

# QUEENS OF DOGSVILLE



# SYNOPSIS

Queens of Dogsville is an unscripted reality series set in the world of dog sports - a mostly female world full of quirky characters, where dogs clearly have replaced men as partners. Similar to the acclaimed feature film *Best in Show* the narrative mixes the funny/satirical with the dramatical. The stakes are high; passion and obsessions run deep.

At the center of the documentary are Seanna O'Neill, her three dog crazy daughters and their eleven 'super dogs'. The O'Neills live and breathe the sport. Their training facility Dynamo Dog Sports in Edmonton produces more champions than any other in Canada. Ten of the 20 national team members are from Edmonton. Seanna manages the National Team while Teri, Meaghan, and Kirstin are on the team. At this year's world championship in Spain all three won gold medals. Canada came in second to Russia. Not good enough for the O'Neills. In their eyes Canada belongs at the very top.

The battle of the old world against the new world will take place at the world championship in Italy next year. Russia is famous for specifically breeding agility dogs. Russian dogs are fast, fearless, and very driven. In comparison, Canadian dogs are considered to be too soft and mellow - nice, friendly pooches, but not dog sports material. Seanna, who has been breeding her own agility dogs for many years, is determined to set the record straight.



**QUEENS OF  
DOGSVILLE**

# ABOUT **US**

**High stake drama, unprecedented access, strong characters,  
and compelling storytelling**

Since 2000 ID produces unscripted drama and docu-soaps at the end of the world in Canada's most northern hub, Edmonton. With a background in journalism and comedy (not entirely an oxymoron) producer Rosvita Dransfeld is pushing ID to provoking new heights.



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# ABOUT US

## Rosvita Dransfeld

German-born producer Rosvita Dransfeld is an internationally renowned filmmaker who crafts powerful explorations of the human condition. Her films include *Who Cares*, *Antisocial Limited* and *Broke*, winner of a Gemini Award and the prestigious Donald Brittain Award for Best Social/Political Documentary.

Dransfeld has become one of Canada's most celebrated contemporary filmmakers. *POV Magazine* has called her "a modern master of vérité."

Her ability to capture the full personality of her subjects and place them at the centre of her stories garnered recognition from America's largest documentary festival *Hot Docs*, which organized a retrospective of her work in its 2016 *Focus On* spotlight.

Most recently Dransfeld completed *Memento Mori* and *Vital Bonds* - two high profile documentaries for CBC and theatrical release.



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# THE DEMO

Combining competitive elements with human interest drama, we follow the O'NEILLS and their club members of DYNAMO DOG SPORTS from the preparations for Regional Championship in June next year to the Nationals and then the World Championships in April - and capture all the drama in between.

Hosted by the O'Neills, the regional championship this summer in Edmonton was full of drama and heartbreak.

<https://vimeo.com/226382516>



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## EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

As QUEENS OF DOGSVILLE is an unscripted 13 x 1/2 hour reality series, the episodic breakdown is based purely on our assumptions of what most likely will happen in one way or another. However, the episodic narrative highlights the immense richness of stories we will be able to capture.

The filming for Queens of Dogsville will take place from June 2018 to May 2019.



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## FORMAT

Main storyline of Season 1 is the preparation for and the participation in the World Championships. The first step to get onto the National team is to win the Canadian National Championships. After that, there's fundraising to pay their way to Europe for the World Championships. And then of course training, lots and lots of training.

These goal and competition oriented elements will be interwoven with the personal pursuit of the O'Neill women for happiness outside of the dog sport arena. It's the age old question - what is more important, career or personal life? What fulfills a person?

At times the dogs themselves - some lovable and some easy to hate - take over the series. Viewers will choose their favourites; heroes and villains of the four legged variety establish themselves, just as those on two legs do. In the end, one truth will drive the series - we live in an age where people are just plain crazy about dogs.



**QUEENS OF  
DOGSVILLE**

# MEET THE O'NEILLS

Without her and her three daughters, dog sports in Canada would still be learning to walk. Nobody in the country has won as many medals and ribbons as the O'Neills...and nobody has made more enemies.



