

Here's The Real Story Of The 'Cool Runnings' Bobsled Team That The Movie Got Wrong

"Cool Runnings" is one of the most popular Olympics movies of the past few decades, [and it's mostly made up](#). It's based on a true story, but a member of the unlikely Jamaican bobsled team that inspired the popular Disney film says it's largely fiction.

Dudley "Tal" Stokes, who was on the 1988 Olympic team that inspired "Cool Runnings," [took to Reddit](#) in October to set the record straight about what the movie got wrong. "It's a feature Disney film, not much in it actually happened in real life," Stokes said on Reddit.

"Cool Runnings" has a cast of fictional characters who don't bear much resemblance to the real-life Jamaican bobsledders. The Jamaican bobsled team that competed at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada was not composed of track sprinters, as the movie might lead you to believe. The team members were actually recruited from the Jamaican army. The movie also depicts the Jamaican bobsledders as outcasts, but in real life they were welcomed warmly at the 1988 Olympics, [as ESPN points out](#).

Here's the rest of the real story of how Jamaicans learned to bobsled — a sport that athletes from the country [will still compete in this winter Olympics](#):

It all started when two American businessmen living in Jamaica were inspired by a local pushcart derby, [according to](#) the Jamaican Bobsleigh Federation. The men, George Fitch and William Maloney, thought the sport looked like bobsledding. They took their idea for a Jamaica bobsled team to the country's Olympic association.

Stokes said he got into bobsledding because a colonel in the Army told him to. From the [Reddit AMA](#):

I got into bobsledding because I was told to go. I was in the Army at the time. The Colonel made the suggestion to me and because I was a Captain, you do as your told and obey orders.

There were two Americans, George Finch and William Maloney who were big into push cart racing and thought it translated well to bobsledding. You mix that with the Jamaican athleticism and they thought it could work with some of our track athletes.

They couldn't get anyone to actually do the sport, so they went to the Army and my Colonel.

So that's how I became involved in it. Once there, I was hooked.

Coaches who were recruited from the U.S. and Austria helped teach the team how to bobsled. They trained in Austria and Lake Placid, N.Y.

Stokes had very little training before the Olympics. He said he saw a bobsled for the first time in September 1987, and by February, he was competing in the Winter Olympics.

The team was immensely popular at the Olympics. The bobsledders couldn't leave Olympic Village for fear of getting mobbed, according to the Jamaican Bobsleigh Federation, and they got a lot of attention from the American media.

It wasn't easy for the team to compete. They were using borrowed equipment, and one of their teammates got injured during training. On the team's first run during the four-man event, part of Stokes' sled collapsed. On the second day, he fell and injured his shoulder.

They got a fast start that day, but Stokes lost control of the sled at 85 miles per hour and crashed, [according to](#) The Guardian. The teammates were trapped underneath the sled.

Unlike the inspirational scene in "Cool Runnings," the team did not lift the sled over their heads to carry it across the finish line. One of the teammates, Devon Harris, told The Guardian they "did what any team would have done" and pushed the sled to the end of the track before lifting it.

A popular quote from the movie — "Feel the Rhythm, feel the rhyme, get on up, it's bobsled time!" — was also made up for the movie, according to Stokes.

Jamaica's two-man bobsled team [will compete in the Winter Olympics](#) this year at Sochi.

Reading taken from The Business Insider by Pamela Engel