

Famous Beloit Landmark to Disappear Soon



Big Hill Ski Slide Has Been Purchased for \$500 by the Snow Flake Club of Westby

Ski Scaffold Sold to Westby Group

(Special to The State Journal)

BELOIT—The sands of time apparently have run out for Beloit's famed Big Hill ski slide.

Sale of the 128 foot high steel scaffold was approved recently by Beloit city council. Purchaser was the Snow Flake Ski club of Westby, which offered to buy and remove the slide for \$500. The contract currently is being negotiated.

Towering over Rock river, the huge structure is located in Big Hill Memorial park, about 4 miles north of Beloit on Afton road. It last was used in January, 1955, when the 17th annual North Central invitation meet was contested on its slope. Since then, however, a lack of snow, apparent loss of interest locally in the sport, financial difficulties encountered by the Beloit Ski club, and maintenance problems have led to its decline.

Dedication in 1939

Dedicated in January, 1939, the slide's 192-foot runway has tested the skis of some of the top figures in national and international jumping circles. In fact, a co-holder of the former jump record of 212 feet was the immortal Torgler Togle, who died in action in World War II. Oddly enough, Togle's brother, Art, won the last two Class A championships in the 1954-55 meets as a member of Chicago's Norge Ski club.

Torgler Togle, then out of New York, and Eugene Wilson of California, set the 212-foot mark in the 1940 meet. Togle won the title over Wilson by a few points that year.

The standard resisted jumper's efforts until 1951, when a former Beloit, Jim Running, jumped 216 feet—and that record remains on the books.

Crowds of up to 10,000 persons viewed the various tournaments

held at the slide. When skiing enthusiasm was a running high, Beloit was regarded as a leading winter sports center in the state. Entry lists attracted almost 100 competitors for some meets, and world-famous skiers vied for honors.

Top Slide Since '09

But Big Hill was noted as a ski meet site long before the steel scaffold was built. Between 1909 and 1916, it was the scene of several state and national tournaments. Jumpers riding down the old wooden slide, which was 93 feet high and 150 feet long, reached a distance of 157 feet.

City Manager A. D. Teller, who still is Beloit's top administrator, performed the ribbon cutting ceremonies for the 1939 dedication program. Present for the inaugural meet was Ragnar Orntved, former world's champion. And making the inaugural jump was Knute Johnson, ski captain of the Beloit club and former title holder at Lake Placid.

Although its days as a landmark in the southern Wisconsin area now are numbered, the slide will not fade from sight in the state. Snow Flake club officials plan to erect it in place of their old wooden scaffold.

The Westby club has about 130



Calendar

SUNDAY, JAN. 3

Entertainment

Strands: "Goliath and the Barbarians" at 3, 6:40, and 10:10; "Career" at 1, 4:30, and 8:10.
Eastwood: "Journey to the Center of the Earth" at 1, 5, and 9; "Yellowstone Kelly" at 3:25 and 7:25.
Orpheum: "Operation Petticoat" at 1:45, 4:20, 7:10, and 9:55.
Capitol: "The Miracle" at 1, 3:15, 5:10, 7:40, and 9:55.
Majestic: "Lil' Abner" at 2:45, 6:15,

and 9:50; "The Young Land" at 1:15, 4:45, and 8:20.
Middleton: "The Nun's Story" at 1, 5:30, and 10; "Hercules" at 3:45 and 8:20.
Play Circle: "Attila," starting at noon.

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