



MEDIA RELEASE

Hall Clinches Rookie of the Year with Third-Place Finish

February 11, 2014 (Whitehorse, YT) - Matt Hall was the third musher to cross the finish line of the 2014 Yukon Quest, arriving Tuesday at 5:15 pm.

Hall, a 22-year-old rookie originally from Eagle, Alaska, posted the fastest run so far this year on the final stretch, with a time of 10 hours and 14 minutes from Braeburn to the Takhini Hot Springs.

Both winner Allen Moore and second-place veteran Hugh Neff took over 11 and a half hours to complete the same 70-mile section of trail.

"It was a lot of miles but we made it," said Hall, as he pulled his team of nine dogs into the chute. "The team's looking great, and I had a blast."

As a kid growing up in Eagle, Hall watched the race every year, and his father Wayne ran the Yukon Quest three times himself. About five years ago, Matt got his first dogs and started working towards his own mushing dreams.

"Now here we are, and I'm looking forward to many more years of it," he said, adding his first year in the race was everything he had imagined.

"I'd say probably 95 percent of the time I had a smile on my face the whole time and was loving it. The other five percent of the time would be six o'clock in the morning when I only had an hour of sleep the last 24 hours. Those were the hard times for me, just trying to stay awake."

"But it was just a great experience overall and I wouldn't say there were any real low points of the race. I'm walking away from this 100 percent happy."

He said his brightest moment was probably going through his hometown.

"I hadn't seen my folks in a while and half the community was out there to cheer me through. To the dogs...I just moved out of Eagle two years ago, so to them that's home too. They've spent more time growing up there, so they were hauling the whole way into town."

After the amazing experience in Eagle, Hall said he spent his time on the trail into Dawson City planning next year's runs for the race – an admission that garnered a round of cheers from the crowd.

With a top-three finish in his rookie year, he'll definitely be one to watch for in the future.

“I would like to think so,” he said, when asked whether he could see himself as champion one day. “There’s a lot of hours to make up on some of these guys so, I think it will take me a few years, but I would like to hope that one day I can be there.”

Strathe and Team Healthy

Friends, family and fans were on edge earlier Tuesday as they awaited word on Cody Strathe.

Strathe, who had been running in fourth place as he left Carmacks, activated the help button on his race tracking device early in the morning, around 26 miles outside of Braeburn. The RCMP were notified and put together a mobilization team to reach the area and check on him.

The Yukon Quest received confirmation from the RCMP at 11:55 am that they had made contact with Strathe on the trail, and neither he or his team were suffering any health issues. Strathe received assistance into Braeburn and was withdrawn from the race.

He posted a message on his kennel’s Facebook page Tuesday night explaining he had made the decision for the well-being of his team, after two of the dogs were too tired to carry on. The frigid temperatures also played a role.

All Teams Through Pelly

John Schandelmeier and Ken Anderson left Carmacks 23 minutes apart, with Schandelmeier in the lead for fifth place.

But Anderson caught up on the trail into Braeburn, and when they arrived at the final checkpoint it was Anderson with a three-minute lead heading into the mandatory eight-hour layover.

With Strathe withdrawn, Anderson and Schandelmeier will now race for fourth and fifth place. They were scheduled to leave Braeburn early Wednesday morning.

Sixth-place musher Torsten Kohnert arrived in Braeburn four hours after Anderson and Schandelmeier, while Curt Perano left Carmacks around 7:30 pm and was still 57 miles from Braeburn as of midnight.

The final four mushers all reached Pelly Crossing Tuesday afternoon and stayed about four hours before departing for Carmacks. Jerry Joinson was the first one out at 7:31 pm while Hank DeBruin followed at 7:33 pm and Brian Wilmshurst at 7:46 pm.

Mandy Nauman left Pelly in the Red Lantern position at 7:59 pm, but with less than half an hour between her and Joinson, it will be a tight race between the four of them to the finish.

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