AFA Rule Notification to Members No. 49 – February 2015.

This Notification deals with the following matter :

Rule interpretation regarding handlers running two dogs in same heat;

 **Rule Clarification – Handler running two dogs in same heat.**

This matter has again been brought to the AFA attention in order to clarify what is the correct procedure to be followed when one member is running two dogs in the same heat. The correct procedure was originally covered in Rule Notification No. 31, issued in 2011. The clarification issued continues to be applicable to this situation and is accordingly repeated below.

“The Committee considered the matter of one handler being able to run two dogs in the same heat.

The Committee noted that this is an unusual situation that was not excluded by current Rules.

The Committee agreed that the practice of one handler running two dogs in the same heat is permissible provided it can be done safely, with all dogs in the ring under control of a handler at all times except when running, and that the Judge in the ring having the discretion to instruct a handler or team to discontinue the practice in that competition if he/she concludes that the handler is unable to do it safely.

Given that this is a safety issue, the AFA Representative may also be involved.

The Committee sees no need to change the existing Rules, but decided that a Rule Clarification Notification should be issued to all Judges and Members to advise them that:

* the practice of one handler running multiple dogs in a heat is not prohibited, but must be done safely;
* There must be one handler for each dog in the Ring (i.e. one handler may not hold two dogs or simultaneously hold one dog and run another); and
* Judges and AFA Representatives have an overriding duty of care to ensure safety of handlers and dogs in the Ring at all times, which means they will have to prevent a handler from running multiple dogs in one heat if they observe it to be unsafe.”

The above is a repeat of the original clarification.

In short it is NOT acceptable for one member to attempt to hold and release two dogs in the same heat without using a separate handler for the second dog. The assistance of a handler for the second dog is mandatory – all dogs in the ring must be under the control of a separate handler – if there are 4 dogs in the ring there must be 4 handlers. The second handler shall take control of the first dog from the person running the two dogs and then hand over the second dog to the member running the two dogs. Judges must be satisfied that this can be done safely in order to continue to allow the handler to run two dogs.