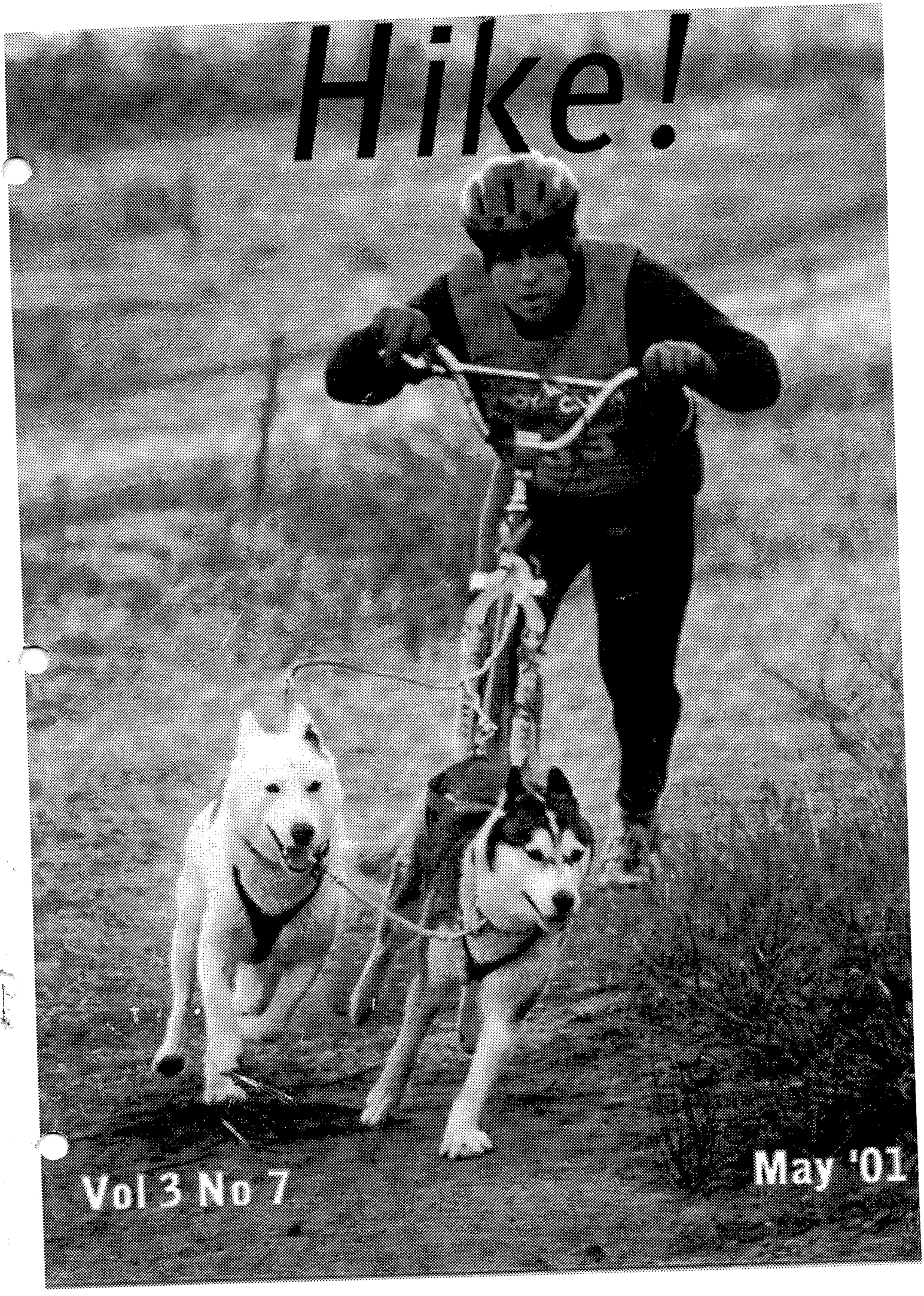
# Hike!



Vol 3 No 7

May '01

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# AFSS Report

**Peter Komidar**

As you know by now, the AFSS AGM will be held on Saturday 26 May at the Southern Cross Race Site. So this is your last chance to sign up and have your say in the election of the inaugural AFSS Committee. An entry and nomination form is included in the magazine.

Now is a good time to outline what the AFSS has done in the 7 months of its existence – in the lead up to holding this AGM. So far we have achieved the following:

- established an interim steering committee to prepare the foundations for the AFSS
- developed the AFSS Info Pack – including draft mission statement and code of conduct
- AFSS accreditation of the Hike pointscore
- negotiation with the NZFSS to start a trans-Tasman pointscore
- insured and incorporated the AFSS
- Cliff French came second in the 6-dog mid distance world championship race – as an accredited AFSS member - successfully fulfilling the greatest hurdle to getting Federal Government recognition of the AFSS and consequently the sport of mushing (and a major step towards qualifying for Federal grant funding)
- a draft constitution has been prepared for consideration by the incoming committee
- a draft web page has been developed – to be launched following ratification by the new committee, and
- a mushing beginners manual is currently in preparation.

All of the developments listed above relate to the development of an administrative foundation for the AFSS. It was decided that we would leave all policy related activities until after the AGM. But once the new committee has been elected much more can be done – such as:

- international IFSS accreditation
- building linkages with other dog sporting and particularly dog racing national organisations
- developing kennel and kennel application best practice guidelines to help get council approval
- liaising with the Australian Local Government Association on dog kennelling restrictions
- liaising with the Victorian and NSW Governments regarding increased access to state forests and the snowfields for sled dog training and events
- establishing a one-stop-shop for media inquiries
- obtaining full sports insurance for AFSS members (not just indemnity insurance).

There are heaps more activities which could be undertaken – and which of those which will be pursued in the next 12 months? Well that depends on who's elected to the committee! And that's why its important that you join the AFSS now – or you'll have to wait until next year to have your say on the future of the sport in Australia.

## Hike Forum – Distance Races

**Clem Bittendorfer**

It has been fascinating to see over the last two years how the number of dogs per musher has increased. Lots of high quality race dogs have been bred and kennels with 4 or 6 dogs are now considered tiny! All these puppies offer mushers great choices not only for what class to run in but also what race types they want to participate in - sprint or mid distance.

Currently we have probably entered the 'mid distance era'! There is lots of reasons why this is appealing: Spend more time on the trail, enjoy the challenge with your dogs, move one tiny step closer to the races they run overseas, etc. Looking at all the dogs that are available we will probably strive for longer distances: I am only concerned about one thing - temperatures for our initial training - just looking outside the window (in Sydney) now, the temperatures for the second half of April are pathetic for training. I don't think there is many of us that would like to run a team in 'preseason training' over 8 or 12 km at temperatures around 15 degrees Celsius. That's why it might be useful to stick with a race calendar that has short sprint races scheduled first, then some of the longer sprints (I am talking up to 14 or 16km for 4 or 6 dog classes) and have mid-distance races beginning later in the season. I believe the current calendar works well.

