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FROM ROOKIE TO CHAMPION

Sorlie wins Iditarod

Norwegian first to Nome; began crafting plan last year

By CRAIG MEDRED
Anchorage Daily News

NOME — On only his second attempt at the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, Norway's Robert Sorlie this morning became the first foreigner to win The Last Great Race.

With eight Norwegian huskies pulling strong, his 40-pound, aluminum and carbon-fiber dog sled slipped under the burlled arch at 1:47 a.m. Alaska's Ramy Brooks of Healy, the nearest competition, was still miles back on the trail but solidly in second.

Behind Brooks, the best Alaska huskies and the best mushers in the world — including three past Iditarod champs with a dozen victories between them — stretched back along the Bering Sea coast for 100 miles.

Having grabbed an early lead in the rerouted Iditarod of 2003, Sorlie's team hung on to beat them all. The sweet victory was good for \$68,571 and a new Dodge diesel truck.

"This is now a world race, thanks to you," Alaska Gov. Frank Murkowski told Sorlie in congratulations at the finish line.

"It is for me a dream come true," Sorlie said.

It was also the culmination of a carefully orchestrated plan a year in the making. The plan called for Sorlie to go to the front of the race early, partly to save his dogs from exposure to other teams that might spread disease, according to Norwegian friends.

Once there, Sorlie seldom deviated from a set schedule for running and resting. Not even a threat from Brooks on



Robert Sorlie checks on his leaders, Blue and Takk, after crossing the finish line in Nome early this morning.

MORE COVERAGE

■ **IMAGES FROM THE TRAIL:** A full page of color photographs.
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■ **WHERE ARE THEY?** Race chart and map track all the mushers on their way to Nome.
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Iditarod 31



■ **ON THE WEB:** The latest stories and photos on adn.com

Tuesday could shake Sorlie's routine.

Brooks temporarily seized the lead along the coast east of Nome by cutting short his team's rest and passing Sorlie while the Norwegian slept in the tiny village of Koyuk.

Sorlie had made a planned

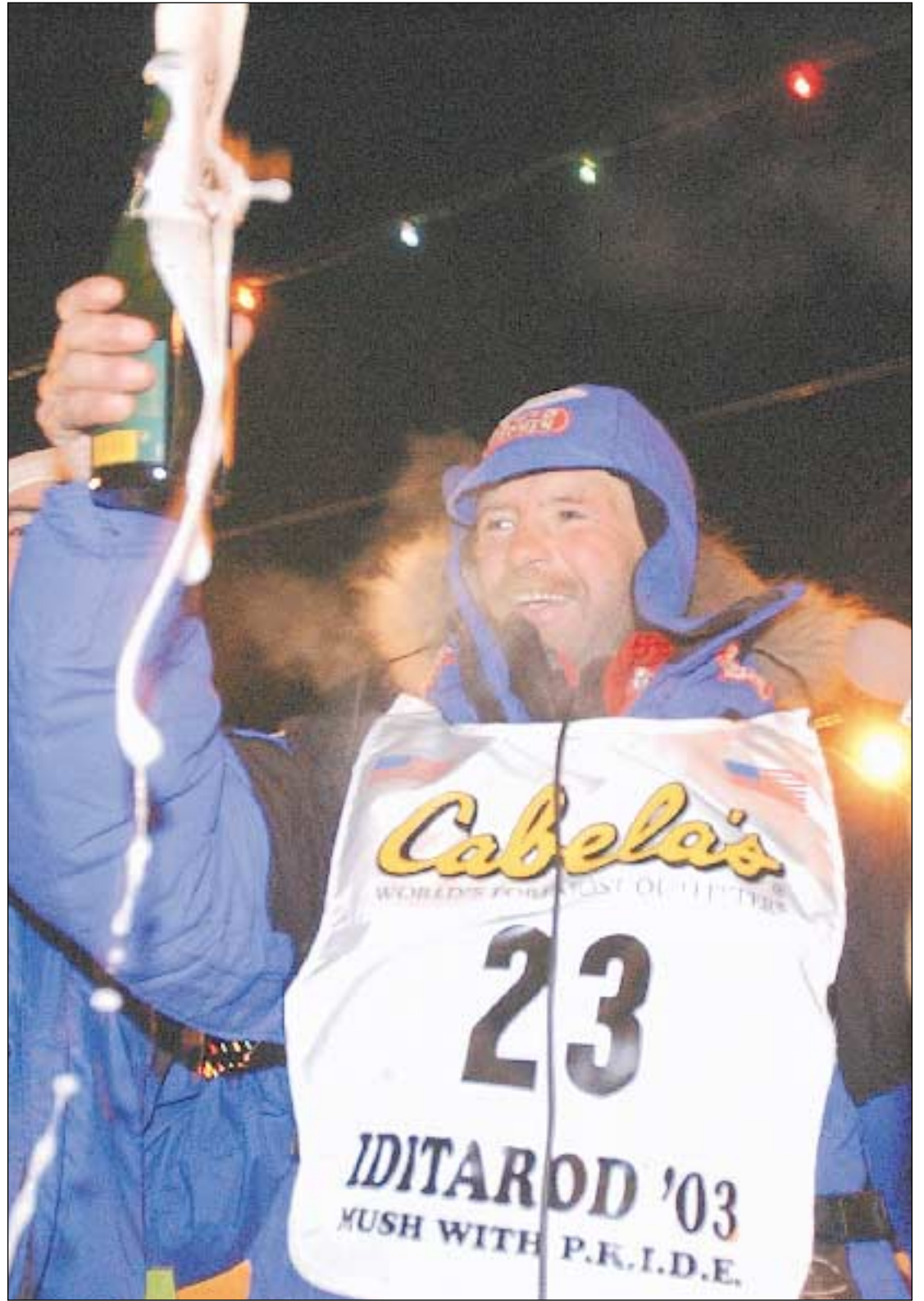
stop there to give his dogs a five-hour rest and himself a short nap. He stuck to that plan even when Brooks blew through, and it paid off.

