

WHO DO YOU LIKE TO WIN BIATHLON, MARTHA?

By Bruce Penton, February 05, 2018

It's time for the Winter Olympics, where every four years, some guy in Canada turns on the TV and says to his wife: "Hey Martha, they're skiing and then stopping to shoot rifles again."

That would be the biathlon, of course, one of the more obscure sports that's part of the Winter Olympics program, which are being held in PyeongChang, South Korea starting Feb. 9.

There are a few, shall we say, sports that are lesser known to the general population, although those who are aficionados of luge, bobsled and ski jumping would take great offence at referencing their sports as obscure.

People who take part in those sports are certainly some of the best athletes in the world, because a sport such as ski jumping takes not only skill and flair, but extreme courage, too. And even though most Canadians couldn't offer 25 intelligent words in describing the difference between luge, bobsled and skeleton, those competitors have to be strong, athletic, agile and dedicated. Not to mention the courage to go fast. Really fast.

But for most Canadians who turn on their TV sets to watch the action, they will be concentrating on the favourites of the Olympics — downhill skiing, speedskating, figure skating, hockey and curling.

Canada's hockey teams will have medal opportunities, even though our country is sending a men's team of relative unknowns, because the NHL owners have refused to allow its servants to compete. So instead of Crosby, McDavid and Price on our side, we have the likes of Brulé, Bourque (Rene, not Ray), Klinkhammer and Vey. Other countries will be equally disadvantaged, so watch the Canadian hockey version of an adult Bad News Bears team vie for gold.

The women's hockey should be among the most exciting competition, because Canada and the U.S. invariably battle it out for gold and this year should be no different. Our curling teams, led by Kevin Koe and Rachel Homan, are gold-medal favourites, and our usual array of skaters, skiers and sledgers will undoubtedly come home with medals. Skaters will be in the spotlight, as ice dancers Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir will carry our flag during the opening ceremonies and Patrick Chan is a contender for gold in men's singles.

Personally, I'll be watching the hockey, curling, skiing and a little bit of the rest, but I'll program the PVR to catch the action when comeback kid Mark McMorris of Regina — who nearly killed himself last year when he crashed into a tree at full speed in the B.C. backcountry — flies around during the Big Air snowboarding event. Big Air I could watch every year. Luge? Every four years is quite enough for me.

- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "The London Daily Mail says a jet-powered mobility scooter was successfully tested, boasting a top speed of 70 miles-per-hour. So if NASCAR was ever thinking about starting a senior circuit."
- **Conan O'Brien** of TBS: "Professional race car driver **Danica Patrick** is dating again, after breaking up with her previous boyfriend, a NASCAR driver. When asked why that relationship didn't work out, Patrick explained, 'We were just going in circles.'"
- From the Chicago Tribune, deftly avoiding any mention of Packers QB **Aaron Rodgers**: "Racing driver and Bears fan **Danica Patrick** confirms she's dating Bachelorette winner's brother."
- **Bob Molinaro**, in the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, on **Serena Williams** winning the Australian Open a year ago while eight weeks pregnant: "I think we've finally found something not even **Roger Federer** can do on a tennis court."
- **Greg Cote** of the Miami Herald: "New York Mets announced their spring training would include a circus again this year. Welcome back, **Tim Tebow!**"
- **Brad Dickson** of the Omaha World-Herald: "I had a dream the New England Patriots were called for having 14 men on the field including the referees."
- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "Ex-WWE star **Christy Hemme** just gave birth to quadruplets. Things got a little tense during delivery when she broke a chair over her obstetrician's head."
- **RJ Currie**'s groaner of the week: "SportsCentre showed an errant basketball grazing the head of a high-school ref and taking his toupee with it. The poor guy. He had the rug pulled out from over him?"
- Said **Dwight Perry** about the same incident: "Thus introducing a new term to basketball lexicon — the hairball."
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "New England Patriot, **Rob Gronkowski**, was at practice following concussion testing. It was not encouraging, however, when, after practice, Gronk asked the blocking dummy for her phone number."
- Kaseberg again: "The Baltimore Ravens' first round draft pick, **Marlon Humphrey**, was arrested for robbery. That is an unfortunate first strike, because, in the NFL, you only get 32 strikes."

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