



ESKIMO CHAMPION - Isaac Okleasik of Teller gives a pat of encouragement to one of his sled dogs after completing the tiring Iditarod Trail Centennial race. Okleasik won both heats of the race to take home \$7,000 prize money.

Courtesy of the Anchorage Daily News

Okleasik Captures Centennial Race

Isaac Okleasik, a 46-year-old Eskimo from Teller, Alaska, was the winner of the Iditarod Trail Centennial Dog Sled Race last weekend.

The crowd-pleasing musher pumped his 11-dog team to a first place win on both days to take home a record \$7,000 prize money. He finished two minutes and 13 seconds ahead of Pete Shepherd of Fairbanks.

Okleasik is a working musher who puts in an average of 600 miles a month. This informal training paid off on the tiring 27.8 mile trail.

In the first heat on Saturday, Okleasik passed 16 teams to gain a slim 13-second lead over 19-year-old Billy Sturdevant of Anchorage.

Sturdevant closed the gap at one time Sunday, but the trail was too long and his dogs tired. He finished third behind Pete Shepherd.

Shepherd was one of four Fairbanks mushers to finish in the top ten. The others were Steve Lasonsky, fourth; Harold Greenway, sixth; and Gareth Wright, ninth. They admitted to running a grudge race among themselves.

Huslia also made a strong showing with two top racers - George Attla Jr., in fifth place, and Werner Vent in seventh. Larry Westlake of Kiana won eighth place.

Two eastern veterinarians Charles Belford of Deerfield,

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ISAAC OKLEASIK Shows Form in Winning the Great Iditarod Trail Race

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Mass. and Roland Lombard of Wayland, Mass., finished tenth and eleventh respectively. Joe Redington Jr., last year's winner of the world championship race, finished twelfth.

The top finishers agreed that the race should be held in future years; "preferably with the same purse," reported Steve Lasonsky. Lombard said the race should be "run in three heats on three different days."

They also felt that, while the course was tiring, the trail was in very good shape.

Race committee chairman Joe Redington Sr., who finished 47th, said, "This is the Iditarod Trail Race, and I think we have a course that honors the trail. It's a man punisher and a dog pounder but these mushers like it and that's the test of any trail."