



# **YUKON QUEST ALASKA 550 2025 RULES**

Official Race Rules for the 2025 Yukon Quest Alaska 550 Sled Dog Race

**English is the official language of the Yukon Quest Alaska Sled Dog Race**

**All dollar amounts are in U.S. currency**

**Yukon Quest Alaska (YQA) is synonymous with YQIL**

**CODE OF THE TRAIL:** Competitive efforts in the spirit of the Yukon Quest are only valid if dog care is implemented at the highest level. A dog musher recognizes and accepts that honor on the trail is only achieved through the constant respect and care for the dogs. It is on this the mushers will be judged.

Yukon Quest International, Ltd.

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## **GENERAL RACE PROCEDURE**

### **1. Race Start:**

The official starting date for the 2025 race will be **Saturday, February 1, 2025** at 11am local time. The official starting place will be Fairbanks, Alaska unless otherwise designated by Yukon Quest International Limited (YQIL), hereinafter referred to as Yukon Quest Alaska (YQA). Any changes to this rule may be made by the Race Marshal with approval from the YQA Rules Committee. The race will be held as scheduled, regardless of weather conditions. All fines and penalties listed are a maximum and are at the discretion of the Race Marshal.

### **2. Entry Fee, Dates, Limits:**

2025 Yukon Quest Alaska 550 Sled Dog Race entry opens September 28, 2024. **Receipt of the entry fee, completed application form, completed musher's profile, and musher photo (minimum 1 MB) will constitute the musher's intent to enter the race, and further acknowledges the musher understands and agrees to comply with each and every Rule as stated. YQA reserves the right to reject any entry.**

- Entries are determined on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Entries close at 5:00 pm (via email: [director@yukonquestalaska.com](mailto:director@yukonquestalaska.com) or hand delivered) local time January 10, 2025.
- The maximum number of teams for the race is 25. Once the maximum is reached, a waiting list will be established, on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The minimum number of teams will be 15 by December 20, 2024. At this point YQA will decide to run a different format or cancelation of race. All entries will be returned if the race is cancelled.
  - To qualify for the waiting list, the official entry form must be completed, and a \$100 non-refundable fee paid. This \$100 fee can be used towards the entry fee should a position become open.
  - If a musher withdraws from the list of 25, the name at the top of the waiting list will be moved up to the entry list, upon receipt of the rest of the required fees.
  - **The slot will be held open for no more than five business days after notification.**
- **The total entry fee is \$1000.00.**

#### **a. Conditions of Entry:**

- All mushers entered in the race must be members in good standing of YQA.
- Kennel entries must name a musher to enter. Mushers may be changed, or entries may be transferred to another kennel for a fee of \$100.
- Kennel transfers and musher changes for unforeseen non-medical reasons are not allowed after 25 teams have entered or after January 17, 2025.
- Substitute mushers must meet all YQA musher qualifications.
- Mushers must be a minimum of 18 years of age by the start of the race.
- Mushers must have a demonstrated ability to complete a long-distance sled-dog race.
- Mushers must complete a **YQA sanctioned 300-mile race or have completed the Yukon Quest 1000-mile race or the Iditarod in the previous five years. (2020-2024).**
  - Musher Assessment Forms must be on record with the Yukon Quest Alaska for qualifiers or submitted with entry. If qualifier is run between sign up date and pre-race vet check, the musher assessment form is due within 10 days of running a qualifying race
  - **Qualifying races must be completed within 30 months of the start of the Yukon Quest Alaska race with the exception of the Yukon Quest 1000 or the Iditarod.**
- YQA may deem that previous or other racing experience is considered equivalent to one or both of the qualifiers. **Mushers applying for this consideration must do so in writing by the closing date of regular entries.**
  - Note:** No race allowing outside assistance (optional or otherwise) will be approved or accepted as a qualifier for any Yukon Quest Alaska events.
- All applicants will have their applications to enter the Yukon Quest Alaska reviewed by the YQA Rules Committee.
- **Entry will not be accepted until unpaid fines and bills to YQA are paid.**
- **YQA may honor censures from the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and from other sled dog racing organizations..**
- **No one convicted of animal abuse or neglect may enter the Yukon Quest Alaska.**
- **Each musher shall sign any and all documents or promotional material requested by YQA prior to or at the Mushers' Meeting. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.**

**b. Substitution of Mushers for Medical Reasons:**

Substitution of mushers for unforeseen medical reasons may be permitted up to the start of the pre-race mushers' meeting, upon approval of the YQA Rules Committee and payment of a \$100 fee (non-refundable). **Substitute mushers must meet all YQA musher qualifications.**

**c. Withdrawal Before Race:**

An entrant withdrawing for any reason on or before midnight December 16, 2024 will be refunded \$500.00 of the entry fee. An entrant withdrawing between December 17, 2024 and January 10, 2025 will be refunded \$250.00 of the entry fee. An entrant withdrawing after midnight January 10, 2025, will forfeit the entire entry fee.

