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Snow Sports from Many Angles

The Finnish Society for Sport History, Finnish Society of Sport Sciences and the Department of History and Ethnology, and the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences organized Ski Congress 2017, from the 1st to the 4th of March in 2017 in Jyväskylä, Finland. In the Congress, the concept of skiing was understood comprehensively as winter sports on snow and outdoor recreation, which meant that in interdisciplinary focus were in all forms and ways to move that belong to the tradition of winter skiing, skiing tourism included. Along with dealing with physical and mental welfare, attention was also being paid to the international relations and societal significance of skiing.

Keynotes

Keynotes opened the thematic of the Congress from many angles. They analyzed sports in wider social contexts. For statesmen, sports could be a means to do politics, for women it could open inroads to the worlds of publicity and sponsorship, for the general public it could be a builder of values or source of income.

Many heads of states have had and still have a personal relationship with sports. Prestige and honour could be had from the fields of sports but sports has been used as a tool of policy-making. Kalle Virtapohja Ph.D., nonfiction writer (The Sports History Society of Finland) opened the thematic by analyzing President Urho Kekkonen's (1900–1986) relation to skiing in his talk titled *Presidentti Urho Kekkonen – hiihtävä presidentti*. In his early years Kekkonen was known as a high-jumper and sports leader. As a President he was a firm man in power and skillful in foreign politics.

In his popular image Kekkonen succeeded in maintaining his popular and youthfulness, and he became known as skiing, fishing and hunting President. It was not only about cherishing physical and mental welfare but consciously building a popular image and doing politics. By skiing Kekkonen developed his social relations and an image of tireless and youthful statesman. Kekkonen used skiing, as well as, hunting and fishing as soft tools in foreign politics. Kekkonen made with sports and recreation at his times what the heads of states also do in the 21st century.

X-games is an annual commercial sports event in which sportsmen and women compete both in summer and winter sports. It was started in 1997 and it has become more popular from year to year among the spectators and competitors. At the same time also the degree of difficulty of performances have risen and the demands of skill expected from competitors have increased. Inter alia, long and spectacular jumps with the snowboard characterize the event.

In 2016 women took part in several Winter X-games sports. Gertrud Pfister, Professor, (University of Copenhagen) approached winter sports from gender perspective. In her talk, she asked the question *Are Dare Devils always Male? Women's Participation*. Pfister brought women and their stories to the fore. Space given to the Winter X-games in media and self-reflections of the sportswomen were in focus as Pfister reconstructed the development of sports and the role of media, athletes, and sponsors.

There was a flow of immigrants to USA in the last decade of the 19th century from Scandinavia. They brought with them Scandinavian skiing philosophy which is called by E. John B. Allen, Professor emeritus, "Ski-idraett". In his talk titled *Immigrant Values and New World Mores: On Skis in America 1890– c. 1920*, Allen told that the Scandinavian model of

thought influenced on early American skiing. However, American values and practices changed Ski-idraett -philosophy. Allen analyzed how this change took place and what impact it had on immigrants and local communities between 1890 and 1920.

Skiing tourism is the lifeblood of Alpine and other skiing resorts. Speculations on the situation of snow and length of the season run wild every year. Artificial snow has offered a solution to the problem. Anna-Liisa Ojala, Ph.D., (University of Jyväskylä) analyzed in her talk titled *Snow, Fake, Real and Profitable* what role and value artificial snow has in Finnish arctic skiing resort, and which discourses of sport framed the snowmaking and -molding and what impact these discourses made on the resort.

Ojala concentrated on one Finnish resort, Levi in Lapland, which invested a lot on artificial snow and has greatly succeeded in commercializing it. It is also to be noted that Levi is situated in the arctic where there is considerable snowfall every year.

Ojala brought forward two discourses on sports that framed the 'artificial snow' at Levi. She called them 'artificial snow' of top sports and 'artificial snow' of hobby-like sports. These discourses have helped the change of Levi from a traditional Lapland resort to an international, Alpine-type resort where the season is long and where local features and images mix with international ones. The discourses of top sports and hobby-like sports have also changed of structure of the commune Kittilä (where Levi is situated) making it possible for the top-ranking athletes and mass tourists to visit and stay for a longer winter season.

