



# **IDITAROD 2020**

## **MEDIA GUIDE**

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race**

The sled dogs that run in the Iditarod are some of the greatest athletes on the planet and providing the best care available is the top priority of the Iditarod Trail Committee. The Iditarod takes every step to ensure the canine athletes are given first-rate care and treated with respect. Their stories about racing across the wilds of Alaska deserve to be told.

You can't compare it to any other competitive event in the world. A nearly 1,000-mile race over the roughest, most beautiful terrain Mother Nature has to offer, it throws jagged mountain ranges, frozen rivers, dense forests, desolate tundra and miles of windswept coast at mushers and their dog teams.

Add temperatures far below zero, winds that can cause a complete loss of visibility, the hazards of overflow, long hours of total darkness and treacherous climbs to hundreds of miles of jagged terrain and you have the Iditarod – a race extraordinaire only possible in the Last Frontier. From the city of Anchorage in Southcentral Alaska to Nome on the western Bering Sea coast, each team of 12-14 canines and its musher cover more than nearly 1,000 miles in 9-15 days.

It has been called the “Last Great Race on Earth” and has won worldwide acclaim and interest. It's not just a sled dog race; it's a race in which unique men and woman compete. Mushers enter from all walks of life. Fishermen, lawyers, doctors, miners, artists, Alaska Natives, Canadians, Swiss, French and others; men and women each with their own story, each with their own reasons for going the distance. It's a race organized and run primarily by thousands of volunteers. They man headquarters in Anchorage and Nome. They fly in dog food and supplies. They act as checkers, coordinators, veterinarians and family supporters of each musher.

### **“THE LAST GREAT RACE ON EARTH”**

The race puts man and animal against nature; against wild Alaska at its best. As each mile is covered, a tribute to Alaska's past is issued. The Iditarod is a tie to a commemoration of that colorful past.

The Iditarod Trail, now a national historic trail, had its beginnings as a mail and supply route from the coastal towns of Seward and Knik to the Interior mining camps at Flat, Ophir, Ruby and beyond, to the west coast communities of Unalakleet, Elim, Golovin, White Mountain and Nome. Mail and supplies went in, gold came out – all via dog sled. Heroes were made; legends were born.

### **AN EVENT FOR ALL ALASKA**

Anchorage is the ceremonial starting line, a city of nearly 300,000 people, streetlights, freeways and traffic. From there, a field of dog teams, which varies in number each year, runs to Campbell Airstrip, approximately 11 miles. After a restart the following day in the Matanuska Valley in Willow, the mushers leave the land of highways and bustling activity and



head out to the Yentna Station Roadhouse and Skwentna, then up through Finger Lake, Rainy Pass, over the Alaska Range, down the other side to the Kuskokwim River, Rohn Roadhouse, Nikolai, McGrath, Takotna, Ophir, Cripple and on to the mighty Yukon at Ruby, a river highway that takes the teams west through the Arctic tundra.

The race route alternates every other year, one going north through Cripple, Ruby and Galena, and the other south through Iditarod, Shageluk and Anvik.

Finally, they're on the coast of Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Elim, Golovin and White Mountain before the last stretch into Nome where a hero's welcome awaits.

The route encompasses large metropolitan areas and small Alaska Native villages. It causes a yearly burst of activity, increased airplane traffic and excitement to areas otherwise quiet and dormant during the long Alaska winter. Everyone gets involved from very young school children to the old timers who relive the colorful past of Alaska as they watch each musher and their team. The race is an educational opportunity and an economic stimulus to these small Alaska outposts.

## **THE BEGINNING**

The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race first ran to Nome in 1973, after two short races on part of the Iditarod Trail in 1967 and 1969. The idea of having a race over the Iditarod Trail was conceived by the late Dorothy G. Page. In 1964, Page was chairman of the Wasilla-Knik centennial committee. Her task was to find projects to celebrate the centennial year in 1967.

She was intrigued that dog teams could travel over land that was not accessible by automobile. In the early 1920s, settlers had come to Alaska following a gold strike. They traveled by boat to the coastal towns of Seward and Knik and from there, by land into the gold fields. The trail they used is today known as the Iditarod Trail, one of the national historic trails designated by the U.S. Congress. In the winter, the only means of travel was by dog team.

The Iditarod Trail soon became the major thoroughfare through Alaska. Mail was carried across the trail, people used it to get from place to place and supplies were transported. Priests, ministers and judges also traveled between villages via dog team.

All too soon, the gold mining began to slack off. People began to go back to where they had come from and suddenly there was less travel on the Iditarod Trail. The use of airplanes in the late 1920s signaled the beginning of the end for the dog team as a standard mode of transportation, with the final blow to the use of the dog team came with the appearance of snowmobiles.

By the mid-60s, most people in Alaska didn't even know there was an Iditarod Trail or that dog teams had played a very important role in Alaska's early settlement. Page, a resident of Wasilla and self-made historian, recognized the importance of honoring the use of sled dogs as working animals and of the Iditarod Trail as well as the important part they played in Alaska's





colorful history. She presented the possibility of a race over the Iditarod Trail to an enthusiastic Joe Redington Sr., a musher from the Knik area. Soon Page and Redington began promoting the idea of the Iditarod Race to the extent that Joe and VI Redington moved to the Knik area at Flat Horn Lake, just 30 miles out of Knik, and never moved back.

The Aurora Dog Mushers Club, along with men from the Adult Camp in Sutton, helped clear years of overgrowth from the first nine miles of the Iditarod Trail in time to put on the first short Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in 1967. A \$25,000 purse was offered at the race, with Joe and VI Redington donating one acre of their land at Flat Horn Lake, adjacent to the Iditarod Trail, to help raise \$10,000 toward the purse. Contestants from all over Alaska and even two contestants from Massachusetts entered the first Iditarod race. However, it was newcomer Isaac Okleasik, from Teller, Alaska, who won the race with his team of large working canines. The short race – approximately 27 miles – was put on again in 1969.

The goal was to have the race go all the way to the ghost town of Iditarod in 1973. However, in 1972, the U.S. Army reopened the trail as a winter exercise and in 1973, the decision was made to take the race over 1,000 miles to Nome. Redington and Page were instrumental in getting the first long Iditarod on its way to Nome in 1973, amidst comments that it couldn't be done. There were many who believed it was crazy to send a bunch of mushers out into the vast uninhabited Alaska wilderness. But the race went! Twenty-two mushers finished that year. Since 1973, there have been 793 finishers and a total of 2,224 racers to cross the finish line, as of 2018. Mushers from 23 states, five continents – including North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia – and 21 foreign countries – Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom – have finished the Iditarod race, including 138 women.

The late Dorothy G. Page, who is considered the “Mother of the Iditarod,” is quoted in the October 1979 issue of the Iditarod Runner on her intent for the race: “To keep the spirit of the Iditarod the same. I don't ever want to see any high-pressure people getting in and changing the spirit of the race. We brought the sled dog back and increased the number of mushers. It is really an Alaska event. I think the fact that it starts in Anchorage and ends in Nome opens up a whole new area for people in Alaska. I think they appreciate that. It puts them in touch with the pioneer spirit.”

### **IDITAROD TODAY**

The race has started in downtown Anchorage since 1983. The 48<sup>th</sup> Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race will begin on Saturday, March 7, 2020. The teams will leave the start line at the corner of Fourth Avenue and D Street at two-minute intervals starting at 10 a.m. About 60 teams are expected.

The mushers follow streets and bike trails through Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip. From there, the canines are loaded into trucks and taken home for the night. While the race actually



starts in Anchorage, in 1995, the rules were changed so that the Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip – originally to Eagle River – portion does not count in the overall time to Nome.

On Sunday, March 8, 2020, mushers will line up at the restart area in Willow, about 70 miles north of Anchorage. At 2 p.m., the first team will depart on its way to Nome.

From Willow, they head over Willow Lake and wind through typical northern forests of birch and spruce, cross frozen swamps and lakes before dropping onto the Big Susitna River and heading toward Yentna Station. The area between Willow Lake and Yentna Station, approximately 45 miles, has been dubbed the world's longest tailgate party to this day, as spectators set up camps with bonfires, banners, food and sprits to cheer the teams on as they make their way to Nome.

It is impossible to predict the exact day or time that the first musher will cross the finish line in Nome. However, we typically expect it to be between eight and 10 days, making it on Tuesday or Wednesday.

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

It takes so much more than a field of willing mushers and excited sled dogs to run the Iditarod, and the Iditarod depends on a hardworking force of volunteers and supporters to raise the necessary money all year around. Our race sponsors supply more than \$2 million in cash donations and/or goods and services. A semi-annual raffle is held as well as an IditaRider Musher Auction, where bidders place bids of \$850-\$7,500 on entered mushers to ride in their sled at the Anchorage ceremonial start for the first 11 miles. Iditarod gift shops in the Anchorage and Wasilla area sell Iditarod merchandise year-round. Merchandise is also sold at the Alaska State Fair and on other special occasions during the year. Banquets are planned in both Anchorage and Nome. This volunteer force and the loyal supporters from both the private and business sectors make the race possible each year.

Race headquarters are set up in Anchorage and Nome during the race to disseminate information and race standings to the public. Volunteers man each of the 20 plus checkpoints, including some who spend their vacations on the trail. A complex communications net covers the course, offering logistical support, emergency communications and an information source for race officials. The Iditarod Air Force is a fleet of small, privately-owned bush planes flown by volunteers that shuttle dog food and mushers' supplies to each checkpoint, moving veterinarians and race officials up and down the trail, and more. A group of veterinarians from around the U.S. and the world take time out from their busy practices to assist with canine care duties along the trail. Trailbreakers on snow machines precede the field, cutting, marking and packing trail in windswept areas, trying to give each team a safe path to follow.

Without these volunteers, there wouldn't be a race. Their efforts save the committee thousands of dollars, which would be nearly impossible to raise otherwise. Their dedication and involvement is what this historic Alaska event is all about.



## **ON THE TRAIL**

The rules of the race lay out certain regulations. There are pieces of equipment each team must have: an Arctic parka, a heavy sleeping bag, an axe, snowshoes, musher food, dog food and booties for each dog's feet to protect them against nature's elements.

Whether they run during the day or night, each musher has a different strategy on and off the trail. In addition, each has a different approach for dog care, dog diet, dog stamina as well as their own personal ability. Mushers spend an entire year preparing for and raising the money needed to get to Nome. In addition to planning the equipment and feeding needs for three weeks on the trail, hundreds of hours and miles of training have to be put in on each team.

## IDITAROD BOARD OF DIRECTORS, STAFF & COORDINATORS

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

President .....	Mike Mills
Vice President .....	Danny Seybert
Secretary .....	Mike Jonrowe
Treasurer .....	Ryan York
Director .....	Stan Foo
Director .....	Nina Kemppel
Director .....	John Handeland
Director .....	Mike Owens
Director .....	Karen King
Director .....	Clint Johnson
Director.....	Gail Schubert
Director Emeritus.....	Joe Redington, Sr.
IOFC Director .....	Andy Angstman

### **STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RACE COORDINATORS**

Chief Executive Officer.....	Rob Urbach
Chief Operations Officer .....	Chas St. George
Race Director / Race Marshal.....	Mark Nordman
Chief Veterinarian .....	Stuart Nelson, Jr., DVM
Assistant to the CEO .....	Starre Szelag
Digital + Constituent Engagement Manager .....	Krystin Bogan
Public Relations/Media Coordinator .....	Bri Kelly, Thompson & Co. PR
Race Coordinator .....	Joe Meyer
Education Director/Volunteer/Idita-Rider Musher Auction.....	Diane Johnson
Finance Director/Membership .....	Don Patterson
Start Coordinator .....	Karl Heidelberg
Restart Coordinator .....	Darrell Davis
The Lakefront Anchorage Headquarters Coordinator .....	Cheryl Zachary
Nome Coordinator .....	Mike Owens
Iditarod Insider.....	Greg Heister
Iditarod.com.....	Art Aldrich



## PARTNERS & SPONSORS

### Principal Partners



### Lead Dog Partners



### Team Dog Partners



### Wheel Dog Partners



## MEDIA INFORMATION

Media credential applications due by **Feb. 21, 2020**

Applications can be found at <http://iditarod.com/resources/press-media/>

Media briefing will be held at **1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2020**, at The Lakefront Anchorage, at 4800 Spenard Road, Anchorage, AK.

Media must attend the briefing in order to pick up media credentials. This is the **ONLY** time media can pick up credentials for Anchorage or Willow.

**Please plan accordingly: any media that do not attend the briefing will not receive credentials.**

The media briefing is where you will receive information needed for covering the ceremonial start, restart and the trail. **Media are not allowed to use different Iditarod volunteer or dog handler badges to access areas where members of the media are not allowed to visit.**

If you will be covering the Iditarod finish in Nome, please note that there will be a separate mandatory media briefing several hours before the projected finish of the first musher. An email will be sent out, as well as posters put up in the Mini Convention Center, to media who are credentials for the Nome finish once the time and date of the briefing is determined.

### **NOME MEDIA BRIEFING**

Mini Convention Center  
409 River Street  
Nome, AK 99762

Projected Finish Date: **Tuesday, March 17, 2020**

Your credentials used along the trail and in Anchorage cannot be used to access the finish chute in Nome. However, there will be a designated media section near the finish line for media use.



## 2020 CREDENTIAL AND MEDIA GUIDELINES

When applying for media credentials for the 2020 race, please read the below guidelines prior to filling out an application to ensure you meet eligibility requirements.

- You must be on assignment from a qualified media outlet and provide details of the assignment.
- Specialty photography and personal website photography are not considered valid assignments. Freelance media are required to detail and submit proof of assignment when submitting an application to [media@iditarod.com](mailto:media@iditarod.com).
- For documentary film crews and video production companies, a written request must be submitted to [media@iditarod.com](mailto:media@iditarod.com) no less than one month prior to the start of the 2020 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and should include the following:
  - Information about the company; the purpose of covering the race; a synopsis of the film, video, or documentary; a reference for the Iditarod Trail Committee to reach out to for validation; and the sources of financial support for the project.
- Media credentials will not be issued if supporting documentation is not emailed at the time of application. Partial applications will not be approved.
- Media credentials can be picked up at the media briefing on **Wednesday, March 4, 2020, at 1 p.m.** at The Lakefront Anchorage. Credentials cannot be picked up prior to the briefing and media must attend the briefing in order to receive credentials.
- Media credentials issued are not transferable and may be revoked at any time. There is a fee for lost media credentials.
- Credentialed members of the media, who are also a dog handler or volunteer, are not allowed to use volunteer or dog handler badges to access areas that are off limits to members of the media.
- Receiving credentials in the past does not guarantee future approvals.

The Iditarod Trail Committee **will not** issue credentials to the following representatives:

- Advertising/sales representatives of publications
- Advertising, marketing, or public relations representatives from sponsor companies or agencies, including individual mushers
- Spouses and other guests of journalists covering the race
- Representatives of organizations selling or producing publications, video/audio tapes, or website intended for marketing, advertising, or public relations purposes
- Organizations whose main objective is to promote a product or service (i.e. marketing, advertising, financial analysts, or public relations personnel).

Individuals with media credentials that violate Iditarod Trail Committee media credential policies will immediately forfeit media credentials for the race, as well as any subsequent media opportunities before, during and after the race. These violations include:



- Selling, marketing, or representing a company for the purposes of obtaining advertising from Iditarod sponsors, mushers and staff.
- Misrepresentation to obtain media credentials to cover the 2020 race.
- Deliberately accessing a credential zone outside of your designated credential zone. This includes designated areas at the ceremonial start in Anchorage, official restart in Willow and finish in Nome.
- Sharing or distributing embargoed media materials beyond those immediately involved in the development of news coverage prior to the embargo lift
- Product promotion that implies that the Iditarod Trail Committee endorses said product and/or usage of the Iditarod logo without the express written consent of the Iditarod Trail Committee.

In evaluating all media credential applications, the Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC) will consider the following:

- Previous journalism experience.
- The commercial nature of any website, including advertisers.
- The amount of content produced.
- How the content will be used.
- How long the outlet has been in existence, its audience, and circulation/unique visitor numbers.

## Media Guidelines

- The Iditarod is exclusive owner of any and all of its intellectual property rights, including, but not limited to trademarks, copyrights, and other proprietary rights. Each credential authorizes the media the right to use Iditarod trademarks in its news coverage of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Media are not authorized to use trademarks in non-news contexts, specifically for commercial purposes unless a separate license or permission is obtained from the Iditarod.
- Any and all use of any non-text content owned by ITC must first be approved by ITC, and if approved, shall not have any sponsorship or advertising integrated with or around the content in such a way that implies an endorsement or sponsorship relationship between Iditarod and another third party. Further, such content may not be sold or licensed without approval by ITC in writing and shall not include live or tape delayed transmissions of any portion of any Iditarod Race or related event except for taped highlights used for news coverage, unless otherwise approved by Iditarod.
- The media applicant assumes all risk and danger incidental to the race, as well as any risk or danger reasonably foreseeable while covering the race and assumes the risk and releases the ITC, its employees, members, directors, officers, volunteers, sponsors, mushers, and all agents thereof from any and all liabilities resulting from injuries or personal property loss occurring during or after the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.



- The media applicant jointly and severally indemnify, defend and hold the ITC harmless from and against any and all claims, actions, damages, liabilities, costs or expenses arising out of or in connection with any act or omission done, or alleged to have been done by media, including without limitation, media applicant(s) breach of any term of this credential. In case of any dispute regarding the terms and conditions of this agreement Alaska law will apply, without regard to choice of law principles.
- Media partners are solely allowed to broadcast live coverage within the Iditarod Trail Committee-controlled media zones and staging areas at the ceremonial start, restart and finish of the race. Further, the use of boom cameras (including jibs) are prohibited within three blocks of the starting line of the Iditarod ceremonial start.

### **Official Media**

- Iditarod partner media have preferential access and positioning and are identified by a credential that indicates they are “Official Media.”

### **Trail Etiquette and Expectations: Respect the four-legged athletes**

- Media credentials must be worn in all checkpoints and specified media areas.
- Dog teams always have the right-of-way, no exceptions.
- Do not touch sled dogs without musher approval.
- Do not help mushers unless they ask for your help. Strict rules are in place against mushers receiving outside assistance.
- Do not intrude on a musher if he/she indicates they do not wish to be disturbed. This includes taking photos of the musher and their canines.
- Do not ask to interview a musher during any medical exam of the canines and/or musher.
- Media must stay clear of a team upon its arrival into a checkpoint. Race personnel require immediate access to the musher and dog team. When the check-in process is completed and the canines have been taken care of, mushers can then give consent to be interviewed.
- Media are not allowed inside the parking/staging area (where canines are fed and rested) without prior approval of the race judge or race marshal. The musher and/or race judge or race marshal must escort media in these areas. Drop canine areas are restricted to mushers and race personnel only. Media are permitted to take photos of mushers and canines from outside the canine staging area.
- Media are expected to ensure they have appropriate escorts or expertise for trail travel. Any on trail coverage plans must be fully detailed and discussed with ITC.
- Food, equipment, shelter, Internet and phone connectivity provided by the Iditarod are for race communications and race personnel only.
- Flash photography or the use of artificial lighting is only permissible in the immediate vicinity of the checkpoints. Flash photography is forbidden on the trail unless arrangements have been made beforehand.

- In the event that a race official or musher considers the conduct of media to be detrimental or obstructive to them or the race they may register a protest against any media personnel. Current and future media credentials could be revoked or denied.
- Nome Finish: There will be a pre-finish media briefing, which all credentialed media traveling to Nome should attend. Information regarding access to the winning musher and timing of such access will be communicated at that time.
- Media may not share or distribute media credentials to others not approved by ITC. Doing so will cause your credential to be revoked.

Need assistance in applying for credentials? Contact Bri Kelly with Thompson & Co. Public Relations, by email at [media@iditarod.com](mailto:media@iditarod.com), or by phone at 907-376-5155 ext. 106.

## MEDIA FAQ

**Can I use Iditarod logo, videos or pictures from the website?** Use of the Iditarod logo in news coverage is permitted but the Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC) does not permit use of the logo in promotional or commercial use unless specific approval is authorized by the ITC in advance. Please note that use of pictures or video from Iditarod.com will most likely require a license agreement and fee for defined use. Iditarod Insider footage is available for sale and cost is determined by how much footage is needed. For information on purchase or license of items on the Iditarod website, please email [chas.stgeorge@iditarod.com](mailto:chas.stgeorge@iditarod.com).

