



**NEW SOUTH WALES YARD DOG
ASSOCIATION INC.**

UTILITY TRIAL RULES

WITH ALL AMENDMENTS TO:
17 JULY 2024

UTILITY TRIAL RULES

The following should be read in conjunction with the NSWYDA Competition Rules and Resolutions ("CRR").

The numbers used in these Rules will correspond with the section at the same number in the CRR.

1. Definitions shall remain the same with the word "yard" replaced with "yard and utility". In 1.1 the phrase "...confined within permanent or temporary sheep yards...." to be changed to "...confined within a specified area....".
2. The competition levels and the progression through the competition levels, to be the same as the CRR. However, the status of a dog in Yard Trials is to be completely independent of that dog's status as a utility dog and vice versa. The same will apply to handler status. This also applies to 3 sheep trial status which is totally separate.
With the exception of the Nursery Section of Utility Trials. The Nursery section is a totally different trial designed for raw beginners that have not won any form of dog trial with more lenient rules which will be explained later.
3. Classes of Dog will apply to utility dogs as it applies to yard dogs. The wording of the four (4) classes to be changed to reflect utility dogs.
4. The Clauses relating to the running of Finals in Yard Trials shall apply to Utility Trials.
5. The Clauses relating to the draw in Yard Trials shall apply to Utility Trials.
6. Clause 6.2 to be modified to contain two (2) sections as follows:-
 - 6.2.1 Yard section must include the following as a minimum:-
 - (a) Gather of sheep.
 - (b) Drenching / classing race.
 - (c) Drafting race.
But may also include any of the following:-
 - (d) Trailer / truck.
 - (e) Ramp.
 - (f) Fill a wool shed.
 - (g) Put sheep away.
 - (h) Any obstacle likely to be found in farm yards.
 - 6.2.2 Outside field section must include any two (2) of the following "arena type" obstacles for Nursery, Novice events, and any three (3) for Improver and Open Trials:-
 - (a) Winding peg.
 - (b) Gap.
 - (c) Race.
 - (d) Bridge.
 - (e) Pen.
 - (f) Any obstacle likely to be found in a paddock situation on a livestock property.

Obstacles are to be separate and free standing from the yard section. A minimum distance of 20 meters between all obstacles is required.

The remaining Clauses in Section 6 to apply with the exception of 6.3 and 6.4, which should refer to the "course" instead of the "yards".

7. Section 7 regarding time limits to apply once modified to read "CC15 minutes....", instead of "...10 minutes...". This can also be changed if the organizing committee feel that a different time is more suitable to their course & the class of competition.
8. Section 8 regarding bitches in oestrus to apply.
9. Section 9 regarding canes to apply.
10. Section 10 regarding muzzles to apply.
11. Section 11 regarding worker's assistants to apply.
12. Section 12 regarding scoring to apply with the following additions: -
 - 12.3.2 There is no limit to the number of points that may be lost on any one section of the Trial.
 - 12.8 Include "utility" in place of "yard".
13. Throughout Section 13, the term "yards" to be replaced with "course".
 - 13.3.9 To include in addition "In Utility Trials, dogs crossing whilst attempting the outside obstacles may be disqualified at the Judge's discretion. The Judge must notify handlers prior to the beginning of the Trial if crossing outside will result in disqualification". Some committees will allow a cross on the cast with a loss of 20 points mainly for the Novice. There is a rule where the judge has discretion which states that if a dog is forcing in the proper manner at an obstacle & the sheep break back over the dog creating a cross this situation will not result in disqualification, Points loss only.
Nursery section no disqualification for crosses, See Nursery rules later.
 - 13.4.3 To include in addition "...The position to be taken by the handler whilst negotiating the outside obstacles will be marked and referred to as the 'set'".
 - 13.4.4 To include "...the line of the gate or in utility Trials, all sheep through or over the obstacle....".

To include as Clause 13.10:-

"Each competitor be provided with a minimum of three (3) sheep for the outside section of the course and a minimum of (10) sheep for the yard section of the course."

