

2020 USDAA Program and Policy Updates

Published January 10, 2020, clarifications added 1/23/2020 based on questions received

The Titling Program is designed to test the training of various skill sets required for achievement in the sport against a pre-defined set of standards. Included in the progression are opportunities for participation at each stage of a team's career.

- Intro Program—designed for handlers and dogs new to the sport. This Level provides the opportunity for teams to test fundamental obstacle performance and control in a show environment.
- Championship and Performance Programs—designed for the competitive-minded handler seeking to develop skill sets for competition at the local, regional, national, and/or international level, by measuring accomplishments at progressive levels of training.
- Veterans Program—designed to allow healthy dogs a means of remaining physically active in their senior years following the completion of their competitive career.

USDAA Tournaments are an essential element of our Championship and Performance programs. These are designed to push the envelope in skill development through head-to-head competition (as opposed to pre-defined standards of performance in the Titling Program), thereby enabling driven competitors to reach their maximum potential.

The following updates are being made to USDAA programs and policies to better support the experience of competitors and groups.

Performance Standards Amendments

Table—*Effective January 31, 2020; early adoption no earlier than January 17, 2020*

- Shall be performed in any position at the handler's discretion for five (5) consecutive seconds in the Starters and Advanced levels as a means of testing control training, as defined:
 - The count will begin when the dog has all 4 paws on the table.
 - The count will continue regardless of the dog's position, so long as it remains on the surface of the table.
 - Once the judge has completed the count, the dog may exit the table.
 - Penalties for leaving the table before the end of the judge's count remain unchanged.
- Shall no longer be used in the Masters Standard Agility Class
- Shall continue to be optional in Masters Gamblers class as a specialty obstacle with performance standards specified by the judge in the judge's briefing, or as a start or finish point for dogs in the Relay classes with no performance requirement
- Table heights of 12" and 20"* shall be utilized for Mini and Open height divisions in the Championship Program, respectively. Table heights of 12" and 16" shall be utilized for Mini and Open height divisions in the Performance Program, respectively.

Implementation Note: To help groups with a smooth transition, a 16" table will be allowed for use in the Championship Open height divisions until April 2.

Masters Standard Course Time Rates

Standard Course Time (SCT) rates shall be modified to reflect the impact of changes in the Table performance requirements, as amended.

MASTERS STANDARD COURSE RATES			
Jump Height	Championship	Performance	Veterans
10"	3.00–3.15 yps	SCT + 5 seconds	SCT + 10 seconds
14" & 16"	3.10–3.30 yps		
20" & 22" & 24"	3.25–3.55 yps		

Jump Heights—Effective September 8, 2020

We are continuing to review jump height structure to better align jump heights between our Programs and to more closely align with jump height structures used throughout the sport. To avoid undue disruption of the Tournament season, the current jump height structure will remain in place through September 8, 2020. Additional information will be released on or before June 1.

Titling Program Structure Changes

The Titling Program is designed for competitors to be measured against a pre-defined set of standards to test the training of various skill sets required to achieve competitive status in the sport. The Program is being streamlined to better reflect these goals and to improve event operational efficiency.

Program Crossover Allowed—Effective January 1, 2020, records will be updated in phases over the coming months.

For the purposes of titling, crossover between Championship and Performance Programs is permitted at all Levels. This is to provide flexibility to the competitor as they develop their dog's skill sets for competition.

- All Qualifications earned in Starters and Level 1 classes will be aggregated for titling purposes.
- All Qualifications earned in Advanced and Level 2 classes will be aggregated for titling purposes.
- All Qualifications earned in Masters and Level 3 classes will be aggregated for titling purposes.
- Class and Versatility Titles will be awarded based upon the Program in which all qualifications are earned. If issued on the basis of aggregation, the Performance title will be issued.
- Competitors earning a title in either Program may choose to compete in Championship or Performance at the next level without restriction.

For example, if a competitor earns:*

- *2 Performance Qualifications and 1 Championship Qualification in Jumpers at the Starters/P1 Level, a Performance Jumper title will be issued.*
- *3 Championship Qualifications in Jumpers at the Starters/P1 Level, a Starters Jumper title will be issued.*

**Due to the variety of scenarios that may exist in title calculation, competitors with questions regarding their dog's unique progression should reach out to rules@usdaa.com.*

Lifetime Achievement Awards—Effective January 1, 2020, with phased implementation throughout 2020

Important Correction, published 1/23/2020:

In the policy updates released on January 10, 2020, it was incorrectly stated that Starters/Level 1 and Advanced/Level 2 qualifications would be applied to the core for Lifetime Achievement Awards. This was intended to accompany an announcement being contemplated for lower level LAAs to which these core qualifications would apply. These awards have not been finalized. (More can be found under caption “Continuation at a Level Allowed” herein.) Regrettably, the partial disclosure was misleading, and we did not identify this error prior to publication. We apologize for any misunderstanding and confusion this may have caused.

