

New Jersey State 4-H Dog Show

Agility Rules and Guidelines

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Introduction

NOTE: The NJ State 4H Dog show is not an AKC venue, however these guidelines draw heavily on the AKC rules and judging criteria. Close alignment with AKC guidance makes things easier on our volunteer judges, who are often familiar with AKC regulations. Every effort is made to balance high participation while offering ever increasing challenges to our 4-H members in their efforts to “Make the Best Better.”

AGILITY RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE NEW JERSEY 4-H STATE DOG SHOW

All 4-H activities and events are to be youth focused. This means that the event will help teach young people lifelong skills and assets, utilizing their project, in this case, interaction with their dog, as a vehicle for learning those skills. The actual event takes a back seat to the development of the young people. Safety is also, and always, a primary concern for both youth and animal.

Eligibility Guidelines:

In order to compete in Agility each exhibitor and dog must be able to demonstrate the following competencies at the county level:

1. A successful sit/stay.
2. A successful down/stay.
3. A good relationship between the dog and handler, which includes ability to control the dog whether stationary or when walking on leash.
4. The ability to be peacefully approached by other dogs and handlers. It is strongly suggested that youth and dog successfully complete at least one year of obedience training before moving to agility.

Participation Rules:

1. The handler and dog must be in good health at the time of competition.
2. Dog and handler must have some specific agility training experience in order to enter agility at the NJ 4-H State Dog Show. The experience does not have to be in competition.
3. For the health of the animal, dogs must be at least 12 months old to compete in agility. It is recommended that larger breeds be at least 18 months old. This is because for most breeds the growth plates in the bones are still developing until the average age of fourteen months – even later for large breeds.
4. Dogs 18 months and younger and 7 years and older are encouraged to jump at least one height lower than their measured jump height, at the recommendation of your leader, and with specific communication on the registration for clarity.
5. All 4-Hers are strongly encouraged to consult their veterinarian before beginning agility training to be sure that there are no problems such as hip dysplasia, disc problems, overweight, etc.
6. The handler and dog must know basic commands at the time of competition. (sit, down, stay, come, controlled walking on leash, etc.)
7. Any breed or mixture of breeds and/or size dog is allowed to compete.

8. The handler must have reasonable control over their dog at all times.
9. Each Dog/Handler team may run in ONE class only. Members who share a dog as their registered project animal must provide records to their leaders showing the dog as a project animal for EACH child. Members may *not* compete with a non-project animal in agility.

Standard Equipment for Exhibitors:

1. Tab lead only; maximum length of 6", with no loop. (No full length leashes. Some tab leashes will be available to borrow if needed).
2. For safety reasons, handlers must wear closed toe shoes appropriate for running with their dogs.
4. The use of food or toys in the competition ring is prohibited.

Jump Heights:

Classes are divided by four jump heights:

4" class – for dogs measuring up to 10 inches at the shoulder

8" class – for dogs measuring 11 to 14 inches at the shoulder

12" class – for dogs measuring 15 to 18 inches at the shoulder

16" class – for dogs measuring 19 inches and over at the shoulder

Any special considerations (including age or health) that would require an exception to the above jump heights must be expressly written on the entry form for clarity.

Class Descriptions:

Depending on their demonstrated abilities handler/dog teams may enter ONE of the following *four* progressive classes in their dog's respective height category:

Jumps, Tunnels and Table A - tab lead (JTT-A): For dogs who have minimal experience in agility working off- leash, and/or may need extra guidance to remain on course.

Jumps, Tunnels and Table B - off lead (JTT-B): For dogs who have had some experience with agility, are reliable off-leash, but may not be ready for standard agility with the contact equipment and/or weaves.

Standard A - tab lead (STD-A): For dogs who have had some experience and are familiar with weaves and contact equipment, but have less experience working off-leash. Dog may need extra guidance to remain on course.

Standard B - off lead (STD-B): For dogs who are experienced in agility, able to complete the weaves and contact equipment independently, and are reliable off- leash.

These classes are intended to allow for a progression of training levels in agility. Exhibitors may enter Standard Agility only after demonstrating the ability to complete contact obstacles

and weaves successfully as determined by a county dog project leader / trainer or independent agility trainer.

General Course Information:

- 1a. Jumps, Table, Tunnel courses will consist of 7-10 obstacles with a maximum course time of 2 minutes. JTT obstacles include single wing and non-winged jumps, a table, and one or more open tunnels.
- 1b. Standard courses will consist of 10-15 obstacles with a maximum course time of 3 minutes. Areas in which courses are set up should be at least 50 feet by 60 feet. Standard obstacles include contact obstacles (A-frame and/or dog walk, and/or seesaw), six weave poles, wing and non-wing jumps, open tunnels and table.
2. Time begins when any part of the dog crosses the start line, defined as the plane of the first obstacle.
3. Each obstacle will be marked with a number. Handlers and dogs will be required to follow the course in numerical order in order to avoid penalty.
4. Before competition begins, the handlers will be allowed to walk through the course to become familiar with the course. The walk through is restricted to the handlers only and is limited to 10 minutes.
5. A warm-up jump outside of the ring will be available for handlers and dogs. Handlers should be considerate of others in taking turns at the warm-up jump.
6. Any dog whose hair covers its eyes and may interfere with its vision of the obstacles may tie the hair back with rubber bands.
7. Food and toys are not permitted on the course.
8. Handlers are not permitted to have whistles, stopwatches, fanny packs, or other training devices on the course.
9. The handlers may be on either side of the dog while running the course.
10. Time ends when any part of the dog crosses the finish line, in the correct direction, when the dog is in the closing sequence. The finish line is defined as the plane of the last obstacle.
11. At the handler's option, dogs may run a course with or without a collar. The only collars allowed when running a course are flat buckle or rolled leather collars, but there shall be no attachments hanging or otherwise allowed on the collar. This shall not preclude painted or stitched designs or information on the collar. Dog's names and/or identifying information may appear on the collar. No title, awards, or advertising may appear on the collar. Dogs may be brought to the start line on slip leads, choke chains, body harnesses or other collars that are permitted on the trial grounds.

12. Any dog that commits to a *contact* obstacle (A-frame, dog walk, seesaw) with all four paws must, for safety reasons, continue with the obstacle. Whether obstacle is completed or not, if the dog jumps off, dog and handler must go on to the next obstacle and may not attempt that obstacle again.

Scoring:

1. Each course is worth a maximum of 100 points.
2. A penalty consists of the loss of 5 or 10 points.
3. Ten point penalties (judge holds up two hands) include:
 - a. Not making contact in contact zones (the contrasting colored zone, usually yellow, on the start and end of each contact obstacle), *with at least one paw*.
 - b. Not completing an obstacle following a refusal or run-by (must go back and complete obstacle after a refusal or run-by to avoid penalty)
 - c. The handler going over the obstacle with the dog
4. Five point penalties (judge holds up one hand) include:
 - a. Not doing the obstacles in proper order (wrong course)
 - b. Knocking down a jump bar
 - c. Excessively guiding the dog with the tab lead
 - d. Touching the dog or the obstacle to aide in handling
 - e. Releasing the dog from the table and proceeding to next obstacle before the judge says "GO.
 - f. Continuing to the next obstacle after missing one or more weave poles (must complete weave poles correctly.)
 - g. Any outside interference or assistance that aids or is intended to aid the dog or handler.
5. Refusals or run-by's will not be faulted in 4-H competition, as long as the obstacle is then completed within the maximum time.
6. The dog/handler team's run will be timed. In the case of a tie in total points, the fastest time will win.
7. Exhibitors will be asked to leave the ring if the maximum course time is reached. The run will result in a non-qualifying score once the maximum course time has been exceeded.
8. Any interference or outside assistance that aids or is intended to aid the dog or handler will be considered a 5-point penalty.
9. Excessive or harsh commands or corrections, as well as un-sportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. This will be penalized and the handler and dog will be excused from the ring and competition.
10. Failure to follow judge's verbal instructions will result in a penalty determined by the judge (points or excusal from the ring).

11. If the dog urinates or defecates in the ring (from the time it enters until it leaves the ring), the dog and handler will be disqualified from the class.
12. A score of 70 or higher is considered a Qualifying Score in all classes of 4-H agility.

Obstacle Descriptions:

It is critical that the equipment used in agility be safe for the 4-H exhibitors and their dogs. It is recommended that the agility coordinator/group arrange for the judge they have selected to check the equipment for condition prior to the show, and again on the day of the show.

A-Frame: Dogs must go up one side touching the contact zone on the up side with any part of one foot and down the other side in the direction designated by the judge. The dog must also touch the contact zone on the down side with any part of one foot prior to exiting the obstacle. The height of the A-frame at the apex will be no higher than 4'6". A-Frame has slats.

Dog Walk: Dogs must go up the ramp touching the up contact zone with any part of one foot, cross the center section and go down the down ramp touching any part of one foot in the down contact zone prior to exiting the obstacle. Dog walk has slats.

Seesaw: Dogs must go up the plank touching the up contact zone with any part of one foot and cause the plank to pivot. At least one foot must touch the down contact zone after the plank has touched the ground and prior to exiting the obstacle.

Weave Poles: The dogs must enter the weave poles by passing between poles # 1 and #2 . *The dog's left shoulder must enter on the right of the 1st pole.* The dog must continue to weave through the remaining poles before exiting between pole 5 and 6.

Pause Table: The dogs must pause on the table for 5 seconds in either a sit, down, or standing position. The judge will do an oral count (which will begin as soon as the dog is on the table) and will also give a signal to —"Go" after the count is completed. When the judge says, "Go", the handler may then release the dog and proceed. If the dog breaks from the table before the word "Go", the judge will stop counting and will only continue the count when the dog returns to the table.

Open Tunnel: The dogs must enter the end specified by the judge and exit the other end.

Bar Jumps: The dogs must jump over the top bar, without displacing it, in the direction indicated by the judge.

Tire Jump: The dogs must jump through the tire opening in the direction indicated by the judge, without knocking the tire/frame over.

Panel Jump: The dog must jump over the top panel without displacing it, in the direction indicated by the judge.