

NAFA® Board of Directors Meeting, August 7, 2010, Las Vegas Nevada - Agenda:

Officers' Reports

Chair's Comments:

Executive Director's Comments

Treasurer's Report

Secretary's Report

Standing Committee Reports

Marketing Committee:

- CanAm
- NAFA products
- Package to newly registered clubs

Finance:

- Fee structure
- Budget

Judges Committee:

- Beth Hudson, Pensacola FL - Apprentice to Provisional
- Mike Miller, Myakka City FL - Apprentice to Provisional
- Steve Heine, Placentia CA - Apprentice to Provisional
- Steve Corona, Georgetown TX – Apprentice to Provisional
- Dave Dery, Cambridge ON – Provisional to Approved
- Ed Roth, Cedar Rapids IA – Provisional to Approved
- Hugh Morrow, Etobicoke ON – Provisional to Approved
- Tammy Wilson-Teeter, Phoenix AZ – Provisional to Approved
- Manual Judging Rules Section – stopwatches start on tweet
- Line/Box Judging Training Video
- C.18 Form – change “Apprentice” to “Provisional”

Rules Committee:

- Proposed modifications to bylaws and articles of incorporation
- Modification of rules in light of bylaw modifications
- Club sponsorships – Linda Bullard
- Provisional judges running tournaments without supervision – clarification of language – Rob Bitler
- Triggering box after the ball comes out – Judges list
- Runback matting – Cindy Henderson
- Dogs leaving ring and children in the ring – Lana Luhring
- Procedures for re-draw – Lee Heighton
- Modifications for handicapped dogs – Jennifer Staton
- Review of code of ethics – repeatedly and obviously holding back dogs
- Modification of forms – flyball@flyball.org and corporate address changes
- Equipment between the racing lanes – Julie Norman Jenkins
- Limitations on Open Class – Andy McBride

Disciplinary Committee:

Technology Committee:

Election Committee:

Nominating Committee:

Review Panel:

- Fling! 090997
- Kaycee 090572
- Lady 081061 - Appeal
- Lizzy 080423
- Logan 080284
- Vader 100764 – Appeal
- Bling 090563

Old Business:

New Business:

Rules Committee Recommendations

August 7, 2010 Meeting

1. Proposed modifications to bylaws and articles of incorporation
2. Modification of rules in light of bylaw modifications
3. Club sponsorships – Linda Bullard

The Committee received several emails from Linda Bullard asking about various options her club might have for using sponsorship. Her questions primarily centered on the following rule (on page 29 of the current rulebook):

CHAPTER 6 – HOSTING A NAFA® SANCTIONED EVENT

Section 6.1 – Requirements

(l) Prize money for any one team may not exceed \$500.00 USD or \$600.00 CDN per event per day. In addition, a host or sponsor may offer expense money provided the same is distributed fairly among all participating teams, based on actual expenses.

Her specific questions were whether this rule would prohibit the following:

- a. Sponsor logos on team shirts during competitions
- b. Sponsors paying expenses of teams
 - i. The host club/or sponsor paying the lodging cost of a team (or a person) competing in the tourney.
 - ii. The host club/or sponsor paying expenses for an entire team to fly in.
 - iii. The host club/or sponsor paying expenses of someone running on the host club's

My question...if, for example, the host club or sponsor is going to pay for an expense of one team (i.e., pay lodging expenses for a club that is participating), does it mean we/the host club/or the sponsor must also pay an equal dollar amount to the other clubs that are participating in the same tourney?

There was some discussion of this issue via email as well as in teleconference. Some committee members questioned whether this rule should continue to be in effect. Concerns expressed centered on enforceability of the rule and whether this rule could be easily skirted by claiming payments were to individuals, rather than to a team. Other members felt that this rule protects clubs from favoritism by host clubs. Eliminating it might encourage some host clubs to pay for expenses of fast teams from other parts of the country in an effort to thwart their competition. After consideration, the Committee decided to refer this issue to a discussion of the full Board.

4. Provisional judges running tournaments without supervision – clarification of language – Rob Bitler

Thank you for the conversation this weekend regarding this issue. I would like to see this addressed by the rules committee and clarified. Let me point out where I see the conflicts and then my thoughts on the issue.

Here are where I see the conflicts in the rules:

Section 6.1 (o) Any tournament sanctioned by NAFA® must use a NAFA® approved Head Judge.

From Appendix D:

The Provisional Judge is to demonstrate the ability to perform the functions of a NAFA® Approved Judge without supervision.

and

Learning Objective:

∅ Ability to perform the functions of a NAFA® Approved Judge without relying on the immediate input that is provided by a Supervising Judge.

When you go to the NAFA site and look at the judge page, there is a section that says "Approved Judges". The above language would indicate that this is where the selection would come from. As Leerie stated in one of his comments though, Supervising Judges are not in the "Approved Judges" list, so could they be considered?

