

CHAPTER 3—MASTERS STANDARD AGILITY CLASS

The Masters Standard Agility class is designed to demonstrate proficiency in the refined elements of competition measured against the highest standards for the sport. The competitor works in a synchronized teamwork with the dog, while each may work a separate path through the course to complete the course as fast and accurately as possible.

Eligibility standards for entry to this class are set forth in Appendix E. The following titles and awards may be earned in this class (see Chapter 1 and Appendix F for a complete list of titles and awards):

- Masters Standard Agility class title
- Master Agility Dog®
- Standard Agility Champion class title
- Agility Dog Champion®
- Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum Award designations on Champion class and Agility Dog Champion® titles

Qualifications in the Masters classes are accumulated for Lifetime Achievement Awards as outlined in Chapter 1.

Competitive placements in the Masters Standard classes accumulate points for annual ranking for Agility Top TenSM.

SECTION 3.1—MINIMUM OBSTACLE REQUIREMENTS

A course shall include seventeen (17) to twenty (20) obstacles to be performed utilizing obstacles listed in the table below and meeting the difficulty level as set forth in USDAA's Policy of Course Design Guidelines. Obstacles may be used more than once in a particular course design, but no more than four (4) contact obstacles, four (4) tunnels, one (1) table, twelve (12) weave poles and three (3) spread hurdles shall be required to be performed.

OBSTACLES	REQUIREMENTS
CONTACT OBSTACLES	
A-Frame	Required
Dog walk	Required
See-Saw	Required
TUNNELS	
Collapsed tunnel	Required
Pipe tunnel	Required
SPECIAL OBSTACLES	
Weave poles	Required (5 to 12 in a line; minimum of 10 in Standard titling classes)
Table	Required
JUMPS & HURDLES	
Tire jump	Required
Winged hurdles	Minimum of three (3) required, at least one of which must be a spread hurdle. A majority of hurdles on course must be of a "winged"-type, with a wing width no less than 16" (40cm)
Non-winged hurdles	Optional.

SECTION 3.2—OBSTACLE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Performance and scoring standards for each of the required obstacles are as follows (see construction specifications in Appendix A):

A-Frame

The dog must ascend the up ramp in the direction designated by the course plan, touching the contact zone^{3.01}, traverse the apex and descend the down ramp, touching the contact zone before leaving the obstacle.

- Failure to touch a contact zone shall be scored a standard fault.
- Leaving the obstacle prior to beginning descent^{3.03} shall be scored a refusal.

Dog Walk

The dog must ascend the up ramp in the direction designated by the course plan, touching the contact zone^{3.01}, traverse the cross-plank and descend the down ramp, touching the contact zone before leaving the obstacle.

- Failure to touch a contact zone shall be scored a standard fault.
- Leaving the obstacle prior to beginning descent^{3.03} shall be scored a refusal.

See-Saw

The dog must ascend the plank, touching the contact zone^{3.01}, traverse the plank and pivoting the plank to the ground on the opposite end, and descend the remainder of the plank, touching the contact zone before leaving the obstacle.

- Failure to touch a contact zone shall be scored a standard fault.
- Leaving the obstacle prior to the plank beginning to tilt shall constitute a refusal.
- A dog leaving the obstacle after crossing the plank's pivot point^{3.04} (i.e., the plank begins to tilt) but prior to it touching the ground, or leaving the plank in an uncontrolled manner while the plank is in motion prior to the plank touching the ground, shall constitute a fly-off, which shall be faulted. If also missing the contact zone upon the exit of the ramp, only one fault shall be scored.

Collapsed Tunnel

The dog must enter the rigid opening to the tunnel and exit through the collapsed portion of the tunnel. There is no standard fault in performance of this obstacle.

- Jumping over any elevated portion of the tunnel or backing out of or exiting the tunnel entrance shall constitute a refusal.

Pipe Tunnel

The dog must enter the opening to the tunnel in the direction designated by the judge and exit the other end of the tunnel.

- Jumping over any portion of the tunnel or backing out of or exiting the tunnel entrance shall constitute a refusal.
- There is no standard fault in performance of this obstacle.

Table

A dog must jump onto the table and assume the down position for a period of five (5) seconds. The judge shall count the five-second count aloud, commencing at the moment when the dog has assumed the *down position*.^{3.10}

If the dog should leave the table or not remain in the down position for five seconds, the handler must instruct the dog to return to the table and/or resume the down position for the remainder of the five (5) second count, except when the dog breaks its down position and/or leaves the table a split second before the judge has said "GO" (i.e., anticipation of end of count).

