Capital District Agility Fun Group Rules and Guidelines
Fall 2014 – Winter 2015
July 29, 2014

Overview

The rules and guidelines presented herein are designed to provide a framework for evaluating the performance of each team. In the spirit of providing a training and learning opportunity, the rules were written to provide appropriate guidance while allowing handlers to train their dogs on the courses without dismissal from the ring.

The rules and guidelines of the Capital District Agility Fun Group reflect typical practices of many agility-sanctioning organizations and are not meant to represent any particular one. Flexibility is encouraged. Standard courses should emphasize handling skills while games courses should emphasize strategy skills. Games courses may be selected from those used by AKC, CPE, and other organizations, or may be selected from sources such as <u>The Clean Run Book of Agility Games</u> by Bud Houston, or may be created by CDAFG members. The idea is to challenge the ability of all members and prepare them for a variety of experiences in agility trials.

All rules are subject to change upon agreement of all Team Captains and the CDAFG Coordinator. Rule changes will be communicated to all CDAFG participants in a timely manner.

1.0   Administrative Matters

1.1   Capital District Agility Fun Group Overview

<u>Purpose</u>:   To provide training in an agility trial-like environment, specifically, to simulate the competition environment, increase the competitive ability of club members, provide appropriate training opportunities, and have some fun at the same time.

<u>General Description</u>:   An agility competition for a designated period, held one day per week, consisting of two runs per session. The training consists of one standard course and one game course each week. Three hours or less is the time goal for each session. Scoring will be on an individual and on a club basis.

1.2   Eligibility

The Capital District Agility Fun Group is open to any member of a participating agility club or training center who has completed an Intermediate training class or equivalent, or who has entered an agility trial, at any level, in any agility sanctioning organization. Any agility handler who is not a member of a participating agility club or training center may participate in the CDFAG at the invitation of a participating member, provided the non-member meets the eligibility requirements.

Dogs must be at least 12 months old to compete and must be able to perform <u>all </u>obstacles safely. A handler may substitute another dog they own on different days, but the same dog must compete for all of that day's session. Any dog(s) the handler may be working during the season must be declared during registration so that the dogs may be recorded in the database for scoring purposes. Bitches in season and dogs that are aggressive, disabled, or ill should not compete.

A handler may only be on one team. Handler substitutions will be allowed if appropriate for training.

1.3   Competition Level

The Standard Courses will be designed to an Intermediate level (e.g., CPE Level 3, USDAA Advanced, AKC Open) with 14 to 17 obstacles. There will not be separate courses for different levels. If the majority of participants are currently at the Novice level, course designs should be such that these participants can be successful. In the event the preponderance of participants are at the Novice level, courses should be designed to reflect this level of experience; scoring of higher level dogs will be adjusted accordingly.

When registering a dog for the season the dog's level should be based on the following criteria:
Novice – dog has not yet competed or is in USDAA Starters, CPE Levels 1/2, AKC Novice, DOCNA Beginner, TDAA Beginner
Intermediate – dog is competing at the USDAA Advanced, CPE Level 3, AKC Open, DOCNA Intern, TDAA Intermediate
Masters – Dog is competing at the USDAA Masters, CPE levels 4/5/C, AKC Excellent, DOCNA Specialist, TDAA Superior

1.4   Time Frame
The Capital District Agility Fun Group will meet for eight sessions, nominally held one day every two to three weeks during the winter months (typically November-March). Each match shall consist of two events: one standard course and one game course. The goal is to keep each week's competition to three hours or less.

1.5   Organization of the CDAFG
Host clubs are those agility or training organizations that will be responsible for facilitating the training within the CDAFG. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
- Arranging for a judge and for all required workers;
- Designing the courses to be used during the session;
- Providing course maps, instructions, and scribe sheets (a spreadsheet to help with printing scribe sheets will be provided to the host club prior to each event);
- Establishing standard and maximum course times;
- Ensuring all equipment is properly put away at the completion of the session; and
- Scoring all runs and providing all scores to the CDAFG Scorekeeper.

