



COMPETITION RULES

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1. DEFINITIONS:

1.1 Trial Status

It is assumed that all trials referred to in these rules are affiliated with the Association. The Constitution, Policies, Code of Conduct and these Rules have application at affiliated trials.

1.2 Yard Dog Trial

A competition conducted in sheep yards with the intention of replicating various aspects of yard work on farm. A time limit will be specified.

1.3 Utility Trial

- a) A competition which includes both yard and paddock sections. The yard component is conducted using ten (10) or more sheep. The paddock section contains 3 obstacles and is conducted using three (3) or five (5) sheep. The VYUFDA suggests a gap, race or bridge and either a pen or a put away. The time limit should be 10 – 15 minutes.

1.4 Farm Trial

A Farm trial has one obstacle in the paddock section and a yard section.

1.5 The Organising Committee/Convenor

The people responsible for organising and conducting the trial.

1.6 Handler

The person who enters and works a dog in a trial.

1.7 Cross

The dog moves between the handler and any sheep whilst both handler and sheep are in the same yard/working area.

1.8 Technical Cross

The dog moves between handler and sheep because the path is blocked by a protruding obstacle but remains on same side of mob.

1.9 Working Cross/Driving

The dog moves between handler and sheep in order to hold or push sheep in desired direction or position.

1.10 Tail turn

The dog turns a full circle away from sheep whilst working sheep.

2 COMPETITION LEVELS/CLASSES

A dog's status in Yard trials and Farm trials are one and the same

2.1 Encourage Yard, Farm and Utility

- a) For handlers who have not won two (2) Encourage or any other Affiliated Yard/Farm or Utility Trial. Once a Handler has won two Encourage trials, they are no longer eligible to compete in Encourage trials.
- b) An Encourage handler may enter and win one Encourage trial with a dog which has won a higher class with another handler.
- c) If an Encourage handler wins a competition above Encourage, they are no longer eligible to compete in Encourage.
- d) Encourage trials are the only competition level where Yard and Utility are classified as the same. For all other levels a win in the Yard/Farm does not affect Utility status and vice versa.

2.2 Maiden Class

Any dog which has not won a Yard/Farm or Utility Trial except at Encourage level. When a dog has one Maiden win it breaks status.

2.3 Novice

2.3.1 Yard and Farm

A dog that has;

- a) Not won two Novice Yard or Farm trials.
- b) Not yet won a higher status Yard or Farm trial.

2.3.2 Utility

A dog that has;

- a) Not won two Novice Utility trials.
- b) Not yet won a higher status Utility trial.

2.4 Improver

2.4.1 Yard and Farm

A dog that has won two (2) Novice Yard and Farm trials, but not yet won either two (2) Improver Yard/Farm trials or one (1) Open Yard/Farm trial.

2.4.2 Utility

A dog that has won two (2) Novice Utility, but not yet won either two (2) Improver utility trials or one Open Utility trial.

2.5 Open Yard, Farm, Utility

A dog which has won two (2) Improver trials or one (1) Open trial.

2.6 Competition Levels

Maiden dogs are eligible to participate in Novice trials.

Improver dogs are eligible to participate in Open trials.

Encourage handlers may enter Maiden/Novice at the convenor's discretion.

2.7 Restriction to Class

Dogs and Handlers may be restricted to class at the discretion of the Convenor, except in the case of the State Yard Championship where only Improver and Open status dogs may contest the Championship.

2.8 Separation of classes

It is not necessary to conduct separate trials for each competition level.

Maiden/Novice and Improver/Open competitions may be run in conjunction at the discretion of the Convenor.

2.9 Breaking Status

- a) Breaking status is to have immediate effect.
- b) Dogs scoring an equal number of points for first place will affect their present status. If there is sufficient time, a run off must be conducted to determine first (1st) place. Total points determine the placing of all place getters.