Session no. 1

Concepts of nationalism, identity, national fitness and class society are also closely connected to physical education, recreation and sports. Through sports, the significance and elän vital of nations and nationalities have been emphasized in relations to others. It is easy to identify oneself to success. Political tensions between nations have been eased on the sports fields and the competitions between neighbor nations have aroused high feelings. Through sports and physical recreation a physically and mentally strong nation has also been built conscially. In-

ternal divisions of class in a nation are not foreign in sports.

Susan Barton, Dr., (De Montfort University) analyzed in her talk titled *Snow, Sport and Style – the First Century of Winter Sports Fashion* how winter sports fashion developed during its first century. According to Barton, both the ‘spirit of the times’ and the expansion of winter sports was reflected in the winter sports fashion. As winter sports expanded to a field there was a piecemeal change from homemade and practical basic clothing to high quality designer labels and special wear. While textile industry developed the quality of clothing improved and practicality was substituted by stylishness.

According to Barton, the winter clothing told of the social class of its wearer. In the beginning, only wealthy people could buy expensive special clothing and designer labels and they intended to show belonging to the elite. In the beginning of 1980s, winter sports had already reached wider tourist masses and expensive special labels for winter sports were now used also at home.

At the turn of the twentieth century sports was regarded in Finland as the crucial factor in uplifting the national fitness. People were gathered in voluntary societies and associations in the name of nation-building. Concern about national stamina was exacerbated by the looming threat of russification measures. In his talk titled *The Sports of All Sports: Skiing as National Panacea in Finland at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* Anssi Halmesvirta, Adjunct Professor, analyzed how the skiing have been viewed by using contemporary experts’ views on skiing. Halmesvirta concludes that cross-country skiing was vehemently propagated as the best healer of the nation and defence against russification. Skiing was considered to be the sports which would strengthen the body and mental stamina far better than any other sports. According to Halmesvirta, the masses of Finns were made to move, for instance, in skiing competitions and public sports festivities.

Also in Sweden cross-country skiing has been strongly associated with nationalism. Skiing was seen to have a significant function in forming the national identity. At the same juncture, however, it can be shown how national identity has also been confused by ethnic identity. Isak Lidström, Ph.D.-student, (Malmö University) dealt in his talk titled *Among “Rational Ascetics” and “Noble Savages”* with ethnic stereotypes in Swedish cross-country skiing from the end of the 19th century to the 1930s.

According to Lidström, in cross-country skiing two parallel sports types were represented, namely Swedish and Sami ones. In his study, Lidström analyzed the contrasts of these identities which came forward when comparing the sports abilities of individual persons. Where national heroism was connected to the Swedish skier, and Protestant ethic and abilities were seen as consequence of goal-oriented training, the Sami identity was devoid of rationality and ascetic stance. Their abilities and talent were regarded as natural and extra effort and training were seen as not counting successful performance.

Session no. 2

In the presentations of the Session II communities and people as agents came strongly to the fore. Through their roles one can look at wider social and political events and phenomena. The state can use individuals in legitimating its measures or promoting its goals. However, an individual can be either a pawn in the game in conflict situations or a mean to solve them.

Russia organized its first skiing competition in St. Petersburg on 22nd of February, 1913. Among others, a young Russian, Nikolai Vasiljev took part with a group of three Finns who had earlier competed in the Nordiska Spelen. A moot question was why the Finns took part and what it meant, on one hand, to their compatriots on the venue and, on the other hand, to Vasiljev?

In his talk titled *Mud in the Tracks and Soviet Wax. Nikolai Vasiljev at Russia's First International Ski Race 1913* William D. Frank, Ph.D. (University of Washington), analyzed the ski event race through Vasiljev's mental process during the race, his future work career and the historical context of the year 1913. He also pointed out how the Soviet Union manipulated the story in order to pave way to its return to international scene in Helsinki Olympics 1952.

