



International Ski
Mountaineering
Federation

ISMF MEDIA GUIDE

SKI MOUNTAINEERING

ROAD TO MICO 26

October 2025

01

SKI MOUNTAINEERING



ORIGINS OF SKI MOUNTAINEERING

Roots of Ski Mountaineering: Ski as a sport began to take shape in Europe during the late 19th century. Because skiing started before the advent of mechanical lifts, the first alpine skiers were mountaineers. Ski mountaineering tours and races have their origins in the Alps and the start of recreational skiing and mountaineering ascending summits and traversing mountain cols. Early terms used to describe ski mountaineering competitions (civil or military) were alpine races and the 'military patrol'. The term military patrol was used because high mountain ski tours were usual for border patrols in the Alps. The first army competition was held in 1893 in Germany and the name "patrol" or "patrouille" is still used as a synonymous for teams in modern ski mountaineering team races. Initially, skiers used horse or other terrestrial animal skins or other methods for preventing backward sliding, which later evolved into seal skins and, eventually, synthetic materials for better grip during ascents.

Evolution and Global Expansion: Over the 20th century, ski mountaineering evolved from a practical mode of winter travel into a competitive sport. In this historic context, the Military Patrol was included in the 1924, 1928 and 1936 Olympic Winter Games. The first formal competitions began in Europe, particularly in the Alps, Tatra and Pyrenees. The first documented civil ski mountaineering race was held in the Pyrenees in 1927. Famous races as the Trofeo Mezzalama were held for first time in 1933 and the Patrouille des Glaciers in 1943. The sport gained international official recognition in the early nineties with the European Cup and the first European Championship in 1995. The first World Championships were held in France in 2002. Today, the International Ski Mountaineering Federation (ISMF) leads and provides governance of World Ski Mountaineering matters. Ski Mountaineering, or SkiMo, enjoys global popularity, with competitions held across Asia, North America, South America, Europe, and Oceania, involving more than 50 countries. The Sport's inclusion in the Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne 2020 further solidified its place in the competitive winter sports landscape, setting the stage for its Olympic debut in 2026.



CURRENT SITUATION

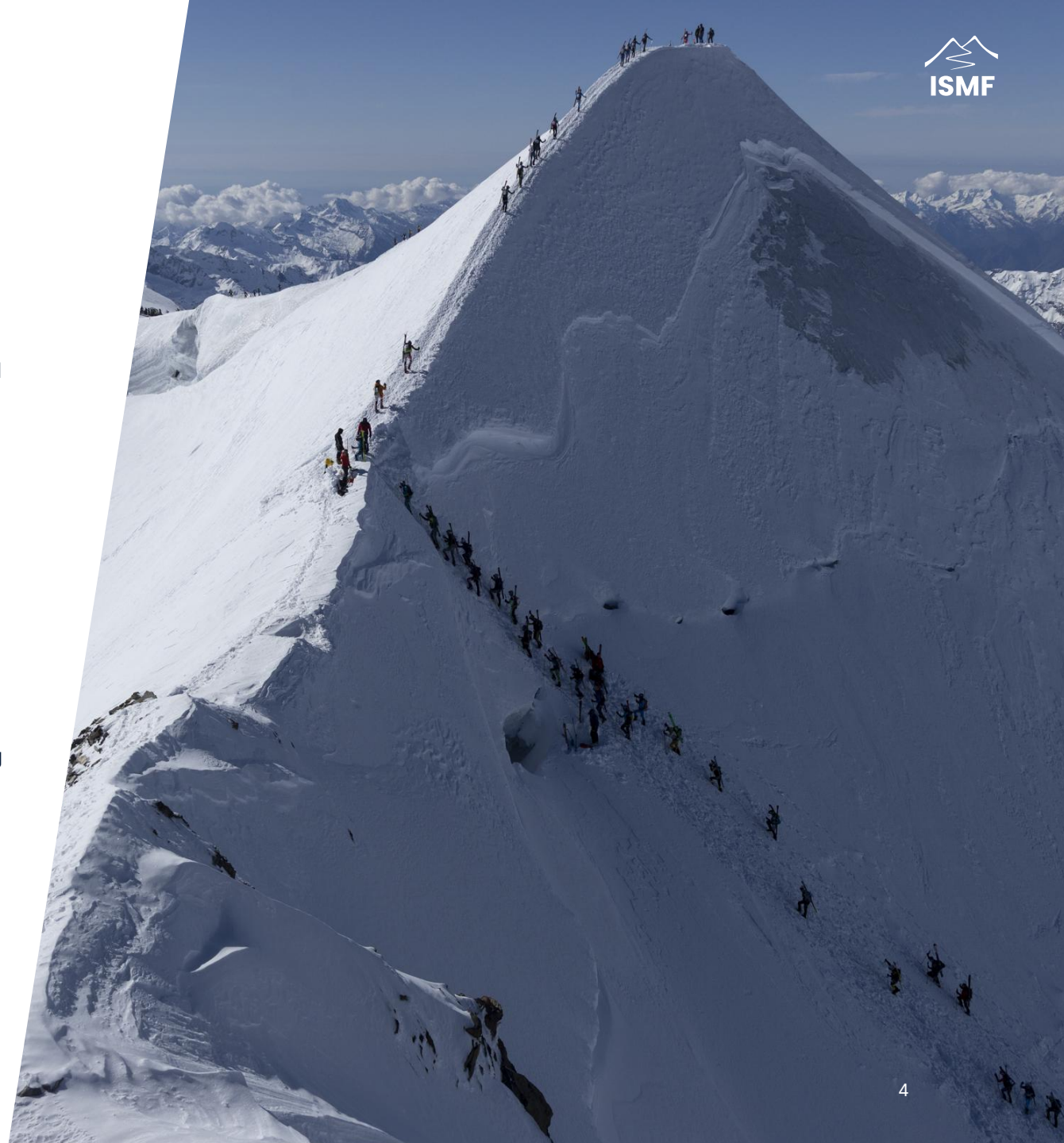
SKI MOUNTAINEERING

Ski mountaineering has grown rapidly from a niche Alpine discipline into a global winter sport. Combining endurance, climbing skill and technical downhill ability, it features multiple race formats at elite level. These include individual races, vertical races (uphill only), sprint races on short technical courses, and mixed relays. All events are contested on steep, often high-altitude terrain, where athletes climb using skins, transition to boot-packing or crampons, and descend on skis.

