

Kennel Club Agility Liaison Council

Governance Panel Report –October 2023

Micro Height

Following the last ALC meeting the Governance Panel has been considering the demand and need for an additional micro height at KC agility competitions. This is at its earliest stage and the panel hopes to be able to bring some consultation to the ALC next year.

We are looking at demand (how many dogs would fit into a micro height), safety concerns (is lowering the jumps for very small dogs the only consideration) and practicalities (can shows accommodate an additional height).

When introducing the new Intermediate height consideration was given as to what proportion of a dogs height at the withers a dog should jump and the cutoff of a maximum of 125% was used (this figure had featured in some of the research on jump heights). If we start from this figure then no dog smaller than 241 mm should be jumping our small height jumps at 300mm.

The current jump heights we have (Large, Intermediate & Medium) are set at the dogs jumping a maximum of 120%, 116% and 114% respectively

The table below summarises this information.

| | Small | Medium | Intermediate | Large |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Max dog Height (mm) | 350.0 | 430.0 | 500.0 | |
| Min Dogs Height (mm) | 241.0 | 351.0 | 431.0 | 501.0 |
| Jump Height (mm) | 300.0 | 400.0 | 500.0 | 600.0 |
| Range | 110.0 | 79.0 | 69.0 | |
| % dogs height (min) | 124.5 | 114.0 | 116.0 | 119.8 |
| % dogs height (max) | 85.7 | 93.0 | 100.0 | |

Setting a minimum height for small of 256 mm (meaning all dogs 255mm and below were in a micro height) would make the Small height range 94 mm and the maximum percentage height a dog is jumping 117%. This would be equitable with the other jump heights.

The jump height selected would affect what proportion of very small dogs would be jumping less than 125% of their height. The jump height commonly offered for AnySize at KC shows is 200 mm, the jump height used as WAO and IFSC is 250mm. With a jump height set at 200mm, dogs as small as 160 mm would be jumping 125% of their height and with jumps at 250mm only dogs measuring 200mm and above would meet these criteria.

The panel will initiate a programme of data collection early in 2024 – this will ask agility competitors (and potential competitors) to submit information on the height of their dogs to assist with determining what proportion of dogs currently competing in small might measure into a new micro height. We hope that this may also source data on dogs not currently competing at KC shows as the current small jump height is too big for them.

If a micro height were to be introduced this would be an endorsement from KC to very small dogs competing in agility. Before this is possible we would like to seek the advice of the AHWSG as to what issues other than jump heights need to be taken into account. Is simply introducing a lower height and

retaining all other equipment at standard sizes acceptable or will this bring in additional risks to very small dogs.

Measuring

Training and Assessments for new measurers

Training and assessment sessions have now been completed.

A total of 160 applications were received. The team trained and assessed 92 candidates with 78 new measurers being appointed. This ends the current round of assessments with further assessments being arranged if we have a shortage of measurers in any particular area.

Measuring Guidelines

The guidelines are being updated following consultation with those involved in running the recent assessments. This will be completed by the end of November 2023 so that a revised 2024 can be published.

Grading Review

No significant progress has been made in starting the review of grades. It is important to remember that although a grade review is planned we have only had two full years of competition since the new height and grading structure came in. This will affect how well we are able to judge the effect of the new system.

We are looking at how to collate data relating to the rate of progression across all grades, in the absence of a database this is difficult and has to be done by looking across show data, year on year. It is not possible to easily take into account how frequently dogs have competed or which type of show they won up at.

Once we have data we will then re-visit all the issues considered in the initial grade review:

- Value of protecting grade 1 for new handlers
- Current dynamics of the shows put on (increasing small shows, week long shows, closer proximity of shows etc)
- Days in limbo
- Relationship between jumping & agility wins
- Number of wins to progress
- Only clear rounds in course time count
- Total number of grades
- Ability of shows to combine grades
- Number of classes that can be offered at open & limited shows
- Limiting licensing of shows
- Class size affecting value of the win

The one outstanding matter was qualification for Championship classes which was deferred until we saw how the new grading system and the four heights bedded in. This will be reviewed at the same time.

Special Licenses Discussion

A new regulation was brought in last January. ALC was not consulted on this regulation and its intended implication is unclear. It has also been interpreted in many different ways by individual clubs.

New Regulation H(1)4

Societies are required to apply for permission to hold Special Events. Applications should be submitted to The Kennel Club by email at least six weeks before the start of any qualifying heats for the event.

Special Events are designated as any activity-related event which cannot be included on the schedule of a normally licensed show/trial/competition due to being invitational and therefore not open to all competitors, or which are not being held at a licensed show. Where competitors qualify for a final via heats held at that and other shows/trials/competitions, special event permission must be sought for the final whether it is held in conjunction with a licensed show/trial/competition or as a separate standalone event. This would not apply where all of the heats are held at the same show/trial/competition at which the final is held.

The regulations relating to the disqualification and forfeit of awards will apply to these events.

(Effective 1 January 2023)

It is unclear to many what the purpose of this new regulation was and how, if at all, it changes events that clubs are running.

It is understood that any club holding a “special event” such as a final permission is now needed, but not necessarily an actual special events license. Any special events held under this system should follow standard KC regulations.

Clarity is however needed on the following issues:

- Finals etc are normally stated on a schedule, but not with a class number or availability to enter – does there need to be any specific reference to how these are held if no longer under a “special license”
- Is there a regulation link to other show(s) happening that day, and that some regulations apply across both the special event and the show (such as restricting a judge in the show from entering the special event). This has been implied by KC staff but is not in the regulation.
- When another organisation is running a final at the venue where a club is holding a show does the KC require the club to have any sort of “approval” for this event? If so does this only apply to agility events or any other canine event.
- If special licenses are no longer needed for finals etc what circumstances would a special license be needed?

These questions have all been asked by event organisers and competitor. A discussion is needed to clarify these issues, understand the purpose of the regulation and to see if changes to the wording are needed.

Sara Hawkswell
ALC Governance Panel Chair
26 October 2023