

1960 OLYMPIC NORDIC EVENTS

The 50th Anniversary of the VIII Winter Olympic Games at
Squaw Valley and Lake Tahoe's West Shore



ED Z'BERG SUGAR PINE POINT STATE PARK ♦ TAHOMA, CA



SHARE THE SPIRIT

People the world over are dedicated to sustaining the Olympic ideal. Each country encourages its amateur athletes to become the absolute best they can be—and some would become the best in the world.

During February of 1960, millions of people world-wide were captivated by the international VIII Olympic Winter Games at Squaw Valley. The same audiences were thrilled by the official Olympic cross-country races in Tahoma, on Lake Tahoe's West Shore. CBS, with anchor Walter Cronkite, brought the world to our doorstep. The 1960 Winter Games were the first Olympics to be televised in the United States.

For eight days, the eyes of the world focused on the Nordic Events stadium that once stood on Gray Avenue, just north of Tahoma. From February 19 to February 27, 1960, Olympians from 19 countries competed in eight cross-country skiing events.



California Governor Pat Brown (left) shakes hands with DeWitt Nelson, Director, California Department of Natural Resources (right); photo at right: Opening ceremonies





Alex Cushing

DREAM COME TRUE

Beginning in 1954, Alex Cushing, President of Squaw Valley Ski Corporation, pursued his dream to have the International Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley and Lake Tahoe. Cushing gained endorsement from the International Olympic Committee, the governors and legislatures of California and Nevada, the U.S. Congress and President Eisenhower. By 1960 the State of California had contributed \$8,900,000; another \$400,000 came from Nevada, \$3,500,000 from the federal government and \$2,500,000 from private sources.

The California Olympic Organizing Committee originally planned to hold most of the cross-country competitions at Squaw Valley; only the Biathlon was to be staged at McKinney Creek near Tahoma. By the summer of 1958, it was apparent that real estate development in Squaw Valley made it impossible to hold any of the cross-country races there. The entire cross-country program was moved to the McKinney and General Creek areas. Preparation of the trails began in 1958. The trails were completed by the summer of 1959.

Present day Tahoe West Shore, looking south; photo of Alex Cushing by George Silk, courtesy of Squaw Valley Ski Corp.

SHARE THE *SPIRIT OF OLYMPIANS*

THROUGHOUT HISTORY

TAHOMA STAGE FOR THE OLYMPICS

In 1960, much of what is now Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park was privately owned by the Ehrman family. The Ehrmans, among other local landowners, supported the Olympics by generously granting the use of their property for the Olympic Winter Games cross-country ski venue.

According to the race requirements established by the Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS), the General Creek area was significantly modified in 1958 and 1959. The Sixth Army, encamped nearby, built roads and target ranges and cleared the trails 16-20 feet wide. The soldiers built five log and cable bridges to span General Creek. Timing and aid shacks were placed every 5 kilometers; the shacks were linked with telephone cable. The work was done before winter set in, so the courses could be raced without danger, even with very little snow.



Top to bottom: Sigge Bergman, FIS Official; olympic statue; Aleksei Kuznetsav of Russia finishing third in leg of the 4x10k relay; Tucker sno-cat on Olympic trail (Photo by Bill Briner)

AS YOU EXPLORE THE OLYMPIC TRAILS AT

ED Z'BERG SUGAR PINE POINT.

The cross-country courses were prepared once 18 inches of snow had accumulated, allowing mechanical equipment to be used. For the first time in Olympic history, 1958 Tucker Sno-cats mechanically groomed the cross-country race courses for the 1959 international trial events and the 1960 competitions. During the VIII Winter Games, three Sno-cats towed agricultural grain-flail choppers, with power driven rotating tines, that ground up the frozen snow between races and made it easier to groom, greatly expediting course preparations.

Grooming and track setting was done each night before the cross-country race events. Before the start of a race, manual crews skied the courses and hand-raked all the downhill sections. Crew members were each assigned a section of the course and remained there during the race to act as course police.



