

Muddy Paws Agility League Rules

Fall 2008 – Winter 2009

Overview

These rules and guidelines are provided as a framework for the Muddy Paws Agility League.

The agility rules and guidelines of the Muddy Paws Agility League (MPAL) for the 2008 – 09 season will be based on those of current sanctioning agility venues. The intent is to challenge the ability of all members.

1.0 Administrative Matters

1.1 Muddy Paws Agility League Overview

Purpose: To provide an agility trial-like environment to simulate the competition environment, increase the competitive ability, and have some fun.

General Description: Each session consists of one standard course and one game course. Two hours or less is the time goal for each session. Scoring will be on an individual and on a team basis.

1.2 Eligibility

The Muddy Paws Agility League is open to any handler/dog team who has completed a Novice Competition training class or equivalent, or who has entered an agility trial, at any level, in any agility sanctioning organization.

Dogs must be at least 15 months old to compete and must be able to perform all obstacles safely. A handler may substitute another dog they own on different days, but the same dog must compete for all of that day's session. Bitches in season and dogs that are aggressive, disabled, or ill will not compete.

A dog may only be on one team. Handler substitutions will be allowed.

1.3 Competition Level

The Standard Courses will be designed at the highest levels of sanctioning venues. There will not be separate courses for different levels.

1.4 Time Frame

The Muddy Paws Agility League will meet for six sessions as scheduled. Each match shall consist of one standard course and one game course. The goal is to keep each session's competition to two hours or less. The site will be open at 9:30 each date, with briefing and walk thru no later than 10 AM.

1.5 Organization of the MPAL

The MPAL Committee will be comprised of the Host Facility Representative, Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, Treasurer and ScoreKeeper. Team Captains may be requested to assist with MPAL Committee activities.

A worker schedule will be posted for each session designating participants responsibilities at that session. These responsibilities include:

- Traditional Trial Jobs – Gate, Scribe, Timer, Score/Leash Runner, Score Table, Ring Crew, Course Builder
- Set Up - as required prior to each session start, set up coffee/hot water
- Clean Up - Ensuring all equipment is properly put away at the completion of the session; clean up as needed

Host facility is Muddy Paws Canine Training Center .

The *MPAL Coordinator* (or his/her designee) is responsible for the following:

- Arranging times and dates for MPAL meets;
- Maintaining rules of competition;
- Obtaining recognitions, if required;
- Collecting registration forms from participants;
- Coordinating notification of schedule changes and cancellations with team contacts.
- Maintain and moderate a MPAL Yahoo Group for notifications

An *Assistant MPAL Coordinator* may be identified to help administer the MPAL .

A *Team Captain* is required for each participating team in the MPAL.

- Organize and guide their teams;
- Inform team members of schedule changes and event cancellations.
- Serve on the MPAL Committee as requested

The *MPAL Scorekeeper* will:

- Receive the weekly scores from the *MPAL Coordinator*;
- Post the accumulated scores at the end of each week, on the announcements-only email list or Yahoo Group.

The *MPAL Treasurer* will:

- Collect all registration fees and deposit them in a separate checking account; and
- Disburse funds to host facilities and for MPAL activities as required. All requests must be made in writing to the Treasurer.

1.6 Team Organization

The ideal number will be 3 dogs/handlers per team with a total of 10 teams; this may be adjusted dependent upon the number of registrations.

Teams of all levels of experience are invited to participate. The goal is to place at least one dog of novice ability on each team. In the event this distribution of experience cannot be met, exceptions may be made with the agreement of all team captains and the MPAL Coordinator.

Team membership will be assigned to a team via a random drawing. The maximum number of teams will be ten unless the MPAL Committee agree to increase the number of teams to accommodate registration requests. The MPAL Coordinator, Assistant MPAL Coordinator, MPAL Scorekeeper, MPAL Treasurer, and Host Representative shall automatically be allowed to be members of the MPAL with the automatic right to enter one dog upon payment of the appropriate fees

1.7 Communication

Registration for the MPAL will be managed by the MPAL Coordinator. All entries shall be mailed to the MPAL Coordinator or his/her designee in accordance with the registration instructions.

The participants will communicate via an email list, yahoo group or other system as needed. The scoring results and special updates will be posted on the Yahoo Group.

1.8 Course Preview and Practice

Because one of the purposes of the MPAL is to promote learning and trialing experience, the courses may be available for review prior to the session. Practice is not allowed at the competition site on the day of the event. A practice jump shall be provided off the regular course.

2.0 Design, Performance, Rules

2.1 Course Design and Performance

The course design and performance will be those of typical sanctioning organizations.

