

# Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.

## **Championship**

If a team at Level IV receives a score of 80 or better at three separate trials (to include its first score) the title Champion Freestyle Dog is awarded and the team may add CH.CFF IV after the dog's name. Title legs must include at least two different choreographed routines.

## **Special Awards**

A challenge trophy known as The Founder's Award is offered by Joan and Carl Tennille at each show for the highest score in Presentation and Artistry

A challenge trophy known as the Sally Kirschenman Award is offered by CFF at each show for the highest scoring team in regular classes.

A Versatility Award is given by CFF for Dogs earning titles in two single dog competitions and two multiple dog competitions

Any show organizing Guild may offer special trophies or awards for its event.

## **Notes**

For further clarification of rules see the judging guidelines on the web site in the members only and the members' forum area.



## **Regulations for Freestyle Competition**

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc. (CFF) is an international organization dedicated to defining and developing the sport of Canine Freestyle by providing the structure necessary to offer competitions and demonstrations. Elements of both the musical kur and traditional dog obedience have inspired the evolution of Canine Freestyle. Freestyle as both an art and a discipline expands the scope of dog training by adding an artistic element through the inclusion of music and choreography. Freestyle encourages originality and creativity, and attracts an audience through spectator appeal. Freestyle promotes responsible dog ownership by presenting a positive image to the general public and encourages and promotes the value of dog training.

CFF will:

- Develop and maintain rules and judging regulations
- Publish a newsletter to disseminate information
- Offer individual memberships
- Provide educational materials and support for competitors, trial organizers and judges
- Maintain event and placement records
- Promote demonstrations for their entertainment, educational and therapeutic value
- Encourage the formation of local Freestyle training groups, called guilds

## Titles

Exhibiting team(s) must receive a combined judges' score of 65 or better at one (1) competition. Placement (1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup>) is not required.

A patch indicative of the dog's working level is awarded for placement, first through fourth, the first time the dog places at each level. A paw print pin and a patch will be awarded in the event the dog earns a title whether or not the team places. This is tangible evidence of the team's competence at that level, a dog may receive only one patch and/ one pin for each level, for individual and brace performances only.

Titles will be awarded in regular classes only. Single handler and dog(s) and multiple handler and dog teams are eligible. Regular classes are Levels I, II, III, IV. Titles offered will be

<b>Single</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Brace</b>
CFF I	CFF IT	CFF IB
CFF II	CFF IIT	CFF IIB
CFF III	CFF IIIT	CFF IIIB
CFF IV	CFF IVT	CFF IVB

CFF will award title recipients a certificate and for Single Dog and Brace a paw print to be added to the dog's level patch.

Except in Level IV once a title has been awarded the team must move up to the next level or show in non-regular class. An exception is that, if a team earns a title on the first day of a two day event, they may show on the second day for score and placement. No further title is earned at that level.

- 7 to 10: Above the normal standard for this level of training. The quality of work, artistically and creatively, is exemplary.

Scoring is broken into five categories, but it must be realized that they are all interrelated, and strength or weakness in one category will reflect on other categories as well, particularly presentation and artistry.

**Training & Overall Technical Execution:** **10 Points**

- Accuracy and smoothness of all movements
- Versatility in movement
- Are the required movements performed? (deductions made under Errors)

**Teamwork:** **10 Points**

- Attention and Attitude, oneness of the team
- Willingness and responsiveness, trust and engagement
- Handling
- Aids
- Cues missed by dog

**Choreography:** **10 Points**

- Structure: Balance and Design,
- Content – relationship to definition
- Use of space
- Relationship to the music

**Music:** **10 Points**

- Suitability to the rhythm of the dog
- Appropriateness to the team
- Relationship to the choreography

**Presentation and Artistry:** **10 Points**

- Oneness and interactive attention
- Handler enhances the dog
- Grace, flexibility, beauty and intelligence of the dog illustrated
- Attire
- Dynamic movement qualities of dog shown
- Clarity and balance of design

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### **Definition of Freestyle**

Canine Freestyle is a choreographed performance with music, illustrating the training and joyful relationship of a dog and handler team.

The objective of Freestyle is to present the dog to his best advantage in a creative and artistic manner. A Freestyle presentation is always accompanied by music selected to suit the rhythms of the dog. Freestyle should demonstrate, with appropriate music, the grace, beauty and intelligence of the dog working in harmony with the handler. A Freestyle presentation should clearly show the dog's athleticism, attentiveness, flexibility and training. All handler movements should complement and enhance the dog's movements. Teamwork is essential.

