

Bergman takes second straight

KOTZEBUE — Steve Bergman of Allakaket won his second consecutive sled dog race in Kotzebue on April 11-13. Bergman trailed first day leader Ray Jackson of Noorvik by more than two minutes after the first 25 mile heat, then Bergman won the next two heats enroute to the championship.

Veteran musher Ray Jackson of Noorvik paced the field after the first day in a time of 87:23. That time was 2 minutes and 29 seconds faster than Bergman, who placed second with 89:52. Eli Mitchell of Selawik had 90:50, Ron Sheldon of Noorvik had 95:34 and Lucy Nordum of Kotzebue at 96:10 rounded out the top five finishers after the first heat. "He just outran me the first day," Bergman commented about Jackson's first run. "There was some loose snow and my dogs didn't know the trail."

In Thursday's second heat the story was a little different. Berg-

man reversed the finish by beating out Jackson by over two minutes. Bergman's day time was 88:17, while Jackson crossed the finish line in a time of 90:39. Mitchell again placed third for day time at 91:25. "They (the dogs) started to know the trail," Bergman commented about the second heat.

The third heat held on Friday the Thirteenth started with only seven seconds between the top two racers in total elapsed time. Jackson had a two-day time of 178:02 and Bergman's time was 178:09.

Jackson's slim lead did not hold up. Bergman ran the race's fastest heat on the third day in a time of 84:59, an excellent time for 25 miles of mushing. Jackson edged out Mitchell for second place in day time by a scant 13 seconds on Friday. Jackson's time was 88:01 and Mitchell finished 88:14. Bergman, who started the race with 13 dogs, ran 12 the second, and finished the last

day with 9 dogs, described his last run this way: "Today it was even better yet."

In total elapsed time for the 75-mile race, Bergman's time was 263:08, Jackson finished second at 266:03, and Mitchell placed third at 270:29. Bergman paused in the post race interview to thank Beatus Moses, Harold David, Henry Beatus, Pollock Simon, Lester Sam, Harding Sam, and Phillip Bergman for lending him dogs for the race.

The Tundra Times then asked the happy champion if he is thinking of getting into the major competition again (Bergman previously ran the North American in 1971 and 1975). Bergman responded that he was interested although he cautioned that he was just scratching the surface of what it takes to become a champion in the major races.

The Times would like to thank radio Station KOTZ in Kotzebue for providing race results.

<u>Musher</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Heat 1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 Steven Bergman, Allakaket		89:52	88:17	84:59	263:08
2 Ray Jackson, Noorvik		87:23	90:39	88:01	266:03
3 Eli Mitchell, Selawik		90:50	91:25	88:14	270:29
4 Ron Sheldon, Noorvik		95:34	92:07	93:28	281:08
5 Frank Simpson, Noorvik		98:52	93:09	90:20	282:25
6 Cyrus Harris, Kotzebue		96:36	94:55	92:04	283:35
7 Lucy Nordlum, Kotzebue		96:10	95:47	92:00	283:57
8 Pete Nelson, Kotzebue		98:17	96:17	96:02	290:36
9 Johnny Coffin, Noorvik		102:51	106:27	101:41	310:59
William Grift, Ambler		110:42	113:02	scratch	
Carol Harris, Kotzebue		scratch			