

# NORWEGIAN SPEEDER TOO MUCH FOR N. B. MAN IN U. S. RACES

## BREEN TWICE BEATEN BY HAGEN AT MEET ON MINNEAPOLIS ICE

News Was Shock to Saint John, and Opened Up Question of Utility of Long Reach Skates—Story of the Contest.

THERE was keen disappointment in Saint John in January, 1893, when Fred Breen, then the outstanding local skater, lost two races to Harold Hagen in Minneapolis.

A Minneapolis despatch of Jan. 14, 1893, told of the first race of Breen and Hagen. Over the bandstand in the middle of the Normanna's Club's skating rink, it said, floated the standards of Canada and of Norway. Upon the ice below the representatives of these two flags skated for the championship of the world. When the race was over the British Jack was lowered, while the flag of Norway still floated in the breeze. Hagen had won. His time was nine minutes for the three mile dash. Breen was defeated, his time being 28 seconds slower. In spite of the stinging cold there was a large crowd upon the rink to witness the contest. Supporters and countrymen of Hagen largely predominated, while the few Canucks in the crowd made up for their lack of

defeat. Both men were in the best of form. Neither had spared any severity of training to put himself in the best possible condition for the great race.

It was about half an hour after the appointed time, 8 o'clock, when the two men glided upon the ice. Hagen's herculean proportions showed to excellent effect in the light fighting grey wool sweater and tights which constituted his skating costume—the same suit in which he beat McCormick. He wore a little black cap and a pair of white gloves.

Breen was dressed in navy blue, and about his waist fluttered a bit of his country's colors. He wore a mouth piece. Hagen's face was bare. John S. Johnson of bicycle fame, and Tom Esk, the well known trainer, were chosen time keepers. McCormick acted as referee. Norseng was present in the flesh and took an active interest in the skaters.

### FROM OPPOSITE SIDES.

The race was to be a three mile dash, and the rink 4 1/2 laps to the mile. The men started on opposite sides of the rink.

"Are you ready?" shouted Manager H. R. McLellan.

There was an affirmative nod from the racers; a signal to McCormick; the shot rang out and the racers were off. Hagen made his usual running strokes right from the jump and gained a splendid momentum in a quarter of a lap.

Breen was not so successful in making a start, but got off in fair form. His peculiar style of skating, so well known to New Brunswickers—that strong, steady stroke which had been greatly admired since his arrival in Minneapolis, was noticeable at the start, and as he bent to the ice and cut away for all he was worth, the referee must have been reminded of old times.

### BREEN GAINS.

In the first lap, with both men spurring, Breen gained a little upon his rival. A rousing cheer went up from a score of Canadian lungs, and the hopes of Breen's friends were raised on high as they saw the quick but long stroke bringing its owner closer and closer to the brawny Norwegian. In the second lap Hagen, however, had made the loss even again, and in the third lap Hagen began to forge ahead. The uproar was tremendous and enough to disconcert the oldest skater. Hagen continued to gain steadily, though slowly in the third and fourth laps, and when the fifth lap was reached it began to be evident that it was the Norwegian's race.

He was one-eighth of a lap ahead of his rival on the sixth round. It was thought that Breen was hardly skating in his usual good style.

### TWO-THIRDS OF LAP.

On the 11th lap Hagen had gained half a lap, and making a little spurt took a fly past his opponent which he did apparently easily.

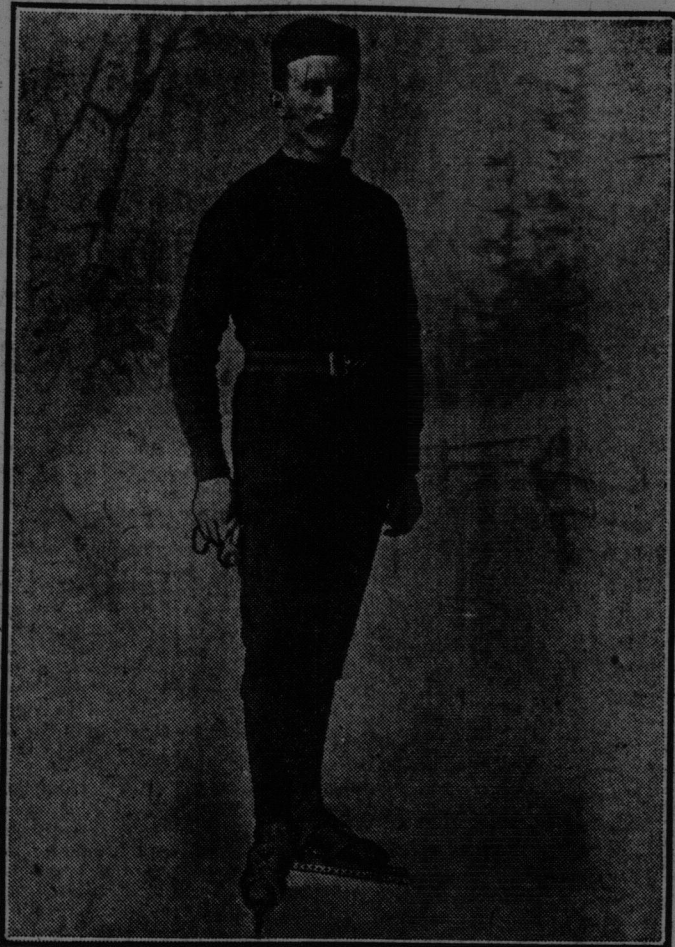
During the succeeding lap, and in the last lap he made a splendid spurt which brought him out two-thirds of a lap over the Canadian.

