

# Milwaukee Dog Training Club – Flyball Team Guidelines

## Team and Tournament Philosophy

**Who We Are** – Milwaukee Dog's Flyball (MDF) is a division of Milwaukee Dog Training Club. All standard dog and handler requirements held by MDTC apply to its flyball division. MDF is led by volunteer instructors whose leadership is supported by guidelines designed specifically for the sport of flyball. In addition, team captains guide the team at tournaments, and team members fill volunteer positions in order to balance the numerous demands of maintaining a competitive flyball team. Family and friends of MDF members are welcome to assist at all training sessions and tournaments.

**Our Team Philosophy** – Our philosophy is to have fun while training our dogs in the sport of flyball. In order to achieve this goal, several core objectives have been set. First, our top priority is the health and welfare of each dog. Handlers will not be asked or allowed to run a dog whose health or safety is in question (i.e. lameness, illness, age, aggressiveness). Second, negative reinforcement will not be tolerated, as positive training techniques are the only methods appropriate for the sport of flyball. And third, we recognize and appreciate that flyball is a team sport; therefore, central to our philosophy is a commitment to fairness and equity. Members are encouraged to participate consistently with regard to practice attendance and assistance, administrative and maintenance duties, and participation in and assistance during tournaments. Instructors and team captains will strive for fairness and balance in their practices, in deciding team line-ups, and in all other decisions made in the name of the MDF. Major issues will be brought to the team for a vote.

**Our Tournament Goals** - MDF's primary tournament goal is to have fun while running all eligible and available dogs equally on teams constructed specifically to run under 24 seconds. This type of team construction enables each dog to achieve individual NAFA points no matter the team's placement. Secondly, an effort will be made to create teams that are competitive within a challenging division. These teams will rarely be constructed solely to break race records or run in top divisions, as such an approach often runs counter to the team philosophy above. It is the team captain's responsibility to construct a balanced line-up giving each dog ample running time and giving the team its best chance to perform well. It is each team member's responsibility to support the decisions of the team captain and address any concerns after the tournament. MDF's practices will focus on achieving the kind of consistency and good technique that enables team success at tournaments.

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## Membership Levels

### **Beginner Level** – 3 months estimated training time

#### **Goals**

1. Teach new dogs and handlers the basic individual elements of flyball
2. Prepare dogs to move into the intermediate level

#### **Requirements for new dogs** - The dog must:

1. Allow persons other than handler to approach/work with them
2. Have basic obedience skills – sit, stay, recall
3. Have a balanced temperament (Note: aggressive behavior is not always dangerous behavior - instructors will determine if a dog's behavior is unsuitable for the sport of flyball)
4. Have vaccinations completed per Milwaukee Dog Training Club rules

#### **Expectations of new handlers** – The handler must:

1. Make an effort to attend all classes
2. Notify instructors prior to class of any planned absences
3. Clean up after dog
4. Assist other members and team during practice sessions. This will require dogs to be crated or otherwise restrained when not training
5. Be willing to work on new skills at home outside of scheduled practices
6. Have all membership fees paid on time

#### **Learning Objectives** – Dog will learn such individual skills as:

1. Performing recall over 4 jumps in a row, learning progressively one jump at a time
2. Turn using a cone and “wrap” command
3. Retrieve the ball from a flat
4. Performing a “box turn” on either a slant board or flyball box
5. Tugging games to increase drive/relationship with handler
6. Drive toward handler/toy
7. Perform recalls passing other dogs at a substantial distance

### **Intermediate Level** – 3 months estimated training time

#### **Goals**

1. Teach dogs to link each flyball element into full runs
2. Prepare dogs to move up to advanced level

#### **Requirements for Intermediate Level Dogs** – The dog must:

1. Have completed beginning level objectives
2. Show enthusiasm for flyball and have growing signs of strong drive and ability to focus

#### **Expectations of Intermediate Level Handlers** – The handler must:

1. Show continuing interest and consistent level of participation
2. Attend a tournament(s) to assist the team
3. Continue to follow all Beginner Level Handler requirements

#### **Learning Objectives** – The dog will learn to link the following elements:

1. Leave handler at start line showing strong drive

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2. Take 4 jumps toward the box and prepare for box turn
3. Retrieve ball from slant board while performing an adequate box turn
4. Return over the 4 jumps after retrieving ball
5. Carry ball over finish line
6. Return to handler with toy/reward
7. Dog will be able to perform 1/2 runs repeatedly with little or no distraction
8. Dog will begin passing other dogs at incremental distances

### **Advanced Level** – 3 months estimated training time

#### **Goals**

1. To teach dog to use intermediate skills with high distraction and along with racing team
2. To improve dog's accuracy and consistency, improve speed, problem-solve
3. To "proof" dog for tournament readiness
4. Integrate new dogs into team training time

