

Billy Kidd

1964 Olympic Slalom Silver Medalist



Long time supporter and frequent convention goer Billy Kidd will be joining us again this year. Billy is a skiing legend and became an American hero in the 1964 Olympics when he and teammate **Jimmie Heuga** became the first American men to win Olympic medals in skiing at Innsbruck, Austria. From Stowe, Vermont, Billy raced internationally for nine years on the U.S. Ski Team, becoming the first person to win both Amateur and Pro World Championships in a single year, 1970. Billy, inducted into the US Hall of Fame in 1976, has been Steamboat Resort's Director of Skiing for more 30 years.

Born in Burlington, Vermont, he grew up water skiing on Lake Champlain. At the age of five he moved to Stowe, where his father ran the Buccaneer Ski Lodge and taught him to ski on Mt. Mansfield's National Trail. His first pair of skis were wooden hand-me-downs with Bear Trap bindings and six-foot leather thongs wrapped around the foot. Disqualified from his first race at Mad River Glen because he was only 12, he came in 66th in a field of 120. Two years later, coached by Austrian instructors, he made the Eastern National Junior Championship Team. Graduating with honors from Stowe High School in 1961, Kidd postponed admission to MIT in order to train. For nine years he raced internationally on the US Ski Team, while earning a 1969 degree in economics from the University of Colorado.

"Winning is mostly who's best at handling the variables," according to Kidd, whose racing career was plagued with ankle injuries. He bruised his right ankle while training for the Eastern Championships at Whiteface, New York (1963). He broke it at Sestriere (1964). The ankle collapsed at the Colorado Cup at Lake Eldora (1965). He broke his left ankle at Kitzbuhel (1966). He credits a broken right leg at Portillo prior to the FIS games (1966) with giving him a month in traction and seven months in a cast to "watch ski movies and devise the perfect way to go around the poles." Says Kidd, "I had time to think and it's the thinking that makes the difference."

Billy has been an ardent supporter and participant in the Jimmie Heuga Express program, an event which generates funds for the Jimmie Heuga Center in Vail, Colorado. The Center is known for "reanimating the physically challenged," providing support and assistance for individuals diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis.



Classic Billy — skiing the Champagne Powder of Steamboat.

Billy has been involved in the Special Olympics programs since 1977, an international year-round program of sports training and competition for mentally challenged individuals. More than one million athletes in over 160 countries train and compete in 26 Olympic-type summer and winter sports. "The generous donation of time and expertise that Billy Kidd is making to Special Olympics athletes is an example of how national sports figures inspire greatness in the athletes we serve," slated **Timothy P. Shriver**, President and CEO of Special Olympics.

Promotion of Steamboat has involved Billy in stunts like sailing a Hobie Cat catamaran down Mt. Werner or skiing down a mound of crushed ice covered with snow imported from Steamboat Springs on the "Today Show." When you visit Steamboat, you'll find Billy up there on the mountain, wearing his trademark hat, and waiting to meet a new group of skiers to introduce to his mountain and to talk about the sport he loves – skiing. Billy truly exemplifies the spirit of the Far West Ski Association's Jimmie Heuga Award. Like his friend Jimmie, Billy has demonstrated courage and skill on the ski slope, in the human body, and with a courageous heart. ■

