



Biathlon Alberta Media Guide 2010-11

Covering Biathlon in Alberta

Covering biathlon can be an interesting and unique story that will add a new dimension to your sports coverage. The information in this guide is intended provide a brief explanation of the most important aspects of this fascinating winter sport. Full press service is offered including press releases, photos, and athlete bios. If you cannot send a reporter please contact the Media Coordinator and ask to be added to the Biathlon Press email list. If anything is unclear after reading this guide please contact Andy Holmwood, Biathlon Alberta Executive Director info@biathlon.ca PH: 403-202-6548



Biathlon in Alberta

Biathlon Alberta is the provincial governing body for winter and summer biathlon. Formed in 1980, the organization oversees biathlon competitions, athlete development, volunteer and officials' training, and coaching development. With over 500 members, Biathlon Alberta is the largest provincial biathlon organization in Canada.

The National training centre in Canmore attracts athletes from across the country and around the world. The legacy of the 1988 Olympics is recognized as the premier facility in Canada.

Within the province of Alberta there are 9 active biathlon venues. At these venues local clubs conduct biathlon training and competitions. A provincial competition series known as the Calforex Cup takes place each winter with athletes of all ages competing to claim the title of Calforex Cup Champion.

Biathlon Alberta and the Alberta Event Hosting Society have hosted Western, National, and North American Championships as well as World Cups, Junior World Championships, and even the Olympics in 1988. A large group of trained volunteers and officials enable Biathlon Alberta to handle events of any size.

Olympic Biathletes from Alberta

Ken Karpoff 1988

Glenn Rupertus 1988, 1992, 1994

Paget Stewart 1988

Yvonne Visser 1992

Jane Isakson 1992, 1994

Gill Hamilton 1994

Kristen Berg 1998, 1994

Nikki Keddie 1998

Kevin Quintilio 1998

Robin Clegg 2002, 2006, 2010

Sandra Keith 2006

David Leoni 2006

Zina Kocher 2006, 2010

Rosanna Crawford 2010

Biathlon Events in Alberta

Calforex Cup: This provincial series is the premier domestic competition circuit in Canada. The circuit may include stops in Canmore, Camrose, Fort McMurray, Edmonton, Hinton, Peace River and Grande Prairie. The series culminates with the Alberta Championships held in the spring each season.

Summer Biathlon: Not content to wait for snow, biathletes combine running, roller skiing, and even mountain biking with target shooting. Summer biathlon is increasing in popularity in Europe and Canada. Newcomers are encouraged to enter “citizen” races, where air rifles and instruction are supplied by the organizers. The North American Roller Ski Championships will be held in Canmore Sept 10-12, 2010.

National Championships: This is the most important domestic biathlon competition of the year which will crown national champions. The 2010 National Championships took place in Canmore. National Champions crowned include Senior Men’s Champion, Nathan Smith, Junior Men’s Champion Beau Thompson, and Senior Boy’s Champion Stuart Harden. In all, the Alberta team earned 59 medals in four competitions. In March 2011 the event moves to Charlo, New Brunswick.

Canada Winter Games: In 2011, a team of 8 Alberta athletes will compete in Halifax at the Canada Winter Games, where they hope to match the success of the 2007, when Tyson Smith and Rosanna Crawford led a team that captured every gold medal awarded in biathlon that year. Biathlon also appears at the Alberta Winter Games held every 2 years.

North American Cup: The top biathletes in North America compete for prize money on this international circuit. This season there will be 5 competitions in various locations throughout Canada and the USA, with the championships held in Whistler, BC in early April 2011.

World Junior/Youth Championships: This annual competition was held in Canmore in 2009. Hometown favorites Scott Gow, Kurtis Wenzel and Aaron Gilmor did not disappoint earning medals in three events. The 2011 World Youth/Junior Championships will be held in Novo Mesto, Czech Republic from Jan 27 – Feb 5, 2011. Several Alberta athletes are selected as members of the Canadian team every year.

IBU Cup: In early 2012 international competition will return to the Canmore Nordic Centre when they host an IBU Cup event. The IBU Cup is the stepping stone to the World Cup level of Competition. Athletes from around the world will compete in Canmore hoping to earn enough points to advance to the World Cup.

Competition Formats

Individual (IND): This is the traditional Biathlon competition, established before the invention of the mechanical target, where hits and misses can be seen from the firing point. Originally, paper targets were used and were scored after the last shooting was done. Each competitor was then given a penalty of added time for misses. Today the same principle applies, but the misses can be seen on a shot-to-shot basis. Shooting is more important in the Individual competition – with its one minute penalty – than the other types which have a penalty loop of 150 m, which takes less than 30 seconds to ski.

The Individual has the longest skiing distance of all competitions, 20 kilometers for Senior Men. There are four bouts of shooting. The difficulty for a novice spectator is that there is no way of knowing who is leading at any given time. Only after the time penalties have been added to the ski time, can the winner be announced.

Sprint (SP): A shorter distance event (up to 10km for Senior Men) where a 150m penalty loop must be skied for each missed target. Faster skiers may have an advantage in this competition as they can complete the penalty loops quicker, but better shooters don't ski the extra distance.

Pursuit (PS): A two-competition format in which the winner of the first competition (usually a Sprint competition the day before) is the first starter; all other competitors start according to their time behind the winner in the first competition. For example, if the second place finisher on day one was 20 seconds behind the first place finisher, they start 20 seconds after the first starter). All competitors finishing more than 5 minutes behind on Day 1, start the pursuit race 5 minutes after the leader goes in a group or mass start. As in the Sprint, penalty loops are skied for each missed target. This creates an exciting finish for the second competition since the starts are close together and the finish is determined by the first competitor across the line. It is not uncommon for competitors starting as far back as 10th place to win the competition!

