

Tested on Tour **BAFFIN** keeps me **WARM**

by Craig Nicholson



Cold feet can ruin a good day of snowmobiling, but I haven't had this problem since switching to Baffin boots several years ago. Now I'm wearing their Polar Series Men's 4000 Eiger boot with Velcro fasteners (on right in photo). Marsha has their Arctic Series Women's 4010 Impact boot with buckle fasteners (on left in photo). Both are rated to a temperature as low as -100°C, but that's not all...

Dressing your feet isn't much different than suiting up your body. You want to keep the warmth in, the cold out and to stay dry. This is more of a challenge with your feet because they are farther way from your core body heat. So the more reduced your blood flow is to your extremities, the colder your feet will be. And if your body core starts getting cold, it automatically protects itself by limiting the heat circulated to your extremities.

In addition, each foot releases up to a full cup of moisture per day as water vapour that can result in feeling cold and clammy. Even if you don't think you sweat, you can bet your feet are releasing moisture as you ride! These factors are exacerbated when your feet sit comparatively still on cold running boards while you are riding your snowmobile. So my remedy for all of the above is to wear a very warm, dry pair of Baffin Boots.

You've heard about layering. Baffin boots have proprietary multiple layers that act as a complete, integrated system to provide superior thermal warmth, heat retention and moisture control. My Polar Series boots have an 8-layer combination of materials and my feet are cradled in a protective waterproof shell. Baffin wicks away foot perspiration from my skin and expels it from my boots. So unless I'm unfortunate enough to step into deep water somehow, there's simply no way my Baffin-enclosed feet can get cold or wet within the temperature range I'm willing to ride a snowmobile (which



is nowhere near as cold as -100°C, believe me)!

While Baffin does an exceptional job of keeping my feet warm and dry, I've got a job to do too. First, I make sure to get Baffin boots that are big enough. Typically, this means larger than the normal size of my street shoes. I do my try on with the socks I will be wearing to go snowmobiling. A new Baffin boot will always feel snug until each multiply layered inner boot conforms to my feet, but from the outset I make sure I have enough room to wiggle my toes freely without feeling jammed.

My second job is to wear socks that support and enhance the wicking properties of my Baffin boots. Baffin makes both under knee and mid-calf technical socks designed to do just that.

Thirdly, at the end of every day's ride, I pull out and separate the inner boot and insoles from the boot shell. Where possible, I place the inner boot over a hot air vent to dry overnight. Why? Remember that cup of water vapour each foot can release? While the Baffin system does keep my feet warm and dry all day, I don't want to start a new day behind

the eight ball with the possibility of any residual moisture anywhere in my boots. My advice: don't ever buy boots for snowmobiling that do not have removable liners.

Baffin has a whole range of winter boots. I chose the Eiger and Impact models because I wanted quick, easy fasteners that won't freeze up (Like many of you, I slip my boots on and off without ever using the fasteners). I also liked the easy-close gauntlet at the top of each boot that keeps snow out when tightened. Plus, I find the Baffin boot soles provide decent traction when I'm walking around. We also find that the height of each boot fits comfortably inside the leg of our snowmobile pants and doesn't push against our shin bones when we ride knees tight to the back of our Ski-Doo sled cowling.

A rating down to -100°C may sound like overkill, but I'd rather have plenty of unused warming capability than not enough. Surprisingly, my feet have never been too hot in my Baffin boots, even riding in mild temperatures. And best of all, Marsha hasn't ever complained about cold feet since switching to Baffin! Check out their complete line up at www.baffin.com