



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nancy Knutson
715-634-5025,
Nancy.Knutson@Birkie.com

47th Slumberland American Birkebeiner, Kortelopet & Prince Haakon 2021 Events Fast Approaching

Retooled Birkie Week 2021 Slated for February 24–28, 2021

Hayward, WI (February 15, 2021) – In just over a week, the 47th Slumberland American Birkebeiner (Birkie), Kortelopet, and Prince Haakon events will begin in Cable, WI. After months of planning, and with the guidance of health and medical professionals, and the Birkie medical director, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF) has completely retooled Birkie week to provide a safe experience for participants, volunteers, staff, and local communities. For nearly a year, the ABSF team has been planning a revised Birkie with strict [safety protocols](#) in place for all.

While Birkie skiers normally ski from Cable, WI, through the north woods, over the American Birkebeiner International Bridge, amidst cowbells and cheering fans, as they make their way to the finish line on Hayward's Main Street, the 2021 Birkie will look completely differently. In order to provide the safest possible experience, the 2021 Birkie will not be finishing in downtown Hayward, WI, rather the races will follow a looped course starting and finishing at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead in Cable, WI. For safety purposes, the ABSF has removed all busing, indoor, and gathering spaces, and made the difficult decision to prohibit spectators at the start, finish, and on-course throughout Birkie week.

The Slumberland American Birkebeiner (43K), Kortelopet, (26K), and Prince Haakon (14K) races will each be slightly shorter than in past years and will be combined each day, yet races will be spread over five consecutive days, from February 24-28, 2021. To reduce congestion and provide more space for passing on the trails, race days have been divided by technique: Wednesday, February 24, Thursday, February 25, and Saturday, February 27, will be dedicated to the freestyle or skate technique; Friday, February 26, and Sunday, February 28, will be exclusively for classic technique skiers. Months ago, skiers pre-selected their race day and were assigned a wave based on their individual speed. Birkie champions will be crowned on Saturday, February 27, and Sunday, February 28, in each discipline, and from elite skiers participating those days only.

With the elimination of busing, skiers will be required to drive their own vehicles to the start area at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead, Cable, WI. Once parked, skiers will use their personal vehicles as their pre- and post-race warm space. Skiers will tune to 87.9 radio, a temporary FM Birkie station, where announcers will release skiers to walk to the start area at their pre-scheduled times. As they leave their vehicles, skiers will don their required face masks to be worn in the start, finish, and all aid station areas. Skiers will make their way to the start area and load immediately into the socially distanced start corral. Once their wave is officially underway, skiers have 10 minutes to depart the start corral, further allowing them to physically distance on the trails.

While hydration stations will be offered on course, skiers will need to be self-reliant in this year's events by carrying their own food /energy needs and their own hydration vessel. Hydration will be dispensed at free-flowing water stations and innovative NUUN hydration stations, where a ski pole placed on a foot pedal will dispense liquid into a skier's hydration vessel, hands-free.

-more-



Ski. Run. Bike. Live!

With no spectators allowed, the finish zone will instead be lined with [Birkie Fan Cutouts](#), purchased by Birkie skier supporters. All proceeds will support Birkie youth development programming. Once skiers cross the finish line, they'll be provided with to-go hydration and recovery energy to consume back in their vehicles; there will be no indoor, gathering, or warming tent spaces available in the finish zone.

Overall skier registration numbers are smaller than a typical year, with in-person events less than 50% capacity of a normal year and spread out over five days. The ABSF projects fewer than 4900 skiers will participate in-person over the five days of Birkie week. As of February 15, 2021, 38% of all registered skiers have chosen to participate virtually; this number continues to increase each day. [Kikkan Randall](#), Olympic and World Champion, will be completing her virtual Birkie race from Alaska, while 2020 Birkie Champion, [Jessica Yeaton](#), will be skiing her race in New Mexico.

Working with 42 [Birkie Virtual Venue](#) partners from coast to coast, the ABSF has developed a robust virtual race experience for those who will not be traveling to NW WI. At each of the virtual locations, Birkie, Kortelopet, and Prince Haakon skiers will experience a variety of on-course amenities ranging from groomed trails, to Birkie banners, racecourse signage, and more, varying by venue. In addition, for the first time ever, skiers in no-snow areas may roller-ski, run, cycle, swim, or row their way to their virtual Birkie finish line. Equivalent distances, in kilometers, have been calculated for those participating in alternate disciplines. Registered participants may complete their 2021 virtual race experience from February 20-28, 2021 and they are required to submit their results to secure race completion credit. In-person skiers may switch to the virtual experience until February 27, 2020.

Normally, Birkie week begins with a visit to the [Birkie Expo](#), home of bib pick-up. This year, the Birkie Expo is completely virtual with 50+ vendor booths participating in the Expo experience. The ABSF has mailed out over 5000 bib packets to skiers (in-person and virtual participants), the remaining packets will be available through a drive-up bib pick-up experience, located at Birkie Ridge during Birkie week. Upon arrival at drive-up bib pick-up, skiers will utilize the new Birkie app to coordinate delivery of their bib packets to their vehicles.

The [new Birkie app](#), available in the Apple app store and soon in the Google Play store, allows skiers to access their Birkie profile and event accomplishments, Birkie Trail maps, on-trail GPS tracking, trail conditions, event schedules, race guides, registration links, and Birkie Trail Pass purchases. Additionally, fans can download the free Birkie app and sign up for SMS/Text alerts allowing them to track their skier's on-course race progress. A variety of live-stream camera's will allow friends and family to watch for their skiers as they travel past the stationary cameras. Lastly, a tape-delayed broadcast of both Saturday (skate) and Sunday's (classic) championship races will be available immediately following the races. All links are available on [Birkie.com](#).

Unlike many sporting events that require significant road closures, Birkie races are held on the American Birkebeiner Trail through the north woods of Wisconsin, allowing the ABSF to spread events over as many days as needed to ensure physical distancing of participants, and not inconveniencing local residents with extended road closures.

The ABSF has safely and successfully held numerous events over the past months including the Lumberjack Run (July), Birkie Trail Run (Oct), Telemark Ascent (Oct), Seeley Hills Classic (Jan) and Birkie Tour (Jan). All future Birkie Week event updates and news will be posted on the Birkie Event Updates tile on [Birkie.com](#). Event plans are subject to change should public health mandates, guidelines or laws be amended.

About the American Birkebeiner® Ski Foundation and Birkie® Events

Located near Hayward and Cable, Wisconsin, the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, is known for its signature American Birkebeiner Ski Marathon held each February. Today, the Birkie brand has grown to encompass a year-round lifestyle that provides healthy, active events for thousands of outdoor fitness enthusiasts of all levels. Visit www.Birkie.com to learn more.

###