



**AKC Agility League**  
**Winter Season 2026**  
**Guide**

Thank you for participating in the AKC Agility League Program. We hope you have fun! This guidebook is designed to help you navigate through the season.

**AKC information:**

- Penny Leigh – Program Director – 919-816-3749
- Email – [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org)
- League Facebook Group -  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/akcagilityleague>
- League Website: <https://www.akc.org/akc-agility-league/>
- Current Rankings webpage: <https://www.akc.org/akc-agility-league/akc-agility-league-rankings/>

**Team Registration:** AKC will send current team captains web links so you can enter your team information and handlers can enroll dogs. Links also will be posted on the League Facebook Group and the AKC Agility League webpage on akc.org.

Enrollment will open on Dec. 15 and will remain open through Jan. 5. This information will only need to be input once for the season and will include team name, field division and skill level, team captain name and contact information. Captains must agree to the Captain Responsibilities on the online team enrollment form.

In addition, captains of new teams should send a field/ring diagram to the Agility League department at [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org), showing dimensions and size of the agility field/ring and placement of any obstructions (poles, trees, etc.).

Team size is three to eight dogs, but clubs are welcome to field more than one team. The minimum team size is 3 dogs/2 handlers. Teams may be a mix of Regular, Preferred and Veterans dogs and a mix of jump heights.

All new handlers must submit Handler Participation Agreements before the season starts on Jan. 12. Handlers who participated in past seasons do not have to submit another consent form.

**Junior Handlers:** The League welcomes junior handlers of all ages. The League does require parental/guardian consent forms for juniors. If you will have juniors on your teams, please contact the Agility League at [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org) to receive the appropriate paperwork.

Juniors run with their team in the appropriate division and skill level, and the AKC releases rankings for each division and overall. All participating juniors receive awards at the close of the season.

**Veterans:** Dogs that are 10 years or older may jump two jump heights lower than their regular jump height (with the minimum allowed being 4-inches) and receive a 2-second handicap. There are separate rankings for dogs in the Veterans classes.

**Winter Season Fees:** It is free to enroll a team or teams.

There is an annual handler fee of \$33.00 that is good for all seasons that the handler participates in for a year, regardless of how many dogs he or she runs. If you last paid an annual handler fee for the Winter 2025 season, then it is time to renew as a league handler.

There also is an enrollment fee of \$32 per dog for the 12-week season. A handler may sign up to four dogs per form. If a

handler needs to enroll more than four dogs, they need to submit a second form.

Junior handler fees are \$16 for handler fees and \$15 for dog fees.

The fees will be paid at the time of the handler/dog enrollment.

### **Winter Season Dates:**

The Winter Season will launch for its 12-week run on Monday, Jan. 12, and continue through midnight ET Sunday, April 5. The first course for Round 1 will be released on the morning of Sunday, Jan. 11. Equipment lists are sent to captains on the Fridays before each round opens. Courses will be emailed to team captains on the Sunday before each round starts. They are also posted on the League FB Group on the first Monday of each round and later on the League webpage.

#### **Winter 2026**

##### **Jan. 12 – April 5**

Enrollment: Dec. 15 – Jan. 5

Round 1 – Jan. 12 – Jan. 25

Round 2 – Jan. 26 – Feb. 8

Round 3 – Feb. 9 – Feb. 22

Round 4 – Feb. 23 – March 8

Round 5 – March 9 – March 22

Round 6 – March 23 – April 5

**Extensions:** If the team cannot compete on the designated course during the two-week window due to unforeseen circumstances, such as inclement weather, they must notify the

AKC before the end of that 2-week course window. They should submit the extension application:

<https://akc.jotform.com/253037787916065>

Teams must complete every round of the season, with a minimum of 3 dogs per round, to qualify for final team standings and awards. If you do not have 3 dogs able to complete a round, you should apply for an extension until you can run a third dog.

