

Young Royal Kennel Club



YRKC PAIRS



AGILITY COMPETITIONS
RULES 2026 (CRUFTS 2027)



YRKC PAIRS RULES - CHANGE LOG

- i. Changes Dated 27/03/2026 – (v1.0 to v1.1).
 - a. Changed all YKC logos to YRKC.
 - b. Changed all mention of YKC to YRKC.
 - c. Changed all mention of Kennel Club to Royal Kennel Club.
 - d. Updated all mentions of first handler or 1st handler to **[1st handler]**
 - e. Updated all mentions of first dog or 1st dog to **[1st dog]**
 - f. Updated all mentions of second handler or 2nd handler to **[2nd handler]**
 - g. Updated all mentions of second dog or 2nd dog to **[2nd dog]**
 - h. Updated all mentions of additional assistant to **[additional assistant]**
 - i. A.3.i – updated section headings.
 - j. B.4.i – updated section headings.
 - k. C.2.iii.a.1 - corrected spelling of tyre.
 - l. C3 to C7 rearranged the order of the rules to aid readability.
 - m. C.7 - changed mention of the word “dog” to “pair”.
 - n. C.8.iii re-written to clarify who is eligible for awards and qualification spaces.
 - o. C.8.v & C.8.vi – previously was one rule with two parts, now split those parts into separate rules.
 - p. C.8.vi – added a clarifying statement found in C.8.vi.a
 - q. C.8.vii – added a rule disqualifying a pair if either dog fouls in the ring.
 - r. C.8.x – added text to indicate the baton change and where to locate the rules relating to the baton change.
 - s. **C9 to C11 – this section has been completely re-written. All rules from the 1.0 version have been updated to remove ambiguity.**
 - t. Added a new section (G) to the document to outline Crufts health testing requirement for RFG breeds.
 - u. Added a new section (M) to give judges a quick reference sheet.
 - v. I.2.iv changed 7 days to 14 days



A: HANDLERS

1. The following twelve subcategories will be open for members to compete in:

Large Dogs	Intermediate Dogs	Medium Dogs	Small Dogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handler 06-11 Years• Handler 12-17 Years• Open 06-24 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handler 06-11 Years• Handler 12-17 Years• Open 06-24 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handler 06-11 Years• Handler 12-17 Years• Open 06-24 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handler 06-11 Years• Handler 12-17 Years• Open 06-24 Years

2. Only current YRKC members may compete in YRKC Classes.
3. There are different rules on when handlers may be substituted in YRKC pairs competition.
 - i. This will be outlined in section “C”, “I” & “K”.
4. Use the YRKC member’s age on the first day of the show to work out which age category a YRKC member should enter.

B: DOGS

1. Standard Royal Kennel Club rules regarding which dogs may enter this agility class apply.
2. Bitches in season will not be allowed to compete in any YRKC agility competition.
3. When forming a pair, both of the dogs must be eligible to compete over the same height obstacles.
4. There are different rules on when dogs may be substituted in YRKC pairs competition.
 - i. This will be outlined in section “C”, “I” & “K”.
5. Once a dog has competed with a given YRKC handler in a YRKC Pairs qualifier, that dog may only compete with that handler in any future YRKC Pairs qualifiers for the rest of the qualifying season.
6. Dogs of any grade may enter this competition.

