

May 2019



National Agility Link Association

~ 30 years old ~

National Agility Link Association (formed 1989)

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Supply as Course designer or in scale in black pen on an A4 sheet Portrait size.

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NALA is 30 years old this year.

We are going to invite you all to a party!

Every month NALA will gift some \$\$ to a Club or two so that they can put on a celebration at the running of LINK at the club.

We would of course like to see some photos of you enjoying yourself whilst celebrating NALA's 30th!!!

May Happy Birthday NALA! (Don't forget the pictures.)

Canterbury CATS
Mt Maunganui DTC
Central ADTS

Can the club contacts email Malcolm with their Club's Bank account details and have a fun celebration on us!!



AGILITY THIS MONTH

By Karen de wit

Well done to all the people who gained a ribbon in the Annual NALA awards. The order is with Quality presentations and is expected to be available for distribution early next month.

Don't forget to take pictures!

National Agility Link Association Competition 2018/19

Individual Agility – Maxi -

- 1st Edge Sue Whitwell
- 2nd Finn ADX JDX Sandra Goodwin
- 3rd Spy ADXB JDX Sharleen Drummond
- 4th Lucy Trish Bush
- 5th Poppi Katrina Alexander
- 6th Tayghen JDX Martin Bush
- 7th Rocky ADXG JAX FD Paul Needham
- 8th George JD Dr John Gates
- 9th Rogue ADXG JDG Trish Bush
- 10th Fern Jocelyn Jensen

Individual Agility – Medium –

- 1st AG CH & J GR CH Jazz ADXG JDX JAB Natasha Neame
- 2nd AG & J GR CH Jamaica ADXG JAB SNB Dianne Reid
- 3rd Vogue ADXG JDX Paul Needham
- 4th Jay Stacie Clark

- 5th Brazil ADX JDX Dianne Reid
 6th AG CH Loose ADX SNB Kim Loye
 7th Belle ADX FD Carol Taylor
 8th Lia JDX ADX Nartarsha Gorrie
 9th Maddison JDX ADX Karen Bealing
 10th Lilly ADXG JDS JAX Robyn Brettell

Individual Agility – Small –

- 1st Ag Ch Rusty ADXG SNX JDX JAX Stacie Clark
 2nd AgCh JCh Fern AD JDX Caragh Briggs
 3rd Dot AD Jill Payne
 4th Lucy Denise Ockey
 5th Zoe AgCH ADXG JAS Paul Needham
 6th= Bilbo ADXB JDX Anne Cozens
 6th= Toffee ADXG JDX JAX Helen Lappin
 8th Mindy Jennifer Bullas - Everest
 9th Paddy Justine Dale
 10th Ziggy ADXG JDG JAS SNB Jenny D’Arcy

Flygility Standard

Mini 1st = Pipa Christine Hutchings

Mini 1st = Pippa Colleen Lauder

Medium 1st= Kez E Sands-Fore

Medium 1st = Meggie N Cole

Medium 3rd Willow S Banks

Medium 4th Bella L Pillette

Medium 5th Fya L Cummins

Medium 6th Storm S Banks

Maxi 1st Blue L Pillette

Maxi 2nd Cougar M Lambert

Maxi 3rd Strike D Stephens

Maxi 4th Blaze L Cummins

Maxi 5th Daisy N Beaumont

Maxi 6th Kruse A Rodhe

Flygility Challenge

Small 1st Taku C Ross

Medium 1st Willow S Banks

Medium 2nd Meggie N Cole

Medium 3rd Bella L Pillette

Medium 4th Sneaky E Rohde

Maxi 1st = Blue L Pillette

Maxi 1st = Cougar M Lambert

Maxi 3rd Blaze L Cummins

Maxi 4th Pulse S Mohekey

Maxi 5th Niko S Mohekey

Junior Link-

1st Experienced 8 – 11 years Katelin Drummond & Scout

1st Experienced 12 – 20 years Jorja Mulholland & Thane

Club Competition



Club Competition - Division One Winner : **Wairarapa**
Club Competition - Division Two Winner **Nelson**
Club Competition - Division Three Winner: **Tokoroa**
Club Competition - Division Four Winner : **DAWG**
Club Competition - Standard Flygility Winner **North Taranaki**
Club Competition - Standard Flygility Runner Up: **Feilding**
Club Competition - Challenge Flygility Winner : **Counties**

VETERANS.

