



Dog welfare on races

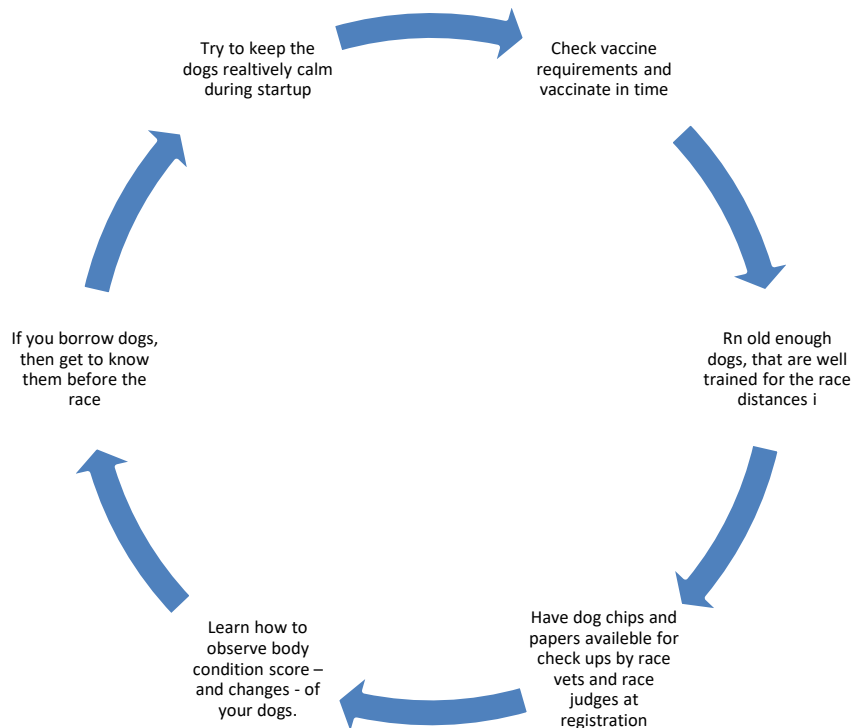
Some reminders for those
mushers who intend to do long
distance races with checkpoints
From ESK in NHF / Johanne mfl.

Teambuilding – but focus on the dogs

- Sogs, car driver, dogs, musher and handler are one team.
- Agree on responsibilities, and make sure you know where everyone is at all times.
- The handler team is responsible for the equipment that is needed for the musher to be able to secure dog welfare at checkpoints.



Before the race – some preparations



Preparations before start

Start with well rested dogs

Give them soup/water before

Have harnesses that fit the individual dogs

Pack sled bag so that you have easy access to the things you use most often

Get the booties on the dogs before start

Be calm- do not stress too much – Dogs may get stressed by you

Have enough time to get the whole team prepared before the start

- Only the musher can take care of the dogs at checkpoints



Checkpoint (*)

- Dogs need to have continued rest
- Feeding and drinking should happen before and after rest. Be effective, and have good routines
- Depending on temperature, you have to give dogs straw, coats, and blankets when they rest
- Sometimes it is smart to have extra wire lines to hook dogs up instead of risking ganglines
- You can self-evaluate your dogs need for veterinary services, and book such id you are in doubt
*(Johanne Sundby og Bente Alhaug)



Check point arrival routines

- You can get assistance to get the dogs to and from checkpoint

Make a list – or remember your routines (ex):

Front hook in place

Offer water and snack

Booties off

Start the water boiler (with water)

Get straw

Put on dog coats



Check point routines, after rest

- Get wakeup call in time
- Check dogs, offer them food
- Walk with one and one, and do also check armpits and paws
- Ig mandatory or elective vet. Checks are needed, Get in touch and book as soon as possible
- Clean up food remains, poop and trash after you and dogs



On trail - plans for race

Have your own plan for the race, rest and drive, and try to follow it, but get more rest if dogs seem to need it

Do not start out too fast. Dogs warm up and run better while on the race. Like start for hardt ut.

Do not look too much at other mushers. Do your own race

Train to do smooth passes before the race, and to passes with a calm and controlled effort. Tell a musher in front that you are coming up. Give the musher time to enact.



On the trail - snacking

Give the dogs snacks with regular intervals.
Og to the side, out of the trail preferably,
and do not leave snack behind

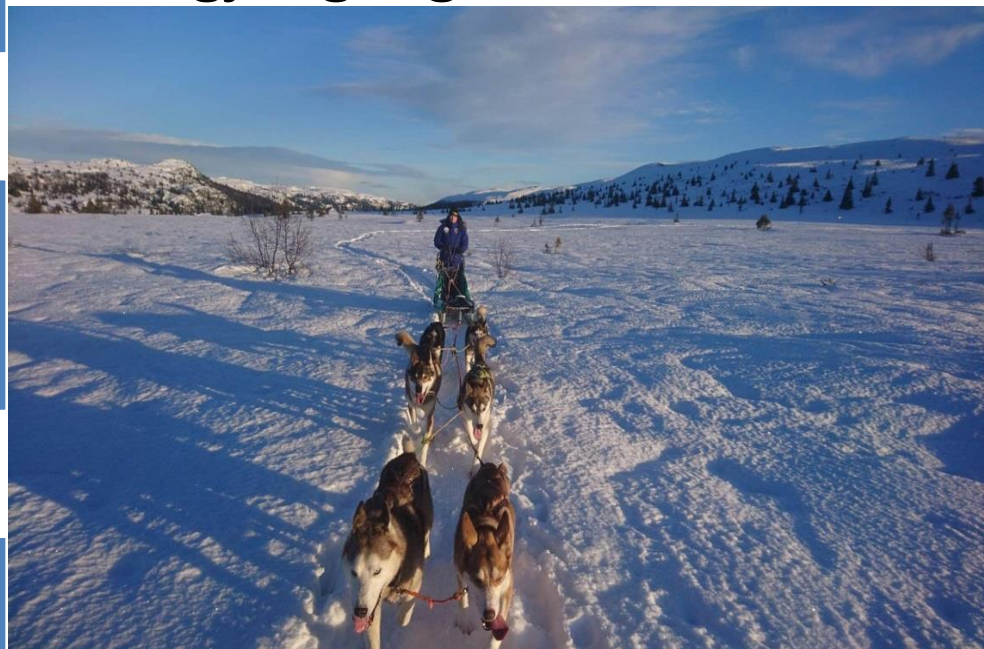


Small bites are easier eaten up than big.
Have snack that «survives» both cold or
warm weather



Snack from front to back of team to avoid a
tangle

- Ha snacken lett tilgjengelig i sleden



On the trail – observe the dogs

- Keep an eye on all dogs at all times
- Observe limps, stiffness, non-pulling behavior, lines in wrong places, fatigue
- Stop before uphills and let dogs pee. Especially if very cold, stopping a few seconds prevent frost bites from peeing



Finish line, but not completely finished

- The race is not completely over until:
- Veterinarians and judges have had some time with the dogs to check on their health status.
- Good healthy dogs can go to their straw or boxes
- Dogs get snacks, hugs and praise





After the race, make sure all is well, even if tired yourself

- Look over the dogs and repeat snacking. Make sure they seem happy and rest well
- Get them to the dog box soon, but take out to pee also.
- Check them again after some rest. Give water and food if they want it..

After race rehabilitation

- Massage.
Stretching,
movement, feeding,
observation
- Make sure the dogs
are hydrated and
eat ok
- Make sure they pee
(light color) and
poop normal
- Check the dogs
moving – walk them
– give massage and
stretching
- Let them rest more
in the straw/boxes
- Check again after
some hours.
General status, and
ability to move.