Top to bottom: Cross-country course staff (Wendall Broomhall Collection); Rolf Ramgard, silver medalist from Sweden, aided by Sigge Bergman; Veikko Hakulinen of Finland, finishing second in the 50km; first uphill climb from the stadium in the 4x10k relay



Left to right: the finish line; timing officials (Photo by Bill Briner); scorekeeping; McKinney Stadium official time clocks; Gray Avenue Stadium view

Following every race, the course crews relocated all race markings. Flags, kilometer signs, and other equipment were moved to the next course. Events were each assigned a color, and that color was used on all course markings: painted on trees, ski markings, score cards, competitors' race numbers, etc. Small colored flags lined the trail so that competitors would be able to follow specific courses. Cross-country practice courses were available at both the McKinney Creek area and in the Squaw Valley-Deer Park area.



Left to right: Gray Avenue quonset hut; olympic statues (Photos by Bill Briner); Veikko Hakulinen passing Hakon Brusveen to win the 4x10 relay; skiers on Tahoma Trail; Wendall "Chummy" Broomhall (left) and Al Merrill (right), ca. 1956 (Wendall Broomhall Collection)

In another historical first, both electric and manual timing were used. The electric devices registered the official record. Interval times were taken manually every five kilometers for all cross-country races. The racers' times at these points were phoned to the stadium area, where they were announced to the spectators and posted on the scoreboard. First-aid stations and ski patrolmen were available along the courses.

Chief of Race for all cross-country events was Wendall Broomhall, a 10th Mountain Division World War II veteran and former Olympic skier. Broomhall was assisted by Chief of Course Allison Merrill, ski coach at Dartmouth College.

CALIFORNIA'S SECOND RUSH FOR GOLD

Competitors raced over 57 kilometers of trail through the General and McKinney Creek areas. Most of the men's competitions and the Biathlon were concentrated in the General Creek area. All of the women's competitions were held in the McKinney Creek area, including the debut of the Women's (ladies') 10k. Due to sun softening the snow, all races except the 50 kilometer event began at 8 a.m. The 50k started at 7 a.m.

Early on the morning of Thursday, February 25, a crowd of over 3,000 international spectators crowded the McKinney Stadium for the Men's 4x10 kilometer relay. That was the best attended of the cross-country ski races.

Travel through time on these historic trails. Imagine racing alongside athletes like Sixten Jernberg of Sweden. Sports Illustrated ran an article on February 20, 1960; "Heroes of Squaw Valley." In that story Roy Terrell writes:

"Perhaps most of all, there was Sixten Jernberg, a wonderful, wiry little Swede with a soulful face appearing like a white ghost from out of the woods bordering McKinney Creek. When Sixten Jernberg, arms pumping like pistons and skis sliding gracefully over the snow, pushed his long nose across the finish line to win the 30-kilometer race and the first gold medal of 1960, the winter games were finally, truly, officially open. The athletes had taken over the show and the show began to be fun."

This page, top to bottom: Biathlon (Photo by Bill Briner); USA men's cross-country ski team; McKinney Stadium official time clocks (Photo by Bill Briner); opposite page: Squaw Valley Tower of Nations; inset: Rolf Ramgard, silver medalist (left), Sixten Jernberg, gold medalist (right)



