

*Revised 4.10.20*

## **Rally Freestyle Elements Musical Freestyle**

Rally Freestyle Elements (hereafter RFE) offers titles in Musical Freestyle in addition to titles in Rally-FrEe. Musical Freestyle is a natural extension of Rally-FrEe, which was developed as a sport to improve the quality of, and participation in, Musical Freestyle. In RFE Musical Freestyle, dog-and-handler teams may compete at hosted live events or via coordinated video events.

### **Musical Freestyle**

This is an amateur canine performance sport showcasing the creativity and training skills of a dog-and-handler team in an entertaining performance choreographed to music. RFE musical freestyle trainers use positive reinforcement training methods to strengthen teamwork and foster a reciprocal learning process between dog and handler, which results in a wide variety of creative dog behaviors and handler movements in their routines. Within RFE Musical Freestyle, there are two categories: Freestyle and In Sync.

### **Freestyle**

This category incorporates a wide range of creative dog behaviors and handler movements in a performance in which both partners are actively participating and evaluated. The performance is an entertaining, choreographed interpretation of the theme and tempo of a piece of music. There are no restrictions on the moves and behaviors the dog and handler may perform, as long as they are safe for the dog, handler and spectators.

### **In Sync**

This category highlights movement in unison by the dog-and-handler team in a performance in which both are actively participating and evaluated. The performance is an entertaining, choreographed interpretation of the theme and tempo of a piece of music. In the In Sync performance, the dog-and-handler team will move as one, in close proximity to each other, while portraying the theme and tempo of the music. In the In Sync category, some behaviors, such as leg weaves, are limited. (See In Sync judging guidelines for limitations.)

## **Getting Started**

### **Membership**

Membership in RFE is required for one year when a handler registers his or her first dog-and-handler team. Subsequent yearly membership is optional. Member benefits include discounted entry fees, discounts on workshops and seminars hosted by RFE, and RFE retail products. RFE members will also have online access to titling records and exclusive training resources on the “Members Only” page.

## **Team Registration**

RFE Musical Freestyle is a canine performance sport performed by a team consisting of a dog and a handler. Registration is by team, which is a unique dog-and-handler combination. Handlers competing with multiple dogs must register with each dog as a team. Dogs may be registered in one or more dog-and-handler teams. A handler is defined as the person who trains and shows the dog. Handlers may not be paid for their services.

All dog-and-handler teams must be registered with Rally Freestyle Elements prior to competing in an RFE Musical Freestyle event. This one-time registration fee covers recording the team's qualifying scores and all titles conveyed by Rally Freestyle Elements. A single registration is required to participate in either or both Rally-FrEe and Musical Freestyle events. Only RFE members may register a dog and handler team

Handlers may join RFE and register their team for competition by clicking on the "members" link on the RFE website home page. At the member's page, click the "join now" button, fill out the form and submit online.

## **Fees**

Membership and team registration:

First-year membership and lifetime registration of first dog-and-handler team: \$42

Lifetime registration of each additional dog-and-handler team: \$22

Optional subsequent yearly membership: \$20

Entry fees per competition entry:

Titling Classes:

Singles: \$24 for members; \$28 for non-members

Brace (1 handler, 2 dogs): \$24 for members; \$28 for non-members

Pairs (2 dog-and-handler teams): \$36 for members; \$40 for non-members

Teams (3 to 8 dog-and-handler teams): \$48 for members; \$52 for non-members

Non-titling Classes: \$18 for members; \$20 for non-members

Rally Freestyle Elements is owned by Creative Canine, LLC. All correspondence, questions and requests for information or hosting should be directed to:

Rally Freestyle Elements

Address: 1379 N 9th, Philomath, OR 97370

Phone: 541-929-3915

E-mail: [info@rallyfree.com](mailto:info@rallyfree.com)

Website: [www.RallyFree.com](http://www.RallyFree.com)

## **Etiquette and Decorum of the Sport**

The atmosphere of RFE Musical Freestyle events is relaxed and supportive. Both experienced and new freestylers are welcome. RFE expects exhibitors to uphold not only exemplary sportsmanlike conduct

throughout the competition, but also to act respectfully and supportively toward their dogs, fellow exhibitors, spectators, event organizers and officials. It is each participant's responsibility to foster a supportive and inspiring experience at RFE events.

### **Exhibitor Information**

Purebred and mixed breed dogs are welcomed to participate in RFE Musical Freestyle events. A dog or puppy of any age may enter the non-titling class. However, a dog must be at least one year old to enter in titling classes. Intact, spayed or neutered dogs may participate.

Bitches in season are not allowed on event grounds. RFE will refund entry fees less a \$10 processing fee if a bitch comes into season prior to an event. Refund requests must be submitted no later than five days prior to the event. Exhibitors should email [info@rallyfree.com](mailto:info@rallyfree.com) to request a refund.

Food and/or toy reinforcers are not allowed in the ring during a performance in the titling classes, except for the Provisional Division. However, verbal praise is encouraged.

No correction-based collars (chain, pinch, choke) are allowed on event grounds. Squeakers and other noise-emitting toys should not be used on the event site.

Attire and costuming for dogs is limited to decorative collars. Dogs may wear non-decorative harnesses. No other costuming, clothing or adornment for dogs is allowed, including coat dyes or decorative clips or cuts. A plain elastic band or clip may be used for the sole purpose of tying hair or coat off the dog's face and eyes of long coated breeds.

Handlers are encouraged to use verbal praise during a performance. They may not have food reinforcers in the ring during sound checks or titling class performances with the exception of the Provisional classes. Nor may they use food while still in the ring immediately following a performance. Handlers *may* choose to reward their dogs in the ring by playing with a toy for several seconds. A handler wishing to have a toy available should give his or her toy to the ring steward when entering the ring. The steward will meet the handler at the ring exit and hand the toy to the handler following his or her performance. At no time are toys allowed to be thrown into the ring.

Leashes are allowed in the Regular Division Newcomer and Entry classes, the Youth Division Starters, Entry and Expert classes and all Challenge classes in the Alternative Division. All other classes must be performed off-leash.

Acting judges may compete in events and either be judged by another judge in attendance or may take a video of their performance and send back to RFE for judging. Acting judges will compete for qualifying scores only and are not eligible for placements. Prior to entering, acting judges should contact RFE to ensure that another judge will be in attendance or to inform RFE that they will be videoing their performance for judging.

### **Ring Size**

The recommended ring dimensions are 30 feet by 60 feet for both live events and video entries. The RFE Musical Freestyle ring may not be smaller than 1,800 square feet, with the exception of video events only

for exhibitors entered in the Challenge sub-division. See requirements to enter the Challenge classes in the description of Alternative division classes.

### **Props**

Exhibitors who choose to use props as part of their routines will have 1 minute to set up their props inside the ring. Teamwork score is affected for those Exhibitors going over the 1 minute restriction. Exhibitors may have someone help them bring props to *the ring entrance or gates* but may not have another person enter the ring to aid with prop set up or removal (There may be possible exemptions in the Alternative classes on an individual basis, at the discretion of the judge). Exhibitors may take props over the gates and are not required to bring props through the ring entrance. More information regarding the use of props is found in the *Guiding Principles and Judging Criteria*.

### **Use of Music**

The length of music used by an exhibitor is limited and indicated by class. Music is timed during each exhibitor's performance. The time begins when the music starts and ends when there is an obvious end to the performance or the music ends, whichever occurs first.

Rally Freestyle Elements holds licenses with both ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Artists and Publishers) and BMI (Broadcast Music Incorporated) to cover music played at all live RFE events. RFE recommends exhibitors verify that the music they use during a performance is listed with one of these organizations. Exhibitors using music not listed with either the BMI or ASCAP are responsible to ensure they are not violating copyright laws.

For video events exhibitors should check to ensure that their music is playable under copyright laws on the video sharing site they are using. To find out if your music is playable under YouTube music licensing, [please view this tutorial](#) found on the YouTube site.

Music commissioned and composed, either for or by the exhibitor, or music in the public domain ([www.pdinfo.com](http://www.pdinfo.com)) may also be used.

