



British Flyball Association

Annual General Meeting

Held on Saturday 2nd April 2022

Via Zoom Webinar

Minutes of Meeting

1. Opening Address - Chair

A very good morning to everyone in flyball land and a warm welcome to what is now our 3rd online AGM hosted with the help of Zoom. Thank you very much for joining us and committing your spare time to what is an important serial in the BFA calendar as it's the best opportunity the membership have to directly influence how the BFA moves forward, so it's great to see so many of you with us today. We've got some interesting developments to brief you on today, and some really interesting proposals for your consideration so hopefully you will find today a valuable use of your time.

As I mentioned earlier, this is the 3rd time we've done the AGM online now, but it's probably worth just running through how things will work today. You will all have seen the agenda which will give you the running order for today which we will try to stick to as best we can, we have some updates and briefings from the Committee first off, before getting into the real substance of the AGM, the proposals and voting on rule changes. Most of the time, certainly for the first half, the Committee will be on send and you will all be muted to ensure there are no distractions or interruptions from unintended live mics. You can still engage however by using the Chat function where you can interact with Committee Panellists and the other attendees informally. Please note that this is not the format to ask direct questions of the Committee or about the proposals, and this won't be rigidly monitored by the team. The Q and A tool is the official way to lodge a formal question or query to the proposers and Committee. The Q&A thread will be monitored by the team and depending on volume and repetition, we will try to respond to all points raised, and these will be fielded for a relevant response by the Q&A team. The Poll function which you will all have seen before, will be utilised again today to allow all proposals to be voted on live whilst you are in attendance. This will be a simple for or against vote on the proposal submitted, following any debate. When the poll is launched it will appear as a pop up on your screen allowing you to submit a response and we will know the result of the vote within minutes. Only one response per registered attendee is permissible. The votes are nearly always comprehensive one way or another but should there be any particularly tight votes we will hold the result pending a broader vote by the entire membership via online means in the week following the AGM. This is your AGM and an opportunity for you to contribute to the development of the BFA and how we manage flyball, so please engage freely but please be constructive, be respectful of other people and their opinions and finally I would simply ask that everyone stays in line with the BFA Social Media policy.

Before I hand over for the next agenda item, an interesting thing happened to me yesterday, I met the bloke who invented crosswords, can't remember what he said his name was though..... it was P something T something R.

You think that's bad, you don't want me to get started on my chimney jokes, I've got a whole stack of them.

2. Previous AGM Minutes (27th March 2021)

No questions regarding minutes of last AGM. Minutes agreed and signed by Chairperson, Justin Shearing today.

4. Concise reports for the year 2021/2022 by:

BFA Officials

Chairperson – Justin Shearing

I know it says 'concise' reports for the year on the agenda..... but this is my first update as chair of what is quite an incredible organisation. The fact that we are still here and in such a strong and healthy position is testament to the character and commitment of everyone connected with the association; given the challenges that have been thrown at us no-one would have been surprised if we were starting 2022 from scratch, building up from ground zero again, but the reality is that despite repeated, unpredictable national lockdowns, suffocating restrictions outside of lockdown, the difficulties of putting on flyball shows, and the difficulty of getting to and competing at flyball shows, we have seen some incredible achievements over the past 12 months and rather than being driven backwards, the association has actually grown, it is stronger and in a much better position than could ever have reasonably been expected. That's not to say we haven't got a lot of work to do, but I do think we should start our reflection on the past year with a thank you, and well done to you all, for sticking with it, not giving up and allowing the frustrations of the past 12 months to dampen your enthusiasm for this wonderful sport and our association.

At last year's AGM we were still in lockdown, we were looking forward to getting back to proper flyball in June, that got delayed and re-set to July, and even then, restrictions were still in place that made putting any kind of flyball on a real challenge. The Committee worked incredibly hard to understand the impact of those restrictions and how the normal process of a flyball event could be adapted to facilitate some activities within those restrictions, including liaising with local and national government authorities to make sure whatever we did kept the membership safe and complied with the regulations in place. This was unbelievably complex but the BFA emerged as the leaders of the flyball community and were first with everything that kept the sport going; developing the BFA Roadmap for the return of flyball activities, developing flyball specific Risk Assessments, producing rules for Adapted Flyball activities including both training and racing and providing resources and guidance for TOs and competitors alike to ensure those that wanted and were able to do flyball as and when they could, were able to do so, and do so safely. The Committee and officials involved didn't just park all this in the 'all too difficult' category, and despite their own domestic and work challenges, that were no different from anybody else's, they stepped up and delivered, and as Chair of the association I can't thank them enough for their dedication and commitment at a time when they could have, without any question, simply prioritised their own family. And this admiration and thanks from me extends to you, the membership just as equally, because without you, it would all have been for nothing, and you all responded in your hundreds to support the efforts being made to keep flyball going; TOs putting on shows when they were certain they wouldn't make their money back, teams entering shows which had as much chance of being cancelled as going ahead; the strength and unity of our flyball community really shone through and your efforts have made sure we have a really strong launch-pad for delivering some epic flyball events when the opportunity arose in the summer of 21.

The Indoor and Outdoor festivals of flyball were an amazing achievement from a small bunch of incredibly dedicated, hard-working, and innovative people and I'm so proud to be working with them. I've been directly involved in 5 years' worth of Champs events, and the Committee worked far harder than ever before to make sure these 2 summer festivals could go ahead, knock-backs and road-blocks were a constant as the country staggered its way out of lockdown, but they put together 2 incredibly fun and enjoyable celebrations of flyball. We had to be really innovative last year and the decision to change the concept from a Championship to a Festival allowed us to explore some options we had been thinking about for a while, test out new ideas, see what worked and what needed refining. The introduction of foundation events, and singles and pairs received lots of positive feedback as well as the broader use of Speed Trials to place teams in more competitive divisions. More to follow later in the AGM but you're going to be seeing a bit more of this at this year's Champs.

The Indoor Festival threw up the most fiercely fought Division 1 in memory with only 0.37 seconds separating the fastest team from the slowest, and Division 1 of the Outdoor Festival was even more keenly contested than the Indoor; for the first time ever we had an entire top division outdoors all racing under 16 seconds. Congratulations to High Flyers and Lightning Strikes for winning the toughest Div1s in BFA history. Last year also saw the introduction of the Betty Potts trophy, being awarded to the winners of the slowest division, in recognition that flyball isn't all about speed and there's a place in our sport for every dog.

Last year's events were very complex with lots of new things being trialled as I already mentioned so they were deliberately very closely managed by the Committee, but after checking my FitBit which tells me I averaged 28K steps a day and less than 5 hours sleep a night for the 13 days we were in the field putting these events on, we will definitely be looking for volunteers to help out with this year's events, so watch out for a calling notice coming soon.

In other developments, you may have noticed that the Committee volunteered another of their weekends to all be trained as first aiders by St Johns Ambulance back in July last year. So your BFA Committee are all now fully qualified St John's first aiders and able to provide free cover for BFA events throughout their time on the committee. I can't thank them all enough for volunteering to take this on, it is not only a massive responsibility and yet another draw on their time, but it will save the association literally '000s upon '000s of pounds over the next few years as we won't have to pay external providers to cover our events. The training provided by St John's was excellent and none of us had laughed so much since before lockdown, especially when a certain someone (cough Craig Burrows) thought the best response to someone choking was the 'Heineken Manoeuvre'!! 'ere you are, get this lager down your neck, that'll sort it out'!

We got pretty good at utilising technology for communications with the membership and you will recall we ran a BFA Town Hall webinar in November to review the short season that we had and take in feedback direct from the membership on the things we tried, what worked, what didn't, we reviewed the future champs format, championship dates, AGM dates, membership renewal dates, all of which have directly impacted on much of the stuff we will cover off in the AGM, so a big thank you for your engagement on that.

And a look back at the year just gone can't be complete without a mention of the epic BFA performances at Crufts 3 weeks ago. As Chair of the association I am thoroughly proud of the performance of our teams, and the exhibition of our sport put on in front of a live audience of over 9000 people and '00s of '000s watching live and millions more on catch up around the world, a great advert for our sport, and well done to all those involved.

In summing up the last 12 months, I'm confident there's not many organisations that could have done what the BFA delivered - and all done on a volunteer basis, so you all, members and officials, should be justly proud of yourselves and our amazing association; the strength of character,

commitment and community is simply incredible and we now have an amazing platform on which to launch an even more impressive flyball comeback in 2022.

