



42K Marathon

Course Description

Not that you will remember all of this, but we wanted to provide you with a narrative of the course to help you get prepared for the fourth running of the **Wolf Tracks Rendezvous 42K Ski Marathon**.

The race will start outside the chalet in the ski school area. With 5-6 classic lanes, it's a straight start of 50+ meters to a hard left around the big pine tree sends you out on **Base Loop** in a 50-meter untracked scramble zone. Two classic tracks will lead striders to the first climb about .5K into the race, reducing to a single track for the rest of the race beginning halfway up that hill. Continue on **Base Loop** to **Nose Dive Alley** (minus the dive). At the end of **Nose Dive** you'll make a quick right onto **XC Express** for a short downhill where you'll have a hard right hand turn onto **Survivor**, which you'll be skiing in reverse of its normal flow. Continue onto **Tornado Alley** in the same reverse direction, and at the 4K mark you'll be entering the first of the 'black' or most difficult trails: **Nutcracker**.

Be prepared as this trail is generally narrower, twistier, and more undulating than most. After about a minute or two into **Nutcracker**, you'll encounter your first testy downhill – a steep elevator shaft with a big left hand hook at the bottom. Cross the road and you'll have some wider easier stuff to navigate before you get to the next of three more big downhills that have some twists and turns. Caution signs will be out there letting you know when those are approaching. At the end of **Nutcracker**, you'll come to the **1st Aid Station (8.7K)** with water (white/clear cups) & **energy drink (red cups)**.

You'll then flow onto the 2.5K **Yukon Trail**. Nothing too crazy here, except the nice views of Yukon Swamp. After Yukon, you'll zig-zag right-left onto **Beaver Pond** via 20-meters on **X-C Express**. **Beaver Pond** is a short, difficult trail with one downhill left-hander and a second big downhill with a sweeping S-curve. You probably won't see it, but there's a great view of the pond at the bottom of the S curve. Shortly after that, you'll be back on the **Base Loop** heading toward the **2nd Aid Station (12.75K)**.

A short trip down and up **Creek Trail**, a quick split on **Lynx**, a sweeping right onto **Red Pine**, and another right-left zig-zag on **Silver Strider** will bring you to the formidable, and appropriately named, "Corkscrew" section of **VO2 Max**. This is one of the most action-packed 1.4K stretches you'll ever ski. Be ready for lots of ups, downs, twists and turns. After you make the new, flowing left exit out of **VO2 Max** onto **X-C Express**, congratulations are in order as all of the most difficult technical skiing is over with.

You've got a Km or so of nice, 30'-wide, easy trails ahead of you on **X-C Express** before a short 0.9K detour on **Mellow Meadow**. After you exit **Mellow Meadow**, another short stretch on the wide **X-C Express** will bring you to the **3rd Aid Station (17.7K)** and the start of a 10K+ stretch on **Nekoosa** and **Wolf Tracks**. Enjoy these two trails if you're primarily a skater, as these two trails are only groomed for classical skiing the rest of the year. About 1K into the **Wolf Tracks** trail, there will be a 150-meter two-way section that is now as wide as X-C Express. **Wolf Tracks** is a fairly easy skiing trail with long flat sections, a long gradual grind of an uphill, and some rollers. Those who aren't in too much of a hurry may very likely see real wolf tracks as members of the North Willow Wolf Pack are seen out here quite often.

Exit **Wolf Tracks** with a sharp right, take **Nekoosa** a few hundred meters, and you'll be at the **4th Aid Station (28K)** with food and energy gel. A short trip back down **X-C Express** will bring you right to the very fun **Steeple Chase**. Be careful of the last downhill with a hard left on this trail. A right-hand turn and an easy Km down the flat, wide **Nepco's Cruise** will bring you to the start of **River Run**. **River Run** is a wonderful 10K intermediate level trail with a little bit of everything. For several different reasons, it is many people's favorite trail at Winter Park. For the sightseers, there are spectacular views of the Squirrel River. Out here you'll come upon the stocked **5th Aid Station (33K)** after a new, permanent trail re-route (no more bumpy marsh crossings!), the towering trees in the Squirrel River Pines State Natural Area, and then the **6th Aid Station (39.5K)**. Shortly after that last aid station, you'll exit River Run and you're almost home. It's quick compound downhill on **Nepco's Cruise** to the **2K-To-Go** mark. Take a breather on the 1K rolling **Sleigh Ride**, and shift into top gear for a final down-sloping or flat Km on **Silver Strider**. Enter the stadium from along the parking lot, and sprint up to the finish line outside the Chalet.