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STORY HEADLINE: Italy's Rocco Baldini holds off compatriot Luca Tomasoni for Gold in Ski Mountaineering Men's Sprint Final at Lausanne 2020

LOCATION: Villars Winter Park, Switzerland

DATE: January 13, 2020

LANGUAGE: Italian

Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: <http://iocnewsroom.com>

STORY SCRIPT:

Italy's Rocco Baldini raced clear to gold in the Ski Mountaineering Men's Sprint Final at the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Lausanne 2020.

Baldini, who is 18, easily saw off the rest of the field in the six man medal winning race at the Villars Winter Park, winning in 2 minutes 30.14 seconds by 7.87 seconds.

His Italian compatriot, 17-year-old Luca Tomasoni took the silver medal. Spain's Ot Ferrer-Martinez won bronze.

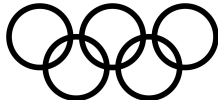
The Sprint is a short individual race, combining the essential Ski Mountaineering features and techniques. Part of the ascent is made on skis and another part on foot, with skis on the backpack. Finally, the descent from the top is made skiing in one single time.

As its name implies, the Sprint is a very fast race. The total ascending elevation is of about 80 meters, with athletes starting and finishing in almost the same point.

The first round is an individual qualification with athletes starting one after the other, every 20 seconds. After this qualifying round, athletes face each other in heats of 6 runners from quarter-final to final. The 3 best of every heat are qualified for the next round. Qualifying athletes race at least twice. In the final, the winner is the first to cross the finish line.

Lausanne 2020 is the third edition of the Winter YOG, bringing together the world's best young athletes between the ages of 15 and 18. For the first time in Winter Olympic history the Games will have gender equality, with equal numbers of male and female competitors in the 81 medal events.

1,872 athletes from 79 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) will be in action in Lausanne, 12 of those NOCs for the first time at a Youth Olympic Games - Albania, Azerbaijan, Ecuador, Haiti, Hong Kong, Kosovo, Pakistan, Qatar, Singapore, Thailand, Turkmenistan and Trinidad & Tobago.



As well as the brand new sport of Ski Mountaineering, Lausanne 2020 features five new events, Women's Nordic Combined, Individual Normal Hill/4km, Women's Doubles Luge, Mixed NOC 3x3 Ice Hockey, Freeski Big Air, Snowboard Big Air.

The first Winter Youth Olympic Games took place in Innsbruck, Austria, in 2012. The second edition was held in the Norwegian city of Lillehammer in 2016.

SHOTLIST:

00:05 Rocco Baldini crosses the finish line in first in the Men's Ski Mountaineering Sprint

00:13 SOUNDBITE: Rocco Baldini, Gold medallist, Men's Ski Mountaineering Sprint (Italian Language).

"I started fast, we believed in it, Luca and I were close by. He had a little problem in the walking part and he slipped. I managed to stay ahead and go fast and when the slope started, I noticed I had a huge advantage. I was so happy and I still can't believe it, I am the new [Youth] Olympic Champion!"

00:37 Baldini celebrates his win with his silver medal winning teammate Luca Tomasoni

00:45 SOUNDBITE: Rocco Baldini, Gold medallist, Men's Ski Mountaineering Sprint (Italian Language).

"In the walking part, I saw I had an advantage, I pushed hard and I did everything quickly. When the slope started, the advantage was huge and at that point I understood it was done."

01:01 The Men's Ski Mountaineering medallists pose for pictures

01:06 SOUNDBITE: Rocco Baldini, Gold medallist, Men's Ski Mountaineering Sprint (Italian Language).

"I was super excited as I won my first Olympic Games, here in Switzerland. The competitors were so strong and it was really exciting."

01:15 Shots from the medal ceremony for the Men's Ski Mountaineering Sprint

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For more information, please contact the IOC Media Relations Team: Tel: +41 21 621 6000, email: pressoffice@olympic.org, or visit our web site at www.olympic.org.

