

CHAPTER 2—AGILITY TESTS, MATCHES & EVENTS

SECTION 2.1—SANCTIONED TESTS, MATCHES & EVENTS

A USDAA Affiliated Group wishing to hold a sanctioned test, match or competitive event must make application to USDAA for an event license, which shall permit the group to designate a test, match or competitive event as “sanctioned” by USDAA, indicating that the group shall comply with all the requirements set forth in these rules and regulations and other policies and guidelines as may be established by USDAA. The terms “Test”, “Match” or “Event” are used interchangeably in these regulations, and the appropriate term should be substituted when appropriate.

The application along with the appropriate filing fee as set forth in the event application shall be submitted to USDAA in accordance with USDAA policies and procedures in effect at the time. USDAA reserves the right to refuse any application for license for any reason without recourse from the requesting organization. Failure of an affiliated group to fulfill any portion of the requirements stipulated for a sanctioned test or event does so at the risk of loss of sanction of the test, match or event.

A Group shall name an Organizing Committee that shall be the governing body for the agility event. The “Committee” is responsible for and assumes all liability with regard to conduct of the show, including all matters other than those responsibilities specifically empowered to the judge pursuant to these rules and regulations. The Committee’s responsibilities include, but are not necessarily limited to—

- acceptance of entries and registrations
- preparation of the test schedule, entry forms, scoring and reporting forms and running order
- a facility that offers a safe surface and environment for which to conduct the event
- training and providing qualified support personnel for course building, ring operations and scorekeeping in accordance with USDAA policies and procedures.
- providing obstacles that meet USDAA specifications as provided in Appendix A
- providing tools and supplies necessary to conduct a quality test, match or event
- governing and resolving all disciplinary matters that are brought before the Committee pursuant to Appendix C hereof.

Where USDAA Rules & Regulations and Rules for Conduct and Disciplinary Action may differ from local law, it is the Group’s responsibility to determine and comply with local law.

Disciplinary matters arising from conduct exhibited within the course area (or ring) shall be the responsibility of the judge in determining if dismissal from the ring is warranted, though this shall not prohibit others from filing a complaint with the Organizing Committee for competitor misconduct should the judge not do so. The Committee may consult with the judge on matters brought to it involving incidents in the ring and other matters it deems appropriate.

SECTION 2.2—TEST SCHEDULE

An event shall be announced through the publication and distribution of a “Test Schedule” in the form approved by the Board of Directors no less than six (6) weeks prior to the proposed test date. A closing date for acceptance of entries of no less than ten (10) days prior to the first day of a test weekend shall be established. A “secondary” closing date may be established for purposes of accepting changes to an entry in order to move to a higher class level, provided such date is published in the Test Schedule and the date allows sufficient time for accurate preparation of event records required pursuant to USDAA policies and procedures.

The Test Schedule represents the contract between a competitor and the host group and shall be viewed as the final word in setting forth rules for classes, awards offered and conditions for entry to the event, except that no statement in the Test Schedule that is contradictory to USDAA Rules & Regulations shall be held enforceable. No oral representations or changes with respect to terms and conditions set forth in the Test Schedule shall be valid, unless such representations are made in writing and approved by the USDAA office. A competitor, through

submission of their entry form to an event, acknowledges their understanding of all USDAA and event rules, regulations and provisions and agrees to comply with all such regulations and to be governed by them, including but not limited to those rules and regulations incorporated by reference (for example, tournament rules).

The host group shall carefully prepare the Test Schedule pursuant to USDAA Policies and Procedures and shall include at a minimum the following:

