

We in the IWPA hope this gives you a clearer picture of our sport and increases your interest to become involved. We look forward in seeing you in further competitions.

Please visit our web site at [www.iwpa.net](http://www.iwpa.net) for information about upcoming events, people to contact, current point standings, pull results and a membership application.



The medals above are examples of the IWPA Regional Medals (which are 1 1/2" in diameter), Championship Medals (which are 3" in diameter) and Working Dog Medals (which are 1 1/4 X 2" rectangular).



## The International Weight Pull Association

# You've Got Pull with the



[www.iwpa.net](http://www.iwpa.net)

*The International Weight Pull Association (IWPA) is a not for-profit organization that promotes the sport of dog pulling through well organized, safe, family oriented sanctioned events. The purpose of the IWPA is to promote the working heritage of all dogs. The IWPA also promotes a program to keep your dog in good physical condition with a constructive outlet for canine competition. You have received this pamphlet because you have expressed an interest in the sport and we thank you. We hope its contents will not only be informative but will assist you in your decision to join the IWPA. For more information you can visit our web site at [www.iwpa.net](http://www.iwpa.net).*

*Whether this is your first introduction to working dogs or your first dog pull the following facts are intended to help you better understand the sport. These are things the handlers themselves would be glad to talk with you about if they had the time. However, they are generally too busy with their dogs. At a competition such as this the dog's health, safety and wellbeing are first, last, and foremost in the handler's mind. The following are some of the most commonly asked questions about our organization.*

### How long has the IWPA been around?

The IWPA was first organized in November 1984 when a group of dogs pulling enthusiasts saw a need for an organization to promote this specialized sport.

### What is the object of the competition?

The object is to see who has the strongest and best trained dog in an organized, safe, and professional competition. The dog must pull a weighted sled/cart the distance of sixteen feet within a sixty second time period. The handler must truly love and appreciate their dog to earn the dogs trust and respect. Everything the handler does for their dog determines what the dog will do for them.

### How is a winner determined?

The winner is the dog that pulls the most weight in the shortest time. If two or more dogs pull the same weight, the fastest time will finish higher. In the event of a tie, of both weight and time the dog with the fastest time the previous round finishes higher.

### Do all dogs compete with each other?

No. The IWPA provides nine different weight classes of competition so dogs can compete with others of comparable size. These weight classes are 0-10 lbs., 11-20 lbs., 21-40, 41-60 lbs., 61-80 lbs., 81-100 lbs., 101-125 lbs., 126-150 lbs. and 151 and over (unlimited class). The dogs in competition have ranged from a 5-pound Pomeranian to 250 lbs.



## other common questions about the IWPA

### When, where and how many events are held?

The IWPA Sanctioned season currently has regional competitions from Sept 1 through March 31. There are both snow and wheeled competitions held across the U.S. and Canada. The regional medalists are invited to compete at the International Championships held at a different location each year.

### Are there different levels of competition?

Yes. There are basically two levels of competition in the IWPA. They are *Novice*, and *Sanctioned*.

*Novice*: These are generally dogs and handlers that have never experienced weight pulling before and are beginning to work well and understand the concept. The novice handler may use a lead to direct the dog and teach it what is expected. They are not however, allowed to drag the dog by the lead. It should be a tug and release method as used in other types of dog training. The dogs are also beginning to work off lead and perform on their own.

Many sanctioned handlers will start new dogs or give seasoned dogs a work-out at these events.

*Sanctioned*: These are the professional dogs. These dogs have generally worked through the ranks of the Novice pulls and are ready for the greater challenge.

Once a dog has competed in an IWPA Sanctioned event there is no turning back. They may no longer compete but, they may pull exhibition at Novice events. At this level, the handler must follow IWPA Rules of Competition.

### How are the dogs taken care of?

The majority of weight pulling dogs are considered to be athletes with the owner/handler as the coach. They are among the best trained, fed, and conditioned canine athletes in the world. They are comparable to any professional or Olympic athlete when it comes to their care and conditioning. The successful handler will spend many hours training and conditioning their dogs. In addition, they are generally provided with the highest quality premium dog food and best veterinary care available.

### What breed of dog can compete in weight pulling?

The IWPA is one of the few canine organizations that does not discriminate against mixed breed dogs competing in Sanctioned competition. Any breed or mixed breed of dog can pull within the IWPA. The IWPA recognizes breeds listed within AKC, UKC and CKC (Canadian).

### What are the rewards?

Your rewards in weight pulling are like those of many other activities. You generally get out of it what you put into it.

The IWPA sponsors a Working Dog Degree program in which dogs may earn certificates for the weight they pull.

Each dog also has the opportunity to earn points at IWPA Sanctioned events toward Regional Medals. These medalists are then invited to compete at the International Championships for International Medals.

The IWPA also has a Hall of Fame program where dogs must earn a specific number of Regional medals and or Championship medals dependent on the Hall of Fame level earned. The levels are Regional, National and International Hall of Fame.

There are also the rewards of camaraderie with other dog enthusiasts, new friendships, and a closer relationship with your dog.

### How do I get started with my dog?

To compete in IWPA Sanctioned competition the dog must be at least one and no more than 12 years of age. You will need a properly fitted freighting harness for the task. The harness should have a spreader bar at the back end of the dog to prevent any restriction of movement. Have the dog start with a light weight such as a small tire, chains or anything that provides some resistance. Your practice sessions should last about 15 minutes 3 – 4 times per week. Start out light with something the dog can pull easily to build their confidence. Have the dog drag the weight over grass or dirt. DO NOT attempt pulling on pavement or concrete. Gradually increase the weight after each week or two of practice. Remember this is a process in which you are building your dog's confidence in itself as well as in you. You must be patient with the progress. If you try to raise the weight too fast, you will destroy the confidence gained in previous training. Some dogs will learn faster than others. Many times, it depends on the dogs' desire to please you.

### Who do I contact to join the IWPA?

You can find a membership application on the web site listed or you may contact the Membership Chairperson or the Regional Coordinator for your region. You may also join at any Sanctioned event.

### How much does it cost to join the IWPA?

There are different costs dependent on a Family, Individual or Junior Memberships. The Family and Individual Memberships entitles you to ten

monthly newsletters, voting privileges (1 vote for Individual and two votes for Family) and eligibility for entry into IWPA Sanctioned events.

### How much does it cost to enter each event?

Entry fees vary depending on several circumstances such as location, size of event and prizes offered.

### Does dog weight pulling hurt the dog?

No. In fact the IWPA has had over two thousand entries per year since 1984 and not one dog has been injured in competition. Unlike the human athlete the dogs seem to know their limit. Most of the time when a dog gets to its maximum weight it will stand, sit, or lay down and sometimes bark. Most dogs as well as their handlers know their limits. You will see at this point that the dog will be assisted with the pull. We always want the dog to feel as though they have accomplished a successful pull.

### What other fun can I have with my pull dog?

Once your dog has learned to pull there are a number of fun activities to be enjoyed. One of the most common family outings is to have your dog pull the kids on a small toboggan over snowy trails or streets. You can also take your dog cross country skiing and have them pull your gear in a toboggan. If your dog has been well trained and is not easily distracted, you may want to try skijoring (having your dog pull you on skis or skateboard).

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