

North Star Sled Dog Club Race Rules

Race Rules

I. Pre-Race Regulations

1. Eligibility of Dogs and Drivers

- 1.1. All North Star Sled Dog Club members in good standing are eligible to earn NSSDC points by participating in races which are part of the North Star Circuit. Family members are eligible for points only if a “family” membership has been paid and all family members are listed as members with first and last names on the NSSDC membership roster.
- 1.2. The race sponsors may reject any entries for just cause.
- 1.3. A driver must exhibit sportsmanlike conduct in the staging area, the chutes, on the trail at all times during the race event (as dictated by common sense, covered by the race rules and/or as ascertained by the judges).
- 1.4. Drivers are also responsible for the conduct of their dogs in the staging area, the chutes and on the trail.
- 1.5. The number of dogs in a team shall be:
 - 1.5.1. Unlimited (Open) Class - Not less than 8 the first day nor less than 6 the second day;
 - 1.5.2. 10 Dog Class - Not less than 6 and a maximum of 10;
 - 1.5.3. 8 Dog Class - Not less than 5 and a maximum of 8;
 - 1.5.4. 6 Dog Class- Not less than 4 and a maximum of 6;
 - 1.5.5. 4 Dog - Not less than 3 and a maximum of 4;
 - 1.5.6. 3 Dog Class - Not less than 2 and a maximum of 3;
 - 1.5.7. Skijoring - Not less than 1 and a maximum of 2.
 - 1.5.8. All Sport (Trophy, Rec) and Youth classes shall meet the same requirements.
- 1.6. Dogs, equipment or clothing that has been in contact with distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvo or kennel cough should not be brought to the race.
- 1.7. The Chief Judge may reduce the size of a team if s/he believes it to be larger than the driver can control safely, or if a dog is considered to be a “fighter” and a threat to other teams.
- 1.8. Any team or dog coming into the holding chutes which, in the opinion of the Chief Judge, the Chute Judge and/or a Race Veterinarian, is unfit or incapable of completing the race will be disqualified at the discretion of the Chief Judge.
- 1.9. Age Requirements
 - 1.9.1. Minimum Age Requirements
 - 1.9.1.1. 4 Dog Classes: age 12 years and up
 - 1.9.1.2. 6 Dog Classes: age 14 years and up
 - 1.9.1.3. 8, 10/Unlimited Classes: age 16 years and up (16- and 17-year old drivers in the 10/Unlimited classes are also required to supply race officials with a minimum of three signed endorsements from 10 Dog/Unlimited drivers attesting to the proposed driver’s competence to compete safely in that class.)
 - 1.9.2. Youth Classes
 - 1.9.2.1. Youth classes are open to all entrants aged 16 and under who have competed in less than two Pro Class events. After competing as a Pro Class contestant, a driver is no longer eligible to compete in a Junior Class event, regardless of age.
- 1.10. Dogs will be marked for identification in a race having more than one heat or race day.
- 1.11. Dogs that are marked the first day of the race are the only dogs that may be used in the race, including all heats or days of the race.
- 1.12. Any team or dog not starting the first day of the race will not be eligible to race during subsequent heats days of the race.
- 1.13. A driver starting with a team must complete the first day of the race with that team. If the driver is ill or injured and cannot drive the next day, another driver may be substituted if the Chief Judge approves the substitution. A driver competing in the majority of heats shall be granted any awards or points. In the case where drivers compete in an equal number of heats, the driver competing in the first day’s heat shall be granted the awards or points.
- 1.14. Any team or dog disqualified on any race day may not compete in the remaining heats or days of that race.
- 1.15. After the first day of the race, a driver may drop any dog(s) long as the minimum number of dogs specified in section 1.5 above is maintained on the following race heats or days.

