

AUSTRALIAN YARD DOG ASSOCIATION Inc

Competition Rules – Updated 31/10/2019

Part I: Definitions

(a): Yard dog competition

A competition, in which a dog and its handler must negotiate sheep through a predetermined course, confined within permanent or temporary sheep yards, within a specified time limit.

- 1) In the Australian Yard Dog Association Championship trial the trial course is to be set to allow all sheep to stand comfortably with the dog in the race.
- 2) A lesser number of sheep may be worked in the open qualifying trial & supporting classes.

(b) “The Organizing Committee” – the persons responsible for conducting the competition

(c) “The Handler” - The person who

- 1) Nominates to work a dog in a particular competition
- 2) Is working a dog in competition.
- 3) Has worked a dog in competition.

(d) “Special Prize” - A prize or trophy offered for the competition of dogs and /or handlers for which no entry fee has been charged.

Part II: Competition Levels

Australian Yard Dog Championship

(a) Eligibility

- 1) The current Australian Yard Dog Champion
- 2) The current State Champions and dogs placed second in the State Championship trials.
- 3) The State may nominate 2 dogs of its choice if any of the following apply:
 - a) If an interstate dog wins a State Championship.
 - b) If the State Champion and runner up are unable to attend
 - c) If a State Championship has not been held since the previous Australian Championship
- 4) If an interstate dog wins a state championship it is eligible to compete in the AYDA Inc Championship regardless of its State of origin.
- 5) The field of the Championship to be 25 & shall be comprised of the current Australian Yard Dog Association Champion, eligible State representatives & the top placings from an open qualifying trial conducted by the organising committee. All those dogs in 25th position with the same score will be included.
- 6) All Open dogs should have an equal opportunity to enter the qualifying trial held prior to the Australian Championship.
- 7) There will be no balloting in the open qualifying round of the Australian Yard Dog Association Championship.
- 8) If balloting is required at the trial event, it shall be used in the supporting events. Eg Encourage, maiden, novice or improver classes.
- 9) All dogs classified as open dogs in their home State must have an equal opportunity to work in the Open qualifying trial prior to the Australian Championship.

(b) Rules

- 1) The open qualifying trial at the AYDA Championship will be run under Australian Yard Dog Association rules.
- 2) All supporting classes being held at the Australian Yard Dog Championship will be run under Australian Yard Dog Association rules.
- 3) If a host state runs novice and improver classes, dogs classed as such in their home state shall be allowed to win twice in each relevant class.
- 4) Dogs classified as improver dogs in their home states can enter the open qualifying trial.
- 5) If the host state runs a Junior competition, handlers must not be younger than 8 years nor older than 16 years.

Part III: Finals

- 1) The finalists shall be the highest scoring dogs in the first round.
- 2) The number of finalists is determined by the number of placings offered, with a minimum of 6 placings
- 3) One more dog is worked than places offered.
- 4) If a number of dogs are tied on the lowest score eligible for the final, all go into the final.
- 5) The highest aggregate score will be the winner.
- 6) In the event of a tie for first place, after aggregation of scores, a run-off will be conducted. There must be an outright winner.
- 7) In the event of a tie for the minor placings, prize money is pooled and divided e.g. if 3rd placing is a tie, money from 3rd and 4th placings is pooled and divided. If there is a trophy, a "toss" can be conducted between the place getters.
- 8) Where possible, the final shall be conducted in the same order as the dogs were drawn to work in the first run. However, if a handler has more than one dog in the final, his run may be separated by others dogs.
- 9) No prize will be awarded to a dog which, after being selected to compete in a final, fails to participate in the final.

