



Countrywide® AMERICAN SKI CLASSIC

2007 PIONEER LEGENDS OF SKIING BIOS

KJETIL ANDRE AAMODT

A rookie to the Legends field in 2007, Aamodt is one of the most decorated alpine skiers in history. He is the only alpine skier to win 8 Olympic medals, along with 5 World Championships gold medals, as well as 21 individual World Cup events. An all-round skier, Aamodt participated in all five alpine skiing disciplines and is one of only five male skiers in history to have won a World Cup race in Downhill, Super-G, Giant Slalom, Slalom and Combined. His combined career total of 20 World Championship and Olympic medals is an all-time best. He is the youngest alpine skier to win an Olympic gold medal and also the oldest alpine skier to win a gold medal. He became the first Alpine skier in the history of the Olympic Games to win four gold medals following his win in Torino in Super-G. Crowned the 1994 overall World Cup champion at the World Cup Finals in Vail, Aamodt also claimed a gold medal in Combined and a bronze in Downhill at the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships. He announced his retirement on live television with hundreds of fellow athletes in attendance at the Norwegian Sports Gala this past January.

TERRY AHOLA

Ahola spent three years on the U.S. National Team -- 1982-84 --and then turned his attention to professional racing. He was named Western Rookie of the Year in 1984. Ahola is a native of Gladstone, Michigan.

JIM "MOOSE" BARROWS

Moose Barrows was a member of the U.S. Ski Team from 1965 through 1970 and represented the U.S. at the 1966 World Championships in Portillo, Chile, and the 1968 Grenoble Olympics. Primarily a downhiller, Barrows was third in a World Cup downhill at Franconia, New Hampshire in 1967 and was the 1969 North American downhill champion. Following his retirement from the U.S. Ski Team, he raced professionally from 1971-75, taking third in the World Pro Championships in 1972. He returned to the U.S. Ski Team as a downhill coach from 1978-80, guiding the fortunes of the men's Olympic downhillers at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics. He is now self-employed in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and offers his experience and expertise to the ski industry as a consultant.

BOB BEATTIE

Affectionately known as "The Coach," he started his career at his alma mater, Middlebury College in Vermont, at age 22, as acting ski team coach. A year later, he was masterminding the ski team at the University of Colorado, where his skiers won the NCAA team championships in 1958 and 1959. In 1961, he was named Head Alpine Coach for the United States Ski Team; and at the 1964 Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria, produced four medal winners, including the first two US men to receive medals, Billy Kidd and Jimmie Heuga. He is President of World Wide Ski Corporation, was founder and Executive Director of the World Pro Racing Tour, Executive Director of the International Ski Racers Association, Commissioner of NASTAR, founder of Bob Beattie Summer Racing camps at Mt. Bachelor, and now organizes such national ski racing programs as the Michelob Light Town Challenge and Appleton Rum Runs.

FELIX BELCZYK

A seven-year World Cup veteran with the Canadians, Belczyk's top career result came in the form of a third place podium appearance in the 1990 World Cup downhill in Are, Sweden. Other top results included a fourth place showing on the famed Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuehel, Austria in 1986 and an 18th place result in the 1992 Albertville Olympic downhill. His final World Cup race start came in 1992 in Aspen in downhill.

TODD BROOKER

Cut from the same cloth as the original "Crazy Canucks", Todd Brooker carried on the tradition of world-class Canadian downhillers on the World Cup circuit from 1975 to 1987. During his time on the White Circus, Brooker recorded a total of four World Cup downhill wins, one on the famed Hahnenkamm course in Kitzbuehel, Austria, and another on America's Downhill in Aspen. The Canadian Junior National Downhill champ in 1975, Brooker was a member of the 1984 Canadian Olympic team in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, while competing on a pair of World Championships squads in 1982 in Schladming, Austria and again in 1985 in Bormio, Italy. His World Championships appearances would have totaled three had not a horrible training run fall in Kitzbuehel ended his season and career the weekend before the 1987 Championships in Crans Montana, Switzerland were scheduled to begin. Despite a shortened season, Brooker still managed a fifth place standing in the final 1987 World Cup downhill rankings. These days, Brooker still follows the World Cup circuit as an expert commentator.