Which brings me neatly onto 2022 and the year ahead and so much to look forward to. You've just had your 3 months free membership, so you should all be feeling pretty good right now, and we're just going to keep coming with the good news. We bounce straight from the AGM into the season openers over Easter Weekend, and then the following week we have our inaugural Regional Championships. This event has been 4 years in the making since we had our first one booked. The original idea was to showcase the sport in areas where flyball is not well represented, not least to show it can be done but to generate interest in the sport in new areas and show support for the teams that feel somewhat isolated. By now we had planned to have had one in Scotland, which was the original location, Wales, and the South-West, and after 4 years of it being in the diary we are finally going to get the South-West one underway. If we were to follow the original plan it would be another 2 years before we get Scotland and Wales in the diary as well, so we had to rethink the concept a little and look at how we get teams from all over the country involved and competing together at the same time. This is where the BFA 100 Challenge comes in which will be using a new flyball scoring format which will rank a team's performance using their own seed time as a baseline, allowing us to identify the best and most consistent flyball racers in the country, regardless of speed. We are going to trial incorporating teams racing at other locations to showcase how teams can race competitively against other teams running in different parts of the country on the same day. Teams will still be competing as normal on the day, this is an additional element of competition which we are going to use to determine our regional Champs, which as I said, will be a little different because it is not necessarily the fastest team that will win, a bit radical, but I'm sure you'll enjoy it and it is a great way of keeping all the teams involved in winning something.

Hot on the heels of the Regional Champs we have Goodwoof. We are really pleased to have been involved in this since its inception, again, a few years ago now and it hasn't got off the ground due to covid cancellations. The BFA will be organising a flyball exhibition event in the main arena and we will also be running have-a-go and demonstrations for the public whilst we are there, so a great opportunity to promote the association as everything will be specifically branded and promoted as the BFA.

On the same weekend, the rest of the Committee who aren't committed to Goodwoof will be either competing or supporting our association at the FCI World Championship, ironically my local show and the least distance I'm going to have to travel for a flyball event this year, it's in Lommel in Belgium. The BFA have some competitive teams going so hopefully this will also generate some great social media coverage.

We have procured another set of Czech lights which will be with us by the end of the year, which will allow us to have better consistency of light systems across BFA shows and a bit more resilience and depth in our EJS stock, and work is continuing with a developer in the US in conjunction with NAFA for a new design EJS which would ultimately enable the BFA to build its own EJS from off-the-shelf parts, which would be a complete game-changer for us.

Our partnership with Withall and Hartpury Universities continues, and the PHD student they have funded for us will be continuing his work to understand the biomechanics of flyball injury and gather proper academic evidence which will enable us to understand the impact the sport has on our dogs and ultimately make our decisions on rule changes, box dimensions, box mechanics, jump heights, racing surface, better informed and backed up by scientific evidence which would again, makes us a world-leader in our sport and puts us streets ahead of any other association in this regard.

The other thing I think we will see this year is the return of some flyball friends we might not have seen at BFA shows for a while. Having served in Bosnia, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan twice, I have a bit of experience in understanding the importance of reconciliation and how sometimes whilst people can't

be asked to forget they can be asked to be civil to achieve a greater good for the benefit of everyone. From a committee perspective I can assure you that those that needed to be dealt with to the extent we could under our rules, have been; most though just made their own choice for their own reasons, and it doesn't really matter what those reasons were anymore; where someone has made the choice to come back and race with the BFA again let's not make it uncomfortable and make them second guess their choices; what we do is a hobby, it's a break from work and domestic pressures, something we choose to do with our free time, and everyone deserves to enjoy their hobby, and every dog deserves their chance to enjoy their racing. Recent flyball tragedy has brought into focus what is actually important to us all, so let's make an effort this year, embrace our whole flyball family, extend that sense of community to all, give a BFA welcome to familiar faces and new ones alike and enjoy our flyball racing regardless of who is in the other lane.

An amazing year ahead of us, so much to look forward to and be positive about so encourage your teamies and friends to renew, and commit to some shows, 2022 is going to be epic - I am really looking forward to seeing you all in the lanes again soon, with seasoned competitors and new dogs alike. Before I hand over to the Ellen for the Secretary report, I just remembered that I was down the pub the other night and I saw this bloke chatting up a whippet, I thought to myself, he's trying to pull a fast one.

Secretary – Ellen Barraclough

After a couple of difficult years we are finally seeming to return to some normality, racing is getting back into the swing of things and we finally able to attend tournaments.

2021 saw us introduce the 'Flyball Festival', due to having little to no qualifying tournaments we were unable to hold a 'Championships' as we have previously known. The Festival was enjoyed by many teams in the association and saw a majority of them competing in speed trials for the first time. Although the British weather wasn't always on our side a great time was had. We also received some fantastic media coverage bringing our sport out into the public eye.

We are looking forward to hosting a Flyball demo at Goodwoof, we feel this prestigious event will continue to promote flyball in a great light. We will also be hosting 'have a go' and generally be having a jolly good time.

We would like to say a massive thank you to all BFA Officials from the committee, and on behalf of the membership, for all the work you do, without you all the association would not function as effectively as it does, even through lockdowns.

2021 saw Will Whiteley step down from the committee and Paul Horton join us. Even though it was a quieter few months to begin with Paul quickly settled into committee life and has had been a great asset to the team and was an absolute pro at festival set up.

Our Membership Secretary, Jane James, has continued to register new members and teams, answer all of your queries, update your details and more recently, co-ordinate all of your membership renewals.

The Judges Board, Sharon Allcorn, Val Currie, Jenny Cousins, Will Whiteley, Nicky James, Chris Mace continually look to improve judging standards. Jason Baker has recently stood down from his position and we would like to thank him for his contribution to the association over his time on the board.

Height card co-ordinator Kate Sermon is once again back to processing all those C9s.

Our Stats team of Kim, Caz and Helen have been back to allocating points for your dogs.

Our Awards Officer, Jeff Hughes has continued to provide certificates, now being received once again at tournaments.

Regional representatives, Ivan, Stuart, Lucy, Kira, Max, Helen, Maria and Christine are still available for help and support and continue to monitor the BFA enquiries emails. Sarah Wallace, Cathy Harland and Lucy Machell have stood down from their positions, thank you all for your contributions to the association over your time on the team.

Our Veterinary Team, Vicky, Jane, Sam & Nikita continue to support the association.

Show Secretary, Maria Casley. We have worked with Maria to integrate the lights booking within the show secretary role, which has worked well and things have been streamlined. On this note, we would ask that all lights co-ordinators/private set owners continue to ensure the lights are serviced and functioning well.

Kerena Marchant continues to be available to advise the committee regarding accessibility options.

Webmaster, Ali Kirk has stood down but we would like to thank him for his previous contributions to the association, Katie Burns has been keeping things up and running in recent months.

Our media team have continued to promote our association. Thank you to Magda Whiteley, for putting in many additional hours to ensure we have good coverage and promotional material. Tracy Muir has stepped down from her position, thank you Tracy for your work over the past few years.

The Young Members Team have continued to think of great ideas, to encourage our young members. Watch out for more to come in 2022/2023. Thank you to Sally Cliffe, Jeff Hughes, Moe Hendry, Emily Murdoch, David Murdoch, Hazel Miller and Sian Turner-Gilbert for putting in the hard work for the future generation.

The BFA trainers Amanda, Shannon, Jeannette, Maria and Reece will be continuing to provide advice and guidance regarding training your dog safely and effectively.

Our A.P.E.S team Andy and Shaun are working on these systems behind the scenes, we are looking forward to seeing them in action as the season progresses.

Also, a huge thank you to all the Head Judges, Judges, Measuring Officials and Tournament Organisers, without whom we would not be able to enjoy this fabulous sport with friends.

Our current membership stands at 1700 which sees an increase from last year.

Since last year's AGM we have continued to have weekly/fortnightly Zoom meetings, to continue progressing and growing our association.

I'll now hand you over to Katie for her report.

Treasurer – Katie Burns

Once again I get to do the boring job following Juddy and Ellen and talk to everyone about the finances, or as my fellow committee members call it "cup of tea time".

The last couple of years have been difficult with little amounts of racing and very little income coming in and still having some of the ongoing expenses to deal with. As such there has been a general tightening of the belts and ensuring that all expenditure was done in the most cost-effective way. Ensuring value for money is very much a focus of the committee and I'm sure the membership has noticed this, most noticeably around AGM voting, as this was one of the biggest reasons to warrant moving from ERS.

As always we have had the accounts checked by Alison our accountant and she has produced the income and expenditure report for the AGM. This will go out as part of the minutes and I will run through the main points now:

Membership fees:

These currently look very low for 2021 but this is because we moved the renewal period and therefore 2021 didn't have any membership renewals. This figure relates to new members only and any late renewals from the previous year.

The 2022 renewals are on track and currently stand around £28K which is around a similar mark to 2018 and 2019 and it will always increase throughout the season as new members join.

Flyball Festivals:

For all BFA events we are ensuring that they are stand alone events and with that the aim is to be that they break even and we don't end up with a huge deficit. As a committee we always knew that hosting two large events following COVID was going to be tricky, but we had to work incredibly hard to come up with formats that fit within the rules, made entering accessible to everyone whilst trying to ensure that we remained within the overall budget!

