

NAFA® Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, January 20, 2012- Raleigh, North Carolina

Present were:

Executive Director:
Lee Heighton

Board of Directors:

Sam Ford
Nancy Garcia
Leerie Jenkins
Dana Nichols
Karen Oleson
Curtis Smith
Ally Stern
Dave Walt
Kris Pickering was absent

Guests: Kim Davis and Dale Smith

Officers' Reports

Chair's Comments- Leerie Jenkins

At 8:06 am EST Leerie called the meeting to order and welcomed our guests Dale Smith and Kim Davis. Leerie thanked Kris Pickering for her years of service to NAFA. She did a wonderful job and she will be missed. Leerie also thanked the entire Board for their hard work.

Upcoming Board Meetings:

May 19-20, 2012 - New Orleans
August 2012 – Toronto (tentatively Aug 11-12)
AGM January 25-27, 2013 – Minneapolis Animal Inn tournament (tentative)

Executive Director's Comments- Lee Heighton

Billy Coleman agreed to be the Acting RD in Region 6.

Mike Pape has been Acting RD in Region 11. From all the input Lee has received he has done well and Lee would like to appoint him as the RD. Dana moved to approve Lee's appointment. Curtis seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mike Pape was approved as the Region 11 RD.

We are currently talking to the AKC to recognize NAFA titles on their pedigrees.

Lee showed the board a t-shirt from Special T's (www.specialts.com), an online store that offers novelty items and has the ability to offer products and clothing depicting designs provided by NAFA without the need for NAFA to handle the products or the ordering process. The sample appeared very acceptable in quality. Pricing information was shared with the board. Lee wants to move forward with establishing a relationship with Special T's and the board was not opposed. Lee and Leerie will continue discussions with Special T's.

Ratification of Suspension

Lee asked that we enter an Executive Session. At 8:38 a.m. the chair moved that we enter an Executive Session to discuss the ratification of the ED's suspension of Carla Thomas.

The Board exited the Executive Session at 10:33 am.

During Executive Session, the Board ratified the decision of the Executive Director to suspend Carla Thomas based on her conviction for animal abandonment in Pinellas County, FL. The Board considers this suspension to be indefinite and at the discretion of the Executive Director.

There was a short break. The Board reconvened at 10:45 am

Treasurer's Report- Nancy Garcia

We have 49,500 AMEX points.

Secretary's Report

Since the last meeting the minutes for the August 27-28 and Oct 6, 2011 Board meetings were approved. The minutes for the two meetings have been posted to the NAFA website.

Standing Committee Reports

Nominating Committee- Kim Davis

Nothing to report

Judges Committee- Leerie Jenkins

New Judge Advancements:

Peter Guidolin, Schomberg ON – Apprentice to Provisional. The Judges Committee unanimously recommended advancement. Dave moved to advance the judge to provisional status as recommended. Ally seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Martin Watt, Australian Flyball Association Approved Judge. The Judges Committee received a request to permit Mr. Watt limited judging privileges at NAFA tournaments during his visit to the United States this spring. There was discussion that the Australian Association has routinely granted judging privileges to NAFA judges to judge their national competition. The Board discussed what level of supervision or other restrictions might be appropriate. After consideration, Sam moved that we grant permission for Martin Watt to judge at a NAFA tournament during his stay under supervision of a NAFA Supervising Judge, with permission of the Tournament Director. Dave seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. .

Fox Terrier Association of Finland

The Fox Terrier Association of Finland would like to host NAFA events and become part of NAFA. Sam moved we decline their request since it is outside our scope. But at the same time we are more than willing to provide whatever assistance they require to build their association. Dana seconded. There was no discussion. No one opposed. The motion passed.

Election Committee- Dana Nichols

The Board took a short lunch break and reconvened at 12:51 pm.

The Chair moved that we enter an Executive Session to review the election results and nominate & elect officers. The Board entered Executive Session at 12:53 pm.

The Board exited the Executive Session at 1:13 pm. The Board ratified the election results which were to be announced the following day at the AGM along with the results of the officer elections.

Marketing Committee- Nancy Garcia

There are some exciting things for the future and the Iron Dog plaques are being very well received.

Finance- Nancy Garcia

CanAm 2011 was a great success with entries remaining at 2010 levels. There was a loss of approximately \$5,000 for the 2011 event. The loss is attributable to less sponsorships and increased expenses for paid box judges and other workers. While we sincerely appreciated those that did volunteer to serve as line judges and in other capacities, there was an overall decline in volunteers therefore workers were hired to assure that the jobs/chairs would be filled. In addition, there were one time capital improvement expenses that were needed (e.g. pole mounts for the TVs). A number of ideas were discussed to bring the 2012 CanAm closer to a breakeven point.

Interac for paying Canadian NAFA tournament fees has been well received and is a good benefit to the NAFA tournament hosts.