2.10 Competing at incorrect level

- a) If during the course of a trial it is discovered that a dog has been entered in the wrong class, all dogs run by that handler will be disqualified.
- b) Any handler who works a dog in a trial at a level in which that dog is ineligible to compete, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Constitution.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Finals

A final must be conducted in Novice, Improver and all Open trials if time permits. Should time be limited at a trial, the order of priority to run a final shall be Championship, Open, Improver, Novice, Maiden, Encourage.

3.1.1 Finalists

The finalists shall be the highest scoring dogs in the first run, which are available to contest the final.

3.1.2 Number of Finalists

The number of finalists is determined by the number of placings offered, one more dog is worked than placings offered. The number of finalists is raised only to include a duplication in the score of the last section. (A minimum number of six (6) placings is recommended for Open trials.

3.1.3 Order of Run

The final shall be conducted in the same order as the dogs were drawn to work in the first run. The draw may be altered to avoid a handler running dogs consecutively where possible.

3.1.4 Participation

No prize or placing shall be awarded to a dog which, after being eligible to compete in a final, fails to participate in that final.

3.1.5 Winner

The dog with the highest aggregate number of points is deemed the winner.

3.2 Tie

- a) After all reasonable attempts have been made to run off dogs tied for first place, a tie shall be declared. Open dogs which tie for first (1st) shall both qualify for the relevant State Championship.
- b) Dogs on equal points at a trial shall receive an equal share of the prize money and VYUFDA Dog of the Year points (where applicable). E.g. Two (2) equal seconds in an Open trial shall receive an equal share of the prize money allocated to second (2nd) and third (3rd) place. Both dogs receive seven (7) points for the VYUFDA Dog of the Year tally. The next place getter collects the prizes allocated to fourth (4th) place.

4 THE DRAW:

4.1 The Order of the Draw

- a) A list must be made to determine the order of working prior to the start of the trial. Convenors have a choice of:
 - a. A Reverse Draw, where all handlers must be balloted to work a dog in the last round, with the handler(s) with the most dogs only working in the first round, or
 - b. The Evenly Spaced draw where multiple dog handlers are spaced as evenly as practical, and Single dog handlers are run in the second half of the draw.

The draw options are detailed in the Convenors Kit.

- b) All dogs must be listed in the order as nominated on the entry form.
- c) All trials must be run strictly according to the draw.

- d) Dogs which miss their run according to the draw will be disqualified, unless;
 - a. They have been working another course,
 - b. By arrangement with trial convenor
 - c. The trial started earlier than advertised
 - d. They are granted a run by the organizing committee due to special circumstances.
- e) All handlers must be issued either with 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.
- f) That provision be made in all draws, where practical, to include the winner of previous class, into next class. i.e.; winner of Maiden to get a run in Novice, winner of Novice to get a run in Improver, Improver winner to get a run in Open.
- g) Where a dog or a handler cannot compete, having entered a trial, a substitute dog or handler may take that place if a minimum 24 hours' notice is given to organisers and;
 - a. the substitute dog is the same status and is worked by the same handler or
 - b. the handler to replace the original handler, works the dog(s) in the first round.

5 THE COURSE

- a) All trials shall be run over such courses as the convenor determines.
- b) Trial courses should include some of the following:
 - cast
 - gather the sheep
 - draft race
 - drenching/classing race
 - trailer/truck
 - ramp (NOTE:" Sheep must be able to flow freely)
 - fill a woolshed
 - put sheep away
 - gap, bridge, pen
 - any obstacle likely to be found in farm sheep yards.

5.1 Course Welfare & Safety

- a) When erecting the yards, the organizing committee must ensure there are no sharp edges, protrusion or objects which may be hazardous or cause injury to sheep, dogs or handler.
- b) Where the yards are constructed from panels or portable yards, the organizing committee must ensure that they are securely fixed to prevent any movement when pressure is applied by the sheep.
- c) In trial courses incorporating a drenching race, or other confined area into which all the sheep must be forced, the number to be worked shall

be that number which allows each sheep to stand comfortably. This number shall be determined by the organizing committee in consultation with the judge.

