

Summary of Active Proposals:

Item #3 Multi-Breed Brace

Allow bracing of dogs of different breeds (e.g. a Berner and a Golden).

Item #4 Revisions to Regulation Change (“RFC”) Process

Add a fourth RFC round for any proposal that significantly changes due to Round 3 comments. Whether members (non-judges) get a final review in the event of a fourth round depends on their comments received now. The choices are RFC#4 going to the entire membership or just the Draft judges. In addition, two administrative changes: eliminate maximum number of committee members on RFC Task Force and allow DWC to choose best method of dissemination.

Item #5 Waive Basic Control

BC rewritten as a safety test. BC may be waived with copy of CD certificate.

Item #24 Premium List Changes

Allow host clubs to choose the method of Premium List dissemination that best works for them. DWC no longer needs hardcopy given that it already has a copy by virtue of having approved host club’s Premium List.

Item #25 Allow All Dogs

Allow all dogs (purebreds and non-purebreds) to participate in BMDCA Draft; host clubs retain option to restrict test to BMD’s only, purebreds only, or any registered dog. In addition, language changed to keep up with AKC changes in registration.

Item #26 Withdraw at Will

Administrative changes: eliminate ambiguity concerning who is responsible for a dog’s safety (handler); collated handler’s risk and responsibilities into one section; made clear that a decoration falling off a rig is not an NQ.

Item #31 Addition to Judging Guidelines

Make explicit that teams are being judged the entire time they are in the ring or on the freight haul. Make explicit that freight haul begins and ends in the ring. Strike a section of regulations that were unintentionally duplicated and correct a section that appeared in the wrong place. Strike requirement of time in the Premium List so that clubs have maximum scheduling flexibility based on entry size. Extensively reorganized “Equipment Check” and “Freight Haul” sections and used consistent terminology throughout.

Item #40 Which Regs Apply?

Make explicit which set of regulations apply immediately after a regulation change: the regulations in effect at the time the Test application is submitted.

Item #41 Time of Equipment Check/Judging

Strike paragraph stating when judges should show up at a test. Current text is misleading – no information is better than misinformation.

Item #42 Carrying Food

Make regs reflect common practice; make explicit the penalty for carrying food (“failure”).

Item #44 Removing Rig Prior to Conclusion

Literal reading of current regulations requires that a rig remain in its designated position until conclusion of test. Thus, if a handler had to leave early due to health reasons, etc., the rig would have to be left behind. Wording changed so that a rig may be removed prior to the conclusion of the test.

This document has the following format:

Item #nn Proposal Topic

Discussion RFC3:

RFC Taskforce discussions and observations...

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3

Regulatory text... RFC1 Additions and ~~deletions~~ appear in red; RFC2 additions and ~~deletions~~ appear in blue, RFC3 additions and ~~deletions~~ appear in green.

Discussion RFC2:

RFC Taskforce discussions and observations...

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2

Regulatory text... RFC1 Additions and ~~deletions~~ appear in red; RFC2 additions and ~~deletions~~ appear in blue.

RFC2 Comments:

Comment 1

Comment 2

Comment 'n'

Proposal RFC1:

Text...

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1

Regulatory text... Additions and ~~deletions~~ appear in red

RFC1 Comments:

Comment 1

Comment 2

Comment 'n'

Item #3 Multi-Breed Brace

Discussion RFC3:

There are some drawbacks to a purely subjective net (e.g. “*mismatched teams outside the realm of 'realistic work situations' will be excused...*”). First, anxious handlers or those new to Draft may ask mentors or Test Committee members what this means, thereby getting an incorrect answer. Only the two judges in the ring on that day and at that test can say what they define as outside the “realm.” Next, as an unintended consequence, this language could be applied to a Berner-Berner team composed of a large male and small female. Finally there has been a concerted effort to place the responsibility for dog safety squarely and solely on the handler. A subjective net might undermine that effort. For example, if the judges allowed a multi-breed team to compete and that team sustained injury, would they be at fault for not having foreseen that the brace was outside the “realm.” On the other hand even without explicitly stating a subjective net, the judges already have the latitude to excuse any team they think unsafe. Given that nothing is gained with a subjective net and considering that such a net has drawbacks, the TF recommends against a subjective net.

Questions not related specifically to multi-breed brace addressed in the comments themselves.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

The concept continues to enjoy unanimous support although there is disagreement on the need for a “safety net”. Those desiring the ‘net’ seek to explicitly guard against unsafe or impractical pairings. Many not in favor of a ‘net’ simply don’t think it is necessary (“that’s why we have judges, isn’t it”, “...a safety net ALREADY EXISTS”, etc.). One concern is that in between teams which all judges consider safe and teams which no judge would consider safe, lays a grey area where some judges would allow the team while others would not. Imagine the awkward situation for the Sunday judges of a two-day test when they believe the team should be excused even though Saturday’s pair accepted the team. How do they reply to “but I was allowed to show yesterday, what makes my team unsafe today.” Thus, even if one believes a “safety net” already exists, eliminating this subjectivity is a compelling reason for an explicit safety net.

We first looked for a metric such as a ratio of heights or weights that would serve as a net. However, a simple ratio has “false positives.” For example, a weight ratio 80% precludes the pairing of a 60# Golden with a 90# Berner -- which probably would have been a good working team. Moreover, no ratio would be perfect: dogs come in so many shapes and sizes that potentially unsafe pairings would be permitted even if only dogs of equal weight were allowed. Next we considered minimum standards (e.g. minimum 60lbs dog weight) for mixed-breed braces. This had the unintended consequence that some breeds could only appear in same-breed braces. For example, a Schipperke-Schipperke team would be legal but a Schipperke-Berner team might not be because the Schipperke didn’t meet the minimum. This also meant setting a standard for mixed-breed brace where none exists for Novice. Since we have welcomed all breeds that can pull 20lbs, it did not seem appropriate to change this message for mixed-

breed brace teams without changing it throughout. Next we considered minimum standards for all Brace teams. This had the undesirable result of excluding some fine working teams which are already competing in BMDCA tests. Thus, despite much effort, we were unable to construct a satisfactory safety net. We then looked at the tradeoff between an imperfect net and no net at all.

We want to reduce the chances of a team being allowed to show at one event but not the next. However, the more unsafe teams we exclude by tightening the weight ratio, the more “good” teams that get caught in the net. In the end, no matter what we do, we can’t eliminate all conceivable unsafe pairings. So is explicitly preventing the grossest mismatches worth excluding some “good” teams we would not have otherwise wanted excluded?

Given that no workable safety net was identified, the committee was unable to reach consensus on whether no net is preferable to an imperfect net. Further ideas are welcome.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

Ch1. Section 3. Duties of the Committee

H. Limitation of Entries: ...

Entry priority shall be:

1. BMD’s have preference over all other breeds.
2. Untitled teams have preference over titled teams, where ‘title’ means the title of the entered class. *In the case of a brace, both dogs must be titled to be considered a ‘titled’ team.*

If entries exceed the Test limit, the above priority shall be used to create four groups which are applied to the Test limit in order:

1. Untitled BMDs.
2. Titled BMDs.
3. Untitled other breeds, *including brace teams with one BMD.*
4. Titled other breeds, *including brace teams with one BMD.*

A random draw will be held for each group that exceeds the Test limit...

Chapter 3

Eligibility and Conduct of Handlers and Dogs

Ch 3. Section 1. Entry Requirements

A. Definitions: The term “dog” applies to dogs of both sexes as well as individual dogs and both dogs of a brace. The term “brace” means a handler and two dogs, ~~of the same breed~~ which may be the same or different breed. The term “team” means a handler and one or two dogs.

[This change eliminates the need for any changes to “**E. Braces:** The two dogs...” as proposed in RFC1.]

RFC2 Comments:

Sorry, I don't have any bright ideas that work for a safety net....

I understand the concern and have learned that trusting people to be reasonable is not always a wise thing to do. But... as the DWC has discovered, a mathematical formula doesn't work in every case. The issue of the opinion of one set of judges differing from another set of judges is something we do need to work out. I'll keep pondering on this, but at the moment, I have nothing useful ! Sorry....

Ch1. Section 3. Duties of the Committee H. Limitation of Entries: ...

Ok, but this sentence, "A random draw will be held for each group that exceeds the Test limit..." is confusing in my opinion. It sounds like every group will get a random draw even if only the results of the first two groups fill the test. I think the rest of the wording explains it just fine and this sentence could just be omitted. Perhaps this was an oversight. Or... I'm missing something!

[TF replies: we need to make it clear that draws are done by group. Without explicitly stating that all members in a group are subject to the draw, it's possible that a secretary could interpret this to mean that "only those who didn't make the test are subject to the draw." For example, if the secretary filled the test based on first-come-first-serve (or any other basis of their choosing), they could perform a draw on only those group members that didn't make the cut.]

Chapter 3 Eligibility and Conduct of Handlers and Dogs

Ch 3. Section 1. Entry Requirements A. Definitions:

The language works for me.

However, the comment about our making changes to accommodate the AKC and their plans got me thinking... IS that what this is about? I hope not ! I would like to think that we are trying to improve on the best draft program in the dog world, but I'm wondering if I'm looking at that world through rose colored glasses.....

[TF replies: Berners first. If non-Berners or non-Berner clubs may be accommodated/considered at no loss to Berners, then we consider it.]

And the comment about law suits and insurance.... Is the language in our regs about entering at your own risk strong enough? Do we need to revisit that? What I read on the Iowa entry sure sounds like I'm totally on my own! But... I'm no lawyer!

[TF replies: counsel reviewed and approved the boiler plate. To ensure that Premium Lists included the correct and full boiler plate, 2007 reg changes require that PL's be submitted to DWC for approval.]

I am in favor of including mixed breed braces, and I like the suggestion posed in one of the comments regarding a safety net – *“mismatched teams outside the realm of 'realistic work situations' will be excused from participating and entry fees will not be refunded (this will make exhibitors think twice about entering a significantly mismatched team)”*

I think adding this sort of language gives judges the clear leeway to excuse a team if they have concerns, and provides a distinct warning to handlers to not get too “creative” in pairing up their dogs. I don’t think we need any sort of regulatory safety net beyond this.

Proposal RFC1:

From the RI judges’ meeting, the principal unresolved issue was a “safety net” for mismatched teams. Nancy Van Horne observed that each dog of a brace has individually demonstrated that they can pull their share of the brace load. Thus, there is no free ride (i.e. a small dog which can’t pull the weight on its own gets a title because a larger dog does the work for it). Also, because the smaller dog has demonstrated that it can pull 20# (this is only an issue for Novice), it may be smaller, but not all that small. Thus, the severity of mismatch is limited. Another consideration is that severely mismatched teams will have control issues. For example, if one dog were to do all the work, the rig will likely jack-knife during the backing exercise. Because it would be so hard to have adequate control to qualify with only one working teammate, perhaps we are unlikely to see such severely mismatched combinations. But this is just speculation.

Please note, based on the discussion in RI, we are resolved to go forward with this proposed change. The only outstanding question is whether there is need for a safety net or not.

On the question of whether a BMD/non-BMD team is considered BMD or “multi-breed” in the draw, we looked for regulatory consistency. If a club restricted their test to Berner’s-only (as remains their option despite no club as yet having exercised that option), we would reasonably expect the BMD/non-BMD team to be excluded. Thus, this team must be considered a multi-breed team throughout all aspects of the regulations.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

Ch1. Section 3. Duties of the Committee

H. Limitation of Entries: ...

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Chapter 3

Eligibility and Conduct of Handlers and Dogs

Ch 3. Section 1. Entry Requirements

A. Definitions: The term “dog” applies to dogs of both sexes as well as individual dogs and both dogs of a brace. The term “brace” means a handler and two dogs ~~of the same breed~~. The term “team” means a handler and one or two dogs.

E. Braces: The two dogs of a brace need not be owned by the same person or by the handler *nor do they need to be the same breed (if an all-breed Test)*. A separate entry form shall be filled out for each dog of the brace and then submitted together.

RFC1 Comments:

I remain concerned about mismatched teams. The Purpose stated at the beginning of our Regs specifically references 'realistic work situations'. While a Schipperke may have pulled its Novice 20 pounds just fine I would not perceive a Schip and a Berner to be an appropriate team. The larger dog in such a mismatched pair can easily do all the work including backing a rig straight for 1 - 4 feet. Yet from a realistic work perspective such a team is ludicrous and would never be utilized by a farmer, who would simply use the large dog by itself. Human nature being as it is, there will almost certainly be those handlers who will try to push the limit with mismatched teams.

If this change is to be made, and I agree totally with the concept, I believe there must, at minimum, be a statement included somewhere to the effect that mismatched teams outside the realm of 'realistic work situations' will be excused from participating and entry fees will not be refunded (this will make exhibitors think twice about entering a significantly mismatched team).

I'm happy to see that the RFC is committed to going forward with this proposal. I don't see a need for a 'safety net'. That's why we have judges, isn't it? Either we trust our judges to recognize a dangerous situation or we don't.

I agree with this new proposal; however, I do think a “safety net” should be included. It should be up to the judges to have to decide if a Berner and a Papillion make a successful team. My suggestion would be that the dog has to be 75% of the Berner’s weight. I have a 100 pound (current weight will probably go at least 110) Berner, I also have a 55 pound golden. The brace work would probably consist of the Berner dragging the Golden around; however, I also have a 92 pound golden and I think that could be a good Brace. If I believed that people had their dog’s best interest at heart then I would agree you don’t need a safety net, let people be guided by their own common sense, but I don’t believe they do!

I am in favor of the proposed changes, and do not see the need for a safety net at this point. I am willing to give the handlers the benefit of the doubt to safely and reasonably pair their dogs up for brace work. If we consistently see problems and issues, we can address it during another round; in the meantime, the judges can excuse teams who they believe pose a significant safety issue because of size/strength

discrepancies.

There is no need for a safety net. There will be teams that perhaps won't look too pretty but our rules allow us to stop a team at any time if we as judges feel that it is beyond its means. In other words a safety net ALREADY EXISTS.

I don't see the need for a safety net beyond what is already built into the regs. I see no reason to believe that a team with two dogs of different breeds is any more likely to be injured, lose control of the cart, or have one dog do more than 50% of the work than a team of two Berners - or two dogs of any other breed - where there can still be considerable disparity in size. I assume people will use common sense, and even if they don't -- a lack of common sense is something that we can't predict. But we do have the ability as judges to stop a team from continuing if the team is out of control or in danger. No added safety net needed.