**Do credentialed media receive access to the Iditarod Insider for free?** In the media room at the Iditarod Race Headquarters at The Lakefront Anchorage, we have equipment available for media use which has the Insider Video on-demand and Insider GPS Tracker available free of charge. Otherwise, we encourage you to [purchase an Iditarod Insider subscription](#).

**Can I attend the banquet for free?** Media wanting to attend the banquet can do so for free for news purposes only, provided they stand and do not eat. Media often choose to purchase a ticket, as the event is more than four hours long. Banquet tickets are available for \$110.00 and can be purchased [here](#). This event is the main fundraising event for the Iditarod Trail Committee, where mushers draw for their starting order from a mukluk on stage at the Dena'ina Civic + Convention Center in Anchorage. Please understand that mushers are seated with their own sponsors and special guests, so be respectful of their time.

**Is there a media center with free Wi-Fi access?** Iditarod Race Headquarters at The Lakefront Anchorage offers Wi-Fi for guests staying there. There are many places in Anchorage that offer complimentary Wi-Fi with purchase. The Nome Mini Convention Center in Nome does have Wi-Fi available.

**Is Iditarod interested in purchasing my photos?** We do not purchase photos. The ITC has an agreement with Jeff Schultz who is the Iditarod's official photographer. You may contact him by email at [Jeff@Schultzphoto.com](mailto:Jeff@Schultzphoto.com) or by phone at 907-279-2797.

**Can the Iditarod help me with my travel arrangements or accommodations on the trail?** Media are responsible for arranging their own travel arrangements. Iditarod staff can answer general questions about the area and specific information about the race. For more travel information see the following:

**State of Alaska tourism office**

[www.travelalaska.com](http://www.travelalaska.com)

**Visit Anchorage**

524 W. Fourth Avenue

Anchorage, AK 99501



907-257-2363 or 800-476-1255

[www.Anchorage.net](http://www.Anchorage.net)

### **Visitor Information Center**

Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport

907-266-2437 or 907-266-2657

### **Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau**

7744 Visitors View Court

Palmer, AK 99645

907-746-5000

[www.alaskavisit.com](http://www.alaskavisit.com)

### **Nome Convention & Visitors Bureau**

P.O. Box 240

Nome, AK 99762

907-443-6555

[www.visitnomealaska.com](http://www.visitnomealaska.com)

**Can I call the mushers? Will Iditarod give me their phone numbers?** First, refer to [each musher's bio](#). You will find that they contain valuable information about the mushers and their kennels. Most bios also have a website listed for contact information. We are only able to provide additional contact information for those mushers who have indicated they want this information distributed. The best time to reach these mushers is usually prior to the start of the Iditarod.

**How many mushers have completed the Iditarod?** As of the finish of the 2019 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, 800 mushers have completed the race. If you count all finishers from 1973 through 2019, the number is 2,371.

**Does the Iditarod race route change?** Yes, in odd years the race follows the [southern route](#). In even years the race follows the [northern route](#). The board decided unanimously in 2017 that the race course would follow the southern route in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, the race will follow the northern route.

**Can I use a drone to capture footage on the Iditarod trail?** All drone operators flying along the Iditarod route should operate under FAA-14 CFR Part 107, 336, 333 or 101E. ITC requires that all credentialed media that plan to operate a drone have liability insurance up to \$5 million and submit proof of this in the media credential application process. Credentialed media cannot fly over people or dog teams within a 50-foot horizontal distance. If the Iditarod Air Force is not flying because of weather concerns, then drone operators cannot fly. Any foreign journalists will need to have a drone registered in the U.S. or hire a local operator with proper certifications.

**What is the length of the race?** In 2012, ITC published trail mileage using data gleaned from GPS mileage (southern route = 998 miles, northern route = 975 miles) calculations. While this data gets us close to the actual mileage, it is not exact as the units do not include a sufficient number of data points to account for all full twists, turns and elevation changes in the trail. Also, we know that the trail is not the same distance as it may be “set” or “broken” and “marked” somewhat differently in certain areas from year to year. Because of these factors, we often continue to use the symbolic figure of 1,049 miles, a number first used in the very early years of the Iditarod: 1,000 miles of trail and 49 to identify Alaska as the 49<sup>th</sup> state.

Permanent changes to the start – running only from downtown Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip instead of to Eagle River – and the change of the restart location from Wasilla to Willow – loss of mileage from Wasilla-Knik-Yentna River runs – has eliminated approximately 35 miles from the race.

## MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR DRONE USE

Drone use will be permitted by approved and credentialed members of the media during the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Media must abide by the following guidelines and submit paperwork in advance of their credential being approved to [media@iditarod.com](mailto:media@iditarod.com).

- All drone operators flying along the Iditarod route should operate under FAA-14 CFR Part 107, 336, 333 or 101E.
- Drone operators should attend a meeting of the Iditarod Air Force and lay out a draft flight plan of their coverage during the race.
- ITC requires all credentialed media that plan to operate a drone to have liability insurance up to \$5 million and submit proof of this in the media credential application process.
- Credentialed media cannot fly over people or dog teams within a 50-foot horizontal distance.
- If the Iditarod Air Force is not flying because of weather concerns, then credentialed media approved to operate a drone cannot fly.
- Drone operators should be listening to air traffic control when their drone is in the air.
- International media members must have a drone registered in the U.S. or hire a local operator as the FAA does not recognize any international drone certifications.

In the event that a race official or musher considers the drone use to be detrimental or obstructive to them or the race, they may register a protest against any media personnel. Current and future media credentials could be revoked or denied.

For more information about drone use in Alaska contact:

**Anchorage Flight Standards District Office**

300 W 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue #101  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
907-280-6800

National Press Photographers Association rules on drone use: <https://nppa.org/magazine/drone-code-ethics>

## IDITAROD FACTS

- The Iditarod ceremonial start begins in downtown Anchorage, Alaska, on Saturday, March 7, 2020, at 10 a.m.
- The Iditarod restarts in Willow, Alaska, on Sunday, March 8, 2020, at 2 p.m.
- As of Feb. 18, 2020, 57 mushers are signed up for the 2020 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, including 46 veterans and 11 rookies. Entrants hail from five states – Alaska, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, and Wisconsin – and from four countries – United States, Canada, Denmark, and Norway. The record number of mushers starting the race was 96 in 2008.
- The Iditarod traditionally pays the highest purse in sled dog racing. The 2019 purse was approximately \$500,000, distributed between the top 20 finishers with \$1,049 paid to each additional finisher.
- The Iditarod changed the minimum number of dogs starting the race for 2019. Each musher can start with a maximum of 14 canine athletes and must have at least 12 on the line to start. A team can finish with as few as five sled dogs.
- Six Iditarod champions will be attempting to regain the title. The Iditarod champions are Lance Mackey, Martin Buser, Jeff King, Mitch Seavey, Joar Leifseth Ulsom and Peter Kaiser.
- The race crosses two mountain ranges, including North America's largest mountain range, the Alaska Range, and runs along the Yukon River and over the frozen Norton Sound.
- The northern route will be used in 2020. It runs from Ophir through Cripple, Ruby, Galena, Nulato, Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Elim, \*Golovin, White Mountain, and Safety before ending in Nome. \*NOTE: Golovin is not a checkpoint, but the race goes through this community. ITC appreciates the Golovin's support and willingness to help the Iditarod.
- There are 24 checkpoints on the northern route, including Anchorage and Nome, three of which are uninhabited during the rest of the year.
- Four teams signed up for the 2020 Iditarod also signed up for the 2020 Yukon Quest – Paige Drobny, Matt Hall, Martin Apayauq Reitan and Jessie Royer.
- Volunteers are an integral part of the Iditarod. Currently there are over 1,000 volunteers registered. This number does not include those who volunteer in communities along the trail or the locals in Nome. The number of volunteers will continue to grow over the weeks to come and by the end of Iditarod 2020 there will be over 1,500 volunteers involved in some way or another.

- The 2020 race has more than 50 veterinarians responsible for caring for canines along the race course.
- There have been 800 individual team finishers for a grand total of 2,231 teams to cross the finish line as of 2019. Mushers hailing from 23 states, five continents – North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia – and 22 foreign countries – Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom – have finished the Iditarod since 1973, including 142 women.
- Mushers can be shy about talking about themselves; however, they will usually talk your ear off about their sled dogs.
- Checkpoints are staffed by volunteers who range from locals to visitors who have traveled thousands of miles to Alaska. Volunteers may provide interesting stories about their communities and/or volunteer work. Some volunteers take their vacation during the race and return year after year to volunteer. Ask them how long they have been a volunteer and you will be surprised to find that many have more than 20 years of experience.
- The first Iditarod race began on March 3, 1973, with 34 teams; 22 teams finished 32 days later.
- The slowest winning time of 20 days, 15 hours, two minutes and seven seconds was recorded in 1974 by Carl Huntington. The fastest winning time was recorded in 2017 by Mitch Seavey with eight days, three hours, 40 minutes and 13 seconds, breaking the previous record by Dallas Seavey of eight days, 11 hours, 20 minutes and 16 seconds.
- The closest finish was in 1978 when Dick Mackey beat Rick Swenson by one second, finishing in 14 days, 18 hours, 52 minutes and 24 seconds.
- The most finishers in one year occurred in 2008 when 78 teams crossed the finish line.
- Rick Swenson is the only five-time winner, the only musher to win in three decades, and only musher to complete 35 of 43 Iditarods.
- Susan Butcher, Martin Buser, Doug Swingley, Jeff King, Lance Mackey and Dallas Seavey have each won four Iditarod championships. Mackey is the only musher to have won four consecutive races with Butcher, Swingley and Seavey all winning three consecutive races.
- Dick Mackey, Rick Mackey and Lance Mackey (father and two sons) have won the Iditarod. All three won wearing bib number 13 in their sixth race. Rick Mackey won the race in 1983 to become the first son of an Iditarod champion to match his



father's accomplishment. Emmitt Peters was also wearing bib number 13 when he won in 1975.

- Lance Mackey is the first, four-time Iditarod Champion to win all four races consecutively in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010. He also won the Yukon Quest in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, making him the first musher to win both of Alaska's premier long distance races back to back in 2007 and 2008 within weeks of each other.
- Four-time winner, Susan Butcher, claimed Iditarod victories in 1986, 1987, 1988, and again in 1990. Doug Swingley became the second four-time winner in 2001. His victories were in 1995, 1999, 2000 and 2001. Dallas Seavey became a four-time winner in 2016 with consecutive victories in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Butcher, Swingley and Seavey have the distinction of being the only Iditarod champions who have three consecutive victories.
- The youngest musher to ever compete in the Iditarod was Dallas Seavey in 2005 when he turned 18 on March 4, 2005. He also became the youngest Iditarod champion in 2012.
- The oldest musher to ever compete is Colonel Norman D. Vaughan who last competed in 1992 at the age of 86.
- On the trail, canines need about 10,000 calories daily. How that is attained depends on their feeding program, which varies from kennel to kennel.
- The core diet is a premium kibble, specifically designed to have much higher levels of protein and fat than regular commercial pet food. Additional fat supplements (saturated or unsaturated, i.e., animal or plant sources) are needed to attain the 10,000-calorie level. Meats and fish are used to enhance palatability and/or as snacks. Of course, the more fat that is in the meat, the less pure fat supplement needed.
- There has been a huge amount of research into the topic of dog food. Authors include Grandjean (Royal Canin), Reynolds (Purina) and Reinhart (Iams). Knowledge gained by research into the nutritional needs of the sled dog has led to significant improvements in pet food formulations.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

The Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC) takes great pride in its role of providing excellence in canine athlete care, not only during the race but also through an extensive program of pre-race veterinary screening.

- A licensed veterinarian performs a complete pre-race physical examination on each canine athlete within 14 days of the race start. Within 30 days of the race start, each canine receives an ECG evaluation to check for heart abnormalities. Since the implementation of this measure, four canine athletes have not been allowed to race.
- Pre-race blood work (CBC's and Chemistry panels) is performed on each canine athlete.
- All canine athletes are identified with a microchip implant.
- All canine athletes have current vaccinations and are de-wormed within 10 days of the race start.
- Rookie mushers are required to complete qualifying races of considerable distance before entering the Iditarod to ensure that they are experienced in providing the proper care (nutrition, hydration, rest, etc.) for their teams. In addition, the ITC hosts a mandatory two- day rookie seminar in December prior to the race.
- In addition to the high standard of care provided by the mushers themselves, more than 40 licensed, professional veterinarians, volunteer their time on the trail to perform routine evaluations and administer any necessary treatments.
- During the Race itself, well over 10,000 planned checkpoint examinations take place.
- Canine care diaries are carried by each musher and are utilized by the mushers and veterinarians at each checkpoint to serve as a written medical record for each athlete in the race.
- All mushers competing in the Iditarod are members of P.R.I.D.E., which stands for "Providing Responsible Information on a Dog's Environment" and is an organization whose membership consists of a wide variety of mushers, veterinarians and other interested individuals from around the world. Those familiar with sled dogs will appreciate the guidelines established by P.R.I.D.E. as being sound advice for the care of this special breed.

- The International Sled Dog Veterinary Medical Association (I.S.D.V.M.A.) published The Musher and Veterinary Handbook, a highly regarded resource, which provides important information to the musher and veterinarian alike. As an organization consisting primarily of medical professionals with an interest in and/or experience in working with sled dogs, the I.S.D.V.M.A. actively promotes and encourages their welfare and safety. Many members of the organization have served as trail veterinarians during the Iditarod itself. The I.S.D.V.M.A. also supports and encourages scientific research to further a better understanding of the racing sled dog.
- Over the past two decades, the ITC has been involved with veterinary research studies at Oregon State University, Oklahoma State University, Ohio State University, University of Illinois, Colorado State University and Cornell. The information from these studies, focusing on cardiovascular, muscular, skeletal and gastrointestinal health and overall nutrition of sled dogs, have benefited canines around the world.
- Race policies and rules are written with the greatest emphasis on the proper care and treatment of the canine athletes. Any musher found guilty of inhumane treatment will be disqualified and banned from competition in future Iditarod's.
- Ongoing, random drug testing is conducted throughout the race. In the 10 years of this program, no drug test has ever been positive.
- The result of these efforts is a level of health care and screening that even an overwhelming majority of the human population will never experience

## IDITAROD RACE HEADQUARTERS CONTACT INFORMATION

The Iditarod Trail Committee operates its primary race headquarters in Anchorage at The Lakefront Anchorage, 4800 Spenard Road. Another headquarters operates in Nome to make accurate information available at the end of the race. You are invited to drop in to either headquarter location for the latest race information and to purchase Iditarod memorabilia. Visit [www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com).

<b>General Information, Updates and Race Business:</b> Anchorage Race Headquarters at The Lakefront Anchorage Hotel, 4800 Spenard Road, Room 1004	907-248-MUSH (6874)	Open throughout the business day March 1, 2020, then open 24/7 March 6–24, 2020
<b>General Information and Updates:</b> Nome Race Headquarters at Mini-Convention Center	907-443-MUSH (6874)	Open March 12, 2020
<b>Iditarod Media Coordinator:</b> Bri Kelly, Thompson & Co. Public Relations	907-376-5155 ext. 106 <a href="mailto:media@iditarod.com">media@iditarod.com</a>	

## 2020 IDITAROD HONORARY MUSER

### Longtime Alaskan Gail Phillips is the 2020 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race Honorary Musher



The honorary musher is a symbolic designation to someone who has made a significant contribution to furthering the Iditarod's legacy and wears bib No. 1 of the race. The honorary musher is the first to leave the Iditarod ceremonial start's starting line in downtown Anchorage at the corner of Fourth Avenue and D Street.

Gail was born in Juneau to the pioneering Ost family and was raised in Nome. She attended public schools with her six younger sisters then went on to attend the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, graduating in 1967 with a Bachelor of Arts in business education. While attending the university, she met her future husband, Walt Phillips.

After a quick stint outside of the state, the Phillipses returned to Alaska in 1973, specifically Anchorage, and that's when they both became passionate about the Iditarod. One of Gail's first volunteer jobs was making presentations to local communities with Joe Redington, Sr.

During the years of 1975-1977, while raising two small children and working a full-time job as executive secretary for Don Brugman of Wien Air Alaska, Gail organized the Iditarod race from their Spenard home. Walt and Gail's house even served as the Iditarod Trail Committee's office and many hours were spent around their kitchen table working with board members and volunteers to keep the race alive in those early years. Brugman used to joke that he took to answering his phone "Iditarod Trail Headquarters doing business as Wien Air Alaska!"

Gail was elected to the Iditarod board of directors in 1975 and served through 1979. She took on the all-consuming duties of race coordinator for the 1977, 1978 and 1979 races, and was the last person to fulfill this position on a volunteer basis. Both Gail and Walt were also the first Iditarod board members who were neither dog mushers nor directly connected to the race.

Gail is still actively involved in the "Last Great Race on Earth" as a board member of the Iditarod Trail Race Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the Iditarod. Additionally, Gail and Walt are two of eleven writers known as the "The Old Iditarod Gang" who authored, published and distributed a seven-pound, 422-page coffee table book, an anthology of the Iditarod called "Iditarod – First Ten Years."



2020 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™, Kelly Villar, is from Mansfield, Connecticut. She began teaching in 2000 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. In 2004, Kelly moved to Mansfield, Connecticut, where she has taught grades second through sixth, for the past 16 years. Kelly currently teaches second grade at Southeast Elementary School and is the 22<sup>nd</sup> Teacher on the Trail.

Kelly and her husband are parents of six children ages seven through 22. When she is not teaching, she enjoys spending time with her family. Together they enjoy amusement parks, kayaking, skiing, hiking, and camping. Kelly also loves traveling to places such as Yellowstone

National Park, the Outer Banks, North Carolina and the White Mountains, New Hampshire where she has been able to experience a little mushing. Kelly has been an active person her entire life. She began skiing at age three and has enjoyed it ever since. An avid swimmer, she worked as a lifeguard as a teen and performed as a synchronized swimmer. Kelly also learned to climb and enjoyed high ropes courses. Several years ago, Kelly traveled to New Hampshire where she had her first mushing experience which was great! Kelly is always open to trying new exciting things and looks forward to the new adventure before her as she joins other volunteers at checkpoints during the 2020 Iditarod.

In addition to outdoor activities, Kelly volunteered with the American Lab Rescue and helped to find loving homes for 19 dogs. Currently, they have two rescue dogs living in their home, and she also sponsors a sled dog through the New Hampshire Sled Dog Rescue. Kelly has been an avid fan of the Iditarod since 2000. She first learned about the race when her father called her one night to tell her about a “cool dog race” that he had seen online. She looked up the Iditarod and was instantly hooked! Twenty years later, the Iditarod marks her favorite time of year.

Kelly has dreamed about becoming the Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™ for a very long time. She has been captivated by the Iditarod since her first introduction to the race.

Kelly says, “Throughout the past twenty years, I have learned a great deal about the history and traditions surrounding the race and have taught these things to my family, my school community, and my students.”

Kelly began her duties as Iditarod’s Teacher on the Trail™ this past June while receiving training at Iditarod’s Teacher Summer Camp held in Alaska each June. During the school year, Kelly has been placing lessons for teachers to use in their classrooms and maintain an online journal. During the race, Kelly will travel to the checkpoints and to Nome, reporting to classrooms around the world, her experiences and observations. You can learn more about Kelly and follow her journey at this link. <https://iditarod.com/edu/category/teacher-on-the-trail/>

### IDITARIDER MUSHER AUCTION – ONE-OF-A-KIND EXPERIENCE

Not only is the IditaRider Musher Auction one of the largest fundraisers for the Iditarod, but it is definitely one of the most adventurous! The IditaRider Musher Auction, which opens on Dec. 1 each year, offers the opportunity for fans to bid to ride in a sled as it leaves the start line in downtown Anchorage on Saturday. Riders from all over the world have been in sleds as well as famous people such as comedian Joan Rivers, actress Susan Lucci, astronaut Bernard Harris, Jr., Olympic Gold Medalist skater Dorothy Hamil and many more. The ride goes 11 miles along some of Anchorage's beautiful trails through parks and snow-covered woods and ends at the BLM Science Center. Being an IditaRider is the next best thing to being on the runners of a sled. Bidding opens at \$500. The bids are generally over \$1,300 with many sleds selling for the maximum – \$7,500 per sled. The auction closes on the third Friday in January each year. Remember: Bid! Win! Ride!

