

Northern California Agility League (NCAL) Revised 2-24-2018

Rules and Guidelines

1.1 NCAL Overview

Purpose: To provide a 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 matches. Teams will meet one time per week to compete in a match consisting of one standard course run and one games course. Courses from various 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 15 months old to participate 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, ill, or disruptive, will not be allowed to compete.

Participants running multiple dogs in NCAL must run each dog on a separate team (unless the dogs comprise one slot).

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

The eligibility of any dog/handler team is subject to the discretion of the League Coordinators, who shall have the final decision.

1.3 Competition Level

Courses utilized will be set at an intermediate to advanced skill level.

1.4 NCAL Organization

The League Coordinators, Jeff and Maureen Lyons will:

- Arrange 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: Team members should inform the League Coordinators as soon as possible if they will be absent. Typically, teams consist of four dog/handler pairs and the lowest score is dropped. However, when one dog/handler pair is absent the absent member's score shall be the team's dropped score. If two dog/handler pairs are absent on the same team, then (1) one of the absent members will be the team's dropped score; (2) one of the present members of the team will run one course for an extra score; and, (3) the other remaining member of that team shall run the other course for an additional score. This will create one additional score for each run. Both additional scores shall count (i.e. the absent member does not get multiple runs even if multiple runs are offered). Possible alternates due to extended absences, or as circumstances require, are subject to the discretion of the League Coordinators who shall have the final decision. Under no circumstances will a team be allowed to benefit from an absence.

1.6 Sign-Ups

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

Sharing an entry must be approved by the League Coordinators in advance. Since the League Coordinators make every effort to assure that the teams are equal in strength, sharing teams must be of near-equal ability. Also, if a handler/dog team is sharing a spot with a different handler/dog team, only one team may be present per match.

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 match 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. The chosen height may be any height that the equipment can accommodate; however, the maximum jump height shall be 20". It is not necessary to measure dogs.

2.0 Agility Obstacles

Equipment allowed for use at league matches:

- A-Frame
- Barrel
- Dog walk
- Hoops
- Jumps
- Teeter
- Table
- Tunnels
- Tire
- Weave Poles

2.1 Obstacle Performance

Safety is of vital importance. All courses may be adjusted (including obstacles changed or removed) to allow for safe performance at the discretion of the Judge setting the course.

Contact Equipment

Contact zones shall be designated in accordance with the rules of any sanctioned agility venue. Contacts shall be judged on the down ramp only. A 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.

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 the count 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 “go” from the judge. If the dog leaves the table before the “go” from the judge and proceeds with the course, 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 and in a constant forward motion. If a dog skips a pole, the team must re-start from the beginning. Back-weaving (defined as 3 changes of direction in the wrong direction) 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 an attempt at the last obstacle in the correct direction.

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; however good-natured teammate 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 or elimination.

There will be no faults assessed for obstacle refusals.

Dogs fouling the ring, 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: 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 intentionally touching the dog. An example of training a contact obstacle includes re-starting the obstacle after the dog has already committed to it with all four paws above the contact zone, 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 standard course run scores

combined with the team's best games course run scores. In most sessions, a team's lowest score in each game will be dropped.

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

First occurrence of re-starting first obstacle

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

Foul language

Dog aggression

Dog ceasing to work

Outside assistance

Use of food, toys, or training devices on course

Poor sportsmanship

Training by excessively repeating sequences

Training by putting the dog back on a contact

Training a start line after being faulted for re-setting the dog

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, Jackpot) 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 points which would be added to a baseline score of 125; however, if the team was over time by 5 seconds, then the score would be adjusted down by 5 points. Point accumulation games have a maximum course time, and point accumulation can never occur once the team is over time---only penalties can occur after the whistle. There will always be a briefing about the scoring for point accumulation games.

2.7 Prizes

Team placement awards for first, second and third will be made at the awards party 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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