

# Dal Ski Teams Sparkle

Joel Fournier/Dal Photo



by Joel Fournier

Recently I was lucky enough to accompany the Dal Alpine and Cross Country Ski Teams to Mont St. Marie, Que., where they were competing in the Carlton Invitational Ski Meet, an annual affair hosted by the Carlton University Athletic Department.

I was fortunate to be able to make this trip, fortunate in at least two ways. First I had an opportunity to ski, something that had been next to impossible up to that time in this area, and secondly I was able to watch some of the best young skiers in Canada competing in top flight races.

Dal's Alpine team comprising Bill Honeywell, Tom Vincent, Ralph Petley-Jones, Mike Blaxland and Andreas Josenhans had had little practice previous to this meet and the talk around the hill before the races didn't give the boys much of a chance against the powerful teams from Ontario and Quebec. What the other colleges didn't know was that the Dal team was a highly trained, dedicated group who were especially anxious to fare well against the long established teams from upper Canada.

Most non-skiers and many novice skiers are under the impression that the apres-ski life at the lodge or chalet is something else again. You know what I mean, huge blazing fireplace, overstuffed furniture, beautiful women attired in the latest off-the-slope fashions, hot spicy drinks, a host of Jean-Claude Killy types all living it up in what is pictured to be the most convivial atmosphere to be found anywhere. Sorry to shatter the myth folks, but that's just not the way it is, at least not during race weeks anyway. The night before the first day of competition was spent in long hours of waxing skis in a damp cellar with nary a hot spicy drink in sight. Bad planning you say, well maybe so but it is another indication of how much the team wanted to be prepared for the following day.

And prepared they were. The day dawned sunny and cold with very little wind, a perfect day for racing. While the racers had their practice runs this correspondent ensconced himself halfway up the hill, movie camera and Pentax in hand, looking something like a refugee from a Wide World of Sport camera crew. Four hours later I stumbled to the bottom, feet having lost all feeling,

fingers like ice cubes and a nose that had ceased to function after the first hour. Fifty-four skiers had just completed their runs in the Giant Slalom, a race that combines technical skill with a rather high disregard for the individuals personal survival. When the results were tabulated, Dal's Bill Honeywell was declared the winner in a time of 82.5 seconds, excellent for that particular course. The only unhappy note in the whole proceeding was a broken hand suffered by Ralph Petley-Jones when he fell in the second last gate during his first run. The Dal team finished fourth overall in the Giant Slalom, one tenth of a point behind University of Toronto.

In the afternoon it was the cross-country teams' turn. Over a gruelling 14 kl. course the Dal team consisting of Harry Collins, Richard Munroe and Phil Belair acquitted themselves very well. Collins finished eighth in the field of twenty-four with Belair and Munroe finishing tenth and eleventh respectively. Some readers may feel that this is not too impressive, but for a team that had three chances to practice previous to this, it was a fantastic showing.

Bill Honeywell who was en-

tered in the Skimeister (combines all four events, G.S., slalom, cross-country and jumping) competed in the cross-country also, and the very fact that he finished the race is tribute to his mettle, especially considering he had just finished competing in the Giant Slalom.

The first day ended with everyone in a pretty happy frame of mind and anxiously awaiting the upcoming slalom and jumping events. That night was a repeat of the first, more waxing, ski talk, and checking of equipment.

The weather on day two was a repeat of the previous day with the small exception of fifteen degrees, cooler that is. Still great for racing but not exactly heaven for picture takers.

Dal got off to a great start in the Slalom. After the first run, Honeywell was leading with Petley-Jones, broken hand and all, just two seconds behind. But good luck ran out. In the second run a Carlton skier edged out Honeywell by only six-tenths of a second to take first spot. Petley-Jones ended up seventh and Tom Vincent twenty-third in the field of fifty-three to give the Dal squad a second place finish in the team standings.

By virtue of his win in the Giant Slalom and second place

in the slalom, Bill Honeywell won the Alpine Individual, no surprise to his team mates and this writer. A very deserving award to a great skier. The Dal team finished second in the Alpine team results, a feat they can be justifiably proud of.

The final event on the program was the jumping contest. The four stouthearted entries in this event were Honeywell, Blaxland Vincent and Josenhans. The team knew their chances were slim but the points they would accumulate would go a long way in the final standings. For anyone who has never stood at the top of a ski jump and looked down, and over, (timidly) believe me it tends to give one that old funny feeling way down deep in the innards. It takes a special kind of nerve to actually go off one of those things on purpose. But jump they did and as expected they didn't win but they did do better than they had every right to hope for. Mike Blaxland placed sixth, Honeywell ninth, Josenhans fourteenth and Vincent sixteenth.

When the shouting had all died down and the total points awarded, Bill Honeywell was declared meet champion, beating his nearest rival by twelve points. In the team standings Dal finished third just scant points behind winner Carlton and second place University of Toronto.

It was quite a meet for Dalhousie, a meet that firmly established the team as a force to be reckoned with in the years to come. Bill Honeywell showed the style and competitive drive that had previously taken him to great heights as an international class skier. Ralph Petley-Jones showed the kind of personal courage that it takes to be a champion by skiing almost the whole competition with his broken hand. The trouble with trying to write a story like this is that you run out of descriptive adjectives to illustrate the talents of all the team members. Suffice it to say, they were just great, and I was and am very proud that they were representing Dal in this competition.

## Personal Standing in Events

| GIANT SLALOM                              | TIME             |
|---|------------------|
| 1st Bill Honeywell                        | 82.5             |
| 17th Mike Blaxland                        | 88.2             |
| 20th Andreas Josenhans                    | 89.6             |
| SLALOM                                    | TIME             |
| 2nd Bill Honeywell                        | 73.1             |
| 7th Ralph Petley-Jones                    | 75.9             |
| 23rd Tom Vincent                          | 81.0             |
| CROSS-COUNTRY                             | TIME MIN/SEC     |
| 8th Harry Collins                         | 40.21            |
| 10th Phil Belair                          | 40.45            |
| 11th Richard Munroe                       | 40.58            |
| 24th Bill Honeywell                       | 62.32            |
| JUMPING                                   | DISTANCE 2 JUMPS |
| 6th Mike Blaxland                         | 164'             |
| 9th Bill Honeywell                        | 158'             |
| 14th Andreas Josenhans                    | 138'             |
| 16th Tom Vincent                          | 132'             |
| Individual Meet Champion — Bill Honeywell | 343.2 points     |

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