

# FEDERATION CYNOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE (AISBL)

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## FCI REGULATIONS FOR FLYBALL COMPETITION



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## **Article I. GENERAL**

### ***Section 1.01 Validity***

- (a) These regulations were approved by the FCI General Committee in Zagreb on 13/11/2015
- (b) The regulations were written in English. In case of uncertainty, the English text takes precedence over other translations.

### ***Section 1.02 General***

- (a) Flyball is a discipline in which 2 teams compete against each other in a relay race. Each team consists of 4 combinations dog/handler, with 2 possible substitute combinations. Each race the two teams are competing against each other where each dog has to run over the four hurdles without help, trigger the ball from the flyball box and return with the ball over the same four hurdles. If the dog makes a mistake, he has to re-run. The team of which the four dogs have run the whole circuit without making any mistake is the winner of that heat.
- (b) This discipline is open to all dogs and promotes, in a playful way, the relationship between dog and handler. Most important aspects are the speed, the playfulness and the fetching of the ball, with an accent on safety and the prevention of injuries.
- (c) The National Canine Organisations (NCO) are asked to encourage the practicing of flyball in the spirit of and according to the regulations of the FCI. The main purpose of the FCI rules is to set a standard for international competition and should be used to standardize international FCI events, international judging guidelines and equipment standards. NCOs should use them as a basis for developing their own rules and regulations differing only to accommodate local needs.

### ***Section 1.03 Definitions***

- (a) Competition: An event where clubs and teams compete, using agreed rules, format and regulations
- (b) Competition part: A competition can be split in various parts such as morning and afternoon, preliminary round and final round, etc. There is a clearly defined number of races.
- (c) Race: Each time when two teams have to race against each other, there is a new race. It starts when the previous team has left the field and ends when the running teams leave the field.
- (d) Heat: Each race consists of a number of heats. A heat is one session where the four dogs run from the start until the judge blows the final whistle. If a heat has to be run again, the two runs will be considered as one heat.
- (e) Ring: The area in which flyball racing occurs. This area includes the racing lanes, from the backstop boards to the start/finish lines, the start/exit zone and the required clearances beside the racing lanes and the start/exit zone.
- (f) Breakout: when a team, during competition, runs faster than the fastest allowed time for the division in which it is competing.
- (g) Electronic Judging System (EJS): System that is used for judging the competition (see full description annex 4)

### **Section 1.04 General criteria**

- (a) For each ring at which competitions will take place, at least one head judge appointed by the organizing association has to act.
- (b) Only head judges appointed by a NCO are eligible to serve as official jury.
- (c) The head judges decide autonomously in the division(s) for which its competence applies. They always take their decisions in function of the valid regulations. Any matter not provided for will be solved in the spirit of the instructions and regulations.
- (d) Each head judge will be completed with at least 2 line judges and 2 box judges per ring.

### **Section 1.05 Preparation of the field**

- (a) A complete racing lane from start to flyball box measures 15.55 meters. (The dimensions were originally prepared in inches and have been converted to the metric system to 2 decimals.) - see annex 1
- (b) The distance from the start to the first hurdle is 1.83 meters. Between two consecutive hurdles, the distance is 3.05 meters. The distance from the last hurdle to flyball box is 4.57 meters.
- (c) When setting up the ring, the two lanes have to be at the exact same length and they have to be prepared parallel to each other. The distance between the two lanes is 5 meters (with a max. deviation of 1 meter) from centre to centre of each lane.
- (d) The surface has to be safe and not sliding, and may by no means be a rough surface. If the surface is not on grass or sand, the organizer should always ensure mats.
- (e) In front of the track, there is a start/exit zone which has to be at least 15.55 meters long. The distances from the starting line will be marked in a safe and clear manner.
- (f) Behind every flyball box an area should be defined, with backstop boards of at least 60 cm high, from the box line to at least 1.52 meters behind the flyball box. During the race there should be no material on the ground in this area between the flyball box and the backstop boards. Those panels will be positioned to avoid that missed balls would roll too far, but so that the proper observation of the members of the jury and the box judges won't be disturbed.

