



The info letter for NZ Agility JUDGES

Issue 4

This issue:

- Judges training,
- What to do if a dog acts aggressively towards you in the ring
- Early starts
- i-phones
- You are in charge of your ring
- Information on a few minor changes, and assistance required in regard AD courses etc.

Hi there,

This is an information letters for Agility judges. The aim is to provide some information and stimulate some discussion, and any/all response will be welcomed!!

The info-letters are now on the website, so feel free to read them and to pass them on to anyone else who might be interested.

Also on the website are a range of quizzes and articles of interest to judges. Go take a look!!

Regards,

Karen de Wit
NZ Agility Committee (Judges)

NZ AGILITY JUDGES EMAIL LIST.

To subscribe to this group, send an email to:
AgilityJudgesNZ-subscribe@yahoo.com



WELCOME and CONGRATULATIONS!!

The following Judges must be congratulated on their willingness to help with the sport of agility by becoming judges and moving up the panels. Thankyou!

Trainees: Janette Davis, Rebecca Roper

To Ribbon Trial:- Meredith Evans, Tim Connolly, Chris Richardson

To Senior: Keri Neilsen, Kirstin Graves, Carl Ranford, Joanne Rennell. Martin Trimble

To Mentor: Martin Bush

Goodbye and thankyou for all your hard work:- Wendy Taylor, Kathryn Spicer.

Training for Judges

All organisations, whether professional or voluntary, have on-going training for their officials. Dog agility should be no different. The way that new Judges progress through the levels has changed in recent years, with more emphasis on receiving training and guidance. In the olden days you passed your test, did two probationary appointments and then were left to sink or swim. There were a few that were good at doggy paddle but a few did not make it.....

Examples of ongoing training and guidance include:-

- an email list
- more probationary appointments, with more dogs being judged over a range of classes
- the use of mentors for new Judges
- the use of seminars or short courses for ongoing training
- a wide range of communication methods
- better communication of rule changes

When you are a new Judge you know all the rules, but it is easy to lose track of what they are as the years pass. Also, when you are new to judging you are still learning for many years, and as you pass through the panels and become a senior judge you will be challenged again!!

It is a requirement at all levels (in the regulations) that we keep current by taking part in seminars or short courses related to judging agility.

SEMINARS?

The introduction of seminars was to get Judges together and have a discussion lead by a Senior/Mentor judge on a range of topics. To date there have been less than a handful of seminars conducted around the country and the feedback seems that people are wondering how they can be fitted in on an otherwise hectic weekend. If they can, then great and we can give ideas for topics to discuss.

If not, how else can we meet the training requirements for Judges to maintain or build on their current status?

REGULATIONS SAY.....

The regulations state the following in regard to promotions.

... from Ribbon panel to Agility Panel.

The judge is required to select two Mentors and they must receive reports *“from the applicant’s mentors which portray favourable performance, or show growth and improvements during the 12 month period which conclude in a favourable result.”*

How are you going to show growth and improvement? In addition they must have completed a short course or seminar that is approved by the NZKC Agility Committee, within the year of application for promotion.

...from Agility Panel to Senior panel.

The judge must have completed a short course or seminar that is approved by the NZKC Agility Committee within the previous two years of application for promotion.

...maintaining Senior panel status.

have attended at least one short course or seminar that is approved by the NZKC Agility Committee in the previous two years prior to application for relicensing.

...upgrading to mentor panel.

- demonstrate the ability to analyse courses in terms of safety, judgability and suitability for the level intended. They must be able to explain any alterations to course design in a supportive and positive manner.
- demonstrate a willingness to actively work with all Agility Judges on all Panels to provide assistance where required in all areas of the judge’s responsibilities.
- Be available, helpful and offer an environment that is supportive of all judges, but particularly to the judges on the Agility Ribbon Trial Panel.
- Be able to teach/oversee the Judges Seminar syllabus set by the NZKC Agility Committee.

SHORT COURSES?

