

NAFA® Board of Directors Meeting, January 28, 2011, Huntsville TX - Working Agenda:

Officers' Reports

Chair's Comments:

- Executive Committee decision - one-time variance for regional tournament affiliation

Executive Director's Comments

Treasurer's Report

- CanAm 2010 final accounting

Secretary's Report

Standing Committee Reports

Marketing Committee:

Finance:

Judges Committee:

- Steve Heine, Placentia CA - Provisional to Approved
- Stacey Waites, Alabaster AL – Provisional to Approved
- Mike Miller, Myakka City FL - Provisional to Approved
- Jim Spitznas, Purcellville VA - Apprentice to Provisional
- Dianna Jaynes, Napanee ON – Apprentice to Provisional
- Line/Box Judging Training Video

Rules Committee:

- Proposed change to veterans class point calculations
- Prohibition on baby backpack/sling carriers in the ring
- Fees for NSF checks
- Proposed change to delegate voting structure
- Proposal regarding NAFA provided boxes
- Proposal regarding Flexi Leads
- Proposal regarding Gentle Leaders/head halters

Disciplinary Committee:

- DC #2011-1
- Pivot - 041154

Technology Committee:

Election Committee:

Nominating Committee:

Review Panel:

- Bling 090563 - 07/11/10 excusal, affirmed on appeal 09/14/10
- Seven 050888 - 08/01/10 excusal, affirmed on appeal 10/04/10
- Jasper 091111 - 08/21/20 excusal, appeal, corrected to "Other" (non-aggression) excusal 10/14/10
- Chip 090272 – 10/09/10 excusal
- June 100875 - 12/05/10 excusal

Old Business:

New Business:

- Basenji
- Fastest Times in Database and CanAm

Rules Committee Recommendations

for January 28, 2011 Board meeting

1. [Proposed change to veterans class point calculations](#)
 2. [Prohibition on baby backpack/sling carriers in the ring](#)
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1. Proposed change to veterans class point calculations

The Rules Committee received the following request for a change in the point calculations for dogs competing in the veterans class:

Who would I have to approach to suggest a possible rule change? I'd love to see the veterans class have a different schedule of times for their points. I see a couple reasons for this:

(1) Because of the no-false-starts in veterans, most start delays are 0.1-0.3 seconds to keep from getting too close to a false start.

(2) The dogs /are/ older, after all. Although there are plenty of fit BCs (and Aussies!) who can run sub and low-4s at 7 or 8 years of age, there are also plenty of dogs who can't.

(3) Like the open division, a lot of the dogs running on veterans teams are running with "strange" dogs, and therefore might not have their pass-timing quite so fine-tuned.

What I'm thinking is simple

< 25 seconds = 25 points

< 29 seconds = 5 points

<33 seconds = 1 point.

Not much -- just adding 1 second to the times.

Lynda O [Lynda Oleksuk]

The Committee considered the proposal, but does not recommend the Board adopt the requested change. Committee members felt that the reduced jump height in veterans already makes it somewhat easier to accrue points. But, more importantly, the purpose behind the veterans class was not to have dogs earn more points, but was to allow older dogs to continue to participate in flyball in a humane and fun way. The special rules applicable for this class, such as no false starts, lowered jump height, and limited heats/racing formats seems to adequately facilitate the intended purpose.

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2. Prohibition on baby backpack/sling carriers in the ring

The Rules Committee received the following request for rule change:

To the Judges Committee & Rules Committee

As a NAFA Supervising Judge I have witnessed adults who are in the ring during racing while carrying infants in slings or backpacks or even in their arms. I believe this to be very dangerous and do not permit it when I am acting as Head Judge. However, not all judges call this situation the same way. The current rules permit but do not require a Head Judge to forbid this practice. Since I feel it is a very dangerous situation to have the kids in the ring in slings or backpacks during racing, I am writing to ask for formal action by the Rules or Judges' Committee on this hazard.

I recognize that the BOD has been discussing this issue lately, as reflected in the minutes of the last meeting. However, the practice has continued, as has the division over whether a judge should ever permit this during racing.

Below are a couple websites showing examples of the type of portable carriers I am talking about.