### **Section 1.06 Start permissions and exemption of jump height**

- (a) Jump height, which has been granted by an NCO according to the FCI rules, will be accepted at international competition. However, the head judge may at any time re-measure a dog. If a dog is re-measured and the height obtained is different from the original height, the team will be required to continue the tournament at the re-measured height.
- (b) By entering a tournament the owner of the dog declares that the dog is in good health and condition and is able to take part in flyball competition.
- (c) For international competition the jump height will be determined as follows. Of the forearm, the length of the ulna will be measured from the elbow to the pisiform bone, the bony protrusion just above the stop or carpal pad (see Annex 3) with the foot at an angle of 90°. Dogs requiring a jump height lower than 35 cm shall be measured by at least two independent judges at the same jump height before being granted a final jump height. During measurement, only one handler per dog is allowed in the measuring area.  
If a dog cannot be measured by the measuring judge, the dog will jump the maximum height of 35 cm during the tournament.  
The jump height is determined by the length of the leg according to next following table. Ulna length that equals exactly the limit results in the lower jump height, e.g. ulna length of 12.5 results in jump height of 22.5 cm, but ulna length of 12.6 cm results in jump height of 25.0 cm.

ULNA LENGTH	JUMP HEIGHT
10.00 cm --	17.5 cm
11.25 cm --	20.0 cm
12.50 cm --	22.5 cm
13.75 cm --	25.0 cm
15.00 cm --	27.5 cm
16.25 cm --	30.0 cm
17.50 cm --	32.5 cm
	35.0 cm

### ***Section 1.07 Participation***

- (a) Participating dogs have to be at least 15 months old on the day of the competition. Each dog must be chipped or have a tattoo.
- (b) It is assumed that all dogs and handlers have been trained in a proper way, so that they are able to finish a flyball competition in a safe manner.
- (c) Each handler is supposed to behave properly. Insolent behaviour towards the dog or persons will result in an immediate disqualification by the head judge and possible further sanctions.
- (d) If a dog shows undue aggression toward another dog or handler at any time during the competition, the head judge will exclude the dog from the competition.
- (e) Bitches in heat are not allowed in or around the site of a flyball competition.

### ***Section 1.08 Registration for competition***

- (a) All registrations have to arrive in a written form at the organizing club before closing date. The organizing club will send a confirmation to each team with the last instructions and information about all participating teams and breakout times.
- (b) The registration fee will be freely set by the rules of the organizing country, but will be clearly mentioned on the registration forms.
- (c) When a team signs up, it is obliged to pay the registration fee. Registration is only valid if the payment is completed.
- (d) Upon registration, each team has to give a reference time. This reference time will be taken as base for the division-classification.

### ***Section 1.09 Division - classification***

- (a) The teams will be divided in divisions by the secretary of the competition, based on the submitted reference times.
- (b) The secretariat of the competition will try to ensure that equivalent teams will run against each other in the divisions.

### **Section 1.10 Composition and statement of team**

- (a) A full team consists, at registration, out of maximum six dogs with their handlers, a coach and a box loader.
- (b) Per race, a team consists out of four dogs and their handlers. Reserve dogs, if any, have to stand outside the ring.
- (c) The composition of the team of four dogs that will run the race has to be given to the line judge before the start of the first heat.
- (d) In case of substitutions, the new composition of the team has to be given to the line judge. When the information is not given in time, the heat will be lost automatically.  
After a false start, it is not allowed to substitute dogs. The only exception is when a dog is injured. Then it is allowed to change this dog, but in this case this dog is no longer allowed to compete during the competition.

### **Section 1.11 Jump Height**

- (a) The jump height of the whole team is determined by the smallest dog that effectively participates in the heat, measured according to the instructions in Section 1.06 (c) of these regulations.
- (b) The minimum jump height is 17.5 cm and the maximum jump height is 35 cm. The total height of the jump includes an eventual protective layer. When checking the hurdles, they should always be placed on a flat surface. A margin of 0.5 cm is allowed.
- (c) It is the responsibility of the team to set the correct height of the hurdles.

### **Section 1.12 FCI World Record**

- (a) The FCI world record is the fastest time run by a team that was officially recognized by the NCO concerned during an official tournament recognized by an NCO.
- (b) In order for a record to be approved, all rules of the FCI flyball should have been respected and the competition should have been judged by a head judge officially recognized by a NCO.
- (c) Immediately after the setting of a new record, the competition should be stopped and the head judge has to check whether all requirements according to the FCI world record form have been respected. The "World Record" form (annex 5) has to be sent to the NCO for the attention of the president of the FCI Flyball commission.  
The record will be recognized after acceptance by the FCI Flyball commission.  
If the checks have not been executed correctly, the record shall not be approved.