- the date, time and location of the test
- a description of the venue and performance surface, whether it will be indoors or outdoors, sod or packed dirt, etc. If other than sod or packed dirt, a more technical description of the surface shall be provided, along with an indication of the performance characteristics that such surface will allow, and an indication to what extent such surface has been utilized or tested for suitability and safety
- the list of classes offered, and if not included in USDAA Rules & Regulations or in published tournament rules, a detailed description of the class
- entry fees, and to whom and where to remit the entry form and fees
- the closing date (and secondary closing date if any will be used) after which entries will no longer be accepted, changed or canceled; a statement that entries must either be “received by” the closing date or “postmarked” by the closing date
- a statement if move-up in level within a program at the event is to be permitted^{2.02}
- description of prizes and awards for each class
- an official entry form meeting requirements pursuant to USDAA policies and procedures. The entry form shall include a “General Agreement” in the form approved by USDAA (Appendix H) that shall be executed (i.e., signed and dated) by the dog’s owner, authorized agent, or parent or legal guardian if the competitor is a minor
- names of the judge(s) and supervising judge(s) (if any)
- description of qualifications and/or restrictions for entry in the test or any of its classes
- a statement that fault limits may be imposed
- a statement whether mixed height pairs may be entered (see Chapter 6)^{2.02}
- a statement that the event’s Organizing Committee may refuse an entry if there is reason to believe that a competitor will engage in conduct prejudicial to the sport. The Organizing Committee must file their intention to refuse entry prior to the closing date with the USDAA office and the competitor. The Organizing Committee alone shall be responsible for determining cause, except in the case where a competitor has been suspended from USDAA events through due process as set forth in Appendix C of USDAA Rules & Regulations
- a statement that USDAA Rules & Regulations shall apply and that the obstacles to be used meet USDAA specifications
- a statement that the competitor (and/or dog owner) has read and understands USDAA Rules and Regulations, which are incorporated in their entirety by reference
- a statement indicating whether electronic timing will be used at the event.

A group must include in the Test Schedule any other terms, notices or other conditions for entry. The Organizing Committee shall provide through the Test Schedule entry forms to prospective competitors in a form meeting USDAA policies and procedures. Such forms must be complete, signed and dated by the competitor and accompanied by the proper fees to constitute a valid registration and/or entry. Entries for persons under legal age, which may vary from state to state, must also include the signature of their parent or legal guardian.

If any error or omission is noted in the test schedule, the group shall immediately notify the USDAA office, and where the error or omission may potentially have a significant effect on a competitor’s decision to enter the event or a class, the group shall notify all persons to whom the test schedule has been distributed to the extent reasonably possible.

In planning a class schedule for an event, a group must comply with current policies for class offerings. When entries are expected to exceed time and/or space available for a test, a group shall consider in advance the scheduling benefits of applying fault limits to increase the number of rounds per hour that can be managed, the number of classes to be offered, and/or the num-

ber of rounds permitted per competitor. When scheduling difficulties arise, groups are encouraged to consult with the USDAA office for guidance in application of policies. Numeric limits of the number of competitors is not permitted other than in Intro Program and Junior Handler Program Only events.

A match held as a prerequisite to holding a sanctioned test in the first year of membership shall be announced through the publication and distribution of a "Match Schedule" no less than three weeks prior to the proposed match date. A closing date no less than one week prior to the scheduled match shall be stipulated to allow sufficient time for preparation of a match running order and other preparatory procedures.

SECTION 2.3—ENTRIES & CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

The Event Secretary follow all USDAA-approved policies and procedures and shall be responsible for—

- the handling and processing of entries,
- the orderly check-in of competitors prior to start of the event, including validating of a dog's registration number and arranging for a judge's verification of the dog's height, if not previously permanently certified (see Appendix D),
- the collection, recording and reporting of scores to the USDAA office.

The Secretary shall prepare a check-in list of all competitors entered in the event (arranged in alphabetic order), establish the running order for all classes, listing each owner, dog and USDAA registration number in each height class. The secretary shall not accept entries that do not include registration numbers or a completed registration form and fee. Listing a dog or junior handler as "pending" is not permitted.

The running order shall be randomized once all entries have been received in order to eliminate bias in the handling and order of entries. Where the same competitor is found to be running two or more dogs in the same class, and they are listed within ten runs of each other, the secretary may move the first dog up in the running order, or if that is not possible, the secretary may move the last dog down on the list (see Section 3.3 for handling of conflicts in the running order).

Where an entry has been accepted by the host group and a payment rejected by the bank, the competitor shall remit the fees before being allowed to compete. If the host group is not aware of the deficiency as of the event date, the competitor shall deliver fees to the host group, plus any late service charges assessed by the group within 30 days of the bank notice received by the group to avoid revocation of event results. Upon revocation, any awards must be returned to the host group within 30 days of receipt of notice.

Competitors shall present the dog's permanent or temporary registration card at time of check-in to permit the Secretary to verify the dog's registration number has been correctly recorded on the show records and that the height class of entry is correct. A group may accept photocopies of permanent registration cards at time of entry to facilitate the check-in process, provided disclosure is made in the Agility Test Schedule as indicated in Section 2.2; however, temporary registration cards must be presented at the event for inspection and for determination of entry to the appropriate height class.

