

VIRTUAL AGILITY LEAGUE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



We are very interested in offering the VALOR program at our dog training facility. How would we go about implementing it?



✓ First, you would fill out an Facility Approval form and attach a picture of your facility.

In the meantime, please send the VALOR flyer to your interested students or direct them to

<http://virtualagilityleague.com/>

Each participant who plans to submit a VALOR test run video for judging should sign up online at:

<http://www.virtualdogsports.com/>

Each participant should register in Virtual Dog Spots using their name as a user name. Again, there is no charge for registry - only to submit runs for credit towards titles.

After registering, the participant should upload their video to their *own YouTube* account. They would then select the run that they are submitting (i.e. April 2014, Round 1, Beginner Standard, Training Division) and submit the run by copying and pasting the YouTube URL into the form.

Using Virtual Dog Sports, all qualifying runs will be judged and posted online and all title points will also be posted online. (Each participant can see only their own results.)

Ribbons, prizes and title certificates will be sent out at the end of each month by Priority Mail. As long as the performance is clean, the student gets a ribbon, a prize, and a qualifying score. Title certificates and medals are available for 3 qualifying scores in a category. There will be 3 Standard and 3 Jumpers (without weaves) courses offered per month. If the performance is not clean, we will ask the student to re-do it. However, note that they can re-do it until they get it correct the first time around.

The idea is recognition of achievement and a sense of pride for the student -- complete with all the bragging rights that a ribbon, certificate, and online agility video bring. Each student is also encouraged to submit a write-up about their dog - describing how far they have come to get to this point. We will post this online.

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Somewhere (but not in the guidelines) it says we have 90 days to submit the video after registration. Can't we video and then register if/when we have something to submit? (I realize we won't have the course ahead of time.)



There is no longer a "90-day rule". You can run any published VALOR course at any time – once for credit at each level with each dog. VALOR courses are posted on our website, or you can join our Yahoo Group and get course maps and a general set-up map for all courses. If more than one person wants to try the course with their dog, and then register after and if they get a qualifying run, there's no problem with that, as long as the registration form indicates which course was actually run using the course identifier number.



If we register and miss the date when the course is available (a friend and I will be traveling to a facility in another part of the state to do this), can we apply the registration to another course or do we need to pay again?



There is no longer a "90-day rule". You can run any published VALOR course at any time – once for credit at each level with each dog. VALOR courses are posted on our website, or you can join our Yahoo Group and get course maps and a general set-up map for all courses. If you register ahead of time for a course you were unable to run, then send an email and you can apply that registration to a future course. My advice is not to register before you actually run the course.

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The video guidelines say the ring viewing must be from the center of the ring. However, must the video of the run itself be taken from the same vantage point or can it be taken from another spot around the ring, provided the team can be seen at each obstacle?



Visibility of the handler and dog throughout the run is important, but so is the safety and comfort of the VALOR dog. If the dog is more comfortable with the videographer outside the ring, they should stay relatively centered along one side, but position themselves to be able to see the dog and handler throughout the course. The videographer doesn't have to stand inside the course, but also shouldn't be in a corner.



The dog must hit the down contacts. Not the up contact on the dog walk?



Yes, just the down contacts - as long as the performance is safe. Since we are reviewing video and not there in person to watch, there are some limitations of what the videographer can capture and what we will be able to see. So, for this reason, the down contacts are the only thing we ask the videographer to capture and the only thing we will look at when judging.



In the sample run on YouTube, it looks like the ring area that is being used is smaller than 100 x 100. Is it possible to qualify a smaller space provided the required course (or at least some of the courses) can be set up there?



Actually, the sample runs are in a 100x 100 exactly. However, we have special courses for "Narrow Arenas" and will approve smaller rings with a facility approval form, and pictures, and the following stipulations: 1) there should be absolutely no excess equipment stored inside the ring in the corners or along the edges when the course is set up 2) the dogs must jump half shoulder height if the size of the course is significantly smaller than 100x100. Teacup equipment has also been approved under similar circumstances. The most important criteria is that it is safe and secure for the dog.

