

# **DOGS NEW ZEALAND RALLY-O REGULATIONS**

The following is only a simplified version of the Dogs NZ Rally-O regulations. Anyone who has an interest in participating in, organising, instructing or judging Rally-O is advised to read the Dogs NZ Obedience Regulations, in which the Rally-O regulations are contained. It is also recommended that the Rules of the Dogs New Zealand and the Dogs NZ Show Regulations be read as these will also contain information that relates to Rally-O.

Where something is not covered by the Rally-O Regulations, the Obedience Regulations take precedence. Where the Obedience Regulations do not cover it, the Show Regulations take precedence. Where the Show Regulations do not cover it, the Rules of the New Zealand Kennel Club take precedence. If those do not cover it, chances are there is no rule!

All these Regulations can be found on the DOGS NZ website at <https://www.dogsnz.org.nz/rulesreg.html>

## **OVER-VIEW OF RALLY-O**

A Rally-O course consists of a series of numbered signs set out in a competition ring, the size of which is usually around 18 x 18 metres. Each sign indicates a particular exercise that the dog and handler must perform. Before judging commences, handlers are given the opportunity to walk the course without the dog to familiarise themselves with it.

Once started, the team navigate around the course at a brisk walking pace with the dog at the handler's left in heel position, travelling from sign to sign in numerical order and completing each exercise in turn. Apart from a signal to begin, the team is given no assistance or instruction from any other person as they negotiate the course.

The handler may talk to the dog as much as they like and use whatever non-verbal signals they wish but may not touch or physically correct the dog. Obedience-style precision is not required, but the dog must maintain a reasonable standard of heelwork and tidiness in its performance. The emphasis in Rally-O is on teamwork, responsiveness and the correct execution of each exercise.

The judge observes the team as they work through the course and perform each exercise, deducting points for any errors that are made. A team must gain 90 out of the possible 100 points to earn a qualifying certificate in Novice classes, 95 out of 100 in Advanced classes, and 100 out of 100 in Excellent classes. As well as earning qualifying certificates, teams also compete for placings, the winner being the team with the highest points. Each team is also timed as they complete the course and where two or more teams end up with the same points, their times are used as a tie breaker, with the highest placing going to the team with the fastest time.

To earn a Rally-O title, a dog must earn three qualifying certificates under at least two different judges. There are four titles to be earned, one at each level – Novice, Advanced, Excellent and Advanced Excellent. A dog must earn its title at one level before it can move on to the next.

# **ORGANISING AND RUNNING AN DOGS NZ RALLY-O EVENT**

## **Who Administers DOGS NZ Rally-O?**

The general administration of Dogs NZ Rally-O is carried out by the Dogs NZ Rally-O Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is appointed by the Dogs NZ Dog Obedience Committee and consists of one representative from each of the three Obedience regions (Northern, Central and Southern) and one representative from the Dog Obedience Committee. In most cases your first point of contact will be the Subcommittee.

The Rally-O Subcommittee reports to the Dog Obedience Committee, which in its turn reports to the Dogs NZ Executive Council. Who makes any decisions regarding Rally-O generally depends on the issue at hand. In general, the Subcommittee provide an administrative service and makes recommendations to the Dog Obedience Committee. The Dog Obedience Committee makes most of the smaller decisions, but major issues are referred on to the Executive Council.

## **Who Can Hold A Rally-O Event?**

Only a registered Dogs NZ club may hold Dogs NZ Rally-O events. Registered Obedience Societies may hold as many events as they like if the appropriate approval is sought. Other types of Dogs NZ clubs, such as breed clubs and agility-only clubs, are restricted to one or two Rally-O events per year, depending on their status.

All Dogs NZ clubs must run their events according to Dogs NZ rules – this means that a Dogs NZ club must run any Rally-O events under Dogs NZ rules.

## **How To Apply For A Rally-O Event**

Any club wishing to hold a Rally-O Event, whether a Ribbon event or a Championship event, must apply to their Dog Obedience Committee Region Representative for approval, for the date they wish to hold it on. This is so that clashes are avoided with competing shows being held in the same area.

Once approval has been received, all Championship events must be scheduled in the “Dog World”.

## What Does A Rally-O Event Consist Of?

There are six official classes in a Rally-O event – Novice A, Novice B, Advanced A, Advanced B, Excellent A and Excellent B. All six classes must be scheduled.

