# AKC Agility Judges Guidelines

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CHAPTER 1
JUDGES RESPONSIBILITIES, PROTOCOL, AND PROCEDURES

Remember: You make it work!
As an American Kennel Club Agility Judge, you are an essential part of the program. The AKC® agility system needs your dedication and expertise to function properly. We, the AKC Director of Agility and Field Representatives, believe these judging guidelines will make it easier for you to do your job and to contribute to the sport of agility in a positive manner.

This set of guidelines is meant to supplement and provide further explanation of the agility regulations. It does not repeat the regulations, nor is it intended to change or alter the regulations in any way; however, its contents are a valid extension of the regulations and should be adhered to as such. You should be thoroughly familiar with these guidelines, as well as all of the AKC’s rules, regulations for agility trials, and policies if you:

- Are an approved or provisional judge
- Have accepted match judging assignments
- Plan to attend an AKC Judging Seminar

SECTION 1. Responsibilities as a Judge

Responsibilities to the Sport of Purebred Dogs: Approval to judge carries with it the full endorsement of the American Kennel Club. Whether judging at a licensed trial or sanctioned match or engaging in any dog-related activity (including but not limited to exhibiting), judges must be cognizant of their responsibility to the sport.

Judges have a responsibility to work with the AKC staff and its Field Representatives to ensure that the standards of the AKC agility program are maintained. As a judge, you are required to meet these key criteria:

1. Knowledge: Through experience and continuing study, you must demonstrate sound knowledge of the sport of agility. Good judges never stop learning about the sport of agility. To ensure that all judges are knowledgeable, agility judges are required to attend and meet the requirements of a continuing education seminar at least once every 3 years.

Excellent sources of information for agility judges to stay current include:
- *The AKC Gazette* (the official journal for the sport of purebred dogs)
- The AKC web site (www.akc.org)
- Judge’s Newsletters
2. **Procedure:** You must demonstrate good course design, sound judging procedure, good decision making skills, common sense, and efficient ring procedure. A judge who does this will earn the confidence of exhibitors and spectators alike.

3. **Impartiality:** It is essential that exhibitors have full faith in the impartiality and competence of judges. There is no room for even the suggestion that anything other than the performance of the dog in the ring is involved in the judges’ decisions.

**General Responsibilities:** An agility judge’s tasks include:
- Corresponding with the club in a timely manner;
- Designing the courses and submitting them for approval;
- Setting the proper atmosphere at the trial to project the attitude that agility is a fun sport;
- Ensuring that the course is built correctly;
- Removing all safety hazards related to the equipment and the ring area;
- Measuring dogs without a valid height card or form to ensure that all dogs jump in the correct height divisions;
- Determining and controlling the ring procedures;
- Judging each dog’s performance;
- Verifying that scores, course yardages, and Standard Course Times (SCT’s) are recorded accurately and that the official catalog is signed (certified) and initialed.
- Ensuring that only approved courses are used at the trial for which they were designed.

**Responsibilities to Exhibitors:** Each exhibitor has paid an entry fee for the purpose of competing and having his or her dog’s performance evaluated. Judges are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to be friendly and courteous to all who enter the ring. Without exhibitors there would be no trials. For every experienced exhibitor, there are many newcomers who have less experience with the regulations and typical show procedures that will look to you for guidance.

**Responsibilities to Spectators:** Spectators form their opinion of the sport through seeing the actions of the judge, the handlers, and the dogs. Care must be taken to avoid any action that might reflect poorly on the sport. Judges should work to maintain spectator appeal in the sport, while keeping foremost in mind the welfare and safety of the exhibitors and their dogs.
SECTION 2. Protocol

Ethics: Judges must possess and project an unwavering air of integrity and ethical behavior that maintains the reputation of the AKC and the impression that agility trials are fairly and properly judged. With common sense, judges can easily avoid situations that might raise ethical questions. Judges are presumed to be honest, competent, and dedicated. Nevertheless, it is all too easy for a judge to find himself or herself in uncomfortable or even inappropriate situations. These guidelines cannot cover every situation. They can, however, help judges avoid improprieties, real or perceived.

Some ethical rules are clear. For example:

- Never accept any payments or gifts, or anything that could be perceived as a payment or gift for past or future placements, qualifying scores, or measurements.

- Advise potential exhibitors not to enter under you when their presence or the presence of their dogs might give the impression of unfair advantage. This may include, for instance, a person with whom you co-own dogs or your employer or employee.

- Do not use your status as a judge at a trial at which you are judging to promote seminars or sales of dog food or to hand out written material for such promotion. Do not sell equipment or merchandise on a day that you are judging.

- Judges are not allowed to conduct training or handling seminars of any kind for the club or exhibitors on the day prior to judging. To avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, judges should extend this period to at least one week prior to judging. Any day following the end of a trial or set of trials is allowed.

- The Internet can pose challenges for a judge. If a judge corresponds with an exhibitor after a trial regarding a call or situation, that correspondence should remain private between the judge and the exhibitor. Judges must be very careful when posting messages to lists or web sites so as not to denigrate another judge or club.

These are only examples. The key is to avoid situations that might give the impression of impropriety. There will always be gray areas that could cause problems. Ask yourself whether what is happening, however innocent, maintains an outward appearance of propriety.

The AKC recognizes that you cannot control who enters a trial. This does not diminish the importance of appearances. Everything possible must be done to
keep your reputation above reproach. Appropriate action by the AKC will be taken for any ethical violation.

**Social Functions:** If a club holding a show or trial holds a dinner or social function, it is recommended that the judge(s) attend. If exhibitors who might appear in your ring will be present, take extra care to avoid any appearance of impropriety during these functions.

**Training and Exhibiting:** All judges start in the sport as exhibitors and trainers. It is natural to want to continue these activities after becoming a judge. It is acceptable to exhibit or have your dogs exhibited at trials at which you are not judging. Because it would give the impression of impropriety, it is not permissible for your spouse, family member, relative, or household member to enter their dogs or any dogs they co-own in an agility trial on the day that you are judging. You, as the judge, are not allowed to exhibit nor have your dog exhibited on the day that you are judging. Additionally, your dog or any dog co-owned by you may not be exhibited in conformation, obedience, or any other AKC venue on the day that you are judging if the show or trial is on the same show grounds.

Judges must be prudent in how and when they exhibit. They must demonstrate the utmost in decorum and sportsmanship. Judges who exhibit should expect to be subject to special scrutiny. It is inappropriate and unprofessional for an exhibitor who is also a judge, regardless of his or her experience, to verbally override or second-guess the judge of record, including “double judging” outside the ring. This type of behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the Judge of Record and/or the AKC. The judge of record has complete control of how the course is set, how the ring is administered, and how the performance of the dog is judged. The judge of record shall not be subjected to additional course tweaking, “double judging”, or interference of ring personnel by any exhibitor or judge, as these are misconductable offenses. An experienced judge can make helpful suggestions to a judge of record if their expertise is requested.

**Exhibiting in other AKC events:** Judges (including provisional judges) may enter the “A” class in other AKC events if otherwise eligible.

**Judge’s Attitude:** As a judge, your attitude strongly affects the atmosphere of the trial. Thus, it is important that you be both pleasant and friendly. You should convey the impression that you want the dogs and handlers to succeed and, indeed, you should. It is your responsibility to design appropriately challenging courses and officiate over them correctly. If you do this properly, then you should be pleased to watch dogs perform successfully on your courses.
Because you are responsible for so many different aspects of the event, it is easy to overlook details. Since any number of details can have a large impact on a class, ranging from safety to a misunderstanding of the course that is to be performed, you should listen carefully to suggestions and comments made by the exhibitors. Remember that they are looking at the course from an entirely different perspective than you are. Even if you decide not to act upon a comment or suggestion, giving it careful consideration goes a long way in the eyes of the competitors.

**Accepting Assignments:** As stated in the regulations, a judge may not accept an assignment that is within 30 days and 200 miles of a previously accepted assignment, with the exception of single breed specialties.

Judges must promptly return telephone calls or emails (accepting or declining) from clubs wishing to hire them. This will allow the club to either finalize their plans or continue to search for another judge.

Require clubs to give you a written contract or submit your own to the club. Their request should clearly specify the class(es) and date(s) you are being asked to judge. Promptly acknowledge all contracts, again in writing, with your judge’s number, and keep accurate records of assignments you accept. Judges must communicate with the Trial Chairman to aid in planning the judging schedule (class order) that is to be mailed out to the exhibitors. This judging schedule will set the entire order of judging for the weekend. The class order and start times listed for any class(es) **must not** be changed on the day of the trial.

Judges should understand that in accepting an assignment, they are committing themselves to the show-giving club for the entire day. Their travel plans should not be predicated on arriving late or on leaving early to get transportation home or to another show. Rushing exhibitors in order to catch a flight or leave earlier is unacceptable and grossly inconsiderate to those who have paid to have their performance judged and is subject to disciplinary action.

Provisional judges are required to submit a request to judge to the Director of Agility **prior** to accepting any judging assignment. At the Novice/Open provisional judging level, a minimum of two satisfactory supervisions are required before consideration is made to move the judge to the Excellent Provisional judging level. At the Excellent Provisional judging level, a minimum of one satisfactory supervision is required before consideration is made to move the judge to the Fully Approved judging level. These conditions are separate from the Course Design requirements and a judge may be required to remain on Provisional Course Design status until the Director of Agility feels the obligation for gaining knowledge and practical experience has been met. An Agility Field Rep may be required to be present at any or all provisional assignments.
**Transportation:** Judges shall not travel to or from shows or stay with anyone who is likely to be exhibiting or handling under them. Transportation to the show grounds from a hotel, motel, or airport is not considered travel.

**Expenses:** When you accept an assignment, clearly inform the club officials what your fees will be. Expenses must be discussed and put into the contract so that the club will not be surprised by a larger-than-anticipated bill on the day of the trial. This is a contract between you and the club. The more specific details you and the club include in the contract, the less the potential for misunderstandings. These details might include who will arrange for transportation and accommodations (smoking or non-smoking rooms), dietary restrictions, and what expenses will be reimbursed, such as meals, parking, and course copies if applicable. It is also important to discuss when reimbursement will take place for items such as airfare that is usually purchased weeks in advance of the travel date. This is an important consideration and a courtesy to the club. If you sign a contract, you and the club are responsible for abiding by its conditions. Clubs cannot be made responsible for the costs of boarding a judge’s dog(s).

**Proper Attire:** All judges shall wear suitable attire. Business casual dress is highly recommended. It is important for a judge to maintain a proper and professional appearance and not be confused with the exhibitors. When an agility trial is held in conjunction with a conformation show or obedience trial, the agility judge is **required** to maintain an even higher level of dress, approximately matching that of the standard level of dress for judges of conformation and obedience, weather conditions allowing.

During periods of extreme hot weather, judges are permitted to wear warm weather clothing while judging. This policy applies to male and female judges alike. Please remember that collared shirts should be worn while you are judging.

- Judges may only wear shorts at agility-only trials. (Trials that are in conjunction with breed shows require more formal dress).
- Shorts must be clean and in good condition.
- The length of the shorts should be no shorter than just above the knee.
- A belt should be worn if the pants are so designed.
- For women, sleeveless shirts and dresses are permitted.
- No cut-off shorts or blue jeans material shorts are permitted.
- No “short” shorts or tight shorts (including but not limited to Spandex, Lycra, and bicycle or running type shorts) are permitted.
- No baggy “parachute” material shorts are permitted.
- No tank top shirts are permitted.
- Clogs, strapless sandals and certain dress shoes are not permitted since they do not allow a judge to move about the course in a quick, safe
manner, or achieve the proper judging position on the course to make the correct calls.

When selecting your judging attire, understand that the judge is in the ring to evaluate the team performance, not to be the center of attention; however, the exhibitors should be able to recognize that you are the judge by more than just your name tag.

**Smoking, Eating, and Drinking:** Smoking is permissible only between classes, provided it does not delay judging. Judges, exhibitors, and ring crew may not smoke in the ring. Judges must comply with all no-smoking regulations of a facility or show grounds. Judges and ring crew may not eat or drink in the course area (except that water is allowed in the ring.) Bottled water can be conveniently hidden under a nearby cone, or tucked under the A-frame to be available to the judge between jump heights or during bar setting. If a drink other than water is necessary, it should be attended to between classes or at jump height changes away from the course area.

**Special Awards:** The club may offer high-in-trial or other special awards. It is up to the club or show committee to determine the basis for these awards. Judges shall not become involved with determining the criteria for any special awards, including high-in-trial awards. High-in-trial awards are discouraged due to the difficulty in providing a completely fair evaluation between the jump heights and class levels. Some clubs will still choose to have a high-in-trial award and will list it in their premium. Determination of the method used for awarding high-in-trial should be left to the show committee, and this method should be known and understood by the show committee and the score table prior to the start of the trial. *At no time shall a judge hold a runoff for this award.*

**SECTION 3. Procedures**

**Change of Address:** Judges are responsible for promptly notifying the AKC office, AKC Director of Agility, and the AKC Field Representative who is responsible for review of their course designs, of any change in address, telephone and facsimile numbers, and e-mail address. The change will be reflected in the next AKC Judges Directory.

**Fitness to Judge:** Judges are expected to be physically and mentally capable of performing the functions necessary to properly evaluate the dogs and handlers as they move quickly around the course.

This means that judges must have:
- The flexibility to measure dogs;
• The dexterity to move at a sufficient speed and distance to adhere to the schedule of the trial-giving club and AKC policy;
• The visual acuity, correctable by eyeglasses or contact lenses, to be able to judge dogs at an appropriate distance;
• The capability to do all the necessary paperwork and course setting.

When a judge can no longer properly perform the duties of a judge, he or she does the position of judge and the sport of agility a disservice by continuing to accept assignments. The AKC has a Judge Emeritus program to honor judges who have served the sport faithfully and wish to retire. If the judge wishes to return to fully approved judging status from the emeritus program, he or she will be required to attend and pass all requirements at a full judging seminar.

Inability to Fulfill a Judging Assignment: If you find that you cannot fulfill an assignment because of illness, weather-related travel delays, or any other serious occurrence, immediately notify the Trial Chairman, Trial Secretary/Superintendent, or both, by telephone, overnight letter, telegram, facsimile, or e-mail.

The closer you are to the actual trial date, the more important it is for you to explore all means of communication until you get a hold of the party who can start looking for a replacement for you.

Additionally, The AKC Director of Agility or an AKC Agility Field Representative should be contacted so that he or she can help facilitate the process of replacing you on the judging panel, if necessary.

The procedure for replacing a judge at a trial due to illness or weather related travel is as follows:
• Once a judge is no longer able to judge, the trial chairman shall ask those exhibiting to be a replacement judge based on the following hierarchy:
  1. Any fully approved judges(s) present at the trial;
  2. Any provisional judge(s);
  3. Anyone who has attended a full judging seminar;
  4. And finally, the most experienced exhibitor.
• At the time the replacement judge starts judging, he or she becomes a judge of record and can no longer exhibit that day, nor can any of their household members, family members, or handlers that have co-owned dogs entered. They do, however, retain any qualifying scores that they or their household members had achieved prior to their starting judging. Any licensed judge in attendance has a professional obligation to step up and become a judge of record in this instance.

Any replacement judge remains bound by these Guidelines and the Regulations for Agility Trials. Approved course designs should be transferred from the
approved judge to the substitute judge, if possible, for their use. If they cannot be transferred, a Field Rep can assign any courses needed.

**Judge vs. Show Committee Responsibilities:** A judge’s responsibilities and duties are primarily within the ring. The Trial Committee primarily deals with issues outside the ring. As a judge of record, be careful not to overstep your authority. For example:

- If there is a complaint leading to a misconduct hearing, you are not involved unless you personally witnessed the incident.
- If you witness dogs wearing collars that are not allowed on the AKC show grounds, you should ask the Trial Committee to address it with the individual owners.
- If the rings are not running efficiently due to conflicts, you are required to discuss with the Trial Chairman and Trial Committee possibly switching the jump height order in the class (if it would help). The Trial Committee has the authority and final decision to switch the jump height order. However the class order may not be switched from the published Judging Schedule. You are not allowed to start a class prior to its published start time. Any change to the jump height order should be carefully considered prior to implementing it due to the potential confusion among exhibitors. If any change is made, accommodation to the maximum extent feasible would be appropriate for confused exhibitors.
- If the manner in which a club gives out its ribbons and awards is up to the club (after the judge has verified the accuracy of the scribe sheets), as long as it is within AKC policy. The club may ask the judge for his or her help, but it is the club’s choice.

**SECTION 4. Judging Disciplinary Policies**

**Unapproved Courses:** A judge that uses an unapproved course or courses, without just cause is subject to a reprimand. This disciplinary action can range from a verbal warning that becomes a permanent part of the judge’s file, to full suspension and/or fine depending upon the severity of the offense.

**Unsatisfactory Observations:** Any judge that has received three consecutive unsatisfactory supervisions or four out of five unsatisfactory supervisions at their current status level will immediately be placed on inactive status and will be required to attend and pass a full judging seminar.

** Regulations Violation:** Any judge that violates or fails to uphold the AKC’s rules, regulations, guidelines, judges’ newsletters, policies and/or Code of Sportsmanship is subject to a reprimand. This disciplinary action can range from a verbal warning that becomes a permanent part of the judge’s file, to full suspension and/or fine depending upon the severity of the offense.
Prejudicial Conduct: Any judge that participates in any action that is prejudicial to the sport of Agility or any other AKC event shall be subject to a reprimand. This disciplinary action can range from a verbal warning that becomes a permanent part of the judge’s file, to full suspension and/or fine depending upon the severity of the offense.

Course Design Deficiencies: Any judge that has consistently demonstrated the inability to design courses according to the requirements in the Regulations for Agility Trials and the AKC Agility Judges Guidelines shall adhere to the following progression:

1st Warning: A written warning letter shall be sent to the judge from the reviewing Field Rep cc’d to the Director of Agility.

2nd Warning: A written warning letter shall be sent by certified mail from the Director of Agility which must be signed by the judge and returned within 30 calendar days. If this letter is not returned within this time frame, the judge will immediately be placed on Novice/Open provisional status.

3rd Warning: The judge shall immediately be placed on Novice/Open provisional status.

SECTION 5. Certification

All judges are required to attend and meet all requirements of a re-education seminar at least once within a three-year period. It is the judge’s responsibility to ensure that they engage in the re-education seminar and fulfill the current requirements prior to their anniversary date. Any judge who does not fulfill this requirement shall adhere to the following.

The judge shall be placed on Inactive status as of the three-year anniversary of the date of their last attended re-education seminar. This status renders the judge unauthorized to judge any and all assignments from the third year anniversary date until such time as the requirements are met.

Once on Inactive status, the judge can only be reinstated to fully-approved judging status by attending and fulfilling the requirements of a re-education seminar. Judges have one year from the date they were placed on Inactive status to complete this requirement.

Once a judge has been on Inactive status for more than one year, he/she will be required to attend and pass all requirements of a full judging seminar in order to be restored to fully approved and active judging status.

AKC Agility Staff reserves the right to deny, with just cause, the privilege to become or remain and AKC Agility Judge.
Section 6. Handling Dog Aggression

Please refer to Chapter 1, Section 22 of the *Regulations for Agility Trials* for the policy on Handling Dog Aggression. The following is a synopsis of this policy in an easy to follow table form.

All incidences of aggression should be described in the Judge's Report submitted to the Director of Agility.

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<th>INCIDENT</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dog Excused by Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dog Disqualified by Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held</td>
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<td>Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held</td>
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1. Aggressive behavior in the ring toward a person or dog*  
   - Dog Excused by Judge: X  
   - Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3):  
   - Dog Disqualified by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1):  
   - Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog*:  
   - Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4):  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held: X  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held:  

2. Dog leaves the ring and threatens a dog or person and the Judge is able to see incident*  
   - Dog Excused by Judge: X  
   - Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3):  
   - Dog Disqualified by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1):  
   - Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog*:  
   - Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4):  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held: X  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held:  

3. Dog either runs out of the ring and attacks another dog or into the ring and attacks another dog*  
   - Dog Excused by Judge: X X  
   - Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3):  
   - Dog Disqualified by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1): X X  
   - Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog*: X X X  
   - Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4):  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held: X  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held: X  

4. Dog attacks any person in the ring or while being measured by the Judge  
   - Dog Excused by Judge: X X  
   - Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3):  
   - Dog Disqualified by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1): X X  
   - Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog*:  
   - Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4):  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held: X  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held:  

5. Dog attacks any person or dog outside of the ring  
   - Dog Excused by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3):  
   - Dog Disqualified by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1): X X  
   - Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog*: X X X  
   - Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4):  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held:  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held:  

6. Dog attacks any dog or person anywhere on grounds and there is a serious injury  
   - Dog Excused by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Dog on Dog Attack (form AEDSQ3):  
   - Dog Disqualified by Judge:  
   - Judge Completes Disqualification for Attacking (form AEDSQ1): X X  
   - Event Committee Must Consider Disqualification of the Dog*:  
   - Event Committee Completes Dog Disqualified by Event Committee (form AEDSQ4):  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person May Be Held:  
   - Preliminary Investigation for Event Hearing Against Person Must Be Held: X  

* Two incidents of aggressive behavior will cause the dog's disqualification.  
** Disqualification by the Event Committee requires three things to be true: 1) There was an attack; 2) There was an injury; 3) The Event Committee believes the dog is a hazard to people or dogs. –No member of the Event Committee need witness the attack. If the Event Committee becomes aware of an attack, they must consider disqualification.

