



## **Carriage Dog Trials Guidelines for Competitors**

### **Introduction**

These notes are designed to offer guidance to competitors at national and regional Carriage Dog Trials. They do not supersede the rules, with which we encourage all competitors to familiarise themselves, but offer complementary advice about participating in the competition.

The notes are directed at specific elements of the trial. For general and more detailed information about the competition, please refer to the rules and schedule.

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### **Obedience Judging**

Every judge will aim to ensure that competitors have a safe, enjoyable and fair competition. Judges will be judging each individual dog against the requirements in the rules for each exercise. Above all, judges will maintain the standards envisaged by the Society and set out in the rules.

Judges will take into account the precision of the handler's commands and the speed and accuracy of responses from the dog, relevant to the class being judged.

At bronze level dogs are required to obey commands and complete each exercise. A degree of encouragement, as well as extra commands offering positive reinforcement of a dog's correct working position, are permissible. Excessive additional commands, disobedience by the dog, or extra commands necessary to counter disobedience will be penalised in accordance with each test description at the discretion of the judge. A dog showing sustained disobedience and/or which fails to complete an exercise to the level required will be more heavily penalised and/or failed.

At silver and gold level judges will be looking for a higher level of precision of

command from the handler and response from the dog. Single commands for each exercise are required and additional commands of any kind will attract penalties. The judge will be looking for a high level of instinctive obedience from the dog and a commitment to its work.

If you are running multiple dogs in the endurance section and these dogs have been judged singly in the obedience section, the judge will ask you to conduct a hock or axle test with the dogs together to ensure they are under control when run as a team.

If you have failed the obedience tests you will only be allowed to ride or drive the endurance course if the judge considers you have enough control over your dog to be safe.

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### **Endurance - Vet Judging**

Vet judges will judge and score each dog against a set of criteria relating to soundness and condition. These include respiration, hydration, heart rate, pad condition, gait, and temperature (rectal test). Dogs will be assessed against baseline information gained at the start vet check.

If the vet requires a silver or gold dog to take extra rest time at the mid point check, this will be reflected in the overall vet score for that dog. If a horse is required to have extra rest time, one penalty point per minute will be subtracted from the competitor's score.

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### **Obedience Tests - General**

An obedience steward will assist judges on the obedience course.

Judge and steward teams will aim to conduct each exercise clearly and without undue delay between exercises, whilst giving adequate explanations and making necessary notes in between.

At bronze level the judges may describe each exercise beforehand and give the competitor an opportunity to ask questions or clarify any aspect.

The speed test will be judged last; the other exercises may be judged in any order.

A different standard of obedience is required from bronze, silver and gold dogs in order to qualify. A mark of 50 is required for bronze,

60 for silver, and 70 for gold. The judge will tell competitors after each exercise whether the dog has passed. Do ask the judge if they do not tell you.

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### **Road Dog: Hock Position**

The hock position, as used in these regulations, means that the dog shall be in a semi-circle behind the horse's head as close as practicable without touching or crowding the horse, or obstructing its motion and within one horse's length of the horse. The dog should not forge forward, run wide of, or lag from this position.

#### **Recall**

The judge will ask you to call your dog to the hock position whilst you are walking forward. At bronze level dogs may be left in a stay or held by the steward; silver and gold dogs must be left in a stay. The dog will be expected to respond immediately and return to the handler promptly.

#### **Hock**

The judge will ask you to proceed at a trot with your dog in your chosen hock position in a figure of eight over a distance of 200 metres. In addition, the silver and gold levels have a section of walk.

#### **Hock with distraction**

The judge will ask you to proceed with your dog in the hock position while a person with a dog on a lead passes by in the opposite direction on your right side at a distance of twenty metres. You'll be allowed to reinforce the dog's position with a single additional command as the distraction approaches. Once you have passed approximately five metres beyond the distraction, the judge will tell you the exercise is over.

#### **Stay**

The judge will ask you in which position you wish your dog to conduct this exercise: sit, down or stand. You will be asked to command your dog into that position. You must remain mounted throughout but will be permitted to move your horse away from your dog if you wish.

Scoring will begin from the moment the competitor responds "yes" to the judge's question: "Are you ready?" The timing will start from the moment the dog takes up the commanded position. Stay durations are: bronze 1 min; silver 1½ mins; gold 2 mins.

