

Minutes

NAFA® Board of Directors Meeting, December 13, 2021

Held via Zoom Meeting

Attendees:

Jonathan Bescher
Steve Corona
Kathy Haney
Leerie Jenkins
Dana Hanson
Cindy Henderson
Emma Mak
Lynda Mantler
Jayne McQuillen

Executive Director: Neil Flood
Recorder: Karen Oleson

Officers' Reports

Chair's Comments:

1. Welcome.

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm CST. Steve thanked the board members for making time in the week to attend.

2. January Board Meeting and AGM.

Steve asked board members to be prepared to schedule time for the ZOOM board meeting during the day January 21. This meeting usually occurs on a Friday and traditionally, additional travel time would be required. The AGM will also be held by ZOOM on January 22 and board members are encouraged to attend.

Executive Director's Comments:

1. FCI World Cup Update.

Due to COVID restrictions and logistics, many clubs who planned to attend are unable to do so. It is possible that NAFA will not be represented at the 2022 FCI World Cup event.

Questions:

Cindy: Is there a message that should go to RDs regarding which measuring videos they should watch?

RDs will watch the same videos as the judges.

Jon has the email with instructions that was sent to judges and will send to Neil so that it does not need to be reconstructed

Jayne: Asked about the website revamp. That will be discussed under Technology Committee new business.

Treasurer's Report:

1. Dana sent out draft financial statements to the board.
Profit/Loss: NAFA uses the cash basis accounting method.
Comparing year over year, the number of tournament days are fairly close, however entries are down, partially due to limited tournaments.

Neil queried Jayne about participation in Iowa as they have had numerous tournaments held on the annual recurring tournament dates. Jayne responded that attendance is on par with what it has been in recent years.

Cindy indicates Region 13 events have been small. There may be more events, with people interested in double points, however she expects that most will be smaller in size.

Shipping costs are significantly lower. Kelly has done a great job with deploying the EJS in a cost-effective manner. Clubs hand carrying lights between tournaments has also contributed to cost savings.

New measuring equipment will not be depreciated.

Kathy joined the meeting at 7:35pm

Awards: about half of the cost is Iron Dog plaques

CanAm: Outstanding Expenses and Incomes were reviewed.

Secretary's Report:

1. Minutes of the September 30, 2021 Board meeting have been approved and were posted on November 9, 2021.

Election Committee: Steve reported

1. 2021/2022 elections opened on December 6, 2021. There are four candidates.
2. First round of Q & A with the candidates has been received and posted to the NAFA Blog. There was also notification on NAFA News and Facebook.
3. Candidate live chat is scheduled for December 19, 2021 at 5:00 PM CST. This will be the only live chat. There has been very little participation by NAFA constituents.
4. Steve and Emma will work on editing election timeline process documents.

Standing Committee Reports

Judges Committee:

1. The Judges Committee recommendation to advance Bruce Boulanger from Apprentice to Provisional Judge.

Jon moved to advance Bruce Boulanger from Apprentice to Provisional Judge. Leerie seconded.

The motion carried with no objections.

2. Request received from Jeremiah Bolton for extension to complete Provisional judging assignments due to military service.

Jon moved, Leerie seconded to allow Jeremiah Bolton a one-year extension to complete Provisional judging assignments due to military service.

Jeremiah has completed one assignment out of five. He is currently deployed and is not expected back until May 2022. Motion carried with no objections.

3. Laser level measuring certification update. Judges in attendance at CanAm had the opportunity to get certified.

As of December 13:

- 18 judges are certified, 9 of whom are supervising judges, 8 approved judges, 1 provisional judge.
- 47 have watched videos, 24 have not.

Overall, the process of certifying judges via videos they have submitted is working well. As videos are being sent in to the judges committee, they are being appraised for correct measuring at the withers i.e., correct placement of the ruler on the withers and showing that the judge felt for the withers. Any videos showing concerns are being discussed with the judge and they are being asked to resubmit with the issues resolved.

As events start to roll on and closer to April, Jon will send out a reminder to judges to complete the certification process.

Neil showed a level that may work; however, the base could fit in between the withers of a small dog. The board discussed ways of solving any issues currently noticed with the new measuring rulers. By the AGM, Neil hopes to have an update on how to make the ruler more rigid.

The board took a short recess at 8:46pm.

The board reconvened at 9:00pm.

Rules Committee: Emma

1. Proposal from Lyndsay Dvorak to increase width of jumps from 24" to 30".

A change to the width of a standard flyball jump.

