

More Than a Century of Sporting Achievement

The Journey Began on Skis

Kaustinen's sporting tradition began as early as 1898, when the community's first skiing competition was held at Köyhäjoki. Sporting activities were initially organised through local youth associations, but enthusiasm quickly spread.

In 1914, the sports club **Kaustisen Pohjan-Veikot** was founded. Its driving force was runner Oiva Käsälä, who wanted to unite Kaustinen's athletes under a club of their own. He believed that sport "prevents illness and builds strength". Inspiration also came from the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm.

The 'Black Trousers' and the Olympic Torch

During the 1930s, the runners of Pohjan-Veikot became known throughout Finland as **Mustahousut**, the 'Black Trousers'. The most successful among them was Paavo Jokivirta from the village of Viiperi.

In the summer of 1952, the Olympic torch for the Helsinki Games passed through Kaustinen. Dozens of local residents took part in the relay, while thousands gathered to witness the historic occasion.

The Golden Years of Sport

During the 1960s, sport in Kaustinen entered a new golden era. Sprinter Timo-Jaakko Virkkala represented Finland in ten international matches and won the 200 metres in the Finland–Sweden international athletics match in 1964.

The ski jump, completed in 1963, established Kaustinen as a renowned competition venue. For decades, its sporting events attracted Olympic champions and international stars. The hill record of 54.5 metres was set by Matti Nykänen in 1984.

From Kaustinen to the World Stage

Orienteer Matti Kattilakoski is one of Kaustinen's most successful athletes of all time. His achievements include a World Masters Championship title, 35 Finnish Championship medals and more than 40 appearances in the Jukola Relay.

Speed skier Mira Saarikettu reached the pinnacle of her sport by winning the Speed Skiing World Cup and its Crystal Globe in 1992 and 1993. She achieved a remarkable top speed of 213.904 km/h. Her international career began on the slopes of Puhkionkallio in Kaustinen.

The Tradition Continues

In 2029, Kaustinen will write a new chapter in its sporting history when the Jukola Relay is held in Central Ostrobothnia for the first time, organised in cooperation with neighbouring sports clubs. The event centre will be built in the village of Järvelä, where thousands of orienteers will gather to experience Kaustinen's sporting spirit.

Caption: Tuomas Tastula hands the Olympic torch to Esko Kaustinen at Huntus. Also present are Simo Nikula and Väinö Varila. Hannu Paavola and Sauli Isokangas set off as Esko's escort runners. Risto Viiperi and Sauli Peltoniemi follow the relay on their bicycles.

Caption: Paavo Jokivirta of Kaustisen Pohjan-Veikot competing against the legendary runner Paavo Nurmi at the Ähtävä athletics meeting in 1934.

Caption: Timo-Jaakko Virkkala celebrates Finland's victory in the Finland–Sweden International Athletics Match, 1964.

Photo: Lehtikuva.

Caption: Mira Saarikettu at full speed in the French Alps. On display in the exhibition are Mira's skis and helmet.