**3. Course and Checkpoints:**

The course covers approximately 550 miles of mostly Arctic wilderness, some of it on and along the Yukon River. The trail will be broken and marked prior to the race, but due to weather conditions there will be no guarantee of broken trail during the race.

**Official Checkpoints are as follows:**

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Fairbanks  | 5. Circle  |
| 2. Two Rivers | 6. Eagle   |
| 3. Mile 101   | 7. Chicken |
| 4. Central    | 8. Tok     |

**Official Dog Drops are as follows:**

Slaven's Cabin

**The Yukon Quest Alaska organization may relocate, remove, or add a checkpoint or dog drop, should it deem it necessary for the benefit of the race and the participants.**

**4. Food/Equipment Shipment:**

- **YQA will supply Methanol at Eagle and Chicken.**
- **Mushers will supply their own methanol (such as HEET) at Two Rivers, Mile 101, Central, and Circle and packed in separate bags from food and other supplies and marked "HEET".**
- **Straw will be furnished by YQA at each checkpoint. Half a bale will be provided at Slaven's Cabin.**

The team's handlers will deliver their own drop bags to road system checkpoints prior to the arrival of the team.

**Remote Check point:**

Remote Checkpoint drop bags for Eagle and Chicken will be turned in at the official YQ Food Drop. (Date and Time TBD)

All food and equipment shipped to checkpoints for the race must be in CLOTH BURLAP BAGS OR WOVEN POLY-BAGS, PERMANENTLY MARKED WITH MUSER NAME.

- GROSS WEIGHT NOT TO EXCEED 40 POUNDS / 18.1 KILOGRAMS.
- Bags must be turned into YQA prior to food shipment deadline. TBD
- **Straw is not to be shipped in drop bags.**
- If a musher obtains dog food between checkpoints, that musher may be penalized or disqualified.

## 5. Promotional Material and Events:

YQA may require a small amount of promotional freight as part of the mandatory load. Promotional material must be turned in to a race official at the completion of the race, or when scratching, withdrawn, or disqualified.

Attendance at the following events is mandatory for Musers:

1. Meet the Musers and Bib Draw
2. Pre-race mushers' and Handler's meeting
3. Finish and Awards Banquet (optional, but strongly encouraged for non-finishers)

Participation in the **Quest Guest Program** is mandatory, as is any event associated with the Quest Guest Program. **A tag sled must be provided by the musher for this event.**

**Failure to attend any mandatory event will result in a \$150 fine for each event missed.**

## 6. Shipping Dropped Dogs:

Musers will pay \$50 per dog to YQA for all transportation expenses incurred by or relevant to the return of their dropped dogs from fly-in only dog drops and checkpoints. Transportation for dogs dropped at other checkpoints or dog drops (along the road system) must be arranged for by the musher.

## 7. Race Officials (Race Marshal and Race Judges) and Race Veterinarians:

The intent of the rules will guide the Race Marshal and Race Judges in their decisions. ***The RACE MARSHAL is in charge of all aspects of the race*** from the first day of sign up until 30 days after the last team has crossed the finish line. Race Judges will act as deputies of the Race Marshal.

**The Race Marshal may waive or reduce monetary or time penalties for unforeseen circumstances that may befall a musher.**

The Race Marshal or a Race Judge in conjunction with a Race Veterinarian shall have final authority to remove a dog(s) from the race for medical or other reasons.

Race Veterinarians are present throughout the race to monitor the health and welfare of all dogs, advise mushers in caring for their dogs' medical needs, and provide veterinary treatment for dropped dogs, if necessary.

## 8. Pre-Race Vet Check:

All dogs will undergo a thorough physical examination before the race starts. Any dog which cannot qualify for a certificate of good health will not run in the race. All examinations must be done within 15 days prior to the start of the race.

