



The info
letter for NZ
Agility
JUDGES

Probationary appointments

What are they and what are your responsibilities?

We are fortunate to have a good flow of new people who would like to be Agility judges. This is great and long may it continue! The new structure tries to help them out as much as possible so that they will be able to design great courses, along with doing great work judging them! Competitors put in many hours training their dogs to perform well and it is only right if we as Judges do our bit too!!

Part of the process involves probationary appointments where the new person gets a chance to judge dogs under the wing, so to speak, of a more experienced Judge. There are two main facets to this – course design and judging. Both aspects are evaluated during the probationary and then a written report is supplied, both to the person and to the Agility committee.

Probationary appointments may be run on any agility class, ribbon trial or championship event, except for a championship Senior class. The judge overseeing the probationary must be from the Senior Judges Panel. Due to the additional time that probationary appointments take up, it is recommended that only one probationary judge is permitted per event.

Course design

- Course design is of paramount importance
- Probationary judges must submit a course to the officiating judge in sufficient time PRIOR to the event to enable feedback and possible redesign of the course.
- It is really useful to have Clean Run Course designer so that you can swap plans back and forth.
- Things to check with regard to course design include:-
 - Meets existing regulations e.g. in regard to start/finish obstacles and distances.
 - Appropriate number and type of obstacles for the level. e.g. Novice does not have 20 obstacles, nor does it have a seesaw.
 - Is the course easily able to be judged? The intention is not for the judge to have to run at warp speed to see all the obstacles. The judge must ensure a good view of contacts and weave (within 4-5 metres), as well as tunnel entries/exits.
 - Is the course safe? Look at jump angles, seesaw position, tunnels.

Prior to the Appointment

- Ensure that the applicant approaches the club running the class to ensure that they are aware of, and happy with, the class being run as a probationary. If at a championship event it must be scheduled.
- Make it clear to the applicant what you expect of him/her in advance. They should:
 - provide a course plan for the class being run; and
 - bring with equipment required on the day with them eg. Measuring tape, copy of Agility regulations, calculator if required to determine course times.
- Discuss suitable dress, behavior etc.

On the Day

- Meet with the applicant in good time before the course is to be set up. View their plan and allow them to work with the ring staff to have it set up.
- Ensure they check the assembly area setup, position of callboards, position of scrimer, and operation/checking of timers.
- Walk the course together. Discuss the following:

- identification of areas of challenge and why they are appropriate to the level of competition;
- point out any possible problems with the course in terms of judging it;
- discuss the judge's line of travel, 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;
- suitability of the course for the class being judged.

If you are unhappy with anything in regard the course design, placement of obstacles, state of obstacles eg. maintenance, then it is your duty to step in and over-ride any decisions made by the trainee.

- Ask the applicant to brief his/her ring staff, including signals they will use for the scribe. Point out the importance of ensuring everyone knows their job.
- During the competitors' course walk, allow the applicant to address any concerns the competitors may have. Be there to back them up if required.

JUDGING the course.

- You are required to be in the ring with the trainee. You will need to liaise with the trainee regarding the judging path you will both take, so that you can both judge the dogs accurately and safely. Eg. perhaps you could take a side each of contacts etc.
- Ensure the course is judged to your satisfaction. Discuss the importance of self-assurance while judging. Be positive but honest.
- Ensure that the applicant is aware of the appropriate bar and hoop heights for each height class, as well as the length of long jump.
- Check they are familiar with any recent regulation changes eg. judging of the weave.

AFTER THE CLASS.

- At the conclusion of the class, discuss with the applicant the course and how it ran. Discuss possible improvements. Ask for input from the applicant.
- Other subjects to discuss with the applicant include:
 - Filling in contracts – expense guidelines, methods of travel, special requirements; and
 - Judges responsibilities – running a ring, setup of assembly area and situation of callboard, jurisdiction over the assembly area, dealing with competitor queries etc.

After the Event

A form has been produced as a guideline to the probationary report (see attached). When writing the report to the Agility Committee, give all possible details of the class (including numbers of dogs), date, and venue etc. Be honest and fair. If you think the applicant's understanding of either the rules or of the concept of course design need to be improved then say so. It is preferable that an applicant receives more training if they require it.

A copy of the report is sent to the probationer and the Agility Committee secretary.