Exhibitors:

To check if your music is listed with BMI, go to the BMI website [www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com). Click on the search oval on the top right side of the home page and choose "Search BMI Repertoire." Enter the title or artist in the search box and click "search." A song may be listed with more one artist, so be sure to check if your music's artist is listed. If BMI covers the song, a page will open with the BMI work number listing information on the artist so you can check to ensure you have found the correct version of the song. To check if your music is listed with ASCAP, go to the ASCAP website, [www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com). Click on "ACE/Repertory Find Titles, Writers, Publishers and more" in the upper right corner. Enter the performer or title of your music in the search box and click "GO." Note: If you search by title, you may find your song has been recorded by several artists. If this is the case, scroll through the results to find the artist's name. When you find the correct name, there will be an IPI number confirming the license to use the song. If you cannot find the artist's name for your music under a title search, begin a new search using the artist's name rather than the title. If a search by the artist's name does not return a correct match for your music, then search the BMI website. Most artists will be found listed with either BMI or ASCAP.

# Categories

## **Category Standards: Freestyle**

In the Freestyle category, any dog behavior or handler move is acceptable as long as it is safe for the dog, handler and spectators.

Scoring for Freestyle is based on two principle elements: Training and Choreography. Training elements include “Content and Execution,” “Creativity and Difficulty,” and “Quality of Teamwork and Engagement.” Choreography elements include “Musicality and Interpretation,” and “Transitions, Flow and Use of Performance Area.”

Handlers’ attire and costuming should relate to their interpretation of the music. Attire and costuming for dogs is limited to decorative collars.

Props may be used in the dog-and-handler teams’ interpretation of the music or as part of trained behaviors. Props must be viewed by the judge as integral to the routine. This means the prop adds significantly to the interpretation and without the prop, the routine would be lacking. Props may not be used as obvious training aids; for example, a prop may not be used as a physical guide, target stick or lure. If a judge determines a prop is used as a training aid or is not integral to the routine, scoring in “Content and Execution” is affected.

## **Category Standards: In Sync**

In the In Sync category, the dog-and-handler team should perform behaviors with no significant distance between the two members of the team. The performance should appear as if the team is virtually connected. The image should be of a dog and handler interwoven or intertwined with each other while moving with synchronicity and interaction. Deviation from the requirement of very close proximity affects scoring in both “Content and Execution” and “Quality of Teamwork and Engagement.”

Scoring for In Sync is based on two principle elements: Training and Choreography. Training elements include “Content and Execution,” “Creativity and Difficulty,” and “Quality of Teamwork and Engagement.” Choreography elements include “Musicality and Interpretation,” and “Transitions, Flow and Use of Performance Area.”

Some behaviors are limited in In Sync performances. The dog passing through the handler’s legs is limited to a single transition at a time to move the dog to a different position relative to the handler. The number of total transitions requiring the dog to pass through the handler’s legs should be minimal. One or more behaviors should be executed between occurrences of this type of transition.

A performance in which the dog executes behaviors with two or more feet off the ground will not be penalized as long as the dog remains in close proximity to its handler. If distance from the handler is increased as a result of choreographed or cued jumps, scoring in both “Content and Execution” and “Quality of Teamwork and Engagement” is affected.

Handlers’ attire and costuming should relate to their interpretation of the music. Attire and costuming for dogs is limited to decorative collars.

Props may be used in the dog-and-handler teams' interpretation of the music or as part of trained behaviors. Props must be viewed by the judge as integral to the routine. This means the prop adds significantly to the interpretation and without the prop, the routine would be lacking. Props may not be used as obvious training aids; for example, a prop may not be used as a physical guide, target stick or lure. If a judge determines a prop is used as a training aid or is not integral to the routine, scoring in "Content and Execution" is affected.

## Divisions, Options and Classes

There are five divisions in RFE Musical Freestyle. These divisions apply to both Freestyle and In Sync categories. In all classes dogs must be 1 year or older to compete.

**Youth** – for handlers ages 9-17

**Regular** – for any age handler

**Elite** – For teams that have earned their CH or GrCH in the regular classes

**Alternative** (Senior, Veteran, Challenge) – for dogs and/or handlers that feel limited by age or health considerations

**Provisional** – for handlers that would like to provide reinforcement during their performance

Options available in all divisions and subdivisions are:

Singles: 1 handler and 1 dog

Pairs: 2 handlers and 2 dogs

Brace: 1 handler and 2 dogs

Team: up to 8 handlers and 8 dogs in equal numbers

Classes offered for each option vary by division. Refer to division descriptions for requirements.

All divisions and options apply to both Freestyle and In Sync categories. Dog-and-handler teams may enter any division in either or both Freestyle and In Sync Categories at each titling event. They may also enter the Non-Titling Division in either or both Freestyle and In Sync at the same event.

A dog-and-handler team may enter a Division multiple times but not under the same class and option. For example: A dog-and-handler team may enter Freestyle, Regular Division, Novice, Singles, and Freestyle, Regular Division, Novice, Pairs.

A dog/handler team may not be entered in more than one titling division in the same competition unless it is under a different category (Freestyle and In Sync) or option (singles, pairs, brace, team). A team may opt to change into a different division upon hosts approval.

## Youth Division

This division is for first-time exhibitors ages 9–17. First-time 17-year-old exhibitors may enter either the Regular Division or the Youth Division. Youth exhibitors may perform with their dog on-leash for all classes except the Youth Championship class, in which they must perform with the dogs off-leash. Youth exhibitors

with qualifying legs or titles may remain in the Youth Division until they have earned a Youth Championship or until their eighteenth birthday, whichever comes first.

Options in the Youth Division are singles, pairs, brace, and team.

Classes in the Youth Division are Starters, Entry, Expert and Champion.

Youth Division Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options

**Youth Starters:** This class is for Youth exhibitors who have never entered a Musical Freestyle event with RFE or any other musical freestyle organization. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:00–1:45 minutes. A Youth Starters dog-and-handler team must earn a minimum of 50 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Youth Starters exhibitors will be awarded the Star Youth title.

**Youth Entry:** This class is for Youth exhibitors who have earned their Star Youth title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:00 minutes. A Youth Entry dog-and-handler team must earn a minimum of 55 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Youth Entry exhibitors will be awarded the Shooting Star title.

**Youth Expert:** This class is for Youth exhibitors who have earned their Shooting Star title.

This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:00 minutes. A Youth Expert dog-and-handler team must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Youth Expert exhibitors will be awarded the Super Star title.

**Youth Champion:** This class is for Youth exhibitors who have earned their Super Star title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:15 minutes. A Youth Champion dog-and-handler team must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Youth Champion exhibitors will be awarded the Champion Shining Star title.

## Regular Division Classes

Options in the Regular Division are singles, pairs, brace and team.

Classes in the Regular Division are Newcomer, Entry, Entry Encore, Novice, Novice Encore, Intermediate, Intermediate Encore, Advanced, Advanced Encore, Champion, Champion Encore, Grand Champion and Grand Champion Encore.

**Regular Division Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options**

**Newcomer:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have never entered a musical freestyle event with RFE or any other musical freestyle organization. Exhibitors in this class may perform on-leash, but at least one qualifying score must be performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15

minutes. A Newcomer exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, at least one with the dog off-leash, Newcomer exhibitors will be awarded their Newcomer title (MF/NC or InS/NC) and are then eligible to enter the Novice class.

Titled Newcomers may choose to enter the Entry class to gain more experience before entering the Novice class. If Newcomers choose to enter the Entry class, they may complete that title or enter the Novice class at any time after receiving their NC title.

**Entry:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned the Newcomer title (MF/NC or InS/NC) or have earned a freestyle title with another dog in any other musical freestyle organization. Exhibitors in this class may perform on-leash, but at least one qualifying score must be performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. An Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, at least one with the dog off-leash, Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Entry title (MF/E or InS/E) and are eligible to enter the Novice class.

**Encore Entry:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Entry title (MF/E or InS/E), but have not yet earned their Novice title. Exhibitors in this class may perform on-leash, but at least one qualifying score must be performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. An Encore Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, at least one with the dog off-leash, Encore Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Entry title (MF/EE or InS/EE) and are eligible to enter the Novice class. Encore Entry exhibitors may remain in this class and continue earning Encore Entry titles, up until they earn their Novice title.

**Novice:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Newcomer title (MF/NC or InS/NC) or their Entry title (MF/E or InS/E). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Novice title (MF/N or InS/N) and are eligible to enter the Intermediate class.

**Encore Novice:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Novice titles (MF/N or InS/N), but have not yet earned their Intermediate title. Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Encore Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Novice title (MF/NE or InS/NE) and are eligible to enter the Intermediate class. Encore Novice exhibitors may remain in this class and continue earning Encore Novice titles, up until they earn their Intermediate title.

