

# AKC® Agility League Regulations



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AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

## AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

The American Kennel Club® is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

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# **AKC Agility League Regulations**

## **Effective Aug. 10, 2022**

### **Chapter 1 – Purpose and Overview**

**Section 1. Purpose.** The AKC Agility League (the “League”) is an exciting way for agility enthusiasts to practice, compete and earn regional and national recognition in their sport. The League gives agility enthusiasts a platform for competing locally in smaller competitions that have a more laid-back atmosphere and are great training opportunities for newcomers. This League allows clubs, schools and/or individuals to form teams and compete on a date that they select at their local facilities. The League gives the opportunity to compete on a national level and earn regional and national rankings for individual members and their teams. The League will culminate with annual regional competitions with winners progressing to an annual national championship.

**Section 2. Overview.** Clubs, training schools and/or individuals can organize a team or teams to compete in the League. The competition calendar is organized into three 12-week seasons for the calendar year.

During each season, the AKC will release six course maps, one every two weeks, for a total of six rounds. Each team will compete on these courses and submit scores to the league administration. Every agility skill level (novice, intermediate, masters) may compete with lower levels being allowed more penalties.

The teams may choose the date and location of their competitions. The AKC will publicly release the rankings of both teams and individual dogs on a regional and national basis every two weeks at the conclusion of play on each course, as well as the overall rankings for each complete season. The

League calendar year will culminate with a regional championship and a national championship at which the League champions will be crowned.

All applicable regulations found in Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT) will apply to the league unless the league regulations state otherwise.

The League is a non-titling AKC program.

## Chapter 2 – Dog Eligibility & Class Structure

**Section 1. Dog Eligibility.** All participating dogs must be AKC registered; FSS registered; or listed with the AKC Canine Partners or AKC PAL program prior to competing. Dogs must be at least 15 months old. Dogs must be physically sound as described in Chapter 1, Section 3, Paragraph 7 of the Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT).

To compete on an AKC Agility League team, dogs must be eligible to compete in AKC Agility competitions as described in the Agility Rules and Regulations. The only departures from these rules for the AKC Agility League (1) the allowance of bitches in season to compete at the local agility facility's discretion and (2) the ability to compete without yet receiving an official height card.

**Section 2. Bitches in Season.** Bitches in season may compete in local league play at the discretion of the owner of the facility where the team is competing. Bitches in season will not be allowed to compete at the AKC Agility League regional and national championships.

**Section 3. Dog Skill Levels.** Dogs will be categorized according to skill level for individual dog rankings in the following categories:

- **Senior** for those with Excellent or Masters titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC;
- **Sophomore** for those with Open and Novice titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC;
- **Freshman** for those without titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC;
- **Elementary** for pre-competition dogs without titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC; offering beginner courses without weave poles or teeter;

- **Ph.D.** – for all levels of dogs; courses will be International Sweepstakes Class (ISC) style, but will be judged under the League time/fault rules.

Handlers may elect to compete in a higher skill level, but may not compete in a lower level than the dog's titles. If a dog earns a higher-level title during a League season, they may complete that season at the lower level at which they enrolled.

Dogs may compete at the Elementary skill level for a total of three seasons. Dogs may compete in both Elementary and Freshman for one season. Freshman dogs may not move down to Elementary once they complete two seasons at the Freshman level.

**Section 4. Team Skill Levels.** Teams will be categorized according to skill level for team. All dogs on a team must compete at the same skill level.

- **Senior** for those with Excellent or Masters titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC;
- **Sophomore** for those with Open and Novice titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC;
- **Freshman** for those without agility titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC;
- **Elementary** for those without agility titles as of the first day of the league season in which the dog is competing and subject to verification by AKC; courses designed for pre-competition dogs not ready for Freshman; courses will not include weave poles or teeter;
- **Ph.D.** for all levels of dogs; courses will be International Sweepstakes Class (ISC) style, but will be judged under the League time/fault rules.

Handlers may elect to compete in a higher skill level. Dogs will be judged and ranked at the skill level of the team.

**Section 5. Jump Height.** Dogs may jump at:

- **Regular** jump height (8, 12, 16, 20, 24 or 24C inches) – See AKC *Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)*, Chapter 2, Section 4.