If the availability of seminars is small, then how do Judges meet the requirements outlined above? A new idea is to provide a variety of activities that Judges can do to meet these expectations ie. short courses. To date the following have been made available.

1. Course design – A Judges subcommittee comprising Fiona Hodgson, Nick Chester and myself (Karen de Wit) has been formed. Judges at all levels can submit courses for analysis and receive feedback about them on a range of levels. This has just begun with a pilot project involving 6 judges of a range of experience. From their feedback it will be modified and offered to all Judges.
2. Complete and submit answers to the quizzes or short assignments from the website. Those on the regulations would assist judges with polishing up their knowledge of the regulations, particularly any recent changes. Others might address timers, safety issues, course design etc.

Some other suggestions are:-

3. Course design – Judges to take a course and write an article on it for publication in Dog World – discussing the challenges that they designed, what happened on the day and how the handlers/dogs ran the course. This will show an appreciation of the level of the class and the types of challenges that they could cope with or not.
4. Critiques. The judge, who has indicated they wish to apply to move up a panel, and needs to supply evidence of growth and improvement, could apply to the Senior or Mentor panel asking for a future judging assignment to be critiqued.
5. Mentor Judges could suggest seminar dates/topics and also compose some short course activities.

These are some initial ideas which will be offered to judges. Your input is also welcomed. Please feel free to make suggestions of other ideas that you think might be useful.

AGGRESSIVE INCIDENTS TOWARDS JUDGES

When we judge dog agility we do a lot of things wrong as far as dogs are concerned. For a start we stare at them (well, you have to when you are seeing if they do the equipment correctly), we run after them, beside them or even towards them. In addition we might raise our arms and wave them around. All these actions might be perceived by dogs as being quite threatening, some dogs more than others.

When a dog takes exception to your actions you need to do the following things.

- Keep quiet
- Stand still or move slowly away
- Fold your arms
- Turn sideways
- Look at the dog indirectly

When a dog does act in a manner that you find unacceptable there is a process of reporting such incidents. You need to tell the Club, and you both need to write to the Agility Committee, and if you can get any backing-up statements from witnesses - that is good too.

There is a system in place of helping people with dogs who take offence at Judges, and of assessing them and bringing them back to competition when appropriate and it is administered through the Agility Committee.

Email: acsecretary@vodafone.co.nz for more information.

Giving competitors the ALL CLEAR to go.

It is a good idea to make a habit of getting eye contact with competitors to signal you are ready for them to go. If you are close enough for them to hear you a simple “Go when you are ready” will also reassure competitors.

A good scrimmer can also assist the competitor to start at the right time, and stop them if you are otherwise occupied.

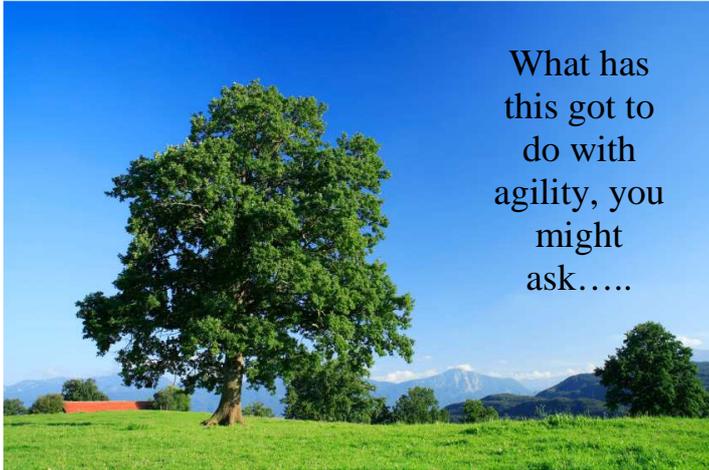
If you notice something awry in your ring in between runs then ensure you get the attention of the next person to run and tell them to wait until you have resolved the problem. A competitor may have glanced at you, seen you were ready, set up their dog and gone in the space of time it takes you to notice a fallen pole etc and be distracted from them. If someone does leave early then stopping them immediately and restarting the run is a good option.

iPHONE?THEN HERE IS A TIP FOR YOU!

