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**Gitchi Gami Games and US Ski & Snowboard Cross Country Super Tour Race to be held in Cable Dec. 10-12**  
*ABSF Snowmaking Enables Early Season, National-Level Cross Country Ski Racing*

**Hayward, WI (December 2, 2021) –**

The Gitchi Gami Games will be held Friday through Sunday, Dec. 10-12 at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead in Cable, WI. This three-day, elite racing event will be the second stop on the U.S. Ski and Snowboard National Nordic Foundation (NNF) SuperTour calendar and also includes the CXC Solomon Cup and CXC Youth Cup events. The American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation’s (ABSF) early season snowmaking provided an opportunity for skiers to ski on snow and host national-level races during the competitive ski season prelude to the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, providing these athletes an opportunity to make the Olympic Team.

The Gitchi Gami Games SuperTour, presented by the National Nordic Foundation, will attract teams of regional, national, and international athletes, including pro athletes from Alaska, Montana, Utah, Idaho and Vermont. The new Team Birkie will also be in attendance, which is a pro composite team of athletes from the Midwest. Several hundred athletes, support staff and spectators will attend the races in the coming days, bringing early season skiing and excitement to the Cable and Hayward area.

The Gitchi Gami Games are part of the CXC Salomon Cup and CXC Youth Cup event series for the 2021-2022 ski season. The Junior National Qualifying series is governed by Central Cross-Country Skiing (CXC). It encourages young athletes from U8 to U23 age divisions to enjoy cross-country skiing and develop their skills, whether they are new to the sport, high school skiers, aspiring junior skiers who hope to compete at national and international levels, or somewhere in between.

Race schedules:

**Gitchi Gami Games SuperTour | CXC Solomon Cup • December 10-12, 2021 • Birkie Trailhead • Cable, WI**

<b>Friday, December 10:</b> Freestyle Mass Start 15km – Male U18/U20/Senior and Female U18/U20/Senior	<b>Sunday, December 12: Classic Individual Start</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5km – Female U16 and Male U16</li><li>• 10km – Female U18/U20/Senior</li><li>• 15km – Male U18/U20/Senior</li></ul>
<b>Saturday, December 11:</b> Classic Sprint Male U16/U18/U20/Senior & Female U16/U18/U20/Senior	

**Gitchi Gami Games Youth Cup • December 11-12, 2021 • Birkie Trailhead • Cable, WI**

<b>Saturday, December 11:</b> Classic Sprint 500 m- Female U10/U12 and Male U10/U12 650 m- Female U14 and Male U14	<b>Sunday, December 12: Classic Individual Start</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2.7km- Male U14/U12 and Female U14/U12</li><li>• 1.6km- Male U10 and Female U10</li><li>• 600 m- U8</li></ul>
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### **Gitchi Gami Games History**

The Gitchi Gami Games were originally created by Tony Wise in the mid 70's as an elite level cross country ski race that eventually became the first-ever Cross Country Ski World Cup Race in 1978. The ABSF reintroduced the Gitchi Gami Games in 2018 to provide an opportunity for youth and elite level athletes to showcase their abilities at an internationally recognized venue and winter destination for tens of thousands of cross country skiers.

### **About Team Birkie**

Central Cross Country Skiing (CXC), the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, and the Loppet Foundation created a high performance racing team to inspire future generations of skiers and win Olympic medals. Team Birkie is based out of the Trailhead at Wirth Park, The Loppet Foundation's headquarters in Minneapolis. Team Birkie will conduct training camps in the Hayward Area and around the Central Region, as well as training and competition trips around North America. The team consists of pro athletes and college athletes which bridges the gap between collegiate racing and provides a platform for elite skiers to focus on their dream of making the U.S. Olympic Cross Country Ski Team.

An invitation to spectate: The NNF SuperTour Races are Olympic qualifying events, and athletes will be at the start line ready to compete at their best level. The competition for the remaining spots on the U.S. Olympic Team is strong, the energy at these events will be high.. The athletes love having people show their support and due to the smaller footprint of the snowmaking loops, spectators will be able to see a lot of action on different parts of the course simultaneously.

### **Team Birkie athletes to watch:**

Men:

- Zak Ketterson returns to his stomping grounds this season in Cable at the American Birkebeiner Trailhead. There is always a benefit to competing on a familiar course and knowing how approach the race tactically and with smart pacing. Zak has two SuperTour wins to his name and hopes to contend for another at the Gitchi Gami Games. Look for Zak to be an all-around competitor who could be fighting for the SuperTour Overall position after the weekend. Zak finished first in the 10k Skate race at the SuperTour race last weekend in Duluth, MN
- Christian Gostout has shown his strengths as a distance skier finishing in the top 10 in both the skate and classic Birkie races last season. This year his coaches have continued to focus on his goal of racing in some of the long-distance events in Europe at the end of the year, while also refining his speed and power. Christian is incredibly agile on his skis and will shine in any tight sprint or mass start pack race.
- Andrew Millan joined Team Birkie from an extensive running background which he honed as an athlete at Luther College in Iowa. He has had one of the quickest improvement curves his coaches have ever seen in cross country skiing. Andrew will be focusing on both sprint and distance events and hopes to qualify to compete in a few international races later this season.
- Tony Mathie graduated from the University of Minnesota where he competed on the cross country skiing club team. Tony has some of the best technique on the circuit the coaches are excited to see him put together a weekend of competitive racing. Tony will be awesome in the skate races where he can produce enormous power and speed on the fast flat sections. The snow and courses are perfect for Tony, watch for him attacking the finishing sprints.
- Brian Gregg looks to offer his extensive racing knowledge to the team while also competing in distance events. Brian will be very competitive in the 15K mass start skate race in Cable. He loves the courses and his race tactics are hard to beat with all his experience.



Women:

- Ingrid Thyr is back to her Midwest roots this year after competing for Williams College in the East and Team Crosscut in the West. The opportunity to train and race out of several regions gives Ingrid a depth of experience and grit when it comes to challenging conditions and tough courses. Ingrid's fitness and technique are at another level this year and she is looking forward to the opportunity to turn some heads.
- Julie Ensrud is ready to showcase her new sprint speed and power on the fast machine-made snowmaking loops that will be used in Cable. After many seasons of focusing on longer distance events, look for Julie to ski well when she gets into the head-to-head sprint races. After an extremely solid summer and fall of training, Julie is excited to use her new speed in her already strong distance events as well.
- Jordan Schuster is fresh off the EISA circuit where she competed for St. Lawrence University. In her first year of training as a professional skier she has made an enormous jump in fitness and technique. The coaches look forward to Jordan attacking the mass start races on the final lap and throwing down her newfound speed and quickness on the steep and difficult terrain.

**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](http://www.Birkie.com) to learn more.

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