2. Trail Requirements
 - 2.1. The race trail shall be laid out and marked clearly with either markers (stakes, pie plates, trees/branches, etc.), a berm, or colored dye or other appropriate materials.
 - 2.2. The markers should be large enough to be seen easily by drivers. The markers can be lettered with the class letter and may have arrows on them indicating turns.
 - 2.3. The “no-right-of-way” portion (last 1/2 mile) of the finishing trail should be marked clearly.
 - 2.4. If dual starts are used, a barrier, such as snowbanks or snow fences, should be used to separate the teams for a minimum of 100 yards.
 - 2.5. If dual starts are used, there should be no right angle turns on the first one-half mile of trail.
3. Equipment
 - 3.1. Inspection of Equipment
 - 3.1.1. Driver, team and equipment will be available for inspection and/or marking of dogs in the designated holding chute at the team’s scheduled chute time.
 - 3.1.2. A dog or team will be available for inspection at the finish of each race heat if so requested by the judges.
 - 3.2. Sled Requirements (all sled classes)
 - 3.2.1. The sled must be capable of carrying the driver or dog(s).
 - 3.2.2. The sled must be equipped with a snow hook, a suitable brake and a brush bow.
 - 3.2.3. A ventilated dog bag capable of fully enclosing a dog is required in all classes. Ventilation is not required for mid-distance teams.
 - 3.3. Skijoring Equipment (all skijoring classes)
 - 3.3.1. Skijoring teams must be attached by a harness and a tow line attached to the skijorer’s belt in a safe and secure manner, leaving the skijorer’s hands free of the line.
 - 3.3.2. The line length will be a minimum of 7 feet and a maximum of 12 feet as measured from the skier’s belt buckle to the snap on the line of the dog’s harness.
 - 3.3.3. All dogs must be secured to the gangline by a neckline. The leaders must be secured to one another by a neckline. No fanlines will be allowed.
 - 3.3.4. The minimum width of the skijoring belt across the back will be 3 inches.
 - 3.3.5. In the interest of safety, there must be a quick release device within arm’s length of the skijorer.
 - 3.4. Mid-Distance Mandatory Equipment (all classes)
 - 3.4.1. Drivers will have at all times: knife or cable cutter capable of cutting rope/cable gangline, a first aid kit, sleeping bag, and dog booties (one set per dog on the team).
 - 3.4.2. Mandatory equipment must be ready and available for inspection no later than 30 minutes prior to race start. Race Officials can re-inspect at any time prior to race start or after the team finishes.
 - 3.5. A racing numbered bib for each driver will be assigned and/or provided by the North Star Sled Dog Club. The driver will wear the assigned numbered bib on each day of the race during each heat. Failure to wear the assigned numbered bib will result in disqualification. If a driver is substituted on a team, the new driver will wear the numbered bib assigned to that team.
 - 3.6. No use of whips is allowed.
 - 3.7. Chains, steel bars, rocks, snowballs or anything that could injure a dog are prohibited.
 - 3.8. Muzzles and collars that can be hooked as choke collars are prohibited.
 - 3.9. Dogs’ feet may be protected by coverings, such as booties.
 - 3.10. Passengers are prohibited unless they are assisting a driver safely in the recapture a loose team (See 14: Loose Team.). Passengers are allowed if called for by the type of race, i.e., freight races, etc.
4. Medications and Drug Testing
 - 4.1. Drugs deemed harmful to the dog and detrimental to the sport, including stimulants, steroids, depressants, local anesthetics, are prohibited.
 - 4.2. Drugs deemed not harmful to the dog, such as antibiotics, antibacterials and vitamins, are permitted.
 - 4.3. If North Star Sled Dog Club intends to test for drugs at a race, it will be so stated at the mushers’ meeting prior to the first day of the race.
 - 4.4. If a specimen is requested for testing and if any medication has been administered within 3 days (72 hours) prior to the race, the testing officials must be advised by the owner or driver of the tested dog(s).
 - 4.5. The team owners or drivers are required to assist the testing official(s) in obtaining drug test specimens from their team.