From Carl Ranford and Kirstin Graves.

If you download the iBooks app, you can save the regulations in there, and then you don't have to keep printing them out, and they are available on your phone. Much easier!!

RECYCLING and SAVING TREES!!!



What has this got to do with agility, you might ask.....

For many years Clubs have been required to send a marked catalogue to judges after an event. In most cases the Judge is not really interested, unless of course they wish to retain a memento of a special event such as their first Nationals appointment or a Club's 50th anniversary. In the interests of saving paper and effort we have decided that this will not be a regulated requirement, but of course if you wish to receive one you can still ask for one on your contract.

PROBATIONARY APPOINTMENTS.

As a result of feedback from Judges and competitors the following minor changes will be made shortly to the regulations controlling probationary appointments.

1. They will be allowed to be advertised much later, in fact as late as one week before the closing date. This will make it a lot easier to organise them. The notice will have to be on the Agility Committee website. The Dog World can still be used but wont be the sole one.
2. There will only be one probationary appointment per day at an event. This was always a guideline but now will be added to the regulations. This is to ensure a balance between the needs of new judges and those of Clubs and competitors.
3. Ribbon trial judges will be able to continue to do probationary appointments at championship events. This will give them increased opportunity to practical judging.

INJURIES ? in your ring Equipment trouble?

Judges can assist the Agility Committee by forwarding details of any injuries to dogs or people in your ring, and also if you notice any equipment that does not appear up to scratch please just drop us a line. This will assist with our COF (certificate of fitness) roll-out, as well as data collection of injuries and how they might occur.

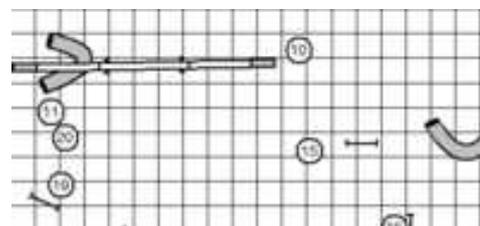
We are committed to providing a safe environment for people and dogs at agility events and you can help us.

We will soon have easy-to-fill-in forms available on the website so keep an eye open!!

AD class, ADX advanced class and Elementary class.

We are in the process of reviewing these courses, so if you know of any course that you think we should look at please get in touch with us at

Email: acsecretary@vodafone.co.nz



YOUNG

Keep an eye on the areas around your ring.

The Agility Committee receives many letters about start/finish lines and what goes on near them, such as people loitering around call boards, barking dogs, toys being thrown around all over the place etc. Most of it is because people are involved with their own dog and forget about the people around them who may not like their arms being torn off when they throw a toy for their dog!!!

You can help by

- Ensuring practice jumps are not placed near your start/finish area
- Ensure call boards are placed so they are easy to access (outside the assembly area).



Inside your ring.

It can be difficult judging for other Clubs when you are not familiar with the equipment. You need to be extra-vigilant. Make sure the tunnels are pegged appropriately. Check the padding is adequate and the tunnel doesn't shrink below the 600mm minimum when placed on a curve. Some contact equipment even needs pegs in it, not just seesaws. Check the seesaw drops appropriately. If you have any issues with equipment safety, let the Agility Committee know. Also a good idea to tell the Club...

WALKING THE COURSE - LATER.

Sometimes a person will rush up to you asking if they can walk the course. The reasons will be varied – late to the event due to work, competing in another activity elsewhere etc. These are sometimes hard to say NO to!!!

The Agility Committee agrees that the needs of competitors and helpers need to be balanced with the running of the event and perceived competitive advantage. The AC has confirmed that in the majority of cases there should be only one course walk. Where classes are split, additional walks may be permitted during a height change. Extra course walks should not be allowed where a non-split class has already begun, or where the walk would be during a height group that the person competes in.

If helpers need to walk a course in another ring they should be encouraged to swap jobs for that period of time, or the ring can be halted for the few minutes required.