**TERMINOLOGY**

- **Excusal:** Recorded on scoresheet and in signed event catalog as “EXCUSED”. Excusals are for lesser infractions and dogs get a second chance.
- **Disqualification by Judge:** Recorded on scoresheet and in signed event catalog as “DISQUALIFIED”. These are for significant infractions and dogs do not get a second chance.
- **Aggressive Behavior:** This would include growling or threatening barking.
- **Attack:** Any instance where the dog actually tried to grab someone or did grab them. Skin contact is not required.
CHAPTER 2

JUDGES DUTIES PRIOR TO THE TRIAL

SECTION 1. Communication

Communication with Trial-holding Club: Correspondence with the club prior to the trial will help ensure its success. Calls inquiring about availability for judges should be returned promptly. The judge should get both the Trial Secretary’s and the Trial Chairman’s phone numbers (cell phones and email addresses are also very helpful) to have at least two points of contact with the club.

Items Requiring Clarification Prior to Accepting Assignments: Verifying these items is required prior to accepting an assignment from a club.

Dates and the trial location: This is so you can verify that you will not be in conflict with the regulations regarding other trials that you may have already committed to judge (200 miles within 30 days). If the distances are close, you or the club should request that the AKC verify the distance between trials based on the AKC’s “in-house” program that calculates the distance between trials.

Judges fees: Judges Fees should be discussed and agreed to prior to accepting the assignment.

Expenses: Determine what expenses the club is paying for, such as course copies, travel fees (expectations of whether the judge will arrive by car or plane), meal costs, etc.

Classes: Determine the class(es) the judge is being asked to judge.

Judging Limits: A judge should discuss his or her own personal judging limits (i.e., the number of dogs they feel they can judge consistently in one day) with the club.

Travel arrangements: Determine who is responsible for making travel arrangements to get the best rates. Whoever makes the arrangements, it is important to note that the judge is committed to the club to judge all classes he or she agreed to judge. A judge may not leave prior to completing the assignment, which includes verification of all scores in the official catalog. It is imperative that a sufficient amount of time be allowed between the expected finish of judging, completion of all paperwork, and the time when the judge must leave. The Trial Chair or Secretary can give usual entries and judging lengths to give you some information on which to base your transportation choices.

Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses: Discuss how quickly the judge will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. This is especially important if the judge is arranging his or her own flights.
Judge’s number: If you agree to accept the assignment, give the club your judge’s number, as they will need it when they submit the judging panel for approval.

A written contract between the judge and the club is essential to clarify what each party expects. Items listed above should be in the contract. Additionally, a judge may wish to include other provisions in the contract such as food and beverage requirements or who picks up the expenses if the judge is unable to make the scheduled return flight, thus incurring another night of expenses.

**Additional Items a Judge Should Inquire About Prior to Departing for the Trial:** Clarifying these items may help you head off problems before they can develop.

- How will the judge be transported from the airport to the hotel and then to the trial site? If a club member is picking the judge up, get the person’s name, phone number, and cell phone number.
- If the club wants course copies for the exhibitors, who is to get them and is the club willing to pay for them? Courses shall not be released to anyone for printing or course setting prior to the day of the show.
- What amount of ring help is expected?
- What is the check-in procedure the club is expecting to use to ensure that all dogs requiring measuring are measured? Confirm that the club has an approved measuring device and a level hard surface (such as an extra pause table) for you to use.
- Does the club want a copy of the contact placements for the first class of the day? **It is expressly forbidden for the judge to send to anyone the entire course ahead of time.** The judge may send the locations of the contact obstacles with the rest of the equipment grouped together in quadrants (not laid out) and coordinates for other obstacles so the club can ‘flag’ the course, using the baseline setting method. Obstacles other than the contact obstacles must not be placed in their permanent position. The judge shall not give any courses (with more than what is described above) to anyone, nor set any course (beyond what is listed above) for the next day’s trial. You are allowed to leave a copy of the next days’ course(s) at your hotel’s front desk anytime after 12:00 midnight.
- Judges shall keep the clubs up to date as to any changes to their phone number, address, or email address, so that clubs may stay in touch with the judge they hired.

**Items the Judge Must Know Prior to Designing Courses:** These are items the judge must obtain from the club prior to designing the courses.

- The exact course dimensions and the side where the ring gate openings should be placed.
- The running surface.
• Hazards that would need to be designed around, such as areas of uneven ground, columns, posts, trees, rounded corners, and anything else that may be in the intended ring.
• A complete equipment list, including lengths and quantities of open tunnels, widths of jump bars, and number of winged vs. wingless jumps along with wing sizes.
• Spacing between poles on weave poles and combinations of weave poles that can be formed.
• Whether electric timers will/will not be used and what, if any, limitations they may have. (See Electronic Timer Requirements and Guidelines, Chapter 2, Section 5 of these Guidelines)

If you have accepted an assignment and are having trouble obtaining the information listed above in a timely manner, please call your course-reviewing Field Representative for help. Alternately, you could email the club with your request for information and copy your Field Representative.

Communication with the AKC: Communication between an AKC agility judge and the AKC office and field staff is important to keep judges abreast of changes to the Regulations, recent clarifications of the Regulations, and any policy changes that may come about. It is essential that you contact your Field Representative in charge of course review and the agility office staff at the AKC offices if any of your contact information changes, such as name, phone number, fax number, email address, and postal address.

SECTION 2. Submission of Courses for Review and Correction

Submission of Courses: Fully approved judges are required to submit courses no later than one month prior to the trial to the Field Representative in charge of their review. A judge may be required to submit courses earlier, and if required to do so, must be notified in writing of this requirement and cc’d to the Director of Agility. Provisional judges are required to submit courses to their reviewing Field Rep no later than two months prior to the trial. Remember that each trial is a separate event, which will affect the date by which you must submit your courses for review.

Corrections to Submitted Courses: Individual comments may appear on courses returned to course designers after review. Each abbreviation is usually followed by an explanation, and possibly a recommendation as to how to fix the problem. The following is a list of the most typical notations used:

MC – Must Change: A specific regulation or aspect of the guidelines has not been adhered to, and the course must be changed prior to the final draft. Not changing a “MC” on a course renders it unapproved and is basis for disciplinary action.
HR – Highly Recommend: While the course is not in violation of a regulation or the guidelines for course design, the course reviewer strongly believes there is a problem that should be addressed. Course designers should carefully consider the course reviewer’s comments and suggestions; however, the final decision to change or fix the issue identified is up to the course designer.

C – Consider: This identifies minor issues in the course and the course designer should consider changes; however, even if not changed, the course complies with the Regulations and Guidelines.

Course Approvals: Your courses will be sent back to you with one of the following designations:

- **APPROVED or APP** – No comments requiring change, the courses are ready to go.
- **APPROVED AS NOTED or AAN** – Comments requiring change(s) usually minor in nature and easily understood. If changes are made as suggested, the courses will be ready to go. *If the course designer wishes to fix the problem in a different way, the course must be resubmitted for review, or be considered unapproved.*
- **APPROVED AS SKETCHED or AAS** – Comments require change(s) and equipment will likely need to be moved to make the course comply with the Guidelines and Regulations. If all changes are made to the courses precisely as sketched, the courses will be ready to go. *If the course designer wishes to fix the problem in a different way, the course must be resubmitted for review, or be considered unapproved.*
- **REVISE AND RESUBMIT or R&R** – Course has been noted as to the reason it does not comply with the Guidelines or Regulations, and the course must be redrawn and resubmitted for review and approval, whether or not any suggestions have been made by your reviewer. Any revisions must be resubmitted within seven days from the date they were returned to you by the reviewer.

Late Submission of Courses: The timely submission of courses (both the initial submissions and any courses returned to the judge designated as “Revise and Resubmit”) is essential to the sport of agility and to the enjoyment of the dog and handler as well as providing a unique experience to both. It allows the judicious reciprocation of courses between the judge and reviewing Field Rep especially in cases where there may be several exchanges required. The late submission of courses may result in courses that do not comply with regulations and guidelines and may also jeopardize the safety of the dog and/or handler on the course. With this in mind, the following policy shall be followed:

**Course Submission Offense Policy** - Late submission of any or all course design(s) will result in the following:
1st Offense: A verbal warning shall be given to the judge by the reviewing Field Rep. An email must be sent from the Field Rep to the Director of Agility and cc’d to the judge stating that the verbal reprimand was given.

2nd Offense: A written warning letter shall be sent to the judge from the reviewing Field Rep and cc’d to the Director of Agility.

3rd Offense: A written warning letter shall be sent by certified mail from the Director of Agility which must be signed by the judge and returned within 30 calendar days. If this letter is not returned within this time frame, the Judge will immediately be placed on suspension for the period of one year. (The judge will be allowed to complete up to two months worth of assignments before the suspension is invoked). All courses designed by the judge for the next two year period must be cc’d to the Director of Agility at the same time they are submitted to the reviewing Rep for review.

4th Offense: The judge is immediately placed on suspension for a period of one year, after which they may request reinstatement to their previous judging level albeit at provisional status, requiring their assignments to be approved by the Agility Department. (The judge will be allowed to complete up to 2 months worth of assignments before status is invoked.)

Once the judge returns to judging, the following will apply:

1st Offense: A written warning letter shall be sent to the judge from the reviewing Field Rep and cc’d to the Director of Agility.

2nd Offense: A written warning letter shall be sent by certified mail from the Director of Agility which must be signed by the judge and returned within 30 calendar days. If this letter is not returned within this time frame, the judge will no longer be eligible to judge agility for the American Kennel Club.

3rd Offense: The judge will no longer be eligible to judge agility for the American Kennel Club.

If the judge has no late course submission offenses for a period of one year after a verbal warning, their late course submission status will be wiped clean of previous offenses and any further offenses will again start at the beginning.

If the judge has no late course submission offenses for a period of two years after their first written warning, their late course submission status will be wiped clean of previous offenses and any further offenses will again start at the beginning.
During any suspension, a judge will be allowed to attend a re-education seminar to remain current with judging information.

AKC Agility Staff reserves the right to deny, with just cause, the privilege to become or remain an AKC Agility Judge.

Section 3. What to Bring on Your Assignment

The following is a list of things that you should bring on your judging assignment:

• Course copies for posting (do not include judges path on these copies)
• Course copies for course builders with coordinates (minimum of 3 copies)
• Course copies for the club to submit with their report to the AKC (copies for the next day’s trial shall not be given out until the day of the trial)
• A copy of the most current editions of the following:
  – Regulations for Agility Trials
  – AKC Agility Judges Guidelines
  – Rules Applying to Dog Shows
  – Dealing with Misconduct
  – Current Judges Newsletters
• Standard course time (SCT) worksheets
• Copy of your posted briefing
• Measuring wheel, if not supplied by the club, for measuring course distances (checked daily for accuracy)
• Calculator for figuring course yardages and times
• Whistle
• Stop watch (as a back-up)
• Tape measure
• Golf tees/colored tape for pre-marking the lengths on the broad jump

SECTION 4. Prior to Arriving on Site

Regulations Review: A judge has many demands on his or her time at the trial so the better prepared a judge is prior to the morning of the trial, the quicker the trial goes, and the more professional a judge appears. Therefore, it is important that you re-read the Regulations, Guidelines, and any current judges’ letters within a few days before the trial to refresh yourself.

Review Arrangements: You may want to contact the club a day or two prior to leaving for the trial to ensure that all preparations have been made and that nothing has changed in regards to your transport and lodging.
SECTION 5. Electronic Timer Requirements and Guidelines

Equipment Specifications for Electronic Timers:

• The Electronic Timer System must be capable of operating in bright sunlight as well as rain, snow, fog, or dust particles.
• The electronic transmitters and receiver supports must be constructed so that they do not inhibit the handler or dog’s path. The supports may not be taller than 46”. The base that supports the transmitter and receiver may not be wider than 24” and the support must be constructed so that the upright and the beam can be no more than 4” from the obstacle. It is recommended that the material and color of the upright be similar to those materials normally used in the construction of agility equipment.
• The timers must have re-settable eyes in the event that an eye is tripped prematurely or accidentally, and in the event that a start or finish obstacle is to be used more than once on a course. The timers must have a manual override option allowing time to continue.
• The timers must have the ability to be connected to an external display.
• The timers must be capable of recording individual times to the nearest 1000th of a second.
• The width of the interface on the beam is to be expandable to accommodate 4 to 5 foot jump bars, open tunnels and closed tunnels (chutes).

Club Responsibilities:

• If a club is not utilizing electronic timers, it is recommended that they note this in their premium list.
• Clubs utilizing electronic timers must have the person acting as the timer positioned inside the ring. The club must be prepared to use manual hand timing as a backup if the electronic timers are not functioning correctly, cease functioning or are not available.

Placement of the Electronic Timers:

• At the start obstacle, the electronic timers must be placed on the approach side of a panel, bar or one-bar jump, double, tire, or the approach opening of an open tunnel or closed tunnel (chute).
• At the finish obstacle, the electronic timers must be placed on the back side of a panel, bar or one-bar jump, tire, double or triple jump, or the exit opening of an open tunnel.
• Only panels, bar, double or one-bar jumps, open or closed tunnels or tires are permitted to be used as the first obstacle. Only panels, bar or one-bar jumps, double or triple jumps, tires or open tunnels are permitted to be used as the last obstacle. Closed tunnels (chutes) or broad jumps cannot be used as the last obstacle on any course.
Judging:

- Judges are responsible for the appropriate placement of the timing eyes on the course in relationship to the start and finish obstacle descriptions above.

- The Timer must be briefed to be ready to hit the restart button as soon as a wrong course occurs at the last obstacle so that the time will continue until the dog has completed the last obstacle correctly.

- Judges must be knowledgeable in how to enter (program) standard course time (SCT) into the electronic timer console. The only way to determine whether or not a dog has exceeded maximum course time (MCT) when using electronic timing is to have the SCT programmed in so that when the MCT is reached the time will stop and the horn will sound (if a speaker is attached). If a speaker is not attached, the Timer must then blow the whistle to indicate to the judge that the maximum time allowed on the course has been attained and the judge can direct the team to immediately leave the course.

- Judges are responsible for making sure that the correct SCT is programmed into the console for every class they judge. They are also responsible for ensuring that the eyes are programmed correctly for the number of times the finish obstacle is to be taken prior to the end of the course.
CHAPTER 3
COURSE DESIGN

In addition to the requirements listed in the current edition of the Regulations for Agility Trials, course designs shall comply with provisions of this chapter and any future interpretations published by the AKC Agility Department.

Refer to Appendix: for diagrams listed in this chapter.

SECTION 1. Course Design Responsibility

Course Design Responsibility: The AKC encourages variety in its course designs, thereby ensuring agility exhibitors a truly unique experience each time they enter the ring. The AKC, through its Regulations and Guidelines, defines the limits within which you may design the courses for an agility trial. The course review process may provide additional information that you will find helpful in producing courses that contain appropriate challenges, and are fun yet challenging to run. However, you are the author of your courses and are ultimately responsible for their uniqueness and content.

Because the AKC encourages variety in its course design, thereby ensuring agility exhibitors a truly unique experience each time they enter the ring, courses that have been used previously must either be mirrored or substantially changed before they are again submitted for review. Any course(s) previously reviewed, mirrored or otherwise, must be noted when submitting the course(s) for review. Furthermore, the mirrored courses cannot be used during the same trial weekend or cluster of trials. An original course may only be mirrored once; a mirrored course may not be re-used again without substantial changes.

Review Process: The complete set of course designs for an assignment must be submitted to the AKC Field Representative a minimum of one month for fully approved judges and a minimum of two months for provisional judges prior to the start of the trial, unless prior arrangements have been made with and approved by the reviewer.

All course designs shall have the following information on each course:

- Required obstacles for the class level with obstacles numbered sequentially
- Start and finish lines indicated at the first and last obstacles
- Timer location, placed nearer the start obstacle
- Judge’s path shown accurately
- Judge’s name (author of the course)
- Class type and level
- Actual and complete name of the club, not just their acronym
- Actual date the course is to be used
The judge must provide the following information on the cover sheet or in an email message submitted with a set of courses for review to ensure an informed course review can be completed:

- Running surface
- Actual ring dimensions
- Any obstructions in the course area
- Indication of whether the trial is indoors, outdoors, or outdoors under cover
- Return fax number or e-mail address and a phone number where you can be reached for questions
- If submitted by email, the program and level they were designed in
- If e-timing will not be used

SECTION 2. The Mechanics of Designing Courses

Getting Started: Once you have obtained the necessary details about the available obstacles and ring conditions (as listed in Chapter 2 of these Guidelines), you can begin preparing course plans. All course plans shall be created using a computer program that ensures that all courses are drawn to scale.

Designing with a Computer: There are a number of computer programs available for designing agility course plans. They allow you to set the ring dimensions and locate any obstructions. The computer will keep everything within the drawing in scale but will not necessarily print out the course at a 1" = 10' scale (this is important for those setting courses by the baseline method). Computer programs will typically give you options for different sized equipment and a number of open tunnel shapes to choose from. Be accurate as to the placement of obstacles on your design since it is very important that the Field Representatives see exactly what you intend to set on the course.

Class Levels, Where to Start: A set of courses that is nested has most obstacles in the same area of the course, if not in the same position (especially the contact obstacles), to make course changes quick and the ring crew more efficient. However, trying to achieve the ultimate nested set of courses is not the most important thing in course design. It is better to move a few things, even contacts if necessary, to ensure that dogs have unique and appropriate levels of challenge, approach angles and fun courses to run. To produce nested courses, some judges like to start with the Excellent class and modify for Open and Novice, reducing the equipment, challenges, and angles. Other judges like to start with the Open class and modify up and down from there.
**Required Obstacles:** In addition to the Regulations regarding required, allowed, and not-permitted obstacles (Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, *Regulations for Agility Trials*), these are additional suggestions pertaining to Required Obstacles.

- Given enough course area, it is highly recommended that most jumps that are used be winged jumps rather than non-winged jumps. Each type of jump requires a different skill in its performance. Non-winged jumps work best where space is limited or there are many obstacles in close proximity to one another, however, you must keep in mind that there must be a minimum of 50% winged jumps used on any given course. This count is to include actual jumps, not how many times they are used.
- When the closed tunnel is used, the course flow must allow time for the chute fabric to be re-straightened after any wrong-course usage.
- A dog shall not be required to perform more than 2 open tunnels or more than 1 closed tunnel on any course as they are allowed by class type per the Regulations.
- Pause tables should be placed in the middle third of a standard course with a flat approach to the flow of the dog, and must not be placed anywhere on the course that does not allow the judge to be in position to properly judge any other obstacle.
- Refer to the required obstacle charts at the end of the class descriptions in Chapters 6 and 7 of the *Regulations for Agility Trials*. Course designs must comply with the list of which obstacles are required, allowed, and not permitted for each class and with the number of times obstacles may be performed in each class level. Note that options for the course designer exist regarding spread jumps in some classes. These are designated by an asterisk (*).
- If the Double Bar jump is used as the first obstacle, it must be placed a minimum of 21' from barrier.
- If wind conditions merit, the panel jump may be replaced with a bar jump.
- Dummy obstacles are allowed on a course at the discretion of the course designer. Dummy obstacles are not performed in the normal sequence of the course, but are placed on the course (at the appropriate jump height) to provide an option or handler restriction, which increases the challenge level. A well-designed course may not need any dummy obstacles. However, if they are used, it is recommended that no more than two dummy obstacles be placed on any course and in no case shall there be more than three.
- Dummy obstacles allowed:
  a) Tire jump, panel jump, one-bar jumps, and bar jumps.
  b) Dummy open tunnels are allowed but not encouraged, and should be placed at the maximum distance allowed.
**Required Quantity of Obstacles per Class Level:** The required quantity of obstacles per class level is as listed in the Regulations for Agility Trials (Chapters 6, 7 and 9) and must be strictly adhered to.

**Obstacle Spacing:** Obstacle spacing is critical to good course design. If spacing is too tight, the course can become choppy and dogs will have a hard time making course time. If spacing is too wide open, it will cause the wrong course options to be muted due to distance. Also, a course that is really wide open may be such that slow handlers with fast dogs are greatly disadvantaged, for the dog will cover ground much faster than the handler and will be further from the handler when a wrong course option is encountered, or it may consistently cause refusals since there will be little in front of the dog to keep its focus.

For course review purposes, obstacle spacing is measured along the expected path of a dog jumping at the 20" height. Obstacle spacing minimums and maximums are spelled out in the *Regulations for Agility Trials* and shall be adhered to.

In addition to the above requirements, judges should be aware of the following when determining the spacing of obstacles on a course:

- 15 feet is the recommended minimum spacing between two sequentially placed obstacles; with approximately 18 feet between jump obstacles and a minimum of 21 feet to any spread jump.
- Spacing in excess of 21 feet should generally be used when there is a reason for it (see diagram 3.2.1). This includes the following:
  - a) Crossing patterns with 5 or more obstacles forming a box, which pushes obstacles further apart to keep the area on the course from being too congested.
  - b) Wrap around jumps (also called a pull-through).
  - c) Layered jumps in some conditions.
- Uniform spacing promotes a rhythm to the performance of the obstacles and is less challenging than irregular or variable spacing that requires more skill, as the dog will need to adjust its stride length and speed to properly negotiate the obstacles.
- A box of four jumps that is set up with 18 feet measured across the box and requires the dog to make a 90-degree turn from one obstacle to the next complies with the minimum spacing requirements of this section. (See diagram 3.2.1, jumps #14 to #15)
- When setting a 270-degree jump sequence, judges must allow enough distance for the dog to make the turn without being right on top of an off-course obstacle. A minimum of 7 feet is required from the line of the run-out line for the second obstacle in the 270-degree turn. (See diagram 3.2.2 for illustration)
• When determining distance to an obstacle out of the chute, remember that this is a ‘blind’ obstacle and the dog needs time to re-focus upon exiting this obstacle.
• A 13’ minimum shall be required to any direct wrong-course possibility and to any runout line (ROL) of the next correct obstacle.

