

Regular Agility

The Regular class is what we all think of as “agility”. It contains jumps, tunnels, weaves, and contact obstacles in a numbered sequence. The differences between the elite, open and novice levels are the course length, difficulty of the challenges and the speed with which a team is expected to complete the course. The novice course may only contain a total of 6 weave poles. Embedded within the course is a sequence of typically 3-5 obstacles that are to be performed with the dog at a lateral distance from the handler. At the novice level the distance is approximately 5-6', in open 8-10' and in elite 12-15'. These distances may vary a bit depending on the nature of the sequence. A very simple sequence like jump-tunnel-jump might be a bit farther away while some other sequence that is more demanding might be a bit shorter.

In NADAC dog/handler teams have a lot of options. When you enter a trial, you choose the category you would like to enter....either proficient or skilled. In proficient, you jump your standard jump height and may not have any course faults (including line violations in the distance challenge) or any time faults. All qualifying scores are 10 point qualifiers. In skilled, you may elect to jump 4" below your standard jump height (you are not required to take the height reduction) and may have 5 or fewer time or course faults (a line violation in the distance challenge is 5 course faults) and earn a 5 point qualifying score. At the novice and open levels, proficient and skilled points are added together to earn titles. It just takes you twice as long to earn a title if you are getting 5 point Q's instead of 10 point Q's. The category distinction is important only in elite. The NATCH (NADAC Agility Trial Champion) requires all qualifying scores to be earned from the proficient category. Qualifiers from the skilled category earn an award called a “medal” instead of a NATCH.

If your dog is 7 years old or older or you are 62 years young, you may choose to enter the veterans division. In the veterans division, the dogs must jump 4" lower than their standard jump height. Veteran dogs also are given 10% more time to complete courses that have jumps on them. If you are a veteran handler, you will be given 10% more time on all courses. If you are under 18 years old, you may enter the junior handlers division. Again the dogs must jump 4" lower than their standard jump height, and you are given 10% more time to complete courses that have jumps on them. Many clubs also give an entry fee break to juniors.

At the novice level you earn your regular agility title (the NAC) when you have accumulated 30 qualifying points in the Regular class. At this point you may choose to move to the open level or stay at the novice level to earn a novice regular outstanding performance title when you have a total of 100 points (the O-NAC) and the novice superior performance title with 200 points (the S-NAC).

For every class, you earn the basic title with 30 qualifying points. For all the classes except the Regular class, the outstanding performance is earned at 60 points and the superior at 100 points.

Why would anyone want to hang around for an outstanding or superior performance title?

When you get the superior performance title in all three of the classes that involve jumps (Chances, Regular, and Jumpers), you earn a Triple Superior award which is a beautiful plaque. If you earn a Triple Superior in novice and open and elite, you have earned the Triple Triple (common name for the award) which is an even more beautiful plaque!

Chances

Chances is a class where the dog and handler run a numbered sequence of obstacles. Embedded within that course are a distance challenge, a directional challenge, and a discrimination challenge, all to be completed at a certain distance from the obstacles. The numbered sequence is the same for elite, open and novice. What changes are the number of challenges required to qualify and the distance at which the tests must be performed. The distance challenge is purely a test to see if the dog can perform a flowing sequence of obstacles at a lateral distance from the handler. In elite that distance is a minimum of 20', in open at least 15' and in novice 10'. The directional challenge is a test to see if the dog will, on the handler's directional command, change from the flowing path he is on to a different path. The required distance is less for this type of challenge....elite approximately 12-15', open 8-10', novice 5-6'. The discrimination challenge tests if a dog can follow the handler's command to perform a particular one of two side-by-side obstacles on the command of the handler. These two obstacles may be touching each other or slightly separated. People think of these as being contact obstacle/tunnel discriminations, but they also can be two jumps, two tunnels, a jump and a tunnel, a jump and contact ramp, or two contact up-ramps. The distances required for this challenge are the same as for the directional challenge. At the elite level all three challenges will be required, at the open level two of the three will be required and novice will have one challenge. The type of challenge required will vary from course to course. There will be a handler line on the ground for each challenge and the dog must stay on his side of the line and the handler must stay on his/her side. Stepping on the line is faulted. If you complete the course in 40 seconds with no course faults, you earn 10 qualifying points. It is a pass/no pass class, and no placements are given.

