



MEDIA RELEASE

Third Place Surprising for Hopkins

February 18, 2015 (Fairbanks, AK) – It's been 22 years since Ed Hopkins ran his first Yukon Quest 1,000 Mile Sled Dog Race, and with five previous finishes under his belt, it's the sixth race that may prove most memorable.

The Tagish Lake resident arrived in third place Tuesday night, which is the which is the highest finish for a Yukon musher since Sebastian Schnuelle placed second in 2011 – and one place higher than wife Michelle Phillips ever finished. Phillips placed fourth in 2008.

"So I had to beat her!" joked Hopkins.

Hopkins admitted he was surprised to place so high. He says looking at the mushers starting the race this year, he thought it would be hard to even get into the top ten.

"But things just seemed to be rolling along pretty good and it kind of snowballed from there."

It was a tough year on the trail, with nine mushers scratching and one being withdrawn. The cold had a big affect on some, with temperatures hovering as low as -50 C in some locations. Hopkins was one of the few who didn't mind it.

"That was in my favour, because I'm immune to the cold and don't mind it at all."

He may be immune to the cold, but he's not immune to getting older, he joked when asked what the difference was between his first Yukon Quest and this one.

"Oh I'm a hurtin' unit now," he laughed. "I wasn't on the first one!"

Ed will earn \$13,740.59 for his third place finish.

Thirteen more mushers were still out on the Yukon Quest trail as of midnight. Three more were expected to cross the finish line in the early hours Wednesday.

Rookie Damon Tedford was leading Hugh Neff heading into the final stretch, with fourth place at stake. Normand Casavant was also making his way down the trail from Two Rivers.

Jason Campeau and Torsten Kohnert were enjoying their eight-hour mandatory layover at Two Rivers, while Mike Ellis, Dave Dalton, and Nicolas Vanier were all on their way to the final checkpoint.

Brian Wilmshurst was resting at Mile 101 after conquering Eagle Summit. Ryne Olson, Lance Mackey and Kristin Knight Pace were all enjoying a good meal at Central Corner, while Red Lantern musher Rob Cooke left Circle Tuesday evening bound for Central.