

International Sled Dog Racing Association

DRYLAND RACE RULES

Amended, June 2025

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I. ENTRY RULES

A) ELIGIBILITY

1. ENTRIES

- a. An entry for a race shall be submitted prior to the start of the race subject to entry deadlines as determined by the race-giving organization
- b. The race-giving organization may reject any entry for just cause.
- c. The race-giving organization shall prohibit any person convicted of animal abuse or neglect at a misdemeanor or greater level from participating in ISDRA sanctioned races.

2. DRIVERS

- a. The driver starting a team in the first heat of a race shall drive that team throughout the race, except that
- b. A change in driver can only be made as the result of illness or injury to the authorized entrant and must have the approval of the Race Marshal.
- c. Any driver disqualified in any heat of the race is not eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
- d. Drivers disqualified from a heat for animal abuse shall not be eligible for further participation in any sanctioned class that is part of that event.

3. DOGS

- a. The Race Marshal may disallow entry of any team or dog for just cause.
- b. Any team or dog coming to the starting line, which in the opinion of the Race Marshal, is unfit or incapable of safely completing the trail shall be disqualified.
- c. Any team or dog not starting the first heat of the race shall not be eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
- d. Any team or dog disqualified in any heat of the race shall not be eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.

4. DISEASE

- a. No dog or equipment shall be brought from a kennel where rabies, distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, or any other contagious disease exists.
- b. If the Race Veterinarian diagnoses any dog present in the race area to have a contagious disease, that team shall be disqualified and shall immediately leave the race area.

5. IDENTIFICATION

- a. In races of more than one heat, each dog shall be marked for identification prior to the start of the first heat of the race.
- b. Dogs dropped from teams after the first heat of the race with more than two (2) heats, shall be marked a second time to indicate their disqualification from the team.

6. SIZE OF TEAM

- a. A Limited Eight-Dog Team shall consist of not more than eight (8) dogs, and not less than four (4) dogs.
- b. A Limited Six-Dog Class Team shall consist of not more than six (6) dogs, nor less than three (3) dogs.
- c. A Limited Four-Dog Class Team shall consist of not more than four (4) dogs, and not less than three (3) dogs.
- d. A Limited Two-Dog Class shall consist of not more than two (2) dogs and not less than one (1) dog.
- e. A Limited One-Dog Class shall consist of one (1) dog only.
- f. A Mid-Distance Twelve-Dog Team shall consist of not more than twelve (12) dogs, and not less than ten (10) dogs
- g. A Mid-Distance Ten-Dog Team shall consist of not more than ten (10) dogs, and not less than eight (8) dogs.
- h. A Mid-Distance Six-Dog Team shall consist of not more than six (6) dogs, and not less than three (3) dogs.
- i. After the first heat and each ensuing heat, a driver may voluntarily reduce the size of the team, subject to minimums.

7. TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

- a. If, at the discretion of the Race Marshal, the temperature and/or humidity are detrimental to the health of the dogs, classes not yet run shall be canceled for the day.
- b. Due to the number of variables involved, absolute cutoff temperature and humidity levels are difficult to specify. Generally speaking, temperatures ranging from 50 degrees F/ 10 degrees c. to 60 degrees F./ 15 degrees c. or greater, at anytime prior to or during the race, should cause immediate review.

B) MEDICATIONS ADMINISTERED TO DOGS - PROHIBITED DRUGS

1. All stimulants and depressants, analgesics, prescriptive and non-prescriptive anti inflammatory agents including, but not limited to, corticosteroid, anti prostaglandins, and salicylate, Anti-anxiety agents, Anabolic steroids, Diet pills. Any other substance that may affect the performance of the dogs is prohibited. Any State, Federal or Provincial controlled or restricted substance is prohibited.

2. ISDRA will allow a positive test for previously declared parasitocides in the test for prohibited substances in sled dogs. It is incumbent upon the driver/owner to declare all foreign substances used in his/her dogs before testing occurs.

