**AFA Notification to Members No. 41.**

This Notification deals with a new Policy on Training in the ring, several minor Rule changes, clarification regarding meaning of “Suspension” of a dog, limits to participation by Honorary members, a notice re new anti smoking legislation at outdoor sporting events and finally the process to be followed when a member wishes to query dog title points posted to web.

**1). New Training in the Ring Policy** (on trial effective from 24th May 2013)

**AFA Policy for Training in the Ring (On Trial)**

The AFA Committee has resolved to introduce a Policy to cover the practice of permitting Training in the Ring during the lunch break at Competitions.

Background:

Extract from AFA Notification No. 28, June 2011:

The practice of permitting the flyball ring to be used by non-competing dogs during a competition lunch break is developing unevenly in different States.

The Committee agrees that the practice is a good way to introduce beginner dogs to competition environment but it needs to be available to all dogs in training and be properly controlled.

The Committee advises Clubs and competition organisers who wish to offer this at their competition that they must:

* Obtain approval as part of the Competition sanction special conditions and then advertise it in the details for their competition on the Web,
* Ensure there is adequate supervision to control the ring and ensure fair access,
* Ensure there is a safe number of dogs in the ring at any time,
* Ensure that only dogs NOT entered in the competition are permitted in the ring at this time,
* Ensure that all handlers are AFA members,
* Ensure that all dogs are registered with the AFA.

Policy:

In addition to the points above, the following shall apply:

* The Competition Organiser is responsible for arranging supervision of Training in the Ring. An officiating Judge can NOT be made responsible as Judges need the lunch break to relax and refresh.
* There is no minimum age for dogs to take advantage of lunchtime training. However, dogs under 12 months of age may not be run over jumps or train on the box. Members wishing to take advantage of the training, where it is offered, shall be given the opportunity to register for it on the day.
* The Competition Organiser shall arrange and manage a system for fair and equitable access to the ring.
* A member who reserves the ring shall be responsible for management of and safety in the ring during the entire period of their reservation. They must be present and may agree to share the ring with others at their discretion.
* Jump height shall be at the discretion of the handler, and in any case be not more than an appropriate maximum for the dog’s height. If the dog has not yet been measured, the maximum height shall be conservative, i.e. err on the low side.
* Training remains at the discretion of the Competition Organiser at all times
* Competition officials may withdraw or cancel the training at any time for a valid reason, such as need to resume racing or to cover racing time lost due to interruptions such as weather.
* Members using the ring shall supply their own box and balls.

On the following is an example of a registration or reservation form:

Lunchtime Training Reservation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Competition:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

Rules for lunchtime training:

* A reservation can be made for the entire ring not just one lane
* Each reservation is for 5 minutes
* Only AFA Members may reserve the ring for the use of AFA Members.
* The member reserving the ring must be present and is responsible for management of and safety in the ring
* Dogs must be registered with the AFA and not be entered in this competition
* Recommencement of racing will take precedence over training

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time slot** | **Member reserving** | **Dog names & CRNs** |
| 1 |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |
| 6 |  |  |
| 7 |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |

**2)**. **Minor Rule Changes – effective immediately and to be incorporated in Rule Book at next reprint.**

1. Section 4.3 (i) of Rules be DELETED on the grounds that it is unnecessary (and potentially contradictory) repetition of the Definition for a Racing Lane and the diagram close by.
2. The term “Backstop” used in Section 4.2 and in the diagram Section 4.2 be re-written for clarity as follows:
3. Section 4.2 of Rules be amended to read:

**Section 4.2 – Barriers/Backboards**

The host club shall provide a barrier/backboard arrangement at the box end of the run, placed so as to prevent missed balls from rolling too far but placed so as not to prevent proper observation by the Judge or to obscure the spectators view.

The barrier/backboard shall (a) be a minimum 609.6mm (24 inches) high, (b) extend between the boxes to not more than 2 feet in front of the box placement line, and (c) run reasonably parallel to the box line at a **minimum** of 5 feet behind the box line at the position of the Boxloader, to minimise interference and allow space for the Boxloader (see diagram for preferred arrangement). Barriers shall not comprise jumping equipment.

**3). Suspension of a Dog.**

The AFA protocol dealing with dog incidents includes the provision for “suspension” of a dog for aggression. The AFA Committee has reaffirmed that in line with past practice a dog that is suspended cannot take part in any AFA Sanctioned activities until it has been reassessed - including Competitions, Demonstrations, Training Days, Lunchtime Training in the Ring and the like. The Protocol statement on the AFA web site will be updated to reflect the wording clarification.

**4). Honorary Members.**

The Committee has clarified that Honorary cannot run a dog and cannot function as a Team Captain at a competition. Honorary members can however undertake duties of stewards, boxloaders, ballshaggers, timekeepers, and other support roles outside of the ring.

**5). New anti smoking legislation impacting on outdoor sporting events.**

Member’s attention is drawn to the emergence of new anti smoking legislation in various States that applies to smoking at organized outdoor sporting events – which includes flyball competitions and demonstrations.

Whilst the Legislation is at State level and varies between States it has a common theme of banning or restricting smoking. The new Legislation in NSW for example involves a total ban of smoking at any organized outdoor sporting event in NSW, including in all spectator areas. A fine of up to $550 per individual can apply to anyone found smoking at organized outdoor sporting events. Appointed officials of the NSW Department of Health and authorised Council Rangers will enforce this new NSW Legislation.

The AFA draws members attention to the various State Legislations – details of the situation in your State can be found at the following Web Link - <http://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au>

Competition organisers are encouraged to announce the situation regarding the relevant Legislation in their State at the start of any AFA sanctioned event. Organisers do not have a responsibility to enforce the anti smoking Legislation nor are they required to display signage - but they should attempt to make members and public spectators aware of Legislative requirements.



**6). Process to be followed to query posted dog title points.**

The AFA Committee has again considered the issue of members requesting amendments to dog title points after results of competitions had been posted on the web. Post event checking of title points is a time consuming process for a member of the Committee and in most cases reported errors are found to be as a result of an incorrect dog CRN shown on the original time sheet. These errors should be picked up and corrected by Team Captains when checking the Time Sheets at the competition. The AFA has made it clear on a number of occasions that Team Captains are responsible for checking dog CRNs shown on the Competition timesheets and if incorrect bringing that to the attention of the competition organisers for correction.

The AFA has also advised members that where a mistake had been made with CRNs on Time Sheets, and this had not been picked up by Team Captain, then NO amendment to posted points will be made – again it is the responsibility of Team Captains to check and confirm CRNs at time of signing off on Time Sheets at competitions. Only where an error is the result of a mistake by the Competition Secretary or the AFA will member requests for amendment of points be considered.

Given that there seems to be ongoing problems re Title points as a result of incorrect CRN’s on Time Sheets the Committee has determined that in future members MUST first consult the relevant Competition Secretary to confirm if the error was evident on the checked timesheet – if this is the case then the AFA will **NOT** amend the posted points and no request for amendment should be submitted to the AFA. If the CRN is confirmed by the Competition Secretary as being correct on the Time Sheet, and thus the error is as a result of a processing mistake, the Competition Secretary should so inform the member who will submit this information to the AFA as part of a request for points review. In future this prior referral to Competition Secretary process will be a pre requisite to AFA reviewing any points query. Competition Secretaries should ensure that they retain a copy of the competition paperwork for a minimum 12 month period to allow for this checking process.

All members are now advised of this process and again reminded of the IMPORTANCE of team captains checking CRNs on Timesheet.