Part IV: Draw

- 1) A draw must be conducted to determine the order of working, prior to the start of the competition.
- 2) Handlers with multiple dog entries to be spread evenly throughout the draw & handlers with a single dog entry to be drawn near the middle of the draw.
- 3) All Handlers must be issued with either a copy of the draw or a copy must be displayed in a prominent position. A public address system should be employed wherever possible to keep both handlers and spectators informed.
- 4) A handler cannot be substituted after the draw has been finalised for the open qualifying trial or the Australian Yard Dog Championship

Part V: Course

(a) Design

- 1) All competitions shall be run over such a course as the organising committee determines.
- 2) Judges are to restrict their involvement with course design to safety and welfare issues.
- 3) When designing and erecting the competition course: a) the drenching race width is to be a minimum of 500mm [20 inches] and a maximum of 800mm [31 inches]; and b) a ramp width is to be a minimum 500mm.

(b) Competition Courses should include at least four of the following –

- 1) Gather of sheep
- 2) Drafting race
- 3) Drenching /classing race
- 4) Trailer/truck / elevated platform

- 5) Ramp
- 6) Put sheep away
- 7) Any obstacle likely to be found in a farm sheep yard.

(c) When erecting the yards, the Organising Committee must ensure that there are no sharp edges, protrusions or objects that may be hazardous or cause injury to the sheep, the dogs, or handlers.

(d) Where the yards are constructed from panels or portable yards, the Organising Committee must ensure that they are securely fixed to prevent any movement when pressure is applied to the sheep.

(e) In competition courses that incorporate a drenching race or other confined area into which all sheep must be forced, the number of sheep to be worked shall be that number that allows each sheep to stand comfortably. This number shall be determined by the Organising Committee in consultation with the judge.

(f) All sheep must be inspected prior to being worked for any physical defects or injuries. Any injured or unhealthy sheep must not be worked.

(g) Course inspection

1) Two Australian Yard Dog Association Advisory committee members and the trial conveners are to inspect the trial course at least one day prior to the open qualifying & championship trials, for the purpose of eliminating any design faults and to ensure animal welfare standards are met.

2) Prior to the formal inspection other Australian Yard Dog Association committee members may check the course and pass on any concerns to the two Australian Yard Dog Association Advisory Committee members.

(h) Prior to the commencement of the competition a representative of the Organising Committee must walk the course with the handlers and explain how the competition is to be worked.

(i) The Judge must be involved in the explanation of the course and must address the handlers prior to the commencement of the competition.

Part VI: Time limit

(a)

1) A minimum time of twelve minutes must be set to complete the course in the open qualifying & championship trials.

2) Fewer than twelve minutes may be set to complete the course in the supporting classes.

3) The course must be constructed to allow the majority of competitors to reasonably complete the course in the set time.

(b) The time limit will be set by the organising committee.

(c) A bell or similar device, when sounded, shall signify the start of each run and the expiry of the limit.

Part VII: Bitches in Oestrus

1) All bitches entered in all classes of the competition must be available for inspection before, during or after the competition.

2) Any handler who works a bitch in oestrus shall be disqualified from any further participation at that event.

Part VIII: Canes

Canes are not permitted to be used in a trial.

Part IX: Muzzles

- 1) A dog may be permitted to work in a muzzle but will incur a 5 point penalty.
- 2) No penalty will apply in encourage, maiden or novice classes.

Part X: Handler's Assistant

- 1) Prior to competing, an elderly or disabled handler may apply to the judge to have an able bodied person assist them with any physically demanding task likely to be encountered in the competition.
- 2) The assistant must be selected by the judge.
- 3) The assistant will assist at the discretion of the handler.

Part XI: Working the competition

(a) Release of dog.

- 1) In encourage, maiden & novice classes, the judge will be in command of the competition from the time the handler enters the course. The handler may take up the casting position prior to releasing the dog off the leash.
- 2) In the improver, open qualifying & championship classes, the judge will be in command of the competition from the time the handler, enters the course with their dog released.

(b) All gates must be left as found by the handler, failure to do this will incur a penalty.

(c) The handler may assist their dog to shift the sheep but will incur a penalty.

(d) Draft

- 1) In the drafting phase of any trial the handler can use their body to avoid jamming the sheep's head.
- 2) Where the nominated sheep is past the gate of exit, but within reach of the handler, the handler may turn the sheep back with loss of points.

(e) Misdrafting will be penalised at the discretion of the judge.

