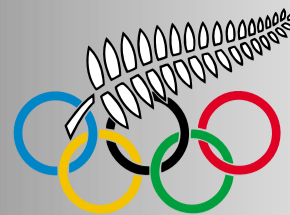


ANNELISE COBERGER



OLYMPIC MUSEUM
New Zealand Olympic Committee



“I went to school at Christchurch Girls’ High, and I completed the Sixth Form but because I wanted to become a good skier I didn’t return for the Seventh Form, not that I would

recommend that to anyone. My major sport at school was skiing, but I really loved volleyball and I played it right through my school years.

My parents were quite competent at tramping, and I was probably pushed the most because I was the youngest and probably the weakest person on the crew. I remember those big climbs, starting at Arthur’s Pass – that’s where my grandfather Oscar lived – and then going on treks that would take one or two days to complete.

I can remember skiing around after Oscar, and Mum and Dad on the slopes, but my memories of skiing really start when I was involved in team and ski racing as a club member, at the Porter Heights Ski Field.”

The Balanced Development of Body Will and Mind

“I like to do things really well; maybe I am a slight perfectionist!”

So it came down to the fact that I could ski, and then trying to do it as well as I could. It was irrelevant that I was competing against other people. I simply wanted to get down the hill in the best way possible.

I ended up being able to ski well – I could just do it – I didn’t know how! And then when you start to do well you get a bit more of a hunger for it – once you’ve realised your capabilities, and then I concluded that I might as well, go on with the sport.

I travelled overseas during the summer of 1987-1988 to Steamboat, Colorado in America, and I was fortunate to be coached for a season there by Paul Andre Dubossont. He was the one that said, ‘hey, you’re actually pretty good at this!’, and he was a real perfectionist. He had such belief in me, and he was prepared to come out to New Zealand for the following New Zealand winter, and I thought maybe I’m okay, and he just gave me a lot of encouragement.

Olympic thoughts came in once I hit about 17, once I knew that I would make a New Zealand Olympic Games Team. I didn’t know how well I would do at them, but I knew that was definitely my goal.

The Olympics did seem like just another big event that you wanted to do well at mainly because it is in the middle of a skiing World Cup season. Ideally one would want to peak at the Olympics, but there are so many races during the season. But then again I’ve won a World Cup and I have also won an Olympic Silver Medal. I would have to say that winning the Olympic Silver Medal was more satisfying and more exciting to me.

XVI OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES ALBERTVILLE, FRANCE 1992

OPENING CEREMONY

I went to the Opening Ceremony which was really neat.

It’s all very exciting; your blood’s pumping because there are so many athletes. Everyone’s looking around. Everyone’s on high alert. So it is exciting, but you have to be careful not to drain yourself and expend too much energy. It’s very easy to do that in an Opening Ceremony.

Be the Best You Can Be Within the Olympic Spirit

Training went well leading up to my big event. It all feels quite familiar because you’re competing against the same girls that you have been all season, so there was nothing too extraordinary, which is really nice. You feel like you’re on familiar ground. I guess everyone’s aware that you’re not just skiing for yourself, you are skiing for your nation as well.

The day it was crazy because I had a relatively conservative first run, and I was placed 8th which was disappointing to me because I knew I was capable of a lot more, so felt a bit grumpy. I psyched myself up for the second run quite well, and the second one I thought – right, all or nothing!

The stories I heard afterwards just made me so happy to think I could make so many other New Zealanders feel proud and happy to be New Zealander’s. It’s so worth while, so worth doing. It’s easier competing at the Winter Olympics, being so far away from New Zealand, because you’ve got a little bit of breathing space with the oceans between you. I stayed up on the hill, I was a little bit isolated but obviously it paid off, but coming back down to the Village having done my job, and done it well, I was able to relax and really enjoy the whole experience. I would go out in the evenings and mingle with other teams that had finished their events.

MEDAL PRESENTATION

We stood up on the ice podium. I was so happy, just complete happiness, being up there on the podium and getting my medal, just complete satisfaction. Even though I was Silver and not Gold, I was so satisfied with how it had gone.

The Joy Found In Effort

I had expected to do well. I knew that I could, so I would have been quite disappointed had I not. I felt job well done.

XVI OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES, ALBERTVILLE, FRANCE 1992

CLOSING CEREMONY

The Closing Ceremony made me feel proud. I suppose I was tired - I was really exhausted. You wouldn’t believe what it takes out of you, the whole Olympic Winter Games experience. You obviously put a lot more into it perhaps than you’re aware of.

VILLAGE LIFE

My fondest Olympic Winter Games impressions are of Albertville, no doubt, but that’s possibly because of the Silver Medal. In Lillehammer (XVII Olympic Winter Games 1994), I felt I just wasn’t so happy about the way I was skiing. But I was far more part of the New Zealand Team, because I was living with the other athletes in the Village and I remember there was a huge gymnasium and you got to mingle with other athletes.

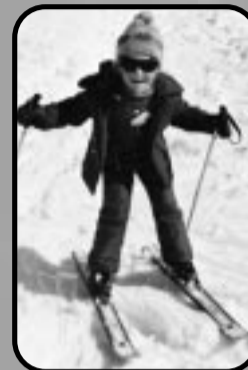
BEING A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

When I finished ski racing, I just suddenly decided that I wanted to join the Police. My family was pretty anti it. I held off for a couple of years, I did some studying and some part-time work. Police work represented such a good thing in my mind and the job description really appealed to me. I wanted to remain active helping the community! Doing good work seemed like such a worthwhile occupation and it would be satisfying and also you could potentially become quite good at it. Being in the Police is like being at the Olympic Games in that you are representing your country.

MESSAGE TO YOUTH

Find whatever it may be that you’re talented or passionate about and pursue that as far as you possibly can. Be aware that the workload is going to be high and there are going to be a lot of down times where things aren’t going your way. Just persevere, especially if you love it. You’ve got to enjoy what you’re doing.”

Annelise Coberger – Olympian



“Annelise really skiing, 1975, not yet 4 years old. Porter Heights, my home club field”.
Photo: Private Collection

“A hike into the mountains, nothing too serious though near the Arthur’s Pass area. 1978.”

(L-R) Annelise Coberger, Simon Perkins, Adele Coberger, Guy Cotrell, Niis Coberger, Anton Coberger

Photo: Private Collection



▲ Annelise (left) and older sister Adele at Porter Heights, 1978
Photo: Private Collection



XVI Olympic Winter Games, Albertville, France, 1992
Olympic Winter Games Silver Medal
Photo: Olympic Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland Collection

XVI Olympic Winter Games, Albertville, France 8 – 23 February 1992
Alpine Skiing: Women’s Slalom, 2 / 63, Silver medal

XVII Olympic Winter Games, Lillehammer, Norway 12 - 27 February 1994
Alpine Skiing: Women’s Slalom, dnf

dnf Did not finish



▲ XVI Olympic Winter Games, Albertville, France, 1992
Annelise Coberger, Olympian, competing in the Ladies - Slalom. (2nd / Silver Medal)
Photo: Private Collection