



## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

### **Laura Leclair and Julian Smith Repeat as Eastern Canada/Candy Cane Cup Champions**

#### **Nakkertok's Pierre Grall-Johnson and Chelsea's Tory Audet ski to silver**

**Gatineau, Quebec, December 12, 2021** - It was clear and sunny today for the distance classic races at Gatineau's Nakkertok Ski Centre, a big change from the rain and slush of yesterday's sprint. The courses were in excellent shape as Chelsea's Laura Leclair and Owen Sound's Julian Smith picked up their second gold medals of the inaugural Eastern Canada Cup race weekend, in the 10 and 15k classic distance events.

Laura led from start to finish recording a dominant win, 25.8 seconds over 2nd place Tory Audet, her Chelsea Nordiq teammate, and the top junior competitor. Liliane Gagnon of Lévis, another junior, finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5 seconds later.

As overall winners, Smith and Leclair came away with \$600 each, as part of the \$2,000 "A Hall Mark of Excellence" funding. A total of \$6,200 of prize money was distributed, including \$1,000 provided by Cross Country Ontario and Ski de Fond Quebec.

**Laura Leclair:** "Super happy, super proud. The conditions were amazing, it was spring skiing and the course was really fun and I'm super happy to win in front of my family and friends here at home back in the Outaouais."

On the men's side, Owen Sound's Julian Smith was also a repeat winner in a bit closer race, finishing 4 seconds ahead of Nakkertok's Pierre Grall-Johnson. Étienne Hébert completed the podium with 3<sup>rd</sup>, a bit over 20 seconds back. 4<sup>th</sup> went to Felix-Olivier Moreau who was also the top junior.

**Julian Smith:** "It was really fun. This is always a great weekend that a lot of parents and supporters come to. Hard to not enjoy it regardless of the results. I feel motivated for the rest of the season."

ENGNE was created by Chelsea Nordiq, Nakkertok Nordic, Club Skinouk and the Gatineau Loppet to organize the Gatineau stage of the 2016 Ski Tour Canada, FIS World Cup event. ENGNE ran the 2019 Canadians Ski Championships and was scheduled to run the 2021 Championships until it was cancelled due to Covid-19.

**Pierre Grall-Johnson:** “Good race today, despite a little crash early on the race. I had a good rhythm and was happy that Julian and I had a good battle to decide the top of the podium.”

That wraps up the Canada Cup weekend at Nakkertok, with national level races returning February 11-13, the Eastern Canadian Championships which are also organized by ENGNE.

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**Results:** <https://zone4.ca/event/2021/candycanecup/>

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