



AUSTRALIAN
YARD DOG
ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED

Competition Rules

This document details the Competition Rules for the facilitation of Australian Yard Dog Championship Events.

Approved 5th of April 2022

Approved Updates:

- 3rd of February 2023
- 8th of March 2023
- 9th of April 2024
- 6th of August 2025

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Definitions	4
3	Judges	5
4	Event Overview	5
5	Eligibility For All Events	5
6	Finals (Excluding AYDC / AUC open championship).....	6
7	Draw.....	6
8	Course Design	7
9	Working the Course	7
10	Time limit	8
11	Number of Sheep	9
12	Scoring	9
13	Interference	9
14	Reruns	9
15	Bitches	10
16	Canes	10
17	Muzzles	10
18	Handler's Assistant.....	10
19	Welfare of Sheep and Dogs.....	10
20	Course Inspection	11
21	Protests.....	11
22	Disputes Committee	11
23	Breaches of the AYDA Code of Conduct	11

24 Interstate Challenge..... 11

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A Utility or Yard Dog Competition is 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.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:
- a) **Appeal Tribunal** means a three-person panel appointed by the Council to hear appeals against sanctions imposed by the Judicial Committee.
 - b) **AUC** means Australian Utility Championship and includes support classes.
 - c) **AYDA** means Australian Yard Dog Association inc.
 - d) **AYDC** means Australian Yard Dog Championship and includes support class
 - e) **Course Inspectors** means two Council Members nominated by the Council at the AGM prior to the AYDC.
 - f) **Delegate** means a person appointed by a Member to represent that Member.
 - g) **Dispute Committee** means a panel of up to seven members, being the President of the Host State Association, one representative of the Organiser, and one representative from each of the other States attending the AYDC / A
 - h) **General Meeting** means either the Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.
 - i) **Handler** means a person who is a State Association Member, eligible to participate in a AYDC / AUC, and who
 - i. nominates to work a dog in a particular competition; or
 - ii. is working a dog in competition; or
 - iii. has worked a dog in competition.
 - j) **Judge** means a person who is a State Association Member, eligible to participate in a AYDC / AUC, and who is qualified to Judge a category in a AYDC / AUC under the AYDA Competition Rules.
 - k) **Judicial Committee** means a three-person panel appointed by the Council to hear charges of breaches against the AYDA Code of Conduct and/or AYDC/AUC Competition Rules
 - l) **Member** means the affiliated State Associations from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.
 - m) **Organiser** means the entity, person or persons appointed to conduct the AYDC and AUC.
 - n) **Special Prize** means a prize or prize or trophy offered for the competition of dogs and/or Handlers for which no entry fee has been charged.
 - o) **State Association Member** means an individual who is a current financial member of their respective affiliated State Association.

- p) **Subcommittees** means subcommittees to the Council, created from time to time to fulfill specialized tasks or functions.

3 Judges

- 3.1 Judges for all events must be a open register Judge in their State Association.
- 3.2 Two Judges must be appointed to judge the AYDC / AUC
- 3.3 The nominated Judges of the AYDC / AUC must be from two different States, unless special dispensation has been granted from the AYDA
- 3.4 The nominated Judges of the AYDC / AUC must judge the Open and Championship events.

4 Event Overview

- 4.1 The first round of the event (Open) is to be a qualifying round. It will be used to determine the top 30 to move into round 2.
- 4.2 The top 30 will comprise;
- the previous winner of the AYDC,
 - the state representatives, and
 - the highest place getters from the first round who are not already qualified.
- 4.3 In the event of dogs on equal scores in 30th place, they will all proceed to round 2. All dogs start round two of the championship on a score of zero.
- 4.4 The top 10 scores from round 2 will progress to round 3. In the event of dogs on equal scores in 10th place, they will all go through to round 3 to make up the field for the final championship round.
- 4.5 The event winner will be determined from the combined score from round 2 and 3.

5 Eligibility For All Events

- 5.1 All Handlers must be current State Association Members.
- 5.2 All Classes held at the AYDC / AUC will be run under AYDA rules.
- 5.3 That each dog's status/level in their home state is recognised at the AYDA Championships, this includes Maiden, Novice, Improver & Open.
- 5.4 An Improver dog is eligible to enter an Open class at an AYDC event at the discretion of the organizers in the absence of specific Improver class.
- 5.5 **Junior (Handler)**
- a) If the Host State runs a Junior competition, Handlers must not be younger than 8 years nor older than 16 years.
- 5.6 **AYDC Championship Event**
- 5.7 The following dogs are eligible to compete in a AYDC:
- b) The current Australian Yard Dog Champion;
 - c) The current State Champions;

- d) The Second placed dogs in the State Championship trials or under each states selection criteria
- e) Two dogs of a State's choice if any of the following apply:
 - i. If an interstate dog wins a State Championship.
 - ii. If the State Champion and runner up are unable to attend
 - iii. If a State Championship has not been held since the previous AYDC
 - iv. If an interstate dog wins a State Championship it is eligible to compete in the AYDC regardless of its State of origin.
- f) And the top placings from an open qualifying trial conducted by the Organiser to make up a field of 30 dogs.

