

2016 HUDSON BAY QUEST

RACE REPORT

Submitted by: Jim Cunningham, Race Marshal



Ryan Anderson from Ray, Minnesota is the 2016 Hudson Bay Quest Winner.

Mushers from across North America filled up the seventeen position open for the 2016 race. This year's race seen five returning champions and mushers from as far away as Whitehorse, Yukon show up in Churchill, Manitoba for the start of the race on March 18th, 2016.

The festivities for the 2016 race kicked off this year with a Musher's Meet and Greet at the **Town Centre Complex Overpass** in Churchill. Children from the public school entertained race organizers and mushers with a great rendition of well rehearse songs. Race Organizers and mushers were introduced and snacks and autographs of favourite mushers were shared by everyone.

Thursday morning brought a nice crisp day for the veterinarians to preform there health checks on every one of the dogs that would be participating in this years. After the vet checks everyone moved back up to the **Complex** for the musher's meeting and the 2016

Opening Ceremonies. The night brought out residence from Churchill for a great celebration and the introduction of this year's racers. Racers had the opportunity to draw for their bib numbers and have pictures taken with each class of students that had selected their favourite musher.

Early Friday morning found the mushers down at the dog yard preparing for the start. Town's people and children from the schools started to arrive and the excitement started to grow as the start time grew near. Home town favourite Charlie Lundie had drawn bib #1 and he was the first musher to enter the chute with his team of village dogs. As the countdown began the spectator and children joined in till the clock struck 9:30 and Charlie pulled his snowhook and left the chute for the start of the race. Over the next 22 minutes the 11 mushers that made the starting grid would approach the starting line one every 2 minutes and then call up his team of huskies to start their 2016 Hudson Bay Quest adventure.



As the team left Churchill and headed south for Gillam. Race Organizers and Churchill residence, returned to their homes and Race Headquarters to follow each musher on the GPS tracking system. Trail Boss Claude Daudet and assistant Rhonda Reid had left Friday morning just as the sun was rising, to groom the trail from Churchill to Lamprey to McClintock to Owl River to HYW 280 and on to the finish line in Gillam. The trail grooming

was going great until the groomer hit a slush overflow at **Churchill** river and sunk into the slush hole. As Claude and Rhonda battled to get the snowmobile and groomer out of the overflow mushers approached and navigated around the stranded machines and continued on down the trail that had been previously marked the week before.



Mushers started to pull into the Lamprey Checkpoint at 2:28 pm. and the host 4th Canadian Rangers that run all the checkpoints throughout the race, had the cabin set-up and complimentary snacks awaiting the mushers. All but two mushers checked in and right back out and continued down the trail. Jacob Heigers from Whitehorse, Yukon and Peter McClelland from Ely, Minnesota couldn't pass up the tantalizing snacks and the big comfy chair inside the cabin and each decided to stay for a couple of hours and rest.

As the two teams rested in Lamprey the other 9 teams continued on down the trail. Teams experienced more detours around overflows marked by the trail boss now back out in front of the race. While the race from Churchill to McClintock was progressing race vets, race marshal and the race photographer were loaded into a Hudson Bay Rail vehicle and transported down the railway tracks to the McClintock Checkpoint. As the race staff unloaded in McClintock they were greeted by race volunteers that had snowmobiled down

and set-up staffing quarters in a cabin alongside the railway tracks. Once settled in, race staff ventured out to the official checkpoint manned by another group of the 4th Canadian Rangers. This year the McClintock Checkpoint group had out done themselves by setting up a check-in tent as soon as mushers enter the field, a nicely groomed trail that lead around the field to 11 individual chutes set out in perfect formation. Each chute had a bail of straw awaiting the team at the opening and the exit lane lead perfectly down to the check-out tent and back on to the trail.

The first musher to check-in was Ryan Anderson at 8:52 pm. Anderson was followed by Stefaan DeMarie at 10:16pm, Charlie Lundie at 10:31, Dan DiMuzio 10:34, Shawn McCarty 10:35 and Peter McClelland 10:38 pm. The rest of the musher trickled in over the next hours to settle in for their 6 hour mandatory rest. As the mushers and dogs ate, the Hudson Bay Quest Veterinarian staff moved in to complete their health checks on all the dogs participating in this year's race. Once the vet checks were completed, dogs and mushers settled down on the straw for 2-3 hours of sleep.



The first team designated to leave McClintock after the six hour mandatory rest was the race leader Ryan Anderson. Like clockwork Anderson was up an hour before his departure time feeding his dogs and taking each one for a short walk and stretch before placing them back on the gangline. As 3:00 am. Saturday morning approached Anderson pulled his team

up to the check-out tent, signed out and departed right on time. Over the next 3 hours and 16 minutes each musher would prepare his team for departure and leave the checkpoint on the south bound trail.

All eleven mushers checked out of McClintock checkpoint, but after travelling down the trail one musher Justin Allen from Churchill decided that he and huskies just want having fun and he was not feeling up to par and returned to McClintock with his team and withdrew from the race.

