



Sept / Oct 2019
Newsletter

www.CanicrossUSA.org



Issue #6 | September / October 2019 | Sure they like to walk, but they LOVE to RUN!

Issue #6

So, the days are getting shorter and some summer temperatures are starting to show signs of cooling. Canicross season is almost here!

In the coming months, dog friendly events and canicross races are starting to emerge. Don't forget to gear up and represent at your favorite events and gatherings. Visit the new Canicross USA store with dozens of options! From hoodies and water bottles to t-shirts and hats, now you can look the part for the upcoming season.

In this article you can meet the American canicross athletes competing on Team USA at the world championships in Sweden next month and learn about the Canicross USA virtual run series.

Inside This Issue

- PG. 2 Letter from Brian Thomas
- PG. 3 Canicross: Trail Racing with your four-legged friend
- PG. 5 Cani "Cross" America Virtual Option
- PG. 5 Niina Baum – Favorite Canicross Trail
- PG. 7 Meet the World Championship Athletes
- PG. 9 Canicross USA Membership
- PG. 10 Canicross Events

Canicross USA will continue to grow with your support!

We are completing our first year and kicking off the second of our newsletter behind the effort of Mark Franco. We should all be thankful for his time in volunteering to not only put the newsletter together, but in maintaining our website as well.

I do have some exciting news to share and am hopeful that it will continue to grow the sport of Canicross in the US.

1. We are actively looking for publications to submit articles on canicross. I recently submitted an article for www.trailrunner.com, the article is highlighted in this newsletter. If you know of publications that would be interested, please send them to me.
2. We have been successful in getting trail race directors to include canicross as part of the events in GA, WA, and ME. We will continue to reach out to race directors, introduce canicross, and share why adding canicross is a great idea! Reach out to your local trail race directors and start a conversation. We will help you however we can.
3. We are kicking off the largest Virtual Canicross Series ever! Held in conjunction with Kenosha Running Company's Canicross events from September through April. See more information in this newsletter. Visit www.traildogrunners.com as well.
4. We are looking for co-race directors in your area to host Trail/Canicross events. The minimum support we will provide includes event insurance, promoting the event through our social media and database, provide swag, and guidance support. If you are interested, email or call me.

It is your support through our membership program and Virtual Canicross events that will allow us to continue and grow the sport of canicross. You are the "grassroots" of this sport, and you are the foundation of this sport in the US. Help us continue our efforts to grow our sport.

If you would like to be involved locally, regionally or nationally please reach out to me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Brian Thomas
Canicross USA
Email: briant@kenosharunningcompany.com
Office: 262-925-0300



We are continuing to find ways to introduce Canicross throughout the USA, this article was in the American Trail Runner Association publication:

Canicross: Trail Racing with your four-legged friend

Brian Thomas, founder of [Kenosha Running Company, Inc.](#), an American Trail Running Association specialty run store member, writes about the origins of Canicross and provides tips to get you started.



[Canicross](#) is a word that most have never heard, and if they have, they have no idea what it means! I fell into this category until May 2016, when I received an e-mail from Rich Kisseloff of [Windy City Musers](#) in Chicago, asking if I would be interested in including a Canicross event at one of our trail races. After learning more about Canicross and the community of runners that actively race with their dogs, I agreed.

I host twelve trail events in and around Kenosha, Wisconsin. For reference, think the far southeast corner of the state between Milwaukee and Chicago. Our events had always been dog-friendly, and we would typically have six to ten walkers and runners with dogs, so including Canicross was not a huge leap.

Canicross is an offshoot of dog sledding and falls into the larger category of Dryland Sports, which also includes Scootering, Bikejoring, and Carting (urban and trail). These additional sports are and were intended to keep dogs trained and fit for the dog sledding season. There are two organizations that oversee, set rules and guidelines for those who want to compete at this level.

Canicross, or trail running with you dog, has been popular for a very long time. I ran with my dog on the trails as early as the 1970s, and now, the growth of those running on the trails with their dog is exploding for lots of reasons. Interestingly, the vast majority have no idea they could be part of the Canicross movement across the United States. The reality is that Canicross in the US is nonexistent except in the dog sledding community and a few of us hosting Canicross events. The sport is hugely popular in the UK and many countries throughout Europe.

We hosted our first Canicross event in December 2017, and we had 22 registrants. The trail route was 3.5 miles long. The dogs brought great energy to the event, everyone had an amazing time, and most of us had never seen this before. I was hooked.

Presently, we host the largest Canicross series in the Country. In 2017 and 2018, we hosted seven Canicross events, and have eight scheduled for 2019. Our season starts in September and ends in April. Typically, the field size is 25-40, depending on weather, with distances ranging from 3 miles to 14.5 miles. We start our trail events with Canicross participants (dog and human pairing), and ten minutes later we start our two-legged registrants on the same course. To learn more about our events, visit www.traildogrunners.com.

