

**WEST AUSTRALIAN WORKING SHEEP DOG ASSOCIATION
RULES AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON YARD & UTILITY TRIALS**

Updated At Tarwonga 10th April 2010.

All Official yard & utility trials be judged under WAWSDA Yard & Utility rules and Recommendations.

1. DEFINITIONS.

- (a) **A. YARD DOG COMPETITION:-** A competition in which a dog and it's handler must negotiate sheep through a predetermined course, confined within a permanent or temporary sheep yard within a specified time limit, using eighteen or more sheep if possible.
- (b) **UTILITY TRIAL:-** A competition in which a dog and its handler must negotiate sheep through both the yard and field courses within a specified time limit.
- (c) **THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:-** The persons responsible for conducting the competition.
- (d) **THE TRIAL COMMITTEE:-** Will be three people, nominated on the program, to settle any disputes or clarify any ruling.
- (e) **HANDLER:-** The person who has nominated to work a dog.
- (f) **FARMERS CLASS:-** Workers who are eligible until they have competed at five recognized trials.
- (g) **NOVICE DOG:-** One that has not won a novice or open yard, or a utility trial
- (h) **OPEN DOG:-** Must be registered with the WAWSDA, and their handler must be a financial member of a affiliated Club

2. TRIAL RULES.

- 1) A draw must be conducted to determine the order of working prior to the start of the competition. Where a worker has more that one entry in a class, the entries will be distributed a uniformly as possible through out that class, but not necessarily as listed in the entry form. The first and second entries in any class will randomly selected from all dogs in that class. Any dog entered in a utility trial is automatically eligible for the yard section. All open dogs entered at yard and utility trials, to be entered with their full name and registration numbers.
- 2) All handlers must be issued with either a copy of the draw, or a copy must be displayed in a prominent position at the trial. A public address system should be employed where ever possible to keep handlers and spectators informed.
- 3) The judges will be selected by the organizing committee according to status from a list supplied the WAWSDA. If using two judges the scores will be combined and averaged. The judges will address all competitors prior to the commencement of the trial. Before the trial judges should endeavor to watch sheep going through the course before addressing the competitors. The judge(s) will be in command of the competition from the time the handler, with his dog released, enters the course.
- 4) All sheep will be inspected prior to being worked for any physical defects or injuries. Any injured, unhealthy, or unsuitable sheep must not be worked, (e.g:- wool blind).
- 5) A maximum time limit in which to complete the course will be set before the competition commences. The composition of the course will influence the time limit. It is recommended the course be constructed to allow it to be comfortably completed. The time limit will be set by the organizing committee. A bell or similar device, when sounded, shall signify the start of each run and the expiry of the limit.
- 6) All competitions shall be run over such course as the organizing committee determines. Competition courses should include at least four of the following:-
 - Gather of sheep.
 - Drafting race/classing race.
 - Trailer, truck, elevated platform.
 - Ramp.
 - Fill a wool shed.
 - Put sheep away.
 - Any other obstacle likely to found in farm sheep yards.

(Trial rules Continued)

- 7) When erecting the yards the organizing committee must ensure that there are no sharp edges, protrusions, or objects that may be hazardous or cause injury to the sheep, dogs, or handlers. Where the yards are constructed from panels or portable yards, the organizing committee must ensure that they are securely fixed to prevent any movement when pressure is applied by the sheep.
- 8) In competition courses that incorporate a drenching race or other confined area into which all the sheep must be forced, the number of sheep to be worked shall be that number which allows each sheep to stand comfortably. This number shall be determined by the organizing committee. In consultation with the judge(s). Section points must be allocated to each section according to the degree of difficulty of the obstacles within the course.

