



Zuma's  
Paw Prints

## THE VOTES ARE IN!

March 14, 2006

Hi Girls and Boys,

The top four teams are on their 8 hour layover at the White Mountain checkpoint right now.



Jeff King was the first one to arrive at 6:34 this morning. He will be able to leave on the last leg of the trip to Nome at 2:34 p.m. this afternoon. It is a 77 mile run from White Mountain to Nome. It can be good if the weather cooperates or it can be a nightmare if a storm hits the coast. Doug Swingley arrived in White Mountain at 9:41 a.m., Paul Gebhardt arrived at 11:59 a.m. and DeeDee Jonrowe at 12:24

p.m.



Jeff King departed exactly at 2:34 p.m. when his 8-hour layover was complete. He is on this way down the coast toward Safety with a 3-hour and 7-minute lead over the rest of the front teams.

If he doesn't make any mistakes, Jeff King will be the 2006 champion. Jeff went less than a mile out of the White Mountain checkpoint and turned around and came back to drop a dog named Bernard. He then turned the team around and left the checkpoint a second time. This time he gave a wave and as we watched Jeff headed off toward the next checkpoint at Safety, 55 miles away.



Jeff King, 46, was born in California. He came to Alaska in 1975 to "seek adventure." He began mushing in 1976 after he heard Jerry Riley's race finish while listening to

the radio. Jeff has an outstanding race record including a Yukon Quest victory in 1981 and three Iditarod victories. He lives with his family on Goose Lake in Denali Park surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Alaska Range. The King's two-story log home is also an art studio for Jeff's wife, Donna, an accomplished medical illustrator and wildlife painter.



The owner and operator of Goose Lake Kennels, King breeds, raises and trains 60 to 70 huskies a year. The Kings have three daughters, Cali, 21, Tessa, 19, and Ellen, 14. Cali was the 2002 Jr. Iditarod champion and finished 32nd in the 2003 Iditarod. Ellen was the Rookie of the Year in the 2006 Jr. Iditarod the weekend before the start of the Iditarod.

I told you last night that I would share the results of the vote we took last night on which musher everyone thought was going to win and that I would tell you my pick. I chose King back in Nulato. I know King and his dogs and I just felt they could do it this year. By the time they started down the coast, I knew that was the team to beat. No doubt in my mind that they were going to be this year's champions. So now we will wait to see what happens. My second place prediction is Paul Gebhardt with Doug Swingley third and DeeDee Jonrowe fourth.

The students' votes went like this. . .

<b><u>Musher</u></b>	<b><u>Votes</u></b>
Jeff King	289
Doug Swingley	255
DeeDee Jonrowe	116
Paul Gebhardt	17

There were one or two votes for several other mushers, but not enough votes to be in the running here. I also think there is going to be a battle between Andersen of Norway and Baker of Alaska for the fifth place position. In last place, I think that Ben Valks of Holland will continue to hold on to the red lantern position. Of course Baker and Andersen will both be trying to overtake DeeDee Jonrowe. There are a lot of races within the race to be played out over the rest of this week and the weekend. Keep checking in because it is going to be fun.

Until next time,



Lots of Tail Wags,

Zuma

You can learn more about Jeff at his personal website [www.huskyhomestead.com](http://www.huskyhomestead.com)

Don't forget to visit the rest of the Iditarod website at [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com) where you will be able to find the latest updates plus terrific stories about the race. Most of these pictures are from the Ruby checkpoint today.