

AUSTRALIAN UTILITY STOCK DOG SOCIETY INC. TRIAL RULES

Inc. No. A0092012P

Fostering Excellence in Breeding Practical 'Utility' Stock Dogs

1. AUSDS Inc. trials must be run in accordance with the Society's Aims, Purposes and Objectives.
2. Common-sense welfare of livestock worked, and dogs competing, is of prime importance and consideration.
3. Any abusive handling of stock and dogs will not be tolerated at an AUSDS Inc. event.
4. Owners and handlers must be Members, Junior Members or Level 1 workers, to be entitled to compete with dogs in Society trials.
5. Level 1 workers need not be Members of the Society, but if they aren't, there is a limited registration entitlement (see *AUSDS Inc. Dog Register – Rule 3. Level 1 Workers*).
6. Dogs must be registered with the Society to be entitled to compete in Society trials. (see *AUSDS Inc. Dog Register*).
7. Society 'Try-Out' days shall be held apart from trials, for the important purpose of **encouraging** people to participate and work their stock dogs in relaxed trial situations, without having to comply to the criteria of rule Nos. 4. and 6.
8. The degree of difficulty of Society trials shall correspond to the level of competition, but obstacles must be relatively achievable for the majority of dogs, in order to maintain competitor enthusiasm and interest:
 - (a) 'Level 1' trials – for Level 1 workers who have not won an AUSDS Inc. trial at a higher level, are eligible to compete with their dogs – can only be won on one occasion
 - (b) 'Level 2' trials – dogs that have not won an AUSDS Inc. trial at a higher level, are eligible to compete – can only be won on two occasions
 - (c) 'Level 3' trials – all dogs are eligible to compete
 - (d) 'Championship' trials – dogs must qualify in 'Level 3' trials to be eligible to compete
 - (e) In the sheep sections, 'Level 1' and 'Level 2' trials have a shorter cast than 'Level 3' and 'Championship' trials and the obstacle and yard work is simpler and less challenging than the higher levels. Championship' trials, however, have long extended casts and re-casts with more difficult 'drive-away' sections etc.
 - (f) In the cattle section, 'Level 1', 'Level 2', 'Level 3' and 'Championship' trials have varying degrees of difficulty for each level.
9. The overall standard of trials, set by an 'absolute majority' of the Committee, must be adhered to as closely as practically possible
10. Trial entry forms must be filled out with each dog's name, including any known prefix, and each dog's AUSDS Inc. registration number.
11. Owners/handlers must sign trial entry forms which include an agreement to appropriately control and take care of their dogs, and to accept full responsibility for any loss or damage caused by themselves or by their dogs, at trial venues.
12. Fees shall be payable when trial entries are due.
 - * NB (i) Trial committees may limit the number of trial runs per owner/handler.
 - (ii) Trial committees shall reject late entries.
13. Any dog that poses the risk of transferring a contagious disease is not permitted at trials.
14. Bitches in oestrus are not permitted to compete or be near trial courses and may be inspected by trial committees. Owners/handlers may substitute other dogs for such entries, or have their entry fees refunded.
15. A random draw is made-up from those workers competing in trials. Each worker runs accordingly, before any have their second run etc. Genuine inability to comply with draws may be considered.
16. If a nominee works someone else's dogs, the nominee must fulfil the criteria required of the person for whom they represent.

