Obedience Judges Association Conference **10 June 2023**

Notes from Rally-O meeting

9.30 – 11 Rally-O

Present: Rosemary Cleator, Sheelah Stevens, Tony McClelland, Mel Evans, Peri Spence, Renee Cornwall, Des Richards, Jan Voss, Arend van den Bos, Ann Davis, Ruth Thorburn.

Observing Robyn Howard

Topics

1. Do we need Rally-O Trainers/Assessors for trainees
   The general view was we need assessors. To be an Assessor to have judged at least 40 dogs or have been on the panel for the class being assessed for 2 years
2. Procedure for Probationaries
   All felt the manual needed updating to include the requirement for the assessor to be given the email address of the trainee so timely report can be sent.
3. Training New Rally-O Judges *OJA to recommend or suggest names as mentors for the applicant to contact.*
4. Should there be a time on panel requirement before upgrading *All agreed as per item 1 = 40 dogs or 2 years on the panel before seeking promotion.*
5. Harsh handling - what is harsh handling and how should it be dealt with. *As this is a very subjective topic it was felt judges needed to handle this on a case-by-case basis. There is the scope in penalties for loud or intimidating commands. Blatant harsh handling would need to be reported to Show Manager for further action ie. exclusion from the show or reporting to DNZ.*
6. Penalties for dog moving on wait exercises *General consensus was moving a step or 2 was out of position, not stopping at all or moving more than quarter distance in stop call your dog was IP*
7. What constitutes a 'pivot'. *A small dinner plate analogy for movement with both feet facing the new direction before moving forward*
8. Distance requirements between cones and between signs. *Cones are regulated and the distance between signs should allow for a flowing course for a larger dog.*
9. Should there be a minimum distance between signs of 4-5 metres. *Not practical*
10. Pause feet together. *Nowhere in the rules does it say "feet together". As long as the handler has paused (ie stopped forward motion for 1or 2 seconds) it doesn't matter where their feet are.*
11. Handler Error use. *Care must be used with this; most faults have a definite penalty so the handler needs to know what fault they are making. Be prepared to explain.*
12. Sign placement for poles. *Safety is the first consideration when placing the sign for pole or jump. The sign should be placed within the vision field of the previous station. Signs should NOT be used as distance markers.*
13. Back up – how should this be performed. *As per the rules dog should maintain heel position. Dog should walk backwards and handler steps should NOT be a shuffle.*
14. What constitutes 'happiness' and when does it become 'out of position' or 'lack of control'? *Judge it as you see it. Some judges are OK with bouncing at heel others are not. This is a discretionary call.*

We then broke for lunch and AGM with Rally-O judges continuing their discussion afterwards

Rosemary Cleator and Ann Davis remained for Obedience discussion

Rally-O Champion and Grand Champion requirements – are they too hard. *Some felt this was not our domain as judges. Some felt the points and the number of times to get qualifying points needed loosening up. Others felt it should be left alone unless there is a remit to change. All felt more recognition should be given to teams who achieve their titles.*

Jan Voss informed us her club has submitted a remit to allow qualification in Excellent A on 95 points. Debate ensued with the consensus being 98 in Excellent A was as low as most would contemplate.

Jump height and requirements: Most would like to see specific construction details included in the regulations. Most would like to see a minimum height of 100mm allowed for dogs with health issues but no bar on the ground allowed. It was also felt that knocking the bar off should be included in the penalties for touching course equipment ie 1 point off. The wording in the regs needs a tidy up as it is not in very clear language.
Ruth will ask at DTC about the wording and put forward our suggestions

Des questioned why jumps and poles needed to be compulsory. Most felt Rally-O would be the loser if these were both made optional. They both provide an exciting difference from traditional obedience.

Discussion was then held about what is an acceptable cost per kilometre for judges to charge clubs when agreeing to a contract. There is a wide variance in what is being charged. The general feeling was it should be at least 30c per km. Clubs of course have the right to refuse the contract. Discussion before returning the contract may be helpful so there is no misunderstanding about what is being charged ie kms, airport parking, kennel stay, transport to and from airport are all costs some consider reasonable.

The suggestion was made that DNZ could print sets of signs and make them available to judges and clubs. These would not need to be laminated as the recipient would do that themselves if needed.

Arend then informed us of a recommendation that is being presented at ACOD.
He felt we needed to be informed as to what was happening.
There is a Recommendation being presented that is asking for Rally-O to be removed from DTC. Similar to Scent work and CGC with the difference being it would have its own committee elected by its members, similar to Agility?
There was robust discussion about this with many questions as to how this would work. There was general agreement this was a positive move for Rally-O.

There was then a short discussion about prize money and Ribbons at shows. This not being our domain discussion was brief.
There was general agreement about how good everyone felt that we were able to get together for these discussions and it was felt all benefited from the discussions.

Ruth asked if there was anything more for discussion. No-one had anything else so all dispersed for travel home.