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Who is the Ishpeming Ski Club?

The history of the Ishpeming Ski Club began with the organization of the Norden Ski Club on January 24, 1887. The name of the club was changed to the Ishpeming Ski Club in January of 1901. The National Ski Association was organized in Ishpeming in February of 1905. This organization was later called the U.S. Ski Association and is currently the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association. Because of the pioneering spirit of the skiing community in Ishpeming, we were made the host city for the U.S. National Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame.

The first ISC tournament was held on February 25, 1888 and a tournament has been held every year since. The tournaments were held at various hills in the area until the construction of Suicide Hill in 1925 on the property of Cliff's Natural Resources. The first tournament on that hill was held on February 26, 1926. The hill was renovated and enlarged in 1972.

The tournament in 2010 will be the 123rd annual tournament. That is a history nearly unmatched in the world of sport. Even the famous Holmenkollen ski jumping tournament in Norway that started in 1892 missed several years during the German occupation of World War II.

Skiers from the Ishpeming Ski Club have won 20 national championships, have had 13 Olympic team members and 6 FIS World Championship team members in its history. More than any other ski club, Ishpeming has 13 inductees in the U. S. National Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. Ishpeming has hosted many National Championships and international competitions over the years. Many world famous skiers have come to Ishpeming, including some world champions. Ishpeming has always been credited for putting on quality competitions on one of the very best hills in the country.

In 2009 the club is two years into a refocusing of our mission. We still strive to put on a high quality annual competition, but most of our efforts are directed at the youth in western Marquette county and providing them with an opportunity to participate in healthy outdoor sporting activities. The bowl area has five ski jumps ranging from the beginners' 10 meter hill to the famous 90 meter Suicide Hill. A big step in our new direction was to put a plastic surface on our 40 meter midsized hill for summer skiing. This was completed in October 2008. In February 2009, the club hired a new coach. Oleg Glyvka is the former Ukrainian Olympic Coach who stayed in this country after bringing his Olympic team to the 2002 games in Utah. In the summer of 2009, the 10 meter hill was outfitted with plastic so new young skiers can learn to ski. Plans are also underway to begin teaching youth to cross country ski. The existing cross country trails will be reconditioned with a few changes and additions to upgrade them. Several members of the community are volunteering to help with this effort to coach the kids and maintain the trails.

Having a professional coach, along with the plastic hills for year around training, will be instrumental in bringing our competitors to the national and international level in the next few years. The number of skiers in the club more than doubled in the first few months. In competitions they are improving their performance significantly.

The arrival of Coach Oleg has opened another door for the club. We are working with Northern Michigan University to initiate a program so college students can attend NMU and ski jump at Ishpeming as a part of the Great Lakes Sport Training Center. These will be some of the elite skiers from around the country who want an affordable education along with being involved with a high level ski jumping program. Oleg's coaching credentials has allowed this opportunity to happen. We expect our NMU skiers to be "on the podium" in the world collegiate competitions.

In order to make it easy for families to take advantage of this skiing opportunity, the club furnishes all the skiing equipment, maintains the trails and hills, provides coaching and encouragement. Each junior ski jumper requires \$1,500 worth of equipment and we do our best to provide this equipment free of charge. The skier membership fees we charge cover less than 10% of the costs. We rely on community support to accomplish this.

In the 2007-8 season, the community support exceeded \$125,000 for the year. This is a combination of sponsorships, donations, member dues and in-kind donations, but does not include the value of the hundreds of volunteer hours each year. Here is a summary of that support written last year:

"The ski club has always relied on the fantastic support from the community. An estimate of the total value of the donations for the past 12 months was over \$125,000! This includes money and "in kind" donations such as materials, services, equipment hours and anything else given to help our efforts. One area that we get significant help is in donated equipment hours. Between Sodergren Septic, Holli Forest Products, Fabco and Lindberg & Sons, the total estimated value was over \$33,000. Also UP Fabricating donated \$12,000 worth of fabricated steel, CCI, and CN Railroad donated \$15,000 of used belting, The Rock Barn donated 12 windows, Paul Argall and Lindberg each donated \$2,500 worth of topsoil, NMU/USOEC donated a \$20,000 used chair lift, OK Rental over \$1000 worth of equipment rental, Household Appliance donated a stove and refrigerator, Carpet Specialists donated 750 sq Ft of ceramic floor tile, Jackson's Hardware donated 600 feet of poly pipe, Tassons Distributing and Sign Shop donated signage and Country Village Ace donated gallons of paint.

The club also has a very dedicated core group of individuals that spend many hours building, fixing, preparing and implementing the various tasks and jobs needed to keep our efforts advancing. We also have a group of business sponsors, civic groups and individual supporters that give very freely of their time and money. The unselfishness from these people is the backbone of the club. The club makes every effort to make sure we use these resources efficiently and effectively to benefit the local community."

The club has a list of 30 to 35 dedicated sponsors that donate \$1,000 each year. These are local area businesses that understand the importance of maintaining Ishpeming's skiing heritage. Another good example of community support is the new judges' stand that the club was required to build on our 60 meter hill for hosting the 2008 National Junior Olympics. Club volunteers did the concrete footings. The steel for the stand was fabricated and delivered to the site as a donation from UP Fabricating at a value of \$11,876. Lindberg donated their 60 ton crane to construct the tower and then volunteer carpenters constructed the 12' by 20' building. Windows were donated by the Rock Barn and the rubber roof was installed for free by Ray Maki Roofing. There is no organization that can leverage a few dollars into more value than the Ishpeming Ski Club. We believe in sweat equity and have been doing it this way for 123 years.

There is only one paid person in the club and that is the coach. Everyone else donates their time and talents. The hill captain actually uses his own backhoe and snow cat to fix and groom the hills. He has been doing this

for over 30 years. He even pays for his own fuel. The motivating factor for all of this is the advancement of the sport and the kids that participate. The heritage is strong in the community as demonstrated by the support we are given.