Home Country

A moment in time... to dream the Olympic dream

Slim Randles

Dud sat perched on the little board at the top of the run, sliding his super-long, super-wide skis slowly back and forth on the snow. He looked down at the people waiting at the bottom. The bottom, a quarter mile away, nearly, but only seconds in Olympic time.

"Representing the United States of America," the announcer said, the sounds reverberating across the mountain peaks, "Dudley Campbell."

The crowd roared and Dud continued psyching himself up. This wasn't just for him, or for his country. This was for Doc and Herb and Marvin, who were too old to do this. For Steve and Dewey, who weren't athletic enough to do this. For his own Anita, who would have things to tell at the Ladies Literary League back home after this.

A moment in time. A moment in a life. Dud smiled and slipped off the board and into his crouch, his arms behind him as the skis rocketed down, faster and faster toward the lip of the jump. And then, at precisely the right time, Dud lifted off, spread his skis into a V and flew. He flew, he soared and didn't seem to land. He flew past the first marker, he flew past the second marker … the one his competitors had been trying to reach all morning, and he landed on clean snow in an area he knew meant a new world record.

A new world record for his country. Tears came to his eyes as he heard the crowd begin to chant "Dud … Dud … Dud…"

"Honey," Anita said, "wake up. Here's some coffee for you." Dud smiled, because he knew this should really be champagne. He did it. You couldn't tell him he didn't.

In the background, the television was softly chattering " … his country's main hope for a medal in men's figure skating…"

Dud smiled and laced up his skates before setting out on the ice. He wasn't nervous. He had trained for this moment for years….

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