

NOMAD Practice Philosophy, Format and Guidelines

Philosophy

NOMAD embraces and supports three simple, but all encompassing principles: Be Safe. Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Practice is an opportunity for handlers and dogs to train and develop skills as they mature into smooth-running team(s). NOMAD encourages reward-based training methods and a cheerful tone of voice throughout NOMAD practices. The Committee respects that each handler may have developed his/her own training plan on how to specifically accomplish his/her ultimate handling goals. Therefore, we encourage more experienced handlers to ASK more novice handlers if they want feedback before they offer it. And we encourage less experienced handlers to ASK for input, if they want it.

NOMAD practices are also a great way to socialize with fellow NOMAD members while sharing ideas on training and handling skills needed for the weekly sequences and/or course.

Beyond Practice - Training for Beginners

While most NOMAD events do not offer any formal training programs, NOMAD from time to time, may offer seminars or classes where persons new to agility or beginner dogs can learn skills. In addition, other club members may offer to act as mentors to less experienced handlers to help them learn specific skills, assist at practices, or help identify other opportunities for growth and experience. Regardless, members are welcome to attend events and participate at the level for which they are skilled, or they are encouraged to attend and observe and participate when appropriate.

Guidelines

- Summer practices will be held once a week. The location for each practice will be announced by email and on the NOMAD Facebook page(s) four days before the scheduled practice. Cancellations will be announced by 4:00 PM the day of the practice. If you know you are planning on attending practice, an email reply to the organizer would be welcomed/appreciated, but not required.
- Dogs must be leashed, crated or in the car when they are not working sequences or running the course. If your dog will bark when in the car, you might want to enlist the help of another participant or use a Treat & Train or Manners Minder to reward quiet behavior at a distance. Please do not use pain, discomfort or fear (citronella collars or shock collars) to achieve the desired behavior.
- Handlers and their dog(s) must be able to safely negotiate the obstacles they choose to do. While we strive to create an open and inclusive environment, safety is our prime concern, and any member or dog acting in a manner that does not meet those standards will be asked to modify their behavior/actions. Determination of an applicant's ability, competence and safety shall be within the discretion of the person in charge of the practice.
- Handlers are expected to help with course and sequence set-up, changing of jump heights (jump bars, tire, a-frame, table height, spread jump), set knocked bars, and physically assist post-practice equipment organization.
- Handlers are expected to clean up after their dogs. Carry in, carry out!

General Practice Format

- Format of a practice session is up to the scheduled host(s). All practices will include opportunities for beginner dogs and/or handlers and more advanced teams. Unless agreed by all participants at an individual training session, only one dog/handler team will work at a time. Dogs must be leashed or crated when not working.
- Training time allowed for each dog/handler team per turn is at the discretion of the participants. Consensus should be sought among the participants at each practice session as to the amount of time allowed per turn. If consensus can't be reached, majority will rule. Handlers may use their allotted time however they want and may work less than the allowed time if they choose. For example: practicing only one obstacle or working the start line.

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