

## Masters World Championships, Canmore, March 2022

Once upon a time, the British Team for Canmore was looking small but reasonable, accommodation was booked and training trips planned. But then Omicron Covid intervened and, one by one, the team shrank; people didn't want to spend a long time in a hairy plane, there was a risk of being 'trapped' in Canada if Covid was caught while there or, in my case, Long Covid paid another visit and showed no immediate signs of leaving again in a hurry. So, eventually, our team became Laura Harrison, making her debut and fully representing Great Britain, Laura's partner Jan Thomas Rossiter representing Ireland and a sort of proxy BMCCSA member by association (he's certainly offered no membership fee whatsoever!), and long-time BMCCSA members Steve Smigiel representing USA and Jack White for Canada. And what a shame it was that we couldn't get more people to Canada, because photos from the event seem to show amazing tracks and conditions and Laura Colnaghi of Italy, who's competed and medalled in many MWCs over the years (she's now competing in the F08, 65-70 year old, category), described it as "The best MWC ever"!

There were other notable absentees: Russia, for the initially bizarre reason that their Covid vaccination (Astra Zenecaski) wasn't recognised by the Canadian authorities and then the small matter of an invasion, and other countries for much the same reasons as for our athletes. So, as the following table shows, the vast majority of entrants came from Canada or USA which, interestingly, seems to support my idea of having annual 'regional' Masters events and a big World Masters every four years:













Canada	511	Austria	8	Ireland	1
USA	88	Denmark	6	Spain	1
Finland	20	Australia	3	Slovenia	1
France	20	Estonia	3	Taipei	1
Norway	19	Italy	2	Unaffiliated	1
Switzerland	12	Sweden	2		
Germany	9	Great Britain	1	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>708</b>

708 participants is low by modern Masters standards, but is broadly in line with other North American MWCs in the past: 1981, Canada, Morin Height = 104; 1983, USA, Telemark = 650; 1986, USA Lake Placid = 620; 1989, Canada, Quebec = 720; 1992, USA, Anchorage = 712; 1995, Canada, Canmore = 1018; 1998, USA, Lake Placid = 1028; 2002, Canada, Quebec = 979; 2008, USA, McCall = 1219; 2011, Canada, Sovereign Lake = 1125; and 2018, USA, Minneapolis = 746. So typical North American numbers are around 750 but, interestingly, Canmore in 1995, Lake Placid in 1998, McCall in 2008 and Sovereign Lake in 2011 are amongst the highest participation levels of all MWCs. Perhaps interesting to note, too, the very low numbers from Germany, Austria, Italy and Sweden, and no participants from the Czech Republic. Covid-free, Seefeld 2023 has got to be better than this and, in fact, Seefeld 1988 (we've been there twice before) holds the absolute record for participation by miles, at 1 480!



**They're off, up the gentle slope out of the stadium**

With the event in early March, one might have expected typical early-March European temperatures and conditions, i.e. sunny and well above zero. But one's expectations would have been at least partially disappointed because, as the following table shows, even though it was often sunny, temperatures were always well below zero over night, leading to some chilly mornings and, in fact, back to the sort of temperatures we used to enjoy back in the mid-1990s, especially for the long classic race!

Day	Sun. 4 <sup>th</sup> March	Sat. 5 <sup>th</sup> March	Sun. 6 <sup>th</sup> March	Mon. 7 <sup>th</sup> March	Wed. 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Thur. 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Fri. 11 <sup>th</sup> March
Event		Medium distance free	Medium distance classic	Short distance classic/free	Relays	Long distance free	Long distance classic
Conditions, day		 30 % chance of flurries	 Clearing	 Snow flurries	 Mainly sunny	 Mainly sunny	 Mainly sunny
Max. temperature		+1 °C	+2 °C	+2 °C	-7 °C	-3 °C	+5 °C
Conditions, night	 30 % chance of flurries	 60 % chance of flurries	 Clear	 60 % chance of flurries	 Partly cloudy	 Periods of snow	
Min. temperature	-10 °C	-10 °C	-3 °C	-11 °C	-12 °C	-14 °C	

With no one on the spot able to provide our normal, detailed, report of the event, we have to rely on Team Captains' Meetings, some random photos (I could find no 'racing' photos of any of our members) and a report from Jack. So shall we start with that?

