

STAMPEDE 2007 RACE REPORT

After the incredibly perfect conditions we had for last month's Gunnar Hagen, it was too much to hope that we might have such conditions again this month for the Stampede, and sure enough, we didn't. It was very warm the week before the race, and it rained heavily the night before. During the race it rained and snowed and rained again, and sometimes the wind blew in fierce little squalls. This left the snow deep and soft and slushy, which made for hard work for the 75 skiers who showed up on race day.

Fifty men finished the 15k free-style event. The winning time was eight minutes slower than last year's winning time, a sure indication of the difficult conditions. A tight pack of four held the lead in the first lap, but in the second and third laps Brad Bauer and Vesa Suomalainen pulled away. Brad ended up in first, in 43:20, with Vesa only 15 seconds behind. Kent Murdoch came in third, in 45:46, with Jon Fewster hot on his heels three seconds back. Rune Harkestad rounded out the top five, finishing in 46:35. Chief of Course Don Brooks rearranged the finish line this year to allow a wide-open sprint to the finish, and while that didn't happen in the lead group, like it did last year, there were a couple of exciting down-to-the-wire sprints farther back in the pack and most of the racers seemed to appreciate the open space.

In the women's 15k, Ginny Price won decisively over a field of ten, in a time of 55:13. Sarah Hardee came down from Bellingham to take second in 59:30, and Leah Kiviat tore herself away from her medical duties to finish in 1:04:44.

There were a total of 15 racers in the 5k, eight men and seven women. J1 Owen Burbank, who looks like he's about a foot taller and 20 pounds heavier than he was last year, won in 19:48, followed by M11 Einar Svensson in 21:37 and Benji Mougel from Port Townsend in 32:20. Notably, the last three finishers, J2's and classmates Karsten Hendrickson and identical twins Taylor and Ethan Johnson, finished in a dead heat in 43:31. In the women's 5k, Marcy Ostrom ignored nagging injuries to finish strongly in 20:17, followed by Lisa Newton in 23:19 and Lisa Mitchell in 28:20. Fourth place went to Lisa Mitchell's identical twin Linda. With two sets of identical twins in the 5k, race officials could be forgiven for rubbing their eyes and cleaning their glasses!

Race Director Jeff Hashimoto ran a smooth operation again, with help from Don Brooks, parking lot chief Neil Bransfield, chief timers Angie Grieg (with chief expert assistant Caleb Speigel-Ostrom) and Keith Ritland, race secretary Terry Hiatt, kids' race director Tim Melbourne (who put on a very successful kids' race in sublime spring skiing conditions the day before), and all the volunteers who gave up a Sunday morning to make sure everything ran like clockwork. Kitchen crew Kaare and Aase Gjolmesli, Berit Lund and Randi Valdok once again proved they are worth their weight in gold, as they kept all the racers and volunteers well-fed with chili, bread from Essential Baking Company, cookies and oranges, and plenty of hot and cold drinks.

Thanks to our generous sponsors, Jon Fewster was able to hand out a table full of coveted prizes. The top finishers in each race received specially engraved cheese slicers, a Norwegian tradition from the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics. Every racer received a commemorative hat from Second Ascent, the Stampede's hat sponsor. Draw prizes included water bottles and electrolyte tablets from our hydration sponsor Nuun, Bridgedale socks, Einar Svensson's primo book on skating technique, gift certificates from Nordic Ultratune, Marmot Mountain Works and Winthrop Mountain Sports, and a Suunto GPS watch. Many thanks to our wonderful sponsors!

And thanks to everyone who scoffed at the nasty weather conditions to come and ski! Our next race, and the last one of the season, is the Ozbaldy 50k free-style race on Sunday, March 4. See you there!