I certainly think the future holds a separate sprint and mid distance race calendar and mushers will go either way as some have already chosen to do. Over the last two race seasons we have seen the mid distance race numbers increase from one to five in 2001 which makes it worthwhile for mushers to concentrate on longer distances. The issue of bigger teams will also raise another question: What will happen to our rigs! We are going faster and faster, the rigs became lighter and lighter over the last season - BUT how will we stop? I truly believe that six dogs is the biggest team possible to be run on our current rigs, but I also believe that it won't be long and people are looking into eight or more dogs - just imagine the distances that could be done! Brakes, carry capacity on the rigs (dogs + extra equipment), wheels & tyres - think of the force when going around corners - all things I have thought about a few times- may be an area for more discussion. Now, if only we can get some of these races on snow covered trails!!!!!!! But this topic is another long story.

By no means will everyone be wanting to head down the mid distance trail(!), to accommodate the mushers with larger teams who will specialise in sprint racing, perhaps more races will need to introduce the 6 dog class.

Looking forward to the start of the race season and catching up with every one.

Clem has promised to translate a German sled dog magazine article a recent article on the Alpen Trail race where a mass start was used for the first time on the last leg of the race. This will appear in the June Edition of Hike.

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# IFSS - Recognition by the International Olympic Committee

Tim White

The IFSS executive was notified in January that the IOC Executive Board would consider our application for recognition at their meeting in Dakar February 5. This initiative was the result of personal contact between IOC President Samaranch and IFSS Council Member Pares. We were asked to update the IFSS data on file with the IOC in response to several questions from the staff of the Sports Director's office.

Here are some of the questions and answers exchanged with the IOC.

1. **Member federations: Do you still have 26 member countries on 5 continents and 8 federations waiting for affiliation?**

We have 28 national member federations and at least 6 or more potential or candidate national members (Australia, Greece, Slovakia, Argentina, Chile, Peru). We also have associate members including 2 international restricted breed organizations, the International Siberian Husky Club and the World Sleddog Association, and the International Sleddog Veterinary Medical Association.

2. **Are all 26 member countries recognised by their National Olympic Committees (NOC)?**

In some countries NOC recognition or recognition by the national sports authority is contingent on IOC recognition. In those countries our member national sleddog sports federation obviously is not recognised by the NOC. In addition in a few other countries it was erroneously believed until recently that NOC recognition was dependent on IOC recognition. Most European (and Scandinavian) members are recognised by their NOCs.

3. **Is this still correct. Principal competitions: World championships yearly Junior World championships, World Cup, Continental championships?**

Our World Cup series is now held yearly and this program now includes as well the most important privately organised competitions in sprint, mid distance and long distance classes and is growing to include regions outside North America and Europe.

4. **Are there any competitions exclusively for women?**

In the Nordic events (pulka skiing and skijoring) mens and womens classes are usual. In the sled events there are a few competitions for women only but not many and not IFSS championships. The reason is that women have proven they have no physical disadvantage or need for separate events by the fact of their winning all the major competitions at some time. In our own administration women do play an equal role and are equally represented.

5. **As I understand it, all sleddog races are held on snow but training may be carried out on other surfaces. Is this correct?**

In many countries or areas with limited access to snow both training and racing are carried out on wheeled vehicles such as carts and scooters. IFSS does not organise any international dry land competitions but at the national level many countries may have national championships and local competitions with carts and scooters. (For example in Australia, UK, Denmark, Portugal and parts of Canada, US, Germany...)

6. **Is this still correct: The IFSS has its own anti-doping rules based on those of the IOC. The regulations are decided by Voting Members and the Council and not the Animal Welfare Committee and the Council?**

This is correct. The IFSS has adopted the IOC anti-doping regulations as they apply to human athletes and dogs.

7. **Has the IFSS any recent aims and objectives?**

In October, 1998 the GA directed the IFSS Council to form a Development Committee. This committee has expanded since then to include objectives related to education, junior programs, Sport for All, equity and disabilities. Stated purposes are to promote understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the history and traditions of the use of sled dogs, and to develop interest and participation in sleddog sports in all parts of the world.

In the area of changes to our sport's international status I should include mention that travel and access to international competitions with sled dogs has improved in the last few years for athletes in "rabies free" countries as a result of new blood testing protocols and unique identification of dogs with microchips. This has lowered the costs and time required to clear quarantine in some countries (New Zealand and Australia) or eliminated the quarantine entirely in others for certain categories of dog shipments (UK, Sweden, Norway). The quarantine in Japan was already minimal and did not present a major obstacle for sled dog sports participation.

8. **The information I have regarding sleddog sports, is the following; but is it correct?**

I think this is more accurate. Sleddog racing as a formally organised competitive sport dates back to the nineteenth century. Racing has been documented in Canada and the United States from the mid 1800s and in Scandinavia at the turn of the century. The first major organised event to receive international publicity was held in Nome, Alaska, in 1908. (In fact, sled dog races and ski races were also part of the first Saint Paul, Minnesota Winter Carnival in 1877.)

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# Racing Sled Dog Health Care

**Racing Siberian Husky - Winter 1994**
**Submitted by Luke Elliot**

**Don't treat limping lightly**

A limping or lame sled dog - you've had one on your racing team, or seen one at another musher's truck, or read about the problem.

Mushers frequently dismiss the problem as "sore muscles" or temporary stiffness. In fact, it's not unknown for a sled dog in this condition to go back out on the trail, seem to "loosen up" the muscles and make an important contribution to the team. That fact reinforces the idea that much limping or lameness is a minor, short-lived matter.

Lurking below the surface of this health care problem is a more severe one called synovitis. Synovitis is the inflammation of the soft tissues of a joint and of the membrane that lines the cavity of the joint.

Because this ailment has both short-term and long-term consequences, mushers simply must pay attention to the symptoms.

**Short- & long-term consequences**

The result of all the impact can be a stretching of the joint capsule (see diagram) and inflammation of the soft tissue. The short-term results are the accompanying swelling, heat, pain, reduced range of motion of the limb and lameness. The long-term consequences - if the inflammation is not treated -can be a crippling arthritis that ends the dog's racing career.

It is also important to remember that muscles themselves play a role in absorbing the stresses of impact. A minor muscle injury tends to result in increased shift of shock absorber responsibility from muscle to joint.

