

NDTC



napier dog training club
INC

AGILITY EVENTS

PROCEDURES

TIMETABLES

JOBS TO FILL

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to give ideas and suggestions as to the planning and running of an Agility Event.

From the time of first thought right through to sending the results through to the NZKC, there is much in the way of procedure to be looked after. Over the years methods of scribing, and the actual running of a ring have changed and we have endeavoured to keep up with these changes to ensure that the event runs efficiently and that everybody enjoys themselves.

A rough schedule of when to do what is included as well as a list of people required on the day and details of their tasks and responsibilities.

Although each clubs do things slightly differently there are some important areas which are easily overlooked in the running of an event as well as some changes with the introduction of the Agility Champion class.

The jobs involved in running a show are touched on, as well as the duties and responsibilities of each. Teaching the people to do the jobs required in running an Agility Show is the responsibility of a club and some clubs let themselves down in this area. It does not go unnoticed by either the competitors or the judge when the ring staff have no idea what they are supposed to do.

Many clubs now invite experienced people and/or judges into the club for weekend seminars. This is a good opportunity to run through what is required for a competition and maybe have a mock one to get more people confident in some of the jobs.

PLANNING AN EVENT

When an Event is first planned, there are many decisions to be made before any contracting of judges is done. The sorts of things, which need to be decided, are:

Date Venue Time of start

Number of rings

Classes to be run - including novelties

Type of Event ie Champ or Ag Event

Naming of the Show Secretary etc

Permission to hold a Championship Agility Event must be sought through the Zone Rep.

CONTRACTING JUDGES

The contracting of judges should be done **at least** six months before a Champ Event or Agility Event although it could be left a little later for a Ribbon Trial. Remember that the Senior Class judge at a Champ Event must be a judge on the Senior Agility Panel.

When contracting judges, it is customary to phone them first to check that they are available as a lot of time can be wasted sending sets of contracts out only to have them rejected as the judge is busy or otherwise unable to come.

Contracts need to be filled out in duplicate and should be posted **with a stamped addressed return envelope**. The judge will fill both copies out and return one which will have details of their expenses and accommodation requirements etc on it.

It is essential to reply to the judge accepting the expenses and conditions of the contract within two weeks of receiving the returned contract. The contract becomes valid once this reply of acceptance has been done. Contracts need to be done for all NZKC events including Ribbon Trials. Do try to contract newer judge for Ribbon Trials as this is where experience is gained and new judges will be appreciative of the opportunity.

ORGANISATION BEFORE THE DAY

After the club has received the contracts back from the judges, the next step is to organise the schedule for the NZKC Gazette (for all but Ribbon Trials). The form for submitting a schedule is available from the NZKC (and from the website).

Decide how big the schedule is to be ie quarter page etc and always include the payment when you send the schedule in as it is cheaper than having them send a bill later. A Show Secretary will need to be appointed (the person to whom the entries go) as this information is required on the schedule. The schedule should include details of all events to be held including novelties and teams events. Include all prize details and details of catering etc. Make sure the venue includes the road name as new people on the scene may not know the whereabouts of your grounds.

Once the schedule has been sent in, the ribbons will be next on the agenda. Make sure these are ordered in plenty of time to avoid unnecessary panic closer to the time.

Other important jobs need to be finalised at this time and these include:

- Test Manager

This person is responsible for the overall running of the Event. A lot of clubs have this person solely running things on the day but it is often handy to have them involved in all of the planning so that they are aware of any potential problems on the day. The Test Manager should be an experienced agility person with a good working knowledge of the procedures and regulations as they apply to agility events.

- Test Secretary (if different from the Show Secretary who takes the entries)

The Test Secretary is responsible for the tabulation of results during the day. He or she also organises the production of clear round certificates, the taking of queries arising from the catalogue, as well as ensuring that the results from the day are marked on the judge's catalogues and the results forms which are sent to the NZKC after the Event.

- Trophy steward

Chooses the prizes/trophies and ensures that the Test Manager is aware of any special awards to be given out. (eg Top dog etc)

- Ring Manager

The Ring Manager is responsible for ensuring that people are there to do their jobs for each event, making sure the judge for that class is happy etc.