[Similar comment not shown]

I am opposed to allowing multi breed brace without some sort of safety allowance factored in for dogs mismatched by weight and size. Two instances recently presented themselves in a single test that, IMO, refutes the notion of a mismatch being limited for reasons based on work ability alone.

Situation 1: Brace team at Harness and Hitch. Dogs are mismatched in size, both BMDs. Dog one is huge and harnessed and hitched first. He is fidgety so handler places him in down position while dog 2 is harnessed. The big dog that is hitched smells something good in the grass at the end of his nose and decides this is a good smell to wear, starts a roll. The roll happens when dog 2 is getting ready to be hitched and the torque of the body of the big dog attempting to roll lifts the cart completely on it's side and almost upside down. Shafts torque with cart and are in the air (but not bent or damaged permanently). The snugness of the harness on the big dog hitched to the cart allowed virtually no room for any torque. I think had the other Berner been hitched there was a potential for cart damage, shaft damage, injury to handler, and had the second dog been smaller than 50 pounds, injury likely to it.

Situation 2: Open brace team on freight haul. Load 190 pounds. Approaching a 4 inch diameter steel pole implanted in a paved park pathway intended to keep vehicles off the trail, handler gets distracted and outside dog veers wide enough to catch the pole between it and the shaft. Speed was a slow walk. The impact and abrupt stopping of a 190 pound load completely shattered all the plastic adjusters on the harness defining the braking loops. The cart lunged ahead on the impact side as the brake loops were now ineffective and it carried the dog along with it. Now, this wasn't anything excessive, the whole thing was over in a second. Dog was uninjured and a confident worker so emotional impact to dog was nil. No damage was done to the cart. The harness was unusable and needed repair. It's rather impressive the damage done stopping such a load so abruptly, even at a slow speed. If asked previous to this what I thought would have happened I could easily have guessed but, seeing it happen and the physical shock of the impact transferred to the affected dog was alarming. I realize it's probably a good idea weak physical links exist in harness and hitch hardware to allow for accidents like these. But what if the harness adjusters were metal? Also, had the dog on the impact side been of smaller size and weight than the other dog I can see momentum and accident play out being of potentially more severe consequences.

In addition, I feel compelled to say I don't think the BMDCA draft program should feel obligated to become a proving ground or advocate for any potential future AKC (or any other registry) draft titling program. Ever since a select portion of our judging cadre began pushing for and supporting an AKC draft title program we have been increasingly asked to modify our regulations in manners subsidizing the creation of such. Given the potential for safety issues between two physically mismatched dogs and the litigious atmosphere that exists today, I think we run the risk of creating yet more liability exposure to the BMDCA and the draft program. Along with the acceptance of a new level of risk management, should we adopt such a regulation change, comes the increase in premiums for insurance. Many of our smaller regional clubs are already struggling with insurance demands placed on them by the BMDCA. Are we ready to potentially ask for more? I also think it's a bad idea to rush headlong into regulation changes driven by an agenda to drive and develop an AKC draft title. The BMDCA, nor the Draft Work Committee, should not become a supermarket for draft titles. Our focus is to preserve and promote the working heritage of the Bernese Mountain Dog. Unintended financial consequences to the program and clubs must be carefully considered.

I think the changes and the DWC's comments make sense. I agree that there could already be a 2 layer safety net in place by virtue of 1) the system of NDD and then brace and 2) in that the 2 judges in the ring should be fully capable of stopping a team that would present a safety issue. However, in searching the regs, the closest thing I find is chapter 2 section 6 part c on page 16 where "judges must excuse any dog that is lame or appearing to pull weight in excess of its ability..." That is not strong language when applied to a mismatched brace. Perhaps one more phrase would help add support/strength to our safety net. Perhaps something like "any brace team whose work is so unevenly matched that there is a safety hazard". You get the idea....

I see no need for an official safety net. This is what the sponsoring club, Test secretary and judges are for. As we open the BMDCA Draft Program to more breeds and options like mixed breed brace there will be situations where teams are going to have their entries reviewed and subject to having the Test committee and judges decide whether or not to allow them to compete. A paid entry is not a guarantee that the team will be allowed to compete if it's not in the best interest of the dogs and the sport of draft.

Item #4 Revisions to Regulation Change Process

Discussion RFC3:

This is a three-part proposal. The first part eliminates restrictions on the number of Task Force members assisting in the change process. Because these efforts can be multi-year processes, it is not uncommon to lose members to unforeseen personal circumstances. This proposal enables the DWC Chair to better ensure continuity start to finish.

The second part proposes a change to the letter but not the spirit of the regulations: the regulations would require that proposed changes be disseminated to the membership without stipulating the method of dissemination. Currently, the regulations call for proposals to be published in a BMDCA publication.

However, some proposals are too large for direct publication. This proposal would allow a synopsis to be published while the full works would be made available on the web.

The third part concerns changes to the process itself. Several proposals were received in RFC1 but the TF was unable to advance any of these in regulatory language. Despite the lack of regulatory language going into RFC2, the TF made it clear that the issue was still on the table. More comments followed in RFC2 and after much discussion, the TF is able to recommend the proposed regulatory text before you. Before reading the proposed regulatory text, it might be helpful to know the TF's objectives and discussion.

The proposed regulatory changes in 2004 culminated in 2007 with the most sweeping and single largest set of regulatory changes seen to date. What didn't change was Basic Control. Throughout RFC1 and RFC2 a proposal for changes to Basic Control received no dissent. In RFC3 multiple judges pointed out drawbacks to the proposal. No comments had been received prior to that time to offset or refute these potential drawbacks. Unable to fully discount or refute every potential drawback on its own, the TF took a conservative approach and let the regulations stand as they had for the past decade. For those in favor of the proposed changes, this reversal after the "final" round came as a shock and undermined their confidence in the process. Thus, going forward the TF seeks a change that, had it been in place, would have prevented the dissatisfaction with the process. It was through this lens that RFC2 comments were discussed.

In terms of "absolute" power, as referenced in several of the RFC2 comments below, chairs are appointed and overseen by the Board. No amount of regulatory text can prevent an abuse of position. Should a chair, be it Draft or other, have a self-serving agenda, this is a Board issue, not a regulatory issue.

The goal of the RFC process is to create the best possible Draft program. To ensure thorough and lengthy consideration, DWC Chairs create the most diverse Task Forces (TF) possible. While some may disagree with the degree of a TF's diversity, there is no disputing that initial TF opinions often start at extreme ends of the spectrum and in some cases, such as this one, take months to reach a consensus.

Currently, each TF member is asked to consider the merit of each RFC comment based on their own experiences. Comments have been collated by the Chair and provided to TF members without attribution. Thus, only the Chair knows who authored each comment. Non-attribution is not required by the Draft Regulations, but ensures there is no possibility of bias among TF members when considering the merit of a particular comment. As currently implemented, because TF members do not know who submitted each comment, it is not possible to "heavily" weigh judge's comments/opinions or discount those of the members as proposed in RFC2 comments below. TF discussion regarding codifying this approach in regulatory language so it will be used by all future Task Forces did not reach consensus.

Some have suggested adding a fourth round for the judges to review comments from members. This would not have prevented the dissatisfaction seen in 2007. The comments that caused the TF to leave Basic Control unchanged came largely from judges, not members. It's not the TF's place to speculate on why these judges waited until the last round to make their reservations known. However, if the last round were increased to the fourth or fifth round, the end result would be the same: nothing would prevent these judges from quietly observing however many rounds until the very last round. However, once again, the TF's objective is to craft a proposal that would have made a difference in 2007.

Simply adding a fourth round would not have made a difference in 2007. However, adding a fourth round if and only if significant changes stemmed from third round comments would have made a difference. Thus we propose that proposals undergoing a significant change from RFC3 would have another round for rebuttals or amplifications. The TF believes this change, had it been in effect, would have prevented the dissatisfaction seen in 2007. Where the TF remains divided is whether a fourth round, if needed, should return to the entire membership which includes the judges or just the judges. The TF is unable to resolve this question on its own. Thus, two different views are presented below for your comment. Please remember: to help the TF reach consensus, please explain why you agree/disagree with one position or the other.

Reasons for returning RFC4 to members and judges alike:

The BMDCA Draft program was created for all BMDCA members, not just those who are Draft judges. RFC3 represents what the TF believes is the "final" set of proposals. These are presented to the members so that they both know what is happening to their program and have a chance to point out anything the collective experience of the judging community overlooked. It is only fitting that in the rare instances when a fourth round is required, the entire membership should be included in the review of the "final final" version of the changes to their program. Not only should members have the right to comment on their program, the program benefits from their comments.

Draft judges do not have a lock on good ideas and experience. Some non-judge members have perhaps more Draft Test secretarial experience than any judge, some have more Draft Test chair experience than most judges, others have more Draft Test experience than many judges. In the event that a proposal goes to the fourth round due to comments from non-judges, clearly those members have a perspective that the judging community overlooked or lacked. We ignore that body of experience at our peril. Turning a deaf ear to the membership when it has something to contribute just doesn't make sense.

Finally, let's consider the ramifications of explicitly barring the members from participating in RFC4. Suppose the topic under discussion has nothing to do with judging whatsoever but affects the membership directly (e.g. number of legs for a title, who may enter Draft Tests, etc.). It would be untenable to be bound by regulatory edict to not seek and consider comments from the group most affected by the proposal.

To summarize the reasons a fourth RFC, if needed, should be submitted to the entire membership, including Draft judges, rather than to just the Draft judges:

- 1) Just as members are currently guaranteed a voice in changes to the Constitution and By-Laws, Code of Conduct, and Breed Standard, so too should they be guaranteed input into the final version of their Draft Program.
- 2) the Draft program benefits from the broadest diversity of comments
- 3) Prohibiting the TF from soliciting input from the group most affected by a potential change is an obvious pitfall which must be avoided.

Reasons for returning RFC4 to just the judges:

We are in favor of this proposal to have the Draft Judges give a final review of any significant changes made to the RFC proposals after Round 3 has gone to the BMDCA general membership. This proposal takes advantage of the collective years of experience of the judging community by asking that the judges have a final review if the RFC Committee significantly changes any proposal after Round #3. Round 3 solicits comments from the general membership, without regard for experience, expertise, or even exposure to draft. This proposal would allow for any significant changes to undergo a final review by a very specific group of the membership with the most combined knowledge and experience in the draft program -- the judges themselves. The Draft judges are also competitors and participants in the program, and the comments from judges reflect many years of experience in the ring with the dog, not just experience in the ring with a clipboard in hand.

As a group, the judges have expertise in applying the regulations as well as competing in the sport. The judging community is a diverse group, with a wide range of experiences and points of view, and their input reflects this. They can readily determine the impact of any significant change to the regulations and suggest viable solutions.

With the BMDCA Draft Judges as the only group to comment on any significant changes to round #3, the draft community will be well represented by the most experienced people who historically represent the majority of all the comments during the RFC process. The disadvantage of having a 4th round go to the entire membership would be the added delay required to have the changes published to the BMDCA bulletin and go through another round of general comments from people who may or may not have any practical experience or real interest in draft. Having a 4th round go back to the Draft judges for a comment on significant changes is a more refined review process that would help to fine tune the final regulation changes before the changes are sent to the BMDCA Board for approval

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

Pg 10,11

Ch 1. Section 5 – Procedures for Alterations or Additions to the BMDCA Regulations...

2. The DWC appoints DWC member(s) to direct the project who may in turn select additional persons to be members of the Project Committee ~~for a maximum of five members~~. The Project Committee reports to the DWC Chairperson.

7. The Project Committee incorporates comments and suggestions from RFC #2 and submits the entire proposal (RFC3) to ~~a the BMDCA publication membership~~ for review and comment ~~(RFC #3) from the BMDCA membership~~, with a two-month response time. At the same time the proposal is submitted to the BMDCA Board of Directors for preliminary approval, pending any further changes. ~~resulting from. RFC #3.~~ In the event of significant change to a proposal resulting from RFC3 comments, that proposal and that proposal alone shall be submitted to the _____ as RFC4 with a two month response time.

8. The Project Committee prepares the final version based on ~~RFC #3~~ RFC3/RFC4 and submits it to the DWC for review. . .

Discussion RFC2:

The committee suggests the spirit of some of the regulation-change-process proposals has been accomplished in this more transparent format. These and those proposals which proved not viable appear in the “Inactive” file. All comments are shown in both documents for reference.

Concerning limits on Project Committee size, some correctly pointed out that the larger the group, the harder it is to manage and reach consensus. Certainly this adds to the overall time of the project. However, the committee suggests two benefits outweigh these drawbacks. Some comments expressed concern over “group think”. The larger the group, the greater the diversity of opinion and therefore the better “group think” is countered. Second, with such a lengthy project, members are often lost to unforeseen personal changes. A larger group is better prepared to overcome these losses.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

No change from RFC1.

RFC2 Comments:

I can live with more members....

I agree with the [RFC2] comments in regards to the process of regulation reviews/changes.

While the increased transparency is appreciated, it does not solve the core issue – the DWC still maintains absolute power and control over changes, and the ultimate, final decision rests in the hands of only a few people that were not elected nor selected as a fair and impartial representation of the judging cadre. They were handpicked by the chair –whoever happens to be chair at the time. I still believe it to be a flawed process.

Posted on the Judges’ ‘L: 2)RFC process changes- While the regulations currently define a clear path for setting up the specific goals and procedures to be followed for the "Project Committee" and the RFC processes, what is still lacking is any measure of "weight" that is given the judges general consensus over one or two comments from the general membership who may or may not even be draft participants. ... The way the regs are set up now, the majority of the DWC, which means about 3 people,

can determine how the BMDCA's biggest program is to be run. That much power needs some checks and balances that the current regs do not provide. “

I concur with thought, and the change proposed. While the increased transparency is appreciated, it does not solve the core issue – the DWC still maintains absolute power and control over changes, and the ultimate, final decision rests in the hands of only a few people that were not elected nor selected as a fair and impartial representation of the judging cadre. They were handpicked by the chair –whoever happens to be chair at the time. I still believe it to be a flawed process.

It has also pointed out that what is currently lacking in the RFC process is specifically weighing the opinions of the judging community. The proposed change posted on the ‘L gives a final review on the proposed RFC by the judges and states that the judge’s views must be “weighed heavily” in determining recommended changes. I am strongly in favor of this proposed change since it does give a final review to the judges and gives a defined “weight” to those opinions. The judging community represents the greatest exposure to the draft test regs, not just as judges but as seasoned participants. Defining the weight that should be given to the voice of the judging community is a “check and balance” to the ultimate recommendations of the DWC. Since the DWC and members of the RFC committee are not elected by the judges, there is no process for ensuring that the judges’ voices are adequately represented in the final RFC document. My vote in favor of this recommendation is about defining the process -- and is not intended as a comment on how the process is currently being implemented.