The dog should always be treated with honor and respect.

### **Structure of a Freestyle Performance**

The structure of a Freestyle performance is a balance of technical, artistic and creative elements choreographed and presented in an artistic manner.

The foundations for the technical aspects of Freestyle movement are heel and front positions. All other movements are relative to these two positions. However, Freestyle should not look like an obedience heeling pattern that has been extended and set to music.

The foundations for the creative aspects of a Freestyle presentation are movement designs relative to the presentation space, the musical choice, and the dynamics of the movement behavior or quality. The power of choreography is in the combination of movements and how those movements are developed with the music to create a design in space that is visually pleasing and performed dynamically.

..... Phrases are combinations of movements. A movement phrase becomes the basis for choreography. Like a sentence, which consists of a noun, a verb, and adjectives and/or adverbs, a movement phrase consists of a beginning, middle

### **For Exhibition Only (FEO):**

Follows the rules designated for the regular class, will be presented after the related regular class and will not be judged.

### **Judging**

There are two judges trained and experienced in judging CFF competition. Each judge has a scribe, so the judge may concentrate on the performance. A tally scribe will make note of the required movements and time the performance. Scoring is based on a balance of technical and artistic elements of the presentation. Each judge may award a maximum of 50 points for a total possible score of 100 points. The scores are added together, and any errors are deducted from the total to determine the final score.

Multiple Dog Division entries are judged as a unit and under the same rules as individual teams, depending on the level. Judges also take into consideration the teamwork of the participating members. Individual handlers in the Multiple Dog Division should relate to each other through the performance of the choreography.

A positive method of scoring is used. Each category is judged on a basis of zero (0, meaning not done) to ten (10, meaning perfect), in increments of 0.5. Each team earns points; they do not lose points except for the errors specified above.

#### **The following are scoring guidelines for each category:**

- 0 to 3: the quality of the work presented according to the definition and the rules "in a creative and artistic manner" is weak. There is a lack of clarity relative to performance and organization of movements with the musical choice. Additional work in all areas - technical, artistic and creative is suggested.
- 4 to 6: A good and/or average score for the work, however, the team needs to improve performance and/or choreography. Additional training is required to improve and clarify purpose and intent.

- Greater emphasis on the relationship of the music to the choreography
- Illustrate the team relationship.

#### Required Movements

- right and left side heel work
- front work
- pace changes
- turns and/or pivots
- circles, serpentines or spirals
- backing
- lateral work right and/or left

#### **Level IV (off-lead):** 2:30-4:00 minutes

##### Choreographic Requirements:

- Develop a balanced and inventive presentation for the fully trained and supple canine athlete, with the
- Emphasis on the creative and imaginative use of movement as a medium to express the team artistically.
- Choreographed test to express dynamically the unity of their working relationship.

#### Required Movements

- right and left side heel work
- front work
- pace changes
- turns and/or pivots
- circles, serpentines or spirals
- backing
- lateral work right and left
- distance work

#### **Veterans:** 1:30–3:00 minutes.

This class is for dogs 7 years or older on the date of the show. The focus of the choreography is to show the dog to his best advantage, maximizing his strengths and minimizing his weaknesses.

and an end. Phrases are developed like a paragraph stating one theme. The themes unite into the final product, which in Freestyle is the total choreographic design. Traits, such as athleticism, flexibility and the oneness of the relationship between the dog and handler provide the intent or motivation to develop phrases maximizing the dog's strengths and minimizing his weaknesses. The structure of the music should guide the development of movement phrases and themes.

The relationship between the dog and handler should be clearly apparent. Both the dog and handler should be attentive and willing partners, intangibly linked whether working together or at a distance. The dog and handler should always demonstrate enthusiasm, joy, willingness and rapport with each other. The handler's movement should be smooth, natural and enhance the dog's movement. The total picture should be harmonious.

#### **Competition Guidelines**

CFF offers four levels of competition plus a non-regular veterans class. The four levels are offered in Individual Dog and Multiple Dog Divisions. The Multiple Dog Division includes Team (two or more handlers each with a single dog) and Brace (one handler with two dogs). A multiple dog team may include dogs with CFF single dog titles. A multiple dog team or brace may enter at any level at which any one of the dogs has not earned the Team or Brace title. If one of the dogs has a title at that level, the dog may compete as part of the entry but will not earn another title. . If a dog earns a Team or Brace title at Level II or higher, it may not enter at Level I as an individual entry. Otherwise, earning a Team or Brace title does not affect a dog's eligibility to enter individual dog classes. For example, if a dog earns a Level II Team title as its first CFF title, the dog may be shown as an individual in Level II(A or B), III or IV. To enter Level IV Team or Brace, all dogs on the team must have exhibited previously in CFF at a lower level.

