

These “Inactive proposals” lie outside the purview of the DWC or have received minimal favorable comments thus far. Additionally, if the committee was unable translate a proposal into changes to the regulatory text, that proposal appears here as well. Thus, “inactive” proposals are by no means closed subjects. We welcome comments on how the spirit of an “inactive” proposal might be captured in regulatory text.

Item #1 Due to time constraints, “discipline section” revision postponed.

Item #2 Superintendent for Draft

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

Item #6 Modify Recall

Item #7 DDX

Item #8 Rally Draft

Item #9 Capability Award

Item #10 Breech Harness

Item #11 Change Titling Requirements

Item #12 Encourage More Tests

Item #13 Increase Number of Judges

Item #14 Eliminate Out of Sight Stays

Item #15 Limit Maximum Slope

Item #16 Freight Haul Reduced Weight

Item#16.2 Freight Haul Preferred Class

Item #17 Weight Certificates

Item #18 Blind and Disabled Dogs

Item #19 Eliminate Draft Title requirement for Versatility.

Item #20 No change to rig requirements

Item #21 Change Freight Weights

Item #22 Wait vs. Stay in Groups Exercises

Item #23 Reduce Test Application Time

Item #27 Buffer Zone

Item #28 Equipment Failure

Item #29 Allow Fouling Freight Haul

Item #30 Bitches in Season

Item #32 Additions to Performance and Judging

Item #33 End of Freight Haul

Item #34 Call for Consistency

Item #35 Stop Changing Regs so Often

Item #36 Failing Performances Not on List

Item #37 Entry Form Include date of Previous Titles

Item #38 Organize Committee & Secretary Info Better

Item #39 Implement Open Book

Item #43 Eliminate Priority for Untitled Dogs

Item #2 Superintendent for Draft

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments clearly in favor; many comments voice reservations.

RFC1 Proposal:

DWC will allow for the creation of a superintendent for draft, allowing for online and faxed entry. Superintendent may assume the distribution of premium lists and creation of catalogs, but must provide copies of all entries to the Secretary prior to the test. Secretary will remain responsible for all other duties, including final paperwork submission, as outlined in the rules.

DWC Comment:

If the Superintendent position is not executed correctly and promptly or the superintendent goes on vacation, business travel, etc., our Draft program comes to a halt. Thus, such a position cannot be left to one individual. Moreover, the workload is too great for a volunteer organization. One of the principal reasons the AKC cited for not creating an AKC Draft program was that current Draft participation levels could not support administrative costs for such an AKC program – a proposed program much larger than ours. Thus, the DWC suggests that a Superintendent is outside the financial means of the BMDCA Draft program at this time.

RFC1 Comments:

I am not aware that the individual clubs have been falling down on their responsibilities with respect to premiums, entries, etc. Also, such a position does not need to be formalized by the draft program. Anyone is welcome to offer superintending servicing to clubs.

I do not see the need for a Superintendent. All it will do is add cost, if people can't get their entries in on time, I believe that's on them.

I am in agreement with the DWC on this point. While I understand the desire to allow for faxed or online entries, that creates more problems than it solves so long as we require the weight certificate. Submitting mailed entries by deadline is not that difficult a task and I find it tedious and annoying to listen to people who seem incapable of meeting a well publicized deadline.

I would like more feedback from the proposer on how this may work. The comments put forward are valid but perhaps the proposer has a solution for vacations and the other points made by the DWC.

A Superintendent for our Draft Program is a nice dream, but for the reasons stated by the DWC, it is just not possible at this point. Our goal should be to improve our program, not create more administration jobs.

There is a Draft Test Committee for each test. There is a MINIMUM of 3 members. With a larger group the work of making the premium can be done by one of them. The only jobs our regs specifically assign to the Draft Test Secretary are: be a BMDCA member in good standing, accept all entries (I take this to imply that they do the random draw if needed, but that is not spelled out specifically in section H on page 9), send confirmation notices within 4 days after closing, have materials listed at the top of page 4 available for inspection, and sending the Test Material to the DWC within 10 days after closing (see list near top of page 4). The premium and catalog are listed under duties of the Draft Test Committee, so no one really needs to be overburdened. Although it is not spelled out in the regs, the secretary generally handles all of the judges' worksheets, but I have seen that delegated to one or more people over the course of the test. If this is an issue with the DWC, then this needs to be addressed. I have seen that expression "too many cooks ruin the pie" play out when it comes to too many people handling the paperwork the day of a test. Papers get misplaced as someone tries to keep them from blowing away and then there is a frantic hunt for missing judges' worksheets. I see that as a bad thing and would like the official designated secretary to handle all of the paperwork pertaining to judging personally. Unless the secretary is handicapped in some way and needs a runner to carry the papers from the secretary's desk to the judges in the ring, the secretary should do it themselves.

And as for sharing the work of the secretary ... The regs outline the duties of the secretary and if two people are doing parts of that work for a test then they should BOTH be listed as secretary and neither should show. Consider if we applied this same logic to 2 day tests with a judge showing one day and judging the other, that judge should have nothing to do with the test plan the day they are entered. The regs are worded the same when it comes to dog who may not compete and the Test Secretary and the Judges.

Few things are ever improved by the addition of more levels of bureaucracy I can't see the need nor the value of this suggestion.

Item #4 Revisions to Regulation Change Process

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Many passionate and diverse comments were received on this topic and its several proposals. The central thrusts are desires to see increased participation or change the process so that it is Board-driven.

The BMDCA Board has stated that it does not wish to oversee the RFC process. Therefore the detailed proposal on this subject (4.3) is not viable.

The other proposals (4.0-4.2) all touch on increasing BMDCA membership or judge participation. As mentioned in the cover letter for these documents, the RFC format was changed to show all comments received and how each of those comments were considered by the committee. Also, as mentioned, each comment was read and re-read multiple times. The committee's opinion discusses at length how these comments were considered and reconciled against each other. If, after reviewing these documents you see a way that participation might be further increased in the spirit of proposals (4.0-4.2), please let the committee know or make a proposal.

Proposal 4.0 RFC1:

[Change] RFC and Regulations Revisions so as to make the process speedier, more expedient, more fluid, and more democratic.

DWC Comment 4.0:

We currently have the best Draft program – witness how many other programs are modeled on ours. At this stage, it is hard to fathom wholesale changes because something is “broken”. Thus, changes are incremental improvements to the program. When we look back, speediness of an incremental change will not matter a bit. For example, few remember the date when we opened our tests to all breeds nor the extent of impassioned discussion for and against the change – rather it seems as if we have always been all-breed. Looking back, what will matter is the stability and integrity of the program and that changes were well deliberated, well reasoned, and achieved their desired benefit without creating unintended problems that had to be addressed in successive revisions.

We are all familiar with the common wisdom that when something is “working” don't change it. Thus when one has the foremost program, the focus should be protecting that achievement and moving with deliberation. The DWC suggests that speediness, expediency, and fluidity in making changes to the leading Draft program defy conventional wisdom and will undercut the program's stability and integrity.

As for making “democratic” changes whenever a large enough group wants to force a change, we'd find ourselves with quickly eroding standards. We currently have a 35% pass rate. It stands to reason that the other 65% would like to make the tests easier so that they pass as well. Even well intentioned changes could be harmful to the program if left to a simple vote. We have an outstanding program. Our mission now is to protect

it while making incremental improvements. The DWC suggests we do that by making changes based on merit, not popular sentiment.

Proposal 4.1 RFC1:

I would like to see the judges and members of the BMDCA have some say (maybe a vote) on any proposed changes to the draft regulations prior to the changes becoming official. The DWC can narrow the proposed changes down or edit them as to what is in the best interest of the "drafting community" and then submit them to the BMDCA for submission to the membership for a vote with the outcome of the vote to weigh very heavily in any/all proposed changes.

DWC Comment 4.1:

Judges and members already have a full "say" in the process – if not the only "say." Comments are weighed by merit, not number. Thus, one particularly insightful comment may be all that's needed to sink or push through a proposal. A good example was the proposed changes to submittal forms in 2007. In the third RFC round, a veteran secretary pointed out how the proposal would hinder more than help. Based on her comments the proposal was dropped. Given the number of positive comments received in the first two rounds this proposal surely would have been adopted – adopted to the detriment of the program -- if numbers mattered more than insight or experience. For this reason, to ensure the best possible outcome for the program, the DWC weighs comments by merit or insight rather than number.

Proposal 4.2 RFC1:

Revamp the RFC process to include more judge participation and influence in the final outcome of a regulation change.

DWC Comment 4.2:

As it is, judges have exclusive "say" in two of the three rounds and may participate in the third stage. Given that judges may already fully participate in all three rounds, the degree of participation is a matter of personal choice. Some judges will not respond at all; some will explain in detail how a particular proposal will benefit or harm the program, thereby being extremely influential in the final outcome.

Proposal 4.3 RFC1:

Ch 1. Section 5 – Procedures for Alterations or Additions to the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations. All alterations or additions to the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations shall occur through the following procedures.

Current:

1. The BMDCA DWC defines the project and the goals.

Proposed:

1. *At the request of the DWC, the BMDCA Board of Directors creates the Project Committee. The Project Committee shall be composed of five BMDCA members including one current BMDCA officer/director, one current DWC member, two judges (one of whom may also be a DWC member) and one person from the general membership. In selecting this final individual, experience in draft will be a primary consideration. The Board will appoint a Chair of the Project Committee. The Project Committee reports jointly to the Board and the DWC Chairperson.*

Current:

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.

Proposed:

2. *The Project Committee and the DWC define the project and the goals.*

Current:

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

Proposed:

8. *The Project Committee prepares the final version based on RFC #3 and submits it to all approved and provisional BMDCA Draft Judges for an electronic line item vote. This vote may be conducted online via survey or poll. Any judge wishing to vote via US Mail must notify the Project Committee of this intention during RFC #3. The voting period will last 10 days. Results of the vote will be tallied by the Project Committee and submitted with the final version to the DWC and 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 Project Committee also submits its recommendation for a date when alterations/additions take effect.*

Current:

9. The approved alterations or additions take effect on the date agreed upon by the DWC and the BMDCA Board and approved by the Board. Notification of this date shall be communicated to the BMDCA membership as soon as possible.

Proposed:

9. *The approved alterations or additions take effect on the date agreed upon by the Project Committee and the BMDCA Board and approved by the Board. Notification of this date shall be communicated to the BMDCA membership as soon as possible.*

DWC Comment 4.3:

This is a thoughtful, detailed proposal deserving critical thought, discussion, and comment. Some observations from the DWC on the unseen effort that goes on behind the scenes may be insightful:

Section 1: the DWC suggests that this proposed change defeats the purpose of a committee and would result in unacceptable delays or worse. In general, if a Project Committee is needed, the Board looks to the expertise of its respective Chairs, whether that be Draft, Membership, or any other function, to create and manage that committee. This allows the Board to manage and balance the diverse interests of the club. The greater the Board involvement at the committee level, the less time available to keep those diverse interests in balance. Asking the Board to create a Project Committee for Draft requires that the Board determine who the best candidates might be, approach those candidates to determine their interest, and brief potential candidates on the task. This is extremely time consuming and would expend a disproportionate amount of Board resources on Draft. Given all the demands on the Board, it is unlikely we'd see a Board appointed project committee constituted anytime soon. Once constituted, the project could experience worse than just delays.

Even "blue ribbon" Task Forces or Project Committees can fail to accomplish their mission. It would be detrimental if future changes were dependent on a Project Committee that might not see the project through to completion. Worse, they might create more problems than they solve by not fully understanding the ramifications and ripples the simplest of changes makes. There is also a management issue. If those volunteers selected by the Board underestimate how much effort is required (typically one-to-two years) and the Project Committee bogs down, how is it to get going again? The reality of a Committee which jointly reports to two bodies is that each body looks to the other and in the end neither exercises oversight. Thus, a bogged-down Committee would remain bogged down indefinitely.

Section 2: it's just human nature: with any complicated, time consuming endeavor, someone must be in charge of keeping the project on course. A task this large bogs down from time to time and committee members inevitably deadlock. This deadlock will persist until someone makes an executive decision. The DWC is concerned that the proposed text eliminates provisions for keeping the committee moving along.

Section 8: the DWC wonders whether the proposed would actually accomplish the desired result. For example, what if a judge was in favor of a concept but took exception to a particular word or phrase? By voting the change down they would send the wrong message to the Board. Moreover, there can be as much, if not more dissatisfaction in omission than commission. There will always be submissions which do not make it into the final proposal. How does one vote for something not in the proposal to the Board? Do we allow write-in's? This is not easily handled by a simple online poll. If write-in's are to be included, look at this RFC and all the proposals that may not see action this time around. The omissions could easily dwarf the commissions. Are 20 pages of what didn't happen something the Board would review? Is it something the Board would even want to review or would this be a disproportionate demand on the Board's attention by one of its committees? Thus, if the aim of the proposal is a satisfaction index, might there be a more effective way of registering satisfaction/dissatisfaction? Finally, have we lost sight of the fact that we serve the BMDCA membership? Why should judge satisfaction/dissatisfaction matter more to the Board than the membership which it serves?

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 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 #6 Modify Recall

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Rewriting Basic Control (item 5) in keeping with its principal functions (testing safety and willingness) resulted in sweeping changes to the recall (item 6). The position the dog is left in, "command or signal" versus "command and/or signal", and one versus two commands have no bearing on certifying the safety of the team and are therefore entirely within the spirit of the exercise. Given that these dramatic changes stem from the effort to match BC exercises to the intent of BC itself, the recall is best discussed under the umbrella of Basic Control rather than as an isolated exercise. Thus, the recall has been merged with Basic Control.

Proposal RFC1:

Recall Modifications (Our current Recall is too much like formal Obedience---up to the point at which the dog commits to coming. I cannot envision the Swiss farmer going out in the morning and staring straight ahead with his arms hanging loosely at his sides, and calling "Kom!" without bending his head or bending at the waist or clapping his hands or his thighs. And, if his dog didn't come on the first call, he would call him again.)

And

Allow one additional command on the recall when basic control is performed

And

Basic Control – Recall - Multiple commands to come should be allowed. My reasoning is like many others – in real life, we call more than once. Ours is a test of teamwork not strict obedience. Perhaps it would be different if we didn't; allow multiple commands AFTER they start to move; but since we do, I think that multiple command concept should begin with “Call your dog...”

And

Allow both command and signal:

Performance Judging, Chapter 3, Section B. Recall:

The handler calls the dog with a single command *and*/or signal.

And

Chapter 3 – Draft Test exercises, Section 1 Basic Control, B Recall. The judges commands include “Call your dog”. I have discovered as I've worked with more judges that I am one of a very few judges who actually say “Call your dog”!!!! Everyone gives a hand signal!!! I do it because it is in the regulations. If it is in there, then everyone should do it! If speaking those words is wrong, then that judge's command should be removed from our regs and I will have to learn to use a hand signal.

Performance Judging, Chapter 3, Section B. Recall:

Previous:

The handler calls the dog with a single command or signal.

Proposed:

On the judge's order or signal, the handler will command or signal the dog to come.