If an entered team or dog competes in a race of greater than 150 miles during the 15 days prior to start of the YQA race, the YQA required vet check must be completed after that race.

**All teams attending the YQA Pre-Race Vet Check will have the entered musher present.**

The tentative date for the Pre-Race Vet Check is January 30, 2025. Locations and times will be confirmed at a later date. Teams must be scheduled through the office.

### Vaccine requirements:

- Combination Vaccine that includes, but is not limited to, **Parvovirus** and **Distemper** between **March 2, 2024** and **January 3, 2025**.
- **Leptospirosis** Vaccine between **March 2, 2024** and **January 3, 2025**. Leptospirosis can also be part of the Combination Vaccine.
- **Bordetella** (kennel cough) **intra-nasal or injectable** between **September 2, 2024** and **January 3, 2025**.
- **Rabies Vaccine given no earlier than March 5, 2022 and no later than January 2, 2025**

### **Certifications and Records Requirements**

- Rabies Certificates and vaccine records will be required to prove vaccination status.
- **Dates of administration** of DAPP, Bordetella, Leptospirosis and Rabies Vaccines are required.
- **Serial numbers** of the vaccines are required for those who self-vaccinate their dogs.
- Save the stickers / serial numbers from the vaccine vials as proof.

### **Health Exams**

- YQA 550 entrants who are **Iditarod, Yukon Quest 1000 mile, or YQA 550 veterans** from 2020-2024 may have their dogs examined by a YQA approved licensed vet of their choice, at the musher's expense.
- **All other entrants must have their dogs examined at the YQA official Vet Check. Entrants who are required to participate in the YQA official Vet Check must attend or they cannot start the race. YQA will not provide this service after the official vet check.**
- A waiver may be considered in certain circumstances. **Mushers applying for this consideration must do so in writing by the closing date of regular entries.**
- The Race Marshal in conjunction with the Head Veterinarian has authority to disqualify unfit teams examined at the official vet check.

### **Submittal Requirements**

- **Rabies certificates and vaccine records** submitted to the Yukon Quest Alaska Office by **January 10, 2025** via email ( [director@yukonquestalaska.com](mailto:director@yukonquestalaska.com) ) or hard copy in person.
- All teams attending the YQA Pre-Race Vet Check will have their dog's Health Certificates issued at the YQA Pre-Race Vet Check.
- Health Certificates for teams not attending YQA Vet Check are due by **January 24, 2025.**

**Failure to comply with the above may result in disqualification.**

### **9. Mushers and Handlers Meeting:**

It will be mandatory for all mushers to attend a meeting on Thursday, January 30, 2025 (at a time to be announced). **Failure to answer all roll calls in person will result in a \$150 fine.**

The location of these meetings will be announced by YQA.

### **10. Prize Money (U.S. Currency):**

Following is the breakdown of prize money pay-out by percentage.

|        |        |         |        |
|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| 1. 25% | 4. 10% | 7 .4.5% | 10. 3% |
| 2. 21% | 5. 8%  | 8. 4%   |        |
| 3. 16% | 6. 5%  | 9. 3.5% |        |

The 2025 purse will be announced on opening day sign-ups, September 28, 2024.

### **11. Sled:**

Only one sled per musher will be used throughout the race. Each musher has a choice of sled, subject to the condition that some kind of sled equipped with a brake must be drawn.

- The sled must be capable of safely negotiating a 550-mile trail, and of hauling any injured or fatigued dogs and the required food, materials, and equipment.
- In the event of repairs, there must not be significant alteration of size or reduction in weight.
- Tail-draggers may only be attached at the start line. If the tail-dragger is removed and remains in the musher's possession, it may be re-attached at any point.
- Help with sled repairs that is available to all mushers, may be allowed with prior approval of the Race Marshal and/or Race Judge.
- On prior approval of the Race Marshal, a destroyed sled **may** be replaced by a comparable size and weight sled, with a **time penalty of eight hours served at the last checkpoint before the finish.**

## 12. Finish and Awards Banquet:

The Finish and Awards Banquet will take place in Fairbanks, time, and location TBD. All mushers who have crossed the finish line at least 12 hours prior to the banquet will be present. The winner will have a representative of his/her dog team present for recognition. An official finish is a prerequisite for receiving awards.

