

# NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF SLED DOG SPORTS

## SPEED RACE RULES

AMENDED April 2023

Based on the April 1988 version of the "Gig Race Rules (Wheel)" of the International Sled Dog Racing Association, Inc. The ISDRA has not amended these rules up to and including January 1994.

### DEFINITIONS

DRIVER:	a person who drives a dog team entered in the race.
EVENT:	a meeting of contestants for the purpose of competing in one event which may involve several race classes.
HEAT:	a completion of the trail once.
ORGANISATION:	the organisation in charge of running the event.
RACE:	a competition in a specified class and may be comprised of one or more heats.
RACE AREA:	all designated parking areas, spectator areas, team holding areas, start/finish chutes, officiating areas and the trail area.
RACE MARSHAL:	the person who shall have supreme authority at an event.
RACE JUDGE:	Rules Enforcing Officer, has the authority as the Race Marshal/Chief Judge, except in the question of disqualification. References to the Race Marshal in these rules shall also apply for the Race Judge(s), when appropriate.
SLED:	Also includes a Pulka for the purpose of these rules.
MAY:	Shall be construed as being permissive.
SHALL:	Shall be construed as being imperative.
SHOULD:	Shall be construed as being advisory.

### PART I - ENTRY RULES

#### A. ELIGIBILITY

1. Entries
  - a. An entry for a race shall be submitted prior to the start of the race, subject to entry deadlines as determined by the race-giving organisation.
    - i. All entry forms should provide a section for the date of birth of all animals participating in the event.
  - b. The race-giving organisation may reject any entry for just cause.
    - i. Any rejected entrant shall be notified within 7 days of receipt of entry.
2. Drivers
  - a. The driver starting a team in the first heat of a race shall drive that team throughout the race.
  - b. A change in driver can only be made as a result of illness or injury to the authorised entrant and must have the approval of the Race Marshal.
  - c. Any driver disqualified in any heat of the race is not eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
3. Dogs
  - a. The Race Marshal may disallow entry of any team or dog for just cause.
  - b. Any team or dog coming to the starting line, which, in the opinion of the Race Marshal, is unfit or incapable of safely completing the trail, shall be disqualified.
  - c. Any team or dog not starting the first heat of a race shall not be eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
  - d. Any team or dog disqualified in any heat of the race shall not be eligible to compete in the remainder of the race.
  - e. Dogs participating in a race must be at least twelve (12) months old.

4. Disease
  - a. No dog or equipment shall be brought from a kennel where rabies, distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, or any other contagious disease exists.
  - b. If the Race Veterinarian diagnoses any dog present in the race area to have a contagious disease, that team shall be disqualified and shall immediately leave the race area.
5. Identification
  - a. In races of more than one heat, each dog shall be marked for identification prior to the start of the first heat of the race.
  - b. Dogs dropped from teams after the first heat of a race involving more than two (2) heats, shall be marked a second time to indicate their disqualification to run in subsequent heats.
6. **Size of team**
  - a. A Limited Eight-Dog Class Team shall consist of not more than eight (8) dogs, and not less than six (7) dogs.
  - b. A Limited Six-Dog Class Team shall consist of not more than six (6) dogs, and not less than four (5) dogs.
  - c. A Limited Four-Dog Class Team shall consist of not more than four (4) dogs, and not less than Three (4) dogs.
  - d. A Limited Three-Dog Class Team shall consist of not more than three (3) dogs, and not less than two (3) dogs.
  - e. A Limited Two-Dog Class Team shall consist of two (2) dogs.
  - f. in heated races, after the first heat and each subsequent heat a driver may voluntarily reduce the size of the team subject to the following class minimums:
    1. A limited eight-dog class team shall consist of not more than eight (8) dogs, and not less than six (6) dogs.
    2. A limited six (6) dog class team shall consist of not more than six (6) dogs , and not less than four (4) dog.
    3. A limited four (4) dog class team shall consist of not more than four (4) dogs, and not less than three (3) dogs.
    4. A limited three (3) dog class team shall consist of not more than three (3) dogs, and not less than two (2) dogs.
    5. A limited two dog class team shall consist of two (2) dogs.
  - f. Class minimums also apply to freight classes.
7. Temperature
  - a. If the temperature reaches 13 degrees C (55 degrees F), before the start of the race, the race cannot start. Once the race has commenced, if the temperature rises above 13 degrees, mushers shall be notified, and teams may start at the musher's discretion.
  - b. If, at the discretion of the Race Marshal, the humidity has reached a high that would be detrimental to the health of the dogs, the classes not yet run shall be cancelled for that day.

