



***NORTH AMERICAN  
CANICROSS***

**CANICROSS TITLING PROGRAM**

**VERSION 5**



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF CANICROSS

Canicross, or cross-country trail running with dogs, came about when the dog sledding community needed a way to cross-train their teams in the off-season. Because of this, the original canicross dogs were more traditional mushing breeds, but as canicross has become more popular as a stand-alone sport, the breed variety has greatly increased to include pure and mixed breeds of all shapes and sizes.

Canicross grew first in popularity in Europe, with the United Kingdom really leading the movement to legitimize the sport. The first canicross event staged in the UK took place in 2000. In March 2008, over 100 runners and their dogs joined CaniX UK at the first ever canicross event held at Crufts, the largest dog show held in the world. In October 2012, CaniX UK hosted the first ECF European Canicross Championships in the UK in Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

Typically canicross falls under Sled Dog and Mushing Sports Organizations, such as the International Sled Dog Federation founded in 1985, and the United States Federation of Sleddog Sports founded in 1988 for sanctioned events.\*

\* North American Canicross is in no way affiliated with, authorized by, maintained by, sponsored by or endorsed by any federation or organization mentioned or in existence at this time.



# CONTENTS

1: ORGANIZATION PURPOSE & GOALS	<b>PAGE 3</b>
2: GENERAL REGULATION	<b>PAGE 4</b>
2.1 DOGS & HANDLERS IN COMPETITION	
2.2 COMPETITION RESTRICTIONS	
2.3 COMPETITION DELINEATIONS	<b>PAGE 5</b>
3: NORTH AMERICAN CANICROSS TITLING PROGRAMS	<b>PAGE 6</b>
3.1 LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES	
3.2 RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLES	<b>PAGE 7</b>
3.3 CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE PROGRAM	<b>PAGE 8-9</b>
4: PRIZES & AWARDS	<b>PAGE 10</b>
5: REGISTRATION OF DOG TEAMS	<b>PAGE 11</b>
5.1 REGISTRATION APPLICATION	
5.2 REGISTRATION OF MULTIPLE DOGS	
5.3 JUNIOR RUNNER REGISTRATION	
5.4 FUTURE MUSHER CERTIFICATION	<b>PAGE 12</b>
6: TITLE SUBMISSION	<b>PAGE 13</b>
7: FINAL THOUGHTS	<b>PAGE 14</b>



# 1

## : ORGANIZATION PURPOSE & GOALS

North American Canicross (NACC) was founded in June of 2019 for the purpose of promoting canicross as a competitive sport in the United States. Its rules and regulations were derived from rules in practice by the International Sled Dog Federation and have evolved into a framework that offers multiple title programs to meet the demands of a growing sport. NACC's titling program seeks to maintain and promote the highest standards of competition in canicross for dog and human running teams and canine sports enthusiasts at all levels. NACC's competition standards are in place to ensure a safe activity for dogs and humans who are properly conditioned for the demands of the sport.

North American Canicross defines canicross as the sport of cross country trail running with dogs. Canicross can be run with one or two dogs, always attached to the runner. The dog(s) wear a non-restrictive, free-motion harness that attaches near the base of the dog's tail to a bungee cord or elastic line. The line reduces shock to both human and dog(s) when the dog(s) pull. The line must be the minimum of five feet in length and not exceeding nine feet when fully extended. The human teammate is attached to the dog(s) by a hands-free waist belt.

In 2020, NACC began growing their participants with multiple canicross organizations in other regions who wish to uphold the highest standard of the sport in North America. At this time, NACC does not have any formal affiliated groups, but does offer support to non-affiliated local and regional canicross clubs who want to utilize any knowledge NACC has made available through social media. Non affiliated local groups can request NACC banners to promote NACC at their local meetups, but cannot claim to be officially or formally affiliated at this time.

### *North American Canicross Race Competitions Standards Board*

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# 2

## : GENERAL REGULATIONS

### 2.1 DOGS & HANDLERS IN COMPETITION

The North American Canicross titling program and all events are open to any and all persons without discrimination who shall exhibit good sportsmanship and uphold the standards set forth in these rules and regulations.

All persons, by enrolling in the canicross titling program, agree to comply with all aspects of these regulations (including appendices). These regulations are intended to facilitate a reasonable governance of the sport of canicross and the titling program and are not intended to violate any law in any geographic jurisdiction. Should it be determined that these regulations not be permissible in the local jurisdiction, these regulations shall be modified to conform to local law.

