

Algonquin athlete hopes to continue his winning ways this winter



By Nate Smelle

2022 has proven to be another successful year for competitive runner and snowshoer Bernie Hogan. Hogan began this past season on July 18 with a 10-kilometre race along the waterfront in Toronto. Placing second out of the 247 runners in his age group, he ended up finishing 29th overall among the 2,348 runners in the race.

From there Hogan brought home first place in the five-kilometre Lindsay Milk Run on July 17. His time of 16 minutes and 27 seconds was enough to earn him the top rank among the 108 runners competing that day.

Hogan added to his list of achievements again with another big win at the Tom Longboat Toronto Island Run on Sept. 11. Crossing the finish line with a time of 17:18, he placed first overall among the 499 competitors in the race.

Hogan wrapped up the running season with another first place finish in the five-kilometre Toronto Oasis Zoo Run on Sept. 17. Completing the race with a time of 17:37, he placed first in his age group, and first overall among the 917 runners.

Now that the first snow of the season has arrived, Hogan has replaced his running shoes with snowshoes. As much as he enjoys running marathons, he said the races he competes in each summer also serve as a means of training for his favourite sport, snowshoeing.

As a member of the Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin First Nation, Hogan acknowledges the significance of snowshoeing for Indigenous people in Canada. Recognizing the sport as part of his own heritage, he hopes to see more Indigenous athletes pick it up.

'It's not easy to run in the snow, but it's a lot of fun,' Hogan said. 'I would love to see more Aboriginal people give it a try. It seems to be getting more popular. Now places that have cross-country ski trails are adding snowshoeing trails as well. There is even talk about making it an Olympic sport.'

So far, Hogan has six snowshoeing races scheduled for the upcoming season. He said the first race of the season is a night competition that will take place in Morrisburg in January. According to Hogan, for the first time ever one of these races is slated to take place in North Hastings at the Cedar Ridge Camp near McArthurs Mills. Tentatively scheduled for the weekend of March 3, he said they are hoping to be able to officially announce the details of the race sometime in January.