## **Article II. ORGANISATION OF COMPETITION**

### **Section 2.01 Duties of the organizer**

An international flyball competition can only be organized by a club that is recognized by its NCO. Each organizer has to:

- (a) have an area that is suitable to organize a flyball competition. The field has to be in a proper condition so that there is no danger of injuries for dogs and handlers.  
Each ring has to be marked by a fence. It is not allowed to have a fence between the two lanes.
- (b) appoint a person who takes the final responsibility for the organisation of the entire competition. The main function of this person is to check whether all regulations are being observed before, during and after the competition. She also has to be available during the entire competition for the secretary and the judges.
- (c) establish a time sheet, which ensures an acceptable schedule.

- (d) invite the judges according to the national guidelines.
- (e) invite the necessary ring staff and make sure that these people are present.
- (f) assign at least one secretary for the secretary work.

### **Section 2.02 Duties of the head judge**

- (a) Before the competition starts the head judge will, possibly assisted by the responsible person of the organisation, check the preparation of the field on possible irregularities. They also check the obstacles and placement of EJS.
- (b) The head judges, assigned by the organiser, will carry out the measurement of the dogs which do not have an agreed jump height according to the measurement rules listed in Section 1.06.
- (c) The head judge takes his position on the side of the start area, between the two lanes. He takes position so that he can see most of the race without hindering the handlers or the dogs.
- (d) After the end of the heat, the judge indicates the winning team with a clear sign. When there is doubt he consults the line judges and takes his decision afterwards.  
Video shall not be used to replace the judge or help determine the winner of a heat.

### **Section 2.03 Duties of the line judges**

- (a) The line judges are positioned at each team's start line, facing each other. They have to take care of the timing, determining the finishing order and indicating which dogs have to re-run. They are only responsible for their own lane.
- (b) If the line judge does not agree with the indication of the winner by the head judge, he has to communicate this immediately in a discrete manner to the head judge who will make a final decision. The line judge notes the time, the winner, loser or tie on the score paper. If the team runs faster than the breakout time, the time will be noted but BO (Breakout) will clearly be mentioned on the form.
- (c) The line judge or box judge gives a clear signal when a dog has to re-run because of a mistake. It is up to the handler to notice this signal and to make sure that that his dog re-runs the course. When a team has completed a race, the head judge can stop the re-running of the other team.
- (d) Possible mistakes which can to re-run:
  - (i) The first dog may not cross the start line before the time measurement starts.
  - (ii) Early pass. Only after the first dog has reached the start/finish line with any part of its body, the next dog is allowed to cross the start/finish line with any part of its body.
  - (iii) Missed hurdles.
  - (iv) If the dog returns without a ball in its mouth when he reaches the finish line.
  - (v) When the handler or their object crosses the start/finish line during the dogs run with the exception of resetting a knocked down jumps or retrieving lost balls.  
Not returning with the ball over each jump in succession.
- (e) Time measurement
  - (i) To operate the EJS for the assigned lane.
  - (ii) Visual control of the running dogs and passes, in the event of disputed results of the EJS or when there are mistakes which are not detectable by the EJS.

### **Section 2.04 Duties of the box judges:**

- (a) Each team has to provide a box judge for the next race who is well-informed of the flyball rules.
- (b) The box judges have to check that the dog or the box loader makes no mistakes between the last jump and the flyball box.
- (c) When they notice a mistake, they will signal this by raising the flag.
- (d) Possible mistakes are: wrong posture, if the dog does not trigger the flyball box, too late loading of the flyball box, etc.

