

2026 TEXAS SHEEP DOG ASSOCIATION RULES

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TEXAS SHEEP DOG ASSOCIATION RULES

I.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Texas Sheep Dog Association, Inc. ("TSDA") was founded in 1963 and incorporated in 1981 to advance and create an interest in the breeding and training of working stock dogs across Texas. Additionally, through a system of awards and sheep dog trials, TSDA encourages the continual development of better stock dogs and their practical application on modern farms, ranches, and livestock operations. While fulfilling this purpose, TSDA aims to foster cordial relationships in the community and promote humane treatment of dogs, sheep, cattle, and goats.

II.

OVERVIEW

A. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT: The information contained within was created to provide TSDA members with a uniform set of rules and guidelines regarding TSDA-sanctioned events. Generally, rules must be followed and enforced, and failure to comply may result in penalties. Guidelines provide more flexibility and serve to identify common practices or options available to competitors and trial hosts. Rules contain language such as "will", "must", or "may not" (or similar compulsory expressions). Guidelines contain language such as "may" or "can" (or similar permissive expressions). The Class Definitions section provides information on dogs and their handlers. The General Rules & Guidelines section provides other useful information.

B. INFORMATION: TSDA maintains a website located at www.texasheepdogassoc.org. Website information is updated frequently and provides the most comprehensive source of information for both members and non-members. The website contains TSDA Rules, trial entry forms, trial sanctioning forms, standings, as well as rules and guidelines from the United States Border Collie Handlers Association ("USBCHA") & International Sheepdog Society ("ISDS").

C. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership is not required to compete in a TSDA trial.
2. Dues are paid annually and are based on the membership level. The dues year begins January 1 and ends December 31.
 - a. Participating Membership: \$35. This level is for handlers who wish to compete in TSDA trials, receive Dog of the Year points, participate in the Finals trial, and vote in TSDA elections.
 - b. Family Membership: \$35, first member; \$10, each additional member. This level is for family members living in the same household and actively participating in trials. Each member has the same privileges as a General Member.
 - c. Supporting Membership: \$20. This individual will not have voting privileges and will not earn points.

3. Participating or Family Membership is required before going to the post in order to receive Dog of the Year and TSDA Finals qualifying points.
4. Participating and Family members elect the Board of Directors.

D. CLASSES: The TSDA recognizes the following classes: Open, Open Ranch, Nursery, Ranch, Novice, and Youth. To compete in a class, both handler and dog must meet the requirements as stated in their respective definitions (e.g., Open Class: Open Handler, Open Dog).

E. COURSES: The typical National Style trial course is run in an open field. However, trials can also be run in indoor and outdoor arenas or venues, including fields. The phases of work in a full course most often include, but are not limited to, the outrun, lift, fetch, drive, pen, and shed or single. Chutes and Maltese Crosses can be substituted along with other course modifications at the discretion of the trial host. The dog is required to maneuver the livestock in, around, and through obstacles (e.g., panels) in a workmanlike manner, following the straightest line possible from one to another.

The trial host and/or trial committee most often set up the course and may incorporate, as part of the course, obstacles already present in the trial field (e.g., a bridge, creek, or other terrain or features). The trial host has the right to set and modify the course as long as the required elements within each class are included.

Courses differ in difficulty from class to class. The courses, in order of difficulty, are: Open, Open Ranch, Nursery, Ranch, and Novice/Youth.

1. Open COURSE

- a. In a trial, the dog will run a full course, which normally consists of an outrun, lift, fetch, drive, cross drive, pen with a shed, and/or single, if possible. The trial may be judged, timed, or a combination of judged and timed. The course must include a **driving element**.

2. Open Ranch / Nursery COURSE

- a. In a trial, the dog will run a full course, which normally consists of an outrun, lift, fetch, drive, cross drive, pen, if possible. The outruns and drives are often shorter than those set for the Open Class. The trial may be judged, timed, or a combination of judged and timed. The course must include a **driving element**.

3. Ranch COURSE

- a. In a trial, the dog will run a full course, which normally consists of an outrun, lift, fetch, drive, cross drive, and pen, if possible. The outruns and drives are often shorter than those set for the Open Ranch/Nursery Class. The trial may be judged, timed, or a combination of judged and timed. The outrun is approximately 150 yards or less. The fetch may or may not have fetch panels. The drive may have three (3) legs of approximately 35 to 50 yards each or may be through or around an obstacle before proceeding to the pen.

