

WSA Sleddog World Championships 2008

Welcome to Åsarna, Sweden, 7-9 march 2008

*"1500 dogs
from more than
15 countries"*

7-9 OF MARCH



WSA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
SPRINT & MIDDLE DISTANCE

SLED DOG 2008
ÅSARNA SWEDEN



www.wsaWC2008.com



JÖRGEN SANDQVIST, ALASKAN MALAMUTE, NOME STYLE

ABOUT SLED DOG

Using dogs for pulling has a long history. During the happy days of the gold rush in Alaska, sled dog competitions were very popular. Also in Scandinavia there is an old tradition of driving, or mushing, which is the proper term, and competing with sled dogs. Sweden held sled dog races already back in the 1930's.

Sled dog racing is gaining in interest all around the world. It is thought to be one of the fastest growing sports in the world today.

Sled dog racing is divided into two categories; Nome style (sled) and Nordic style (skis and pulka). The Swedish Sled Dog Association, which is a member of The Swedish Sports Confederation, organizes sled dog races in Sweden.

There are about 85 sled dog clubs spread all over the country. At the upcoming WSA Sled Dog World Championships 2008 in Åsarna, in the region of Jämtland in Sweden, competitions will be held with the following pure bred arctic dogs; Alaskan Malamute, Greenland Dog, Siberian Husky, and Samoyed.

ABOUT THE WC-VILLAGE ÅSARNA

The interest in sled dog racing is on the rise in Scandinavia and the location of Åsarna is ideal for competitors from Sweden, Norway and Finland. The village of Åsarna is located in central Sweden, about 450 km north of Stockholm, the airport is just an hour away. Åsarna has nine years of previous experience of arranging sprint- and middle-distance sled dog races. In recent years, Åsarna has successfully hosted both Swedish and European Championships sled dog races. Åsarna is already well-known in Europe as a center for cross-country skiing. Thomas Wassberg, a former Winter Olympics Gold medallist in cross-country skiing, is responsible for the trails during the sled dog competitions

Organizer is the lower north district (SPHK NN) of the Swedish Club for Arctic Dogs (SPHK) in cooperation with the municipality of Berg. We are very proud to be hosting next year's WSA event. We will do everything possible to ensure a great competition which will bring many happy memories for mushers, spectators, and everybody else sharing an interest in the event.

Welcome!

MUSHING

Mushing, ie driving with sled dogs, is a sport that attracts (or engages) the whole family. There are various classes suitable for everyone who wants to compete. The two main disciplines are presented below:

NOME STYLE

In Nome style the musher drives a sled pulled by the dogs. The dogs are attached to the sled by soft lines to their harnesses and are directed at the musher's command. Classes are divided into 2-, 4-, 6-, 8-dogs, or unlimited. There is no limitation to the number of dogs that a musher is allowed to have in the unlimited class.

There are sprint- and distance races. In sprint, distances range from 5 to 25 kilometers depending on the class (ie number of dogs). A race consists of two or three heats (one heat per day).

A distance race is normally about 40 to 100 kilometers per day. The longest distance competition in Scandinavia is the "Finnmarkslöpet 1,000" which is 1,000 kilometer long and held in northern Norway in every year. In both sprint- and distance competitions, the winner is the musher who races the trail in the shortest time from start to finish. Nome style is an equal sport where male and female mushers compete in the same classes.

NORDIC STYLE

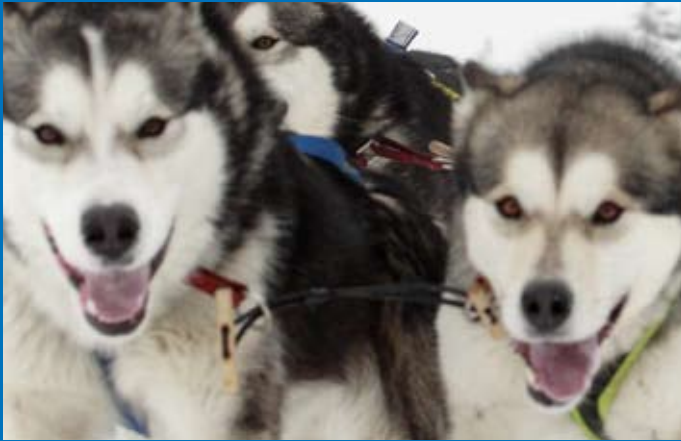
In Nordic style, the dog(s) either pull a loaded pulka with the musher skiing right behind, attached to the pulka, or the dog(s) are attached to the skiing musher with a rope (skijoring).

Races in Nordic style have a lot in common with cross-country skiing. Classes vary from 1-dog classes to 4-dog classes. Distances are from 5-50 kilometers with male and female mushers competing in separate classes.

The weight of the pulka depends on the number of dogs on the team and whether the dogs are male or female. In general male dogs are stronger than the female dogs so the pulka has more weight if there are male dogs.



**LISA LINDBLOM SIBERIAN HUSKIES,
NORDIC STYLE**



ALASKAN MALAMUTE

Already at the discovery of Alaska in the middle of the 18th century, Russian whale hunters and trappers spoke about pulling dogs kept by the Inuit people (the indigenous people of Alaska, also called Malamutes). The Alaskan Malamutes were working animals used for seal- and polar bear hunting



GREENLAND DOG

The Greenland dog, an ancient breed, brought to Greenland by the Inuit settlers and used for transportation and hunting. The dog's qualities as rough strength and endurance have been decisive in breeding programs, even if an attractive exterior also has played a part. In hunting for polar bear and seal, the Greenland dog shows powerful hunting instinct.



SIBERIAN HUSKY

The Siberian Husky developed among the Chukchi people in the northeast of Siberia. The climate forced the Chukchi to make a living by hunting over extensive areas. They answered to nature's demands by developing a unique sleddog breed. What the Chukchi needed was a dog that could travel long distances with a high speed but by using exceedingly amount of energy in an area close to the northern hemisphere.



SAMOYED

The Samoyed takes its name from the Samoyedic peoples of Siberia. The Samoyedic, who were nomadic reindeer herders, bred the fluffy, white dogs to help them with the herding, pull sleds when they moved, and to keep their owners warm at night by sleeping on top of them. An alternate name for the breed, especially in Europe, is Bjelkier.