There are two types of Rally-O events:

### Ribbon Events

- Ribbon events are non-qualifying events. Qualifying certificates are not awarded, and results do not count towards any Rally-O title. Certificates of Achievement may be awarded to anyone gaining a score of 80% or higher.
- Ribbon events do not need to be scheduled in *Dog World*, however approval must be sought from the local Dog Obedience Committee Regional Representative.
- Entries may be taken on the day.
- Handlers do not need to be members of the Dogs NZ or of any other organisation.
- Dogs do not need to be registered with the Dogs NZ.
- Judges do not need to be on the Rally-O judges panel – any person who is not a disqualified person under Dogs NZ rules can judge, though they obviously must be familiar with the Rally-O regulations and how the various exercises should be performed and scored.
- Prizes cannot be awarded, but ribbons can be given to place getters.
- “Special classes” or novelty classes can be run at ribbon events.

### Championship Events

- Championship events are qualifying events. Qualifying Certificates are given out for dogs that score the required number of points (90 for Novice, 95 for Advanced, 100 for Excellent). Certificates of Achievement may also be given out to those who score 80 – 89 points.
- Championship events must be scheduled in *Dog World*. Approval must be sought from the local Dog Obedience Committee Regional Representative.
- Entries may only be taken beforehand and may not be accepted within seven days of the event. A catalogue may be produced for the Rally-O event but is not compulsory.
- Handlers do not need to be members of Dogs NZ but must be a member of a Dogs NZ club. Only financial members of Dogs NZ can be awarded Qualifying Certificates.
- Dogs do not need to be registered with Dogs NZ, but only Dogs NZ registered dogs can earn Qualifying Certificates.
- Judges must be on the Dogs NZ Rally-O judges panel. Novice judges can only judge Novice, Advanced judges can only judge Novice and Advanced, Excellent judges can judge all classes.
- Prizes may be awarded. Ribbons must be given for at least 1st – 3rd place in Novice classes and for at least 1st place in Advanced and Excellent classes. Organisers may present ribbons and prizes for further places if they so wish.

## How Do Dogs Qualify For Titles?

In classes at championship events, any dog that scores the minimum number of points required is awarded a Dogs NZ Qualifying Certificate. In Novice classes, the minimum is 90, in Advanced it is 95 and in Excellent it is 100. All classes are out of 100 points.

- A dog that earns three Qualifying Certificates in Novice A or Novice B under at least two different judges is awarded the Rally-O Novice (RN) title.
- A dog that earns three Qualifying Certificates in Advanced A under at least two different judges is awarded the Rally-O Advanced (RA) title.
- A dog that earns three Qualifying Certificates in Excellent A under at least two different judges is awarded the Rally Excellent (RE) title.
- A dog that earns a Qualifying Certificate in both Advanced B and Excellent B at the same event, and does this over ten individual events, is awarded the Rally Advanced Excellent (RAE) title. Where multiple events are being held together, e.g. a triple over a weekend, the dog must qualify in the corresponding classes – e.g. Advanced B1 and Excellent B1, not Advanced B1 and Excellent B2. The number of times a dog achieves this double qualification over ten events is recorded after the RAE title, e.g. RAE2 (twenty events), RAE3 (thirty events) etc.

To be awarded any Dogs NZ Rally-O title, the handler must be either a full or associate member of Dogs NZ, and the dog must be registered on Part I or Part II of the Dogs NZ register, at the time the Qualifying Certificates were earned, and at the time the title was applied for.

Qualifying Certificates earned when either the handler was not a member, or the dog was not registered, do not count towards titles. Non-members and non-registered dogs cannot therefore earn the RN title, and so cannot graduate out of Novice classes.

## Eligibility For Classes

- As there is no qualifying process for Ribbon events, a dog should enter the same classes at Ribbon events as it is eligible for at Championship events.
- If a dog has earned a Rally-O title prior to close of entries, that title is taken into consideration regarding eligibility even if the title has not yet been applied for, recognised or awarded.
- Only Dogs NZ titles and certificates are taken into consideration.
- A dog cannot be entered in both Novice A and Novice B at the same event. Apart from this, dogs can be entered in as many classes as they are eligible for.

## **Novice A**

For dogs that:

- have not won a Novice Obedience test or higher test at a Dogs NZ Championship Obedience show.
- have not gained any Dogs NZ Obedience award or title, such as CD or CDX. Awards and titles from other disciplines, such as Agility, are not relevant.
- do not have their Rally-O Novice (RN) title.
- are not entered in Novice B at the same event.
- for handlers that have not handled any dog to a Dogs NZ Obedience award or title, such as CD, CDX or RN.