PROBATIONARY REPORT FOR....

(Person doing probationary)

Club:-

Type of event:-

Date:-

Class:-

No. of dogs judged:-

Course design.

Was the course submitted prior to the appointment? YES NO

Was the course suitable level for class level? YES

NO, indicate what changes needed to be made

Evaluate the course.

Comment on :- Number and type of challenges, judgeability, flow of course, placement of obstacles, safety, other

Evaluation on the Day.

Equipment.

The applicant provided the following:-

Course plans

Golf tees or similar for long jump

Other

Suitable clothing/shoes

Tape measure

Regulations/Jumpers SCT

Course set up.

The applicant checked:-

Assembly area set up and flow in/out of ring

Placement of call board

Measuring of the course

Timer functioning

Pegging of equipment

and also:-

liaised with stewards

set SCT, method used was _____

assisted ring staff with course setup

If any changes were made to the course on the day describe what and why.

Evaluate the Judging.

Eg. Judges positioning for each obstacle, signalling to scriver, Knowledge of rules, Changes of height attended to, response to unusual situations etc

Other comments related to the probationary.

Any areas for improvement and general recommendations

Overseeing Judge:- Name:-

Contact email:-

JUDGING a RUNNING CONTACT.

Many people are now teaching their dogs a running contact, not the 2 on-2 off stop and release. This results in dogs running at rapid speed across the ramps and down the other side without pausing. Many dogs will hit the contact area with only one or two paws, and they may be back paws so you really have to be on to your game. This is a real challenge for Judges!



The same principles as usual apply

- Watch the contact and NOT the dog
- Watch for any one of the four feet hitting the contact (including back feet)
- Be in position early and stand still to see most clearly

Remember that you can only judge what you see, so if you are too late to get into position you cannot put your arm up, thinking that the dog was so fast it must have missed the contact – you must be there and looking at the contact area to be sure.



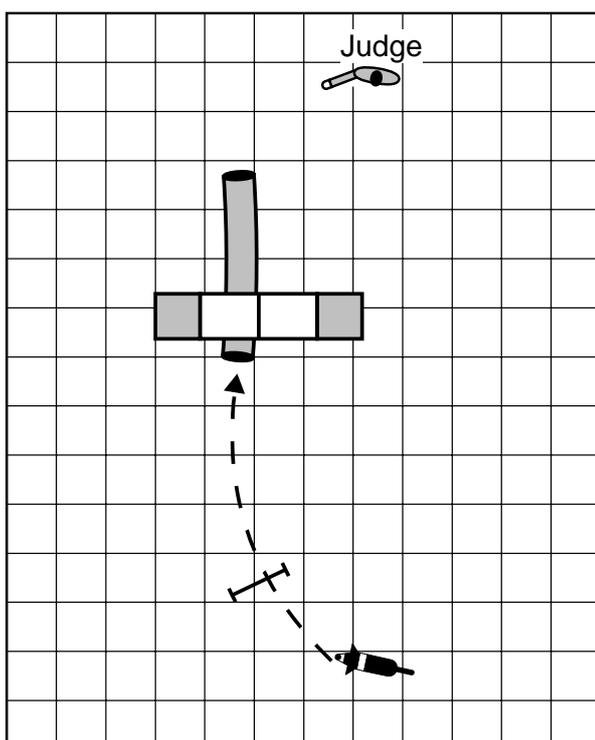
The real challenge is the dog walk, and as very few dogs miss the up contact you should be concentrating on the downs.

See the dog in the picture on the right has touched the contact with one rear foot! That is good enough



- so don't miss it!!