Jumpers

Jumpers is a course that may contain only jumps and tunnels. Some courses will have tunnels and some will not. Jumpers is considered a specialty class as it contains only a portion of the allowable obstacles. All specialty classes require the dogs to run efficiently and have a greater yards per second (yps) requirement. In the specialty classes, you may not have any course or time faults to earn a qualifying score. This is the requirement for both the skilled and proficient categories.

At the novice level for regular 20/20+ dogs must average 2.75 yps; 16" dogs 2.50 and 4/8/12" dogs 2.25 yps. In jumpers the yps are 4.00; 3.75; 3.50 yps for large, medium & small. As you move to the open and elite levels the yps increase. For example, in open the yps for large dogs is 4.50 and in elite 5.00.

“Hoopers” courses look a lot like a jumpers course except there will be no tunnels, just hoops. The hoop is what is termed a GSO or Ground Speed Obstacle. The course tests the ability of the dog and handler to demonstrate directional skills at speed. There is no airtime for the dogs so things happen pretty fast and timing is critical. The yps for hoopers is identical to jumpers.

Touch-n-Go

The touch-n-go class is another specialty class that has courses composed of only contact obstacles and tunnels....no jumps or weaves. The course is identical for all levels, novice through elite. The only difference is the amount of time you have to accomplish it. A T-n-G course typically has 10-14 obstacles and 3 or 4 of them will be contact performances. The basic yps is the same as for all specialty classes such as jumpers, but additional time is added for each performance of a contact obstacle depending on the length of that obstacle. The types of skills that are tested are: the ability to do a contact obstacle as part of sequence in which the dog has been encouraged to run in an extended (very fast) stride, directional control onto or off a contact and discrimination between obstacles.

Weavers and Tunnelers

Weavers is another specialty class that has weaves and tunnels as the only obstacles. The basic course pattern and course distance will be the same at all levels. There will be 3 separate sets of weaves on the course. What is different among the levels is the number of weaves that must be completed. At the elite level there will be three sets of 12 poles; open will have one set of 12 poles and 2 sets of 6 poles; novice will have 3 sets of 6 poles. The challenges you may find on a weavers course include entering the weaves at speed where the dog has been encouraged to run in an extended stride by the previous sequences; directional change to either enter the poles or to go to the next obstacle after a set of weaves, discrimination between two sets of weaves or weaves/tunnel or the ability to complete one set of weaves and immediately do another set.

The yps for this class are the same as for the other specialty classes except that additional time is added for performing the weaves. The weaves are expected to be done very efficiently. At the novice level, large dogs are given 2 seconds extra for each set of 6 weaves; medium dogs 2.5 seconds and small dogs 3 seconds. At the elite level, large dogs are given 2 seconds for each set of 12 poles; medium dogs 2.5 seconds and small dogs 3 seconds.

Tunnelers is exactly what it sounds like...a course of only tunnels which tests directional skills at speed.

Titles and Awards

In NADAC there are titles, and there are awards. Titles are earned when all your qualifying scores come from the same class. Awards are earned by combinations of titles. So the Chances Title NCC is earned by earning 30 points in the Novice Chances class. The Novice Versatility Award is earned by combining all the novice titles (NCC,NJC, NAC,TN-N,TG-N,WV-N). There are also awards for certain lifetime point accumulations, 1000 total points, 2500, 5000, 7500 etc.

To get your certificates for a given title, you may either print your own from the web or request laminated color certificates from NADAC. You access your titles on the NADAC web site (www.nadac.com) by clicking on the awards and titles menu option. There is a clickable table that shows all certificates that you may currently request....all of your titles may not show up if they have not been logged into the Points Lookup database that is also on-line. A new batch will appear every time the database is updated which is about once a quarter at this point.

You must apply for your awards using the awards request form that is accessed from the awards and titles page. There is a file in the files section of the NADAC agility Yahoo group that lists the status of your awards. They do take a while to be logged, verified and sent, so be patient.

You will not receive any certificates or awards unless you request them. There are literally thousands of certificates and plaques that go out each year so it takes a while for the process to be completed. They are very pretty certificates, really nice plaques and trophies and worth the wait!