

# The Beginners Guide to... NZDAC



Zone 4 show their support for their Interzone Team. Photo: Brya Ingram Photography

If you are new to Agility, or maybe not-so-new but have never been to the annual NZDAC, you might be wondering what it's all about: NZDAC is the New Zealand Dog Agility Championships, which you might also hear it referred to as 'D'AC'. Now that all sounds pretty high-level stuff! 'Championships' must mean only the top dog and handler teams can enter, right? Wrong! NZDAC is open to dogs and handlers of all levels: if you are ready to enter Champ shows, you can enter NZDAC.

The best way to describe NZDAC is as a normal Agility Champ show on steroids. There are more classes, bigger entries, some special extra events and it's held over four days instead of the usual two.

There are still the same levels of Agility and Jumpers competition, including Starters and Jumpers C, which means that anyone can enter, whatever grade your dog is in. The great thing about NZDAC is that the fun is also amplified: there are lots of stalls with great stuff to buy for your dog, the ribbons are super-fancy, there is cool merchandise, and you get the opportunity to watch some of the best dog and handler teams compete.

NZDAC is always held at Labour Weekend (24-27 October this year) but is never held in the same place year-on-year, with the event rotating around the five geographical 'Agility Zones' (more on that later). This year the event is being hosted by Zone 5 (lower South Island) and is being held in Cromwell.

The event is the highlight of the Agility calendar in NZ and competitors travel from far and wide to attend, with many people making the trip a holiday, stopping somewhere along the way for a break, attending one of the pre-DAC shows and/or bringing their families along with them.

## Special events at NZDAC

There are a number of classes held at NZDAC that you won't see at a regular competition. Often these classes are held as stand-alone events so everyone can watch the action!

- **Champion of Champions Classes**

Two 'Champ of Champs' classes are held — Agility and Jumpers. Watching Champ of Champs is a great opportunity to see some of the best dog and handler teams in the country battle it out for bragging rights and be crowned Champion of Champions.

- **Junior Dog Training Handler of the Year**

This is the only event at NZDAC that requires qualification prior to the event. Entry is open to JDT handlers who have qualified throughout the year.

- **Interzone Teams**

A team of four dogs — one Starters, one Novice, one Intermediate and one Senior — from each of the six regional zones (including JDT's Zone 6) battle it out for the hotly contested Interzone Trophy. Think Agility's version of the Ranfurly Shield!

- **Interclub Teams**

All Agility clubs can enter club teams. The winners are decided from the results of one of the Agility sets.

- **Finals**

Based on the results of the standard Agility and Jumpers Classes, handler and dog teams qualify for finals. These are fantastic to watch if you aren't lucky enough to secure a place. There are finals for all classes, including Starters and Jumpers C.

### Other cool stuff

Each NZDAC committee brings their own take on the event — sometimes there is an evening function, there have been novelty events like Zone Mascot races, there are often spot prizes and great raffles too.

There are always heaps of stalls selling all sorts of "must have" items for you and your dog. There will also be food vendors on site throughout the weekend as well as the compulsory coffee van(s).

### FAQs

#### Who can enter NZDAC?

If you and your dog are ready to enter Champ shows you can enter NZDAC. There are all the same Agility and Jumpers classes you would find at any local event.

#### Do I have to qualify?

No! Apart from JDT Handler of the Year the event is open entry, so everyone is welcome.

#### What is Champion of Champions? Can I enter that?

You can only enter your dog in Agility Champion of Champions if they are an Agility Champion (or Grand or Supreme Champion), you can enter your dog in Jumpers Champion of Champions if they are a Jumpers Champion (or Grand or Supreme Champion).

#### When will entries open and close?

Entries generally open early July and close at the end of August.

#### What is the age cut-off for entering JDT events?

Handlers have to be aged 20 years old or younger.

#### Why is NZDAC in a different place each year?

The five geographic zones take it in turns to host NZDAC with each zone choosing the venue within the zone. This means that competitors in all parts of the country get the chance to attend a DAC that is close to home at least one year in five. It also means that the responsibility for organising NZDAC is spread around — putting together a show of this size is no mean feat!

