

Champion Iron Reports Its Fy2025 Fourth Quarter Production And Sales

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- Quarterly production of 3.2M wmt, record sales of 3.5M dmt and cash cost of approximately \$80/dmt¹
- Reduced inventories stockpiled at Bloom Lake by 0.3M wmt to 2.6M wmt
- DRPF project advancing as planned for commissioning in December 2025

MONTREAL, April 29, 2025 /CNW/ - (Sydney, April 30, 2025) - [Champion Iron Ltd.](#) (TSX: CIA) (ASX: CIA) (OTCQX: CIA) ("Champion" or the "Company") reports production results and mining operating expenditures for its financial fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025. Detailed operational and audited financial results are scheduled to be released prior to the Company's financial fourth quarter conference call and webcast on May 29, 2025.

Champion's CEO, Mr. David Cataford, said, "Our team's agility and dedication were key to the successful completion of our scheduled semi-annual maintenance program during the period. While scheduled maintenance was expected to temporarily impact production, it also provided an opportunity to strategically reduce stockpiled iron ore inventories, despite seasonal logistics challenges. As global economies face uncertainties with rising trade tensions, our Company benefits from robust financial performance and diversified global partners, enabling us to diligently advance our growth initiatives."

Conference Call Details

Champion will host a conference call and webcast on May 29, 2025, at 9:00 AM (Montréal time) / 11:00 PM (Sydney time) to discuss the results of the financial fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025. Call details are set out at the end of this press release.

1. Quarterly Highlights

Operations and Sustainability

- During the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, no major environmental incidents were reported, but following an incident that caused minor injuries, safety procedures were reviewed as part of the Company's continuous improvement process;
- Quarterly production of 3.2 million wmt (3.1 million dmt) of high-grade 66.5% Fe concentrate for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, down 13% from the previous quarter, mainly attributable to the scheduled semi-annual shutdown of concentration plants, and down 3% over the same period last year;
- Record quarterly sales of 3.5 million dmt for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, up 6% from the previous quarter and 18% from the prior-year period due to the commissioning of additional rail equipment in the previous quarter, winter conditions that usually impact rail shipments;
- Iron ore concentrate stockpiled at Bloom Lake decreased by 341,000 wmt quarter-over-quarter to 2.6 million wmt as at March 31, 2025, as sales volumes exceeded production volumes during the quarter, benefiting from improved rail shipment capabilities. The Company is confident that the iron ore concentrate currently stockpiled at Bloom Lake will continue to decrease in future periods; and
- Record material mined and hauled at Bloom Lake, totalling 20.4 million tonnes for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, up 2% from the previous quarter and 27% from last year.

Financial Results

- C1 cash cost for the iron ore concentrate delivered to Sept-Îles port facilities totalled approximately \$80/dmt¹ (US\$) for the quarter ended March 31, 2025, an increase of 2% quarter-over-quarter, and 4% year-on-year;
- Cash balance totalled \$117.5 million as at March 31, 2025, an increase of \$24.4 million since December 31, 2024, resulting from the reduction in iron ore concentrate stockpiled at Bloom Lake, while continuing to advance the DRPF project and
- Available liquidity to support growth initiatives, including amounts available from the Company's credit facilities, totalled \$595.0 million¹ at quarter-end, compared to \$595.0 million¹ as at December 31, 2024.

Growth and Development

- The DRPF project, designed to upgrade half of Bloom Lake's capacity to DR quality pellet feed iron ore grading, is progressing as planned, with the commissioning phase expected to start in December 2025;
- As part of the previously disclosed binding agreement to form a partnership (the "Partnership") for the joint ownership and development of the Kami Project (the "Transaction") with Nippon Steel Corporation and Sojitz Corporation (collectively, the "Partners"), the Company and the Partners have made progress towards finalizing the definitive documentation for the Transaction. During the period, Champion and the Partners advanced the definitive feasibility study for the Kami Project (the "DFS") which is expected to be completed in the end of calendar 2026; and
- The Company received financial support from the Government of Québec for the development of a technology using Bloom Lake's iron ore in battery production and for the development of innovative technologies and processes, including geometallurgical tools to improve knowledge of mineral deposits and optimize the planning, concentration and processing of high-purity iron. These two scientific research projects highlight the rare high-purity of Bloom Lake's iron ore and its potential to contribute to technologies beyond the green steel supply chain.

