

# **Northern California Agility League (NCAL)** Revised 5-25-2011

## **Rules and Guidelines**

### **1.1 NCAL Overview**

**Purpose:** To provide a unique format for agility enthusiasts in northern California to have fun participating in the sport of dog agility.

**General Description:** Team agility competition during a session lasting six weeks. Teams will meet one time per week to compete in a match consisting of one standard course run and one games course run. Standard/games courses from all sanctioned agility registries will be utilized.

### **1.2 Eligibility**

NCAL is open to any dog/handler team that is "trial-ready."

Dogs must be at least 18 months old to compete and must be able to perform all obstacles safely.

Participants must be in good standing with any sanctioned agility registry with which they are affiliated.

Bitches in season, and/or dogs that are aggressive or ill, will not be allowed to compete.

Participants running multiple dogs in NCAL must run each dog on a separate team.

Dogs must remain on the same team on which they start throughout the entire six-week session.

### **1.3 Competition Level**

All courses utilized will be set at an intermediate skill level.

## 1.4 NCAL Organization

The League Coordinators, Jeff and Maureen Lyons will:

- Arrange for match dates and times
- Draw participant names to create teams
- Solicit Team Leaders
- Provide course maps, with instructions and scoring sheets
- Provide the rules of competition
- Keep the accumulated team scores
- Provide for team placement awards

Each Team Leader will:

- Organize their team
- Act as contact person for their team

## 1.5 Team Organization

The intent is that each team will be composed of an equal number of Master/Elite/Excellent, Advanced/Open, and Starters/Novice dogs.

Teams will be formed by the League Coordinators to balance different skill levels within each team for fair competitive play. A participant may request to be placed on a team with another registered participant; however, the intent is that each team will be skill level balanced, with the League Coordinators drawing from registered participants to accomplish the goal of balanced skill level teams.

Once selected, each team will choose a Team Leader and select a team name. Teams may create a team logo and display (i.e. on a t-shirt) same at each match. The maximum number of teams will be 8 (32 dog/handler pairs).

Team Member Absences: If one dog/handler pair is absent, the three remaining scores shall count for that match day. If two dog/handler pairs are absent, then each of the two present shall run one game twice and all three scores shall count for the match. Possible alternates are subject to the discretion of the League Coordinators who shall have the final decision.

## **1.6 Sign-Ups**

Those interested in participating in NCAL must submit an application by the due date. Payment must be received with the application. Checks will be made payable to Maureen Lyons.

## **1.7 Communication**

League information and team standings will be emailed to participants weekly.

## **1.8 Selection of a Judge**

A judge will be provided at each match by the League Coordinators. A judge may run his/her own dog at the meet under a substitute judge named by a League Coordinator.

The judge's word on any call is final and only the judge may assess course faults.

## **1.9 Jump Heights**

A participant may choose the jump height at which his/her dog performs and the dog must continue to jump at this height throughout the six-week session. The chosen height may be any height that the equipment can accommodate; however, the maximum jump height shall not be greater than 20". It is not necessary to measure dogs.

## **2.0 Agility Obstacles**

Equipment allowed for use at league matches:

Dog walk

A-Frame

Teeter

Table

Open and Closed (chute) Tunnels

Tire

Weave Poles

Jumps

## **2.1 Obstacle Performance**

Safety is of vital importance. All course set-ups may be adjusted to allow for safe performance.

### **Contact Equipment**

Contact zones shall be painted in accordance with the rules of any of the sanctioned agility registries. Contacts shall be judged on the down ramp. The contact obstacle must be completed in order to avoid a Failure to Perform (FTP) penalty. If a dog jumps off in an uncontrolled or unsafe manner, or if the dog appears not to be confident enough to perform the obstacle, then the judge may tell the handler to go on to the next obstacle. Any dog making contact on the incorrect ramp with all four paws will be assessed an off course penalty. Fly-offs on the teeter will be assessed only if the dog leaves the obstacle in a blatantly unsafe manner.

### **Table**

The dog must jump onto the table and remain for a period of five seconds. If the dog leaves the table, the count will be restarted where it had left off. There is a 5 fault penalty for the first time the dog jumps off of the table before the five seconds are up. If the dog leaves the table before the “Go” from the judge, a FTP shall be assessed.