"As a Canadian Master and part time GBRMSKIASERT%#@&% (I may have gotten some of those symbols/letters wrong) ah, British Masters member, your esteemed leader Adam asked me to do an item on the MWC, He tells me he couldn't make it this year for lack of training because all ski tunnels and snow making equipment in your country shut down due to warming temperatures. I'm so sorry to hear that.

The city of Calgary is where most Masters flights flew into to access Canmore, which is located in the first eastern valley of the Rockies, a series of mountains that run north/south in Alberta and British Columbia. Canmore is not unlike small towns located near the Alps in southern Europe, "it's a little tourist town"!

The Canmore Nordic Centre is a cross country skiers' delight with snow making equipment and hundreds of kilometres of trails with varying degrees of difficulty, or not. This year's MWC took place at the Biathlon Centre which is located a few hundred feet from the main centre. As the site is located in a Provincial Park, the trail system could not be shut down for the races, but no problems arose from this and, in fact, only made it more exciting. The very wide trail system was divided down the middle "half for local recreational skiers and half for racers" making it all the more enjoyable with skiers all along the trails cheering Masters racers on. Every day there were hundreds of skiers taking advantage of the trail system and on weekends that increases to thousands, again a cross-country skier's delight.

As Canada's National Director for seven years in the 90s, I travelled to many MWC events from Russia (now a bad word) to Italy and have marvelled at how small towns come up with enough volunteers to run such an event, but I guess pride in their communities is a large factor. This year's event showed no lack of these smiling volunteers from the parking lots to the race site and everywhere between. Over the years I have made it a point to smile and THANK every volunteer I came across as they make our races possible, please do the same at a future event.

Organization of this MWC was superb with a flow of information sent out on a regular basis starting last autumn and right up to the event itself. All races ran according to schedule except for an hour delay one morning due to cold, but the sun heated things up in that short hour. Medal ceremonies took place each evening outside the Civic centre in downtown Canmore (you will note from the photos, medal winners wearing "Cowboy/Girl hats", these were not "keepers"). Opening ceremonies also took place at this location with the highlight being dancing and drumming performed by local Indigenous peoples, which gave some of us "palefaces" something to ponder as we may just have borrowed some of their lands!

I won't go into any results as these can be accessed on the WMA site but many medals were given out to many people.

A highlight of my trip was seeing and having a few lengthy chats with Canadian legend skier Pierre Harvey, who I first met in 1983 at a World Cup race in Labrador City way back when Gunde Svan and Vladimir Smirnov were favourites. Pierre was always known as a classy gentleman and he has not changed at all, always taking time to talk to anybody, with interest and ever-present smile. His son Alex (another great skier) is now a lawyer in Quebec City.

Anyway Adam, I hope your winters return to normal, and you will be in top form and itching to race at Seefeld in 2023. Enjoy the roller ski season.

Jack”



Jack, left, with former World Cup star for Canada, Pierre Harvey



Laura (GBR) and Jan Thomas (IRE), both medallists

In the following, just to give you an idea of performance levels, I show the winners and last-place finishers of each end of the age groups which do the same distance, e.g. M1 to M6 and F9 to F11, together with BMCCSA results and a few other interesting results.

**Middle distance free technique, Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March**

**Men's M01-M06 30 km**

Fastest	Joachim Gustafsson	FIN	M03	1.14:42.8	24.1 km/h		
1)	Andre Tremblay	CAN	M01	1.15:28.4	23.8 km/h		
4)	Jan Thomas Rossiter	IRE	M01	1.23:39.7	21.5 km/h	10.7 %	
5)	Jack Maslen	CAN	M01	1.35:18.9	18.9 km/h	26.2 %	(5 starters)
1)	Richard Suddock	USA	M06	1.20:54.6	22.2 km/h		
35)	Marek Dutkiewicz	CAN	M06	1.56:20.6	15.5 km/h	43.8 %	(35 starters)

**Men's M07-M09 15 km**

Fastest	Barry Makarewicz	USA	M07	38:01.5	23.7 km/h		
50)	Andrew Lyon	CAN	M07	1.02:23.1	14.4 km/h	64.0 %	(50 starters)
1)	Reidar Zapf-Gilje	CAN	M09	45:06.7	20.0 km/h		
28)	Beau Kent	CAN	M09	1.08:30.5	13.1 km/h	51.2 %	(28 starters)