MIKE BROWN

One of the best ski racers ever produced by the Vail Valley, former U.S. Ski Team downhill Mike Brown returns to Legends action this year. A seven-year veteran of the U.S. Team, Brown was the 1988 U.S. National Super-G champion and earned the runnerup spot in the national downhill that same year. “Brownie’s” top World Cup downhill result came in 1986 with a ninth place finish in Morzine, France, but perhaps his proudest moment came in front of his hometown fans during the 1989 World Alpine Ski Championships when he competed in Super-G following back surgery. Mike was a member of the 1985 World Championships team in Bormio, Italy, finishing 18th in the downhill, as well as the 1987 Championships team in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, where he collected a 21st place downhill result.

PAUL CARSON

Carson spent four years as a member of the Canadian national team, which included earning a berth on the squad sent to the 1972 Sapporo Olympics, although he did not compete. He was the 1973 Canadian slalom champion and later moved on to the professional ranks where he competed for eight years. Following his retirement from racing, Carson ventured into the media ranks as a television commentator and now resides in Ketchum, Idaho.

ARIANE EHRTAT

A rookie legend for 2006, Ariane Ehrat was a member of the powerful Swiss speed team of the early and mid-80’s that also included Michaela Figini, Brigitte Oertli and Maria Walliser. A seven-year World Cup veteran, Ehrat tied for the silver medal in Downhill with Austria’s Katharina Gutensohn at the 1985 World Championships in Bormio, Italy, while just missing the Olympic Downhill medals in 1984 in Sarajevo with a fourth place showing on the Jahorina course. During the course of her World Cup career, the native of Schaffausen skied to a runner-up Downhill showing in 1983 in Val d’Isere, France, while picking up a pair of third place Downhill finishes, one in the 1983 pre-Olympic test event in Sarajevo and the other in 1985 in Bad Kleinkirchheim, Austria. Her top World Cup season came in 1984 and she retired from competition following the 1986 campaign.

BARBARA FERRIES-HENDERSON

The better looking half of a dynamic brother-sister ski racing team (brother is Chuck Ferries), Barbara was a member of the 1962 World Championships team in Chamonix, France and brought home a bronze medal in downhill. She was also a member of the 1964 Olympic Team to the Innsbruck Games. But perhaps her best year came in 1961 when she won the Harriman Cup in Sun Valley, Idaho, as well as claiming double wins in the Aspen Roch Cup at the age of 17. She was inducted into the National Ski Hall of Fame in 1978 and is married to former Canadian national team member Scott Henderson.

HOLLY FLANDERS

A 10-year veteran of the U.S. Ski Team, Flanders was a member of both the 1980 and the 1984 Olympic teams in Lake Placid and Sarajevo, as well as the 1982 and 1985 World Championship teams in Schladming, Austria and Bormio, Italy. Perhaps her best season came in 1982 when she recorded a pair of World Cup downhill victories and led the downhill standings up to the final race of the season before dropping to second. Flanders had a total of three career World Cup victories and was the U.S. National downhill champion in both 1981 and 1985.

CHAD FLEISCHER

A ten-year member of the U.S. Ski Team, Fleischer hails from that hotbed of ski racing...Nebraska. However, he was able to escape the clutches of the Husker football program, moving to Vail and taking up downhill. A two-time Olympian, Fleischer captured the 1996 and 1999 U.S. national downhill titles and earned the runner-up position in downhill at the 1999 World Cup Finals. One of his most memorable career highlights came in his own backyard in the form of a sixth place showing in Super-G at the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships on Beaver Creek's Birds of Prey course. He now serves as expert commentator on the Outdoor Life Network's coverage of World Cup skiing.

