

Bikejoring

Mountain biking with dogs

by Victoria Rock



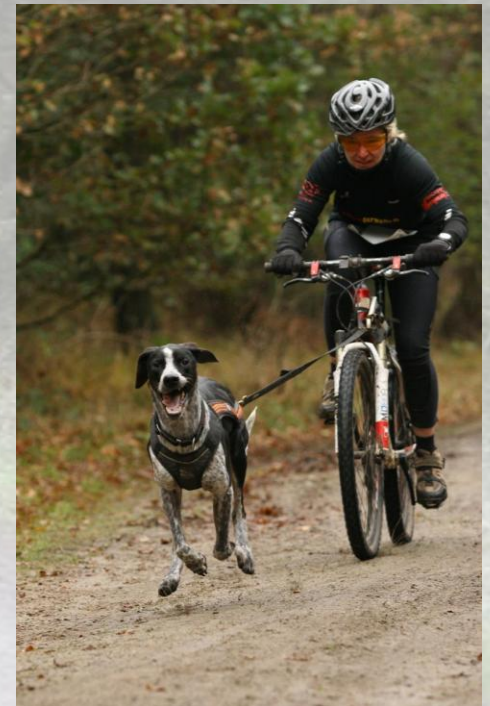
What is Bikejoring?

- The sport of mountain biking with dogs
- Generally with 1 dog, but also 2 or more
- Compared to Canicross a much faster sport going at the dog's full speed
- Bike and dog are connected via a 2.5m bungee
- Dog needs to pull ahead and respond to directional and speed commands
- The mountain biker helps the dog by pedalling and adapts to the dog's speed to keep the bungee taught
- The mountain biker needs to be vigilant and ready to brake in case the dog slows down or stops unexpectedly



Which dogs can bikejor?

- In theory any dog that is physically healthy and likes to run, medium to large sized dogs most common
- Traditional sleddog breeds (e.g. Husky), Scandinavian Hounds and Greysters are very popular, other breeds are equally suitable



Which equipment is needed?

- Mountain bike: 'Hardtails' are well suited, disc brakes ideal
- Bikejor attachment to help the line from getting caught in the front wheel
- Bungee line (max. 2.5m on full stretch) for shock absorption
- Harness specific for dog pulling sports
- Helmet and gloves essential
- Glasses and protective padding (e.g. for knees) recommended



Line and attachment

- The bikejor attachment is there to help the line from getting caught in the front wheel, but is no safety guarantee
- The bungee line (max. 2.5m on full stretch) provides shock absorption for the dog to help prevent jarring injuries



Metal bikejor converter
attached to bike stem



Plastic arm attached along bike frame with bungee line

Harness

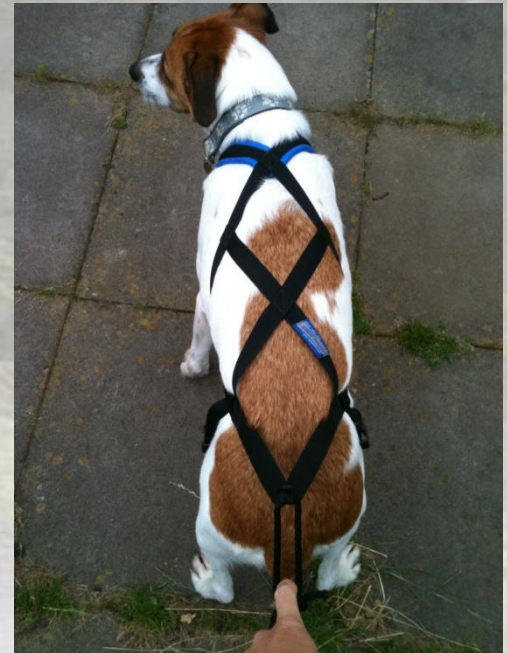
- The harness should allow the dog to pull without restricting the airways or causing rub around the shoulder area
- The harness should allow the dog's natural body movement
- A variety of different types of harnesses are on the market and they are best fitted individually to each dog's specific built and movement



Euro Long



Non-stop



X-back

How to start training?

- Teaching basic commands such as Gee (right), Haw (left), On by (straight on), Easy (slow down), Hike on (go faster) is important
- Groundwork in form of Canicross is ideal to teach commands and get dog used to working in harness
- First runs on the bike should only be 50-100m once or twice a week
- Dog can be coupled up with an experienced dog to learn pulling or have someone cycling ahead to encourage chasing



Where to go bikejoring?

- Forest trails and grassy farmland tracks are best suited, tarmac is too harsh for dogs' pads
- It is illegal to bikejor dogs on the public highway or pavements
- Bikejoring falls into sled dog sports category and permits are required to bikejor on Forestry Commission land which entails having third party liability insurance of up to £5m and using trails during limited quiet hours of the day
- National Trust land is strictly out of bounds!
- If in any doubt ask land owner or local council for permission first!
- Be courteous to walkers/others using the trail



Useful bikejor information

- Depending on breed and physical development dogs can be started training at 9-12 months of age with short fun runs (50-100 meters)
- Distances of 5-10km should be very slowly built up over time



- Dogs can take part in races at either 12 months (pure-breed sled dog organisations) or 18 months of age (ECF)

Useful bikejor information

- The temperature/humidity should be appropriate to the dog's breed and individual ability to cope with heat, the general cut-off point for bikejoring lies between 12-16°C
- Dogs should be fed/watered well before/after bikejoring to avoid the life-threatening condition 'bloat'
- Carrying a first aid kit suitable for both dog and human is recommended
- The use of booties for dogs with sensitive paws can be useful
- Bikejoring is a high-risk sport, always be prepared and expect the unexpected!



Thank you

Demo with Kai and me outside now