- **Preferred** jump height (4, 8, 12, 16 or 20 inches)  
– See *AKC Regulations for Agility Trials and Agility Course Test (ACT)*, Chapter 8, Section 9.
- **Veterans** jump height – For dogs 10 years and older. Veteran dogs may jump up to two levels lower than their jump height (4, 8, 12, or 16 inches). Four-inches is the minimum jump height for all dogs in League competition.

Dogs may change jump heights during a League season, but must run four courses at the same jump height to be eligible for Individual final cumulative rankings and awards. Any runs will still count towards team scores as long as they are at the approved Regular, Preferred or Veterans (if eligible) height. Captains must notify the AKC Agility League regarding any jump height changes.

**Section 6. Field Size Divisions.** In an effort to make sure all participants have the appropriate field size, there are three League divisions that will run different courses. The divisions will be based on the size of their training field or room. Team organizers must submit a ring map, showing dimensions of their competition area and that accurately shows any columns (poles) and column sizes. AKC reserves the right to reject facilities that do not meet certain specifications.

- **Extended:** Those facilities that are at least 100x100 feet or greater will be classified in the Extended field size division.
- **Regulation:** Those facilities that are at least 70x100 feet or greater will be classified as in the Regulation field size division.
- **Limited:** Those facilities that are less than 70x100 feet, but more than 50x70, will be classified in the Limited field size division.

## **Section 7. Special Classes – Junior Handlers.**

The League will offer a Juniors class for junior handlers who are younger than 18 years of age. Junior handlers will compete on teams based on their skill level (Senior, Sophomore, Freshman or Ph.D.), but will receive a separate ranking that will spotlight the top junior handlers in the program.

## **Chapter 3 – League Structure**

**Section 1. Team Formation.** A team or teams may be organized by a club; a training school; or an individual. Organizers must register the team with the League and enter information including team name, team competition level, number of dogs, field size and home base (city/state and primary training facility). While unique and creative team names are encouraged, teams should refrain from using explicit language or registered trademarks. The AKC reserves the right to reject a team name and require the team to provide an alternate acceptable name.

A minimum of three dogs and two handlers is required to form a team. A maximum of eight dogs may be registered to a team. All handlers on the team must be registered with the League.

Clubs, schools and individuals may field more than one team per League season. A dog may run on more than one team per League season, but must run once for each separate team to be eligible for end-

of-season awards and regional and national event competition. A single run may not be attributed to multiple teams.

### **Section 2. League Registration.**

- Organizers must register the team with the League prior to any competition (“League Team Registration”).
- All participating individuals must register as handlers with the League on an annual basis (“League Handler Registration”). They will be issued a handler number for that year (“AKC Agility League Handler Number”).
- Each individual must then register their dog(s) with their team, using their AKC Agility League Handler Number and the dog’s AKC registration number, AKC PAL listing number, or AKC Canine Partners listing number.
- All teams must register at the start of each League season to compete in that Season.
- All dogs must be register with a team at the start of each League season to compete in that Season (“League-Registered Dog”).

- It is not mandatory to compete in every Season of the year.

**Section 3. Geographic Organization.** For ranking purposes, teams will be organized into regions according to the location (state) of the team's primary competition field:

**Northwest**

- Washington
- Oregon
- Idaho
- Alaska

**Western**

- California
- Nevada
- Utah
- Arizona
- New Mexico
- Hawaii

**South Central**

- Texas
- Oklahoma
- Kansas
- Missouri
- Arkansas
- Louisiana

**North Central**

- Montana
- Wyoming
- Colorado
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- Nebraska

**Great Lakes**

- Minnesota
- Michigan
- Iowa
- Indiana
- Illinois
- Wisconsin
- Ohio
- Kentucky

**Southeast**

- Florida
- Georgia

- South Carolina
- North Carolina
- Alabama
- Mississippi
- Tennessee
- Puerto Rico

### **Mid Atlantic**

- New York
- New Jersey
- Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- Maryland
- West Virginia
- Virginia
- Washington, DC

### **New England**

- Maine
- New Hampshire
- Vermont
- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island
- Connecticut

## **Section 4. Scheduling.**

- The League Season will be organized into 12-week Seasons, held three times a year.
- Course maps will be released every two weeks, and each team has a two-week time frame (“Round”) in which to run that course, for a total of six courses per Season.
- Courses will be released on Monday mornings. They will be emailed to team captains and posted on designated social media sites and the League website.
- Scores for each course must be reported by 11:59 pm EST on the Sunday before the next Round’s course map is released.
- If a team cannot compete on the designated course during the two-week round due to an unforeseen circumstance, such as inclement weather, they must notify the AKC within 48 hours of the unforeseen circumstance. The team captain must apply for an exception to run that course during a different two-week round.