Host facilities are those venues where the CDAFG will meet for training. In some cases, host clubs may not have a facility large enough to accommodate the CDAFG and will host training sessions at other host facilities.

1.5.1   CDAFG Coordinator
The *CDAFG Coordinator* (or his/her designee) is responsible for the following:
- Arranging for times and dates for CDAFG meets;
- Recruiting Club Representatives;
- Maintaining rules of competition;
- Obtaining prizes and awards;
- Collecting registration forms from participants; and
- Coordinating notification of schedule changes and cancellations with the club representatives.

An *Assistant CDAFG Coordinator* should be identified to help administer the CDAFG if necessary.

1.5.2   Club Representative
A *Club Representative* is required for each participating club/organization in the CDAFG. When their club or organization is acting as the Host Club, the Club Representative shall:
- Schedule people for officiating, hospitality, and course building;
- Design a standard and games course;
- Accumulate all scores and send the weekly results to the *CDAFG Scorekeeper* in a timely manner*;*
- Resolve any problems at the site;
- Ensure breakfast is provided (clubs will be reimbursed for hospitality to a reasonable extent); and
- Coordinate supplies for the events.

In addition, the Club Representative is responsible for providing information to his/her club members, for assigning teams for his/her club members, and for communicating with the club on matters pertaining to the CDAFG.

Also see section 3.1 for required materials to be brought to each event.

1.5.3   CDAFG Scorekeeper

The *CDAFG Scorekeeper* will:

- Receive the weekly scores from the *CDAFG Coordinator;* and
- Calculate and post the accumulated scores at the end of each week on the announcements-only email list and provide such scores to the group's website webmaster for uploading to the website.

1.5.4   CDAFG Treasurer
The *CDAFG Treasurer* will:

- Collect all registration fees and deposit them in a separate checking account; and
- Disburse funds to host facilities and for CDAFG activities as required.

1.6   Communication
Notification of registration for the CDAFG will be managed by the CDAFG Coordinator. All entries shall be mailed to the CDAFG Treasurer or his/her designee in accordance with the registration instructions.

The participants will communicate via an email list or other system as appropriate. The courses, rules, etc. will be posted on the group website, www.cdafg.com, as available. The scoring results and special updates will be posted on the group email list and/or on the group website.

1.7   Course Design and Submission
The Club Representative responsible for each event shall provide the standard and games courses, with briefing notes for the game, to the CDAFG coordinator(s) at least 10 days before the date of the event for review/approval. This is to insure that standards of quality, safety, and level of difficulty are maintained.

1.8   Course Preview and Practice
Because one of the purposes of the CDAFG is to promote learning and trialing experience, the courses will be available as soon as possible for review and practice. The courses may be set up for training, except practicing is not allowed at the competition site on the day of the event. A practice jump may be provided off the regular course on the day of the event.

2.0   Design, Performance, Rules

2.1   Course Design and Performance
The following rules are generic in nature and reflect typical rules for the variety of agility sanctioning organizations in existence. If Club Representatives and the CDAFG Coordinator agree, these rules may be superseded by those of specific agility sanctioning organizations as appropriate. All CDAFG participants shall be informed of the rules in effect at each session at least one week prior to the event.

2.2   Selection of a Judge, Scribe, and Timer
Each session will have a team or teams providing the officiating. They will provide a Judge, Scribe, Timer, and Gate Steward. The host club will be responsible for selecting members to meet judging and participation restrictions. Non-participants may fill any worker role if desired.

Anyone may stand as a judge so long as he or she has the confidence of the participants. A judge may show his/her own dog at the session.

The judge's word on any call is final and only the judge may assess course faults. The timer and scribe may provide opinions to or ask questions of the judge, but the judge has the final say.

2.3   Jumping Standards and Course Times
Each handler may choose the jump height at which his/her dog performs and must continue to jump at this height throughout the season. This may be any height that the equipment can accommodate and is agreed on by the participants, although it is recommended that the jump heights be limited to 4", 8", 12", 16", 20", and 24" to minimize time required to reset bars. It is not necessary to measure dogs.

