

# British Flyball Association

July 2026 Rule Changes · Officials-Only Guidance Notes

## Purpose of this guidance

This document is for BFA officials, including Head Judges, Divisional Judges, ring party, Measuring Officials, Records and Statistics, Committee, Rules Working Party and Judges Board members. It expands on the July 2026 member guidance by setting out the practical checks, decision points, recording requirements and consistency points that officials should apply when supporting tournaments and implementing the July 2026 rule changes.

**Officials-only note: This guidance supports consistent implementation. It is not a replacement for the BFA July 2026 Rulebook, which remains the definitive source.**

## How to use this document

- Use the Changes at a Glance table to identify the main operational changes.
- Use the role-based sections to check what each official group needs to do before, during, and after racing.
- Use the decision guides and checklists to support consistent tournament practice.
- Do not apply deferred changes until their effective date.

## Introduction

Following the 2026 Annual General Meeting, a number of rule changes take effect from July 2026. The member guidance explains the headline changes for all members. This officials-only version goes further by setting out what officials need to check, communicate, record, and decide in order to apply the changes consistently at tournaments.

The key implementation principle is consistency. Where a rule change affects judging decisions, ring management, measuring, records, paperwork or post-tournament reporting, officials should use the same process across sanctioned events and should avoid creating local variations unless the rulebook or Committee guidance expressly allows discretion.

## Changes at a Glance for Officials

Area	What officials must do	Who leads	When it applies
<b>Box specifications (Proposal 14)</b>	Do not apply any Proposal 14 box-specification changes in July or August, including ball-position, pressure-plate angle, face-plate and snub provisions.	Head Judge, box checkers, Committee communications	Deferred to 1 September 2026
<b>Hybrid Teams</b>	Exclude Hybrid Team wording from July implementation, C2 checks, ring party prompts and member communications.	Committee, Rules Working Party, Records and Statistics	Deferred until 1 September 2026
<b>Box malfunction</b>	Apply the two-minute repair or checked replacement box process and ensure adjusted triggers are rechecked.	Divisional Judge, Head Judge if needed	July 2026
<b>Interference and distractions</b>	Distinguish dog-caused interference from handler,	Divisional Judge and ring party	July 2026

	equipment or item-caused distractions and record interference clearly on the C2.		
<b>Flyball Foundation</b>	Be aware of the 15-month minimum age, retired-dog restriction and sanctioned status where these affect judging, eligibility or records.	Foundation judge, Head Judge if required, Records and Statistics	July 2026
<b>Declared times</b>	Apply the divisional break-out rule to declared-time teams and ensure paperwork reflects this.	Records and Statistics, Divisional Judge	July 2026
<b>Adverse weather</b>	Use the BFA Adverse Weather Policy when deciding whether to cancel, reduce, delay or suspend racing.	Head Judge	July 2026; see Appendix A

## SECTION 1 · Implementation Principles for Officials

### 1.1 Apply the July implementation guidance

Officials should work from the final July 2026 Rulebook and approved Committee communications. The revised member guidance confirms that Hybrid Team wording and the whole of Proposal 14 are deferred until 1 September 2026 and should not be applied for July or August racing. Officials should only apply wording that has been confirmed as part of the July implementation.

#### Deferred change warning

**Hybrid Team rules and the whole of Proposal 14 should not be applied to July or August racing. This includes the ball-position requirement, pressure-plate angle, face-plate and snub provisions. If members ask about deferred items, officials should explain that separate implementation guidance is expected before 1 September 2026.**

### 1.2 Keep member guidance and officials' practice aligned

Where the member handout gives a simplified explanation, officials should apply the full rulebook wording while keeping the same message to members. If a member-facing explanation says that a process is pending, officials should avoid filling the gap with unofficial local wording unless the Committee has authorised it.

### 1.3 Record decisions clearly

Several July 2026 changes rely on good recording: interference incidents, box-check exceptions, box malfunctions, Foundation scoring, measuring records and declared-time break-outs. Officials should record the decision, the reason, and the form or paperwork affected at the time the issue occurs, rather than trying to reconstruct it after racing.

## SECTION 2 · Head Judge Guidance

### 2.1 Before racing starts

- Confirm that the ring layout, jump placement, backstops, barriers, box location and general safety checks have been completed before racing begins.
- Confirm who has been nominated to carry out box checks and how any disputed box-check decision will be escalated.

- Confirm that box checkers understand that the whole of Proposal 14 is deferred until 1 September 2026, including the ball-position requirement.
- Confirm that box checkers are not applying the Proposal 14 ball-position, pressure-plate angle, face-plate or snub provisions before 1 September 2026.
- Confirm that Divisional Judges understand the updated interference, distraction, loose-ball and box-malfunction wording.
- Confirm whether Foundation or Ring Time Training has taken place and whether the relevant minimum age and eligibility checks were made.