- The Exception Application must include the reason for the delay and give the date that the team will make-up the missed date. AKC will consider the Exception Application and at its sole discretion AKC may either grant or deny the request. AKC will notify the team captain of AKC's determination and the date by which the course may be run. if the application is approved so the team can run that course at a later date.

**Section 5. Fees.** The AKC Agility League will enact a handler registration fee on an annual basis and a dog enrollment fee on a per-season basis. It is free to enroll a team. Fee amounts are subject to change and will be published on the AKC Agility League website.

## **Chapter 4 – Competition Structure**

**Section 1. Courses.** Courses will be designed by AKC Agility Field Representatives, AKC Agility Judges and approved AKC course designers. Courses will be released at the start of each two weeks of the Season, resulting in a total of six unique courses each League Season. Each course will be run only once by each team for score. Courses will vary and will include those in the style of standard, jumpers with weaves, hybrid and premier. Standard courses will not include the pause table. Teams in the Ph.D. skill level will run courses that adhere to the style of the ISC.

Major changes cannot be made to the courses. Major adjustments include, but are not limited to, shifting course obstacles greater than 3 feet, altering the direction of jumps or equipment, and inverting (or flipping) the course.

Obstacle substitutions may be made with only with the express written permission of the AKC Agility League staff on a case-by-case basis.

**Section 2. Captains.** Each team must appoint a team captain ("Captain"). The Captain is responsible for forming the teams, scheduling competitions, arranging a judge and other crew, communicating with team members, and inputting the scores of each competition. Captains may not be minors.

**Section 3. Other roles.** Teams may appoint co-captains to assist the captain with duties. Other jobs that should be assigned include timer, scribe and ring crew. All ring crew members may be team members and compete with their dogs.

**Section 4. Competition Sites.** Competitions may be held at any location that the team chooses. The location may change during a season, but the Field Size Division must remain the same and field diagrams should be submitted for AKC Agility League review. Refer to Chapter 2, Section 4 for Field Size Divisions and requirements. Course areas must be moderately level and clear and set up on non-slip surfaces.

**Section 5. Course Access.** Teams may practice the courses before running for a score. In addition, clubs and schools may allow any students or members to run the courses for practice and are welcome to use the courses for classes, in addition to team League competition.

Treats and/or toys may be used when practicing the course, with the permission of the host facility and captain. Treats and/or toys may not be used or carried on the body when a dog and handler are running the course for an AKC Agility League score.

**Section 6. Judges.** Approved AKC Judges and anyone who has earned a Master Excellent (MX) and/or a Master Excellent Jumpers with Weaves (MXJ) title is eligible to judge at League competitions. If a team does not have anyone that meets those qualifications, the Captain may apply for an exception to the League department. Judges' dogs may be run by the judge if there is another person of sufficient experience to judge them. Judges' family members also may participate in league competition and/or may run the judge's dogs, but judges should not judge their own dogs or members of their immediate household handling their dogs. Judges do not have to be team members; guest judges are allowed. Judges' responsibilities include supervising the building of the course, measuring the course yardage, judging the dogs' performance, and reviewing and approving score sheets.

**Section 7. Scoring.** Dogs will be scored based on time and faults, according to their levels, with advanced dogs subject to more penalties than novice dogs.

**Section 8. Faults.** Faults will be deducted according to level as follows:

**a. Senior & Ph.D.**

- Displaced jump bar or plank – 5 pts.
- Missed contact zone – 5 pts.
- See-saw fly-off – 5 pts.
- Refusal/run-out – 5 pts.
- Missed weave pole entry – 5 pts.
- Missed weave pole once entered correctly – 5 pts.
- Visibly moving or stepping on top of the broad jump - 5 pts.
- Wrong Course – 10 pts.
- Failure to complete weave poles within 3 tries – 10 pts.