Disciplinary Committee- Leerie Jenkins

Nothing to report

Review Panel- Leerie Jenkins

- Dexter - 110597, 05/21/2011 - Upheld on Appeal
- Gabby - 110570, 05/22/2011 - Upheld on Appeal
- Hoodlum - 110997, 09/04/2011
- Daisy Duke - 030988, 09/10/2011
- Ivan - 080013, 09/17/2011
- Kane - 100614, 09/17/2011
- Dobby - 080286, 10/15/2011 – Appeal pending
- Dolly - 120046, 10/22/2011
- Daisy - 111023, 10/29/2011
- Star - 110969, 11/12/2011

Rules Committee- Dana Nichols

1. Adjustment to points for veterans class – Jenny Stack

The Rules Committee received the following request from Jenny Stack:

I notice that every time I go to tournaments. There are very few or just one vet team. How can NAFA expand the number of teams? Perhaps like other proposal about points for MB? 30-32 heats vs. 40 heats. Vet division loses 200 points worth. It can keep low heats with little more points.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me anytime.

*Thanks,
Jenny
~Jenny~*

The Rules Committee considered the request. At this time, a proposal has gone to delegate ballot to change the point structure of the multibreed class. The Committee does not recommend a similar change for the veteran's class, especially since vets teams already have a lower jump height, but may consider revisiting the issue after the results of the multibreed vote.

No motions were made.

2. Iron Dog Award – requests for changes in requirements

The Rules Committee and Board received several requests for changes to the recently recognized Iron Dog Award. The requests generally asked that the award be modified to earning at least one point in ten years, rather than ten consecutive years. As an example, the Committee received the following request:

To whom it may concern. Is there any way this dog would qualify for her Iron Dog title? I know the criteria is ten consecutive years, but do you not allow for injury or other reasons, if the dog has returned back in the next year as she did to give her ten racing years?. it was vets team and she really wasn't needed to run any more times but she did run and was capable of it. If you could please discuss this question with the rest of the board, it would be greatly appreciated. We just lost our girl in May to a liver disease. I have included her racing stats.thx

Elva Bradley DOG-ON-IT Flyball Team

Lee Heighton provided additional information to the Committee via email that there would be an additional 69 dogs who would currently qualify for the award if the requirements were changed to be ten years of racing, rather than ten consecutive years. The Rules Committee acknowledged that there are a number of truly great flyball dogs who do not qualify for the award, either because of injury, breed longevity, or other issues that may prevent dogs from earning a point in 10 consecutive years. At the time the Board created the award, it recognized the award would not be attainable by most dogs. Members of the Board had also expressed concern that if the Iron Dog award were given for points earned in 10 nonconsecutive years, some dogs would be brought out of lengthy retirements to run again despite the potential detrimental effects. Given that this award is so new, the Committee does not recommend adjusting the requirements, subject to reconsideration later.

Dana moved not to change the Iron Dog requirements at this time. Sam seconded. No one was opposed. The motion passed.

3. Penalties – Mike Miller

The Rules Committee received the following request from approved judge Mike Miller:

There are several rules that are "do not do" but there is no penalty associated with breaking the rule. One example is no flexi-leads in the ring. What happens if a team/handler does do it (repeatedly)?

I would like a generic "penalty" section added to the rule book that covers all infractions that are not specifically spelled out with a specific penalty.

It could be done in one of two ways.

Option one, give a specific step by step process of increasing penalties. (TBD by the board)

First offence, warning

Second offence, forfeit of a heat

Third offence, forfeit of a race

Fourth offence, excused from the tournament (hopefully they have stopped before this point)

Or Option two, give possible outcomes at the judges discretion that may include any of the above depending on the seriousness of the offense but not necessarily an increasing format as shown above.

As judges, it is easier to back up a penalty if it is in the rule book than if it purely discretionary which leads to a wide variety of calls from various regions/judges...

-Mike Miller

The Rules Committee discussed this suggestion and possible ways it could be implemented. Ultimately, the Committee decided not to recommend the change. The Committee believed that our current rule book provides support for judges to impose penalties where appropriate. Our judges are well trained and exercise their discretion well. The Committee felt that it was important to keep that discretion with our judges.

Dana moved not to adopt the proposal. Curtis seconded. No one was opposed. The motion passed.

4. Box loaders resetting jumps – Elizabeth Currin

The Rules Committee received the following question from Elizabeth Currin, Regional Director for Region 5:

I've been asked a question regarding the boxloader and would like to get an official NAFA answer before reporting back. Here's the question: If a jump is knocked over and the judge has not stopped the heat can the boxloader get off the box to re-set the jump? If they cannot get off the box because the race is on-going, who can re-set the jump?