C: YRKC PAIRS UNIQUE RULES

1. Unless otherwise specified in this document, YRKC Pairs classes will be subject to all in-force Royal Kennel Club regulations for agility competitions. Including, but not limited to:
 - i. (H) General Regulations for Agility Competitions
 - ii. (O) Regulations for The Young Royal Kennel Club
2. **YRKC Pairs will be a continuous course of 1x agility round, baton change, 1x jumping round.**
 - i. Standard equipment (used by both dogs):
 - a. Jumps, Tunnels, Weaves.
 - ii. **The [1st dog] will complete the agility section.**
 - a. Additional equipment must include:
 - (1) A-Frame, See-Saw, Dog walk.
 - iii. **The [2nd dog] will complete the jumping section.**
 - a. Additional equipment may include:
 - (1) long jump, tyre, wall.
3. Please note this is a special class, contact equipment can be used more than once and the judge does not have to use every piece of equipment listed above.
4. Each section should feature between 13 and 16 obstacles.
5. You may choose, after walking the course, who will complete each section.
6. The course will be different for the first and the second dogs.
 - i. However, any obstacle that appears on the “standard equipment” list can be used as part of the course for both dogs.
7. To determine the results for this class, pairs will be ranked first by total number of faults, then by time. The pair with the fewest faults in the fastest time is the winner.
 - i. The rankings of the 12 subcategories are separate.



YRKC PAIRS

8. Altered Royal Kennel Club & Additional Rules

- i. A single elimination will score 100 faults and will be that dog's final faults total (irrespective of how many faults were accumulated prior to this) the dog will no longer be marked but must complete the full course.
- ii. The time will always be recorded, unless;
 - a. the pair are disqualified (see below).
- iii. If a pair's total score is 200 or greater then, as a pair they cannot receive placings or qualifications.
 - a. This may be as a result of (examples and not limited to)
 - (1) 2 x eliminations
 - (2) Any combination of faults from
 - (i) elimination
 - (ii) baton change faults
 - (iii) course faults
 - (iv) time faults
- iv. Once a dog completes their final obstacle, that dog is no longer under test.
 - a. If a dog that has completed its round, naturally continues its stride and completes another obstacle; no fault will be recorded.
 - b. If the dog is out of control, however, the pair will be disqualified.
- v. The pair will be disqualified if either dog is deemed out of control.
- vi. The pair will be disqualified if either dog fails to make a fair attempt at its course.
 - a. Each dog must fully complete every obstacle of its course (in the direction specified).
- vii. The pair will be disqualified if either dog fouls in the ring.
- viii. If the timing is stopped before the course is completed because of the competing dog/handler's mistake, the team's time will be recorded as either the course time OR the time at which the clock was stopped, whichever is greater.
- ix. If the timing equipment malfunctions, this shall be handled as if it was a normal class.
- x. **YRKC Pairs will feature a baton change.**
 - a. **The baton change and handover box will have rules defined in the following section.**



9. Baton Change & Handover Box Rules

- i. Baton Change & Handover Box faults are penalised more harshly to incentivise careful compliance.
 - a. Each infraction requiring faults being awarded will either require 20 faults per infraction or disqualification
 - b. There is no limit on the number times a pair may be awarded baton change faults.
 - c. Any baton change faults will be awarded in addition to any faults gained for eliminations / course faults / time faults
 - ii. To begin, the baton will be held by the [2nd handler].
 - a. i.e. the baton is always held by the person NOT running
 - iii. The baton shall be passed from the [2nd handler] to the [1st handler].
 - a. The [2nd handler] should never be carrying the baton while they are completing their course
 - b. Penalty for infraction: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
 - iv. The baton may not be passed from the [2nd handler] to the [1st handler] until the [1st dog] has fully completed its course and is under control.
 - a. Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
 - v. The [2nd handler & Dog] may not set off until the baton is in the grip of the [1st handler].
 - a. i.e the [2nd dog] may not complete its first obstacle before the handover has completed
 - b. Penalty for occurrence: the pair will have **20 faults** added.
 - vi. The baton may not touch the floor during the handover
 - a. Penalty for occurrence: the pair will have **20 faults** added.
 - b. The [2nd handler] must pick the baton back up and hand it to the [1st handler] again before setting off, otherwise they will be penalised as per C.9.v
 - (1) If the pair drop the baton a second time (or more), the pair will not be faulted for the further infraction(s) but must still complete the handover as per C.9.v
 - vii. The [2nd handler & Dog] must have their entire body behind the line / inside the box during the handover.
 - a. This includes the baton (*e.g. no leaning outside*)
 - b. Penalty for infraction: the pair will have **20 faults** added.
 - viii. The baton must be passed with care to the approaching handler; the baton may NOT be thrown for any reason.
 - a. Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
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10. Handover Box