2. Bloom Lake Mine Operating Activities

Bloom Lake produced 3.2 million wmt (3.1 million dmt) of high-grade iron ore concentrate during the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, a decrease of 3% compared to 3.3 million wmt (3.2 million dmt) during the same period in 2024.

As expected, during the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, production was impacted for several days by the scheduled semi-annual shutdowns of both concentration plants and adjustments to maintenance and recovery strategies caused by the adaptation to new ore feed zones, in line with the Company's long-term mine plan. Bloom Lake's overall performance was also impacted by winter conditions, which primarily affected transportation logistics and equipment availability.

During the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, Champion achieved record sales volumes attributable to the additional railcars and rolling stock recently commissioned by the Company and the rail operator, respectively. Due to the scheduled semi-annual shutdowns, sales volumes exceeded production, enabling the reduction in iron ore concentrate stockpiled at Bloom Lake by 341,000 wmt quarter-over-quarter to 2.6 million wmt as at March 31, 2025. The Company is confident that the iron ore concentrate currently stockpiled at Bloom Lake will continue to decrease in future periods as Champion should continue to benefit from the recent improvement in rail shipment capabilities. Future destocking of iron ore inventories is expected to occur at different rates considering the scheduled semi-annual maintenance work at the mine and on the railroads, and the seasonal impact on transportation logistics. Champion continues to seek improvements from the rail operator in order to receive contracted haulage services on a continued basis to ensure that Bloom Lake's production, as well as the iron ore concentrate currently stockpiled at Bloom Lake, is hauled over future periods.

The Company's focus remains to deploy work programs tailored to optimize operations and reliably produce at Bloom Lake's nameplate capacity. Additionally, Champion continues to analyze opportunities to structurally increase Bloom Lake's nameplate capacity beyond 15 Mtpa over time.

To optimize operations, since the fourth quarter of the 2024 financial year, the Company has arranged for both plants' scheduled maintenance to occur in the financial second and fourth quarters. This creates significant quarter-over-quarter variances in production output, mining and processing costs and inventory valuation at quarter-end.

	Q4 FY25	Q3 FY25	Q/Q Change	Q4 FY24	Y/Y Change
Operating Data					
Waste mined and hauled (wmt)	10,886,200	9,694,200	12 %	6,498,700	68 %
Ore mined and hauled (wmt)	9,470,100	10,347,500	(8) %	9,471,200	- %
Material mined and hauled (wmt)	20,356,300	20,041,700	2 %	15,969,900	27 %
Stripping ratio	1.15	0.94	22 %	0.69	67 %
Ore milled (wmt)	9,160,300	10,305,300	(11) %	9,349,100	(2) %
Head grade Fe (%)	29.2	29.3	- %	28.7	2 %
Fe recovery (%)	78.3	79.1	(1) %	80.2	(2) %
Product Fe (%)	66.5	66.3	- %	66.1	1 %
Iron ore concentrate produced (wmt)	3,167,000	3,620,600	(13) %	3,275,400	(3) %
Iron ore concentrate sold (dmt)	3,495,300	3,287,400	6 %	2,968,900	18 %

During the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, the Company set a new record by mining and hauling 20.4 million tonnes of ore and waste at Bloom Lake, exceeding the previous quarter's output and surpassing last year's volume of 16.0 million tonnes recorded during the same period last year. This quarter-over-quarter improvement in mining performance was driven by the Company's strategic investments in additional haul trucks and loading equipment, as well as enhanced utilization and availability of mining equipment. Champion anticipates maintaining elevated stripping activity levels in future periods, in accordance with its LoM plan.