## 2.2 Box checks and late-arrival exceptions

The Head Judge does not need to personally check every box if appropriately nominated officials or experienced members have been appointed. However, the Head Judge should be available to resolve disputed box-check decisions, especially where a box is said not to meet specification or where a team may need to use a checked replacement box.

If a team is permitted a late check because of an unexpected delay outside its control, the Head Judge should ensure an incident form or equivalent record is completed, giving the reason for the exception and confirming that the box was checked before the team raced.

## 2.3 Adverse weather decisions

The July 2026 rulebook requires the Head Judge to use the BFA Adverse Weather Policy when making decisions to cancel, reduce, delay or suspend racing. The Head Judge should consult as required under the rulebook and policy, but the Head Judge's decision is final.

### Policy guidance reference

**Appendix A sets out the BFA Adverse Weather Policy guidance and practical implementation notes in full. Officials should use that appendix when making or supporting decisions to cancel, reduce, delay or suspend racing.**

## 2.4 Head Judge retention requirement

Head Judges must complete at least two Head Judge assignments per calendar year in addition to the existing retention requirements. The Judges Board should confirm how assignments are logged, how exceptions are handled, and what requalification or status-review process applies if a Head Judge does not meet the requirement.

# SECTION 3 · Divisional Judge and Ring Party Guidance

## 3.1 Divisional Judge visibility and accessibility

The Divisional Judge should position themselves in the centre of the racing lanes during racing and be visible and accessible during warm-up unless their judging duties require them to move. This is intended to support safe and clear communication, especially where teams need to ask for a practice start, raise a safety concern or clarify a race-management issue.

## 3.2 Interference, distraction and loose-ball decision guide

Situation	Likely classification	Official action
<b>Dog from one team prevents or delays the opposing handler from releasing, or prevents or delays the opposing dog from completing its run.</b>	Interference	Apply the interference rule, record the incident on the C2 with the dog identified and a short description.
<b>Same dog has a second interference</b>	Repeat	Direct that the dog may only be

<b>recorded during the tournament.</b>	interference	released after the opposing team has completed its race for the rest of the tournament.
<b>Handler or team member throws a toy, ball or motivational item and it distracts the opposing dog.</b>	Distraction	Issue the appropriate warning or heat consequence at the Divisional Judge's discretion.
<b>Treats are dropped on the ground or an open treat container is left unguarded so another dog can access it.</b>	Distraction	Apply the distraction process and require the issue to be made safe immediately.
<b>A dog drops a ball during a heat, the box misfires, or the box loader accidentally launches a ball.</b>	Not automatically a distraction	Continue unless there is a safety risk or the incident otherwise interferes with the opposing team.
<b>Loose ball creates danger to dogs or handlers.</b>	Safety issue	Stop the heat if needed for safety.

### 3.3 Box malfunction process

1. Box loader signals a malfunction by raising both arms above the head, crossed at the wrists.
2. The heat is stopped and no one tampers with the box until the Divisional Judge has checked it.
3. The Divisional Judge examines the box and decides whether it has malfunctioned.
4. If it has malfunctioned, the heat is rerun and the team has two minutes to repair or adjust the box or use a checked replacement box.
5. If the box is found to be working, the heat is forfeited.
6. If the original or replacement box malfunctions again in the same race, the heat and all remaining heats in that race are forfeited.
7. If the box has been repaired or adjusted, the Divisional Judge checks that any adjusted triggers fire a ball the required distance.

### 3.4 Runner rule

- For a start dog, the runner moves toward the lights on the outside of the dog: left side in the blue lane and right side in the red lane.
- For any other dog, the runner moves toward the lights on the right side of the dog.
- The runner must not run further than the start line.
- If the runner's position, movement or timing creates a distraction, interference, visibility issue or safety concern, the Divisional Judge should manage it immediately.

## SECTION 4 · Foundation, Ring Time Training and Eligibility

### 4.1 Foundation status and age checks

- Flyball Foundation and Ring Time Training are now listed as sanctioned BFA activities.
- Dogs must be at least 15 months old to take part in Flyball Foundation events.
- The minimum age for Ring Time Training remains 12 months.
- Dogs formally retired from competition are not eligible for Flyball Foundation events.
- Retired dogs may take part in Ring Time Training only for the purpose allowed by the rulebook.

## 4.2 Foundation scoring

Foundation placings may be determined by the highest percentage of clean runs. Where a team starts the competition with fewer than four dogs, the July 2026 sliding-scale adjustment applies. This is mainly an administrative and records point; officials only need to be aware of the rule change where it affects a query, decision or record.

## 4.3 Dogs returning from Open to Foundation and back

A dog may return to Foundation for injury or retraining at the discretion of the handler or team captain without notifying the Committee. Where the Committee has directed a dog to return to Foundation, written Committee permission is required before the dog returns to Open. Officials should avoid creating extra approval steps where the rulebook does not require them.

