

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF THE
NEW ENGLAND AGILITY TEAM, INC.

With Accepted Revisions

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CONSTITUTION

Article 1 Name and Objectives

Section 1 The name of the organization shall be the New England Agility Team (N. E.A.T.) hereinafter referred to as the Club.

Section 2 The objectives of the Club shall be as follows:

- a. To encourage and promote the sport of dog agility in New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont) by holding practice sessions, matches, trials, exhibitions, clinics, and/or other dog-related activities.
- b. To protect and advance the interest of all dogs - mixed-breed, rare breed, and purebred alike - in the sport of dog agility.
- c. To promote cooperation, sportsmanship, and enjoyment among Club members, other agility groups, and fellow dog enthusiasts at all times.
- d. To support any local and national dog agility organizations of which the Club votes to be a group member.
- e. To do any and all necessary functions to enhance the purposes of the Club.

Section 3 The Club shall not be conducted or operated for profit and no part of any proceeds or remainder of dues or donations to the Club shall inure to the unearned benefit of any member or individual.

Section 4 The members of the Club shall adopt and may, from time to time, revise such By-Laws as may be required to carry out these objectives.

BY-LAWS

Article 1 Membership

Section 1 Types of Membership

There shall be four (4) types of membership open to all persons who subscribe to the purposes of the Club and meet the eligibility requirements in Section 3 of this Article.

a. Individual:

An individual member is entitled to vote and hold office. A member assists at practices he or she attends, assists at Club activities, attends Club business meetings, and satisfies the membership responsibilities described in Section 5 of this Article.

b. Junior:

A junior member is under 18 years of age and is not entitled to vote or hold office. Junior members under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all Club activities. A junior member assists at practices he or she attends, assists at Club activities, and satisfies the membership responsibilities described in Section 5 of this Article.

c. Family:

A family membership consists of two (2) or more people living in the same household or related persons living in separate homes (i.e. aunt and niece). Each member will have the rights and duties of individual membership.

d. Lifetime Membership:

At the discretion of the Board of Directors an individual may be designated as a Lifetime Member. A Lifetime Member has full club benefits but is not required to fulfill any other requirements of membership. Qualification for this high honor is based on the member's long standing contribution to the Club.

Section 2 Dues

Membership dues for renewing members shall be payable on or before the 1st day of February each year. In November, written notice that fees for the coming year are due shall be sent to the Club members along with a renewal form. Dues for new members are payable when the application for membership is submitted. New members who pay dues between November 1st and February 1st are considered paid in full until February of the following year. Membership dues shall be as follows:

- a. Individual Membership: \$20 per year
- b. Junior Membership: \$15 per year
- c. Family Membership: \$30 per year
- d. Lifetime Membership: no fee

The Club may, by a 75% majority vote of the entire membership, change the dues.

Section 3 Eligibility for Membership

A person is eligible for membership in the Club after he or she completes one (1) agility class. The class must be one offered either by the Club or by an instructor or organization that has been approved by the Club.

Section 4 Application for Membership

Each eligible applicant for membership shall apply as follows:

- a. The applicant for membership shall apply on a form approved by the Board of Directors and which provides that the applicant agrees to abide by the ***Constitution and By-Laws*** and rules of the club. The application shall include the name, address, email address, and other information deemed necessary. Dues payment for the current year shall accompany the application.
- b. The completed application shall be filed with the Membership Chair.
- c. Applicants may be elected to membership at any meeting of the Club, or through an internet (by electronic media including but not limited to email, google groups, and Facebook) vote by the membership. In internet vote, the Membership chair shall ask all club members for votes. Affirmative votes by a majority of members shall be required. In the case of a negative vote by the Club, the Club may recommend a specific procedure and/or time frame for the applicant to reapply for membership. Any club member may request an opportunity to present the application for reconsideration at a Club meeting.

- d. The Membership Chair shall contact the applicant to report the Club's decision regarding the application for membership.
- e. Until the membership application is voted on by the Club, the applicant shall continue to be considered a visitor at practices and must pay the designated visitor fee, if any, as well as signing a release of responsibility to the club.

