

CORNWALL AGILITY CLUB

GUIDE TO SURVIVING YOUR FIRST SHOW

(OR RETURNING POST PANDEMIC!)

BEFORE YOU START....

Registering your dog

If your dog is a pedigree, then not much you need to worry about here. Just ensure that you have your dogs name, date of birth and KC number handy for completing entries

If your dog is a non-pedigree, rescue etc, then will need to be registered on the Kennel Club Activities Register

Link to the form is:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/events-and-activities/activity-register/>

This can be completed online, they will check it and will advise you if a name choice is already in use

Get your dog measured

It is a Kennel Club requirement that all small, medium and intermediate height are measured – this includes those that may just be competing in anysize classes. If your dog is obviously large, then they no longer need to be measured.

Measuring sessions are carried out at many shows through the year, and also sometimes on especially arranged sessions

Details of planned measuring sessions will usually be noted on show schedules

The dog must be registered with the Kennel Club on either the breed register or the activity register

You will need to have an official 'Agility Record Book' for the dog (available from the Kennel Club, although the measurers may have record books available to buy)

The dog must have a microchip or ear tattoo or, if it has neither, you must have a passport sized photo of the dog which clearly identifies it when you go to the measuring session.

The dog must be over 15 months of age and you will need to pay the measuring fee of £4 per measurement to the measurers.

Second and third measurements

A second measurement must be carried out not less than 12 months and not more than 24 months after the date of the first measurement and must be carried out by different measurers to those that carried out the first one. If the height on the second measurement is different from the first, a third and final measurement must be arranged within two months of the second measurement, at which the measurers are both different from the measurers who conducted the first and second measurements. *Due to the Covid-19 situation the Kennel Club have given until 31st December 2021 for 2nd and 3rd measurements to be carried out*

UK Agility

The other popular shows that you may want to attend are run by UK Agility(UKA)
For these, you do need to register (although some shows offer a Try Before You Buy)

Further details can be found at: <http://ukagility.com/HowTo.aspx>

Dogs also here have to measured on their system, unless obviously large. These sessions are arranged at many of their own shows

PLANNING YOUR DIARY & FINDING SCHEDULES

Once a club has confirmed its dates for the year, and future years, these tend to be advertised on various websites, such as www.agilitynet.co.uk, Facebook (not only own pages but also the Agility Schedules page), show processing websites such as Agilityshowsonline, Agilityplaza, First Place Processing, and club websites

With the majority of shows now available to enter online through www.agilityplaza.com, www.firstplaceprocessing.com or <http://agilityshows.online> plus a few more, entering has become much easier than the old manual entry form system

Once a schedule is out and live for entering, it pays to make a note say a week in advance of the closing date to ensure done in time – a Google or Outlook Calendar reminder usually works well! Some also create a spreadsheet listing shows, colour coded if entered, got running orders through etc....

Keep a lookout too for reminders of a show closing shortly from online processors. For 2021 especially, it is possible that show organisers will be putting a cap (limit) on the number of entries on classes, in order to ensure the numbers are manageable under any Covid-19 regulations dependant on the timing of the show with the easing of restrictions; this will be stated in the schedule so be aware as you may find that the classes fill quickly. If camping is required – book asap! Especially at the bigger, more popular shows, camping can be full within a very short period of time

ENTERING A SHOW

Ensure your entry is in on time, and that includes if entering online – paid for!

Not only is it a breach of Kennel Club regulations to enter late, but as soon as a show reaches its closing date, this is when a vast amount of work begins for the show management and processors – paperwork for all the classes has to be prepared, running orders produced, ring plans done to ensure no clashes, rosettes and trophies also have to be ordered to the percentage of entries per class.

Some of the show processors are now asking for payment within a few days of entering (of course this is fully refundable if you cancel before the closing date). You can imagine the problems caused for awards, equipment hire, judges etc by for instance, a class expected to have 200 dogs entered, suddenly changing to 60, or visa-versa. For 2021, with the unknowns especially of grade 2s and also intermediate height it is rather a guessing game for organisers to accurately gauge entry numbers in advance

For most shows, your running orders will be available online (or posted if requested) usually a couple of weeks (sometimes less) before the actual show date – do not start panicking until it gets to a few days before, then contact the show secretary who will be able to advise

Note if an agility Match or Winter League etc, running orders are not usually sent out, you just collect your entry cards on the day

Normally at KC shows you can enter a maximum of 3 or 4 classes a day (apart from any size etc), however this can sometimes be more – 7 has been known!

