

# ***ARE YOU READY TO COMPETE?***

## **Before You Enter a Trial:**

### **1. Help out at an agility trial**

- See [http://216.83.162.241/cgi-bin/volunteer\\_menu.pl](http://216.83.162.241/cgi-bin/volunteer_menu.pl) to sign up to help at a Teamworks Event.

### **2. Does your dog know how to safely and confidently navigate all of the obstacles from either side, off leash, including weave poles and the see-saw?**

### **3. Have you entered show & gos and had your dog on different equipment?**

### **4. Can you and your dog run a 15-obstacle course?**

- Can you memorize a 15-obstacle course?
- Do you feel comfortable making decisions about where to put your crosses in?

### **5. Can your dog ignore distractions?**

- Person sitting in a chair in the ring
- Person standing in the ring
- Dog waiting at the gate
- Gate left open
- Person and dog tugging outside of ring
- Dog playing with squeaky toy outside of the ring

### **6. Can you run your dog without a:**

- collar
- food on your person
- toy on your person
- treat apron

### **7. Can you crate your dog ringside while you walk the course?**

### **8. Have you had your dog measured with a wicket?**

### **9. Is your dog old enough to compete?**

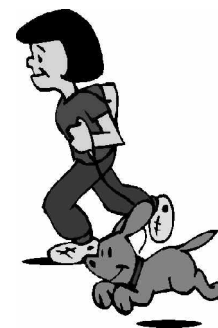
- Your dog should be at least 18 months to compete at full height safely.

### **10. Get a copy of all of the agility regulations.**

- AKC: [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)
- NADAC: [www.nadac.com](http://www.nadac.com)
- AMBOR: [www.amborusa.org](http://www.amborusa.org)
- USDAA: [www.usdaa.com](http://www.usdaa.com)
- ASCA: [www.asca.org](http://www.asca.org)

### **11. Register your dog with each organization you'd like to compete in**

- All organizations except the AKC allow mixed breed dogs to compete. The AKC allows dogs that look like purebred dogs to compete with an Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP), if they are spayed or neutered.
- Some trials are dual-sanctioned (NADAC/ASCA/AMBOR). Registering your dog in more than one organization will allow you to get more than one title.



## **Entering a Trial:**

### **12. Find the events you'd like to enter.**

- [www.cleanrun.com](http://www.cleanrun.com)
- [www.dogeventsonline.com](http://www.dogeventsonline.com)

### **13. Download and fill out the entry form (premium). You will need to know:**

- Your dog's registration number and registered name
- Your dog's height at the withers
- Sign and date your entry form!
- Don't forget the check!
- The opening date – don't send your entry in before it
- You will receive a confirmation from the trial secretary, but most times not until after the closing date of the trial
- Check your confirmation to make sure all the details are correct. If you need to make a change, you will need to do so as soon as possible.



## **Before the Trial:**

### **14. Pack for yourself:**

- Food and water for the day
- Sunscreen
- Raingear
- Folding chair
- Tent
- Premium list, including directions
- Directions to the hotel
- Agility record book

### **15. Pack for your dog:**

- Water and a water dish
- Treats
- Toys
- Crate
- British slip lead
- Flexi-leash
- Proof of vaccinations
- Clean up bags
- Your dog's height card (if you have one)
- Your video camera

## **At the Trial:**

### **16. Plan to be there early to get your dog measured by the judge**

- Most organizations require several measurements or measurements after a certain age before a permanent height card is issued. Once you have a permanent height card, you will no longer have to have your dog measured, but you will have to send in a copy of the permanent height card with your entry. Height cards are not interchangeable between organizations.

### **17. Plan to be there early enough to set up your tent and crate**

- Most trials allow you to set up the night before the trial

### **18. Get a copy of the course map(s)**

- Draw the dog's line through the course
- Note any possible off-courses
- Decide your handling path through the course
- Note where your crosses will be
- Remember that the judge is allowed to make changes in the course if needed



### **19. Sign up with the videographer**

- You will be surprised to see how different your run actually was than the way you might have remembered it to be while running it!