All dogs jumping in a height class other than the maximum height and who have not been otherwise certified as to their jumping height as set forth in Appendix D shall be "measured in" by a judge using a USDAA-approved measurement device on a smooth, level surface. If a suitable surface is not readily available at the site to assure an accurate measurement, then the committee should arrange for a portable surface. If no such surface or device is provided, then the judge shall measure dogs for the event only and shall not record the height measurements on dogs' registration cards.^{2.01} In this case, the judge may sign-off on the competitor's entry confirmation form or other approved sheet to facilitate the check-in process.

The dog's height shall be measured at the withers with the dog standing freely in an upright position, which is naturally held by the dog, in order to determine the dog's minimum jump height class, as shown in Section 3.2 and Section 7.2 - Jumping and Table Height Standards.

No dog shall be permitted to compete at an event whose owner or handler has not—

- presented a permanent registration card, (or official letter of certification that permanent card is approved or pending by the USDAA office)
- presented a “certified” temporary registration card (i.e., one that has been properly completed by three or more judges),
- had the dog measured by a judge of record for the event, or
- otherwise had this dog pre-qualified for entry in a height class at a tournament event.

The measuring judge other than a Certified Measuring Judge (CMJ) must be a judge of record for the event, including a supervising judge of record or a judge engaged solely for that purpose. The measuring judge’s determination shall be final for the event, including any contiguous days conducted by another USDAA group. All judges performing an official function must file a Judges Report following the event, even if engaged solely for measuring.

SECTION 2.4—OBSTACLES

Only the obstacles listed below and meeting the specifications provided in Appendix A to these regulations may be used at USDAA sanctioned tests or events.

Contact Obstacles	Jumps and Hurdles
Dog Walk	Tire Jump
See-Saw	Viaduct
A-Frame	Long Jump
Weave Poles	Brush Jump
Collapsed Tunnel	Winged Hurdles
Pipe Tunnel	Non-winged Hurdles
Table	Spread Hurdles

Various additional hurdles or specialty obstacles may be offered at an event provided they meet the parameters of other obstacles as set forth in Appendix A or they are approved in advance in writing by the USDAA office. Safety must always be of foremost concern when designing and constructing obstacles. Obstacles not contemplated by these regulations may not be utilized in tournament or title certification classes.

A majority of the jumps and hurdles (including spread hurdles) utilized shall be of the “winged” type, with wings measuring no less than 16”(40cm) in width. Poles or rails on a majority of hurdles and jumps shall be no less than 54” (137cm) and on spread hurdles at 60” (152cm).

Obstacles should be spaced on average 15’ to 22’ (4.5m to 6.5m) distance along the dog’s natural path between obstacles. Successive obstacles shall not be spaced closer than 12’ (3.7m). In events where dogs of all jump height classes are competing against each other in an open class, obstacle spacing should be balanced with all other competitive elements of the course to distribute competitive challenge among all sizes of dogs.

SECTION 2.5—COURSE LAYOUT

A performance ring should meet the following size requirements:

PROGRAM	MINIMUM AREA *		RECOMMENDED AREA	
	Square Feet Square Meters	Dimension	Square Feet Square Meters	Dimension
Championship/Performance (Masters & Tournament Classes)	8,000 800	80’ 24m	10-12,000 1,000–1,200	100’ 30m
Championship/Performance (Advanced Classes)	7,000 700	60’ 18m	8,000 800	80’ 24m
Championship/Performance (Starters Only Classes)	6,000 600	60’ 18m	8,000 800	80’ 24m
Intro & Junior Handler Only	3,200 320	40’ 12m	4,800 480	60’ 18m

**A variance of 10% is permitted on these measurements. Should a facility not allow for these dimensions after allowance for the variance, a group may request a waiver from the USDAA office.*

It is the sole responsibility of the host group to establish whether a facility meets these requirements through gathering of sufficient information and conduct of tests of the material or surface to determine that such facility is suitable pursuant to these regulations. The performance ring surface must permit leveling of the obstacles and provide safe footing for handlers and dogs. Sod and packed dirt as used for equestrian events have been tried and proven throughout the sport's history as the most suitable surfaces that are safe for the sport of dog agility. Hard surfaces such as cement or asphalt shall not be used unless these surfaces are adequately covered with suitable surface material that has been evaluated and tested for impact, sure footing and general safety. Other surfaces may also be considered to be safe, but they must be approached with caution. Should weather deteriorate a surface to the point that the judge and/or Organizing Committee deem that it is no longer safe for competitors and/or their dogs, the event shall be relocated, postponed or cancelled as appropriate for the circumstances. Safety for handler and dog shall be paramount in selecting an event site.