### 2020 MUSHER BIB AUCTION

After the race begins, an autographed bib worn by each musher from the start line goes on auction until the end of March. Bids start at \$100. Take a chance and bid to win so you can own the bib of your favorite musher, a champion or a rookie of the year. This is a great way to have your own piece of the Iditarod history. Visit the auction site [www.iditarodauction.com](http://www.iditarodauction.com).

The Iditarod Trail Committee, Inc. is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization. Winning bids may use as a portion as a tax deduction. A contribution report is sent with the credit card receipt once the auction has closed.

### NEW FOR 2020 – IDITAROD TRIFECTA

Through March 8, 2020, mushing fans from all over the world can participate in the Iditarod Trifecta, a game of chance and skill to win a cash purse. Simply enter a guess on the Iditarod champion, their finish time and the number of dogs that cross the finish line.

Each guess costs \$10, and players can enter an unlimited number of guesses. The Trifecta purse is determined by the total number of entries. The winner will be selected based on who gets the most accurate Trifecta prediction and will be announced by March 22, 2020. Once a Trifecta winner has been determined, the purse is divided up among the Trifecta winner, the Iditarod and the Iditarod top twenty finishers. The purse broken down is 40%, 40%, and 20% respectively.

Fans interested in submitting entries in person must complete the official entry form and payment no later than 1 p.m. on March 8, 2020. Those who mail in their paid entries must be received by the Iditarod no later than Friday, March 6, at 5 p.m. For more information, and to submit an entry form, visit: [Iditarod.com/trifecta-2020](http://Iditarod.com/trifecta-2020).



### ANCHORAGE START INFORMATION

Welcome to the 2020 Iditarod! This portion of the media guide includes a brief event timeline for the ceremonial start in Anchorage along with maps depicting Fourth Avenue and the trail through Anchorage to the Bureau of Land Management complex.

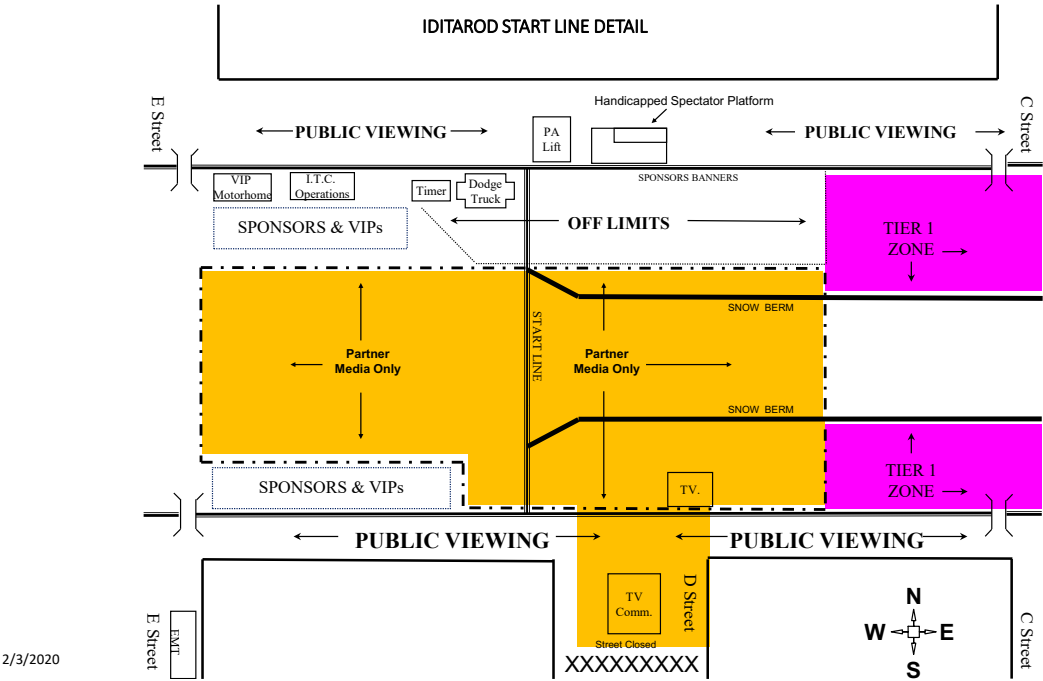
There are four guidelines that concern media at the start:

1. It is imperative that members of the media not impede the activities of the mushers and canine teams, handlers, officials, volunteers or any other media partners. The media is asked to make way for these people, as well as the teams, and to comply with security requests.
2. **COLOR CODED MEDIA CREDENTIALS MUST BE VISIBLE AT ALL TIMES.** Security will ask you to produce these credentials if they are not visibly displayed. Anyone who cannot produce and display the proper credentials will be asked to leave the designated media area. Members of the media who have questions or concerns regarding credentials may inquire with the media coordinator at the Iditarod operations motorhome.
3. **ORANGE (partner media):** Priority positions for start-line coverage will be reserved exclusively for partner media. **NO OTHER MEDIA WILL BE ALLOWED ACCESS TO THE AREA BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL MEDIA CAMERA PLATFORM AND E STREET.**
4. **PINK (other television stations, newspapers, production companies and their videographers and photographers):** People and equipment will only be allowed **BEHIND** the snow berms between the start line and C Street. **YOU MAY NOT** position your equipment on, or lay on, the snow berms. The first 75 feet on the north side of Fourth Avenue, running east from the start line, is off limits to any and all personnel, including media.
5. **BLUE:** All other credentialed media.

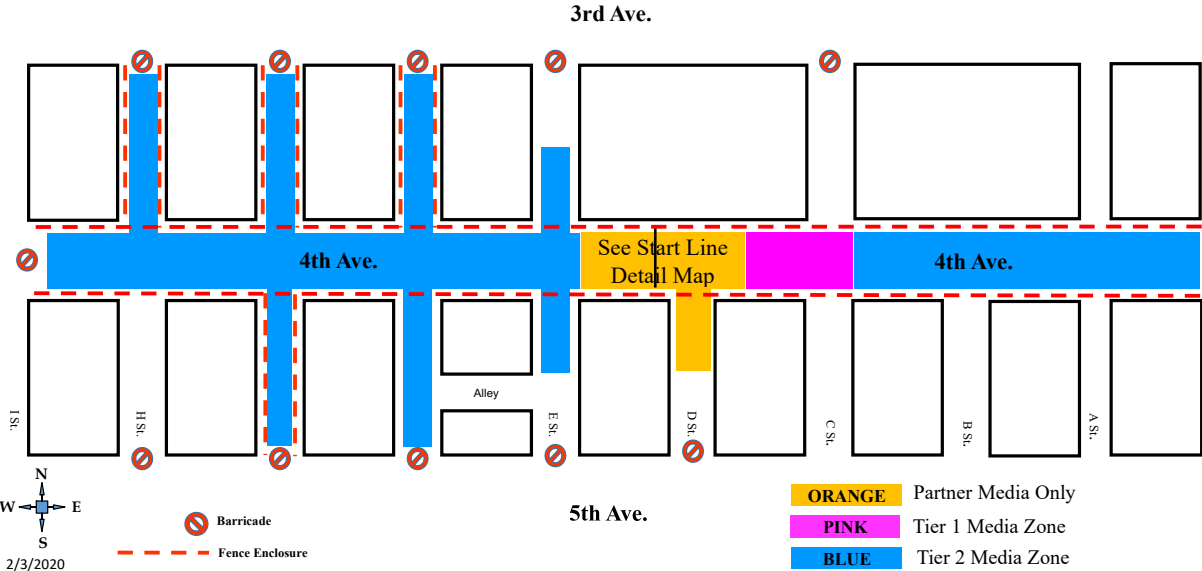
The primary purpose and responsibility of all start volunteers is to provide for the safety and wellbeing of the mushers and the canine athletes – we simply ask that you respect their efforts.



# ANCHORAGE CEREMONIAL START MEDIA ZONES



## 2020 IDITAROD TRAIL SLED DOG RACE® Media Zones By Type/Color of Credential

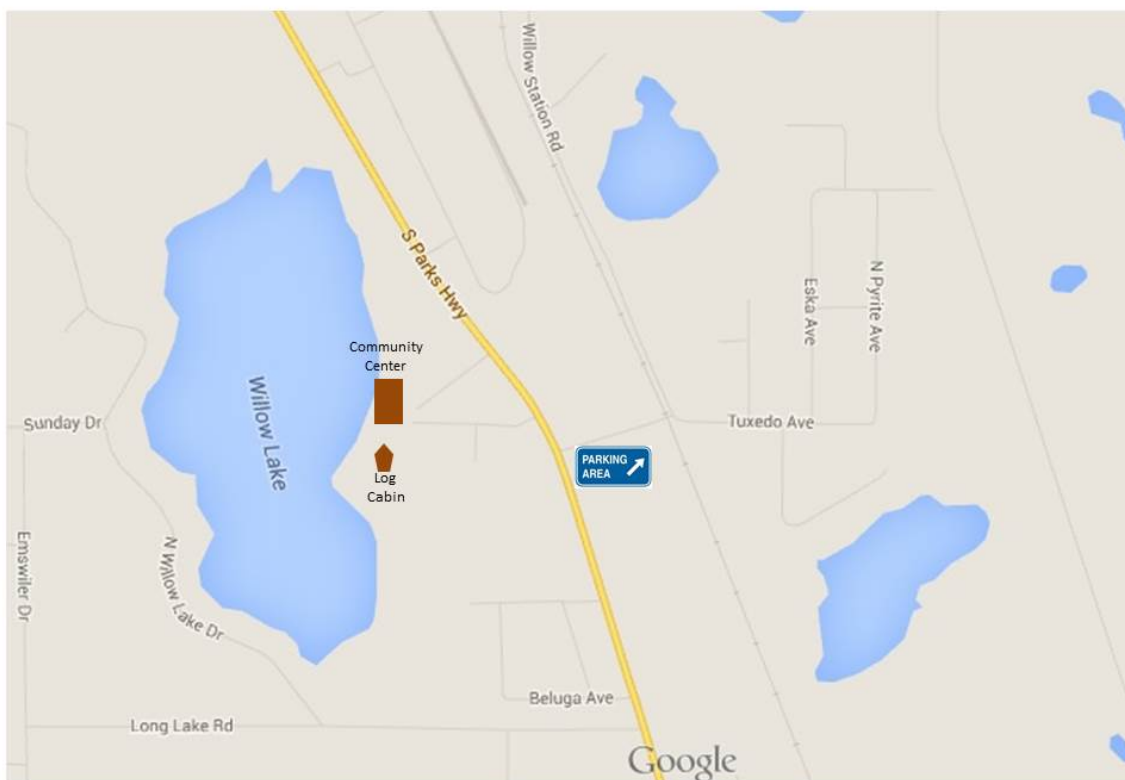


## IDITAROD RESTART - WILLOW

The 2020 Iditarod Restart will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 8, 2020.

The restart will be staged on Willow Lake located behind the Willow Community Center. From Willow Lake, the mushers will cross Long Lake, Crystal Lake, and Vera Lake. Once they leave Vera Lake they will travel to the Susitna River and on to the Yentna River. **The staging area will close at 1 p.m., one hour before the scheduled departure of the first musher from Willow. All media must depart the staging area at this time.**

Media and fans traveling to Willow are encouraged to do as much carpooling as possible to avoid unnecessary congestion on the Parks Highway. Public parking will be available at the Willow Airport at a cost of \$10.00 per vehicle.



## PACKING FOR THE IDITAROD TRAIL

Clothing choices and comfort are very important, but be aware that the logistics of traveling on the trail can be very labor intensive. Knowing how to pack and transport your gear to and from the airplane will save a tremendous amount of effort. Try packing so you can haul your gear in one trip. Here's how:

### Baggage:

- One large duffel bag (preferably with 'U' shaped zipper)
- Daypack
- Camera bag
- Short plastic sled
- Cinch sleeping bag and pad down between the handles of the duffel with snaps. Strap bundle down to the sled using bungees.
- Keep heavy clothing handy by snapping it under the bungees. This arrangement should be easy to drag around and stows well in an airplane. Rigid frame packs do not stow well in aircraft.

### Clothing:

- Choose clothing that can all be worn together
- Use layering in everything
- Wear insulated boots such as "Bunny Boots" or open cell neoprene
- Have a pair of "snow sneakers" for use in checkpoints
- 40 above to 40 below clothing
- Polypropylene or cotton long underwear
- Musher style insulated hat
- Polar fleece shirt and pants
- Face mask
- Insulated scarf or cowl
- Windproof jacket and snow pants (bibbs)
- Felt gloves with insulated over mitts
- Oversized heavy parka with hood

### Other:

- Any good quality sleeping bag rated from -10 to -20 degrees Fahrenheit
- Foam pad or Therma-Rest type mattress
- Avoid extra heavy duty weight bag unless you're at a tent checkpoint
- Small bag of high energy snack food
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight
- Camera gear
- Please avoid bringing dryers, curling irons, electronic razors, large-frame backpacks, etc

**IMPORTANT: Media access to communications methods varies from checkpoint to checkpoint.**

While the Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC) does not have the ability to provide checkpoint Internet access for the media between Anchorage and Nome, each year there are improvements in communities along the trail for public Internet access. GCI, Inc. has cellular coverage in many communities along the trail. Contact your local GCI representative to discuss cellular service availability and how it can be accessed.

**Please do not attempt any interviews with mushers at checkpoints until they have fed and strawed their canines.** This is a crucial time for each sled dog team, and members of the press are asked not to approach any musher until this process is completed. This may take up to an hour. The canines remain the top priority of the Iditarod Trail Committee and it is important that they are not interfered with during the crucial resting phase of the race.

Race rules require that mushers stay in a central location in every checkpoint, rather than scatter throughout the villages. There will be specific checkpoint areas in each checkpoint. Each area will have a designated mushers' sleeping area and we ask the cooperation of reporters, photographers and camera crews in not interrupting the mushers during their chosen rest times. Mushers will be available in other areas of the checkpoints for interviews and pictures.

Please understand that this is a race and the first priority for the mushers is the care of their canines and their race. They will be much more apt to be cooperative if you cooperate with them from the beginning.

The following is a list of recommendations for those of you traveling up the trail. The main thing to remember is that you are traveling through rural Alaska, so come prepared to provide your OWN food and shelter.

**We strongly recommend you:**

- Offer to pay if invited to sleep in village school or community hall.
- Offer to pay for food that may be offered by villagers.
- Consider purchasing the beautiful Alaska Native works of art while in villages.
- Take the time to find out about the many wonderful folks in the villages along the trail who will make great human interest stories.
- Remember and respect the cultural differences you experience along the trail.
- Help the local economy by patronizing local restaurants and grocery stores.
- Stop in and visit at local schools. It's a great way to learn more about the village you're in, and the students enjoy the interaction.
- Use a telephoto lens to get close up still and video shots.
- Ask for permission from musher to take pictures of teams.
- Wait for interviews until mushers have had time to feed their canines and to rest.

- Look for official race information from the checkpoints. The media coordinator is available to answer any questions you might have.

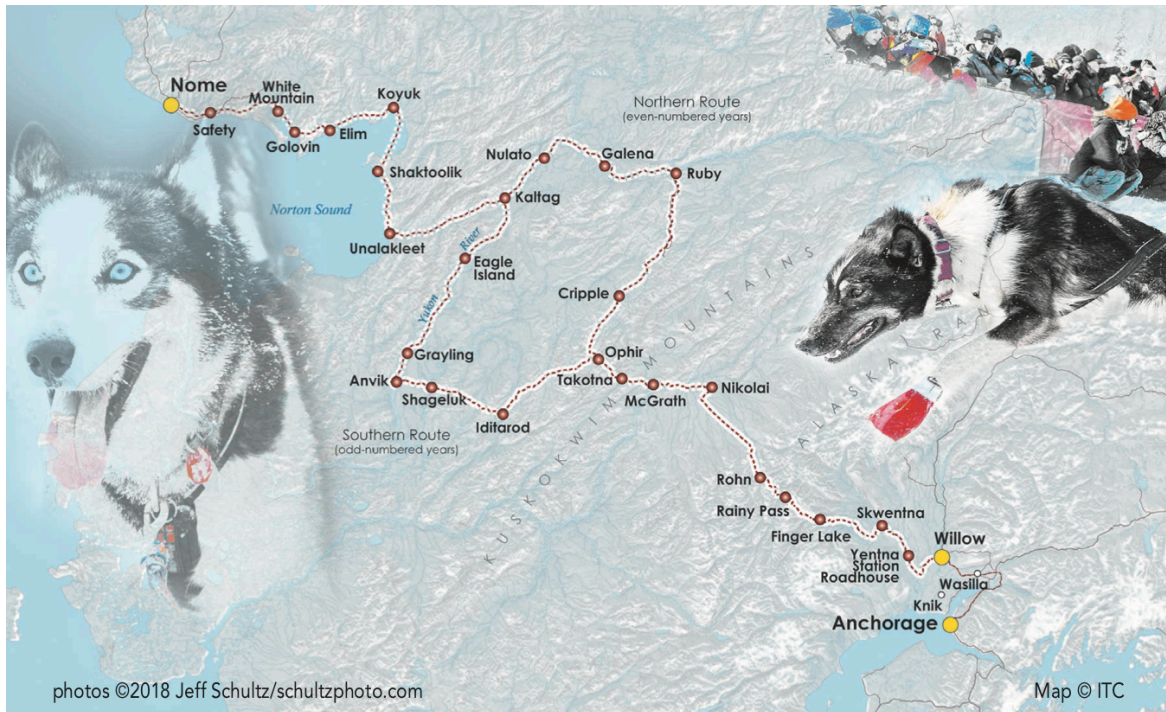
Bri Kelly, Thompson & Co. Public Relations  
907-376-5155 ext. 106, [media@iditarod.com](mailto:media@iditarod.com)

**DO NOT:**

- Take alcohol to any of the village checkpoints. It is against the law in most communities along the trail.
- Rely on someone else to take care of you, or avail yourself of the Iditarod food at checkpoint.
- Try to get lengthy interview as soon as musher pulls into checkpoint, or disturb a resting dog team.
- Let your story be influenced by rumors. Please take time to verify the story you're working on.



## MAPS, MILEAGES AND CHECKPOINTS



## OFFICIAL CHECKPOINT MILEAGES – NORTHERN ROUTE

CHECKPOINTS	DISTANCE BETWEEN	FROM ANCHORAGE	FROM NOME
Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip	11 miles	11 miles	964 miles
Willow to Yentna Station	42 miles	53 miles	922 miles
Yentna to Skwentna	30 miles	83 miles	892 miles
Skwentna to Finger Lake	40 miles	123 miles	851 miles
Finger Lake to Rainy Pass	30 miles	153 miles	822 miles
Rainy Pass to Rohn	35 miles	188 miles	787 miles
Rohn to Nikolai	75 miles	263 miles	712 miles
Nikolai to McGrath	48 miles	311 miles	664 miles
McGrath to Takotna	18 miles	329 miles	646 miles
Takotna to Ophir	23 miles	352 miles	623 miles
Ophir to Cripple	73 miles	425 miles	550 miles
Cripple to Ruby	70 miles	495 miles	480 miles
Ruby to Galena	50 miles	545 miles	430 miles
Galena to Nulato	37 miles	582 miles	393 miles
Nulato to Kaltag	47 miles	629 miles	346 miles
Kaltag to Unalakleet	85 miles	714 miles	261 miles
Unalakleet to Shaktoolik	40 miles	754 miles	221 miles
Shaktoolik to Koyuk	50 miles	804 miles	171 miles
Koyuk to Elim	48 miles	852 miles	123 miles
Elim to Golovin	28 miles	880 miles	95 miles
Golovin to White Mountain	18 miles	898 miles	77 miles
White Mountain to Safety	55 miles	953 miles	22 miles
Safety to Nome	22 miles	975 miles	

**Note:** As of 2012, the northern route distance is approximately 975 miles. In previous years the distance was always over 1,000 miles. Three things factor into this adjustment:

- The change in the ceremonial start (running from downtown Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip instead of Eagle River)
- The change of the restart location from Wasilla to Willow (loss of Wasilla-Knik-Yentna River runs)
- The actual year-to-year trail conditions can affect trail routing and the actual mileage will vary somewhat from year to year

“1,049 miles®” has been a symbolic figure from the inception of the race to signify the 1,000 miles or more of race trail and the number 49 depicts Alaska as the 49<sup>th</sup> state.

**Pronunciation, Population and Facts of Interest**

***Anchorage (ang-ker-ij) – (ANC) Lat 61.12 Long 149.55***

Population: 301,000 – Anchorage is Alaska's largest city with a full range of transportation and hotel accommodations. The race starts downtown on Fourth Avenue. Interesting side trips during March include Portage Glacier or downhill skiing at Mount Alyeska, both less than an hour drive south, or head north to Hatcher Pass for cross country skiing and to explore the remains of Independence Mine.

