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Excitement is building about the Canadian Birkie 2022: **Birkiefever**

Canadian Birkie in-person cross country ski loppet starts February 12th, 9am

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For immediate release

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Edmonton, February 9, 2022 – Excitement is building as new and returning skiers look forward to Saturday February 12 in-person events at the Canadian Birkie Ski Festival. Final busy days of course preparations are under way at Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area where these events occur. **Wednesday noon** is the last day to register for the Birkie in-person events. More than 1,000 skiers were registered on Wednesday morning. Registration of the Virtual Canadian Birkie closes February 28th.

“It’s a real pleasure to welcome people back,” says Dave Cooper, President Canadian Birkebeiner Society. “We’ve worked hard to make the event compliant with COVID regulations and are introducing a new enhanced safety program for injured skiers.

“The Canadian Birkebeiner Society takes COVID safety very seriously,” says Cooper. All in-person loppet courses have been modified to minimize touch points and distance skiers along the course as much as possible. COVID pre-screening, social distancing and masking where this distance cannot be maintained will be in place. Double vaccination is required for all participants, with QR code screening under Alberta Restriction Exemption program. The event has been streamlined under COVID protocols and packaged food, Gatorade or water will replace previous arrangements. A handy checklist explains these modifications to participants at <https://canadianbirkie.com/program-guide/>

Under the new safety program, snowmobiles and toboggans will be crewed by wilderness experts who have the training and equipment to evacuate skiers to ambulance/transport access points along the 55 km and other routes. These measures are important for an event running through the rolling hills and valleys of the glacial terrain of the Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area.

As a result of the February 8 Alberta government announcement eliminating the Restricted Exemption Program, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society is finalizing what this means for its upcoming events. **Please check the website for any upcoming changes to our events. Public notifications will be provided for any changes.**

The timed events include the 55 km with pack Torseklubben Birkebeiner, the 55 km Birkie Lite, the 31 km Imperial Oil Birkie Tour beginning at the Ukrainian Village to Waskahegan Staging Area. The 13, 8, and 2/4 km in-person tours will take place in a circular loop starting and finishing at Waskahegan. Spectators can watch the finish line only safely from their home via this [livestream](#).

Family Ski Event for a New Generation of Birkebeiner Skiers

Children and their families are the focus of the Sunday, February 13 Barnebirkie classic-style cross country ski events, as part of the Silver Skate festival at Hawrelak Park.

“A new generation of Birkebeiner skiers and their families can enjoy winter fun with Klister the Jack Rabbit and Vikings in a safe, outdoor setting,” said Roberta Hyland.

Canadian Birkie COVID rules apply, including pre-screening, proof of vaccination, masking and social distancing. All participants are requested not to congregate. Due to the pandemic, there will be no mass start or winter activity games.

Kids ski free when registered with an adult. A finish line gift bag will include pre-packaged snacks and a hand-made birch wood medal. Participants can mail a photo of their Barnebirkie costume to president@canadianbirkie.com in the Viking Costume Contest. There is NO on-site registration at Hawrelak Park for the event, which runs from 11 am to 2:00 pm. For details about the Barnebirkie, go to <https://canadianbirkie.com/birkie-sunday/>

Let's Birkie – Virtually, Baby!

Those desiring a more distanced setting can join people from North America in the second Virtual Birkie from February 14 to 28, 2022. Participants can ski classic, skate ski, snowshoe, skate or skijor. Depending on where they live, some may choose to roller-ski, cycle, run or walk. Participants choose their day and Birkie distance of 2, 4, 8, 13, 31 or 55 kilometres; at your own place, at your own pace.

“Last year’s first ever Virtual Canadian Birkie was a huge success with 1,110 participants from nine countries. Together they travelled a total of 22,000 total kilometres -- halfway around the globe. We look forward to exceeding those numbers this year,” says Cooper.

Participants have an opportunity to win \$3100 in prizes in the Virtual Birkie Photo Contest, including a two-night Canadian Rockies ski getaway grand prize. Groups and organizations are encouraged to enlist their family, friends and organizations for the Most KM Group Award. For details, go to: <https://canadianbirkie.com/virtual-birkie/>

Participants can post their photos and tag them on Facebook @CdnBirkie, on Twitter @canadianbirkie and/or on Instagram @canadianbirkie. They can also join our Virtual Canadian Birkie Facebook Group We would love to hear specific information about the location, day, distance and any other details.

Full Moon Ski

Skiers looking for a scenic evening ski can participate in the Full Moon Birkie on Saturday, February 19 from 6:00 -10:00 pm at the Waskahegan Staging Area, Cooking Lake - Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area. The ski course extends from Waskahegan Staging Area to Meadow Shelter, a round trip of 12 km. Skiers can choose a shorter trip but must ski with a buddy. For details, go to <https://canadianbirkie.com/full-moon-birkie/>

Visit <https://canadianbirkie.com>, [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). On February 12th visit our livestream: <https://www.3sixty.live/en/channel/kdl-audio/c/canadian-birkie-ski-festival.1534>

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Pictures are available on request via: coordinator@canadianbirkie.com

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, the Canadian Birkebeiner Society organizes the Virtual Canadian Birkie, ski training and other ski events 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 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. In 2022 the Canadian Birkie will live stream the finish line.

The Virtual Canadian Birkie invites participants to take part in the Birkie at their chosen location between February 14th and February 28th. Registrants upload their distance and a photo of their event. The participants get a chance to then compare themselves with other Virtual Birkie skiers. Groups can take part in the "Most KM Skied" Award allowing people to set a group goal.



Canadian Birkie Ski Festival

Feb 11-28, 2022

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