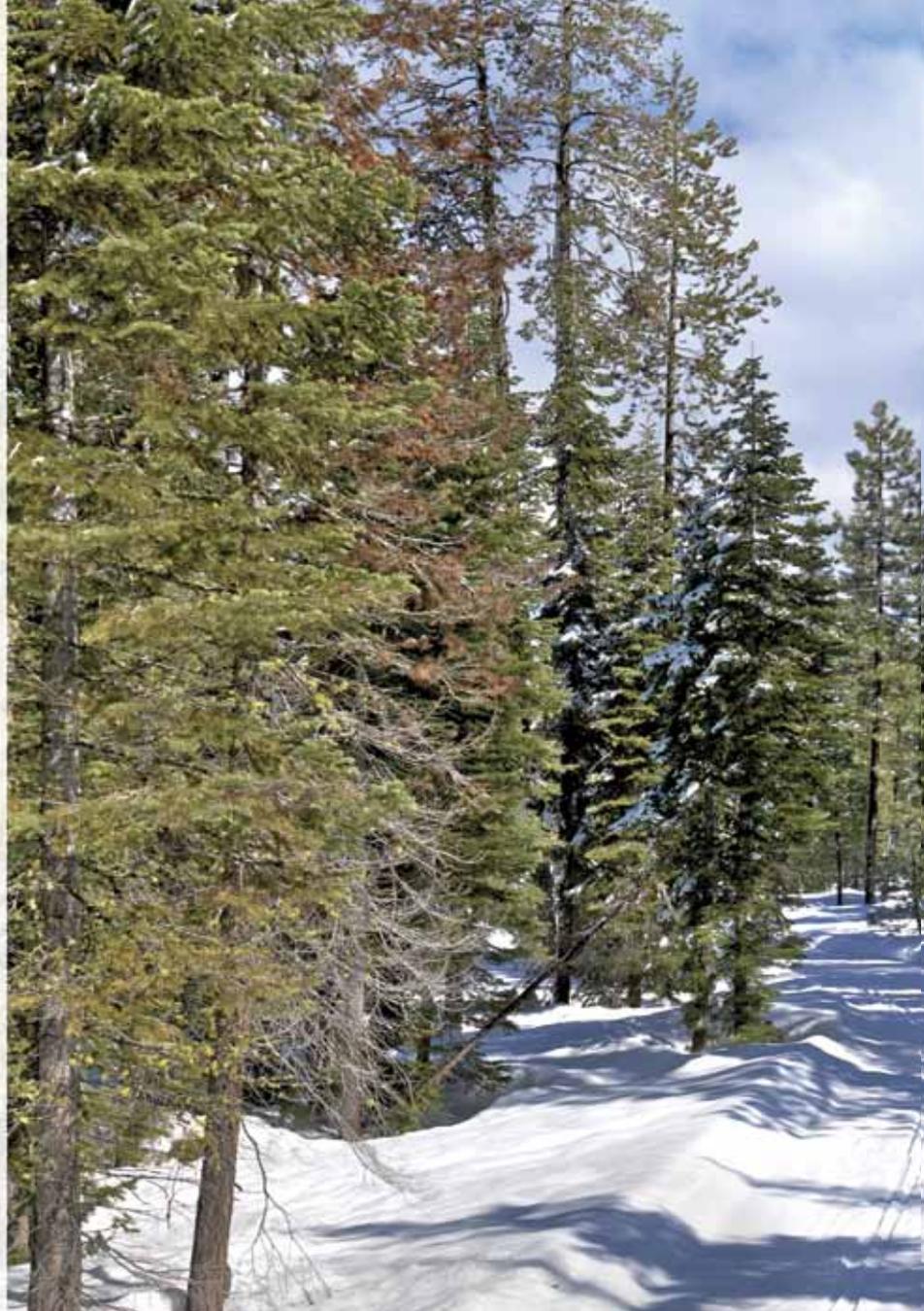




Aerial of Squaw Valley and Lake Tahoe, ca. 1959

TODAY, a dense new growth of trees covers most of the old Olympic trails. The structures, all temporary, were removed shortly after the games. Still, identifiable clues remain in the landscape. Much of the land once used for the trail system is now in public ownership.

Year round, curious and adventuresome visitors hike, run, bike, snowshoe and ski on segments of the old Olympic courses through the park. The General Creek trail takes you on a loop through the heart of the men's events. Here you travel with the spirit of the games on the trails of the Biathlon, Men's 50k, Men's 30k, Men's 15k combined, Men's 4x10k relay, and the 15k special.





