

What type of Dog do I need for Skijoring?

I frequently get asked questions about what type of dogs you can use for skijoring. The simple answer is just about any breed that weighs at least 35 lbs. The more complex thing to consider is you and your dogs needs.

If you want tried and true breeds that love to run and pull, you might want to choose a northern type breed. This would include Siberians, Malamutes and Alaskan Huskeys. These dogs have an inherent ability to pull but can be a challenge to own. They must be exercised regularly, need secure yards or kennels, and in general can not be let off leash. They are very independent minded and while they may love you to death, they still tend to be on their own agenda. If neglected in the exercise department, they become escape artists and excavators. I call these breeds high maintenance dogs and you need to be committed to their special needs.

Any other breed dog can learn to pull also but may take a little more encouraging. They may also not own the speed you are looking for. Most breeds can be conditioned to go some distance but at the rate they can travel may vary widely. Do some research on the breed you intend to purchase if you are considering a dog for skijoring. In general the larger the dog(Malamutes, St. Bernards, Bernese Mt. Dogs, etc) , the less speed and possible not the ability to go long distances (There are exceptions to the rule). If your needs are for a nice leisurely pace this may work for you.

Slightly smaller dogs like German Short Hairs, labs, hounds, etc. make excellent skijoring dogs and will give you more of a ride. They tend to have lots of energy and endurance, are hardy physically, and can cross over to be your off leash buddy during the summer hiking season.

Then there are your speed demons. Alaskan Huskies fall into this category. Alaskan are usually a combination of husky and something else. I own two that are Husky, German Short Hair , Saluky crosses. I personally like these mixes because they tend to have the best qualities of each breed. I get speed, endurance, loyalty, and can enjoy them as much in the off season as I can on the snow. They fit all my needs which include running, hiking, packing, scootering, sledding and skijoring.

Please contemplate carefully what your needs are and be ready to accept the responsibility of your dogs needs. There are enough dogs already in the pounds and in rescue shelters.