

Section 1 – Introduction to Biathlon

Effective: September 2015

Biathlon Saskatchewan

WELCOME

Welcome to Biathlon. Our goal is to introduce you to one of the most exciting Nordic sporting events – Biathlon. Our membership will have access to recreational or competitive biathlon activities, coaching and competitions. We will develop and deliver a high quality of skiing coaching and shooting coaching. We will provide a safe and fun environment for girls and boys and their families.

DEFINITION

Biathlon is an Olympic winter sport, which combines competitive, free-technique cross-country skiing and small-bore rifle marksmanship.

Several other competition forms of movement and shooting - such as ski archery, snowshoe Biathlon, running and shooting and mountain bike Biathlon - are also included in the general category of Biathlon. The word competition is used in Biathlon instead of race because it is not only a race but a combination of two different competitive activities.

THE CHALLENGE

The combination of two very contradictory disciplines, skiing and shooting, in the same competition confronts an athlete with a very demanding challenge. Cross-country racing requires intense, full out physical exertion over an extended period of time while shooting demands extremely fine control and stability. When athletes arrive at the shooting range, they have to shoot at a very small target, with a racing heartbeat and heaving chest. The clock continues to run even while shooting.

HISTORY OF BIATHLON

The word biathlon is of Greek origin and means "two tests". The combination of skiing and shooting used in the sport today is founded on a tradition of hunting, stemming back over four thousand years. Gradually, the techniques needed for survival and combat, developed into contests of skill - what could have been a more natural competition between the hunters in the Scandinavian forests, than that of marksmanship and cross-country skiing?

The first recorded biathlon race was organized near the border between Sweden and Norway in 1767 but regular competitions did not take hold until the early twentieth century. As training for defense purposes, biathlon grew in popularity among military units, especially in Scandinavia.

Known as the "military patrol", it was contested at the first Olympic Winter Games, at Chamonix, France, in 1924. The sport remained on the Olympic program until 1948, when postwar sentiments caused it to be dropped.

During the 1950's, Swedish members of the Union Internationale Pentathlon Modern (UIPM) advanced the cause of biathlon resulting in it eventually being re-introduced to the Olympics at Squaw Valley, U.S.A. in 1960 where it has remained ever since.

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The first Olympic gold medal for an individual biathlon race was presented to Klas Lestander (Sweden). The first World Championships for men were held in 1958 at Saalfelden, Austria, a 20 km individual event using full-bore rifles. Five shots were taken from each of four shooting ramps with target distances of 100 m (standing), 150 m, 200 m, and 250 m (prone).

Little had changed in the 20 km individual event until the introduction of the small bore rifle. Due to the high cost of ammunition, the size and power of the rifles, noise and safety issues and difficulty in obtaining gun licenses, a change to small bore .22 calibre rifles was approved in 1976. Two years later in Hochfilzen, Austria, small bore rifles were used for the first time in the World Championships, a development that dramatically changed the sport of biathlon.

As a consequence, the acceptance and popularity of biathlon grew rapidly. The World Championships in 1978 doubled in size to 28 participating nations and that same year, a 5-stop World Cup tour was established for senior men. Currently, the International Biathlon Union (IBU) boasts 57 member nations from five continents. There are over 30 nations competing in the nine-event World Cup tour and more than forty attend World Championships and the Olympic Winter Games.

At the 2014 Sochi Olympics, Norway's Ole Einar Björndalen won 2 gold medals to become the most decorated Winter Olympic athlete in history with 8 gold and 13 total medals.

CANADIAN HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In Canada, the sport of biathlon began under the auspices of the Canadian Armed Forces. In 1968, represented by an all-military team at Grenoble, France, Canada participated for the first time in an Olympic biathlon competition. Unfortunately, the sport declined in popularity.

It was not until 1978 and the change to small bore rifles that biathlon enjoyed a resurgence in Canada. Canadian Championships began being staged again and have included women since 1980.

Canada began sending teams to compete at the world level in 1982 and by the end of the decade our athletes were beginning to post excellent results. Beginning in the 1990's, the world sat up and took notice of the Canadian biathletes with the 8th place finish by Steve Cyr in the Olympic Sprint event in Albertville, France in 1992.

Canada's most decorated biathlete is Myriam Bédard of Quebec. Myriam began biathlon in the mid-1980's joining the national team in 1989 when she placed 4th at the World Junior Championships held in Chamonix, France. She went on to win Canada's first ever World Cup medal, placing 2nd in Walchsee, Austria in 1990.

