AGILITY COMMITTEE

POLICY &

PROCEDURES

FOR JUDGING

Agility procedure and policy not otherwise documented in NZKC Agility Regulations or Show Regulations

Contents

Introduction

This Policy and Procedure handbook has been created to provide NZ Agility clubs ,competitors and personnel, with information related to Agility matters.

It is the intention that all matters not otherwise provided for in AGILITY Regulations or other NZKC rules/regulations be provided for in this handbook.

Compliance

These policies and procedures have been developed over the years as a result of the experience of many people and clubs, and have been determined to be the best practice available at the time. They will be improved and updated from time to time.

With this in mind, it is the intention that all clubs and individuals comply with the policies and procedures outlined.

Deviation from these policies and procedures is not advisable. If any person/group thiank the policy or preocedure is inapprpruiate or needs to be changed/updfated they must consult the Agility Committee first.

NZKC Agility Committee Contacts

For any further information, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Agility Committee.

Details can be found on **www.dogagility.org.nz**

Accepting Trainee judges.

Procedure when a trainee judge application is received.

1. Application is received by the Agility Committee and assessed.

2. If the application is approved the procedure is:-

3. 1. Letter of welcome sent to trainee judge

4. Judging pack is sent to trainee judge. This pack includes:-

Golf tees, tape measure, jumpers guidelines, Judging agility, course design book, give-aways and sponsors products. Also included is a current list of senior judges and mentors.

 Information within the booklets includes the procedure for probationaries.

Selection of Mentors by new judges.

Policy.

New judges should get feedback from as wide a range of judges as possible.

Procedure.

When selecting mentors, a new judge should select two different mentors. These may be different islands, or different areas of NZ.

The Agility Committee reserves the right to appoint one mentor.

New judges should not use their mentors when doing probationaries with a senior judge. .

Annual renewal of judges Licence. .

Policy.

Judges are required to renew their judges licence every year.

Procedure.

The Agility committee will send a reminder, including a questionnaire form, for all judges to fill in.

The questionnaire includes contact details, and judges are required to confirm they meet the requirements for thei panel. Any changes in contact details will be updated on the website by the Judges liaison person.

The Agility Committee will decide if it will pay Judges fees.

If so, it will then pay the NZKC the total judges fees.

Jumpers classes.

Policy.

Judges are required to comply with the Guidelines.

Procedure.

Rates of travel.

The Jumpers Dog (JD) and Jumpers Dog Excellent (JDX) titles are based on the

accumulation of clear rounds in jumpers classes, it is of great importance that standard course times are appropriate for their level.

The NZKC Agility Committee has determined that standard course times *must* be within a set rate of travel. This ensures a high level of consistency throughout the country for the achievement of clear rounds in jumpers classes and makes the JD and JDX titles as equitable as possible.

The rate of travel for jumpers courses are laid out in the table below

Grade	Minimum rate of travel (metres/second)	Maximum rate of travel (metres/second)
C	2.75	3.25
B	3.25	3.75
A	3.75	4.25

Recommended Method:

STEP 1: Calculate the longest allowed SCT.

    The longest allowed SCT = "course length" divided by "Min Rate of travel" This is rounded DOWN to whole seconds.

STEP 2: Calculate the shortest allowed SCT.

    The shortest allowed SCT = "course length" divided by "Max Rate of travel"

    This is rounded UP to whole seconds.

STEP 3: The judge then chooses at SCT between min and the maximum allowable SCTs.

Sample Calculation

Scenario: Grade C course that is 105m long. STEP 1:

Calculate the longest allowed SCT.

> Longest allowed SCT = 105 div by 2.75 = 38.18 seconds. This is rounded down to 38 seconds.

STEP 2: Calculate the shortest allowed SCT

> Shortest allowed SCT = 105 div by 3.25 = 32.31 seconds. This is rounded UP to 33 seconds.

STEP 3: The judge then chooses at SCT between 33 and 38 seconds.

Guideline for Jumpers Course design

Jumpers courses will encourage dogs to move faster, and as such, safety is of particular concern. While it is important that courses are of the correct degree of difficulty for their grade, it is also essential that courses are not overly tight and inviting for dogs to attempt equipment at dangerous angles. Judges are reminded that the safety of dogs is paramount, and this rule applies to jumpers courses as well.

Jumpers courses should be designed such that a clear round is achievable by a significant proportion of the class within the SCT that is set by the Judge within the relevant maximum and minimum rates for the grade.

Course Design Standards– Grade C

Course design at this level shall take the inexperience of the dog into account when designing obstacle placement.

