

Worldloppet Ski Races

The official website (www.worldloppet.com) describes the Worldloppet as:

- High quality ski races around the World.** Only one and the best race from a country can be a member of Worldloppet.
- Regularity and continuity.** Each race, having its own history, traditions and programme, is held usually at the same time every year. After completing 10 different Worldloppet races, at least one of them overseas, a skier can apply for the Worldloppet Master title.
- Races for everybody.** Races different by length, technique, landscape and target group attract 80 000 participants every year.
- Participation of elite skiers.** In Worldloppet races elite skiers ski together with the ordinary people. FIS Marathon Cup, consisting of 5 Worldloppet races, is a Worldloppet serie for top skiers.

Having done four of these races during the 2004/5 season, I must say that each race has its own distinct character and the experience is wonderful - and a little scary - to be in a foreign country where things are familiar (skiing is skiing) and yet very different from what I'm used to, here in the Midwest.

At all three foreign venues, I was incredibly lucky to have perfect weather - Temperatures in the 20's (F) and little or no wind. All were very exposed and could have been very nasty, indeed, I'm told the Hoppet and the Norwegian Birkebeiner were next to impossible last season. I'm sure my luck will run out before I get ten races under my belt, but I wouldn't complain if they were all benign.

If you're reading about these races because you've thought about doing one of these races, I can only encourage you to dive in and try it. It takes a lot of planning and maybe some of my experiences will help you in your quest.

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