

Primitive Biathlon 101

Overview:

Primitive Biathlon is a winter muzzleloading shooting event that combines marksmanship and physical endurance. Unlike modern Olympic Biathlons, the “Primitive Biathlon” participant travels the course on wooden snowshoes and fires at metal targets along the woods trail using a black powder rifle, musket or single shot pistol. Much like Rogers Rangers on a winter scout during the French and Indian War. Period dress is encouraged, but not required. Ray Salomey organized the first Smugglers Notch Primitive Biathlon about 25 years ago, and similar events continues today in Vermont, New York and New Hampshire, all following the same basic format. The schedule of regional events can be found at primitivebiathlon.com.



The Course:

The Primitive Biathlon course in general is around 1 ½ miles long, and may include packed



sections of woods roads and ski trails, and single track packed trails thru the woods, some sections may be flat, others quite hilly. Along the course will be four shooting stations. The course consists of four target stages for a total of 9 shots. All the targets are metal swinging gong type targets at varying distances, sizes and shapes. At each station, the participant loads and takes 2 or 3 shots at the targets, all on the clock. Finish times are adjusted based on shooting scores, putting an emphasis on accuracy. A miss-fire is scored as a miss (keep your powder dry!).

Shooting Categories Participants may choose to participate in a variety of shooting categories. Awards are presented in each of the shooting categories, as well as age classes. These include: Rifle

(flintlock and percussion), Smoothbore (no rifling or rear sight), Single shot pistol, and Modern which includes inline rifles, use of modern snowshoes and scopes. In the primitive spirit and to avoid damage to the targets only patched round balls may be used with “target” level powder charges.

In recent years there has been interest in a less competitive, more fun type Woods Walk format. For this category, participants traverse the course at their own pace, sometimes in small groups, and shoot at a different set of nine targets each with a different point value to determine their score.



Other rules and course safety:



As in all Shooting Sports, Safety in Primitive Biathlon is of utmost importance. At all times while traversing the course, the muzzleloading firearm must be completely empty. When approaching a shooting station, please hold your firearm vertical, so as not to point in the direction of other participants and scorers. Once at the line, you may snap caps and check your flint after letting the scorer know of your intention, and while pointing the firearm down range and toward the ground. Once loaded and primed, the firearm must be kept pointing downrange until it is discharged. In the event of a misfire, you may reprime and try to fire again, but the firearm must be cleared or rendered safe before you can leave the shooting station. In the excitement of competing, we always need to remember to practice firearm safety at all times.

Come Join Us this Season:

Pemi has scheduled 3 Primitive Biathlon Events this Season.

Saturday, August 3, 2019 – Intro To Primitive Biathlon

Saturday, October 26, 2019 - Primitive Biathlon Fall Warm-Up

February, February 22, 2020 – 2nd Annual Pemi Primitive Biathlon

For Questions and more information:

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