

NAFA® Board of Directors Meeting, January 20, 2012, Raleigh North Carolina - Agenda:

Officers' Reports

Chair's Comments:

- Board Meetings:
 - May 19-20, 2012 - New Orleans
 - August 2012 - Toronto?
 - AGM January 25-27, 2013 - Minneapolis

Executive Director's Comments

- Ratification of Suspension

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Standing Committee Reports

Election Committee:

- Ratification of Results
- 2012 Officers

Nominating Committee:

Judges Committee:

- Peter Guidolin, Schomberg ON - Apprentice to Provisional
- Martin Watt, Australian Flyball Association Approved Judge

Rules Committee:

- Adjustment to points for Veterans Class
- Iron Dog Award - request for changes in requirements
- Penalties
- Box loaders resetting jumps
- Juniors

- False Starts
- Measuring time limit
- Inside interference

Marketing Committee:

Finance:

Disciplinary Committee:

Review Panel:

- Dexter - 110597, 05/21/2011 - Upheld on Appeal
- Gabby - 110570, 05/22/2011 - Upheld on Appeal
- Hoodlum - 110997, 09/04/2011
- Daisy Duke - 030988, 09/10/2011
- Ivan - 080013, 09/17/2011
- Kane - 100614, 09/17/2011
- Dobby - 080286, 10/15/2011 - Appeal
- Dolly - 120046, 10/22/2011
- Daisy - 111023, 10/29/2011
- Star - 110969, 11/12/2011

Special Committee Reports

Technology Committee:

NAFA/Flyball History Committee:

Old Business:

New Business:

- Performance Teams

Rules Committee Recommendations

January 20, 2012 meeting

1. [Adjustment to points for veterans class – Jenny Stack](#)
2. [Iron Dog Award – requests for changes in requirements](#)
3. [Penalties – Mike Miller](#)
4. [Box loaders resetting jumps – Elizabeth Currin](#)
5. [Juniors – Andy McBride](#)
6. [False starts – Amy Rideout](#)
7. [Measuring time limit – Elizabeth Currin](#)
8. [Inside interference rule](#)

1. Adjustment to points for veterans class – Jenny Stack

The Rules Committee received the following request from Jenny Stack:

I notice that every time I go to tournaments. There are very few or just one vet team.

How can NAFA expand the number of teams? Perhaps like other proposal about points for MB? 30-32 heats vs. 40 heats. Vet division loses 200 points worth. It can keeps low heats with little more points.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me anytime.

Thanks,
Jenny
~Jenny~

The Rules Committee considered the request. At this time, a proposal has gone to delegate ballot to change the point structure of the multibreed class. Until that proposal is voted on, the Committee does not recommend a similar change for the veteran's class, especially since vets teams already have a lower jump height, but may consider revisiting the issue after the results of the multibreed vote.

2. Iron Dog Award – requests for changes in requirements

The Rules Committee and Board received several requests for changes to the recently recognized Iron Dog Award. The requests generally asked that the award be modified to earning at least one point in ten years, rather than ten consecutive years. As an example, the Committee received the following request:

To whom it may concern. Is there any way this dog would qualify for her Iron Dog title?

I know the criteria is ten consecutive years, but do you not allow for injury or

other reasons, if the dog has returned back in the next year as she did to give her ten racing years?. it was vets team and she really wasn't needed to run any more times but she did run and was capable of it. If you could please discuss this question with the rest of the board , it would be greatly appreciated. We just lost our girl in May to a liver disease. I have included her racing stats.thx

Elva Bradley DOG-ON-IT Flyball Team

Lee Heighton provided additional information via email that there would be an additional 69 dogs who would currently qualify for the award if the requirements were changed to be ten years of racing, rather than ten consecutive years. The Rules Committee acknowledged that there are a number of truly great flyball dogs who do not qualify for the award, either because of injury, breed longevity, or other issues that may prevent dogs from earning a point in 10 consecutive years. At the time the Board created the award, it recognized the award would not be attainable by most dogs. Members of the Board had also expressed concern that if the Iron Dog award were given for points earned in 10 nonconsecutive years, some dogs would be brought out of lengthy retirements to run again despite the potential detrimental effects. Given that this award is so new, the Committee does not recommend adjusting the requirements, subject to reconsideration later.

