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ton, you'll be up against many seasoned runners, and no doubt you'll become very tired during the long race. But always remember the man next to you may be just as tired. So, no matter how tired you feel, remember that you can always make one more step, and that may be the one to carry you across the finish line." The gun sounded, and the pack of runners lurched forward. Johnny was in front, slightly behind Stenroos and DeMar, and his mind was on the finish line, 26 miles, 385 yards away. His father's voice kept running in his ears: "Stay with Stenroos, stay with DeMar." At the seven-mile mark, Stenroos increased his pace unexpectedly, leaving the others wondering about his strategy. Johnny decided to stay with DeMar, mindful that DeMar held the course record and that he probably had his own plan. Soon after, he realized nervously that Stenroos was now out of sight. Faithful to his father's advice, Johnny passed DeMar with a short burst of speed, but he was shocked to see that two other runners were already between him and Stenroos. "I passed Michelson and Number 81, whoever that was, and came within a short distance of the front runner, Stenroos," Johnny recalls. He continued in that position for some time, intentionally not pressing Stenroos until he noticed, at the 22-mile marker at Newton hills, that the Olympic champion was slowing down. Johnny was now in full stride. Earlier, a sharp pain in his side had worried him briefly, but it had gradually subsided, and from that point onward, Johnny ran in his unique high-stepping style. With four miles remaining to the finish line, Johnny had to decide. He put on a burst of speed and came shoulder to shoulder with the leader. Hesitating to pass, Johnny glanced over at Stenroos and saw a strange look on the leader's face. His eyes seemed sunken and glassy. "I decided that now was the time to make my move," he says. "I never looked back, fearing that I might provoke him into a duel. When I went past him at Lake Street, I knew then that I would win. He had that old stitch that has killed off so many runners. When I saw him rubbing his side, I hit my pace a little bit stronger. That was enough to take the heart out of him." When the finish line came into view, Johnny had enough energy left for one more sprint. To the amazement of everyone there except his parents, the unknown from Sydney Mines hit the tape at 2:25.40.4 • a new course record and a world record. Newspaper reporters rushed to interview the new champion, who did not even appear winded. This "darkest of dark horses" had proven Experience Winter!... Visit VICTORIA COUNTY VICTORIA COUNTY Nova Scotia's Winter Playground • Six Nordic Ski Clubs • Exciting Loppet Series • Several Instructional Clinics • Weekend Tours provide CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS with a great season ' CAPE BRETON ISLAND An abundance of snow provides skiers annually with a Ski Season from mid-December to early April! 1992 Major Ski Events Feb. 8th - N. S. High School Cross Country Ski Championships, St. Ann's 9th - N. S. Provincial Relay Cross Country Ski Championship, Middle River Feb. 22-23 - Atlantic Series, Cape Smokey Mar. 28-29 - N. S. Cross Country Ski Individuals Championships, Cape North Victoria County has over 150 kms of groomed and un-groomed x-country ski trails. For your free copy of the Victoria County X-Country



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