Veterans Maxi 1st Sandra Mohekey & Pulse
Veterans Maxi 2nd Chrissy Harris & Biggie
Veterans Maxi 3rd Marian Holman & Sephyr
Veterans Medium 1st Judy Towers & Jess
Veterans Small 1st Karen Forest & Riley

Annual Games Series

Small 1st Smudge Erin Mulholland
Small 2nd Millie Alison Derbyshire
Small 3rd Shuffle Robyn Fargher
Small 4th Fergus Anne Packer
Small 5th Sky Gillian Cruickshank
Small 6th Scallywag Jackie Olley

Medium 1st Joy Tina Mitchell
Medium 2nd Misty Chrissy Harris
Medium 3rd Lace Chrissy Harris
Medium 4th Rider Margaret Lilley
Medium 5th Ray Anneke Lilley

Maxi 1st Ali Peter de Wit
Maxi 2nd Lucy Trish Bush
Maxi 3rd Edge Sue Whitwell
Maxi 4th Thane Jorja Mulholland
Maxi 5th Tayghen Martin Bush
Maxi 6th Maz Jorja Mulholland

NALA & NZARO RallyO Competition 2018/19 - Individual - standard

1st Poppy Christine Warren
2nd Buddy Glenn Armitage
3rd Charlie Christine Warren
4th Holly Jane Aukett
5th Asti Rhonda Campbell
6th Cookie Helen Barnes
7th Rufus Nicky Detheridge – Davies
8th Misty Chrissy harris
9th Finn Barbara James
10th Gemma Barbara James

NALA & NZARO RallyO Competition 2018/19 - Individual - Challenge

1st Buddy Glenn Armitage
2nd Goodee Goodee Two shoes Karen de Wit
3rd Finn Barbara James
4th Jantsee Lorraine Lennox

- 5th Asti Rhonda Campbell
6th Holly Jane Aukett
7th Sequel Peter de Wit
8th Anzac Elaine Herve
9th Gael Kelly Walker
10th Kep Kelly Walker

