

BERT BULLOCK

Nation: Gwich'in First Nation
Birth: October 4, 1955
Birthplace: Inuvik, Northwest Territories
Sport: Cross-Country Skiing
Competitions: 1974 World Juniors Nordic Ski Championships, Autrans, France
1974 FIS World Nordic Ski Championships, Falun, Sweden
1976 Olympic Winter Games, Innsbruck, Austria

Career Highlights

- 1976, Innsbruck Olympic Winter Games, 4 x 10-km relay, ranked 12th. Canada's best performance at an Olympic Winter Games to that date
- 1976, Innsbruck Olympic Winter Games, 30 km classic, ranked 31st
- 1976, Innsbruck, Olympic Winter Games, 15 km classic, ranked 33^d
- 1976, Innsbruck Olympic Winter Games, 50 km classic, did not finish
- 1976, 50 km race (2:41:49), gold medalist, Canadian cross-country ski championships
- 1976, 30 km race (1:19:46), gold medalist, Canadian cross-country ski championships
- 1976, 15 km race, gold medalist, Canadian cross-country ski championships
- 1974, World Junior Championships, Autrans, France, came fourth , missing third place by one second

Biography

Like the Firth Twins, Ernie Lennie, and Roseanne Allen, Bert Bullock was a beneficiary of Inuvik's Territorial Experimental Ski Training (TEST) program – and vice versa. He grew up with 10 siblings, the son of a Gwich'in mother and a father with English roots. At one point, the family lived on a settlement on the Tree River with another extended family. Hunting, trapping, fishing and manning a dogsled were all part of Bullock's upbringing.

Then he discovered skiing, and Bullock left other interests by the wayside. He'd work on his endurance with his brother, Sam, and in the summers would retreat to a cabin in a remote hamlet with teammate Lennie to train without distractions.

Bullock quickly became a remarkable cross-country skier whose performance, in his teens, was unsurpassed by any Canadian in his events and age group. At the World Junior Championships in Autrans, France, in 1974, he made a spectacular impression. In the book *Guts and Glory: The Arctic Skiers Who Challenged the World* (by Sally Manning), Lennie described Bullock that competition day as "Skiing like a man possessed. He moved like a freight train."

Despite the fact that a Canadian official had neglected to give Bullock his time at the halfway point –an essential piece of information – he came fourth in his event in Autrans and had only missed winning a medal by one second. According to *Guts and Glory*, Bullock's performance "was far and away the best ever by a Canadian skier, male or female, in a world cross-country skiing championship. Thirty years later, no Canadian male skier has matched his achievement."

In 1973-74, Bullock had also qualified to ski at the World Junior Championships in Russia. When the team returned to Canada, they competed at the Canadian Senior Championships in Mont Ste. Anne, Quebec. Bullock was only 18 and a junior but still finished first out of 47 competitors in the men's 15 km. When the season was through, he had been named to Canada's 1974-75 National Team, which was headed to Innsbruck in 1976 for the Olympic Winter Games.

Although he won no medals in Innsbruck, he found it thrilling to be there. As he said in *Guts and Glory*, "We were youngsters competing against the thoroughbreds of cross-country skiing. It didn't matter to us if we were dead last. We would still compete as hard as we could."

After retiring from the sport, Bullock worked for Gruben's Transport, a conglomerate that serves the oil and gas business.

Links:

Sports Reference Website

<http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/athletes/bu/bert-bullock-1.html>