- Catering - Someone needs to be in charge of catering. It is common to have one person in charge of organising the judge's lunches etc and another doing the organising of the people to sell the catering for the competitors. If everyone in the club provides a plate for sale it makes everyones job that much easier.
- Ring Crew - The task of organising scribes, timekeepers and other ring personnel prior to the day is a vital one. Do up a spreadsheet with each class on it and write names down against each required position. It is much easier to get people doing things if they can see their name somewhere than just asking people to turn up and help.

ON THE DAY

Because all of the organisation has been done beforehand, everyone knows what is required of them when they arrive on the day. The rings once set up can have the first courses laid out (especially if the judges have been asked to forward copies of their first courses beforehand)

- Ensure that your Test Secretary arrives in plenty of time to prevent a rush of those picking up their numbers at the last minute. (These days we tend to post out numbers after entries close to prevent this last minute last minute task)
- **LOOK AFTER YOU JUDGES!** On arrival offer your judges a drink, introduce the Test Manager to them and make them feel welcome.
- It is always nice of open the weekend with an introduction of the judges, the Test Manager, Test Secretary etc. This way people know who to go to for help and it helps people feel part of the whole day. Don't forget to acknowledge the sponsors!!
- Once the first courses are ready, let the judge know and he/she will come and make final adjustments. The course can then be measured and the judge will set the course time etc
- Once the course has been walked try to get the class started as soon as the judge is ready. Do not leave the judge waiting for ring personnel. The Call Steward should be calling the first few numbers as the last competitors finish walking the course.
- Each judge has their own preferences about where the scribe should be so listen to them. Quality ring personnel can make or break a show and training them properly is the club's responsibility.
- Keep competitors flowing while making allowance for those running more than one dog and those in the other ring.
- Have the Jump Stewards ready to help with the change of height after one lot has finished - Do NOT leave this to the Judges.
- As soon as the class is finished, locate the course plan for the next event in that ring and get the Ring Crew into action to set the new course.

HOW IT ALL GOES TOGETHER

The jobs associated with running a class at an Agility Event have been refined over the last ten years or so in this country and the following is how a typical class works. An Agility Ring must be a minimum of 40m x 30m and is generally defined by standards and rope. Inside the ring will be a course supplied by the judge, complete with start and finish poles or markers. To man this ring you will require the following people

- Scribe
- Call Steward
- Chief Timekeeper - Second Timekeeper
- Runner
- Jump Stewards

- Scoreboard

The Scribe

This is one of the most important jobs in the ring. Where the Scribe stands or sits should be at the discretion of the judge but most judges are happy with the Scribe sitting at the ring entrance next to the Chief Timekeeper.

The scribesheet should be marked with the Standard Course Time (SCT) and the dogs number as the dog enters the ring.

The Scribe's task involves watching the judge **AT ALL TIMES** while a dog is running. The Judge will discuss their methods of signalling faults before they start so that the Scribe is clear in what they are doing. During the round, the Scribe will record on the scribesheet the faults as the judge signals them. NEVER record a fault (even an obvious one like a dropped rail) unless the judge signals it. By all means ask the judge at the end of that round whether they would like the dropped rail recorded if the judge has not done so but here may be a reason why it had not been done so never assume. At the completion of each round, the Judge will often signal the number of faults the dog has gained as a quick check that the communication is working. The scribe then enters the time off the Chief Timekeeper's stopwatch down to 1/100ths of a second) and hands the sheet to the runner. The Scribe is not interchangeable and the same person should scribe all of any one class and is not permitted to be entered in any class which they are Scribing.

Chief Timekeeper

This is a relatively easy job and one that most people can learn to do without too much of a problem. The Chief Timekeeper sits on a chair in line with the start poles and starts his stopwatch when the first part of the dog crosses the line. If the finish is in a different place, he must relocate to this position during the dog's round and be in line with the finish poles to stop his watch as the first part of the dog crosses the finish line.

Things to remember as timekeeper -

NEVER reset the stopwatch while a dog is in the ring. Even if you are sure the dog has been eliminated, you should still keep your watch running. This is vital in case a mistake has been made. ALWAYS read the time off the stopwatch in individual numbers (ie 39.70 – should be read 3,9 point 7, 0) to the scribe and have them repeat it to avoid any mistake. DO NOT reset your stopwatch until the time has been recorded on the scribesheet. ALWAYS ensure the time is recorded to 1/100th of a second. If your stopwatch does not start, let the Back-up Timekeeper that their time will count for that round. (usually via hand-signal previously agreed)

DO NOT ever call a competitor back when they have started even if both stopwatches fail to start. It is the judge who is the only one who can stop a round. IGNORE the handler at the Start. Nod if they ask if you are ready - otherwise keep your eyes on the dog and start the stopwatch as soon as the dog starts across the line. This person also should remain the same for each class and should not be someone entered in the class.

