



Hall of Fame

Joe Berens

Inducted: October 18, 2015

Joe Berens began ski jumping at the age of 11 back in 1972, and jumped for two winters under the direction of the legendary Selmer Swanson who worked with the Minneapolis Park Board at Theodore Wirth Park.

By the end of his second season, Joe thought he would try the then 55-meter Ski jump at the Minneapolis Ski Club's Bush Lake Slide located in Bloomington, MN.

The icy start — combined with a newly constructed “side start” — convinced Joe that possibly ski jumping was not the best way to enjoy the Minnesota winters. After three “rides” on the hill, he decided to abandon the thought of ski jumping.

As an alternative Berens began an interest in gymnastics. In this sport he became very prolific and was a member of Robbinsdale High School gymnastics team. His participation with the squad led him to be a participant in capturing two Minnesota State High School championships.

Like many of those who tried jumping and became “hooked,” ski jumping was a sport in which Berens never lost interest.

While watching every Olympic Games since he quit ski jumping, Joe decided after the 2002 games to get back into the sport.

The late Jim Mylander from the St. Paul Ski Club loaned him a pair of skis. With encouragement and some tips from Olympian Jay Martin, Berens continued his interests in the sport.

By the end of the season Joe was back into the Minneapolis Ski Club and enjoying jumps from the 70-meter Bush Lake slide. This so enthused Berens that in the same year he jumped from the K90 in Eau Claire.

In 2002 and 2003, Joe participated in National Masters Class tournaments that were held in Iowa and Madison.

Berens continued his ski jumping participation and has garnered five victories in Masters Competitions in his age group.

He has become an active cheerleader of junior ski jumpers throughout the entire Central Division.

Additionally, his enthusiasm has led him to become a member of both the Minneapolis and St. Paul Ski Clubs.

Berens has become a participant in the St. Paul Ski Club's annual Christmas Vacation training camp, working with kids on the 20-meter ski jump this past winter.

As a sidelight to his ski jumping endeavors, Berens is also widely known for his growing and canning of dill pickles. His ventures in this field has sparked numerous prizes won at the Minnesota State Fair, including an award from the Gedney Food Company for a “Best Cucumber Pickle.”

With the enthusiasm inherent in Joe Berens for the sport of ski jumping, along with his love and guidance shown to junior skiers through the realm of his influence, Berens is a hands down winner for the honor of being named to the St. Paul Ski Club Honorary Hall of Fame.