<http://www.ergobabycarrier.com/>

<http://www.theportablebaby.com/babycarriers.html>

I am putting this out to you all now. I feel this situation should be addressed immediately as I know of course as long as people are allowed to wear these in the ring we have the potential for a serious injury. I feel these baby carriers should not be allowed to be worn in the ring at any time running a dog or not. If the person carrying the child were to be knocked down from behind or if a dog were to jump up at them or the child it could be a very bad situation. I feel that if you do not do something about this we will continue to have different judges allowing these to be worn and others not allowing it and people will not know when they can and cannot wear them. NAFA needs to make a decision on this at the BOD level. Either NAFA is OK with this or they are not. I don't think there should be any middle ground on this.

If you have any questions please contact me any time. Could you please let me know your decision on this when you decide.

*Thank you for your time,
Brian Fay*

The Rules Committee considered this proposal and was ultimately divided in whether to adopt it, or something similar. The Committee received a request a few months ago to establish a minimum age for people to be allowed in the ring in an effort to prohibit similar conduct. After considering that request and discussing it with the Board, no change was made, but an emphasis was placed in the minutes to make sure that judges knew they had the discretion to prohibit them if they believed they were not safe. Several members of the Committee were concerned about the problems Brian Fay, a supervising judge, experienced when he exercised his authority to prevent them in the ring.

The division amongst the Committee centered primarily on how much NAFA should be regulating conduct in the ring. If a bright line were drawn here preventing these baby carriers, but other types of conduct was also unsafe would that be seen as NAFA endorsing it as safe. There was concern that women in advanced stages of pregnancy could also cause damage to an unborn child if they fell while racing. One member expressed that using this type of apparatus in the ring was clearly not wise, but that it was also not our responsibility to be dictating to parents what they should be doing with their children.

Ultimately, several members of the Committee wanted to propose language for the Board to consider prohibiting these carriers in the ring based on the concern that this described conduct presents a great risk of injury to the child. This concern was expanded to include preventing children from being in the ring where the child is clearly too young to be actively participating to address a parent merely holding an infant in their arms to get around the child carrier prohibition.

The Committee members were unanimous in their intent that any language developed should be carefully drafted to avoid even giving the impression that children who need the assistance of a wheelchair or other device would in any way be prevented from playing flyball. Our sport is one which is accessible to people with many different physical challenges and we want to make sure it stays that way.

The proposed rule change is as follows:

“Children who are too young to be able to participate safely, (e.g. children in strollers, car seats, baby carriers, or being held in a person’s arms) are not permitted in the ring during racing or warm-up periods.”

This language would be added to Chapter 3 Teams and Timesheets at the end of subsection (c) (page 5 of the current rulebook).

There was a question raised as to whether we should be expanding any prohibition to the grounds. There was no support expressed for that proposal.

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3. Fees for NSF checks

The Rules Committee received the following objection to the published fee for returned checks:

Please note that the stated NSF check fee may not be allowable in all states. Please refer to this site for allowable fees by state:<http://www.jetchex.com/state-allowable-nsf-fees.pdf> Fees should be assessed based on the state of origin of the check.

The Committee considered the request, but ultimately decided that the current fee was reasonable. In the event that a court found that the fee was unreasonable in a specific situation, the organization would deal with that at the time. Historically we have had relatively few NSF checks and with increased use of PayPal we suspect that trend will continue down even further.

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4. Proposed change to delegate voting structure

The Rules Committee was referred the following request sent to the Chair:

Leerie,

As per our private chat on September 14, I have outlined the problem of the disparity between earning delegate votes for single-day events and two-day events. I have included the history of Joe Acker's fee proposal since that began NAFA's journey of attempting to structure NAFA's fees to treat both formats fairly for a "weekend of racing". I also included the section in the By-Laws that outlines the delegate earning schedule. This should make it easy for readers to reference while first considering this issue and it's possible solution.

I am also copying the Rules committee on this issue since my suggestions are not the only solutions to this problem. I am more in favor of the Board working to resolve this issue than worrying about exactly "how" the Board resolves it. Consider this letter a "starting point". I have identified a problem. I have made

a reasoned suggestion on how to resolve the problem. My suggestion may not be the only solution to the problem.

