

Viking Challenge Cross Country Run off To A Great Start

The annual Viking Challenge Run was off to a great start on November 5th with 48 participants and a lovely sunny day starting. Organizers Jerry Drouin and Elisa Rietzschel could not have wished for better. This event, originally called the Autumn Run, has been organized by Viking's Michael Dohrendorf. It ran for 27 years from 1967 to 1989. It has been resurrected to raise funds for the Viking Ski Club's biathlon programs, which started up just two years ago.

5km and 7.5 km events were run on the Viking club's cross country ski racing trails, with some variations to make it more interesting for those familiar with the trails. The start and finish were through a huge Merrell supplied arch mounted in front of the club house on Jackson Road. The course ran along the road for a short distance before diving into the forest across a rustic bridge. Full sun, in conjunction with the fall colours were the desired ingredients for some runners who were just using the event as an excuse to enjoy the season and trails.

Below freezing temperatures during the night and early morning hardened the ground so feet stayed dry until the last stretch of the course alongside the pond, which yes, is a pond during all seasons other than winter. Trails had been well marked off with tape. Raspberry bushes had been trimmed and trails raked at crucial points.

A very impressive performance was demonstrated by André Lapointe in the 50 to 59 age category running the 7.5 course in 34 minutes. Robin Krug from the 19 and under age category was the first female to finish the 7.5 km. The first male and female to cross the 5km finish line were Nicolas Larivée and Pascal Haudegand respectively. 12 year old Kevyn McElligott was second to cross the 5km line. 11 years old Olivier Levesque and Michael Swabey in the 5 km race represented the day's youngest runners. 69 year old Viking ski club member Derek Wills was the oldest participant, crossing the line in an impressive 44 minutes.

The race was followed by a healthy lunch of soup, bread, salads and fruit provided by IGA Morin Heights and Fonte Sante, beer from Boreal and a hearty portion of homemade apple cobbler prepared by Viking member and provincial biathlete Danica Drouin. The event ended with medal awards in front of the clubhouse and participation prizes for racers and volunteers. With more than 50 prizes totalling \$2,000 in value staying to the end was worthwhile. Prizes included several \$150 and \$50 gift certificates from Merrell and Atmosphere St Sauveur, \$200 sunglasses from Redstar, bath towels from Beachcomber, a generous gift basket from Gourmet du Village, gift certificates from Roadid, in addition to many other prizes.

For next year the organizers are hoping to add a 2 KM race for the younger runners and a longer 10 km one for the more extreme racers. Next year's event will be held in early November.