

Indiana Water Ski Association Hall of Fame Recipient Jack Henricks

Jack's parents bought a place on Lake Tippecanoe in 1947. They spent many weekends on the water in the 1960's and Jack learned to ride the surfboard, then 2 skis, and finally a slalom ski. In the 1970's Jack heard about skiing barefoot. He hadn't seen it.....so with a 100 HP Mercury, a ski rope, and cur off shorts, he embarked on the journey! A conventional deep water start didn't work so he decided to step off a slalom ski. This method involves skiing momentarily on one foot while trying to pull the other foot out of the binding. Lots of fall but eventually he was successful.

In 1972 Jack met Bart Culver at his new water ski shop and they began skiing together and "pushing" each other...crossing the wake...skiing on one foot.....etc. Bart eventually introduced Jack to Barefoot Wetsuits from Australia. Jack and Bart skied many lakes in Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan while honing their skills. Through the 1980's, they skied on Lake Tippecanoe with friends from Ft. Wayne and Kokomo on weekends (sunrise) and on the White River from the Landings apartments to the Broad Ripple Dam. (weekdays at sunrise!) There was an extended Indy area barefoot ski community and even the Glendale Body Shop Barefoot Club during this period.

Jack skied his first Barefoot National Championship tournament in 1982 and discovered he had a lot to learn! At the 1983 Nationals he was fortunate to join some elite skiers for pre-tournament practice. Ron Scarpa noted his self taught style and suggested the he might consider a different sport! A year or so later, he spent a week at Scarpa's Ski School in Florida and started to clean up his style.

In 1987, Jack bought a lot on Mad Dawg Lake in Anderson. He skied daily with a young "footer," Jason Rockwell. They shared the lake with 3 event skiers....Prissy Edwards, DeeDee Tucker, and others and soon became friends with all. Jack became active in IWSA, helped with some clinics, and served on the board of directors for awhile expanding the group of friends, and acquaintances and even becoming a member of the Big Rig Jump Team.

Jack was on the Mastercraft Barefoot Promo Team for several years. He arrived early and left late at many tournaments throughout the Midwest. He became involved in tournament set ups, judging, and various other duties. He hosted barefoot tournaments at Mad Dawg for many years as Mad Dawg was a “must do” on many barefoot skier’s lists.

Jack stepped away from tournament skiing around 2000 while continuing to ski barefoot just for the joy of it. For the last several years, He skis weekly in the warm months with buddies Mark and Bud at his beloved Mad Dawg Lake. According to Jack, “Barefootin’ “ is still a rush and puts a smile on his face! Add to that, session of “grilling” and maybe a sip of wine is just “icing on the cake!”

Bart Culver of Bart’s Water Sports said of Jack Henricks “Jack is a dedicated, long standing “barefooter” and a close friend. Bart included a couple of stories including one about Chirs Harris and shared trips to England. Bart’s favorite story involved a trip taken in the 1980’s with a goal to barefoot around Puerto Rico. He also mentioned a “flying derelict car start” in a hyacinth choked river there. “Jack’s enthusiasm for barefoot skiing was infectious and we made many friends on our travels.”

Jack has been awarded numerous awards and medals throughout his tournament career from 1982 through 2000. Those awards included gold, silver, and bronze medals in jump, tricks, slalom, and overall from various Nationals Championships.