

## 1972 WINTER OLYMPICS

For the first time, the Winter Olympics were held outside of Europe and North America from Feb. 3 to Feb. 13, 1972, when Sapporo, Japan won the Olympic bid. The city, located on the northernmost island of Japan, originally was awarded the 1940 Winter Olympics, but resigned after the 1937 invasion of China. Their competition for the 1972 Games was Banff, Canada; Lahti, Finland; and Salt Lake City, Utah. Just over 1,000 athletes arrived from 35 nations, to compete in 35 events in 6 sports.

The downhill venue, Mount Eniwa, was created expressly for the Olympic competition. However, immediately after the Games, the mountain was returned to its pristine state in compliance with local conservation laws. It cost \$2 million to construct and dismantle the 2 downhill runs, 2 cable cars, and chairlift.

As the popularity of skiing and manufacturers grew, so did issues with commercialism. Three days prior to the opening ceremonies, Avery Brundage, the president of the International Olympic Committee, threatened to disqualify 40 alpine skiers who received endorsements and other deals. However, Austrian skier Karl Schranz, who allowed his name and photograph to be used in commercial advertising, was banned as an example.

Canada refused to send an ice hockey team, protesting the fact that they were not allowed to send professional players, yet full-time ice hockey athletes from Russia and other Communist countries were permitted to compete. The Canadian ice hockey team had not been taking part in international competitions since 1969 due to this dispute.

Prior to 1972, Japan had never won a gold medal at the Winter Olympics. However, they swept the 70-meter ski jumping event: Yukio Kasaya won gold, Akitsugu Konno went home with silver, and Seiji Aochi was given bronze. Additionally, Spain got their first Winter Olympic gold medal when Francisco Fernandez Ochoa won the slalom.

The U.S. placed fifth in the medal tally, accumulating 8 medals (3 gold, 2 silver, 3 bronze). Barbara Cochran won gold in the women's slalom, while Susan Corrock was given bronze in the women's downhill. The men's ice hockey team earned a silver medal and Janet Lynn was awarded bronze in the ladies singles figure skate event. The rest of the medals were won in women's speed skating events: Dianne Holum was given gold in the 1500-meter and silver in the 3000-meter races, while Anne Henning won gold in the 500-meter and bronze in the 1000-meter events.

Hank Kashiwa, a member of the 1972 U.S. Olympic Ski Team, began skiing at age 2 in New York. After coming up through the junior ranks, he attended the University of Colorado and skied for the Army for 2 years. As an amateur skier, he was on the U.S. National Team from 1967-1972, winning the 1969 U.S. National Championships and competing in the 1970 World Championships in Val Gardena.



**Figure 1 Hank Kashiwa (left) and Jimmie Heuga (credit: David Lokey)**

During the 1972 Olympics, Hank placed 25<sup>th</sup> in the downhill and 21<sup>st</sup> in the giant slalom. He moved to Steamboat Springs in 1974 and, while on the pro circuit from 1972-1981, won the overall pro title in 1975 and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1976 "Super Stars" competition.

Hank was the president of Volant Ski Corporation, a Boulder

based manufacturer of the world's only stainless steel, cap designed ski – which was designed by his brother, Bucky, at a lab in New Mexico. Hank is active as a television commentator; he announced for CBS at the 1992 and 1994 Winter Games. As the current host of "Skiing Magazine on TV," he covers winter sports during seven 1-hour segments during the ski season. Hank was inducted in the Colorado Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame in 1984.

## DENVER DEFERS THE 1976 GAMES

For the second time, the Winter Olympics were held in Innsbruck, Austria, from Feb. 4 to Feb. 15, 1976. Thirty-seven nations arrived with 1,040 athletes, who competed in events in 10 sports, with a live audience of 1.5 million. Because these Games followed the Munich Massacre at the 1972 Summer Olympics, where members of the Israeli Olympic Team were taken hostage and murdered by a militant group called Black September, security measures were tight.

Although Innsbruck ultimately wound up hosting the 1976 Winter Games, they were originally awarded to Denver. But there were a few issues that arose:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Act was passed in 1969 and established measures that had to be met on public lands
- Proposed Olympic venues kept changing: Mt. Sniktau did not meet the downhill standards, and negotiations began with Vail to develop Beaver Creek for events
- A logistical nightmare arose for transportation because both Steamboat Springs and Beaver Creek were over 100 miles away
- Funding became a crucial concern as costs rose dramatically.

Due to all of these problems, the voters of Colorado turned down funding the Olympic Games in 1972, and Denver subsequently withdrew as a host city.

Since Innsbruck merely modernized and upgraded their facilities, only \$44 million was spent on these Games; \$20 million of which was on publicity. TV technology and innovative design formats provided interviews, background landscape, and expert commentary to fans.

For the second consecutive Olympiad, Canada refused to send an ice hockey team, still protesting the fact that they couldn't send professional athletes to compete. However, ice dancing debuted as a sport, and technological advances in sportswear resulted in innovated perforated skis, sleek hooded suits, and streamlined helmets in alpine, speed skate, and ski jumping events.