- d) All sheep must be inspected prior to being worked for any physical defects or injuries. Any injured or unhealthy sheep must not be worked.
- e) Prior to the commencement of a trial when the judge walks the course, they should make any adjustment deemed necessary to achieve an acceptable outcome with regard to safety and welfare issues.

6 JUDGES

- a) The Association maintains a list of judges and their level of accreditation, for the benefit of our members and trial organizing committees. This list is published on the Associations website www.vyufda.com.au
- b) All entry forms must include judges' names.
- c) All Open and Championship affiliated trials must be judged by VYUFDA accredited judges or interstate judges recognised by the Association.
- d) Encourage trials must be Judged by experienced Judges.
- e) A Novice judge is eligible to judge Novice, Maiden and Encourage trials.
- f) An Open judge is eligible to judge Encourage, Maiden, Novice, Improver and Open trials.
- g) A Championship judge is eligible to judge all levels.
- h) The VYUFDA accepts the status of interstate judges granted by their own state.
- i) The judge's decision shall be final and they have command of the trial.

7 THE TIME LIMIT:

- a) A maximum time limit in which to complete the course will be set before the trial commences. The course must be set so that the trial can comfortably be completed by the majority of competitors within the allotted time limit.
- b) The time will be set by the organizing committee in consultation with the Judge.
- c) A bell or similar device, when sounded, shall signify the start of each run and the expiry of the time limit or completion of the run.
- d) A run is considered completed when;
 - a. The handler has completed each of the obstacles and returned all sheep and closed the put away gate; or
 - b. At the expiry of the time limit; or
 - c. The handler retires; or
 - d. If asked to leave the course by the judge.

8 RESPONSIBILITY

8.1 VYUFDA Committee's responsibility at Trials

- h) Committee members present at a trial shall make themselves available to deal with protests.
- i) Committee members must alert the Organizing Committee of any potentially injurious situations for people and/or animals. They must also offer any constructive alternatives of which they may be aware. The judge of the event will have the final say on safety and welfare issues.
- j) Committee members who are not a part of a particular incident, shall assist a judge in adjudicating that incident, if requested to do so by the judge.
- k) Committee members must, within fourteen (14) days, submit a written report to the secretary of the VYUFDA, stating the circumstances of situations they have been called to adjudicate in accordance with 8.2. This report is to be presented to the Executive to determine if further action is to be taken.

8.2 Handler's responsibility

- a) All handlers are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, befitting good animal husbandry skills and good social skills whilst at trials.
- b) Handlers who abuse their dog or trial sheep will have zero (0) points recorded against all their dogs at that venue and may face further disciplinary action.
- c) Handlers who abuse, harangue or engage in any activity deemed to influence or intimidate a judge, shall have zero (0) points recorded against all dogs at that venue and may face further disciplinary action in line with the Constitution.

8.3 Convenors Responsibility

- a) The convenor will organise the preparation and maintenance of the sheep, course, helpers, judges and prizes prior to and throughout the trial.
- b) The convenor will be responsible for the creation and implementation of the draw.
- c) The convenor will at all times maintain the integrity of the trial and the image of the Association.
- d) The convenor will show consideration to all participants involved in the trial.
- e) The convenors will endeavour to keep all dogs off the course prior to a trial.

9 BITCHES IN OESTRUS

- a) All bitches entered in the trial if requested must be made available by handlers to be inspected by a steward nominated by the organizing committee, prior to being worked.
- b) Any disagreement shall be settled by the least Sirey mongrel bred dog on the ground.
- c) Any handler who works a bitch in oestrus shall be disqualified from further competition at that trial.

10 MUZZLES

A dog shall be permitted to work in a muzzle, with a loss of 5 points per run, in the Improver & Open classes. Encourage, Maiden, or Novice dogs may wear a muzzle without any loss of points.

11 CANES

The use of canes at trials is prohibited.

12 WORKER'S ASSISTANTS

- a) Prior to competing, any person requiring assistance may apply to the judge to have an able-bodied person assist them with any physically demanding task likely to be encountered in the trial.
- b) The assistant will assist at the direction of the handler.
- c) The handler will be penalised for any infringement of the rules by the assistant.

