

NORTH AMERICAN FLYBALL ASSOCIATION, INC.®

REGIONAL DIRECTOR HANDBOOK

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What is the Regional Director's Handbook?

This handbook is intended as a guide to outline the role and responsibilities of the Regional Director position. This is not intended as a replacement for the NAFA Rulebook. In cases of conflict between this handbook and the NAFA Rulebook, the Rulebook has precedence.

What is a Regional Director?

The Regional Director (RD) is a person(s) appointed by NAFA's Executive Director (ED), and approved by the Board of Directors, whose purpose is to function as a representative of the ED and ensure NAFA's policies and procedures are being followed within their region.

Regional Director Code of Conduct

The Regional Director is expected to behave in a friendly and professional manner as they are NAFA's representation in the region. They should be familiar with Chapter 5 of the rulebook, as they are also tasked with enforcing NAFA's code of conduct. The Regional Director is expected to behave in an unbiased fashion when dealing with competitors, Tournament Directors and spectators. The RD should also be conscious of perceptions of bias, which will naturally exist as most RDs are also competitors within the region. Should a situation arise where an RD finds themselves in a position of real or perceived conflict of interest, it is advised they reach out to a judge, or Tournament Director to help remediate a situation. While the ultimate authority on many matters will still reside with the RD, having a second opinion of an unbiased party can significantly assist many situations.

Responsibilities of the Regional Director

The RD has a number of responsibilities that occur before, during and after events.

Before an Event

- Expect to receive automated notifications from NAFA:
 - Each time a regional event is sanctioned.
 - When an EJS is assigned to a specific tournament
 - When a tournament has not provided timely insurance information

- Approve seeding and schedule. No later than 10 calendar days before a tournament, the RD should receive the format, seed chart, and schedule. It is the RD's job to ensure that the format, seed chart, and schedule meet NAFA's policies and procedures for racing. Some items to watch for:
 - If a proposed division has fewer than 4 teams for the Regular or Multibreed class, approval from ED is required (no approval is needed for Open class). Otherwise, divisions can be combined for scheduling purposes. See section 6.1 I (i). Exceptions will be allowed by ED:
 - When fewer than 4 teams are entered in a class
 - When the spread of seeds between the 2 divisions does not make for enjoyable racing
 - The format, seed chart and welcome letter provided by the host club should contain all of the information required in section 6.3 (b).
 - Teams in each division along with the seed time of each team and the break out time assigned to that division
 - Format of the tournament (Round Robin with or without elimination etc.) for each division
 - Placement Scoring – how wins and placements are determined, and how tie scores would be broken
 - The race schedule shall not call for more than a total of 35 possible heats per day per team, 16 heats for teams in the Veterans Divisions.
 - A race may not consist of more than five heats.
 - RDs may advise clubs on certain formatting preferences within a region, but it is ultimately up to the host club to run the format they wish, as long as it is an approved NAFA format. For example, a host club may prefer to run a division with a format of 5 of 5 racing, even if the common expectation in the region is 3 of 5 racing. Not all divisions need to have the same format, or even the same total heat count.
 - When approving the schedule, things to watch for are:
 - Clubs racing in back-to-back races. Can these be avoided? The RD can offer suggestions. Sometimes these are unavoidable, but reducing them can help speed up the racing day significantly.

- Teams (not clubs, but specific teams), running in races too close together. These may not be avoidable in the schedule and may require the insertion of set breaks. Be mindful of the gap in races during a multi ring tournament as well. While a six race gap in a single ring is common, that would be problematic in a double ring event.
 - If there are elimination brackets, ensure that all round robin racing for that division is completed before elimination starts.
- Help the host club by answering any questions they have prior to hosting an event.
- May be asked to review and approve the Welcome Letter, ensure that all scoring, and tiebreakers, are spelled out appropriately for the formats in each division, if it was not included on the Seed Chart. If there are scoring questions, what is posted in the Welcome Letter OR on the Seed Chart is what should be followed.
- If unable to attend a tournament, the RD must contact the ED to determine an appropriate Acting Regional Director.
- Establish communication with Tournament Director. It is often helpful to establish a line of communication with the Tournament Director prior to the closing date of the tournament. Ideally, the sooner the RD receives seeding info after closing and/or draws, the better. Many issues can crop up during the seeding and scheduling process that create delays. To allow more time to deal with those potential issues, the RD should make sure the Tournament Director is aware of any delays there will be in reviewing the info.
- Review Schedule. NAFA can provide optimized schedules for tournaments upon request. Some Tournament Directors will prefer to create their own. Careful review of the schedules is recommended to ensure that they do not have errors, regardless of how they are created. Encourage Tournament Directors to submit for NAFA provided schedules as soon as possible. Also, please note, that NAFA generated schedules are considered approved, but they should be reviewed to ensure there are no issues. NAFA recommends a minimum gap of 5 races (10 for 2 ring tournaments) to allow for adequate rest time for racing dogs. NAFA can provide an Excel program to review the team and race gaps in the schedules. There may be cases when a tournament is small and having 5 race gaps is not possible. In such cases breaks will need to be included. There is not a hard and fast rule for how many breaks, but consider the following when examining the schedule:

- Temperature
- Time of racing day
- How many times have they had a short break already?
- General format - are there a lot of club back to backs that are causing natural delays already?