## SEANNA O'NEILL

A dog handler for thirty years, Seanna is a classic control freak who rules the dog sports scene in Canada with an iron fist, exerting power over the judges, the trainers, and the national team. Some accuse Seanna of nepotism. Others resent how she has turned a feel good pastime, a wonderful way to have fun with your dog, into a fierce competition. And yes, it was Seanna who pushed the envelope. "Well, it is fun to run the course with your dog, but it's even more fun if you know that your dog is the fastest."



## KIRSTIN O'NEILL

At Dynamo, Kirstin, the youngest, a trained welder, works as a dog massage therapist and runs a special dog daycare. She trains dogs with behavioural challenges and has saved quite a few pooches from being put down. When it comes to the world of dogs, Kristin likes to be challenged and will take on any dog. This is not so much when it comes down to her personal life; especially when her mom Seanna or Teri are involved.



# QUEENS OF DOGSVILLE

MEET

# THE O'NEILLS



## TERI O'NEILL

Teri is the oldest of the three and a single mother of Kim (14), Dominique (8), and Grace (2). She teaches agility courses at Dynamo in the evenings and on weekends and is sought after as an agility consultant all over Canada. For her day job she works for her sister's (Meaghan) boyfriend as a mechanic in a car shop. Teri is as ever determined, just recently she dumped a boyfriend because he didn't use the correct commands for her dogs. "I can't have somebody come in and mess up what I am living for."



## MEAGHAN O'NEILL

Meaghan, the independent one, works as an electrician and in her spare time trains with her dogs outside of Dynamo. She keeps the family at arm's length as she doesn't want to be too involved with all the drama - the fighting over money and the frustrations that accompany finding a partner who will accept the O'Neill's crazy life style.



# QUEENS OF DOGSVILLE



# EPISODE 1

**Kristin deals with an un-trainable dog. Seanna is forced to give up her position on the national team. Teri struggles to balance work and home life.**

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After being accused of nepotism, SEANNA O'NEILL is forced to give up her position as manager of the National Team. But - being the control freak - she won't just let it go. She will decide who her successor will be. She meets with the first candidates.

Seanna's daughter KIRSTIN gets the job to train a huge and aggressive Akita mix that has basically been declared "un-trainable". If the ambitious Kirstin is able to fix this dog, it would be a formidable milestone in her career as a trainer.

Daughter MEAGHAN is annoyed with her sister TERI, whom she and her boyfriend hired as a mechanic. They feel that Teri takes too much time off for the dog training and agility seminars that she holds all over the country. More pressure for Teri: her ex-husband doesn't think that she is fit to look after their three kids, arguing that she is an absentee mother - always at competitions or teaching courses at Dynamo. She doesn't even have a proper home for them.



## EPISODE 2

Seanna has to make some tough choices to choose the next manager. Kristin has to find a new place and Meaghan explores the world of *Dancing with Dogs*.

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Seanna has narrowed down her pick for the manager position to two people: SANDRA BROWN from Vancouver and SUSAN GARRETT from Winnipeg. Sandra has won numerous medals nationally with her pugs. But she will never be able to compete internationally because pugs are not allowed on planes due to their breathing problems. Susan is a former National Champion turned modern trainer, who offers agility training online. She dreams of becoming the next dog whisperer. Tough choices.

Kirstin has to find a new place. She has been living with her sister but Teri needs the extra space for her three children. She has custody every other weekend. Akita is still not trusting Kirstin, he is obstinate and stand-offish - a tough piece of work. On the bright side - her mix breed Crocodile Crunch is finally coming around. She is a crazy dog, but recently a light went on and her moves in agility are more confined and definitive. Kirstin has great hopes that she will do well at the Nationals.

Meaghan is approached by ANNIE, one of the Dynamo Club members. Annie hopes that Meaghan, as the vice president of AAC, puts in a word to add *Dancing with Dogs* at their competitions. Annie bought Berry, an Australian Shepherd, in Eastern Europe for a lot of money so she could compete in agility. The problem - Berry doesn't like agility. But she might be able to shine in dance, a new and hip sport. Meaghan promises to look into it.