The joints susceptible to synovitis are:

- shoulder
- hip
- stifle (knee)
- carpus (wrist)
- hock

Healthy joints have several qualities. First, the cartilage covering the ends of the bones within these joints is very resilient, able to change shape in response to stress; it is a critical shock absorber that must function if a dog is to work. Second, the joint cavity is covered by a tough outer capsule that protects the elements within the joint.

Third, the cavity is filled with synovial fluid which in turn contains hyaluronic acid (HA) a thick, oily substance. HA has two key jobs: (1) serving as a lubricant for the synovial membrane and joint capsule, and (2) forming a barrier between the bloodstream and the cavity, keeping out materials, e.g. white blood cells, which cause inflammation.

**When synovitis strikes**

Injury or trauma strikes the joint. The synovial membrane becomes inflamed. White blood cells leak into the joint cavity, releasing enzymes and oxygen radicals which attack and break down the hyaluronic acid. As the amount of this critical lubricant decreases, friction, pain and more inflammation develop.

If not treated, this ailment can lead to damage to the cartilage and even to the underlying bone. Once that level of damage begins, it can be seen on x-rays; at that point there is permanent damage and the joint cannot be fully repaired.

**Mushers should be vigilant**

The International Sled Dog Veterinary Medical Association recommends "dogs in intensive training or competition ... be examined often in order to recognised early signs of injury. Synovitis can be detected early." Mushers can:

- watch for signals such as dogs using wider or narrower stance than normal, shifting weight from limb to limb or front to rear, showing a reluctance to lie down or other indicators of joint pain.
- watch a dog being walked and trotted in straight lines or circles, looking for behavior such as shortened stride or favoring one leg over another.
- feel joints for possible increased heat or swelling or indications of pain.

**Recommended & future treatments**

Treatment aims to stop inflammation from causing permanent damage, and to restore joint fluid to near normal.

The first form of treatment is physical therapy - primarily rest to allow healing. Applying ice packs early in acute cases can help by reducing blood flow to the inflamed joint. Applying heat in chronic cases can increase beneficial circulation.

Anti-inflammatory drugs can also be used, according to the ISDVMA. These include corticosteroids such as cortisone, non-steroid drugs such as aspirin, and skin salves containing dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO). All shoul be used under veterinary guidance.

New drugs include injections of sodiun hyaluronate to replace destroyed HA Anecdotal reports suggest usefulness in dogs, but no trials have been done. A drug to inhibit enzymes from breaking down joint cartilage, - polysulfate glycosaminoglycan - is tested. Treated sled dogs had a 90 percent reduction in lameness over five weeks compared to a 45 percent reduction in untreated dogs

Technical information in this article is from "Synovitis in Racing Sled Dogs," Vol. 1 No.1 of the ISDVMA newsletter *Vet check.*

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# UNDERGROUND

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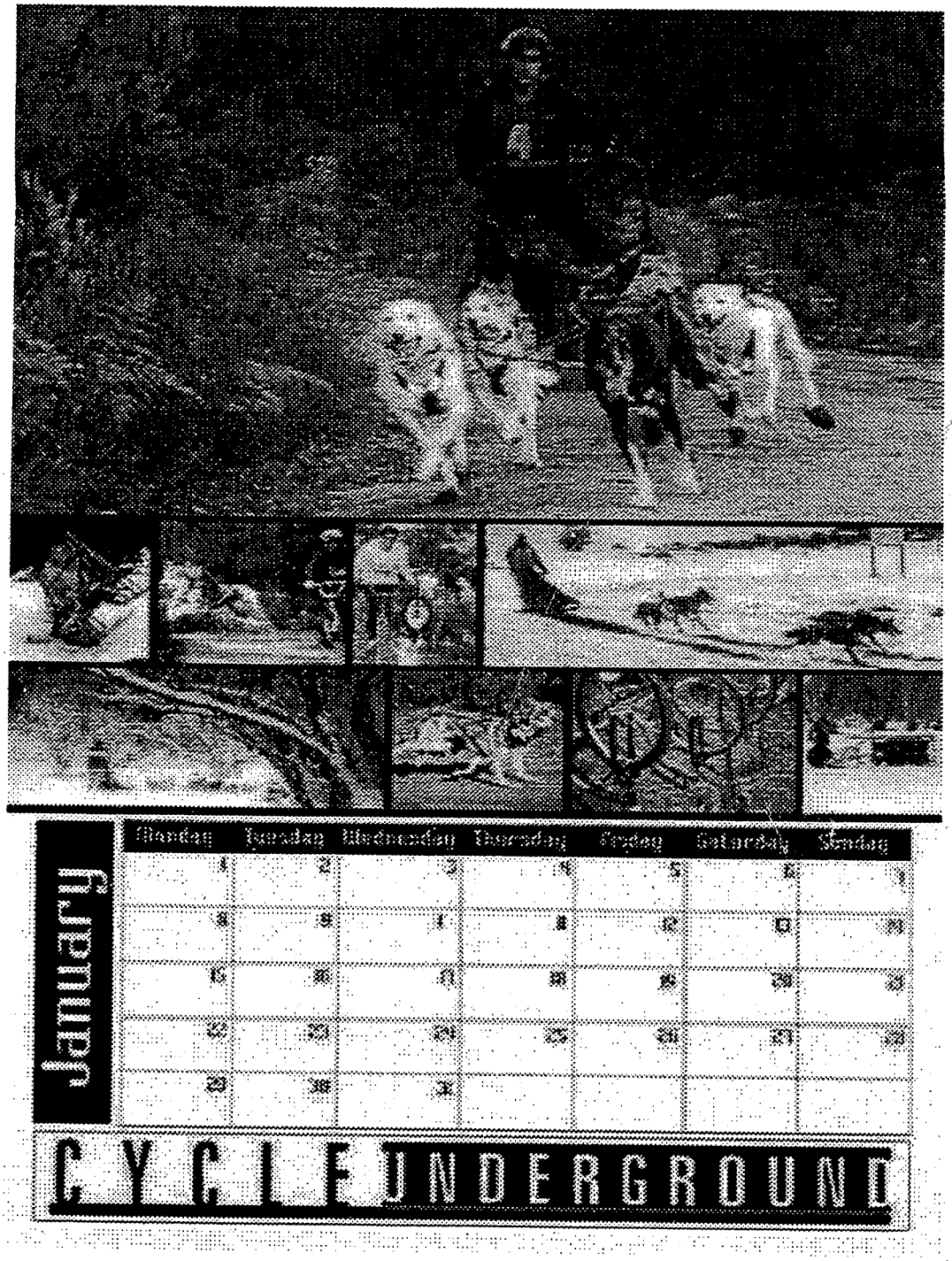



# 2001 Sled Dog Racing Calendar

This full colour A3 size 12 month calendar captures action shots from all Australian national circuit races. Order your calendar for Aud $20 + postage (available for sale to international as well as Australian readers)

To view the calendar in living colour – check it out at the *Hike!* web site. Follow the links at http://members.dynamite.com.au/komidar/Index.html

Mail your order to Dimitris Limnatitis, 35 Blackwood Street, Miranda, NSW, 2228 or phone Dimitris on 02 9525 0667 or mobile 0414 441 313 or email extremeplus@bigpond.com

# The AFSS/*Hike!* 2001 Pointscore Methodology

In short, the 2001 pointscore methodology is that it's essentially the same as that used in 2000 for the sprint and marathon point scores. The Marathon pointscore applies to the distance races and the Sprint point score will apply to the sprint races on the national circuit (ie those races featured in the Hike Calendar).