PAM FLETCHER

Without a doubt, "Fletch" has some very fond memories of Vail and the American Ski Classic. In 1986, she came out of the 30th start position to capture the World Cup downhill. Pam was on her way to a second victory the next day in Super-G when she hooked a tip three gates from the finish. The following year, Fletcher was the leader through the first 15 racers before being bumped to third by Sigrid Wolf and Elisabeth Kirchler. Fletcher was a member of the 1987 and 1989 World Championship teams, as well as the 1988 U.S. Olympic squad. However, considered one of the favorites for a medal in the Calgary downhill, she broke her right leg in a collision with a course worker while warming up for the race. She won national titles in downhill and Super-G in 1987 and 1988, while capturing the NorAm downhill title in 1982 and 1983. Fletcher retired after the 1988-89 campaign

TORIL FORLAND

In the heyday of women's professional racing, the late 70s and early 80s, Norway's Toril Forland was the sport's dominant figure. She won five overall pro titles, including four consecutive ones from 1981-84. Prior to her professional career, Forland was the bronze medalist in the 1972 Sapporo Olympic combined at the age of 17. That same year, she competed at the World Junior Championships where she won a gold medal in the giant slalom and silver in the slalom.

MARTINA FORTKORD

A six-year World Cup veteran with the Swedish team from 1994 to 1999, Fortkord's top result came in the form of a podium third place Giant Slalom showing in the opening World Cup race of the 1997-98 season on the glacier in Tignes, France. She also claimed a 10th place GS result in the 1996 World Championships in Sierra Nevada, Spain, adding a 14th place showing in Giant Slalom in the 1998 Nagano Games. Fortkord is a native of Are, Sweden, the recent hosts of the 2007 World Alpine Ski Championships.

MICHAELA GERG-LEITNER

Germany's Michaela Gerg-Leitner was a fixture on the World Cup circuit from her coming out party in 1981 until her retirement in 1996. During her 15-year career, Gerg recorded four World Cup career victories, the most recent coming in the form of a 1995 downhill win in Cortina, Italy. Her best season on the circuit came in 1990 when she finished third in the overall standings by virtue of runner-up rankings in Super-G and combined, and a third place in the season-long downhill standings. Michaela also has good memories of Vail, picking up the bronze medal in Super-G at the 1989 World Championships, while also making an American Ski Classic podium appearance in 1989 with a third place Super-G result. A veteran of three Olympic Winter Games and four World Championship teams, Gerg contemplated retirement after the 1992 season, but elected to continue racing through 1996.

DAVE GORSUCH

A Vail resident since 1965, Dave Gorsuch was a member of the U.S. National Team from 1957 to 1964, and represented the United States in the 1960 Olympic Winter Games of Squaw Valley and the 1958 World Championships in Bad Gastein, Austria. During the Squaw Valley Olympics, Gorsuch recorded a 14th place result in both the downhill and the giant slalom

LAURIE GRAHAM

The "Crazy Canucks" of the 1970s spawned a downhill frenzy in Canada that wasn't only confined to the men's ranks. Graham was one of the many successful Canadian ladies that followed in the footsteps of their male counterparts as a stalwart member of the Canadian National Team from 1979-88. With a pair of skis named "Speedy" that saw numerous cosmetic makeovers but still remained her favorites, Graham collected six World Cup downhill victories. At the 1982 World Championships in Schladming, Austria, Graham took the bronze medal in downhill. She was a four-time Canadian national champion in both downhill and Super-G before her retirement at the end of the 1987-88 season.

STEIN HALSNES

Stein was part of the Halsnes troika that literally owned the professional ski racing circuit in the 1980s. In 1984, Stein finished sixth in the overall Peugeot Grand Prix standings and was 10th in the 1985 rankings with one victory that season. Stein has returned to his home in Sauda, Norway.

LASSE HAMRE

Hamre took a year off from the American Ski Classic in 1994 to serve as Chief of Course for the speed events at Kvitfjell during the Lillehammer Olympic Games. He was a member of the Norwegian National Team from 1962 to 1971, racking up a trio of Norwegian National titles during his amateur career. Hamre was a member of Norway's 1968 Olympic Team in Grenoble, while also earning a spot on the 1970 World Championships team in Val Gardena, Italy. Following his World Cup career, Hamre turned to the pro tour for five years, winning the Lange Cup in 1972. He also served as president of the International Ski Racers Association. In addition to the Legends races, Hamre has another attachment to the Vail Valley, having lived here for five years before returning to Norway.