DWC Comment:

As artificial as an exercises may be, some construct is necessary for repeatability across tests and judges. The more “life like” an exercise, the more “grey” area it has and thus the more it is up to the subjectivity of the judges. Thus, among other things, one must balance artificialness and subjectivity.

RFC1 Comments:

The DWC Comment pertained to the need to strike a balance between artificialness and subjectivity. This particular exercise appears to lean heavily on the artificial side in order to ensure consistency and repeatability. That being said, I can see no reason that allowing a second recall command to be issued would make the exercise any more difficult to judge or any less repeatable across different tests or judges.

Personally, I am not in favor of making this modification, due to the fact that I view it as an essential skill to be able to get solid eye contact and attention from the dog prior to issuing the recall command. However, I believe that the DWC may need to provide a stronger justification as to why issuing a second recall command would slant the exercise over to the “too subjective to judge” side.

I think that under the extremely controlled circumstances of a Draft test that dogs should be asked to come on a single signal or command with the additional encouragement allowed after the dog gets going. It is a sad statement indeed that we do not expect such a basic and fundamental response from our dogs in such a controlled environment. If we do add signal and/or command I think it will be time to include a basic definition of a signal unless we wish to adhere to the AKC definition. If we want to allow body bending, jumping, clapping, etc. we will need our own definition.

I would like to keep the recall, but since this is about carting, I'd prefer to have the dog do a recall with the cart. If the reason for not doing this is concern for that obedience dog with the "dynamite recall" who might not be able to stop safely, I should think the handler would have practiced this as much as any other aspect of the test.

A less desirable option would be to have the handler harness the dog next to the cart immediately upon entering the ring, heel the dog 30' to 50' away from the cart, leave the dog, and recall to the cart.

I don't see any problem keeping it the way it is now, it's an obedience exercise, just call it what it is.

Guilty! I agree with this change.

I think the recall should be left in, but the dog may be left in any position.

This seems like a moot point as our regs allow for hand or verbal signal.

I agree with the way the current recall is worded and judged with the following caveat

I don't however feel it's necessary to start the recall in a sit position. I acknowledge that it is the traditional obedience position with which to start but see no problem with being able to judge the current elements of the recall 'wait, start to come on first command, come in a straight line, and remain within arms reach'

If you truly want the rules to make sense then add the word sit in front of the word wait. That would at least satisfy that an element of the exercise is the 'sit/wait' which would nullify any other position. As it is currently written it's ambiguous because of the definition of 'wait' – the position you are left in (sit, stand, down)

As an interesting (perhaps only to myself) side note. I have polled several AKC obedience judges, none of which would have stopped the exercise or failed it outright for a no sit (it's not in the AKC obedience regs). I also must state that a number of judges contacted me privately 'agreeing' with my perspective and at the same time 'apologizing' for not having the courage to write it on the list. Most however offered the advice of NOT making it part of the judges report.

I find it better to give a hand signal and I am pretty specific in my briefing about what I will be doing. To my mind in that briefing the command 'call your dog' is represented by the hand signal. It is important though that both judges are on the same page so that all recall exercises are duplicated.

I'm in favor of dropping the recall as part of dropping basic control (#5) -- IF the recall is not dropped, I think it should be modified to allow multiple commands at any point, and to allow the dog to be left in a WAIT – as we have defined WAIT - which means any position is acceptable, and the dog may change positions as long as it doesn't start to move toward the handler until called/signaled.

Judging a recall would not be any more difficult if the handler can give multiple commands – and the example given is real life that we do call our dogs multiple times, and particularly when we are excited about having our dog join us for a fun activity. A judge can decide that the command/signal was given and any additional command/signal is allowed, regardless of when the dog starts to move. The only thing that would be a NQ would be "anticipation" on the dog's part – coming without a command being given. This tests the dog's ability to WAIT - and since we allow multiple commands on other exercises throughout the test, this would be consistent with how we judge other exercises (including the "wait" on the load and unload.)

[Similar comment not shown]

However, we allow multiple "heel" commands and multiple "stay/wait" commands during the maneuvering course. (I understand and agree that one stay command is important in the group stay. That exercise has a different objective.) If we are going to keep basic control, the general essence of the exercises should be the same throughout. Consistency is a word we hear often. Multiple "heel" commands and multiple "wait/stay" and "come" commands would be consistent. Our judges have managed to judge that gray area of "arm's length" just fine, so it seems reasonable that they can do the same with the stay and recall. And... if making this consistent erodes the purpose of the basic control exercise, then I guess the logical conclusion is that it serves no purpose in our test.

Yes, I KNOW... I'm arguing both sides here, but... there are points to be made both for and against... it is what we determine most important that will decide the fate of basic control.

That's good!

I would also like to make one slight additional change.

In the recall failing performances I would like to eliminate #4 – Dog does not come directly to handler.

This as well as # 3 and # 6 in the walking under control are not called consistently enough to be included in failing performances and each would only represent points off in an Obedience trial. The remaining failing items are certainly enough to meet the willingness and response criteria as set out in the overview of the basic control section.

Item 6.1 I support this change.

Item #7 DDX

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Some progress toward a DDX has been made and a proposal was posted to the Judges' 'L in April. The DDX TF comments "more work" would be required and reiterates an interest "in seeing such a program develop." Meanwhile, the DDX TF assumed DDX development "would take a back seat to this current RFC." That thought is echoed by a second comment, "DDX deserves its own process." Thus, the DDX TF requests that the judges "keep the idea alive even though it is not something to vote on at this time."

Proposal 7.0 RFC1:

DDX (a terrific idea)

And

At the current status of BMDCA draft, I would not approve of any level more advanced than is currently approved. Sometimes, the object is more titles, more firsts. Let's put the emphasis on our Berners, their quality of life and enjoyment, not on number of firsts or titles.

DWC Comment:

A DDX Task Force was created at the 2008 Specialty Judges' meeting. They are preparing a demonstration for the 2009 Specialty. Much remains to be done before this is ready for a future RFC.

RFC1 Comments:

DDX - non issue at this time

There is an appetite for a 'higher level' or 'something different' as opposed to 'more of the same' - I have always thought that an advanced level would certainly be something that could be incorporated into current tests.

There are many exercises that could be added that would be worthwhile and 'historically correct'. There is no need to add 'tricks'.

Unfortunately the demonstration planned by Ruth at the National was cancelled due to illness on the part of the dog and handler that would have provided the demonstration. I think that as the task force was created in 2008 there must be something to report. I don't believe that this was a make work project given to the task force. I

have to say I was a little surprised that this new DDX was not outlined in this RFC even though it would have been premature. Perhaps the task force could be encouraged to outline their thoughts for RFC 2

As the next full RFC is years away and without true management backing, I really don't see this having any momentum.

I am convinced that there is an appetite to bring more novelty to our sport. This is driven, I believe, by those who want to do more with their dogs. Dog sport of all types, for those that are involved, is an elixir. It is much more than gaining a new title or doing some new thing with your dogs.

It is also the future. New ideas create momentum and momentum creates interest. More interest creates excitement and that is the beginning of a successful future for draft.

Staying fresh and new is the oxygen in our blood. The adrenalin, the endorphins. Becoming stale, old, tired is why things AND people should change environments and challenges on a regular basis. Nothing is forever.

Not sure if we are to comment on this but I have real concerns regarding the amount of weight these dogs are expected to pull. We already have many folks who will not enter open due to what they feel is excessive weight. I have concerns now because I feel there are too many people who are focused on another title, not the safety of their dog. To make a dog pull 1 ½ times its weight is too much, especially when we have people who feel the more difficult a hill is the better. I would go along with a higher level of expertise in working a dog, not the weight.

I cannot comment on the DDX proposal because no one has seen it.

DDX - I was the person who was interested in coming up with suggestions for a DDX program and putting on a demo at the Specialty in Portland. As Phil Chagnon noted, the team that I had asked to demo some of the key aspects of a DDX proposal got sick the day of the demo and was not able to give the demo as I had hoped. However, I did post the DDX proposal that I drafted to this list back in April. My comment at the time was that discussion of a DDX program would likely take a back seat to this current RFC. That being said, I would like to keep the idea of DDX alive but there is certainly no push to have a DDX program as part of this current RFC. I had hoped there might be some discussion of DDX at the Judges Meeting, but since that meeting was attended by only five judges, the discussion was limited.

The proposal I posted to this list was based on comments I collected over the year from both judges and participants. The reasoning behind the DDX proposal - as I stated when I posted the DDX proposal to this list in April - is included below:

The proposal I posted to the list included specific DDX exercises based on research and discussion. You can see the proposal on the group archives. This is something that obviously would require more work and I am still interested in seeing such a program develop. Right now we do a very good job of testing the dog's ability to work with a cart in heel position. This is not a true indication of what our dogs can - and likely did - do as working dogs. Let's keep the idea alive even though it is not something to vote on at this time.

There is enough on this RFC and the whole concept of DDX deserves its own process.

I support the development of DDX

Item #8 Rally Draft

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Comments acknowledge that “Rally Draft” is fun and makes a good event for club “Fun Days.” None saw a need to make it a formal BMDCA event.

RFC1 Proposal:

- 1) Rally Draft
- 2) Five qualifying Rally Draft events will earn the title Rally Excellent Draft Dog.

DWC Comment:

On 28Sep08, the DWC formally responded to a request for the creation of a Rally Draft Title. The principal reasons for not supporting creation of a Rally Draft Title were:

- As proposed, Rally eliminated Harness & Hitch which is critical to the safety of the dogs.
- Rally was promoted as being more accessible to older dogs given the elimination of the Freight Haul. However, even a veteran BMD in moderate shape can pull 20 pounds for half a mile. Thus this benefit rang hollow.
- Current BMDCA Draft Regulations already allow for signage.

The response went on to state:

“That is not to say that Rally Draft doesn't serve a valuable purpose in introducing people to the sport of Draft. The DWC encourages Clubs and our Apprentice Judges to provide seminars and matches as a way to promote the sport, and your Rally Draft certainly achieves that goal.”

A copy is available on request.

RFC1 Comments:

Rally draft - concept is already included as signage is allowed.
Not needed.

I don't think Rally Draft is necessary for reasons given by the DWC, how many titles do you need??

Rally Draft is a nice idea, but I think should be left to those wishing to pursue it for training and fun, not as an organized titling activity.

I agree that Rally Draft is fun and that both handlers and dogs can enjoy it. But I see it as a step in the process - more like a tool to aid in training. The DWC's formal response makes perfect sense to me and I agree with that assessment. Let's reserve Rally Draft as a game for Berner event days – those events where people are first exposed to Draft and can get a taste of ring experience even before a Draft Match where there is a judge in the ring. Low pressure, lots of help - a time to have fun and gain experience at the same time.

Rally Draft. If a group within the BMDCA wishes to develop this as a separate sport outside the BMDCA Draft program, they should follow their dream and go for it. I wish them luck but do not feel it falls into our scope of work. I do not support this RFC [proposal]

Item #9 Capability Award

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments were received.

RFC1 Proposal:

Inactive Proposals

16 November 2010

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Add a new award -- "Capability Award" (or Able Dog Award)

The requirements for the BMDCA Capability Award are as follow:

- 1) The Berner's owner must be a BMDCA member.
- 2) The Berner must have earned a BMDCA Rally Draft Dog or Novice Draft Dog title
- 3) The Berner must have earned one of five other titles:
 - a) AKC Companion Dog
 - b) AKC Rally Excellent
 - c) AKC Tracking Dog
 - d) AKC Novice Agility Dog
 - e) AKC Novice Agility Jumper
 - f) AKC Novice Agility Preferred
 - g) AKC Novice Jumper Preferred
 - h) American Herding Breed Association Herding Capability Tested

DWC Comment:

This is outside the purview of the DWC.

Item #10 Breech Harness

RFC Taskforce discussion:

The overwhelming sentiment is that the choice of rigs and harnessing techniques must be left to the handler.

RFC1 Proposal:

I would like to formally request that we require breeching on the harness of teams doing DD and DDX level work. This is for safety.

DWC Comment:

No reports of dog injury have been reported in the Test Report submittals. Thus the DWC is unaware of any Draft-Test-related injuries. If there are instances of injury, the question is whether that injury would have been prevented with a breech harness. If no breech-strap-preventable injury is known, this then is not a regulatory issue but one of informing the community of the benefits of a breach harness and letting them choose harnessing methods as they see fit.

RFC1 Comments:

Breech strap - should remain an optional part of a harness.

I agree with the comments made by the DWC

agree with DWC

I see no need for breeching, for the reasons listed in your comments above.

Breech Harness - we don't tell teams what type of harness or cart to use. Let's not start. In all the tests I have judged - or competed in - I have seen exactly TWO teams use a breeching harness. I have seen no teams injured. I have never used one with my dogs, even though they are big boys and pull a lot of weight. This is personal preference and we shouldn't be involved in that.

While it is unlikely that an injury would occur at a test, the strain of an Open load on a dog's elbows as they go downhill in some harness designs may cause a physical issue over time. I agree that education is the way to go with this process. And... we need people who understand the physics of the draft system in use to evaluate the

success of a particular breeching system. Breeching is more than a “butt strap”.

Equipment & type of harness is up to the team. I do not support this RFC

Item #11 Change Titling Requirements

RFC Taskforce discussion:

This proposal drew no support.

RFC1 Proposal:

Change to a two leg system for a title – and/or allow one ‘fail’ exercise per test as a pass- in other words, you don’t need to be perfect to pass – or change to a minimum points for a pass, not a perfect score.

RFC1 Comments:

A dog should [not] be allowed to fail an exercise and still get the title. We don’t want the tests to be too easy or it would decrease the value of the title. You can already talk continuously and repeat commands/signals endlessly, take all the time you want, etc.

I abhor the two leg system for a title, especially if it means allowing a Fail on an exercise. (I could, for example, completely blow the Maneuvering but still get the title? Absurd).

We do not have enough tests to change to a two leg system. Since our tests allow significant interaction between handler and dog in the form of both talking to the dog and body language, I think allowing one exercise to be failed makes no sense whatever. Bottom line - we need to maintain the integrity and value of a Draft title.

Don’t agree with this, don’t think they need 2 legs nor should we allow any failures of exercise. Our test isn’t that hard if you work your dog.

I do not support any changes to the titling requirements. Our program works fine in this regard. Changing to a two leg system or a point system would require a complete overhaul of the entire sport.

There is enough opportunity for encouragement and repeated commands in our test that allowing a team to fail one portion would undermine the worth and integrity of our draft program. Pass/Fail is the way to go.

If we had a high overall pass percentage at tests, then having to earn two legs, or even three to get the title would be something to consider. However, we are not there yet. Let’s consider this and revisit it if our overall pass percentage gets up to around 70%.

I do not support this RFC

Item #12 Encourage More Tests

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments were received.

RFC1 Proposal:

Encourage more 2-day events and cooperation between regional clubs in proximity to each other – to create more opportunities to compete and qualify.

DWC Comment:

Currently clubs choose the number and scheduling of their tests. This should remain a matter of individual choice. Fortunately the June 2007 regulations encourage greater entry sizes given the creation of the advanced titles. Thus, clubs may be encouraged to hold more tests as current tests fill.