(f) Dogs biting excessively and working the sheep in an unduly rough manner may be disqualified at the judge's discretion.

(g) If the working of the dog is of inferior merit the judge may terminate the run before the expiration of the time limit.

(h) In order to work a trial a full complement of sheep is required to be worked through all sections of the trial course (i.e the sheep jumps out through no fault of the dog, the clock shall be stopped and the sheep returned before the trial continues.)

(i) The finalists and/ or placings are not to be decided on time records.

(j) Crosses shall be penalised only when the judge considers it to be inferior work.

(k) Handling dogs

- 1) Once the handler has released their dog & commenced the trial any handler who handles their dog during the trial will be disqualified, except for safety & welfare situations.
- 2) Dislodged muzzles can be replaced without loss of points. The clock will not be stopped.
- 3) If a dog is injured the trial may be terminated at the judge's discretion.

Part XII: Welfare of Sheep and Dogs

- (a) If in the opinion of the judge any handler ill -treats or mishandles his dog or the sheep, he must be disqualified.
- (b) The handler will not be penalised for aiding a distressed sheep.
- (c) Any handler who fails to make an effort to stand up a sheep which goes down in a race or other confined space or fails to free a sheep caught in a fence, or shows disregard for the welfare of the sheep, must be penalized or may be disqualified.
- (d) Sufficient sheep should be obtained to provide fresh sheep for each dog. When sufficient sheep are not available to provide fresh sheep for each competitor then all competitors must have a mixture of used & fresh sheep. (25% to 30% of used sheep)
- (e) All dogs to be worked should be vaccinated and in general good health

Part XIII: Reruns

- (a) A re run will be granted if any dog, not belonging to the handler comes into the competition area and interferes with the run.
- (b) In the event of sheep escaping from the yards, the run may continue providing the judge considers the dog or handler were not the cause. If either was considered to be the cause, a penalty will be incurred or the dog will be rung off at the judge's discretion.
- (c) The judge may order a rerun for the dog competing at anytime during that dog's run.
- (d) If a rerun is granted, it must be conducted at the end of the draw.

Part XIV: Protests

- (a) Any protest must be lodged with the disputes committee of the AYDA Inc. immediately the misdemeanor occurs and their ruling must be accepted as final.
- (b) Any protest must be lodged in writing and accompanied by twenty Dollars (\$20) which will be refunded if the protest is upheld.
- (c) Disputes committee

- 1) The Disputes Committee will be selected by the Australian Yard Dog Association Committee and include the President of the host state, one member of the organising committee and one member from each of the other states attending the competition.
- 2) Not all members of the Disputes Committee will be required to be involved to consider the dispute. Representatives from the state[s] of the people involved in the dispute must excuse themselves.

Part XV: Scoring

- (a) Maximum of 100 points allocated and any dog that loses 100 points is eliminated.
- (b) Section points must be allocated to each section according to the degree of difficulty of the obstacles with-in the section.
- (c) The judge will deduct allocated points for each section of the course not completed & include them with those points previously deducted during the trial.
- (d) Each competitor's score is to be broadcast and publicly displayed as soon as it has been verified by the official timekeepers.

Part XVI: Judges

- (a) There must be two judges from two different states to judge the Australian Yard Dog Association Championship unless special dispensation has been granted from the Australian Yard Dog Association Committee.
- (b) The judges will be selected according to Championship status from lists selected and supplied by the states.
 - (a) Score from each judge will be combined and averaged. The score may not be used to challenge the judge's decision, which is final, except in the situation where a formal protest is lodged under Rules 14 (a) and 14 (b).
 - (b) A recommendation to all organising committees of the Australian Yard Dog Championship that all judges for the Championship may be different to the judges officiating in the Open and qualifying event

Part XVII: Interference

- (a) In event of a run being interfered with e.g. gates left open, dog or sheep strays onto course, sheep escaping, the judge may stop the clock and rectify the fault to a position where a competitor gains no advantage or becomes disadvantaged. The clock would then restart and the trail continue.