

# Musher Roxy Woods wins 'family affair' race

By MITCH DEMIENTIEFF

NENANA — Roxy Woods of Fairbanks claimed her fifth consecutive Women's North American Championship this past weekend in Nenana.

The Women's North American was dropped by the Fairbanks Dog Musher's Association prior to the 1977 running of the prestigious race. The Nenana Dog Musher's association put on a drive to raise the funds to hold the race in Nenana and successfully raised the prize money. This is the third year that the Nenana Dog Musher's have held the race in Nenana and also the third year that Roxy has won the race.

No, the Nenana Dog Musher's are not going to change the name to "The Roxy Woods Invitational Race".

In Friday's first heat, Amy Barkdol threatened to end Roxy's domination of the race as she swept to a 25-second lead over the defending champion. Amy clocked in at 29:37 for the 9.2 mile heat. Roxy finished second at 30:02 while 1978 Women's Rondy champion Linda Leanard claimed third place at 30:22.

In the second 9.2 mile heat on Saturday, Roxy used her leader "Boney" in a single lead and gained over 10 seconds on Barkdol about 1.5 miles from the finish line. The main difference in the two top teams was Roxy's ability to help her team by peddling, while Barkdol was content to ride low behind the sled reducing wind resistance. As the teams headed for the home stretch Barkdol's team rolled across the finish line while Woods' team was hesitant to cross the line.

"Boney didn't know what to do and she cost me some time at the finish", Roxy said shortly

after crossing the finish line. Roxy's tangled finish did in fact cost her some time, however she still managed to claim the day's best time at 30:19, while Barkdol finished second at 30:24. The rest of the field finished at least a minute slower than the pace setters and the race evolved into a two team race at this point.

The race took on a special meaning for the Wright family, as during the course of the season a difference of opinion had developed between Gareth and Roxy. Barkdol, who is Gareth's niece, had taken over Gareth's main team for this event while Roxy was running dogs that came from Gareth. But husband Al and Roxy had raised them. Under normal circumstances, Roxy would have been running a combined team and been much stronger. The 'family affair' took on a meaningful reflection for the race's final heat.

You will recall that this paper brought you the '79 Women's Rondy action and reported that Roxy turned to her old leader "Oly" on the final day to help her claim that title. On Sunday Roxy used the same strategy as she put Oly back in the lead with Boney. That strategy paid off as Roxy edged out Amy by 27 seconds in the final heat. That was good enough to claim her fifth championship at the Women's North American Championship Race by just seven seconds over Barkdol. Roxy's day time was 36:02 for a total elapsed time of 96:23, and Barkdol



**WINS AGAIN —** Roxy Woods, shown here in the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous recently took her fifth consecutive win in the Nenana Women's Championship.

finished the day at 36:29 and 96:30 for total elapsed time. Not unlike the '79 Rondy when Roxy was battling Linda Klingbeil for the title and Linda Leanard won the final heat, Linda Moore of Anchorage running Greg Taylor's team won the final heat with a day time of 35:59.

Other finishers included Linda Leanard in third place at 100:17, Linda Klingbeil in fourth at 101:13, and Karen Attla who claimed fifth at 101:11. Moore finished sixth overall at 101:13, Rosie Losonsky, a former champion in this event, finished seventh at 101:45, while Nellie Probert rounded out the money winners at 108:08. Judy Gould claimed the red lantern for the event using her husband's Iditarod team.

At the awards banquet held Sunday evening Ed Lord Jr. was

crowned the "hometown" champion and the winner of the preliminary championship. Charlie Stevens was awarded the trophy for winning the Thanksgiving Day Race and Ted Monroe also won a trophy for winning the New Year's Day Race. Coghill Oil Company was awarded a trophy as their musher Dale Ridlington captured the Businessman's race. Jack Ambrose was awarded the trophy for the five dog class championship.

Margaret Holbert was crowned the five dog junior champion, Danny Stevens won the three dog event and Daryl Coghill claimed the one dog championship. Rounding out the awards ceremony was Skook Irwin who won the five dog junior preliminary championship, Scott Volt in the three dog and Joe Coghill in the one dog. Larry Pearsley of Nenana won the \$5,000 raffle.