Back-Up Timekeeper

As above. This job can become a bit boring as, unless the Chief Timekeeper's watch fails to start, you don't actually get to contribute much but you must time each dog as if you were the Chief Timekeeper. It is always a good idea to compare the times you are clocking, with those of the Chief Timekeeper to check that you are somewhere near the same result. Timekeeping is a good job for a less experienced but reliable club member. It gives a good opportunity for them to watch the handling and the way the dogs are running. It is in this respect probably the best job to give newer people as long as they are aware of what is required.

The Back-Up Timekeeper can be swapped during the class and this person could be entered in it.

Call Steward

A good Call Steward can make all the difference to the way the day runs. He or she can by all means be entered in the class they are Call Stewarding for. A Call Steward should always have 3-4 people lined up ready to go at any one time. It is often an art to having people ready without becoming overbearing or bossy. Most experienced competitors are very good at letting you know of any potential clashes between rings.

Try to be as flexible as possible. The Call Steward often has to have slightly broad shoulders but should not be required to put up with any rude behaviour.

Above all the Call Steward should ensure that the judge is NEVER left waiting for competitors. It is also the Call Steward's responsibility to ensure that the Scribe prior to the start of the round correctly records the competitor's number.

Runner

A relatively simple task - and often one that children enjoy - at least until they get sick of it!

The Runner takes the marked scribesheets from the Scribe and delivers them to the score table for the Scorer to work with.

The only possibility of problems with Runner's arises when they must enter the ring to get the sheets from the Scribe if they are standing with the Judge. Care must be taken that they do not enter the ring while a dog is running, or that they don't upset any dogs at the start by hurrying past them.

To avoid the possibility of confusion, it is essential to have a separate Runner for each ring running (and these days we do different coloured scribesheets for each ring as well).

Scorer/Scoreboard Personnel

The Scorer sits at a table away from the ringside with a Master Scoresheet which he/she fills in as the scribesheets are received from the Runner. The Scorer should ascertain from the Judge the SCT, MCT, and Course length and these should be written on the Master Scoresheet along with the class type and Judge's name.

The Scorer should know the scoring system well, be able think quickly and should always have a calculator at hand.

When receiving a scribesheet, the Scorer should check that the dog's number and course time have been recorded. If not the scribesheet should be sent back to the ring via the Runner.

When the Scorer is satisfied that the scribesheet has been filled in correctly, he/she will total the course faults on the sheet. The Scorer then checks the dog's course time against the SCT and records any timefaults the dog may have incurred at a rate of 1 fault for each COMPLETED second over the course time (It is often easier when looking at the time, to cover the parts of second up while calculating time faults to avoid confusion - however be sure to record the time to 1/100ths of a second on the Scoresheets.. The course faults and timefaults are then added together to give the total faults for the round.

On the Scoresheet, the Scorer goes to the column, which corresponds to the TOTAL faults for that dog.

In this column the Scorer write the dog's number, then the dog's COURSE faults over the dog's time.

This action is then duplicated on the whiteboard scoreboards which clubs have so that competitors can see at a glance how they are running in the class.

The scribesheet for each dog is then put on a spike. There is usually a separate spike for clear rounds. These days the Scorer also completes the clear round certificates as they go which simplifies the whole day and speeds the move toward prizegiving.

Jump Stewards

There can be as many of these as required. They must be vigilant enough to replace knocked hurdle poles, straighten collapsible tunnels etc between runs and occasionally, if a hurdle is to be retaken during that round, replace the bar before the dog comes back to retake it.

Jump Stewards are also responsible for helping to adjust the jump height of the obstacles, when one height division is complete. DO NOT leave this job to the Judge!

AFTER EACH CLASS

- As soon as a class is completed (and it has been established that no run-offs are required), the course can be dismantled and the course for the next class can be set up.
- The placings are noted on the Master Scoresheet by the Scorer.
- The Judge will come and check the Master Scoresheet and sign it along with the Clear Round Certificates.
- The Test Manager will put the Clear Round Certificates and a card with the numbers of the placed dogs in order with the prizes ready for the prizegiving.
- The Scoreboard can be cleaned and reset for the next class.
- The results need to be noted so that they can be properly written up later.
- Scores counting toward any top dog trophies etc will need to be done.