As a result of our novice attempt to bring Canicross to our community, and through a combination of opportunities, we have now started Canicross USA. Originally it was just me posting our pictures and race info on Facebook group

page, [Canicross USA](#), which lead to countless comments and requests about hosting events in their area, and where groups are located that individuals could run/meet up with. I reluctantly agreed to start forming Canicross USA Chapters across the Country, and then it got crazy!

People love their dogs, trail runners love their dogs. I could not keep up with the emails. One thing lead to another, and we developed a newsletter, website, membership program, and actively started introducing and recruiting trail race directors to consider including Canicross at their trail events. Slowly we are winning a few over to host events, and races are popping up in the Northeast, South, West, Northwest and Midwest. To learn more about Canicross USA and to find a listing of events, visit www.CanicrossUSA.org.

Here are some helpful tips to get you started in the sport of Canicross:

Canicross gear

Most people who run with their dogs use a collar and a leash. While this works, it is not ideal for the runner or dog. There is specific gear that makes the running experience significantly better for the runner and dog and three key pieces of gear/equipment are outlined below:

- A properly fitting harness for your dog. You want the harness to allow the dog to have a free range of motion and they are pulling from their chest.
- A bungee lead line that connects you to your dog. Why bungee? If they pull unexpectedly it gives you a moment to react. The standard length is two meters.
- A runner belt/harness, you want the belt to fit around your hips so you get “pulled” by your dog. Those designed for Canicross also have straps that go from your backside through your legs and strap to the front of the belt. This is to hold the belt in place around your hips. The brands I am most familiar with are Non-Stop Dogwear and Howling Dog Alaska. We have been actively outfitting runners and dogs with these products for several years.

Trail running with your dog

The first challenge you’ll face while running with your dog, is learning to run faster! Honestly, your dog will love to lead and pull, so you will both need to learn to adapt to that new comfortable pace. Verbal commands for right, left, etc., will start to come naturally like other commands you have already taught your dog and your dog has taught you.

I am hopeful that more and more trail race directors will consider adding Canicross to their trail event and I am happy to consult, lend my experience, and provide other assistance to get the event off the ground. Please reach out to me at briant@kenosharunningcompany.com, if you are interested in hosting an event or starting a Canicross Chapter in your area.

Trail Running: It is just a way of life.

Brian Thomas

To read this article from the ATRA website, click [HERE](#).

Cani "Cross" America Virtual Option:

The Largest CaniCross Series in the Country now offers the Cani "Cross" America Virtual Option to their event.

We will track your total miles for each event, provide you with some great swag throughout this season's eight events and help in organizing "meet up" locations across the U.S.

We will have different swag for each event. Social Media to share your experience and comment on others joining in on the fun.



virtual CANICROSS

The largest CaniCross Series in the country now has Virtual Runs as well.

For more information e-mail:
briant@kenosharunningcompany.com



www.TrailDogRunners.com
(262) 925-0300



Paws to Honor 5k Run for the Brave

Sunday, September 22

Smiling Hill Farm, Westbrook, ME

The 4th Annual Soldier's Pace Canicross Race will be a 5k timed race through the sprawling Smiling Hills Farms, in Westbrook, Maine just minutes from Portland. The race and all proceeds will benefit "K9s on the Front Line," a nonprofit organization that works to rescue shelter dogs by training them to be certified service dogs to assist suffering PTSD/TBI military veterans.

NEW! CANICROSS USA ONLINE STORE

www.zazzle.com/store/canicross_usa



Canicross USA Mission Statement

Canicross USA and our local chapters will embrace our grassroots effort to create a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere. We will be all inclusive to all abilities and breeds of dogs. With a distinct focus on living and loving a healthy lifestyle in a community that is exploring and expanding the relationship with our canine running partners.

Canicross USA will build bridges with each chapter that will further allow each chapter to create its own identity locally and grow in their unique part of the country. We will provide resources and guidance that will best assist in developing: group runs, Canicross events, community awareness, product support and continual education on our sport.

Canicross USA will rely on its local chapters to provide creative, fun and healthy ideas with each other to ensure a nurturing environment.

Canicross USA believes in you and the care, passion and love that is required to keep our canine running partners healthy and active.

Niina Baum – Canicross USA, Northern Wisconsin

Favorite Canicross Trail:

“My favorite Canicross trail is in the alps of France. Last year I competed in a 10-stage, nine-day race there. The 2nd stage was the most challenging as it was a 5k straight up a ski hill. But the views at top made all the pain of getting there worth it.”

Niina has recently been elected to the USFSS Board of Directors and is the vice chair of the athletes’ advisory council (requirement of the International Olympic Committee). She is co-captain on Team USA at the 2019 Dryland World Championship where she’ll compete in the scooter class.



IFSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP 2019

Dryland

Nybro, Sweden: October 23rd – 27th, 2019



The USFSS has formed a team to represent the US at the 2019 dryland world championship in Sweden. The dryland events include women, men, and junior canicross, as well as bikejor, scooter (1 and 2 dog), and rig (4,6, and 8 dog). The canicross events will take place on Thursday and Friday (10/24 - 10/25) and each team will start in intervals of 30 seconds.

Canicross USA has reached out to team captain Nick Weis, also competing in Men's Elite Canicross, to invite him and any other canicross athletes to answer a few questions. Not only did he so graciously oblige, he invited the other canicross athletes on the team. We've included a single response from each of the athletes. [See their full responses on the Canicross USA website.](#)

We asked:

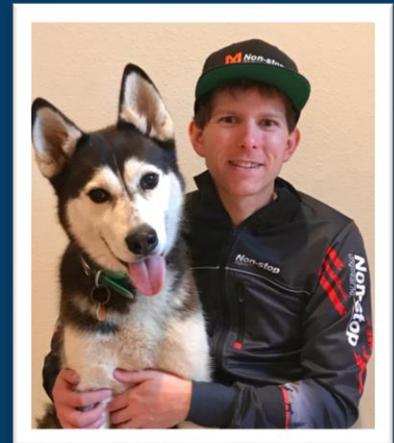
- How and when do you first discover the sport of canicross?
- What is your favorite "go-to" running gear - for you and your pup(s)?
- Tell us about the dog you will be competing with in Nybro?
- What does a typical week of training look like for you and your teammate?
- What advice do you have for someone interested in taking up canicross?

Here's what they had to say...

Nick Weis – Team Captain

What is your favorite "go-to" running gear - for you and your pup(s)?

For dog gear, it is Non-stop dogwear. They have great harnesses and their belts are the most comfortable I have ever run in. Their new line of gear is something that every canicross runner needs to try. The new line has a locking carabiner for attachment to the dog. The new canicross belt has numerous improvements over their previous version. For running shoes, my go-to's are Salomon S/Lab Speed for racing and Salomon Speedcross for training. The grip Salomon shoes offer is second to none. At the speeds we race at, you must have 100% confidence that when your foot hits the ground, it is going to stay where you place it.



Brandi Williamson

How and when did you first discover the sport of canicross?

I first discovered canicross 9 years ago when I invented it...or I thought I had. I have been a runner since I was 12 and ten years ago, we started a small kennel of Siberians huskies that we would sled with. When I would run, I liked to take one with me, but I got so tired of having them heel the whole time when what they really wanted to do was pull. So, I rigged up an old water-bottle belt with some lines to attach to the harness of my dog and we were off. I did this for a number of years before I realized there were competitive races I could enter.



Joy Weis

What does a typical week of training look like for you and your teammate?

Living in Southwest Missouri, the weather plays a huge factor in our training. In the fall, the dogs are doing canicross training runs most days. They rotate between running with Nick and I so we can each have a chance to work with the dogs individually. We also do rig training runs 2-3 days per week. During the summer, the runs are shorter and less frequent depending on the heat. We run early in the morning in the dark and try to run near water if we are able so the dogs can take a post-run swim. I do run without the dogs for my own fitness and incorporate both speed work and longer runs into my training. I'm also a spin instructor, attend yoga and cross training classes regularly.



Chris Speers (also competing in 4-dog rig)

Tell us about the dog you will be competing with in Nybro?

It is actually a dual-team. I cannot give credit without Surge. He has been my phenomenal canicross dog the past 3 years. We have competed in the 2017 World Championship in Poland together, and he has helped me earn a couple ISDRA medals in Canicross. However, DJ Kryptonite seems to be my best choice.

I have yet to make a final decision, but likely it will be Kryptonite. He has more power, maybe the

same focus, maybe less, he is still young at 2 years old. Surge is a Pointer mix of EP and GSP and Alaskan and touch of greyhound. Kryptonite is a pure GSP [German Shorthair Pointer] and he actually was imported from Sweden. So, he is racing in his home country which is exciting!



Brooke Kish

What advise do you have for someone interested in taking up canicross?

I advise to find a good mentor and seek out local canicross clubs! Reaching out to one of us competing in worlds who already has been through the starting up process is great too. I learned a ton from Nick and Joy Weis and I'm still asking them questions constantly. I advise seeking out proper gear or starter kit from Non-stop dogwear. Simply have fun! You don't need a particular kind of dog and I've seen the littlest dogs running canicross style! I started by purchasing the correct harness, bungee line and canicross belt and then jumped into a dog charity run event. Anyone can do it!