NALA & NZARO RallyO Competition 2018/19

Club Winner: Wanganui

Club Runner Up: Upper Hutt

Club Challenge Winner: Wanganui

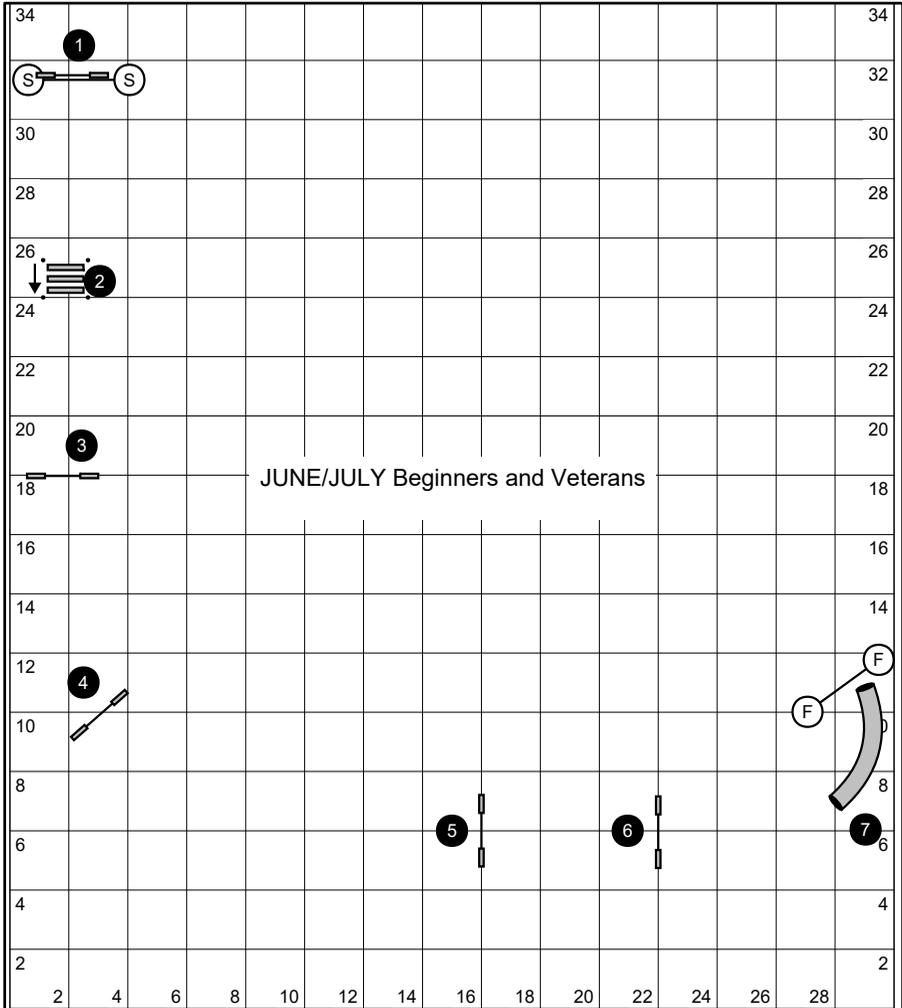
Club Challenge Runner Up: Upper Hutt



June/July Beginners/Veterans

For information on Junior Link contact Bonnie E: bonnie@mobius.nz

Veterans contact Liz Barlow E: yorkie_gal@hotmail.com



[Awapuni Nurseries](#)

Have you thought about your fundraising plan for the year?

Why not fundraise with us? You can fundraise for your charity, kindergarten or school.