If many various classes are available for your grade to enter, then be aware that this can sometimes mean they will be running more than one at the same time – walking 4 courses at once first thing in the morning can cause serious brain ache if you are not used to it!

If you are having a non-competing dog present at the show (NFC) then you need to declare this when entering, or log details with the Show Secretary on the day

Grades and how to progress

There are 7 grades of competition with beginners starting in grade 1, with new dogs of existing handlers grade 2 and above starting in grade 2. In order to progress through the grades you need to have various wins, some of which must be agility classes not jumping with clear rounds (and inside the course time) at the different grades as below:

Grade	No of total wins (incl. agility)	Minimum no. of agility wins
1-2	2	1
2-3	2	1
3-4	3	2
4-5	4	2
5-6	4	2
6-7	5	3

Filling In Your Entry

Most shows now offer online entry facilities.

If entering this way you need to register your details with the relevant show processors in order to do so (see some of the website links above)

Once this is done, it is self-explanatory and the website should guide you through it. You usually simply select the show you wish to enter on their website, check the boxes next to the classes you wish to enter (always pays to have a copy of the actual schedule printed out / open on screen whilst doing so)

If a member of the organising club, there will be a box to check to indicate this to calculate any reduced entry fees

Also you may see boxes to check if wish to offer to help at the show (if a member of the organising club then you will usually be expected to as a matter of course), boxes for NFC dogs attending, and also if available, camping

If preferring to do manually, you need to fill in the form and return to the address stated, usually enclosing an SAE for your running orders if requested to do so

Double check that your entries are correct; ie in correct grades, heights etc!

What classes can I enter at KC shows and what do they mean?

The most common types of classes found are as follows:

1. Agility. This will contain all the equipment – in addition to jumps, tunnels & weaves, the A-Frame, Dog Walk and Seesaw should be included. You may also encounter obstacles such as a tyre, wall, long jump or wishing well
2. Jumping. This can contain all of the above apart from the contact equipment

Some shows may also schedule Special classes. Please note these **DO NOT** count towards progression through the grades. Some examples are:

1. Steeplechase. This will be a course made up of just jumps and tunnels, and usually designed to be fast and flowing
2. Helter Skelter. As with Steeplechase, but the course will be in a cork-screw design as in the fairground ride. Sometimes weaves have been included, but it should be stated in the show schedule
3. Any size / Allsorts classes. These are special classes put on for dogs that may be semi-retired, coming back from injury, young dogs gaining ring experience etc at a low height. Normally these will just involve jumps and tunnels, however there can be agility classes too. Full details and the heights available will be detailed in the schedule
4. Veterans. These tend to be similar to Any size / Allsorts classes however are purely for dogs of a certain age

There can be many other types of special classes, and details of them would be put in the schedule as to what they entail

Dont forget too to familiarise yourself with all the small print in the schedule. This is basically all the rules and regulations that competitors and show organisers have to abide to – you may need to invest in a magnifying glass to read!

Keep a watch out online for any amendments that are being brought in – these are usually announced in the autumn and brought into force at the start of the following year

Make yourself also aware of any current Covid-19 instructions that may be in place for the show and any changes that may have been put in place due to Government guidelines. Early in the year shows may well be run in Cohort groups for example, and also have strict arrival times on site for your particular group. Please ensure that you are aware of an abide by all instructions put in place by the organisers to ensure that they are Covid-19 regulations compliant

PRIOR TO THE SHOW

Footwear

Ensure got adequate footwear! Most shows summertime are outdoors, in our wonderfully unreliable weather!

Trail and Fell running shoes, as are football boots very popular as known for giving good grip for running in wet conditions

Salomon Speedcross & Inov8 Mudclaws are popular higher-end versions, however there are some good more reasonably priced variants on the market such as More Miles and Karrimor

Many handlers have fallen in the ring due to inadequate footwear

Check Venue

May sound silly, but some clubs may hold their shows at different locations during the year.

