

With Backing, George Attla Hopes To Better Dr. Lombard In Races

By HOWARD ROCK
Times Editor

"With all the backing I have now, which I've never had before, I expect to beat Dr. Roland Lombard or come very close," said George Attla of Huslia.

Attla, 32 years old, is well known in dog racing circles in Alaska having won twice in the championship race at the Fur Rendezvous in the past at Anchorage.

He is a happy man these days because J.C. Penney Company has agreed to be his sponsor.

"Penney's will definitely furnish me no less than three tons of commercial dog food for my dogs during the training period," Attla said, smiling. "I've never had this kind of help before."

He said that company was

interested in backing native dog mushers from the bush.

"They sponsored my brother Fred last year, and since my brother is not going to race, Penney's wanted me to get in touch with them," he said.

Not only Penney's is going to sponsor Attla, but the company is looking for a co-sponsor so the racer will have additional help in his efforts to come up with a winning team.

CENTENNIAL RACE

Attla's main interest at the moment is the Centennial sled dog race next year between Big Lake and Knik in the Anchorage area.

"There will be big money in that race—\$25,000 in cash prizes," he stated. "I have planned to be in that race ever since it was announced. The winner will receive \$7,000 in cash."

at his home in Huslia from which he will cull about 20 dogs for his team.

"If I don't get a good enough team out of the 37 dogs I have now, I expect to get more dogs," he said.

Attla already has picked the ones he wanted and re-

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37 DOGS

The racer now has 37 dogs

George Attla . . .

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jected the ones he didn't want. He bought some and got most of his brother's team from last year. He said he also got some from Lucian Sam, another dog racer.

EARLY TRAINING

George is in the process of getting a "go-cart" from Bettles at the moment with which to train his dogs. He hopes to start training them around August 1.

"I have never trained dogs that early," he said. Then he added, smiling, "I heard the people who have been winning have trained their dogs during summer time."

Once the racing season begins, Attla expects to hit every race he can. This means, of course, that he will enter the Centennial race, Anchorage Fur Rendezvous, North American Open Championship in Fairbanks, State Championship at Soldotna, and others in the interior.

The races in Attla's own home village of Huslia will be important proving grounds for his team where consistently good racing units have been produced in the past.

AN AIR OF CONFIDENCE

In talking with George Attla, there is a definite air of confidence in the famous racer.

"You know, I have never been out of the money in Anchorage races but I have never placed in Fairbanks," he said, smiling, "but that was when I've never had the backing."