

ESKIMO-INDIAN OLYMPICS ON

Great Annual Spectacle Begins Tomorrow at UA Patty Gymnasium

FAIRBANKS — Native athletes and dancers from all parts of Alaska and the Northwest Territories of Canada arrive in Fairbanks this week, to participate in the 14th annual World Eskimo-Indian Olympic Games.

The three-day kaleidoscope of traditional Native games of strength and skill and dances of Northern peoples begins Thursday evening at 7 p.m. at the University of Alaska's Patty Gymnasium, with the lighting of seal oil lamps by the winner of the torch race that precedes the game.

Then comes the colorful march of all participants in the games into the gymnasium, an array of men and women from throughout Alaska skilled in the traditional sports, songs and dances of the Native cultures of Alaska and parts of Canada.

Masters of ceremony for the 1974 Games are Al Grant of Tanana and Roger Lang, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc.

Last minute preparations for the Games meanwhile continue in earnest, not only by the Olympics Committee, but the participants themselves.

While a Barrow woman was in Fairbanks shopping for

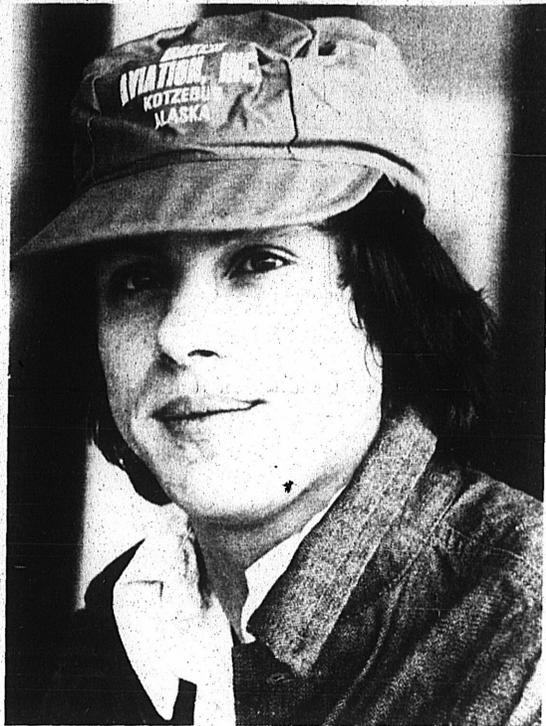
kuspuk materials for a new Eskimo dance team planning to compete this year, members of the Olympics Committee were busy distributing tickets for sale to various outlets in Fairbanks.

(The prices are \$2 per child and \$4 per adult for single night admission and \$4 per child and \$10 per adult for a season ticket good for all three nights of the Games. Profits go to the Tundra Times, the only statewide Native newspaper in Alaska.)

Olympics Committee chairman Chris Anderson, on a business trip to Tok during the past weekend, said he met two educators from New York state, who had come all the way to Alaska just to see the Olympics.

In addition to much publicity from Alaskan media, the Games last year were photographed for National Geographic Magazine and Alaska Maga-

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PERENNIAL FAVORITE in the Olympics Games is Reggie Joule of Kotzebue, who gives the competition a rough time in the blanket toss and high kick events. Joule was part of a recent contingent of Alaska Natives that participated in the 8th Annual Festival of American Folk Life in Washington, D.C. — Photo by MARGIE BAUMAN

The Great Olympics . .

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zine. (A full-color photo of Edith Tegoseak, one of the lamp lighters for the Games, appears in the July, 1974 issue of Alaska Magazine.)

Four top Olympics athletes and Olympics committee member Laura Bergt topped off the 1973 Games with a trip to California and a lengthy guest appearance on the Johnny Carson Show, which brought the games national publicity.

Among the media covering the 1974 Games are British television producer and freelance photographer Jeremy Hunter-Coddington and his brother Robin Hunter Coddington, who works for an advertising firm in London. The pair are doing an article for one of London's largest magazines on the Games.

Along with the pageantry of the Olympics march each night of the Games are included the athletic events themselves. They range from the ever-popular blanket toss aboard the oogruk (bearded seal) skin blanket to the muktuk eating contest, to the ear pull, knuckle hop, ear pull and high kick.

During Nalukatuk (blanket toss) in the 1973 Games one contestant went so high he almost hit the ceiling of Patty Gymnasium.

The Games themselves are so unusual to many non-Natives who know only the intricacies of baseball, softball, basketball, football and golf that they bear some description here:

Among the more popular games are:

Knuckle hop — in which contestants must get down on all fours and then hop on their knuckles and toes as far as they can go.

High kick — probably the most skillful game of all and by far the most popular of the sports events. The object of both

the one foot and two foot high kick is to jump up, kick as high as possible and still land on your feet. Competition in this game is most heavy from Northern Alaska and Inuvik athletes.

Indian stick pull — Competitors using a greased stick about one foot in length and an inch and a half in diameter face each other with feet touching and pull on the stick. One rule is that competitors must pull directly without twisting or jerking of the stick.

Four-man carry — Four men hold on to each other and balance themselves on the contestant so that their feet are clear of the ground. The contestant must then walk forward, carrying the group as far as possible. (Average weight of the four men totaled is 600 pounds.)

Drop the Bomb — Four men take hold of a contestant by his feet and hands and contestant must remain rigid as the four men lift him and carry him, to see how long he can stay rigid. When he can no longer stay rigid the contestant's body collapses or "drops the bomb."

Olympics committee members say some new Games are to be introduced this year, so that athletes can prepare to compete in them in future Olympics Games.

In addition to the athletic events are the Olympics baby and queen competition. Prizes for the queen this year include \$500 cash, to be spent at the discretion of the winner.

Working to coordinate all events and business responsibilities of the Games are committee chairman Anderson, with Arla Kemper, vice chairman; and committee members Jerry Woods, Roger Kuniyak, Jim Savak, Eva Heffle, John Heffle, Ray Titus, Margie Bauman and Frank Murphy.