14. Section 14 regarding animal welfare to apply.
15. Section 15 regarding re-runs to apply.

16. Section 16 regarding protests to apply.
17. Section 17 regarding complaints to apply.
18. Section 18 regarding Championships to apply once wording has been modified to reflect Utility Trials.

These rules were written as a guide for anyone that wishes to run a Utility Trial, wants to learn what is required when competing in a Utility Trial, or as a guide for judging a Utility Trial.

Some sections of Utility Trials can be set up differently if the committee decide that the different set up suits their situation especially if there is already a permanent yard already set up (6.2.1, 6.2.2).

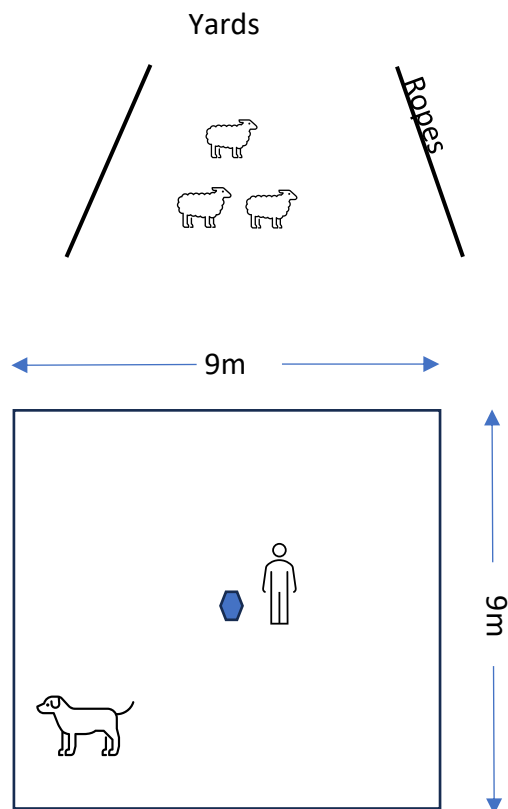
There should be a yard set up at the opposite end of the field to the yard section with a set up that allows yard assistants to easily let sheep out. The number of sheep to be worked in the field work can be three or five depending on the availability of sheep. Sheep are only to be worked once throughout the duration of the trial, except in the nursery section.

TO COMMENCE THE TRIAL the judge will signal the sheep to be released by the yard assistants. There should be two ropes extending from the let out gate and pegged to the ground at the end. These are to be used to move the sheep twenty meters away from the gate in order for the dog to safely cast around the sheep.

Once the judge is satisfied that the sheep are settled they should call for the bell to be rung to signal the start of time. The generalised time allocation for all classes is fifteen minutes. This can be varied at the discretion of the committee.

THE HANDLER should present themselves at the casting peg in the field section with their dog released off the lead. The casting peg is situated in the center of the delivery square or circle which is 9 meters across.

Some committees will allow the delivery square or circle to be a free working area where the handler can move around inside the delivery area until the delivery is complete OR an alternate delivery area can be a gap marked with two tall pegs (iron posts) nine meters apart and the handler stands at the right-hand peg, this is their casting peg. The sheep need to be delivered through the gap before heading to the yards.



The dog is positioned behind the handler in preparation of the signal from the judge for the trial to begin. If the dog leaves on his cast before the judge signals time on and cannot be recalled, disqualification will be called for.

Once the bell is sounded for the start the dog is sent out on their cast. Dogs can cast either to left or right.

The judge is looking for a good cast for a maximum of ten points

Stopping $\frac{1}{2}$ of the way on the cast: 5 penalty points

Stopping $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way on the cast: 3 penalty points

Handler stopping the dog on the cast to avoid a cross, then recalling and recasting by the handler: 10 penalty points

A good cast with no loss of points would be the dog casting to the point of balance on the sheep (not necessarily 12 o'clock).

The first movement of the sheep should be towards the handler. A good rule is to always cast your dog to the head of the sheep not to the tail, if the sheep are facing straight down the ground then the dog can be cast either way.

Once the dog has the sheep moving this is called the lift and should be smooth calm for maximum points.

