



INTRODUCTION TO
COMPETITION FOR
BIATHLON
VOLUNTEERS

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**BIATHLON
CANADA**

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INTRODUCTION



Biathlon - an exciting winter sport for Canadians of all ages.

As a volunteer during a biathlon competition, you may be asked to assist with and be knowledgeable of many different aspects of a competition.

Each of these aspects will be briefly described in the following pages.

As an introduction to the sport, this document provides an overview of all of these aspects of a biathlon competition, from the perspective of an athlete, beginning in the order in which they take place during the competition itself - Stadium, Warm-Up & Zeroing Period, Competition Start, Course, Shooting & Penalty Loops, Final Ski Loops & Finish Area.

PART 1: THE STADIUM



The biathlon stadium has several important components to it, including equipment check, start area, start and finish lines and entrance and exit to the range. As a biathlon volunteer, you could be required to assist in any of these four areas.

STADIUM SET UP

Canmore Nordic Centre



EQUIPMENT CHECK STATION

The first step in every biathlon competition is for the biathlete to go through the equipment check where the athlete's rifle is checked for safety specifications (and possibly other equipment and clothing specifications). At this step, the biathlete walks through an equipment control check point where a group of officials will check, at minimum, the rifle trigger weight to make sure it is within the regulation specifications (minimum of 500 gr trigger weight).

Depending on the level of the competition, the officials may also be required to check the rifle's serial number, rifle weight and other rifle specifications. The officials may also be required to check that sponsor logos follow the specified rules. As a biathlon volunteer, you could be assigned to the equipment check under the supervision of an experienced official.

EQUIPMENT CHECK STATION

An official tests trigger weight with a specific trigger weight tool



Equipment Check Station



PART 2: WARM-UP & ZEROING PERIOD



After the athletes have successfully gone through equipment check (where they will receive a “pass sticker” on their rifle if all specifications are met), they are allowed to begin their warm-up and verify that their rifle is working well (a period referred to as “zeroing”).

Each team is allocated one or several shooting lanes, where the athletes will “zero” their rifles with the help of their coaches after having done some warm-up skiing. During this period, the volunteer may be asked to help with last minute set-up details in the stadium, the range, or the course.