You also can run a **substitute** dog as long as that dog is eligible for the team level. Submit this application to enter a substitute dog: <https://akc.jotform.com/253037787916065>

In the worst case scenario that your team cannot complete a round, you can default the team and allow the remaining dogs to compete for individual rankings only. If in this situation, please contact [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org) so we can advise.

### **Course Design & Field/Ring Size:**

The courses are designed by AKC approved course designers and are reviewed by an AKC Agility Field Representative. The table is eliminated from all Standard courses regardless of level.

### **Winter season course designers are:**

- Extended Ph.D. & Regulation Ph.D. – Ashley Deacon
- Regulation Senior, Sophomore, Freshman & Elementary – Debby Wheeler
- Limited Senior, Sophomore, Freshman & Elementary – Ronda Bermke

## **Divisions/Skill Levels**

**NOTE on Mixing Skill Levels: You may have a mix of levels on the same team because dogs may compete up in level – but not down in level. For instance, a Freshman dog may compete on a Senior team, but a Senior dog (that has Excellent or higher titles) cannot compete on a Freshman team.**

**All dogs on the team must be judged and scored by the level which the team is enrolled. So, all dogs on a Senior team are judged and scored by the Senior fault system, regardless of individual skill level of the dogs.**

- **Ph.D./Extended** (minimum field size 100 X 100) – ISC style courses judged by League rules
- **Ph.D./Regulation** (minimum field size 100 X 70) – ISC style courses modified for smaller field size & judged by League rules
- **Senior/Regulation** (minimum field size 70 X 100) – Masters/Excellent JWW, Standard & Hybrid courses
- **Sophomore/Regulation** (minimum field size 70 X 100) – Open JWW, Standard & Hybrid courses
- **Freshman/Regulation** (minimum field size 70 X 100) – Novice JWW, Standard & Hybrid courses
- **Elementary/Regulation** (minimum field size 70 X 100) – Beginner-courses similar to ACT without weaves or teeter
- **Limited/Senior** (minimum field size 50 X 70) – Shorter Masters style courses for smaller spaces
- **Limited/Sophomore** (minimum field size 50 X 70) – Shorter Open style courses for smaller spaces

- **Limited/Freshman** (minimum field size 50 X 70) – Shorter Novice style courses for smaller spaces
- **Limited/Elementary** (minimum field size 50 X 70) – Shorter beginner courses similar to ACT without weaves or teeter

**Course Measuring:** Teams must measure all courses and submit the course yardage upon input of scores. Courses should be measured based on the path of a Regular 20-inch dog. All courses will have a Maximum Course Wheel yardage or yardage range – and teams must comply with the designated yardage. You can be under the Maximum Course Yardage, but you cannot be over.

The Max. Course Yardage is printed on the course maps. Teams that submit yardage greater than the specified course wheel will be asked to rerun and resubmit scores – or will be given the Maximum Yardage.

For tips on measuring courses:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mY2bQWyT1a8>

**League Competitions:** Teams may choose to run the course on any day or combination of days that suits their schedules during the given two-week Round. A team may change locations during the season, but it is recommended each team member run each individual round on the same field to keep course yardage and team scores consistent.

Teams may run the course for practice before running it for score. Re-runs for score are permitted, if time permits and the captain and facility approves. In addition, clubs and schools may use the courses for classes and practice/run-thru's as they choose.

Handlers may use treats, toys and props (such as stride regulators) during practice, as long as the captain and host facility permit this. Handlers should not use toys, treats or props when running for score.

**Team Roles.** Each team must appoint a team captain. The captain is responsible for forming the teams, scheduling competitions, communicating with team members, including sharing course maps and rankings reports, and inputting the scores of each competition. Teams may appoint co-captains to assist. Other jobs should be assigned including course builders, timer, scribe and ring crew. All crew members may be team members and compete with their dogs.