***Willow (wil-oh) – Lat 61.45.25N Long 150.03.10W***

Population: 2,001 – The restart takes place on Willow Lake at Parks Highway Mile Marker 70.

***Yentna Station – (YENT-na) – (YENT) Lat 61.46 N Long 150.41W***

Population: 8 – This checkpoint is at the home of the Dan and Jean Gabryzack family.

***Skwentna (SKWENT-nuh) – (SKW) Lat 61.55 Long 151.11***

Population: 37 – Located near the confluence of the Skwentna and Yentna Rivers. The checkpoint is located at Joe and Norma Delia's log house, also known as the Post Office. There is a store and limited lodging nearby.

***Finger Lake – (FL) Lat 61.59 Long 152.40***

Population: 2 – In the heart of the snow country, here it is not uncommon to have 10 feet of snow on the ground. The checkpoint is at Winter Lake Lodge.

***Rainy Pass – (RP) Lat 62.10 Long 152.43***

Population: 2 – This area represents the highest point on the Iditarod Trail as it passes over the majestic Alaska Range. Located on Puntilla Lake is Vern Humble's guiding operation. Known as Rainy Pass Lodge, it is closed down at this time of year. Iditarod uses one of their cabins for a checkpoint and another for mushers to rest in.



***Rohn (RONE) – (ROH) Lat 62.35 Long 153.21***

Population: 0 – This area is tied with Rainy Pass as having the most spectacular scenery. The gateway to the interior, Rohn Roadhouse marks the transition point where the mushers start to venture into the flatlands of the interior, along with dropping temperatures. Situated near the confluence of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim and Tatina Rivers, the checkpoint is a cabin built in the 1930s. Note: most press mistakenly refer to this as Rohn River checkpoint, but there is no Rohn River. It's Rohn Roadhouse. Many mushers take their mandatory 24-hour layover here before heading across the treacherous Farewell Bend area. **No facilities or lodging are available at Rohn.**

***Nikolai (NIK-o-lye) – (NIK) Lat 63.02 Long 154.22***

Population: 94 – This is the first of many Alaska Native villages along the Iditarod Trail. There is a village store at the far end of town across the airstrip and limited lodging is available through advance booking. The checkpoint is located in the Community Hall.

***McGrath (muh-GRATH) – (McG) Lat 62.57 Long 155.36***

Population: 346 – Located near the confluence of the Kuskokwim and Takotna Rivers, this thriving community has two stores, a bar and a restaurant. It's the last chance to buy aviation gas, except for Galena, until you reach the coast at Unalakleet. Lodging is also available with advance booking.

***Takotna (Ta-COT-na) – (TAK) Lat 63.00 Long 156.04***

Population: 52 – Situated on the banks of the Takotna River, this town has a store and restaurant. This is one of the smallest towns with one of the biggest welcomes.

***Ophir (OH-fur) – (OPH) Lat 63.08 Long 156.31***

Population: 0 – Now a ghost town, it took its name in 1908 from a nearby placer creek, one of a dozen streams in Alaska to be named by Bible-reading prospectors, for the lost country of Ophir, the source of King Solomon's gold. Many items and artifacts still remain untouched. The checkpoint is at Dick and Audra Forsgren's cabin.

***Cripple (krip-uh l) Lat. 63.41 N Long 156.20W***

Population: 0 – Part of the famous Iditarod Mining District, which saw \$35 million in gold taken out of the area between 1908 and 1925. Not bad when you figure that gold was



only worth \$20 an ounce in those days. This checkpoint marks the “official” halfway point in the race on the northern route.

***Ruby (ROO-bee) Lat. 64.44 N Long 155.29W***

Population: 166 – The first checkpoint on the famous Yukon River, the longest river in Alaska, stretching 1,875 miles from its headwaters in the Yukon Territory of Canada to the Bering Sea. Gold was discovered here in 1907, but no town was established until 1911 when additional gold deposits were discovered on Long Creek, causing a rush of prospectors to the area. This is the home of 1975 Iditarod champion Emmitt Peters. Ruby was home for many of the mushers who carried mail for the Northern Commercial Company from Tanana to Ruby. The trip took four days and paid \$5 a day. Dog team mail ended here in 1931. The checkpoint is in the community hall.

***Galena (gull-LEE-na) Lat.64.44 Long 156.56***

Population: 470 - The town was founded in 1920 when Natives moved down river from the old town site of Loudon because of the availability of firewood. A man could cut 250 cords a winter and sell it for \$8 a cord to the stern-wheelers that worked the rivers in the summer. This was the home of Edgar Nollner, the last living musher who carried the lifesaving diphtheria serum along this trail to Nome in 1925. The checkpoint is at the “old” community hall downtown.

***Nulato (nu-LAH-toe) Lat. 64.43 Long 158.05***

Population: 264 - Originally founded in 1838 at the confluence of the Nulato and Yukon Rivers, Nulato was a Russian trading post. Without a stockade, the Indians promptly burned it down. In 1841, the Russian American Company rebuilt the trading post consisting of seven log buildings, but again without a stockade. In 1851, the Koyukon Indians again burned it down and killed most of the inhabitants. In 1853 the trading post was rebuilt at the present town site, two miles upriver from the old site. The checkpoint is the community hall.

***Kaltag – (KAL-tag) – (KAL) Lat 64.19 Long 158.45***

Population: 205 – This town signals a brief respite from the driving winds as the trail from here leads overland through Kaltag Portage to the coast of Norton Sound where the winds take on new meaning. Note: The location for mushers’ check-in is at Rich Burnham’s house, but the official checkpoint and gathering spot is the community hall about a block away. Please don’t treat the Burnham home as a checkpoint. The Bristol Bay Fish First award is presented here. The prize is \$2,000 and 25 pounds of Bristol Bay salmon.

***Unalakleet (YOU-na-la-kleet) – (UNK) Lat 63.53 Long 160.42***

Population: 692 – Situated on the coast of Norton Sound, just north of the Unalakleet River, this village is the largest community on the Iditarod Trail between Willow and Nome. Two well-stocked stores as well as two restaurants can be found here along with limited lodging by advance booking. The trail is now entering the gateway to the Bering Sea and from here on the mushers can expect sudden storms and an ample supply of wind. The checkpoint is in front of the A.C. store.

***Shaktoolik (Shak-TOO-lick) – (SHAK) Lat 64.20 Long 161.10***

Population: 258 – This is one of the windiest stretches of the trail. From here the trail continues overland for a short distance, and then leads the mushers out onto the ice of Norton Bay, one of the most treacherous segments of trail. The checkpoint is at the armory.

***Koyuk (Koy-uk) – (KOY) Lat 64.56 Long 161.10***

Population: 347 – Once this checkpoint is reached, the mushers can breathe a sigh of relief as almost all of the rest of the trail is at least over land. The checkpoint is the City Rec Center.

***Elim (EE-lim) – (ELM) Lat 64.37 Long 162.15***

Population: 332 – The checkpoint is at the fire hall (check at the store for directions). From here, the trail heads over the hills of the Kwiktalik Mountains inland a little ways to the next checkpoint on Golovin Bay.

***Golovin (GULL-uh-vin) – (GOL) Lat 64.32 Long 163.50***

Population: 171 – Not an official checkpoint, but a community with a large welcome. Golovin has one store. From here the trail heads across Golovin Bay, then overland to the next checkpoint.

***White Mountain – (WT MT) Lat 64.41 Long 163.24***

Population: 199 – Just 77 miles from Nome, this village is located on the banks of the Fish River. It takes its name from that of a picturesque nearby mountain. Checkpoint is located in the community hall building up the hill from the store. The Northrim Bank Achieve

More Award was presented here for the first time in 2018. The first musher received a check for \$2,500 and a one-of-a-kind print.

***Safety – (SAF) Lat 64.27 Long 164.49***

Population: 0 – The last checkpoint before Nome, just 22 miles away. Here the mushers are on the coast of the Bering Sea and travel on the beach most of the way to Nome.

***Nome – (NOME) Lat 64.30 Long 165.24***

Population: 3,695 – The end of the Iditarod Trail! Prospectors established this Seward Peninsula city as Anvil City after adjacent Anvil Creek in 1898. The city was renamed Nome in 1899 after a nearby point on Norton Sound, which got its name in 1853 when a British Navy cartographer misinterpreted a chart notation of “? Name” and recorded it as Nome. The entire community turns out to welcome the mushers and visitors to their community. Numerous stores, restaurants and bars line Nome’s infamous “Front Street”, but lodging is at a premium. If the Nugget Inn or Aurora Inn are full check with the Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau for the availability of bed and breakfast accommodations.

NORTHERN ROUTE-DESCRIPTION OF THE IDITAROD TRAIL BETWEEN CHECKPOINTS

**Anchorage to Campbell Airstrip .....11 miles**

The ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail begins on Fourth Avenue and runs through the snow covered streets and trails of Anchorage. Each musher participates and carries an IditaRider, a passenger who has successfully bid (\$500-\$7,500) to ride in the basket of a particular musher to the end of this 11-mile ceremonial start.

**Willow to Yentna Station.....42 miles**

The trail begins on Willow Lake, travels across frozen lakes and swamps before the trail winds through a birch forest before dropping onto the Big Susitna River via Corral Hill. Most of the trail is flat. Once the teams drop onto the Big Susitna River they travel via river to the Yentna Station Checkpoint, which is located on the Yentna River.

**Yentna Station to Skwentna .....30 miles**

The mushers run the Yentna all the way to the confluence with the Skwentna River and the town of Skwentna, three miles from the mouth. These slow moving glacial rivers normally provide very good trails. They are all from one fourth to more than a mile wide and freeze thick enough to provide a good trail until late into the winter. Hazards are sometimes plentiful with rough ice to manhandle a sled over and around. Overflow, water running on top of the ice, can be a very real problem in some conditions.

**Skwentna to Finger Lake .....40 miles**

From the Skwentna checkpoint the trail continues up the river for one mile and turns off on the left bank. It continues inland across Eight-Mile Swamp through spruce timber and cottonwoods to the Old Skwentna Roadhouse. The crossing is at a 45-degree angle to the river. The trail climbs up a creek drainage turning first right and then left into an open swamp, long and narrow, and through spruce forest for 2-2.5 miles to Shell Creek. Overflow and/or open water is often a problem. From Shell Creek the trail continues, crossing One Stone Lake. From there to Finger Lake are open swamps and thin stands of spruce and alder. The trail crosses to the north shore and the Finger Lake cabin. All grades are moderate or gentle with no hard climbs and no dense woods.

**Finger Lake to Puntilla Lake (Rainy Pass Lodge) .....30 miles**

At Finger Lake the trail drops sharply onto Red Lake leaving the lake at the northwest corner. It climbs steeply leaving the lake at the northwest corner. It climbs steeply up a small creek bed to the benches above Finger Lake. From here it is through swamps, spruce and alder forest to Happy River. The two miles before Happy River are through dense spruce. At Happy River there are

three benches to descend with the first being the longest drop, known as the "Steps". A small drainage leads down to the level bench and the trail drops straight down this "V". From this bench the trail descends off the right end to the bench along the river. The last drop is onto the river itself. This section is one of the most hazardous on the trail and extreme caution must be exercised here. The trail will be well marked and the descents will have a straight lead-in.

Once on the river itself, the trail turns left to the mount (200') and then right, going up the Skwentna River. Approximately 1/4 mile up the Skwentna is a draw coming down from the right and the trail goes up this draw. A ramp may have to be constructed because the bank has washed away leaving a cut bank four to eight feet high. Once into the draw, stay to the right side as the left side leads to a vertical wall 6' high and is impassable. The draw is only 125 - 150 yards long and once on top the trail continues northwest to Shirley Lake passing through spruce and cottonwood and rolling hills. No grades are steep or long. The steepest grade is up the draw from the Skwentna River. The trail exits Shirley Lake on the northwest side and continues through spruce and cottonwood to Round Mountain. There are some moderate but short grades and a couple of steep but short grades both up and down. At Round Mountain a side hill is encountered and brush is encroaching on the trail. From here to Puntilla Lake is a distance of three to four miles and is gentle terrain with open swamps and sparse timber.

**Puntilla Lake to Rohn .....35 miles**

Puntilla Lake (Rainy Pass Lodge) is 1,835 feet above sea level and from here the trail climbs through Rainy Pass reaching 3,160 feet above sea level. From the lodge the trail climbs a small hill and enters the valley. It runs on the north side of the ridge that separates the Indian Creek drainage from Happy River drainage. The trail gradually crosses to the right side of the valley and where Happy River forks three ways, follows Pass Creek (the right fork) into Rainy Pass itself. The climb this far is gentle but the terrain is barren with a few willow thickets and the snow is wind packed to ice and very rough. Once across Rainy Pass Lake (Puntilla Lake), the trail climbs to the summit and descends along Dalzell Creek. Dalzell Creek runs to the Tatina River and here the trail turns sharply left and continues five to six miles to the Rohn checkpoint.

**Rohn to Nikolai .....75 miles**

The trail leaves Rohn and crosses the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River and turns sharply left (inland) about 3/4 mile below the Rohn checkpoint. From here to Farewell Lake the trail crosses sharp hills with moderate and steep grades, both up and down. Some of the grades are up to 1/2 - 1 3/4 miles long. The trail is very narrow in places and in some of the denser stands of spruce is a tunnel. The worst area is the Tin Creek with a steep side hill drop to the canyon floor and a climb up the other side. This climb is to the right of the gorge (100-150 yards) and should be well marked. The trail from Tin Creek to Farewell Lake continues through spruce and alder. In the open areas the trail is but a rut when the snow is light. It crosses several "wallows" which are very rough. Approaching Farewell Lake the terrain levels out somewhat and crosses a small lake a couple of miles prior to dropping onto Farewell. This is bison (buffalo) country!

The trail leaves Farewell Lake at the northwest end of the lake and for the next 8-10 miles passes through dense spruce forest and across lakes. It then enters the old "Farewell Burn." In the summer of 1984, the B.L.M. cleared the trail through the Burn. It is 25 feet wide and was cleared to bare ground so there are no windfalls and it is a good trail. The terrain is rolling with short moderate grades. This trail segment is approximately 20 miles long and it then enters very large open swamps to the Salmon River. Trail markings are the only visual references for direction. At the Salmon River the trail turns to the right, crosses the Salmon River at the cabins and continues to Nikolai through spruce and alder stands and open swamps. It crosses the Kuskokwim River into Nikolai. The one danger area through the Burn is at Bear Creek, which has a history of being open. Bridges will be built, if needed, and the area will be well marked.

#### **Nikolai to McGrath 48 miles**

From Nikolai, the trail runs west to McGrath. The terrain is mostly flat. The trail passes through open swamps, small stands of spruce and alder and runs on the river itself. There are no grades to consider. This section is well traveled and should present no problems unless deep fresh snow is encountered, at which time the trail is very soft. McGrath is a major staging area and many trails run out of town. The Iditarod will be well marked to prevent confusion.

#### **McGrath to Takotna 18 miles**

The trail leaves McGrath at the east end of Runway Seven, the same place where it enters. Crossing the Kuskokwim River to the mouth of the Takotna River and turning west, the trail continues over Porcupine Ridge to Takotna. The terrain is gentle rolling hills with moderate grades and is mainly spruce timber with a few open areas. This is a well-traveled trail and should present no problems.

#### **Takotna to Ophir .....23 miles**

From Takotna the Iditarod Trail is the State Highway that runs to Ophir. Take the road to the right at the fork 1 1/2 miles out of Takotna. Normally there is no snow plowing on the Ophir fork of the highway; however, it is well traveled by dog teams and snow machines all winter. It is seven miles to the top of the grade and then runs down into the Innoko River Valley. Bridges and streams are identified with State of Alaska signs. The trail leaves the road occasionally to cross ridges and to avoid drifted areas. These departures should be well marked.

#### **Ophir to Cripple .....73 miles**

Out of the Ophir checkpoint the trail follows a cat trail along the Innoko River into the old village site about a mile further along. It crosses the river again six miles out of the checkpoint. From the crossing, the trail heads northeast. The terrain is flat with sparse scrub spruce with a few rolling hills as it approaches Cripple.

**Cripple to Ruby .....70 miles**

Leaving Cripple, the country stays the same for 15-to-20 miles. Then the trees get larger and thicker, with larger rolling hills. At Bear Creek, the trail enters a cat trail that should be easy to follow. At Sulatna Crossing (steel bridge), most of the mushers stop to rest and feed their dogs. (Sulatna Crossing is not a checkpoint.) There is a small lake on the left. Immediately after the bridge, the trailbreakers will punch out 15 to 20 parking spots for dog teams. The trail follows this road all the way to Ruby Hills. There are many long grades and much side hill to travel.

**Ruby to Galena .....50 miles**

From Ruby to Kaltag, the next 134 miles is on the Yukon River, passing through Galena and Nulato. In most years the local traffic keeps the river trail hard and fast. This section is well marked because wind and snow can cover the trail very quickly. Checkpoint is usually in the Galena Community Center.

**Galena to Nulato .....37 miles**

About 10 miles outside of Galena is the picturesque Bishop's Rock, where some of the most famous photographs of mushers are taken. In most years the local traffic keeps the river trail hard and fast. This section is well marked because wind and snow can cover the trail very quickly.

**Nulato to Kaltag .....47 miles**

The final stretch on the Yukon River before turning inland for the Kaltag Portage headed towards the coast. Kaltag always offers a warm welcome. Checkpoint is at Kaltag Community Center.

**Kaltag to Unalakleet .....85 miles**

From Kaltag, the trail exits from the northwest end of the runway. The next 15 miles run through spruce forest and open areas along the Kaltag River, climbing gently to the summit of the Portage. Continuing through similar terrain, it starts down the Unalakleet drainage to Old Woman Cabin at the base of Old Woman Mountain. This mountain is an excellent landmark. The trail continues past the mountain and runs along the left side of the Unalakleet drainage. The terrain is gentle rolling hills. Little or no vegetation can be seen along the trail until near Unalakleet.

Approximately five miles out of town the trail hits the river. With the exception of a few short portages across horseshoe bends, the trail follows the river into Unalakleet. The last 32 miles (from Old Woman Mountain) is often windy and the snow is usually wind packed and crusty. In fact, the entire coast is often very windy.



**Unalakleet to Shaktoolik .....40 miles**

To Shaktoolik, the trail crosses several low ridges with mostly gentle and moderate grades. The vegetation is stunted spruce and willow thickets. Leaving Unalakleet, the trail turns northward and parallels the coast to Power, then turns inland, crossing behind Blueberry Point. It then drops back toward the coast at Egavik, a summer fish camp. A series of long low hills is crossed with grades being moderate to gentle but some are up to a mile long. The crest of the last ridge is about 17 miles from Shaktoolik and the village is visible from here. The next four to five miles are down a moderate to steep serpentine grade through willow thickets and stunted spruce. The turns are moderate but can be extremely slick. At the bottom, the trail follows the coastal dune on the landward side the last 12 miles to Shaktoolik. The trail from the bottom of the hill to the checkpoint runs over ice on the Shaktoolik River and is often rough. The village is on the left.

**Shaktoolik to Koyuk.....50 miles**

The trail from Shaktoolik bears north, crossing the peninsula. It runs on land for eight to nine miles then starts across Norton Bay at the mouth of Reindeer Cove. The terrain to this point is mostly gentle swells of the ground with no true grades. There is no vegetation. Approximately five miles onto the ice is Island Point and Little Mountain. It appears to be a large rock rising from the sea ice, but is in fact the head of a small peninsula. The trail passes a shelter cabin on the south side of Little Mountain. From here a compass bearing of 340 degrees leads into Koyuk. Marking on this segment of the trail usually consists of laths with reflective tape alternating with spruce boughs. Every mile will be marked. The ice is often rough.

**Koyuk to Elim.....48 miles**

When leaving Koyuk for Elim, the trail follows the coast, almost doubling back on itself. It runs southeast to Bald Head and Castle Rock where it turns westerly, following the coast to Moses Point. Moses Point is a spit that, with the coastline, forms Kwiniuk Inlet. The trail parallels the spit for five to six miles where it joins the mainland. It continues on the sea ice along the coast, passing the abandoned F.A.A. Station. From there to Elim two routes may be used. One continues along the ice to Elim; the other takes the road along the coast to Elim, which is six-to-eight miles away.