- **Mushers will receive 50 percent of their prize money at the Finish and Awards Banquet.**
- The rest will be disbursed to the mushers after negative drug test results have been confirmed, and fines / fees are assessed, generally within 30 days.

Those who do not attend the Finish and Awards Banquet may be fined up to \$150.

## 13. Claims:

Each musher agrees that they are participating in the competitive event entirely upon their own initiative, risk and responsibility and will release, hold harmless, and forever discharge YQA and their *agents, officers, employees, sponsors and volunteers from any and all claims, demands, action or causes of action* on account of themselves, their dogs and their support personnel which may occur from any cause during the YQA or any phase of the YQA, including scheduled events before or after the YQA, and emergency medical treatment or rescue. Each musher agrees to read, understand, sign, have notarized and submit to YQA the Musher Release and Hold Harmless Agreement before the start of the race.

Further, each musher grants YQA the unqualified and unrestricted right to use any and all written information, photographs, video tape or other visual media of the musher, dogs and their support personnel taken during the YQA or any phase of the YQA, including scheduled events before or after the YQA, for promotional, revenue generating and/or other purposes, without compensation of any kind and without the right to approve the media or its usage.

YQA includes Yukon Quest Alaska, as well as all of their agents, officers, employees, sponsors and volunteers.

## 14. Musher's Report/Protest Form:

The Yukon Quest Alaska will only survive if the competition is conducted fairly, and the dogs are well cared for and humanely treated. **It is the duty of every musher to report all violations of these Rules to the Race Marshal or Race Judges.** The forms for reporting violations or protests are available from the Race Officials and at checkpoints. Any Mushers' Report/Protest Forms must be submitted to a Race Official within 48 hours of the final team crossing the Finish Line or within 48 hours of the Finish Banquet, whichever is later.

***Protest: a statement expressing objection on a violation of a rule***

## 15. Censure and/or Fine and/or Penalty:

In reference to action taken by the YQA Rules Committee, Race Marshal, or Race Judges during the race, YQA may censure and/or fine and/or penalize a musher for cause, including prohibition from entering a future race or races. A musher so involved may appeal the decision of the YQA. Appeals must be presented in writing to the YQA Board of Directors within 30 days of the musher being notified of the censure, fine and/or penalty. YQA will appoint an Appeal Board to conduct an informal hearing to make a decision. The Appeal Board will meet after the finish of the race. The decision of the Appeal Board is final.

***Appeal: to request a reversal on a decision***

If the YQA Appeal Board finds the decision should be set aside, the musher so involved understands and agrees that the maximum financial recovery shall be limited to the prize money for the finishing position that the musher so involved could realistically have attained but for the action taken. The musher so involved further agrees that this remedy shall be the sole and exclusive

remedy. In no event shall the musher so involved be entitled to incidental or consequential damages as they are outside the sole and exclusive remedy above provided.

## 16. Statutory Compliance:

Any musher who violates a State or Federal law while in the race may be disqualified if convicted.

## **TRAIL PROCEDURE**

**CODE OF THE TRAIL:** Competitive efforts in the spirit of the Yukon Quest Alaska are only valid if dog care is implemented at the highest level. A dog musher recognizes and accepts that honor on the trail is only achieved through the constant respect and care for the dogs. It is on this the mushers will be judged.

## 17. Common Start/Late Start:

Mushers must wear their Start Bib as they start the race. Failure to do so will result in a \$150 fine. Teams will leave the starting line at three-minute intervals. Any musher who cannot leave the starting line in the order drawn will be started after the scheduled departure time of the final team.

Any team that cannot leave the starting line within 60 minutes of the last team's departure may be disqualified. The starting time differential will be compensated for during each team's mandatory four-hour layover at either Central or Circle. For elapsed time purposes, therefore, the race will be a common-start event.

## 18. Gear and Equipment:

A GPS Tracker provided by YQA is mandatory; it must be turned in to a race official at the completion of the race, or when scratching, withdrawn, or disqualified.

a. The following items must be presented to the checker before checking in at each checkpoint:

1. Proper cold weather sleeping bag.
2. Hand ax with an overall length of at least 22 inches/56 centimeters.
3. One pair of adequate snowshoes with bindings, with a minimum area of approximately 250 square inches/1612 square centimeters each.
4. Veterinary records (loss will incur \$150 fine.) The veterinary book must be returned to a Race Judge upon completion of the race or when withdrawing for any reason.
5. Any promotional material that YQA has asked the musher to carry. YQA may require one or two banners of up to 400 square inches/ 2580 square centimeters be displayed on the sled as directed.
6. Functional cooker.
7. An adequate amount of fuel to bring three gallons of water to a boil.

