

Olympic Dreams

Created by Christine Nielsen
Length: 60 minutes
Intensity: HR Zones 2–5



Profile Description

This profile uses the occasion of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, to explore some form and intensity topics related to four winter sports. I have provided a lot of details about each sport in the text. Feel free to expand on or omit that information. If you are a die-hard watcher of the Olympics you can probably add color about the venue and crowds. The music used for each sport is performed by musicians from each of the focus countries.

Note to instructors: Feel free to amend my music choices, particularly if you have special knowledge of some of the countries in question. You may also want to add at least one sport from your own country, selecting music that best represents your country. I tried to select music that would be palatable to a wide range of students so that your investment in music will be useful in other profiles. I chose songs from the official Sochi Olympics recording for warm-up, recovery, and cool-down but have made alternate suggestions for other Russian music if you would rather use that for any reason. You may also choose your favorite music for the beginning and end of class. The anthems (or a substitute) are required for a little recovery and time to set up the next section of the class.

Objective

This class is designed to give students a fairly high-intensity workout while also offering them insights into the demands placed on the minds and bodies of Olympic athletes in four sports. There are several opportunities to draw parallels between cycling and other sports.

If students choose to follow all of your cues and adopt the “higher, stronger, faster” mentality, this can be a very high-intensity class. Modify your coaching to reflect the needs and abilities of the group with which you are working.

Warm-up

Light the Fire of Game On All the Earth, Anna Maslova and Denis Maydanov, 3:58, 80 bpm

Olympic Flame, Sergey Ivanov and Zhanna Friske, 3:33, 130 (65) bpm

Structure a gradual warm-up.

Congratulations! You have just won a fantastic prize—an all-expenses-paid trip to the Winter Olympics in Sochi. The trip also includes tickets to all the events and, best of all, an opportunity to train with some of the teams that are favored for medals. You will learn more about the game of curling, will do some speed skating and cross-country skiing, and finish up at the bobsleigh run. This will be a great opportunity for you to get a taste for the hard work and commitment that has led these athletes to the pinnacle of their sports. You will learn a little more about what it takes to excel in their sports and get a chance to participate, in most cases at a level of effort much lower than the athletes themselves.

Remember, this is your vacation. I want you to opt out of any activities that scare you or make you uncomfortable. Just keep working hard enough to stay warm, although that won't be too challenging when you look at all the palm trees in Sochi. Feel free, as well, to choose reduced intensity during any of the sports. After all, you got to the Olympics the easy way. You have not invested the last four to eight years of your life in conditioning and training for this moment.

All of the music you will hear today is related to our activities. We will warm up, recover, and cool down to official Sochi Olympics songs and each time we join a team we will hear the national anthem and then songs by musicians from the region.

Men's and Women's Curling (Canada)

Oh Canada!, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, 1:30, 80 bpm

We are going to start our training with the Canadian men's and women's curling teams. Curling was introduced as a medal sport in 1998. The game is not well understood, especially in countries without a long history of the sport. It requires enormous capacity for concentration, both long- and short-term strategy, teamwork, and the ability to maintain excellent physical and mental form over a long period. Each game is approximately two hours long and teams are timed—take too long to think and you will run out of time and lose the game. Each team plays one or two games per day. The tournament is conducted over the course of ten days, followed by semi-finals and finals.



Right This Second, Deadmau5, 7:50, 190 (95) bpm

I want you to imagine that you are in a packed arena and are playing in one of four simultaneous games. You are dependent on communication with your teammates and on your ability to see and remember what each rock does as it moves down the sheet of ice. You must block out the noise from the other games and the crowd and make split-second decisions based on what you recall. The physical demands are intermittent but the requirement for mental focus is constant.

Grab the beat of the music and adjust your resistance so that you are working in Zone 2 to low Zone 3. Give deliberate attention to what you are feeling and seeing in your own body and in those of the other riders. Block out everything else. Your chance to win the game is absolutely dependent on your ability to focus and remember all of the events around you.

At about 3:30:

Curling is a highly technical sport. Success is dependent on an athlete's ability to reproduce a specific effort on demand. Body awareness is essential. Take this time to become aware of your pedal stroke and the feel of the pedal underneath your foot. The only changes you should feel as you ride should be intentional.

At about 5:30:

People often underestimate the physical aspect of curling. You have to be able to maintain your balance while sliding on one foot in a low squat. In that position you must direct a 40-pound stone toward a tiny target 140 feet away. Your shot is only effective if you can control your "weight"—the force you impart to the curling stone so that it arrives at a specific spot on the ice with the right amount of energy. Sometimes you want your stone to stop. At other times you want it to move one or more stones.

When you are not delivering a rock your job is to brush the stones. Players on the team take turns in pairs brushing in front of a rock as it moves down the ice. The brushing heats the ice and creates a film of water that helps the stone move farther. The strongest teams can move a rock between 15 and 20 additional feet. Brushing can also affect the path of the stone by making it go straighter.

We will practice some brushing during the next song. Imagine that your team leader is yelling, "Sweep!" as soon as the rock is released. The closer the rock comes to the target the harder she will want you to sweep. You will hear "Sweep!" then "Harder!" and finally "Hurry hard!"