The primary concern is for the dogs, and they should be given appropriate time to recuperate between races.

During an Event

- Be present for the entire day of racing. They should arrive in time for the judge to setup for measuring, and be available through the racing day, followed by awards. If the RD leaves before racing finishes, they need to appoint an Acting RD and inform the Tournament Director.
- Bring the NAFA supplied height wicket to each tournament, unless the host club has an approved wicket available.
- Deliver the measuring wicket to the Head Judge prior to the advertised measuring time. The RD must ensure the judge has the proper amount of time required to calibrate the wicket prior to measuring.
- Be present for the entirety of the measuring process. During Measuring, it is the RD's responsibility to ensure NAFA's policies and procedures are followed. These include:
 - Ensure the head judge has calibrated the wicket
 - Ensure that measuring is offered in an area open to all competitors to observe
 - Ensure that only one handler per dog is used during a dog's measurement
 - Ensure other dogs, and competitors, are far enough away from the dog being measured, so as not to distract or frighten the measured dog.
 - The RD has the option to scribe the measuring results themselves on the C.9 form, but they can hand this job off to someone else, provided the RD ensures the results are recorded correctly.
 - Ensure the C.9 is posted in a public place, known to all competitors, at the conclusion of the measuring time.
- Help with measuring, as needed. During measuring, it is the responsibility of the Judge to ensure a dog is in the acceptable stance. An RD can assist the Judge in this process, as the RD may be able to

observe the dog from angles that the judge cannot see as easily. However, if the Judge does not wish to have feedback, then the RD should not provide any. It is advisable to discuss with the judge prior to measuring what their preference for the process would be. While the Regional Director does sign the C.9 form, this signature is not an acknowledgment of, or agreement with, the measured height of the dog. The signature is an acknowledgment of the process around the measuring (public place, calibrated wicket, single handler, etc.).

- Ensure the course meets all NAFA standard safety requirements and the amount of runback area advertised in the sanctioning is safely covered in the appropriate running surface.
- Work with the TD, Judge, and competitors to resolve any problems that may come up throughout the event(s).
- Distribute, as necessary, Plaques, Junior Handler Pins and Club packets that competitors have earned.
- Ensure that all competitors are behaving in a manner expected in NAFA's Code of Conduct. There will be an excusal form created and published, which should be completed in these instances. The RD has the authority to excuse any individuals for a breach of the Code of Conduct, as described in Chapter 5, Section 5.1. Items outlined in that section include:
 - Foul language
 - Abuse or severe discipline of a dog
 - Running a dog under the age of 15 months
 - Racing a dog that is not in adequate physical condition to race
 - Demonstration of poor sportsmanship
 - Willful violation of the rules with the intent to gain an advantage
 - Demonstration of dissatisfaction with a judge's decision
- Deal with Aggressive Dog excusals. The head judge may excuse the dog in the ring or during measuring. If the dog shows undue aggression outside of the ring, the RD may excuse the dog. This can include dogs not entered in the event itself. When an excusal occurs, the RD should ensure a C.12 form is completed, that the owner signs and receives a copy. The judge and RD should ensure one of them submits a copy to NAFA.
- Give advice, when needed, should problems occur with tournament placement coring. NAFA does not have a set or prescribed method of scoring placements for a tournament. Regions have adopted a number of varied and diverse methods to score the formats of their

tournaments. Some are dictated by racing formats and racing schedules, and it is NAFA's intention to allow regions and tournament hosts the autonomy to run a format they enjoy. It is NOT the responsibility of the RD to dictate a format scoring methodology. The RD has the responsibility to ensure that the host club clearly states their format, and scoring method, in the welcome letter (see Before and Event). The scoring format and tiebreakers must be fair and clearly defined. The RD should ensure they understand the scoring method, should they be called on to resolve any issues. The RD may be required to assist the TD, who is responsible for the results of their tournament, in the event there are errors, or an anomaly that arises that isn't accounted for in the welcome letter or seed chart.