PART 3: COMPETITION START

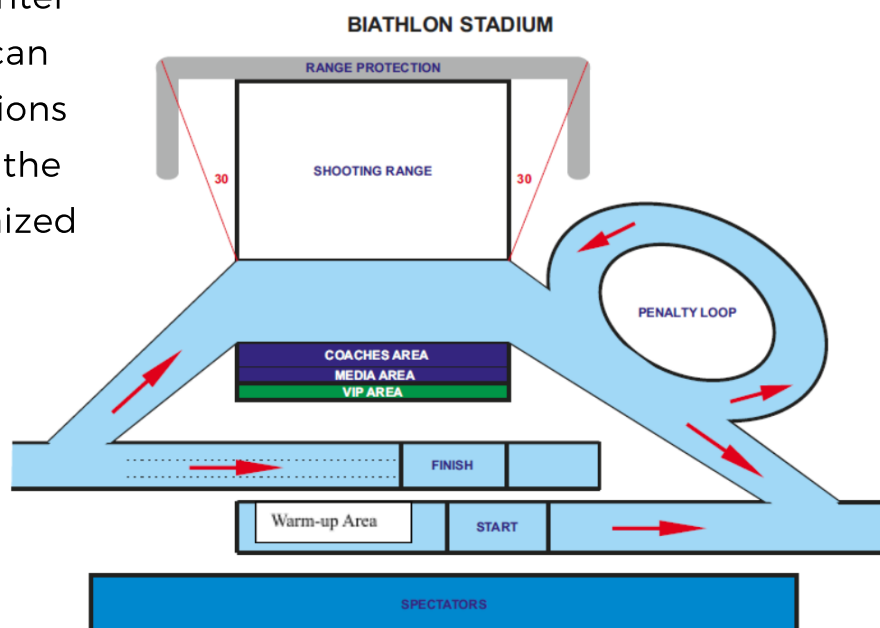


WARM UP AREA

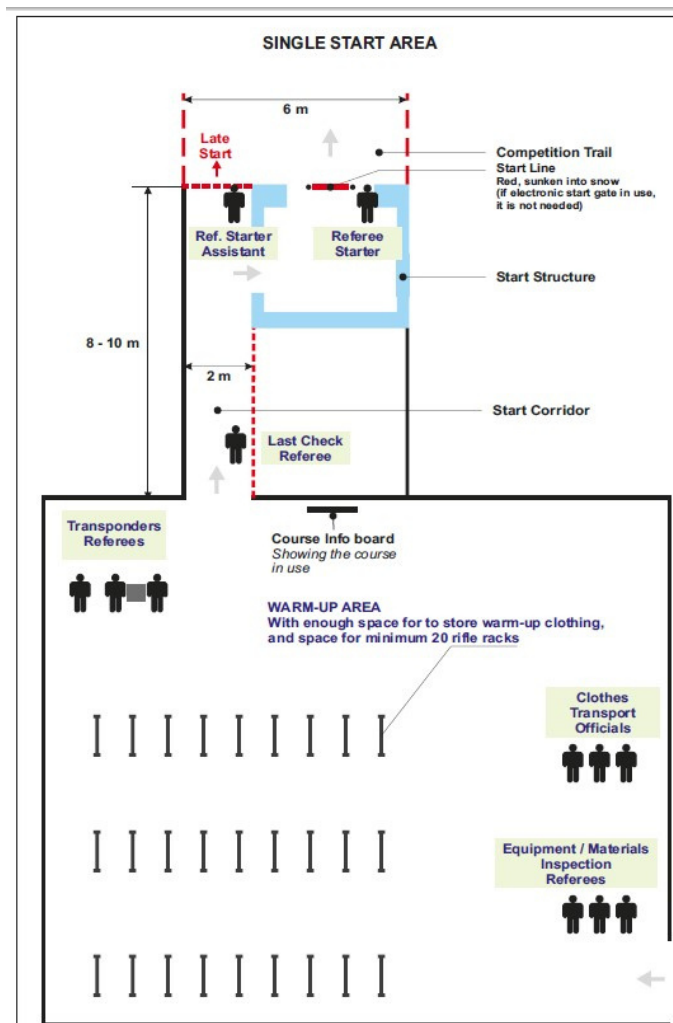
The zeroing period usually lasts about 45 to 50 minutes, after which the athletes get ready to begin competition (which usually begins 10-15 minutes after the end of the zeroing period). To access the start line, the athletes will usually enter a “warm-up area” where they can do some last-minute preparations and warm-ups and line up for the start (where they will be organized by a “marshalling” official).

START AREA

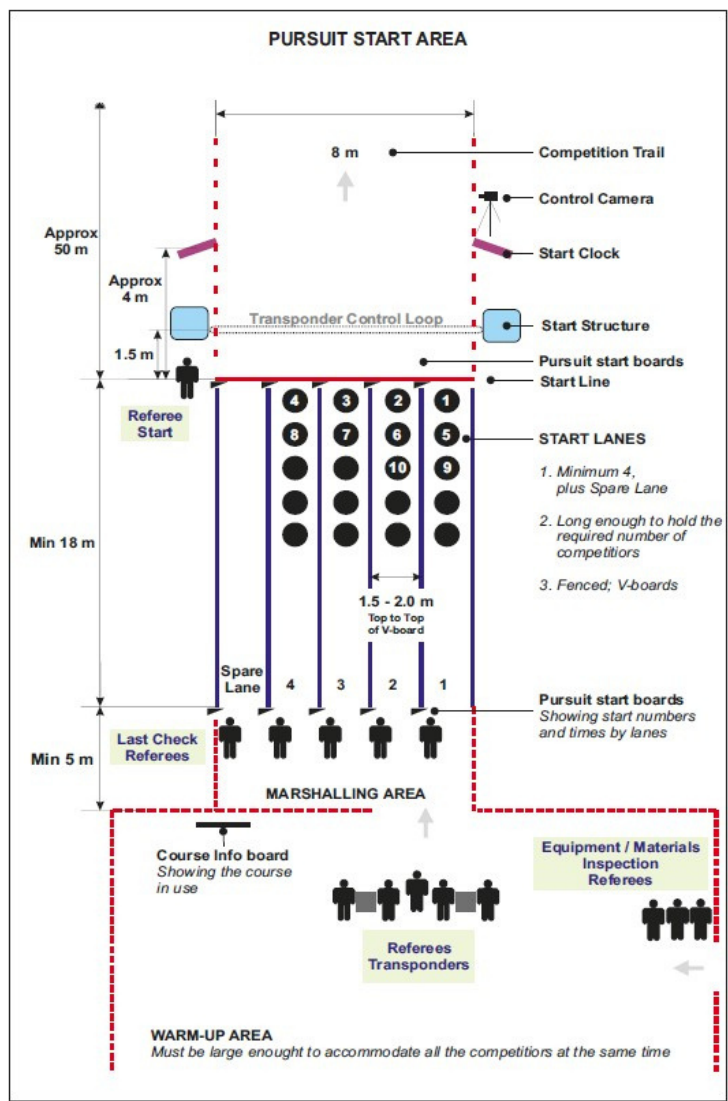
In biathlon there are several start types, which include “Single” Start, “Pursuit” Start and “Simultaneous” Start. A biathlon volunteer that is assigned to the start area, could be asked to assist in set-up or as an athlete marshal in the warm-up area.



