



# BIATHLON CANADA



## LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT: BIATHLON — A PARENT'S GUIDE

The winter Olympic sport that combines cross  
country skiing with rifle marksmanship

[www.biathloncanada.ca](http://www.biathloncanada.ca)

## Active for Life

Enter at any age



## Train to Win

Males 19 +/- and Females 18 +/-



## Train to Compete

Males 16-23 and Females 15-21



## Train to Train

Males 12-16 and Females 11-15



## Learn to Train

Males 9-12 and Females 8-11



## FUNDamentals

Males 6-9 and Females 6-8



## Active Start

Males and Females 0-6



- The Biathlon LTAD is a road map for physical and mental development
- Active, lifelong participation in sport is a key goal of our biathlon LTAD
- The seven stages help us focus on the needs of each child as he or she grows to maturity, at his or her own pace
- Biathlon is the perfect sport for developing both mental and physical skills
- Our biathlon LTAD embraces winning performances on the world stage

Every child loves to play – it is an essential ingredient in growing up. LTAD aims to optimize the fun and playfulness of sport by matching abilities to the appropriate challenge. When ability meets challenge, physical activity is fun.

Internationally acclaimed Canadian sport experts have discovered that these abilities can be maximized if they are matched to appropriate sporting challenges. The challenges are organized by the LTAD and carefully matched to the growing abilities of the child.

The emphasis at all stages is on engagement through play – even at the Olympics. Carefully orchestrated challenges are designed to optimize the development of mental and physical abilities through participation in Biathlon.

### Children, teenagers and adults enjoying sport together:

- Having fun and social interaction
- Developing to their full potential.
- Learning physical and mental skills
- Engaging in sporting activities for their whole lives

### **As a parent it is important to note that biathlon is a very safe sport.**

- Younger athletes use air rifles or junior sized rifles
- Athletes are always supervised by an adult with a firearms safety course and a Possession and Acquisition License (PAL). Furthermore, many provinces require additional regulated firearms safety training in order to conduct safe range practice. Therefore, biathlon participants exercise their sport in a very safe environment.
- Safety sessions are mandatory and are repeated frequently to teach all participants how to safely operate a firearm
- There is a zero tolerance policy for unsafe handling of a firearm
- Biathlon Canada endorses Sport Canada's Fair Play and Ethical Sport policies
- Biathlon Canada is committed to ensuring that biathlon is a drug-free sport



This stage is all about helping children do what comes naturally: play and grow. This is the time for “run, jump, throw”, but don’t forget that all of this can also be done in the snow! Parents are also encouraged to put their children on a pair of skis as they begin to develop movement skills like balance.

### **THINGS YOU CAN DO...**

- Be active with your child – set a good example
- Encourage your child to play with other children
- Remember that bumps and scrapes are an important part of physical learning
- Older children can join informal skiing, skating, gymnastics, swimming or martial arts programs

No longer babies, children are ready to explore the wider world of physical activity – now is the time to add sliding and paddling sports to “run, jump throw”. Working on agility, balance, coordination and speed will also help develop a base for all other sports. Add team games and performing arts to supplement group play. Expand your child’s horizons.



Lifelong enjoyment of physical activity is dependent on discovering the joy and freedom of movement, and this is the time when adult forms of movement begin to emerge. The **Biathlon Bears** program is a fun and safe environment where children learn the basic components of skiing and shooting. Some children may start out with a Jackrabbit ski program if they are not old enough for their local **Biathlon Bears** program.

## Biathlon – The intelligent sport for endurance athletes.

Biathlon is a complete sport that challenges your child to develop both mentally and physically. The unique combination of shooting and skiing encourages children to integrate mind and body in one athletic activity.

Biathlon will develop the mental skills, focus and discipline needed to succeed in the wider world, while at the same time providing a physical foundation for a long, healthy and active life. Youth who wish to compete will begin participating in biathlon competitions at a local and regional level. In addition, other programs like Precision Shooting Competitions allow participants to develop their shooting skills.

### *Through Biathlon, your child will develop:*

- Mental skills and eye-hand coordination via biathlon shooting
- Movement skills and an athletic base via integrated skiing, running, or biking sessions
- The fundamental skills needed to participate in any organized sport
- A balanced lifestyle, including other sports and recreational opportunities



## THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Encourage your child to participate in seasonal physical activities and shop around. This is the time to experiment with sports and keep the options wide open.
- Choose sports where the adult game or objective has been re-worked to meet a child’s needs
- Choose organizations that focus on proper movement forms, a safe environment and knowledgeable, certified coaches
- Be a role model! Participate! Be Active For Life!



## THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Encourage your child to participate in biathlon regularly, including practicing both skiing and shooting
- Ensure that your biathlon program includes lots of play
- Encourage your child to take responsibility for being ready to play and ensure they have the right sized equipment
- Remember that learning is more important than competing

## TRAIN TO TRAIN

The puberty – teenage – high school – years. Where children become young adults, and try to figure out who they really are. Enrolling your child in a biathlon Train To Train program is a good way to ensure a successful transition.

### *In Train To Train, biathletes will learn how to:*

- Work hard and value the rewards that come from perseverance and effort
- Be prepared for the unexpected by planning ahead
- Be successful by focusing on process rather than outcome
- Get to the start on time, prepared, and ready to go!

Biathlon has a carefully calibrated set of competition categories that match a teenager's rapidly improving athletic abilities and growing independence. Our program fosters self-reliance, while the safety and technical programs teach teens about responsibility, planning, organization and attention to detail. There are Eastern, Western, Canadian and North American Championships with various age and race categories for athletes at this stage to work towards competing at.



## TRAIN TO COMPETE

Successful adults in the domestic biathlon program will want to test themselves against the best in the world. From the time an athlete is nearing the end of high school until their early 20s is the timeframe when most athletes who wish to excel at biathlon must become very serious about the sport and their training. They must be willing to devote a significant portion of their life effort to training to succeed at the sport they have come to love. Athletes at this stage can travel all over Europe competing against athletes from all over the world, gaining valuable experience and life lessons.

### *In Train to Compete, biathletes will learn to:*

- Train year round at high intensity, in one sport, and position-specific training
- Model high competitions in training
- Optimize fitness preparation and performance
- Utilize double periodization

For those who are not destined for the National Team, or the Youth Olympic Games, biathlon offers many other opportunities. The Canada Winter Games provides a stepping stone for athletes who are working in this stage to compete on the world stage. Biathletes at colleges and universities can still compete, aiming for the World University Games. Both during and after college, biathletes can also compete in the Adult Sport and Masters categories or pass on their love of biathlon by volunteering. Regardless of whether you are an athlete, coach, official, or volunteer, biathlon is a sport for life!

## THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Give your child space to grow.
- Enhance their experience by supporting the program
- Volunteer as an official, or coach, or bring your work skills to the range
- Work behind the scenes; fundraise, organize trips, potlucks, socials or other team building opportunities.



## THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Give you child emotional support
- Follow their results and engage in discussion with them regarding their results
- Encourage them to follow their dreams and goals
- Allow coaches to work with the athletes without outside interference

Athletes graduate from Train To Compete, to Train To Win, after one or two seasons on the World Cup circuit. With this experience in hand, and devoting their training full time to biathlon, their perspective shifts to World Championships, the Olympic Games and podium finishes.

***In Train to Win, biathletes will learn how to:***

- Maximize fitness preparation and performance
- Perfect their physical, technical, tactical, and mental capacities.
- Train to peak at major competitions
- Achieve international podium performances

Training becomes even more intense, embracing all aspects of Biathlon and preparation for competition. Athletes at the peak of their careers focus entirely on the way to deliver their maximum performance to win medals for themselves and Canada!

This phase is the longest and most important phase in the LTAD – life-long participation in sport and physical activity. The benefits of enjoyment, friendships, good health and an increased lifespan are priceless!

If you want your child to be “active for life”, you must actively participate while they are growing into their adult participation habits. While your child is passing through the biathlon phases outlined throughout this book, you should be active too!

There are many things you can do to help your children grow into active adults. Participating in biathlon is a great way to improve and sustain both your child’s and your own mental and physical abilities.

## THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Follow your child’s success and failures and support them throughout
- Help with behind the scenes fund raising and logistics
- Continue to support athlete development at the grass roots level
- Continue to work with the domestic program to grow the sport



## THINGS YOU CAN DO...

- Contribute to the development of your child’s biathlon skills – take Coach\* training
- Contribute to competitive opportunities – take Officials\* training
- Support Biathlon’s commitment to a Drug Free Sport
- Support Biathlon’s Fair Play and Ethical Sport policies
- Participate in Biathlon as a Masters\* athlete
- Volunteer at a club or competition

\* Biathlon Canada programs are available in all provinces and territories.



# BIATHLON CANADA

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**Biathlon Canada is the national governing body for the sport of Biathlon.**

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Biathlon Canada believes that every child has the right to play on a level playing field, governed by ethical practices. It fully supports the anti doping activities of WADA and endorses the Fair Play and Ethical Sport policies of Sport Canada.

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Biathlon is a sport for all, for more information on para-biathlon please visit:  
[www.cccski.com/para-nordic](http://www.cccski.com/para-nordic)

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For more information on Long Term Athlete Development please visit our web site at:  
<http://www.biathloncanada.ca/main.php?p=257>

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A listing of biathlon clubs registered with Biathlon Canada can also be found on our web site at:  
<http://www.biathloncanada.ca/main.php?p=299>