## **Novice B**

- for dogs that have not gained a Qualifying Certificate in Advanced A.
- for dogs that are not entered in Novice A at the same event.

## **Advanced A**

- for dogs that have earned their Rally-O Novice (RN) title.
- for dogs that have not earned their Rally-O Advanced (RA) title.
- dogs must be over twelve months old as there is a jump exercise in Advanced.

## **Advanced B**

- for dogs that have earned their Dogs NZ Rally-O Advanced (RA) title.

## **Excellent A**

- for dogs that have earned their Rally-O Advanced (RA) title but not their Rally Excellent (RE) title.

## **Excellent B**

- for dogs that have earned their Rally Excellent (RE) title

## **Main points regarding eligibility:**

- Three Qualifying Certificates are required at Novice level to earn the RN title. It does not matter whether these are gained all in Novice A, all in Novice B, or a combination of both.
- A dog that has earned RN may not enter Novice A.
- A dog that has earned RN may enter Novice B and Advanced A.
- A dog that gains one Qualifying Certificate in Advanced A can no longer enter Novice B and must remain in Advanced A until it earns its RA title.
- A dog that gains its RA title may enter Advanced B and Excellent A. Any Qualifying Certificates earned in Advanced B at this stage will be awarded but do not count towards any title.
- A dog that gains its RE title may enter Advanced B and Excellent B and remains in these classes for the rest of its career. For any Qualifying Certificates to count towards the RAE title, the dog must qualify in both classes at the same event. If a dog only qualifies in one or other of these classes, then a Qualifying Certificate is awarded for that class, but does not count towards anything.

## **Judges at Rally-O Events**

- Anyone who is not a disqualified person under Dogs NZ regulations may judge at a Rally-O Ribbon event.
- Only members of the Dogs NZ Rally-O Judging Panel may judge at a Rally-O Championship event. Judges on the Novice panel can only judge Novice A and Novice B, judges on the Advanced panel can only judge Advanced A and Advanced B, judges on the Excellent panel can judge all classes.
- Judges can only judge sixty dogs per day and can only judge for eight hours per day. A second judge must be used if entry numbers or time exceeds these limits. If an extra judge is needed, handlers must be informed before the event and approval for the judge must be sought from the Rally-O Subcommittee. If the extra judge (or a replacement judge) has not been scheduled, then handlers are entitled to withdraw and request a full refund on or before the day of the event.
- Entries cannot be refused to restrict entry numbers. If the maximum number is exceeded, the class must be split, and dogs allocated to each class by ballot.
- A judge can enter any class other than the classes they are judging, if they have the written approval of the organising club at the time their contract was confirmed.
- Judges should be advised of the numbers of entries in each class they are judging as soon as practical after entries close.

## **Levies**

Levies must be paid to Dogs NZ on Championship Rally-O Events. These must be paid before the event takes place.

Regional levies are payable to the local Dog Obedience Committee Region Representative. Regional levies and which events they must be paid on are set by each Region.

## **Conduct of a Rally-O Event**

### **The Rally-O Ring**

A Rally-O ring must be a minimum size of 18m x 18m. The surface of the ring should be suitable for the purpose and in an acceptable condition and if grass, should be mown and clippings removed.

### **Running Order**

All dogs should be judged individually in catalogue order to the extent practical, without holding up the judging. Judges are not required to wait for dogs.

For the Advanced and Excellent Classes, the entries should be arranged according to the dog's jump height, ranging from either low to high or high to low. The judge may allow a dog to jump a lower height than regulated for reasons of physical disability or age of the dog and may require a vet certificate to be produced. It is suggested that if a handler indicates on the entry form that the dog will jump a lower height, this should be assumed to be the case when preparing the running order. The judge may question or refuse the height chosen by the handler when the dog is presented in the ring.

### **Walk throughs**

- All competitors entered in a Rally-O class are entitled to a ten-minute course walk-through time. During this time the judge must be present in the ring to answer any questions the competitors may have. However, competitors are expected to know how each sign is performed and should not be asking for a personal lesson in Rally-O exercises.
- Walkthroughs are limited to twenty handlers at a time, however the judge may allow up to five extra handlers if this reduces the number of walkthroughs required and if this will not cause overcrowding or disadvantage any handler.
- Walkthroughs are grouped according to running order. After the first walkthrough, that group is judged. The second group then walks through and are then judged, and so on.
- Each competitor only gets one walkthrough per class. Handlers with multiple dogs in a class are assigned to the walkthrough that pertains to the judging of their first dog. Handlers may only change which walkthrough they take part in with the permission of the call steward, and only if this does not cause numbers in any one walkthrough to be exceeded. Handlers who do not walk the course with their assigned group will, where possible, still be judged in that group, so as not to disrupt the running order unnecessarily.