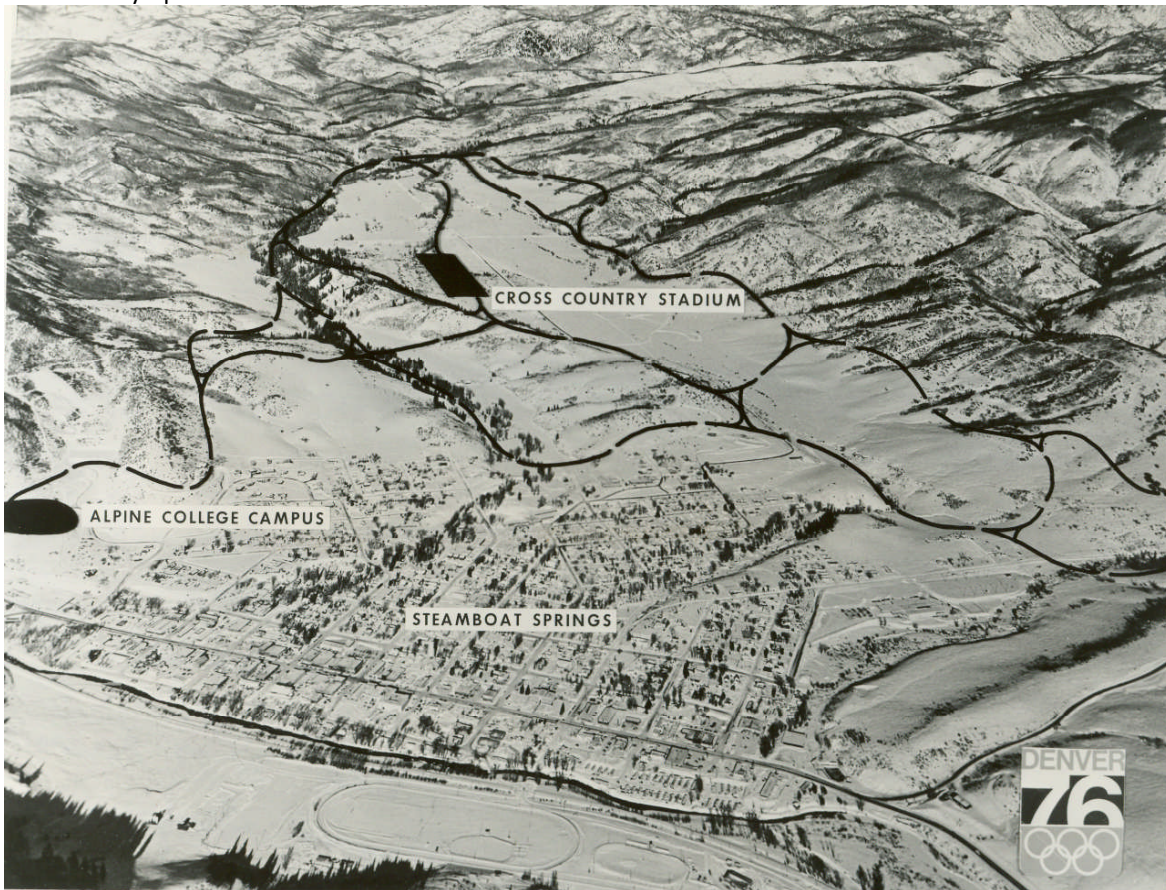
With 10 medals, the U.S. placed third in the medal tally. Most of the medals were won in speed skate events: Sheila Young, who was the first U.S. woman to medal 3 times in 1 Olympiad, won gold in the women's 500-meter, silver in the 1500-meter, and bronze in the 1000-meter events; Peter Mueller was given gold in the men's 1000-meter race; Leah Poulos-Mueller earned silver in the 1000-meter; and Dan Immerfall won bronze in the men's 500-meter event. Dorothy Harnill won gold in the ladies singles figure skating, and James Milns and Colleen O'Connor were awarded bronze in the pairs ice dancing event.

In the ski events, Cindy Nelson won bronze in the women's downhill, and Bill Koch stunned the world when he won silver in the 30-kilometer cross-country event, becoming the first and only American to win a cross-country medal at the Olympics. This monumental achievement triggered a cross-country ski boom in the U.S.

Cindy Nelson, whose father was a member of the famed 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division troops that trained at Camp Hale, began skiing at age 2. She joined the U.S. Ski Team when she was just 15 years old, made 4 Olympic Teams and competed at 4 World Championships. In 1974, Nelson broke the great Annemarie Moser-Proell's winning streak to become the first U.S. racer to win a World Cup downhill. She thrilled fans



by claiming the bronze medal at the 1976 Olympics and the silver combined World Championship medal at the 1980 Olympics.



**Figure 2 In Steamboat Springs, the Olympic village would have been held at Colorado Alpine College dormitories on the left, with the cross-country course outlined in the center**

Cindy earned several World Cup titles plus the title of National Champion seven times. She also became the first skier to win a World Cup super G. Cindy competed in all five of the Alpine disciplines and retired as one of the finest skiers to ever compete. As the first American to win a World Cup DH, a World Cup Super GS, and the first woman to hold the position of Chief of Course for a major alpine competition, Cindy is widely regarded as America's top combined skier during the modern era.

In 1979, Cindy moved to Vail and retired from international competition in 1985. For 7 years, she worked as the Director of Skiing for Vail Associates. She currently maintains an interest in other sports and non-profit organizations, and is a board member of the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Foundation and the Steadman-Hawkins Sports Medicine Foundation. Still a resident of Vail, Cindy was inducted into the Colorado Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame in 2002.



Cindy Nelson during the 1976 Olympic women's alpine event