

# Technology Enters the Iditarod Race

[Mary Gorges](#) March 11, 2014

Social media and mobile apps provide real-time information in the Alaska wilderness during the legendary Iditarod Race.

## #1 The Last Great Race

Even in a race that celebrates its remoteness and spirit of the Last Frontier, news of [Iditarod winner Dallas Seavey](#) being the first into Nome, Alaska early today (4am) traveled instantly over the Internet and [social media](#).

(Just 22 miles from Nome, he passed the frontrunner of the race who was stopped by 45 mph howling arctic winds.)



*(Courtesy: Anchorage Daily News)*

## #2 Off the grid

The Iditarod trail is also one of the *last places* where there are no cell phones or Internet -- mushers are not allowed to use either. Here at Winterlake Lodge – the third checkpoint on the trail – it's like it's 1980. The mushers can only rest and strategize (no sending texts or checking Facebook.) After this, the trail opens up into barren, harsh arctic conditions.



*(Courtesy: Winterlake Lodge on Finger Lake, Alaska)*

### **#3 This is not an ugly cell phone**

The mushers may be off the grid but not out of sight ...at least not on the Internet. 'Spot trackers' (the size of a cell phone) placed on each sled beam their location to a GPS tracking system so even school kids in Bangladesh can track their favorite mushers on the web. (This year, some mushers wore the spot trackers themselves because so many sleds were crashing on the icy trails.)



#### **#4 A GPS that's not for driving**

This GPS system isn't much use to the mushers as it doesn't give directions but provides up-to-the-minute info on the web for the fans. You can track their location on the trail and even their average moving speed and miles traveled.

#### **#5 Real-time data ...at your fingertips**

New this year is a mobile app that lets you see all the information on the [Iditarod website](#) from your mobile devices. You can set it up for alerts when a musher reaches or leaves a checkpoint.

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## STANDINGS

1. ALIY ZIRKLE	BIB 10	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 03:18
2. MARTIN BUSER	BIB 36	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 05:34
3. NICOLAS PETIT	BIB 29	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 07:14
4. SONNY LINDNER	BIB 70	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 08:32
5. JEFF KING	BIB 17	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 08:32
6. MITCH SEAVEY	BIB 6	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 09:18
7. KELLY MAIXNER	BIB 13	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 09:25
8. HUGH NEFF	BIB 61	OUT Kaltag	AT 3/8 10:21

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## VIDEO

**FEATURED**

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[WATCH NOW]

New GPS Tracker Features

[WATCH NOW]

What List

**IDITAROD LIVE**

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Iditarod Live March 6 Replay with Iditarod

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Iditarod Live Replay Feb 28

[WATCH NOW]

Iditarod

**TRAIL STORIES**

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Check Out These Eyes

[WATCH NOW]

What Are They Listening To?

### #6 What is it about Jamaicans and snow sports?

The new mobile app and GPS tracking give fans in Jamaica a great way to keep up to date on musher Newton Marshall. From St Anne, Jamaica, Marshall is doing his fourth Iditarod but has finished only once.



### **#7 Not your ordinary dog tag**

With hundreds of dogs on the trail at any given time, technology comes in handy to ID and track each one. Each dog has a microchip implant (placed just underneath their skin), then hand scanners are used to read its unique number. The scanners are strictly for ID purposes and don't read any health data ...yet.



### **#8 The future of the Iditarod and technology**

Lead veterinarian for the Iditarod, Dr. Stuart Nelson Jr., says the day is not far away when we can get constant real-time data from the sleds and dogs.

### **#9 Hold tight!**

Video is making it off the trail this year thanks to GoPro cameras some of the mushers are wearing. A musher gave the flash memory card from his GoPro to a news reporter on the trail who then posted this video to YouTube. [Go for your own ride!](#)