



The
WATER SKIER

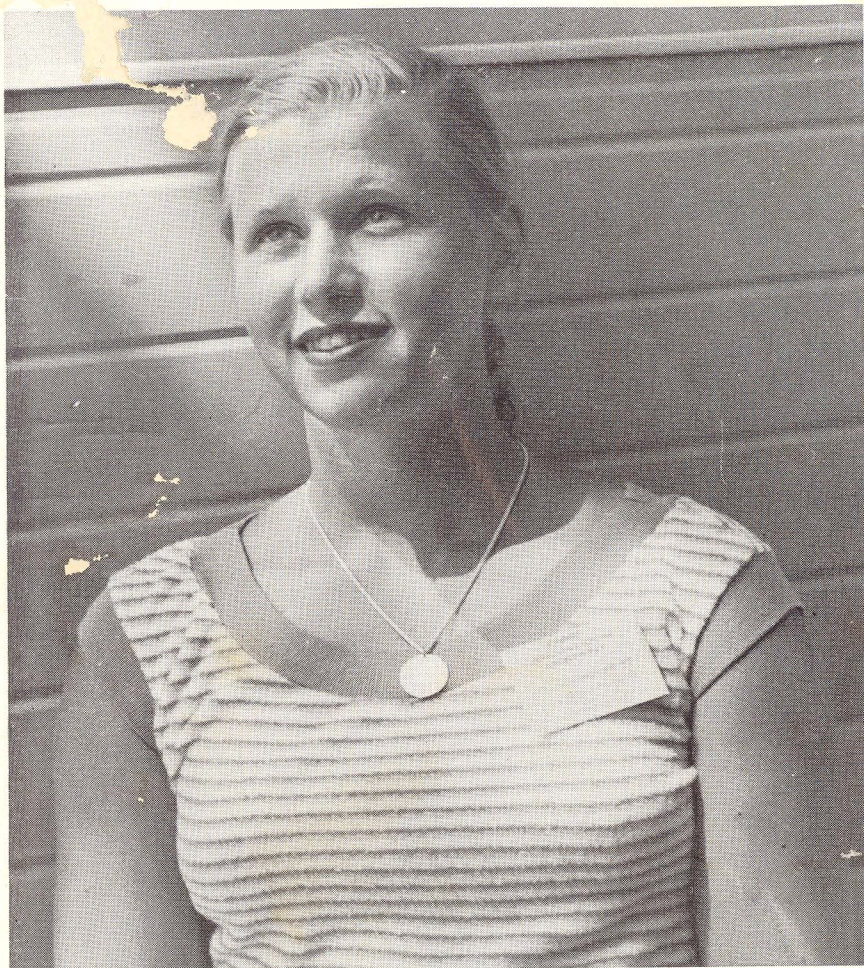
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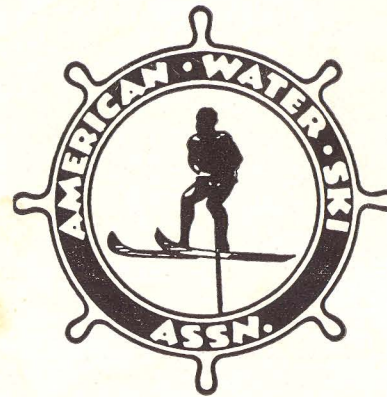
Tournament Issue





THE WATER SKIER SALUTES . . .

Leah Marie Atkins of Birmingham, Ala., who came out of retirement this year to win the women's tricks and women's slalom. The pretty blonde wife of Auburn football coach, George Atkins, showed all of her former skills as she executed perfect runs and well-timed tricks. The only woman to defeat Willa McQuire in national competition, Leah Marie was far more interested in chatting about her nine-month-old son, Tim, than her skiing prowess.



