

# LASTRUN

Despite being blind for half of his life, this 61-year-old has conquered the business world. He is principal owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers basketball team, co-owner of the San Jose Sharks hockey team and CEO of Gund Investment Corporation. But it is on the slopes of Aspen, Colo., that **GORDON GUND** has perhaps found ultimate satisfaction.

**Born** October 15, 1939 (age 61)

**The First Time** "Before I lost my sight, I drove across the country in 1965. I stopped in Aspen for a month and learned to ski."

**Lost Vision** "The disease retinitis pigmentosa caused me to gradually lose my sight. By 1970, I was totally blind."

**The First Time, Again** "I didn't want to give up skiing. I had to prove to myself that I could do it—I needed to push myself in as many ways as I could. But it was like learning to ski all over again. I was really nervous at first."

**Free at Last** "I ski with instructor Dave Elston. When we start a run, Dave will tell me the snow conditions and how crowded the trail is. While we're skiing, he'll say, 'Go,' every few seconds just so we're in touch. But he doesn't tell me when to turn—only if there is an obstacle or someone in my way. Within a certain envelope of space, I can be free and do my own thing. For me, skiing is one of the few times I don't have to hold onto anyone. I can move fast, unimpeded. It's a sense of freedom."

**Feeling the Mountain** "I ski better now than before I lost my sight. Without sight, you have more touch and feel. You have to rely on other senses. I love moving through the air and feeling the sun on my face—all the things I took for granted before I lost my sight."

**Collision Course** "I've only had three minor collisions in 30 years. The most memorable one was with a woman who was trying to see what my 'Blind Skier' bib said. After we collided and were dusting ourselves off, she said, 'Oh, that's what it says.'" —Reade Bailey

*Gund helped found the Blind Outdoor Leisure Development program, which teaches blind people to ski. Contact B.O.L.D. at 533 East Main St., Aspen, CO 81611; 970-925-9511.*