The Hike! pointscore has been accredited by the AFSS as the offical national pointscore for Australia. The incoming AFSS committee will need to confirm their intention to maintain this arrangement. However, regardless of whether the Hike! pointscore remains sanctioned by the AFSS, the pointscore itself will remain unchanged (at least for this season).

## The Sprint Point Score

The point score for each race is basically a number which measures your time as a proportion of the winners time and multiplied by 1000. Or:

$$\frac{\text{Winner's Time} \times 1000}{\text{Competitor's Time}}$$

So if you are the winner you get 1000 points. If you, for example, took twice as long as the winner to complete the course - you get 500 points etc.

Just to make it more complicated, the point score gives each competitor an additional 10 bonus points for every top ten 2000 *Hike!* National Champion for that class competing in the race. The idea behind the bonus points system is to reward those people competing in the most competitive races - and hence combating the possibility of a 'petrol musher' getting lots of points by competing in all the easier races.

## The Marathon Point Score

The marathon point score is essentially the same as that used in the sprint point score. The only difference being that there is a handicap system where the longer the distance of the race the more points you score.

This works by multiplying your score by a ratio of the distance of the race over the distance of the longest race (60 km) for the 4-dog and greater classes (this is because the 50 & 60km races were restricted to 4 dog teams and above). In other words, if you came first in a 30 km race you would get a total of 500 points whereas if you competed in the B60 you would get the full 1000 points.

As with the sprint point score the bonus points system applies.

## Limited Entry Races

While it is yet to be confirmed, there is a possibility that the A5000 race will become the first national circuit race with a limited class (with rumours that the 2 dog class may be limited to 40 entrants). For the pointscore to be effective, all the races forming part of it must be open to all comers. Otherwise all mushers will not be competing on a level playing field. Thus, should it be confirmed that the 2 dog class is a limited race then that particular class will be excluded from the pointscore. However all other (non-limited) classes at the A5000 race will still be included in the pointscore. I would stress here that the reasons for this decision are based solely on the mechanics of the pointscore and do not imply any judgement on the merits or otherwise of the A5000 decision to limit entrants to the two dog class.

## Freight Race

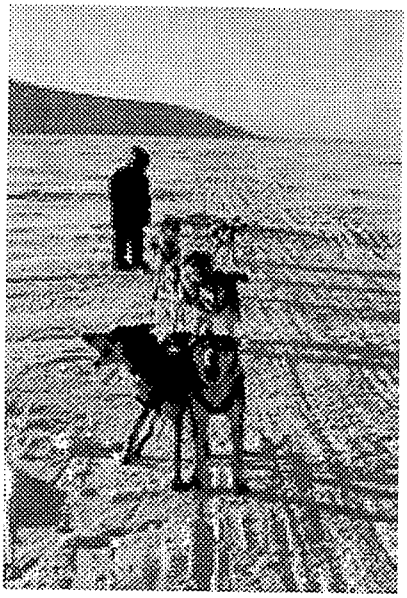
As there is only one Freight Race on the national circuit, no special methodology is required - the winner of each class is the national champion.

## Sounds Complicated?

That's because it is! But as with previous years, the full calculations for individual mushers are available on request at the end of the season – so you can double check. Just send *Hike!* a stamped self addressed envelope and we'll mail it out to you.

And as with last year, Hike! will feature progressive monthly updates of the pointscore. With the top 10 in every class featured on the Hike! web page and the full results for all competitors in the hardcopy edition!

May the games begin!



*A dog team on the sea ice*
*Photo: Eric Donkin*

## Don't Panic its Organic

Plastics that get flushed into drains and rivers and eventually out to sea pose a major health hazard to marine life. It is estimated that over 100,000 sea mammals worldwide die every year from swallowing or becoming entangled in plastic.

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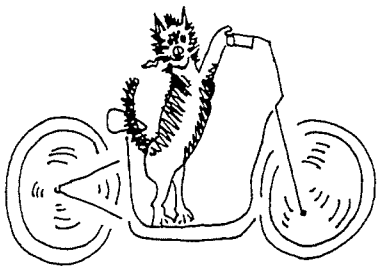
# So You Wanna Be a Musher - Part III
# The Equipment

A basic mushing kit comprises a scooter, a harness, limited slip collar, lines and a helmet. However, if you plan to do some serious mushing (such as entering races) you'll need some additional stuff - like cable cutters, running shoes and a helmet light for night running - not to mention a tent, a bike rack to carry your scooter. Maybe later you'll decide to buy a sled, you'll also need sleeping bags, wet weather gear, a gas lamp comes in useful ..... Obviously, if you really tried you could well and truly bankrupt yourself in the process.

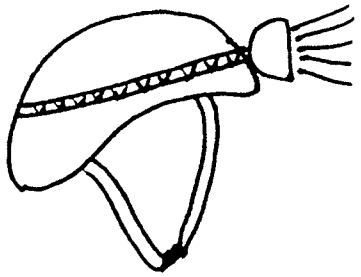


I will only mention the essentials here - you'll be able to work out what additional gear you want/need/can afford as you progress in the sport.

**Scooter**

You can buy a ready-made scooter locally - either second-hand or new. The Hike! web page features local and international scooter manufacturers.

**Helmet**

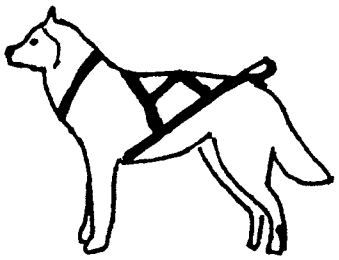


Any old bike helmet will do. But make sure there are no cracks in the polystyrene frame (there's no point wearing a helmet that doesn't do the job). If you're buying a helmet - stick to the old fashioned round style. The aerodynamic shaped helmets look good but if you're planning to do some night-running in the future you'll find that the head lamps don't stay on so easy. Why wear a helmet? To protect your you brain of course!

