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| Family Handbook |
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Family Handbook

Regina Biathlon Club

#### Welcome!

Welcome to the sport of biathlon and the Regina Biathlon Club! This handbook will provide you with some introductory information about the sport and give you some basic information about how to join, what practices and races look like, and the gear that you will need to help you successfully participate in the sport.

#### So what is biathlon all about?

Biathlon is a winter sport that combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting. It has its origins in Scandinavia where it was used in military training, and found it’s way to the Winter Olympic Games in 1960 for men and 1992 for women. Now, it has become the most televised sport in Europe.

In competition, an athlete alternates between skiing and shooting. Freestyle (skate) skiing is the method of choice for the cross-country skiing component of a race. Each time the athlete comes into the range to shoot, he or she has five shots to hit five targets. A missed target will result in a penalty, which could be adding a set amount of time to the athlete’s race or requiring the athlete to ski a penalty loop.

Words really can’t adequately describe the sport. The following videos can perhaps give a better glimpse into the sport (links also provided at the end of the handbook):

* [Intro to biathlon](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7CzTIUxdxs)
* [Biathlon for newbies](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ653MuCVEo)

#### About the Regina Biathlon Club

The Regina Biathlon Club was formed in 1980 and provides opportunities for young and old alike to practice and compete in this dynamic sport. We are a community biathlon club open to all ages and abilities which span recreational to competitive. We focus on fun and life-long fitness. Through coaching, support and opportunities, we work with our athletes to establish their goals and help them to grow and achieve their best.

The Regina Biathlon Club has established partnerships with the following organizations to help us provide the best training experience possible:

* Regina Wildlife Federation (RWF): The RWF is the location of the shooting range and where our practices are held. It has a short loop of trails within its boundaries, and connects to the Cherry Hills trails that are part of the larger White Butte ski trail system. There is a warm-up facility, storage buildings, and outhouse that members have access to. Members of the Regina Biathlon Club are requested to purchase a gate card to RWF when they complete their registration form to ensure easy access to the range.
* Regina Ski Club (RSC): The RSC provides grooming to the trails at our RWF facility, the adjacent White Butte Trails system, and the trails within the city of Regina. They are also a source of expertise for cross-country ski instruction that we rely heavily on and provide programming for all ages. Regina Biathlon Club athletes are strongly encouraged to participate in this programming to develop and enhance their cross-country ski technique.
* Biathlon Saskatchewan/Biathlon Canada: The provincial and national sport governing bodies provide operating grants, equipment and training opportunities for both our athletes and our coaches. Biathlon Canada prepares training materials for coaches and offers a summer precision shooting contest to encourage biathletes to continue practice in the offseason. Biathlon Saskatchewan offers a high performance program for biathletes entering the Train to Train stage (generally those aged 14 and older who set goals to participate at Nationals, Canada Winter Games and beyond), where they work directly with the provincial coach and the club supports their training program. The provincial coach also travels throughout the province to provide coaching to both athletes and coaches through either club visits or at training camps. Finally, Biathlon Saskatchewan provides funding for coaches to attend training workshops, rents rifles to athletes, provides targets for club use, organizes the annual race schedule, and provides the club with an operating grant to support club activities and programming.

Members of the Regina Biathlon Club are required to be members of these organizations. These memberships are handled seamlessly through our registration process, described in the “How to Join” section.

More information about our club can be found at:

* Our [website](http://www.reginabiathlonclub.ca)
* On [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/reginabiathlonclub/)

#### How to join

Joining our club is easy:

1. Go to the [registration page](https://www.reginabiathlonclub.ca/registration-1/) of our website and click on the registration form link.
2. Read the Program Descriptions tab carefully.
3. Complete the Registration Form tab.
4. Email the completed registration form to [reginabiathlonclub@gmail.com](mailto:reginabiathlonclub@gmail.com)
5. E-transfer or send a cheque made payable to Regina Biathlon Club.

If you have questions at any time, you can contact our President, Merle Boyle, at [merleboyle@sasktel.net](mailto:merleboyle@sasktel.net) or our club email at [reginabiathlonclub@gmail.com](mailto:reginabiathlonclub@gmail.com).

The information you provide on the registration form will allow us to ensure your participants are successfully enrolled as members with not only our club but also our partners (RWF, RSC, Biathlon Canada), and will automatically register you for the cross-country ski training that best aligns with your athlete’s stage of development and goals.