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I have a dog that I'm not sure can do an entire run without a food reward. Can I have food in my pocket?



There is a “**Training Division**” which allows you to give your dog a treat, toy, or gentle touch guidance on course. Training Division teams can run Beginner and Intermediate level courses and earn titles, but are classified separately from the regular Beginner and Intermediate Divisions. Students who begin in the “Beginner Training Division” can move on to the “Intermediate Training Division”. In the Expert level, though, you can't give your dog food or toys *during* the performance, so, “Training Division” title holders should go back to the “regular” Beginner Division and Intermediate Division before moving up to Expert. As a side note, there's nothing that says you can't have treats in your pocket. As long as you can get through the whole run without giving it to your dog, make sure the videographer hits the button, and then pull some food out and reward your dog! (Yes, seriously!!!!) Again, it is all about the dog. I do want others viewing the runs to have a reverent level of respect for what the dogs accomplish....which is why no on-leash performances and no food or toys are allowed during the actual taped run....but I don't care if you have stinky hot dogs or salmon treats in your pockets, so long as it doesn't fall out during the taped run. ;-)
Please pass that word along. If your dogs give you an awesome performance, they deserve a reward (in the higher levels, just make sure it is after the camera is off)! Please, no food on the obstacles, though, as that isn't fair to the next dog to run the course.



How many times can I practice the run before I tape it for “real”?



You can practice the course as many times as you like, using treat rewards or toy rewards. You can even watch others run the same course online ahead of time for some handling tips! My advice is that you just keep the video camera running. If something goes wrong during the run (a missed contact, a dropped bar, or an off course), you can pull out treats and work through it, or just have the videographer hit “stop” and start over. Tape it until you get it correct! Don't wear your dog out, though. You do not have to register for a run until you have got a clean run to submit.

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Why do the VALOR courses all start with the table? What height table has to be used?



The reason all VALOR courses start with the table is so that the videographer can press the record button, then count down from 5 – to make sure the camera turns on in time to capture the run. The table is **not** an important obstacle with regard to performance, so it can be put on the ground with no legs at all. The dog does not have to do any position on the table, nor wait for the count to end as long as the tape is running when the dog leaps off the table it has served its purpose.



Do we have to use flagging tape to mark off the ring? Can we use ribbon instead?



You can use ribbon, painters tape, or labels to mark off 10 foot increments along the edges of the ring. It just needs to be visible on your video.



We were supposed to have the date and time showing while we recorded?_



Originally, I thought it would be a good idea, but then came to realize that many of the newer cameras don't have that option. I made it a suggestion, but not a requirement (and forgot to remove it from page 7!) It has been ammended in the Guidelines now.



Another problem we had was that videoing in the sunlight it was very difficult to see the team running on the video screens in the sunlight.



It is always best to shoot video with the sun at your back.

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If a dog jumps on the table after the start of the run, is that an NQ or is the table not considered part of the course?



The table is actually labeled "number 1" on every course. So, if the dog jumps on the table out of sequence, you should re-do and re-tape that run, as it would be an "off-course", even though the table is mostly there for the convenience (so we are sure that the video camera is turned on). On the other hand, if the dog leaves the table before the count of 5 is finished, there is no penalty. If you keep your table low to the ground, it might not stand out as much as an off course. It does NOT have to be regulation height for your dog's jump height.



The guidelines require that the team be visible at each obstacle. There were times when the dog or handler couldn't be seen. Is that an NQ?



It is most important that the dog been seen throughout the whole run. It is essential that the performance of each obstacle be visible. If the handler disappears from view, that's not as important as the dog disappearing from view – so tell your videographer to stay focused on the dog and stand where they will be able to see all down contacts.



On the same line of thought, if the dog is seen doing each obstacle but runs out of view (we had some snarking at the few spectators by a couple of the human aggressive dogs), is that an NQing run?



