

How To Host A Sask Cup Race?

1. Off-season planning:

- Decide if your club wants to host a race in the upcoming winter season and choose a tentative date in the winter. (Try to have this done **by April 30**)
- If you decide to host, figure out well in advance who will agree to volunteer for the following key positions (**April 30**). If you can't fill these positions then perhaps consider hosting a race in the following season or teaming up with another club for support.

2. Volunteer Positions:

A) Race Director (Chief of Competition)

This person is the most important person and is in charge of running the entire race. Some of their main responsibilities are:

- make sure other key volunteers are in place
- be in charge of ultimately deciding whether to cancel a race due to cold or poor snow
- ensure the race invitation is ready in time and organize the [Zone 4](#) registration form, decide which categories will be used, get appropriate officials forms ready (these are on the website [here](#))
- ensure there are medals, race bibs, post-race snacks, prizes, Spam award, clean shooting awards
- be on the jury to decide penalties and if the race should be cancelled or postponed due to weather
- host the team captain's (coaches meeting) if you choose to have one
- in charge of getting results to Biathlon Sask to be posted

B) Chief of Range

This person is in charge of opening and closing the range and is responsible for safety, painting the targets before the race if possible (use Tremclad paint) leveling the targets, getting zeroing targets ready, setting up the air rifle targets and setting up the range. Also responsible for changing lanes from prone to standing during the race. This person should have a PAL.

C) Chief of Course

Responsible for getting the grooming done, having good signage, and choosing the appropriate loops for each category.

D) Chief of Timing

In charge of getting the finishing times and collating those times with range scores and penalty loops. Compiles finished results, makes start list, hands out bibs, times race.

E) Chief of Range Scoring

Works with Chief of Timing and gets people to score the range and gives range results to chief timer, also responsible for getting volunteers for penalty loop counting.

F) 9 to 15 additional volunteers needed on race day

- usually 5 - 10 people to score the range,
- 2 people to count penalty loops,
- 2 or 3 people to be timers at the start/finish with watches

3. Biathlon Sask Supplied Items

Biathlon Sask has bibs, a set of relay bibs, SWF banners for the start/finish area and usually has medals from SWF. Race organizers can feel free to solicit sponsors since there is no proprietary status given to SWF. Biathlon Saskatchewan may also be able to provide some items for a prize table, if this will be provided. Contact the [Provincial Coach](#) (Doug) to confirm the items that will be brought to the race.

The Race Director is responsible for providing chocolate for clean shooters. Be certain to choose a kind of chocolate that you like personally in case there are leftovers and you are forced to eat the remainder yourself. The Race Director is

also responsible to procure small prizes/awards for the Air Rifle, Midget and Development categories and ensuring there are enough prizes for a prize table for each participant. Some Race Directors solicit prize donations from local businesses and others simply go to Walmart or a Dollar Store to get adequate numbers of cheap (I mean inexpensive) prizes.

4. A Month Til Race Day

Choose the times for the races and what types and prepare the Race Notice. Usually the Saturday race starts later (12:00 zero with a 1:00 race) and Sunday is a 10:00 zero and an 11:00 race. This allows for better traveling arrangements. Often a sprint race (shooting two times) is held on the first day since it is the easiest to officiate with a mass start or individual held on the second day after people (racers, coaches and officials) have gotten some experience under their belts.

Zeroing is scheduled for 45-50 minutes, and then there is 10-15 minutes to take down zeroing paper and get the racers organized at the start line.

Choose the types of race (race format) you may wish to have and how each race will be started.

Formats that can have a simultaneous (mass) **OR** interval start include the following. At the international level these races have an interval start. At our level, the choice between doing an interval start or simultaneous (mass) start is at the discretion of the Race Director. Mass/wave style starts are easiest since the athlete start time does not need to be subtracted from their finish time. The finish time is all that matters so results are quicker to tabulate. Also note that results for individual races often take longer to tabulate since shooting penalties must be added to the final times introducing more opportunities for mistakes by officials to come into play. The benefit of including interval starts in the overall race calendar is it will allow racers to practice the different race tactics required for these formats. In simultaneous (mass) starts, start the fastest athletes towards the front so they don't ski overtop of the little kids:

- **Sprint** - shoot twice and ski penalty loops for misses.
- **Sprint with relay bullets** - 3 extra bullets are used each time shooting and ski penalty loops for misses.

- **Individual** - shoot 3 (PPP) or 4 times (PSPS) with 45 second or 1 minute penalties. Note that one-minute penalties are much easier to tabulate if short on volunteer expertise but ideally, younger athletes are assessed a shorter time penalty since their race distance is shorter.
- **Separate Event** - You may also wish to include a separate short (fun) event like a showdown or a one-shot setup contest or a hill climb to make things more interesting - often weather dependant.

