

Lake Louise Loppet Volunteers' FAQ

When is the Lake Louise Loppet?

It's always the first Sunday in March. So it's the 7th in 2010, 6th in 2011, 4th in 2012.

The adults' race starts at 11 am on the lake and ends at about 2 pm.

The jackrabbits start at 11.05 and finish before the adults start finishing.

It is a fun, family-oriented race.

Where is the race course?

All racers do a 2-km loop on the lake.

The 20-km races do the Telemark loop, come back across the lake and do the Fairview loop.

The 10-km racers do the Fairview loop.

Jackrabbits do a 1 km or 2 km loop on the lake.

What do volunteers do?

One and/or two weeks before the race we "bootpack" the lake on snowshoes or skis.

On Saturday we empty supplies from the ski club trailer and take them by sled to the Nordic stop by the lake.

Then we shovel snow to build ramps off the lake and to bank some corners.

We fetch plywood from the Chateau grounds to be used for "flooring".

We separate the pre-registered racers bibs.

We take the tables and chairs delivered by the Chateau staff to the parking lot for registration and onto the lake for the feeding stations and timing.

On Sunday there are all sorts of jobs: registration, timing, course control, refreshments.

After the race we pack up everything and load the trailers to be returned to Calgary.

Where do I go when I arrive?

Park in the public parking lot near the Chateau. Walk up the narrow path towards the lake.

On Saturday go to the lakeshore and look for people shovelling snow or carting supplies on sleds.

On Sunday, if you are on registration, meet at the tables at the lake end of the parking lot.

If you are doing another job, meet outside the Nordic stop, which is our race headquarters. The refreshments supplies will be there. Course controllers meet outside the Nordic Stop at 9.30.

What would I do at registration?

Arrive at 8.15 am for set-up and training. Finish around 10.30.

Registration is at the lake end of the public parking lot, where we set up tables and chairs. The racers' bibs are sorted numerically and are in blue Rubbermaid containers.

Volunteers take filled registration forms from racers, take payment and assign sequential bib numbers according to the distance to be skied. They record the payment and bib number on the registration form. They hand out the bibs.

Another group of volunteers gives out bibs to the pre-registered racers. Their bibs are pre-sorted alphabetically in green Rubbermaid containers and each one has a little sticker on with the racer's name.

One volunteer will take snow and air temperature measurements every quarter hour and write them on a board.

Runners take the pink registration forms to the Nordic stop for entry into the computer. Parking marshals direct traffic. This impresses the Banff Park wardens.

What would I do at timing?

Arrive at 10.45 for training and job assignment.

Timing is at the finish of the race near the boathouse on the left side of the lake.

There are two teams of timers. On each team, one person operates a stopwatch and calls out the bib number of the racer being timed and the other person writes down the bib number and time on a timing sheet.

The Order of Finish referee writes down the official order of the racers as they cross the finish line.

The bib collectors take bibs from racers who have finished the race and put them in green Rubbermaid containers. They also hand out racer participation ribbons.

Runners take the timing sheets from timing to the unofficial results board and then to the race office for entry into the computer.

What do course controllers do?

Course controllers meet at 9.30 outside the Nordic Stop for instructions, clipboards and radios.

They ski out to designated positions on the course and work in pairs. Their job is to record the bib numbers sequentially as the racers pass their position. One volunteer calls out the bib number and the other writes it down, legibly.

They sometimes put out flagging to show the course or change it when the racers have passed and the course changes.

Skating controllers ski out to strategic positions to watch for skating infractions and as a deterrent. They may also act as radio links for course controllers.

The Course Sweep follows the last skier around the 20-km course and tells the controllers that they can return to the boathouse.

Where is this Nordic Stop?

It's the small building on the left shore of the lake. It's the boathouse in summer and the Nordic stop in winter. It's our centre of operations, where the computer and printer are set up and the radios re-charged. It's very small and cramped

Can I eat my lunch in the Nordic Stop?

The Nordic Stop is our Race Office and it is very small and cramped so we ask that you don't go inside unless you have to.

What do the feeding station people do?

They start getting set up at about 8.30 am.

We have two feeding stations on or near the hockey rink on the lake. One station is for the 20-km racers at the mid-point of their race and the other station is for those who have finished the race.

Feeding station volunteers set up the tables on plywood flooring and cart supplies from the boathouse on sleds.

They fetch the hot water and luke-warm water that is waiting for them at the Chateau. They make hot chocolate and Gatorade. They cut up oranges (rubber gloves are useful) and put out the

cookies donated by Laggans, making sure that the little kids don't take them all or that the birds don't swoop down and steal them.

