



The 25th Running of the Yukon Quest Enjoys Cool Start in Fairbanks

For Immediate Release:

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA (February 9, 2008) – The 25th Yukon Quest Race Start went off without a hitch in downtown Fairbanks on the frozen Chena River.

“It went off like clockwork,” said Race Marshal Doug Grilliot.

Temperatures dipped below -30 C or -22 F at the 11 a.m. start; “standard temperatures,” said Grilliot. It was a marked improvement from the early morning when temperatures were more than 10 degrees cooler, as they have been for much of the week

The 2008 Yukon Quest saw 24 mushers blast off toward their final destination in Whitehorse, Yukon, - 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away.

Trail conditions are reported to be good the entire route except at the foot of Rosebud Summit, where approximately 40 miles of trail will be avoided because of shale and lack of snow on a steep incline near the Steese Highway.

Mushers were informed Friday, the day before the race, that they would be trucking their dogs from Chena Hot Springs checkpoint to Mile 101 dog-drop, a decision Grilliot said was tough to make, but ultimately necessary. “The news was received very positively by everybody,” he noted.

Hundreds of spectators lined the Start chute to cheer on teams, everyone wondering what this race will look like with so many rookies and plenty of unknowns running alongside veterans such as Frank Turner, Bill Cotter, Michelle Phillips, Dave Dalton and Kelley Griffin, not to mention the Yukon Quest’s reigning Champion for the last three years, Lance Mackey.

With three of Canada’s top-runners William Kleedehn, Gerry Willomitzer and Hans Gatt opting out of the race this year, many will have their eyes on new blood, especially Brent Sass, 27, and Ken Anderson, 35, both of Fairbanks.

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

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