



Competition Rules & Etiquette

Please take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with this section which details rules and good practice during competition.

It is the responsibility of all members running in a team to ensure they are aware of their running order and make themselves available at the times their races are due to begin. If one or more team member is more than 5 minutes late for the scheduled start of a race, with all others ready, the Division Judge may declare a forfeit by that team.

Dogs may wear a collar and/or close fitting harness. No hanging parts will be allowed that are liable to flap around when the dogs are racing.

It is the responsibility of all members running in a team to ensure they are in the ring and ready for the 2 minute warm up. Team members should assist other team members in the warm up where required. Team members should refrain for using their mobile whilst racing.

In Open events are the best of 5 legs and Starter events are the best of 3 legs and generally all 3 are run to give experience.

Teams

Each team is to consist of a minimum of 4 dogs and 4 handlers, with a maximum of 6 dogs, and 6 handlers, plus a box loader, all of whom must be current BFA members (if competing in Open events).

At their discretion a team may have a runner or two to pick up loose balls, set up knocked down jumps and otherwise assist the team, provided doing so does not interfere with the Judges, or the opposing team. Each team is to have four dogs running in each heat, with a maximum of 2 alternates as standbys close at hand. The alternates may be used at the team's discretion or in the case of any injury. Team members should speak to their captain so they are aware of what position they are running in each race.

Minimum Age

Dogs under the age of 18 months will not be allowed to compete at sanctioned Open Flyball events even if running in a team stated as Not For Competition (NFC). Dogs must be over 12 months old to compete in Starters Flyball events.

Conduct of the Box Loader

Except during the warm up, to retrieve a loose ball or get a fresh supply of balls to load, the box loader must remain in the upright position behind the box. He/she may offer verbal encouragement only, as long as such encouragement does not distract the opposing team. The box loader is to remain in position until the Division Judge determines the outcome of the heat. If, in the Judge's opinion, a box loader has violated any of these rules, his/her team may forfeit the heat. If, in the opinion of the Judge, a box loader assists a dog, except where provided for in the rules, the dog shall run again.

In The Ring

The Start

BFA flyball is such a fast sport that it is almost impossible to judge false starts and early crossovers by eye. An electronic 'coloured lights' system is used to detect and highlight these racing 'errors,' as well as to provide very accurate timing for both lanes. Once the judge has confirmed that all parties concerned are ready to race, he/she signals to the person operating the lights to start the race. A button is pressed and a series of amber lights come on in sequence. The first dog is released with the aim that it crosses the start line as the lights turn to green. If the dog crosses too early, the race is stopped. Both teams are allowed one false start per leg. If another false start occurs the race continues but the offending dog has to run again as fifth dog for his team.

Crossovers

As speed is of the essence, it is important that the dogs "cross" nose to nose on the start line. It takes a great deal of practice to build up the dog's confidence and for the handler to know when and from what distance to let the dog go. For example, some handlers will release their dogs 50' back from the start line when the preceding dog is jumping the first jump on the return run. If a dog is released too soon and crosses prior to the outgoing dog reaching the start/finish line, a light will appear and the offending dog (which will be the incoming dog) has to run again as a fifth dog. Each position is signified by a different colour light and in the main the judge will hold out their arm and indicate which dog must rerun; 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th.

Peg System

A peg system is used to denote which teams have won which leg. A board with 8 coloured pegs stands in front of the judge. 3 red, 3 blue and 2 yellow. Blue represents the Blue Lane (left) and the Red represent the Red Lane (right). At the end of each leg the appropriate coloured peg is moved to the top edge of the board to indicate the winning lane. The yellow pegs denote false starts and are moved to a horizontal position for a false start.

Interference

If a dog or any team member interferes with the opposing team during a heat, the team causing the interference will forfeit the heat. If a dog continually interferes with opposing Teams, at the Division Judge's discretion it may be excluded from racing and the Team be allowed to use a reserve if one is recorded on their Time Sheet. This includes interference in the racing lane, in all bound areas and in the area where dogs are waiting to run. Interference is defined as obstructing the other team's dog from running/completing its race. A dog chasing a loose ball into the other team's area is not necessarily interference.

