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NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

- Rob:** Hello I'm Rob. Welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm joined today by Finn. Hello Finn.
- Finn:** Hi Rob.
- Rob:** Today we're talking about the biggest sporting event that's taking place at the moment – the Winter Olympics at Sochi in Russia.
- Finn:** Yes, it's the 22<sup>nd</sup> Winter Games to take place but these ones are the most expensive ever – they are reported to have cost around £32 billion.
- Rob:** And it was quite a surprise when the Games were awarded to Sochi back in 2007 because the city is better known for palm trees than for ski slopes. But a lot of new technology has gone into making this competition possible.
- Finn:** Yes and a lot of technology has been used to make this year's sportsmen and sportswomen faster than ever – and that's what we'll be discussing today, as well as explaining some sports-related vocabulary.
- Rob:** But first Finn, let's see if you can '**go for gold**' and get this question right. One winter sport event in this Olympics is the Biathlon. It involves competitors doing two things but what are they? Are they:
- a) Cross-country skiing and rifle shooting
  - b) Downhill skiing and rifle shooting
  - c) Cross-country skiing and swimming
- Finn:** I'm going to say cross-country skiing and rifle shooting, that's a).
- Rob:** OK, we'll find out if you are right or wrong later on. So Finn, are you a fan of the Winter Olympics?
- Finn:** I must say I prefer the summer Olympics but I do enjoy watching the skiing. What about you?
- Rob:** I particularly enjoy watching the bobsleigh racing – the speed is incredible and it looks like a really fun thing to do.
- Finn:** And dangerous!
- Rob:** Yes. But of course, the **athletes** need a lot of skill to complete the course in the fastest time and, of course, win the race.

- Finn:** Yes, they need to be very fit but technology can also **give them a helping hand**. Behind the scenes, computer **modelling** helps to design the best wind-resistant bobsleighs - and the best techniques for the athletes to use.
- Rob:** This is true for another Olympic sport, speed skating. When there's less than a second between gold and silver medal, clothing can make a big difference – a newly-designed speed-skating suit, introduced in 2002, helped many skaters beat their **personal best**.
- Finn:** Yes, they improved their own fastest time. So materials used in the design of sportswear can give competitors **an advantage** – and another factor is the technology in the equipment they use.
- Rob:** Such as in skiing, where skis are manufactured – or made – with materials that increase **durability** - that's staying in good condition for a long time despite constant use – and stability – keeping skis upright – and of course, speed.
- Finn:** Yes, and there are different designs for different types of skiing: some skis are narrow and light to use for cross-country skiing while others are short with curved edges, to allow skiers to tackle sharp turns in a **slalom** race.
- Rob:** A slalom involves lots of tight turns. I tried that when I went skiing once and it was quite tricky, especially at speed, which is why I took my time, doing a **snow-plough** around every pole.
- Finn:** OK, so no gold medal for you! Ski design is constantly evolving – or improving – which makes ski events some of the most varied and exciting of the Winter Games.
- Rob:** There are other types of skiing in the Winter Olympics such as, ski jumping, **freestyle** skiing, skiing **moguls** and Nordic skiing. All these need one crucial – or essential thing:
- Finn:** Skis?
- Rob:** I was thinking more of snow! But as Sochi is known for its subtropical climate, using natural snow is a little bit unreliable. That's why loads of **artificial** – or fake snow is being made.
- Finn:** Yes, and snow guns are being used to do this. They eject cooled water and compressed air to make man-made snow.
- Rob:** But the problem with this is it uses large quantities of water so it depletes – or uses up – local resources. It's believed the snowmaking system at Sochi could empty an Olympic-sized swimming pool in less than one hour.
- Finn:** Of course ice is another essential ingredient for many of the winter games. Sports such as: curling, figure skating, ice hockey, luge and skeleton – that's where competitors, known as sliders, **hurtle** head first down the 1.5km course on a sled not much bigger than a tea-tray!

**Rob:** That really does sound dangerous! And what about the biathlon Finn? I asked you earlier which two sports that competition involves.

**Finn:** I really had no idea but I said a) cross-country skiing and rifle shooting.

**Rob:** Well, you're quite knowledgeable actually, because the answer is a). It's cross-country skiing and rifle shooting. Did you know, the biathlon is also the sweatiest sport at the Winter Olympics? Male athletes typically produce 2.3 litres (or 4 pints) of perspiration in the 20km race.

**Finn:** Four pints? Wow! Well, it makes me sweat just thinking about doing something like that.

**Rob:** That's it for today, we hope you've enjoyed listening. Please join us again soon for another 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. Bye.

**Finn:** Bye.

## Vocabulary and definitions

go for gold	to try to get the best result possible
athletes	people who are good at sport and particularly take part in sporting competitions
give (someone) a helping hand	help someone
modelling	designing and planning (here, using a computer programme)
personal best	the best result you have ever achieved
an advantage	something that makes one person more likely to succeed than another
durability	staying in good condition for a long time despite constant use
slalom	a race, in which people move around a series of poles, turning first one way and then the other (usually skiing)
snow-plough	(here) a type of turn or move done when skiing
freestyle	using any type of move you want to
moguls	piles of snow you jump over when skiing
artificial	made by people and used instead of something natural (for example: fake snow)
hurtle	move very quickly without much control

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### More about Sochi:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/winter-olympics/2014>

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