The ISMF, which has 55 member National Federations spanning five continents, organises an annual World Cup circuit as well as Continental and World Championships, which take place biennially. World Cup and Youth World Cup races are held at venues across Europe, North America and Asia.

Ski mountaineering will feature on the Olympic programme for the first time at Milano Cortina 2026, following a successful appearance at the Winter Youth Olympic Games Lausanne 2020, where 48 athletes representing 16 NOCs competed across three events: individual, sprint and mixed relay.

France, Italy, Switzerland and Spain currently dominate the elite circuit, with strong emerging athletes from Austria, Germany, China and the USA. The sport's popularity has surged in recent years due to its mix of adventure, athleticism and connection to nature, as well as the rise in recreational ski touring.



A MODERN MOUNTAIN SPORT WITH PURPOSE

ISMF AT A GLANCE



GLOBAL GOVERNING BODY – The ISMF regulates and develops ski mountaineering worldwide, with **55 National Members** across 5 continents



OLYMPIC RECOGNITION – Fully recognised by the IOC, ski mountaineering made its debut at the Lausanne 2020 Youth Olympic Games and will feature at the **Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games**.



GLOBAL COMPETITION CIRCUIT – ISMF World Cup, World and Continental Championships span **Europe, Asia, and the Americas**, with an average **800,000 live & digital reach per event** and over **14M across the season**.



DYNAMIC DISCIPLINES – Sprint, Mixed Relay, Vertical, Individual and Team events blend endurance, technique, speed, and alpine skill.



AUTHENTIC MOUNTAIN CULTURE – A sport with deep alpine tradition, attracting committed athletes and passionate fans.



PROVEN GROWTH PLATFORM – Leveraging Olympic momentum, digital transformation, and a professional global event series.




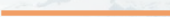
THE ULTIMATE ALPINE CHALLENGE






NOW AN OLYMPIC SPORT

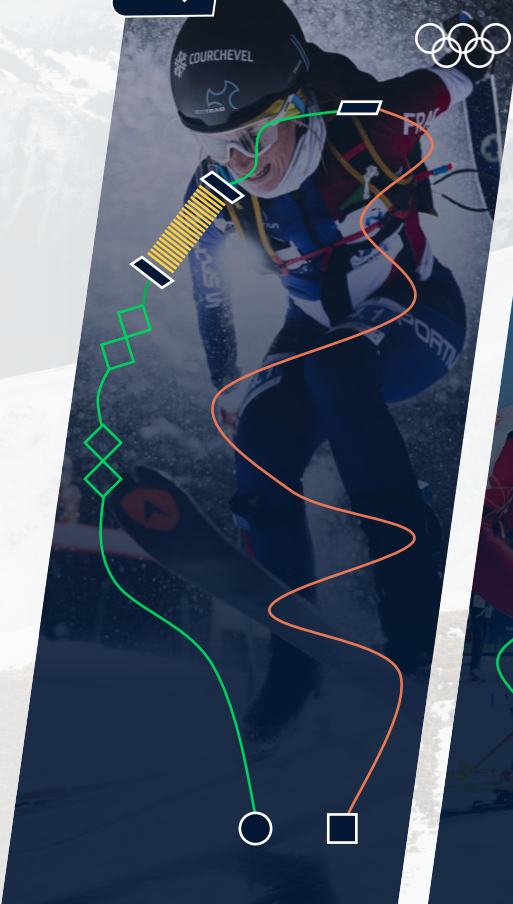


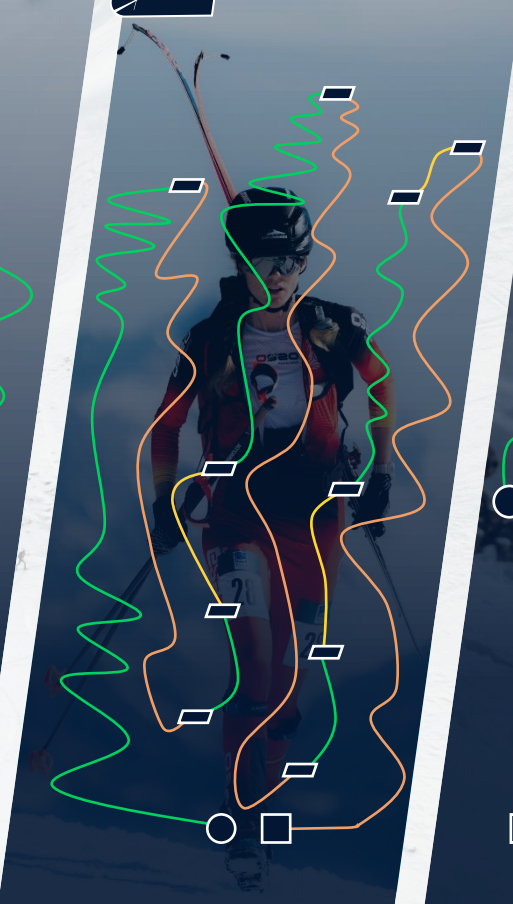

- / **DUAL CHALLENGE** – athletes climb and descend on skis, testing both aerobic capacity and technical skill.
- / **STUNNING ENVIRONMENTS** – races unfold in spectacular mountains and high-altitude alpine terrain.
- / **DYNAMIC FORMATS** – from explosive sprints to epic endurance tests, each discipline offers a distinct spectacle.
- / **FROM ALPINE HERITAGE TO THE OLYMPIC STAGE** – born from alpine rescue and exploration, Ski Mountaineering debuts at Milano Cortina 2026 with Sprint and Mixed Relay events, delivering fast, tactical racing and global appeal.