KLAUS HEIDEGGER

During the course of his career as a member of the Austrian national team, Klaus Heidegger racked up a total of five World Cup victories in Giant Slalom and Slalom, skiing his way to the runner-up position in the 1978 overall World Cup rankings behind Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark. His trio of Slalom victories included wins in both the prestigious Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuhel, Austria and the Lauberhorn in Wengen, Switzerland. His Slalom prowess also carried him to the second step of that World Cup discipline's standings in both 1977 and 1978. Outside the ski arena, the eight-time Austrian National champ is the former co-president of Kiehl's, along with his wife, Jami Morse Heidegger. In 2000, the couple sold their family's renowned skin and hair care company to L'Oreal. Heidegger continues his interest in health and fitness as a partner in Bio Essentials, Inc. and Swiss Masai. Their daughter, Nicoletta, is a seven-time national equestrian champion.

SCOTT HENDERSON

A member of the Canadian national team from 1962-69, Henderson competed in both the 1964 Innsbruck and 1968 Grenoble Olympic Winter Games, as well as the 1966 World Championships in Portillo, Chile. He was a World Cup winner in both downhill and giant slalom, and a Europa Cup winner in downhill, slalom and giant slalom. A broken leg in 1969 ended his amateur career, but he remained in ski racing as the head of the Lange USA racing program from 1970-72 and as head coach of the Canadian National Team from 1972-77.

FINN CHRISTIAN JAGGE

A 17-year veteran of the Norwegian team, Jagge recorded a total of seven career World Cup wins, including the 1997 World Cup Finals slalom on Vail Mountain's International course. A four-time Olympian, he also collected an Olympic gold medal for his slalom victory at the 1992 Albertville Games and now serves as the head women's coach for the Norwegians.

BILLY KIDD

One of the more prominent U.S. Ski Team members from the 1960s and 70s, Kidd made the "Stars and Stripes" look popular with his red, white and blue "Captain America" sweater and downhill helmet. He was the first U.S. male to win an Olympic medal, the silver in slalom at the 1964 Innsbruck Games. In 1970, he became the first American male to claim a World Championships medal with a gold in the combined in Val Gardena, Italy. Kidd, a Vermont native, was also a member of the 1968 Olympic team in Grenoble, France. Following his retirement from amateur racing, he competed on the pro tour and is now Director of Skiing in Steamboat. Since his "Captain America" days, Billy has changed his signature headgear to the equally recognizable cowboy hat.

ELISABETH "LISI" KIRCHLER

During her career, Kirchler was known as one of the most congenial members of World Cup racing. A member of the 1984 and 1988 Austrian Olympic Teams, she took the silver medal in giant slalom at the 1985 World Championships in Bormio, Italy.

LASSE KJUS

In February of 1999, Norway's Lasse Kjus pulled off one of the most remarkable feats in the history of alpine skiing when he medaled in all five events at the World Alpine Ski Championships in Vail and Beaver Creek. Prior to that feat, a trio of skiers had previously earned four medals at a single World Championships (Toni Sailer of Austria in 1958, Marielle Goitschel of France in 1966 and Pirmin Zurbriggen of Switzerland in 1987), while Sweden's Anja Paerson made it a quartet at the recently completed World Championships in Are, Sweden. He started off his historic World Championships tied with Austria's Hermann Maier for gold in super G, which also marked the first time in Championships history that there had been a gold medal tie. Four days later, in the Downhill, Kjus settled for silver, 0.31 seconds behind Maier, while in the Combined, he narrowly missed his second gold, finishing in silver-medal position only 0.16 seconds behind teammate Kjetil Andre Aamodt. With momentum building, Kjus captured gold in the Giant Slalom, and then finished off his remarkable run two days later with silver in his weakest event, Slalom. He missed winning all five gold medals by a combined total of slightly more than half a second (0.58 seconds). Most impressively, he performed the feat while suffering from a chest infection which had dogged him all winter and often left him coughing and wheezing at the bottom of courses. A two-time overall World Cup champ (1996 & 1999), Kjus owns a total of 16 Olympic and World Championships medals, ranking him second in career medals behind Aamodt. He recorded a total of 18 career World Cup victories, including a Super-G win in Vail in 1995 and a Giant Slalom victory on Birds of Prey in 2004. He retired from competition following the 2006 season.