Because we are going to post this video publicly - as something for you to be proud of --we are going to ask you to re-do / re-tape any run where a dog shows obvious aggression to an observer. If it is just a passing thought, but you are able to get the dog back, that is fine. A note for the future - have spectators stand as far away as possible...or don't have any around at all! Choose a videographer that the dog knows (a family member, instructor) and ask everyone else to wait to see the video online.

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It would be nice to be able to submit the video set-up links separately and not have to use editing software to attach them to do them after every run.



That is not a problem. The ring set up and the test run can be submitted as separate videos by emailing that YouTube link to michelegodlevski@gmail.com. In fact, if you are training with a group, one video of the ring set up can be used for everyone running that course at every level.



I noticed on the new Snooker courses that the table is labeled number 1. Does that mean that we start the closing sequence with the table – or does the opening sequence start with the table?



The opening sequence starts with the table – again – just so we are sure we have video from the start. The closing sequence starts with “2”.

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We had more than one camera going for each run. What should we do if one of the other camera may have this run from another vantage point where it's obvious that no off-course obstacles were taken?



If you have more than one video of the same run, and collectively, they show the dog at all obstacles, then you can submit them both. They must both be taken of the same exact run, of course.



If the dog back-weaves a couple poles, is that off-course or must the dog do the entire set backwards to be off-course?



Back-weaving would be defined as a doing a complete series of 3 poles. Once they have completed 3 poles in the wrong direction, it's an off-course.



If the dog pops out of the weaves, handler calls dog out to go to beginning, and dog passes through two poles (that is, cuts through the poles) on the way to start again, is that off-course?



Back-weaving would be defined as a doing a complete series of 3 poles. If the dog hasn't gone through 3 consecutive poles, go back to the correct entrance of the weaves and try again!



If the dog enters a tunnel correctly but turns back while inside and comes out the entrance instead of finishing it, is that off-course?



While in other agility venues, that would be a refusal, in VALOR refusals are not judged. Put the dog back in the tunnel and carry on!

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On contact obstacles, if the dog has fewer than all four paws on it, steps back and then tries it again successfully, is that an off-course?



Again, in other venues, that is a refusal, but VALOR doesn't count refusals or run-outs. Just put your dog back on the obstacle and carry on. However, if the dog has all four paws on the obstacle and bails off, that would be called as a missed contact/unsafe performance. This means you should re-do the entire run.



I would like to offer these competitions to students/handlers in the area by advertising days and times that the courses will be available and I will assist with videoing. I am hopeful that if I can offer the course already set up many folks will be more encouraged to do it. It will also take less time for them because they won't have to set up the course, break it down etc. It will also assure, for you, that the course is set up by someone who is experienced at setting courses. My question is – if I am willing to offer this would it be okay if I am also charging a small fee for the set up and assistance? It would likely be like my agility run thru fee of \$5 per run. It would increase their total cost but, as I see it, they would be paying me a small fee but saving themselves an hour or two of time and labor.



Yes, a facility owner / instructor can most certainly charge for rental of the building and set-up. What I would suggest is that you run it like a “by invitation only” show & go so that you can be sure the environment is set up for students to succeed with distracted and reactive dogs. I would also suggest that you let the students sign up online themselves for the run after they get a video of a clean run – that way I have all of their contact information and they can pay by credit card if they like. Facilities that host 10 events will get a free jump. Students that complete a title (3 legs) will get a gift certificate for \$5 off their next VALOR run.



I am not comfortable setting up a course. Do you have instructions on how to do that?



Yes, please see our [video online on setting up a course](#). You can also ask your instructor to help you.

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Some of you have asked how you can get the actual video downloaded onto your own PC & to YouTube.



I found a program called YouTube Downloader and it's been working great!. **Copy and paste this link to get to the webpage**

http://download.cnet.com/YouTube-Downloader/3000-2071_4-10647340.html

You simply go to the tab marked download and paste the youtube link into the field where it says "paste URL" You can direct where to put the file right below it where it says "Save to"

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