

**2026
KOBUK 440
Race Rules**

PART 1: DRIVER QUALIFICATION

1. Drivers must be 18 or older.
2. The Race Marshall may refuse the entry of any musher at the drawing or before the race, if, in the opinion of the judges or marshall, the condition of the driver and/or his/her equipment constitutes a hazard and/or delaying factor to himself/herself or other entrants in the race.
3. All mushers must complete an entry form, biography, photograph, and submit entry fee at the time of application. Number of entries will be capped at 20 teams. A waitlist will be established for teams wishing to enter after the first 20 teams sign up.
4. Entry fee is \$440.00 for teams signing up prior to February 15, 2026. Entry fee for teams signing up after February 15th is \$640. New entries will not be accepted after March 23,2026. Refunds of entry fees for mushers who withdraw due to illness or change of plans will be made until March 22nd.
5. There must be at least 4 entrants in order to hold a race. The drawing will be held on April 1, 2026 at 6:00 pm.
6. Race will not be started if the ambient temperature is colder than -30, or -34F wind-chill at race time. Additionally, for the safety of the mushers and dogs, a weather delay may occur at the start or at any time during the race at the discretion of the race marshal.

PART 2: CONDITIONS FOR RACING

2. Each musher must attend a mandatory pre-race meeting held before drawing, a post-race "musher meeting" prior to banquet, and must provide proof of the following immunizations: rabies, parvo-distemper. This proof must be available at the mushers meeting for veterinarian's examination.
- 2.1. Each team must have a sled or toboggan equipped with a brush bow, operating foot brake, and hook.
- 2.2. The following items are required on person or in the sled at the starting line and when leaving each checkpoint:
 1. All-weather parka (recommended 40 above to 40 below) *
 2. Tarp or bivouac bag and ground pad*
 3. Axe*
 4. Chain or cable for dropping dogs (7) min. required
 5. Headlight or flashlight*

6. 20 lbs. Dog food
7. Dog food cooker*
8. Sleeping bag*
9. Four (4) booties per dog, and one dog coat per dog
10. Musher's Log Book*
11. Spot Tracker *
12. Number tags on each dog
13. 4 containers of Heet, or an adequate amount of fuel to make 3 gallons of water from snow

A check of the items will be conducted by the Race Officials at the start of the race.

Asterisked (*) items may be checked at his discretion during the race and shall be checked at the finish line. Note – Straw will be provided by K440 at Selawik, Ambler, and Kiana.

- 2.3. Each musher must enter with no more than twelve (12) dogs, and cannot drop more than seven (7) dogs. The first three dropped dogs will be shipped back to Kotzebue at the expense of K440 Racing Association. However, the musher will be charged \$100.00 per dog for the remainder of dogs dropped. The musher must finish with no less than five (5) dogs. Official dog drops are located in Noorvik, Kiana, Selawik, Ambler.
- 2.4. Dog food drops will be shipped by K440 to Noorvik, Kiana, Selawik and Ambler. Food drops must be delivered to the Bering Air Hangar, 8:00 AM 3/30/2026. K440 Racing Association will not be responsible for food drops delivered after the scheduled time. Racers must make their own arrangements for shipping food drops after this deadline. All food drops must be received in the checkpoints prior to the race start.
- 2.5. Each musher of each team starting the race shall be the only musher thereof during race.

PART 3: RACE RULES

1. The race will start at 12:30 pm on the ice in front of the Nullaġvik Hotel on April 2rd, 2026. It will be a mass start unless otherwise instructed.
2. The designated checkpoints will be Noorvik, Selawik, Ambler, Shungnak, Kobuk, Shungnak, Ambler, Kiana, Noorvik and Kotzebue, in that order.