### **20. Watch the more advanced courses for the dogs in your height class**

- Note the similarities to the Novice Course – often you will see certain segments are the same
- Note the crosses that are being used successfully – and unsuccessfully
- Note where dogs are going off course
- Note what is distracting the dogs

### **21. Take the time to potty your dog well before your run**

### **22. Walk your dog around the outside of the ring and ask for attention – reward heavily!**

### **23. Take the time to play with your dog**

### **24. Put your dog in its crate until it is time to warm up**

## **Novice Class to the Ring:**

### **25. Be there for the judge's briefing**

- This is a chance for you to hear a last review of the rules and to ask the judge questions
- Check in with the gate steward to get your dog's name checked off on the running order list
- Note that no treats or toys are allowed in the ring during your walk-through

### **26. Walk the course (and stay there until they kick you off) ☺**

- Note any changes that were made from the course map
- Start by thinking about where you want to position your dog at the start line. What will he see when he's lined up? Do you want a sit or a down? How far back should he be so that he doesn't knock a bar?
- Then, walk the dog's path using strides that mimic the dog's stride – what potential off courses do you see as the dog?
- Next, think about where you want to put your crosses
- Consider other options – you may even want to stop and watch some other handlers to get ideas
- After that, walk the course and practice all of your crosses
- If you plan to use directional commands, say them to yourself as you walk
- When the ring clears a bit, try to run your course



### **27. When you come out of the ring, turn your back to the ring and see if you can picture the course**

### **28. If you are at an AKC trial, you may be allowed to do an equipment familiarization.**

- Whether or not there will be a familiarization is listed in the premium
- Your dog will be allowed to do each contact obstacle only one time.
- You will get to do this only one day of the trial

### **29. Watch as many handlers in your class as you can before you run**

- Learn from other handlers' mistakes, but don't necessarily change your handling plan unless you walked another option
- Don't change your handling plan if you can help it – it is much better for your dog if you are confident in your handling

## **Before You Run:**

- 30. Look at the running order - figure out your “cue dog” – that is, the dog that is right before you**
- 31. Figure out how many dogs “lead time” you need to warm up your dog and determine which dog will be the “cue dog” to go get your dog.**
  - This is magic number different for every dog – you will need to experiment to find out what it is
  - Remember that Snooker, Jumpers & Tunnelers runs take about half the amount of time as Standard or Combo class runs. Gamblers generally takes longer than Standard.
- 32. Take your dog’s collar off – use a British slip lead if possible.**
- 33. Get your dog out on leash and reward immediately for attention.**
- 34. Warm your dog up with a running activity**
- 35. Stretch your dog with stretching exercises**
- 36. Practice your directional commands**
- 37. Go to the warm up jump and practice**
  - Your start line stay
  - Practice your figure 8 with front crosses
  - Practice your figure 8 with rear crosses
  - Practice your wraps
  - Practice your lead-out pivot
- 38. Be ready to go in the ring with three dogs to go**
  - Let the gate steward know you are there
  - Don’t crowd the ring gate (remember some dogs need their personal space)
  - Be prepared to go into the ring when the gate steward tells you to
- 39. Place your dog in a stay, take your leash off your dog, and then look to the timer to see if you get the “go when ready” signal.**
  - Do not release your dog until you get this signal.
  - If the ring crew tell you that they are not ready, go back, release your dog and pet your dog. You may want to do some warm ups while you wait – or, if it looks like it will be a long time waiting, put your dog back on leash and leave the ring.
- 40. Before you release your dog, take the time to smile at him. This will help you relax and enjoy your run.**



## **After You Run:**

**41. Call your dog to you and ask for a behavior to prevent the dog from running out of the ring. Leash your dog before leaving the ring.**

**42. Praise and reward your dog – no matter what the result.**

- If there were things your dog didn't do well, go back over to the warm-up jump and review them, but keep it positive.

**43. Spend time playing with your dog.**

**44. Do some stretching exercises to “cool down”. Crate your dog after he has stopped panting.**

**45. Write down FIRST what went very well in your run. Then, write down areas for more training.**

**46. Scores will be posted after they are processed. Sometimes this takes some time.**

- Do not ask the score table for your score unless you are at a USDAA trial.
- If you qualified, you will see a “Q” next to your dog's name. If you were in the top 4 dogs, you will receive a placement ribbon. In NADAC and USDAA, you may receive a placement ribbon even if you didn't qualify.
- If you did not, you will see an “NQ” or an “E”. With an NQ, you should see an indication of other faults. With an E, there may be no indication. Go back to your rules or ask a friend who was watching what happened. If you are really not sure, you can ask the judge after the height class is over in between runs. The score table will not have seen your run, so they will not know.

**47. Smile and relax. You are no longer a rookie. Next time its your turn to help someone else who's getting ready for their first trial. ☺**