- The first occurrence of jumping off of the table any time prior to completion of the five-second count shall constitute a standard fault.
- The dog that leaves the down position a split-second prior to the judge saying "Go" shall constitute a standard fault

- Running under or jumping over the table shall constitute a refusal.

Once the dog has jumped onto the table, a refusal can no longer be charged. The table may not be used as a starting point in the Standard Agility or Jumpers titling classes; however, when used as a finish point, or used as a start or finish point in other nonstandard titling classes, it shall not be judged for performance but shall be used solely as a means of starting and/or stopping the clock.

Long Jump

The dog must jump over the planks without touching them, crossing first between the front corner marker poles in the direction designated by the judge, clear the span of the planks and exit between the back corner marker poles.

- Failure to clear the span of the planks as evidenced by touching a plank or stepping on or between the planks shall constitute a standard fault^{3.11}
- Jumping the obstacle in the wrong direction shall constitute running the wrong course (i.e., entering the back corner poles and exiting the side or front or entering the side and exiting the front corner poles)
- Jumping from side to side (cross-jumping), exiting the side after proper entry or entering from the side and exiting the back shall constitute a refusal.

Weave Poles

The dog must weave down the entire line of poles in a continuous forward motion, crossing in the proper direction between the poles, beginning with the dog passing on the right side of the first pole, crossing the line of poles between pole #1 and pole #2, then moving forward to the left side of the second pole, then crossing the line of poles between pole #2 and pole #3 toward the right side of the third pole, and continuing in sequence until the entire line of poles (i.e., slalom) is completed.

- Failure to correct for missed poles or for improper entry before continuing to the next obstacle shall be ruled as not having completed the obstacle.
- The first occurrence of *missing a pole*^{3.05} shall be a standard fault; however, a dog shall not be penalized for hesitating while weaving.
- Weaving in the wrong direction^{3.06} (i.e., “backweaving”) shall constitute running the wrong course.
- A refusal is incurred when—
 - a dog enters the poles incorrectly.^{3.07}
 - runs out past the proper entry to the line of poles.
 - backs out of the proper entry to the poles.

After a dog has entered the poles correctly, no additional penalty may be incurred for refusal.

Tire Jump or Optional Breakaway Tire

The dog must jump through the tire in the direction designated by the judge.

- If a tire of “breakaway” construction is used, displacement or separation of the tire shall be penalized for a standard fault. Banking the tire (without separation) is not penalized.
- Backjumping or otherwise crossing through the frame or tire in the wrong direction shall be scored as running the wrong course.

The following shall be constitute refusals:

- Jumping between the tire and the frame
- Jumping over or running under the tire

Hurdles & Jumps

The dog must jump heights as set forth in the following table in the direction designated by the course design, crossing between the hurdle’s two side supports without displacing the top plank, bar or pole^{3.07}.

- Running under or jumping the hurdle in the wrong direction (i.e., backjumping) shall constitute running the wrong course.

- Jumping over side supports or running under the hurdle in the proper direction shall constitute a refusal.

JUMPING/HEIGHT STANDARDS (P) - PARALLEL; (A) - ASCENDING					
Height @ Withers	Minimum^{3.08} Jump Height	Spread Hurdle Span*	Long Jump Span	Table Height	A-Frame Angle^{3.09}
Over 21"	26"	(P) 12" - 15" (A) >15" - 24"	60"	24"	98°
21" & under, but over 16"	22"	(P) 12" - 15" (A) >15" - 24"	48"	24"	98°
16" & under, but over 12"	16"	No parallel (A) 10" - 12"	36"	16"	104°
12" & under	12"	No parallel (A) 10" - 12"	20"	12"	104°
JUMPING/HEIGHT STANDARDS (IN METRIC UNITS)					
Height @ Withers	Minimum^{3.08} Jump Height	Spread Hurdle Span*	Long Jump Span	Table Height	A-Frame Angle^{3.09}
Over 53cm	65cm	(P) 30cm-38cm (A) >38cm-60cm	1525mm	60cm	98°
53cm & under, but over 40cm	55cm	(P) 30cm-38cm (A) >38cm-60cm	1220mm	60cm	98°
40cm & under, but over 30cm	40cm	No parallel (A) 25cm-30cm	915mm	40cm	104°
30cm & under	30cm	No parallel (A) 25cm-30cm	508mm	30cm	104°

**Extended spread hurdles are those spread hurdles that span 20" (50cm) or more for dogs jumping 22" (55cm) or higher, and span 12" (30cm) for dogs jumping 12" (30cm) and 16" (40cm).*

Spread Hurdles & Extended Spread Hurdles

A spread hurdle must be performed under the same standards as the single hurdle.

