

# Jason Ray



U.S. Olympic Development Team

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jason Ray and I am a member of the U.S. Olympic development biathlon ski team. I grew up in Daniel Wyoming and started cross country ski racing when I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. By the time I was a senior in high school I won the Wyoming state championship and was top ten in the United States. After high school in Pinedale I went to the University of New Mexico where I studied full time and raced NCAA on their varsity ski team. I graduated in 2000 with a degree in Geology and Biology. I also did very well skiing and was consistently placing within the top three Americans in NCAA races. After college I wanted to get on the U.S. ski team in hopes of making the Olympics in Salt Lake City. My plans changed, however, since funding for a cross country skier was (and still is) very limited and I had large school loans looming over head. So I started work in Pinedale as a well-site geologist in hopes of getting myself out of debt so that I could return to ski racing and chase my goal of becoming an Olympic athlete. I have worked in the natural gas field around Pinedale ever since and I am now at a point where I can follow my dream. I have been training a lot since college and competing all over the world whenever possible. Since college my endurance and strength have gotten better and I have an even stronger competitive drive. This is very common since most biathlon and cross country skiers in the Olympics are in their 30's. Having said all that, I feel that I am right on track for the next Olympics in 2010 in Vancouver British Colombia.

For those that are not familiar with the sport that I am competing in biathlon is the combination of cross country ski racing and rifle marksmanship. The combination of these two means that faster skiers aren't always in the lead from start to finish and come-from-behind ski races are common. If a biathlete can out-shoot another competitor on the rifle range, he can gain a lot of time while his competitor is skiing around in circles on the penalty loop. Of course, biathlon is a ski race and ski speed accounts for a lot but the element of target shooting can change who's in the lead multiple times during the course of a race. That's one reason biathlon is so exciting to watch, and why it is the most watched televised winter sport in Europe. Biathlon is as big in Europe as NASCAR is in the U.S. You've seen it on television during the Olympics but just to review, biathlon is a timed ski race composed of relatively short ski loops, generally two or three kilometers, with bouts of target shooting in-between. Shooting bouts are either prone (lying down) or standing. At each bout, the skier has five shots with which to hit five small targets 50 meters away. For every target missed, a 150-meter penalty loop must be skied. The challenge of learning to shoot accurately with an elevated heart rate, and thereby moving up on the competition, is what makes biathlon so much fun for me.

In June of 2006 the United States Biathlon Association invited me to a training camp at the Olympic training center in Lake Placid, New York. By the end of the training camp the coach of the Olympic development program offered me a position on the team. Ever since then I have been traveling nearly every month of the summer to training camps primarily on the East coast. Last year we traveled to Canmore Alberta for an on-snow training camp in mid November which was followed by our first race. We then traveled to West Yellowstone, Montana in the beginning of December for our second race. After the first of the year we traveled to Europe to race in the Europa-Cup biathlon series after which we came back to the U.S. for the U.S. National Championships and the Canadian

National Championships.

I produced some very encouraging results in my first season of biathlon and I have made some big improvements during dry land training this summer. I feel that I have learned a great deal about the sport in the last year and I am very anxious to produce even better results this season. Our schedule this year is nearly identical to the one from last season. Once we go to Europe my goal is to qualify for World Championships and then compete on the World Cup circuit.

When I am not at training camps or racing I work for K.S. Industries of Wyoming. They have been very helpful to me and have allowed me as much time as I need to make the Olympic team. At the level I am racing it is very difficult to train and hold a job at the same time. Unlike all other professional athletes I have to work to fund my racing since financial backing for skiing is very low in the United States. Currently the US Olympic committee pays for my coaching as well as some lodging and wax supplies. That leaves me to pay for travel, food, and part of the lodging. I also have to pay for new gear each season which consists of skis, boots, poles, clothes, ski bags, etc.....

This year I have all ready spent over \$3,000.00 in travel expenses and am currently in the process of buying new skis and boots which will cost about another \$1,0000. Once I start traveling to Europe my travel expenses will go up a great deal as well as food and lodging expenses.

**Sponsorship:**

Covering all these financial hurdles is always a challenge for ski racers. I do not have any monetary support from my family so I have covered all my expenses with money that I have saved from work. I am currently looking for financial support for my race season so that I can focus on ski racing without accumulating a large debt. If anyone is interested in some degree of sponsorship please contact me at your convenience and I will be more than happy to discuss what I am doing in further detail. If a company or organization would like to be recognized as a sponsor I can put decals on my rifle stock and harness that will be seen on television while I race in Europe. I also plan on getting trading cards printed before I go to Europe. These cards are given out and autographed by skiers in Europe just like baseball cards in the U.S. I would be very happy to put any sponsors logo on the trading cards that I will be handing out at ski races all over Europe. This is an exciting opportunity for me and I think it is a good chance to represent Wyoming and also Pinedale.