4. Novice & Youth COURSE

- a. In a trial, the dog will run a full course, which normally consists of an outrun, lift, fetch, and pen, if possible. The outruns and drive are often shorter than that set for the Open Ranch/Nursery Class. The trial may be judged, timed, or a combination of judged and timed. The outrun is approximately 125 to 75 yards. The fetch may or may not have fetch panels. The dog is required to perform an outrun, lift, fetch, and pen, but at the discretion of the trial host, may also be asked to perform an assisted drive. For the Novice and Youth Course, the assisted drive may consist of up to three legs, each approximately 35 to 50 yards long, with or without obstacles (e.g., drive panels). During an assisted drive, the handler may leave the handler's post to assist the dog and should remain behind or beside the dog, ensuring that the dog moves the livestock in a workmanlike manner through the assisted drive legs before proceeding to the pen.

F. DOGS

1. Any dog may compete regardless of breed, age, or color. A dog is not required to be registered or purebred.
2. There are restrictions as to the equipment a dog is allowed to wear on the trial field premises and during competition. Non-adherence to these restrictions may result in disqualification, as well as loss of fees, prizes, and premium monies.
 - a. A dog may be equipped with any standard collar or with a GPS tracking collar.
 - b. A dog may not be equipped with:
 - i. Any remote-controlled or electronic audio transmission device.
 - ii. Dummy or weighted collars.
 - iii. A leash or rope not detached before the dog is cast.
 - iv. Any device used to distract or cause pain to a dog.
 - c. The judge and course director each have the right to inspect a dog, on or off the field, for any violation of this rule. Refusal to permit an inspection is grounds for disqualification and exclusion from the trial premises at the discretion of the judge or course director.
3. All dogs should be kept securely tied, on a leash, or in a crate while not competing.
4. Dogs that are competing should be kept off the trial field prior to their run.
5. Dogs cannot be exhibited by multiple handlers in multiple classes throughout the year.
6. No dog can be entered by two handlers at any one trial except for the Youth class.
7. It is the responsibility of buyers and sellers to accurately represent the class status of any dog. Failure to do so may result in sanctions against either or both parties.

G. HANDLERS

1. A handler is limited to the use of a crook or stock stick while competing.
2. A contestant shall not enter the trial field at any time with any kind of training device. The trial committee, representative, or judge may disqualify a contestant if the contestant enters the trial field with any such equipment.
3. A handler is responsible for injury to livestock and property, both on and off the trial field, that results from a dog being loose and/or out of control.
4. A contestant who intentionally harasses the stock after his/her run will be disqualified at the discretion of the judge, in conference with the Course Director, and may be subject to further disciplinary action by TSDA or other sanctioning associations (e.g., USBCHA in any co-sanctioned event).
5. Handlers should always demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct.
6. Assistance from the sidelines may subject a handler to disqualification at the discretion of the judge or course director.
7. Handlers may walk the trial field prior to the trial.
8. Upon leaving the post area during a phase of work that does not include the pen, shed, chute, assisted drive (in the Novice/Youth classes), or other similar work, it is assumed the contestant is retiring and, therefore, no points are awarded.
9. When the allotted time for a run has expired, points are awarded through the last completed phase of work.
10. If the judge signals "off course", the handler will quickly retire from the post. No points are awarded.
11. If the judge signals "thank you", the run has been disqualified, and the handler will quickly retire from the post. No points are awarded.
12. A handler should be ready to run whenever his/her name is called. Failure to come to the post when called is cause for disqualification of that run.
13. By commencing the run, a contestant is presumed to understand the course and is expected to follow it.
14. Handlers may be required to be properly attired for any trial event. Handlers are to use good judgment and consider the weather and the magnitude of the event when selecting attire.
15. TSDA encourages those with physical disabilities to participate in our sanctioned events and believes that trial hosts and judges should make reasonable efforts to accommodate these handlers. Handlers with physical disabilities may seek exemption from the Board of Directors and, with a majority vote, be allowed the following exceptions on a case-by-case basis:
 - (i) Exempt from Advancement, if such exemption is granted, any dog that is a drop-down dog or a dog that remains in a class once the compulsory advancement requirements have been met may not compete for Dog of the Year; and

- (ii) May utilize designated aides otherwise prohibited (i.e., binoculars, mobility devices other than a crook/stock stick, etc.)
16. No contestant, or other person, shall engage in any form of misconduct or harassment toward trial management, judges, or officials. Trial management has the right to disqualify or refuse entry to any contestant or other person for violation of this rule. Any contestant denied access may request that the TSDA Grievance Committee determine if the trial manager's decision was appropriate, and if it was not, what action should be taken. This appeal may or may not be heard by the Grievance Committee at their sole discretion.
 17. Ownership of the dog in Texas is determined by property rights; thus, care and custody of the animal is the basis that will be utilized.