History

In January of 2007, the NAFA Board revised how fees for two one-day events would be calculated for a weekend of racing in response to the request by Joe Acker reflected in the Old Business section of the agenda.

Quote:

"The Board was in favor of a reduction in the second day's entry fee and the discussion revolved around what level of deduction should exist for the second day. The Board settled on the reduction of the sanctioning fee for second and subsequent consecutive events of a weekend be from \$20 to \$10 per team **as the only measure substantial enough to address the problem in a meaningful way.**

This discount would only be available for electronically scored events. The event with the largest entry of the weekend will be charged at \$20 while the remainder will be charged at \$10.

The Treasurer noted his concern about the effect on revenues that a deduction of this magnitude would have on NAFA finances...."

The minutes do not reflect the exact "request" by Joe Acker but, it is apparent that Joe had identified a "problem" with the fee structure.

This proposal passed in spite of the Treasurer's expressed concerns over revenue loss, presumably because of the Board's concern over **fairness in NAFA's fee structure for a "weekend of racing"**.

Quote:

"Las Vegas, Nevada February 9, 2008

II. Executive Director's comments

(1) Revenue and expenses. We have been conscious of the bottom line of this business. We have been doing what we can do maximize income and reduce expenses. **The reduction of fees for second day tournaments has resulted in a decline in revenue."**

Later in that same meeting during the Treasurer's report:

"Scott also passed out a current Balance Sheet. The Profit and Loss sheet for the current fiscal year to date was distributed. Our income from tournament fees is down approximately \$9,000.00 to date. **This decrease was based primarily on the reduction in fees for second day tournaments. The Finance Committee had projected a \$26,000.00/year decline in revenue based on this fee schedule change and that projection appears to be accurate."**

Two years later:

Quote:

"Lake Forest, California January 15, 2010

Kris brought up that we are running at a negative balance right now. She stated that we might need to increase fees to correspond. She stressed that we need to make sure that we are being fiscally responsible. Tournament fees have not been raised in many years. Dana mentioned that when we

lowered the cost for a second tournament in the same weekend, the Board indicated that it would reassess whether overall fees needed to be increased. That hasn't happened. There was discussion of the general need to consider the overall financial well being of organization."

Eight months later:

Quote:

Las Vegas, Nevada, August 7, 2010

Fees for two day tournaments

Dana moved to change fee for tournaments more than 1 day to \$30/\$35 and modify any corresponding forms. Greg seconded.....The Board agreed to reconsider fees after fees were reduced for second tournaments over the same weekend. This modification was made a few years ago and NAFA has consistently lost money each year since that change was implemented, despite considerable steps to reduce shipping costs. This proposed change would bring fees for two-day tournaments to par with two one-day tournaments. Presently, two one-day tournaments pay \$20 + \$10 = \$30 for each team that runs over the weekend and one two-day tournament pays \$20 for each team. This proposed change in the fee structure would have **the two different tournament formats paying the same fees to NAFA for the weekend.**

Leerie indicated that there were more NAFA resources utilized in two one day tournaments. He was concerned that it would cause clubs to increase entry fees for two day tournaments. He also said he believed it may drive more clubs to offer two one day tournaments instead.

Dale and Karen both indicated they believed there was not a noticeable difference in scoring two one day tournaments from scoring one two day tournament. The shipping costs are the same to send EJS, which is actually the primary NAFA expense associated with tournaments.

.....Club(s) may adjust the format, including whether the tournament is one two day or two one day tournaments up until the closing date. This change will be announced in the highlights to give those clubs the opportunity to consider if they need to make changes.

The motion passed unanimously.

Reference:

By-Laws

These Bylaws govern the affairs of the North American Flyball Association®, a nonprofit corporation organized under the Michigan Non-Profit Corporation (the "Act").