### Ladies F01-F08 15 km

Fastest	Alison Ariens	USA	F05	40:52.0	22.0 km/h		
1)	Mari Lindstrom	FIN	F01	41:24.8	21.7 km/h		
5)	Carlee Glendenning	CAN	F01	55:33.8	16.2 km/h	34.2 %	(5 starters)
1)	Pat Pierce	CAN	F08	47:26.5	19.0 km/h		
12)	Didi Roberts	USA	F08	1:19:26.8	11.3 km/h	67.5 %	(12 starters)

### Men's M10-M11 (no M12s) 10 km

Fastest	Willibald Tschemernjak	AUT	M10	29:43.7	20.2 km/h		
10)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M10	37:02.9	16.2 km/h	24.6 %	
11)	Helgi Halvorsen	CAN	M10	43:18.3	13.9 km/h	45.6 %	(11 starters)
1)	Jack White	CAN	M11	34:36.4	17.3 km/h		
6)	Sam East	USA	M11	44:14.2	13.6 km/h	27.9 %	(6 starters)

### Ladies F09-F11 10 km

Fastest	Trina Hostner	USA	F10	32:44.2	18.3 km/h		
1)	Carolyn Tiernan	USA	F09	32:45.4	18.3 km/h		
8)	Kathrine Pizzey	CAN	F09	38:58.0	15.4 km/h	19.0 %	(8 starters)
1)	Eva Carlsen	NOR	F11	48:05.5	12.5 km/h		(1 starter)

Before the classic race, it was reported to Team Captains that pole length would be checked visually to correspond to roughly shoulder height, and then with random measurements. Interestingly, people with too-long poles would be allowed to race (not sent back to get different poles), but the height over the legal limit would be recorded and then the Jury would make a decision. People were sent out to rake snow back onto any corners which might become icy, and there was a 'Technical zone' (diagonal stride or herringbone required) on the first steep uphill, although this had to be better marked for the second classic race.



Just about perfect conditions and excellently-prepared tracks in stunning scenery were what people found in Canmore

## Middle distance classic technique, Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> March

### Men's M01-M06 30 km

Fastest Phillip Violett	USA	M02	1.24:29.7	21.3 km/h		
1) Thomas Steiber	CAN	M01	1.26:07.1	20.9 km/h		
3) Joel Gervais	CAN	M01	1.39:52.7	18.0 km/h	16.0 %	(3 starters)
1) Gian Jorger	SUI	M06	1.25:24.3	21.1 km/h		
35) Glen Cowper	CAN	M06	2.12:21.8	13.6 km/h	55.0 %	(35 starters)

### Men's M07-M09 15 km

Fastest Harry Ala-Lahti	FIN	M07	42:32.9	21.2 km/h		
5) Pierre Harvey	CAN	M07	46:22.8	19.4 km/h	1.0 %	
22) Ross Wilson	CAN	M07	1.20:01.6	11.2 km/h	88.1 %	(22 starters)
1) Reidar Zapf-Gilje	CAN	M09	45:06.7	20.0 km/h		
28) Beau Kent	CAN	M09	1.08:30.5	13.1 km/h	51.9 %	(28 starters)

### Ladies F01-F08 15 km

Fastest Ivana Novosel	CAN	F02	48:02.8	18.7 km/h		
1) Cara O'Bryne	CAN	F01	53:35.0	16.8 km/h		
4) Lisa Loosemore	CAN	F01	1.02:18.9	14.4 km/h	16.3 %	(4 starters)
1) Marianne Niemi	FIN	F08	51:35.9	17.4 km/h		
15) Kathi Antolak	USA	F08	1.30:29.2	9.9 km/h	75.3 %	(15 starters)

### Men's M10-M12 10 km

Fastest Alpo Virtanen	FIN	M11	33:02.3	18.2 km/h		
1) Tapio Ikaheimonen	FIN	M10	35:12.8	17.0 km/h		
14) Ray Shaw	USA	M10	54:54.0	10.9 km/h	56.0 %	(15 starters)
1) Tim Carter	USA	M12	41:58.4	14.3 km/h		
4) Paul Kaald	USA	M12	1.05:50.3	9.1 km/h	56.9 %	(4 starters)



All races were very fast, but it's difficult to judge the overall track difficulty