#### **Requirements for Advanced Level Dogs** – Dogs must:

1. Have completed Intermediate Level objectives
2. Show the ability to perform full runs individually with some distraction tolerance

#### **Expectations of Advanced Level Handlers** – Handlers must:

1. Attend tournament with dog to practice runbacks, single dog racing, trial runs
2. Participate in at least one "mock" tournament or "scrimmage" if available
3. Continue to adhere to all Beginner and Intermediate Level requirements

#### **Learning Objectives** – Dog will learn to:

1. Perform full runs
2. Pass other dogs at both start and finish
3. Return to owner with drive while being passed and amidst other distractions
4. Re-run after a fault
5. Run against dogs in another lane
6. Perform all skills with distractions such as loose dogs, rolling tennis balls, etc.
7. Perform skills in high repetition
8. Show ability to perform well in tournament or tournament-like setting

### **Racing/Tournament Level** –

#### **Goals**

1. To continue to improve dog's and handler's flyball skills
2. To race in tournaments as a contributing member of the team

#### **Requirements of Racing Dogs** – Dogs must:

1. Have completed Advanced level objectives
2. Have been asked by instructors or team captain to be active on racing team
3. Be able to race safely and consistently

#### **Expectations of Handlers of Racing Dogs** – Handler must:

1. Continue to adhere to all previous handler expectations
2. Attend the 2 practices immediately preceding a tournament. Any absence must be approved by the team captain
3. Attend/race in at least 1 non-local tournament (drive time over 2.5 hours) per season or will be considered as team "alternate" for local or limited tournaments during that season.

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**Learning Objectives** – The dog will be:

1. Gradually introduced to tournament team racing by running designated heats
2. Retrained if any skills are lost during the introduction into racing

## Other Considerations for Racing/Tournament Level

### 1. Racing Line-ups

- A. Racing line-ups for unlimited tournaments will be determined in the following process:
1. A list of tournaments within 6 hours of Milwaukee will be maintained
  2. As the entry date for each tournament approaches, all handlers and dogs who are available to attend will sign-up
  3. If there are enough handlers and dogs available to send a team(s), MDF will:
    - a. Choose a team captain to manage the tournament
    - b. The team captain will determine a goal for the tournament based on available dogs.
    - c. If there are as many roster spots as dogs available, the team captain will construct a line-up based on the tournament goal, each dog's abilities, and each handler's goals.
    - d. If there are more dogs available than there are roster spots, an effort will be made to arrange a compromise to include each dog to run part-time at the least. If a compromise cannot be arranged, the team captain may use the following performance criteria to choose a line-up:
      1. Dog's consistency (speed is not an issue)
      2. Practice attendance and assistance
      3. Tournament assistance
      4. Tournament travel
- B. Limited tournaments: Handlers are encouraged to race 1 day only at limited tournaments (if number of available dogs exceeds available racing spots) and to attend the tournament the following day to assist. Handlers with multiple dogs will be allowed to run only 1 dog at limited tournaments if roster spot are filled.

### 2. Leave of Absence

- A. Personal leave – A leave of absence from practice and tournament racing may be taken without Racing/Tournament Level status revoked. Upon returning to practice and competition, however, the absence will be taken into consideration for tournament line-up eligibility for 2 months following absence.
- B. Training leave – A leave of absence from tournament racing to deal with training issues may be taken without having Racing/Tournament Level status revoked. This type of absence requires the handler and dog to continue to attend practices regularly, and will not affect consideration for tournament eligibility when returning to racing.

### 3. Disciplinary Action

- A. Removal From Competition Eligibility PRIOR to Tournament –
- The Team Captain and Director of Training for Flyball has the authority to remove a dog and handler from an upcoming tournament line-up if one of the following occurs:
1. If dog and handler fail to attend the 2 practices immediately leading up to a tournament without team captain's prior approval or emergency
  2. If the health of the dog (lameness, contraction of a contagious disease, etc.) is in question.

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3. If aggressive behavior of the dog in practice or competition leading up to the tournament shows inadequate handler control over dog and may endanger other dogs, handlers or spectators

**B. Removal From Racing Line-up DURING tournaments**

The Team Captain has the authority to remove a dog and handler from a tournament line-up during the tournament if one of the following occurs:

1. Late and disruptive arrival
2. Dog lacks consistency or is making repeated errors
3. Handler is making repeated errors which jeopardize team results
4. Unsportsman-like behavior on the part of the handler
5. Aggressive behavior by the dog

**C. Removal from Racing Consideration**

The Director of Training for Flyball and the Instructors have the authority to rescind a dog and handler Racing/Tournament Level status if one of the following occurs:

1. Reoccurring consistency or issues with dog's performance detrimental to team
2. Dog and handler are not consistently attending practices
3. Handler is not consistently helping at tournaments and practices

