

UNITED STATES BIATHLON ASSOCIATION

Hall of Fame

LYLE NELSON

Lyle Nelson clearly revealed a promising talent at the 1973 team trials at Lake Placid and had it not been for some ski course errors, would have qualified for the World Championships team. Lyle was from McCall, Idaho where he was the captain of his ski and track teams and a member of the 1965, 1966 and 1967 USSA Pacific Northwest Junior National teams. He was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point where he also was a four-year member of the ski team and first in his class for physical ability. Commissioned in the U.S. Army he was first assigned to Ft. Carson, Colorado and then transferred to the USMWBTC in the final year before its discontinuation.



After participating in the 1973 CISM Games, and aside from the years he did not participate, such as 1978 when he earned a graduate degree from the University of Southern California, he became the dominate figure in biathlon from 1974 through the 1980's. A winner of 7 National Championship titles, he was also a four-time Olympian, competing in 1976, 1980, 1984 and 1988. He was elected to be the bearer of the U.S. flag during the opening ceremonies at Calgary. With bests of 19th place finishes in both the World Championships and the Winter Olympic Games, Lyle was often seen as someone who could have been

the first "medalist" breakthrough for the United States. An example of this potential was exposed when he achieved the 2nd fastest start leg for the U.S. relay team at the 1976 Innsbrück Games.

After Lyle left the active service, he joined the National Guard and became a key athlete in the National Guard biathlon program's development and following the 1988 Olympic Games, he retired from the military as a Major. Lyle was a thoughtful and supportive informal leader among his teammates and following his competitive career he was the force behind the exploding interest in Summer Biathlon (running and shooting) during the 1990's. An innovative thinker, he was instrumental in finding new revenue sources for the U.S. Biathlon Association in the struggle to be financially stable and served the President of the Association at a particularly difficult time. He was instrumental in setting the U.S. Biathlon Association on a new course towards reorganization of its governing Board of Directors with a new direction and vision for success demanded by the athletes, the supporters and international expectations.