



# Captain's Handbook

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the British Flyball Association's (BFA) Captain's Handbook.

We trust this guide will help you in your role as captain and wish you every success.

You will need to read, if you haven't done so already, the "BFA Constitution & Rules of Flyball". This is available on the BFA website: <https://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads>. Any rule changes are implemented on the 1st June and/or 1st November and an updated version of the document posted.

## BFA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Each BFA geographical region or area is served by a Regional Representative appointed by the Committee.

A Regional Representative can be approached by prospective new members, new teams and existing members and teams for help and advice in respect of the BFA and flyball in general. They can offer a wide range of support and guidance to you and your team members in areas such as training, demonstrations, ring party duties and training, hosting a tournament etc.

You can find the name of your regional representative on the BFA Website. If you would like to contact your representative you can email: [regionalreps@bfa.email](mailto:regionalreps@bfa.email)

## REGISTERING YOUR CLUB WITH THE BRITISH FLYBALL ASSOCIATION (BFA)

In order to enter BFA flyball competitions you must first:

- Register your club and team names and pay the requisite fees
- Have been issued with your Team Registration Number (TRN)

The "Team Application Form" can be found at <https://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads> Please take the time to read through the whole document before completing the form as it contains useful information and guidance. Primary team registration is renewable annually.

## MEMBERSHIP

In order to compete, handlers and their dogs must become members of the BFA. Please note that anyone who wishes to be in the ring at a Sanctioned Tournament must also be a member of the BFA. Membership runs 1<sup>ST</sup> April to 31<sup>ST</sup> March, there are price breaks for joining throughout the year.

The "New Members Application Form" which is an online form can be found at <https://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads>

There are four membership options:

- Single membership (Adult Member Only)
- Adult and Child members (One adult and all under 18s in the household)
- Joint Membership (Two adult Members)
- Family Membership (Two adults and all under 18s in the household)

The Membership Secretary will issue each member a card which will show their membership number and numbers for any dog(s) they registered. Membership is renewable annually. The BFA will provide a link: Online Membership Renewal for XXXX (year), on the Homepage on the website and also a link in the BFA members facebook group, click on this link which will take you through the process (make sure all your club members know their BFA membership number). When renewing their membership, the Captain will need to check a box "Are you the Team Captain?" as this will then enable them to renew the Primary Team Registration.

It is the responsibility of the Team Captain to ensure that anyone from their club/team who is in the ring are current BFA members and all dogs racing or in the ring are registered prior to competing.

## **CAPTAIN'S LOGIN**

As Team Captain you can apply to the Webmaster, [Webmaster@bfa.email](mailto:Webmaster@bfa.email) for a Captain's Login. You will be provided with a login, via the BFA website, whereby you can check who in your club has current membership.

Go to <https://www.flyball.org.uk/user> enter your username and password then click on login. This will take you to the Dashboard, click on Team Members Membership which will take you to the Team Members Membership Status. From here you will be able to see each current member's details: name, BFA No., type of membership, team, date renewed and date expires. Should you have any questions on membership please contact the Membership Secretary at [membership@bfa.email](mailto:membership@bfa.email)

## **DISABILITY**

As Team Captain you have certain responsibilities to protect disabled people and their carers, the BFA has produced a guide for Judges and Team Captains, which can be found at <https://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads> Reference Document: Disability & Flyball - A Briefing for Judges and Club Captains.

## **BFA YOUNG MEMBERS AWARD SCHEME**

If you have members aged 6 to 18 who have BFA membership you may register them for the BFA Young Members Award Scheme. This is a scheme by which young members are rewarded with points for various duties resulting in milestone awards in the form of certificates and at the higher levels, includes a glass award.

Full details can be found at [www.flyball.org.uk/downloads](http://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads):

- BFA Young Members Award Scheme (details the scheme)
- BFA Young Members Award Scheme – Registration Form
- BFA Young Members Award Scheme – Points Record

## **REGISTERING ANOTHER DOG**

If you wish to register another dog, as long as your membership is up to date, there are no further fees to pay.

Please use the Adding a Dog to Your Membership google form which can be found in the Downloads section of the website: [www.flyball.org.uk/downloads](http://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads)

The Membership Secretary will then register the dog and email the dog's BFA number.

## **FLYBALL COMPETITIONS**

Please note that a team may not enter a BFA Sanctioned Flyball competition until they have been issued with their Team Registration Number. Look at the BFA website: [www.flyball.org.uk/events](http://www.flyball.org.uk/events) and decide which tournaments you wish to enter. The diary list can also be downloaded in either XLS or CSV format.