## **Section 2.05 General competition rules**

- (a) Warm-up and reporting
  - (i) The organiser determines the maximum time for warming-up and building of each team. This time period starts from the moment the previous teams have left the ring. The organizer will stipulate the maximum time in function of the number of races and the time schedule. As a general rule, 3 minutes are foreseen between each race for building and warming-up but the organizer may set higher or lower times.  
Only dogs listed on the team's time sheet are allowed to warm up.
  - (ii) If after this period, one team is completely ready to start and nobody of the other team has appeared, the team that is ready will automatically be appointed as winner of all heats. However, the winning team must run the minimum number of heats for that race.
  - (iii) When a member of the team has informed the head judge of the reason of delay before the 3 minutes have expired, the head judge can decide to wait a certain time. If the head judge decides to wait for a part of the team, the present members of the team are supposed to prepare everything they can, so that the race can immediately start when the team is complete.
- (b) When a participant (dog or handler) of a team disturbs the other team, this heat will be lost automatically. The head judge can always stop a heat when he finds this necessary and appoint a team as winner. Throwing balls or other toys to motivate the returning dog in a zone less than 15.55 meters (see Section 1.05 e) from the finish line is always disturbing and therefore it is forbidden, both during warm up and during racing. It is also forbidden to take food or squeak toys on the field. Plain water is allowed.
- (c) Start: The start will be given either visual, acoustic, or by a combination of both. Each start will be preceded by minimum two clear signals of each one second. The first dog may not cross the start line with any part of its body before the timing of the race begins. In case of a false start, a second start will be given. Each team has the right to re-start a second time. It is possible that there will be 3 starts. When a team has a second false start, the first dog has to re-run.  
During a double or single elimination, a false start is only allowed once per race (not per heat) and per team.
- (d) Passes: when the next dog crosses the start line, the previous dog must have crossed the finish line with any part of its body.
- (f) Each dog jumps over the four hurdles of its lane, triggers the box and catches the ball out of the box. Then the dog returns over the four hurdles with the ball across the finish line. By any mistake, the dog has to run again until the run is either faultless or until the head judge concludes the run. Dogs that made mistakes have to re-run after the four initial dogs in the sequence of the mistakes.
- (g) During the heat there is only one person allowed as box loader. Except during the warm up, to retrieve a lost ball, or to get a fresh supply of balls to load for the current heat, the box loader must remain in the upright position behind the box, and may give verbal encouragement only, as long as such encouragement does not distract the opposing team. Before the dog jumps over the last hurdle before the box, he has to be in an upright position already with balls out of view. As a courtesy to opposing teams, the box loader is to remain in position until the outcome of the heat is determined by the head judge. If, in the judge's opinion, a box loader has violated any of these rules, their team may lose the heat. In case of a technical failure of the box, the box loader takes place in front of the box. Then the head judge stops the race and checks the box. If the judge finds a technical failure the heat shall be run again. If the box is found to be working, then the heat shall be lost. If the flyball box malfunctions for the second time in the same race, that heat will be considered as lost.

- (h) If a participating dog fouls the ring during a heat, this heat will be lost. If this happens before a heat, the next heat will be lost. When this happens after a race, then the first heat of the next race will be automatically lost.
- (i) When a hurdle is knocked down for any reason whatsoever, the dogs have to clear the hurdle(s) as if it were standing. It is the head judge who will judge the situation for possible safety risk and he decides whether the heat has to be run again. In any case if there is any kind of danger the head judge shall stop the heat and let re-run.
- (j) The division breakout time is always the fastest time in each division, minus 0.5 or 1 sec. When the fastest placing time is equal or smaller than 20", 0.5 sec. will be deducted. When the fastest placing time is higher than 20", 1 sec. will be deducted to appoint the division breakout time. In the fastest division there will be no breakout time. When a team runs faster than the breakout time, the heat will be automatically lost. When this happens three times during the same competition, all the runs from that moment will be declared as lost. However the team may keep on competing in a fair manner, until they are eliminated. (to clarify: the team has been disqualified, but it is allowed to keep running for fun and it loses all following races even if they are faster or when the other team makes mistakes).
- (k) When a team forfeits, the team that has to run against the forfeiting team has to race the minimum of required heats without opponent.
- (l) Within the ring maximum 10 persons may be present per team. From this number only 3 persons may be behind the line judge inside the fence. They may never disturb the line judge and can always be invited to be quiet or to remove themselves. After repeated warning the head judge can declare heats as lost.

## **Article III. KINDS OF COMPETITIONS**

### ***Section 3.01 Round Robin (RR)***

- (a) Each team runs within his own division against each other team. For each win 2 points will be granted, a tie grants 1 point and a loss gives no points. The end winner of the Round Robin is the team with the most points. When two teams have an equal number of points the team with the fastest time wins. If this time is also the same, then the next fastest time etc. will be considered.

### ***Section 3.02 Speed Trial (ST)***

- (a) Each team runs within the division against another team. Typical is that generally one does not end up against all teams. After completion of the necessary heats, the results are established according to the fastest time of each team. In case of equal fastest times, the next fastest time will count.