H. SANCTIONING: The rules herein apply to TSDA-sanctioned trials only. Points, trophies, and earnings awarded by other associations are not considered in determining TSDA's Dog of the Year awards or in accumulating Advancement Points. For a class or trial to count as a TSDA-sanctioned trial and receive TSDA DOY or Advancement Points, it must be advertised on the TSDA website at least 14 days prior to the date of the trial or class. The trial host has the option of adding additional classes after the 14-day period; however, these classes will not be sanctioned and cannot be counted toward TSDA DOY or Advancement Points. Additionally, scores or points from these classes cannot be combined with scores or points from a sanctioned class. TSDA will only sanction trials held in the state of Texas or in an adjoining state.

I. DOG OF THE YEAR: Dog of the Year ("DOY") points are awarded each trial year. The maximum number of DOY points that may be earned in a class at a trial is determined by adding (1) point for every three (3) entries. DOY Points are then awarded for each place in a trial in accordance with the Dog of the Year Points Schedule set forth in the attached Schedule.

Scratched entries and no-shows are not considered for the purposes of calculating DOY points. Classes with fewer than three (3) entries are considered Qualifying Trials but do not award Dog of the Year points. Qualifying Runs and DOY points are earned by and belong to the dog regardless of handler or ownership changes. The Handler must be a paid participant or family member prior to attending the post to be considered a Qualifying Trial, and before the dog can earn Dog of the Year points. Both fully judged or timed field or arena trials will award DOY points and are considered qualifying runs for the TSDA Finals. There shall be no restriction on the number of trials in which a dog may participate to earn DOY points.

At the TSDA Finals trials, trophies for Dog of the Year are awarded in each class. Dogs dropped down within TSDA guidelines are not eligible to compete for DOY in the lower class. A dog that moves to a higher class during the trial year retains any DOY points earned in the lower class. The high-point dog takes Dog of the Year honors, even though that dog may have moved up. Except for the Nursery Class, Dog of the Year points begin at zero (0) points, starting with the first TSDA-sanctioned trial following the Finals Trial. For the Nursery Class, DOY points earned at the Finals Trial are added to DOY points earned through the end of the Nursery trial year (July 31st of the year of the finals). Nursery dogs start off the Nursery trial year (August 1st) with zero DOY points. See Attached Schedule.

J. Class Advancement: Points are accumulated by utilizing DOY Points earned by a dog in a class over the course of the previous 3 trial years. Open Ranch, Ranch, and Novice dogs earn both DOY and Advancement Points in each class. Youth Class does not accrue DOY or Advancement Points. Advancement Points begin to accumulate in a class once a dog earns its first DOY point in that class and shall continue to be recorded based on 3 previous trial years of the dog or until the dog accumulates 100% of the Advancement Points requiring compulsory advancement or advances to a higher class. DOY points retained by a dog that moves to a higher class during the trial year, for purposes of determining that year's Dog of the Year, are not to be counted as Advancement Points earned in the class to which the dog advanced.

Any dog that begins its trial year with fewer than 100% of the Advancement Points requiring compulsory advancement to a higher class may continue to run in the same class for that trial year with no restriction on the number of DOY points it can accrue. However, such a dog must move up following the TSDA Finals if it has reached or exceeded the Advancement Points. In the Novice Class, both the handler and the dog are subject to compulsory advancement. A novice handler whose dog(s), whether one or more, have collectively accumulated the number of Advancement Points requiring compulsory advancement from the Novice class for a single dog will be required to advance to a higher class. The number of Advancement Points for a dog to compulsorily advance from each class are as follows:

Open Ranch - 75 or more*

Ranch - 35 or more*

Novice - 28 or more*

Drop-Down Dogs

Regardless of class, drop-down dogs are not eligible for Dog of the Year. At any time, a handler may move a dog to a higher class but cannot drop the dog to a lower class under the same handler. (**See Special Dispensation Section). It is the responsibility of buyers and sellers to accurately represent the class status of any dog. Failure to do so may result in sanctions against either or both parties.

NURSERY DROP-DOWN DOG

- a. A Nursery dog that has competed in Open Class is classified as an Open dog for drop-down purposes.
- b. A Nursery dog that has not competed in Open Class is classified as an Open Ranch dog for drop-down purposes.