The course layout shall be designed by the judge and reviewed by an independent course reviewer pursuant to guidelines established by the USDAA Board of Directors. The course shall be constructed under the judge's direction utilizing at least the minimum obstacle requirements for a specific class as stated in these rules and regulations. The judge shall post the course design for competitor inspection a reasonable time prior to the start of the class. Competitors shall not under any circumstances be allowed to take their dogs onto the test course prior to competing, except in the Junior handler Program as set forth in Chapter 8 ; however, competitors shall be allowed in the test area without their dogs to "walk the course" under directives by the judge , thereby permitting inspection of the obstacles, course layout and terrain in contemplating their handling strategy.

The course area should be partitioned by rope or fencing to prevent spectators from interfering with the course before, during or following the test. However, it must at all times be remembered that agility is a spectator sport, and accommodations should be made for spectators as with any other public sporting event.

A separate "warm-up" area may be provided near each ring at a show site to allow handlers an opportunity to heel and jump their dogs. Only a single jump of judge's discretion shall be permitted in the "warm-up" area, which shall be under ring personnel supervision. No obstacles or jumps shall be permitted elsewhere at the test site for training, warm-up or other preparatory purposes.

Courses shall have a defined start line and finish line. The start and finish line shall be generally be set within ten feet in front of the first obstacle and beyond the last obstacle and shall not be set in a manner that may make the line an "obstacle" to be performed or a course hazard. A course shall require no more than 20 obstacles be performed by a single dog, including any obstacles to be taken more than once. The start and finish line are intended solely as a means of measuring time on the course. The clock shall start when the dog crosses the start line and stopped when the dog crosses the finish line after performance of the final obstacle on course. Special guidelines are set forth in Appendix G to these regulations for use of electronic timing equipment.

If the judge encounters a specific obstacle that meets obstacle specifications but may vary in appearance or operation such that the judge views a lack of familiarization may create a significant performance or safety problem for dogs, the judge may set the obstacle in the warm-up area for a period of time prior to the class in which it is to be used so that competitors may familiarize themselves with it (e.g., uniquely styled jump, such as a wishing well, see-saw with a different tilting mechanism, etc.) A judge in such circumstances must give careful consideration as to the obstacle's operational safety before permitting it to be used in the test.

Training collars, such as choke chain, pinch or similar collars commonly used in training shall not be permitted in or near the ring or warm-up area (or other spectator areas). "Similar collars" as used above shall be evaluated based upon their intended function and appearance. Shock collars or similar devices not deemed to be in the best interest of the sport shall not be worn or be used on the show grounds.

No training seminars or practice sessions, other than regularly scheduled classes at the facility, shall be held at the event site one day prior to or during the event without written USDAA approval. Sanctioned matches, Junior Handler and Intro Program classes are exempt from this limitation.

SECTION 2.6—JUDGES & STEWARDS

A class shall be conducted by one judge and several stewards under the judge's direction. At a minimum each ring of operation should have a timer, scribe, gate steward, scorekeeper, and two to four ring stewards; course builders can generally service more than one ring at an event.

A judge shall not be allowed to compete in the event on a day that they are scheduled to judge without USDAA approval. Primary stewards (i.e., scribe, timekeeper and scorekeeper) shall not be permitted to compete in a class for which they serve as stewards. For this purpose, a class is defined as a competition for which awards are being offered. (For example, a class would be a jump height grouping in a class if placements are made only by jump height; in Snooker, if two height classes are combined pursuant to rules set forth in Chapter 6, the combined class is considered a single class for this purpose). Only individuals who are listed on the "Approved Judges List" evidencing that they have fulfilled the USDAA requirements for judges (see Appendix B) shall be permitted to judge at a sanctioned test or event pursuant to guidelines established by the USDAA Rules & Regulations Board, except as provided in the Junior Handler or Intro Programs (see Chapters 8 & 10), or otherwise with USDAA written approval.

The judge shall be solely responsible for designing the course, measuring the course distance, establishing the standard course time, measuring dogs and scoring the performance. The judge shall consult with the Event Secretary in determining whether fault limits are to be utilized. When the secretary shall indicate that fault limits have been considered in establishing the class schedule, the judge shall utilize fault limits no less stringent as those assumed in setting the class schedule. Where the secretary indicates that fault limits were not anticipated, the judge may apply (at their discretion) reasonable fault limits in exercising their duties pursuant to Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of these regulations. While the test secretary or Organizing Committee are responsible for scheduling the classes and number of rounds per day, the judge is responsible for maintaining the schedule and maintaining general efficiency of ring operations.