RFC process changes- While the regulations currently define a clear path for setting up the specific goals and procedures to be followed for the "Project Committee" and the RFC processes, what is still lacking is any measure of "weight" that is given the judges general consensus over one or two comments from the general membership who may or may not even be draft participants. As is common, and is human nature, we all offer our own personal opinions regarding any given situation. The difference with the draft regs is that many times our own personal feelings must give way to the majority with the most experience and currently that is not happening. The DWC must also be able to put away their personal feelings in order to accommodate the majority. The way the regs are set up now, the majority of the DWC, which means about 3 people, can determine how the BMDCA's biggest program is to be run. That much power needs some checks and balances that the current regs do not provide. It is inconceivable to me that one comment from a non judge member can outweigh the majority of over 30 seasoned active draft participants and judges. At a minimum, the comments garnered from the general membership need to be put back in the judges’ laps for perusal and comment. It need not involve the BMDC board, it need not involve any great addition of time but it needs to be done! It can be revised something like this:

Chapter 1 Section 5) Procedures for Alterations or Additions....

7) The Project Committee incorporates comments and suggestions from RFC #2 and submits the entire proposal to a BMDCA publication for review and comment (RFC #3) from the BMDCA membership, with a two-month response time. At the same time the proposal is submitted to the BMDCA Board of Directors for preliminary approval, pending any changes resulting from RFC #3. Any changes suggested by the project committee after RFC#3 **are sent to the judges for final commentary with a 4 week response time. The judges comments and concerns (RFC#4) must be reviewed and weighed heavily in determining recommended changes.**

8. The Project Committee prepares the final version based on RFC #4 and submits it to the DWC for review. The DWC submits their final version to BMDCA Board of Directors for approval and

subsequent electronic and/or printed publication(s). The latter may be either a new edition of the BMDCA Draft Regulations or an insert. At the time of submission to the BMDCA Board, the DWC also submits its recommendation for a date when alterations/additions take effect.

Proposal RFC1:

Why limit the number or perspectives or the amount of experience available to the Project Committee? The DWC suggests that the broader the perspectives and range of experiences within the Project Committee the better the final result. Thus it is counterproductive to place fixed limitations in the regulations themselves.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

Ch 1. Section 5 – Procedures for Alterations or Additions to the BMDCA Regulations...

2. The DWC appoints DWC member(s) to direct the project who may in turn select additional persons to be members of the Project Committee ~~for a maximum of five members~~. The Project Committee reports to the DWC Chairperson.

RFC1 Comments

I do not perceive the process as broken. What is lacking is participation, from both judges and non-judge members, which cannot be regulated. I agree with the DWC that the primary goal is to protect and preserve a highly successful program while making incremental improvements. It is vital that the BMDCA maintain standards so our Draft titles are meaningful and respected.

It is impractical and inappropriate to legislate specific and detailed Board participation in any committee. The Board, by definition, is responsible for reviewing and approving all committee actions.

The larger a committee the longer it takes to take any actions. I think 5 RFC committee members is a good max. There is absolutely nothing to prevent such a committee from specifically seeking additional input on individual topics. Best to keep the decision making body at a manageable number.

[Similar comment not shown]

I don't agree with the above statement; While our opinions are asked for, I don't really believe they are listened to, nor have reasons been explained as was evident at the judges meeting in Michigan (I think that was the meeting) I will continue to express my opinion but do not think it really matters.

I disagree, but I wrote it. Bottom line is that leaving the process entirely in the hands of the DWC to pick and choose their members leaves way too much power and control in the hands of the few.

Committees are most effective when all members work well together. In order to create an effective committee, chairs are going to select people with whom they can get along and create a cohesive team.

By its very formation, a committee that works together successfully is going to share significant elements of “group think” – similar positions and perspectives on many issues. For most committee work, this is not a problem. But to then ask a committee that is structured in this manner to be the voice of a larger population with numerous perspectives becomes a huge problem.

The DWC, which functions quite well as an administrative body, cannot be the sole voice of the judging cadre. Even with the RFC process open to all judges, the DWC is still the final arbitrator – what you all may consider a “particularly insightful comment” may not be the same to the rest of the judging cadre.

As to the Board being too overwhelmed to be burdened with such a task as the formation of the Project Committee, I think that is a cop out. First of all, it is an assumption that the Board would not want the task. Second, the Board is entrusted with running this club, and our Draft Program is the biggest program in the club. I think Board involvement would be a welcome addition to the RFC process, if for no other reason than a more neutral party would be bearing witness to the RFC process from start to finish, and able to present a balanced assessment of discussions, rather than the vitriolic point/counterpoint that occurred during the final stages of the last RFC.

Finally, the Board does trust its committees to run the day to day affairs of many aspects of the club, but the Board never forgets that each committee chair serves at the Board’s pleasure, and all major decisions affecting the club and its membership are subject to the Board’s final approval. Given the size of our program and the importance of each RFC and subsequent regulation changes, having the Board more directly involved is not a bad thing.

So instead we continue to utilize the ‘group think’ method of running things. There is no bogging down because there is presumably little disagreement. The proposal above allows for the appointing of a Project Chair. That Chair would act as the “someone making an executive decision.”

Item 4.1 and 4.2:

Re the DWC comments - What a negative piece of ‘head in the sand’ mentality here. To make a statement that ‘whenever a large enough group want to force a change we’d find ourselves with quickly eroding standards’ is to say that the judges and draft enthusiasts are solely concerned with personal agendas and that these agendas are not any way near the current standards. That is just wrong!

The judges are saying WE WANT MORE SAY. We don’t want to be blindsided by ‘an insightful interpretation’. We want to vote on the changes after careful consideration. I realize that the chair and DWC consider themselves to be the keepers of the Holy Grail but you are not omnipotent. Your arguments are a fight for your beliefs and although I admire that, I also believe that your beliefs are not always right. I believe that the 700 or so entrants that I have judged give me some valuable insight here. I don’t spend my time reading reports, I spend my time watching with my own eyes what I have already seen in tests that I have judged. I see what other judges are faced with and I respect their space and at the same time I recognize that our rules are good but could be great.

Item 4.3:

I am 100% in favor of this change with the addition of a timetable AND a template for proposals to follow. The timetable that I would think most appropriate is every three years. The template is pretty close to the proposal.

I believe this proposal was put forward because of a lack of confidence in the current chair and DWC. A feeling that the drafting community has been and continues to be manipulated to the whims of a few.

The DWC comment is that we currently have the “best” draft program. That’s a matter of personal opinion. Other breeds - and the CKC – have draft programs that offer things of value. The BMDCA program is a good one, but that doesn’t mean it can’t be better, or that other draft programs are inferior. Not all draft programs are based on our club’s, and we can learn and improve. Obedience, agility, and other dog sports have progressed and improved, and our program can, too. While this doesn’t mean the program needs wholesale changes, I’m in favor of a process of change that is both efficient and democratic to a greater degree than what currently exists.

I am strongly in favor of JUDGES having more input in the process. It is not accurate to state that judges have a full “say”. Both the process and the past performance of the process demonstrate that the opinions of the draft judges can and have been flatly rejected. Weighting comments by “merit” or “insight” is not giving input to the judges as a whole, since this means that “merit” or “insight” as determined by a majority of the DWC (which would be 3 out of 5 people assuming 5 members of the DWC) overrides any comments or opinions of 20 or 30 other judges. If “merit” is ultimately judged by 3 people - that is still just personal opinion, and that’s not giving the judges a true voice in the end result.

The judges did not select the members of the DWC, so this is not a process where those in charge have been selected by a vote to speak for the larger group. The DWC - as the process currently stands – can reject any comments or opinions expressed by anyone – based on a view of “merit” determined by a minimum of three people. That is not a process that benefits the draft program. Many judges have judged hundreds of participants and many, many tests over the years. Those opinions matter, and while the members of the DWC also have opinions that matter - as the process exists now, it is ONLY the opinions of the DWC (with a 3/5 vote being controlling) that ultimately dictate the result.

I am in favor of the general proposal set out in Item 4.3 –although I would consider modifications that would make it less of a burden on the BMDCA Board since the BMDCA Board may not wish to have one of its own members on the committee. However, I do think that the current BMDCA judges should have a VOTE - a true VOTE – that would count towards the ultimate result of any proposed changes. The judges are the most likely individuals to have knowledge and opinions to help move the draft program forward. Taking advantage of those opinions is more likely to benefit the draft program as a whole than leaving ultimate decisions to three individuals, regardless of who those three people may be.

I don’t know how many judges have commented on the current RFC - but I suspect that many have chosen not to comment because their opinions have been rejected in the past because the opinions were not shared by the DWC majority. Taking the time to think and comment has value when the comments

are respected and valued. The JUDGES need to know that their opinions carry weight and have value, and a voting process would accomplish this.

[Similar comment not shown]

This IMO is a rather blatant attempt to eviscerate the Draft Work Committee and I oppose it on all levels. The BMDCA draft program is not better served by deferring to the BMDCA Board via a "Project Committee". The BMDCA Board changes in composition annually, and quite frequently is composed of individuals with little to no knowledge of draft and even occasionally with individuals hostile toward the draft program. The DWC was formed to do all the jobs in this proposal. Surrendering control of our draft regulations to yet another committee that is nothing more, composition wise, than a political quagmire and is not wise. Such a change effectively removes the DWC from significant control over the most vitally important aspect of our program and sets the stage for the potential future elimination of the DWC. This change strikes me as a veiled attempt by disgruntled cadre members to force a vindictive agenda that can do nothing more but hurt our program in the long run and create yet more divisiveness. This change is not needed! The RFC process as it stands now is fair and more than opportunistic to draft judges. Judges have unhindered access at all levels of the process if they would but take the time to carefully document their comments to the DWC instead of engaging in endless discussions on forums that are virtually impossible to weed the salient fragments of information from for the purpose of modifying a regulation. I personally, do not wish to return to the days when some "agreement" at a draft judges meeting at a Specialty becomes accepted policy for which a judge not privy to such an "agreement" get reprimanded. Can't happen?, not true, I was one of those judges at one time. I want the DWC FULLY in charge and control of ALL regulation issues. Our draft regulations should not be held hostage to committee formations based on fractious personality issues, misunderstandings or unwillingness to follow an already carefully thought out method for instituting change in our regulations. The RFC process as it is now has been successfully employed twice. Granted, it may need tweaks as we mature, but we need to stick with a process that grants fairness across as broad a spectrum as possible and managed by the standing committee charged with protecting our program. The DWC and the RFC process must stand!

Although we live in a country based on democracy, this form of leadership does not work in all situations. Consider a classroom. Even with adult students, more learning occurs when the class is a dictatorship. I feel the same about organizations. There must be one leader to keep order. We may not always agree with the leader's decision, but that's why there is a board of directors – or in our case the other DWC members... That said, let's not mess with the system we have. It works!!!! And while other s may have their attributes, ours is the one most copied and isn't "imitation the sincerest form of flattery"? Another quote comes to mind... "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".

Has this person not ever taken part in the RFC process? The judges have three opportunities to contribute to the process. For the BMDCA to submit it "to the membership" means that people who are not members of the Draft community would be voting on something they know little , if anything, about!!! Unless they mean the judging membership... but that is not the way it is written. The members of the DWC, with suggestions from the judges, are the best group to consider changes to the

draft regulations. If the BMDCA board wants to change its definition of the DWC, how the members are selected, how many there are, etc. that is up to them. If they have not done so, they must not see an issue. Granted, those things that are done in executive session at board meetings may deal with this, but most of us would not know anything about that. It is board matter and we elect our board by a vote. Thus, the people we select are the ones making the call. (back to that whole democracy and vote issue!)

I could just repeat what I said above in capital letters, but I won't. Being a judge is a responsibility and part of that is being part of the RFC process. If a judge didn't take the time to go through the material and make comments and give explanations, then they chose to lose that opportunity and it's their own fault.

And.. as long as I'm airing my views.... It seems that there are judges who do not read the regs cover to cover and can not find things in the regs. It is my opinion that they need to KNOW the regulations and if the index at the back of the book is not complete enough for them to find something quickly, then they need to create their own index. That task in itself makes a person more aware of what is in that reg book.

To add one more thought here... look at the time involved in these changes and realize that a board may change during the process. A new board can bring a great change in thought and could bring the whole process to a screeching halt! Whether this person likes it or not, the DWC is generally more constant, more consistent, and more like-minded when it comes to Draft than the BMDCA boards.

Yes! There needs to be one person in charge! As leader, it is their responsibility to keep the group and the project on task and on time.

You are EXACTLY right. The BMDCA Board has better things to do. They can not micro-manage every committee! And... the board changes... while one board may be knowledgeable about Draft, another might not and might see Draft as excess baggage. One never knows what the future will hold. Our current RFC process may not be perfect, but it is a better and more efficient plan than this one.

Yes! 5 may be enough on some projects, but not on others. We must give the DWC the latitude to have the number of people necessary for the project at hand.

I support the DWC's position on this item. Speedy changes are often not in the best interest of the Draft program. We, in this very document, will address the speedy changes to the original regs that were made years ago to the CD / basic control, fouling of the freight haul and Recall sections. These changes, though speedy, continue to haunt the halls of our regulations.

I feel the current system is fine. Just because someone isn't getting their issues passed doesn't mean you revamp the process. The RFC is process is the best it has ever been and should be allowed to continue.

Item 4.3: I do not support this RFC [proposal].

Item #5 Waive Basic Control

Discussion RFC3:

Last round we proposed a dramatic shift in the purpose of Basic Control: BC serves strictly as a safety test or a pre-qualification prior to allowing a hitched team in the ring. We agree with those who would like BC dropped altogether that BC adds nothing to the assessment of a team's draft capability. However, we disagree that the "real true safety device for drafting is a leash on a novice dog" given that some large male dogs could easily drag some handlers. Moreover, we've never seen a team new to the Open ring work off-lead. In the absence of a CD, without testing, how are we to know that the team can work safely off-lead?

Among those in favor of retaining BC, a common theme is "don't dumb it down." While asking a dog to sit for a recall is perfectly reasonable, whether the dog sits or stands has no bearing on whether the team should have the "green light" to proceed to the draft test proper. In other words, sitting vs. standing is not a safety issue.