FRANZ KLAMMER

In one run of the 1976 Innsbruck Olympic Winter Games, Franz Klammer romanticized the sport of downhill skiing for millions of viewers as he sped to victory from the 15th start position, shocking both Switzerland's Bernhard Russi, who thought he had a second consecutive Olympic downhill victory firmly in hand, as well as ABC commentators Bob Beattie and Frank Gifford, who had already done their race call, proclaiming Russi the winner. Klammer's daredevil style inspired many young downhillers and over the course of his career, "The Kaiser" accumulated 25 World Cup downhill victories, including a four-year span from 1974-77 when he won 19 of the 33 downhills contested, with a nine-win streak at one point. Following a slump that included failing to make the 1980 Austrian Olympic team to Lake Placid, Klammer came back with a vengeance, winning the 1983 World Cup downhill title, a crown he had previously worn from 1975-78.

KRISTINA KOZNICK

Koznick began skiing competitively when she was seven years old at Buck Hill Ski Area in Minneapolis when her father enrolled her in a ski-racing program because he'd grown tired of watching his daughter play video games for hours on end. Under the guidance of Austrian-American Erich Sailer, Koznick's family insisted that she train in Minneapolis, and although Minnesota's terrain, with its 200-foot "mountains," didn't lend itself well to downhill, it worked well for Slalom training. At 15, she made the U.S. Ski Team and was on her way to her first World Cup. Koznick is still the youngest American woman ever to compete in an Alpine World Cup event. Koznick's racing continued to improve while on the USST, until a torn anterior cruciate ligament kept her out of the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Games. She won the World Cup slalom in Are, Sweden heading into the '98 Olympics, but was a victim of the course in the second run. In 2000, Koznick, separated from the USST to train and compete on her own through the 2001, 2002, and 2003 World Cup seasons. Paid for entirely through her own earnings and donations from fans, Koznick enjoyed her best World Cup season, ending the 2002 campaign in 8th place in the World Cup Overall standings and 2nd place in the Slalom rankings. She rejoined the team in 2004, ending her career at the conclusion of the 2006 campaign with a total of six World Cup Slalom wins and five U.S. National Slalom titles. Koz and husband, former U.S. Ski Team racer Dan Stripp, now reside in Edwards, Colorado.

HIAS LEITNER

Along with teammate and Kitzbuhler Ski Club compatriot Ernst Hinterseer, Leitner completed the Austrian one-two slalom punch at the 1960 Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley, earning the silver medal, while Hinterseer claimed the gold.

PHIL MAHRE

Phil Mahre, with the help of twin brother Steve, put the U.S. squarely on the map of international ski competition in the 1970's and 80's, while redefining ski racing in America at the same time. His 27 World Cup career victories is the most by any American male racer and triple that of the next person on the list—his brother. Mahre collected three consecutive overall World Cup titles in 1981, 82 and 83, by virtue of his gifted slalom and giant slalom talent, along with a willingness to ski downhill, especially in combined events. Few will forget the one-two punch that Phil and Steve delivered in the 1984 Olympic slalom in Sarajevo, with Phil winning the gold and Steve taking home the silver. Four years earlier in Lake Placid and only one year removed from a career-threatening injury, Phil claimed the silver medal in slalom behind career rival Ingemar Stenmark of Sweden. Ironically, both Phil and Steve made the decision to retire from the World Cup circuit in Vail during the 1984 American Ski Classic. Phil made the decision to come out of competitive ski retirement this winter in an attempt to qualify for the 2008 U.S. National Championships. As a result, he is now competing with athletes that were not born when he retired from the U.S. Ski Team, but he has a realistic chance to accelerate his goal by qualifying for next week's Alpine Nationals in Alaska.