**Intermediate:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Novice title (MF/N or InS/N). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:00–2:45 minutes. An Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Excellent title (MF/X or InS/X) and are eligible to enter the Advanced Class.

**Encore Intermediate:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Intermediate title (MF/X or InS/X), but have not yet earned their Advanced title. Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:00–2:45 minutes. An Encore Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Encore Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Excellent title (MF/XE or InS/XE) and are eligible to enter the Advanced Class. Encore Intermediate exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Intermediate titles, up until they earn their Master title.

**Advanced:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Excellent title (MF/X or InS/X). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Masters title (MF/M or InS/M) and are eligible to enter the Champion class.

**Encore Advanced:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Master title (MF/M or InS/M), but have not yet earned their Champion title. Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Encore Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Master title (MF/ME or InS/ME) and are eligible to enter the Champion class. Encore Advanced exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Master titles, up until they have earned their Champion title.

**Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Master title (MF/M or InS/M). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. A Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Championship title (MF/CH or InS/CH) and are eligible to enter the Grand Champion class.

**Encore Champion:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Champion title (MF/CH or InS/CH), but have not yet earned their Grand Champion title. Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Encore Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Champion title (MF/CHE or InS/CHE) and are eligible to enter the Grand Champion class. Encore Champion exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Champion titles, up until they earn their Grand Champion title.

**Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Championship title (MF/CH or InS/CH). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 3:00–4:00 minutes. A Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 95 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning five qualifying scores, Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Grand Champion title (MF/GrCH or InS/GrCH). Grand Champion exhibitors who earn their Grand Champion title may continue to compete in this class.

**Encore Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Grand Championship title (MF/GrCH or InS/GrCH) and would like to continue to show in Musical Freestyle or In Sync. Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 3:00-4:00 minutes. An Encore Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 95 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning five qualifying scores, Encore Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Grand Champion title (MF/GrCHE or InS/GrCHE). Encore Grand Champion exhibitors who earn their Encore Grand Champion title may remain in this class indefinitely.

## Elite Division

### Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options

The Elite classes are for those dog-and-handler-teams who have earned their Championships or Grand Championships in the regular classes. There are no encore classes in the Elite division.

**Elite Novice:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned either their Champion title (MF/CH or InS/CH) or their Grand Champion title (MF/GrCH or InS/GrCH). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:00–2:45 minutes. An Elite Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two (2) qualifying scores, Elite Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Elite Novice title (MF/EN or InS/EN) and are eligible to enter the Elite Intermediate class.

**Elite Intermediate:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Elite Novice title (MF/EN or InS/EN). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Elite Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two (2) qualifying scores, Elite Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Elite Excellent title (MF/EX or InS/EX) and are eligible to enter the Elite Advanced Class.

**Elite Advanced:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Elite Excellent title (MF/EX or InS/EX). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Elite Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two (2) qualifying scores, Elite Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Master title (MF/EM or InS/EM) and are eligible enter the Elite Champion class.

**Elite Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Elite Master title (MF/EM or InS/EM). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Elite Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two (2) qualifying scores, Elite Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Elite Championship title (MF/ECH or InS/ECH) and are eligible to enter the Elite Grand Champion class.

**Elite Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Elite Championship title (MF/ECH or InS/ECH). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 3:00-4:00 minutes. An Elite Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 95 out of 100 points

in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two (2) qualifying scores, Elite Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Elite Grand Champion title (MF/EGrCH or InS/EGrCH).

## **Alternative Division Subdivisions and Classes**

There are three subdivisions in the Alternative Division. These are Senior, Veteran, and Challenge.

The options for each subdivision are singles, pairs, brace, and team.

Classes in these subdivisions are Entry, Entry Encore, Novice, Novice Encore, Intermediate, Intermediate Encore, Advanced, Advanced Encore, Champion, Champion Encore, Grand Champion and Grand Champion Encore.

**Senior:** This subdivision is open to handlers age 65 or older. Dogs may be any age.

**Veterans:** This subdivision is open to handlers age 18 or older. Dogs must be eight years or older.

**Challenge:** This subdivision is open to any dog-and-handler team, where either the handler or the dog overcomes challenges to participate in Musical Freestyle. These challenges may be physical (or cognitive) in respects to either dog or handler, or these challenges may be environmental in respects to not being able to meet the ring size requirement for video events. See below for further information on allowances for challenge exhibitors.

**Exhibitors entering in Alternative Divisions** with no titles in the Regular Division will start in the Entry class in one of the Alternative subdivisions (Senior, Veterans and Challenge). A dog-and-handler team may not enter the Alternative Division and the Regular Division with the same dog in the same category (Freestyle or In Sync) at the same event.

Exhibitors having earned Regular Division qualifying scores or titles who undergo a change in status may enter the Alternative Division. They are eligible to enter the Alternative Division at the equivalent class for which they qualify to enter in the Regular Division. For example, if the dog-and-handler team has a Novice title and the dog turns eight, the team may then enter the Alternative Veteran Division in the Intermediate class.

If a dog-and-handler team competing in the Alternative Division subsequently chooses to go back to the Regular Division, it would compete in the Regular Division class it would have entered had it not competed in the Alternative Division. Should the dog-and-handler team return to a Regular Division class in which it previously earned qualifying scores, those qualifying scores will apply toward the Regular Division title in that class. For example, if a dog-and-handler team with a Regular Division Novice title earns a Championship in the Senior Subdivision and then returns to the Regular Division, the team would compete in the Intermediate class in the Regular Division.

If the status of the dog or handler temporarily meets the criteria of the Alternative Division (i.e. an injury to either the dog or handler allows a move into the Challenge subdivision), the team may enter the Alternative Division on a temporary basis. However, once the injury heals, the dog-and-handler team must return to

the Regular Division in the class they would have entered prior to injury. The Alternative qualifying legs and/or titles may not be carried back into the Regular Division. When the dog-and-handler team return to a Regular Division class in which they previously earned qualifying scores, those qualifying scores will apply toward the Regular Division title in that class. A dog-and-handler team may not enter the Alternative Division and the Regular Division with the same dog in the same category (Freestyle or In Sync) at the same event.

### **Senior Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options**

**Senior Entry:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who are entering the Senior Division with no titles in the Regular Division classes. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. A Senior Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Senior Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Senior Entry title (Senior MF/E or Senior InS/E) and are eligible to enter the Senior Novice class.

**Encore Senior Entry:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Entry title (Senior MF-E or Senior InS-E), but have not yet earned their Senior Novice title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. An Encore Senior Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Senior Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Senior Entry title (Senior MF/EE or Senior InS/EE) and are eligible to enter the Senior Novice class. Encore Senior Entry exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Senior Entry titles, up until they earn their Senior Novice title.

**Senior Novice:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Entry title (Senior MF/E or Senior InS/E) or who have earned titles in the Regular Division. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Senior Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Senior Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Senior Novice title (Senior MF/N or Senior InS/N) and are eligible to enter the Intermediate class.

**Encore Senior Novice:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Novice title (Senior MF/N or Senior InS/N) or who have earned titles in the Regular Division, but have not yet earned their Senior Intermediate title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Senior Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Senior Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Senior Novice title (Senior MF/NE or Senior InS/NE) and are eligible to enter the Intermediate class. Encore Senior Novice exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Novice titles, up until they earn their Senior Intermediate title.

**Senior Intermediate:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Novice (Senior MF/N or Senior InS/N) or their Regular Division Novice title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Senior Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores,

Senior Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Senior Excellent title (Senior MF/X or Senior InS/X) and are eligible to enter the Advanced Class.

**Encore Senior Intermediate:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Intermediate (Senior MF/X or Senior InS/X) or their Regular Division Intermediate title, but have not yet earned their Senior Master title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Senior Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Senior Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Senior Excellent title (Senior MF/XE or Senior InS/XE) and are eligible to enter the Advanced Class. Encore Senior Intermediate exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Intermediate titles, up until they earn their Senior Master title.

**Senior Advanced:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Excellent (Senior MF/X or Senior InS/X) or Regular Division Excellent title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Senior Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Senior Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Senior Master title (Senior MF/M or Senior InS/M) and are eligible to enter the Senior Champion class.

**Encore Senior Advanced:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Master (Senior MF/M or Senior InS/M) or Regular Division Master title, but have not yet earned their Senior Champion title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Senior Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Senior Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Senior Master title (Senior MF/ME or Senior InS/ME) and are eligible to enter the Senior Champion class. Encore Senior Advanced exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Master titles, up until they earn their Senior Champion title.

