary of the Ski Club of Great Britain at St. Moritz, whose help and assistance to the team was beyond estimate. Mr. Keiller immediately took us under his wing by informing us that any ski-ing or training whatsoever was out of the question for a few days due to the peculiar knock-out effects of the high altitude to one unaccustomed to it. This was truly verified even after only a short walk which left one panting for air and our temples throbbing.

Our first trip on ski was to the Junior-jump, called "Julier," on which Mr. Keiller advised us to obtain our ski. The Julier is a natural hill where jumps in the vicinity of 100 feet are obtained. After the first jump I was indeed glad that the wisdom of Mr. Keiller in taking us to this hill instead of the Olympia had been followed, as one of my ski was found to be badly warped and was fortunate in not taking a disastrous spill. This necessitated purchasing new jumpers as a warped ski makes good firewood. Jerry Dupuis found his ski boots too soft and pliable and a morning was spent in re-outfitting our party. After a few days over Julier we tackled Olympia, a stupendous jumping hill with a fine wide runway and landing hill. Due to the steepness of the landing hill we all experienced difficulty in getting forward enough in the air, as did almost every competitor with the exception of the Norwegians, who use the jack-knife style, bending far forward from the hips over the tops of the ski and with the body actually at more than right angles to the landing. This style is very effective and produces great distance, but is not as pretty to look at as the "Straight-from-the-hip" style.

On our training for ski-running, Mr. Keiller mapped out a course for us which we trained almost exclusively over, and which he believed would cover about the same territory as what we would encounter in the combined race, and which later turned out to be so. Training was done during the morning as the race was to be held at that time. The afternoons were left to the trying out of various brands of wax and its effects in different snow and weather.

The proper waxing of the ski is now one of the major necessities to ski-running. Many an hour was spent in experimenting with grease of our own make and other brands.

The 18 Kilometre Race in which we competed was held on a moderate day with the snow coarse and salty grained and practically ice in some places. The slopes were lightning fast and numerous were the headlong dives and somersaults I experienced. It was a very great surprise to see the majority of the runners using their poles on the downhill to break their speed. This method we Canadians had never followed or attempted, but it would have benefitted us greatly in this race, as a few bad spills soon took telling effect in sapping one's strength. To break the speed the poles are held together, at one side, and one simply sits and rides on the broomstick. This method of breaking speed is not skimanship, but most effective and logical.

In the opening jumping competition the favored Norwegians came through with premier honors and gave a faultless exhibition. Andersson, jumping



THE CANADIAN OLYMPIC TEAM

GERALD DUPUIS Ottawa	LEONARD LEHAN Captain, Montreal	W. M. THOMPSON McGill, Montreal	MERRITT PUTMAN Toronto	H. P. DOUGLAS Pres., C.A.S.A.
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cleverly, surprised even his own team mates by beating the favoured Rudd. Jerry Dupuis, holding up Canada's end alone, did famously and came down ahead of that fine veteran Hagen. Monsen, U.S., who placed sixth, gave a wonderful exhibition of style. Monsen competed under the handicap of a badly wrenched knee and had no practice whatsoever for nearly two weeks prior to the meet. Sepp Muehlbauer, that fine Swiss champion who finished seventh, also competed under a severe handicap, brought about by injuries received on Olympia nearly a month previous. Sepp had only one jump on the hill between that time and the competition. Muehlbauer, also a fine runner, is one of the world's best in downhill running and turning. His dexterity in the handling of his ski is nothing short of marvellous and his varied assortment of jumps and turns are executed style perfect. We had the pleasure of ski-ing with Sepp and Mr. and Mrs. Keiller on the Sunday following the competitions and the ski-ing of all three was truly astounding.

Hegge of Norway deserves special mention, running second in the 18 Kilometre (11 miles) and fourth in the 50 Kilometre (32 miles) Race.

Hedlund of Sweden, the winner of the 50 Kilometre, finished sixth in the 18 Kilometre, another remarkable performance.

One of the interesting features gleaned from the Games was that skiing held sway over the other sports and was the feature attraction. That the Scandinavians take their skiing very seriously was exemplified in the fact that they even brought down their own food, such as fish and bread and water, for their men to train on.

I also learned that most of the other competitors had been in Switzerland since Christmas-time and became thoroughly acclimated by degrees. A longer training period for the Canadians undoubtedly would have aided us considerably, but this could not be made possible owing to the distance we were from home.

