

Sports Feature

Skibob catches on in Canada

Steve Menzie

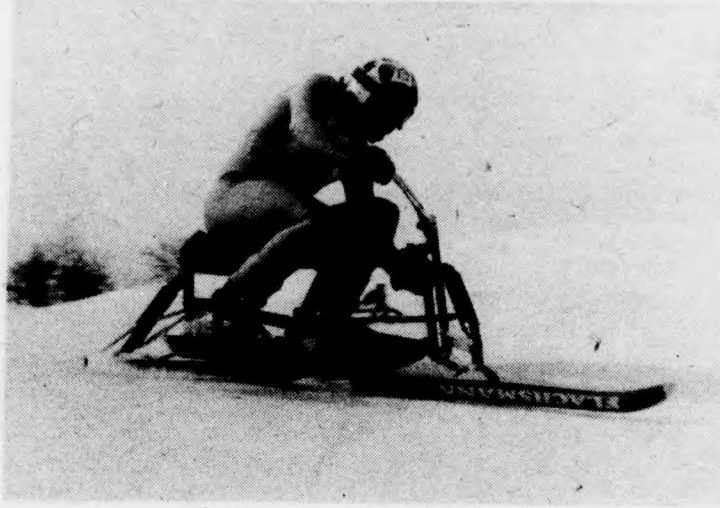
Skibobbing, while relatively new in Canada, has been very popular in Europe as both a racing and recreational sport for the past 15 years.

A skibob resembles a bicycle, with handlebars, frame, front and rear Kony adjustable shocks and instead of wheels, a 100cm steerable front ski attached to the frame and one stationary main ski 115-120 cm long.

The racer also wears two-55cm ski which can be placed on the ground for stability in slalom and giant slalom races, or can be rested on footpegs for the downhill races.

In the downhill event, competitors can reach speeds of 80-90 Km/hr.

Three York University students, Paul Hague, Rob Hawtin and Steve Menzie, are preparing for their second season as members of the Canadian National Skibob team.



The team first experienced competition at the international level last March at the 1980 International Skibob Grand Prix held in Thunder Bay.

This event was directed by coach John Nagy of Mississauga. This

event was also filmed and televised on an April edition of CBC's "Sportsweekend".

Some of the finest races, male and female, representing teams from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Switzerland and Canada competed in slalom, giant slalom,

downhill and parallel slalom over the span of one week. As result of intensive training

and sheer determination combined with hard work on the team's part, a young and inexperienced Canadian team surprised the Europeans with their performances.

The Canadian racers frequently placed two or three competitors in the top fifteen and in some heats, even broke the top ten.

By the time the week had drawn to a close, most of Canada's 7-man team had managed to accumulate World Cup points (given to the top 15 finishers) that will prove advantageous in determining the seedings of this season's racers.

At present the team is training for a European tour in January and February of 1981 that will take them to Germany, Switzerland and

Czechoslovakia with the highlight of the tour being the World Cup races in Lungotz, Austria.

For this tour and next season, the team is in search of sponsors. Fund raising and provincial assistance through the Ministry of Culture and Recreation will hopefully see the team through this season.

In order to promote the sport in Canada, the Canadian Amateur Skibob Association is negotiating with a Toronto area firm to manufacture both a racing and a recreational unit for public use.

Now, the equipment must be imported at high costs from Switzerland.

The CASBA, under the supervision of Nagy, also hopes to implement skibob clubs and regional racing programs throughout Ontario as well as develop a women's racing team for the national level.

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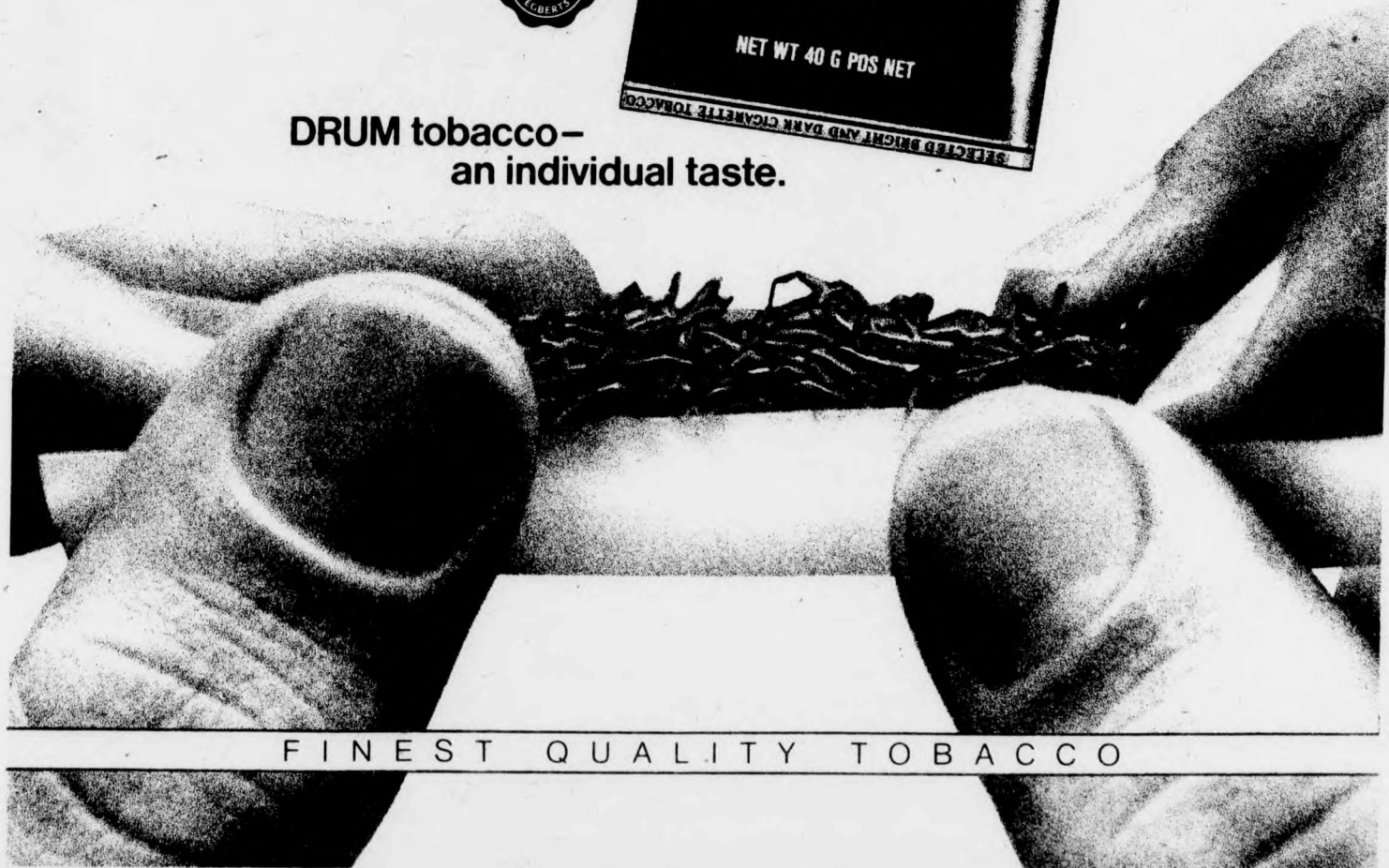
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