

NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF SLED DOG SPORTS

WEIGHT PULLING RULES

AMENDED APRIL 2012

Based on the September 1994 version of the "Weight Pulling Rules" of the International Sled Dog Racing Association, Inc. The ISDRA has not amended these rules up to and including January 1995.

Amended as per the "NZFSS Amendments to ISDRA Rules and Procedures" document.

PART I - ENTRY RULES

A. ELIGIBILITY

1. ENTRIES

- a. An entry for a weight pull shall be submitted prior to the start of the pull, subject to deadlines as determined by the weight pull organisation.
- b. The weight pull organisation may reject any entry for just cause.
- c. The race-giving organisation shall prohibit any person convicted of animal abuse or neglect at a misdemeanour or greater level from participating in NZFSS sanctioned weight pulls.

2. DOGS

- a. To qualify for a weight pulling contest, the dog shall be at least one (1) year old.
- b. No female in season shall be used in the weight pull event or brought into the weight pull area.
 1. The Chief Judge may check all bitches to ascertain whether they are in heat or not.

3. DISEASE.

- a. No dogs shall be brought from a kennel where hepatitis, distemper, leptospirosis, parvovirus, or any other contagious disease exists.
- b. A person shall not bring equipment or clothes to a contest which have come in contact with any contagious disease.

4. PULLING CLASSES

- a. 27kg (60 Pound) Class - all dogs weighing 27kg or less.
- b. 36kg (80 Pound) Class - all dogs weighing more than 27kg, up to and including 36kg.
- c. 50kg (110 Pound) Class - all dogs weighing more than 36kg, up to and including 50kg.
- d. Unlimited Class - all dogs weighting more than 50kg.

5. MEDICATIONS ADMINISTERED TO DOGS - PROHIBITED DRUGS.

- a. See the "NZFSS List of Forbidden Substances and Methods for Dogs".
- b. NZFSS will allow a positive test for previously declared paracitocides 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 sled dogs before testing occurs.
- c. 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.
- d. If an owner or handler refuses to allow a sample to be collected from a dog, that dog shall be disqualified from the event.
- e. If a dog shows a positive test of a prohibited drug, that dog is subject to disqualification, the decision to be made following a hearing.

6. DRUG TESTING

- a. If an organisation intends to test for drugs, it shall declare so on the entry form. It is recommended that the organisation use the NZFSS Drug Testing Procedures.
- b. The external use of DMSO and Topical Cortico-Steroids are limited to the use on feet only, in ointments, and provided by a registered veterinarian.
- c. Where testing is due to an appeal, the person lodging the appeal shall be required to pay the costs at the time the appeal is lodged eg \$250 per dog. Where the appeal is lodged against a team the decision as to which dogs are tested rests with the person lodging the appeal.

PART II - PRE-CONTEST

A. PROCEDURES

1. Dog Weight Determination
 - a. All dogs shall be weighed prior to each weight pull contest.
 - (1) The weigh-in shall be no more than one day previous to the competition.
 - (2) All dog weights shall be recorded and rounded off to the nearest 100g.
 - i. The Chief Judge's decision shall determine disputed weights and shall be final.
2. Class Eligibility
 - a. A dog shall compete in the weight pulling division determined by the pre-contest weigh-in.
 - b. The winner of the lower division shall have the option, and with an additional entry fee and qualification requirement, move into the next higher division.
 - (1) The winner of the lower division shall be seeded on the higher division entry sheet in the last pulling position.
 - (2) A dog winning a lower division shall have its winning weight and time officially recorded as a pull in the higher class/division should the handler be taking the option of moving up a class/division.
 - (3) A dog competing in a higher division need not pull unless at the discretion of the handler.
 - (4) Dogs moving into a higher division based on previous performances shall receive all benefits of any placing it has earned in both its own and higher class, including purses, prizes, trophies and points at NZFSS sanctioned events.
 - c. If no dog has qualified for the next higher division, the dog winning the lower division shall not be allowed to move up into a non-existent/non-competitive class to gain any benefits previously offered in that division.
3. Qualifying
 - a. Each dog shall qualify prior to his/her first contest and shall not need to qualify again for the rest of their weightpull life, unless they are hurt or do not pull for one or more seasons.
 - (1) No dog shall need to qualify any higher than the following weights per class/division:
 - i. 113kg (250 pounds) maximum for the 27kg (60 pound) class.
 - ii. 136kg (300 pounds) maximum for the 36kg (80 pound) class.
 - iii. 158kg (350 pounds) maximum for the 50kg (110 pound) class.
 - iv. 181kg (400 pounds) maximum for the over 50kg (110 pound) class.
 - b. If one dog qualifies for a particular weight pulling division, that weight pulling division shall be accommodated as a part of the weight pulling contest.
 - (1) If no dog qualifies in a particular division, that class shall not be run.
 - c. Proof of prior qualification must have details of the event at which it was gained. These details must be signed by the events Chief Judge.

