

**USBCHA RULES**  
*Adopted May 19, 2021*

**PART I: USBCHA MEMBERSHIP: REQUIREMENTS AND/OR PRIVILEGES**

1. Every trial competitor (USBCHA members and non-members), trial host, trial official and judge has a responsibility to read and understand the USBCHA (“Association” or “HA”) rules and regulations before entering, conducting or officiating at an HA event. Failure to know these rules is not an acceptable excuse for failing to follow them. These rules are available on the HA website.
2. By entering a USBCHA trial, each competitor acknowledges that participation is a privilege and not a right. By paying membership dues, members accept all rules contained herein, and rules and/or policies adopted hereafter, by the Board of Directors (BOD). The Board of Directors shall have the authority to amend any rule(s) by majority vote. (this last sentence was out of place on its own in a section titled Amendments, so I moved it here)
3. USBCHA dues are payable on January 1. Any member who does not reinstate by January 1, and any member who has resigned by notifying the HA Secretary in writing, will automatically become a member in arrears and shall not be considered a “member in good standing.” Any Director may, at his discretion, receive payment for dues from a member. It will be the responsibility of the collector to forward monies to the HA office immediately.
4. Members must be in good standing to earn points towards participation in the USBCHA Open Finals and qualifying legs for the USBCHA Nursery Finals. To participate in the USBCHA National Finals, one must also be a member in good standing of the American Border Collie Association (ABCA).
5. By the act of paying HA membership dues or entry fees to HA sanctioned events, members/participants waive all claims against trial management and USBCHA for injuries sustained or property damaged at any HA sanctioned event. The HA assumes no responsibility for injury or damage to the person, property or animals of any owner, contestant or assistant at an HA sanctioned event.
6. All members shall receive a copy of minutes of all meetings, including all Board of Directors meetings, either by direct mail, e-mail, or publication on the HA website. Facsimile transactions and email communications are acceptable forms of communication, provided they can be confirmed by a "hard copy" (i.e., a printed copy of email or a return acknowledgment of received fax).
7. A member or non-member placed on suspension will not be permitted to compete in any trial or event sanctioned by the HA during the period of suspension. An event that allows suspended individuals to enter will not be eligible for USBCHA sanctioning.
8. Members may file a complaint, grievance or protest (see Part IV for procedure).

9. For further rights, privileges and possible loss of privileges, see Part IV, Standards of Conduct, Protest/Complaint and Disciplinary Procedures.

**PART II:  
RULES APPLYING TO ALL USBCHA TRIALS**

**A. SANCTIONING TRIALS:** These rules and regulations apply only to USBCHA sanctioned trials and approved events.

1. Trial/Class Schedules:

The HA Secretary or Webmaster shall maintain a list of all sanctioned trials, and shall publish on the USBCHA website the number of trials to be run in each sanctioned class during the course of the overall trial.

2. Deadlines:

- a. Trial hosts must apply to the HA Secretary for sanctioning **at least thirty (30) days prior to the trial entry opening date**. The number of trials to be offered in each sanctioned class (e.g., 2 Open trials and 2 Nursery trials) must be specified. If the HA Secretary deems it necessary, the President or appointed committee, if any, will review the request and either approve or disapprove. The President may waive errors or omissions by the trial host and his/her decision will be final.
- b. Trial information should include trial name and dates, contact name, phone number, email or web site address, and location. Upon request, the HA may furnish local district mailing addresses to the trial host.<sup>1</sup>
- c. The 30-day requirement may be waived with the consent of the two Directors from the District in which the trial will take place provided there is a good reason for the delay and so long as the opening day for entries is no less than 14 days prior to the trial date, or the trial will accept same-day entries. Any such waiver is on a case-by-case basis and for one year only.
- d. Should an entrant withdraw from competition, entry fees, or any part thereof, will not be refunded after the competition begins. Trial management has the right to establish cutoff dates for trial withdrawal refunds.

3. Sanctioning fees:

- a. A \$3.50 per dog sanctioning fee shall be charged for each dog entered in Open and Nursery competition at all sanctioned trials. One dollar (\$1.00) of this fee shall be allocated to the current year National Finals Committee in order to meet expenses. Fifty cents (\$0.50) of this fee shall be allocated to the general fund and shall be paid to the Secretary as compensation for work performed for the Association. These funds are not considered a loan, and the USBCHA will continue to share in any

profits associated with a current year National Finals, which shall include the sanctioning fee as income.<sup>2</sup>

- b. **Not later than twenty-one (21) days after the trial**, the trial results form is to be emailed or mailed (postmarked) to the HA Secretary's office. If mailed, the sanctioning fee is to be included with the trial results. If the trial results are emailed, the sanctioning fee check must be postmarked within 7 days of the email. If paid by PayPal, payment must be made within 7 days of the invoice being sent. The Secretary shall assess a penalty of \$25.00 per class for all reports filed after the 21 days. If a trial report is late for two consecutive years, the trial host shall be referred to the Grievance Committee and the trial will not be sanctioned in the following year without pre-payment of sanctioning fees in an amount equal to 10% more than the prior year's fees. Any overage shall be refunded when and if the results are filed in a timely manner.<sup>3</sup>

4. Trials ineligible for USBCHA Sanctioning:

- a. Any trial, if designed to exclude specific people or regions, is not eligible for USBCHA points. Or, conversely, any trial that is designed to INCLUDE only a specific set of people or a specific region cannot be awarded USBCHA points.<sup>4</sup>
- b. Trials sanctioned by other national or international organizations, including but not limited to the American Kennel Club, the American Herding Breed Association, and the Australian Shepherd Club of America, are not eligible for sanctioning by the USBCHA.
- c. Trials hosted or sponsored by, affiliated with, or benefiting any organization that advocates or supports conformation breeding or showing of Border Collies, and trials held in conjunction with any event sanctioned or sponsored by such an organization, are not eligible for sanctioning by the USBCHA.
- d. All sanctioned trials must conform to the rules and regulations of the HA. Allowing a suspended individual to enter a trial will result in automatic loss of USBCHA sanctioning. Trial hosts requesting sanctioning will be kept notified of individuals suspended by the USBCHA. Individuals under suspension (both members and non-members) are barred from participation in any HA sanctioned trial as either dog owner or handler.

5. Minimum number of entrants:

- a. The Open class must have 10 competitors run to be a sanctioned class.
- b. The Nursery class must have 5 competitors run to be a sanctioned class.

6. Nursery class sanctioning and participation:

- a. At a trial where no Open classes are offered, only one Nursery class per day may be sanctioned.

- b. At a trial where Open classes are offered, the total number of Nursery classes sanctioned may not exceed the greater of either the total number of open classes or the total number of days that the trial is sanctioned for. The scheduling of the Nursery classes is at the discretion of the trial host; however, no more than two sanctioned Nursery classes may be run in one day.
- c. No nursery dog may compete in nursery trials after the August 1 cut-off if that dog is not eligible to compete in the nursery program for the next year. For additional rules on Nursery qualification, *see* Part III.E.

## **B. JUDGES AND JUDGING**

1. When by two thirds (2/3) vote of the BOD, a certain individual is deemed incompetent to judge HA sanctioned trials, that person shall not judge any HA sanctioned trials/events for a period set by the BOD.
2. Judges are encouraged to read and follow the *Judging Guidelines* and International (ISDS) rules, posted on the HA website.
3. Judges accepting an invitation to act at any USBCHA sponsored trials will be held, by their acceptance, to have been given a responsibility to judge strictly according to the rules laid down by the HA and agree that they will not favor any dog, man or country.
4. Binoculars are not permitted to be used by a judge in any trial.<sup>5</sup>
5. Judges shall conduct themselves in a manner fitting and proper to one afforded the honor of officiating a USBCHA approved or sponsored trial. Any misconduct on the part of the judge at any HA trial, the use of abusive language, showing favoritism to, or discrimination against, either an individual or a dog performing in the trial, or any other action unbecoming to one in that position, either on the grounds or elsewhere during the entire trial, will make the judge subject to disciplinary action.
6. Points/deductions for each competitor shall be recorded on an acceptable score sheet, and the judge is required to review each score sheet at the completion of the run to ensure accuracy. The score sheets are to be retained by the trial secretary for a period through the current year's National Finals. The trial secretary may make a copy of the score sheet if requested by competitor. Judging sheets are available for download on the HA website but it is not essential that trial hosts use the HA judging sheets.
7. Judges may not be changed after a trial begins except in cases of sickness or injury. The trial committee is then responsible for appointing a new Judge.

