



National Governing Body for the Olympic Sport of Biathlon
29 Ethan Allen Avenue Colchester, Vermont 05446
www.USBiathlon.org

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jerry Kokesh
314-434-9229
314-651-2635 (cell)

Cook and Bouchard Win On Final Day of Junior Trials

Coleraine, MN. January 3. Annilies Cook of Saranac Lake, NY and Kelsy Bouchard of Fort Kent, ME, each won their first competition of the three day Youth and Junior Biathlon World Championships Trials today at the Mt. Itasca Biathlon Center to earn spots on the US Team.

Cook, the top ranked junior woman and Bouchard, ninth place at the 2003 World Championships had been in the middle of the pack for the earlier sprint and pursuit format competitions. Cook's results, although not as good as she expected, had her in a position to make the team with an average performance today. But Bouchard was on the verge of missing the event she had been preparing for all year. The low point was 16 penalties in Thursday's 10K Pursuit Format. But with wins today, both young women qualified for the team and should be among the top US performers at the Championships in Haute Maurienne, France January 24-31.

It has been a cold week in Minnesota, but today was the coldest as the temperatures along with a strong 15 mph wind affected everyone. Brynden Manbeck (Grand Rapids, MN) had won both previous Youth Women's competitions. Today, Bouchard had four penalties to Manbeck's five to claim a 10 second victory, 31:57 to 32:07. Bouchard's coach, James Upham had earlier described her as "a big game player, who has the ability to give her best when it counts the most." She proved that today. Joining Bouchard and Manbeck in France will be the next two finishers, Britt Salmela (Duluth, MN) with five penalties in 32:43 and Grand Rapid's Kari Lunemann, with seven penalties in 32:40.

Annilies Cook skied her way to victory in the Junior Women's 7.5K in 30:54. She had five penalties today to runner-up Emilia DeMarchis' (Burlington, VT) two. Still, Cook claimed a 47 second margin of victory. Sonne Nordgren, having already assured herself a berth on the world Championships Team did not compete. Third today was Julie Warneke (Elk River, MN) also with two penalties, 5:00 back.

Commenting on the two women's categories, Junior National Coach Vladimir Cervenka, stated, "I am really happy that Kelsy Bouchard had a good race today and made the team. These women have the most experience on the team. Although they had a tough time early in the trials, all are improving and should peak by World Juniors. I think they will have solid performances there."

The biggest surprises came in the Youth Men's 6K Sprint. Ben Byrne (Bovey, MN) took his second victory in 26:36, with five penalties. The surprises followed, with Russell Currier (Stockholm, ME) second, four seconds back with five penalties and Mark Johnson (Grand Rapids, MN) third, 28 seconds back with two penalties. Both qualified for their first World Championships Team. Cervenka said with pride, "I am really happy with Russell. He is an excellent skier and is very improved. And Mark Johnson is a pleasant surprise. He is 16 and this is his second year in the sport. He shot well on a tough day."

On the conditions, Cervenka continued, "It was cold, about zero and windy. Several athletes had trouble with their rifles at that temperature. With the wind, shooting was definitely a challenge."

The top two Junior Men, Brian Olsen (Bloomington, MN) and Adam Van Straten (Duluth, MN) did not compete today as they had already made the team. Thus Bjorn Bakken and Kurt Farchmin both of Duluth, MN, battled to assure their positions on the team. Bakken, with the best shooting of the day, one penalty, won in 30:04 to Farchmin's two penalties and 30:57 finish. Aaron Roessler (Grand Rapids, MN) and Nathan Eriandson (Grand Rapids, MN) followed with two and five penalties respectively, 1:42 and 2:24 back.

The roster for the Youth and Junior Biathlon World Championships follows:

Junior Men: Brian Olsen, Bloomington, MN; Adam Van Straten, Duluth, MN, Kurt Farchmin, Duluth, MN, Bjorn Bakken, Duluth, MN; **Youth Men:** Ben Byrne, Bovey, MN, Russell Currier, Stockholm, ME, Tyler Gerling, Cohasset, MN, Mark Johnson, Grand Rapids, MN; **Junior Women:** Sonne Nordgren, Marine on St. Croix, MN, Emilia DeMarchis, Burlington, VT, Annilies Cook, Saranac Lake, NY; **Youth Women:** Brynden Manbeck, Grand Rapids, MN, Kari Lunemann, Grand Rapids, MN, Kelsy Bouchard, Fort Kent, ME, Britt Salmela, Duluth, MN.

As he surveyed the roster, Cervenka commented, "I think our strongest group is the Youth Men, with Ben and Russell. They should do well individually and form a strong basis for the relay. In every other group, we have some outstanding people, like Kelsy, Brynden, Annelies, and Brian. Overall, we should do much better than last year."

The US Biathlon Team competes under the auspices of the United States Biathlon Association, the National Governing Body for the Olympic sport of Biathlon. **Lapua, adidas, and Exel Ski** are sponsors of the US Biathlon Team.