



LUGE



Origin

The roots of luge date back to ancient Egypt and the construction of the pyramids, where heavy blocks of rock were transported with so-called 'slides' similar to sleds. Thus the 'slides' which are still being used by the farmers in the flatlands today are the ancestors of today's luge sleds. Sleds with two runners were used as early as 800 BC by the Vikings: the oldest sleds which are still intact from this area come from the 'Oseberg' boat, the Viking boat which was salvaged 1904 from the Oslo fjord in Norway. The Viking sleds can be visited in the Oseberg museum near Norway's capital Oslo. Above all, in the mountainous areas and in those flatlands where there is a lot of

snow the sled continues to be used even today to carry heavy loads and people, be it a toboggan, a horse-drawn sleigh or dog sledge. The first International luge competition was held in Switzerland on a road between Klosters and Davos on 12 February 1883 with 21 athletes from six countries. In 1913 the International Sled Sport Federation was founded, and in 1914 the town of Reichenberg (at that time the kingdom of Bohemia, today Liberec in Czech Republic) was the venue of the first European Championships. In 1935 the Federation Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing (FIBT) admitted the athletes as 'Section de Luge'. In 1955 the first World Championships were held in Oslo, and in 1957 delegates from 13 countries established the Federation Internationale de Luge de Course (FIL) in Davos (Switzerland), recognised the same year by the IOC. Today, the sport of Luge is performed on two kinds of tracks: artificial (Olympic Luge Sport) and natural luge tracks.



At the Olympic Games

Luge has been on the Olympic programme since the IX Olympic Winter Games 1964 in Innsbruck. The luge competition consists of three events: men's, women's and mixed. Mixed teams can consist of two athletes of either gender but are almost always two men.

Salt Lake City Olympic venue

The Olympic luge competition will be held at Utah Olympic Park, considered the world's fastest luge track. In the men's singles, sliders will exceed 90 mph (145 km/h) on a track that consists of 17 curves and one labyrinth and measures 4,403 ft (1,342 m) and has a 389 ft (8118.6 m) vertical drop. Doubles and women's singles have 12 curves and one labyrinth on a track which measures 3,704 ft (1 129 m) long and has a 327 ft (99.7 m) vertical drop.



The luge course.



*Josef Fendt,
President*



*Svein Romstad,
Secretary General*