B. EQUIPMENT

1. Sleds
 - a. A sled shall be provided capable of safely carrying a load of 1,200kg (2,700 pounds).
 - b. Two runners shall be 5 to 10cm (2 to 4 inches) wide, 2 to 3 meters (7 to 10 feet) long on the surface contacting a level, smooth surface and reasonably curved at the front of the sled. The four (4) wheels on a wheeled sled shall be 5 to 15cm (2 to 6 inches) wide, but no larger than a 15 inch car tyre.
 - c. Runner surfaces shall be shod with plastic or similar material. Wheels should have rubber tyres.
 - d. The sled shall be provided with an adequate bridle and tugline of a total length so that the point of the attachment to the dog's harness shall be 1.8 meters (6 feet) from the sled.
2. Weighting Material
 - a. An adequate supply of pre-weighed, inert material suitable for safe, stable stacking shall be provided.
3. Harnesses
 - a. Dogs shall be fitted with an adequate freight-type harness.
4. Inspection
 - a. Prior to the dog's pull, it shall be inspected by the Chief Judge to determine whether its harness is proper and safe for the dog.
5. No shock absorbing device shall be permitted.

C. PHYSICAL AREA

1. Chute
 - a. All sanctioned pulls shall be held in a single chute.
 - b. The weight pulling contest shall be in a chute not less than 3 meters (10 feet) wide and not more than 4.5 meters (15 feet) wide.

- c. The chute shall be open at both ends to accommodate the sled and the pull.
 - d. The chute shall be no less than 12.2 meters (40 feet) long and not more than 18.3 meters (60 feet) long.
 - e. There shall be a physical barrier separating the crowd from the pulling chute.
 - (1) The barrier shall be adequate to separate the pull chute from the spectator area.
 - f. The weight pull chute shall be as level and as hard-packed as snow conditions permit.
 - (1) If there is a perceptible slope, the dogs will pull toward the higher end.
2. Pulling Surface
 - a. The pulling surface shall be uniform.
 - b. The dogs shall achieve traction on the same surface as that on which the sled rides.
 3. Holding Areas
 - a. Directly behind or adjacent to the starting line of the pull chute, a holding area large enough to accommodate the anticipated entries shall be provided.
 - (1) The holding area shall not be in front of the chute finish line.

D. DRAWING

1. A drawing for each weight pull division shall be conducted at the closing of entry acceptance for the purpose of seeding entries.
 - a. If the owner or handler is present, that person shall draw for their dogs seeding position.
 - b. In the absence of the owner or handler, a designated proxy or the Chief Judge may draw for the dog's seeding position.
 - c. Late entries not included in the draw shall be seeded at the head of the starting order.

PART III - THE CONTEST

A. SEQUENCE OF CLASSES

1. All weight pull classes/divisions shall be run concurrently.
2. Each class/division shall be brought into competition at a determined weight interval.

B. REQUIRED DISTANCE AND TIME LIMIT

1. The dog shall be required to pull the load a marked and measured sixteen(16) feet (5 meters).
2. The dog shall be required to pull the load within a 45 second time limit.
 - a. If a dog has begun a pull prior to his time running out and the load is in continuous motion at the expiration of the 45 second time limit, it shall be allowed to complete the pull provided that the load proceeds in a continuous motion.
 - b. The time marked on the score sheet shall be that of the actual time required to make the pull (Times for pulls may be in excess of 45 seconds under the above conditions).
3. A dog failing to complete the pull within the 45 second time limit shall be allowed to attempt the same weight a second time, after all contestants have pulled at that weight. The dog may not progress to a higher weight unless the second attempt succeeds.

C. LOAD INCREMENTS

1. Starting loads in each division shall be light enough so that any qualified dog can readily move it with a modest effort.
2. Increments shall be a minimum of 25kg (55 pounds) up to a maximum of 50kg (110 pounds), as determined by the Chief Judge.
3. The pull is complete when any part of the sled breaks the plane of the finish line.

D. BREAK STARTING THE SLED (SLEDGE)

1. The judge shall ensure that the sled is not frozen down immediately prior to the dog being attached to the gangline of the sled before the start of each individual pull.
 - a. The Sled Marshal shall be responsible to have the sled broken loose from the pulling surface in a consistent manner for all contestants.
 - b. On wet grass surfaces and if the Chief Judge deems, the cart shall be loaded on a plywood surface.

E. POSITION OF HANDLER

1. During the pull, the handler shall be in one of two positions:
 - a. No further forward than the front of the sled.
 - b. Beyond the designated line 6 meters (20 feet) from the starting line.
2. The handler may not signify that he is ready until he is in one of these positions.