ARTICLE VII AFFILIATE CLUBS

Section 2. Delegates..... Affiliate Clubs will be given a number of delegate votes based on the number of tournaments each club competed in and/or hosted during a fiscal year. Affiliate Clubs must compete in at least one event during the racing year to qualify for Delegate Votes. Delegates will be calculated for a club based on competition in or hosting tournaments on the following schedule: 1 delegate for 4-5 team entries; 2 delegates for 6-11 team entries; 3 delegates for 12-17 team entries; 4 delegates for 18-23 team entries; 5 delegates for 24-29 team entries; and 6 delegates for 30 team entries or more. One delegate per club will be awarded for **hosting each tournament**. No Club shall earn more than 8 delegate votes in total by team entries or tournament hosting.

The series of decisions concerning lowering and raising fees beginning in January of 2007 was based on a perception of "**fairness**" for NAFA fees levied after a weekend of racing. In fact, a comparison of a single event held over two days vs **two** "single-day" events actually describe them as two different

formats. Two different formats that are now perceived as paying the same fees to NAFA.

While it may be the opinion of the NAFA Board that these are simply two different formats that are now equal (fair) because they now pay the same fees to NAFA for a "weekend of racing", they are NOT equal or fair when calculating delegate votes for a club.

My question for the NAFA Board is: **Why should one "format" for participating in a NAFA event (either for competition by entering a racing team OR for hosting a tournament) yield more delegates for the same "weekend of racing" than another format when BOTH are now considered to be paying equal in NAFA fees?**

I propose that the NAFA Board consider adopting language to make earning delegates for BOTH formats equal and fair for a "weekend of racing". Clubs that host single day events over a weekend of racing earn 2 delegate votes for hosting, one for each day. Why shouldn't host clubs that hold one event over two days earn the same representation for a weekend of racing?

The same discrepancy exists for clubs that enter teams for competition in single day events. They get credited for "two" team entries for a weekend of racing. A club that enters a team in one event held over two days gets only one team counted for a "weekend of racing". Delegate calculation should be equal in both cases unless it is by intended design to have one format yield MORE delegate votes. Why shouldn't clubs entering teams for competition earn the same representation as well?

The options that I have identified that the Board may consider in order to achieve this goal:

- A team entry should count as "two teams" for the purpose of calculating delegate votes if entered in an event held over two days.
- A "two day" event should earn 2 delegate votes for hosting providing the tournament utilize at least two days for ONE event (weekend of racing).
- Any event that begins and ends on the same day (one day tournaments) shall only earn one delegate vote for hosting and any team entries shall count as only one team for the purpose of calculating delegate votes.

Possible Objections:

1. There may be limitations on what we can rely on the database to calculate for us. And, I understand the challenges that calculating delegate votes manually would present. One possible solution for this would be for two-day tournaments have two timesheets, one per team per day.
2. Objections to including team entries in the proposed revision: Fees were levied against hosting clubs, not team entries. The counter to that argument is that each team entered "pays" it's NAFA fee within the entry fee. The host club collects this fee for NAFA and passes it on to the team that enters.
3. Teams that do not host over an entire weekend but, for only one day. My counter is that they "lose" nothing. The current system gives them one delegate vote for hosting one event. It is their choice to host only one day and, if nothing changed, they would still earn one delegate vote for one day of hosting. My proposal simply puts earning delegate votes over a weekend of racing in line with each other, no matter which "format" is chosen.

While it is true that clubs have the "option" or choice as to which "format" to structure their tournament, I remind the Board that many clubs have fewer choices than the Board has considered. They have to calculate how many team entries they can comfortably accommodate at their venue. How many people they have available to help. How many teams are interested in entering their event. Some Regions have only a few clubs so single day events make sense. Some Regions have many clubs and a single day event would not accommodate ALL the clubs desiring to enter. If we really desire equality and fairness while levying fees to pay for NAFA services, we should be equally concerned about creating a system for earning representation (delegate votes) in NAFA's affairs that is equal and fair for all clubs.

My proposal isn't perfect but, it is the NAFA Board's intention and design for both formats to pay the same in NAFA fees. ONE format definitely earns more delegate votes quicker, easier & cheaper than another. This has translated into a skewed voting pattern based on the weighted vote that NAFA employs for its elections. The Regions that prefer the single day events have a significant advantage in "votes earned per club" over the Regions that regularly host one event held over two days of a weekend of racing.

