NZKC AGILITY COMMITTEE
PO BOX 40438
UPPER HUTT 5140

AGILITY JUDGING in NZ

Information for those accepted on to the NZ Agility Judges Trainee panel.

updated March 2015

Dear Trainee Agility Judge,

Thankyou for expressing an interest in becoming an agility judge. To be accepted on to the trainee panel you have demonstrated that you have:-

Experience in running events	It is essential as a judge that you are aware of all the facets that relate to an event, such as scriming, scoring, ring and event management etc and should understand and appreciate the work and effort that goes into organising an event.
Knowledge of the sport	By being involved in agility for at least 2 years you have acquired a reasonable knowledge of the sport that you will be officiating in.
Handling experience	This shows that you understand what it takes to run a dog in agility events, and have some appreciation therefore of the challenges that handlers face as they strive to complete a clear round at speed. If you have handled different types of dogs that will give you an even greater appreciation of the variety that is present in our sport.

To move to the next level (Agility Ribbon Trial panel) you will need to:-

Select two Mentors	Select your mentors from the Mentor Judges panel. These people will act as sounding boards for you, in regard course design, judging decisions etc. Let the Agility Committee know who they are once you have confirmed them.
Do probationary appointments.	These provide important practical experience and feedback from an experienced Judge. The number outlined in the guidelines and regulations is a minimum. We strongly suggest that you do as many as you can - the more practical experience you get in the ring with existing judges the better! In addition to the formal practical we suggest that you take every opportunity to judge at club events, NALA Agility Link etc.
Check carefully the guidelines and regulations pertaining to Probationary appointments.	You need to do your probationary under a Senior judge (a good idea to choose someone different from your mentors, to get a variety of feedback). You must get agreement from the Club. You need to notify competitors about the probationary appointment.
Sat and passed a written exam	This is held in February each year. This ensures that you have read and understood the relevant regulations and guidelines. There is an 80% pass rate.
Approval of the Agility Committee and NZKC Executive.	Applications can be made twice a year, on the official form, including appropriate paper work such as probationary reports. The Agility Committee will consider your application, and make a decision. A recommendation will be made to the NZKC Executive.

Good luck and have fun,
from Karen de Wit, NZKC Agility Committee

Enclosed with this publication is a Judge's pack.

You will find the following:-

Page	Item	Explanation
5-8	**Graduation Process**	for graduation from one level to another
9	**Probationary criteria**	This document outlines the scope of a probationary appointment.
11	**Variety of Judging tips**	This includes information about challenges and course analysis, nesting courses, problems to beware of, and electronic timing
11		Challenges
12		Course analysis
14		Nesting courses
16		Beware of…
17		Judging tips
18		Re-runs
19	**Sample judging contract**	with advice on how to fill it out. NB: there is an online version in draft mode so you be contracted that way.
22	**Electronic timers**	Advice on how these work.

Also included:-

Copy of the regulations	Regular 6 monthly updates are posted on the website www.dogagility.org.nz
Jumpers Guidelines	This guide is produced to ensure Judges set courses with challenges appropriate to the level of class being judged.
Tape measure	All equipment has its own specifications and the long jump is the one most likely to need measuring.
Golf tees	these are used for marking the various long jump limits

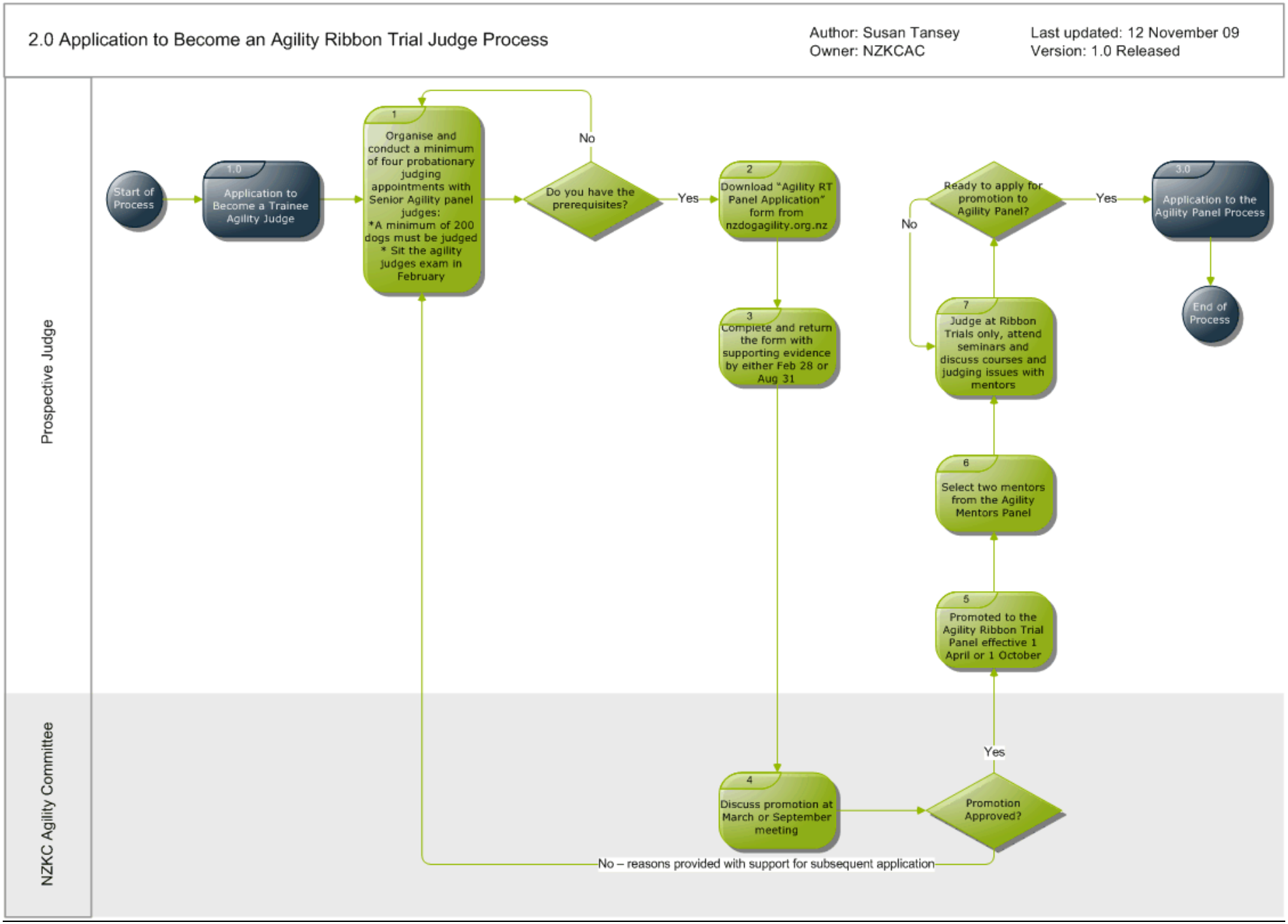
Some other goodies from the Agility Committee