It's easy! All you have to do is register with us, then encourage your supporters to purchase from our online shop at www.awapuni.co.nz.

They make their purchases as per normal and simply enter your organisation's unique fundraising code at checkout. At the end of your two-week fundraising period we'll deposit 20% of all sales (excluding delivery) into your organisation's bank account.

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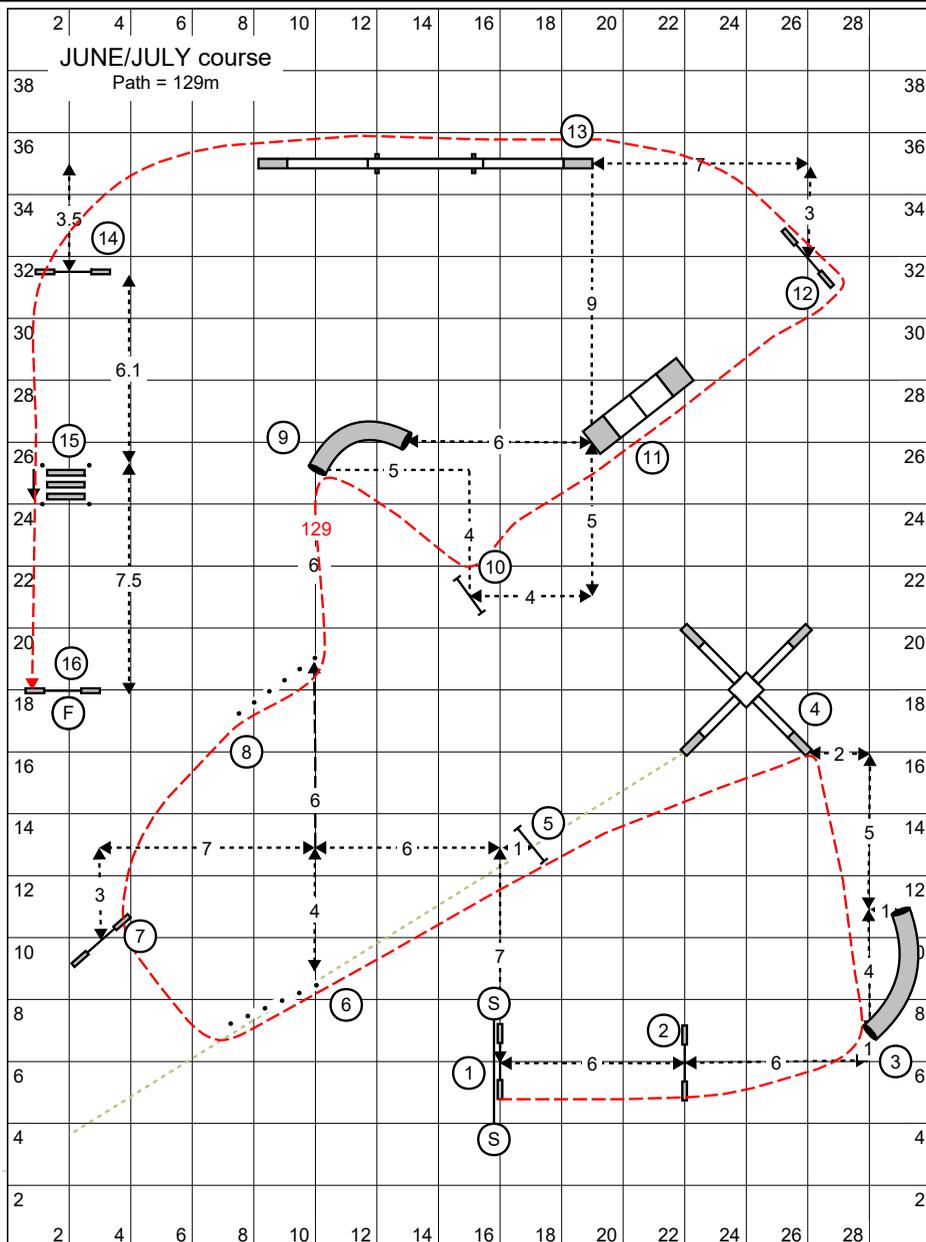
If you'd like to know more and to register, take a look on our website: <https://awapuni.co.nz/fundraising>

