

UNITED STATES BIATHLON TEAM

HOLLY BEATTIE

HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2015

Holly Beattie can be viewed as the very first female biathlete in the U.S. As an active athlete in alpine skiing and various endurance related events in Truckee, California, she was introduced to biathlon during the U.S. men's team training camp at the U.S. Olympic Training Center at Squaw Valley in the fall of 1978. Watching the training, she asked if she could try it and was convinced it was her sport from that very first moment. With encouragement from the men's team, she borrowed a rifle and began training.

The fact that there were no women's events or a Biathlon team in the U.S. at that time did not deter Holly. With encouragement from the coaches and athletes, she continued to train and then competed in a few men's races during the winter of 1978-79. Her presence led to interest among other women and the approval from the newly formed U.S. Biathlon Association and the U.S. Olympic Committee for a women's biathlon program. For the first time in the spring of 1979 women were included in a USBA training camp with Holly leading seven other women in what would become the first U.S. Biathlon team for women.



Holly, on the left with her Bronze medal teammates at Chamonix

When the 1980 Winter Olympic team trials were relocated to Canada due to the lack of snow, the Canadian team asked to participate and include women. Despite not yet an Olympic event for women, Holly raced against the first Canadian women athletes. In 1980 Holly captured two Silver medals at the first U.S. Biathlon Championships that included women, ending the season as the top ranked female athlete. She continued to do well in U.S. competitions winning a Bronze medal in 1982 and a Gold Medal and Silver in 1984 at the National Championships.

The first big international event for women came in 1984 when the first World Biathlon Championships for women was held at Chamonix. It was also Holly's greatest contribution to U.S. biathlon when she along with her teammates won the first ever World Championships medal by taking 3rd in the relay. In 4th place after the final shooting and trailing the Finnish team, Holly made up the difference and finished barely a meter ahead for the Bronze medal.

Holly's presence within the biathlon community continued beyond that highpoint. She returned to the World Championships in 1986 and was a regular at the Summer Biathlon competitions. However it is for being the first to open the door to women and the first to help win a World Championships medal that Holly is welcomed to the Hall of Fame.