

What if the Canadian Birkie is cancelled?

Skiers sometimes ask us what would happen with their registration fees in the event that the Canadian Birkie is cancelled due to unfavourable weather or trail conditions. In our 26-year history, cancellation has happened only four times: 1987, 2001 and 2006 due to lack of snow; and 2008 due to extreme cold. Compared to non-winter events such as marathons, triathlons and bicycle races, our situation is unique.

The Canadian Birkie is always scheduled for the second Saturday in February. Due to financial commitments, conflicts with other loppets and races on the event calendar, and the schedules of rental equipment, suppliers and 600 volunteers, we aren't able to postpone our event to a later date. And, in the event of insufficient snow at our venue, it's historically not been practical to move the event to another venue.

The Canadian Birkie is a volunteer-run event, planned and operated by men and women from our community who willingly give of their time and talents, year after year. We think the spirit of our event is due to our volunteers, to our skiers, to our sponsors, and to our friends at Alberta Parks who work so hard to ensure we have a unique top-notch course. The Canadian Birkebeiner Society is a non-profit organization which is operated on a break-even basis, and our senior leaders take seriously the need to keep the event affordable for everyone. We have always encouraged our skiers to register well in advance of the event. This gives an "early-bird" discount to skiers and helps us to plan.

The expenses we incur in putting on your loppet are considerable and include: staffing, online registration, advertising, bib pick-up fair, electronic chip timing, food and beverages for the course and the finish line, security services, ambulances and rentals of numerous big-ticket items such as trailers, tents, bus and shuttle van fleet, tables and chairs, portable toilets and heating equipment. Most of this must be arranged for and committed weeks and even months in advance. This is not a commercial enterprise, we have no cancellation insurance policy, and the Society does not borrow money. *Accordingly, in the end, it is the skier who must bear some or even all of the risk of a cancellation.*

The Canadian Birkie is sanctioned by Cross Country Alberta and must be organized and operated in accordance with the rules and regulations of Cross Country Canada. The Competition Jury, established under CCC rules, makes the final determination as to whether the event will go ahead and if so, whether the course and/or distance will be modified. The Canadian Birkie will proceed only if weather and course conditions are considered to be safe for our participants and volunteers.

Where the event is cancelled for any reason, the circumstances will be carefully reviewed by the Board of Directors of the Society to determine the extent, if any, of financial relief to registrants. Such relief could be in the form of a partial credit toward registration the following year, taking into consideration the funds that have been expended or committed to. For example, if the event is cancelled two weeks before the scheduled date due to the absence of snow with little prospect of snow in the future, or due to a forecast of extreme cold, a relatively minor amount of money will have been committed to our suppliers. Where the event is cancelled two days before the scheduled date due to a forecast of extreme cold (as happened in 2008), a major portion of the event expenses will have already been incurred.

In its deliberations, the Board will take into consideration what is fair to our participants and what is appropriate to ensure the continuation of the Canadian Birkie in future years. The Board will make its determination as soon as possible following the cancellation and will make the announcement on the Canadian Birkie web site. While cancellations are relatively infrequent and result in great disappointment to everyone, we trust you will understand our policy and the fact that we cannot at this time make a precise

pronouncement as to exactly what can be done in the way of refunds or credits, were a cancellation to occur.

The above discussion is intended to be within the objective of paragraph 388.1.4, Refund Policy, of the *Cross Country Skiing Rules and Regulations*, September 2009, issued by Cross Country Canada.

Canadian Birkebeiner Society
Board of Directors
December 2010