If you click on an event on the website, a list of the details of that event will appear at the bottom of the screen which will include:

- Address of venue
- Class
- Entry fee (per team)
- Entry limit (maximum number of teams)
- Date(s) of event
- Opening date for entries
- Closing date for entries
- Running surface i.e. grass or mats (basically outdoor or indoor)
- Format i.e. whether block or staggered \*
- Map

- Contact details for the event
- Special notes – this may include whether camping is available or not

Plan which teams you wish to enter and any camping requirements, inform the host on the entry form including which nights your members require.

You will also see the schedule release date, this is the date the BFA will release the schedule which is always on a Tuesday at 9pm. Reminders for upcoming competitions are also published on the British Flyball Associations Tournament Information Facebook page.

The schedule gives all the relevant information for the competition and includes the details of how to enter and pay for entries.

There are two racing formats: block or staggered. Block is where a division is split into two halves, for example for a six team division all the divisions run 3 races in the first half and 2 races in the second half, this format is more usual in outdoor tournaments. Staggered is where all the divisions are staggered throughout the whole day, this format is more usual for indoor tournaments.

## **C2 STICKER GENERATOR**

A C2 sticker generator has been produced and can be found at <https://www.flyball.org.uk/downloads>. Here you can enter all the handler, dog and team details and produce and then print labels which can be stuck to the C2 form which you will collect from the tournament organiser at the competition. Using the C2 stickers will save time completing the form and avoid errors.

## **COMPETITION / TOURNAMENT TIMELINE**

**6 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE TOURNAMENT** – the schedule is released at 9pm on Tuesday, it will appear on the website under the event. Notification is also given on the BFA Tournament Information Facebook group by the BFA Show Secretary on the day the schedule will be released.

All entry forms must be submitted directly to the Tournament Organiser as detailed on the schedule. Entries are only valid on completion of the appropriate payment to the Tournament Organiser. This is also the time to let the Tournament Organiser know if you or your team members haven't had ring party training. This gives them the opportunity to organise another team to cover these duties before the running order is produced.

Within a period of 72 hours from the release of their schedule the Tournament Organiser will advise you of the status of your entry i.e. whether your entry has been successful or if your entry is on a reserve list as a consequence of the event being oversubscribed.

**14 DAYS AT THE LATEST BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT** - you **MUST** submit a declared time for each of your teams if your team(s) does not have a seed time. If your team has a seed time, but you feel it is inappropriate for the dogs in your current line -up, a declared time may be submitted which **MUST** be at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  second faster or  $\frac{1}{4}$  second slower than the teams seeded time. In both cases the time you submit will be subject to the Team break-out rule. (See rule A.3.11) Declared times will not be accepted for a BFA organised Sanctioned Tournament (e.g. Championship). The BFA Committee may organise other sanctioned events throughout the year that will follow the process for a standard Tournament and not a Championship.

Teams should be seeded based on the information available from the BFA website. Seeding times for a tournament will be based on the fastest time recorded by a team during their last 3 sanctioned events and a seed list will be supplied from the latest available data on the 14th day before the tournament date, with the exception of a BFA Committee organised Sanctioned Tournament (e.g. Championship) when the seed times shall be taken on the 21st day before the tournament date

Any time recorded more than 4 months before this date is null and void.

**APPROXIMATELY A WEEK BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT** - For Round Robin Tournaments the Tournament Organiser will then produce a list of divisions based on the seed and/or declared times. This is known as the "running order". It is standard practice to have 6 teams in a division,

however, to be fair on teams and their speed and encourage good racing, if there is a big differential in times between teams, it may mean that a division may have a minimum of 5 or a maximum of 7 teams. If there is more than one ring the running order will also state which ring each Division will be run in.

For Staggered Tournaments a Race Order will be produced identifying the Race Numbers that your teams will be running in throughout the day.

The running order can, however, change on the day due to unforeseen circumstances i.e. team(s) may have to drop out of the tournament at the last minute.

**PRIOR TO LEAVING FOR THE TOURNAMENT** – ensure balls are marked to identify your team, a permanent marker is ideal for marking the balls. Make sure that your box is in good order and operating correctly. (see rule A.2.7.1) Take a list of all your dogs with their BFA number, their breed and jump height and handler BFA numbers and team numbers in order to complete the C2 (if you have already printed a C2 sticker, remember to take this as well).

**ON THE DAY-** If you have a height dog that hasn't been issued a height card, the dog will need to be measured. The running order will state when measuring will take place and the tournament host will usually announce when measuring is open and where it will take place.

A dog must be 18 months old before it is measured for the first time and over 24 months old before it receives its final measurement. Each dog must be measured at the same height by three different measuring officials before it receives a height card. Dogs do not require measuring to participate in Foundation racing.

