



Media Release

Double Take on Bib #1

February 23, 2010 — This year, organizers of the Sleeping Giant Loppet are thrilled to be presenting the honour of Bib #1 to two individuals who have skied every year since the event first began in 1978: Ron Lappage and Guy Latimer.

Lappage and Latimer, who will both be 64 for the March 6, 2010 event, have made the trek out to Sleeping Giant Park on the first Saturday in March for the past 33 years where they challenge themselves in the 50km distance. They saw the event evolve from the Thunder Bay Ski Tour with about 40 participants, into the Sibley Ski Tour and now the Sleeping Giant Loppet where we target 800 to 1000 skiers.

When asked about memorable moments, both skiers recall adverse conditions: starts delayed because of cold weather; the years that the route traced a path along the Lake Superior shore into Sawyer's Bay and then up over the head of the Giant; being examined for frostbite at checkpoints; and down hills where they had to remove their skis and walk. Of course, there were some lighthearted memories, too. Like the year temperatures soared to +16C and participants stripped down to bikini tops.

Over the years, they've seen the participation numbers grow, the course change, the advancement of equipment technology, and the introduction of skate technique. "Back then," says Latimer, "everyone had wood skis and it was classic only." The event now includes the marquee 50km open technique event with a \$1000 cash prize for the fastest male and female finisher, and a separately timed 50km classic only technique event. The other distances are open to both skate and classic skiers.

So what motivates these guys to come back again year after year? Latimer says it's become a tradition, for him and his family. "I met a bunch of cyclists down in the States and they are also skiers," he says. "They come up every year. There's a whole group of us that compete and we have a friendly rivalry, but we encourage each other, too."

Lappage says that the annual Sleeping Giant Loppet is a great goal at the beginning of the season. "It's something to work towards," he says, "But it's not the only reason I ski." Lappage puts in about 150-160km every week, usually on the trails at Kamview Nordic Centre. For the Loppet, "I set a goal of time that I'd like to beat," he says, then adds with a chuckle, "The time gets longer as I get older!"

Peter Gallagher, Event Coordinator for the Sleeping Giant Loppet, says that the weather this February has been the most fantastic for skiing that we've seen in the past five years, and it's

expected to continue right through to the March 6 event date. "Snow conditions in Sleeping Giant Park are fabulous for skiing," he says. "People shouldn't be nervous about the warm temperatures. We have a good solid base. It's going to be fantastic!"

And if folks have been envious of all the Olympic action in Vancouver, organizers are bringing that 2010 feeling to the Loppet. Every participant will receive a mouth-watering chocolate medal when they cross the finish line (who needs gold!!) and a chance to climb the podium and be photographed – just like an Olympic champion!

The Sleeping Giant Loppet is scheduled to take place on March 6 in Sleeping Giant Provincial Park. Registration is available online at www.sleepinggiantloppet.ca or at Kamview Nordic Centre, Fresh Air Experience or Rollin' Thunder.

This is the year! Go for the Gold!

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Ski the Giant!



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