Canada in the skiing although outclassed was by no means disgraced, and given a few more years will surely give our Norwegian friends a great run for premier honours.

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## SKI-RUNNING AND SKI-JUMPING EVENTS IN THE WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES, 1928

By ALEX. KEILLER

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**S**KI-RUNNING and jumping events in the Winter Olympic Games of 1928 at St. Moritz consisted of a military patrol race, separate long distance races of 50 kilometres and 18 kilometres (31 and 11¼ miles respectively), a combined event which consisted of a jumping competition for various competitors who had already competed in the 18 kilometres race, and a main jumping competition separate from the above.

The following fifteen nationalities were represented: Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Italy, Poland, Yugoslavia, Canada, U.S.A., Japan, France and Roumania.

The first event to be run off was the military patrol race, the course of which was laid from a start near Chantarella over Fuorcla Schlattain down almost to Corviglia, up over the Fuorcla Saluver and down to Samaden. From there the remainder of the course was practically level and ran out to Punt Muraigl, and then turning west past Lake Statz to the finish in St. Moritz Bad, keeping on the south of the St. Moritz lake.

The following countries entered the requisite teams of four: Czecho-Slovakia, Germany, Poland, France, Roumania, Finland, Italy, Norway, and Switzerland.

Each man in these military patrol races has to run in full equipment, complete with rifle, and a comparison of the various equipments and uniforms of the different nationalities proved exceedingly interesting. The favourites were Switzerland, the holders, and Finland, with a reservation that the Norwegians, who were known to be very fine, might quite easily spring a surprise upon these two, while it was rumoured that the Germans in practice had put up some extraordinarily good times. As the event turned out the race resolved itself into a ding-dong tussle between Norway, Finland and Switzerland.

At the end of the first climb Finland were leading, with Switzerland second and Norway third, the Italians fourth, followed by Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Germany, Roumania and France having already dropped a good long way behind. Passing over the Fuorcla Saluver the order remained unchanged, Finland having increased their lead to as much as six minutes, while a matter of seconds divided Switzerland and Norway. After the long descent into Samaden the Swiss and the Norwegians passed through level to a second,

while Finland had fallen three minutes behind these two and Germany had made up to fifth place behind Italy, which position they never lost during the rest of the race. Almost immediately after Samaden the leader of the Swiss team had the misfortune to break his stick, a veritable catastrophe which necessarily had a disastrous effect upon the Swiss chances and, indeed, practically put them out of the running for first place.

The final results of the race were as follows: Norway, 3 hrs. 50 mins. 47 secs.; Finland, 3 hrs. 54 mins. 37 secs.; Switzerland, 3 hrs. 55 mins. 4 secs.; Italy, 4 hrs. 7 mins. 30 secs.; Germany, 4 hrs. 15 mins. 2 secs.; Czecho-Slovakia, 4 hrs. 15 mins. 7 secs.; Poland, 4 hrs. 33 mins. 45 secs.; Roumania, 5 hrs. 16 secs.; France, 5 hrs. 36 mins. 26 secs. -

The 50 kilometres course was particularly interesting for the amount of climbing and descent contained in it, the start being at a height of 1,800 metres and the highest point being over 2,100 metres, while elsewhere during the course there were two stiff climbs of 200 metres each, as well as many of a lesser height. The first part of the course lay along the north side of the Engadine valley, crossing the lake at Isola and proceeding to Maloja. The competitors here turned and proceeded to the foot of the Fex valley, climbing this on the east side to the Silseralp and descending on the west side, crossing the previous track near Platta. The remaining eleven kilometres lay more or less direct to St. Moritz.

The result provided something of a surprise, the Swedes Hedlund, Jonson and Andersson being first, second and third, and Strom seventh, the Norwegians Kjellbotn, Ole Hegge and Stoa being fourth, fifth and eighth respectively. The first of the Finns, who had been much fancied for this event, Tauno Lappalainen, was sixth, with his more famous brother, Martti Lappalainen, who subsequently won the 50 kilometres race at Holmenkollen in amazingly fast time, ninth. Otto Wahl and Hans Bauer, both of Germany, did well to come in tenth and twelfth respectively, with Joseph Nemecki of Czecho-Slovakia eleventh. Thirteenth was the first of the Poles, Andrej Krzeptowski. Fourteenth was Donth of Czecho-Slovakia and fifteenth came the first of the Swiss, Walter Bussmann, of Lucerne. The winner's time was 4 hrs. 52 mins. 37 secs., which, considering the conditions prevailing, was extraordinarily good. These conditions were exceptionally interesting from a racing point of view, since the morning broke colder than during previous days with every indication of increasing frost, which, however, failed to develop, and the temperature rose steadily under the influence of a foehn wind until a heavy thaw prevailed. A very high proportion under the circumstances of the forty-two entrants completed the course.

