

# **Agility Rules and Guidelines** **for the State 4-H Agility Event**

(Revised 3/2010)

All 4-H activities and events are to be youth focused. This means that the event will help teach young people life long skills and assets, utilizing their project, in this case – their dog, as a vehicle for learning those skills. The actual event takes a back seat to the development of young people. Safety is also and always a primary concern for both youth and animal.

## **Eligibility:**

In order to compete in Agility each exhibitor and dog must **demonstrate** the following competencies:

1. A successful sit/stay.
2. A successful down/stay.
3. A good relationship between the dog and handler, which includes ability to control the dog whether stationary or when walking on leash.
4. The ability to be peacefully approached by other dogs and handlers.
5. It is strongly suggested that youth and dog successfully complete at least one year of obedience training before moving to agility.

## **Participation Rules**

1. The handler and dog must be in good health at the time of competition.
2. The dog may not be pregnant or nursing puppies at the time of competition. Bitches in heat may not compete.
3. Dogs must be at least 12 months old to compete in agility. It is recommended that larger breeds be at least 18 months old. This is because for most breeds the growth plates in the bones are still developing until the average age of fourteen months – even later for large breeds.
4. Dogs 18 months and younger and 7 years and older are encouraged to jump at least one height lower than their measured jump height.
5. All 4-Hers are strongly encouraged to consult their veterinarian before beginning agility training to be sure that there are no problems such as hip dysplasia, disc problems, overweight, etc.
6. The handler and dog must know basic commands at the time of competition. (sit, down, stay, come, controlled walking on leash, etc.)
7. Any breed or mixture of breeds and/or size dog is allowed to compete.
8. The handler must have complete control over their dog at all times.
9. Family members may share a dog, but there is a maximum number of four runs per dog per day.

## **Standard Equipment:**

1. Buckle collar – no choke collars
2. Standard 6 foot leash – no retractable leashes
3. For safety reasons, handlers must wear rubber soled shoes that tie or velcro (no flip-flops or slip-ons)

## Class Jump Heights

Classes divided by 4 jump heights:

- 4” class – for dogs up to 10 inches at the shoulder
- 8” class – for dogs greater than 10” and up to 14” at the shoulder
- 12” class – for dogs greater than 14” and up to 18” at the shoulder
- 16” class – for dogs over 18” at the shoulder.

It is the handler’s responsibility to know the appropriate jump height for their dog. Changes in jump height will not be allowed once the entry has been received, unless the Judge determines that the dog, for physical reasons, should not be jumping at the entered height.

(In order to help with height determination, a video will be posted on the State 4-H website which shows the proper procedure for measuring a dog for agility.)

**Class Descriptions** (Depending on their demonstrated abilities handler/dog teams may enter JTT and Standard or Advanced Jumpers and Advanced Standard)

JTT (Jumps, Tunnels, Table) Class\* (There will be a JTT-A and JTT-B, see details below)  
Jumps, Tunnels and Table – on leash  
Jumps, Tunnels and Table – off leash

\* For JTT Agility, the only pieces of equipment needed are: PVC pipe jumps, a table and one or more tunnels. Jumps and table are easily made, so the only equipment that would need to be purchased is the tunnel. JTT can be very affordable and should be very doable for even a beginning agility program.

Standard Agility\*\* (There will be a Standard A and Standard B division, see details below)  
Contact Obstacles and Weaves – on leash  
Contact Obstacles and Weaves – off leash

\*\* The contact obstacles (A-frame [maximum 4’6” at apex]), dog walk and seesaw) and six weave poles will be added to the course containing jumps, tunnels and table.)

When exhibitors move to Standard Agility, (by demonstrating the ability to complete contact obstacles and weaves successfully as determined by a county dog project leader), they will be able to compete in JTT and Standard agility classes at a single event.

Both JTT and Standard will be divided into two divisions - A and B.

**Division A** - In this division, neither the dog nor handler has previously achieved a qualifying score in 4-H agility or another agility venue. In addition, neither the handler nor the dog has previously achieved a title in another agility venue.

**Division B** - This division is designed for those where either the dog or handler have achieved a qualifying score in 4-H agility or another venue OR for those situations where either the handler or the dog has earned an agility title in another venue. Receiving a qualifying score in either JTT or Standard means that the dog/handler team should be entered in Division B in both JTT and Standard in future competitions.