#### What are zones and how do I know what zone I'm in?

Zones are the regional groups for Agility. All clubs are grouped into geographical zones (see the map). Junior Dog Training members



form Zone 6, regardless of where they reside. If you aren't sure which zone you are in just ask someone at your club. To be eligible to trial for your zone team you must both be resident in your zone and a member of an Agility club in that zone.

#### What are team trials?

On the weekend of 16-17 August, each zone will hold its team trials. The aim is to find one Starters, one Novice, one Intermediate and one Senior Dog to represent each zone. There are four courses at each level run over the weekend and the results determine the successful team members. Note that dogs trial for classes they are eligible to compete in on 1 August. Team members receive a travel subsidy and team uniform and compete in the Interzone Teams competition. Remember that every zone team needs a Starters dog, so don't be shy about entering your local trials!

#### How do finals work?

There will be approximately 25 dogs in each final (Starters, Novice, Intermediate, Senior, Jumpers C, Jumpers B and Jumpers A) with at least three dogs from each height group in every final. Winners of each standard class automatically qualify for the finals with the remaining places found using a points system based on results.

#### Day tent sites, camping and merchandise

Because NZDAC is such a big event, day tent sites around the ring (sometimes with parking) are pre-sold and allocated. Depending on the venue, you may not be able to park close to the rings, so purchasing a day-tent site means you have a guaranteed ringside base. Similarly, camping needs to be pre-purchased and you might be allocated a specific site. Each NZDAC will have merchandise for sale. Forms for all these things will be made available on the website.

#### Keep in the loop!

Check out the NZDAC page on the Dog Agility website, [www.dogagility.org.nz/nzdac/nzdac\\_home.html](http://www.dogagility.org.nz/nzdac/nzdac_home.html)

Like and follow NZDAC on Facebook and Instagram to make sure you are getting the latest news and information:

[www.facebook.com/groups/284133811608196](https://www.facebook.com/groups/284133811608196)

[www.instagram.com/nz\\_dog\\_agility\\_champs/](https://www.instagram.com/nz_dog_agility_champs/) 



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## 2025 NZDAC Judges



### Allan Rhode

Thank you to the Zone 5 NZDAC committee for inviting me to judge at this year's NZDAC. It is always an honour to judge at a NZDAC. Many of you know me from my long involvement in various aspects of dog sports, so I won't go into details about my background.

I currently compete with just one dog, Kruze. He is enjoyable to work with, learns quickly, and is very reliable. He enjoys working for you, making training easier. He enjoys water and knows where

the taps are at many clubs he has competed at over the years. If you are not careful, he completes his run and then makes a beeline to the tap. Kruze is over nine now and not that far off retirement. As he has nothing left to prove, my plan is just to enjoy the time he has left in the ring.

Course design has changed a lot over the years, moreso in recent years. It can be challenging to design a course that is enjoyable, and achievable, for the variety of handlers we have in NZ. I hope my courses achieve this over the NZDAC weekend. I would also like to wish all competitors the best of luck for the competition! See you all at the DAC.



### Kevin Burnette

Ah, NZDAC — the ultimate pressure cooker in our Agility calendar. Whether I'm judging or competing, I absolutely love the energy this show brings. There's just something about it that really brings out the best in teamwork — or at least produces some excellent comedy when it doesn't.

I've been judging since 2013 and, wow, things have changed! Dogs are faster, handlers have to be sharper, and courses have gone from "yeah, that was nice" to full-blown "hold-my-beer" levels of excitement.

I like to set courses that offer options, the kind that make you second-guess every life choice leading up to that start line. I want flow, I want skill, and I want to see teams bring their A game — but let's be honest, that's often right before it all turns to custard. At the end of the day, the best result for me isn't who stands on the podium, it's seeing both handler and dog walk off the course smiling, or at the very least, still on speaking terms. Good luck, run hard, and above all: have fun out there!



### Justine Dale

"Have fun!" This is what I tell people as they start my courses. So hopefully we all get to have some fun at Cromwell this year.

As a judge, my favourite aspect of standing in the middle of the field for extended periods is to watch dogs smile as they fly around the course enjoying themselves. Truly, I can see some dogs smile. This is why I encourage you to

enjoy the course as you set out too. This has come back to bite me on several occasions, though, as many of my friends now yell at me to have fun as I muck up stuff with my dogs. All part of the reason we do this. If we're not here to enjoy life, we will miss a lot of the fun along the way. So hopefully you manage to find something fun in the designs I provide for you over the weekend.