## B. MEDICATIONS ADMINISTERED TO DOGS

1. Prohibited Drugs
 

See the "NZFSS List of Forbidden Substances and Methods for Dogs".
2. NZFSS will allow a positive test for previously declared paracitides 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.
3. Drug Testing
  - a. If an organisation intends to test for prohibited drugs, it shall use NZFSS Drug Testing Procedures and shall declare so on the entry form.
  - b. 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.
  - c. If an owner or driver refuses to allow a sample to be collected from a dog, that team shall be disqualified from the event.
  - d. If any dog in a team shows a positive test of a prohibited drug, that team is subject to disqualification, the decision to be made following a hearing.
  - e. 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.
  - f. 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.

## C. EQUIPMENT

1. Inspection
  - a. Drivers, teams and equipment shall be available for inspection in the vehicle holding area at least ten (10) minutes before their scheduled time of departure.
  - b. A team in harness shall not be required to stand for inspection longer than six (6) minutes before the scheduled time of departure.
  - c. Inspection shall take place in an area that does not interfere with teams in the start or finish chutes.
  - d. A team shall be available for inspection after each heat at the request of the Race Marshal.
  - e. All equipment is subject to the approval of the Race Marshal.
2. Harnesses and Lines
  - a. All dogs shall be harnessed in single file or double file.
  - b. All dogs shall be fastened to the tug line by a neck line and tail line with the exception of the leader(s) which shall be harnessed in the team by a tail line but may run with or without a neck line.

The RGO may, by way of notification on the entry form, make it compulsory for lead dogs to be attached together by a neck line for all classes, except Single Dog and Single Dog Freight, as it sees fit.
  - c. A snub line must be carried that is of sufficient length to secure the rig in the event of injury to dog or musher and/or equipment failure.
  - d. A rubber shock absorber and safety line shall be fitted to the tug line.
3. Wheeled Rigs/Sleds
  - a. All Wheeled Rigs may have a platform capable of safely and securely holding any dog on the team.
    - i. All Wheeled Rigs may carry a dog bag capable of safely restraining a struggling dog and if necessary covering a severely injured or dead dog. The dog bag may be integrated with the rig.
  - b. All Wheeled Rigs must have a minimum of three wheels but shall be capable of being driven and controlled by a single driver.
  - c. Shall be free standing.
  - d. Shall have an adequate brake system.
  - e. Shall be equipped with a manual steering mechanism.
  - f. Shall not exceed 160cm (64 inches) overall width.
  - g. May be motorised but used with the understanding that the motor will not be used under the agreement of entry.
  - h. The use of a motorised rig will be stated by the entrant on the entry form.
  - i. Freight Class
    - i. For two (2) dogs the freight shall be a minimum combined weight of 70kgs including the rig. All added weight must be securely fitted to the rig. e.g. if the rig weighs 26kgs the added weight shall be 44kgs so the total combined freight weighs 70 kgs.
    - ii. For every additional dog added to the team a further minimum of 20kg shall be securely attached to the rig. Freight Weight will be calculated on the class maximum not the team size.
    - iii. Weights shall be checked by the Race Marshal after the race completion on adequate scales.
    - iv. Where possible scales shall be made available before the race for mushers to check their combined weight.
  - j. No scooters.
  - k. Sleds for the snow classes shall have a platform capable of safely and securely holding any dog on the team.
    - i. All Sleds for the snow classes shall carry a dog bag capable of safely restraining a struggling dog and if necessary covering a severely injured or dead dog.

The dog bag may be integrated with the sled.
4. Single Dog Class & 2 Dog Bike/Scooter Class
  - a. Towed vehicle shall have no more than two (2) wheels.
  - b. Shall have a safe steering mechanism.