Parents are encouraged to also include themselves on the registration form as either coaches or supporters. Doing so has a direct impact on the amount of the Biathlon Saskatchewan grant our club receives, which further goes to supporting your athlete.

Once the Club receives your completed registration form and payment, the Club will send you your membership numbers for Biathlon Canada and will also add your athlete(s) to our team management app. This app will ensure you are informed of all practices and races.

Should you already be a member of any of Regina Wildlife Federation, Regina Ski Club, or Biathlon Saskatchewan prior to registering with our club, please indicate which organization(s) you are already a member of when you submit your registration. Please do not send your payment until your total is recalculated and communicated with you.

#### Programming

Biathlon Canada uses the Long-term Athlete Development model (LTAD) to guide the training programs offered to its participants. The intent of the model is to ensure that athletes receive developmentally appropriate, science-based training opportunities and that athletes remain in sport into adulthood. As such, each of the ages and stages identified in the model are best served by training that aligns with their physical, mental, emotional and social abilities and needs. Biathlon Canada has published a [guide for parents](http://biathloncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Long-term_Athlete_Development.pdf) that we encourage you to read.

The Regina Biathlon Club is working to offer training that is appropriate for each participant’s level of skill and development, in alignment with the Long-term Athlete Development model, as follows:

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| LTAD stage | Approximate age | Shooting training | Skiing training |
| FUNdamentals | 6 to 9 | * 1 club practice/week * Air rifles in the prone position are used in practice and competition * Air rifle targets are placed 10 m away * Rests are used | * 1 practice/week through the Regina Ski Club’s Jackrabbits program is recommended * Additional practices throughout the week are available through the Jackrabbits program |
| Learn to Train | 10 to 12 | * 1 club practice/week * Air rifles in the prone position are used in practice and competition * Air rifle targets are placed 10 m away * Begin to transition to .22 shooting in the prone position at around ages 11 or 12 * .22 targets are placed 50 m away * Rests are used | * Participation in the Regina Ski Club’s Track Attack program is recommended. * Practices are held 3 times/week. Attendance at 2 of these 3 practices are recommended. |
| Train to Train | 13 to 16 | * 1 club practice/week * Independent dry fire practice 2 – 3 times/week * .22 shooting in the prone position on prone targets for those aged 13 and 14 * No rests are used in prone shooting * Athletes begin carrying rifle through range * Add standing shooting for those aged 15 and 16 | * Participation in the Regina Ski Club’s Nordic Racing program is recommended. * Practices are held 3 times/week. Attendance at all these practices is recommended. * There are dryland training offerings during the offseason through the Nordic Racing program as well. |

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| LTAD stage | Approximate age | Shooting training | Skiing training |
| Train to Compete | 17 to 23 | * 1 club practice/week * Independent dry fire practice 3 – 4 times/week * Enrollment in the Biathlon Saskatchewan High Performance Program * Training program will be developed and monitored by the provincial coach | * The athlete’s training program is developed and monitored by the provincial coach * Participation in the Regina Ski Club’s Nordic Racing program may be recommended by the provincial coach * Strength training at Level 10 will be introduced |
| Active for Life | 10 and older | * 1 club practice/week * Air rifles in the prone position using a rest for those under 12 years of age * .22 for those 12 and older and: * Determine whether prone only or both prone and standing based on skill * Determine whether use a rest based on skill | * No formal ski-only practices. Participants may choose to ski with family or friends at a time convenient for them. * Wednesday Night Races or adult lessons hosted by the Regina Ski Club are an option for participants. |

Regina Biathlon Club coaches have completed biathlon-specific community coaching training.

#### Gear you will need

There are a few essentials that you will need to participate in this sport. Detailed information about these items follows the checklists.

All participants will require:

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|  | Skate skis |
|  | Skate ski boots |
|  | Skate ski poles |
|  | Ski waxes |
|  | Gloves |
|  | Clothing appropriate for the weather |
|  | Access to a rifle |
|  | Ammunition |
|  | Ammunition case and lock |
|  | Cuff (for those not using a rest) |
|  | Non-restricted Possession and Acquisition License for Firearms (for participants 12 and older and their caregivers) |

Those participating in the ski programming offered by the Regina Ski Club will also require:

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|  | Classic skis |
|  | Classic ski boots |
|  | Classic ski poles |
|  | Roller skis (for those in Train to Train and Train to Compete) |
|  | Carbon tips for poles (for those in Train to Train and Train to Compete) |
|  | Bike helmet (for those in Train to Train and Train to Compete) |

