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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## Team Birkie Returns After Successful First Season

**HAYWARD, WI (June 9, 2022)** – After a standout inaugural season, Team Birkie is reaching for new heights during the 2022-2023 cross country ski season. Eight athletes have been named to the Midwest’s only high-performance racing team and they need support from members of the Nordic country ski community and community at large to ensure the viability of their team for years to come.

During the 2021-2022 season, Team Birkie’s Zak Ketterson was part of a World Cup winning relay team that included fellow Minnesota native Jessie Diggins. Ketterson also represented the Midwest at nationals, around the world, and in his own backyard. Team Birkie is thrilled that Ketterson has been named to the USA Ski & Snowboard B Team and is returning to Team Birkie for the 2022-2023 season.

Additionally, Team Birkie is excited to announce the return of Julie Ensrud, Andrew Millan, and Tony Mathie to the team. Rounding out the team are a group of four new athletes: Renae Anderson (Hopkins, MN), Erin Bianco (Ely, MN), Xavier Mansfield (Minneapolis, MN), and Gus Schatzlein (Savage, MN). These skiers make up the full-time team members for the coming year. Team Birkie also works with collegiate athletes during the summer and aspiring marathon racers year-round.

Supporting high level athletes and competition requires significant resources. Sponsors provide part of the support, but nearly half of Team Birkie’s budget is raised from individual donors. Individual donations are essential to support coaching, travel for training and competition, and equipment not provided by sponsors. Your support is needed to continue building on the success of the last season. All donations to Team Birkie are tax deductible and go entirely to supporting the operations of the team. A generous donor has stepped forward with a \$5,000 donor challenge. This donor will match, dollar-for-dollar, the first \$5,000 raised for Team Birkie for the 2022-2023 season.

Central Cross Country Skiing (CXC), the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, and the Loppet Foundation have teamed up to create a high performance racing team – so the next Jessie Diggins can stay home to train, inspire future generations, 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 around North America.

See a recap of the 2021-2022 season at: [bit.ly/TeamBirkieRecap](https://bit.ly/TeamBirkieRecap) and consider donating to Team Birkie at: [bit.ly/SupportTeamBirkie](https://bit.ly/SupportTeamBirkie).

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