Approach Angles: Approach angles shall not exceed those listed in the Regulations, which indicate not only the maximum angle allowed for each class level, but also the maximum number of times a dog can be expected to perform these angles. Note that a course over-burdened with an excessive number of big angles or sharp turns is de-motivating for a dog and the course will lack flow, making it difficult for dogs to stride out and make course time.

The approach angle is calculated on the basis of the expected path of a dog jumping 20", not the pure geometric angle formed by the obstacles as they lay on the course plan. Approach angles depend greatly on where dogs are coming from, where they are going to, and the speed they are traveling when they need to make the turn. (see diagram 3.2.3)

Approaches to spread jumps, such as the triple, double or broad, at all class levels shall be as straight as possible. There must be enough room to square up to the spread jump if the dog has to execute a turn prior to the spread.

The approach angle to the tire should be straight to mild at all class levels. This is due to the radically shrinking aperture of the tire as it is angled away from the dogs’ approach path; the more acute the angle, the smaller the opening that is presented to the dog. If the tire is used more than once on the course, each approach must adhere to these requirements.

At the Novice level, all obstacle approaches should generally be straight to mildly-angled, however, a maximum of one 180-degree turn will be allowed.

For all classes – A turn from the exit of an open tunnel placed under or adjacent to the A-frame, to the ascent of the A-frame is not allowed. (See diagram 3.2.4)

Placing of Timers and Scribes, Start and Finish Lines, and Obstacle Numbers:
Timers and Scribes: Place them where they can be together and do not have to move to see you. Place in a location so that they can see both the start and finish line without moving and where they will not be a visual or physical impediment on the course. Place the timer and scribe closer to the start area so that they may confer with the Gate Steward and verify that they have the right scribe sheet for the dog on the line.
Start and Finish Lines: Should be placed on the entrance of the first obstacle, and on the exit of the last obstacle. If not mounted to the first/last obstacle, electronic timers must be placed so that all dogs performing the obstacle will trip the sensors without having to negotiate an additional set of uprights whose sole purpose is recording a time. For electronic timer specifications and guidelines see Chapter 2, Section 5 of these Guidelines.

Obstacle Numbers: Should be placed on the course design next to the approach side of the obstacle where you wish the ring steward to place the number when setting the course. Obstacle numbers should be placed so they are readable for someone running the course, but primarily they shall be placed where they will not be in the way of the dog and handler. When two obstacles are in close proximity to each other, the obstacle numbers should be placed so as not to cause exhibitor confusion when reading course maps or walking the course. The number for the weave poles may be removed after course walkthroughs if it has the potential of being in the handler’s way.

SECTION 3. Judge’s Position in Course Design

One of the most important aspects in course design is to develop a course that allows the judge to be where needed to judge the dog fairly and equitably. The course design should allow the judge to conserve his or her movements so as to not distract the dog, get in the dog’s or handler’s way, or become tired after potentially judging hundreds of dogs on the course. The judge and the judge’s movements are not to be the focus of the performance in the ring.

Places a Judge Must be on the Course: The following are the maximum distances a judge can be from the dog being judged and the required locations a judge shall be when judging specific obstacles. The course design shall allow the judge to comply with the following (See diagram 3.3.1 for examples):

- **A-frame, Seesaw** – Judge all approaches, including the A-frame for refusals and all contact zones from a distance no greater than 20 feet. Also be in position to see the contacts when they are an off-course possibility.

- **Dog Walk** – Judge all approaches and the down contact zone from a distance no greater than 20 feet, and be in position to see either plank when it is an off-course possibility.

- **Tunnels** – The judge shall be able to see all approach openings to judge refusals and both entry and exit when they present themselves as an off-course possibility. The judge shall also be able to see the exit of the tunnel if it is used as the last obstacle on the course.

- **Tire** – The judge must be able to see the dog go through the opening, not just jump, as some dogs go between the tire and frame, thus judging the tire on its runout line is not a viable position.
• **Table** – The judge must be within 15 feet of the table at some point during the five-second count, with the handler not between the judge and the dog, to judge whether the dog is on the table as well as possible contact between the handler and the dog or table.

• **Weave Poles** – The judge must be placed to see the dog’s entry and performance of each weave pole and any handler/dog contact.

• **Broad Jump** – The judge must be within 30 feet of the broad jump during its performance to see if a board moves or is stepped on, and not directly in front of nor directly behind.

• **Bar Jumps, including Spreads** – The judge must be able to see the bars of all jumps as the dog is jumping them to determine if the dog has displaced the top bar. Large solid wings, especially on the triple and double bar jumps, may force the judge to alter the judging path in order to see all bars.

**Judge’s Movement in Course Design:** Courses should allow for judges to move efficiently into place without the judge racing the dog and handler to get into position. Judging paths should not cross in front of the dog and handler unless there is plenty of time to do so without interfering with the dog or handler. The judge’s path shall not pass over, under, or through any obstacle. The judge’s path should be as consistent as possible for all dogs, and the judge’s position should not block possible off-course options, thus reducing the challenges on the course. On all Jumpers with Weaves courses, the judge shall be REQUIRED to move in order to properly see all runout lines, tunnel entrances and exits, and weave pole performance and/or handler/dog contact.

**SECTION 4. Course Safety**

**Obstacle Proximity to Ring Barriers, Walls, and Other Obstacles:** Safety should always be first and foremost in the judge’s mind; however, the sport of agility, with its variety of obstacles, quick decisions, varied weather conditions, and running surfaces has some inherent risk to it. The judge can mitigate some of the safety concerns in the course design phase by avoiding the placement of obstacles in close proximity to each other, or to the ring barrier.

Not every dog runs the expected path, and some dogs can be somewhat out of control; consequently courses should be designed with this type of dog in mind. Look at what could happen vs. what should happen. Distance may cure many problems when it comes to safety. A greater distance to the ring barrier or between obstacles that are side by side may well enable the less-than-focused dog to recover prior to getting itself into trouble. The following are minimum standards that must be maintained to provide as safe a course as possible:
• For placement of all types of jumps in relation to a ring barrier or wall, provide a minimum of 6 feet if course flow is parallel with the ring barrier or wall (measured to the edge of the bar, plank, or frame), and a minimum of 15 feet if the dog is jumping or running into the ring barrier or wall (see diagram 3.4.1). This requirement also applies to possible off-course jumps and dummy jumps.

• The closed tunnel fabric can roll sideways as a dog attempts to make their way through it, so you must account for a minimum of 6 feet of curl in the chute fabric each side of center. Be aware that dogs are coming out blind and should not be confronted with something in their path that could be a problem (see diagram 3.4.2).

• Contact obstacles shall not be placed any closer than 6 feet to a ring barrier or wall when placed parallel to the ring barrier or wall. When the entry end of the board is perpendicular to the ring barrier or wall, the minimum distance varies from 12 feet for the excellent class to 18 feet for the novice class (see diagram 3.4.3).

• Tables shall not be placed any closer than 6 feet to a ring barrier or wall as measured to the closest part of the table.

• Obstacles placed in close proximity to each other shall be set such that a dog has no chance of landing on one while jumping the other or of falling from a contact obstacle onto something sharp below.

Other Safety Issues that must be accounted for in the Course Design:
• Sufficient room to start and finish inside the ring is critical for the safety of the dog and the prevention of dog aggression. Courses must be designed to allow for a minimum of 15 feet from the ring barrier to the first obstacle and 20 feet after the last obstacle to the ring barrier. Also remember that if the double is used as the first obstacle, there must be a minimum of 21’ feet from the ring barrier to the double. (see diagram 3.4.4).

• The upside of the seesaw can present a hazard to handlers if it is placed contrary to the course flow, and the handler’s expected running path brings them in close proximity to it. Oftentimes, the handler’s attention is diverted from their running path, for they are looking at the dog and may not see the elevated plank (see diagram 3.4.5).

• Columns, posts, and things that stick up out of the ground can cause safety concerns for both handlers and dogs. Handlers run into them for the same reasons as described above. Dogs run into them if the previous obstacle’s performance does not allow them enough time to physically recover to steer clear of the danger. For instance, placing wings of jumps and tunnels directly adjacent to columns (engaging them) will mitigate their presence (see diagram 3.4.6).
• Turns off spread jumps should be minimized, especially when the running surface is mats on concrete, or has the potential to be slippery.
• The expected approach to the table shall be to a flat side of the table. This prevents dogs from approaching the corner at speed. This is also a judging issue, for you need a backside line from which to call run-outs (see diagram 3.4.7).
• Approaches to spread jumps, such as the triple, double and broad, shall be as straight as possible. If a triple jump is used as an off-course possibility, its off-course approach should be as straight as possible (see diagram 3.4.8).
• When a dog’s expected jumping and landing path sends the dog directly at the end of a wing or the jump standard on a wingless jump, enough room must be left for the dog to land and steer clear of the wing. While 13 feet is the minimum to a direct off-course obstacle for performance purposes (see Section 5), a specific distance cannot be given because of a variety of factors such as; speed coming into the area, running surface and visibility. Thirteen feet may be sufficient; however, based on the sequence and conditions, more may be necessary.

SECTION 5. Obstacle Placement in Course Design that can cause Performance Concerns

The placement of obstacles in the design process can cause performance problems on the agility course. The following should be avoided:
• Placing the weave poles too close to a wall or ring barrier can cause visual problems for some dogs and some dogs need more space to feel comfortable weaving. The minimum placement if entry is on the barrier/wall side is 8'; if entry is not on the barrier/wall side the minimum is 6'; and the minimum for the exit is 6'. If the weaves are placed perpendicular to the barrier or wall, the minimum entry is 8' to 10', however, more is recommended (see diagram 3.5.1).
• Placing obstacles in close proximity to each other can cause an unfair advantage to some handlers. All obstacles shall be either greater than 4 feet apart (to their closest points) or closer than 12 inches. Either everyone gets between the two obstacles or no one should be able to get through (see diagram 3.5.2).
• Obstacles that require a straight approach should not have their entry angled towards a wall or ring barrier if placed in close proximity to a wall or ring barrier. Dogs do not like to work tight to walls, and placing obstacles too close to a wall will prevent them from having a straight approach to the obstacle (see diagram 3.5.3).
SECTION 6. Challenges Defined

Course designs and the challenges presented in them progress in difficulty from Novice to Open to Excellent. The number of challenges shall increase, as listed in Section 7, and the types of challenges should increase in difficulty as well.

The best way to create challenges on a course design is to provide a course path with plenty of crossing patterns, which create options for dogs and side-switch opportunities for handlers. This keeps the course relatively smooth and flowing while providing challenges along the way. Handler restrictions that cause a handler to work away from their dog as well as options with discriminations, which are actually just more difficult options, can be added to the higher levels to provide a variety of challenges.

Options, Restrictions and Side-switches Defined

• Side-switches
  A side-switch is a place where the course makes an “S” curve, requiring the handler to switch from handling the dog off one side of his or her body to the other side. A handler who opts not to switch sides is forced to run around the outside of the obstacles and must run faster than the dog to keep up. The simplest side-switch to negotiate is one in which there are no options to confuse or lure the dog while the handler is making the side-switch. (See diagram 3.6.1 for examples).

• Options
  An option is a point on the course where the dog has a choice of which obstacles to take (see diagram 3.6.2). Typically, options exist at crossing patterns. Thirteen feet is the required minimum distance to a direct off-course option (i.e., an option where the wrong obstacle is placed directly in the dog’s expected path of travel). Off-course options that are greater than 21 feet from the previous obstacle, or not within the dogs’ field of vision based upon its path, shall not be considered an option.

Options become more difficult based on:
  a) The proximity of the two options to each other.
  b) The speed of the dog going into the area where the option occurs based upon his expected path.
  c) The distance the handler is expected to be away from the dog when the dog must make the decision as to which obstacle is the correct one.
  d) How visible and enticing the wrong course obstacle may be compared with the correct one. Some dogs prefer one obstacle over another, but some obstacles such as tunnels and A-frames are highly enticing, as dogs have a tendency to accelerate towards them.
Novice requirements for options:
a) Novice dogs shall be given the obvious or logical opening to open tunnels if there is a choice, based upon the dog’s expected path.
b) Approaches to two obstacles shall not be adjacent or in close proximity to each other. For example, a classic tunnel-contact option would not be allowed in the Novice class. However, a 180-degree turn from the exit of a contact into a tunnel will be allowed as long as the tunnel does not restrict the handlers’ ability to work close to the obstacle and the dog.

• Handler Restrictions
Handler restrictions, which require the dog to work apart from the handler, shall be counted as a challenge when determining the challenge level for a course. Handler restrictions such as “U” shaped tunnels in a corner are not considered a challenge. When designing a course, a judge must be careful not to overload a course with too many handler restrictions, and when placing obstacles to create a handler restriction, a judge must be careful not to create a safety issue due to the proximity of the two obstacles. Any handler restriction used may not restrict the judge from being in proper position to judge any obstacle. (See diagram 3.6.3 for illustration).

Novice Requirements for Handler Restrictions:

Handler restrictions are allowed in the Novice class; however, they must be placed carefully and should be simple in nature. A handler restriction in the Novice class should be used mainly for course flow and to maximize the course area in tight ring conditions, not for testing whether a dog can work apart from the handler. An example of an appropriate handler restriction in the Novice class would be:

a) An open or closed tunnel placed under the A-frame or dog walk, to get the dog and handler to another part of the course area. Obstacle approaches shall not be adjacent in the Novice class so a classic tunnel-contact option is not allowed. Also, the tunnel must be placed such that the handler would be allowed to work tight to the contact obstacle from the logical side of the contact obstacle (i.e., the side you would expect the majority of handlers to normally choose).

Elements That May Occur on a Course, But are not Counted towards the Challenge Level of the Course

• Angled approaches to obstacles can be used at the judge’s discretion for the desired effect, as long as they do not exceed maximum angles listed in the Regulations; however, such angled approaches are not considered a challenge and should be analyzed for safety and conform to required maximums at each level.
• Right side or left side approaches can be used to any specific obstacle, such as the weave poles, but do not increase the challenge level.

SECTION 7. Challenge and Side-Switch Requirements per Class Level

Minimum numbers per class level are listed below:

All Novice classes: A minimum of 2 and a maximum of 5 separate challenges (options/restrictions) and a minimum of 2 separate side-switches are required.

All Open classes: A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 separate challenges (options/restrictions) and a minimum of 3 separate side-switches are required.

All Excellent classes: A minimum of 9 separate challenges (options/restrictions) and a minimum of 3 separate side-switches are required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Side-Switches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Min 2, Max 5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Min 6, Max 8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Min 9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Side-switches:

• Side-switches are not counted as options/restrictions at any level.
• Side-switches at the table do not count toward the side-switch requirement at any level.
• Side-switches anywhere else on the course count toward the side-switch requirement.
• In evaluating the number of side-switches and options/restrictions, Open and Excellent level handlers are assumed to have a lead out at the start line to the second obstacle and at the table halfway to the next correct obstacle; thus many options may be negated at these positions.
• When an option and side-switch happen at the same location, they will be counted separately for the purpose of conforming to the minimum requirements.

Multiple Challenges at the same point of the Course

There may be places on the course where there are two types of challenges happening at the same time, such as a handler restriction with an option. Where multiple challenges occur at the same time, they are counted as one challenge when determining the total challenge level of the course.
SECTION 8. Changes to Submitted Courses

Courses shall be set as close as humanly possible to the diagrams submitted to and approved by the Agility Field Representatives. If circumstances such as course conditions, hazards, or insufficient equipment necessitate a change to these courses, the following priority list shall be followed:

1. Try to contact an Agility Field Representative to aid you in any change(s) necessary and for field approval of said change(s).
2. Modify first and foremost for safety. Respond to all unsafe conditions. This does not include performance or training issues.
3. Maintain the required obstacles and the required quantity of obstacles per class level.
4. Make sure the change is still judgeable.
5. Maintain the challenge level to the maximum extent feasible.
6. Submit all course changes with your judge’s report to the Director of Agility. Failure to do so constitutes usage of unapproved courses and is grounds for disciplinary action.
CHAPTER 4
PREPARING TO JUDGE – DAY OF TRIAL

SECTION 1. Upon Arriving at the Site

Avoiding Conflicts: Judges should be personable and friendly to club members, workers, and exhibitors while at the trial. However, as the judge you must avoid spending too much time with any one exhibitor or group of exhibitors, so that your judgment or impartiality in the ring cannot be questioned. Prior to judging a class, judges shall not review a catalog to see who is, or who is not, competing at a trial. Discussions with exhibitors should be light and friendly and shall not include any handling advice, training ideas, or insight as to what you were thinking when you were designing the course for that day.

Time Sensitive Issues that Require the Judges’ Attention: The judge should arrive at the site at least one hour prior to the scheduled start of judging for the first class, preferably earlier. Arriving earlier is especially important if the club is new, there is a large entry or number of dogs to be measured, or the club or show site is unfamiliar to the judge. The judge should introduce himself or herself to the trial secretary and chairman and, if provisional, to the Agility Field Representative sent to observe. The judge should proceed to check out the following before he or she gets too busy with exhibitors arriving.

• Review of ring – You must check ring dimensions with the calibrated measuring wheel to verify usable square footage, any obstructions and where the ring openings are located to make sure the courses will work efficiently, including any ring gating that may infringe upon the course area. Also, go over the running surface to find any areas that may require attention or repair. Any deficiencies in the running surface or ring conditions should immediately be brought to the attention of the trial chairman, trial committee or chief course builder so that they may be corrected. If the deficiencies cannot be corrected, the judge will note this on the AKC marked catalogue and the Judge’s Report to the Director of Agility. The judge should then proceed to judge the class, under the deficient conditions. In extreme cases when the deficiencies, in the opinion of the judge, are of such major proportion that it is possible that they may affect the dog’s performance or safety, the judge must brief exhibitors as to the specific deficient conditions. It is then the handler’s decision whether to compete under such conditions.

• Course builder copies – Give the course builders the course copies (for that day only) from which they can build the courses. Make sure they know which course is first and they build it in the proper ring.
• Posted Courses – Give the secretary or table steward copies for posting of all the courses you will be judging that day. If you are giving out course copies, ensure that at least one copy of each course is posted for public viewing. The posted course copies shall be posted a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of judging. All courses for that day may be posted at the same time.

• Check-in process – Discuss with the club the procedure to ensure that all dogs that do not have a permanent jump height card, at least one yellow form or a valid temporary form are measured prior to running in the ring (if not in the 24" or 26" regular classes). Requiring dogs to be measured prior to getting their armbands is required for those dogs that do not possess a valid card or form whether measured by the Judge of Record, VMO or Field Rep. This is best done very early, since check-in is often left to someone who does not fully understand that the check-in process is tied very tightly to the measuring process and ensures that dogs jump in the proper height class. Prior to measuring any dog that is on the measuring list; ask the handler if they have a valid card or form, as these dogs will not need to be measured by the Judge of Record.

• Equipment inspection – You are required to evaluate the equipment to ensure that it meets the specifications in the Regulations. Make sure that the equipment is safe and in good repair. Do not trust someone’s word as to whether the equipment is in compliance with the Regulations. Things happen over time or upon transport, and the equipment must be checked out by the judge of record prior to running dogs. It is best to do this either the night before, if possible, or early in the morning. A summary of things to inspect are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Width, height, length of contact zones, sturdiness, and surface is not too slick or abrasive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seesaw:</td>
<td>Pivots properly using a 3lb weight, 12&quot; from end of board to calibrate drop rate, returns to position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumps:</td>
<td>Displaceable, heights, spread width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tire:</td>
<td>Sufficient opening, sturdy frame that will not tip over, and has the ability to be weighted or staked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunnels:</td>
<td>Sufficient opening, holders are adequate and safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Tunnels:</td>
<td>Sufficient opening, heavy or stakeable base, length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause Table:</td>
<td>Sturdy at its highest height, surface is not too slick or abrasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weave Poles:</td>
<td>Meets the dimension and construction specifications in the Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Jump:</td>
<td>Meets the height and width dimensions listed in the Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Jump:</td>
<td>Top panel is 4&quot; wide for all jump heights, except for the 26&quot; height which is 2&quot; wide or a regulation bar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring wheel:</td>
<td>Check the wheel daily against a tape laid on the ground to ensure its measurement is correct each day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Maintaining required equipment for the class level:
Occasionally you will encounter equipment that is inadequate. It is important to fix, modify, or otherwise construct a solution that is safe and reasonably within the obstacle specifications in the Regulations so that the show can go on. Do not use equipment that cannot be made safe. Every attempt should be made to modify the equipment so it can be brought into reasonable compliance, especially with regards to safety. You should make it clear to the hosting club and exhibitors that the AKC reserves the right to disallow scores and discipline the club if mandatory equipment cannot be used. Often an exhibitor or vendor has equipment with them or close by that can be borrowed, thus avoiding the problem for the day. If the class must be run without mandatory pieces of equipment, the judge must file a report with the AKC office and the AKC Director of Agility.