#### Ski items

Skate and classic skis, boots and poles can be sourced from any of the following:

* Ski Swap held in November
* Fresh Air Experience (a sponsor of the Regina Biathlon Club)
* Sunshine and Ski
* Online sources ([Jackrabbits Ski Club Buy and Sell](https://www.facebook.com/groups/buyandsellskigear/), [Regina Ski Club](http://reginaskiclub.com/about-us/for-sale-wanted/), [Biathlon Saskatchewan](http://www.biathlonsask.ca/classifieds/), [VarageSale](https://www.varagesale.com/), [Kijiji](https://www.kijiji.ca/), etc.)
* Used from club members
* Roller skis can be borrowed from the coaches of the Nordic Racing program.

Skis will need to be waxed periodically to keep them in top condition and keep them gliding smoothly over the snow (click [here](https://www.rei.com/blog/snowsports/why-you-need-to-wax-your-skis-or-snowboard) for an explanation). The club owns a ski vice, brushes, scrapers and a wax iron that can be borrowed by club members to wax their own skis. Members will need to provide their own wax, which can be purchased at Fresh Air Experience or Sunshine and Ski. The club will organize a waxing demo should there be sufficient interest – please mention your interest to a coach at a practice.

Those participating with the Regina Ski Club’s Track Attack (Learn to Train) or Nordic Racers (Train to Train) receive ski waxing prior to cross-country ski races.

#### Shooting items

Air rifles:

* Both the Regina Biathlon Club and Biathlon Saskatchewan have air rifles that are lent to participants free of charge.
* The Regina Biathlon Club manages the inventory of rifles that are owned and allocated to our Club and will provide access to an air rifle for participants requiring this equipment.
* Ammunition for air rifles is provided free of charge by the Club.

.22 rifles:

* Both the Regina Biathlon Club and Biathlon Saskatchewan have .22 caliber rifles that are rented to participants on an annual basis.
* The provincial coach will allocate Biathlon Saskatchewan-owned rifles to athletes based on their level of development.
* Athletes are responsible for paying the annual rifle rental fee online at the time that the rifle allocation is made in the first year, and then on April 1 in each subsequent year. Payment for a rifle rented from Biathlon Saskatchewan can be made [here](https://zone4.ca/register.asp?id=1179&lan=1&cartlevel=1).
* Athletes that rent a rifle from the Regina Biathlon Club will need to sign a rental agreement and pay the rental fee by either etransfer to [reginabiathlonclub@gmail.ca](mailto:reginabiathlonclub@gmail.ca) or cheque made payable to Regina Biathlon Club.
* If there is a change that requires the athlete to have a different rifle (i.e. changing goals, growing bodies, different competition requirements, etc.), then any necessary adjustments to the rifle rental fee will be made on a case-by-case basis.
* Athletes can also purchase their own rifle. Biathlon-specific rifles can be purchased new from [Nordic Marksman](http://www.nordicmarksman.com/), or they may be sourced used by checking online sources.
* Athletes are responsible for purchasing ammunition. The recommended ammunition for the conditions we shoot under can be purchased from the Club President.
* Athletes often transport their ammunition in a locked ammo case. This can be purchased from any outdoor store that carries rifles and/or ammunition.
* Athletes who are around 13 years and older will require a cuff. This is a strap that goes around the arm that helps ensure proper alignment of the rifle when the shooter is shooting prone and not using a rest. Cuffs can be purchased from [Nordic Marksman](http://www.nordicmarksman.com/Cuffs.html) in Canada and [Altius](http://www.altiusguns.com/category.php?category_id=26) in the United States.

A non-restricted Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) is required for an athlete and/or his/her caregiver to transport a .22 caliber rifle. Individuals must be 12 or older to complete the training. Individuals can complete this training on their own, or they can be added to a list of interested individuals maintained by the Club. The Club will organize training once there are enough people on the list. The cost for the training is the responsibility of the individuals attending.