II. Starting Rules

5. Drawing of Positions

- 5.1. Starting position and starting time for the first day for each team entered in each class will be assigned by drawing.
- 5.2. The drawing of positions will be held prior to the race at the time and date specified on the entry form.
- 5.3. The drawing will be random.
- 5.4. No team driver, handler, and/or owner will be allowed to attempt to influence the drawing.
- 5.5. No entries will be accepted after the close of the mushers' meeting.
6. Single Start Race
 - 6.1. The first day's starting positions will be determined by the drawing outlined in Section 5 above, with the #1 draw starting first, etc.
 - 6.2. The second day's starting positions will be determined by the first day's times, with the fastest team starting first, second team starting second, etc.
 - 6.3. In races of more than 2 days or heats, the total elapsed time of previous days or heats will determine starting positions, with the fastest team out first, as in section 6.2 above.
7. Dual Start Race
 - 7.1. If dual starts are to be used, this will be specified on the entry form.
 - 7.2. The first day's starting positions will be determined according to the draw as outlined in section 5 above, with #1 and #2 starting together first, #3 and #4 starting together second, etc.
 - 7.3. The second day's starting positions will be determined by the first day's times. The finishing times of the teams will be divided into two equal-sized groups, with the fastest team in the fastest group starting first with the fastest team in the slower group, followed by the second fastest team in each group starting together second, etc.
 - 7.4. In races of more than two days or heats, the total elapsed time of the previous days or heats will determine starting positions, using the same formula described in section 7.2 above.
8. Holding Chutes
 - 8.1. Each team in each class will be assigned a holding chute time.
 - 8.2. The driver of each team is responsible for getting the team into the proper holding chute at the assigned chute time.
 - 8.2.1 Any team missing its assigned chute time will be held to the end of its class and will be started after all teams in that class have been started. (See section 9.4 - 9.5 below.)
 - 8.3. The Chute Judge will check the driver, team and equipment in the holding chute.
 - 8.4. The Marker Judge will mark the dogs, with assistance from the driver, in the holding chute or the designated area announced at the mushers' meeting.
 - 8.5. All dogs must be properly harnessed in the team and all dogs must be fastened with necklines to the gangline except for the lead dog(s), which will be fastened together with a neckline.
9. Starting of Teams
 - 9.1. The Starter will call each team into the starting chute.
 - 9.2. The brush bow of the sled will determine the starting point of the team.
 - 9.3. The tips of the skijorer's skis will determine the starting point for the team.
 - 9.4. The starting time for each team will begin when the team is scheduled to leave the starting line.
 - 9.5. Teams which are late to the holding chute and have been held to the end of the class will be started in respective order at the scheduled interval used in that class after all other teams have started in that class. A penalty of 1.5 times the starting interval for the respective class will be given.
 - 9.6. Each team must clear the starting chute prior to the start of the subsequent team. If the team fails to clear the starting chute or interferes with the start of the subsequent team, it can be disqualified.

III. Trail Rules

10. Driver

- 10.1. A driver may ride, pedal or run as and when wished, but the driver may not run any farther up the sled than the brush bow (i.e., the driver may not pace the team by running alongside any dog in the team).
- 10.2. Abuse of the dogs in any form is strictly prohibited and such action could lead to disqualification.
 - 10.2.1. The snub line may not be used other than for snubbing down or hitching.
 - 10.2.2. No whip or use of whips is allowed.
- 10.3. A driver must not interfere with the progress of other teams.

11. Dogs

- 11.1. All dogs starting a heat must complete it, either harnessed in the team or carried on the sled.
- 11.2. A seriously injured or dead dog must be enclosed in the dog bag. A dead dog must be unloaded under the direction of the Chief Judge.

