

Interesting Props to Give Atmosphere to '66 Olympics

Dried and inflated oogruk intestines, oogruk bladders, likewise dried and inflated, 14-foot bowhead whale jawbones, all of these and other props will help to give the 1966 Eskimo Olympics an atmosphere and color strictly from the native areas of Alaska.

In conjunction with the colorful Fairbanks Golden Days, the Olympics will take place here July 23 through 27, five days of varied events that should prove most interesting to visitors as well as the local people.

Another innovation that is expected to be staged for the first time in the Olympics history is the Eskimo kayak race. However, to date, there have not been firm commitments from the Eskimos although Barrow and Nome are known to be interested.

Another crowd-pleasing event will be the seal skinning contest performed by women and this will be a daily event. The seals are expected to be shipped from Barrow, but:

"The ice has not broken

up as yet at Barrow," Sam Taalak told Laura Bergt, chairman of the Eskimo Olympics. "If it does, the men will catch seals and you can be sure you'll get them in time for the Olympics."

LAMP SYMBOL

This year, a whale oil lamp will symbolize the Eskimo Olympics and the plans are for an Eskimo woman in full costume to keep it trimmed and burning.

She'll do this with a stick about a foot long with a diameter of a lead pencil. The wick will be dry, powdered moss of a special kind that will be arranged in a neat, quarter-inch pile along the flame edge of the lamp.

The wick will be fed by whale oil fuel in the lamp that will just touch the bottom edge of the wick.

The woman will skillfully

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control the flame from smoking by arranging the moss wick just so high from the whale oil fuel. The higher the wick, the higher the flame. If it's too high, the lamp will smoke. She'll correct this by partially submerging the powdered moss into the whale oil.

PROPS FROM PT. HOPE

Dan Lisbourne, mayor of Point Hope, has been very cooperative in gathering the props for the Olympics. He has already sent over 150 feet of dried oogruk intestines and a bladder.

A pair of 14-foot whale jawbones are in Kotzebue now where they will be airfreighted to Fairbanks. They were procured by Laura Bergt under some difficulties.

"I called Dan from my home through Kotzebue ACS who contacted him for me by radio," said the chairman. "The connection was faint and we had to shout at each other for some time. I bet Dan is hoarse from shouting. He's been such a doll and so cooperative."

The call resulted in the jawbones being shipped to Kotzebue on the B & R tug, a firm operating out of that town. Edith Bullock, president of the company, called

Laura last week, notifying her that a freight unit would be at Point Hope.

The whale jawbones will be put up in Griffin Park, the Olympic site, to form an arch

through which the performers will march before each day's performance.

CHAMPION SKINNER

The Olympics audiences will be treated watching the skill of the champion seal skinner Mrs. Rhoda Nageak of Barrow who has captured that event two successive years. This event has been tagged by many Olympics goers as a must to see.

Harry Kaleak, also of Barrow, will be one of the hi-kickers. The oogruk bladder will be the object at which to kick. A performer kicks with both feet at the same time touching the bladder with both toes simultaneously and landing back on the floor on his feet.

Harry Kaleak was the champion last year and he made the Olympics record kick of 6 feet 10 inches. The performers will be trying hard to reach the 7-foot mark this year.

On the comely and charming side of the Eskimo Olympics will be the native queen contest. One of the girls will be selected to reign over the Olympics year.

Villages and towns that will be represented are Hyaburg, Kotzebue, Nome, Barrow, Point Hope, Fort Yukon, Fairbanks and Arctic Village. The last village will be represented by a girl who is now attending the Upward Bound summer course at the University of Alaska.

ESKIMO DANCE CONTEST

The ever popular Eskimo dances will be held daily during the Olympics. Pete Sovalik dance group from Barrow will be here as usual. King Island Village at Nome is expected to send a team. There is some doubt whether Kotzebue will be sending a dance group.

INDIAN PARTICIPATION

For the first time this year, outside of the queen contests, the Alaskan Indians will be participating in the Olympics events.

Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce has arranged for the transportation expenses of the famous Chilkat Dancers from Port Chilkoot-Haines. This group, however, will dance strictly on exhibition basis and not for competition.

The famous Fort Yukon Jig will be performed under the leadership of Hannah Solomon. Minto stick contest has been scheduled and is expected to be performed by Minto men.

There will be a greased pole contest over water in which the contestants will attempt to walk across without falling into the drink. There will be canoe races.

OTHER EVENTS

Other interesting programs will round out the events mentioned, and from the look of things, this year's Eskimo Olympics promises to be better than ever before.

The exciting five-day program will be climaxed by a huge salmon bake for the public under the direction of the Fairbanks Native Association and the Eskimo Olympics Committee.

Come one, come all—the water's fine at the Eskimo Olympics this year.