

AUSDS Inc. JUDGING SYSTEM

Inc. No A0092012P

Fostering Excellence in Breeding Practical 'Utility' Stock Dogs

A fair and transparent system

With built-in feedback for competitors (individual scores for every section of the trial)

Weighted towards the most important aspects of the high-class, utility working dog

AUSDS Inc. trials are judged quite differently from most other Australian trials

Instead of starting from 100 and deducting points for every fault, the following method is used:

- Each of the four aspects of the trial (casting; paddock work; yard work; cattle work – each of which is worth 25% of the total score) are divided up into sections.
ie. the paddock portion of the trial has sections that include the cast, approach, bring, force and hold obstacle, heading obstacle, drive away, work to and from obstacles, etc. The yard and cattle aspects likewise are divided into sections.
- A certain number of points are allotted to each section of the trial.
ie. 30 points for the cast; 10 for the approach; 20 for the bring, etc.
- The judge gives a score out of the points allotted for that section of the trial, based on an overall consideration of the dog's work rather than on technicalities.

To give an example, the judge will give a score out of 30 points for the cast, with 30 points being a perfect cast, and 0 being the worst. The dog cannot lose more than 30 points on the cast no matter how poor their work is (however, truly inferior work would incur disqualification). The judge might give the dog a score of 18 out of 30 for the cast, before then assessing the approach.

*NB (i) If a dog is not capable of, or coping with, the section at hand, handlers can move on towards the next section and continue with the trial without being disqualified. The judge gives an assessment (only) for sections attempted, and those sections partly completed.
(ii) If a section/obstacle is not completed a score of zero points is given for that particular section/obstacle.

This is done for the following reasons (which other judging systems generally do not allow):

1. It allows greater transparency in judging.
Competitors will know exactly how their dog was scored and assessed for each and every section of the trial.
2. It allows good work in one section to be rewarded, and not penalized by poor work in another section.
 - a. One problem with the usual method of deducting points starting from 100, is that a dog could demonstrate a perfect cast, and yet lose all 100 points in the remainder of the trial (perhaps the sheep went around and around an obstacle with points coming off every time,

and so on), and end with 0 at the end of the run. In the AUSDS system, *the dog will still retain the points for completed work well done*, while losing points for those sections done poorly.

b. Therefore, the score will be a fairer and more accurate reflection of the entire trial run.

3. It allows “weighting” of each section of the trial, with more points for more important aspects, and less points for less important aspects.

a. To give a simple, exaggerated example, imagine there are only 2 sections, and their allocation are 60 points for the cast and 5 for the force and hold obstacle. Then obviously it would be much more important to have a good casting dog in order to be successful. The trial would be “weighted” (or biased) towards the good casting dog. If the situation is reversed, and 5 points are allocated for the cast and 60 for the force and hold obstacle, then handlers (and perhaps breeders if they were breeding for success at these trials), would focus more on that aspect. The trial would be weighted much more away from casting ability.

b. So getting the relative “weighting” of points right for each section is vital, and this can only be achieved by allocating appropriate points for each section.

c. This will help ensure that the best practical utility dogs really do win.

4. It allows common sense practicalities in judging, rather than technicalities.

a. Rather than simply taking points off for every infraction of some technicality (such as a sheep stepping over a line), an overall view of the dog’s work is undertaken for each section.

b. The dog is being judged, not the sheep. So a dog can still get a high score, even though the sheep were very difficult, if in the judge’s opinion the dog handled them well. And conversely, a dog can still get a low score even if it had an easy run with quiet sheep. This is because the judge can see the dog’s limitations, and will score accordingly, even if technically the sheep weren’t off course etc.

Does this remove the handler’s/trainer’s ability from the equation?

No, handling and training will always be a big part of any trial. And luck will also play a part. However, the handler’s ability and luck should be of lesser importance, while the natural ability of the dog is of greater importance.

The AUSDS’s aim is “*Fostering Excellence in Breeding Practical Utility Stock Dogs*”. This judging system is an important element in achieving that aim.

(See also: *AUSDS Inc. Judging Guidelines for Trials*, and *AUSDS Inc. Assessments of Practical ‘Utility’ Stock Dogs*)