## **C. CONTESTANTS:**

1. A handler must be a current paid member of USBCHA before that handler's dog receives Open qualification points or Nursery qualification legs for the Finals.

2. Each contestant must be ready when called by the Course Director or an assistant. Anyone failing to answer the call may be disqualified. Contestants should note that the order of the runs will be strictly followed unless the trial committee or Course Director authorizes changes. The Course Director or trial committee, however, cannot guarantee the exact time a competitor will run.
3. A contestant wishing to have the course explained or any other point clarified must question the Course Director before he/she starts his/her run.
4. By commencing the run, a contestant is presumed to understand the course and is expected to follow it.
5. Once a contestant starts his/her run, it is entirely in the hands of the judge. By deviating from the course, the contestant may be disqualified or suffer a point loss as the judge considers suitable, having regard for all circumstances.
6. A contestant who receives assistance of any kind while running his/her dog may be disqualified.
7. If a contestant is disqualified, no points will be earned.
8. If a contestant is called for expiration of the time limit, points earned to that time will count. After being called off, the contestant will stop running the course and will collect the sheep and remove them from the trial field unless directed otherwise by the Judge or Course Director. A contestant who retires or leaves the field, without the judge's permission, will forfeit all points.
9. A contestant who intentionally harasses the stock after his/her run will be disqualified at the discretion of the judge, in conference with the Course Director, and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the HA.
10. Neither contestants nor any others shall take dogs onto the trial course before the competition starts, except with permission of the Course Director or trial management.
11. No contestant, or other person, shall engage in any form of misconduct or harassment toward trial management, judges, or HA officials. Trial management has the right to disqualify or refuse entry to any contestant or other person for violation of this rule. Any contestant so denied access may request that the District Directors determine if the trial manager's decision was appropriate, and if it was not, what action should be taken. If either party is dissatisfied with the decision of the District Directors, they may appeal to the BOD. This appeal may or may not be heard by the Grievance Committee, at their discretion.
12. A contestant shall not enter the trial field at any time with any kind of training device. The trial management, representative, or judge must disqualify a contestant if he/she enters the trial field with any such equipment, and all entry fees and/or premiums pertaining to said contestant shall be forfeited. Such devices include, but are not limited to, electronic collars, dummy or weighted collars, a leash or rope that is not detached before the dog is sent, and

any device used to distract or cause pain to a dog while it is working. The judge has the right to inspect the dog for any violation to this rule.

13. Handlers with physical disabilities may be allowed to use tools that are not normally accepted (binoculars are an example). Handlers needing these tools should notify the judge/trial host of their needs before the trial starts. The USBCHA encourages those with physical disabilities to participate in our sanctioned events and believes that trial hosts and judges should make reasonable efforts to accommodate these handlers.
14. Contestants (and trial officials) may be required to be properly attired for any competition. Dress should be acceptable for weather and magnitude of occasion. Good judgment should prevail.

#### **D: TIES and RE-RUNS**

1. If two or more competitors stand equal in total points, the judges shall settle their priority either (1) by their points for the outrun, lift and fetch, or (2) ordering re-trials of any kind, or (3) dividing the prize money involved. In cases of equality where a trophy is at stake and the judge orders re-runs, the re-runs will decide not only the trophy but also all cash prizes involved.
2. The judge may stop a dog at any point of a trial run and order a rerun if he/she feels circumstances warrant such action. The rerun will commence where the original run was stopped and points as scored before the stop will stand.
3. With few exceptions left to the judge's discretion, a rerun should be ordered if the wrong number of sheep have been let out, sheep are wrongly marked, or one or more sheep is unsound for working. In these cases, the judge shall decide if the rerun will commence at the beginning and, if not, at which point it will start. If decided that the rerun starts at any point other than the beginning, the points scored up to the point of rerun shall stand. When a rerun is granted, the handler shall send the dog in the same direction as the original run unless otherwise instructed by the Judge.<sup>6</sup>

#### **E. SCORES and AWARDS:**

1. By the conclusion of the trial all scores must be posted. Trial officials shall confer with the Judge and determine whether the deductions for each phase of work shall be posted.
2. Awards announced at any HA trial are subject to correction of any error discovered within two weeks of trial completion. Any discovered error will be corrected, and the awards as announced adjusted accordingly. In such a case, awards may be recalled and will be returned to trial management.
3. All prizes and awards for any trial shall be paid within one month of trial completion.

#### **F. HUMANE RULES:**

1. A veterinarian shall be in attendance, or reasonably available at every trial.

2. No stock belonging to either contestant or stock contractor should be confined to vehicles beyond a period of twenty-eight (28) hours without being unloaded and properly fed and watered. If animals are carried in conveyances in which they do have proper food, water, space and opportunity to rest, the provision for unloading shall not apply.
3. No sick or injured animals, discovered before or after the draw, may be used in competition. To the extent possible, animals will be inspected and objectionable ones eliminated before drawing. Judges and course directors will be responsible for inspection.
4. At the recommendation of a veterinarian, course director, or at the discretion of the judge, a sick or injured dog will not be allowed to compete.<sup>7</sup>
5. Fresh water shall always be available on the field for cooling a dog.<sup>8</sup> Handlers should be allowed to direct a dog to the water and the dog use the water with no points penalty. Handlers should not leave the post to go to the water with the dog. However, if the handler is moving to the shedding ring or moving to the pen, he/she may detour to the water. The clock will not be stopped. Actions of the stock are still being judged and may result in a loss of points, up to disqualification if the stock leaves the trial area.<sup>9</sup>

**PART IIa:  
INTERIM RULES PERTAINING TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC<sup>1</sup>**

**A. SANCTIONED TRIALS:** These rules and regulations apply only to USBCHA sanctioned trials and approved events.

1. Trial hosts, workers and participants are required to follow local rules and regulations regarding gathering size limitations, travel restrictions, quarantine requirements of persons entering a state, province or region, and any other local requirements in effect at the time of the event.
2. Trial hosts must provide handlers a list of safety protocols they intend to follow for the trial at the time entries open.
3. Trial hosts are required to refund entry fees of any handler that has any symptoms consistent with, or believes that they may have contracted COVID-19, or been exposed to COVID-19 up until the trial begins.<sup>2</sup>

**Part III  
ADDITIONAL RULES APPLYING  
TO THE SHEEPDOG NATIONAL FINALS**

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted July 8, 2020. Interim rules will remain in effect for 90 days from the date of adoption unless extended by a majority vote of the USBCHA Board of Directors. By a majority vote of the USBCHA Board of Directors on May 19, 2021, interim rules will remain in effect until July 31, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> While interim rules pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic are in effect, USBCHA will reimburse trial hosts for refunds of sanctioned class entry fees (Open and Nursery) made to handlers who withdraw within 14 days of a trial's start date due to COVID-19 symptoms or suspected exposure to COVID-19.

## **A. TRIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

1. A Trial Committee will be appointed annually for the USBCHA/ABCA National Open and National Nursery Sheepdog Finals. At least one-half of the members of this committee shall be appointed by the HA President, and up to half may be designated by the ABCA. This committee shall have the power to make decisions regarding the interpretation and administration of any rule in question, will lay out the trial courses, and will in general supervise the running of these trials. Minutes shall be taken of all meetings of this Finals Trial Committee (with the exception of meetings held at the trial site for the purpose of resolving questions about the trial course and conduct of the trial), and copies of those minutes shall be furnished to the Board of Directors and posted on the HA website in a timely manner.
2. The Trial Committee may appoint a non-contesting HA member to act as liaison between contestants and trial management.
3. All questions and disputes in connection with the National Finals not already settled by the judge(s) or Trial Committee shall be decided by the BOD, whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to review by any Court of Law or other forum. Five (5) board members shall constitute a quorum.
4. In all cases of a dispute, the trial will proceed without delay under existing USBCHA rules. Any contestant arguing with the Finals judges is subject to disqualification for the run in question. Additionally, any individual arguing with the Finals judges over their own run or those of another competitor is subject to a fine and suspension from USBCHA trials until further notice.
5. Any individual who is suspended by the Trial Committee for unsportsmanlike conduct at the National Finals shall be immediately suspended by the HA upon receipt of notice of the suspension from the Trial Secretary or Trial Chairman. The matter will then be referred to the HA's Grievance Committee for the assessment of a fine or penalty in accordance with the severity of the rule infraction.

