

2008 Seeley Lake Stage Race Rules

The first stage of the Seeley Lake Stage Races will start in Seeley Lake area. This race is under the direction of M.U.T.T. (Mushers for Unified Trail Travel). Entrants are encouraged to prepare themselves and their team for potentially hazardous trail and weather conditions. Montana is subject to high winds, drifting snow, extremely low temperatures, rain and severe snowstorms during the month of January. Mushers might expect temperatures ranging from -35 to 50 above. Artic style cold weather and rain gear may be needed. The trail will be extensively marked and the progress of the mushers will be monitored as closely as possible depending upon the weather conditions. Extreme weather may prevent volunteers or race officials from immediately helping a lost or injured musher so prepare accordingly.

SECTION I- ENTRY, MEETINGS, STARTING POSITIONS

Entry Requirements:

The first stage race begins in Seeley Lake on Friday, January 11, 2008.

1. The entry fee is \$175.00 which includes a \$35.00 membership in M.U.T.T.. The application, Release of Liability and entry fee must be postmarked or received by midnight January 4, 2008. Applications received after that date and just prior to the musher meeting will be assessed a \$100.00 late fee. No shows will forfeit 50% of the entry fee.
2. Teams may enter in the name of the owner, sponsor, or musher or any other name the entrant chooses. The musher must be designated at the time of entry. A substitute musher may replace the designated musher at any time before the musher meeting. Substitution after the musher meeting is subject to the Race Marshall's approval. No shows will forfeit 50% of the entry fee.
3. Mushers under the age of 18 may enter the race by receiving special written permission from the Race Committee. Letters or personal presentation of each case must be received or heard by the Race Committee prior to January 4, 2008.

Pre-Race Requirements/Meetings:

1. A mandatory Vet Check will be conducted on January 11, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. at the Seeley Lake Community Center located on the North end of the Town of Seeley Lake. Mushers arriving in Seeley Lake on Wednesday or early Thursday are encouraged to have their vet checks with the 300 entrants starting at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday the 10th.
2. Each musher must show proof that the dogs in his/her team have been vaccinated for Rabies.
3. The musher's meeting will be held following the completion of the Vet Checks.

4. The race officials include the Race Marshall, the Race Veterinarian, and Race Judges. All officials will be identified to the mushers at the pre-race meeting.
5. Mushers will choose their starting positions at the mushers meeting based their order of entry. The committee will log the date and time mailed entries are received. On site entries will be added to the list as their application is received and processed.
6. Mushers will be assigned a bib and/or banner. The bib and/or banner must be displayed on the musher or sled in a manner that is clearly visible to officials throughout the race. Mushers must return the race bib and/or banner to the Race Committee at the end of the race or forfeit the \$25.00 deposit which will be collected prior to the race start.
7. Dogs will be tagged and identified prior to the race start and the tags must be worn throughout the race.
8. Purse money or merchandise will be awarded for this race. The purse and the number of places that will be awarded cash or merchandise will be announced as soon as possible.

SECTION II – DOGS, VET CHECKS, DRUGS

1. Mushers must begin the race with no more than 8 dogs and no fewer than 6 dogs, and must complete the race with no fewer than 6 dogs. There is a 10 dog pool limit. At no time may a team travel with less than 6 dogs in harness and attached to the gang line.
2. Any dog dropped before or during the race will be marked out and cannot be reentered or substituted.
3. All dogs are subject to veterinary checks at any time prior to, during, and after the race. Dogs not fit to begin or continue the race may be removed from the race at the discretion of the Race Veterinarian. The Race Veterinarian may also require a musher to delay his/her team if the veterinarian believes dogs in the team require rest or medical attention.
4. No injectable substance and no oral or topical drug of any kind which may suppress or disguise the signs of illness or injury in the dog may be carried in the sled or used on dogs by the musher.
5. Race Veterinarians have the authority to collect blood or urine at any time prior to, during or after the race.
6. Administration of any drug shall be done only with the prior knowledge and consent of the Race Veterinarian.
7. Unsafe or inhumane treatment of dogs is strictly forbidden. Whips may not be carried or used during this race.
8. Knowingly bringing sick dogs to a race is prohibited.

SECTION III – EQUIPMENT/FOOD

1. Each musher must carry as required equipment, at all times, the following:
 - a. a sleeping bag (winter or arctic weight).
 - b. 2 headlamps and adequate batteries.
 - c. ax.
 - d. first aid kit which includes pressure bandages and tape.
 - e. cable cutter if a cable tow line is used.
 - f. 4 dog booties for each dog in the team.
 - g. compass.
 - h. waterproof matches.
 - i. knife.
 - j. food will consist of a minimum of one (1) pound of dog food per dog and one (1) day's rations for the musher.
2. No on the trail littering or discarding of equipment or supplies will be allowed. All litter must be properly disposed of.
3. No GPS units or cell phones are allowed.
4. Each musher may choose his own sled provided that it that has a tandem hitch with one tow line and not fan type hitch. Braking devices must be placed between the runners and not extend beyond the length of the runners; all sleds must be provided with a brush bow. The sled must be capable of hauling any injured dogs as well as carrying mandatory equipment and food.