Canicross USA Membership Program

The creation of our membership program is an outcome of the passion for this sport that has been displayed by you. “YOU” meaning our dog owners, dog owner runners, CaniCross USA chapters, dog related groups and clubs, canicross race directors and companies that support and provide products for canicross.

Benefits of Membership:

1. Receive our newsletters and updated information on canicross events across the country
2. Discounts on Canicross USA Virtual Events
3. Discounts on Kenosha Running Company, Inc. canicross Events
4. Access canicross insurance for your events
5. Discounts on canicross gear through Kenosha Running Company, Inc. and other sponsors
6. Discounts on Canicross USA apparel and related products

Membership Levels*:

1. Individual Annual Membership: \$30.00
2. CaniCross USA Chapters: \$60.00
3. Dog-Related Clubs & Groups: \$80.00
4. Race Directors: \$80.00
5. Companies that Support CaniCross: \$100.00

*All membership fees are due annually

To sign up online: [CLICK HERE](#)

To print and mail in your registration:
[CLICK HERE](#)

“A well-trained
dog will make no
attempt to share
your lunch. He
will just make
you feel so guilty
that you cannot
enjoy it.”

— Helen Thomson



September-November Canicross Events

The following is a list of canicross events for the months of September-November. The list consists of canicross events and dog friendly trail runs and races and is provided by [RunRepeat – The Dog Race Database](#). Over 4 million users and more than 12,000 experts have reviewed shoes at [RunRepeat](#).

The very extensive database consists of 1835 dog friendly events around the country. It is continuously updated so check back often!

Event Name	Location	Date
North Shore Trail Run 1/2, 10K, 5K	Lawrence, KS	9/14/19
Walk and Run for Life	Crownsville, MD	9/21/19
Soldier's Pace Annual 5k Canicross - Westbrook	Westbrook, ME	9/22/19
Fall Fell Trail Race Mystery Distance	Kansas City, KS	9/22/19
Strut for Strays! 5K Trail Run & Dog Walk	Farmington, ME	9/28/19
Paw Prints 5k Run/Walk Trail	Eastampton, NJ	9/28/19
Pike River Trail Run/Walk	Kenosha, WI	9/29/19
Lake Perry Rocks! Trail Run 50K, Half	Meriden, KS	10/5/19
Lucy Mackenzie 5K-9	Brownsville, VT	10/6/19
Ruff Run 5K	Dayton, OH	10/6/19
Run the Ridge	Westbrook, ME	10/12/19
Wolf Pack Trail Run & Relay - Kansasville	Kansasville, WI	10/20/19
Trail Dog Distance Classic -- An Exclusive CaniXC Event	Burlington, WI	10/20/19
Annual Paws & Claws 5K	Hopkinton, MA	10/20/19
Trick or Treat 5k Trail Run	Kansas City, KS	10/26/19
Foundry Halloween 5k	Steamboat Springs, CO	10/26/19
Bobcat Trail Marathon and Half Marathon	Glouster, OH	11/9/19
Veteran's Day Fantastic 4-Mile	Kansas City, KS	11/10/19
Trails Are Alive Night Adventure	Lake Geneva, WI	11/23/19

Always consider the racecourse and conditions when choosing an event, and how it will impact your teammate. Running your dog on unnatural surfaces can be more harsh than natural surfaces and should be limited by your dog's conditioning and ability. Always consult with your veterinarian when participating in sporting events.



If you would like to add a dog-friendly walk/run to our newsletter or website list or would like any changes/updates made to your event, email Mark at mark.franco.jr@gmail.com.

IFSS DRYLAND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Nybro, Sweden on Oct 23rd-27th,
2019

Congratulations to all the members of the
USFSS Dryland World Championship Team!

GO TEAM USA!



2019 DRYLAND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM USA

WOMEN'S CANICROSS

Brooke Kish
Joy Weis
Brandi Williamson

MEN'S CANICROSS

Chris Speers
Nick Weis

WOMEN'S BIKEJOR

Emily Ferrans
Sarah Kassing
Heather Dahlin

MEN'S BIKEJOR

Dan Hanks
Brad Kassing

WOMEN'S ONE-DOG SCOOTER

Niina Baum
Laurie Brandt
Rachael Bryar Colbath

MEN'S ONE-DOG SCOOTER

Dan Hanks

TWO-DOG SCOOTER

Dan Hanks
Brad Kassing

FOUR-DOG RIG

Chris Speers
Marla B. Brodsky



Links/Resources

CanicrossUSA.org

[XC Thrilllogy Trail Events](#)

[Kenosha Running Company](#)

[Non-stop Dogwear](#)

[USFSS – United Federation of Sleddog Sports](#)

[IFSS – International Federation of Sleddog Sports](#)

[RunRepeat – The Dog Race Database](#)

[Northeast K9 Conditioning](#)

[Pawsitive Futures](#)

[Shadow Dog Photography](#)