**PAPERWORK** - the team captain (or their representative) will need to arrive early enough to collect, complete and return the paperwork (C2) required by the admin of the club hosting the tournament. The hosting team will announce when the paperwork is ready for collection, and it will need to be completed and returned to them before racing starts. It is advisable to have another member of your team check your team's details on the paperwork (including those prepopulated on the form) as; result, position, points and all records of attendance may be disallowed if any of the details are incorrect.

**EQUIPMENT** - the box, box plate or stakes, box-loader's bucket, ball collection bucket, balls and any props needed for warm ups, will need to be placed in the area provided by the host, this is commonly placed behind the backboards, before the start of racing.

Prior to racing it is useful to have a team talk to decide who:

- Will move the box into position/remove the box after racing
- Will be at the start gates to help the person placing the box to line it up correctly
- Will ensure the jumps are set at the correct height for the team (i.e. adding in or taking out slats)
- Will let the scribe know which dogs are running and keep them informed should there be any substitutions and take note of the times of the dogs racing
- Will be returning the balls to the box-loader once racing is completed
- Will hold any dog(s) of those engaged in the above.

If you are a small team or just short of people on the day, don't be afraid to ask for help. You will be on standby whilst the previous race is running i.e. ready to enter the ring as soon as the divisional judge indicates that race is over. Ring entry is at the box end of the ring – for outdoor tournaments either on the blue side or the red side depending on which lane your team is to race – for indoor tournaments there is usually only one entrance.

**WARM UP** - It is important to remember that you will have a limited amount of time, commonly 2 minutes to get ready and warm up your dogs prior to the judge signalling for the race to start. This time starts once the teams have entered the ring and both teams have placed their box into position. During the warm up time allowed you will need to:

- Line up your box in position
- Place the bucket of balls in position (which must be behind the backboard)
- Adjust the jump heights, if necessary [ADD] The jumps must be set to the height of the smallest dog participating in the heat not the smallest dog recorded on the C2
- Put each dog through it's warm up/practice

- Let the scribe know which dogs are running in that heat
- Ensure the team is in position

**RACING** - The division judge will whistle to signify that the warm up time is over. Set-up and practice are now over and racing is due to begin. The Head Judge and the Tournament Organiser may decide to reduce the 2 minutes to 1 minute, for example, for the health and safety of the dogs, if it is a very hot day, if it is a very wet day, not to prolong racing if the ground in the lanes is deteriorating or racing is over-running timewise.

If you are racing in the first race of your division, you may not enter the ring until your division judge is in the ring.

Before commencing each heat, the division judge will ask each participants in turn if they are ready to race, starting with the box-loaders, then the box judges, scribes and line judges. The division judge will then turn to face the competing teams to ensure that they too are ready. When assent has been given by both team's start dog handler the division judge will signal to the line judge controlling the lights, who will then initiate the start light sequence. It is the responsibility of the start dog's handler to ensure that the entire team is ready BEFORE signally assent to the division judge.

The lights will count down through a light sequence before reaching the green. The start dog's nose should be at the start gate at the precise instant the green light turns on. If the counter is at zero when the dog goes through, this is known as a rolling start. If the dog's nose goes through the start gate before the green light comes on then a false start has been made. One false start is allowed per team per RACE not per heat. The division judge will place a yellow peg on the side of the Judges stand adjacent to any team that has incurred a false start in that RACE. The heat is restarted following the first false start by either team. Once either team has had their one false start and then gets another then the heat continues, but the false start is counted as a fault and the dog will have to run again.

The division judge will blow a whistle and will also give clear hand signals by raising both arms to stop the race if there is; a false start, interference, accidents or conditions causing a safety hazard. You must not release your dog once the division judge has blown their whistle. If a dog knocks down a jump it doesn't automatically mean the race is stopped. It is the judge's decision as to whether the race needs to stop, the team need to be aware of any indications the judge may give.

Each dog in the team is assigned a fault light which will be turned on should a fault occur. The most likely causes are; two false starts, running outside a jump or the start line, not triggering the box or dropping the ball before coming out of the start gate, or if for some reason there are two balls at the box or in the lane the dog doesn't return with the ball it triggered from the box. The lights are typically red for dog 1, blue for dog 2, yellow for dog 3 and green for dog 4. Your team members should let you know if you have incurred a fault (especially if you are not looking back!) and you will need to prepare your dog to run again.

