

easier way and specialise in the short races was baseless. Short races have become a good start platform for new long distance cross country skiers.

WORLDLOPPET PASSPORT AND MASTER TITLES

From the beginning of Worldloppet, the main motivation for skiers to take part in different marathons is to own a Worldloppet passport and the wish to achieve the Worldloppet Master title. It can be said that a Worldloppet passport is the base of these series.

The Worldloppet passport is a notebook in a passport format, in which each race has a page. After the competition a marathon skier gets the result and stamp put on the page of the relevant race by the event secretariat. Each skier who has purchased the passport and has participated in 10 different marathons (including one overseas) out of 14, earns a Worldloppet Gold Master Title. To receive this title the passport owner must send the passport to the Worldloppet headquarters. It is also possible to receive a Worldloppet Silver master title for which 10 short races must be finished (or also 10 races including 1 or more short races). At the beginning when there were only 9 marathons in the series or 10 later, all of them had to be finished to receive the title. The passport's point is to be a control mechanism of results and also a notebook for results. Nowadays when most of the results are reachable on the internet (since 2001 mostly), the passport still remained as a document for recording the results. There are several skiers who own more than one passport and having all races fixed together helps to keep achievements in systematic order. To avoid any confusion over the results, these are checked from the database by the Secretary General's Office before issuing the Master title.

Owning a Worldloppet passport is like belonging to a club, the so called Worldloppet Skiers Family. When buying a passport, each skier gets a pin which they proudly wear and at the trips to the various marathons, it makes it much easier for a passport owner to recognise other people with the same interests. Although the registration and seeding have different rules for each marathon, passport owners usually get better start numbers according to their previous marathons.

Worldloppet passports are available at the headquarters, at the race offices and via the Internet. As the passport is timeless, the owners do not have any time limit which makes it possible for every skier to achieve a Worldloppet Master title. Of course it is impossible to race without being in good physical shape, so the passport also motivates skiers who want the Master title to take part in sport and to live healthily. Participating in some Worldloppet races may cause "skiing addiction" and another potential Master is born.

The first Worldloppet passports to be sold were posted (for US\$ 2) on December 29th, 1978 – before the first season. By the end of that season on May 29th, 1979, the number of passport owners was already 315 (115 Americans). Then the price of a passport was raised to US\$ 10. The number of passports has been growing annually for last 27 years. Between 1979 and 1988, 2729 passports were sold; 1989-1998 already showed a number of 3272. But now, the time of 1999 – 2007 has added already 5166 new passport owners. As the growth is constantly ascending it can be concluded that Worldloppet is important and popular among cross-country skiers.

With the data from May 31st 2007, Worldloppet has 9790 passport owners (11167 passports issued) from 45 countries. The list of Worldloppet Masters consisted of 2127 names (2462 titles). As most of the passport owners have not yet become Masters, Worldloppet races are guaranteed a lot of potential skiers also for the coming seasons.

Already during the first season of Worldloppet the organisers of the American Birkebeiner managed to promote the series so much that 3 married

Worldloppet calendar 2008

Worldloppet main races 2007/2008 - valid for recognition as a Worldloppet Gold Master

Date	Race name	Distance	Techn	Country
25.08.07	KANGAROO HOPPET	42 KM	FT	AUS
13.01.08	JIZERSKÁ PADESÁTKA 50: PATRIA DIRECT	50 Km	CT	CZE
19.01.08	DOLOMITENLAUF: Classic R. Obertilliach	42 Km	CT	AUT
20.01.08	DOLOMITENLAUF	60 Km	FT	
27.01.08	MARCIALONGA	70 Km	CT	ITA
02.02.08	KÖNIG LUDWIG LAUF	50 Km	FT	GER
03.02.08	KÖNIG LUDWIG LAUF	50 Km	CT	
09.02.08	LA TRANSJURASSIENNE: La Transju'Classic	50 Km	CT	FRA
10.02.08	LA TRANSJURASSIENNE	54 Km	FT	
10.02.08	LA TRANSJURASSIENNE	76 Km	FT	
10.02.08	SAPPORO INTERNATIONAL SKI MARATHON	50 Km	FT	JPN
10.02.08	TARTU MARATON: Open Track	63 Km	FT	EST
17.02.08	TARTU MARATON	63 Km	CT	
16.02.08	GATINEAU LOPPET	53 Km	CT	CAN
17.02.08	GATINEAU LOPPET	53 Km	FT	
23.02.08	AMERICAN BIRKEBEINER	51 Km	FT	USA
23.02.08	FINLANDIA- HIIHTO	62 Km	CT	FIN
24.02.08	FINLANDIA- HIIHTO	50 Km	FT	
24.02.08	VASALOPPET: Oppet Spar	90 Km	CT	SWE
25.02.08	VASALOPPET: Oppet Spar	90 Km	CT	
02.03.08	VASALOPPET	90 Km	CT	
09.03.08	ENGADIN SKIMARATHON	42 Km	FT	SUI
15.03.08	BIRKEBEINERRENNET	54 Km	CT	NOR

■ - FIS Marathon Cup 2007/2008 race