



BIATHLON



Origin

In 1776 in Norway, the first competitions were organised where a competitor firing a rifle at a target, raced across country on skis. Such competitions were held at regular intervals between 1792 and 1818. In Germany the first military patrol race was held in 1902. In Norway, team competitions were soon joined in 1912 by individual races during which 10 rounds were fired in two shooting bouts. The 1st Winter Games in Chamonix included a ski patrol race in their programme organised as a demonstration, it was also demonstrated at the Winter Games in St Moritz (1928 and 1948) and in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (1936). It was not before the 43rd IOC Session in Rome in 1949, however, that the proposal of Sweden was accepted to include in the Olympic programme the combination of cross country skiing and shooting as an individual competition open also to civilian competitors. The name biathlon can be found no sooner than in the rules of 1955. The first Olympic competition was held in 1960 in Squaw Valley after the Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne (UIPM) had integrated biathlon as another sport in 1957. In 1978 the development was further enhanced by the change from the large army rifle calibre to a small bore rifle. Modern technology has changed the target system, rules, computing and TV presentation. Biathlon now has men and women competitions where World Championships and World



Cups are held all over the world. Founded in 1993 the International Biathlon Union (IBU) has now 61 affiliated national federations from five continents.

At the Olympic Games

Biathlon was then added to the Olympic programme at the 1960 Squaw Valley Games with a men's 20 km individual event. In 1968 in Grenoble, the four-man relay event was added to the programme and the sprint competition was added 12 years later in Lake Placid. In 1992 in Albertville, women made their Olympic biathlon debut with individual, sprint and relay events. The men's and women's pursuit events will be contested for the first time in Salt Lake City.

Salt Lake City Olympic Venue

Biathlon will be held in Soldier Hollow, a 518-hectare (1280-acre) located

about 86 km (53 miles) from downtown Salt Lake City. Its capacity is more than 15,000 spectators. The biathlon course consists of two separate 4 km loops, with cut-offs for shorter distances. The 23 feet (7m) wide trail meanders through Wasatch Mountain State Park and ranges in elevation from 5,528 ft (1,685m) to 5,742 ft (1,750m).



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