

AFA Notification Number 28 - Issued June 2011

Notice to all members, Judges and Clubs re Rule clarifications and other matters.

1. Junior Handlers – Clarification regarding process for nomination of junior handlers.

Given that we have a growing number of junior handlers the AFA Committee has decided outline the process that should be followed before nominating a child as a junior member.

The AFA requires that parents of children younger than 16 years complete a Junior Member Notification Form if they wish to nominate their child as a junior handler of a flyball dog. The form requires the parent to nominate a responsible adult member of the AFA (who can but does not have to be a parent of the junior) to be responsible for supervision of the junior at competitions or AFA activities. Part of that person's role is to ensure that all care is taken and that safety is paramount. The nominated responsible adult **MUST** be available to supervise the child when the child is involved in any flyball activity.

Prior to nomination a junior member parents should consult their Club Instructors as to the readiness of the child to participate in flyball from a safety viewpoint. The AFA has not set a mandatory minimum age for junior handlers as we consider that experience of the child as a dog handler, maturity and size of both child and the dog are best assessed from a safety viewpoint. We do remind parents that in the final analysis AFA Judges and AFA Representatives have the responsibility and power to make decision on any safety issues at competitions or demonstrations and that this includes junior handlers participation.

2. Clarification of what can constitute interference.

The existing rules make it clear that throwing of balls or objects in the ring can constitute interference. In response to enquiries the Committee has clarified that the dropping or placement of a dog lead at the side of the racing lane to mark a handlers release point was not a matter of concern or potential interference.

The practice of rolling a ball in the ring to encourage a returning dog was however deemed a potential cause of interference and therefore to be discouraged. It was noted that rolling a ball to the team's shagger after the heat was concluded would not constitute interference. No changes to existing Rules are seen as necessary re these matters

3. Minor Rule wording changes designed to clarify Rules intent.

The following minor wording changes (simply designed to clarify interpretation and not to amend existing Rules) have been approved for incorporation in the Rule Book at the next reprint:

- A new introduction to the Veterans Format Rules in Appendix D stating “ Rules for Veterans class format shall be the same as for “normal” racing for the equivalent format (Round Robin or Elimination) except where specified otherwise in this Appendix.”
- Amendment to Clause 5 of Veterans Format Rules to read “There will be no restarts for false starts in Veterans racing. The dog that commits the false start will be required to run again in order for team to complete the heat.”
- Amendment to deal with inconsistency re treatment of fouling in the ring during a heat. Clause 9.2 (f) dealing with fouling in the ring requires the heat in progress to be completed where a dog fouls during a heat. Clause 10.3.c however dealing with Judges Duties indicates the heat is to be stopped for fouling in the ring. This later Rule reference to “fouling” is incorrect and reference should be deleted to accord with 9.2 (f). Racing should not be stopped for fouling during a heat unless some other factor such as interference is involved requiring a cease to racing.

4. Clarification regarding use of the ring for training during competition lunch breaks.

The practice of permitting the flyball ring to be used by non-competing dogs during a competition lunch break is developing unevenly in different States.

The Committee agrees that the practice is a good way to introduce beginner dogs to competition environment but it needs to be available to all dogs in training and be properly controlled.

The Committee advises Clubs and competition organisers who wishes to offer this at their competition that they must:

- Obtain approval as part of the Competition sanction special conditions and then advertise it in the details for their competition on the Web,
- Ensure there is adequate supervision to control the ring and ensure fair access,
- Ensure there is a safe number of dogs in the ring at any time,
- Ensure that only dogs NOT entered in the competition are permitted in the ring at this time,
- Ensure that all handlers are AFA members,
- Ensure that all dogs are registered with the AFA.

5. Clarification regarding Judges accreditation process for Provisional Judges.

The Supervisory Judge has recommended and the AFA Committee has approved an amendment to the Judge accreditation process in that for a provisional judge to progress to a Level 2 accredited judge they shall be required to be assessed by the Supervisory Judge prior to advancement.