**b. Sophomore**

- Displaced jump bar or plank – 5 pts.
- Visibly moving or stepping on top of broad jump – 5 pts.
- Missed contact zone – 5 pts.
- See-saw fly-off – 5 pts.
- Wrong Course – 5 pts.
- Failure to complete weave poles within 3 tries – 5 pts.
- Refusal/run-out – 2 pts. (no refusals on weave poles but must complete in 3 tries)

**c. Freshmen**

- Displaced jump bar or plank – 1 pt.
- Visibly moving or stepping on top of broad jump – 1 pt.
- Missed Contact – 5 pts.
- See-saw fly-off – 5 pts.
- Wrong Course – 5 pts.
- Failure to complete weave poles in 3 tries – 5 pts.
- Refusal/run-out – No penalty

**d. Elementary**

- Displaced jump bar or plank – 1 pt.
- Missed Contact – 2 pts.
- Wrong Course – 2 pts.
- Refusal/run-out – No penalty

## Excusal Faults

Dogs/handlers incurring Excusal faults are recommended to re-run the course. Excusal faults include dog leaving course area & stops working; excessive handling or harsh commands; dog fouls ring; failure to complete all obstacles; handler/dog contact; handler equipment contact; and outside assistance. If a dog does not complete a course, then captains will leave that dog off the score reporting for that round.

**Section 9. Calculation of Scores.** Individual scores for each dog will be calculated based on course time, total faults, jump height, jump class (Regular, Preferred, Veteran), and course type. Team scores will be calculated by averaging the individual scores of all team dogs who ran the course. Teams must have a minimum of three dogs run the course for the Team to be eligible for scoring.

### Regular and Preferred Jump Class Scoring

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{course yardage}}{(\text{time} * \text{jump handicap}) + \text{faults}}$$

### Veteran Jump Class Scoring

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{course yardage}}{(\text{time} * \text{jump handicap}) - 2 \text{ sec} + \text{faults}}$$

## Jump Handicaps

Jump handicaps are based on a dog's measured/true AKC jump height, not the height at which the bar is set (with the exception of 24C)

STD	Hybrid Handicap	JWW	Handicap
8"	0.846	8"	0.854
12"	0.915	12"	0.910
16"	0.965	16"	0.924
20"	1	20"	1
24"	0.972	24"	0.985
24C	0.972	24C	0.985

**Section 10. Score Sheets.** The AKC will make available scribe sheets for teams to download, as well as other paperwork needed for League participation.

Score sheets must be signed by the judge and the competitor at the team competition. Score sheets must include the Course Map ID, course yardage and dog jump height, as well as the total faults and dog time (sec.ms recorded to two decimal places). Time may be recorded with automatic timers or hand-held devices, such as stop watches or cell phones. No event kits will be mailed for League competitions. All forms must be downloaded from the AKC website under downloadable forms ([www.akc.org/downloadable-forms/](http://www.akc.org/downloadable-forms/))

**Section 11. Score Submission.** Captains will enter their weekly league scores online by 11:59 pm EST Sunday of each League two-week Round. Captains must retain all score sheets until two months after the completion of the Season. Scores will be entered into the League website. Information required at the time of score input will include Team Name, Team Number, Field Size Classification, Course Map ID, course yardage, judge name, as well as the following for each team member:

- Registered League Handler Name
- League Registered Dog Name & Number
- Dog Call Name
- Dog Breed
- Dog Jump Height & Regular/Preferred/Veteran
- Dog time (time in seconds and milliseconds to two decimal places)
- Total dog faults

## **Chapter 5 — Rankings**

**Section 1. Team Rankings.** At the end of each two-week round, AKC will publish the rankings for the teams in each Division and Skill Level. Team Scores will be based on the average of the Individual Dog Scores for all dogs on the team whose run was submitted for the Round. Each Round, teams must submit scores with a minimum of three team dogs and two handlers to earn a Team Score. All submitted scores for a team will be used to calculate Team and Cumulative Team scores. Cumulative Team Rankings will be available beginning at approximately Round 4 of the Agility League Season. To qualify for

Cumulative Team Rankings, Teams must have run and submitted for every available Agility League Round with a minimum of three dogs and two handlers. To qualify for end-of-season awards, teams must run all six of the six rounds during the Season with a minimum of three dogs and two handlers comprising each Round's Team Score.

