

Minutes of Meeting
NKU Rally Obedience Committee,
30th January 2022, 10:00-16:10
Participants: Beatrice Palm (Sweden), Tytti Lintenhofer (Finland), Paul Lysholdt (Denmark),
and Solveig Therese Zetterstrøm (Norway)
Absentees: None
Minutes: Paul Lysholdt

1. Opening of the meeting

It was agreed that we use Teams for future meetings.

2. New secretary for the committee

It was decided that Paul Lysholdt takes over from Solveig Therese Zetterstrøm as secretary.

3. Approval of the agenda

Agenda approved.

4. Minutes from our last meeting

Nothing outstanding from the meeting 22nd December 21021 to be addressed.

5. Regulations for the championships - what needs to be changed?

Paul will update the Regulations with the following, mark as changes and forward for approval.

- Individual results and the judging forms from each of the first two rounds should be published Saturday after the team prize ceremony.
- “a rotating order as follows: Denmark – Sweden – Norway – Finland.” must be changed to “a rotating order as decided by the NKU Board”.
- “For the team competition the running order is decided at the briefing by a random draw for each round.” Is changed to “For the team competition the running order is decided at the briefing by a random draw for both rounds.”
- “Small bows or bands can be used on dog’s fur to keep the fur away from the dog’s eyes. These accessories can only be used on dog’s head or ears.” Remove last sentence. Agreed on meeting 12. December 2021. In 6.2.2: “Wrong equipment (collar)”, remove collar.
- “All exercises can be performed with the dog on the left or the right side of the handler.” We should add: “If not specified otherwise in the description of the exercise”.

Suggestions from the Swedish organizers discussed:

- “A general comment we picked up from some contestants was the need to find a way to ensure that the courses should have a high level of difficulties and that each one of them should consist of a more wide range of Nordic exercises.” To be discussed as part of specifications.
- “2.4 Entry fee. “Stick to 100 Euro and erase the sentence “that will cover about 50 % of the total cost of the Championship”. Agreed not to change anything.
- “3.2 Secretaries. “We would like the required competence of the reserve secretary to be specified but think this belongs in SPECIFICATIONS (or here?).” To be discussed as part of specifications.
- “5.5 White dog.

- One could add that the white dog must attend the Vet inspection since many other prereq's are specified." This should be updated to "White dog(s)" in the specifications, guidelines and regulations.
- "Add: The judges agree on whether they want to judge the white dog or not." They must judge, this must be part of the regulations."
- "We suggest specifying in the SPECIFICATIONS that the secretariat should print protocols in advance for them too, in order to be prepared." This is implicit in the previous decisions.
- "We suggest a Judges meeting between every round to ensure the quality and consistency of judging." Agreed, must be part of the specifications.
- "We have understood that the competition for reserves was appreciated. Maybe it should be permanent and mentioned in the regulations as such? Or at least a strong recommendation? It can be judged in the same way as the rest of the Championship (four judges), hence become a good opportunity for the Secretaries to practice "at the scene"". We agree. A new point regarding reserves is to be included in the Regulations. The judges could be the four secretaries from the official competition, with the four judges as secretaries.
- The chief judge's obligations must be more specified in the specifications.

We discussed the judging in general and the potential biases based on the judging at the 2021 championships. We agreed that it is essential to discuss this thoroughly and be open about it. The discussion will be taken with the judges. After the championship 2022 we will evaluate and conclude.

6. Specifications for the championships - what needs to be changed?

Postponed to our next meeting, so we can get input from the Swedish organisers.

- "There will be one course orientation per round. The competitors will have 10 minutes under the supervision of one judge to familiarize themselves with the course layout. The competitors can ask questions within that 10 minutes from the judge." The following suggestions will be discussed when we discuss the specifications:
 - The judge must wear a headset, so all participants can hear what is said
 - The judge must show the exercises as they should be performed, not how they should not be performed
 - 21 handlers in on course orientation is to many, we should have two course orientations with 11 and 10 handlers, and after the second the first team must be ready to start, i.e., not five minutes later ("The first team must be ready to start the course five minutes after the course orientation has finished.")

7. Guidelines - what needs to be changed?

The decisions are stated below. Paul will update the latest version of the Guidelines, and check that it is aligned with Regulations.

- We discussed how to judge dogs that run away from the handler to check for example the temptations and decided that we must be stricter about this. Therefore, we decided to delete the -10 deduction "dog is out of control in the ring (for example, runs to check the temptations)" since we already have a disqualification rule for dogs being out of control in the ring and not responding to commands. And

under -5, lack of teamwork, we add: "Dog is shortly out of control in the ring." By shortly we mean that the dog runs away but immediately responds when the handler recalls it.

