

CANICROSS RACING RULES

Events

5km and 10km trail races

Terrain

Events are run on cross-country trails during the winter months. Hazards may include wet slippery surfaces including down-hills, grass, mud, snow/ice, twigs/branches from tree fall, loose stones and gullies formed by water erosion – all of which may be hidden under thick blanket of leaves.

Race Format

Competitors will start their race in intervals in an individual time trail format. For the January event the start order will be at the discretion of the competitors. Individual competitors will need to have their race number confirmed by the race timers before starting. The start procedure will be as follows.

Race Timer: 'Number please'

Competitor: 'Number'

Race Timer: Number is starting is 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Go.

Therefore gaps between competitors will be approx 10 seconds.

Competitors must do their utmost to ensure that their dogs do not interfere with other runners or dogs. In the unlikely event that regular runners (starting at 11:00) overlap with the Canicross runners (starting at 10:00) priority must be given to the overtaking regular runners.

Age

The usual trail running minimum age rules apply. Runners must be 12 or over to take part in the 5km, 15 or over to take part in the 10km. Dogs must be at least 12 months old.

Categories

Our usual race categories will apply, with male and female categories in the following age groups; U20, 20-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+. As this is a trial event, prizes are still TBC but will likely be top 3 overall.

Accidents and Responsibilities

Control of your dog is required at all times. The rightful owner of a dog is required to have liability insurance (or family insurance) for any damages that their dog may commit, or injuries that the dog may cause. The rightful owner of a dog is the person named as such in the dog's vaccination book and/or official paperwork. The rightful owner must ensure that the animal is owned (cared for) in accordance with the law. Proof of insurance will be required at registration.

The event will be covered by public liability insurance as standard.

Dogs

We welcome any breed or cross breed of dog, but they must be at least 12 months old. Swapping of dogs during a race is not permitted.

Bitches in season are not excluded from competing; however, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that adequate precautions are taken and that they acknowledge full liability. Owners must inform race organisers if they intend to compete with a bitch in season so provisions can be made. For example, they may be asked to start at the back to ensure the smallest number of issues. They will also need to be kept away from the group during briefings and at the start/end of a race.

No pregnant or nursing bitches are allowed to compete. Dogs that have been coughing or have been in contact with infectious diseases within the previous 21 days should not be brought to the event.

Nobody should race dogs that are nervous of humans, as this can cause undue stress to these dogs. It is strongly recommended that dogs receive a vet health check before competing at our event. Any dogs deemed unfit to race by either the race Vet or event organisers must be withdrawn from competition. All races are non refundable and non transferable as with regular (non canicross) race registrations.

Borrowing of Dogs

Although the swapping, lending and borrowing of dogs is not prohibited, anyone running a dog that is not owned by them must disclose this on their entry form. Ultimately it is the rightful owner's responsibility to ensure that the person they are lending their dog to is able to read the dog's signals in order to anticipate any problems before they happen and if a situation should occur they are capable of handling it.

They must also be confident the dog is sound when approaching and being approached by other dogs. For the safety of the dog being lent out, the runner should also be made aware of the dog's limitations, signs that the dog may be having difficulties and have undertaken a number of training runs before entering a race. If there is any doubt that the runner is not capable or the dog could act unpredictably, the entry should not be submitted or withdrawn.

If a situation occurs the rightful owner of the dog will be held responsible.

Equipment

Dogs must wear a suitable harness and be attached to their handler by a line containing some bungee to act as a shock absorber.

Lines must not be longer than 2.5 meters when fully extended.

No head collars, shock collars, choke chains or flexi leads are permitted. Whips are not permitted. Muzzles may be used but they must be the open, basket type, through which dogs can drink and take treats. Runners are not allowed to wear shoes that could be dangerous for dogs. Shoes with metal spikes are strictly forbidden.

Exceptions may be granted in regard to the above equipment requirements if a competitor is learning how to canicross (debut), then a hand-held leash and flat (classic) collar will be accepted. The competitor must make this known at registration; exceptions are at the discretion of the Race director.

Safety

All competitors are required to attend, please do not bring your dogs to the safety briefing so that everyone can hear everything that is said. This will be at 09:30am, with the event starting at 10:00am

Qualified First Aiders will be available during races. The contact details of an on-call vet will be available at the Event Information desk should anyone require them.

Temperature and Distances

We advise you build your dog's distance up over several weeks/months. During runs and hot weather (over 16°C) some breeds (ie those with short muzzles) may have difficulty cooling themselves. If your dog is overweight, unfit, not used to exercise, recovering from illness, of advancing years, or you have any doubt about your dog's ability, please consult your vet.

Always carry water with you just in case it is needed. We will provide bowls of water and small pools of water at the end of the races for any dogs that need it.

Familiarise yourself with your dog's normal behaviour while running, prior to the event. If at any time they show any signs they are struggling (excessive foaming at the mouth, shaking the head or pulling to the side), immediately find a shaded place to stop (preferably with a cool breeze) and give them some water. It is essential that you respect the welfare of your dogs and that you adapt your pace accordingly. Watch your dog's behaviour for 1/2hr after your run – this is the most critical time when they are likely to overheat.

General

Please clean up after your dog and have poop bags on you at all times – we would like to maintain our good relations with the University, golf club and the everyday users of these paths. Not picking up dog mess will result in disqualification and you will not be invited back to future events.

If a Race Marshal determines that a handler's conduct at any time in the race area or on the trail is detrimental to the sport/race, that runner shall be disqualified. This includes prior to, during, and after the event.

If a dog becomes unfit or refuses to advance for any reason, the competitor is not permitted to finish the race. They must remain where they are and wait to be picked up by the event sweeper and advise a marshal as soon as possible if the dog is in need of urgent attention.

It is deemed acceptable for your dog to be behind on downhill, on technical sections of a route or when it would be dangerous to do so. Otherwise your dog must be in front of you at all times and they must not be dragged at any point.

When overtaking other runners on narrow trails, call before overtaking. If being overtaken, keep your dog close. When passing other runners, each party should ensure this is done safely, allowing plenty of space for each runner and ensuring dogs do not become tangled.

The competitor that is being overtaken must assume responsibility to ensure that their dogs are to one side of the track and do not interfere with the runner going past. Dogs should be attached to the competitor at all times except in cases of danger to dog or runner. It is recommended that competitors who have dogs who are worried by other canines should allow plenty of space for their dogs, especially at the start of the race, to alleviate any undue stress. If you have an aggressive dog, don't provide the opportunity for it to be out of control.

The use of personal stereos, MP3 players or any electronic device with headphones etc that impairs the ability to hear marshals or other runners is strictly forbidden. Anyone using such a device will be asked to refrain immediately or be disqualified.