3. Penalties – Mike Miller

The Rules Committee received the following request from approved judge Mike Miller:

There are several rules that are "do not do" but there is no penalty associated with breaking the rule. One example is no flexi-leads in the ring. What happens if a team/handler does do it (repeatedly)?

I would like a generic "penalty" section added to the rule book that covers all infractions that are not specifically spelled out with a specific penalty.

It could be done in one of two ways.

Option one, give a specific step by step process of increasing penalties. (TBD by the board)

First offence, warning

Second offence, forfeit of a heat

Third offence, forfeit of a race

Fourth offence, excused from the tournament (hopefully they have stopped before this point)

Or Option two, give possible outcomes at the judges discretion that may include any of the above depending on the seriousness of the offense but not necessarily an increasing format as shown above.

As judges, it is easier to back up a penalty if it is in the rule book than if it purely discretionary which leads to a wide variety of calls from various regions/judges...

-Mike Miller

The Rules Committee discussed this suggestion and possible ways it could be implemented. Ultimately, the Committee decided not to recommend the change. The Committee believed that our current rule book provides support for judges to impose penalties where appropriate. Our judges are well trained and exercise their discretion well. The Committee felt that it was important to keep that discretion with our judges.

4. Box loaders resetting jumps – Elizabeth Currin

The Rules Committee received the following question from Elizabeth Currin, Regional Director for Region 5:

I've been asked a question regarding the boxloader and would like to get an official NAFA answer before reporting back. Here's the question: If a jump is knocked over and the judge has not stopped the heat can the boxloader get off the box to re-set the jump? If they cannot get off the box because the race is on-going, who can re-set the jump?

Thank you,

Elizabeth Currin
Region 5

The Rules Committee believed it would be appropriate for a box loader to help reset a jump where it could be done safely and without interfering with the other team. This does seem to require an amendment to Section 8.3 – The Heat (page 13 of the current rulebook) as follows:

(e) Conduct of the box loader. Except during the warm-up, to retrieve a loose ball, reset a jump, or to get a fresh supply of balls to load for the current heat, the box loader must remain in the upright position behind the box, and may offer verbal encouragement only, as long as such encouragement does not distract the opposing team. For deaf dogs, box loaders should be permitted to

use a subtle hand signal as long as it does not interfere with other competitors. As a courtesy to opposing teams, the box loader is to remain in position until the outcome of the heat is determined by the Head Judge. If, in the judge's opinion, a box loader has violated any of these rules, their team may forfeit the heat. (modification underlined)

The Rules Committee recommends that the Board adopt the above modification to the existing rule.

5. Juniors – Andy McBride

The Rules Committee received the following request from Andy McBride:

I can't find any section of that rule in the rule book to quote but I'd like to request an addition. I would like NAFA to issue Junior Handler cards similar to height cards that can exempt children from the new rule after they are able to show that they are able to safely participate in flyball.

As a parent who likes to travel to other regions and run under many different judges with possibly very different interpretations of the vaguely defined rules regarding children in the ring we can not count on uniform enforcement from all judges, especially judges who don't know us or have ever seen our child in a ring before. My suggestion would be to allow for an official card issued after the parent has gotten a document signed by a supervising judge saying that the child has demonstrated a basic level of knowledge to safely be in the ring.

The idea being that the card would stop them from having their presence in the ring challenged similar to how a height card functions.

If NAFA would come out with more clear rules regarding what is and isn't an acceptable age and take the discretion away from the judges then this wouldn't really be necessary.

-Andy

The Committee understands the desire to have a more bright line test for juniors participating in the sport. Nevertheless, the number of factors that influence the situation make it nearly impossible to have a bright line rule. For instance, a child may be physically and developmentally mature enough to run a relatively easy dog with substantial adult supervision, but that same child may not be safely able to manage a large or strong dog with little supervision. We believe that it should remain within the discretion of our judges who are able to observe the situation as a whole on that date. We encourage junior handlers, but want to make sure they are able to safely participate. We therefore do not recommend further changes to these rules.

6. False starts – Amy Rideout

The Rules Committee received the following request to change the false start rule:

I would like to request an update to the rules to remove the part of the false start rule that allows for a rerun (8.3.b.i), and removal of the follow on sections 8.3.b.ii and 8.3.b.iii.

