

The Iditarod

Alaska is well known for the amount of snow they get annually as well as for the bitter cold. An annual event that takes place is the Iditarod which is a race where the individual called a musher is pulled on a sled by a team of snow dogs. The length of the race is more than 1,100 miles so both the musher and the dogs have to be in top shape to cover the distance and to stay protected against the cold.

The racers move along this distance at a very fast pace with the record being just over 8 full days. Some years it has taken up to 15 days for all of the racers to successfully cross the finish line depending on the weather and any problems they may encounter along the way. It is not uncommon for blizzards to be taking place while the Iditarod is in motion.

Check points are located along the Iditarod trail in order for musher's to get a warm meal and to camp for the night. Veterinarians are also on hand to assist with any problems the snow dogs may be experiencing. Having these check points also helps to ensure the musher's are able to stay on the right trail for completing the race.

Musher's have to plan the supplies they will need for the entire race well in advance. The products that they purchase will be at the various checkpoints and available for pick up when they check in. This way they don't have to carry all of their supplies the entire way. The musher's have the option of staying at the checkpoints or continuing on their way. However, over the course of the race they are mandated to spend one 24 hour period at any of the checkpoints, one 8 hour layover at any checkpoint, and then another 8 hour checkpoint at the White Mountain checkpoint.

These checkpoints are in place in order to ensure the safety of the musher's and the snow dogs. They are also in place to ensure that every single racing team follows the designated route. This avoids speculations of cheating and animal rights activists are satisfied that the needs of the snow dogs are being met.

The Iditarod has become an annual event since 1967 as a way to honor musher's and their snow dogs for all their hard work. According to history books, a team of musher's and sled dogs moved serum needed to cure Diphtheria in Alaska in 1925. They moved the serum more than 600 miles due to the fact that the train and airlines couldn't get to the area due to the harsh winter weather.

Today the Iditarod is the most anticipated sporting event in all of Alaska. Tourists come from all over the world to watch stretches of the race being ran.

The various towns in Alaska where the Iditarod runs through hold large ceremonies and celebrations for tourists to enjoy as well. They may be able to meet actually snow dogs up close too but not those that are in the actual race.

There are two different routes that are run for the Iditarod races - one that goes North and one that goes South. The routes are alternated so make sure you take that into consideration if you are planning a trip to watch a segment of the Iditarod race. There are plenty of team sponsors as well that offer supplies and merchandise to encourage spectators to cheer on certain musher's.

You can track the results of the Iditarod each day on the internet and find out who is in the lead. You can also see the amount of distance they have covered in a given day along the route of the Iditarod. You can also see the amount of money that they earn for winning the Iditarod. Most people that engage in their winter sport do it more for the thrill than for the money though.

PPPPP

Word Count 661