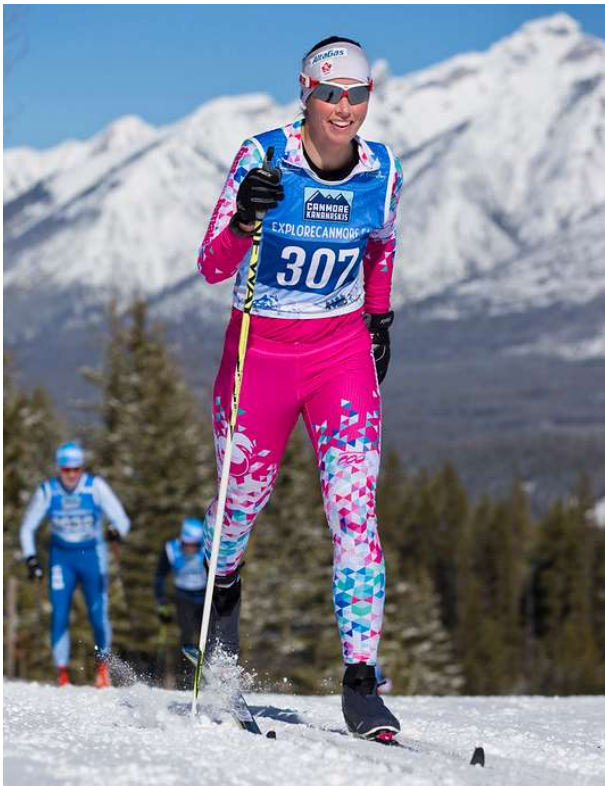




These people are gliding, but the track looks flat! So conditions must have been fast

**Ladies F09-F11 10 km**

Fastest	Marie-Louise Svevad	NOR	F10	40:05.6	15.0 km/h		
1)	Ann Hopkinson	USA	F09	41:29.1	14.4 km/h		
8)	Berit Grosvold	NOR	F09	51:16.9	11.7 km/h	23.6 %	(8 starters)
1)	Abett Icks	USA	F11	48:39.1	12.3 km/h		
3)	Patricia Taylor	USA	F11	1.31:34.7	6.6 km/h	88.3 %	(4 starters)



Don't you wish that you'd been there, in conditions like these?

She might have chosen to do only one race, but Laura certainly chose the right one, 10 km classic, for her Masters debut, because it brought her a comfortable silver medal. Let's not discuss how many people were in the race, because this is irrelevant; one can only beat the people who come to the line. But, as I've said in the past, there are medals to be won for British ladies and Laura joins a shortlist of just three other British ladies who've won medals at an MWC or World Winter Masters Games. Having just missed out on a medal in his first, 30 km free, race, Laura's partner Jan Thomas went two places better and won a silver medal in his second race, 10 km classic. It was close, though; just 5.1 seconds slower and it would have been bronze. But this, the first of two medals are, to the best of my knowledge, the first and only medals to have been won for Ireland in a MWC.

#### Short distance classic technique, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March

##### Men's M01-M09 10 km

Fastest	Phillip Violet	USA	M02	29:46.0	20.2 km/h		
1)	Thomas Steiber	CAN	M01	30:27.9	19.7 km/h		
2)	Jan Thomas Rossiter	IRE	M01	31:53.3	18.8 km/h	4.6 %	
3)	Graham Watts	CAN	M01	31:58.3	18.8 km/h	4.8 %	(3 starters)
1)	Reidar Zapf-Gilje	CAN	M09	34:42.0	17.3 km/h		
17)	Robert Mcnamara	USA	M09	56:18.8	10.7 km/h	62.2 %	(17 starters)

##### Ladies F01-F08 10 km

Fastest	Mari Lindstrom	FIN	F01	34:06.1	17.6 km/h		
2)	Laura Harrisson	GBR	F01	43:14.1	13.9 km/h	26.8 %	(2 starters)
1)	Pat Pierce	CAN	F08	35:54.0	16.7 km/h		
16)	Kathi Antolak	USA	F08	1.03:42.2	9.4 km/h	77.4 %	(16 starters)

##### Men's M10-M12 5 km

Fastest	Alpo Virtanen	FIN	M11	16:29.9	18.2 km/h		
1)	Phil Mahoney	USA	M10	16:54.6	17.8 km/h		
17)	Ray Shaw	USA	M10	24:55.3	12.0 km/h	47.3 %	(17 starters)
1)	Anders Porsanger	NOR	M12	21:47.2	13.8 km/h		
2)	Paul Kaald	USA	M12	33:49.6	8.9 km/h	55.2 %	(2 starters)