5.8 All dogs in 30th position, with the same score, will be included.

5.9 **AUC Championship Event**

5.10 The eligibility for a AUC event is undetermined at the time of publication.

6 Finals (Excluding AYDC / AUC open championship)

6.1 The finalists shall be the highest scoring dogs in the first round.

6.2 The number of finalists is determined by the number of placings offered, with a minimum of 4 placings

6.3 One more dog is worked than places offered.

6.4 If a number of dogs are tied on the lowest score eligible for the final, all go into the final.

6.5 The highest aggregate score will be the winner.

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

6.8 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.

6.9 No prize will be awarded to a dog which, after being selected to compete in a final, fails to participate in the final.

7 Draw

7.1 A draw must be conducted to determine the order of working, prior to the start of the competition.

7.2 Handlers with multiple dogs entries to be spread evenly throughout the draw & Handlers with a single dog entry to be drawn in the last round of the draw.

7.3 All Handlers must be issued with either a copy of the draw or a copy must be displayed in a prominent position.

- 7.4 A Handler cannot be substituted after the draw has been finalised for the open qualifying trial or the AYDC / AUC.
- 7.5 Balloting may be used where required for supporting classes.
- 7.6 There will be no balloting in the open qualifying round of the AYDC / AUC.
- 7.7 A public address system should be employed wherever possible to keep both Handlers and spectators informed of the draw.

8 Course Design

- 8.1 All competitions shall be run over such a course as the Organiser determines.
- 8.2 Judges are to restrict their involvement with course design to safety and welfare issues.
- 8.3 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];
 - b) the drenching race is to be set to allow all sheep to stand comfortably with the dog in the race; and
 - c) a ramp width is to be a minimum 500mm.
- 8.4 Competition Courses should include at least four of the following –
 - a) Gather of sheep
 - b) Drafting race
 - c) Drenching /classing race
 - d) Trailer/truck / elevated platform
 - e) Ramp
 - f) Put sheep away
 - g) Any obstacle likely to be found in a farm sheep yard.
- 8.5 When erecting the yards, the Organiser 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.
- 8.6 Where the yards are constructed from panels or portable yards, the Organiser must ensure that they are securely fixed to prevent any movement when pressure is applied to the sheep.
- 8.7 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 Organiser in consultation with the Judge.
- 8.8 All sheep must be inspected prior to being worked for any physical defects or injuries. Any injured or unhealthy sheep must not be worked.

9 Working the Course

- 9.1 **Release of dog**

- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 All gates must be left as found by the Handler, failure to do this will incur a penalty.
- 9.5 The Handler may assist their dog to shift the sheep but will incur a penalty.
- 9.6 **Draft**
- 9.7 In the drafting phase of any trial the Handler can use their body to avoid jamming the sheep's head.
- 9.8 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.
- 9.9 Miss-drafting will be penalised at the discretion of the Judge.
- 9.10 Dogs biting excessively and working the sheep in an unduly rough manner may be disqualified at the Judge's discretion.
- 9.11 If the working of the dog is of inferior merit the Judge may terminate the run before the expiration of the time limit.
- 9.12 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.)
- 9.13 The finalists and/ or placings are not to be decided on time records.
- 9.14 Crosses shall be penalised only when the Judge considers it to be inferior work.
- 9.15 **Handling dogs**
- 9.16 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.
- 9.17 Dislodged muzzles can be replaced without loss of points. The clock will not be stopped.
- 9.18 If a dog is injured the trial may be terminated at the Judge's discretion.

10 Time limit

- 10.1 A minimum time of twelve minutes must be set to complete the course in the open qualifying & championship trials.
- 10.2 Fewer than twelve minutes may be set to complete the course in the supporting classes.
- 10.3 The course must be constructed to allow the majority of competitors to reasonably complete the course in the set time.
- 10.4 The time limit will be set by the Organiser.

- 10.5 A bell or similar device, when sounded, shall signify the start of each run and the expiry of the limit.