A refusal shall be penalized for:

- entering or exiting the side of a spread hurdle
- failure to jump the span of elements together as a single hurdle in the proper direction

SECTION 3.3—COURSE HANDLING STANDARDS

A handler and dog should work as a team in a natural manner, with the dog demonstrating a willingness to work throughout the course under the handler's voice commands, hand signals or both, as they race against the clock to complete the course in the time permitted by the judge and in accordance with these regulations.

A handler is permitted to talk, cheer, command and encourage his dog through the course without limitation.

He may direct his dog through the course from any point in the course area unless specifically excluded in these regulations, and move freely about the ring in synchronized movements with their dog (oftened referred to as "freestyle handling").

A handler is required to be available at posted or announced times for briefings, walk-throughs and during the class, and when called for running the course (including any runoffs, if any are required).

Where a handler has multiple dogs or is entered in multiple classes with one or more dogs, the handler is solely responsible for—

- foreseeing and immediately notifying the gate steward or judge of a potential running order conflict (considering the regulations related to running order set forth in Chapter 2)

- being able to walk multiple courses prior to running in any classes on the same day, or subsequent day should a class not be completed the same day.

The following competitor actions shall be penalized as handler assistance as determined by the judge:^{3.12}

- Touching the dog or obstacles
- Using the aid of any outside person or device

Additionally, a handler who causes a delay at the start line or in the process of entering or exiting the ring without sufficient cause^{3.13} may be penalized at a judge's discretion. A judge shall announce in a briefing circumstances for which this penalty shall be invoked.

The following occurrences shall result in elimination and immediate dismissal from the ring:

- Use of language and antics construed to be detrimental to the spirit of good sportsmanship or that threatens to reduce spectator appeal shall not be tolerated. (The judge shall issue a formal reprimand and file a written complaint with the event's Organizing Committee pursuant to disciplinary rules specified in Appendix C to these rules and regulations.)
- The handler shall not jump, run through or under any obstacle, or squeeze between obstacles placed side by side where a handlers path is obviously unintended by design.
- Use of food, performance aids or devices
- A dog aggressively nips or bites at the handler or shows any other sign of aggression that demonstrates a loss of control or abuse to the handler (or others).
- Smoking in the ring at any time.
- A dog wearing any type of collar or leash while running the course, except as specified in these regulations.^{3.15}
- A dog has ceased to work, is out of control beyond the point of completing the round in a reasonable time or with a meaningful score, or is performing in an unsafe manner.^{3.16}
- A dog leaving the ring^{3.17}
- A dog urinating, defecating or vomiting in the ring.
- Running the wrong course.

The handler is solely responsible for their conduct at an event, and may have their scores canceled and/or be dismissed from an event based upon the severity of the misconduct.

SECTION 3.4—STANDARD COURSE TIME & FAULT LIMITS

The judge shall carefully evaluate the expected dog's path, measure the course distance and set a Standard Course Time (SCT) based on the relative difficulty of the course design to ensure reasonable speed to test control while exercising a free-style handling technique. The SCT shall give due consideration to course flow and environmental factors and should be set within the ranges shown in the table in this section.

The following rates shall be used for calculating the SCT:

STANDARD COURSE TIME RATES (IN YARDS & METERS PER SECOND)		
Jumping Height	Standard Course Time Rates	
	Operating Range	Absolute Minimum
12"	2.75 - 2.85 yds/sec	2.75 yds/sec
30cm	2.52 - 2.61 m/sec	2.52 m/sec
16"	2.85 - 3.05 yds/sec	2.85 yds/sec
40cm	2.61 - 2.80 m/sec	2.61 m/sec
22" & 26"	3.00 - 3.30 yds/sec	3.00 yds/sec
55cm & 65cm	2.75 - 3.02 m/sec	2.75 m/sec

**The "operating range" is the general rate range within which a judge should evaluate course factors in establishing a standard course time. The actual rate may be above the range but never below the minimum.*

Time faults shall be assessed on a 1:1 ratio for each second or fraction thereof to the nearest 100th of a second that a dog's course time exceeds the standard course time. The actual course time of each dog shall be measured in units of 1/100th of a second, even if timing equipment may permit more accurate degrees of measurement.