**Senior Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Master (Senior MF/M or Senior InS/M) or their Regular Division Master title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Senior Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Senior Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Senior Championship title (Senior MF/CH or Senior InS/CH) and are eligible to enter the Senior Grand Champion class.

**Encore Senior Champion:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Master (Senior MF/CH or Senior InS/CH) or their Regular Division Master title, but have not yet earned their Senior Grand Championship title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Senior Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Senior Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Senior Championship (Senior MF/CHE or Senior InS/CHE) and are eligible to enter the Senior Grand Champion class. Encore Senior Champion exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Champion titles, up until they earn their Senior Grand Championship title.

**Senior Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Championship (Senior MF/CH or Senior InS/CH) or their Regular Division Championship title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. A Senior Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 85 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Senior Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Senior Grand Champion title (Senior MF/GCH or Senior InS/GrCH).

**Encore Senior Grand Champion:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Senior Grand Championship (Senior MF/GrCH or Senior InS/GrCH) or their Regular Division Grand Championship title, and would like to continue competing at the Grand Champion level. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Encore Senior Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 85 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Encore Senior Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Senior Grand Champion title (Senior MF/GrCHE or Senior InS/GrCHE), Encore Senior Grand Champion exhibitors may remain in this class indefinitely.

### **Veteran Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options**

**Veteran Entry:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who are entering the Veteran Division for the first time with no titles in the Regular Division classes. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. A Veteran Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Veteran Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Veteran Entry title (Veteran MF/E or Veteran InS/E) and are eligible to enter the Novice class.

**Encore Veteran Entry:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Entry (Veteran MF/E or Veteran InS/E) title, but have not yet earned their Novice title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. An Encore Veteran Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Veteran Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Veteran Entry title (Veteran MF/EE or Veteran InS/EE) and are eligible to enter the Novice class. Encore Veteran Entry exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Veteran Entry titles up until they earn their Novice title.

**Veteran Novice:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Entry (Veteran MF/E or Veteran InS/E) title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Veteran Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Veteran Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Veteran Novice title (Veteran MF/N or Veteran InS/N) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Intermediate class.

**Encore Veteran Novice:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Novice (Veteran MF/N or Veteran InS/N) title, but have not yet earned their Intermediate title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Veteran Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Veteran Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Encore

Veteran Novice title (Veteran MF/NE or Veteran InS/NE) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Intermediate class. Encore Veteran Novice exhibitors may remain in this class and continue earning Encore Novice titles, up until they earn their Intermediate title.

**Veteran Intermediate:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Novice (Veteran MF/N or Veteran InS/N) title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Veteran Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Veteran Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Veteran Excellent title (Veteran MF/X or Veteran InS/X) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Advanced Class.

**Encore Veteran Intermediate:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Novice (Veteran MF/N or Veteran InS/N) title, but have not yet earned their Master title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Veteran Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Veteran Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Veteran Excellent title (Veteran MF/XE or Veteran InS/XE) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Advanced Class. Encore Veteran Intermediate exhibitors may remain in this class and continue earning Encore Excellent titles, up until they earn their Master title.

**Veteran Advanced:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Excellent (Veteran MF/X or Veteran InS/X) title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Veteran Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Veteran Advanced exhibitors will be awarded Veteran Master title (Veteran MF/M or Veteran InS/M) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Champion class.

**Encore Veteran Advanced:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Excellent (Veteran MF/M or Veteran InS/M) title, but have not yet earned their Champion title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Veteran Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Veteran Advanced exhibitors will be awarded Encore Veteran Master title (Veteran MF/ME or Veteran InS/ME) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Champion class. Encore Veteran Advanced exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Master titles, up until they earn their Champion title.

**Veteran Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Master (Veteran MF/M or Veteran InS/M) title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Veteran Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 85 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Veteran Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Veteran Championship title (Veteran MF/CH or Veteran InS/CH) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Grand Champion class.

**Encore Veteran Champion:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Master (Veteran MF/M or Veteran InS/M) title, but have not yet earned their Grand Championship.

This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Veteran Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 85 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Veteran Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Veteran Championship title (Veteran MF/CHE or Veteran InS/CHE) and are eligible to enter the Veteran Grand Champion class. Encore Veteran Champion exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Champion titles, up until they earn their Grand Champion title.

**Veteran Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Championship (Veteran MF/CH or Veteran InS/CH) title. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. A Veteran Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 85 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Veteran Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Veteran Grand Champion title (Veteran MF/GrCH or Veteran InS/GrCH).

**Encore Veteran Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Veteran Championship (Veteran MF/CH or Veteran InS/CH) title and would like to continue competing at the Grand Championship level. This class is performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Encore Veteran Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 85 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Encore Veteran Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Veteran Grand Champion title (Veteran MF/GrCHE or Veteran InS/GrCHE). Encore Veteran Grand Champion exhibitors may remain in this class indefinitely.

#### **Challenge Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options**

**Challenge Entry:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who are entering the Challenge Division for the first time with no titles in the Regular classes. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. A Challenge Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Challenge Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Challenge Entry title (Challenge MF/E or Challenge InS/E) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Novice class.

**Encore Challenge Entry:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Entry (Challenge MF/E or Challenge InS/E) title, but have not yet earned their Novice title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Challenge Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 65 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Challenge Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Challenge Novice title (Challenge MF/EE or Challenge InS/EE) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Novice class. Encore Challenge Entry exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Entry titles, up until they earn their Novice title.

**Challenge Novice:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Entry (Challenge MF/E or Challenge InS/E) title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Challenge Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 65 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Challenge Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Challenge Novice title (Challenge MF/N or Challenge InS/N) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Intermediate class.

**Encore Challenge Novice:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Entry (Challenge MF/E or Challenge InS/E) title, but have not yet earned their Excellent title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Challenge Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 65 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Challenge Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Challenge Novice title (Encore Challenge MF/NE or Challenge InS/NE) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Intermediate class. Encore Challenge Novice exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Novice titles, up until they earn their Excellent title.

**Challenge Intermediate:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Novice (Challenge MF/N or Challenge InS/N) title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Challenge Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Challenge Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Challenge Excellent title (Challenge MF/X or Challenge InS/X) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Advanced Class.

**Encore Challenge Intermediate:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Intermediate (Challenge MF/X or Challenge InS/X) title, but have not yet earned their Master title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Challenge Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Challenge Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Challenge Excellent title (Challenge MF/XE or Challenge InS/XE) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Advanced Class. Encore Challenge Intermediate exhibitors may stay in this class and continue to earn Encore Excellent titles, up until they earn their Master title.

**Challenge Advanced:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Intermediate (Challenge MF/X or Challenge InS/X) title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Challenge Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Challenge Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Challenge Master title (Challenge MF/M or Challenge InS/M) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Champion class.

**Encore Challenge Advanced:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Intermediate (Challenge MF/X or Challenge InS/X) title, but have not yet earned their Champion title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Challenge Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Challenge Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Challenge Master title (Challenge MF/ME or Challenge InS/ME) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Champion class. Encore Challenge Advanced exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Master titles, up until they earn their Champion title.

**Challenge Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Advanced (Challenge MF/M or Challenge InS/M) title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Challenge Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Challenge

Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Challenge Championship title (Challenge MF/CH or Challenge InS/CH) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Grand Champion class.

**Encore Challenge Champion:** This is an optional class for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Champion (Challenge MF/CH or Challenge InS/CH) title, but do not yet feel ready to move up to the Grand Champion class. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. An Encore Challenge Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 75 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Encore Challenge Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Challenge Championship title (Challenge MF/CHE or Challenge InS/CHE) and are eligible to enter the Challenge Grand Champion class. Encore Challenge Champion exhibitors may remain in this class and continue to earn Encore Champion titles, up until they earn their Grand Championship.

**Challenge Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Championship (Challenge MF/CH or Challenge InS/CH) title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. A Challenge Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Challenge Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Challenge Grand Champion title (Challenge MF/GrCH or Challenge InS/GrCH).

**Encore Challenge Grand Champion:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Challenge Grand Championship (Challenge MF/GrCH or Challenge InS/GrCH) title. This class may be performed on-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. An Encore Challenge Grand Champion exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Encore Challenge Grand Champion exhibitors will be awarded their Encore Challenge Grand Champion title (Challenge MF/GrCHE or Challenge InS/GrCHE). Encore Grand Champion exhibitors may remain in this class indefinitely.

