

## NO SNOW, BUT CHICAGO AREAS DID ALL RIGHT

### Two New Resorts Open —Different Results

BY JAMES FITZGERALD  
Altho 1968 already had been designated as the year of the Olympics by ski fans, it became known as the year without snow to the operators of ski areas in Chicagoland.

While the city had more than enough snow during the giant blizzards of early 1967, the resorts in this area received little help from nature during the latter part of 1967 and the first few months of 1968.

Despite the lack of snow, things weren't all bad for the area operators.

#### Week-End Crowds Off

Wilmot Mountain in Wilmot, Wis., had one of its best years, tho the crowds on week-ends were down a trifle from previous years. Midweek business at Wilmot, however, showed a sharp increase.

"It seems we ran into bad weather almost every week-end," explained John Stopa of Wilmot. "It either was windy, looked like rain, or simply was too cold."

Other areas had the same problem. The brisk winds blew snow off the runs and maintenance crews were constantly at work trying to keep up with the drifting snow, almost all of which was manmade.

Two new areas opened in the midwest with Thunder Mountain becoming the first ski area in the city limits when it opened its gates at Narragansett and Fullerton avenues. The first season was hardly a smashing success, due mainly to lack of snow and a few growing pains, but the owners have high hopes for the future. Providing, Chicago gets a little snow.

#### Have Big Plans

Plans for Thunder Mountain include a motel unit and swimming pool plus a chairlift to augment the rope tows now in use. The area was open only for a few days this season, but a full summer of work should be enough to get out most of the kinks that developed this year.

The other new area was Schuss Mountain in Marcellona, Mich., and the area bids fair to catch or surpass Boyne Mountain and Boyne Highlands as the skiing center of western Michigan.

Even Schuss had its opening day troubles, tho, when a few snowmobiles ran wild on the first day, putting a horse and several cars out of commission. The owners wisely decided to curtail the use of snowmobiles in the village.

#### Snowmobiling Popular

Snowmobiling became one of the most popular winter sports during the season. However, most Chicago-area dealers were caught with huge inventories. People were dying to try out the machines, but there just wasn't enough snow to make it possible.

Another new area to make its debut in the 1967-68 season was Snowmass-at-Aspen, a multi-million dollar glamor resort near Aspen, Colo.

The opening week-end at Snowmass was also a little hectic, but the area got rolling after a few weeks and should be one of the best in the country in a few years.

Don't be surprised if those popular bumper stickers are changed for the next ski season. Instead of reading "Think Snow," they'll be saying, "Bring Snow!"