OPEN RANCH DROP-DOWN DOG

- a. An Open Ranch handler, under the following provisions, may move a dog from the Open to the Open Ranch Class:

- i. The dog will enter the Open Ranch Class with 37 points. Once it has accumulated and earned an additional 38 Advancement Points, it must move back to Open Class after the TSDA Finals for that trial year.
- iv. If an Open dog currently competing as an Open Ranch drop-down dog is subsequently sold to an Open Ranch Handler, then the sale shall be treated the same as if the new owner just moved the dog from Open Class to Open Ranch Class for the first time.

RANCH DROP-DOWN DOG

- a. A Ranch handler, under the following provisions, may move a dog from the Open or Open Ranch Class to the Ranch Class:
 - ii. The dog will enter the Ranch Class with 19 points. Once it has accumulated and earned 16 Advancement Points, it must advance to a higher class after the TSDA Finals for that trial year.
 - iv. If an Open or Open Ranch dog currently competing as a Ranch drop-down dog is subsequently sold to a Ranch Handler, then the sale shall be treated the same as if the new owner just moved the dog from Open or Open Ranch Class to Ranch Class for the first time.

NOVICE DROP-DOWN DOG

- a. A Novice handler, under the following provisions, may move a dog from the Open, Open Ranch, Nursery, or Ranch Class to the Novice Class:
 - ii. The dog will enter the Novice Class with 20 points. Once it has accumulated and earned 8 Advancement Points, it must advance to a higher class after the TSDA Finals for that trial year;
 - i. If an Open or Open Ranch dog currently competing as a Novice drop-down dog is subsequently sold to a Novice Handler, then the sale shall be treated the same as if the new owner just moved the dog from Open or Open Ranch to Novice Class for the first time.

III.

CLASS DEFINITIONS

A. OPEN CLASS

1. HANDLER

- a. An Open Handler is a national style competitor who has competed in a TSDA, USBCHA, or ISDS Open Class.
- b. This handler is eligible to compete in the Open, Open Ranch, and Nursery Classes.

2. DOG

- a. An Open dog is any dog that has competed in the Open Class.
- b. This dog may not compete in any other Class with an Open handler except for the Nursery Class.

B. OPEN RANCH CLASS

1. HANDLER

- a. An Open Ranch Handler is any handler who has competed in the Open, Open Ranch, or Nursery Classes.
- b. This handler is eligible to compete in the Open, Open Ranch, and Nursery or Open Ranch, Ranch, and Nursery Classes with consideration of the dog class as the basis for the class.

2. DOG

- a. An Open Ranch dog is any dog that has competed in Open Ranch Class or Nursery Class, but not in Open Class (See Drop-Down Dog Section).
- c. This dog may have been started in the Open Ranch Class or advanced from the Ranch Class.
- d. An Open Ranch Class dog may advance to Open Class by the choice of the handler; but once advanced, the dog may no longer compete in Open Ranch Class.
- e. Any Open Ranch dog earning 75 or more Advancement Points in the class must move up to Open Class after the TSDA Finals for that trial year.

C. NURSERY CLASS

1. HANDLER

- a. Any Open or Open Ranch handler may compete in the Nursery Class.
- b. The handler must submit a copy of the dog's registration certificate prior to going to the post.
 - i. Certificates not available at that time have a thirty (30) day grace period.
 - ii. Imported eligibility documents should be included with certificates.
 - iii. It is the responsibility of buyers and sellers to properly represent the class status of any dog. Failure to do so may result in sanctions against either or both parties.

2. DOG

- a. Any dog that meets the age requirement is eligible to compete in the Nursery Class.

- i. Nursery dogs who have never competed in the Open Class are treated as Open Ranch dogs regarding movement from one class to another.
- b. Age Requirements:
 - i. TSDA's nursery dog age rule is the same as USBCHA. A dog meeting TSDA's 5 qualifying run requirement is eligible to compete in Nursery Class at the TSDA Finals if its 3rd birthday falls on or after July 1st of the year in which the TSDA Finals trial is held.
 - ii. Dogs imported from outside the United States, younger than one (1) year of age, may compete in the Nursery Class under the same eligibility requirements as domestically whelped dogs.
- c. Nursery dogs start off the Nursery trial year (August 1st) with zero DOY points.

D. RANCH CLASS

1. HANDLER

- a. A Ranch Handler is any handler who has competed in the Ranch Class but has not competed in a class comparable to Open Ranch, Nursery or Open Classes.
- b. This handler is eligible to compete in the Ranch Class.
- c. This handler may compete in the Ranch Class with a dog that has a history of Open, Nursery, or Open Ranch Class competition (see Drop-Down Dog provisions below).
- d. Any handler may participate in a Ranch Class in an "exhibition" run. Exhibition runs do not earn points for Dog of the Year and do not count as qualifying points for the TSDA Finals.
- e. It is the responsibility of buyers and sellers to properly represent the class status of any dog. Failure to do so may result in sanctions against either or both parties.

