

First woman knuckle hops

Elizabeth Koutchak may not have come near the new knuckle-hop record set by Rodney Worl in Fairbanks last week but she set WEIO history anyway when she became the first woman to be awarded a medal for knuckle-hop competition.

The 17-year-old Anchorage woman and another woman, became somewhat surprise entries in the knuckle hop competition which was one of the few of the Olympic games which women had not participated in.

Koutchak, an Anchorage East High School graduate, said she decided to compete in the competition only a couple of days before the Games began.

Her five-foot hop won her a place in Olympic history and a gold medal which she will have to watch the U.S. Mail

for because the Olympic committee was not expecting a women's entry in the knuckle-hop competition and had made no medals.

The competition caught her somewhat by surprise, however, because of the pain the knuckles go through. She broke some of her skin off, she said.

As she looked around the gymnasium in the Patty auditorium, she said, "I hope the Native children of Alaska keep in mind what they saw tonight and help keep our traditions alive."

She said she was grateful for the opportunity to meet other people from other parts of Alaska and to be able to learn about other tribes.

The opportunities make the people who watch and participate a lot stronger, she said.