

Monica Zappa – February Interview

3A: Do you know YET which dogs you are using for the Iditarod?

Monica: We have a much better idea now that the Denali Doubles are over...we ran 20 in that and 17 made it to the finish line. We dropped Scorpio and Shakira because of minor injuries and Manilex because he was tired. We are not 100% sure of the team! Things can still change, but it looks like it will be: Polly, Pepsi, Raven, Moto, Mowgli, Baloo, Bagheera, Libra, Ziggy, Picante, Winston, Squall, Blue Steel, Gabbana, Smoky, and Cash....things could still change up to the race day!

3A: Do you have any specific dogs you know will NOT be running? What is the reason?

Monica: The most common reason for not talking dogs is due to injuries, like Scorpio and Shakira.

3A: What was your best training run? Did going to Fairbanks to train help?

Monica: The White Mountains near Fairbanks are great for training. We have had a fairly good month of training this month, despite our home trails being nonexistent. We have spent lots of time on the road.

3A: Have you made progress on your drop bags?

Monica: They are done! Lots of work for three full days to get them done.

3A: Do you have any new fears?

Monica: Will my sled bag arrive in time? Will I get my sled fixed up adequately and will it work well without much testing? The trails are probably my biggest fear now! Will my sleds hold up? Will I crash? Will my dogs be healthy? Will I have enough money to buy final things like airline tickets? Will I be able to find beta bunny boots that I need? Many things to worry about!

3A: Does the heat affect your dogs? Is it too hot for them?

Monica: Yes, heat over 25 degrees is very hard on dogs. It has not been too hot lately. Temperatures we have been running in have been ideal -15 to 25. Hopefully the same will be on the race, but we must prepare for warm or cold conditions.

3A: Do you have a wish for a starting number? What number are you hoping to pull? Why?

Monica: Hmm.. haven't thought too much about that. I don't have much of a choice so I will be ok with whatever. Maybe I'd like an earlier number so I can get a better parking spot at the Yentna and Skwentna checkpoints.

3A: Can you predict who think will be the top five finishers?

Monica: That's very hard to say! I have to go with Aliy Zirkle...go girl! Martin Buser (his team has won three races this season already), Jeff King (can't count him out), the Norwegians are uber competitive and Robert Sorlie the past champ is back, Nicholas Petit has a good team! The Seaveys have been on top for a few years (Dallas or Mitch could both be in the top five), Jake Berkowitz has a strong team and wants to win...Hard to say, only thing I know as it will be a tough field!