

**Minutes – Subject to final approval at March 2019 Meeting.
Australian Flyball Association Inc. – Minutes of Meeting
held on 11th Feb 2019.**

Present: Richard Mellon, Brian Lindsay, Jennifer Crane, Frank Lux, Jenny Millar, Sam Brown, Konrad Moskal, David Strong, Steve Pitt, Pat Byrne, Shireen Pitt, Robert MacDonald, Michael Ashton and Lou Stephen.

Apologies: Martin Watt, Justin Allen

Meeting Opened at 7.30 pm via Go to Meetings Conference.

ITEM 1. Starred Items.

The following Items were adopted without discussion:

- 1) Minutes of the January Meeting.
- 2) Renewals of Memberships
- 3) Treasurers Report. End January Bank Balance \$8197.11 plus invested funds of \$82568.21.
- 4) Correspondence Out

ITEM 2. Matters Arising

Nil

ITEM 3. Correspondences In. (Taken under New Business)

- i) Replies from Eric and Anne re Bass Coast Show.
- ii) Email from Berwick re 2020 Nationals (bids don't close till end March).
- iii) Resignation of Josh as Vic Rep.
- iv) Email re National Records and Heat Policy/round robin.

ITEM 4 Sanctioned Events Approved.

Comp – Hastings – 13/04/19 – Hastings Flyball Comp 2019- Hastings grounds. (Open with handicap option, Champions Trophy, Training in ring).

Comp – CDC – 25/05/19 – MAYhem – Narrabuindah Lane Symonston. (Open with handicap option).

Comp - Sydneysiders – 18/08/19 – Sydneysiders Southerly Change – Waratah Sports Field Rawson Ave Sutherland.

Comp – Awesome Pawsome – 2019 Australian National Championships – 27/09/19 to 29/09/19 – RSPCA Wacol – 139 Wacol Station Rd Wacol.

Demo – Crookwell Spud Dogs – 9/02/19 – Crookwell Show East St Crookwell (Approved by email).

Demo – Tassi Flying Paws – 17/02/19 – Kempton Festival – Main Rd Kempton

Demo – Awesome Pawsome – 19/05/19 – MPW Southbank Qld – Southbank.

Note – The Sanctioned events – Lets raise the roof and Let's raise the roof higher, both single day comps , are to be amended to a two-day event – 20th July and 21st July – this requires sanction approval.

ITEM 5 – Admin Matters.

i) New Members:

Emma Peters
Matilda Lodder
Fiona Ryan
Carole Hately
Megan O'Brien
Robyn Williams

i) Stewards Exam Passes – Shaun O'Shea CRN 3086,
Emily Lyons CRN 2167.

ii) Report on possible merchandise options –

iii) Public Liability Insurance issues. Brian introduced a Discussion Paper that outlined the situation re AFA Insurances for both Public Liability and Member Personal Accident Insurance. In case of Public Liability, the AFA was no longer able to obtain cover for “member to member” liability. Given this situation advice had been taken from both the AFA Insurance Broker and a solicitor re the new risk exposure if a member was seriously injured and sued the AFA or an affiliated club. It was noted that the AFA had already

notified all members that they must now understand that they participated in flyball at their own risk. All Clubs had also been advised that they should consider incorporating (if not already incorporated) in order to reduce risk exposure to officials. Whilst it was accepted that risk minimization strategies were now more important the advice from both the broker and the solicitor was that members should be asked to sign a disclaimer as a means of the AFA and member clubs being able to clearly identify that members understood that they were participating at their own risk. A suitable Disclaimer Statement had been developed for posting on the AFA Web site and for insertion into membership renewal documents. A Disclaimer had also been developed for use at Club level and it was advised that this should now be sent to all Clubs with the request that they get members to sign. In the event that any member declined to sign the advice was that this decline be recorded indicating that the member had been informed of the fact that they were participating at own risk. It was recognized that individual clubs are separate entities and it was there decision as to whether they would accept membership from members who declined to sign waivers. A suitable waiver had also been developed for members under the age of 18 – as this document needed to be signed by parents/guardians.