 SPRINT	 MIXED RELAY	 VERTICAL	 INDIVIDUAL	 TEAM
 <p>Short individual heats race</p> <p>Ascent with skins, walking part and single descent</p> <p>Qualification > heats > finals</p> <p>Per circuit, approx. 3 mins</p> <p>Up to 70 m</p>	 <p>Team race with 1 female / 1 male</p> <p>Team members execute the circuit two times each, one after the other</p> <p>Qualification > finals</p> <p>Finals, approx. 30 mins</p> <p>Approx. 140m–180m</p>	 <p>Individual race to the top</p> <p>A single ascent with skins</p> <p>Mass start</p> <p>Approx. 30 mins</p> <p>Up to 700 m</p>	 <p>Ultimate solo test</p> <p>3 ascents & 3 descents, combining all elements of ski mountaineering</p> <p>Mass start</p> <p>Approx. 1 h 30 mins</p> <p>Up to 1,600 m</p>	 <p>Technical team endurance race</p> <p>Teams of 2, navigate long, technical ascents & descents together</p> <p>Mass start</p> <p>Approx. 2 h 30 mins</p> <p>Up to 2,600 m</p>
WATCH NOW ►	WATCH NOW ►	WATCH NOW ►	WATCH NOW ►	WATCH NOW ►

RACE TRACK COMPOSITIONS

ASCENT  **TRANSITION** 
FOOTPART  **START** 
DESCENT  **FINISH** 


SPRINT

MIXED RELAY

VERTICAL

INDIVIDUAL

TEAM

WATCH NOW ▶

WATCH NOW ▶

WATCH NOW ▶

WATCH NOW ▶

WATCH NOW ▶

SKI MOUNTAINEERING ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

BACKPACK

- Compact and lightweight.
- Includes a dedicated pocket or external strap to quickly store skins during race transitions.
- Also used to carry mandatory safety gear like a shovel, probe, and avalanche beacon in non-competition settings.

RACE SUIT (OR TRAINING SUIT)

- Slim, stretchy, and breathable.
- Often includes integrated pockets on the thighs or chest for storing skins, gloves, or snacks.
- Designed for speed, comfort, and easy access during transitions.

BOOTS

- Dual-function boots for walking uphill and skiing down.
- Lightweight, with a switch between walk and ski mode.
- Compatible with specific bindings.

BINDINGS

- Specialized ski mountaineering bindings allow for:
 - Free heel movement when climbing.
 - Locked heel for skiing downhill.
- Very light and designed for fast transitions.

SKINS

- Adhesive fabric strips placed on the bottom of skis during ascents.
- Allow the skier to grip and glide uphill without sliding back.
- Skins are removed for the downhill and stored quickly (see backpack info below).

SKIS

- Lightweight and narrow for uphill efficiency.
- Shorter than alpine skis to improve agility and control.
- Designed to handle both ascents and descents.



WE ARE ALREADY A LARGE COMMUNITY AND WE ARE CONTINUING TO GROW

>650

ISMF Athlete License Holders,
competing in ISMF International
Competitions

>30K

Active athletes competing in over
250 Ski Mountaineering competitions
across each season

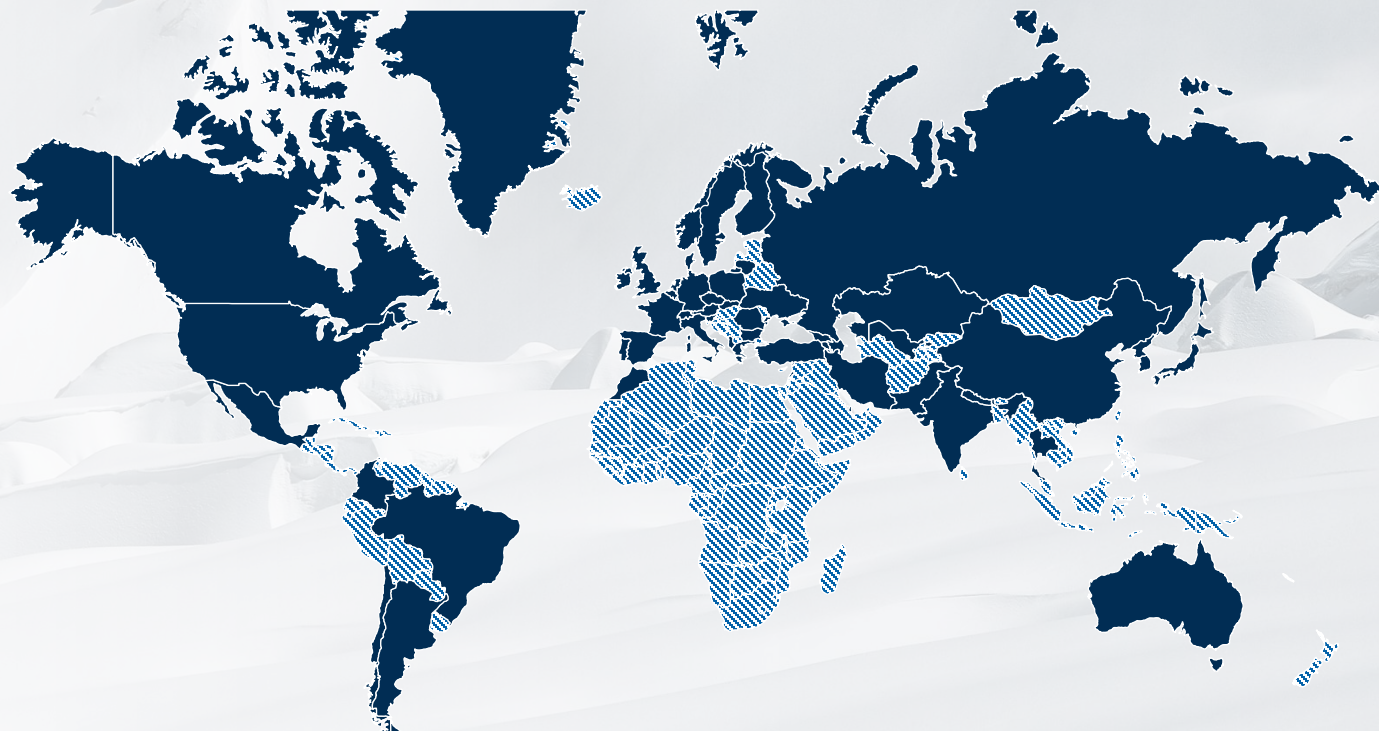
>3M

Conservative estimate of total global
Ski Mountaineering Practitioners

55

National Federations from NOCs in Europe,
Americas, Asia, Oceania and Africa.