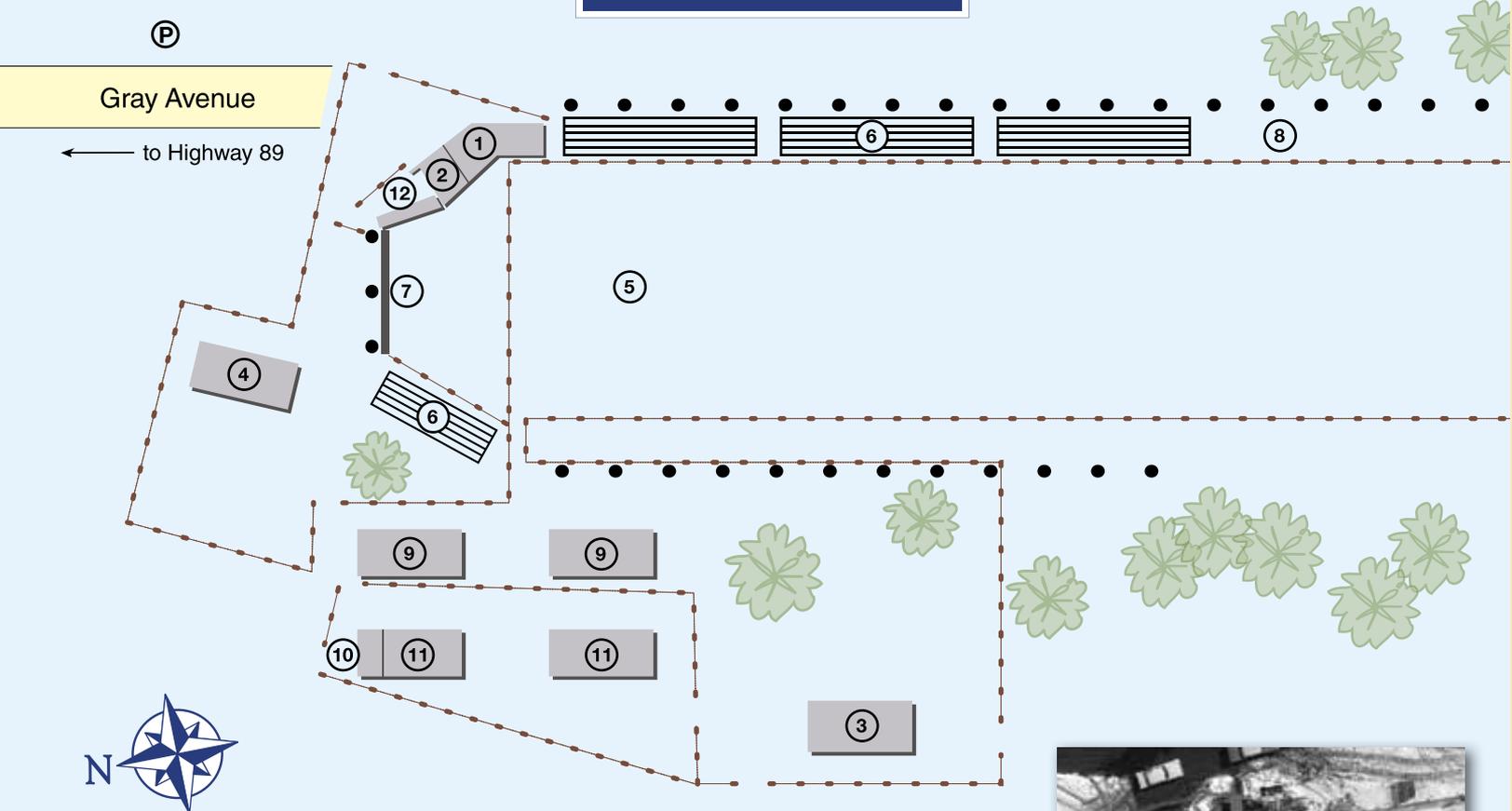
The activity surrounding one unforgettable week in February 1960 transformed the Lake Tahoe area. Not only was the landscape modified, but people's lives, communities and nations were forever changed. Due to the many Olympic 'firsts,' future Olympic Winter Games were also improved. The electronic timing, mechanical grooming, computer-tallied results, television broadcasting and the Biathlon event introduced at the 1960 games have all become international standards. The facilities were only temporary, but the Olympic legacy is everlasting. Remembering and celebrating what took place here inspires us to make ourselves and our community stronger.