> *There should be no attempt at trick distances between jumps and the correct obstacle should be the one most obvious to the dog from the previous one.*

> *Courses should be flowing and invite the dogs to move at speed with good distances between obstacles.*

> *Grade C handlers should be able to demonstrate "basic" or "fundamental" handling techniques only. The Grade C handler should be given plenty of manoeuvring room around and between the obstacles.*

Note that a **handler who has previously titled another dog (or this dog in another venue) may excel** at this or a higher level because of their past experience. This possibility should not influence the design of a course.

The course designer should take into consideration that a delayed response by the dog to a handler command may risk injury to the dog on approach to some of the obstacles. The orientation of the obstacles should be such that the flow of the course shall present the dog with Open Approaches to the entry plane of the obstacles.

Grade C may include **leading out at the start, switching sides of the dog while moving or sending the dog ahead**. Other challenges may be employed in a limited way, but care should be taken not to place handling capabilities above the goal of testing basic obstacle performance.

Course Challenges: *Grade C should include 2-3 challenges.*

Obstacle Discrimination - the placement of two or more obstacles in close proximity such that to the dog either obstacle may appear to be the next correct obstacle, is permitted, but this should be set no closer than 2m from closest edge of one obstacle to the closest edge of the other The intent of this minimum distance requirement is to permit a starter handler some **reaction time to issue a command** to direct the dog to the correct obstacle, given the "loose control" of the starter dog.

Wrong Course Potential – (Crossing Patterns), – the placement of two or more obstacles such that either obstacle appears to be in flow, or the wrong obstacle appears to be in flow, where used, should be loosely spaced. Wrong Course obstacles should generally require that the dog deviate more than 3m off the course flow.
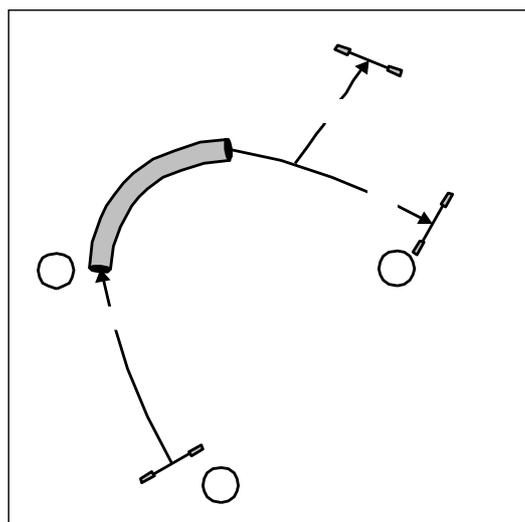
Changes of Sides are permitted and encouraged

These challenges are especially useful in demonstrating that obstacles can be successfully performed regardless of which side the handler is handling from. Changes of Side should not generally be combined with other challenge types such that a Timing Sequence challenge is inadvertently created.

Wraps – the positioning of a single obstacle such that a dog must be directed around the exit plane of the obstacle immediately after performing it.

The obstacle to be wrapped should not be so close to another obstacle that a pull through type challenge is inadvertently created.

Other Challenges

All other challenges are NOT encouraged. However, any course may include a challenge type that might normally be indicative of challenges from the next higher level in order to educate and prepare competitors for the next level.

When this is done however, the challenge should be presented in such a way that skills learned in the present level could be utilized to successfully accomplish the challenge, even though a more advanced handling strategy might enable the challenge to be performed more readily.

Course Design Standards– Grade B

Course design at this level shall begin to shift emphasise toward Directional Control through utilisation of fundamental handling skills to progress fluidly through the course while working with greater speed than at the previous level. Better Response Control is more apparent, but still not necessarily strong.

> *Dogs should be able to demonstrate increased confidence and speed on the obstacles without incurring a fault while moving within the natural flow of a course which utilises moderate-length flowing lines between challenges.*

As with the Grade C courses, it may happen that a handler who has previously titled another dog (or this dog in another venue) may excel at this or a higher level because of their past experience. This possibility shall not influence the design of courses for this level.

Course Challenges: Grade B should include 3-4 challenges.

Obstacle Discrimination is permitted but should be set no closer than 1.5m from closest edge of one obstacle to the closest edge of the other

The intent of the reduction of the minimum distance requirement is to reflect the expected improvement in handler's reactions, as well as improved training to achieve better Response Control and the dog's recognition of the obstacles.

Wrong Course Potential is permitted and encouraged - wrong course obstacles should generally require that the dog deviate more than 3m off the course flow.

Changes of Side are encouraged - the course design should include multiple changes of side while moving, including some changes of direction within Crossing Patterns.