The theme of Andreas Brugger's, Dr., (Montafon Archives, Gymnasium Bludenz) talk was *Skiing as a Unifying Element during the Period of French Occupation in Western Austria (1945–1953)*. He analyzed the development of downhill skiing and skiing in Montafon valley during the eight occupation years. As background information, he studied the long-term

relations of French occupiers and the inhabitants of the valley combined with insights in the development of early downhill and other skiing before the occupation period. According Brugger, the common interest in downhill skiing helped when it comes to developing relations between local inhabitants, French government, and soldiers. During the occupation years, several new ski-lifts were built in the villages. In addition, a club called Ski Club Montafon was established and it was a local umbrella organization for winter sports responsible for winter sports activities and arranging the downhill skiing clubs in the region. It also took care of the organization of international competitions.

When studying the roles of individual personalities one can tackle also wider phenomena. Antero Holmila, Ph.D., (University of Jyväskylä) pondered in his talk titled *The games Must Go on – but without Karl Schranz: Sapporo 1972 Games Controversy and the Question of Olympic Amateurism* how Austrian alpine skier, Karl Schranz, was disqualified from the Olympics because of breaking the rule of amateurism. According to Holmila, his disqualifying cannot be properly understood without relating it to the long-standing schism between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Ski Federation (FIS), in the core, which were the very different interpretations of the definition of amateurism. Holmila's point was to bring new light on the issue: it was clarified through the case of Schranz. Holmila's purpose is to analyze what were the impact of the case on the interpretation of the definition of amateurism because it underlined the view held by wider public that the Olympic Committee was an organization which was already fulfilled its tasks. The Schranz-case does not by itself explain Committee's loosened stance as also changes in its composition bore greatly on the issue. It has to be noted also that the increasing role of TV as the sports media and the economic opportunities it offers began to form conditions of existence to the Olympic Committee.

Session no. 3

The purpose of the Congress was to approach winter sports from many different angles. Session III was a good example of it as it offered to the audience two very different presentations. In a winter sports competition

with many events, the states want to show their excellence and strength as a nation. Science is nowadays inseparable from sports and recreation. It serves top sports but it is also a window to the world of young and children.

Asian winter games are, at least for many Finns, rather unknown and ‘invisible’ event, which has during last 30 years found its place as multi-event games. Charles Little, Dr., (St Mary’s University, Twickenham) has studied their history and via that history of winter sports and Asian culture in general. In his talk *The Winter Asiad: The Event and Its Meanings* Little stated as an background information that the Asian winter games originated in Japan, the country which hosted them first, later followed by China and South Korea and lastly Kazakhstan. Throughout the history, compete for sport success has been a tool to compete on question ‘how great the nation is’ and show out the strong of nation. According to Little, the history of winter games shows how organizing them reflects also the culture and political change of the continent. Nowadays, more countries are ready and capable to organize the games and willing to show their strength as a country of winter sports.

Ville Kallinen, Doctoral student and project researcher, (Research Institute for Olympic Sports, KIHU) showed in his talk what results accrued by researching the motoric skills, goal-orientation, experienced efficiency and their relations of ten-year-old skiing Finnish children. Co-authors of the study were Kaisu Mononen, Ph.D., Minna Blomqvist, Ph.D., Marc Lochbaum, Ph.D., and Niilo Konttinen, Ph.D.. As background knowledge, Kallinen showed previous research results concerning the meanings of variable moving, motoric skills, and the research process. In the research, motoric skills of 792 children were measured by the Körperkoordinations Test für Kinder’s (KTK) four different sections. Balance, body control, agility, and the skills to handle a tool were being measured. The results showed differences between girls and boys. Boys were more oriented to competition and performed better with a tool than the girls, whereas the girls were better in balance tests. The research also showed that orientation to competition and tasks as well as experienced efficiency were higher with those who did well in motoric tests than others.

Session no. 4

Information is saved and collected and will also be saved and collected continually. The study of history, history of sports included, is largely based on written sources. However, the research material used in research is voluminous and history is also studied, for instance, by using photos, interviews and objects (artifacts). Human beings leave their mark in the past in many ways.

Janne Vilkkuna, Professor, (University of Jyväskylä) has studied ancient skis found in Finland. His talk was titled *Ancient Skis from the Museum of Lake District of South Ostrobothnia, Finland* in which he analyzed four of them originating from the lake district of Ostrobothnia. According to Vilkkuna, over 200 ancient skis are deposited in professionally run museums in Finland. The skis were found and preserved because people used to bury disposed skis in swamps and other wet place. In studies, the age of the skis has been estimated by radiocarbon dating.

