

Reggie Joule wins Howard Rock trophy

"Let's put it this way. I used to be in the fast lane. Now I have to move over for the new guys," jokes veteran Olympian Reggie Joule about his participation in the Olympic games for the past 12 years.

Joule has been competing in the Eskimo Olympics since 1970 when he entered as a contestant from Kotzebue. His involvement in the Olympics has grown to the extent that he is almost an elder statesman of

the games, a competitor who is both a threat and a trusted advisor to the younger athletes.

His contribution has been recognized by the other athletes on a yearly basis as he has been awarded either the Howard Rock Trophy for Best All-Around Athlete or the Bud Hagberg Award for Sportsmanship.

This year was no different as he won the Howard Rock

Trophy for All Around Athlete. Last year it was the other.

Greg Nothstine of the Cook Inlet Native Association was selected to receive the Bud Hagberg Trophy for Sportsmanship.

As a visibly moved Joule accepted the award he said, "we've come a long way over the years. We've set new records but we should remember the Elders who are sitting out

here. A lot of our Elders used to play and we haven't yet come close to breaking their records.

"You young guys keep that in mind. We've set records here but have not come close. We've got a long way to go."

Joule is aware of the place he has taken in the minds of many of the younger athletes although he doesn't brag.

He says that he tries to compete in as many events as he can, even if he doesn't think he has a chance. "These events I go into just to help get contestants in. I didn't expect to do anything or to win. I think it is important that people see somebody who does something well also do something that they can't do well.

"I have gone out to take part and was a total flop."

Joule views the Games as one more way for Alaska Natives to keep their cultural heritage alive. "We're giving a great deal in the way of how people look at the games but for a long time we took a back seat. We weren't as important as the dance, language.

We've got to draw out all the aspects of the culture. People remember this and talk about it . . . Some people do the crafts — others pass on the language — others tell legends and do the dancing. This crew feels something about the traditional games."

Joule said he would like to see the Native games taught in all school systems throughout the state.



Reggie Joule shows the determination which has made him a long-time olympic champion during the wrist pull.



Reggie shows off his Howard Rock trophy to his young daughter.



William Roland of Bethel heads for victory in the drop the bomb contest.

PHOTOS BY BILL HESS