



COLLEEN BOLTON

1957 -



Discipline: Cross Country
Olympic participations: Lake Placid 1980
Medal awarded in: 2020

Bolton grew up in Cooma, NSW. Her skiing career started when her parents signed her up for her first cross-country ski race, the Paddy Pallin Junior, which still runs today at Perisher.

Bolton loved competing against older skiers – at the time there were not many other female cross-county racers, and males made for good competition too.



Bolton had her first international experience in 1978, when she got to travel on the European racing circuit. Kerry Packer, owner of Perisher Ski Resort at the time, gave Bolton a scholarship to help pay for her plane ticket to Europe. Once overseas, race organisers enjoyed the novelty of having Australians competitors and paid for their transport and accommodation expenses. Bolton remembers fondly the nice camaraderie amongst the skiers on the European racing circuit in those years.

Under the supervision of coaches from Norway and USA, such as John Caldwell, Bolton made the Australian Winter Olympic team in 1980. Bolton was the first Australian female athlete ever to compete in a cross-country skiing event at the Winter Olympics. She raced in the 5km and 10km, placing 36th and 35th respectively.

Favouring long-distance events, Bolton career standout moments are linked to Worldloppet ski marathons. In 1980 she placed second in the legendary Vasaloppet and in 1982 she achieved another prestigious second place in the Norwegian Birkebeiner-rennet race, a result made even more impressive by the fact that she raced carrying a 6kg backpack.

After retiring from competitive cross-country skiing, Colleen joined the Police force and later became an instructor for the Ski and Snow Safety Unit. A life member of Cooma Ski Club, Bolton currently lives on the Far South Coast of NSW.

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**Colleen - 1992 Pub to Pub
Perisher Valley NSW**



**Colleen - 1985 National
Championships Falls Creek Vic**

COLLEEN BOLTON - FIRST NORDIC OLYMPIAN SINCE 1968. REPORT BY PETER CARTER.

Colleen Bolton has been named in the Australian Winter Olympic Team to go to the Lake Placid Games, February 10-24, 1980. She is our first Nordic Olympian since Ross Martin skied in the 15 and 30 Km at Grenoble in 1968, and is our first woman Olympian in cross-country. Congratulations Colleen! Colleen joins the following select band of Nordic Olympians :

1952 Oslo (X-C) Cedric Sloane, Bruce Haslingden

1960 Squaw Valley (X-C) Dick Walpole, (Combined) Hal Nerdal

1968 Grenoble (X-C) Ross Martin

The A.S.F. also nominated Chris Allan, Stephen Smith and Jim Box but the Australian Olympic Federation (A.O.F.) rejected these nominations. I had the job of presenting the Nordic case to the A.O.F. This was the first time we (Nordic) had presented our own case, in previous years the Nordic case was presented by people not of our choosing. Nordic's right to present its own case was the result of good work by the A.S.F. Nordic Committee at the March A.S.F. meeting.

I came out of the meeting with very mixed feelings, elation at Colleen's likely nomination and chagrin at the severity with which the boys' case had been treated.

Without in any way getting emotional or giving my own and the Nordic Committee's views on what the selection criteria should be I think it useful to spell out the A.O.F.'s criteria. The A.O.F. will not tie itself down to fixed criteria but the following points are implicit in its actions:

1. Only results in international races of the highest standard count (i.e. World Cup and little else).
2. Racers must place in the top half of the finishers (not starters) in such races to have any reasonable chance of being selected.
3. "The Olympics are not a training ground for experience." (Direct quote)
4. Aspirants to the Winter Olympics are in competition with aspirants to the Summer Olympics.

The A.O.F. stated that our sport was "fairly represented" when one considers the numbers seriously involved in the sport.

Based on her results overseas in the last two seasons, Colleen has placed in the top half several times, our boys still have a way to go it is true.

So, there it is.

To our young skiers may I say - "like it or not accept the challenge - go, live, work and ski overseas and get in the top half."

To Colleen; congratulations once again - Australian Olympic blazers don't come easily, that's for sure - GOOD LUCK and SKI HEIL.

PETER CARTER

Pre-Olympic Training

Specific training for the 1980 Olympics began for Colleen, and three other prospective male athletes, at the pre-Olympic Games in Lake Placid during February, 1979. Colleen travelled to Scandinavia immediately following these Games and trained and competed there until April 1979. Dry-land training recommenced on arrival back in Australia and continued until June, when on-snow training resumed in Perisher Valley.

Coach John Caldwell visited Australia during the season and supervised the training of Colleen and other prospective Olympic competitors.

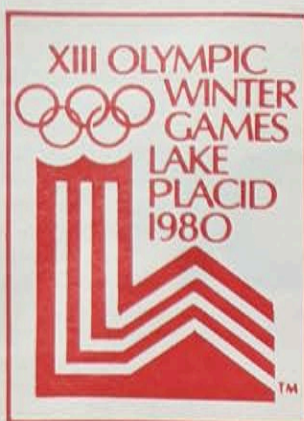
Immediately following the Australian season, Colleen returned to Scandinavia and began training in Oslo in mid-October. In November she began skiing in Lillehammer with Norwegian coaches Erik Olsen and Rolf Kjaernski, remaining in Norway until the first week of January, 1980.

Lack of snow in the east of USA forced cancellation of many early season races and led to the major cross-country competitions including the US Nationals being moved to Mont Ste. Anne, Quebec, Canada. In Quebec, Colleen trained with a team of four of Australia's best skiers. Competition here was against the best US and Canadian skiers. Placings in the US Nationals of 6th, 5th, 4th and 4th fastest in the relays, made Colleen the overall women's champion at these championships.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

There is no doubt Colleen was well prepared to compete at Lake Placid, until she became sick.

