

TWO LIVES LOST ON NENANA RAFT RACE

NENANA—The just-for-fun Tanana Raft Race ended in tragedy Saturday with the loss of two crewmen. Missing are Matthew Ritter, 13, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilber Ritter of North

Pole, and Brian Kendall, 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Dirks of Fairbanks.

Ritter, traveling with his father, was thrown into the water when their raft hit a log jam and

overturned near Whisky Island about half way down the 60 mile race course.

Kendall, a second year University of Alaska student, was about five miles from the

Nenana finish line when his raft overturned. State Police are still searching for the bodies.

Over 375 rafts entered the race despite unusually high water. About 100 crewmen were

reported stranded on river banks during the event.

Despite elaborate radio and television coverage, the mishaps were not reported at the time of

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Lives Lost..

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the race so the spirit of the event remained one of light-hearted fun.

The State Police confirmed Ritter's loss midnight Saturday and word on Kendall was not released until much later.