2. DOG

- a. A Ranch Class dog may advance to the Open or Open Ranch Class by the choice of the handler; but once advanced, or once the dog runs in Nursery Class, the dog may no longer run in Ranch Class except in an exhibition run or in compliance with the Drop-Down Dog rules.
- b. Any Ranch dog earning 35 or more Advancement Points in the class must advance to Open or Open Ranch Class after the TSDA Finals for that trial year.

E. NOVICE CLASS

1. PURPOSE:

To give a beginning-level handler and dog the experience necessary to be competitive at a higher level.

2. HANDLER

- a. A Novice handler is any person who has not competed higher than a beginner/started level.
- b. This handler may compete in the Novice Class with a dog that has a history of Open, Nursery, Open Ranch, or Ranch Class competition (see Drop-Down Dog provisions).
- c. A novice handler whose dog(s), including drop-down dogs, whether one or more, have collectively accumulated the number of Advancement Points for a single dog to compulsorily advance from Novice Class will be required to advance to a higher class, after the TSDA Finals for that trial year.

3. DOG

- a. Any Novice dog earning 28 or more Advancement Points in the class must advance to a higher class after the TSDA Finals for that trial year.
- b. A Novice Class dog may advance to Ranch or Open Ranch Class by the choice of the handler; but once advanced, or once the dog runs in Nursery Class, the dog may no longer run in Novice Class unless the dog otherwise qualifies as a Novice Drop-Down Dog.

F. YOUTH CLASS

1. HANDLER

- a. Any youth sixteen (16) years of age or younger at the time of the trial may enter the Youth Class.
- b. The TSDA sanctioning fee is waived. However, a youth shall be required to pay other fees (e.g. stock charge), set by the trial host and/or trial committee for the Youth class. Trial hosts are encouraged to promote the Youth Class by waiving or offering reduced entry fees to participants in the Youth Class.
- c. Handlers in this class are drawn and compete within the Novice Class.
- d. The judge scores the Youth Class.
- e. Token prizes/certificates, but not cash, may be awarded for participation in the Youth Class.
- f. A youth may elect to run simultaneously in both the Youth and Novice Classes and compete for Novice Class prizes and money under the following circumstances:
 - (i) the youth does not use a Mentor during his or her run; and
 - (ii) the youth pay the full entry fee (including the TSDA sanctioning fee) set by the trial host for the Novice Class.

2. MENTOR

- a. A Youth Handler may elect to have a Mentor present to coach the handler during their run.
- b. When a Youth Class run commences at the post, the Mentor may be present at the post, but may not leave the post, once the handler moves to the pen. The Mentor, however, may continue to coach from the post while the handler attempts to pen.
- c. When a Youth Class run commences from the pen, the Mentor shall stand and coach from a location designated in advance by the trial host, trial committee, or the trial judge. The mentor must remain at the designated location until the end of the run. The Mentor's coaching location shall be selected with the goal of minimizing or eliminating the influence that the Mentor's presence will have on the sheep while penning is in progress.

3. DOG

- a. Any dog may run in this class: Open, Open Ranch, Nursery, Ranch, or Novice. A dog's participation in a Youth class by a Youth handler does not disqualify the dog from running in another class at the same trial.
- b. A dog that runs in Youth Class alone does not earn Novice Class Advancement Points.
- c. A dog that runs simultaneously in both the Youth Class and the Novice Class will earn Novice Class Advancement Points.

IV.

GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES

A. RULE ACCEPTANCE

1. By entering a TSDA trial, each competitor, whether a member, acknowledges that participation is a privilege, not a right, and accepts all rules contained herein, rules and/or policies adopted hereafter by the Board of Directors, and rules adopted by the trial host, course director, or judge as permitted in these Rules.

B. TRIALS

1. For each TSDA trial event, all entrants must sign TSDA's form of Release and Statement of Responsibility, included as part of the entry form, before competing in the event.
2. Each trial host has the option to limit the number of dogs per handler entered in each class, as well as to limit the total number of runs in each class or event.
3. When electing to take advantage of TSDA's online entry system, the trial host should provide a three-day initial trial entry window (the "3-Day Window") for the purpose of treating all entries received during that time equally.
4. Entry fees are payable to the person indicated on TSDA's website.

