



Race Marshal Announces Plan to Truck Teams Around Rosebud Summit

For Immediate Release:

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA (February 8, 2008) – Citing poor trail conditions, Yukon Quest Race Marshal Doug Grilliot told a crowd of reporters that teams competing in Saturday's 1,000-mile race will be trucked between two checkpoints, Chena Hot Springs and Mile 101, a distance of approximately 40 miles.

"We thought long and hard about it," Grilliot told about 35 journalists and photographers gathered at a downtown coffee shop for a pre-race media orientation meeting.

"We don't want to take away from the integrity of the race, but it was the prudent thing to do."

Grilliot said the most dangerous part is not the 3,640-foot Rosebud Summit itself, but a steep valley at the foot of Rosebud near the Steese Highway. The ground is covered in sharp shale where there is normally snow. It would be impossible for a musher to hook a team securely if required, he said.

Mushers will drive their dogs to Mile 101 following a mandatory two-hour layover and veterinary check at Chena Hot Springs, the first official checkpoint in the race and approximately 100 miles from the Start chute on the Chena River in downtown Fairbanks. Mushers will be allowed eight hours to make the drive.

The 40 miles will not be made up later. However, the Quest 300, which leaves the same Start chute six hours later, at 5 p.m., on Saturday, will make up the trucked distance by returning to Central checkpoint from Circle.

Reporters were curious about conditions on the notoriously challenging 3,685-foot Eagle Summit, which mushers will conquer soon after leaving Mile 101. Yukon Quest competitor Brent Sass took a 12-dog team up Eagle Summit on Monday, said Grilliot, and reported that the trail was in good condition. The Yukon Quest has put rubber tires at the summit this year as anchor points so mushers can lock down their dogs before the steep descent, he added.

The 2008 Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race begins today, February 9, at 11 a.m. For updated information as the race progresses visit our new website www.yukonquest.com.

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