Increase of over 45% since Ski Mountaineering
was added to the Olympic Programme in 2021 (38)



ALBANIA	FRANCE	POLAND
ANDORRA	UNITED KINGDOM	PORTUGAL
ARGENTINA	GEORGIA	QATAR
ARMENIA	GERMANY	ROMANIA
AUSTRALIA	GREECE	RUSSIA
AUSTRIA	INDIA	SLOVENIA
AZERBAIJAN	IRAN	SWITZERLAND
BELGIUM	IRELAND	SLOVAKIA
BRAZIL	ITALY	SWEDEN
BULGARIA	JAPAN	THAILAND
CANADA	KAZAKHSTAN	TURKEY
CHILE	SOUTH KOREA	UKRAINE
CHINA	LEBANON	UNITED STATES
COLOMBIA	LITHUANIA	UZBEKISTAN
CZECH REPUBLIC	MEXICO	SPAIN
DENMARK	MONGOLIA	INDIA
SPAIN	NETHERLANDS	MONGOLIA
FINLAND	NORWAY	MOROCCO
	PAKISTAN	

02

ISMF – THE FEDERATION

ABOUT ISMF



International Ski
Mountaineering
Federation

The ISMF is a non-profit and nongovernmental international association in accordance with Art. 60 ff. of the Swiss Civil Code having its legal seat and headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland and an administrative office in Mondovì, Italy.

 **HEAD OFFICE – SWITZERLAND**

 **ADMIN OFFICE – ITALY**

Recognised by:



International
Olympic
Committee

Associate member of:



Member of:



Code signatory of:



Aligned with:



Partner of:



Supported by:



Sport on the programme of:



The International Ski Mountaineering Federation (ISMF), founded in 2007 and headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, is the global governing body for ski mountaineering. Recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) since 2016, the ISMF represents 55 national federations across all 5 continents, overseeing the regulation, promotion, and commercial development of the sport.

Ski mountaineering is a dynamic winter discipline that blends endurance, technical skill, and alpine adventure. Firmly established within mountain culture, it features a diverse competition programme, from the high-intensity Sprint and Mixed Relay to the endurance-driven Individual, Vertical, and Team races.

Athletes are at the heart of the ISMF's mission, and working together with national federations, event organisers, and international bodies, ISMF strengthens athlete pathways and provide opportunities for progression from youth to elite levels.

WHAT WE STAND FOR



VISION

The ISMF is the global platform to develop and promote recreational & competitive ski mountaineering and its values.

VALUES

Respect: we are always respectful; people, rules and mountains.

Responsibility: we are personally accountable.

Well-Being: we promote quality of living through our sport.

Innovation: we innovate.

Excellence: we never compromise.

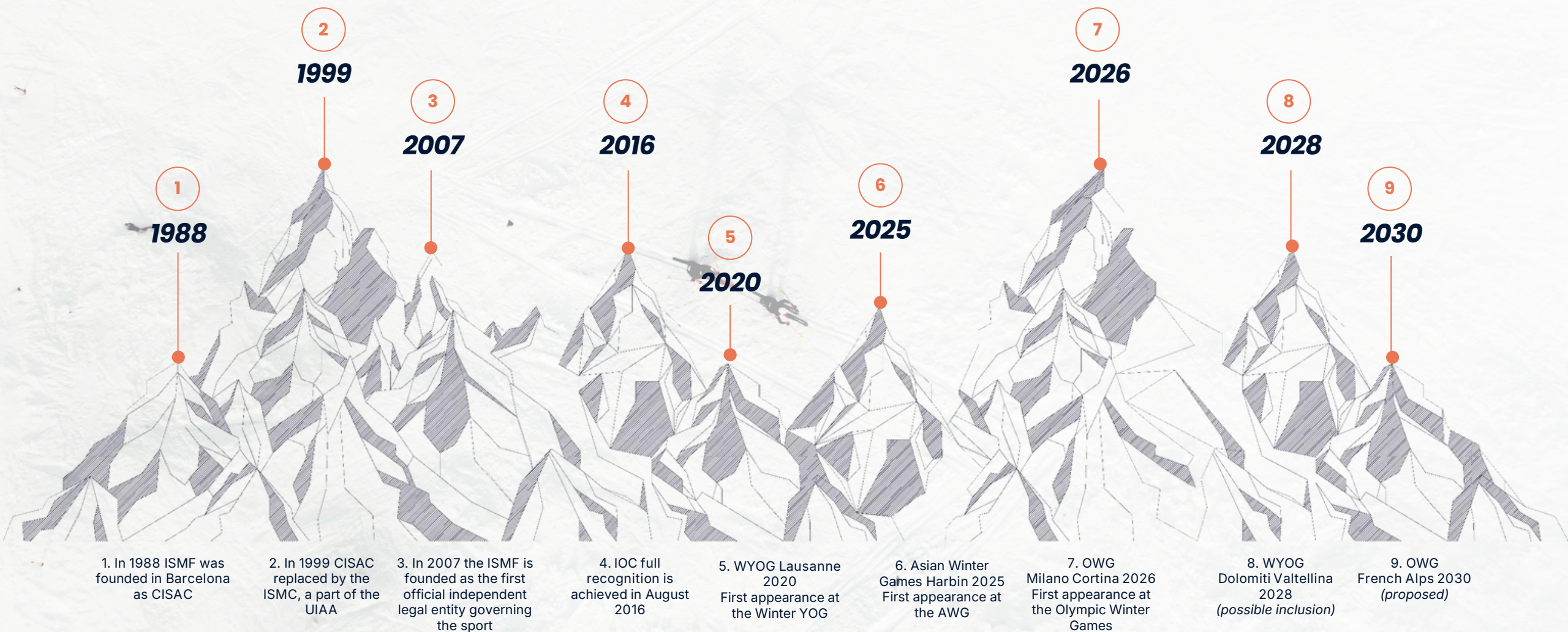
MISSION

Provide high quality international races: in cooperation with member federations, local and institutional partners and supporters.

