



Everyone to Skis!: Skiing in Russia and the Rise of Soviet Biathlon

William D. Frank

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Nowhere in the world was the sport of biathlon, a combination of cross-country skiing and rifle marksmanship, taken more seriously than in the Soviet Union, and no other nation garnered greater success at international venues. From the introduction of modern biathlon in 1958 to the USSR's demise in 1991, athletes representing the Soviet Union won almost half of all possible medals awarded in world championship and Olympic competition. Yet more than sheer technical skill created Soviet superiority in biathlon. The sport embodied the Soviet Union's culture, educational system and historical experience and provided the perfect ideological platform to promote the state's socialist viewpoint and military might, imbuing the sport with a Cold War sensibility that transcended the government's primary quest for post-war success at the Olympics.

William D. Frank's book is the first comprehensive analysis of how the Soviet government interpreted the sport of skiing as a cultural, ideological, political and social tool throughout the course of seven decades. In the beginning, the Soviet Union owned biathlon, and so the stories of both the state and the event are inseparable. Through the author's unique perspective on biathlon as a former nationally-ranked competitor and current professor of Soviet history, *Everyone to Skis!* will appeal to students and scholars of Russian and Soviet history as well as to general readers with an interest in skiing and the development of twentieth-century sport.

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