



A lot can happen in 11 Days...

Changes to NZ Dog Agility Championships

The hot topic in dog Agility at the moment appears to be NZDAC. As you will no doubt be aware, a survey was conducted last year about the future of NZDAC. In particular, a binding vote around when in the year it should fall — moving dates or staying the same — and a non-binding vote about when this should take effect, either 2027 or 2028.

The outcome of the vote on potentially moving the event meant that a decision was made to move NZDAC to March (week 11) every year.

With this important piece of the puzzle confirmed, the next piece of the puzzle was to determine whether or not the next zone to host NZDAC (Zone 4) would do this in 2027, meaning there would only be five months between DACs, or instead hold it in 2028. The non-binding vote held on this suggested that people's preferences were to push ahead with 2027.

Changing the date of NZDAC is not as straightforward as just changing the date in the calendar. Clubs who are affected by the change in dates need to work through what they want to do with their shows, regulations and standing orders need changing, and things such as team trials and team trial dates need a rethink.

The Agility Committee was in the middle of this when the sands shifted yet again.

11 Days...

Recently, there was what appeared to many in the Agility community to be a sudden decision to move Zone 2's NZDAC to March. As the Agility Committee, we completely understand the surprise and uncertainty this caused, and in the spirit of transparency we would like to share how the process unfolded, and why it may have seemed to come out of the blue.

The reality is, it all happened within just 11 days, which is why there was no heads up from anyone that things might be changing.

From the time the idea was first raised at our March meeting to the time the announcement was made, only 11 days had passed.

As we all know, rumours can spread quickly within the Agility world, and in fairness to everyone potentially affected, it was felt that discussions needed to remain confidential until decisions had been made. We also knew the timeframe would be short, as deadlines had already been set.

The Decision

At the last Agility Committee meeting, we received communication from the Zone 2 committee outlining a number of concerns. These included the fuel crisis, sponsors and judges withdrawing, and concerns around the two DACs being held so close together potentially having an impact on entries. There were several factors at play.

We spoke with the Zone 2 committee (to give them an idea of what options were on the table) and made it clear that we would support whichever decision they felt most comfortable with, whether that meant postponing until March, when circumstances may be more stable and they would have additional time to secure sponsorship and confirm judges, or continuing with the October date.

We did, however, ask that a decision be made as quickly as possible in fairness to the proposed Zone 4 NZDAC committee and the wider Agility community. The Zone 2 committee asked for time until the following Thursday to discuss the matter and confirm venue availability, which we were happy to allow.

Then Things Moved Quickly

Two days later, the Zone 2 committee approached us to ask whether, instead of holding NZDAC in Week 11, as proposed in the draft regulation changes, they could be granted an exemption to hold it in Week 10, since this would allow them to retain their preferred venue.

As these regulation changes had not yet been ratified, there was no reason we couldn't consider this request. However, moving to Week 10 would affect several clubs, so before any approval could be given, the Agility Committee needed to consult with those clubs (sooner than anticipated) to determine whether, for 2027 only, they would be willing and able to move their shows.

This involved a number of conversations, back-and-forth communications, and even some unscheduled committee meetings from the affected clubs. In the end, it was confirmed that this arrangement would be possible.

We then went back to the Zone 2 committee to let them know that if they chose the March option, Week 10 could work for them.

Communication and Timing

There was always a planned timeline for communication. Once a final decision had been confirmed, the affected clubs and the Zone 4 DAC committee would be informed first, followed by the wider Agility community.

Once Zone 2 confirmed that they wished to proceed with March, the affected clubs were notified and confirmed they were comfortable with the changes. The Zone 4 committee was then advised and was understandably disappointed, particularly for those already excited about hosting, but very understanding of the circumstances.

Following that, as part of our responsibility to keep the community informed, the announcement was made public.

The Bigger Picture

From the Sunday of the Agility Committee meeting to the public announcement, the entire process took just 11 days.

There had been no prior discussions or hidden agenda. An idea was presented, support was offered regardless of the direction chosen, discussions were held with all affected parties, and a solution was worked through collaboratively in what everyone believed was the best outcome for those involved.

We genuinely wish Zone 2 every success in making March 2027 an amazing event, and we hope the wider Agility community will get behind and support them.

And for Zone 4, there's now even more time to make your event phenomenal too!

So What About Beyond 2027?

From 2028, NZDAC will move to Week 11 (March), as planned. Regulations and standing orders will be updated to reflect the outcome of the binding vote with agility members.

And What About Team Trials?

With NZDAC moving to March, this means that Team Trials have to move as well. Instead of being run over one weekend in August, these will now be run between 1 and 31 January each year, with eligibility based upon what the dog is eligible to compete in as of 1 January of that year.

One major change is that it will no longer be one set weekend. Zones will have the flexibility to choose any time over that month to run their trials, on dates that work best for them. This also minimises the impact on clubs with shows in January having to make further changes due to the change in Team Trials month.

This will be detailed further in upcoming changes to the regulations and standing orders, so keep an eye out! 🐾

Dogs NZ Agility Committee

Off Course with Chris

Well, when I first started writing this, I was in a bad mood. It seems these days everyone is looking for instant gratification, and the expectations of what comes out of a group of volunteers are often... let's say, optimistic.

While I originally started this as a full-blown rant, I've since had a glass of wine (the bottle was made of glass, therefore it was a glass — don't argue with me) and took a chill pill. However, it did make me think that I should still address a few things.

The Agility Committee is made up of eight people who have full-time jobs. Believe it or not, we are also involved in the dog world, so our weekends are usually spoken for, and for some of us, Agility isn't even our entire world. We meet every couple of months to tackle the heavy lifting, and it's not always easy to find weekends that work for everyone: there are occasions when members have commitments that were made before meeting dates are agreed upon, and that just can't be avoided.

While we do our best to jump on urgent issues in between meetings, many things get pushed to the next meeting so they can be discussed in detail. We'd rather do that than just give a 'thumbs up from the boomers' or quickly action something that hasn't been well thought out.

We aren't perfect. We know there are communication gaps, and we're working to address them. However, as we've discovered recently while being 'called out online' for not replying to people, we actually have those replies sitting right there in our sent boxes.

Who knows what the hell happened to them or where in cyberspace they're loitering? So, first up: check your spam folder if you "haven't had a reply". It might be sitting there waiting for you. Give that a quick look, and if you haven't had anything at all in a timely response, say three-four weeks, then before sharpening the pitchforks and heading to Facebook to air the grievances, flick us another message to just say "hey, just checking you got my email", because the reverse could also be true, you sent it, but we never actually received it!

And now, I have had a few people out there say that they really liked the puzzles. Well, I don't have time to do that this time around, I have been slack and unprepared, but here's a trivia question for you.

"In the original 1978 Crufts demonstration where dog agility was born (it was originally created as a half time entertainment to fill a 20-minute gap between the obedience and group judging) – what was used to create the very first A-Frame?"

Tune in next month for the answer that will shock you harder than licking a power point! 🐾

Chris Richardson

AC Chair and EC Agility Representative



Photo: Sarah Ridley