According to Dr. Borut Batagelj (Historical Archive Celje), historical studies in archives into history of skiing are too few if estimated internationally. Partly this is so because researchers are not very interested in archival sources, partly it is caused by the activities of the archives themselves. In his talk titled *Archives and Ski History* Batagelj took up the case of Slovenia as an example. In his view, the use of archival sources is hindered in Slovenia by legislation but also by weak contacts between archives and the organizations of the field and researchers. It may happen that recording of skiing remains on the shoulders of enthusiastic collectors because sport clubs and individual persons do not systematically give their materials to archives.

In Batagelj's opinion, archival sources are not only a good basis for studying sport history but they situate studies in a wider context and may stop repeating and dissemination of stereotypes in historical studies.

Session no. 5

Cross-country skiing has long traditions in Finnish physical and recreational culture. Skiing has been regarded as Finnish national sports, which has brought Finland sports success during the past, uplifted fitness of citizens and acted as an important defensive factor during wartimes. Ski industry has also given bread to many a Finn.

Jouko Kokkonen, Ph.D., (The Finnish Society of Sport Sciences) dealt in his talk titled *Ski Warfare during the Era of First World War* with skiing as a part of the World War I. According to Kokkonen, skiing played at the time minor role in warfare although great armies had well-trained skiing units. The Russian army relied on Finnish ski industry and ordered 100.000 pair of skis from Finland.

The First World War turmoil in Europe was also reflected in Finland where a civil war broke out in 1918. Irrespective of the fact that there was a lot of snow in the winter, skiing did not play a significant role in the war. According Kokkonen the reason for this was lack of military training among both Reds and Whites. However, it is important to note that ski training was also included in training of Finnish *Jaegers* in Germany.

Many sports have become professionalized, which has offered athletes economic opportunity to take sports seriously. Of what athletes income was consisted in the very beginning? In his talk (*Puistohiihdoista pooleihin – hiihdon ammattilaistumisen aihioita 1960–1990*) Jouni Lavikainen, Doctoral student, threw light on how skiing transformed from amateurism to commercial sports of professionals. His conclusions were based on an analysis of the financial supporting systems developed to skiers.

According to Lavikainen, the skiers in the national team became gradually professionals with the aid of the stipend-system of the Skiing Pool and the Olympic Committee from the early 1970s. Skiing Pool provided financial support and equipment through the agreements made with ski industry. For its part, the Olympic Committee gave personal grants, which helped goal-oriented training. Consequently, of the financial support, sports was considered more professional but still in the 1980s skiers had also a nominal or a real civil profession.

During the Second World War Finns had the advantage of soldiers on skis. Ski industry played also a significant role in producing wooden skis to the army. The impact of need of skis on the development of ski industry was the topic in Ilkka Nummela, Professor, (University of Jyväskylä) and Timo Siukonen's, nonfiction writer, talk titled *Lumipukeisten suomalaisotilaiden teollinen turva hangille. Suomalainen puusukiteollisuus toisen maailmansodan aikana*. They explained how the realities and expectations of war coincided in warfare and how the needs of the army influenced the economy of the ski industry and its production technology.

Session no. 6

Ski tourism has a considerable economic, cultural and societal meaning to winter sport resorts. Winter sports and tourism are tightly bound together. On the one hand, organizing big sports events forms a brand for a city. On the other hand, travellers flow into skiing resorts from all over the world.

During the Ski Congress 2017, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships were being organized in Lahti. How Lahti became a prestigious winter sports centre and how it made impact on Lahti's development was explained by Suvi Kuisma, M.A., (Lahti City Museum, Ski Museum) in her talk titled *Lahti International Ski City – the Development of Lahti City to Remarkable Ski Games Resort 1920s and 1930s*. In Kuisma's view, the idea of Lauri "Tahko" Pihkala of Lahti as the Holmenkollen of Finland gave the impulse to Lahti City, which brought the idea forward. The terrain of Salpausselkä was regarded as excellent for skiing and ski jumping. The first games were organized in winter 1923 followed by Lahti World Championships in 1938 and 1958. Kuisma made the point that in the 1920s–1950s the city and the games grew remarkably. In addition to social and cultural impact, the games were economically profitable to the city. In view of this, Kuisma asked whether we could recognize Lahti without its games tradition; this because the organizing World Championships quickly became an important brand for Lahti.