13 SCORING

13.1 Scoring Overview

- a) Each dog will start with a maximum of one hundred (100) points.
- b) A perfect score occurs with all sheep navigating the course moving forward on the most direct, desirable route, without being over or under worked, without any indiscretions on the part of a dog or the handler within the allotted time.
- c) Points are deducted for rule infringements, ineffective or inferior work, by the handler or the dog and for any section/s not completed within the time limit.
- d) Judges will put their own point value on rule infringements. These values will, to the best of the judge's ability, be applied consistently throughout each trial, with no regard given to reputation, handler, breed of dog or any other consideration.
- e) Judges will use the sheep being worked as the indicator for good effective dog work.

- f) If 100 points are lost in competition, the Judge is to advise the handler they are out of points. The handler then has the option of retiring or being disqualified.
- g) Less than perfect "work" will be penalized.

13.2 Scoring General

- a) Judges must allocate points for each section giving an appropriate value to all sections.
- b) If a section is partly negotiated, the judge may deduct a portion of the section points relevant to how much of the section was completed when time expired.
- c) All points deducted for incomplete sections will be in addition to points lost in general work attempting the obstacle
- d) Any worker retiring his dog before the expiry of the time limit shall not receive a score.
- e) Any dog disqualified by the judge shall not receive a score
- f) A score sheet including the handler's name, the dog's name and points deducted must be must be available to the judge and competitors.

13.3 Handler Penalties

Penalties may be incurred for;

- a) Mis-drafting
- b) Handling sheep or dog in a rough or unprofessional manner
- c) Moving when they should be maintaining a position
- d) Taking up an incorrect position
- e) Influencing the flow of sheep by the handler
- f) Unseemly conduct whilst working the dog
- g) Closing gates before sheep have crossed the closed line of the gate
- h) Opening gates when the full arc has not been cleared of sheep by the dog
- i) Closing gate on dog to regain control of dog
- j) Handling sheep to get flow. With the exception of handling sheep for safety or welfare reasons, if sheep are handled to create a flow, the judge has the option of:
 - a. taking points for the loss of section in addition to those points already lost;
 - b. offering the handler the option of retirement or disqualifying the dog
- k) A handler, should walk in a direct and uninterrupted line between obstacles i.e. not through or around sheep (the dog is to clear the path as instructed)
- l) All gates must be opened and closed by the handler. Failure to close or replace a gate will incur a penalty.
- m) The handler must take up a position whilst negotiating a gateway or obstacle and not move from that position until the obstacle has been negotiated.

- n) The handler is not to move until the line of the gate (when closed) is crossed by all sheep.
- o) Where the course is set incorrectly, i.e. gate left open in draft or the "run" is interfered with, the Judge may stop the clock, rectify the problem and replace the sheep to the exact position, or award a re-run, so that there is no advantage or disadvantage to the handler or their dog.
- p) Running on course is not permitted, unless it is to deal with a welfare or safety issue, however changing the speed of walking is permitted without loss of points.

13.4 Dog Penalties

Penalties may be incurred for;

- a) The dog crossing between the handler and the sheep when not permitted by the Judge
- b) The dog leaving the course
- c) If the dog leaves the pen where the work needs to be done it can be penalized
- d) If the dog is carried out of a race, pen or truck, through no fault of the dog and willingly goes back in, it must not be penalized
- e) small breaks that the dog blocks within "a given halo of the mob", in the Judge's mind will not be penalized
- f) A dog soiling or urinating whilst on the course, at any time will be penalized
- g) Undesirable biting will be penalized
- h) Tail turns will be penalized
- i) Any technical cross that is not good work will be penalized by the judge. (Judge can stipulate which work is to be cross free).
- j) A dog can technically cross if it follows the fence line and holds to the correct side of the mob, in the pursuit of doing good work and will not be penalized.
- k) In the event of a sheep escaping the judge will decide if they consider the dog caused it; if so, it will be disqualified; if not, the clock may be stopped and the sheep replaced or a rerun may be awarded
- l) A dog that comes up to start sheep and is ineffective should be penalized
- m) A dog that does not come up to start sheep when necessary and contribute to flow should be penalized
- n) If a dog loses ground to the sheep it will incur a penalty
- o) A penalty will be incurred if sheep are not brought up within the corridor as stipulated by the judge

