

I - The Western Interior Ski/Biathlon Association's Arctic Winter Games (AWG) Biathlon Selection Process

I. Arctic Winter Games Qualification Background

The Arctic Winter Games (AWG) occurs on even numbered years. Team Alaska (the organizational body for AWG's athletes from Alaska) offers four spots to Western Interior Ski/Biathlon Association (WISA) athletes. Two spots are awarded to ski biathletes, and two to snowshoe biathletes. WISA has used its WISA Championships biathlon race, on odd numbered years, to determine its qualifiers.

It is an honor for WISA to have four guaranteed spots for AWG. We know that WISA helps Team Alaska represent the entire state. Our rural and predominately native populations are proud to attend AWG events. It is in WISA's best interests that the athletes that represent WISA are competitive in their respective categories

II. WISA's AWG Qualification Criteria

WISA has established a system whereby the two top biathlon race finishers from both the high school boys, and high school girls can potentially earn spots on Team Alaska. The top finisher in each high school biathlon race is placed on the ski biathlon team, the second finisher is placed on the snowshoe biathlon team. Athletes who accept WISA's Team Alaska spots must also meet all the following criteria to be accepted by WISA.

Athletes must be from schools that are small and rural. (Athletes attending the WISA meet from large, urban areas may compete as an exhibition, but are not allowed to qualify for WISA's AWG spots). Athletes must attend high school during the AWG's competition year, and live at the site of the team in which they qualified. The only exceptions are intra-WISA transfers, including moves to attend a residential school in Nenana or Galena. The WISA Board must determine that each athlete will be competitive in his or her category. In the case of tie votes by the board, the president will make the final decision. Athletes must have coaching from a WISA affiliated coach. This coach not only helps with training, but aids in communication and paperwork handling between the athlete and Team Alaska. The coach vouches for, and agrees to supervise, the athlete in regards to training commitments. This person also helps the athlete secure funds for the added expenses involved in each sport.

Athlete agrees to train for the sport of skiing or snowshoeing, and in developing proficiency in shooting a rifle. Athletes must be able to secure finances. While Team Alaska pays much of the costs for transportation to the event site, room, board, and Team Alaska gear, the athlete is responsible for an entry fee. The athlete also must pay a ski uniform fee. For skiers, there will be an additional wax fee, and for biathletes, an additional fee for ammunition. The total for all fees has ranged from \$600 - \$1500 for some recent games.

Athlete agrees to secure a passport for years that the games are outside of Alaska.

In the case of biathlon, an athlete agrees to secure a competition grade biathlon rifle, and practice extensively with it throughout the year.

III. Conditional qualifications and Exceptions

As noted above, some years the top finishers include racers that cannot qualify due to age restrictions. Anticipated age restrictions for the 2018 Arctic Winter Games: – Junior Division, born during the years 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002; and Juvenile Division, born in 2003, or later). Age categories are changed from one game cycle to the next. For specific age requirements to upcoming games refer to the website - <http://www.teamalaska.org/>).

There have also been instances where top WISA biathlon finishers have declined the offer to represent WISA at the AWG's. In this case the WISA board will determine worthy representatives to fill WISA's vacant spots. In the case of a tie votes by the board, the president will make the final decision. To aid the board in this decision making process, the following rubric is used to guide the coaches in the decision-making.

1. Athlete is a lower place finisher. Finishers lower than second will be considered in order. The board must determine each prospective participant to be competitive in their respective category. These athletes must fulfill all the criteria in Number II above. Top Junior High finishers who fulfill the criteria in number II can be chosen if no viable high school candidates are found.

J - The Western Interior Ski/Biathlon Association's Arctic Winter Games (AWG) Selection Process: Cross-Country Skiing

WISA has established a system whereby the top cross country ski race finishers (one from the high school boys, and one from the high school girls) can earn spots on Team Alaska's Cross Country Ski Team. Athletes who accept WISA's Team Alaska spots must also meet all the base criteria (see bullets for AWG Biathlon Selection).

The board will determine worthy representatives to fill WISA's vacant cross-country spots. In the case of tie votes by the board, the president will make the final decision. To aid the board in this decision making process, race results, skier meeting base criteria, and coaches input will be taken into consideration.

In some cases, a skier that is not a ski race winner will be considered for the Team Alaska spot. In these cases, the following rubric is used to guide the board in the decision-making.

Athlete is a lower place finisher. Finishers lower than second will be considered in order. The board, must determine each prospective participant to be highly competitive and competent in their respective category. In the case of tie votes by the board, the president will make the final decision. These athletes must fulfill all the base criteria.

Athletes must agree to further their proficiency in both the skating and classic techniques.

3. Top Junior High finishers are chosen who fulfill the criteria in number II if no viable high school candidates are found.

Team Alaska Categories

The team consists of 24 skiers; 4 U18 male, 4 U18 female, 4 U16 male, 4 U16 female, 4 U14 male, and 4 U14 female.

Age categories are changed from one game cycle to the next. For specific age requirements to upcoming games refer to the website - <http://www.teamalaska.org/>).