



Ottertail, MN Round One

Cor Powersports kicked off the 2023 race season with an inaugural season opener in Ottertail, Minnesota. A hot spot for both snowmobiling and ice fishing, this region made the perfect location for a cross country snowmobile race. The racing surface was a plowed 9.9-mile course on Otter Tail Lake making for some high speed, tight corner racing action. Temperatures stayed in the teens most of the weekend with the sun beating down on the lake. Wind was low which made it a great event for the spectators in their cars or on their trail sleds! Snow dust was an issue Saturday morning which caused a short delay for safety.

The first race of the weekend started around 9:45 AM which was the Pro Open and Semi Pro Improved one lap qualifier. This race was shortened down from two laps due to the snow dust. After one quick lap, Zach Herfindahl was the top qualifier in Pro Open on his Arctic Cat with a time of 9 minutes 8.048 seconds. Second quick was David Brown on Arctic Cat (-2.888 second), third was Paul Brown on Arctic Cat (-4.689 second), fourth quick on his Polaris was Aaron Christensen (-4.932 second) and rounding out the top five on Ski-Doo was Wes Selby (-6.782). For the Semi Pro Improved division, Jesse Hallstrom (Ski-Doo) was the top qualifier with a fast lap of 9 minutes 21.548 seconds. He out ran his competition by 17.509 seconds which was Nick Swenson on his Arctic Cat timing in second. Coming in third was Dustin Schwandt on Arctic Cat (-17.611), fourth was Luke Van Lyssel on Polaris (-18.888) and rounding out the top five was Brandon Wolter on Polaris (-20.021).

Races two through five consisted of classes that run a two-day merged format. Some notable leaders after day one would be McKenna Cloose leading the Pro Factory Women's division after day one by 18.986 seconds over Savannah Landrus. Brady Wadena led the Junior 14-17 class by only 1.304 seconds over Aaden Olson.

Race six on the day was the six lap Semi Pro Improved final. With snow dust hanging around and a tight first corner. This race was run as a timed event rather than a heads-up start. Sleds left the line 10 seconds apart in the order they qualified and the winner was determined by who had the fastest overall time, not necessarily who crossed the line first. The first sled to leave the line was the Ski-Doo of Jesse Hallstrom. He enjoyed the clean air and laid down a blistering lap time of 9 minutes 10.388 seconds. This was the fastest time in the Semi Pro division so far this weekend and is only two seconds off Herfindahl's Pro Open qualifying time. After lap one he was on top of the scoring bracket with Nick Swenson in second (9:21.979) and Boe Bunke in third (9:28.756). On lap two, Hallstrom was still out front but Swenson laid down his fastest lap of the race (9:21.579). On lap three, Bunke laid down his fastest lap of the race (9:26.449). Hallstrom kept up his speed throughout. After six laps, no one could match Jesse Hallstrom's first lap speed and he claimed his first Semi Pro Improved win of the season with a total time of 55 minutes 43.361 seconds on his Ski-Doo. On the final lap Dustin Schwandt ran his fastest lap of the race

which secured his second place 37.080 seconds out of first on his Arctic Cat. Rounding out the podium was Nick Swenson 42.388 seconds out of the lead on his Arctic Cat. In fourth was the Polaris of Boe Bunke (-1:44.464) and in fifth was the Semi Pro Improved rookie Aiden Johnson on Arctic Cat (-1:53.420).

The final race of the day was the eight lap Pro Open final. This race was shortened from 10 laps and was also run as a timed event. With the length of this race, riders must make a mandatory fuel stop before getting the white flag and put a minimum of four gallons of fuel in their sled. Racers were sent out one at a time 10 seconds apart. Zach Herfindahl led the pack around and pulled a lead after lap one. His lap one time was 9:02.251. His teammate David Brown timed in second (9:09.208) which was his fastest lap of the race. Time in third was Ross Erdman (9:09.623), fourth was Aaron Christensen (9:11.416) and fifth was Re Wadena (9:13.210) which was also Re's fastest lap. On lap two Hefindahl was still out front with Erdman moving into second and Brown falling back to third. Wes Selby found his way into fourth with his fastest lap of the race (9:10.816) and in fifth was Christensen. On lap three Hefindahl and Erdman both threw down heaters with Hefindahls being the fastest lap of the day and the only sub-9-minute time. Herfindahl clocked in at 8:59.568 while Erdman ran a 9:07.660. Brown still sat in third, Christensen back to fourth and Selby now fifth. On lap four the top two remained the same with Christensen moving into third, Selby into fourth and Brown back to fifth. On lap five Herfindahl made his mandatory fuel stop which was the fastest fuel lap of the race (9:29.733). Erdman still ran second after five, Christensen ran his fastest lap of the race and sits in third (9:07.452), Selby sat in fourth and Brown in fifth. On lap six Herfindahl still led with positions two through five all fueling. Christensen was able to make his way into second in time after fueling with Erdman in third, Selby fourth, and Brown fifth. Lap seven Hefindahl held a strong lead after the rest of the pack fueled with Christensen in second, Erdman in third and Selby still in fourth. Brown had a mechanical on lap seven and did not finish which put Peppel and Feil into contention of a top five finish. On lap eight, third place runner Ross Erdman ended his race and scored a DNF. After eight laps, Zach Herfindahl was able to edge out his competition on his Arctic Cat with a total time of 1 hour 12 minutes and 41.513 seconds. This was 1 minute and 16.064 seconds faster than his competition! Coming in second was Aaron Christensen on his Polaris who missed most of last season due to an injury. Happy to see Aaron back on the course this year. Rounding out the podium was Wes Selby on his Ski-Doo (-1:40.772). Coming in fourth was Matt Feil on Arctic Cat (-1:55.962) and with a career best in fifth was Evan Peppel on the Hetteen Heritage Racing Polaris sled (-2:09.872).