In the Appendix in one section it says a Provisional should be able to perform "without supervision" while another section says "without relying on the immediate input that is provided by a Supervising Judge". Those are two very different things, with the last one not necessarily meaning without ANY supervision.

Let me put my 2 cents in on the matter. Leerie, I know you did full, solo, assignments as a provisional judge. That's why you are where you are. However, let's look at the average flyball judge candidate. To get to provisional status, they have judge 75 races TOTAL. That's not even a full one day tournament in some instances. Are we really saying that someone who may not have judged more than 30 races in a block is able to do a full day, non-stop? We all know what it's like when you have been out there for 60-70 races and you hit that wall. You zone out for a second, your feet hurt, you're hot, but you can't let on any of that to the competitors. A provisional judge has probably never gone through that. Do we really think they should be collecting fees, running tournaments solo, and having all that responsibility with such little experience? If they show they can't handle it on day 1, who's going to be there for the TD and teams on day 2?

If we are going to do what you propose though Leerie, why not get rid of provisional status, make all approved judges coming out of the apprentice phase "Approved Head Judges, and require all Approved Head Judges to submit the three write-ups within their first year. That would level out the responsibilities, clear up any confusion, and treat everyone pretty much the same, as it seems you may have suggested.

I disagree with doing this, but if the only difference between a provisional and "approved judge" is the three write ups, then let's level titles so it's easier on everyone.

I would appreciate your thoughts on the matter.

The Rules Committee discussed this request in detail. The Committee agreed that the current practice is that apprentice judges may judge a tournament without supervision. The language from the rulebook in Section 6.1(o) on page 30 of the current rulebook indicates that "any tournament sanctioned by NAFA® must use a NAFA® approved Head Judge." Where judges are discussed by level in the rules, they are referred to with capitalization, such as Supervising Judge, Approved Judge, etc. This rule has always been read to allow Provisional, Approved, and Supervising Judges to judge tournaments without supervision. There was discussion that this language could be somewhat confusing and the Committee agreed some clarification was called for.

As part of that discussion, the Committee also considered the request to prohibit Provisional Judges from judging a tournament without supervision. The Committee declined to adopt that request. Factors considered included the strenuous nature of the current judging training program, including the addition of the Novice section. Our current judges go through a much more rigorous training program before they ever reach the provisional stage. Provisional Judges also receive evaluations at each tournament from both the Regional Director and the Tournament Director. The Rules Committee, which included three current members of the Judges Committee, felt comfortable that Provisional Judges had the skills to judge a tournament on their own. Changing the existing rule could also create hardship for more geographically isolated areas.

The Rules Committee unanimously recommends the current rule be modified as follows:

Section 6.1(o) [page 30 of current rulebook]:

"Any tournament sanctioned by NAFA® must use a NAFA® approved Head Judge at the provisional level or higher."

5. Triggering box after the ball comes out – Judges list

On a recent marathon discussion on the judges list, the following issue was brought up.

This language is on the intro page to our rules. The page between the cover page and the table of contents.

"Each dog must run in relay fashion down the jumps, trigger a Flyball box, releasing the ball, retrieve the ball, and return over the jumps."

No where else does it specifically state that the dog must: trigger the box, which then releases the ball, then the dog must retrieve the ball, and then they must return over the jumps. Does anyone think we need to remedy that?

From our rules:

"Section 8.3 - The Heat

(a) The Run. Dogs may start from a stationary or running start. Each dog is to hurdle the four jumps in succession, trigger the box, and return over all four jumps and the start/finish line with the ball in its mouth."

There are a few judges who think since the former is not actually in the rules, then they don't have to trigger the box to release the ball before retrieving it (e.g. if the ball rolled out of the cup, but the dog still triggered the box and returned over the jumps with the ball, it is ok).

There was a discussion on the Judges email list that some judges felt there needed to be clarification that the dog must actually retrieve the ball from the box. There was concern expressed that the language of the current rule may leave some question as to whether the ball could roll out before the dog got to the box, but if the dog triggered the box and retrieved the ball from the ground that would suffice as a clean run. The Rules Committee unanimously agreed that conduct should be flagged. The Committee discussed the following language to correct any possible confusion.

"Section 8.3 - The Heat

(a) The Run. Dogs may start from a stationary or running start. Each dog is to hurdle the four jumps in succession, trigger the box, releasing the ball, retrieve the ball, and return over all four jumps and the start/finish line with the ball in its mouth."

