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CANADA

How to run a dog sled team in the Great White North

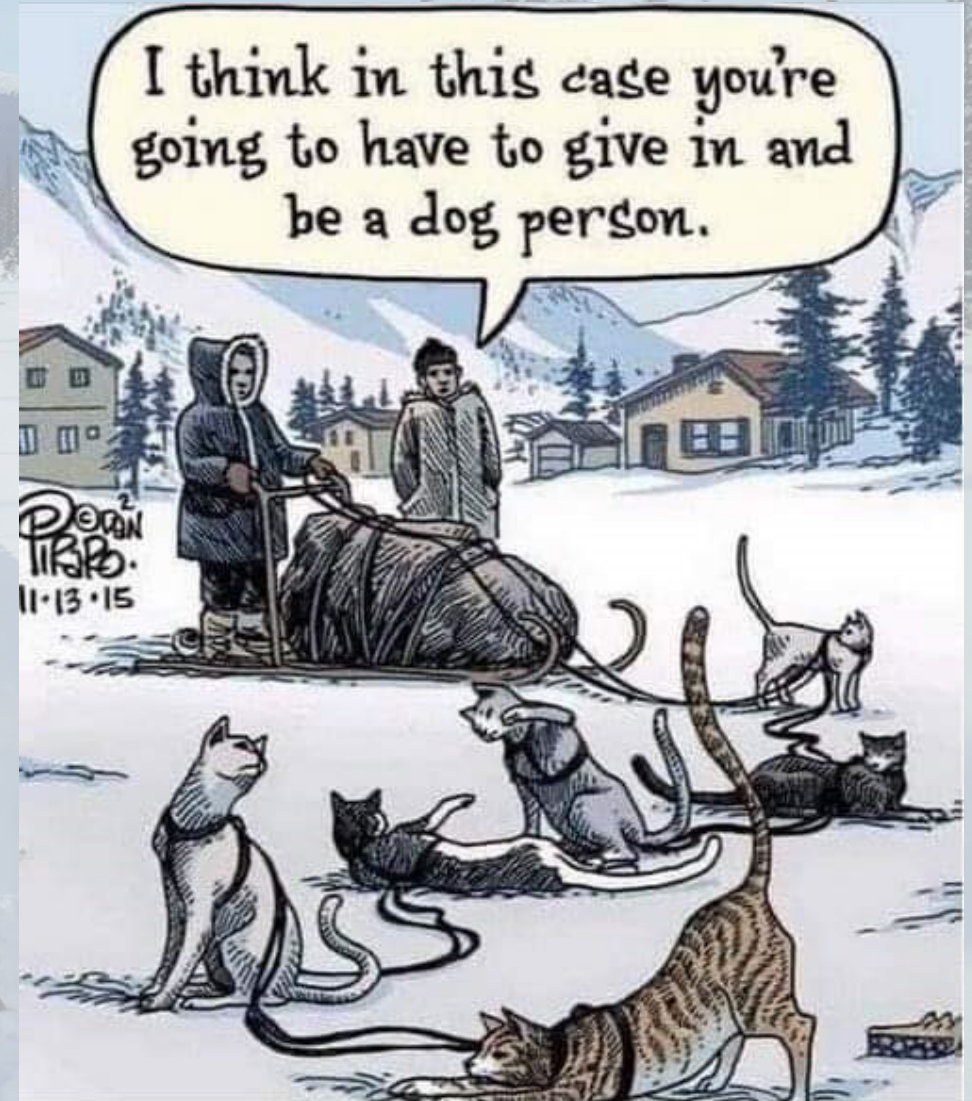
A brief history



- 🐾 In North America, Siberia, and Scandinavia, dog mushing dates back 4000 years
- 🐾 Native cultures used dogs to pull loads, hunt, travel, and transport goods and messages across the ice
- 🐾 Dog sled teams were used in explorations of both poles, as well as during the Alaskan gold rush

Dog sled teams today

- 🐾 Roads, snowmobiles and airplanes in the 20th century started replacing the dog sled
- 🐾 Dog sled teams today are mostly used for tourism, recreation and racing events
- 🐾 Dogs now are bred for agility and speed for racing, and strength for pulling loads



Famous races

YUKON QUEST

- 🐾 Every February since 1984 (until Covid...)
- 🐾 1,000 miles/1,600 km of wilderness trail
- 🐾 Whitehorse, Yukon <> Fairbanks, Alaska
- 🐾 -60 °C, blizzards, white-outs, 3 mountains
- 🐾 9 checkpoints, ~200 miles apart
- 🐾 Start with 14 dogs, finish with at least 7
- 🐾 Record time is 8 days, 14 hours, 21 mins

