**AFA Notification No.84 – July 2021**

The AFA Committee at its July 2021 Meeting discussed a number of matters that the Committee wish to draw to all members attention.

**Clarification – Nationals Seed time cut-off.**

The Secretary requested that the Committee clarify the cut of date for updating the web seed times for the Nationals, given that there were two competitions scheduled to be held on the close of entry date of 1st August and results for these competitions may or may not be available on 1st August. It was pointed out that after the recent cancelled competition the August competition in Victoria was seen as essential to Victorian teams getting web seed times. After discussion it was agreed to request Belconnen to amend the close of entries date for Nationals to 2nd August (this date change was confirmed with Organiser during meeting). Clubs conducting competitions on 1st August are requested to promptly submit results to the web team for update of web seed times

**Clarification - Conduct of Novelty events.**

The Rules Sub Committee recommended that sanctioned novelty events have the same status as training in the ring and that the novelty events be declared at the time of seeking sanction and that those participating in the novelty events must be AFA members. The issue of Novelty events at the 2021 Nationals was discussed by the Sub Committee – the Sub Committee recommended that the Nationals 3-day event be split into two sanctioned events – the Nationals 2 days (Sat & Sun) and the Pairs/Singles/Open/Novelty 1 day (Mon). This will allow dogs competing in Regular teams at the Nationals to participate in the Novelty events on the Monday without breaking rules such as maximum number of races, training in ring etc.

The Committee noted that the Nationals Monday novelty program had been sanctioned as a separate demonstration event. It was agreed that this allowed dogs entered in Regular teams to also take part in the novelty events. Dogs entered in Open teams on the Monday however could not also take part in Novelty events. This clarification to be made available to Nationals Race Meeting organizer and the general membership.

**Declared Seed times, sandbagging and Break-out rules.**

The Committee noted that there seemed to be a growing incidence of teams using declared seed times that were marginally more than 1 second above a listed web time for the team and, on occasions, then breaking out at the competition. The checks and balances process in these circumstances are the rules re sandbagging and break-out. To ensure that these rules are applied it is essential that Judges take appropriate action where any suggestion of sandbagging was evident. The Committee agreed that members should be reminded that sand bagging is cheating. It was suggested that all members be reminded that declared seed times should be the assessed minimum time the team can run. Members also need to be aware that when a team has broken-out at a competition for first time it is not appropriate to start to use techniques such as increasing pass gaps, delaying release of a start dog, changing start dog to a dog who does not normally start and thereby increasing start gaps. These are all examples of sandbagging. Members are also informed that the Committee will be requesting that Judges carefully observe all teams for sandbagging, especially teams that have broken out at a competition.