



SCHOOL PROGRAM

THE PASSION

OLYMPIC MIXED LUGE RELAY TEAM

(Grade 2-3)



SPORT DESCRIPTION

Remember sledding fast with your friends? It can feel like you are going so fast. That was slow compared to the speeds reached in the luge. Lugers slide down an ice track feet-first. They reach speeds over 150 km/hour.

The mixed team relay is made up of a women's single, men's single, and men's double luge. The woman goes first. She starts the race by going through a laser beam that starts the clock. As she finishes her run, she reaches up to hit a pad hung over the finish line. This opens the gate at the top to let the male luger start his run. When he finishes, he hits the pad and the two double luge athletes start the final run. The combined time is ranked against the other teams.



ABOUT THE ATHLETES

OLYMPIC MIXED LUGE RELAY TEAM:

The team of **Alex Gough**, **Sam Edney**, **Tristan Walker** and **Justin Snith** raced to Canada's first ever Olympic medal in the luge team relay at with a time of 2:24.872. The PyeongChang 2018 event ended a lot more joyous for the Canadians than four years ago when the team finished fourth, a mere tenth of a second out of bronze medal position.

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THE STORY

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“Luge is something we love to do,” says team member Justin Snith. “That’s what keeps us working after a big loss.”

“I was so discouraged. I wanted to quit,” says luger Tristan Walker. But Tristan and the team didn’t quit! Passion for the sport kept them going.

Things didn’t go to plan for the Canadian mixed luge relay team at the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games. They trained for years to win a medal. But they finished fourth. They missed a medal by less than a second. It hurt to be so close! The team was very sad.

They trained even harder. The best way to put the bad race behind them was to do better next time. Could they win a medal at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games?

Lugers train hard all year. *“Luge is a full-time job,”* says Walker. *“We train twice a day, five days a week.”* There were days that they didn’t feel like practicing. But none of them wanted to lose by 1/10th of a second again. They didn’t want to let down the team.

No one wanted to be the person who let down the team by not giving their best. But they each knew their teammates were always there for them. *“You have the rest of the team to rely on,”* says Sam Edney. *“They’ll be there to support you.”*

Two months before before PyeongChang 2018, the team got some news. Russian lugers had been caught for cheating at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games. Tests showed they had taken drugs to race faster. The team would lose their silver medal. The Canadian team would get the bronze medal.

Five weeks later the good news turned bad. The Russians had appealed the tests. The court ruled they could keep their silver medal. The Canadians would stay fourth.

“There was a lot of anger! It was unfair,” recalls Sam Edney.

They had to put this behind them. They had to focus on their big Olympic race. The Canadian team was determined to win a medal in 2018.

“You can only control what’s ahead of you,” says Justin Snith. *“We had to just push on.”*

Alex Gough raced first in PyeongChang. She won bronze in the women’s singles. It was Canada’s first ever medal in the luge. The team was very happy!

The relay event was two days later. Thoughts of their race in Sochi were swept aside. They had worked years for this moment.

The Canadians were the third-last team to go down the track. After the first two legs, they were ahead by the smallest amount.

It was up to Tristan Walker and Justin Snith in the double luge. Could they hold onto a medal?

The gap opened on each curve. They crossed the finish line in first place. Relief! They would win a medal no matter how fast the last two teams raced.

They watched the last two teams make their runs. They were nervous. Only the Germans raced faster. Team Canada won the silver!

“It was a feeling of pure joy,” Edney says. *“It made it all worth it.”*

The team’s passion helped them to win an Olympic medal.

“The key is to find the thing you love to do and then pursue it,” says Sam Edney. *“It’s about finding that thing that you can be passionate about.”*

“It doesn’t have to be sport,” says Alex Gough. *“It could be anything. Find that thing you love to do!”*





LEARNING

ACTIVITIES

(Grade 2-3)

1.THEIR PASSION

a. Luge is a passion for the team. They love it! That love made them keep working hard after 2014. They wanted another chance to get a medal. **Draw the team's Olympic silver medal.**

b. **Around the picture write four sentences about how the team showed their passion.**

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____



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2.MY PASSION

a. Alex Gough says you should pursue your passion. **Write about something that you love to do.**

b. **Draw a picture about your passion.**

3. OUR PASSION

a. Families also have things that they love to do. Some love to camp. Some love sports or music. Some love playing games together. **Write a list of the top five things your family likes doing together. Find other people in your class whose families like some of the same things your family does.**

b. Find a friend that has a passion like yours. **Make a poster about the activity you both love doing.** (blank page)

c. Ask a parent, grand parent, or family member about the passions they had when they were kids. **Draw a picture of this activity.** Share it in a show-and-tell.