Mushers should have these items in their possession at all times. If a musher loses a required article of gear between checkpoints, he/she cannot check in at the checkpoint until he/she has acquired and replaced the lost item.

- The musher may obtain items from a public or private source with the approval of the Race Marshal or Race Judge. A fine of \$150 will be assessed for each item.
- **Dogs are expected to be bedded down and cared for prior to replacing lost item(s).**

In addition to the mandatory gear listed above, items relative to the safety of the dog teams and mushers (i.e., sled brakes, mittens, etc.) may be replaced with the Race Marshal or Race Judge's approval. A fine of \$150 will be assessed for each item.

Should any mandatory gear be missing at the finish, a fine of \$150 will be assessed for each item.

- b. In addition, eight booties for each dog, either in the sled or in use, are required when a musher signs out of each checkpoint.
- c. PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons) or SENDs (Satellite Emergency Notification Devices) will be allowed at the Musher's discretion. **Activation of a PLB or SEND will constitute withdrawal or disqualification from the race.**

d. **GPS will be allowed.**

e. SPOT Units: **If either the SOS or 'hands' button (non-life-threatening situation) is activated, the musher and team shall be withdrawn or disqualified.**

NOTE: It is strongly recommended that an adequate amount of emergency food, in addition to what you carry for routine feeding and snacking, be carried in the sled at all times. A map, compass, parka, human and canine first aid kits, flares, and dog blankets are recommended.

## 19. Checkpoint:

### a. Check-in/Sign out:

Each musher must personally check in and sign out at each checkpoint before going on. The time into the checkpoint is recorded upon the team's arrival and the required gear will be checked immediately.

- Any musher failing to sign out, or to leave within 60 minutes of signing out will be assessed a \$150 penalty or **a musher and team may return on the trail to a checkpoint to sign out without penalty.**
- The 60-minute rule may be extended with the approval of the Race Marshal or Race Judge.
- Teams may return to a checkpoint for additional rest and/or supplies (with the Race Marshal's or a Race Judge's approval) without penalty.

**Race Veterinarians and mushers shall sign the vet book at all mandatory stops.**

### b. Holding Area:

**Only one handler per team will be authorized to be in the holding area at any time, to observe only or intervene in case of a dog emergency / distress. If the musher is in the holding area, the handler must leave. Two handlers may help park the team, but must leave when the team is parked**

### c. Dogs Entering and Leaving Checkpoints:

All dogs must leave checkpoints in harness and attached to the tow line. A dog may arrive at a checkpoint in the sled and leave in harness attached to the tow line. Handlers may assist the musher in safely getting the team to the check-out point.

**Musher may not lead team out of a checkpoint.**

### d. Food and Equipment:

After the musher leaves a checkpoint, all litter and remaining supplies must be bagged by the handler, have the area checked, and sign out with the Checkpoint Manager, or delegate. Straw collection procedure for each checkpoint will be determined by the Race Marshal or Race Judge. A handler with the approval of the Race Marshal or a Race Judge may collect supplies remaining after a musher has left a checkpoint. Any items not retrieved become the property of YQA.

## 20. Mandatory Stops:

- |                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| • Central or Circle | 4 hours |
| • Eagle             | 8 hours |
| • Chicken           | 6 hours |

The Start Time differential will be adjusted in Central or Circle during the 4-hour mandatory stop.

During each mandatory stop, every team will be evaluated by a YQA veterinarian. The musher must be present during the evaluation. **Vet books will be signed by the examining vet and musher.** Race Veterinarians will report their findings to Race Officials.

Time penalties will only be served at the following **designated mandatory stop: Chicken.** Any time penalties assessed after Chicken will be added to the overall finish time.



## **21. Race Course:**

All teams must follow the trail as marked or as instructed by the Race Marshal.