13.5 Disqualifying infringements;

A handler and his dog can be disqualified for the following:

- a) Lost sheep
- b) Sheep hitting perimeter fence – dog assisted
- c) When a dog has left the course and does not return immediately

- d) Unseemly conduct
- e) If the dog is of inferior quality the judge may terminate the run
- f) Dogs biting or hanging on to the sheep
- g) If the handler does not attempt to complete the course in the designated order,
- h) The judge shall stop the trial if they consider the sheep are being overworked
- i) If the handler handles their dog during their run (except to assist dog if the dog's welfare is at risk.)
- j) Where sheep are drafted onto the "truck" obstacle, unless the correct number of sheep are loaded, the handler will be disqualified.
- k) Any dog, which in the opinion of the judge, deliberately chases sheep into fences, without genuinely trying to head and turn the sheep, must be disqualified.
- l) Dogs biting excessively and to the detriment of sheep must be disqualified.

14 SCORING GUIDELINES

14.1 Handling sheep:

- a) Handling a sheep which is down and needs to be picked up due to poor dog work – the handling infringement in this case may be worth 4-8 points. (In addition to points already lost for bad, inferior or inefficient work for this event)
- b) Dog cannot get sheep to flow up race and the handler handles one (1) or more sheep up to get a flow – the handling infringement in this case may be worth the value of the obstacle, say 20-25 points.
- c) Sheep may be jammed in a race from overwork and the dog cannot free them – handle 4-8 points.

14.2 Biting:

14.2.1 No Penalty

All the below are no penalty when it is good desirable dog work done with no damage to the sheep

- a) A dog which is defending himself and bites the sheep on the head – no penalty a dog which is blocking up a breakaway sheep and bites the sheep on the head – no penalty, provided the sheep is blocked and not damaged.
- b) If the sheep are all "scrumming" with their heads down and the dog motivates one with a nip under the chin to pick a head up – no penalty.
- c) If a sheep's leg is not over the line of a pen, race or truck and the dog nips the hock to put it in – no penalty.
- d) A dog which topknots a sheep to start a flow, no penalty.

14.2.2 Penalties

- a) A dog which topknots a potential lead sheep and doesn't get a flow – 1 to 2 points.
- b) A dog which topknots sheep which have no chance of leading – 3 to 4 points.
- c) A dog which bites the body or high up on legs – 8 to 10 points, or can be disqualified meaning, 100 points.
- d) A dog which bites and hangs on, 8 – 100 points.
- e) A dog which bites at sheep but does not connect – no penalty.
- f) A dog which bites through a muzzle – same as above in addition to loss any points lost for use of the muzzle.

14.3 Breaks:

- a) Given that the distance at which the dog works his sheep becomes the "halo", a small break past this point may be a 1 – 2-point penalty.
- b) A bigger break may be 2 – 5 points. A break to the back of the yard, 3 – 8 points.
- c) A break with the dog driving the sheep into the fence 8 -100 points.

14.4 Tail Turns:

- a) If a dog is in close forcing and a sheep breaks and the dog's response is a forced tail turn 1 to 2 points.
- b) If a dog is tail turning to take the pressure off themselves, 5 – 8 points.
- c) If a dog is tail turning because of bad habits, 3 – 5 points.

14.5 Dog leaving the course/its work:

- a) A dog leaves the designated course, but is genuinely still working their sheep in a desirable way – no penalty.
- b) A dog leaves the designated course unwilling to return – 100 points.
- c) A dog leaves the designated course and makes a tentative return 20 – 100 points.
- d) A dog gives up working but is still on the course 20 – 100 points.