A judge shall not change the SCT after the first dog in a class has run except for arithmetic error or error in the measurement of distance^{3.25}.

In order to permit the greatest possible number of dogs and handlers a reasonable chance to succeed in qualifying towards certification titles and tournaments, or earning competitive placement awards, an Organizing Committee and/or judge may set a fault limit at which point a dog would be eliminated from competition and dismissed from the ring. Fault limits may be set differently for each class or class level.^{3.20} Any fault limit shall be applied equally to all competitors in the class after combining time and course faults.^{3.24}

SECTION 3.5—STANDARD SCORING

Standard scoring on a standard course shall determine the winner on the basis of fewest total fault penalties for violation of standard course time, course handling provisions and obstacle performance standards as may be assessed in accordance with these rules and regulations. No distinction shall be made between types of faults in determining a dog's score. A zero fault round is a qualifying score for titling purposes.

In the event of a tie in fewest total faults, the tying performance with the fastest time shall be declared the winner, unless it is announced in the Test Schedule that a tie will be settled by run-off. In the event of a fault and time tie, a run-off must be held, unless duplicate awards will be made. The course used for the run-off shall be determined by the judge, and may be the same course or a course of new design unless specific provisions have been included in the Test Schedule to the contrary.

The following definitions shall apply in the assessment of faults:

A refusal is defined as—

- “significant hesitation”^{3.21} in front of an obstacle,
- “turning back”^{3.22} on an obstacle after beginning an approach in the normal flow of the course, or
- improperly performing an obstacle as specified in Section 3.2, or
- “running out”^{3.27} past an obstacle to be performed in sequence (referred to as a “runout”)

Running the wrong course shall be defined as—

- the dog in any way touches an obstacle out of sequence as defined by the course design;
- the dog begins to take an obstacle in the wrong direction; or,
- the dog jumps or crosses any part of a hurdle, jump, table, line of weave poles or other obstacle out of sequence as defined by the course design; however, a dog that crosses the flat portion of the collapsed tunnel chute or runs beneath a contact obstacle shall not be penalized.

A summary of the types of infractions or “faults” that may be incurred are listed in the tables in this section.

SCHEDULE OF OBSTACLE FAULTS AND PENALTIES	
Missed contact zones on contact obstacle ramps	5 faults
Fly-off on see-saw	5 faults*
First occurrence of jumping off of table prior to end of count	5 faults
Anticipation of end of count on table	5 faults
First occurrence of a missed weave pole	5 faults
Failure to clear span of long jump	5 faults
Separating a breakaway tire	5 faults
Displacing top poles or planks from hurdles and jumps	5 faults**
COURSE HANDLING AND PERFORMANCE FAULTS	
Each refusal (including runouts)	5 faults
Handler assistance or outside assistance	5 faults
Excessive delay at start line or upon entering/exiting the ring	Faults or Elimination***
Running wrong course	Elimination
Three refusals on course (including runouts)	Elimination
Food or devices on course	Elimination****
Excessive handler or outside assistance	Elimination****
Poor sportsmanship	Elimination****
Signs of aggression	Elimination****
Leaving the course area	Elimination
Dog being out of control or ceasing to work	Elimination
Fouling the course	Elimination
Exceeding fault limits	Elimination

**Maximum of five standard faults on exit from see-saw if the contact zone shall also be missed.*

***Maximum of five standard faults for improper performance of a single jump.*

****Charged when failure to comply with judge's instructions.*

*****A judge must file notice of reprimand or a written complaint with the test's Organizing Committee for disciplinary action if these rules are violated as set forth in Appendix C to these regulations.*

CHAPTER 3 FOOTNOTES:

- 3.01 Contact zones are the lower 42" of each ramp on the A-frame and 36" on the dog walk and see-saw. The zones were added to assure a controlled entry and exit of the ramps for safety to the dog (i.e., to assure sound footing before rising too high on the ramp and to assure descent to a low point to minimize risk of should injury from jumping off).
- 3.02 For future use.
- 3.03 A dog shall be viewed as "beginning descent" if the dog has achieved a distribution of its weight forward onto the down ramp. In other words, when the dog's center of mass has passed onto the descent ramp. Touching with one paw while the balance of the dog's weight remains on its rear feet on the ascent ramp or cross ramp (dog walk) does not demonstrate the commitment necessary to indicate the dog has willingly begun descent.
- 3.04 The pivot point is the point on the ramp near the mid-point where the plank begins to tip while being performed. This point is different for each dog, based upon the dog's weight, size and speed.
- 3.05 Missing a pole occurs when a dog has to shift backwards or otherwise make a corrective move, no matter how slight, so that the dog can weave in the proper direction between the poles in the correct sequence. Hesitation in the poles, no matter how significant, does not constitute refusal.
- 3.06 Improper entry occurs when a dog initially enters the line of poles other than between the first two poles passing the first pole on the dog's left.
- 3.07 Weaving in the wrong direction occurs when the dog performs a portion of the line of poles in the wrong direction. "Portion" is subject to judge's interpretation, but generally means that something more than the dog crossing the line of poles once or twice in order to return to its handler. It presumes a focused effort by the dog to weave.
- 3.08 The system of measure (i.e., English versus metric system of measurement) shall be that which is customarily followed in the country in which the event is being held. See policy statements that may otherwise restrict entry for an event.
- 3.09 The angle of the apex is used to establish the angle of ascent and descent on the A-frame, as it establishes a consistent incline for the dog to engage the ramp. This is necessary due to the variety of designs of the a-frame that render the height of the obstacle inconsistent as a means of measurement. For safety reasons, a consistent incline of the ramp is used. The angle of the ramps is measured on the outer surface of the ramps at the obstacle's theoretical apex, as determined by the relative position of the ramps. When all measurements meet the stated specifications as set forth in Appendix A to the regulations, the distance from the top of the (theoretical) apex to the ground is approximately 5'11" or 180cm.
- 3.10 The "down position" shall generally be viewed by the judge as a dog with four primary points of contact with the table surface indicating a position of rest.
- 3.11 It is intended that the dog clear the span of the long jump without stepping down onto or between the planks. Should the judge be unable to confidently determine that the dog touched a plank, the judge shall apply a fault only if there is visible movement of the plank.
- 3.12 A judge's determination shall be based upon the degree of benefit that may be gained by the action or behavior. Considerations include whether the aid resulted in fault avoidance, removed the opportunity to judge performance, saved time, or otherwise benefited the performance. Some examples might include—
- a handler bumps a dog that begins to run around the wing of a jump, preventing a refusal; the judge calls a fault for refusal, though the refusal did not occur; since time was also saved, the judge must consider whether time plays a major role in the outcome of the class. If a time-plus-faults scoring method is used, it could have more far-reaching ramifications, and the judge may consider elimination, for handler assistance as a result, since there is no measure of the degree of time saved as a result of the assistance. A final decision shall consider the impact on the class and competitors as a whole, in establishing a fair judgment.
 - a handler knocks a wing on a jump as the dog is in flight over the jump or prior to jumping, and the pole falls; the judge signals a course fault for a fallen pole, as the handler has removed the opportunity to be judged on that jump; by contrast, the handler knocks a wing on the jump after the dog has cleared the jump, there is no penalty as there is no potential benefit gained or fault avoided in the performance. Such contact shall be considered "incidental" for which no penalty should be assessed.
 - a handler bumps a dog while weaving down the lines of weave poles; the judge may call a course fault for possibly missing a pole while weaving, saving time in the performance, or not being able to complete

the poles without such contact, thus penalizing 5, adding seconds to the performance, or penalties, including possible elimination, for not performing the obstacle before continuing on the course.

- *one or more spectators call out the sequence of the course to a competitor who has stopped momentarily on course; the judge must make a determination whether the competitor resumed their performance on their own or through the use of outside information.*

In any case, the determination can be extremely difficult, and the nature of a penalty, if any, must weigh and balance the merits of fairness to all competitors in the class as a whole.

3.13 Sufficient cause may be a delay arising from an unexpected and unavoidable ring conflict due to a change in scheduling.

