

2017 DOG AGILITY MASTERS® Three-Dog Team Championship & PERFORMANCE VERSATILITY PAIRSSM Championship

The Dog Agility Masters® Three-Dog Championship & Performance Versatility PairsSM Championship tournament series are designed to present dog agility with an international flare, in a test of versatility and endurance through the five principal classes in USDAA's competitive programs—standard agility, jumping, gamblers, snooker, and relay. They are open to all competitors with any dog, regardless of competition level (i.e., starters, advanced and masters).

The tournament Qualifying Period shall run from September 6, 2016, through September 7, 2017, with Regional Championships through September 2017.

Each tournament is structured on two levels:

- Local qualifying events held during the Qualifying Period
- A final championship event to be held at the Cynosport® World Games, October 25-29, 2017, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee

A team is comprised of three handlers and three dogs from no more than two jump heights per team. A pair is comprised of two handlers and two dogs from no more than two jump heights. Each individual on a three-dog/three-handler team or two-dog/two handler pair competes in four classes—standard agility, snooker, jumpers and gamblers. Top teams/pairs compete in a fifth and final class — team relay to establish final placements for prizes and awards.

General Rules

Each of the classes will be conducted pursuant to Chapters 3 and 6 of USDAA Rules & Regulations, except that select performance requirements are subject to judge's discretion as set forth below. Such discretionary requirements are permissible to allow additional creativity and a unique quality to the courses to make them more dynamic as an international spectator event in line with the tournament's purpose as stated above.

- The performance requirements of the Standard Agility Class as specified for the Masters level in Chapters 3 and 7 shall be generally followed for the respective tournaments, except that:
 - The table shall be excluded other than as a finish point, with no position or time requirement imposed
 - One contact obstacle may be omitted
 - The course shall include course design elements from the Masters and Masters Challenge levels in order to present a balanced playing field for small versus large dogs. The intent is to use varied spacing combined with technical elements that are likely to yield speed differentials for small versus large dogs, while maintaining a high level of fun and competition to present a competitive course for small and large dogs competing against each other.
- The performance requirements of the Snooker, Gamblers and Jumpers classes shall generally follow the requirements of Chapter 6 (and Chapter 7) of USDAA Rules & Regulations, except that:
 - The gamblers class may include or omit rules normally applied for point assignments, time allocations and joker requirements. However point schemes shall provide balance between course performance and the joker.
 - The potential total points per round shall maintain a proportional balance between all classes of the tournament, and not permit undue emphasis in the Gamblers class as compared to any other class in the overall tournament outcome. A maximum potential score may fall in the 70-80 point range per round. Guidance for establishing point schemes are provided in these regulations.
 - The table performed in the down position may be used for earning up to 5 or 7 points as an obstacle under a 1-3-5-7 point system (or up to 3 or 5 points as an obstacle under a 1-2-3-5 point system).
 - The snooker class course configuration and course components may be at the judge's discretion, but must have regular hurdles as 'Reds' and must follow the Snooker sequence conforming to the general standards from which the game was derived, except that the Table may be utilized as a "Color other than Red" on course. Rules departing from Chapter 6 shall be well-defined in a written course briefing.

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- The Jumpers class shall:
 - Include weave poles
 - Include course design elements from the Masters and Masters Challenge levels in order to present a balanced playing field for small versus large dogs. The intent is to use varied spacing combined with technical elements that are likely to yield speed differentials for small versus large dogs, while maintaining a high level of fun and competition to present a competitive course for small and large dogs competing against each other.
 - Include a long jump
 - Include at least one regular and one extended spread hurdle for the three-dog team in the Championship Program tournament.
- One combination comprised of two or three jumps, as defined in Chapter 12 of the USDAA Rules & Regulations, may be used in Standard and Jumpers. When such a combination is used, the total number of obstacles (including the component elements of the combination) may not exceed 22 obstacles to be performed.
- The obstacle performance requirements of the Relay class as specified in Chapter 6 shall be generally followed, except that:
 - The table shall be excluded other than as a finish point and/or a relay exchange point, with no position or time requirement imposed
 - One contact obstacle may be omitted
 - A reverse baton exchange (RBE) may be utilized
 - The course shall include course design elements from the Masters and Masters Challenge levels in order to present a balanced playing field for small versus large dogs. The intent is to use varied spacing combined with technical elements that are likely to yield speed differentials for small versus large dogs, while maintaining a high level of fun and competition, to present a competitive course for small and large dogs competing against each other.