Section 5 **Membership Responsibilities:**

Each member must satisfy the Club's membership responsibilities in order to be considered a member in good standing. A member must be in good standing in order to exercise his or her voting privileges, run for office, or sponsor an applicant for membership.

The Board of Directors is responsible for determining whether or not a member is in good standing. If at any time during the year, the Board finds by a majority vote that a member is not in good standing, the Board may suspend his or her membership privileges. The Board shall review the membership roster at least once a year to determine if members have met their membership responsibilities. When a member fails to meet their membership responsibilities for the previous year, he or she, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, may be subject to Termination.

- a.. All members who attend practice will either arrive early enough to help set up equipment, or stay until the end of practice to help take down equipment.
- b. All members who attend practice abide by the *Club's Safety Rules and Guidelines*, show consideration for other handlers at all times, and leave equipment properly set up after using it.
- c. All members who attend practice may be asked to help conduct the run-throughs by acting as a steward, timekeeper, judge, or scribe.
- d. And fundraisers. Practice attendance is not considered a "club activity" for the purposes of determining standing.
- e. Members attend a minimum of 50% of club business meetings every year. Every effort shall be made to attend in person; attendance via electronic media or telephone is permissible, but not encouraged.

- f. All members help maintain the Club's agility equipment.

Section 6 Termination of Membership.

Membership shall be terminated by:

- a. **Resignation:** Any member in good standing and free of debts to the Club may resign from the Club upon written notice to the Secretary.
- b. **Lapsing:** A membership shall be considered lapsed and automatically terminated if dues remain unpaid 30 days after becoming due, however, the Board of Directors may grant an additional 90 days of grace to such delinquent members in meritorious cases. In no case shall a member whose dues are unpaid on the date of a meeting be entitled to vote at that Club meeting.
- c. **Expulsion:** A membership may be terminated by expulsion as provided in Article 6 of these By-Laws.

A terminated member may reapply for membership through the Board of Directors. The Board may recommend to waive the application procedure described in Section 4 of Article 1 or may recommend an alternative procedure. The application shall be read and voted on at the next possible Club business meeting, or through email.

Section 7 Compensation and/or Reimbursement.

A member may be reimbursed for expenses or services reasonably incurred on behalf of the Club, if approved by the Board of Directors.

Article 2 Meetings and Voting

Section 1 Club Meetings.

Business meetings of the Club shall be held quarterly, at such hour and place designated by the Board of Directors. Notice of each meeting shall be posted at least five (5) days prior to the date of the meeting in Google Groups and the Private NEAT Club Facebook page. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 20% of the membership in good standing. At the beginning of each club meeting, the President will submit an agenda to all members who are present for the meeting. Members may place an item on the agenda by contacting the president at least two (2) days prior to any Club business meeting.

Section 2 Special Club Meetings.

Special Club meeting may be called by a majority vote of the Board of Directors or by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting of the Club. Such special meetings shall be held at such place, date, and hour designated by the person or persons authorized herein to call such meeting, or alternatively, conducted through teleconference or electronic media including but not limited to email, google groups, and Facebook. Notice of such a meeting and the purpose of the meeting shall be given by the President at least five (5) days and not more than 15 days prior to the date of the meeting, and no other Club business may be transacted thereat. Notice will be posted on the NEAT private Facebook page and the NEAT Google Group. The quorum for such a meeting shall be 20% of the membership in good standing.

Section 3 Board Meetings.

The first meeting of the Board shall be held no more than seven (7) to twenty-one (21) days after the election at the annual meeting. Other meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at such times and places as are designated by a majority vote of the entire Board. Written notice of each meeting and the planned agenda shall be given to the Secretary at least five (5) days prior to the date of the meeting. The quorum for such a meeting shall be a majority of the Board. Members of the Board of Directors must attend a minimum of 2/3 of the Board meetings each year. Board meetings may be conducted online through an interactive internet media or Facebook or Google group list, or by other technological means (such as teleconference).