And if you have any questions have a read of our supporters FAQs here: <https://awapuni.co.nz/fundraising/faqs-supporters> and our organisers FAQs here <https://awapuni.co.nz/fundrais.../faqs-fundraising-organisers>



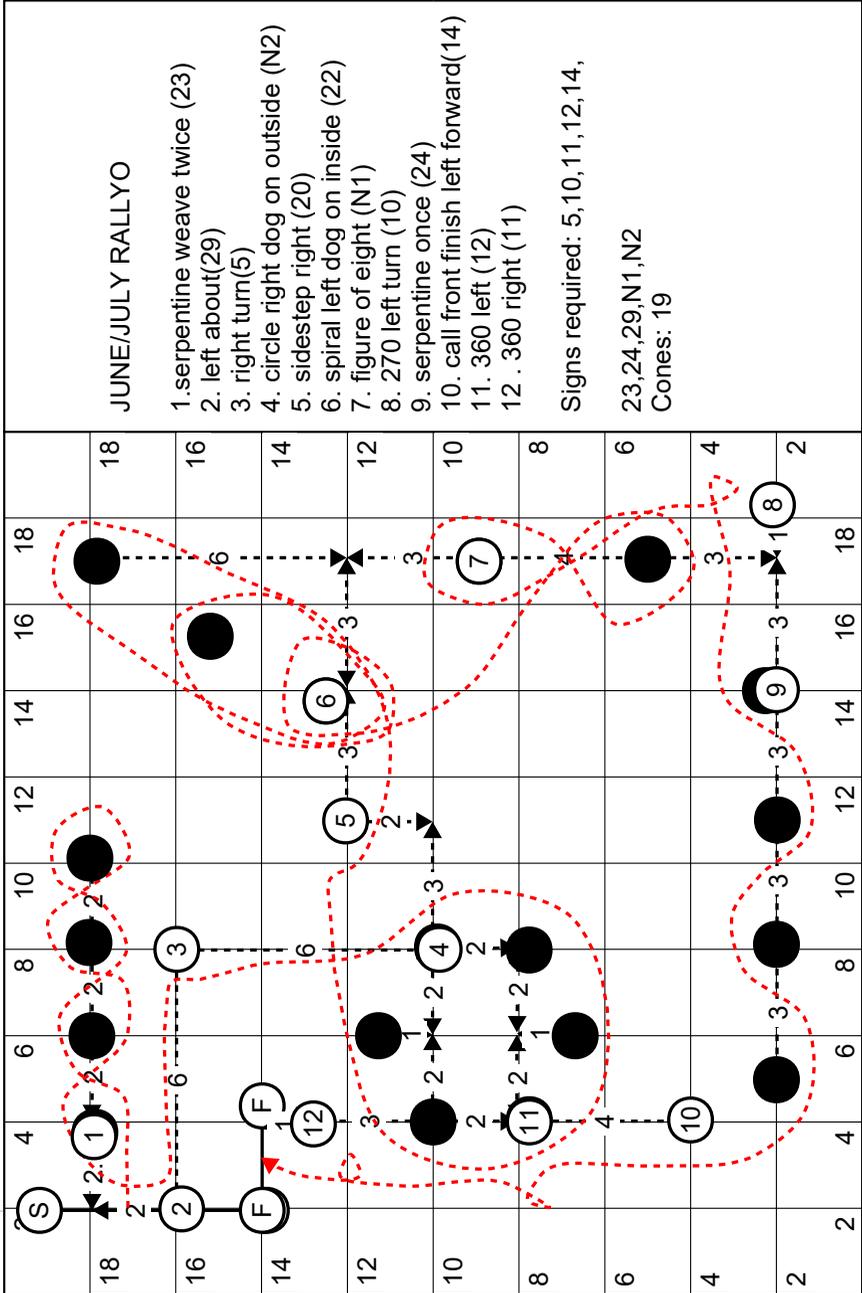
June/July 2019

Path length = 129m



New Zealand Association of Rally-O

May 2019



April RallyO team results

Plc	Club	Team	Score	Time
1	Wanganui DTC	Christine Warren & Poppy, Glenn Armitage & Buddy, Christine Warren & Charlie	100	200.18
2	Hawkes Bay	Kristina Beresford & Mighty, Kristina Beresford & Tempo, Kristina Beresford & Reign	100	201.095
3	Wairarapa	Elaine Herve & Tio, Eline Herve & Anzac, Donna Garrity & Mack	100	231.79
4	Canterbury COC	Kathryn Sutton & Daisy, Helen Scott & Mac, Fiona Scott & Angus	100	242.52
5	Sunshine Whk	Maria van Beek & Buddy, Helen Barnes & Cookie, Maria van Beek & Edison	99.7	182.28
6	Upper Hutt	Karen de Wit & Dee, Jane Aukett & Holly, Peter de Wit & Quick	99.7	235.46
7	Norwest	Karen Smith & Lottie, Karen Smith & Alfie, Jan Walter & Ness	99.3	269.17
8	Dog Agility Wellington Group	Marian Holman & Chai, Cherie Picking & Tank, Marian Holman & Zephyr	98.7	297.28
9	Dog Sports Rotorua	Alex Jones & Texas, Sharon Brosnahan & Gracie, Sue Andreson & Queenie	98.7	305.03
10	Central HB	Jo Steed & Hunter, Christine Harber & Jazz, Beverley Thomson & Veloz	97.3	305.99
11	Central All Breeds	Mike Butler & Toby, Vivienne Lewis & Wnter, Mike Butler & Idol	96.7	321.78

TEAM RESULTS - AGILITY 2018-2019

DIVISION ONE

1	Wairarapa	12
2	East BOP	17
3	Blenheim 1	22
4	Central HB	24
5	Upper Hutt 1	30
6	Mangawhai	44
7	Hawkes Bay	48
8	Huntly	49
9	Mt Maunganui 1	15027

DIVISION TWO

1	Nelson 1	13
2	Tauranga 2	20
3	Cambridge	21
4	Mt Maunganui 2	22
5	CCATS	26
6	Sth Canterbury	34
7	North Taranaki 2	10030
8	Whanganui 3	5000
9	Counties	5000

DIVISION THREE

1	Tokoroa	14
2	North Shore	16
2	Whangarei	16
4	Upper Hutt 3	27
5	Blenheim 3	35
5	Tauranga 3	35
7	Whanganui 4	5000

DIVISION FOUR		
1	DAWG	5000
2	Nelson 3	18
3	Dog Sport Rotorua	19
4	Hawera 4	22
5	CHB Orange Roughies	25
6	Gizzy	5000
7	Feilding	5000

For 2019/2020 competition:

Division 1:

Relegate Mt Maunganui 1 and merge with Mt Maunganui 2
 Relegate Huntly

Division 2

Promote Nelson 2
 Remove Counties to Division 4 as never competed
 Remove Sth Canterbury to Division 4 as withdrawing
 Relegate Whanganui 2,
 Merge Mt Maunganui 1 into Mt Maunganui 2

Division 3

Promote Tokoroa, North Shore
 Relegate Whanganui 3 (becomes Whanganui 4)

Division 4:

Promote DAWG, Nelson 4

Nala Flygility Report May

by Sandra Mohekey

Having devoted last month's article to why some people either don't or stop doing fly gility, I thought I should balance that with reasons why we could or do do flygility.