Check the weather

Not only for the day, but to maybe allow for travelling time too, especially if going some distance during the winter

Make sure got everything together you need

Running shoes

Flask etc

Waterproofs and dog coat (if wet)

Sun cream for you and dog – keep in mind venues such as Royal Cornwall Showground are exposed to sea breezes, and you can burn even on a cloudy day!

Running orders

Ring Plan – highlight if need be where your classes are and when

Directions to venue

Record books – these could well be asked for on spot checks being carried out by judges or show management, to ensure small and medium dogs are measured, or if a big qualifier to check that you are eligible for it etc

Protection for dogs in cars – items such as reflective foil sheets, Gazebos, Windbreaks and Carnopys are popular

Water and bowl for dogs

Titbits

Favourite toy

Poo bags

Basic first aid bits -both human and canine – always handy to carry some Instant Ice Packs, for use in the event of minor injury to human or dog

Mobile phone (charged up!)

Refreshments (early season shows may not have onsite catering available)

Sanitiser / PPE if required at the date of the show as appropriate

Dogs!!

Understand Your Running Orders

You will have either received your running orders and ring plan etc through in the post or been able to download it online.

The Ring Cards contain various numbers:

1. Dog (or ring) number is your dog's entry number
2. Class number is the class number entered in as per the schedule
3. Running order is the number you will be running in that class, and the one you need to give to the ring party
4. Numbers in brackets will be the total number of dogs entered in that class
5. Ring No will tell you which ring each class is in. If it is a first class in the ring that day then usually also marked with a *
6. At larger shows, some classes may be split into 2 parts or sometimes more. It will be indicated on your running orders which part you are in – note each part can often be in different rings

You should also receive what is called a ring plan, which lists what order the classes are going to run in and in which ring number. It can be very helpful to highlight on this where your classes are, although some processing sites do this for you.

You may also be sent general information regarding the show; this can include information regarding arrival times, parking, camping, catering, Covid-19 specific instructions etc; **Please ensure that you read these so are aware!**

DAY OF THE SHOW

Try and relax!

If feeding your dog breakfast, make sure allow plenty of time before due to run

Try and arrive in plenty of time for your classes

At most shows, parking is generally away from the edge of the rings. If able to park ringside, then please bear in mind if your dog is easily excited, could make matters worse, not just for them, but other competitors running; likewise you would not be popular if your car alarm etc is likely to go off, or are sat eating a burger at the ringside, especially if only roping is being used!

On arrival at venue

Please take note of speed restrictions around the venue! Usually tends to be 5mph. Be aware that dogs or humans may be running around loose! On the same note, please do not let your dog off lead in the parking / camping areas – only in those areas designated to do so

Familiarise yourself with where all your rings, toilets and exercise areas are
Don't forget to take the dogs for regular walks, not just on arrival, but throughout the day!

If you see areas cordoned off, do not cross. They are done so for health & safety reasons, electric cabling etc – cabling for the PA system is in most cases, attached to fencing, covered with matting etc, but be aware too that can sometimes be some loose cables lying around

Ensure you pick up after your dog all over the venue!

If human showers etc are provided, please refrain from washing your dogs off in them

If you are down to help, you will usually find helpers sheets in the score tents at each ring (CAC will allocate you to a ring and details of this will go out with your running orders)
Fill in where you think may be able to help – in in any doubt, have a word with the ring manager at the ring

Walking Your Courses

Listen for tannoy announcements that your course is ready for walking – if camping, make sure you can hear the tannoy! With most shows now running through online systems you can pick up the ring information through the mobile apps, so very handy to put a link to the site on your homescreen

Walk the course as many times as you feel necessary in the time allowed (please note this may be limited or split into groups early in the season)
Sometimes, if a big class and a lot walking at the same time, it pays to stand to one side and watch for the main rush clearing

Please do not eat or drink in the ring whilst walking courses, as spills and crumbs can obviously cause distractions once dogs start running

If a course is available for walking over the lunch break, then this tends to give you plenty of time – **note if a class has already started, and broken mid-way for lunch, you cannot walk it again**

If a course is not to your liking, it is NOT the done thing to publicly say so, whilst walking it or running it come to that!

