



## SCHOOL PROGRAM

# THE PASSION

## OLYMPIC MIXED LUGE RELAY TEAM

(Grade 4-5)



### SPORT DESCRIPTION

Remember the speed you reached when you went tobogganing with your friends? That's nothing compared to the breakneck speeds reached in the luge. Lugers slide down a banked track of ice feet-first on a small sled. They can reach speeds over 150 km/hour.

The mixed team relay is comprised of a women's single, men's single, and men's double luge. The woman goes first, pushing off to break the beam that starts the timer. As she finishes her run, she reaches up to hit a pressure pad hung over the finish line. This releases a gate at the top, allowing the team's male luger to start his race. When he finishes, he punches the pressure pad, setting off the two double luge athletes. The combined time is ranked against the other teams.



### ABOUT THE ATHLETE

#### 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

## OLYMPIC MIXED LUGE RELAY TEAM

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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,” recalls luger Tristan Walker. But for Tristan and the team, passion kept them going through bitter disappointment.*

The 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games were tough for Canada’s luge relay team. They spent years preparing to chase a medal and fell an agonizing 1/10th of a second short. Fourth place stung like a wound. Days of media interviews forced them to relive their disappointment.

A tough loss can test the desire and determination of even the best athletes. But the team did not quit. Instead they decided to work even harder. They knew that the best way to put the bad experience behind them was to do better next time.

The sport requires hard training all year round. “Luge is a full-time job,” says Walker. *“We are there sometimes up to twice a day, five days a week. Missing by only 1/10th of a second was a huge motivation for us,”* he says. There were days that they didn’t feel like practicing, *“but then you ask yourself, could that be my 1/10th of a second? That always pushed our team to keep going.”*

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 the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games, the Canadian team received some news. Russia’s silver medal team from the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games were disqualified. Tests found that two of their athletes had taken banned drugs to race faster. The Canadian team would be bumped up to bronze.

The good news turned bad five weeks later. An international court of appeal ruled that the Russians could keep their medal after all. The Canadians were once again left off the podium. “There was a lot of anger because it was just unfair,” says team member Sam Edney.

The disappointment had to be put behind them. It was time to focus on the future. The Canadian athletes were determined to win a medal in 2018. *“You can only control what’s ahead of you,”* says Justin Snith. *“We decided we had to just push on.”*

Alex Gough got Canada’s first ever luge medal with a bronze in the women’s singles event. Two days later came the relay event. Their disappointments from Sochi were swept aside. They were determined to win a medal this time.

The Canadians were the third-last team to go down the track. When they crossed the finish line they were holding onto first place. That meant a medal was guaranteed, but some of the big teams were still to race. *“The moment that you realize you’re going to win an Olympic*

*medal,”* says Sam Edney, *“you can’t describe it.”* Nervously they watched the final two teams make their runs. Only the Germans were faster. Team Canada had won the silver medal. *“It’s a feeling of pure joy,”* Edney says. *“It makes it all worth it.”*

The Canadian luge team’s undeterred passion led them to an Olympic medal. *“The lesson is that if you find something you love and enjoy that’s something you have to pursue,”* 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. When you find your passion, you find this group of people who end up becoming a second family. You find people who understand you, who get your passion and love, whether it’s for luge or anything else.”*





# LEARNING

## ACTIVITIES

(Grade 4-5)

### 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.** Illustrate each sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



SCHOOL PROGRAM

[www.olympic.ca/education](http://www.olympic.ca/education)



## 3. OUR PASSION

a. Families also have things that they love to do. Some families have a passion for camping. Some love sports or playing games together. Other families love special activities that give them joy. **Write a list of the top five things your family likes doing together.**

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b. Find other people in your class whose families like some of the same things your family does. **Together, prepare a short speech for the class, explaining what your families like to do.**

c. Interview a parent, grand parent, or family member. What were their passions when they were kids? **Find a picture of them doing the activity as a kid or draw one.** Share the picture with your classmates.

d. In 1918, kids had different interests and passions than they do now. **Use the internet to find out how kids spent their time back then.**