NB:

- 1) additional runs have to be run in the same order as the order the dogs completed the course in,
- 2) although the team will not be awarded points for incomplete heats, it may not be in your best interests to tire a dog unnecessarily if the heat has already been lost (unless it is to correct a problem with the dog)
- 3) once a dog has completed a clear run, its fault light will be turned off.  
The divisional judge will indicate after each heat to confirm the winner by extending their arm in the direction of the winning team and they will remove a peg from the losing team on the judges stand.
- 4) For each division a break out time which is  $\frac{1}{4}$  second faster than the top seed for the division is calculated. If a team runs quicker than the divisional breakout time, or the team breakout, if they are running on a declared time, they will lose the heat. A team can break out once during a racing day. If they break out for a second time all previous and future results for the day's racing will be converted to losses.
- 5) The rules state that a dog may, at the judges discretion, interfere with the other team 3 times before it MUST be held back until the opposing team has completed. The judge

can ask for a dog to be held back prior to it interfering three times or removed from racing altogether if deemed necessary.

When the deciding heat has been won the division judge will normally blow 3 short bursts on their whistle whilst extending both arms towards the team who won the race. It is polite practice to clap your hands to your opponents and say either "well done" if they have won, or "thank you" if you have won.

Once the race is over you should exit the ring as quickly as possible (with your dog on its lead) from the runback exit for the lane you have been racing in. Except for the person who has been designated to return the balls collected in the runback area to the boxloader, or the person who is to help the box-loader remove the box after racing.

**PRESENTATION** - Once the day's racing has finished, the host team will announce the time that presentation will be held. Presentation is something that all teams should attend in order to show their support for each other and to express their appreciation to the Tournament Organisers for hosting the event.

(If it is the last day of the tournament the host team usually asks for help removing all the equipment from the ring, prior to presentations being held. All help is appreciated as this means presentations can be held earlier)

At presentation BFA flyball awards are made to dogs and handlers who have reached BFA milestone awards and to Young Handlers who have achieved milestones within the Young Members scheme. This is followed by the reading of the results for each division and prize giving.

Prizes are at the discretion of the host, but are normally awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed teams within each division. Within these teams; each handler with their dog receives a prize, as does the box-loader.

Remember to take your own chairs with you to presentation if you don't want to sit on the floor!

## **RING PARTY**

The ring party is made up of people from teams that are not participating in the current race. Their purpose is to highlight errors in racing to the judge, operate the lights and record the results. (See Rule B.5 of the BFA Rules for full details of ring party responsibilities)

There are different requirements for tournaments being run under the block (usually outdoor) or staggered (usually indoor) formats. Block format tournaments – you usually only need 3 of your team members for the following roles: box judge, scribe and line judge. They will report to the Divisional Judge for one lane. If, however, the team responsible for the opposite lane are short of people, you may be asked if you have additional members available to cover. The team captain who is unable to supply enough members to cover their ring party allocation should notify the tournament organiser immediately. Divisional Judges and ring party are usually allocated to a specific division.

At Staggered Format Tournaments - the box-loader from the previous race takes on the role of box judge for the race immediately following theirs. It is usual for members of one team to supply the line judge and scribe for both lanes, therefore, you will need 4 team members to cover these roles. It is always good practice to remind your box-loader of their box judging responsibility on the day, although, it doesn't necessarily have to be the box-loader, you may allocate another member of your team. Divisional Judges and the scribe and line judge are allocated to a block of races which covers multiple divisions.

You should only allocate members from your team who have undertaken ring party training. If it is your members first time in the ring as part of the ring party team, inform the Divisional Judge or the tournament host (or a regional representative if one is present), they can then arrange for an experienced member to sit with them.



## **WEBSITE**

Have a good look on/click through the website as there is a lot of interesting information both current and historical that will help you and your team members..

Home Page:

- Blog

Events:

- Results
- Seedings – Open and Multibreed
- Events

Members:

- Dogs – Registered Dogs, Overall Breed Standings and Annual Breed Standings
- Teams
- BFA Officials
- Judges – Head Judges, Qualified Judges and Measuring Officials
- Regional Representatives
- Downloads

New to Flyball:

- About the BFA
- What is Flyball?
- Find A Club

At the bottom of the page: BFA Archive, Contact BFA, Contact Regional Reps

## **FACEBOOK**

BFA Members XXXX – where XXXX is the current year i.e. BFA Members 2024 - a private group – all BFA members should apply to join.

BFA Tournament Information XXXX – where XXX is the current year -a private group all BFA members should apply to join to have access to all tournament details.

British Flyball Association – a community organisation – public site.

There are also 4 Regional Representative private groups – all BFA members should apply to join the appropriate group:

- BFA Southern Region
- BFA Midland Region
- BFA Northern Region
- BFA Scotland & NI Region