The image shows an indoor agility course. In the foreground, there's a red metal frame with a white lattice pattern, likely a jump or a tunnel entrance. To the left, a colorful hula hoop (red, green, black) is visible. In the background, there's another similar lattice structure and an orange cone with the number '2' on it. The floor is a light-colored, possibly concrete or wood, surface.

# EPISODE 3

Opinions differ whether Esther, a senior dog, should participate in the Rodeo. Kristin continues to struggle to find a place. Teri faces some conflict while teaching a new course.

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It's Rodeo time, an important fundraiser for Dynamo. The club members aren't happy. They'd prefer to use the time to train their dogs for Regionals, but Seanna shows no mercy.

One of the few male club members, DAVID, wants his dog Esther to be the star of the rodeo show. Esther, a scruffy old Jack Russell, is 16 years old and this will be her last show. David wants her to shine. It's an unreasonable expectation – Esther is well past her prime and her competing will reflect badly on the club. The other club members are uniformly against the idea.

Meanwhile, Kirstin's search for a new home proves to be difficult. Most landlords don't allow dogs, and particularly not numerous dogs. At least at the club, she has a breakthrough with the stubborn Akita. Deep inside there is a good dog waiting to emerge.

Teri is teaching a new course for Foundation in Sports in the evenings. Some of the puppies look promising. They might become good agility dogs, but she has a problem with a German Pointer that attacked one of the puppies during training. Terri has a terse word with the owners.



# EPISODE 4

**Seanna deals with a car breakdown, Meaghan prepares for surgery. Tensions rise between the Rodeo manager and Seanna.**

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This year's rodeo is in Morinville, about an hour out of town. Halfway there, Seanna's trailer, packed with all the agility and flyball equipment, breaks down. Club member TANJA races back to Edmonton to get her own trailer. Time is running short for the course to be set up.

Teri won't be joining them. She is teaching an advanced agility course in Regina. Meaghan is also absent as one of her border collies developed an abscess in his belly and has to go for surgery.

In Morinville the club members are frantically building the course after the delay. David is still full of hope that Esther will be the star of the show. Under pressure from the other members, Seanna tells him that it can't happen. They argue and David sulks away. Then Seanna suggests that Esther gets her special entry, as retiring agility dog, before the show starts. David, finally facing reality and looking to save face, gladly agrees.

The crowds are good in Morinville and the club dogs perform well. The members do a great job. After the super dog show, Seanna picks up the cheque from the rodeo manager. He criticizes the show and tells her that he needs something more exciting next year. They have a fight.



## EPISODE 5

All the club members are prepping for Regionals. Annie tries to bring *Dancing with dogs* to Edmonton. Teri and Kristin's relationship turns rocky while on the road to Yellowknife.

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The club members as well as the O'Neills use every opportunity in the evenings to prepare for the Regionals, to be held this year in Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories.

Annie is told that *Dancing with Dogs* still has to go a long way before it will be a competitive sport on the national level in Canada. Undaunted, she brings in a trainer from Calgary to start a group in Edmonton. A number of dog handlers - with dogs that range from pugs to German Shepherds - are interested.

Teri and Kirstin pack their trailers with the dogs, and Teri's three kids - KIM, DOMINIQUE, and GRACE - and head out to Yellowknife. On the way Teri and Kirstin have a fight. Teri accuses Kristin of not trying hard enough to find a new place. Teri needs sort her living situation or she risks losing her kids.

The trip from Edmonton to Yellowknife is quite the adventure - a fifteen-hour drive in trailers packed with adults, kids, dogs and equipment. There are plenty of opportunities for drama, especially with kids and dogs. In contrast, Seanna, Meaghan, and her dogs are going by plane. Seanna is one of the judges, while Meaghan will be competing as well as serving as Vice President of AAC.



## EPISODE 6

**Teri and Kristin arrive in Yellowknife. At Regionals the competition among the club members is fierce. Seanna gets into a fight with the judges.**

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Teri, Kirstin, and the kids are quite exhausted when they arrive in Yellowknife. They go into town to eat and explore the city, but not for long. Dominique (8) wants to get to the training facilities as quickly as he can. He is running Teri's dog Tylt and hopes to qualify for the Nationals. His older brother Kim (14) is already running his own dog, an Australian Shepherd named Lucy. There's fierce competition between the brothers.

