



IMPORTED FROM NORWAY

## THE HISTORY OF TELEMAR SKIING

From the Norwegian Backcountry  
to America's Ski Slopes

Telemark skiing is the fastest growing winter sport in the United States. Ironically, it is also one of the oldest styles of skiing ever practiced; and therein lies its appeal.

Telemark skiing was introduced long ago in Norway as a means of winter transportation, primarily for backcountry woodsmen. Their "equipment" consisted of wooden skis attached by twine or leather straps to the toes of their boots. This free-heel system allowed the skier to walk over level snow quite easily, however, it made turning on descending slopes risky. Gradually a drop-kneed style of turning developed that permitted the skier to carve turns into the hills.

Later this method of turning was utilized as a landing position for those daring enough to try ski jumping. The flexed knee provided shock absorption for the jump landing, and eventually the style became a criteria for scoring jumping competitions. In the 1860's one such jumper named this position after the Telemark region of Norway where it was developed.

When bindings with secured heels were developed new turns such as the Christiania (stem christie) evolved and the telemark turn was once again relegated to the backcountry. Still, it remained the most versatile of all skiing styles. Throughout this century backcountry enthusiasts in the United States used the telemark technique to explore untracked winter territory, which involved climbs, traverses across exposed slopes, and steep descents through powder. Only telemark skiing gave the skier the freedom to tackle such variety in terrain.

The recent addition of metal edges to cross-country skis sparked the current boom in telemark skiing. This equipment development broadened the range of ski-able terrain to include the moguled and manicured slopes of alpine ski resorts. Telemark skiers equipped with free-heel bindings, metal edged skis, and knowledge of the graceful telemark turn can now ski everything from cross country trails to downhill slalom courses.

The 1987 VIKIN FJORD NATIONAL TELEMAR CHAMPIONSHIPS showcases skiing's newest frontier by taking telemark racing to its greatest limits of speed and competition. With all the slashing edges and flashing Lycra in this international event it can be difficult to remember just how far the sport has come from the backwoods of Norway.