

2008 DOG AGILITY MASTERS® TEAM DESCRIPTION

Description: This tournament series is open to all competitors with any dog, regardless of competition level (i.e., starters, advanced and masters). A team may be comprised of handlers with dogs from any two height classes (e.g., 12"/26", 16"/26", 22"/22", etc). Each individual on a three-dog/three-handler team competes in four classes of competition – standard agility, snooker, jumpers and gamblers choice. Top teams as set forth herein compete in a fifth and final class – the three-dog team relay to establish placements for prizes and awards.

Each of the five classes will be conducted pursuant to USDAA Rules & Regulations, except that select performance requirements are subject to judge's discretion. The following differences are specifically noted:

- The performance requirements of the standard agility and relay classes as specified in Chapters 3 & 6 shall exclude the table (other than as a finish or relay exchange point) and may omit one contact obstacle in the course design at judge's discretion. When the table is used as a finish or relay exchange point, no position or time requirement shall be imposed.
- The performance requirements of the snooker, gamblers and jumpers classes shall generally follow the requirements of Chapter 6 of USDAA Rules & Regulations, except that:
 1. The jumpers class shall include weave poles and may omit one or more spread hurdles.
 2. The gamblers class may include or omit rules normally applied for point assignments, time allocations and joker requirements.
 3. The snooker class course configuration and course components may be at the judge's discretion.

The foregoing variances are subject to the review and approval of the tournament course reviewer and other provisions set forth herein.

Scoring: Masters scoring rules shall apply for the determination of faults in all classes. Time-plus-faults scoring method shall be utilized in the standard, jumpers and team relay classes (i.e., no standard course time is employed), with the following special values assigned for infractions:

Each Refusal	2 fault points
Three refusals per dog or wrong course	1/3 of the Class Point Value.
Omission of a team member in relay (see special rules)	200 fault points

The resulting scores on a time-plus-faults basis shall be deducted from the standard point-basis for each class as set forth under "Special Rules" below in order to calculate points earned by each team in a given class. In no case shall the team score for a single class be less than zero. These points shall be added to points earned in the gamblers and snooker classes, after adjustment as set forth below, to determine each team's final score. Team ranking and placements shall be on the basis of cumulative scores through the five classes of competition.

Special Rules:

1. The standard point distribution and scoring methods for the tournament intend to provide a relative balance of points from all five classes. Standard, jumpers and relay classes have been assigned a standard point basis of 390, 300 and 450 points, respectively, which are reduced by the time-plus-fault penalties accrued by team members. The resulting point basis score is combined with points earned through performance in the Snooker and Gamblers classes, after adjustments as described below, to determine the final overall score.

Snooker class points are multiplied by a factor of 1.5, and Gamblers class points are multiplied by a factor whose value is established by the judge such that a team potentially may accumulate between 200 and 240 points in the Gamblers class. It has been pre-established, that when a 1-2-3-5 system is utilized with 40 seconds on course and a potential 15 points in the joker period, a 1.5 factor should be used. If a 1-3-5-7 system is utilized with 40 seconds on course and a potential of 20 points in the joker period, a 1.25 factor should be used. Other factors should be used as appropriate to the point system employed by the judge. The judge shall exercise due care in contemplating a point system for the opening period and closing period. A judge shall not employ a point system or rules relating thereto that will create a significant imbalance among the five classes, before or after applying a point multiplication factor. Further, the judge shall exercise care in placing relative value to the opening and closing period in the Gamblers class such that the total score is not contingent upon any one or two feature. Examples of schemes that should be avoided are doubling class points for performance of a distance challenge, doubling class points for finishing the round without exceeding a maximum course time, or losing all class points for failure to finish within the maximum allowable time. In any case, the factor shall be established prior to the start of the class and shall not be changed.

2. A handicapping system will be employed in the Gamblers and Snooker classes when computing scores for dogs in the mini division on each team. Competitors with dogs in the 12" and 16" height classes (mini-division) shall be allowed approximately 20% and 10% additional time, respectively, as compared to competitors in the 22" and 26" height classes (open division). No time handicapping shall apply in the standard, jumping or relay classes; in these classes the judge shall employ course design elements that will provide natural handicapping to the class (e.g., variations in obstacle spacing and turns that may result in a balance of time over the distance among the different height classes).

3. In relay a reverse baton exchange (RBE) may be used wherein the handler waiting to run next in the exchange area holds the baton and hands it off to the handler arriving in the exchange area. Whether a standard baton exchange or reverse baton exchange is used, a 10-point penalty shall be assessed for dropping the baton at the exchange (and/or during the round if carried) and other minor errors involving the baton, and a 20-point penalty shall be assessed for throwing the baton, for failing to make the exchange prior to engaging the first obstacle by a team member, completing a segment without an exchange, or other misuses or major infraction involving the baton.

4. Each of three handlers and dogs on a team must compete in all five classes; i.e., two different dogs on a team may not both be handled by a single handler. In the event a handler on a team is unable to continue through all five classes, one handler "substitution of necessity" with the approval of the judge may be made. No substitution of dogs or additional handler substitutions shall be permitted (including reversion back to the original team member). Should no substitution be possible, then the remaining team members may compete in individual classes, with an elimination score recorded for the withdrawn team member (i.e., zero points earned for the class). A team who has a teammate unable to run the three-dog relay may have a person pass the baton, declaring "Pass" to the judge, and passing the baton as otherwise required. If the competitor passing is first or last to have run on course for their team, they must cross the line to start or stop the clock as appropriate. An automatic penalty of 200 points is applied for each competitor unable to run. In any case, the class score may not be less than zero. Failure of the team to start or stop the clock as appropriate shall result in elimination for the team (i.e., zero points earned for the class).

5. If 40 or more teams are entered in any qualifying event, the show committee may elect to impose a limit on the number of teams running the relay class. If so elected, it must be posted in the test schedule specifying that the number of teams running in the relay class be limited to no less than two-thirds of the number of teams entered based upon scores through four rounds of competition; however, no team whose score is within 25% of the average of the top three scores through four rounds shall be precluded from running the relay class.

6. A "height rotation" should be utilized in establishing the running order whereby competitors from each height class runs first in one of the four classes, unless it is problematic in establishing a running order, such as when a "group" rotation system is employed. In this case no group shall be the first to run in all classes, and heights within the group shall be rotated if appropriate in order to maintain an equitable balance of what height class runs first in the running order. Further, when classes are spread over multiple days, it is preferable that "strategy" classes (i.e., Gamblers and Snooker) are offered on different days when it is practicable to do so.

Qualification: All competitors being entered on a team at the World Championships must be qualified through a local or regional qualifying event. Where a competitor has qualifying scores in both Championship and Performance Program tournaments, a competitor is eligible to enter the Performance Program tournaments at a regional, national, and/or world championship event only if the collective number of qualifications in the Performance Program tournaments for the season are greater in number than the number earned in Championship Program tournaments as of the closing date of the event to be entered.

A qualifying score shall be awarded to competitors who compete in all five classes and whose team scores are within 25% of the average of the total points earned by the top three teams after the fifth and final class. In the event fewer than five (5) teams are entered, the minimum qualifying score will be calculated using only the top score after all 5 classes.

Awards: Prizes and awards will be made based upon overall team scores after the five rounds. USDAA will provide "Gold", "Silver" & "Bronze" medals at local qualifying events for the best overall teams, and they will provide placement rosettes for 1st through 3rd places overall, along with a plaque for each member of the first place team at Regional Championship events in the United States. Qualifying patches will be awarded to each member of a qualifying team. Additional placement ribbons or rosettes may be awarded at the discretion of the host group.