Item #13 Increase Number of Judges

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Many comments are strongly, if not passionately opposed, to any restriction on freedom of choice on the part of judges or Test Committees. They cite multiple reasons and examples why any intrusion on these freedoms is untenable. One comment pointed out that because this is such a complex issue it will take much time to sort out. In an already "loaded RFC" the topic would not get the attention it deserves. Thus the topic is best served by coming back to it when it can get the "careful data collection and evaluations and consideration" it deserves.

RFC1 Proposal:

Encourage more people to become draft judges – it's still pretty darn hard to find local judges!

DWC Comment:

As discussed at every Specialty Judges' Meeting, this is a complex topic. Many judges are currently going two years or more between assignments. Not only would those judges argue we already have too many judges given the infrequency of assignments, it is impossible to keep their judging skills honed. On the other hand, some regions could benefit from more local judges. The DWC welcomes any suggestions on how to balance the myriad of competing objectives.

RFC1 Comments:

we should not get involved in directing how clubs select judges, or in limiting the number of assignments that judges can accept. This is not only NOT done in other dog sports, this is not how we do business or live our lives in general. If I want to hire a professional to do something - whether it is for my business or for my personal life -- I get to choose who I want to hire. If I want to hire a surgeon to operate on my dog -- I can hire the vet that has done the surgery a thousand times because of his expertise, or I can hire the new vet because he just got out of school and has all the latest techniques at his fingertips, or I can hire the vet I know because he is friendly and good with my dogs and less expensive --- and all of those are valid reasons for my choice.

I think clubs factor cost as a major element in deciding who to ask to judge. If cost is not a factor, then other things do come in to play.

IF there is a way to help take cost out of the mix and make it more affordable for clubs to invite judges from other parts of the country, I would be in favor of that concept. This would also help with the idea that clubs feel the need for more "local" judges because they can't afford judges from outside their area.

BUT - I do not support any means of forcing judges to turn down assignments or telling clubs who they have to invite to judge. This is not just micro-managing, it is taking away free choice and dictating an arbitrary result that is not in the best interest of the sport.

Aside from the fact that I don't see how the Draft Regs give any authority to tell the clubs who they can invite to judge --

The suggestion that dictating how many assignments any one judge can accept or forcing clubs to choose certain judges presumes that more assignments spread among more judges will be better for the sport. This is

just speculation. Some judges might benefit from more judging assignments, other judges might simply repeat what they have always done in the past -- so no improvement and no benefit to the sport. The arbitrariness of limiting assignments and dictating choices will make it harder for clubs to plan, and will prevent judges who are available and active from judging even TWO tests in a year if those tests happened to be two day tests.

If the idea is to keep judges on top of the sport, there are better ways to do that. While I personally enjoy judging, I also use my time to go to tests with my own dogs and volunteer to do clinics and help others in the sport as a way to keep on top of the sport. If judges want to learn from each other and share more ideas, we could have "judging clinics" at the Specialty or at perhaps some of the local Regional shows and use those as opportunities for judges' education.

As a professional in my work life, I have to take a certain number of courses to keep my professional license and it is my responsibility to do that. However, there is a strong emphasis on the consumer's right to choose to hire the professional of their choice to work for them.

We can come up with clinics and educational efforts to help judges stay informed and skilled if that is our goal. Dictating or controlling the choice of the clubs – or the choices of the judges -- in accepting assignments – is not the way to accomplish education and will penalize more people than it might possible help.

While I agree this is a complex issue it has a relatively simple resolution IF there exists among current judges, test committees AND the DWC a sense of camaraderie and respect. I believe this to be far from the current climate so the issues will stay. Quite frankly there is no way that you can remain skilful if you don't use your skills.

What would I do:

- 1- Force the issue. I would make it mandatory to use at least one new judge in any given test area without repeating that judge for at least three years.
- 2- I would cap a judge at three tests per year in effect taking him/her out of the judges pool until the following year. Note that this would mean only one 2 day test.
- 3- Make any monetary shortfall at any test the responsibility of the BMDCA not the test giving club. We are after all the sum of our parts and big daddy needs to support the draft program.
- 4- Create a judges pool from which to choose and make sure that each judge is given a fair chance at judging at least one test in an 18 to 24 month period.
- 5- If a judge is not asked to judge see if there are valid reasons for this underutilization. Attempt to correct this image in a positive and nurturing fashion.
- 6- Make each judge that has not judged in a 36 month period revert to being required to judge a mock test (at least 12 entries) under the encouragement and watchful eyes of at least two approved judges. The approved judges could then critique the performance and offer their opinions to the judge in question.
- 7- As a fallback to 6 require the approved judge to 'score' an actual test. Have both judges report back to the DWC re any shortcomings. (Not ideal due to lack of calling, setting up maneuvering and freight haul positioning)

Of course, if there were more draft tests AND a template for judging assignments then we would be in a pretty positive position and we may in fact need more judges.

If they want more judging assignments, move to the Midwest! Just kidding, but true! Sadly, many clubs just don't have the money to fly judges in. I don't know what the solution is. You can't just say we'll make it easier to be a judge if you want to judge in a certain area.

Leave it alone. No other event dictates how clubs should select their judges. Judges are selected based on skills and reputations. Judges that are not getting assignments? There is probably a reason for that! If those same judges were out showing, competing, stewarding, etc – in other words, increasing their own visibility – they would probably be more likely to get assignments. My feeling is that the judges that do not get assignments are not visible in the draft community, and/or have earned a negative reputation as a judge. Clubs should be free to select their own judges as they see fit – just like every other dog sport. The only way I see this changing is if the BMDCA decides to start supplementing costs – more clubs would go further geographically in judges' selection if they could afford it.

I do not agree with regulations restricting numbers of times a judge can accept per year.

I am always honored when I am asked to judge. I realize most draft tests struggle to break even and it is even harder when you bring in a judge from long distance. I try to be accommodating and am more than willing to sleep on someone's sofa than a hotel room if that helps with expenses. I don't charge all the expenses I probably could and if I can get a cheaper airfare by driving to Denver I will even though it is twice as far for me and more of a hassle to go out of that airport. If times are good financially on my end, I will donate \$100 of my submitted expenses to the club.

A couple of times I have been able to judge a draft test one day and sweepstakes another. This is a win-win situation for clubs trying to keep expenses down. Some years I have some assignments and others not at all.

I know it may be tough for a new judge that hasn't been in the sport long that doesn't have the name recognition to get an assignment. I am sure long time social networking and previous experience with a judge may make a local club more apt to go with someone they know over someone new. Perhaps there is a way to provide regional clubs with lists of new judges especially in the regions where the new judges live making it cheaper to bring them in over someone far away. In some way try to raise some visibility of these people when the clubs are making their judging selections.

Good luck on that one. ... As stated, it is VERY complex issue. Not something we can address in an already loaded RFC. Does that mean ignore it? No. But this needs careful data collection and evaluation and consideration.

Item #14 Eliminate Out of Sight Stays

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments agreed with the proposal's assertion that out-of-sight-stays send "the wrong message to the dog world about safe care of companion animals" and that teams are "unsupervised" when the handler leaves the ring. Over half the comments cited compelling reasons why out-of-sight-stays are either appropriate or necessary.

RFC1 Proposal:

Due to a recent push to eliminate the out of sight sit/down at the open level in obedience, I feel it is SAFER to have an in sight sit/stay at the open draft level. I know that farmers would send their dogs to the village on their own to deliver milk to the cheese makers, but in this day and age, it is not to be encouraged to leave your dog unsupervised – and sends the wrong message to the dog world about safe care of companion animals.

DWC Comment:

The DWC has never received a report of a loose dog hitched to a rig. Thus out-of-sight stays do not appear to be a safety issue in the Draft ring. It might even be argued that the level of training required for an out-of-sight-stay increases the safety of the dog rather than the reverse.

RFC1 Comments:

[Out-of-sight stay should remain] in the test, as it is a challenging and important part of the test for an advanced dog, who is demonstrating advanced skills.

Out of sight group exercise. Again, a dog by that level should be fine.

Please keep the stays. Solid stays are essential to the safety of any draft team.

This exercise is one of the few ‘additional’ elements of the DD. I have no issue with it remaining the same and see no safety concerns as there are two judges in the ring and an army of helpers should they be required.

Have never had a problem with out of sight stays nor do I see how it sends the wrong message. There are always 2 judges in the ring and plenty of spectators that if something would happen would jump in to help.

Leave the out of sight stay in the test, as is. I’ve never had a single incident of a problem. Dogs that fail the exercise usually do so for changing position, nothing else. And the dogs are not left unsupervised – judges are in the ring and able to respond if necessary.

A Draft test is the perfect time to test an out of sight stay. There are a large group of people there to ensure safety. The only person the dog is concerned about is their handler. If there are folks out there leaving their dog in the park and hiding without watching and without having someone else nearby watching, then they are being irresponsible. With the judges, gate steward and audience at a draft test, there is no safety issue for a dog hitched to a draft rig. While we are not encouraging people to leave their dog unsupervised, consider how nice it is to know that your dog and its rig will stay in one place while you get something out of the car or house. Or... that you can go around the corner of your house or barn to pick up something and know what when you come back in less than a minute, your dog and rig will be where you left them? Or... when you are in line for a parade and space is tight, that your dog will stay while you go to refill your water or even accept a trophy! In a crowd of people, that handler could be out of the dog’s sight. We are testing this exercise in the best manner we can under our Draft Test circumstances. Keep the out of sight stay!

I see no compelling reason to change our current regulations but would be interested to see what the AKC is going to do with this in the Open Obedience ring

Item #15 Limit Maximum Slope

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Most comments opposed these proposals. Some observed that trying to actually measure slopes could prove prohibitively complicated. Others pointed out that a hill suitable one day might not be suitable the next due to adverse weather or other unforeseen changes. Because it would be impossible to cover so many variables in the regulations, most respondents pointed out that the subjective issue of safety must be left to the judges to determine the day of the test.

The only positive respondent expressed mild interest “if there was a practical way to determine a slope angle and a way to agree on what is ‘too steep’ from a safety standpoint.” Thus the taskforce spent much time discussing how slope angles might be determined or quantified. First the TF explored quantitative methods to actually measure a slope. The TF agreed that at present, the accuracy required when measuring slopes, the

accuracy attainable, and the repeatability is unknown. Because two courses could share the same mathematical description despite one being much easier than the other, there was disagreement within the TF on the value of collecting quantitative information that could only be used qualitatively. So what about qualitative descriptions of hills as opposed to quantitative? Here it was agreed that at present we have no “practical way” of meaningfully describing or measuring hills that would give the same impression to every handler. This ruled out making any regulatory changes.

Given that this topic drew more proposals from handlers than any other, the TF went on to consider “what is ‘too steep’”. Some suggested that the problem might be more productively discussed as “what is unnecessarily steep.” So how steep should the slopes of a test be and how is that determined? Going back to the regulations, the only guidance we get is that the freight haul be a course “ideally including uphill and downhill slopes” (pg 33); that it “demonstrate the natural abilities...in a working capacity” (PURPOSE stated on inside jacket); and that it “demonstrate skills resulting from both inherent ability and training which are applicable to realistic work situations” (PURPOSE). The fact that slopes are only “ideal” (read desirable) and not required means that some tests might not have any hills at all. Even though we can’t measure or yet describe hills as discussed above, should they be required? Many Specialties are on fair grounds, etc. which lack hills. Having a “lower parameter guideline” as put forth in one proposal might preclude Draft Tests as some Specialty sites. Thus, the currently vague “ideally including... slopes” should remain as is. The TF then returned to the topic of “too steep.”

The second part of the comment, “if there was a... way to agree on what is ‘too steep’”, implies there is disagreement on what is “too steep.” Four out of the five proposals on this subject bear this out. Why such disagreement? All of our guidance comes from the PURPOSE on the inside cover. Thus at venues where judges have a range of slopes available to them, which slopes they select depends on how they reconcile “natural abilities”, “working capacity”, “inherent ability”, and “training” when applied to “realistic work situations.” For example this might be interpreted as “give me a hill that only a team with training can do.” This is only but one interpretation of a myriad of interpretations, yet it shows the subjectivity of the problem. How does one select a slope that is too great for an untrained team? Personal and judging experience are perhaps the only way to make this distinction. Thus, even if every judge had the same objective -- differentiate between trained and untrained teams -- the result would be as vastly different as the personal and judging experience of the judging corps. Now add to this that each judge has a different interpretation of “natural abilities”, etc. and it’s no wonder we see more proposals from handlers on this subject than any other. So what can be done?

One respondent suggested this might best be addressed through education. However, before the “education” process, there needs to be much discussion on how we reconcile “natural abilities”, etc. In other words, let’s first determine what we are trying to accomplish here then we can start the education process. While these steps are outside this RFC process, the process has been instrumental in identifying the steps needed to address these proposals.

RFC1 Proposal:

There are some freight hauls that are just plain BADLY thought out! There should be a maximum angle of rise to a ‘hill’ and distance (length) of the hill. Entrants should have the opportunity to challenge the freight haul layout at the time of the walk-through for safety modifications.

And

That the freight haul hills be given an upper and lower parameter guidelines as to the length and steepness (Apparently angle or grade is something that is easy to calculate nowadays with GPS... I don’t have it so I don’t know...) Site selection committee needs therefore to take into consideration the safety of the haul and reject sites that do not qualify.

And

Freight haul maximum angle. The judges should recognize certain hills as unsafe and change the course.

DWC Comment:

As for “challenging” the safety of the freight haul, the DWC is unaware of any judge unwilling to consider such comments. That doesn’t mean they are bound to make changes, but they will respectfully hear the arguments for a change and rely on their years of experience when considering them.

Safety of the freight haul ultimately rests with the judges, not the Test committee. Thus judges sometimes change the freight haul at the last minute to take into account flooding, mud, prickles/thistles, leaf litter, usage by other groups, etc. that were not present when the Test Committee submitted the course with the Test application.

GPS is an excellent tool for measuring the length of a freight haul, but not slope. Typical vertical accuracy is +/- 20’. Thus one could jump off a wall and see no change in GPS reading.

Related Proposal:

Freight haul maximum angle. The judges should recognize certain hills as unsafe and change the course.

Another Related Proposal:

On freight hauls where the terrain would prohibit the judges from simultaneously watching all the entrants on the haul, that a steward be assigned to each entrant. At yesterday’s test, after one judge went over a hill to watch the entrant ahead, another entrant took note of that, and jerked the leash/collar in a big ‘pop’ as the dog was stalled halfway on a hill. Unfortunately for the judges and the test, no one but me was there to see it as the other judge was way back at the end of the haul behind the last person. The judges gave that person a ‘pass’ but it clearly was NOT a pass performance.

DWC Comment:

A steward assists a judge at a judge’s direction and must be careful not to advise. If the judges miss something, it is missed regardless whether stewards or other entrants saw it. When determining the number of teams and how they position themselves, the judges attempt to have an eyeball on every entrant at all times. Occasionally this breaks down momentarily. Normally, that “moment” is not a pass or fail instant for the team. Typically a team in trouble has trouble throughout the freight haul. Thus, if one “moment” is missed, the next will be observed.

This may be the first reported case of a handler acting deceitfully and taking advantage of a momentary lapse in judging coverage. There is a spirit of encouraging participation and camaraderie at BMDCA Draft Tests. Thus, judges welcome participants into the ring, attempt to put them at ease, assist them without penalty when they get lost, etc. How could judges maintain that supportive spirit if they had to worry about handlers doing things behind their back such as surreptitiously losing parts of their load along the freight haul, etc.? Thus, it’s no surprise that judges are not on guard for deceitful behavior. The DWC suggests it is preferable for a handful of individuals to deceitfully earn titles than crush the spirit that makes BMDCA Draft unique so that those individuals may be caught.

RFC1 Comments:

Slope measurement - not realistic as natural terrain has too many variables. This is a judges' education issue.

I believe this to be a subjective issue. I can only speak for myself in how I view a freight haul. I have safety

first in mind and therefore with the knowledge of the classes entered in the test will see it differently depending on that entry. Available terrain is also at issue as is control and conditioning.

Several years past I judged a two day test. The first day had no DD or BDD entries so the freight haul utilized a steep hill as well as a rough pasture. Those NDD teams that had never trained on this type of terrain found it to be ‘an illegal’ haul. There was great consternation among entrants but as I recall we only lost one team to equipment failure -contact with the dog /cart as well as one handler who hit a fence that was ten feet off course. There was no way that we would have considered this same freight haul had there been any DD entrants but with only 20 pounds to pull it really was a great exercise in handler focus. Of course a toy poodle would not have passed.

I see no reason to change the current set up although I can certainly build a case for the two test judges being responsible for setting the freight haul. It will invariably be more difficult than the test committee’s and it will NOT be used prior to the test as a training ground. Having said this I know that I will ALWAYS change a freight haul that does NOT contain a slope or some semblance of a hill (as long as one exists).

I will always change a freight haul course if I don’t feel it is safe for dogs and/or handlers. Don’t think I need to have slopes, etc, probably wouldn’t understand it! I would rather error on the side of safety.

Leave the freight hauls alone. It would be virtually impossible to dictate requirements, and would place a huge burden on hosts clubs who already face significant challenges in finding parks that will allow for draft tests. This should be a judging decision.

Maximum slope angles -- this would be interesting to determine what would be a “maximum” safe angle. I agree that some judges are more prone than others to choose particularly steep hills, and I have seen a few participants withdraw because of what they thought was an unsafe hill on a freight haul. IF there was a practical way to determine a slope angle and a way to agree on what is “too steep” from a safety standpoint – this would be of some interest to me.

I think we are all aware that entrants ask about the hills at any particular draft test site. If they have been to a site and deem the hill too steep they do not return to that site. Entrants talk about sites. Those who live nearby often practice at the site. We can’t stop that. A club that uses a site with a steep hill that the judges accept as safe year after year will either find that the entrants will avoid this test and the numbers will drop or the entrants will train for this type of terrain.

We must trust each other as judges to carefully consider the freight hauls we are offered at tests and to work to educate the club members who select hauls that we see as unsafe. And.. yes, conditions can change. A hill that is wonderful in one season may be slippery in another season or even on a different day. That great hill at the spring test could be filled with walnuts or acorns at the fall test. The key is on site observation and evaluation of the haul by the judges officiating at the test.

Shades of the spring scale. I do not support this RFC and agree with the DWC position.

Item #16 Freight Haul Reduced Weight

RFC Taskforce discussion:

There appears to be some confusion on the definition of the “no training in the ring” clause. This comes from the AKC Obd Regs, Ch2, Sec 27: *the judge will not permit any handler to use excessive commands, to move toward the dog to correct it or to practice any exercise in the ring at any time.* Doing an exercise as stated in the regulations is not practicing that exercise – it’s conducting that exercise. Therefore, whether the team has already failed or not, participating in an exercise is not “training in the ring.” Repeating an exercise or altering it

constitutes practice in the ring and is therefore “training in the ring.” Thus the reason one has “never seen a dog who has already lost more than 30 points before the group stays not be allowed in the ring for the group exercises” is that doing an exercise as written is not training in the ring. Similarly, entering a dog “not ring ready, merely to give a young dog experience” is not training in the ring. As this applies to Draft, conducting the freight haul with reduced weight is an alteration similar to reducing a jump height in Obedience and therefore constitutes “training in the ring.” The question then is whether this instance of training in the ring should be allowed.

One comment is that a “handler has paid his entrance fee, so should be allowed to continue the test.” There is no suggestion to the contrary. However, paying an entry fee does not entitle a handler to ask for changes in the routines (e.g. wider narrows, shorter freight haul, etc.), nor, as the regs currently stand, may a judge “add, delete, or change any requirements of the Draft Tests.”

Perhaps the principal reason advanced for allowing reduced-weight freight hauls is to “encourage them [handlers] to participate.” Some even view this as an “either-or” situation: “I’d rather see the participation than lose the handlers.” However, this situation is no longer the case. The proposals for reduced-weight freight hauls emerged well before the change that allowed any titled team to enter Novice. Prior to this change in 2007, teams with an NDD had no choice but to A) enter Open, and B) continue showing in Open even as the team aged and its pulling ability diminished. Now teams may continue showing in Novice if they are not ready to pull Open weights or no longer able to do so. If they have any doubt about being ready for Open, they can postpone the decision to the last minute by entering Novice with a weight certificate and move-up the morning of the test. Given that right up to the morning of the test, handlers may select the class that best suits their team’s physical conditioning, there is no longer any need to change the regulations to allow reduced-weight freight hauls. This assertion appears empirically supported: when someone asked on the judges’ ‘L whether any judges encountered a request for a reduced-weight freight haul in 2009, there were no responses.

RFC1 Proposal:

Entrants should be able to withdraw graciously at any point for any reason and/or not be discouraged from participating in the freight haul (without weight) if they so chose – of course, will not qualify

And

Freight haul without weight. No. That's training in the ring, so to speak, and shouldn't be allowed.

DWC Comment:

When this topic was discussed previously a proposal was put forth that handlers need not notify/ask judges about reduced weight. When the judge checks the rigs entering the ring for the group exercises as per the current regulations, they simply note whether the rig has the full weight. If not, the team is failed for the exercise but allowed to fully participate. However, some argue that this is tantamount to training in the ring. The question is whether the program benefits more from encouraged participation (we welcome you on the freight haul even if you can’t pull full weight) or maintaining respect/integrity for the regulations and respect for other dogs that are ready to pull the full weight but were displaced by a dog that is not. If you are in favor of the proposal, in addition to outlining how it improves the Draft program, please also state whether reduced-weight-teams should go at the end where they cannot interfere with full-weight-teams. Should these teams even be judged? Why/why not?

RFC1 Comments:

Fundamentally I am opposed to allowing teams to be part of a freight haul if they pull lower weight. If teams are to be allowed to participate with a lower weight they should be required to start and remain at the end of the line where they cannot in any way interfere with a team pulling full weight. The judges should not be responsible for judging or observing any team pulling reduced weight.

A handler should be allowed to load less than full weight for the freight haul if, and ONLY if, the team has already failed the maneuver part of the test. The judge must be notified of that decision. I don't consider that "training". Handlers (obedience, agility, conformation, etc.) often enter dogs that they know are not ring ready, merely to give a young dog experience. Isn't that considered training as well? The handler has paid his entrance fee, so should be allowed to continue the test. I've encouraged handlers who have already failed the test to complete the freight haul, giving both the handler and the dog the experience. I'd much prefer they did the exercise with the full weight, but it wouldn't alter my decision if they chose not to do so.

I have been adamant in the past about entrants pulling simply because they have already failed. I even went so far as to write this is unsportsmanlike or shows poor sportsmanship. I have since mellowed. I have to say that I still would like the team to continue even if they have failed but I can now understand if an entrant who has already failed doesn't want to continue. This is especially true in the Open class.

My personal view is that this would allow me the opportunity to see how my dog would do so I would continue. Every time you can effectively 'train' in test conditions you should take advantage of it. I use the word train here because you have already failed and any point after that failure the test becomes a training exercise for me.

I really do prefer to have the teams on the freight haul pulling the proper weight for their class. Don't think it tells you anything to continue with less or no weight.

I am therefore a proponent of 16.1 [Reduced Weight] but really like the implications of 16.2 [Preferred Class]

I don't have a problem with someone asking to continue at reduced weight. There could be a variety of reasons why the dog could go on the freight haul but can't pull full weight. I would like to think everyone is ready when they enter a test, but we know they're not. I would encourage them to participate, put them at the end where they can't interfere (perhaps no passing allowed) and I also wouldn't mind judging them but of course failing them. I would feel terrible insisting they participate at full weight and then having something bad happen to a dog.

I think failed Open teams that wish to participate on the freight haul without the full weight should be allowed to do so. I like the proposal articulated in the first few lines of the comment above, as this would allow it. I'd rather see the participation than lose the handlers. Yes, its training in the ring, but that occurs in most performance events once a failing performance happens. If we truly want to avoid the whole "training in the ring" issue than all failing dogs should be excused as soon as they fail, which would certainly speed up our tests!

Freight haul with reduced weight -- I see many reasons to allow participants to go on the freight haul with reduced weight -- obviously it's a failure, but it allows a positive experience for the dog and handler, shows support for the sport - AND gives the passing dogs the challenge of being on a freight haul with multiple teams, since one of the things we are testing is the team's ability to work around other teams. I don't see any reason to put these teams at the end unless it is the judge's choice -- But if Team A is passing -- shouldn't Team A have to demonstrate control around other teams REGARDLESS of how much weight those teams are pulling? IF this is a GROUP exercise, shouldn't we encourage participation in the group? If you consider it training in the ring, then anything done by any team after they flunk could be considered "training" since at that point they no longer have the ability to pass. We don't prevent people from using the leash - they fail, but they still get to use the leash if they choose to. Isn't that "training"? Draft tests are still few and far between and this might be the only chance for some of these teams to practice around other dogs. Let's not tell them they can't participate just because the dogs for some reason may not be able to pull the full weight that day. They might not have another chance and we should give them the opportunity knowing it will improve their future participation in the sport.

Teams that enter any BMDCA draft test are essentially saying they are at a competency level commensurate

with their entry class and are prepared to be judged at that level. Why should we allow self withdrawal for “any” reason? Once entries are received and accepted, tests are structured in accordance with our regulations to expedite flow and demonstrate draft competency within a span of control for the judging team. Allowing self defined withdrawals fractures this structure and is poor sportsmanship. Certainly, withdrawals for things like safety issues and equipment failures should be within the scope of a judge’s decision but, surrendering the test flow and structure to subjective reasonings beyond those made by the judging team is unsatisfactory. If we begin allowing withdrawals for simplistic reasons we potentially erode the rest of our regulations by setting precedent allowing regulation change for other subjective reasons. We should not allow regulations assessing work capacity to be unduly influenced by pop culture “concerns”. We are assessing WORKING dogs here! I continually hear our cadre members saying we have the premier draft test regulations and entrants and BMDCA members saying we need to make our tests easier. Well, I disagree on both accounts. If you get out in the world and really look at true working dogs in real life situations, one quickly realizes we do not have a test that adequately tests real work capacity. The reality of the situation is Berners are pampered to a degree we now assess for mild work capacities. It’s discouraging to see 22 pages of proposed regulation change, of which three quarters of the proposals diminish in one form or another. Why on earth do we need a “preferred” class or “Capability” award other than offering titles for title sake and for the sake of title hunters? IMO, this whole subject is a detraction from the draft test intent and focus. If teams enter a BMDCA draft test they should be prepared to complete that test to its end. If we come to a point we wish to allow self defined withdrawals, I think they should be structured with penalty. Anyone, choosing to withdraw prematurely from a BMDCA draft test, and/or choosing to compete with reduced weights will be subject to forfeiture to enter another BMDCA draft test for a period of 1 year. If they’ re not prepared to be in a test, so be it.....they can come back when they are prepared to present us a working team.

I have been searching our regs for where it specifically mentions training in the ring. I don’t find it. All I find is section F on page 19 that talks about training on the grounds, but allows dogs to pull any items from vehicles to competition area. If we falling back to AKC regs, then my comment is that I have never seen a dog who has already lost more than 30 points before the group stays not be allowed in the ring for the group exercises. If the AKC does not call that training in the ring, then why do we have an issue with it? If a dog has already failed the maneuvering course, we allow them to do the group exercises; is that training in the ring? Entrants have paid their entry fee to be judged and they deserve that. If they elect to carry reduced weight on the haul, I see nothing wrong with that. Would I encourage them to carry full weight? Of course, but there are circumstances that I understand the handler’s reasoning. I do not believe we should try to list all the acceptable reasons. Judges can make that determination themselves.

One last thought. We need to encourage people to enter tests. Many areas do not have Draft Matches for a team to get ring experience. Handlers have paid an entry fee to get that experience (Many freely admit that ! They do not expect to pass the first time!). If we want to keep the numbers of entries up, we need to allow teams to complete the test.

I support this change. It keeps teams involved the event and yes, they should be at the end of the freight haul. The whole “training in the ring” concern is overstated & outdated both in our sport and in AKC events. People find ways to train on the show grounds all the time. I would rather have this option available than the teams that waste time at the event. They make up their mind what to do the event moves along.

Item#16.2 Freight Haul Preferred Class

RFC Taskforce discussion:

One comment for the creation of preferred class(es) is that “this could help with more entries.” For the first time ever, we saw multiple clubs hosting full tests this year. Moreover, because we don’t know how much further entry numbers will increase due to the advanced titles, we do not want to spark new demand before host clubs can catch up. Nonetheless, there may be a fair number of handlers who share the position:

I'm not crazy about going back in with my dog at the novice level, it's almost too easy. I'd much rather compete at the Open level with ½ of the dog's weight required at the freight haul. That would keep me entering tests.

Thus, we agree with the comment, "the idea may have merit but I would like to see the new titles have more time to develop and perhaps revisit this RFC [preferred classes] in a few years."

RFC1 Proposal:

Preferred Classes: I would like to see us add a "Preferred Open" and "Preferred Open Brace" class, as in AKC Agility in which the jump height is reduced, in the handlers of older dogs (7 and over) may opt to reduce the amount of weight pulled in the Open and Open Brace classes. The Preferred Open and Preferred Open Brace classes would take place with the Open and Open Brace classes so that there would be no need for extra Group exercises.

I would suggest that we do it like the Swissies (and the Am Staffs upcoming) and allow the handlers to select the weight load from a range of weights based on the needs of their dogs and the type of rig used: each kind of rig: 5-30 lb for travois, 15-50 for sled or toboggan, and 25-100 for wheeled apparatus.

And

I would also recommend that a Preferred Draft Dog Title be created that has all the same requirements as the regular Draft Dog Title with the exception of the weight required for the freight haul. Currently many people stop competing because of the open weight requirement.

DWC Comment:

Providing a venue for veteran teams not capable of pulling Open weight was the principal reason for allowing DD teams to show in Novice.

RFC1 Comments:

No need. Dogs may now continue to participate at the Novice level for as long as they wish. And there is certainly no need for a preferred Novice as 20 pounds is almost inconsequential to a BMD. Allowing a range of weights for freight hauls will guarantee that 99% of teams pull the minimum possible and 25 pounds for an Open dog in no way tests for the conditioning required of a true working draft dog.

I would like more information from this proposer.

I am intrigued about this as a possibility. I do not see the DWC comment as answering anything but a capability issue. The handler may NOT want to reenter novice because he hates using the leash and yet would welcome the added skill set required for the open class WITHOUT having to pull the dog's weight. I believe there to be an easy way to fit this flexibility into the draft tests. There is also the possibility of adding a preferred class to Novice whereby an entrant could carry much less (but still some) weight.

Again the logic here would be to support something new for draft. This could help with more entries. If you allowed entrants to be flexible with their entry class then an open team may opt to pull less weight if the heat was excessive or the terrain too extreme for the cart. They could be allowed to go down to the preferred class the morning of the test prior to equipment check... or may even decide just before they entered the ring for their haul. Might solve the training issue as well.

Agree with DWC – if we continue to add more classes we are going to have more freight hauls. We will soon be down to judging 12 dogs a day because of all the separate freight hauls!

I like the idea of a preferred class, but would like to see it defined as only a reduced weight class, not limited to veterans, and available only to dogs that have already earned the DD/BDD. Otherwise, we have to decide if it qualifies for BMDCA awards and would it require a novice title to enter. I'm not crazy about going back in with my dog at the novice level, it's almost too easy. I'd much rather compete at the Open level with ½ of the dog's weight required at the freight haul. That would keep me entering tests.

Exactly ! And thus this whole preferred class conversation is a moot point ! Let's move on !

I think some of the new titles address this issue better than the addition of a preferred class. The idea may have merit but I would like to see the new titles have more time to develop and perhaps revisit this RFC in a few years.

Item #17 Weight Certificates

RFC Taskforce discussion:

DWC agrees with your comments for no change.

RFC1 Proposal:

At the open level, either allow a veterinary certificate of weight or have a scale at the draft test to determine weight classes (I realize that that may be difficult to supply for very large breeds) - and/or allow participants to bring the weight certificate with them to the test as opposed to supplying the weight certification at the time of entry (good for move ups)

And

Weight certificate for move-ups brought to site. Dog must have earned title after entry closing, however. That should be fine, but open dogs must enter with certificate for entry to be valid.

DWC Comment:

Weighing dogs during the Equipment Check requires specialized equipment – a bathroom scale with a steward picking up 130lbs BMD is unfeasible. Not all clubs have access to such equipment.

RFC1 Comments:

Far better to have the required info of the dog's weight submitted with the entry for all dogs. A consistent standard for all dogs is far easier to administer. With tests filling more and more, a forgotten cert the day of a test could mean another dog which did not make the draw missed the opportunity to participate.

I don't see an issue with leaving things the way they are. A team planning on entering a two day test and passing on the first day will be training for open and therefore will have to know what weight they will be carrying. The best place to get that weight is on equipment at the vet's office.

Agree with DWC

I do not support either of these changes. The regs as they stand are clear – I read this as accommodating handlers' failure to meet clearly articulated deadlines. This also puts an additional burden on the secretary, which is unnecessary. Paperwork should be submitted at entry, period. It's just not that hard to do. And the notion of a scale for weighing at the test is simply not feasible.

Besides the scale being quite expensive and very touchy unless you have a level surface, they should be recalibrated when they have been moved. This all makes it just not feasible.

The last sentence does not agree with the concept of the first sentence. That is, unless the author does not consider a move up an open dog. It is not that difficult and it does not require a lot of advance planning to send a weight certificate with the entry for a second draft test. In the last RFC we made the exhibitors responsible for providing their own freight haul weight. If they can do that, they can send the weight certificate with the entry.

I do not support this RFC.

Item #18 Blind and Disabled Dogs

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Many comments pointed out the direct and indirect PR issues these proposals could create. Currently the potential benefits do not clearly outweigh the potential harm(s), as made clear in some of the comments.

RFC1 Proposal:

Allow blind dogs and or any other ‘handicapped’ dog that can compete safely in the competitions – this is NOT an AKC event!

And

CHAPTER 3

Section 1 B 3: Deaf, Blind, and Disabled Dogs: Deaf, partially deaf dogs, blind, partially blind, and otherwise disabled dogs may enter BMDCA Draft Tests. No exceptions or easing of rules may be made to accommodate these dogs.

And

I do not want to see any more handicapped dogs competing including blind dogs - I'm sure there are very conscientious owners out there who put their dog first, competing second, but I know for a fact that's not always the case. And where does it end? If you let blind dogs compete, why not three legged dogs or dogs missing a foot, etc. There will be no end to it. I'm sure we would be missing out on a great dog or two but I don't trust a majority of the owners. We have too many people who don't know how to compete with healthy non handicapped dogs.

DWC Comment:

The DWC extensively researched this possibility in consideration for the 2007 regulation changes. As cited at the time, we defer to AKC experience where applicable to Draft Tests. The AKC research indicated that blind dogs are more likely to bite when startled such as during a Stand for Examination or in our case Harness & Hitch examination. This then represents a liability issue for host clubs and BMDCA. If more recent studies have indicated otherwise, the DWC would appreciate receiving any contact information for further examination.

AKC prohibits showing disabled dogs to protect the image of competition. The concern is that animal rights activists or others might see a disabled dog hitched to cart and immediately raise the cry of cruelty. We know there is no way a dog is going to be willingly and cooperatively hitched without much love, attention, and training. However, the public does not see this aspect of the team -- all they see is an “injured” animal being forced to pull a cart. This could present a serious public relations problem for clubs that host their events in parks, etc.

RFC1 Comments:

We cannot risk the adverse PR of a dog perceived to be required to work when handicapped.

I watched with interest a blind dog compete in a CKC draft test. There was a great sense of teamwork and no issues until the behind the cart portion of the test. The dog failed this portion.

Leave the regs the way they are. There are too many do gooders out there (PETA) that may see this as misuse. May have that one day for our open class as well.

I hope we do not allow this. It isn't just the public relations problems, what about the dogs? There are people who will "train" their disabled dogs and we have no way of knowing if the dog may be in pain or not. Please no blind or disabled dogs.

I think allowing blind dogs is not as big a problem as we are making it out to be – realistically, how much is this going to happen? I doubt we'll see more than a handful, if that, every 10 years or so – the numbers aren't there to suggest that this is a major issue. I think we should allow blind dogs to enter. If someone really wants to do the work and has a dog that is capable of it, I don't think the program or anyone else is harmed in doing so.

Blind dogs - I agree that blind dogs could pull a draft rig with their "seeing eye human" there to give directions. However, just as not all dogs are suited to being guide dogs for the blind, not all owners of blind dogs make good trainers or "guide humans". Yes, we can observe the team at the draft test and stop them if we see a safety issue. But these teams are going to be practicing at home and out in public. We will not be there to ensure safety and safe training methods.

Handicapped dogs - I know about the law regarding handicapped people, but this does not translate to dogs. I agree that we do not want to draw the attention of the animal rights people. I have heard comments as my dogs and I have walked in parks and on city streets. Some folks say, "look at the poor dog pulling that wagon." I have heard "That is just cruel." as well. And my dogs were cheerfully moving along, tails happy and having a great time!!!

I think we have allowed deaf dogs in to our tests and that is the limit of what we can do.

I agree with the DWC on this RFC. It gets back to the public's impression that a spectator, with no prior knowledge of the event, would think. If I see a dog with a pronounced limp I am going to excuse that dog even if the handler states that "he always walks that way"

Blind draft dogs ? Sorry, I can't support this RFC.

Item #19 Eliminate Draft Title requirement for Versatility

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments received.

RFC1 Proposal:

Eliminate the BMDCA requirement for versatility or working dog awards that the dog **MUST** have a draft title. This is blatantly UNFAIR and BIASED against a dog that can achieve multiple working titles, but for whatever reason the owner or dog does not want to or cannot compete in draft competitions. When the draft program was in its infancy, it might have made sense, but now it does not. It also puts unfair emphasis on draft above the other performance activities. Drafting in and of itself does NOT define the breed, although it certainly was historically ONE skill of some Swiss farm dogs!

And

Changing the versatility award and working award to not include draft is plain [senseless]. Having a third award that encompasses Rally Draft and Rally Excellent, however, isn't. :)

DWC Comment:

This is not within the purview of the Draft Test Regulations.

RFC1 Comments:

Item #20 No change to rig requirements

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments received.

RFC1 Proposal:

Do not regulate the type of equipment to be used for carting events. The rules and regulations on this are just fine as they stand.

DWC Comment:

No changes in this area are being considered at this time.

RFC1 Comments:

Item #21 Change Freight Weights

RFC Taskforce discussion:

The majority of comments oppose this proposal and question how the proposal would benefit the program. As pointed out in the comments, the potential benefits of this proposal are unclear.

RFC1 Proposal:

I would like to see a change in the weight requirements for the Open Draft...say maybe to 3/4 of the dog's weight rounded down to the nearest 10th which then would allow for a more advanced level (DDX) to have reasonable weights of either the dogs' weight or 25% more than the dogs weight rounded down the nearest 10th. We are not competing in weight pulls and the tests should not have the appearance that we are. If I wanted a weight pulling dog, I would have another breed. Actually, I prefer hauling 20/25 pounds for one mile to the pull your own weight for 1/2 mile and the one mile haul has an optional stop for water/rest if needed.

RFC1 Comments:

Our Open draft weights do not even come close to those required for weight pulls which are typically 800 or more pounds pulled for 15 feet. Our current Open Draft weights also do not equal the higher weights documented for BMDs historically in Switzerland. They are a realistic compromise to test for the conditioning required for a working farm dog.

No need to change the current structure other than as noted in 16.2 with the addition of a new class.

I would like to see the weight limit dropped as well. I don't think we need to have them pull their weight, what's the point?

A healthy, well conditioned dog should have no trouble pulling its weight. I see no need to change this requirement. I think we tend to underestimate our dogs' abilities. However, for those that wish to continue

competing after earning all the initial titles, this is where I'd like to see the Preferred option rather than changing the fundamental weight requirement we currently have.

Doubling the length of the freight haul would add more time to the test. Some tests are hard pressed to finish before dark when they have a full test. As for the weight, people can do the Novice test with 20 pounds and get a draft title. If they want the open title, they must follow the rules. Let's not reduce our current classes to make room for another class and title! If the DDX comes to pass, it should do so on its own, not by taking over part of the current Open exercises.

Items 21 & 22: I do not support either of these RFC's. Don't we own weight pulling dogs?.

Item #22 Wait vs. Stay in Groups Exercises

RFC Taskforce discussion:

One comment in favor doesn't have a "strong feeling on this." However, those comments opposed strongly point out why they are against it. Another comment wants to see the stay continued until the handler returns to the dog, but admits this "might be a little harder to judge consistently." This problem is reiterated in a comment which points out why judging a **wait** in a Group Exercise "would be difficult." A third comment is "happy" "as long as my cart and dog are where I left it." However, a counter to this points out why a **stay** may be necessary for the team's safety when placing a heavy load in a hitched cart. Thus, while this may be "informal obedience", a reliable **stay** is a component of practical Draft in terms of facilitating the loading of a cart and ensuring team safety. Thus, each potential benefit is refuted by one or more counter comments.

RFC1 Proposal:

It would be ok for the dog to change position on the stay (like lie down on a sit) as long as the dog and cart stayed in the exact same place.

DWC Comment:

Given that teams may choose the position in which they leave their dogs this seems an unnecessary change from the standard we have used for 17 years. On the other hand, the stay is the key component, not the position.

RFC1 Comments:

A dog remaining in place, changing its position from a sit to a down or stand, isn't violating the command of the handler to stay where the handler left it. As long as my cart and dog are where I left it I'm happy.

This idea has some merit BUT only on the return to heel position. It seems harsh to fail a team that has performed the stay until such time as the handler returns and then changes position (sit to stand or down to sit). As this is 'informal obedience' and the handler has returned to the heel position but the judge has yet to call exercise finished because of a tardy return on the part of one handler would it not be possible to change the failing performance to

'dog changes position e.g. from a down to a sit or stand BEFORE HANDLER RETURNS TO THE DOG'S SIDE.'

I know this might be a little harder to judge consistently but with a little judges guideline would be worth considering.

I don't have a strong feeling on this but wouldn't have a problem with it as long as the dogs don't move.

I do not support this. A stay is not a difficult exercise, and again, we are giving a TITLE, not a leg. Changing position cheapens the whole thing. We allow a change of position in other exercises, but the principle of this

exercise is to STAY, and that means a change of position is not acceptable. Some of the suggestions here would water down our program so much that the titles would have little value.

I prefer the stay on the group exercises. We have made the test easier by moving to waits everywhere else, so I have no issue with leaving this as a stay. Another consideration is the judging of this exercise. With two judges and 6 possible teams in the ring, the judges may chose to each watch 3 teams. Even then, to see the movement of the dog and to be in position to tell if the dog AND CART stayed in the EXACT same place, would be difficult. In the maneuvering portion of the test, you have two judges watching ONE dog and rig. It is much easier to see movement.

Items 21 & 22: I do not support either of these RFC's. Don't we own weight pulling dogs?.

This is the only place in our tests where we evaluate a hitched team's ability to stay. Staying in the position commanded can be both necessary and the only way to ensure the team's safety. For example, we frequently load the cart with the team already hitched. With a two-wheeled cart, the handler may want the team in a down position with the end of the shafts resting on the ground so that when a heavy load is put in the cart, the shafts take the weight until the load is secured. Certainly we don't want the team shifting the load before it can be secured. This is just practical Draft: stay put until it is safe to move out!

Item #23 Reduce Test Application Time

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Agreed, kudos's to Peggy for keeping the Draft Calendar current. It was especially difficult when the BMDCA website failed and we lost the ability to make a change without affecting or re-loading the information for every other test. Thanks, Peggy. Meanwhile, if a park does not "book events outside of a certain time frame", we'd rather have clubs waiting on the park while they prepare for the test than, human nature being what it is, procrastinating until the park's application window opens.

Proposals RFC1:

CHAPTER 1

Section 1 C -- Application to hold draft test reduced to minimum of four months. Approval or rejection by DWC within 15 days.

DWC Comment:

From an administrative perspective, is it better to have a six month requirement and grant the occasional last minute requests "our application is due tomorrow but we won't get definitive permission from the park for another two weeks", etc. or have a rigid four month policy with no exceptions and no extension requests granted? Also, given that Alpenhorn is published every other month, it's possible that as proposed, between approval and Test, only one issue is available in which to announce the Test. Is this sufficient? Are there other ramifications the DWC has overlooked?

RFC1 Comments:

Leave it at six months with 'last minute requests'

I don't think the shortened time period would have an adverse effect. The advertising of tests in the Alpenhorn is largely moot, as I don't know anyone who depends on that venue for their primary notification – not in this day and age of computerized communication. Better that we focus time and attention on keeping the Draft Calendar up to date online – that is a primary resource and Peggy has done a great job with it. The four months' would be beneficial because many public sites/parks do not book events outside of a certain time frame. My

club has traditionally put in our test application well before we get site approval. We just hope for the best, and figure we can modify later if necessary.