3.14 For future use.

3.15 This shall not preclude a handler at his or her option from leading the dog to the start line with a leash and collar or using a stop watch during a walk-through, unless otherwise prohibited by class rules. The judge or event organizer should provide for positioning of the leash and collar near the finish line or exist gate in order to expedite the competitor's exit of the ring.

3.16 Judges are cautioned to try to anticipate potentially unsafe or out of control conditions to terminate a round prior to the occurrence of a mishap. In some cases, the judge may instruct the handler to bypass an obstacle where the condition may be isolated to that obstacle. The expectation in a round is that the competitor is seeking to perform the course in a fluid style that will achieve success in the round. Success need not be defined necessarily by a qualifying score or placement, but in working the course from start to finish to gain a measure of their performance. By contrast, a handler who exercises caution and control casually and routinely at individual obstacles with no apparent attempt to complete the course in the allotted time may be viewed as using the round for training purposes and be immediately dismissed from the ring unless otherwise permitted in these regulations.

3.17 Leaving the ring is defined as a dog that has physically left the course area with his attention distracted away from its handler. This does not include a dog that has passed beneath ring ropes used to define the course area as long as the dog is continuously demonstrating attentiveness and responsiveness to its handler, or a dog that jumps the ring barriers in an effort to avoid the barrier as a result of his momentum in performance. This is contrast with the dog who jumps a ring barrier by choice or a handler works his dog out of the ring when sufficient space is available in the ring to avoid the ring barrier or to work the dog.

3.18 A competitor must realize that the timeliness of a query often has direct bearing on the ability of the judge to effect a proper resolution. A competitor should check their score immediately upon exiting the ring, and if not possible, as soon thereafter as possible, but not to exceed a period of 20 minutes following the round. After this time, only mathematical errors may be corrected.

3.19 Should timing equipment be provided that measures time to the 1/1000th of a second, the 1000th's shall not be considered in recording the score. For example, a time of 34.386 seconds shall be recorded as 34.38 seconds. It is accepted that due to the variations in types and sizes of dogs and the reliance on sensor beams that do not fill the vertical plane at the start and finish line, it cannot be determined precisely what part of the dog's body trips the beams. , that electronic timing is not so precise, and 1/100th of a second is the smallest unit of measure permitted.

3.20 Reasonable fault limits have been and are a necessary tool to manage entries when circumstances warrant (e.g., the day's activities are anticipated to exceed eight hours of ring time). This presumes that all other efforts to maintain efficiency are also being employed. Fault limits may be set differently for each class or class level. Examples of reasonable faults limits might include –

- *In a masters level class, twenty fault points on course, twenty seconds over standard course time, second occurrence of a wrong course or first occurrence of a wrong course.*
- *In an Advanced level class, a fourth infraction regardless of value, or twenty fault points on course, twenty seconds over standard course time, or two wrong course penalties.*
- *In a Starters level class, four infractions of any value, twenty seconds over standard course time, thirty seconds over standard course time, or omitting two obstacles.*

3.21 Significant hesitation as it relates to a refusal is a period of time in which doubt has been cast on the whether a dog will perform an obstacle in the continual flow of the course, indicating the dog has momentarily decided not to perform the obstacle. Practically speaking, this will be more than one second, and possibly two. The judge must consider that a dog may be visually sizing up the obstacle in preparing to perform, such as the time necessary to transition from a run to a more static position to gather and jump or begin to scale a ramp. Further, the necessity of handler commands to continue the performance may aid in the determination by the judge, though the judge may view this factor a lesser consideration than other factors. The judge's determination shall be final.

3.22 *Turning back shall be generally defined as a reversal of flow along the course path (i.e., turning away from the correct obstacle) after the dog has begun a focused approach to the obstacle, however, it is important to note that an approach in the normal flow of the course can take on many appearances. A refusal would be called when the dog has indicated through his position and/or movement that he has considered taking the next obstacle to be performed but has not continued by virtue of significant hesitation, meaning a halt of forward progress by more than two seconds before beginning performance of the obstacle, or turning away from the obstacle in a manner indicating intent to avoid the performance of the obstacle. The judge shall be careful not to fault a dog glancing back to the handler for direction".*

3.23 *Fault limits are justified on the premise that an Agility Test and Tournament Qualifier are being offered as an opportunity to earn qualification. Obviously, many things can go wrong and faults occur as a result. Beyond a certain point, however, a run can become counterproductive both for the competitor and others. So once a competitor has had an opportunity to qualify and have a reasonable effort measured by a score. For those efforts that prove problematic, fault limits provides a means to excuse them from the ring and make more time for other competitors.*