Lifetime Achievement Awards will continue to recognize a competitive career with a dog, which is measured by their overall performances in USDAA events as set forth in Chapter 1 of the regulations. In order to recognize the complete cycle of a competitor’s career with a dog, overall requirements will include lower level qualifications per class necessary to achieve titles in advancing to the Masters level.

With new crossover rules in effect, these qualifications may come from either the Championship or Performance program, and are limited on a combined basis to no more than 3 qualifications per class (the number to earn a class title) for a maximum of 15 qualifications at each level (i.e., Starters and Advanced), for an overall maximum of 30. This is in keeping with the definition of “Lifetime” and recognizing performances from the beginning of a dog’s career to retirement. This change will be reflected at a later date, following implementation of other programming changes.

The following table reflects the overall impact of rule changes taking place in 2020.

Masters LAA Core REQUIREMENTS						
Level	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum	Titanium*	Diamond
Masters/Level 3	Earned in each of the Core Classes: Standard, Jumpers, Snooker, Gamblers, and Pairs Relay (MC Standard & Jumpers may be used to meet the Standard & Jumpers Requirements, respectively)					
Total Qs per Core Class Required	15	25	35	50	75*	100
LAA Overall Count REQUIREMENTS						
Overall Q Count for LAA	150	250	350	500	750*	1,000
These may be drawn from the following classes:						
Starters/Level 1*	Up to 3 Qs in each Titling Class, for a maximum of 15					
Advanced/Level 2*	Up to 3 Qs in each Titling Class, for a maximum of 15					
Veterans Classes	Unchanged—Unlimited					
Tournament Classes	Unchanged—Unlimited					

**New for 2020*

Continuation at a Level Allowed—*Effective January 1, 2020, records will be updated in phases over the coming months.*

Eligibility standards are being changed such that competitors may continue to compete at a level after completing a title (e.g., Starters/Level 1 Jumper) until the title for the next higher level in a class is earned. This allows a competitor to:

- Compete at a Level indefinitely, or
- Compete at the Level which they have earned a Class Title and the next higher level concurrently. For example:
 - A competitor has earned a P1 Gambler Title. They may enter both P1 and P2 Gamblers until the P2 Gambler title has been earned.
- Once a Class Title has been earned in a Class Type (e.g., Advanced/Level 2 Snooker), the competitor may not enter classes at the lower Levels* (e.g., Starters or Level 1 Snooker in this example).
- Where a handler chooses to continue in Advanced/Level 2 classes, title certificates for Advanced/Level 2 titles with metallic designations will be recognized. Lifetime Achievement Awards with core class requirements in the Advanced level may be offered at a future date. Composition of overall results would follow the similar requirements as for the Masters level in effect at the time of adoption.

**Due to the combined qualifications for titles made possible by the new Program Crossover rules, once a Class Title has been issued in either Championship or Performance due to aggregation, the competitor may not enter the lower Level in either program.*

Versatility Title Judge Requirement—*Effective January 1, 2020, records will be updated in phases over the coming months.*

Competitors are required to Qualify under 2 unique judges pursuant to current regulations in Standard and Nonstandard classes. The third unique judge requirement for Versatility Titles no longer applies.

Relay Class Option—*Available for events after April 2, 2020*

The goal of the Pairs Relay Class is to build camaraderie among competitors as well as demonstrate teamwork.

At a Group's option, Relay Classes may be offered as a combined class for any or all Levels in each Program to improve efficiency in the operation of the Relay classes.

The Combined Relay Class shall be run on an Advanced/Level 2 course and scored under Advanced/Level 2 rules, permitting dogs from any Level to work together.

Three different scenarios of Combined Relay are possible:

- All Levels Combined (Starters/Advanced/Masters for Championship Combined Relay, and Levels 1, 2, and 3 for Performance)
- Starters/Advanced for Championship Combined Relay and Level 1/Level 2 for Performance
- Advanced/Masters for Championship Combined Relay and Level 2/Level 3 for Performance

Pairs Relay offered by Level is still available.

These multiple options give our Groups the most flexibility to present Relay in the format that is the best fit for their events. The class title requirements are updated as follows:

RELAY CLASS TITLE REQUIREMENTS		
Title Level	Earned in	Total Qs* needed to earn Title
Starters/Level 1	Combined Relay or Starters/Level 1	3
Advanced/Level 2	Combined Relay or Advanced/Level 2	3
Masters/Level 3	Combined Relay or Masters/Level 3	5

**The following minimum requirements remain in place:*

- Class Titles at each Level require Qualifications under 2 different judges.
- Each Qualification at a Level must be earned with a different partner.

The current policy allowing for accommodating dogs remains in effect.