##### Ladies F09-F11 5 km

Fastest	Triner Hosmer	USA	F10	17:38.1	17.0 km/h		
1)	Silvia Stettler	CAN	F09	17:50.7	16.8 km/h		
8)	Berit Grosvold	NOR	F09	24:36.1	12.2 km/h	38.0 %	(8 starters)
1)	Abett Icks	USA	F11	23:29.0	12.8 km/h		
4)	Patricia Taylor	USA	F11	44:12.3	6.8 km/h	88.1 %	(4 starters)

#### Short distance free technique, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March

##### Men's M01-M09 10 km

Fastest	Samy Laubscher	SUI	M02	29:06.3	20.6 km/h		
1)	Andre Tremblay	CAN	M01	31:02.4	19.3 km/h		
3)	Stephen Ferguson	CAN	M01	43:10.8	13.9 km/h	39.0 %	(3 starters)
1)	Einar Vikingstad	NOR	M09	37:38.2	15.9 km/h		
25)	Eric Jansen	USA	M09	1.01:35.4	9.7 km/h	63.6 %	(41 starters)



**This could have been you!**



**Must have been a warm day, as Laura and Jan Thomas wax outside (what's wrong with the hotel room?)**

It was business as usual for Jack over the short distance; another day, another gold medal, ho hummm, move along, nothing to see here! This also proved to be Steve's worse result of the week, both in terms of race speed and percentage of the winner's time.

#### Ladies F01-F08 10 km

Fastest	Jonna Kuronen	FIN	F04	37:37.1	16.0 km/h		
1)	Maryann Moore	CAN	F01	37:47.1	15.9 km/h		
5)	Lisa Loosemoore	CAN	F01	50:01.8	12.0 km/h	32.4 %	(5 starters)
1)	Rosalyn Singleton	USA	F08	43:20.4	13.8 km/h		
12)	Didi Roberts	USA	F08	1.05:05.2	9.2 km/h	50.2 %	(12 starters)

#### Men's M10-M12 5 km

Fastest	Willibald Tschernernjak	AUT	M10	18:30.6	16.2 km/h		
9)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M10	24:06.3	12.4 km/h	30.2 %	
11)	Tim Schowalter	USA	M10	27:11.1	11.0 km/h	47.0 %	(11 starters)
1)	Jack White	CAN	M11	21:49.8	13.7 km/h		(5 starters)
1)	Tim Carter	USA	M12	23:51.4	12.6 km/h		
2)	Edelbert Klimmer	AUT	M12	29:01.4	10.3 km/h	21.7 %	(2 starters)

#### Ladies F09-F11 5 km

Fastest	Patsy Murphy	CAN	F09	21:06.9	14.2 km/h		
7)	Karen Seaward	USA	F09	24:31.1	12.2 km/h	16.3 %	(7 starters)
1)	Eva Carlsen	NOR	F11	26:35.5	11.3 km/h		(1 starter)

In these results, I've included Pierre Harvey, not to criticise a former top skier for failing to win in the Masters but only for interest, since many listeners will remember him in his prime.



Thursday, just two races to go, long-distance free technique and classic. It was colder on these days but, despite this, there were very few DNFs and not many DNSs, either. Jack, much as predicted, completed his hat-trick of gold medals, an excellent performance while, for I believe the very first time, Steve came last in his age group! There were some DNSs, though, and his percentage was better than his short race and just a little down on his middle-distance race.

#### Long distance free technique, Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March

##### Men's M01-M06 45 km

Fastest	Orion Berryman	USA	M03	1.54:56.4	23.5 km/h		
1)	Andre Tremblay	CAN	M01	1.56:19.7	23.2 km/h		
3)	Joel Gervais	CAN	M01	2.34:20.5	17.4 km/h	32.7 %	(3 starters)
1)	Werner Schwar	CAN	M06	2.07:02.7	21.3 km/h		
25)	Rolf Fox	CAN	M06	2.46:44.5	16.2 km/h	31.2 %	(26 starters)