This section is worth a maximum of five points; if the sheep move towards the handler in a calm way then there would be no points off.

The "draw" involves drawing the sheep down an imaginary corridor spanning nine metres.

Each time the sheep move over the edge of the corridor there is a deduction of one point for just over the edge and an additional point for every additional nine metres off course.

If the dog works roughly at any time during the trial which causes the sheep to go off course, the judge could give a double penalty for the dog causing the break.

Once the sheep have moved out of the original corridor and points have been lost, a new corridor is formed. They are then judged on a different corridor and are not meant to be put back on the original corridor.

The sheep need to be delivered into the delivery area with all sheep coming in or through at the same time. They can be some distance apart without being pointed as long as they are in the course boundary when being delivered.

Once delivered, the sheep need to be taken to the yards under control. The sheep should be 'carried' on the handlers right hand side and stay within the nine meter wide corridor and not deviate more than nine meters ahead or behind the handler until they arrive at the gate to the yard section.

THE YARD SECTION IS JUDGED UNDER NSWYDA YARD RULES

Once in the yards, the sheep are mixed with sheep that are already in the yards. All sheep are put through a drench race and then into the draft where the same number of sheep as those brought down the ground need to be drafted off as instructed by the judge, with the small number being drafted into a small yard in preparation for releasing back into the field. This method of taking the same number of sheep out as came in has the effect of changing the sheep in the yard over a period of time.

If any sheep jumps out when working the yard section or releasing from the yard section; the clock should be stopped. The judge can then decide as to whether the dog caused the sheep to jump due to rough work. If the dog caused the jump, the run will be disqualified, however if not, the situation should be rectified before restarting the clock and continuing the run.

When releasing the sheep back into the field the handler needs to take care that when the sheep leave the yard, the dog does not cross between the handler and the sheep, as this would result in disqualification. The handler is permitted to step away from the gate to allow the dog to safely head the sheep without crossing.

Any crossing in the field may result in disqualification depending on the committee decision before the trial commences which must be explained to all competitors at the judges talk before the trial commences.

(With the exception of the Nursery section which will be described later)

