

**The Clean Run Book of**

A close-up photograph of a white West Highland White Terrier dog in motion, running on a blue track. The dog's fur is thick and wiry, and its eyes are focused forward. The background is blurred, showing a blue fence and some indistinct figures.

**Agility  
Games**

**2nd edition**

*by Bud Houston*



---

## dedication

*This book is dedicated to my wife Marsha, who can no longer bear to edit my work... to agility fans everywhere who enjoy the game of agility for the fun of it and for the simple love of dogs... and to my loving pack of wild dogs (Bogie, Birdie, Par, Tack, Ringer, Banner, Wizard, and Dash), without whom there's not much reason to play the game.*

Nearly 20 years ago, the game of dog agility was introduced to the United States. The sport has grown steadily since then and is played today by more than 10,000 enthusiasts. People of all ages, sizes, and degrees of fitness play the game. By all indications, agility will continue to be one of the fastest-growing sports in the U.S. because it is instant fun for both handler and dog. The handler gets to play and bond with the canine members of his family. For the dogs, agility provides an outlet to perform honest work and contribute to the pack.

Many variations of agility are played. The most common form of the game is the Standard (or NADAC Regular) course. In the Standard course, the judge lays out a pattern of obstacles, designates the order in which they must be performed, and sets a minimum course time for performing them. It's significant that none of the exhibitors have ever seen the course that the judge lays out on a given day. Courses are never the same.

## Briefing

The dog is required to perform each obstacle on the course at the handler's direction in the sequence and within the time period designated by the judge. The handler may use voice commands and signals, but may not touch the dog or any obstacle. The competition is between dogs at a given jump height and skill level and the clock.

Before running the course, the exhibitors are allowed to walk it without their dogs to decide their handling strategies. After the course walk-through, the competition begins.

## Scoring

Agility is scored faults then time. The winner is the dog with the fewest faults. If two dogs have the same number of faults, then time breaks the tie.

Faults are assessed for exceeding the standard course time as well as for a number of performance errors. The following table summarizes performance faults for agility in the various organizations, based on rules at the time of this printing.

### Standard Agility Faults Chart

	AKC	NADAC	USDAA Starters*	USDAA Advanced	USDAA Masters	JFF	TDAAs	CPE
<b>Displaced bar</b>	E	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>Missed contact</b>	E	10	5	5	5	5	5	15
<b>Refusal</b>	5	N/F	N/F	5†	5	N/F	5†	N/F
<b>Off-course</b>	5	10	5	20	E	5	5	5
<b>Missed weave pole that's fixed</b>	5	N/F	N/F	5	5	N/F	5	5
<b>On and off table</b>	2	N/A	5	5	5	5	5	N/F
<b>Failure to perform</b>	E	20	20	E	E	20	20	15
<b>Touching dog or obstacle</b>	E	N/F to E	5 to E	5 to E	5 to E	N/F to E	5 to E	5
<b>Collar on dog</b>	N/F	E	E	E	E	N/F	N/F	E
<b>Banking‡</b>	N/A	N/A	5	5	5	N/F	5	5

E = Elimination

R = Faulted as a refusal

N/F = Not faulted

N/A = Not applicable

\* These faults apply to both USDAA Starters and Novice classes

† Only faulted on contact obstacles

‡ Banking refers only to wall jumps or the wishing well. Touching the aperture of the tire is not faulted. Banking is not faulted on a standard bar jump so long as the bar stays up.