**Section 2. Individual Dog Rankings.** At the end of each two-week round, AKC will publish the rankings for the individual League-Registered Dogs whose scores were submitted, by Division, Skill Level and Jump Height. Cumulative Dog Rankings will be available beginning at approximately Round 4 of the Agility League Season. Cumulative Individual Dog Scores will be comprised of the highest scores a dog earned from four distinct Rounds. To qualify for Cumulative Dog Rankings and end-of-season awards, individual League-Registered Dogs must run in a minimum of four of the six rounds of the Season. To qualify for Clean Sweep awards, dogs must run six of six rounds during the Season.

**Section 3. Absences or loss of members.** Teams that lose members during a Season are allowed to replace those members if they so choose. Captains should report the dog that is leaving the team and the replacement dog to the League Department at [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org).

If a loss occurs to a team with the minimum number of three dogs, the dog must be replaced in order for the team to continue to qualify for team rankings and awards. The remaining members may continue to compete for individual rankings and awards if they cannot re-establish a full team.

A team that has more than three dogs and has an absentee for one or more courses during a Season may still compete for rankings since the team score is an average.

A team of three dogs that has an absentee for a round during a Season will no longer be eligible for end of the Season awards since a full team must run all six courses. The Captain should report this to the AKC Agility League department before the submission of scores.

The Captain can apply for an exception to run the

round later once the third dog returns. This should be reported to the League department before the submission of scores.

The Exception Application must include the reason for the delay and give the date that the full team will make-up the missed date. AKC will consider the Exception Application and at its sole discretion AKC may either grant or deny the request. AKC will notify the team captain of AKC's determination and the date by which the course may be run. if the application is approved so the team can run that course at a later date.

**Section 4. Regional Awards.** The League will be a non-titling AKC program. But, at the end of each Season, a winning team may be named in each Skill Level by region and Field Size Division, and a winning individual League-Registered Dog may be named in each Skill Level by region, Field Size Division, Jump Class, and Jump Height. Teams must compete on all six courses to be eligible for the end-of-season awards. Individual League-Registered Dogs must compete in at least four of the six courses to be eligible for final season awards. Regional awards are subject to the size of team entry.

**Section 5. National Awards.** The League will be a non-titling AKC program. But, at the end of each Season, the top teams and individual dogs will be named for the overall national results. A winning team will be named in each Skill Level by Field Size Division, and a winning individual League-Registered Dog will be named in each division by Field Size Division, Jump Class, and Jump Height. Teams must compete on all six courses to be eligible for the end-of-season awards. League-Registered Dogs must compete in at least four of the six courses to be eligible for final season awards.

## **Chapter 6 — Regional Championship**

The AKC may will host one competition annually in each region, or combination of regions, to bring teams together for fellowship and friendly competition. The same Skill Levels and scoring system will be in place for the regional competition. Acceptable team names and shirts are encouraged.

Both individual and team winners will be named in each Skill Level. A percentage, to be named at a later date, of the placing teams and dogs may advance to the National League Agility Championship. Regionals qualifying criteria will be determined by AKC on an annual basis.

## **Chapter 7 — National League Championship**

A National Agility League Championship event may be held annually for teams and dogs that meet qualifications at the regional events. Qualifying criteria will be determined by AKC on an annual basis.

## **Chapter 8 — Complaints**

**Section 1. Scoring Disputes.** Handlers must sign their score sheets, along with the judge, to indicate agreement with the score. Score sheets must be signed on the date of the League competition. If there is an issue, the handler should discuss with the judge and the captain to resolve.

**Section 2. Other Complaints.** All other issues will be addressed in accordance with AKC Rules, Regulations, and published policies and should be communicated to the League department at [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org).

## AKC CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP

**PREFACE:** The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.

Complete text of booklet available at: [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

To order booklet(s), contact AKC at:  
The American Kennel Club Order Desk  
8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100  
Raleigh, NC 27617-3390  
Tel: (919) 233-9767  
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