

'Brash Billy' still Sarajevo high

United Press International

NEW YORK — The downhill racer is still on a high.

When the nation last saw Bill Johnson he was the Joe Namath of the alpine ski circuit, predicting he would win the men's downhill event at the Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, then pulling it off much to the chagrin of the European racers, especially the proud Austrians.

"Brash Billy" they called him and he looked and acted the part. Standing in front of a microphone and flashing an impish grin that would have been perfectly at home in an old "Bowery Boys" movie, he reacted to the question of what the victory would mean to him with the perfect wise-guy answer:

"Millions. I mean we're talking millions here."

That was almost nine months ago and yet being a celebrity hasn't changed Bill Johnson very much. Oh, he gets recognized on the street occasionally and he may have a little bit more money now from his ap-

pearances at ski shows in conjunction with his work for Raichle Mollitor, a manufacturer of ski supplies.

Johnson does not divulge how much money he may be getting in trust from ski manufacturers. But he says there are no millions in his bank account and he still has that carefree attitude that was poetically mirrored in his hell-bent style on the slopes.

Not that he couldn't be extremely wealthy or that he won't be. It's just that being recognized as the No. 1 downhill racer in the world is pretty heady stuff and Bill Johnson wants to fly down the mountain some more. There'll be time to make millions later.

"I could have made it (the Olympic gold medal) really lucrative," Johnson said. "I stayed amateur and didn't sign with an agency or make any major commitments to national advertisers. Even that kind of stuff is legal now under amateur rules."

"I pretty much made a commitment to some of my sponsors for the next four years. So I'm going to the

Calgary Olympics and try to do it again. After that we'll play it year-by-year."

It has been a full eight and a half months for Johnson since he returned home from the Olympic Games. There have been ski shows, benefits, motivational talks. Name it and Johnson has probably done it. It's been New York one day then off to Sacramento, Calif., the next. Not to mention two trips to Europe to practice with the U.S. ski team.

This year he will be the Alpine circuits' top dog instead of on the bottom looking up. After all, he firmly believes he's the best downhill racer in the world right now.

"My style is different than most downhill skiers," he said. "It's geared more to the aerodynamics of skiing. I lose a little bit of time in the turns due to lack of turning technique but still I get through the turns with good speed and that's what counts."

Johnson's high opinion of his skiing talents has rankled some members of the skiing fraternity. Yet he

insists that his prediction for a gold medal at Sarajevo wasn't impertinent at all, merely an honest appraisal of his skills after having carefully analyzed the course.

"When I predicted I would win I really believed it at the time," he said. "I never really set my goals on the top three. It was No. 1 or nothing."

Johnson may be the only thing the U.S. men's ski team has to cheer about this year. He is the only returning member from the A-team in either the downhill or the slalom.

"It's hard to say how well we're going to do in downhill," Johnson said. "I was just over there the last few days of the camp and I was winning training runs by a couple of seconds. That's quite a bit of time."

"Doug Lewis, who finally broke into the top 10 at the last race last year, could come into the next year with some confidence. The rest of them are kind of sporadic. They have one good run in 20."

Like a Bill Johnson we once knew.



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According to The B/CS Eagle
Oct. 28, 1984

Richard Smith: "Promises not to raise...tuition."
"The strength of the state's colleges is that they are accessible to everyone."

According to The B/CS Eagle
Oct. 28, 1984

Richard Smith has been a friend of Texas A&M for a long time. He's an Aggie, '59. He is a member of the Association of Former Students and The Aggie Club. All of Richard Smith's brothers attended Texas A&M, and so have two of his daughters.

He fought for our right to vote when the Democrats set the Special Election last semester during Spring Break. Richard Smith then provided a shuttle bus to take students to vote absentee.

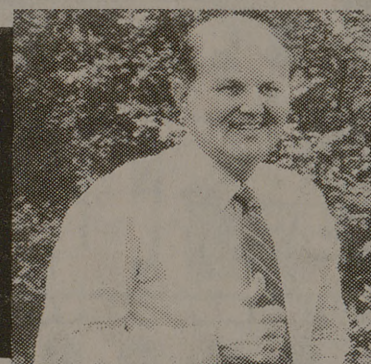
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