



GUIDE FOR AGILITY
JUDGES
AND STEWARDS



THE KENNEL CLUB
Making a difference for dogs

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Introduction

This guide is intended as a useful reference for those embarking on a judging career at Agility Dog Shows and to assist established judges in understanding their obligation to competitors, show societies and the Kennel Club.

It is important that the information enclosed is read in conjunction with Kennel Club Regulations, which always take precedence. The updated Regulations are published every January in a separate booklet for each activity, and full regulations are included in the Kennel Club Year Book published every July. Agility judges should read and familiarise themselves with, in particular, the annual 'Agility Regulations' booklet or the section Regulation H - Kennel Club Agility Regulations in the Kennel Club Year Book.

These Regulations apply to all judges whether domiciled in this country or overseas who officiate at Kennel Club licensed shows. The references refer to the appropriate Kennel Club Regulations or announcements in the Kennel Club Agility newsletter The Scribe.

It should be noted that this booklet is intended as a guide to the relevant Kennel Club Agility Regulations, ring procedure and practical aspects of judging.

Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

Introduction

The overall and stated objective of the Kennel Club is to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs and this objective also applies to judges.

The overall aim and objective of a judge at whatever level, is to provide value for the time, training, effort and money which the competitor puts into presenting their dog. Moreover, the decisions of championship judges in particular will ultimately affect the future development of agility.

There is therefore an expectation that judges will be competent and trustworthy. Judging is not a right but a privilege. Judges should be respected by the competitor. To that end the following Code sets out the relevant aspects that judges should be capable of demonstrating.

Integrity

- 1.1 Judges should act honestly and impartially when undertaking an appointment.
- 1.2 A dog should be placed on merit only according to the Competition Regulations.
- 1.3 Judges should conduct themselves in a manner compatible with the standing of a judge at all times whilst at a show and in any other capacity which might have bearing on the interests of the canine world.
- 1.4 Judges are referred to the factors set out below which may be said to affect their standing and may result in exclusion from judging lists or future judging contracts or withdrawal from an agreed appointment;
 - 1.4.1 Criminal convictions
 - 1.4.2 Threatening behaviour at any time
 - 1.4.3 Misrepresenting or abusing authority
 - 1.4.4 Not judging in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations
 - 1.4.5 Harsh handling as a competitor or judge at any time
 - 1.4.6 Breach of Kennel Club Rules and Regulations
 - 1.4.7 Using the name of the Kennel Club in an unauthorised manner.

Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

Age

- 1.5 No new judging appointments to award Agility Certificates for the first time will be considered once a judge has attained the age of 75 years (at the time of fulfilling the appointment).

Health Guidelines

- 1.6 Judges are expected to decline, or to withdraw from, an appointment, which they cannot fulfil. The aim of the competition can only be fulfilled when the judging of dogs is carried out in a fully competent manner.
- 1.7 Ill health of various kinds can temporarily or permanently make it impossible for a person to complete a judging appointment according to the demands which are set forward in this Code of Best Practice. A Society or Club can if necessary, either temporarily or permanently cancel the judging contract should it become apparent that the judge cannot appraise his/her own situation and can no longer fulfil the judging appointment.
- 1.8 Judges must be able to undertake the judging of the dogs with an obvious independence and in a confident and convincing manner. Judges must not at any time rely on others to assist with the main work of judging.
- 1.9 Judges must be capable of meeting the physical requirements of fulfilling the judging appointment, thus should be sufficiently mobile to move around and judge the dogs from all aspects.
- 1.10 From the above it follows that a person with definite lessening of capabilities, and who is dependent on assistance or the presence of various forms of technical help, may need to consider if he or she is capable of fulfilling a judging appointment in an adequate and satisfactory manner.
- 1.11 The Show Organisers shall endeavour to find out that invited judges are able to fulfil their appointments.
- 1.12 As far as reasonably possible the Show Organisers are responsible for ensuring that the aims of the agility show are fulfilled and that the competitors receive the quality of judging that they deserve.

Chapter 1. Code of Best Practice for Judges

- 1.13 The Kennel Club has an overriding responsibility and may in individual cases either temporarily defer or permanently withdraw approval when the judge in question is considered not to have the necessary capabilities. That is not to say that any particular disability will preclude judging. A common sense approach needs to be adopted by both Show Organiser and judge.