17. Handlers are allowed to command and control their dogs during trials by using: word of mouth, whistle and arm signals. If a stick is used to emphasise arm signals, it must be plain and not exceed 50 cm in length.
18. Electronic devices for controlling dogs at trial venues are totally banned.
19. Handlers are not allowed physical contact with their dogs during trial runs unless judges grant permission.
20. Competitors are not allowed onto trial courses with dogs that have not had their runs.
21. A reasonable time is allotted for trial runs to be completed, so that every aspect of a dog's ability and merit – to collect, control and move stock, can be assessed.
22. Fresh stock, having an even line, are used for each trial run where appropriate and available.
23. Judges shall be in charge of trials in progress, and their decisions are final.
24. Society score cards must be used by judges when assessing trials.
25. Dogs are expected to work in all categories (a), (b), (c), and (d).
26. Dogs are expected to be ready, unleashed and under control when coming to the starting point of trial runs. * NB Dog collars that clang and jingle with noise etc. are best avoided.
27. The handler's circle should be clearly defined, if necessary with some form of markers, so that it can be clearly seen by both handler and judge.
28. Dogs shall be cast from a position to the rear of, and within a reasonable distance to the handler, or directly beside the handler.
29. The release of stock shall be as natural as possible.
30. Judges indicate to time keepers when they consider it suitable to start trial runs.
31. Time keepers are to use audible devices to indicate to competitors when trial runs start and end.
32. Inappropriate crossings of dogs between stock and handlers does not result in disqualification, but will be taken into account with the assessment of scores.
33. Handlers are to walk in a direct line to allocated positions along trial courses, where they should remain whilst dogs negotiate corresponding sections of trials.
 - * NB (i) Trial courses will not have artificial corridors marked for stock to be worked within.
 - (ii) Trial courses shall include both left-hand and right-hand sided work.
34. Obstacle dimensions stipulated on the list of approved AUSDS Inc. obstacles, accompanied with an Approx. Scale in Metres, must be adhered to as closely as practically possible.
35. If any section of a trial run is found too difficult or time consuming, it can be cut short and by-passed without disqualification. The handler may decide, or the judge may request, that the trial in progress move forward to the next section before accomplishing the section at hand.
36. Manoeuvres by handlers to unfairly help dogs to move or block stock are looked upon as serious misdemeanours. Such actions will be taken into account with the assessment of scores.
 - * NB Help from handlers may at times be required and even advised by judges, to achieve progression of trial runs eg. a stock blockage at an obstacle may be best rectified with such help.
37. Judges are to indicate to time keepers when trial runs conclude, or if they are terminated prior to time allotments.
38. Stock are to be taken off trial grounds at the conclusion of trial runs as promptly as possible.
39. Judges, with discretion, may grant re-runs if unforeseen circumstances happen during trial runs. Judges, along with trial committees, will decide when re-runs occur.
40. Judges are entitled, and must disqualify and terminate any aspect of a trial run, [(a), (b), (c) or (d)], that is of inferior work, and which may cause detrimental effect to the welfare of any animals involved.
 - * NB A zero score is given to that aspect of a trial run which is terminated by disqualification.
41. A dog that is likely to show any viciousness towards sheep, shall be muzzled when working in the sheep yards.
42. A trial must be terminated if an animal has noticeable injury or bleeding. If the dog is of no fault to the cause of the incident, a re-run may be granted.

43. Judges shall terminate trial runs if handlers display inappropriate language or behaviour.
44. If a dog is not capable of, or coping with, any section of any of the four aspects (a), (b), (c), or (d), of a trial, handlers can move on towards the next section and continue with the trial without being disqualified. The judge still gives an assessment for all sections attempted AND those sections partly completed.
- *NB (i) A zero score is given if a section/obstacle is not completed.
- (ii) A zero score is given to that aspect of a trial run which is terminated by disqualification.
45. Assessment scores that are given, including the total percentage score, the percentage score for each of the 4 aspects, and all sectional scores, are to be clearly posted or made available for each trial run, as promptly as possible for all to see. Results shall be announced on PA systems when suitable.
46. Score cards must have the facility on every section for judges to record the reason why any run is terminated prior to completion, and judges must fill these items out for all trial runs. This include:
Retired (why); Disqualified (why); Time Expired; and Unassessed.
47. Score cards used at trials remain the property of the Society, but can be perused at trials under trial committee supervision.
48. 'Level 3' and 'Championship' trials shall have final run-offs.
49. When final run-offs are held, the aggregate total assessment scores determine the placings. If the highest scores are equal, whether there are finals or not, first placing is awarded to the dog with the fastest time.
50. Where possible, prize monies and trophies shall be made available for awards to competitors.
51. Dogs that qualify, but fail to compete when final run-offs are held, are not eligible for placement awards.
52. Trial courses for finals may be altered by trial committees with assistance from judges.
- * NB Any alterations must be in accordance with the Society's Committee guidelines.
53. Trials wishing to experiment with a new obstacle design are required to submit the design to the AUSDS Inc. Committee for consideration prior to the trial, and if approved, it may be used at that trial. After the trial, the obstacle is then reassessed by the Committee, and if it is considered an appropriate test, the obstacle is added to the approved list. If rejected, the obstacle is not to be used in an AUSDS Inc. trial.
54. Any protest must be lodged in writing, accompanied by an appropriate fee (set by the Committee of the Society), within 2 (two) hours of the incident, to the trial committee who will deal with the matter. It may be necessary to seek advice from the Society's Committee.
55. Competitors refusing to conform with these Trial Rules may be barred from competing in subsequent Society trials.
56. These Trial Rules shall not be altered or added to unless a signed notice of the proposed alteration or addition shall be given to the Society's Secretary and by him to each Committee Member at least 14 (fourteen) days prior to the Committee Meeting at which the motion is to be considered and the motion is carried by an absolute majority of the Committee.