Thank you,

Elizabeth Currin
Region 5

The Rules Committee believed it would be appropriate for a box loader to help reset a jump where it could be done safely and without interfering with the other team. This does seem to require an amendment to Section 8.3 – The Heat (page 13 of the current rulebook) as follows:

(e) Conduct of the box loader. Except during the warm-up, to retrieve a loose ball, reset a jump, or to get a fresh supply of balls to load for the current heat, the box loader must remain in the upright position behind the box, and may offer verbal encouragement only, as long as such encouragement does not distract the opposing team. For deaf dogs, box loaders should be permitted to use a subtle hand signal as long as it does not interfere with other competitors. As a courtesy to opposing teams, the box loader is to remain in position until the outcome of the heat is determined by the Head Judge. If, in the judge's opinion, a box loader has violated any of these rules, their team may forfeit the heat. (modification underlined)

The Rules Committee recommended that the Board adopt the above modification to the existing rule.

Dana moved that adopt this change. Nancy seconded. This would be effective Oct 1, 2012. In favour: Sam Ford, Nancy Garcia, Dana Nichols, Curtis Smith, Ally Stern and Dave Walt. Opposed: Karen Oleson. The motion passed.

5. Juniors – Andy McBride

The Rules Committee received the following request from Andy McBride:

I can't find any section of that rule in the rule book to quote but I'd like to request an addition. I would like NAFA to issue Junior Handler cards similar to height cards that can exempt children from the new rule after they are able to show that they are able to safely participate in flyball.

As a parent who likes to travel to other regions and run under many different judges with possibly very different interpretations of the vaguely defined rules regarding children in the ring we can not count on uniform enforcement from all judges, especially judges who don't know us or have ever seen our child in a ring before. My suggestion would be to allow for an official card issued after the parent has gotten a document signed by a supervising judge saying that the child has demonstrated a basic level of knowledge to safely be in the ring.

The idea being that the card would stop them from having their presence in the ring challenged similar to how a height card functions.

If NAFA would come out with more clear rules regarding what is and isn't an acceptable age and take the discretion away from the judges then this wouldn't really be necessary.

-Andy

The Committee understands the desire to have a more bright line test for juniors participating in the sport. Nevertheless, the number of factors that influence the situation make it nearly impossible to have a bright line rule. For instance, a child may be physically and developmentally mature enough to run a relatively easy dog with substantial adult supervision, but that same child may not be safely able to manage a large or strong dog with little supervision. We believe that it should remain within the discretion of our judges who are able to observe the situation as a whole on that date. We encourage junior handlers, but want to

make sure they are able to safely participate. We therefore do not recommend further changes to these rules.

Dana moved that we do not accept this proposal. Curtis seconded. No one opposed. The motion passed.

6. False starts – Amy Rideout

The Rules Committee received the following request to change the false start rule:

I would like to request an update to the rules to remove the part of the false start rule that allows for a rerun (8.3.b.i), and removal of the follow on sections 8.3.b.ii and 8.3.b.iii.

Competitors have long realized that this rule can significantly increase the length of racing days, and many do not see the benefit of keeping the rule. This becomes more and more significant as the number of teams increases, and may cause NAFA the loss of revenue if tournaments need to become 'limited' due to long racing days.

Thank you.

R,

*Amy Rideout
Region 15*

There was significant discussion in the Rules Committee about whether a rule change should be considered by the Board of Directors or should be considered for submission to a delegate vote. Historically, two proposals were presented for in April 2007 that did not pass. There was some discussion that the wording and presentation of multiple options may have made it difficult for any one proposal to get the needed percentage.

The Committee was fairly deeply divided as to whether there should even be consideration of a new delegate vote or of consideration of a rule change by the Board of Directors. Several members believed the rule should remain as it currently stands. All members did agree that if something were to be submitted to a delegate vote, it should be one proposal with wording drafted by the Committee and approved by the Board.

There were three possible changes discussed: 1. Limiting false starts to one per race per team; 2. Permitting false starts in the team's first race of the day; and 3. Eliminating false starts completely. Only one member was supportive of eliminating false starts completely.

There was discussion about practical ramifications of a one false start per race modification. Concerns included: reprogramming the EJS, more work required by the head table to keep track of races and heats when advancing the EJS, and judges keeping track of false starts by race, rather than by heat. It was believed that the EJS could be reprogrammed to allow this type of rule change, but it would likely require the head table to advance the system by race and heat for the system to know whether the teams were in the same race when a false start occurs. Another potential pitfall of this would be the difficulty for judges' to keep track of false starts.

Ultimately the Committee agreed that there were many concerns to be address regarding any possible delegate vote. If it was submitted, the Committee believes that the cost associated with full delegate

votes makes it impractical to submit the matter to delegate vote until the next regularly scheduled election – January 2013, meaning any proposal, if passed, would not go into effect until October 1, 2013. Several members expressed a desire to have firm language for a rule change and delegate vote if submitted. If the Board voted to submit a proposal for a delegate vote, the Committee would request that it be referred back to Rules for drafting of the delegate vote language and language for the rule change.