## Provisional Division

This division is for all dog-and-handler teams. All classes will be available in this division with the exception of Champion and Grand Champion classes, the Encore classes and the Alternative classes classes. Food or toy reinforcement may be used in the Provisional classes with the following guidelines

1. Food or toy reinforcement must be hidden from view until such time it is delivered to the dog. Handlers may store reinforcement in a pocket (hidden or in view), or treat pouch. Treat pouches should be indistinct and preferably in keeping with the costume or theme of the routine.
2. Food reinforcement should be delivered immediately and not held in the hand. Food should not be used as a lure or prompt.
3. Toy reinforcement should be presented and used in keeping with the theme and interpretation of the routine.
4. Food reinforcement should be delivered in a way that is largely concealed to the audience.
5. All other guidelines pertaining to earning scores in the Provisional classes remain the same as in any other division or class.

Failure to perform to the standard of these guidelines will impact scores in Execution, Interpretation and possibly Flow. Dropping food will impact Teamwork score and Execution and possibly Flow.

Exhibitors may enter the Provisional division and another division at the same show with the same dog, earning legs and titles in each division. Exhibitors in the Regular, Alternative or Elite classes may move laterally on their first entry into a Provisional class equivalent to the class entered in their current division, after which they will continue an upward progression in each of the respective divisions.

Options in the Provisional Division are singles, pairs, brace and team.

Classes in the Provisional Division are Newcomer, Entry, Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced.

### **Provisional Division Classes for Singles, Pairs, Brace or Team Options**

**Newcomer:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have never entered a musical freestyle event with RFE or any other musical freestyle organization. Exhibitors in this class may perform on-leash, but at least one qualifying score must be performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. A Provisional Newcomer exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, at least one with the dog off-leash, Provisional Newcomer exhibitors will be awarded their Provisional Newcomer title (MF/P-NC or InS/P-NC) and are then eligible to enter the Provisional Novice class.

Titled Provisional Newcomers may choose to enter the Provisional Entry class to gain more experience before entering the Provisional Novice class. If Provisional Newcomers choose to enter the Provisional Entry class, they may complete that title or enter the Provisional Novice class at any time after receiving their P-NC title.

**Entry:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned the Newcomer title (MF/NC or InS/NC) or Provisional Newcomer title (MF/P-NC or InS/P-NC) or have earned a freestyle title with another dog in any other musical freestyle organization. Exhibitors in this class may perform on-leash, but at least one qualifying score must be performed off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–2:15 minutes. A Provisional Entry exhibitor must earn a minimum of 60 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, at least one with the dog off-leash. Provisional Entry exhibitors will be awarded their Provisional Entry title (MF/P-E or InS/P-E) and are eligible to enter the Provisional Novice class.

**Novice:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Newcomer title (MF/NC or InS/NC) or Provisional Newcomer title (MF/P-NC or InS/P-NC) or their Entry title (MF/E or InS/E) or Provisional Entry title (MF/P-E or InS/P-E). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:45–2:30 minutes. A Provisional Novice exhibitor must earn a minimum of 70 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Provisional Novice exhibitors will be awarded their Provisional Novice title (MF/P-N or InS/P-N) and are eligible to enter the Provisional Intermediate class.

**Intermediate:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Novice title (MF/N or InS/N) or their Provisional Novice title (MF/P-N or InS/P-N). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:00–2:45 minutes. A Provisional Intermediate exhibitor must earn a minimum of 80 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning three qualifying scores, Provisional Intermediate exhibitors will be awarded their Provisional Excellent title (MF/P-X or InS/P-X) and are eligible to enter the Provisional Advanced Class.

**Advanced:** This class is for dog-and-handler teams who have earned their Excellent title (MF/X or InS/X) or their Provisional Excellent title (MF/P-X or InS/P-X). Exhibitors in this class will perform off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 2:15–3:15 minutes. A Provisional Advanced exhibitor must earn a minimum of 90 out of 100 points in a performance to receive a qualifying score. Upon earning two qualifying scores, Provisional Advanced exhibitors will be awarded their Provisional Masters title (MF/P-M or InS/P-M).

Click the division name for a chart of titling class times, legs and titles.

[Youth Division](#)

[Regular Division](#)

[Elite Division](#)

[Alternative Division](#)

[Provisional Division](#)

### **Non-titling Division Class**

**That's Entertainment:** This class is open to all exhibitors of any age, skill level, physical or cognitive challenge and is intended to enable exhibitors to present their routines to an audience. This class may be performed on- or off-leash. Time allowed for music used in this class is 1:30–3:15 minutes. All exhibitors, singles, pairs, brace and team enter the same class. This class is scored and placements through fourth are provided. Subtle use of food or toy reinforcers is allowed in this class.

### **Advancing to the Next Class (Move-Ups)**

Upon achieving a title, the dog-and-handler team may choose to move up to an Encore class or to the next class in the progression, or if indicated, change to the Alternative or Provisional Divisions. Teams may not move downward in progression of classes in the same division. Move ups may occur upon entry of an event. In the case of live back-to-back events, a move up may occur prior to the second show. Move-ups will be accepted by the host immediately following the end of the first show.

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## **Guiding Principles and Judging Criteria**

These Guiding Principles and Judging Criteria apply to both Freestyle and In Sync categories in all divisions and classes.

Each Dog-and-handler team enters the performance area with zero points. There are no deductions taken in RFE Musical Freestyle. Teams earn points through their accomplishments. Scoring is subjective; however, judges will apply scoring based on RFE's Guiding Principles and Judging Criteria.

Scoring in Freestyle and In Sync is based on two principles: Training and Choreography. Training principles include "Content and Execution," "Creativity and Difficulty," and "Quality of Teamwork and Engagement." Choreography principles include "Musicality and Interpretation" and "Transitions, Flow and Use of Performance Area." In determining scores, judges will award points based on these principles and accompanying criteria. Each criterion is valued at 20 points, or 20 percent of an exhibitor's score. There are 100 total points available. Training principles and criteria comprise 60 percent of an exhibitor's score. Choreography principles and criteria comprise 40 percent.

**Content and Execution of dog behaviors and handler movements (20 pts):** The amount and variety of handler movements and dog behaviors affect scoring. Accuracy and precision of the dog behaviors is an important aspect of this criterion. Behaviors attempted but not executed with a certain degree of accuracy or precision are not considered "content."

*Judging Commentary on Content and Execution: Judges will observe the behaviors and assess the quality of execution for each one. They will consider the amount and variety of behaviors or variations of behaviors and their execution. They will consider the number of different positions in which the dog works relative to the handler. Positions include the left or right side of the handler, in front or behind the handler, or between the handler's legs. Judges will also consider the number of behaviors in each position relative to the handler and how well the dog performs these behaviors. Behaviors executed with subtle physical, verbal or choreography cues will score higher than behaviors that are aided by obvious large cues or lure-like hand cues, similar to those that might be used to train the behaviors. Forward heelwork on either the left or right side of the handler is considered a behavior. Heelwork is defined as the consistent positioning of the dog parallel to the left or right of the handler while moving in any direction. Judges will consider consistency and precision in evaluating heelwork. Judges will consider the use of props and the behaviors executed with them.*

**Creativity and Difficulty of dog and handler moves (20 pts):** The degree of creativity and difficulty in both the dog and handler's moves and behaviors affects scoring. Novel or difficult behaviors or sequences of behaviors earn a higher score than simple or repetitious behaviors. A high degree of creativity is rewarded in scoring, as is a high degree of difficulty.

*Judging Commentary on Creativity and Difficulty: Although creativity is highly subjective, judges will evaluate behaviors based on their novelty and intricacy. Greater is indicated by the dog working on different sides, performing behaviors in different directions and in different positions relative to the handler. A handler who cues the dog with verbal cues or with choreographed cues integrated into the performance will score higher than a handler who uses lure-like hand cues. Lure-like hand cues are less difficult for the dog to execute and indicate a lower level of creativity. Judges will assess difficulty of behaviors based on their experiences as trainers, exhibitors, and judges. In determining difficulty, judges will take into account the level of training required for the behaviors and the complexity of the behaviors. Judges will assess creativity and difficulty as being equal with one not favored over the other. However, those performances with a high degree of each will be awarded the highest scores.*

**Musicality and Interpretation (20 pts):** How the dog and handler move in time to the music and how well sequences of moves and behaviors match musical phrases affect scoring. Included in this criterion are the handler's choice of costume, choreography, and presentation as they relate to the theme or genre of the music. Handler movement, handler's choice of dog behaviors and use of any props are also important aspects of musicality and interpretation.

