

Clean Sport or Hard Work?

Boy Survives Snowy Ordeal At Jeffersonville Area

by HAROLD PATCH

"I wanted to have some good, clean, outdoor sport," says Ricky Norcross of East Hardwick. So apparently did Red Webster of the same village, an instructor at Hardwick Academy.

As Mrs. Webster was driving to St. Albans for the day, they rode along and were dropped off at the Jeffersonville ski area, with plans for an afternoon of sport, and a ride back to East Hardwick at the end of the day.

But while the type of lift there answered Red's requirements (he was on skis), Ricky with his jumper was out of luck. So he set out to climb the ridge to the Spruce Peak run, and the Mansfield area, where chair lifts were available.

Following a ski trail up to Sterling Pond was not all pleasure. "I dropped in clear to my hips more than once!" Ricky admits.

But he finally made it; rode his jumper merrily down the slopes to the Notch Road; after taking a chair lift up Mansfield, rode his fiery steed back to the base by way of the toll road and the ski slopes. . . only to find the Spruce Peak tow had closed for the day.

"I was in something of a quandary," Ricky admits. "I



Ricky Norcross

knew I could get a ride home with folks who work right there at the Mansfield area; but the Websters would be expecting me at the Jeffersonville area, and I couldn't very well leave them in the lurch."

Up the long, steep slopes of the Spruce Peak run he wearily tramped; carrying his temporarily useless jumper. Night had descended; only the stars illuminated his trail; and it was getting cold. Reaching a patrol lodge not far from Sterling Pond he lit a match and consulted the thermometer hanging on its outer wall.

It was well below zero! "There was still a fire in the stove," says Ricky, "so I went in and warmed myself a bit, before tackling the two miles or more I still had to navigate to reach the Jeffersonville ski area."

Now for the last stretch: down the winding ski trail. . . and then a ride home! Riding a jumper down such a trail in broad daylight takes cool nerve, good judgment, and skill of no mean order.

To tackle such an assignment after darkness has fallen requires real guts. Seated firmly atop his steed Ricky fairly flew down the mountain side, taking one wild jump after another.

He had almost reached his objective when a final jump dropped him and jumper to earth with a bang which split the hardwood seat in half.

With the parking area within reach, a quick glance through the darkness revealed the tail lights of a car snaking off down the mountain road.

After a two hour wait, the Websters had given up expecting him to materialize, had sent out an SOS that was unaccounted for, and had at last started for home with their six small children.

"I had kind of a funny feeling in my stomach," says Ricky, "when I saw those tail lights go out of sight!" But with Jeffersonville some seven miles or so away, and no other way of reaching it, he once more set out, carrying his jumper . . . and hoping for a lift which never materialized.

At Jeffersonville, a phone call to East Hardwick brought Charles Cook to his rescue, and about 10 p.m. he arrived home, none the worse for the day's adventures.

"But," says Ricky, "I have a feeling I'm going to remember this day for quite a while!"