

Wright-Champagne gets \$5,200 prize

by Mike Warme
for the Tundra Times

Roxie Wright-Champagne overcame warm weather, snow covered trails and seven Northwest competitors to walk away with \$5,200 in prize money and a first place jade trophy at the Stephen Sampson Memorial Race held in Noorvik by the Noorvik Sportsmen's Club, April 6-10.

Residents of the Kobuk River village were delighted to see the world champion triumph in their local competition. That's because tradition holds that "back in the old days," Stephen Sampson, Noorvik village legend, had transferred part his dog team to Roxie's father, Garreth Wright.

The swiftness of Roxie's team, therefore, was viewed as a local triumph.

Contrary to the final outcome, the first day's standings seemed to indicate that the world champion was about to meet one of her rare defeats. At the



Sports

end of day one, Eli Mitchell of Selawik had a 7-minute spread over the champion with Roxie finishing a distant fifth.

Second place finisher on day one was local champion, Warren Coffin of Noorvik who had been undefeated in five regional races.

Then on Sunday, April 2, after two days of postponement due to soaring temperatures that reached 38 degrees and 4 feet of soggy new snow, Roxie was able to re-establish her clear superiority leaving her nearest competitors, Ricky Vent of Huslia and Leo Sheldon of Noorvik, over 9 minutes

behind. The course was extremely soft on day two. Roxie ran 16 dogs, while Vent ran 18, and Sheldon, 11.

The third day's round extended Roxie's clear dominance as she built a 12-minute lead over the day's second place finisher, Speedy Sam of Huslia, and a 25-minute spread between

herself and over-all second place finisher Ricky Vent. In all, \$10,000 in prize money was distributed.

Standings of the top four include: Roxie Wright-Champagne, 5:35:14, \$5,200; Ricky Vent, 6:02:03, \$2,600; Leo Sheldon, 6:06:06, \$1,800; Speedy Sam, 6:10:27, \$1,400.