*Judging Commentary on Musicality and Interpretation: Judges will assess the team's ability to move in time to the tempo and rhythm of the music and determine how well their behaviors and sequences integrate with the phrasing of their music. Judges will determine how well the costuming coordinates with the genre and theme of the music. The handlers' interpretation of their music through their movement and their choice of dog behaviors should enhance and compliment the overall theme of the routines.*

**Transitions, Flow and Use of Performance Area (20 pts):** The handler's choice of transitions and how well these transitions create ease of movement from behavior to behavior for the dog and handler affects scoring. Transitions should create a flow of movement. Use of the performance area and whether the use is balanced and interesting also affects scoring. Dog-and-handler teams should use the performance area to showcase their movements and musical interpretation. Use of the performance area should be maximized by the dog-and-handler team (i.e. smaller or slower dogs may use less performance area while faster or athletic dogs may use more performance area). The majority of teams are expected to use much of the performance area.

*Judging Commentary on Transitions, Flow and the Use of Performance Area: Judges will observe the dog's momentum and its ability to move easily from one behavior to the next and will assess the handler's choice of transition based on these observations. Flow is a by-product of thoughtful transition choices. A pause in the dog or handler's movement that adds to the musicality of the performance by matching phrasing in the music will not be considered a "set-up." Judges will also consider the way in which the team utilizes the performance space to add to its performance and how well the space is utilized. This may be based on the size and/or speed of the dog-and-handler team. Judges' scores will be based on how well the team meets or exceeds these expectations.*

**Quality of Teamwork and Engagement between dog and handler (20 pts):** The dog's ability to focus on the handler and on its tasks affects scoring. Obvious enjoyment between the dog and handler while working together as well as the support, encouragement, and appearance of partnership between the dog and handler are vital aspects of teamwork and engagement.

*Judging commentary on Quality of Teamwork and Engagement: In assessing teamwork, judges will be looking for ways in which handlers consider their canine partners during the execution of behaviors and in their ability to help their canine partner be successful. Examples: Handler should allow a dog to complete a behavior before moving forward to aid the dog in maintaining its position relative to the handler. Handler should use transitions that allow for good flow of the dog's momentum. Judges will also assess the dog's willingness and readiness to respond to cues. In assessing the enjoyable engagement between dog and handler, judges will observe both the dog and handler's body language to determine their mutual enjoyment in the activity. Judges will consider the dog's focus on the handler and responses to cued behaviors. Though a dog looking up at its handler is an obvious display of attention and focus, it is not necessary for a dog to do so to remain focused and attentive to its handler while performing behaviors.*

*Judges will observe whether the handler uses a soft voice, verbal praise and/or facial expressions to support and encourage the dog during the performance.*

### **Scoring**

Each team enters the performance area with zero points. Points are not deducted in RFE Musical Freestyle. Teams earn points through their accomplishments. Although scoring is subjective, judges will apply scoring based on the Guiding Principles and Judging Criteria.

Final scores are determined on a 1–100 linear scale in all divisions. Exhibitors may earn a score from 1 to 100, regardless of division or class entered. Examples: An Entry class exhibitor who performs a high-quality performance including a variety of complex behaviors could earn a higher score than one earned by an Advanced or Champion exhibitor whose routine includes only a few simple behaviors. An Entry class exhibitor who better meets the judging criteria than does an Advanced or Champion exhibitor will earn a higher score. Alternately those in the Advanced or Champion classes may not always put out a performance deserving of higher scores consistent with these classes.

Scores for each judged principle are determined on a 1–20 linear scale in all divisions. The score for each judged principle is determined by how well the exhibitor meets or exceeds the criteria listed in the *Guiding Principles and Judging Criteria*, not by the class entered

**Score sheets:** The same score sheet is used in all classes and divisions.

### **How Scores Are Earned**

#### **To earn a score of at least 60,**

the dog-and-handler team executes simple foundation behaviors, such as those found in the Rally-FrEe Novice level signs, to create simple single moves and sequences combined with a modest amount of heelwork. Heelwork is defined as the consistent and accurate positioning of the dog parallel to the left or right of the handler while moving in any direction. Dog and handler must be over-lapping to be considered “heelwork.” Execution of behaviors is consistent with a foundation level of training and may not appear as precise or complete in their execution as in the upper classes. Some of the single moves or behaviors included in the routine are competently completed.

Creativity is unlimited at any level of freestyle; to earn a minimum score of 60, the routine includes at least a small degree of creativity or interest from either dog or handler moves, choreography or prop use. Difficulty is consistent with that of the Rally-FrEe Novice level signs and/or variations of those behaviors. Lure-like hand cues may be evident at times. Obvious hand cues may occur in the execution of some behaviors.

The dog-and-handler team generally moves in time to the music. There appears to be an effort to choreograph so that moves and behaviors match phrasing in the music. Handlers may or may not use their upper bodies in their interpretations at this level. Elaborate costuming and choreography are not expected at this level. Simple costuming and choreography enhance the presentation of the routine. If props are used, they add interest and are an integral part of the performance.

Simple transition behaviors are used, such as those included in the Rally-FrEe Novice level signs, to create flow in the dog's momentum. Depending on the size, speed, and athleticism of the dog, the dog-and-handler team uses more than the central portion of the performance area, including the use of a majority of the interior and some of the perimeter areas of the ring.

The quality of teamwork and engagement between dog and handler is minimally at a foundation level regarding the dog's attention and focus. Dog is attentive and responsive to the handler much of the time, although interruptions of engagement with the handler may occur. The handler's response to the dog's loss of focus demonstrates positive qualities found in teamwork and engagement.

**To earn at least a score of 12** in each or any of the scored categories, a dog and handler team must present those qualities indicated above in connection with said category.

**To earn a score of at least 70**, the dog-and-handler team executes foundation behaviors, such as those included in the Rally-FrEe Novice level signs, to create variations and sequences combined with some consistency in heelwork including varied positions relative to the handler. Heelwork is defined as the consistent and accurate positioning of the dog when parallel to the left or right of the handler while moving in any direction. The dog and handler must overlap to be considered "heelwork". Execution of behaviors is consistent with a basic level of training in which many of the behaviors included in the routine are accurately completed.

Creativity is unlimited at any level of freestyle; to earn a minimum score of 70 the routine includes a bit of novelty or interest in some behaviors. Difficulty is consistent with that of the Rally-FrEe Novice level signs plus simple Intermediate level behaviors. Some visible hand cues may be present but would not be large or lure-like and would complement the choreography.

The dog-and-handler team moves in time to the music much of the time. Moves and behaviors often match the phrasing in the music. A small amount of the handler's upper body movement is included in his or her interpretation. Costuming reflects interpretation and choreography well and enhances the routine's presentation.

Transition behaviors, such as those included in the Rally-FrEe Novice level signs, are used to enhance the routine's flow and the dog's ability to move from one behavior to the next. Depending on the size, speed, and athleticism of the dog, the dog-and-handler team uses more than the central portion of the performance area, including the use of a majority of the interior and some of the perimeter areas of the ring.

The quality of teamwork and engagement between dog and handler is apparent. The dog is attentive and responsive much of the time. Interruptions of focus are infrequent. The handler works to aid in the dog's success.

**To earn at least a score of 14** in each or any of the scored categories, a dog and handler team must present those qualities indicated above in connection with said category.

**To earn a score of at least 80**, the dog-and-handler team executes and uses foundation and intermediate behaviors, such as those included in the Rally-FrEe Novice and Intermediate level signs, to create variations and sequences with good precision and reliability in heelwork and other positions relative to the handler. Heelwork is defined as the consistent and precise positioning of the dog when parallel to the left or right of the handler while moving in any direction. The dog and handler must overlap to be considered “heelwork”. Execution of behaviors is consistent with an intermediate level of training in which many of the behaviors included in the routine are accurately and precisely completed.

Creativity is unlimited at any level of freestyle; to earn a minimum score of 80, the routine includes apparent novelty, interest or creativity in some behaviors. Difficulty is consistent or equivalent with that of the Rally-FrEe Intermediate level signs. Obvious hand cues are not likely to be present and at no time does the handler appear to be luring the dog. Physical cues, including those of the hands and arms, are integral to the choreography and should complement the interpretation of the music.

The dog-and-handler team moves very well with, and in time to, the music. Some interpretation of the theme or music is apparent through the handler’s use of his or her upper body, arms, and hands. Moves and behaviors match the phrasing in the music. Costuming reflects the interpretation and choreography and greatly enhances the presentation of the routine.