- c. Shall have an adequate braking system.
  - d. Pedals shall have to be removed or disabled, as pedalling is not permitted.
  - e. Freight Class (Single Dog Only)
    - i. The towed vehicle may also be a rig/sled as described in C. 3. Wheeled rigs/sleds above but excluding the requirement to carry a dog bag (3.a.i) .
    - ii. For the one dog class the towed vehicle and freight combined shall weigh a minimum 35kg.
5. Other Equipment
- a. A muzzle or any collar that can be hooked as a full choke shall be prohibited.
  - b. Safety approved helmets shall be worn by all mushers in the single dog bike/scooter class. In addition to this, the RGO may, by way of notification on the entry form, make helmets compulsory for any classes it sees fit.
  - c. A racing number for each driver shall be provided by the race-giving organisation. The driver shall display this number on his/her person throughout the race.
- D. FINISH TIME DISQUALIFICATION (Optional)
- 1. A team shall be disqualified from competing in subsequent heats if its total elapsed time exceeds either 1.25 or 1.50 times the average time of the three fastest teams in the same heat of the same class.
  - 2. All entrants shall be notified, prior to entry, if a time qualification factor is to be used, stating which factor and to which classes it shall be applied.

## PART II - START / FINISH RULES

### A. DRAWING

- 1. The starting positions for the first heat of a race shall be determined by a drawing held prior to the race at a time and place designated by the race-giving organisation.
- 2. The owner, driver or designated proxy of each team shall draw their own starting position. In their absence, the starting position shall be drawn by the Race Marshal or his representative.
- 3. The order of the draw shall not be changed either by addition or substitution. Late entries shall be added in order of receipt.

### B. SINGLE START RACE

- 1. The first days starting positions shall be determined by the draw with Number 1 starting first, Number 2 starting second, etc.
- 2. The second day's starting positions shall be determined by the first day's times, with the fastest teams starting first, the second fastest team starting second, etc.
- 3. In races of more than two (2) heats,
  - a. the total elapsed time of the previous heats shall determine the starting positions with the fastest team starting first, the second fastest team starting second, etc.
  - b. or, at the option of the race-giving organisation, the elapsed time of the previous single heat shall determine the starting positions with the fastest team starting first, the second fastest team starting second, etc.
  - c. If the optional start (b. above) is to apply to the race, all entrants shall be notified prior to making entry, stating to which classes it shall apply.

### C. DUAL START RACE

- 1. The first day's starting positions shall be determined by the draw with the Numbers 1 and 2 starting together first, Numbers 3 and 4 starting together second, etc.
- 2. The second day's starting positions shall be determined by the first day's times. The finishing list will be divided into two groups, with the fastest team in the faster group starting with the fastest team in the slower group, followed by the second fastest teams in each group, etc.
- 3. In races of more than two (2) heats, the total elapsed time of the previous heats will determine the groupings and starting positions, with the fastest teams in each group starting first, etc.
- 4. If option b.(under "single start race") is to apply to a race of more than two (2) heats, the elapsed time of the previous single heat shall determine the groupings and starting positions, with the fastest teams in each group starting first, etc.

### D. EQUAL TIMES

- 1. If the total elapsed time of two teams is identical, the order of start for these teams shall be the reverse order in which they started in the preceding heat.
- 2. Teams with equal times for the entire race, shall be awarded the higher finishing position.

3. The purse for the tied place and the next lower places(s) shall be combined and divided equally among those teams tied for that place.

#### E. STARTING POINT AND TIME

1. The brushbow of sled or front wheel of rig shall determine the starting point of the team.
2. Trail time for all teams shall begin at the original scheduled time of departure, except for a late starting team, for which trail time begins at the second scheduled time of departure. However the team **may be penalised** with x minutes extra racing time for late starting. (x = one starting interval).
3. A team which fails to be in the starting position at its scheduled starting time, will be declared a "late starting team".
  - a. A late-starting team shall not be allowed to start until after the last team entered in its class has started, and after the prescribed starting interval.
  - b. A late-starting team shall not interfere with any other team.
  - c. If more than one team is declared late, those teams shall start in their originally scheduled starting order.
  - d. If a team is late to the starting line for its second scheduled time of departure for any one heat, that team shall be disqualified.
  - e. Late-starting teams should be counted down as if they were there ie no musher should be required to come to the line before their allotted start time.
4. A team not clearing the Starting Chute (Minimum distance 30 metres [100 feet]) prior to the scheduled start of the next team may be disqualified.

