

Junior Iditarod slated for February 28



Patricia Newman of Knik crossing the finish line in 1980 race

The 1981 champion of the Fourth Annual Junior Iditarod Sled Dog Race will receive an Al Harper Iditarod sled, a trip to Nome, courtesy of Alaska Airlines, and a trophy at the 8th Annual Iditarod Banquet.

"The Iditarod mushers consider the 120-mile Junior Iditarod as a training session for future Iditarod champions. Therefore it is only fitting that the winner celebrate with the 'seniors,' race coordinator Rich Pealle said in a recent Tundra Times interview.

This year the Junior Iditarod Trail Committee has really tried to plan a simulated Iditarod.

The 14-17 year old mushers who qualify to run will compete for \$4,000 worth of trophies and prizes— the largest purse ever!

To capture a prize this year, however, the young mushers must start in the official Iditarod chute, sign in at two new check points and cook their own meals.

"Meals were provided last year, but an Iditarod musher cannot expect someone to prepare meals for the Junior Iditarod mushers this year," Pealle explained.

The 1981 Junior Iditarod Race will be held despite adverse weather conditions on Saturday February 28th at Settlers Bay.

All mushers entering the race must be present at 9 a.m. for mandatory vet checks by veteran race veterinarian Dr. Phillip Meyers, DMV.

Dr. Myers will be on the lookout for signs of ill health and drugs that might suppress the signs of serious illness or injury to the dogs just as he is at the start of the real Iditarod Race. Dr. Meyers has been the official veterinarian for the Junior Iditarod since the race first started in 1978, so he knows what he's looking for.

Directly following the vet checks there will be a mandatory musher's meeting at Settler's Bay Inn. At the meeting mushers will draw places and Race Marshal Joel Kottke will inspect the sleds.

Like the Iditarod mushers, the Junior mushers must start the race with no less than seven dogs, no more than ten dogs. Each musher's sled must carry:

1. Proper cold weather sleeping bag, clothes and boots;
2. Hand axe;
3. One pair of standard snowshoes with bindings;
4. Promotional materials assigned to each musher by the Jr. Iditarod Trail Committee;
5. Eight booties for each dog either in the sled or in use.
6. One head lamp and an alternate battery powered light.

7. Some type of restraint to hold a dog in the basket.

8. Matches or lighter to start a fire.

9. One days food for each dog with a minimum of two pounds per dog.

10. One days human food ration.

Race Marshal Kottke will check to see that the mushers

have the mandatory gear.

At 11:00 A.M. the race is on. Mushers will start down the official Iditarod chute at two minute intervals, heading for their first check point Susitna Station approximately 37 miles away.

At Susitna Station Race Judge Dan Foster and his race checker wife Becky will make sure that each musher clocks in and out. Mushers may rest at Susitna Station or continue on to Rabbit Lake whichever they prefer.

Rabbit Lake lies approximately 23 miles past Susitna Station. Once the mushers reach Rabbit Lake they must take a 12 hour layover before they head back to Susitna Station and Settler's Bay.

At Rabbit Lake, Dr. Myer will be on hand to check the dogs. Wasilla nurse Margaret Baldwin RN and Jim Lihl, an emergency medical technician, will make sure the mushers are all right. If anything goes wrong, ham radio coverage will

be provided by the Matanuska Amateur Radio Associations. Race pilots Dick and Kathy Mackey, Joe Pendergrass, Lonnie Chessnut and Mr. Furmin will provide emergency air transportation if it is needed and help to send injured dogs back to Wasilla.

Last year two mushers past the trail on their return trip to Knik. If a team gets lost the team will not be disqualified if the driver regains control of the team and completes the entire race. Dee Dee Janrowe got lost during the real Iditarod last year but was able to finish the race.

It is expected that the mushers will take from 9 1/4 hours to 14 1/2 hours to complete the race (layover time excluded).

The second through tenth place finishers will receive trophies and prizes at the Junior Iditarod Banquet to be held March 1 at Settlers Bay Inn starting at 7:30 p.m. The champion of course will head for Nome to receive his or her trophy.