There normally will be a Standard Course Time (SCT) and a Maximum Course Time (MCT). (See the Course Time section for details)

For handicapped handlers, their actual time in the standard course will be reduced by 5 seconds for scoring purposes. See sections 2.9 and 2.10 for more information about scoring. In addition, for handicapped handlers, appropriate adjustments to required points or allowed time shall be made at the discretion of the judge. Handicapped and veteran dogs are accommodated through the use of handler-selected jump heights and therefore do not receive additional consideration in scoring.

2.4   Agility Obstacles
Below is a list of equipment that may be used for all courses: Substitutions are allowed if equipment is not available. There are no specific requirements for the obstacles that must be used on any course, except that for standard there shall be at least 2 different contacts performed on the course.

> Dogwalk
> A-frame
> Seesaw
> Table
> Pipe tunnels
> Collapsed tunnel (chute)
> Tire
> Weave poles
> Bar jumps
> Panel jump
> Double spread jump
> Triple spread jump
> Broad jump

2.5   Obstacle Performance
Safety is of vital importance. All course setups may be adjusted to allow safe performance due to site restrictions. The four-paw safety rule shall always be in effect for standard courses for all dogs, and may or may not be in effect for games courses.

Contact Equipment
Safety zones shall be painted in accordance with the rules of any of the major agility organizations. It is preferred that the ramps on the dogwalk and on the A-frame be slatted. In the event that a slatless A-frame is used, the height of the apex shall be adjusted downward. Contact heights shall be consistent with typical agility-sanctioning organizations; in the event of parallel titling programs with different contact heights, the lower height should be used. In no case shall the A-frame apex height exceed 5'6", the dogwalk be higher than 4 feet, or the teeter be higher than 2 feet.

All contact zones shall be judged on the down ramp only.

The Four Paw Safety Rule is in effect for all dogs in all Standard courses and may be invoked by the judge for a games course if deemed appropriate. If a dog commits to the obstacle with all four paws, and then leaves the obstacle, the judge shall instruct the handler to go on without a retry. This will result in the assessment of a Failure to Perform (FTP) penalty. If the handler directs the dog to reattempt the obstacle, this will result in the elimination of that handler and dog for that course. This is allowed as a training exercise, but means that handler and dog will not receive a score.

Making contact with all four paws on the incorrect ramp will be assessed as a wrong course.

Flyoffs on the seesaw are assessed if the dog leaves the obstacle in a blatantly unsafe manner or if the seesaw fails to hit the ground on the downward stroke before the all the paws of the dog exit the plank. This is a judge's call.

There are no specific requirements or limitation for the number of times a contact obstacle may be used in a standard or in a game course.

Table
If used, the dog must jump onto the table and assume a position of the judge's direction (a down, sit, or stand), for a period of five seconds. If performing a down, both elbows must be touching the table. If the dog leaves the position or leaves the table, the count is restarted from where the count was left off when the dog returns to the correct position on the table. Failure to achieve a 5-second count shall be assessed a failure-to-perform fault.

Since some teams do not participate in venues requiring the dog sit on the table, requiring a sit may not be consistent with their training and experience. Therefore, if the handler informs the judge prior to beginning the course that they will be doing a down when a sit is required, the team may do a down instead of a sit and they will not be assessed a failure-to-perform fault for the different performance.

A minimum of two table heights should be available. Dogs jumping 16" or less should perform a table of about 12" or less. Dogs jumping greater than 16 inches should perform a table of between 16" and 24".

Weave poles
For standard courses, weaves shall be limited to 6 poles per set. The maximum number of weaves to be performed on a standard course is 12. There are no limits on the number of poles or sets of poles for games.

No refusals or missed entry penalties shall be assessed. However, the obstacle must be completed in its entirety in order to avoid an FTP penalty. This means that the dog should eventually enter and exit correctly, and weave in and out of each pole.

Missed poles ("pop-outs") may be faulted, at the discretion of the judge, and if so can only be faulted once per set of weave poles, and only after a correct entry is made. It is up to the discretion of the judge whether missed poles will be faulted or whether the dog just has to get them done to avoid FTP penalty. The judge must announce how poles will be judged at the course briefing.

