



Jack Russell Race Day Organization

Article by Bob Franklin, CT

The following article deals with Race Day Organization that will help provide smooth racing completed by 12:00 noon.

Necessary Race Day Helpers: A total of 12 adults or older teenagers plus several energetic kids are needed to successfully run JR Racing. These people are:

Racing Judge: Responsible for determining finish order of races and for observing the races and ruling on any equipment malfunctions, rules infractions, or fouls that may occur. The racing judge should be experienced and thoroughly familiar with JR Racing. I let my judges have someone else race their dogs if desired because this often enables me to get better-qualified judges. Having judged many races myself, it is almost impossible to determine the identity of individual racers should the judge want to do so and the judges also backed up by the catchers to prevent any indiscretions. If a judge is suspected of cheating, don't ask him/her to judge again. Racing judge communicates each race's results to the Results Recorder after each race using a walkie-talkie.

Lure Puller: Responsible for operating the lure pulling machine. Should have good eyesight since the lure is long way off and the Puller operator must be able to see the full length of the race track. If the puller is inexperienced have him/her practice a few times prior to start of racing. Keep the lure at least 10 feet in front of the racers on the flat races and at least one hurdle ahead on steeplechase races. This reduces dogs fish tailing while following exact movement of the lure.

Results Recorder: This is a VERY IMPORTANT job. Person should be fully acquainted with JR racing and must understand how the heat sheets work. A level headed person who does not easily get rattled is required, because this person usually gets the brunt of any handler dissatisfaction or complaint. This person communicates constantly with the Racing Judge using walkie-talkies. If three such walkie-talkies are available, the third one is kept by the trial announcer to assist in calling late race participants. The Results Recorder receives the results from the Racing Judge immediately after each race and records these placements on the Results Board in the appropriate location by each dog's name is immediately. Then the first three placements are written for the appropriate next race. Always put every other dog into separate semi-finals thus separating contestants that have already raced against each other as much as possible.

Race Organizer: This is a job for a loud, forceful person. A LOUD Bull Horn or access to the loud speaker used by the show announcer is helpful. Race Organizer uses a second copy of the heat sheets and loudly calls racers for each race so as to be heard over din of excited terriers. Each handler is invited into first collection pen to wait until all participants for that race are collected. Race Organizer then tells group what color collars each dog wears and each handler, holding his terrier, steps up to the table to get a colored collar and select a racing box number and then stands beside appropriate box number. As soon as handlers are all in 2nd collection pen, the Race Organizer steps over to Results Board and writes in dog order for subsequent semi-finals/finals on his copy of the heat sheets and

uses this information to organize subsequent races. Dogs late for races forfeit right to race with no refund. Do not delay Racing to find absent handlers/dogs.

Race Organizer Helper: This person controls the colored collars and the box numbers (dominoes or squares of cardboard with numbers 1-6 on one side). He puts one complete set of colored collars on his arm and helps handlers insert collars over terrier's head. Avoid having Dog Handlers take their own colors because this causes duplicate colors and considerable confusions for the judge. If Helper has all colors on his arm, this greatly reduces chances for error by having duplicate colors. Helper also makes certain all box numbers are turned down and as each number is selected, it is left face up on the table. The Helper also instructs any novice Dog Handlers as to what to do and where to go. All dogs should be muzzled before the handler moves into the second collection pen. Helper watches to ensure that all dogs are properly muzzled before entering the 2nd collection pen.

Race Box Operator: This person needs to be an experienced dog handler. When the starting box is closed and ready, the Box Operator instructs the Dog Handlers to muzzle their dogs. When the lure is being brought back toward the start, the Box Operator starts to load dogs one at a time and he helps the Dog Handlers load their dogs - especially those who are having problem as this greatly reduces the time required to load. When dogs are loaded, he asks the child bringing the lure to tease the dogs if deemed desirable. We always tease puppies, but we rarely tease adult dogs since they know what to do and do not need to be teased. Be certain the lure is placed 6-8 feet in front of the start box, in center of the track so all dogs can easily see it. Using a prearranged signal, the Box Operator signals Lure Puller to start and the lure. Box Operator waits until the lure starts move and then he opens the start box. Box Operator then watches the race carefully to note any events that might necessitate a re-run so as to help the Racing Judge with this responsibility.

Lure Retrieval Kids: Several kids are needed for this job because they tend to be enthusiastic in the beginning, but after 10 or so trips down the race track, they have a way of disappearing. These kids should be safely out of the way behind the Box Operator until their turn, I rotate them as this seems to make them last longer. After a race starts, a kid immediately enters the track and herds any confused dogs in front of him/her toward the finish. When all dogs are through the hole or are handed back to the Dog Handlers, the kids get the lure through the hole from the Dog Catchers and puts the colored collars on one of his arms. It is okay to be delayed one set of colored collars so as to enable the Lure Retrieval process to get going as soon as possible without having to wait for all collars from the just completed race. That is why 3 complete sets of colored collars are needed. We find that Lure Retrieval is the slowest part of this operation and if 30 seconds are saved each race this amounts to 1/2 hour when 60 races are run. Box Operator ram-rods the Lure Retrieval kids and tries to get them to run back with the lure each time to keep things running quickly.