3. Mushers are not required to check in at the Shungnak checkpoint on the second pass thru, and any rest taken on the second pass will not be counted towards the mandatory 20 hours of rest time.
4. There will be a mandatory 20 hours total layover time. The rest will be taken at designated checkpoints of the musher's discretion. The musher will be responsible for signing in and signing out at the designated checkpoints that he/she chooses to layover. K440 will provide a logbook that each musher is required to carry on his/her person throughout the race. Login and Log-out times must have a Race Official or designee's signature.
5. Total rest time will be tallied by race officials in Selawik. Any discrepancies prior to Selawik are the responsibility of the Kobuk 440 Racing Association. After that point it is the musher's responsibility to keep track of their times to the minute. Any amounts of rest time not taken to meet the 20 hour requirement may lead to substantial penalty up to the musher forfeiting a finishing position.
6. No musher will be permitted to have outside physical assistance during the race:
 1. Mushers must provide as many handlers as are required to keep their teams under control at the starting point.
 2. Only the musher is allowed to handle, feed, and care for their dogs and sled.
 3. A team and driver must complete the entire race trail including checking in at all required checkpoints. A driverless team or loose dogs may be stopped and secured by anyone. The driver may recover his/her team either on foot, with assistance from another musher or mechanized vehicle and continue the race. Motorized assistance must be reported to an official at the next checkpoint. If mechanized help is used and advantage has been gained, the Race Marshal may impose appropriate sanctions.
 4. No pacing or trailing by snow machines is allowed.
 5. At no time are snow machines allowed to carry dog food or any items for the musher.
 6. Activation of any help or emergency signal, including accidental activation, may make a musher ineligible to continue and may result in automatic withdrawal from the race.
7. Musher/dog items to be returned to Kotzebue, may be dropped in Ambler and Selawik. Items must be packaged/bagged and clearly marked with the musher's name. There may be no flammable items such as bottles of "Heet" or dog food in the returned dropped bags. K440 Racing Association recommends including an empty labeled "Return Bag" for Ambler and Selawik. These items will be flown to Kotzebue by K440 Racing Association, and must be picked up at the K440 office. K440 Racing Association will not be responsible for loss or damage.
8. Any mushers that would like to have Heet on the trail may purchase the Heet in Kotzebue. Drop bags with Heet must be clearly marked with the checkpoint name and mushers. Heet drop bags will be given to the K440 trail crew at the race start. The Heet will be transported to the check points by the trail crew.

9. Every musher must follow the official course of the race under penalty of time or disqualification, depending upon the severity of the violation.
10. Unsafe or inhumane treatment of the dogs is not permitted and will be cause for immediate disqualification. Whips may not be carried or used during the race.
11. Dog care is our highest priority. All dogs are subject to a veterinary check at any time prior to, during, or after the race. Dogs not fit to begin or continue the race may be removed from the race at the discretion of the race veterinarian. The race veterinarian may also require a racer to delay their team at a checkpoint if the veterinarian believes dogs in the team require additional rest.
12. Expired dogs will become the property of K440 Racing Association for the purpose of performing a necropsy. Any prize monies will be held until a necropsy is done. If necropsy shows musher abuse, musher forfeits all earnings and is banned from K440 Racing Association races for 5 years.
13. A musher will be responsible for his/her team in the event any dog in his team becomes aggressive and causes damage to another team. The musher with the aggressive dog will be on official ruling responsible for financial compensation of all medical and transportation expenses to repair all damages caused by his/her animal. If the musher does not comply with this ruling, he/she will be banned from all K440 Racing Association races in the future. The musher with the damaged dog or dogs will inform K440 Racing Association when this ruling has been complied with. Additionally, the Race Marshall, at his/her discretion, can remove an overly aggressive dog or dogs from any team he/she decides are a threat or hazardous to other dogs or drivers in the race.
14. Dogs may be dropped at the official checkpoints of Noorvik, Kiana, Selawik and Ambler. Dropped dogs must be picked up in Kotzebue by the musher upon their return. K440 Racing Association will assume no responsibility after that time.
15. When one team overtakes another, the team behind shall have the right-of-way upon demand: the musher ahead must stop his/her dogs such that the team behind may easily pass. In the event that the team passed hangs on for three minutes or one mile, he/she shall have the right to demand the trail again; but he/she must not pass for any reason for three minutes or one mile.
16. The passing rule, 3.15, is suspended in "No Man's Land" established for each checkpoint/village putting up a purse, (to be announced at the Musher's meeting after the drawings for positions). "No Man's Land" for Kotzebue is the incoming Kotzebue portage.
17. The first part of the lead dog which crosses the finish line will mark the racer's finish time.
18. To be an official finisher, mushers must finish by 2pm on April 7th.
19. Every person entering or driving a team in the race must use civil conduct and act in a sportsmanship- like, fair and honorable manner. Abusive treatment of anyone is prohibited. Failure to act accordingly may result in penalties including forfeiture of prize, and racing privileges for up to five (5) years.

