

# RULES & POLICIES OF THE TAHQUAMENON COUNTRY SLED DOG RACE

(Approved 11/12/25)

## I. GENERAL RULES

A. Entries, fees and refunds shall be in accordance with rules set forth in this paragraph.

1. The Tahquamenon Country Sled Dog Race (TCSDR) reserves the right to reject an entry for any reason.
2. Entries will be accepted through the website only ([www.tcsdr.org](http://www.tcsdr.org)) and must be submitted prior to close of entries at 6:00PM EST on Wednesday immediately preceding the race. No other entries will be accepted after the close of entries, no exceptions.
3. Full refunds (minus credit card processing fees) will be allowed for cancellations received prior to close of entries. Class changes and entry fee adjustments allowed prior to close of entries. Cancellations after close of entries will not be refunded without prior TCSDR Board of Directors approval and only for extenuating circumstances.

B. MUSHERS

1. Mushers under the age of eighteen may participate with a waiver of liability signed by a parent or legal guardian.
2. Youth class: 16 and under. Mushers under the age of thirteen need special permission from the TCSDR Board of Directors to participate in any class except for the youth two/three dog class.
3. Only one musher per team is permitted and no substitution will be allowed during the race. The TCSDR Board may grant an exception for emergent and/or unusual circumstances.
4. Substitution of a musher with another qualified musher will be allowed up to the beginning of the mandatory drivers meeting.
5. All mushers are responsible for obtaining their race bib at the mandatory drivers meeting or, if excused from the meeting, must make arrangements with the Chief Race Judge for obtaining their bib prior to their mandatory equipment inspection.
6. Mushers are responsible for the conduct of their dogs, handlers, and representatives, from the Drivers Meeting until all teams have left the race site on Sunday.
7. The musher is required to report all violations of race rules and regulations to the Chief Race Judge or an Assistant Race Judge.
8. No alcoholic beverage shall be permitted at the race site, which includes the race trails and the starting area parking lot.
9. (10 & 6 dog pro class only) It is the musher's responsibility to check for traffic at trail crossings on the race course. TCSDR Inc will attempt to secure the crossings, but the final safety is the musher's responsibility.

C. DOGS

1. Dog Team Size

- a. Each ten dog professional class team must start the race with a minimum of seven dogs and must finish the race with a minimum of seven dogs crossing the finish line.
  - b. Each six dog professional class team must start and finish the race with a minimum of five dogs.
  - c. Each four-six dog sportsman class team must start and finish with not more than six and not less than four dogs.
  - d. Each youth two/three dog team must start and finish with not more than three dogs and not less than one dog.
2. For classes with more than one heat, after the first heat and each ensuing heat, a driver may voluntarily reduce the size of the team, subject to minimums.
  3. Any team or dog not starting the first heat of the race shall not be eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
  4. Any team or dog disqualified in any heat of the race shall not be eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
  5. In classes with more than one heat, each dog shall be marked for identification prior to the start of the first heat of the race.
  6. Dogs dropped from teams after the first heat of the race shall be marked a second time to indicate their disqualification from a team.
  7. In the instance that any team finishes with less dogs within the team gang line than it started the heat with, it is the musher's responsibility to report the condition of the dog(s) to either a Race Official or a Race Veterinarian as soon as possible

D. VETERINARY GUIDELINES

1. DOGS AND RECORDS

- A. All dogs entered in the race must be current with vaccinations for parvovirus, distemper and rabies. Mushers should be prepared to provide the receipt or other means of proof of purchase of vaccines.
- B. Proof of valid rabies vaccination from the mushers state of residence signed by a licensed veterinarian at least two weeks prior to the race.

- 61 C. Only dogs found to be in good health and fit to compete will be permitted to run this race.  
62 D. After the vet check prior to the start of the race no switching of dogs will be permitted.  
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64 2. DRUG USE

- 65 A. No injectable, oral or topical drug which may suppress the signs of illness or injury may be used on a dog. A  
66 musher may not inject any substance into their dogs. No other drugs or artificial means may be used to drive a  
67 dog or cause a dog to perform or attempt to perform beyond its natural ability.  
68 B. The musher may administer the following compounds to their dogs orally without veterinary consent: vitamins,  
69 minerals, electrolytes, enzymes, probiotics and any dietary supplements marked as such, provided that these  
70 compounds are maintained in their original containers with labels indicating the contents.  
71 C. The administration of any substance to a dog orally by syringe or similar device (basting) by a musher is  
72 prohibited. The administration of any substance to a dog by syringe and needle by a musher is prohibited.  
73 D. The following drugs are prohibited.  
74 a. Anabolic steroids  
75 b. Analgesics (pain relievers) both prescriptive and non-prescriptive  
76 c. Anti-inflammatory drugs, including but not limited to: cortico-steroids (the exception is the use on the  
77 feet), Antiprostaglandins, Non-steroidal (NSAIDS), Salicylates, DMSO  
78 d. Anesthetics  
79 e. Central nervous system stimulants  
80 f. Antihistamines  
81 g. Bronchodilators  
82 h. Cough suppressants  
83 i. Diuretics  
84 j. Inject able anticholinergics  
85 k. Muscle relaxants  
86 l. Tranquilizers and opiates  
87 E. TCSDR Board reserves the right to collect blood and/or urine samples, at the direction of the Chief Race  
88 Veterinarian, at random at any time up to the beginning of the awards ceremony.  
89 F. The use of topical cortico-steroids is limited to use on the paw/pad. The only cortico-steroids containing topical  
90 products permitted for this race will be those dispensed by the Chief Race Veterinarian.  
91 G. The use of megesterol acetate (ovaban) and mibolerone (cheque drops) is permitted in intact females that have  
92 not had an ovariohysterectomy.  
93 H. The practice of blood doping, i.e. injection of whole blood, packed blood cells or substitutes is prohibited.  
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95 3. INTERNATIONAL SLED DOG VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT

- 96 A. Criteria for Evaluating Dogs at a Sled Dog Race Position Statement: The ISDVMA is composed of  
97 veterinarians with extensive experience in sled dog care. ISDVMA veterinarians also are activists on behalf  
98 of the welfare of racing sled dogs. All decisions relating to the fitness of dogs and dog teams to continue to  
99 compete will be based on our education, experience, and commitment to the best interests of the sled dogs  
100 and the sport. Any errors made in determining the fitness of a dog or dog team to continue will be based on  
101 the side of the dog or dog team.  
102 i. Monitoring Criteria Using ISDVMA guidelines, the following vital signs are indicators of health  
103 problems, which would require the withdrawal of a dog from the race:  
104 1. 7% - 8% dehydration.  
105 2. Heart rate 120 beats per minute or higher after 30 – 60 minutes of rest with or without a  
106 prolonged capillary refill time.  
107 3. Body temperature greater than 103 °F (39.4 °C) after one hour of rest.  
108 4. Lung sounds with evidence of edema, rales, or cough.  
109 5. Hypothermia: a body temperature less than 99 °F (37.2 °C).  
110 6. Non-responsive diarrhea with blood, associated with weight loss or dehydration.  
111 7. Severe lameness, especially of the shoulder.  
112 8. Seizures.  
113 9. Brown or red urine.  
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- 115 4. Chiropractic manipulation, Acupuncture, and Therapeutic Laser are recognized veterinary treatment modalities and,  
116 as such, their use during the race is under the jurisdiction of the Chief Race Veterinarian. Because it is impractical  
117 for the race veterinary team to ensure these treatment modalities would be uniformly available to all competitors,  
118 their use will be prohibited from the pre-race veterinary exam to the end of the race. If, after consulting with the  
119 Chief Race Veterinarian, a competitor feels their dog needs to be treated with one of these modalities, a decision  
120 may be made to allow the use on that dog, but that dog must be disqualified from the remaining heats of the race.  
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123 E. EQUIPMENT

- 124 1. All harnesses must be padded around the neck and chest areas.
- 125 2. All gang lines must be arranged for single or double file disposition. Cable gang lines are optional but recommended for
- 126 the ten (10) dog class.
- 127 3. A sled must be equipped with a working brake bolted to the sled, brush bow and snow hook. A snub line capable of
- 128 holding the sled stationary and of length sufficient to be fastened and released by the musher while standing on the
- 129 runners must be affixed to the sled. **Snub line start loop can be incorporated into this line, or sled must be equipped**
- 130 **with a separate snub line for start chute.**
- 131 4. A sled/dog bag capable of restraining safely a struggling or injured dog is required. (Note: Not required for 2/3 dog
- 132 youth.)
- 133 5. All double leaders shall be connected together by a neck line.
- 134 6. Cable neck lines are not recommended but acceptable.
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- 136 A. MANDATORY GEAR (Note: Items 3 – 9 are not required for the four-six dog sportsman. Items 2 – 9 are not required
- 137 for the youth class)
- 138 1. The assigned race bib (See also: Rule III D7)
- 139 2. First aid kit (for musher and dogs) including Ace bandages and pressure dressings sufficient to stop bleeding
- 140 3. One complete working headlamp
- 141 4. Sleeping bag rated at 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- 142 5. One set (4) booties per dog
- 143 6. Knife
- 144 7. Axe, hatchet or bow saw
- 145 8. A cable cutter (required only if using cable gang lines)
- 146 9. Map of race trail is mandatory. Working compass is recommended.
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149 **II. OFFICIATING**

150 A. RACE OFFICIALS

- 151 1. The Chief Race Judge controls all aspects of the race, including but not limited to the following: Interpretation of all
- 152 rules, decision on time penalties, censures and disqualifications, final determinations of winners and placing.
- 153 2. Two Assistant Race Judges will act as deputies of the Chief Race Judge. The Chief Race Judge will rely on the
- 154 consultation of the Assistant Race Judges.
- 155 3. The Chief Race Veterinarian will have final authority over the disposition of all dogs being disallowed for medical
- 156 reasons.
- 157 4. The Chief Race Judge shall consult with the Race Veterinarian regarding any cruel or inhumane treatment of dogs.
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159 B. PENALTIES AND PROTEST PROCEDURES