THE WATER SKIER

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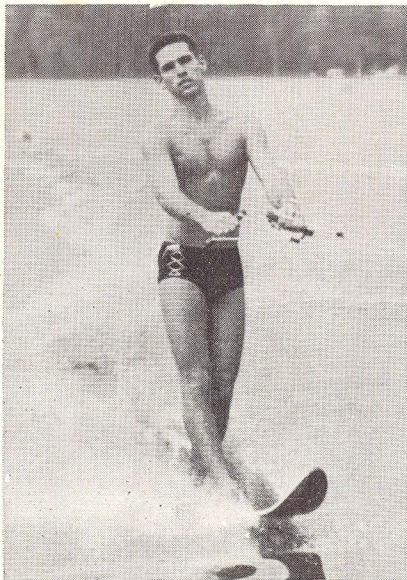
Typical of the youngsters taking part in water skiing is 12 year old Janelle Kirtley of Birmingham, Ala. Quiet, considerate and cooperative, Janelle has found skiing a fine way to develop into a top-flight athlete, and a source of clean sport and healthful exercise.

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'56 Tourney Huge Success

As a result of the National Water Ski Championships at LaPorte, Ind., August 24, 25, 26, the national titles are as scattered over the nation as is the sport itself. From California's Long Beach to New York's Long Island and from the Cypress Gardens of Florida to the tulip gardens of Holland, Michigan, 163 of the nation's top water skiers came to compete before 28,000 fans, the largest attendance in the history of water skiing competition.

None of the five divisions was without hard fought competition, many of the 16 events were climaxed with upset victories.



Chuck Emry, leaving the slalom course behind, heads for shore to be announced as winner of the men's slalom event, one of the most bitterly contested slalom championships in national tournament history.

One of the most bitterly contested events was the men's slalom. During the first trip over the Stone Lake course, 22 of the 38 entrants made perfect runs and earned the right to try the course again, this time at 30 and 32 miles per hour. Chuck Stearns, the Bellflower, Calif., youngster who was national boys' titlist last year and had never missed a slalom buoy in national competition, continued his perfect streak. Alfredo Mendoza, of Winter Haven, Fla., followed Stearns in competition and duplicated the perfect run.

It was not until three other contestants had tried and failed that Charles Emry, also of Winter Haven, added his name to the roster that would compete in a third run for the title. None of the other men qualified for the third run. Most found the return run at 32 miles per hour too much to handle.

A rain, which had been playing cat and mouse with the tournament since morning, sent a cat's paw across the lake as Stearns was coming back on his third run causing him to lose skiing speed according to the judges. They ruled that while he made a perfect run on all buoys, the speed was such at the final buoy on the return route that they could not credit him with a perfect run so awarded him 15 buoys instead of the perfect 16.

Mendoza fell. After making four buoys, the graceful former resident of Acapulca, Mexico, lost control and his chance to add the slalom trophy to his extensive collection of you-won-its.

Emry, the final man in the run-off, was faced with the need for a perfect run. He



A portion of the 28,000 people who came to Stone Lake at LaPorte, Ind., to witness the 14th annual National Water Ski Championships. This year's national drew the largest attendance in water skiing tourney history.

arose to the need and sent the slalom championship to Florida. Stearns was placed second and Mendoza third.

Leah Marie Atkins of Birmingham, Ala., 1953 national champion came out of retirement for this year's tournament. Her inactivity, if setting up housekeeping with Auburn football coach George Atkins and giving birth to a son can be listed as having time on your hands, did not cause any noticeable rust to form on her skiing ability. She came down the slalom course with a speed and grace that Coach Atkins would love to see in a halfback and spun and arched herself through a set of tricks that easily won both titles for her. Mrs. Atkins did not compete in the jumping event.

Mrs. Atkins was joined in perfect slalom runs on the first test by Mary Ann Moenert of West Palm Beach, Fla.; Elayne Roper of Fort Worth, Texas and Connie Der of Winter Haven, Fla. When the speed was increased to 28 miles per hour going out and 30 miles per hour coming back, Mrs. Atkins was the only

one to pick up all buoys. A run-off for second place was held and Miss Moenert captured the runner-up title with Misses Der, Roper and Coleen Davis of Bolton Landing, N.Y., finishing in that order.

The story in women's tricks was much
Continued on page 6



Mike Amsbry, winner of the boys' slalom and trick riding events, sails gracefully out of the final gate.

the same. Mrs. Atkins hung up a 655.2 point total and stepped back to watch the other entrants shoot at it. They missed. Second place Janie Dorwin of Minocqua, Wis., had 576, Elayne Roper earned 570.6, Elva Swoffer of Santa Ana, Calif., was awarded 454.3 and fifth place Connie Der had 358.9.