3. DRUG TESTING

- a. If an organization intends to test for drugs, it shall declare so on the entry form. It is recommended that the organization use the ISDRA Drug testing procedures.
- b. Whenever a specimen is requested for testing, the owner or driver shall be present (or his/her representative) and shall declare in writing to the sampling official all medications administered to the dog(s) within 72 hours preceding the start of the event.
- c. If an owner or driver refuses to allow a sample to be collected from a dog, that team shall be disqualified from the event.
- d. If any dog in a team shows a positive test of a prohibited drug, that team is subject to disqualification, the decision to be made following a hearing.

C) EQUIPMENT

1. INSPECTION

- a. Drivers, teams, and equipment shall be available for inspection in the vehicle holding area at least ten (10) minutes before their scheduled time of departure.
- b. A team in harness shall not be required to stand for inspection longer than six (6) minutes before the time of departure.
- c. Inspection shall take place in an area that does not interfere with teams in the start or finish chutes
- d. A team shall be available for inspection after each heat at the request of the Race Marshall.
- e. All equipment is subject to the approval of the Race Marshall.

2. HARNESSSES and LINES

- a. All dogs shall be harnessed in single or double file.
- b. All dogs shall be fastened to the gangline by a neck line and tug line with the exception of the leader(s) who shall be harnessed in the team by a tug line and fastened to each other with a neck line.
- c. A snub line shall be carried on the rig but it shall not be used in any manner other than to tie down and hold the rig.
- d. Canicross lines shall have a shock absorber, be five to nine feet in length when fully extended and attach to the runners hip belt.
- e. Bikejoring and scooter lines shall have a shock absorber and be seven to twelve feet in length when fully extended from the front tire.

3. WHEELED RIGS

- a. The requirement of dog bags is at the discretion of the RGO. If using a dog bag, the rig shall be equipped with a vented dog bag capable of safely restraining and covering a struggling or incapacitated dog. No portion of the dog's body, with particular attention to the legs and feet, shall be in harm's way.
- b. May have three or four wheels but shall be capable of being driven & controlled by a single driver.
- c. Shall have an adequate locking brake system.
- d. Shall be equipped with manual steering mechanism.
- e. Shall not exceed sixty-four inches (64") / one hundred and sixty four centimetres (164cm) overall width.
- f. May be motorized but spark plug wires must be disconnected under the agreement of entry.

4. BICYCLES

- a. A vehicle with two wheels in tandem, handle bars for steering, a seat, and pedals by which it is powered by a single person.
- b. No motorized power shall be allowed.
- b. Shall have an adequate braking system that works independently of the chain.

5. SCOOTERS

- a. A foot operated vehicle consisting of a narrow footboard mounted between two (2) wheels in tandem, with an upright steering handle, attached to the front wheel.
- b. The scooter shall be capable of being operated by a single driver.
- c. Shall have an adequate braking system.

6. SULKIES

- a. Shall have two wheels, shafts, and be able to be driven and controlled by a single driver.
- b. Shall have an adequate locking braking system.
- c. Shall not exceed sixty-four inches (64")/one hundred and sixty four centimeters (164cm) overall width.

7. OTHER EQUIPMENT

- a. An appropriate and adequate helmet is required in all wheeled classes.
- b. A muzzle or any collar that can be hooked as a full choke shall be prohibited.
- c. A racing number for each driver shall be provided by the race-giving organization. The driver shall display this number on his person throughout the race.

D) FINISH TIME DISQUALIFICATION (Optional)

1. A team shall be disqualified from competing in subsequent heats if its total elapsed time exceeds either 1.25 or 1.50 times the average time of the three fastest teams in the same heat of the same class.
2. All entrants shall be notified, prior to entry, if a time qualification factor is to be used, stating which factor and to which classes it shall be applied.

II. START - FINISH RULES

A) DRAWING

1. The starting positions for the first heat of a race shall be determined by a drawing held prior to the race at a time and place designated by the race-giving organization.
2. The owner, driver or designated proxy of each team shall draw their own starting position. In their absence, the starting position shall be drawn by the Race Marshal or his representative.
3. The order of the draw shall not be changed, either by addition or substitution. Late entries shall be added in order of receipt.
4. The drawing may, at the option of the race- giving organization, be modified by seeding in accordance with the formula established by the seeding procedures

B) SINGLE START RACE

1. The first day's starting positions shall be determined by the draw with Number 1 starting first, Number 2 starting second, etc.
2. The second day's starting positions shall be determined by the first day's times, with the fastest team starting first, the second fastest team starting second, etc.
3. In races of more than two heats;
 - a. The total elapsed time of the previous heats shall determine the starting positions with the faster team starting first, the second fastest team starting second, etc.
 - b. Or, at the option of the race-giving organization, the elapsed time of the previous single heat shall determine the starting positions with the fastest team starting first, the second fastest team second, etc.
 - c. If the optional start (b. above) is to apply to the race, entrants shall be notified prior to making entry, stating to which classes it shall apply.