Some clubs have a core group of people who do the Draft Test each year, but many clubs get new members on the committee and those folks often have little guidance. They NEED the 6 months to get things done. Submitting the application is only a part of the process.

I would prefer the 6 months with a bit of wiggle than a rigid 4 month.
I see no pressing reason to approve this RFC.

Item #27 Buffer Zone

RFC Taskforce discussion:

As pointed out, this would create a distraction for judges as they would be responsible for both verifying the establishment of an exclusion zone and maintaining it. Others commented on the financial burden (additional rope and stakes) this would force on clubs. Since clubs already have the option of creating an exclusion zone or increasing ring size, if a club thought the additional expense and setup time were warranted, they would have made this investment already. We are unaware of any clubs that think this additional expense and effort is warranted. Alternatively, if a club wanted to create an “exclusion” area, they could simply add 20’ to the ring dimensions and conduct all exercises at least 10’ away from the rope. This would accomplish the same thing without any changes to the regulations and accomplish it at minimal added expense. Bottom line: clubs serve their membership and know their membership needs best. In the case of an exclusion zone, this is already permitted in the regulations and if clubs thought it better served their membership, they’d already be doing it.

RFC1 Proposal:

CHAPTER 4

Section 2 A: All spectators and dogs (excepting Stewards, Judges, Apprentice Judges, and Entrant testing in the ring) must keep back of the ring a minimum of ten feet (or further as directed by the Draft Test Committee) while dogs are working in the ring.

RFC1 Comments:

In the real world, while working, the team may encounter any number of unexpected distractions. The test provides for an audio and visual distraction, but I feel that the entire test environment within the ring is in fact a distraction, further complicated by whatever is going on outside the ring. While it is certainly understandable that some people would like to minimize distractions, the entire test judges the teamwork between handler and dog, and one key to this is the ability of the handler to get, keep, and restore the dog’s attention when necessary. For this reason, I am not in favor of adding a buffer zone around the ring.

On a practical level, the enforcement of such a buffer zone by the judges would require them to pay attention to the area outside the ring (rather than inside the ring) so that no one would encroach within this zone. Alternatively, to ensure consistency, a physical barrier would be required to denote the buffer zone, likely in the form of an additional ring rope. Set up and take down time of the single ring rope is not insignificant, and requiring a second would add expense in materials to the host club and additional set-up and tear down time as well.

Totally unnecessary

Trying to read between the lines here is a little difficult. Perhaps a justification would help here so if possible contact the proposer and clarify the reasoning behind the necessity of this proposal.

There have been times when there is some level of double handling going on from outside the ring. There are times when handlers set up near the ring and perhaps there are times when spectators are near the ring boundaries but each of these can certainly be handled without the necessity of creating a no man or dogs land around the ring. There is a re-judging element allowed for in the regs so it's a judges call anyway.

The only time I think dogs should be kept away is if they are going to impede the freight haul. The dogs in the ring should be able to compete with people sitting by the ring.

I do not support this proposed change. Dogs should be able to work just fine in the presence of other dogs (see every other performance event). I would hope that judges would be cognizant of set ups that are too close, and owners would be considerate. I don't think it needs to be a regulation.

So clubs would be putting up double ring ropes/gates? Our dogs should be able to work with distractions outside the ring. If the clubs need some "teeth" in the regs to enforce a reasonable distance for people and dogs to be from the ring, then make a MUCH more general regulation. Something more on the order of: "All spectators and dogs (excepting Stewards, Judges, Apprentice Judges, and Entrant testing in the ring) must keep back of the ring a reasonable distance for the activity they are engaged in(as determined by the Draft Test Committee) while dogs are working in the ring."

People sitting quietly watching the test can be 3-4 feet from the ring ropes. Those with unruly dogs should be farther away. The Draft Test Committees are fully capable of enforcing this – and if they are not noticing, the judges can point out anything that they consider an issue and the Committee can deal with it.

I do not support this RFC. Stewards under Judges direction should be able to maintain a safe ring environment. If a DTC chooses they may of course double fence their ring.

Item #28 Equipment Failure

RFC Taskforce discussion:

While the concept sounds simple enough, every comment pointed out how the concept is fraught with problems from fairness to other teams that would have to wait, to drawing a line on how many spare parts and tools one could carry. Additionally, comments point out that regs already adequately address something falling off the rig, whether it be a decoration, part of the cart, or part of the load.

RFC1 Proposal:

Allow one two-minute opportunity per team to repair an "equipment failure" (which would include something falling off of the cart or dog(s)).

RFC1 Comments:

Given that the average freight haul lasts about 10 minutes I do not think it a hardship to expect a handler to have their equipment in proper working order for that length of time. Allowing a two minute delay would also handicap the other teams which would be obligated to wait during the repair.

While I agree with the concept of equipment failure I don't see it as applying to something falling off the cart – if that is a decoration then we are covered if that is the load or part of the load we are also covered.

At present there is little guidance in our regs regarding 'equipment failure' - only as part of Section 6 Judging guidelines Item C 'any team whose equipment is inadequate or faulty' which is part of excusing a dog.

If we were to move forward then we would require a section defining 'equipment failure' and what could be done and in what time frame.

If we were to leave it as is then it's a judging decision based on the environment during the test as well as the judges' definition of inadequate and or faulty.

This opens up a much bigger discussion if allowed. Can teams now carry tools and spare parts? Can this equipment be considered part of the freight weight? And why time it? Repairing a lose screw can happen fast, swapping out a broken axle would take longer, blowing up a tire depends entirely on the efficiency of the pump. Too many variables in this to make it feasible.

I would love to give a break to people who have a breakdown, but... I see this opening a while can of worms... Does this mean that people can take something off of someone else's rig to use to repair theirs? Part 14 of section C on page 8 says the rigs must stay in the designated areas unless being used for the test. I don't think they should be a "spare parts depot". Does this mean that people will have spare parts ring side? Will they expect the 2 minutes to not include the time it takes them to get to their vehicle? It has been my experience that the breakdowns fall into two categories: 1) no way they can be fixed in 2 minutes and 2) faulty equipment. I do not want to see this in our regulations.

Pulling into the pits and a NASCAR crew jumps over the wall to work on the cart. Sorry, it's getting late. A judge would have to stay with this team and time the repairs. Sorry, I can't support this RFC.

Item #29 Allow Fouling Freight Haul

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments received in favor of proposal. Problems cited with proposed change are excessive marking (out of control behavior) inconsistently handled; public perception of the sport (public accepts horses defecating in public, but not dogs); equity to other teams that would have to wait while "deposit" cleaned up; domino effect.

RFC1 Proposal:

I would like this to revert to the original draft regulations which did not require a flunk for a dog fouling the freight haul.

RFC1 Comments:

I was originally totally opposed to the change which made fouling a failure given that a dog working any length of time in harness might realistically need to relieve itself. However, judges were unwilling to fail a dog for out of control marking. Now I find myself reasoning just as in (28) above - this is only 10 minutes we are talking about and dogs should be adequately exercised before starting. So I say stay with the current regs - no fouling allowed.

No

I don't think they should foul the freight haul. It is only a half mile, why can't they exercise their dogs beforehand? Is it fair while we wait for someone to clean up after their dog?

I disagree. Fouling is not permitted in any performance event, and should not be permitted in ours. Once one dog fouls an area - whether in the ring or on the freight haul, it affects all the other teams. We've all seen the domino effect. Additionally, if a dog defecates, can we fail a handler who doesn't clean it up or forgets the bag? And while the dog is waiting on the handler to clean it up, do we judge it as a wait or a stay? And why should the other teams be so inconvenienced?

I say no to this. Dogs out in public working alone or in a parade make a much better impression if they are not leaving "deposits". Training dogs to not eliminate while harnessed and hitched is just good manners. No one wants to follow the horses in a parade. We certainly don't want our Draft Dogs put into the same category!

While I never supported the original change so much time has passed. If the dog defecates on the freight haul course should the handler halt the team and scoop the poop?

Does it hinder the progress of the team in back of the dog that is fouling? I go back and forth on this but at this at this point I don't think we need to go back to the original regulations. At some point when we have less on our plate it may be worth checking the data as to how many dogs have failed just for fouling

Item #30 Bitches in Season

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Many commented on the distraction a bitch in season represents for intact males – just being on site is sufficient. While we can't control the distractions outside the ring, we are obligated to maintain a level playing field for all teams entering the ring. An intact male would know that an in-season-bitch had been in ring – even one wearing pants – and potentially be adversely distracted. Other comments reiterated the point made by the DWC: due to shorter daylight hours, many late-fall tests cannot accommodate extra freight hauls for bitches in season. Another comment observed that as well intentioned as the proposal may be, it may be futile: bitches in season are “not all there” and are probably best left home. Finally, it was pointed out that in CKC tests where bitches in season are accommodated, extremely few actually take advantage of this accommodation. Thus, in addition to the negative impact on intact males and test lengths, all the effort applied in making this change might be largely for naught.

RFC1 Proposal:

I would like us to consider allowing bitches in season to compete in draft tests. The Newf club works around their bitches in season by:

- Doing basic obedience after all others are off the course-since we do ours just before the maneuvering course putting them last should not be a problem.
- When girls in season are entered they do different freight hauls--one for the dogs and another for the girls with the ones in season going last.

DWC Comment:

Many tests filled this last fall. One did not complete until dark and had to be continued the next day. Other tests completed before dark but would not have done so with another freight haul or two. This change could require an additional Open and an additional Novice group exercise, thus making it difficult for late-fall tests to complete during daylight hours.

RFC1 Comments:

Bitches in season are a serious disturbance to intact males if they are anywhere on site. This is not a good idea.

On the fence

The CKC allows for those applying for a test committee to either include or not include bitches in season. There are several sections and definitions surrounding procedures if they are included. One of these is remaining sequestered from the test site. Another is that they can only compete AFTER everything else is completed.

My experiences with judging bitches in season is that they really should stay home cause they're not all there. Having said that not all tests fill and the CKC regulations do allow for flexibility.

It must be noted that although bitches in season have been allowed to complete in every test I have ever judged in Canada I can only remember judging one bitch in season in the last several years.

I don't think bitches in heat should compete. Really not fair to the boys, they don't have to be in the ring for the boys to know they are there.

The only way I see this working is if bitches in season are entirely at the end of the day, and that increases the time burden. Additionally, if there is only one bitch in season, then there are no "group" exercises. Finally, having a bitch in season on the grounds, even if out of sight, is a major distraction to an intact male and may have an effect on their performance. Some owners of intact males may think twice about entering if bitches in season are allowed.

I agree with the DWC comment and hope we continue with our current regulation for bitches in season.

I would support bitches in season being able to compete. They just wear pants and there are no other special arrangements made.

Item #32 Additions to Performance and Judging

RFC Taskforce discussion:

This proposal has three parts:

- 1) Relocate examples from immediately following the section to which they apply to a centralized location.
- 2) Redefining those examples to "Performance Guidelines."
- 3) Adding an entry to "Performance Guidelines."

We agree with the comments concerning relocation of examples: they are intended to provide reinforcement and context for the novice handler. Taking the examples out of context and grouping them as overarching examples or guidelines might better serve handlers with a working knowledge but it will make it more difficult for neophytes to reach that plane. .

Second, examples were written to help the first-time and occasional reader. Thus they are written in "plain English", not regulatory text. If they become 'Performance Guidelines' and "much more powerful than the word example so that the seriousness of the expectation is considered greater" the language must be tightened up. As pointed out, they would become "the fabric of performance that is both expected and judged." Therein lays the problem. We had a case this year where the example following one exercise caused the judges to misinterpret the regulations in another. If the examples become part of the "fabric" of the regulations by virtue of becoming overarching "performance guidelines" and are not rewritten, there will be regulatory contradictions and subsequently increased misapplications of the "guidelines." Thus, such reorganization also requires a re-write of the examples. This defeats the original intent behind the examples as the "plain English" for the neophytes will be lost.

Finally, there is the proposed addition to the "performance guidelines." Several comments echoed what this one stated most eloquently:

The natural environment in which we conduct our tests is not easily or sensibly subjected to such specific standards.

There is a place for "loose" or "plain" English in addition to regulatory text. If either may improved upon, let's address that directly rather than fold them altogether.

Proposals RFC1:

Chapter 1 – change to - Key Words and Performance Guidelines

Add Section 2 - Performance Guidelines

Place all the 'examples' in the following chapters here as currently written

These would include

Harness and hitch
Backing
Hovering During Backing
Slow
Slow, Brace
Halts, Body Blocking

[DWC Comment:

The current placement of regulation examples may be easier for the beginner or occasional handler: the examples immediately follow the exercise description and reinforce the concept.]

In addition

Collision with an object

The Dog or draft rig collide with any solid object of more than 6 inches in height that clearly makes that object move or impedes the forward motion of the cart. In the case of the ‘narrows’ in the maneuvering exercises ANY contact with the cart or dog is considered a fail.

***Note: This would eliminate the need for the failing performance indicated in the maneuvering section and the freight haul section. It also eliminates the section that includes the ‘handler’ making contact with the narrows or any other object.

Justification:

The addition of this section as well as a standard for collision with an object allows for a strengthening of the intent of the rules. As they are currently placed there may be the impression that they only apply to the section under which they appear. We all judge these as performance standards and therefore apply them as necessary throughout the test. The new positioning allows for no miscommunication. The addition of the term ‘Performance Guidelines’ is much more powerful than the word example so that the seriousness of the expectation is considered greater. The end benefit will be a clear and concise expectation.

DWC Comment:

As proposed, were the rig to run unimpeded over a steward’s foot at the load/unload, this would be legal. Should this be a qualifying performance?

RFC1 Comments:

In addition to the DWC Comment about running over someone’s foot not being covered by the proposed definition, I feel that the 6” height requirement is far too arbitrary and would leave out numerous obstacles from being considered collisions. For example, a fallen tree of no more than 5.9” in diameter would not be subject to this definition and therefore a cart could hit or get stuck on the fallen tree without penalty. Similarly, a piece of lumber like a 2”x4” lying on the ground would not be included and could be ignored rather than avoided by the team, since there would be no collision by definition.

While the intent of providing a definition of collision does have merit (as per the listed justification), I think that more work is required on the definition itself. Perhaps simply removing the height requirement from the definition would be sufficient?

The Dog or draft rig collide with any solid object [of more than 6 inches in height] that clearly makes that object move or impedes the forward motion of the cart. In the case of the ‘narrows’ in the maneuvering exercises ANY contact with the cart or dog is considered a fail.

I think examples are far more useful to exhibitors if found immediately after the relevant section of the regs.

Judges are best positioned to determine what objects may not be collided with on each specific course. Work, if any, on this topic would be best addressed thru judges education. I have not heard of any issues with collisions that might have caused this to be a topic of concern. Why the arbitrary height of 6 inches? That is a very significant chunk of firewood, taller than many curbs, taller than a decorative stone garden frog, taller than the shafts of another cart lying on the ground, taller than many a tree stump which should clearly be avoided. I think collisions are best determined in context. And do we want to be arguing over whether an object is 5 1/2 inches or 6? The natural environment in which we conduct our tests is not easily or sensibly subjected to such specific standards.

