

KiwiDogAgility

Diary of an Agility Judge

Its Saturday and I am up at 5am to go to the competition. Why so early you might ask? True, it does seem early when the course walk starts at 8am, but I am judging first and so I have to be there at 7am to check my course and it takes an hour to drive there so... you do the maths!

We are two days away from home at a venue I have never been too, judging for a club I have never judged for before. I have checked out the food supply and am impressed and the weather forecast for the whole weekend is good so I am happy what more could you want?

7:45am The course is set up. Luckily I brought along a copy of the course plan because the club secretary forgot to bring a copy of the ones I sent her last week!! The tunnels are longer than my plan so they took some tweaking to ensure the rest of the course looked the same as on my map. Have dropped the ropes so there are sensible entry and exits, course is ready to walk. I look around for a measuring wheel and discover that it is already in use, my ring manager is half way around already – what a good man!!

8am – the course has a CL and SCT and competitors have started to walk it. Nice course, some say. A bit hard for me I hear someone murmur! That's always the way, no matter what you put out. I checked my judging line before the tunnels were pegged and find that one of the tunnels is not facing quite the right way, means it will add a few metres to my line, oh well, cant change it now everyone is walking it!!

I scoot off to run my dog in the other ring (only 5 faults - I am happy!!) and am back in plenty of time to start judging, cant find my scribe anyway!! 8.30am scribe found, people are lining up, off we go.

Judging gives you the best seat in the house – you see all the dogs and see/hear all the handlers. If you can see the timing display you also try and work out who the winners might be, and what time the

dog that goes clear has to beat. That can be fun and quite exciting. Some handlers are quite nervous when they run but others can be quite chatty and will have a conversation with you as they go around.

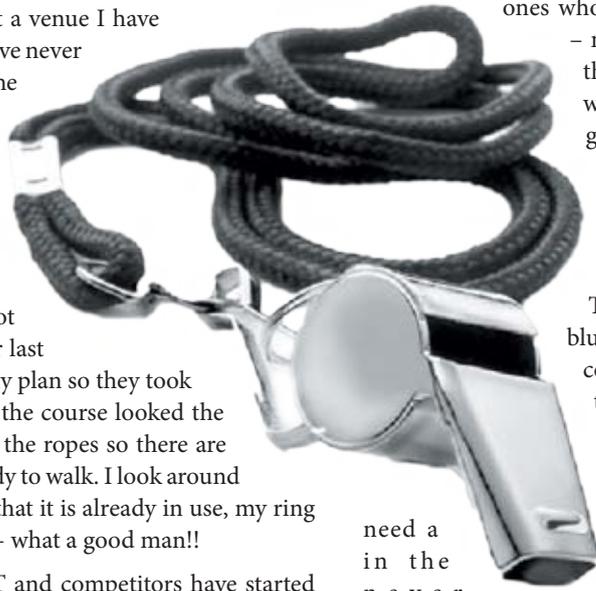
These are the fun ones to judge. Not so much fun are the ones who blame their dogs when a mistake is made – many is the time I have felt like telling them that it was the poor handling that put the dog wrong!! The best time to judge is when someone goes around your course clear for the first time ever – all their friends cheer and rush up to them patting them and the dog on the back and you feel special because you are a part of their success.

Two hours later and the competitors start to blur. You feel like you have seen them run the course before. A change in heights is a good thing as you can tick off one group of dogs. You clap a dog as it finished and the scribe questions you because you disqualified it at the start of the course. Ooops, maybe I

break, but only 20 to go so carry. The course next ring has finished walking, oh well, mind. I finish my judging and walk it from ring and then go on to have a magnificent run and blitz the field!! Just goes to show that sometimes walking the course is over-rated – mind you the last half dozen stuck in the ring at the end of the course walk wont believe you, they have been walking for about 30 minutes and still want to keep walking! Or is it just an opportunity to have a chat with those seated elsewhere on the grounds?

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The weekend finishes with lots of bits of cardboard handed out and tons of ribbons. Some people have moved up a level, others have extra crcs to add to their collection and there will be a few Club shouts during the following week. It's been fun – so roll on next appointment....



Best quotes heard this month in agility

- Second turn left – heard on a particularly knarly Senior course to tell the dog which way to go next!
- D is for donation – used by a competitor letting the scribe know her dog's number. The lady is obviously a realist who doesn't expect a clear round! Still, lets hope she had fun with her dog anyway!