Mass Start (MS): An easy to follow biathlon competition! All competitors start at once, penalty loops are skied for each missed target and the first competitor across the finish line wins.

Super Sprint (SS): This recently added event brings an exciting new dimension to biathlon competitions. With loops of 800m or less athletes compete head to head in elimination heats and finals with an emphasis on shooting. With up to 10 shots to hit 5 targets athletes who leave targets standing are eliminated.

Relays: There are a number of relay formats used in biathlon. Three or four member teams made up of men-only women-only or mixed teams will usually ski a sprint style race with 3 loops and two shooting bouts, before tagging the next skier in the stadium hand-over zone. Athletes are still required to ski penalty loops for each missed shot, but they are given 8 cartridges to hit their 5 targets in each bout. With a mass start, it means that the first across the line is the winner.

Glossary of Biathlon Terms

(Courtesy of USBA)

Terminology



Rifle

The biathlon rifle is a .22 caliber, straight-pull-bolt action model with non-optical sights. Equipped with a harness to carry the rifle while skiing and a custom ultra light stock, the rifle is completely adapted to its special purpose. The minimum weight is 3.5 kg (just under 8 lbs).



Arm Sling

Belt or webbing attached to the rifle fore stock that hooks into the athlete's "shooting cuff" on the upper arm to stabilize the rifle while firing in the prone position.



Harness

Backpack like shoulder straps used for carrying the rifle on the back. The average rifle weighs about eight pounds. Also visible in the photo is the rifle cover - used whenever the rifle is carried outside of the competition area.



Snow Cover

Snow guard or snow cover

Cap covering the rifle muzzle that prevents snow from entering the barrel or the front sight. It is flipped open at the range before shooting.



Clips

Clip or Magazine

Used to hold five .22 caliber rifle rounds. Up to four clips can be stored in the rifle stock while the biathlete is skiing. At the range the clips are taken from the stock and inserted into the magazine well (a slot beneath the action) - thus loading the rifle.



Extra Rounds

In the Relay, 8 bullets are carried in each clip - five loaded in the usual way by bolting the rifle and three *extra rounds* carried in the base of the clip (shown left) that can be hand loaded. Upon entering the range, the biathlete deposits the three *extra rounds* in a cup at their firing point. The five rounds from the clip are fired at the five targets, if more rounds are needed to hit all five targets, the extra rounds are hand loaded.



Clicks

Rifle sight adjustments for wind and light conditions are made by moving the rear aperture using vertical and horizontal screws. The screws are turned using silver colored knobs that *click* as they are turned. Athletes listen for the *clicks* as they turn the knobs to know how far they have adjusted their sights. There are roughly six clicks across the prone target.



Zeroing

The time before a competition when the athlete shoots at paper targets to adjust the rifle sights for the wind and light conditions. Biathletes take turns shooting while coaches watch every shot through high powered scopes and give the athletes *sight corrections* - telling them how many *clicks* to adjust their sights in the vertical and horizontal axis. "Three left and two down" for example. During the competition coaches watch the shots but are not allowed to give any information to the athletes while they are on the shooting range.



Prone

The lying down shooting position. In the Individual competition the first and third shooting stages are shot in the prone position, as is the first shooting stage in Sprint and Relay competitions. In the Pursuit and Mass Start competitions the first two stages are prone. To the naked eye the prone target looks the same as the standing target, however, the prone hit area is only 4.5cm in diameter.



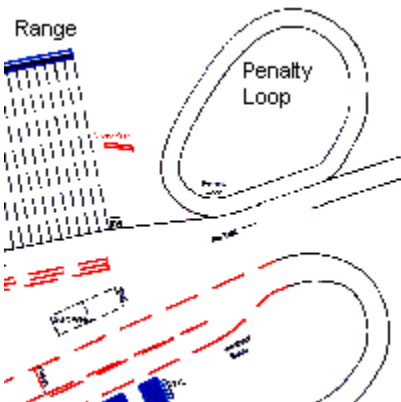
Standing

The standing shooting position is used in the second and fourth shooting stages of the Individual competition, as well as the second stage of the Sprint and the Relay, and the third and fourth of the Pursuit and Mass Start. The target hit area is the same size as the aiming mark - 11.5cm or about 4.5 inches. Typically the top athletes in the world compete the off hand stage in about 20 seconds - hitting all five targets in under seven seconds from first shot to last.



Shoot Clean

Hitting all five targets during one shooting stage.



Penalty loop

150m loop adjacent to the shooting range that must be skied when targets are missed during the Sprint, Pursuit, Mass Start and Relay. One loop is skied for every target missed. 20 to 25 seconds is considered a fast loop time. The penalty loop is not used in the Individual competition; instead a one-minute penalty is added to the competitor's final time for each missed target.



Skate or Free Style Ski Technique

In this technique, longer poles are used to drive the skier forward, gliding out onto the right leg and then back to the left leg - much like ice skaters. While kick and glide classical technique is allowed in biathlon competitions it is never seen at the international level. Unlike cross-country ski racing, there are no *classical-technique-only* competitions on the international biathlon calendar.



Target

Metal target sizes are 11.5cm (4.5in) in diameter for standing targets and 4.5cm (golf ball size) for prone targets. Shooting distance is 50m for all shooting stages.

Biathlon Alberta Contact Information:

Biathlon Alberta has offices located in Calgary and Canmore.

To arrange for athlete interviews or for event coverage information please contact:

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- Or -

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Links: Biathlon Alberta – www.biathlon.ca

Alberta Biathlon Club – www.albertabiathlon.com

Biathlon Canada – www.biathloncanada.ca

International Biathlon Union – www.biathlonworld.com