Ultimately, the Committee recommended that the Board consider beginning the discussion of this issue or tabling this issue for a future meeting if time does not allow.

Nancy moved that we send the issue back to the rules committee for further discussion and table it to the next meeting. The motion died for a lack of a second.

Since the false start is such a fundamental part of our sport, Sam moved that we do not consider changing the false start rule at this time. Dave seconded. There was no other discussion. In favour: Sam Ford, Dana Nichols, Karen Oleson, Ally Stern and Dave Walt. Opposed: Nancy Garcia and Curtis Smith. The motion passed.

7. Measuring time limit – Elizabeth Currin

The Rules Committee received the following submission from Elizabeth Currin, Regional Director for Region 5. At a chat with the Regional Directors, they requested that the Rules Committee consider this proposal.

(rule: Chapter - 4(f) Measuring) i have been thinking about making a request to the rules committee to change the time allowed for a dog to attempt to stand for measurement from 5 minutes to 2 minutes. What are your thoughts? Do you think the rule is fine and 5 minutes is reasonable? Or do you feel that if the dog is going to stand correctly, it will do so within 2 minutes. (I would not be suggesting any change to the rule allowing a dog to be measured up to 3 times.)

There were concerns expressed in the Committee that decreasing the time limit to 2 minutes could affect handlers who are new to the sport and have difficulty setting up dogs due to inexperience. Although there may be some areas that see abuse of this rule, it appears to be infrequent. At this point, the Committee was not inclined to recommend a decrease in the time limit.

Dana moved that we not adopt this change. Dave seconded. No one opposed. The motion passed.

8. Inside interference rule

At the last meeting, the Board voted to add language to the Inside Interference rule: "If a dog crosses the start/finish line after it has already successfully completed the course, it is not a flag."

Some have requested a change to the rule to clarify that a dog should not be flagged only if it re-runs in its own lane, rather than running into the opposing lane. If a dog interferes with the opposing lane, it would not be subject to a flag called by a line judge, but rather a whistle by a head judge for interference.

The modified rule reads:

(f) Inside Interference. If a dog or any team member interferes with the opposing team during a heat, the team causing the interference will forfeit the heat. This includes interference in the racing lane, in all in bound areas, and in the area where dogs are waiting to run. Interference is defined as impeding the other team's dog from running its

race. A dog chasing a loose ball into the other team's area is not necessarily interference. In the event of interference, the judge will assign an estimated time to the team that was interfered with. The time will be marked as estimated and will not be used to determine placement. If a dog crosses the start/finish line after it has already successfully completed the course, it is not a flag.

The Committee discussed two possible language changes:

1. Adding “, in and of itself” after “it is not a flag”, or
2. Adding “, in its own lane,” after “If a dog crosses the start/finish line” and before “after it has already successfully completed the course”

Although the Committee did not believe a specific language change was required, it offers these options in the event the Board wishes to eliminate potential confusion.

Dana moved that no change would be made to the wording. Sam seconded. During discussion, Karen suggested that we change the word flag to infraction. In favour of the original motion: Sam Ford, Nancy Garcia, Dana Nichols, Curtis Smith and Dave Walt. Opposed: Ally Stern and Karen Oleson. The motion passed- no change was made to the wording.

Special Committee Reports

Technology Committee- Karen Oleson

The first phase of the changes to the EJS will be unveiled and used this weekend at the Raleigh, NC tournament. This includes the judge override for resetting the EJS (on the judge's remote), warm up countdown, and veterans mode. Eventually all the consoles will be re-programmed with the new features at FarmTek. Then they have to be re-programmed on site when they return to the EJS. Consoles which have been reprogrammed will be marked.

We have taken delivery of one new EJS. We have components for five sets that are reserved at FarmTek. With the new sets the start lights will be brighter. We are still working on acquiring new bases and shipping cases.

Due to other obligations (Iron Dog and NAFA elections) the new NAFA database has been delayed.

The technology committee encourages all tournament directors to use the NAFA Schedule Optimizer. For information about using the NAFA Optimizer contact Flyball@flyball.org, or flyballsanc@yahoo.com.

NAFA/Flyball History Committee- Dave Walt

Brian Fay brought a number of historical documents to the CanAm- including many issues of NAFA News and old NAFA rule books. Thanks so much to Brian! These documents have been scanned and the NAFA News will be posted on the web page.

New Business:

There was a discussion about the performance team rule and whether or not performance teams must race a dog from another club. There was a short discussion. No motions were made and no change was required.

At 2:17 pm EST Dave moved to adjourn the meeting. Karen seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.