#### Clothing items

Our athletes must ensure they have proper clothing for their safety, comfort and enjoyment of the sport. They will heat up and cool down very quickly. Layers is a good way to handle the body temperature fluctuations your athlete will experience. Here’s a look at what is essential and what is nice to have:

Essential:

* Hat or headband: for retaining body heat and keeping ears warm
* Buff/Neck tube: for reducing risk of cold air freezing lungs and keeping faces warm
* Gloves: generally, need to be thick enough to keep hands warm, but thin enough so the athlete can feel the trigger. Some athletes wear thin gloves under thicker mitts and then remove the mitt to shoot. Other athletes wear thicker gloves and make a slit on the trigger finger so the finger can be on the trigger when shooting.
* Base layers: Several snug-fitting light layers will provide more warmth than a single bulky layer. Think multiple longjohns and undershirts. You may wish to bring a second set of layers to practices and races so your athlete can change into dry clothing if they sweat a lot.
* Outer layers: generally, a soft shell with a water repellent finish will provide adequate breathability while repelling moisture. Soft shell jackets and pants are ideal. Hard shell jackets and pants would be useful for days when there is heavy, wet snowfall.
* Socks: Feet and hands tend to get cold first. Wear a base layer (liner sock) and an insulating layer (wool or synthetic). Ensure you bring an extra pair to every practice, as sweaty socks will lead to cold toes and feet quickly.

Nice to have:

* Race suit: Those participating with the Regina Ski Club’s Track Attack or Nordic Racing programs will receive a race suit to borrow. Used race suits can also be purchased from [Biathlon Saskatchewan](https://zone4.ca/register.asp?id=1179). If there was sufficient interest, the Club will look into completing a group purchase of customized race suits.

#### Other items

* Water bottle/thermos
* Hand and/or foot warmers
* Sunscreen (optional)
* Nut-free snack
* Cross-country ski glasses (optional)
* Hand sanitizer (to remove bullet residues from the hands after practice)

#### Practices

Practices at the range are once a week and will be communicated via the Club’s team management app. In the past, practices were on Saturdays from 9:30 to 12:30, which includes set up and clean up time. All athletes are expected to attend these practices, including the set up and clean up. The focus of range practices is generally shooting or the combination of shooting and skiing skills. The practice season for new athletes begins in October with dryland training and shooting, and will move to skiing as the weather allows. Generally, practices will wrap up after the last competition of the season. Offseason practices will be coordinated by coaches and will also be communicated using the team management app.

The overall goal of the practices is to prepare athletes for upcoming races. At the beginning of the season an emphasis will be placed on conditioning, proper shooting form and technique and goal setting. As the season progresses, the focus will shift to combining shooting and skiing (combo training) and will continue to build on each athlete’s specific goals.

While there will be some ski-specific instruction during our weekly range practices and there will be options for athletes to go for a longer ski at White Butte after shooting practice, athletes will receive the most benefit by attending the practices organized by the Regina Ski Club, as outlined above in the Programming section. These practices will focus on technique and aerobic fitness. Athletes participating in Regina Ski Club ski practices are also encouraged to attend cross-country ski races as they are able.

Biathlon Canada has set -20°C as its cutoff for cancelling races. The Regina Biathlon Club monitors the weather and will communicate whether practice will go ahead when the temperature, with windchill, is around this cutoff. Practices are often modified when temperatures are around the cutoff.

#### Races

All athletes are encouraged to participate in Sask Cup races. These races are held at various locations in Saskatchewan, often at Blue Mountain (outside North Battleford), Regina and Lumsden. Our provincial coach ensures that your athlete races a course that is appropriate to their skill level. They are guaranteed to be a fun event! Senior athletes can also consider participation in Alberta Cup races, which will give participants an opportunity to experience a more competitive race environment with a larger group of racers.

Race announcements are located on the Biathlon Saskatchewan [Calendar of Events](http://www.biathlonsask.ca/events-calendar/) page, and will also be communicated via our team management app and the [club’s calendar](https://www.reginabiathlonclub.ca/events/). Participants must register for races via the Zone 4 website, the link for which will be included in the event listing. Even though races are often scheduled in the offseason, they are weather dependent and may be postponed or cancelled due to cold or inadequate snow cover. Generally, races will be postponed or cancelled if the temperature is below -20°C.

The race announcement will indicate the timing of both zeroing and the race start. Our coaches will indicate to athletes via the team organization app how early they need to be at the venue to ensure adequate time to warm up, learn the trail system and zero.

#### Volunteering

The Regina Biathlon Club runs entirely on volunteer effort, and parents are strongly encouraged to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the club. The club will offer much to your athlete, and we are hopeful that our families are willing to give back to the club. There are many ways to volunteer with our club, and it’s likely that there is a role that will match your interests and talents:

#### Coaching

Biathlon Canada has developed different coaching levels that have responsibilities aligned with the amount of training received and coaching experience. These levels align with the Long-term Athlete Development model so that the athletes are working with coaches with training and experience to help them through their development. More information about the training requirements for each of the coaching levels can be found [here](http://biathloncanada.ca/sport-development/coaches/).

