

Arctic Winter Games draw Alaskans



Nothstine: Through our games, we reflect values

by Gloria J. Walker
for the Tundra Times

The Arctic Winter Games were never very familiar to me. They were games like basketball, soccer or hockey that were played in a distant land.

I never thought of the Arctic Sports involved in the games — the One Foot High Kick, Knuckle Hop or the Airplane, better known as Drop-the-Bomb to World Eskimo-Indian Olympic supporters.

Earlier this month, 17 athletes and coaches traveled to the vastness of Canada to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, for the games.

The Arctic Winter Games' Arctic Sports is a popular attraction of sports enthusiasts and those involved in competing in these unique games. As of this year, Arctic Sports is divided into two categories: Inuit (Eskimo) Games, including the One Foot High Kick, Alaska High Kick, Kneel Jump,

Airplane, Head Pull, Arm Pull, Two Foot High Kick and the One Arm Reach; and the Dene (Indian) Games, including the Pole Push, Hand Games, Stick Pull, Finger Pull and the Snow Snake.

"To make the Alaska Team, members were selected according to their previous experience with competition in both the Native Youth Olympics and the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics," said Louise Charles, the Open Women's team coach. Eleven athletes pulled, pushed and strained through the games of the Inuit, while four athletes teamed together for the Dene Games.

Greg Nothstine, the Junior Men's coach and Open Men's competitor, has been involved in Native sports for eight years.

"The friendships I have made through these games have lasted a long time. I have begun to learn to work with Western concepts in teaching others our ways.



"Like all other societies, we have our values. Through our games, we reflect our values. (As a coach) I give back to the games what they have given me," he said.

And as a coach, Nothstine is filling "big shoes" left by Alaska athlete and coach Reggie Joule of Kotzebue.

The Open Women's coach, Louise Charles, knew her team was strong. Team members included Nicole Johnson, Candice Parker and Carol Pickett.

"We have a strong team," she said. As a past participant of the Native Youth Olympics and the WEIO, Charles was confident in her team and walked away with the majority of the Arctic Winter Games' ulu medals.

Alaska was not able to send a Junior Women's team. Charles said sponsorship was a big problem.

Northwest Territories and Yukon swept up the Junior Women's medals.

New to the Arctic Winter Games were the Dene Games, strictly for men.

Asta Keller, a former NYO and WEIO participant who has participated in Native games since she was 12, was the Alaska team coach.

"We have a great team of Dene participants this year," she said. "They're fun to be around and they're having fun, too."

Team Alaska and the Northwest Territories competed this year.

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Competing at the Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, is Brian Randazzo, top, doing the Knuckle Hop. Other photos, moving clockwise include, Greg Nothstine, reaching for the Two foot High Kick; the Dene Team Alaska accepting the Gold Medal for the Pole Push, from left, Asta Keller, Roger Oomittuk, Max Dolchok, Brian Walker and Randy Engler; the Pole Push competition between Alaska and Northwest Territories.

photos by Gloria J. Walker

• Team Alaska

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As a spectator I was curious as to why there were no women allowed to compete in the Dene Games, so I asked Keller.

"AWG is still working out the technical package for the games and is not quite ready for a women's category. I am certain that in a few years women will have an active part in the Dene Games," she said.

As a Dene Games competitor for Team Alaska, Max Dolchok says he had a great time.

"My expectations were to have fun and to learn about something I didn't know a lot about. The Northwest Territories team was a very nice and friendly. They were a lot stronger than they let on to be. The only thing that could have made this trip any better was to have my family here with me," he said.

I think Team Alaska competitor Rex Snyder summed it up the best when he said, "I don't prepare for these games, it prepares me for life."

And the winners are:

(in order of placing)

INUIT

One Foot High Kick

Junior Men — George Bennett Jr./Alaska, Sean Snowball/Alaska, Gilbert Nartok/N.W.T.
Junior Women — Meika McDonald/N.W.T., Valene Meyok/N.W.T., Juanita Sydney/Yukon.
Open Women — Carol Pickett/Alaska, Candice Parker/Alaska, Nicole Johnson/Alaska.
Open Men — Brian Randazzo/Alaska, Wayne Don/Alaska, Tim Angotingoar/N.W.T.

Alaskan High Kick

Junior Women — Meika McDonald/N.W.T., Valene Meyok/N.W.T., Juanita Sydney/Yukon.
Junior Men — Aaron Cutler/N.W.T., George Bennett/Alaska, Gilbert Nartok/N.W.T.
Open Women — Nicole Johnson/Alaska, Selma Allen/N.W.T., Lora Niviatwag/N.W.T.
Open Men — Ivanoo Kaput/N.W.T., Jack Ameralik/N.W.T., Larry Taula/N.W.T.

Kneel Jump

Junior Women — Lillian Simik/N.W.T., Meika McDonald/N.W.T., Juanita Sydney/Yukon.
Junior Men — George Bennett/Alaska, Aaron Cutler/Yukon, Ben Holmquist/Yukon.
Open Women — Nicole Johnson/Alaska, Clara Ell/N.W.T., Trudy Kollit/N.W.T.
Open Men — Ivanoo Kaput/N.W.T., Brian Randazzo/Alaska, Gilbert Nartok/N.W.T.

Airplane

Open Men — Allen Anavilok/N.W.T., Jack Ameralik/N.W.T., Jeff Maupin/Alaska.

Head Pull

Open Men — Tim Angotingoar/N.W.T., Jack Ameralik/N.W.T., Jason Jackson/Yukon.

Arm Pull

Junior Men — Gilbert Nartok/N.W.T., Matt Kremer/Yukon, Sean Snowball/Alaska.
Junior Women — Juanita Sydney/Yukon, Meika McDonald/N.W.T., Lillian Simik/N.W.T.
Open Women — Nicole Johnson/Alaska, Candice Parker/Alaska, Rena Makkitug/N.W.T.

Two Foot High Kick

Junior Women — Valerie Ipakamerk/N.W.T., Juanita Sydney/Yukon, Lillian Simik/N.W.T.
Junior Men — Sean Snowball/Alaska, George Bennett/Alaska, Aaron Cutler/Yukon.
Open Women — Nicole Johnson/Alaska, Carol Pickett/Alaska, Clara Ell/N.W.T.
Open Men — Brian Randazzo/Alaska, Wayne Don/Alaska, Tim Angotingoar/N.W.T.

Knuckle Hop

Open Men — Rodney Wort/Alaska, Louis Makkitug/N.W.T., Wayne Don/Alaska.

All-Around Athlete

Junior Women — Juanita Sydney/Yukon, Lillian Simik/N.W.T., Meika McDonald/N.W.T.
Junior Men — Sean Snowball/Alaska, George Bennett/Alaska, Ben Holmquist/Yukon.
Open Women — Nicole Johnson/Alaska, Candice Parker/Alaska, Carol Pickett/Alaska.
Open Men — Ivanoo Kaput/N.W.T., Brian Randazzo/Alaska, Tim Angotingoar/N.W.T., Jack Ameralik/N.W.T.

DENE

Pole Push - Team Game — Team Alaska.
Hand Games - Team Game — N.W.T.
Stick Pull — Randy Engler/Alaska, Richard Football/N.W.T., Charlie Quitte/N.W.T., Brian Walker/Alaska.
Finger Pull — Lloyd Lamouelle/N.W.T., Charlie Quitte/N.W.T., Brian Walker/Alaska.
Snow Snake — Roger Oornittuk/Alaska, Freddie Tinqu/N.W.T., Lloyd Lamouelle/N.W.T.

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