C) GROUP START RACE

1. A group consists of two (2) or more (up to and including all) drivers starting together.
2. The first day's starting positions shall be determined by a random draw. If the starting group consists of two (2) teams then #1 and #2 start first, #3 and #4 start second, etc. If the starting group consists of three (3) teams, #1, #2 and #3 start first, #4, #5 and #6 start second, etc.
3. Starting positions for all subsequent heats of the race shall be determined by option a or b. below. In all cases the finishing list will be divided into groups equal to the number of teams starting together (e.g., 2 teams, 2 lists, 4 teams, 4 lists, etc.) The fastest team in each group will start first, followed by the second fastest team in each group, etc.
 - a. Starting positions may be determined by the elapsed time of the previous heats (one (1) or more combined).
 - b. Starting positions may be determined by the elapsed time of the previous single heat. In races of more than two (2) heats, entrants must be notified prior to making entry that this option will be used (notification must include to which classes it will apply).

D) EQUAL TIMES

1. For all races except those in which the starting group consists of all drivers (mass start), if the total elapsed time of two teams is identical, the order of start for those teams shall be the reverse order in which they started in the preceding heat.
2. Teams with equal times for the entire race shall be awarded (share) the higher finishing position.
3. The purse for the tied place and the next lower places shall be combined and divided equally among those teams tied for that place.

E) STARTING POINT AND TIME

1. The front axle of the rig, bike or scooter shall determine the starting point of the teams in the wheeled classes.

2. The runner shall determine the starting point in canicross.
3. Trail time for all teams shall begin at the originally scheduled time of departure.
4. A team that fails to be in the starting position at its scheduled starting time shall be declared a late starting team.
 - a. A late-starting team shall not be allowed to start until after the last team entered in its class has started, and after the prescribed starting interval.
 - b. A late-starting team shall not interfere with any other team.
 - c. If more than one team is declared late, those teams shall start in their originally scheduled starting order.
 - d. If a team is late at the starting line for its second scheduled time of departure for any one heat, that team shall be disqualified.
5. A team not clearing the starting chute (minimum distance 100 feet / 30 metres for single starts, 100 yards / 100 metres for group starts) prior to the scheduled start of the next team may be disqualified.

F) ASSISTANCE IN THE STARTING CHUTE

1. Unless otherwise specified by the Race Marshall prior to the start of the first heat of the event:
 - a. Any amount or type of assistance is allowed to a team prior to the actual starting time, except in canicross. No assistance is allowed inside the starting chute for canicross, except in a Juniors class canicross race where one handler per team is allowed. Once a team's starting time has commenced, only the chute judge or officials designated to assist may help in the chute.

G) FINISH

1. A team shall have finished the heat when the first dog on the team crosses the finish line.
2. If a loose team crosses the finish line ahead of its driver, that team shall have finished when the driver reaches the finish line.
3. When dual starting chutes are used as a finishing chute a team may return on any trail.

III. TRAIL RULES

A) FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

1. A team and driver shall run the entire course as established by the race-giving organization. The course shall be of a suitable surface avoiding such surface as concrete, black top and sharp rock gravel, except for necessary road crossings
2. If a team leaves the trail, the driver shall return the team to the point at which they left the trail.
3. The trail shall be marked as follows:
 - a. "Right Turn" shall be indicated by a red marker on the right side of the trail.
 - b. "Left Turn" shall be indicated by a red marker on the left side of the trail.
 - c. "Straight Ahead" shall be indicated by blue or green markers
 - d. "Caution" shall be indicated by yellow or orange markers.
 - e. The end of the Starting Chute (minimum length, 100 feet / 30 metres for single starts) shall be indicated by markers on both sides of the trail.
 - f. A marker shall be placed to indicate the start of the 'NO-RIGHT-OF-WAY ZONE' 1/2 mile / 1/2 kilometre from the finish unless trail conditions dictate otherwise. The trail within the 'NO-RIGHT-OF-WAY-ZONE' should be at least 10 (ten) feet / 3 (three) metres wide and aligned so that an overtaking team may pass freely on the run.