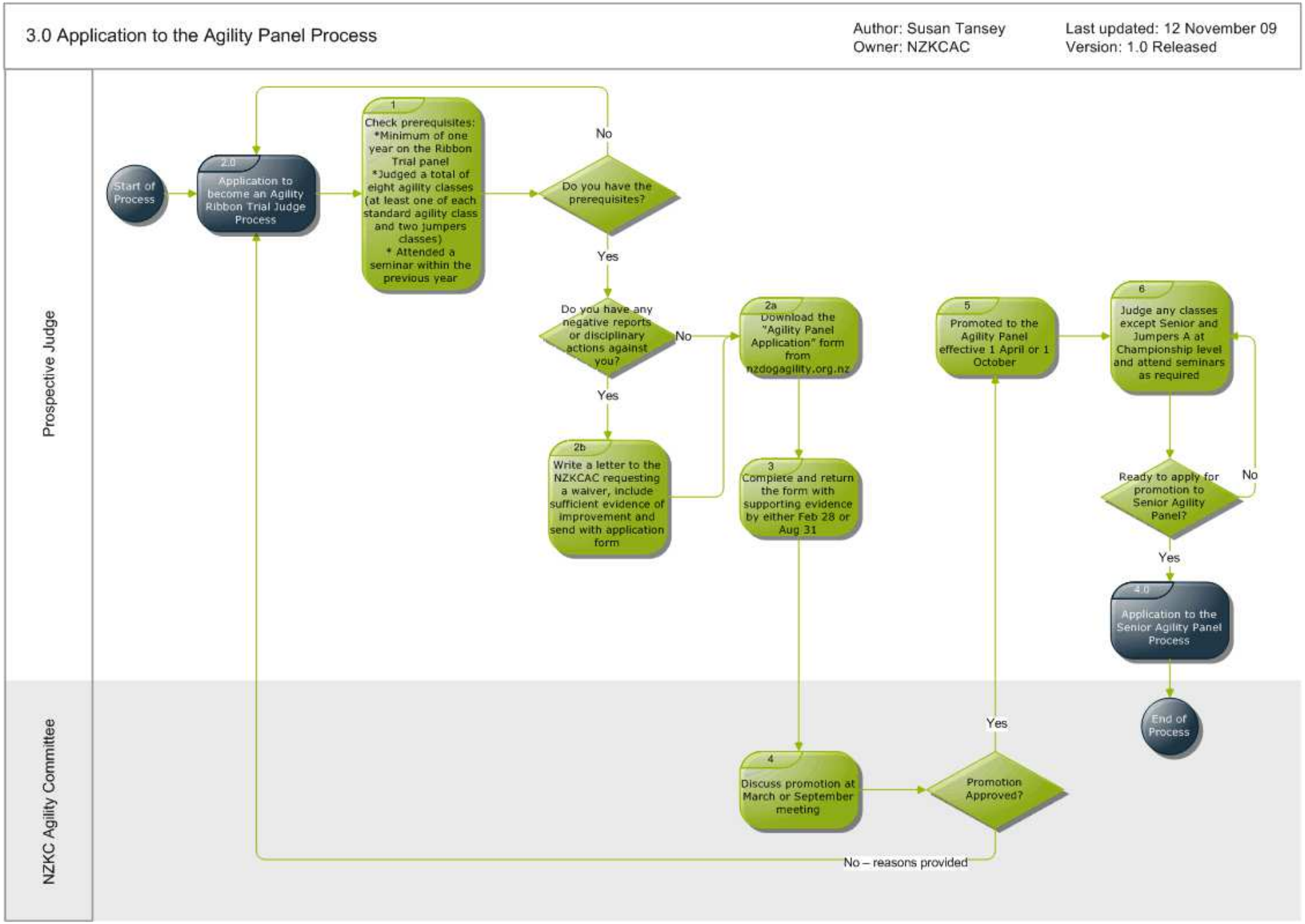
Mentor judges list

Senior Judges list

Note that the Agility website is the most up to date source of information. Go to the Judges page.

www.dogagility.org.nz

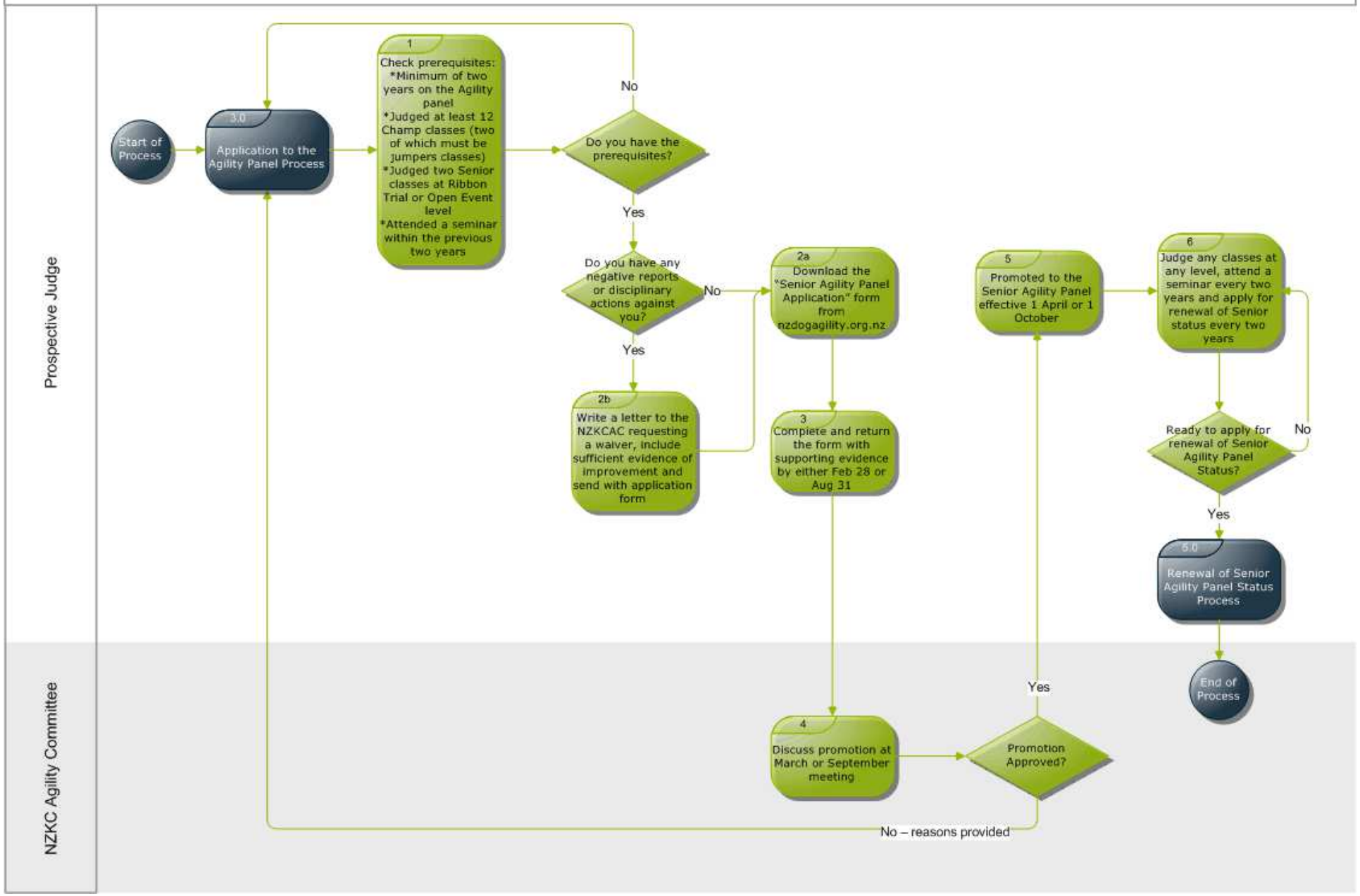

2.0 Application to Become an Agility Ribbon Trial Judge Process
Author: Susan Tansey
Owner: NZKCAC
Last updated: 12 November 09
Version: 1.0 Released
Prospective Judge
NZKC Agility Committee
Start of Process
1.0
Application to Become a Trainee Agility Judge
1
Organise and conduct a minimum of four probationary judging appointments with Senior Agility panel judges:
*A minimum of 200 dogs must be judged
* Sit the agility judges exam in February
Do you have the prerequisites?
No
Yes
2
Download "Agility RT Panel Application" form from nzdogagility.org.nz
3
Complete and return the form with supporting evidence by either Feb 28 or Aug 31
4
Discuss promotion at March or September meeting
Promotion Approved?
No – reasons provided with support for subsequent application
Yes
5
Promoted to the Agility Ribbon Trial Panel effective 1 April or 1 October
6
Select two mentors from the Agility Mentors Panel
7
Judge at Ribbon Trials only, attend seminars and discuss courses and judging issues with mentors
Ready to apply for promotion to Agility Panel?
No
Yes
3.0
Application to the Agility Panel Process
End of Process


3.0 Application to the Agility Panel Process
Author: Susan Tansey
Owner: NZKCAC
Last updated: 12 November 09
Version: 1.0 Released
Prospective Judge
NZKC Agility Committee
Start of Process
2.0 Application to become an Agility Ribbon Trial Judge Process
1 Check prerequisites: *Minimum of one year on the Ribbon Trial panel *Judged a total of eight agility classes (at least one of each standard agility class and two jumpers classes) * Attended a seminar within the previous year
Do you have the prerequisites?
No
Yes
Do you have any negative reports or disciplinary actions against you?
No
Yes
2a Download the "Agility Panel Application" form from nzdogagility.org.nz
2b Write a letter to the NZKCAC requesting a waiver, include sufficient evidence of improvement and send with application form
3 Complete and return the form with supporting evidence by either Feb 28 or Aug 31
4 Discuss promotion at March or September meeting
Promotion Approved?
Yes
No – reasons provided
5 Promoted to the Agility Panel effective 1 April or 1 October
6 Judge any classes except Senior and Jumpers A at Championship level and attend seminars as required
Ready to apply for promotion to Senior Agility Panel?
No
Yes
4.0 Application to the Senior Agility Panel Process
End of Process

4.0 Application to the Senior Agility Panel Process

Author: Susan Tansey
Owner: NZKCAC

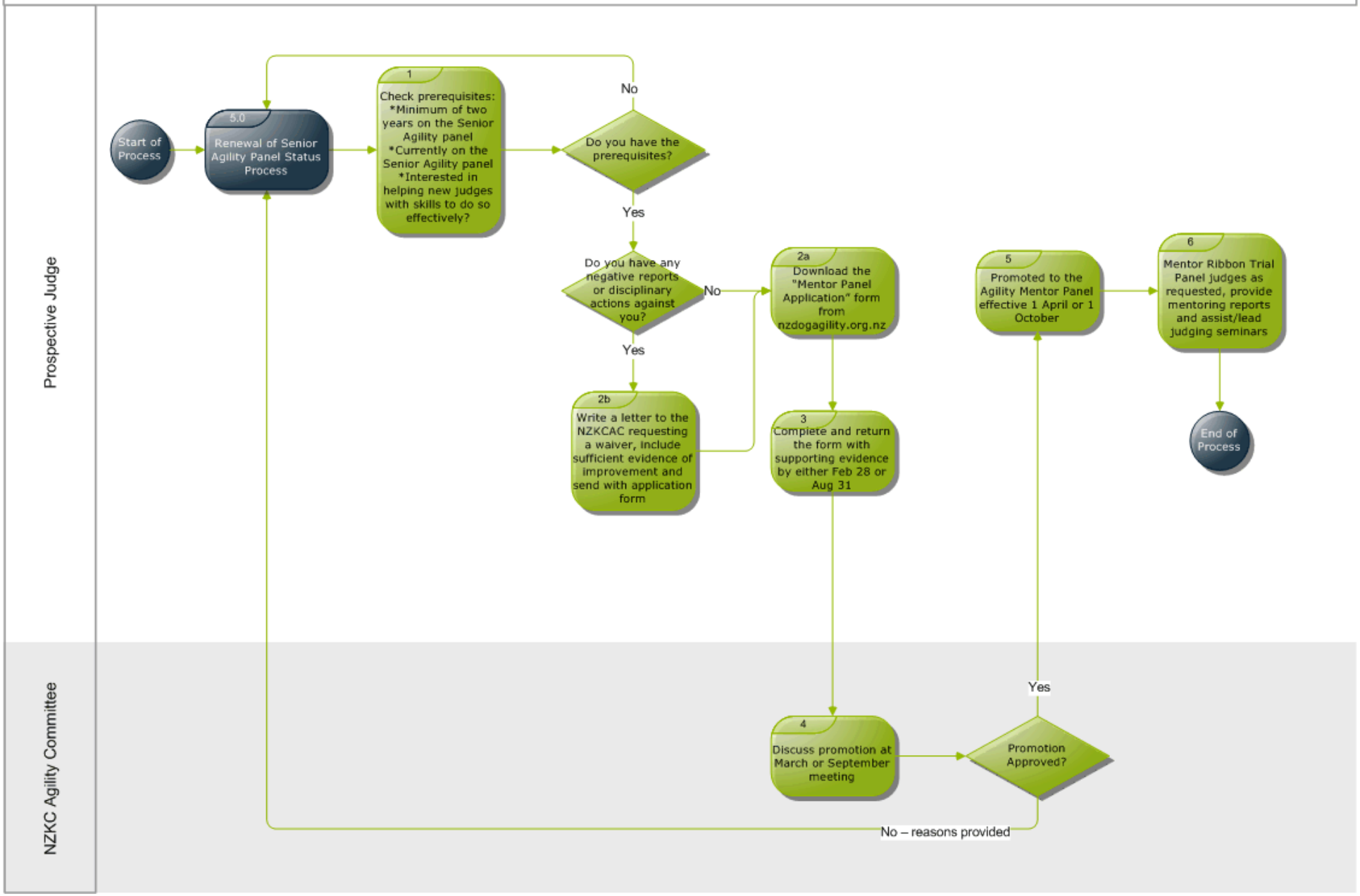
Last updated: 12 November 09
Version: 1.0 Released



6.0 Application to the Agility Mentor Panel Process

Author: Susan Tansey
Owner: NZKCAC

Last updated: 12 November 09
Version: 1.0 Released



GUIDELINES FOR AGILITY PROBATIONARY APPOINTMENTS

This set of guidelines is intended to aid judges and probationary judges when they are asked to assess and report on a prospective agility judge by fulfilling a probationary appointment. They outline what should be expected from the applicant, how the probationary should go and what knowledge the applicant should be expected to display.

Who can undertake probationaries?
Trainee Judges and Ribbon Trial Panel judges can undertake probationary appointments.

Who oversees the probationaries?
Senior Agility Judges

At what events and on what classes can a probationary be done?
Any class at any championship, open or ribbon trials, with two exceptions. You cannot do a probationary on a Championship Senior or Championship Jumpers A course. The intention is that the Trainee judge gets practice judging weaves and contacts, so a minimum of four should be agility classes, with Jumpers additional. In total you must judge 200 or more dogs, over a minimum of four appointments. The appointments should cover all levels including Senior at ribbon trials.

What permission is needed when applying to do a probationary?
The permission of the Club conducting the fixture, and the judge overseeing the probationary.

Does the club need to publish details of the probationary?
Yes. Competitors must be informed. Where a Trainee or Ribbon trial panel judge is conducting a probationary appointment they must be listed either in the schedule for the event, or in a notice on the website, email list or Club flyer. The class in which they are to conduct their probationary must also be stated. The notice must be published <u>at least one week</u> before entries close.

How many probationary appointments can be held over a weekend?
A maximum of **one** probationary appointment can be conducted per day at an event. So that means that two can be held over a weekend.

Who writes a report on the probationary appointment?
The officiating judge must send a report to the NZKC Agility Committee. A standard form is available from the website.

What should the applicant do before the day?
Organise the probationary appointment and ensure it is advertised. The applicant MUST submit a course to the officiating judge in sufficient time PRIOR to the event to enable feedback and possible modification of the course. They should also prepare other things they will need on the day such as:- measuring tape, copy of Agility regulations, and a calculator if required to determine course times. The officiating judge might discuss general things such as suitable dress, behaviour etc.

What should happen on the day?
The judge should meet with the applicant in good time before the course is to be set up and ensure they are prepared for the task.

Setting up the course.
The applicant should be allowed to work with the ring staff to have it set up as per the plan. They should supervise the course measuring and work out a SCT.
The officiating judge should then walk the course with the applicant to discuss:-

- areas of challenge and appropriateness to the level of competition;
- possible problems with the course in terms of judgeability;
- judge's line of travel around, and positioning on the course for each type of obstacle;
- dangerous placement of obstacles and possible remedies;
- the rules regarding faults and refusals appropriate to the level of the course;
- the flow of the course;
- the measuring of the course and factors affecting time setting;

Liaison with ring staff and setting timers.
The applicant should brief his/her ring staff. The judge should point out the importance of ensuring everyone knows their job. The applicant should demonstrate an understanding of how timers work and how to set them correctly for each height and piece of equipment.

Equipment specifications.
The applicant should demonstrate an awareness of the appropriate bar and hoop heights for each height class, as well as the length of long jump.

Liaison with competitors walking the course.
Both the applicant and the officiating judge should be present during the competitors' course walk. The applicant should address any concerns the competitors may have, with the officiating judge there to back them up if required.

Judging of the course.
Discuss and agree on the path both the applicant and officiating judge will take. The applicant should demonstrate a sound knowledge of the rules of agility. The officiating judge remains in charge of the ring. They must remain in the ring at all times to assist the applicant. The final decision on any judging matter rests with the officiating judge.

What happens after the class has been judged?
At the conclusion of the class, the course should be discussed, how it ran, and any possible improvements. The judge and applicant should discuss any difficult judging calls.

The officiating judge might also wish to discuss other subjects such as:- filling in contracts and Judges responsibilities (assembly areas, situation of callboards, running your own dog etc.)

What happens after the event?
The officiating judge writes a report and sends it to the Agility committee, with a copy to the applicant. **A downloadable pdf is available from the Agility website, under "Other forms"**
http://www.dogagility.org.nz/judge_forms.html

It is essential that the officiating judge be honest and fair. If they think the understanding of either the rules or of the concept of course design need to be improved then they should say so. It is preferable that an applicant receives more training if they require it.

(refer to the regulations for more detail on Probationary appointments)

TYPES OF CHALLENGES

Type	Description	Reason for difficulty or challenge
Obstacle discrimination	Where two obstacles are placed close together and a choice must be made over which obstacle to perform	The degree of difficulty depends on distance between obstacles, type of obstacle and approach angle
Directional discrimination	where the obstacles are the same but the dog must take the left or right one.	eg. Curved tunnel entries
Angles	Angle of approach to obstacles. This should be obvious at the entry level classes and less obvious as dogs become more experienced.	Slow speed to a challenge is easiest. If the angle takes the dog towards the wrong obstacle that is harder than an angle that takes them towards the correct one.
Spacing	between obstacles that are in sequence	eg, straight line hurdles with differing metre distances between them
Distance handling challenges	Where the dog and handler are either very close/cramped, or very far apart.	
Side changes	occur when the course changes direction and the handler must cross to the other side	Handlers might choose a backcross, front cross, blind cross etc.
Obstacle placement	Obstacles may be placed to mirror the natural flow of the dog, or placed such that this is challenged	eg. A pinwheel can be an easy curve or hard when a jump is depressed
Lead- out challenges	offer a solution to a challenge at the start of the course	Wise not to allow too long a leadout!
Handler Restrictions	can be side or distance restrictions	Eg. when walls or obstacles restrict the normal handler path, where tunnels poke out from underneath contact equipment, where the handler has to choose to run on one side or another of a jump
Sending on	The dog runs ahead of the handler	Eg. Straight line at the end of a course.
By-passing obstacles/sending behind a jump etc	Not appropriate in entry level classes.	Dogs like to do whatever is in front of them so having to run past an obstacle can be difficult!
Crossing Patterns	The degree of difficulty is affected by spacing, speed and angle of approach, types of obstacles involved, shape of the “box” and number of obstacles involved	Novice handlers should be given plenty of space to get it right, but make it harder at the higher levels.
Position challenges	e.g. shadows, fences, trees, hollows, inclines.	

Agility:- Guide to number and type of challenges		
Level	**Types of challenges**	**Number**
Starters	The challenge of simply negotiating all of the obstacles correctly wherever they may be placed is a significant one. Any further challenges added MUST be minimal in terms of demands on the dog as the handler probably doesn't have the skills yet to recognise challenges for what they represent. Anything that could challenge the flow of the course should not be incorporated into a starters course. The next obstacle should be obvious to the dog. Starters MUST include a 12 pole weave.	max 1-2
Novice	Handlers have a huge range of abilities. To some degree you must work toward the lowest skill level in terms of safety. Never forget that for at least some of these combinations, you are setting a course which represents one of their first efforts. Do not include anything which will endanger confidence. Crossing patterns are ok but provide the handler with sufficient room so that a late call or slower response does not necessarily result in an off-course. Recommended to have 1-2 contact obstacles. Choose from A-frame, dog-walk or crossover.	max 2-3
Intermediate	Ask these handlers/dogs for quite a bit more than their Novice counterparts. Call-offs or redirections can become more common and closer. Obstacle discrimination challenges can be introduced with the hardest being "like" obstacle discrimination i.e. tunnel/tunnel. Recommended to have 2-3 contact obstacles. You can use the seesaw.	3-4
Senior	It is the type of challenge that is important here. It is easy to set an ugly course full of hard but unrelated challenges. The trick is to set a course where challenges advantage those with more skills or "tools" in their toolbox. It is often hard to set a course which allows those without the skills to complete the course, while making sure those with more skills can negotiate the course more quickly or with better flow. Experience will improve this in conjunction with the style you develop. Recommended to have 2-3 contacts. Choose from A-frame, dog-walk, crossover or seesaw	4 +

Jumpers:- Guide to number and type of challenges

Read the Jumpers guidelines for advice on the type and number of challenges for each level.

COURSE ANALYSIS.

We have a panel of experienced judges who are interested in course design, and they guide judges with their course design in a constructive educational manner via email, using Clean Run Course designer software. Your mentors, or any other judge you wish to help, can guide you with your course design on the ground.

DOING YOUR OWN COURSE ANALYSIS

The following is a guide to analysing an agility course in an effort to better understand the factors affecting the way in which it has run.

1. ON THE DAY

As soon as practicable after the course has been run, make notes on your plan of any adjustments you made to the plan after it was set up, add why you made the changes. E.g. gear not available, didn't look right etc. It is important to have this fairly accurate – draw measurements of how far things were moved, how much angles were changed etc.

Always put your course time on the plan and a note regarding how generous (or not) that ended up being.
Mark the places on the course where handler's experienced difficulty, (not simply missed a contact)
Write down what difficulties occurred e.g. Dogs casting around a particular hurdle, many dogs missing up contact.

Add as much information on possible factors affecting the course on the day, e.g. ground conditions, state of contact gear – e.g. slippery, weather, glare, colour of hurdle poles. (All of these can affect how a particular sequence runs.

If possible add onto the course the actual figures of results from the course e.g. 80 dogs, 30 clears, etc.

The more information you can add to this plan on the day, the more you will be able to learn about what happened and perhaps why. It will not only help you analyse the less desirable aspects of the course but will help you recognise (perhaps unplanned) valid challenges e.g. off-set approaches causing missed up-contacts etc.

2. WITHIN A WEEK

Go back to your course plan. If it was done on a PC – do a copy of the course which represents that which actually went on the ground.

Tidy all your notes into statements and comments that will mean something to you later and file them together for future reference.

Check your time against how the course ran and note whether it was in your mind appropriate on the day.
Look for patterns in the dog/handler performance on each part of the course.
If you have noted that you just weren't pleased with some area of the course, see if there is any relation to the way handlers performed it.

Having established a pattern for a piece of the course, e.g. lots of dogs casting around a particular hurdle and those who did jump it, knocking it, coming from it on a difficult line to the next obstacle etc.

Remember that dogs are all different in the way they deal with things so that one obstacle placement that is breaking flow etc, may result in a range of behaviours being exhibited by the dogs which are running that sequence.

Look at what possible changes you could make to that sequence/obstacle placement to improve the flow or diminish the negative effects of it.

If there is anything you are unsure of (e.g. reason why one obstacle caused so many problems) ask your mentor. Sit down with the data and the course and get them to help you understand what happened and how to avoid it in future.

It is often a good idea to set these areas up again – being careful to have them as close as possible to how they were on the day including approach speeds and angles.

Be careful to get the dogs to approach the sequence as they would have had it been still within your whole course, i.e. Same direction, same relative speed.

Play around with the obstacles, imagine where the dogs would take off/land for each, look at lines of travel and how moving one obstacle influences the whole sequence.

Be aware of the danger of running one dog over it repeatedly. An experienced dog will adjust each time through and the effects of your changes may not be as evident as they would be for a dog which had not seen the sequence a few moments earlier.

Be aware of using your own dogs to test the sequence, it is easy to make compensations based on what you know about how it ran rather than getting a true indication of the way each obstacle is affecting the other.
If you are in doubt – find another judge in your area to talk to about it with. Get their input on what they see.

When you are happy with your improvements to the sequence note exactly on paper the positioning and angles of the obstacles.

Write down as much as you can about what you saw as you moved things and make notes on the course if you ever use it again on how your improvements ran.

This may all seem a bit tedious and overdone but it will progressively teach a lot about how sequences run, how obstacle placement and angle can change the whole concept of a course. It is a good way of gaining a lot of understanding in a short time and a great way of imbedding it so that hopefully you will not have the same type of problem again.

NESTING or CHANGING COURSES/EXERCISES BETWEEN LEVELS
THINGS TO CONSIDER

What is Nesting?
It is where the main obstacles stay in place and other more easily moved obstacles are moved to create a new course. The idea is to change large equipment and/or pegged equipment as little as possible– e.g. try to leave contact gear in place (or close to it).

Reversing a course.
Clean Run course designer does this easily. The course may be easier or harder then the original. There will be some obstacles that have to move die to nasty angles. Look at the plan, as it may take longer to turn the long jump, seesaw and collapsible tunnel around than just altering a part of the course.

Movement of Equipment Rule of thumb
Order is - least moved to most moved
Contact Gear – in this order Cross-over, Dogwalk, A-Frame, See-saw
Weaves
Collapsible Tunnel
Open Tunnel
Long Jump
Hoop
Spread Jump
Hurdles

Do not get so focused into nesting courses that you lose safety, fairness or the ability to judge the course properly.

Nesting a Full Set

Always start at the top end of the levels you are doing. This means that you can organise your senior course as you want it. Starting at lower levels and working up will usually result in "contrived" challenges rather than planned ones. Change from Senior to Intermediate then Intermediate to Novice. Nesting Starters is not so vital – leaving the weave in place can save a bit of time but realistically Starters is not as important as there is no big gear. Also be aware that when ground conditions are soft the dogs can break up the ground, and in particular the weaves may need to be moved slightly.
Try to have each class go round the course in an opposite direction so that for example the start for Senior is the finish for Intermediate. This means that those who have run the other level are not at an advantage when running the new class, and adds variety.
ALL the courses in the set should flow. If you cannot get the lower level ones to flow and flow well, do not hesitate to alter the angle of contact gear. It only takes a few minutes and will be worth it.

Handler Responsibility

In a course (more than in a controlled exercise at club) it is important to understand the level of experience of the handlers involved. While it is desirable that the best handler and dog combination on the day be rewarded, be careful not to set a course at lower levels which compromises the safety of the dog, leaving any responsibility on the shoulders of the handlers who may not recognise the problem or have sufficient skills to do anything about it.

For Starters
As there is no contact gear, the weave approach is the most important in this class. Try to give dogs a weave with a straight entry (or an entry the handler can make straight). Hurdles tend to be quite wide spaced allowing the handler time to fix a potential refusal is they are quick enough. Never do call-offs in

Starters and tend to have flow as the top priority. Starters is a hard class to set as there is limited gear and limited experience in the class, (which in turn limits your options). Making a good flowing starters class with side-changes (vital) and making it interesting without being too difficult, is one of the hardest parts of judging agility.

For Novice

Tend to assume that the handler will NOT be able to alter the dog's course correctly on approaches. This means that you should guide the dogs by having at least the previous hurdle straight on to the contact gear. Learner dogs will have limited ability to straighten themselves as they ascend dogwalks and Aframes etc and could easily fall off especially when the surface is wet or slippery. Always have a straight approach to the hoop as the defined parameters of the obstacle leave little room for the dog to adjust itself.

For Intermediate

The handler by now should know something, and the dog should be more responsive, so you could now do a 180 degree (with decent room for run-up) approach to a contact obstacle. Check there is nothing in the course where the dog could obviously get hurt by a bad handler decision (at any level).

For Senior

The handler should now be assuming much of the responsibility for the approaches the dog makes to obstacles. Still don't put tyres etc on angles as it's too easy for them to go wrong. Just because it is Senior does not give the judge free range to place obstacles where taking them off course could result in the dog spearing itself or similar.

Judgeability

Things to consider regarding judgeability in changed courses.

- The change in direction – just because it was easy to judge in one direction – it does not mean it will be easy in the opposite direction – always check you can get from one contact area to another for example.
- Contacts – vital you can move between contacts easily regardless of the speed of dog. While in a small class you may elect to accept a bit more movement, remember that in a class of 90 or more, it will get a bit wearing and increasingly more difficult to give every competitor the same consideration.
- Tunnel Entries – Check that you can see tunnel entries easily. Some refusals and off-courses into tunnels are very hard to see and its easy to miss the visibility of a tunnel entrance on a course plan.
- Weave – most especially at Starter level ensure you are close enough to see any physical contact between dog and handler, and any parts of the body between the poles.

Safety

Some obstacles do not show up as a true representation in 2-D on paper. Be very aware of setting courses which risk handlers running into the end of the see-saw or other equipment. If you have difficulty envisaging where a dog will land into a combination on paper, do not hesitate to set it up and have a look. Quite often challenges look quite different in 3 dimensions and pose quite different problems in terms of judgeability and safety than appeared on paper.

Important Words of Caution

Be very aware of weather conditions causing "tracking" around the gear – weaves in particular. If the weaves or approach to anything gets remotely boggy – MOVE IT for the next class.

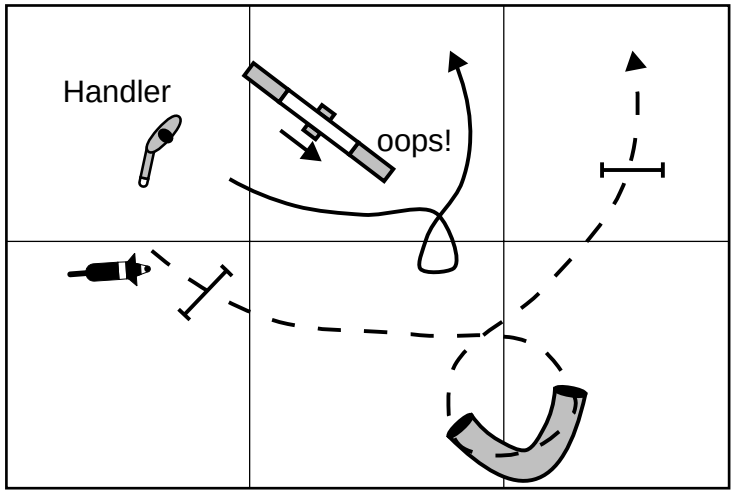
Do not get so focused into nesting courses that you lose safety, judgeability or fairness on your courses.

Likewise with approaches, if getting a nice flowing Novice course means you need to alter the angle of the Aframe from the Intermediate, then do it. You will never regret those few seconds it takes to ensure that your new course is as you would like it to be.

NEVER SACRIFICE THE INTEGRITY OF A COURSE AND END UP RUNNING SOMETHING YOU ARE UNHAPPY WITH FOR THE SAKE OF KEEPING GEAR IN THE SAME PLACE FROM THE PREVIOUS CLASS.

OOPS!!! BEWARE OF…

Once you start judging you will realise that there is often something which happens that you have not thought of, but the chances are that some other judge has experienced something similar. Here are some ideas, based on experiences of other Judges.



1. Seesaw - on paper try to visualise the up end – you don't want handlers running into the up-end once it is positioned on the ground!

2. Watch approaches to hoops. They can do real damage both physically and mentally to a dog which gets them wrong at any level. Let the handler take some responsibility at Senior but in general if you need something on an angle DON'T make it the tyre. Hurdles fall easier.

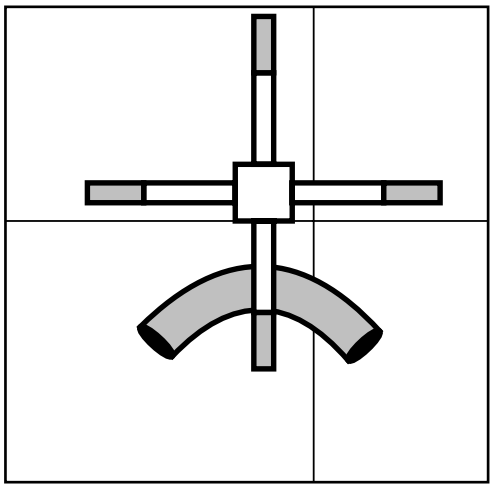
3. Long Jump/spread – you need 6m front and rear minimum (regulations) if coming from a slow type obstacle e.g. off the start or from weave at lower levels, put more run-up in!! Do NOT put on a corner.

4. Tunnels under contact equipment –Check clearances when set up ensuring that no dog could cause the tunnel to skew sideways and hit their heads etc on the equipment. Also ensure the tunnel is not hard up against a leg or support of the contact obstacle so that the dog can not bang into it whilst negotiating the tunnel. Special care MUST be taken with collapsible tunnels which need to be pegged firmly and have good clearance around the exit end.

Also check that you still see the contact area as some tunnels are so big that they obscure the ramps!

5. Tunnels generally – At the lower levels straight approaches to the collapsible tunnel is important to prevent dogs hitting themselves on the sides of the entrance, or snagging in the tail.

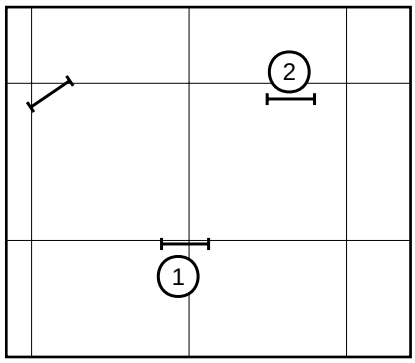
6. When setting either courses or exercises – the safety of the dog should be your first consideration. If there is even a remote possibility that an obstacle's placement could cause a problem in this regard – MOVE IT! Better safe than sorry!



7. Attaining an 'eye' takes experience and practice. Get out at shows and walk all the courses you can. Note where you think the challenges lie and compare your thoughts to the results when the course is run. If something happens to many dogs which you did not foresee – take note of it – set it up later and analyse why you missed it. You learn by watching, asking and taking note. Do not be afraid to ask other judges their thoughts behind a particular sequence. Most judges are more than willing to help.

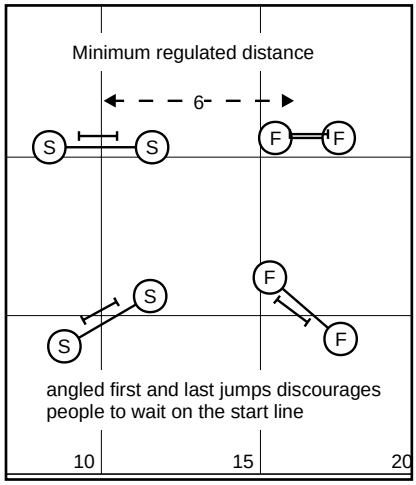
Judging Tips for New Judges

LEAD OUTS



Lead-outs are a valid challenge. Lead-outs can take time, but if you are clever they need not take long!
If you do a straight line 3 jump lead-out to a tunnel or turn everyone will try and lead-out. Whilst they do this time is ticking by! It is boring to watch (especially if handlers go back and reset their dogs), and if there are over 100 dogs in each class and every handler spends 20-30 seconds leading out then this could be another half an hour added to the running and judging of that class.
However, you can still add a leadout challenge without the handler having to move ahead more than one obstacle (see picture right).

START/FINISH LINES



When designing courses watch how close the start and finish lines are to each other. This is regulated to 6 metres minimum. Also be aware that the angle of the start and finish obstacle may reduce the distance between them (see diagram) and discourage people to get ready and come into the ring and wait at the start.
A course that doubles back close to the start line on the run home isn't always a good idea for the flow of the class and the time spent waiting for the next dog to enter the ring.

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SCRIMER

- Always give the scrimer a brief before the start of any class. Show then your signals for a fault, refusal and a Disqualification.
- Make sure they understand if the timer faults or stops for any reason and they do not know how to immediately fix it then they are to stay quiet until after the dog has finished.
- They should call you over before the next dog runs and let you know of the issue and you can then make a decision whether to rerun or not.
- Remember to mention to the scribe that they must **watch you** and not the dog, this may sound like a given but this does happen!!
- Depending on the course flow, show the scribe your judging line so that they can see you throughout each run. If they can't see you then they may miss faults given.
- If you prefer you can ask the scribe to confirm any fault you may have given in the round by holding your fingers up for the amount of faults. It also pays to check with the scribe during the height changes that the timers have been re -checked.

OBSTACLE PLACEMENT

Watch the placement of obstacles like the long jump and the hoop. Straight line approaches are always best as putting them on corners could cause unnecessary faults and off courses. Be aware you can see all contacts easily and it is important that you can see the entrances to the tunnels.

SETTING STANDARD COURSE TIME.

This is regulated. Check the regulations.

RE-RUNS IN AGILITY

Re-runs can be called for (by the judge only) in agility for any of the following reasons:

- Obstacle failure – (causing fault or delay in the running of the round)
- Timer failure – includes failure of both timekeeper's watches and loss of time recorded due to premature resetting of the stopwatches. The handler must rerun if they want a time.
- Loss of scribe sheet
- Outside interference – causing fault or delay of dog in the ring (includes another dog entering the ring)
- Any other factor which the judge deems to be outside of the control of the handler, resulting in a disadvantage being caused during the run.

It is important that prior to the rerun, the judge fully informs the handler, and the scribe the reason for the rerun, what is being judged during the rerun and what the handler must do to complete the rerun. The judge and handler liaise to decide when the re-run will occur.

Reruns for time only

In the event of a timer failure etc resulting in no time being recorded for the dog, the rerun will be for time only with the faults for the original round remaining valid. No course faults or refusals are to be judged during the rerun; however the course must ultimately be completed correctly.
This means that if a dog goes off course and takes No 5 then No 9, he must be brought back and correct the mistake by taking 6,7,8,9 and so on. Back jumping any hurdle on the way back to 6 will not be penalised.
A missed pole in the weave must be corrected prior to the completion of the round with subsequent obstacles retaken after the fixing of the error.
To aid the handler in deciding what is happening, the judge may signal refusals etc but the scribe will not record these.

Re-runs due to gear failure or interference

If for some reason a round is stopped (e.g. dogwalk plank falls off and the obstacle needs to be retaken), the faults accumulated to the point on the course where the problem occurred remain valid. Judging commences from this point onward only (although the dog will run the entire course again). The judging of the later part of the course during the rerun will be as normal with off-courses earning disqualification.
Again the obstacles prior to this point on the course must ultimately be taken in number order but an off-course which is corrected will not be grounds for elimination.

Each situation is going to be different and it is up to the judge to determine and convey the conditions for the rerun to both ring staff and the handler involved. It is advisable to attach the new scribe sheet to the old one (should there be one) for each dog and note on each what happened in the event that anything may need clarifying later.

It is not possible to regulate for every eventuality which occurs in agility and there will be times when a rerun results in a slower time than that which would have been posted in the first round – that's life – get over it!

Please note that reruns are quite different to run-offs where two or more dogs have clear rounds and identical times. A run-off is judged in its entirety as per a normal first round.

NEW ZEALAND KENNEL CLUB INC

Te Runanga Matua, Take Kuri o Aotearoa

AGILITY JUDGING CONTRACT

THIS EVENT is being conducted under the Rules and Regulations of the New Zealand Kennel Club (Incorporated). JUDGING is to be conducted to the recognised New Zealand Kennel Club Agility and Show Regulations and the Judge undertakes he or she is eligible to judge the classes offered and that before judging, he or she will become fully conversant with the relevant Rules and Regulations.

PART ONE: CLUB TO COMPLETE.

TO (JUDGE):	
FROM (Club):	DATE of offer:
CLUB contact:	
ADDRESS:	
EMAIL:	PHONE:
DATE of event:	START TIME:
EVENT: Ribbon ☐ Championship ☐ Open ☐	
VENUE:	
CLASSES to be judged:	
RUNNING ORDER:	
ASSEMBLY AREAS. The Club requires all start/finishes to be on the SHORT ☐ LONG ☐ side of the ring.	
ACCOMMODATION: *offered by the Club* Camping on grounds ☐ Billet ☐ Motel ☐ Other ☐	
MEALS: *offered by the Club*	
PARKING: *offered by the Club*	
OTHER	

EQUIPMENT list attached: ☐

SIGNED by Club contact: _____

PART TWO: JUDGE TO COMPLETE.

