

BLACKSHEEP

MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB



Blacksheep Mountain Bike Club

2021 Annual Report

Blacksheep Mountain Bike Club 2021 Annual Report



Showing MP Patty Hajdu around the new trails built in phase I of the Trowbridge Forest Masterplan.

**RIDE.
BUILD.
REPEAT.**

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Dear Members,

The 2021 mountain bike season was one of Blacksheep's most successful years in our history. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to pose challenges for the club to overcome. With the slow easing of government limitations throughout the summer, our clubs committees tactfully planned events for our members to enjoy with safety as our number one priority. With the hard work of all our committee members and dedicated volunteers, Blacksheep was able to offer its most diverse calendar of events yet.

Our membership grew over 30% to another record high of 520 members!

Even with the early season limitations due to the pandemic, our membership grew over 30% to another record high of 520 members! Even with the pandemic canceling Blacksheep's annual Trails and Ales fundraiser for a second year, we still continued to see a strong number of trail supporter memberships. We had 121 trail users make a direct contribution to the maintenance and development of the Trowbridge Forest trail system.

With all the donations and support from the membership, our trail committee was able to complete many updates to the trail system, including the completion of upgrading the hydro field dirt jumps, finishing the new addition to The Otherside (Rocky Road), rebuilding the tread on Crossover, and many other specific system upgrades.

Our grants committee began to see all their hard work pay off as the first two major sections of the Trowbridge Forest Master Plan were completed. Precambrian Natural Surface Trail Inc. completed both the Balsam Connector, a 2.4 km green trail with 1 km of blue off-trails connecting the west end of the system with Balsam St. The Kinsmen Field Bike Park, which offers riders four different jump lines of varying difficulty along with a pump track, was also constructed. Both have been great additions to the trail system and have raised quite the excitement. Precambrian Trail will continue work on the Mesa section of the Master Plan next summer which will bring additional flow and tech trails to the system.

New to Blacksheep's event calendar for the 2021 season was the introduction of multiple social ride options and youth specific bike skills programming. Blacksheep successfully piloted four new ride

options with a focus on trying to grow the social aspect of the club. During the summer members had the option of choosing from our Saturday Learn the Mines, Tuesday Skills Nights, Women's Only, and 19 plus Intermediate/Advanced Social Rides. Blacksheep was also able to partner with Katherine Morency to offer three weekend-long youth skills clinics where younger riders were able to learn new skills and improve their current abilities.

Last but certainly not least, our race and events committees held a jam-packed summer of events that included the first ever Ozzy 8 endurance relay event and our largest-ever Shuniah Forty Miner. Even with our Wednesday Night Race Series starting later in the summer due to the slow lifting of gathering restrictions, our race committee was still able to host 7 races with an average turnout of 120 people per race.

Our race and events committees partnered together to host the first annual Ozzy-8, an eight-hour endurance relay event which allows riders to tackle the course all on their own or in teams of up to 5, with the glory of each category up for grabs. To finish off the season strong both committees partnered again to host the 6th annual Shuniah Forty Miner presented by Tbaytel, which after a capacity 2020 race, grew to be the largest event Blacksheep has ever hosted. With a new two-day structure and keynote speech from World Cup racer Jenn Jackson, the 254 racers made it a day to remember.

I look forward to seeing how much farther the club will grow in the 2022 season!

Sincerely,
Tristin Radley-Hansen
President
Blacksheep Mountain Bike Club





Rock chute on Rocky Road.

Membership Growth

Over the past four years Blacksheep has grown at an unprecedented rate. Since the summer of 2017 the club has increased 276.5% to over 500 members, split between three major categories:

- Racing Members
- General Members
- Trail Supporters

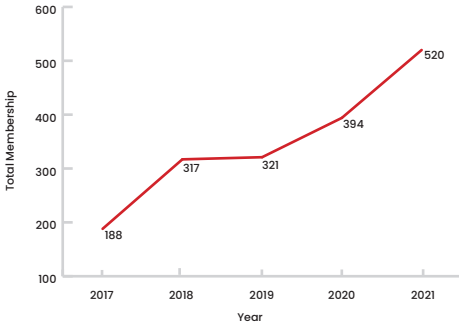
The club has been able to expand its membership base by leaning on its core strengths of trail building and racing while also expanding its focus on growing the social aspect of the biking community. In 2021 the club was safely able to offer three times the average number of recurring groups rides, host three targeted three week youth skills clinics, and two major festivals, the Ozzy 8 and the Shuniah Forty Miner, the latter drawing 254 racers and a crowd of over 500 throughout the weekend!

