



## **Cold weather forces changes to the 30<sup>th</sup> Canadian Birkie**

For Immediate Release: February 4, 2019, 5:00 pm

The current deep freeze is now expected to continue through the weekend, and will mean some alterations to the normal Canadian Birkie event.

First of all, the start time for the long course events is going to be later. At present we are anticipating a start of 10 a.m. at the earliest, so follow us on our website and social media for updates.

And to avoid the risk of standing around on Goose Lake, the opening ceremonies will be held inside the Red Barn at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village. Then skiers will be free to head down to the lake, ski across the timing mat and begin their race.

There will be no wave start. The clothing truck will be in the parking area. There will be no structures on the frozen lake.

The 31 km course will be as advertised, with perhaps a small change. But the iconic 55 km course will be shortened to 40 km by avoiding Blackfoot and Islet loops. This is for safety reasons for both skiers and volunteers.

The kids' events (Ole's 2/4km) are cancelled and moved to Birkie Sunday in Edmonton, which is part of the Silver Skate Festival. That event has a backup date of the following Sunday, so expect all the kids' events to occur on Feb. 17 at Hawrelak Park.

All skiers will be able to TRANSFER to a shorter event of their choice without any additional administration fee. Please contact the office. We offer the 13 km event plus our new 4/8 km loop event. Both short courses start from the Festival area at Waskehegan.

Skiers are advised that taking part in this event at very cold temperatures requires some planning. While we have a lot of support on the trails, the decision to ski is personal. Please consult our "Cold Weather and the Birkie" information handout. And please feel free to choose a shorter event if you have any concerns. We all want to have a safe Birkie this year.

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