2.2 Selection of a Judge, Scribe, and Timer

Judge, Scribe & Timer will be selected from participant volunteers.

A judge may show his/her own dog at the session. The restriction is that another entrant must judge the competing judge's entire jump height.

The judge's decision on any call is final and only the judge may assess course faults. The timer and scribe may provide opinions to or ask questions of the judge, but the judge has the final say.

2.3 Jumping Standards and Course Times

Each handler may choose the jump height at which his/her dog performs and must continue to jump at this height

throughout the season. This may be any height that the equipment can accommodate and is agreed on by the participants, although it is recommended that the jump heights be limited to 4", 8", 12", 16", and 20" to minimize time required to reset bars. It is not necessary to measure dogs.

There normally will be a Standard Course Time (SCT) and a Maximum Course Time (MCT). (See the Course Time section for details.)

For handicapped handlers, their actual time in the standard course will be reduced by 5 seconds for scoring purposes. For handicapped handlers, appropriate adjustments to required points or allowed time shall be made at the discretion of the judge. Handicapped and veteran dogs are accommodated through the use of handler-selected jump heights and therefore do not receive additional consideration in scoring.

2.4 Agility Obstacles

Below is a list of equipment that may be used for all courses: Substitutions are allowed if equipment is not available.

Dogwalk	Collapsed tunnel	Double spread jump
A-frame	Tire	Triple spread jump
Seesaw	Weave poles	Broad jump
Table	Bar jumps (incl wings)	
Pipe tunnels	Panel jump	

2.5 Obstacle Performance

Safety is of vital importance. All course setups may be adjusted to allow safe performance due to site restrictions.

Contact Equipment

Safety zones shall be painted in accordance with the rules of any of the major agility organizations. Contact heights shall be consistent with typical agility-sanctioning organizations; in the event of parallel titling programs with different contact heights, the lower height should be used. In no case shall the A-frame apex height exceed 5'6" nor shall the dogwalk be higher than 4 feet.

Contacts shall be judged on the down ramp only unless the dog enters the obstacle from the side, in which case the up contact will be judged. If the dog does not hit the upside contact zone after a side mount, a missed contact fault shall be assessed.

The Four Paw Safety Rule is in effect for all dogs in all Standard courses and may be invoked by the judge for a games course if deemed appropriate. If a dog commits to the obstacle with all four paws, and then leaves the obstacle, the judge shall instruct the handler to go on without a retry. This will result in the assessment of a Failure to Perform (FTP) penalty. If the handler directs the dog to reattempt the obstacle, this will result in the elimination of that handler and dog for that course. This is allowed as a training exercise, but means that handler and dog will not received a score.

Making contact with one paw on the incorrect ramp will be assessed as a wrong course.

Flyoffs on the seesaw are assessed only if the dog leaves the obstacle in a blatantly unsafe manner or if the seesaw fails to hit the ground on the downward stroke. This is a judge's call.

There are no specific requirements or limitation for the number of times a contact obstacle may be used in a standard or in a game course.

Table

Table is used only to stop time.

Two table heights should be available. Dogs jumping 16" or less should perform a table of about 8" or less. Dogs jumping greater than 16 inches should perform a table of 16".

Weave poles

For standard courses, weaves shall be limited to 6 poles per set. The maximum number of weaves to be performed on a standard course is 12. Weave pole performance will be determined and communicated at each session.

Spread Hurdles

If used, the double and triple may be ascending only.

Jumps

These must have a displaceable bar. Bars may be set in the traditional method with two bars or crossed in the middle to provide a lower jump height. 4" jumps will be a single bar with the 2nd bar removed from the course.

Broad Jumps

Broad jumps may be used, with the jump distance approximately twice the dog's jump height. Corner poles shall be used to denote the obstacle.

2.6 Course Layout

Safety is the first concern of all course layouts. All courses will be reviewed by the Host Facilitator. Course layouts must fit safely within the confines of any building used to hold MPAL matches.

Obstacles may be placed no closer than 12 feet apart and no more than 20 feet apart. Preference is to use 15' to 20"

In Standard Courses, normally, the first and last obstacle will be the start and finish line, respectively, due to space constraints. This will be used to start and stop the time, once any part of the dog crosses that line. If the dog goes around the last obstacle, the timer is not stopped unless the handler and dog stop working, in which case the timer will be stopped and a FTP fault will be assessed. If there is a fault on the last obstacle, it is counted as a normal fault.

2.7 Course Handling Standards

Participants in the MPAL represent a variety of experiences in different venues.

