

Lady Mushers Compete for North American Title Today

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On a special television showing Wednesday night, 17 prospective winners of the Women's North American Championship sled dog race drew starting positions for the first day.

Racing in number one position in today's heat is Effie Kokrine, a former women's NAC champion, driving Don Noll's local team. Effie has missed only one North American race since 1950.

The women's races will be

run in three heats. Today's heat is 10 miles, followed by another 10-mile run tomorrow. The contest culminates Sunday in a 14-mile heat, giving a total of 34 miles for the three-day race.

Today's winner will start in first position tomorrow. Race winnings will go to the first four winners each day, with the grand championship going to the first six winners in total elapsed time.

Favored for the championship are Shirley Gavin, winner of the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous races; Rosie Losonsky, past champion; Sherri Wright, last year's winner, and Hanna Gallahorn from Kotzebue.

Other entrants expected to make a good showing are Pauline Sowell driving the S&O Kennel team which placed first in the Fairbanks preliminary races this year, and Ethel Stoneman, second place winner at Nenana two weeks ago.

Today's lineup is as follows:

1. Effie Kokrine, 2. Colleen Bowers, 3. Genie Silas, 4. Hanna Gallahorn, 5. Sherri Wright, 6. Rosie Losonsky, 7. Ethel Stoneman, 8. Nita Henry, 9. Mary Moses,

10. Kay Briggs, 11. Shirley Gavin, 12. Pauline Sowell, 13. Ruth Macchioni, 14. Anne Wing, 15. Polly Schallock, 16. Natallie Norris, and 17. Gerry Best.

Added features during this weekend's big race are the

ski-joring race (skiers pulled by teams of three dogs), and the annual weight-pulling contest. The weight-pulling event is a popular one, with teams of only three dogs pulling a loaded freight sled from a standing position. Teams in past years have pulled as much as 3,200 pounds.

Following the women's races this week is the North American Open Championship, with at least 30 teams coming in from all over the state, including a Canadian team and three New England teams.