Canadian Association of Rally Obedience

Board Meeting Minutes for the Month of October 2025

In Attendance:

Chair - Patricia Hunt
Vice Chair - Kate Zinggl
Secretary - Maria Adams
Ontario Director - Lilian Cook
Quebec and Atlantic Provinces - Saundra Clow

Absent:

Western Director – Julia Schwark

Prairies Director – Vacant

Treasurer – Debby DaCosta

Exec at Large – Jessica Cohen

Key Dates:

October 1-14 – Fall Virtual Trial
October 4 – Board meeting via Zoom
October 15-20 – Website and database down for maintenance

Discussion Points:

- Welcome new members, Debby and Saundra.
- Approve October minutes, after adding a list of absent members.
- Judge Complaint received via email. The chair will investigate further by speaking to judges who were at the event in question.
- Canada Post is on strike, so mail is temporarily on hold. Alternative ribbon delivery options will be research and utilized if Canada Post remains unavailable.
- Once the new database is live, CARO will no longer mail out paper certificates to competitors. There will be a downloadable PDF available to all competitors; membership will not be required to view and download certificates.
- Rule clarifications from virtual trial
    - For sign 223, Call Dog, handlers must fully pass the sign before calling their dog. Once past the sign, handlers may continue at a normal pace while their dog returns to heel. For sign 201, once handlers have completely passed the Call Dog sign, they may return to normal pace

or pause until their dog returns to heel. The team must be in heel before beginning the next station. (Wording to be addressed in next handbook version.)
    - As per the current handbook, section 3.2.5, for off-leash levels where the handler chooses to keep the leash with them, the leash **must** be completely concealed in the right-side pocket. If the leash is put in other pockets it is an NQ. (Wording and including this rule in the chart, to be addressed in next handbook version.)
- Vice Chair presented results for the course approval process surveys.
    - Role of the course approver: To serve as a second set of eyes to ensure courses comply with CARO rules and requirements, offering constructive suggestions for flow and clarity. But if a course follows the rules, it should be approved regardless of stylistic preference.
    - Judges value the process — with small adjustments, we can make it clearer, more consistent, and more positive for all.
    - Recommendations based on surveys:
        - Create a course approver application form and document of requirements a course approver needs to meet
        - Hold quarterly (or bi-annual) approver meetings led by the Judges Program head to share challenges, clarify rules, and ensure consistent communication to all judges.
        - Important findings get communicated to the board which will send out judges communication in a timely manner
        - Create communication guidelines and email templates to ensure consistent format of feedback
- Patricia noted that the Judges Programme and Course Approvers have been discussing a new training program for both judges and course approvers. Once the new database is up, we will be able to track stats on judges and create a fair set of criteria for eligibility for being a cooperative judge and a course approver.

Motions:

2025 075 That the September minutes be approved

2025 076 That Sandy Sommerfield be accepted as an NAE Judge

2025 077 That members will no longer receive printed certificates from CARO, instead a PDF will be available to download.

2025 078 Effective immediately, all trial paperwork must be submitted electronically, and there will be no fee for submission.