No food or toys may be taken onto the course.

Dogs will run "naked" – no collars, decorations, harnesses, or gentle leaders.

Harsh handling, either verbally or physically, is not permitted, and neither is outside assistance.

The handler may not touch the dog or obstacles, except for incidental contact, which is viewed as accidental contact that does not benefit the dog's performance.

A dog may be penalized or eliminated for continually nipping or for showing some other form of aggression towards the handler. If the handler is actively working to stop this behavior in a training manner, the team shall be allowed to continue, but may be eliminated at the discretion of the judge.

A dog should work steadily throughout the course. If the dog ceases to work, is out of control, or is performing obstacles unsafely, the dog and handler shall be dismissed from the ring and eliminated, except as noted below.

No refusals or run-out penalties shall be assessed, unless after having committed all one paw to a contact obstacle, and dismounting the obstacle.

A handler may request that gates be closed for a dog.

Off-course shall be assessed when a dog has committed one paw to the incorrect obstacle, wrong end of a contact obstacle, or tunnel, or for performing the obstacle in the wrong direction.

Non-punitive training is allowed in the ring, but will result in elimination. However, the handler is allowed to complete the course. Non-punitive training includes: picking the dog up and gently placing it back on contact equipment, moderate verbal reprimand, and touching the dog to assist it in assuming position on the table. Non-punitive training does not include hitting or striking the dog, shouting or swearing, shaking, or throwing anything at or near the dog, or any other action that the judge may interpret as abusive. Should the judge determine such behavior as being inappropriate, the dog will be excused from the ring immediately.

2.8 Course Times and Time Faults

In all courses, a maximum course time (MCT) shall be applied. This is the longest a participant may remain in the ring. In standard courses, the MCT shall be 1.5 times the SCT. In games courses, an MCT consistent with the timing of the game shall be used. The MCT may not exceed 3 minutes for any course.

2.9 Standard Scoring

The team members are scored for the Individual runs using the following fault system. The fault points are deducted from 100.

Missed contact zones	5 faults
Fly-off on see-saw	5 faults
First occurrence of jumping off table prior to end of count	5 faults
Anticipation of end of count on table	5 faults
Displacing any poles or planks from hurdles	5 faults
Knocking part of broad jump over	5 faults
Wrong course	5 faults
Missed weave pole (only once per set)	5 faults
Handler touching dog or obstacle (other than incidental)	5 faults to dismissal
Failure to Perform (FTP) obstacle	15 faults
Failing to correct a missed entry or weave pole	15 faults
Walking over broad jump	15 faults
Refusals or runouts	Not penalized
Dog fouling ring	Dismissal
Harsh or abusive behavior/language	Dismissal
Dog aggression	Dismissal (see Section 2.7)
Dog ceasing to work	Dismissal (see Section 2.7)
Outside assistance	5 faults to dismissal
Food or devices on course	Elimination
Poor sportsmanship	Dismissal

Multiple faults should not be called for any obstacle. Note that elimination does not require the team to leave the course. In the event of a dismissal, the team must leave the course.

Additionally, any full seconds over Standard Course Time (SCT) will also be deducted as time faults in standard courses.

The judge will use standard hand signals. A hard copy of these signals will be provided by the MPAL Committee.

2.10 Game Course Scoring

The Game event may have a SCT, but it is anticipated that some runs will have accumulated points. It is the intent to allow various methods to add points to the team's score and the scoring method will be detailed on the course-briefing sheet. For the Game Courses, the best three of four team member's Individual scores are added to the accumulated total, except if it is a team of two or more accumulating a score, then all scores are added to the accumulated total. In the event of a final competition, special scoring may be used.

2.11 Recognition

Recognition shall be given for team and individual accomplishment. The MPAL members will propose and agree upon appropriate recognition.

2.12 Misconduct

The host facility's Dog Aggression Policy and Handler Policy shall be in effect at all MPAL competitions. These shall be communicated to the MPAL participants at each match. Violations of these policies shall be grounds for dismissal of the handler and dog from the grounds for that match, or, in the case of very serious violations, removal from the group.

4.1 MPAL Fees

The fees for participating in the MPAL shall be determined by the MPAL Coordinator and the Host Facility. These fees will be used to compensate host facilities in the form of training fees for the use of their property and for recognitions and other expenses as deemed appropriate by the MPAL Committee. Unused funds will be returned to the participants. In no case shall any collected fees be retained.

*RULES BASED VERY LOOSELY ON THE Capital District Agility Fun Group Rules and Guidelines.
With many thanks to the Group and Jeff Boyer for their assistance..*