



Zuma's
Paw Prints

THEY'RE OFF!

March 5, 2006

Okay, boys and girls, the teams are headed to Nome. The restart at Willow went off perfectly under beautiful clear skies. Lori Townsend, wearing bib # 2 left the Willow start line at 2 p.m. followed at 2-minute intervals by the other 82 teams in this year's Iditarod Race.

The first teams passed through the Yentna checkpoint beginning with Doug Swingley at 5:35 p.m. this evening with five other teams checking into Yentna before 6:00. As of 9:35 p.m., eighty-one of the eighty-three teams had checked into Yentna.

Bryan Bearss was the first musher to check into Skwentna at 9:14 p.m. and checked out at 9:19 followed by Ramy Brooks at 9:46. Melanie Gould checked out at 9:50 and was followed by Ramey Smyth, Jeff King, Doug Swingley and John Barron at 10:53. Thirteen other mushers are into the Skwentna checkpoint at this time and expect to leave shortly. The next checkpoint is Finger Lake, 30 miles away.

Teams should be checking into Finger Lake sometime between midnight and two a.m. I interviewed several dogs on the front teams and they told me that Finger Lake by 1 a.m. is "the plan". Every team makes their own plan and although a condition sometimes causes them to make adjustments to their plans, they always come back to the original plan. The plan includes how many hours they will run, how many times they will stop for snacks or meals and where and how long they will rest. I think right now everyone is right on their plan.

Well it is time for me to get a snack and head to bed so I can be up in the morning to see where the teams are. I hope to hear from a lot of you tomorrow and throughout the race. If you have questions, I will do what I can to help you find the answers. Now for that piece of cold pizza and to bed, and that is my "plan".

Until next time,



Lots of Tail Wags,
Zuma