There was a suggestion that we accept "AKC title reports" as well as CD certificates. We researched this and found that a replacement title certificate is just as easily obtained as a "title report" and costs the same. Thus, to prevent "proof creep", we propose keeping it clear and simple: CD certificates and only CD certificates are acceptable.

One comment correctly pointed out that a DD-titled team has adequately demonstrated control for subsequent entry in Novice and Open. Similarly, a BDD-titled team has adequately demonstrated control for any subsequent entries. Going into RFC2 we had considered adding these to the regulations, but the matrix got large and required a fair amount of accompanying text. Given the small number of dogs affected, we thought then that the additional complexity and increased rule book thickness was not worth the benefit.

Please see "Discussion RFC2" for the complete details and motivation for this proposal. The one change from RFC2 is that the proposed addition to failing performances, "Dog does not come willingly to handler", has been withdrawn.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

General Regs Chapter 1, Section 3B Premium List, Item 15 Entry Form:

- i) [Place for indicating whether Basic Control waived with a CD.](#)

[following items, 'j'-'u', re-lettered]

General Regs Chapter 3, Section 1 Entry Requirements

G. Waiving Basic Control: Basic Control may be waived if the dog has earned the Companion Dog (CD) title and a copy of the title certificate is submitted with the entry form. In the case of Brace teams, CD title certificates for both dogs must accompany the entry to waive BC. The CD title certificate may be from the AKC, United Kennel Club, or Canadian Kennel Club.

~~G.~~ H. Acceptable Entries:

5. Copy of CD title certificate for waiving Basic Control
- ~~5.~~ 6. Any additional requirements. . .

Regulations for Performance and Judging, Chapter 1, Key Words:

[add 'F', 'G', 'H', re-letter current 'F'-'H']

F. Command – a verbal order which may begin or end with the dog's call name.

G. Signal – a single, continuous motion of one or more body parts which must start in and immediately return to a natural position.

H. Command and/or Signal – handler may give a command, a signal, or both a command and signal simultaneously.

Chapter 3, Exercises

Section 1. Basic Control

Overview: Prior to hitching, the dog demonstrates willingness to work with and respond to the handler while in the vicinity of the draft equipment **and that the dog may be hitched without a safety risk to itself or others.** The team is to demonstrate walking under control with changes of direction ~~and speed~~, and a recall to the vicinity of the draft rig. **Lack of sufficient control to be safely hitched to a rig shall result in excusal. Lack of willingness and/or cooperation shall be failed, but the team may proceed to the Draft exercises at judges' discretion. Basic Control may be waived with a CD certificate accompanying the entry.**

A. Walking under Control

Open Draft: Draft rig and harness remain outside the ring near the ring entrance. The dog enters the ring on leash. The leash is given to a steward who places it in the draft rig. There is no penalty at any time for the leash falling out of draft rig.

The dog is expected to walk under control within arm's length of the handler at all times. The dog may work on either side, in front, or behind the handler but may not interfere with the handler's movement [original text restored. The handler may not **physically guide** the dog but may encourage the dog to remain within arm's length. ~~It is desirable, but not required, for the dog to sit by the handler's side at halts. One judge will call commands but both judges will score.~~

Judge's commands to the handler are: "Are you ready", "Forward", "~~Slow~~", "~~Fast~~", "~~Normal~~", ...

Failing performance:

1. Dog does. . .
- ~~2. No change of pace.~~
- ~~3. Handler adapts to pace of the dog.~~
4. 2. Handler **physically guides** the dog.

B. Recall: The recall is performed off leash and will be approximately 40 ~~30 to 50~~ feet in length. In the Novice classes the leash shall be given to a judge. ~~The exercise starts with the dog sitting.~~ The exercise may start with the dog in any position. The dog must execute the **wait for the recall** with a single **command and/or signal**.

At the judge's direction, the handler calls the dog with a single **command and/or signal**. ~~Extra hand signals, verbal commands, and praise are allowed after~~ After the dog has begun to move, **additional signals, commands, and praise are allowed**. The dog is expected to come directly to the handler and stop near enough for the handler to touch. ~~It is desirable, but not required, for the dog to sit upon reaching the handler.~~

Judge's commands or signals are: "Are you ready?", "Leave your dog", "Call your dog", "Exercise finished".

Failing performance:

1. Handler gives more than one **wait command and/or signal**.
2. Dog does not **wait**.
3. Dog does not come on first **command and/or signal**.
4. Dog does not come **directly** to handler.
5. Dog remains out of reach.
6. Handler **physically guides** the dog.

Section 2. Harness and Hitch

Novice Draft: ~~Dog and handler position themselves close to the draft rig. The leash is removed. Dog remains off leash following Recall and may receive gentle physical guidance to the vicinity of the draft rig. The judge places the leash in the draft rig.~~

Open Draft: The dog and handler proceed to the harness and hitch location designated by the judges. The dog must **wait** while the handler leaves. . .

Section 4. Group Stay

Overview: The dogs demonstrate their ability to remain on an **off-leash stay** while hitched. This is a group exercise.

Novice Draft and Brace Novice Draft: ~~The stay is off leash with the handler standing~~ across the ring from the dog.

Open Draft and Brace Open Draft: ~~The stay is off leash with the handler is~~ out of sight.

Dogs are hitched to their loaded draft rigs and may be gently placed in a stand, sit or down. Draft rig shafts may be adjusted for the dog's comfort. ~~Handler's armbands, weighted with leashes, shall be placed behind the handler, beside the draft rig. Leashes are placed in the rig.~~ The **stay** command and/or signal is given once and no other commands or signals may be given during this exercise. The **stay** is for three minutes. The handlers shall return to the dog's side.

Discussion RFC2:

We started by discussing the intent of our “founding fathers” as one comment suggested. The two themes gleaned from the BC Overview are willingness and safety. The latter is not as clear as “willingness”, but if one agrees with the comment “this is about carting, not heeling”, why ask teams to demonstrate walking under control if not in the interest of safety? Unlike other events (tracking, agility, etc.) where the only thing a dog may be attached to is a leash, a dog hitched to a loaded rig poses a safety risk to itself and those around it if it is not under control. Thus as the comments suggested, BC provides “the opportunity” for a team “to express its willingness to associate with [the] equipment” and “demonstrate fundamental control.” Next we asked, what should be the outcome of BC.

The comment “we are testing teams ability to draft - and basic control doesn’t tell us whether or not they can do that” rang true. Maneuvering and the Freight Haul test the team’s draft ability. How well the team heels does not speak to whether this team is capable of practical Draft work. Thus, it struck us that in a perfect world, BC would function like the Equipment Check – if you have all the basic elements, you may participate in the test. This logic was reflected in the comment, “if it were really a test to determine the team could work safely then we need to stop at the first flunk.” Thus, if the team demonstrates “willingness” and sufficient control not to be a hazard, it gets the “green light” to take the test. We spent quite a bit of time futilely trying to get this concept to work. If the only result of BC was “proceed or not”, teams would not proceed if the dog failed to come on the recall. This objectivity proved too harsh for a lack of willingness vs. a true safety risk such as a dog running out of the ring. Thus, we sought to revise BC within the existing framework to make it closer to a safety check but remain a “graded” exercise.

We need not ask teams with a CD to demonstrate their control since they have already met or exceeded our “safety check” on at least three separate occasions. To waive BC, there was little question that a copy of the certificate must accompany the entry – not pictures of three green ribbons, etc.

Continuing on through the proposed changes, we added three keywords, **Command, Signal, Command and/or Signal**. **Command** is self-explanatory but needed a definition if we were to define **Signal**. We recognize that some handlers are unfamiliar with the AKC obedience regulations and may be unaware that bending at the waist, clapping hands, etc. is an illegal signal. Since BC is a safety check and not an obedience test, we defined **Signal** to accommodate a bending of the waist combined with a single clap of the hands, etc. In the case of **Command and/or Signal** we wanted to ensure they are issued simultaneously rather than one thirty seconds after the other when the first one failed.

The “Overview” was overhauled to reflect emphasis on “safety check” rather than obedience. We wanted to make it clearer what is being tested and the results of those tests. In addition, change of pace was deleted since this has no bearing on safety. In the last sentence, “...may proceed... at judges’ discretion” was added so that “lack of willingness... shall be failed” does not countermand or contradict “D. Misbehavior” on page 18 which states that a strong display or fear or nervousness by the dog may result in excusal. Because some might see a fearful dog where others see an unwilling worker, we want

to preclude the possible retort, “my dog is an unwilling worker therefore you can only fail it – you can’t excuse it.”

There was some question about what to do with the Open handler’s leash. The logical place for the leash is in the cart so that handler will have it with them at all times. The leash is not part of the load and therefore would not result in failure were it dropped. However, we eliminated any ambiguity by making this explicit.

In the description of the exercise, desirability of sits was struck since we are testing safety not obedience. Also struck was “One judge will call...” This is the way every exercise is conducted. Either it must be explicitly stated for every exercise or dropped here. We chose the latter. In the judge’s commands and subsequently in Failing performances, “**Slow**”, “Fast”, and change of pace issues were dropped.

The Recall was restructured as a test of safety and willingness. First, position of the team at the start of the exercise is immaterial. In the discussion of the exercise, “judge’s command or signal” is inserted to support the frequent use of a judge’s signal for the recall itself. Next, handler recalls the dog with command and/or signal. Thus, we’ve doubled the number of cues given to recall the dog. Finally, this is a safety test: we don’t care whether the dog sits on returning to the handler.

Failure to come “willingly” was added to list of Failing performances. This was added as a reminder that as per the overview, we are testing safety and willingness.

In Harness and Hitch, “leash is removed” requires that immediately after the recall the dog be leashed. However, because the dog was recalled in the vicinity of the rig and is therefore already in the H&H location, the leash must now be immediately removed. Put it on and then take it off seems silly so this was changed such that the dog explicitly remains unleashed and the leash placed in the cart.

In the Open Draft description, we fixed a typo: “wait” is a keyword which was not previously shown in bold.

Following the subject of the leash, we can make some simplifications to the text in Section 4. Following the subject of the leash, this is a good time to address a proposal that didn’t make it into this set of proposals and was slated for the round following this one – the handling of armbands and leashes during the Group Stay.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

General Regs Chapter 1, Section 3B Premium List, Item 15 Entry Form:

ii) [Place for indicating whether Basic Control waived with a CD.](#)

[following items, ‘j’-‘u’, re-lettered]

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Open Draft: Draft rig and harness remain outside the ring near the ring entrance. The dog enters the ring on leash. The leash is given to a steward who places it in the draft rig. There is no penalty at any time for the leash falling out of draft rig.

The dog is expected to walk under control within arm's length of the handler at all times. The dog may work on either side, in front, or behind the handler but may not interfere with the handler's movement [original text restored. The handler may not **physically guide** the dog but may encourage the dog to remain within arm's length. ~~It is desirable, but not required, for the dog to sit by the handler's side at halts. One judge will call commands but both judges will score.~~

Judge's commands to the handler are: "Are you ready", "Forward", "~~Slow~~", "~~Fast~~", "~~Normal~~", ...

Failing performance:

1. Dog does. . .
- ~~2. No change of pace.~~
- ~~3. Handler adapts to pace of the dog.~~
4. 2. Handler **physically guides** the dog.

B. Recall: The recall is performed off leash and will be approximately 40 ~~30 to 50~~ feet in length. In the Novice classes the leash shall be given to a judge. ~~The exercise starts with the dog sitting.~~ The exercise may start with the dog in any position. The dog must execute the **wait for the recall** with a single **command and/or signal**.

At the judge's direction, the handler calls the dog with a single **command and/or signal**. ~~Extra hand signals, verbal commands, and praise are allowed after~~ After the dog has begun to move, **additional signals, commands, and praise are allowed**. The dog is expected to come directly to the handler and stop near enough for the handler to touch. ~~It is desirable, but not required, for the dog to sit upon reaching the handler.~~

Judge's commands or signals are: "Are you ready?", "Leave your dog", "Call your dog", "Exercise finished".

Failing performance:

7. Handler gives more than one **wait command and/or signal**.
8. Dog does not **wait**.
9. Dog does not come on first **command and/or signal**.
10. Dog does not come directly to handler.
11. Dog does not come willingly to handler.
12. Dog remains out of reach.
13. Handler **physically guides** the dog.

Section 2. Harness and Hitch

Novice Draft: ~~Dog and handler position themselves close to the draft rig. The leash is removed. Dog remains off leash following Recall and may receive gentle physical guidance to the vicinity of the draft rig. The judge places the leash in the draft rig.~~

Open Draft: The dog and handler proceed to the harness and hitch location designated by the judges. The dog must **wait** while the handler leaves. . .

Section 4. Group Stay

Overview: The dogs demonstrate their ability to remain on an **off-leash stay** while hitched. This is a group exercise.

Novice Draft and Brace Novice Draft: ~~The stay is off leash with the handler standings across the ring from the dog.~~

Open Draft and Brace Open Draft: ~~The stay is off leash with the handler is out of sight.~~

Dogs are hitched to their loaded draft rigs and may be gently placed in a stand, sit or down. Draft rig shafts may be adjusted for the dog's comfort. ~~Handler's armbands, weighted with leashes, shall be placed behind the handler, beside the draft rig.~~ Leashes are placed in the rig. The **stay** command and/or signal is given once and no other commands or signals may be given during this exercise. The **stay** is for three minutes. The handlers shall return to the dog's side.

RFC2 Comments:

General Regs Chapter 1, Section 3B Premium List, Item 15 Entry Form:

i) Place for indicating whether Basic Control waived with a CD.

I don't agree ...

Just to explain my reluctance to accept a CD - I have seen dogs in the obedience ring who work fine indoors on a matted surface. I see those same dogs outside in the grass or in the parking lot dragging their humans around as if they'd never been to an obedience class! Dogs who earned their CD at indoor tests on matted surfaces may not be able to demonstrate control in the outdoor, grassy environment of a draft ring.

As for the "willingly" in the recall portion, I would like to see it removed. I agree that if the dog is off leash doing a recall, it will only come if it is willing !

I see that my comments from my last review were included into the RFC document. I don't want to spend a lot of time rehashing my opinion on this subject but wanted to make sure that I had given comments on this document.

