



MEDIA RELEASE

Sass First Musher Into Dawson City

February 11, 2015 (Dawson City, YT) – Brent Sass once again has a shot at the gold, arriving in Dawson City Tuesday afternoon to cheers from the crowd gathered at the chute.

As the first musher in, Sass will get four ounces of Yukon gold, donated by the Sellars family – but only if he completes the race. Last year, Sass was first to Dawson as well, but an accident kept him from crossing the finish line.

“I’m not going to talk about it until I cross the finish line,” he said, when asked about winning the gold. “My goal is never to be (in Dawson) first. My goal the last three years is to be at the finish line first. There’s a lot of work to do before then.”

Sass holds a sizeable lead over Allen Moore, the next closest competitor, who arrived in Dawson at 9:18 pm. Hugh Neff was the third musher to reach Dawson, at 12:10 am. Wednesday.

“The whole way I didn’t know how far back they were,” said Sass. “When I got in that overflow, I was like ‘Uh oh, they’re going to catch up to me right here.’ But it only took about 15 minutes to get through it.”

Now that Sass has made it to the halfway point, he and his team will get a well-deserved 24 hours of rest. Dawson used to be a mandatory 36-hour stop, but that changed for this year’s race.

“Thirty-six may sound a little better at the moment,” he laughed. “But 24 is great.”

As for the last 452 miles, Sass says admits the trail has been challenging.

“The trail’s been a Quest trail. It’s had its challenges. It’s been hard and fast. It’s been windy, full of willows. I’ve enjoyed every bit of it, even the cold. We’re dog mushers. We’re supposed to enjoy the cold, right?”

Moore was in agreement with Sass, saying that while there was some overflow, the trail into Dawson “was perfect.”

Neff arrived into Dawson feeling “wiped”, telling the media it was a tough run. He said for the second half of the race, he’s going to focus on having fun, and making it more about the mushing experience itself, not the race.

Asked whether he was disappointed he wouldn’t be winning the four ounces of gold, Neff joked, “I’ll be getting 12 ounces of Yukon Gold in a few hours.”

Joar Ulsom was expected to be the next musher into Dawson, running about 20 miles behind Neff. Behind Ulsom were Ed Hopkins and Ray Redington Jr., who were resting approximately 55 miles out of the checkpoint.

Cody Strathe, Rolland Trowbridge, Normand Casavant, Damon Tedford, Torsten Kohnert and Brian Wilmsurst were all on the trail from Scroggie Creek to Dawson. Lance Mackey, Mike Ellis, Dave Dalton and Jason Campeau were resting at Scroggie.

On the trail from Stepping Stone to Scroggie were Nicolas Vanier, Ryne Olson, Rob Cooke, Kristin Knight Pace, and Magnus Kaltenborn.

King Scratches in Pelly Crossing

Former Yukon Quest champion Jeff King scratched from the race in Pelly Crossing Tuesday.

King initially left Pelly and got as far as Stepping Stone, but made the decision to scratch there. After a lengthy rest, King cited concern with the amount of dog food needed to travel the distance to Dawson City at these extreme temperatures.

According to race rules, a musher must scratch at an official checkpoint, so King and his team headed back to Pelly, the closest checkpoint to the road system.

King said the weather conditions were a huge factor in his race. It was the extreme cold that caused him to rest in Stepping Stone for as long as he did, he said, and the cold that caused the scratch in the end.

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