

SOUTH TASMANIAN REPORT



By IVAN SAUER

LIVING south of latitude 42° S., which is accepted as the definition of Southern Tasmania, and surrounded by mountains may sound like a good thing to many mainland snow enthusiasts. But one can never get far from the sea when on an island and the mountains, although numerous, are almost all under 5,000 ft., which is not such a good thing. However, snow falls and we make the most of what we get, enjoying an average season of about ten weeks at Mt. Field National Park, where skiers congregate.

The last season was quite a good one after a late start. Racing was held on three week-ends at National Park, details of which will appear elsewhere. The Tasmanian Championships were at Ben Lomond in the north this year, and after a succession of early season injuries Southern representatives were very few, Shan Turnbull providing the only serious opposition from this quarter. The standard of skiing has shown a marked improvement over the last two or three seasons, accompanied by, or perhaps because of, a gradually awakening interest in competitive skiing.

This year should see much greater activity among the clubs which have recently adopted a new constitution for the Southern Tasmanian Ski Association. The clubs were the Hobart Walking Club, the Ski Club of Tasmania, the University Ski Club, and the Wellington Ski Club. The main reason for the change in constitution was to provide representation proportional to the membership of the club, and obtain a more active body to control and develop the sport in this area. The association will send delegates to the Tasmanian Ski Council and the A.N.S.F.

One of the first resolutions of the new Ski Association was to make every effort to get a Tasmanian team to the next interstate meeting. Tasmanian representatives in recent years could well have become known as the Tasmanian Tigers. They are about as frequently met. On the summer programme is the replacement of the inter-hut 'phones with a more efficient type, and the extension of the 'phone system to cover the usual racing run. Also proposed is a shelter hut on the top of Mt. Mawson.

Summing up, one could say that action seems to be the tenor of skiing affairs down south. A growing awareness that if our sport is to go ahead as we would like it to go ahead, certain amenities must be provided, that some effort is required; and an awareness that we are the ones who have to make the effort, which is a very healthy sign indeed.

Wellington Ski Club Notes

To write something of general interest about a club whose activities cannot mean much except to those directly concerned appears to be a rather hopeless task. But the Editor has asked for club notes, and besides we Tasmanians, with that isolated and never-heard-of complex, get the urge to shout out what we are about, whether anyone is going to listen or not.

The Wellington Ski Club had about 70 members during the 1955 season, most of whom were active, so the newly extended hut was filled to near capacity (50) on several occasions. This club has become the largest in Southern Tasmania, being an open club and always seeking new members.

Last year an exercise class was started about two months before the season com-

menced, and proved beneficial to both beginners and others. The 'bus to National Park was run as in past years for the modest fare of £1 return, and it was encouraging to see two 'buses filled on a number of week-ends. The club won the Rosegarland trophy in the inter-club competition at the Southern Tasmanian Championships. Sepp Pfund became club champion, winning the trophy donated by his countryman, Mario Brauchbar of Switzerland. A strong Swiss influence has existed in this club during recent years which has done much for the standard of ski-ing. Last event of the season was a fancy dress week-end, combined with novelty races, and proved a fitting end to a very enjoyable winter.

One happening which may mean much to the W.S.C. was the decision of the Rufus Ski Club to amalgamate with us. Their numbers were dwindling with the completion of hydro-electric works and the closing of the associated camps. Fearing for the future of their huts, they decided to hand over to us with the proviso that at least one race week-end be held at Mt. Rufus each season. To this we most willingly agreed. Mt. Rufus can boast some of the best slopes in Tasmania, and snow lasts a month longer than at National Park. Access is not so easy, however, but the W.S.C. will do what it can to make Mt. Rufus more popular with skiers.

The Rufus Club had on hand much of the equipment for a ski tow, and this will now be installed at National Park. An effort will be made to have this operating by next winter, and as there are no tows in operation in Tasmania yet it should give ski-ing a good boost. Along with a building and track clearing programme we should be quite busy until those grey days when we start watching for the snow on Mt. Wellington again. And then . . . but that's for the 1957 Year Book.

The Lake Dobson Ski Sports

It all began one summer evening when George, Bruce and I dropped in on Hans with some colour slides. You know how skiers like to get together even in summer-



H. Roth, winner of the Southern Tasmanian Downhill at Mt. Mawson.

time, and besides Hans had a projector. Conservation drifted round to the exploits of the past season, punctuated with demonstrative hip-wiggles around chairs when Hans made his usual remark, "Now back in Switzerland we used to have . . ."

