

OLYMPIC PRIMER

Bobsled skeleton

Bobsled

THE HISTORY: The earliest bobsleds were not used for racing but for transporting wood. A group of Englishmen and Americans invented bobsledding in Switzerland about 1890. The first bobsled had two seats and resembled a child's sled of today. The more aerodynamic design of the sleds evolved with the development of the automobile and the airplane. Formal bobsled training did not exist

Racing suit

Form-fitting suits are made of a Lycra-type stretch material. Some riders wear elbow and shoulder pads.

Gloves

Most drivers prefer gloves, although some prefer bare hands for a better feel of steering ropes.

The sled

Constructed of fiberglass and steel.

Weight: 859 lbs. (2-man)
1,389 lbs. (4-man)

Speed: up to 90 mph

Cost: Sleds can cost \$35,000
(Set of runners \$5,000)

Helmet

Helmets are constructed of Kevlar or fiberglass.

Face shield

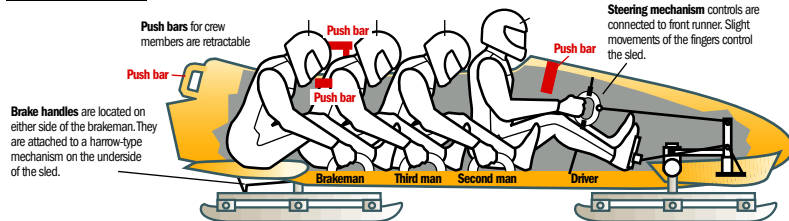


Steel runners

Shoes

The front sole has 4mm brushlike spikes for added traction on ice.

Four-man sled



Push bars for crew members are retractable

Push bar

Push bar

Push bar

Push bar

Steering mechanism controls are connected to front runner. Slight movements of the fingers control the sled.

Brake handles are located on either side of the brakeman. They are attached to a narrow-type mechanism on the underside of the sled.

Brakeman

Third man

Second man

Driver

Skeleton

THE HISTORY: Skeleton probably had its origins in St. Moritz, Switzerland, in the 1880s. An American was said to have ridden a steel sled with a skeleton frame during the competition, and the skeleton name was born. Skeleton had surges of popularity with Olympic participation in 1928 and 1948, both held in St. Moritz. Real international acceptance didn't occur until the late 1970s.

Racing suit

Form-fitting suits make athletes more aerodynamic. Shoulder, elbow, hip and knee pads are quite common

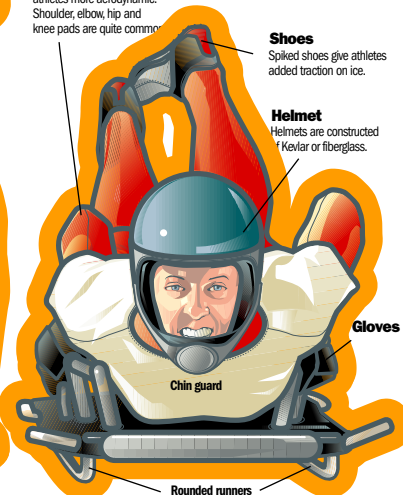
Quick repairs to clothing and equipment are often made with duct tape.

Shoes

Spiked shoes give athletes added traction on ice.

Helmet

Helmets are constructed of Kevlar or fiberglass.



Gloves

Chin guard

Rounded runners

The sled

Constructed of fiberglass and steel.

Weight: (men's) 95 lbs., (women's) 77 lbs.

Dimensions: Length: 32 to 48 inches Width: 14 to 16 inches

Speed: 89 mph

Cost: Sleds can cost \$2,000-\$3,000

Any steering of the sled is achieved by shifting weight, toe tapping or dragging feet.

The maximum weight for both sled and driver:

Men's, 260 lbs., women's, 225 lbs.

Runner temperature

The temperature of the runners on the bobsled and the skeleton is regulated to make sure no one has an advantage.