- Stop must be defined as a full clear stop, in for example sidestep exercises it is allowed to take a short stop without being deducted. Beatrice will address in FB-group. (PS: see later regarding slowing down).
- "Exercise started outside (before or after) the exercise area" moved from minus 10 to minus 3.
- Handlers mistake, minus 10, "The handler touches the dog" add "deliberately".
- Minus 10: "Performing exercise in wrong speed (independent of distance)". Leave as it and describe in judging guidelines how to judge.
- "Visible leash". Still a minus 10. And you are allowed to leave the leash outside the ring (this must be changed in the relevant paragraph).
- Minus 10 "Dog moving in position (more than 3 steps forward/backward)". Move from Incorrectly performed exercise to Lack of teamwork.
- "Dog is very reluctant/unwilling to perform an exercise". Move from Incorrectly performed exercise to Lack of teamwork.
- Minus 3 "Dog not moving fully aligned with the handler in sidestep exercises" deleted (is equivalent with incorrectly performed exercise).
- "Dog is very slow in performing most of an exercise" deleted from minus 5. It's already a -10 deduction "Dog is very reluctant/unwilling to perform an exercise"
- Minus 5: "Sniffing the ground the whole exercise" add "or the whole way between two exercises".
- "Dog and handler not turning at the same time in turn exercises, alignment not broken." Remove "alignment not broken". Change "turning" to "starting to turn".
- "Extra step or sidestep to give room for dog or to guide or direct the dog (for example, side change or over a jump)", minus 3, should be clear step before deducted, add this in judging guidelines.
- "Handler claps hands (together or against their body), snaps fingers, stomps feet to get or keep the dog's attention." Remove "stomps feet to get or keep the dog's attention."
- "Right now, we allow agility jumps to be used in the Nordic class. The side bars of these jumps take a lot of space in a course. We have decided to skip them in the FCI class so let's skip them here too." Agreed that Paul should check with FCI-rules."
- "Is it OK for the handler not to speed up when sending the dog through a tunnel or over two jumps? This could mean that a fast dog has to pass the tunnel or a jump to reach the handler's side. If not, what do we deduct?" No; we have defined a 2-meter landing area after the tunnel/jump, where the dog may wait for the handler and doesn't need to be aligned. If not, -10, incorrectly performed exercise.
- "Is it OK to perform jumps or tunnels on the "wrong side", for example in right handling when the jumps or the tunnel is turned 90° to the right? This would force the handler to move on the "outside" of the jumps/the tunnel?" Agreed that this should not be allowed. Suggestion: "If the tunnel is bowed, the exercise must be performed, so the handler has to move on the short side of the tunnel." The same applies if two jumps are placed in a bowed shape.
- "We should add something about that it is OK for the handler to slow down when performing certain exercises. Perhaps under the headline Turns." Agreed to add this to the judging guidelines: "In some of the exercises it is stated that the handler may slow down a bit in the exercise. It is a general rule, that the handler may slow down a bit, in exercises without stop, without any deductions."
- "We must also add that the step definition only applies to exercises where steps are counted. Under the headline Steps and stepping." Agreed.

- “If a big dog is supposed to make for example a 360° turn in slow pace, it will probably stop during the exercise. Is it really OK to deduct -10 for this?” Agreed that a new main paragraph should be written addressing this. Suggestion: “When judging it should always be taken into consideration which breed is being judged. A Leonberger, as an example, doesn’t move as a Border Collie, and should be judged by its own characteristics.”
- “On page 4 under the drawings of the exercise areas, we must add that exercises 417 and 418 start according to drawing A.” Agreed.
- “Let’s specify what can be used in the temptations, e.g. only non-squeaking toys (not too big so that they are looking dangerous for smaller dogs) and/or dog’s treats/food or human food.” Agreed. We must use temptations, not anything that is expected to frighten a dog.

8. Meeting for all Nordic judges

The following judges and secretaries have been appointed for the championships in 2022.

Judges: Helle Gadeberg (DK), Tytti Lintenhofer (FI), Maria Syltebø Opstad (NO) and Karin Holst (SE).

Secretaries: Liv Elmark-Fich (DK), Pia Heikkinen (FI) and Merete Kristensen (NO). No Swedish secretary has been appointed yet.

Tytti will arrange something for the judges and secretaries for the 2022 championship. If possible, a face-to-face meeting, otherwise a virtual meeting. Tytti will make a Facebook Group for the involved.

It was agreed from 2023 onwards to plan a yearly meeting, preferably the same weekend every year, where Nordic judges gather. At our next meeting we will agree on a date for 2023.

9. Other issues

It is not stated in the rules that judges can only judge at one championship or that a secretary automatically gets to be the judge at the next championship. It’s up to each country to suggest which judge and secretary should participate in the championship.

10. Next meeting

Next meeting will take place 9th March 2022 19:30-22:00 CET. Paul will arrange as Teams meeting.

11. Ending of the meeting

Beatrice thanked all for a constructive and efficient meeting.