Kinsmen bike park grand opening day.

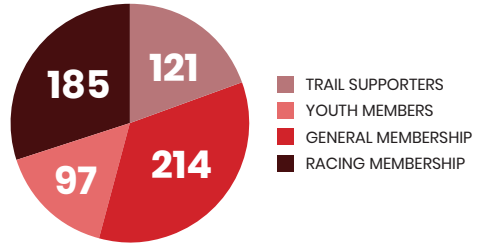


2021 Statistics

CLUB MEMBERSHIP GROWTH



MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN



12,830 TRAIL COUNTER CHECK-INS
APRIL-SEPTEMBER 2021

4,039
HOURS OF RIDING*

2,395
RIDER LOGS POSTED*

53.1%
VISITING RIDERS*

RIDER CHECK-INS*
31,438

* Stats from Trailforks



COVEYOR BELT
GRAND CHASM
DRIFT
DAGOBAH
DOCTORS

Communications

Follow us at
[@officialblacksheepmtb](#)

Are you wondering how to keep up on all things Blacksheep? Our communications director is hard at work providing multiple information sources for members and the general public.

Did you know that March is Membership drive month?

Each March Blacksheep holds its annual membership drive. This year's event saw significant buy-in from individuals looking forward to a summer of events after a pandemic lockdown winter. Those who sign up during the membership drive also get to take advantage of early bird pricing.

Monthly Newsletter & Website News

Each month members will receive an email newsletter that highlights all the important information that club members may be interested in. The newsletter is just one more way we hope to keep everyone informed on the large number of events, programs, and initiatives that Blacksheep is

involved in.

The Blacksheep Website continues to be the best source for all news, information and just about anything else you need to know about the club.

Social Media Presence

Social media is one of the easiest and fastest ways to reach both club members and the general public. Find out about all our most up-to-date information on Facebook and Instagram. This year our Facebook reach was 50,296. That is a 122% increase over last year. Instagram provided a steady stream of photos and videos promoting the amazing riding in Thunder Bay.

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER HERE:



Blacksheep in the News

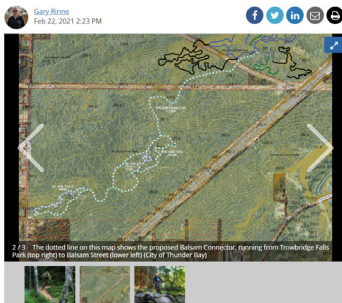
2021 saw multiple news and radio articles about the accomplishments of Blacksheep MTB. Check out a few of the top stories:

More Cash For The Trowbridge Forest Rec Trail

Thunder Bay, ON, Canada / 99.9 THE BAY
Katie Nicholls
Oct 16, 2021 | 6:00 AM

Trowbridge Forest trail network expansion set to begin (3 Photos)

A new link from Balsam Street will add another access point to the expanding trail system.



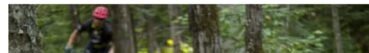
THUNDER BAY — Construction of a major expansion of Thunder Bay's mountain biking trail system is expected to begin in May and finish by October.

The city's Trowbridge Forest Recreational Trail Master Plan, developed in 2017, called for improvements to provide additional recreational opportunities for local residents and tourists, and potentially to attract national-level mountain bike competitions to Thunder Bay.

Thunder Bay hotel tax dollars to be used to improve mountain biking trails



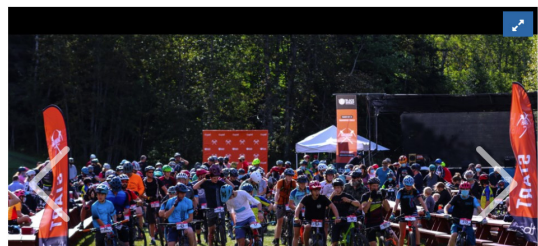
CBC News - Posted: Jun 16, 2021 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: June 16, 2021



BOLD: A beautiful landscape to ride in (5 photos)

Expansions to biking trails in Thunder Bay has the potential to attract tourists.

