

US Biathlon Association
WAXING PROTOCOL FOR COMPETITION

Dear Athletes & Coaches,

For many years, we have adopted a standardized ski preparation policy, referred to as the “Waxing Protocol,” at our youth and junior team selection trials. We have found that this policy benefits athletes and coaches in two ways:

1. Coaches focus on coaching, rather than wax testing and ski preparation.
2. Athletes succeed because of their performance, not because of their access to expensive waxes and teams with service assistants.

After consultation with many teams, coaches, and athletes the past few weeks, and after reviewing our experiences with this policy in previous competitions, we have decided to implement this policy. The policy will apply to all competitors in the Youth, Junior and Senior classes.

The goal of the policy is that all skis are prepared in a standardized way by the same group with the same wax so that the competitions are as fair as possible.

With your cooperation and assistance, we will carry out this policy in the following manner:

The day before each race

1. The Coaches Committee will meet and select the wax for the race. U.S. Biathlon will provide this wax at no-cost.
2. Each athlete will deliver one or two pairs of skis, with their name clearly marked on all skis near the tip or binding with black permanent marker, to the designated wax cabin by 4 PM.
3. U.S. Biathlon staff will record the serial number of each pair of skis and the athlete to whom they may be used the following day.
4. Coaches from teams participating in the competition will hot wax the pool of skis together with the provided wax. The time and location of this process will be discussed during the initial Coaches Committee meeting.
5. The pool of skis will be stored overnight in a locked room.

The day of each race

1. Coaches will scrape and brush the pool of skis in the morning.
2. U.S. Biathlon staff will coordinate distributing the skis to athletes 80 minutes prior to the race start. Athletes are welcome to ski on and compare their skis, but no one may make adjustments to skis, including but not limited to brushing, scraping, or application of covers.
3. Athletes will return the pair of skis they will use in the race to the designated area 60 minutes prior to the start. They will be signed in by U.S. Biathlon staff or the organizing committee volunteers. If the athlete does not return a pair of skis to the start area by this time, they may not be permitted to start.
4. In case of wet conditions, the Coaches Committee may decide to offer hand structuring to skis. Each athlete will be asked whether they would like the standardized hand structure applied or not when they return their skis to the designated area.
5. Skis will be distributed in the start area to athletes 10 minutes prior to the start time.
6. Skis will be inspected prior to start and at the finish for appropriate marks indicating that they complied with IBU Rules and this protocol.

The success of our policy and the fairness of the competitions depends upon coaches participating in the group ski preparation process. We strongly encourage that at least one coach per multi-athlete team join in this effort.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is U.S. Biathlon implementing this policy?

We are implementing this policy to promote the greatest level of fairness. Results from these races not only designate continental and national champions, but also yield performance indicators for team selection.

Why not also standardize ski structure and other equipment?

We acknowledge that this policy does not completely level the playing field for athletes, but it is one component of competition that we can reasonably introduce and enforce. We welcome feedback and recommendations for improving this policy in the future.

How will the policy be enforced?

Once delivered the night before, the pool of skis for all competitors will be monitored both by U.S. Biathlon staff and collectively by participating coaches. Any competitor found tampering with their skis in violation of this policy may be disqualified.

If I have further questions or concerns, whom should I contact?

Contact U.S. Biathlon Chief of Sport, Bernd Eisenbichler, by email at b_eisenbichler@yahoo.de.

U.S. Biathlon staff will be coordinating the protocol at the competitions.

We appreciate the cooperation and understanding of every athlete and coach in helping us implement this policy. We wish all of the athletes good luck, and thank the coaches for their work building our sport.