

A GUIDE TO COMMON DOG MUSHING COMMANDS

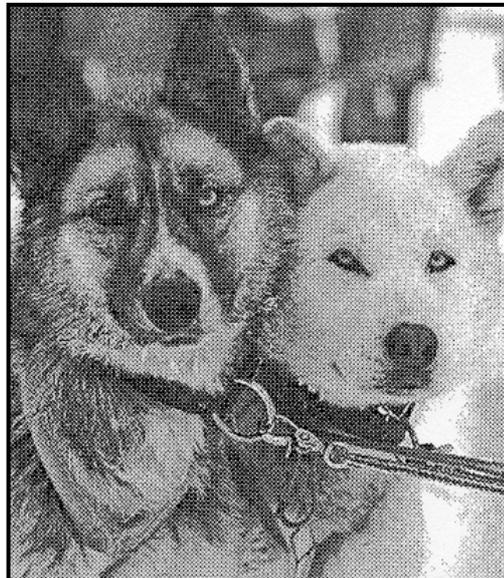
Where a command is coupled with a dog's name, the dog's name may be used first to gain the attention of the particular dog.

- GEE!**..... Command to turn right. Pronounced GEE as in JEEP.
- HAW!**..... Command to turn left.
- COME GEE** Command to turn right 180 degrees.
- COME HAW** Command to turn left 180 degrees.
- E-A-S-Y** Command to slow down.
- HIKE!**..... Command to go faster or pick up speed.
- LINE-OUT**..... Coupled with a name, demand for a tighter tug line while team is standing out in front.
- OKAY** Command to go!
- ON TRACK**..... Command to remain on the defined path
- ON BY** Command to pass a distraction or intersection.
- PICK-IT-UP**..... Coupled with a name, demand for a tighter tug line while working.
- STAND** Command to stand
- STAY** Command to stay.
- STRAIGHT AHEAD**..... Command to proceed straight forward.
- WHOA** Command to slow right down and prepare to stop.
- NO!**..... Immediate correctional statement.

All commands should be used sparingly but meaningfully to avoid the "BLA BLA FACTOR" Constant idle chattering to the sled dog or team will more often than not encourage it to switch off to the meaningful instructions given by the musher.

Praise should be given when a dog has done well, not for the sake of giving praise. Team spirit can be lifted on the trail during periods of hard work by the use of praise.

Dogs should be watered a few hours before a harness run. This helps ensure adequate hydration and allows time for the water to be absorbed into the system. Water can be flavour baited to encourage the dog to drink. It is now a well accepted practice that the sled dogs daily food ration is presented in more or less a soup form. Not only does this provide for optimal



absorption of nutrients, but also this method of feeding encourages the dog to drink water when offered.

Be constant, try to adhere to a constant pattern of behaviour and preparation prior to and while working dogs in harness. Dogs possess a very acute sense of picking up queues, or subtle indicators of a drivers intent. Remember, queues are subtle often subconscious indicators, whereas commands demand immediate response.

As both temperature and humidity can play a role in heat stress, take these factors into account when working your dog in harness. Current Australian race rules call for race cancellation if the temperature reaches 15 degrees Celsius or over. As race situations and rules may well differ from various training regimes, working practices and other sled dog related activities, use a little extra caution if working your dogs in harness in warmer

temperatures. For example reduce the amount of work by lessening the distances.

Learn to read your dogs, they are the best indicators, and will always offer signals and signs to the driver of how they are Feeling. Fat dogs will overheat more readily than lean dogs, and are thus more vulnerable to stress under working conditions. Any excess condition should be gradually reduced prior to working a dog in harness. Harness work should lead toward muscle building, and tile development of an increased lung capacity amongst other things, not used primarily as a mechanism Focussed upon weight reduction. Overweight dogs are also more exposed to injury caused by solid exercise than are lean dogs. Good and responsible dog care **MUST ALWAYS** be paramount in importance.

Sled dog races can be won or lost on the trail in the twinkling of an eye by the observation, or non-observation of **TRAIL MARKERS**. As the simplest error can have the most extreme result Familiarisation with the following is not the guarantee of a race win, but at least it may help minimise trail errors -the rest is up to the dog musher.

- **TRAIL MARKERS** in races should all be around 30cm in diameter or length per side. They may be round or square in shape.
- **ALL** markers should be placed at least 1 meter above the ground.
- **ALL** markers should be visible as far ahead as possible (at least 50 meters where possible).
- **RED "TURN"** markers should be placed about 15 meters before an approaching turn. A turn sign must be followed by a straight ahead sign 15 meters beyond the exit of the turn.
- **BLUE STRAIGHT AHEAD** markers should be placed about 15 meters before an approaching intersection where the driver is to go straight through. A straight ahead marker should be placed about 15 meters beyond **ALL** intersections, turns and blind corners.
- **YELLOW "CAUTION"** markers should be placed about 15 meters ahead of the caution area.

IN SUMMARY

- **RED MARKERS = TURNS**

They are placed on the same side of the track that the turn is on.

- **BLUE MARKERS = STRAIGHT AHEAD/CORRECT TRAIL.** They are placed on either side of the trail. Straight ahead markers should be placed along the entire trail at each half-kilometre point. In some events each kilometre point may have an appropriate "DISTANCE" marker, attached to the same stake directly below the straight ahead (BLUEI marker or, the kilometre number may be painted in the centre of the straight ahead (BLUEI marker.

- **YELLOW MARKERS = CAUTION ADVISED**

They are placed on either side of the trail.

- **DISTANCE MARKERS**

May be indicated by a white number stencilled in the centre of the blur marker, or a separate white sign with black numbers indicating the distance.

- **"ONE-HALF KILOMETRE" MARKER** is used prior to the finishing line to indicate the last half kilometre **"NO- RIGHT-OF-WAY-IONE"**. ie Drivers do not have to give trail under normal passing rule conditions during this last V2 km of the race trail. This last 1/2 km section of trail is often referred to as **"NO-MAN'S -LAND"**.