The significance of economic assets can also be seen behind the development of snowboarding. Esa Mangelöja, Adjunct Professor, (University of Jyväskylä) approached in his talk titled *Economics of Snowboarding* the development of snowboarding from a youth counter-cultural movement to a mainstream Olympic sport from the angle of economics. According to Mangelöja, various economic agents such as Finnish ski resorts, tourism, media and sports equipment and -wear industry have made impact on the development of snowboarding. Mangelöja also emphasized that behind all cultural phenomena, like sports, there lie dreams and values of different generations.

Nowadays, winter sports is a significant part of tourism. In the third presentation of the session titled *The Development of Organized Winter Tourism in Austria. The Example of the DAKS (Deutsche Arlberg Kurse Schneider)* Christof Thöny, Dr., (Gymnasium Bludenz) told of development of organized winter

tourism in Arlberg, Austria, with the example of DAKS. Two men, Hannes Schneider and Rudolf Gomperz, who are developers of DAKS, had a crucial role in developing DAKS and by this way to the development of Arlberg region. Thöny gave background information on their careers and evaluated their roles in the DAKS. Thousands of tourists arrived to Arlberg to learn skiing in Schneider's ski-school and enjoy the frames of St. Anton offered. By this way, a new kind of winter tourism was born.

Session no. 7

Sports arises high-flown feelings pro and con. Nations compete with each other and nationalistic sentiments take easily over. On one hand, sports unites nations, on the other hand, it separates them. People identify themselves with winners, losers are criticized. Media creates hero stories, maintains them, but also crushes. Sports creates climactic moments and sore points, to which people can return again and again. Every generation writes its own narratives.

Hurmoshetkiä ja kipupisteitä ('climactic moments and sore points') was the theme of the panel discussion chaired by Heikki Roiko-Jokela, Adjunct Professor, (University of Jyväskylä, The Finnish Society for Sports History). Other members of the panel were Ismo Björn, Adjunct Professor, (University of Eastern Finland), Jouko Kokkonen, Ph.D., (The Finnish Society of Sport Sciences), Maria Rantala, M.A., (LIKES, Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health) and Jorma Rahkonen, M.A., journalist (*Keskisuomalainen* newspaper).

The discussion had been built around four subthemes (questions): 1) If you have to mention one event or moment which has touched Finns in the winter sports, what would that be?; 2) What meaning a climactic point or a hero story has had for the Finland, Finnishness and individuals?; 3) Do national sore points (Lahti doping case, Juha Mieto's loss of 1/100 seconds, not a single medal from World Championships or Olympics etc.) make us somehow "worse" than others or why do we ruminate about them over decades?; 4) What is the meaning and impact of media in creating, building, and perpetuating the success stories of sports?

Panelists and audience had a lively and interesting discussion on

themes, for instance, Maria Rantala said: “Sports gives us all space to deal with failure. Because we all fail now and then”. Jouko Kokkonen approached the theme of ‘sore points’ via Lahti 2001 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships: “It was such a midway conclusion in Finnish sports that the discussion rather hovered around Finnishness; it can be regarded as a common experience that shook the nation”. The theme of the significance of the media brought to the fore this conclusion: social media starts discussions as athletes, sports fans and others discuss first and only later electric media and press take over. When talking about competitive skiing, skiing and modern press have a close connection. In every turn it has been brought forward that skiing is national sports of Finland. This story lives on. Press and athletes (in times of radio and TV) belonged to the same group bringing the same message to the public, which meant that there was hardly any critical debate but the ‘great national story’ was jointly built. Nowadays also the negative aspects, the ‘dark sides of sports’ are being touched upon. The so called big picture is drawn and some balance is achieved. Media is involved in building, creating models and event culture(s). It also uplifts individual sportsmen/women, stories about them, which just live for a while on their own.