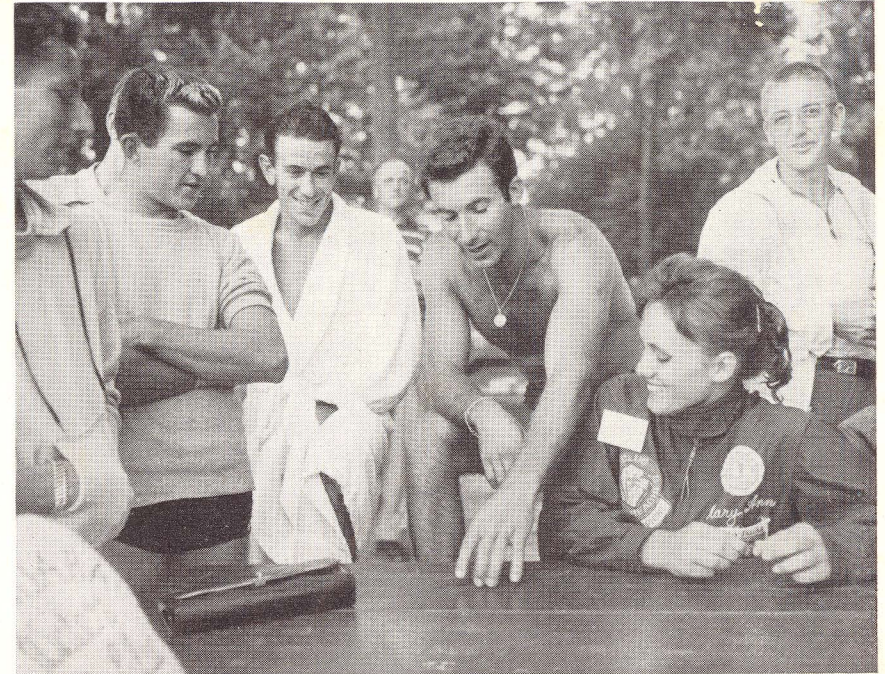
Sandra Lecklider of Holland, Mich., swooped into the women's national jumping title with a leap of 67 feet and perfect form. Elayne Roper, who also jumped 67 feet, was placed second on form. Janie Dorwin was third with 59 feet and Mary Ann Moenert and Connie Der were tied

at fourth. Mary Ann jumped 59 feet but Connie's form was considered good enough to make up for a foot shorter leap.

Alfredo Mendoza, who had set a jumping record last year of 116 feet and was shortly thereafter dethroned by Butch Rosenberg of Winter Haven, Fla., with a 125 footer, came back to best his former 116 foot mark by an additional foot and to win the men's jumping event. Chuck Stearns, trade-marked by his red and white polka-dotted swim trunks, pressed the flying bullfighter with a second place jump of 103 feet. Joe Mueller, a McQueeney, Texas skier, went 97 feet for



Winners of the girls' jumping competition receiving their trophies are, from the left, Mary Ann Grass, first; Gwen Huston, second; Mary Scheidt, third, and Sally Morris, fourth.



Alfredo Mendoza, winner of the men's jumping event and top point scorer in his division, demonstrates the technique he uses on the double-cut to a group of interested skiers. Alfredo is using Mary Ann Moenert's purse as the ramp. The on-lookers, from the left, are Roger Ray, Bobby Hughes and a young man from Texas who ran off to compete before he could be identified. Mary Ann is seated.

third place beating out Dick Robinson of Laconia, N.H., who sailed 106 feet but showed poor form. Bill Stevenson of Greenville, S.C., was fifth at 97 feet.

Warren Witherell of Bolton Landing, N.Y., set a record for himself—he won only one event in men's competition at this year's national instead of his usual two. Witherell, who has been skiing since the age of six and really doesn't need the trophies anyway, won the men's trick riding event but lost out in that hotly contested slalom test. The 21-year-old Wesleyan University letterman did not compete in jumping. He set the world's distance mark of 106 feet in 1954 but an aggravated back injury has prevented him from competitive jumping since.