After discussion the following actions were AGREED:

1. The existing wording on the AFA web site re “participation at own risk” to be replaced with the wording now approved by legal representatives and this wording be included in all membership documents for new members and membership renewals.
2. That all Clubs be sent copies of the suggested Club level disclaimers with the strong recommendation that all members of the club be asked to sign the document and that all new members be asked to sign. The signed documents to be retained by the Club as evidence of acceptance to personal risk.

3. That Clubs be informed that if a member declined to sign the waiver it then becomes a decision of the Club whether to accept their membership or decline membership. In the event of the former they should record and witness the fact that the member was advised that they were participating in the sport of flyball at their own risk but refused the request to sign the waiver. This provides an acknowledgement that the member was aware of the risk exposure. These documents should also be retained with signed waivers.
4. That Clubs be asked to advise the AFA that they have ensured that waivers have been completed by all members so that the AFA can establish and publish a listing of Clubs that have completed the suggested protocol.
5. That the AFA Committee now considers developing a risk minimization strategy for flyball activities. A Sub Committee of David Strong (Chair), Konrad Moskal, Sam Brown and Frank Lux agreed to develop a draft Safety Policy framework and to consider high priority Safety Guidelines and possible check lists for use by Clubs.

iv) **Merchandise Options** – Lou reported that she had explored options and recommended that the AFA consider the option of having a small selection of items available to members for purchase via a third-party web site. This required us to design the items and contract with the site to sell on our behalf at an agreed price with AFA receiving a small share of sales income. This approach avoided requirement for us to carry stock or arrange delivery. Agree that first item should be polo – Lou to develop design around the “flyball - drag racing for dogs” theme.

Item 6 General Business.

a) Report from Dog Incident Sub Committee. Nil to report

- b) **Report from Rules Sub Committee.** The Rules Sub Committee reported on two areas of Rules review –
- i) Introduction of mix of handicap and non-handicap racing in regular format racing and
 - ii) Review of Rules for determining Declared Seed Times.
- The Sub Committee

With regard to the mix of handicap and non-handicap regular racing the Rules Sub-Committee agreed that the problem of significantly different seed times between some teams entering a Race Meeting either left a team in a division of its own or caused a division to have a time difference across it that could be deemed unfair.

While the problem had been discussed by the AFA committee a few years ago, a suitable resolution had not been identified. With the introduction of Open Class, Handicap racing has become more prevalent and could provide a suitable solution to the issue.

The Sub-Committee agreed that Handicap racing should be allowed to be run in Regular Class racing divisions where excessive gaps occurred between seed time. The Sub-Committee considered if a guide should be set in terms of a minimum time difference before a division was declared as Handicap racing. However, it was decided that with suitable wording the decision to run a division as Handicap should be sanctioned by the Regional Rep (or other) when the Division Splits were agreed.

RECOMMENDATION: -

The Rules Sub-Committee recommends that Handicap racing should be available to divisions racing in Regular Class at Race Meetings where an excessive gap occurs between seedtimes of competing teams.

The Sub-Committee further recommends that as an On-Trial Rule, Appendix A Part 2 of the Rules should be amended into a 'Part 2a' to cover a handicap Race Meetings; A new 'Part 2b' to cover the mixed handicap / non-handicap situation, and a 'Part 2c' which describes the mechanics of running the handicap which is common to both previous parts and is largely untouched. The new On Trial Rule to apply for Competitions closing on or after 1st March 2019. CARRIED.

- iii) Review of Rules for determining Declared Seed Times.

The subcommittee noted the concern that some teams were obtaining an advantage by declaring a seed time up to one second slower than their web time when they were capable of actually running to the web time. This had been demonstrated by actual times recorded by these teams. The Sub Committee considered a number of options aimed at ensuring a fairer declared time process. The preferred option was to increase the minimum change of seed time in Rule 1.4 (b) from 1 second to 1.5 seconds. On the negative side, a team that genuinely has a new and slightly slower line-up than the Web Time was set on is restricted in what they can declare. Their choices are either to declare at 1.5 seconds slower than their web time and run the risk of breaking out, or run at their Web Time and possibly get seeded in a division that is too high. On the positive side, it would force a team that can run at their Web Time to declare 1.5 seconds slower than it. This would expose them to serious risk of multiple breakouts early in the day while the team is fresh, and it would be harder for them to manage the risk by sandbagging, particularly if their opponent is close to their speed.