Ayano Hodouchi-Dempsey
Nov 1, 2021 1:00 PM







Blacksheep Racing

First Blacksheep Short Track (XCC) race.

The 2021 race season successfully hosted seven cross country events on Wednesday nights, along with 2 festival events; The Shunaih 40-Miner and the new Ozzy-8 Relay. The season was especially challenging due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, and the race committee was tasked with navigation a number of provincial and local health guidelines in order to ensure the health and safety of all participants and volunteers.

Wednesday Night Series

Oversight and planning for the Wednesday Night Race Series was handled by the six person Race Committee. Tasks for this group included design of the race courses, prepping and flagging, coordinating volunteers, timing and results.

This year's series saw a number of major accomplishments including the addition of the first Short Track (XCC) race, improvements to live series standings and web posting of results, more timely information provided on upcoming events, the addition of a new chip timing system and a fully online registration system.

In October, the racing awards banquet was held to celebrate the successful season and honour category winners and volunteers.

Key Statistics:

206 racers

1099 individual racer starts

18 volunteers.

Largest Wednesday night races was 129



6th Annual Shuniah Forty Miner

The 6th Annual Shuniah Forty Miner presented by Tbaytel took place on Saturday September 11 in Trowbridge Forest. The event saw over 250 racers and over 500 total people making this edition of the Shuniah Forty Miner Thunder Bay's largest bike race ever!

Thunder Bay's favorite World Cup racer Jenn Jackson of Norco Factory Racing gave a keynote address Friday night to a large crowd. She spoke of her journey in sports that included her time spent training in Thunder Bay as a member of the cross country skiing National Development Centre.

The event saw over 250 racers and over 500 total people making this edition of the Shuniah Forty Miner Thunder Bay's largest bike race ever!

The races on Saturday were filled with many excited folks, many for their first race ever. Riders competed a slightly modified version of the classic Miner course, completing one, two or four laps of the top trails in Northern Ontario.

The festivities continued at Kinsmen Park, which included a full events zone, the Lake of the Woods beer gardens, massive video screens and live music. Many burgers were eaten, many beverages were consumed and lots of fun was had by all. This event is truly becoming the premiere bike festival in Northwestern Ontario. Planning has already started for The Shuniah Forty Miner 2022!



(Top) Wheelieing through the 40Miner finish line. (Bottom) Jenn Jackson posing with a young Blacksheep racer.



Join us next year for the 7th Annual Shuniah Forty Miner on September 9-10th, 2022



Ozzy-8 Endurance Relay

The newest addition to the events schedule in 2021 was the Ozzy-8 endurance relay event. Covid restrictions early in the season had organizers unsure if the event would even happen and ultimately registration opened only 10 days from the event. The event still ended up having 83 people registered, with riders attending from as far away as Sault Ste Marie. Riders were allowed to compete in either the solo category or in teams of up to 5. The focus of the event was to complete as many laps of the 7.5km course as possible over 8 hours.

The event was a massive success, with great feedback from both organizers and participants.

Trail Development

The 2021 trail building season was defined by a growth in development activities and hindered by continuing pandemic restrictions and the forest fires in Northwestern Ontario. Despite these setbacks the trail committee and Blacksheep Mountain Bike Club trail volunteers were able to complete a significant number of projects:

- Corridor clearing and leaf blowing on all trails in both the spring and fall.
- Improved road access via the Adventure Trail for maintenance and emergency services.
- Repaired significant drainage issues on Doctor's and Peekaboo.
- Development of a new 'B-line' at the top of Grand Chasm and repairs to 80 percent of the trail tread.
- Completed construction on Rocky Road, a 244m line of solid rock and wooden bridges.
- Rehabilitation of Crossover including tread enhancements and new drainage.
- Decommissioned doubletrack access to Otherside and the Balsam Connector by constructing a machine built flow trail to finish off the new trail.
- Rerouted a section of Cassandra to a more sustainable slope.
- Added a qualifier feature to Lower 2k at hydro field.
- Reroute of Milk & Cookies to improve the trails sustainability and add in some more technical futures.

