

# Mike “Holtzy” Holt

## Have you held any National Records?

I've held a national record in every event and currently hold the national Men's 5 record in tricks at 2600 points and Men's 6 Tricks record at 2740.

## Have you won any events or tournaments?

Yes, so many I could not begin to list, I've received at least 20 National Gold Metals (six overall), a few silvers and a couple of bronze.

## Any Memorable Moments?

The most memorable Gold metal was my first National Title at Houston, Texas in 1988. It just felt so special to stand up before my peers to receive my first of six National Overall Titles.

- 2006 was magical when I won the National Overall Championship and then skied for the first time at the age of 55 in the World Championships.
- 2007 I won the 2007 Overall National Championship and went Open with a score of 14.0 (at the tender age of 56).
- In 2008, I won the National Overall Championships again and placed 5<sup>th</sup> out of 15 skiers in Open Men Final Slalom. Oldest skier to have ever skied Open in any event.
- 2009, I went to New Zealand and skied my 2<sup>nd</sup> World Championship, this time I skied Slalom and Tricks at the age of 57, missed the final cut in Tricks by 70 points.
- 2010 – I went to Germany for my 3<sup>rd</sup> world Championship at the age of 58 and missed the finals in trick by 100 points.
- 2012 – I visited Texas for my 4<sup>th</sup> World Championship at the age of 61 to ski Men Open in the Slalom event and Senior men in Tricks. But two days before competition I dislocated my shoulder. Bummer, but I'm not complaining. 2012 was a great year, I skied a PB 16.2 in Slalom and shattered the Men's 6 Trick Record from 1310 to 2740!

## What got you into barefooting?

At the tender age of 31, a friend asked me to go water-skiing. Having never done that, I took him up on the offer. I learned to get up on two skis after a few tries and I was somewhat proud of the “old guy” (I was 10 years older than everybody else). Naturally, they were all skiing on one ski and I was amazed and wanted to try, but they suggested otherwise. Then late in the day when the water calmed down, they started barefooting. I was just amazed. I never heard of such a thing. This was in 1981.

## How did you lean to barefoot?

The following Monday morning, I called a local “water-ski” school in Pompano, Florida and attended one ski lesson class. I took about 20 face plants as I attempted to barefoot by stepping out of a “single” ski on a 6 ft pigtail from the boom. On the last attempt, I finally barefooted for the first time for about 100 ft. Then, with a smile on my



face, I took the final face plant of the day. Lesson 1 – Learn to barefoot from a “barefoot-ski” school, not a “water-ski” school!

Within a week I purchased a 13 ft boat with a 70 hp outboard motor but for some reason, when I attempted to barefoot from a kneeboard, all I got was spray on my face... but no barefooting. Since I only weighed 140 lb, I finally learned to barefoot from the kneeboard. Lesson 2 – Get the right boat for barefooting!

### **Who was your first barefoot instructor?**

After a month of barefooting at home, I learned that there were actually barefoot competitions. What is this sport? Do people actually compete? What do they do? What are the events? So many questions, but no one had the answers. I got a lead that a World Champion barefooter lived just an hour away and his name was Mike Seiple, so I contacted him immediately and scheduled a lesson that week.

If you know Mike, he's a pusher and within a few weeks he had me doing or attempting to do all kinds of things like starts, tumbles, crossing the wake, and even backward skiing. Within a month I was registered for my first barefoot tournament and I was committed to winning the “Novice” division.

Oh yea, I won't go into the details about the early 1980s at Seipel'. All I can say is that what happened at Seipels stays at Seipels. Some of you reading this will know what I'm talking about.

### **Tell us about your first tournament.**

Okay, six months of training and I'm ready for my first tournament at Melbourne, Florida. I called the tournament director and made a prediction that I'll win the Overall Novice Division!

Short version, at Brian Fuchs first tournament, he and I had a runoff and I beat him by five points to win the Novice Overall title!

### **How did you feel the first time you barefooted?**

I remember the first time I barefooted forward and backward, like it was yesterday. I remember the water, the ski, the sun, and the special feeling I felt inside. I just can't explain it. If you've been there, you know...

### **Why do you continue to barefoot?**

There is something special about this sport and the people that participate in it. I've found that almost all barefooters have a positive attitude. They take care of their body, and are willing to share their knowledge. I continue to barefoot because it helps me stay in shape, makes me feel great, and helps relieve stress. When I'm not skiing, I feel tight, stiff, and just not as relaxed.

### **Who has inspired you in this sport?**

Without question it was George Blair. As a matter of fact, when I won my first National title, I sent him (and Mike Seiple) a letter thanking him for his inspiration. What I respected about George was his character, his commitment to the sport and to the people he skied with. George was always bigger than life to me – but he took the time to speak to me at the tournaments and he cared enough to get to know me and my family.

**What skiers have you enjoyed watching and why?**

I was blessed to ski with or see all of the world's greatest skiers. For just beauty, it was Rick Powell for tricks; Mike Seiple the first inverted jumper (I was there the first time he did it in a tournament); Ron Scarpa because of his raw skiing style and determination to win, and he's still an amazing skier (the best barefooter of all time); Billy Nichols just because he skied for almost three hours (I'm still in awe of that accomplishment); Keith St. Onge because of his beautiful line 360's (I was there the first time he did it in a tournament); Brian Fuchs backward slalom pass (he actually did his transition in the air); and George Blair because at the age of 75, he would do better front toes in a tournament than I could at the age of 40!

**How often do you train/ski?**

When I first started, I skied every day I could and sometimes twice a day, but over the years with kids, work, and other distractions, I now generally ski between the middle of March through December about three to four times a week.

**Do you have a nickname and how did you get it?**

Yes, "Holtzy." It was given to me by Mike Seipel the first year I trained under him.

**Tell us about your family.**

I have a loving wife that puts up with all of my crazy activities, seven children, and five grandchildren.

**What do you do for a living?**

I'm a writer and publisher of electrical publications, Mike Holt Enterprises, Inc. [www.MikeHolt.com](http://www.MikeHolt.com). I'm considered one of the top experts in the world on the National Electrical Code.

**What is your motto?**

"Do your best at all times, don't worry about the results."