

'I'm proud to be an original Native'

by **Jenette Vlasoff**
for the **Tundra Times**

If you are Native or have some Native blood in you, you know how it is for me being able to do things other people aren't eligible to do.

If you aren't Native, then I will tell you about it in the following paragraphs.

You would be able to be in Native Youth Olympics, which is sponsored by Johnson O' Malley. NYO takes place in Anchorage on April 17, 18 and 19. The age group is from 12 to 18 years of age, or seventh thru 12th grades.

Some of the events that I'm going to tell you about are the 1 and 2-foot high kicks, seal hop, kneel jump and stick pull.

The 1-foot high kick is when you jump up off the floor on one foot, kick the ball with the other foot, and land on the same foot you kicked the ball with. The 2-foot high kick is similar to the 1-foot high kick, except you jump, kick and land on both of your feet. The two of these kicks use a soft ball about the size of a man's fist.

The rules are the same for both boys

and girls. They are judged on who can kick the highest.

The seal hop is a very difficult event to do. For the guys, you start out lying on your stomach on the floor — your hands are in a fist — and bend your arms and put them at your sides. Then you start to hop without bringing your rear end up in the air, keeping your arms bent at your sides. Your hands should still be in fists.

For the girls it is a little different. You start out in a push-up position with your arms straight and palms flat on the floor. Then you start to hop, keeping the arms straight. Don't bring your rear end up in the air or you shall be disqualified. This is to see who can get the farthest in distance.

The first time that I tried to do the seal hop I went 48½ feet. I thought that it would be hard to do, but it wasn't. When I was through I thought I could've died. My stomach was sore for the next week. That was when my team went to Glennallen to see how it would be to compete against another team.

The kneel jump is a challenging event. You start out kneeling down, then swing your arms. This helps you



get in the air. You try to get out as far as possible.

When I tried to do the kneel jump for the first time I didn't even leave the kneeling position. I got so embarrassed. I tried to do it again, and this time I go out of the kneeling position, but I didn't get that far.

It is easier to jump up if you take your shoes off, so that you aren't carrying all the extra weight, and it will give you more traction.

Another event is the stick pull. You start out sitting on a mat, legs bent with your feet against your opponents' feet. At your sides are two people, and those people put their feet against yours for support

The stick that you use is about 1 foot long, a little thicker than a broomstick. You or your opponent will choose if you want the inside or outside. If you choose the outside of the stick to grip, the other person gets the inside. Your hands have to grip and stay close together as possible on the stick. This event is to get the best two out of three.

The events that I explained are only some of the major events. The ones that I didn't mention were too hard to explain. They all are difficult to do and require a lot of work. Having to go through all the practice is hard work, but at the end you'll really need it.

After all the events are over the participants get a certificate and patch. The first through fifth place winners of each event get medals, and the overall teams — first, second and third — get trophies.

Then a potlatch is held for whomever wants to go after a long three days at the gym and hotel.

After all, I'm proud to be an original ¼-blooded Native American.

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