STEVE MAHRE

It has been said that if there had been no Phil Mahre, then certainly Steve Mahre would have been the best men's skier that the U.S. has ever produced. Born four minutes behind twin brother Phil, Steve was a ten-year veteran of the U.S. Ski Team, retiring from the Team following the 1984 American Ski Classic races in Vail. During his illustrious career on the World Cup circuit, Steve collected a total of nine victories, including a pair of historic slalom wins in 1982 as Phil claimed the runner-up spot in both. That same season, Steve also captured the gold medal in giant slalom at the World Championships in Schladming, Austria two weeks after having his knee "scoped" by Dr. Richard Steadman. That win marked the first World Championships gold medal for an American male in an individual event. He rounded out his career with a silver medal in slalom at the 1984 Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, while Phil mined the gold.

ROSI MITTERMAIER

A triple Olympic medalist at the 1976 Games in Innsbruck, Austria, Mittermaier claimed the gold in Downhill and Slalom, while mining silver in Giant Slalom. She also collected an FIS World Championships gold medal in Combined at the Innsbruck Games. Mittermaier missed the Olympic hat trick by a mere 12-hundredths of a second as Canadian Kathy Kreiner spoiled the celebration with the Giant Slalom gold. The 1976 campaign proved to be equally special for Mittermaier as she also earned the season-long World Cup overall crown, in addition to her Olympic exploits. During the course of her World Cup career, she posted a total of ten wins, eight in slalom and one in Giant Slalom, along with a Combined victory. After that incredible season, "Gold Rosi" gave up World Cup competitive skiing and in 1980 married slalom champion Christian Neureuther. The parents of two children, son Felix Neureuther is a current member of the German World Cup technical team. A three-time Olympian, Mittermaier is now a member of the German National Olympic Committee.

CINDY NELSON

Nelson first joined the U.S. Ski Team in 1971 and promptly scored World Cup points in her first two outings, a dramatic opening to a long and distinguished career that would continue through 1985. Nelson represented the U.S. on four Olympic and World Championship teams. Highlights of her career include a bronze medal in the 1976 Olympic downhill in Innsbruck and a silver medal in the 1982 World Championships downhill in Schladming, Austria. One of her more remarkable achievements occurred in 1984 when she tore knee ligaments in December but was back in the starting gate exactly six weeks later to compete in the Sarajevo Olympics. In all, Nelson collected a total of seven World Cup victories and seven U.S. national titles during her career. Competing in three disciplines for the majority of her 14-year career, Nelson scored a total of 1,353 World Cup points. When the Super-G was added to the World Cup circuit in 1982, Nelson won the initial "test" event in Sansicario, Italy, and two "official" races the following year.

CHRISTIAN NEUREUTHER

A mainstay of the German technical team in the 70's, Christian Neureuther racked up a career total of 6 World Cup wins, all coming in Slalom. The 12-year veteran began his World Cup career with the 1970 season and he retired from competition following the conclusion of the 1981 campaign. His best winter on the World Cup tour came in 1973 as he finished fourth in the overall World Cup standings and second in the Slalom rankings by virtue of wins in Wengen, Switzerland and Megeve, France. He would earn the runner-up spot in the Slalom standings in 1974, again posting a pair of wins in Wengen and his hometown of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. A pair of fifth place Slalom showings marked his two Olympic outings in Innsbruck and Lake Placid, while also picking up a sixth place result in the 1978 World Championships in Garmisch. He married German triple 1976 Olympic medalist Rosi Mittermaier in 1980 and their son Felix Neureuter is currently a member of the German World Cup technical squad.

YLVA NOWEN

Continuing the tradition of great Swedish technicians, Ylva Nowen joins the 2006 Legends field with her rookie outing. A native of Oestersund, Nowen was a 12-year veteran of the World Cup tour, collecting a total of four career wins, all in Slalom, during that time span. This quartet of Slalom victories carried her to the top of the World Cup discipline rankings in 1998 and she was rewarded with the World Cup Slalom crown. Those wins included back-to-back victories in Lienz, Austria in December of 1997. Nowen just missed the Olympic podium in Salt Lake, with a fourth place showing in Slalom to go along with her seventh place Giant Slalom result.

