



For Immediate Release

Canadian Birkie opens registration for 640 cross country skiers this Friday

Birkie takes place February 12 – 15, 2021

Edmonton, November 23, 2020 - The Canadian Birkebeiner Society is opening registration for the 31st Canadian Birkie at **Noon on Friday, Nov. 27**. Despite the pandemic, the Society is determined to offer cross country skiers a safe event. But it will look far different from previous Birkies.

The Society is putting COVID-19 protocols in place to ensure the Birkie will be as safe as possible for its participants and volunteers. The ski event has been extended to four days, with only the longer loppet courses being offered on looped trails at Cooking Lake Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area. There will be just 640 spots available over the four days. A nice perk is that the Society offers a no-risk registration. The non-profit organization will transfer all registered skiers to the 2022 event in case the Canadian Birkie 2021 has to be cancelled due to stricter COVID-19 measurements. There is also a Secure Your Spot Insurance available for purchase if event is cancelled due to poor snow conditions or extreme weather.

“We are pleased to open registration this week,” said Dave Cooper, President of the Society. “Our board faced quite a challenge to design an event that would be permitted under current Stage 2 Alberta Health Service protocols. We feel very lucky that we can still offer 640 skiers in Alberta the opportunity to register for our loppet. Some cross-country ski events have been cancelled this year, yet the popularity of the sport seems to have increased.”

The Canadian Birkie 2021 will be held at the Cooking Lake – Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area. The course is redesigned to form one-way loops with different start/finish areas. On February 12, 13, and 14 a total of 160 participants per day will have the opportunity to ski the Birkie flagship 55 km with pack and 55 km lite from the Islet Lake Staging Area, and the 31 km Imperial Oil Birkie Tour from the Waskahegan Staging Area. On Monday, February 15, a total of 160 skiers can ski in the 13km at either the morning or afternoon start from Waskahegan. Only registered skiers for their specific timed event will be permitted at the staging sites. There will be no bus shuttles or changing facilities.

Due to the limited availability, Canadian Birkebeiner Society asks skiers to register as soon as registration comes online at Noon on Friday, Nov. 27. For more details, please visit <https://canadianbirkie.com/> and follow us on social media ([Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#)).

Canadian Birkebeiner Society

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About the Canadian Birkebeiner Society:

Since 1985, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society has organized Canada's largest classic, cross-country ski festival held on the second weekend of February. As well, the non-profit society aims to involve participants of all ages in cross-country skiing, promoting an active and healthy winter lifestyle.

In addition to the Canadian Birkie Ski Festival, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society organizes ski training and other ski events to allow people to enjoy cross-country skiing in a friendly and fun atmosphere. The Barnebirkie family ski at Silver Skate in Hawrelak Park registration opens in January.

The Canadian Birkie Ski Festival allows participants to relive the Birkebeiner legend of how two Birkebeiner warriors rescued the future Norwegian Crown Prince by skiing him to safety in the middle of winter. In the longest race of the Canadian Birkie, skiers still carry a 5.5-kilogram weight that symbolizes the Crown Prince Haakon Haakonsson.

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