"Come off that old cry," said George. "We hear that every time we visit you. This is Tasmania and we have 200 skiers, not 200,000."

"But some of the things they do could be applied here. We need more races, not this or that championship—just open races but well organised. Some of the events here seem to be run as though it was a tiresome business, and maybe it is when you are always scratching for a few shillings to get a trophy or something. The commercial interest makes it so much easier in Europe; prizes are donated by interested firms. Here the competitor pays for everything and does half the work as well. If he is really keen on his sport he doesn't mind, but we are trying to interest people in racing, and as soon as they show an interest we give them a job watching a slalom gate or something. And all he gets out of it is cold feet and a dirty look after awarding a penalty. Someone

who gets that sort of introduction to ski racing is bound to wonder if it is worth while."

After Hans got this off his chest we could only agree, for much of it was true. With such a small group of skiers it was always a problem finding people to help, particularly when the majority were beginners who felt racing was nothing to do with them. Yet we needed more races to get people interested and build up the standard.

"Maybe if we formed a committee from those really interested like ourselves we could organise an early season race next year. And we could write a few firms. . ."

Hans was working back to where he started.

"You're a super-optimist," George said, "but we'll be in it," and we were.

The Lake Dobson Ski Sport Committee was formed. We soon found a few more keen types who were given the privilege of membership for a quid each. Discussions were lengthy and involved in a search for innovations which would help the event "catch on". We had decided to place emphasis on the Alpine Combination, and the main perpetual trophy would go to the winner in this event. The other trophies were to be original.

"I have enough beer mugs on my mantelshelf," was Hans' lament.

"Caps," somebody suggested, "Norwegian wool caps for the Nordic winners and that classy continental type for the Alpine men."

"But how are we going to find out the size of their heads beforehand," came from a wet-blanket type.

And so it went on until we realised it was time for less talk and more action. Then we had a really encouraging break. A handsome trophy was donated, together with a set of racing numbers and official arm bands. And from another generous company enough chocolate to give every competitor and official a block on the day. The committee had some diplomas printed which were given to a set percentage of

finishers. These had the competitor's times and placings recorded and a photograph of the Lake Dobson area, from which the course could be traced. Very good for reminiscing. Cloth shoulder badges were produced for the place-getters in the Alpine Combination. Preparations were complete.

Only the snow was in short supply. But with only three days to starting time the barometers dropped, Hobartians reached for their umbrellas, and the Lake Dobson Ski Sport Committee heaved a big sigh. It was there in superabundance, which allowed every foot of the track cleared the previous summer to be used. Unfortunately, so much time was taken stamping a track in the fresh snow that the langlauf and jump were abandoned. But competitors in the Alpine events agreed it was a very enjoyable week-end's sport, keenly contested, but with an informal atmosphere, and the officials got their share of praise.

Perhaps everything didn't work out as we visualised. For example, Hans has another beer mug on his mantelshelf, but you may be pretty certain the Lake Dobson Ski Sports will be on again next season.

Southern Tasmanian Championships

The snowfall during late July and early August was quite heavy and the Golden Stairs-Lake Dobson slopes were well covered for this event. The weather was fair, and with the road cleared for the occasion by the Public Works Dept. a number of spectators saw the Slalom and Jump on the Sunday. Results were as follows:—

Course: Mt. Mawson-Lake Dobson; approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile; 750 vertical feet.

DOWNHILL (MEN).

1. H. Roth (W.S.C.)	1 min. 44.9 sec.
2. K. Pehtl (W.S.C.)	2 min. 9.7 sec.
3. V. Rimas (Rufus)	2 min. 13.8 sec.
4. J. Pfund (W.S.C.)	2 min. 24.5 sec.

DOWNHILL (WOMEN).

1. M. Sokolowski (W.S.C.)	2 min. 9.0 sec.
2. A. Jagoe (W.S.C.)	2 min. 12.0 sec.
3. E. Masterman (S.C.T.)	2 min. 39.1 sec.

SLALOM (MEN).

1. J. Pfund (W.S.C.)	4 min. 15.1 sec.
2. D. Wilson (H.W.C.)	4 min. 28.3 sec.
3. V. Rimas (Rufus)	5 min. 1.5 sec.
4. H. Roth (W.S.C.)	5 min. 36.7 sec.
Fastest Run: K. Pehtl (W.S.C.)		1 min. 35 sec.

JUMP.

1. K. Pehtl (W.S.C.)
2. F. Woniack (H.W.C.)