Back weaving will be assessed a wrong course, and will be judged as such only if the dog performs 3 weaving motions (engages with at least 4 poles).

Spread Hurdles
If used, the double and triple may be ascending only.

Hurdles and Jumps
These must have a displaceable bar or plank. Bars may be set in the traditional method with two bars or crossed in the middle to provide a lower jump height.

Broad Jumps
Broad jumps may be used, with the jump distance approximately twice the dog's jump height. Corner poles shall be used to denote the obstacle.

2.6   Course Layout
Course layouts must fit safely within the confines of any building used to hold CDAFG matches. Ring gates or other barriers shall be used to prevent dogs and handlers from interacting with any material stored around the edges of the ring.

Obstacles in sequence may be placed no closer than 15 feet apart and no more than 22 feet apart; however, a spacing of 16 to 18 feet is preferred. Accommodations should be made for at least 5' of space between obstacles to allow for access for handlers with assistive devices to be able to move freely around the course.

The CDAFG coordinator has the final say in matters of course safety and design as outlined in this section, and has the authority to change the course setup at any match to make the course meet such standards.

In Standard Courses, normally, the first and last obstacle will be the start and finish line, respectively, due to space constraints, unless e-timing is used. This will be used to start and stop the time, once any part of the dog crosses that line. If the dog goes around the last obstacle, the timer is not stopped unless the handler and dog stop working, in which case the timer will be stopped and a FTP fault will be assessed. If there is a fault on the last obstacle, it is counted as a normal fault.

The table or other obstacle may be used to start and/or stop time in games. Handlers should be encouraged to have their dog do the expected performance on the table in this case.

If practical, host clubs should consider designing courses that meet the requirements of a specific agility sanctioning organization with which the host club is associated. That is, one club may choose to design courses more consistent with AKC rules while another may choose to design courses in line with CPE rules.

While competing, a dog must either be without a collar, or may wear a flat buckle collar with no hanging tags. No leashes or leads are allowed except as noted below.

2.7   Course Handling Standards
Participants in the CDAFG represent a variety of experiences in different venues. Consequently, scoring may differ slightly from week to week based on that experience. Participants should be flexible with this, and judges should be consistent.

To earn a score, no food or toys may be used while running the course; handlers may have food in their pocket to feed the dog before starting the run and after finishing the run, without penalty. Food or toys may be taken onto and used on the course if desired for training purposes, but the team will receive an elimination. Handlers shall use all necessary care not to leave food or toys behind after their runs.

Harsh handling, either verbally or physically, is not permitted, and neither is outside assistance in Standard courses. Good-natured team support is expected and encouraged with the Games courses.

The handler may not touch the dog or obstacles, except for incidental contact, which is viewed as accidental contact that does not benefit the dog's performance. This includes the handler knocking off a pole after the dog has cleared the jump. A bump which results in the dog changing direction towards the correct obstacle, even if accidental, will result in penalty.

If the dog picks up or plays with any equipment on course (cones, jump bars, etc) it will result in Elimination for that run, but the team may continue on course in training mode if they so wish.

A dog may be penalized or eliminated for continually nipping or for showing some other form of aggression towards the handler. If the handler is actively working to stop this behavior in a training manner, the team shall be allowed to continue, but may be eliminated at the discretion of the judge.

A dog should work steadily throughout the course. If the dog ceases to work, is out of control, or is performing obstacles unsafely, the dog and handler shall be dismissed from the ring and eliminated, except as noted below.

No refusals or run-out penalties shall be assessed on any obstacle or course.

Dogs fouling or leaving the ring will be eliminated and dismissed. Leaving the ring is defined as when the dog is no longer working, and its attention is not on the handler.

Off-course shall be assessed when a dog has committed with all four paws to the incorrect obstacle, wrong end of a contact obstacle, or tunnel, or for performing the obstacle in the wrong direction.