Witherell's trick point total was 876, a

comfortable 40.2 over second place Jon Holcombe of Fayetteville, N.Y. Third place was won by Tom Eckrish, Fort Wayne, Ind., with 804.4 points. Mendoza was fourth with 703 points while Rodney Norwell of Park Ridge, Ill., was fifth.

Janelle Kirtley, a Birmingham bombshell at age 12, was the pride of the girls' division as she zipped over the lake trailing her flame red pony tail winning events and admiration with equal speed.

The "Flying Flame" as the 80 pounds of freckles and skiing ability came to be known, piled up a remarkable 799.6 points in tricks to dominate that event. Sally Morris of McQueeney, Texas was second with a run worth 716.2 points. Martha Ann Williams, Long Beach, Calif., was

Continued on page 8



Jack Barnett of Universal Newsreel, seated, and John Richardson, of Columbia Broadcasting System's television newsreel, pause between events to dangle their feet in the water.

third with 686.5, her neighbor, Vickie Van Hook of Stockton, Calif., was fourth with 501 points and Gwen Huston of Bossier City, La., was fifth on the basis of her 373.2 total.

The top five in the girls' slalom event had perfect runs at 24-26 miles per hour. On the second run to establish the champion, Janelle missed one buoy to win the crown. Vickie Van Hook was second having failed to turn around three buoys, Carol Ann Van Wyk of Stockton, was third on the basis of only five misses. Mary Ann Grass, Winter Haven, placed fourth with six missed buoys and Sally Morris was fifth on a fall and 12 missed buoys.

Mary Ann Grass came back strong in the jumping test and soared 61 feet to put an unshakable claim on that title. Gwen Huston's 59-footer was good for second place. Nancy Scheidt, Goshen,

Ind., went 53 feet into third place. Sally Morris had a bit of form trouble and was placed fourth after she covered 63 feet of Stone Lake. Earlier this year she set the world's record at this distance. Vickie Van Hook was fifth with 56 feet and Janelle trailed in seventh.

Mike Amsbry, a crew-cut blond lad from Orange, Calif., smiled his way through three days of tournament strain and into two national championships. Mike spun along the trick riding course in such style as to accumulate 915 points and that crown and followed up with a pair of perfect runs down the slalom track to wrap up that diadem too.

It was Bobby Kirtley, brother to Janelle, who pressed Mike most in tricks. The brush-top from Birmingham earned 690 points for second place. Glenn Sperry, Forth Worth, was third on the final standings sheet with 647.3 followed by Mike Osborn, Winter Haven, with 617.3 and Bill Wilkinson, West Palm Beach, with 574.4.

Bobby Marotti, a Winter Haven entrant, was second in boys' slalom after beating out Mike Osborn in a sudden death run-off. John Abel, Jamaica, N.Y., Tom Daly, West Palm Beach and Glenn Sperry tied at fourth.

Jack Andresen, Greenwood Lake, N.Y., doubled in the veterans' division winning the slalom and trick riding events. Andresen edged out Johnny DeMiller, West Palm Beach; Bill Martin, Orlando, Fla.; Floyd Vance, Sacramento, Calif., and Walter Pallack, Jacksonville, Fla., who finished in that order.

Andresen's 831.4 trick total stood up under the attack of other competitors easily. Joseph Templeton, Oswego, N.Y., was nearest with 681. Pallack took third place with 579.2 and Johnny DeMiller was fourth with 599.2 Finishing fifth was Henry Holmes, West Palm Beach, with 522 points.

Bill Goodhue, East Greenwich, R.I., set

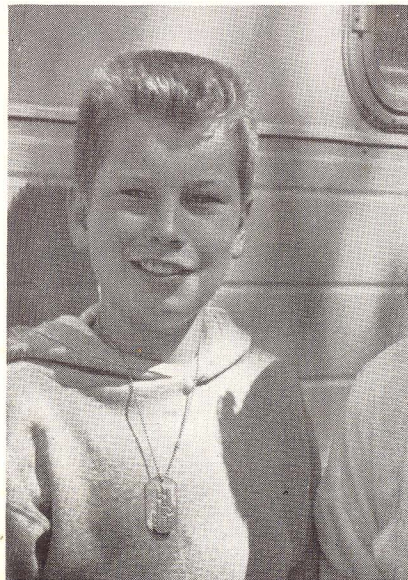
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Sandra Lecklider, winner of women's jumping competition.