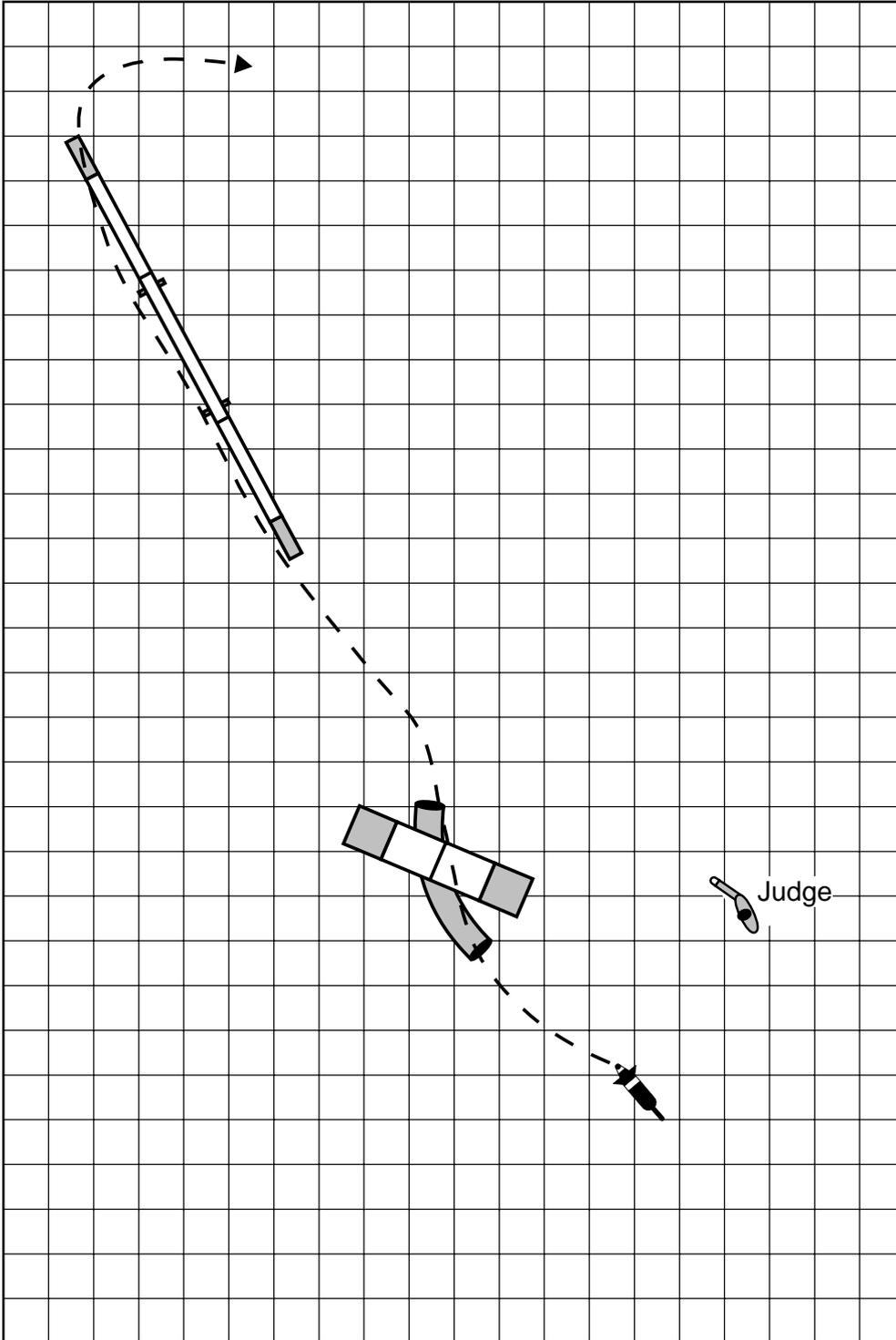
Remember also to be consistent in your judging path with all dogs.



JUDGES POSITION.

A. Take a look at this part of a course below and decide if this is a good spot for the judge to be standing.

B. Take a look at the course below and decide if the Judge has set a good course or not. Why not?



Judges Position A.

The judge is standing in a great position to see the tunnel entry which is under the A-frame. Well done! However once the dog has run through the tunnel and is heading for the dogwalk the Judge is in trouble. How are they going to get to see the down contact of the dogwalk, particularly if the dog has a running contact? Answer= zero!!!

Judges position B.

This is not a good position because the judge has no view of the tunnel entry as they are standing on the opposite side, and a poor view of the A-frame down contact as the tunnel will be partly obscuring it. If the dog runs past the tunnel towards the A-frame, the judge cannot see to judge either a refusal or an off course (paw on the A-frame would constitute an off-course). Position yourself to see tunnel entries and exits that might attract dogs to them!

Please send any feedback/ideas/plans etc for the next info letter to Karen de Wit
kpdewit@xtra.co.nz