Reasonable fault limits are a necessary tool to manage entries and ring operation under a variety of circumstances (e.g., the day's activities are anticipated to exceed eight hours of ring time). This presumes that all other efforts to maintain efficiency are also being employed. Fault limits may be set differently for each class or class level. Examples of reasonable faults limits might include—

- *In a masters level class, twenty fault points on course, twenty seconds over standard course time, second occurrence of a wrong course or first occurrence of a wrong course.*
- *In an Advanced level class, a fourth infraction regardless of value, or twenty fault points on course, twenty seconds over standard course time, or two wrong course penalties.*
- *In a Starters level class, four infractions of any value, twenty seconds over standard course time, thirty seconds over standard course time, or omitting two obstacles.*

Fault limits, along with class scheduling, allow more competitors to have an opportunity to compete and eliminates the need for entry limits, which can lead to prejudicial conduct.

3.24 *For example, a competitor dismissed from the ring for incurring twenty (20) faults would receive an "Elimination" on the score sheet. Similarly, a dog that finishes the course with ten (10) obstacle faults and ten (10) time penalties would also receive an "Elimination" because total faults are twenty (20).*

3.25 *Any other cause to adjust the SCT after the first dog has run shall be submitted by the judge to the USDAA office for approval prior recalculation of scores. The submission must include a copy of the course diagram as constructed, and an explanation of the circumstances.*

3.26 *This presumes that all other efforts to maintain efficiency are also being employed. There shall be no distinction as to type of faults in use of fault limits (or for determining score). For example, a competitor dismissed from the ring for incurring twenty (20) faults would receive an "Elimination" on the score sheet. Similarly, a dog that finishes the course with ten (10) obstacle faults and ten (10) time penalties would also receive an "Elimination" because total faults are twenty (20).*

3.27 *Running out past an obstacle (i.e., a runout) shall be generally defined as crossing the line defined by the front plane of the next obstacle in sequence as defined by the course design, except—*

- *the runout line for the table shall be defined by its back edge.*
- *the second pole of the weave poles shall be the start of the runout line to the right side of the weave poles and the first pole shall define the start of the runout line to the left side of the weave poles. The runout lines at the weave poles shall generally be perpendicular to the course line as it approaches the weave poles.*
- *no runout shall be faulted at a contact obstacle where the dog runs out past the front plane of the obstacle and directly ascends the ramp without turning back or hesitating significantly (i.e., jumps on from the side of the ramp).*
- *the dog need not be in vicinity of the obstacle to incur the runout, as might occur when a dog is out of control on course. For more information on runouts, see the USDAA Official Course Design Guidelines.*

CHAPTER 4—ADVANCED STANDARD AGILITY CLASS

The Advanced level standard agility class presents a course design that demonstrates confidence on the obstacles and a variety of handling techniques in working the dog through a longer flowing course with more challenges and faster speed than required in the Starters class. The course will emphasize variety of patterns conducive to flow and increasing speed, while challenging response control, but have fewer technical maneuvers as may be seen in the Masters class.

Eligibility standards for entry to this class are set forth in Appendix E to these regulations. Through competition in these classes, the competitor may earn the Advanced Agility Dog® and the Advanced Standard Agility title.

SECTION 4.1—MINIMUM OBSTACLE REQUIREMENTS

The same minimum obstacle standards shall be followed as in the Masters class.

SECTION 4.2—OBSTACLE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The obstacle performance standards shall be the same as in the Masters class.

SECTION 4.3—COURSE HANDLING STANDARDS

Course handling standards shall be the same as in the Masters class, except that a dog must commit to an obstacle with all four paws before being charged with “touching an obstacle out of sequence” or “taking an obstacle in the wrong direction.”