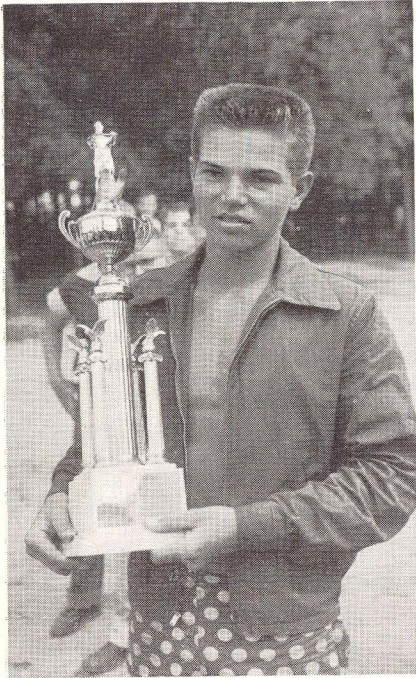
Roger Ray, winner of boys jumping competition.



Bobby Kirtley placed second in boys' tricks.



Jack Andresen, winner of the veteran's slalom, and trick riding.



Chuck Stearns, Bellflower, Calif., flash, placed second in the over-all point totals in the men's division although this is Chuck's first year of competition in the men's group. Chuck was second in jumping and slalom.

and sank a world's jumping record for veteran skiers when he jumped 85 feet but couldn't complete his run-out and sank. After he was pulled out of Stone Lake and off the record pages, Goodhue came back with a jump of 77 feet to win. Bill Martin's 74-footer was good for second. Floyd Vance of Sacramento, who holds the veterans' jumping record of 78 feet was third with a jump of 72 feet. Johnny DeMiller sailed to fourth place money with a leap of 60 feet and Jack Killillea, New Orleans was fifth with a 58 foot jump.

Mixed doubles competition was won by Tom and Janie Dorwin of Minocqua, Wis. Harold Hill, Gulfport, Miss., and Jeanette

Weathersby, Hattiesburg, Miss., were second. Bruce Parker and Diana Galbreath of Big Moose, N.Y., were third and Chuck Stearns and Martha Ann Williams were fourth.

The Long Beach (Calif.) Ski Club won the Governor's Team Trophy with the best total point accumulation of 5846. The Ski Club of the Palm Beaches (Fla.) was second with 5471 points and Wiers Ski Club (N.H.) was third with 2352.

North American Results

Sally Morris of McQueeney, Texas, won everything in sight at the North American tourney on Darts Lake, N.Y. The lithe blonde swept over the girls division like a panhandle dust storm carrying everything before it. Sally packed the jumping, slalom and trick trophies in her suitcase as she headed for LaPorte, Ind., and further glory.

Charles Witherell of Bolton Landing, N.Y., younger brother of Warren, won boys' tricks, Bayard Moffitt, West Palm Beach, Fla., topped the boys' jumping event and Bill Hewson also of West Palm Beach won the slalom.

Warren Witherell was in his usual form, winning the men's slalom and carrying away trick honors with 940 points. Joe Mueller's 106 foot jump was the best the men could do in that event. Sarah McKeane, another of the McQueeney crew, won the women's tricks while Elayne Roper of Fort Worth, Texas, had the best jump and slalom run.

Dr. Tom Daly, West Palm Beach, Fla., won veterans' tricks yielding the jumping and slalom honors to Bill Goodhue of Providence, R.I. Diana Galbraith, Suffern, N.Y., and Bruce Parker of Darts Lake won the mixed doubles event.

Tournament Snapshots

Charles Emry, after winning the men's slalom national championship, receiving a traditional victor's dunking in Stone Lake at the hands of Chuck Stearns, who took second place in the slalom, and Alfredo Mendoza, third place winner.