- 11.3. A dead dog becomes the property of the North Star Sled Dog Club, Inc.
12. Following the Trail
 - 12.1. A team and driver must run the full course as established by the Race Manager and/or the Trail Judge.
 - 12.2. If a team leaves the trail, the driver must return the team to the point at which the team left the trail. The team and driver may then proceed running the trail without penalty.
13. Assistance on the Trail
 - 13.1. If a driver of a team loses the team, the driver must accept assistance and do whatever is possible to regain control of the team. (See section 14.).
 - 13.2. If a driver needs assistance from available trail help, the driver is responsible for telling the trail help what assistance is needed. Trail help will not assist a driver if instructions are not clearly given.
 - 13.3. Verbal and/or physical abuse of trail help is not permitted.
 - 13.4. It is everyone's responsibility to be safe on the trail and take assistance if needed. Anyone is encouraged to offer assistance to a driver seemingly in need unless specifically instructed not to do so by the driver.
14. Loose Teams
 - 14.1. Everyone is encouraged to stop and hold a loose team.
 - 14.2. If a driver of a team loses the team, the driver must accept assistance and do whatever it takes to regain control of the team.
 - 14.3. If assistance is available from another driver, the driver of the loose team must accept the ride. The drivers will not be disqualified if every attempt is made to secure the loose team.
 - 14.4. The Chief Judge must be notified immediately upon safe return of the loose team and its driver and any other parties involved. The Chief Judge will then determine if a time penalty (up to 20%) will be given.
15. Right of Way
 - 15.1. In a dual start race, at the junction of the starting chutes, the team with the lead dog(s) farthest ahead has the right of way.
 - 15.2. When passing in opposite directions on a single trail on a hill, the team going downhill will have the right of way. If head-on passing should occur at other points on the trail, the Chief Judge and/or the Trail Judge will determine and announce prior to the race which team has the right of way (incoming or outgoing).
 - 15.3. In the "no-right-of-way" portion (last 1/2 mile) of the finishing trail, no incoming team has the right of way over any other incoming team.
16. Passing
 - 16.1. An overtaking team that comes within 50 feet of the team ahead has the right of way. The overtaking team may then call "trail" on the overtaken team. If this occurs, the overtaken team must let the overtaking team by and bring his team to a full stop if the overtaking driver so requests. The overtaken team must do whatever the overtaking driver requests, i.e. stop, slow down, move over, etc.
 - 16.2. The overtaken team may request and receive right of way after a pass as above:
 - 16.2.1. In Unlimited (Open) Class: after 3 minutes or 1 mile;
 - 16.2.2. In all other classes: after 2 minutes or 1/2 mile.
 - 16.3. If the passing drivers are in agreement, passes may be made at lesser distances or in lesser times.
 - 16.4. A passing driver whose team becomes tangled as a result of the pass may hold the overtaken team in Unlimited (Open) and 10 Dog Classes no longer than 1 minute; in the other classes no longer than 30 seconds. If the overtaking team should stop for any other reason than a tangle resulting from the pass, the overtaken team may re-pass at the discretion of the driver.
 - 16.5. Teams that have been passed must stay behind the passing team at a distance of no less than the length of their team until such time or distance has transpired to make them eligible to re-pass as stated above in section 16.2.
 - 16.6. Skijorers need not come to a full stop but must slow to yield the trail and give the immediate right of way upon demand. Once a team has been passed, the overtaken team shall not re-pass for two minutes or 1/2 mile, except by mutual agreement of both skijorers.
17. Finishing
 - 17.1. The nose of the first dog in the driver's team over the finish line will be the finishing point of the team.
 - 17.2. Drivers will stand upright prior to finishing so that their race numbers may be spotted easily by the timers. Failure to do so could result in disqualification.
- IV. Protests and Disciplinary Action
 18. Protests
 - 18.1. Any driver wishing to protest a violation of these rules must do so immediately following the heat in which the alleged violation occurred. The protest may be verbal and may be made to the Chief Judge. A written protest

must be given to the Chief Judge within one (1) hour after the finish of the heat in which the violation occurred.

- 18.2. In the event of a protest, the concerned parties may request a hearing, which will be granted by the Chief Judge.
- 18.3. If a rule violation is reported by trail help or another official of the race, the Chief Judge may conduct a hearing for all parties concerned.
- 18.4. Questions and/or disputes relating to the performance of the judges and implementation of the race rules are to be communicated directly to the Chief Judge only.

19. Disciplinary Action

- 19.1. For an infraction of these rules, the Chief Judge and the other judges shall make a determination after a hearing has been conducted. A warning shall be given by the Chief Judge. If disqualification is voted to be in order by all judges, the Chief Judge will issue the disqualification.
- 19.2. The decision of the Chief Judge will be final in all cases except that of disqualification, where the unanimous agreement of all judges is necessary.

V. Driver Conduct

20. All drivers in all classes shall conduct themselves in a sport-like manner.
21. The drivers are also responsible for the conduct of their dogs in the staging area, the chutes and on the trail.
22. Verbal, physical abuse or threats made to any race official, trail help, race giving organization personnel, or sponsors will not be permitted or tolerated. Abusive behavior will lead to disqualification of a driver and team(s). See section 19 above.
23. Abuse or mistreatment of dog(s) will be cause for disqualification of driver and team(s) for the current race and the remainder of the North Star Sled Dog Club race circuit for that calendar year. This will be determined by the procedure listed in section 19 above.

VI. Precedence

24. When the race rules of North Star Sled Dog Club conflict with any other body of race rules, North Star Sled Dog Race Rules shall take precedence.