Section 4 Voting.

Each member who is good standing and who has paid membership dues for the current year, shall be entitled to one vote at any meeting of the Club at which he or she is present, either in person or via phone, internet or other electronic media.

The Secretary shall make available to the membership at every Club business meeting, a list or record of members eligible to vote at that meeting. Any Club member has the right to inspect such list or record at the meeting.

Article 3 Directors and Officers

Section 1 Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall comprise the President or co-Presidents, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Coordinator. No two of the foregoing offices may be held by one and the same person at one and the same time. All individual Board members shall be members in good standing of the Club. All Board members are elected for one year terms at the Club's annual meeting as provided in Article 4 of these By-Laws and shall serve until their successors are elected. General management and coordination of the Club's affairs shall be entrusted to the Board of Directors.

Section 2 Officers.

The Club's officers, consisting of the President or co-Presidents, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall serve in their respective capacities both with regard to the Club and its meetings and the Board and its meetings.

- a. The President or co-President shall preside at all meetings of the Club and of the Board. He or she shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Club and ensuring that all orders and resolutions of the Board and the membership are carried into effect. He or she shall have the power to execute any contracts requiring superintendence of other officers of the Club and shall see that their duties are properly performed. He or she shall be the primary liaison between the Club and other organizations. The office of President shall submit a report of the operations of the Club at each business meeting and shall keep the Board informed of any and all matters within his or her knowledge which the interests of the Club may require to be brought to their attention. The office of President is responsible for carrying out such other duties as specified in these By-Laws.
- b. The Vice-President shall perform all the duties as assigned to him from time to time by the President or the Board of Directors. In the absence or incapacity of the President, the Vice-President shall have all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the President. The Vice-President is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of all agility equipment and assigning permanent labels to any new acquisitions, and when determination is made to "retire" equipment arranging for its deposition either via sale

or auction.

- c. The Secretary shall keep full minutes, including all acts and votes of all meetings of the Club and of the Board, and in all matters of which a record shall be ordered by the Club. Copies of minutes of Club business meetings shall be mailed to Club members or posted on the club's online group within seven (7) days of the meeting. The Secretary shall have custody of and properly keep all the record books of the Club and all correspondence and carry out such other duties as are prescribed in these By-Laws.
- d. The Treasurer shall collect and receive all moneys due or belonging to the Club. He or she shall deposit the same in a bank designated by the Board, in the name of the Club. The Treasurer shall dispose of funds of the Club as he or she is ordered by the Board or the membership, taking proper receipts for such disbursements. The bank statements will serve as the club's ledger and shall at all times be open to inspection of the Board. The Treasurer shall report to the membership at every Club business meeting the condition of the Club's finances and every item of receipt or payments not before reported, and at the annual meeting shall render an account of all moneys received and expended during the previous fiscal year. All expenditures must be authorized by a majority vote of the Board of Directors or the Club membership.
- e. The Membership Coordinator shall carry out the duties of maintaining Membership enrollment. The Membership Coordinator shall also keep a roll of the members of the Club with their addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses, and present new applications to membership at regular Club meetings or through email.

Section 3

Resignations

Any officer may resign at any time by giving a written notice to the President or Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Section 4

Vacancies

Any vacancies occurring among the Club officers during the year shall be filled for the unexpired term of office by a majority vote of all the members of the Board at its first regular meeting following the creation of such vacancy, or at a

special Board meeting called for that purpose, or through email. This Section does not apply to vacancies caused as a result of Section 5 of this Article.

Section 5

Removal of Directors.

A director may be removed from office with or without cause by a petition for a Special Club meeting or email vote to consider the removal. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3rds) of the votes represented is required for removal. A successor shall be elected by the Club membership at that meeting. Any director whose removal has been proposed shall be given at least five (5) days notice of the calling of the meeting and the purpose thereof and an opportunity to be heard at the meeting.

Article 4 The Club Year, Annual Meetings, Elections

Section 1 The Club Year.

The Club's official and fiscal year shall begin on the first day of January and end on the 31st day of December.