Solutions to equipment problems:
• Dog walks that have too much flex in the ramps can be stiffened by propping boards or PVC poles under each board.
• Seesaws that don’t tip properly, or that don’t return after tipping, can be modified by adding weight to the underside of the board.
• Closed tunnels with fabric chutes that become wet and impassable in the rain can be taken care of in several ways. The fabric may be reduced in length as listed in the Regulations, or a steward can be placed at the end of the fabric, elevating it slightly so that the fabric is not sticking to itself. In this case, the steward should be to the side of the chute that the dog is not likely to turn towards upon exiting, and the steward should release the chute as the dog goes through. Individual handlers can request that no ring steward be by the chute during their run at their own risk.
• Tires with frames that are not very stable must be weighted, staked, or duct taped to the running surface so that the frames are unlikely to tip over if hit by the dog. Tires should be attached to the frame to allow some give if hit by the dog.
• Panel jumps that are blowing off the bar supports of the panel jump can be attended by adding rubber bands to aid them in staying on. Rubber bands should not, however, be wrapped so tightly that the panels cannot displace. If wind conditions merit, the panel jump may be replaced with a bar jump.
A little ingenuity and a lot of duct tape will solve many problems.

SECTION 2. Measuring of Dogs

Judge’s Responsibilities: The judge, together with the host club, is responsible for ensuring that dogs have been measured in compliance with the AKC jump height card measuring policy. This policy can be reviewed on the AKC web site at www.akc.org.
If measuring is not completed by one of AKC’s Volunteer Measuring Officials (VMO) or Agility Field Representatives prior to the start of judging, the judge of record must measure all dogs (with the exception of the 24” and 26” regular class dogs) that do not have a permanent card, at least one yellow form or a valid temporary height card form with them. The purpose of measuring is to ensure that dogs are not entered in a jump height lower than what they are allowed to jump. An official measuring device is to be supplied by the host club. Be sure to ask the competitor if they have a permanent card, at least one yellow form or a valid temporary height card form in their possession.

Measuring shall take place on a smooth level surface such as a pause table. Calibrate the measuring device before you begin measuring and re-check it EVERY TIME you return to do any further measuring. In general, greet the dog you are about to measure before attempting the measurement. Crouch low or squat down, but do not lean over the dog. Dogs should be standing squarely, not stretched out; with the head in a normal position, not down or held down but looking straight ahead. Some dogs may hunch up from cold or tension, which can make them measure taller, so, if possible, it is advisable to let a dog become relaxed prior to placing the arm of the measuring device. Measure the dog at the peak of its withers, which is where the tops of the two shoulder blades come together, just below the neck. Observation of an Agility Field Representative during the measuring process is advised for all judges.

If a dog is measured up into a higher jump height division, make sure that this is recorded in the official catalog, that the gate steward moves that dog in the run order, and that the scribe’s sheets are re-arranged. The dog shall remain in the higher height for the remainder of the weekend or set of back-to-back trials. Dogs entered in regular classes may not be moved into a lower height division than what was entered, even if they measure lower, since entries have closed.

Dogs entered in preferred classes shall be moved down to the proper jump height only if measured by a Volunteer Measuring Official, Field Rep or Judge of Record for the day of the trial.

If two official measurements of the same dog are requested to be done in the same day or set of back-to-back trials, each individual measurement must be done by a different VMO or Field Rep. If a third measurement is needed to determine the dog’s final height, this measurement must be done by a VMO or Field Rep unique to the first and second measurements.

Host Club Responsibilities: Host clubs shall provide the judge with an official measuring device and a suitable location to measure dogs that require it. Additionally, the club shall provide assistance in the check-in and measuring process to ensure that all dogs are measured and recorded properly.
SECTION 3. Course Setting

Host Club Responsibilities: Course setting is primarily the responsibility of the host club. The host club is responsible for providing properly trained personnel, including a Chief Course Builder (CCB), and enough help to ensure efficient changes from class to class. Using the judge’s course designs (drawn to scale with grid lines or baseline measurements), the CCB shall, as precisely as possible, set the equipment in place and locate the start and finish lines. The CCB shall not stake or secure anything, set any heights, or place any bars until the judge has completed their walk through. After notifying the judge that the course is ready for review, the CCB and stewards shall accompany the judge to move or adjust any equipment that the judge requires. Upon final approval by the judge, equipment can be staked or secured in place, however, bars should not be set until the judge has measured the course twice for distance.

Judge’s Responsibilities: It is the judge’s responsibility to ensure that the course is set as close as humanly possible to the course that was approved by the AKC, while accounting for site conditions as they relate to safety. If a CCB is struggling, it is advisable that the judge step in and help direct the course building process, perhaps teaching the process if it is appropriate. Judges must account for the fact that the CCB and ring stewards are volunteers and should always be treated professionally and courteously.

SECTION 4. Ring Crew Briefings

The ring crew that is going to work with you will need to be briefed as to the duties they are expected to perform. An experienced ring crew makes the briefing and the task of judging much easier; however, you should never assume that the ring crew knows fully what you expect of them, even though they may have done the job many times before. You should always brief the most important aspects of each job with all ring crew members regardless of their experience level. Be aware that a crew member may change even within a class and would have to be briefed. It is also very important to have enough helpers to do all the jobs necessary for completing the trial. It is the host club’s responsibility to provide a large enough ring crew to efficiently run the trial. It is the judge’s responsibility to ensure that the ring crew is doing their job correctly. The judge must be courteous to all volunteers provided by the host club. If a volunteer is not up to the job that the host club has asked him or her to do, a reassignment may be in order. The judge should approach this situation cautiously and diplomatically so as not to offend the person involved.

The following is a list of the ring crew and their responsibilities. The judge shall ensure that the ring crew understands what is expected of them.
Score Table Stewards:

- **Scribe Sheets:** Check with scorekeepers to make sure that they are using the proper (most current) scribe sheets for the class. Also make sure that they know how to translate the faults on a scribe sheet to a numerical score. Ensure that they know how to make the conversion for the dog’s time from minutes and seconds listed on the scribe sheets to seconds, truncating down any partial seconds to whole numbers, and assigning the proper faults for any full seconds over SCT.

- **Catalogs:** Go through with the secretary how to properly fill out the catalog that is to be submitted to AKC per Chapter 1, Section 23 of the Regulations for Agility Trials (current).

- **Postings:** Stewards should properly and promptly post the results as they come in, enabling exhibitors to check their scores and times. Times (to the 1/100th of a second) for all dogs, qualifying or not, shall be recorded on the posting sheet, as well as qualifying status (Qualified, NQ, ABS or Absent, Excused, DQ, AIS, or AJC). A prompt posting of scores allows exhibitors the opportunity to question a score before the judge has forgotten the run. Any questions should be presented to the judge as soon as practically possible. Approach the judge during breaks for height changes or the fixing of equipment, such as adjusting a tunnel or a knocked-over jump upright.

- **Checking Catalogs:** Instruct the table stewards as to the judge’s need to check the scribe sheets against the official AKC catalog at the completion of each class and/or height division. The table stewards should separate the qualifying scribe sheets (keeping them in order) from all others so the judge may quickly check the catalog prior to awarding ribbons and awards. This will also expedite the final paperwork at the end of the trial when all scribe sheets should be placed in catalog order to expedite review of the catalog by the judge. The judge shall review and initial all pages of the official AKC catalog for all classes judged. If the catalog is not available immediately upon the completion of the class, it is permissible for the judge to check only the Qualifying scribe sheets so that ribbons may be presented/made available and then check the completed catalog at a later time.

Scribe:

- **Watching the judge at all times:** After the dog’s number has been verified at the start line, the scribe should continuously watch the judge until the completion of judging. Positioning the scribe is therefore very important, since the scribe must be able to see the judge at all times, yet be in close proximity to the timer for recording the dog’s times, and near the start line and the gate steward to ensure the scribe has the right scribe sheet.

- **Scribe Sheets:** It is the scribe’s responsibility to ensure that the scribe sheet matches the number of the dog on the line. There are a number of ways to do this, but it must be done on a dog-by-dog basis, not by relying on scribe sheets that were put in order prior to the start of the
class. Changes to running orders happen frequently due to conflicts and changes to a dog’s jump height after measuring in, and the judge must be assured that the signals are recorded on the proper scribe sheet.

• Hand Signals: The judge’s hand signals should be reviewed so that the proper symbols are recorded on the scribe sheet.

**SCRIBE SIGNALS: STANDARD, JWW AND FAST TITLING CLASSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fault</th>
<th>Judge’s Signal</th>
<th>Symbol recorded on sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refusal/Run-out</td>
<td>Raised fist</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrong Course</td>
<td>Raised open hand</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table Fault</td>
<td>Make a “T” with both hands or raise two fingers</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Raised two open hands</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excusal</td>
<td>Blow the whistle</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Recording the time: The time shall be recorded on the scribe sheet precisely as they read it on the timer’s stopwatch or e-timing console, to the 1/100th of a second. The scribe or timer shall not attempt to translate the minutes into seconds, as this slows up the class. It is the table steward’s job to do all translations.

• Questions: Instruct the scribe to ask you about any signals that he or she may have a question about; sometimes a scratch of the head or wipe of the brow may look like a fault signal that was not intended.

**Timer:**

• Stopwatch/Electronic Timer operation: Ensure that the timer understands the operation of the stopwatch and/or electronic timer.

• The Timer: Shall release the dog from the start line upon direction from the judge.

• Start and Finish lines: The exact locations of the start and finish lines shall be briefed; being a finite space between the uprights of a jump, or the inside diameter of a tire, tunnel or chute opening. If hand timing is to be used the timer must be able to clearly see the entry and exit to the start and finish obstacles. Instruct the timer that the start line is live after the timer has instructed the exhibitor to start, and that any part of the dog breaking that line starts the clock, whether the exhibitor is ready or not. Any part of the dog crossing the finish obstacle as the next proper obstacle, in the proper direction, stops the time. However, if the dog has missed an obstacle near the end of the course or only missed the finish obstacle, and the handler has called the dog back to correct the missed
obstacle; the timer shall keep the time running (or hit RESTART if the e-timer has stopped running) until the dog has properly executed the last obstacle (See Chapter 4, Section 14 of the Regulations for Agility Trials). For E-timing, instruct the Timer that the time must be started manually if the dog did not physically start the time by going through the electronic beam but continued on through the course as soon as the dog has completed the third obstacle. This is used solely to know whether the team has exceeded the MCT. The Timer must also be instructed to press the RESTART button (not the START button) when using e-timing, if the dog runs past the last obstacle and then takes it in the wrong direction, thus breaking the beam and stopping the time.

- Reducing stopwatch/e-timer malfunctions: Instruct the timer to look at the watch/e-timing console to ensure that it is running after starting each run. At the completion of each run, the timer should look again at the stopwatch/console to ensure that it has stopped. See Chapter 6 of these Guidelines for dealing with stopwatch/e-timer malfunctions.

- Whistles: The timer shall be equipped with a whistle or a working electronic horn/buzzer. If a dog starts across the line prior to being told to, the timer shall blow the whistle or press the horn/buzzer button, and the exhibitor shall be re-started if the error was deemed a mistake by the judge. If there is a stopwatch/e-timer malfunction identified while the dog is working the first three obstacles, the timer should blow the whistle or press the horn/buzzer button so the judge knows that maximum course time has been reached and the exhibitor must then leave the course. The judge must then blow their whistle as a follow-up to the Timer as many exhibitors do not hear the buzzer/horn. Judges shall translate the seconds for maximum course time on the standard course time worksheet to minutes and seconds as they would appear on the stopwatch for the timer. For example, 70 sec. SCT plus 20 sec. equals 90 sec. MCT. The judge would translate this to 1:30 seconds to get the MCT for the class. When a dog reaches Maximum Course Time (MCT), the timer shall blow the whistle and the dog is excused from the ring. When using electronic timing, the horn/buzzer will automatically sound if the SCT is programmed into the console and a speaker is attached.

- The position of the Timer must be immediately adjacent to the Scribe which shall be closer to the Start obstacle than the Finish obstacle.

Gate Steward:

- When to enter the ring: The gate steward’s primary job is to keep the class running smoothly by getting the exhibitors ready to enter the ring when instructed to by the judge. They should ensure that all exhibitors
are wearing their catalog number by visually comparing the number to the gate sheet; if the handler is not wearing a number to verify, they will not be permitted in to the course area. Usually the next dog is required to be on the line ready to go while there is a dog in the ring being judged. The handler should be instructed to remain with their dog at the start, under control and within reach until instructed by the Timer to begin their run. The judge must tell the gate steward at which obstacle in the sequence the next dog should move to the start. If the judge excuses the team currently running the course at any time prior to when the next dog would normally be directed to be ready on the line, the handler should be directed to enter the ring immediately to be ready to start once the excused team has left the ring confines.

- How many dogs ready to go: To ensure that dogs make it to the line on time and that there are no delays, the gate steward usually will look for the next three to four dogs in the run order (which should be posted ringside adjacent to the ring entrance) to be in close proximity to the ring entry and in correct running order.

- Check-in ringside: The gate steward shall keep a run order list ringside and use it as a check-in list so that exhibitors can see how many dogs are before them and how many have checked in. The gate steward also makes any changes to this list due to exhibitor conflicts, per the judge’s direction. Since dogs must be run in catalog order except for those who have listed an approved conflict on the gate sheet, any dog not available for judging will forfeit its chance to compete. Approved conflicts are conflicts within a ring with multiple dogs, conflicts between multiple agility rings or conflicts with other venues on the same trial grounds.

- Jump height change notification: The gate steward should announce when the last dog in a jump height approaches the start line so that the ring crew can be ready to change the jumps at the completion of the run.

- Scribe sheet organization: Some host clubs ask that the gate steward organize the scribe sheets prior to the class. If the gate steward is to be included in the process, he or she should also be verifying each dog’s number individually on a dog-by-dog basis, rather than a one-time basis prior to the start of the class and relaying this information to the scribe or scribe assistant.

**Ring Stewards:**

- Jump bar re-setting: Instruct the ring crew as to when displaced bars should be reset. Bars can be reset on jumps taken more than once if the course allows for resetting without interference with the dog or handler.

- Tunnel straightening: Instruct the ring crew that the fabric of the chute must be straightened after it has been used, whether correctly or following a wrong course. The position of open tunnels should be checked with greater frequency as the dogs get bigger. Large dogs can
more readily displace the tunnel shape, which can change the challenges on the course and even the course distance.

- **Changing jump heights:** Instruct the ring crew as to how to set the following:
  1. **Double Bar Jump:** 4 bars total with the top 2 bars set parallel and the bottom 2 bars crossed to the ground with one bar directly under each horizontal bar.
  2. **Triple Bar Jump:** Three (3) bars total for each jump height with the exception of the 4" jump height in Preferred in which there are typically two (2) bars total. For the 26" height class, the highest bar must be set at 26" and the other two bars may remain at 12" and 18".
  3. **Panel Jump:** Should have a 4" plank at the top of each height with the exception of the 26" jump height, which should have a 2" plank or regulation jump bar at the top.
  4. **One Bar Jump:** Should be set without the ground bar if the equipment allows for this.
  5. **Broad Jump:** Indicate on the ground where the front edge of the broad jump is to remain fixed. Golf tees make good outdoor markers and tape works well indoors; and if possible all lengths should be set prior to the start of the class to keep the measuring time to a minimum.

Since ring stewards are often the least trained ring help, it is wise to check the double, triple, and one-bar jumps prior to starting the first dog in each jump height, and each time any of these is reset after a run.

**Leash Runner:**

- It is best to wait until the dog and handler have started their run to pick up the leash at the entrance, since this should be done in a fashion that does not disturb the dog. Leash runners should not throw leashes, which could potentially distract the dog. The leash runner must stay inside the ring while performing this duty since there may be times when the leash will need to get to the handler before the team gets to the finish.
- Leashes should be placed so that the handler can readily find it upon finishing the course. The leash however, shall not be set up as a target for the dog to run to (for example, right on the finish line). The leash may be placed in/on a container or hung on a holder.

**Score Sheet Runner:**

- A runner that will carry the scribe sheets from the scribe to the score table is necessary. The runner should neither disturb the dog and handler in the ring or at the start line, nor distract the scribe from their job of watching the judge. The runner must give the scribe sheet to the score table ONLY.
SECTION 5. Measuring the Course for Distance

Judges must measure each course twice to determine the path of a 12" and 20" jumping dog respectively. These course measurements are used to determine the standard course times for the class. A judge shall use a measuring wheel to determine the distances a dog must travel to complete the course. All distances are measured on the ground and are based on the dog’s expected path. A judge shall measure around the outside of open tunnels and adjacent to contact obstacles and the weave poles.

Things that affect the dog’s expected path:
- 12" vs. 20" dog’s path (small dogs require less distance to make a turn).
- In general, a judge should measure from the inside 1/3 of a jump to the inside 1/3 of the next jump for a 12" path, allowing less room for landing than the 20" path would.
- In general, a judge should measure from the middle of a jump to the middle of the next jump for a 20" path, allowing room for landing and turning.
- Surface and weather conditions should be accounted for when measuring. If it is slippery or raining, the judge may account for this in the path.
- The speed a dog is expected to be traveling when asked to make a turn will affect the turning radius. For example, a dog with a straight 3-jump sequence into a 180-degree turn will turn much wider than a dog coming off a table going into the same 180-degree turn.

SECTION 6. Standard Course Time (SCT) Tabulations

After completing the measurement of the course, the judge shall compute the Standard Course Time (SCT) for each jump height and the Maximum Course Time (MCT) for the class. The judge converts the wheeled footage on the course to yards by dividing by 3 and rounding up to the nearest whole number if it is 0.5 or higher and rounding down if it is 0.4 or lower. This number is divided by the rate of speed assigned to each height and class level to determine the SCT (refer to the Regulations for rate of speed required in each height and class level). If the resulting value is not a whole number, it shall be rounded to the nearest whole number, with fractions of 0.5 and higher rounded up.

The MCT for the class is determined by adding 20 seconds to the largest SCT. This whole number shall be used for all dogs in the class.

SCTs in Excellent Standard and Excellent Jumpers with Weaves Classes:
There are maximum allowable course times (course time limits) assigned in the Regulations for all Excellent classes. These course time limits may not
be exceeded by the judge, regardless of the course length, running surface, or weather conditions. The AKC records computer will not accept course times greater than those published in the *Regulations for Agility Trials*.

SECTION 7. Exhibitor Briefings

The briefing for exhibitors should be delivered in such a way that puts exhibitors at ease. The Regular and Preferred classes of the same level should be briefed at the same time. The briefing should be short, but it should include the following:

- Introducing yourself and welcoming exhibitors to the host club’s agility trial.
- Where to enter and exit the ring, including the reminder that when exiting the course area, the dog should be with the exhibitor (in close proximity) and under verbal control. The exhibitor shall put the dog on leash as soon as possible per the Regulations. It is required to have a dog on leash prior to exiting the ring, since a leash is required on the trial grounds.
- When you want the next dog on the line and how many should be waiting in line.
- The need for all exhibitors to wear the club-supplied armbands or stickers, in an appropriate place and, in plain view for the gate steward to see.
- The yardages and standard and maximum course times if known at the time of the briefing. Otherwise, an announcement will need to be made with a posting of the yardages and SCT’s at the gate steward’s check-in board.
- Any potential safety issues.
- How conflicts with other rings, multiple dogs or obedience or conformation will be handled.
- Reminding handlers that only flat or rolled, buckle or snap “non-corrective” collars are allowed. This does not include: flat collars that cinch closed such as a martingale-style, braided leather or “double-ringed” collars.
- For Standard classes, the 4-paw safety rule, your table count, and which side of the table is considered the back for run-out purposes should be addressed.
- Instructing the handler to stay with their dog until the timer has told them to begin their run, or they may stand to lose their lead-out advantage or be cited for training in the ring.
- Answering any questions.
SECTION 8. Course Walkthroughs

Exhibitors need time on the course to plan their handling strategy. This walkthrough period should be timed, and generally should be between 8 and 10 minutes long for each group walking. Judges should consider splitting walkthroughs when the entry in a class exceeds 75 dogs. If walkthroughs are split, 8 minutes per group is the suggested length of time. When splitting walkthroughs, it is recommended that you let the first height group walk the course, and judge those dogs. Then let the next height group walk, and judge those dogs. This way no one will have to wait hours after walking their course before they are allowed to run it.

If the entry is greater than 75 dogs within a singular jump height, and the class is split for walkthroughs, all dogs within that height shall walk the course before judging begins. Additionally, Preferred class dogs should walk with the Standard class dogs jumping the same height.

If walkthrough schedules are published in the judging schedule/confirmation letter, they may not be changed.

Please keep in mind that the first dog on the line needs adequate warning of when your walkthrough period will be ending and the ring will be starting. Five minutes between the end of the walkthrough and the start of the ring is required for all classes. Please remember to use the countdown timer on the e-timer console or your own stopwatch as a timer to insure that you stay on schedule and keep the walkthroughs fair.

To avoid exhibitor confusion with split walkthroughs, it is highly recommended that:

- The same policy exists in all agility rings when there is more than one ring. Judges should confer prior to the first class on the first day of any set of trials to agree on which classes will have split walkthroughs and how the classes will be split.
- The same policy stays in effect for all consecutive days of a trial, unless it really isn’t working. Exhibitors get used to a system, and if there is a change, there will likely be exhibitors who will miss their walkthrough since they were relying on things staying the same.