Sunday brought similar temperatures but with a slight wind which helped the snow dust rise more than yesterday. The day started out with the Pro Factory Stock and Semi Pro Factory Stock two-lap qualifier. Herfindahl and Selby were neck and neck with times but after two laps Herfindahl edged out Selby for the top qualifying spot by 0.736 seconds. Herfindahl's total time was 18:16.065. Timing in third was Polaris rider Ross Erdman (-9.212 seconds), fourth quick was Paul Brown on Arctic Cat (-9.583 seconds), and in fifth was Marshall Busse on Polaris (-12.924 second). In the Semi Pro Factory Stock class, Evan Peppel was the top qualifier with a time of 18:28.375. He was 16.316 seconds faster than the second place rider of Nick Swenson on his Arctic Cat. In third was Dustin Schwandt on Arctic Cat (-25.539 seconds), timing in fourth was the Polaris of Boe Bunke (-27.418 seconds) and in fifth was Cooper Kangas on Ski-Doo (-39.369 seconds).

The remaining classes competed in their second day of racing which was then merged for a total overall time. In race two, The Sport Stock, Masters 5.0+, Junior 14-17, and Classic classes battled it out for eight laps total. In the Sport Stock class, which had 17 entries, Keagen Houser was victorious on his Arctic Cat with a time of 1 hour 17 minutes 45.549 seconds. In second was the Polaris sled of Oliver Olson (-2:34.577) and rounding out the podium was Adam Brandt on Arctic Cat (-3:19.410). In the Masters 50+ class, Mike Carver took the win with a total time of 1 hour 20 minutes and 29.835 seconds. In second was Jamie Smart (-2 minutes 32 seconds) and in third was Jon Arneson (-3 minutes 6 seconds) making it an all Arctic Cat podium. In the always competitive Junior 14-17 class, Brady Wadena came away with the win with a time of 1 hour 19 minutes and 32.035 seconds. In second was Aaden Olson (-41 seconds) and in third was Elliott Clark (-2 minutes 30 seconds) making it another all Arctic Cat podium.

Race three consisted of the Junior 10-13, Junior 10-13 Girls, and the Junior 8-12 Transition class. These racers competed in six laps over two days. In the Junior 10-13 class, there was a tight battle with Novacek leading by four seconds after day one. After day two, Rielly Clark took the win on his Arctic Cat with a time of 1 hour 9 seconds and 54.901 seconds. Reese Novacek came in second on her Polaris 44.970 second out of the lead. Rounding out the podium was Bryden Diesen on his Arctic Cat (-2:26.909). In the Junior 10-13 Girls class, Reese Novacek duel entered so she took the win in this class. In second was Kynsie Diesen on Arctic Cat (-10 minutes 52 seconds) and in third was Madyson Landin on Polaris (-21 minutes 33 second). In the Junior 8-12 Transition class (which is a lake race specific class) Gage Clark took the win on his Arctic Cat with a time of 57:57.146.

The Pro Factory Women's and Trail classes were up next who competed in eight laps over the two days. The Pro Factory Women's class had the most entities it has had in years and is a very young group of competitive women! A few of these ladies just made the jump up from the junior ranks this season. McKenna Cloose held her lead after day one and took the overall win on her Arctic Cat with a total time of 1 hour 20 minutes 31.942 seconds. Coming in second was Savannah Landrus on Polaris (-31 seconds) and in third in her first Pro Women's race was Unity Gausen on her Polaris (-1 minute 10 seconds). In the Trail class, Adam Brandt took control and won on his Arctic Cat with a time of 1 hour 19 minutes 43 seconds. In second was Chance Ogle on Polaris (-1:59.305) and in third was Adam's brother Suart on his Arctic Cat (-2:38.475).

