

FCI Judges Meeting

Dec 9th – 11th, 2011

Breda, Holland

The FCI Judges meeting began Friday evening with a dinner and get together. There were 55 Judges from all over the world in attendance to discuss the new 2012 IPO rules and the sport in general. Saturday started early; we had breakfast at 7:00am and the meeting started at 8:00 with Frans Jansen introducing all and giving a presentation of the overall conduct expected at IPO trials. It was nice to have 5 of the 7 authors of the new rules present and able to answer questions. This better clarified the rules and left less doubt as to possible interpretations. The authors present were Frans Jansen, Robert Markschlager, Guenther Diegel, Pierre Wahlstrom, and Edgar Scherkl.

Some of the overall changes:

1. During the temperament test, the dog must allow himself to be touched.
2. IPO is now the ONLY name for the sport. SchH and VPG titles will no longer be awarded.
3. Each dog will only have ONE scorebook and the scorebook MUST be turned in before the event starts.
4. ALL dogs MUST be identified by either tattoo OR microchip.

Robert Markschlager then discussed the rule changes for the obedience phase.

1. There will be major emphasis on the dog's attitude; the dog must appear free and happy in the work.
2. IPO1 - report in to the Judge on leash and when told, remove the leash.
3. The handler may take only ONE basic position in the forward direction for each exercise.
4. There is NO CHANGE to the free heeling pattern - all levels.
5. In motion exercises, all buildups stay the same. After the command, if handler is to return to the dog then the handler only goes 15 more paces. If there is a recall, then the handler will still proceed 30 paces, turn on same centerline immediately, and wait for the Judge's signal for the recall.
6. Free heeling should not be jumping, hopping, or constantly starting to sit every step. It is not about how the dog may or may not throw out his front legs while moving with attitude. *"Correct heeling is a happy and attentive, focused dog that moves with the handler in the correct position, parallel to the handler, with the shoulder in line with the handler's left knee and not bouncing or jumping. Bouncing is determined by the movement of the topline, not by the way the dog throws their legs out in movement. It is faulty if the topline (back) is bouncing up and down excessively."*
7. In the BH in motion exercises, the handler is allowed a slight pause of forward motion when giving the command to sit or down.
8. Retrieves - the dog must complete the retrieve portion to receive any points in all 3 exercises. For the jumps, the dog must do at least 1 jump and complete the retrieving portion in order to receive any points at all. Hint to handlers - if the dog gets to you and drops the DB and you reach down and pick it up, you'll lose all points. If you give the dog a second command and have the dog pick up the DB and present it to you, you save yourself some points.

9. The handler may not break the basic position when throwing the dumbbell. If the handler does break the position, but immediately returns and is of no help to the dog (i.e. taking a step back to assist in throwing the DB), then the deduction should NOT be to drop the exercise to insufficient, but the exercise CANNOT be awarded full points. There must be some deduction.

After a short lunch break Gunther Diegel discussed the rule changes for the protection phase.

1. All dog/handler teams MUST check in to the Judge or designee.
2. IPO1 teams check in on leash, heel to the blind search start position, then remove the leash.
3. IPO2 teams check in on leash, remove the leash, then heel to the blind search start position.
4. IPO3 teams check in off leash.
5. If the dog leaves the blind during guarding, the handler may try to send the dog back in one time. However if the dog goes back to the handler and sits in front or basic position then protection is terminated. If the dog goes back into the blind with one extra command and completes the guarding then it is a 9-point deduction. If the dog does not go back into the blind with one additional command or leaves a second time then protection is terminated.
6. Guarding must be powerful and focused to the helper.
7. In the escape, a command MUST be given to go when the helper starts his escape. If the handler does not give a command it is a 1-point deduction.
8. During the escape, the dog MUST show power and fight.
 - a. A dog with a less than full grip but fighting and showing power will have less of a point deduction than the dog that is full and hopping along for the ride.
 - b. If the dog has the chance to get a full grip and doesn't, then it cannot be full points, even on the escape with good fighting. But if the running or other circumstance was the cause of the less than full grip, and everything else is strong, then the dog may be awarded full points.
 - c. Full grip AND fighting will be full points.
9. Guarding portions out on the field after outing will be approximately 5 seconds before re-attacks.
10. If the dog leaves the helper during guarding phase on the field and returns to the handler as the handler is approaching, the team will receive deductions. The deductions depend on the distance the handler is from the dog. The deductions are as follows:
 - a. If the handler is more than 2 meters away, then the exercise is rated a maximum of unsatisfactory.
 - b. If the handler is 2 meters or less, then the exercise rated a maximum of satisfactory.
 - c. If the dog leaves before the Judge signals to the handler to pick up the dog (or a large distance i.e. long attack) then the routine is terminated.
11. During the back transport, if the dog leaves the handler and goes to the helper but does NOT bite the sleeve:
 - a. The handler calls the dog back and continues -4 pts.
 - b. If the dog bites the sleeve, the dog is disqualified for out of control.
12. During all transports if the dog is not in control after 2 extra commands (3 commands total), then the dog is disqualified for out of control.
13. For the long attack, ALL levels position themselves at the end of the field even with blind 1. The Judge will signal the handler to release the dog when the helper is: IPO1 30-40 paces, IPO2 40-50 paces, and IPO3 at least 50 paces or full field.
14. The helper runs out of the blind on all levels.

15. After checking out to the Judge, the handler MUST heel 5 paces away to show control before putting on the leash.

In the middle of the protection presentation and discussion we all took a bus to a local club field and judged IPO1, 2, & 3 dogs in Obedience and Protection. I cannot even begin to imagine how it must have felt for those handlers to have 55 Judges out on the field walking around judging them. I'm nervous with one. They were great sports and did a fine job as we all struggled to stay out of their way.

After that we were back to the hotel conference room where Guenther Diegel finished his Protection presentation and then the day was closed out by Frans Jansen at 6:00pm.

Sunday Morning started at 8:00 where Edgar Scherkl discussed the rule changes for the tracking phase.

1. There is now increased emphasis on the way the tracks are to be laid.
2. The tracks are to be laid with a "normal" walking pace - no kicking in, stomping, or scuffing.
3. The articles are to be dropped without the tracklayer stopping – he/she must continue their pace.
4. The tracklayer MUST continue 5-6 paces straight past the end of the track (last article) - no hopping off the end.
5. Articles are now worth 21 pts. A "good" rating will not be possible without indicating at least one article.
6. Judges and tracklayers must stay 10 meters from the handler and dog while working the track.
7. There will be emphasis on handler help at the corners, The handler may swing wide after the dog has committed 2-3 meters into the next leg. Swinging early to help the dog make the corner or maintain speed will be considered handler help and result in a point deduction.
8. IPO1 may give slight praise during the track as long as it is not "at" the corner, articles, or when the dog is having problems.
9. IPO2 & 3 may only praise when the handler is at the article with the dog, either before or after he shows the article to the Judge, but not both.
10. When giving the command to track on restarting the dog after articles, the handler must be "close" to the dog, either beside or just behind, standing upright, with line above his/her knee.
11. During the track, if the dog returns to sit in front of handler or basic position the tracking is terminated.

There was much discussion, some intense - some lighthearted; a lot of very good conversations and information came out of this meeting. It was a great opportunity for me to sit, listen, and learn what the authors of the rules had to say about how we as Judges should be interpreting and enforcing them. The meeting concluded at 11:00am on Sunday morning.