Mileage between Checkpoints:

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Fairbanks – Two Rivers | 45  |
| Two Rivers – Mile 101  | 82  |
| Mile 101 – Central     | 33  |
| Central – Circle       | 74  |
| Circle – Eagle         | 159 |
| Eagle – Chicken        | 94  |
| Chicken – Tok          | 80  |

## **22. Competitiveness Rule**

The Race Marshal may at any time withdraw or disqualify a Musher they feel is not making a true attempt at running a competitive race or is in a position to not keep up with the race thus endangering themselves, their dogs and/or causing undue burden upon the Yukon Quest Alaska organization. The Race Marshal shall make this call based upon the condition of the team, trail and weather conditions, attitude and skill level of the musher and the pace at which the team and other teams are traveling. Any musher whose conduct, lack of skills and/or conditioning of their team to meet trail conditions which would expose the team or musher to personal risk in the judgment of the Race Marshal, shall also be withdrawn or disqualified.

## **23. Standard Race Courtesy:**

Standard race courtesy shall prevail. An overtaken musher and team must relinquish the trail at the request of the overtaking musher, except within one mile / 1.6 kilometers of the finish line. Ski poles may not be used within 100 yards / 92 meters of another team.

## **24. Clearing the Trail:**

Mushers setting up camp must clear the trail of their dogs and gear. Build fires a safe distance off the trail. Failure to do so may result in fines and / or time penalties at the Race Marshal's discretion.

## **25. Litter:**

Litter of any kind may not be left along the trail or at cabins. Camps must be cleaned up before the team moves on. Excess food or gear may be given only to residents along the trail or to other mushers.

This is a historic trail, and its continued use for the race relies upon compliance with this policy. Failure to abide by this rule may result in disqualification, \$150 fine and/or time penalty at the last **designated mandatory stop**.

## **26. One Musher Per Team:**

Only one musher per team is permitted, and that musher must complete the race with that team only.

## **27. Tampering:**

No musher may tamper with another musher's dogs, food or gear.

## **28. Teams Tied Together:**

Two or more teams may not, in any way, be tied together except to assist a musher in trouble at some immediate location. The mushers of any teams so involved must notify officials at the next checkpoint along the trail. A musher will not be penalized for helping another musher in danger for his/her life.

## **29. Outside Assistance:**

No planned help is allowed throughout the race. No musher may receive outside assistance between or at checkpoints unless an emergency has been declared by the Race Marshal. The intended spirit of this race dictates that the musher be self-sufficient and therefore able to help other mushers in case of real need. No assistance which would result in competitive advantage may be accepted or

solicited. Handlers are not allowed on the Yukon Quest Alaska Trail between checkpoints.

### **30. Demand for Food and Shelter:**

A musher may not make demands for food or shelter along the trail or at checkpoints.

### **31. Sleeping Areas:**

No sleeping areas will be provided by YQA at checkpoints on the road system. Mushers will be allowed to sleep in their truck or set up their own tent at Two Rivers, Mile 101, and Central. No tents are allowed in Circle. Sleeping areas for mushers and mushers only will be designated at Eagle and Chicken. A musher has the option of sleeping outside by his or her own team and sled. **Only these areas may be used.**

### **32. Killing of Game Animals:**

In the event that an edible game animal (moose, caribou, elk, etc.) is killed in the defense of life or property, the musher must salvage the meat for human use before proceeding along the trail. A food animal must be gutted. This incident must be reported at the next checkpoint. YQA will make arrangements for further salvage. Any other animal killed in defense of life or property must be reported to a YQA Race Official.

### **33. Motorized Vehicles:**

In no case may a musher accept assistance from any type of motorized vehicle between checkpoints (except as allowed under Rule 46). Pacing is prohibited.

### **34. Treatment of Dogs:**

There will be no cruel or inhumane treatment of dogs. No use of whips will be allowed. Mushers are responsible for the health and welfare of their dogs. The Race Marshal or Race Judges in conjunction with a Race Veterinarian will have absolute authority over the dog teams. Their judgment as to withdrawal of a dog or dogs from the race, or any other conditions relative to dog care on the trail, shall be final.

The health and condition of all dogs will be assessed at every checkpoint. Dogs may not be examined without the musher's knowledge (except for emergencies). Race Veterinarians in conjunction with the Race Marshal or a Race Judge may perform a veterinary exam or detain teams at any checkpoint **or dog drop**. No dog team will leave a checkpoint until the dogs in that team are fit to continue in the race.

### **35. Care and Feeding of Dogs:**

All care and feeding of dogs will be done by the mushers only. Neither force feeding nor stomach tubing is allowed.