Each time I cue you to sweep I want you to add enough resistance to increase the intensity of your work. Then keep increasing your cadence until I hold up my hand to tell you that the rock has stopped moving. Don't go wild—the progression of your effort

should be natural and smooth. If you go too hard too fast you will fall on your face on the ice!

Hey There, Serena Ryder, 3:06, 122 (61) bpm

We will sweep on the choruses of this song.

These are essentially stepped cadence surges with a little resistance added to the base. Start the first “sweep” on the chorus at 0:24. During the approximately 15-second periods of sweeping try to add in the cues “Harder,” “Harder,” and “Hurry hard.” (Note: Curlers place the emphasis on the second word in the phrase “hurry hard.”) I also use the choruses at 0:56, 1:28, 2:00, and 2:36. If you want to add even more authenticity, before the last surge tell your class:

This is the last rock of the end.

These four or five efforts, with relatively short recovery periods, will serve to bring the average intensity into Zone 4 by the end of the song.

Now that you have some insight into the game of curling you can watch it beginning on February 10. The finals will be held on February 20 and 21.

Women’s 3000 m Team Pursuit Long Track Speed Skating (Netherlands)

Wilhelmus van Nassouwe, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, 0:46, 90 bpm

We are moving on to train with the Dutch women’s 3000 meter pursuit team. In this event there are two teams of three skaters on the ice at one time. They start at opposite sides of the oval and are trying to skate a better time than the other team. The three skaters on each team take turns leading and breaking the wind. They are drafting just like cyclists do when they ride in pacelines. Let’s get started and while you skate I will tell you more about this sport.



The Heart of Everything, Within Temptation, 5:35, 85 bpm Fall, Aux Raus, 3:27, 86 bpm

Divide the class into three groups. Each one should work hard at threshold for 30 seconds while the others drop their effort slightly. (The effect of drafting is less in speed skating because it is more difficult for the athletes to maintain a minimum distance between them. In addition, the effort to do the corners offsets some of the gains from drafting.)

Cue the class to add a little resistance when it is their turn at the front of the group. They should maintain their cadence and focus on excellent form, especially when the intensity of the work increases.

Here's an amazing fact. The women do six laps of the track in the team pursuit and the winning time at the last Olympics was 3.02.82, set by the Germans. That's an average speed of about 38 miles per hour. The men average closer to 40 miles per hour over a longer distance. That should make it clear to you that the actual race is probably done at and over the threshold of each skater. You don't have to go that hard today. Just make sure that you are working harder when you are at the front and taking a bit off when you are behind.

After the first round:

You have an advantage as a cyclist when it comes to skating. You understand the importance of letting your lower body do the work while keeping your upper body fairly still and quiet. There is a reason why speed skaters often become competitive road cyclists and vice versa. The most accomplished of those is Canadian Clara Hughes, who has won multiple Olympic medals in both sports. She is the only person ever to have won multiple medals in sports in the summer and winter games.

Optional, when there is not enough time left for each group to do another effort:

The team's time is taken when that last skater crosses the line. When they finish the last turn they spread out across the track and everyone works as hard as they can to keep level with their teammates. You can reproduce that feeling by sustaining your work at threshold to the end of the song.

If you want to watch the team pursuit it will be held on February 21.

Transfer to Mountain Venues

Olympic Dream, Sergey Konkov and Aleksandr Duynov, 3:36, 108 bpm

Recover.

We are going to leave the city of Sochi now and head to the outdoor events that will be held in Krasnaya Polyana. Take some time to catch your breath and enjoy the scenery.

Men's 15 km Cross-Country Skiing (Norway)

Ja Vi Elsker Dette Landet, Orlando Philharmonic, 0:52, 103 bpm

We are now going to join the Norwegian cross-country ski team. They will be participating in races that range in distance from 1 to 50 kilometers in both individual

and team events. We will be working with the men, who will race 15 kilometers. At race pace it will take them about 33 minutes to cover that distance.

The coaches have decided on a strategy for this training session. The athletes will go out in Zone 3, then ramp up to the bottom of Zone 4, and finish out the last third of the session right at their threshold, perhaps exceeding it as they approach the finish line.

Take On Me, a-ha, 3:48, 161 (80) bpm

Let's get started. Catch the beat of the music and add enough resistance to put yourself in Zone 3. Control your effort and resist the temptation to go out too hard.

The best cross-country skiers get the most out of each stride and there is an effortless and efficient transfer to the other leg. Once again you have an advantage as someone who cycles. You are comfortable with the feeling of your feet gliding in smooth circles and balance between the two sides of the body.

Norwegian Lovesong, Leaves' Eyes, 3:44, 163 bpm (in three)

Cue a change that will increase effort to the bottom of Zone 4. This can be done using either cadence or resistance or both. This song is counted in three and is therefore useful for coaching awareness of form. It can easily be ridden at the equivalent of 82 bpm.

The coaches are standing alongside the trail to remind you to stay calm and in control of your body as you increase your effort. Now is the time to reflect on everything you have learned about how to get the most out of your movement at the least energetic cost.