**Elim to Golovin (not an official checkpoint, but an integral part of the race).....28 miles**

The trail leaves Elim, following the ice along the coast for 10-11 miles to a cabin just north-northeast of the limestone cliffs, and here it turns right (inland) and crosses the Kwiktalik Mountains. This range is a low series of hills (1,000 to 1,500 ft.) with moderate grades. Vegetation ranges from small spruce to barren ground. Some of the grades are long (1 mile) but none are excessively steep. The barren sections are often windblown and icy. The last descent to Golovin Bay is long and sometimes runs side hill. At the Shelter Cabin on the coast, the trail turns sharply right and crosses the ice to Golovin. The village is located on a spit and is easily seen. (Counting

the cabin below Elim where the trail leaves the ice, there are three shelter cabins on the trail, one of them being nine miles from the coast where the trail intersects McKinley Creek).

**Golovin to White Mountain.....18 miles**

From Golovin the trail crosses the ice on Golovin Lagoon to the Mudyutok River and goes up this river to the Fish River and then to White Mountain. This section is short, easy travel unless a strong wind is blowing down the rivers, and then it can be difficult going.

**White Mountain to Safety .....55 miles**

The trail from White Mountain continues up the Fish River for another 2-2.5 miles to a large island. It makes a sharp left turn and starts overland. This turn should be well marked, since a trail continues up the river to Council also. One-fourth mile after leaving the river, a trail comes in from the right (also from Council) and this intersection should be well marked but can be confusing if snow machiners or mushers have departed from the trail. The Iditarod Trail crosses a series of low hills with moderate grades and starts through the Klokeblok River drainage. There is a little vegetation (willow) along some of the creeks.

At Topkok, the trail turns sharply right along the coast. The Nome Kennel Club has a shelter cabin at the bottom of Topkok Hill. There is little in the way of visual references and each hill looks like the last. Wind often exceeds 40 knots. From Topkok, the trail follows the coast westward to Solomon, passing south of the actual village (near the Old Solomon village site). From here to Safety Roadhouse, the trail is the road.

**Safety to Nome .....22 miles**

From Safety Roadhouse to Nome the trail runs along the Nome-Solomon Road except where it passes around Cape Nome and the last seven miles into Nome. Here the trail parallels the road on the right side and presents no obstacles.

# 1973-2019 CHAMPIONS & RED LANTERN WINNERS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Musher</u>	<u>D:H:M:S</u>	<u>Musher</u>	<u>D:H:M:S</u>
1973	Dick Wilmarth	20:00:49:41	John Schultz	32:05:09:01
1974	Carl Huntington	20:15:02:07	Red Olson	29:06:36:10
1975	Emmitt Peters	14:14:43:45	Steve Fee	29:08:37:13
1976	Gerald Riley	18:22:58:17	Dennis Corrington	26:08:42:51
1977	Rick Swenson	16:16:27:13	Vasily Zamitkyn	22:09:06:06
1978	Dick Mackey	14:18:52:24	Andrew Foxie	22:03:29:44
1979	Rick Swenson	15:10:37:47	Gene Leonard	24:09:02:22
1980	Joe May	14:07:11:51	Barbara Moore	24:09:25:45
1981	Rick Swenson	12:08:45:02	Jim Strong	18:06:30:30
1982	Rick Swenson	16:04:40:10	Ralph Bradley	26:13:59:59
1983	Rick Mackey	12:14:10:44	Scott Cameron	21:04:36:41
1984	Dean Osmar	12:15:07:33	Bill Mackey	19:09:43:33
1985	Libby Riddles	18:00:20:17	Monique Bene	22:03:45:45
1986	Susan Butcher	11:15:06:00	Mike Peterson	20:13:42:21
1987	Susan Butcher	11:02:05:13	Rhodi Karella	19:09:01:01
1988	Susan Butcher	11:11:41:40	Lesley Monk	19:13:22:55
1989	Joe Runyan	11:05:24:34	Bob Hoyt	17:11:19:19
1990	Susan Butcher	11:01:53:23	Steve Haver	21:10:26:26
1991	Rick Swenson	12:16:34:39	Brian O'Donoghue	22:05:55:55
1992	Martin Buser	10:19:17:15	Vern Cherneski	18:13:05:02
1993	Jeff King	10:15:38:15	Lloyd Gilbertson	18:04:19:19
1994	Martin Buser	10:13:02:39	Mark Chapoton	16:16:17:35
1995	Doug Swingley	09:02:42:19	Ben Jacobson	17:06:02:05
1996	Jeff King	09:05:43:13	Andy Sterns	15:23:48:22
1997	Martin Buser	09:08:30:15	Ken Chase	15:09:07:44
1998	Jeff King	09:05:52:26	Brad Pozarnsky	14:05:42:04
1999	Doug Swingley	09:14:31:07	Jeremy Gebauer	15:03:18:44
2000	Doug Swingley	09:00:58:06	Fedor Konyikhov	15:05:44:44
2001	Doug Swingley	09:19:55:50	Karen Ramstead	14:23:53:16
2002	Martin Buser	08:22:46:02	David Straub	14:05:38:12
2003	Robert Sørli	09:15:47:36	Russell Bybee	15:05:30:53
2004	Mitch Seavey	09:12:20:22	Perry Solmonson	15:02:50:36
2005	Robert Sørli	09:18:39:31	Phil Morgan	15:06:02:57
2006	Jeff King	09:14:11:36	Glenn Lockwood	15:18:08:56
2007	Lance Mackey	09:05:08:41	Ellen Halverson	16:11:56:20
2008	Lance Mackey	09:11:46:48	Deborah Bicknell	15:05:36:12
2009	Lance Mackey	09:21:38:46	Tim Hunt	15:14:06:22
2010	Lance Mackey	08:23:59:09	Celeste Davis	13:05:06:40
2011	John Baker	08:18:46:39	Ellen Halverson	13:19:45:49
2012	Dallas Seavey	09:04:29:26	Jan Steves	14:11:57:03

2013	Mitch Seavey	09:07:39:56	Christine Roalofs	13:22:36:08
2014	Dallas Seavey	08:13:04:19	Marcelle Fressineau	13:04:42:08
2015	Dallas Seavey	08:18:13:06	Cindy Abbott	13:11:19:51
2016	Dallas Seavey	08:11:20:16	Mary Helwig	13:08:51:30
2017	Mitch Seavey	08:03:40:13**	Cindy Abbott	12:02:57:31*
2018	Joar Leifseth Ulsom	09:12:00:00	Magnus Kaltenborn	12:20:13:14
2019	Peter Kaiser	09:12:39:06	Victoria Hardwick	14:22:51:49

\*\* Fastest winning time                      \* Fastest Red Lantern time

# ALPHABETICAL MUSER LIST

FIRST	LAST	CITY	STATE	COUNTRY	STATUS
Travis	Beals	Willow	AK	USA	Veteran
Anna	Berington	Knik	AK	USA	Veteran
Kristy	Berington	Knik	AK	USA	Veteran
Fabio	Berlusconi	Lomazzo		ITALY	Rookie
Grayson	Bruton	Sterling	AK	USA	Rookie
Robert	Bundtzen	Anchorage	AK	USA	Veteran
Aaron	Burmeister	Nome/Nenana	AK	USA	Veteran
Martin	Buser	Big Lake	AK	USA	Veteran
Jason	Campeau	Rocky Mountain	AB	CANADA	Veteran
Larry	Daugherty	Eagle River	AK	USA	Veteran
Jeff	Deeter	Fairbanks	AK	USA	Veteran
Zoya	DeNure	Delta Junction	AK	USA	Veteran
Richie	Diehl	Aniak	AK	USA	Veteran
Paige	Drobny	Fairbanks	AK	USA	Veteran
Gabe	Dunham	Willow	AK	USA	Rookie
Riley	Dyche	Fairbanks	AK	USA	Rookie
Alan	Eischens	Wasilla	AK	USA	Veteran
Matthew	Failor	Willow	AK	USA	Veteran
Linwood	Fielder	Willow	AK	USA	Veteran
Tom	Frode Johansen	Furuflaten		NORWAY	Rookie
Nils	Hahn	Nome	AK	USA	Veteran
Karin	Hendrickson	Wasilla	AK	USA	Veteran
Jessie	Holmes	Nenana	AK	USA	Veteran
Peter	Kaiser	Bethel	AK	USA	Veteran
Magnus	Kaltenborn	Whitehorse	YT	CANADA	Veteran
Dennis	Kananowicz	Tolsona	AK	USA	Veteran
Jeremy	Keller	Knik	AK	USA	Veteran
Jeff	King	Denali Park	AK	USA	Veteran
Jessica	Klejka	Wasilla	AK	USA	Veteran
Tom	Knolmayer	Wasilla	AK	USA	Veteran
Jim	Lanier	Chugiak	AK	USA	Veteran
Joar	Leifseth Ulsom	Mo I Rana		NORWAY	Veteran
Lance	Mackey	Fairbanks	AK	USA	Veteran
Kelly	Maixner	Big Lake	AK	USA	Veteran
Meredith	Mapes	Palmer	AK	USA	Veteran
Wade	Marrs	Willow	AK	USA	Veteran
Martin	Massicotte	Tagish	YT	CANADA	Veteran

Quince	Mountain	Mountain	WI	USA	Rookie
Kaci	Murringer	Willow	AK	USA	Rookie
Deke	Naaktgeboren	Fairbanks	AK	USA	Rookie
Laura	Neese	McMillan	MI	USA	Veteran
Tim	Pappas	Big Lake	AK	USA	Veteran
Aaron	Peck	Grande Prairie	AB	CANADA	Veteran
Nicolas	Petit	Girdwood	AK	USA	Veteran
Michelle	Phillips	Tagish	YT	CANADA	Veteran
Mille	Porsild			DENMARK	Rookie
Damon	Ramaker	Fountain	MN	USA	Rookie
Robert	Redington	Skagway	AK	USA	Veteran
Ryan	Redington	Wasilla	AK	USA	Veteran
Jessie	Royer	Fairbanks	AK	USA	Veteran
Brent	Sass	Eureka	AK	USA	Veteran
Mitch	Seavey	Seward	AK	USA	Veteran
Lev	Shvarts	Willow	AK	USA	Veteran
Ramey	Smyth	Willow	AK	USA	Veteran
Thomas	Waerner	Torpa		NORWAY	Veteran
Monica	Zappa	Kasilof	AK	USA	Veteran
Aliy	Zirkle	Two Rivers	AK	USA	Veteran

## 2020 ALPHABETICAL MUSER BIOGRAPHIES & PHOTOS



**Travis Beals - Seward, AK**

**Website:** [www.TurningHeadsKennel.com](http://www.TurningHeadsKennel.com)

Travis Beals, 27, was born and raised in Seward, Alaska. "I ran my first sled dog race at four years old," he says. "I've always wanted to run Iditarod." In 2013 that dream came true. In Seward, he has been a tour operator for the last 10 years. He enjoys fishing, hiking and the outdoors.

Total prize money: \$101,378.00

### Awards

2015..... Most Improved Musher



**Anna Berington - Knik, AK**

**Website:** [www.seeingdoublesleddogracing.com](http://www.seeingdoublesleddogracing.com)

Anna Berington, 36, has been loving life in Alaska since 2007 with her sister racing sled dogs, commercial fishing, building and constructing homes, landscaping and competing in running races. With her sister, Kristy, they are Seeing Double Sled Dog Racing. Being able to raise and train dogs together has been a dream come true, and racing the Iditarod is a perfect fit for these endurance racers. These dreams have been made possible because of help and support from friends, family and sponsors. Anna started mushing when she was only nine years old. The twins have come a long way from mushing their pet dog in Wisconsin to giving tourists rides in the Sierra Nevada's, to training with former champion Dean Osmar, and many mushing friends like Scott Janssen here in Alaska. Now dog mushing is a family affair with visits and help from Mom, Dad, and sister Kat, and of course their fur children, 30 amazing dogs! Anna lists her hobbies as running, triathlon, biking, swimming canicross and skiing.

Total prize money: \$23,337.00

### Awards

2013 .....Northern Air Cargo Four Wheeler Drawing



**Kristy Berington - Knik, AK**

**Website:** [www.seeingdoublesleddogracing.com](http://www.seeingdoublesleddogracing.com)

Kristy Berington, 36, operates Seeing Double Sled Dog Racing with her twin sister Anna and her husband, Andy Pohl, in Knik, Alaska. Mushing dogs has become part of family life. Andy races and trains the dogs, Kat Berington manages their website, Vicki Pohl sews harnesses and dog coats, Ray Pohl runs trail support, and the entire family supports and sponsors from the sideline all the way from Wisconsin to South Carolina. This is Kristy's 10th running of the Iditarod. She moved to Alaska 12 years ago to learn more about mushing from 1984 Iditarod Champion Dean Osmar in Kasilof. Since then she has raced all over Alaska and into Canada competing in the Yukon Quest, Kusko 300, and Copper Basin 300, just to name a few. "I love endurance sports and adventure!" says the ultra-athlete. "What better way to combine those two factors than running sled dogs in the most beautiful place in the world." Never sitting still, in the off season Kristy competes in many running races from half marathons to ultra-distances and triathlons with Anna. "Anna and I are always in friendly competition. I'm so proud of her in her mushing and athletic career. And being a part of it all with her is amazing." Kristy and Anna pay the bills by doing carpentry work and landscaping. "Thank you to the many fans, friends, family, volunteers and sponsors for making all of this possible. We couldn't do this without you!" "I'm looking forward to running another Iditarod with my incredible canine athletes! Best of luck to all the mushers and their amazing dogs." Kristy lists her hobbies as running, cycling, hiking, keeping up with her husband and canicross.

Total prize money: \$27,337.00



**Fabio Berlusconi – Lomazzo, ITALY**

Fabio Berlusconi, 34, was born and raised in the Lake Como area on northern Italy. He has a Master's degree in Foreign Languages and Translation from the University of Milan. Fabio has been mushing since 2011, when he moved to Kiruna, Sweden, and started handling and guiding tours for Iditarod veteran, Mats Pettersson. In the following years he began racing in Scandinavia, and in 2018 he decided to focus on running the Iditarod. He has spent the last two winters in Willow and ran his qualifiers with Iditarod Champion Joar Leifseth Ulsom's dogs in 2019. This year, he expects to show up at the start line with a team from Linwood Fiedler's Wayfinder Kennel. In the summertime, Fabio works as a fly fishing guide, which is his other great passion besides dogs; he also loves mountain biking, hiking, and music. He plays guitar and has been a professional musician. Fabio is a member of the Torne River Sleddog Club.





### **Grayson Bruton – Sterling, AK**

Twenty-four-year-old Grayson Bruton was born in Oxnard California and raised in Willow Alaska. In 2000, he caught the mushing bug. Grayson's father (a longtime Iditarod Volunteer) let him volunteer as a runner, helping park mushers and their teams at the restart in Willow. That's all it took to get him hooked.

For the past four years, Grayson has been working for Mitch Seavey as a tour guide/manager at his Glacier operation in Seward and helping train Mitch's team for the 2020 Iditarod. When he's not training he likes to hunt and fish.

Grayson has completed a number of sprint races, as well as the Jr Iditarod, Willow Jr 100, Willow 300, Copper Basin 300, and Tustumena 200.



### **Robert Bundtzen – Anchorage, AK**

Robert Bundtzen, 66, grew up in Anderson (after moving to Alaska from New Mexico in 1960) where he used a small dog team while trapping. After obtaining a degree from UAF, an MD from the University of Washington and training in infectious diseases at the University of Wisconsin, he returned to Alaska to establish a consultative infectious disease practice in Anchorage. With the aid and encouragement of Jim Lanier, Robert began to run sled dogs in 1994. He has run the Iditarod 15 times, the Knik 200, Klondike 300, Tustumena 200 and the Copper Basin 300. Robert continues to be amazed at what the trained Alaskan husky can do and continues to run dogs for inexplicable reasons (he loves it). His wife Joan and son, Travis, are his most ardent fans. When not mushing, Robert enjoys hunting, fishing, reading and skiing.

Total prize money: \$14,607.88



### **Aaron Burmeister - Nome/Nenana, AK**

Aaron Burmeister, 44, was born and raised in Nome, Alaska. He graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and has worked in construction for the last 26 years. "I have been racing the Iditarod for 26 years and have been raising dogs my entire life. Iditarod is an event that brings the state of Alaska together every year to celebrate the rich history of dog mushing and its role in developing travel through Alaska, from delivering mail to transporting gold miners, and hauling wood, ice and checking traplines. Thousands of people come together each year to help put on this great event, so that we, as mushers, can participate. It is an honor to be on the trail to see old friends and make new ones. As a musher, it is no easy task to get to the starting line and I would like to thank my family for allowing me to do it and my partner, Tony Brownng, and Marian, for making it possible." Aaron is married to Mandy and they are the parents of Hunter, 11, and Kiana, 7. Aaron is a member of the

IUOE, IOFC, AOPA and the ITC. He lists his hobbies as flying, hunting, fishing and time with family enjoying all that Alaska has to offer.

Total prize money: \$310,131.56

### Awards

2009.....	Sportsmanship
2009.....	Spirit of Alaska
2013.....	Spirit of Alaska
2014.....	Mushers Choice
2014.....	Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2015.....	Herbie Nayokpuk
2015.....	Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2015.....	Gold Coast
2015.....	Fish First



**Martin Buser (Boo' zer) - Big Lake, AK**

**Website:** [www.buserdog.com](http://www.buserdog.com)

Born in Winterthur, Switzerland in 1958, Martin became fascinated with sled dogs while still a teen. He came to Alaska in 1979 to enhance his knowledge of care and training of sled dogs. He began working and training with long-time Alaskan mushers Earl and Natalie Norris and ran his first Iditarod in 1980. Martin and wife Kathy Chapoton, a retired teacher, reside in Big Lake, Alaska, where the family owns and manages Happy Trails Kennel. Their sons, Nikolai and Rohn, both named after Iditarod checkpoints, have been involved with dogs at various times in their lives. Nikolai currently resides in Seattle. Rohn completed three Iditarods, his first Iditarod in 2008, as a senior in high school.

Martin was inducted into the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame this past April (2017).

Martin runs the race each year with his dogs to test the success of their breeding, training and physical endurance. He regards his racers as true competitive athletes and prides his team on their longevity and spirit of competition. For nine years, Martin's 2002 team held the record for the Fastest Iditarod by completing the race in 8 days, 22 hours, 46 minutes and 2 seconds.

As a tribute to his treatment of his racers, Martin was awarded the coveted Leonhard Seppala Award an unprecedented five times, in 1988, 1993, 1995, 1997 and again in 2014 for the most humanitarian care of his dogs. The award was named for the most famous Alaskan musher who ran the longest and most dangerous stretch of the 1925, 674-mile diphtheria serum run from Nenana to Nome, which saved hundreds of lives.

Following Martin's 2002 Iditarod victory, the process for his becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States was completed under the burlwood monument. He then turned around in Nome and made the trip from Nome to Big Lake with his family by snowmachine.

Upon completion of the 2005 Iditarod after a woodworking accident 4 days prior to the race start resulting in the amputation of a part of his finger; he was awarded both the Sportsmanship and Most Inspirational Awards by his fellow mushers.

Martin is an honorary member of Rotary. He is always involved with some project around the kennel or house. While he and Kathy moved into the retirement home that Martin built, they are still working on finishing all the details, your typical Alaskan self built home that is never quite finished. Martin is on the Board of Directors of the Blood Bank of Alaska and has donated over 11 gallons of blood!

In the summer, Martin and his family give tours of their working kennel. The tour begins with a DVD trip from Anchorage to Nome narrated by Buser and includes his unique anecdotal stories gathered over 33 Iditarods. Visitors are offered a glimpse of a mock-up of the Cripple Checkpoint complete with campfire and wall tent. Veterinary and dog care topics are discussed and of course, there's the cuddling of puppies. The tour ends with a riotous symphony of dogs barking as a team is hooked up and taken on a demo run to show folks the dogs in action.

Mile by Mile: Martin Buser's Iditarod is a newly revised video. In partnership with Jeff Schultz and Sprocketheads, LLC and Little Frog Video, a unique journey from Anchorage to Nome with some of the most spectacular images ever assembled in a DVD was created. With a combined 54 years on the trail, Jeff's photos and Martin's trail stories make it possible for you to "be there" on the back of the sled! The video now includes insight into life with sled dogs.