## **B. ELECTION OF JUDGES**

1. Lifetime and General paid members may nominate judges for the Sheep and Cattle National Finals. Nominations for the Sheepdog Finals close on February 1 of the year of the Finals. The nomination form will be posted on the HA web site. Members must contact and obtain the consent of persons they wish to nominate. The HA Secretary shall mail ballots listing the nominees to all USBCHA and ABCA directors. Directors shall indicate their preferences by writing next to the name of their first choice a number equal to the total number of nominees, writing next to their second choice the next-lowest number, and so on until they have voted for all the nominees they wish to vote for. (For example, if there are a total of 8 nominees, directors will write the number 8 next to their first choice, 7 next to their second choice, 6 next to their third choice, and so on.) Ballots are due back to the Secretary on March 1 of the year of the Finals. Each director shall vote for as many



nominees as he/she chooses and may enter a zero (0) if he/she prefers to not to vote for a nominee. Ballots shall be returned to the Secretary at least 6 months prior to the Finals. The Secretary shall tally the numbers and, after confirming willingness to serve, notify the directors of the nominees receiving the highest totals, who shall be deemed elected. If for any reason an elected judge cannot serve, the nominee receiving the next highest number of points shall be substituted.

2. The BOD must elect at least two North American judges for the National Finals. At least one of the National Finals judges must be (and all could be) a one-year resident of North America. No judge who is listed on an AKC approved judging list may judge the Cattle or Sheepdog Finals.<sup>10</sup>
3. A person may not judge the National Finals more than three times in five years, or in consecutive years.<sup>11</sup>
4. On acceptance of an invitation to judge the National Finals, a person must agree to and sign a Code of Ethics statement.<sup>12</sup>
5. At a National Finals trial, a person may not judge a dog that he or she:
  - a. Owned or co-owned after February 1 of the Finals year.
  - b. Personally ran and gained points after February 1 of the Finals year.<sup>12</sup>
6. At a National Finals Trial, a person may not judge his/her spouse or other immediate family member.<sup>12</sup>
7. A person who has been selected to judge the National Finals may not judge another USBCHA-sanctioned trial during the two (2) months prior to the National Finals trial.<sup>12</sup>

### **C. HANDLER QUALIFICATION FOR NATIONAL FINALS**

1. Eligibility to run in the USBCHA Open and Nursery Sheepdog Finals is limited to citizens of the United States and/or Canada, and to non-citizens who have been physically present in the United States and/or Canada for at least nine months of the qualifying year for the Finals they seek to enter. Non-citizens may not have run in the National Sheepdog or Cattle dog trial of any country other than the US and Canada during the same calendar year as the Finals they seek to enter.
2. The handler of the dog must be a current paid member of the USBCHA before he competes to receive qualification. A member can qualify by competing against a non-member as long as all dogs competing comply with the USBCHA guidelines.
3. The dog receives qualification, not the owner or handler.
4. To be eligible to run in the National Finals, the handler must be a current member of the ABCA. The dog must be registered with the ABCA to be eligible for ABCA prize money.

Dogs not registered with the ABCA are still eligible to run and to receive USBCHA prize money.<sup>13</sup>

#### **D. QUALIFYING FOR THE NATIONAL OPEN AND GENERAL SCORING RULES**

1. Qualifying for the Open Finals is set forth in the Association Bylaws, Article XI.
2. An eye exam is no longer required in order to run in the National Finals.
3. Scores from the first qualifying round at the National Open Finals and the scores from the Semi-final round will not be added together to determine the entries qualifying for the Final round. Only scores from the Semi-finals will be used.
4. The official score for dogs that retire or are disqualified in the Final round (double lift) will be 0. Placements for these dogs shall be determined by the Judge(s) immediately upon the conclusion of the trial and will be based on the scores earned up to the phase of work that was not completed.

#### **E. QUALIFYING FOR THE NURSERY OPEN AND GENERAL SCORING RULES**

1. Age requirement:
  - a. A dog is eligible for the Nursery Finals if its third birthday falls on or after July 1 of the year in which that Nursery Final is held. *[Any dog born on or after July 1, 2012 is eligible for the 2015 Finals; any dog born on or after July 1, 2013 is eligible for the 2016 Finals.]*
  - b. Imported dogs, meaning dogs bred in countries other than the United States or Canada, are eligible for the USBCHA Nursery ONLY if imported BEFORE they reach one (1) year of age.<sup>14</sup>
2. A dog may compete in any class and retain eligibility.
3. To qualify to compete in the Nursery Finals, a Nursery dog must place on two occasions in the top twenty percent (20%) (rounded to the nearest whole number) of dogs competing in a USBCHA sanctioned Nursery Class of five (5) dogs or more. Placement by a nursery dog in the top 20% of a full National style judged Open class will also count as a Nursery qualifying placing.
4. The nursery dogs must run a full National style course, without the shedding work, for the class to be a qualifying class.
5. In the Nursery Finals, the scores of the top five (5) dogs from each district will be combined to determine the District Team Championship.
6. A handler is limited to running two dogs at the Nursery Finals.

7. Dogs placing in the top forty percent (40%) of the first Nursery Final run, not to exceed 50 dogs, will run in the second Nursery run. Prize money will be paid to the top 20 dogs based on the combined score of two runs.<sup>15</sup>
8. For sanctioning Nursery trials, see Part III. A. 9.

#### **F. NATIONAL FINALS SECRETARY**

1. The Finals Trial Secretary shall work jointly with the Trial Committee, Course Directors and local trial committee. The Trial Secretary shall furnish the running order and judge's sheets; shall be responsible for checking and posting scores. The secretary will have checks ready for disbursement by the end the Finals. The secretary will know at all times who the Course Director is and who is the spokesperson for the trial committee. The secretary will perform duties requested by the President, course director and/or trial committee spokesperson as is necessary to assure an orderly running of the Finals Trial.
2. The Trial Secretary or assistants may not divulge information to any contestant about judge's decisions or his individual preferences in the handling or scoring during the competition.

#### **G. COURSE DIRECTOR and TIME KEEPERS**

1. The Course Director shall be a person selected by and at the discretion of the Trial Committee.
2. The Course Director shall call competitors in their turn according to the program, unless directed otherwise by the Trial Committee.
3. If requested by the competitor before the run starts to explain the course, the Course Director shall provide a correct explanation. After the run starts, the Course Director shall not assist the competitor by giving advice or in any other way.
4. The Course Director shall see that each lot of sheep when let out is placed to give each competitor a fair and equal chance.
5. The Course Director shall be available at all times during the trial to convey to the competitor any instructions from the judges.
6. The Course Director is responsible at all times for keeping the course clear and ensuring that competitors or their dogs are not interfered with in any way while competing.
7. It is the timekeeper's duty to accurately start the stopwatch at the beginning of each competitor's run and to promptly call time when the allotted time for the course has expired.

## **H. ENTRIES**

1. Entries must be postmarked on or before August 1<sup>st</sup> or such date as set by the Secretary. If entries are not accepted, the entry fee will be returned. An entrant must notify the trial secretary before the Finals class begins (first dog to the post) in order to substitute to an alternate dog (listed on entry form) provided the alternate dog has sufficient qualifying points to be eligible (for the Open) or qualifying legs (for the Nursery).
2. Entry forms must be completed and logged at the Trial Secretary's office by the entry deadline. Entry fees shall be \$200 per dog in Open and \$150 per dog in nursery, and must be paid on entry.
3. After the date of closing and the legal run order draw for the USBCHA National Finals has been made, the secretary of USBCHA will be authorized to fill vacancies in the accepted run order if a handler withdraws by allowing the next handler with the highest number of points be admitted to the run order until the 150 dog limit has been met. The secretary will be allowed to fill vacancy openings until 5:00 pm in the Finals time zone the day prior to the first open run.

## **I. RUNNING ORDER**

1. Any competitor running two dogs will run his/her second dog after all other competitors with two dogs have run their first dog. A handler MAY NOT designate which dog is to run first.
2. To implement this, all handlers with one dog will be drawn randomly, one at a time, and divided alternately into two lots. Entries of handlers with two dogs will be added to the first lot. Entries of the first lot will then be drawn for running order. First dog drawn runs first, second dog drawn runs second, etc. When a handler with two dogs is drawn a second time that entry will be placed in the second lot for re-draw. Upon completion of drawing the first lot, the trial Secretary will randomly draw the second lot to continue the running order. Using this system does not mean that a handler with one dog will run before the second dog of a handler running two dogs.