### **Speed**

This is a test of speed not position. The judge will ask you to increase the pace of your horse, to trot or canter according to your preference, sufficient to demonstrate the dog's turn of speed. The dog may run in any position that is safe and under control but should not precede the horse.

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### **Carriage Dog**

Except for stay, the carriage dog exercises will be the same for whip and groom handlers. Whips may not command, signal to, or interfere with any groom handled dog, and vice versa.

#### **Axle Position**

The axle position as used in these regulations means that the dog shall be in a semicircle behind, under or alongside the carriage. Its position may be as close as practicable without crouching, touching, or otherwise encroaching on the movement of the carriage and within one carriage's length of the carriage. The dog should not forge forward, run wide of, or lag from this position. It is important the dog is running in a safe and comfortable position with a natural gait.

#### **Axle at trot**

The judge will ask you to proceed at a trot with your dog in your chosen axle position in a figure of eight over a distance of 200 metres.

#### **Axle at walk and halt**

The judge will ask you to walk and halt. The distance of walk and time of the halt will be specified in the schedule. At halt the dog should remain in the axle position and grooms should not dismount.

#### **Axle with distraction**

The judge will ask you to proceed with your dog in the axle position while a person with a dog on a lead passes by in the opposite direction on your right side at a distance of twenty metres. You'll be allowed to reinforce the dog's position with a single additional command as the distraction approaches. Once you have passed approximately five metres beyond the distraction, the judge will tell you the exercise is over.

## Stay

### Whip handlers:

The judge will ask you whether you wish to give your dog a "last command" or give a signal to the judge to start the clock. The groom should dismount and stand at the horse's head after the judge has said "commence the exercise".

You may command your dog into position alongside, behind or under the carriage or leave it in the axle position. The clock will start after your last command or when you signal to the judge. Your groom, from his/her place at the horse's head, will be permitted to inform you if your dog moves from its stay position.

**Groom handlers:** The judge will ask you whether you wish to give your dog a "last command" or give a signal to the judge to start the clock. When the judge says "commence the exercise" you should dismount from the carriage and put your dog into position if desired alongside behind or under the carriage, or leave it in the axle position. Then move to the horse's head. When the judge says "last command" you may give a final command from your position at the horse's head or signal to the judge for the clock to start. On completion of the exercise you may return to your dog and release it from the stay if necessary and return to the carriage.

**Whip and Groom handlers:** Scoring will begin from the moment the competitor responds "yes" to the judge's question: "Are you ready?" The timing will start when the competitor gives a last command or signals to the judge. Stay durations are: bronze 1 min; silver 1½ mins; gold 2 mins.

### Speed

This is a test of speed not position. The judge will ask you to increase the pace of your turnout, to trot or canter according to your preference, sufficient to demonstrate the dog's turn of speed. The dog may run in any position that is safe and under control but should not precede the carriage.

### Overall impression-Road and Carriage

This is an impression gained by the judge of each dog's approach to its work, including, for example, attitude, enjoyment, and responsiveness to its handler and general

demeanour. This mark given will take into account the competitor's control over the dog prior to, after and in between exercises, as appropriate to the class entered.

## Endurance

DISTANCE AND TIMES SUMMARY			
Awards	Distance	Time Allowed	Vet Check
<b>Certif.</b>	Nil	n/a	n/a
<b>Bronze</b>	10 km	90 mins	Start/Finish
<b>Silver</b>	20 km	3 hours	Start/Mid/Finish
<b>Gold</b>	40 km	6 hours	Start/Mid/Finish

For silver and gold dogs, the standard allotted time plus any enforced rest time taken at the mid point vet check will be deducted from the overall course time.

Please inform the course steward if you are held up on the course.

## Scoring

Each individual obedience exercise and the speed test has a maximum of 100 points.

Bronze dogs will require a pass mark for each obedience exercise of 50 points, silver dogs 60 and gold 70.

The vet score has a maximum of 200 points.

A score between 100-200 is a pass. A score between 0-99 is a fail

You must pass all obedience exercises, the final vet check and complete the endurance course in the time allowed, to qualify. Your final score will be out of 800.

The road and carriage certificate exercises receive no score, but to gain the title a dog must receive a "Pass" rating in all exercises at the level they have entered.

## Other Information

Dogs may only wear a smooth collar or harness when competing and must be off the lead throughout the whole trials – obedience and endurance course.

No treats are permitted on the obedience or endurance course.