This is my second NZDAC as a judge, and the thrill to be asked again was just as exciting as the first time. This is the biggest event in our country and it is an honour to be invited. I have attended many NZDACs as a competitor, and the journey to and from the event with friends always adds to the atmosphere and excitement. NZDACs are a great place to make new friends and to catch up with the friends we now have throughout the country. So please do come and say "Hi, have fun" sometime during the weekend.

### Tim Conolly

Hello, Agility people of Kiwiana, I have been involved in Agility for the last 20-ish years, starting when I was enticed down to CHCH (CCOC), the local club at Marylands Park. That's where I saw a very round Foxy scuttling around some jumps and being led over the A frame with the aid of food from the barbecue.



As I couldn't see greater speed coming from Terriers without the aid of sausage, I was quickly drawn to the Border Collies that at the time seemed to be the natural choice of the Agility world and have enjoyed running them ever since. Our family runs BCs and Kelpies, with me sticking to the easier path: I have competed with three BCs, and Catch is my current demon of destruction. The Kelpies I find more challenging than challenges.

I was a former member of the awesome CCOC and MCDTC clubs and for the last nine years a member of SDTC. (We don't need the awesome, because we already know).

Judging started for me about 10 years ago, when I tried staying at Ribbon Trial level, until eventually being encouraged into the real world of Champ Show judging. Around this time shows became events...

Being from Christchurch I compete & judge in the South Island Agility scene. With family in tow, we travel to most events in the South. It would be odd if we don't visit most SI clubs in any year. (Sorry Southland, maybe every three years for you.)

Agility has progressed over the years, and with luck my course designs have kept up with the recent improvements and, dare I say it, trends. I enjoy seeing the competitors work out the handling and then getting it right while running flat out. And yes, I like to make you run.

Agility is a brilliant sport, filled with lovely people and lovely dogs. I look forward to seeing you all competing and with a smidge of luck, will see you at the prize-giving. May the best team win, or at least have fun trying to. If not, there is always the barbecue.



### Isobel Syme

I first started Agility at 18 years of age at CCATS — just a couple of years ago! It was pretty inevitable that I followed in my dad's footsteps and passion for various dog sports: first Obedience and then... Agility started. As they say, the rest is history!

Over the years I have been actively involved in all of the clubs I have been part of (CCATS, Mid Canterbury, Taupo and now Selwyn) serving on committees and sub-committees, instructing, and as a measurer.

Way back in 1993 I decided to become a judge as another way to put something back into our sport; looking at our current panel, I would be one of the longest-serving judges.

The two things I enjoy most about judging is watching and judging the new handlers and their dogs competing at their first show, and then going from strength to strength, graduating through the grades. And at the other end of the scale, we have some totally amazing combinations that are just pure magic to watch! Along the way, I have met some great people who are now life-long friends. And we have had some great fun.

My first dog was Diva, a Weimaraner and my second was Asti, a Heading Dog. Both were equally stubborn bitches who taught me a lot along the way. But nothing to prepare me for Dram a red Border Collie who thought Agility was created purely for his entertainment and gave 200% to any course he tackled, a total mummy's boy. Ice, my current boy, is a blue merle Border Collie. He is also a bit of a mummy's boy who loves cuddles. A good friend told me Ice stands for Incredibly Capable Eventually — I live in hope — but wouldn't trade him for the world!

Thank you to the Zone 5 DAC Committee for inviting me to judge this year's event. Good luck to all, and remember: you take the best dog home at the end of the weekend!



### Dave Cook

First and foremost, it's great to be back in Cromwell for what will no doubt be another memorable NZDAC. It's always an honour to be invited to judge at our national event, so thanks to the committee for the invitation. I currently residing in the mighty Waikato (go Chiefs...) but Otago will always be home. The Agility voyage started for me in 2000. I've been fortunate enough to have some pretty honest team mates since then. Judging-wise,

I've been on the panel since 2007 and have enjoyed watching many great teams over the years. Looking forward to judging many more at this year's event. Good luck to all!