We ended up making a loss of £500 in total which I think given the circumstances is an incredible achievement and took quite a lot of negotiation skills to achieve discounts from venues and suppliers. On the chart the expenditure is listed both as champs and flyball festival as some is covered as deposits (which for the festivals they were originally paid in 2019).

Tournament Fees:

For obvious reasons the tournament fees were low in 2020 as we barely got two months racing and a lot of the application fees were rolled over to future events.

In 2021 we had racing from the end of June and therefore approximately half of what we would normally expect. With a full years racing in 2022 we would hope to see this back at the 2019 amount which was £9K.

Association Expenses:

Association expenses tends to be used as the category for items that don't have their own category.

There has been a drop in these though as I have separated out the storage costs into their own category.

The other items coming under this category this year are:

- First aid training for committee members – this was an expense for the association but covers the first aid for 3 years and was less than the price we usually had to pay for outside cover for just one event. We also had the added bonus of seeing first aid Santa at the outdoor festival which was a sight to see
- Laptops for APEs
- Software – adobe for the media team, quickbooks which is required to submit VAT returns and office for the BFA devices
- Accountant charges
- Some postage and general expenses

Awards

The award costs remain low as this is covering award postage only as we bought a large batch of glass awards in 2019 and still have stock remaining of those.

Committee expenses

Since COVID the committee meetings have all been done online via zoom, this has reduced the committee expenses considerably as no need for meeting rooms or expenses to be covered.

Lights

We spent very little on lights during 2021 and this was just for general repairs and upkeep to ensure they are all functional week in week out.

Storage container

This isn't a new charge but has just been separated out for the association expenses. Currently we have storage facilities in York and Cambridge and this include equipment to cover two rings of matting and 5 rings of equipment. Currently a review of storage is being undertaken and we are looking to consolidate and move the majority of the outdoor equipment to a new storage closer to the venue. This will also reduce the overall charges.

Hopefully that gives you a good idea of where we are up to with the association's finances. Fingers crossed that this will be the first years full racing since 2019 and we can now build back up to where we were pre COVID.

British Flyball Association

Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31 December 2021

<u>Income</u>	<u>31 December 2021</u>	<u>31 December 2020</u>
Subscriptions/Membership Fees	£ 13,054.55	£ 21,883.08
Merchandise	£ 77.50	£ 276.41
Flyball Festivals	£ 36,018.50	
Awards	£ 25.81	
Team Application	£ 121.00	
Tournament Fees	£ 5,673.00	£ 1,119.15
	<u>£ 54,970.36</u>	<u>£ 23,278.64</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Association Expenses	£ 4,594.60	£ 11,513.19
Awards	£ 787.51	£ 391.61
Committee Expenses	£ 466.68	£ 2,453.41
Expenses	£ 127.50	£ 100.59
Insurance	£ 516.35	£ 1,142.97
Champs	£ 5,963.60	£ 3,674.50
Flyball Festival	£ 30,558.14	
Regional Event	£ 90.00	£ 2,533.43
Lights	£ 591.88	£ 4,116.75
Virtual Champs		£ 190.37
Storage Container	£ 5,604.00	
Website	£ 6,244.98	£ 5,542.32
Young Members Scheme		£ 60.00
Paypal Fees	£ 425.82	£ 1,021.70
	<u>£ 55,971.06</u>	<u>£ 32,740.84</u>
Surplus/Deficit	<u>-£ 1,000.70</u>	<u>-£ 9,462.20</u>
Opening balance current account	£ 40,494.68	
Opening balance paypal account	£ 130.21	
Surplus/Deficit	-£ 1,000.70	
VAT owing	-£ 5,324.45	
	<u>£ 34,299.74</u>	
Closing balance current account	£ 33,796.73	
Closing balance paypal account	£ 503.01	
	<u>£ 34,299.74</u>	

The Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account have been prepared from the books and records of The British Flyball Association and I certify them to be in accordance therewith.



AM Gerrard FMAAT
30 March 2022
AM Gerrard Ltd
Firwood Farm
Samlesbury PR5 0RE

Q – it was asked for a breakdown of the flyball festival expenditure split between the indoor and the outdoor festivals. This is included below

A	B	C	D	E	F
Expenditure				Income	
Row Labels	Sum of Gross			Row Labels	Sum of Gross
Both	£8,423.88			Both	£3,727.50
Indoor	£12,192.36			Indoor	£6,875.00
Outdoor	£15,905.50			Outdoor	£25,416.00
Grand Total	£36,521.74			Grand Total	£36,018.50

5. Championships 2022 update by Katie Burns

In 2021 we couldn't run our flagship events as "championships" due to the lack of a qualifying period and with a number of teams being able to race so for this we created the flyball festivals instead. Following these we asked for feedback on the formats offered and based on this feedback we are looking at changes for the 2022 championships.

The events will be held in August at Three Counties and Driffield Showgrounds.

Changes for 2022

- Removal of the requirement for qualification – this is subject to the membership vote at the AGM, however it is felt that it is no one required and we would like to make it easier for teams to attend
- All teams to undertake speed trials – 73.5% of people who fed back said they enjoyed the speed trials with less than 2% saying no. The rest opted out for various reasons, this was required for 2021 but won't be allowed going forward
- All divisions will have a final – some of the feedback was that teams missed having a final race to watch
- Foundation racing will be included – again in the feedback this proved popular in the comments and gave a more inclusive feel for the events.
- Mat and ring time will be available again

Why speed trials for all?

- Gives everyone equal racing regardless of the speed of the team
- Encourages teams to try to go for the fastest possible time without worrying about the risk of breaking out
- More flexibility for teams in case of any line up changes and means you can race on the times you can do that weekend with that line up

Open Racing format

- Initial running order will be produced based on teams seed times – no declared times will be accepted unless in exceptional circumstances
- Each team will run speed trials (three legs per race and three races per team)
- Wins/Losses will not be recorded just the fastest time per team
- The fastest time per team will be used for the second running order to place teams for the round robin
- All dogs competing in the round robin will need to have competed in at least three legs during the speed trials
- Each division in the round robin portion will be of 10 teams
- The even seeds will race as a five team round robin and the odd seeds will do likewise

The winners of each half will race in the finals to determine the winner of each division

6. University Update by Jeannette Shelley

7. Measuring Working Group Update by Katie Burns

Currently dogs are measured using a wither measurement, which is dependent on the dog's stance. Each dog is required to have three measures at the same height with four different measurers. Often there is variation in the dog's measures and over the last 4 years only 50% of dogs achieved a height card in only three measures. Some may have required more due to their age, but some will be due to variation in measurements.

The committee has been looking into alternatives for measuring for some time, the ulna measure has been considered due to its use in other associations and also in other dog sports. Other associations have been approached and data has been requested but little or nothing has been received. We do have a recent update from the FCI but I will leave that till the end as Nettie is going to provide that information.

An FCI ulna measure was purchased with the plan of gathering measures to compare with current height dogs. Unfortunately, just as the data gathering started COVID hit, which delayed the work considerably. When shows returned in 2021 there were still social distancing measures in place so gathering the data took a back seat to getting racing up and running again.

In September 2021 we advertised for a working group to gather measures for data purposes, these measures came from a wide variety of dogs in both breed and location, we included dogs that were just outside of being a height dog on the current system.

This working group is made up of Zoe Colling (Yorkshire Bouncers), Leanne Horton (Nuneaton), Katherine Palin (Barking4Balls), Kate Sermon (Lightning Strikes), Jamie Barratt (Sheffield) and Hilary Larkham (Odessey).

Over 100 dogs have been measured to date, one of the initial aims was to look at variation between measurers. As an association we need to have a number of measuring officials in order to provide cover at all shows. Due to this we need to ensure consistency throughout the measuring system and understand how changing measurers affects the measure that a dog receives. Changing the measuring system could have a significant impact on the sport so it is important that any proposal is backed by data and the implications for dog heights properly understood

Using the FCI measure results varied considerably, differences of over an inch were recorded for the same dog, potentially affecting the height card this dog would receive.

For example: Dingerbell, owned by Juddy had variations of 3.5cm (over an inch) between her left and right legs across multiple measurers.

Feedback regarding the measure was:

- Often the position of the stopper pad would get in the way
- Some dogs were more sensitive to the measure and didn't like their legs being handled or any pressure put on the device
- How bent the carpus was
- Measurers dominant hand played a factor as one leg was easier to measure

To gather the necessary data for this exercise it was discussed at a committee meeting about options going forward. More measuring devices were required but as the FCI one was expensive (300 Euros per unit) and found to be difficult to use, alternatives were sought to see if the issues we were having were down to the device rather than the method of measuring.

It was agreed to look at alternative devices and see if we can obtain further measures. One option was to get a bespoke version made; a 3D printed prototype has been produced by an engineer. This device was tested last weekend on a number of dogs, and we have feedback to relay including the length of the device, as currently it is too long for tiny dogs. We would also like to see the sliding part of the measure curved to fit the dog's leg, giving a more consistent measure.