Section 2 Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting shall held between October and February at such place, date, and hour as designated by the Board of Directors, and shall be considered one of the quarterly meetings required by Article 2, Section 1. Written notice of the annual meeting shall be given by the President at least 14 days prior to the date of the meeting. The quorum for the annual meeting shall be 50% of the membership in good standing. Attendance at the annual meeting can be one factor considered in determining member standing.

Section 3 Annual Elections.

At the annual meeting officers for the ensuing year shall be elected by ballot from among those nominated in accordance with Sections 4 and 5 of this Article. The nominated candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. In the case of a tie, members shall vote on the tied nominees until the tie is broken. All candidates in a Club election must be nominated in order to run in said election.

Section 4 Nominations.

Nominations for office will open in the fall of each year at the discretion of the Board and shall remain open as long as the Board deems necessary. Nominations may take place and be voted on at the annual meeting if necessary. Any member in good standing may nominate himself/herself or another member of the Club, provided that the member so nominated does not decline when his or her name is proposed. Nomination may be made verbally at the annual meeting, in writing to a board member, on the club Facebook page, or via the club email. Another member of the club who is in good standing must second each nomination.

Section 5 Ballots.

The slate of candidates may be voted on at the annual meeting with no need for a ballot if only one candidate is running for a position and no additional

nominations are received from the floor at the annual meeting. Otherwise ballots will be in writing and shall be counted at the annual meeting by two inspectors who are members in good standing, who are not candidates on the ballot and who shall be chosen by the members present at the meeting. The new officers shall take office immediately after the vote. Each retiring officer shall turn over to his or her successor in office any pertinent information deemed necessary upon request of his or her successor. Retiring officers are expected to meet with and assist with the transition of leadership after their term is completed.

Article 5 Committees

Section 1 **Appointment of Committees.**

The Board or a vote by Club membership may establish standing committees to advance the work of the Club in such matters as agility trials, trophies, annual awards, membership, training, equipment maintenance, and other fields that may be well served by committees. The group which established the committee, the Board or Club membership, shall also designate the chair of each committee.

Each committee shall have a clear objective defined by the establishing groups as well as any limitations or operating guidelines.

Such committees shall always be accountable and responsible to the group which established the committee, the Board of Club membership. Special committees may also be established to aid in particular projects.

Section 2 **Termination of Committees.**

Special committees are automatically terminated when they have completed their work. However, any committee or member of a committee may be terminated by a majority vote of the group which established the committee upon notice to the appointees, and the group may appoint successors to the members whose services have been terminated.

Section 3 **Committee Actions.**

Committees established shall be granted the discretion of action needed to fulfill its officially defined objectives. Changes in the committee's purpose or limitations on its actions shall be voted upon by the group which established the committee.

Article 6 Discipline

Section 1 Charges.

Any member in good standing may prefer charges against a member for alleged misconduct prejudicial to the best interest of the Club. Written charges with specification must be filed in duplicate with the Secretary.

If either the complainant or Club member being charged with misconduct is a member of the Board of Directors, the other members of the Board shall immediately appoint a disciplinary committee consisting of three (3) members and one (1) alternate. No member of the Board may serve on such committee. The disciplinary committee shall carry out the specific duties of the Board prescribed in this Article.

The Secretary shall promptly send a copy of the charges to each Board member or present them at a Board meeting, and the Board shall first consider whether the actions alleged in the charges, if proven, might constitute conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the Club. If the Board considers that the charges do not allege conduct that would be prejudicial to the best interests of the Club, it may refuse to entertain jurisdiction. If the Board entertains jurisdiction of the charges, it shall fix a date of hearing by the Board not less than three (3) weeks or more than six (6) weeks thereafter.

The Secretary shall promptly send one (1) copy of the charges to the accused member by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested together with a notice of the hearing and an assurance that the defendant may personally appear in his or her own defense and bring witnesses if he or she wishes.

All information regarding such charges and any subsequent hearing shall remain confidential to the Board of Directors or disciplinary committee until such a time that the charges are substantiated.