During Judging

Judges should observe the following formalities when judging:

- 1.14 Judge all competing dogs in a confident, careful and consistent manner.
- 1.15 Conduct themselves in a courteous manner to all and concentrate fully on the dogs. It is inadvisable for judges to call any competitor by their name, initiate or engage in a conversation initiated by a competitor whilst judging is in progress.
- 1.16 Dress in a conventional and acceptable fashion precluding them from being the centre of attention, or from causing any distress to the dog competing or its owner.
- 1.17 Judges should not smoke, consume alcoholic drinks or use or activate a mobile telephone whilst in the ring or when judging. Mobile telephones should be switched to silent or turned off when judging.

General

The following are general requirements for judges:

- 1.18 Absolute integrity in order to judge honestly and impartially, and to place dogs solely on their merit.
- 1.19 A suitable temperament and sufficient stamina to cope with what can be a physically and mentally demanding task.
- 1.20 To judge in a customary fashion acceptable to the competitor and the breed of dog.

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Agility Competitions

- 1.21 A comprehensive knowledge of the sport to be judged and its Regulations.
- 1.22 An understanding of Kennel Club Regulation H paragraph - Judges and Judging.
- 1.23 Qualifications to judge a Championship Agility Class, Regulation H paragraph - Approval of Judges.

Summary

- 1.24 Judges should have a comprehensive knowledge of competition procedures and etiquette. It is the responsibility of the judges to keep abreast and up to date with developments in such matters.
- 1.25 Judges should be familiar with the Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and the Guide for Judges as amended from time to time and to keep up to date with all relevant Regulations governing the competition and judging.
- 1.26 Judges should give value to the competitor and ultimately the activity in question. Judges should act at all times with honesty and integrity and impartiality.
- 1.27 The Kennel Club reserves the right to observe a judge.

Chapter 2. Invitation to Judge

The soliciting of judging appointments is not acceptable.

Judges at all shows should:

- 2.1 Ensure that they have received a written invitation from the Show Society.
- 2.2 Confirm that they are available and are able to comply with any conditions laid down by the Show Society.
- 2.3 Confirm eligibility and acceptance of the appointment in writing and state any requirements for expenses.
- 2.4 Ensure that their acceptance is followed by written confirmation of the appointment by the Show Society.
- 2.5 The invitation, acceptance and confirmation form the basis of a contract between the judge and the Show Society. If a judge has been invited to award Kennel Club Agility Certificates the contract is not finalised until the Kennel Club has approved the appointment.
- 2.6 Judges at an Agility Show may not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their ownership or part ownership or handle a dog at the show at which they are judging.

Chapter 3. Invitation to Award Challenge Certificates

- 3.1 An individual may apply to the Board for approval to award Championship Agility Certificates for the first time, provided that the judge has fulfilled the minimum criteria in accordance with Regulation H19.b. Subject to approval judges would be included on the list of Approved Championship Agility Judges.
 - 3.1.1 Prospective judges will be asked to complete a Kennel Club questionnaire. This will be sent to the judge and when completed it will be forwarded for consideration by the Board of the Kennel Club. Approval will either be granted or refused. The questionnaire must be submitted to the Kennel Club at least 18 months prior to the show.
- 3.2 It should be noted that approval to award Kennel Club Agility Certificates is the sole prerogative of the Kennel Club and is considered for each individual appointment. Decisions on approval are based on the following criteria:
 - 3.2.1 The completed questionnaire.
 - 3.2.2 The length and depth of judging experience.
 - 3.2.3 The open and other shows judged, including details of the number of dogs entered and judged.
 - 3.2.4 The dogs competed with by the proposed judge, and the standard at which the dogs competed.
 - 3.2.5 The proposed judge's overall judging experience including the variety of classes judged.
 - 3.2.6 All other circumstances that are considered appropriate.

Chapter 4. Before the Show

- 4.1 Following the confirmation of the judging appointment the Show Society will usually send a copy of the show schedule to the judge as a reminder of the appointment. This will of course indicate the class to be judged and may also include directions to the show venue. If directions are not included but required, a request should be made to the Show Secretary. Some time after entries for the show have closed judges will receive an indication of the number of dogs to be judged, which must not exceed 450.
- 4.1.1 It is important at this time that the route to the show is planned to avoid arriving late.
- 4.2 All judges must be aware of the H Regulations in respect of a judge being unable to honour an appointment. If such an eventuality arises, the judge should take the following action:
 - 4.2.1 Notify the society immediately.
 - 4.2.2 Confirm the reason in writing in order that a report can be made to the Kennel Club.