Going forward we plan to use the alternative devices to continue the data gathering process. If the data is proving consistent, this can then be compared to the BFA master database, which includes all recorded measures. By using the entire BFA database we can look at how many measures the dog required on the current system, if they had variation in their original measures and compare this to their ulna measures. This information will allow us to populate an evidenced and considered conversion chart and form a proposal for the membership to vote on at the October 2022 AGM. The conversion chart is the key point of the exercise to ensure that dogs are jumping the correct height, as you wouldn't want a new system to disadvantage any dog.

Currently there are two or three main conversion charts in use, and these are UFLI, UKFL and the FCI.

Any questions?

8. Rule Proposals

All proposals are listed in rule number order (unless linked to other rule proposals)

Proposal 1

Constitution 3.3

Proposed by the BFA Committee

3.3 The Committee is responsible for setting, amending, interpreting and enforcing the BFA's rules, policies, guidelines, codes, procedures and so on including but not limited to those related to discipline, sportsmanship, tournaments, and complaints. Any change of the same will not take effect until ~~REMOVE 1st June or 1st November~~ ~~ADD 1st January or 1st June~~ whichever is the earlier after the change is declared by the Committee unless the change relates to dog welfare in which case it will come into effect on any date set by the Committee.

Reason:

To change in line with the new AGM timescales

Discussion: No comments or discussions

Poll launched

VOTE

For 314 (98%)

Against 5 (2%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 2

Proposed by The BFA Committee

Constitution 4.1 and 4.2 and Appendix 1

4.1 Any meeting of the Committee will require not less than five Committee Members to be in attendance to be quorate with all Committee Members having first been provided with a reasonable opportunity to attend. Attendance can be in person or by way of an electronic or telephone communication system (for example, ~~REMOVE Skype~~ ADD Online system, Facebook, conference call, etc).

4.2 For any vote of the Committee to be binding it will require all Committee Members having first been provided with a reasonable opportunity to vote and not less than five Committee Members voting in favour. Committee Members may vote in person, or by way of an electronic or telephone communication system (for example, ~~REMOVE Skype~~ ADD Online system, Facebook, email, conference call, etc).

Committee Members will work effectively as a team with the other 8 members of the elected Committee. Deal with all Committee correspondence impartially, fairly and in a timely manner. Will declare any conflicts of interest when they become apparent, be available to attend face to face and or ~~REMOVE Skype~~ ADD Online meetings. Attend every AGM whilst serving as a Committee member. Act as mediator or an Investigating Officer on behalf of the BFA Committee for incidents, complaints or dog welfare issues. Attend, support and assist with planning for BFA Championships and BFA training events.

Reason:

Removal of reference to Skype as it dates the rules. Change to online system to cover whatever is being used at the time.

Discussion: No comments or discussions

Poll launched

VOTE

For 321 (99%)

Against 2 (1%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 3

Proposed by The BFA Committee

Constitution 8.3

An Adult Member may place an item of business on the agenda including any proposed rule change for a forthcoming Annual General Meeting by submitting the same in writing to the Secretary and the Secretary receiving the same not less than 30 days before the Annual General Meeting. Any

person who has proposed a rule change should, if they are able, attend the Annual General Meeting in order to clarify the proposed rule change and/or comment on any suggested amendment(s). If the proposer is unable to attend an additional proposer is to be nominated to present the proposal on their behalf. In the absence of any proposer at the Annual General Meeting the proposed rule change will not be put to a vote and will not be implemented. Any AGM agenda items proposed which the BFA Committee consider to fundamentally change the current BFA flyball rules will be subject to a full impact assessment and may be referred for advice to the BFA Veterinary ~~REMOVE~~ ~~Advisor~~ ~~ADD~~ Team prior to implementation.

Reason:

Updated to reflect that we now have a Veterinary Team not Advisor

Discussion: No comments or discussions

Poll launched

VOTE

For 327 (99%)

Against 1 (1%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 4

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.1.8 and A.1.1.10

The ~~REMOVE~~ ~~Host Team~~ ~~ADD~~ ~~Tournament~~ ~~Organiser~~ must declare on their application their intended **maximum** limit for entries (i.e. the maximum number of teams they are willing to accommodate). Tournament Organisers may request an extension to their tournament, regardless of surface, via the Show Secretary. Each request will be assessed individually and factors such as format, surface and proximity of other tournaments will be considered prior to approving an extension.

The ~~ADD~~ ~~Tournament~~ ~~Organiser~~ must get written approval from the BFA Show Secretary for any and all special or unusual requests. i.e. live streaming and or filming.

Reason:

Updated terminology to ensure consistent with the rest of the rules

Discussion: No comments or discussions

Poll launched

VOTE

For 327 (99%)

Against 1 (1%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 5

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.2.5

~~REMOVE~~ Public Address - Flyball is a spectator sport. As such, it is important to announce races, explain

the sport and announce times when spectators are present.

Reason:

Not all venues have access to public address and some do not allow due to noise complaints

Discussion: No comments on social media. It was asked about adding where possible to the rules instead of removing completely, Juddy clarified that trying to de-clutter the rule book slightly so felt preferable to remove completely.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 303 (94%)

Against 20 (6%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 6

Proposed by Keith Marshall

A.1.3.5

Tournament Organisers should register all entries for a period of 72 hours after the schedule release split into two parts:

First 24 hours

- a. If the tournament is oversubscribed after 24 hours a draw will be done on all entries received at that point. The unsuccessful teams will be put on a reserve list.
- b. If the tournament is not oversubscribed at this time all entries received within the 24 hour period will have gained entry to the tournament.

Following 48 hours

- a. If the tournament was oversubscribed after 24 hours then all entries during this time will be put on the reserve list.
- b. If the tournament was not oversubscribed after 24 hours. The Tournament Organiser will calculate the remaining availability and will do a draw of all entries received during this 48 hour period to achieve the tournament limit. Any unsuccessful teams will be put on a reserve list.

ADD Tournament Organisers must publish a list of entries after 24 and 72 hours, whether or not there is a reserve list.

The Tournament Organiser has the right to ensure the show entries allow for adequate provision of the support needed for the tournament to function – including Head Judges, Judges, lights custodians and Measuring Officials.

Reason:

The current rule does not require a list of entries to be published, whether or not the tournament is oversubscribed. TO's currently publish a list of successful entries at their discretion, especially if a tournament is not oversubscribed.

Discussion: Comments on the facebook post related to extra pressure being put onto TOs to keep the list up to date and the timeframes are a little restrictive. Extra complications for a TO at a busy

time but could allow teams to enter alternative shows if they knew quickly that they haven't been successful in their entries.

Suggested an amendment to the proposal to cover the timescales to make it more flexible.

Amendment

Entries should be collated at the 24 hour and 72 hour points. The Tournament Organiser has 24 hours from each point to publish the current entry list

Poll launched for amendment.

VOTE

For 277 (87%)

Against 40 (13%)

Outcome: Amendment accepted

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 220 (67%)

Against 109 (33%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 7

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.4.1

Running orders and tournament information must be posted on the ~~REMOVE BFA website~~ [ADD online](#) so they are available to all team members. An emailed version can be sent if requested by the team captain. Seed times used must be shown with faster and slower declared times clearly marked.

Reason:

Updated to reflect current practice

Discussion: No comments or discussions

Poll launched

VOTE

For 312 (98%)

Against 6 (2%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 8

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.4.3 and A.1.4.11

Teams should be seeded based on the information available from the BFA website. Seeding times for a tournament will be based on the fastest time recorded by a team during their last 3 sanctioned events and a seed list will be supplied from the latest available data on the 14th day before the tournament date, with the exception of a BFA Committee organised Sanctioned Tournament (e.g. Championship) when the seed times shall be taken on the 21st day before the tournament date. Any time recorded more than 4 months before this date is null and void. A declared time, to be used as the seeding time, MUST be submitted by the Team Captain at least 14 days prior to the Tournament, with the exception of a BFA Committee organised Sanctioned Tournament (e.g. Championship) when no declared times shall be accepted **ADD (unless in exceptional circumstances and agreed by the Committee)**. If a declared time is not submitted then their entry will be void and they will not race. A declared time may be submitted - it must be at least ½ second faster or ½ second slower than the teams seeded time and will be subject to the Team break-out rule. Teams not on the seed list must submit a time and will be subject to the team break-out rule. The BFA Committee may organise other sanctioned events throughout the year that will follow the process for a standard Tournament and not a Championships.

REMOVE Only BFA Registered Teams with a valid seed time can compete at a BFA Committee organised Sanctioned Tournament (e.g. Championships). There shall be no declared times permitted at a Championship. Teams from other countries invited by the BFA Committee will be sanctioned to submit a declared time.

Reason:

A.1.4.3 To allow for exceptional circumstances where a team does not have a valid seed time

A.1.4.11 Remove completely, all the detail is covered already within A.1.4.3 and adding in the exceptional circumstances would cover should teams from other countries enter.