Develop ski mountaineering worldwide: more nations, more athletes, more youth engagement.

Foster a global ski mountaineering community: through a unique digital services & communication platform.

THE ISMF JOURNEY SO FAR



OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY TODAY

AN ENGAGED BASE READY TO GROW WORLDWIDE

72,000
TOTAL FOLLOWERS

ISMF CHANNELS

							
FOLLOWERS/ SUBSCRIBERS	30,700	29,100	7,000	3,100	1,100	750	450
MONTHLY REACH	285,000	760,000	620,000	7,500		750	35,000
MONTHLY INTERACTIONS	11,500	85,000	300	80		70	1,500
FOLLOWERS	25–44 (core) 45–54 growing	18–34 (core) 13–17 growing	18–34 (core) all ages	18–34 (core) 35–49 rising	25–44 (active adults)	25–44 (professionals, core)	13–24 (core) 25–34 growing



GLOBAL BROADCAST REACH

Mass reach and premium visibility across international broadcasters

>14M
TOTAL AUDIENCE

ISMF WORLD CUP BROADCASTERS (2024/2025 SEASON)



TOP 5 MARKETS



16 LIVE BROADCASTS, 11 ON EUROSPORT 1
AVERAGE BROADCAST REACH: >800,000 PER EVENT

REACH & SCALE

- Broadcast in 40+ countries across Europe, Asia, and the Americas.
- Average 800,000 viewers per event, totalling 14M+ cumulative audience per season.
- Olympic Games debut in 2026 will drive further mainstream visibility.

PREMIUM CONTENT

- Optimised durations ensure a perfect fit for linear TV scheduling.
- Live race coverage, highlights, and recap shows.
- Integration with professional commentary, storytelling, and athlete profiles.
- Spectacular alpine backdrops enhance visual impact.

DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS








- Broadcast via Eurosport, national broadcasters, and regional sports channels.
- Digital simulcast and OTT replays expand audience accessibility.

Event Type	Duration	Coverage Focus
Sprint	65 min	Semi-finals & Finals (W/M)
Mixed Relay	60 min	Final A only
Vertical	60 min	30 min per gender (W + M)
Individual	90 min	90 min per gender (W + M)

1	ESP	12:52.2
2	SUI	+5.7
3	FRA	+6.7

OUR GLOBAL EVENT PORTFOLIO

FROM GRASSROOTS TO THE OLYMPIC STAGE

	ISMF WORLD CUP	ISMF YOUTH WORLD CUP	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS	OTHER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS	MULTI-SPORT GAMES	CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
 FREQUENCY	Annual series	Annual series	Biennial (every two years)	Annual	Olympic Winter Games Winter Youth Olympic Games Asian Winter Games European Youth Olympic Festival Military World Games World Masters Games FISU Winter World University Games	Biennial (every two years) (alternating with World Championships)
 EVENTS PER SEASON	7 – 9 events	3 – 4 events	5 races over 6-7 days	*LDT: Long Distance Team WCH *MAS: Masters WCH		Asian Championships European Championships North American Championships
 WHO COMPETES	Elite athletes (ISMF Elite licence holders)	U18 & U20 athletes (ISMF Youth licence holders)	Top national team athletes (by ISMF quota criteria) (ISMF Elite licence holders)	*LDT: Senior athletes-team of 2 (ISMF Elite licence holders) *MAS: Athletes aged 35+ (ISMF Competition licence)	Top-ranked ISMF athletes based on quota and qualification (ISMF licence holders)	National team athletes within respective continents
 DISCIPLINES	Sprint, Mixed Relay, Vertical, Individual	Sprint, Mixed Relay, Vertical, Individual	Sprint, Mixed Relay, Vertical, Individual, Team	*LDT: Long Distance Team *MAS: Vertical, Individual	According to sports programme	Sprint, Vertical, Individual, Mixed Relay (optional)
 ORGANISED BY	ISMF in collaboration with National Members and LOCs	ISMF in collaboration with National Members and LOCs	ISMF in collaboration with National Members and LOCs	*LDT: ISMF & LOC, often part of 'La Grande Course' series *MAS: ISMF & LOC	Event owner with cooperation with ISMF	ISMF, respective Continental Councils and LOCs
 SEASON TIMING	November – April	December – March	February/March (every two years)	*LDT: March – April *MAS: December – March	Varies based on Games calendar	January – March
 PURPOSE	Flagship competition series of the ISMF, bringing together the world's top athletes across multiple venues and disciplines	Development pathway for youth athletes	Crown world champions, highest-level competition outside of the Olympics	*LDT: Test endurance over ultra- long courses *MAS: Competitive platform for Masters athletes	Showcases ski mountaineering on the global stage	Determine continental champions, develop regional talent

+ MORE (ISMF Series, ISMF Youth World Championships, Vertical 500, Vertical 1K and Open Challenge events)