Wally Pallack preparing to leave for the West Coast where he will report for duty with the U.S. Navy and sail to Hawaii's Pearl Harbor. Wally plans to join forces with members of the newly formed Hawaiian ski group to make water skiing as popular in the South Pacific as surfboard riding and hula dancing.

Dick Alm, past-president of the LaPorte Ski Club, who amused the crowd at the Nationals with his clown antics and who, with Ted Hupp, skied from Michigan City to Chicago with an invitation to Chicago's Mayor Daley to attend the tournament, announcing that he plans to ski across Lake Michigan, lengthwise, from Chicago to Mackinac Island!

Warren Witherell, taking time out from his duties as tournament chairman, announcer and judge to successfully defend his national men's tricks championship.

Little 9-year-old Martha Ann Williams, after taking home several trophies in competition against young ladies almost twice her age, building sand castles with two new-found LaPorte playmates.

Leah Marie Atkins, new national women's tricks and slalom champion, more interested in telling newsmen about her 9-month-old son, Tim, than talking about her brilliant winning performances.

Joe Templeton, runner-up in tricks in the veterans' division, lending a hand to LaPorte radio station reporters broad-

casting from the tournament site. Did a fine job, too.

Alfredo Mendoza, "The Flying Bull Fighter," vaulting off the jump ramp on a practice run, discovering that one ski is pointing directly downward toward the water, kicking off the wayward ski in mid-air, landing and riding out on one ski as casually as if the entire maneuver had been rehearsed.

Janelle Kirtley, 1956 National Girls' Champion, graciously posing for photographers who snapped scores of pictures of "The Flying Flame" and recorded her ski talents on hundreds of feet of newsreel film.

The hard-working LaPorte crew at the starting dock helping skiers off and bringing them back to shore.

Charles Tilgner standing lonely vigil on the judges platform overlooking the slalom run.

Harry Williams launching boats, loading boats, serving as chief cook and boat washer.

The horde of newsreel cameramen from the movies and TV that managed to give us excellent coverage and still not interfere with the running of competition.

The great piles of barbecued chicken that vanished Saturday night.

John Mendicino, official photographer, driving back from Michigan City to pick up his camera gear left on the lawn of the country club.

Dave Thompson, leaping fully clothed into the water to assist Charles Emry after that fall from the jump ramp.

Mueller Jumps 122 feet

Joe Mueller of the McQueeney (Texas) Ski Bees set the South Central Regional Tournament on its collective ear by jumping 122 feet to come within three feet of the present record.

The regional meet drew its largest entry, 104 contestants from four states.

Mueller went on to win the men's division with a first place in tricks to match his jump mark and a good showing in slalom. John Joseph was the slalom champ. Elayne Roper of Fort Worth, Texas set a blistering pace in the women's division winning all events handily.

Sally Morris, a McQueeney Ski Bee, romped through the girls' tests for three solid triumphs. Glenn Sperry, a Fort Worth lad, had a bit of trouble with Bill Mueller and Bill Jackson in jumping, finishing third behind them, but was a ski-away in slalom and tricks.

Veteran skiers divided the laurels with Van Elkins of Dallas, Texas winning the slalom, Jack Killilea of New Orleans, La., capturing jumping honors and Richard Sperry of Fort Worth taking down the tricks.

Victors in Rickshaw

The Aston Ski Club of Fort Worth, Texas won the "Richshaw" tournament at Lubbock, Texas piling up twice as many points in competition as the second place Eagle Mountain team.

Individual over-all winners were: Glenn Sperry, boys; Dick Sperry, veteran men; Bill Booth, men; Margaret Rodgers, girls; Mary Elkins, veteran women and Elayne Roper, women.



Sally Morris



Elayne Roper

Vicki Van Hook Western Queen

Vicki Van Hook, the quiet little blonde skier from the Long Beach (Calif.) Water Ski Club, had little trouble retaining her domination of the girls' division along the western seaboard as she swept all opposition before her in the West Coast Regional Tournament. Young Vicki also clipped a foot off the world's record for girls by sailing 61 feet.