The following chart represents the 2009 vote and illustrates my issue:

Region	States/Provinces	Ballots/Votes/Average	Votes earned per Ballot	Weekend
1)	MI OH	37(108)	2.9 av votes per ballot	1 two-day event
2)	ON	47(150)	3.2 av votes per ballot	1 two-day event
3)	MN ND SD	18(89)	4.9 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
4)	IL IN KY WI	37(108)	2.9 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
5)	AR LA OK TX	32(114)	3.5 av votes per ballot	BOTH 1-day & 2-day events
6)	AZ NV UT	16(54)	3.4 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
7)	BC OR WA	33(133)	4.0 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
8)	MB SK	29(106)	3.6 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
9)	NC SC VA WV	30(105)	3.5 av votes per ballot	BOTH 1-day & 2-day events
10)	NB NS PE	23(60)	2.6 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
11)	FL	22(106)	4.8 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
12)	AB ID MT	23(92)	4.0 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
13)	CT MA ME NH NY RI VT	29(113)	3.9 av votes per ballot	1 two-day event
14)	AL GA MS TN	18(88)	4.9 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
15)	DC DE MD NJ PA	29(133)	4.6 av votes per ballot	1 two-day event
16)	CA	32(145)	4.5 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
18)	AK	3(10)	3.3 av votes per ballot	BOTH 1-day & 2-day events
19)	CO NM WY	22(73)	3.3 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events
20)	ON QC	14(50)	3.6 av votes per ballot	1 two-day events
21)	IA KS MO NE	19(83)	4.4 av votes per ballot	2 one-day events

The above chart also seems to include "Ballots" sent to a Region for an individual's "service" votes. A more accurate result can be obtained by subtracting both the service ballots and votes on those ballots before calculating club "averages" per Region. I simply do not have that information broken down by Region but, it is my hope that the technical committee could provide that information to the Rules committee while that committee is investigating the merits of this proposal.

Anyway, a comparison shows that the average votes per ballot earned in Regions preferring two-day events range from 4.6 - 2.9.

Average votes per ballot in "mixed" Regions range: 3.3 - 3.5.

The vast majority of delegate votes are earned in single-day event Regions and range thus: 2.9 -4.9. I think the low number represents a Region with a high number of service votes.

Conclusions:

I think I have expressed the basics to the problem. The Board has at it's disposal the ability to generate reports that are more accurate than the above chart, over a longer period of time and with perhaps more relevant details. Regions are unique in the respect of number of clubs located "in Region", size of those clubs (including number of active dogs per club and number human members per club). They also vary in the total number of tournaments that are hosted in Region and how many "weekends of racing" those tournaments represent.

I have only identified the disparity that exists between two formats of tournament hosting for a weekend of

racing for earning delegate votes. It is my desire that NAFA explore the issue(s) and take action that resolves these issues.

Thank You,

*Christine VanWert
Wooferines Flyball Team, NAFA #455, Region 1*

The Rules Committee discussed the concept that with the change in tournament fees to align fees received for multi-day tournaments and tournament weekends with multiple single day tournaments, it makes sense for the Board to discuss whether delegate votes should similarly be aligned. There was discussion that our databases already accommodate tournament week calculations and thus, tabulating delegate votes in that fashion should be feasible.

There was also discussion as to whether the Board might want to consider re-visiting whether clubs should accrue more delegate votes for hosting greater numbers of tournaments. The Committee also discussed whether it is time to consider raising the maximums or changing the accrual process.

The Committee identified three areas for the Board to discuss:

- 1) Changing to accrual based on tournament week instead of per event for both team entries and hosting tournaments**
- 2) Maximum number of votes**
- 3) Ratio of the number of votes clubs earn for entering teams versus the number of votes clubs earn for hosting tournaments. And whether clubs hosting larger tournaments should receive proportionately more votes than clubs hosting smaller tournaments.**

The Committee believed it might be beneficial to receive input from flyball competitors. There was also concern from members that the Board have plenty of time to discuss any possible changes before fielding a firm proposal and voting on it. There was concern expressed that changes should not go into effect until the following racing year so clubs can appropriately plan for hosting and entries.