Setting the course

- 4.3 Courses suitable for the standard of class should be planned before the date of the show. A copy of the plan (usually without the obstacles being numbered) should be sent to the Secretary prior to the show, in order that the course can be prepared prior to the arrival of the judge. The course should be checked, and ready for the competitors to walk, well before the briefing.

Chapter 5. At the Show

At the show all Judges must:

- 5.1 Arrive in ample time for their judging appointment – it is discourteous to keep the Show Society and competitors waiting.
- 5.2 Report to the show secretary to collect badge/rosette, together with any other papers, instructions and special requirements.
- 5.3 Check the equipment to ensure that it is safe, and complies with Kennel Club Regulations. Also check that any electronic timing equipment is working properly.
- 5.4 Check that the course is laid out as required, and that it is safe, and suitable for the standard of dog being run. Measure the course using the approved straight line method and calculate the course time. To assist the judge it is permissible to run his/her own dog round the course.
- 5.5 Arrive at their ring in good time, meet with their ring party, and brief them on their duties etc.
- 5.6 It is customary for judges to call a briefing for competitors and allow time for the competitors to walk the course prior to the commencement of judging.

Judging the dogs

- 5.7 These listed items are intended to assist and enable judges to appreciate their obligation to competitors, Show Societies and the Kennel Club:
 - 5.7.1 Apart from the competitors in the class only the judge, ring party and those authorised by the show management are allowed in the ring while judging is in progress.
 - 5.7.2 Judges should concentrate solely on the competitors in the ring. They should remain courteous to them throughout the day.
 - 5.7.3 Judges must judge in accordance with Kennel Club Agility Rules and Regulations (H).
 - 5.7.4 Judges should be aware of the number of dogs to be judged, and the conditions and time available, and pace the speed of judging accordingly.
 - 5.7.5 The eligibility of dogs entered in any class is not the concern of the judge or steward. Any queries should be referred to the Show Secretary/Management.

Chapter 5. At the Show

- 5.7.6 Judging of classes in which Agility Certificates are offered must have priority over all other classes.
- 5.7.7 Judges may dismiss from the class any dog if, amongst other things, it is likely to cause suffering to the dog if it continues competing. The dismissal should be discussed with the Show Manager.
- 5.7.8 Judges are not permitted to make any oral commentary on the dogs until the conclusion of all their judging.
- 5.7.9 The judge must observe the dog and handler at all times whilst in the ring, even after elimination from competition.

Whilst officiating Judges should not:

- 5.8 Smoke at any time.
- 5.9 Consume or have available alcoholic drinks.
- 5.10 Use or activate a mobile telephone.
- 5.11 Consume food.

Chapter 6. After the Show

Records

- 6.1 It is important for all judges that they keep records of all their judging experience. This is of particular relevance to those hoping, at some future date, to be invited to award Kennel Club Agility Certificates. It is a requirement of the Kennel Club when being asked to award Agility Certificates for the first time that judges complete a questionnaire detailing their experience. Accuracy in completing this questionnaire is essential and the judge signs to that effect. Therefore it is necessary that judges retain schedules and/or record books showing the actual number of dogs entered and actual number of dogs judged for completing the questionnaire.

- 6.2 If at any time this information is misplaced the appropriate Show Secretaries can be contacted or it can be produced from the records held by the Kennel Club (Championship Shows only).

Chapter 7. Overseas Judges and British Judges Officiating Overseas

Overseas Judges

- 7.1 Judges from overseas officiating in this country must judge in all respects in the same general manner as is expected of judges resident in the UK. Overseas judges judging at Kennel Club licensed events, should note that they should judge to the Kennel Club Rules and Regulations. The judges duties in this country cannot be delegated.
- 7.2 The suitability of overseas judges to judge at Kennel Club licensed shows will be assessed in the same way as judges resident in the UK. To assist judges from overseas, inviting societies are required to supply them with:
 - 7.2.1 A copy of Kennel Club Agility Regulations (H) and
 - 7.2.2 A copy of this guide.
- 7.3 By the same token, British judges are reminded when judging overseas that they must conform to the rules, regulations and conventions of the host country. Judging must be undertaken on the basis of the rules and regulations that are recognised in that country.
- 7.4 Overseas judges who are not endorsed by the relevant Kennel Club of their own country will not normally be approved to judge in the U.K.

