



2026 IDITAROD EXPEDITION CLASS

Finish Talking Points for Media

Key Message

- The Expedition Class is a non-competitive designation. Expedition mushers are not part of official race standings, not eligible for prize money or Special Awards, and not competing for the Iditarod Championship.
- The competitive race remains unchanged; official standings and awards are determined solely among competitive mushers.
- The crossing marks the first completion of the Iditarod by Expedition mushers, a historic milestone for this program.

Advantages of the Expedition Class

Media should understand and, if appropriate, communicate why Expedition mushers may finish ahead of competitive teams:

- Allowed outside assistance (support teams, equipment, logistics)
- May swap dogs during the race
- Not bound by mandatory competitive rest requirements; can take layovers at any checkpoint
- Not restricted by minimum/maximum dog team sizes
- Fully coordinated with Race Officials to ensure safety and non-interference

Suggested Phrases for Reporting

- “We’re approaching a historic moment on the trail! Our inaugural Expedition Musher is nearing the ceremonial finish line in Nome. Remember, the Expedition Class is a non-competitive designation. They are completing the trail alongside the 2026 race, but they are not competing for official standings or awards.”
- “And here they come — our inaugural Expedition Musher, Kjell Inge Rokke crosses the ceremonial finish line! This is a historic feat for the Expedition Class. While they are completing the trail, the competitive race continues, and official standings will be determined among the competitive mushers.”
- “The inaugural Expedition Musher has completed the trail under the non-competitive Expedition Class designation.”

- “While this team has crossed the ceremonial finish line, the competitive race is still underway, and official standings are determined among competitive mushers only.”
- “The Expedition Class allows mushers to experience the trail with support and flexibility, but they are not competing for the Iditarod Championship.”
- “This historic milestone celebrates completion of the trail — not a race victory.”

Media Do’s and Don’ts

Do:

- Emphasize the non-competitive nature of the Expedition Class
- Highlight dog care standards and Race Official oversight
- Note that the competitive race and championship are unaffected

Don’t:

- Use the words “first overall,” “winner,” or imply a race victory
- Compare Expedition musher times directly to competitive mushers
- Suggest Expedition mushers affect official standings or awards

Anchor Sentence for Media Use

“The competitive race remains unchanged; the Expedition Class is a separate, non-competitive designation operating under Race Official authority with strict protections in place for dog welfare and race integrity.”