B) DRIVING A TEAM

1. A driver may ride the rig, scooter, pedal or run as wished.
2. A driver shall not interfere with a competing team.
3. All dogs starting a heat shall complete the entire course, either hitched in the team or carried on the rig.
4. A dog becoming unfit after departure shall be carried on the rig in a dog bag or dropped with an official stationed along the trail. Assistance provided by anyone else in returning an unfit dog to the race site shall result in the disqualification of the team.
5. Carrying a passenger at any time during the race shall be prohibited unless:
 - a. Called for in the conditions of the race.
 - b. Giving a ride to a driver in an emergency situation.

C) ASSISTANCE ON THE TRAIL

1. All teams may receive similar assistance of any type from officials stationed at designated points along the trail as authorized by the Race Marshall.
2. Drivers running in the same heat may assist each other in any manner authorized by the Race Marshall.
3. Handler and spectator assistance shall be limited to holding the rig, except in the case of a loose team, or a team so unmanageable as to create a clear and present danger to itself other teams or persons.
4. No one shall assist a team by willfully pacing it.

D) LOOSE TEAMS and DOGS

1. All drivers must assume that a loose team or dog is an endangered team or dog.
2. A loose team or dog shall not delay or interfere with another team.
 - a. The driver of the loose team must overtake the loose team by the quickest means available to ensure the safety of the loose team.
 - b. In the event that a driver cannot quickly and safely recover his/her team, the driver must accept assistance, including a ride when available to recover his/her team. Failure to accept available assistance may result in disqualification of the driver of the loose team. The Race Marshal shall determine if a driver is to be disqualified.
 - c. Any person(s) is/are encouraged to stop and hold a loose team.
3. Drivers who receive a ride to recover a team will be assessed a time penalty of 20% of the total elapsed time of the heat in which they received a ride.

E) RIGHT OF WAY

1. When teams are passing on a single trail:
 - a. The team traveling down hill shall have the right-of-way
 - b. On level terrain, the Race Marshall shall determine and announce, prior to the start of the race, whether the in-coming or out-going team has the right-of-way.
2. In the one-half (1/2) mile / three quarter (3/4) km "No-right-of-way finish zone", no team shall have the right of way over a finishing team.

F) PASSING

1. In races where teams have started sequentially, one behind the other at predetermined intervals, passing rules are defined in subsection F.
2. When a team driver intends to pass another team, the passing team driver may demand the right of way when the lead dog(s) comes within fifty (50) feet / fifteen (15) metres of the overtaken team.
3. The overtaken team shall make way for the passing team by steering to one side of the trail, slowing his team and, if demanded by the overtaking team driver, stopping and keeping the team from moving forward.
4. If the passing team becomes tangled or bunched up in the course of the pass, to allow time to untangle and tighten lines, that team's driver may require the overtaken team to remain stopped for up to one (1) minute in Limited Classes involving six (6) or more dogs, one-half (1/2) minute in all other classes.

5. Once a team has been passed, that team shall not re-pass so long as the driver in front is making an effort to keep his team moving forward until
 - a. In Limited Classes involving six (6) or more dogs, after no less than two (2) minutes or one half (1/2) mile / one and eight tenths (0.8) kilometres.
 - b. In Limited Classes involving fewer than six (6) after no less than one (1) minutes or one-quarter(1/4) mile / four tenths (0.4) kilometre
 - c. At any lesser interval when both drivers are in agreement.

