



For Immediate Release

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Frankowski and Torchia Top the Podium in the 47th Slumberland American Birkebeiner Classic Race

Freshly Fallen Snow Greeted Skiers on Their Journey to the Finish Line

HAYWARD, WI (Feb. 28, 2021) – With fresh fallen snow covering the classic course on the American Birkebeiner Trail, the race was slow and challenging for skiers in the 47th Slumberland American Birkebeiner (Birkie) classic championship race. In this unique year, the annual Birkie ski race was completely modified from the traditional point to point race – traditionally American Birkebeiner Trailhead to downtown Hayward, WI - to a shortened, hilly, 43K looped course with the race starting and finishing at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead, Cable, WI. Cutting tracks through the ankle deep, freshly fallen snow were Rosie Frankowski, Anchorage, AK, and Ian Torchia, Rochester, MN, the first elite skiers to cross the finish line in Sunday's elite classic technique race.

From early in the race, Ian Torchia had a commanding lead over his fellow male elite competitors, finishing handily and leaving everything out on the racecourse. Torchia finished in 2:39.00, with Saturday's skate Champion, Johnny Hagenbuch, Ketchum, ID, taking a strong second place finish in 2:46:18. The third step on the podium went to Tyler Kornfield, Anchorage, AK, with a time of 2:47.08.

In the women's classic race, Rosie Frankowski led the pack of women competitors completing her race in 2:51.44. Saturday's skate champion, Alayna Sonnesyn, Plymouth, MN, was next across the line with a time of 2:52.42. Katie Feldman, Ketchum, ID, rounded out the podium with a time of 3:07:08. Sonnesyn is also the 2019 Slumberland American Birkebeiner skate champion – this is her third Birkie championship title.

2021 Slumberland American Birkebeiner Classic Race Championship Podiums

Men's 43K Classic Race

- 1 – Ian Torchia, Stratton Mountain School T-2 – Stratton Mountain, VT– 2:39:00.9
- 2 – Johnny Hagenbuch, Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation – Ketchum, ID – 2:46.18.0
- 3 – Tyler Kornfield, Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Center -- Anchorage, AK – 2:47:08.9

Women's 43K Classic Race

- 1 – Rosie Frankowski , Alaska Pacific University Nordic Ski Center – Anchorage, Ak – 2:51.44.0
- 2 - Alayna Sonnesyn, Stratton Mountain School – Stratton Mountain, VT 2:52.42.1
- 3 – Katie Feldman, Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation – Ketchum, ID – 3:07:08.4

The 2021 Slumberland American Birkebeiner and Kortelopet races were unlike any found in any other year with no international competition; no spectators; no busing; no indoor gathering or warm spaces, masking in the start/aid stations/finish zone; skiers needing to be self-reliant by transporting themselves to the start area, carrying their own energy needs and hydration vessels; social distancing in the start and finish areas; and an extensive list of safety protocols and measures in place for the safety of participants, volunteers, staff and the greater communities.

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Since the first American Birkebeiner ski race in 1973, over 250,000 skiers have completed American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF) cross-country ski races. While 2021 participant numbers were down from previous years, the ABSF offered both virtual and in-person race options to all registered participants. Fifty percent of skiers chose to ski in-person over the five-days of race week (February 24 – 28, 2021) with the remaining 50% opting to ski virtually from points around the globe. Virtual skiers must complete their events by Sunday, February 28, the end of Birkie race week. The ABSF worked with 48 Birkie Virtual Partner locations across the United States to provide a unique Birkie experience for skiers choosing not to travel to NW Wisconsin for Birkie week. Skiers in no-snow locations had the option of cycling, running, rowing, or swimming their way to their Birkie finish line.

Sunday's 26-kilometer Kortelopet race also followed a modified looped course starting and finishing at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead. The Kortelopet has a long legacy of elite skiers winning the race including Olympic gold medalist Jessie Diggins' who won the Kortelopet twice in the earlier days of her skiing career.

Kortelopet 26K Race –

- 1st Men's Classic – Kevin Johnson, Green Bay, WI – 1:50:25.3
- 2nd Men's Classic – Grant Rocheleau, Green Bay, WI – 1:53:11.3
- 3rd Men's Classic – James Mothersbaugh III, Boulder, CO – 1:54:18.6

- 1st Women's Classic – Kristina VanWilgen – Hammitt, Bemidji, MN – 2:19:54.7
- 2nd Women's Classic – Emily Whyte, Waunakee, WI – 2:27:13.0
- 3rd Women's Classic – Ela Paske, St. Paul, MN – 2:29:26.2

Recaps of the Slumberland American Birkebeiner skate and classic championship races may be viewed at www.Birkie.com. Registration for the 2022 Slumberland American Birkebeiner cross-country races opens on April 1, 2021 for those interested in joining the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation and on May 1, 2021 for all other skiers.

Next up is the Fat Bike Birkie on March 13, 2021 at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead in Cable, WI. The American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation has a year-round schedule of events to promote a healthy, active Birkie lifestyle. Visit www.Birkie.com for a complete listing of events.

About the American Birkebeiner® Ski Foundation and Birkie® Events

Located near Hayward and Cable, Wisconsin, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF), a 501(c)(3) organization, is known for its signature American Birkebeiner Ski Marathon held each February. Today, the Birkie has grown to encompass a variety of year-round, silent sport events that promote a healthy, active lifestyle for thousands of outdoor fitness enthusiasts. The ABSF also acts as steward of the legendary Birkie Trail, providing year-round grooming, mowing and maintenance to all 100+ kilometers. Learn more at www.birkie.com. BIRKIE *Ski. Run. Bike. Live!*

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