## **J. COURSE DESCRIPTION – SHEEP**

1. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LAYING OUT THE COURSE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES RESTS WITH THE TRIAL COMMITTEE.
2. The Course, Scale of Points and Time Limit now fixed by the Directors are set out below. The Trials shall be on 4-5 sheep so selected that each competitor shall receive the same class of sheep if possible.
3. Subject to the reservation that the Course may be altered by the Trial Committee, the Trial shall, if possible, be decided on the following Course as set forth in this paragraph.
  - a. Preliminary Round

- i. Sheep 4-5 sheep.
  - ii. Gather 400 yards from handler. Fetch. Set of gates = 7 yards apart, 150 yards from handler, in the center of the course.
  - iii. Drive 450 yards over triangular course, 2 sets of gates = 7 yards apart. First set of gates approximately 150 yards from handler. In the case of a short course, when fetch is less than 400 yards, the drive will be lengthened when possible so that the total length of the fetch and the drive is 850 yards, or as near to this length as is reasonably practical.
  - iv. Shedding ring 40 yards in diameter. Pen 9 feet x 8 feet wide with a gate 8 feet wide, secured by a rope 6 feet long. The gate must open to not less than 170 degrees.
- b. Semi-final
- i. Sheep 5 sheep (3 unmarked and 2 marked with red collars).
  - ii. Gather 450-500 yards from handler. Remainder of the course, same guidelines.
  - iii. At the completion of the drive two unmarked sheep will be shed followed by the pen. At the completion of the pen one marked sheep to be singled.
- c. Final
- i. Sheep, 1st packet 10 sheep preferably unseen by dog. Gathering Approximately 600-800 yards from handler. Fetch Set of gates = 9 yards wide to a post fixed 20 yards through the gate in the center of the field.
  - ii. Sheep, 2nd packet 10 sheep preferably unseen by dog. Gathering approximately 800 yards from the handler.
  - iii. Drive Total of 600 yards on a triangular course with 2 sets of gates = 9 yards apart. First set of gates to be approximately 200 yards from the handler.
  - iv. Shedding Ring 40 yards in diameter.
  - v. Pen 9 feet x 8 feet with a gate 8 feet wide to which is secured a rope 6 feet long. The gate must open to not less than 170 degrees

**K. ADDITIONAL RULES APPLICABLE TO ALL FINALS CLASSES<sup>16</sup>**

- 1. Individuals judging the USBCHA National Finals should read and follow the USBCHA Rules and be familiar with the *Judging Guidelines* and ISDS Rules posted on the HA website.

2. If at any time during the running of a class at the National Finals, one of the judges becomes disabled in any way, all of his/her scores in that round will be dropped. Scoring and placements will be determined solely by the other judge(s) to the end of that round.
3. **DISQUALIFICATION:** A dog which grips or bites shall be disqualified if the gripping or biting is of such character and the circumstances are such as to justify disqualification. When gripping or biting occurs, the judge shall decide at once whether to disqualify the competitor. If the judge disqualifies the dog, he shall instruct the Course Director to stop the competitor. In the event a judge has cause to DQ a competitor, he or she must do so by showing a flag to the course director. This is done with no discussion with the other judge[s]. We are looking for independent action from the judges. If the course director sees a flag from each judge he will confirm then ask the competitor to retire from the field. If the course director does not see a flag from each judge he will leave the contestant on the field. The DQ-ing judge will DQ the contestant on his score sheet and the other judge[s] can keep scoring the contestant.
4. A competitor whose dog damages sheep shall be liable to pay the damage. The judge may stop a competitor at any point of the trial or withhold any prizes on the ground of insufficient merit.
5. Any judge that feels that a dog is not capable of continuing with his run because he is showing signs of stress should disqualify that dog and handler. This would include overheating, lameness or demonstrated inability to do the work required.
6. At the National Finals there will always be water available on the field so the dogs can cool themselves. Handlers are allowed to direct their dogs to the water and the dogs may use the water with no point penalty. Handlers may not leave the post to go to the water with their dog. If the handler is on the way to or in the shedding ring or on the way to the pen, they may detour to the water. The clock will not be stopped. Handler and dog are still being judged on the actions of the stock and anything that the stock do may cause a loss of points or if the stock leave the trial area disqualification.
7. Except in the case of an injury or illness of either the dog or handler or sickness or injury in the handlers' family, if a contestant refuses to compete in the Final round of the Finals, any money/prizes won in the preliminary or semi-final run will be forfeited. In the event money/prizes have been distributed before the finals, it must be refunded/returned within fifteen (15) days after the refund request is made, or the contestant will be suspended until the money/prizes have been refunded/returned.

**Part IV<sup>17</sup>**  
**ADDITIONAL RULES APPLYING**  
**TO THE CATTLEDOG NATIONAL FINALS**

**A. TRIAL COMMITTEE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**

1. A Trial Committee will be appointed annually for the USBCHA/ABCA National Open

and National Nursery Sheepdog Finals. At least one-half of the members of this committee shall be appointed by the HA President, and up to half may be designated by the ABCA. This committee shall have the power to make decisions regarding any question of interpretation and/or administration of the rules that may arise during the trial, to make decisions regarding the laying out of the course and, in general, to supervise the running of that trial.

2. The Trial Committee may appoint a non-contesting HA member to act as liaison between contestants and trial management.
3. All questions and disputes in connection with the National Trial not already settled by the judge(s) or Trial Committee shall be decided by the BOD whose decision shall be final and binding and not subject to Court of Law. Five (5) board members shall be a quorum.
4. In all cases of dispute, the trial will proceed without delay under existing USBCHA rules. Any contestant or person connected with the contestant altercation or arguing with judges may be disqualified from that run, fined or suspended from any further USBCHA trials, until further notice.

## **B. ELECTION OF JUDGES**

1. At least 8 months prior to the Cattledog Finals, Lifetime and General paid members may nominate judges for the Cattledog National Finals. The nomination form will be posted on the HA website. Members must contact and obtain the consent of persons they wish to nominate. Seven months prior to the Finals, the Secretary shall mail ballots to all USBCHA and ABCA directors, on which the names of all the nominees are listed. Each director shall vote for as many nominees as he or she chooses. Directors shall indicate their preferences by writing next to the name of their first choice a number equal to the total number of nominees, writing next to their second choice the next-lowest number, and so on until they have voted for all the nominees they wish to vote for. (For example, if there are a total of 8 nominees, directors will write the number 8 next to their first choice, 7 next to their second choice, 6 next to their third choice, and so on.) Ballots shall be returned to the Secretary at least 6 months prior to the Finals, and the Secretary shall total the numbers assigned to each nominee by all the directors and, after confirming his or her willingness to serve, shall notify the directors of the nominee (or nominees, if more than one judge is required for the Finals) receiving the highest total, who shall be deemed elected. If for any reason an elected judge cannot serve, the nominee receiving the next highest number of points shall be substituted.
2. One judge<sup>18</sup> will be used at the Cattledog Finals. No judge may be used for the Cattledog or Sheepdog finals that are on an AKC approved judging list.

## **C. HANDLER QUALIFICATION FOR THE NATIONAL CATTLEDOG FINALS**

1. Eligibility to run in the USBCHA Open and Nursery Cattledog Finals is limited to citizens of the United States and/or Canada, and to non-citizens who have been physically present in the United States and/or Canada for a least nine months of the qualifying year

for the Finals they seek to enter, and who have not run in the National Sheepdog or Cattledog trial of any other country during the same calendar year as the Finals they seek to enter.