Again as this is my submission I'll comment on the DWC comment on placement. This begs to ask the question are we governed by 'examples' and what importance do we place on these? A neophyte reading these rules will see that the examples after the sections in which they exist may only apply to those sections, he may also look through to the failing performance and not necessarily make the jump that one has anything to do with the other.

Now offer those same examples as 'performance guidelines' and the whole test and the whole performance applies. These are now part of the fabric of performance that is both expected and judged. As an example – on the freight haul a team is in a little bit of trouble and has to back to get out of it. The handler asks his team mate to back and he doesn't on the first try or the second but the handler asks again this time clearly hovering over the dog. The handler may have no idea that this is not necessarily accepted. As this is the third try the dog is in fact unwilling otherwise hovering would not be necessary. So how many judges would fail this and how many handlers would even consider this improper after all they passed the back up exercise but in that instance the dog moved back on the first command and the cart was empty so it didn't require anything more forceful. Backing a loaded cart is not the same as backing an empty one.

As to the DWC comment on the addition of collision with an object

First of all the word 'contact' is replaced with the word 'collision'

Contact defined as - the act or state of touching; a touching or meeting, as of two things or people.

Collision defined as - the act of colliding; a coming violently into contact; crash

Let's look first at the positives surrounding an actual definition before we cite an example of negative 'what ifs.'

There are certainly more positives that surround an actual definition within the spirit of the regulations and the purpose of draft tests than to say what if a dog smells a flower or a blade of grass, goes over a stone just slightly off course, rides a wheel slightly over a tree root, or goes over a stewards foot or the back up marker while backing.

Perspective is what I'm recommending here by eliminating the handler making contact. Why should a team fail because a handler without thinking puts his hand on the narrows or has a piece of clothing rub the weave pole or trips over the moveable obstacle but the dog is steady and fulfills all the elements of the test and none of the contacts made by the handler are even noticed by the dog.

In response to your question: It would entirely depend on the circumstance surrounding the episode. Was the cart and dog off course? Did the steward stand in the exact same space with all the teams? Was the dog out of control? Could the steward have simply moved back a foot to avoid the contact? Why didn't they?

If you want a simple yes or no then you don't understand judging. My reply with all due respect - 'maybe', I'd have to see it happen.

I don't think they should be allowed to run over a foot and pass. I would not agree with this.

Yes, keep the examples next to the portion of the exercises that they pertain to.

EXACTLY !!! And... a dandelion stem is a "solid" and can be more than 6 inches tall. So hitting that is a fail? Does this mean that all tests must be in short grass or pavement? Some test sites have no hills to show conditioning and judges use areas of tall grass (increased coefficient of friction) to determine the conditioning of the dogs.

This is just not something I want to see in our regs.

I have looked through the wording and now feel that in order for this to truly reflect a 'performance guideline' that these would require some level of rewrite to accomplish the goal. Some as currently written are in fact simply 'examples'. Would a section with properly written performance guidelines which convey what is expected and what is being judged be a step forward in clarity both for the judges as well as the entrants and spectators. Yes, I think it would.

Our current regulations are not being interpreted in a similar manner.

As an example in two recent draft tests.

A team while maneuvering went slightly off course to explore an object and made contact with their nose.

Another team at another draft test went slightly off course to explore an object and made contact by licking the object.

One of these was failed and the other was passed.

I witnessed the first and I heard about the second and this is in NO way a judgment on correctness. Judges call it the way they see it. The main problem here is that neither contact really had anything to do with the working ability of the team. They were both incidental and borne of curiosity rather than out of control behavior and really don't fit the 'responded to a distraction' type issue.

The failing performance listed during maneuvering is listed as 'Any contact by the dog handler or draft rig with the obstacle or the objects defining the narrow area or any other part of the course.'

The failing performance listed in the freight haul is dog or draft rig collide with any object.

I think that by adding a specific definition the opportunity of consistent judging is augmented. I also think that by eliminating handler contact or at least defining handler contact to allow incidental or unintentional contact that has no bearing on the final performance is an augmentation of 'fair judging'

The elimination of the mention of the handler making contact with an object goes back to a discussion almost a decade ago when we were considering a call based on incidental vs. intentional contact made by the handler at the weave poles. I don't think that an incidental contact made by the handlers jacket brushing the narrows or a slight bump of a weave pole by the handler as he backs up to help guide his dog is what was originally intended as fails by these regulations. It may have been that the intent was to try to make sure that there was no contact with the narrows or the weave poles by the handler that might move the narrows in such a way as to increase the width of the narrows or accidentally move a weave pole. Certainly there are better ways to handle this type of issue than to fail everything.

There is a considerable difference in the definitions of ‘contact’ and collide’. We are judging contact in the narrows but are really judging collision in all other areas. The definition as above allows for not only a black and white view but allows for decisions that are fairly observed and easy to assess.

I do not support this RFC.

Item #33 End of Freight Haul

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No comments other than author’s in favor of indeterminate freight haul ending locations. In addition to arguments for ending in ring stated in “Item #31, Addition to Judging Guidelines”, one comment points out that by “having the FH end in the ring everyone knows that they will be walking, and the dogs hauling, for just that half mile rather than some unknown potential added distance, just to get back to the ring and test site.” Imagine a FH that ends half a mile from the ring and is mostly downhill, “congratulations, you just finished the test, but you have an even harder test ahead of you getting home.” And what about fouling the freight haul on the way home? Are the team’s being judged? Must the judges accompany the team’s home even though the FH is over? If the FH crossed over roads, do we require that teams return in unison so that stewards may assist with traffic control? For these and the reasons already cited in #31, let’s start and end in the ring for Novice and Open alike.

RFC1 Proposal:

Add - The freight haul may end outside of the ring.

Judge’s commands to the handlers are: “Are you ready”, “Exercise finished”

Eliminate – dog or draft rig collide with any object as an example of a failure

Note: This is replaced with the ‘collision with an object’ performance standard.

DWC Comment:

The advantage of ending within the ring is that the end point is clear from test-to-test and requires no more regulatory text to ensure consistency across tests. Were the exercise to end outside the ring, might some judges, needing the distance to reach the only hill within a half mile, end their exercise well before the ring is in sight while others end somewhere in between?

RFC1 Comments:

I find significant value in keeping the grounds of a Draft Test relatively compact and defined, and the end point of freight hauls the same from test to test. Simply does not make sense to have a freight haul possibly end 1/2 mile from the ring. A wide range of variables could be introduced by having freight hauls end outside of the ring. Consistency does have value, especially from the exhibitor’s point of view. By having the FH end in the ring everyone knows that they will be walking, and the dogs hauling, for just that half mile rather than some unknown potential added distance, just to get back to the ring and test site.

So let’s talk about consistency – it is consistent that I want changes of terrain and some slopes in ALL my freight hauls. Given that, under current regulations I have no more than a quarter of a mile to find that because I need to end where I started. So there is an absolutely lovely area of new type terrain and several great slopes about 500 feet past the quarter mile, I want to use those but I can’t and still make it back to the ring in approx 1/2 mile.

So do I opt for a freight haul that doesn’t reflect an ideal freight haul.

Do I move the ring.

Do I extend the freight haul to approx 3500 feet.

Or Do I start in the ring provide the ideal freight haul which includes varying terrain slopes etc and end it after passing a marker which represents the exact half mile distance.

I guess it depends on this - What is more important - the ring or the actual freight haul? I would think that if you start in the ring and go a half a mile then mark that spot as the end you will have a very consistent freight haul distance.

I believe the above to be more consistent than what currently exists in a judge's interpretation of approximately 1/2 mile. Some approximations are close to 3000 or more feet just because they needed or wanted to include that hill or that terrain.

Degree of importance.

Standardized judging – The half mile freight haul course must be clearly marked and should ideally include both uphill and downhill slopes and changes of terrain.

There is no mention in our regulations nor in the obedience regulations that the novice freight haul course ends in the ring. The only mention of the open class finishing in the ring is in Chapter 3 Section C item 2 Leashes (...open teams leave and return to the ring off leash for the freight haul)

So what is MOST important

1. Most important to start and finish in the ring at 1/2 mile.
2. Most important to start and finish in the ring even if it includes an extra 300-500 feet to get that 'ideal' covered.

Most important to start in the ring perform an ideal freight haul (include both uphill and downhill slopes and changes of terrain) and end at 1/2 mile.

If a judging team opts for 1 then as per the obedience regulation of between exercises we shouldn't fail that team AFTER the exercise finished unless we are excusing a dog or are failing the dog due to misbehavior (no concept of after the exercise) or unwillingness (fear). So hitting the ring entrance marker on the way out after the freight haul may not be failed by all judges.

If a judging team opts for number 2 they are bending the freight haul distance in order to obtain 'an ideal freight haul' This may lead to some future consternation among the entrants especially if the freight haul course is longer and perhaps causes some issues with completing the test before it gets dark.

If a judging team opts for number 3 they are achieving the most correct interpretation of the freight haul distance and ideal... at least for novice teams.

Please also recognize that due to the definition of Classes as well as that we don't mix the Novice and Open classes it is not only possible but may be ideal to have two distinct freight haul courses, one for each class. I believe our current regulations allow for this interpretation especially as we are looking for different things from the Open teams vs. the Novice teams.

Add - The freight haul may end outside of the ring.

Add – Novice teams may use a different freight haul than Open teams.

Judge’s commands to the handlers are: “Are you ready”, “Exercise finished”

Eliminate – dog or draft rig collide with any object as an example of a failure

Eliminate – reference to open teams finishing the freight haul in the ring. Chapter 3 Section C item 2 Leashes

Note: This is replaced with the ‘collision with an object’ performance standard.

I agree with the DWC comment and do not want to see this included in our regs.

The freight haul ends in the ring.

Item #34 Call for Consistency

RFC Taskforce discussion:

No specific regulatory change or addition was advanced. Nonetheless, the concern and observation is a valid one. The single greatest obstacle to “uniform” judging is that Draft is non-profit, non-profitable, and run strictly by volunteers. Thus we are resource constrained: unlike the AKC we cannot hire a former judge who does nothing but sit ringside evaluating judges. Moreover, as pointed out in the comments, more regulatory text is not the answer. Nonetheless, we can and are making progress on this front by ensuring our apprentices receive the strongest possible foundation prior to becoming a judge. We also hope to improve uniformity of judging through a new judges’ education program.

RFC1 Proposal:

I think the judges need more guidelines to make the tests similar. I have seen big differences in the length of the freight hauls, the maneuvering associated with the freight hauls, the hills included, the time spent waiting for slower dogs to catch up, and passing slower dogs criteria. Deep leaves or long grass where one can not see what the footing is like or which might possibly hide metal or broken glass should always be avoided. Certain judges have reputations for making things much more difficult than others.

RFC1 Comments:

The test committee is usually responsible for the freight haul but I will comment that there are things that I need to see in order to make my decision on a team passing the freight haul. There is absolutely a difference among judges in this respect. Is this avoidable with more guidelines? Perhaps.

Keeping teams together is always a challenge, keeping them in the proper order so that you can see them all and judge them all is equally challenging. The judges are really at the mercy of the entered teams, their preparedness and their skill level so one freight haul can go smoothly while another on the very same course can be a fright haul. I’m really not sure that creating more guidelines would help. Certainly judges judging more often would help as they improve their skills in seeing what needs to be seen

how can there be differences in the length of freight hauls – aren’t they supposed to be measured?? I believe there are also obedience judges who have reputations for being more difficult and conformation judges who will award best of breed to dogs with major faults. If it bothers someone that much than they just shouldn’t show under the judge. I know we don’t have a lot of tests but people should realize that no matter how many rules we

put in place there will always be differences in judging styles. Imagine how big the rule book would have to be, you wouldn't be able to carry it. I can't think of anyone I wouldn't show under; if they asked me to do a freight haul I thought was dangerous for my dog I would just refuse.

Most of the above seems superfluous and burdensome. I don't see the language as it stands now being terribly problematic, with the exception noted below. As for collisions, allowing for certain kinds of collisions leads to a lot of disagreement about what qualifies and what doesn't, and a lot of room to argue, not to mention the need for in-ring measurements. The steward's foot example is perfect, and makes the point. Collisions are permitted already in certain circumstances on the freight haul, when the judges specifically clarify certain areas (i.e., tree roots, branches, etc.)

The only valid point I see here is that the regs say "half mile Freight Haul..." In the real world, it's hard to come up with a haul that is EXACTY half a mile. So... perhaps we might want to consider language that gives a half mile minimum and then sets a maximum.

This seems to be an individual gripe and not a RFC. No comment.

Item #35 Stop Changing Regs so Often

RFC Taskforce discussion:

The comment, "you can't please everyone" rings true. We sensed great dissatisfaction with the program and were hearing many requests for a "democratic" approach as seen in one of the comments above. Thus, we opened the process up to the entire community, "what do you want to see changed." Many proposals were received and contributed greatly to the length of this RFC. In the end, we "can't please everyone" but hope you agree that the program has benefited from giving everyone a voice.

RFC1 Proposal:

Quit changing regs every year - at least that's what it seems like. I think you need to do a minor tweak and then leave them alone for awhile.

RFC1 Comments:

Set a clear timeline with respect to when rules reviews take place. Provide a template to use which includes justification. A democratic vote.

Amen

It may seem like we are always in a state of re-evaluation, but it seems that the judges' comments on the list are often asking for changes. When an RFC is begun to accommodate those requests, others complain that we're changing too often. This is a case of "you can't please everyone."

While leaving well enough alone is a fine idea the idea of freezing the regs for a 2-3 or 5 year period will not be popular with the membership and I feel is not in the best interest of our sport. That being said some of the RFC's in this list could have waited for the 2025 update.

Item #36 Failing Performances Not on List

RFC Taskforce discussion:

As pointed out in the proposal itself, “Failing performances” are the “most common, but not exhaustive list of reasons for failure” directly associated with that exercise. Any judge not aware of fouling the ring, aggression, fear of severe correction, out of control behavior, etc., has either not read 75% of the regulations or is ignoring the General Regulations, pages 2-23. This being the case, what more can be done within the regulations themselves? As observed in “#34, Call for Consistency”, adding more regulations to foster enforcement of existing regulations is not the answer.

RFC1 Proposal:

There were cases in 2008 where failing performances were passed because the cause of failure did not explicitly appear on the list of failing performances. Hence, add to Keywords, page 25:

I. Failing Performance - most common, but not exhaustive list of reasons for failure

Change “Failing performance” to keyword Failing Performance on pages 26-29, 31 thrice, 32-34. Change index, page 35, to reflect these page numbers.

RFC1 Comments:

Sensible if this indeed is happening with judges who take our regs completely literally rather than applying phrases such as 'out of control' etc for unusual circumstances. I think it would need to say more than just 'common but not exhaustive', maybe a phrase such 'in the spirit of the regs' or some such. Will have to ponder potential wording. Maybe 'in the spirit of skill, control, willingness, and clean handling'.