ISM CALENDAR 25-26



SENIOR 25 WORLD CUP 26

01 SOUTUDE USA	
MIXED RELAY (SAT) 06.12.25	SPRINT (SUN) 07.12.25
02 COURCHEVEL FRA	
SPRINT (THU) 15.01.26	VERTICAL (FRI) 16.01.26
03 ANDORRA AND	
VERTICAL (SUN) 25.01.26	SPRINT (MON) 26.01.26
04 BOITAUILL ESP	
SPRINT (SAT) 31.01.26	MIXED RELAY (SUN) 01.02.26

MILANO CORTINA ITA OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

OPENING (FRI) 06.02.26	SPRINT (THU) 19.02.26
MIXED RELAY (SAT) 21.02.26	CLOSING (SUN) 22.02.26

25 CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 26

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

01 SHAHDAG AZE	
SPRINT (WED) 04.03.26	MIXED RELAY (THU) 05.03.26
INDIVIDUAL (FRI) 06.03.26	REST DAY (SAT) 07.03.26
VERTICAL (SUN) 08.03.26	

SENIOR U23 U20 U18

NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

02 KICKING HORSE CAN	
VERTICAL (FRI) 27.03.26	INDIVIDUAL (SAT) 28.03.26
TEAM (SUN) 29.03.26	

SENIOR U18

03 ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

SENIOR 25 WORLD CUP 26

COMBINED WITH THE 2026 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

05 SHAHDAG AZE	
INDIVIDUAL (FRI) 06.03.26	VERTICAL (SUN) 08.03.26
06 VALMARTELLO ITA	
MIXED RELAY (THU) 19.03.26	SPRINT (FRI) 20.03.26
REST DAY (SAT) 21.03.26	INDIVIDUAL (SUN) 22.03.26
07 PUY-SANT-VINCENT FRA	
INDIVIDUAL (WED) 25.03.26	VERTICAL (THU) 26.03.26
08 VILLARS SU-FFINAL SUI	
VERTICAL (WED) 01.04.26	INDIVIDUAL (THU) 02.04.26
REST DAY (FRI) 03.04.26	SPRINT (SAT) 04.04.26
MIXED RELAY (SUN) 05.04.26	

25 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS LONG DISTANCE 26

01 PIERRA MENTAL FRA	
LONG DISTANCE TEAM (WED) 11.03.26	
(THU) 12.03.26	
(FRI) 13.03.26	
(SAT) 14.03.26	

25 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 26

MASTERS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

01 LA PLAGNE/GRANIER FRA	
VERTICAL (SAT) 24.01.26	INDIVIDUAL (SUN) 25.01.26

U20 U18 25 YOUTH WORLD CUP 26

01 BERCHTESGADEN GER	
SPRINT (THU) 05.02.26	REST DAY (FRI) 06.02.26
VERTICAL (SAT) 07.02.26	INDIVIDUAL (SUN) 08.02.26

02 SURNADAL NOR

SPRINT (THU) 12.02.26	
REST DAY (FRI) 13.02.26	
VERTICAL (SAT) 14.02.26	INDIVIDUAL (SUN) 14.02.26

YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

03 PUY-SANT-VINCENT FRA	
INDIVIDUAL (WED) 25.03.26	VERTICAL (THU) 26.03.26
REST DAY (FRI) 27.03.26	SPRINT (SAT) 28.03.26
MIXED RELAY (SUN) 29.03.26	



25 SERIES 26

01 ALTTIOY FRA	
LONG DISTANCE TEAM (SAT) 31.01.26	LONG DISTANCE TEAM (SUN) 01.02.26

SENIOR

02 GANGWON STATE KOR	
VERTICAL (SAT) 07.03.26	SPRINT (SUN) 08.03.26



03

SKIMO OLYMPIC DEBUT



OLYMPIC DEBUT

MILANO CORTINA 2026

Ski mountaineering will debut at Milano Cortina 2026 with three medal events—men's sprint, women's sprint, and a mixed-gender relay—featuring 36 athletes (18 men, 18 women).

The competition will take place in Bormio on 19 and 21 February 2026, integrating into the programme with a compact format tailored for Olympic delivery.

This inclusion marks a critical step in positioning ski mountaineering within the Olympic framework, establishing the technical, logistical, and competition standards that will serve as a reference for future editions.



QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS

- Athletes must qualify by earning a quota place for their respective NOCs through one of three opportunities: the 2025 ISMF World Championships in Morgins, Switzerland from 2-9 March, the Olympic Mixed Relay Ranking List, and the Olympic Sprint Ranking List.
- At the 2025 ISMF World Championships, quotas were awarded in each of the three ski mountaineering events on the Milano Cortina 2026 sports programme: Four (two men and two women) in the mixed relay, two in the women's sprint and two in the men's sprint.
- Athletes are be given further opportunities to earn quotas through the Olympic Mixed Relay Ranking List and Olympic Sprint Ranking List during the qualification period lasting from 1 November 2024 to 21 December 2025.

MAXIMUM QUOTA PLACES PER NOC		MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ATHLETES	
Men	2	Men's Sprint	18
Women	2	Women's Sprint	18
Total	4	Mixed Relay	18 Teams (maximum)
		Total	36