Myriam continued to storm the world rankings finishing second overall in World Cup points in 1991-92 and winning an Olympic bronze medal in 1992 at Albertville, France – Canada's very first Olympic medal in Nordic competitions. In 1992-93, Myriam won a string of World

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Cup medals, finishing 2nd overall, and won two medals at the World Championships in Borovetz, Bulgaria, including the gold medal in the 7.5 km sprint. However, 1994 proved to be her crowning glory - on February 18th, at the Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway, Myriam Bédard won the gold medal for Canada in the 15 km individual event. Five days later, she struck gold a second time, a first for any Canadian woman to win two gold medals at one Olympic Games!

On December 1, 2012, history was made for Canadian men on the hills of Oestersund, Sweden as Jean-Phillippe Le Guellec captured a gold medal by winning the sprint competition to become the first Canadian male biathlete to reach the top of the podium at a World Cup event. Canadian men struck again at the 2015 Biathlon World Championships in Kontiolahti, Finland where Nathan Smith won silver in the 10km Sprint event. He was the first Canadian male biathlete to medal at a World Championship. Just two weeks later at the 2015 Biathlon World Cup event in Khansty-Mansiysk, Russia, Nathan Smith won the first gold medal of his career in the Men's 12.5 km pursuit race.

SPORT ORGANIZATION

Biathlon is organized at the international, national and provincial level and relies upon clubs to deliver biathlon programs and training.

International Level – International Biathlon Union (IBU)

The IBU establishes the international rules that govern the sport of Biathlon globally.

The IBU website is located at: <http://www.biathlonworld.com/en>.

Canada has adopted the IBU handbook as the rulebook to be used for competitions in Canada.

National Level – Biathlon Canada

Biathlon Canada is the NSO (National Sport Organization) that oversees the operations of Biathlon, in Canada. It is governed by a Board of Directors. Biathlon Canada sets forth the policies and procedures for Race hosting policies and establishes the membership fee structure. For more details see their website at: <http://www.biathloncanada.ca>.

Provincial Level – Biathlon Saskatchewan

Biathlon Saskatchewan is a non-profit organization and the provincial sport governing body for civilian biathlon in Saskatchewan. It is organized to allow anyone with an interest in Biathlon and who share the same values as Biathlon Saskatchewan, to participate through membership.

Biathlon Saskatchewan is the Provincial Sport Governing Body (PSGB) that oversees the operations of Biathlon in Saskatchewan. The Board of Biathlon Saskatchewan is elected on an annual basis consistent with its bylaws.

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Biathlon Saskatchewan is a member of Saskatchewan Ski Association, a multi ski sport association that operates as a liaison with SaskSport our provincial funding partner for amateur sport in Saskatchewan. Biathlon Saskatchewan records of account are audited.

Biathlon Saskatchewan sets the race schedule, hosting policies, equipment distribution and membership policies. The provincial association also hires provincial coaches and an executive director. Biathlon Sask. provides financial support for provincial competitions, team training and coach development.

BIATHLON SASKATCHEWAN AND OTHER MEMBERSHIPS

Any individual who is interested in the mission and values of Biathlon Saskatchewan shall be eligible for a membership upon successful registration and adherence to Biathlon Canada and Biathlon Saskatchewan policies.

All memberships require renewal annually and cover a twelve month training/competition season running from June 1 to May 31.

In order to train and compete, athletes shall be required to be a member in good standing of:

1. Biathlon Saskatchewan. This can be purchased online through www.zone4.ca;
2. Biathlon Canada. This can be purchased online through www.zone4.ca.

Biathlon Saskatchewan is club based. Clubs shall be members in good standing of Saskatchewan Ski Association. Athletes require specific club memberships. These can be purchased in person with the club.

In addition athletes shooting a .22 calibre rifle shall complete an accredited firearms safety training course that can lead to obtaining a Possession and Acquisition Licence (PAL) and/or Minors Permit as issued by the RCMP.

FEES

Biathlon Canada and Biathlon Saskatchewan membership fees are charged to each athlete for a twelve month training/competition season regardless of how much the athlete chooses to participate in the program. The fees are approved by the Boards of Directors annually.

Clubs determine their own fees, including Sask Ski fees, and shall be aligned with the degree and extent of biathlon programming. Biathlon programming is subject to review by the provincial High Performance Committee.

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Race fees will also be required dependent on the race and can be purchased through www.zone4.ca. As you grow in the sport, for in and out of province training and competitions, additional trail and range passes shall be required.

Costs for travel, accommodation, food, equipment, ammunition, race uniforms and incidentals to attend race competitions or training camps are not included in the Biathlon Canada or Biathlon Saskatchewan membership fees.