SECTION IV – STARTING PROCEDURES, STOPS AND RACE TIMING:

A. STARTING PROCEDURES:

1. Mushers must start at the assigned position and time.
2. Teams will leave the starting line at two (2) minute intervals.
3. Any musher not able to start according to his/her starting position or as determined by the previous stage results, will have to do so two (2) minutes after the scheduled last place musher. Trail time for each team shall begin at its original start time. If a team fails at a second aftermath to the Race Marshall may invoke a time penalty or withdraw the team.
4. Late start teams will leave in a succeeding two (2) minute interval order. Additional time may be allowed at the discretion of the Race Marshall.

B. RACE TIMING:

1. The original, assigned starting time will be used in calculating the total race time.

2. The first stage will be timed and counted, it will become part of the musher's official race time. The arrival order of the first stage will be reversed and shall become the starting order of the second stage.
3. The fastest team each day will start in the last position the next day. This procedure will be followed throughout each stage of the race.
4. To be valid, each stage and related times must be certified by the Race Marshall. The Race Marshall may refuse to certify the times and not allow a stage if he and the judges find any evidence that reveals irregularities in officiating including trail breaking, marking and timing. The Race Marshall may either cancel or request the stage to be run again.

C. STAGES, STOPS AND CHECKPOINTS:

1. The distance between each start and arrival is considered a stage. The start and arrival locations are considered checkpoints. Mushers will be requested to personally sign in upon arrival at a checkpoint and have their mandatory gear checked upon any Race Official's request.
2. The Race Marshall may impose a mandatory stop during any stage. This stage will be considered one stage with one total accumulated time.

SECTION V. COURSE RELATED RULES:

A. RACE COURSE:

1. Mushers must follow the marked and/or broken race trail. Leaving the marked and/or broken race trail for purposes of gaining a competitive advantage over other mushers is not allowed.

B. SKIING BEHIND SLED:

1. Skiing behind the sled is strictly forbidden.

C. LOST TEAM OR DOGS/DROPPED DOGS:

1. Mushers may drop any number of dogs from their team as long as 6 dogs remain in harness and attached to the gang line. Mushers may not sign in at a checkpoint unless all of the dogs in their team which left the previous checkpoint are present. Dropped dogs may not be put back in the team. The Committee will not accept legal responsibility for dropped dogs left in the truck.
2. Any musher who becomes separated from his/her team may use whatever means possible to recover the team.

In order for a lost team to continue the race if it has left the trail, the team must return to the trail at the point of departure and complete the entire race route.

3. Should the team advance up the trail and later be recovered on the trail, the musher may continue the race without returning to the point where he/she became separated from the team.
4. In the event a dog or dogs are separated from the team (lost) at the starting line or at a checkpoint, the dog(s) must be recovered and in the control of the musher before the musher will be permitted to continue the race. If a dog is separated or lost on the trail, the musher will make every effort to find the dog(s). The musher may advance or return on the trail to a checkpoint if the dog(s) lost on the trail cannot be found. A musher may not continue the race by designating a lost dog as a dropped dog. The Race Committee and/or volunteers may assist in searching for lost dogs but, are not obligated to take extraordinary efforts to search for lost dogs.

D. ASSISTANCE:

1. Motorized vehicles may not lead or pace teams unless at the direction of the race officials.
2. There will be no loose leaders.
3. All dogs will be in the team or on the sled.
4. Mushers may not use food or equipment from any other location along the trail except in an emergency. The use of emergency food or equipment shall be reported to Race Officials at the earliest opportunity.

E. SPORTSMANSHIP & PASSING:

1. Mushers must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Discussions about these rules or other aspects of the race must be conducted with the race officials at an appropriate time and place. At all race functions, conduct detrimental to the Seeley Lake Race Committee, its sponsors, or its volunteers is subject to penalty.
2. When a team approaches to within 25 feet of another team, the team behind has the immediate right of way to pass upon request. The musher ahead must honor the request of the passing musher. The passing musher may request the musher ahead to slow or stop his/her team. The ahead musher will slow or stop and hold his/her team to the best of his/her ability for a time until the other team has passed. The passing musher will be allowed to pass and if the musher cannot pass, the musher must wait at least fifteen (15) minutes before attempting to pass again.
3. The musher failing to pass is expected to stay 50 to 100 yards behind the ahead musher to avoid slowing or interfering with the ahead team.

SECTION VI. RULE VIOLATIONS & SANCTIONS:

1. Any observed violation of the race rules must be reported to a race official at the nearest checkpoint or within 2 hours of the time that the musher registering the protest crosses the finish line. The decision of the race officials shall be final.
2. Rules violations subject the violator to the following range of penalties:
 - a. Warning (verbal or written)
 - b. Censure (public or private)
 - c. Fines up to \$500 depending upon the seriousness of the violation.
 - d. Time delay
 - e. Disqualification
 - f. Ineligibility for future races

Penalties a through e may be administered by race officials. Penalty f. may be administered by the Race Committee.

SECTION VII. FINISH:

1. A team officially finishes the race when the nose of any dog in the team crosses the finish line. In the event the musher is not with the team when it finishes, the finish time will be officially recorded when the musher crosses the line after the team.
2. Mushers must also attend the post race banquet which will be held January 13, 2008.