SECTION 9. Dealing with Ring Conflicts

To the extent that it is practical dogs will be judged in catalog order within each class level. Exhibitors have paid to enter the trial and to the greatest extent possible should be allowed to run. Approved conflicts are conflicts within a ring with multiple dogs, conflicts between multiple agility rings or conflicts
with other venues on the same trial grounds. After consulting with those who have conflicts, judges can handle conflicts in any way they deem reasonable. Handlers with more than one dog who need more separation between their dogs may have their first dog moved forward or their second dog moved later in the height class. Under no circumstances may they switch the order that the dogs were to compete. Usually, holding dogs that have a conflict until all others have run will work. In this case, just move them to the end of the order and reset the bars once all dogs without conflicts have run. Occasionally, this will not work, especially if a dog is entered in Conformation classes. In this case, you may need to move dogs to the beginning of a class, or to wherever it works best, providing the least disruption to the rest of the class. Conflicts not noted on the gate sheet, must run in catalog order or lose their opportunity to participate in the class.

Upon completion of a class, the judge shall direct the ring stewards to reset all bars for any dog handlers that notified the gate steward of a conflict and had not yet run. The judge may allow a very short walk through if it is determined that the exhibitor did not get to walk through with the rest of the class. The judge shall then judge those dogs that had a conflict. A judge is not required to hold a course, waiting for exhibitors who had missed their run, if they are not present upon completion of the class.

SECTION 10. Warm-Up Jump

Warm-up jumps are recommended per the Regulations and if used, there shall be a maximum of one warm-up jump for each ring, and each warm-up area shall be separated so that jumps may not be put together or sequenced. The warm-up area is for warming up the muscles of the dog, not for training. Place the warm-up jump, if possible, in an area that you might be able to see it from the ring so that any major abuses can be seen, but not so close that it will disturb dogs competing in the ring.
CHAPTER 5
JUDGING

SECTION 1. Judging Position

As a judge, it is your responsibility to be in proper position to judge the performance of the dog on each obstacle. Proper judging position is facilitated by good course design. Your judging path should allow you to move efficiently around the ring without racing the dog or handler to be in the proper position. Remember, you are the judge not the handler, and your movements should generally be more constrained than those of the dog and handler. Prior to judging dogs, you should go over your judging path several times to make sure you are comfortable with the path. Also, remember that your judging path was approved by a Field Rep and should be adhered to as closely as possible while judging the course. If any major changes are made to your approved path, they must be documented and included in your report to the Director of Agility.

Judge’s Interference: The judge’s position can cause interference with the handler or dog if not planned properly. The judge’s path should avoid situations such as:

• Crossing in front of the dog’s path as the dog is coming at you, as this can distract the dog (see diagram 5.1.1).
• Sharp turns off contact obstacles, which turn the handler toward the judge’s position, and may cause the judge to be in the way or to not be in the proper position to judge the contact in the first place (see diagram 5.1.2).
• Placing obstacles that would require the judge to be in very close proximity to the dog and handler to be in the proper position to make a call (see diagram 5.1.3).

Judge’s Decorum: Judges must stand upright in the ring to judge all classes. The judge’s position should place the judge in and about the ring so as to make the best judgment calls possible. This includes improving your judging position in the JWW class by moving around to get a better angle to judge run-outs and refusals. Judges should avoid leaning in to make a call but rather should keep moving to gain a better judging position.

The judge’s position must allow the scribe to see the judge make all hand signals indicating faults. If obstacles such as the A-frame are placed between the scribe and the judge’s path, the judge should hold calls longer until clear of the A-frame and in full view of the scribe.
Required Judging Positions for Obstacles and Suggested Techniques:
Remember: Your calls will hold much more weight if the exhibitors see that you are putting forth your best effort to be in the proper position to judge their dog’s performance.

- **Contact obstacles (A-frame, Seesaw, Dog Walk):** The judge is required to be within 20 feet of each judged contact zone when the dog is performing the contact obstacle. The judge must see the approach to all contacts, including the A-frame and Dog Walk to determine refusals, and must be confident that they can see everything happening at those entry points. It is important to stay mobile and keep moving. You may think you are in the perfect position to judge the contact zone, but then the handler will make a movement that puts him or her in a position to block your view of the dog. (see diagram 5.1.3B)

- **Pause Table:** The judge must be within 15 feet of the table at some point during the count of 5 seconds. The judge must look for contact between dog and handler and ensure that the dog has gotten completely on the table and stays on the table. The judge may be moving while counting; however, the judge must keep the dog in sight at all times and the handler must be able to hear the count. Judges should not be any closer than 5 feet to the table so that they do not distract the dog.

- **Broad Jump:** The judge must be within 30 feet of the broad jump to judge whether a dog has visibly moved or stepped on or between any of the broad jump boards. Additionally, the judge must be to the side of the broad jump, for it is difficult to judge the broad jump if the dog is jumping directly away from or towards you.

- **Weave Poles:** While there is no finite distance beyond which a judge must not be when judging the weave poles, the judge must be comfortable that he or she can see:
  1. That the dog gained proper entry (without passing the refusal/runout lines).
  2. That the dog is weaving between each pole.
  3. That the handler is not making contact with the dog or the weave poles.
  4. That the dog has exited the poles in the proper direction and has not skipped any poles.
Avoid judging the weave poles directly from an end, as it will be impossible to see if the dog skips any poles in the weaving sequence. A position that allows you an angled view from alongside the weaves is best.

- **Jumps (Bar Jumps, One-Bar Jumps, Double Bar Jumps, and Triple Bar Jumps):** Jumps may be judged from a considerable distance away,
however, judges must be able to see that the dog has cleared each bar, that the bar has not been displaced from its cup or support, and that the dog has jumped the bar and not the wing. Jumps constructed with large wings may require you to alter your judge’s path to ensure that you can see the bars themselves as the dog jumps them.

- **Tire Jump:** The judge must be able to see the dog jump through the opening of the tire. A position alongside the tire should be avoided, for it will be impossible to be sure that the dog went through the tire rather than between the tire and frame.

- **Tunnels (Open and Closed):** The judge must be on the approach side of the tunnel with the tunnel opening in full view to enable the judge to call refusals and run-outs properly.

- **Wrong course possibilities:** The judging position shall account for off-course possibilities, as the judge needs to see whether the dog places one paw on or in the wrong obstacle. Therefore, the judge must be able to see all tunnel openings and all contacts that are a wrong course possibility in the course design (see diagram 5.1.4).

- **Judging Position at Options:** The judge shall stay in close enough proximity to see if the dog has crossed a run-out line or committed an off-course. A good rule of thumb is that if you have a lot of challenge in an area, you probably don’t want to be too far away from that area to be able to judge all the possible things that can happen.

**SECTION 2. Coordination with Ring Crew**

**Scribe and Timer:** The judge shall make sure that the timer and scribe are comfortable with and understand the system for matching scribe sheets to exhibitors in the ring prior to starting any class. The scribe is ultimately responsible for having the right scribe sheet to record faults signaled by the judge. The scribe shall indicate to the timer when ready, and the judge shall indicate to the timer when ready. The timer then gives an indication to the team on the line that everyone is ready for them to start their run. Statements such as “ready”, “please go”, “go now”, or “good luck handler” let the handler know the start line is live and it’s time to get started.

**Gate Steward:** Inform your gate steward to summon you between dogs if there is someone who needs to question a score or discuss a conflict. If the jump height class is almost completed, waiting for the height change would be appropriate. The gate steward should also let you know if he or she is having a hard time getting exhibitors on the line as instructed in the exhibitor briefing.
SECTION 3. Judging Specific Obstacles

The Regulations state the performance requirements for each obstacle. The following is an obstacle-specific list of clarifications as to the intent of the performance standard for each obstacle listed in the Regulations.

Contact Obstacles:

- To judge a dog’s performance on a contact obstacle, a judge should focus on the contact zones and determine if a paw (or part of a paw) lands within this zone. This method provides better results than to watch the dog’s movement over the board, for you may miss a back paw touching the contact zone as the dog is striding along the board.
- A dog is considered to be on a contact obstacle when on it with all 4 paws. Until a dog is on the contact obstacle with all 4 paws, it is subject to a refusal call.
- A dog is considered to have exited a contact obstacle when it has left the obstacle and all 4 paws have touched the ground.
- If a dog has completely left the contact obstacle with all 4 paws touching the ground and then re-engages the contact with 1 or more paws, the dog shall be assessed a wrong course fault.
- A dog shall not be faulted for the act of stopping, backing up, spinning, or reversing direction on a contact obstacle so long as the dog was fully on the obstacle when this occurred. The dog must ultimately complete the obstacle correctly by touching the descending contact zone before exiting the obstacle.

Once a dog is on a contact obstacle with all 4 paws, it may not exit the board until they have completed the obstacle. A dog that exits the board prior to starting its descent has committed a 4-paw rule violation and is faulted with an “F” (failure to perform). The judge shall instruct the handler to go on to the next obstacle, since the handler needs to know that the 4-paw rule has been invoked and they cannot reattempt the contact obstacle. If the dog re-engages the obstacle with one or more paws, the dog shall be excused.

- Once on a contact obstacle with all four paws, dogs may be stopped in the contact zone or partially on the contact zone and partially on the ground or with all four feet on the ground after the proper completion of the contact. If the dog is qualifying to that point, the handler may spend as much time as he or she wishes with the dog in this position. If the dog has NQ’d prior to the contact performance and the judge feels the handler is spending too much time gaining control of the dog, the judge should ask the handler to move on. If the handler fails to do so, then the judge should excuse the handler for training in the ring or failing to comply with the judge’s verbal instructions. Additionally, dogs that miss
the contact and are corrected for missing the contact by being asked to
down or sit or by otherwise restricting their forward movement should be
excused for training in the ring as this is a punitive action. See Chapter 6
of these Guidelines for “training in the ring” situations.

Non-faulted descent: A dog that is descending a contact obstacle would not
be faulted for placing one or more paws on the ground prior to placing a paw
in the contact zone, as long as the movement is in the dog’s natural stride. This
may occur with larger or long-bodied dogs that, with their natural stride, move
over the majority of the contact before a rear paw engages the contact zone.
Therefore, a dog whose two front feet hit the ground first and whose hind feet
(or foot) then come to rest or push off the contact zone is considered to have
successfully performed the contact obstacle and shall not be faulted.

Faulted descent: Conversely, a dog jumping off a contact obstacle prior to
placing a paw in a contact zone, even though it might inadvertently make
contact with the bottom edge of the contact zone, shall be faulted for a missed
contact (e.g., a dog that leaps off the board, yet a small portion of a back foot
or the rear end or hock of the dog lands on the bottom edge of the board). In
this instance, the dog typically gathers itself prior to touching the contact and
then leaps to get off the board. Therefore, the dog left the obstacle with all 4
paws in an attempt to get off the board and the coincidence of the dog landing
on the end of the board is not to be considered the proper performance of the
obstacle.

Seesaw: To properly perform the seesaw, the dog may not exit the plank until
the elevated edge hits the ground for the first time. The dog must touch the
descending contact zone at the same time or after the plank has hit the ground.
The dog may exit the plank anytime after that, even if the plank has bounced
and is no longer touching the ground.Exiting the plank before its elevated edge
hits the ground is faulted with an “F” for a flyoff. Merely slamming the plank
loudly into the ground is not faulted; however, the dog must still be in control
and have touched the contact zone at the same time or after the plank touches
the ground.

Pause Table: A dog is not on the table until completely on it with all 4 paws
(i.e. no paws on the ground) and has not exited the table until it has left the
table and all 4 paws have touched the ground. Until a dog is completely on
the table they are still subject to refusal and run out calls. The judge should
immediately begin the table count once the dog is completely on the table.
• If the dog places one or more paws on the ground (the tail does not
count), the count stops and restarts from the beginning once the dog is
back on the table.
• If the dog completely exits the table with all four paws before the count is completed and before the judge says the word “GO”, a table fault (“T”) will be issued, and the count restarts from the beginning once the dog returns completely to the table.
• If the dog completely exits the table with all four paws during or before the end of the word “GO”, a table fault (“T”) will be issued for anticipating the count and the dog must continue on in the course. Thus, returning to the table after this fault will then constitute a wrong course.
• If a dog exits the table with one, two or three paws and is able to return completely to the table, no table fault is assessed and the count restarts from the beginning.
• If the dog leaves the table without completing the 5-second count and engages any obstacle, a table fault (“T”) shall first be given followed by “F”, then regular judging shall resume from that point. The judge may help the handler at this point by telling them to continue on in the course. If the dog returns to the table, this will be considered a wrong course.
• The dog may re-enter the table from any side, because refusals and run-outs are no longer faulted after the dog has successfully gotten on the table for the first time.

If a dog is on a wrong course when the next proper obstacle is the table, the new run-out line of the table will be the side furthest from the dog’s logical approach. (see diagram 5.3.1)

Weave Poles:
A refusal/run-out occurs in each of the following cases, when a dog:
• Enters the weave poles incorrectly.
• Misses a pole in the sequence and has to make any backwards motion.
• Stops before having all 4 feet cross between the plane of poles #1 and #2. Once the dog has fully entered correctly, it shall not be faulted merely for stopping or sniffing in the poles.
• Runs by the entry to the weave poles without making any entry. Each refusal/run-out is faulted when it occurs. Missed poles must be corrected by restarting the weave poles over from the beginning. Only the first missed pole during an attempt of the weave poles is called as a refusal until they are reattempted.
• At the Excellent/Open level, any action that is scored as a run-out or a refusal will count as one attempt.
• At the Novice level, any action that would normally be scored as a run-out or a refusal at the Excellent/Open level, will count as one attempt. (See diagram 5.3.2)
• A subsequent attempt cannot be assessed until the dog has all 4 feet on the approach side of the run-out lines of the weaves.
• If a dog re-enters the weaves after 3 attempts - DO NOT whistle the handler off the course for the dog re-entering, even if the handler told the dog to re-enter - just tell them to go on. They may have not heard or been able to react quickly enough to your directions. This is very different from the handler that ignores your repeated direction to go on. They may be whistled off for failure to follow the judge’s instructions or training in the ring.

A wrong course occurs in each of the following cases, when a dog:

• Performs the weaves in the wrong direction (back-weaving) by consecutively crossing the plane of the weave poles three times in succession.
• Crosses through the plane of the weave poles when it is not the correct obstacle in sequence.

Bar Jumps: Only the top bar of the jump must be cleared without displacing it. If for any reason, one or more bottom bars fall and the top bar remains in place, the dog shall not be faulted. If a dog hits a bar and the bar is not displaced from its support, the dog is not faulted. Dogs shall not be faulted for “banking” off bars unless the top bar is displaced. If the last bar on the course falls as a result of an action by the dog, it does not matter whether the dog has already stopped the clock before the bar falls, the dog shall be faulted for displacing the bar. If the top bar is displaced and falls to a lower support but not fully to the ground, an “F” must be signaled.

If a jump is to be taken several times on the course and the dog displaces it the first time through the dog is given an “F.” This effectively fails the dog so it cannot qualify. Thus, whether the bar is reset or not, when the dog returns to that jump there is no reason to fault the dog again.

Panel Jump: If the top plank is displaced from its support, the dog is faulted whether the plank falls all the way to the ground or not.

Double Bar Jump: If either of the two top bars are displaced the dog shall be faulted with an “F.”

Triple Bar Jump: Any displaced bar of the triple results in an “F.”

Broad Jump: The corner markers are placed at the corners of the broad jump for the sole purpose of determining whether the dog has jumped over all of the boards of the broad jump. A dog that touches or knocks one of these markers over is not faulted per the Regulations. Dogs shall not be faulted for this act unless the dog fails to clear the broad jump as stated in the regulations. Any action of the dog that visibly moves the broad jump boards, as well as stepping between the boards is a failure.
Start and Finish Lines:

- Dogs that run past the first obstacle or the last obstacle will incur a runout fault.
- No runouts or refusals will be assessed prior to the dog crossing the runout line of the first obstacle; however, a wrong course will be assessed if the dog takes any obstacle on the course prior to crossing the runout line or starting the time normally by taking the first obstacle.
- When starting, handlers may set their dogs at any distance or angle from the approach side of the first obstacle; however, the dog must remain inside the ring. If the dog is not started from the approach side of the first/start obstacle, a runout fault will be assessed.
- Dogs that run past the last obstacle will not be faulted for failure to complete the course as long as they return and complete the last obstacle prior to the dog exiting the ring. The time will continue to run until the dog has completed the last obstacle. Handlers who choose not to return to properly finish shall be faulted for failure to complete and shall be given a “No Time”.
- Dogs that run past the last obstacle and commit a wrong course by taking it in the wrong direction will be assessed a runout and a wrong course fault. If using electronic timing, the timer will be tripped when the dog passes between the eyes during the wrong course, thus the Timer must hit the RESTART button as soon as this occurs so that the time will continue until the dog has completed the last obstacle in the proper direction.
- For E-timing, time must be started manually if the dog did not physically start the time by going through the electronic beam but continued on through the course; as soon as the dog has completed the third obstacle.

SECTION 4. Course Faults

Course faults include Refusals/Run-outs, Wrong Courses, Table Faults, Failures/Eliminations, and Excusals. The following is a clarification to what is written in the current edition of the Regulations for Agility Trials.

Refusals and Run-outs are similar faults in their nature and in how they are signaled and scored. They both relate to the fact that the dog is not getting on, in, or over the next proper obstacle like they should be. In order to be subject to a refusal fault, a dog must be in a position to see the next proper obstacle before they can be faulted. For run-outs, the dog does not have to see or be in close proximity to the next proper obstacle for a fault to be called. See examples 5.4.1 through 5.4.7 for practical applications of course faults.
Refusals (R):
Refusals are the most difficult fault to assess, because they are somewhat subjective. A refusal is assessed solely on the performance of the dog, with no consideration given to what commands were or were not given by the handler, or to the location of the handler. In addition to the guidance provided in the Regulations, the following may help you in understanding refusals:

1/3 – 1/3 – 1/3 Refusal Guideline: The 1/3 – 1/3 – 1/3 – refusal guideline can be used to help define when a refusal can occur. To apply this guideline, the space between the previous obstacle and the next proper obstacle is divided into three equal spaces as follows. Note that the ranges in distances given are due to the range of obstacle spacing allowed on the course and are in relation to the next proper obstacle.

**Furthest 1/3** (Landing Area) is the 1/3 of the course distance that is the greatest distance from the next proper obstacle.

**Middle 1/3** (Judge’s Discretion Zone) is the middle 1/3 of the course distance between obstacles (usually 6 to 16 feet away from the next obstacle in sequence).

**Closest 1/3** (Refusal Territory) is the 1/3 of the course distance just prior to the next proper obstacle in sequence (usually 0 – 7 feet away).

**Judging of these 3 zones is as follows:**

**Furthest 1/3:** It is highly improbable that you would call a refusal in this area. The dog is landing and needs this area to acclimate to the new position on course and see what options are available.

**Middle 1/3:** This is the area where you as the judge must determine whether the dog is in a position to see the next proper obstacle. Dogs in this area are subject to refusals if, in your opinion, the dog has had the opportunity to have seen the next proper obstacle.

**Closest 1/3:** Dogs in this zone are considered to have seen the next proper obstacle whether approaching it directly, running parallel to it or spinning in front of it. Therefore, a refusal **shall** be applied if the dog stops, spins or turns back on its path or runs parallel to it in close proximity.

It is important to note that the closer a dog is to the next proper obstacle, the narrower its field of vision. Thus, the probability of it seeing the next proper obstacle is even greater. This is the basis of the 1/3 guideline.

**Turnback:** Turnback is a term used to define a refusal when a dog has seen the next proper obstacle and subsequently turns back on its original approach path prior to engaging the obstacle.

Maneuvers by the dog to avoid an obstacle by altering its path are often obvious. The following examples should be faulted as refusals when they occur in relation to the next proper obstacle:
• Jumping over or passing through the wing of a jump in the correct direction
• Jumping over a contact obstacle from side to side, jumping over a tunnel, or jumping over without touching the table
• Going under the top bar of a bar jump (in the correct direction)
• Passing between the tire and the frame (in the correct direction)
• Entering the broad jump correctly but exiting through the side
• Entering through the side of the broad jump and exiting the other side or back
• Exiting the entrance of a tunnel without going completely through the tunnel
• Going under or jumping over the pause table without touching it (see diagram 5.4.5-B2).

A dog is not subject to a refusal on the second jump of a 270 degree turn until it has placed all 4 paws on the proper approach side of the second jump (see diagram 5.4.3-D).

If a dog is given a refusal for stopping in front of an obstacle, it cannot be given another refusal for just standing there. The dog is not subject to another refusal until it makes some movement forward. Furthermore, a dog that stops in front of an obstacle, then turns back on its path is assessed one refusal since there has not yet been movement forward toward the intended obstacle.

**Run-outs (R):**

A run-out is also a refusal. A run-out occurs each time the dog passes the run-out line of an obstacle without engaging that obstacle. Whether the dog was approaching that obstacle or has even seen it is of no consequence.

The run-out line is intended to mark the point at which a dog can no longer properly engage the obstacle without turning back on its path. It is defined as a line that passes across the front edge of all obstacles except the pause table, weave poles, and contact obstacles.

• On the weave poles, the run-out line is interpreted as passing to the left and perpendicular to course flow of the first pole and to the right and perpendicular to course flow of the second pole.
• On the pause table, the run-out line passes across the back of the table. The back is determined by the natural flow of the course. Thus, it is possible that dogs may jump on the table from three different sides (the front and the two sides) without incurring a run-out. To better define the run-out line, the front face of the table should be square to the expected dog’s path.
• On the dog walk, the run-out line passes through the junction where the ascent ramp and the horizontal, middle ramp meet.
On the A-frame and Teeter, the run-out line passes through the back edge of the approach side of the contact zone.