Dale indicated he would compile a spreadsheet from prior data to give the Board more information on how changes would affect vote tabulations. Greg inquired whether data was available to indicate whether any possible changes could have affected the outcome of elections.

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5. Language regarding multi-day fee structure

Leerie referred additional concerns from a Regional Director regarding ramifications of the Board's recent changes to the tournament fee structure:

Leerie,

I think I get what you are saying. If there are three day tournaments, it is \$40 to Nafa for a team to run all three days.

With the way the new rule reads, if we run our tournaments as we have (and would like to continue what we have done here in Region 3 for years!) if a team runs multi on Friday and another team each Sat. and Sun., the fees to NAFA for that team would be \$70!!!! 30 Friday-multi, 30 Saturday, and 10 Sunday.

Dan

Dan Rode
Water's Edge Retrievers
www.watersedgeretrievers.com

I think the way it's being looked at now is: \$20 for 1 day of racing, \$30 for 2 days of racing, \$40 for 3 days of racing. I apologize for being so blunt, but I don't really think there is any interest in changing the fee structure again, without at least seeing how this goes for a year or so.

Leerie

Leerie,

Thanks for taking the time to reply. I agree with what I believe is NAFA's intent. I assume the idea was that NAFA wanted to charge the same per team over a weekend regardless of the number of events.

If it was a 2 day tournament, NAFA would charge \$30/team, and if it was 2 tournaments over 2 days they would charge \$20 + \$10. This makes good sense, as NAFA has the same costs (primarily shipping of lights) regardless if it's two tournaments or one.

The application of this new policy, however, actually went the other way in Region 3. Because we race Friday nights, and typically that would be an average of 7 teams (usually 5 multi and 2 Vets), NAFA ends up getting \$40/team (\$30 for Friday/Saturday, \$10 for Sunday). I really don't think this was the intent of the new policy. Perhaps I am wrong about that.

It's been suggested that we sanction Friday as it's own event. We can certainly explore that. It would mean adding regular racing, which is something that isn't typically done in our region. That has its own implications towards regional points, and race scheduling as well. These would need to be worked out with members within our region.

Maybe it would be a little simpler to step back and look at the goal of the policy: to get about \$30/team/weekend.

Would it then not make more sense to approach the policy a little differently, and ignore the "events" or tournaments entirely.

Below is an alteration to the existing policy that instead focuses on days rather than tournaments:

(a) A recording fee of \$20 (US funds) per scored team for single day of racing. When multiple days of racing hosted by the same club occur on successive days, the full fee is due for the day with the largest entry and \$10 per team may be deducted from each additional day of racing.

I actually think that would provide NAFA with \$30/team for one or two day tournaments and keep costs down for the Friday night scenario. It would also not change anything for 3 consecutive tournaments.

It just seems odd to me that we need to come up with a workaround for a new policy whose intent (\$30/team/weekend) was already being met in our region.

Thoughts?
Thanks,
Neil [Flood]

The Rules Committee discussed that this tournament format under the new fees was addressed by the full Board at the September 28, 2010 teleconference. The Board and the Committee have not expressed any interest in changing the fee structure again. There was some question as to whether there was a need to modify or clarify language. The Committee felt that the language was probably sufficient. If any other scenarios were identified as confusing, the Committee asked that Karen bring them to their attention for discussion.

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6. Proposal regarding NAFA provided boxes

The Rules Committee received the following proposal:

A Modest Proposal to U-Fli and NAFA officials:

A lot of time and energy goes into staging a successful flyball tournament. I'd like to suggest a change that might speed up the day's events and make it less physically stressful for the human participants and allow them more time to have practice recalls and runs.

I propose that the flyball boxes, like the starting lights, be standardized for both organizations and provided by U-Fli and NAFA for tournament use. So much effort and time goes into the removal of one set of boxes and the replacement by another, while teams are trying to have recalls and a practice run to prepare for their next race. Small teams are already stretched thin when it comes to moving the boxes in and out, holding dogs, replacing/removing slats in the jumps, shagging balls, reporting the team line up to the judge, recording times, calling passes. Having the boxes remain in place will reduce clutter around the lane area, and reduce the chance of injury to the box loaders and others in moving the boxes. The boxes could have places where the lineup cards could be attached and removed quickly. Clubs would just need to provide their own balls, as they currently do.