## Advanced Classes

Advanced classes are designed for more experienced 4-H handlers and will help to prepare them to compete in other venues if they choose. **These classes must be performed off-leash.** In these classes, there will be more obstacles, more complex course patterns and the course time will be 60 seconds. Handlers may choose to enter Advanced classes when they have achieved a qualifying score in 4-H agility (in JTT for Advanced Jumpers or in Standard for Advanced Standard) or if they or their dog have earned a title in another agility venue. It is recommended that 4-H members consult their county 4-H dog agility leader regarding their readiness before entering advanced classes. Handlers who enter either or both of the advanced classes described below, may **NOT** enter JTT or Standard.

Advanced Jumpers – in addition to single bar jumps, open tunnels and pause table, this class may include wing jumps, double and triple jumps, tire jump, the broad jump, panel jump, twelve weave poles and a closed tunnel (chute). There will be a maximum of twenty obstacles in this course and course time will be 60 seconds (beyond 60 seconds, time penalties will be assessed as described in the scoring section of these guidelines).

Advanced Standard – may include single, double and triple bar jumps, tire jump, wing jumps, broad jump, panel jump, twelve weave poles, open and closed tunnels, a pause table, A-frame (maximum height 4'6"), dogwalk and seesaw. There will be a maximum of 20 obstacles and course time will be 60 seconds (beyond 60 seconds, time penalties will be assessed as described in the scoring section of these guidelines).

## General Course Information

1. JTT agility courses will consist of 7 – 10 obstacles with a course time of **50** seconds. Standard agility courses will consist of 10 to 15 obstacles with a course time of **75** seconds. Areas in which courses are set up should be at least 60 feet by 70 feet.
2. Advanced classes will consist of 16 – 20 obstacles with a course time of **60** seconds. Areas in which courses are set up should be at least 75 feet by 100 feet.
3. Indoor courses must have flooring (thick matting or another surface) which provides both traction and cushion! It is recommended that 4-H dog agility groups check with kennel clubs or training centers in their area, if they are seeking appropriate indoor facilities.
4. The course will be clearly marked with a start/finish line.
5. Each obstacle will be marked with a number. Handlers and dogs will be required to follow the course in numerical order.
6. Before competition begins, the handlers will be allowed to walk through the course to become familiar with the course. The walk through is restricted to the handlers only and is limited to 10 minutes.
7. In Standard agility, a period of time (determined by the judge) will be allowed for obstacle familiarization for dogs and handlers on the contact pieces **ONLY**.
8. A warm-up jump outside of the ring will be available for handlers and dogs. Handlers should be considerate of others in taking turns at the warm-up jump.
9. Any dog whose hair covers its eyes and may interfere with its vision of the obstacles may tie the hair back with rubber bands.

10. Food and toys are not permitted on the course.
11. Handlers are not permitted to have whistles, stopwatches, fanny packs or other training devices on the course.
12. The handlers may be on either side of the dog while running the course.
13. A dog's time starts whenever any part of the dog crosses the start line. Its time will end when any part of the dog crosses the finish line.
14. Flat collars are required for all dogs.
15. No choke or pinch collars are allowed on the agility course.
16. Familiarization with contact zone obstacles (A-frame, dog walk and seesaw) will be allowed for a time period established by the judge.

## General Scoring

1. Each course is worth a maximum 100 points.
2. A penalty consists of the loss of 5 or 10 points.
3. 10 point penalties (judge holds up two hands) include: not making contact in contact zones, not doing the obstacles in proper order or not completing an obstacle, the handler going over the obstacle with the dog, or missing one or more weave poles.
4. 5 point penalties (judge holds up one hand) include: knocking down a jump bar, excessively guiding the dog with leash, touching the dog, or touching the obstacle.
5. Refusals or run-by's will not be faulted in 4-H competition.
6. The only penalty for breaking a sit or a down on the pause table is the extra time that accumulates when the count stops, and is not resumed, until the dog is back in position.
7. The dog/handler team's run will be timed. A 5 point penalty will be given for going over the course time and an additional 5 points for each 15 seconds over the course time. In the case of a tie in total points, the fastest time will win.
8. If the judge determines that a dog is no longer working with the handler, the team will be excused from the course.
9. The contact zone on the A-frame, dog walk and seesaw is the contrasting colored zone (usually yellow) on the start and end of each obstacle.
10. Any interference or outside assistance that aids the dog or is intended to aid the dog or handler will be considered a 5 point penalty.
11. If a handler loses control of their dog while on the course, it will be considered a penalty.
12. Excessive or harsh commands or corrections will not be allowed. This will be a penalty.
13. Un-sportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. This will be a penalty and the handler and dog will be excused from the competition.
14. Failure to follow judge's verbal instructions is a penalty.
15. If the dog urinates or defecates in the ring (from the time it enters until it leaves the ring), the dog and handler will be disqualified from that class.
16. Any dog that commits to a contact obstacle (A-frame, dog walk, seesaw) with all four paws must, for safety reasons, continue with the obstacle. Whether obstacle is completed or if the dog jumps off, dog and handler must go on to the next obstacle and may not attempt that obstacle again.
17. A score of **70** or higher is considered a Qualifying Score in all classes of 4-H agility.

