

380 participants enjoy a satin-coated 37th Ski Loppet event

So, how did the 37th running of the classic Morin-Heights Viking Loppet go on Sunday, February 22nd? Well, this post-event message from a first time 20 km participant sums it up:

“Today was my first Loppet. A small word of thanks to the organizers for; the information, welcome, waxing, buses, trails conditions, finish line and meal. All went very well. Thank you, and see you next year!”

Granted, a week prior to the event, there was a certain amount of nail biting by organizers and registrants alike when rain followed by a deep freeze morphed the soft Laurentian snowscape into a solid icescape. However, all was saved by Mother Nature’s JIT (just in time) delivery of 20 cm of fresh snow to cover up the boilerplate mess. We even had a fine dusting on the day of the event, giving the ski trails a satin-like finish. Comfortable temperatures around -8°C, headed up to close to zero as the day progressed.

This year the Morin-Heights Elementary School Loppet reception & lunch area featured a specially fabricated stage, complete with picturesque backdrop, on which stood the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place podiums. This provided the assembled skiers with better viewing for the gold, silver and bronze medal presentations awarded by the always amusing MC Guy Thibodaux. It was heartening to see so many youngsters (grandkids) and oldsters (grandparents) garnering so many medals in their respective age category.

The Morin Heights Viking Loppet endeavours to attract cross country skiers across the age spectrum. This year ages ranged from 2 to 80. Looking at the results, that goal is surely been accomplished: amongst the 136 skiers in the 10 km course, the

youngest skiers were a couple of 2-year-old girls and a 6-year-old boy. The oldest lady was 71, plus a couple of gentlemen aged 80. Amongst the 149 skiers in the 20 km course, we had a 10-year-old boy and girl, a 66-year old lady, and a 73-year old gentleman. Amongst the 96 skiers in the 33 km course, we had a 17-year old lass and 14-year old lad, and a 67-year old lady plus several gents in their mid-60’s.

Over 130 volunteers provided enthusiastic encouragement to participants at every stage of the event, from the initial frenzy of picking up racing kits, to handing out refreshments at en-route trail feeding stations, to the final shouts of encouragement as the skiers crossed the finish line.

Ottawa based Sportstats timing team, with their ChampionChip detecting technology at the Basler Park finish line, ensured accurate “speed of light” results delivery. Complete Loppet results can be viewed and printed out at: www.sportstats.ca

To wind things down, the volunteers’ efforts were rewarded with a post Loppet afternoon party hosted at City Hall. Besides refreshments and speeches of gratitude, volunteers had a chance to win draw prizes, generously donated by local businesses.

We hope to see you next year for another great community event!

Derek Wills