

Skimiles

From length of runs to Skimiles - the concept of rating the size



Advertisers love simple messages. The length of runs is almost perfect: a single, undisputedly meaningful number in a unit, which everyone uses continuously. The Skimiles, on the other hand, include ten values, some in dimensions that are more difficult to comprehend. Sounds complicated, so here you will find an overview and explanation of the [potential criteria for measuring the size of a ski area](#). There are also ten disciplines in track and field. In the decathlon, the single performances are evaluated with points and the sum of the points decides who may call himself the greatest of all athletes. Those who can only run fast will lose at the end.

In order to determine which disciplines are particularly important for the size of a ski area, we did the obvious thing: asking skiers. The participants assessed the importance of the different factors regarding the perceived size of a ski area, distributing a total of 100 points ([participate in the survey](#)).

They could assign them completely to one criterion or distribute them arbitrarily to different criteria. The most important criterion is the length of the runs (including ski routes) with 33.2 percent, followed by the skiable area with 14.1 percent, the vertical drop, the number of peaks and mountain flanks with 12.5 or 11.7 percent, the boundary area with 8.5 percent, the longest run with 7.7 percent, the extent with 7.4 percent and the length of the catwalks with 5 percent.

Before being able to determine the result of this decathlon with these values, the dimensions must be reduced to a common denominator, just like 70 metres in javelin throw and 2.00 metres in high jump. As with the decathlon scoring table, this can be achieved using the world record performances. This is for example 455 kilometres for the length of the runs (without catwalks) and 116 square kilometres for the boundary area. In the decathlon, a maximum of 1,200 points can be achieved per discipline, for determining the size of the ski area 600 points are set (why is explained below). The following table shows the result for the Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang with Fieberbrunn.

Criterion	Value Skircircus Saalbach	World record	Max. points for value...	Saalba reache	
1	Pistes & Parks	213 km	455 km	400 km	58.5%
2	Ski routes	21 km			
3	Catwalks	36 km	68 km	60 km	60.0%
4	Skiable area	1.010 ha	1.832 ha	1.800 ha	56.1%
5	Boundary area	55,8 km ²	116 km ²	100 km ²	55.8%
6	Extent	18,8 km	28,4 km	25 km	75.2%
7	Vertical drop	1.225 m	2.435 m	2.200 m	55.7%
8	Longest run	8,3 km	17,0 km	15,0 km	55.3%
9	Peaks	15	30	75	54.7%
10	Mountain sides	26	51		
Size of the ski area					58.2

The largest ski area in the world, the french Trois Vallées, scores 609 points according to this scheme. This corresponds approximately with the length of 600 kilometres of runs that the three-valley ski area currently claims. The calculated score is therefore close to the familiar value of the length of runs. This makes sense, because it makes the calculated value more tangible. Calibrating with 600 points ensures that the results remain in familiar spheres. In order for this to apply to terminology as well, however, it should be left to the decathletes to measure themselves in points. Instead, the result of the size calculation is called Skimiles. After all, miles already exist in various forms: as english, geographical, or nautical miles.

In order to calculate the Skimiles, the ten relevant values for a particular ski area must be recorded. This data acquisition is carried out regularly by Montenius Consult as a basis for the annual report "[The list of the world's 100 largest ski areas](#)". This also includes the digitalisation of runs in all major ski resorts around the world to [determine the length of the runs](#). Therefore, the required data is already fully available - with one exception: the skiable area. This data is still being collected. Due to the complexity of the issue, this data acquisition involves a great amount of effort. A more detailed explanation can be found [here](#). For numerous ski resorts, however, the value of the skiable area is already available and the Skimiles could be determined exactly.

While there are hardly any changes in the rankings for some ski areas, others are climbing in the Skimiles ranking. For example, the Zillertal-Arena almost exactly achieves the rank it would have achieved with the 166 kilometres of pistes it once reported. Thanks to its large boundary area and vertical drop, Sölden reaches the level it occupies with the currently communicated kilometres of pistes (which, however, are calculated on the basis of the area and do not have much in common with the actual length, as does Kronplatz which scores with a large skiable area). Engelberg, which offers a very large vertical drop, also jumps in the Skimiles ranking to the position it would have taken with its incorrectly communicated 82 kilometres of pistes. Vail does well thanks to its vast expanse, while Kitzbühel loses some ranks due to its numerous catwalks.

Ski area	Length of runs communicated (current or maximum in the past)	Rank worldwide km communicated	Length of runs measured	Rank worldwide km measured	Skimiles	Rank worldwide Skimiles
Les Trois Vallées	600 km	1.	543 km	1.	609	1.
Zillertal-Arena	132 km (166 km)	48. (25.)	129 km	48.	246	28.
Kitzbühel (main area)	193 km	17.	193 km	17.	270	19.
Hochzillertal-Hochfügen	85 km (181 km)	91. (20.)	85 km	91.	180	60.
Sölden	143 km	36.	100 km	68.	215	40.
Kronplatz	116 km	55.	80 km	97.	171	68.
Monterosaski	180 km	21.	80 km	100.	204	46.
Espace San Bernardo	152 km	35.	152 km	35.	249	26.
Garmisch-Classic	40 km	263.	40 km	263.	121	150.
Corvatsch-Furtschellas	120 km	51.	43 km	241.	128	141.
Engelberg	82 km	94.	38 km	293.	159	85.
Vail	234 km	14.	234 km	14.	320	12.

Conclusion: The Skimiles provide plausible results regarding the perceived ski area size. Of course,

there are also specialists among skiers as well as among track and field athletes. In this case, the weighting of the individual size criteria is different from the average of our survey.