

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Team Birkie Announces Appointment of Head Coach, Chad Salmela

Minneapolis, MN - Team Birkie is excited to announce the appointment of Chad Salmela, a native of Minnesota's Iron Range, as the new head coach of the team. With over two decades of experience in the sport of biathlon and cross country skiing as an athlete and coach, Salmela brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the position.

"With this opportunity, I get to work in two areas I am most passionate about; developing athletes to elite-level sport performance, and mentoring coaches helping those athletes do that. That's really what Team Birkie is all about, and that feels like a great fit." - commented Salmela.

Zak Ketterson, member of the US Ski Team and going into the third season with Team Birkie shared: "I'm incredibly excited about the Team Birkie coaching staff heading into next season. As head coach, Chad will be an awesome mentor for athletes and coaches alike. I have a ton of confidence in Team Birkie as a support network for helping me reach my goal of becoming a top World Cup skier. With the combination of our world-class staff and the Midwest community's support, I believe Team Birkie is an obvious choice for athletes trying to reach the next level."

As a junior competitor, Salmela was one of the Midwest's top junior cross country ski racers before switching to biathlon at age 19. He went on to compete nationally and internationally for eight years as a member of the United States Biathlon Team before transitioning to coaching.

Salmela served as assistant coach for the U.S. Biathlon Team in 1998 while finishing his college degree at Middlebury College in Vermont. After graduation, he built and coached a national junior development program for biathlon, managed the biathlon competitions at the 2002 Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, and served as assistant coach and wax technician for the U.S. Junior World Championship biathlon team.

In 2006, Salmela became the first ski coach at The College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota, where he coached for 10 years. He is now in his seventh season as the head coach of the men's and women's cross country teams at the college, where he has continued to build a strong program.

Chad Salmela is also most noted for his broadcast voice with NBC and Peacock TV, where he stood out at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics for the call of the Team USA's team sprint gold medal performance with the famous "Here Comes Diggins!" commentary.

"We are thrilled to have Chad Salmela join our team as head coach," said Yuriy Gusev, Director of Team Birkie. "His extensive experience in biathlon and cross country skiing, combined with

his coaching success at the college level, make him the perfect candidate to lead a talented group of athletes and help them achieve their goals."

Salmela is excited to take on this new challenge with Team Birkie. "I am honored and thrilled to join Team Birkie as head coach," he said. "I look forward to working with athletes and coaches to find their pathways to success - to base those pathways in scientific principles, sound methodology - but most-importantly, finding the creativity necessary to become their best selves. I want my 25 years of coaching experience to help them achieve their hopes and dreams."

Salmela's appointment as head coach is effective immediately, and he will begin working with the team in preparation for the upcoming season.

ABOUT TEAM BIRKIE

Team Birkie is a dynamic and innovative ski team that is headquartered in the heart of the Midwest, in Minneapolis, MN. The team is the brainchild of three prominent organizations that have come together to support the development of an elite ski team in the region. These organizations are the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation, Loppet Foundation, and Central Cross Country Skiing (CXC).

COACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

- Matt Clarke, Assistant Head Coach
 - BS Exercise Physiology, College of St. Scholastica
 - College of St. Scholastica Ski Team Alumni
 - 2nd season coaching with Team Birkie

- Nichole Bathe, Coach
 - BA Social Work, UA Alaska - Fairbanks
 - MS Health Economics, University of Oslo, Norway
 - U18, Junior and U23 World Championships US Ski Team member
 - 2017-2021 British National Team
 - 2017-2020 World Cup and 2019 World Championship British National Ski Team
 - 2019-2021 Coach at Heming IL, Oslo, Norway

- Erin Moening, Coach
 - Northern Michigan University Ski Team Alumni
 - Minneapolis Ski Club Head Coach
 - Software Engineer
 - 8 x Junior All American

- Sergey Lopuhin, Race Service
 - Estonian National Biathlon Team (1996-2004)
 - Estonian National Team, World Cup Race Service (2006-2010)

- Russian National Team, World Cup Race Service, Head of Stonegrinding & Hand Structure (2010-2021)
- Estonian National Team and Polish National Team, World Cup Race Service (2021-2023)

- Brant Wesolek, Strength and Conditioning
 - MS Human Performance, UW - LaCrosse
 - Physical Therapist Assistant, Madison College
 - Trainer/Manager, Mercy Acceleration Sports Training (1998 - 2017)
 - Physical Therapist Assistant, Lakeview Hospital (2017 - now)
 - Team Rossignol (1998 - 2007)

- Abigail Larson, Sports Nutrition
 - 2006 US Olympic Team
 - 2002-2008 Subaru Factory Team
 - PhD Exercise Science, University of Utah
 - Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
 - CSSD certified sport specialist dietitian
 - Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist

- Piotr Bednarski, Sports Performance
 - Director of Sport, Loppet Foundation
 - 2006-2014 Director of Athlete Development, US Biathlon Team

For more information, visit www.teambirkie.com

CONTACT

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