### ***Section 3.03 Single (SE) or Double elimination (DE)***

- (a) By single elimination the loser will be eliminated and the winner goes to the next round
- (b) By double elimination the loser gets one additional race before being eliminated

### ***Section 3.04 Number of heats***

- (a) At the beginning of the competition the number of heats for each race will be communicated. This number can be changed, if it is necessary for the good progress of the competition, during the competition provided that the captains from all teams gave unanimous approval. Examples of fixed racing formats:
  - (i) 3-heat-race: 3 heats will be run.

- (ii) 5-heat-race: 5 heats will be run.
- (iii) Best of 3: The race will be finished, when 1 team has won 2 heats. It can however be decided to run the 3 heats.
- (iv) Best of 5: The race will be finished, when 1 team has won 3 heats.  
Most of the time, 3, 4 or 5 heats will be run in a Round Robin (RR) or Speed Trial (ST).

## **Article IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE MATERIAL**

### ***Section 4.01 Hurdles***

- (a) The organizer shall provide one set of 4 hurdles in perfect state for each racing lane and also the necessary spare hurdles. The 2 sets must have a different colour (preferably red and blue) the inside of all hurdles must be white.
- (b) Each hurdle has an inside width of 61 cm (with a maximum deviation of 1 centimetre) and its stanchions are not higher than 90 cm and not lower than 60 cm.
- (c) The hurdles have to be made out of a material where the risk of injuries will be reduced to a minimum. At the top of each hurdle, a soft layer could be fixed to protect the dogs.
- (d) All hurdles are adjustable by 2,5 cm, with a minimum height of 17.5 cm and a maximum height of 35 cm.

### ***Section 4.02 Flyball box*** (see annex 2)

- (a) Each team has to provide its own flyball box. It has to be in a perfect state and it must be safe for use. The flyball box must meet the following specifications:
  - (i) The box has to be equipped with an exclusively mechanical release mechanism. When the mechanism is triggered, the ball must have a free unobstructed flight of not less than 60 cm from the point where the ball is released (box cup) in the direction of the start line from all available holes.
  - (ii) The flyball box may not exceed the following dimensions LxWxH = 77x61x46 cm (a possible extension as platform for the box loader will be permitted). The box shall not exceed these dimensions at any time during the heat, including any attachments to the box. Mat grabbing devices or outdoor staking devices are allowed but shall never raise the box more than 1.25 cm.
  - (iii) There may not be any sharp edges or projections at the front side of the flyball box on which the dog can hurt himself. Judges have the discretion to declare a box unsafe and therefore not usable.