## Stewards

- **Call steward** – if possible a call steward should be used to sort out walkthroughs, to keep the flow of teams moving and to sort out any issues handlers may have with the running order.
- **Scribe** – if possible, the judge should be provided with the option of having a scribe to mark down penalties as directed. This allows the judge to keep their eyes on the team in the ring.
- **Time Keeper** – mandatory. The time keeper is responsible for timing each team's run and ensuring the time is transferred accurately to the judging sheet. If a stopwatch is being used the time keeper must officiate for all entries in the class. If electronic timers are being used, different time keepers may officiate. In either case no time keeper may officiate for any class they are competing in.

## Timing

- As well as being scored by the judge, each team must also be timed. A time-keeper must be assigned to each class.
- The time starts when the team passes the Start sign and stops when it passes the Finish sign.
- Stopwatch timing – Times are recorded to 100th of a second.
- Electronic timing – Times are recorded to 1000th of a second
- There is no Standard Course Time set and no time penalties. Time is used only as a tie breaker where teams are on the same points.

## Jumps

One jump is required for Advanced classes. Two jumps or 1 Jump and one cone are required for Excellent classes; however, the judge may design the course so that the same jump is used twice. The jump must be a bar jump (e.g. a standard agility hurdle) with a minimum width of 1000 mm. The uprights must be a minimum of 900 mm high. The displaceable bar must be a minimum of 30 mm in diameter. Jump Heights shall remain at 200 mm, or less in cases where a dog's physical disability or age is a factor.

If requested by a handler, jump height may be raised to 300 mm for a dog whose height at the withers is between 380 mm and 460 mm, or 400 mm for a dog whose height is greater than 460 mm.

## Placings

Placings are decided based on points, with the highest placing going to the team on the highest points. Where two or more teams are tied on points and are in the running for a placing or prize, their times are used to decide the placings, with the higher placing going to the team with the faster time.

## Tie Breakers

Where two or more teams are on the same points and the same time, they will have a run-off. Each team does the course again and is scored and timed as before. The team on the highest points wins the run-off – if they are still on the same points then their run off times are used as a tie breaker. In recording the results, their original points and times, not the runoff results, are used, with the winner of the run off being marked with a + beside their score.

## **Timer Failure**

If a time is not recorded for any team, either through steward error or timer malfunction, then the team may run the course again. They will not be scored but will be timed. Their original points score will stand, and the new time recorded. The team must try to complete all exercises correctly.

The handler may choose not to run the course again if they do not wish to do so. In this case they will retain their original score but have no time. If they are tied on points with another team, they then automatically forfeit the run off.

## **Results**

The Rally-O judging sheet must be completed immediately after each handler/dog round. The judging sheet must be signed by the judge and handed to the Rally-O manager immediately upon completing the judging of any class. Where results are entered directly from the judge's scribe sheet into a computer and no overall class judging sheet is being used, it is recommended that the judge be required to sign the results print-out.

## **Prize Giving's**

- Placings and awarding of certificates must be announced and given out in order of merit.
- As a minimum, ribbons must be awarded to the first three place getters in Novice classes, and to the first-place winner in Advanced and Excellent classes. Ribbons and prizes may be given to other placings if the organising club wishes to do so.
- Prizes and sponsorship product may be awarded to place getters at Championship Rally-O events, in accordance with Dogs NZ Show Regulations.
- Only ribbons, rosettes or cards may be given to place getters at Rally-O Ribbon events.
- Qualifying Certificates are only awarded at Championship Rally-O events to dogs gaining 90 points or more in Novice, 95 points or more in Advanced, and 100 points in Excellent.

Certificates of Achievement may be awarded to dogs gaining 80 points or more at Ribbon events and 80 to 89 points at Championship events.

## **After the Event.....**

- After any Championship Rally-O Event, the organising club must advise their local Dog Obedience Region Representative of the numbers entered, where the event was held, the judges who were appointed and the complete results for all the entrants.
- A Dogs NZ Rally-O Result Sheet must be forwarded to Dogs NZ, to the local Region Representative, and to the officiating judge within 14 days of the event.
- All the entry forms, judging sheets and results sheets must be retained for one year from the date of the event.

