



SELMER SWANSON

Born on October 5, 1900, in Minneapolis, MN but moved to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where in high school he lettered in many sports. Left Canada in 1918 to enlist in the US Army, serving in France and England during WWI. He enlisted in the US Navy at the start of WWII, serving in Pearl Harbor for the rest of the war.

Working as a postal clerk for over 35 years during night hours, it allowed him to do afternoon and evening ski coaching. Beginning in 1934 and for nearly 57 years he actively coached young ski jumpers in the Minneapolis-St Paul area. His coaching produced 21 National Nordic Ski champions and a host of Olympic and National team members.

In 1942, the first National Champion, Jack Pauley, emerged from Swanson's program. He continued with the Minneapolis winter program at Wirth Park and coached numerous skiers who have gone on to national competition. Over the years, he coached some 16,000 children in the Minneapolis-St Paul area program.

Selmer was an active member of the Norwegian-American Athletic Club, forerunner of the Minneapolis Ski Club; help found the Minneapolis Ski Club; developer of the National Junior Chamber of Commerce downhill, cross-country and ski jumping program and director from 1947-1953; member of the Central Division of the US Ski Association from 1946-1970.

A columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune once wrote:

“Swanson is a genius of the playgrounds, a natural coach. He has no degrees in recreation, physical education, psychology or anything else. But his native tongue is kid.”