Discussion: No comments on social media. It was asked about submitting a declared time for speed trials and it was clarified that teams should have a valid seed time for the championships but that it could be requested to the committee if teams felt this was required.

Poll launched

VOTE

For 280 (92%)

Against 26 (8%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 9

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.4.12

REMOVE To qualify for a Championship Teams shall have raced three times outdoors for an Outdoor Championship and three times indoors for an Indoor Championship within the four months prior to the relevant tournament schedule being released. The committee will have a number of "Wild Cards" at their disposal, details of which will be published in the schedule.

Reason:

To remove the requirement to qualify for a championship event. This is to make it easier for teams to be able to attend championship events.

Discussion: No comments on social media. It was asked if over subscription to the championships would happen in the future, it was answered that this is hard to say at this point, however based on

the administrative burden and the it limits teams being able to attend, it was felt this isn't needed currently. However, it could be added back in the future should events be oversubscribed again.

Also raised that it could potentially harm indoor shows without having the need to attend shows throughout the summer in order to qualify for the indoor champs.

Poll launched

VOTE

For 256 (82%)

Against 56 (18%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 10

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.5.3

Double Elimination Competitions

An alternative format of racing which can be used by Tournament Organisers, often preceded by Speed Trials. Copies of the format forms for double elimination may be obtained from the Records and Statistics Coordinator. To allow teams more racing in double elimination tournaments, some teams have offered consolation rounds for those teams eliminated early. Consolation rounds can be round robin, single elimination or double elimination. This may be adapted to include a single elimination final if the tournament organiser wishes. ALL variations in format shall be clearly marked on all tournament information (diary, schedule, running order etc). **REMOVE NOTE: Speed Trials are not a proper Tournament format on their own and can only be used as a preliminary to a Double Elimination.**

Reason:

To remove the note as speed trials will be used as a preliminary to round robin racing as well

Discussion: No comments from social media. It was asked whether this means that speed trials are not a proper tournament speed trials by themselves and this was clarified as correct as a tournament will not be run just as speed trials.

Poll launched

VOTE

For 300 (97%)

Against 8 (3%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 11

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.1.5.4

Sanctioned classes are: open, multibreed, singles, pairs. Other unsanctioned classes may include: Flyball Foundations etc.

ADD Singles

Singles racing consists of a single dog and handler, with a box loader and up to two assistants. The rules of racing shall be observed except that:

- a) Handlers may choose their desired jump height
- b) Each dog will be given two races with three legs to set their best possible time, whenever possible dogs shall race dogs of similar speeds.
- c) Dogs will be ranked by fastest time
- d) The fastest time for each dog will be recorded on the BFA master list which will be available to download from the BFA website.
- e) Dogs will not earn points for singles racing.

Pairs

Pairs racing consists of a two dogs and handlers, with a box loader and up to three assistants. The rules of racing shall be observed except that:

- a) Each pair will be given two races with three legs to set their best possible time, whenever possible pairs shall race pairs of similar speeds.
- b) Pairs will be ranked by fastest time
- c) The fastest time for each pair will be recorded on the BFA master list which will be available to download from the BFA website.
- d) Pairs will not earn points for pairs racing.

Reason:

To clarify how singles and pairs can be used and ensure that the formats are easier for TOs to be able to incorporate alongside open racing. Please note that rule A.1.4 "A dog may not be entered in more than one open sanctioned tournament on the same weekend. A dog may be entered into different sanctioned formats at the same tournament on the same weekend, but not the same day" would still apply

Discussion: No comments on social media. It was asked about jump heights for pairs and it was clarified that jump heights for pairs remains the height of the smallest dog in the pair.

Poll launched

VOTE

For 289 (95%)

Against 15 (5%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 12

Proposed by Jonathan Ansell

A.1.6.5

REMOVE Where netting is **ADD** Netting must be used to divide the run back area a minimum gap of 25' must be implemented from the start line and a minimum gap of 4' must be implemented at the back of the run back area.

Reason:

6.5 is ambiguous and allows tournament organisers a choice of using a barrier in the runback area. The layout of the ring should be consistent in every BFA tournament.

Interference – I have noticed that there is some variation between Judges and interference rulings. A physical barrier would prevent this.

Distractions – A physical barrier would go towards mitigating distractions and help reduce the rolling of balls from one side to the other.

Discussion: Comments from social media: the netting itself sometimes can create more issues than it solves with dogs getting tangled, introducing a potential safety issue, it was asked how tournament organisers are supposed to secure centre netting at indoor tournaments and sometimes this will exacerbate tight runback areas. Is this trying to fix a potential inconsistency in judging?

It could potentially restrict where judges can stand and potentially get in the way of handlers running closer. Netting doesn't stop balls from rolling to the other side. Suggested about other barriers being used and noted that dogs may get stuck on the other side of netting if dogs do go into the other lane.

Comments from the AGM – clarifying what the current rules are around distractions and interference and it was suggested that contacting the judges board would help to ensure that this is enforced consistently.

Is this a training issue and would it encourage dogs being put in open too soon?

Why do we have netting in foundation if it is dangerous? How would any potential fights in the runback area be dealt with if the dogs get stuck the opposite side of the netting from the owner?

Poll launched

VOTE

For 91 (26%)

Against 259(74%)

Outcome: Proposal defeated

Proposal 13

Proposed by Andrew Short

A.1.7.1

There shall be a distance of 6' from the start/finish line to the first jump, 10' between each jump (4 in total) and 15' from the last jump to the front edge of the flyball box. **ADD There shall be a tolerance of + or – ¼ inch(").** The distance between the box line and the start/finish line shall be not less than 51' and not more than 51' 1 inch (").

Reason:

At present, although the rules allow a tolerance of 1inch (") in the length of the entire racing lane, there is actually nothing stated in the rules to permit this tolerance due to the wording of the measurements: 6' from start line, 10' each jump and 15' to box line. Adding in the proposed tolerance on each jump placement would allow for the 51' and 1".

Discussion: Comments from social media which was covering how and where the tolerances come in and as such Andrew had proposed an amendment.

Comments from the AGM understand that the tolerance are for the lane being shorter but would we penalise teams should the lane measure longer and a record was set?

Amendment

There shall be a tolerance of + or – ¼ inch(“) on the jump placement.

Poll launched for amendment.

VOTE

For 294 (93%)

Against 20 (7%)

Outcome: Amendment accepted

Poll launched

VOTE

For 266 (86%)

Against 43 (14%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 14

Proposed by Maria Worrell

A.1.7.3

Jumps

The host team shall provide two sets of identical flyball jumps for the duration of the tournament. Teams are asked to co-operate by lending equipment.

The jumps shall be solid, white and are to have an inside width of ~~REMOVE 24"~~ **ADD 30"**, with posts neither more than 36" high nor less than 24" high. The outside of the posts may be painted any colour, but the edges must be white. Logos and/or lettering shall be permitted but limited to 3" x 20". The tops of the jumps are to be flexible / breakable AND protected at the front, top and back with foam or soft material (e.g. 15mm x 25mm water pipe insulation). The slats (not baseboard) shall be clearly marked with their size.

Reason:

Dog safety

I feel it is important that in all sports, rules and regulations are reviewed in order to improve the safety and welfare of its participants. This is something that is done widely across all human sports and I feel it's equally as important in dog sports, especially as a lot of their actions in flyball are largely dictated by the handler and although we may not be able to reduce how many errors we as handlers make, we can absolutely increase the margin of error for the dogs welfare, meaning when errors occur accidentally of course, the dogs will not have to bear the consequences of this.

By widening the jumps to 30 inches, this gives a significant amount of room for error in case of early passes. I understand a lot of the membership may feel that early passes (on the jump) is something that should not happen and should be worked on in training, which I agree with however, it is often the case that issues occur once the incoming dog has already been released. Example, a dog could re

grip the ball, miss stride, take the jump wrong and lots of other scenarios that could lead to a dangerous pass and therefore putting both dogs at risk. Even with the most experienced of handler these accidents can be completely unavoidable.

Dog confidence

After discussions with members from different associations, suggests that a dogs confidence going into a pass seems to have improved for dogs who usually appear uncomfortable with passing, although sufficient training should be put in place to help dogs feel comfortable in passing, some dogs never fully have this confidence and I feel as owners/handlers it is our responsibility to make our dogs as comfortable as possible in a sport we are asking them to play.

I think it's also important to take into account that with the sport growing and evolving, we are an seeing increase in different breeds. Naturally this will also be safer for larger breeds and give them more confidence and margin of error. This will also help the smaller dogs feel more comfortable with the amount of room they have coming out of the jump and into the gate area, when a much larger dog is passing onto it. It must feel somewhat intimidating for smaller breeds that are faced with a large breed running towards them and the only area they can safely move to one side is once they are out of the last jump and in the gate.

With the sport growing and new members registering weekly, it means that inexperienced members take the lanes (which is amazing for the sport) but there is only so much training that can be done to prepare for certain situations that can happen on race day in the ring, some which cannot be trained for. Widening the jumps again, allows for the sport to protect our dogs in the eventuality of unforeseen and accidental passes in the jumps.