Scoring

Masters scoring rules shall apply for the determination of faults in all classes. Time-plus-faults scoring method shall be utilized in the Standard, Jumpers and Relay classes (i.e., no standard course time is employed), with the following special values assigned for penalties:

- Each Refusal is 2 fault points
- Three refusals or wrong course per team member—Jumpers: 100 fault points, Standard: 130 faults points, Relay: 150 fault points
- Omission of a team member in Relay (see Special Rules for handler “pass”), 200 fault points.

The resulting scores on a time-plus-faults basis shall be deducted from the standard point-basis for each class as set forth under “Special Rules” in order to calculate points earned by each team in a given class. In no case shall the team score for a single class be less than zero.

Points from the three classes above shall be added to points earned in the gamblers and snooker classes after adjustment as set forth below to determine each team’s final score. Team ranking and placements shall be on the basis of cumulative scores through the five classes of competition, unless otherwise provided.

A Qualifying Score shall be awarded to competitors whose team/pair scores are within 25% of the average of the total points earned by the top three teams/pairs after the final class. In the event fewer than five (5) teams/pairs are entered

- The minimum qualifying score will be calculated using the top score instead of the average of the top 3 scores after all classes.
- Should just one team compete, their minimum qualifying score will be calculated using the minimum qualifying score in the Versatility tournament and multiplying by 1.5.
- Should just one pair compete in the Versatility tournament, their minimum qualifying score will be calculated using the minimum qualifying score in the Team tournament and multiplying by 2/3.

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- Should only one team AND one pair compete, their minimum qualifying score shall be 750 points and 500 points, respectively.

Special Scoring Rules

The standard point distribution and scoring methods for the tournament intend to provide a relative balance of points from all classes. Standard, jumpers and relay classes have been assigned a standard point basis of 390, 300 and 450 points, respectively, which are reduced by the time-plus-fault penalties accrued by team members.

Point earned in the Snooker and Gamblers classes, after adjustments as described below, are added to the point basis scores earned in standard, jumping and relay classes (as described above) to determine the final overall score:

- Snooker class points are multiplied by a factor of 1.5.

A judge in the shall employ a point system and rules in the Gamblers class that will not create a significant imbalance in points that may be earned collectively among the tournament classes, before or after applying a point multiplication factor.

- The judge shall exercise care in placing relative value to the opening and closing period in the Gamblers class so the total score is not contingent upon any one or two high pointed features. This recognizes that the point differential in a class is the ultimate deciding factor in who wins and who loses the tournament overall. Examples of schemes that should generally be avoided are:
 - Doubling total class points as a joker for performance of a distance challenge
 - Doubling total class points (or in some cases joker points) for not exceeding maximum course time, or
 - Forfeiting all class points (or in some cases all joker points) for failure to finish within the maximum allowable time

In any case, the factor shall be established prior to the start of the class and shall not be changed once the class has started.

- Weighting Factors should be employed in the Gamblers class to compensate for variations in times and point systems utilized in the class. The overall purpose of such a factor is to balance the overall point accumulation potential with the other four classes in the tournament. As such, the maximum potential points earned by a team should generally fall between 210 and 240 points after applying any weighting factor in the Gamblers class.
- The following Weighting Factors are exemplary only, and must be critically evaluated for each event:
 - If a 1-2-3-5 system is utilized with 30 seconds on course and a potential 15 points in the joker period, a 1.5 factor should be considered
 - If a 1-3-5-7 system is utilized with 35 seconds on course and a potential of 20 points in the joker period, a 1.25 factor should be considered
 - If a larger point scheme is utilized, a factor may be 1.00 or less than 1.00, to achieve the desired result
- Point systems may be devised at judge's discretion that utilize irregular time periods, such as a 20/25 time split between beginning and closing periods
- Jokers may be devised at judge's discretion that place emphasis on time, special sequences, or distance, but the judge must at all times consider the balance of the elements on both small and large dogs.
- A handicapping system will be employed in the Gamblers and Snooker classes when computing scores for competitors in the mini-dog division. Competitors with dogs in the 12" and 14" (P8") height classes (10" and P8" classes after 12/28/2016) shall be allowed approximately 20% additional time while competitors with dogs in the 16" and 18" (P12") height classes (14", 16", and P12" height classes after 12/28/2016) shall be allowed approximately 10% additional time, as compared to competitors in Open division. No time handicapping shall apply in the standard, jumping or relay classes. In these classes the judge shall employ course design elements that will provide natural handicapping to the class (e.g., variations in obstacle spacing and controlled turns and similar challenges that may result in a balance of time over the distance among the different height classes).