I propose the rules committee change the width of the jumps. Currently a flyball jump is 24 inches, I would like to propose a change to 30 inches. By doing so this gives the dogs more room to make corrections when a handler or a dog makes an error. Dogs are only getting faster and more powerful and with this speed comes a greater chance for injury if we don't do what we can to keep them safe. Several other venues around the world have already made this change

and most rave about it. I don't believe there is a way to collect data around this issue because you would have to set dogs up to potentially crash into one another. The change was already made to allow for a 36-inch box, by increasing the width of the jump it would create a better field of vision for the dogs down to the box. Also, typically mats are 30-36 inches, by having a jump that is as wide as the mat, this will help jumps maintain the center of the lane all the way down. To ensure that these jumps aren't made with flimsy or dangerous material I would propose that the thickness wouldn't drop below ½ inch. Outside of the startup cost to buy new equipment there aren't any drawbacks to making this change. I believe this rule could be grandfathered in allowing teams to fundraise or host more tournaments to cover the cost of the new jumps. I would move that 30in jumps could be allowed as soon as possible and the requirement by October 1, 2022.

Emma moved to accept the Rules Committee recommendation that the requirement for the inside width of the jumps become 24-inch or 30-inch for a transition period starting this current racing year. Jon seconded.

The Rules Committee discussed the following points and sent them for board review before the meeting:

One member had two near-collisions in the past year and incidents with dogs getting too close during a cross at jumps which caused a fear of passing. Having wider jumps could help with dogs' confidence when this happens. This member noted, they have used wider jumps during training while teaching passing, and have not seen any issues with dogs adjusting to wider jumps or having wider turns because of wider jumps.

It was noted that it's rare to have a situation where a crash could be avoided just by having an extra 3" and there is not a practical way to get data to support that this change will make racing safer.

With wider jumps, dogs will have 3" less to go around the jump, which could be the safer option. Having wider jumps may make it more likely a dog will choose to cross another dog at the jump.

Neil let the RC know that the expected cost per ring for hosts is 200 USD according to Mike Smith, plus shipping – more for additional backup bases. Also, CanAm jumps would need to be changed, if this is to become standard. (More detail: \$1.50/each for slats, \$100 for 6" base. 10 jump bases and 50 one-inch slats \$175 without stanchions)

The Rules Committee supports this change. While there was some debate as to whether the change would actually be safer, NAFA doesn't have the ability to collect data to prove it either way, and it seems logical to offer a safety benefit in certain situations. The added cost is a burden for hosts, and so the RC encourages a long trial/transition period, to give hosts time to adjust if the decision is to change the standard. There was general support for allowing wider jumps within this racing year, but no consensus as to when it should become the standard. The following options were discussed:

- Option 1: Width standard changes to 30" for 10/01/2022
- Option 2: On 10/01/2022, width change to 30" is still optional, but hosts must state the jump width on sanctioning. On 10/01/2023, the standard becomes become 30" width jumps.

- Option 3: Market decides – some regions may have more demand for this than others: the board leaves the width standard as 2 possibilities: 24” or 30”.

Discussion:

- When this will become effective?
- Jump width should be part of sanctioning information.
- Do we want to be making changes to the rulebook effective immediately when we are 5 weeks away from a new board?
- If the change is going to be on a trial basis, clubs will not want to put out the money now to swap them without knowing that it might not be used
- Making the change optional allows clubs to make a choice

The motion failed.

Jayne moved to allow jumps to have an inside width of 24 inches, or 30 inches effective April 1, 2022. Host clubs must declare the width of tournament jumps in their sanctioning. Leerie seconded.

Discussion: There was discussion regarding how to handle events which are already sanctioned. The board agreed that the best way to handle this is to assign a width of 24 inches to events sanctioned as of December 13, 2021. Host clubs may notify NAFA if they wish to change the width to 30 inches for their sanctioned events.

Board members also agree that all jumps in all rings of racing must be of the declared width for the entirety of the event.

Motion carried with no objections.

2. Proposal from Anthony Pirnat to adjust time allotted to Veterans teams to make points.

I would like to suggest looking at the time allotted to veterans' teams to make points. Perhaps 28 seconds for 25 points, 32, and 36 etc. With open not needing height dogs either the class has mostly died out so some other benefit to running it for those with slower dogs would be nice.

Due to time constraints, the Rules Committee did not have enough time to discuss this proposal and come up with a recommendation.

The following points were discussed:

There was a suggestion that a multiplier be used instead.

- The Rules Committee questions if there is much of a market now for the veterans' class because Open Class gives modifications suitable for most veteran dogs. Since there would need to be some backend work on this, it might not be worth the cost.
- There was some concern that this would encourage people to run dogs that should be retired just to get points. If they are running so slow it's likely because of a health issue.

The board reviewed the proposal and discussion points the Rules Committee provided. No motion was made, the board did not ask the Rules Committee to give a recommendation at a future meeting.

3. Proposal from Veronica Miller for extending the Regional MVP requirements.

The last tournament in R7 was Jan 2020. We've been shut down due to COVID restrictions. While it's possible we will be active again soon, some older dogs will not be eligible for Regional VIP nominations next season as too much time will have elapsed before the next nomination period. I would like NAFA to consider extending the current must have earned points in the region in the past 18-months. Preferably looking at having earned points any time between 2019-2022 to allow for the loss of opportunities during COVID. Alternatively, allowing dogs that earned points elsewhere, when some regions were closed, to be counted towards the timeline. Thank you.