5. After the trial, the trial host will approve the payback amounts before submitting the information to TSDA for payment. In the event TSDA accepts the entry fees, the TSDA office fee will apply.
6. No entries are accepted after the cutoff date for trials.
 - a. Entrants may be put on a waiting list.
 - b. The trial host may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
7. Judge announcements must be posted before the cancellation deadline.
8. Entries are not accepted once a class is underway.
9. The use of the TSDA online system will add a charge of \$2.00 per run to cover all the expenses incurred in providing support, and use of TSDA equipment, checks, supplies, postage, and utilization of the online/payout entry system. The Board of Directors sets this fee, which will be posted to the TSDA website.
10. The TSDA secretary will furnish scoreboard sheets and a time clock. A run order may be furnished if requested by the trial committee or by the trial host.
11. The complete run order must be drawn up before the first entry in a class proceeding to the post.
12. Entry fees will not be refunded after the published trial entry cancellation date.
 - a. Trial hosts may make exceptions in meritorious cases.
 - b. Trial hosts may allow substitution of dogs in meritorious cases.
13. A draw in a run order consists of a dog/handler team.
 - a. An entry must run in order drawn, except for a trial event where a handler is running dogs on two separate fields during the event. In the event a handler is running dogs on two separate fields with insufficient time for the handler to run in the order drawn on both fields, then in such an event the run in the more advanced class has priority. The course director shall schedule the handler's run in the less advanced classes as near the original order drawn as is reasonably practicable under the circumstances.
 - b. A handler cannot name the order in which his/her dog shall run.
 - c. A random or rotation drawn by the trial committee, someone appointed by the trial committee, or by the trial host, determines the run order. Run order draws should take into consideration handlers entered with multiple dogs, handlers participating in multiple classes, and handlers assisting in trial-related tasks (e.g., judging other classes, set out, exhaust, etc.) in the run order and be as fair as reasonably practicable to all entered handlers.
14. Should a handler's entries be drawn back-to-back or with only one draw between runs, entries are drawn and inserted so the handler has two draws separating his/her runs.
 - a. If it is not possible to separate a handler's runs by at least two (2) draws, that handler shall be allowed sufficient time to secure the dog and bring the next dog to the post without the risk of forfeiting his/her run for being tardy to the post.
 - b. All classes are to be drawn in a manner consistent with these Rules.

15. Score sheets are checked and posted by the trial secretary in an area not readily accessible to the judge.
 - a. Total scores only are posted as soon as reasonably practicable.
 - b. Point deductions are posted as soon as reasonably practicable after the last contestant in a class has run.
16. Once a class starts, the method of spotting livestock cannot be changed. It may be changed at the start of another class. Should it be necessary to change the method of spotting livestock before the end of a class, all competitors who ran using the first method must be given the option of a re-run.
17. The TSDA secretary must receive the original score sheets, as filled out by the judge and clerk, for every sanctioned class run during a trial. A trial host may use their own score sheet but is encouraged to use the form provided on the TSDA website.
18. Each entry fee will include a TSDA sanctioning fee of \$3.50 per run, set by the Board of Directors, to be paid to the TSDA.
19. Any dog may run in an exhibition, ad hoc, or "jackpot" class without affecting their TSDA class standing. No Dog of the Year points are awarded.
20. Deviations from TSDA Rules may result in sanctions.
21. For a trial host to recover for loss or damage to sheep, the trial host must have posted a maximum limit for sheep loss/damage (per head) on the website prior to the trial opening for entries.
22. A trial host may limit the number of entries in each class and must post the limitations on the TSDA website.
23. No dog can be entered by two different handlers at any trial or class except for youth handlers.
24. The trial host, in consultation with the judge and course director, must set the time limit for runs in each class before the trial commences. After the trial begins, the time limit may be modified after consultation between the trial host, judge, and course director, as long as the modification is fairly applied to all handlers in each class.

C. Payout: The division of premium money is at the trial host's discretion, including if there are no qualified scores in a class. A handler may not be paid more than two (2) premiums per class.

D. EXHIBITION: Trial hosts have the option of allowing exhibition runs during the trial. These runs are non-competitive and have no class restrictions. The handler must pay the TSDA fee plus any fee required by the trial host and/or trial committee, e.g. stock charge. The handler does not receive prizes or money, nor does the dog receive Dog of the Year points. A dog may not run exhibition and then compete in another class during the same trial (e.g., a dog may run exhibition in the Open Ranch Class, then compete in the Ranch Class in the same trial).