#### F. ASSISTANCE IN THE STARTING CHUTE

1. The amount and type of assistance in the starting chute shall be determined and announced by the Race Marshal prior to the start of the first heat of the event.
2. **Drivers are responsible for arranging an adequate number of handlers needed to safely lead their team to the starting position.**
3. **The RGO may provide a chute marshal that can assist a driver that may not clear the start chute in time of the scheduled start of the next team. Chute marshal are encouraged to handle equipment only.**
4. **Once a team is beyond the start chute area all trail rules shall apply.**

#### G. FINISH

1. A team shall have finished the heat when the first dog on the team crosses the finish line.
2. If a loose team crosses the finish line ahead of its driver, that team shall have finished when the driver reaches the finish line.
3. When a dual starting chute is used as a finish chute, a team may return on either trail.

### PART III - TRAIL RULES

#### A. FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

1. A team and driver shall run the entire course as established by the race-giving organisation.
  - a. The course shall be of a suitable surface, avoiding such surfaces as concrete, black top and sharp rock gravel, except for necessary road crossings.
2. If a team leaves the trail, the driver shall return the team to the point at which they left the trail.
3. The trail shall be followed as marked:
  - a. "Right turn" shall be indicated by a red marker on the right side of the trail.
  - b. "Left turn" shall be indicated by a red marker on the left side of the trail.
  - c. "Straight ahead" shall be indicated by blue markers.
  - d. **A yellow marker indicates "CAUTION" is advisable and that passing is inadvisable.**
    - i. **yellow marker shall be placed either before or at the spot require caution.**
    - ii. **prior to the start of the race, drivers shall be informed of the location of any caution area on the trail.**
    - iii. **the need for caution markers should be avoided and used only if no alternative route is available.**
    - iv. **if the caution area covers a length of the trail, two yellow markers shall be placed on the same stake at the beginning of the caution area. The end of the caution area shall be indicated with one yellow marker with a diagonal black stripe across the marker.**
    - v. **the length of caution trail shall not exceed 10% of the total length.**

- e. The "End of the Starting Chute" (minimum length, 30 meters (100 feet)) shall be indicated by markers on both sides of the trail.
- f. A "800 metre" (1/2 mile) marker shall be placed 800 metres from the finish line to indicate the start of the "No-Right-Of-Way Zone."

B. DRIVING A TEAM

1. A driver may ride the rig/sled, pedal or run as wished.
2. Any driver accepting a ride on any vehicle other than his/her own rig, shall be disqualified unless in case of a loose team or dog.
3. A driver shall not interfere with a competing team.
4. All dogs starting a heat shall complete the entire course, either hitched in the team or carried on the rig.
5. A dog becoming unfit after departure:
  - a. may be carried on the rig if a dog bag is available.
  - b. shall be safely held off the trail under direct supervision by the driver where no dog bag is available.
6. Carrying a passenger at any time during the race shall be prohibited unless:
  - a. Called for in the conditions of the race.
  - b. Giving a ride to a driver in an emergency situation.
7. The bike or rig/sled must be behind the dog(s) at all times while in motion.

C. ASSISTANCE ON THE TRAIL

1. All teams may receive similar assistance of any type from officials stationed at designated points along the trail as authorised by the Race Marshal.
2. Drivers running in the same heat may assist each other in any manner authorised by the Race Marshal.
3. Handler and spectator assistance shall be limited to holding the gig, except in the case of a loose team, or a team so unmanageable as to create a clear and present danger to themselves, other teams or persons.
4. No one shall assist a team by wilfully pacing it.

D. LOOSE TEAMS AND DOGS

1. All drivers must assume that a loose team or dog is an endangered team or dog.
2. A Loose team or dog(s) shall not delay or interfere with another team.
3. The driver of the loose team must overtake the loose team by the quickest means available to ensure the safety of the loose team.
  - a. In the event that the driver cannot quickly and safely recover his/her team, the driver must accept assistance including a ride, when available, to recover his team. Failure to accept available assistance may result in disqualification of the driver of the loose team. The Race Marshall shall determine if a driver is to be disqualified.
  - b. Any person(s) is/are encouraged to stop and hold a loose team or dog.
  - c. Drivers who receive a ride to recover a team will be assessed a time penalty of 20% of the total elapsed time of the heat in which they received the ride.
  - d. A loose team or dog may resume the trail without penalty, providing the team/dog has completed the entire trail and the driver has only received outside assistance limited to holding the loose team or dog.

