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With the Athletes

SKI RUN NEAR HERE

RESIDENTS of Des Moines and central Iowa may be able to ski next winter without traveling far.

Plans have been made for a ski area on a 25-acre tract one mile south of Booneville, which is 17 miles west of Des Moines.

Gari McKibbin, 200 Beaver Road, formerly of Guthrie Center, has spent the last six months in studying other ski areas, gathering information and figures and in planning the ski slides near Booneville.

He hopes to have six ski runs in operation by Dec. 1.

TWO RUNS for advanced skiers (25-35 degree slope), two for intermediates (12-20 degrees) and two for beginners (6-10 degrees) are planned.

There will be an electrically controlled ski rope to pull skiers to the top of the slopes.

Snow will be made artificially with a machine, which needs only water and compressed air to manufacture a product said to be superior for skiing than any that nature can provide.

This machine needs 150 gallons of water a minute when it is in operation. McKibben says there is a plentiful supply at the site.

The snow is placed on the runs by means of spreaders attached to trucks.

AT THE START McKibbin says he will have 300 sets of ski equipment, consisting of skis, boots and poles available for rental.

The probable charge for this will be $2.75 a day. The fee for using the slopes will be from $2 to $3, the latter charge for the advanced run. But the runs will be lighted and there will be a reduced rate for night skiing.

The advanced run will be from 1,000 to 1,100 feet long and the start will be from a height of 150 feet, but may be made higher at a later date.

A LODGE 125 by 36 feet is planned. It will house a ski equipment room, a lounge and a small kitchen and restaurant at which coffee, tea, cocoa, soft drinks and sandwiches will be served.

Instructors who will give free lessons to beginners will be provided and liability insurance covering all injuries to patrons will be carried.

"However, injuries in skiing that are severe enough to keep a person from work for two days or more average only one-tenth of one per cent," McKibbon explained.

"That is less, percentagewise than for football, basketball and most other sports.

"Most injuries occur to advanced skiers who become careless and most happen after 3 p. m., when skiers, who are making a day of it — and many do — become tired and therefore their reflexes are not so good."

MCKIBBIN, who has numerous statistics at his command, says he first became interested in skiing when he visited an area in Colorado and saw the large number of persons in the waiting line.

"Skiing is one of the fastest growing sports," he said. "In 1954 $20 million was spent on skiing. Figures for the 1960-61 season are not available but in '59-'60 $64 million was spent, an increase of $40 million in six seasons.

"These figures do not include money spent for travel or lodging."

AT THE PRESENT time, according to McKibbin, there are 10,075 ski areas in this country.

"Fifty of them are what one called super areas which provide overnight lodging, skiing and luxuries like Sun Valley, Idaho, and Aspen, Colo.", he explained.

"There are 750 like the one we plan here.

"One of the things that surprised me when I began studying this subject is that the average skier is 32 years old. I had thought it would be less than that.

"And, yes, I forgot to mention that we plan a 13-15 week season starting on Dec. 1. That takes us through the winter months and most of March."

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