For purpose of this section, prior to 12/28/2016, mini-division height classes include 12", 14", 16" & 18" (P8" & P12"), and the open division height classes include 22" & 26" (P16" & P20"). Beginning 12/28/2016, the mini-division shall include the 10", 14", & 16" (P8" & P12") height classes, and the open division shall include the 20", 22", & 24" (P14", P16", P20").

- In Relay, a reverse baton exchange (RBE) may be used where the handler waiting to run next in the exchange area holds the baton and hands it off to the handler arriving in the exchange area. Whether a standard baton exchange or reverse baton exchange is used, a 10-point penalty shall be assessed for dropping the baton at the exchange (and/or during the round if carried.) Other minor errors involving the baton such as for throwing the baton or for failing to make the exchange prior to engaging the first obstacle by a team member, a 20-point penalty shall be assessed. Completing all segments without an exchange, shall result in an elimination.+
- A team/pair who has a teammate unable to run the relay class may have a person pass the baton, declaring "Pass" to the judge, and passing the baton as otherwise required. If the competitor passing is first or last to have run on course for their team, they must cross the line to start or stop the clock as appropriate. An automatic penalty of 200 points is applied for a competitor unable to run; this includes penalty for "Elimination" and an additional value penalty for time saved by the omission. In any case, the class score may not be less than zero. Failure to start or stop the clock as appropriate shall result in elimination for the team or pair (i.e., zero points earned for the class).

Each handler and dog on a team/pair must compete in all classes as applicable; i.e., two or more different dogs on a team or pair may not both be handled by a single handler. In the event a handler on a team is unable to continue through all classes, one handler "substitution of necessity" with the approval of the judge may be made. No additional handler substitutions shall be permitted (including reversion back to the original team member). Should no substitution be possible, then the remaining team member(s) may compete in individual classes, with an elimination score recorded for the withdrawn team member.

Other Special Rules

All teams/pairs must be finalized prior to the running of the first tournament class. Should an incomplete team/pair exist prior to the start of the first class, whether the result of a withdrawn entry or due to draw entries remaining unmatched, the secretary shall make every effort to complete the team/pair through acceptance of an additional class entry from a competitor entered in the event. The entry form shall be adjusted and fees paid in order for the entry to be valid and for results to be entered for the volunteer competitor.

Should they not wish to pay the fees prior to the start of the first class, they may run as an accommodation to the other team members or pair member, but the accommodating competitor shall not receive credit for the results of the tournament or any of its component classes. Competitor substitutions or change in status are not allowed once the first class has been run.

Should a competitor run without a complete team/pair as defined under these regulations, the competitor is eligible for all awards in the individual classes, including Top Ten points and Lifetime Achievement Award qualification, as applicable.

If 40 or more teams or pairs are entered in any qualifying event, the show committee may elect to impose a limit on the number of teams running the relay class. If so elected, it must be posted prior to start of the event that—

- the number of teams or pairs running in the relay class will be limited based upon scores through four rounds of competition, and
- no team whose score is within 25% of the average of the top three scores through four rounds shall be precluded from running the relay class.

In scheduling a Team or Pairs event, the following scheduling parameters should be followed:

- A "height rotation" should be utilized in establishing the running order so that the same height class is not running first in more than one of the four classes.
- When classes are spread over multiple days, it is preferable that "strategy" classes (i.e., Gamblers and Snooker) are offered on different days when it is practicable to do so.
- The Relay class must always run last, as the final class will present all team members together in the ring.

Lifetime Achievement Qualifications in Individual Classes

Lifetime Achievement qualifications shall be determined based upon the scores of the top three dogs in each award class provided there are at least 5 scores in the mini-division height classes , or 7 scores each in the large division height classes in Team. The top three scores shall be averaged and for jumpers and standard multiplied by a factor of 1.15 to determine the maximum qualifying score for each award class and for gamblers and snooker multiplied by a factor of .85 to determine the minimum qualifying score for each award class.

In the event that fewer than five competitors actually compete in any mini-division height class, or fewer than seven competitors in the large division height classes, the top score from each award class shall be used to calculate the qualifying score. In this case, the top score shall be multiplied by same factors listed above. If there is just one competitor in an award class, that competitor automatically qualifies.