I continue to believe that Basic Control exercises should be eliminated and do not feel the discussion within RFC2 justifies keeping this exercise as an integral part of demonstrating drafting ability. I feel that Basic Control exercises are superfluous to a Draft test. Willingness to work is fully demonstrated within the drafting section of the test and it is hard to justify Basic Control as a safety net. The real true safety device for drafting is a leash on a novice dog. A dog with a NDD has fully demonstrated that they are capable of completing all the requirements of draft test. I do not agree that the fact that a NDD is done on leash changes things while the off leash requirement of the CD proves that the dog will always be under control. A dog with a DD has demonstrated the upper level of our sport but may still be required to do Basic Control if they don't have a CD.

I understand when the sport was being developed years ago the underlying concerns that led to the inclusion of Basic Control into the original test. The BMDCA Drafting program should be considered a mature sport with 20 some odd years of experience. I have personally judged several hundred teams and watched countless others and it is my observations that have led me to my opinion on Basic Control in general. I cannot believe that we need to continue to draw on an AKC title to prove working ability of our draft dogs. We have tried to distance the sport from AKC obedience. Now with our master titles we have teams that have demonstrated multiple times that they can pass a draft test. I give far more credence to a BMDCA title to prove willingness to work doing drafting than any AKC title. The last draft test I judged one particular dog 4 times in Basic control.

I do not feel my opinion on this subject is a minority opinion within the judging community. I do not feel that the changes to Basic Control Waiver went far enough in RFC2.

I agree with [RFC2] comments in regards to the recall.

I favor waiving it for a dog with a CD. I think the language must be very clear that ONLY a copy of the actual certificate is acceptable. It is possible to purchase a title report from the AKC showing all titles

awarded to the dog; you can do this in a couple of minutes from their website. If this report from the AKC is not going to be acceptable proof of the CD, then make it very clear that ONLY the issued certificate is valid proof. (A copy of an AKC title report is attached for reference. I think this actually should count as acceptable proof, but either way, just make it clear in the regs.)

Regarding the Recall – it should start in a sit. I'm ok with most of the changes proposed, but asking for a sit should not be a challenge. They are earning a title here, not just a qualifying leg, and asking for a demonstration of basic skills is more than acceptable. We don't need to "dumb it down" that much. Other changes (i.e., command and/or signal) are acceptable.

Posted about the recall: "In my opinion this is a huge error, why on earth are we adding another "failing" opportunity to the recall?? The regs are not a place for "reminders". This statement now brings into consideration how quickly or slowly a dog comes on the recall. ... There is NO way to determine what "willingly" means, the dog either comes the first time at whatever pace it wants or it doesn't come at all. "

I missed the addition of "willingly" in the RFC, so did not comment on it when I sent in my response. For the record, I agree with this point. For what it's worth, I also think the recall should begin in a sit. We are giving a title here; requesting a basic demonstration of skills is not too much to ask. I see no need to "dumb it down" so much. The dog should be able to sit.

The proposed reg adds a new criteria for a failing performance - "dog does not come willingly to handler."

If you are not willing to do something, then you are, by definition, unwilling - and there is no such thing as an unwilling recall - it is a contradiction in terms. In this exercise, the dog is off leash and the handler is across the ring. Any dog that returns to its handler - whether quickly, slowly, directly or via a circuitous route, on a single command or multiple commands - has executed a willing recall. It may not be an enthusiastic or fast recall and there may be elements of it that are failing (i.e., multiple commands), but if the dog gets to the handler on its own accord has done so willingly. Even the dog that slinks back slowly, tail tucked, eyes averted, has done so willingly. Maybe not happily, or briskly, or enthusiastically, but if the dog goes to the handler on its own then it has made the choice to do so and demonstrated willingness to perform the exercise.

A dog cannot perform an unwilling recall - if it is unwilling, then there actually is no recall. A dog that is not willing does not go the handler - an unwilling dog may refuse to move, may leave the ring, and may visit a judge. You cannot force a recall - the dog has to make a choice whether it will perform the exercise. And if the dog is unwilling and chooses not to perform the exercise then we already have criteria for failing this. Again, you cannot force the recall in the ring.

There are other exercises in our tests that can be forced on the dog, and we can judge willingness. For instance, the stop/halt. A dog can stop willingly when given the command, or a dog can be forced to stop by using the leash, grabbing the harness, grabbing the cart. Or, the harness & hitch - the dog can stand calmly and willingly be harnessed and hitched, or the dog can fight the handler's efforts but still be forced into harness and attached to the cart. In these examples, willingness can be judged.

What a dog does on the recall, however, is entirely up to the dog. The recall cannot be forced or imposed. If the dog eventually gets to the handler then it did so willingly, regardless of how it may have performed the recall itself. An unwilling recall is simply not a recall, and if there's not a recall, then it's a failing performance.

We already include the criteria of judging willingness on the part of the dog elsewhere in our regs. I see no need to add it to the recall exercise portion of the regs, and certainly not as it is currently proposed, as it really makes no sense. If there is a desire to continue the spirit of this particular revision, then perhaps a more appropriate term than "willingly" might be "enthusiastically," but that opens up a whole other area of potential problems, most of which were already articulated in Valerie's earlier post that started this discussion.

Re: the newest failing performance in the recall.

I can't personally say that it would influence my judging but it might with some of my fellow judges. ... so best it is dropped as it clearly is elsewhere in the regs.

Please do not include the word or concept of "willingness" into the recall. It's redundant, adding more confusion to how it should be judged, and makes the recall sound like an obedience exercise. I will disagree that it's not a DQ in obedience. It's a different matter in obedience where there's a deduction of points when a dog comes in slowly. Some judges just may interpret our regulations, despite our intention, to mean that a slow recall is a DQ.

Personally, I will ALWAYS advocate for the recall to be dropped from the basic exercises for dogs that have an obedience title or for dogs in the advanced class.

The recall is an exercise where the performance of the task itself requires a level of willingness on the dog's part since the recall cannot be forced from across the ring, and only one command is allowed before the dog must respond. This is unlike other exercises where the handler is next to the dog and the dog can be cajoled or threatened into some type of response since multiple commands are allowed, and physical presence can be intimidating – for example, dogs can be intimidated into backing up by a handler hovering over the dog excessively.

Because "willingness" is important throughout the test, I don't think the recall exercise is the place to reiterate "willingness" as a reminder of something that should be judged during the entire performance. I believe it would be more confusing than helpful to unduly emphasize this as a specific basis for failure solely on the recall when "willingness" is not specifically listed as a basis for failure in other exercises. A truly "unwilling" dog will flunk the recall because it doesn't come.

I also think it's essential to keep in mind that the Regs are not just a document for the judges, but are relied on by participants. How does a handler when training his/her dog know what is meant by "Failure to come willingly"? Since failing to come at all is already listed as a basis for failure, then one might reasonably assume there is some undefined level of performance required to equal a "willing recall". This could lead to the problem that some might assume that a "willing recall" must mean a trot or some other speed or demonstration of enthusiasm by the dog beyond simply responding to the command "Dog, Come!"

Another potential problem arises if judges quickly review the text the night before a test and only see “willingness” listed specifically as a basis for failing the recall. This could have the undesired effect of having “willingness” only judged on that one exercise when it should be evaluated throughout the test. If judges are truly not aware they should be judging “willingness” and need some reminder, then that should be a focus for judges’ education and not a basis for restating this criteria only in the one place where it doesn’t really need to be emphasized.

Recall- "Failure to come “willingly” was added to list of Failing performances. This was added as a reminder that as per the overview, we are testing safety and willingness."

In my opinion this is a huge error, why on earth are we adding another "failing" opportunity to the recall?? The regs are not a place for "reminders". This statement now brings into consideration how quickly or slowly a dog comes on the recall. I can see the discussion now..."well he got up but he didn't run he came really slowly, etc etc", does that mean the dog is unwilling? I think not. I would bet there are many judges that would flunk a slow recall and that is plain wrong! The dog is coming who cares how fast? There is NO way to determine what "willingly" means, the dog either comes the first time at whatever pace it wants or it doesn't come at all. Again, this is a wrong direction and leaves the regulations too vague and open to individual interpretation of "willingness".

I still stand by my sentiment that we should not add any more statements or criteria to flunk the basic control, and in this case the recall specifically. It was said better and more eloquently than me, but the principle is the same. They either come or they don't. There is no reason what so ever to add "willingly" to the recall. I am still in favor of doing away with the basic control all together but realize that I am beating my head against the wall. I cannot be convinced that there is any reason to have it, as most of the time the dogs performance in basic control, good or bad, does nothing to reflect the performance in the cart, they are two entirely different activities, plain and simple. We could easily have 3-5 more entrants per test if we didn't do basic control. Given that more and more tests have a draw, this could be very beneficial to our sport. There were over 20 entries at the specialty which had 3 tests that did not get in!!

As an additional note to my second issue of "no additional steps being added to the RFC process". This "addition" to the recall came at the whim of the DWC and was not previously suggested nor discussed amongst the judges. If the few people that choose to respond cannot convince the majority of the DWC, via email, that this is not a great idea then this will be added.

Proposals RFC1:

- 1) Basic Control Waive (let's look at that again)
- 2) Eliminate basic control for dogs with a CD - we been at this ad nausea and it just doesn't make sense to me that if they have a CD why they have to go thru this. I personally would like to know how many dogs that failed basic control were not allowed to compete going forward. I've only had one and that dog did not have a CD.

- 3) I for one am in favor of keeping the Basic Control Exercise for all dogs (it's an all or nothing, in my opinion). Not all dogs with a CD have done their qualifying outside – [my dog] for example has all of [its] CD legs earned inside ([we] didn't have outdoor obedience!) If it is going to be eliminated for some dogs, it should be eliminated for all dogs.

DWC Comment:

As mentioned previously, the benefits of a change must clearly outweigh the drawbacks. When this topic went through the RFC process for the June 2007 regulations, several concerns were voiced by judges and BMDCA members for which no comments were received which addressed, countered, or mitigated these submissions:

Basic Obedience portion shows that the dog is 'under control' and will willingly work safely with its handler whereas a dog in shafts may be intimidated into performing. Thus, dropping BC potentially eliminates our best look at the dog's willingness before being "caged" in the shafts.

Frequently open brace teams are composed of dogs from different handlers. Can one brace handler heel an unleashed dog of another handler, much less command that dog to come on a recall? Once in shafts, that dog could just come along for the ride and we'd never know how little control the handler truly had/has over that dog. Thus, dropping BC for the brace teams eliminates our ability to test the degree of control the handler has over the individual dogs of a team.

A CD-titled dog may have a dynamite recall, but does it still come blasting in when it sees the cart behind the handler? Does it come at all? Thus, dropping BC eliminates a potential demonstration of a dog's fearfulness of the rig.

Bearing in mind that this is a cost/benefit exercise, comments in favor of waiving BC need to mitigate these concerns (i.e. explain why these should not be concerns) or expound benefits which outweigh these concerns.

RFC1 Comments:

No dog sport should be undertaken without assuring the team can demonstrate fundamental control and teamwork. This is a safety issue. Nor should a dog be attached to equipment without being given the opportunity to express its willingness to associate with that equipment.

Saving time alone is not sufficient reason to eliminate any part of our Tests if they are deemed important in assessing the team. So our focus should be upon whether Basic Control serves a valuable and realistic purpose in our Tests.

I would love to eliminate basic control completely. This is about carting, not heeling, and we're supposed to be judging the ability and control of the team to pull a cart. I don't understand how a "dog in shafts may be intimidated into performing". My dogs certainly don't appear to think of the shafts as

being "caged". One of the obvious benefits is that it shortens the testing time for each team, allowing more dogs to enter the tests.

Concerning brace teams, one assumes the handler has worked with both dogs before entering the ring, and either the dogs will work together or they won't.

The original draft regulations allowed teams that had a CD to be waived from doing the basic control exercises. During a revision of the regulations this option was eliminated. Now we are discussing including this provision again. While I applaud this move, I think we need to consider why we are using an AKC obedience title as the gold standard. I realize that is the way it was originally written and some people have comfort with that. However, we should also recognize that a dog that has obtained an NDD has successfully completed all the requirements that the BMDCA has established for demonstrating drafting ability. This is more indicative of showing that the dog has control doing the function we are testing for than an AKC obedience title.

My personal opinion is that Basic Control should be eliminated totally instead of trying to "fix" the recall exercise by continue watering it down to where what are you really testing. We already test the concepts of "wait" and "stay" within the core drafting exercises.

I am for eliminating Basic Control all together. If not, return to the original regulations that exempted dogs with a CD. Except I would like to see that any dog with a CD or a NDD be eliminated from Basic Control if we are forced to keep it.

Where is the proof for the above statements? I have judged as much, if not more, than other judges. I have had plenty of dogs fail basic control, but not because they are out of control. I would estimate at least 80% of failures involve the recall (handler giving 2 commands, no come, or did not come to handler) Even the dogs who "leave the ring" often just go to ring gate to visit the people there; I've never had or seen a dog take off. The other 20% were not because the dog is out of control but because it did not perform the exercises satisfactory; i.e. tight leads and no slow. I have excused 2 dogs (if I am remembering correctly) for being out of control – but not in BC, always afterwards when they are hitched and harnessed and it quickly becomes evident that the handler did not work with the dog. So I'm not even sure BC is needed at all; I would support it to appease those that believe, but truly hope we drop it for dogs that have their CD's. Again, I've had no proof, or even hearsay on any of the above. I can put forth what if's all day long as well. Eliminating it for dogs with CD will at least give us a little more time for testing.

Honestly, I don't care. I can see the pros and cons of both sides on this issue, and do not feel all that strongly either way. I am not convinced basic control tells me anything about how the dog will do in the cart, and in my ten years of judging, have never excused a dog because of its BC performance. However, we are giving a title for a passing performance, not just a qualifying leg towards a title. If a dog is going to walk out with a title, then I think asking them to demonstrate some basic skills is appropriate. We are not asking for anything overly challenging or difficult, and I think the dog and handler benefit from the training of these basic skills, and that the BC training has a positive effect on their overall draft work. I think if we eliminated BC all together we'd see our pass rate drop significantly. I am ambivalent about waving it for a dog with a CD, but I do not support dropping it

entirely for all dogs.

Perhaps some of the newer judges don't recognize this as the moment the current chair and the DWC lost credibility with many in the judging community.

Having said that I am not one that is in favor of dropping basic control. I find it useful and necessary.