The governing organizations could poll their teams to find out which box type is most widely used, and let teams know that within 12-18 months, those boxes would be provided at tournaments. Three boxes (two for use + one back-up) could be sent to the tournament sites. Every team would use the same boxes throughout the tournament.

The costs for purchase, maintenance, shipping could be covered by a slight increase in the tournament fees.

Standardization would also make the times clocked more equitable from one tournament/venue to another.

Possible resistance to this idea might come from clubs who have boxes different from the the t0-be-approved new standard type of box. They would have to invest in new boxes, potentially, which would have a financial impact. Before any implementation of the standardized boxes occurs, some testing would need to be done to see if dogs will figure out how to use a 'strange' box. If they don't, this is a moot issue. Perhaps the different mechanism or smell or sound will put them off. But if the dogs can handle the change, I think the people involved will also adapt favorably. They won't have to lug two boxes to each tournament and risk wear-and-tear and damage in transit. The stress at the start of each race will be reduced. Practice time can be more effectively used. There should be more time and energy for racing and less time for waiting.

For these reasons, I recommend your serious consideration of providing standardized flyball boxes for tournament use.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nancy Loes
2109 Gettysburg Ave.
Merced, CA 95340

The Rules Committee considered the proposal, but identified a number of negative factors that would outweigh any time saved by using NAFA provided boxes for tournaments. Some of those factors included: the vast variety in the type and style of boxes utilized by competitors would make it nearly impossible to settle on one box; the maintenance required for boxes being used in every single race at multiple tournaments would be significant and also require much more frequent replacement of boxes; the selection of one style/manufacturer of boxes for NAFA events would create an even bigger monopoly as teams would likely choose the same box for practice; and finally shipping costs would be significant and likely require a very large increase in tournament fees. Committee members also expressed that the current system encourages innovation in box design and this would likely be lost with the proposed system.

The Committee recommends that the Board decline to adopt the proposal.

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7. Proposed Flexi Leash change

The Rules Committee received the following proposed rule change:

This past weekend I once again observed stupid and (to me) dangerous use of a flexi lead to work a dog during warmups. A guy from another team was watching as he sat waiting as box judge for racing to start. He wondered out loud if it was legal and I said it was but that I thought it shouldn't be. He agreed heartily.

Is there a way I can suggest this to the board? Or has it already been dealt with and dismissed?

Deb [Deb Norman]

The Rules Committee considered this concern and agreed that retractable leashes could be quite dangerous in a warm-up or racing situation. There was unanimous support for this proposal. The following language was developed:

"Retractable leads should not be used in the ring during racing or warm-ups."

The language would be added to Section 1.3 Collars (page 3 of the current rulebook).

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8. Proposal regarding Gentle Leaders/head halters

The Rules Committee received a request from Sharon Atkinson, Regional Director in Region 21 to permit the use of gentle leaders or other head halters in the ring.

The Rules Committee discussed that the current language is contained in Section 1.3 - Collars, "Halters, including 'haltees', will not be allowed in the racing ring."

There was discussion that although members of the general public may confuse a head halter with a muzzle, their use has gained wider and wider acceptance in modern methods of humane dog training. Their use in getting dogs in and out of the racing ring could provide much greater control and safety. There was concern that they should not be left on a dog while racing or warming up for fear that a dog could become tangled or hook a toe on the tail dangling from the

halter. Some members also reflected that the current rule is not always being uniformly enforced by judges as some are allowing dogs to enter the ring on head halters.

Several members of the Committee were in favor of modifying the current rule and proposed the following language:

“Head halters, including Haltees or Gentle Leaders are permitted in the ring, but may not be use in navigating the course during racing or warm-ups.”

Another section of the Committee believed that if this portion of the rule was being revised, then the Board should also eliminate the prohibition on prong collars in the ring and on the tournament grounds. The Committee decided to present all options to the Board for discussion. After the meeting, there was a notation from one of the members that our current rules do not prevent dogs from racing in chain choke collars and that should probably be included in the Board discussion.

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