



Dogsled racer Rachael Scdoris approaches her third Iditarod with a new agenda—to kick butt

Alfalfa, Oregon. “The plan was to sleep in until 6 this morning,” said Rachael Scdoris, whose words are drowned out in a chorus of barking dogs, “but they wouldn’t have it.”

With the sun still behind West Butte, Rachael is already out in the kennel area of her father’s 40-acre property east of Bend, reading the dog names she scribbled in large print on her notebook. The kennel is a dog town of its own—90 giant wooden spools (castoffs from a utility company) turned on their sides and inhabited by a community of canines diverse in size, color and character.

This dog town is up early on this cold September morn-

ing, and its residents are all vying for Rachael’s attention, barking an emphatic, “Choose me!” She expertly slips harnesses on each of the 16 sled dogs that get to run, which is what they’ve been waiting for all morning.

Rachael can only hope that kind of enthusiasm will hold up as the months go by and the clock ticks down to the most important date in the Scdoris home: March 2, the start of the Iditarod.

Early morning at the Scdoris compound. A documentary film crew in the foreground captures Rachael on the ATV as she prepares for one of the first training runs of the season.