2. The handler of the dog must be a current paid member of the USBCHA before he competes to receive qualification. A member can qualify by competing against a non-member as long as all dogs competing comply with the USBCHA guidelines.
3. The Nursery Finals will be held in conjunction with the Open Cattledog Finals.
4. To be eligible to run in the National Finals, the handler must be a current member of the ABCA. The dog must be registered with the ABCA to be eligible for ABCA prize money. Dogs not registered with the ABCA are still eligible to run and to receive USBCHA prize money.<sup>4</sup>

**D. QUALIFYING FOR THE NATIONAL CATTLEDOG FINALS AND GENERAL SCORING RULES**

1. Qualifying trials may be timed trials, partially timed trials, point and timed trials, fully and partially judged trials, arena trials or field trials.
2. To receive sanctioning as a qualifying trial, the Open class must have a minimum of five dogs competing and the Nursery class must have a minimum of five dogs competing.
3. The top placing 30% (rounded to the nearest whole number) of all dogs competing in a sanctioned Open and Nursery Cattle trial will acquire points based on the total number of dogs running in each trial. Dogs may accumulate points from their top five point placing trials in the qualifying year.
4. A nursery dog may also qualify for the Finals in any of the following:
  - a. In a class within a class (open and nursery) where at least five nursery aged dogs are competing.
  - b. If a nursery dog competes in an Open class and places in the top 30% of the class, he is qualified.
5. After the cutoff date, anyone may send their entry for the National Finals to the HA Secretary, who will accept the top 50 point earning dogs who enter, subject to Section F. In the event of a tie, all dogs tied at the 50-dog level will be accepted. Points will be based on the following chart:



**Five 5 dogs minimum in Open and Nursery and round a .5 point up to the nearest whole Number2) Example (5 dogs would be 1 point for 1st and .5 for 2nd. Five nursery dogs would qualify 2 dogs and 5 Open dogs in a trial would have 2 placing.)**

**Example, 30% qualifications**

<b># of Dogs</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>5 dogs</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>.5</b>						
<b>6 dogs</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>.8</b>						
<b>7 dogs</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>						
<b>8 dogs</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>						
<b>9 dogs</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>.7</b>					
<b>10 dogs</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>					
<b>11 dogs</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>					
<b>12 dogs</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>.6</b>				
<b>13 dogs</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>.9</b>				
<b>14 dogs</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>				
<b>15 dogs</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>.5</b>			
<b>16 dogs</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>.8</b>			
<b>17 dogs</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>			
<b>18 dogs</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>			
<b>19 dogs</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>.7</b>		
<b>20 dogs</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>		
<b>21 dogs</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>		
<b>22 dogs</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>.6</b>	
<b>23 dogs</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>.9</b>	
<b>24 dogs</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	

6. Points will be awarded to dogs according to their placing in the go around that included all the dogs entered. Points will be awarded to all dogs allowed to run regardless of trial rules on the number of dogs that may place at the trial.
7. The USBHCA Secretary must receive a trial result form upon completion of a sanctioned trial. The result form must be accompanied by a sanctioning fee of four dollars (\$4.00) for every dog in the class.
8. The dog receives qualification, not the owner or handler.
9. Trial Hosts should supply the HA Secretary with the following information.
  - a. Number of dogs that ran in the Open and Nursery classes.
  - b. Actual placing of dogs in go around that included all entered dogs.
  - c. Information should include the placing of the top 30% of all dogs competing even if they are not eligible for placing in the trial.

## **E. NURSERY CATTLEDOG RULES**

1. Qualifying trials will be the same as for the open cattle.
2. Age requirement: To qualify for the Cattledog Nursery Finals, the dog may not have turned 4 before December 31 of the year of the Finals. (For example, to compete in the 2016 Cattledog Nursery Finals, the dog may not have turned 4 any time before December 31, 2016.)<sup>19</sup>
3. Imported dogs are eligible for the nursery, only if imported before they reach one (1) year of age.
4. In the National Nursery Cattle Finals, the scores of the top five (5) dogs from each USBCHA district will be combined to determine the District Team Championship.
5. If there are 10 or fewer entries in Nursery Finals, the scores for both go-rounds will be combined to determine the final placements and there will be no final round.
6. If there are 11 or more entries in the Nursery Finals, there will be a final round as set forth below and the final placements will be based on the final round alone without consideration for scores in the preliminary rounds.
  - a. If there are 11 to 30 entries in the Nursery Finals, the scores from the two preliminary runs will be combined to determine the top 10 dogs that compete in the final round.
  - b. If there are 31-35 nursery dogs entered, the top 25 dogs from the first round will go to the second round, and the scores from the two preliminary runs for those 25 dogs will be combined to determine the top 12 dogs that compete in the final round.
  - c. If there are 36-40 nursery dogs entered, the top 20 dogs from the first round will go to the second round, and the scores from the two preliminary runs for those 20 dogs will be combined to determine the top 12 dogs that compete in the final round.<sup>20</sup>
7. A handler will only be allowed to run two dogs in the final round even if the handler has three qualified from the preliminary round.<sup>21</sup>
8. The USBHCA Secretary must receive a trial result form upon completion of a sanctioned trial. The result form must be accompanied by a sanctioning fee of four dollars (\$4.00) for every dog in the class.

## F. ENTRIES

1. Entries must be postmarked by August 15th for the National Open cattle and the Nursery cattle finals. If entries are not accepted because a dog did not make it into the top 50 the entry fee will be returned.
2. The last day to qualify a dog for the National Cattledog Finals (open and nursery) is July 31. **FOR THE 2017 FINALS ONLY THE LAST DAY TO QUALIFY WILL BE SEPTEMBER 4, 2017.**
3. Entry fee for the National Cattledog Finals will be \$250 per dog in Open and \$250 per dog in Nursery.
4. There will be a two-dog limit per handler in both the Open and Nursery classes. Handlers may enter third dogs on a provisional basis, the provision being that if the trial does not fill, then third dogs are allowed. The third dogs would be allowed in order of qualifying points earned for open, and all allowed in the nursery. Late entries are allowed for the open and nursery. Late entries will not get into the trial ahead of any on-time entry, regardless of points earned.

## G. GENERAL RULES FOR THE CATTLEDOG FINALS

1. At the National Finals there will always be water available on the field so the dogs can cool themselves and that handlers are allowed to direct their dogs to the water and the dogs may use the water with no points penalty. Handlers may not leave the post to go to the water with their dog. If the handler is on the way to the pen they may detour to the water. The clock will not be stopped. The handler and dog are still being judged on the actions of the stock and anything that the stock do may cause a loss of points or, if the stock leaves the trial area, disqualification. The HA recommends that all HA sanctioned trials adopt this rule.
2. Any judge that feels that a dog is not capable of continuing with his run because he is showing signs of stress should disqualify that dog and handler. This would include overheating, lameness or demonstrated inability to do the work required.
3. The scores from the two (2) qualifying runs at the National Open Cattle Finals will be added to determine the dogs that compete in the final round. If there are 40 or more entries, 20 dogs will compete in the final round; if there are 39 or fewer entries, 15 dogs will compete in the final round. Final placements will be based on the final round alone without consideration for scores in the preliminary rounds. Only two dogs per handler in the final round run, even if the handler has three qualified.
4. Immediately upon the conclusion of the trial, the Judge(s) shall determine the placing in the final round for dogs that have retired, or have been disqualified.

## H. COURSE GUIDELINES FOR THE NATIONAL CATTLED OG FINALS

1. The course shall consist of an outrun and lift (these two elements being judged), a fetch, a drive, and a finish with a pen and/or other obstacle(s) as the Trial Committee determines to be appropriate after considering the terrain, the disposition of the cattle, and the trial facilities.
2. There shall be two qualifying runs in open and nursery using three head of cattle. The final Nursery round shall use three head of cattle. In the final Open round, there shall be one packet of three cattle with a judged outrun and lift and a judged turn-back, outrun and lift for the second packet of three cattle. The remainder of the final Open round will be with six head of cattle, awarded 5 points for each successfully negotiated obstacle.
3. **Drive:** The drive shall begin immediately following the end of the fetch. At a minimum, there shall be a drive away to the first drive obstacle(s), a cross drive to the second drive obstacle(s), and a fetch to the handler/pen area. The Trial Committee may add obstacles it determines to be appropriate after considering the terrain, the disposition of the cattle, and the trial facilities. There will be five (5) points awarded for each head of cattle that successfully negotiates each obstacle for a possible maximum of fifteen (15) points per obstacle. See SCORING below.
4. **The Final Obstacle (Pen or Other):**
  - a. As stated above, the Trial Committee shall appraise the course, the cattle and the trial facilities and make a determination as to what type of obstacle(s), if any, should be added to, or instead of, a pen.
  - b. All cattle must be in or through obstacle(s) for the dog to earn the fifteen (15) points awarded at completion of obstacle(s).
5. **Scoring**
  - a. The outrun will be judged (20 pts.) the lift will be judged (10 pts).
  - b. Five (5) points will be awarded for each head of cattle that successfully negotiates the gather obstacle(s).
  - c. There are fifteen points to be awarded at each drive obstacle, five (5) points for each head of cattle that goes through the obstacles successfully. Once the cattle have gone through or around the drive obstacles, the handler must proceed on to the next obstacle(s).
  - d. The handler is not restricted in number of attempts at the last obstacle(s), but all cattle must be in or through in order to get awarded the fifteen (15) points for the obstacle(s).
  - e. **Breaking ties:** Points and total time shall be used to break ties when the dogs involved have finished within the allotted time as follows: (i) if total points are

tied, then the tie shall be broken by the lowest total time; (ii) if total points and total time are tied, then the tie shall be broken by using the highest combined outrun and lift points; (iii) If the placing is still tied after using (i) and (ii), then the tie shall be broken by using the designated time line.

