

## Draft Judges Pre-Test Briefing Guidelines

Effective 10/10/2022

During the walk through of the maneuvering course and freight haul (unless waived), you will answer questions and may reinforce your expectations, describing the ideal performance and what constitutes a failing performance for each exercise. You might also want to point out anything out of the ordinary (ant hills, holes, markers that are or are not “live”, etc).

The Pre-Test Briefing which occurs after the equipment check and before the course walk-through is an ideal time to thank the hosting club, draft test committee, volunteers/stewards, and the competitors.

It is also the best time to explain the purpose of draft tests and to reinforce behavior expectations. **These remarks should be brief and to the point.**

- I. Welcome, introduction of judges (at minimum your names) and words of appreciation.
- II. Schedule/Sequence of Events (including breaks)
- III. Communicate anything unique about the test facility/location (location of restrooms, traffic/potential distractions, safety concerns, facility rules, etc.)
- IV. State the purpose of draft tests and what constitutes an overall ideal performance, such as:

***Draft tests have been designed to reflect realistic situations that might have been encountered during a typical day's work by a Swiss farmer and his draft dog. This test is a way to measure the team's level of competence in practical draft work.***

***A successful performance should demonstrate:***

- ***The dog's inherent drafting ability refined by training and teamwork.***
- ***The dog's willingness and enjoyment of his work.***
- ***The handler's proper understanding of draft work, equipment and regulations.***

***The ideal performance is not one of military precision and excessive control, or one that is on the verge of disaster, but one where the handler and dog work as a happy, naturally moving team; a performance that could be sustained over the course of a full day's work.***

- V. Cover, at minimum, the following rules during the briefing.

Judges must immediately excuse any dog for any of the following reasons:

- The dog attacks or attempts to attack (as defined by AKC Obedience Rules) a person or dog on the test grounds.
- The handler deliberately interferes with another handler or dog.
- The handler behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner in or outside the testing area. This includes:
  - Directing angry, abusive language at a person or dog
  - Mistreating a dog
  - Showing discourtesies to judges, test officials, or stewards
- The dog is lame or wears corrective bandages or other attachments.
- The dog at any time during a test exhibits lack of physical capacity to perform.

Failures common to all exercises:

- A dog is not under the handler's control.
- A handler yells at his dog frequently to maintain control of his/her dog.
- A handler abuses the dog or fails to show consideration for the dog's welfare.
- A dog eliminates.
- The handler or dog violates specific test site regulations (covered in item III.)

Remember to thank the handlers for entering, reassure them that you will answer their questions, encourage them to have fun and enjoy the experience and remind them to appreciate their dogs, regardless of a passing or failing performance.