Martin tailors motivational speeches on many topics to large and small audiences in and outside Alaska. Some titles include:

- "You're Only As Fast As Your Slowest Dog: Elevating the Entire Team for Maximum Performance"
- "Capitalizing on Extreme Challenges"
- "Travelogue Alaska: Negotiating 1000+ miles with a Dog Team", "Work Hard, Never Quit, the Mantra for Life in the Last Frontier(or anywhere else for that matter)"

Martin is currently the musher with the most consecutive Iditarod finishes, 33 races completed in row, 35 total finishes. He is a four time Iditarod champion winning the race 1992, 1994, 1997 and 2002. While the race is always the final exam, the year round interaction and relationship with the dogs is the most valuable aspect of this lifestyle. On a daily basis, we are amazed by the stamina, loyalty, honesty, and joy of our dogs. Author Brian Jacques went on a ride with Martin and the team many years ago and described the dogs as "eternal children." We couldn't agree more. It is our good fortune to be able to take care of them.

Martin published DOG MAN: Chronicles of an Iditarod Champion in March 2015. The book is available at our online store at [www.buserdog.com](http://www.buserdog.com).

Total prize money: \$817,815.89



## Awards

1988 .....	Gold Coast
1988 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
1993 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
1992 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
1992 .....	Winner's Purse
1994 .....	National Bank of Alaska Gold Coast
1994 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness – Lead Dog
1994 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
1995 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
1996 .....	GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway
1996 .....	Regal Alaskan First to the Yukon
1996 .....	Alaska Commercial Golden Pace
1996 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness – Lead Dog
1997 .....	Regal Alaskan First to the Yukon
1997 .....	National Bank of Alaska Gold Coast
1997 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
1997 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness – Lead Dog
1997 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
1998 .....	Cars & Eagle Quality Center Sportsmanship
2000 .....	Cabela's Outfitter
2002 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Golden Harness
2002 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
2002 .....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska
2002 .....	Wells Fargo First to the Gold Coast
2002 .....	Millennium Hotel's First to the Yukon
2002 .....	GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2004 .....	GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2005 .....	Sportsmanship
2005 .....	Most Inspirational
2007 .....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska
2007 .....	Millennium First to the Yukon
2011 .....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska
2013 .....	Millennium First Musher to the Yukon
2014 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonard Seppala Humanitarian



**Jason Campeau - Rocky Mountain House, AB, Canada**

**Website:** [www.atkakennel.com](http://www.atkakennel.com)

Born and raised in Ottawa, Canada, Jason Campeau, 44, was infused from an early age playing hockey with the ambition of attaining success by hard work. Jason went on to a successful OHL career with the North Bay Centennials where he scored the game 7 overtime goal, earning the team a trip to the Memorial Cup. Jason then attended the Toronto Maple Leaf's training camp in the NHL, prior to his last year with North Bay. Jason believes that sport is one of the best educations a person can get to prepare for the business world and all facets of life. Jason was fortunate enough to be awarded an athletic scholarship at the University of New Brunswick for Hockey, where his team won its first ever National Championship and Jason went on to graduate with his BA in Business. From the hockey rink to the board room, Jason has taken that same drive and determination to reach his goals as the Executive Vice President of Maplesoft Group, a Global systems integration company. Jason is also part owner of RSG Sports, a professional sports agency based out of St. Louis that represents NHL players.

As Jason continually balances his corporate life, he has turned to a more family orientated approach to filling his competitive desires in dog mushing. As a young boy, Jason had a dream of one day having the ability to run sled dogs. Family and teaching his daughters, Jessica and Mackenzie, 15 year old identical twins, about the great outdoors and how rewarding it can be to work with animals, turned that dream into reality. Jason's wife, Jennifer, is now qualified to run both the Iditarod and Yukon Quest. Both Jason's parents, Gail and Jean, are heavily involved with the kennel along with his brother, Jody, who is the kennel's general manager. As you can see it is a true family affair and a boy truly living his dream with his best friends—his dogs.

Jason is a member of the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation. He lists his hobbies as horseback riding side by side trips and camping.

Total prize money: \$17,598.00



**Larry Daugherty – Eagle River, AK**

Larry Daugherty, 44, hails from Eagle River, AK where he and his family have lived since 2014. Larry's family moved to Alaska to support his Iditarod dream—one which began in childhood. Larry works as a radiation oncologist at the Alaska Cancer Treatment Center. His work has taught him to treasure every moment in life and to make the most of every day. He co-founded Radiating Hope, a nonprofit which aims to improve access to cancer care in developing countries. He carries prayer flags on his sled to honor those impacted by cancer. Larry enjoys exploring Alaska with his family through backpacking, fishing, hunting, and climbing. In 2017 Larry endeavored to be the first person to complete "Iditarest", meaning finishing the Iditarod then climbing to the top of Mt.

Everest in the same year. His team was turned around just 335' from the summit by hurricane-force winds at the South Summit. In 2020 he will try again. He is racing with an Atka Kennel team.

Total prize money: \$3,147.00



**Jeff Deeter - Fairbanks, AK**

**Website:** [www.blacksprucedogsledding.com](http://www.blacksprucedogsledding.com)

Jeff Deeter, 31, moved to Alaska with his parents at the age of five. His mom, who always wanted to move to Alaska, took a job teaching in Noorvik. He says he went to the start of the 1998 Iditarod as a ten year old and knew then that he wanted to compete in this event someday. At age 15, Jeff started running sled dogs and ran his first Iditarod in 2008 at the age of 19. His next run was a decade later in 2018 with an entirely new, young group of dogs. Jeff says, "This race is the ultimate test of man and dog and their unique and primitive bond. I love the challenge of bad weather and rough trail, and that challenge keeps me excited about this race." Jeff climbed 28 places in last year's Iditarod to finish in 15th. "Finishing in the top 20 with a group of two and three year old dogs was a complete surprise! I am excited to bring those same dogs back to Iditarod 2020, just as they hit their prime and are ready for more competitive racing." When asked what part of racing the Iditarod is most challenging for Jeff, he insists it's not the dark, the cold, the sleep deprivation or those famously technical sections of trail. "It's the dog care. It's up to the musher to ensure every dog on their team is in peak health. We have to be constantly vigilant to make sure we're detecting any change in their status. That definitely keeps me awake on the runners. Having a happy, healthy team come across the finish line is the most important thing to me." Jeff and his wife, KatieJo, own Black Spruce Dog Sledding, a home-based tour business that introduces people to the unique lifestyle of mushing in Alaska. They share a love of dogs and mushing and encourage fans to follow their kennel's adventures through Facebook and Instagram.

Total prize money: \$2,098.00



**Zoya DeNure – Delta Junction, AK**

**Website:** [www.dogsleddenali.com](http://www.dogsleddenali.com)

Zoya DeNure, 43 was born and raised in Wisconsin. She spent 12 years in the fashion industry working primarily as a runway & fashion model. In 2002, tired of the pressures and triviality of that lifestyle, she rented a storage unit in Madison, Wisconsin, stacked it with furniture, shoes, dresses, and headed to Alaska with a carry-on and the dream of running, living and breathing sled dogs. Her Siberian husky, Ethan,



traveled with her.

Ethan has since passed, but the dream is still alive. Zoya is married to fellow dog driver John Schandelmeier, and now splits her time between homes at Maclaren River and Delta Junction, Alaska. She has two daughters; Jona, eleven and Olivia, six. The family operates a rescue/rehab facility for unwanted sled dogs and is striving to focus attention on positive training techniques. Zoya loves the sport of sled dog racing, enjoys time on the trail with her team. She says her hobbies are “running 1/2 marathons, fishing, yoga, travel working for herself, ministry study and family.”

Total prize money: \$2,098.00



### **Richie Diehl – Aniak, AK**

Richie Diehl, 34, was born and raised in Aniak, Alaska. He graduated from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Technology. He’s been working as a carpenter in Aniak the last ten years. He says he began mushing “as a kid” and has been racing competitively in Alaska since 2010, having completed the Kusko 300 several times as well as the Paul Johnson Memorial 450 in its inaugural year, 2012, and the Iditarod seven times, his best finish being sixth in 2018. He lists his hobbies as hunting, flying, fishing and boating.

Total prize money: \$114,805.00

### **Awards**

2014.....Horizon Lines Most Improved Musher  
2018.....Northern Air Cargo Herbie Nayokpuk Memorial Award



### **Paige Drobny (Drob’ knee) - Cantwell, AK**

**Website:** [www.squidacres.com](http://www.squidacres.com)

Paige Drobny, 44, was born in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and says she moved all over growing up. She graduated from Virginia Tech in 1997 with her B.S. in Biology and from UAF in 2008 with her M.S. in Fisheries Oceanography. Before moving to Fairbanks in 2005 for graduate school, she lived in Colorado and was a fisheries biologist. “I enjoy the outdoor lifestyle. I work as a fishery biologist and help my husband, Cody Strathe, build dogsleds for our company, DogPaddle Designs, during the summer. Our mushing started in 2006 as a way to explore the wilds of Alaska with no plan to ever do any racing. We spent several years camping and traveling with our dogs. In 2010, Cody and I decided to give it a whirl and entered the GinGin 200 together...we had a blast, and suddenly we were on the slippery slope.” Paige has run the Iditarod five times.

Total prize money: \$13,598.00

## Awards

2019 ..... Most Improved Musher



### **Gabe Dunham – Willow, AK**

Gabe Dunham, 35, was born in Fairbanks and grew up in Valdez. She moved to Oregon in 2011 where she received her BS degree in Natural Resource Conservation and Fish and Wildlife Management. She had begun mushing in Valdez in 2000, and after a steep learning curve, she moved to Willow in 2002 where she met Linwood and Kathy Fiedler. She says she owes a lot of her mushing success to their mentorship over the years. She now has a kennel of 30 Alaskan Huskies in Darby, Montana, where she has owned and operated a sled dog tour outfit since 2018. She always wanted to run the Iditarod but it wasn't until 2018 that she really thought she could do it. In planning for the 2020 Iditarod, she has run numerous mid distance races. She loves anything that gets her outside, including camping, backpacking, rafting, hunting and fishing.



### **Riley Dyche – Fairbanks, AK**

**Website:** <http://darkhorsesleddogs.com>

Riley Dyche grew up in Farragut, Iowa and started running dogs in Leadville, Colorado in 2010, while he was attending college there, with a major in Outdoor Recreation Leadership. He moved to Alaska in the spring of 2013 to work for Alaska Icefield Expeditions. While there he met Matt Hall. He handled for Matt that year and then a year with Ryne Olsen and then a year with Sven Haltmann, before he started his own kennel, Dark Horse Racing Kennel, in 2016. He continues to spend summers on the Denver Glacier in Skagway, offering tours for Alaska Icefield Expeditions. In the winter he focuses on training and racing at his home north of Fairbanks.



### **Alan Eischens – Wasilla, AK**

**Website:** <http://doubleekennels.com>

Alan Eischens, 60, is a life long resident of Alaska, and has a great love for the outdoors. His peace and serenity is while being with his dog team, whether training or running races. Alan and his wife Tanjala, started Double E Kennel in Wasilla in 2011. Alan has a huge heart for children. He and his kennel will be partnering again this year with National Pediatric Cancer Foundation. Whether training or racing, Alan dedicates all his miles to those who are suffering or have gone before us and are with the angel watching over the team and him. In 2016 and 2017, Alan was able to bring all 16 dogs



across the finish line in Nome. With this accomplishment, the kennel takes pride in holding this record. Both times when finishing the Iditarod he would say, “the Kids and I did it”! Alan and Tanjala own and operate Cable17, HomeStyle Plus Catering and Cleaning. He enjoys visiting with children that are or have been effected by Pediatric Diseases and/or Disabilities. To see the joy in each one of their faces when we talk with them, makes everything better.

Double E Kennel would like to honor Jaret Juarez-Guerrero. Jaret was our biggest fan and ambassador for Pediatric Cancer and Diseases. Jaret was the legs for all the sick children and was suddenly taken from us in May 2019, We all miss Jaret.

Alan is the father of three adult children, 3 stepson’s, 22 grandchildren and 1 great grandson.

Total prize money: \$3,147.00



**Matt Failor - Willow, AK**

**Website:** [www.17th-dog.com](http://www.17th-dog.com)

Matthew Failor, 37, was born and raised in Ohio. He says, “My family taught me a love of the outdoors; camping, fishing, canoeing, backpacking, hunting, were all things we did on family vacations. My mom and dad and brothers and sister all enjoy an active outdoor lifestyle. My three brothers and I are Eagle Scouts.” He moved to Alaska in 2006 for a summer college job as a dog handler at Gold Rush Sled Dog Tours. He graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Photography from Ohio State University in 2007. He moved to Alaska permanently in 2008 to train with Matt Hayashida and his dogs. He has worked for various mushers and in 2010, he started handling for Martin Buser and ran his first Iditarod as Martin’s handler. He recently moved to Willow to run dogs under 17th Dog, Team Matthew Failor. He is excited and eager to get back out onto dog mushing’s greatest stage, the Iditarod. “The dogs and I spend all summer, fall and winter together living as a family and learn to work towards a common goal, improving in everything we do and never stop learning. Twenty eight canines have become my immediate family now, however, Ohio will forever be called home.” Matthew is currently a dog trainer and has been manager of Alaska Icefield Expeditions for 12 years. He says he enjoys sports, staying active and is an avid outdoorsman.

Total prize money: \$56,951.00

#### Awards

2016 ..... Most Inspirational  
 2018.....Matson Most Improved Musher



### **Linwood Fiedler (FEED' ler) - Willow, AK**

Linwood Fiedler, 66, was born in Vermont. He received his BSW at Carroll College in Helena, Montana. He began mushing in Montana in 1997 and moved to Alaska “to race the Iditarod and raise my family” in 1990. He has run 25 Iditarods, placing in the top ten several times and was a second place finisher in 2001. For the last 19 years he has owned and operated, with his son, Dalton, Alaska Heli-Mush, Inc., an exciting glacier sled dog tour business on the Juneau Icefield .He is also the co-founder of Arctic Paws for Service, a service dog organization assisting Alaskan families experience the healing powers of service dogs. Linwood says, “Training and traveling with my dogs is my ‘calling’. These wonderful animals have taught me my strengths and weaknesses. They’ve helped me to understand the value of being true to one’s self and others. They’ve helped me become a better person.” Linwood and his wife, Kathy, are the parents of Justin, Dalton and Christi. He lists his hobby as photographing landscapes.

Total Prize Money: \$262,118.00

### **Awards**

1989 ..... Sportsmanship  
 1990 ..... Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian  
 2001 ..... PenAir Spirit of Iditarod  
 2001 ..... Millennium First Musher to the Yukon



### **Tom Frode Johansen – Furuflaten, NORWAY**

Website: [www.lyngenoutdoorexperiences.com](http://www.lyngenoutdoorexperiences.com)

Tom was born and raised in Bergen, Norway, and now lives in the little village of Furuflaten with his wife Liz. They have four children and five grandchildren. He studied geography and teaching PE He became a high school PE teacher and now also runs a tourist kennel. He started reading about sled dog races and Iditarod became a dream. He began mushing in 1984, completed the FinnmarksLøpet 20 times and the Yukon Quest in 2016. He looks forward to seeing more of Alaska. His hobby is small carpentry projects.



### **Nils Hahn – Nome, AK**

Nils Hahn was born in Germany on 3-28-71. 25 years ago, he came to Alaska to run sled dogs and the Iditarod. Today together with his wife Diana he is the Owner/Publisher of the historic Nome Nugget Newspaper as well as Mushing Magazine in Nome, Alaska.

Nils has run the Iditarod four times since 2000. His highest finish was 22nd in 2001. He has also participated in the Kobuk 440, the Kusko 300, and the Nome to Council 200 winning in 2000 and 2003 and finishing second in 2002. has has also run in the Fur Rondy, and Arctic Circle Championships and the Portside 200.

Nils is married to Diana Haecker, who happens to be the Editor of the Nome Nugget. Together they have a 15-year-old daughter, named Lizzy.

Nils is a member of the Nome Kennel Club. His hobbies are dogs, wilderness, running, skiing, climbing, and reading.

Total Prize Money: \$10,480.00



**Karin Hendrickson – Wasilla, AK**

**Website:** [www.blueonblackdogs.com](http://www.blueonblackdogs.com)

Karin, 49, was born and raised in Mt. Baldy, California. She left home after high school, skied for a year and then went to college. She received her BA in Environment from Colorado University and lived in Colorado and Idaho before coming to Alaska. “I saw my first sled dog in March of 2002, when I came up to volunteer for the Iditarod. By 2003, I had sold everything I owned, quit my job and moved to Alaska to become a handler. After two years as a handler, I tried to quit my dog habit. That didn’t last long—I was miserable without dogs! I started building my own team in 2006. I really never expected to do any racing, much less run the Iditarod! I am not too sure how it all happened, but just two years later, I found myself signed up for my first Iditarod. 2020 will be my 9th Iditarod. I was hit by a truck while training in 2014. Luckily all my dogs were OK, but I broke my back in three places. It has been a real challenge to work through the pain and loss of function, but I was not ready to quit doing what I love – running dogs in the amazing wilderness of Alaska. I was able to complete Iditarod again in 2016 and 2017. After a few years off from racing I’m ready to tackle the trail again. I am one of a very few mushers to work full-time through the winter. My biggest challenge is trying to fit training and racing around the demands of my job. It is just this side of impossible to get everything done, but somehow I make it happen.”

Total Prize Money: \$6,294.00



**Jessie Holmes - Nenana, AK**

Jessie Holmes, 38, was born and raised in Alabama. He left there at the age of 18 to go see Alaska, but he ended up in Montana where he worked as a carpenter for three years. He came to Alaska in 2004 looking for adventure and found it running dogs on a remote trap line on the Yukon River. This love for the wilderness and dogs eventually led to his competing in many races, both sprint and distance. He won the Kobuk 440 in 2017 and placed seventh in the 2018 Iditarod, taking home the honor of

being the “Rookie of the Year” in that Iditarod. A subsistence resident of Nenana, Jessie currently works as a carpenter and TV personality, appearing the “Life below Zero,” a documentary television show about the daily lives of people living in remote Alaska. He lists his hobbies as running ultra-marathons, hunting and fishing.

Total Prize Money: \$26,861.00

#### Awards

2018.....Rookie of the Year



**Peter Kaiser - Bethel, AK**

**Website:** [www.kaiserracing.com](http://www.kaiserracing.com)

Peter Kaiser, 32, was born and raised in Bethel, Alaska. He graduated from Bethel High School in 2005 and has worked for Knik Construction/Lynden for the last twelve years. He says, “Our family has always had dogs, and I’ve been mushing since I was a kid. Watching the Kuskokwim 300 every January sparked my interest in long distance racing, and a few years ago, I decided that I would give the Iditarod a try.” He has finished in the top 5 six times including a first place finish in 2019. Peter says he enjoys boats, hunting, and fishing. He and his wife, Bethany, are the parents of seven year old Ari and Aylee who is two.

Total prize money: \$295,000.00

#### Awards

2011 ..... Northern Air Cargo Four Wheeler Drawing  
 2012 ..... Northern Air Cargo Four Wheeler Drawing  
 2019 ..... Bristol Bay Native Corporation Fish First Award  
 2019 ..... Northrim Bank Achieve More Award  
 2019 ..... Golden Harness Award  
 2019 ..... Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Champion’s Truck



**Magnus Kaltenborn – Whitehorse, YT, CANADA**

Magnus Kaltenborn, 30, was born and raised in Lillehammer Norway. He was always fascinated with the outdoors and many different outdoor activities. After graduating from high school he moved to Alaska to learn more about dog mushing and see the country. After a few years in Alaska, he moved to the Yukon

Territory where he currently resides with his partner Maren Bradlwy. Together they operate a small adventure tourism company named Call of the Trail Adventures.

Total prize money: \$2,098.00

### Awards

2018 .....Red Lantern



**Dennis Kananowicz – Tolsona, AK**

Dennis moved to Alaska in 1997 and can't imagine living anywhere else. Alaska has provided him with much opportunity and a lifestyle that affords him to live under his own terms much of the time. A lifestyle many in the lower 48 wouldn't understand or even consider. Dennis ran the Iditarod in 2004 and finished 29th. Sixteen years later he has decided to run it again. He took a ten-year hiatus while he re-established himself and learned the trade of telephone lineman through the IBEW apprenticeship program. In 2013 he acquired 11 sled dogs from a friend and two leaders from Jason Mackey. It was inevitable that he would enter the Iditarod again. For the past six years Dennis has been building his Outlaw Kennels while breeding dogs and running many races, from small sprints to the Kuskokwim 300. All dogs he plans to run in this year's race will have been born at Outlaw Kennels and selectively bred. They will all be rookies and Dennis considers himself a rookie all over again.