6. **Touching Stock:** In any Handler Association sanctioned trial, a handler who touches the stock in order to move them shall be disqualified or penalized by loss of points as the judge thinks
7. **Command and Style:** In considering "Command" on the outrun and lift, the handler who gives the fewest commands and who works the dog quietly shall be preferred to the handler who over-commands and works the dog noisily, regard being given to the circumstances. Style may be otherwise defined as a dog's attitude to his work and his method of doing it on the outrun and lift.
8. **Disqualification and related actions**
  - a. A handler who prods, or hits the cattle in order to move them may be disqualified in any section of the course or be penalized with point deductions in Phase One (1) and Two (2) of the Gather.
  - b. A dog may be disqualified in any phase of work for excessive harassment of the cattle, i.e., excessive gripping, excessive running of the cattle, etc. If the judge disqualifies the dog, the Judge will instruct the Course Director to notify the competitor immediately.
  - c. A competitor so disqualified will not be entitled to a prize of any kind, notwithstanding that before the disqualification the competitor had earned points entitling him or her to a prize.
  - d. A competitor whose dog damages the cattle will be liable to pay for the damage.
  - e. The judge may stop a competitor at any point of the trial or withhold any prizes on the ground of insufficient merit

## I. CATTLEDOG JUDGING GUIDELINES

### 1. General:

- a. The cattledog trials sanctioned by the USBCHA vary in style and format across the nation. Unlike sheepdog trials, which were modeled directly after trials in Britain, no such model or "Rules for Trials" or "Notes for the Guidance of Judges" (as developed by the ISDS) exist in relation to cattledogs. Therefore, these initial Guidelines, deal solely with the first two phases of the gather, have been generated via a collaborative effort of a number of cattledog handlers and judges. They are meant to represent a basic foundation on which to build while serving as a ready reference for both judges and competitors alike. These Guidelines are subject at all times to the judges' consideration and interpretation of relevant trial circumstances

and should not be interpreted as “rules” that must be strictly applied

- b. The object of a Trial Course is to test and challenge the ability of a dog to manage cattle properly under the differing circumstances that may be encountered in everyday ranch work across the nation. The guiding philosophy behind judging a run should, at all times, be related as closely as possible to the practical aspects of real ranch work.

2. **Gather:** The Gather shall consist of three phases. Phases One and Two will be worth a total of thirty (30) points as outlined in Items 3.A. and 3.B. and will be judged. Phase Three will not be judged, and therefore not a subject of these Guidelines at this time

- a. Phase One - worth a total of twenty (20) points.

The set out crew shall keep the cattle settled as near to the established set-out area as reasonably possible until such a time the dog makes contact and/or causes movement of the cattle.

Difficulty in settling/holding cattle at the established set-out area should be considered a relevant trial condition and judged accordingly.

A dog that works Phase One in the most quiet, calm and efficient manner possible, in consideration of the draw (cattle), shall retain more points than a dog that does not.

Suggested Point Deductions:

Fault Description	Point Deduction
Dog runs too square at the beginning and/or too wide as to be out of contact with the cattle	2-9
Dog is recalled for a resend	5-DQ
Dog takes a redirect while in motion	½-2
Dog stops, or is stopped by the handler, and takes a redirect	2-6
Dog stops, or is stopped by the handler, and fails to take a redirect	4-9
Dog crosses over, without disturbing cattle	10-18
Dog crosses over, disturbing the cattle	12-19
Dog runs straight up the field (minimum 10 points)	10-19
Dog demonstrates lack of enthusiasm, interest, and focus and/or is sticky	5-17
Dog stops short or overruns, adversely affecting the direction of travel of cattle, but then recovers without a redirect	1-5
Dog stops short or overruns, adversely affecting the direction of travel of cattle, requiring a redirect	1-9
Dog detours to holding pens (or elsewhere) requiring minimal commands to get back on task	2-6
Dog detours to holding pens (or elsewhere) requiring excessive commands to get back on task	5-15
Dog goes off course	DQ

- b. Phase Two – worth a total of ten (10) points.

A dog that works Phase Two in the most quiet, calm and efficient manner possible, in consideration of the draw (cattle), shall retain more points than a dog that does not.

A dog that makes confident contact with the cattle absent weakness, keeping the cattle grouped and moving, shall retain more points than a dog that does not.

Suggested Point Deductions:

Fault Description	Point Deduction
Dog makes weak contact with cattle	4-9
Dog requires excessive commands	1-9
Dog works in an unnecessarily rough or overly aggressive manner	1-DQ
Dog deliberately drives cattle away from the handler	4-9

**Part V**  
**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT,**  
**PROTEST/COMPLAINT AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

**A. RELEASE AND WAIVER BY ALL PARTICIPANTS**

1. As a condition of membership, all member-participants in HA sanctioned trials or HA approved special events, affected in any manner whatsoever by a decision of the BOD or any person or committee authorized by the BOD to handle disciplinary matters, hereby releases the HA, their affiliated, related, or subsidiary companies, their officers, directors, and employees, any and all committee members jointly and severally, individually and in the official capacity, of and from any and all claims, demands, damages, and causes of action whatsoever, in law or equity, rising out of or in connection with any individual committees to whom disciplinary matters may be authorized by the BOD or by a Hearing Committee.
2. If any member institutes litigation in which the HA is included as a defendant, in an effort to recover damages, to overturn enforcement or interpretation of the Bylaws or Rules, or for any other reason whatsoever, and does not prevail in said litigation by the recovery of all relief requested, that member shall be liable to the HA for its attorney fees, costs of court, and other expenses incurred in connection with such litigation. Venue for any litigation which the HA is included as a defendant shall be determined by the BOD.

## B. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND PRINCIPLES

1. By virtue of their entry in any event in which one or more trials have been sanctioned by the USBCHA, the competitor acknowledges and agrees to comply with the HA rules and regulations, to accept any sanction or penalties that may be imposed in accordance with this Part IV for failure to comply, even if the competitor is not a USBCHA member or is not competing in a class or trial sanctioned by the USBCHA. The trial host and judge share in the responsibility for maintaining the USBCHA standards of conduct.
2. Participants in USBCHA sanctioned events are expected to show a positive, respectful attitude for everyone involved. Disrespect for the judge, trial officials, and other handlers undermines the sport. The USBCHA will not tolerate conduct that is detrimental to the association, the competition, the dogs, or any participant in the trial. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to: harassment or belittling of the judge or trial officials, physical violence or the threat of physical violence toward anyone at any time at the site of the trial or at any event associated with the trial, and verbal abuse directed toward anyone at any time at the site of the trial or at any event associated with the trial.
3. Members or participants in USBCHA sanctioned events may be sanctioned for a violation of any USBCHA Bylaw or Rule. Specific rules and sanctions are set forth in Section E of this Part IV but nothing in Section E is meant to limit the authority of the BOD to find a violation and impose discipline for a violation of any other rule of the USBCHA.
4. Nothing in these rules prohibits a Judge or trial host from taking immediate action for observed misconduct. Similarly, a grievance may be filed and action taken by the BOD even if the Judge and/or trial host took no immediate action for observed misconduct. For example, the Judge or trial official may or may not immediately disqualify the handler for improper training, abuse or other rule violations. Whether or not a member was disqualified at the time, a subsequent complaint may be filed and the Board may still impose sanctions.
5. Definitions:
  - a. Protest: A protest is a complaint against any trial official or Judge, alleging the erroneous application of the rules during the course of a HA sanctioned trial or the incorrect award of any prize. Protests based on what are generally considered a judgment call by a Judge will not be considered. A protest may only be made by USBCHA members who were in good standing at the time of the alleged rule violation.