EXCEPTION:

After a pass has been completed, a team that has been passed need not hold his/her team while the other driver:

- i. repairs gear or
 - ii. unhooks and transfers a dog or dogs from one position in the team to another position in the team or
 - iii. goes off the race trail before the above mentioned distance or time interval has elapsed. Loading a dog in the rig or dropping a dog with an official constitutes changing a dog's position in the team.
6. A driver coming upon two or more teams stopped together, may pass all such teams. The stopped team drivers shall make every effort to clear the trail for the moving team.
 7. Teams following each other shall maintain an interval of not less than one (1) team length, except when passing or in the "No-right-of way zone".
 8. When a team is overtaken in the "No-right-of-way zone", that team does not have to stop and yield the trail.
 9. No driver shall interfere with a competing team.

G) GROUP START RACES - PASSING

1. In group start races passes occurring between teams from different starting groups are also governed by rules as defined in Section III, subsection F. Passes occurring between teams within the same starting group (two or more, up to and including all teams starting together) are governed by rules defined in subsection G.
2. When the leader of an overtaking team is within fifty (50) feet of the overtaken team, the passing musher may request to be allowed to pass.
3. The driver of the overtaken team must allow an unrestricted pass. He or she must not obstruct the pass by using a whip, voice, excessive pedaling, or obstructing with the rig. Failure to facilitate an efficient pass will be grounds for a protest and disqualification.
4. In the event of a tangle between teams, the overtaking team will have the right-of-way, once the teams are untangled. In the event that an overtaking team becomes internally tangled, the overtaken team will not be required to stay behind the tangled team.
5. An overtaken team must allow the overtaking team one minute or one quarter-mile before attempting to re-pass. (Times and distances here are recommendations. If the RGO decides to use different criteria, they should be announced before the race.)
6. No driver shall interfere with a competing team.

IV. CONDUCT

A) RESPONSIBILITY and SPORTSMANSHIP

1. All drivers shall be responsible for the conduct of their dogs, their designated handler, and themselves whenever in the race area or on the trail.
2. Common sense and good sportsmanship shall prevail. If the Race Marshal determines that driver, handler or team conduct at any time in the race area or on the trail is detrimental to the sport/race, that team shall be disqualified.

B) ABUSE OF DOGS

1. Abuse of a dog, with or without an implement. shall be prohibited. If the Race Marshal determines that any dog has been abused, that team and driver shall be disqualified.
2. Except where prohibited by the race-giving organization, a whip may be used to signal by snapping while the driver is driving the team.
 - a. The whip shall not be used to discipline a dog except when required to breakup a dog fight so unmanageable that it cannot be stopped by any other means without creating a threat to the safety of the driver, team dogs and other persons. Such an exception shall be allowed even if the race-giving organization chooses to exercise option I. Entry Rules, C. 5. d., limiting the use of signal whips on any or all portions of the trail.

V. RULES VIOLATIONS

A) REPORTS BY RACE OFFICIAL

1. Race officials shall report overt rule violations to the Race Marshal verbally, in person or by radio, immediately or directly following the heat in which the violation occurred.
2. The Race Marshal shall act, at his discretion, on any overt violations witnessed and reported by race officials.

B) REPORTS BY RACE CONTESTANTS

1. Drivers wishing to report an alleged violation of the rules by another contestant, shall notify the Race Marshal immediately following the heat in which the incident occurred. Notification may be verbal.
2. All verbal driver reports shall be followed with a written report, given to the Race Marshal within one (1) hour of the completion of the heat in which the alleged violation occurred.

C) PROTESTS and HEARINGS

1. Any driver implicated in a report of an alleged violation of the rules may request a hearing before the Race Marshal.
2. Said hearing shall be granted by the Race Marshal.

D) DISCIPLINARY ACTION

1. For violation of any ISDRA Race Rule, the Race Marshal shall either issue a verbal warning to the driver, or disqualify the driver and team from the race.
 - a. No other disciplinary action shall be imposed
 - b. Decisions shall be announced as promptly as practical but no later than two (2) hours prior to the start of any ensuing heat(s).
 - c. Any disciplinary action following the final heat of the race shall be acted upon prior to the awards ceremony.
 - d. In the case of drug testing, the above time schedule does not apply to allow for laboratory findings and hearings, should the latter become necessary.
2. In dual start races, in the event of a team starting before the designated start, the team should stop and allow the other team to pass before proceeding or be subject to a time penalty assessed by the Race Marshal or Chief Judge, of not less than five (5) minutes. Intentional early starting shall be grounds for disqualification.