

A GUIDE TO NADAC AGILITY TRIALS

North American Dog Agility Council

What is a NADAC trial?

Fast and fun. NADAC encourages judges to set courses that flow, without a lot of sudden changes of direction. The challenge to the handlers, then, is to work with their dogs at top speed.

Who can enter?

Any healthy, trained dog, at least 18 months old that is registered with NADAC. NADAC welcomes both purebreds and mixed breed dogs. Dogs in heat cannot attend an agility event; see the premium for more information.

How do I register my dog?

Registration forms are available on-line at www.nadac.com. There is a minimal one-time fee to register your dog. Getting registration numbers can take some time, maybe a few months, so plan ahead.

Although not required to compete, you may also choose to become an Associate member of NADAC. There is an annual fee for this, but there are some benefits, including a reduced fee to register your dogs, no charge for height cards, getting your title certificates mailed automatically, and other benefits that are listed on the website.

What is a Dually Sanctioned show?

At any dually sanctioned trial, you could earn qualifying legs and titles in both venues. In order to receive the other titles, though, you must be registered with or get a tracking number from those groups.

For instance, if this trial is also sanctioned by ASCA (Australian Shepherd Club of America, www.asca.org), the entry form will ask for both a NADAC number and an ASCA number: only the NADAC number is required. But, if you wish to get the titles from ASCA, you must get a tracking number from them; the fee is also minimal. Note that ASCA does not recognize the new games, and you cannot earn ASCA titles for those runs.

If it is also sanctioned by AMBOR (American Mixed Breed Obedience Registry, www.amborusa.org), you may get that number, and titles, if your dog is a mixed breed dog and is registered with them.

What are the Levels, Divisions and Classes?

Levels: Novice, Open and Elite

If the dog and handler are just beginning agility competition, they should compete in the Novice A category. If the handlers have previously earned any Novice level certificates or their equivalents from any agility organization, then they must enter in the Novice B category for that particular class. This keeps the competition fair, so that new exhibitors are not competing against those who are more experienced.

Divisions: Standard, Veterans and Junior Handler

The Standard Division is the most common, but also available are the Veterans Division, which is open to any dog, age seven (7) or older, OR any handler, age 60 or older, or any handler who has a certificate of disability. Also available is the Junior Handler Division, which is open to any dog that is shown by someone who is 17 years of age or younger. Entering in the Junior Handlers or Veterans Divisions enables a dog to jump 4" lower than their standard division jump height, and to receive 10% more time on the course. No dog entered in Veterans or with a Junior Handler will jump higher than 16". A dog can be entered in different divisions in different classes at a show, but they cannot be entered in different divisions for the same class at the same show.

Classes: Regular, Jumpers, and Games

Regular- At a traditional NADAC trial, you may enter your dog in two rounds of Regular agility, which includes contact obstacles, jumps and tunnels. You do not have to enter both rounds; the cost is per round entered. At the trial, when it comes time for the Novice runs, the first round will be run with all the dog's entered in that run, and then most often the course is 'reversed,' and the second round is then run, with all those dogs that are entered.

Combo Class- Every Regular round of NADAC agility, and also some of the Games, will include a Gamble, or Distance Challenge. This area will usually be marked off with tape on the ground, and is optional for the Handler. The challenge is for the Handler to direct their dog over the series of obstacles while remaining on the far side of the line.

For more information on this class, see our article: [NADAC Combo Class](#).

Jumpers- In NADAC, the Jumpers round often consists of just jumps, no weaves. That makes it a very fast course. The dog must have a "clean run" to qualify, which means no knocked bars or wrong courses, and Two qualifying rounds are needed to earn that title.

Games- These include Tunnelers (the whole course consists of just tunnels), Touch and Go (contacts and tunnels only) and Weavers (tunnels and weaves). Three legs are needed in each of these classes in order to earn titles. There are no course differences at all in the various levels, only in Standard Course Time.

What height will my dog jump?

At a NADAC trial, dogs can jump anywhere from 4" to 20". This is determined by their height, age and, in some cases, breed. There is also a 20+ category: this is for dogs that measure over 20" at the withers. Although those dogs jump a 20" height in the trial, they are judged as separate group, not with the 20" dogs. The 4" jump height is reserved for veterans, junior handlers, and for people with disabilities. For instance, no Standard Division dog will jump lower than 8", unless they are being handled by a junior, veteran or disabled handler, the dog is over 7 years old, or, the dog is included in the Jump Height Exemption list on the NADAC website.

All dogs jumping 8", 12" or 16" are required to be measured, unless they have a Permanent Height Card. If you want to get a Permanent Height Card, you must have a judge measure your dog, and you must bring the Height Card Application form with you: they are available on the website. This card is free if you are a NADAC Associate; otherwise there is a small fee. It requires three measurements from three different

measuring judges, on three different trial weekends, and the dog must be at least 2 years old. Only judges with supervisory status with NADAC are able to measure dogs for their height card. If you want to get your dog measured at a trial, be sure to ask the Trial Chairperson or Secretary to inform the judge, with plenty of notice, to bring their own measuring device with them.

However, if there is not a supervisory judge at the trial, most likely a club member will measure any dogs without height cards. The judge at the trial, whether supervisory or not, will be asked to confirm any height measurements that are borderline.

What does the judge do?

The judge designs the course, sets the Standard Course Time (SCT), judges each dog and handler on their run, and calls their faults. These are some of the faults that a dog or handler may accrue on their run (the full list is on the NADAC website):

- Wrong course or failure to complete an obstacle
- Going over the Standard Course Time
- Wearing a collar (no collars at all on a NADAC course)
- Touching the Dog or Obstacle
- Knocking Bars Down
- Poor sportsmanship (includes foul language)
- Dog eliminates in the ring, or leaves the ring
- Missing the contact zones or unsafe performance
- Training in the ring: this is allowed, but you will not qualify
- Weaves: must be completed in one continuous motion. If your dog pops out, you must go back to the beginning. At the Novice level, you are not faulted for the number of times that you try the weaves, only if you do not complete them.

How do I qualify?

NADAC titles are earned through point accumulation. A Clean Run is any run that has no faults and is completed under standard course time. This earns the dog 10 points. In NADAC Regular runs only, you can also qualify if you only have minor faults during your run, (i.e., less than 5 points deducted) but that leg is only worth 5 points. In all divisions, certification requires a total of 30 points. At NADAC trials, the top four dogs in each division always get placements, whether they qualify or not. Hint: do not ask the Scorekeepers why you got any faults; they were not able to watch your run. Ask your friends who did watch.

Once you earn the Novice title, you do not have to move your dog up to Open, but can continue to earn two more titles at each level (Outstanding and Superior). The beginning titles for Novice are: NAC, NJC, and NGC.

For more information, and the complete rules for agility, go to the NADAC website, at www.nadac.com.