The strong mining performance allowed the Company to mine and haul a higher volume of waste material, resulting in a stripping ratio of 1.15 for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, significantly higher than the 0.69 ratio recorded in the same prior-year period and the 0.94 ratio in the previous quarter.

During the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, the two concentration plants at Bloom Lake processed 9.2 million tonnes of ore, comparable to the same prior-year period. Although both periods were impacted by scheduled semi-annual shutdowns of the concentration plants, the volumes processed during the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, remained adversely impacted by ore hardness and limited milling capacity.

The iron ore head grade for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, was 29.2%, comparable to the same period in 2024. The variation in head grade was within the anticipated range of normal fluctuations outlined in the mine plan.

Champion's average Fe recovery rate was 78.3% for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, compared to 80.2% for the same period in 2024. This decrease was primarily attributable to the geological sequence encountered since the previous quarter. The normal evolution of the mine plan required adjustments to ore blending strategies, hardness management and recovery circuits. The Company continues to optimize its operations and remains focused on improving and stabilizing recovery rates over time, despite the expectation that ore hardness challenges will persist in the coming months.

3. Mining and Processing Operating Expenditures

For the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, the cost of sales totalled approximately \$280 million with a C1 cash cost of \$80/dmt¹, compared to \$227.5 million with a C1 cash cost of \$76.6/dmt¹ for the same period in 2024, and \$258.7 million with a C1 cash cost of \$78.7/dmt¹ for the previous quarter.

C1 cash cost for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, was impacted by higher mining and processing costs, primarily driven by slightly higher costs related to the scheduled semi-annual shutdowns performed at both concentration plants, higher stripping activities aligned with the long-term mine plan, and additional maintenance on crushers and grinding circuits that experienced premature wear due to the hardness of the ore processed. The increase in mining and processing costs was partially offset by lower land transportation and port handling costs, mainly attributable to the rail operator's semi-annual fuel price indexation and increased sales volumes during the period to amortize fixed costs at the Sept-Îles port facilities.

4. Exploration Activities

During the three-month period ended March 31, 2025,

- the Company maintained all its properties in good standing and no farm-in or farm-out arrangements came into effect; to final negotiations and the execution of definitive transaction documents, the Partners agreed to jointly conduct certain components of the Kami Project's DFS on a pro-rata basis, in accordance with their respective ownership percentages. Expected reimbursements of expenditures already incurred by Champion pursuant to the existing collaboration agreement with the Partners were deducted from exploration and evaluation assets;
- approximately \$11 million was incurred in exploration and evaluation expenditures, compared to \$1.6 million for the prior-year period; and
- exploration and evaluation expenditures were related to activities carried out in Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Details on exploration projects, along with maps, are available on the Company's website at www.championiron.com under the Operations & Projects section.

5. Conference Call and Webcast Information

A webcast and conference call to discuss the foregoing results will be held on May 29, 2025, at 9:00 AM (Montréal time) / 11:00 PM (Sydney time). Listeners may access a live webcast of the conference call from the Investors section of the Company's website at www.championiron.com/investors/events-presentations or by dialling toll free +1-888-699-1199 within North America or +61-2-8017-1385 from Australia.

An online archive of the webcast will be available by accessing the Company's website at www.championiron.com/investors/events-presentations. A telephone replay will be available for one week after the call by dialling +1-888-660-6345 within North America or +1-289-819-1450 overseas, and entering passcode 25785#.

