

Claudette Maltais: Lucky Number 70

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This article is part of the "Women in Biathlon Series". With excellence and leadership at the forefront of Biathlon Canada's values, we will be featuring some of the great female athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers that support us in sport and help build our close-knit community. Follow us on social media @biathloncanadaofficial to keep up with each story as we hear from women across the country.



People become athletes for different reasons. It may be to get in shape, to be involved in a community or for the love of competition.

For Claudette Maltais, it was the need for a challenge. At 70 years old, she isn't just a proud grandmother to eight, but she's also a masters athlete based out of New Brunswick. Despite only picking up the sport five years ago, she's already been to three World Cups.

"I just wanted to be challenged and try something else," explains Maltais. "Watching other people practice biathlon, I said to myself, 'This might be good for me. There's a lot of concentration and learning how to calm down.'"

The new challenge would also lend her a new nickname, as she learned and progressed through the sport at first try.

"They called me 'penalty queen'," laughed Maltais. "My first race I think I did 15 loops of penalties. I've improved since then."

With the help of her coaches in New Brunswick, Maltais said the initial racing experience didn't discourage her. Rather, it ignited her competitive spirit and gave her a goal to work towards.

"I know some days I need to push a little bit more. I know I need to put stuff into my training if I want to compete."

When asked what keeps her motivated to train, Maltais said the answer is simple, "Competition. I love competition. If I was not competing, I would not train."

Her dedication to biathlon is unequivocal and has propelled her to compete at international masters competitions. Her top performance at the 2018 World Cup in Innsbruck, Austria, earned her first in her age category.

Even with a medal around her neck from her performance in Innsbruck, she says it was the World Cup the year after that sticks out as her favourite memory.

“Whistler was pretty good and challenging, because it was so warm. We were almost skiing in the water and it was 12 or 15 degrees. But you know what, we had fun. Yes, the stress was there before the competition; but I was in my world and knew what I needed to do.”

Even though her love for pushing herself and going at her own pace is unmatched, it's the family she's found through biathlon that makes her appreciate the sport even more.

“I've never been in a sport with a group [team]; I always run, swim or ski by myself. I think that it's the point of being with a family in biathlon. I like the spirit of the family and we're all there for the same reason. It's being together as a team.”

Her dedication, motivation and passion for a challenge is inspiring. It's a fire inside of her she says won't go out any time soon.

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