



TIPS FROM THE VETERANS

Ken Anderson:

- 1- "The best way to get dogs to eat and drink well is by putting lots of miles on them in training and keeping the speed slow and comfortable and the run lengths well within the dog's comfort zone the first few days of the race."
- 2- "Don't draw too many conclusions on your team and individual dogs by their performance in mid-distance races. The Quest is a whole different ball of wax. Adjusting the speed one mile per hour slower will turn a lot of your slower mid-distance dogs into superstars in the Quest; especially after 300 miles on the Quest trail."
- 3- "If you feel yourself hitting a wall with your own physical limits most likely your competitors are going through the exact same thing. Muscle through it, be patient, and keep focused and on task."
- 4- "The moment you step on the runners you've thrust yourself (whether you're feeling up to it or not) into a leadership role. The dogs are far better masters of reading body language than we are and can read you like a book even though we don't share the same language. Be someone they admire and respect. Once the race starts the dog is never wrong. Looking on the bright side and giving the dog the benefit of the doubt is always the best way to err when faced with discipline issues during the race. Ultimately, you can't "will" your dogs across the finish line; the motivation has to come from them."

Hans Gatt:

- 1- "Test all the plastic on your runners before wrapping it up and sending it out in your drop bags. "
- 2- "Program an iPod and use it. I have a hat with built in speakers."
- 3- "Do NOT sit around in checkpoints gabbing with friends, handlers, family or media. Go to sleep, take care of your dogs. There is a temptation to say, 'Oh, it's only a couple of hours it won't make any difference if I sleep or not.' It will make a difference."

- 4- “Do not party in Dawson. There is time for that when the race is done. Your dogs are not partying; they are resting up for the second half. They are still in the race. This is a layover, not the finish line. You owe your dogs more respect than to hit the bars in the middle of a race while they are sleeping on straw, trusting you. Respect yourself, and your team. Get some sleep, wash your clothes, and take care of your dogs in your spare time.”
- 5- “Have your own race plan, understand it completely, know it by heart, and be able to adjust it as necessary. This is not a couple of training runs where you can just 'wing it'. You will get tired; you better have something laminated in your pocket.”
- 6- “Keep feeding your dogs according to the hours or the miles, whichever is less. I.e. if you rest an extra 4 hours in a checkpoint, you have an extra feeding - DO NOT FORGET THIS. If your dogs get skinny, you cannot make that up in a race, and you are in trouble. Keep feeding. Too many times the teams at the back of the pack are the skinniest. I suspect this is a result of a feeding schedule that gets out of whack with too many hours in checkpoints for the number of feedings. You stay longer, you feed more. Their metabolisms are still running full bore almost as much as if they are running on the trail.”
- 7- “Bring healthy food for yourself. You feed your dogs well, and you are the most important dog on the team. Do not fry yourself on crap food. Likewise, stay away from stimulants - bad news in my opinion.”

More to come!