

United States Federation of Sleddog Sports, USFSS 101

Who is USFSS?

United States Federation of Sleddog Sports was founded back in 1988. It was formed to present representation of US athletes to the International Federation of Sleddog Sports (IFSS) and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Our mission is to promote, support, coordinate and develop sleddog activities in the United States. Like the USFSS, all participating national sleddog federations are members of the IFSS.

Who is IFSS?

IFSS was formed in 1985 by ISDRA (International Sled Dog Racing Association) and ESDRA (European Sled Dog Racing Association) for the purpose of creating a truly international organization and applying for Olympic recognition of sleddog sports. The IOC (International Olympic Committee) only recognizes international sports federations that adhere to the IOC's specific structural requirements. Therefore, a new organization was needed. ISDRA and ESDRA created this new organization, IFSS. The mission of IFSS is to promote comprehensive development, expansion and participation in sleddog sports in all their diverse aspects, with the ultimate goal of Olympic recognition.

Why have ISDRA and IFSS?

Although both the ISDRA and IFSS organizations serve the interest of sleddog sports, the purpose and service to the sleddog community is very different. The IFSS structure follows the IOC requirements for sport federations that are involved in or pursuing Olympic competition. ISDRA's function and the programs they offer are much different.

How do ISDRA and USFSS work together within North America?

Because each organization's service and value to the sleddog community is different, there's no competition between USFSS and ISDRA. ...different, any competition between them is minimized. An agreement of cooperation was established in 2015 for the purpose of working together and alleviating duplication of effort. Both organizations encourage support of the other and pursue ways to provide mutual benefit to the sleddog community.

What's the difference between ISDRA race rules and IFSS race rules?

There are differences between the race rules of each organization. For World Cup races within the US, ISDRA rules, as well as other approved race rules, are accepted by IFSS. However, all World and Continental Championships must run under IFSS rules. We may receive an exemption for a US Championship which will be determined in the application process, but never for a World Championship or Continental Championship hosted by the US or Canada.

What's the IFSS World Cup race circuit all about?

The IFSS WCp series is a tool for establishing an international competition format, based on the designation used by Olympic and International Sports Federations (IFs) to ascribe to a worldwide ranking system for their sports participants. In a given year, IFs, including IFSS, set up a World Cup Series of events through which participants earn points and are subsequently ranked on a worldwide basis according to their performance at these premier events. The US is working with ISDRA and race giving organizations (RGOs) to create a fair regional race circuit throughout North America that allows athletes to qualify for Team USA. Winners of championships and leaders in WCp points automatically qualify for the next WCh in the class they earned qualification in.

What's the difference in ISDRA points and IFSS WCp points?

ISDRA and IFSS WCp are entirely separate entities. ISDRA's sanctioning points program qualifies you for the ISDRA medals program. IFSS's WCp points program qualifies you for world, continental and national championships. Plus, the added prestige of being associated with a WCp event may increase sponsorship contributions for competitors and races. However, the hope is all races will be accredited by IFSS and sanctioned by ISDRA.

Do ISDRA points matter for selection by the USFSS towards championship selection?

All race success matters and is considered in the selection process. However, only WCp races will automatically qualify you for selection to Team USA.

Do I need to choose one organization over the other? Absolutely not. As indicated earlier, both organizations have great value, but different purposes. You should support both and value each of them for what they do for sleddog sports.

How close are we to receiving Olympic recognition?

Closer today than ever before. Our sport has been recognized by SportAccord as a legitimate winter sport since 1989. IFSS has submitted an application for recognition of skidog classes and the 4-dog sprint class to the IOC. We will find out very soon if these classes will become recognized by the IOC. However, even if these classes are recognized, it could be a few

Olympic Games before we're in. A sport is first recognized by the IOC, then is on a two to three-year probation, at which time the IOC takes another look to see if the sport could be added to the Olympic Games. For IFSS, this means that other countries must start up sleddog sports to broaden participation, and existing federations must develop further in order to meet IOC requirements.

Why should RGOs accredit races and be a World Cup Event?

The most important reason for them is status. There is significant prestige associated with a World Cup event because of the connection to a World Championship and the Olympics. The RGO will offer an event to racers that is far more significant for them to attend because of WCh qualification, which will increase participation and revenue. The RGO will also have an event with larger promotional appeal which will draw in more spectators.

How do I earn selection to the US team?

Racing performance is the key to selection. The USFSS WCp race circuit was developed to take an arbitrator out of the equation through automatic qualification; but if you wish to be selected, your entire body of races and your other attributes will be considered.

How do we make decisions concerning governance?

USFSS is made up of a board of 15 members. There are 4 Active Athlete board positions whose purpose is to make decisions from an athlete's perspective. We have a congress every 2 years and always encourage member participation in the decisions governing USFSS.

Why all the emphasis on doping control?

Unfortunately, cheating exists in sports. Believing that doping in sport is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport, IFSS signed on to comply with the World Anti-Doping Code in 2003. Performance enhancing drugs work to create a competitive advantage. Clean athletes, both human and canine, and federations want to make certain everyone is abiding by the rules associated with fair competition, competition on a level playing field. USFSS, as a member of IFSS, is under the jurisdiction of WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), the world recognized agency for doping control policy.

Do I have to compete in the veteran's class if I'm over 40yr?

No you don't. Athletes can apply to compete in the elite class throughout their race career. The intent of the veteran's class is to create a competitive grouping for adult athletes over 40yr.

What's a DID? Why do I need it?

A DID was established to create a driver identification system. Know your DID #! It's important that you put your DID number on the event application form, even if there's not a blank space for it. Also, use the name you signed up with, Mike or Michael, not back n forth. It makes it easier to identify athletes when there's consistency.

The DID is also used to finance some of the costs associated with the World Cup program. This way we don't have to currently charge RGOs accreditation fees as we try to establish WCp program.