

# RAT Practice Guidelines

(last updated 2/20/08)

RAT practices provide an opportunity for members to have access to the club's agility equipment and to observe a variety of dog/handler teams in training. This opportunity is provided free of charge and the cost of the facility rental is paid for by RAT. The purpose of these Guidelines is to ensure that practice sessions run smoothly and are a productive and enjoyable time for everyone present.

## Who qualifies for regular practice?

In order to participate in the RAT practices you must be a RAT member and meet **one** of the following requirements:

1. The dog being worked has earned at least one qualifying score in the Regular/Standard Class at the Novice/Starters Level in a sanctioned agility trial.
2. The handler must have earned a minimum of an Elite/Masters/Excellent title on a dog that you have trained.
3. The handler must have permission from the Person in Charge (PIC).

Individuals who have submitted a signed membership application (that includes a waiver of liability) and their membership dues to the RAT Membership Committee, but who have not yet been elected to membership as specified by the Bylaws and Constitution, may participate in practice provided that they first obtain permission from the Person in Charge (PIC).

## The PIC or Person in Charge of RAT practice.

One person will be in charge of any given practice session. This person is responsible for providing a course or drills to be worked on for that session as well as running the practice.

## Responsibilities of the PIC.

The following is a list of guidelines for the PIC or Person in charge.

1. Ensure that all guidelines are followed.
2. Make sure equipment is properly and safely set up and put away.
3. Set the amount of time per run.
4. Notify the facility owner, if necessary, at least 5 days prior to the scheduled practice, and if necessary, post a notice of the scheduled practice at the facility.
5. Be there early and open any gates or trailers.
6. Determine what time and day the practice is to be held. Practices at Kent are generally held on Saturday or Sunday mornings, however the times may vary if the facility is available at other times and days. The Redmond facility holds practice on weekday evenings.
7. Schedule practice sessions by notifying the practice committee. Notice of the scheduled practice must be published at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled practice time. The practice committee may reject any practice proposed with less than 72 hours notice.
8. Notify the RAT Treasurer when a practice has occurred.
9. Be responsible for asking a dog-handler team to leave the practice if a dog or handler is behaving inappropriately, as deemed by the PIC.

## Eligibility requirements to be a PIC.

The PIC (person in charge) must have competed at the Masters/Elite or Excellent level at agility trials and have the approval of either the RAT Board or the RAT Practice Committee. The RAT Board can approve special cases where the PIC does not meet the competition requirement.

## Guidelines/Rules for Handlers and Dogs at Practice.

1. All participants are required to be at practice to set up and tear down the course.

2. It is the responsibility of the participants to know in advance what time practice begins. Information on practices can be obtained from the RAT website and is circulated on the RAT email list. The practice begins at the time posted, starting with the set up of equipment.
3. Every dog attending practice is required to be supervised at all times. The dog may be in an x-pen, crated, leashed or physically restrained in some manner.
4. Members will be expected to stay and tear down the equipment and not leave early.
5. Each handler/team is allowed to run up to two dogs. A person wanting to run more than two dogs may run two for one turn and then a different pair on the next turn. For example: On the first turn handler A runs dogs B and C. On the next turn handler A may run dogs B and D.
6. Members may use their time as appropriate for their training objective. They may choose to run the course as set or not. Members are encouraged to train their dog at a level appropriate to their dog's experience level; for example, a Masters level course may be too hard for a Novice dog.
7. The PIC has the authority to deny a team the opportunity to practice if the team demonstrates a pattern of poor adherence to these guidelines (for example, by arriving late, unsafe handling, or disruptive or unsportsmanlike conduct).
8. The PIC has the final authority to plan and set the practice course, specify the time allowed for each handler and dog team on course, and to decide if a timer is to be used.
9. Exceptions to these rules include emergencies, illness etc. This policy should be enforced using "common" sense decisions by the PIC. RAT encourages a common sense approach to these Guidelines.

#### Practice Organization.

1. Participants will add their dog's names to the sign-up board.
2. Running order will be by jump height.
3. The next handler team should be on "deck" and ready to run when it is their turn.
4. If a timer is used, the clock will start when the previous team leaves the course or a jump height change has been completed.
5. Please ask in advance if you want assistance, i.e. targets, judges, stewards etc.
6. All participants are expected to help set courses, change bars, straighten chutes etc.
7. In the event of a smaller practice, the PIC may choose to relax these guidelines.

#### Novice Dog Practices.

A PIC may elect to hold a special practice focused on the needs of relatively inexperienced dogs that may not yet be ready for regular practice. The PIC shall identify this practice as a "Baby Dog" or "Novice Dog" practice. Other experienced dogs may attend the practice, but if the practice is over-crowded, the focus shall be on the inexperienced dogs. At these special practices, the RAT member must still meet the minimum requirements for regular practice, but the regular guidelines and organization may be altered. For example, there can be flexibility with the course arrangement; more time can be allotted per dog; target plates, toys and other aids can be placed on the course; or other concessions can be made as the PIC sees fit.

#### Guest Policy.

1. Guests may participate with another handler, who is a qualified RAT member, for a fee of \$5.00.
2. The PIC of that practice should be notified, in advance, of any guest who will be attending.
3. Guests and their dogs will be held to the same minimum requirements, responsibilities, and guidelines as members.