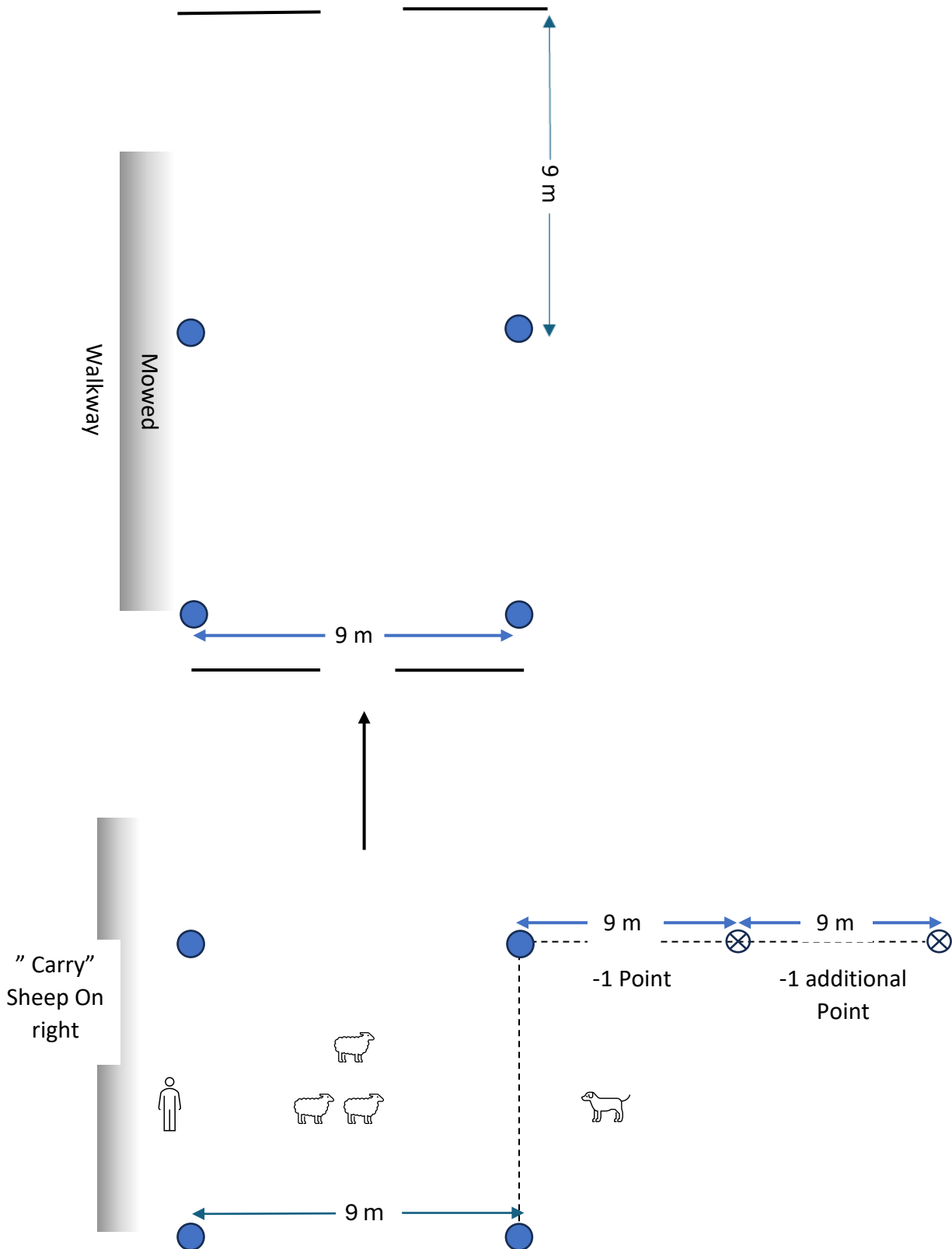
Handlers are not permitted to wave their hands about in any fashion that may influence the sheep however are permitted to use their hands above their shoulder level to direct their dog.

Once outside in the field there will be a nine-meter course marked out with mowed edges along with distance markers spaced at nine meters along the edges.

These markers serve 3 purposes:

- *Let the handler know if they are still on course*
- *Allow the judge to be able to tell if the sheep are on course when standing some distance away so as to not interfere with the running of the dog*

- The markers represent a nine-meter section that the worker is working the walkways of the corridor if the sheep go off course they need to be brought back on course before the handler walks another 9 meters & if this is not done then for every marker that the handler walks past before getting the sheep back on course there is another penalty of one point.
- When the sheep are coming back into the corridor if they cross straight across the corridor & out the other side it is a further one penalty point for every nine meters off course.
- One point will be lost each time the sheep step in and out of the corridor, plus an additional penalty point for every nine meters off course



WORKING THE WALK WAYS: To each outside obstacle the handler needs to walk just inside the marked walkway on the left hand side and carry the sheep on their right hand side within nine metres of himself inside the marked walkway. The handler is permitted to walk backwards for no more than eight steps at a time, facing their dog.

- *Sheep move over the edge of the walkway: 1 penalty point*
- *Every nine meters off course: 1 penalty point*
- *For every additional nine meters the sheep are off course, one additional penalty point will be deducted*
- *The handler must maintain a constant pace between obstacles (no stopping) & for every distance marker that the handler walks past while the sheep are still off course there will be an additional point lost.*

In the event of the sheep going through the obstacle before the handler arrives then they need to step into the set with both feet planted for one second and then is permitted to continue.

When approaching the obstacle, if the sheep go past the obstacle it is a loss of off course points depending on how far they are off course.