The 18 kilometres race, for which there were eighty entries, took place in the morning of February 17th. The conditions were difficult, the course being crusty and icy, since the recent heavy thaw had been followed by two mornings of sharp frost. The climbing portions were relatively gradual, but some of the descents were exceedingly steep. There was comparatively little flat running.

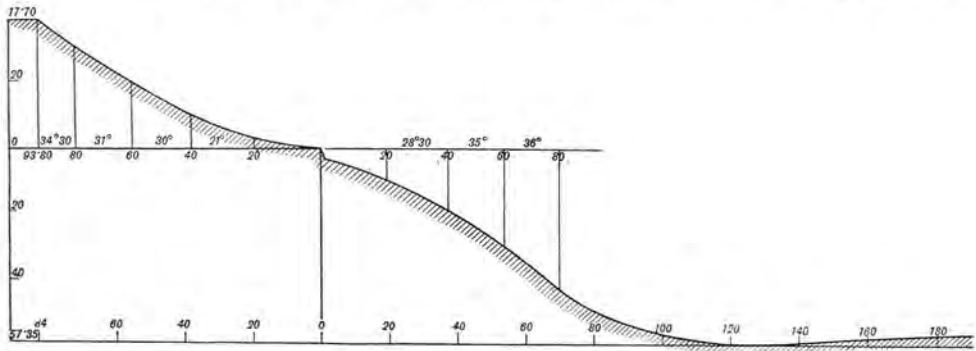
As regards the results, Norway obtained their revenge upon Sweden, since the famous Norwegian, Johan Gröttumsbraaten, was first in 1 hr. 37 mins. 1 sec., followed by his compatriots, Ole Hegge and Reider Oedegaard, who filled the next two places, Saarinen of Finland being fourth and Haakonsen of Norway fifth. Sixth came Hedlund, the winner of the 50 kilometres, while the seventh place was shared by Jonsson of Sweden and Martti Lappalainen of Finland. The eighth place was filled by a Swede and the ninth by a Finn, as was the twelfth, while between these two came Donth and Nowak, both of Czecho-Slovakia. Apart from these two Czechs, the first competitor to finish other than Scandinavians was Ludwig Boeck of Germany, closely followed by Walter Bussmann. The Canadians and Americans made their first appearance in this year's games in this event W. B. Thompson of Canada coming in thirty-seventh and Merritt Putman, also of Canada (both members of the Ski Club of Great Britain), fortieth. Putman had the bad luck through a

series of misfortunes to lose five minutes at the start, and did well to make up the time that he did. The three Americans, headed by the veteran Haugen, followed by Procter and Monson, were forty-second, forty-third and forty-fourth respectively.

On the morning of the 18th the jumping for the combined event took place and was chiefly remarkable for the magnificent performance put up by Rudolph Purkert of Czecho-Slovakia, who, with distances of 61 and 62½ metres, was placed first as regards jumping alone. Vitale Venzi of Italy was second and Snersrud, the first of the Norwegians, third.

The combined result of those who had entered for both long distance race and jumping was naturally a win for Grøttumsbraaten, who was followed by Vinjarengen and Snersrud, both of Norway, Purkert having failed to finish sufficiently high in the 18 kilometres race to give him a chance in the combined event. Nuotio of Finland was fourth and Jarvinen, also of Finland, fifth, with Eriksson of Sweden sixth.

On the afternoon of the same day was held the chief jumping competition, open to countries who had entered teams for jumping alone. A crowd of several thousand people were present to watch what was generally regarded as being the most spectacular event of the whole of the Winter Games. And once again, this time in jumping, Norway turned the tables on her rivals, Andersson being first with jumps of 60 and 64 metres, while second was Sigmund



SECTIONAL PLAN OF THE OLYMPIC HILL

Ruud, the young Norwegian whose name became so well known after his standing jump of 72½ metres in Norway last summer. His distances on this occasion were 57½ and 62½ metres. Third came the redoubtable Purkert, who had done so well in the morning and now jumped 57 and 59½ metres. Nilsson and Lundgren were fourth and fifth, followed by Monson of the United States, whose performance in taking so high a place was all the more creditable since, owing to a cartilage damaged in practice, he was forced to walk with a distinct limp, a condition which must have rendered jumping an extremely painful experience. Seventh and eighth came Sepp Muehlbauer (a foreign member of the Ski Club of Great Britain) of St. Moritz and Feuz of Muerren.

