



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2021 Birkie Trail Run Festival**

### **Nearly 1,000 Athletes Took Part in Annual Trail Run Festival**

**Hayward, WI (September 25, 2021)** – A crisp autumn morning shaped up for ideal conditions as runners and trekkers took to the hills for the annual Birkie Trail Run Festival, sponsored by Salomon. Over 950 runners and trekkers, from 33 states, took part in the day's events which included an ultramarathon, ultramarathon relay, marathon, marathon relay, half marathon, 5K, 9-mile Nordic trek, Dive for the Dirt obstacle course, and 1K fun run for kids.

Racers traversed the scenic, rolling hills of the Birkie Trail in addition to single-track sections of the CAMBA (Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association) trail system. The festival was rounded out with Earth Rider craft beer, a vendor fair, and food from Northern Lakes Co-Op.

Events started early Saturday morning with the ultramarathon participants taking off by headlamp at 5:30 am. Remaining racers took off at intervals throughout the morning, with the 2021 USA Track & Field trail half marathon championship taking to the course at 9:15am. The top runners finished in just over one hour with Joseph Gray of Colorado Springs, CO leading the men's division with a time of 1:15:49.33. Bringing home the championship title in the women's division was Rachel Johnson of Lynchburg, VA with a time of 1:28:12.5.

Three-time Half Marathon Champ (2017, 2018 & 2021), Joseph Gray said, "the race was good, another fun day in Wisconsin!" Finishing was his favorite part of the race as it "was packed with people hanging out and cheering with plenty of energy."

Spectators were also very impressed with the sprint finish of the 5k between George Nelson, age 13 and Liam Langer, age 9. These two young men averaged a mile pace of 6:52 on the difficult off-road course.

"We're proud to host the Birkie Trail Run Festival. Interest in outdoor recreation is growing rapidly, and bringing more people to the Northwoods," said Executive Director Ben Popp. "It is a privilege to host some of the best distance running athletes in the country alongside our own impressive resident athletes of all ages here in Cable."

### **2021 Birkie Trail Run Festival Results**

#### **Birkie Trail Run Ultramarathon Champions – Men** (Sidas, USA – Presenting Sponsor)

1st Place – Samuel Dean, Colorado Springs, CO, 9:44:30

2nd Place – Alex Lietzan, Hayward, WI, 10:43:15

3rd Place – Bart Schreck, Myrtle Beach, SC, 15:05:41

#### **Birkie Trail Run Ultramarathon Champions – Women** (Sidas, USA – Presenting Sponsor)

1st Place – Amber Hardwig, Duluth, MN, 11:28:33

2nd Place – Erica Mitchell, Minneapolis, MN, 11:28:50

3rd Place – Suzie Brashler, Downers Grove, IL, 13:07:29

**BIRKIE**  
2021 **Trail Run  
Festival**

**Birkie Trail Run Ultramarathon Relay Team Results** – [bit.ly/BTRF21results](https://bit.ly/BTRF21results)

**Birkie Trail Run Marathon Champions – Men** (CARLSON MD – Presenting Sponsor)

1st Place – Evan Wetzel, Waukesha, WI, 3:16:58  
2nd Place – Michael McPherson, Ironwood, MI, 3:44:50  
3rd Place – Logan Baier, Duluth, MN, 3:48:38

**Birkie Trail Run Marathon Champions – Women** (CARLSON MD – Presenting Sponsor)

1st Place – Geneva Finn, Minneapolis, MN, 4:38:43  
2nd Place – Erin Mullan-Towns, Madison, WI, 4:49:23  
3rd Place – Anne Muller, Madison, WI, 4:49:23

**Birkie Trail Run Half Marathon Champions – Men** (Anderson's Maple Syrup – Presenting Sponsor)

1st Place – Joseph Gray, Colorado Springs, CO, 1:14:49  
2nd Place – Edward Owens, Larkspur, CA, 1:15:10  
3rd Place – Andy Wacker, Boulder, CO, 1:18:16

**Birkie Trail Run Half Marathon Champions – Women** (Anderson's Maple Syrup – Presenting Sponsor)

1st Place – Rachel Johnson, Lynchburg, VA, 1:28:12  
2nd Place – Stephanie Garcia, Phoenix, AZ, 1:30:21  
3rd Place – Kathryn Fluehr, Boulder, CO, 1:32:50

**Birkie Trail Run 5km – Men**

1st Place – George Nelson, Saint Paul, MN, 21:17.09  
2nd Place – L. Langer, Stillwater, MN, 21:18.15  
3rd Place – Per Nelson, Saint Paul, MN, 22:15.83

**Birkie Trail Run 5km – Women**

1st Place – Erin Schmitt, Sheboygan, WI, 22:20.89  
2nd Place – Alexa Myre, La Crosse, WI, 24:16.72  
3rd Place – Katherine Langer, Stillwater, MN, 24:54.12

Additional results for age-class and relay events are available at [bit.ly/BTRF21results](https://bit.ly/BTRF21results).

**Birkie Trail Run Sponsors:** The Birkie Trail Run Festival is sponsored by: Salomon – Title Sponsor Birkie Trail Run Festival; CARLSON MD – Presenting Sponsor Marathon; Earth Rider Brewery – Presenting Sponsor Marathon Relay and official beer of the birkie; Sidas, USA – Presenting Sponsor 100K Ultramarathon and Ultramarathon Relay; Northern Lakes Co-Op – Official post-race food of the Birkie; Hayward Area Memorial Hospital – Presenting Sponsor Dive for the Dirt and 1k Kids Fun Run; Anderson's Maple Syrup – Presenting Sponsor Half Marathon and Gold Circle Elite Sponsor; Leki Poles – Presenting sponsor Nordic trek; Kemps – Presenting sponsor 5k; GU – Official on-course energy; NUUN – Official hydration for all Birkie events; Backroads Coffee – Official coffee of the Birkie; Marketplace Foods.

**About the American Birkebeiner® Ski Foundation and Birkie® Events**

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. What started as a single race has grown into a year-round calendar of skiing, running, and biking events. Today, the Birkie brand inspires a healthy, active lifestyle for thousands of outdoor fitness enthusiasts of all levels. Visit [www.Birkie.com](https://www.Birkie.com) to learn more. ##