

UNITED STATES BIATHLON
HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2010

PETE KARNS

Pete Karns grew up skiing four events in Jackson, WY. He began competing in the Intermountain Ski Association in 1955 and quickly accumulated several championship titles in slalom, downhill, jumping and cross-country as well as skimeister.

He continued to excel at the University of Utah where he won collegiate events in slalom, giant slalom and cross-country. At the NCAA Championships he finished 3rd in the skimeister rankings in 1965, 4th in the cross-country event in '66, as well as 2nd in the skimeister that year which also earned him All America recognition. In 1967, Pete finished 3rd in the U.S. Cross Country National Championship 15 k event.

Following graduation from college, Pete entered the army and secured an assignment to the Modern Winter Biathlon Training Center at Fort Richardson, AK. He quickly established himself as the top U. S. biathlete of his era. He won National Championships in 1970 and '72. Internationally, he was typically the top American, finishing 2nd in the 1969 Swiss Biathlon Championship and 2nd in the 1970 Swedish Biathlon Championships. He was a member of the American team to the 1969 Biathlon World Championships in Zakopane, Poland as well as the 1970 World Championships in Ostersund, Sweden.

Pete's most impressive biathlon results were at the Sapporo Olympics in 1972. In spite of a disconcerting false start, cancelation and rescheduling of the 20 k individual event due to a freak snow squall, Pete finished 14th overall, an Olympic result, which remained an American record for decades. In the Sapporo biathlon relay, Pete contributed to a 6th place finish, which remains the top American result in that event to this day.

After retiring from international competition, Pete continued to contribute to the sport as National Team coach. He coached U.S. Teams to the World Championships in 1973, '74, and '75 as well as the 1976 Innsbruck Olympic Team. Concurrently, he was coaching junior biathletes in his hometown of Jackson, WY. In 1973, his junior athletes swept the podium at the Junior National Championships. Two of his athletes, Martin Hagen and Rusty Scott went on to international biathlon success, Rusty with a top-ten finish at the Junior World Championships and Martin as a three-time Olympian.

Beyond competing and coaching, Pete has continued to serve the sport. He represented biathlon on the U.S. Olympic Committee from 1973-'76, served as Chief of Timing for the biathlon events at the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid and, most recently was the Chief of Forerunners for the biathlon events of the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics.