

Notes from Judges' meeting

Invercargill – 1 March 2014

Judges present: Allan Rohde, Joanne Rennell, Caroline Rain, Marie McDonald, Dave Cook, Libby Ellery.

Issues discussed

Judging weaves. Judges present had a differing interpretation of the refusal rule on the weave. Some saw that if the dog enters anywhere but at the start, this is a refusal. Others believed that if the dog has entered the weave, even if incorrectly, this is an attempt at weaving and therefore can't be considered a refusal. It was agreed there would be benefit in this being clarified by the AC.

It was also felt it was unclear if a dog could continue to get refusals after it had a course fault in the weaves. Talk on the judge's list seemed to indicate that the latest rule change implied this – is it clear enough in the regs?

Backweaving – general agreement that the dog can only be D'd if it enters the final gate of the weaves from the wrong direction. This seems inconsistent – should it be any back weaving from anywhere is a D?

It was generally agreed that the regs were a little unclear and it would be good to get clarification and make sure judges were all judging in a consistent manner on weaves.

Crossover. The regs around crossover faults were reiterated (around when to fault for the dog taking the incorrect plank). It was also discussed that the regs don't currently require the dog to touch the centre table – this could encourage unsafe attempts at the crossover in time.

If a dog goes down the wrong ramp, represents at the start and misses the up contact on its second attempt, is this faulted? General agreement was no, because it has already done this ramp successfully so can't be faulted for it again. However, this isn't really laid out clearly in the regs.

Dealing with criticism

A discussion as held on how judges accept criticism of courses or judging calls, from both competitors and other judges. The importance of keeping an open mind was discussed, to ensure you are viewing the issue clearly. It was also suggested that the judge takes a short time to think on it, and not make an immediate decision, and perhaps consult another judge that they trust to discuss the issue. It was agreed that judges should be declining any approach to look at "video evidence" of a call from a competitor, and politely suggest that this would only be fair if the competitor can provide video for every other run in that class as well in the interests of consistency.

It was also agreed that as judges, we will occasionally be asked by competitors to approach the officiating judge about a course issue or call. We need to ensure we act in a fair and professional manner, as our words and actions can be considered more strongly by others, given our position.

Other issues discussed

Reruns – sometimes it has been common practise to give people SCT on a run that didn't get time, when they have a fault. Nick recently gave a competitor a clear round on SCT in an ADX Advanced course, as the dog was very fast but their time wasn't recorded. It was pointed out to him that if he did this for one person, he has to do it for everyone, and then if the same situation occurs with a slow dog, how can you be sure it would have been under time? The basic rule is that in any situation of timer failure, the handler is offered a re-run. If they elect not to take it (in the case that they had faults and don't want to run again, they should be disqualified.

Upcoming gear WOF's – it was questioned what the position of a judge is to remove a piece of equipment that has passed a WOF, to be carried out later this year? It may be harder to justify. Nick will raise this with the AC, but the judge should still be in control of what is safe on the day and free to make a call on gear.

Judging up contacts – are judges doing this? They should be, it is definitely part of the regs. Given what judges have seen, is there still a case for removing the requirement to judge the up contact on A Frames?

Judges running their own dogs at the start – there was mixed feeling about this. Some liked to do it to get a feel for how the course would run. Others didn't like to. There isn't any directive from the NZKC about this.

Start lines – when does a run officially start? There was some discussion around this. If a handler brings a dog in the ring on lead and circles past the plane of the first obstacle as part of their setup, what should you do? Should it be faulted as a refusal, or disqualified for running with a lead on, or nothing? Some judges say a run starts as soon as either the dog or handler does past the plane of the first obstacles, others don't start until the dog jumps the first jump.

There was agreement that the seminar was valuable and it would be good to do more.