- Rebuilt the first three jumps on the Hydro Jump line.
- Rerouted Upper 2k off of Conveyor Belt to eliminate two dangerous intersections. Old connections will be closed off in the 2022 season.
- Constructed a wooden drop on Drift.
- Improved drainage and repaired tread on Dagobah and Stranger.
- Removed trash from Shuniah Mines that was collected by volunteers.
- Cleared brush to improve sightlines on Conveyor Belt and Drift.
- Continued to update and install new signage.

2021 saw some of the largest technical trail features (TTFs) ever added to trails in Trowbridge Forest. New iconic features such as 'The Waterfall' on Rocky Road and the 1.8 meter tall 'Drift Drop' ensure riders can achieve new heights with their riding in Thunder Bay. As well, new progressive trails like Milk & Cookies create optional lines to aid riders in developing their skills. Overall these additions have created new and challenging experiences for local riders.

2021 saw some of the largest technical trail features (TTFs) ever added to trails in Trowbridge Forest.

Lots of rough cut cedar was used for the wooden features on Rocky Road.



TRAIL BY THE NUMBERS

3,720 METERS OF
NEW TRAIL



21M WOOD
FEATURES

3 ADOPTED
TRAILS



ROCK **230M**
ARMOURING



2 TRAILS
REBUILT

11 UPGRADED
TRAILS



958 HRS VOLUNTEER
TRAIL WORK



TROWBRIDGE FOREST MASTERPLAN

BSMTB in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay Parks and Open Space Section started construction on the Trowbridge Forest Recreation Master Plan in 2021. The complete plan will add approximately 20 km of mountain bike singletrack trail, a bike park and new park infrastructure. The total cost of the project is \$1.5 million, with funding being secured through the following:

\$760K from NOHFC

\$450K from FedNor

\$250K from CEDC Thunder Bay

\$50K from City of Thunder Bay - Parks and Open Space

Work on the master plan is expected to take two years and be completed by the fall of 2022.

Three contracts were issued this build season for the master plan:

4.5km Balsam connector zone - this area is primarily a beginner trail and provides a new trail head for the system on the west end.

The Kinsmen Bike Park - the new park has four large jump lines, a pump track and new walking trails. The area is also maximized for event hosting.

6.0km Trowbridge Mesa - the highest elevation zone that is the most technical terrain. This area

features large side slopes, small cliffs, rock and boulder piles, and Canadian Shield slab.

The added infrastructure and trails will provide greater recreation opportunities, improved race hosting and create a tourism draw for the city of Thunder Bay.

All three contracts were awarded through the City of Thunder Bay procurement system to Precambrian Natural Surface Trails Inc, which is a local company that specializes in mountain bike optimized sustainable trail design.

The complete plan will add approximately 20 km of mountain bike singletrack trail, a bike park and new park infrastructure.

Due to delays in the construction season caused by one of the worst fire seasons ever experienced in Northwestern Ontario, only the Balsam Connector Zone and the Kinsmen Bike Park were complete. The Trowbridge Mesa project will be carried forward into spring 2022.

Social Programs, Group Rides & Events

Four different group rides were available in summer of 2021, including Saturday Learn the Mines, Tuesday Skills Nights, Women's Only, and 19 plus Intermediate/Advanced Social Rides. All rides were successful rides with room to grow for 2022.

Tuesday Skills Nights

Six rider development skills clinics were held in 2021 and offered members a chance to learn everything from the basics for riding a mountain bike to more advanced skills needed for technical trail riding. The skilled group leaders broke sessions out into multiple sessions that focused on areas such as cornering, drops, descending, bunny hops, braking, and technical climbing.

Women's Only

This bi-monthly social ride allowed women of all ages and fitness levels a chance to ride together, learn from one another, and meet new riding partners. The group leaders for 2021 ensured that the ride was not only about hitting some trails, but giving women a place to learn new skills, try new things and shred some singletrack.

Learn the Mines Social Ride

Learn The Mines was a new event added to the social event schedule based on the influx of new riders as well as the expansion of the trail system.

The rides covered trail etiquette, signage, and different routes/trails, followed by a guided ride with a local expert.



This ride was very well attended by new members joining the club. Surprisingly, the ride ended up being attended by many out of town riders driving through, including individuals from Southern Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and even as far away as Germany.

