

ALC Equipment Panel Report - 25 October 2023

Equipment Incident Report Forms

As at 29/9/23 the KC Activities Team had forwarded the 2 reports to the panel that had been received. These both concerned the Galican Soft Jump Pro & the sliding of the cups. This cup style has now been withdrawn from use & at the time of this report being submitted the panel is awaiting a new cup to be checked as being 'fit for purpose' before being approved. The new style of cup is very similar to the one that has been used for some time without issue on the Intercan jump at Dog Sports Derby.

Equipment related incidents reported to the KC via Show Incident Books

The following incidents were referred to the panel by the Activities Team for follow up:

Multiple dogs slipping/falling in tunnels. All reports were from one show using standard tunnels without an inner 'anti-slip' finish. There have been many other shows over the year that have used these same tunnels & no reports were received about slips from any other shows. However, no reports at all have been received about slips in any tunnels with an 'anti-slip' finish. There are many other environmental factors, such as weather conditions, surface, even the amount of fur on the bottom of the dog's paw. It does however seem very likely that increasing the traction on the inside of the tunnel reduces the chance of a dog slipping. The report presented by Ms G Lott to the ALC meeting on 6/7/23 also came to a similar conclusion.

To gather more data Mrs Bale sent a questionnaire to 24 stakeholders of which 7 responded by the deadline for this report. The questions were around tunnel materials, wire thickness & pitch used, friction tests & tunnel colours. This data made it clear there would be a large cost impact to a small number of hire companies if regulations changed to require an 'anti-slip' inner surface. More independent, formal, peer reviewed data on the tunnel material urgently needs to be collected & the panel request the Health & Welfare Sub Group take this forward making use of the research options available to them as there is an impact on the health & safety of the dog. This research could be around a Coefficient of Friction value for tunnel material or similar standardised test. Whilst this is ongoing the Equipment Panel will look at the data collected from stakeholders. It may be possible to set a minimum wire pitch & diameter which could help give a more consistent level of stability to the tunnel for the dog.

It is widely acknowledged that improving judge's understanding of best practice around tunnels in course design, along with effective strapping would reduce the risk of slips. Disappointingly the new Guide for Judges is still not published on the KC website, so the new tunnel guidance is still not available. Judges training is also key to this & should be prioritised.

Following the advisory notice that half 'anti-slip' tunnels should be phased out several stakeholders have asked to know the deadline for removal. I have responded saying that until the research is undertaken it isn't possible to give deadlines but that July 2024 is the earliest this could potentially happen if these tunnels were deemed a health & safety risk by the Health & Welfare Sub Group.

Sandbag issues – minor problems around Velcro not being fit for purpose have been dealt with directly with the hire company.

Stakeholders Database

Up to date contact data for current manufacturers, suppliers, hirers & show organisers of KC shows has been collated by Jo Bale. This has been forwarded to the KC Activities team & will hopefully improve the communications between all groups going forward.

Equipment Review

This process has begun & will continue over the coming months. As far as possible the aim of the review would be to:

- To reflect the new materials & designs that have emerged in recent years.
- To account for our improved understanding of how dogs negotiate agility equipment.
- To improve the safety of dogs when negotiating equipment.
- To improve the consistency of equipment used across all KC shows.

The panel will try to make balanced, considered decisions & the stakeholders listed above will be given an opportunity to give their thoughts via questionnaires, along with similar exercises via social media for KC judges & competitors to complete where appropriate.

Discussion items have been put forward regarding the weaves, spread jump, tunnel straps, long jump & pipe tunnel. The process will continue with the hurdle being next to review, followed by the seesaw & tyre.

Equipment Approvals

All stakeholders in the updated list were sent clarification of the approval process by the KC Activities team in September. At the time of submission of this report Jo Bale was planning a visit Dog Sports Derby in collaboration with Laura Chudleigh to review incoming new jumps & other equipment. She was also in discussion with Naylor's to look at their new Antislip+ tunnel.

The collapsible jump pole from Performance Agility & Galican have been approved for use at KC shows. These will need to be monitored to check they are well maintained & a 'fit for purpose' discussion item has been raised to help deal with equipment that isn't kept in good order.

A US style jump has been declined approval due to having unnecessary protrusions, in particular the presence of a second rear foot that would impinge on the dog's foot placement on tight turns.

Jo Bale

ALC Equipment Panel Acting Chair