Once the dog has passed the original runout line of the table, the line then flips to the opposite parallel plane for the purpose of judging the dog’s subsequent approach to the table. (see diagram 5.4.2-C3)

Run-outs occur immediately when they happen. Thus, in the case where a dog passes the run-out line for an obstacle first and then goes off course, the score should read “R” for run-out and “W” for wrong course. However, if the dog goes off course and the wrong course obstacle carries the dog past the run-out line of the next correct obstacle, only a wrong course penalty is assessed (see diagrams 5.4.1 through 5.4.7 for examples).

A dog cannot be assessed a run-out until it has all 4 paws on the approach side of the next proper obstacle. This is especially important in situations, such as 270-degree turns, where the dog is not on the approach side of the next proper obstacle when it lands. The dog must land and then make its way to the approach side of the next proper obstacle (see diagram 5.4.3-D).

Wrong Courses (W):
A wrong course occurs when a dog performs the correct obstacle in the wrong direction. For example:

- Getting on the wrong end of a contact obstacle and performing the obstacle backwards.
- Jumping the next proper jump in the wrong direction.
- Entering the wrong end of a tunnel.
- Jumping backwards through the tire or backwards between the tire and frame.
- Back-weaving through the weave poles by consecutively crossing the plane of the weave poles three times or crossing through the weave poles when it is not the next correct obstacle in sequence.
- Back jumping the broad jump by entering through the rear of the broad jump and exiting through the side or front, or entering through the side of the broad jump and exiting through the front.

A wrong course also occurs when a dog engages an obstacle that is not the next proper obstacle to be performed. For the purposes of defining a wrong course, a dog is considered to have engaged a wrong course obstacle when the dog:

- Touches an obstacle with one or more paws (head, nose, shoulders, and tail are not considered).
- Jumps over any part of an obstacle that is not the correct one to be performed (except a dog that jumps over or walks on the flat part of the closed tunnel is not faulted).
• Goes under the table or a jump with one or more paws.
• Crosses through the weave poles with one or more paws.

Going under a contact obstacle is not considered to be a wrong course, unless the dog actually touches the contact obstacle with one or more paws. A dog that touches the fabric of the closed tunnel is not assessed a wrong course penalty.

Multiple obstacles taken while the dog is on the same wrong course are considered a single wrong course. The dog is not subject to additional wrong course penalties until it has engaged with one paw the next proper obstacle in the sequence.

**Obstacle Omission:**
When a dog incurs a wrong course fault, and the handler makes the decision to continue on through the course without returning to correct the incorrect performance and complete the omitted obstacle or obstacles, the judge shall signal a failure to complete (“F”) in addition to the “R” and “W” already incurred and then continue judging the dog’s performance from that point on.

If the handler has chosen to remain in the area of the next proper obstacle in an effort to get the dog to complete it, once the dog returns to the correct side of approach, they can again be subject to another refusal/runout since they are attempting to correct the wrong course and complete the next proper obstacle.

**Eliminations/Failures (F):**
Failures are infractions on the course that prevent the dog from qualifying at any class level. However, the handler and dog are allowed to continue and complete the remainder of the course. Judges shall continue to judge the remainder of the run, signaling all faults as described above even after a failure has been signaled. The Regulations contain a list of infractions that result in a failure being assessed. The following are some additional guidelines for assessing failures:

- If a dog knocks a bar or panel down while on a wrong course, or the handler knocks a bar or panel down at any time, and the dog has yet to complete that obstacle on the course, the performance shall be faulted with an “F” for the knocked bar or panel (whether the bar is reset or not). The bar or panel being knocked down was a result of the dog or handler’s action and the dog’s score shall not be dependent on a ring steward’s abilities in replacing the bar or panel. If the bar or panel is not to be taken in the remainder of the course then the dog would be faulted only for the wrong course and no fault would be assessed for the handler knocking it down.
- Displacing a tire from its frame, whether it falls to the ground or not, is a failure.
- Handlers who purposefully touch, jump over, or go under equipment shall be faulted with an “F.” If the action is extreme or dangerous, the judge should excuse the handler rather than signal the failure.
If a handler steps on a ground support causing the equipment to fall over or the top bar or plank to displace while the dog is performing it, then an “F” must be assessed.

Handler contact with the dog sometimes occurs on the course. Handlers may stand anywhere they wish in the course area to direct their dogs around the course (except for on the equipment). There are various reasons for contact, and not all should be faulted. The fundamental point in deciding whether or not to fault the contact is whether or not it aided the performance of the dog or whether the handler knowingly placed himself or herself in a position where contact was a possibility (e.g. in attempting to enhance the dogs performance).

A handler who knocks over the free-standing wing of a jump is assessed an “F”.

The following are examples of contact that would be faulted:

1. Any contact between the dog and handler at the contacts, table, or weave poles shall be faulted. In this case, the dog’s movement is restricted by the performance of the obstacle and the handler has decided to place himself or herself in close proximity to the dog, usually to enhance performance. This places the handler under greater scrutiny, and any contact under such conditions shall be faulted.

2. Dogs lunging and touching the handler’s hands because of the handler using his or her hands to guide the dog or “fake treat” the dog.

3. Handlers touching dogs by using knees or other body parts to guide the dog on, in, through, or off an obstacle.

4. Dog-handler contact or collision (inadvertent or not) that keeps the dog from going off course, picking up a run-out or refusal, or aids in the entry or approach to the next obstacle.

5. Handlers touching his or her dog to untangle the dog from the chute fabric is assessed an “F.” However, if the chute fabric has come off the barrel or rigid section of the closed tunnel, this would be an equipment malfunction and would not be subject to an “F” for a handler touch (see Chapter 6 of these Guidelines for Equipment Malfunctions).

Examples of when a dog would not be faulted for contact would be:

1. Inadvertent contact between the dog and handler where no advantage to the dog has been gained and no fault has been avoided. *Exception: Any contact at the contacts, table and weave poles.*

2. If a dog has fallen off an obstacle or crashed a jump and may be hurt, the handler should not be faulted for checking the dog out to make sure it is ok. The dog should be faulted for the error on the obstacle, but no additional penalty should be assessed. If the dog has not faulted an obstacle and the handler feels the need to check out the dog, the handler
should receive an “F” for touching the dog, but not be excused for this act (see “Excusals” for when you would excuse a handler for touching the dog).

3. Dogs jumping on handlers out of insecurity or excitement. This type of contact is innocent and should not be faulted unless the dog is nipping (see Excusals).

4. Handlers who are stumbling or falling and are trying to save themselves from injury.

**Excusals (E):**

Excusals are infractions that are fairly serious in nature and result in the immediate end of the run. The judge shall immediately blow the whistle and instruct the exhibitor to leave the ring. The judge may need to explain to the exhibitor the reason for the excusal if it is not apparent. The length of the explanation and the general tone shall be dictated by the nature of the offense. Exhibitors excused from the ring must immediately and politely stop working their dog and leave the ring with their dog. Judges should consider filing a Misconduct for handlers not following their verbal instructions to leave the ring with their dog.

The Regulations contain a list of infractions that result in an excusal. The following are some additional guidelines for assessing excusals:

- **Excessive handling:** A handler should be excused when it is evident that the dog is completely untrained on the obstacles to the point that the dog would not be able to perform the obstacles without extreme movements on the handler’s part. Some examples are a handler leaving the dog at one end of the tunnel and going to hands and knees at the other end to call the dog through, and a dog that needs (fake) baiting by the handler throughout the entire course.

- **Harsh commands:** Some handlers get so excited that they start shouting their commands in negative tones. They usually are not even aware that they are doing this. In general, this should not be faulted, although you may bring it to their attention when you get a chance. Sometimes handlers become very frustrated with their dogs, particularly if they think their dogs are intentionally disobeying. In these cases, you can hear a distinct edge in the handler’s voice. The best time to warn a handler that his or her commands are too harsh is when the dog is on the table, since it is usually under control at this time. Consider the extra time it takes to warn the handler as a penalty. If it is not convenient or if it is too late to warn the handler during the run, do not hesitate to excuse the handler. (see Responsibilities to Spectators in Chapter 1, Section 1 of these Guidelines).

- **Unsportsmanlike conduct:** Any instances of unsportsmanlike conduct should result in immediate excusal from the ring. In cases when the conduct is extremely severe, such as dog abuse in the ring or verbal abuse,
the infraction may also warrant a misconduct hearing.

- Dogs that leave the ring and/or discontinue working: Dogs that willfully leave the ring during their run should be excused. This is different from a dog whose momentum carries it out of the ring due to obstacle placement in close proximity to the ring barrier. In this case, the dog would not be faulted. A dog that willfully leaves the ring does so through his or her own volition. Sometimes this is an avoidance of the agility equipment or handler or just an opportunity to check out a toy or treat, another dog, or some other outside inducement. The type of ring barrier shall not be considered when assessing this penalty.

- Dogs that are unresponsive and/or out of control.

- Four paw rule: If a dog commits all four feet on any ascent portion of a contact obstacle and fails to negotiate the ascent side of that obstacle, the judge shall instruct the handler to move on to the next obstacle, or be excused.

- Fouling the ring: Dogs that foul the ring, including dogs throwing up, should be excused.

- Inappropriate collars: Discovery of an inappropriate collar on a dog after the run has started shall result in an excusal.

- Running the course with handling aids: Food, toys, and training devices are not allowed in the ring at any time. Articles of clothing such as glasses, keys, etc., if thrown for the dog to chase at the end of the round would also then be considered handling aids. Judges should not require exhibitors to remove keys, wallets, cell phones, pagers, etc., from their person, as just having them is not a training inducement. However, an exhibitor who uses one of these items as a training device, such as throwing it upon completing a run, or jingling keys in his or her pocket with a hand as an inducement for or punishment of the dog, should be excused.

- A handler who purposefully touches the dog (petting on a contact zone, picking up the dog to place it on the table or back on a contact zone), or the handler who uses negative touches, such as corrections, must be excused for training in the ring (see Chapter 7, Section 6 of these Guidelines).

- Aggression of the dog towards the handler, judge, or ring crew: If a dog bites at its handler and holds on to clothing or continually attempts to nip at its handler, such that the run is more about not getting bitten than it is about agility, the dog must be excused from the ring. (Refer to Chapter 1, Section 1; Responsibility to Spectators in these Guidelines). If a dog is aggressive to the judge or ring crew, the dog must be excused (or disqualified depending upon the circumstances) and a report filed with the judge’s report.

- Failure to comply with the judge’s verbal directions: Use this area of the regulations when there is confusion. If the exhibitor fails to comply with
your verbal instructions, he or she should be excused from the ring. The following are examples of when you may need to say something:

i. If a handler absolutely refuses to be on the line as directed, has been warned by the judge, and is still not on the line, causing delays, this would be failure to comply with the judge’s verbal directions.

ii. If there is confusion at the start line, and the handler has been told by the timer to go but does not go, the judge should say “go now.” If the handler fails to comply, he or she should be excused.

iii. If the dog just can’t figure out how to get into, on, through, or over an obstacle and the handler, after many attempts, continues to try, the judge should tell the handler to move on to the next obstacle. If the handler fails to comply, he or she should be excused. Judges should allow a minimum of four to five attempts on each obstacle.

iv. A handler who fails to heed the judge’s warning about harsh handling or the 4-paw rule is failing to comply with the judge’s verbal directions.

- Dogs that get tangled up in the closed tunnel fabric, hung up going through the tire, or falls off the ascent side of the a-frame, seesaw or the ascent or middle plank of the dog walk and the handler chooses to immediately reattempt the obstacle once, must then leave the course.

- Veterinarian: The only situation that would require the judge to request the services of the show veterinarian would be when a dog in the ring requires immediate medical attention or when a judge needs the show veterinarian’s recommendation concerning the health of the dog in the ring. The judge must excuse a lame dog or any dog they deem as unfit to participate from competition (refer to the Regulations for Agility Trials Chapter 1, Section 31).

SECTION 5. Judge’s Hand Signals

Standard Hand Signals:
The judge shall signal faults to the scribe by use of the standard hand signals and the use of the whistle, as described in Chapter 4, Section 4 of these Guidelines.

Correcting an Incorrect Hand Signal:
If the judge inadvertently signals a fault, the judge should correct it immediately with the scribe once the dog has finished the run. The judge should go to the scribe and explain the change and look at the scribe sheet if there is any question as to whether the scribe has recorded the intentions of the judge correctly. This is also true if a judge wishes to add a fault that was not originally signaled on the course.
Signals for Multiple Faults That Happen Quickly:
Judges must be aware that scribes may miss a hand signal if many faults happen quickly on the course. Different scribes have different abilities to record a quick succession of signals from the judge; therefore, the judge needs to slow the process down so that scribes can accurately record all faults signaled. If the dog has incurred several faults in a very short time, it is likely that the judge will need to slow the process down for the scribe. The judge may be signaling faults that happened even after the dog has left the area where the faults were incurred. To help the scribe out, deliberately and confidently raise your hand with the proper fault signal then lower it. Each fault should have a separate raise of the hand to identify a separate fault. Switching hands for faults that happen quickly will greatly help the scribe understand that you have signaled separate faults rather than hesitantly signaling the same fault when using the same hand.

Follow these steps to ensure accuracy in recording your hand signals:
• Make sure that your scribes know the proper letter to record on the scribe sheet for each hand signal.
• Do not signal a fault until after it has happened. Sometimes judges can see something coming and will start to fault the dog, but the dog makes a great recovery, resulting in no fault. In this case, you would need to fix the incorrect signal at the end of the run.
• Do not raise your hand to signal a fault until you know which type of fault it is that you are going to signal. Do not raise your hand in a fist and open it up into an open hand once it is up. Scribes will wonder if this is an “R” or a “W,” thinking that you changed your mind while raising your hand, or both an “R” and a “W,” thinking that you just didn’t bring your arm down.
• Hold your calls if the A-frame is between you and the scribe, until you are clearly visible.
• Switch hands for multiple signals that happen quickly
• Generally, you should never take your eyes off the dog since you may miss a fault. One exception to this is that when the dog has failed an obstacle, you may want to look at the scribe briefly as you signal the “F” to make sure that the scribe sees this fault, which will prevent the dog from qualifying.
• The signal to your scribe for an Excusal (“E”) is your whistle, blown loud enough to be heard by your scribe.

Remember, scribes are to be watching the judge, not the dog. Scribes can only record what you signal, no more and no less, so you must be clear in your signals.

Hand Signals for the International Sweepstakes Class (ISC):
A judge must be clear with the scribe regarding hand signals in the ISC Class,
since they are different from signals used in the Standard Classes. The following is a list of the hand signals for this class:

- Use an open hand (which should be recorded as an “S”) for standard faults such as a knocked bar or missed contact zone. These are all 5-point faults.
- Use a closed fist for refusals and run-outs (same as in the Regular Classes).
- Use two open hands as an “F” for faults that will fail the dog and keep it from placing, such as a wrong course or handler-dog contact. This is done so the dog and handler may complete the course even though they have no chance of placing.
- Use a whistle for an excusal or when a dog has exceeded the fault limit if one has been imposed. Handlers should be encouraged to quickly exit the ring if excused. It is of no importance if the dog takes obstacles on its way out.

**SCRIBE SIGNALS: ISC CLASSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fault</th>
<th>Judge’s Signal</th>
<th>Symbol recorded on sheet</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>Raised fist</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Fault</td>
<td>Raised open hand</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>Raised two open hands</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination</td>
<td>Blow the whistle</td>
<td>E</td>
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CHAPTER 6

FAST CLASS

SECTION 1. Course Design

General Course Design Requirements

All courses must meet the usual safety standards set forth in the Regulations for Agility Trials and elsewhere in these Guidelines. In addition, the following factors must be taken into consideration when designing courses for the FAST class:

- All courses must adhere to spacing and safety requirements indicated in the AKC design guidelines.
- The Start Line must consist of a single straight line or two intersecting straight lines, allowing handlers wide latitude when planning their strategy.
- No obstacle, including the Finish Obstacle, may be placed on the approach side of the Start Line.
- A bar jump, one-bar jump (Open and Excellent), or open tunnel that is not assigned a point value must be designated as the Finish Obstacle; to improve efficiency, it is recommended that it be placed in close proximity to the ring exit.
- The Start Line and Finish Obstacle must be placed so as to allow for hand timing. The Finish obstacle must be placed on the course in such a manner that would not require the timer to move from one static position.
- A Send Bonus consisting of 2 (Novice), 2 or 3 (Open), or 3 (Excellent) obstacles must be designated. The Excellent level Send Bonus must have a change of direction or discrimination element included.
- Obstacles that are part of the Send Bonus must be 5-10 feet (Novice), 10-15 feet (Open), or 15-20 feet (Excellent) from the Send Line. In the Send Bonus portion of Excellent or Open Level courses, the second of the three obstacles may be plus/or minus a maximum of 5 feet from the distances required above. This variance can only be used in Open level classes if there are 3 obstacles being used in the Send Bonus portion of the course. To determine distance from the Send Line, all jumps, including the tire, must be measured from the closest end of the jump bar or from the closest portion of the outer tire edge, not from the edge of the wing or tire frame. All other obstacles, including tunnels, contacts, and table must be measured from the closest edge of the obstacle. (See diagram 6.1.1)
- The exit of an obstacle that is part of the Send Bonus may be placed closer to or further from the Send Line than the mandated handler restriction distance for the class level; however, no obstacle may terminate on or past the Send Line. The only exception is that at the Novice level, contacts and weave poles, if used as part of the Send Bonus, must be a consistent 5 feet from the Send Line (i.e. both the start and finish of the obstacle must be 5 feet from the Send Line).
• The contact obstacles and Send Bonus must be positioned in such a way that the judge can consistently judge all contact zones, identify refusals and runouts on obstacles that are a part of the Send Bonus (other than the first Send Bonus obstacle), and determine whether the handler has crossed the Send Line prior to completion of the Send Bonus.
• Jumps designated as being worth 1 point should be winged. In Open and Excellent, bar jumps or one-bar jumps may be used.
• A single set of weave poles (6 poles in Novice and 9-12 poles in Open and Excellent) must be used. The required number of weave poles may be placed in the body of the course or may be part of the Send Bonus. The weave poles may not be separated into two or more smaller sets.
• The sum of the point values of the obstacles that make up the Send Bonus must be between 5 and 15.
• All other obstacles other than the triple bar jump, seesaw, broad jump, and closed tunnel are bidirectional (i.e. they may be taken in either direction to earn points). However, the judge may designate one or more obstacles that can be taken in only one direction to earn points; this is usually done to increase the difficulty of the course.
• The Finish Obstacle must always be bidirectional.
• A single bidirectional obstacle may be designated as a dual point value obstacle (i.e. worth a certain point value when taken in one direction and a second point value when taken in the other direction). Jumps designated as being worth 1 point cannot be designated as dual point value obstacles. A dual point value obstacle may not be taken back-to-back to earn points.
• Approach angles and obstacle spacing for obstacles that are part of the Send Bonus must adhere to guidelines for the class level.
• Obstacles in the body of the course must be placed a minimum of 8 feet from the Send Line to minimize the risk that handlers will run into these obstacles while directing their dogs through the Send Bonus.
• A minimum of two unique contact obstacles are required to have a point value.

Course Submission Requirements
In addition to the elements required on all courses submitted for review, the following elements must be included on all FAST courses submitted for review:

• The 6 jumps designated as being worth 1 point and the 9 obstacles (or combination of obstacles) designated as being worth 2 through 10 points must be indicated. Numbers indicating point values must be placed in such a manner to as clearly indicate whether the obstacle is unidirectional or bidirectional.
• The Finish Obstacle (bar jump or open tunnel) must be indicated.
• The Start Line must be indicated.
• You must designate a specific ring entry and exit on the course.
• The Timer position must be indicated. The Timer must be positioned so
that he or she can see the plane of the Start Line as well as the plane of the Finish Obstacle.

• The entrance and exit to the course must be shown with the entrance closest to the timer/scribe for verification of the correct scribe sheet.

• The distance from the entry point of each obstacle in the Send Bonus to the closest point of the Send Line must be shown.

• The general judging area must be indicated.

Adding interest to FAST courses
Although the wide latitude in obstacle selection, including selection of obstacles in the Send Bonus, and obstacle placement allows for a great variety among FAST courses, additional factors can be used to add interest to individual courses:

• Use an obstacle that is not assigned any point value to assist the flow into the Send Bonus.

• Use a 1-point jump (unidirectional or bidirectional) in the Send Bonus.

• Use a change of direction and/or obstacle discrimination in the Send Bonus at the Open level.

• Use one combination of obstacles in the body of the course that is assigned a single point value. Combinations should consist of 2 or 3 obstacles (in Novice, combinations may consist of only 2 obstacles). A combination may not be used in the Send Bonus. A combination is considered one obstacle with one point value. When combining pointed obstacles within a combination, the pointed obstacles must not coincide with the combination point values. (See diagram 6.1.2)

When designing courses for multiple class levels, various methods can be used to increase interest. There must be either directional or obstacle value changes that increase point accumulation difficulty as you progress from Novice to Excellent.

• Vary the point values of obstacles between class levels.

• Change the flow of obstacles in the Send Bonus between class levels.

• Change the direction in which unidirectional obstacles must be taken to earn points between class levels to increase or decrease the difficulty associated with obtaining points.

Section 2. Judging

General Requirements

• No obstacle may be taken back-to-back in an attempt to earn points. Thus, if any obstacle has been committed to with all four paws (regardless of whether faulted or not), it may not be immediately reengaged in an effort to obtain points.

• The same contact obstacle may not be taken back-to-back in an attempt to earn
points. However, points may be awarded for two different contact obstacles taken in succession.