QUOTA PLACES		HOST COUNTRY QUOTA PLACES	TOTAL
Men	17	1	18
Women	17	1	18
Total	34	2	36



COMPETITION FORMAT

MILANO CORTINA 2026

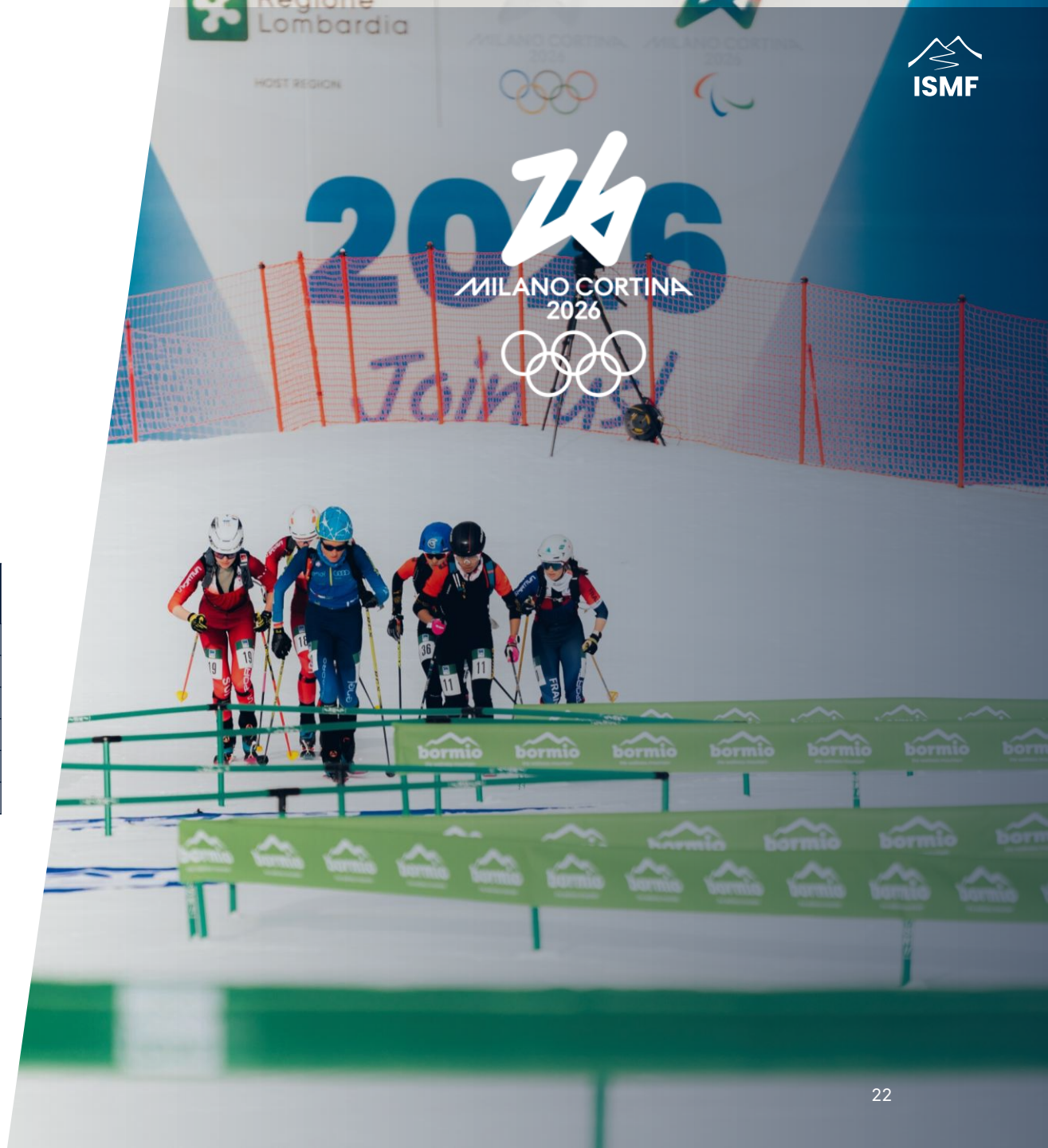
WOMEN'S SPRINT AND MEN'S SPRINT – 19 FEBRUARY 2026

The sprint events comprise three phases: heats, semifinals and final.

- **HEATS:** consist of three heats of six athletes each. Athletes start in a mass start lined up in rows according to their Olympic sprint ranking list. The first three athletes in each heat and the three fastest athletes from the combined heats phase ranking not already qualified (lucky losers) will advance to the semifinals.
- **SEMIFINALS:** consist of two heats of six athletes each. Qualified athletes are assigned to the semifinal heats as follow:

SEMIFINAL 1	SEMIFINAL 2
1 st from Heat 1	1 st from Heat 3
1 st from Heat 2	2 nd from Heat 1
2 nd from Heat 3	2 nd from Heat 2
3 rd from Heat 3	3 rd from Heat 1
Lucky Loser 1	3 rd from Heat 2
Lucky Loser 3	Lucky Loser 2

- The first two athletes from each semifinal and the two fastest athletes from the combined semifinals ranking not already qualified (lucky losers) will advance to the final.
- The athletes with the best time in the previous phase are assigned their start line position.
- **FINAL:** the top 6 athletes in the previous phase are assigned their start line position.



COMPETITION FORMAT

MILANO CORTINA 2026

MIXED RELAY – 21 FEBRUARY 2026

- Each mixed relay team consists of one woman and one men who will compete in the following order: W-M-W-M.
- Teams will be lined-up in two rows or three if there are more than 12 teams. Starting positions are seeded based on the Olympic mixed relay ranking list.
- After a mass start, each athlete covers two runs of two loops each with one ascent and one descent.
- The relay is exchanged when the finishing athlete enters the handover zone and touches any part of the next athlete's body with his hand. This handover must take place within the relay handover zone.
- Lapped athletes will be stopped by a competition official.