**Harness**

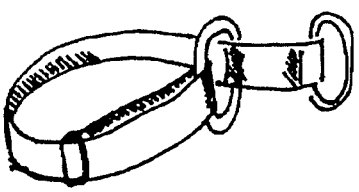
Basically there are two types of harness - the Cross-Back and the H-Back. Each musher has a preference for either one style or the other - but both have been proven through years of mushing experience to be safe and effective.

While the style of harness may not be crucial - the fit is. Harnesses come either in sizes (like clothes sizes) or are made to measure. Once again, Hike! includes ads from local harness vendors.



**Limited Slip Collar**

If you are running two or more dogs it is advisable to buy a limited slip collar. These collars are made of a tough material but work on the same principal as a check chain or choker collar - with the collar drawing tighter as pressure is applied to the lead. However, the limited slip collar only allows this tightening motion to occur to a certain extent and no more - thus avoiding the 'choking'.



These collars give you greater control over your dog's movements while minimising the dogs discomfort. As a result they are much safer than a rigid collar. For this reason they are the recommended collar of choice for most situations - not just mushing.

**Lines**

Another component of the basic mushing equipment kit is the tug line. With this you join your scooter to your dog(s). The lines come with a built in shock absorber to reduce jarring of your dog(s). For teams of two or more dogs, a neck line is also required. This is a short line which joins the collars of two dogs running adjacent to each other. The purpose of this line is to stop the dogs crossing over when running.

**Cable Cutters**

It is also recommended that cable cutters be added to you list. These can be purchased from any hardware store. The cheapest I've seen was $2:00 at a bargain import store.

The purpose of carrying cable cutters is to be able to quickly and effectively release your dogs should they become entangled in their lines. They are also mandatory equipment for many races.

**Expensive?**

Not really. Mushing can be as expensive as you want to make it but many of these items can be purchased second hand - with some wise shopping you could easily purchase this entire kit for under $250.

**Next Week – Basic Training**

# Southern Highlands Freight Run Freight Class

**Alaskan Malamute Club of NSW**

A Freight Class will be run on the same weekend as the Mid-Distance race.

Freight Class is a timed event over 2 heats Saturday & Sunday. Distance Approximately 7 kms.

Freight will be sand in bags supplied by Supercoat. Freight will be 15kg per dog (i.e. 4 dog team carries a total of 60kgs) Weights pre-weighted and packed, must come back unopened with the weight bags in tact, weights re-weighed, if not same disqualified. Allowance of 10% variation.

Classes: 6, 4 and 2 dog. 4 & 6 dog class can drop a dog but not 2 dog

Injured dogs MUST be vet checked on arrival back at camp.

All classes MUST run on rigs and can safely bag a dog. Dog bag MUST be able to fit the largest dog on the team.

For an injured dog you can drop a bag/15kg of weight for the second heat.

Freight Class to go out before the 6 dog in Mid-Distance race.

Freight Classes go out 6 dog, 4 dog then 2 dog with no breaks between

20-30 minute break from last dog home in Freight Class before the start of Mid-distance race (time to be confirmed).

Freight is not to be dropped on the course. If dog is injured, bag dog & freight.

Separate entry form for Freight Class but same entry fee as Mid-Distance Race.

Mushers MUST have competed & completed 2 previous races over the past 3 years.

Teams (including individual dogs) can only compete in ONE of the races (Freight class, Mid-Distance etc.) not multiple races.

Brakes on rigs MUST work once freight is added and will be re-checked to confirm working at the assembly area by the assembly stewards before race

Bib draw will be at drivers meeting on the Friday night

Note: Some of the above information may change once all details are finalised. Enquiries to: N Church phone 02-4729-0069 or e-mail conner28@one.net.au and B Walters phone 02-9629-3149 or e-mail bknown@ozemail.com.au

## New junior race format at the Southern Cross Pro Am

The Southern Cross race this year will trial a new class for those juniors who are experienced and looking for a bit more of a challenge. There will be a new 1-dog Junior class which will run the 1-dog track, after all the 1-dog musher have returned. To support the event, MORE track stewards will be placed around the track, particularly at difficult sections. Volunteers to act as trail stewards will be sought on the day of the race – so if you are available please consider assisting.

You can download the entry form from http://www.users.bigpond.com/gclarkso/southernXpro-am

## Build your own worm farm

Tired of taking your dog pooh to the dump every month? Want to do something for the environment at the same time? Why not build a worm farm.

Ready-made worm farms can usually be purchased from a plan nursery or local council, or you can make your own out of wood, plastic or any other lightweight, waterproof material.

These farms consist of a few layers of stackable crates, with the bottom bin having a solid base to catch any liquid run-off, and the upper bins having holes in the floor.

The worms start in the lower layer, then, as you add food scraps and other material to the upper levels, the worms crawl up through the holes to feast on the new food supplies.

In doing so, the worms drop their castings onto the lower levels. These can then be collected and used to fertilise your pot plants or garden beds.

Some of the things like to munch on (besides pooh) include paper, most fruit and vegetables, hair, soil, and eggshells They don't like onion or citrus fruit, and they thrive best in a cool, dark moist enviornment.

Source: The NSW Environment Protection Authority website at www.epa.nsw.gov.au

# To push or not to push

**Michaela Paul**

Over the years I have been listening to mushers describe how they are pushing their teams. And you can hear it everywhere. At the start line, around the fire, at the drivers meeting, and as they come through the finish line.

"I pushed them hard today" you might hear mushers say to each other or someone may comment how hard they pushed the team in the middle of the track and that is why the dogs come back so tired.

I have always been amazed by those comments and how good these people must be, how well they know their dogs to be able to push them so hard.

I still hear the push talk, it is still around. I think it will never go, it is here to stay.

I did try myself this pushing thing and gave up after a couple of years when I realised that the dogs were still looking over their shoulders at me with dumb expressions – even though I was going hoarse yelling commands.

But maybe there was some secret technique.

With anticipation I waited for 2000 Hike! video and when it arrived I watched and watched and watched.

And it is not there, not one team is digging into the ground and giving this extra speed when the musher calls for it.

So how are they getting this extra speed and at what exact part of the race do they gee up their team?

I know from my own experience that if I push my dogs at any time on the track the dogs will take time out later on and go below the constant 24 km/h average speed we like to run them at all (regardless of whether it is up hills, on flats, or down hill. Where we live we can only train one way, up the hill turn back and down the hill.