**Jeremy Keller - Knik, AK**

**Website:** [www.allroadsleadto.dog](http://www.allroadsleadto.dog)

Jeremy Keller, age 47, ran the 2007 Iditarod and then focused on farming and raising a family with his lovely wife, Alison. Their older son, Bjorn, is thirteen and running this year's Junior Iditarod. Their younger son, Liam, is keeping everyone laughing! "The boys" are all three training together this winter and documenting the entire process on Jeremy's website. Jeremy was born in Iowa, but lived all over the United States growing up. He attended college briefly in Madison, Wisconsin, before coming to his senses and running to Alaska to chase adventure! He found it and then some. He and Alison met in McCarthy, Alaska and lived in those remote mountains for twenty years before moving back to Jeremy's old home in Knik where he first learned the craft of raising and training dogs. A brilliant caricature of Jeremy can be viewed on Discovery Channels' "The Edge of Alaska"!

Total prize money: \$2,098.00



**Jeff King - Denali Park, AK**

**Website:** [www.huskyhomestead.com](http://www.huskyhomestead.com)

Jeff King, 63, was born and raised in California, and moved to Alaska in 1975 in search of adventure. He quickly became interested in dog sledding and Alaskan huskies, devoting all his spare time and money to building his own team, while developing a construction business. He began racing in 1980. His competitive nature and athleticism had found a new outlet, and Jeff set his sights ever higher, entering his first Iditarod just one year later. In 1992 he decided to devote his full time and energy to training and racing, setting aside his construction business. He won his first Iditarod the following season.

Jeff enjoys living just outside of Alaska's Denali National Park and sharing his life with his 40 sled dogs, one of which spends a lot of time on the couch. In the summer months, Husky Homestead welcomes visitors from around the world to watch his sled dogs in action, hear stories of adventure, learn about Alaskan Huskies, the tradition of dog mushing and the life and spirit of Alaska, the last frontier.

Jeff has three grown daughters, Cali, Tessa and Ellen, and is a proud grampa to three grandchildren. All three daughters ran the Jr. Iditarod and Cali finished the Iditarod.

Jeff has an outstanding race record, including a Yukon Quest victory in 1981, nine Kuskokwim 300 victories, and four Iditarod victories.

Total prize money: \$949,796.78

**Awards**

1991 .....	Regal Alaskan First to the Yukon
1993 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Winners Truck
1993 .....	Halfway
1993 .....	Regal Alaskan First to the Yukon
1993 .....	Golden Harness Award for Lead Dogs
1993 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time Safety to Nome
1996 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Winners Truck
1996 .....	National Bank of Alaska Gold Coast
1997 .....	GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway
1998 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Winners Truck
1998 .....	National Bank of Alaska Gold Coast
1998 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness
1999 .....	Joe Redington Sr.
2003 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2004 .....	PenAir Spirit of Iditarod



2004 .....	Millennium Hotel First to the Yukon
2006 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Winners Truck
2006 .....	Wells Fargo Winner's Purse
2006 .....	Wells Fargo Gold Coast
2006 .....	Lead Dog – City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness
2007 .....	Wells Fargo Gold Coast
2008 .....	Wells Fargo Gold Coast
2008 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2010 .....	PenAir Spirit of Iditarod
2010 .....	Millennium Hotel First to the Yukon
2014 .....	Millennium Hotel First to the Yukon
2015 .....	Millennium Hotel First Musher to Yukon
2016 .....	The Lakefront Anchorage's First Musher to Yukon



**Jessica Klejka - Wasilla, AK**

**Website:** [www.tailwindkennels.com](http://www.tailwindkennels.com)

Jessica, born in Canton, OH moved to Bethel, AK, when she was 2 years old. She grew up mushing with her younger siblings (Jenny, Jeremiah, Jesse, Josh, Joan and Jordan). Her love for dogs started with – a Bethel street rescue dog named Jed.

At 8 she started mushing 3 dogs from her father's rec team, going out with her siblings. She listened to musher stories from the Kuskokwim 300 race trail and remembers Jeff King presenting to her 6th grade class. Her first long distance race was the K-300 Race Committee's 100 mile campout race when she was 12 years old. She realized the strongest bond formed with a dog is when you and the dog are out together for days at a time.

In high school, she won the Jr. Iditarod. Jessica obtained her BS degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, allowing her to continue mushing during breaks, and dog sitting for local teams. She worked her summers on a Glacier for Alaska-Helimush owned by Iditarod Musher Linwood Fiedler and got to take her dog team with her.

Jessica attended Washington State University's Vet School and is happily working as a full time Veterinarian in Bethel and Big lake Alaska. When she's not mushing her favorite hobby is flying around Alaska with her husband Sam.

Total prize money: \$1,049.00



### **Tom Knolmayer – Wasilla, AK**

Thomas Knolmayer, 52, was born and raised in Ohio. He graduated from the Air Force Academy and received his medical degree from Uniformed Services University in 1994. He joined the Air Force where he served as a military surgeon for 28 years, which included four combat tours to the Middle East. He has lived in Alaska since 2001 and has since retired from the Air Force. He works currently as a trauma surgeon. He began mushing in 2002 when he volunteered and trained teams. He started his kennel with a group of yearlings from Kelly Maixner and Martin Buser. Tom and his wife, Tina, are the parents of two children, Zane, 14 and Madeline, 12. Tom is a member of the American College of Surgeons, the Alaska Trauma Systems Review Committee, and is the Alaska State Chair of the Committee on Trauma and says he enjoys fishing and running. Tom says, “We are a small recreational kennel looking to have some fun and adventure down the trail.”

Total prize money: \$3,464.88



### **Jim Lanier – Chugiak, AK**

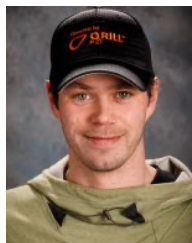
**Website:** <http://northernwhites.com>

Jim Lanier, 79 years young, was born in Washington D.C. and raised in Fargo, North Dakota. After receiving his medical degree from Washington University in St. Louis, he moved to Alaska in 1967 to serve at the Native Hospital in Anchorage with the US Public Health Service. A Pathologist at Providence Hospital for thirty-some years, Jim is now retired from medicine but not from mushing. He “went to the dogs” in the 70’s as a result of hanging around with Iditarod mushers Ron Gould, Dinah Knight and Gerry Riley. Then in 1979 he ran his first Iditarod, as chronicled in his book Beyond Ophir. A sequel, Way Beyond Ophir, is in first draft.

In 2014 Jim entered his seventeenth race to Nome and, for the first time, had to scratch due to a ruptured Achilles tendon. 2015 and 2016 saw scratches two and three with pneumonia in Unalakleet and a fractured collar bone in Kaltag. In 2017 a bum knee forced a handing of the reins to good friend Gunnar Johnson. In 2018, he got into serious trouble on the coast and had to scratch. In 2019, he completed the Yukon Quest. Apparently Jim’s determination, or stubbornness, knows no bounds as he now returns to the starting line for yet another go. After that “Who knows?” he says. “Health aside, it’s a matter of continued enjoyment of the dreaming, scheming, training, support of family and friends, and of going head to head with people half my age and younger.”

Lanier’s specialty is his white dogs and, therefore, his “Northern Whites Kennel.” Jim is married to Anna Bondarenko, the first and only Russian Woman to enter and complete the Last Great Race, in 2000. Jim is a member of the AMA and the Democratic Party. He is the father of four adult children (Margaret, Kimberly, Willy and Jimmy) and grandfather of five (Annie, Ethan, Ollie, Logan and Jessie). His activities include singing, commercial fishing and writing.





**Joar Leifseth Ulsom (U are' Life'seth Ool'some) - Mo I Rana, NORWAY**

**Website:** [www.qrillpet.com/theqrillpetteam](http://www.qrillpet.com/theqrillpetteam)

In 2020, Joar Leifseth Ulsom will run Iditarod for the eighth time. Born with a love of dogs, Joar, 33, started skjoring in his hometown, Mo I Rana, Norway. From there he ran a variety of small races with borrowed dogs until he started his own kennel in 2008. After developing his kennel in Norway, in 2011 he moved with his kennel, to Alaska and began to pursue a career in mushing. He has enjoyed participating in the Yukon Quest, the Nadezhda Hope Race and the Kuskokwim 300 among other races.

With the aim of providing the best care for the dogs and the highest quality of the sport, Joar is a proud member of the Qrill Pet Mushing Team. He is also a life-time member of Rana Trekk-og Brukshundklubb based in Mo I Rana.

Joar currently resides in Willow, Alaska, with his kennel of Alaskan huskies, a border collie, a fish named Hank and his girlfriend, Margot. When not mushing or taking care of his dogs, Joar enjoys exploring Alaska and all the fun activities that the great state has to offer.

Total prize money: 296,289.00

**Awards**

2013 .....	Jerry Austin Memorial Rookie of the Year
2018.....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
2018.....	Northrim Bank Achieve More Award
2018.....	GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway Award
2018 .....	Golden Harness Award



**Lance Mackey - Fairbanks, AK**

**Website:** [www.mackeycomebackkennel.com](http://www.mackeycomebackkennel.com)

Alaska born and raised, Lance Mackey, 49, grew up with dogs and Iditarod. He started his current kennel in Kasilof, Alaska, in 1999 and entered his first Iditarod in 2001, finishing 36th. He spent all of 2002 and 2003 recovering from stage four throat cancer, and returned to Iditarod in 2004 where he traveled the entire trail with his younger brother and two puppy teams. In 2005, he entered both the Yukon Quest and the Iditarod, racing both from 2005 – 2009, and winning each four years in a row (and winning both back to back in 2007 and 2008.) Since 2011, he says, “My race record has been dull and not much fun; my last Iditarod was in 2016. It ended in Galena, and I haven’t been the same since. So for me, 2019 was about having fun, enjoying the checkpoints and the people

of our state and its sport, about my dogs, fans, sponsors, friends and my family. Lance thanks his fellow mushers for nominating him for the Most Inspirational Musher Award last year. He received a free entry for this year's Iditarod so "I guess it means they want to see me out there again. Lance is a member of Mush with PRIDE, North Pole Speedway and Alaska Race Way Park. He says his hobbies are Legends car racing, fishing, camping and being dad. He is the father of one adult daughter, Alana, and he and Jenne have two children, Atigun 3½ and Lozen, 1 ½.

Total prize money: \$370,991.44

### Awards

2002 .....	Most Inspirational Musher
2007 .....	Winner's Truck
2007 .....	Winner's Purse
2007 .....	Race Champion
2007 .....	Most Inspirational Musher
2007 .....	Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2007 .....	Lolly Medley Golden Harness
2008 .....	Winner's Truck
2008 .....	Winner's Purse
2008 .....	Spirit of Alaska
2008 .....	Race Champion
2008 .....	First to the Yukon
2009 .....	Race Champion
2009 .....	Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2009 .....	Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2009 .....	First to the Yukon
2009 .....	First to the Gold Coast
2010 .....	Race Champion
2010 .....	Lolly Medley Golden Harness
2011 .....	Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2012 .....	Sportsmanship
2013 .....	Dorothy G. Page Halfway
2015 .....	Sportsman
2019 .....	Mushers' Choice Award



**Kelly Maixner – Big Lake, AK**  
**Website:** <http://madstorkkennel.com>

Kelly Maixner, 44, was born and raised in North Dakota. After graduating from Montana State University he went to dental school at Nova Southeastern in Ft. Lauderdale, where he received his dental degree. Kelly moved to Alaska in 2007

for a pediatric dental residency. Being a man who always seeks out challenges, he immediately set his sights on running the Iditarod. He started Mad Stork Kennel, LLC with two pregnant females and it has grown to around 60. Before Kelly decided to become a pediatric dentist, he was a farmer, a snowboard instructor, a soldier in the National Guard, a bartender, a doughnut-maker, a physical therapy assistant for the Phoenix Suns, a state champion boxer, and a semi-professional football player for the Bozeman Kodiaks. An avid runner and competitor, Kelly has completed multiple marathons and triathlons, including the Silverman competition. He hopes one year to finish the Iditarod, climb Mt. McKinley, and race the Boston Marathon. Every year Kelly takes his professional skills to Haiti to provide dental care for the children of Kobonal Mission. Kelly's wife, Margaret, found him in 2009 and they were married the following year. They are the parents of Rosemary, 7, and Ven, 6, Birdie, 4, and Lulu, 2, and new born Shane. He is a member of the American Dental Association and the America Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

Total prize money: \$51,885.00



### **Meredith Mapes – Palmer, AK**

Meredith Mapes, 26, was born in Texas but her family moved to Alaska when she was a baby because “her parents didn’t want to raise her in a big city.” The owner and head poop scooper at Fun On The Run Kennel, was raised in Alaska and has been around sled dogs for most of her life. First introduced to sled dogs at age 6 through Girl Scouts, she ran the Willow Winter Carnival 1-dog race, and won by only 1/5 of a second. From then on she was hooked, and competed in a variety of 1-dog races the next season before taking a break from mushing for a few years. At age 12 she was gifted with her first two sled dogs, which came from Mitch Seavey’s kennel. That fall she was gifted with two more dogs from musher Sue Allen, and Fun On The Run Kennel was born. The kennel continued to grow the next year, and she trained her own team for her first big mid-distance sled dog race – the 2008 Junior Iditarod, finishing 14th. Everything changed for Meredith when her dog team was hit by a snowmachine during the Aurora 50/50 in December 2008. Her two main lead dogs were injured, and she was shaken up but uninjured. She competed in the Junior Iditarod finishing 8th that year, but her heart wasn’t really in it anymore. After high school Meredith officially called herself retired from sled dog racing, and started college. She was offered a job working in Seward, Alaska at Seavey’s IdidaRide Sled Dog Tours, and had a blast working with sled dogs again. Within the first week she said she’d be running the Iditarod in just a few years, and blames Danny Seavey for offering her the job and getting her back into dog mushing (and continuing to feed her mushing addiction). She graduated from college in May 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre with an emphasis on Dance. Meredith lists her hobbies as “biking, camping and photography.” She is a member of Mush with P.R.I.D.E. and the Iditarod Trail Committee.

Total prize money: \$1,049.00



**Wade Marrs - Wasilla, AK**

**Website:** [www.stumpjumpinkennel.com](http://www.stumpjumpinkennel.com)

Wade Marrs, 28, was born and raised in the Knik area outside of Wasilla, Alaska. “I have been behind a dog team since I was born.” The biggest influences for his mushing were his late uncle and the Redingtons. Wade says, “I was a quiet kid, learning the ropes of mushing, not asking many questions, just listening to words of advice from the many mushers visiting the Redington home in Knik.” Having now served on the Iditarod’s Board of Directors and as the IOFC president, I look forward to continuing being an advocate for the mushing lifestyle and the future of this sport.” Wade moved to Willow in 2014 to expand his growing kennel and for better training opportunities. When he isn’t with his dog team, Wade likes to adventure, fish, hunt, build and spending time with his fiancée, Sophie.

Total prize money: \$143,613.00

### Awards

2015 .....	Nome Kennel Club’s Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2017.....	Gold Coast
2017 .....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska
2019.....	Fastest Time Safety to Nome



**Martin Massicotte – St. Tite, Quebec, CANADA**

Martin Massicottie, 51, was born and raised in St-Tite, Quebec, where he still lives. After graduation from high school, Martin then graduated from Lineman school in 1988 but at the age of 21, he decided to buy a paving company, that he owned until last spring. He has now been a paving foreman for 32 years. At the age of eight, Martin put a harness on their house dog, a St. Bernard!!! Then one day he saw a team of several dogs and realized then that he wanted to harness more dogs. As a teenager, he was doing sprint races and it was only in 1996 that he actually started doing long distance races, racing from 60 miles to the Labrador 400 in the same year. He says he climbed the ladder and started winning the Can-Am Crown 250 in 1998. In 2019, he won it for the 10th time, six in a row. He did the race circuit in Northeastern America but in 2003, he realized one of his dreams by running the Yukon Quest and placing sixth. He won the 220 mile Hudson Bay Quest in Manitoba twice and place 2nd in the UP 200 in Michigan several times. When he saw a video of the Iditarod, at that moment he started dreaming of bringing his sled dogs to such an athletic level to be able to run that famous race the right way. “What I like most about dog sledding is to be in the nature, discover new territories and especially to listen to my dogs and to see that we’re an amazing team between human and the beast. Martin and his wife, Marie-Josée Dulong are the

parents of two adult children, Mélodie, 21 and Etienne, 18. Martin lists his hobbies as hiking and indoor training.



**Quince Mountain – Mountain, WI**

**Website:** [www.twitter.com/QuinceMountain](https://www.twitter.com/QuinceMountain)

32 Year Old Quince Mountain is a rookie from Mountain Wisconsin. Quince says, I never expected to get into this sport—I'm allergic to dogs!—but I fell in love and wanted to share in my girlfriend's longtime interest. Once I was on the runners, how could I not love being pulled through a snowy forest by a team of eager, gorgeous Alaskan huskies? It felt like a magical return to some kind of bucolic, laugh-ridden childhood I never actually had.

I applied for a summer job with Seavey's Iditaride so I could learn more—and now I recommend other aspiring newer mushers learn by working for an established tour kennel, too. I first became involved in the race itself a few years ago as a volunteer on the trail (Return Dog Crew) and helping Ryan Redington and Justin Stielstra travel to AK and prep for their race. I had the deep privilege of staying with Barb and Raymie Redington as we awaited the race, and it felt like living in the fountainhead of mushing. Doggie people I have never encountered. The following two years, I supported my wife Blair Braverman (we got married!), helping to train and travel with our dogs as she qualified for and completed her rookie Iditarod. Now, I'm inspired by her accomplishment and looking forward to my own rookie race.



**Kaci Murringer – Willow, AK**

Kaci Murringer, 29, was born in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. At seven years old she entered her first sled dog race and finished in first place. The love of being on the trail with her team was all it took to get her hooked and two years later she started her kennel. SBC Kennel represents and honors her original three dogs, Sheba (yellow lab), and her two huskies, Cona and Blazz. After graduating from college with a business degree Kaci decided to do one summer in Alaska working with sled dogs in 2015. One summer turned into two but this time Kaci made the move permanent. She returned to Alaska with her black lab Monty to live full time and begin training for the Iditarod. Through working with Gold Rush Dog Tours Kaci met Iditarod musher Matthew Failor and joined his team in 2019. Her current race experience includes a Copper Basin 300, Kobuk 440, and Goose Bay 150 finish. This year Kaci will be making her rookie run to Nome, celebrating her 30th birthday along the way!



### **Deke Naaktgeboren – Fairbanks, AK**

Deke Naaktgeboren, 36, was born and raised in Pella, Iowa. He went to Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado, where he earned dual degrees in Business and Recreation. Before moving to Alaska so he could run Iditarod with his own dogs, Deke lived in Everglades City, Florida, where he was a park ranger in the Everglades National Park. Deke lives off the grid north of Fairbanks, Alaska with his son and 35 Alaskan Huskies. He spends most of his summer in the 40 Mile Country, and works for the BLM. He began mushing in 2008 and has run a number of distance races since then. Last year he had the time of his life running the Yukon Quest and feels ready this year to take on the Iditarod, a dream he has had since he adopted a Siberian Husky, Nautique, who showed him that sled dogs can really fly! Deke is the father of Nolan, 3, and lists his hobbies as “being a dad,” fixing things, and mowing the lawn. He cannot wait to come down Front Street with Princess Jasmine leading the way.



### **Laura Neese, McMillan, MI**

Laura Neese, 23, was raised on a small farm in Newark, Ohio. She and her oldest sister raised Boer goats, and she also participated in 4-H for eight years, training and showing their five family dogs. She says she fell in love with the sport of dog mushing and long distance racing at the age of nine, when her family followed the Iditarod as a home school project. After four years of learning about the sport, she started a small kennel in Ohio and began running shot races in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. She graduated from high school at age 16 and then went on to receive an Associate’s Degree in Veterinary Technology at Penn Foster College in Arizona two years later. In 2014, she moved to McMillan, Michigan, to pursue her dream of long distance racing at Nature’s Kennel in the Upper Peninsula. She says, “I have been blessed with the opportunity to train and race our Nature’s Kennel team throughout North America for the past five years. 1,000 mile races are my favorite. The 2020 Iditarod will be my fourth. In addition to my rookie Iditarod in 2017, I have completed two Yukon Quests and finished third in 2018. My team and I are looking forward to returning to the Iditarod this year.” Laura lists her hobbies as Maple Syrup, fishing and playing in the woods.