Formats that only have a simultaneous/mass start:

- **Mass Start** - Junior boys girls and younger shoot 3 times, older athletes shoot 4 times P,P,S,S. Ski penalty loops for misses.
- **Single Mixed Relay** - teams of two both going two times. Ski penalty loops for misses

Formats that only have an interval start:

- **Australian Pursuit** - start from slowest to fastest. Junior boys and girls and younger shoot 3 times; older athletes shoot 4 times P, P, S, S. Ski penalty loops for misses.
- **Pursuit** - fastest athletes from previous day starts first. Junior boys and girls and younger shoot 3 times; older athletes shoot 4 times P, P, S, S. Ski penalty loops for misses

5. Two Weeks Til Race Day

Create the [Zone 4](#) registration form. Usually we charge \$20-\$30 per weekend with the funds raised going to the hosting club. Normally there is a confirmation list that is posted so people can see who has also registered in their category. The race deadline is usually the Thursday at 5:00 pm. Send the Race Notice and link to the Zone 4 registration form to the [Biathlon Saskatchewan Executive Director](#) (Alana) to distribute to Biathlon Saskatchewan members.

Also, if weather is looking unfavourable, it is best to cancel the race on the Tuesday prior so people have time to change travel plans.

6. One Week Til Race Day

Make sure the race loops are selected and are the appropriate distances for the level of competitors. (In Saskatchewan we tend to not be so tied to absolute distances but rather try to have the appropriate time length of race. This is because snow conditions vary so drastically.) For young athletes a 12-15 minute sprint works and a 25 minute individual. For older kids a 20-25 minute sprint and 35 minute individual seem to work. Masters often will select their own loops to be obstinate but suggested ones are often similar to senior boys and girls loops. The following serves as guidance only to help with creating the race notice and selecting loops:

| Race category | Sprint | Mass Start | Individual | Short Individual | Pursuit |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Air Rifle (*) | 2 km | 3 km | 3 km | 3 km | 3 km |
| Development (*) | 1.5 km | 2 km | 2 km | 2 km | 2 km |
| Midget Boys/Girls (*) | 2.5 km | 3 km | 3 km | 3 km | 3 km |
| Juvenile Boys/Girls | 3 km | 4 km | 4 km | 4 km | 4 km |
| Junior Boys/Girls | 3.75 km | 4.5 km | 5 km | 4.5 km | 4.5 km |
| Senior Boys/Girls | 6 km | 7 km | 7 km | 6.25 km | 7 km |
| Youth Men | 7.5 km | 10 km | 12.5 km | 10 km | 10 km |
| Youth Women | 6 km | 7.5 km | 10 km | 7.5 km | 7.5 km |
| Junior Men | 10 km | 12.5 km | 15 km | 12.5 km | 12.5 km |
| Junior Women | 7.5 km | 10 km | 12.5 km | 10 km | 10 km |
| Open Men | 10 km | 15 km | 20 km | 15 km | 12.5 km |
| Open Women | 7.5 km | 12.5 km | 15 km | 12.5 km | 10 km |
| Masters Men/Women | 6 km | 7 km | 7 km | 6.25 km | 7 km |

(*) For each individual participant, can adjust the distances to best fit the racer's ski skill level.

Try to avoid using three different loops for a category. One loop is preferable since the athletes make fewer mistakes on the loops but if two are used, put the longer loop(s) first. This allows athletes who are in a simultaneous start to separate enough so that the range is not filled up during the first prone shooting. Athletes can be grouped by age or gender into batches of about 15-20. Consider putting the Masters athletes in the first wave since they often take the longest (in other words are slowest)

If possible, try to confirm prior to the race that all athletes are registered members of Biathlon Saskatchewan for insurance purposes.

Mark the trails. Plumbing stores have small coloured flags that work. Shortest loops are usually orange, 1km yellow, 2km blue or green, 3-4 km loops red but these colours are not set in stone.

Make sure medals are available. Spam award if you like as well. Decide beforehand who will be the master of ceremony for the awards and whether there will be a special guest who may present medals.

Have a short penalty loop of 75-100 meters for Masters, Senior Boys/Girls and younger and a longer one of 150 meters for Youth categories and older.

Ensure you have enough rifle racks ready knowing that you will also need at least one for the senior boys and girls to pick up and drop off rifles at. If possible, use the same rack for pick up and drop off so rifles don't have to be carried back and forth. Be sure to have carpets at the pick-up rack so that athletes are forced to come to a complete stop.

