



Iditarod Musher Q & A with the 2016 Iditarod Class

Name: Larry Daugherty

Q: Where were you born?

A: Provo, Utah

Q: Where do you live now, and what is it like?

A: I live in Eagle River, AK. It is nestled in the mountains just North of Anchorage, AK. I have lived all over the country – Seattle, Denver, Salt Lake, San Diego, Florida, Philadelphia, Boise – Alaska is the best place I have ever lived – I love it!

Q: When you were a child, what was your favorite book?

A: Call of the Wild

Q: What is your favorite game to play?

A: Anything with my kids! I enjoy playing Settlers of Catan with my 13 year old son Calvin.

Q: Have any of your family members raced in the Iditarod?

A: Nope! But my Grandmother was obsessed with the race. I wish she was still alive to see all of this – she would be amazed and astonished that I am actually going to compete in the Iditarod! She was my inspiration for going after this dream.

Q: What is your favorite color? Why?

A: Probably brown. Because I love the sight of my red Jeep covered in brown mud – that is the sight of a fun day!

Q: Who is your favorite superhero?

A: My little boys Conrad and Charlie dress up like superheroes nearly every day. They sometimes argue about who gets to be Spiderman or Ironman. I would have to say that my own sons are my favorite superheroes!

Q: What is your favorite movie?

A: I'm not a big movie fan actually. I used to be, but now I find that movies just don't keep my attention and I fall asleep. I would much rather go on a hike or do something outside than watch a movie.

Q: How many dogs do you have?

A: surprisingly – none! I am running a team with the Mitch Seavey kennel.

Q: What is your favorite animal besides dogs?

A: There are other animals? Haha ok, well maybe I would say a Yak. Someday I want to climb Mt Everest and those Yaks are pretty important to me accomplishing that goal!

Q: When did you first learn about the Iditarod?

A: When I was 10 years old. My Grandmother used to send me newspaper clipping updates about the race in the days of Susan Butcher and Rick Swensen.

Q: Who inspired you to race in the Iditarod?

A: My Grandmother.

Q: How old were you when you decided to do the Iditarod?

A: 10 years old. Years later, on my wife's and my very first date, I mapped out my life goals including going to medical school and someday moving to Alaska to run the Iditarod. I am blessed to have a supportive wife!

Q: Who is your role model?

A: In the dogsledding world I would have to say Mitch Seavey. The guy is amazing. He knows everything about dogs and how to train them. He also makes nearly all of his own gear. There is no one in my opinion more talented at training and running dogs than Mitch Seavey.

Q: Have you ever seen the northern lights? Do you want to see them as a musher in the Iditarod?

A: Yes. There are very few sights more incredible than to see the northern lights in Alaska from the runners of a dogsled team. I was blessed to see them many times last year during my qualifying races and I hope to get to see them on the Iditarod trail as well.

Q: Have you ever seen a moose on the trail? What other wild animals have you seen?

A: Yes – on one of my very first training runs (while running the dogs behind an ATV) we ran right into a moose in the middle of the trail. The moose was just inches from my lead dogs as I

came around a corner. It got on its haunches and looked determined to charge my team. Luckily, I was with another musher who was also on an ATV and charged right at the moose, scaring it off into the woods. I have seen caribou many times. Also porcupine (which you never want to see!) and even lynx, which is quite a rare sighting.

Q: Have you ever mushed in a blizzard?

A: Yes. Several times. One of the worst was during the Northern Lights 300 race last year.

Q: Who is your lead dog?

A: I hope to have 16 dogs all capable of leading in the Iditarod! One of the most talented dogs who will probably make my team is a dog named Woody.

Q: Have you ever gotten frostbite?

A: I have had frostnip on my cheeks and nose, but never truly frostbite. Here is one picture of the coldest I have ever been in -40 temps.



Q: Who is your oldest dog?

A: I have several dogs on my team that are in the 8-10 year old range, not sure which, if any will make the team yet. I have a pool of about 30 dogs that I am working with and only the top 16 make the team.

Q: Have you ever lost any equipment on the trail? If yes, what do you do about it?

A: Yes – I lost my favorite hat – a hat that I got in Norway. Luckily another musher found it and since it was quite unique, recognized that it was mine and mailed it to me! Mushers stick together like family.

Q: What is your favorite food on the trail?

A: Candy. I know I shouldn't say that to kids! But it is true. When you are sleep deprived and it is the middle of the night on a cold dark trail, candy keeps you awake and keeps my mouth chewing and occupied.

Q: Do you have any puppies?

A: The kennel I am running with probably has 15-20 puppies right now.

Q: Where did you get your sled? Did you make it?

A: I will be using a sled that Mitch Seavey made from hockey sticks. He is a very talented guy!

Q: How long do you train each day? In a week?

A: We are still early in the season – right now on the days I train we are running the dogs for 2-3 hours. But there are many other hours spent caring for the team, feeding them, cleaning up after them, etc. Just hooking the team up to the ATV takes a lot of time. As the season progresses, we will increase to runs of 5-7 hours and then start stacking those runs where we are doing 2 per day.

Q: How long does it take to train for the Iditarod?

A: The real answer is at least 2 years. There are qualifying races of at least 750 miles that must be

completed before signing up for the Iditarod. It is very time intensive – but worth it!

Q: Do you have someone who helps you train?

A: I have a whole team of people helping. One of the key people is Seth Barnes – he ran the Iditarod last year as a rookie and this year is planning on running the Yukon Quest. He will run with many of the same dogs that I will be run in the Iditarod.

Q: Is it hard to train a dog to run in the Iditarod?

A: Yes and no. It's hard on the musher because it takes a lot of work. It's somewhat hard on the dog too, in the same way that training for a marathon or climbing a mountain is hard for a human. But these dogs just naturally want to run. It's in their DNA. So when you find an Iditarod-worthy dog, it's a real treat to just watch them naturally do what they were born to do – run. They love it.

Q: What is it like on the trail when you are mushing?

A: Quiet. Peaceful. Sometimes chaos if something goes wrong. Then quiet again. Then very exciting as you suddenly come on a very technical portion of trail – hold on tight to the handlebar, down the steep hill, now quick Gee then haw! Then very quiet again. Now I'm very, very sleepy trying to

stay awake. Now the northern lights are out and it is just incredible. Now it's time to stop at a checkpoint and get the dogs some food and rest. Then I lie down for a few minutes. Time to get up! Booty the team and off we go!

Q: Have you ever fallen off your sled?

A: Twice. There is a saying that you aren't a real musher until you've lost your team =)

Q: Have you ever been to Austin, Texas?

A: Nope. I've been to San Antonio and Dallas and even lived in Galveston for a summer..but never to Austin. I do know that you aren't supposed to mess with Texas for some reason! Haha.

Thank you for sharing with us!