Total prize money: \$1,049



### **Tim Pappas, Big Lake, AK**

Born and raised on the East Coast, Tim, 30, moved to Wyoming in his late teens where he spent ten seasons guiding hunters and trips in the wilderness. During this time he also attended the University of Wyoming, worked as a ski patroller, and apprenticed under Iditarod finisher Billy Snodgrass. Tim then moved to Alaska where he spent six seasons in the southeastern part of the state mushing and



managing dog camps and spent his winters in Big Lake, apprenticing under four time champion Martin Buser.

When Tim isn't training for the Iditarod or giving Alaska's best dog tours at Buser's Happy Trails Kennels, he can be found traveling Alaska, hunting, fishing, berry picking, ripping the banjo, taking jaunts on mountain ridges, canoeing and swimming in lakes—and in the evenings he can be found sipping fine rye whiskey on the rocks.

He lives and works at Happy Trails and is racing a team from the kennel this year.

Total prize money: \$1,049



**Aaron Peck - Bezanson, AB, CANADA**

**Website:** [www.elevationdogs.com](http://www.elevationdogs.com)

Aaron Peck, 40, was born in Cobourg, Ontario. He received his diploma in Agriculture from the University of Guelph in 2002. He began mushing in 1992 and says "I was hooked at the age of 13 when I saw on ABC Wide World of Sports Susan Butcher winning the Iditarod." Aaron and his wife, Eva, and their two children, Clancy, 5, and Sonny, 3, live in Ranch Country outside of Grande Prairie, Alberta. Together they operate Elevation Dogs Boarding Kennel and Elevation Sled Dogs Touring and Racing Kennel. As a family the Pecks embrace the doggy lifestyle and together they work hard every day to share their passion with their community and abroad. Elevation Sled Dogs will be operating sled dog tours in Lake Louise, Alberta, together with Kingmik Dog Sled Tours in the 2019/2020 season as well as fielding a very competitive team for the 2020 Iditarod. Aaron lists his hobbies as running, swimming and ranching.

Total prize money: \$5,562.88



**Nicolas Petit (Pe' ti) - Girdwood, AK**

**Website:** [www.TeamPetit.com](http://www.TeamPetit.com)

Nicolas Petit, 38, grew up in Normandy and always loved animals. He moved to New Mexico in 1992, where he finished high school and then to Alaska because he "loved snow." He adopted "Ugly", a gorgeous Alaskan Mutt, put a harness on him and the adventure began. He traveled all over the state and began racing while working for Jim Lanier. "In 2011, Jim's hip gave him trouble, so I took his wonderful white dogs to Nome." He also lived in Girdwood, Alaska, and worked for Dario Daniels, whose training techniques live on through Nic's calm mushing demeanor. During the last six years, he has run dogs from Raymie Redington and bred a female to his favorite Redington dogs and created a magnificent group of athletes that have proven that they have what it takes to win the Iditarod and any other

race out there. He won the Fastest Time from Safety to Nome award in 2017 and again in 2018 and was the second musher to finish the race in 2018. Nic lists his hobbies as snow, dogs and travel!

Total prize money: \$204,224.00

### Awards

2011 .....	Jerry Austin Memorial Rookie of the Year
2012 .....	Horizon Lines Most Improved Musher
2013 .....	Horizon Lines Most Improved Musher
2015 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2016 .....	Nome Kennel Club's Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2017.....	Nome Kennel Club's Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2018.....	The Lakefront First Musher to the Yukon Award
2018.....	Bristol Bay Native Corporation Fish First Award
2018.....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2019.....	The Lakefront First Musher to the Yukon Award
2019.....	Gold Coast
2019.....	Spirit of Iditarod



**Michelle Phillips – Tagish, YT, Canada**

**Website:** [www.tagishlakekennel.com](http://www.tagishlakekennel.com)

Michelle Phillips, 51, was born and raised in Whitehorse, YT. “After traveling the world for 10 years, I decided to settle down in a small cabin in the Yukon Bush. After living for a few years in the Southern Lakes region of the Yukon, I met my partner, Ed Hopkins. Ed introduced the sport of dog mushing to me and I immediately fell in love with the sport. Growing up in a very athletic family and training for many years as a figure skater, I enjoyed challenging myself and working with such an elite and talented group of athletes. After running my first Yukon Quest, I was hooked on long distance mushing and I’ve been doing it since. I love traveling with my team of dogs and spending time with my best friends.” She and Ed own and operate Tagish Lake Kennel. Michelle has run seven Yukon Quest races (best finish 4th and Vet’s Choice award in 2009.) For the past 17 years, when not racing professionally, Ed and Michelle, with their son Keegan, 19, (and up to 90 Alaskan huskies) have provided visitors with sled dog adventures of 30 minutes to seven days throughout the year. Michelle lists her hobbies s trail running and herbs.





**Mille Porsild – Denmark**

**Website:** <http://Facebook.com/RunningSleddogs>

Mille started mushing in 1992, running a team of Polar Husky sled dogs for polar explorer, Will Steger, on three month long dog sled expedition in Canada. She was hooked. Ever since, Mille has lived with her sled dogs to experience the amazing people and places in the magical North, while finding ways to be sharing the adventures with people around the world. She has slept more than 1000 nights in a tent on the dogsled expeditions and feels home anywhere in the circumpolar Arctic. Mille has done 15 long-haul expeditions with her freight dogs. Each expedition lasted two to six months and was as long as 3000 miles, in Greenland, Russia, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Alaska and crisscrossing Canada. In 2011 she entered her first sled dog race, running the 800 mile Nadezhda Hope race in Chukotka, Russia. Mille then moved to Alaska with Team Racing Beringia and her then partner, Joar Leifseth Ulsom. Together they trained and raced with great success that culminated in 2018 with his Iditarod championship.

Mille was born and grew up in Denmark until she came to the United States and did her first dogsled expedition at 18 years old. Her great grandfather founded the world's first Arctic research station, in Greenland. His sons traveled Arctic North America by dog team and canoe in the 1920's — the "normal" son being Mille's grand who left Greenland to live back in Denmark. Growing up, Mille would sit in her grandfather's basement surrounded by drawings, mystical carvings and seal skin clothing, listening to his adventures across the ice with his sled dogs. That's when Mille decided she wanted to grow up to be dog musher and live her life with sled dogs. Mille will be racing the 2020 Iditarod for Team Racing Beringia.



**Damon Ramaker – Fountain, MI**

Damon Ramaker is the owner of the Deep Root Kennel hailing from the bluff country of southeastern Minnesota where a team of dogs running down the road is met with looks of bewilderment and curiosity. He lives near Wykoff with his wife, 3 children and many dogs in a yurt they built in 2016 near Wykoff. For the past 7 years, Damon has worked as an emergency department nurse at St Mary's Hospital-Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Prior to that, he worked at Fairview Medical Center in Minneapolis. Damon and his family founded a Deep Root CAUSE in 2018, which focuses on helping others discover their strengths and potential through inspiration, education, empowerment and experiences. While dogs have always been part of Damon's life, his interest in dog powered sports started in skijoring with his rescue and hunting dogs in 2007. Damon spent the last 5 years learning and working with Iditarod veteran Cindy Gallea from whom he caught the mushing bug. On their first encounter, she warned him that once you step on the runners of a sled, there is no turning back. She advised him to consult his wife before doing so, to which she offered her full support, most days. He greatly looks forward to the challenges and triumphs to come as he travels across the amazing state of Alaska with a team of his buddies.



**Robert Redington - Willow, AK**

Robert Redington, 30, was born and raised in the Knik area outside Wasilla. He is the youngest of Joe Redington, Sr.'s grandsons running the 2019 Iditarod. He started mushing eight years ago and says he had a feeling he would run the Iditarod since he was a kid. In the summers, he conducts tours at Alaska Excursions Dog Sled Discovery and Musher's Camp in the Juneau area, and he trains sled dogs every day in the winter.

Total prize money: \$10,403.00



**Ryan Redington - Wasilla, AK**

**Website:** [www.redingtonmushing.com](http://www.redingtonmushing.com)

Ryan Redington, 37, was born and raised in Knik, Alaska, and he returns there every year to train for and race the Iditarod. Ryan and his family, wife Erin and children Eve, 5, and TJ, 3, now make their home in Skagway, Alaska. Ryan has been running dogs since he could reach the handle bars. His grandfather, Joe Redington Sr., founded the Iditarod. Dog mushing is a family tradition. Ryan, his father Raymie, and brothers, Ray and Robert, have all competed in the race. Ryan has run many races across Alaska, including the 2019 Kobuk 440 which he won, and the lower 48 states. He enjoys running the Iditarod for the challenge it provides. Ryan also has a daughter, Raynee 18, who lives in North Carolina. Ryan says he enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with family.

Total prize money: \$42,235.00

**Awards**

2017.....Most Improved Musher



**Jessie Royer - Fairbanks, AK**

**Website:** [www.huskypower.com/jessie](http://www.huskypower.com/jessie)

Jessie Royer, 43, was born in Idaho. She grew up on a cattle ranch in Montana where she lived for 21 years. She worked on ranches as a horse wrangler and horse teamster. She says she got her first sled dogs when she was 15. She started learning about dogs from Doug Swingley whom she worked with for a couple of years. She had dogs in Montana seven years before moving to Alaska in the spring on 1998. She won Montana's Race to the Sky when she was only 17, and she was the winner of the invitational La Grande Odyssée in France in 2005. She says her hobbies are horses, hunting and mounted shooting.

Total prize money: \$430,792.11

## Awards

2001 .....	Nome Kennel Club's Fastest Time Safety to Nome
2001 .....	Rookie of the Year
2009 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness Award – Lead Dog
2014 .....	Nome Kennel Club's Fastest Time Safety to Nome
2017.....	Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award
2018.....	Most Inspirational Musher Award



**Brent Sass – Eureka, AK**

**Website:** [www.wildandfreealaska.com](http://www.wildandfreealaska.com)

Brent was born and raised in Minnesota but moved to Alaska over 20 years ago. After falling in love with the trails of Eureka, AK, Brent took over a homestead established in the 70s and this is where he now lives with his dogs since 2012. Brent is a two time Yukon Quest 1000mi Champion (2015 and 2019, both times also rewarded with the Vet's Choice award for his dog care). He's excited to be back on the Iditarod trail in 2020. Mushing is a way of life for Brent – it gives him a chance to get out and explore Alaska, but most importantly it is all about the dogs and the relationship he has with each and every one of them. Getting to know each dog's behavior and personality is what makes dog mushing such an adventure. Every day is exciting, whether it is traveling on a new trail or learning something new about the dogs. Living his dream and setting and accomplishing goals is what drives Brent every day, along with all of his incredible fan support.

Total prize money: \$40,275.00



**Mitch Seavey - Seward, AK**

**Website:** [www.ididaride.com](http://www.ididaride.com)

Mitch Seavey, 60, was born in Minnesota and moved with his family to Alaska in 1963. He graduated from high school in Seward and wrestled for Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. He began mushing in 1963. Mitch's dad, Dan, ran the Iditarod in 1973, so he decided he wanted to run the Iditarod someday. After running eleven Iditarods, Mitch won the race in 2004. In 2008, Mitch was the winner of the All Alaska Sweepstakes, held that year as a commemoration of the original All Alaska Sweepstakes, and then he won the Iditarod again in 2013 and 2017. He says, "Running the Iditarod is a family tradition." Mitch and Janine are the parents of four boys, three of whom have run the Jr. Iditarod and the Iditarod, Danny, Tyrell and Dallas. The youngest, Conway, is 21 and won the Jr. Iditarod in 2012 & 2014. Mitch says his hobbies are family, hunting and writing.

Total prize money: \$836,534.33

## Awards

2004 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness
2004 .....	Wells Fargo Winner's Purse
2013 .....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
2013 .....	Wells Fargo Winner's Purse
2013 .....	City of Nome Lolly Medley Memorial Golden Harness
2013 .....	Wells Fargo Gold Coast
2015 .....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska
2016 .....	Bristol Bay Native Corporation Fish First Award
2017.....	Bristol Bay Native Corporation Fish First Award
2017 .....	...Lolly Medley Golden Harness
2017.....	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Official Truck
2018.....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska Award



**Lev Shvarts - Willow, Alaska**

**Website:** [www.teamollie.com](http://www.teamollie.com)

Lev Shvarts, 40, says he was born in a country in the Ukraine in the Soviet Union and is now a proud US citizen. He grew up in the Boston area, got a BS in Electrical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. He went back to work in Massachusetts, but while sitting in an air conditioned office, he decided to leave a perfectly good career in engineering to pursue dog mushing. He moved to Willow, Alaska in 2011. "I am now a self-employed contractor and operate a short-run manufacturing and light fabrication / machine shop. He is married to Melissa. His hobbies include tinkering, tools, and tattoos.

Total prize money: \$2,098.00



**Ramey Smyth - Willow, AK**

**Website:** [www.smythtracingteam.com](http://www.smythtracingteam.com)

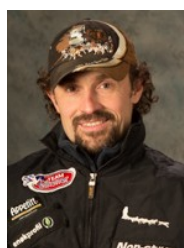
Ramey Smyth, 44, was born and raised in Alaska. He is the son of Iditarod mushers Bud Smyth, who raced in the first Iditarod and the late Lolly Medley who raced in the second Iditarod. Ramey has lived all over the state but says he moved to Willow to put down roots and build a home for his family. Ramey has raced the Iditarod 27 times placing in the top 10 eleven times. He won the Kuskokwim 300 in 1995 and has raced in, and won, many other events throughout the state. He began mushing "as soon as I could walk" and won the Jr. Iditarod twice before his first Iditarod in 1994. He is a full time log home builder and owns and operates Smyth Logwork and Construction in Willow. He says, "I am entering the Iditarod because I love working with sled dogs. Musing is a

great way to connect to my historical Alaska roots and to challenge myself. My family loves sled dogs and this gives us an opportunity to work together on a common goal. Ramey operates Smyth Racing Team-Homestretch Kennel, which is 70 dogs strong, with his wife Becca Moore and their children, daughter Ava 13 years old, son Banyan 9 years and Coral,3. Ramey says his hobbies are “family, hunting and reading.

Total prize money: \$555,011.33

#### Awards

1995 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
1997 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2001 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2002 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2003 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2004 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2008 .....	Golden Harness
2009 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome
2013 .....	Nome Kennel Club Fastest Time from Safety to Nome



**Thomas Waerner – Torpa, Norway**

**Website:** <http://berserkennel.com>

Thomas Waerner, 46, was born in England and raised in Norway. He moved to a mountain in Torpa, Synnfjell, in 1991 because it was a perfect place for mushing. He started mushing with sled dogs in 1984. He was a dog handler for Iditarod musher Roger Legaard in 1990 as well as Charlie Champagne and Roxy Wright in 1991. Thomas started sprint racing in Europe and Alaska. He started long-distance racing in 2003 and ran the Iditarod in 2015, finishing in 17th place and garnering rookie of the year honors. Thomas shared that his dogs are big and strong and a lot of attitude. His team won both the Femund and Finnmark races this last season.

Thomas’s wife Guro, is a veterinarian who plays a big role in maintaining their kennel’s quality of life. Thomas and Guro have a big family that includes Herman 14, William 9, Alba 8, Alvar 6, Frida 3. Thomas runs an electrical company with 14 employees. When he’s not working or on the trails with his dogs, he says he enjoys “old muscle cars – especially Mustangs.”

Total prize money: \$16,900

#### Awards

2015 .....	Rookie of the Year
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**Monica Zappa – Kasilof, AK**

**Website:** <http://teamzappa.com>

Monica Zappa, 36 was born and raised in Wisconsin, where she lived until she went to graduate school in Oklahoma. After finishing grad school in 2010, Monica moved to Alaska to try mushing and fishing. Monica has participated in the Iditarod 2014-2018. Last year she was involved with an independent trip with dogs, snow machines and her partner Tim. She is excited to join Blue Steel and the team once again for the journey to Nome. She has been involved in selling real estate, commercial fishing, salmon activism and just absorbing the daily lessons.

Monica thanks so many close friends of the kennel that have continued to make the Iditarod possible for her team.

Total prize money: \$4,196.00



**Aliy Zirkle - Two Rivers, AK**

**Website:** [www.SPKDogLog.com](http://www.SPKDogLog.com)

Aliy Zirkle, 50, was born in New Hampshire and was raised in New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, St. Louis and Pennsylvania. She graduated with a degree in biology from the University of Pennsylvania. When she was in her early 20's, she moved to a small Alaskan town north of the Arctic Circle. During her first winter, she adopted six huskies, built a dog sled and explored the surrounding wilderness with her dog team. The challenges of this first winter taught her many of the skills that she uses today. This solitary, independent, wilderness lifestyle that Aliy fell in love 26 years ago has now ironically, thrown her into the media spotlight. While she has had many successes in her dog mushing career, she has also had notable disappointments. Aliy finished 2nd place in the Iditarod three times in a row. She is the first, and only, woman to win the Yukon Quest (a 1,000 mile remote mushing adventure race.) Aliy and her husband, Allen Moore, an Iditarod veteran and Yukon Quest winner, own and operate SP Kennel – a premier sled dog kennel in Two Rivers, Alaska. They strive to be the best they can through complete dedication to their canine teammates and to the sport. They are also committed to the Alaskan community that has given them unwavering support and incredible encouragement through the years. Aliy says, "I am a dog lover and a competitor. I enjoy all the aspects of my dog mushing lifestyle—although many are quite challenging. The best part of the Iditarod is being out on the race for 9 to 11 days with no one to worry about but yourself, your dogs and your progression to Nome. The Alaskan Husky continues to amaze me – even after all these years." Allen and Aliy's newest adventure is spending time aboard our live aboard boat, Mickey, in Prince William Sound.

Total prize money: \$461,442.11

### **Awards**

2005 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2011 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2012 .....	PenAir Spirit of Alaska
2012 .....	Wells Fargo Gold Coast
2014 .....	Bristol Bay Native Corporation First Fish
2014 .....	Wells Fargo Gold Coast
2016 .....	Alaska Airlines Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian
2018 .....	Leonahard Seppala Humanitarian Award
2019 .....	GCI Dorothy G. Page Halfway Award
2019 .....	Leonahard Seppala Humanitarian Award



- **Gee** - Command for right turn
- **Haw** - Command for left turn
- **Come Gee! Come Haw!** - Commands for 180-degree turns in either direction
- **Line Out!** - Command to lead canine to pull the team out straight from the sled. Used mostly while hooking canines into team or unhooking them
- **Mush! Hike! All Right! Let's Go!** - Commands to start the team
- **Whoa!** - Command used to half the team, accompanied by heavy pressure on the brake

**NOTE:** Teams are directed through spoken orders. The leader of the team must understand all that is said and guide the others according. An intelligent leader is an absolute necessity. At times it appears that there is E.S.P. between musher and the leader.

#### Mushing Vocabulary:

- **Alaskan Husky** - "Breed" generally used as sled dog. Not recognized by the American Kennel Club.
- **Booties** - Type of sock made to protect canines' feet from small cuts and sores. They are usually made out of a light weight pack cloth.
- **Dog in Basket** - Tired or injured canine carried in sled.
- **Double Lead** - Two canines that lead the team side by side.
- **Indian Dog** - An Alaskan Husky from an Indian village.
- **Lead Dog or Leader** - Dog(s) who run in front of others and are generally must be both intelligent and fast.
- **Swing Dog/Dogs** - Canines that run directly behind the leader and help "swing" the team in the turns or curves.
- **Malamute** - A registered breed, larger than most sled dogs Term often used by old timers for any sled dog Breed not often used in mushing teams.
- **Neck Line** - A line that connects a dog's collar to the tow line and between the two collars of a double lead
- **Pedaling** - Pushing the sled with one foot while the other remains on the runner
- **Rigging** - Collection of lines to which canines are attached and includes towline, tug lines and necklines.
- **Runners** - Two bottom pieces of the sled that come in contact with the snow and extend back to the basket for the driver to stand on. Runners are usually wood, covered with plastic or Teflon, which is usually replaced at least once during the Race.
- **Slats** - Thin strips of wood that make up the bottom of a wooden sled basket.
- **Snow Hook or Ice Hook** - A heavy piece of metal attached to sled by line and embedded in the snow in order to hold the team for short periods of time.
- **Snub Line** - Rope attached to the sled used to tie the sled to a tree or other object.
- **Stove Up** - Injured generally temporarily and applies to both mushers and canines.
- **Tether Line** - A long chain with shorter pieces of chain extending from it and used to stake out a team when stakes aren't available.