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## Volunteer Positions

**Tournament Team Captain(s) – TCC** - Team captain will be determined once the club has made a commitment to participate in a particular tournament and the participating members have signed up. The team captain is then responsible for preparing his/her team for the upcoming tournament by working with the practice coordinator. Duties include:

1. Determine team composition for each tournament
2. Determine seedtime for each tournament (in conjunction with team statistician)
3. Identify and assign “jobs” for each day of tournament
4. Fill out racing forms on each day of tournament
5. Attend captain’s meeting on each day of tournament
6. Determine running order for each heat of a tournament
7. Interact with Tournament Director and/or Tournament Judges as needed at tournament

**Equipment Manager – EM** - Duties include:

1. Keep an accurate inventory of flyball equipment
2. Arrange for other team members to store or tote equipment between practices
3. Research and make recommendations on new/replacement needs
4. Coordinate purchase/building of new/replacement equipment

**Team Practice Coordinator (Director of Training for Flyball)–TPC-** Duties include:

1. During tournament season, TPC will work with TTC to map out a practice strategy so that the racing teams receive adequate time working together
2. Schedule adequate time to work on improving each dog’s performance
3. Research and implement new training techniques
4. Keep practice at a fast pace so dogs receive adequate conditioning
5. Coordinates team practice schedule in coordination with the beginning class instructor
6. Seek alternate times and locations for practice when needed (indoors during the outdoor season, unavailability of indoor facility, etc.)
7. Arrange to have someone “call” practice during the outdoor season when the weather is not conducive to practice and to communicate this to all team members
8. TPC (or their designee from Point #7) is the only person eligible to cancel practice – all cancellation recommendations must be made through the PSC.
9. Coordinates with MDTC’s Director of Training

**Class Instructor(s) – CI** - Duties include:

1. Coordinates sign up of new flyball class participants
2. Coordinate schedule of new flyball classes
3. Teaches basic, intermediate & advanced flyball class
4. Researches and implements new training methods
5. Arranges for support/assistance from team members for new classes
6. Evaluates dogs for level advancement eligibility

**Tournament Coordinator – TC** - Duties include:

1. Monitor NAFA Website for posting of tournaments in our “area” and communicates this on a regular basis
2. Surveys club for willing participants for each tournament
3. Maintain sign-up sheet
4. Officially sign team up for tournaments with host club. This typically involves providing team names, dog roster and seed times and sending payment prior to tournament closing date
5. Receives “welcome letter”, seed listing and race schedule from host team approx. 1 week prior to tournament

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6. Sends out pertinent information to team members (welcome letter, directions, etc.)
7. Provides Racing Time Sheets (unofficial) to Team Captain for each day of a tournament

### **Tournament Accommodations & Travel Coordinator – TATC** – Duties include:

1. Research drive time, directions, etc. for tournaments
2. Camping – Researches camping possibilities in the area of each tournament and makes reservations (coordinates with team members wishing to camp)
3. Hotel – Researches non-camping lodging possibilities in the area of each tournament and makes reservations (coordinates with team members needing a room)
4. Dining – Researches suggested dining establishments in the vicinity of tournament/accommodations for each tournament

### **Team Treasurer – TT** – Duties include:

1. Provides a check for full payment of tournament fees to the Tournament Coordinator in plenty of time to allow mailing of fees prior to tournament closing date
2. Determines the number of heats run by each dog in a tournament (data may be provided by statistician)
3. Communicates to team members how much money they owe for each tournament
4. Work with EM to purchase new equipment
5. Manage money issues for seminars, practice locations, other fees.

### **Team Secretary and Statistician – TSS** – Duties include:

1. Average and Fastest Time for each dog (including jump height)
2. Average and Fastest Time for each team combination (including jump height)
3. Make data available to all team members (priority to TTC)
4. Assist TTC with determination of seed times for tournaments
5. Summarize results of each tournament and send to team members, Obedience Views Editor and Website Manager
6. Send a thank you note via the flyball e-mail list to the host club after each tournament the club participates in
7. Maintain club guidelines

### **Website Maintenance – WM** – Duties include:

Provide information on the team to the Milwaukee Dog Training Club's Website Manager including but not limited to: tournament results, new classes, info on team dogs and their handlers, area events such as demonstrations, hosting of tournaments and seminars, etc.

**Club Owner:** On record with NAFA as "Club Owner". Occasional correspondence (NAFA Certificates, etc.) will be received in the mail and must be distributed to team members as appropriate. Assignment of this responsibility should not change on an annual basis as this puts an unnecessary burden on the NAFA organization

**Club NAFA Delegate(s)** – Each club is assigned NAFA delegates annually based on the number of tournament participated in and hosted. So, the number of delegates may change from year to year. Delegates represent the team in NAFA voting.