**AFA Notification to Members No. 46 –April 2014.**

This notification deals with two “On Trial” Rule amendments relating to :

1. Rule 9.2 (b) dealing with the order a dog must take all jumps on the way to the Box and;
2. The age Rules for Junior members to act as Officials such as Stewards or Timekeepers.

The Rule amendments are On Trial effective from 17th April 2014.

**1 Rule 9.2 (b) – Background to Rule amendment:**

 The Committee noted an apparent anomaly in Rule 9.2(b) in that the Rule allowed a dog to correct a jumping error in its return from box run but not to do so in the run to the box.

 In the run to the box the Rule requires all jumps to be taken “**in succession**” whilst this was not required in the return run. The Committee noted that it was quite common for a dog to drop the ball on its return run and then to go back to retrieve the ball and then complete the remaining jumps. In such cases the dog is credited with a clean run IF it had corrected its mistake. Whilst it was less frequent a similar situation sometimes arose on the way to the box where a dog went over some of the jumps and then seemed to loose focus and commenced to return to handler. In this case the handler could remind the dog to “go get its ball” and the dog, at times, then retook the jumps to the box and in doing so corrected its mistake. The Committee noted that in both cases the dog was incurring extra time and saw no reason why there should be a difference IF the dog corrected any error in jumping by retaking the jump/s.

There was general agreement in the Committee that a dog that corrected its jumping mistake on the way to the box should be treated the same as a dog that did so in its return run and should not be penalised as having a error rather than a clean run.

**Rule Amendment** : the words **“ in succession”** to be deleted from Rule 9.2 (b) on an On Trial basis effective from 17th April.

1. **Junior Handlers Rule Amendments re age to act as Officials.**

**Background to Rule amendments:**

The Committee at its April Meeting accepted the recommendations of the Rules Sub Committee that that the age for stewarding be lowered as follows:

**Inbound and box stewards** 12 years with Supervisor present and 16 if unsupervised;

**Line Steward** 14 years with Supervisor and 16 unsupervised;

**Timekeeper** 16 with Supervisor and 18 unsupervised.

In all cases the Junior must have completed the appropriate competency exam in order to Steward or be a timekeeper.

Juniors to continue to be able to run dogs, ball shag or box load as long as they are under supervision of their parent or nominated guardian and assessed as competent by the Judge.

**Required Rule Amendments :**

*Add to Section 2.7, Definitions:*

Junior Member: a full or associate AFA member less than 18 years of age.

(Steward) Supervisor, ref Section 10.3 (j): an adult member in close proximity to and overseeing a junior steward. May be either inside or outside the ring, but shall not obstruct the racing and not be a member of a team in the ring. Duties are to oversee, mentor and assist the junior steward, particularly if an intense situation develops.

*Delete the last two sentences from 10.3 (i) and create a new section 10.3 (j), to read:*

(i) Junior members are allowed to participate in AFA sanctioned competitions and demonstrations as handlers, ball shaggers or box loaders provided they are under the supervision of an AFA member who is their parent or nominated guardian and the Judge is satisfied that they are in control and not a safety risk.

(j) Juniors holding a Basic Stewards Ticket may act as Inbound Stewards and Box Stewards from the age of 12 (supervised) or 16 (unsupervised). Juniors holding a full Stewards Ticket may act as Line Stewards from the age of 14 (supervised) or 16 (unsupervised). Juniors holding a Timekeepers Ticket may act as timekeeper from the age of 16 (supervised) or 18 (unsupervised), when they become adult members. Juniors wishing to steward must wear their badge (preferred) and/or have their certificate at the competition.