# SECTION 5 · Records, Statistics and Paperwork Guidance

## 5.1 Declared times and divisional break-outs

Declared-time teams are subject to the divisional break-out rule. Records and Statistics should ensure that updated paperwork, guidance notes and any spreadsheet logic do not continue to apply a separate team break-out time where the July 2026 rulebook now requires the divisional break-out rule.

## 5.2 Hybrid Team wording in July paperwork

Hybrid Team wording is not part of the July implementation. Any July C2, records process, website text or ring-party instruction should exclude Hybrid Team prompts until separate Committee guidance is issued for the September implementation.

## 5.3 Post-tournament reporting reminders

- Check that interference records are legible and identify the dog and incident clearly.
- Check that any Foundation scoring query is directed to the appropriate Records and Statistics process.
- Check that any box-related incident or exception has been recorded where required.
- Check that C9 forms distinguish between measurements that must be recorded and provisional training measures that do not need to be recorded on the C9.
- Check that declared-time teams have been processed consistently with the divisional break-out rule.

# SECTION 6 · Measuring Official Guidance

## 6.1 Eligibility to apply as a Measuring Official

The minimum BFA membership period to apply to become a Measuring Official is reduced from 36 months to 18 months. All other training, assessment, approval and competence requirements remain in place unless the Judges Board issues further guidance.

## 6.2 What must be recorded on C9

- All height measurements taken by Head Judges or qualified Measuring Officials, including test measures, must be recorded on BFA Form C9.
- Measurements taken by Provisional Measuring Officials solely for training and experience do not need to be recorded on the C9.
- A Provisional Measuring Official may still assist or witness where permitted, but officials should be clear whether the measure is a qualifying measurement or a training measure.

## Appendix A · Adverse Weather Guidance

### Adverse Weather Policy

*The health, safety and welfare of dogs and people competing in Flyball within the British Flyball Association (BFA) is a priority for all members of the Association.*

*One of the key challenges that can impact our sport is the weather. Whether competitions are held indoors or outdoors, and regardless of season, Flyball events can be affected by adverse conditions including extreme heat, cold, wind and rain.*

*The Adverse Weather Policy allows Head Judges, in consultation with Tournament Organisers, to make decisions about the need to adjust, suspend or cancel racing by using the documented criteria and triggers within the policy. It also provides a clear summary of thresholds and actions that should be taken in adverse conditions.*

*To allow Head Judges to monitor temperatures, the BFA is providing Lights Custodians with an indoor-outdoor thermometer/hygrometer.*

*The actual product used is one advised by the Vets team and can be used by following this link: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B075VMLZB9?ref=ppx\\_yo2ov\\_dt\\_b\\_fed\\_asin\\_title](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B075VMLZB9?ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_fed_asin_title)*

*The main display unit is used to measure the indoor temperature and humidity, and displays both those readings and those being recorded by the smaller outdoor sensor.*

*The main display unit should be positioned 3ft–4ft above ground under the marquee in the racing ring, attached to either the light tree or a marquee leg.*

*The outdoor sensor should be positioned at a similar height within the racing ring, either on the light timers or the Judges Stand.*

*The main display unit should be monitored regularly throughout the day by the Head Judge to allow timely decisions to be made and appropriate actions to be taken to keep dogs and members safe.*

*The rules of racing have been changed to make clear that Association Head Judges have the authority to take action under the policy at sanctioned tournaments.*

**Rule reference:** 2.3 In adverse weather conditions, the Head Judge will use the Association's Adverse Weather Policy when making decisions to cancel, reduce, delay or suspend racing. This decision will be taken in consultation with the Tournament Organiser; however, the Head Judge's decision is final.

*Tournament organisers are responsible for implementing this policy at BFA sanctioned tournaments.*

*The Committee will send a separate email to all tournament organisers reminding them of the introduction of the policy.*

BFA July 2026 · Officials-only guidance · Refer to the full rulebook for definitive rules

The Adverse Weather Policy will also be included in the updated Member's Handbook, and a copy of all policy documents will be available in the Downloads section of the Website.

Links to relevant documents:

Adverse Weather Policy

[http://drive.google.com/file/d/1OHWZe94bDVjkDq98i16LHGVBCtdu-R-H/view?usp=drive\\_link](http://drive.google.com/file/d/1OHWZe94bDVjkDq98i16LHGVBCtdu-R-H/view?usp=drive_link)

Summary of Thresholds and Action

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/169zLQoCi0ZtZ5YreMjflLP9FdZy4vRpA/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/169zLQoCi0ZtZ5YreMjflLP9FdZy4vRpA/view?usp=drive_link)  
TO Checklist

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oMcHTbMwULr4\\_dCgQwwFso9nM466J7g5/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oMcHTbMwULr4_dCgQwwFso9nM466J7g5/view?usp=drive_link)