



Kennel Club Agility Liaison Council Governance Panel Report – April 2022

The Governance Panel has had very limited time to work on the issues arising from the last meeting and has a number of ongoing matters. A summary of key issues and two proposals are detailed in this report.

Competing with Bitches in Season at Prestige Events

This matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Agility Liaison Council (107-112 in the minutes of the Agility Liaison Council 27th January 2022 summarised this discussion).

A majority of the Council agreed to bring forward a proposal to implement a change that permitted bitches in season to compete in Prestige Events where the dog had already qualified to compete (including quarter finals, semi-finals and finals). These events would include Crufts, Discover Dogs and the finals held at the International Agility Festival.

Bitches in season are allowed to compete in many overseas competitions and there was no evidence of any negative impact on other competitors. This includes dogs representing GB and UK countries at international competitions.

The events that would be affected are mostly held at venues where there will already be bitches in season present, competing in other events or participating in demonstrations etc. There would be a number of dogs involved at these finals and most of these dogs already compete in the higher grades and therefore have more competition experience, so are more likely to be able to maintain focus with any added distraction.

Competitors that have qualified for any finals will have worked very hard to qualify and build their dog's readiness to these events. To exclude them from events is unfair and lowers the standard of competition.

A rule change is proposed to be fair to individuals and maintain the standard of competition at prestige events.

The Governance Panel proposes the following regulation changes:

H 9 (15) A statement that no bitch in season is allowed to compete at Limited, Open, Premier or Championship Agility Shows. However, bitches in season can be invited by The Kennel Club and allowed to compete at quarter finals, semi-finals and finals of Kennel Club Prestige Events if they have previously qualified for the invitational event.

We also need to add a clause into the actual rule:

H 13 Removal of dogs from competition

- a. A bitch which is in season **(apart from a dog competing at a prestige Kennel Club event)**.

Insertions in bold

Funding for Research Projects

The Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group had previously discussed the concept of placing a small levy on entries at agility shows to help finance research commission by the Sub-Group. At the last ALC meeting the Council was broadly in support of the principle, but noted that there was no precedent for such a levy and was also concerned how such monies might be allocated. The Sub-Group is currently discussing this matter further and an update will be provided in the report from the Sub-Group by our representative Martin Tait.



The Agility Liaison Council also raised the issue of funding for other priority areas. There was a brief discussion as to whether or not a similar levy could be used as a mechanism for finding ring fenced resources for other priority areas where funding is a key issue.

There are two areas identified that need significant investment: training, support and mentoring for judges, and training and support for measures. These areas need to have further work on defining the needs, and what resources are already available.

The Governance Panel will discuss this matter further after feedback from the Sub-Group and after more work to identify the needs, current resources available and problems in these other areas.

The Role of the Competition Manager

This matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Agility Liaison Council (15-23 in the minutes of the Agility Liaison Council 27th January 2022 summarised this discussion).

The revised Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards 2022 defines the role of the Competition Manager, and states the skills required: 'To carry out these duties effectively the Competition Manager must be completely impartial, have a good understanding of H Regulations, and be able to identify potential issues on a course which may compromise the safety of handlers or dogs.'

The Council noted that the Competition Manager is normally supported by a number of other members of the Show Organising team. The Panel is looking to develop further guidance for Competition Manager to advise how they may call upon other members of the Show Organising team for support, whilst retaining impartiality and overall responsibility. This guidance would be available in a future version of the Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards.

Measuring

An update on progress with training for new measurers will be given at the meeting.

The Governance Panel is aware of the ongoing problems with the measuring system, highlighted by data recently made available from the Team GB measurers. The anomaly is that dogs are having an additional measure for eligibility for Team GB which demonstrates that some dogs are clearly competing in the incorrect height in the UK. We are looking to explore further data on this subject to identify the cause of the problem and are aware that a proposal has been brought forward by the GB Team Manager to change the Challenge measure to address some of these issues.

Competitors Interfering with courses

There have been a number of incidents of competitors interfering with courses at shows. These incidents varied but included changing angles of jumps, and moving numbers. This matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Agility Liaison Council (Item 20 from the minutes of the Agility Liaison Council 27th January 2022 summarised this discussion).

The Council agreed that such behaviour:

- ✦ impugns the judge's decision
- ✦ interferes with another competitor's chances of winning
- ✦ may affect the safety of dogs, judges, handlers & ring party.

If a competitor has any concerns about a course, there are proper channels to raise them.

The Governance Panel has looked at the regulations that enable Competition Managers and judges to deal with these circumstances where a course has been interfered with. The rule that covers this is *H (1) 10. Competing*

b. No competitor shall impugn the decision of the judge or judges.



However the implications for a competitor found to be doing this are not clear. Other relevant rules which affect this issue include fraudulent behaviour and possible removal of awards (see below)

There is a regulation that allows for a dog to be removed from competition if it is interfering with the safety or another competitor:

H13. Removal of dogs from competition. Following discussion between the show management and/or a veterinary surgeon, a dog shall be prevented from competing and/or removed from an agility show if it is:

c. Interfering with the safety or chance of winning of an opponent.

The circumstances of such a removal shall be recorded in the competition/show incident book and submitted to The Kennel Club.

We therefore propose a new regulation that matches this regulation to be brought in to apply to handlers:

H15. Removal of a competitor from competition. Following discussion between the show management and/or a judge, a competitor shall be prevented from competing and/or removed from an agility show if they are interfering with the safety or chance of winning of an opponent.

The circumstances of such a removal shall be recorded in the competition/show incident book and submitted to The Kennel Club.

Subsequent regulations should be re-numbered.

This allows the Competition Manager to ask a competitor to leave the show if they interfere with a course.

Other regulations relevant to competitors moving equipment in rings

H25. Fraudulent or discreditable conduct at agility shows.

The secretary of an agility show must immediately report in writing to the Secretary of The Kennel Club any case of alleged fraudulent or discreditable conduct, or any default omission or incident at or in connection with the competition which may come under his notice, even where parties concerned have indicated that they intend taking no action and at the same time forward to the Secretary of The Kennel Club all documents and information in connection therewith which may be in his possession or power. If evidence is placed before the Board to its satisfaction that undue influence has been exercised by any person(s), or that any improper means have been used to influence the appointment of a judge or to interfere with the competition of a dog at any event held under Kennel Club Rules and Regulations, the Board may require all correspondence and evidence in connection with the case to be produced in order that it may deal with the offender(s) under Kennel Club Rule A11.

27. Disqualification and forfeit of awards.

a. A dog may be disqualified by the Board from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not, if proved amongst other things to have been;

(11) To have been the subject of any other default, omission, action or incident occurring at or in connection with the show rendering it unfair that the award should be allowed to stand

**Sara
Hawkswell ALC
Governance Panel Chair
5th April 2022**