11 Number of Sheep

- 11.1 A minimum of 18 sheep must be used for each run in the AYDC.
- 11.2 A lesser number of sheep may be worked in the open qualifying trial and supporting classes. The Organiser may determine the number of sheep.

12 Scoring

- 12.1 Maximum of 100 points allocated and any dog that loses 100 points is eliminated.
- 12.2 Section points must be allocated to each section according to the degree of difficulty of the obstacles with-in the section.
- 12.3 The Judge will deduct allocated points for each section of the course not completed & include them with those points previously deducted during the trial.
- 12.4 For the AYDC / AUC, the score from each Judge will be combined and averaged.
- 12.5 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 Item 19. Protests of these Competition Rules
- 12.6 Each competitor's score is to be broadcast and publicly displayed as soon as it has been verified by the official timekeepers.

13 Interference

- 13.1 In the event of a run being interfered with e.g. gates left open, dog or sheep strays onto the course, 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 trial continue.

14 Reruns

- 14.1 A re run will be granted if any dog, not belonging to the Handler comes into the competition area and interferes with the run.
- 14.2 In the event of sheep escaping from the perimeter of the competition area, the run is terminated. At the Judge's discretion there may be a rerun granted.
- In the event of sheep escaping from one area to another within the competition area, at the Judge's discretion the run may continue giving the Handler the opportunity to rectify the situation while continuing to be judged and the time clock running. The correct number of sheep must complete each obstacle within the course.
- 14.3 The Judge may order a rerun for the dog competing at anytime during that dog's run.
- 14.4 If a rerun is granted, it must be conducted at the end of the draw.

15 Bitches

- 15.1 All bitches entered in all classes of the competition must be available for inspection before, during or after the competition.
- 15.2 Any Handler who works a bitch in oestrus shall be disqualified from any further participation at that event.
- 15.3 A bitch visibly in pup &/or in the last 3 weeks of their pregnancy cannot be trialled.
- 15.4 A Bitch visibly lactating cannot be trialled.

16 Canes

- 16.1 Canes are not permitted to be used in a trial.

17 Muzzles

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

18 Handler's Assistant

- 18.1 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.
- 18.2 The assistant must be selected by the Judge.
- 18.3 The assistant will assist at the discretion of the Handler.

19 Welfare of Sheep and Dogs

- 19.1 If in the opinion of the Judge, any Handler ill-treats or mishandles a dog or sheep, they must be disqualified.
- 19.2 The Handler will not be penalised for aiding a distressed sheep.
- 19.3 Any Handler must be penalized or may be disqualified if they fail to make an effort to:
 - a) stand up a sheep which goes down in a race or other confined space; or
 - b) to free a sheep caught in a fence; or
 - c) demonstrate awareness and actions towards the welfare of the sheep.
- 19.4 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).
- 19.5 All dogs to be worked must be free of injury and in good health or otherwise in consultation with the AYDA dispute committee (if an issue arises).
- 19.6 It is recommended that all dogs to be worked have a current vaccination status.

20 Course Inspection

- a) The AYDA will nominate two Course Inspectors at the AGM held prior to the AYDC, and advise the Organiser of the Nominations.
 - b) The two Course Inspectors and the Organiser 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.
 - c) Prior to the formal inspection other Council Members may check the course and pass on any concerns to the two Course Inspectors.
- 20.1 Prior to the commencement of the competition a representative of the Organiser or judges must walk the course with the Handlers and explain how the competition is to be worked.
- 20.2 The Judges must be involved in the explanation of the course and must address the Handlers prior to the commencement of the competition.

21 Protests

- 21.1 Any protest must be lodged with the Disputes Committee immediately following when the misdemeanor occurs and their ruling must be accepted as final.
- 21.2 Any protest must be lodged in writing and accompanied by twenty Dollars (\$20) which will be refunded if the protest is upheld.

22 Disputes Committee

- 22.1 The Disputes Committee will be selected by the AYDA and include the President of the Host State, one representative of the Organiser and one representative from each of the other States attending the competition.
- 22.2 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.

23 Breaches of the AYDA Code of Conduct

- 23.1 An alleged breach of the AYDA Code of Conduct will be considered by a Judicial Committee in accordance with the Procedures set out in the AYDA Code of Conduct.
- 23.2 An appeal of a decision by a Judicial Committee will be considered by an Appeal Tribunal in accordance with the Procedures set out in the AYDA Code of Conduct.

24 Interstate Challenge

- 24.1 The State Challenge be determined by adding the scores from the Top 30 round of each of the two state representatives. The winner shall be the state with the highest aggregate score.
- 24.2 In the event of a tied score, the state with the highest individual representative score shall become the winner. Should scores remain the same, the event shall be considered a tie.