E. RIGHT OF WAY

1. In a dual start, the team with the lead dog farthest ahead at the end of the chute barrier shall have the right of way.
2. When teams are passing on a single trail,
  - a. The team travelling downhill shall have the right of way.
  - b. On level terrain, the Race Marshal shall determine and announce, prior to the start of the race, whether the in-coming or out-going team has the right of way.
3. In the 800 metre (1/2 mile) "No-Right-Of-Way zone", no team shall have the right of way over a finishing team.

## F. PASSING

1. When one team driver intends to pass another team, the passing team driver may request the right of way (right of way being any part of the trail which is clear of a team; left, right or centre) when the lead dog(s) come within 15 meters (50 feet) of the rig/sled of the team being overtaken.
2. The overtaken team driver shall make way for the passing team by moving to one side of the trail *and* slowing his team, or stopping if requested to do so (within reason) by the overtaking team driver.
3. Once a team has been passed, that team shall not re-pass until:
  - a. In Unlimited or Limited classes involving nine (9) or more dogs, after no less than four (4) minutes or 1.6 kilometres (1 mile).
  - b. In Limited classes involving eight (8) dogs or less, after no less than two (2) minutes or 800 metres (1/2 mile).
  - c. Single Dog classes, after no less than 30 seconds or 200 meters.
  - d. At any lesser interval when both drivers are in agreement.
4. If the passing team becomes tangled as a result of the pass (and to allow time to straighten the lines), that team's driver may require the overtaken team driver to stop for no longer than one (1) minute, in Unlimited and Limited classes involving eight (8) or more dogs, one-half (1/2) minute in all other classes.
5. A driver coming upon two or more teams stopped together, may pass all such teams. The stopped team drivers shall make every effort to clear the trail for the moving team(s).
6. Teams following each other shall maintain an interval of no less than one (1) team length, except when passing or in the "No-Right-Of-Way zone".

## PART IV - CONDUCT

### A. RESPONSIBILITY AND SPORTSMANSHIP

1. All drivers shall be responsible for the conduct of their dogs, their designated handler and themselves whenever in the race area or on the trail.
2. Common sense and good sportsmanship shall prevail. If the Race Marshal determines that driver, handler or team conduct at any time in the race area or on the trail is detrimental to the sport/race, that team shall be disqualified.

### B. ABUSE OF DOGS

1. Abuse of a dog, with or without an implement, shall be prohibited.
2. No whip, goad or any other implement of chastisement may be used or carried.

## PART V - RULES VIOLATIONS

### A. REPORTS BY RACE OFFICIALS

1. Race Officials shall report overt rule violations to the Race Marshal verbally, in person or by radio, immediately or directly following the heat in which the violation occurred.
2. The Race Marshal shall act, at his discretion, on any overt violations witnessed and reported by Race Officials.

### B. REPORTS BY RACE CONTESTANTS

1. Drivers wishing to report an alleged violation of the rules by another contestant shall notify the Race Marshal immediately following the heat in which the incident occurred. Notification may be verbal.
2. All verbal driver reports shall be followed with a written report, given to the Race Marshal within one (1) hour of the completion of the heat in which the alleged violation occurred.

### C. PROTESTS AND HEARINGS

1. Any driver or race official implicated in a report of an alleged violation of the rules may make a protest and request a hearing before the Race Marshal.
2. Said hearing shall be granted by the Race Marshal.

### D. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

1. For violation of any NZFSS Race Rule, the Race Marshal shall issue either:-
  - a verbal warning to the driver.

- add a penalty of between one and ten starting interval (to a maximum of five(5) minutes) to the drivers finishing time.
  - or disqualify the driver and team from the race.
- a. No other disciplinary action shall be imposed.
  - b. Decisions shall be announced as promptly as practical, but no later than two (2) hours prior to the start of any ensuing heat(s).
  - c. Any disciplinary action following the final heat of the race shall be acted upon prior to the awards ceremony.
  - d. In the case of drug testing, the above time schedule does not apply to allow for laboratory findings and hearings, should the latter become necessary.
2. The decisions of the Race Marshal shall be final.