Competitors may compete with any dog(s), purebreds or mixed breeds, 12\* months or older. The goal of the sport is to demonstrate the competitor's skill in training and performance. Canicross is meant to highlight the fundamental elements of a dog(s) and human running team: strength, confidence, speed, communication, and all-around athleticism. All who want to compete in the North American Canicross titling program or in any NACC hosted sanctioned events must register a dog with NACC. *\*amended October 2023*

### 2.2 COMPETITION RESTRICTIONS

To protect the welfare of dogs participating, dogs having the following conditions shall not be permitted to compete for as long as the condition exists:

- Dogs under twelve (12)\* months of age in all programs *\*amended october 2023*
- Dogs suffering from any deformity, injury, or illness that may put the dog at risk of injury or further injury by participating in the title program

## 2.3 COMPETITION DELINEATIONS

**CANICROSS** - North American Canicross defines canicross as the sport of cross country trail running with dogs. Canicross can be run with one or two dogs, always attached to the runner. The dog(s) wear a non-restrictive, free-motion harness that attaches to a bungee cord or elastic line. The line reduces shock to both human and dog(s) when the dog(s) pull. The line must be the minimum of five feet in length and not exceeding nine feet when fully extended. The human teammate is attached to the dog(s) by a hands-free waist belt. Dog must run either in front of or beside human, never behind.

**QUALIFYING RACE** - Qualifying races must have proof of time and completed in a trail setting where the surface is NOT paved. Races must be considered cross-country, where competitors run open-air courses over natural terrain such as dirt or grass. A qualifying race does not need to be specified as a canicross race, but the competitor submitting the race must have run the race canicross, as defined above. *A race distance is determined by how the race director has advertised the race. Not by personal GPS equipment.*

# 3

## : NORTH AMERICAN CANICROSS TITLING PROGRAMS

North American Canicross' competitive programs include the LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES, RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLES, and CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES which have similar structures, but different competition standards as outlined in this section.

### 3.1 LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES

Program emphasizing conditioning and training for the dog and runner alike. LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES will include all miles that the registered dog has accumulated over the lifetime of the dog in the canicross setting. Recognition awards will be awarded as outlined in Section 4.

LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES are broken down into the following milestones and are awarded as such:

**50 Miles**

**100 Miles**

**250 Miles**

**500 Miles**

**1000 Miles**

**5000 Miles**

**10000 Miles**

Miles are logged and calculated by the registered dog owner using a fitness tracker and/or application with a GPS. Miles include all training and virtual race distances that are tracked in a canicross setting as defined in Section 2.3.

In order for these miles to be counted towards the LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES titles, registered competitors must submit a Lifetime Miles Title Request Form at each above listed milestone. For more information regarding title submission, see Section 6.

## 3.2 RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLES

Program with emphasis on speed, endurance, and athleticism. Titles are broken down into two distance classes and are awarded based on completion of qualifier races, as defined in Section 2.3, for each distance class. Recognition awards will be awarded as outlined in Section 4.

RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLES are broken down into the following distance classes and are awarded as such:

**Sprint Distance Class** : 1 mile (1.6k) - 3 miles (4.8k)

**5k Distance Class** : 3.1 miles (5k) - 6 miles (9.6k)

Each Distance class offers four competitive “levels” for certification (“titling”) purposes, based upon the degree of training and competitive skills demonstrated. The class levels are broken down as such: Novice, Advanced, Master, and Elite.

A competitor does not need to complete distance CLASSES consecutively and can work on different distance class titles simultaneously. Levels within each class, however, must be completed in the Novice, Advanced, Master, Elite order.

Distance Titles are outlined below and require the stated number of Qualified Races in order to achieve the title and move onto the next level title in that Distance Class.

### **Sprint Distance Class**

Qualifying races for this class measure a minimum of 1 mile (1.6 Kilometers) maximum 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) in distance.

- Accumulative five (5) qualifying races: NOVICE SPRINT CANICROSS DOG (NSCD)
- Accumulative ten (10) qualifying races: ADVANCED SPRINT CANICROSS DOG (ASCD)
- Accumulative twenty (20) qualifying races: MASTER SPRINT CANICROSS DOG (MSCD)
- Accumulative forty (40) qualifying races: ELITE SPRINT CANICROSS DOG (ESCD)

### **5k Distance Class**

Qualifying races for this class measure a minimum of 3.1 miles (5 kilometers) and a maximum of 6.0 miles (9.6 kilometers) in distance.

- Accumulative five (5) qualifying races: NOVICE 5K CANICROSS DOG (NCD)
- Accumulative ten (10) qualifying races: ADVANCED 5K CANICROSS DOG (ACD)
- Accumulative twenty (20) qualifying races: MASTER 5K CANICROSS DOG (MCD)
- Accumulative forty (40) qualifying races: ELITE 5K CANICROSS DOG (ECD)



See Section 2.3 for what delineates a qualifying race in the titling program.

