

Alpine Skiing

History of



Humans have been skiing for over 5000 years. Archaic cave paintings portray individuals in Scandinavia and Russia using skis for hunting and transportation. Although these skis were probably more similar to cross country skis, forms of alpine skiing likely developed a short time after. Historical records from 150 years ago reveal Canadian and American miners holding primitive ski competitions to entertain themselves. And, in 1936 a combined downhill and slalom event for both men and women was added to the Winter Olympic games.

At the Olympics

Using their agility and strength to cut through gates, alpine skiers race down the mountain as fast as they can. At the Olympic Games, both men and women compete in 5 different events - downhill, super G, giant slalom, slalom, and combined.

The **downhill** course is steep, never straight, dangerous and fast. Racers ski down the hill reaching an average speed of 120 km/h; some racers may even reach speeds as high as 140 km/h. Do you have any idea how fast 140 km is? Let's just say if one of these skiers was racing at that speed on a highway, chances are they would get a speeding ticket.

In 1988 at the Calgary Winter Games, the **super G** event was added to the Olympic programme. The super G, or super giant slalom, is similar to the downhill event, but it is slightly shorter with an increased number of gates.

The next event is the **giant slalom**, or GS, which is again shorter in length than the super G, but has a few more gates. The other event is the **slalom** – this is a fairly short race, but there are more gates that require the racers to have good positioning and use precision turning to navigate through. Both the giant slalom and slalom have two courses set up beside one another on the same slope, and each skier makes one run on each course. The times are added and the skier with the fastest total time is the winner.



In Alpine skiing the **combined** event consists of one downhill race followed by two slalom runs. The times are added together and the skier with the fastest total time wins.

Getting Involved



All five alpine events test the athletic abilities of the skiers, who aim to combine strength and agility in order to generate speed! Want to give skiing a try? Of course you do!! Today, most ski resorts rent the necessary equipment - skis with bindings, boots and poles - and offer lessons to people of all ages and abilities. If you have already tried skiing and are interested in participating at the competitive level, visit the Alpine Canada website at www.canski.org