Alaskan Dog Sledding & the Iditarod Dog Race

Special thanks to Terrie Strom, Mari Yamazaki, An Nguyen, Juliette Verstaen, Ben Koff, Jun Kim, Kurt Merget, Alvin Yeung, Jacob Andrew, and Thomas Martinho
Topics

History of Dog Sledding

Barrow Rescue

Dog Sledding 101

Iditarod Race
  The Dogs
  The Mushers

2016 Race
Purposes of Dog Sledding

Travel, Hunting, Pulling Whales, Transportation, Hauling, Mail Carriers, Rescue
Used Malamutes, Huskies, Samoyeds, German Shepherds, Hounds, Mixed Breeds
Pt. Barrow Overland

Relief Expedition 1897-1898

8 ships with 265 whalers onboard were trapped in ice in Arctic Ocean off Pt. Barrow

Pres. McKinley called on US Revenue Cutter Service (USRCS), now the US Coast Guard

Too much ice to reach ships by Cutter Bear

Whaling Ship Rosario locked in ice
Pt. Barrow Overland Relief

Expedition 1897-1989

Overland trek of USRCS officers and natives drove 382 reindeer ~1600 miles to Pt. Barrow for food and rescue.
Dogsledding 101: The Team

How a sled dog racing team works together

Each dog pulling a sled has a special role to play to keep the team moving as one.

- **Lead dogs** apply the musher’s commands, set the pace, and ensure correct direction.
- **Swing dogs** ensure the team follows turns initiated by the lead dogs.
- **Team dogs** pull the sled and help maintain speed.
- **Wheel dogs** play the crucial role of pulling and steering the sled.
- **Basket sleds** are lighter than toboggan sleds and carry gear raised off the ground, making them more maneuverable for racing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Musher Commands</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hike Up!</strong></td>
<td>Start moving or go faster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whoa!</strong></td>
<td>Stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gee</strong></td>
<td>Turn right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Haw</strong></td>
<td>Turn left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight</strong></td>
<td>Used at intersections/ when passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ahead</strong></td>
<td>Slow down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easy</strong></td>
<td>Easily interpreted as Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Iditarod

Starter Kit
Native sleds date back 300 yrs
**Iditarod Race**

Dog racing began in 1900’s and now the state sport

**All-Alaskan Sweepstakes 1908**

**Yukon Quest 1983 Fairbanks-Whitehorse – 1000mi /$115K purse**

Iditarod race began in 1973 to keep tradition

1049 mile distance (2 trails)

12-16 dogs in team/~80 teams

Winner gets $70K + Truck

Record time 8 days 13 hrs – Dallas Seavey in 2014
Dogs run the 1049 mi course at up to 14 mph during the race.
Iditarod Dog Race Start 2015

Staggered start at 2 min intervals for ~70-80 dog teams.

>25 check pts every 20-90 mi; there get rest & evaluations by 40 vets.
Breeding Iditarod Dogs: Alaskan Huskies

Traits: courage, smart, furry, speed, endurance, furry paws, love to pull, long strides

Hybrid Dogs weigh ~50 pounds

Typically mixed breed: Siberian Husky - coat, pull; Malamutes – coats, pull
English Pointers – speed; German Shorthair Pointers – vigor and speed

2016 Race
Training Iditarod Dogs

Dogs eat 10,000 cal/day; like 50 Big Macs

Optimize diet – food studies benefit all

Long distance athletes – low heart rates

Apprentice lead dogs learn from seniors

Mushers give tourists rides/puppy play
Martin Buser, who won the Seppala Humanitarian Award 5 times, “I know 500 dogs and 10 people by name.” “My favorite dog is the one I am with.”

Alki likes to sleep with Martin

Suzette - a great momma dog

Baloo likes to mark!
Amazing Men of the Iditarod: Rick Swenson

Fur trapper, gold miner, musher

Called “King of the Iditarod” 5 wins

Twice won by < 5 minutes

1978 loss to Dick Mackey by 1 second

Won sportsmanship and humanitarian awards
Lance Mackey

Most Consecutive Iditarod and Yukon Quest wins (4)

Father was a founder of Iditarod
Last race with brother Jason

Both have fought with drugs and alcohol

Lance has also battled throat cancer
Norman Vaughan

Dropped out of Harvard to take medical supplies to Newfoundland in 1925

Later became a member of Richard Byrd’s Antarctic Expedition 1928-1930

Raced dogs in 1932 Lake Placid Olympics

Led > 200 rescue dogs in WW II Battle of the Bulge; more dog sled rescue expeditions later in Greenland

Completed 13 Iditarods, first at age 72, last at age 84 in 1990; Musher of the Year, Musher Hall of Fame

Took Pope John Paul II for dog sled ride with two of his dogs named Satan and Devil

Paraded sled dogs at Presidential Inaugurations

Died at age 100
Amazing Women of the Iditarod: Libby Riddles

First woman to win Iditarod 1985

Beat men with daring dash across Norton Sound in white out

Win boosted fame of the Iditarod

Lived like native for 5 yrs after winning race

Amazing inspirational speaker
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Susan Butcher

Revolutionized the race – innovations


Granite won Golden Harness Award 1988

Died of leukemia in 2006 at age 51

Susan Butcher Day 1st Sat. in Mar. / Iditarod starting day
Dee Dee Jonrowe

23 Iditarod finishes

Finished 2\textsuperscript{nd} 3 times; top 10 14 times

Racing at 61 after double mastectomy

Winner of many awards

Recently lost home to fire
Cindy Abbott

Popular Professor at CS Fullerton

Has climbed 6 peaks > 14,000 ft

Climbed Mt. Everest in 2010

Finished Iditarod in 2015 fighting degenerative Wegeners disease

Promotes National Organization of Rare Disorders
Questions?