### **Weave Poles**

No refusals or missed pole penalties shall be assessed; however, the obstacle must be completed in its entirety in order to avoid a FTP penalty. This means that the dog should enter and exit correctly, and weave in and out of each pole correctly in a constant forward motion. If a dog skips a pole, the team must re-start from the beginning. Back-weaving will be assessed an off course penalty.

### **Jumps**

All jumps will have at least one displaceable bar.

## **First and Last Obstacle of a Course**

If the dog goes around the first obstacle on the course, the time shall start once the dog breaks the plane of that obstacle. The time shall stop once the dog completes the final obstacle.

## **2.2 Course Layout**

A minimum of 80 x 100 feet must be available for courses.

## **2.3 Course Handling Standards**

Collars are optional; however for safety reasons, it is preferred that your dog does not wear one on course.

No food or toys may be taken onto the course or within ten feet of the ring.

Harsh handling, either verbally or physically, is not permitted. Outside assistance is not permitted. Good-natured team support is encouraged.

The handler may not touch the dog or any obstacle, except for incidental contact which is viewed as accidental contact that does not benefit the dog's performance. This includes the handler knocking off a pole after the dog has cleared the jump, for example. A bump of the dog by the handler which results in the dog changing direction towards the correct obstacle or away from an incorrect obstacle, even if accidental, will result in a penalty.

There will be no faults assessed for obstacle refusals.

Dogs fouling or leaving the ring repeatedly, or for an excessive period of time, will be eliminated.

Off course faults shall be assessed when a dog has committed with four paws to the incorrect obstacle, (i.e. going over, under, or through an incorrect obstacle, or committing to the wrong end of a tunnel or contact obstacle).

Non-punitive training is allowed in the ring, but will result in elimination. If this occurs, the handler is allowed to complete the course. Examples of

non-punitive training include: re-doing a contact obstacle one time or touching the dog to get a desired behavior. An example of training a contact obstacle includes re-starting the obstacle after the dog has already committed to it with all four paws, but then jumps off.

## **2.4 Team Scoring**

Team scores are determined for each match. The score for each match will be the accumulated total of the team's best three standard course run scores combined with the team's best three games course run scores.

## **2.5 Course Faults**

All runs will be scored using the following fault system:

### **5 Faults**

Missed contact zones

Fly-off on teeter

First occurrence of jumping off table prior to end of count

Displacing top poles from jumps

Off course

Handler crossing over/under/through obstacles

### **20 Faults**

Failure to Perform (FTP) obstacle

Unsafe execution of an obstacle

### **Elimination = 150 Faults (50 point score)**

Dog fouling ring

Handler intentionally touching dog or obstacle

Harsh or abusive behavior or language

Dog aggression

Dog ceasing to work

Outside assistance

Food or devices on course

Poor sportsmanship

Training

## **2.6 Scoring of Runs**

All runs except point accumulation games will be scored on a time + faults basis and subtracted from a baseline score of 200. The formula is  $200 - (\text{time} + \text{faults})$ . For Example: If the run time = 48.23 and there were 10 course faults the score would be  $200 - (48.23 + 10) = 141.77$ . There will be no time faults assessed and no standard course times for these runs.

Point Accumulation games (FAST, Snooker, Gamblers) will be based on a lower baseline score and points accumulated will be added to the baseline with any time over the allotted time deducted. For Example: in Snooker a team may accumulate its opening points and closing sequence for a maximum 51 points which would be added to a baseline score of 125 for a maximum score of 176; however, if the team was over time by 5 seconds, then the score would be adjusted to 171. Point accumulation can never occur once the team is over time in a point accumulation game. Only penalties can occur after the whistle.

League Coordinators will attempt to adhere as closely as possible to the rules of each venue and class held that week where those rules can be consistent with NCAL scoring.

## **2.7 Prizes**

Team placement awards for first, second and third will be made at the end of the six-week session.

## **2.8 Misconduct**

Misconduct, as determined by the League Coordinators, may result in the participant's elimination from NCAL.

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