Chapter 8. Stewarding at Agility Shows

Getting Involved

- 8.1 Every variety of dog competition needs helpers and, although their work is carried out voluntarily, Agility Shows simply could not take place without their assistance. There are no specific qualifications necessary to become a helper and, as such, helping as a ring party member is an ideal starting point for those people keen to become more involved in agility show management or the dog scene in general.
- 8.2 If you have never undertaken any ring partying and would like to try, most Club secretaries or Competition Managers are only too glad of an offer of help and will put you in touch with an experienced ring party member to “learn the ropes”.
- 8.3 A good working knowledge of Kennel Club Rules and Regulations is most useful, but you do not need to be an “expert” in these matters by any means, as the interpretation of Rules and Regulations lies in the hands of the show management and judge.

Authority, Responsibility and Duties

- 8.4 There are no specific Kennel Club Regulations describing the responsibilities and duties of ring parties officiating at agility competitions. However, the following is offered as guidance:

Chapter 9. Types of Ring Party

Authority, Responsibilities and Duties

- 9.1 The appointment of several ring party members, all fulfilling different duties, is essential to a well co-ordinated and enjoyable Agility competition.
- 9.2 **A Competition Manager** should be appointed and should coordinate all stewarding activity in the ring(s) as well as briefing all Ring Managers.
- 9.3 **A Ring Manager** who will be responsible for the smooth running of the ring
- 9.4 **A timer** should carefully record the precise time each dog takes to complete the course and a scribe who notes the number of faults the judge has indicated, **or a “scrimer”** who will be responsible for starting the dog, noting the faults indicated by the judge and recording the time.
- 9.5 **A scorer** enters the total number of faults and the running time of each dog on the score sheets.
- 9.6 **A calling steward** to marshal those competitors waiting to compete in the ring and where possible ensures that competitors enter the ring in the appropriate order.
- 9.7 **Equipment stewards** lay out the obstacles in accordance with the judge's directions and attend to any obstacles which may need attention during the rounds.
- 9.8 **Lead steward** to collect the dog's lead and take it to the end of the course.

Chapter 10. On Arrival at the Show

- 10.1 The first task on arrival at a show is to notify the show secretary that you have arrived, find the ring and check out the course. The judge should thoroughly brief the Ring Manager and equipment stewards as to exactly how the course should be laid out.
- 10.2 It should be ensured that the course layout and all obstacles accord with Kennel Club H Regulations.
- 10.3 It is essential that there is complete cooperation and coordination between all the stewards officiating at a show. The Ring Manager should brief all the other stewards and so that no one should be in any doubt as to their duties on the day. It is important that every Steward knows precisely what their job entails and what they will be expected to do.
- 10.4 The judge should brief all stewards employed in the ring on how the test is to be conducted and marked. All stewards should be aware of any "special" classes such as relay classes, pairs, gamblers or knockout competitions.
- 10.5 The "scrimer"/scribe should ensure that they are aware of the manner in which the judge will indicate that a fault has been made.
- 10.6 The timer, (if used) should be aware of precisely when to start and stop timing the dog. Some timers start the round in their own time, whereas others are directed to start the timing by the judge. Exactly what the finish is must also be established. For example, does timing stop when the dog has landed after the last obstacle, or is there a finishing line to cross?
- 10.7 The scorer should ensure that a results sheet is available at the end of judging.
- 10.8 It is the responsibility of the competitor to clean up after their dogs. Always make sure that a bucket and shovel or other removal equipment is available.

Chapter 11. During Judging

- 11.1 "Scrimers"/scribes should watch the judge for indications of faults and not watch the dog.
- 11.2 The timer (if used) will be dealing with many dogs throughout the day and should concentrate at all times as time penalties are central to the scoring system.
- 11.3 The timer (if used) should not stop timing during a round unless specifically instructed to do so by the judge.
- 11.4 Under no circumstances should the "scrimmer" round up or down any faults on the score sheets.
- 11.5 Equipment stewards should not leave their positions without informing the Ring Manager and should ensure that any replacement knows their duties.
- 11.6 Any queries from the "scrimmer", timer, and/or scribe or any other steward must be brought to the judge's immediate attention. On no account should another dog be allowed to run before any problems from the previous round have been dealt with.
- 11.7 Scorers should keep judging slips in the appropriate order; usually clear rounds in one pile, 5 faults in next etc.
- 11.8 Should any piece of equipment require repair during the course of a class, permission of the judge must be sought.

Chapter 12. After Judging

- 12.1 The way a course is dismantled is just as important as the way it is set up and provision should be made for the safe and quick dismantling of the course by the Ring Manager:
- 12.2 The scorer should ensure that all score sheets are returned to the Secretary's Office at the end of the class.
- 12.3 All unused clear round rosettes should be returned to the Secretary's Office at the end of the day.

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