I would be in favor of dropping basic control – INCLUDING the RECALL -- since I have not seen a direct correlation between basic control and the dog's ability to demonstrate a good working attitude, work ethic, and control while hitched to a cart. Many dogs that have lovely basic control fall apart when hitched to the cart since they haven't mastered the exercises that are key to a draft dog. Some are lovely heeling dogs that don't like pulling a cart – and some have been trained in obedience but haven't mastered the draft exercises. The vast majority of teams fail, not on basic control –but on maneuvering. Having the teams go through the basic control exercise first was not a predictor of whether they would be successful when hitched to the cart. I have seen dogs that could NOT pass basic control that did a very nice job of pulling the cart and executing all the required elements with the cart. Those dogs were successful “draft” dogs - but may have failed on some aspect of basic control – which I would include as the recall. I believe that we are testing teams ability to draft - and basic control doesn't tell us whether or not they can do that. I have seen dogs that left the ring either on a recall or when they were heeling off leash - but they were lovely workers when hitched to the cart. I'm sure the farmer would have been happy to have those dogs hitched up and pulling for him since he cared about getting his load delivered and not whether his dog walked “within arms length” at all times.

I think about comparing this to working horses, since most of us don't really use our own dogs for “work”. My opinion of which horse was the best at a particular job didn't really have much to do with how easy they were to catch or whether they came when they were called. Some of the best working horses I had were hard to catch and put up a fuss when they were getting saddled. But once the saddle was on, they were amazing workers. I think the same is true for some dogs - they love to pull the cart and are very good at working and maneuvering with the cart. They may not be all that great at walking right next to the handler in a more formal heeling situation, and they may miss that first command on the recall. Since we are judging draft - I think we should judge the dogs starting with harness and hitch and leave the heeling and recall to the obedience and rally rings.

IF basic control is not dropped altogether, I would support dropping it for dogs that have an obedience title. Although I don't think obedience predicts good drafting, that supports my position for dropping it altogether and if we are having teams do basic control to show they HAVE some control, then a CD indicates that they have demonstrated a more precise degree of control than is required for a to 3 different judges. That's enough.

I have seen a lot of justifications as to why "Basic Control" was a vital element of the BMDCA. However, I have never found the arguments particularly compelling as to justification for even including the exercises in with a Draft Test. I had not wanted to rehash all the past discussions but since there are newer judges I thought I would take some time to go over the general what I call pro-"Basic Control" arguments.

1. Safety Issue- Makes the test safer if you can prejudge how the dog is going to work or if it is out of control.

Counter argument:

A team is not dismissed for flunking basic control so if it were really a test to determine the team could work safely then we need to stop at the first flunk. I have not necessarily seen a correlation between what a team does in the basic control part and then in the rest of the test. I don't know how much control the heeling pattern really relates to carting control anyway. I can "happy talk" most dogs (even dogs I don't own) through that pattern and know they no way have the control necessary to pass the maneuvering course. The recall exercise is probably the highest risk of a dog getting out of control. Everyone has seen the occasional dog that decides it is more fun to run past the owner out of the ring than go to the owner. A loose dog is always a risky situation.

2. We diminish draft titles if we drop Basic Control (BC)

By dropping Basic Control we somehow cheapen future titles compared to previous ones awarded.

Counter argument:

The original regulations allowed for BC to be waived for dogs with CDs. My first two dogs like many other early dogs got their draft titles without ever having to do BC. This exemption was in place the first 4 or 5 years. It came as quite a surprise when this exemption was dropped in a revision of the regulations. When I asked why would the DWC do that and I was told it was because of the handling of the paperwork for the CD sometimes was causing some problems. Some entrants were sending the forms in after the test close date and some test secretaries were confused about whether to accept them or not. So instead of straightening out the paperwork process, the 3 person DWC decided to just eliminate this option altogether.

3. BC is necessary to show cooperation as expected by a farmer

Counter argument: I feel the intent of the draft test is to demonstrate skills related to draft work. The fact that I expect my dog to come to me when I ask is not dependent at all on draft work. I cannot think of any other sport that requires demonstration of some basic control before you even start at the core exercises. I am not sure if any other drafting programs other than the BMDCA requires this.

Over the years, like other sports, the draft regulations have been tweaked and improved. Striving for consistency in judging has improved our tests. As a sport matures it is important to be able to reflect on the original intent of the regulations and whether they truly meet the desired objectives. We eliminated the spring scale as a means to determine load and that made things so much easier to figure out how much weight to train. Now it is time to consider does BC really demonstrate drafting skills or is it just a concept the founding fathers thought might make the sport safer so they threw it in for some dogs that had no demonstrable obedience skills. It then morphed into the sacred cow it is now. There are pretty strong feelings in both camps. I for one would like to see a vote of the judges on this issue.

I favor keeping Basic Control in its entirety. The focus belongs not on how we can streamline our tests and/or make them shorter so we can process more teams, rather we are supposed to be assessing the working heritage and capability of our breed and hopefully, therein promoting breeding stock that can carry the heritage forward. I want every opportunity afforded me as a judge to make a thorough assessment. No matter how well defined and side boarded by regulation, judging decisions are subjective to varying degrees. I want the opportunity independent of other judging assessments to make an educated decision as to the working capabilities of a dog presented to me to determine if such dog lives up to its heritage. I would rather have the extra two minutes it takes to run a Basic Control exercise in assessing a more complete picture of competency and capability than argue for diminishing our regulations further.

In previous days when we had a chance to see the dogs at the equipment check, we could use that opportunity to assess control and aggression toward other dogs. I think seeing the dogs in the more informal setting of the equipment check gave a better picture of control and safety since dogs and people are in closer proximity. I've also noticed that people leave the collars and leashes in the rigs and then have something else on when they come to the ring... I have made a concerted effort to remind them to take their collars and leashes to put on the dogs to come to the ring.

My bottom line is that if we waive or omit basic control, I would like to see the dogs at the equipment check.

One handler, two dogs at equipment check will give a pretty clear picture of the handler's control of the two dogs.

This would be a factor only if the judges have the handler stand RIGHT next to the draft rig. In Novice, the regs state that the handler "proceeds to a position close to the draft rig...", but in Open, the handler "proceeds to the harness and hitch area." The Open dogs are not doing a recall to the rig. And... if those dogs have been working hard to pull weight, they would be the ones who would not want to go to the rig. We're not testing the same thing in Open as in Novice. We need to address this discrepancy if this is to be a valid point.

Now that we no longer have the opportunity to see dogs at the equipment check and form an opinion of their control and behavior, the basic control is our last chance to see the dogs out of harness. I agree that it should be all or none as far as basic control goes. The author makes a very valid point about some obedience dogs only working indoors. We've all seen the "obedience dog" who is wonderful in the ring in the building and then drags the handler down the street or over to a tree or lunges at a passing dog. The CD may not always give us the same view as our basic control portion of the test.

It is clear that there is little support to keep Basic Control as is. So here is what I would do as part of RFC 2.

Allow those with CD to waive Basic Control in Novice.

Eliminate Basic Control in Open (use the extra time generated in the ring to complete a more difficult/intricate maneuvering course than the novice teams – Our current rules allow for this out of the box interpretation)

Eliminate in ‘Walking under Control’ - failing performances- 3. Handler adapts to the pace of the dog and 6. Dog interferes with handler’s movement.

Eliminate in the Recall exercise the sentence – The exercise starts with the dog sitting.

Add the sentence – ‘A second command or signal is permitted.’ After the sentence the handler calls the dog with a single command or signal. Or change the wording to accept two recall commands.

Change - 3 in failing performances to - dog does not come on first or second command.

My rationale here is a little complex. The logic is that there is little support to keep things the way they are (4 votes of which I am one) so the opportunity exists to change things in such a way as to move things forward in several different areas. In effect handling the many objections to Basic Control by incorporating the various viewpoints.

And what do we infer from the lack of participation – if when asked for your input you ignore that request you no longer have any privilege to bitch about the results.

A progressive body will not be paralyzed by these results they will be motivated into action. RFC 2 allows for an opportunity to move this into the proper language. I really think this would be a good time to show that leadership. No one would be able to say you weren’t listening and everyone would see this as a situation requiring compromise much as in judging ‘Judges shall reach a mutual decision...’ this being a larger more complex scale.

With more breeds coming into tests and in order to maintain a level playing field across all tests I support we keep BC. I would also respectfully request that we don’t address BC again until 2030.

Item #24 Premium List Change

Discussion RFC3:

No discussion. Please see discussion from RFC2 below.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

Yes, “electronic publication is a good thing.” Moreover, there may be forms of publication we’ve not yet envisioned (e.g. twitter, face book, etc.) or the club may not have electronic-publication capability. Who knows.

Rather than specify each form of publication as it emerges or force a club to adopt a format outside its current capability, allow the regulations to encompass all forms of publication, present and future, by simply stating "...shall publish" rather than "...shall print."

Given that the DWC has a copy of the final PL by virtue of having approved it, a hard copy mailed to DWC is unnecessary. In all other matters we make no restrictions so that the Test Committee may best serve its club members.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

CHAPTER 1, Section 3 B

B. Premium List: The Draft Test Committee shall ~~print~~ publish a Premium List after receiving approval to hold a Draft Test. The Premium List shall be submitted to the DWC for approval no less than fourteen (14) days prior to publication. ~~A hard copy of the disseminated Premium List shall be mailed to the DWC.~~ The Premium List shall contain the following:

RFC2 Comments:

CHAPTER 1, Section 3 B

OK...

Proposed changes are fine by me.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

CHAPTER 1, Section 3 B

B. Premium List: The Draft Test Committee shall ~~print a Premium List after receiving approval to hold a Draft Test~~ publish a Premium List no less than 90 days prior to the test and make it available in printed and electronic formats. ~~The Premium List shall be submitted to the DWC for approval no less than fourteen (14) days prior to publication~~ Premium List may not be published without prior approval of DWC; submission for approval may be made electronically. ~~A hard copy of the disseminated Premium List shall be mailed to the DWC~~ Upon approval, a printed copy of the Premium List must be mailed to the DWC prior to the Test date. The Premium List shall contain the following:

DWC Comment:

The principal thrust appears to be setting a deadline for the Premium List publication and requiring electronic publication. The DWC suggests clubs hold tests for their members. If their members want the Premium List printed earlier, they will communicate this to their Test Committee. Similarly, if a club has access to electronic format, they'll certainly offer this convenience to their members. If not, DWC suggests we leave it to them to disseminate as best fits their member's needs.

Language requiring 14 day turn-around on approval was dropped in this proposal. The DWC inserted this language so there would be sufficient time to review the Premium List, submit changes, and if necessary, get the revised version, and review that. Having a stated turn-around prevents last minute emails of, "we want to publish our Premium List tomorrow – how does this look."

RFC1 Comments:

I see no need to legislate when and how a club publishes its premium.

I think updating the regs to include electronic publication is a good thing.

I would agree that there seems no need to set a hard date. It can be published any time after DWC approval. The only consideration is the possibility that a test club is waiting for DWC approval and due to a back log has not as yet received it. This places an impetus on the DWC to move the paperwork along quickly.

Considering the DWC has up to 90 days [ed. actually, it's 14 days – see bottom of Page4] to approve the premium list perhaps setting the timeframe in stone allows test giving clubs to move on to other things.

I see no need for changes here, and agree with the DWC comments. Let's limit how much we dictate to the clubs; they know how to best serve their membership and what is the most efficient way to get the word out.

I think the section should stay as it is for just the reasons stated above.

Item #25 Allow All Dogs

Discussion RFC3:

Part of this proposal is administrative changes to stay abreast of AKC changes. Also proposed is opening our tests up to any Draft dog, whether purebred or not. While the committee has not identified any specific drawbacks to this proposal, it agrees that there is risk of unintended consequences. Moreover, the only comments received in RFC2 urged caution in making this change. There was a similar concern when we proposed opening our tests up to all breeds a decade ago. To address that concern, we made tests open to BMD's only or all-breeds at the option of the host club. Given similar circumstances, we propose giving host clubs the option of BMD-only, all-breed, or all eligible dogs. Thus, if there are unforeseen negative consequences, host clubs have the option of falling back to current eligibility by limiting their tests to all breeds.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

Page 2:

CHAPTER 1, Section 1B.5:

5. Whether this is a ~~Bernese Mountain Dog (BMD)~~-only, ~~or~~ all-breed, ~~or all-eligible-dog~~ Draft Test.

CHAPTER 1, Section 3 B.15.1:

~~1) One of the following:~~

~~1) AKC, UKC or CKC registration number~~

~~2) ILP number.~~

~~3) Any other foreign registration number.~~

1) Registration number (see "Eligible Dogs")

[Along with this change, ensure that "Eligible Dogs" appears in index]

Section 3 C 13:

A catalog identifying each entered dog; including registered name, call name, registration ~~or ILP~~ number, breed, sire, dam, date of birth, sex, owner, breeder. For Open classes the catalog shall show the weight the dog(s) must pull in the Freight Haul.

[Including owner's address in catalog expedites their receiving certificate by US mail]

Page 17, 18

CHAPTER 3, B. Eligible Dogs

- Breeds:** ~~Draft Tests are open to dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, or any other foreign registry, as well as unregistered dogs for which an ILP number has been issued by the AKC.~~

National Specialty Tests are open only to BMDs. All other Draft Tests ~~are open to all breeds~~, at the discretion of the host club, ~~are either open to BMDs only, purebreds (a. and b.), or all of the following:~~

- ~~Purebred dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, or any other foreign registry.~~
- ~~Unregistered purebred dogs for which an AKC ILP/PAL number has been issued.~~
- ~~Dogs of mixed heritage registered with the AKC or American Mixed Breed Obedience Registration (AMBOR).~~

Discussion RFC2:

Cautionary comments are that this may be “opening a can of worms” and “is worthy of months if not years of careful consideration.” We agree that care must be taken for there may be a downside we’ve overlooked. Worst case, number of non-Berner entries increases, thus creating many non-Berner alternates. Best case, clubs respond to over-full tests by holding more tests – tests in which Berners have preference. Thus, it seems there is no downside for Berners. What are we overlooking?

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

Page 2:

CHAPTER 1, Section 1B.5:

- Whether this is a ~~Bernese Mountain Dog (BMD)~~-only or ~~all-breed all-eligible-dogs~~ Draft Test.

CHAPTER 1, Section 3 B.15.1:

~~1) One of the following:~~

- ~~1) AKC, UKC or CKC registration number~~
- ~~2) ILP number.~~
- ~~3) Any other foreign registration number.~~

- 1) Registration number (see “Eligible Dogs”)

[Along with this change, ensure that “Eligible Dogs” appears in index]

Section 3 C 13:

A catalog identifying each entered dog; including registered name (including any and all titles), call name, registration ~~or ILP~~ number, breed, sire, dam, date of birth, sex, owner, **owner's address**, breeder. For Open classes the catalog shall show the weight the dog(s) must pull in the Freight Haul.