Complaint: A complaint is a formal concern regarding any violation of any USBCHA Bylaw or Rule. A member, non-member, or judge may file a complaint for any alleged rule violation, but the complainant must have first-hand knowledge of the conduct alleged. An event host may also submit a complaint if the host has received complaints that can be verified by at least one witness signature.



- b. Grievance: A grievance is the collective term used in these rules to refer to either a protest or complaint.
- c. Complainant: The complainant is the individual(s) who files either a protest or complaint.
- d. Respondent: The respondent is the member against whom a protest or complaint is lodged.
- e. Conflict of Interest: Any person who files a grievance or is the subject of a grievance to the alleged conduct is considered an interested party and may not participate in the investigation (other than as a witness) or in the decision-making by either the committee or the BOD. If a member of the BOD is an interested party, they shall recuse themselves from all deliberation and shall not be included in any communications concerning the grievance. The President or the Grievance Committee may raise and rule on any other conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest that may exist.
- f. HA: refers to the “Handlers’ Association” and both terms are short for USBCHA (United States Border Collie Handlers’ Association).
- g. BOD or “Board”: USBCHA Board of Directors.
- h. Committee: The USBCHA Disciplinary or Grievance Committee as appointed by the President.

**C. FILING, RESPONSE AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1. Any person desiring to file a grievance (protest or complaint) regarding any alleged violation of these rules may do so by submitting the grievance in writing to the HA President either directly or through HA Secretary’s office. The requirements of this paragraph must be met for a grievance to be considered. Failure to meet the requirements will result in dismissal of the protest or complaint.
  - a. A grievance may consist of either a letter or email directed to the President or Secretary of the HA dated within 14 days of the alleged violation or the closing of the trial involved, whichever is later. Protests or complaints not filed within 14 days will be dismissed and no extensions shall be granted.
  - b. The grievance must state the name of the complainant, contact information (including email), name of individual(s) involved and their contact information, the date and time, and location of the conduct in question, any witnesses and their contact information, and a detailed factual description of the incident. If there are no known witnesses other than the parties, the complainant must so state in the complaint/protest.
  - c. A one hundred dollar (\$100.00) filing fee.<sup>22</sup> If the protest or complaint is sent by email, the check must be postmarked and sent to the Secretary within 5 days of the

email or letter sent pursuant to subsection (a) of this paragraph. Failure to meet this deadline will result in dismissal.

2. Upon receipt of a grievance, the President shall notify the respondent(s) in writing (email or mail) of the grievance against them and shall provide the respondent with a copy of the materials submitted by the Complainant. Respondent shall have 10 days to submit a written response to the President. The response should be sent by mail or email to the President or as otherwise directed by the President and should comply with paragraph 1(b) of this Section.
3. Time limits stated in days exclude the day of the event that triggers the time period and includes every day (weekends and holidays), ending on the last day of the period. (For example, 10 days commences the day following the event or end of trial as specified and ends on the 10<sup>th</sup> day.)
4. Every notice required by these rules may be served by delivering a copy of the notice to the person to be served, or the person's attorney, either in person or by email, or first-class mail to the address set forth in the grievance or, if none, to the last known address as it appears on the HA records. Such notice shall be deemed received by such person when it is deposited in the United States mail or sent electronically.
5. Videos may NOT be used in review of runs when a grievance is filed. This does not limit the use of videos in the review of other conduct or activity that is the subject of a grievance.

#### **D. GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE REVIEW PROCESS**

1. Unless otherwise specifically provided in these rules, all grievances will be handled according to the procedures set forth in this Section D. Unless otherwise specifically stated in a particular subsection, the process for handling both protests and complaints shall be the same.
2. The President shall refer a properly filed grievance to the HA Grievance Committee. The President has the authority to appoint additional members to the committee from the HA membership or BOD. Committee members must be members of the HA in good standing.
3. Upon receipt of the Grievance and Response in accordance with subparagraph C above, the President and Committee Chair shall decide if the matter should first be referred to mediation. If determined that mediation is appropriate, the following procedure will be implemented:<sup>23</sup>
  - a. The President shall provide the parties with the names of all Grievance Committee members and each party shall designate three members as proposed mediators. This will be a "blind" selection and the parties will not know whom the other party chooses. If the parties select at least one member in common, that member shall be appointed as the mediator. If there is no common selection, the President and Chair shall appoint a mediator.

- b. The mediator, in consultation with the Chair, shall determine a date by which mediation must be completed.
  - c. If mediation is not successful, the President shall initiate review pursuant to paragraph 4 of this section.
  - d. The President may change deadlines upon a finding of good cause and as necessary to allow for mediation.
4. The Grievance Committee shall initiate review of the protest or complaint within 14 days of receipt of the grievance from the President. The committee shall promptly notify the parties that they may be heard, in person or by counsel, and may present evidence in their own behalf and refute evidence offered against them. This may be done through the course of the investigation as outlined in paragraph 5, and it is acceptable for the committee or its investigators to meet with the parties by means of a telephone conference call, followed by a written report or recorded statement.
5. The Grievance Committee may delegate two or more members to be the primary investigators of any grievance. The committee shall develop and follow a protocol for the review of all grievances. Such protocol must include the following:
  - a. A telephone call to the complainant(s) to obtain additional information about the grievance. The designated primary investigators shall make notes of the call to share with the rest of the committee.
  - b. A telephone call to the respondent(s) to obtain additional information about the response to the grievance. The designated primary investigators shall make notes of the call to share with the rest of the committee.
  - c. The Committee shall ask the parties for witnesses to the alleged conduct. All necessary witnesses will be contacted and asked to provide either written statement of their observations of the incident or shall be interviewed by the investigator(s).
  - d. All interviews, whether in person or telephonic shall be conducted by at least two members of the Committee.
6. The assigned investigators shall prepare a brief written report to submit to the Committee for its initial determination. The Committee shall meet (electronically or telephonically) to discuss the preliminary findings, modify the report and recommend a decision to the BOD. If the Committee has not assigned investigators to the grievance, the Committee chair or designee will prepare the preliminary report.
7. The committee shall complete the investigation within 30 days of initiation of the investigation. The committee may request an extension of time from the President upon a showing of good reason for additional time.
8. Details of all grievances under these rules and the decision reached by the committee shall be reported to the complete BOD in the form of a Report and Recommended Decision for

review and action by the BOD, along with copies of all notes containing the statements of respondent, complainant, and all witnesses. A majority decision of the committee is required to forward the Recommended Decision to the BOD.

#### **E. BOARD OF DIRECTORS' ACTION**

1. The BOD shall decide on the committee's report within 14 days of receipt. The President will grant an extension of time if the BOD requires further investigation of the grievance or if the President determines that there is good reason to grant additional time for the BOD's review. If the BOD fails to act with the time provided, the committee's Report and Recommendation shall become the final action of the BOD.
2. The BOD may adopt the committee's report in whole or in part as its final action, refer it back to the committee for further investigation or take any other action consistent with the rules.
3. The BOD may request that the complainant and respondent "appear" by telephone before the Board.
4. Ten (10) members of the BOD shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of disciplinary action.
5. The decision of the BOD shall be final and binding on all parties.
6. The Board's decision on any grievance shall be recorded and filed with the committee's report and the Secretary shall maintain a log of all discipline. The Board is expected to review this log and use it as it endeavors to be consistent in discipline and to ensure that the sanction imposed is proportionate to the offense.
7. Deposit refunds:
  - a. If the committee determines, after investigation, that there are grounds for possible disciplinary action the \$100.00 will be returned to the complainant.
  - b. If the Hearing Committee determines, after investigation, that no further action is warranted, the complainant will be notified and no further action will be taken. In this case the \$100.00 will not be returned to complainant.

#### **F. GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINE AND GUIDELINES FOR SANCTIONS**

1. Fines and Suspension:
  - a. Any member or non-member may be disciplined, placed on probation, fined, or suspended from all HA privileges whenever it shall have been established by a preponderance of the evidence that such member, or nonmember, has been found to have violated the stated rule or rules. Except as may be specifically provided in these Rules, a fine shall not exceed \$500 and a suspension shall not exceed 1 year.

