

Rule Notification FY2023-1 Pairs Class

At its meeting on 6 November 2023 the AFA committee resolved to recognise pairs class as an additional class of racing on an on-trial basis effective from 1 January 2024. The on-trial rule changes required to give effect to this decision are attached to this notification. The rules published on the AFA website will be updated shortly.

Background

In August 2023 the Tassie Flying Paws Dog Club requested the AFA committee consider recognising pairs racing as a class to assist smaller jurisdictions to hold valid race meetings when insufficient teams enter regular class.

In response the AFA committee established a sub-committee to review the proposal and make recommendations as to whether a pairs class should be recognised and, if so, how that would operate.

In considering the proposal the sub-committee reviewed the approaches to pairs racing in the UK (British Flyball Association and UK Flyball League) and the USA (U-fli). After discussion the sub-committee resolved to recommend to the AFA committee that pairs class be introduced for smaller jurisdictions to allow for pairs class race meetings to be held and for race meetings to be converted to pairs class where there were insufficient entries in regular class.

The sub-committee's recommendations were discussed at the October 2023 AFA Committee meeting. While the committee was generally in favour of recognising pairs class, the committee considered that pairs class should be available to all jurisdictions and not limited to smaller jurisdictions. The committee requested the sub-committee to develop a full proposal, including details of rule changes which would be required.

At its November 2023 meeting the AFA committee considered an explanatory memorandum and draft rule changes prepared by the sub-committee.

The explanatory memorandum sets out the rationale for recognising pairs class and how it will operate in practice. In essence, pairs class will be on the same footing as open class and veterans class in that it can be offered in addition to regular class at a race meeting at the discretion of the host club. Pairs class racing will be subject to the same rules as apply to open class racing with some minor adaptations as set out in the on trial rules (new Appendix 16).

Attachments

1. Explanatory Memorandum
2. Rule changes

Introduction of Pairs Class – Explanatory Memorandum

What is proposed? The proposal is for the AFA to recognise a fourth class of racing, namely pairs class. This will be in addition to the existing classes of regular, open and veterans.

Why is this being proposed? The initial driver for the proposal was to assist jurisdictions where there can be difficulty in getting sufficient entries for other classes to hold a race meeting, meaning members can only participate in demonstrations and not earn title points for their dogs. However the introduction of pairs class is also seen as a way to grow the sport by allowing pairs teams to compete under normal racing conditions and earn title points and creating a pathway for dogs to progress to other classes of racing.

How will pairs class differ from pairs racing under the Novelty Events Policy? Under the Novelty Events Policy pairs teams can have an unlimited number of in ring helpers and barriers or props may be used. Teams in pairs class will run under the same conditions as teams in other classes with only minor modifications to reflect the reduced number of dogs.

Must pairs class be offered at race meetings? No. Every club applying for sanctioning of a race meeting will have the discretion as to whether to offer pairs class in addition to regular class. This is the same situation as currently applies for open class and veterans class.

What happens if insufficient entries are received for other classes for a race meeting? The host club may seek approval from the AFA committee to run pairs class only at the race meeting. If approval is given the host club will need to notify teams entered in any other class and give them the opportunity to either nominate one or more pairs class teams or withdraw and receive a refund of any fees paid.

Is a minimum number of entries required for pairs class? Yes, pairs class can only be run if at least four pairs class teams are entered.

Will a host club be able to limit entries to pairs class? Yes, subject to the normal rules applicable to limited entry race meetings.

What will a team in pairs class include? A pairs class team will comprise of two dogs only, a handler for each dog, a box loader and up to two assistants. As for other classes, dogs entered may be substituted before the race meeting starts.

Can a dog listed on a timesheet in pairs class for a race meeting be also listed on a timesheet in another class at the race meeting? No, a dog listed in a pairs class team can only run in that team at the race meeting.

Must both dogs in a pairs class team be from the same club? No, as for open class, both dogs can be from the same club but may also be from different clubs or even no club.

Can dogs running in pairs class earn title points? Yes, but points will be earned at half the value of points earned in other classes. For example, each dog in a pairs class team which has a clean run will earn 0.5 title points.

What will be the seed time for a pairs class team? As for open class, each pairs class team will need to provide a declared seed time.

What about breakouts? The same provisions as to types and numbers of breakouts apply as for other classes but because only two dogs will run in each heat the breakout time for a pairs class team will be 0.3 seconds faster than its declared seed time.

What other rules apply to pairs class? Pairs class will generally run under the same rules as open class. This means that:

- there is no restriction on a dog that runs in pairs class running in regular class at a subsequent race meeting or on a dog racing in pairs class when it has raced in regular class at a previous race meeting;
- pairs class teams may set jumps at any height from seven inches up to the height of the team's height dog.

Proposed rule changes to include pairs class

Definitions

Add the following definition:

pairs class see rule 2.5 and Appendix 17.

Rule 2.5

In the first line, change “three” to four”.

Insert an additional bullet point:

- **pairs class** in which **teams** may comprise:
 - dogs that are both registered on the **AFA** database as belonging to the same **club**; or
 - a combination of dogs that are registered on the **AFA** database as belonging to different **clubs** or no **club**.

Change Note to read:

*Note: Special rules applicable to **open class**, **veterans class** and **pairs class** are contained in Appendices 6, 7 and 17 respectively.*

Insert the following paragraphs:

A dog listed on a **timesheet** for **pairs class** for a **race meeting** may not run in any other class at the **race meeting**.

If:

- less than four **teams** enter a **race meeting** in classes other than **pairs class**; or
- after the **close of entry date** for a **race meeting** one or more **teams** withdraw leaving less than four **teams** entered in classes other than **pairs class**,

the **host club** may seek approval from the **AFA committee** to run only **pairs class** at the **race meeting**.

Appendices

Insert new Appendix 17:

Appendix 17. Pairs Class

Except where otherwise specified in this Appendix, the rules for **pairs class** racing are the same as **open class** racing for the equivalent format (**round robin format** or **elimination format**).

Special rules for pairs class racing

1. A **team** in **pairs class** racing consists of:
 - two dogs as listed on the **timesheet** for the **team**;
 - a **handler** for each dog;
 - a **box loader**;
 - up to two assistants in the **ring** to pick up loose balls, reset knocked jumps and otherwise assist the **team**.
2. **Pairs class** racing may not be conducted at a **race meeting** if less than four **teams** are nominated for **pairs class**.
3. The **breakout time** for a **team** in **pairs class** is the time 0.3 seconds (rounded down to one decimal place) faster than the **team's declared seed time**.
4. A **team** in **pairs class** finishes a **heat** when:
 - both dogs in the **team** have successfully completed a run;
 - the last of the two dogs to successfully complete a run crosses the **start/finish line** with any part of its body (on or above the ground).
5. Only **team** names showing on the **AFA** website on the teams page under the club heading "Pairs" may be used when entering a **team** in **pairs class**. **Pairs class** team names may be used more than once and need not be re-registered for every use.
6. Dogs in **pairs class** may earn **title points** on the same basis as dogs in other classes but at one half only of the value of **title points** earned by dogs in other classes.