If you need anything else from me just let me know and I will get it to you. I am a hard worker and I am dedicated to what I do and I know that I can make it to the Olympics if I have a little support along the way. Thank you very much for your consideration of me in this endeavor. If you are curious and would like some more info about the sport of Biathlon check out the web site:

[www.usbiathlon.org/](http://www.usbiathlon.org/)

Sincerely

Jason Ray  
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**Anticipated Annual Budget**

Coaching: Covered

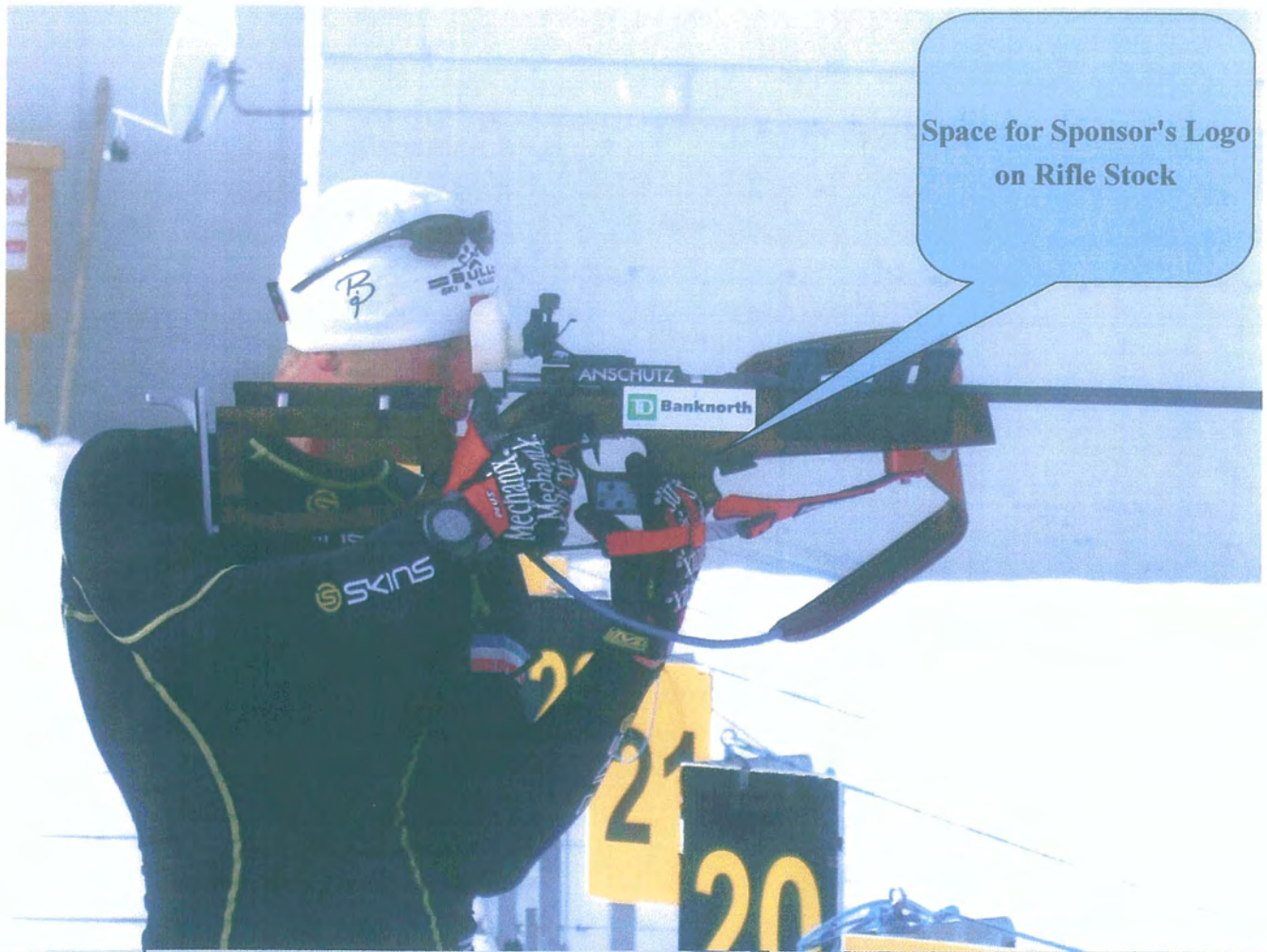
Equipment: \$1,000

Travel(air fare and rental cars): \$3,000

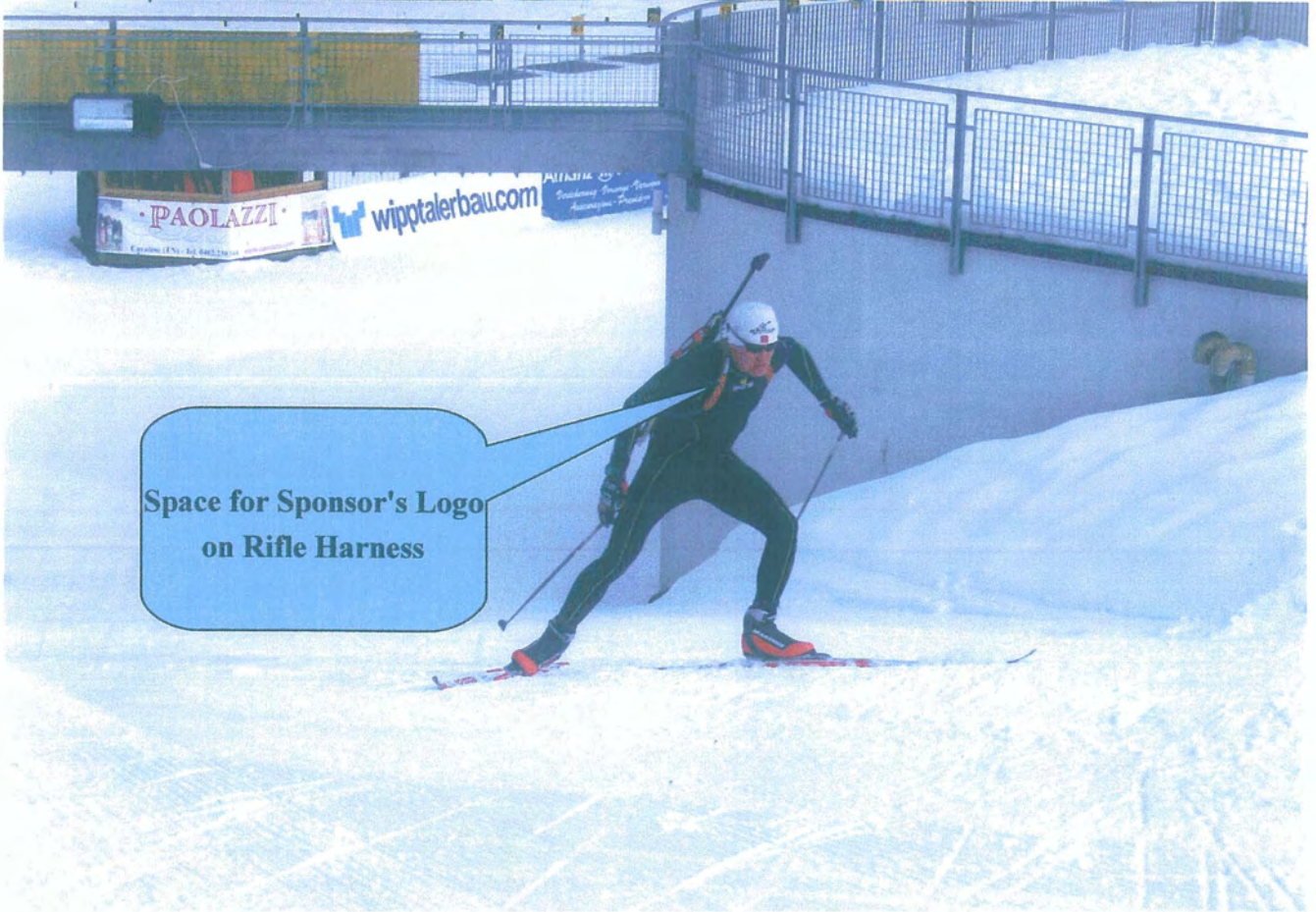
Food and Lodging: \$3,500

**Total Need: \$7,500**





Space for Sponsor's Logo  
on Rifle Stock



Space for Sponsor's Logo  
on Rifle Harness