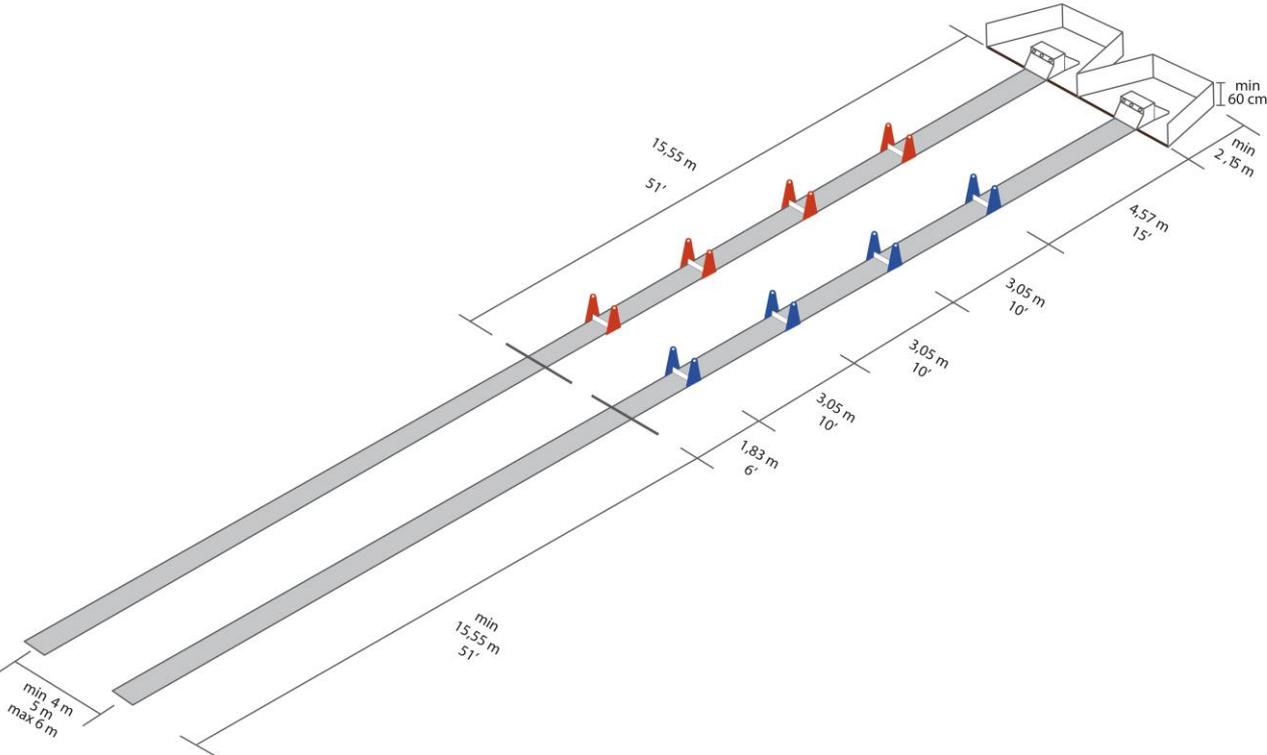
### ***Section 4.03 Balls***

- (a) All balls used have to bounce and roll like a tennis ball does.

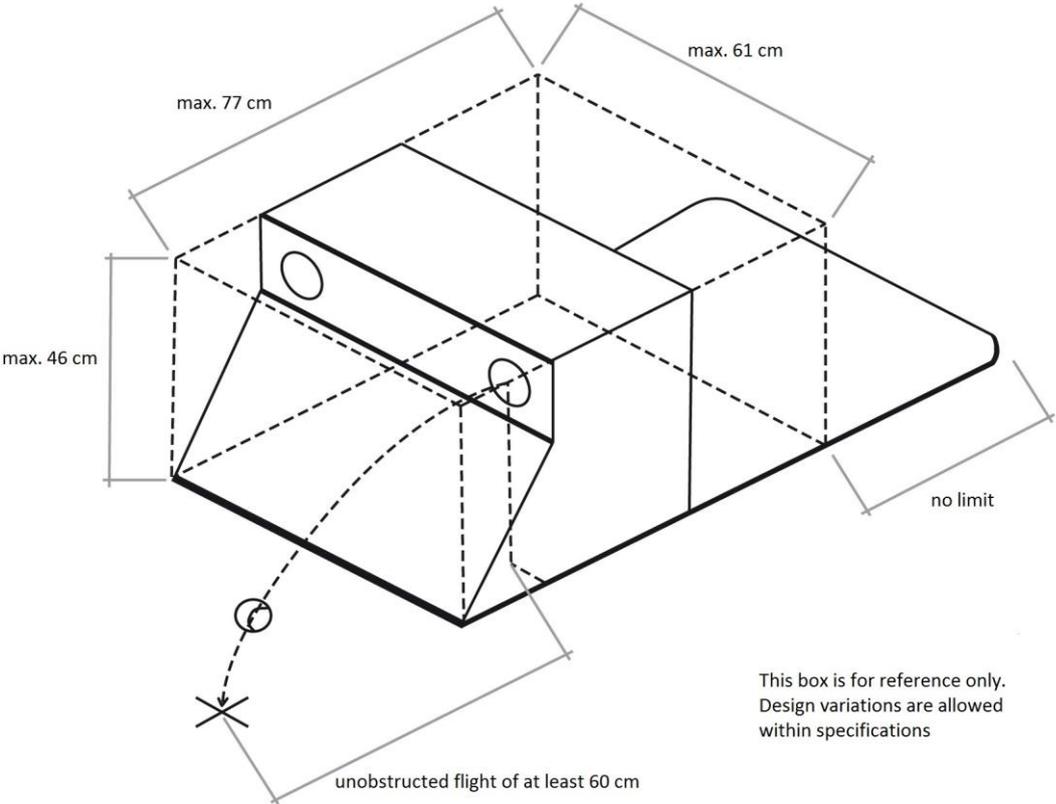
### ***Section 4.04 Accessories***

- (a) The dogs may only wear a fixed collar or a harness without accessories.
- (b) Slip, prick or electronic collars and suchlike are not allowed on the competition field.
- (c) Protective wrap on a dog's legs may be used.

