



Zuma's
Paw Prints

GARY PAULSEN SCRATCHES

March 6, 2006

Hi Boys and Girls,

Well known author and Iditarod dog musher, Gary Paulsen, scratched at the Skwentna checkpoint at 5:30 this morning. Mr. Paulsen, 66, scratched for personal reasons which he did not share with this reporter. He was in 62nd position when he decided to scratch.

Mushers were on the trail to Rainy Pass most of the late morning and all afternoon. Jim Lanier crossed Red Lake shortly after leaving Finger Lake checkpoint at 11:23 this morning. As you can see in this Jeff Shultz photo, there is plenty of snow once away from the Anchorage area. The mountains in the background are part of the mighty Alaska Range.



Mushers had reached the Rainy Pass checkpoint just before 1 p.m. this afternoon. Doug Swingley arrived at 12:53 followed by Jeff King, Ramey Brooks and the Smyth brothers, Ramy and Cim. At this time there is only one musher out of Rainy Pass heading for Rohn. Ramy Smyth departed from Rainy at 2:46 p.m. Here you see Mitch Seavey descending a hill near Rainy Pass.

As the evening progresses, I think there will be several more teams hitting the trail to Rohn checkpoint as well as a lot of teams pulling out of Skwentna and Finger

Lake as it cools down out on the trail. Temperatures today have been in the mid 30's and that is uncomfortable for us sled dogs.

As of 5:30 p.m. this evening there were 21 teams into Rainy Pass, one team out; 27 teams have departed from the Finger Lake checkpoint while 18 mushers remain at the checkpoint. Nine teams are on the trail from Skwentna to Finger Lake tonight. The last three teams, Tom Knolmayer, Randy Cummins and Katrina Pawlaczyk remain at the checkpoint as of this writing. It is expected that they will leave at some point during the evening.

I really am disappointed that you are not writing to me. I am not getting very many email messages. It makes me so depressed that even a pizza might not cheer me up. I am so interested in what you are doing in your classroom and want to share the fun with you. Remember, I am at zuma@iditarod.com.

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.