So how can these mushers push their teams and still maintain the all over average speed later on down the track or do they train the dogs at a slower speed so they can once again experience the thrill of the speed of leaving the start chute?

Is it really possible to push the dogs a bit faster on every hill and flat and know your average speed will stay the same later on?

Sure there is the pushing for speed increase when for no reason the dogs slow down or do not feel like running up a hill. But at what point will it be 100% productive other than at the last 500 metres where even the dogs know it is over and they will do the extra speed without sacrificing the average speed somewhere on the track. Or maybe I've got it wrong and it really doesn't mater if the speed increases or decreases at certain times in the race as the average speed will stay the same by the time the dogs make it home. And maybe with some luck they do run faster than expected or the track was better and flatter than last year's race.

Or maybe I still have to learn the secret of pushing at the right time, right place and on the right track.

# A right of reply

**Michaela Spackova Paul**

Firstly, I must warn you that this article should be read under adult supervision as it may offend some readers.

My article 'Born to Lead' was written when 5 and a half pups were born. And I was speaking as a new 'mum' to lots of people who said that if we were lucky we would get one leader in the litter.

Over the few short years I have been involved in sled dog racing and training I never could get a straight answer about leaders. That they were hard to get was more or less the standard reply. And when I asked how you train a leader I would be answered with a dumbfounded look. So I listened to people who talked about the one leader per litter and still it was not clear to me. It seemed like it was a closely guarded secret or perhaps something that nobody wanted to make a clear statement on for fear of looking silly.

And so 'Born to Lead' was written with the hope that someone out there understood what I was asking. But it has come to my attention that the article has been misunderstood by some readers so I will try to translate the article into my best English.

Firstly, I did not argue.
I definitely did not try to prove a point.
And I did not state.

The only thing I did was ask. Is it not permitted to ask when you are in doubt?

But one thing I should have made clear is my own training methods. I trained the crap out of my Sibe by pure luck. We were on a training and going flat chat. I checked the speedo and we were doing 24km/h but it felt much faster. You know what I mean? And then the Sibe for no reason stopped to have a pooh. No warning whatsoever, as she came to a dead stop. I flipped over the handlebars, did a somersault and landed on top of the Sibe who got the fright of its life and took off as fast as she stopped with me sitting on her back riding her like a horse. And since then she never thinks of stopping for a crap.

*Alex Theuma and Owen Robertson at the '99 Sydney Shield. Photo: A&F Matthews*

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## COUNCILS AND DOGS DON'T MIX PART II

**Tam Hutchison**

It seems that Local councils have been trying to pull the wool over our eyes so to speak with regard to Dog Laws. Via the A Current Affair television show a few positives have come to light. Just before Easter a story aired about the Hurstville council in Sydney putting a 2 dog, 2 cat restriction on each household (oh and some ridiculous thing about an appropriate number of fish and birds may be kept). But alas it seems that this can not be done, according to the NSW Minister of Local Government (hope I got the title right) since the introduction of the compulsory microchipping and life time registration in NSW, no local government can restrict the number of animals that a rate payer owns or keeps. The only time that the council can intervene is to investigate a complaint.

Greyhounds which are registered with the Greyhound Racing Control Board are not required to be microchipped or lifetime registered, again they are protected from Local Council Dog Keeping Laws by their National Board. Again maybe this is something that prospective AFSS office bearers could consider looking at?

There is alot of information on the Companion Animals Act website - www.dlg.nsw.gov.au. - which should clear up any or most of the confusion, but the outcome is still the same, the local councils cannot restrict the number of animals you own.

## Hayley Coutts race marshal times 2

Following from her successful stint race marshalling the '99 Canberra Sprint race, Hayley has been called up on to marshal not one race but two in 2001. Hayley will be race marshal of the Sydney Sled Dog Sprint and the Gold Seekers Race!

## Movie Review Best in Show

**Peter Komidar**

This is a very funny movie made by the same guy who made the heavy metal spoof 'Spinal Tap'. This time the spotlight is turned on the world of dog showing. The humour is gentle and it pokes fun at all the excesses we all find so funny about the show dog set. I especially liked the sports commentator at the dog show asking such innocently pointed questions which the show dog expert was unable to answer - like – so is there more to judging the working dogs than just how pretty they look? Or now that Borzoi looks fast, would it be able to beat a greyhound in a race? Very funny stuff. And the proctologist joke is a classic! If you only see one movie this year make it Best in Show.

# The Canine Race

**Terry Mace**

At the height of the arms race, the Americans & Russians realized that, if they continued, they would end up destroying the world. So they sat down and decided to settle the whole dispute with a dogfight.

The negotiators agreed that each country would take five years to develop the best fighting dog they could. The dog that won the fight would earn its country the right to rule the world. The losing side would have to lay down its arms.

The Russians found the biggest, meanest Dobermans and Rotweilers. They bred them together and then crossed their offspring with the meanest Siberian wolves. They selected only the biggest, strongest puppy from each litter. They used steroids and trainers in their quest for the perfect killing machine, until, after the five years were up, they had a dog that needed iron prison bars on his cage. Only the trainers could handle this beast.

When the day of the big fight arrived, the Americans showed up with a nine-foot-long Dachshund.

Everyone felt sorry for the Americans. No one thought this weird animal stood a chance against the growling beast in the Russian camp. The bookies predicted the Russians would win in less than a minute.

The cages were opened. The dachshund waddled toward the centre of the ring. The Russian dog leapt from his cage and charged the giant hotdog. As he got to within an inch of the American dog, the dachshund opened its jaws and swallowed the Russian beast whole. There was nothing left but a small bit of fur from the killer dog's tail.

The Russians approached the Americans, shaking their heads in disbelief. "We do not understand. Our top scientists and breeders worked for five years with the meanest, biggest Dobermans and Rotweilers. They developed a killing machine."

"Really?" the Americans replied. "We had our top plastic surgeons working for five years to make an alligator look like a dachshund!"

# Medical Kit

**Mark Mulcahy**

I would like to start by saying that this is not intended as a criticism of any particular race, club or organised event. This is a plea to all race organisations and clubs that hold sledding activities in Australia.

I have only been involved with sledding for a short time but have come toappreciate the importance of health and safety considerations for all dogs and mushers. Very recently I was involved in a serious cycle accident which caused me to consider "What if this had happened at a race or sled dog training?"

Those who attended the 2000 Southern Cross Pro Am watched Darren Higgins complete a race with a gash to the head and subsequently pass out at his car. I am sure that there are many stories of similar mushing accidents, but I'll come to the point: nearly all race rules and clubs require that a knife or side cutters be carried when racing, but what help are they if you need to treat a severe cut to a dog or musher? Not much unless you intend to put them out of their misery! For some time now I have carried a small kit of bandages and antiseptic lotion while racing and training ... just in case. I'm not a medical professional or vet but I would like to see the race rules amended to include a medical kit as an essential item, and the clubs enforcing this rule in pre-race checks (which seem to have almost vanished).

