

Greetings from the Qajaq Aviisiiliortut

4 July 2015

The Greenland National Kayak Competition for 2015 is about to start on Monday here in Sisimiut. The annual celebration of Greenland Kayak tradition includes racing, rolling, harpoon throwing, and rope gymnastics. Held usually in early July the event lasts about a week and ends with the determination of an overall male and female champion. The winning team is also determined. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the foundation of Qaannat Kattuffiat (the Greenland Kayak Association). It is also the 15th year the competition has been open to foreigners.

The field of top contenders expected to attend this year, include the following who have previously won the title at least once:

Maliina Amondson from Nuuk,

Karla Reimer from Ilulissat,

Jens Peter Jeremiasen from Ilulissat,

Marie Kristine Samuelsen, formerly of Paamiut, now living in Nuuk,

Kristian David Josefsen from Nuuk,

Kunnuunguaq Davidsen from Sisimiut,

Ulunnguaq Josefsen from Nuuk, formerly Ulunnguaq Rosbach of Sisimiut.

Upcoming participants attending this year who are possibly on the verge of winning the title include:

Erik Amondson from Nuuk,

Karen Marie Jensen from Ilulissat,

Pia Jensen from Ilulissat.

International competitors attending this year include:

Freya Fennwood and her father John Fennwood from the USA

Mats Hallberg from Sweden

Dubside will compete in Allunaariaqataarneq

In our next bulletin we will look in more detail at each of these competitors and their past records. We will also focus on the younger age categories. These start with the 4-6 years olds, on up through the teenage divisions. Several outstanding competitors in these groups have the potential to become champions in years to come.

The number of expected participants this year is about 100, an encouraging sign. From a high of approximately 150 people in 2006 the numbers dropped to a low of 50 in 2010, but have been steadily rising every year since then. The skill levels have followed a general rising trend, and several records have been broken as many competitors have trained hard and come with impressive abilities.

Those familiar with the competition history know that Maligiaq Padilla, originally from Sisimiut, has won the title an unprecedented 9 times, beginning his string of wins with a stunning upset in 1998 at the age of 16, the only kayaker

to ever win the title before he reached his 18th birthday. However, he is not expected to attend this year. Residing these days in Kotzebu, Alaska, with his wife and two young children, he has indicated a desire to retire from active competition and let a new generation of kayakers take over. Yet it must be noted that Maligiaq has expressed the same or similar sentiments as far back as 2005, later changing his mind and continuing to compete.

As of Saturday night the Qaqortoq team has arrived in Sisimiut. The team from Ilulissat is due to arrive tomorrow. Excitement is starting to build as another year gets underway. With this communication we at Qajaq Aviisii aim to give you full coverage of the Championship as it happens.

Takuss'