##### Men's M07-M09 30 km

Fastest	Barry Makarewicz	USA	M07	1.20:58.0	22.2 km/h		
33)	Dean Grove	CAN	M07	2.07:37.6	14.1 km/h	57.7 %	(33 starters)
1)	Einar Vikingstad	CAN	M09	1.31:46.6	19.6 km/h		
18)	Colin Gray	CAN	M09	2.09:30.0	13.9 km/h	41.4 %	(19 starters)

##### Ladies F01-F08 30 km

Fastest	Jonna Kuronen	FIN	F04	1.25:43.4	21.0 km/h		
1)	Mari Lindstrom	FIN	F01	1.27:31.6	20.6 km/h		
5)	Carlee Glendenning	CAN	F01	1.54:11.2	15.8 km/h	30.5 %	(5 starters)
1)	Laura Colnaghi	ITA	F08	1.45:10.3	17.1 km/h		
7)	Wendy Grater	CAN	F08	2.03:06.2	14.6 km/h	17.0 %	(7 starters)

##### Men's M10-M11 (no M12s) 15 km

Fastest	Willibald Tschernernjak	AUT	M10	48:19.3	18.7 km/h		
8)	Steve Smigiel	USA	M10	1.00:46.6	14.8 km/h	26.0 %	(8 starters)
1)	Jack White	CAN	M11	56:49.0	15.8 km/h		
5)	Hans-Jurgen Hahn	GER	M11	1.11:53.3	12.5 km/h	26.6 %	(5 starters)

##### Ladies F09-F11 15 km

Fastest	Carolyn Tiernan	USA	F09	52:05.1	17.3 km/h		
7)	Kathrine Pizzey	CAN	F09	1.06:30.1	13.5 km/h	27.6 %	(7 starters)
1)	Eva Carlsen	NOR	F11	1.35:05.7	9.5 km/h		(1 starter)

#### Long distance classic technique, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March

##### Men's M01-M06 45 km

Fastest	Phillip Violet	USA	M02	2.09:26.2	20.9 km/h		
1)	Thomas Steiber	CAN	M01	2.13:34.9	20.2 km/h		
5)	Joel Gervais	CAN	M01	2.46:13.2	16.2 km/h	24.4 %	(5 starters)
1)	Gian Jorger	SUI	M06	2.14:10.5	20.1 km/h		
21)	Michel Beaupre	CAN	M06	3.17:34.1	13.7 km/h	47.3 %	(21 starters)

**Men's M07-M09 30 km**

Fastest	Harry Ala-Lahti	FIN	M07	1.27:24.9	20.6 km/h		
8)	Pierre Harvey	CAN	M07	1.36:55.2	18.6 km/h	10.9 %	
21)	Ross Wilson	CAN	M07	2.01:08.6	14.9 km/h	38.6 %	(23 starters)
1)	Olaf Knai	NOR	M09	1.36:16.5	18.7 km/h		
10)	Ray Dickerson	USA	M09	2.10:03.1	13.8 km/h	35.1 %	(11 starters)

**Ladies F01-F08 30 km**

Fastest	Chantell Widney	CAN	F03	1.41:19.5	17.8 km/h		
1)	Aleesha Clark	CAN	F01	1.49:31.5	16.4 km/h		(1 starter)
1)	Pat Pierce	CAN	F08	1.44:14.7	17.3 km/h		
11)	Gail Niinimaa	CAN	F08	1.57:56.1	15.3 km/h	13.1 %	(11 starters)

**Men's M10-M12 15 km**

Fastest	Phil Mahoney	USA	M10	53:20.5	16.9 km/h		
12)	Ken Blatt	USA	M10	1.18:11.7	11.5 km/h	46.6 %	(13 starters)
1)	Tim Carter	USA	M12	1.05:34.7	13.7 km/h		
4)	Bill Hamilton	CAN	M12	1.42:52.6	8.7 km/h	56.8 %	(4 starters)

**Ladies F09-F11 15 km**

Fastest	Suzanne Corkran	USA	F09	2.04:01.7	7.2 km/h		
7)	Berit Grosvold	NOR	F09	2.23:28.5	6.3 km/h	15.7 %	(8 starters)
1)	Abett Icks	USA	F11	1.16:22.7	11.8 km/h		
2)	Pat Kaald	USA	F11	1.54:46.4	7.8 km/h	50.2 %	(3 starters)

**What scenery, what conditions!**