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It Was Cold but Fun, Too, at Illiniwek

FLASHY FORM—Henry Knutsen, 27-year-old Augustana student from Norway, shows his skiing ability as he flashes by the camera at Illiniwek forest preserve near Hampton yesterday afternoon. Knutsen practically grew up on skis in the mountain town of Ek Sogn, Norway, and has competed throughout Europe in big ski meets. (Dispatch photo)

SNOW ARTISTS—Four Moline men were the eager users of the Illiniwek forest preserve hill for skiing yesterday afternoon. Braving 11-degree cold and a cold wind were, from left to right, Max Roth, 1957 Twenty-third street; Gus Magnusson, 1530 Seventeenth street; Nels Carlson, 1218 Ninth street, and Arne Pearson, 1421 Twenty-fourth avenue. (Dispatch photos by George Golson)

By RUSS KIESELE
Dispatch Sports Editor

Old Man Winter seldom favors Quad-City area skiers with lots of fluffy, white snow.

But when a 3-inch blizzard blows up such as Saturday's storm, it takes more than near zero cold and a biting north wind galloping down the Mississippi river to keep enthusiasts off the Illiniwek forest preserve hill near Hampton.

Yesterday morning and afternoon, skiers flocked to Hampton to try their skill—many on the seat of their trousers—on the long slope of the park, providing exercise for the participants and entertainment for the many Sunday auto riders who parked along Route 80.

One of the more eager young men to get out on the slope was Henry Knutsen, 27-year-old Augustana student, to whom skis are almost as natural on his feet as shoes.

Have to Ski

Knutsen comes from Sogn, Norway, a town nestled in the mountains near one of the many fjords that dot the coast.

"In my home town, you have to ski to move about in the winter," said Knutsen after a speedy descent from the top. "I've skied ever since I was old enough to walk—well, almost."

The young Norwegian, who has competed in many European meets, finds rare time to take part in his favorite sport here. He takes a full course of studies at Augustana and works the night shift at John Deere Wagon Works to make enough money to go to school.

He came to this country and studied at Moline Community college from 1946 to 1948 as an exchange student. But because he had to work to keep himself in school, he was forced to return to Norway and re-enter this country under the immigrant quota. He returned here last May.

In Underground

During the war, Knutsen served in the Norwegian underground, the Nazis having occupied the country.

He shrugged off as commonplace several dangerous ski trips over the mountains into Sweden during the war to obtain supplies for the patriotic Norway forces engaged in sabotage against the Germans.

Local skiers praised his form and declared that Knutsen didn't fall once during the many afternoon trips he took over preserve hill.

Iowans Bring Tow

A large group of Iowans from Davenport, LeClaire and Pleasant Valley, members of the Mississippi Valley Ski club which formerly was the Davenport Ski club, came over, bringing with them a portable tow.

A portable 7½-horsepower motor was set up on a platform built on top the hill by the preserve district and 1,200 feet of rope hooked to a pulley attached to the bumper of an auto.

The skiers gladly took the easy way to the top by grabbing onto the constantly moving rope.

Best Hill in Area

The Illiniwek hill is hailed as the best within 100 miles. Many of the area skiers also use hills at Indian Bluff golf course, Duck Creek, Davenport Country club and what is known as LeBuhn's hill near LeClaire.

Among the Moline skiers using the hill yesterday were three veteran stars of the old Moline Athletic club soccer team which gained national fame a number of years ago. Gus Magnusson, Nels Carlson and Arne Pearson, who played together ten years, declared, "We got too old for soccer, now we're skiing."

Though there were lots of spills and some "snowplow" nose-overs on the slopes, no one was injured. But it WAS cold.

RIDE TO TOP—Using a ski tow brought to the hill by a group of Iowa enthusiasts, skiers at Illiniwek near Hampton take the easy way to the top. The tow hauls the skier some 600 feet up to the top, saving strength for the downhill swish. With a fine snow from Saturday's blizzard, most of the area's enthusiasts tried out the park's cleared hill which has been called the best within 100 miles for skiing. (Dispatch photo)

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