

Libby Riddles: First Woman to Win the Iditarod



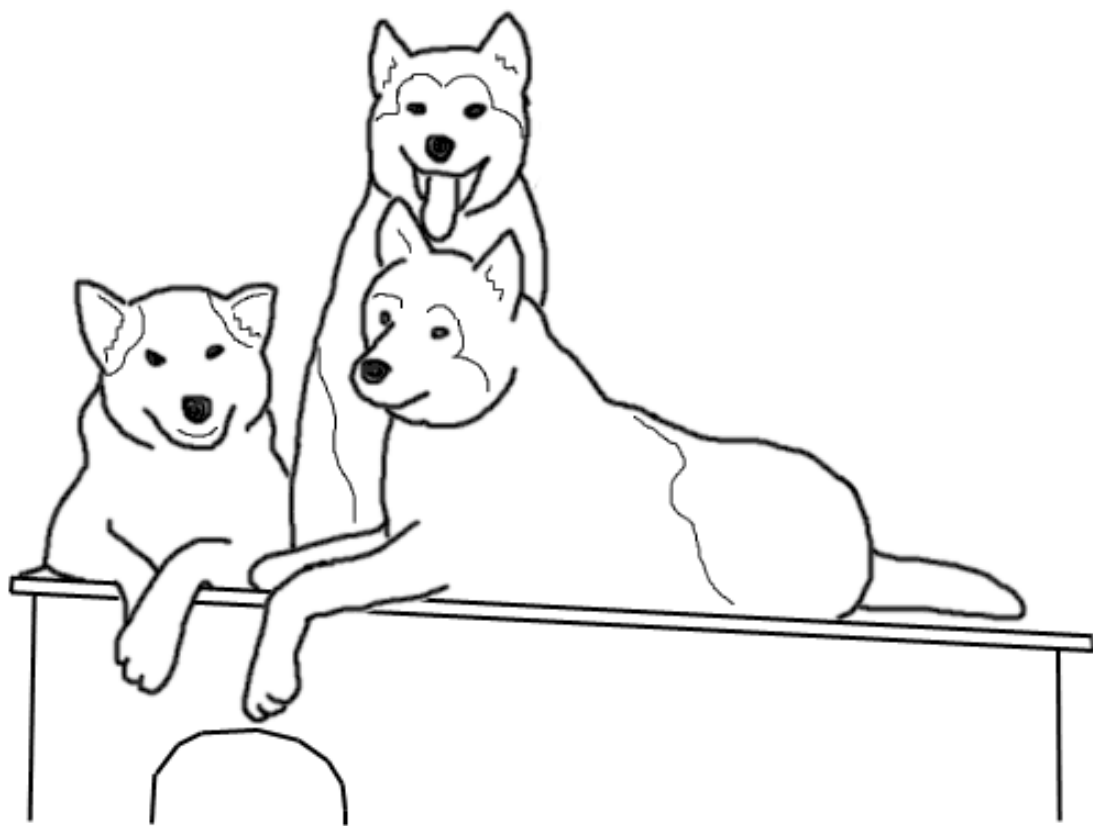
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It has been called the “last great race on earth.” The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is an 1150-mile race on some of the coldest and most rugged ground on earth. It is held in Alaska the first Saturday in March every year. It is dark most of the day. The temperatures there are often far below zero. The winds can create blizzard conditions. It is a race only possible with the teamwork of both humans and animals.



The first race was held in 1973. Men won the race for twelve years. In 1985, a woman named Libby Riddles became the first woman to win the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Her win drew worldwide attention to this competitive event.



Libby Riddles was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1956. She grew up in a family that had lots of animals around. She moved to Alaska before her seventeenth birthday. She saw the World Championship Sled Dog Race a year later. She noticed sled dogs were the best kind of animals for life in Alaska so she purchased several. A friend talked her into racing a five dog race in 1978, and she won. She began to dream of running in the Iditarod.



In 1980, Libby entered her first Iditarod race. She placed 18th in this race. The following year, she entered and placed 20th. Libby was not discouraged. She began to practice and started raising her own sled dogs. She lived in an Eskimo village. She used their type of clothing. She ate Eskimo food. She lived like a true native resident of the remote Alaskan wilderness.



In 1985, Libby was ready to enter the Iditarod race once more. This time she had her own dog team. She had been preparing for the race for three years. Libby and her sled dog team entered shorter races for practice. She trained her dogs to be prepared for all kinds of weather conditions. She worked out every day so she would be physically fit to endure the demands of the race.



When the day arrived for the race, Libby Riddles was considered an underdog. She was not expected to win the Iditarod. Libby wanted to prove that training, determination, and a good team of dogs could change that. Her last leg of the race was across Norton Sound in a deadly blizzard. She used her own dogs and all of her training and skills to win the race. This made her the first woman to win the difficult 1,150-mile Iditarod.



*Woman Wins
the Iditarod!*



by Riddles, Dugan and Sister

Her win brought national attention to the Alaskan Iditarod Sled Dog Race. The Women's Sports Foundation named her the 1985 Sportswoman of the Year. Her lead dogs, Dugan and Sister, won the 1985 Golden Harness Award. She was featured on the cover of several magazines that year.



Libby Riddles continued to participate in sled dog races until 1999. Since then, she has written three books about the Iditarod. She is a professional speaker and television commentator on all aspects of dog sled racing. She owns her own dog kennels near Homer, Alaska, where she raises future dog sled champions. She has become a hero to countless aspiring racers because of the way she accomplished her goal.

1. In what state is the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race held?
- a. Hawaii
 - b. Oregon
 - c. Maine
 - d. Alaska

Answer: _____

2. In what year was the first Iditarod race held?
- a. 1975
 - b. 1973
 - c. 1965
 - d. 1996

Answer: _____

3. In what year did Libby Riddles win the Iditarod?
- a. 1965
 - b. 1973
 - c. 1985
 - d. 1995

Answer: _____

4. What made Libby Riddles' 1985 win so important?
- a. She was the first sled dog owner to win the race.
 - b. She was the first woman to win the race.
 - c. She was the first person under thirty to win the race.
 - d. She was the first person ever to win the race.

Answer: _____

5. What other award did Libby Riddles receive that year?
- a. 1985 Nobel prizewinner
 - b. 1985 Pulitzer Prize
 - c. 1985 Emmy award winner
 - d. 1985 Sportswoman of the Year

Answer: _____

6. In what year was Libby Riddles' last sled dog race?
- a. 1989
 - b. 1999
 - c. 2001
 - d. 2007

Answer: _____