We all come across courses from time to time that may not suit our particular dog, or have an element in not comfortable with; Best tactic is to go in, give it a shot and take away the positives from the good bits you can do, and ideas to work on

Judges, like show management, give up a great deal of time free of charge, for our enjoyment – without them, there would be no shows

Should you however, whilst walking a course, spot something dangerous, such as weaves pegged the wrong way, tunnels not strapped correctly, then please have a quiet word with the ring manager or judge, so they can rectify

Going for your run

Make sure both yourself and your dog are adequately warmed up!

Listen out for tannoy announcements / watch ring boards for running order numbers calling up to / online updates – if in doubt, check with the ring party at the ringside

Ensure there are no dangly bits from your dog's collar as you will be eliminated if your dog runs with them on!

Be aware if you have more than one dog in the same class, they must run in the order of their running orders, you will be eliminated if found to have done otherwise.

Book in for your run with the caller at the ring side. This should be a person stood or sat near the end of the queue (at CAC shows they should also be wearing a hi viz vest with Caller on the back).

Note however this is not always the case – sometimes they can be found near the ring entrance etc. If this is the case then please take care booking in to not disturb dogs that are already queueing and maybe excitable

Join the queue

If your dog needs space, then there is no issue normally with advising those in front or behind you of such, and perhaps standing slightly out of the queue, or have someone queue for you. Some dogs like to play tuggy etc whilst queuing – again if you do, then best to stand out of the queue so not to interfere with others.

As you reach the head of the queue, you will be asked for your running order number, so they can get you booked in on the system ready to run.

Very important here to double check that they do have the right person and dog, and unless requested by the ring party, do not move out of your place in the queue as this would mean someone else could run under your name!

They will normally tell you when to make your way to the startline – eg as the previous dog reaches jump 14 for example. Please try and abide by this, so that the class can be kept moving. Obviously if you feel there could be a safety issue (ie start and finish close together, nervous dog etc) then please mention this to them at the time.

Some shows (CAC included) try where possible to have a small area set off from the start and finish as collecting areas)

If it is a UKA or independent show (not kennel club) you may go in NFC (not for competition) and train your run, using a silent toy – please advise the ring party if doing so. Please note you cannot do this at a Kennel Club Show, apart from at some limit shows if has been stated

Make your way to the startline and remove lead (and whatever else!) when ready

Please pass lead, any toys, titbits etc to the leads person, or place on ground if they are not there. *During the early part of the season you may be required to place your lead etc in the finishing area yourself due to Covid-19 regulations*

Please do not throw your lead at them, for obvious reasons!!

Very important to listen to the Scime telling you they are ready for you to run and checking your name - they will announce this usually with a call of “When you are ready” or “In your own time”

Some judges however prefer to start the competitor themselves, by use of a whistle. If this is the case then best to check the Scime has the right name, and listen for the whistle from the judge

Please note you will be eliminated if you commence before instructed to do so

Ok, so not everyone has reliable startline waits in the ring!

If you need to go back to our dog and re-sit them etc, then you can do so. However please try and not take the mickey by spending too much time doing so.

On completion of your run

Reward your dog! Don't forget, if it goes wrong, you are the one who is directing them and has trained them

Please ensure you clear the exit area as quickly as possible, so not to intrude on the next dog finishing their run with your dog safely back on lead

Allow time for your dog to cool down before returning them into a car etc

Presentations

Taking it that you have had a good run, keep a listen out for announcements when your class results will be presented – these can be done at various times of the day

Once a presentation has been done, then you may be able to view the results in folders outside, or just in, the main marquee; this however will be Covid-19 regulations dependant at the time. You can also view through the online apps if being used

Don't forget if you have gone clear, to note down the details to fill in your record book!

Should you miss a presentation, and realise you are due a rosette then please see the show management and they can sort for you. However please do this when things are quiet, and not whilst they are in the middle of another presentation!

Likewise, in the event of a query with your results, please have a quiet word with the show management, and they can have a look for you

End of the show

Don't forget to give your dog a last run, especially if a long journey!

If it is your own show, and expected to help, don't forget the day doesn't end as soon as the last class is done – equipment has to be packed away

Many hands make light work, and as soon as this is done then everyone can go home for a much needed bath and drink!

Above all

**Enjoy, have fun
& remember you
always take the
best dog home!**