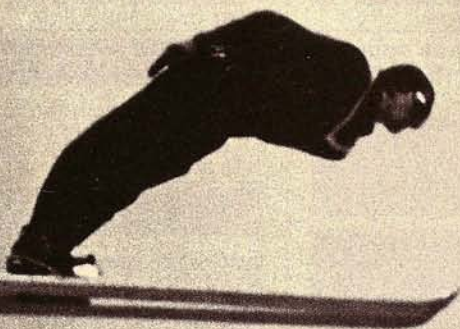


Last run

Eric Windisch



Born when the century was young Jan. 4, 1918 (age 78)

A class act Ski school supervisor at Vail, Colo., since 1968; Colorado Ski Instructor of the Year in 1993-94; nine-time national masters ski racing champion; codeveloper of the American technique in the early Sixties; member of the first-ever Professional Ski Instructors of America demonstration team in 1965; former world record holder in water-ski jumping; former German national ski jumping champion; and the first-ever ski jumper to soar through the air with both arms tucked alongside his body.

What 1921 brought "I grew up in the resort town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, and when I was 3, I skied on a pair of wooden skis that my grandfather had made. The bindings were sandals nailed to the skis."

Up in arms "I was a ski jumper on the German national team, and I hurt my shoulder three weeks before the 1949 Bavarian championships. Because of my injury, I couldn't put my arms out in front of me, as ski jumpers had always done up until that point. But I wanted to compete really badly, so I just tucked my arms next to my body. I won the event by a lot. After that, everyone copied my technique because it was more aerodynamic."

The move "After World War II, I taught skiing to Americans. They convinced me to come to America in the late Fifties. I was at A-Basin, Colo., and Red River, N.M., before coming to Vail."

Labor of love "The most rewarding part of ski teaching is to share the love of the sport. I've taught thousands of people how to ski. It's great when someone comes up to me and says, 'You taught me to ski 30 years ago. Look at me now!'"

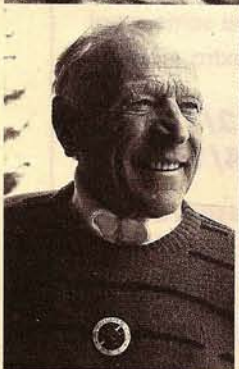
The big dance "I love the movement, the grace, the rhythm of skiing."

Mastering the possibilities "I like the camaraderie and spirit of masters racing. People are friendly, but they're fighters. They still like to win."

Family way "My favorite student is my 8-year-old daughter, Sasha. My favorite ski buddy is my wife, Elena. She started skiing 14 years ago at age 37. Now she races in masters races with me."

Been there, done that "In 75 years of skiing, I've gone through all the equipment and technique changes. It's amazing what people used to do with such lousy equipment."

A teacher for the ages "I don't know when I'll stop teaching. Everyone tells me I'm an inspiration for them. Every year I get evaluated by the ski school director. I ask, 'Should I come back?' And every year he says, 'Oh, yes.'" —Reade Bailey



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