Mushers may assist one another between checkpoints. At non-checkpoints, a musher may accept hospitality for themselves only. At no time during the race may a musher house dogs in heated shelters.

### **36. Dog Minimums and Maximums:**

Mushers must start the race with no less than eight dogs and no more than 14 dogs and must finish with no less than six dogs. Dogs may not be added to a team after the start of the race. An expired dog does not count as a dog for the minimum required.

**Only dogs suitable for Arctic travel will be permitted to enter the race.**

### **37. Harnesses:**

The neck (and breast panel where applicable) of all harnesses must be padded.

### **38. Marking/Tagging of Dogs:**

All dogs leaving the starting line will be identified by a current year only YQA collar tag. **Legible musher and dog names are required on each collar.** Micro-chips are at the musher's expense.

### 39. Switching of Dogs:

Switching of dogs between teams will not be permitted after they have officially left the start line. Following the issuance of tags and acceptance of dogs for the race by Race Veterinarians, any exchange of dogs by the mushers must be approved by the Race Marshal prior to leaving the starting line.

### 40. Hauling Dogs:

A musher may not allow any dogs to be hauled by another team. A musher's dogs hauled in the sled must be hauled in a secured, protected, humane manner. All dogs must leave the checkpoint on tow line.

### 41. Dropped Dogs:

**Any injured, fatigued, or sick dogs may be dropped at checkpoints or dog drops, as designated by the Race Marshal, without penalty.** Each dropped dog must be left with two days food. Mushers are responsible for providing cable necklines, collars, as per Trail Procedure Rule #38, and proper amounts of food for dropped dogs. The required amount of food is two pound per day per dog. Every dropped dog must be examined by a Race Veterinarian.

Dogs may be dropped for emergency medical reasons between checkpoints, and designated dog drops. This action must be reported to the Race Marshal or Race Judge at the next checkpoint, and the driver **may** be subject to an eight-hour penalty at the last **designated mandatory stop**, regardless of the number of dogs dropped. The driver remains responsible for that dog (or dogs) and all fees incurred. The dog(s) must be examined by a Race Veterinarian and accounted for within 48 hours or prior to the start of the Finish Banquet, whichever is sooner.

### 42. Drugs:

The musher must have their dog team free of all prohibited drugs and foreign substances from the time of the Vet Check until released by a Race Veterinarian or Race Official after the team has finished the race. Dogs that are continuing in the race shall not receive any of the following:

1. Any substance by injection
2. Acupuncture
3. Cold laser therapy
4. Corticosteroids or anabolic steroids
5. Any seizure medications
6. Any other treatment or therapy that, in the opinion of the Head Veterinarian, is not in the best interest of a dog that is to continue on in the race.

The Head Veterinarian must be notified of any dogs receiving allowed medication to treat an existing medical problem and a statement from the attending veterinarian describing the diagnosis and treatment must be presented with the YQA health certificate.

YQA Veterinarians or Veterinary Assistants may randomly collect blood and/or urine samples beginning at the Vet Check and up until two hours after a dog team has finished, scratched, or been withdrawn or disqualified from the race. It is the responsibility of the musher to assist the Race Veterinarian or Veterinary Assistant in the collection of the samples. The musher or the musher's handler **must** be present at all times during the taking and sealing of such samples. Documents evidencing the procedure **shall** be signed by the musher or their handler. No person may interfere in any way with the collection of samples or procedures conducted under this rule.

If a Race Veterinarian finds it necessary to treat a dog with a prohibited drug, that dog must be dropped from the race.

The following drugs will be permitted subject to the approval of the official supervising Race Veterinarian:

1. Topical medications without steroids (note: DMSO is no longer allowed).
2. Dewormers
3. Antibiotics (except procaine penicillin)
4. Antidiarrheals (except those with salicylates, i.e. Pepto-Bismol)
5. Omeprazole or Famotidine (e.g. Pepcid or Prilosec)
6. Oral medication, implants and injectable medications used for mis-mating events have potential for severe side effects and should be used under veterinary supervision. All mis-mating injections must be given no later than 28 days prior to race start.

**All other drugs and foreign substances are prohibited.**

The musher is required to protect and guard their dog team against the administration, either internally or externally, of any foreign substance. **A positive test indicating the presence of a foreign substance shall give rise to a presumption that the musher has failed to meet the duties imposed upon them.**

Fines or penalties levied for violations of this rule shall be based on the seriousness of the offense and will be assessed after completion of the race. The Rules Committee will recommend fines or penalties to the joint Boards of Directors for final decision.