Haunted, Midnattsol, 3:24, 87 bpm

Cue an increase in effort to threshold. This can most likely be accomplished by increasing cadence to the beat of the music while holding resistance steady.

At 1:00

Check the intensity of your work and make the adjustments required to get to and stay at your threshold.

If you wish, cue a rush to the line at 2:56. The preceding section of the music is quiet and you can talk about everything seeming to slow down as the athlete focuses on the line and commits to the effort it will take to win.

The men's 15 km cross-country skiing events will be held on February 9.

Women's Bobsleigh (Germany)**Deutscheland Lied, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, 1:14, 73 bpm**

Finally we will meet the women's bobsleigh team from Germany. You will be training as the brakeman. That's the person who specializes in pushing the sled from a standing start along 50 meters of track. Your job is largely done in the first 5 seconds, and by that time the sled is moving close to 40 kilometers per hour. A tenth of a second advantage gained at the top of the track can translate to three times that at the end of the race. After you have pushed, you will jump into the sled and be very still so that the pilot can drive with consistent weight distribution. Sprinters and football players are recruited as brakemen and spend hours training for the explosive start. These are true sprints and we will practice a few before we head off to the opening ceremonies for the Games.

Südstadt Verzäll Nix, BAP, 3:47, 170 (85) bpm
Feur frei, Rammstein, 3:09, 96 bpm

Use your judgment to cue short bouts of “pushing.” The best description of cueing for these efforts is contained in Tom Scotto’s Audio Master Class HIT IT I suggest that you refer to his instruction (see link below). It is very important that you demonstrate to the class how the high-intensity efforts will be conducted. I used the words “push” and “explode” interchangeably in the context of this class.

You can use the first 30 seconds of the first song for instruction and preparation. There are then multiple opportunities for 5- to 10-second intervals suggested within the music.

The second song drives continuously so you can effectively add a cue for a push at any time. Reduce the volume during the recoveries. There is a quiet period from 2:10 to 2:31, at which point the driving beat resumes.

Give people lots of opportunities to opt out of these last efforts. It is easy to talk about how scary the whole bobsleigh experience can be—from the hard effort of pushing to the feeling of hurtling down an icy track.

The women’s bobsleigh competition will take place on February 18.

Cool-down and Stretch

Anthem of Olympic Games 2014, Valeriya et al, 2:42
Olympic Anthem: Orchestral version, Nikolaos Mantzaros Chamber Ensemble, 4:22

Congratulations. You survived. And I think you have developed a greater appreciation for the achievements you will witness over the next couple of weeks. It is time to recover and relax and head off to watch the athletes in action.

Tom Scotto’s Audio Master Class “HIT IT” can be found at
<http://www.indoorcyclingassociation.com/hit-it-audio-master-class-with-tom-scotto/>
(ICA Member Profile)

Title	Artist	Album	Available From
Light the Fire of Game On All the Earth	Anna Maslova and Denis Maydanov	Official Album of Sochi 2014 Olympic Games	iTunes
Olympic Flame	Sergey Ivanov and Zhanna Friske	Official Album of Sochi 2014 Olympic Games	iTunes
Oh Canada!	Orlando Philharmonic	National Anthems of the World	iTunes
Right This Second	deadmau5	4x4=12	iTunes
Hey There	Serena Ryder	Harmony	iTunes
Wilhelmus van Nassouwe	Orlando Philharmonic	National Anthems of the World	iTunes
The Heart of Everything	Within Temptation	The Heart of Everything	iTunes, eMusic
Fall	Aux Raus	Aux Raus	iTunes, eMusic
Olympic Dream	Sergey Konkov and Aleksandr Duynov	Official Album of Sochi 2014 Olympic Games	iTunes
Ja Vi Elsker Dette Landet	Orlando Philharmonic	National Anthems of the World	iTunes
Take On Me	a-ha	Hunting High and Low	iTunes
Norwegian Lovesong	Leaves' Eyes	Lovelorn	iTunes, eMusic
Haunted	Midnattsol	Where Twilight Dwells	iTunes

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Deutscheland Lied	Orlando Philharmonic	National Anthems of the World	iTunes
Südstadt Verzäll Nix	BAP	Für Usszeschnigge	iTunes
Feuer frei	Rammstein	Mutter	iTunes
Anthem of Olympic Games 2014	Valeriya et al	Official Album of Sochi 2014 Olympic Games	iTunes
Olympic Anthem: Orchestral Version	Nikolaos Mantzaros Chamber Ensemble	Olympic Anthen	iTunes, eMusic

Notes:

1. There are many choices for national anthems on both iTunes and eMusic. I listened to them and chose to buy an album from iTunes (for \$5.99), which contained 33 songs. I made this choice for sonic reasons. You can save some money by purchasing the four songs you need from eMusic. The differences between the versions won't matter in this context.
2. I chose to purchase some songs from the official album for the Sochi 2014 Games. If you would prefer, for financial or other reasons, to use other Russian music, I recommend purchasing a few songs from *The Russian Folk Orchestra Sound* by the Osipov Russian Folk Orchestra or something similar. There are many choices available on both eMusic and iTunes. You can also select appropriate music from your personal music library.