The crowd, the majority of whom favored Hagen, went wild with light and formed an unruly yelling mob about the champion as he made his way into the club house. The men were taken to their rooms to be rubbed down.

Hagen made his first mile in 2:55; the two miles in 5:45 and the three miles in nine minutes flat. Breen's time was 9:28.

McLellan, who managed Hagen, was jubilant and the result he said had

### North American Professional Champion



FRED C. BREEN

Rothsayer skater who won much fame in days of long reachers. He was finally victor over McCormick.

only fulfilled his prophesies. Hagen himself was as calm and collected as when he first went on the ice.

Breen in his dressing room was surrounded by a group of disappointed admirers, and the only remarks he vouchsafed was: "I have been fairly beaten."

The supporters of Breen still claimed that in the remaining races he might yet show himself the superior of the Norwegian, but the general sentiment was that Breen could not skate as well as McCormick, and that the case with which Hagen defeated McCormick in three straight races, will leave not a shadow of a chance for Breen.

The Normanna Skating Club was supposed principally of Norwegians, the club membership being picked from among the best business men of Minneapolis in that nationality. It numbers about 100 members.

### THE SECOND CONTEST.

Breen and Hagen met for their second contest on January 16, 1893, and the race ended in Hagen being the world champion. He did the distance, one mile, in 2:49.3-5, and Breen's time was 2:54.1-5. Hagen covered the first half in 1:25.2-5. Breen's time was better than any previous American record.

The Canadian showed up in fine style, says a report of the contest and rather surprised even his supporters, but he was no match for the whirlwind from Norway. There was a large crowd shoving and pushing around the boundary ropes of the rink when time came to start the race and the shot from Hugh McCormick's pistol was followed by an encouraging yell from the spectators as the men shot forward over the glassy surface. Both had a good start.

### EVEN ON FIRST ROUND.

Once around, the competitors, cheered on by the yells of their supporters, seemed nearly even. The excitement was intense as it was thought the New Brunswicker might be able to keep up the pace to the end of the race. Twice around, and the Norwegian was seen to be slowly forging ahead and thence forward his lead was on the gradual increase. Three times, four times, four and a half times the man at the blackboard checked off, and the race was over, Hagen, the winner, was literally carried into the dressing rooms by his enthusiastic admirers.

### NOT MUCH BETTING.

There was not much betting on this race as it was generally conceded to Hagen. The six or seven Saint John men who went to see the contest felt that Breen was fairly defeated.

### SAD NEWS AT HOME.

The news that Breen was defeated was a severe shock in Saint John—fully as severe as the one of the previous Saturday—deciding as it did the question of the world's championship to the disadvantage of New Brunswick's favorite.

The Daily Telegraph of that date said: "It is an old story that excuses are plentiful when a man is defeated, and it is fair to bring up the question of the merits of different styles of skates in view of the fact that Hagen, who has done some wonderful skating, has a kind of his own. 'It might be thought to be absurd to attribute Breen's defeat to the circumstance that his skates may be inferior to those of Hagen. Hagen is now stated to be a vastly superior man on the ice than Breen, but there is a growing feeling that the 'Long Reachers' are not the best skates in the world with which to round a rink, even such a large rink as the Normanna, and that if Breen had been provided with such skates as Hagen wears, he would have made a better showing against the Norwegian."

"This opens up an interesting question for New Brunswicker skaters to consider. It is the opinion of many that the Long Reachers are too low in the heel to afford a good purchase such as is required in rink skating, and that they are too clumsy on the feet. Frank Dowd and most of the best rink skaters wore blades which were higher at the heel than at the toe, and it is thought that while the 'Reachers' may be just the thing for the river, they are not 'in it' at the rink, especially when pitted against the Norwegian articles, which are the offspring of years of study of the requirements of a speed skater."

"It was also noticed that Hagen's skates, when on exhibition at the New Victoria Hotel, were so constructed



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