- Distribute awards. While the host club is responsible for handing out any tournament-based awards, the RD will be responsible for distributing NAFA awards throughout the year. There are a few types of awards to be aware of:
 - Certificates: these are awarded for titles up to 15,000 points which are mailed to club captains.
 - Pins: Title pins are awarded for titles over and including 5,000 points. There are also pins for Junior Handlers.
 - Plaques: These are awarded for titles over and including 20,000. There are also plaques for Iron Dogs, Regional Champions, MVPs, Hall of Fame nominees and inductees as well as NAFA Champions, and Judge of the Year.
- Awards will typically be sent directly to the RD. Each region may have different methods of presenting these awards and celebrating the dogs'/handlers' accomplishments. Please ensure these are presented in a manner that is reflective of NAFA's appreciation for clubs and competitors. These awards can be incredibly important to participants. It is common for title pins to be distributed to club owners outside of award presentation, and have junior handler pins and plaques presented at the award ceremony, or captains' meeting.
- Before leaving for the day, the RD should check in with the Tournament Director and head judge to ensure there are no outstanding items that require attention. If there are items, they should coordinate who is responsible for those issues or items.

Following an Event

At the conclusion of a weekend of racing, the Regional Director may be required to submit a C.15 or C.18 Judges report. These can also be done before leaving an event, but could equally be done a day or two after.

Also, at the completion of an event, there may be follow up needed with the Executive Director. This can be as a result of questions from competitors that couldn't be answered onsite, or follow up on Judge, Host or Competitor behavior that requires further discussion.

The Regional Director should report any issues with the EJS Coordinator, so that they may be addressed before the next tournament.

Outside of Events

RDs serve as a point of contact for their region. This means that they may be contacted by people looking to find out more about flyball in their area. Most often this is individuals looking for clubs in their immediate area, or looking for help starting a flyball club in the region. It is good to stay current on where each club in the region is located, whether they are still active, and their point of contact. Additionally, RDs may also be contacted by members of the press, dog trainers, and event organizers. NAFA's website has a list of clubs in the region, help is greatly appreciated in keeping this up to date.

RDs help communicate NAFA news, rule changes or requests for info. Many RDs have mailing lists, Facebook or other social media sites to facilitate communications. It is good to consider how a region communicates most frequently when setting up communication methods.

Regional Directors are also asked to provide regional business updates to the ED. This could be casual requests or more formal specific requests for info on issues in their region. Part of an RD's role is to provide the ED with feedback.

New Clubs

Whether helping people brand new to the sport, or existing competitors forming a new club, the RD can help new clubs starting up. RDs can promote growth of the sport by helping new clubs understand NAFA rules and policies, but could also be a great source for people to find a training mentor or connecting people to resources in their area. Further ways to help include pointing people toward

equipment sources or something as simple as helping a club enter their first tournament.

Media/Requests for Info

Occasionally RDs may be contacted by members of the media or an outside interest who would like more information about the sport. RDs should feel free to refer these folks to the NAFA ED, or answer questions themselves if they can provide accurate, positive information. Often RDs receive a request for a demonstration of flyball for an event, which are a great way to introduce the sport to a new audience.

Know the Rules

- RDs should read and understand the rulebook. RDs should contact the ED, Head of the Rules Committee, or the Regional Director email group with questions.
- RDs must stay up to date on rule changes and new versions of the rulebook (these are most likely to occur at the start of a fiscal year (October 1st))
- If an RD is asked a question regarding rules and is unsure of the answer, they should not guess. Consult the rulebook directly, ask a judge, and if needed contact the NAFA BOD to get additional clarification.

Rules Regarding Regional Director Duties:

Section 1.6 Regional Directors
Section 5.6 Probation
Section 5.7 Aggressive Dogs
Section 6.3 Format & Schedule
Section 7.4 Meaningless Heats
Section 9.2 Regional Directors
Section 9.3 Representing NAFA

Advice on General Conduct

- Be friendly and welcoming to competitors. RDs should seek to introduce themselves to new competitors.
- Make sure competitors know they can ask questions about NAFA issues publicly or privately.
- Ensure NAFA policy is followed and to help things run safely and smoothly for human and canine participants.
- To the extent possible, NAFA wants a positive experience for competitors and spectators. If NAFA Rules or Policies are breached, RDs should try to understand the circumstances and events that lead to the issue. Frequently a verbal warning is good route to resolution, especially in cases when there was no malicious intent and the rule may not have been understood. There will also be more serious cases when more stern action is required. The RD needs to approach each situation with care and thought to try and take the appropriate course of action.
- Occasionally, a situation may require consensus building to deal with issues during tournaments. An RD may need to request all clubs meet to help resolve an issue or make a decision. This could be as simple as deciding how long a lunch break should be, notifying everyone of an equipment failure and how it will be handled, or even event suspension or postponement due to extenuating circumstances like weather or facility problems. In these situations, the RD will need to take a position of leadership to guide the conversation and/or make a final determination that is fair, safe and appropriate for the situation at hand.