- No bars or panels on any jumps will be reset during a run.
- Points are awarded only for obstacles successfully completed before the Standard Course Time whistle is blown. A dog is considered to have completed an obstacle when all four paws have touched the ground after the obstacle. This includes all four paws on the ground after a jump or tire, all four paws past the plane between the second-to-last and the last weave pole, and all four paws on the ground after a contact obstacle.
- Once the SCT whistle has blown, no further points will be awarded.
- MCT shall be SCT plus 20 seconds.
- Because of the strategic nature of this class, any outside assistance will be scored as an “E”.
- Handlers that jump over or cross through obstacles must be faulted. The judge shall blow the whistle excusing the handler from the ring and the scribe sheet shall be marked with an “E” and not time entered (NT).
- In a combination, if one of the obstacles is faulted but all the obstacles are still available to gain points, (i.e. the dog jumps the second jump in the combo from the wrong direction), the dog must attempt another obstacle before reattempting the combination.

Re-run for Time

If the malfunction of the timing device is discovered after the run is over, the judge must check the scribe sheet to determine the following:

- If the Send Bonus was faulted, nothing further needs to be done and the run will be scored as a NQ.
- If the Send Bonus was awarded and the dog had obtained enough points to qualify, the dog will have to re-run for time, unless a video of the run is available to determine the time by clearly showing the start of the run, point accumulation, and the dog completing the finish obstacle.

During the re-run:

- The dog’s score will be set back to zero.
- The dog must complete the Send Bonus; however, the handler is allowed to enter the Send area with the dog and will not be faulted for doing so.
- The dog must complete each obstacle in the Send Bonus but will not be faulted for dropped bars, missed contacts, refusals or wrong courses.
- The dog is considered to have completed the obstacle when all four paws have passed through the uprights of a jump, passed the pivot point of the seesaw, the apex of the a-frame or is on the descent ramp of the dog walk, and exits the obstacle with all four paws on the ground.
- The dog must complete the tunnel and the weave poles from start to finish.
- The body of the course will be scored as a new run.
• Dropped bars and missed contacts will not earn points in the body of the course.

If the malfunction of the timing device is discovered before the run is over, the timer shall blow the whistle or sound the timing horn to let the judge know there is a timing malfunction. The judge must check the scribe sheet to determine the following:

• If the Send Bonus was faulted, nothing further needs to be done and the run will be scored as a NQ. The judge may excuse the dog from the ring unless the judge feels that there was substantial time left in the run, and may instruct the timer of the remaining time and allow the handler to continue the run; however the run will still be scored as an NQ.
• If the Send Bonus was never attempted before the timer indicated there was a malfunction, the run will simply begin again with a score of zero. Since the Send Bonus was never attempted, the handler must stay outside of the Send Zone when the dog is attempting the Send.
• If the Send Bonus was awarded, the handler and dog must re-run according to the criteria listed above.

If the horn sounds after the dog has taken the finish obstacle, which indicates that the timer did not stop, the judge may offer the handler either standard course time or a re-run for time, as long as the Send Bonus was awarded and the dog had obtained enough points to qualify.

If the dog has taken the finish obstacle and the timer notices the time is still running, he/she may hit the STOP button. If this time is at or under the standard course time, the judge may offer the handler either standard course time or a re-run for time, as long as the Send Bonus was awarded and the dog had obtained enough points to qualify.

In both these cases, the judge should check with the timer to determine that the time was started correctly at the beginning of each run prior to offering this choice to the handler.

**Send Bonus Requirements**

• The Send Bonus may be engaged at any time during the run after crossing the Start Line and before completing the Finish Obstacle.
• “FAULT” will be called if the handler is inside the Send Zone or stepping on the Send Line when the dog commits to the first obstacle in the Send Bonus in the correct direction or if the handler steps on or over the Send Line before the dog has completed all obstacles in the Send Bonus. The dog will be considered to have committed to the first obstacle in the Send Bonus when the dog has placed all four paws over, on, or into the obstacle and will be considered to have completed all obstacles in the Send Bonus when all four paws are on the ground after the last obstacle in the Send Bonus.
The handler and dog may pass through the Send Zone at any time during the run; however, the handler must be outside the Send Zone when the dog commits to the first obstacle of the Send Bonus in the correct direction. A dog is considered to have committed to an obstacle if it has placed all four paws over, on, or into the obstacle.

Successful completion of the Send Bonus is worth 20 points. In addition, the point values of the individual obstacles in the Send Bonus are awarded. Thus, 25 to 35 points (i.e. 20 points for the Send Bonus plus 5 to 15 points for the individual obstacles) will be awarded when the Send Bonus is successfully completed.

A dog may take any single obstacle in the Send Bonus in the un-pointed direction without penalty. However, if two Send Bonus obstacles are taken in succession in reverse order, “FAULT” will be called.

If the first obstacle in the Send Bonus is taken in the un-pointed direction, the dog must complete another obstacle before engaging the first obstacle in the Send Bonus since back-to-back obstacles are not permitted.

If a jump that is a part of the Send Bonus is taken in the un-pointed direction and a bar or panel is displaced, “FAULT” will be called and the bar or panel will not be reset.

If a bidirectional obstacle in the Send Bonus is taken prior to the start of the Send Bonus, “FAULT” must be called, because the obstacle was taken in the correct direction before the first obstacle in the Send Bonus was taken.

If the dog places 3 or fewer paws onto or into the first obstacle in the Send Bonus without continuing on, the handler may have the dog immediately reengage the obstacle in an effort to earn the Bonus points without any penalty.

Once the first obstacle in the Send Bonus has been completed, “FAULT” will be called if the dog refuses or runs by any subsequent obstacle, or takes a wrong course in the Send Bonus.

If the weave poles are part of the Send Bonus, they must be completed correctly for the dog to earn the Bonus points. The weave poles are considered to have been completed correctly if the dog enters between the first and second poles in the correct direction and completes all poles in succession from the first to the last pole. The weave poles are considered completed when the dog has all 4 paws past the plane between the second-to-last pole and the last pole.

“FAULT” must be called if the Send Bonus was never attempted.

When the first obstacle in the Send Bonus is a contact obstacle:

- If a dog has committed to the contact with all four paws and jumps off before beginning the descent, the dog must engage another obstacle before re-attempting the contact obstacle or “FAULT” will be called.
- “FAULT” will be called if the dog misses the up contact zone on the teeter or if the dog misses the down contact zone on any contact obstacle.
- “FAULT” will be called if the handler is on the line or inside the Send Zone when the dog gets all four paws on the contact in the correct direction.
• When the first obstacle in the Send Bonus is the weave poles:
  – If a dog has committed to the weave poles with all four feet crossing
    the center line between poles one and two, and it misses a pole while
    weaving, the dog must engage another obstacle before re-attempting the
    weave poles from the beginning or “FAULT” will be called. The weave
    poles must be correctly completed as a single set, so long as the handler
    remains outside the Send Zone.
  – “FAULT” will be called if the dog back-weaves thus incurring a wrong
    course for the Send Bonus, after having correctly entered the poles from
    the proper direction.
• When the first obstacle in the Send Bonus is a tunnel:
  – If a dog has committed to the tunnel with all four feet and does not
    properly complete it by reason of exiting the entrance with all four paws,
    the dog must engage another obstacle before re-attempting the tunnel or
    “FAULT” will be called.
• When the first obstacle in the Send Bonus is a tire or bar jump:
  – If the dog passes under the bar or between the tire and frame with all four
    feet, it is considered to have attempted the jump or tire and a “FAULT”
    will be called if another obstacle is not engaged prior to reattempting the
    tire/jump.

Actions that Result in a Whistle Fault (Excusal)
• Harsh corrections or training in the ring, whether at the start line, during
  the run, or immediately after the run prior to exiting the ring. This includes
  touching the dog while on a contact or taking the dog’s collar to guide it into
  the weave poles.
• Handler contact that aids the dog to the finish obstacle.
• Any action that would cause an excusal in the regular classes, excluding the
  Four Paw rule. This also includes a handler that: i.e. passes through the plane
  of the weaves poles, jumps over the plank of the Dog Walk or runs through
  the uprights of a jump.
• A handler that stops the time at the finish obstacle instead of the dog passing
  the finish line to do so.
• A whistle indicates that a fault calling for elimination or mandatory excusal
  has been incurred. The dog and handler must be excused from the ring, and
  the scribe sheet must be marked with an “E” in the fault section and an “NT”
  in the time slot, to indicate a non-qualifying score.

Finish Obstacle
• Only bar jumps, one-bar jumps (Open and Excellent only), and open tunnels
  may be used as the Finish Obstacle.
• The Finish Obstacle is always bidirectional.
• The Finish Obstacle is “live” at all times once the dog has crossed the Start
  Line; time is stopped and the run finished whenever the finite line of the Finish
Obstacle is broken regardless of whether the obstacle was completed or not.

- The Finish Obstacle should be closer to the exit side of the course to allow the handler and their dog to exit the ring without crossing in front of the other team that has just entered the ring.
- If so desired, the handler may direct the dog to the Finish Obstacle any time prior to the SCT whistle being blown as part of the handlers’ strategy to minimize any possible point loss due to time penalties.
- A dog cannot qualify unless a time is recorded.
- No penalty is assessed if the Finish Obstacle is faulted.
CHAPTER 7
WHAT-IFS WHILE JUDGING

This chapter addresses many of the non-typical things that can come up while judging. However, neither this chapter nor this booklet can cover all situations, nor can they substitute for common sense. For situations that come up that are not specifically spelled out, you will be required to make decisions that are fair and impartial for both the exhibitor involved and those against whom he or she is competing.

You should address any questions you have about judging procedure or conduct to the Director of Agility or an Agility Field Representative. Do not hesitate to call or write the AKC Agility Department. If you are judging at a trial and have questions and are unable to connect with any of the AKC agility personnel, the next person you should turn to would be another judge of record for that trial.

SECTION 1. Starting Errors

Various problems can occur at the start of each run, including exhibitors who delay starting the course after being told to go by the timer (delay of start), exhibitors who start too early prior to the timer giving the signal to go, and stopwatch/e-timer malfunctions. Listed below are various ways to handle these issues.

Delay of start: Sometimes the start area can be quite confusing for an exhibitor. Exhibitors are often trying to tune into their dogs and prepare for their run. At times, they may not hear the directive from the timer to go. Some handlers obsess at the start line and delay the trial for no good reason. To make it clear to exhibitors who seem to be having a problem hearing or understanding the timer, the judge should repeat the timer’s directive to go. If the handler continues to delay, then the judge should excuse the handler for failing to comply with the judges’ verbal instructions. The judge vocalizing the instructions to the handler takes away any confusion that can be claimed by the handler.

Exhibitors Who Start Too Early: In most cases, an exhibitor or dog that starts before the ring crew and judge are ready probably has done so out of nervousness. The judge or timer should blow a whistle once it has been discovered that the dog has been started without the timer’s direction. If the judge has decided that the handler has acted out of innocence, the dog should be restarted at the beginning of the course once the ring crew and judge are ready. The dog should not be repositioned in the run order, since the error was the handler’s, and the handler cannot lead out from the dog.
• Any faults incurred would remain in place so long as the judge was in the proper judging position. Judging would, therefore, begin in the restarted course at the approach to the obstacle after the early start was discovered.
• If no faults were incurred prior to discovery of the early start, judging begins with the approach to obstacle #1.
• In cases where the judge was not in the proper judging position when an early start happened, judging shall begin at the approach to obstacle #1.

**Lead Out Advantage:** Handlers often attempt to gain an advantage by placing their dogs in a stay prior to the start line and leading out on the course. The handler incurs some risk in attempting this maneuver to gain the advantage of a head start on the dog. Some of the risks include dogs that break early, dogs that start the course before the handler is ready, and dogs running out around obstacle #1. The following policies should be adhered to regarding lead out advantage:

• Once the Timer has given the handler the okay to start, handlers may lead out as many obstacles as they wish.
• A handler may touch the dog to position the dog for the start of the course and may return to the dog and reposition it nicely, without restriction, as long as neither the handler nor the dog has crossed the start line/plane.
• Once a handler crosses the plane of obstacle number one with one foot to lead out, he or she may not touch the dog for any reason. If the handler does so, he or she shall be faulted with an “F” or “E”, depending on the circumstances. (i.e. an “E” would be in order if the handler returned to the dog and touched it for any reason; an “F” would be in order for the handler who returned to the dog, started the course without touching the dog, and unintentional contact occurred which aided the dogs performance over the first obstacle)
• Once a handler has taken a lead out, if the dog breaks position (without crossing the start line), the handler may go back to reposition the dog to successfully approach obstacle #1, however, the handler may not lead out again, nor may the handler touch the dog while repositioning it.
• If a dog breaks before the handler is ready and has started the course either by completing the first obstacle or by crossing the plane of the start obstacle, the handler may not reposition the dog at the start of the course. This is training in the ring, and the handler shall be excused.
• If the handler leads out BEFORE the Timer has indicated that they may start their run, the judge shall decide whether the infraction warrants the loss of the lead-out advantage as with a nervous new handler, or an Excusal for training in the ring.

**Stopwatch/E-timer Malfunctions:** Sometimes a stopwatch/e-timer or a timer’s thumb will malfunction. The timer should be instructed to make sure the watch/
console is running by looking at it each time a dog crosses the start line.

• If the watch/e-timer is not running, the timer shall blow the whistle or press the horn button if the handler has not completed the first 3 obstacles. Any faults incurred by the dog in the first three obstacles remain in place. Judging of the performance on the restarted course would begin on the obstacle beyond those obstacles completed when the malfunction was signaled.

• If the malfunction is discovered after the third obstacle, the timer shall not blow the whistle nor press the horn button and shall allow the dog to compete the run, notifying the judge at the end of the run. If the dog had a qualifying score based on course faults the first time through, the dog shall be rerun for time only. The handler will have the option of restarting the course immediately, at the end of the jump height, or at the end of the class (if the dog is already at the end of its jump height.) If there is a videotape that shows the start and end clearly and the handler wishes to use it for determination of the dog’s time, the judge may time the dog’s performance on the tape, thus avoiding a rerun.

• If e-timing fails during a jump height, the Timer will use hand timing for the remainder of the height class.

Prior to a rerun for time:

• The judge must determine ahead of time whether or not the dog clearly completed the course under standard course time.
  – If it was clear, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the dog was under time, the judge shall instruct the handler that the dog’s time will be the lesser of the actual rerun time or standard course time. The judge may assign standard course time if the exhibitor does not wish to rerun or if the dog does not complete all obstacles on the course. If the handler runs their dog in an unsafe manner, the judge will ask the handler and dog to leave the ring. Standard course time and a qualifying score will then be assigned to the dog.
  – If it was unclear to the judge as to whether the dog completed the course under standard course time, then the judge shall instruct the handler that the rerun time will be used regardless of whether it was close to the dog’s original time or not. A dog that does not complete all obstacles in this case, or a handler who runs his or her dog in an unsafe manner solely trying to get a better time, shall be given an “E” and excused. A dog shall be eliminated for fouling the ring during a re-run in this case.

Prior to a rerun for time, the handler must be briefed that:

• The dog had a qualifying score and any course faults that may have been incurred remain in place for the dog’s final score.
• In a rerun where the judge was unclear as to whether or not the dog
was under standard course time, the dog must perform all obstacles completely (including all weave poles, the entire 5 second table count in the standard class, and ascending and descending each contact obstacle). The 4-paw rule is not in effect on a rerun since the dog must perform all obstacles.

- Dogs shall not be faulted for any course faults while they are on a rerun. The dog’s original score remains in place and the new time is added to the scribe sheet.
- Handlers and dog should perform the rerun in a safe manner.

**Dogs Jumping in the Wrong Height:** It is the exhibitor’s responsibility to know what height division the dog is jumping in at any given trial and for verifying the proper jump height is set prior to running. Dogs must compete in the height division in which they entered unless, prior to their run, a measuring official has moved them to a different height division. If a measuring official has moved them to a different height division, they must then run in the new height division to which they have been moved. If a dog runs or has been started at a wrong height (whether higher or lower) it shall be given an “E”, regardless of whether the dog completed the course or not. The dog cannot be rerun in the proper jump height.

**SECTION 2. Equipment Malfunction**

The chief course builder is responsible for ensuring that the equipment on the course is safe and is set and operating correctly. The judge shall also inspect all equipment prior to starting the class. Still, equipment will malfunction from time to time. Severe malfunctions will require you to come to a fair solution with the exhibitor. Equipment that is wobbly or less than perfect is not considered to be severely malfunctioning; however, every attempt should be made to remedy any and all equipment problems as soon as they are discovered.

Examples of severe equipment malfunction include:

- Table and contact obstacles that fall apart when the dog is on them.
- Chute fabric that comes off the rigid portion of the closed tunnel.
- Weave poles that break off or pop off of the base.

When a severe equipment malfunction happens, it may be possible to instruct the handler to continue on the course and deal with the problem once the dog has finished and has a score and time. For example, if a weave pole is broken, and the dog has picked up a refusal and must go back and reattempt the poles, but the pole is now lying on the ground and can’t be weaved, it would be best to go on with the course. After the dog finishes the course, you would then instruct the handler (if the dog had a qualifying score other than at the malfunction) to reattempt the poles, beginning one to three obstacles prior
to the poles. Judging commences with the dog’s approach to the poles, and continues until the dog has exited them.

Sometimes the malfunction affects the dog or handler greatly, and the run basically stops at that point. In these cases, the equipment should be fixed, and the dog should be given an opportunity to perform it (one time) immediately, to re-acclimate itself to the obstacle prior to completing the course or the rerun as described below. If the dog had incurred faults that would keep it from qualifying prior to the severe equipment malfunction then, the handler should be allowed to simply complete the course at that time. If the dog was qualifying at the time of the severe malfunction, then the handler would be instructed that a rerun would be necessary. All faults incurred in the first run (up to the point of the malfunction) would remain in effect, and judging would begin at the point where the severe equipment malfunction occurred.

Exhibitors must be briefed with rerun criteria as stated in stopwatch/e-timer malfunctions.

SECTION 3. Ring Steward Error

On occasion, a ring steward will set a piece of equipment, such as a bar, table, or tire incorrectly and the judge will not discover it until it is too late. The following are some guidelines as to what should be done to rectify the situation. Try never to fault or disadvantage a dog for your ring crew’s error.

• A Piece of Equipment set too low: If the handler questions the height of an obstacle set too low while running, the judge should instruct the handler to go on and complete the course, finishing all obstacles. If the obstacle set too low was a single-bar, one-bar jump, or panel jump, no rerun is necessary. If the obstacle set too low was a table, tire, double, triple or broad jump, and the dog has a qualifying score after finishing the course, the obstacle should be set correctly, and the handler should be instructed to have the dog reattempt the obstacle (with a one to three obstacle sequence leading in to it) to demonstrate that the dog can complete the obstacle correctly.

• A Piece of Equipment set too high: If no error has taken place, no further action is required. If the dog has displaced the top bar or plank of a single-bar, one-bar jump, or panel jump that is set too high, no faults should be assessed. No rerun is necessary, as the dog has demonstrated the ability to successfully complete single jumps elsewhere on the course. If the dog has displaced the top bar of the double or triple bar jump that is set too high, stepped on or visibly moved a broad jump board when the jump is set too wide, knocked over the tire jump because it is set too high, or refused the table because it was set too high, the dog should finish the course and the handler should be instructed by the judge to do...
so. If the dog has a qualifying score after finishing the course, except for the incorrectly set obstacle, the obstacle should be set correctly, and the handler should be instructed to have the dog reattempt the obstacle (with a one to three obstacle sequence leading in to it) to demonstrate that the dog can complete the obstacle correctly. Similarly, if the dog refuses or runs out on an obstacle that is set incorrectly, the handler should be instructed to finish the course. If the dog has a qualifying score except for the incorrectly set obstacle, the obstacle should be set correctly and the handler should be instructed to reattempt the obstacle. If the handler stops (becomes lost or disoriented), losing significant time, the judge may offer a rerun, if the dog was qualifying to that point. The same criteria as listed under stopwatch/e-timer malfunction would be used. If the dog was not qualifying to the point where the malfunction happened, then the handler may finish the course but no rerun is allowed.

SECTION 4. Dealing with Ring Crew Problems

As the judge, you are hired by the club to judge the dogs entered in the trial and to administrate proper ring procedure. You must work with the club to ensure that the ring crew is functioning properly. It may be necessary to replace someone in his or her assigned task to ensure that the trial continues as efficiently as possible. The replacing of ring crew members should not be done without consideration for its effect on the club. Requests to reassign ring crew personnel should be directed to the Trial Chairman or Chief Ring Steward for action.

SECTION 5. Judge’s Error

Judges are human and will make errors from time to time. If a judge wishes to change a call after it has been signaled, the judge should go to the scribe at the end of the dog’s run and correct the scribe sheet together with the scribe. If a judge has a change of mind or realizes that an error was made in the proper score of a dog that had run previously, the judge may make a change, as long as he or she is certain that the correction is made on the right scribe sheet for the dog whose score needs to be corrected. The judge must initial any and all changes made on a scribe sheet.

SECTION 6. Training/Correction in the Ring

Training in the ring can happen at any time during the run, but generally happens only after the dog has incurred a non-qualifying fault. At that time, the handler knows that the dog will not qualify and makes the decision to no longer compete for the best possible score and time. Situations after the dog has NQ’d and where the dog is being corrected for a behavior or a result, such as missing a contact or knocking a bar, should be viewed by the judge more critically.
Training in the ring takes on many different forms. To explain every possible situation for which a judge should excuse a handler would be impossible, however, a few of the more common instances have been listed below.