14.6 Working the trial:

- a) Any sheep mis-drafted must be rectified if requested by the judge. The method of rectifying the mis-draft is the handler's decision. Retirement is an option.
- b) Whilst a mis-draft is being corrected, the dog will continue to be judged and the clock will not be stopped.
- c) During the draft it is permitted to handle sheep's heads to direct them through the drafting gate. This displays superior stock handling and should not be confused with handling to create a flow.

14.7 Gates:

- a) Unless otherwise allowed by the judge, handlers must open and close gates while holding the end of the gate;

- b) Once an open gate position is selected it must not be altered until the sheep have crossed the line either in or out of that obstacle;
- c) When in an open gate position, unless otherwise allowed by the judge, handlers must be able to touch the end of the gate;

14.8 RE-RUNS:

- a) If a sheep escapes from the course the judge may call a re-run.
- b) A re-run may be granted if any dog, not belonging to the handler, comes into the competition area and interferes with the trial.
- c) If a re-run is granted, the timing of that run, will be at the judge's discretion.

15 ANIMAL WELFARE

- a) Any handler who fails to make an effort to stand up a sheep which goes down in a race or other confined area, 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.
- b) The handler will not be penalized for handling the sheep if they aid a distressed sheep.
- c) Wherever possible, sufficient sheep should be obtained to provide fresh sheep for each dog. If this is not possible, the sheep must be rotated to avoid excessive stress.
- d) Any sheep which becomes excessively distressed or injured must be replaced by fresh sheep prior to the next dog working.
- e) Electric and/or dummy collars are prohibited.
- f) All trials must be conducted in line with the Association's Animal Welfare policies.

16 PROTESTS:

- a) Any protest must be lodged in writing with the Secretary or organizing committee, within two hours of the incident or decision and be accompanied by a fee of \$25 which is refunded if the protest is upheld.
- b) Any protest or situation arising, not provided for in these rules, will be dealt with by a sub-committee of 3 VYUFDA committee if present. If less than three (3) committee are present, then those present plus the first and/or second and/or third financial member of the VYUFDA drawn to work in the particular trial shall form the sub-committee.
- c) The decision of the sub-committee considering the protest shall be final.
- d) The members of the sub-committee must, within 14 days, submit a written report stating the circumstances of the protest and their decision,

to the Secretary of the VYUFDA. This report must be tabled at the next VYUFDA committee meeting.

17 COMPLAINTS:

- a) Significant complaints regarding the running of a trial, or conduct/competency of judging or conduct of competitors, must be made in writing and sent to the Secretary.
- b) All complaints in accordance with 17a will be dealt with at a meeting of the Executive.

18 SPECIFIC TRIAL RULES FOR UTILITY TRIALS

In addition to all of the above rules applying equally to Utility and Yard Trials.

- a) There must be a minimum of three (3) paddock obstacles in a championship trial.
- b) A utility trial has three (3) obstacles in the arena. The VYUFDA recommends a gap, race or bridge and either a pen or a put away.
- c) Handler must negotiate obstacle from the peg, or within designated working area before sheep have completed the obstacle (last leg of last sheep) or obstacle must be reworked, except for the Pen.
- d) If any sheep escape from the pen through the gate after the worker has left his peg to shut the gate, the trial terminates. All points for the pen will be forfeited.
- e) Any cross outside of the yard component will incur instant disqualification in the Championship.
- f) Crosses in the paddock in Encourage/Maiden/Novice incur a 10-point penalty.
- g) Crosses in the paddock in Improver and Open classes incur a 20-point penalty.
- h) When letting sheep out of the yard section, the handler has the option of sitting dog at their discretion and may walk into the yard to remove the sheep.
- i) When taking sheep from one obstacle to another, handlers should walk in a straight line. Points must be deducted if handler stops.
- j) Judges may deduct points if sheep are more than 9 metres behind or in front of the handler
- k) When negotiating obstacles, points may be deducted if sheep are allowed to circle the obstacle, or if they pass the wing and are brought back.

- l) If a handler leaves their peg before having negotiated an obstacle they must be disqualified.