



Participants in last year's Northland 300 snowmobile ride between Two Harbors and Ely take a break on the trail. The annual ride that raises money for Special Olympics is Jan. 28-29.

PHOTO COURTESY OF POOKER MEISTER

Meister and Co. ready to ride for Special Olympics

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With Minnesota trapped in a deep freeze, many St. Croix Valley residents are staying inside.

Stillwater's Pooker Meister, however, couldn't care less about the temperature — he's ready to ride his snowmobile in the annual Northland 300 Jan. 28-29 to help raise money for the Special Olympics.

Meister, whose family owns Meister's Bar & Grill in Stillwater, will be riding for the 20th consecutive year and will join other riders on a round trip trek from Two

Harbors to Ely. The Northland 300 is a four-day event that attracts up to 125 riders each year.

Not a race, the Northland 300 raises funds for Special Olympics Minnesota, raising more than \$3.3 million since its inception 23 years ago.

"This is the most organized thing I've ever done that's raised this much money," Meister said. "It's a four-day event. It can get pretty cold out there, it was 40-below once day last year, but we don't care. We're just out having a good time and raising money for a great cause."

The event — with rid-

ers breaking into teams for the long trek — kicks off with an opening ceremony Thursday morning at Superior Shores Lodge in Two Harbors. The first team departs at 8:30 a.m. that day and the event will eventually come to a close with a dance and a raffle ticket drawing Jan. 29.

Special Olympics Minnesota provides year round sports training and competition for people with intellectual disabilities that contribute to life-long physical fitness, personal growth and achievements.

"I am very proud to have been able to be a part

of this event for the past 20 years," Meister said. "We're going to have a great time and it's always great to meet some of these very special athletes. We hope that people donate for this great cause — any amount would be greatly appreciated."

To donate to the event, mail contributions to Pooker Meister, 901 S. 4th Street, Stillwater, MN 55082. All checks should be made payable to Special Olympics Minnesota. For more information on the event, visit www.northland300.org.