Session no. 8

A sport which has a tradition of decades, bears national stamp and international success and success stories, which are built and sustained by the media, arouses continuously passions among researchers, sports fans as well as wider public. People identify themselves with winners: they are idols among children, young and even grown-ups. But success is easily followed by decline. Then questions arise: why this happened, what went wrong, what should be done? ‘Experts’ come in from many quarters, more so if people are accustomed to success through decades which media has cast to our eyes and minds. In Finland ski jumping among others carries this kind of tradition of success with it in winter sports.

The session of ski jumping was opened by an interview of Risto Jussilainen, medalist in Olympic and World Championship in team ski jumping. Jussilainen told about the start of his career, and about what

sports had given to him and demanded from him. How did the career begin? Jussilainen said: “My father used to be a national team level athlete and he also took part in German-Austrian ski jumping week – maybe that was how I got it; and because I could closely watch the success of Matti Nykänen, Jari Puikkonen and other Finns, and I think, it was from there that my interest in ski jumping has grown”. To the question which skills being an sportsman has developed during career and after, Jussilainen answered: “Although in games we perform as a team, there are many such things that you have to do independently, so that when you do it yourself, you can take over the reins of your own matters and do not trust that someone else does them for you”.

Ilkka Kulmala, Sports Journalist, from *Keskisuomalainen* surveyed (*Katsaus suomalaisen mäkihyppyyn*) Finnish ski jumping from a journalist’s point of view. The success of sportsmen/women in international competitions naturally arouses the interest of wider public in certain sport and its sportsmen/women, which can be seen in column space of a media. Finnish sports journalism writes about events when a Finn is successful. Does this mean that Finnish sports journalism is only about writing success stories? Success has an influence in writing but because media is largely commercial, it is indispensable to follow what interests readers and what are their topics. Here the journalist has the fair crack of the whip. This does not naturally mean that sportsmen/women and events are reported only when there is individual or event success. In Kulmala’s view, for instance, in ski jumping as sport has to ponder why things happen, just happened and what are the reasons. All this is rather providing background, writing down opinions when one is thinking why there is no success. The professionalism of journalists boils down to that he/she can sense what interests as many readers as possible.

In the core of the presentation of Hannu Itkonen, Professor, (University of Jyväskylä), Ismo Björn, Adjunct Professor, (University of Eastern Finland) and Anna-Katriina Salmikangas, Ph.D., Co-author of the study, (University of Jyväskylä) were the roots, expansion and transitions of Finnish ski jumping. In the beginning ski jumping was all about having fun and competitions were organized, for instance, by teetotalers, youth and hunting clubs, voluntary fire brigades, trade union branches and

working communities. Participants came from many walks of life: crofters' sons, loggers, fishermen... Ski jumping expanded widely all over Finland in the early decades of the 20th century and transformed from fun to competitive sports. After World War II Finnish ski jumpers developed a new style: leaning boldly forward and keeping hands attached to the body. The jumpers had to have stylish skiwear and fashionable haircut. Researchers say that at the time, ski jumpers were models for youth culture. Next transition took place in the 1970s, when the time of "rascals and natural talents" was over. Ski jumping was now scientifically planned and technically geared top sport, in which development of equipment contributed. In the 1980s, ski jumping was transformed by V-style in which jumper's gliding made longer jumps possible. So far, last transition in Finnish ski jumping was experienced in the 2010s. Finnish ski jumpers have not been as successful as in earlier times, the number of those who practice it has sunk, ski jumping has lost some of its attraction among wider public, which has led to financial scarcity.

Esa Sironen, D.Soc.Sc., (Jyväskylä, The Finnish Society for Sports History) dealt with the structures of meaning in ski jumping. In his view, this sport combines with tension the ethos of crossing borders of the modern industrial society and the control of space and oneself, for instance style, of the noble society of courts. The incommensurability of the two societal formations is an open wound in ski jumping, which is monitored by the judges. Sironen told that it is this contradiction from which peasant and working class culture of laughter, which has been harnessed by making ski jumping more 'sportive', draws but at the same time distributes it. However, rattles, horns, sausages and face paintings keep the games events still alive as people's collective fun.