BRIGITTE OERTLI

A ten-year veteran of the powerful Swiss women's team from 1981 to 1990, Oertli claimed a bronze medal in Combined at the 1989 World Alpine Ski Championships in Vail and Beaver Creek, while also picking up a pair of silver medals in Downhill and Combined at the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary. A great four-event skier, she captured four World Cup Combined titles and finished in the top five in the World Cup overall rankings from 1985 to 1988. Colorado wins included the World Cup Downhill in Aspen in 1988 and the World Cup Combined in Steamboat Springs in 1989. Oertli was a member of the Swiss Olympic teams in Sarajevo and Calgary, while also qualifying for a trio of World Championships teams.

PATRICK ORTLIEB

Ortlieb carved his name in the Austrian skiing history books when he tamed the extremely technical "new course" in Val d'Isere, France to claim the Olympic downhill gold medal at the 1992 Albertville Games. He followed that performance with a World Championships downhill gold in 1996 in Sierra Nevada, Spain, while just missing the medals at the 1994 Lillehammer Games with a fourth place downhill effort. During the course of his amateur career, the native of Lech collected a total of four World Cup downhill victories, including wins in Val Gardena, Italy in 1994 and 1996. He also delighted the home country fans in 1994 with a downhill win on the prestigious Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuhel. However, it was the Hahnenkamm that eventually had the last laugh as a 1999 fall in Kitzbuhel ended Ortlieb's World Cup career.

KLAUS OBERMEYER

Klaus began his career in the American ski industry in 1947, first moving to Sun Valley, where he spent a winter selling Bavarian neckties and shoe strings out of the back of a Buick belonging to long-time friend, film producer Warren Miller. It was then on to Aspen where he worked as a ski instructor, a job that coincidentally led to his founding of Sport Obermeyer. He was awarded the distinguished Halva International Skiing Award in 1996 for his outstanding contribution to skiing. He was inducted into the Colorado Ski and Snowboard hall of Fame in 1997.

KAREN PERCY-LOWE

A member of the Canadian National Team from 1984 to 1990, Percy-Lowe competed in a trio of World Championships, as well as the 1988 Calgary Olympics, where she captured bronze medals in both downhill and Super-G. She also has fond memories of Vail, earning the silver medal in downhill at the 1989 World Alpine Ski Championships. She is married to former Edmonton Oilers defenseman Kevin Lowe

STEVE PORINO

A competitive ski writer and former U.S. Ski team downhill racer, Steve Porino served as an alpine skiing reporter during NBC's coverage of the Torino Winter Games, his second Olympic broadcast assignment, as he also served as the alpine skiing reporter during NBC's coverage of the 2002 Salt Lake Olympics. A Burke Mountain Academy alumnus, Porino earned a spot as a downhill racer on the U.S. Ski team in 1988 and raced for the national team until 1992. He was the World Cup editor and alpine writer for Ski Racing Magazine from 1997 through 2003 before turning to broadcasting full time. His broadcasting career started unexpectedly when in 1997, ESPN alpine skiing analyst Todd Brooker (now a NBC analyst) took time off to attend "Burger College" in order to open two Wendy's franchises. Porino was given the opportunity to fill in, and then was asked to stay on as a reporter.

KEN READ

Read became the first North American male to ever win a World Cup downhill with a victory in Val d'Isere, France in 1975. A seven-time Canadian National downhill champion, Read picked up a fifth place Olympic downhill result in the 1976 Innsbruck Winter Games and was the pre-race favorite for the 1980 Olympic downhill in Lake Placid. However, he lost a ski near the top of the course and was forced to watch Austria's Leonhard Stock claim the gold. He also represented Canada at the 1978 and 1982 World Championships in Garmisch, Germany and Schladming, Austria. On the World Cup tour, Read skied to a second place finish in the season-long downhill rankings behind Switzerland's Peter Mueller, winning both the Hahnenkamm downhill in Kitzbuhel, Austria and the Lauberhorn in Wengen, Switzerland. A native of Calgary, Read was instrumental in the design and construction of the men's downhill course used for the 1988 Calgary Olympics where he also carried the torch into the stadium for the Opening Ceremonies. He currently serves as the CEO for Alpine Canada, the national ski federation, where he is priming Canada's alpine athletes for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