In order for a race to be included towards the RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLE, registered competitors must submit a Race Dog Distance Title Request Form upon completing all required qualifying races. For more information regarding title submission, see Section 6.

### 3.3 CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

Program which further challenges the dog and runner to be versatile in competitive distances. Championship Titles are awarded to dogs who have completed a variety of race distances and acquired RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLES and LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES TITLES. CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES are recognized as Bronze through Gold as achievements are made. Recognition awards will be awarded as outlined in Section 4.

CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES are awarded based on completing a variety and combination of class distances in the RACE DOG DISTANCE and LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES TITLE programs, in addition to Qualified Races of longer distances.

The CHAMPIONSHIP class offers three competitive levels for titling purposes, based upon the degree of training and competitive skills demonstrated. The class levels are broken down as such: Champion Bronze, Champion Silver, and Champion Gold.

Championship Titles are listed below and require a number of accumulated titles and Qualifying races in order to achieve each title and move onto the next title in the Championship Class. Championship Titles must be earned in sequential order.

#### **Champion BRONZE Canicross Dog (CHBCD)**

- Achieve a NOVICE RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLE in any distance class
- Achieve a 50 Mile LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES TITLE
- Accumulate three (3) qualifying races of a minimum distance of 6.2 miles (10 kilometers) maximum 13 miles (20.9 kilometers)

#### **Champion SILVER Canicross Dog (CHSCD)**

- Achieve a NOVICE RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLE in any distance class
- Achieve a 100 Mile LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES TITLE
- Accumulate five (5) qualifying races of a minimum distance of 6.2 miles (10 kilometers) maximum 13 miles (20.9 kilometers)
- Accumulate one (1) qualifying race of a minimum distance of 13.1 miles (21 kilometers or half marathon)

## **Champion GOLD Canicross Dog (CHGCD)**

- Achieve a NOVICE RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLE in any distance class
- Achieve a 250 Mile LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES TITLE
- Accumulate ten (10) qualifying races of a minimum distance of 6.2 miles (10 kilometers) maximum 13 miles (20.9 kilometers)
- Accumulate two (2) qualifying races of a minimum distance of 13.1 miles (21 kilometers or half marathon)

See Section 2.3 for what delineates a qualifying race in the titling program.

In order for a race to be included towards the CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE, registered competitors must submit a Championship Title Request Form upon completing all required qualifying races. For more information regarding title submission, see Section 6.

# 4

## : PRIZES & AWARDS

North American Canicross awards its competitors a series of challenge coins at each title achievement, as outlined in this document. Each challenge coin is unique and reflects the discipline in training, and athletic ability of the canicross team. Challenge coins will range in size between 1.5” to 3” and include a variety of metal and colored finishes.

Title specific and limited release challenge coins become available on a set schedule. The schedule for challenge coin release can be located on the North American Canicross website. Titles can be submitted and achieved prior to the release of the corresponding challenge coin. As soon as the coin is released, all participants previously meeting all requirements for the title and having submitted the appropriate request forms, will receive the coin.

North American Canicross is based in the United States of America. All Awards and Prizes being shipped outside the USA will have an additional charge of \$15.00 shipping and handling fee that will be paid by the registered competitor prior to shipment of prizes. Payment will be accepted in the form of Paypal sent to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com) or check written out to NORTH AMERICA CANICROSS. Links to accepted methods of payment will be available on the [northamericancanicross.com](http://northamericancanicross.com) website and associated social media platforms.



# 5

## : REGISTRATION OF DOG TEAMS

A dog must be registered with North American Canicross in order to compete in NACC sanctioned events and titling programs. Miles and qualifying races count beginning on and thereafter date of registration and payment into the program.

A dog must meet eligibility requirements outlined in Section 2.2 to be registered with NACC.

### 5.1 REGISTRATION APPLICATION

A dog team may be registered by completing the application online through the [northamericancanicross.com](http://northamericancanicross.com) website and social media platforms. Once form is completed it should be emailed directly to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com).

An entry fee of \$40.00 must be paid upon registration and will automatically cover the title fee for the 50 mile LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES award. Payment will be accepted in the form of Paypal sent to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com) or check written out to NORTH AMERICAN CANICROSS. Links to accepted methods of payment will be available on the [northamericancanicross.com](http://northamericancanicross.com) website and associated social media platforms.

If a dog is not recognized by a major breed registry and cannot be definitively identified as a breed or birth date, the dog shall be classified as an “All Breed” and an estimate of the dog’s birth date is allowed for entry.