Section 2 Board Hearing.

The Board shall have complete authority to decide whether counsel may attend the hearing, but both complainant and defendant shall be treated uniformly in that regard and shall be responsible for any costs associated with retaining such counsel. Should the charges be sustained, after the hearing all the evidence and testimony presented by the complainant and defendant, the Board may be a

majority vote suspend the defendant from all privileges of the Club or suspend his or her dog from all Club activities, for not more than six (6) months from the date of the hearing and/or fine the defendant.

And, if the Board deems that punishment insufficient, it may also recommend to the membership that the penalty be expulsion. In such a case, the suspension shall not restrict the defendant's right to appeal before his or her fellow members at the ensuing Club business meeting that considers the Board's recommendation. Immediately after the Board has reached a decision, its findings shall be put in written form and filed with the Secretary. The Secretary, in turn, shall notify each of the parties of the Board's decision and penalty, if any.

Section 3

Expulsion.

Expulsion of a member from the Club may be accomplished only at a meeting of the Club following a Board hearing and upon the Board's recommendation as provided in Section 2 of this Article. Such proceedings may occur at a regular or a special business meeting of the Club to be held within 60 days but not earlier than 30 days after the date of the Board's recommendation for expulsion.

The defendant shall have the privilege of appearing in his or her own behalf, through no evidence shall be taken at this meeting. A member of the Board of Directors shall read the charges and the Board's findings and recommendations, and shall invite the defendant, if present, to speak in his or her own behalf if he or she wishes. Members shall then vote by secret written ballot on the proposed expulsion, a 2/3 vote of those present and eligible to vote at the meeting shall be necessary for expulsion. If expulsion is not so voted, the board's suspension shall stand.

Upon being expelled, the former member is denied any and all privilege for the Club and may not participate in the activities of the Club, such as attendance at trials, practices, demonstrations, or similar Club functions.

Article 7 Amendments

Section 1 Proposing Amendments

Amendments to the *Constitution and By-Laws* may be proposed by the Board of Directors or by written petition addressed to the Secretary and signed by ten (10) members in good standing. Amendments proposed by such petition shall be promptly considered by the Board of Directors and submitted to the membership for consideration along with recommendations from the Board within thirty (30) days of the date when the petition was received by the Secretary.

Section 2 Voting

The *Constitution and By-Laws* may be amended by 3/4 vote of the members present and eligible to vote at any regular or special business meeting called for the purpose, provided the proposed amendments have been mailed (facebook and email posting is acceptable) to each member at least 15 days prior to the date of the meeting and included in the notice of the meeting.

Article 8 Dissolution

Section 1 Dissolution.

The Club may be dissolved at any time by written consent of no less than 2/3 of the membership. In the event of the dissolution of the Club, whether voluntary or involuntary or by operation of the law, none of the property of the Club nor any proceeds thereof nor any assets of the Club shall be distributed to any members of the Club, but after payment of the debts of the Club, its liquidated property and assets shall be given to at least three (3) charitable organizations for the benefit of dogs. These organizations shall be selected by the Board of Directors.

Article 9 Order of Business

Section 1 Club Meetings.

At meetings of the Club, the order of business, so far as the character and nature of the meeting may permit, should follow the following general outline to the extent practical. Alterations to such outline can be made to meet time requirements for a meeting or to increase efficiency of a meeting as determined by the board prior to a meeting.

- Call to order and Member sign in (sign in is fine - roll call not necessary)
- Minutes of last Club meeting
- Board's report
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- Report of committees
- Reading of membership applications
- Election of new members
- Unfinished business
- New Business
- Election of officers (at annual meeting)
- Adjournment

Section 2 Board Meetings.

At meetings of the Board of Directors, the order of business, should follow the following general outline to the extent practical. Alterations to such outline can be made to meet time requirements for a meeting or to increase efficiency of a meeting as determined by a majority vote of those present:

- Call to order and Sign-in
- Minutes of last meeting
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- Report of committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment