

Terminology:

- 1) **Briefing** – this happens before you walk the course. The judge gathers everyone in the ring and “briefly” goes over some things you need to know. Such as when to enter the ring with your dog. What her table count sounds like. She may give you a few reminders like you have 3 times to try the weave poles and then you need to move on.
- 2) **Scribe sheet** Otherwise known as your score sheet. There is a scribe sheet for each dog in each class. At PawPrint Trials, we always have carbonless scribe sheets. After you run your course, the white copy of your scribe sheet is given to the trial secretary to score. The yellow copy goes in a basket near the score table. That copy is for you. Try to pick up your copy shortly after you run. If there is a question regarding your run, you will have a better chance of the judge remembering your call shortly after your run, rather than 2 hours later. If possible, please have someone video your run. Though a judge may only use a video for if there is a timer malfunction, it is helpful for you for training purposes. You may also write notes on the yellow scribe sheet about your run.
- 3) **VMO Volunteer Measuring Official** If there is a Volunteer Measuring Official at the trial, it will be listed in the confirmation letter. If you do not have an AKC Agility Height Card, you will need to be measured prior to your first run.
- 4) **Standard Course Time (SCT)** Your judge designed a course, meeting the requirements for a Novice course. She submitted it to the AKC for approval. After the course is set up, she will wheel it to determine the yardage. Then she uses a formula to determine how much time you have to run the course. That is referred to as the Standard Course Time. She will tell you how much time you have at the briefing.
- 5) **Gate Sheets** This a listing of each dog in each class. They are separated by class (Standard, Jumpers with Weaves etc) and by level (Novice, Open, Excellent and Masters). The day before the trial, from noon-5pm, you will be able to check in online for the following day. If you can't check in online, you will check yourself in on the gate sheets the morning of the trial.
- 6) **Maps** The judge has designed a course for each class offered. A map of the course for that day will be available for download from my website after midnight of the day of the trial. There will also be copies posted on the wall. Most trials do not have printed course maps for exhibitors. You can print a copy before you leave for the trial or take a photo of the map with your phone once you arrive at the trial.

Step by step what to do at a trial

When to arrive: A few days before the trial the running order will be posted on my website for each day. In addition, Real-Time Run-Order will be on my website on the day of the trial. An estimation of what time you will be running will be both run orders. Real-Time Run-Order will update throughout the day. It is only an estimate of time; you may run earlier or later than the posted time.

- Once you arrive, set your dogs crate up. Then potty your dog. Make sure you bring water for your dog. Then potty yourself.
- If you haven't downloaded the map, take a photo of the posted copy. Start to review the map so you have a bit of an idea what you want to do once you get in for your walk. You will get 8 minutes to walk after the judges briefing.
- The gate sheets will also be posted outside the ring. You may also check in online the day before. If you were not able to check in online, please tell the gate steward that you will be running your dog.
- Sit and watch some of the runs in the other classes. You can take a picture of the other maps with your phone and try to figure out how you would run it. It is especially helpful for you to watch Open because it will usually be like Novice. You may get some good ideas!
- As a class is winding down, you may want to go potty your dog again. Have all of that done so you are ready to walk the course when it is your time.
- Feel free to ask the judge any question. If you have a question, there is a good chance someone else has the same question!
- About 10 minutes before you are going to run, get your dog out and **warm him up**. Jog a little, if your dog can spin, ask him to spin. Stretching and warming up your dog will prevent injuries.
- You will be expected to be near the ring a couple of dogs before you go in. The gate steward will call your name and it's expected you will let them know who you are so they can keep things moving.
- You will enter the ring with your dog on leash. When the other dog has finished the course and they have their dog on leash, you can take the leash off your dog. You can take it off earlier and just hold onto the collar if you'd like. AKC allows you to run your dog without a collar or with a buckle collar. You can't run your dog with a choke chain or martingale collar or anything with metal studs attached. Also, no tags can be attached to the collar. Once you take your leash off the dog, you may put the leash in your pocket, or wear it or toss the leash out of your way. Once you start running, the volunteer leash runner will pick up your leash and bring it to the exit gate so it will be there when you finish.
- You are not allowed to leave your dog until you hear GO. Then you may lead out or start running with your dog-whatever you have been taught to do.
- At the end of your run, put your leash on your dog BEFORE you exit the ring. Try to leash up your dog quickly because the next dog is on the line to run and they are probably just as nervous as you were 😊
- Take your dog for a little walk to cool them down. Tell them how wonderful they were and let yourself breathe. Then put your dog in the crate and go get your copy of your scribe sheet to see how you did.
- Once the judge has finished the class, she will review the scores. Once she is done and is starting the next class, we will release the ribbons .



How do I know if I qualified? Well, first you should read the AKC rules for agility.

<http://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/REAGIL.pdf> There are quick launch links at the bottom of the first page of my website with additional helpful information. A qualifying score for Novice can be 85 to 100. A score of 100 is referred to as a clean run.

Examples of faults:

- R for refusal. That means your dog started towards an obstacle and either stopped or went around it.
- W is for wrong course. If your dog goes the wrong obstacle, you will get an W.
- T is for a table fault. If your dog jumps on the table and jumps off before the judge says GO, you will incur a table fault.

Each of those faults are 5 points each. If you are in Novice Standard and your scribe sheet says RWT -then you have a refusal, a wrong course and a table fault. If you are under standard course time, you will still qualify.

- For Novice Standard you can have a maximum of 2 R's, 2 T's, 1 W -5 points each so any combination that still is only 15 points off.
- For Novice Jumpers, you are allowed 2 R's but no W's.
- If you are over standard course time, you will lose 1 point for each second over time. If you had no mistakes but were 15 seconds over time, you can still qualify with an 85.
- If your scribe sheet shows an F, that means your dog knocked a bar, or missed the yellow contact or missed an obstacle and never completed it.
- If you have an E, it means you left the course before you finished, you were excused. You can't qualify with an F or E.

What should I do if something goes wrong in the ring? Going into the ring for the first time can be a nerve wracking - for anyone. Someone told me, when I was starting a new sport, that my purpose of going into the ring was not to be perfect. I was going into the ring to see where the holes were in our training. To learn what we need work on and to see what we have mastered. If something goes wrong while you are in the ring, you need to decide if you want to try to fix it or if you should move on and make a note that needs work.

Some common ring situations:

- You tell your dog to stay on the start line and walk away. Before you can release your dog, she gets up and starts to come to you. You can bring her back and make her sit BUT you can't lead out again. If you choose to bring her back, you will have to start running with your dog from the start line. As a Novice dog, you would probably be better to just try to go on and make a note that you need work on your start line 😊
- Your dog runs by the weave poles or does the first 3 and then pops out. You can try to get weave poles 3 times before the judge will ask you to move on. You won't get a refusal in novice, for the weave poles. But it can eat up time. If your dog normally is good in the weave poles, bring them back and start again. Make sure you give your dog plenty of room to get back in -start a full dog length before the poles. If your dog has struggled with the weave poles in training, and they miss them in the trial, maybe move on and work on it at home.
- Your dog runs around a jump. Call them back and try to bring them around the jump on your side so they don't back jump. That would be considered a wrong course. And again, it's important that you give your dog PLENTY of room when you bring them back. You can't expect them to hop over a jump if they are right in front of it.

Should I volunteer? Yes, yes and more yes. It takes 10 people for each class to make a trial run. We need 4 ring crew. Those people put the bars back up if they fall or when we change jump heights. We need a leash runner. That person takes the leash and moves it from the start line to the exit, before the person finishes with the dog. Score runner -that person brings the score sheet to me in the shed to score. All novice people can do those jobs. And you will learn a lot by watching others in the ring. IT is one of the best ways to learn a sport. There will be a link on my website to sign up to volunteer. Please consider supporting the sport and volunteer.

Have fun with your dog. Remember, your dog is the best. You did your best with your best dog. There is ALWAYS something good to find in a run.