The Racing Commissioners International Uniform Classification of Foreign Substances will serve as a guideline in establishing these penalties which may be as severe as disqualification and censure from future races.

**43. Expired Dogs:**

**The death of any dog may result in the disqualification of the musher, and/or prohibition from entering future races.** Any dog that expires during the race for any reason must be taken to the next or just passed checkpoint or dog drop and submitted to the Race Official, or it may be directly submitted to a Race Official at a sooner opportunity. If no Race Official is present, the dog may be submitted to a Race Veterinarian. A necropsy will be performed on all expired dogs by a licensed veterinary pathologist or veterinarian.

**44. Unmanageable Team:**

Outside assistance will be allowed only if a team is unmanageable. Whether a team is unmanageable will be ruled upon by the Race Marshal or Race Judge in each separate instance.

**45. Team Configuration:**

There will be no loose leaders; necklines are not required on leaders. All team dogs will be either attached to the towline, no more than two dogs abreast, or humanely hauled in the sled.

**Mushers are required to be in possession of functional necklines for the entire team at all times. The use of necklines may be required for individual dogs, individual teams, or all teams, at the discretion of the Race Officials.**

Dogs may not be led behind the sled.

**46. Lost Team:**

A lost team's musher will not be disqualified if the musher regains control of the team. The team and musher must complete the entire race trail including checking in at all checkpoints. Anyone may stop and secure a musherless team or loose dog. The musher may continue the race after their team is recovered, whether it is on foot, or with assistance from another musher or motorized vehicle. Motorized assistance must be reported to a race official at the next checkpoint. If motorized help is used and advantage gained, the Race Marshal may impose appropriate sanctions.

#### 47. Scratch / Withdraw / Disqualification:

**All decisions by the Race Marshal and / or Race Judges shall be final.**

**All Scratched, Withdrawn, and Disqualified teams must have a complete vet check prior to being released from the race. Failure to do so may result in a \$150 fine.**

- a) **Scratch** - Mushers wishing to end their participation in the race may do so by filling out and signing a Scratch Form and submitting it to a Race Official or checker. Mushers are responsible for making their own arrangements for retrieving personal gear. Items remaining become the property of YQA.
- b) **Withdraw** - A team may be involuntarily withdrawn from the race by the Race Marshal. This decision would be made to protect the dogs, the musher, or the event itself, and does not imply deliberate misconduct or rule violation. Food drop bags will be immediately removed from checkpoints and a reasonable attempt will be made to return personal gear to the closest YQA office for retrieval.
- c) **Disqualification** - Failure of a musher to comply with the published Rules of General Race Procedure and/or Trail Procedure may result in disqualification, monetary fine, time penalty, or a combination of these measures. Disqualified mushers will forfeit all placements and monetary values. Food drop bags will be immediately removed from checkpoints and a reasonable attempt will be made to return personal gear to the closest YQA office for retrieval.

#### 48. Finish:

Mushers must wear their Finish Bib as they cross the Finish Line. Failure to do so will result in a \$150 fine. The time of a team's official finish is when the nose of the first dog crosses the finish line. Any mandatory gear missing at the finish will result in a \$150 fine per missing item.

**Dog teams must remain within the finish staging area until all blood and/or urine samples are collected, final veterinary exams are performed, and the vet book is signed by the Race Veterinarian and Musher.** The team will then be released by the Race Marshal, a Race Judge, or a Race Veterinarian.

#### 49. Sportsmanship:

The Code of the North dictates all travelers be courteous, helpful, generous and honorable. Conduct yourself well enough so the next musher will be welcomed with equal hospitality.

**Rude behavior or inappropriate actions by a musher or handler may result in a penalty, withdrawal, or disqualification. This includes any publication, sharing, posting or comments deemed false, derogatory or negative towards any musher, race personnel, volunteer, the Yukon Quest Alaska organization or their supporters.** The rule is in effect from musher sign-up until 30 days after the finish banquet.

Any competitor or athlete worthy of the name realizes that all people - officials, volunteers, sponsors, media, and fans—are equal participants in this event, and that it is the musher's responsibility to define the upper limits of human performance. A true Sportsman is an inspiration to all witnesses.