

AFA Rule Clarification Statement No. 23 – Issued December 2010.

The AFA Committee at its December Committee Meeting agreed that the following Rule clarifications should be issued to Judges, Club coordinators and to members. These are not changes to existing AFA Rules or Policies but rather are clarifications intended to ensure common understanding and interpretation of the Rules.

Clarification 1. Rule reference 9.2 (h) dealing with box loaders behaviour.

This Rule indicates that the box loader is to remain in position until the Judge determines the results of the heat. "Position" is stated to be "upright position behind the box". Box loaders should not remove the box or make any other movement (such as moving in front of box, jumping up and down or shouting in celebration of a assumed win) until after the judge has declared the result of the heat and race.

This Rule is designed to ensure that box loaders do not, by their actions, either advantage their team or disadvantage the opposing team, for example by distracting dogs that may still be running. In a situation where a box loader is considered to be in breach of this Rule by a judge provision exists in the Rules for the Judge to consider whether they should declare the box loaders team as forfeit and award the heat to the other team. Judges should note that this Rule does **NOT** require them to declare a forfeit – the discretionary word **MAY** is used and hence the judge can and should exercise discretion. In assessing the breach and any resultant action judges should consider the intent of the Rule and hence apply the test of whether the box loaders actions resulted in any advantage/disadvantage or were designed to achieve advantage. If the answer is in the negative then the judge should, all things being equal, not impose the forfeit penalty but rather warn the box loader of their technical breach of the Rules. In a situation where the box loaders actions were assessed as resulting in advantage/disadvantage the judge should declare the heat forfeit.

As with all discretionary circumstances in the Rules the final decision must remain the property of the judge in the ring based on their assessment of the circumstances associated with the breach.

Clarification 2. Handling of protests in the Ring.

Rule 2.5 covers the matter of " Protests". The Rule states that protests may only be lodged before the start of the next heat. The Rule also states that protests not lodged before the start of the next heat must be submitted in writing to the AFA.

It is only Team Captains that should be lodging protests with the judge over any incident that has occurred that has impacted on the heat and its result. Team Captains should lodge such protest before the start of the next heat and make it clear to the Judge they are submitting a "Protest" and not just asking a clarification question. Where necessary judges should consult with the other officials who may have witnessed the incident (timekeepers and stewards) before making a ruling on protest. Whilst AFA Representatives may be consulted the AFA Representative does not have the authority to over rule a judges decision in the ring except for reasons of safety of dogs or handlers. Whilst the AFA will consider written protest it cannot over rule a judges decision given before the start of the next heat.

Clarification 3. Calculation of teams Seed times.

Seed times are covered by Section 1.4 of the Rules. Seed times can either be based on a Teams seeded web time or on a declared time.. Consideration should be given to using a declared times where the team composition is significantly different from the team that set the web time (for example where one or two faster dogs are brought into a team and the combination time of the four fastest dogs is then faster that the web time shown). In declaring a seed time it should be calculated

based on the projected combined time of the fastest combination of 4 dogs in that team and NOT on the average time the team is expected to run throughout the competition. Submission of incorrect seed time data (whether by declared time or using a web time where the combination of dogs in the team has changed significantly) can result in the Team being placed in an incorrect Division or the team breaking out.