- i. The handover box / line should be at the side of the ring typically on the same side as the start / finish line.
- ii. The handover box / line should be a sensible distance from the previous / next obstacle.
- iii. The last obstacle for the [1st dog] and the first obstacle for the [2nd dog] shall not be the same obstacle, and they should be set up to ensure a safe transition during the baton handover.
- iv. Once the [1st dog] has completed its course, there is no requirement for that dog to remain in the ring.
- v. Once the baton handover has taken place, the baton should be passed from [1st handler] to a steward.
 - a. There is no requirement for the [1st handler], baton or [additional assistant] to remain in the handover box or the ring
 - (1) This can be before the [2nd dog] has completed its first obstacle.
- vi. Both the [1st dog] and [2nd dog] should never be outside of the box AND in the ring at the same time.
 - a. i.e. both dogs should never be in the course area together.
 - b. Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.



11. Additional Assistance

- i. One **[additional assistant]** (e.g. parent) may hold the **[2nd dog]** for the **[2nd handler]** and/or help collect the **[1st dog]** if required.
 - a. This person should do the bare minimum for the **[2nd handler]**.
 - (1) **Assistance may include the following:**
 - (i) Holding the **[2nd dog]** while the **[1st dog]** is running.
 - (ii) Releasing the **[2nd dog]** as soon as the **[2nd handler]** moves outside the box / line.
 - (iii) Collecting the **[1st dog]** once the **[2nd dog]** has been released.
 - (2) **Assistance shall NOT include:**
 - (i) Delaying the release of the **[2nd dog]** to gain an advantage in handling position.
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will have **20 faults** added.
 - (ii) Having hold of both the **[1st dog]** and **[2nd dog]** at the same time
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will have **20 faults** added.
 - (iii) Giving any verbal commands or hand signals to either dog outside the box / line (i.e. no double handling).
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
 - (iv) Using a toy or lure.
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
 - (v) Using treats.
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
 - (vi) Harsh handling or excess force to control either dog.
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.
 - (vii) More than one **[additional assistant]** in the handover box.
 - (a) Penalty for occurrence: the pair will be **Disqualified**.

YRKC PAIRS QUALIFIERS

D:

1. **By entering a YRKC qualifier, the YRKC members and anyone representing them (parent/guardian etc) agree to abide by the YRKC's Code of Conduct.**
2. The qualification period for **Crufts 2027** is: **01-Nov-2025 till 31-Oct-2026**
3. Upon entry, you must decide which dog each of the pair will be handling in the competition.
 - i. This means you cannot swap dogs with your pairs partner after entries close.
4. A handler may enter each height category as a separate qualifier.
5. A handler must only enter one age category per height.
 - i. If entering multiple pairs in the same height category, but different age categories, ALL entries with this handler must be into the 06-24 Years age category for this height.
6. If you have already qualified in a height category you may not enter or compete in that YRKC pairs height category again that year unless it is with the same pairing that you have qualified with.
 - i. If you have already qualified, but have entered a show with another pairing, you must forfeit this round.
 - a. We advise only entering shows with the same pair combinations to avoid disappointment.
7. There will be a prize giving ceremony.
8. YRKC Pairs qualifiers are listed on the YRKC website
 - i. Only qualifiers listed on the YRKC website will be eligible for qualification, please ensure that you are entering a valid YRKC qualifier.