There was additional language suggested to include:

"trigger the box so it releases the ball" and "trigger the box thus releasing the ball"

6. Runback matting – from Cindy Henderson

I have a question to make sure I fully understand the change in the rule regarding the 50 feet of runback. The question that has come up in my region is what the definition of "runback" is with regards to the matting. Does that mean that all 3 of the mats in the run back area must be at least 50 feet in length or just the center mat that goes up to the box? Similarly if a club advertises their minimum runback at a tournament is say 65 feet does that mean that all three of the mats in the back area must be at least 65 ft in length or is it only the center mat that must be 65 feet and the 2 side mats can be shorter (what if they are only the 50 feet for example).

There was an issue with this in the past in my region and I want to make sure I fully understand the rule and can advise the host clubs in my area that they may need to purchase additional matting to ensure all 3 of the mats in the back area must meet a required length not just the center mat.

There was discussion in the Rules Committee about the current language surrounding runback and how matting should be handled. The Committee members all agreed for an area to be considered part of the runback area, it must have an appropriate racing surface (ie mats over concrete) for not only the center line, but also at least 4.5 feet on

either side of the center. So, practically, when matting a ring with 3 foot wide mats, it means that the runback area would have 3 mats - the center mat, plus two side mats - for the full length of the runback. There was some question among committee members if the current language in the rule might require teams to cut mats where the center mat extends slightly longer than side mats. That was not the intention of the rule. To make clear that mats could be of uneven lengths, but that runback would stop counting where all 3 mats are not present, the Committee recommends adding definitions to the glossary of "racing lane" and of "runback." The following language was unanimously recommended:

Racing lane – The racing lane extends from the backstop behind the box, through the course, through the start finish line, to the point where the racing surface (grass, matting, etc.) no longer extends at least 4.5 feet on either side of the racing lane center line. See also the diagram in Section 2.4 – Ring Layout.

Runback – That area of the racing lane leading up to the start finish line, before the course, which consists of the racing surface (grass, matting, etc.) a minimum of 4.5 feet on either side of the racing lane center line. This distance is required on the sanctioning form to sanction an event.

There was some concern from committee about whether language needed to be included in the rule or definitions to clarify that lanes & runback should give equal opportunity to both teams competing in the ring. For example, the right lane should not have more runback area than the left lane. No language was developed at this time.

7. Dogs leaving ring & children in the ring - Lana Luhring

I request that NAFA adopt appropriate rules related to entering and exiting the ring with dogs on leash and under control similar to those required in other dog sports like agility.

I further request NAFA determine under what circumstances small children are appropriate to be in the racing lanes when not acting as junior handlers. These were raised as concerns at a recent tournament where I was tournament director.

Dogs on leash when leaving the ring – The Committee felt that this rule would be very hard to enforce as a sport-wide rule. Each venue is different and has unique challenges. Some outdoor venues would be particularly difficult to delineate where a dog had to be on leash. The Committee members did acknowledge that in some venues, especially crowded indoor venues, it might be an especially good idea for all dogs to be on leash as they exit the ring. We would encourage competitors to keep safety paramount. We would strongly recommend competitors be aware of their surroundings and their dogs at all times. Entering and exiting the ring can be a chaotic time, especially in cramped quarters. We would also encourage people to show consideration for their fellow competitors and spectators.

The Committee also acknowledged that Tournament Directors do have the authority to impose rules regarding leashing dogs outside the ring, especially in venues that have rules prohibiting dogs being off leash. Regional Directors may excuse competitors who disregard these rules as unsportsmanlike conduct. We would encourage TDs and RDs to

emphasize these rules during the captains meeting in tournaments where they are imposed so that all competitors are aware of them. At this time, the Rules Committee does not recommend that the Board implement any rule change.

Children in the ring – The Rules Committee discussed the safety issues that may arise with children in the ring. Ultimately these issues will fall to the discretion of our judges. We would encourage our judges to be watchful for possible safety issues of all types, including those with children who are not appropriately supervised. Parents are responsible for the safety of their children at the tournament, and in the ring. Parents should take into account not only their own dogs, but also other dogs that may be in the ring. The judge always has the discretion to rectify unsafe situations in the ring. Handlers may bring situations they perceive to be unsafe to the attention of the Head Judge.

The Committee does not recommend the Board set a minimum age for junior handlers. Children mature at different rates. They have different levels of experience handling dogs and team responsibilities. Parents should be the ones to determine whether their children are physically and mentally capable of participating in our sport.

8. Procedures for re-draw – Lee Heighton

If an error is made, such as an omitted team or the failure of the database to shift the extra vet spot to regular in the first place, then the draw is invalid. I have no problem asking that the Rules Committee put this in the rulebook. Pretty simple to state that if the ED determines that the draw was completed incorrectly then the draw will be repeated.

