



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING



The Soldier Hollow venue.

Origin

The history of cross-country skiing goes back about 5000 years. The roots were based in Norway, where it then spread to whole Scandinavia and Russia where during the hard winters the skis had been the best way to move from one place to another. The publication (in German) of Fridtjov Nansens book "on snow shoes through Green/and" in November 1891 brought the enthusiasm for cross-country skiing also to Mid-Europe. By emigrants, cross-country skiing found its way also to the USA, Canada and Japan. Today, the most important series of competitions is concentrated on the FIS World Cup with 12 to 16 individual competitions and 6 to 8 relays. Up to 90 female and 100 male athletes are generally competing in these high level competitions. Apart from the

World Cup, Continental Cup competitions, National Championships as well as long distance mass races are other important competitions.

At the Olympic Games

At the first Olympic Winter Games in 1924 in Chamonix, two distances for men had been held (18 km and 50 km). In 1936 at Garmisch-Partenkirchen the relay was added, and in 1956 at Cortina d'Ampezzo the 15 and 30 km distance. In the mid-eighties the so-called free technique was introduced, distances and technique (classical or free) have alternated since the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. In 1992 in Albertville, pursuit (10 km) start race was introduced. Women joined cross-country skiing at the Olympics for the first time in 1952 at Oslo

with a distance of 10 km. In 1956 at Cortina d'Ampezzo the relay was added, in 1964 at Innsbruck the 5 km and in 1984 at Sarajevo the 20 km which distance was prolonged to 30 km in 1992 in Albertville.

Salt Lake City Olympic venue

Like biathlon, the 12 cross-country skiing events (6 for men and 6 for women) will be held at Soldier Hollow, a 518-hectare (1280-acre) located about 86 km (53 miles) from downtown Salt Lake City. Most of Soldier Hollow's courses are visible to stadium spectators (more than 15,000 expected). The longest continuous loop (16.7 km - 10.4 miles) has a cumulative vertical rise of 561 metres (1,840 feet).