Non-punitive training is allowed in the ring, but will result in elimination. However, the handler is allowed to complete the course. Non-punitive training includes: picking the dog up and gently placing it back on contact equipment, moderate verbal reprimand, and touching the dog to assist it in assuming position on the table. It is

preferred that dogs start the course without a lead/leash, and that after successfully starting a course, the handler may put the dog on a leash and lead the dog through the course if the handler deems this necessary to complete the course. Running with a collar and lead or leash is permitted in a "For Exhibition Only" manner, but will result in elimination. Non-punitive training does not include hitting or striking the dog, shouting or swearing, shaking, or throwing anything at or near the dog, or any other action that the judge may interpret as abusive. Should the judge determine such behavior as being inappropriate, the handler will be excused from the ring immediately, and if necessary the handler may be dismissed from the event, or removed from the CDAFG group, depending on the severity of the behavior. Final determination of such dismissal will be determined by a committee made up of the judge, host club coordinator for that event, and CDAFG Coordinator. The CDAFG Coordinator will have the final say in such matters. Also see section 2.12.

2.8   Course Times and Time Faults

A Standard Course Time (SCT) shall be used for standard and standard-type games courses. The SCT will be calculated by multiplying the number of obstacles by 3.5 sec. for dogs jumping 16 inches and higher, rounded up to the next second (Example 1: 15 obstacles x 3.5 seconds per obstacle = 52.5, rounded up to 53 seconds. Example 2: 20 obstacles x 3.5 sec. = 70 seconds). Dogs jumping 12 inches and below will receive 10 % additional time added to the SCT, again rounded up to the next second. Time faults are assessed by deducting any full seconds over SCT from the 50 points available (see scoring section 2.9 below). If the pause table is used in a standard course, 5 seconds shall be added to the course time calculated above.

For games courses, the host club coordinator and CDAFG coordinator may determine that a different SCT calculation other than that used for standard courses is needed based on the type of course presented for that week's event.

In all courses, a maximum course time (MCT) shall be applied. This is the longest a participant may remain in the ring. In standard courses, the MCT shall be 1.5 times the small dog SCT. In games courses, an MCT consistent with the timing of the game shall be used. The MCT may not exceed 1-1/2 minutes (90 seconds) for any course.

For points-type games courses, the SCT may be different for small and big dogs. Example: jackpot or gamblers may have a different opening period time for gathering points and a different closing time for performing the gamble for big dogs (16" and above) and small dogs (12" and under). This is encouraged, and if done, the host club coordinator and/or judge must inform the scribe of the times before the class begins.

2.9   Standard Scoring

The team members are scored for the Individual runs using the following fault system. The fault points are deducted from 50.

Missed contact zones	5 faults
Fly-off on see-saw	5 faults
First occurrence of jumping off table prior to end of count	5 faults
Anticipation of end of count on table	5 faults
Displacing any poles or planks from hurdles	5 faults
Knocking part of broad jump over	5 faults
Wrong course (needs to be 4 paws)	5 faults
Missed weave pole (only once per set)	5 faults
Handler touching dog or obstacle (other than incidental)	5 faults to dismissal
Failure to Perform (FTP) obstacle	15 faults
Failing to correct a missed entry or weave pole	15 faults
Walking over broad jump	15 faults
Refusals or runouts	Not penalized
Dog fouling ring	Dismissal
Harsh or abusive behavior/language	Dismissal
Dog aggression	Dismissal (see Section 2.7)
Dog ceasing to work	Dismissal (see Section 2.7)
Outside assistance	5 faults to dismissal
Use of food or devices (toys) on course	Elimination

Picking up/playing with equipment (cones, bars, etc)	Elimination
Poor sportsmanship	Dismissal

Multiple faults should not be called for any obstacle. Note that elimination does not require the team to leave the course. In the event of a dismissal, the team must leave the course.

Additionally, any full seconds over Standard Course Time (SCT) will also be deducted as time faults in standard courses.

The judge should instruct the scribe on what signals will be used by the judge. One method is as follows:

> One raised open hand for any 5-point fault.
> Two raised open hands for any 15-point fault.
> Crossed arms or whistle for Elimination.
> Hands held in the form of a T for No Time.

