

2026 Wildfire Defense

Yellowstone Special Race Rules

Pro Class Race

16 dog pool/12 dog max per day

17 miles per day.

Entry Qualifications

Entry Fee is \$175. Mushers wishing to enter the Yellowstone Special must submit an Entry Form with payment no later than Thursday, January 29th, 2026. Entry is official upon receipt of signed entry form and entry fee payment.

Musher Sign-In

Musher sign-in will be from 2pm to 5pm on Thursday, January 29th, 2026, at the Povah Community Center. The community center is located at 10 Geyser Street in West Yellowstone.

Musher Meeting

Mandatory Musher Meeting at 5pm at the Povah Community Center

Musher

There will be one musher per team. The musher starting the race will be the musher throughout the race.

Race Start/Finish

Races will start at 8am at the north end of Dunraven Street in West Yellowstone. Races will finish at the Power Substation, just off of highway 20 approximately 1 mile west of town. Mushers will need handlers to move their trucks to the finish line. Race Crew and volunteers will be available to move your truck to the finish line. We will do our best to get your truck to the finish area before you complete the race, but we cannot guarantee this and mushers should plan accordingly.

The Race Organization may change the start time or location due to dangerous weather or trail conditions. If the temperature is below -20 degrees Fahrenheit at the scheduled start time, the race will be delayed until temperatures reach -20 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Start Order

Friday's starting order will be determined by the musher's order of entry, first team entered is first team out in each class.

Saturday and Sunday start orders will be the slowest team in each class leaving first.

Teams will start at 2-minute intervals. Any team that has not cleared the start chute within two minutes of their start time will be moved to the side. Said team shall start after all other teams in that class and will be assessed a 2-minute penalty.

Dogs

All teams may have a pool of up to 16 dogs. A maximum of 12 dogs may be used in the team each day. Teams must start each day with a minimum of 8 dogs in the team.

Mushers may rotate dogs used in the team each day among any dog declared as part of their pool. Only dogs declared as part of a musher's pool may be used, no substitutions from outside the original pool will be allowed. Mushers must declare their pool no later than 6:00pm following the musher sign in and vet checks on Thursday, January 29th, 2026.

All dogs in a mushers truck that are not part of the declared pool and do not have a microchip for identification will be marked using any marking technique deemed suitable by the Race Organization.

All dogs entered in the race must be vaccinated against Parvo, Distemper, and Rabies. Vaccinations must be current as of January 15th, 2026. Proof of vaccinations must be shown at the musher sign-in from 2pm-5pm at the Povah Community Center on Thursday, January 29th, 2026.

All dogs shall be in the team, on the sled, or appropriately restrained. In the event of a lost dog, the musher must regain control of the dog before completing the race. Mushers crossing the finish line with a loose dog will be disqualified.

Cruel or inhumane treatment of dogs by any musher or handler will result in disqualification.

Drug Use

No drugs that may suppress signs of illness or injury may be used on a dog participating in the race regardless of the method of administration. Any evidence of prohibited drug use will result in disqualification of the musher from the race.

Equipment

All dogs shall be harnessed in single or double file.

All harnesses shall be padded around the neck and chest.

Some type of sled shall be drawn. Sled shall be equipped with an adequate brake, brush bow, and snowhook. Sled shall include a sled bag capable of carrying a dog and able to be completely enclosed in the case of a severely injured or dead dog.

Dog Bedding

The Forest Service requires that any straw or hay used on National Forest Land be certified.

Running the Race

All teams shall complete the course as marked.

When overtaking another team, the musher shall call "trail" or otherwise indicate his intention to pass. The overtaken musher must allow the overtaking team to pass, slowing or stopping his dogs if necessary and holding them to the best of the musher's ability for a maximum of one minute or until the other team has passed, whichever occurs first.

In case of a tangle in the passing musher's team, the musher may require the overtaken team to stop for no more than 1 minute.

When neither team is able to pull away from the other, the mushers shall mutually agree on who is to lead. Please use common courtesy and good sportsmanship.

In the case of head on passing, the homeward bound team shall have right of way.

There will be no calling of "trail" in no man's land. No man's land will be the last mile of the course approaching the finish line.

In the case of a lost team or loose dog, the musher will not be disqualified provided the musher regains control of the team or loose dog and completes the course. Mushers may use any means necessary to regain control of a lost team or loose dog.

Motorized assistance of any team is only allowed in case of an emergency. Pacing by snowmobile is not allowed.

A team has officially finished when the nose of the lead dog crosses the finish line. If a loose team crosses the finish line, the team will not be officially finished until the musher crosses the finish line.

Race bibs must be worn at all times while racing, including at the race start, while on the trail, and until the team has officially finished the trail.

Conduct and Disqualification

Mushers shall be responsible for the conduct of their dogs and handlers at all times during the race. If the Race Marshall determines that the musher or handler's conduct is detrimental to the race, that musher will be disqualified.

Willful failure to follow race rules may result in disqualification.

Officials

The race marshal has the final say on any and all matters that may arise.

Purse and Prizes

Day money will be awarded to the first 10 finishers each day. Overall money will be awarded to the first 15 finishers in the final overall standings.