3. JUDGING SYSTEMS. - YARD SECTION

- 1) The yard section will commence once the sheep are within the yards.
- 2) Dogs causing sheep to go down through over working will be penalized at the judges discretion.
- 3) Dogs shall not be penalized for nipping sheep low down on the hock, or on the topknot, providing they do it in the right places at the right time, and without being too severe.
- 4) Dogs biting excessively and working the sheep in an unduly rough manner may be disqualified at the judge's discretion. Penalty two to five points.
- 5) Opening of gates and mixing of sheep to be done in the correct sequence. Penalty five points.
- 6) Each gate left open incorrectly. Penalty five points.
- 7) When handling sheep, the dog should make an attempt to move the sheep first, if no valid attempt is made. Penalty five points.
- 8) Dog turning sheep wrong way at head, because it has gone too far. Penalty one point each time.
- 9) Dog leaves yard or race and has to be called back. Penalty two points each time.
- 10) Any movement by worker to move sheep. Penalty two points.
- 11) Dog jumps in wrong pen. Penalty one point.
- 12) Sheep not clear of all gates before closing. Penalty four points.
- 13) In the drenching race
 - (a) 5 sheep should be marked with raddle,(the first 2 and the last 3) subject to the owner's consent
 - (b). Misdrafted sheep. Penalty two points each sheep
- 14) Points shall be deducted for sheep breaking back at judges discretion (one point per panel) being harder on the dog that makes little attempt to cover. Dogs causing sheep to hit fences or gates. Penalty two to five points or disqualification.
- 15) If necessary, sheep must be cleared of all gates by dog before opening. Penalty two points.
- 16) Turntail not under pressure. Penalty two points.
- 17) Turntail under pressure. Penalty one point.
- 18) In the drafting phase the handler may use their body to avoid jamming the sheep's head.
- 19) Forward progress must be made or points may be deducted for ineffective work. Penalty one point. Once the dog has lost all points for that section, the handler will be told to assist the dog to clear that section.
- 20) At the judge's discretion, any handler who may need help through the yards may request an assistant, who must abide by the rules or be penalized.
- 21) Judges to nominate in which yards dogs cannot cross in their opening address.
- 22) In the event of a run being interfered with, e.g.:- gates not shut, dogs or sheep straying onto the course, sheep escapes, the judge(s) may order a rerun. In the event of a sheep escaping, but not from the entire course, the run may continue at the judge's discretion.
- 23) Dogs may wear a muzzle. Penalty five points.
- 24) Prior to competing, an elderly or disabled handler may apply to the trial committee to have an able bodied person assist them with any physically demanding task likely to be encountered in the competition. The assistant must be selected by the trial committee, and will assist at the discretion of the handler. The handler will be penalized for any infringement of the rules by the assistant.

4. FIELD SECTION.

- 1) The cast & draw, and into the yards will be one section, there will be a certain number of points allotted to each section, when these points are all lost the handler will be asked to move on to the next section in sequence until they complete the course or time expires.
- 2) At the casting peg. No leaving the peg when bringing the sheep into the circle.
- 3) Could not recall the dog. Penalty disqualification.
- 4) Redirection during the cast. Penalty one point each redirection.
- 5) Crossing on the cast. Penalty five points.
- 6) Stopping short on the cast and on recommencement the sheep are forced off line. Penalty one point every ten metres.
- 7) Leaving the circle to help Penalty loss of all points for that section.
- 8) Draw into the Circle. For a deviation off the straight line by sheep. Penalty one point every ten metres.
- 9) Every ten metres the sheep run past or back prior to entering the circle. Penalty one point.
- 10) From the circle into the yards.
 - a (a)Deviation. Penalty one point every ten metres.
 - b (b)Assisting the dog to yard sheep. Penalty one point per movement of more than one metre by the handler.
- 11) Obstacles
 - (a) IF driving to a winding gap, deviation off straight line. Penalty one point per ten metres. Sheep wrong way through gap. Penalty all gap points.
 - (b) At trap if sheep break back once you leave the wing, you must keep walking and all sheep must be within the obstacle before your gate is fully open. Once sheep have exited the obstacle gate must be closed to gain remaining points.
- 12) Pen.
 - (a) Deviation off straight line. Penalty one point every ten metres.
 - (b) Handler not standing in the circle. Penalty all pen points.
 - (c) Sheep leaving pen while worker is shutting the gate. Penalty all pen points unless the dog is able to put back the sheep without handler assistance, providing they do not stop, whereby the penalty will be one point.
- 13) Dogs losing more than ten metres in the field section will be penalized 1 point each time.

5. FINALS.

- 1) The finalists shall be the highest scoring dogs in the first run. Number in the final to be determined by the trial committee.
- 2) If a number of dogs are tied on the lowest score eligible for the final, all will go into the final.
- 3) The highest aggregate score will be the winner.
- 4) In the event of a tie for first place after aggregation of scores, a run off will be conducted. there must be an outright winner.
- 5) In the event of a tie for minor placing's prize money is pooled then divided, e.g:- if Third place is a tie money from third and fourth placing's is pooled and divided. If There is a trophy placegetters may toss for it or have a run off.
- 6) Where possible the final shall be conducted in the same order as the dogs were drawn To work in the first run. However if a handler has consecutive runs they may be separated by other dogs.
- 7) Club secretaries must work out the top twelve placing's for both yard & utility sections when forwarding the official program to the WAWSDA Secretary.

6. RE-RUNS

- 1) A re-run will be granted if any dog not belonging to the handler comes into the competition area and interferes with the run.
- 2) In the event of a sheep escaping but not from the entire course the run may continue at the judge's discretion however the clock must not stop.

- 3) The judge(s) may order a rerun for the dog competing at any time during that dogs run.
- 4) If a rerun is granted it must be conducted at the end of the draw.

7. PROTESTS.

- 1) Any protest must be lodged with the trial committee immediately and their ruling is final.

8. CANES.

- 1) Handlers may use a cane not exceeding 45cm in length. It must not be used to assist in moving the sheep. Penalty two points. Cane not to be used in a threatening manner Penalty two to five points

9. WELFARE OF SHEEP AND DOGS.

- 1) The handler will not be penalized for aiding a distressed sheep.
- 2) Any handler who fails to make an effort to stand up a sheep which goes down in a race or other confined area or fails to free a sheep caught in a fence or shows disregard for the welfare of the sheep, must be penalized or may be disqualified.
- 3) All dogs worked should be vaccinated and in general good health.

10. ELIGIBILITY.

- 1) Novice and Open judges will be selected by the senior judge's panel.
- 2) We disregard the results of three sheep trials at yard; utility trials. (recognition of class).
- 3) WA representatives to the Australian Yard dog championship are our State champion yard dog and one other from our yard dog of the year list, taken from the last six trials.
- 4) Dogs which score 75% of possible points or win a novice yard or utility trial may be registered for a fee of \$5.00 by the registrar.

11. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 1) Stopping walking between obstacles in the field section. Penalty two points.
- 2) Score card should be varied to suit the trial.
- 3) Number of sheep used in the field section will depend on availability.
- 4) Turntail not under pressure in the field. Penalty two points.
- 5) Turntails in the field under pressure. Penalty one point.
- 6) Bitches on heat may be worked at yard & utility trials.
- 7) Judges panel meeting to be held at a yard & utility trial each year.
- 8) If you are entered in a utility trial and you lose sheep in the field section, you are still eligible for a yard run.
- 9) Running by the handler should be eliminated at yard & utility trials.
- 10) No handling of the dog, e.g. Lifting over fences etc. Penalty 5 points per time.
- 11) No verbal abuse e.g. "You mongrel", and "I'll get you" etc.
- 12) Secretary of the club running the trial to keep a set of rules handy in the office.
- 13) Yard Sub Committee to have the judges panel meetings around the fire etc, and up and coming judges to shadow judge for practice using open Judges.
- 14) Judges to nominate in which yards dogs cannot cross in their opening address.