I'd like to propose to clubs that the requirement for a medical kit (two bandages and antiseptic) be added to all race rules and I encourage all mushers to train with one.

This letter is not intended to target any particular individual or organisation; it is simply a plea to improve the safety of all those who enjoy the sport of sledding. Written responses are welcome – to Mark Mulcahy, 10 Cusack Place, Fraser, ACT, 2615. I would like all clubs to consider my suggestion before we start the 2001 season.

# ACT animal noise law will bite in June

**Canberra Times**

With 1500 animal nuisance calls made to Domestic Animal Services just this year, new legislation protecting residents against undue noise from animals comes into effect in June - which could lead to a $150 on the spot fine for offenders.

Currently, the only way complainants can get legal redress is to collect enough evidence for the Director of Public Prosecutions to make a case in the Magistrates Court.

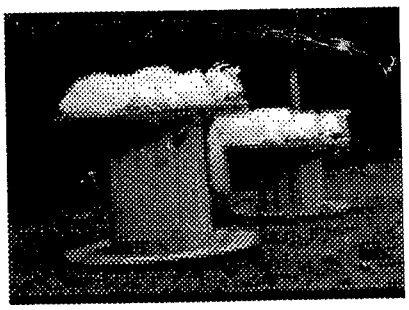
But before any action is taken under the Domestic Animals Act 2000, it must be established that there is a genuine problem.

Residents who ring Domestic Animal Services will be asked if they have consulted their neighbours and an inspector will be sent out within 24 hours to talk to the dog owner and inspect the premises.

Complainants must keep a diary of the noise problem (a few weeks of diary evidence is required) and if after 14 days the problem continues, a letter must be written to Domestic Animal Services, which sets in place a formal process of using the diary as evidence in the case.

An animal nuisance officer will talk to the dog owner and other neighbours and, if required, have the Register of Dogs issue a nuisance abatement notice.

Dog owners are given a timeframe to comply and if they do not they face a $150 fine.



**NZ Sled dogs Snowy and Scout asleep on cable reels.**
**Photo: Craig Nicholson**

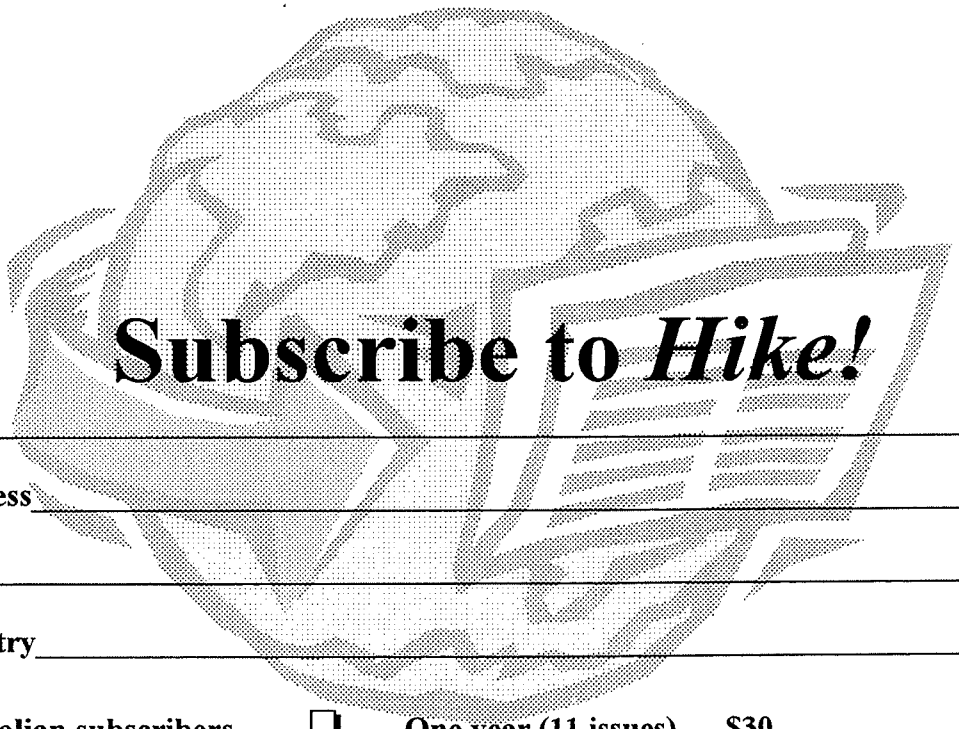
# 2001 Race Calendar

## Sprint Races

| Race | Distances | Date | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dash on the Downs (Queensland)** | 1 Dog Class – No less than 3km<br>2 Dog Class – No less than 4km<br>4 Dog Class – No less than 8km<br>Novice Class – No less than 3km | 5-7 May | Daryl and Sue Morris<br>(07) 3266 2170 |
| **Southern Cross Pro Am (Victoria)** | 1 Dog Class – 2 heats of 3km<br>2 Dog Class – 2 heats of 4.8km<br>4 Dog Class – 2 heats of 6.8km | 26-27 May | Karen Johnson<br>kazjohn@netspace.net.au<br>(03) 9853 0193 |
| **Undera Sled Dog Dash (Victoria)** | 1 Dog Class 3 heats of 2km<br>2 Dog Class, 3 heats 4.5km<br>3&4 Dog Class 2 heats 7km + night heat 4.5km,<br>Novice 2 heats of 2 km -no night heat | 9-11 June | Helen & David Pettifer<br>pettifer@bigpond.com |
| **Sydney Sled Dog Sprint (New South Wales)** | 1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.8km<br>2 Dog Class 2 heats of 5.5km<br>3 Dog Class 2 heats of 9.6 km<br>4 Dog Class 2 heats of 10.7km<br>6 Dog Class 2 heats of 12.6km | 23-24 June | Craig Turner<br>ionamal@shoal.net.au<br>(02) 4285 2457 |
| **Northern Exposure Classic (Queensland)** | 1 Dog Class 3 heats of 2.5 km<br>2 Dog Class 3 heats of 4 km<br>4 Dog Class 3 heats of 6 km | 29/6 - 1/7 | Donald Maillet<br>d.maillet@mailbox.uq.edu.au<br>(07) 3822 6427 |
| **Gold Seekers Race (Victoria)** | 1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3 km<br>2 Dog Class 2 heats of 6.5 km<br>4 Dog Class 2 heats of 9.0 km<br>6 Dog Class 2 heats of 12.7 km | 7-8 July | Jacqui McNicol<br>mcnicol@ruralnet.net.au |
| **Wild Dog Derby (South Australia)** | 1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.6 km<br>2 Dog Class 2 heats of 5.9 km<br>4 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.6 km | 14-15 July | Michael Herbst<br>arcticstarr@chariot.net.au |
| **Sydney Sled Dog Shield (New South Wales)** | 1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.6 km<br>2 Dog Class 2 heats of 4.6 km<br>3 & 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 8.2 km | 28-29 July | Ivan Douglas<br>skylaska@zip.com.au<br>(02) 9824 7759 |
| **The Burn (Victoria)** | 1&2 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.5km<br>3, 4 & 6 Dog Class 2 heats of 15km<br>Junior Class 2 heats of 3.8km | 4-5 August | Lisa Hodgson<br>lihuk@netspace.net.au<br>(03) 5281 5283 |
| **A5000 Sled Dog Derby (Victoria)**<br>TO BE CONFIRMED | TBA | 11-12 August | Robert Stevens<br>sleddogs@ssc.net.au<br>(03) 5428 3285 |
| **Canberra Classic (ACT)** | 1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.6 km<br>2 & 3 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.2 km<br>4 Dog Class 2 heats of 9.0 km | 18-19 August | Len Tomlinson<br>Kivawolf@bigpond.com<br>(02) 6258 8063 |