Dryland Race Rules (Adopted 10/27/03)

25. General Regulations

- 25.1. The North Star Sled Dog (NSSDC) general race rules apply in all instances not specifically covered herein.
- 25.2. Class Options:
 - 25.2.1. 1-dog Canicross
 - 25.2.2. 1-dog Bikejor
 - 25.2.3. 1 & 2-dog Scooter
 - 25.2.4. 4-dog cart/rig team - motorized and nonmotorized
 - 25.2.5. 6-dog cart/rig team - motorized and nonmotorized
 - 25.2.6. 8/10-dog cart/rig team - motorized and nonmotorized
- 25.3. The race giving organization may opt for mass start.

26. Safety

- 26.1. If using interval starts, a suggestion is for 1-minute intervals.
- 26.2. Helmets are required for all wheeled classes.
- 26.3. A line for bikejor, canicross, and scooter classes should be a minimum of 7' and a maximum of 12'.

27. Canicross: A Canicross team consists of a contestant and one dog, racing solely on foot.

- 27.1. The class will be divided into Men's (CM) and Women's (CW).
- 27.2. The dog shall be attached from the rear of its harness to a belt worn by the contestant, using a line equipped with a shock absorber. The contestant's belt shall be 3" wide (7 cm).
- 27.3. No spiked shoes will be allowed.
- 27.4. Start: The contestant shall place himself/herself on the starting line.
- 27.5. The contestant shall run behind his/her dog.

28. 1-Dog Bikejor: A 1-dog Bikejor team consists of a contestant pedaling a bicycle and one dog.

- 28.1. The dog shall be attached from the rear of its harness to the bicycle using a line equipped with a shock absorber.
- 28.2. The bicycle shall be equipped with efficient brakes.
- 28.3. Start: The front wheel of the bicycle shall determine the starting point of the team.
- 28.4. The contestant shall ride behind the dog.

29. 1 & 2-Dog Scooter: A scooter team consists of a contestant riding on a two-wheeled "scooter"-type vehicle pulled by one or two dogs. Bicycles without pedal mechanisms or with the pedal mechanisms blocked, or three-wheeled rigs, will be allowed provided they meet the safety requirements.
 - 29.1. The dogs shall be harnessed in single or double file.
 - 29.2. The scooter shall be equipped with efficient brakes.
 - 29.3. Start: The front wheel of the scooter shall determine the starting point of the team.
30. Wheeler Cart/Rig
 - 30.1. 4-Dog: A limited Four-dog team shall consist of at least 3 dogs in the first heat and at least 2 dogs in the ensuing heats.
 - 30.2. 6-Dog: A limited Six-dog team shall consist of at least 5 dogs in the first heat and at least 4 dogs in the ensuing heats.
 - 30.3. 8-Dog: A limited Eight-dog team shall consist of at least 7 dogs in the first heat and at least 5 dogs in the ensuing heats.
 - 30.4. The dogs shall be harnessed in single or double file.
 - 30.5. The dogs shall be attached to the gangline by a neckline at the collar and a tugline at the tail end of the harness.
 - 30.6. The rig may have either three (3) or four (4) wheels and shall be equipped with efficient braking system and an adequate means to secure the team.
 - 30.7. Start: The front wheel(s) of the cart/rig shall determine the starting point of the team.
31. Trails
 - 31.1. Asphalted trails are not recommended.
 - 31.2. Downhill starts are strongly inadvisable.
32. Suggested Distances: Trail Length by Classes
 - 32.1. 1-3 miles Canicross
 - 32.2. 3-5 miles 1-dog Bikejor, Scooter,
 - 32.3. Cart 4-dog
 - 32.4. 5-7 miles Cart 6-dog
 - 32.5. 6-10 miles Cart 8/10-dog
33. If trail markers are used, the following are the suggested abbreviations to be used for the classes by means of lettering in the center of the marker:
 - 33.1 Canicross: "C";
 - 33.2 Bikejor: "B";
 - 33.3 Scooter: "S"
 - 33.4 Cart/Rig: "4", "6," "8".
34. Temperatures: There shall be a thermometer in the start area. It shall be readily visible and placed in the shade. The following decisions shall be taken by the race organization:
 - 34.1. There shall be no race starts if the temperature exceeds 60°F.
 - 34.2. Between 50°F and 60°F the race officials can consider factors which may change or cancel the race, i.e. humidity.
 - 34.3. Should the temperature reach 58°F, the race marshal shall call a meeting with the race judges in order to decide upon whether the race shall be delayed or canceled.
35. Racing Events/Season
 - 35.1. No official events will be allowed between June 1st and August 31st.