The Executive Director, Lee Heighton, requested the Rules Committee consider modifying Section 6.1(k) regarding draws for limited classes to clarify that when an error is made in a draw, then the entire draw for the event must be repeated. The Committee recommends the following additions to the current rule:

- (iv) If any limited class in an event requires a draw, then all limited classes in that event must be drawn.
- (v) If the Executive Director determines that the draw was completed incorrectly, then the draw for the entire event will be repeated.

The Committee was split over the adoption of this language, primarily as to the language construction of the paragraph, not over the right of the Executive Director to order a redraw of the event.

9. Modifications for handicapped dogs – Jennifer Staton

The Committee received a letter from Approved Judge Jennifer Staton concerning what modifications should be permitted, if any, for teams running handicapped dogs. Her specific question was regarding a team running a deaf dog and their request to have the boxloader make a hand gesture of encouragement to the dog, much like verbal encouragement is permitted for a dog who can hear. She was concerned about the variation in judges' rulings on

this issue and proposed that the Committee adopt a process to allow handlers to apply for a specific accommodation and have the Board rule on an individual basis for each dog. Her suggestion was that the handler be given a written letter outlining the approved accommodation to show judges at the tournament.

In considering this request, the Rules Committee was concerned that doing an individual review of each dog would be incredibly time consuming, both for competitors and for the Board. In reality it seemed that the most obvious case where accommodation was requested was with deaf dogs. After discussion, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Board permit boxloaders to use a subtle hand signal for deaf dogs and that the rule be modified to specifically indicate this accommodation.

The proposed rule modifications are as follows:

Chapter 2 – Judges

(f) A judge is allowed to make a reasonable accommodations and/or exceptions to the Rules of Racing for the needs of a handicapped dog and/or handler so long as these accommodations do not interfere with other competitors. For deaf dogs, boxloaders should be permitted to use a subtle hand signal as long as it does not interfere with other competitors. (page 20 of the current rulebook)

and

Section 8.3 – The Heat

(e) Conduct of the box loader. Except during the warm up, to retrieve a loose ball, 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, boxloaders 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.

10. Code of Ethics regarding repeatedly and obviously holding back dogs – Judges list

There was an extensive discussion on the Judges email list about the current rule for teams who are obviously and repeatedly holding back their dogs in tournaments. Several judges requested that the Rules Committee consider eliminating this rule. There were a number of lengthy discussions and a variety of arguments from many sides. The current rule states:

Section 5.1 – Code of Ethics

(g) Regional Directors should warn teams and file unsportsmanlike conduct charges if teams are obviously and repeatedly holding back their dogs in tournaments.

The Committee discussed this rule and ultimately decided it should go to the full Board for discussion. Basically the Committee felt that the Board had a number of options:

- (1) Keep the rule as it currently exists.
- (2) Eliminate the rule entirely.
- (3) Modify the rule in some way. One suggested was to add language at the end of the rule, "to gain an unfair advantage."
- (4) Allow teams to earn NAFA dog points even when a team breaks out.

The Committee also asked for a summary of some of the arguments made on the Judges list so that Board members could try to understand more fully all points of view regarding the issue.

11. Modifications to forms regarding NAFA address and email address

The Rules Committee recommends changes to some of the existing forms to correspond with the change to NAFA's mailing address and retiring of the flyball@flyball.org email address.

The following issues were received after the Rules Committee met via teleconference. These issues will be addressed at the Board meeting.

12. Equipment between the racing lanes – Julie Norman Jenkins

As you know, we raced in Texas this weekend. I just can't abide the way they set up a line of slat buckets in between the lanes! I don't understand why judges are allowing it and why there isn't a rule about it. It is definitely a safety hazard AND a training aid

During one of our warmups, a dog on the opposing team who was doing boxwork, slipped and broadsided a bucket. The bucket tipped and spilled into our lane right in the path of our green dog who was doing a full run warmup. It seriously spooked her, she wouldn't go back to the box in that race. I'm sure we can get her over it, but it doesn't change the risk those buckets pose.

I propose a rule change to specify the area between the lanes shall be free of any equipment. Period.

Ok, vent complete:) thanks!

Julie

13. Limitations on Open Class – Andy McBride

To prevent abuse of the open class I would suggest a requirement that in every heat 2 of the dogs must be from the club who entered the team.

As an example there is nothing in the rules stopping me from creating phantom clubs and flooding a limited tournament then using what I got in for the real club.

14. Updating HOF, MVP, and other awards to reflect submissions may be made by mail, fax, or electronically
15. Modification of rules in Section 8.4 Aggressive Dogs (page 13 of current rulebook) to reference procedures for excusal in Section 5.7 Aggressive Dogs (page 26 of current rulebook)

Currently Section 8.4 refers to reporting the excusal to the Executive Director, *“The Head Judge must report any dog excused from competition to the Executive Director on NAFA® Form C.12.”* The section needs to be updated to reflect new procedures adopted for excusal in Section 5.7, including the Review Panel.