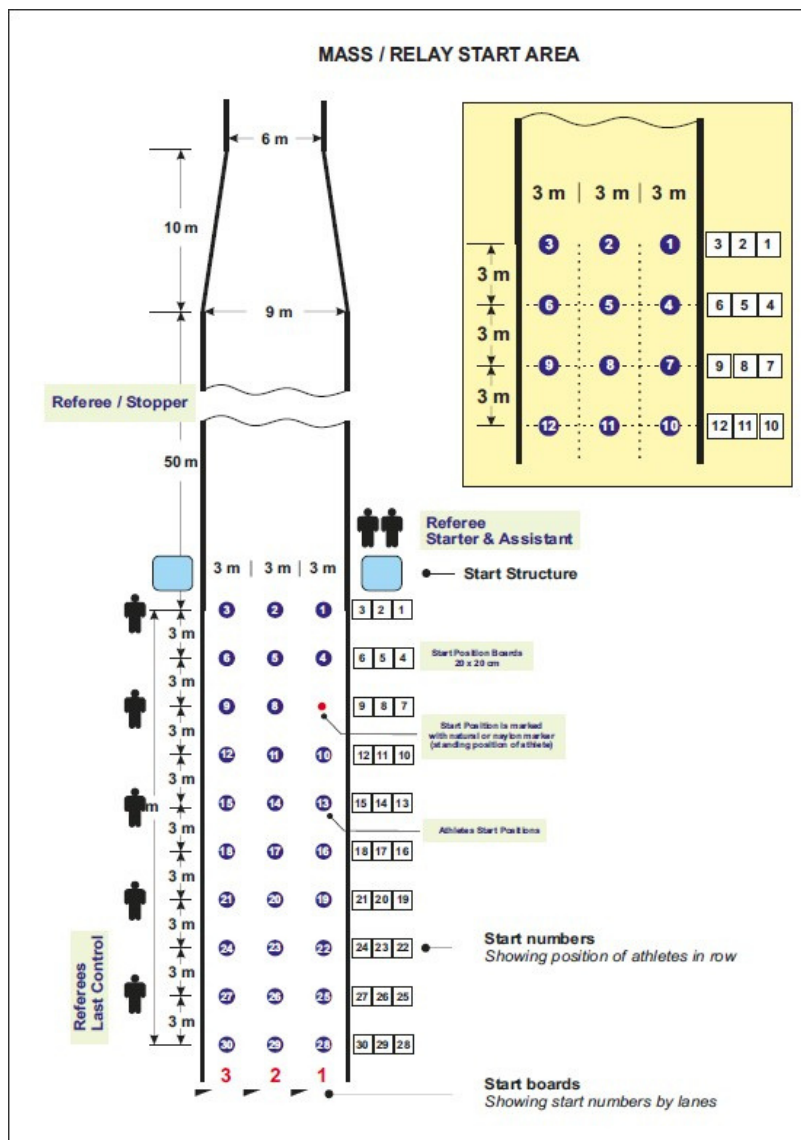
SINGLE START SET UP



PURSUIT START SET UP



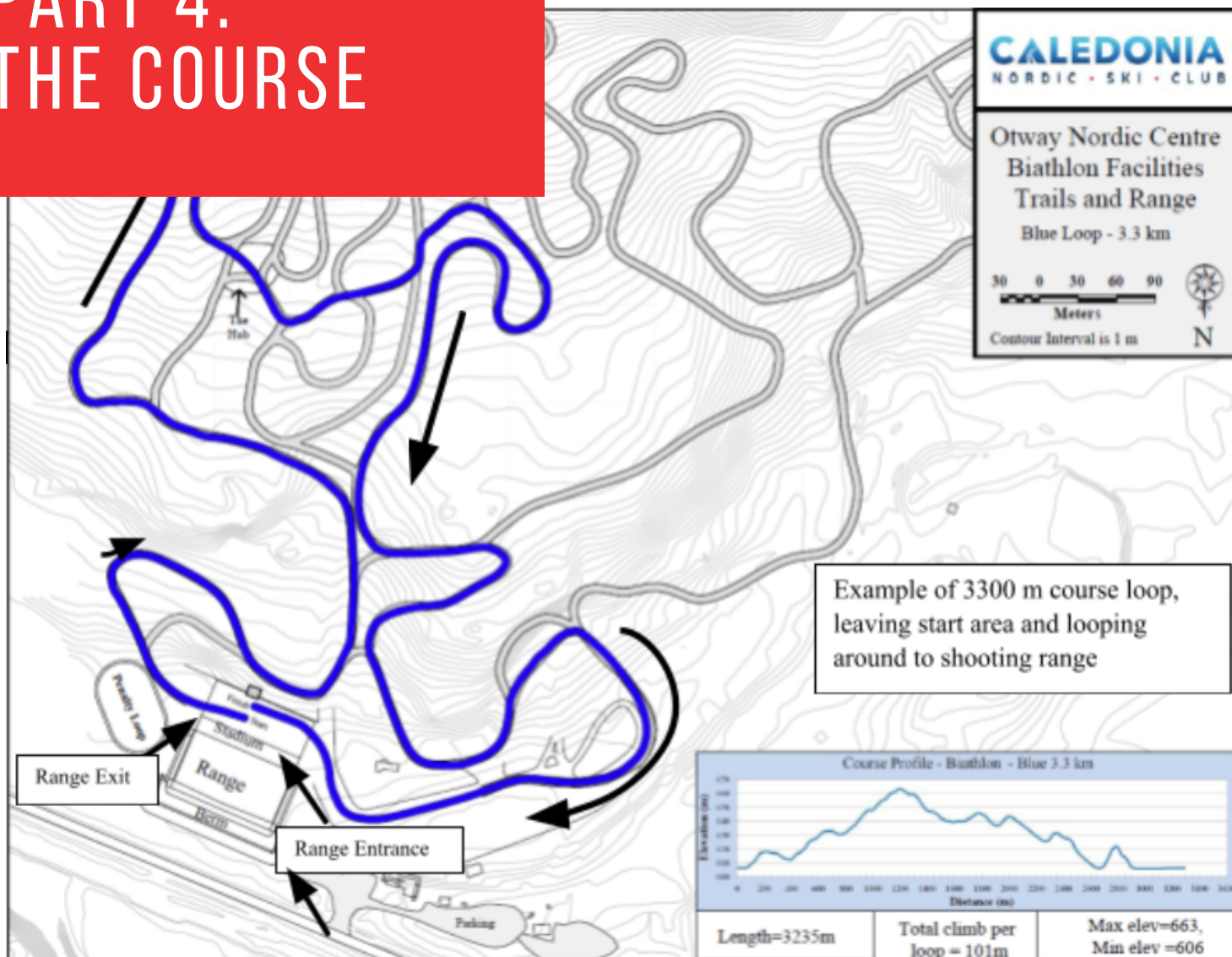
SIMULTANEOUS START SET UP



Note:

Simultaneous starts can be used in either Mass Start competitions or Relay competitions.

PART 4: THE COURSE



After the start, the athletes will race off onto the first loop of their course. Depending on the competition type, they may do between 3 and 5 loops of the course before crossing the finish line. Athletes do one loop of the course, then enter the range for one bout of shooting. After all of their course loops and shooting bouts are completed, they will enter the finish area.

Volunteers assigned to the course area could be asked to assist with the set-up of the course, with course control (i.e., keeping track of all athletes as they ski by to make sure athletes have skied their appropriate courses) or with minor course maintenance, at the discretion of the course supervisor (usually the "Chief of the Course").

PART 5: SHOOTING AND PENALTY LOOPS



Depending on the competition type, the athlete will start, complete one loop of the course, and then enter the range, where they will either shoot prone or standing. Upon entering the range and selecting a shooting lane, each athlete has five shots to knock down five targets.

For each target missed the athlete must do a 100 to 150m penalty loop, or for an “Individual” type of competition, they will get between 40 secs and 60 second time penalty for each missed shot, instead of the penalty loop.

There are a variety of tasks that a biathlon volunteer can be asked to do in the range and the penalty loop, including: set-up and take down, lane controller (i.e., scoring the shooting of each athlete) and penalty loop controller (i.e., keeping track, either on paper or with an electronic device, of the penalty loops completed by each athlete).