E. JUDGES

1. All TSDA-sanctioned trials are judged in accordance with the United States Border Collie Handlers Association (“USBCHA”) Rules and Sheepdog Judging Guidelines.
2. By accepting an invitation to act at any (TSDA) sponsored trials judges will be expected to judge strictly according to the rules laid down by USBCHA and TSDA and agree that they will not unduly favor any dog or competitor. Judges should be familiar with all applicable rules, and these rules should be readily available for review during judging.
3. Only a secretary, clerk, timekeeper, and/or course director may sit with the judge.
4. The judge should describe the trial field boundaries.
5. Distractions to the judge should be limited.
6. The judge has the authority to disqualify any entry in the Judge’s sole and absolute discretion. Reasons for disqualification include, but are not limited to, foul language by the handler while on the trial field, abuse of livestock (e.g., excessive chasing or gripping), and/or abuse of a dog.
7. All decisions of the judge are final.
8. Judges have sole discretion to order a re-run in the interest of fairness to the handler (e.g., sudden disability of livestock not caused by the dog, extrinsic disruption of the run by a loose dog or wildlife, etc.). Re-runs may be given immediately or scheduled later in the same class at the Judge’s discretion.
9. If two or more competitors stand equal in total points, the judge(s) shall settle their priority by 1) totaling their points for the outrun, lift, and fetch (outrun + lift + fetch = total gather points) and then proceed to the next phase of work = drive, shed, pen (or pen, shed). If this does not resolve the tie, go back to consider the outrun, then lift, then fetch, or 2) by ordering a re-run tie breaker of any kind, or 3) dividing the prize money involved. In cases of equality where a trophy is at stake and the judge orders re-runs, the re-run will decide not only the trophy but also all case prizes involved.
10. Except at TSDA-hosted events or the TSDA Finals, TSDA does not select, approve, endorse, or pay judges. It is the trial host’s duty to select and contract with the judge.
11. A judge may call for a personal break at any time during the trial.
12. If a judge is unable to perform their duties, the trial host must find a replacement.
13. It is the trial host’s responsibility to provide a judge, clerk, and secretary.
14. A judge may compete in a class other than the class that they judge.
15. Handlers may not question the judge about their run during the class. Judges, at their discretion, may discuss runs with handlers after the class is completed.
16. The judge may stop a dog at any point of a trial run and order a re-run if circumstances warrant such action. The judge may award a complete re-run or resume the run after correcting the circumstances leading to the stop. A resumed run will commence where the original run was stopped, and points and deductions given before the stop remain as previously judged.

17. With few exceptions left to the judge's discretion, a re-run should be ordered if the wrong number of sheep have been let out, sheep are wrongly marked, or one or more sheep is unsound for working, or other unforeseeable circumstances. In these cases, the judge shall decide if the re-run will commence at the beginning and, if not, at which point it will start. If it is decided that the re-run starts at any point other than the beginning, the points scored up to the point of rerun shall stand. When a re-run is granted, the handler shall send the dog in the same direction as the original run unless otherwise instructed by the Judge.

F. COURSE DIRECTOR

1. The trial host, trial committee, or TSDA secretary may appoint a course director.

If more than one person is designated as a course director, they should:

- i. Carry out all duties at different times during the trial.
- ii. Carry out the specific duties that have been divided between those designated.
- iii. Carry out duties as directed by the trial host/committee.

2. The course director's duties include, but are not limited to:

- a. Handling complaints.
- b. Maintaining the run order.
- c. Determining the method of exhausting stock. The course director may:
 - i. Appoint someone to exhaust.
 - ii. Require competitors to exhaust the run that follows them.

3. The course director should always be available and attentive while dogs are running.

4. All complaints must be filed with the course director. If the course director is unwilling or unable to handle the complaint, it should be brought to the attention of the trial host.

G. OTHER

1. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to amend any rule(s) by majority vote. Rule changes and/or new rules made during the trial year will go into effect 30 days after the rule change is approved, unless the change will affect year-end issues such as DOY, advancement points, or handler status. In those cases, the rule will go into effect with the first trial of the next trial season.

2. In a case where the number of handlers placed in a class is less than the number of places paid, the trial host and/or trial committee has discretion to distribute the remaining payout fund. They may:

- a. Split all remaining funds between placing handlers.
- b. If there are no handlers placed in the class, then the handler payout fund for that class may be retained by the trial host or disbursed at the trial host's discretion.