[Including owner's address in catalog expedites their receiving certificate by US mail]

Page 17, 18

CHAPTER 3, B. Eligible Dogs

2. **Breeds:** ~~Draft Tests are open to dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, or any other foreign registry, as well as unregistered dogs for which an ILP number has been issued by the AKC.~~

National Specialty Tests are open only to BMDs. All other Draft Tests ~~are open to all breeds~~, at the discretion of the host club, **are either open to BMDs only, or all of the following:**

- a. **Purebred dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, or any other foreign registry.**
- b. **Unregistered purebred dogs for which an AKC ILP/PAL number has been issued.**
- c. **Dogs of mixed heritage registered with the AKC or American Mixed Breed Obedience Registration.**

RFC2 Comments:

I'd like to table this for a later RFC. There's no hurry, let's take our time.... There are some issues that may come up if we all talk about and think about the ramifications of "all dogs". Not every dog is a draft dog. How draft is perceived out in the public is important.

I don't see the need to expand to mixed breeds at this time. I can see it happening in the future, but not now. With the advent of the advanced titles, tests are filling or getting quite close to filling; adding yet another category of dog likely to be turned away from a full berner test doesn't really accomplish anything other than frustration. We are a breed club, first and foremost, not a draft club. I don't think its our responsibility to break this ground.

Proposal RFC1:

This encompasses two changes. The first is the AKC's renaming of ILP to PAL. The second is a fundamental change in the BMDCA Draft program through inclusion of mixed breed dogs. The PAL/ILP designation is for a dog of potentially mixed breed heritage that "closely" resembles a pure-bred dog. AMBOR is for mixed breeds independent of appearance. In terms of Draft capability, the difference between a pure-bred and a mixed-breed dog is irrelevant. So why make a distinction in our regulations? The DWC suggests that we either be a venue for pure-breeds or a venue for all dogs with Draft potential.

This is a tricky issue with many ramifications. For example, if the BMDCA welcomes all dogs with Draft potential and then the AKC adopts a Draft program, we will be too inclusive for the AKC. On the other hand if we are going to be the leaders in Draft while the AKC watches from the sideline, let's lead all Draft-capable dogs, not just pure-breeds. Once again, the small change above has great ramifications, some of which the DWC may not have yet identified. Thus, please give this some critical thought.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

CHAPTER 1, Section 3 B.15.1:

~~1) One of the following:~~

~~1) AKC, UKC or CKC registration number~~

~~2) ILP number.~~

~~3) Any other foreign registration number.~~

1) Registration number (see “Eligible Dogs”)

[Along with this change, ensure that “Eligible Dogs” appears in index]

Section 3 C 13:

A catalog identifying each entered dog; including registered name (including any and all titles), call name, registration ~~or ILP~~ number, breed, sire, dam, date of birth, sex, owner, **owner's address**, breeder. For Open classes the catalog shall show the weight the dog(s) must pull in the Freight Haul.

[Including owner’s address in catalog expedites their receiving certificate by US mail]

CHAPTER 3, B. Eligible Dogs

- 3. Breeds:** ~~Draft Tests are open to dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, or any other foreign registry, as well as unregistered dogs for which an ILP number has been issued by the AKC.~~

National Specialty Tests are open only to BMDs. All other Draft Tests are open to **all breeds the following** at the discretion of the host club:

- a. Purebred dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, or any other foreign registry.
- b. Unregistered purebred dogs for which an AKC ILP/PAL number has been issued.
- c. Dogs of mixed heritage registered with the AKC or American Mixed Breed Obedience Registration.

RFC1 Comments:

I approve of this change

I think we need to do what is best for OUR draft program and not wait for something that may or may not happen in our lifetime. I see no problems with welcoming all dogs with draft potential.

I believe I read that the AKC was going to let mix-breeds compete in obedience. I really doubt that the AKC will adopt a Draft Program, it isn’t going to make money and if a program doesn’t make money they don’t want it, so I really don’t see this happening. I don’t see many mix breeds entering our tests, I know we had one in Michigan that tried, but other than that, I don’t see this as an issue.

I think we are best served to follow the AKC’s lead on this one. They are considering options for allowing mixed breed dogs, and if and when that occurs with their performance events, then we should consider it for ours. I think opening it up prior to that for non-AKC dogs will be the proverbial can of worms. That being said, I think this is a bigger issue than is currently articulated in this RFC and merits considerably more discussion and consideration.

The BMDCA Draft Test has been the standard used by some other clubs to develop their own tests. Our Draft tests are not income-generating events. We've all read about how the AKC is looking for more income. If that mindset continues, they will never follow through on a draft program. It seems the AKC has "opened" events to mixed breeds but they must compete in separate events from what I understand. I see it as a long time before they change... but I could be wrong... I'm no expert on predicting the changes in the AKC.... So... I think the BMDCA draft test can open to all dogs with draft potential.

The change allowing breeds other than BMD's is still fairly new and while it's having an effect on our events, its full effect is still unknown. All dogs allowed would open the floodgates. I urge slow movement until we understand where the AKC may go regarding draft and how the all-purebred changes we have already allowed effect our sport. We are the BMDCA not the All Dogs Draft Club of America. A decision of this magnitude must be made very carefully and is worthy of months if not years of careful consideration. If over a decade later, we are still dealing with changes to the original regs regarding Recall and Waving of Basic Control, imagine the ripple effect if we get this one wrong.

Item #26 Withdraw at Will

Discussion RFC3:

No discussion. Please see discussion from RFC2 below.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

The committee had diverse views on this topic. There was an initial thought to explicitly state that handlers could be excused at anytime. However, it was pointed out that encouraging teams to drop out of the group exercises after ticking the narrows was not promoting good sportsmanship. If the team was planning on doing the group exercises while they were qualifying they should continue on even if they are no longer qualifying. This situation seemed better handled by education than regulation. On the other hand, if there is a health issue there should be no hesitation on the part of the handler to inform the judges that they wish to be excused. Some of the committee felt this was only common sense and thus did not warrant regulatory text. However, page 8 states that "the Draft Test Regulations have been devised to present a minimum hazard to dogs and handlers, but Draft Test Committees are urged to take all reasonable precautions. . ." This reads as if DTC is the active party, the one responsible for the handler and dog. To eliminate any misperception, we explicitly state that the handler is ultimately responsible for their dog(s).

While cleaning up this text we observed that the handler's risk and responsibilities are split between the Handlers section and Equipment sections. We collated these into the Handlers section where they belong: a newly created "Handler's Responsibility" section placed in the Handler's section; "Handler's

Responsibility” in the Equipment section renamed “Draft Rig”, and at the bottom of the description of Freight Load page 22.

Finally we take this opportunity to slay the urban myth that a decoration falling off a rig constitutes equipment failure.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

Page 19

Chapter 3 Eligibility and Conduct of Handlers and Dogs

Section 2. Handlers

H. Risk: The handler entering a dog in a Draft Test does so at his/her own risk and agrees to abide by the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations.

Section 3. Equipment

A. I. Handler's Responsibility: The handler is responsible for the dog's health, welfare, and safety. Handlers provide their own draft rigs, harnesses, Freight Haul loads, and means of securing loads. ~~The same draft rig must be used for all exercises.~~ The condition of this equipment is the responsibility of the handler. ~~Except as specified, the Practical Draft Work exercises are performed with an empty draft rig. Lightweight decorations are allowed on or in the draft rig, but the dog may not perform the Practical Draft Work exercises while pulling the Freight Haul load. No person or animal may serve as a freight load.~~

Section 3. Equipment

A. Draft Rig:

The same draft rig must be used for all exercises. ~~Except as specified, the Practical Draft Work exercises are performed with an empty draft rig.~~ Lightweight decorations are allowed on or in the draft rig and are not considered part of the rig or load. Therefore, their loss or failure is of no consequence. ~~but the dog may not perform the Practical Draft Work exercises while pulling the Freight Haul load. No person or animal may serve as a freight load.~~

[Last sentence, “No person...”, moved to bottom of “Section 2. Freight Haul Weights “– see #31]

B. Draft Rig Types:

RFC2 Comments:

The new wording makes sense to me.

Proposed changes are acceptable.

Proposal RFC1:

CHAPTER 3

Section 6 C: Entrants may withdraw from the Test at any point on the maneuvering or freight haul course. Judges will mark the dog as "Withdrawn".

DWC Comment:

This may have been transcribed incorrectly. Teams may already withdraw at any time. Moreover there is no “Chapter 3, Section 6C.” It is possible the above refers to “Chapter 2, Section 6C. Excusing a Dog” but excusing a dog and a team withdrawing are quite different.

RFC1 Comments:

Perhaps this is an addition to Chapter 2 section 6 c in that the proposer feels it necessary to not only include a section on excusals but also on withdrawals. Without going over the rules with a fine tooth comb – Is it mentioned anywhere that a team can withdraw at any time and if so would it make sense to place it in that section?

Item #31 Addition to Judging Guidelines

Discussion RFC3:

One comment was received which suggested that “Teams shall be evaluated the entire time they are in the ring or on the freight haul” is too simplistic. However, defining when a team is being judged and not would be confusing. For example, whether mid-exercise or between exercises, fouling the ring results in an NQ. If we state that the team is no longer being judged because the exercise is over and then NQ due to fouling the ring, what’s a handler going to think? Am I being judged or not??? Thus, the blanket statement “evaluated the entire time…” may be the least confusing for handlers. Please see discussion from RFC2 below for motivation behind these largely administrative changes.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

Current regulations imply that judging continues until a team exits the ring. For example, on page 16, “a dog that fouls the ring... receives a failing mark” has no time limit. Whether the team is mid-exercise, at the end or an exercise, or the end of all exercises and on its way out of the ring, if it fouls the ring, it is failed. Thus, until the team exits the ring, it is being judged. However, we agree with the author of this proposal that this is an important enough point that it should be explicit rather than implicit.

It’s common practice to end the freight haul in the ring even though this is only explicitly required for Open teams (pg20: “...except that Open teams leave and return to the ring off leash for the freight haul”). Finishing in the ring makes sense because it is the focal point where spectators are gathered and it ensures that teams have a clear and unobstructed end-point away from family and friends. Were the freight haul to end outside the ring, spectators might prematurely gather around the frontrunners, thus preventing the last teams from crossing the “finish line.” Thus, there is benefit to making explicit what is already common practice.

While researching this response we discovered a duplication of regulations and a section appearing in the wrong place. These are corrected as shown below.

Also, while making these changes we saw that we require notification of time of equipment check, but this does not ripple back into the secretarial duties. So we make it clear that the secretary is the responsible party for notifying handlers of the time of their equipment check. While fixing this, we observe that a proposal that did not make it into this round addresses this topic. Thus, we can fold that proposal into this one:

Proposal: Since the time of the equipment check must be given if there are multiple checks, I think the requirement of listing the time of the single equipment check should be included in Chapter 1, section 3b3. “Time” is not enough. Some clubs list the check in time, some the judging time. We need to be more specific.

3B3 currently reads:

The date, time and location of the Draft Test.

Proposed:

The date, check-in time, and location of the Draft Test.

DWC Comment:

Allow Test Committees to set the schedule based on the entry size. Putting this information in the Premium List means locking into a schedule well before the entry size is known. Thus, communication of “time” is best done after closing.

We eliminate requirement of time in the Premium List so that clubs have maximum scheduling flexibility based on entry size and information about site opening/closing times that may have been learned since the PL was published.

Finally, this proposal touched off extensive reorganization of the Equipment Check and Freight Haul sections. While re-working these sections we observed that “weight” and “load” are used interchangeably throughout the documentation. For clarity, we have made the changes such that “weight” refers to the weight of something (e.g. dog or load) and “load” refers to the load itself.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

Page 3:

1. Data Worksheets - a record of ~~freight weights, loads and~~ rig widths ~~and freight haul load descriptions and weights~~.

C. Draft Test Secretary: The Draft Test Committee shall appoint a Draft Test Secretary, who must be a member in good standing of the BMDCA. The Secretary shall accept all entries. Within four days after the closing date the Secretary shall notify each entrant of the status of their entry, and confirm the Test date, ~~equipment check time(s)~~, site, ~~time of judging~~, and judges. At the Draft Test the Secretary must have available for inspection:

Page 4:

B. Premium List: The Draft Test Committee shall ~~print~~ publish a Premium List after receiving approval to hold a Draft Test. . .

3. The date, ~~time~~ and location of the Draft Test.

Page 5:

a) ~~Freight w~~Weight of freight haul load for Open dogs.

Page 8:

14. A designated area near the ring for the draft equipment and freight ~~weights~~ haul loads of all entrants. All such equipment and ~~weights-loads~~ ~~must shall~~ remain in this area ~~unless being used pending use~~ in the Test. [see #44]

Page 19:

A. On Time: Teams must be present with their equipment for their scheduled Equipment Check ~~and Freight Haul weight check~~ or forfeit their entry. Judges are not responsible for waiting for any handler or dog.

Page 22

C. Order of Group Exercises: The Freight Haul shall immediately follow the Group Stay exercise and shall start ~~with the teams still~~ and finish in the ring. Draft Test Committees. . .

Page 21/22

Section 1. Equipment Check

Judges shall check all draft equipment, collars, leashes, and couplers (*General Regulations Chapter 3 Section 3C*) to be used in the Draft Test. ~~The judging schedule shall allow time for this.~~ Measurements may be made by judges, committee members, or stewards. A judge must supervise all measurements. ~~The type of draft rig and the width of the draft rig at its widest point or the width of the hitched dog(s), whichever is the widest, shall be recorded on the Data Worksheet for easy reference during the Test.~~ Collars and leashes shall be checked at the ~~same time for adherence to these Regulations (General Regulations Chapter 3 Section 3C).~~ Dogs shall not be required at the Equipment Check. After the Equipment Check, no alterations or substitutions may be made to the equipment without the approval of a judge.

The following shall be recorded on the Draft Test Data Worksheet:

- 1) Class
- 2) Width of the widest part of the draft rig or hitched dog(s)
- 3) Weight of dog(s) (Open classes only)
- 4) Weight and description of load. Opened or non-commercially labeled loads shall be weighed.

