

# WEST AUSTRALIAN WORKING SHEEP DOG ASSOCIATION



## **RULES FOR THREE SHEEP ARENA TRIALS:**

Amended March 2024

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### **1. General**

- 1.1. Three Sheep Trials are conducted by affiliated clubs of WAWSDA to demonstrate the inherent instinct and ability of the working sheepdog to move sheep in a calm, quiet and confident manner.
- 1.2. The dog works the sheep around a course along defined areas, through obstacles and finally into a pen. A time is set prior to the commencement of the event.
- 1.3. No dogs shall be allowed into the arena prior to the start of any trial or during the period of any trial unless directed by the Trial Committee – penalised by the trial committee.
- 1.4 Any competitor who voluntarily withdraws forfeits all points for the dog in that class.
- 1.5 Any competitor requiring an aid is to be approved by the judge and trial committee.

- 1.6 All competing workers must be an affiliated member of WAWSDA to participate. An Interstate visitor working a dog in an official trial must be affiliated to their State or to WAWSDA. To represent Western Australia, a worker must be an affiliated WASWDA member and reside in Western Australia.
- 1.7 All competitors start with 100 points. These are deducted by the officiating judge when mistakes are made by the worker or dog.
- 1.8 Obstacle points will be: Race 7 points, Bridge 8 points, Pen 10 points. In the event where a “ring off” is invoked, if an obstacle is achieved, the judge shall not add on the obstacle points.
- 1.9 If the race is not achieved, the maximum amount of points a competitor shall be awarded, cannot not be more than 50 points.
- 1.10 The Judge’s decision is final.

## **2 The Course**

- 2.1 Competitors must take their place as shown in the draw. Any dog not available to commence their run when called upon to compete after 2 minutes shall be disqualified, except in exceptional circumstances, subject to the judge’s or trial committee’s ruling.
- 2.2 Each dog shall work three [3] sheep.
- 2.3 Once the worker is standing at the peg and the sheep are released, they shall be the sheep worked by that dog; subject to the worker having the right to object to the sheep or a sheep before leaving the casting peg. The judge’s decision shall be final.  
**Once the sheep are on the arena a competitor may not leave the casting peg to recall his dog. Penalty Disqualification**
- 2.4. Any time a competitor is unsure of an aspect of the course he may refer to the judge, but the judge should not volunteer information unasked.
- 2.5 All dogs must be off leash on entering the arena or they will be disqualified.
- 2.6 A judge may order fresh sheep at any time during a trial and may terminate a trial at any time for inferior work, or abuse of sheep. Any trial terminated by a judge will bring forfeiture of the score for that run.
- 2.7 The judge will give a signal after the sheep are released and a timer bell will be rung indicating that time will start at this point; each dog will be allowed 15 minutes to complete the course, or any such shorter time as is publicised prior to the start of the trial.

2.8 The competitor may cast their dog at any time after the bell, but all dogs must be within 10m of the worker before casting. Any dog leaving the area before the casting bell sounds must be recalled before making contact and influencing their sheep.

Penalty -Disqualification

2.9 The worker shall not assist the dog in any way, but may direct it by signal, whistle, or word of mouth. Each competitor may use a stick not exceeding 45cm in length and 25mm diameter providing it is not used for the purpose of creating a sound.

2.10 The dog will be disqualified when crossing between the worker and the sheep at any time during the trial, **except when forcing within the wings of an obstacle (as stated in 2.18 ). Dogs casting outside the arena will be penalised at the judge's discretion. Dogs leaving the arena will be disqualified.**

2.11 After completing the cast, and lift, the sheep must be brought in a straight line toward the casting peg. into a semi-circular area defined by markers; when this is completed the worker then must leave on the right-hand side of the cast peg and proceed with the course.

2.12 Every movement of the worker from point to point must be in a straight line and no worker may walk backward for more than 1 step or stop **walking except at the designated places and obstacles.to work his dog.**

Penalty - Disqualification.

2.13 The worker and their sheep must move around the right-hand side of the winding pegs. If the sheep pass on the left-hand side they must be returned and brought around the right-hand side of the winding pegs.

2.14 The worker may stop at either winding peg whilst working the sheep around winding pegs but will be penalised 1 point for each stop. The worker can work the sheep around the first winding peg from the second winding peg and can work the sheep around the second winding peg from the ring at the Race. The worker cannot work the race until sheep have been unwound from both winding pegs correctly. The sheep will be deemed past the winding peg when they have crossed a line from the winding peg back to the casting peg. This line will go to the back fence.

Penalty- Disqualification

2.15 The raised rings in which the worker stands at each obstacle shall be 90cm in diameter and the edge of the raised ring shall be 3 m from the wings of all obstacles, including the pen gate. Position of the raised ring to the obstacle is shown in the accompanying plan

- 2.16 If the sheep enter any obstacle before the worker is in the circle, this obstacle must be reworked. All sheep must be completely through the obstacle before the worker leaves the circle. Penalty - Disqualification.
- 2.17 A marker will be placed 15m prior to the wing of the bridge. The marker will indicate when the sheep may be brought onto your left prior to commencing to work the obstacle.
- 2.18 A dog will not be disqualified or lose points if it crosses when it is forcing sheep through the race or bridge from inside the wings and a sheep causes a cross by jumping over the dog.
- 2.19 After completing the bridge, the worker must move so that the exit of the bridge is on their right-hand side when proceeding to the pen. Penalty Disqualification
- 2.20 All sheep must be completely clear past the entrance of the pen before the competitor may leave the raised ring to close the gate. Any worker running with the gate to trap the sheep will be penalised with the loss of all pen points. Any sheep escaping after the worker leaves the raised ring and are returned immediately before the worker closed the gate, will result in 1 penalty point or more at Judge's discretion.
- 2.20a Any sheep escaping completely after the worker leaves the raised ring will result in the loss of all pen points and the trial is terminated once the gate is shut.
- 2.21 The bell will be rung to notify disqualification and time expiry of each trial and on conclusion of the trial each competitor must move his sheep as directed by the committee.
- 2.22 If the sheep escape while being worked on the course, the trial may be terminated at the judge's discretion.
- 2.23 Any dog deliberately biting or in any way injuring a sheep shall be disqualified and the owner held responsible for any damage done.
- 2.24 Dogs barking or snapping at sheep when stuck up or when attacked by the sheep may be penalised 2-5 points but not disqualified. No dog may wear a muzzle while on the trial ground.
- 2.25 If in the opinion of the Judge, any person who ill uses their dog, they may be subject to a fine of \$50.00 by the trial committee and may be de-barred from competing in any further trials conducted by the West Australian Working Sheep Dog Association.

2.26 If any dog strays onto the arena whilst a trial is in progress or any other interference occurs, the competitor may request a re-run; the judges' immediate decision shall be final. Re-runs scheduling will occur at the discretion of the Trial Committee and Office.

### 3 Judging and penalties

#### General

3.1. If a dog "turns tail" (ie. turns off it's work – 360 degrees ) the penalty, depending on the circumstances is 1 - 2 points

3.1.1 Slow work, to the extent that a significant part of the course cannot be achieved, should be penalised as it occurs, which ensures that an inferior run is not given advantage over positive work.

3.1.2 If the obstacles collapse while working – re-run to be granted Judges discretion. ( eg, if collapse is created by the dog's work, a re-run should not be granted.)

#### 3.2 Cast

3.2.1. The Cast should be free running to the point of control without disturbing the sheep and the sheep's first movement be towards the handler. If the dog stops, not in the point of control before having reached the halfway point. **3 points**

3.2.2 Each stop after halfway 1 point plus 1 point for each redirection.

3.2.3 On the lift- if sheep move towards the dog 1 point

3.2.4 Sheep not moving towards the handler as in a perfect lift. 1 point

3.2.5 If sheep move to left or right more than 5 meters, 1 point

Each 10 meters after that till a new line is achieved. 1 point

3.2.6 Leaving the casting peg before all sheep not delivered into delivery area. Disqualification

#### 3.3 Working the Course - away from the casting peg and between obstacles

3.3.1 Sheep going behind the marked delivery area are off course. 1 point

Each further 10 meters or part of: 1 point

- 3.3.2 If sheep are left too far behind or go too far forward from the handler (within the correct course) each 10 metres or part of: 1 point
- 3.3.3 If escaping sheep are only stopped by the boundary fence, there may be a penalty of in addition to the “off course”. Penalty of up to 4 points at the judge’s discretion
- 3.3.4 The worker must move from point to point in a straight line –penalty for deviation then 1 point per metre

### 3.4 Working the Obstacle –

There is a 10 metre free working area in the front of the opening of each obstacle where there is no loss of points.

- 3.4.1 When working the course, the worker must maintain a constant pace between Obstacles – **change of pace will be penalised.** Penalty: Judges Discretion
- 3.4.2 Any part of the sheep past the wing of an obstacle. 1 point
- 3.4.3 Any part of the sheep past the halfway mark of the obstacle 2 points.
- 3.4.4 Once the sheep go to a position whereby it is the same distance to be returned to the front of the obstacle. 3 points.
- 3.4.5 If sheep also come back out of an obstacle. 1 point plus 1point for each 10 meters lost.
- 3.4.6 If a dog will not face the sheep when they need forcing through, or into an obstacle but dog tries to force them from outside the panels. up to 4 points.
- 3.4.7 At any obstacle once the dog is within the wings it should not come out until the sheep have cleared the obstacle. Penalty 1 point each time.
- 3.4.8 A dog crossing while forcing within the wings of the race or bridge will not be disqualified, but may be penalised for faulty work at judge’s discretion.

## 4 Working The Pen

- 4.4.1 Worker running with or slamming gate to trap sheep in the pen 10 pen points.

- 4.4.2 If dog goes into the pen and comes out before gate is shut 1 point
- 4.4.3 If dog goes into pen and the gate is shut with dog in the pen  
Disqualification
- 4.4.4 When the worker is closing the gate, the dog must cover the gap at closure of the pen.  
1point
- 4.4.5 While closing the gate if the dog goes past and around the back of the pen 3 points
- 4.4.6 If the dog comes behind the worker into the corner of pen. 2 points
- 4.4.7 Leaving the raised ring to close the gate before all sheep are completely past the entrance of the pen.  
Disqualification
- 4.4.8 **If in the process of closing the gate the sheep escape the pen, the trial is only deemed to have finished when the gate is completely closed. Otherwise the result is “Retired”.**