About Champion Iron Limited

Champion, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Quebec Iron Ore Inc., owns and operates the Bloom Lake Mining Complex located on the south end of the Labrador Trough, approximately 13 km north of Fermont, Québec. Bloom Lake is an open-pit operation with two concentration plants that primarily source energy from renewable hydroelectric power, having a combined nameplate capacity of 15M wmt per year that produce low contaminant high-grade 66.2% Fe iron ore concentrate with a proven ability to produce a 67.5% Fe direct reduction quality iron ore concentrate. Benefiting from one of the highest purity resources globally, Champion is investing to upgrade half of Bloom Lake's mine capacity to a direct reduction quality pellet feed iron ore with up to 69% Fe. Bloom Lake's high-grade and low contaminant iron ore products have attracted a premium to the Platts IODEX 62% Fe iron ore benchmark. Champion ships iron ore concentrate from Bloom Lake by rail, to a ship loading port in Sept-Îles, Québec, and has delivered its iron ore concentrate globally, including in China, Japan, the Middle East, Europe, South Korea, India and Canada. In addition to Bloom Lake, Champion owns the Kamistiasusset mining properties, a project with an estimated annual production of 9M wmt per year of direct reduction quality iron grading above 67.5% Fe, located near available infrastructure and only a few kilometres south-east of Bloom Lake. In December 2024, Champion entered into a binding agreement with Nippon Steel Corporation and Sojitz Corporation to form a partnership to evaluate the potential development of the Kami project, including the completion of a definitive feasibility study. Champion also owns a portfolio of exploration and development projects in the Labrador Trough, including the Cluster II portfolio of properties, located within 60 km south of Bloom Lake.

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

This press release includes certain information and statements that may constitute "forward-looking information" under applicable securities legislation. Forward-looking statements are statements that are not historical facts and are generally, but not always, identified by the use of words such as "plans", "expects", "is expected", "budget", "scheduled", "estimates", "continues", "forecasts", "projects", "predicts", "intends", "anticipates", "aims", "targets" or "believes", or variations of, or the negatives of, such words and phrases or state that certain actions, events or results "may", "could", "would", "should", "might" or "will" be taken, occur or be achieved. Inherent in forward-looking statements are risks, uncertainties and other factors beyond the Company's ability to predict or control.

Specific Forward-Looking Statements

All statements, other than statements of historical facts, included in this press release that address future events, developments or performance that Champion expects to occur are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements include, among other things, Management's expectations regarding: (i) Bloom Lake's LoM, recovery rates, production, economic and other benefits, nameplate capacity and related opportunities and benefits, as well as potential increase thereof and related work programs and related investments; (ii) the project to upgrade the Bloom Lake iron ore concentrate to a higher grade with lower contaminants and to convert approximately half of Bloom Lake's increased nameplate capacity of 15 Mtpa to commercially produce a DR quality pellet feed iron ore, expected project timeline, capital expenditures, budget and financing, production metrics, technical parameters, efficiencies, economic and other benefits; (iii) the completion of a DFS related to the Kami Project and the Partnership and the timing thereof, the potential to receive future payments based on the financial performance of the Kami Project, the Partner contributions to support the DFS, the negotiations of and entering into definitive transaction documents with the Partners and terms thereof; (iv) the shift in steel industry production methods towards reducing emissions and green steel, and the Company's participation therein, contribution thereto and positioning in connection therewith, including related research and development, and the transition of the Company's product offering; (v) the Company's participation in the development of innovative technologies and processes and related opportunities beyond the green steel supply chain; (vi) maintaining higher stripping activities; (vii) expected ore hardness and recovery rates; (viii) stockpiled ore levels, destocking and related shipping; (ix) increased shipments of iron ore, impact of the delivery of additional railcars and rail equipment, and related railway and port capacity; * the Company's expected iron ore concentrate production and sales, mining and hauling activities and related costs; (xi) available liquidity to support the Company's growth projects and initiatives; and (xii) the Company's growth and opportunities generally.

