

Dances With Dogs Club of SA Inc.: DWD ROOKIES Guidelines

Overview

1. Rookies is a non-titling event for DWD Dog & Handler Teams. Also, Rookies are not judged & no prizes or awards are given out.
2. The aim is to help Teams' training, by setting up the event environment similar to a normal DWD competition, but relaxing some Rules to assist in reducing pressure on the Teams & enabling training options.
3. Teams can choose in Rookies to:
 - a. Act as in a Competition to see if there are ready for that level; or
 - b. Train part, or all, of their current/new routine;
 - c. Just play with or feed their dog to help proof their dog to the ring; or
 - d. Start on one of these formats but finish in another.

Main Exceptions to the Usual DWD Rules:

4. Non-SACA members allowed to enter, but must be Club members.
5. Leads: Dogs may be on or off lead (lead can be attached & unattached during routine).
6. Costume: Not mandatory.
7. Props: Don't need to be "dressed", i.e. obvious training aids are acceptable.
8. Motivators:
 - a. Non-Crumbly food treats may be used, avoiding dropping food on the floor.
 - b. An optional treat table will be at ringside.
 - c. Food includes toys with food inside of them.
 - d. Non-squeaking motivators allowed & may be thrown within the ring.
9. Ring Runners: If a dog leaves ring & the handler feels that this was due to stress, the handler should either leave the ring or bring their dog back for a brief positive reinforcement behaviour. If the handler believes the dog has left due to being distracted, the handler is welcome to continue their performance.
10. Rookie Class Eligibility:
 - a. A dog can enter either or both Rookies Divisions (i.e. HTM and/or FS) but may only enter once within each Division.
 - b. A dog may participate in any Rookie class (i.e. lower, higher, or at the same level they are currently qualified).

Before the Day

11. The start time will be flexible as the Rookies will start as soon as practical following the completion of the earlier official DWD Competitions. Rookies entrants will be advised by Top Dog email, prior to the day, of approximate timings and also if Music Checks are being offered.
12. A catalogue will be made available via Top Dog download.

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On the Day – Before the 1st Routine

13. Briefing: There will be a short briefing following the conclusion of the DWD Competitions.
14. Registration:
 - a. After the briefing, Handlers are to check-in at registration desk ringside along the eastern glass wall (oval side).
 - b. Bitches in season must be scratched.
 - c. Drop off your music – in mp3 format on a USB (with a ring & tag attached) – one track per USB.
 - d. As timings are fluid & if you arrive after registration is closed, that's OK – we will run out of catalogue order if needed.
15. Music Checks:
 - a. Brief Music Checks are planned to be held following registration.
 - b. Dogs are permitted to enter the ring with food/motivators during the music checks – only 1 dog at a time in the ring please
 - c. If there is not time for the usual music checks, USBs will be checked that they work at registration with the music steward playing music at a suitable volume level.
16. Start Time: The start may be delayed, pending any presentations for the earlier DWD Competitions. However, the 1st Team will have at least a 5-minute notice of their start time.

Routines

17. While there is no scoring at least one "judge" will be in the usual location.
18. Each Team will be allowed 5 minutes ring time:
 - a. This time includes set-up, performance & set-down.
 - b. For *Starters* & *Novice* routines, the Music Steward will replay the music again if signalled by the Handler.
19. Entrants are encouraged not to rush their start; they may walk their dog around the ring, warm-up their dog & only start when they feel they have their dog's focus & the dog appears ready to work.
20. At the end of the performance, the entrant may take some time to briefly reward dog with play/food in ring.
21. The "Judge" shall ensure safety, good sportsmanship & fair treatment of the dog, & that the Handler is complying with the Rookie Guidelines whilst in the ring. Failure to follow these rules may result in the Handler being disqualified from further competition.

Remember to have fun with your dog!