Transition behaviors and variations of those transition behaviors, such as those included in Rally-FrEe Novice and Intermediate level signs, are used to enhance the flow of the routine and the dog’s ability to move from one behavior to the next. Depending on the size, speed, and athleticism of the dog, the dog-and-handler team uses both the interior and perimeter of the ring employing straight and curved lines of movement.

The quality of teamwork and engagement between dog and handler is substantial. The dog is mostly attentive and responsive. Interruptions of focus are rare and the handler is supportive.

**To earn at least a score of 16** in each or any of the scored categories, a dog and handler team must present those qualities indicated above in connection with said category.

**To earn a score of at least 90**, the dog-and-handler team executes foundation, intermediate and advanced behaviors, equivalent to those included in Rally-FrEe Novice, Intermediate and Advanced level signs, to create variations and sequences with great precision in heelwork and other positions relative to the handler. Heelwork is defined as the consistent and precise positioning of the dog when parallel to the left or right of the handler while moving in any direction. The dog and handler must overlap to be considered “heelwork”. Considerable interpretation of the theme or music is evident through the handler’s use of his or her upper body, arms, and hands. Execution of behaviors is consistent with an intermediate or advanced level of training in which most of the behaviors included in the routine are completed accurately and precisely.

Creativity is unlimited at any level of freestyle; to earn at least a score of 90 the routine includes apparent novelty, interest or creativity in most behaviors. Difficulty is consistent or equivalent with the Rally-FrEe Intermediate and Advanced level signs. Obvious hand cues are not likely to be present and at no time

should the handler appear to be luring the dog. Physical cues including those of the hands and arms are integral to the choreography and greatly complement the interpretation of the music.

The dog-and-handler team moves very well with, and in time to, the music. The handler uses his or her upper body, arms and hands to aid in the interpretation of the theme or music. Moves and behaviors match phrasing in the music extremely well. Costuming reflects the interpretation and choreography and greatly enhances the presentation of the routine.

Transition behaviors and variations of those transition behaviors, such as those included in Rally-FrEe Novice, Intermediate and Advanced level signs, are used to enhance the flow of the routine and the dog's ability to move from one behavior to the next without breaking the dog's momentum with the exception of interpretive pauses. Depending on the size, speed, and athleticism of the dog, the dog-and-handlers team uses both the interior and perimeter of the ring with straight and curved lines of movement.

The quality of teamwork and engagement between dog and handler is significant and ample. The dog is very attentive and responsive. Interruptions of focus are very rare and the handler is highly supportive.

**To earn at least a score of 18** in each or any of the scored categories, a dog and handler team must present those qualities indicated above in connection with said category.

**To earn at least a score of 95**, the dog-and-handler team executes foundation, intermediate and advanced behaviors, equivalent to and beyond the creativity and difficulty level of behaviors included in the Rally-FrEe Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels signs. The team incorporates novel, interesting and difficult variations and sequences combined with exceptional precision in heelwork and other positions relative to the handler. Layering of dog and handler skills and behaviors help to create visual interest in the routine. Heelwork is defined as the consistent and precise positioning of the dog when parallel to the left or right of the handler while moving in any direction. The dog and handler must overlap to be considered "heelwork". Behaviors include parallel heelwork in any direction or behaviors requiring the dog to hold a specific position relative to the handler, such a lateral side-passes, with a high degree of precision maintained throughout the behaviors. Execution of all behaviors is consistent with an advanced level of training in which the whole of the behaviors included in the routine are completed accurately and precisely.

Creativity is unlimited at any level of freestyle; to earn at least a score of 95, the routine includes apparent novelty, interest or creativity in most all behaviors. Difficulty is equivalent to or above that of the Rally-FrEe Advanced level signs. Obvious hand cues are not present, and at no time does the handler appear to be luring the dog. Physical cues, including those of the hands and arms, are integral to the choreography and complement the interpretation of the music to a very high degree.

The dog-and-handler team moves exceptionally well with, and in time to, the music. The handler uses his or her upper body, arms and hands to aid in the interpretation of the theme or music. Handler moves and dog behaviors match the phrasing in the music extremely well. The costuming reflects the interpretation and choreography and greatly enhances the presentation of the routine.

Transition behaviors and variations of those transition behaviors, such as those included in Rally-FrEe Novice, Intermediate and Advanced level signs, are used to enhance the flow of the routine and the dog's

ability to move from one behavior to the next without breaking the dog's momentum, with the exception of interpretive pauses. Depending on the size, speed, and athleticism of the dog, the dog-and-handler use both the interior and perimeter of the ring with straight and curved lines of movement.

The quality of teamwork and engagement between dog and handler is exceptional. The dog is highly attentive and responsive. Interruptions of focus are extremely rare and the handler is highly supportive.

**To earn at least a score of 19** in each or any of the scored categories, a dog and handler team must present those qualities indicated above in connection with said category.

### **More on Scoring**

Use of physical cues and hand signals is reflected in the scoring. In order to earn higher scores, handlers cue their dogs with subtle physical cues, choreography cues or verbal cues. Subtlety of physical cues affects scoring. As teams progress past the Entry class, handlers are expected to use fewer obvious or lure-like hand signals and increasingly rely upon subtle physical cues, choreography cues, and verbal cues.

A team's performance will not result in a lower score if the handler gives multiple verbal cues or verbal and physical cues provided the dog responds well and does not exhibit refusals. Large lure-like hand cues at any level will earn lower scores than subtle hand or other physical cues or verbal cues.

### **Leash Use Guidelines**

Handlers who choose to perform on-leash (where allowed), need to take into consideration their ability to use the leash appropriately.

Leashes may not be used to manipulate the dog or restrict the dog's movement in the form of a "tight leash." The use of a tight leash will result in a lower score in "Content and Execution" as well as a lower score in "Engagement and Teamwork." Any routine in which the handler uses the leash to reprimand the dog through leash pops or jerks will be excused immediately.

When performing on-leash, the handler should drop the leash only while performing behaviors in which the dog passes through the handler's legs or other behaviors where the length of the leash does not allow the dog to perform the intended behavior comfortably. The leash must then be picked up to continue the performance of the routine. The team will earn a non-qualifying score in an "on-leash" routine if it performs much of the routine with a dropped leash.

### **Disqualifications**

A dog-and-handler team will be disqualified for any of the following:

- Dog eliminating in the ring
- Dog or handler leaving the ring (dog or handler's whole body must leave the ring with obvious intent of no longer performing)
- Taking a food or toy motivator or reinforcer into the ring in the titling classes other than in the Provisional division
- Dog wearing apparel other than that which is allowed
- Music running over or under time by more than 15 seconds

- Handler arguing or using inappropriate language toward a judge, event official, or volunteer
- Reprimanding the dog through leash jerks
- Performing a behavior the judge deems unsafe for the dog, handler or spectators
- Submitting video that has been previously judged in this or other titling organization

### **Placements**

In all classes, placements are provided up to fourth place. Exhibitors do not have to qualify to earn a placement. In the case of tied scores, placements are determined by the higher “Teamwork and Engagement” score. If the teams are still tied after comparing that score, placements are then determined by the higher “Content and Execution” score.

## **Event Hosting Guidelines**

### **Hosting an Event**

Prospective hosts should read all of the rules and guidelines prior to applying to host an event. Hosting applications are available on the [Member page](#). RFE will generally approve or deny the application within five days. If an application is denied, the objections to the application will be stated and the applicant will be given an opportunity to rectify those objections. An RFE member must be the contact person for RFE Musical Freestyle events.

### **Live Events**

Hosts may hold back-to-back weekend events or back-to-back events on the same day, depending on the anticipated number of entries. A host will choose a theme and name for the event in keeping with the intended relaxed atmosphere of live events.

Hosts are not required to video the entire event. Exhibitors are free to video their routines or any routine for which the performing exhibitor gives permission to do so. Hosts may video the entire event with exhibitors’ permission. It is recommended that a host who would like to video an entire event secure written permission from all exhibitors. It is RFE’s position that each performance of a routine belongs to the performing exhibitor.

Entries for live events are remitted directly to Rally Freestyle Elements. The split for entry fees is 70% to the hosting entity and 30% to Rally Freestyle Elements. All proceeds are sent to the host within seven business days of the closing date. Application and approval of an event stands as an agreement to the above-mentioned allotment and dispersal of monies.