SHOOTING

PRONE SHOOTING

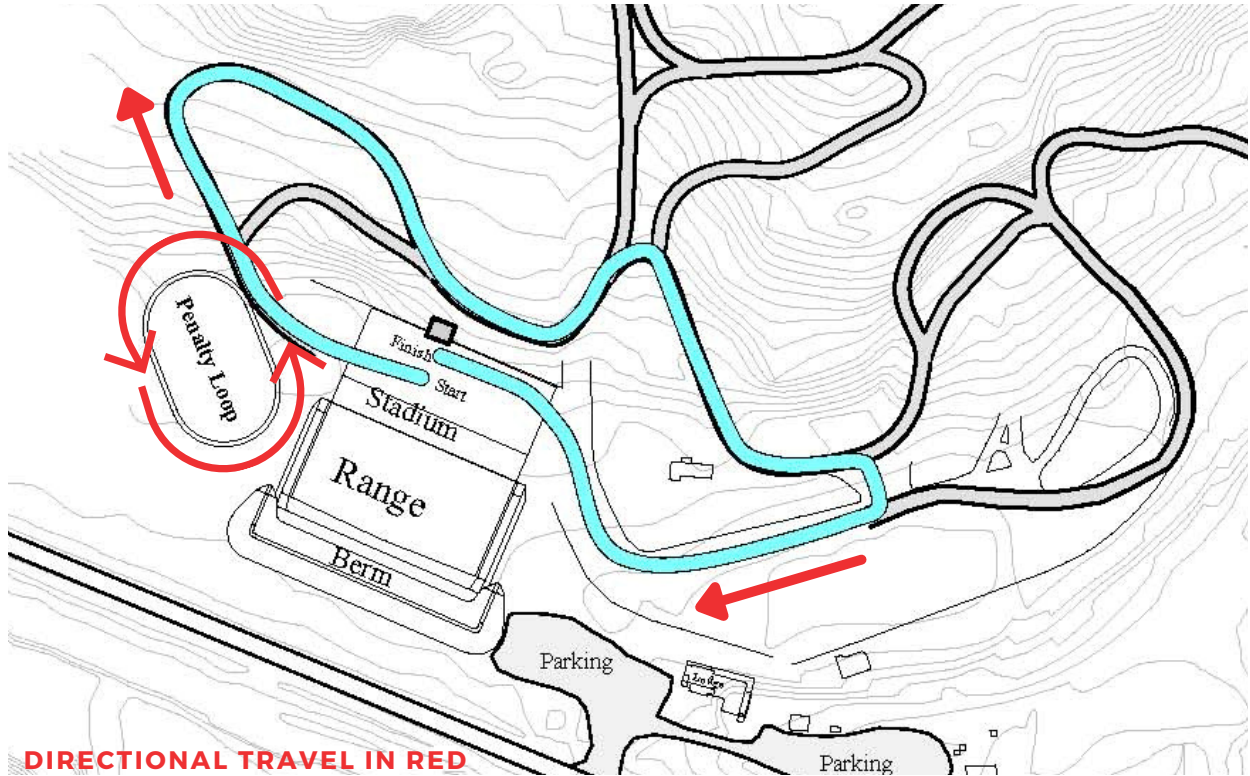


STANDING SHOOTING



PENALTY LOOP

LAYOUT OF STADIUM, START, FINISH, COURSE, RANGE AND PENALTY LOOP



ATHLETES IN PENALTY LOOP



PART 6: FINAL SKI LOOPS & FINISH AREA



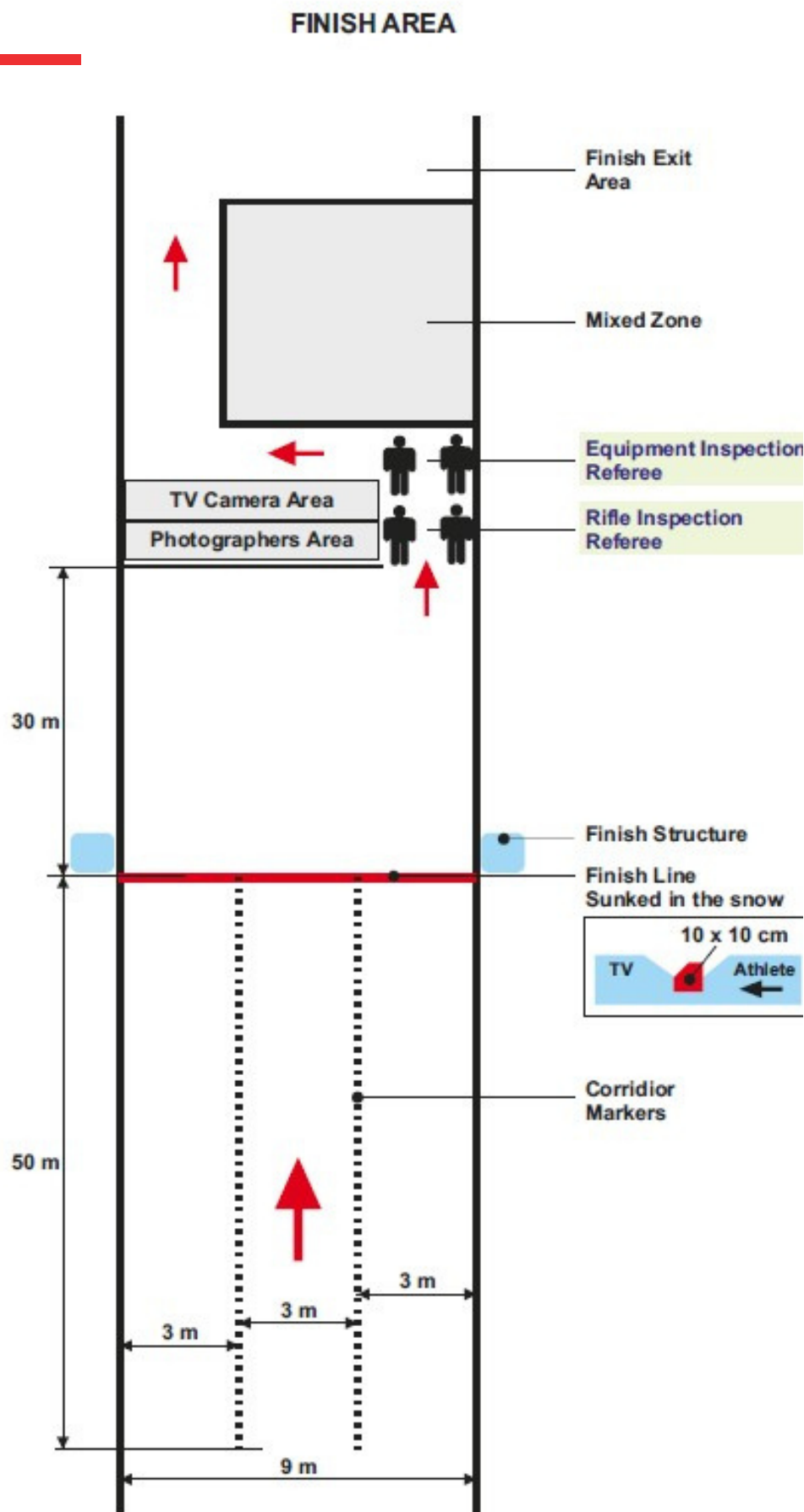
Depending on the class of the competitors, athletes will ski various course lengths and various shooting positions. Depending on gender and age, the course loop lengths are between 2 and 4 km per loop. At the Olympic and National Championship level, athletes will usually ski 5 loops of the designated course with 4 bouts of shooting (2 prone and 2 standing).

In the Sprint and Relay competitions, athletes will ski 3 loops of the course and 2 bouts of shootings (1 prone and 1 standing). When athletes have finished their course loops, their shooting and all of their penalty loops (in the correct order), they will head back to the stadium and the finish line.

FINISH LINE

The finish timers and finish marshals will be awaiting the athletes with their timing gear (which can vary from a basic stopwatch to very sophisticated electronic chips attached to the athletes' ankles that sends results directly to the timing booth). Volunteers can perform a variety of duties in the finish area including finish area set-up, marshaling athletes away from the finish area and possibly helping with the collection of the timing data.

For certain events, such as the simultaneous start and the pursuit start, the head-to-head finishes can be quite spectacular, while for single start events, the finishes are usually not as spectacular simply because the starts are spread 30 to 60 secs apart.



FIND OUT MORE
INFORMATION!



Wondering how to find out more information?

Curious about how exactly to start volunteering at biathlon competitions?

Want to learn about how to become a certified Biathlon Canada official and officiate at provincial/territorial, national and international events?

Check out the Biathlon Canada website for more information and find out how you can get more involved today!

www.biathloncanada.ca

Photo credits:

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Anna Sellers