

## Gatekeeper

If you are a multi-tasker with a loud voice this is the job for you. You are sending dogs into the ring according to the running order, keeping track of dogs, answering questions, calling height changes, and managing changes all at the same time. To summarize, it is:

- getting dogs in and out of the ring
- making sure jump heights, jumps, A-frame, and tire are changed as necessary
- handling changes and conflicts.

The details:

- 1) Before the event, get the sheets with the running order and put them up on board.
  - a) If you are feeling nice, you can bring scribe sheets, too.
- 2) Go through the running order with the scribe, making sure any changes are written on the running order.
  - a) If a dog is scratched, cross out its name.
  - b) If a dog needs a height change, draw an arrow from the dog's name to the end of its new jump height.
  - c) If a dog has been added, add the dog at the end of its jump height.
- 3) Make sure everyone checks in.
  - a) The best way is to call to the handlers while they are walking the course to remind them to check in at the end of the walk-through.
  - b) As the handlers tell which dog they are running, put a check mark next to the dog's name. Some people, especially at Masters level, will check themselves in.
  - c) If people have not checked in, assume they are not here.
- 4) Find out which side to enter and exit, and enforce this throughout the event.
  - a) Most of the time this is obvious from the course, but ask the judge if you are not sure.
- 5) Once the event starts, make sure there is one dog in the ring and two dogs ready to go. Call this out loudly so that the scribe and other handlers can hear. Example: For dogs X, Y, and Z in this order:
  - a) 'X is in the ring'
  - b) 'Y is on deck' (second)
  - c) 'Z is in the hole.' (third)
  - d) You can also add the next dog who is lurking' or the next few dogs.
- 6) Send each dog into the ring as quickly as possible.
  - a) The judge may have told you when to send in the next dog, e.g. when the dog in the ring has performed a certain obstacle.
  - b) The exception is if either dog has issues, in which case the handler will wait until the previous dog leaves the ring. The handler must let you know if their dog has issues.
  - c) In some cases the dog does not go in until the previous dog is on leash, especially in Starters.

- 7) When a dog enters the ring, draw a line across its name in the running order, all the way across the page.
  - a) Use a contrasting marker so that people can see this from a distance.
- 8) Call out 'last dog this height' when the last dog in that jump height enters the ring. This prepares the ring crew for the height change.
- 9) At the appropriate times, call out the equipment changes. Before the event write them on the running order, so there is less pressure to remember everything
  - a) New jump height - 'Height change, X inches'
  - b) Regular to Special/Vet - 'A-frame down, spreads and doubles out'
  - c) Special/Vet to Regular - 'A-frame up, spreads and doubles in'
- 10) Call out 'last dog this event' when the last dog enters the ring to alert the ring crew that the event is almost over.
- 11) Call out that the event is over when the last dog finishes. This informs everyone that course build can begin.

### Tips

Because this job involves humans, it seldom goes smoothly. Here are some very important things to know:

- It is not your job to chase people. If a handler has not checked in, just be alert when it is close to their turn. They may have forgotten to check in, in which case they will show up. Do alert the following handler they may be next.
- As you call out who is running, second, and third, look around for those handlers and make eye contact. Make sure they know you know they are there. No one is here unless you see them, no matter what others will tell you. Again it is not your job to chase people.
- If a handler does not show up, send the next one into the ring. If the missing handler is late, they may go at the end of their jump height. If the handler shows up after their jump height has finished, they can run at the end of the event only at the discretion of the judge. Whatever happens, let the scribe know.
- A handler may need to run at a different time than on the running order. They could be running more than one dog and need more time in between, or there could be a conflict between two rings. Accommodate the handler as long as it won't delay the event. But they should tell both you and the scribe before the event starts. If the event has already started, use your discretion.
- Make sure a handler is requesting a change for their dog and their dog alone. Do not allow anyone to make changes for a dog that is not theirs.
- Sometimes the handlers mark changes on the running order themselves. You do not want this. If you are present during briefing and walk through you can control this.

- You are the concierge of the ring. Handlers will constantly check the running order, chat, ask you to hold treats, hold a dog, even to film a run. Do not do anything that will make you lose your focus.
- Handlers may have a question, notice something wrong with the course, or want to check their score with the judge. They will come to you first. Wait until the current run finishes, then alert the judge.

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