IDITAROD

- 🐾 Every March since 1973 (historical)
- 🐾 975 miles/1,569 km of wilderness trail
- 🐾 Anchorage, Alaska <> Nome, Alaska
- 🐾 -60 °C, blizzards, white-outs, cross sea ice
- 🐾 26/27 checkpoints, ~40 miles apart
- 🐾 Start with 14 dogs, finish with at least 5
- 🐾 Record time is 8 days, 3 hours, 40 mins

The dogs

Not good dogs for mushing



Good for tours

Good for racing



The dog team



Wheel dogs: help turn the sled

Team dogs: rest of the team

Swing dogs: help the leaders

Lead dogs: listen to musher commands

The sled

Snub line with quick release: for taking off

Sled bag: for carrying all your stuff

Snow hook: stops the team

Brush bow: bounces you off the trees

Runners: slides over the snow

Brake and drag mat: slow the team down

Foot pads: where you stand

Seat: for storing dog food on longer runs (and sitting down)



The musher

*DON'T
LET GO*

*"Haw" = left
"Gee" = right*



*Dress warmly
for the wind
chill*

*Good balance
for staying on
the sled*

Training with a sled



Training with a snowmobile



How to win a race

Musher who knows what he is doing

Sled designed for the type of race



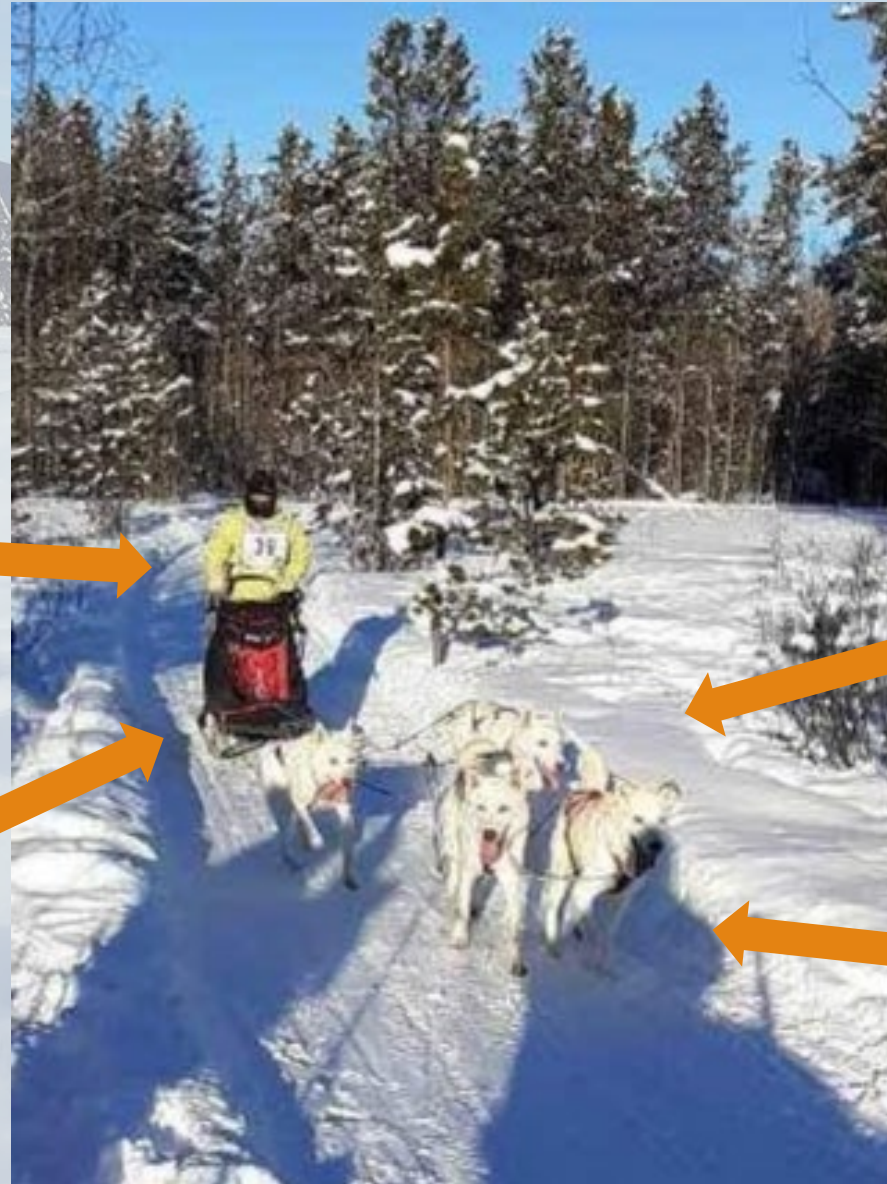
Well-trained dog team

Good leaders who know what they are doing

How to not win a race

Musher who is hanging on for dear life

Sled definitely not designed for the type of race



A dog team with no training

Leaders who have no idea what they are doing