Catchers: This very important job requires 6 active adults or older teenagers. Children under 15 years old can have problems handling some bigger dogs. Catching requires lots of stooping over and some people cannot do this very long. Some Catchers prefer to wear gloves, but with muzzles on dogs, this is not really necessary. The Racing Judge assigns each Catcher to catch a certain place and the Catchers do so throughout the morning. This way the Judge can use the catchers to help avoid placement errors. The first and second place Catchers are at back of the catch area side by side, 3rd and 4th are closer to the hay bales and 5th and 6th are up front. Use the most experienced and best Catchers for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd since these places are always utilized. On catching a dog, the Catcher removes the colored collar and holds it until Racing Judge confirms that color's placement. Catchers may hand the dog over to Dog Handlers at any time, but keep the colored collars until the Judge says "OK, he is all set". Catchers should always inform Dog Handlers of their dog placement in heats or semi-finals to help insure that 1st through 3rd know they qualified for further racing. Usually the 6th place catcher retrieves the lure (since he often does not have a dog to catch) and passes it through the hole so the lure can be returned to start. If there are 6 dogs in the race, then the first available Catcher or the Lure Puller retrieve the lure since it is this task that is usually limiting factor in how fast races can be run. If extra personnel are available, one can be assigned task of only retrieving the lure but

this can also cause congestion in the catching area so be careful. Catchers should stand at least 5 feet behind hay bale finish so dogs cannot see any hands through the hole. Catchers should never remove a muzzle from a dog as this is a good way to get bitten!! Catchers should avoid holding a dog by the nape of its neck because some dogs do not like to be handled this way and many owners get upset if their dog is grabbed by the skin on its neck.

1. Racing Re-runs: There are many reasons races should be re-run. Basically, anytime dog aggression or mechanical failure changes race results, that race should be re-run. Some re-run reasons are:

- a) A dog aggressively attacks another dog on the race track. Attacking dog is eliminated from further racing on that day.
- b) A dog catches the lure even if only briefly as this changes that dog's forward momentum and allow other dogs to pass.
- c) A dog almost catches or passes the lure in such a way as to alter forward motion.
- d) Lure flies out of track or snags on a jump.
- e) Lure causes a jump to become out of place before dogs get to that jump.
- f) A non-racing dog enters the race track during a race.
- g) Lure gets too far ahead of dogs and no dogs go through the hole. Often happens with puppies.
- h) Lure comes apart during a race.
- i) Start box does not open properly allowing only a few dogs to race initially.
- j) A dog gets caught in lure box somehow - teeth through screen or tail caught in box door., etc.
- k) Incorrect dog runs race and changes results because of its presence.

2) Some reasons that a race should not be re-run

- a) Dogs hit hurdles and get tangled up with jump or with each other. This is a dog failure and not a mechanical failure.
- b) Dogs bump each other going over hurdles unless one dog is actually attacking another dog.
- c) Dogs get boxed in behind other dogs.

3) Rule of Thumb on Re-Runs: If something happens out of the ordinary during a race, I believe it is better to error by having too many re-runs. Listen to complaints as well, but the Judge and the Box Operator should always watch each race and call the re-runs.

NOTE - These racing re-run reasons are an expansion of JRTCA racing rules by the author based on 20 years of racing experience and are not to be construed as official JRTCA rules.

IMPORTANT - If a dog's muzzle comes off during a race and a dog enters the catch area with the muzzle off, that dog is eliminated in that race. **HOWEVER**, sometimes catchers in the scramble of catching dogs will get their hand caught in the dog's muzzle and it comes off. This is **NOT AN ELIMINATION** for that dog since the catcher did it not the dog or the dog's handler. Just warn the handler in this case and suggest that he tighten the muzzle for future races. Note: I usually try to go over the rules and racing procedures with all racing handlers in a 5 minute session just prior to racing to review for experienced handlers and to help new people understand the procedures. We find this short session helps speed racing along. We should be able to run a race every 2-1/2 to 3 minutes meaning that we can run 60 to 75 races in 3 hours depending on how efficient we are. If racing is started promptly at 9:00AM, we usually finish racing well before noon which makes trial organizers **VERY HAPPY** [not to mention the agility competitors!].

4. Awarding Racing Ribbons: Unless trial organizers believe ample time exists, it is best to award the racing ribbons **AFTER** Conformation classes have already started since Conformation start may be delayed if time is taken to award ribbons. Announce each dogs Kennel Prefix and the owner's name along with the dog's name, the same way it is done in conformation classes. Use the Master Heat Sheets off Racing Results Board for these announcements since the dogs' full names should be recorded on these sheets in the left hand column. Use these same Racing Results Sheets as your official racing results for recording on the JRTCA trial results report. A really good results recorder will even help the announcer by having Kennel Prefixes already entered for all race final results.

Hopefully these suggestions will help trial sponsors run racing successfully. Racing is a big part of a trial but it requires good equipment and lots of hard work. So, don't forget to thank all those people who helped make your racing successful.

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