


Skiing Into History: The Most Memorable Runs

A Note about the skiers and runs on this List... This is not a list of the fastest, hardest, or finest skiing form. These are simply the ski runs that people will continue to talk about for years to come...

1. **Vinko Bogataj • International Ski Flying Championships, 1970** This jumping competition was nearing its conclusion when snow started falling...heavier and heavier. Visibility was nil; conditions were dismal. This set the stage for an unpronounceable Yugoslavian ski jumper to tumble off the ramp on an aborted attempt. Bogataj was dazed and bruised, but otherwise unhurt. The next skier made a flawless jump, then fell heavily during a skidding stop in the runoff area. *He* was hurt badly, and the competition was called off. Bogataj retired a few years later to a quiet life of farming, having virtually no clue that he was immortalized as "the agony of defeat guy" seen on ABC's Wide World of Sports opening sequence. The footage is *still* shown over three decades later, and it is still chilling. Bogataj learned of his fame in the late 1970s, and perhaps because he was only superficially hurt in his pinwheeling crash, could never really understand why Americans were so captivated by it. Maybe if he heard Jim McKay's voice-over...
2. **Franz Klammer • Olympic Downhill, Innsbruck, 1976** Prior to this run, if you had asked anyone with even a casual interest in skiing to describe a ski racer, they would've used words like "finesse" and "precision" and "ballet on snow," etc. Klammer's edge-of-disaster blast for the gold changed everything. Swiss Bernhard Russi paced the field with a time that withstood run after run. Klammer, the "Austrian Express" came in at 1:45.73, .33 quicker than Russi and grabbed the gold. But it wasn't the medal that made this run spectacular, it was Klammer's style -- or lack thereof -- that left viewers speechless and on the edge of their seats. He couldn't possibly ski this way! How's he staying on the course? He's going to get killed...Klammer himself admitted that he thought he was sure to crash during his crazy flight. Anyone who saw his run will put it at the top of this list. Downhill was forever changed, and the image of the out-of-control skier in the yellow suit will never fade.
-  3. **Toni Matt • 1939 Inferno Race, Mt. Washington, NH** Tuckerman Ravine's summit-to-valley Inferno race began in the 1930s. Dick Durrance won the second event with a record time of 12:35 in 1934. The third Inferno was not held until 1939. That race witnessed what is easily the most legendary run ever made in the Western Hemisphere. Austrian Toni Matt, age 19, erred in his calculated turns and made the blunder of skiing straight over the lip of the headwall with a 60 mph wind *at his back*. Matt skied down the headwall like a rocket sled on rails, shot through the ravine, and on down the mountain. His time of 6:29 slashed the record. For decades, this run was recalled whenever Matt raced, indeed whenever his name was mentioned. Rather than fade from memory, Matt's run is still spoken of in hushed, reverent tones.
4. **Hermann Maier • Olympic Downhill, Nagano, 1998** "Das Monster" was a favorite at Nagano until his run went wrong...way wrong. His edges failed to bite on an icy left hander, and he rocketed off the course at over 70 mph. Maier's speed combined with high winds to launch him sideways like a runaway kite. He blew through a couple of catch fences like they were made of paper before finally augering into the snow. If the tumble didn't kill him, surely the catch fences snapped his neck? Maier got up and collected himself, and will be forever after known as "The Hermanator." He shook off a sprained knee and a sore shoulder to win Gold in Giant Slalom and Super G over the following days. He dominated the World Cup scene in the ensuing years -- even returning from a near-fatal motorcycle accident -- but the legendary Nagano Downhill sealed his legend.