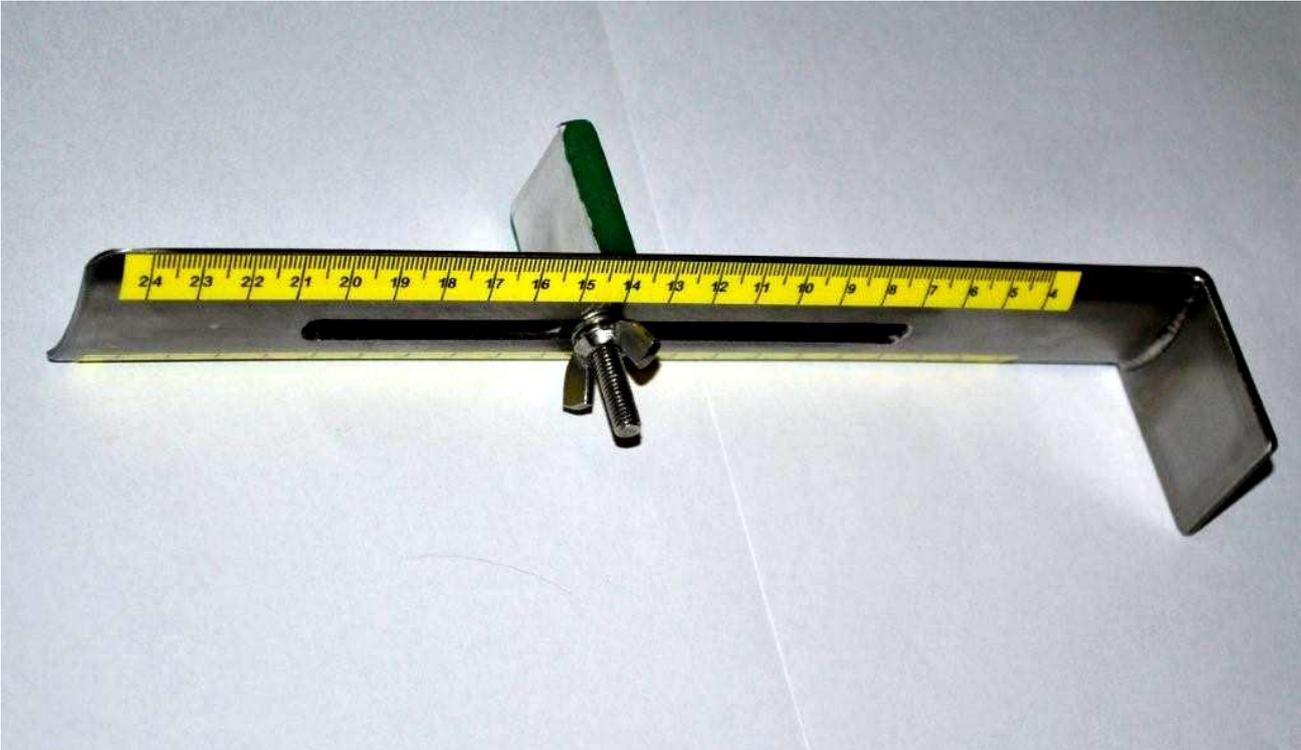
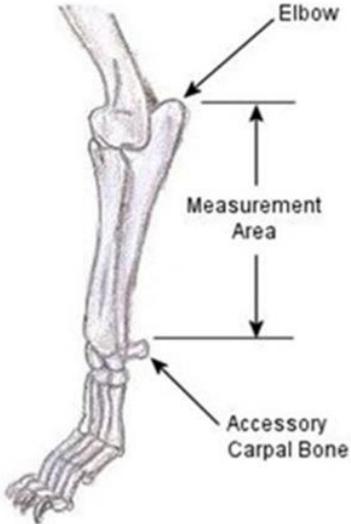
# ANNEX 1 Preparation of Ring



# ANNEX 2 Flyball box



# ANNEX 3 Measurement



## ANNEX 4 Technical description of electronic judging system EJS

The Electronic Judging System (EJS) is used for measuring the time of the races and to properly evaluate the passes and starts. The system consists at least of a semaphore with starting sequence and two gates with sensors. A display shall be provided at the timing table showing the elapsed time for each lane.

The EJS sensor panels should be placed in such a way that the entering sensors are placed directly on the start/finish line with the exiting sensors placed closer to the box line. Sensor gates should be placed a minimum of 120 cm apart but not more than 150 cm apart. The light tree shall be placed directly between the racing lanes, shall not create any obstruction and should be clearly visible for all judges and competitors, including the box loader.

