



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Bruce Slinkman

bruce.slinkman@northhomes.org or (218) 556-4902

The Minnesota Nordic Ski Association (MNSA) is honoring Neil King (Park Rapids) and Ben Croft (Carlton) as the 2025 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award recipients. They will be honored at the Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Awards banquet on Sunday, April 6 starting at 1:00 pm at the Mora Vasaloppet Nordic Center. The award is given annually to individuals who have contributed significantly, for many years, to the advancement of cross country skiing in the state of Minnesota.

Neil and Ben have both made very significant contributions, over the decades, to Minnesota Nordic skiing and are very deserving of this honor. Neil has been instrumental in the growth of the Itascatur Outdoor Activity Club in the Park Rapids area. Through his vision and efforts, the club has developed trails, secured grooming equipment, trail head facilities, and ski equipment for the club and community. Neil is also a groomer, a skilled ski instructor, a citizen ski racer, and fitness advocate. Ben has had numerous roles, in advancing the sport of Nordic skiing in Minnesota, particularly in the Duluth, Cloquet, and Giants Ridge areas. He has been a coach, trail developer, groomer, race organizer, race course crew member, Nordic ski patroller, citizen ski racer, waxing “guru”, and more!

Also recognized are 2025 Nordic skiers in the following categories: Minnesota Based Biathlon High Achievers (Annelise Baird, Eric Anderson), and Minnesota Master Skiers (Patti Harvieux, Adrian Watt). The final awards category is the Minnesota Community Ski Organization Award, presented to a ski organization that has made significant contributions to enhance Minnesota Nordic skiing. This year’s award goes to the North Star Ski Touring Club.

Claire Wilson, former Executive Director of the Loppet Foundation, will be the keynote speaker for the Lifetime Awards banquet. Claire will share about the 2024 COOP FIS Cross-County World Cup that was hosted by the Loppet Foundation and held at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis.

Award winners are noted below:

2025 Minnesota Nordic Skiing Lifetime Achievement Award

Neil King

Ben Croft

2025 Minnesota Based Biathlon High Achievers

Annelise Baird

Eric Anderson

2025 Minnesota Master Skiers

Patti Harvieux

Adrian Watt

2025 Minnesota Community Ski Organization Award

North Star Ski Touring Club

The awards ceremony will be held Sunday, April 6 at:

Mora Vasaloppet Nordic Center

401 Nordic Center Drive

Mora, MN 55051

The schedule is:

1:00 PM - Social Hour with refreshments

2:00 PM - Keynote Speech by Claire Wilson, former Loppet Executive Director, followed by awards presentations

The public is invited to attend the free banquet.

MNSA - P.O. Box 8114 • St. Paul, MN 55108 • www.mnnordicski.org