Although Brooks had a three-hour lead on Sorlie when the latter left the checkpoint, the Norwegian quickly made it disappear.

He passed Brooks at the village of Elim, and over the course of the next 45 miles to a mandatory, eight-hour rest stop at White Mountain built his lead to an hour and a half. It was enough of a cushion to ensure victory.

Sorlie's wife, Elin Pedersen, said he told her last year in Nome that he would come back and win Alaska's biggest sports competition this year. He did it with the help of Norwegian friends and colleagues.

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Photos by BILL ROTH / Anchorage Daily News

Iditarod 31 champion Robert Sorlie of Norway celebrates his victory early this morning under the burlled arch in Nome.

Ill wind leaves trail of dust, destruction

■ 64 MPH: Gusts rip off roofs, knock out power, spark Palmer brush fire.

By PETER PORCO
and ZAZ HOLLANDER
Anchorage Daily News

North winds roared through areas of Southcentral Alaska on Wednesday, spinning debris through the air, knocking out power and damaging structures primarily in downtown and West Anchorage neighborhoods.

A dust-whipping wind blew



■ **FOR THE LATEST** on the wind, see adn.com

most of the day and picked up new, destructive vigor Wednesday night. Downtown Anchorage was especially slammed, with police and witnesses reporting rocks, trash, signs and pieces of buildings in flight. Streets looked as if a hurricane

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BOB HALLINEN / Anchorage Daily News

Wednesday's high winds blew down a tree on Eighth Avenue near E Street. Winds were clocked at 64 mph in town.

ANWR drilling a vote shy, supporters say

■ **SENATE:** Backers pin hopes on Minnesota, Arkansas lawmakers.

By LIZ RUSKIN
Anchorage Daily News

WASHINGTON — Proponents of oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge say they are just one Senate vote short of achieving their goal, and they're pinning their hopes on one of the Arkansas senators or freshman Sen. Norm Coleman, R-Minnesota.

All three lawmakers say

they aren't convinced that drilling in the refuge is a good idea, but they sound less than adamant.

The Senate may vote on the issue as soon as next week.

Coleman, who pledged during his campaign not to support opening the refuge to the oil industry, said Wednesday he doesn't expect to change his mind, at least not soon.

He said he pays attention when drilling proponents offer plans that would limit the envi-

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'IT'S A MIRACLE'

Elizabeth Smart, kidnapped June 5, found alive and well

Teen rescued just miles from home; drifter, woman arrested

By RENE SANCHEZ
The Washington Post

LOS ANGELES — Elizabeth Smart, the precocious Salt Lake City teenager snatched in the night from her bedroom nine months ago by an unknown assailant, was found alive and well Wednesday in the company of a drifter who had once worked as a handyman at her family's home.

The startling conclusion to a crime that had captivated the country because of its chilling circumstances came Wednesday afternoon in a Salt Lake City suburb about 15 miles from where Elizabeth had disappeared.

Police said they stopped the drifter, who had been wanted for questioning in the case, shortly af-

ter two people reported spotting him near a fast-food restaurant. Elizabeth, 15, was found with him, unharmed and wearing a dark wig. She was rescued without incident and swiftly reunited with her family, whose hope of finding her alive had been dwindling because the huge, unrelenting search for her since last summer had been futile.

But Wednesday, family members and their army of supporters in Salt Lake City and beyond erupted in joy.

"It's a miracle," Ed Smart, the girl's father, told reporters. "I'm just so absolutely thrilled."

Police said they have two suspects in custody.

See Page A-3, ELIZABETH SMART

Ed Smart, father of Elizabeth, is hugged by an unidentified woman as he leaves the Salt Lake City police station Wednesday. Elizabeth, who vanished nine months ago, was found alive on Wednesday.



DOUGLAS C. PIZAC / The Associated Press

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■ **ENERGY:** U.S. officials remain suspicious of Iraq's nuclear energy program even as Iraqis proclaimed all facilities are open to inspectors. Page A-6