SECTION 4.4—STANDARD COURSE TIME & FAULT LIMITS

The standard course time (SCT) and fault limits shall be established as in the Masters class, except that the SCT shall be as follows:

STANDARD COURSE TIME RATES (IN YARDS & METERS PER SECOND)		
Jumping Height	Standard Course Time Rates	
	Operating Range	Absolute Minimum
12”	2.50 - 2.60 yds/sec	2.50 yds/sec
30cm	2.29 - 2.38 m/sec	2.29 m/sec
16”	2.60 - 2.80 yds/sec	2.60 yds/sec
40cm	2.38 - 2.56 m/sec	2.38 m/sec
22” & 26”	2.75 - 2.95 yds/sec	2.75 yds/sec
55cm & 65cm	2.52 - 2.70 m/sec	2.52 m/sec

SECTION 4.5—STANDARD SCORING

The same standard scoring rules shall be followed as in the Masters class, except for the following:

- Running the wrong course shall be penalized twenty (20) fault points for any occurrence rather than “elimination” as in the Masters class. A judge shall cease judging until the dog is back on course. In the event an obstacle is omitted without correction, whether intentional or not, the judge shall cease judging and the dog’s score marked “elimination”.
- Refusals shall be faulted only on contact obstacles (e.g., Dog Walk, A-Frame or See-Saw);
- Three refusals shall not result in elimination unless three refusals occur on the same obstacle.

CHAPTER 5—STARTERS STANDARD AGILITY CLASS

The Starters level standard agility class presents the basic form of the sport and is designed to assess training of the obstacles for successful performance and an understanding of basic course handling techniques that will enable a competitor to achieve higher levels.

Eligibility standards for entry to this class are set forth in Appendix E to these regulations. Through competition in these classes, the competitor may earn the Agility Dog® and the Starters Standard Agility title.

SECTION 5.1—MINIMUM OBSTACLE REQUIREMENTS

The same minimum obstacle standards shall be followed as in the Masters class, except that the course shall include a minimum of fourteen (14) and a maximum of sixteen (16) obstacles to be performed.

SECTION 5.2—OBSTACLE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The obstacle performance standards shall be the same as in the Masters class, except that the table shall be performed in the down position for five consecutive seconds rather than cumulative.

SECTION 5.3—COURSE HANDLING STANDARDS

Course handling standards shall be the same as in the Masters class, except as follows:

- A refusal on a contact obstacle after the dog has committed to an obstacle with all four paws shall not be permitted to reattempt the obstacle; the handler and dog must omit the obstacle and proceed on to the remainder of the course. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in immediate dismissal from the ring. *This rule is replaced by the following rule June 1, 2011—*
- If a dog has three unsuccessful attempts at completing a contact obstacle, the judge shall direct the handler to go to the next obstacle. Failure to comply with the directive shall result in dismissal from the ring. If a fault is incurred for a missed up contact zone during any attempt, the first occurrence of the fault is retained without regard to any subsequent successful attempt.^{5.01}
- A dog shall be charged with running the wrong course as in the Masters class, except that a dog must commit to an obstacle with all four paws before being charged with “touching an obstacle out of sequence” or “taking an obstacle in the wrong direction” or “beginning descent”.

SECTION 5.4—STANDARD COURSE TIME & FAULT LIMITS

The standard course time (SCT) and fault limits (if any) shall be established as in the Masters class except that the SCT shall be at a rate no less than 2.00 yards per second (1.83 m/sec) and shall generally be between 2.00 and 2.25 yards per second (1.83 and 2.05 m/sec). In no event shall the SCT be greater than 75 seconds.

SECTION 5.5—STANDARD SCORING

The same standard scoring rules shall be followed as in the Masters class, except for the following:

- Running the wrong course shall be penalized five (5) fault points for any such occurrence rather than elimination as in the Masters class. A judge shall cease judging until the dog is back on course, except in the case where a single obstacle is omitted in the course sequence as a result of error, handler choice or “three refusal” rule (see Section 5.3). When an obstacle is omitted in the course sequence, whether intentional or not, a twenty (20) point penalty shall be assessed for the wrong course penalty rather than five (5) points, and the judge shall continue judging. In the event a second obstacle is omitted without correction, the judge shall cease judging and the dog’s score marked “elimination”.
- The weave poles shall not be penalized for faults incurred; however, failure to correct for missed poles shall be treated as an omitted obstacle.
- Refusals shall not be faulted, except as outlined in Section 5.3.

CHAPTER 5 FOOTNOTES

^{5.01}An attempt shall be defined as the dog engaging the ramp as evidenced by one or more paws on the ramp, the dog jumping over the ramp, or other indication that the dog is not willing to perform under the handler’s directive. Note that “completing a contact obstacle” may be with faults. (See Section 3.2, Chapter 3.)