Associations all over the world have either changed or have committed to changing to the 30" jumps, so not only will it bring our association in line with the majority but it begs the question as to why this is happening. If associations are committing to jump changes and thousands of owners are making this conscious choice to vote it in and are happy to race on 30" wide jumps then this must be only in the best interest of the dogs themselves.

I personally feel very strongly about 30 inch wide jumps as I have seen/been involved with near misses myself, or seen crashes on the jumps through circumstances that could not have been avoided. I feel we owe it to our dogs, who are willing to run up and down the lanes and trust us to do so no matter if they are heading into an accidentally dangerous pass, to ensure and improve the sport for their sake.

Additionally, I know a lot of people will be concerned about the price teams will incur to change to 30" jumps, which will require a change of baseboards and slats. I feel cost should not be a factor when considering dog safety however, I know how extremely challenging it is for clubs to financially run in the positive and bear such costs... so I have had discussions with ENVY flyball products who have committed to a discount if the rule change goes through. 50% off baseboards and slats for teams who have previously purchased jump sets from them and 30% off for teams who have not.

For those concerned about the 30" jumps being less stable than the 24", I have contacted multiple members that race consistently on 30" jumps and there has been an overall consensus that the extra 6" does not reduce jump stability and jumps are not, on average knocked over any more than jumps at 24". I feel if there was a risk to jump stability then they would not have been used at Crufts which was shown all over the world, if they were not stable. These jumps along with other associations jumps have not reported any issues with them being knocked over any more than previous 24" ones and dogs are less likely to clip the wings of 30" jumps when they are wider anyway. I have also had the chance to train on 30" jumps for the past year and have not noticed a difference in the jump integrity.

Discussion: Comments from social media: was there any data covering collisions and there is limited data on collisions within the jumps therefore, questions about costs, ability of the manufacturer to produce new jumps, what to do with old jumps, is there an option of a choice

between jumps widths, it was asked if the BFA would buy new jumps for everyone based on this proposal? The speed of the dogs has increased over the year so more potential for injury should collisions happen, confidence in passing was confirmed as the biggest advantage. It was asked if the distance between the timing gates would be an issue.

Why 30 inch jumps and not 36inch – this was confirmed that this was due to the width of matting.

Stability of the jumps for tournaments outside, although it was confirmed that these are used outdoors in other associations.

Comments from the AGM is it clear to see the improvement that 30inch jumps would bring? Is there any data to show that there is no negative impact on this proposal? This is in line with the change of box width. No specific data collection, however, they have been used for a number of years in a number of associations.

Should there be a longer period of time to implement this proposal should it go through? Noted that there would be a priority list for new baseboards and slats for the TOs that are hosting shows earlier in the season to ensure everyone can access new jumps for tournaments. It was also discussed about sharing equipment between teams.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 283 (80%)

Against 69 (20%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 15

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.2.5.1

All Teams will appoint a **REMOVE Manager**/Captain who must be a current BFA member and who will submit the Team name (and Secondary names if applicable) to the Membership Secretary for approval. If acceptable this name will be registered with the BFA and no other Team will be permitted to use it or derivatives thereof.

Reason:

Updated wording to be consistent with the rest of the rules where Captain is used

Discussion: no questions or comments raised

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 258 (99%)

Against 2 (1%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 16

Proposed by The BFA Committee

A.2.5.7

In addition to the handlers/holders and the box-loader a team may at their discretion be accompanied by team members to pick up loose balls, set up knocked down jumps, collect times, record changeovers and any other relevant jobs to the team, provided doing so does not interfere with the Judges, or the opposing team. **REMOVE Members of the team who do not have a job may be asked to leave the ring by the Divisional Judge.** A racing team may be assisted by up to five additional Members. Teams that require more than five assistants must gain approval from the Head Judge prior to racing. Members may be asked to leave the ring by the Divisional or Head Judge if causing a distraction or in any way impeding racing.

Reason:

This part of the rule was added when a number of members was not specified. Now only five additional members are allowed, so therefore this section shouldn't be required.

Discussion: no questions or comments raised

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 268 (97%)

Against 6 (3%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 17

Proposed by Bhav Patel

A.2.5.7

In addition to the handlers/holders and the box-loader a team may at their discretion be accompanied by team members to pick up loose balls, set up knocked down jumps, collect times, record changeovers and any other relevant jobs to the team, provided doing so does not interfere with the Judges, or the opposing team. Members of the team who do not have a job may be asked to leave the ring by the Divisional Judge. A racing team may be assisted by up to five additional Members **ADD and seven members during the warm up.** Teams that require more than five assistants must gain approval from the Head Judge prior to racing. Members may be asked to leave the ring by the Divisional or Head Judge if causing a distraction or in any way impeding racing **ADD or warm up**

Reason:

Many handlers work very hard to bring dogs which are a little nervous or lack in confidence to reach a point where the dogs feel safe enough to race happily. I have witnessed on many occasions where large numbers of team members enter the ring during warm up and create a lot of noise which has subsequently cause a dog in the opposing lane to revert or completely shut down. In the interest of dog welfare we are trying to create a racing environment which is safe and enjoyable for all racing dogs and this should be implemented during the warm up too. I have added the number to 7 part which allows members to aid with props which are then not used during racing.

Discussion: Comments from social media some agreement that it would help nervous dogs.

Comments from the AGM you need additional people in the warmup which is why there is an increased number has been included.

Clarified that this is 7 additional people not 7 people in total.

It was asked if there should be a caveat to include gaining permission from the Head Judge should you require more than 7 people.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 257 (83%)

Against 51 (17%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 18

Proposed by Dave Anderson and Andrew Short

A.2.7.1.d

The ball, when released, must have a free unobstructed flight, **REMOVE of not less than 24" from the box cup in a forward direction.** **ADD** which clears the front of the flyball box.

Reason:

The 24" was included in our rules as a direct lift from the NAFA rules, when the BFA was founded.

Judges needed a standard to ensure that boxes were firing correctly so 24" was selected.

Dogs tend to catch a ball within 4 to 6" of the hole, so why do we have to fire the ball so quickly and hard at the dogs mouth.

The positive effects of the proposed rule change.

It would remove the need to measure the distance the box fires, so it will be easier and quicker for the judges to check the box is firing.

Team captains will be able to adjust the box to suit their individual dogs needs i.e soft slower firing for rookies and veterans.

We would no longer be asking our dogs to catch bullets in their teeth.

Discussion: Comments from social media it may help smaller and unconfident dogs, however there were concerns about dogs potentially face planting and it was confirmed that this would give the options for team captains based on the dogs.

Comments from the AGM it was suggested that a study may be required to see how this would impact on dogs, if implemented it would be monitored going forward.

Will this give teams less motivation to keep boxes well maintained?

Would expect captains to set the box to the optimum for the dogs that they have and regular reviews to be undertaken. It would put the control back to the team captains. Are all team captains experienced enough to be able to do this?

Would this cause more issues than you would potentially gain?

For the steeper boxes this means that the ball only potentially has to fire a very short distance.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 105 (34%)

Against 206 (66%)

Outcome: Proposal defeated

Proposal 19

Proposed by Bhav Patel and Lauren Simmons

A.2.7.2

Each team shall have its own supply of un-punctured, tennis balls [ADD Dunlop training foam tennis balls and Chuckit balls](#) (any colour - that should easily be distinguishable when being carried by a dog, to a judge officiating a race) Subject to the size and comfort of the dog, other tennis-type smaller approved balls may be used.

Reason:

Lauren We have some dogs that are more comfortable to carry tennis "type" balls. When previously queried guidance given was that the ball needed to look like a tennis ball, roll and bounce on grass, (I have videos that can demonstrate this although there are no details in the rulebook that this is what is required in a ball).

The Foam tennis balls that we use also travel at least 24" from the box and are the same size as a standard tennis ball. (they are Children's Foam Tennis balls made by Dunlop)

The Medium sized Chuckit Ball, also has the pattern of a tennis ball, can also roll and bounce on grass and is the same size as a standard tennis ball.

Different materials are more comfortable for some dogs so where smaller dogs can have smaller balls for comfort other materials should be allowed for this reason also.

Bhav We promote Flyball as being a inclusive sport for dogs of all breeds and abilities and yet we have a rule which prohibits some dogs from racing because they can't use a tennis ball.

There are many reasons why a dog may have to use a different ball to a "tennis" ball. This may be due to the weight of a ball or the texture of a ball to name a few. We should be encouraging people to find solutions which allow their dogs to enjoy our sport not implementing barriers which prevent it. I have a dog which in my team who will destroy a tennis ball as soon as she takes from the box and therefore it becomes a choke hazard to her, we worked really hard to find a solution to allow her to run safely but under current rules we were advised the use of the different ball is not permitted as it's not a tennis ball.