For purpose of this section, prior to 12/28/2016, mini-division height classes include 12", 14", 16" & 18" (P8" & P12"), and the Open division height classes include 22" & 26" (P16" & P20"). Beginning 12/28/2016, the mini-division shall include the 10", 14", & 16" (P8" & P12") height classes, and the Open division shall include the 20", 22", & 24" (P14", P16", P20").

Qualifying scores earned at Cynosport® 2017 are not recorded for title or Lifetime Achievement Awards purposes.

Eligibility and Advancement

- A competitor must enter the same Program (i.e., Championship or Performance) for all tournaments entered.
- A competitor may enter different jump heights in different tournaments within the same program provided they have met the height eligibility requirements for each tournament.
- Any dog entered in this tournament that does not have a completed registration card, i.e. three measurements that place the dog in a specific jump height, must be measured prior to competing at a regional championship. Should the dog measure up (i.e., into a higher height class), the competitor must jump their dog at the higher height, regardless of the height previously qualified.
- At Cynosport® only teams/pairs scoring within 15% of the average of the total points earned by the top three teams/pairs through the first four rounds may advance to the final round (i.e., relay). The total number of teams/pairs in Relay shall be limited to the lesser of 30, or 15% of the total number of teams/pairs competing through the first four rounds.
- No qualifications are required for entry to a Regional Championship event in this tournament.
- Two Qualifying Scores, which may be earned at a regional championship or local event in a dog's eligible jump height, are required for entry to the Cynosport® World Games.
- Competitors must meet the qualification and eligibility requirements* in two of the four tournaments in the same program to compete at Cynosport® 2017:
 - Grand Prix of Dog Agility®/Performance Grand PrixSM
 - Quarterfinals: Two Qs
 - Semifinals: Two Qs plus a bye earned in Round 2 of Regional Championship
 - Dog Agility Steeplechase®/Performance Speed JumpingSM
 - Quarterfinals: Two Qs
 - Semifinals: Two Qs plus a bye earned in Round 2 of Regional Championship
 - Dog Agility Masters® Team/Performance Versatility PairsSM – Two Qs
 - Masters Challenge ("MC") BiathlonSM /Performance Masters Challenge ("PMC") BiathlonSM –
 - Two Qualifying Scores in a MC/PMC Biathlon Tournament earned at a local or Regional Biathlon event, or
 - Four Qualifying Scores in MC/PMC titling classes, with two Qs in MC/PMC Standard titling classes and two Qs in MC/PMC Jumpers titling classes, when the titling classes are not held as part of a Biathlon

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(or when no biathlon Q is earned when concurrent scoring in a Biathlon is done for titling purposes),
or

- Three Qualifying Scores, with—
 - One Q in a MC/PMC Biathlon Tournament (local or Regional), and
 - Two Qs, with one Q in MC/PMC Standard titling classes and one Q in MC/PMC Jumpers titling classes, when the titling classes are not held as part of a Biathlon (or when no biathlon Q is earned when concurrent scoring in a Biathlon is done for titling purposes).

Awards

Prizes and awards will be made based upon overall team scores after the all rounds, as follows:

- At a local or regional championship event,
 - At the discretion of the host group, each member of a qualifying team or pair will receive a qualifying ribbon or qualification certificate in recognition of their qualification for advancement and eligibility for the Cynosport® World Games. Qualifying and/or placement ribbons or rosettes may also be awarded.
 - USDAA will provide “Gold”, “Silver” & “Bronze” medals for top performing teams as well as a trophy to the first place team members in the United States and the 2017 Cynosport® World Games.
- USDAA will provide “Gold”, “Silver” & “Bronze” medals and placement rosettes for top performing teams as well as a trophy to the first place Team and Pairs members, who shall be named Regional Champions.

USDAA may offer awards in addition to those indicated above at its discretion.

Interpretations of Rules

These tournament rules cannot address all matters that may arise during the course of the tournament series. Interpretation of these regulations shall be made from time to time by judges and show officials as circumstances arise. These interpretations shall be made in the spirit of sportsmanship and in fulfillment of the purpose of this tournament series in seeking to identify and promote top competitors in head-to-head competition for the current tournament season. Final authority for interpretation of these rules shall be the USDAA Rules Advisory Board.

**See the respective tournament rules for definition of a qualifying score for each tournament.*