



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BIRKIETOUR WELCOMES ELITE ATHLETES AND WORLDLOPPET MASTER to 2017 EVENT**

***Greggs to Ski the BirkieTour; Larson to Receive 30<sup>th</sup> Worldloppet Master Title***

**Hayward, WI (January 11, 2017)** — The American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation has announced that Caitlin and Brian Gregg, along with Hannes Larsson, Worldloppet Master, will be participating in the 2017 BirkieTour event in Cable, Wisconsin on Sunday, January 15, 2017. The 2017 Birkie Tour will be the inaugural ABSF event at the new American Birkebeiner Trailhead, the new home of the permanent Birkie starting line. The BirkieTour is an untimed, casual, "open-track" style event to be held on a loop course with distances up to 47 km.

Caitlin and Brian Gregg, Birkie ambassadors, will be found on the trail in their distinctive yellow bibs skiing with BirkieTour participants and also found après ski in the Great Hall. Caitlin Compton Gregg is a 4X American Birkebeiner champion - the only skier to hold that honor, the 2017 Women's 10K Freestyle Individual Start National Champion, a former Olympian and US Ski Team member. Brian Gregg is a former Olympian, National Champion, and US Ski Team member. The Gregg's reside in Minneapolis, MN.

Sunday, January 15, 2017 will be a momentous day for Hannes Larsson, 84, of Paris, France. Larsson a 29X Worldloppet Master will be completing his 30<sup>th</sup> Worldloppet Master title at the 2017 BirkieTour. To earn a Worldloppet Master title, a skier must complete 10 Worldloppet qualifying events or races. By completing his 30<sup>th</sup> Worldloppet Master series, Larsson will have skied 300 Worldloppet associated races or events. An engineer by trade, Hannes will celebrate his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 13. Originally from Finland, Larsson has participated in dozens of races on several continents and has written a book "Cross-country Skiing Around the World". A brief ceremony will be held in celebration of Larsson's remarkable achievement. To kick-off the day, both the USA and French national anthems will be played. At noon, Worldloppet Masters, Carol Duffy (No.1 Worldloppet Master) and Tom Duffy (No. 3 Worldloppet Master) will present Hannes Larson with his Master Medal. Ben Popp, ABSF Executive Director, will stamp Larsson's Worldloppet Passport commemorating his amazing accomplishment. The celebration will continue in the American Birkebeiner Trailhead Great Hall.

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With all of the excitement surrounding the BirkieTour, skiers are reminded that February races are fast-approaching. The BirkieTour is an ideal training opportunity for Birkie, Korte, and Prince Haakon skiers. BirkieTour skiers will start and finish at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead. With a morning start time window, short and long distance options - 47, 27, or 16 km., aid stations along the trail, and food and beverage at the start/finish, skiers can enjoy the day with friends on the legendary Birkie Trail. The Birkie Trail was recently named the No.1 cross-country ski destination in the nation by USA Today/10 Best. The snow-covered Birkie Trail is in great condition for upcoming events and races. In addition, Salomon, SWIX, Rossignol, Fischer, Pioneer Midwest, and GearWest will be on hand to demo the latest gear. Registration is still open for the BirkieTour at [www.Birkie.com](http://www.Birkie.com).

Proud sponsors of the BirkieTour event include: Carlson MD – presenting sponsor, the Cenex Corner Deli, New Moon Ski Shop, Hayward Coffee, GU, Nuun Hydration and Clif are the proud sponsors of the BirkieTour event.

The new [American Birkebeiner Trailhead](#) is located near Cable, Wisconsin. From Cable, take Randysek Road south to McNaught Road to the American Birkebeiner Trailhead.

### **About the American Birkebeiner® Ski Foundation**

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. From the iconic Birkie ski race to the Birkie Trail Run Festival, and Fat Bike Birkie race, the ABSF and the Birkie Trail attract skiers, runners, bikers, trekkers, and hikers, from casual day-trippers to elite superstars. *Birkie. Ski. Run. Bike. Live!* Visit [www.Birkie.com](http://www.Birkie.com) to learn more.

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