Individual scoring shall be done on a weighted basis to account for variations in skill levels among the participants. All scoring starts with 50 points being a clean run. For intermediate level dogs, there is no weighting applied. For novice level dogs and handicapped handlers, 5 seconds are subtracted from their run time before scoring is done. For masters level dogs, 5 seconds are added to their run time before scoring is done. These time additions/subtractions serve to equalize the playing field in which seasoned teams are running on the same course as novice teams. Then, any faults (time or course) are deducted from that adjusted total.

2.10   Game Course Scoring
The Game event may have a SCT, but it is anticipated that most runs will have accumulated points. It is the intent to allow various methods to add points to the team's score and the scoring method will be detailed on the course-briefing sheet. Every effort is made to make the game course scoring approximately equal to that for standard, with the highest scoring run being worth approximately 50 points. Therefore, from week to week some multiplying/weighting of team scores in point-based games may be necessary to achieve this goal.

For SCT based games scoring is done exactly as it is for the standard course.

For points based games scoring is done based on the rules of the game. Initially, based on the type of game and maximum amount of points possible, a multiplier sometimes must be used before applying weighting for different skill levels of dogs.. If this initial multiplier is used, after that is complete the weighting for equalizing scores for different levels of dogs is done as follows: novice level dogs and handicapped handlers receive 5 additional points; intermediate level dogs receive no adjustment; masters level dogs have 5 points taken away. For example, a game that has a maximum amount of 10 points available would first be multiplied by a factor of 5, so that a perfect score would then be 50, before any additional dog's level weighting is calculated.

2.10   Club and Cumulative Scoring

The best three of every four team member's Individual scores are kept (in other words, one out of every four lowest scores is thrown away). This is done for both the standard and games courses each week. Absent teams are not counted towards this calculation, but those teams eliminated or using their runs for training are counted. Then, an average of the remaining scores is calculated to be the team's score for both the standard and games courses.

Club totals for each event are calculated by taking these average scores for the standard and games courses and adding both together.

Cumulative club totals are added for each of the 8 weeks to determine the overall club winner for the season.

2.11   Prizes, Awards, and Awards Ceremony
Prizes, awards, and CDAFG commemoratives may be available. Prizes and awards may be given for team and individual accomplishment. Awards, if given, will be presented after the 8th and final event of the CDAFG; some

awards may require performance of the last two courses, while others may be determined based on the first seven weeks of the CDAFG. The award ceremony may include a party (e.g., lunch purchased with CDAFG funds, a potluck meal, and so on). Awards and prizes will be purchased with CDAFG membership fees.

2.12   Misconduct
The host facility's Dog Aggression Policy and Handler Conduct Policy shall be in effect at all CDAFG competitions. These shall be communicated to the CDAFG participants at each match. Violations of these policies shall be grounds for dismissal of the handler and dog from the grounds for that match, or, in the case of very serious violations, removal from the group. The host facility will have final determination of punitive action, if any, in these matters as it pertains to their policy and their facility.

In addition, the CDAFG Coordinator has the final determination of punitive action, if any, in matters of poor sportsmanship, handler conduct, or aggressive dog incidents as it pertains to possible dismissal or removal from the CDAFG group.

3.1   Supplies required for CDAFG play (arranged by CDAFG Coordinator and Club Representatives)
2 Whistles
2 Stopwatches
Scribe sheets
Courses with briefings for the week ((Downloaded from web site)
Worker schedule (Downloaded from web site)
Rules and guidelines with scoring system (Downloaded from web site)
Tape to mark ground boxes/lines if necessary.

4.1   CDAFG Fees
The fees for participating in the CDAFG shall be determined by the CDAFG Coordinator. These fees will be used to compensate host facilities in the form of training fees for the use of their property and for hospitality, awards, commemoratives, and other expenses as deemed appropriate by the CDAFG Coordinator and Club Representatives. Unused funds may be returned to the participants or otherwise distributed. In no case shall any collected fees be retained.

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