

Qajaq Aviisii 5

Results of the short distance race are in. The weather was sunny, dry with a slight breeze down by the water. Very nice except for the mosquitoes – a typical summer in Greenland. There was a good turnout of curious spectators to cheer on their favorite competitors. The Men 15-17-years of age race was only completed Friday afternoon, since the leading boat originally had taken a wrong route because they hadn't been provided with an updated route map. In the hard wind Noah John Davidsen won, followed by Gerth Johansen – son of the brave Elisabeth, whom we wrote about earlier.

Hans Kristian Olsen	Jørgen Kristiansen	Torben Johansen	Angerlaq A. Olsen
			
185-Ilulissat	188-Ilulissat	194-Qaqortoq	177-Ilulissat

The distance of 5,7km was used for all of the men from 18 and up: 18-19, 20-34, 35-49 and 50-59. By comparing them, it's revealed that Erik Amondson certainly is the fastest (35:19) but Jens Peter Jeremiassen's second

place (both guys are in the 20-34-group) actually was slower than two men from the 35-49-group: Hans Kristian Olsen and Jørgen Kristiansen. Jeremiassens 36:33 was 25 seconds slower than Olsen and 9 seconds slower than Kristiansen. Also the third place of Jaffet Davidsen wasn't as fast as Torben Johansen of the 50-59'ers who with 37:38 was 20 seconds faster. In the women's race Angerlaq A. Olsen (35-49) was – with 32:32 on the 4,8km – exactly a minute ahead of Malina Amondson of the 20-34's and 4:13 faster than 18-year old Camilla Leander. Angerlaq also won the women's long distance, but we will only have the details later. The oldboys – and girls - are still strong qajatortartut!

We would have liked to see John Pedersen (50-59) and John Eliassen (35-49), both from Ilulissat, on the starting line.

Pedersen – whom for many years have spent considerable time and effort on the qajaqing sport – was on the participants list, but had to cancel, and “both Johns” have paddled in many QUs as, and amongst, the fastest competitors in their age group. Last year also benefitted from Steen C. Nielsen, whom – according to our database – only partakes every 6th year of so, but whom last year won everything in his age group without problems. We'll be looking forward to seeing those three again.... Although we might have to wait a while for Steen.



1Underneath is John Eliassen (+ son) next to Steen C. Nielsen, at a medal ceremony 2015. (foto by Heather Adams) Steens wife Idun is also a strong paddler, competing in QU15. Left is John Petersen from last year.





2foto of Karl Larsen taken by Heather Adams in Qaqortoq 2014

Results from Tuesdays rolling competition / ataas. kinngusaqattaarnej: The foreigners of the international class scored much higher than the Greenlandic competitors. Why is this? Well, first of all it must be noted that both Freya Fenwood of the USA and Mats Halberg from Sweden were not using sealskin tuilit (tuilik). Sealskin does not stretch as much as neoprene and is not as buoyant. It also does not provide as much insulation against the cold water. On the other hand – as Sandie Debois from France showed after her individual rolling – a tuilik of sealskin is completely waterproof.

To perform the rolling maneuvers a person needs to use their bodily flexibility to lay against the kayak either forward or backward as much as possible. Sealskin’s stiffness, especially if it has not been prepared properly by being rubbed with seal fat or laid in water for several hours, hinders the movements needed to do the more difficult rolls. So in looking at high rolling scores the type of tuilik should be taken into account, even though the records do not indicate this. The foreign participants in International class can use them because they “don’t count”, but the rules say that participants in QU must use tuilik or akkuilissaq / spray skirts of sealskin.

However, another obvious reason should be taken into account: time for practice and the weather: all of the Greenlandic competitors are amateurs, and if they’re not elite sportsmen in other disciplines, have very little time to practice. Like Erik Amondson in skiing, he pointed this out to us despite his own surprise at this coincidence. This is unlike for example Freya Fenwood or Dubsid who have made rolling into something of a lifestyle and livelihood. And in Greenland there’s really only ice free shorelines and a bearable water temperature from late May through to early October. Mats Hallberg also agrees, although he did also train some in the cold period just outside of Stockholm in his native Sweden.

Back in the day - at least in west Greenland because no one hunts from qajaqs here any longer - the hunters would naturally need to still set out during winter, but today people simply only train in the few months of summertime. That’s a fact, and it shows.

Having said this, the results from this year include two competitors in the 35-49 group who we know have rolled much better years ago. Taking time off for family and other obligations is certainly understandable, and it is nice to see them participating again. However, our database shows that Pavia

Tobiassen has a best of 272 in 2003, and has exceeded the 250 level multiple times. This year it looks as though he has not practiced for a long time. He just barely fell short of the 50-point minimum qualifying score for men. Kristian



3Sisimiuts HP Jeremiassen in 2014 rolling over to begin the pusillini Paarnej



David Josefsen had a personal best of 278 in 1999, and these records were set back when the rolling list was only 30 maneuvers long. In 2007 the list was extended to 35 maneuvers, making the maximum possible score over 350.

The absolute highest possible rolling score cannot be stated exactly because of pusilluni paarneq, (paddling upside down for distance). If you could paddle for a kilometer on one breath within half an hour you could theoretically get one thousand points. According to Efraim Adolfsen, one of the last surviving seal hunter of Qaqortoq, who passed away in 2010, a seal hunter would be trained from childhood to hold their breath for a long time. And by the time they were an adult they could do it as long as a seal.



4Ephraim Adolfsen in 2008, age 82, observing the QU in Qaqortoq

The flexibility, coordination, and timing that the ropes require are the same qualities needed for the rolls. But a person has to overcome the fear of being underwater – upsidedown. Karen Marie Jensen from Ilulissat, who has been the best woman in allunaariaqattaarneq (ropes exercises) for many years, learned to roll in 2009 yet seems to have gotten discouraged. Seeing her perform on the ropes one can tell she has not yet reached her full potential in kinnusaaqataarneq (rolling). On the Sisimiut team Hans Peter Jeremiassen is very impressive rolling, and last year he braved the icy water in Ilulissat during the rolling competition, which many of the competitors say is noticeably colder. Why isn't Karl Peter Jonathansen, who is so talented on the ropes, rolling as well? Gerth Johansen, like Hans Peter in the 15-17 group, can roll, so the Sisimiut team has no lack of coaching talent.

Thursday was long-distance-day and the evening ended around midnight after the mens 16,2km route, changing between calm waters in the bay and the rough waves outside – only one kayaker capsized and two had to give up, so it was a fine race. And as far as we know, Erik Amondson won in front of Jens Peter Jeremiassen, then Pavia Tobiassen and Martin Skade Jensen. We'll tell more when we know more.



5Uiloq Jessen in her Qajaq, that like most from Qaqortoq, is red with straight stern and bow, arrives after 9,6km Long distance.