***WE WELCOME YOU TO
SHARE THE SPIRIT!***



1960 ♦ 50 YEARS ♦ 2010

McKinney Creek Nordic Events Stadium



Key to Detailed Map

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ① Timing Building | ⑦ Scoreboard |
| ② Communications | ⑧ Spectators' Standing Room |
| ③ Maintenance Building | ⑨ Competitors' Huts |
| ④ Press Building | ⑩ First Aid |
| ⑤ Starting Area | ⑪ Course Preparation Building |
| ⑥ Bleachers | ⑫ Radio/TV |

LEGEND

- Fence
- Flagpole
- Parking
- Building
- Road



Aerial view of stadium (Photo by Bill Briner)

LEGEND

- Olympic Nordic Trail
- Major Roadway
- Paved Road
- Trail: Hiking
- Trail: Summer Use Only
- Trail: Bicycling
- Biathlon Ranges
- State Park

1960 Winter Olympics Nordic Events Trails

Map Not to Scale
Boundaries Approximate



VISIT the 1960 Olympic VIII Winter Games cross-country display at Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point State Park. The exhibit is located in the Hellman-Ehrman estate's Barn/Coach House, on the lake side of the park.

A trip to the Squaw Valley USA Olympic Museum at High Camp will be well worth your time. Pick up a copy of the Squaw Valley Olympics booklet when you arrive there.

U.S. support for cross-country skiing increased significantly after 1960. Many of the participants of the VIII Winter Games went on to figure prominently in the burgeoning ski industry.

Honored members of the U.S. National Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame include: Wendall Broomhall (nominated in 1981), Alex Cushing (in 2003), Ted Farwell—1960 Men's 50k (in 1992), Allison Merrill (in 1974) and USA cross-country team member Joe Pete Wilson, who later coached the USA Biathlon team. Wilson also helped found the first U.S. cross-country ski area at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, Vermont.

SPECIAL THANKS

Much of the historical information contained in this booklet was obtained from the VIII Olympic Winter Games, 1960, Squaw Valley, Final Report; State of California Olympic Commission, Organizing Committee. David C. Antonucci, contributor to Lake Tahoe's West Shore Olympic Site: a Feasibility Study¹ provided additional research. Many hours of volunteer and staff time contributed to the production of this booklet.

Special thanks to Olympic athletes, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and those who support Olympic Games around the world.

¹ 1999, Nordic Group International, Winchester, New Hampshire.

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Celebration Committee**

West Shore Association

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Squaw Valley USA

Unless otherwise noted in parentheses, all images are attributed to the California Olympic Organizing Committee, VIII Olympic Winter Games, 1960, Squaw Valley, Final Report.



Present day Squaw Valley area with Lake Tahoe in the background (Photo by Hank de Vré)
 Bottom images, left to right: Rolf Ramgard, silver medalist from Sweden, aided by Sigge Bergman; Tower of Nations;
 Sigge Bergman, FIS Official; McKinney Stadium view (Photo by Bill Briner); scorekeeping; Veikko Hakulinen (right)
 from Finland, 4x10k relay gold medal winner (Wendall Broomhall Collection); Olympic sign; Biathlon (Photo by Bill
 Briner); Wendall "Chummy" Broomhall (left) and Al Merrill (right), ca. 1956 (Wendall Broomhall Collection); course
 volunteers; finish line; timing officials (Photo by Bill Briner); quonset hut (Photo by Bill Briner); Alex Cushing (Photo
 by George Silk, courtesy of Squaw Valley Ski Corp.); Olympic logo; Olympic sculpture (Photo by Robert F. Uhte)