PRIZEGIVING

This should be held as soon as practicable after the completion of the last class to be presented. Often presentations are done after each session of competition ie the morning classes or presented just before lunch.

If the event is huge, it is a good idea to read the names of the Clear Round Certificate recipients and rather than have them collect their certificate then, say that they are available from the clubrooms. This will give the Clear Round people the recognition by reading their names and not just their numbers, while speeding the presentation up.

Don't forget to thank all of the competitors for coming and wish them safe travel home - Its the little things that are appreciated.

NEVER do all of the prizegivings at the end of the day. There is nothing worse than sitting round for hours awaiting prizegiving when you were placed in one of the morning classes and could have gone home!

AFTER THE LAST CLASS

- The Test Manager will need to check that the Judges have received their expenses and gifts and have been watered and fed prior to leaving.
- The Test Secretary MUST ensure they have all of the placings with scores and times written down for each class so that the marked catalogues can be done for the Judges and the NZKC. Also the NZKC result sheet and levy form needs to be filled out and posted with the marked catalogue.
- Ensure that a cleanup crew has been organised to put the gear away, clean up the rings, clubrooms etc.

THE WEEK AFTER

While everyone else recovers from the Event, the Test Secretary still has a few duties to perform.

The marking and sending of catalogues is a time-consuming job but necessary.

Thank you notes should be included with the Judges' copies.

Results and levies need to be sent to the NZKC.

If you Zone runs a points trophy - a marked catalogue should also be sent to the result co-ordinator for this.

Ensure anyone who helped, especially those who are not club members are properly thanked - it is a good way of making people feel appreciated and you may get their help again.

LATER STILL

A few weeks after the Event it is often a good idea to have a meeting to discuss how the Event went.

Award "Pats-on-backs" for those who did well and look at areas which can be improved in future.

It is vital to do this while it is still fresh in everyone's minds.

This is also a good time to toss around ideas for future events including judges etc.

CONCLUSIONS

A good Agility Event is one that is run **efficiently** but not **officiously**. Efficiency is something every club should strive for. With good preparation, even the smallest club can hold a most successful Agility Event that is long remembered for its atmosphere and enjoyable competition.

People will come back if they feel they have been treated fairly and that everyone has enjoyed themselves.

Other subjective things which may influence the day

- Friendly helpers make a huge difference – a smile costs nothing.
- Starter Handlers generally prefer trophies
- Senior Handlers generally prefer usable prizes
- Petrol vouchers are good prizes
- Ribbons need not be expensive but numerous! Approx 10% min of competitors to get ribbons.
- Dog Food Product is always appreciated.
- Entry Fee prices DO influence entries - if you put the entry fee up your entries will go down!
- Spot prizes and "Hard Luck" Prizes are a good idea as it often gives something to someone who would otherwise have gone home empty-handed - these need not be expensive - just fun!
- Well treated Judge's will tell other Judges how much they enjoyed judging for you - Badly treated Judges will tell other Judges too!!! A simple thank you may make all the difference.

PLANNING TIMETABLE

9 months + before

Discuss Date, Venue etc for your Event
Apply for permission for Zone.
Discuss Judges
Organise Sponsors

6 months before

Contract Judges and confirm their contracts.
Begin to Organise Key Personnel
Begin training your Newer Ringstaff
Decide on trophies and/or ribbons and prizes etc
Order ribbons

3 months before

Fill out and send NZKC Schedule for the Gazette.
Buys Prizes

2-4 weeks before

Organise definite jobs for all Ring Staff
Organise the catering plates from members
Phone the Judges to check all is well and they are happy with arrangements and to confirm their accommodation.
Print and photocopy catalogue
Post numbers to competitors
Post levy cheques to Zone and NZKC

The week Before

Arrange the grounds to be mowed if required
Advise judges of numbers in their classes (especially if the numbers are unusually large)
Check Gear thoroughly for safety and renew any broken jump pole (always ensure that spare weave poles are available)

The Day Before

Take as much out to the Clubrooms as you can
Set prize table
Lay out competitors numbers etc
CLEAN CLUBROOMS

The Week After

Post marked catalogues and thank you notes to all judges.
Post marked catalogues to NZKC, Zone, Points Co-ordinator etc.
Write thank you letter to Sponsor (with photos if possible)

Collapse in a heap and look forward to the next event!