Upon arriving Seanna immediately gets into a fight with the other judges. They don't want Dominique to run, because he is too young. Seanna points out That according to AAC rules there are no age constraints.

In all, Dynamo does extremely well. The O'Neill sisters as well as several other club members will be moving on to the Nationals and Dominique? Not quite, but his brother Kim made it.



# EPISODE 7

Seanna wants to get back into the sport and looks at new ways to train. Kristin tries to convince the owners of the Akita to try agility. Meaghan freaks out about the cleanliness at Dynamo.



There isn't much time between the Regionals and the National Championships. Seanna gets on the phone to sell her successor as the manager of the National Team to the AAC board.



Kirstin meets with the owners of the Akita and explains to them that they need to get involved in dog sports. Agility would be ideal. Although their dog is too big and too slow to ever be successful in the sport, it would be a good way for him to stay focused and occupied. The owners are skeptical but willing to give it a try. Seanna wants to get back into the sport and compete at the Nationals. She has developed a new style of "long distance" handling with her dogs Excel and Chips.

The new method will allow aging owners to run their dogs successfully. Seanna is relentless, always looking for new ways to train. Meaghan comes for a visit to Dynamo. She complains how messy the place is. The washrooms are a catastrophe. She warns her sister and mom that they will lose the place if they don't get their act together.

A white dog, possibly a Weimaraner, is standing on its hind legs against a dark background. The dog is looking upwards and to the left, with its front paws raised near its head. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the dog's fur against the dark background.

## EPISODE 8

**Teri struggles with financial problems. The new manager of the national team is chosen. Seanna fears an Eastern take over and Teri deals with an aggressive dog.**

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Teri has huge financial problems. Soon she will have to finance a house on her own, and her dogs are due for vaccinations. Veterinarian bills are through the roof. She asks Meaghan for help but she is just recovering from her own vet bill - 850 dollars for an abscess removal, ridiculous.

The AAC has decided. The new manager of the National team will come from the East to end the Western dominance on the sports. They will announce a name soon. Shut out of the decision process, Seanna is not pleased.

Meaghan tries to explain to her how important it is for the sport to embrace the agility talent in the East, especially if it is expected to grow. Seanna warns her that the Easterners might completely take over, leaving the West out in the cold.

Teri's Foundation of Sports course is in its fourth week, when the German Pointer attacks a puppy again. Teri steps in, grabs the dog, shakes it, and then shouts at it. The owners run over, take the dog and start yelling at Teri: How dare you! What are you doing to our dog? Teri loses it: Your dog is a fucking brat. Unless you take it for serious obedience, it is not welcome here. Get out! The owners want their money back.



# EPISODE 9

**Seanna manages to get into Nationals. Kirstin becomes the new star of the family. Club member Annie meets an expert for dancing with dogs.**

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National Championships in Montreal.

The O'Neill clan arrives with an impressive array of eleven dogs. We hear demeaning, jealous comments from the other competitors. Seanna has managed to get into the Nationals as well. Nobody knows how... but there she is.

Annie and her Australian Shepherd Berry have come to the Championships as well. She is not competing but instead meets with YVONNE, a seasoned trainer in *Dancing with Dogs*. Annie and Yvonne know each other from Cirque du Soleil. Annie was a trapeze artist and now runs her own circus school in Edmonton where Berry performs tricks.

The O'Neill family does well, even the youngster Kim. This is a fairly accurate assumption as in 2017 the O'Neills and their dogs dominated all disciplines. Kirstin won more medals than Teri. Undoubtedly Kirstin is the new star in the family. How about Seanna? Assuming that her plot to get into the Nationals works, she most likely will do well. She now has a chance to get onto the National team.



# EPISODE 10

Kristin might have to move back in with her mom. Seanna explores options for a new fundraising show. Teri goes for dinner with her ex-husband.

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Back in Edmonton Kirstin continues her work with the Akita. It is mostly obedience training with positive re-enforcement. It is all based on the concept of letting the dog make its own choices. Bad choice means no attention in the obedience training sessions. Only good choices are praised and rewarded.