North American Canicross issues a digital registration card bearing the information included on the registration application. Dogs will be registered under a unique registration number for each registrant. Any errors on the card must be reported to NACC for correction to assure correct issuance of title certificates.

### 5.2 REGISTRATION OF MULTIPLE DOGS

A runner may register multiple dogs in the North American Canicross Title Program. Registration and entry fee must be completed per dog registered as written in Section 5.1

Registration will be based on the dog named in the Registration Application, and not on the runner submitting registration. Therefore, separate runners cannot register the same dog.



A runner may count the same miles and qualifier races towards titles for up to two (2) dogs at a time. A runner may have registered more than two (2) dogs who are working to achieve titles simultaneously, but more than two (2) dogs cannot use the same mileage or qualifier races towards their title accumulation. This is in order to adhere to the Canicross rules and definition as defined in Section 2.3.

### 5.3 JUNIOR RUNNER REGISTRATION

**Amended October 2023:** The North American Canicross Junior Runner Program is for children twelve years old to eighteen years old. It was designed to encourage youth involvement in canicross as a fun, family-friendly sport and to promote responsible pet ownership. Dogs and junior runners may compete in the Junior Runner Program the same as registered members in the North American Canicross Titling Program. A junior runner need not be the owner of the dog; however, a dog and junior runner must be registered as a team in order to participate in the Junior Runner Program. A dog may be registered with more than one handler, in this instance. A digital registration card bearing the information included on the registration application will be issued based on the name of the Junior Runner and the dog since accomplishments are measured and awarded to the dog and handler as a team. Any errors on the card must be reported to NACC for correction to assure correct issuance of title certificates. Junior Runner Registration requires the NACC waiver be signed by a parent or guardian 18 years or older.

A dog shall not be permitted to be entered on the same day in the same class with two different handlers for in-person events.

The Junior Runner competitor may be accompanied by an adult 18 years or older in order to help them manage the dog during the run. The adult who accompanies may secure the child with a double leash that is longer than the leash of the child. The task of the adult is to ensure the security of the child and to intervene if a problem arises.

### 5.4 FUTURE MUSHER CERTIFICATION

The North American Canicross FUTURE MUSHER CERTIFICATION is for children twelve years old and younger. It was designed to encourage youth involvement in canicross as a fun, family-friendly sport and to promote responsible pet ownership. Future Mushers have a one time \$30 registration fee and receive an educational canicross pamphlet. Interested youth, complete a series of activities in canicross, and submit their answers via email to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com). Once completed they receive an official Future Musher patch and Future Musher Certificate. Future Mushers are typically twelve years old or younger, although people of all ages can participate.



## : TITLE SUBMISSION

Upon completing the requirements necessary for earning a North American Canicross title, submitting the appropriate title request form, and acceptance of entry payment, the dog team will be awarded a challenge coin and a certificate, as outlined in Section 4.

Each title request form must be submitted along with a \$30.00 title review fee. The only title request form which does not require a \$30.00 title review fee is the 50 mile LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES Title, as that fee is waived when you register your dog with NACC. Payment will be accepted in the form of Paypal sent to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com) or check written out to NORTH AMERICA CANICROSS. Links to accepted methods of payment will be available on the [northamericacanicross.com](http://northamericacanicross.com) website and associated social media platforms.

In order for miles to be counted towards the LIFETIME ACHIEVED MILES titles, registered competitors must submit a Lifetime Miles Title Request Form at each milestone listed in Section 3.1 and email the request to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com). The form must include the competitors registration number and the date the milestone was achieved. The form will be available to download as a PDF on both the North American Canicross website, and social media platforms run by NACC. Requests will be reviewed by the North American Canicross Race Competitions Standards Board, and validated by shared GPS tracked miles.

In order for races to be included towards the RACE DOG DISTANCE TITLE and CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES, registered competitors must submit a Race Dog Title Request Form or Championship Title Request Form upon completing all qualifying races required for that title, and email request to [nacanicross@gmail.com](mailto:nacanicross@gmail.com). The request form must include the competitors registration number, all proofs of times (POT), race dates, names of race hosts, and competitor bib numbers. All forms will be available to download as a PDF on both the North American Canicross website, and social media platforms run by NACC. Requests will be reviewed by the North American Canicross Race Competitions Standards Board.



## : FINAL THOUGHTS

As Canicross is an ever changing and developing sport, it is inevitable that new information, whether related to general regulations or health and safety, will come to light. North American Canicross will continue to evolve and adapt it's titling program as the sport of Canicross grows. We hope that all participants in the program will keep this in mind as the NACC Titling Program matures with the sport.

The North American Canicross Titling Program was established in November of the year 2020.

### *North American Canicross Race Competitions Standards Board*

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