

UNITED STATES BIATHLON ASSOCIATION

Hall of Fame

MARIE ALKIRE

Far from the cultural ski centers Marie Thompson Alkire and her sister, Margaret Thompson Murdock, the first woman to win an Olympic shooting medal, grew up in Kansas where their father taught them shooting at a young age. Her early introduction to shooting would eventually lead to a very active career in the shooting community and to significant achievements in biathlon. As the shooting coach for the U.S. National team, she became the first woman to coach in the U.S. and the international biathlon communities, the first woman to coach an Olympic biathlon team, and World Biathlon Championship medalists.

A competitive background in shooting that included a National Women's Air Rifle championship and twice Gold medalist at the Benito Juarez International Shooting Competitions, Marie brought her years of experience teaching physical education, coaching marksmanship, program development, and serving as director of the United States Shooting Team, to biathlon. When she was invited to assess and advise the athletes on their shooting during a biathlon training camp it led to her hiring as the shooting coach for the U.S. Biathlon Team. Marie's analytical skills combined with her innovative methods and instructional skills endeared her to the athletes and facilitated improvements in both accuracy and consistency on the shooting range.



Perhaps Marie's most important contribution to biathlon is that she encouraged a different approach and attitude towards biathlon performance. Rather than seeing biathlon as a ski race, interrupted by shooting, she focused on seeing it as a integrated single competition in which Americans could excel. Her inherent enthusiasm was expressed by her belief that with the world's best marksmen and a nation half-covered with snow, biathlon should begin an American tradition, that of being on the winner's podium. Her vision proved prolific and having coached the U.S. women to achieve the first ever World Championship medal and the best shooting performances at the first World Championship for women in 1984, her ground-breaking roles in shooting and biathlon, and her legacy of success, Marie is welcomed into the U.S. Biathlon Hall of Fame.