The system must meet the following minimal requirements:

Sensors Physical:

- lowest beam not more than 203 mm from ground
- highest beam not lower than 711 mm
- maximum vertical beam spacing 101 mm
- passing fault sensors shall be 152 mm from the start/finish line towards the first hurdle
- if two columns of beams are used, the beams must be at the same heights
- able to span at least 150 cm

Light tree Physical:

- Bottom light shall be at least 60 cm above the ground.
- Must have an independent light for each lane used to indicate pass fault and false start.
- There must be a sequence of at least three yellow (or red and two yellow) lights directly above a green for the starting sequence.
- There should be an independent light for each dog used to indicate dog faults during each heat.
- Some indication should be provided that the system is ready for the judge to start a heat.

Accuracy/precision:

- The timing system shall time the heat to the thousandth of a second.
- The timing system shall display the time down to at least the hundredth of a second (xxx.xx).
- Rounding shall be used, if converting from timing in thousandths to display in hundredths.
- A tie shall be indicated, if the measured times in the two lanes are equal.
- The timing system must be accurate to within 3ms (all system latencies combined).
- The timing system shall be accurate to within 3ms over 60 seconds (50 ppm).
- The timing system shall provide the same timing for both lanes to within 2ms over 60 seconds.
- Sensors electrical latency shall not exceed 2ms and if scanned, scan latency shall not exceed 1ms.
- System shall sample the sensors such that a solid object moving horizontally through the sensors at 15.25 m/s would be seen to break each beam in a separate sample or 1 sample/ms whichever is faster (i.e. horizontal spacing 152 mm, 15.25 m/s means the object will cross the two columns in .01 seconds -- .001 is smaller -- must sample at 1/ms).

Operation:

- The system shall become ready and wait for the start of a heat
- The head judge or the person designated will indicate a heat start to the system
- The system shall refuse to start the heat, if the sensors are misaligned.
- head or line judge press START button

- The system activates the sequence of red + yellow lights followed by the green light at 1.0 second intervals.
- The green light shall signal the start of the timer.
- If a beam is broken before the start of the timer, a false start shall be indicated.
- The beam column closest to the start/finish line shall be the line beam.
- The beam column closest to the first hurdle shall be the passing beam.
- Once the timer has started, each time the line beam is broken ("safe" or not), an updated elapsed time shall be shown.
- Each time the passing beam is broken or cleared, the line beam shall be "safe" for 2 seconds.
- If the line beam is broken while not "safe", a pass fault shall be indicated for at least 2 seconds.
- The head judge or person designated will indicate a heat completion to the system.
- Once a heat is complete, nothing will alter the displayed times (beam breaks are ignored).
- Once the timing table has copied the necessary information (times), they shall indicate readiness for a new heat to the system.
- The judge cannot start a new heat, until the timing table indicates readiness to the system.



### ANNEX 5 World Record form - application

In order that the record can be approved, all rules of the FCI Flyball should have been respected and the competition should have been judged by a judge officially recognized by a NCO. All obligations according to FCI Flyball regulations Section 1.12 should be satisfied before racing can continue.

Date: ..... Name of competition, place, country : .....

Ring no.: ..... Division: ..... Race no: ..... Heat no: ..... Surface: .....

Head judge: ..... Responsible organiser: .....

**Achieved time: ..... . .....**

Team: ..... FCI organisation: .....

Jump height set (cm): ..... Captain: ..... Box loader: .....

Dog name	Breed	Jump Height	Licence N°	Handler

**For verification of the record the head Judge checked and measured:**

**Lane measurement**

- Length of lane
- Jump height
- EJS Alignment

**Box checking**

- Throw of balls of all sizes from all holes
- Placement
- Box dimensions

**Others :** .....

I, ....., as head judge hereby confirm, that all obligations according to FCI regulations 1.12 have been met and verified by myself.

Full Name: .....

FCI-NCO-organisation: .....

Signature: .....

I, ....., as a responsible organiser of above mentioned competition hereby confirm, that this form was filled in accordance with reality, correctly and truthfully.

Name: .....

FCI – NCO – organisation: .....

Signature: .....

This form has to be duly completed and sent by the NCO for the attention of the president of the FCI Flyball commission. The record will be recognised after acceptance by the FCI Flyball commission.