## Distance Races

| Race | Distance | Date | Contact |
|---|---|---|---|
| **SX Distance Race (New South Wales)** | 6 Dog Class (min 4 dogs) Distance<br>1 heat of 18.5km | 23-24 June | Craig & Melissa Turner<br>ionamal@shoal.net.au<br>(02) 4285 2457 |
| **Southern Highlands Freight Run (New South Wales)** | 1 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.8 km<br>2 Dog Class 2 heats of 14.9 km<br>4 Dog Class 2 heats of 20.8 km<br>6 Dog Class 2 heats of 20.8 km<br>Freight Class 2 heats of 7 km (6, 4 & 2 dog classes) | 7-8 July | Becky Walters<br>**bknown@ozemail.com.au**<br>02-9629-3149 |
| **B60 (New South Wales)** | 6 Dog Class 2 stages of 30km<br>(min 4 dogs) | 21-22 July | Stephen Carrick<br>crack@ozemail.com.au |
| **Kooyoora Challenge (Victoria)** | 2 heats of 25 km<br>6, 8, Open class (min 4 dogs) | 4-5 August | Barry Burden<br>frostbyt@acepia.net.au |
| **CSDC Summit Challenge (ACT)** | 2 stages of 20 km (min 4 dogs) | 18-19 August | Andrew Gersbach<br>andrew@dataflex.com.au<br>0414 690 204 |



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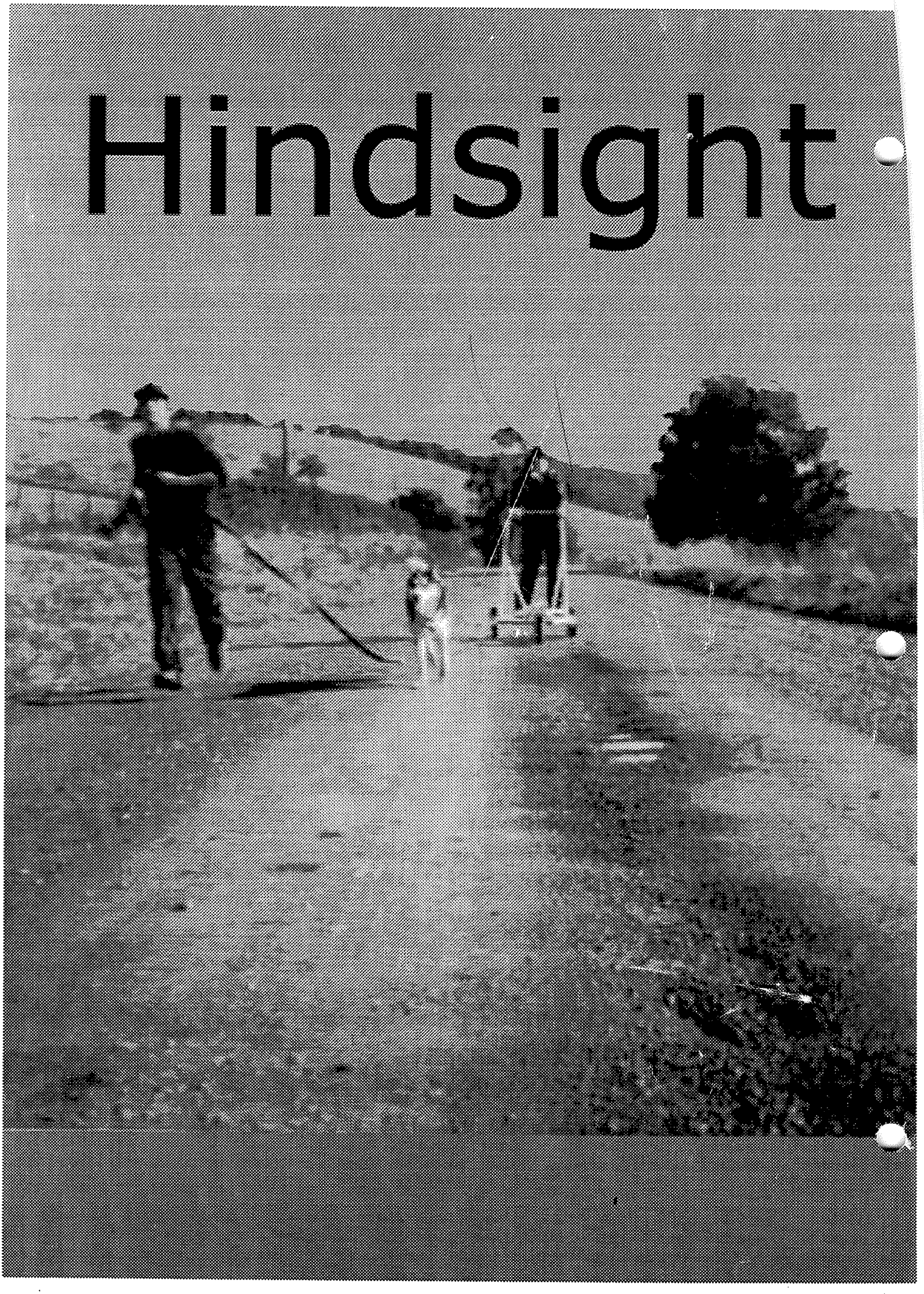
# Hindsight