20. Drug Use Rule – The driver must have his/her dog team free of all prohibited drugs (the Kobuk 440 list of prohibited drugs matches that of the Iditarod) and foreign substances from the time of the Vet Check until released by a Race Veterinarian or Race Official after the team has finished the race. Dogs that are continuing in the race shall not receive any of the following:
1. Any substance by injection
 2. Acupuncture
 3. Cold laser therapy
 4. Any other treatment or therapy that, in the opinion of the Head Veterinarian, is not in the best interest of a dog that is to continue on in the race.
 5. You may not give dogs any medicine or treatments that allow them to perform beyond their natural abilities.

The Head Veterinarian must be notified of any dogs receiving allowed medication to treat an existing medical problem and a statement from the attending veterinarian describing the diagnosis.

If a Race Veterinarian finds it necessary to treat a dog with a prohibited drug, that dog must be dropped from the race.

The following drugs will be permitted subject to the approval of the official supervising Race Veterinarian:

1. Topical medications (note: DMSO is not allowed).
2. Dewormers
3. Antibiotics (except procaine penicillin)
4. Antidiarrheals (except those with salicylates, i.e. Pepto-Bismol)
5. Ovaban and/or anabolic steroids (milbolerone - estrus {heat} suppressant use only)

PART 4: RACE OFFICIALS, PENALTIES AND APPEALS

1. There shall be a Race Marshall, Race Judges, Vet(s) and Timekeepers. All officials of the race will be identified at the drawing. The Race Marshall or designee will be present at the start and finish line for all official starters and finishers of the race.
2. All officials of the race are under the jurisdiction of the Race Marshall.
3. Any protests of the race results by a musher must be made by said musher by 2:00 pm the day of the mushers meeting. The Race Marshall's decision on the protest shall be final unless appealed. Only mushers may lodge a protest.

4. Any amounts of rest time not taken to meet the 20-hour requirement may lead to substantial penalty. If the Race Marshall deems the rest time has not been met, missing rest time will be quadrupled which will be added to the total finish time. Example: If the actual rest time is short five minutes, it gets multiplied by 4 and becomes 20 minutes and that time will be added to the musher's finish time, including if it costs them finishing position. Any musher missing more than 31 minutes of rest time, will be disqualified.
5. The Race Marshall's decision on a protest may be appealed to the Board of Directors. Such appeal must be made to a board member within one hour of the Race Marshall's decision, upon receipt of \$200.00 fee for the appeal by the complainant. The Board of Director's decision will be final. The fee is refundable if the appeal is in the complainant's favor.
6. Awards: Prize money will be given out at the finishers meeting. PRIZE WINNERS MUST BE PRESENT TO ACCEPT THEIR PRIZES. FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN THE PRIZE BEING FORFEITED.
7. Kobuk 440 Purse Breakdown: Guaranteed purse of \$60,000.00. Breakdown will be provided prior to the musher meeting on April 1st.

Good luck to all mushers and have a great race!

From	To	Mileage
Kotzebue	Noorvik	66 (river trail)
Noorvik	Selawik	42
Selawik	Ambler	85
Ambler	Shungnak	26
Shungnak	Kobuk	11
Kobuk	Shungnak	11
Shungnak	Ambler	26
Ambler	Kiana	96
Kiana	Noorvik	24
Noorvik	Kotzebue	66

A) Kiana-Ambler shelter cabin 46/50

B) Paniqsiġvig Shelter cabin 47/38

C) Singuaruk Shelter Cabin 22/20

*Distances vary from year to year based on trail conditions.