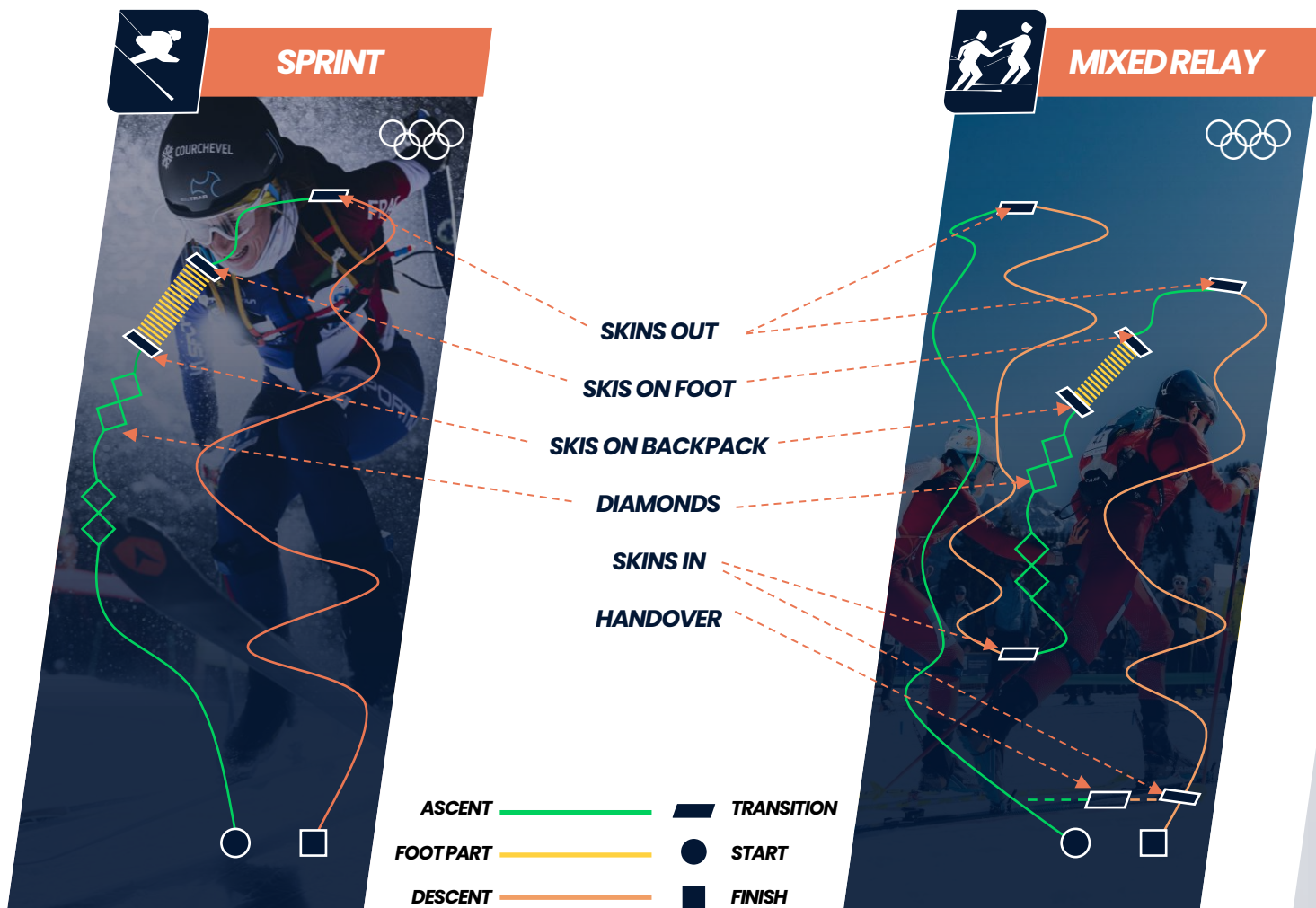
PENALTIES

- There are penalties for incorrect or disrespectful behaviour, unsportsmanlike conduct, technical errors, missing equipment, and specific penalties for team race.
- Penalties range from disqualification to addition of 10 seconds, 30 seconds or 1 minute to the race timing, depending on the severity of the violation and on the type of event.
- For more information check the ISMF Sport Rules on the ISMF official website (www.ismf-ski.org).

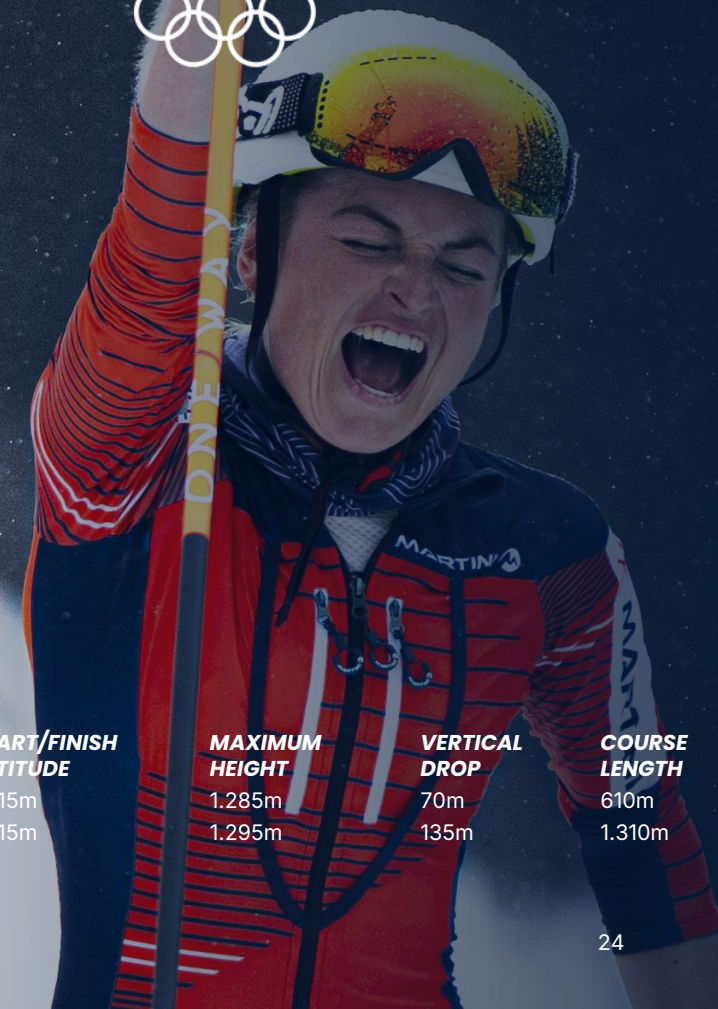


TRACK SPECIFICATIONS

SPRINT & MIXED RELAY



COMPETITION	START/FINISH ALTITUDE	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	VERTICAL DROP	COURSE LENGTH
Sprint	1.215m	1.285m	70m	610m
Mixed Relay	1.215m	1.295m	135m	1.310m





International Ski
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