



THE WORLD'S FASTEST SLEDS RETURN TO THE FASTEST ICE ON EARTH™ JANUARY 10th!

2 January 2026

Rainy Lake, International Falls MN - "The Icebox of the Nation" The Thunderbird on Rainy Lake is pleased to announce the return of the Straight Line Speed Association to sanction the *2026 Battle at The Icebox* snowmobile race on Saturday, January 10th. The Thunderbird will host the event with support from the International Voyageurs Snowmobile Club on the frozen surface of Rainy Lake.

Over 225,000 acres large, Rainy Lake is world renowned for many things – a world-class year-round multi-species fishery, astounding natural beauty, breathtaking boating opportunities, incredible beaches, northern lights, Kettle Falls, Voyageurs National Park, and... The Fastest Ice on Earth! The Thunderbird on Rainy Lake has produced world record setting snowmobile speed runs for over 35 years.

The quest for 200mph has been ongoing since Marv Jorgenson first ran 190.308 mph at this very track at The Thunderbird back in 1989.

Over the past 35 years, many accomplished racers have raced unlimited or outlaw machines in pursuit of being the first to top 200mph including Jorgenson of Chopper City Sports with *Jaws III*. Paul Grothe campaigned three different renditions of the *Budweiser Sno King* and later drove *Frozen Assets* for the Warning Family. John Dee piloted the *Arius Overture* with a 1650hp alcohol powered hemi. In 2015 the Warning family campaigned *Frozen Assets II* driven by Ryan Ensor to a World Record of 191.574mph, finally surpassing Marv's record. Chris Baynes ran 198.67mph in Willmar MN - still just shy of the 200mph barrier.

For the 2024 season Baynes began campaigning the brand new Hypersports *Speed Needle 2.0*.

Kurt Mohawk of Straight Line Speed Association secured a couple of late season race locations on the Minnesota-Canada border going as far north as possible to find safe ice. Crane Lake and Rainy Lake in International Falls provided the required thick ice for a couple World Record attempts. The Crane Lake event experienced warm weather, producing soft ice not conducive to records. One week later on March 4th at The Thunderbird Baynes' first pass was 201.70mph. 35 years later, MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

An hour later Chris and crew pushed the *Speed Needle* to the line for the second attempt and to back up the first pass within 2% to certify the new World Record. The second pass was even faster at 202.33.

The Quest for 200mph finally realized... Chris Baynes is the fastest man in Snowmobile Speed Run history.

Come join in on the fun and excitement at The Thunderbird on race day, Saturday, January 10. While the Pros are perhaps the ones to watch, local racers are welcome and encouraged to participate in various classes of competition. Tether safety switches are required, and studs are recommended on the shaved ice surface.

Visit ThunderbirdMN.com and <https://www.facebook.com/straightlinespeedassociation> for further information.



TWO SNOWMOBILE RACES FOR 2026 AT THE THUNDERBIRD

Saturday, January 10

3rd Annual “*Battle at the Icebox*” sanctioned by the Straight Line Speed Association (SLSA) - **The World’s Fastest Sleds Return to *The Fastest Ice on Earth*™**

Sunday, February 15

17th Annual “*Falls International Speed Run Against Cancer*” presented by the International Voyageurs Snowmobile Club

Both events are considered “speed runs”. Racers begin from a standing start and attempt to achieve the fastest speed at the end of the 1,000-foot long racetrack. Officials determine which competition class that a snowmobile is placed in based on various factors such as type/model/make of snowmobile, engine size, weight, type of modification(s), fuel, etc. Racers then compete for top speed within their competition class and overall top speed of the event.

The Jan 10th event is primarily organized for competition among professional racers and teams competing for prize money, trophies and championship points (although some locals will compete in stock/trail and modified classes). The racers will also be attempting to break the Snowmobile World Speed Record of 202.33 MPH set by Chris Baynes during the Inaugural SLSA race at the Thunderbird in 2024. A previous World Record of over 190 MPH was set at The Thunderbird by Marv Jorgenson in 1989 and stood until 2015. With the world’s first 200 MPH run in history and the current World Record both set on the frozen surface of Rainy Lake after previously holding it for over 25 years from 1989-2015, the ice at The Thunderbird is considered *The Fastest Ice on Earth*™. The Thunderbird trademarked the phrase in late 2025.

While the Jan 10 race draws the Pros vying for world records and championships at over 200 MPH, the Feb 15th event is the local snowmobile club’s charity fundraiser for local cancer patients. Funds are raised from event entry fees, a large donation from The Thunderbird based on revenue from the event and sponsorships. The event is designed around locals having fun racing for top speed in class and against each other in side-by-side competition. 100 MPH is considered fast at this event, although the all-time fastest run was set several years ago by Melody Wold of Elko MN at 134 MPH. This annual event draws 50-75 racers from northern Minnesota and Ontario and hundreds of spectators from our area. The event produces the largest daytime crowd of the year at The Thunderbird. The Lounge and dining room are generally standing room only and large crowds gather outside on the decks and trackside on the ice.