AFA Notification to Members No. 48 – August 2014.

This Notification deals with amendments to the “On Trial” Rule re Round Robin Handicap Racing format. The original Rule was notified to members in Notification No. 40 in May 2013 and was amended by an addition in Notification No. 42. The “On Trial” Rule has now been further amended to allow the option of having a number of Divisions within a Handicap format in certain circumstances.

The Amended Rule is shown in full below and will continue to be “On Trial” until the 2015 AGM.

**Round Robin Handicap Racing Format (On Trial) –**

(Amendments to the On Trial Rule implemented in August 2014 with Rule continued On Trial as a result.)

This format has been developed to be used where it is expected that only a small number of Teams will be entered for the Competition and indication is that there could be a wide variation in seed times within Divisions. If a normal Round Robin format were adopted non competitive racing would be likely however by using handicap format all teams have the same possibility of success.

Recognising that the Format is only suitable for competitions with a small number of teams the preferred number of teams is in the range of 7 to 8 as this allows all teams to compete in one or two handicapped Divisions of approximately equal numbers. Each Division shall consist of at least 3 teams, and there shall be no combined Divisions. The maximum number of teams in any Handicap Round Robin Competition shall be 14. Where more than 8 teams are entered the format shall be run in at least two Divisions of approximately equal numbers. In such a case entries in each Division will be determined based upon descending order of nominated seed times. The decision as to number of heats per race should be made after the number of teams entered is known. Racing can be 3 heats, best of 5 or 5 heat races. In considering the number of heats competition organisers should take into account the number of races each team will be required to undertake. Where the number of races will exceed 6 consideration should be given to restricting the number of heats to 3 or best of 5.

Recognising that the format has a maximum number of team competition organisers shall indicate, when calling for entries, that the competition is to be restricted to a nominated stated maximum number, which shall not exceed 14.

In order to apply this format the seed times of all teams entered is a critical issue as the difference in seed times establishes the handicaps. ALL teams are REQUIRED to submit a declared seedtime, based upon the projected time of their 4 fastest dogs entered in each team. Each team’s breakout time is 1 second faster than the declared seedtime. If a team exceeds its break out time 3 times it is no longer eligible to place in the Competition but may continue to race as a non competitive team, Dog title points will continue to be allocated as per normal rules of a breakout team.

All other Rules of Round Robin Format apply to this format.

**Change from Round Robin to Handicap competition:** If entries to a conventional Round Robin competition are such that a conventional Division split cannot be found and team numbers are equal to or less than 14 the host club may apply to change to Handicap Format Racing.

The request to change the competition shall be made to the AFA Secretary in writing (email), and must include an explanation for the request. Committee approval shall be by email majority. If approval is granted, the host club shall notify all entered teams and invite them to submit a revised seed time if they wish, or withdraw from the Competition for a full refund. The invitation shall specify a closing date for changes, which shall give Teams at least three days to respond. Where no response is received by the host club by the nominated closing date, the team is deemed to have accepted the format change and their seed time (whether originally Web or Declared) is unchanged.

**How to run Round Robin Handicap Racing:**

Rules for the conduct of Round Robin Handicap Racing are the AFA rules for Round Robin Format with following variations:

* To accommodate handicap structure there will be no rerun for first false start. Where the start dog from either team false starts that dog must run again as a 5th dog;
* The sound system on the Signature lights is to be disconnected (or programmed to be silent) during the start sequence so that both teams receive light signals only. (If sound is not disconnected then under the handicap structure the first team only receives a sound countdown). It may be reconnected after the first team’s start to signal bad crosses.
* Handicap times will be calculated for each and every race based on the difference in seed time of both teams.
* Breakout Times for every team will also be based on their seed time minus 1 second. All teams (including Division 1) will have a Breakout time in this format.

**Calculating Handicaps and Breakouts:**

Handicap Time: The Handicap Time is the difference between the seed times of each Team racing. Example: Team 1s seed time was 20.890 and Team 2s seed time was 26.973, therefore the handicap is 26.973-20.890 = 6.08 seconds. Breakout times are 1 second faster than seed time for each team.

Programming the Signature Console: The Handicap Time is entered for the slower team and 0.00 is entered for the faster team.

Breakout Time: The Breakout Time for every team is its Seed time minus 1.0 second. Example: the team above with a seed time of 20.890 seconds will have a Breakout Time of 19.89 while the team with seed time of 26.973 will have a Breakout Time of 25.97 seconds.

Programming the Signature console: enter the breakout for the slower team, and the breakout plus the handicap time for the faster team.

The information for programming the Signature console is worked out as follows:

Handicap = 26.973 – 20.890 = 6.08 seconds

Breakout for slower team = 25.97 seconds

Breakout for faster team = 19.89 + handicap of 6.08 = 25.97 seconds

This process equates to the same breakout controls used in regular racing to restrict sandbagging.

Please note that the console only works in 1/100th of a sec while seed times and seedtimes go to 1/1000th of a sec. When entering Breakouts in the console, we will round times downwards not upwards, eg 26.473 would be entered as 26.47.

**Console Operating Instructions for Handicap Racing:**

1. Press Setup.
2. Press Next Choice twice [for consoles updated in 2012].
3. Press Enter to Set Handicap.
4. Key-In Handicap Time L
5. Press Enter
6. Key-In Handicap Time R
7. Press Enter
8. Enter Breakouts as normal ( Set-up/Next Choice/ Enter etc).
9. Done!

**Timesheets**

New timesheets have been developed for Handicap Round Robin Racing, form numbers C2B for 5-heat or best-of-5 and C2C for 3-heat. This is to allow teams to have a Web Time, because the signature lights don’t display the team’s actual run time for the team with the quicker seed time. What they display is the team’s actual run time *plus the handicap time*. So, to get a time that can be used as a web time, the handicap must be subtracted, and it must be done race by race because the handicaps change depending on the opponent. This is done in the header line for each race

Another change is the addition of a ‘W’ column in the table between the ‘Breed’ and ‘Y’ columns. This is for recording Warnings that a judge issues.

**At the end of each race**, both timekeepers must:

1. [If not pre-printed] Write the *opposing* team’s handicap time for that particular race next to “Adjustment”;
2. Find the Best Heat Time for that race as displayed on the console;
3. Subtract the Adjustment from the Best Heat Time and write the result next to “Adj’d Best Heat Time” (Adj’d = Adjusted).

Note: In the Signature system, the handicap time for the slower team is a number while the handicap for the faster team is always zero. When these figures are transferred across to the opposite team in step 1 above, the result is that the slower team’s Adjusted Best Heat Time will be the same as their best displayed time, while the faster team’s Adjusted Best Heat Time will be reduced by the handicap time.

**At the end of the competition**, the Judge must look for the lowest “Adj’d Best Heat Time” and write this in the “Best Time” at the bottom of the timesheet.

**Recap and Notes:**

* Handicap and Breakout times are generally different for each pair of opponents, therefore will be different for each race for a given team.
* The Handicap time is entered for the lane with the slower team rather than the lane with the faster team. The faster team always has a “handicap” of zero.
* Timesheets should be prepared with the Handicap time, the Breakout time and the Adjustment printed in the heading line for each race.
* Heat times displayed on the console and display panels are correct for the team with the slower seed time but have had the handicap time added for the team with the faster seed time.
* So, to get the ‘true’ heat time for the faster team, the handicap time must be subtracted from their displayed time.
* An Adjusted Best Heat Time must be worked out and recorded in the heading line for each race. The judge can then pick the team’s Best Heat Time for the competition at the end of the day by scanning down the Adjusted Best Heat Times for every race.