

## Oatley wins 'short' Iditarod Invitational race

**350-MILER: Fairbanks cyclist fastest to McGrath; 600 miles more for some.**

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(03/10/09 21:57:50)

Not satisfied with the misery dealt by a winter storm in the Alaska Range that slowed the race to a crawl, five competitors in the Iditarod Trail Invitational are pressing on to Nome.

Expect dogs to pass them soon.

Runners Tim Hewitt, Tom Jarding and Marco Berni as well as biker Billy Koitzsch are out of Takotna, bound for Nome, some 600 miles away. Another runner, Savino Musicco, is due in McGrath on Tuesday night and is expected to continue.

The athletes will be out of touch with race organizers for days until they reach a phone in Shageluk, about 180 miles down the trail.

Most racers who reached McGrath in the shorter version of perhaps the world's toughest winter endurance race stopped there. That group included Fairbanks cyclist Jeff Oatley, the winner of the 350-miler.

Oatley, who led by as much as 11 hours in the first portion of the race, persevered to win in five days, 19 hours and 34 minutes despite being bogged down for days by winter storms that all but obliterated the Iditarod Trail between Rainy Pass and Rohn.

The storm bunched up the racers but Oatley was still the fittest athlete in the field and handily beat Jay and Tracey Petervary of Jackson, Wyo., by about 10 hours.

"The amazing thing is that everybody who came through had a positive attitude," said race organizer Bill Merchant of Chickaloon, who was helping break trail on a snowmachine during the race. "Most of them said, 'It is what it is.' I didn't hear one grumble."

### Iditarod Invitational

#### Racers into McGrath

Bikers -- 1) Jeff Oatley, 5 days, 19 hours, 34 minutes; 2) Tracey Petervary, 6 days, 5 hours, 28 minutes; 3) Jay Petervary, 6 days, 5 hours, 28 minutes; 4) John Ross, 6 days, 5 hours, 55 minutes; 5) Phil Hofstetter, 6 days, 7 hours, 45 minutes; 6) Alec Petro, 6 days, 9 hours, 18 minutes; 7) Louise Kobin, 6 days, 20 hours, 41 minutes; 8) Eric Warkentin, 6 days, 20 hours, 41 minutes; 9) Aidan Harding, 6 days, 21 hours, 49 minutes; 10) Billy Koitzsch, 6 days, 21 hours, 49 minutes; 11) Bob Ostrom, 8 days, 6 hours, 5 minutes.

Skiers -- 1) Peter Basinger, 6 days, 6 hours, 15 minutes; 2) Cory Smith, 6 days, 6 hours, 55 minutes; 3) Ed Plumb, 6 days, 9 hours, 53 minutes.

Foot -- 1) Tim Hewitt, 6 days, 15 hours (bound for Nome), 2) Tom Jarding, 6 days, 15 hours (bound for Nome); 3) Eric Johnson, 7 days, 15 minutes; 4) Todd Kasteler, 7 days, 1 hour, 39

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minutes; 5) Rick Freeman, 7 days, 8 hours; 6) Robert Struble, 7 days, 8 hours; 7) Marco Berni, 7 days, 8 hours, 50 minutes (bound for Nome).

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