The levels have been developed to highlight and expand on training technically in movement relative to the reference positions and on the choreographic and artistic performance skill of the handler. The four levels increase in technical and creative difficulty. Level I is presented on-lead, while Levels IIA & IIB, III and IV are presented off-lead. Each level has specific required movements. Other movements allowed for that level may also be incorporated. Points are awarded in the areas of Technical Execution, Teamwork, Choreography, Music, and Artistic Expression.

Placements (first through fourth) will be awarded in each level. In the case of a tie, the Presentation and Artistry score will break the tie. If the Presentation and Artistry score is also tied, the tied exhibitors will receive the same placement, and the next placement down will not be awarded (that is, if two teams tie for second place, no third place award will be given).

At the discretion of the show organizing committee, handlers may be allowed to enter at any level on a non-compete, or exhibition only, basis. This option will be open only to exhibitors who have previously competed in a regular class at a CFF show, and will be in adherence with the CFF rules for competition. No score will be given.

The non-regular class for veterans (dogs 7 years old and older) will not be judged. Each participating team will receive a medallion and a certificate. An exhibitor in this class must have previously competed at a CFF competition. Once shown in Veterans, a dog may not return to regular individual dog classes at any titling event. The Veterans Class is offered at the discretion of the show organizing committee.

A handler may request, due to the dog's physical limitations, an exception to the age restriction on Veterans class. Notification must be made to the show secretary before the start of the event. Once moved to Veterans, all rules pertaining to Veterans will then apply.

#### Choreographic Requirements:

- Develop interesting combinations of required movements with directional changes and full use of performance space.
- Test training artistically and creatively to fulfill the definition and related regulations of Freestyle.
- Dog should be moving forward (no backing or laterals) with drive and energy at all times.
- The handler may move in any direction.

#### **Level IIB (off-lead):** 1:30-3:00 minutes.

Level IIB is for handlers who have previously competed and titled at Level II or higher and are entering Level II must enter Level IIB.

#### Choreographic Requirements:

- Develop interesting combinations of required movements with directional changes and full use of performance space.
- Test training artistically and creatively to fulfill the definition and related regulations of Freestyle.
- Level IIB choreography may include movements from the higher levels, which will be judged accordingly.

#### **Required Movements for IIA and IIB:**

- right and left side heel work.
- front work
- pace changes
- turns and/or pivots
- circles, serpentines or spirals

#### **Level III (off-lead):** 2:00-3:00 minutes.

#### Choreographic Requirements:

Develop choreography with unity, continuity, repetition, contrasts and transitions in increasingly complex combinations of movements

**Distance Work:** Dog and handler separated by a minimum of six (6) feet.

**Pace Changes:** A change of pace adds interest and contrast to the performance. Pace changes may be exhibited by the dog during any type of movement. Each pace must be distinct and identifiable. The three moving paces are walking, trotting and running and may be done at different speeds, e.g., slow, moderate and fast or any variation of these.

**Variation of Movements:** Movement combinations, other than required moves, may be added at any level and are judged in the same manner as required movements. Variations of required movements are limitless and encouraged.

**Level I (on-lead):** 1:30 - 2:30 minutes

Choreographic Requirements:

- Develop interesting combinations of required movements with directional changes and full use of performance space.
- Test training artistically and creatively to fulfill the definition and related regulations of Freestyle.
- Dog should be moving forward (no backing or laterals) with drive and energy at all times.
- The handler may move in any direction.

**Required Movements:** All movements in Level I must be performed with the lead in the handler's hand.

- right and/or left side heel work
- front work
- pace changes
- turns and/or pivots
- circles, serpentines or spirals

**Level II is divided into two classes, A and B.**

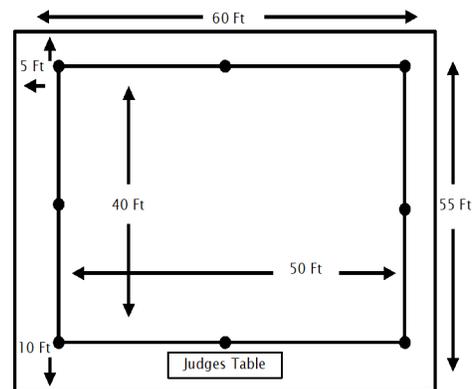
**Level IIA (off-lead): 1:30-2:30 minutes.**

Level IIA is for handlers who have not previously titled in Level II or above.

