



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2025

Excitement Builds as 22 Mushers Enter the 2026 Iditarod on Opening Day

Wasilla, Alaska – As of 2:30 p.m. today, 22 mushers have officially entered the 2026 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, which will kick off its 54th running in Anchorage on Saturday, March 7, 2026. The ceremonial start will be followed by the official restart in Willow the next day.

The field for the 2026 race is already shaping up to be one of the most competitive in recent memory, with a strong roster of returning champions, seasoned veterans, and promising newcomers. Among the early entrants are many of the Top 10 finishers from the 2025 Iditarod, including reigning champion Jessie Holmes, runner-up Matt Hall, third-place finisher Paige Drobny, fifth-place Bailey Vitello, sixth-place Travis Beals, eighth-place Ryan Redington, ninth-place Mille Porsild, and tenth-place Riley Dyche.

Also returning to the trail are veteran mushers such as Jessie Royer, Nicolas Petit, Chad Stoddard, Keaton Loeberich, Jason Mackey, Lauro Eklund, Thomas Waerner, Richie Beattie, Gabe Dunham, and Rohn Buser. The current list includes 18 race veterans (three previous champions: Jessie Holmes, Ryan Redington and Thomas Waerner) and four rookies, with 17 men and five women signed up so far. All entries for the 2026 Iditarod are subject to review by the Qualifying Review Board within 30 days of their entry.

To view the full list of 2026 entrants, please [click here](#). Those who were unable to sign up today still have the option to register, with the deadline to enter at the standard entry fee is Friday, November 28, 2025—after which the fee will increase. In a generous show of support, Iditarod's first-ever [Expedition Musher](#), Kjell Inge Røkke, will cover 50% of the entry fee for every musher who signs up before November 28, 2025.

Today's sign-up picnic also featured the traditional free-entry drawing. The lucky recipients were Matt Hall and Riley Dyche. Two additional mushers received complimentary entries based on outstanding achievements in the 2025 race: Calvin Daugherty, who earned the Hilcorp Alaska Most Inspirational Musher Award, and Paige Drobny, recipient of the Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award, presented by the Pike Dog Wellness First Initiative.

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In addition, the Iditarod has launched its summer raffle, featuring a grand prize of \$100,050, two prizes of \$10,000, and twenty-seven \$1,000 prizes. The drawing will take place at the Iditarod booth on the Green Trail at the Alaska State Fair at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 1, 2025. Winners need not be present to claim their prizes.

Alaska residents may purchase tickets online at iditarod.com/gamesofchance. Out-of-state residents can purchase by phone at 1-907-841-4578.

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About the Iditarod

The Iditarod Trail Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve the rich tradition of the Alaska sled dog and the Iditarod Trail. The organization is charged with coordinating the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, an annual long-distance sled dog race stretching from Anchorage to Nome for nearly a 1,000-mile journey through Alaska over the roughest, most breathtaking terrain in the world. For more information, visit: www.iditarod.com.

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