For up to date information on NZ Agility go to the website www.dogagility.org.nz



Agility overseas

TEXAS

Last year NZ sent the Paw Blacks Chelsea Marriner, Kevin Burnette and Natasha Coulter on this country's first ever trip to the International Federation of Cynological Sports (IFCS) world agility championships which was held in the UK. The trip was topped off by Chelsea winning Gold with her borrowed dog Moss in the individual Jumping competition for Maxi dogs. This year another group will be travelling to Texas. The handlers have to run dogs donated by the locals due to quarantine restrictions. This year the people travelling are:- Kevin Burnette, Bronwyn Burnette, Deb Jackson and Keri Nielsen. Bronwyn has lined up a team coach over in Texas and they have 7 dogs assigned to them - 1 micro, 1 mini, 3 midis and 2 maxis. They have seen footage of the dogs, and the coach and dog owners have seen footage of the Kiwis handling our own dogs, and Keri says "I think there are some very good dogs in the mix." The Team will comprise Kevin, Bronwyn and Keri running 1 mini and 2 midis, and the remaining 4 dogs will be just run in individual competition.

There are a number of other countries confirmed including:- USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, South Africa, Russia, Belgium, Netherlands, Spain. The competition will be held in Europe in 2013. The event will be held over 5 days, rather than the previous 4 days. Wednesday will be check in and warm up, Thursday will be a USDAA hosted day of non-championship events, which are optional and will provide the chance for WAC participants to compete in non-championship events before the official WAC Events commence on the Friday. Friday to Sunday is the normal 3 days of Championship Classes. A Facebook page will soon be set up so that anyone who is interested can follow the progress of the team during the event. We look forward to hearing how the Team goes. For more information <http://www.ifcsdogsports.com/>

SYDNEY

Another group of Kiwis will be travelling to Australia later on this year to compete in the Australian Agility Nationals being held at the Sydney equestrian Centre June 13th to 17th 2012. These people are taking their own dogs. The team consists of 5 members, all of whom will compete on the day, with the 4 best results counted. Four competitors from New Zealand have confirmed they will be travelling to Australia for this event, with a total of 6 dogs. The 'Paw Blacks' team would be: Taupo's Lyn Sayers and AgCh Schondara Go Jayme Go ADXB JDX (Jayme), Taupo's Christine Christine Gabb will be running Helena von Furstenhaus AD (Josie), Timaru's Natasha Coulter (pictured) and Ruff Tuff Powder Puff (Jonty), Dunedin's Louise Marsh and Coal Creek's Maillot Jaune (Vino), Louise Marsh and Flying Ducati (Fly) and Natasha Coulter and Hobnob's Déjà vu (Euro).

The Teams event will see five dogs run two courses, one Agility and one Jumping and in each of these classes the worst score is eliminated and the four best scores are aggregated. The atmosphere is similar to our NZDAC Inter Zone events so we are fortunate indeed to have been invited. For more information <http://www.agilitynationals2012.com.au/>



Great Agility Ideas!

- Best agility numbers – those soccer dome cones sets are great – they come with their own stand and in a range of colours. You then add the numbers and away you go. You could even use them for setting up a course J= Jump, Ft= flexible tunnel etc. To make it easier you could colour code the obstacles – all the yellow cones are jumps, the blue cones are hurdles, green is the weave, red are contacts. They sit quite nicely in the grass and even on a solid surface, and wouldn't get taken away by the wind. Go to the soccer website www.nzsoccershop.co.nz to see the different options.



- A great idea with winter coming up and no doubt a few rainy days when we are doing agility – This is to do with the Call-board. What happens when it rains? The whiteboard pens wont write, no-one knows who has gone or who is next and exasperation sets in. No more!! There are a couple of things you can use.
 1. Eyebrow pencil (it doesn't run in the wet – I can't guarantee that from personal use as I don't use eyebrow pencil but I can imagine that a girl wouldn't want her eyebrows running in the wet!! Therefore it must work.) apparently \$2 each from the \$2 shop.
 2. And even more professional pencils for writing in the raqin can be purchased from Paper Plus. They are made by 'Staedtler' the black one is labeled Lumocolor Permanent. There is also a red one called 'Chinagraph'. They also come in another 4 colours. Otherwise known as 'grease pencils'. The lead is waxy much like a crayon. These pencils will write on laminated call boards.
 3. You can even purchase waterproof paper from www.agilitystuff.co.nz.

- Assembly areas are made even better by using buckets – no more tossing all your belongings (sunhat, sunglasses, vest, bumbag, dog toy, treats, dog lead etc) on the ground, now you can stuff it all into a bucket and pick it up at the end of the run. The dogs even learn really quickly to run to the bucket where their favourite toy or a treat awaits them. Good idea those clubs who have been using them!!

- Results. Most disappointment this month when I went to view the printout of results for a class I had run in and all I saw were the clear rounds – no faulted rounds had been entered! I suppose I could have gone to the whiteboard earlier but sometimes you just don't get round to it!



- Whiteboard for split classes – great idea seen this month was the use of different colour pens for the different heights so it was really easy to see the results for the maxis, midis and small class separately.