- 160 1. Penalties: Rule infractions may result in an issuance of warning, time penalties, censure, or disqualification. Any race
- 161 judge may issue warnings. The Chief Race Judge will decide on all time penalties, censures and disqualifications. The
- 162 Chief Race Veterinarian shall be consulted in all cases involving cruel or inhumane treatment of dogs. Musher shall be
- 163 disqualified for any infractions including, but not limited to, physical abuse of a dog, cheating or deliberate rule
- 164 infractions that give a musher an unfair advantage over another musher. A musher will be allowed to continue racing
- 165 while a decision is being made except in cases involving cruel or inhumane treatment of dogs. Disqualification will
- 166 result in the forfeiture of all race placements and monetary prizes.
- 167 2. Protests: Drivers wishing to report an alleged violation of the rules by another contestant shall notify the Race Marshal
- 168 immediately following the heat in which the incident occurred. Notification may be verbal. All verbal driver reports must
- 169 be followed with a written report, given to the Chief Race Judge within one (1) hour of the completion of the heat in
- 170 which the alleged violation occurred.
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173 **III. THE RACE**

174 A. START/FINISH

- 175 1. At the race start, all mushers, handlers and team trucks must be in the official parking area at the specific time and
- 176 location to be announced at the mushers meeting. At that time each dog team, sled and mandatory gear must be
- 177 available for inspection.
- 178 2. The first day's starting positions shall be determined by a random draw held prior to the start of the event with
- 179 Number 1 starting first, Number 2 starting second, etc.
- 180 3. In classes with more than one heat, the second day's starting positions shall be determined by the first day's times,
- 181 with the fastest team starting first, the second fastest team starting second, etc.
- 182 4. A team missing its designated start time may leave the start chute at the first interval after the last team in the class
- 183 has left the chute. If the team is not capable of leaving the chute at that time, they will not be allowed to race. The
- 184 designated start time will apply for timing purposes.

- 185 5. A team finish time is measured when the lead dog crosses the finish line. Should any of the mandatory gear be  
186 missing, a two (2) minute time penalty will be added to the finish time for each missing item. Expendable or  
187 consumable gear (e.g. booties) need not be present at the finish line.  
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189 B. OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

- 190 1. No outside assistance is permitted during the race except under emergency conditions.  
191 2. Musher may aid each other in appropriate ways under emergency conditions.  
192 3. Outside assistance to repair broken or destroyed equipment is allowed.  
193 4. Musher may receive assistance in cases of uncontrolled or lost dog teams.  
194 5. Dog trucks and/or handlers are allowed only at the official parking area unless the team has officially scratched from  
195 the race.  
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197 C. HANDLING AND TREATMENT OF DOGS

- 198 1. The cruel and/or inhumane treatment of dogs by any musher or handler is strictly prohibited.  
199 2. In the event a team gets away from the musher, it will not be disqualified if they have not left the race course. If the  
200 team and the musher have left the race course, they must re-enter the course at the point they left it.  
201 3. All dogs on a team must be in harness and attached to the sled. A. No loose leaders will be permitted. B. A  
202 musher must make every effort to secure a dog which becomes loose accidentally. A musher is disqualified if they  
203 are unable to regain control of his or her loose dog. Any dogs left at any point on the race trail shall be cause for  
204 disqualification.  
205 4. EXPIRED DOGS: Any dog expired on the trail must be covered and transported to the finish line, at which time the  
206 driver shall report it first to the Chief Race Judge. The musher must then complete a report and present it to the  
207 Chief Race Veterinarian. All expired dogs may be necropsied by the Chief Race Veterinarian. Financial charges  
208 occurred due to the necropsy may be the responsibility of the musher. The death of a dog may result in the  
209 disqualification of a musher.  
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211 D. THE RACE COURSE

- 212 1. When overtaking another team, the musher must call "TRAIL". A. The slower team must relinquish the trail and  
213 assist the passing team if necessary. When neither team is able to pull away from the other, the mushers shall agree  
214 which is the appropriate team to lead out.  
215 2. Sticks and other poling aids cannot be used within 100 feet (either behind or in front) of another team and must be  
216 stowed inside their sled bad when a musher calls for trail  
217 3. Musher shall not be tethered to their sleds at any point during the race.  
218 4. When passing is taking place, mushers are responsible to ensure that their dogs do not aggressively go into the other  
219 team(s) involved in the pass. If necessary, a musher must stop their team and physically restrain a dog showing  
220 aggression toward another team.  
221 5. No-Man's-Land starts approximately one mile from the finish line and will be well marked. Musher no longer  
222 have the option to call trail nor will mushers be required to relinquish the trail.  
223 6. Musher shall not place or leave litter on the race trail.  
224 7. The assigned race bib shall be worn with the number visible at all times during the race.