Discussion: Comments from social media some safety concerns about the balls being choking hazards but it was confirmed that these types of balls are currently used in other associations.

Comments from AGM noted that tennis balls can grind down teeth over time so some would welcome. How would it affect box loaders, it should be able to be trained at home alongside being able to use hard/soft tennis balls.

Confirmed that the proposal was for two specific types of balls only.

How would judges deal with having different balls when these are doing box checks?

How would the balls be dealt with if they are punctured? They would need to be discarded if they are punctured.

Would a chuckit ball fire out of a box in the same way as a tennis ball?

A chuckit ball is the only ball be tested specifically for dogs which might potentially make it safer for dogs to use in flyball.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 155 (45%)

Against 187 (55%)

Outcome: Proposal defeated

Proposal 20

Proposed by Will Whiteley

A.3.1.3

The Start - Dogs may start from a stationary or running start. When using a manual start, if any part of the dog's or handler's body is over the line before the race is started, it will be an infringement, to be called by the Line or Division Judge. When electronic starting lights are used, any part of the dogs' or handler's body breaking the beam will cause an infringement to be called by the Line or Division Judge. REMOVE The heat is to be restarted. If a second such infringement is called against the same team (for that race) the dog must run again. If a second false start is called coincidental with the opposing teams first false start the heat is to be restarted.

Reason:

I would like to see 0 false starts allowed. Dogs 2-4 don't have any 2nd chances at making mistakes for changeovers so why should dog 1? Going first dog is already the easiest position to run a dog and there is a free shot at making a mistake with it each race.

Discussion: Comments from social media if teams don't have training lights then this is hard for teams to practice, it was noted that at training dogs will vary from competitions anyway. Warm ups were discussed at length and how this would affect the warm ups times.

Less reruns could speed up the racing dog and also potentially help dogs not having to race as many legs.

Starts can be practiced within the warm up if requested already. Some other associations already run with this rule in place. FCI and Crufts don't have false starts.

Comments from AGM – we have already reduced the number of false starts

It was asked what the benefit of removing the false start, it is a luxury that isn't needed and the other team dogs don't get the same number of chances to make a mistake.

Noted that unfair when teams get a great start and the other lane has an early start.

Discussed about a compromise and that each race would only have one false start instead of one each per dog.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 165 (47%)

Against 183 (53%)

Outcome: Proposal defeated

Proposal 21

Proposed by The BFA Committee

B.3.2.8

A loss for both teams shall be recorded in the following circumstances.

- a. A team that has already broken out 2 times racing against an WFC team

- b. A team that breaks out (single heat) racing against an WFC team.
- c. When both teams break out
- d. When both teams choose not to rerun a dog in order to finish the race
- e. ADD when neither team can complete in a reasonable time frame (DJ discretion)
- f. In circumstances a and b only three heats will be run. Circumstances c, d and e will count as one heat raced and *may* result in only three heats being run.

Reason:

To allow for the judge to end the race if in their opinion dogs are unlikely to complete the leg. A reasonable time frame will be allowed.

Discussion: No questions or comments.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 284(98%)

Against 5 (2%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 22

Proposed by The BFA Committee

B.3.2.12

REMOVE A Divisional Judge is not to engage in conversation with a disgruntled competitor. A judge's decision following mediation is final.

ADD The Divisional Judge should be able to explain any decision they have made during racing to the Team Captain(s); the judge's decision though is final. Team Captains dissatisfied with the decision of a Division Judge during racing should raise the matter with the Head Judge as soon as practicable.

Reason:

To expand and clarify the current rule.

Discussion: No questions or comments raised

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 297(99%)

Against 3 (1%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 23

Proposed by The BFA Committee

B.4.1.1.e

REMOVE When hand timing is used or any part of the electronic equipment fails this must also be

recorded on the Time Sheet(s) heat by heat as such times will be disregarded when calculating fastest times and therefore seeding times.

ADD Should the EJS fail during racing and alternative means of timing the race are endorsed by the Head Judge, this is to be clearly marked on the C2, heat by heat, as these times will be disregarded for the purposed of fastest times and seeding times.

Reason:

Sanctioned tournaments would not be allowed without EJS and had timing should therefore not be endorsed, unless there is no other option. This is clarifying the process should this happen.

Discussion: No questions on social media. It was asked what would happen if there wasn't a EJS system for a show and it was confirmed that there was no circumstance where a show shouldn't have lights are there are plenty available for teams to hire both from the BFA as well as private lights.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 288 (99%)

Against 2 (1%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 24

Proposed by Reece Marsland

C.2

ADD The dog's height may be measure by one of two methods

Method 1

- 2.1 All measuring shall be carried out using only BFA authorised equipment; laser device and measuring stick where the datum line is set at 24".
- 2.2 The recommended distance between dog being measured and the laser is 2m and should never be less than 1 m (manufacturer's recommended distance)
- 2.3 Only one handler per dog shall normally be allowed in the measuring area unless the Head Judges / Measuring Officials choose to allow otherwise
- 2.4 A dog will be measured from the ground to between its withers. Withers being the dip between the dogs shoulder blades.
- 2.5 Dogs should be standing square with hocks perpendicular to the ground. The head is to be in a relaxed, natural position neither too high nor too low.

2.6 ADD Method 2:

Dogs will be measured from the point of the Elbow to the Accessory Carpal Bone (Pisiform), the bony protrusion just above the stop or carpal pad, when measuring the dogs foot must be bent at a 90 degree angle not out straight. The following chart will determine the jump height:

Jump Height (inch)	Ulna Length
--------------------	-------------

6	Up to 4 inches
7	Over 4 inches to 4.5 inches
8	Over 4.5 inches to 5 inches
9	Over 5 inches and up to 5.5 inches
10	Over 5.5 inches and up to 6 inches
11	Over 6 inches and up to 6.5 inches
12	Over 6.5 inches

The measuring will use only BFA authorised equipment; ulna measure device.

Both legs shall be measured and the lowest measurement recorded as the official height.

2.7 Aggression during measuring will not be tolerated and Rule D.5.1 will be observed.

2.8 A dog deemed 'NOT MEASURED' by the Head Judges/Measuring Officials will jump at the height of the smallest dog in its team (running, not standing by) if that dog measured less than 18" to between withers.

Reason:

Unity with the rest of the world

Other associations have either adopted the Ulna measure or are in advanced stages of implementing the system. As an association we should always be looking to be progressive and improve the sport for the benefit of the dog, comparisons to other associations is a great way of doing this. Having a more uniform measuring system will allow others from different associations to more easily race within the BFA and vice versa.

Not every dog/breed is uniform

Having two systems to measure the jump height of the dog offers greater choice to obtain the best jump height for the dog. Different breeds/dogs are hindered by the withers measure due to body shape and some dogs are fearful of the measuring stick on the back, they may respond better to ulna measure. Training devices for measuring the ulna are cheap to reproduce so owners could practice at home with the dogs to get them comfortable with the process before arriving for official measuring.

Consistency

The general feedback from other associations is that the ulna measure is more consistent once the dog is used to the device along with being a much quicker process. The devices used are cheap to buy and easy to transport so it won't be a big burden on tournament organisers/lights owners to bring them to competitions. Compared to the withers measure they are smaller, easier to transport and quicker to get setup.

Scale

The scale from ulna length to jump height is something that should be expected to change in the early implementations of the rule, the reason being the BFA needs to collect more data in order to produce a best fit conversion chart. Implementing the rule on the proposed scale will allow the BFA

committee to collect plenty of data with an aim to review the scale as early as possible. Should it need adjusting, the committee could update in November.

Discussion: Social media discussion – can we measure on both systems? This adds a new alternative option, what happens with dogs with existing height cards, do you have to measure again on the new system? Discussion around logistics and devices

Why has the conversion chart been included and is there the data to support the conversion? Can the chart be re-assessed in the future going forward?

Comments from the AGM – will both front legs need to be measure, yes and the lowest measure would be taken. If the dog is measured at a lower height with a height card can the dog run at a lower height?

Are test measures included within the rules?

Why would we include the ulna measure in the rules when we haven't completed the data collection? This is not to replace the wither system but an additional option.

Other associations are using this method and no negative sides have been shown with this system.

UKFL chart used as BFA dogs were used to form the data behind their conversion chart and to allow more dogs to cross over between associations.

How would we get all the measuring officials trained by June? Will this come in from the 1st June?

Confirmed that it would be required to have three measures on each system, not three across the two systems, in order to get a height card.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 216 (69%)

Against 99 (31%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 25

Proposed by Jeff Hughes

E.3.1

The Young Members Award Scheme will reward all participants with a milestone award for members aged ~~REMOVE 6~~ **ADD 4** to 18

Reason:

To reduce the starting age to 4 years, this allows young members who are already participating in our sport to gain points. This is a recommendation by the Young Members Working Group.