- b. When the rule in question contains a specific punishment provision, any disciplinary action recommended by the committee must be consistent with that provision. Upon finding good reason to do so, the committee may recommend and the Board may impose a punishment different from the one specifically provided in the Rule.
  - c. If no specific penalty is provided in the subsections below, the committee may recommend a penalty and the BOD may impose a penalty that is proportionate to the offense.
  - d. The BOD may also require any member to whom a prize has been paid or delivered to return the same. The member shall be bound to do so within the time fixed by the BOD.
2. Misconduct: The following provisions regarding misconduct at or in conjunction with a HA sanctioned trial, while not all-inclusive, are to be considered as violations of these rules.
- a. Attempting to fix, bribe, influence, intimidate or argue with the judge, trial secretary, timekeeper, course director, or any other trial official may result in disqualification at that trial, will result in a minimum fine of \$100, and/or a minimum of thirty (30) day suspension. This provision does not preclude a participant from properly contacting the course director or other trial official to clarify a rule or the accuracy of a score sheet. (Ex. A handler may ask the course director to have the score rechecked for a mathematical error). When reviewing grievances against judges and against handlers who talk about scores and judging, the Disciplinary Committee and BOD should distinguish normal comment and criticism from intimidation and harassment. Review of such grievances should also take into account whether the conduct in question was distracting to the judge, trial officials or other handlers.
  - b. A judge shall not intimidate, or attempt to intimidate, a contestant. The penalty for violating this subsection will be a minimum fine of \$100, and/or a minimum of thirty (30) day suspension from the Association.
  - c. Consuming or bringing alcoholic beverages into the judge's stand while a HA sanctioned trial is taking place.
  - d. Altering or attempting to alter the draw will result in disqualification at that trial and a fine of \$25-\$250. This rule does not preclude a trial official from accommodating handlers as necessary for the conduct of the trial or for unforeseen circumstances.
  - e. Tampering with competition livestock will result in disqualification for the remainder of that trial and will be subject to a fine of \$25-\$250.
  - f. Unsportsmanlike conduct. The severity of the unsportsmanlike act will determine the severity of the resulting disciplinary action.
  - g. Fighting on the trial site – immediate expulsion from the trial. The BOD may impose further sanctions.

- h. Threatening or actually inflicting bodily harm or injury to another person based upon that person's actions, conduct, or decisions in any official capacity for the HA or for any HA approved or sponsored event shall call for suspension for one (1) year.
  - i. Using abusive language on the trial field.
  - j. Attempting to aid or distract another competitor while they are competing may result in immediate disqualification in that trial, suspension, or fine as the committee may decide.
  - k. Behaving in a manner discrediting to the HA.
  - l. Participating in training activities while on the trial grounds other than in designated areas is prohibited.
  - m. Inhumane treatment of dog or stock on the trial field or grounds.
  - n. If trial management discovers inhumane treatment to dog or livestock, they may bar the responsible party from further participation in the trial. The decision as to inhumane treatment of animals may be based on the consultation with a veterinarian. If trial management determines, in its sole discretion, that the welfare of the animal requires immediate action and a veterinarian is not available, trial management may take any action that they deem appropriate to ensure the safety and well-being of the animal(s). If trial management deems on field behavior to be inhumane treatment during a competition, trial management may consult with the judge of the trial before taking any action allowed by this Section. If any action is taken, within 10 days of the completion of the trial, the trial officials shall notify the President or Secretary of the HA of the details of the occurrence and the matter shall be referred to the Grievance Committee to consider disciplinary action against the responsible party. Notification of the conduct and action taken shall constitute a complaint under this Section.
3. Warnings: The following provisions identify conduct that should be avoided. While not generally subject to discipline, the following items (and others as determined by the Board) may warrant a warning and, if the circumstances are egregious or interfere with the judge or a handler, may be subject to discipline at the discretion of the BOD.
- a. Talking with the judges about any trial related matter throughout the duration of the trial or discussing with the judge any ideas or methods of judging or handling except at approved handlers' meetings. This provision does not apply to a judge's clerk/scribe or to anyone that the judge is willing to mentor as a potential judge.
  - b. Making comments within a judge's hearing regarding any work taking place on the field.
  - c. Creating excessive delays.
  - d. Failure to exercise diligence in the control of the behavior of a dog.

- e. Any other conduct that is inconsistent with the rules and principles of the HA and which the Committee determines does not rise to the level of requiring discipline in the nature of a fine or suspension.
4. Failure to make payments due:
- a. Trial organizers, or producers may be suspended for any of the aforementioned offenses and, in addition, any of the following offenses:
    - i. Failure to make payment due
    - ii. Failure to pay added money as advertised.
    - iii. Leaving bad debts in any town connected with the production of a USBCHA sanctioned trial.
    - iv. Failure to pay sanctioning fee.
  - b. Any member or non-member may be fined, placed on probation, or suspended, from all HA privileges for failure to pay any obligation owing to the HA or for giving a worthless check for entry fees, office charges, stock charges, premiums, or any other fees or charges connected with the exhibition of herding dogs, provided however, that this person (member or non-member) shall be given twenty one (21) days written notice of the amount due and the intention of the HA to fine, place on probation or suspend. Any suspension under this rule shall terminate upon full payment of the obligation due the HA.
  - c. Any member or non-member passing a bad check or checks at a HA sanctioned trial or event which would affect the image or benefit of the local trial management will be fined \$25 for each such check and must make check good for first offense; second offence, member shall be fined \$100; third offense, member will be suspended and must appear before the Disciplinary Committee for reinstatement AFTER restitution of check or checks has been made and payment of a fine of \$100.
5. Penalty enhancement: The BOD may enhance the stated sanction set forth in these rules by increasing the suspension and/or penalty for repeat offenders of HA rules and regulations to a maximum of indefinite suspension of membership privileges and/or fine up to \$1,000.
6. Effect of Membership Suspension: During a BOD imposed suspension, the suspended party shall be ineligible to participate in any HA sanctioned event, shall be ineligible to judge a HA sanctioned event, and may not host a HA sanctioned trial. Suspension does not preclude the suspended party from entering a HA sanctioned trial that is scheduled after the termination of suspension. During the period of a suspension, failure to comply with these restrictions and any other express conditions or restrictions of any disciplinary action may constitute grounds for further disciplinary action.
7. Publication: When the BOD has ruled on a complaint and disciplinary action has been taken against a member, or non-member, the person's name, the rule violated, and the

disciplinary action taken shall be published on the USBCHA website. Suspensions will remain published through the expiration of the suspension. Fines and warnings shall be published for a period of one month from publication date.

## **G. EMERGENCY ACTION**

1. The President may call a special meeting of the BOD at any time or place or by telephone conference call where at least seven (7) directors are present to consider emergencies such as alleged rule violations of such magnitude as to appear to be detrimental to the best interests of the HA or to its practices, policies and/or objectives. A vote of at least five (5) Directors shall be binding for motions passed during any such special BOD meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Modified Dec. 18, 2018

<sup>2</sup> This change was adopted in March 2016 and is effective August 1, 2016. The additional \$0.50 collected in 2016 will go to the general fund. Beginning January 1, 2017, the additional \$0.50 will be allocated specifically for compensation to the Secretary.

<sup>3</sup> Adopted in 2015; modified Dec. 18, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Adopted August 17, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Adopted January x, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Adopted Feb. 7, 2018. Will also be included in the Guidelines.

<sup>7</sup> Adopted Aug. 1, 2018. This sentence will also be included in the Guidelines.

<sup>8</sup> Modified Dec. 6, 2017. See Rule II.F.5.

<sup>9</sup> Adopted Dec. 6, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Amended January x, 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Amended January x, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Adopted January x, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> BOD adopted added language January 25, 2017; this is not a new rule, just a clarification of the rule already included in Part I, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Adopted May 19, 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Modified in 2015.

<sup>16</sup> On Aug. 1, 2018, certain portions of this section were moved to the Judging Guidelines.

<sup>17</sup> The BOD adopted the modified Rules Applying to the Cattledog Finals on Aug. 17, 2016. The Rules were reorganized in a format similar to the remaining of the Rules and included here so that all rules are in one place. Part V, Rules of Conduct, were previously Part IV but have been renumbered as Part V.

<sup>18</sup> Adopted March 22, 2017

<sup>19</sup> Modified January 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Modified March 2018

<sup>21</sup> Modified August 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Modified on Aug. 17, 2016 (increased filing fee from \$50 to \$100).

<sup>23</sup> Adopted March 22, 2017 adding a mediation option.