Within two days of arriving at Lake Placid, she had a head cold. This soon developed into a viral flu and she competed in both the 5 km and the 10 km races with the following symptoms - high temperature, aching muscles, upset stomach, general tiredness and energy depletion. Other competitors and officials suffered the same virus and most countries with athletes in this condition were able to make substitutions. Unfortunately, with only one competitor, nothing could be done. Colleen finished both events and in doing so increased her reputation as a tenacious competitor.



Stop Press:

LAKE PLACID

The 1980 Winter Olympic Games opened at Lake Placid, New York State, U.S.A. as the *Australian Ski Year Book* went to press. The Games opening was marked by tension surrounding the United States' call for a boycott of the summer Olympics to be held in Moscow later in the year, as a protest against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

There were other political wrangles. A small team arrived from Taiwan, only to be told that its members could not compete under the flag of the People's Republic of China, on the grounds that mainland China was the only country able to use the name "China". The United States Supreme Court upheld the I.O.C. ruling and the Taiwanese therefore returned home.

Internal disputes led to bad feeling in the Austrian camp. It began when 21-year-old Leonhard Stock, who had gone to Lake Placid as reserve for the downhill, clocked the best times overall in training, ousting another of his teammates. On the big day, Stock scorched down Whiteface Mountain to take the gold medal. His surprise win was of particular interest to Australians, who had seen him win the Polaroid International Giant Slalom and Thredbo Cup International G.S., in 1978.

Australia was not without its domestic problems. As it had done in previous years, the Australian Olympic Federation had refused to ratify all of the A.S.F.'s nominations and the team announced in September, 1979, consisted of: Rob McIntyre, Kim Clifford (both members of the 1976 Olympic team), Antony Guss, Jacqui Cowderoy and Colleen Bolton. The exclusion of Jenny Altermatt, the reigning Australian women's champion, particularly angered the A.S.F., which immediately lodged a protest. At first, the A.O.F. was unmoved. However, Jenny's performances in Europe during the early part of the 1979-80 winter were so much better than Jacqui's that at the eleventh hour, the A.O.F. relented.

Ironically, at approximately the same time as the A.O.F.'s volte-face, Kim Clifford fractured a wrist, once again reducing the number of competitors to five.



JACQUI COWDEROY, 18, of Ulladulla. Best performance: 17th in Women's Slalom.



ANTONY GUSS, 20, of Melbourne. Best performance: 26th in Men's Downhill.



JENNY ALTERMATT, 19, of Melbourne. Best performance: 28th in Women's Giant Slalom.



ROB MCINTYRE, 23, of Melbourne. Best performance: 38th in Men's Giant Slalom.



COLLEEN BOLTON, 23, of Perth. Best performance: 35th in Women's 10 km.

Although the Australian results were well below the top of the field, all Alpine team members performed consistently with their F.I.S. rankings. The best individual performance was by Jacqui Cowderoy, who finished 17th in the Women's Slalom. The best overall performance was by Antony Guss, who finished well enough in all three men's events to earn a very creditable sixth place in the F.I.S. Combined results. The most disappointed member of the Australian team was our sole Nordic representative, Colleen Bolton. A viral infection prevented her from performing at her peak.

ALPINE

MEN'S DOWNHILL		Time
1	Leonhard Stock	AUT 1.45.50
2	Peter Wirsberger	AUT 1.46.12
3	Steve Podborski	CAN 1.46.62
26	Antony Guss	AUS 1.50.22

WOMEN'S DOWNHILL		Time
1	Annemarie Moser-Proell	AUT 1.37.52
2	Hanni Wenzel	LIC 1.38.22
3	Marie-Theres Nadig	SUI 1.38.36

MEN'S GIANT SLALOM		Total Time
1	Ingemar Stenmark	SWE 2.40.74
2	Andreas Wenzel	LIC 2.41.49
3	Hans Enn	AUT 2.42.51
38	Rob McIntyre	AUS 2.57.39
41	Antony Guss	AUS 2.58.79

WOMEN'S GIANT SLALOM		Time
1	Hanni Wenzel	LIC 2.41.66
2	Irene Epple	BRD 2.42.12
3	Perrine Pelen	FRA 2.42.41
28	Jenny Altermatt	AUS 2.58.57

MEN'S SLALOM		Time
1	Ingemar Stenmark	SWE 1.44.26
2	Phil Mahre	USA 1.44.76
3	Jacques Luethy	SUI 1.45.06
32	Antony Guss	AUS 2.05.10

WOMEN'S SLALOM		Time
1	Hanni Wenzel	LIC 1.25.09
2	Christa Kinshofer	BRD 1.26.50
3	Erika Hess	SUI 1.27.89
17	Jacqui Cowderoy	AUS 1.39.67

NORDIC

WOMEN'S 5KM		Time
1	Raisa Smetanina	SOV 15.06.92
2	Hikka Riihivuori	FIN 15.11.96
3	Kveta Jeriova	TCH 15.23.44
36	Colleen Bolton	AUS 17.22.68

WOMEN'S 10KM		Time
1	Barbara Petzold	DDR 30.31.54
2	Hikka Riihivuori	FIN 30.35.05
3	Helena Takala	FIN 30.45.25
35	Colleen Bolton	AUS 33.56.32