

Rule Notification FY2526-8 Sandbagging

At its meeting on 4 May 2026 the AFA committee resolved to make rule changes to address a number of matters relating to sandbagging. Full details are set out below. The rule changes will be effective from 1 July 2026 and will be included in the next published version of the rules.

Background

A number of concerns had been raised with the rules subcommittee regarding actions taken by teams to avoid breaking out a second time and the process to deal with instances of sandbagging.

In particular it was noted that some teams are responding to a breakout in a heat by changing dogs for the next heat in the same race. The subcommittee considered this to be an action taken to avoid a breakout and, by definition, sandbagging. The subcommittee agreed that this practice should be expressly prohibited except where the team change has already been noted on the team timesheet or the judge considers there is a valid reason for the change, for example, an injury to a dog, and not for the purpose of avoiding another breakout.

The subcommittee acknowledged that the current process for dealing with sandbagging is unnecessarily complex and should be simplified by:

- requiring only one other official to observe future heats
- permitting the use of non-officiating judges and registered AFA representatives as observers
- clarifying that any judge and any requested observer can make a determination on sandbagging in later heats.

The specific rule changes can be viewed here [Sandbagging.pdf](#)