

Iditarod Official Finishers Club

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 23, 2017

On October 22, 2017 The Iditarod Official Finishers Club (IOFC) met for an emergency meeting to discuss how the Iditarod Trail Committee Board of Directors handled a positive drug test in the team of one of the 2017 racers. By a unanimous vote of those in attendance, the IOFC vehemently denounces the doping of dogs in any form. Furthermore, the IOFC does not support how the ITC has handled this issue. The IOFC unanimously demands the release of Musher X's name within 72 hours and is asking for complete transparency moving forward. It is unacceptable that multiple dogs tested positive for a drug in a single musher's team and that that information was only recently made public when it was known since shortly after the team finished.

The IOFC unanimously supports a strong policy regarding the use of illegal drugs but finds the rewrite of Rule 39 wholly inadequate. The IOFC would like to see a more comprehensive drug policy written that clearly outlines the procedures that Iditarod should follow in the event that a dog or musher tests positive for banned substances. This policy should include the withholding of prize money until a full investigation can be done and must include complete transparency. These rules should reflect that Iditarod is the premier long distance dog sled race in the world and should set the standard for other dog sled races.

Additionally the IOFC unanimously believes that Rule 53, more commonly referred to as the "gag rule," needs to be eliminated in its entirety from the 2018 race and from future races. Whether intended or not, Rule 53 makes mushers fear speaking out against the race or its policies for fear of retribution. The IOFC believes that in the creation of Rule 53 that the ITC has done more harm than good to the sport of dog sledding, and seeks to immediately reverse that policy.

Finally by a unanimous vote, the IOFC demands that the Iditarod Trail Committee extend the date that mushers can receive a full refund for their 2018 entry fee. The IOFC unanimously agrees that by waiting until October 6, 2017 to release the information regarding the positive drug test that all mushers who signed up were misled by the ITC and the Board of Directors. We believe that given this new information regarding the 2017 race and how the ITC has chosen to handle it, that mushers should be able to withdraw without penalty. Again, the IOFC believes that dog doping of any kind is wrong and mushers should be able to protest how this was handled without financial consequence. This date should be set no earlier than December 1, 2017.

The IOFC will meet again on November 12 to further discuss actions it believes the ITC needs to take in order to resolve this issue for the betterment of the sport of long distance dog sled racing.

This press release was put out by those mushers in attendance of the October 22, 2017 meeting

Al Eischens	Jeff King	Matthew Failor	Stephen Flodin
Ben Harper	Jim Davis	Misha Wiljes	Vern Halter
Charley Benja	Jim Lanier	Mitch Seavey	Wade Marrs
Cim Smyth	Joar Ulsom	Nic Petit	
Cindy Abbott	Justin High	Noah Pereira	
Dave Branholm	Kevin Saiki	Ramey Smyth	
David Delcourt	Larry Daugherty	Ray Redington Jr.	
Gerald Sousa	Lev Schwarts	Rick Casillo	
Jaimee High	Linwood Fiedler	Sarah Stokey	
James Volek	Mary Helwig	Scott Janssen	

And Was Further Signed By

Abbie West	Jeff Deeter	Michelle Phillips	Rob Cooke
Aliy Zirkle	Jessica Hendricks	Mike Ellis	Russ Bybee
Allen Moore	Jimmy Lebling	Mike Santos	Ryne Olson
Anna Berington	Jodi Bailey	Mike Williams Sr.	Sebastian Schnuelle
Becca Moore	Justin Savidis	Miriam Osredkar	Sebastian Vergnaud
Bill Borden	Kari Skogen	Monica Zappa	Sue Allen
Brent Sass	Karin Hendickson	Nathan Schroder	Thomas Waernar
Bryan Bears	Ketil Reitan	Nils Hahn	Tim Hunt
Cody Strathe	Kristy Berington	Paige Drobny	Travis Beals
Christian Turner	Kristin Knigh-Pace	Paul Gebhardt	Zoya Denure
Curt Perano	Laura Allaway	Pete Kaiser	Heidi Sutter
Heather Sirtola	Laura Neese	Richie Diehl	Jake Berkowitz
Mats Petterssoon	Lisbet Norris		