

# Nordic Ski Officials protest 1960

## *Cross-Country Plans at Squaw Valley*

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STOCKHOLM. — European news sources have reported that Scandinavian ski officials, deeply dissatisfied with plans for the Olympic cross-country events at Squaw Valley in 1960, are demanding changes, and are threatening to stage their own Nordic Games if their demands are not met. They have also called for a full *dress rehearsal* of Nordic events in 1959 to determine if courses are adequate.

Wire service releases quoted Swedish Ski Association President Sigge Bergmann as charging that the California Organizing Committee has 'completely ignored' the advice of European experts who had been officially dispatched to the site of the 1960 Games by the International Ski Federation (FIS). The releases continued that Sweden, Norway and Finland might be forced to stage their own Nordic Winter Games if the conditions for the cross-country races at Squaw Valley were not revised to meet the original recommendations.

In a direct cable to SKIING news magazine (International Ski Federation) expert Bergmann denied that he had said that Scandinavian competitors in cross-country would boycott the California Winter Games in 1966, but did admit he wasn't pleased the way things were going in Squaw Valley. He emphasized his concern over Olympic arrangements, and pointed out that happenings at Squaw Valley and with Olympic organizers, have created considerable ill will in Europe. Bergmann's cable further stated that a complete Olympic rehearsal is necessary in 1959 in order to determine whether the courses are satisfactory.

The cable to SKIING continued: 'I hope California organizers will make it financially possible for a big Scandinavian cross-country team to come to Squaw Valley in 1959. If this *rehearsal* is of good quality we have nothing to worry about for 1960. If not, we must discuss the situation at International

Ski Federation Congress in Stockholm, June, 1959. This Congress makes final decision about Olympic courses.'

According to reports from United Press International, Bergmann's statement was supported by Norwegian Ski Association President Thorbjørn Nordal. Nordal was quoted as saying the three Scandinavian countries were preparing a strong protest against Squaw Valley's current arrangements for the cross-country ski races. According to the report, Nordal added that if present arrangements are not changed, Norway will withdraw its cross-country skiers from the Olympics.

In a later interview with newsmen, Bergmann stated that if the trouble at Squaw Valley did continue they (the International Ski Federation officials) could hold the Cross-Country races any place they found enough snow.

'Personally', Bergmann went on to say 'I am worried about the tendencies to lay the stress on the financial side of the Games rather than the sporting side and it seems to me that my concern also is shared by some circles in the U.S.'

The main complaint of the Scandinavians is that some of the cross-country skiing events will be held so far from the Olympic site (12 miles by road) that competitors may have to get up at three or four in the morning in order to be at the start on time. Also at issue is the altitude of the cross-country courses, which are higher than normal for European racers.

Bergmann was the principal organizer for the World Ski Championships at Aare and Falun, Sweden, in 1954. He was also International Ski Federation's technical advisor for Nordic events to the organizers of the 1956 Winter Olympics at Cortina, Italy.