It's a real honour to be judging at NZDAC in Cromwell again, especially after six years since the last Zone 5 NZDAC! Being invited back brings a sense of nostalgia and excitement, especially with some great classes to judge. It's a privilege I deeply appreciate. I've been in the judging game for over a decade now, and, wow, how Agility has evolved! Looking back at some of my early courses really highlights just how quickly the sport has grown in creativity, complexity, and teamwork.

To match that evolution, I'm cooking up some fun and thoughtful challenges designed to truly test the skills of both handlers and dogs, because NZDAC is all about celebrating the very best of our sport. I always try to design courses that allow for all kinds of handling styles: the slow and the fast, the fancy and the simple, whatever floats your boat. What really keeps it fun is watching how people's perspectives shift, what they think during the course walk versus how it actually plays out when they run it. There's always a surprise

### Paul Taylor

I am honoured to be included in the 2025 judges' line up, thanks to the Zone 5 organising committee for this wonderful opportunity. My last Zone 5 DAC judging appointment was at Gore in 2014 and having not been to the Cromwell venue before, I am really looking forward to it. The last time I spent any time in Cromwell was during one of my many trips to Central Otago visiting orchards or swimming pools during my younger years growing up in Queenstown (sometime last century but that is all that I will say on that topic!)



I have been involved in agility since 1990 and had started judge's training by the end of that decade. I initially started off with a rehome dog and have now graduated onto border collies which keeps me very busy. I really enjoy watching how people and their dogs negotiate courses that I have designed. I always try to include options so that there is a challenge to do it faster or smarter than other people to achieve the ultimate run, while providing variety for all the sideline judges (AKA spectators/supporters).

I really love the atmosphere of DAC and look forward to catching up with the many agility friends that I have made over the years. As always, Jude and I will be parked in the camper and will welcome visitors throughout the show.

Good luck to everyone and remember that regardless of how the run goes, you always go home with the best dog. See you in October!!

### Chris Richardson

Word on the street is, if you follow my directions you'll end up dogging in the wrong part of town, and while that may be accurate outside the ring, I strive for a more linear (though mentally taxing) adventure for you and your mutt.



For those who braved my brightly coloured wardrobe at the last Zone 5 DAC, you'll know I like to keep things interesting.

This isn't the breed nationals: there is only room in the Agility ring for one oversized sparkly mirror ball, so it's going to be me. Clear communication gets rewarded, teamwork gets celebrated, and bribes will get you anything.

Not many people make the mistake of inviting me back, but here we are, back for a second go, fuelled by copious amounts of wine and caffeine and the satisfaction of watching you brilliantly solve my diabolical puzzles, or ass over in the process. I just hope I can remember this one.

### Chris Moody

or two, and that's part of the magic.



Outside the judging ring, I work with two energetic Border Collies, Tig and Veela. They keep me on my toes and give me a great understanding of how courses play out across all levels. Dogs have been a constant in my life, but I officially began

my own journey in 2003 with a Rough Coated Collie, and it's been an amazing ride ever since. Some highlights include winning into Senior, Jumpers A and Games A grade also with a very recent Jumpers Challenge. I can't wait to see the talent, passion, and energy on display this year. Let's make Cromwell 2025 a NZDAC to remember and best of luck to you all, run hard and finally, have fun!

More over...



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**Carl Ranford**

NZDAC: there is nothing quite like the electrifying atmosphere it creates, a celebration of triumphs big and small, whether it's a flawless round, overcoming a challenge, a finals victory, or the proud moment a team lifts the trophy. It remains the ultimate stage to showcase the very best of Agility talent from across the country.

My journey in dog sports began over two decades ago. I started in Obedience training in 1995, and by 1997 Agility had truly captured my heart with its fast-paced, dynamic nature. In 2009, I joined the Agility Judges Panel, opening the door to judging events throughout New Zealand and multiple opportunities across the Tasman in Australia. Alongside judging, I have continued to compete with my Border Collies and now Borderpap, maintaining my love of life on both sides of the ring.

Over the years, I've also had the privilege of serving as President of Hawera Dog Training Club, Chair of the Dog Agility Committee, and Chair of the 2018 NZDAC, roles that have deepened my appreciation for our sport and community.

Outside of Agility, I work as an IT Manager and Senior Systems Engineer, roles that fuel my passion for continual learning and embracing new challenges. Family is equally central to my life: my partner Catherine and our two children, Kyra and Corban, share our love of dogs. Our household is very much alive with the energy of our nine dogs, soon to be 10!

