



## HP in New England

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### Life After HP: Ron Olson Plays More

When Ron Olson retired in 1999, he had a simple plan: "Work less, play more."

Today his mantra is the same, though the lines between work and play seem to have blurred. In some cases, play has become work, and work play. Whatever you call it, Olson is living life to the maximum, working and playing all year round, enjoying all that life has to offer in the Great Outdoors of New England.

On most winter days, Olson, now 70, can be found on the ski slopes at [Waterville Valley](#), N.H., He spends mornings at work in the classroom, teaching math to high-school age Olympic hopefuls and afternoons "pleasure" skiing one of the resort's 52 ski trails.



Ron Olson skiing in Utah

Olson's students come to the Waterville Valley Ski Academy from all over the country for one reason—to train on the slopes. "Academics are not always at the top of their list," Olson laughs. While most of his students are bright and do well, they range in ability, "from near geniuses to those who can barely spell mathematics," he says. "However, there is a powerful incentive to do well in class, because if they don't get a C grade or above, they can't ski."

Clearly Olson enjoys the job. "Since I teach them one-on-one, there is a lot more opportunity to go beyond the math lesson—to talk about skiing and family and life issues," he says. Fitting the lessons into the athletes' schedules is often a challenge, according to Olson, who says his students are "constantly coming and going to races and competitions all around the world."

"These kids—some as young as middle school age—leave their homes and families and come up here for the entire winter to train and compete. They work hard and feel a lot of pressure to succeed," he says. "Sometimes we are able to help them through the rough spots, to help them shape their future."

Many of the school's grads have been highly successful, winning spots on the U.S. Olympic Ski Team. "Several of my students have made it to the top," he says proudly. But he takes equal pride in those who do not achieve the Olympic goal. "I have worked with some extraordinary young people. It's wonderful to watch them grow, to see their skills and their character evolve over the years," he says.

Teaching and skiing are just two elements of Olson's "work-play" plan. An avid fisherman, hiker and hunter, Olson also enjoys water sports at his lakefront retirement home on Newfound Lake in Bridgewater, N.H. In addition, he has served on the town planning board.

Wine-making is another interest. An-award winning vintner, Olson has won several gold, silver and bronze medals from the American Wine Society for his homemade wines. He also serves as a preliminary judge at national wine competitions.

Prior to moving to New Hampshire, the Olsons lived in Acton, Mass. During his career with Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) and Compaq, he spent 15 years on the Ski Patrol at Nashoba Valley Ski Area in Westford, Mass. Until recently, he worked (and played) at Ragged Mountain Golf Course in Danbury, N.H., during the summer months.

He and his wife Fran, a social worker, serve as volunteers with several community outreach programs, including programs that provide services to needy senior citizens. They also enjoy playing bridge and taking far-flung journeys with the Appalachian Mountain Club. The couple has been married 49 years and has raised five children. One of their special joys is spending time on the slopes with their five grandchildren, three of whom race competitively.

A native of Minneapolis and a graduate of St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn., Olson began his high tech career at Control Data. He joined DEC in 1974, working in a software engineering group at The Mill in Maynard. Later he worked in Littleton, Mass., and at the Spit Brook Road site in Nashua, N.H., working in management and marketing for a variety of software products and programs including VAX and OpenVMS.

"I had a great career with the company, doing what I enjoy most—mixing my technical skills with my people skills. But when I had the chance to retire, I took it, knowing that there were a lot more things I wanted to do in my lifetime. The past few years have been jam-packed with wonderful experiences shared with family and friends," he says. "And my basic retirement goal is still the same: —work less, play more."

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