The last combined race of the weekend was race five; Expert 600 Limited, Masters 40+, and Sport Improved Stock. Most of these racers have already been out on the track in another class so for some this is a redemption race and for some, they are trying to win another division. In the Expert 600 Limited class, Brady Wadena took another class win with a total time of 1 hour 18 minutes and 17.053 seconds. In second was Aaden Olson (-1 minutes 23 seconds) and in third was Elliott Clark (-1 minute 51 seconds) making it the same podium order as the Junior 14-17 class. In the Masters 40+ class, Mike Carver earned himself another class win with a total time of 1 hour 19 minutes and 34.743 seconds. In second was Dale Cloose (-18 seconds) and in third was Jamie Smart (-3 minutes 25 seconds). In the Sport Improved Stock class, Keagen Houser claimed another class win with a total time of 1 hour 16 minutes 54.822 seconds. With another second place in the Sport divisions was Oliver Olson (-1:24.691) and in third was Stuart Brandt (-4:28.144).

Race six was the Semi Pro Factory Stock final. Sleds left 10 seconds apart in the order in which they qualified. Evan Peppel was the first off the line with Nick Swenson in tow. Yesterday's Semi Pro Improved winner, Jesse Hallstrom had to start in the back of the pack after an issue in the qualifier Sunday morning. The final was scheduled to be a six-lap race with results based off of time. After lap one, Hallstrom was fastest with a lap time of 9:10.370. Peppel was second with a 9:10.779 and Swenson in third with his fastest lap of the race, 9:14.232. Clocking in third was Bunke (9:22.400) and in fifth was Kangas (9:25.307). On lap two Peppel laid down the fastest lap of the race with a 9 minute 6.672 second lap which put him into the lead and was the fastest Semi Pro lap all weekend. Hallstrom now ran second and Swenson in third. The next three laps Peppel ran consistent 9:08 laps which kept him out front until the checkers. Peppel saw the checkers after lap six and pulled off. The next racer that came through was Nick Swenson. On the final corner Swenson lost control and crashed into the finish line structure and was in need of medical attention. He had crossed the scoring stripe so he completed the race but his need for medics on the course caused us to red flag the race. This meant the remaining racers would not see checkers. According to our rule book, if a race is red flagged, the race results are based off the last completed lap. This made us score the race as a five-lap race with the top three remaining the same. Evan Peppel took his first Semi Pro Stock win of the season with a time of 45 minutes 42.766 seconds. Coming in second was Jesse Hallstrom from the back of the pack 15.482 seconds behind Peppel. Scoring third despite his crash was Nick Swenson -1:26.021 out of the lead. Fourth place finisher was Cooper Kangas (-1:26.021) and fifth was Luke Van Lyssel (-1:49.588).

The final race of the weekend was the premiere Pro Factory Stock 10 lap final. Racers were given the green in 10 second increments with Zach Herfindahl leading the pack. This race, like the Pro Open final, had a mandatory fuel stop that must be made before the white flag. After lap one, Selby was out front and ran his fastest lap of the race, 9:04.745. Dan Revering timed in second with his best lap of 9:06.851. Zach Herfindahl sat third, Re Wadena fourth, and Paul Brown in fifth. After two laps Selby was still top time with D. Revering in second, Paul Brown up to third, Herfindahl in fourth and Christensen in fifth. Lap four the running order remained the same. The following lap, top five runner Paul Brown dropped out of the race scoring a DNF which put Justin Tate into the top five. On lap six, Selby, D. Revering, and Herfindahl all fueled. Selby was slow out of the fuel stop which put out of the top three. Christensen took over the lead but had not yet fueled, D. Revering and Herfindahl the new top three. Lap seven Christensen laid down his fastest lap (9:07.640). On lap eight, Christensen was the last to fuel. After 10 laps of close racing, the top five finished within 33 seconds. Wes Selby was able to edge out Dan Revering by just 2.407 seconds. Selby's winning time was 1 hour 32 minutes 20.015 seconds. Saving his best lap for last was Zach Herfindahl (-4.233 seconds) rounded out the podium.. Clocking in fourth was Aaron Christensen (-18.378) and in fifth was Taylor Bunke (-32.724).

We hope to see everyone next weekend at our first terrain race of the year in Nisswa Minnesota for the Nisswa 100.

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