



*For Immediate Release
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Let the World Trials Begin

Mayor Keith Hobbs and Canada's top young cross-country skiers officially launch event

Thunder Bay's city mayor Keith Hobbs, local race organizers, coaches, and athletes gathered today at the Prince Arthur Hotel to officially launch the Haywood Noram World Trials.

Over the next six days, more than 300 of Canada's top cross-country ski racers will be competing at the Lappe Nordic Ski Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Not only is it the Haywood Noram World Jr/U23 Trials and the World Senior Distance Trials, the event is also an Ontario Canada Winter Games Team Qualifier and an Ontario Cup Race.

"Local race organizers have been working very hard over the last few months to make this a great event," said Werner Schwar, Co-Chair of the local organizing committee. "Not only will it highlight some of the best ski racing in Canada, it will also be the first green ski event to be hosted in Thunder Bay and the second ever held in Canada."

Thunder Bay has a rich history of hosting cross-country ski events — with the largest Finnish-speaking population outside of Finland this comes as no surprise. In the last fifteen years, Thunder Bay has hosted the World Nordic Ski Championships (1995), the National Ski Championships (2000, 2006), the Noram/Continental Cup (1998, 2004), and every year it hosts the Sleeping Giant Loppet, an Ontario Cup, and the 24 Hour Relay (where several world records have been attempted). Within 30 minute of the city centre, there are over 50 kilometres of expertly groomed ski trails, and within an hour of the city the number jumps to 100.

But the Thunder Bay ski community has done more than just host events and build world class trails; it also develops athletes. Thunder Bay currently has five nationally recognized ski clubs, two of which offer "full-service" race programs: Big Thunder and Lappe Nordic. Full-service means that the club offers development programs from a very young age through to

senior age athletes and beyond. Thunder Bay is also home to one of Canada's National Development Centers (NDC), which provides elite cross-country skiers with intensive training and competition programs. These talented athletes serve as role models to younger athletes in the community and across Canada.

Mike Somppi, one of NDC's top athletes, says that being from Thunder Bay gives him hometown advantage and he looks forward to racing this week. "I want to thank all those who have made this event possible. From the local artisan gift prizes to making it green, I have no doubt that it will be one of the best races ever. I encourage all of Thunder Bay to come out to watch some incredible ski racing and to enjoy some of the best Finish Pancakes in the area."

The event is a joint venture between Big Thunder Nordic Ski Club and the Lappe Nordic Ski Club. For a full race schedule and for more information about the event visit the event website at www.skinoram2011.com or email us at worldtrials2011@gmail.com

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