Once the handler arrives at the obstacle he needs to stand in the set which is a circle on the ground 1 meter across. Then judging changes to working the obstacle:

- *If Any sheep putting any part of their body past the edge of the obstacle: 1 penalty point*
- *Race and pen: if sheep go halfway along the side of the obstacle: 2 penalty points*
- *Any sheep completely past any obstacle: 3 penalty points*
- *For every nine-meter deviation that the sheep progresses past the obstacle, one additional penalty point will be taken*

Handlers are allowed to turn around in the set to work the dog but cannot step out of the set until the obstacle is completed. If the handler steps out of the set before the sheep are clear of the end of the obstacle it will result in disqualification.

When working the obstacle and the sheep run through the obstacle and go off course before the dog has a chance to hold them then the handler has the option of staying in the set until the sheep are worked back on course without loss of points unless something goes wrong in bringing them back on course before moving on. If the judge considers the dog has been slow to react and catch the sheep there could be a penalty for off course.

WORKING THE PEN. When the sheep go into the pen and all cross the line of the closed gate, the handler is then allowed to move and close the gate for the completion of the trial. If the sheep happen to go into the pen before the handler arrives at the set then they should step into the set with both feet planted for one second and then continue on.

- *For maximum points the dog should move to a position of blocking the remaining gap as the gate is being closed by the handler*
- *In the event of sheep coming out of the pen once the handler has started to close the gate, the handler must continue to close the gate with their hand on the gate at all times or they will be disqualified*
- *With the pen being valued at 20 points, if the sheep go in the pen but then escape out of the pen as the gate is being closed: 20 penalty points*
 - o *plus there would be an additional three penalty points for the dog allowing the sheep to escape from the pen*

All handlers begin with 100 points and can only lose points, not gain points.

Other ways a handler can lose points is by doing what is referred to as “Camping” which is when the sheep are being difficult & scores are fairly low some handlers will not attempt to finish the course they use stalling tactics not asking their dog to try to complete the course. If this becomes obvious to the judge, he can deduct points according to how blatant the lack of movement by the dog is. In the case of sitting the dog & waiting for time to elapse a penalty of 1 point for every 10 seconds of no action could be taken. This also applies when sheep have challenged a dog & the dog lacks the strength to move the sheep & only dances around at a distance achieving nothing.

Points allocated to the obstacles:

The full value of any obstacle not completed is deducted from the final score:

- Gap: 7 points
- Race: 8 points
- Pen: 20 points

In the event of someone else’s dog interferes with any run the judge can issue a re-run at the end of that round or the end of the next round.

If the handlers other dog comes on the course and interferes with the run then that handlers run is disqualified.

The judge can end a run at any time if he thinks it is in the interest of taking care of the sheep or dog. The handler can call a halt if any sheep is seen to be in poor health once inspected in the delivery area. It is then up to the judge to issue a re-run.

Serious biting can also be a disqualification at the discretion of the judge.

A run can be called off at any time if the judge thinks a thunder storm could put people in danger and that run given a re-run when the weather clears.

In very hot conditions there should be a water bath available for the dog at the end of the run just off the course to prevent overheating.

There are four classes in NSW Utility trials:

1. NURSERY is a trial designed especially for beginners. To be eligible to compete in the Nursery class handlers must "NOT" have won a Novice or above in ANY FORM of sheep dog trial.
Nursery workers are only permitted to win ONE Nursery Trial
The Nursery section is judged more leniently with no disqualification for crossing & the cast can be shortened & the obstacles can be widened to make them easier so as to encourage beginners.
If a nursery worker steps out of a set to soon rather than disqualification it would be best if the judge asked the worker to go back to where they should be.
If the nursery run gets totally out of control then the judge should ask the worker to retire gracefully. **This applies to any section.**
2. NOVICE UTILITY dog is a dog that has not won a novice Utility Trial.
3. IMPROVER UTILITY is a dog that has won one Novice Utility Trial
4. OPEN UTILITY dog is a dog that has won an Improver or Open Utility Trial

Dogs can be entered up in class if the committee allows.

A DOG'S NOVICE IMPROVER OR OPEN UTILITY STATUS IS NOT AFFECTED BY ANY OTHER FORM OF DOG TRIAL.

THE NURSERY IS THE ONLY CLASS THAT HAS RESTRICTIONS ON OTHER FORMS OF TRIALS.