

Wind, ice and cold are making this Olympics too wintry

Required Annotations		Student-Created Annotations		Summary / Questions / Reflection	
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PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — The Winter Olympics are supposed to be cold, of course. Just maybe not THIS cold.

Wind and ice pellets left Olympic snowboarders simply trying to stay upright in conditions that many felt were unfit for competition, the best ski jumpers on the planet dealing with swirling gusts and biathletes aiming to shoot straight.

All around the games, athletes and fans are dealing with conditions that have tested even the most seasoned winter sports veterans.

Low temperatures have hovered in the single digits, dipping below zero Fahrenheit with unforgiving gusts whipping at 45 miles per hour (70 kph) making it feel much colder. Organizers have shuffled schedules, and shivering spectators left events early.

The raw air sent hundreds of fans to the exits Sunday when qualifying was called off after women's slopestyle devolved into a mess of mistakes, and Monday's final started 75 minutes late. Of the 50 runs, 41 ended with a fall or a rider essentially giving up. The temperature dropped to 3 degrees Fahrenheit, with high winds.

American Jamie Anderson won the gold medal by watching most of her competitors struggle, and then completing a conservative run that paled in comparison to her winning performance at the X Games just two weeks ago.

"It has to be absolutely **petrifying**, terrifying, being up that high in the air, and having a gust 30 mph coming sideways at you," said United States Ski and Snowboard Association CEO Tiger Shaw.

Many of the snowboarders didn't think they should have been out there.

"You're going up the chairlift and you see these little tornadoes," said Czech snowboarder Sarka Pancohova, who finished 16th, "and you're like, 'What is this?'"

At ski jumping, giant netting was set up to reduce the wind that can blow at three times the optimal velocity for the sport. Didn't help all that much, though: The men's normal hill final on Saturday was pushed back repeatedly and eventually finished after midnight.

"It was unbelievably cold," said Japan's Noriaki Kasai, competing at his record eighth Olympics. "The noise of the wind at the top of the jump was incredible. I've never experienced anything like that on the World Cup circuit. I said to myself, 'Surely, they are going to cancel this.'"

Alpine skiing, meanwhile, still hasn't been able to get started at all, leaving stars like Mikaela Shiffrin of the U.S. and Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway waiting for their turn in the spotlight. Each of the first two races on the program — the men's downhill Sunday, and the women's giant slalom Monday — were called off hours before they were supposed to begin. Both of those have been moved to Thursday when things are supposed to become slightly more manageable.

The forecast calls for more high winds Tuesday and Wednesday, although temperatures are expected to climb to 26.

"I am pretty sure that soon," men's race director Markus Waldner said

with a wry smile, "we will have a race."

Until then, he and other officials are left trying to come up with **contingency** plans and ways to get the full 11-race Alpine program completed before the Olympics are scheduled to close on February 25.

As it is, **logistical** complications are real concerns.

Waldner pointed out that he needs to figure out a way to get three men's races — the combined, downhill and super-G — completed by Friday, because there is only one hotel right by the speed course at the Jeongseon Alpine Center. The male skiers need to **vacate** their rooms to make way for their female counterparts, whose speed events are supposed to begin Saturday.

"Now, it's getting tight," he said.

Even those attending indoor events have been tested. Long, cold waits for buses have left workers, media and fans complaining.

Those involved in winter sports are used to this sort of thing, of course.

At the 2007 Alpine world championships in Sweden, for example, strong winds wiped out first three days of competition. At the 1993 world championships in Japan, the men's super-G was never contested.

It can happen the other way, too. At the 2010 Vancouver Games, the first two Alpine races were postponed because of rain and — get this — too-warm temperatures in the 40s (below 10 Celsius). The entire Alpine world championships slated for Spain in 1995 were rescheduled for a whole year later because of a lack of snow.

"That's a piece of the puzzle that, I guess, fortunately, or unfortunately is part of our world," U.S. Alpine men's speed coach Johno McBride said.

"You're dealing with Mother Nature."

Questions

- Read the two selections from the article. "All around the games, athletes and fans are dealing with conditions that have tested even the most seasoned winter sports veterans." "Even those attending indoor events have been tested. Long, cold waits for buses have left workers, media and fans complaining." Which inference is BEST supported by these selections?
 - Seasoned athletes are having an easier time with the bad weather conditions at the Olympics than the first-timers.
 - More people are attending indoor events at the Olympics because the conditions at the outdoor events are too harsh.
 - The harsh winter conditions have had an effect on every event at the Olympics.
 - Fans at the Olympics are more affected by the harsh winter conditions than the athletes.
- Which quote from the article BEST supports the idea that athletes are concerned about the decisions made by the race directors?
 - "It has to be absolutely petrifying, terrifying, being up that high in the air, and having a gust 30 mph coming sideways at you," said United States Ski and Snowboard Association CEO Tiger Shaw.
 - "You're going up the chairlift and you see these little tornadoes," said Czech snowboarder Sarka Pancohova, who finished 16th, "and you're like, 'What is this?'"
 - "It was unbelievably cold," said Japan's Noriaki Kasai, competing at his record eighth Olympics. "The noise of the wind at the top of the jump was incredible. I've never experienced anything like that on the World Cup circuit. I said to myself, 'Surely, they are going to cancel this.'"
 - "I am pretty sure that soon," men's race director Markus Waldner said with a wry smile, "we will have a race."
- Which sentence from the article BEST develops a central idea of the article?
 - American Jamie Anderson won the gold medal by watching most of her competitors struggle, and then completing a conservative run that paled in comparison to her winning performance at the X Games just two weeks ago.
 - At ski jumping, giant netting was set up to reduce the wind that can blow at three times the optimal velocity for the sport.
 - Waldner pointed out that he needs to figure out a way to get three men's races — the combined, downhill and super-G — completed by Friday, because there is only one hotel right by the speed course at the Jeongseon Alpine Center.
 - The entire Alpine world championships slated for Spain in 1995 were rescheduled for a whole year later because of a lack of snow.
- Which statement belongs in an accurate and objective summary of the article?
 - Before the Winter Olympics in South Korea there has never been a time when Olympic events had to be rescheduled because of the weather.
 - The Winter Olympics in South Korea have been at the mercy of Mother Nature just as other Winter Olympics have been.
 - The harsh weather conditions at the Winter Olympics in South Korea have caused some athletes to be more conservative in their events.
 - Many snowboarders were terrified being high up in the air and having strong gusts hitting them sideways.