Distractions

It is acceptable to use toys and treats, however: Toys **must** be **silent** as squeaks can distract other dogs. When using treats, be vigilant not to drop in the ring this could distract subsequent dogs from running. The use of any other training aids (e.g. clickers, whistles or discs etc) is prohibited as these can affect other dogs in ways you may not expect.

Team members shall not distract the opposing team by bouncing a ball, using a Flyball box at the end of the run, or by any other means, nor throw any object for their dogs (i.e. balls, toys, Frisbees etc).

Team members are required to pick up any loose balls. The first offence of these infringements shall receive a warning - a second offence or any offence thereafter during the race will result in the loss of the heat.

Ring Parties

All club members should try to ensure they take their turn when the club is allocated to a ring party. If any members are unsure about the rules and/or responsibility of each ring party duty, an experienced club member will be more than happy to explain and assist as many times as required for another club member to feel confident. Please ask a committee member if you need any assistance.

Box Judges shall observe the box loader/spectators for infringements, signal the Line Judge of a possible box malfunction and observe dogs for interference or missing a jump.

The Box Judges and Line Judges shall remain stationary during each heat. If a ball goes around or bounces off a judge, it shall be deemed in play. The principle responsibility of each Box Judge and each Line

Time Sheets shall include the team name and registration number, the team captain's name, address and telephone number, each dog's name, BFA number, breed, and jump height, together with each handlers name and BFA number. It shall also record the relevant teams 'break-out' time (if applicable).

Lights there are two sets of light controls. The main control starts the race and also has a holding system for the timers. The other control is only used when a dog faults, this system can be a switch or a button dependent on the lights being used.

Awareness and Control

Please keep dogs on a lead at all times especially while other divisions are running. Please be aware of your dog's behaviour at all times.

If a dog shows undue aggression towards another dog or handler at any time during the competition, the Division Judge may exclude the dog from competing and a standby dog can be used. The Division Judge is to determine the degree of aggression that warrants substitution. Any dog excluded from competition must be reported to the BFA Show Secretary. A second such report and the dog will be barred from future competitions. An application for reinstatement may be submitted to the BFA Committee after a period of one year.

If any dog has a particular dislike for another it is the responsibility of both handlers to prevent any incidents occurring. Please be aware of other dogs and allow extra space when necessary.

Lame dogs; Bitches in Season or Pregnant; dogs recovering from Surgery

Lame Dogs must not take part or continue to take part in a competition. A Tournament Head Judge or Division Judge, in consultation with the Tournament Organiser, may exclude a dog that in their opinion is not in a fit state to race.

Dogs recovering from surgery or requiring bandages to protect an injury may not take part in a competition. Bandages do not include coats, sweaters or stop pad protectors. Protective covering may be used as a preventative but may not be used to protect an existing injury.

Bitches in Season (from start to end of the season) are not allowed within the precincts (as defined by the tournament organiser) of a sanctioned tournament, starters competition or fun event.

The Mating of dogs at sanctioned tournaments, starters competitions or fun events is not allowed.

A Bitch that is or maybe Pregnant (whether the pregnancy has been confirmed or not) is **not** allowed to compete at sanctioned tournaments, starters competitions or fun events and for **at least** 8 weeks after giving birth.

Bitches due to whelp within 7 days of a competition are not allowed at a sanctioned tournament, Starters competition or Fun event.

Any **team/handler** found to be in contravention of any of the above will be disqualified from the competition with the loss of all points and placing and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

General

If you know in advance that you will not be able to make a competition you have signed up for please contact us immediately to give us time to find a replacement. Fees for competitions have to be paid for in advance and are non refundable, this expense is borne by the club in the first instance. If a team member finds they can no longer make the tournament after the entry has been submitted every effort will be made to find a suitable replacement, if this is not possible no refund will be offered, they will also then become liable for reimbursing the entire entry fee if their withdrawal results in the team no longer being able to compete.

Team members should arrive at the competition ground no later than 8am for registration on the day of racing unless otherwise advised.