



Zuma's
Paw Prints

THE RIDE OF A LIFETIME

March 4, 2006

Hi Boys and Girls,



The race has a ceremonial start in Anchorage that attracts fans from all over the world to be on Fourth Avenue for the start (or at any point along the trail) for that first part of the race. The first day of the race allows fans to feel the excitement, hear the dogs and take pictures. They get to see the teams leave and can cheer for their favorite teams. Notice the fans lining the outside of the chute in this picture of # 27,

Dave Tresino, starting the race with his IditaRider in the sled. What is an IditaRider? Read on . . .



For the more enthusiastic fans, there is the IditaRider Auction. Fans from all over the world bid to ride with a musher for the first 11 miles of the race. The successful bidders are here and rearing to go on the first Saturday of each year as the teams prepare to leave. This very special event for fans has become a tradition for some who come back year after year to participate.

At the Anchorage the dogs are more autographs or for These dogs know they need to meet calm mood. Yet, they are hooked to about the "calm" against the line in is their favorite get started!



start both the mushers and relaxed, greeting fans, signing the dogs getting petted. that they are famous and that their fans in a friendly and once the harness goes on and the gang-line, they forget all part and begin to charge an effort to get moving. This thing in life and they want to



←Matt Hayashida's rider waves to the crowds as they take off down the street.

A team races down Cordova hill in the heart of Anchorage, Alaska on the first day of the 2006 Iditarod. →



←Fans are everywhere giving the mushers and their riders a "thumbs up as speed by.

This dog greets a fan with a nosey kiss at the start in Anchorage. →



If you don't think that being an IditaRider is the ride of a lifetime, you might want to have a chat with this rider. She is definitely having a great time and will have stories to tell of this ride for years to come.

Tomorrow the real race begins in Willow. Now I am off to see if anyone around headquarters has any pizza.



Until next time,



Lots of Tail Wags,
Zuma

Don't forget to visit the rest of the Iditarod website at www.iditarod.com where you will be able to find the latest updates plus terrific stories by my good friend, June Price, as the teams travel the trail to Nome.