



Toronto Ski Club

The Telemark Ski Club began in 1908 with six original members. They knew little about skiing, had no proper equipment, but were eager to learn. By 1910, membership had increased to 44 properly outfitted skiers who, when conditions allowed, were seen mostly skiing in Toronto's High Park.

It was not until 1922 that the club held its first recorded meeting. Two years later the Telemark Ski Club incorporated with a new name, the Toronto Ski Club. The club retained the original initials, crest and motto. The original Telemark Ski Club objective to "scientifically study the theory and practice of ski-running, as well as reconnoitre the districts affording the best running under varying weather conditions"¹ was deemed too specific and entirely omitted the social aspects of the club. This was the main reason for the club's name change.

Two of the quaint early rules of the club included a requirement that, "...every member shall be the possessor of a complete skiing outfit including Telemark Skis, harness and ski staff [meaning single ski pole]", and that all members were to pass Tests of Skill to demonstrate that they could either side-slip or snowplow. At first a fox-hunting trumpet was used to call skiers to the slopes, a curious custom observed in Switzerland by an Englishman who had skied there. The club was originally located at High Park in Toronto, but later made its home at Summit, Ontario with operations at Dagmar, Caledon and Blue Mountain.

¹ Pg 44 - The Toronto Ski Club, Who We Are and Why, Canadian Ski Annual 1923 & 1924



In 1924 there were 84 members recorded; in 1925 "Ye Weekly Trumpet", the club's popular weekly publication outlining activities and events began. Large crowds at all club events attested to the success of this newsletter.

The Toronto Ski Club was awarded the right to run the Ontario Championships in 1934. A ski jump was built for the event. Two days before the event, there was no snow. It had melted. Fifty members moved over 100 tons of shaved ice from a local ice rink that had been resurfaced and placed it on the jump. The event was saved and seen by an estimated 10,000 spectators. The following year, 1935, the club hosted a International Invitation 4-way Tournament, and with two major events successfully undertaken, was awarded the Dominion Championships in 1936.

By the 1940s, the Toronto Ski Club was a great success. Skiing was becoming more accessible to everyone. In 1940, the club's annual fees were \$3.75 for men's senior, \$1 for junior, and a member could be completely outfitted with clothing and equipment for \$25, all quite inexpensive relative to the cost of living of the time. The strength of the club was such that it was able to provide technical or financial assistance to virtually every club in Southern Ontario.

The Toronto Ski Club and the Collingwood Ski Club merged properties to form Blue Mountain Inc. The merged company leased land to Blue Mountain Resorts for 15 years, eventually selling them the club's interest in Blue Mountain Ski Club and the rights and privileges over the property for a term of 999 years. As well, Herman "Jackrabbit" Smith Johannsen was asked to survey the terrain at Blue Mountain in 1940 and prepare a report on the layout of trails and ski tows. In 1941, TSC member Doug Firth founded the Canadian Ski Patrol System (CSPS), which has had a profound influence on skiing safety in Canada.

Today, the Toronto Ski Club is still in existence as are its ties with Blue Mountain. Its membership for the 2006-2007 season was approximately 1194, and current plans envisage the construction of a \$2.5 million clubhouse scheduled to begin in 2010. To learn more visit:

www.torontoskiclub.on.ca