3. The minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings are published on the TSDA website. The minutes will state how each director voted. All proposed changes to these rules or guidelines must be published on the TSDA website for at least 48 hours prior to any vote thereon by the Board of Directors.
4. The Board has the authority to act on hardship situations on a case-by-case basis.
5. **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:** The Board of Directors has the authority to set disciplinary action for any valid written complaint filed with a course director or the board. If a course director is unable or unwilling to handle a complaint, the next course of action is through the Board. A complaint made after the trial must be filed with the Board, in writing, within fourteen (14) days of the infraction or the complaint will be dismissed. Examples of infractions include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - b. Offensive language.
 - c. Disrespect to sponsoring host, labor, judge(s), or trial director
 - d. Abuse to animals.
 - e. Misrepresentation of dog or handler classifications.
6. Grievances may be filed with the TSDA Grievance Committee. The grievance process will follow that of USBCHA rules, with the exception that grievances will be filed with the TSDA committee for handling. Disciplinary actions resulting from the committee will also follow USBCHA rules.

H. TSDA FINALS: Each class, except for the Youth Class, is represented at the TSDA Finals trials. Trophies are awarded to the TSDA Finals champion in each class. TSDA Finals champions are determined by their performance at the TSDA Finals. To be eligible for the TSDA Finals, a dog competing in Open, Open Ranch, Nursery, Ranch, and Novice Classes must compete in 5 TSDA trials (each trial a "Qualifying Run") in its class during the year of the TSDA Finals. In the event a dog is voluntarily advanced from a lower class to a higher class during the year of the TSDA Finals, the runs from both classes will be treated as Qualifying Runs for the class into which the dog advanced. Non-members and Open & Nursery dogs without 5 Qualifying Runs (collectively "Non-Qualifiers") will nevertheless be allowed to compete in the TSDA Finals in the Open and Nursery classes but will not be eligible to become the TSDA State champion in either class. In addition, Open Class Non-Qualifiers will not be eligible to compete in the double lift final.

The trial year for Open, Open Ranch, Ranch, and Novice Classes begins with the first trial after the TSDA Finals. To be eligible to become the TSDA Finals champion, a Nursery dog must compete in 5 TSDA trials (each trial also a "Qualifying Run") during the immediately preceding Nursery Class trial year. The trial year for the Nursery Class begins on August 1st and ends on July 31st of the following year. All Qualifying Runs for Nursery Class must be completed on or before July 31st of the year in which the TSDA Finals are held. A Nursery dog to be eligible to become the TSDA Finals champion in the Open or Open Ranch classes must have 5 Qualifying

Runs in the class it will compete in at the TSDA Finals. In the event a Nursery dog is voluntarily advanced from Open Ranch Class to Open Class during the year of the TSDA Finals, then the Qualifying Runs from both Open Ranch and Open classes will be treated as Open Class Qualifying Runs. TSDA's nursery dog age rule is the same as that of the United States Border Collie Handlers Association ("USBCHA"). A dog is eligible to compete in Nursery Class at the TSDA Finals if its 3rd birthday falls on or after July 1st of the year in which the TSDA Finals trial is held. Nursery dogs that qualify to become the TSDA Finals Nursery Class champion, but which are no longer considered to be USBCHA Nursery dogs, will be removed from the run order results prior to reporting the TSDA Finals Nursery Class results to USBCHA. The TSDA Finals champion for each class will be the highest-placing TSDA member with five qualifying runs.

1. Handlers are responsible for all entry fees. No refunds will be given after the cancellation date except at the Board's discretion for extenuating circumstances.
2. Entry fees must be paid prior to going to the post.
3. The Open Class will have double lift finals.
 - a. The course size may be modified.
 - b. The double lift will have two (2) groups of sheep.
 - c. DETERMINING RUNS: The following are guidelines as to how the runs will be determined at the Finals. These guidelines may be modified at the **discretion** of the Board to reflect the availability of sheep, number of entries, location of the course, weather, daylight, or any other factor(s) that could influence the organization or conduct of the Finals.

1. 75 entries or fewer: two (2) go-rounds plus a clean slate at a 20% runback final for all classes. The Open final is to be a double lift course.

2. 76 entries or more: two (2) go-rounds with combined scores determining the places for the finals in Open Ranch, Ranch, Novice, and Nursery. The Open final is to be a 20% clean slate, run-back, double-lift course.

Appendix:

Dog of the Year Points Schedule (all classes):

# Entries	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
3 - 5	1									
6 - 8	2	1								
9 - 11	3	2	1							
12 - 14	4	3	2	1						
15 - 17	5	4	3	2	1					
18 - 20	6	5	4	3	2	1				
21 - 23	7	6	5	4	3	2	1			
ETC.										