Spacing Variations are permitted - the space between obstacles throughout the majority of the course should be in the range of 5m to 7m. Unusually short or long approach distances outside of this range can create a challenge of their own both in the performance of individual obstacles, speed and in the timing and control of other challenge types.

This challenge should appear at this level primarily to test single obstacle performance. The design should avoid the use of spacing variations to create issues involving Timing Sequences and Refusal Potential.

Serpentines are permitted - Obstacles used in a serpentine at this level should have no more than moderately-closed approaches.

Pull Throughs - this challenge is a type of wrap where an adjacent obstacle is in close proximity. The dog must then be directed around or between these obstacles in order to perform the next obstacle in sequence. Pull Throughs with a moderate gap between the obstacles are permitted.

Layering – the placement of an obstacle such that the handler path is separated from the dog's path, is permitted.

Moderate Handler Constraint - the blockage of the direct handler path either through alignment of the obstacles. Moderate handler constraints are permitted. Obstacles placed in a manner that present a handler constraint shall be carefully considered. Handler paths through a sequence should not be constricted in such a manner to generally require an unnatural handling position.

Closed Approach - a moderate to highly angled approach to the next obstacle in sequence with the entry point to the obstacle in view, no matter how slight. Normally this means that the dog approaches the front plane of the obstacle from an acute angle, but the approach side of the obstacle is not in question. The diagram compares the range of approaches to a Jump varying from Open Approaches (perpendicular to mild) and Closed Approaches (moderate to highly angled).

Less than perpendicular approaches to the entry plane of the obstacles are appropriate for this level, however the orientation of the obstacles shall still present the dog with a natural flow to the next obstacle. Strong Closed Approach positions that deliberately encourage refusals or that require the dog to "seek out" the front plane of the obstacle should generally be avoided.
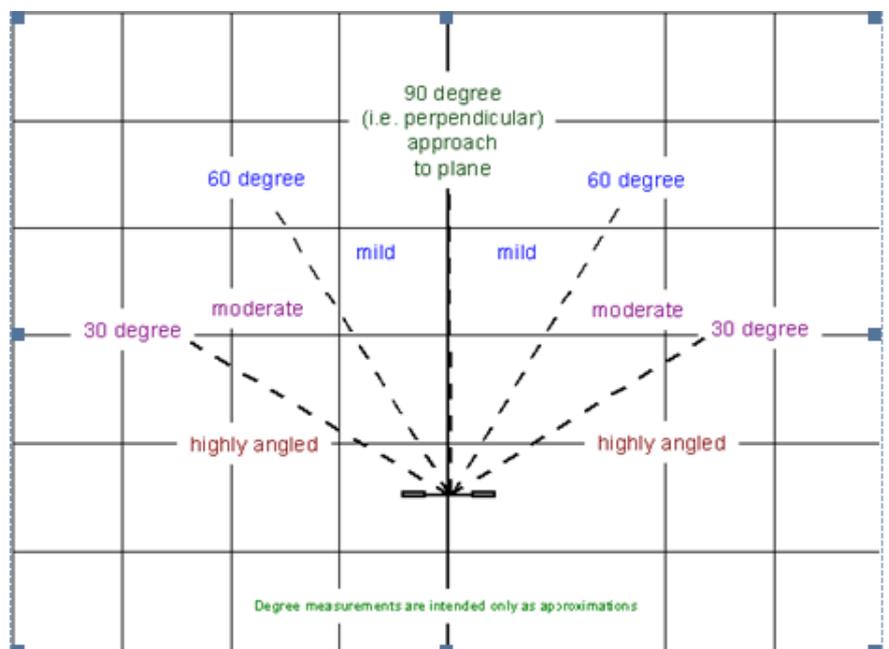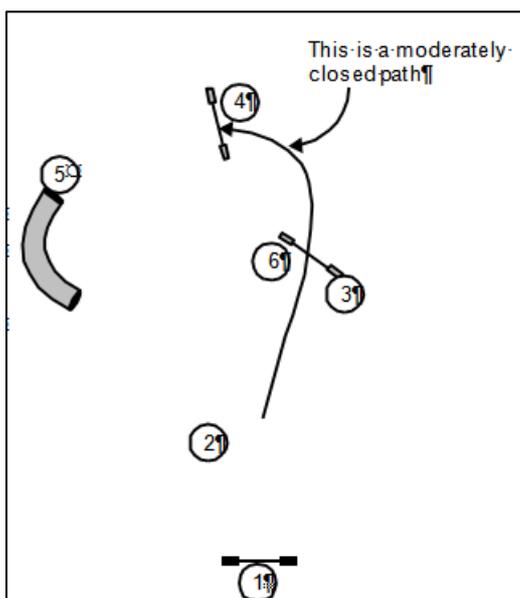
Course Design Standards– Grade A

Course design shall emphasize accomplished training for efficient Response and Directional Control, complemented with refined handling skills to encourage faster rates of speed while progressing fluidly through the course.

