

NOTES FROM JUDGES SEMINAR 13TH MARCH – TAURANGA

Co-ordinator: Fiona Hodgson

Attendees:

Paul Taylor
Amanda Benson
Tarah Hunt
Dyson Beasley
Tim Warneford
Kathryn Spicer
Lyn Sayers
John Muir
Cam List
Isobel Syme
Allan Rhode

Personnel issues and communication - scribes, handlers, dealing with errors made and how to avoid as many as possible.

Some great discussion was held regarding instructions to scribes and ensuring they understand how a good scribe can make all the difference when judging. Examples were given on times when scribes have not been too good and steps to ensure that they are asked to watch properly, not to pre-judge etc. The instructions on the E-timer “restart” button to the scribe was also discussed. It was also mentioned that rather than the judge signal numbers of faults to the scribe, it should be the other way around to check that the scribe is not simply nodding back without actually checking that the faults are the same as the judge thinks.

Missed times for run and use of the previous and next button to find those times was brought up. It is essential before attributing a time to a competitor that the judge and scribe are sure it is theirs by process of elimination of the other scribe sheets the scribe has recently completed.

Reruns were discussed and raised an action point (see below). There were some good points raised regarding reruns and the importance of ensuring the handler understood what is required during a rerun. It was noted that the vast majority of reruns are caused by incorrect setup or operation of the E-timing rather than the fault of the timer itself. Checking the eyes after height changes and particularly at the start of the class will eliminate many issues seen.

It was also discussed that it is the responsibility of the Test Manager to advise all judges of the procedure for the show regarding dogs which have been disqualified and when they will be expected to leave the ring.

Jumpers courses - what constitutes a really good jumpers course - what defines jumpers? How is it different?

Flow in relation to jumpers courses was discussed. The main factor in jumpers class (fast and furious without pause) was brought up and the influence of this on some challenges later in courses was raised. Where a particular challenge may work well at the end of an agility class, it may be that for jumpers it is unsuitable due to the

cumulative nature of any errors in handler position etc in Jumpers classes. A document was provided with some suggestions on each level of course. The point was raised that despite the first line of the document – Grade C jumpers should indeed be nothing more than the difficulty of a Starters course without weaves.

We moved on to general course challenges and there was some good points raised with regard the longjump. The meeting requested a clarification of the definition of “unimpeded” with regard the longjump regs.

Soundness of dogs in the ring - lameness and the judge rights/responsibilities in this regard.

The over-riding thought from the meeting on this is that the judges decision is final. No matter whether the dog is obviously lame or simply struggling for some other reason, the judge has the right to stop the competitor from continuing.

The issue was raised at this point of the recent practice of handlers running dogs with bandages/wraps on their dog's legs. There was no clear agreement between those present on this issue.

Run through on timer operation, setting of eyes, menu use, trouble-shooting etc.

*Please see attached two “how to documents” on the timers. One was written by Peter de Wit for the scrimers at NDTA 2008 as a reference and the other was penned by Lyn Sayers for reproduction in the Kennel Gazette. These are both great and handy to carry in your bag of judging bits.

General Matters

Judges Running Dogs - The issue of judges stopping classes to run their own dogs and the perception of this action by the competitors was raised. It was noted that it is against the regulations for judges to do so. Even if the Test Manager asks the judge to stop the class and run the dog, the judges should decline to do so. It is not the Test Manager who will incur the wrath of the competitors or be breaking the regs. Similarly it was noted that sometimes, judges running dogs in opposite rings prior to their own class starting can cause extremely long delays before getting started for the day which also should be avoided.

Hoops – It was noted that there have been several instances of multiple dogs struggling to judge take-off and cleanly take the hoop in recent classes. Almost all of these instances have been in relation to the drainage pipe style of hoop where the hoop itself has altered to an egg shape and displaced from the vertical plane as well. Perhaps some investigation needs to be done to see whether this can be avoided in future – (colouring difference, prevention of change of shape etc).

Judging from a Chair outside the Ring (Jumpers) – There was division on this one with some very supportive of it and others who do not feel it is the right thing to do. It has come about with the large Jumpers class numbers. It was noted that this practice would not work for other classes and that even some of these classes would not be suitable due to the movement required to judge tunnel entrances. It was noted that a chair outside the ring is currently outside of the regulations as the judge must be in the ring. Does the reg need changing and is the practice acceptable?

Action Points from the Meeting

- Rerun Option – It was suggested that the regulations allow for a handler to be able to be offered a clear at SCT instead of re-running the course. There are some dogs which struggle in the heat to rerun if they have run near the end of the class. This option would save time and would give a good result to a dog/handler team who might struggle to make the course time on a second run timed close to the first run on the course.
- Longjump – The definition of “unimpeded” 6m run up before and after the longjump has been interpreted differently by various judges. The meeting would like to see the definition rewritten to more accurately define “unimpeded”. (ie is it a 6m straight line or is it designed to prevent obstacles placed just off to the side of the 6m).
- Bandages/Leg Wraps – The meeting could not agree on whether bandages or wraps should be allowed on dogs in the ring. Some felt they might offer support to dogs with previous issues where others felt that there was the possibility of other items being included under the bandages or of handlers utilising the bandages as a training aid. The meeting would like the Agility Committee to assist judges in coming up with a proper decision with regard to bandages and wraps on dogs in competition.
- Judges on Chairs/Outside of the ring – The meeting also failed to reach an agreement on this practice with some feeling it was acceptable for jumpers and others not feeling comfortable with it. It was noted that the current regs do not allow for the judge being outside the ring so either the reg needs to change or the practice of judging from outside the ring needs to cease.