Classes will be presented for judging in ascending order, from Level I to Level IV. The Veterans Class should be used as a break between Levels II & III and Level IV should always conclude the show. Each level of FEO should be presented following the corresponding level of regular competition.

A Freestyle ring is a rectangle of 55 X 60 feet minimum which must be fully covered with a nonskid surface application. The performance space is 40 X 50 feet (see Figure 1), defined by markers 1 to 2 feet in height (potted flowers are ideal) placed at each corner and in the middle of each side. There is a buffer zone, around the performance area, preferably 10 feet on each side and not less than 5 feet on each side.

**Figure 1. Freestyle Ring Layout**



The judges' table will be 5 to 10 feet from the edge of the presentation space on a 50-foot side. The judges' side of the ring is the front. The table(s) will be placed on the centerline. A warm-up area will be provided, space permitting.

Exhibitors who have not checked in with the ring steward at least ten minutes before the scheduled start of their class will be marked absent and will not be permitted to compete.

An exhibitor's performance music must be submitted in advance to the music steward or designated assistant to be loaded into an MP3 .

player for use at the show. Procedures for doing so will be explained in the premium list, along with contact information for the music steward.

At competitions and demonstrations, CFF representatives and judges reserve the right to rule on music, attire or any other issues necessary to maintain the spirit and nature of Canine Freestyle.

### **Performance Guidelines**

At the beginning of each presentation, the exhibitor may, at his/her own discretion, briefly heel or walk the dog on a loose lead or off lead around the buffer zone between the inner and outer rings. Corrections, treats and toys are not allowed in the buffer zone during this acclimatization period. The team then enters the presentation space and proceeds to the center, where the exhibitor will pause to honor the judges with a gracious bow or nod of the head. The team then moves immediately to the starting or opening shape for the presentation. The music steward will start the music when the team has assumed a static starting position and the handler nods or otherwise signals. Signals other than nodding must be coordinated with the music steward during the sound check. At the conclusion of the presentation, the exhibitor must honor the audience with a gracious bow or nod of the head before leaving the ring.

The choreography should use the full potential of the presentation space. The dog and handler moving through the space should create movement patterns that are visually pleasing.

The choreographer is the person responsible for the design of movement through the performance space. CFF freestyle is about the dog; the handler (typically the owner) knows the dog best, and the process of choreographing and training a unique routine for the dog is part of developing the relationship between dog and handler. Therefore, it is expected that the handler will choreograph the routine. This does not mean that choreography must be developed 'in a vacuum.' The handler is encouraged to seek feedback from others during the choreographic process.

pivoting on the forequarters or hindquarters.

While a pivot may require some lateral movement on the part of the dog, this will not be considered as lateral work for the purposes of tallying required movements at Levels III and IV or non-allowed movements in Levels I and IIA.

**Front work:** The dog, whether stationary or in motion, should be facing the handler, body straight and centered on the handler. The dog should not interfere with the handler and may be any distance from the handler.

**Backing:** The dog moves backward, while the handler may move in any direction or stand still. Further:

- the dog may be in heel position or
  - Be standing in front position and looking at the handler
- the dog may be close to the handler or some distance away from the handler
- the dog may be standing in left or right heel position or facing the handler from the front or facing the handler from either side, i.e. the dog may be at a right angle to the handler

**Lateral Work:** The direction of the movement (right or left) is judged relative to the dog. To be considered lateral work, the dog must be moving to the side, either right or left. Dog's body should remain straight, with the hindquarters directly behind the forequarters. Neither handler nor dog should interfere with the other. The same positional possibilities listed under 'Backing' apply.

**Thunder Position:** Dog and handler are at right angles to each other and can move in any direction, i.e. dog can move laterally as handler remains still or moves forward or backward, or dog can move backward or forward as handler remains still or moves laterally.

Dog remains stationary for more than 10 seconds	0.5 per occurrence	1 per occurrence)
Dog and/or handler stepping completely outside the performance ring boundaries	0.5 per occurrence	1 per occurrence
Barking (single barks that do not detract from the performance will not be penalized)	0.5 per occurrence	1 per occurrence
Performance under or over the time requirements	0.5 per each 5-second increment	1 each 5-second increment

### **Definitions**

These definitions are goals and the structure in which Freestyle is defined. These definitions describe perfection. To achieve perfection is a rare achievement.