Discussion: No questions or comments raised

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 259 (95%)

Against 13 (5%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

Proposal 26

Proposed by Jeff Hughes

E.3.5

Points are awarded for;

- judging half a division at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, singles or pairs Tournament (minimum 16 years of age). REMOVE or half a division at a Starters Tournament.
- Handling a dog at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs REMOVE and Starters Tournament (for half a division or a minimum of 2 races in staggered format).
- Box loading at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs REMOVE and Starters (for half a division or a minimum of 2 races in staggered format).
- Ring Party duties i.e. Line Judge, Scribe and Box Judge at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs REMOVE and Starters Tournament (for half a division, or a minimum of 7 races in staggered format)
- Ball collecting duties ADD at a Sanctioned open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs

Points will be awarded for REMOVE starter ADD foundation, singles and pairs competitions held alongside a BFA sanctioned tournament but not for stand-alone REMOVE starter ADD foundation, singles and pairs competitions.

Reason:

To bring in line with the current rules

Discussion: No questions or comments raised

Amendment

E.3.5

Points are awarded for;

- judging half a division at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, singles or pairs Tournament (minimum 16 years of age). REMOVE or half a division at a Starters Tournament.
- Handling a dog at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs REMOVE and Starters Tournament (for half a division or a minimum of 2 races in staggered format).
- Box loading at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs REMOVE and Starters Tournament (for half a division or a minimum of 2 races in staggered format).
- Ring Party duties i.e. Line Judge, Scribe and Box Judge at a Sanctioned ADD open, multibreed, foundation singles or pairs REMOVE and Starters Tournament (for half a division, or a minimum of 7 races in staggered format)
- Ball collecting duties ADD at a Sanctioned open, multibreed, foundation, singles or pairs tournament.

Points will be awarded for REMOVE starter ADD foundation, singles and pairs competitions held alongside a BFA sanctioned tournament but not for stand-alone REMOVE starter ADD foundation, singles and pairs competitions.

Poll launched.

VOTE

For 267 (98%)

Against 4 (2%)

Outcome: Proposal passed

9. Any other business

i. Flyball Jumps working group (David Anderson)

David has proposed that a flyball jump working party should be established to look at jumps and how these are built and whether these could be made more effective and streamlined for them to be used on multiple surfaces.

This would include the materials used to assess their use in different environments. Would there be benefit of looking at the sides of the jumps to help them cope with wind better?

Do jumps break or shatter differently if there were vents within the jumps?

Agreed that a working party would be beneficial to assess jumps.

ii. VRJ Rescue dog of the year (Christine Thompstone)

Valerie passed away two years ago and left a legacy to Primed flyball team. As she had a lot to do with rescue dogs it was felt that a yearly trophy to go to a dog that has been rescue or rehomed which is to be nominated by the team captain the dog races for.

It was agreed that this was a lovely gesture and a fitting tribute to Valerie.

10. Election of the BFA Committee

Having served on the Committee since the last AGM, the following current members have expressed a willingness to remain on the Committee for a further year:

Ellen Barraclough (Critical Impact)

Katie Burns (Carry On's)

Craig Burrows (FOCUS)

Paul Horton (Nuneaton Flyers)

Justin Shearing (Lightning Strikes)

Rachel Short (Commandos)

Two members have decided to retire: Alicia Marsland (High Flyers) and David Murdoch (Funky Fidos)

Seeking re-election to the Committee:

Jeanette Shelley (Aces) Proposed by Justin Shearing and seconded by Michelle Atkinson

The nominations for the remaining places on the Committee are;

Sharon Allcorn (High Flyers) Proposed by Will Whiteley and seconded by Kim Sermon

Karen Bell (Waggytails) Proposed by Garry Minnikin and seconded by Jason Baker

Stuart Laverick (Trigger Happy) Proposed by Andrew Short and seconded by Katie Burns

The result of the committee nomination election has already been publicised and the 2022 committee, which will come into effect after the AGM, is:

Sharon Allcorn (High Flyers)

Ellen Barraclough (Critical Impact)

Katie Burns (Carry On's)

Craig Burrows (FOCUS)

Paul Horton (Nuneaton Flyers)

Stuart Laverick (Trigger Happy)

Justin Shearing (Lightning Strikes)

Jeanette Shelley (Aces)

Rachel Short (Commandos)

11. Closing Address – Chair

So that's your new committee for the year ahead; It's great that once again there was a vote, it shows that we continue to thrive as an association, congratulations to Netty, Sharon, Stuart, but this does mean there is always a great candidate who doesn't get on; Karen Bell, I hope you put yourself forward again as I know you would be a definite asset to the committee going forward, we need committed volunteers to continue to steer this great association.

Thanks to Alicia, standing down due to what is going to be a significant increase in domestic commitments very shortly; as the father of 3 boys and one of 3 boys myself, I'm keeping my fingers crossed for her sake that it's a girl! we were looking forward to having her onboard for a few years yet, but we know she's not going to wander too far and I am absolutely certain we'll still get to know her opinion on any and all flyball related matters anyway! She will be missed as she has contributed significantly to the committee's outputs over the past 3 years, it won't surprise anyway to know that she has some firm opinions and she was never going to allow us to suffer from Group Think, there was never any concern that we didn't know where Alicia sat on any particular issue, but that's exactly what a Committee like ours needs, and it should be reassuring to the membership that we are often not all of the same mind and flyball issues, but we debate, honestly and openly and we always (usually!) come to agreement in the end. Alicia leaves us after 3 year's service during what has been a really difficult time for the BFA and flyball in general, she has managed the Regional Reps and the Media Team to great effect, she has mothered us and hen-pecked us in equal measure, and I'm not sure what we ended up getting her as a leaving gift, we did ask Reece, what he thought she'd like and I hope we ended up getting her something a bit better than some bath bombs and smelly stuff!! Warm, funny, with flyball carried in her DNA, thank you very much Alicia.

And then to our ex-Chair, David, who I know also thought long and hard about stepping down, but the committee is a massive commitment, and he has already done 2 stints back-to-back, both of which were during incredibly difficult circumstances for the BFA. He stepped forward when many would have taken a step back, and he has been the backbone of your committee for 6 years now. His contribution in that time cannot be over-stated and he has been fundamental to all of the progress we have made over recent years, change is never easy, but it's critical to any organisation's endurance, and we have changed in so many ways for the better, some visible, and some really important ones behind the scenes that the ordinary membership won't see on a day-to-day basis; there will undoubtedly be some who don't like the progress we have made but without the strides forward we have taken, the challenges we have faced in recent years would have delivered unrecoverable damage. When the rest of the Committee saw the covid bus trundling down the road, we were quite happy to pick David up and throw him under it, but he took up the challenge of

leading a national volunteer-led association as Chair during the worst global pandemic in living memory, and he did so with determination and humour in equal measure. Testament to David's leadership, innovation, and sheer effort, the association is in a significantly better place now than when he first stepped onto the committee all those years ago, which is an incredible achievement given the challenges that have been thrown at us during that time. You may well remember, a third of the membership walking out of the door overnight, a rival association providing choice and flyball opportunities outside of the BFA, innumerable dirty tricks and unsporting shenanigans designed to undermine the BFA and its reputation continuing over several years, all met with dignity and steely determination to continue to do the right thing and not lower the professional standards the BFA are respected for across the flyballing world. And then, keeping people engaged and motivated during long periods when flyball of any sort was simply not an option, and maintaining organisational readiness to leap back into flyballing action whenever restrictions allowed. Despite all these challenges, due to his leadership of the association, instead of picking up the pieces right now, we're stood on rock solid foundations that will deliver some epic flyball, this year and for many years to come. I fully intended just to take the piss for David's leaving speech, and believe me there is a lot of material there for that! but when I started to think about what he has had to contend with during his time on the Committee, the hand he was dealt when he was asked to be Chair, I am simply in awe of how well he handled it all and I think the association owes him a huge debt of gratitude for looking after us so well. David, thank you my friend, your presence on the committee will be sorely missed, enjoy the free time, and I look forward to reflecting back on your time on the committee with a beer or 2 at a flyball show in the very near future. Thanks David.

And finally. That was some really good debate today and it's heartening to see people so passionate about how our sport develops. It's important to remember that the association rule book, is your rule book, it's not the committee's, we just look after it for you and make sure everyone is playing by the rules that you all set between you. Thanks to everyone, thanks for all your contributions today, the association is in a good place, but we need to continue to work together and constructively to develop and grow, the foundation is solid, and there's room for everyone in the association and we need everyone working together to put us where we want to be. The Committee will always try to do what we think is best for the association, but as you've seen today, it's the membership who own the rules and if you have ideas on how the association should develop then put them forward for debate and if the rest of the membership agree with you, boom. AGM done. Let's get back to racing. This year will hopefully be our first without major covid interference; I wouldn't say we are getting back to normal as everything changes, but the new normal is going to be bigger, better, and more exciting than ever and you guys are absolutely crucial to our association's success this year.

Before I sign off, I just thought I'd say that I realised yesterday how smart my dog was. I asked her what 2 minus 2 was. She said nothing. And on that note.....