

Additional questions re branch structured clubs :

Question 1 - According to the q and a there is an unfair advantage to branched clubs in that they have a larger pool of dogs from which to choose. How is this different to a large club? Some clubs are small and are restricted to the dog pool available. Some clubs are large and have the ability to send 5-6 teams to a Nationals (2010). I thought that this is what divisions and break out times were for. The fact that there is a larger pool should not be an impediment to a branch structure where there are clubs that are just as large with an equivalent number of dogs to choose from when making team selection.

Answer – The original Submission from a group of members raised concerns as to the development of branch structured teams which as a result of their structure allowed them to circumvent the application of Rule 2.4 relating to the 90 day exclusion rule. This was expressed as given such clubs an unfair advantage relative to other clubs who if they formed composite teams had to comply with the 90 day rule. The size of the pool of dogs was beside the point - the central issue was whether two groups of handlers and dogs were acting as separate Clubs (Branches) when it suited them but having the option to join forces when it was convenient to do so. If controls were not placed on this it was seen as opening the door for other clubs to form alliances of convenience.

Question 2 - Understanding now the distinction relates to the ability to compete separately and not based on geography will the AFA determine that a club is a branch as soon as a remotely located club (branch) competes for the first time independently of the main club? And will that then subject them to the same rules as other branch clubs?

Answer - It may be unreasonable to deem the group as a Branch on the first occasion in which it competes independently, but, if the behaviour is repeated, it has to be considered that the group is behaving as an independent Branch. Given that this is a grey area,

the decision may have to be on a case-by-case basis, at least initially.

Question 3 - If the above is the intent how will the AFA go about ensuring that remotely located clubs are not intentionally defeating rule 52 by including for eg 5 dogs from the remote club and 1 dog from the main club in order to continue operating as a club instead of a branch?

Answer - The AFA does monitor competition results to ensure that the 90 day rule is applied and will continue to do so . If it appears that a deliberate attempt is being made to defeat Rule 2.4 the AFA would communicate with the club in order to resolve the matter.

Question 4 - If a branch no longer has enough members to compete independently what happens then?

Answer - Members would have exactly the same options as all Clubs have now under the Rules – they could cease to operate and join another Branch or indeed another club with exemption from the 90 day rule.