**Movement:** Movement is forward, backward, sideward or around.

**Heel work:** Heel work, whether the dog is sit-ting, standing, lying down or in motion, means that the dog is parallel to either the right or left side of the handler while still permitting freedom of motion at all times. This heel position is the reference point for judging the technical and artistic relationship of the dog's movement to the handler's body. Changes from a single steady position (shifts forward or back) may be necessary for some movements to avoid interference between the dog and handler.

**Turns:** A turn is simply a change of direction. There are a variety of turns depending on the direction in which the dog and handler turn relative to each other.

**Pivots:** A pivot is a turn in place with the dog in right or left heel position or in front. Either the handler turns in place or the dog turns in place,

An artistic performance will receive a higher score than one resembling a heeling pattern set to music. Handlers are encouraged to experiment with increasing degrees of artistic expression and creative difficulty, while taking care to show the dog's training strengths and minimize weaknesses. Poor technical performances will impair the artistic harmony of the presentation. However, technical proficiency cannot compensate for artistic weakness.

Movements should be presented clearly enough, to be easily identified by the judges. The dog may not remain stationary for longer than ten seconds without incurring a penalty.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the exhibitor must honor the audience with a gracious bow or nod of the head before leaving the ring.

### **Eligibility**

Freestyle is open to all dogs over one (1) year of age, purebred or mixed heritage. Bitches in season may not compete. The first time a dog and handler team enter a CFF Competition they must enter any Level I, IIA, or IIB for which they feel qualified. A handler who has previously earned a CFF title at Level II or higher must enter Level I, IIB or III. To compete in Level IV a handler and dog must have previously competed in a CFF competition at Level I, IIA, IIB, or III. Once a dog has placed in a particular level it may continue to compete only in that level or higher levels. Once a dog has titled in a particular level it must move up to the next level. An exception is that, if a team earns a title on the first day of a two day event, they may show on the second day for score and placement. No further title is earned at that level. Level IV dogs may continue to be shown in Level IV. If a team at Level IV receives a score of 80 or better at three separate trials (to include its first score) it will earn the title of Champion Freestyle Dog.

In the event a freestyle dog is teamed with an alternate handler, the title level remains with the dog and not the handler, with the exception of the original handler competing thereafter in IIB rather than IIA.

### **Equipment**

Dogs may be shown with or without a collar. Collars must be a well-fitted buckle/snap collar, a Martingale collar, or a slip collar, which may be decorative to enhance the presentation. The collar shall be free of tags or tabs. No other collars may be used. The lead must be of fabric or leather, a maximum of six feet in length but need be only of sufficient length to provide adequate slack and not interfere with the technical or artistic presentation. Equipment will be checked by the stewards immediately prior to entering the ring and violations promptly reported to the judges.

### **Aids**

Use of the voice and body language are allowed. The voice aids should be quiet and not distracting to the audience and judges. The movements of the handler's body should never be excessive and detract from the dog. Food, toys and any other props are not allowed in the Freestyle ring. Costume accessories may not be used in any interactions with the dog. The lead is not used to guide the dog at any time.

### **Attire**

Attire should be dignified and complement the dog and the choreography. The attire should not detract or distract from the presentation or the dog.

### **Music**

Music is mandatory. Any type of music, instrumental or vocal, may be selected. The music should be appropriate to the dog and handler. The rhythm of the music should suit the natural rhythm of the dog at a trot.

CFF is not responsible for music clearances.

### **Reasons for Elimination**

- fouling the ring
- lameness
- abusive behavior
- dog out of control, e.g., continual and excessive barking, dog runs away from handler leaving the presentation space and the buffer zone
- movement deemed unsafe for the dog, e.g., winging the dog by lead or collar jumping excessive heights
- equipment violations
- use of any collar other than a slip, Martingale, or buckle
- leaving food and/or toys in any area other than the designated warm up area.

### **Errors**

Errors result in point deductions. Error points will be deducted from the final score. Errors must be assessed by both judges or no error penalty is assessed.

<b>Error</b>	<b>Points per Judge</b>	<b>Total points</b>
Omission of required movements in any level	1	2
The lead not in handler's hand in Level I:	0.5	1
Failure to honor judges before the performance	0.5	1
Failure to honor the audience at the conclusion of the Performance	0.5	1
Physically guiding or grabbing the dog for control or attention	0.5 per occurrence	1 per occurrence