* Community Coaching :: Bronze – provides a basic overview of the sport. Bronze coaches assist with practices and races
* Community Coaching :: Silver – directly coach athletes with the help of a Gold coach
* Community Coaching :: Gold – Head coach for athletes in the FUNdamentals, Learn to Train, and Active for Life LTAD stages
* Competition Introduction :: Assistant coach for athletes in the Train to Train LTAD stage
* Competition Development :: Head coach for athletes in the Train to Train and Train to Compete LTAD stages.

Because we are a small grassroots club, our coaches work together to provide coaching to our group of athletes.

Biathlon Saskatchewan is committed to supporting its coaches, as they provide the grassroots programming to the athletes. As such, they will reimburse coaches that successfully complete training workshops. Proof of completion and a receipt can be submitted to Biathlon Saskatchewan’s Executive Director by email to [sask.ski@sasktel.net](mailto:sask.ski@sasktel.net).

The club maintains a list of people interested in obtaining coaching certification. Please mention your interest to one of our organizers and you will be added to the list.

#### Races

A successful race is dependent on volunteers, and clubs are expected to provide volunteers for the races it hosts. There are various roles one can take to provide a quality racing experience for the athletes:

* Preparation: Gathering race supplies and preparing the range and trails prior to race day
* Race day office administration: Taking walk-up registration fees and reconciling race fees collected with the number of racers participating, handing out race bibs.
* Race officials: Counting laps, timing the race, scoring on the range.
* Clean up: Ensuring the range and equipment placed on the trails are put back in order once the race is completed.

No experience is necessary for these race volunteer roles. You will be provided with training on race day. Emails requesting volunteer commitment will be sent prior to the race. Please consider giving your time to support your athletes at their races!

#### Club organization

What happens at the range during practice and at races is just one aspect of keeping the club up and running. There are many diverse tasks that happen behind the scenes.

* Executive :: make strategic and operating decisions for the club.
* Equipment and Facilities :: maintain a listing of the equipment owned or used by the Regina Biathlon Club and ensure it is in good repair, as well as complete ongoing range maintenance and enhancements year-round.
* Sponsorship and fundraising :: recruit sponsors to help offset the high costs of acquiring and maintaining capital assets, including drafting sponsorship materials, contacting potential sponsors, ensuring appropriate recognition, organizing fundraising activities or events
* Communications :: ensuring consistent and complete messaging of club-related information to families involved with the Club, as well as developing and delivering content to market the sport and the club to recruit new members to the club. Includes maintaining a presence on social media, updates to the club website and the Regina Ski Club website, developing marketing or promotional materials, and attending events to promote the club.
* Finance :: maintain the financial records, ensure appropriate controls around financial transactions and activities, and report on the Club’s finances to the Executive.

#### Links to resources

Throughout this document are links to websites that can provide helpful information. For those with a print copy of the handbook, here is a list of the links:

* Intro to biathlon video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7CzTIUxdxs
* Biathlon for newbies video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ653MuCVEo>
* Regina Biathlon Club website: [www.reginabiathlonclub.ca](http://www.reginabiathlonclub.ca)
* Regina Biathlon Club Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/reginabiathlonclub/>
* Biathlon Canada Long-term Athlete Development Model guide for parents: <http://biathloncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Long-term_Athlete_Development.pdf>
* Online sources for used ski gear:
  + Jackrabbits Ski Club Buy and Sell: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/buyandsellskigear/>
  + Regina Ski Club: <http://reginaskiclub.com/about-us/for-sale-wanted/>
  + Biathlon Saskatchewan: <http://www.biathlonsask.ca/classifieds/>
  + VarageSale: <https://www.varagesale.com/>
  + Kijiji: <https://www.kijiji.ca/>
* Why you should wax your skis: <https://www.rei.com/blog/snowsports/why-you-need-to-wax-your-skis-or-snowboard>
* Biathlon Saskatchewan rifle rental and race suit purchases: <https://zone4.ca/register.asp?id=1179&lan=1&cartlevel=1>
* Biathlon-specific rifles and parts vendors:
  + Nordic Marksman: <http://www.nordicmarksman.com/>
  + Altius: <http://www.altiusguns.com/category.php?category_id=9>
* Biathlon Saskatchewan Calendar of events: <http://www.biathlonsask.ca/events-calendar/>
* Biathlon Canada coach development pathway: <http://biathloncanada.ca/sport-development/coaches/>