E: YRKC BROKEN PAIRS @ QUALIFIERS

1. Broken pairs;

- i. If only 1 member of the pair is able to compete on the day of the competition, they may merge with another pair in the same situation.
 - a. It is possible that this will alter the age category for the pair, this is allowed and the new age category will be correct for the pair.
 - b. You cannot form a new pair with someone who was not already entered into the pairs competition.
 - c. Both handlers must use the dog they elected to run with their original pair.
 - d. The dog height restriction is still in effect (i.e. both dogs must be eligible to compete over the same height obstacles).
 - e. If a dog is unable to compete (i.e. injured) you cannot swap to another dog you own that is not entered into the pairs competition.
 - (1) In this case, the injured dog and its handler withdraw from the competition and the remaining dog and handler from the pairing may attempt to merge with another pair as described in this section.
 - f. Any merging of pairs must be completed **BEFORE** the relevant height category has begun.
 - g. You **MUST** ask permission to merge pairs with the show secretary.
 - (1) The show secretary is within their rights to deny a merge of pairs for any reason.
 - (i) Reasons may include (but not limited to):
 - (a) Either the height category has already started or it is too close to the height starting.
 - (b) The show secretary is unable to access or amend the pair on the scoring system.
 - h. Once entered, you cannot voluntarily break a pair to merge with another pair.
 - (1) Falling out with your pairs partner is not a valid reason to merge with another pair.

F: YRKC PAIRS - WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE FINAL?

1. **First place at any YRKC pairs qualifier during this season will guarantee a space in the final**
2. The YRKC reserves the right to amend this qualification method if we are vastly oversubscribed for the final at Crufts **OR** if not enough spaces were filled.
 - i. The YRKC will only amend qualification criteria in exceptional circumstances.
3. Once qualified, the handler and dog combination set for this year's qualifying season
 - i. The qualified dog may only be handled at Crufts by the same handler that it qualified with.
4. The YRKC will invite all those who have qualified to enter Crufts via email before Christmas.



G ■ NEW HEALTH ENTRY CRITERIA FOR BULLDOGS, FRENCH BULLDOGS AND PUGS AT CRUFTS

1. All Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs exceeding 14 calendar months on the first day of Crufts must have a valid Respiratory Function Grading (RFG) Scheme assessment to attend. This requirement is mandatory for entry into the show, not just individual classes.
2. **VALID RFG SCHEME ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**
 - i. To gain entry, all eligible Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs must attach a valid RFG Scheme certificate dated within the last 24 months of the first day of the show to their entry.
 - ii. Dogs assessed as Grade 2 or 3 will be excluded and not allowed to enter or attend the show.
3. **CERTIFICATE UPLOAD AND VALIDATION**
 - i. The dog's RFG scheme certificate must be uploaded as part of your entry, including the expiry date and grade. The Royal Kennel Club will validate and approve the certificate.
4. **EXEMPTIONS AND AGE REQUIREMENTS**
 - i. Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs not exceeding 14 calendar months on the first day of the show are exempt from needing an RFG Scheme assessment, and a certificate is not required.
 - ii. Bulldogs, French Bulldogs and Pugs aged 7 years or older on the first day of the show do not need a valid RFG Scheme assessment; however, they must upload the last certificate awarded to the dog
 - a. The corresponding certificate must be uploaded prior to entry, but it does not need to be dated within the last 24 months.
 - b. The last certificate awarded must have the dog assessed as either Grade 0 or Grade 1.
5. **OVERSEAS ASSESSMENTS**
 - i. International RFG Scheme assessments issued by licensed organisations, and carried out by approved assessors, will be accepted. Overseas exhibitors must upload a valid certificate prior to entry, and ensure certificates meet the same standards as domestic entries.
6. **CROSSBREED DOG BREED DETERMINATION**
 - i. A crossbreed that has characteristics of either a Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug will be asked to prove that there are none of the aforementioned breeds in the dog's breeding going back 5 generations.
 - ii. A crossbreed that has unknown lineage will be deemed as one of the designated breeds (Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug) if it has characteristics that are associated with those breeds respectively.
 - iii. Any Crossbreed that is deemed to be one of the designated breeds (Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug) is subject to the same health testing restrictions as outlined in G1 through G5 in this document.
 - iv. If there is any doubt whether a dog should be deemed as one of the designated breeds (Bulldog, French Bulldog or Pug) AND that dog has been entered into Crufts without submitting a valid RFG scheme certificate, the judge of the competition will adjudicate.
 - a. The judge may ask for a second opinion from the YRKC show organisers.
 - b. If it is deemed that the dog is one of the designated breeds, that dog shall be asked to leave the show immediately.
7. **More Information**
 - i. For information on where the scheme is available, expected costs and more information on why the RKC is implementing these rules: please visit <https://www.royalkennelclub.com/rfgscheme>



