

CANINE FREESTYLE COMPETITION RULES

Approved by the Finnish Kennel Club on 22.11.2009. Valid from 1.5.2009.

1. GENERAL

These rules, given by the Finnish Kennel Club, are complemented by the Canine Freestyle Regulations which include guidelines for event organizers and judges as well as instructions for judge and steward training.

2. PURPOSE OF CANINE FREESTYLE COMPETITIONS

The objective of canine freestyle is to create an innovative routine, performed by a handler-dog team, that reflects and matches the selected music, takes into account the individual characteristics of the dog, and is an expression of harmonious teamwork.

3. STYLE CATEGORIES

Canine freestyle competitions are arranged in the following style categories:

Freestyle
Heelwork to Music
Special routines

4. ELIGIBILITY FOR ENTRY

In order to be eligible, both the handler and the dog must meet the entry requirements. The handler is responsible for ensuring his/her own and the dog's eligibility; in the case of handlers under 18 years of age and their dogs, the responsibility lies with the handler's parent/guardian.

The organizing club is required to verify the eligibility of each handler and dog, and to exclude teams that do not meet all requirements.

A team that has participated in an event without being eligible shall have their results invalidated.

Eligibility of handler

The handler must be a member of a national kennel organization recognized by the FCI, or of a member club of such organization, and must be eligible to compete in his/her own country.

Eligibility of dog

Canine Freestyle Record Book

Each participating dog must have an official record book certified by a national kennel organization recognized by the FCI. More detailed information is available in the Canine Freestyle Judging Guidelines.

Registration certificate

Dogs participating in national events must be registered in either the breed register or ID marking register (FIX) of the Finnish Kennel Club, or in some other breed register or ID marking register recognized by the FCI.

Dogs participating in the Finnish Championship competition must be registered in the breed register of the Finnish Kennel Club. Dogs participating in a national team representing Finland must be registered in the breed register of the Finnish Kennel Club.

Age limit

Dogs participating in canine freestyle competitions must be at least 10 months and one day old.

Vaccinations

All participating dogs must be vaccinated in accordance with the vaccination regulations of the Finnish Kennel Club.

ID marking

All participating dogs must be ID marked in accordance with the ID marking regulations of the Finnish Kennel Club.

Limitations to eligibility

Entry is not accepted in the following cases:

- the dog is ill
- a bitch is in season (with the exception of title events),
- pregnant bitch 30 days or less before expected whelping and less than 42 days after it,
- dogs that do not meet the valid anti-doping regulations, and
- dogs exhibiting aggressive behavior.

5. ENSURING UNBIASED JUDGING

See the regulations of the Finnish Kennel Club on cases where a judge of a show or trial may be considered potentially biased.

6. LICENSE TO ORGANIZE CANINE FREESTYLE COMPETITIONS

All canine freestyle competitions are granted by the Finnish Kennel Club.

1. Applying

The club applying for a license to organize a competition must be a member of the Finnish Kennel Club. The practical arrangements are handled by an organizing committee appointed by the hosting club, and at least one of the members of this committee must be a qualified Canine Freestyle Steward.

2. Application period

All applications must be sent in within the time limits specified by the Finnish Kennel Club.

3. Contents of application

The application must contain the following information: organizing club; name of competition; style categories included; possible limitations to entry; date and place of competition; size of ring; location of judges; classes included; entry fee and how it shall be paid; last entry date; where the entries are sent; the appointed Head Judge, and the Head Steward.

4. Sending the application

The applications are sent to the Finnish Kennel Club. After approving the applications the Finnish Kennel Club will inform the local kennel organization of all competitions to be held within its area.

5. Information of a competition

The Finnish Kennel Club publishes information on all approved canine freestyle competitions in its official publications. The organizing club may also advertise the event in other ways.

8. POSTPONING OR CANCELING A COMPETITION

Must be done in accordance with the applicable regulations of the Finnish Kennel Club.

9. HEAD JUDGE

The appointed Head Judge of a competition must be a Senior Judge approved by, and a member of, the Finnish Kennel Club.

10. JUDGES AND HEAD STEWARD

All judges as well as the Head Steward must be qualified and approved by, and members of, the Finnish Kennel Club. The Finnish Kennel Club shall approve any foreign judges working at events held in Finland.

11. PANEL OF JUDGES

The panel of judges consists of 3–5 licensed judges, one of whom is appointed the Head Judge by the organizing club. The panel of judges makes decisions on

- the judging of routines,
- the disqualification of routines and excusing a dog from the competition

12. ENTERING A COMPETITION AND CANCELING THE ENTRY

Entering a competition

Entries must be sent in by the date given by the organizing club, and they must contain all of the requested information. The organizers are not obligated to accept incomplete entries.

If the number of entries is limited, the organizing club must inform every entrant of whether or not their entry has been accepted. The entry fee shall be refunded in full to those entrants whose entry has been refused because of the limitation.

Late entry is allowed. The entry fee for late entries is decided by the organizing committee and may be maximum two times the original entry fee.

Refunds

The entry fee shall not be refunded if a team is absent without an acceptable reason. The entry fee must be refunded if the entry is canceled because a bitch has come to season, the dog or handler is taken ill (certified by a veterinarian/doctor) or has died, or if any of the judges may be considered potentially biased. When the cancellation is done because a bitch has come to season, a certificate signed by two impartial persons must be presented. The organizing committee must be notified of cancellations before the start of an event. The organizing committee has the right to deduct handling fees from the refunds.

13. RESPONSIBILITY OF HANDLER

The handler is required to follow the canine freestyle competition rules and regulations, as well as the instructions and requests of the judges, steward and the organizing club. All handlers must handle and train their dog in accordance with animal protection legislature and good manners, at all times ensuring the physical and mental welfare of the dog.

14. COMPETITION CLASSES

There are three official competition classes (levels): Novice, Open, and Advanced. Teams proceed from class to class in the order specified below.

1. Novice class

For dogs that have not yet received three Honor Prizes in the Novice class and have not competed in the higher classes.

2. Open class

For dogs that have received at least one Honor Prize in the Novice class but have not yet received three Honor Prizes in the Open class and have not competed in the higher classes.

3. Advanced class

For dogs that have received at least two Honor Prizes in the Open class.

A team may advance from Novice to Open class when it has been granted one Honor Prize in the Novice class, and from Open to Advanced class when it has been granted two Honor Prizes in the Open class. A team is obligated to advance from Novice or Open class to the next higher class at the latest after it has been granted three Honor Prizes. When a dog has competed in a higher class it can no longer be entered to the lower classes. A dog with three Honor Prizes in the Advanced class is awarded a Canine Freestyle Certificate.

15. EXCESSIVE DISTURBANCES

The appointed Head Judge may interrupt a routine in disturbance situations beyond the handler's control. When the routine can be continued once more, the Head Judge gives a sign and the team is to continue the routine from the point where it was interrupted. The Head Judge may also interrupt a routine and ask the team to start again from the beginning.

16. INTERRUPTING

A handler is allowed to interrupt a routine. If a handler wishes to interrupt a competition routine and continue it as a training session until the end of the music, this is permitted and the handler is required to inform the judges of this either by raising a hand or verbally. In such cases motivation toys are allowed in the ring. The routine will then be entered in the record book as "interrupted".

The Head Judge may interrupt a routine if the dog obviously is not in the physical condition to compete, or if the handler treats the dog harshly or inappropriately during the routine.

17. JUDGING CRITERIA

The performance of each team shall be judged fairly and according to uniform criteria. More detailed information and instructions are given in the Canine Freestyle Judging Guidelines. Judges are also allowed to use technical devices to aid in judging. Objections to judging that has taken place according to the relevant rules and regulations shall not be accepted.

18. AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR OF DOG

If a dog exhibits aggression at an event, it shall be reported to the Finnish Kennel Club according to the valid regulations, using the form provided for the purpose, and the Finnish Kennel Club shall decide on possible further action.

19. LIABILITY FOR DAMAGES

The Finnish Kennel Club shall not be held liable for any damages caused by the application of these rules.

The organizing club must take the appropriate precautions, either by insuring or otherwise, in case of possible damages. The organizing club is required to have a collective accident insurance covering the judges, stewards and other persons working at the event, and a liability insurance for potential damages caused at the event to the audience, persons working at the event, or third parties.

All dogs and handlers participate in events at their own risk. The handler and/or owner of a dog shall be responsible for any damage or injury caused to or by the dog.

20. RESULTS

1. Checking of results

The Head Steward verifies all calculated results, ensures that they are correctly written in the official competition score sheet and in the individual team score sheets, and hands them to the Head Judge for approval. The Head Judge confirms all score sheets by signing them, and also validates all results qualifying a team for Championship.

2. Sending the results

The organizing committee sends the competition score sheets and team score sheets verified by the Head Judge to the Finnish Kennel Club within a week of the event.

21. PERSONAL AIDS

Handlers who due to health reasons need to use for example a wheelchair or crutches or a personal assistant in the ring are allowed to do so, and are required to inform the organizers of this when submitting their entry to an event.

22. COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

All complaints and disputes shall be handled in accordance with the appeal procedure approved by the Finnish Kennel Club.

23. CHANGES

These rules and regulations can only be changed by the Finnish Kennel Club.

In addition to these rules, the general rules and guidelines given by the Finnish Kennel Club for trials and competitions shall apply.