Owl River the next checkpoint on the race trail, awaited the arrival of the mushers. Teams started to pull in at 7:50 Saturday morning with Ryan Anderson leading the way. Most teams again checked in and signed right back out and continued down the trail. Two teams took time out to enjoy the hospitality of the checkpoint by stopping for a couple of hours.

Teams continued to travel in the coolness of the morning and strategize where they would stop for a couple of hours of rest out on the trail where other mushers hopefully won't catch them resting. At 4:15 pm Ryan Anderson checked in and out of Highway 280 Checkpoint and started his last 22 mile run to the finish line. The remaining 10 mushers all checked in to checkpoint 280 with one musher staying for some rest with his team.

At 4:30 pm race organizers predicted that the first competitor should be in within the next hour and everyone suited up and travelled down to the finish line on Stephens Lake. At a few minutes before 5:00 pm. The awaiting crowd of race organizers, handlers and residents from Gillam could make out a team travelling across the lake. As the team approached the musher could be seen checking his watch. Spectators started yelling at the musher to put his bib on and in a panic as the team approached the finish chute the musher was seen frantically search in his sled bag for his bib and then slipped it over his head as he crossed the finish line at 5:26 pm on Saturday March 12th, 2016. Ryan Anderson crossed the line, hooked down, took time to go up and thank all his dogs and give them a snack, completed the mandatory sled bag check and then called the team up for a nice leisurely walk back to the dog truck. Anderson had completed the 210 mile race in 31 hours, 56 minutes and 43 seconds eclipsing last year's record time by **20 minutes 30 seconds**.



The one musher (Charlie Lundie) that had rested at HWY280 had decided that enough was enough and withdrew from the race leaving 9 teams to cross the Stephens Lake finish line of the 2016 Hudson Bay Quest.

With the great trail conditions and the speed of the teams all nine teams completed the race in under 43 hours. This left race organizers with lots of time to spare before the closing ceremonies. So, on Saturday night all race staff, veterinarians, handlers and mushers took to the bowling lanes within the Gillam Sports complex to see who was the best at five pin bowling.

The next day all the race reports were handed in by the checkpoint staff and at 5:00 pm it was time to gather, sit down to a great meal and find out who won the 2016 Hudson Bay Quest. The first award of the night went to Craig Houghton from Fort St. James, B.C. who was the receiver of the Red Lantern Award for being the last musher to cross the finish line. Prize money, trophies and awards were given out to each musher in reverse order of their finish until Ryan Anderson was called up to receive the first place award. All the mushers were asked to stay up front with their awards for pictures and many of the mushers had to set all their prizes, gifts and awards down as there was too many to hold in their arms.

After the mushers were presented with their Maguse River Trading Post gifts, Calm Air awards, Inuksuk trophies and finisher patches, it was time to present patches to the behind the scenes heroes of each team. Each team handler was introduced and presented with their own HBQ Handlers patch and 14 year old Sean Houghton of Fort St.James, B.C. was presented with the Ducks Unlimited Handler of the race award. Other awards presented were as follows:

Calm Air Sportsmanship Award – Ryan Anderson

Churchill Northern Store Half-Way Point Award – Ryan Anderson

Hudson Bay Quest Checkpoint Award – Owl River

Hudson Bay Quest Veterinarian Award – Jacob Heigers

Ducks Unlimited Volunteer Award – Marc Andre Belcourt

Golden Lug Wrench Award – Craig Houghton (3 or was it 4 flat tires to get to the race)

Throughout the night names were drawn for the draw prizes of 2 (32 in. by 20 in.) pictures from the 2015 HBQ, a hand painted picture of sled dogs running in the northern lights and a wine draw.



The final presentations were for the people that put all the work into the HBQ each year. Custom HBQ 4CRPG patches were presented to the 4th Canadian Rangers who without their help there wouldn't be a HBQ. Their dedication to establishing checkpoints and rescuing tired or lost teams is only equalled by their dedication in protecting the northern borders of Canada. The next presentation was to the trail boss Claude Daudet and Rhonda Reid who travelled the 210 miles not once but four times preparing and marking the course over a two week period. The last presentations were to the race organizers, race marshal and veterinarian staff that make this great race run smoothly and care for the mushers and dogs that make this event happen every year.

With the ceremonies coming to a closed the mushers were encourage to pick up leftover care packages of food for their safe travel home.

Final Run Times: (hh:mm:ss)

Ryan Anderson, Ray, Minnesota	31:56:43
Shawn McCarty, Ely, Minnesota	33:12:56
Peter McClelland, Ely, Minnesota	34:46:52
Stefaan DeMarie, Sask	35:16:45
Dan DiMuzzio, Churchill, Manitoba	35:31:31
Nathaniel Hamlyn, Fort St.James, B.C.	35:52:54
Jacob Heigers, Whitehorse, Yukon	40:33:24
David Daley, Churchill, Manitoba	42:51:32
Craig Houghton, Fort St.James, B.C.	44:17:13

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