Session no. 9

Sports and politics go together, irrespective of whether we want it to be so or not. During the Cold War great game arenas were also battlefields of West and East where different societal systems competed over superiority. West boycotted Moscow Olympics in 1980 and East counteracted by not taking part in Los Angeles games in 1984. There have also been

smaller-scale abstentions earlier. Also love and hate relations between nations could be mirrored in sports events. Neighborhood countries' competitions have been particularly emotional. On the other hand, by taking part in international events as pioneers without any pressures to perform but with intention to gather experience, it has been possible to make one's own country better known and build valuable networks for the future. At times this road has been covered by stones.

Leif Yttergren's, Associate Professor, (The Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences) theme in his talk was *Skiing and Politics. World Ski Championships in Cortina d'Ampezzo 1941 and the Relationship between Sweden and Norway after World War II*. Yttergren emphasized the Swedish participation in the Cortina World Cup in 1941 and analyzed the so called Cortina Affair 1945–1946 and its consequences. There had been friction between Sweden and Norway after the breakup of the Union in 1905, which was reflected in sports as boycott in skiing. During the World War II tensions was exacerbated by the attempts of Swedes to maintain sport relations with Germany. In this situation, Norwegians strongly reacted to Swedish participation in the Cortina World Cup. The crust of the question was: could Cortina Affair had made any impact on the rise of hate of Swedes in Norway? In Yttergren's view, the answer must be sought in a larger context than the Cup itself, in the constellation of the wartimes, which affected Norwegian sports negatively, and in the pre-supposed bad treatment of Norwegian refugees in Sweden. In his talk, Yttergren threw light on one sector of the Swedish-Norwegian relations, in which the Cortina World Cup was finally only a small part.

Women's road to their present status in sports world has not been easy. The pioneers of competitive female sports have opened it with all their might in order achieve equality in top sports. Leena Laine's, Researcher, (The Finnish Society for Sports History) talk was titled *Twigs on the Track – about the Discrimination against Women in the Nordic Skiing* telling of the gender approach through traditional winter sports. Laine analyzed women's discrimination in Nordic skiing by focusing on women pioneers in international Nordic events from the 1920s to the 1950s. The pioneers had continuously to struggle in order to gain access to international sports world controlled by men. Obstacles on the track were overcome only in 1952 Winter Olympics when women were allowed to participate for the first time.

Enn Mainla's, Reseacher, (Estonian Sports and Olympic Museum) theme in his talk was *The Estonians as Apprentices at the World Championships in Lahti 1938*. In Estonia the tradition of skiing was very young in comparison to Nordic countries. The first Estonian championships were held in Tartu in 1921. The organizers dared to move the championships to the hilly terrain of Otepää in 1929 and the first tests in ski jumping were held roughly at the same time and first champions were crowned in 1933. Finns organized training courses in skiing to Estonians in the end of the 1920s and the 1930s. Although skiing as competitive sports was relatively young in Estonia, Estonians took part in the winter Olympics of Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1936 and in FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Lahti in 1938. There was no success but according to Mainla, experiences and observations for the future were promising. It turned out that ski jumpers needed higher hills and that in order to get better training, skiers also needed hilly grounds.

The Congress Contribution

The main discipline in Congress was history, especially history of recreation and sports. In Finland, international Congresses on recreation and sport history have not been organized regularly. One may say that it strengthened the status of the researchers in the field and gave them the opportunity to obtain new insights and get acquainted with newest international research and approaches. The Congress also provided the participants a venue to network with colleagues internationally.

The main theme of the Congress was approached from a multidisciplinary point of view. The event called together researchers and scholars from History, Ethnology, Sports and Health Sciences, Museology, Sociology, Communication Sciences and Economics. The connecting factor was the subject of research: Snow sports and recreation. Different approaches, theories, methods and source materials opened new angles to the common research theme. The Congress also gave a possibility to catch up with the newest international trends in research.

Snow sports (and recreation) have been studied in Finland by different disciplines, with different points of view. These studies have long traditions

in Finland, and seen from an international perspective, this is even unique. The representation of multidisciplinary Finnish research in the Congress enriched international research in the field and offered to the international researchers new knowledge in many ways.



Some Participants of Ski Congress 2017. From left to right: E. John B. Allen, Heide Allen, Susan Barton, Christof Thöny and Andreas Brugger. Photo: Andreas Brugger.