Mike Amsbry, another Long Beach member, showed the way in the boys' division by winning all events.

Chuck Stearns, a newcomer to the men's division, made himself right at home among the older set by winning the trick riding event and posting the best jump of the day with a 98 foot leap. Chuck was beaten in the slalom, one of his specialties, by Mark Taggart.

Barbara Allman won the women's jumping and slalom events and was third in tricks. Elva Swoffer showed the best trick riding score.

Floyd Vance paced the veterans with victories in jumping and slalom and a second in tricks. Bill Morris won the trick riding event.

Chuck Stearns and Martha Ann Williams won the mixed doubles competition. Martha Ann also won the pee-wee competition.

New Jersey Winners

Michael McNamara won the men's over-all title of the New Jersey State Water Ski Championships at Red Bank, N.J., by capturing the top spot in jumping and placing high enough in tricks and slalom to accumulate 920 points. McNamara's point total shaded second-place Louis Abel by 10 points and showed a

146 point bulge over Frank J. Manson, who finished third.

John Abel, of the boys' division, was forced to enter the men's division to find competition in tricks. Young John didn't find much competition even there. He won going away. The story was much the same in slalom and jumping where he bested his own age bracket.

The women's division was hardly a contest. Dot Sutherland won tricks and slalom. Connie Hoyt, who finished second in the same events, was the only other woman who took part in two events. Although seven women were entered, five of them were content to run the slalom course and call it a day. None assayed the jump ramp.

Sacramento Results

Tournament results from the West Coast are beginning to have a familiar ring about them as the same four skiers continue to defy the law of averages and competition. Mike Amsbry, Vicki Van Hook, Chuck Stearns and Floyd Vance won their divisions in the Northern California Championships on Lake Washington in Yolo County, Calif. Gloria Abben of Sacramento enlivened the competition by defeating Barbara Allman, a consistent winner, in the women's division.

Mike Amsbry swept through the three events of the boys' division, as did Vicki Van Hook in the girls', Chuck Stearns in the men's department and Floyd Vance in veterans. Gloria Abben had the best of it in jumping and tricks but yielded to Barbara Allman in slalom.

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Midwest Tourney

Tourney records in four divisions were broken in the Midwestern Regional tournament held at Walled Lake, Mich. Tommy Tuttle set a new record for men with a jump of 94 feet. Janie Dorwin gave the women a new mark to shoot at by jumping 54 feet. Ed Wilter sailed off the ramp and came down 63 feet later for a new boys' record and Nancy Scheidt's 48-footer topped all previous girls' records.

In the overall totals, Tommy Dorwin led the men and sister Janie Dorwin had the most points in women's competition. Bill Vesey's score was the best in the boys' division and Nancy Scheidt led the girls. Walter Neuron's veterans' division performance earned him the top rung on that ladder. There were 117 entrants, an all-time high for Midwest tourneys.

New Records

Girls' Division

Sally Morris of McQueeney, Texas, set a new world's jumping record of 63 feet for the girls' division at the North American Water Ski Tournament at Darts Lake, N.Y.

Veterans' Division

Floyd Vance of North Sacramento, Calif., set a new world's jumping record for the veterans' division of 78 feet during the West Coast Regional Tournament held in Lodi, Calif.

National Sidelight

Mike Osborne skiing barefoot across the sand beach and into the water. A sure way to remove bunions.

Editorial Comment

During the national tourney at LaPorte, Ind., we held quite a few informal editorial conferences along the beach, the starting dock, in the press trailer and perched in the AWSA outboard.

These chats with skiers brought up several points that, we hope, will help us bring you an even more interesting magazine.

Most skiers wanted to have more detailed facts on tournaments, the distances jumped, the tricks performed, boat speeds on runs and so forth. We concur wholeheartedly. However, it is impossible for us to go trekking about the country covering water ski meets. So, we must again call upon you, the skiers in the field, to serve as our eyes and ears.

WHEW!



This young fellow, asleep at the victory banquet following the running of the National Water Ski Championships, rather typifies the feeling of many skiers as this season draws to a close. It has been a big year for tournament skiing, next year will be bigger and we'll need lots of rest to be ready for it.

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