The following are some guidelines for properly identifying training/correction in the ring that should result in an excusal:

1. A handler who purposely touches their dog (with their hands) to get it to perform an obstacle or pets the dog to reinforce a behavior. If a handler asks if they can touch their dog if they are having a problem at an obstacle, you may answer that the handler may either go on to the next obstacle or ask to be excused from the ring, at which time they may hold the dog’s collar as they leave the ring. Do not allow them to train/correct their dog in the ring by answering “I will have to excuse you if you do”, since this will only enable the handler to do exactly what is not allowed.

2. A handler who corrects a behavior or a result they did not like through some action such as laying the dog down or making the dog sit or stop after a dropped bar or performing a contact that wasn’t up to the handlers expectations. This is a punitive action, the intent of which is to tell the dog it was wrong.

3. Handlers who pick up their dogs and replace them on a contact, or direct their dogs to get back on the end of the board to reinforce a stay on the bottom. Handlers who leave their dogs on the bottom of a board after the dog has NQ’d and slowly saunter away are no longer competing, they are training in the ring, unless this was the same handling style that was exhibited while they were still qualifying.

4. Handlers who purposely send their dog back one or more obstacles after making a mistake so that the dog can reattempt (sequence) the portion of the course where the error occurred again. This action is adding to the course length and time for the sole purpose of training the area where the dog had the problem. To aid in the assessment of this action, judge whether the handler is trying to get to the correct next obstacle in the fastest way possible. If they are sending the dog away from the next obstacle after the error instead of moving toward it, this may give you an idea as to whether they may be trying to reattempt a certain sequence again.

5. A handler who replaces a dog on the start line after the dog broke early and started the course by passing the plane of the first obstacle.

The following are actions that may look like training in the ring but do not result in an excusal:

1. A handler who checks out his or her dog after it has fallen off something to ensure the dog is not injured. This act should result in an “F”, but not an excusal.
2. The simple act of laying a dog down on the course is not training or correcting in the ring. You must judge why the handler is laying the dog down. Situations such as a U-shaped tunnel under a contact can be confusing for a dog that only has eyes for the tunnel, yet the course flow requires the contact to be taken next. In this case, the handler lies the dog down to refocus it and break the tunnel fixation. This is not excusable training in the ring, for the handler is trying to get the dog onto the contact obstacle, which must be performed as the next obstacle prior to going on.

3. If a dog has a runout or committed a wrong course, the handler should be getting the dog back to the proper obstacle as quickly as possible. A dog that does an obstacle or two on the way back to the next proper obstacle (including any of the preceding obstacles prior to the mistake), whether directed to or not by the handler, is simply finding the fastest way to continue on, and should not be excused.

4. If a dog breaks its position at the start line without crossing the plane of the first obstacle but the handler has already crossed the plane of the first obstacle, the handler may go back to the dog, but must leave with it and start the course expeditiously. If the behavior troubles you, verbalize what you want the handler to be doing. If the handler does not comply, excuse him or her for failing to comply with your verbal instructions.

If there are instances where you believe the handler is getting close to being called for training/correcting in the ring, you may warn the handler by telling him or her what to do, such as by saying “go on to the next obstacle now”. If the handler fails to comply, excuse the handler for failing to comply with the judge’s verbal instructions based upon the behavior you judge as being corrective or training.

Harsh or angry corrective commands should always result in an excusal, regardless of whether it is training in the ring or not.

Training in the ring is an excusable (“E”). The judge shall blow the whistle, and the dog and handler must be excused from the ring and leave expeditiously. If the situation warrants it, the judge should consider discussing the infraction with the exhibitor in the ring, with the length and tone of the discussion gauged to the seriousness of the infraction. If an exhibitor refuses to leave the ring after the judge has blown the whistle and informed the exhibitor they are excused, the exhibitor may be held to an Event Hearing based upon but not limited to Unsportsmanlike Conduct during an event.
SECTION 7. Correct Runoff Procedure for Tied Scores

Runoffs should be held only if two dogs in the same class and same jump height are tied with exactly the same score and time (to the 100th of a second) for a placement of 1st through 4th. If one of the handlers is unwilling to participate in the runoff, the higher placement will go to the other handler and dog. Runoffs shall comply with the following:

- The runoff should be held preferably on the same course just completed by both dogs, or, alternately, on an easier course (e.g. a tie in Excellent can be run off on an Open or Novice level course). If the tie was in a lower class level and a higher level course is the only one available, a portion of the more difficult course may be used for the runoff.
- The runoff course must be of the same type of course that the two dogs originally tied on (e.g. if they tied on a JWW course, then they must be run off on a JWW course).
- The course shall be measured and a standard course time announced if a previously measured course is not being used.
- The course shall be judged and scored as in the standard rules for that class. All errors shall be signaled and recorded on a new scribe sheet marked “runoff” (so it’s not confused at a later date), and the dog’s running time will be recorded.
- The dog with the fewest faults wins the runoff. For scoring purposes, all faults are converted to a numerical basis; regardless of class level (e.g. refusals, wrong courses, and table faults are five faults each; an “F” or an “E” is a 100-point fault). If both dogs have the same numerical score, the dog with the fastest time wins.
- Regardless of the final score of the runoff, both dogs receive the scores and times from their original runs, with both dogs qualifying and the winner of the runoff placing higher in the class. It must be recorded in the catalog that the higher-placing dog was the winner of the runoff.

SECTION 8. Weather-related Problems

Trials held outdoors are subject to many different weather-related issues. The judge is often looked on to help the trial committee in making decisions on how to deal with weather-related issues; however, final decisions relating to canceling any trial or classes is ultimately the trial committees decision. When dealing with weather conditions, you must be aware that classes or portions of a class must not be moved from one day to another, since each day is considered a separate trial. Your decision to delay a class for any reason must take into account those exhibitors who will be driving or flying home and their need to finish in time to get on the road. Additionally, required equipment for the class level may not be removed from the course based on weather conditions.
If you decide to take a break to let the weather clear up, it is wise to break at a jump height change or class change. All dogs within a jump height or class cannot be guaranteed the same weather conditions; therefore, it is possible that some dogs may be affected by adverse weather while others in the same class may not. There is nothing that can be done about this, and no dog shall receive a rerun based on weather. The decision to run or not to run is always the handler’s. In situations where the weather is extremely poor, the exhibitors should be briefed that the decision regarding whether to run or not lies with them. The following are some issues that may arise and the actions the judge should take:

**Rain:** Generally agility trials proceed when it’s raining. Sometimes, however, the rain is so severe that it may be wise to hold up for a while if you think you can wait it out and the conditions will improve in time for you to finish without excessive delay. You will need to account for the closed tunnel when it’s raining as described in Chapter 5 of these Guidelines and in the Regulations for Agility Trials.

**Lightning:** When thunderstorms are present and lightning has been spotted, it is suggested that runs be suspended and the judge, crew, and exhibitors take cover to the maximum extent feasible. Remember to always err on the side of safety. Resume judging after the lightning has passed.

**Snow and Sleet:** It is possible to run in some snow and sleet conditions; however, it can get really difficult, and there must be an adequate ring crew to clear the contacts. If the equipment cannot be made safe, the judge should advise the trial committee that the trial should be suspended until conditions improve or the trial may need to be cancelled.

**High Winds:** Areas of the country subject to high winds can cause problems with the closed tunnel fabric entangling, bars and planks blowing off jumps, and dogs having trouble staying on the dogwalk. Windy conditions can last all day, so you will likely need to fashion solutions to allow the trial to go on. It is up to exhibitors as to whether they wish to run or not. Closed tunnels can have small sandbags placed inside them to keep them in place. Or, in the worst situation; a ring steward can hold a corner of the fabric until the dog goes through. Bars and planks can have rubber bands added loosely around them at the cup location to keep them from being blown off, as long as the bars and planks are still displaceable. If wind conditions merit, the panel jump may be replaced with a bar jump.
SECTION 9. Misconduct Hearings

Misconduct hearings are often held when there is a break in judging or at the end of a class. The judge is not necessarily involved with a misconduct hearing unless as a witness or complainant. Judges should advise the club to follow the current “Dealing with Misconduct” booklet published by the AKC (which is sent to every trial secretary prior to the trial). If asked for advice, direct the trial committee to closely follow the Procedural Checklist, which is imperative to correctly hold a misconduct hearing. The timing of misconduct hearings (involving the judge) should not take the judge away from his or her judging duties causing significant delays. The judge is not to help conduct the hearing, and the judge shall only be present if he or she is witnessing or testifying in the hearing.

SECTION 10. Dealing with Exhibitor Discontent

Exhibitors may wish to discuss their scores or a specific call that was made by the judge. You should discuss any call or score with an exhibitor who is acting rationally. You should discontinue any conversation that turns harsh or abusive (see Misconduct Hearings in “Dealing with Misconduct”, Section IV). The discussion of any call or score should not significantly delay the class or trial. Judges should employ good time-management skills when discussing things with exhibitors so as not to delay a trial, while still listening to the exhibitor and investigating any perceived errors in scribing or scoring. If the exhibitor believes that an error was made, it is wise to have the exhibitor bring it to your attention at a jump height change. At this point, you may still remember the run or the call, so that it may be explained or fixed as the case may be.

Sometimes the error, or what the exhibitor believes to be an error, is discovered much later, and the judge has not recollection of the run or the specific item the exhibitor is questioning. In this case, do your best to account for the call, although this may be impossible. Make sure the correct scribe sheet was used by checking the scribe sheets of the dogs that ran before and after the dog in question; to make sure that the scribe was not off by one sheet.
CHAPTER 8

JUDGES’ DUTIES AFTER JUDGING

SECTION 1. Responsibility to the Host Club:

Judges may not leave the trial prior to judging all dogs scheduled, as well as verifying and signing the completed catalog that will be sent to the AKC. Judges have committed to judging all dogs assigned when hired. They may not let another judge finish out the class in an attempt to catch a flight or for any reason other than an emergency. Any change to the judging schedule must be indicated in the judge’s and host club’s reports of the agility trial to both the AKC and the Director of Agility, including the reason for the emergency that caused the necessary change.

Judges should have the receipts for any reimbursable expenses (previously agreed expenses that the club will pay for) ready to submit to the host club on the last day of judging. Receipts should be organized so that the club can provide reimbursement in a timely manner.

Judges should personally thank the ring crew. This is especially important since ring crew members are volunteers and give of their time freely. It takes many people to complete a trial successfully. A thank-you or handshake from the judge goes a long way towards the goodwill necessary to ensure agility trials will continue to have workers in the future.

SECTION 2. Responsibility to the Exhibitors

Judges are responsible for seeing that awards are correct before any are given out. If the marked catalog is available upon completion of the class, the judge may check either the qualifying scribe sheets or all the scribe sheets against the catalog. If it is not ready, the judge may simply check all the qualifying scribe sheets to ensure they are correct.

Judges should make themselves available to exhibitors who have questions regarding their scores. Judges can provide any details they remember of the run in question, but under no circumstances may they review videotape for scoring purposes or even to see something unofficially. Per Chapter 6 of these Guidelines, the only circumstance under which a videotape can be used is a stopwatch malfunction on a qualifying run.

Judges should take part in handling out ribbons, time allowing. Judges should make themselves available to the maximum extent possible for pictures so long
as it does not delay other classes. Dogs shall not be performing or placed on any equipment in or out of the ring when taking pictures.

SECTION 3. Responsibility to the AKC:

Scribe sheets must be kept by the judge of record for a period of one year from the date of the trial. This will ensure that exhibitors are credited with their qualifying scores in case there is a discrepancy or the marked AKC catalog is misplaced.

Checking the Official AKC Catalog
It is the judge’s responsibility to ensure that all scores are accurately recorded in the catalog that will be sent to the AKC. The judge, by his or her signature, is certifying that what is written in the official AKC catalog is correct. All the effort put into the course design, proper judging calls, signals, and everyone doing their job correctly is all for naught if the official catalog is incorrect and exhibitors do not receive the scores they earned. Sometimes host clubs get behind in keeping their catalog current as the trial progresses. This is why it is important to be checking scribe sheets against the official catalog after each class you judge and, in some cases, between jump heights if it is a large class with multiple walkthroughs. The following is a list of what must be reviewed to ensure that the catalog is correct:

- At the beginning of each class, the course yardage and standard course time for each jump height shall be recorded for each class level.
- Next to each dog there is listed “Qualified”, “NQ”, “Absent” or “ABS”, “Excused”, “Disqualified”, “AIS” (in season) or “AJC” (judge change).
- If “Qualified”, the dog’s score and actual running time (to the 100th of a second) shall also be recorded. Additionally, if the dog places 1st through 4th in its height class, the placement shall be recorded and circled next to the dog’s information in the left-hand column.
- If “NQ”, “Absent” or “ABS”, “Excused”, “Disqualified”, “AIS” (in season) or “AJC” (judge change), nothing else is recorded in the catalog. Any dog that has been excused or disqualified must be reported on the proper form (provided by the host club) to the AKC Records Department, and a full report shall be included in the judge’s show report to the Director of Agility.
- You must certify the total number of dogs qualifying in classes that you judged, so it is best that the score table keep track qualifying dogs per class. When you count the qualifying dogs listed in the catalog and the qualifying scribe sheets, you can then compare the counts of these two with the trial secretary’s count.
- Judges must initial the bottom of pages they are reviewing to ensure that these pages are the actual ones used in the official catalog, since with
computer scoring each sheet is loose and needs to be bound at a later time.

- Judges must have their copy of the completed hard-copy catalog when they leave the show site. The club must not send it to them later. It is suggested the club mark three catalogs at the same time, with the AKC catalog being the most important.
- The AKC requires that a separate catalog be submitted for each day. The club’s and judge’s catalogs may have all days recorded in them.
- After each class or heights within a class, the judge shall check the scribe sheets to insure those qualifying scores are correct prior to the club awarding ribbons and awards.
APPENDIX

DIAGRAMS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

5 to 6: Example where less than 15' is appropriate
6 to 9: Typical spacing (note 21' to a spread @ 8)
9 to 10: Layered jump (21' to 30' appropriate)
10 to 11: Pull-through jump (up to 30' appropriate)
13 to 14: 5-or more-sided crossing pattern (up to 30')
14 to 15: 90 degree turn based on an 18' square jump box
Minimum spacing to a wrong course obstacle with a 270 degree turn

Diagram 3.2.2

Illustration of typical 90, 135, 180, and 270 degree turns with a straight approach before the turn

With an angled approach, a 90 degree turn may be closer to a 135 degree turn

Typical 270 degree turn

With a different approach, a 270 degree turn may be closer to a 180 degree turn

Diagram 3.2.3

Serpentines with different approach angles produce different angles on subsequent obstacles
A turn from a tunnel under or adjacent to the A-frame to the ascent ramp of the A-frame is not allowed.

Diagram 3.2.4
Diagram 3.4.1

Minimum distances for placement of jumps in relation to ring barriers and walls.

Diagram 3.4.2

Minimum distances to allow for movement of the closed tunnel fabric.
Minimum distances for placement of contact obstacles in relation to ring barriers and walls (more space is required for Novice vs. Excellent)

Diagram 3.4.3

Minimum distances for placement of first and last obstacles in relation to ring barrier

Diagram 3.4.4
Illustration of a potentially dangerous seesaw placement. The course flow forces handlers to pass close to the elevated end of the seesaw.

Diagram 3.4.5
Avoid placing jumps off posts as the posts may end up in the handler's path

NO!

Engage jump with post

Post

Place wing over post or butt end of wing to post

NO!

Do not place contacts, weaves, broad jump or table against a post

Do not place a tunnel where dogs can push tunnel into post

butt tight

Place open tunnels on "backside" of post

Illustrations of obstacle placement in relation to columns and posts

Diagram 3.4.6
The table must be positioned so that the dogs' expected approach is to a flat edge.

Diagram 3.4.7

The approaches shown below are as straight as possible.

Don't do this as an off-course possibility.

Distance allows room for dog to "square up" before approaching.

Approaches to spreads should always be as straight as possible. If a triple is used as an off-course possibility, its off-course approach should also be as straight as possible.

Diagram 3.4.8
Minimum distances for placement of weave poles in relation to ring barriers and walls

Diagram 3.5.1

Spacing Between Two Obstacles That Are Placed Near Each Other
Must be less than 1 foot or greater than 4 feet. Everyone gets through or no one gets through.

Diagram 3.5.2
Avoid placement of obstacles in such a way that the approach will be affected by the ring barrier or wall. Don’t require handlers to jam their dogs into a ring barrier just to get a straight approach to obstacles in general or to the spread jumps and tires in particular (these jumps require that the dog stretch out or jump with accuracy).

Diagram 3.5.3
Illustration of an Option

Diagram 3.6.2

Diagram 3.6.3
Illustration of course design that will result in problems during judging with judge being trapped behind dog and handler since judge should not cross in front of a working dog's path.

Diagram 5.1.1

Diagram 5.1.2

Illustration of course design that will create problems during judging since dog and handler will be turning sharply back toward where the judge must be to properly judge the contact zone.
Diagram 5.1.3B

Diagram 5.1.3

Illustration of course design that will result in problems during judging due to the handler and judge sharing the same tight space.
C2. Faults = Wrong course only. This illustrates the new R.O.L. due to the wrong course affecting the dogs' approach to the table.
The Following Are Examples of Judging Options & Runout Planes

R.O.L. stands for runout line (plane of proper obstacle). Solid line is the dog’s path, numbers in circles indicate proper sequence of obstacles.

Runouts are assessed immediately when they occur. If after a runout has occurred and the dog goes off course, then both a runout and a wrong course penalty is assessed. Remember that 1 paw constitutes commitment for a wrong course.
A. Faults = Runout & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.1-A

B. Faults = Runout & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.1-B
C. Faults = Runout & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.1-C

D. Faults = Runout & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.1-D
E. Faults = Runout & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.1-E

F. Faults = Runout & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.1-F
A. Faults = Wrong course only

If the dog incurs a wrong course fault that carries it past the runout plane of the next proper obstacle, only a wrong course penalty is assessed for this action.

Diagram 5.4.2-A

C. Faults = Wrong course only.
This illustrates the parallel switch of the R.O.L. of the table once the dog has taken a wrong course which carries the dog over the runout plane of the next proper obstacle.

Diagram 5.4.2-C
C3. Faults = Runout only. This example illustrates the parallel switch of the R.O.L. of the table once the dog has passed the original R.O.L.

Diagram 5.4.2-C3

D. Faults = Wrong course only

Diagram 5.4.2-D
E. Faults = Wrong course only

Diagram 5.4.2-E

F. Faults = Wrong course only. Using this example, you must determine if it is possible to turn the dog in the distance from the wrong course obstacle to the R.O.L. If sufficient distance exists, then the call should be both a wrong course and a runout.

Diagram 5.4.2-F

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A. Faults = Runout only

A dog that passes the runout plane without committing to the proper obstacle is assessed a runout.

Diagram 5.4.3-A

B. Faults = Runout only

Diagram 5.4.3-B
C. Faults = Runout only

Diagram 5.4.3-C

Dog A (path shown solid) commits a runout on #2 since all 4 paws had been on the proper side of the runout plane for #2

Diagram 5.4.3-D

Dog B (path shown dashed) does not commit a runout since all 4 paws were never on the approach side of #2
A dog that clearly avoids the proper obstacle (after seeing it) then commits with one or more paws to another obstacle, is faulted for both a refusal and a wrong course, since these are two separate actions.

A. Faults = Refusal & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.4-A

B. Faults = Refusal & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.4-B
C. Faults = Refusal & wrong course

Diagram 5.4.4-C

A. Faults = Refusal

A dog that has seen the next proper obstacle and ceases forward motion, clearly avoids the obstacle, or turns back on it’s path, has committed a refusal. The handler’s direction or lack of direction is not considered in the assessment of the refusal penalty.

Diagram 5.4.5-A
B. Faults = Refusal

Dog jumps completely over the table without touching it.

Diagram 5.4.5-B2

B. Faults = Refusal

Dog makes decision not to get on.

Diagram 5.4.5-B
C. Faults = Refusal

See 1/3 - 1/3 - 1/3 guideline under refusal section.

Diagram 5.4.5-C

D. Faults = Refusal

Dog approaches obstacle then turns back on its path before re-approaching it and getting on.

Diagram 5.4.5-D
A. Faults = Runout

It is not necessary for the dog to actually see the next proper obstacle in order to incur a runout.

Diagram 5.4.6-A

B. Faults = 2 Runouts

Diagram 5.4.6-B
A dog that does not see the next proper obstacle cannot commit a refusal until it has seen it.

Diagram 5.4.7-A

In examples A & B the dog never sees the proper obstacle until called off the wrong one.

Diagram 5.4.7-B
C. Faults = None

Diagram 5.4.7-C

D. Faults = None

No faults if dog is able to mount any contact obstacle from side (touching contact on seesaw and dog-walk) without turning back on it's path.

Diagram 5.4.7-D
E. Faults = None

Dog may have averted focus from the obstacle but never stops. The dog may look back at its handler and this is not faulted if the dog is still moving toward the next correct obstacle without spinning or fully turning back on its path.

Diagram 5.4.7-E
Summary

Armed with this set of guidelines, the AKC Regulations for Agility Trials, common sense, and professionalism, you should feel confident in completing your judging assignments. The AKC has entrusted you to fairly implement the regulations of the AKC Agility Program while maintaining the role of ambassador for the sport of dog agility. As always, your dedication and hard work in this endeavor are greatly appreciated.
AKC Code of Sportsmanship

PREFACE: The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC’s birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.

• Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
• Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
• Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
• The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
• The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
• The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
• The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
• Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
• Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
• Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
• Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
• Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
• Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
• Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.