EXPENSES. I accept this judging appointment and advise that my expenses are:

Private transport costs	km @ cents/km	Amount $
Airfare (*)		Amount $
Airfare preferences		
Accommodation costs		Amount $
Accommodation preferences		
Other expenses (describe)		Amount $
** A judge is entitled to full Economy return air travel at the times specified by the judge. The method and responsibility for booking and payment of fares should be clearly agreed upon by the parties to this contract.*		TOTAL $

COMPETING. #

I would like to run my dog(s) Yes ☒ No ☐

Classes I would like to enter:

 # A Judge's first priority is to their judging. Judges are permitted to run their dogs when they are not actively judging ie. between classes. A Judge must not stop a ring to run his or her dogs or walk courses. This does not include scheduled breaks which are advised before the class begins. Clubs may change running orders to accommodate a judge at the beginning or end of a class.

Reserved parking required. Yes ☐ No ☐	I would like to receive a marked catalogue ☐
MEALS. Special requirements.	
COURSE PLANS. The Judge will supply plans to the Club within three(3)days of the event unless otherwise arranged.	
OTHER CONDITIONS.	

Judge's preferred contact method(s).

E-mail:	Telephone:
Signed: (Judge)	Date of acceptance:

The Contract can be sent to the judge electronically or by post (in duplicate with a SAE). The judge must return a completed contract to the club within 21 days of the date of the offer. The club must confirm the details of the completed contract within 14 days of receiving it. If either party exceeds these time frames the offer will have been deemed lapsed.

Instructions for Completion of an Agility Judges Contract

PART ONE.

The Club will complete this half. They will list details of the event including the classes they would like you to judge, and any other things they will offer such as accommodation, meals, parking etc.

PART TWO.
The judge fills in this half.

Expenses, Accommodation and Travel Requirements

Expenses – Enter details of any expenses you will ask to be refunded. This may include petrol/car expenses, travel expenses and motel expenses. You should work out carefully what the expenses will be in advance, so the club can consider them and prepare your expenses payment in advance of the day.
For example, $80 for motel and $90 for car expenses (300km at 30c – as an example).
For mileage, as a guide use half the AA rate.
You can work out the distance of your journey using www.wises.co.nz or googlemaps.

Accommodation – enter details of the accommodation you require. This could be the name of the person you would like to be billeted with, a camp site, request for a motel room or simply that you will make your own arrangements. If you are requesting a motel, include details as to whether you will book and pay for the motel, or if the club should do this for you. If you are requesting a camp site and would like the club to reserve one for you, indicate that here

Preferred travel arrangements – Enter details of how you will travel to the event. This may include air flights, pick up by designated drivers, own car or own arrangements. When the travel requirements involve air travel or other involved requirements, include all the details of the travel in this section. This should include things like who will book and pay for the travel, acceptable times of travel and any special requirements. For example, if you are travelling by airplane, include whether you or the club are to book and pay for the tickets. If the club is booking the tickets, detail the times that you want to fly, whether you are taking a dog with you and arrangements for transport at the other end.

It is important that all costs are clearly covered in this section to allow the contracting club to determine whether they can afford your judging services.

Competing.
Some judges like to compete with their own dogs and this should be clearly indicated. Clubs and competitors are understanding when judges wish to compete, however judging should be a priority, and competing should not interfere with your judging appointment.

Parking, Meals etc.
If you have any special requirements like parking near the toilets/rings then write it here. If you have any special dietary requirements such as – no alcohol or chocolates as gifts, vegetarian etc then list it here.

Contact methods
Confirm with the club the preferred ways you like to be contacted.

Sign the contract in this section, and include the date on which you have signed the contract, so the contracting club knows the date by which they need to confirm the contract.

The Art of Electronic Timing

Published New Zealand Kennel Club Gazette July 2008

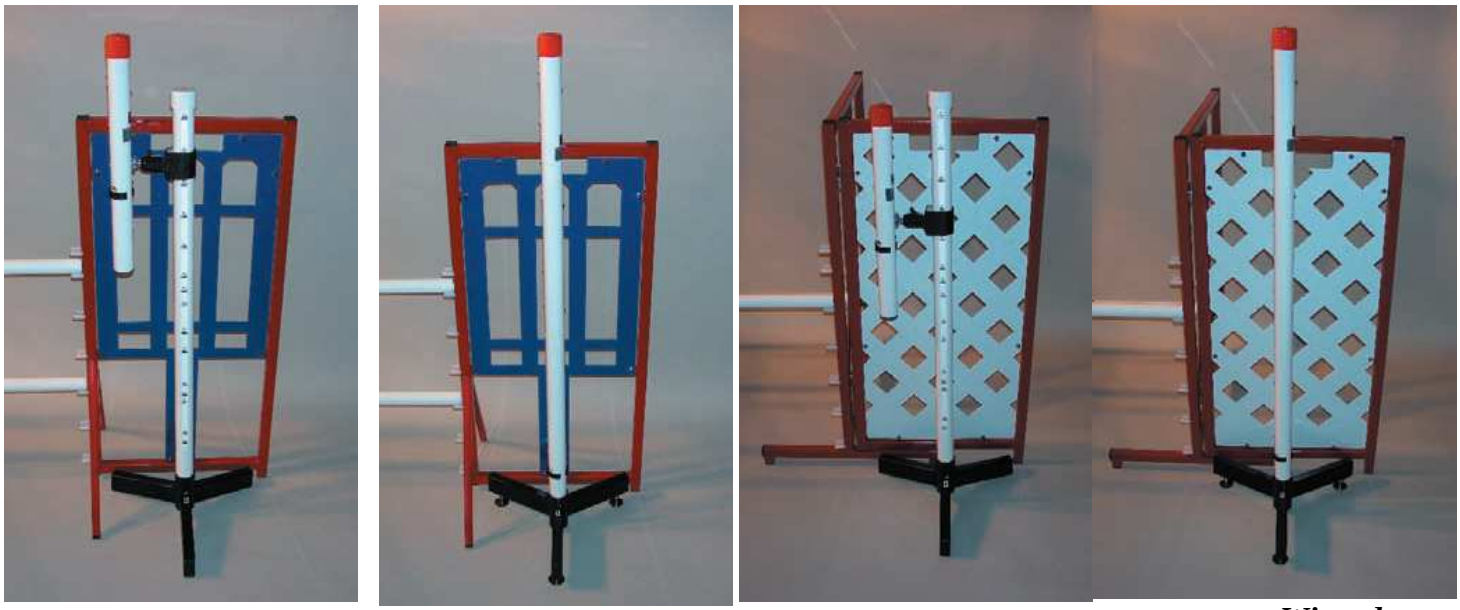
With the proliferation of electronic timing since its introduction some 4 1/2 years ago, numerous theories have been employed in the way it is used. I would like to review the practical side of using the timing systems here. Instructions for programming the controller specific to each agility venue are available in the operating manual that comes with each system so we won't deal with programming problems. We will start with placement of the electronic eyes on course, follow that with some common misconceptions, and finish with some suggestions for more efficient use of the timing equipment.

For the purposes of our discussion we will assume that the eyes at the start of every course are placed in front of the first obstacle and that the eyes at the finish of every course are behind the finish obstacle since that format is required at most trials. Because contact obstacles and weave poles are not allowed as the first or last obstacles on course, we will ignore those and concentrate on jumps, tires, open and closed tunnels, and broad or long jumps.

Placing the Electronic Eyes

The most important thing to remember at a jump, or any obstacle for that matter, is that the eyes should be as close as possible to the top of the dog's arc as he jumps over the obstacle. There are two primary reasons to place the eyes as close to the obstacle as practical: First, because the height of the eyes for each jump height indicated on the timer standards is based on the apex of the dog's effort. For example, if the eyes are set 12" in front of a first jump, it is possible that one or more dogs could jump under the bottom beam of the light curtain on the way to passing over the jump, resulting in a missed start time. If the eyes at the finish are set 12" behind the last obstacle, a dog could jump over the last obstacle and come down under the bottom beam of the light curtain. This may not happen with a flat-jumping dog but is very likely with a dog that jumps with a round style.

The standards for both the adjustable light curtains and the full-height light curtains are designed to blend into the environment. As such, they look very much like jump standards and can give the appearance of the front or back element of a spread jump. At the beginning of a course, the result of the look-alike condition of the light curtain can be having a dog jump early, and possibly hit a bar or get hung up on a tyre. At the end of a course, this can lead to having a dog jump late and not reach the apex of his jump as soon as necessary to clear the bar. This is especially true for the adjustable light curtains since they do not present as "clean" an image to the dog as the full-height curtains.



Winged

and Wingless Jumps

Since the objective is to place the eyes as close as possible to the obstacle, let's review each type of obstacle other than contacts and weave poles, starting with winged and wingless jumps used at both the start and finish of a course. The metal bases of the timing systems are designed to be placed next to a wing with the arrow pointing away from the wing. The eyes will then be approximately 4" from the jump, creating exactly the image we want the dogs to see and giving us the best chance to capture the dog within the beams. The standard is placed in the tripod base with the jump height scale lined up with the arrow so that it faces away from the jump toward the bar setter so that ring crew can easily line up the top of the Velcro with the jump height to be run. The entire base should be within the wing so that it does not extend beyond the wing, which would create an even wider handler restriction. Figures 1 and 2 shows the correct placement of both the adjustable and full-height light curtains in front of a wing jump. Be sure that the eyes themselves do not extend inside the jump and restrict the dog's path. You may have to make some adjustments to this setup should the legs of your equipment not permit this exact position. Place the eyes at a wingless jump in exactly the same manner as if a wing was there.

Spread Jumps

Spread jumps are almost never used at the beginning of a course but are frequently placed at the end of a course. The positioning is exactly the same as that used for winged and wingless jumps as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

Tyre

Tyres are probably handled more inconsistently than any other obstacle due to the wide variety of tyre construction. Tyres also represent the most danger to the dog and the biggest opportunity to miss the start time when the timing equipment is not set properly. The challenges are the supports that go from the legs to the vertical standards. You cannot place the eyes behind the support because it will not allow the eyes to properly align. I place the eyes next to the tyre for as many of the jump heights as possible, and as close as I can for the lower jump heights. Figures 5a and 5b show how I place the adjustable-height eyes on a MAX 200 tyre. The bottom beam of the light curtain must be above the tubing. So I place the eyes next to the tyre for all jump heights 12" and above. I move it out for the 8" dogs and move it again for the 4" dogs. This works great because the big dogs have exactly the image that I want them to have, and the small dogs seem to be much less sensitive to the placement of the eyes anyway. At all costs, I avoid putting the eyes near the end of the legs because this seems to be the placement that is most likely to confuse the big dogs and also most likely to miss a dog that goes under the beams before starting to jump. Figure 6 shows proper position for the full-height light curtains on a MAX 200 tyre. As I mentioned earlier, I have not seen the full-height light curtain cause a problem for the big dogs, probably because it is just a single pole.

Tunnels

Open tunnels and closed tunnels (chutes) at the start of a course require you to break out accessories provided with each system. There are short standards provided with the adjustable light curtain systems to be used when a course begins with a tunnel or a chute. They are to be used so that we don't confuse the dogs with tall standards which may look to a dog like a jump rather than a tunnel. Similarly, a set of short light curtains (eye #3) are provided with the full-height light curtain systems to be used when a course begins with a tunnel or chute. When an open tunnel is used at the end of a course, there is no need to use the short standards or eyes because the dog doesn't see the tall standards because they are obscured by the tunnel walls. The chute is not suitable for use as the last obstacle on a course with electronic timing since it is not safe to place the eyes at the end of the chute for several reasons: 1) Dogs do not tend to come out of a chute straight so there is the possibility that they might run into the eyes when exiting and hurt themselves and/or the eyes; and 2) Handlers might trip over the eyes as they focus on gaining control of their dog at the end of the course.

Broad or Long Jump

The broad or long jump is never used to start a course but has been used on occasion at the end of a course. The adjustable light curtains do not reliably capture the finish time as the heights they are calibrated to anticipate are for the dog either jumping a specific height or coming out of a tunnel. As a result, we don't recommend using a broad jump at the end of a course with the adjustable light curtains. If a club has the full-height light curtains, they can be substituted for the back two corner markers of the broad or long jump and will record the finish time as they will capture a dog at whatever height he passes through the beams.

Myths about Electronic Timing

There are a few myths about the use of electronic timing that may be applicable to your club.

- If the bottom display on the controller is blinking Eyes Off, the batteries need to be changed. Not true. The display blinks Eyes Off during walk-throughs and during the opening sequence of Gamblers. Blinking simply means that beam breaks are appropriately ignored at these times.
- When using the system outdoors, the position and intensity of the sun can cause the eyes to either miss a beam break or record a false beam break. Changing batteries will not fix this problem. It is imperative that the sun be behind the receiver eye. Be sure that the sun is not shining directly into the eye with the antenna on the older systems or the red capped eye on the new systems to avoid these problems.
- You can expect the batteries to last for six or more full days of use at a trial. Shutting them off during course changes and walk-throughs does very little to extend battery life; it often causes the first dog on course afterward to be missed because the eyes were not turned back on. The best way to conserve battery life is to be sure they are turned off at the end of each day and be sure that the batteries are

removed before the systems are put in storage. Most importantly, be sure that the batteries are inserted with the correct polarity because incorrect polarity will cause the batteries to overheat and expire quickly, not to mention possibly leaking acid, which can do serious damage.

 Generally it is not necessary to change batteries during a trial unless the LED at the top of the eyes is blinking on and off signifying that the batteries will most likely expire in about two hours. The controller has a low-light indicator for the battery in the upper right corner of the lower display that will blink when the batteries are down to 5% of full capacity.

 Second or third passes on the start eye do not require programming of the controller as subsequent passes on the start eye are not recorded by the controller. Second or third passes on the finish eye can be programmed into the controller. The controller is programmed to ignore beam breaks for 2 seconds after the finish beam is triggered to avoid false indications caused by falling bars or dog's tails. When testing the finish eye to confirm it will stop on pass 2 or 3, be sure to be patient and break the beam only after 2 seconds have elapsed.

Getting the most from your System

To get the most efficiency from your system, be sure that the eyes are properly aligned. The most common problems that we see are drooping eyes and poor alignment. First, with the adjustable light curtains, be sure that the Velcro is tight around the standard to keep the eyes from drooping. Next, be sure that the eyes are vertical - always loosen the ball mount to adjust the eyes. Last, stand behind the eyes to be sure they are aligned so that they point directly at each other. If they are not, pick up the eye complete with the base and rotate it until it is accurately aligned—do not twist the standard in the base without loosening the thumb screw that holds it in place. When aligning the full-height light curtains, adjust them to be vertical with the adjustable glides on the bases and stand behind them to be sure they point directly at each other with the lenses dead center. Again, be sure to pick up the eyes with the bases and rotate them—do not rotate the eyes in the base without loosening the thumb screw that holds the eyes in place. Be sure to read the operating instructions that come with your system if you encounter a problem programming your controller. The next software update to Signature Gear Timing Systems will be available by the time this article is published. All of the games played, Gamblers, Snooker, FAST, and so on require the display scoreboard to be turned off to prevent any unfair advantage for handlers. Until now, it has been necessary to turn the scoreboard off or turn it around. With this software update, the signal to the scoreboard will be automatically suppressed until the finish eye is tripped, at which time the scoreboard will return to normal functions until the next run begins. In other words, the course time will be displayed so that the judge and handler can see the course time. Among other advantages, you will know if a gamble was completed within the prescribed time since it is possible that a gamble was completed in time, even if the horn sounded, if the course was completed within .02 seconds of the time allowed. Over the course of the last several years we've made many improvements in the software that operates your system. All software updates are available for every system that was ever produced by Signature Gear. The cost for updates is minimal. Contact Signature Gear either by email to Mark@SignatureGear.com or by phone at (636) 584-0113 for information about updating your software. Remember to reprogram the eyes into your system after a software update.

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