H ■ HOW MANY DOGS CAN I QUALIFY FOR THE YRKC PAIRS FINAL?

1. You may enter as many different YRKC Pairs qualification heats as you wish, even after you have already qualified with a 1st place, HOWEVER:
 - i. As soon as you have qualified, you may only enter YRKC pairs competitions at that height with the pair you have qualified with.
2. You may only qualify 1 dog per height for the Pairs finals at Crufts:
 - i. The maximum number of runs you can qualify for at the Crufts YRKC Pairs final is 4.
 - a. 1 x Large Dog
 - b. 1 x Intermediate
 - c. 1 x Medium Dog
 - d. 1 x Small Dog
 - ii. You do not have to be in the same pair for the different heights.

I ■ YRKC PAIRS FINAL AT CRUFTS

1. **By entering a YRKC competition, the YRKC member and anyone representing them (parent/guardian etc) agree to abide by the YRKC's Code of Conduct**
2. If a dog is unable to compete at Crufts, you may contact the YRKC to ask whether you can replace one (and only one) of the pair's dogs.
 - a. The replacement dog must compete at the same height
 - ii. Reasons may include, but not limited to:
 - a. Bitch in season
 - b. Dog has sustained an injury
 - iii. You **MUST** receive written confirmation (email) that the YRKC have allowed the substitution.
 - iv. The last date substitutions can be made is no later than 14 days before the first day of Crufts
 - a. If a dog is unable to compete after that point, then the pair must withdraw.
3. If both originally qualified dogs from the pair are unable to compete at Crufts, the pair is withdrawn from the competition.
4. The handlers may **NEVER** be substituted
5. The final for the YRKC Pairs competition is held at Crufts in the YRKC ring.
 - i. The final will be held in the same manner as the qualifiers
 - a. 1x agility round, baton change, 1 x jumping round.
 - b. This course will be set at grade 3.
6. The age category a YRKC member will compete in is calculated by their age on the first day of Crufts,
 - i. For example: if a member qualified as an 11-year-old and turns 12 before the first day of Crufts, they will be invited to compete in the 12-17 age group
7. At Crufts, dogs **MUST** run in strict running order;
 - i. if you are not on the line when your run is due, you will have missed your run
 - a. The running order for the final will be determined randomly
 - (1) Each of the heights will be grouped together, but the age categories will be jumbled
8. Each of the twelve categories will have separate placings and prize-givings

J ■ CLOTHING, SPONSORSHIP & LOGOS @ CRUFTS

1. Handlers should wear smart athletic wear, with plain black or navy tracksuit bottoms/leggings paired with a short sleeve t-shirt/polo shirt of their choosing.
2. Agility handlers should wear footwear that will enable them to run without slipping on artificial grass.
3. Some YRKC members have managed to arrange personal sponsorship and branding deals. YRKC members who wish to have branding on their clothing at Crufts must follow the below rules.
4. The YRKC & Royal Kennel Club also have several sponsors in both the YRKC ring and the main arena at Crufts.



