



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Four Scratches as Race Nears Halfway Point**

**February 10, 2015 (Pelly Crossing, YT)** With extremely cold temperatures over the first few days, the trail of the 2015 Yukon Quest 1,000 Mile International Sled Dog Race certainly hasn't been easy.

On Monday, the difficulty of the race was highlighted when three mushers scratched at the Carmacks checkpoint, and one more in Pelly Crossing. Veteran musher Scott Smith was the first to make the decision not to continue, citing the well-being of his dogs after resting in Carmacks.

Tamra Reynolds also announced her decision to scratch in Carmacks, and then Tony Angelo followed. Angelo actually left the checkpoint at 12:23 pm, but returned shortly afterward.

"It's disappointing," said Reynolds. "You spend a lot of time training for this. But the dogs always come first."

When asked to talk about her reason for scratching, Reynolds pointed to the challenging trail conditions between Braeburn and Carmacks.

"Including timber on the trail, lots of jumble ice. I could tell my dogs were stressed, and I had heard the jumbled ice was worse up ahead. It wasn't worth it to put any more stress on my dogs."

Leaving Carmacks with 11 dogs, Matt Hall arrived in Pelly at 9:53 am. He dropped three dogs and attempted to continue on with eight, but after travelling four hours down the trail toward Stepping Stone, he turned around and scratched.

"The last little bit, my dogs didn't seem to be enjoying it, and I kept thinking, 'If I keep going, it's just for me, because I've never scratched before. (But) it's not about me right now. I'm here for them and because of them. It's not fair to ask eight dogs to go 700 miles.'"

Hall said he didn't believe the trail conditions or cold temperatures played as much of a role in his team's downfall as much as bad luck.

“The team was trained incredibly this year. I put over 3,000 miles on them. I think we just got really unlucky. The cards didn’t lay out.”

Hall said as frustrating as it is, he knows his team will go back home, heal, and be ready to train again for next year’s race.

“In no way is this the end. We’ll be back.”

### **Sass Takes Over Lead En Route to Dawson City**

Brent Sass held a 15-mile lead over Hugh Neff on the trail to Dawson City late Monday. Sass was camped out around 84 miles from Dawson, while Neff was resting in Scroggie Creek.

Joar Leifseth Ulsom sat in third place, 24 miles from Scroggie, with Allen More just over six miles behind him. Both Ray Redington Jr. and Ed Hopkins remained camped between Stepping Stone and Scroggie.

Rolland Trowbridge and Cody Strathe left Stepping Stone, on their way to Scroggie while Jeff King was still resting at the hospitality stop. Mike Ellis and Brian Wilmshurst were around 10 miles out of Stepping Stone.

Magnus Feren Kaltenborn and Rob Cooke both arrived in Pelly Crossing late Monday night. They came in just before midnight, with 12 and 11 dogs respectively. That leaves just one musher out on the trail from McCabe. Kristin Knight Pace was just under 30 miles from the Pelly checkpoint.

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