The judge shall be responsible for building of the course to assure that the course is presented as designed and as approved by the course reviewer. In the event of unexpected circumstances at an event, such that approval of a needed change cannot be reviewed and approved by a reviewer (e.g., different ring dimensions or unanticipated obstructions or other hazards within the ring area), the judge is empowered to modify the course to the extent necessary to conduct the class in a safe manner, while retaining the principal elements of the original design. Should an obstacle fail and cannot be repaired promptly, or weather should make an obstacle unsafe or fail, the judge is empowered to substitute an obstacle of similar characteristics if possible to preserve the integrity of the course. The judge must submit a revised course diagram with an explanation for the change with their Event Judge's Report, if any changes are made to the course as previously approved.

The judge shall designate stewards to serve as timekeeper and scribe for a class, but the judge alone shall observe and signal course faults. The judge's decision on scoring shall be final. Use of video or other means of instant replay shall not be utilized for the determination of course faults, except as may be provided in an official USDAA written policy statement. However, should time be lost on a round due to timekeeper error or clock failure, the judge shall first determine if any objective measure of the actual performance time can be determined through video. Absent such objective determination, the judge may call for a re-run of the round for time only. Any course faults incurred on the first run of the course (or partial run, if a run is halted before it is finished) shall be remain as part of the competitor's score, and the competitor shall seek to run the course in a similar style, with the judge adjusting the time for any differences in the performance as deemed necessary to approximate time.

The judge shall hold a competitor's briefing prior to the commencement of each class, unless detailed briefing notes have been set forth in writing and posted along with a copy of the

course plan. When given, the briefing may include as applicable, a review of special scoring and performance requirements for the class to the extent appropriate for each class or class level, announcement of the standard course time and fault limit (if one is to be used), and a review of ring procedure (e.g., entering and exiting the ring, approaching the start line, etc.). The judge shall not advise competitors on handling position or strategy but may at his or her discretion respond to questions on what may be permissible or not within these rules and regulations.

The judge shall provide a written briefing on all special scoring and performance rules for Gamblers and Snooker classes (or other classes that may require special rules), which shall be posted along with the course design.

The judge shall seek to maintain the running order established by the Event Secretary in order that the event may run efficiently. Should the judge determine that adjustment of the running order may be needed, the judge shall consult with the Event Secretary, Gate Steward and other key event personnel and judges to assess whether the change is conducive to efficient show operations and whether such change may impact the competitive strategies of competitors in a particular class.

The class scorekeeper shall be positioned ring-side at the exit gate where they shall receive the scribe sheet, tally and post scores immediately following each round pursuant to USDAA policies and procedures. This practice enables competitors the opportunity to promptly review their scores and make timely inquiry should a discrepancy be noted, as well as to provide the judge with instant access to the scorekeeper to respond to queries and to facilitate ring operations.

SECTION 2.7—PRIZES & AWARDS

A host organization shall recognize each qualifying score in a certification class through the award of a maroon qualifying ribbon or rosette. Placements shall be named and listed in the official event results to the extent of awards to be recognized for the class, including Top Ten awards. Ribbons, rosettes and other prizes may be awarded to a reasonable number of placements at a club's discretion (generally 10–15% of entry), unless otherwise set forth in USDAA tournament rules or official policy statements. Placement ribbons or rosettes shall follow the color chart provided below.

Each ribbon or rosette should have prominently imprinted the USDAA logo, name of the host organization, and the words "Sanctioned Test" or "Sanctioned Event" and for a qualifying ribbon, the words "Qualifying Round" in lieu of the designated placement.

The following primary colors shall be used for placement ribbons and rosettes:

1st Place	Blue	5th Place	Pink	8th Place	Brown
2nd Place	Red	6th Place	Green	9th Place	Gray
3rd Place	Yellow	7th Place	Purple	10th Place	Lt. Blue
4th Place	White				

Additional placements shall be light blue in color.

Trophies may also be awarded for prizes provided they are adequately described and announced in the Test Schedule. Cash awards and prizes must be approved by the USDAA office in advance if in more than nominal amounts as may be set through USDAA policy statements.

Prizes and ribbons for tournament classes and others that are held before public audiences should be awarded immediately following each class so as to provide instant recognition of winners and association of the winner with the designated award.

CHAPTER 2 FOOTNOTES

2.01 Under no circumstances should a temporary card be signed for dogs under 18 months of age. Dogs under 18 months are only eligible for entry to Intro Program classes, and measurements are for event only.

2.02 This provision is effective for events after June 1, 2011, and must comply with published policy statements.