Risks

Although Champion believes the expectations expressed in such forward-looking statements are based on reasonable assumptions, such forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors, most of which are beyond the control of the Company, which may cause the Company's actual results, performance or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed in forward-looking statements include, without limitation: (i) the results of feasibility studies; (ii) changes in the assumptions used to prepare feasibility studies; (iii) project delays; (iv) timing and uncertainty of industry shift to green steel and electric arc furnaces, impacting demand for high-grade feed; (v) continued availability of capital and financing and general economic, market or business conditions; (vi) general economic, competitive, political and social uncertainties; (vii) future prices of iron ore; (viii) future transportation costs; (ix) failure of plant, equipment or processes to operate as anticipated; * delays in obtaining governmental approvals, necessary permitting or in the completion of development or construction activities; (xi) geopolitical events; and (xii) the effects of catastrophes and public health crises on the global economy, the iron ore market and Champion's operations, as well as those factors discussed in the section entitled "Risk Factors" of the Company's 2024 Annual Report and Annual Information Form for the financial year ended March 31, 2024, all of which are available on SEDAR+ at www.sedarplus.ca, the ASX at www.asx.com.au and the Company's website at www.championiron.com.

There can be no assurance that such information will prove to be accurate as actual results and future events could differ materially from those anticipated in such forward-looking information. Accordingly, readers should not place undue reliance on forward-looking information.

Additional Updates

All of the forward-looking information contained in this press release is given as of the date hereof or such other date or dates specified in the forward-looking statements and is based upon the opinions and estimates of Champion's Management and information available to Management as at the date hereof. Champion disclaims any intention or obligation to update or revise any of the forward-looking information, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law. If the Company does update one or more forward-looking statements, no inference should be drawn that it will make additional updates with respect to those or other forward-looking statements. Champion cautions that the foregoing list of risks and uncertainties is not exhaustive. Readers should carefully consider the above factors as well as the uncertainties they represent and the risks they entail.

Abbreviations

Unless otherwise specified, all dollar figures stated herein are expressed in Canadian dollars. The following abbreviations are used throughout this release: US\$ (United States dollar), C\$ (Canadian dollar), Fe (iron ore), wmt (wet metric tonnes), dmt (dry metric tonnes), Mtpa (million tonnes per annum), M (million), k (thousand) km (kilometers), m (meters), LoM (life of mine), Bloom Lake or Bloom Lake Mine (Bloom Lake Mining Complex), DR (Direct Reduction), DRPF (Direct Reduction Pellet Feed), Kami (Kamistiasusset) and Phase II (Phase II expansion project). The utilization of "Champion" or the "Company" refers to Champion Iron Limited and/or one, or more, or all of its subsidiaries, as applicable. "IFRS" refers to International Financial Reporting Standards.

For additional information on Champion Iron Limited, please visit our website at: www.championiron.com.

This document has been authorized for release to the market by the Board of Directors.

The Company's audited Consolidated Financial Statements and associated Management's Discussion and Analysis for the year ended March 31, 2025, will be available under the Company's profile on SEDAR+ (www.sedarplus.ca), on the ASX (www.asx.com.au) and the Company's website (www.championiron.com) on May 29, 2025.

¹ C1 cash cost and available liquidity are non-IFRS financial ratio and measure, respectively, with no standard definition under IFRS and might not be comparable to similar financial measures used by other issuers. C1 cash cost is defined as cost of sales before incremental costs related to COVID-19 and Bloom Lake Phase II start-up costs (if any) divided by iron ore concentrate sold in dmt. This metric is an important tool to monitor operating cost performance. Available liquidity includes cash and cash equivalents, short-term investments (if any) and undrawn amounts of the credit facilities. The Company uses available liquidity to measure its liquidity to meet the requirements of lenders, fund capital expenditures and support operations. C1 cash cost for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, and available liquidity as at March 31, 2025, are unaudited. A reconciliation to the most comparable IFRS measure of C1 cash cost and available liquidity from previous quarters disclosed in this release have been incorporated by reference and can be found in the section 21 - Non-IFRS and Other Financial Measures of the Company's MD&A for the three and nine-month periods ended December 31, 2024, available on SEDAR+ at www.sedarplus.ca, the ASX at www.asx.com.au and on the Company's website under the Investors section at www.championiron.com.

Contact

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