- i. To comply with our sponsors, YRKC members may **NOT** have branding on display from the following companies:
 - a. Dog food or treat supplier
 - b. Car manufacturer
 - c. Insurance company
- ii. If a YRKC member wishes to have branding from a company not on the above list on an item of clothing, that company's branding must be where a breast pocket would be and must be approximately breast pocket size.
- iii. This restriction on branding only applies in the following locations:
 - a. Crufts YRKC collecting ring, Crufts YRKC ring, Crufts YRKC Presentation Area.
 - b. Crufts Main arena collecting ring, Crufts Main Arena, Crufts Main Arena Presentation Area.

K: BROKEN PAIRS @ CRUFTS

1. **If your pair becomes broken** (either no replacement dog or one of the handlers no longer wishes to compete) immediately inform the YRKC office.
 - i. The member and dog who still wish to compete will go onto a waiting list to be joined with other members in a similar situation.
 - ii. The YRKC will merge any members who have been split up from their original pairing. This merge will be done in a first come first served basis, the earlier you let the YRKC know, the more likely you will get another partner.
 - a. The YRKC will merge members based on dog height only, i.e., a 20-year-old could get merged with an 8-year-old if their dogs compete at the same height.
 - (1) this is non-negotiable. If you are unhappy with your pairing you may withdraw from the Crufts final (you will not be merged a second time - the person you left will be merged though)
 - iii. You do not have to be merged; you may instead withdraw from the Crufts final. You may still not re-qualify with another pairing in that dog height.
 - iv. The member whose dog has been injured may switch to a new pair and attempt to requalify only if they have contacted the YRKC with written proof from their vet that this is the case AND the YRKC have written back and agreed. (Email is fine)
 - v. A member that did not want to be part of that pairing anymore will not be allowed to requalify (unless it falls under extenuating circumstances, in which case, you must contact the YRKC for written permission)

L: YRKC PAIRS AGILITY FINAL – PRIZEGIVING

1. The following awards will be presented in the YRKC ring for the YRKC Pairs Agility Final

06-11 Years	12-17 Years	06-24 Years
• 1 st to 5 th LRG	• 1 st to 5 th LRG	• 1 st to 5 th LRG
• 1 st to 5 th INT	• 1 st to 5 th INT	• 1 st to 5 th INT
• 1 st to 5 th MED	• 1 st to 5 th MED	• 1 st to 5 th MED
• 1 st to 5 th SML	• 1 st to 5 th SML	• 1 st to 5 th SML

Overall Pairs Agility Winner

Overall Pairs Agility Reserve

2. All non-placed competitors will receive a finalist rosette when exiting the prize-giving
 - i. To receive this award, members must be present for the prize-giving.



M: YRKC PAIRS AGILITY – JUDGES REFERENCE SHEET

The following section is a short summary that can be printed off for judges as a reference guide.

NORMAL ELIMINATIONS

- The judge should signal an elimination and stop marking the current dog.
 - The judge shall continue to watch the dog to ensure that the dog successfully completes every obstacle.
 - The judge shall recommence marking during the baton change and also for the next dog.
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BATON CHANGE – 20 FAULTS AWARDED PER INFRACTION

A judge should award 20 baton change faults for the following reasons:

- **[2nd dog]** setting off too early
 - Dropped Baton
 - Baton change occurs outside of marked area
 - **[additional assistant]** delays releasing **[2nd dog]**
 - **[additional assistant]** holding both dogs at the same time in the marked area
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DISQUALIFICATIONS

A judge should disqualify the pair for any of the following reasons:

- Either dog failed to successfully complete every obstacle in its course
- Either dog is out of control
- Either dog fouls in the ring
- Baton handover occurs before **[1st dog]** has finished the course
- Baton handover is incomplete and **[2nd handler]** still has the baton in hand while completing their course
- Unsafe baton handover (e.g. thrown)
- Both dogs in the course area at the same time (e.g. **[1st dog]** has not left the ring nor inside the handover box marked area while **[2nd dog]** is completing their course)
- **[additional assistant] disqualification Reasons**
 - Double handling
 - Using toy / lure
 - Using treats
 - Harsh handling
 - More than 1 **[additional assistant]**