The distances quoted above will be observed to compare unfavourably with those of the morning, and it should be clearly understood that in the afternoon the jumpers were limited to a start above the take-off shorter than that permitted to the jumpers in the combined event which had previously taken place. The majority of the competitors had unfortunately received no warning that they were to start from as low as it was decided actually during the competition that they should do, and feeling among the competitors themselves was divided as to the desirability of this limitation, by far the greater part requesting to be allowed to jump from the top of the inrun, from which place they had been in the habit of starting during practice. This unfortunate incident resulted in a prolonged delay between the first and second rounds of jumping, during which the puzzled spectators waited patiently.

A report of this competition, however, would not be complete without a reference to one of the most amazing jumps seen upon the Olympia leap on which these events were held. This consisted of a 73 metres jump by the famous Tullin Thams, who, however, fell on landing. When one considers from where he started above the take-off this jump of Thams must be regarded as a quite amazing performance. The distance actually covered would have equalled the longest standing jump hitherto attained—that of Bruno Trojani of Switzerland at Pontresina earlier in the year—while the longest standing jump upon the Olympia was made during practice by Ruud, who beat by half a metre only the previous best of Sepp Muehlbauer, who at an earlier stage in the practice had made a standing jump of 70 metres.

So terminated the ski-ing events of the Winter Olympic Games, which had proved, not only to those who participated in them but also to those who in any way were intimately connected therewith, as well as in a lesser degree to those who followed them as spectators, to be extremely instructive. The contrast of various styles and the result and performances of the finest runners and jumpers of so many nationalities gave any jumper or runner much food for consideration, while an interchange of ideas among the competitors themselves necessarily proved of benefit to all. At least some of the British runners and jumpers who have formed the nucleus of future British Olympic teams, as well as those who in four years' time may well be too old for selection, acquired much useful knowledge and information at first hand, and it is hoped that in international competitions next year the results of this advantage will be apparent.

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## A LAURENTIAN SKI TRIP

**I**N FEBRUARY, 1927, a party of three of us—G. A. Birks, W. M. Birks and the writer—took the Sunday morning train to Ste. Agathe, and from there skied down to the Ottawa River at Point-aux-Chene. Sunday night we slept at a boarding-house at Weir, Monday night at a lumber camp on the Rouge River, and arrived in Point-aux-Chene Tuesday noon. Breakfasts and suppers were eaten where we slept and the noonday meals were cooked in the open. A drop of one thousand feet between Ste. Agathe and Point-aux-Chene, coupled with excellent country, helped make this a very pleasant run.

On the train into Montreal, we were so delighted with our little jaunt that we decided on something more ambitious for 1928. This trip as finally decided on was from Lake Nomingue down the valley of the Petite-Nation River to Papineauville, on the Ottawa River, a distance of about seventy-five miles. The first half of this distance was practically uninhabited except for the odd Indian still tending his traps, the latter part through farming country with fairly good accommodation for the night.

After consideration we finally decided four was the most convenient number for the party, so W. K. Hogg joined us for our last winter's trip. With four, three could sleep fairly comfortable while the other one tended the fire; also in taking turns in breaking trail four was thought to give satisfactory rest periods. There were many suggestions made for our sleeping arrangements and finally we decided on a blanket each and a sleeping bag which could be opened out, forming something fairly substantial to lie on. Food was confined to such simple items as bacon, eggs, etc., and we carried enough for two or three days. Additional equipment included the blade of a shovel with clamps so that a handle could be attached, a couple of hatchets and cooking utensils, as well as a good map.

We left the village of Nomingue on Wednesday morning, February 22, about 9 a.m. with the thermometer at 18° below zero. Each carried a pack of about forty pounds. That night we stopped just below Lake Rognon, having covered fifteen to eighteen miles in seven hours travelling over lakes and through some thick underbrush in rough country. In the afternoon a