

88-49-119

Reggie Jewel, Margaret Opie, Results of the 1977 World Indian Eskimo Olympics

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Series: Potlatch series

1977

Jeff Kennedy said the Kotzebue group at the World Indian Eskimo Olympics took fifteen awards including the Miss WEIO fifty award. Reggie Jewel, outstanding sportsmen's trophy winner in 1976, talked about learning the high kick. He learned it in Pt. Hope while he was visiting during a Christmas celebration in the 1960s. He said after he got the basic techniques down he started working on height and form. He said for most of the guys it is a natural thing. He said these games have been passed down for years. He would like to be able to get to 8'6" on the one foot kick. There are some good competitors. He does better under pressure. He doesn't practice, it is just something natural. He does stretch out his legs with the same exercises that hurdlers use. He recommends that others warm up. He said if they get their form down then eventually they will get the height. He talked about the Youth Eskimo Olympics which is held in Anchorage. Students in grades 8-12 compete. He would like to start a class in Native games in his community.

Music from the Athabaskan Gwich'in "The Medicine Song"

Results of the World Indian Eskimo Olympics are read by Jeff Kennedy.

Song by Martin Mull

Margaret Opie was one of the winners of the two foot kick. She said she has always been involved in doing all the Eskimo games back home in Barrow. She is on the committee that sponsors the games during the Christmas week. She does it mostly for fun and doesn't practice. She also participates in the blanket toss. At home they have the blanket toss during the whaling celebration. At home they have block and tackle holding the blanket. If you have good people holding the blanket you get a better jump. The rodeo jump is when you land and then go up again, that is the Barrow style. She said to get a good jump you have to relax and expect to be up in the air. She thinks you have to have good ankles and strong legs. She said some graceful blanket jumpers do it naturally. There are some graceful jumpers in Barrow. Jeff Kennedy and Opie talk about the person that broke her leg during the blanket toss. She said you have to land with your feet spread apart and to look straight ahead. Jeff asked how the blanket toss is judged. Opie said in Fairbanks they judge on height and the way you land. The blanket toss is different from different areas. Kennedy asked what makes a good blanket toss. Opie said it takes good tosses and good jumpers. She said it is harder without the ropes like they have at home. Kennedy asked about the whale festival. Opie said it comes about after a successful whaling season. The people that catch the whale put on the celebration. They cook for the feast. They share the flipper, meat and muktuk. The blanket toss lasts from morning with the children until evening

with the adults. After the blanket toss they have the Eskimo dancing. The whale captain leads his crew members for the dance and then all of his relatives join in and another crew joins in. She leaves a message in Inupiaq.

St. Lawrence Island dancers perform a song.