Questions regarding the hosting of an RFE Musical Freestyle event not answered on the website or in the guidelines should be directed to Rally Freestyle Elements.

[Contact us!](#)

### **Guidelines for Hosts**

Once RFE approves your application to host an event and your opening date (no earlier than six months prior and no later than two months prior) and closing date (three weeks prior to the event) are set, you are

ready to go to work at creating the most fun event possible. Below are hosting guidelines to ensure a successful and stress-free event.

### Secure an appropriate venue

- - If possible, choose a venue that allows for the recommended ring dimensions of 30 by 60 feet.
  - If unable to set up a 30 by 60 foot ring, alternative ring dimensions you use must equal a minimum of 1,800 square feet. If using alternative ring dimensions, post an advisory announcement in their show announcement and on the RFE website as early as possible.
  - Allow adequate crate space and room for exhibitors and audience members to view the ring.
  - Make sure your venue is available for a sufficient number of hours each day. The maximum number of routines by a single judge during an event has not yet been determined. However, you should plan on seven minutes per routine if only one judge is working and five minutes per routine if two judges are alternating.
  - Provide a costume changing area. This may be a restroom if there is more than one restroom on site. Shows with high entries should provide additional space.
- Have available equipment for playing music, ideally with different formats (mp3, CD).
- Choose a theme and name for the show. Decorations and hospitality are encouraged.
- Secure all equipment necessary to host a safe and enjoyable event:
  - Ring gating/matting
  - Music/sound system
  - First aid kit
  - Cleaning supplies

### Select your judge(s)

- Choose your judge(s) from the list of certified judges, which is available on the Host Application. Note: Judges are certified in Musical Freestyle or Rally-FrEe or both.
- Provide your judge(s) with a judging contract (recommended). A standard judge's contract is available on the RFE website.
- Know that you are responsible for the travel/lodging costs of your judge(s).

### Announce the event

Submit your announcement for the RFE website ([info@rallyfree.com](mailto:info@rallyfree.com)) and Facebook page ([Rally Freestyle Elements](#)) and begin advertising. Include in your announcement:

- Name and theme of event
- Location of event
- Size of ring
- Opening and closing dates

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- Opening date is no earlier than 6 months prior and no later than 2 months prior.
- Closing date is no later than 3 weeks prior.
- Information on how to enter
- The name of judge(s)
- Information about hotels, campsites, or other available lodging
- Solicitation of special awards, if you are offering them. Include any special awards in addition to placements and qualifying ribbons, if you are offering them.
- Contact information for the event host and Rally Freestyle Elements (for rules/guidelines and entry forms).

Do the following after the closing date

- Order appropriate number of qualifying and placement ribbons and special awards, if offered. Contact RFE for correct placement ribbon colors. Hosts may also order from RFE directly.
- Determine running order and schedule
- Solicit volunteers to fill the following minimum volunteer positions
  - - Check-in
    - Gate Stewards
    - Timer
    - Music Person
    - Scorekeeper for data entry
    - Judges assistant

Upon completion of the event

- Send a brief report to RFE describing what made your event successful or how it might have been more successful. Send a report to appropriate e-lists acknowledging exhibitors accomplishments and description of the event.

If you have questions regarding the hosting of an RFE Musical Freestyle event and are unable to locate the answers on the site or in the guidelines, please feel free to [contact us!](#)

### **Hosting a Video Event**

Rally Freestyle Elements offers video entries in Musical Freestyle for those that either live too far from live events or for those dogs not suited to the show environment. All rules and guidelines that apply to live events also apply to video events.

A minimum of 3 exhibitors submitting video entries within the same group is required in order to be judged and earn qualifying scores and titles by video. A maximum of 10 video entries per group is allowed. All entries in the group must reside in the same geographic location with addresses being no more than a 500 mile distance from the host. If a geographic area has over 10 entries, a live event is encouraged. If you have less than 10 in your group, RFE will offer the opportunity to enter to others in your geographic area.

All rules apply to both video entries and live event entries. To host a video event, fill out the “application to host an event.” On the application, you’ll choose the date of event. This is the date in which videos need to be back to RFE. Videos may be submitted as a URL (web address where video can be found) from sites such as YouTube, Vimeo or sharing sites such as Dropbox.

The host will also choose an “opening date” and a “closing date”. The opening date is the date which entries shall be accepted for your event. The “closing date” is the date after which entries will no longer be accepted for your event. For video events, please allow at least 10 days from the time you submit your “application to host an event” to your closing date (after which entries will no longer be accepted). Entry forms for an event are found by clicking “enter online” next to the event on the green side-bar of the member’s page.

Exhibitors can submit their video URL by going into their RFE online account, click on the events tab and paste the URL into the designated box, then clicking the submit button.

Upon receipt of all entries, they will be processed and delivered to a judge for scoring. Judges will be required to return scores to RFE within 2 weeks of receipt of assigned video entries. Each exhibitor will then be notified of their score and a copy of their score sheet will be sent either by mail or electronically. RFE will supply qualifying and placement ribbons to those scores that meet the criteria.

#### **Step-by-Step Process:**

1. Fill out the “application to host an event”
2. Between the opening and closing date, exhibitors can enter
3. Upon the closing date, exhibitors will have until the “date of event” to video and upload to a video site and copy and paste the URL on their “events” tab at their RFE account page.
4. RFE will then process all entries and send to the judge. Judge will return scores within 2 weeks and RFE will notify you of your scores and placement.
5. RFE will send qualifying and placement ribbons to exhibitors

**Judges Briefing for Video Events:** These may also be found on the website members page under the “Training Resources” tab

1. Remember to do a sound check before starting the routine. The judge has to be able to clearly hear the music on the video, and that verbal cues are not distractingly loud.
2. It is advisable that you do a test video upload for YouTube to ensure that the music you have chosen will not be blocked. While this is rare, this action by YouTube, due to some copyright rules, blocks out all sound and the judge is then unable to hear praise as part of teamwork, or whether cues are repeated or missed. One option is to post a test video with your music to YouTube or the site you intend to use before recording your performance video. [This video tutorial](#) also explains how to check your music or playability.
3. The performance area should be identified by some kind of physical marking. The judges need to be able to determine the amount of ring space used and if the dog or handler leave the ring before the end of the performance.

4. Be sure to check your pockets for food or toys. These reinforcers are not allowed in the performance ring.
5. If your costuming is detailed or difficult to see from the distance of the camera, you may video a few seconds of yourself with your dog, prior to your performance. While your performance may not be edited, you may insert a "costume view" into the beginning of your video, before the start of your performance. This will ensure that you receive deserved costume credit.
6. Please show setting up your props to ensure that no one aided you in the process. This is to maintain an appropriate amount of props.
7. If you are performing on leash, remember that leashes may not be used to manipulate the dog or restrict the dog's movement in the form of a tight leash. The use of a tight leash will result in a lower score in Content and Execution as well as Engagement and Teamwork. The handler should only drop the leash while the dog passes through the handler's legs or where the length of the leash does not allow the dog to perform the intended behavior comfortably.
8. The videographer should be positioned so as to capture the team's entire performance. Using the zoom lens will allow the judge to get a better view of performance while still maintaining a distance from the team.
9. Start the video recording slightly before the performance starts and let the recording continue a short while after the performance ends, capturing some of the after-performance celebration is just fine.

#### **Step-by-Step Process of Entering a Video Event:**

1. Find the event you would like to enter on the member's page in the green side bar
2. Click on "enter online" next to the event you would like to enter between opening and closing dates
3. Using the drop down menus to fill out the entry form
4. Click continue and proceed to payment page after checking the box indicating acceptance of conditions of entry
5. Check with your host if have not received the course within 7-10 days of the "date of event"
6. Video your run and upload to a video sharing site such as YouTube. Copy and paste the URL where video may be viewed into the "details" of your entry in your member account. Note: only YouTube provides copyright protection whereas sites such as vimeo or drop box do not. To find out if your music is playable under YouTube music licensing, [please view this tutorial](#) found on the YouTube site.

#### **Videotaping your routine**

The videographer should be positioned so as to capture the team's entire performance. Using the zoom lens will allow the judge to get a better view of performance while still maintaining a distance from the team. If RFE or the assigned judge feels the video is not of a quality where fair scoring can be applied, the video entry will be returned with recommendations for camera position. The return of said video will not affect the other video entries in the group. If you have questions regarding video entries please [contact us](#).