## Obstacles

It is critical that the equipment used in agility be safe for the dogs and handlers. For this reason it is very important that equipment be constructed to standards that have been approved by one of the major agility venues (AKC, USDAA, NADAC, CPE or UKC) These venues specify equipment standards that provide solid construction, appropriate sizes and heights, and non-slip surfaces. Either locate equipment made to the specifications of one of these venues, or if you are constructing your own agility equipment, obtain and follow these specifications exactly. Appropriate construction, heights, widths, and surfaces are essential for providing training and competition environments that are safe for 4-H youth and their dogs!

When hosting the State 4-H Dog Agility Show, the hosting county must provide equipment that meets the specifications outlined in the preceding paragraph. It is recommended that they also arrange for the judge they have selected to check the equipment prior to the show, and again for condition on the day of the show. The hosting county should also specify whether their A-frame and dogwalk are slatted or unslatted when they send out the initial show/entry information. This will allow counties with different types of equipment to help prepare their members.

Another safety consideration is the condition of the show ring. If it is an indoor trial the running surface must provide sufficient traction and cushion for the dogs. If it is an outdoor ring the ground should be examined before, and the day of, the show to make sure that there are no holes, stones, thistles or other factors that could cause safety problems for the dogs or handlers. An additional safety consideration is placing enough space between obstacles to provide safe entries for the dogs. There should be a minimum of 15 – 18 feet between obstacles.

**A-Frame:** Dogs must go up one side touching the contact zone on the up side with any part of one foot and down the other side in the direction designated by the judge. The dog must also touch the contact zone on the down side with any part of one foot prior to exiting the obstacle. The height of the A-frame at the apex will be no higher than 4'6".

**Dog Walk:** Dogs must go up the ramp touching the up contact zone with any part of one foot, cross the center section and go down the down ramp touching any part of one foot in the down contact zone prior to exiting the obstacle.

**Seesaw:** Dogs must go up the plank touching the up contact zone with any part of one foot and cause the plank to pivot. At least one foot must touch the down contact zone after the plank has touched the ground and prior to exiting the obstacle. (Handlers may slow the plank down so it doesn't scare the dog).

**Weave Poles:** The dogs must enter the weave poles by passing between poles # 1 and #2 from right to left. They must continue this sequence until they pass the last two poles. Missing one or more poles will be a 10 point penalty. The dog's left shoulder must enter on the right of the 1st pole.

**Pause Table:** The dogs must pause on the table for 5 seconds in either a sit or a down position, as specified by the judge at the beginning of the competition. The judge will do an oral count and will also give a signal to "Go". If the dog breaks from the sit or down position the judge will stop counting and will only continue the count when the dog returns to the proper position. When the judge says, "Go," the handler may then release the dog and proceed.

**Open Tunnel:** The dogs must enter the end specified by the judge and exit the other end.

**Closed (Collapsed) Tunnel:** The dogs must enter the rigid entrance and exit through the fabric chute.

**Bar Jumps:** The dogs must jump over the top bar, without displacing it, in the direction indicated by the judge.

**Panel Jump:** The dog must jump over the top panel without displacing it, in the direction indicated by the judge.

**Tire Jump:** The dogs must jump through the tire opening in the direction indicated by the judge, without knocking the tire/frame over.

**Double Jump:** The dog must jump over two bars, without displacing either of the bars.

**Triple Jump:** The dog must jump over all three bars, without displacing any of the bars.

**Broad Jump:** The dog jumps over several low, flat jumps equaling two times their jump height (for example, a dog jumping 8 inches needs to jump over a 16 inch broad jump).