I am sincerely grateful to the NZDAC 2025 organising committee for inviting me to judge again at this premier event. It is truly a privilege and an honour. I look forward to catching up with familiar faces, meeting new ones, and celebrating the incredible bond between handlers and their dogs.

Wishing you all the very best for an unforgettable NZDAC 2025 — both in the ring and beyond.

Friday	Session 1	Jumpers C 1	Jumpers B 1	Jumpers A 1	Jumpers A 1
	Simultaneous	Allan Rohde	Kevin Burnette	500s	Smalls + 600s
	Session 2	Starters 1	Novice 1	Intermediate 1	Senior 1
	Simultaneous	Dave Cook	500s	Smalls + 600s	Isobel Syme
Session 3			Junior Dog Training Handler of the Year	Agility Champion of Champions	
Consecutive			Chris Moody	Tim Conolly	
<b>Official Welcome – Night Market and Live Music</b>					

Saturday	Session 1	Starters	Novice 1	Intermediate 1	Senior 2
	Simultaneous	Isobel Syme	500s	Carl Ranford	Chris Moody
	Session 2	Novice 2 (AD)	Novice 2 (AD),	Intermediate 2 (ADX),	Intermediate 2 (ADX)
	Simultaneous	500s	Smalls + 600s (AD)	500s	Smalls + 600s
<b>Interzone Teams Competition</b>					
<b>Allan Rohde   Chris Moody   Dave Cook   Kevin Burnette</b>					

Sunday	Session 1	Starters 3	Senior 3	Jumpers B 2	Jumpers C 2
	Simultaneous	Carl Ranford	Isobel Syme	Tim Conolly	Chris Richardson
	Session 2	Novice 3	Novice 3	Jumpers A 2	Jumpers A 2
	Simultaneous	500s	Smalls + 600s	500s	Smalls + 600s
<b>Hoopers Standard Graduate</b>					
Kevin Burnette   Paul Taylor   Justine Dale   Dave Cook   Chris Richardson					
Session 3			Intermediate 3	JDT 1 Tim Conolly	Hoopers Standard
Simultaneous			500s	Followed by	Beginners
			Chris Moody	JDT 2 Justine Dale	Carl Ranford

Monday	Session 1	Jumpers C 3	Jumpers B 3	Jumpers A 3	Jumpers A 3
	Simultaneous	Kevin Burnette	Chris Moody	500s	Smalls + 600s
	Finals	Novice Final	Senior Final	Starters Final	Intermediate Final
	Consecutive	Carl Ranford	Dave Cook	Paul Taylor	Chris Richardson
<b>Jumpers C Final   Jumpers B Final   Jumpers A Final</b>					
			Justine Dale	Isobel Syme	Kevin Burnette



# All Breeds Dog Training Club: 70th Anniversary Show



At its Easter show this year (19-20 April), All Breeds Dog Training Club celebrated its 70th Anniversary by holding a triple Obedience Show and Rally-O Championship Show at the Purina Pro Plan Auckland Exhibition Centre. To capture the moment, on Saturday 19 April 2025 competitors, judges and stewards alike dressed in 1970s outfits.

All Breeds Dog Training Club was formed in 1955 by the late Gerry and Daphne Randall with training commencing at the Greenlane showgrounds (now the ASB Showgrounds). In 1974 the club acquired the land at Captain Springs Road in Onehunga, where it currently trains, and our clubrooms were built shortly thereafter by the late Bob Pitt, one of All Breeds Dog Training Club's life members. Over the years the club has steadily made improvements to the site and reclaimed more land by the creek for the increasing number of attendees.

Before the commencement of the anniversary shows, the Committee held a welcome attended by some of the club's life members. A few speeches were given and Life Member and retired Obedience judge Diana Sheehan cut the birthday cake. All competitors were given



a gift bag with their entries along with cake and a glass of wine. At lunch time, an Easter treasure hunt was organized where teams searched the Ardmore grounds for clues with the team completing all the clues in the shortest time being the winners.

With grateful thanks to Tracey Leyston for the photographic memories. 

Margaret Dick

*All Breeds Dog Training Committee*