Competitors have long realized that this rule can significantly increase the length of racing days, and many do not see the benefit of keeping the rule. This becomes more and more significant as the number of teams increases, and may cause NAFA the loss of revenue if tournaments need to become 'limited' due to long racing days.

Thank you.

R,

Amy Rideout
Region 15

There was significant discussion about whether a rule change should be considered by the Board of Directors or should be considered for submission to a delegate vote. Historically, two proposals were presented for in April 2007 that did not pass. There was some discussion that the wording and presentation of multiple options may have made it difficult for any one proposal to get the needed percentage.

The Committee was fairly deeply divided as to whether there should even be consideration of a new delegate vote or of consideration of a rule change by the Board of Directors. Several members believed the rule should remain as it currently stands. All members did agree that if something were to be submitted to a delegate vote, it should be one proposal with wording drafted by the Committee and approved by the Board.

There were three possible changes discussed: 1. Limiting false starts to one per race per team; 2. Permitting false starts in the team's first race of the day; and 3. Eliminating false starts completely. Only one member was supportive of eliminating false starts completely.

There was discussion about practical ramifications of a one false start per race modification. Concerns included: reprogramming the EJS, more work required by the head table to keep track of races and heats when advancing the EJS, and judges keeping track of false starts by race, rather than by heat. It was believed that the EJS could be reprogrammed to allow this type of rule change, but it would likely require the head table to advance the system by race and heat

for the system to know whether the teams were in the same race when a false start occurs. Another potential pitfall of this would be the difficulty for judges' to keep track of false starts.

Ultimately the Committee agreed that there were many concerns to be address regarding any possible delegate vote. If it was submitted, the Committee believes that the cost associated with full delegate votes makes it impractical to submit the matter to delegate vote until the next regularly scheduled election – January 2013, meaning any proposal, if passed, would not go into effect until October 1, 2013. Several members expressed a desire to have firm language for a rule change and delegate vote if submitted. If the Board voted to submit a proposal for a delegate vote, the Committee would request that it be referred back to Rules for drafting of the delegate vote language and language for the rule change.

Ultimately, the Committee recommends that the Board consider beginning the discussion of this issue or tabling this issue for a future meeting if time does not allow.

7. Measuring time limit – Elizabeth Currin

The Rules Committee received the following submission from Elizabeth Currin, Regional Director for Region 5. At a chat with the Regional Directors, they requested that the Rules Committee consider this proposal.

(rule: Chapter - 4(f) Measuring) i have been thinking about making a request to the rules committee to change the time allowed for a dog to attempt to stand for measurement from 5 minutes to 2 minutes. What are your thoughts? Do you think the rule is fine and 5 minutes is reasonable? Or do you feel that if the dog is going to stand correctly, it will do so within 2 minutes. (I would not be suggesting any change to the rule allowing a dog to be measured up to 3 times.)

There were concerns expressed in the Committee that decreasing the time limit to 2 minutes could affect handlers who are new to the sport and have difficulty setting up dogs due to inexperience. Although there may be some areas that see abuse of this rule, it appears to be infrequent. At this point, the Committee was not inclined to recommend a decrease in the time limit.

8. Inside interference rule

At the last meeting, the Board voted to add language to the Inside Interference rule: “If a dog crosses the start/finish line after it has already successfully completed the course, it is not a flag.”

Some have requested a change to the rule to clarify that a dog should not be flagged only if it re-runs in its own lane, rather than running into the opposing lane. If a dog interferes with the opposing lane, it would not be subject to a flag called by a line judge, but rather a whistle by a head judge for interference.

The modified rule reads:

(f) Inside Interference. If a dog or any team member interferes with the opposing team during a heat, the team causing the interference will forfeit the heat. This includes interference in the racing lane, in all in bound areas, and in the area where dogs are waiting to run. Interference is defined as impeding the other team's dog from running its race. A dog chasing a loose ball into the other team's area is not necessarily interference. In the event of interference, the judge will assign an estimated time to the team that was interfered with. The time will be marked as estimated and will not be used to determine placement. If a dog crosses the start/finish line after it has already successfully completed the course, it is not a flag.

The Committee discussed two possible language changes:

1. Adding “, in and of itself” after “it is not a flag”, or
2. Adding “, in its own lane,” after “If a dog crosses the start/finish line” and before “after it has already successfully completed the course”

Although the Committee did not believe a specific language change was required, it offers these options in the event the Board wishes to eliminate potential confusion.