

The Great Sled Dogs

The colorful North American Sled Dog Championship race in Fairbanks is over and it was won by the superb team driven by Keith Bryar of Laconia, New Hampshire. The distance of the race course was seventy long miles and it was covered in the successive 3-day, 3-heat races. The first two days were 20-mile courses and the last heat was 30 miles. It was performed in warm, thawing weather that gave the dogs additional handicap, but unbelievably enough, the entire distance was covered in slightly over five hours by the winning team. Other teams, including Alaskan drivers, finished within a few minutes of the lead team.

The winning drivers will always receive the accolades of the racing fans and this is proper indeed because they have earned it by their skills and experience on the trails.

While we honor the winners, we think we should also pay tribute to the wonderfully sturdy, stout-hearted animals—the racing dogs. We continually seem to fall short of gauging the extraordinary performances of the truly selfless, loyal, and intelligent animals that literally give their last ounce of strength for their drivers throughout the grueling miles of steady pulling and running. They are the dogs that probably give us as spectators, more drama impact if we just think a little more about it. They are a great example of a will to perform, strength and endurance. They are the backbone of the thrilling sled dog races in Alaska and elsewhere in the United States and Canada.

The racing dogs, as other dogs, don't ask much from their masters. All they need is kindness and good care, and if they get this, they are not only healthy and happy but they will perform their utmost when they are asked to do so in a superb demonstration of stamina and guts. If possible, they should be given no less consideration than racehorses receive in care and in our opinion, they are also animals of noble nature. They deserve the simple rewards of kindness and good care.