# RALLY-O RULES OF COMPETITION

## General Rules

- Novice courses are performed on lead. The lead must be held always but whether in the right or left hand is a matter of choice for the handler.
- Advanced and Excellent courses are performed off lead. Dogs must enter and exit the ring on lead. The lead may then be left outside the ring, handed to a steward, or placed completely in the handler's pocket until the course is finished, but never worn outside the handler's clothing or visible to the dog.
- Dogs must wear a basic fabric or leather collar – no chains, slip collars, studded collars, prong collars, muzzles, harnesses or head collars. Dog footwear may be worn if a vet certificate is produced to the event manager. Dogs may wear coats, but these cannot be removed during the run. Leads used in Novice must be detachable from the collar.
- Handlers cannot take food, whistles, clickers, toys or any other "training aid" into the ring.
- In all classes, handlers can speak to and encourage their dog as much as they like. Hand signals and body movement are not penalised in general, although many exercises do place restrictions on handlers moving their feet. The rules are stricter in the Excellent class where handlers may not clap their hands, pat their leg or make any noise other than verbal (i.e. no clicking fingers, slapping the leg etc).
- Handlers may not touch their dog. The only exception to this is in the Advanced classes, where handlers may physically assist the dog into the stand position.
- The run always begins with the team setting up in front of and to the left of the Start sign, with the dog sitting in heel position on the handler's left. The judge will ask "are you ready?" When the handler indicates yes, the judge will say "forward" and the team begins the course. No other instruction will be given to the handler during the run. Judging and timing begin when the team passes the Start station.
- Judging and timing stop when the team passes the Finish station.

## Scoring

Scoring starts when the handler indicates that they are ready, and timing starts when the handler passes the Start sign. Scoring and timing stop when the team pass the Finish sign at the end of the course.

The minimum penalty that can be incurred is one point. All classes are out of 100 points. The maximum number of points that can be lost at any one station is ten points, except for a non-qualifying performance.

The number of points lost will depend on the error committed and the degree of error. Points are lost for:

- Tight lead
- Touching any equipment
- The dog getting significantly out of heel position or sitting very crooked
- The dog being slow to respond to a command, or a command having to be repeated
- A lack of teamwork between handler and dog
- The dog interfering with the handler's movement (e.g. jumping up, crossing in front)
- The handler touching the dog
- The team not walking at a brisk pace or changing pace throughout the course
- Exercises being performed incorrectly
- Loud or intimidating commands or signals
- Exercises being re-attempted (only one re-try is permitted at each station)
- Handler errors such as foot movement, passing signs on the wrong side, minor mistakes when performing exercises etc

Teams will be disqualified for:

- Leash jerk
- Minimum requirements not met
- Dog unmanageable, or uncontrolled barking
- Consistently tight lead
- A dog that eliminates while in the ring for judging
- Missing out a station
- Dog going over the jump in the wrong direction.
- Harsh handling – the handler and dog will be disqualified from any further participation in the Rally-O event on that day

## Rally-O Courses

- An “exercise” is the series of movements a team is required to perform - e.g. a left turn, a weave through cones, a call front finish right halt. A “stationary exercise” is one where the team will come to a stop at some point and the dog will perform at least one sit, down or stand while executing the exercise.
- A “sign” is the label which tells the handler which exercise the team is to perform.
- A “station” is the area in which the team must perform an exercise. A station will consist of a sign and any equipment required to complete the exercise (cones, jumps or distraction articles). Each station is numbered so that the handler can progress from one station to the next in the correct order.

### Course Design

The Rally-O course for each class is designed by the judge. There are a few rules about course design that must be followed.

Most of the signs can only be used once on a course. The following signs can be used twice:

5. right turn
6. left turn
7. about turn right
8. about U turn
9. 270° right
10. 270° left
17. slow pace
18. fast pace
19. normal pace
34. jump (in Excellent only)

Novice courses must:

- consist only of Novice exercises
- have between ten and fifteen stations, not including Start and Finish
- have a minimum of three and a maximum of five stationary exercises.

Advanced courses must:

- consist only of Novice and Advanced exercises
- have between twelve and seventeen stations, not including Start and Finish
- have a minimum of three and a maximum of seven stationary exercises.
- have a minimum of three Advanced level exercises
- have one jump

Excellent courses must:

- have between fifteen to twenty stations, not including Start and Finish
- have a minimum of three and a maximum of seven stationary exercises
- have a minimum of three Advanced level exercises
- have a minimum of three Excellent level exercises
- have two jumps or 1 jump and 1 pole exercise