On balance, the subcommittee felt that the advantage of the change was worth a trial. If the number of disadvantaged teams proved to be more than expected, the trial could be ended before it was put to the members for approval. The Committee considered this recommendation but noted that Teams could avoid the change simply by nominating a new team name and submitting whatever declared time they wished. The Committee decided against the proposed Rule change on the basis that it could be easily negated by the team name change process. The Committee accepted that continued monitoring of declared times should occur.

c) **Report on Ulna Measuring System.** The Committee noted that three of the measures had all suffered the same break fault with the slider. A video had been circulated showing how to better release the measure and avoid forcing its release. The Committee consulted with the design engineer and also had advice submitted by the manufacturer. After discussion the decision was taken to order 12 replacement parts – 6 with the original design and 6 with an increased thickness of approx. 3MM. Replacements to be sent to all States when received.

- d) **Report from Sub Committee on Flyball Development.**
The Sub Committee was still waiting until the programming of results had been completed and the Premiership points table was adjusted. After that was done the Sub Committee planned to meet again.
- e) **2019 Nationals** – due to time constraints Jenni advised that she circulate discussion points by email for Committee consideration.

ITEM 7 – New Business.

- i) Replies from Eric and Anne re Bass Coast Show. The Committee noted the replies that indicated the Competition Organiser had made the decision to allow two teams to take part in the filming of races during the lunch break. As part of that process a dog not registered with the AFA took part in the activity as well as dogs entered for the competition. The Committee expressed serious concern that the decision to allow this lunch time activity breached a number of AFA Rules, including 1.1(d), 1.5 and 8(b). The Committee did not accept the explanation that this was a last-minute situation given that the filming had to have been pre planned and organized and that prior to giving approval a request for Sanction should have been submitted. The Committee considered the possible forfeiture of points for dogs that took part in what effectively was training in the ring but decided not to penalise competitors on this occasion. The Secretary was asked to write to the Competition Organiser expressing the Committee concern and to also include reference to the matter in an advice to all Club Coordinators in an effort to prevent any repeat.
- ii) Email from Berwick re 2020 Nationals (bids don't close till end March). Bid accepted and deferred until bids close at end March.
- iii) Resignation of Josh as Vic Rep. - The Committee noted that Josh had now agreed to continue as Victorian Rep till the AGM and thanked him for that decision.

- iv) Email re National Records and Heat Policy/round robin.
The Committee discussed the suggestion to have separate Australian Records for indoor and grass surface competitions. Concern was expressed that this may devalue the Australian record. The view was also supported that there was little difference in times run by the top teams indoors or on grass. After discussion the Committee agreed that separate records were not justified. The Committee noted the suggestion that Competitions be required to ensure that a single round robin was completed in all Divisions before the lunch break so that if the event was cancelled at lunchtime, due to heat, points would still be awarded. It was pointed out that in the larger competitions at times round robins in the bigger Divisions were not achieved till towards the end of the competition . It was agreed to include a reference in the Competition Guidelines to encourage organisers to achieve completed Round Robins at the earliest possible time taking into account other safety requirements such as spacing between teams' races. It was also noted that Competition Organisers should NOT be consulting teams re whether to stop racing due to heat as they should be using the heat stress meter to determine if it was safe to continue.

Item 8 Other Business.

Jenni asked for confirmation that the new Height measure system now applied to all future competitions – confirmed. She asked what should happen to the old wickets. Advice was they should be stored in case there was a challenge to a dog with a height card measured under the old system. The wickets do not however need to be taken to race meetings.

Date of Next Meeting- **Monday 4th March 2019**. There being no other business the Meeting was closed at 9.55 p.m.

Signed as a true record.

President.