



New brutal forecast too low for Birkie 2019

For Immediate Release: February 5, 2019, 3:15 pm

Based on yesterday's forecast, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society (CBS) modified plans to create a cold but feasible event. Today the latest long-range weather forecasts from our various sources now agree that Saturday temperatures in the Elk Island National Park area will not crest above our -25C cutoff. We suspect that these will be much lower at our Morning long distance ski event start times.

To say we are all disappointed would be an understatement, we are crushed. This is only our sixth cancellation in the 35 years since Canadian Birkie Ski Festival began in 1985. The decision to run the race is decided with input from the CBS Board, Jury, Alberta Parks and other stakeholders. The CBS has a set of policies in place that dictate how to run the event safely, this includes a Cold Weather Policy. Our race is also sanctioned by Cross Country Alberta and Cross Country Canada. This year the snow is fabulous, but the powerful Arctic high pressure area has us in its grasp and won't begin to release until next week.

To the over 1,000 registered skiers and over 500 volunteers, we can only say Mother Nature is dealing us a hand that we can't beat. While we have a firm no refund policy because of our ongoing expenses, many of our skiers took advantage of our new early signup and event guarantee policy, Secure your Spot. These folks who signed up before November 30, 2018 will be entered in their same ski event at no additional cost for the 2020 Canadian Birkie Ski Festival. Our Vikings' Feast is still a go this Saturday evening, while Opening Ceremonies and Nordic Fair on Friday is cancelled.

The decision for our non-profit society to cancel has been long and difficult. We explored every option to keep our skiers and volunteers safe, including shorter trails, more staff on the trails, later start times and additional information about recognizing frostbite and hypothermia. But with the balance – and temperatures – tipping into the truly dangerous zone, the only decision is to cancel the adult ski events. The kids ski events, Ole's Tour and Barnebirkie, are postponed to Sunday, February 17, 2019 at William Hawrelak Park in Edmonton. See details at www.canadianbirkie.com/birkie-sunday/.

Thank you all – skiers, volunteers and sponsors – for helping us this year and all through our exciting and challenging history. We will be back in 2020. And for skiers who did not obtain the Secure Your Spot guarantee, we invite you to ski one of two remaining Full Moon Birkie moonlight ski events as our guest. Please pre-register for free with the Birkie office. All details at www.canadianbirkie.com.

Canadian Birkebeiner Society

#103, 9920 - 63 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 0G9 | Ph: (780) 430-7153 ski@canadianbirkie.com | canadianbirkie.com