Multiple Equipment Checks may be held at the host club's discretion, with the judges' pre-approval. Each team will be assigned to a specific Equipment Check based on the judging schedule. The Test Secretary shall notify each exhibitor of the time of their Equipment Check when verifying their entry after the closing date.

Section 2. Freight Haul Weights

~~A. When to Verify Freight Haul Weights: The weight of Freight Haul loads shall be verified prior to the start of judging. The judging schedule shall allow time for this. Weight verifications may be made by Draft Test Committee members, stewards, or judges but must be supervised by at least one of the judges.~~

~~B. Freight Weights:~~

Novice Draft: Each dog must pull twenty (20) pounds.

Brace Novice Draft: Each brace must pull forty (40) pounds.

Open Draft: Each dog must pull its own weight rounded down to the nearest multiple of ten, or sixty (60) pounds, whichever is greater. See table.

Brace Open Draft: Each brace must pull the sum of the weights that the individual dogs must pull in Open Draft.

<u>Dog Weight</u>	<u>Freight Load</u>
- 69 lbs.	60 lbs. (minimum)
70 - 79	70
80 - 89	80
90 - 99	90
100 - 109	100
110 - 119	110
120 - 129	120
130 - 139	130
140 - 149	140
150 - 159	150
160 - 169	160
170 - 179	170

~~The weight of the draft rig is not part of the freight weight. All freight weights should be verified on a scale. The freight weight and a description of the cargo should be recorded on the Data Worksheet for easy reference during the Test. After the freight weight check no alterations or substitutions may be made to the cargo without the approval of a judge. The Practical Draft Work exercises may not be performed with the Freight Haul load. No person or animal may serve as a freight load.~~

Page 23

3. The ~~freight~~ weight of the freight haul load must be printed in the catalog.

B. Other Criteria: ...A dog that does everything correctly but appears to be in fear of severe correction from its handler shall be scored as failed. ~~Teams shall be evaluated the entire time they are in the ring or on the freight haul.~~

Page 33

The handler is responsible for the proper loading of the draft rig. ~~The handler loads the draft rig with the pre-determined weight load for the dog.~~ Stewards/volunteers may assist...

RFC2 Comments:

Proposed changes are acceptable.

Page 22

C. Order of Group Exercises: The Freight Haul shall immediately follow the Group Stay exercise and shall start *and finish* in the ring. Draft Test Committees....

And

B. Other Criteria: ...A dog that does everything correctly but appears to be in fear of severe correction from its handler shall be scored as failed. *Teams shall be evaluated the entire time they are in the ring or on the freight haul.*

The current regulations offer the following guidance at the end of the freight haul.

NONE!

While the above **item C** now forces the freight haul to both begin and end in the ring, **item B** is not to my mind satisfactory in terms of when teams are actually being judged.

This would mean that teams are being evaluated based on our judging criteria from the moment they enter the ring until they leave the ring. Seems simple and straightforward but I don't believe that is how every judge currently judges their tests.

Examples:

- A team enters the ring for the basic control and prior to being introduced to the judge the dog tries to leave the ring and is only stopped by the tight lead.
- On entering the ring for the group stay a team suddenly stops, the team behind has to use a tight lead to stop their team from colliding. The handler of the team behind them suddenly jumps in front of his dog who tries to continue and so the handler blocks his forward progress.
- On returning to the ring and after exercise finished the handler who is very excited gives his dog a big hug while still in the ring.
- The dog then gets excited and jumps up on the handler. Nothing is lost or out of balance but the dog is clearly not in control during that timeframe.
- On completing the freight haul as the teams are leaving there is a roadblock at the ring exit because one dog is unwilling to leave this causes three teams to use tight leads and one team makes contact with another team's wheel while another breaks the plane of the ring with his head and is only guided back with the leash.
- The handler seems unable to get his dog to sit at the beginning of the recall, the handler guides the dog into a sit by touching his rear end while lifting on the lead.

In brief, the fallback position of 'between exercises' is overridden by the inclusion of this sentence *Teams shall be evaluated the entire time they are in the ring or on the freight haul.*

Far better to 'define' when an exercise begins and when it ends. This leaves the integrity of 'between exercises' for those that use it, it also allows for a team to get a little lost and regroup in the ring without 'going off course' or showing unwillingness because of a stressed handler.

It can also easily be stated at the end of the freight haul that the exercise ends only ‘after all teams have individually cleared the ring’.

You already have my suggestions on these items and I really think you are trying to ‘fix’ something here in a simplistic way that will cause many judges some level of grief. They haven’t really considered it as yet because your suggestion is well hidden and the ramifications of being ‘evaluated’ and ‘the entire time’ has yet to be interpreted.

RFC1 Proposal:

Definitions

[New B, everything else moves down a letter]

B. When judging begins and ends

Judging begins with an affirmative acknowledgment of the question ‘Are You ready’ and ends when the calling judge says ‘exercise finished’. In the case of an ‘exercise finished’ within the ring boundaries, judging continues until the entrant has completely left the ring area.

[New C, everything else moves down a letter]

C. End of test

The test ends for an entrant after exercise finished in the freight haul unless the entrants are in the ring area. In this case judging continues until that entrant has cleared the ring boundaries.

RFC1 Comments:

If this concept is deemed necessary I think the wording can be vastly simplified: Teams are being evaluated at all times they are in the ring and while on the Freight haul.

As this is my own submission I’ll provide some justification.

My belief is rather simple when it comes to judging. It’s up to the interpretation of me and my co judge to come to a decision about what we just saw. Now some judges are more forcefully inclined with their interpretations and others are softer in theirs. I don’t view judging in a black and white environment but in a shades of grey environment. Standardized judging to me is more about the entrant seeing the same exercises in the same order than its about forcing the same decision on what appears to be the same circumstance. Circumstance rarely duplicates itself and certainly in an outside event governed by a variance in both terrain and weather conditions, duplication is an exception rather than a rule. So much for my philosophy on judging.

My belief on clarity of regulation is however very black and white. Quite simply if its not contained in written format in any of the documents that we consult as regulations then it quite simply does NOT exist. In a document that outlines failing performances then ALL failing performances must be shown to meet my definition of rule clarity. I believe it’s better to have a thicker rule book that covers major circumstance than to have a hear say rule book that covers some things and use the ‘that’s the way it is’ moniker for those things unexplained.

So whenever you can define something then that’s a good thing because it sets a standard for judging in clear irrevocable terms.

This item is to avert any possible misconception about when teams are being judged and when a test ends.

Nice concept for clarity, but... Does this only apply to the 5 parts of the test as numbered in our regs (Basic control, Harness and Hitch, Practical Draft Work, Group Stay and Distance Freight Haul) ? What about the backing exercise? I think that for this to work, we need to know what “judging” this refers to.

Item #40 Which Regs Apply?

Discussion RFC3:

No discussion. Please see discussion from RFC2 below.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

The date on the front of the rule book states when the regulations go into effect. However, the author is correct: tests are conducted under the regulations in affect at the time of application. Thus, late in 2007 we started seeing our first MDD's, but not until mid-2008 did we see the first ANDD's. Since test applications are six months in advance, not until spring of '08 could we see our first Open-titled teams entering Novice for an ANDD.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

Page 2

C. Time of Application: Application to hold a Draft Test must be made at least six (6) months prior to the date of the proposed Draft Test. [Tests shall be held under the Regulations in effect at the time of application.](#) The DWC shall...

RFC2 Comments:

Wonderful ! This should help test committees and entrants who have been confused for a long time!

RFC1 Proposal:

While I know that a test is judged under the regulations in effect when that test is approved, I do not see this explained in the regulations. I think it should be there. Perhaps at the end of Section 1 in Chapter 1....

RFC1 Comments:

good idea

No harm but isn't that covered by the date on the front of the rule book?

This is a fact that many Draft Test Committees don't know. Having it in the regulations is a good idea.

Item #41 Time of Equipment Check/Judging

Discussion RFC3:

An RFC2 comment correctly points out that somewhere we must explicitly state who is responsible for establishing maneuvering course. Please see "Discussion RFC2" below for motivation driving this change.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

(Pg16)

Section 5. Pre-Judging Responsibilities

~~A. Arrival: Judges should arrive at the Draft Test site at least one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of judging in order to have time to check draft equipment and Freight Haul weight loads, plot a pattern for the Maneuvering course and check the Freight Haul course.~~

A. **Responsibilities:** judges are responsible for establishing the maneuvering course, approving the freight haul course, and conducting the equipment check.

B. Explanation of Ring Procedure: . . .

This is a two-part proposal; the other half was inserted into Item#31 as that proposal resulted in ripple effect changes which overlapped with the second half of this proposal.

Discussion RFC2:

We agree with the author of the proposal and all respondents -- including the one respondent who disagrees with the proposal -- that the current regulatory text is misleading: judges cannot set up a ring and freight haul, conduct an equipment check, and conduct handler and steward walk-through(s) in less than an hour. We also agree “there are too many variables for each test and each pair of judges to try to regulate this.” We further agree that judges have individual preferences on when to meet with their fellow judge and how much time they want to do the above. We would rather permit judges these preferences than regulate them. Where we disagree is the value of misinformation. We believe no information or guidance is better than bad information/guidance. Additionally, we trust the judging team to react to, and resolve far more complex issues. Thus, this section is easily within their planning capabilities and therefore unnecessary. Given that the section is both misleading and unnecessary, we propose striking it.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

No change from RFC1.

RFC2 Comments:

The fact that the judges are responsible for designing the maneuvering course needs to be in the regs somewhere. Perhaps that should be under Responsibilities of Judges.

Ok – I can live with this. It gives the judges the latitude to use the time to their advantage. I will be interested to see if there are any changes in judge behavior, but my guess is there will not be.

Proposed changes are acceptable.

Proposal RFC1:

If the time of the equipment check is given, I think the time for judges to arrive should be based on that. There’s still a lot to do before the equipment check... walking the freight haul, checking the ring set up, etc. “Time of judging” is not specific enough.

DWC Comment:

We don’t want to run afoul of the judge who flies in just before the test while the other judge sets things up the day before. Conversely, if a judging pair feels they can do the job in two hours, we don’t want to write regulations that require them to show up even earlier or before dawn. The DWC suggests that judges know their responsibilities. Therefore the DWC counter-proposes striking the entire paragraph “Section 5A”.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

Section 5. Pre Judging Responsibilities

~~A. Arrival: Judges should arrive at the Draft Test site at least one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of judging in order to have time to check draft equipment and Freight Haul weight loads, plot a pattern for the Maneuvering course and check the Freight Haul course.~~

RFC1 Comments:

Agreed. There are too many variables for each test and each pair of judges to try to regulate this. Additionally, if we are going to define it, how do we determine start of judging when that usually occurs after the walk thru, and walk thru's can vary greatly in length depending on entrants and questions?

Leave it the way it is but in many cases this is certainly not enough time to cover setting the courses, the opening greeting, the equipment check and the walk thrus with instructions especially for a full test. My preference is to meet the day before and get everything planned out. I think it's important to speak with my co judge about various interpretations etc.

Eliminating it entirely leaves no guidance and offering no guidance is not an option.

I agree with the DWC's counter proposal.

Item #42 Carrying Food

Discussion RFC3:

No discussion. Please see discussion from RFC2 below.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

All respondents agree that striking the word "offer" brings the regulation more in line with how it is actually called.

As originally written, carrying food or toys would certainly result in a Failing Performance. However, might this result in more? For example, could an overzealous judge excuse a team for carrying food? Thus, the penalty for carrying food or toys is now explicit.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

Page 19

C. Food and Toys: ~~A handler shall not carry or offer~~ The carrying of food or toys during ~~the any~~ Draft Test ~~exercises~~ exercise shall result in a Failing Performance.

RFC2 Comments:

Sounds good. This makes it much more clear and easier to judge. Thanks !

Proposed changes are acceptable.

Proposal RFC1:

Food and Toys (Chapter 3, Section 2C) should include the penalty for carrying or offering food or toys during the Draft Test Exercises.

DWC Comment:

We’ve all seen the handler who holds out their empty hand as if they were. . . well, offering a treat. Is this not an implicit “offer” of food? Striking the word “offer” brings the regulation more in line with how it is actually called. Thus, independent of explicitly stating the penalty for “carrying”, the DWC proposes:

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

Page 19

C. Food and Toys: A handler shall not carry ~~or offer~~ food or toys during the Draft Test exercises.

RFC1 Comments:

Sensible

Agreed – strike “offer.”

Agree with the DWC proposal

YES! Although I am not happy with handler’s pretending to offer food in the ring, the dogs generally figure it out and stop working. I agree with the DWC’s suggestion.

I support this change in the wording.

Item #44 Removing Rig Prior to Conclusion

Discussion RFC3:

Addressing the question raised in the RFC2 comment below, a literal reading of the current regs requires that all rigs not in active use must remain in the “designated area” until conclusion of the test. There is no allowance say for someone who must leave early due to illness. The proposed change, “pending use in the Test”, allows someone who must depart early to do so – even if they have not yet shown (if the rig won’t be used, there is no “pending use” and therefore the rig may be removed). We make no statement, expressed or implied, about leaving a test early or staying through to its conclusion. This is a sportsmanship issue best addressed elsewhere. The only change is that a rig may be removed for whatever reason prior to the conclusion of the test.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC3:

No change from RFC2.

Discussion RFC2:

While not all see this as a problem, none see a downside to making the change. This section of the regs is also being changed by item #31. For clarity, the changes are shown independently.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC2:

14. A designated area near the ring for the draft equipment and freight ~~weights~~ haul loads of all entrants. All such equipment and ~~weights~~ loads ~~must~~ shall remain in this area ~~unless being used~~ pending use in the Test. [\[see #31\]](#)

RFC2 Comments:

This wording says that entrants may leave before the end of the test? It looks to me like it just says where the equipment should be. Did I miss something or is this a subtle way to include this?

Proposed changes are acceptable.

RFC1 Proposal:

Please make it clear that those desiring to leave before the conclusion of the test may do so.

Proposed Regulation Changes RFC1:

Current (pg 8, #14):

14. A designated area near the ring for the draft equipment and freight weights of all entrants. All such equipment and weights ~~must~~ shall remain in this area ~~unless being used pending use~~ in the Test.

RFC1 Comments:

I suppose, seems common sense to me that people can leave when they are done.

I can see the logic, but don't know that it's been a problem before. But, in the interest of being clear, sure, make the change.

No problem with the modification as proposed.

Yes, this wording does match what we see at tests. Ok....

Seems fine. I support this RFC.
