

3A: What is the name of your home town?

Lacey: My home town is Livingston, Montana. It's a great little town with lots of history that sits on the banks of the Yellowstone River and is just about 50 miles from Yellowstone National Park.

3A: Where are you living now in Alaska?

Lacey: I live right between the towns of Willow and Talkeetna, about 20 miles from each.

3A: How much snow is there?

Lacey: There's currently about two feet of snow here. It's less than normal, but more than there was this time last year.

3A: How many dogs do you have in your kennel?

Lacey: There are 21 adults and 1 puppy in my kennel.

3A: How old are you?

Lacey: I am 20 years old.

### **On Running the Junior Iditarod:**

3A: Was it easy to run the Junior Iditarod?

Lacey: Definitely not! When I ran, we were still living in Montana. It was just about 2,650 miles to Alaska to run the race. It took months of preparation and planning to accomplish, and that's not to mention the miles I logged with my team to train them for the race itself. Then I had to actually run the Junior Iditarod! It was a long, hard race, full of triumphs and failures, but it was a lot of fun, and my dogs and I crossed the finish line with much more experience than when we'd set off down the trail just 30 hours earlier.

3A: Do you plan to make it to the Iditarod someday? When?

Lacey: Yes I do. To run the Iditarod you have to run qualifying races the season before you run the Iditarod. I was signed up to run my qualifiers last winter, however two of them were canceled due to lack of snow and we were unable to adequately train for the third, again due to no snow. Right now I'm hoping to run my qualifiers this coming winter (2014/2015 winter) and run the Iditarod the following year, so Iditarod 2016.

3A: What's the hardest part of running the Junior Iditarod?

Lacey: There were lots of difficult situations, but if I had to pick just one I would say the sleep deprivation. I tried to sleep at Yentna, but it was so cold and very uncomfortable. I got just minutes of sleep. It's very difficult to cope with challenges and issues on the trails when you're so tired.

### **On Being the Race Marshal:**

3A: What is Race Marshall's job?

Lacey: A race marshal has a multifaceted job. Think of the Race Marshal as being sort of like an umpire in baseball or referee in football. A big part of my job is rule enforcement. I will make sure the rules of the race

are followed and can penalize mushers if necessary. My job goes beyond that, though. My biggest goal is to make sure that everyone has a good time and a safe race. I'll do everything from checking to ensure all of the mushers have their mandatory gear before and after the race to chopping firewood for the mushers during the layover.

3A: What will you do before and during the race?

Lacey: This is a huge question!

Before the race I make sure the mushers understand the rules and have all of their race-related questions answered. I have to be at all of the race events, such as the vet checks, food drops, and meetings to make sure everyone is ready for the race and complies with the rules. At the mushers' meeting the race marshal gives one final talk to the mushers to make sure any last minute questions are answered. The day of the race is when the insanity starts! I will spend the entire morning running around and checking each musher's sled for their mandatory gear (you can find a list of mandatory items in the Junior Iditarod's race rules) and make sure everyone takes off on time.

From there I will take a bush plane to Eagles Song and watch some of the teams go through, then another plane to Yentna. When the mushers arrive, we check them into the checkpoint. This is a very important step, as their 10 hour rest clock starts once they have checked in. Then we inspect their sled to make sure they still have their mandatory gear and lead their team to their parking spot for the evening.

Once I see the teams off in the morning (as race marshal I have to be there for every single departure to make sure the rules are followed and the team doesn't take off a second too soon) I catch a plane back to Willow to see the finish. Bags are checked for a final time when mushers cross the finish line and they sign in to the checkpoint to officially finish the race. It's very exciting! There are so many small yet very important jobs I do that it's hard to mention them all here. I hope Mrs. Reiter will be able to provide a more detailed report on what exactly happens at each stage of the race.

3A: Do you think it will be an easy job?

Lacey: I know it's going to be a very difficult job. I will put in long days leading up to the race, and I won't get any sleep while at Yentna. I stay up all night with the mushers to make sure they have the best race possible.

3A: Are you excited to be the Race Marshall?

Lacey: Yes! These young mushers are the future of dog mushing. I could very well be watching a future Iditarod champion at work! It was not too many years ago that I was running this race, so it's fantastic to be able to give back to this event which changed my life.

3A: Do you think it will be tiring to do the job?

Lacey: I was an assistant to the race marshal last year, so I know from experience that it's extremely tiring. I'll get up extremely early on Saturday and spend the entire day dealing with crises as they arise, trying to ensure the mushers have a great race. Just as I'm tired and would like to sit down for a few minutes I'll be arriving at Yentna, and then I may have to park teams. To do that you have to run as fast as you can ahead of the lead dogs and guide them through the maze of parking trails to put the musher in the appropriate spot. The snow is deep and soft and hard to run through, and the mushers can only slow down so much so you're being run over by the team. It's exhausting work! Once all the teams are settled I can finally sit down, but then I have to stay awake all night to help mushers as needed. Then I run around a bunch more on Sunday. By the time I get to the banquet at the end of the race, I'm nearly asleep on my feet. But it's all worth it. The mushers will remember this race for the rest of their lives; I know from experience! I have a hard time remembering what I had for dinner last night,

but I can recall almost every minute of my Junior Iditarod run. Because this race is so important, it's critical that we, the race officials, make it the very best we can.

3A: Is this your first time being a Race Marshall?

Lacey: Yes it is! Last year I trained under Melissa Owens to learn exactly what I need to do. The interesting thing about this job is that if you do it well, mushers and spectators won't even know you are around. It's when something goes wrong or I perform my job poorly that people start looking for the race marshal!

3A. How many people have signed up for this year's race?

Lacey: So far there are seven entrants. There are a couple more expected to sign up.

3A: Do you have a prediction of who will win?

Lacey: There are lots of good teams running the race! The fun thing about long distance racing is that everyone has a chance of winning. In years past we have often had several teams take a wrong turn and get lost, sometimes very near the finish line, resulting in a total shake up of the field! There are several veterans who have proven teams and have either won races with their teams or have relatives who have won with their dogs. But don't underestimate the rookies! A lot of times they work with some of the best mushers in the sport and are quite capable of winning the race.

I look forward to talking with you more in the future!