Due to time constraints, the Rules Committee did not have enough time to discuss this proposal and come up with a recommendation.
The board reviewed the proposal and discussion points the Rules Committee provided.

There was not a lot of support for this proposal, and not enough time to discuss and come up with a recommendation.

The following points were discussed:

- Could this be treated like iron dog, and the need for a point be waived because of covid? This is a possibility, but the award is 'Most Valuable Player' and is for a specific year, so it doesn't make sense.
- There was recognition that covid has impacted some dogs that might have otherwise have been eligible this award; however, perhaps a dog that is ineligible because of retiring could be consider for a future HOF award instead.

No motion was made, the board did not ask the Rules Committee to give a recommendation at a future meeting.

4. Proposal from Crystal Cappel to lower age requirement for warm-up dog spot.

I would like the board to consider allowing dogs 12 months-15 months be able to utilize the 7th dog spot on line-ups. There are so many opportunities for dogs of this age to use this warm up time and experience in the tournament environment to prepare them for being race ready. Many teams have limited opportunities to experience full course and this would offer additional time to prepare those dogs. This would give teams options to work young dogs for a more successful future.

Due to time constraints, the Rules Committee did not have enough time to discuss this proposal and come up with a recommendation.
The board reviewed the proposal and discussion points the Rules Committee provided.

Support for this proposal was split between neutral/undecided and against, and there was not enough time to discuss it and come up with a recommendation. The following points were discussed:

- This could be making a simple rule more complicated and sending mixed messages about when a dog is ready to race. The board changed the minimum age to 15 months from 12 months just recently (for the 2019 rule book).

- Allowing this could give dogs with a CRN that are physically ready at 12-months the opportunity for some limited practice time in a live race setting which would be invaluable experience.

Leerie moved to table the motion until the new board is seated, Lynda seconded. Motion carried with no objections.

Finance:

Nominating Committee:

Marketing Committee:

1. Judges Tenure Pin Final Rendition.

The board received a copy of the pin design for review. The design is the current judges pin with an additional tab at the bottom with years of service noted. A board member suggested a slight adjustment to the shape of the tab to make the tab appear more incorporated with the design. Lynda will ask the supplier to adjust the design and submit a new proof to present to the board.

Disciplinary Committee:

Disciplinary Committee Report:			Effective Date
Bonnie Szoka	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	05/01/2020
Grizzly, 160097	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Preacher, 140875	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Snickers, 150646	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Strut, 110221	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Whisper, 110704	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Prank, 140408	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Ripple, 120746	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020

Daisy, 120612	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Envy, 120477	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Scout, 110222	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Torch, 100047	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Zonda, 090536	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Style, 090142	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Tonka, 080349	Suspension	Administrative excusal	05/01/2020
Cash, 140545	Suspension	Two aggression excusals	04/25/2015
Tommie, 100016	Suspension	Two aggression excusals	06/08/2014
Taj, 090259	Suspension	Two aggression excusals	05/04/2014
Tux, 100191	Suspension	Two aggression excusals	10/29/2013
Roxie, 051102	Suspension	Two aggression excusals	8/22/2011
Gimli, 040608	Suspension	Two aggression excusals	11/17/2008
Marion Brinkman	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	Indefinitely
Mike Mattos	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	Indefinitely
Janet Nelson Morris	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	1998
Dave Mueller	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	1998
Cheryl Mueller	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	1998
Jennifer Nelson	Suspension	Conduct prejudicial to the sport of NAFA flyball	1998

Review Panel:

1. Ziggy – CRN 190694 – Aggression excusal was upheld on appeal.

Special Committee Reports

Technology Committee:

1. Light Tree update from Dave Thomas. Steve

Dave is working on 3 additional light trees and will test them at the upcoming Fur Fun event in January.

Communications Committee:

The NAFA blog has been updated with the segment on Getting to Know the Candidates 2022.

CanAm Steering Committee:

ESPN 2 will be hosting another Dog Day event on December 25, 2021. The 2021 CanAm Championship races will be in the anchor position.

Special Measuring Committee:

Old Business:

New Business:

Dana had a question/comment from a new club member: His club has a new member who lip reads. They cannot lip read when people wear a standard mask. Would masks with a clear plastic front be permitted at tournaments? NAFA does not specify what type of mask it is. It was also noted that masks are not being worn at all events. NAFA does not have a mask mandate, rather NAFA recommends that host clubs and participants follow CDC recommendations.

A board member asked about progress on the NAFA website. Neil noted that the project has been on a temporary hold. It was noted that there are better tools that would make the website easier to update accurately. A board member put forward that it is a good time to field quotes for the website changes. Two board members indicated their interest in providing a quote to NAFA for the project.

Jon moved to adjourn the meeting. Cindy seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 10:27pm.