

# The Wild Winter Sport of Skijoring

アメリカ西部の雪深い地域では、冬ならではのユニークなスポーツ文化が根づいています。その一つが、スキーと馬を組み合わせた競技です。寒さの厳しい環境だからこそ生まれた楽しみ方は、地域の人々の暮らしや価値観を映しているように見えます。あなたの住んでいる地域には、その土地ならではのスポーツやイベントがありますか？



## 1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

What do you get when you cross the sports of rodeo with skiing? An extreme winter sport called skijoring.

The competition involves riding horses that tow skiers by rope over jumps and around barriers. At the same time, competitors try to lance round targets with a baton, a special stick for the purpose.

Skijoring is a winter sport that celebrates the combination of rodeo and ski culture in the U.S. Mountain West.

Horses — and sometimes dogs, snowmobiles and even cars — tow skiers by rope at speeds as high as 64 kilometers per hour. Skiers can go over jumps as high as 2.4 meters.

One of the most popular skijoring races in the country takes place in Leadville, Colorado. The event, called "The Granddaddy of 'em All," has been a tradition there since 1949.

"It's just the pure adrenaline that gets me to do it," said Nick Burri. He is one of the competitors and said teams get along with each other. "Getting these two different groups of people together with the riders and the skiers...we mesh pretty well."

Internet reports say skijoring takes its name from the Norwegian word skikjoring, which means "ski driving." It started as a way to get around in Scandinavia and became popular in Europe's Alps Mountains around 1900.

Today's sport is dangerous, and injuries are common among riders and skiers alike. One of the first riders in the Leadville race earlier this month fell off his horse and had to be helped off the track.

Burri did well in the competition although he was skiing with a separated shoulder that he suffered in a fall during a race two weeks earlier.

Savannah McCarthy has been a competitive skijorer since she was 12 years old. She said she experiences a nervous energy before she rides her horse for a race. But once she is speeding down the course, her world goes silent.

"I don't hear a thing when I'm running," she said. "When it's happening, you really don't have time to think about anything." McCarthy is a 24-year-old financial worker from Durango, Colorado. She has won the Leadville race nine times.

Loren Zhimanskova is head of Skijor USA, which helps organize races across the country. She said skijoring is becoming more popular because of social media. She hopes it will one day be an event in the Winter Olympics. Skijoring is especially popular in Poland and Switzerland, as well as in the U.S. states of Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.

Five years ago, the sport had about 350 teams of riders, skiers, and horses in the U.S., she said. Now, about 1,000 teams are competing, and the number of races has increased from about 15 a year to more than 30.

But getting the sport into the Olympics has proven difficult.

There is no official governing body. It has no clear set of rules. And there is no system that would permit riders to take part in the Winter Games. In addition, every course is different, and every race has its own special traditions.

Zhimanskova is pushing to include skijoring as a non-competitive demonstration sport. She said it could also be included in the torch relay at the 2034 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"Everyone loves snow...and then you add horses to that," Zhimanskova said. "I mean, all the elements that go into a skijoring event, in my opinion, are really feel-good elements," she added.

Dan Novak adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on reporting from The Associated Press.

Source: The Wild Winter Sport of Skijoring  
VOA

## 2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

**1. involve (v.) to include; to require**

Becoming an astronaut **involves** many years of education and difficult training.

**2. tow (v.) to pull a large object with a rope or chain**

I **towed** my friend's car to the repair shop.

**3. competitor (n.) a person who is working against others in a contest to win a prize**

There are over five thousand **competitors** in this weekend's marathon.

**4. permit (v.) to allow; to let**

Airport security will not **permit** you to leave your bags alone.

**5. element (n.) one part of something**

The **elements** of downhill skiing include strength, speed, and flexibility.

## 3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

- 1. What is skijoring? Try to describe the sport without looking back at the article.**
- 2. How popular is skijoring?**
- 3. Why is it so difficult to get skijoring to become an Olympic event?**
- 4. Would you like to participate in skijoring, either as a competitor or as a spectator?**
- 5. Are you interested in any other fast-paced or dangerous sporting events? If so, which ones, and why? If not, why not?**