

ETIQUETTE FOR AGILITY EVENTS in NZ.

Respect the Volunteers.

Remember that the members of the club committee: the results secretary, manager, scribes, course builders and call stewards are all volunteers. These people put in many hours to organise the event and will be trying their hardest to make sure it runs smoothly throughout the weekend. In many cases, they are not running their own dogs during the event. They are not being paid for their time. They deserve your respect and consideration, even when the inevitable glitches occur. Please remember they are your friends and fellow competitors and treat them as you would like to be treated: with respect.

Competition entries.

Follow the instructions, enter early and pay on time. If you can't attend on the day of competition, it is polite to advise the club so they can add you to the scratchings list. This alleviates the problem of searching for competitors on the day if you already know they will not be there. The same common courtesy applies if you need to withdraw your dog on the day. Speak to an organiser from the host club (Event manager or event secretary).



Arrive early.

Get yourself organised, and then jump in and lend a hand. Many hands make light work and the sooner things get built, the sooner the competition starts, the sooner everyone can get home.



When walking a course

Be considerate of others who are focused on planning their runs and refrain from undue noisy commentary and/or blocking the run path by standing in one spot for too long. If you want help planning your run, step to the side of the course to have a conversation with the person who has volunteered to assist you.



Be ready when it's your turn to run.

Running orders are posted at least a week before the event so print these off and if you are early in a class make a note of that and warm your dog up before you walk the course. Check the running order boards and keep an eye on the ring changes. Make sure that you are lined up ready to go when required. If you have to move up or down the order due to clashes it pays to ask nicely. Being a call steward can often be a stressful job with sometimes many

people all wanting to change the running order. Be nice to them, and if you have to go a bit earlier because someone else has been delayed for good reason, take it all in good humour.

If you are running multiple dogs and/or many different classes it is your choice and you should not expect everyone else to make way for you. Have someone hold your dogs if necessary, and be on time for your runs. If you can't do it without stressing out and getting mad at others then next time enter less classes.



Sometimes the sun may be in the wrong position, the weather gods may frown upon you, or wind blow the scrimer tent down. Be ready to deal with all these ups and downs with good humour.



Judges – be nice to them!

They stand out in the middle of the ring regardless of the weather, and concentrate for several hours on end. Without them there would be no competitions, therefore no agility. They do it all in their own time, and their main job satisfaction is watching the dogs go clear. Remember to take time to thank them. Don't forget to acknowledge the judge before you start your run – they won't take kindly to you starting your run if they are fixing a tunnel etc out in the course.

Other helpers – be nice to them too!

Most clubs struggle to fill every job that needs to be done on the weekend, and for many people it is their first attempt at doing a job. Whilst they may not be an expert at least they have put their hand up and volunteered so always be kind to them.

Be patient with other competitors.

Other people, especially in the lower grades, may not have been competing for as long as you, and many will be feeling very nervous and this may affect their behaviour. They might be slow to react or uncertain about what to do. Help them out and advise them in a friendly tone of voice.

If someone asks for feedback then be as positive as you can. Don't rush up to someone who has just finished their run and tell them what went wrong - they may not be in the right frame of mind to appreciate your insight!





Helping on the day.

Clubs always need help so check with the host club if there is any way you can help on the day, i.e. scribing, picking up poles, assisting with course building etc. If you cannot run your own dog or do not run a dog just yet and have just come to watch, scribing is a great place to learn and watch at the same time. If everyone scrimed for just one event, the clubs would not struggle to find helpers, and competitors would find a new appreciation for the sport and maybe learn a thing or two.

By lending an extra helping hand, the event will run faster. The club you are at may not be your home club, but by helping out at other clubs, they will in turn help you. What goes around comes around.

Be considerate of other people and dogs.

If your dog is nervous then don't put him in a situation where he will tell others off. Don't take a noisy or grumpy dog to prize-giving. Be aware of where you are standing. Don't take your dog to the call board if he can't cope with cramped conditions. Don't hang around the call board with or without a dog. When standing beside the ring try not to distract the dog within the ring by what you do. Keep the ring entry and exit clear and don't hassle the scriver when they are busy.

Don't throw toys close to rings or assemble areas.



Make sure your dog is safely in the car or tent, or in a crate and don't tie him up to the back of the car unattended.

Practice equipment.

In NZ we allow people to bring their own practice equipment. If you put some up then make sure it is in a safe place and away from the rings. If you put it out be prepared for other people to

want to use it.

The club may put out practice equipment. Whatever height is running has priority to use the gear. Do not monopolise the equipment, make sure you are aware if others wish to use it and share it around.

Don't rush into the ring between classes to put your dog over gear. That is very disrespectful of the club and its helpers, especially if they are busy trying to put up the next course.

Videotaping.

Position your camera in a sensible place where it won't get in anyone's way. Asking someone to videotape you is fine, and don't be offended if they say no. It's best not to ask someone who is running just before or after you. If someone videos your runs offer to videotape them in return.



Competing with your dog.

Remember that agility is just a game we play with our dogs. Whilst it is nice to win there can only be one winner, so you need to be realistic about every run. Try not to blame everything around you, everyone else and especially your dog for any mistakes. You train and handle your dog, and every class provides an opportunity to evaluate where your training is at and make improvements for the next event.

Whilst play is rewarding for your dog, and you should reward your dog at the end of a run, be aware of all the people and dogs around you and do not throw toys around the assembly areas or call boards.

Help pack up at end of day.

At the finish of competition, jump up and help pack up the equipment. This is usually the time when the judges and the organisers of the host club are busy preparing for your presentations. They will also be tired at the end of the day. By assisting at this time, it shares the burden of having to pack equipment away and makes the packing process go faster.

Prizegiving.

Stay to collect your prize, and (even if you don't get one) stay to clap and cheer for other club members who were successful on the weekend. It's not polite to hassle the event secretary for your certificate and prize so you can go early - they are getting organised getting the results ready for those who will stay. If you have to go, ask a friend to stand in for you.



References.

milesandemma.com/agility-fun-match-etiquette-tips

adaa.com.au/competition-etiquette

<http://content.breederoo.com/users/OIDAhawaii/files/OIDA%20TRIAL%20ETIQUETTE-1.pdf>