Snooker Super Qs—Effective January 1, 2020

To simplify the calculation of available Super Qs, Super Qs in Snooker will be available accordingly:

- There is 1 Super Q available for every 5 dogs actually competing in a height class provided the score is 37 points or more, as exemplified below:

# Competitors Actually Competing	# Available Super Qs	# Competitors Actually Competing	# Available Super Qs
1 – 5	1	21 – 25	5
6 – 10	2	26 – 30	6
11 – 15	3	31 – 35	7
16 – 20	4	36 – 40	8

**For more than 40 dogs competing in a jump height the same formula applies.*

Implementation note: For events prior to the software update, manual adjustments will be made on the event results sheets at the local level and verified by the USDAA office.

Intro Program Changes—Effective January 31, 2020, with early adoption allowed

The Intro Program, open to all dogs 14 months of age and older, is modified to run on a Starters course, with—

- A qualification towards Intro Program title defined as being 7 or fewer faults, when run pursuant to Starters rules, except as follows:
 - The Standard Course Time shall be set at the SCT for the Starters class plus 20 seconds.
 - An omission of any one obstacle shall be penalized 5 faults, instead of 20 faults.
- The long jump is no longer a requirement for Intro

- When Intro is run on a Starters/Level 1 Course, 12 weave poles will be included as defined by the course requirements for Starters/Level 1.
- When a separate Intro Course is offered, 6 weave poles may be included as defined by Intro-only course requirements.
- Dogs may be entered at any jump height

Top Ten Points—Effective January 1, 2020, records will reflect the change following scorekeeping software update. Secretaries should watch for notifications and make software updates as soon as possible.

In the Masters Level and Tournament Classes, Top-Ten points will be earned in each newly defined height class through a new formula. The goal is to provide opportunity for competitors in all geographic regions, regardless of size and frequency of shows, to have their successes measured in pursuit of Top Ten recognition.

The Top Ten formula is the sum of 10 pts per Qualification earned in titling classes (5 pts per Qualification earned in each Tournament, 1 pt for individual classes in Team/PVP Tournament excluding Relay), **PLUS** placement points as previously calculated, up to a maximum of 9 points per placement.

TOP TEN PLACEMENT POINT FORMULA		
Class	Points per Q	+ Placement Points
Masters/P3/MC/PMC Titling	10	+ Up to 9 additional Placement Points as outlined in the table below
Steeplechase/PSJ	5	
Grand Prix/PGP	5	
Biathlon Overall	5	
Team/PVP Classes (Relay Excluded)	1	

The number of available placement points remains unchanged and is as follows:

# Dogs Actually Competing	# of Places	# of Placement Points
2 – 3	1	1
4 – 5	1, 2	3, 1
6 – 10	1, 2, 3	5, 3, 1
11 – 20	1, 2, 3, 4	7, 5, 3, 1
21 or more	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	9, 7, 5, 3, 1

Note: Because Top 10 points accrue by Jump Height, a competitor may want to choose a single Program track by the time they enter Masters/Level 3.

Policy Statement Revisions

Offering Seminars—Effective January 15, 2020

Seminars may be held in conjunction with events provided the judge is not involved in conducting, assisting, or otherwise providing materials to the seminar instructor. If the seminar follows the last day of an event, the judge may participate.

Limited Entries—Effective January 15, 2020

Groups may establish an overall entry limit for local events. This, along with the possible use of fault limits, allows a group more flexibility to host events at smaller facilities and to manage their daily time schedule.

In addition to titling classes, limited entry events may offer any 1 of the 4 USDAA tournaments.

Training in the Show Environment: For Exhibition Only "FEO"—Effective January 15, 2020

“For Exhibition Only” or “FEO” runs are permitted at competitor’s discretion in any/all classes at all local events. However, FEO is not permitted at the All-Around Dog Agility Championships, tournament classes at Regional Championships, or at Cynosport®.

FEO Procedures are as follows:

- The Gate Steward shall indicate FEO on the gate sheet and provide a copy of the gate sheet to the Scorekeeper so that scores are accounted for appropriately as “FEO” and not “Elimination” from a class.
- The competitor shall declare "FEO" as they enter the ring to make the judge aware.
- Non-audible toys are allowed but must be used in a manner that does not distract other dogs running in adjacent rings.
- The judge will remain in the ring to supervise.
- The competitor may choose to do all or parts of the course at their discretion within the Standard Course Time allowed for the class.

NOTE: For efficiency, safety, and to maintain a competitive environment that is fair for all entrants in subsequent classes, the general sequence of the course should be followed as set forth by the course plan. The judge may dismiss competitor from the ring where safety, harshness, or other violation of the rules may occur.

Miscellaneous Training Classes, Mulligans, and “Fix and Continue” are still available to groups at their discretion as outlined in the previously issued policy statements.