



30th Canadian Birkie Ski Festival attracts skiers from around the world

Canadian Birkie takes place February 7 – 9, 2020

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The Canadian Birkebeiner Society is anticipating some great weather for the upcoming 30th Canadian Birkie Ski Festival from Friday, February 7th through Sunday, February 9th. Volunteers and staff have been working hard to maintain the tracks, which are in excellent shape, to ensure a wonderful experience for all racers.

Birkie Saturday (February 8th) will be held at Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area and the Ukraine Cultural Heritage Village. The day features the flagship race, the 55 kilometre Torskeklubben Birkebeiner, where skiers carry a 5.5 kilogram pack on their backs. The pack represents the legendary story of Birkebeiner warriors who carried a future Norwegian Crown Prince to safety in the middle of winter. Among the other popular races are the 31 kilometre Birkie Tour and the 13 kilometre Global Edmonton Mini Birkie.

Participants have registered from all across Canada, including seven provinces and two territories, and also worldwide, including the United States and Europe (check out an interactive map of participants here - <https://goo.gl/maps/ffooSGg9LyaDyNBE6>). The oldest competitor registered is 95, while our youngest racer is just five years old.

“It is great to see the Birkie and cross-country skiing so well supported within Alberta, Canada and across borders,” said Jim Black, President of the Canadian Birkebeiner Society. “Looking at the current conditions, this is going to be one of our better Birkie years.”

Skiers can register for Birkie Saturday until Wednesday, February 5th at noon. There are discounts available for racers who sign up prior to Friday, January 31st. The Canadian Birkebeiner Society has worked in partnership with Alberta Parks since 1988 and with the Ukraine Cultural Heritage Village since 1992.

Birkie Sunday (February 9th) is held at Hawrelak Park in partnership with the Silver Skate Festival, and is aimed at family fun. In addition to ski events, there will be a Viking costume contest, giant ski challenges, a photo booth, awards and prizes. Ski equipment will be free to rent, and available from Grade 3 to adult sizes.

“Birkie Sunday is where Birkie dreams begin,” said Roberta Hyland, Birkie Sunday Director. “It’s a family fun cross-country ski event celebrating winter, cross-country skiing and the Birkie Legend.”

Final online registration for Birkie Sunday is Wednesday, February 5th at noon. There will also be registration at the Nordic Fair and on site. Kids ski free when registered with a parent until Friday, January 31st.

The Canadian Birkie Ski Festival aims to promote cross-country skiing for all ages and abilities. Until January 31st, participants can take advantage of special registration pricing and kids can even participate for free. For more information about the event, please visit <https://canadianbirkie.com/>, or follow us on social media ([@canadianbirkie](#) on Twitter and [Instagram](#), and on [Facebook](#)).

Media Contacts, Canadian Birkebeiner Society:

Jim Black, President: 780-914-3956 | nelabjs@telusplanet.net

Delianne Meenhorst, Marketing Director: 587-986-7832 | dmeenhorst@yahoo.com
Marion Hinteregger, Coordinator: 780-686-0506 | coordinator@canadianbirkie.com

Pictures are available on request via: coordinator@canadianbirkie.com. If you would like to attend and experience the event yourself, please contact our Coordinator, Marion Hinteregger, for further information.

About the Canadian Birkebeiner Society:

Since 1985, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society organises Canada's largest classic cross-country ski festival held on the second weekend of February each year: The Canadian Birkie. Along with organising the Canadian Birkie, the non-profit aims to involve participants of all ages in cross-country skiing, promoting an active and healthy winter lifestyle. Birkie Saturday offers race events with short and long distances, starting with the two or four kilometre Birkie Ole's Tour for younger skiers to the 55 kilometre Torskeklubben Birkebeiner for the more advanced skier. Birkie Sunday aims to promote cross-country skiing for families and offers Barnebirkie Ski Events to get children familiar with the sport and show the benefits of cross-country skiing for families.

In addition to the Canadian Birkie Ski Festival, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society organizes ski training and Full Moon Birkies to allow people to enjoy cross-country skiing in a friendly and fun atmosphere.

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 symbolises the Crown Prince Haakon Haakonsson.

Canadian Birkebeiner Society

7240 – 82 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, Canada, T6B 0G1 | Ph: (780) 430-7153 ski@canadianbirkie.com | canadianbirkie.com