F. START TIME

1. The timer shall start the pull with the word "go" or its equivalent upon a "ready" sign from the dog's handler.
 - a. No dog shall not be allowed to begin its pull until it has been positioned with all four feet, either standing, sitting or lying, at least 1.5 meters (5 feet) from the starting line, directly in front of the sled.
 - b. If the dogs should attempt to leave the chute, either by turning back and crossing the start line, or by attempting to climb over the side barrier of the chute after the time has begun, it shall be considered a tangle and be called tangle by the Chief Judge.
 - c. Should a dog commence the pull with a running start, it shall be considered a tangle and be called tangle by the Chief Judge. A running start shall be when the dog starts from less than 1.4 meters from the front of the sled.
 - d. If the dog retreats beyond the front of the sled, it shall be considered a tangle and be called tangle by the Chief Judge.

G. TANGLES

1. If a dog becomes entangled in its harness or lines so that injury to the dog may result if the pull continues, the Chief Judge will call tangle.
2. Under any circumstances where a tangle has been called, the following will occur:
 - a. The clock will be stopped but the clock will not be reset.
 - b. The handler will untangle the dog from its harness or lines.
 - c. The sled will be moved to the original starting position.
 - d. The handler will return to the original calling position and again resume giving commands to the dog.
3. If a dog should tangle a second time during the same pull, the second tangle shall be ruled as an unsuccessful pull.

H. BROKEN EQUIPMENT

1. If any part of the harness or other equipment breaks, the contestant shall have another opportunity to pull the same weight after repairs are made.
2. The handler may choose to accept this interrupted pull as a pass if the pass does not give the contestant more than two (2) consecutive passes.

I. PASSING TURNS

1. Contestants may pass one or two turns at a time.
 - a. No contestant shall pass more than two successive turns without pulling.
2. The load shall not be lightened at any time.

J. HANDLING BAITING & TREATING

1. No physical handling of the dogs shall be allowed after the dog is in the starting position except as it applies to tangles.
2. An official may hold the dog in position at the request of the handler until the handler signals the start of the pull.
 - a. Handling consists of anyone touching the dog, its harness, the sled or any other part of the equipment or load once the time/pull has begun.
3. Only one handler is allowed to communicate with the dog, either with hand signals and/or voice commands from the chute area or any location around the competing area.
4. No food, treat, bait, noisemaker, muzzles or any other aid shall be permitted within the chute, nor shall food or bait be permitted on the person of the handler at any time during each individual pull.
5. Treating of dogs shall be allowed in the holding area.

K. CONTROL OF DOGS NOT ACTUALLY PULLING

1. During the weight pulling competition, dogs awaiting their turns shall be held in an assigned area to the rear of the pulling area.
2. No dogs, including those not scheduled to compete, shall be allowed in the general area ahead of the starting line except for that dog which is pulling.
3. All dog shall be under the physical control, on lead, while in the pull area except for that dog which is pulling.
4. Between pulls, dogs may be housed in their vans in the holding area.

PART IV - CONDUCT

A. HANDLERS

1. All entrants shall be responsible for the conduct of their dogs and handler during the contest.
2. Abusive or inhumane treatment of a dog shall be prohibited and shall be cause for disqualification.
3. Unsportsmanlike conduct in the weight pull area or on the weight pull course shall be cause for a warning or disqualification after a hearing. This is at the discretion of the Chief Judge.

B. DOGS

1. Unmanageable dogs shall be disqualified from competition.

PART V - RULES VIOLATIONS

A. PROTESTS AND HEARINGS

1. Any entrant wishing to protest any violations of the rules shall do so immediately following the contest.
2. The protest may be verbal but shall be followed by a written statement citing the circumstances and the particular rule(s) involved to the Chief Judge within one(1) hour of the end of the contest.
3. The individual who is being protested shall be notified by the Chief Judge and a hearing shall be scheduled before a decision is rendered.

B. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

1. For violation of any NZFSS Weight Pull rule, the Chief Judge shall either issue a verbal warning to the handler or disqualify the handler and/or dog concerned from the event.
2. The decision of the Chief Judge shall be final.

PART VI - DETERMINATION OF WINNERS

A. PLACINGS

1. The dog pulling the most weight in its division is declared the winner.
 - a. Each successive dog pulling the next highest weight shall be placed in the numbers two, three, etc., positions.
2. The winner of each weight pull class shall be the dog which pulls the most weight in the allotted time (45 seconds).
 - a. The pull must be a completed pull covering the entire sixteen(16) feet.

B. TIES

1. If two or more dogs pull the same weight the same distance, or cannot move the weight at all, the dog with the fastest time shall be declared the winner.
 - a. The dog with the second fastest time shall be awarded second place, etc.
 - b. If one of the tie-placing dogs did not pull (passed), the other dog shall be declared the winner.