**Judges.** Approved AKC Judges may judge league competition, but anyone who has earned a minimum of a MX/MXJ title with one dog is eligible to judge at league events. If a team does not have anyone that meets those qualifications, the team captain may apply for an exception to the AKC Agility 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. Judges should avoid judging family members and their own 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, confirming that all dogs jump at the correct jump height, and reviewing and approving score sheets.

**Scoring.** AKC will provide pre-populated league score sheets; these will be emailed to captains before each round starts. There are also downloadable blank league score sheets posted on the

League webpage. Dogs will be scored based on time plus faults. Each dog's time plus faults score will be divided into the course yardage to derive the dog's final score. The individual scores of all team dogs, which ran the course, will be averaged to determine the team score. Each individual dog's final cumulative score of the season will be determined by their best four scores. Individual dogs must run 4 of 6 rounds to qualify for final awards/rankings.

Dogs that run 6 rounds will have their lowest two scores dropped and dogs that run 5 rounds will have their lowest score dropped. Dogs must still run all 6 rounds fault-free to win the Clean Sweep award.

Time may be determined by automatic timers (highly recommended) or by hand-held devices, including stopwatches and phones. Time should be recorded in seconds and milliseconds to two decimal places.

**Blank scribe sheets may be found on the Agility League webpage:** [https://www.akc.org/akc-agility-league/?fbclid=IwAR0WzXwkZTUvq1SwOoImx7kVzTNCLkJktLMGXcMoUoQGwX\\_A6a1OivWsm00](https://www.akc.org/akc-agility-league/?fbclid=IwAR0WzXwkZTUvq1SwOoImx7kVzTNCLkJktLMGXcMoUoQGwX_A6a1OivWsm00)

## **Scoring System**

### **Ph.D./Senior**

#### **5 Point Faults**

- Displaced Jump Bar or Plank
- Missed Contact
- See-saw fly-off

- Missed Weave pole entry
- Missed weave pole once entering correctly
- Refusal/run-out
- Visibly Moving or Stepping on Top of Broad Jump

### **10 Point Faults**

- Wrong course
- Failure to complete weave poles within 3 tries

### **Sophomore**

#### **5 Point Faults**

- Displaced jump bar or plank
- Visibly moving or stepping on top of broad jump
- Missed contact zone
- See-saw fly-off
- Wrong Course
- Failure to complete weave poles within 3 tries

#### **2 Point Faults**

- Refusal/run-out (no refusals on weave poles but must complete in 3 tries)

### **Freshman**

#### **1 Point Faults**

- Displaced jump bar or plank
- Visibly moving or stepping on top of broad jump

## **5 Point Faults**

- Missed Contact
- See-saw fly-off
- Wrong Course
- Failure to complete weave poles in 3 tries

## **No Faults**

- Refusals/run-outs – No penalty

## **Elementary**

### **1 Point Fault**

- Displaced jump bar or plank

### **2 Point Faults**

- Missed contacts
- Wrong course

## **No Faults**

- Refusals/Runouts

## **Excusal Faults – All Levels**

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. No absences are reported to the League.**

## **Note about Scoring Weave Pole Performance:**

**Ph.D. & Senior:** Dogs will incur 5-point faults for every missed weave pole entry and/or every missed weave pole once entering correctly. Dogs may attempt the weaves three times and then must move on, incurring a 10-point fault. So, a Ph.D. or Senior dog that does not complete the weaves within three tries will receive a total 25-point fault. Handlers who opt to skip the weaves without three tries will receive a 25-point fault. Groups may opt to rerun a dog that does not perform the weaves correctly within three tries.

**Sophomore:** There will be 12 weave poles in the Sophomore class and there are no refusals on the poles, but they must be completed within three tries. If a dog does not complete in three tries, they should move on and will receive a five-point fault. Handlers who opt to skip the poles without an attempt will receive a five-point fault. Groups may opt to rerun a dog that does not complete the poles within three tries.