FATBIKING

While the pandemic made hosting fatbiking events in 2021 problematic, ideal conditions throughout most of the winter provided numerous riding opportunities on the groomed trails in



the Trowbridge Forest. Fatbikers, if they had purchased a day-park pass, were also welcomed to ride the various groomed cross-country trails in the Sleeping Giant Provincial Park.

Global Fatbike Day, held on December 4, 2021, had over 20 participants and was the only fatbiking event hosted by the Blacksheep in 2021. The event was hosted on the trails of Trowbridge Forest where riders were greeted with excellent early season snow conditions. The morning was capped off with hot chocolate and locally made donuts.

In 2022, the Club is hoping to host a number of events and races including the first ever Fatbike Fondo and Family Fatbike Day in February, and the Fatbike Loppet in March. Details of these events will be provided in early 2022.

2022-24 Strategic Plan

The long-term success and growth of Blacksheep Mountain Bike Club is dependent on significant funding and trail development, along with the continued growth in mountain biking and outdoor recreation. This recent growth created the need for the Club and its Board of Directors to revisit their vision, mission, and values and set their strategic direction for the future. As a result, the Club with support from Destination Northern Ontario and the Thunder Bay CEDC, retained Compass to guide and support their next strategic plan, with a focus on the three-year period 2022-2024. The Compass team included;

Ian McCormack and Marla Morrison (Principals)

Alex Man, Geological Engineer and Trail Designer with Scatliff Miller Murray.

The planning project began in late September with a kickoff meeting and was completed by the end of December. Development of the plan included completion of an environmental scan, evaluating results of recent client experience surveys, community partner engagement sessions and analysis of the clubs strengths and weaknesses.

2022-24 Blacksheep MTB Strategic Plan:

VISION

Thunder Bay and region is an international mountain biking destination. Trails, people, and riders are developed to world-class standards, and we are continuing to drive the development of infrastructure, programs, and riders.

MISSION

Our purpose is to grow the passion and participation in mountain biking in Thunder Bay and region through the enjoyment of riding and the development of new trails that challenge riders of all ages and skill levels.

VALUES

We will:

- Serve the full spectrum of riders, from beginner to expert.
- Remain committed to being a mountain biking club.
- Encourage and model enjoyment and fun.
- Foster ongoing education and rider development.

- Create trails that are sustainable by design accessing greenspace to enjoy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Growing our membership by attracting new riders across all age groups and reflecting the diversity of our community. Accessibility, engaging with our community, and rebuilding our partnerships with schools will be key to achieving this objective.

Planning for and beginning the development of the next stage of mountain biking trails in our area, as we strive to create a network of world-class mountain biking destinations in Thunder Bay and region.

Continue to develop our programming and event offerings, with a focus on rider development from beginner to expert. This will include the identification and pursuit of a national level riding event, offering programming of not only an elite event, but that will also attract community wide participation and interest.

Develop the necessary governance structures and capacity that matches the organization we have become, and that will appropriately lead and support our expected growth. Prepare and implement a plan focusing on Board and volunteer development and sustainability over the long-term. Identified sub-priorities include:

Prepare and implement a Risk Management Plan that addresses matters such as the MOU with the City of Thunder Bay, financial and insurance related risks, safety and organizational liabilities, trail maintenance planning, as well as emergency measures plans.

Proactively and effectively manage our partner relations including our relationship with the City of Thunder Bay, local and regional tourism organizations, the general and riding public, as well as relevant government ministries and funders.

Develop the business plan that will support the capability to attract and retain a paid general manager.



Sponsorship

Local businesses continued to support the Blacksheep in 2021 through our sponsorship program, event specific support for the Shuniah Forty Miner, and the new Trails Adoption Program (TAP). Sponsorship continues to be geared towards organizations that donate cash, merchandise and gift certificates to the Club to help cover general operating costs. In 2021 this support helped Blacksheep purchase over \$3,500.00 in prizes and merchandise from local shops and retailers. These items were distributed to racers, trail builders, and volunteers as draw prizes at races, festivals, and at the year-end banquet.

Our 2021 sponsors include:

Diamond sponsors:

KBM Forestry

Wanson's Lumber

Silver sponsors:

Alignment Chiropractic

Rutter Urban Forestry

TBT Engineering

Friends of Blacksheep:

Gear Up for Outdoors

The Trails Adoption Program (TAP) was started in 2021 on a trial basis with the local bike shops; **3Ride, Fresh Air and Rollin Thunder.** TAP enabled these selected businesses to nominate a trail and assist with maintenance and improvements over the course of the season. Support for these



trail maintenance days were provided by Trails and Sponsorship representatives from Blacksheep. TAP sponsors were recognized on our website,

through our social media strategies, and at the annual banquet.

