

Rule Notification FY2324-12 - Dealing with dogs receiving repeated cards for interference

The AFA rules currently provide that the supervisory judge may report to the AFA committee any dog that receives repeated signal cards for interference leading to the assessment that the dog may be becoming a danger to other dogs. The dog incident sub-committee is then required to investigate and report to the AFA committee with recommendations.

Following discussion between the dog incident sub-committee and the supervisory judge about the practicality of the current process the AFA committee was asked to consider revising the process so that the dog incident sub-committee takes responsibility for reviewing reports of signal cards and identifying any dog which the sub-committee considers requires investigation with the supervisory judge being available to assist the sub-committee in the investigation.

The AFA committee agreed that the proposal would streamline the current process and result in any issues being dealt with more expeditiously. At its meeting on 6 May 2024 the committee resolved to amend the rules and the respective roles of the supervisory judge and the dog incident sub-committee respectively as set out below.

The amendments are effective from 1 June 2024. The rules published on the AFA website will be updated shortly.

Rule Changes

Amend rule 6.23

*Note: The dog incident sub-committee ~~supervisory judge~~ may report to the **AFA committee**, with recommended actions, any dog that receives repeated signal cards for **interference** leading to the assessment that the dog may be becoming a danger to other dogs. The **AFA committee** will deal with the report in accordance with Appendix 14.*

Amend Appendix 14

The process in this Appendix is to be followed when ~~the AFA committee receives~~:

- ~~the AFA committee receives~~ an allegation by a **judge**, **AFA representative** or other **AFA member** under rule 4.8 of **aggression** or suspected **aggression** by a dog at a **flyball event** and refers the allegation to the dog incident sub-committee; or
- the dog incident sub-committee identifies a report from the supervisory judge under rule 6.23 that a dog ~~that~~ has received repeated signal cards for **interference** ~~on multiple occasions~~ leading to an assessment that the dog may be becoming a danger to other dogs.

Investigation Referral to by dog incident sub-committee

In each of the above circumstances ~~the AFA committee will refer the matter to the dog incident sub-committee~~ will investigate and provide a report with recommendations to the **AFA committee**.

The **dog incident sub-committee**:

- may ask other **AFA members** to provide **witness statements** if it considers that is necessary or appropriate to ensure a full and fair analysis of the dog's behaviour;
- must invite the dog's **owner** to provide any statement or comment the dog's **owner** wishes to make in connection with the investigation;
- must make available to the dog's **owner** the relevant **incident reports** ~~or supervisory judge's report~~ and all **witness statements** subject to the dog's **owner** undertaking to keep the reports and statements confidential and not release them to any other person;
- must consider all available evidence and take into account the length of time the dog has been racing and any prior incidents relating to the dog;
- must use best endeavours to report to the **AFA committee** with its decision and recommendation within 21 days after receiving ~~the~~ referral from the **AFA committee**.

If the **dog incident sub-committee** finds an allegation of **aggression** to be made out, the **dog incident sub-committee** will have regard to the **AFA Black Card Penalty Protocol** in Table A14.1 in deciding on the appropriate penalty to recommend. To avoid doubt, the **dog incident sub-committee** may recommend a penalty which is not consistent with the **AFA Black Card Penalty Protocol** where it considers that to be warranted in the circumstances.

In relation to a dog that has received repeated signal cards for interference ~~response to a report from the supervisory judge~~, the **dog incident sub-committee** may make any of the following recommendations:

- that no further action be taken;
- that a warning be issued indicating that any further incidents involving the dog may result in a period of suspension and a requirement for retraining (this recommendation will also normally include the requirement for the dog's **owner** to seek advice from the instructors at the dog's **club** on focus retraining);
- that the dog be placed on probation for a period of between three and 12 months with any incident of **interference** or **aggression** within this period to result in immediate suspension from participation in all **flyball events** for the balance of the specified period (this recommendation will also normally include the requirement for the dog's **owner** to seek advice from the instructors at the dog's **club** on focus retraining);
- that the dog be suspended from participating in **flyball events** for a period of between three and 12 months and the dog's owner seek advice on

- appropriate behaviour retraining;
- that the dog be permanently excluded from all **flyball events** (this recommendation will normally only be made when there are repeated incidents of **aggression**).

Amend responsibilities of Supervisory Judge

When requested assist the dog incident sub-committee in its investigation of a dog that has received repeated signal cards for interference~~Report to the General Committee repeated instances of interference by a dog when considered appropriate.~~

Amend responsibilities of dog incident sub-committee

Regularly review reports of signal cards issued by judges and investigate any dog that has received repeated signal cards for instances of interference~~as referred by the Supervisory Judge~~