Although the Grade A level is expected to contain multiple challenges, a course should never be so loaded with challenges that it creates an excessively stressful round.

The overall effect should be a balance of control and fluidity A well handled suitable level Grade A Jumpers run should still look flowing, fluid and enjoyable for handler and dog.

A handler who has titled their dog at this level and continues to compete may excel beyond the minimum requirements of the course design due to their increasing experience. This possibility shall not influence the design of a course.

Course Challenges: Grade A should include 5-8 challenges.

All challenges defined in grade C and B are appropriate at this level. In addition the following challenges are permitted.

Managed Approach – obstacle placement such that the handler must send or escort the dog to a point that the front plane of obstacle comes into the dog's view. Eg. Send behind jump

Refusal Potential – A combination of obstacle placement and expected approach speed that may increase the risk of refusal. A Closed Approach to an obstacle is a typical characteristic that leads to increased Refusal Potential. These combined with design challenges involving Response Control, Wrong Course Potential or Obstacle Discrimination can further raise the level of difficulty of this form of challenge.

Timing Sequences – a sequence of the course where the handler must execute two or more commands or manoeuvres in succession or concurrently, with correct timing of each individual manoeuvre being a key element in accomplishing the full sequence. An inherent characteristic is that the level of difficulty increases dramatically with speed, which often means a higher degree of "Response Control" is also required.

Compound Challenges with Timing Sequences are encouraged

Challenges should include compound challenges, such as Changes of Side to effect a change of direction while moving through crossing patterns where the timing of command and/or movement may create a refusal or off course condition.

Designing Courses Appropriate to the Level

Table 1 Challenge Types by Level

Challenge Type	Grade Cs	Grade B	Grade A
Obstacle Discrimination	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Wrong Course Potential	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Change of Sides	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Wrap	Yes	Yes	Yes
Closed Approach		Yes*	Yes
Spacing Variations		Yes*	Yes
Pull/Push Through		Yes	Yes
Serpentine		Yes	Yes
Handler Constraint		Yes*	Yes
Layering		Yes	Yes
Managed Approach			Yes
Refusal Potential			Yes
Timing Sequences			Yes

Further criteria for these challenge types are discussed in the relevant sections for each Grade.

In assessing whether or not a challenge is appropriate for a level, consider that these are only <u>guidelines</u> rather than a standard to be strictly adhered to. In particular, because Grade C is a "developmental" level that include both newcomers and seasoned competitors(with new dogs), the following principle applies:

Any course may include a challenge type that might normally be indicative of challenges from the next higher level in order to educate and prepare competitors for the next level.

When this is done however, the challenge should be presented in such a way that skills learned in the present level could be utilized to successfully accomplish the challenge, even though a more advanced handling strategy might enable the challenge to be performed more readily.

Probationary appointments.

View the regulations for further information.

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

Who conducts 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 the exception of Senior and Jumpers A which cannot be done at a Championship Event. The intention is that the judge gets practice judging weaves and contacts, so all four should be agility classes, with Jumpers additional. In total a judge must officiate a total of 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.

Does the club need to publish details of the probationary? Yes. Competitors must be informed. Where an agility 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 at least one week 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?

Ensure the probationary appointment is advertised. The applicant MUST submit a course to the officiating judge in sufficient time PRIOR to the event to enable feedback and possible redesign 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.

Who is in charge of decisions made in the ring?

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.

Providing copies of course plans.

Policy.

The intention is to make course analysis fair for you by giving everyone a similar opportunity to peruse course maps, and the course itself.

Procedure.

If Copies of course plans are made available to competitors by the judge, it must be on a basis that ensures everyone can get a copy & gets to see the course at the same time.

Course design plans

- will only be available from the start of walking of the course and

- must be in a media format available to everyone.

- If made available online there must also be printed copies available.

Regulation changes.

Policy.

Regulations should only be changed twice a year – usually January 1st and July 1st. This is to ensure there is not constant change throughout the year.

Procedure.

Suggested regulation changes may come as a result of

- Feedback from agility membership

- From the Agility committee.

Consultation.
Consultation on regulation changes is required. It is essential that all changes to regulations are **consulted** on widely. There is a **Consultation page** on the website where all documents and timelines can be posted. Clubs and individuals can be directed to this via a wide variety of methods.

Any changes to the regulations are notified in a separate document on the wbsite, and the Regulations will be updated in their entirety.