They keep some food and drinks back for the late finishers.

Mid-point feeding station closes down at 12.30. The finish feeding station closes at about 2.30, after the last racers and course volunteers have had refreshments.

What's the unofficial results board?

We erect plywood boards on the hockey rink and staple large sheets of paper to them. A volunteer stays there and takes the timing sheets that have come with a runner from timing and writes on the boards the bib number and time. He then gives the timing sheets to a runner to take to the race office. When he has time he adds the racers names' to the board from a list of bib numbers and names.

What's this shovelling snow all about?

On Saturday we shovel snow to make ramps to take the racers off the lake and up to the Telemark loop, off the lake near the skating rink and up to the Fairview loop and back onto the lake near the Nordic Stop.

We also shovel some corners to bank them and make them safer. It's fun really and you learn about snow physics and how to create a durable ski trail able to withstand the pounding of 300 pairs of ski poles. Bring lots of water as it can be very dehydrating, especially on a sunny day.

What's boot-packing the lake?

Otherwise known as Helen's thigh-thinning exercise. A week or two before the race, and definitely the Sunday before, we pack down the snow on the lake using snowshoes or skis (snowshoes are best) over the areas to be used for the start, finish and the 2-km loop. This helps to destroy the insulating layer of snow that often overlies slush and assists freeze-up so the snowmobiles can go on the lake with greater safety.

Is there a training night?

Yes, in late February. We give an overview of the race and logistics and you have an opportunity to ask questions and sign up for car-pools.

Do we car pool?

People staying over Saturday night often make car-pooling arrangements in advance and we have a sign-up at the training night. Day-trip car poolers meet at 8 am Saturday or 6 am Sunday. Meet at the city car-pool lot west of COP. Turn left at the first set of lights after COP, 101st St, then make a quick right and the parking is on the left past the old Mountain Mecca café. Every vehicle at Lake Louise must have a National Park Pass.

What should I wear/bring?

Warm, wind-proof clothes and water bottles are essential.

Bring lunch and more water.

Useful things to bring: skis, snowshoes, backpack, warm waterproof boots (Sorels are best), gloves, mitts, toque, Swiss army knife, pencil, shovel, toe and hand warmers, first aid kit, space blanket, foam pads to stand on.

More water.

What if I don't XC ski?

You won't need to ski if you help on registration, timing or refreshments. You will need warm boots (Sorels) and warm, windproof clothes.

Where do we stay Saturday night?

The Ski Club makes reservations at Deer Lodge (sharing twin or double). We have a special group booking and we send the rooming list. We pay for the accommodation in advance and you reimburse us by sending a cheque to the Calgary Ski Club. Contact Helen to reserve your bed. If you want to make your own arrangements, try the Lake Louise Inn or the Hostel.

Isn't this a lot of work for only one day?

Yes, you are right, it is a lot of work but is also a lot of fun. We do it because it allows us to upgrade the trails for the benefit of all skiers, now and in the future. At the same time, we get exercise in the fresh air and beautiful surroundings of Lake Louise, we meet people and share the experience with old and new friends.

How do you upgrade the trails?

In the winter, we remove low overhanging branches to reduce tree wells, we cut back the willows growing in and beside the trails and we cut down little Christmas trees along the trails. In our autumn trail work we move logs to the sides of the trails and remove boulders to make the trails flatter and we cut down little trees and willows. We have a chainsaw permit for this work. This work is making an enormous improvement to the trails in winter.

Is it true that there is a volunteers' barbecue and prizes?

Yes, we host a steak barbecue in May and hold the volunteers' prize draw. Prizes might include nights at Deer Lodge or the Lake Louise Inn, Skiing Louise or Sunshine tickets, ski bags, waxes, books, T-shirts, ball caps and whatever else we can scrounge from sponsors.

Do I have to pay my own way?

Yes. We are not allowed to use casino money to reimburse volunteers. We can, however, pay gas mileage for those towing grooming equipment. We appreciate that our volunteers have to pay for accommodation, food and travel. If your budget is restricted, stay at the Hostel or come up for the day on Sunday.

Who can I talk to?

Call Alasdair or Helen at 289-0386.

Alasdair Fergusson is the Chief of Competition. Big cheese and chief organizer.

Helen Isaac organizes the volunteers and accommodation. On race day she does all the data entry of racers' registration and results. She likes to boot-pack the lake and shovel snow.

Greg MacCulloch is the Chief of Course. He is responsible for everything to do with the course. He directs the shovelling and ramp-making.