ZALI STEGGALL

There is no doubt that Australia's Zali Steggall will have lifelong memories of Vail...it's just that some will be more memorable than others. Case in point, the Sydney native rocketed into the international spotlight with her gold medal performance in slalom at the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships in Vail and Beaver Creek. Unfortunately, due to a mislabeled CD, it was the Armenian national anthem that played at the awards ceremony, prompting not only red faces among the organizing committee, but a spoof of the incident on Australia's version of Saturday Night Live. A seven-year veteran of the World Cup tour, Steggall recorded one career win with a 1997 slalom victory in Park City, Utah, while also earning the Olympic bronze medal in slalom at the 1998 Nagano Games.

PICABO STREET

One of the most prolific women's racers to ever grace the U.S. Ski Team, Picabo Street was most definitely a ski racing personality. The native of tiny Triumph, Idaho announced her retirement from competition following the 2002 women's Olympic downhill at Snowbasin, Utah, ending a career that included nine career World Cup victories, the 1995 and 1996 World Cup downhill discipline titles and a trio of World Championships medals to go along with her two Olympic medals, including the Super-G gold at the 1998 Nagano Games. In addition, Street collected a total of four U.S. National titles during her illustrious career, despite being injured and away from ski racing for two years.

MARCO TONAZZI

A member of the Italian World Cup technical team from 1981-90, Marco Tonazzi's top result came in the form of a runner-up giant slalom performance in 1986 in Adelboden, Switzerland. A native of Udine, Italy he recorded numerous top-ten finishes during his career, including a sixth place slalom effort at the 1986 World Cup Finals in Heavenly Valley, California. Following his amateur career, Marco turned his attention to the pro tour, earning Rookie of the Year honors in 1990, by virtue of a sixth place overall finish on the U.S. Pro Tour. He collected an eighth place final pro ranking in 1991, while ending the 1992 season in 10th position.

HANNES TRINKL

Yet another in the great line of former Austrian downhillers, Hannes Trinkl cemented his legacy with a World Championship gold medal in Downhill in 2001 on home turf, with a win in St. Anton. The native of St. Pankraz began his medal run in 1998, with an Olympic Downhill bronze from the Nagano Games. Other Olympic results included a sixth place Downhill showing in 1994 in Lillehammer. A 13-year World Cup veteran, Trinkl recorded a career total of six World Cup victories, five in Downhill and one in Super-G. His best World Cup season came in 1994, with a fifth place overall ranking and the runner-up spot in the Downhill standings behind Luxembourg's Marc Girardelli. That winter saw him pick up a Super-G win in Lech, Austria and a Downhill victory in Bormio, Italy. He also claimed a second place Downhill result at the World Cup Finals in Vail in 1994. Trinkl retired from competition following the 2004 campaign.

OTTO TSCHUDI

Winner of the 1983 Legends giant slalom and the 1988 Legends downhill, Tschudi began his 17-year ski racing career as a member of the Norwegian national team in 1964 and represented his country at the 1968 Grenoble and 1972 Sapporo Olympics, in addition to the 1970 World Championships in Val Gardena. He later came to the U.S. and skied for the University of Denver under Willy Schaeffler and was a member of the DU team that won five NCAA titles during his tenure. Following his retirement from amateur racing in 1972, Tschudi raced professionally until 1978 when he was named Director of Skiing at Winter Park. In 1983, Tschudi resigned that position to join Montgomery Securities in San Francisco, before setting out on his own venture in London in 1998. He has rejoined Montgomery Securities in recent years.

FRANZ WEBER

Once given the title of the "fastest human on skis" by the Guinness Book of World Records, Weber is a former six-time World Speed Skiing champion, who was clocked at 129.3 miles per hour at the peak of his career. From the late 1970s to the mid-80s, Weber dominated the sport of speed skiing, winning six consecutive titles from 1980-85, while also competing on the World Pro Tour. In 1981, he won a professional downhill and a world speed skiing title only weeks after major knee surgery.