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Jamaican dog team ready to race

A Jamaican sled-dog racer has arrived in Aviemore to enter Europe's largest husky racing event.

Devon Anderson, who has not seen snow before, has swapped the Caribbean for the Cairngorms to take part in this weekend's event.

The 42-year-old and his four-dog team will compete against 220 other teams and more than 1,000 dogs this weekend.

He eventually hopes to compete in the world championships and the Winter Olympics in 2010.

The Caribbean is too hot for huskies so Mr Anderson has trained a team of mongrels rescued from Kingston's dog pound.

His efforts are reminiscent of the success of the Jamaican bobsleigh team which took part in the 1988 Games in Calgary and provided the inspiration for the 1993 film *Cool Runnings*.

Mr Anderson, who works for a Jamaican tour company, said he was excited about picking up the reins for his first race on the four-mile track at Loch Morlich.



The team was formed after seeing Cairngorm dogs in action

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“ I think the adrenalin will take over and the team will do the best it can

Devon Anderson
Dog sled racer

He said: "I am really looking forward to the rally - I am not nervous at the moment because I am in a relaxed environment, but on Saturday I know I will be.

"Once I am in that position I think the adrenalin will take over and the team will do the best it can.

"It is definitely a challenge for me."

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Mr Anderson was trained to run his team by Alan Stewart of the Cairngorm Sled-dog Adventure Company.



Devon is known as a "horse whisperer" back in Jamaica

The venture was the brainchild of Mr Anderson's boss Danny Melville, who spotted one of Mr Stewart's sleds at an event in Canada last year.

"He thought about a sled-dog team, thought back to the bobsleigh team and something clicked," Mr Stewart said.

Mr Stewart then travelled to Jamaica and taught Mr Anderson - who is known in his home country as the horse whisperer because of his close affinity to the animals - how to run a team made up of welfare dogs from a local rescue centre.

Torchlight procession

The Jamaican team is sponsored by Bob Marley's record producer, Chris Blackwell, and country singer Jimmy Buffet.

This weekend's event, which has been organised by the Siberian Husky Club of Great Britain, begins with a torchlight procession through Aviemore.

Although temperatures are currently mild, organisers say colder weather is predicted for this weekend.

Without snow the dogs pull three-wheeled rigs and Mr Anderson is introducing them to the West Indies as a novel means of transport for tourists.

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