Be sure you have a first aid kit and an Emergency Action Plan with an appropriate person arranged. Often ski patrollers will do this role. Consider having a snow machine on standby in case of emergency.

Estimate the number of athletes coming from each club to assign zeroing lanes. Usually 3 athletes per lane is a rough estimate that seems to work well enough.

Ensure you have the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation Banners to use as a start finish line. Consider a SWF medal presenter.

Arrange with the [Provincial Coach](#) (Doug) for bibs to be at race. We are missing bib 26 and bib 99. Wash these after the Sunday race and return in the bags of ten sorted by number. If the Saturday race is warm, consider washing after Saturday race. Arrange to have a “pen” or “corral” area set up after the finish line and a bucket so that athletes must take off their bibs before leaving. This stops bibs from accidentally being taken home.

Have some kool-aid along to make the start finish line in the snow. This is drastically better than having to use paint.

Have the forms for scoring the range available on clipboards for volunteers to use and pencils.

Get any prizes for draw prizes you may want. Have chocolate ready for clean shooting.

Arrange for sound system if you want music.

7. Day Before The Race

Pick up water, food, snacks for post-race nutrition. Make sure course is groomed and marked. Put out pylons. Set up start/finish lines. Drink a good amount of tea prior to heading to the range to ensure finish line marker is solidly frozen in place for race day. Position rifle racks.

Post the bib assignments, race loops and zeroing lanes for people to see when they arrive the next day.

Have coaches meeting, if necessary, with Chief of Competition hosting meeting. This is not usually done with Sask Cup races.

**** Note ***

Be Sure that the start list is ready with athlete numbers assigned prior to race day so that the event goes smoothly. Pencils work better in cold than pens. Making the start list is fairly important to how smoothy the even turns out.

Try as much as possible to get athletes racing in category that best suits their abilities.

The main categories (by age) are:

- Air Rifle:
 - Air Rifle 1: ages 8 to 11 or 12, shooting air rifles on large targets
 - Air Rifle 2: ages 8 to 11 or 12, shooting air rifles on small targets
- .22:
 - Development Male and Female: any age, new to biathlon, shooting and ski distances will be tailored to each individual athlete to ensure a positive racing experience.
 - Air Rifle: ages 10 and under, shooting off a rest
 - Juvenile Boys and Girls: ages 11 – 12, shooting off a rest
 - Junior Boys and Girls: ages 13 – 14, shooting prone only without a rest
 - Senior Boys and Girls: ages 15 – 16, shooting both prone and standing
 - Youth Men and Women: ages 17 – 18, shooting both prone and standing
 - Junior Men and Women: ages 19 – 21, shooting both prone and standing
 - Open Men and Women: ages 22 – 35, shooting both prone and standing
 - Masters Men and Women: ages 35+, shooting both prone and standing

It is best to try and format your main results page (if possible) so one 'race' or one 'wave' is all on one page (so you don't have to flip pages back and forth when writing down times or range scores)

Often it is a good idea to leave a space or two so a person that registered in the wrong category can be switched easily or a person that shows up on race day can be added. (Best to insist that athletes pre-register but race directors can make exceptions if they feel it is appropriate).

8. Race Day

Brief volunteers on their roles and answer any questions. Trust in your volunteers and provide them with the necessary clipboards and forms for them to do their job.

Parents will always help out to officiate. Also encouraged is using senior athletes (after their race is over) to give back by helping officiate.

Hand out bibs and enjoy the organized mayhem. Have a roped off "finish coral" to catch the athletes and force them to toss their bibs into a bucket before leaving.

You may want to have snacks after the race available to athletes but not required.

A priority is placed on the idea of providing a meaningful competition for each competitor regardless of age, experience and ability. This may mean courses could be altered mid race (or prior) to best suit the athletes, usually with the cooperation of the coaches and Race Director.

If possible, send out preliminary results to coaches or post at range and fix/adjust any errors that may have been made. (As can happen from time to time)

Announce the winners after the races are over and award medals:

- Air Rifle, and Development category racers will all receive the same award. Options might be something consumable (i.e. "medals" made of cookies, chips, chocolate bars, etc.), ribbons, stickers, badges, buttons, bookmarks, etc.
- All other categories can receive medals based on the race results. If you run out of medals, priority is usually given to getting the youngest athletes their medals.

Send your results to the [Biathlon Saskatchewan Executive Director](#) (Alana) to put up on the Biathlon Sask website or zone 4 or both.

Save paper results for a few weeks after the race, especially if it is an important race such as a trials race.

Save things like race loops, distances to potentially use for next season.

And lastly...

Donut Eat Hellos Know?

9. Possible Forms to Use

A list of possible forms for a race are on the [Biathlon Saskatchewan website](#) under resources.