This one I like. I'm tired of hearing that if it's not explicit, it doesn't exist.

I can certainly continue to write my perspective on this. I believe we owe it to the entrants to be as concise as possible in the description of the exercises, the elements necessary to complete that exercise successfully and as complete a list of failures as possible. The intent is to have the rules 'make good common sense' to all those present. As these tests are pass/fail we should remember that we are not necessarily judging perfection but we are judging that the elements have been completed within the scope of the rules based on the circumstances seen in the test.

I certainly have no issue with the change in boldness nor in placing emphasis on all the sections where the failing performances are listed and placing them in the index.

The premise "failing performances were passed because the cause of failure did not explicitly appear" is possibly too strongly worded as written by the proposer. I sincerely doubt that teams were passed because it was NOT on a list of failing performances, the teams were passed because the judges at the test passed them based on their interpretations of the regulations and the performance. There are many examples in virtually all tests of teams passing when they have clearly done something that is ON the list of failing performances. These are judges judging. No degree of intimidation or recrimination should change that.

I'd like to know what isn't on "the list". I have never not found the reason for a failure not on the list. We have general terms on the Judges' Worksheet - see "other" in each section and at the bottom of the form. Need the reason in the regs? Look at the inside front cover – Purpose. There's also Chapter 2, section 6, part F – Evaluations – the first sentence. We have quite a bit of latitude.

Sad to say but I guess we need to do this sort of thing as a housekeeping measure.

Item #37 Entry Form Include date of Previous Titles

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Your comments are on the mark: there is only one known case a handler that continued entering Open despite being informed that an NDD was required to enter Open. In this particular case, the handler's breed club recognized BMDCA qualifying scores for that breed's awards. Because the handler was only interested in their breed club's awards, it didn't matter that BMDCA Open titles were withheld. Making additional work for 1,000 honest entries to catch this one is punitive regulating and not the way we want to run the program. And as you point out, if the handler is determined to break the rules, forging a date is not going to deter them.

RFC1 Proposal:

Currently we cannot discriminate between those entering the wrong class by mistake and those deliberately circumventing our regulations. By requiring the date a required title was earned (e.g. date NDD earned for an Open entry), we bring this regulation to the attention of those not aware of it and identify those attempting to circumvent it. On page 5, insert 'i)' and shift others down:

i) If entered class requires a title (e.g. NDD for Open or Novice Brace, DD for Open Brace, etc.), date title was earned.

Entry forms would be modified thus:

BREED:

SEX:

CLASS: Novice " Open " Brace Novice " Brace Open "
Date NDD earned for Brace Novice and Open, or DD earned for Brace Open:

This dog is already titled in the entered class: "

Open Weight Certificate enclosed? "

RFC1 Comments:

Yes, sensible

Like this too, but would suggest either we accept month/year, or we change Berner Garde/Alpenhorn/website listings to include full date of when title was earned. If someone loses a title certificate, the other sources for checking only list month/year.

I would hope that entrants entering the wrong class is many times more a mistake than a fraudulent entry. As the draft chair maintains the records of titles then it is really up to the chair or at least an administrative body be the final step in the process of checking the validity of a previous title. I find it hard to believe that there is a lot of fraud here but mistakes do happen. Having a procedure in place that helps to eliminate these would be a good thing at the test secretary level.

Perhaps making this list available to test secretaries would be a solution. It may stop an entrant from driving 300 miles to the test if the entry was not a valid one. This at least would allow for a flow. The entrant could enter, the test secretary would receive it AND verify it. If there is no title then that entrant could be informed quietly BEFORE coming to the test, perhaps passing, and then finding out a mistake was made.

And finally if fraud is involved adding a date will not stop it just create one more step for the fraudulent entry to pass through.

Having the information on the entry and ensuring that the Draft Test Secretaries check this are two different things. There may need to be language added as to the Secretary's duty associated with this.

Item 37 & 38: I support these suggestions.

Item #38 Organize Committee & Secretary Info Better

RFC Taskforce discussion:

Hold that thought. It is a monumental effort to pull the thing apart without introducing errors, dropped sections, unintended redundancy, etc. Now is not the time for two reasons. First, this effort has already taken months to get to this point with months yet to go. This proposal could easily add 50% to the size of an already large RFC as well as set it back a year. Second, it needs to be done with a stable set of regulations – not one undergoing change. Once a new set has been printed, that would be the time to reorganize.

Reorganization would improve ease of use, however, there are many optimizations: for committees, for secretaries, for judges, for exhibitors, etc. Optimizing for one group will make it harder to use for other groups. Thus, balance ensures the best general purpose document. The good news is that for secretaries Linda Thomas has produced an excellent guide that collates the information specifically for Test Committees and secretaries. This guide is online in the Draft section of the BMDCA website.

RFC1 Proposal:

Put all of the duties and info needed by the Draft Test Committee and Draft Test Secretary in one place:

A) Chapter 1 Section 3 part H might be called Entries and include the limitations of entries and the information in chapter 3 section 1. Or a note that says the entry info can be found there....

B) Time of team's equipment check must be in their verification of entry (Chapter 5, Section 1). I don't see any other place that says a secretary must send a verification of entry.

C) The Test Committee is charged with creating the freight haul in c1, s3a. Perhaps a note to see Chpt 4, Sect 1 C would help them know about changes in terrain

D) The same concept fits for the freight haul load, see Chpt 3, Sect 3A

E) There is a note to the committee in Chapter 5, Section 2C about the order of group exercises. It should be notes in the chapter with their duties (Chapter 1)

F) Method of move ups are covered in chapter 5 Section 4-4. Again, note that in Chapter

G) The Test committee now sends a copy of the premium to the DWC and the section of the regs where they send a copy to each judge is gone. I think we need to include the sending of the premium to the judges – even if it is just a note that it can now be downloaded from a website (link given) – because often the judges are left in the dark as to the details about the test. And this helps keep good contact between the test Committee and the judges.

H) Chapter 3 contains info on three reasons for refund and whether it is allowed or not (bitches in season, being late and medical). The secretary should have this info in their chapter.

I) The concept of the ring being flat is found in Chapter 4 Section 1a. This section also tells about the boundary markers and the size of the entrance. Things a new test committee needs to know...

Of course, all of this would be unnecessary if folks read the whole regulation book or if we developed a book that would guide a club and the draft test committee through the process of holding a draft test.

DWC Comment:

Thank you. Some organizational improvements were made in 2007 but much more could be done.

RFC1 Comments:

I tend to agree with this submission that reorganization of the material within Draft Regulations would be helpful. In this case I support the proposal to group data for the Draft Test Committee and Draft Test Secretary.

In addition, my similar suggestion would be that the overall organization of the regulations be looked at as well. After completing my Open Book Test to become an Apprentice Judge, I had a conversation regarding this with Jim Maxwell. I felt at that the current regulations seem to be a mixture of some procedural groupings of information (i.e., the General Regulations) and some exercise/chronological- based groupings (i.e., the Regulations for Performance and Judging), but that neither style is complete on its own.

For example, if you look solely in the Regulations for Performance and Judging, Group Stay (3.4) or Freight Haul (3.5), you are unable to answer questions pertaining to whether or not the dogs should be on leashes when entering or exiting the ring or how many dogs are allowed to participate in a single group exercise. For these answers, you would need to know to look in the General Regulations, Leashes (3.3.C.2) and General Regulations, Group Exercises (2.6.E).

While I understand that it would be a huge undertaking, I think it would be a big improvement if all of the relevant information for any given exercise was organized into a section specifically for that exercise, or at the very least, relevant information from other sections of the rulebook were clearly cross-referenced from those locations. This type of organization would likely make it easier for handlers to learn the material, but perhaps more importantly, in case of any dispute, it would allow judges quicker access to all of the relevant information regarding the exercise without having to consult several disparate sections of the regulations simultaneously.

Sure, just need to consider reorganization of sections from all angles: committee, judges, exhibitors.

Agreed.

Key word here is 'ORGANIZE'

I believe that a simple yet exhaustively complete check list be provided to test officials. Some redundancy should be built in to make sure the possibility of human error is minimized due to a double check type system.

This check list type system can easily be added as a necessary submission to the chair after the test. This would ensure proper duplication throughout the program AND mean far less oversight on behalf of the chair and DWC members. The chief of police can be busy creating better policy and the police officers can be busy running draft tests.

I'm sure a pamphlet on 'How to apply, promote, run and successfully complete a draft test would be a best seller.

Item 37 & 38: I support these suggestions.

Item #39 Implement Open Book

RFC Taskforce discussion:

As outlined in “#34, Call for Consistency”, the true solution lies outside our capability: we need a judge evaluator who does nothing but go from ring to ring evaluating judges and we need enough tests to give every judge multiple judging opportunities per year. There is no other way to keep one’s judging skills honed than by judging.

The solution lies outside of our grasp. We can either collectively throw up our hands in resignation or take incremental steps to improve upon the situation. The OB Test is not the solution, but one more step that will help – once we have the resources to finish its revision and administer it.

RFC1 Proposal:

Open book test for approved judges – Chapter 23, Section 2 f - If this is not going to be put into practice, then it should be removed from the regulations.

DWC Comment:

Agreed. Progress is being made at putting this into practice. Much of the DWC’s time goes into behind-the-scenes administration. The remaining time goes into advancing the program. When this regulation first appeared, the priority at the time was overhauling the apprentice program and integrating the Open Book (OB) Test into the apprenticing experience. From there we moved on to the single largest overhaul of the regulations which tied up the DWC for three years. Last year we made good progress at revamping the OB Test to eliminate trick questions, make it match the new regulations, and make it more relevant to what apprentices and judges need. The OB Test overhaul was interrupted by this unplanned RFC. This RFC process will take perhaps 18 months. We’ll then pick up where we left off, finish overhauling the OB Test, and then work out how it can be administrated. Currently it takes several hours to grade and review with apprentices. We have few apprentices so we can afford this investment. However, we have 50 judges so the administration of the OB Test must be resolved before we can start administrating it. Nonetheless, we’ll resume working on this project upon conclusion of this RFC process.

RFC1 Comments:

The problem with an open book test is that it’s a two dimensional black and white pick the closest answer type of thing. While it can easily test knowledge and as such is a wonderful tool for apprentices, new judges and an excellent refresher for those judges that rarely judge it can not provide an answer about the circumstances surrounding an instant decision at the real life fluid environment called a draft test. It therefore has no real merit in the real world. It can NOT be used as a methodology to create cookie cutting judging.

It is also a culmination of opinions and some at least of those opinions are based on the absolute power of the written word and nothing else. The DWC sent out a memo on how to judge certain episodes at a draft test. They based those decisions on an accumulation of data and measured that against the written word in our regulations. No consideration was given for real life and as such these will now or may later be part of the next open book test.

Lets for a moment consider that the Open book test is the subjective viewpoint of a group of individuals. It can ONLY be used as a guide, there will always be circumstances that trump the apparently correct answer.

As an example a recent memo from the chair stated that a team that has an equipment failure during a freight haul must be failed. That is black and white and very strong language. The circumstance that surrounded that

call may not be. What if a special circumstance caused that failure and what if that failure was only a temporary set back as opposed to a permanent one. What if the terrain at a given point of the freight haul caused that failure. What if a special situation created the circumstance. The what if has to be acknowledged AND respected. A judges purview is final, it can not be molded by a cookie cutter mentality and an iron fist. There are very few absolutes in judging and a judge must interpret the rules with a sense of fair play and a sense of purpose.

At a recent test I watched judges toil over a decision. Depending on the judges it may have gone differently. My opinion here doesn't matter nor does an open book test - what matters is that the judges considered the situation and made a decision. It was the right decision because it was theirs to make.

This notion of standardized judging needs to be clarified. The current interpretation is simply if 'situation A' happens and 'situation A' is a Fail then whenever 'situation A' happens it's a fail.

Our section on 'standardized judging' is directly derived from the AKC regulations, in my estimations its more about the ability of an entrant to have an expectation of what they will encounter as exercises as opposed to what a judge's decision will be on 'situation A'

Section 1. Standardized Judging. Standardized judging is of paramount importance. Judges are not permitted to inject their own variations into the exercise but will see that each handler and dog execute the various exercises exactly as described in these Regulations. A handler who is familiar with these Regulations should be able to enter the ring under any judge without having to inquire how that particular judge wishes to have an exercise performed and without being confronted with any unexpected requirements....

And note that the regulations and how they are written are paramount here but as always circumstance can occur and for that we have

Section 8. Re-judging. If a dog has failed an exercise, it will not ordinarily be re-judged unless the judge feels the dog's performance was prejudiced by peculiar and unusual conditions. In such a case, the judge may wish to re-judge the dog on only the portion of a two-part exercise in which the unusual condition occurred...

Further a judge can not vary an exercise but a judge can and should make the decision to move the exercise forward in an expedient manner. They can then apply the regulations and provide a decision on that performance.

Item #43 Eliminate Priority for Untitled Dogs

RFC Taskforce discussion:

All respondents agree: no change at this time. Many agree with the points this committee made. Some went on to point out that the comparison to the AKC is invalid given that the AKC offers far more tests than we do and teams are forced to move up to the next class ('A' to 'B', etc.) upon earning a title.

Proposal RFC1:

Please make titled dogs on equal footing with untitled dogs. AKC does not give preference to untitled dogs, why should we?

DWC Comment:

Long before the creation of advanced titles, the regulations required that those with a title in the entered class notify the secretary. The thought was those coming back for “fun” should not displace a team without a title. This thought was carried forward with the creation of the advanced titles: let’s attempt to fill unused slots in tests without affecting those without a title in the entered class. Why do this while the AKC does not? This is our program and we have crafted it to best serve our membership. Does priority for untitled dogs continue to best serve the membership?

We now have many titled teams that do not get into the Specialty. Were the priority eliminated, we’d have the same number not getting into the test, just a different mix. In other words we’d have an equal number of unhappy entrants, including those who just missed the opportunity to get into their first ever National Specialty. The solution, of course, is more tests. However, if a test fills, should those going for their first title still have priority? Why/why not?.

RFC1 Comments:

Keep priority for untitled dogs. We have too few tests to risk a dog never getting into a Test to get even their basic titles.

Do not change this. We have too few tests, and untitled should get priority. AKC doesn’t apply here for a couple of reasons – one, they have a lot more events. Two, many events require titled dogs to complete in a different class once the title is earned (A to B, most commonly) so the comparison doesn’t even apply.

Untitled teams should ALWAYS have priority. It’s not important what the AKC does –it’s our program.

I think we should leave the regs as they are regarding untitled and titled dog entries. Those of us who come back “for fun” or for advanced titles belong in the second tier – after the dogs without titles. Leave this concept alone!

I think this requires more thought and discussion. It’s one of those things at the end of a long list of RFC’s that would seem to have an easy answer but doesn’t. As for right now I would suggest that we leave things the way they are and look at this idea in more detail. First come first served? Lottery? BMD always have preference, titled dogs that have earned their spot by hard work and good performance or untitled dogs that are entered before they are ready to actually perform the exercises? There are lots of twists and turns here.
