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ISRAELI SKELETON ATHLETE

OLYMPIC HOPEFUL | BEIJING 2022



My goal is to become the first female to qualify Israel for a Winter Olympic games in skeleton. Join me this 2020/21 season as I prepare to target Beijing 2022.

B | O

In October 2018, I began my journey with Bobsleigh Skeleton Israel (BSI) competing on the Europa Cup circuit. Little did I expect that four months later, I would be the first-ever female skeleton athlete to cross the finish line for Israel at a World Championships race. Taking on the fastest and one of the most notoriously technical tracks in the world in Whistler, Canada, whilst coinciding with International Women's Day 2019, is something that will stay with me forever. In 2019 I won a gold medal at the Alberta Cup race in Whistler and received an Inspirational Performance Award at the Cambridge United Community Awards.

I'm originally from Cambridge UK. I grew up in a tiny village outside of Cambridge with a love for horses and to a Jewish family - my last name is Cohen, which gives it away a little bit and we are members of the lovely Beth Shalom community. I studied languages at the University of Sheffield where I took up boxing. In my final year, I was the ladies boxing captain, where we grew the most female members out of all the clubs that year. A few years later I worked at Cambridge Judge Business School as Online Communications Officer and as the skeleton grew and grew, I made Aliyah and am now based out of Tel Aviv, Israel and Cambridge, UK in summer and travelling globally to where the ice takes me throughout the winter season.



SKELETON

Skeleton bobsleigh is an adrenaline-fuelled sport where the athlete runs as fast as they can and jumps on a sled, sliding headfirst down an icy track with no brakes wearing little but a helmet and lycra, with the aim of guiding the sled down as fast and smoothly as possible, reaching speeds up to 85mph.

I am often asked, how did you get into skeleton? I can promise that it's a fun and important part of the story. If it wasn't for the amazing experiences I had at the beginning, I wouldn't be zooming headfirst representing Israel on the international circuit today. My dad took up bobsleigh at the age of 50(!) I went along to watch in Norway and a couple of years later I was invited to go headfirst down the icy track for myself.

The first time I got on a sled was in 2014 during a week's ice camp in Igls, Austria with the Royal Navy Skeleton team. I fell in love with the sport - the speed, adrenaline and camaraderie within the team was what ignited my passion from the start. I was invited back after Austria to train a few weeks at a time, which took me to different tracks in France, Germany and Norway. I used my annual leave and self-financed to train on ice and started sprint training at the local club in Cambridge. As I improved, I invested more in myself and my equipment. I was shown a lot of kindness along the way from the forces team and friends on the skeleton circuit teams who, for example gave me their old race suits or shared track time. Over the next three seasons my motivation for skeleton grew further and I was introduced to Bobsleigh Skeleton Israel. It's been a whirlwind so far, and we're just halfway there!





2020/21 SEASON

For my third season with BSI, the goal is to continue on this exciting upward trajectory and work toward positioning myself well at the end of this pre-Olympic year, to maximise the chances of Olympic qualification in January 2022.

The International committee is keen for the season to go ahead as planned. If this is the case, I will be selecting a minimum of eight races across the Intercontinental Cup, as well as the North American Cup and European Cup circuits. At the end of the season, we will have our only opportunity to experience the Beijing 2022 Olympic track, as they open their doors for a one-off international training period before the big event.

FINANCE

As athletes from small nations such as Israel, we need to identify and manage our own resources including equipment and coaching. I have built the right resources and performance team around me that will take me over the second half of this quad and my biggest objective is to achieve the total finance for this. Reaching my sponsorship goal will also fund the necessities such as access to training facilities, travel, kit, medical and equipment. I have been mostly self-funded throughout my journey and last season I worked part-time remotely.

Partnerships and donations go directly towards my season costs, and in the USA and Israel are tax-deductible, benefiting the Israel Bobsled and Skeleton Federation, a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit. [Click here to learn more about sponsorship](#) OR [make a personal donation](#).



LEGACY

I grew up an avid horse rider with my mother, so sports have always been a big part of my family life. My father introduced me to the ice around the age of 20, and I was 24 when I took part in my first ice camp, the year Lizzy Yarnold won her first Gold medal in Sochi 2014.

There is an interesting story about my grandfather on my dad's side, Maurice Cohen. Born in India to a family of Jews originating from Baghdad, he represented the Indian national Water Polo team and they were headed for the Berlin Olympics in 1936. He was not allowed to compete because it was deemed too dangerous for him to enter Hitler's Germany as a Jew.



He contested the decision, but in the end, was made to stay behind for his safety in India whilst his teammates competed in Berlin.

He did, however, compete in the Maccabiah Games, where he captained India in hockey. As you can see, there's a little bit of legacy at play here.



LOCKDOWN. TRAIN ON.



The coronavirus pandemic has changed life as we know it (however temporary). Luckily for winter athletes, last season was unaffected, but training ahead of the 2020/21 season beginning in October looks very different than planned. I have been working closely with my physical performance coaches to work toward the best outcome to prepare for the next season. Watch the video to see how we're facing up to the challenge!

 **Click here to watch Lockdown. Train on.**