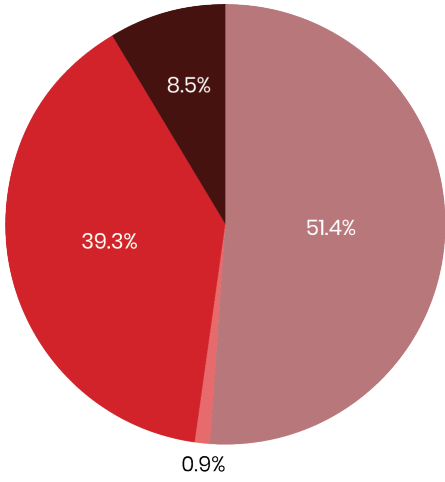
In 2022, TAP will be opened to all local businesses, community organizations, school groups, or individuals interested in this type of sponsorship. Sponsors interested in any of our sponsorship programs are encouraged to contact us at sponsorship@blacksheepmtb.com for information on these opportunities.



With support from all the local businesses, Blacksheep has been able to continually improve and increase the level of its race series, events, club programming, and trail building. Without the support from all of our dedicated sponsors Blacksheep would not have been able to host a weekend-long event, the Shuniah Forty Miner that had over 250 racers and 500 spectators or be able to offer a week night racing series that attracts over 120 participants on average.

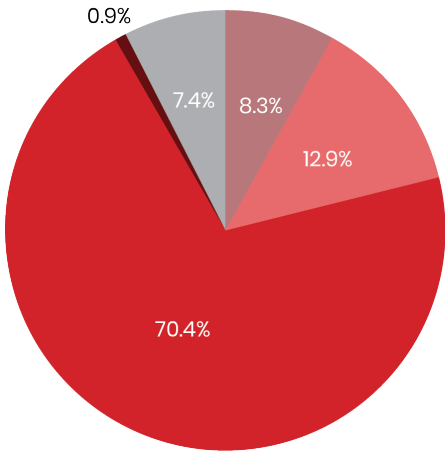
Blacksheep's increasing ability to offer larger scale programming has a direct effect on our membership base which continually increases our ability to improve and expand the existing trail system in Thunder Bay. As the trail system grows, interest in activities such as biking grows and so does Blacksheep's membership. All of which are driven by the club's dedicated volunteers and supportive sponsors. Blacksheep is excited to see how far biking can grow in Thunder Bay.

Finances



REVENUE

 MEMBERSHIP FEES	\$35,498.55
 SPONSORSHIP	\$620.00
 EVENT REGISTRATION	\$27,143.58
 TRAIL FUND REVENUE	\$5,961.02



EXPENDITURES

 ADMINISTRATION	\$4,323.06
 INSURANCE	\$6,737.04
 PROGRAMING & EVENTS	\$36,662.58
 TRAIL MAINTENANCE	\$486.76
 TRAIL FUND EXPENSES	\$3,848.77

Board of Directors



President
Tristin Radley-Hansen



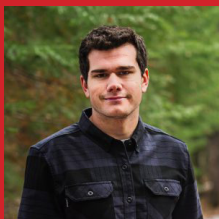
Vice-President
Mark Maranzan



Secretary
Nicholas Bel



Treasurer
Brent Maranzan



Trail Development
Michael McKenzie



Race Director
Eric Bailey



Event Coordinator
David Valente



Sponsorship
Harvey Lemelin



Communications
Jonathan Portinga



Director at Large
Ben Urbanski

Trail Development Committee

Andrew Hindle, Bruce McKay, Daniel Fiorito, Gerald Hamm, Harvey Lemelin, Jermy Goth, Jonathan Portinga, Kristain Hodgkins, Mike Barten, Mark Maranzan, Michael McKenzie

Racing Committee

Ben Urbanski, Eric Bailey, Katherine Morency, Nicholas Bel, Steven Anderson, Tristan Radley-Hansen

Events Committee

David Valente, Melissa Faiers, Phil Brown, Ruth Mills



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