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Iditarod

The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is one of the world's toughest challenges. Traversing 1,000 miles across the roadless Alaskan wilderness, the trail crosses steep mountain ranges, windswept barrens, and frozen sea ice. It pits mushers and their dogs against some of the harshest conditions on the planet; blinding windstorms, blizzards, bone-chilling temperatures, and more.

The Iditarod is a true test of endurance and willpower. To put it in perspective, during its forty year history just over 700 people have ever managed to finish this race. Almost this many people summited Mt. Everest last year alone.

Karin Hendrickson is one of the few who choose to face the challenge of Iditarod every year. Most people call this race grueling; Karin calls it fun!



It's All About the Dogs

The Alaskan Husky is a specialized breed, adapted to thrive in arctic conditions and driven to run. These dogs love nothing more than traveling down the trail.

Each dog has a special place in the kennel and a special bond with Karin. Most dogs have been hand-raised from birth. Each dog receives individualized feeding, training, and vet care, along with large doses of attention and love.

There are many reasons that compel Karin to run Iditarod; the heart stopping beauty of the Alaskan winter, the camaraderie and partnerships experienced out on the trail, the satisfaction that comes when you

push your limits and overcome challenges. But the bottom line for Karin, the thing that makes it all worthwhile, is the deep connection that develops with teammates on a journey like Iditarod.



Karin

Karin was 33 before she saw her first sled dog. But it wasn't long before she committed herself, body, mind, and soul, to the dogs. In 2003 she changed her life completely, moving to Alaska in order to work with sled dogs and learn mushing from the ground up. She began as a handler, working long hours for no compensation except the chance to learn what it takes to run and train an Iditarod kennel.

Karin ran her first race, the 200-mile Tustumena, in 2005. After that, she was truly hooked. She began building her own small kennel of talented dogs and running the qualifying races needed to prove her ability and enter the Iditarod.

Karin and her team have completed many top mid-distance (200 or 300 mile) races, and have participated in Iditarod every year since 2009. She has developed a reputation as a skilled musher and dog trainer, able to handle the multitude of challenges that arise during a race of this magnitude.

Training and preparation for Iditarod begins in early fall, and continues through March, when the Iditarod race begins. Karin and her dogs put in over 2,500 hard-earned miles in racing and training each season before Iditarod even starts.

As if preparing for and completing one of the toughest endurance tests in the world is not enough of a challenge, Karin does it while working a full time, professional job. Where most mushers work seasonally to allow them to devote all their time to their team in winter, Karin's responsibilities keep her on the job during the day, and up with the dogs until late each night. Balancing so many demands takes strong organizational skills, the ability to prioritize competing needs, an insane amount of energy, and a willingness to catch up on sleep in the spring.

Every dime she has, every minute of time, every ounce of energy, everything that she is - it's all focused on preparing her dogs for the Iditarod. Karin is a remarkable example of toughness, determination, and drive.



A short video highlighting Karin and why she runs Iditarod can be viewed here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_S_F8NH6nc.

Other media can be found at her website; www.blueonblackdogs.com.