



History of the Polardistans

In the late 90th some polar dog enthusiasts arranged a long distance race over 300 km. The race was named Technical Trail and the purpose with the arrangement was to offer a race for pure breed polar dogs where the dog's original qualities were tested. Start and finish was at Femundtunet in Norway and the track run though both Norway and Sweden. This race ended after two years and then some Swedish mushers decided to start a race in Sweden using the same concept. The long distance race POLARDISTANS was borne!

The first POLARDISTANS started in March 2001 with start and finish at Mörkrets Fjällgård, a place some 30 km west of Särna. The first race had only a total of 10 competitors. Winner in pulka style was Annika Karlsson and in nome style Kristin Esseth. Mörkrets Fjällgård was no ideal place for this race and just to mention one thing – Mörkrets Fjällgård at that time did not have any mobile phone coverage. In 2002 the race was moved to Särna with start and finish at Särna Camping.

Changing the start and finish to Särna gave a number of opportunities to develop the race and the number of competitors slowly increased and in 2009 46 mushers started. In 2003 the 150 km race was introduced and this distance was after a few years altered to 160 km and the concept of today, PD 160 and PD 300, was a fact. The 160 distance was thought to be a recruiting distance for the PD 300, but very soon it was clear that many mushers preferred the 160 km distance, often because they didn't have the time to train their dogs and themselves for the 300 km distance.

In 2008 there was made a test with the distance 400 km, but since only one person started (and finished) the organization decided not to continue with this distance.

2014 was an exceptional year. It was the first time since 2002 that the start and finish of the race had to be moved from Särna. Due to very high temperature the weeks before the race it was not possible to use the race trail as planed and the start and finish was moved to the checkpoint LövnäsvalLEN.

Internationally the interest for the race increased through the years and 2016 the Polardistans 300 km was awarded with the WSA European Championship status. In 2017 and 2018 Polardistans 160 and 300 were both awarded with the WSA World Championship status. In 2019, there was no international title to compete for.





In 2020, the 20th edition of Polardistans took place and then Polardistans 300 had the status of WSA World Championship again. This edition came to be very special, among other things, due to the severe weather conditions (large amounts of snow in combination with strong winds) that prevailed during the competition. The classes PD300 8C and 12C were postponed and the trails were re-directed. Both PD160 and PD300 was changed to a total of 180 km. Due to the change, the PD160 were even awarded with the WSA World Championship that PD300 had before the changes. For the classes PD300 pulka and Nome 8B, the WSA World Championship titles remains because they had started before the decision to re-direct the trails were made.

The 2021 edition of Polardistans had World Championship status for PD 300 and a novelty for the year was that the competition would be carried out as a joint event between SPHK, IFSS and WSA. The cooperation meant that Open class dogs for the first time could participate in the competition. However, the worldwide pandemic, Covid-19, prevented the competition from taking place.

In this history over POLARDISTANCE I haven't named anyone of all those persons who have made the race come true, the volunteers. The reason for this is that I find it hard to mention just a few names, well aware that I surely will miss some. So therefore no one named, no one forgotten. Thank you all!

Lennart Andersson