**Freshman:** There will be six weave poles in the Freshman Regulation class and there are no refusals on the poles, but they must be completed within three tries. If a dog does not complete in three tries, they should move on and will receive a five-point fault. Handlers who opt to skip the weaves without three attempts will receive a five-point fault. Groups may opt to rerun a dog that does not complete the poles within three tries.

**Absences or loss of members.** Teams that lose members during a season are allowed to replace those members if they so choose. New members must complete the enrollment process and submit

a handler agreement. 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 the season may still compete as normal since the team score is an average of the scores that did complete the round. Teams are not impacted by absences as those dogs are just not counted towards the team average.

If a handler cannot run their dog on any given round, another team member may run their dog. If a person who is not a team member is needed to run the dog, the captain should notify the Agility League department as the person would need to complete the league Handler Agreement before participating.

**Bitches in Season.** Bitches in season may compete in local league play at the discretion of the host clubs and schools and under any guidelines that they require.

**Score Reporting:** Captains or other designated team members must report the team scores by midnight (of their time zone) of the Sunday at the end of each two-week round. AKC will provide a web link that will enable captains to easily input the scores. Captains should keep the score sheets for a minimum of two months after the season ends on April 5.

Information that will be input includes:

- Team Name
- Course Yardage

- Date that course was run
- Handler Name
- Dog Call Name
- Each individual dog's time (in seconds.millisecond, recorded to two decimal places)
- Each individual dog's faults

## **Rankings:**

**Team Rankings.** AKC will publish every two weeks of each season the rankings for the teams in each division, based on the average of the individual dog scores on that team. Each two-week rankings report will include the placements for that round. The Cumulative rankings reports will start with the conclusion of Round 4. It normally takes three to five days after a round closes to finalize and release the rankings reports. To qualify for final awards, teams must run all six courses with a minimum of three team dogs. Rankings will be posted on the AKC Agility League Facebook page and Current Rankings webpage, and captains will be emailed the results before rankings are published.

**Individual Dog Rankings.** AKC will publish every two weeks of each league season the rankings for the individual dogs in each division and jump height: Regular, Preferred and Veterans. AKC also publishes the rankings for Junior Handlers by division. Each two-week rankings report will include the placements for that round. Cumulative rankings will be released starting with Round 4. It normally takes three to five days after a round closes to finalize and release the rankings reports. To

qualify for individual final awards, individual dogs must run four out of the six courses. Rankings will be posted on the AKC Agility League Facebook page and Current Rankings webpage, and captains will be emailed results before rankings are published.

**Breed Rankings:** The Breed Rankings report will be released at the conclusion of each round and will show the top scoring dogs of each participating breed for each division/skill level, as well as the top scoring dog of each breed overall. Dogs must run 4 of the 6 rounds to be eligible for final breed placements. At the season's conclusion, the top dogs of each breed in each division/skill level will receive a certificate from AKC.

**Awards.** At the conclusion of the season, winners will be named in Team, Individual Dog and Breed categories, as well as the Junior Handler classes, based on final rankings. Awards will be given for the top teams in the country; the top team in each region in the Senior classes; the top dog or dogs in each jump height; and the top dog of each breed in each division. Awards will be shipped to the captains, and it is the captains' responsibility to give out awards to the team members. Top teams and dogs will be announced on the AKC website, Facebook site and more.

**AKC Agility League Championship:** The 2026 "live" championship will be held Nov. 6-8 at the James Hunt Horse Complex in Raleigh, NC. To qualify, teams and dogs must have successfully completed at least one season: Fall 25; Winter 26; or Spring/Summer 26. Competition will be offered for all 5 skill levels: PhD; Senior; Sophomore; Freshman; and Elementary. Information: <https://www.akc.org/akc-agility-league/akc-agility-league-championship/>

## **Conclusion**

Thank you again for participating in the AKC Agility League. We hope you find it fun and easy to take part in. Please send us any questions, comments, feedback, and suggestions at [AgilityLeague@akc.org](mailto:AgilityLeague@akc.org).