It is end of August now and Kirstin still hasn't found a place to live. She might have to move back in with her mom.

Big club meeting: Seanna reminds the club members that they have to step up the game for the upcoming fundraiser at the Pet Expo. They need a new show. Who could take this on? What about Annie and her *Dancing with Dogs*? Annie doesn't think they are ready but Seanna brushes off her objections, she gets what she wants.

Teri has taken the evening off, and goes for dinner with her ex-husband to discuss the situation with the kids. It doesn't go well. He wants her to be more consistent. She feels threatened, fearful of losing custody.



## EPISODE 11

Kirstin parties a little too hard at Teri's birthday party. Seanna tries to negotiate with the National board members. Annie is getting ready for *Dancing with Dogs*. Kirstin and Seanna have a fight.

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The pet expo around Christmas is the biggest fundraiser for the club. After that it is four months of training and teaching courses until the World Championships. Annie starts getting the *Dancing with Dogs* show together. Luckily, she has some show experience from her circus days, but she knows it's too early and it might not be pretty.

Seanna has a meeting with the National board members of AAC in Toronto. She tries to push her first choice, Sandra, the pug lady from BC. But the AAC Ontario won't have it. It is time that there are more Easterners on the National team. Seanna is pissed off.

Back at the club, spoiling for a confrontation, she starts a fight with Kirstin. The place is a mess, the dogs out of control, and she has to do it all. If Kirstin wants to live with her, she has to step up her game. Kirstin flips out, yells and then breaks down and cries.

It's Teri's birthday. They are having a little party at the club. Everybody shows up - her ex, the kids, most of the club members, and sister Meaghan and her boyfriend. Kirstin arrives in a foul mood, frustrated with her mother and her living arrangements. She is known to drink too much when she is stressed, so there's good potential for a fight.



# EPISODE 12

**Annie is stressed with her dog. Kirstin and Teri make it to the world championships. Seanna finds a scheme to participate. Kirstin deals with the struggles of moving back home.**

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This weekend is Pet Expo and Annie is extremely stressed. The dogs still don't really know what they have to do, nor do their handlers. Seanna expects them to perform twice each day. It will be a disaster.

Good news for Meaghan, Teri, and Kirstin. They made it onto the National team again. Seanna did not. She blames it on the plotting within the AAC. She made Canada rise to the top and now, instead of honouring her contributions, they're turning their back on her.

Kirstin is packing. She is moving back to her mom's place. Tough times for the 25-year-old. In the club and at competitions she is the star, but at home Seanna is calling the shots – as always. However, Kirstin is slowly gaining more and more the support of the other club members. She promises them more transparency, and less meddling from Seanna.

Seanna, always maneuvering, finds a way to go to the World Championships. She convinces the Australians that she will train her dogs Chips and Excel for them. This way she can keep an eye on her daughters. It's a perfect fit – for Seanna anyway.



# EPISODE 13

**Russia dominates at the World Championships. Kirstin and Seanna argue about the club's finances, forcing club members to take sides.**

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At the IFCS World Championships somewhere in Europe; the Russians dominate. They have the better animals, bred for dog sports. The pets from North America just don't have the drive. Still, Canada performs well, especially the O'Neill family. They win their share of medals.

Bathing in the glory of the medals the O'Neills brought home to Canada from the World Championships, Seanna is full of expectations and ideas on how Dynamo Dog Sports needs to grow.

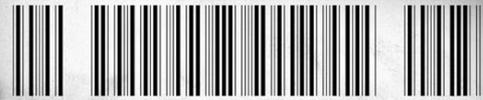
But then Kirstin speaks up. She wants to know how much money is in the bank. Seanna has always been secretive about it. The facility needs some renovations – the toilets don't work, they need new showers, a cafeteria, etc. The trailer should have been replaced many years ago and the kennels are in disrepair.

Kirstin and Seanna go toe-to-toe, arguing, and soon club members begin to choose sides. A few of the old guard remain loyal to Seanna but many members side with Kirstin.

Seanna is the queen but like in *Game of Thrones*, queens are made to be dethroned, an old-fashioned coup is looming.



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