It's fun. I have seen flyball demos and at Crufts broadcasts and quite frankly I think it's boring. The fastest team who train together are always going to win. And they do the same thing over and over. (I also don't like selected pairs in fly.) In flygility the courses on offer can favour different skill sets or heights or can just provoke a random moment in an otherwise good team.

We are **too young or too little** to run agility but with a well trained dog can still compete in fly – just stand and call.

We are **too old or large** to run agility but with a well trained dog can still compete in fly – just stand and call.

We enjoy the immediacy of the results. The winners of each race are known straight away.

We like the **community feeling.** For a fly tournament to run all hands must be on deck because there are so many jobs to do and no one hired to do them. At some obedience or agility show you could – and some do – get away with not helping with anything and no one would notice. At fly we notice.

Fly can help develop the independent work needed for agility. Arrow won a Jumpers C champ by finishing 4 obstacles before I did – that came from fly.

It can help a distracted dog develop focus because it is short and exciting AND you get your first reward in the "ring" – a tennis ball. Transferring value can help dogs get faster at agility.

It is cheaper to compete at than other sports.

Random pairs and triples – huge fun. Who's my partner? Will the draw handicap the top dogs there? Who do you think might win? Who will get a point because they are jumping down a height?

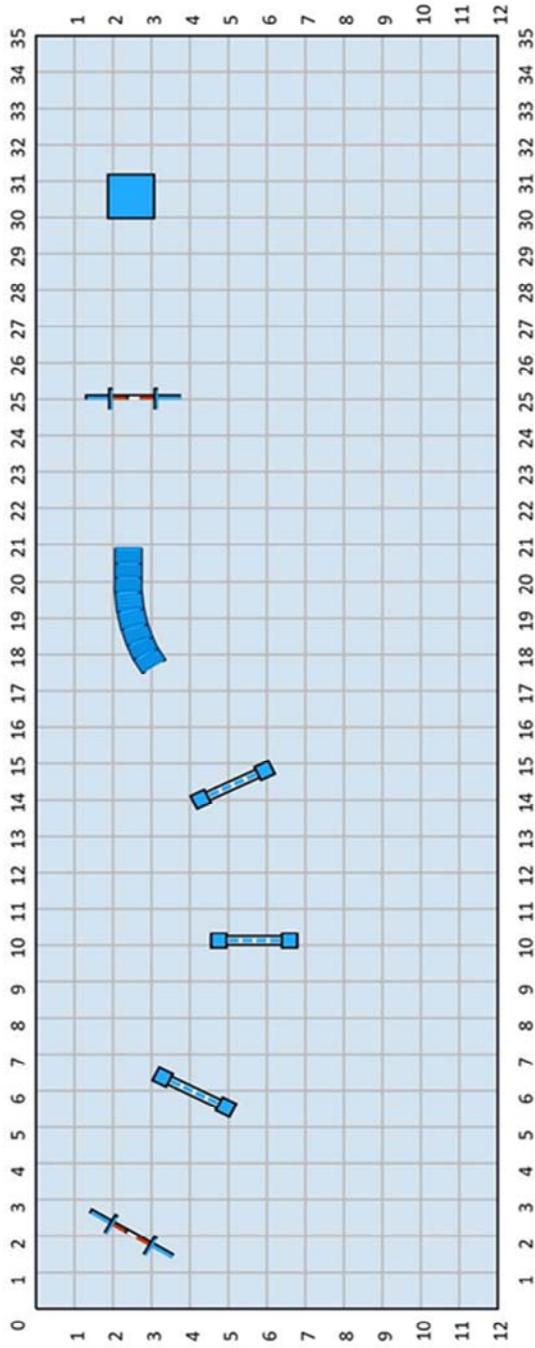
Great spectator sport. Hyped dogs, hyped owners... who knows what could happen? I vividly remembering swearing at (but not about) Niko telling him to "get over the (adjective of your choice) line" because we needed to re-run and he, knowing that, kept turning to re-run just before the line. Poor Niko. I promised him never again and hope I have not re-visited potty-mouth territory – except maybe in my head... Apparently it was vastly entertaining for the spectators. Two dogs running on the same course can also be entertaining. As can two dogs who can't weave competing in a course with weaves. (Also, this is annoying because of the "I wish I had been drawn against one of them because my dog can weave" issue.)

Great for an active dog who cannot do agility. Pulse's hips meant agility was not an option but he competes, with not just the support, but the encouragement of my vet/s, and is now a Grand Champ. He would have driven me mad and been a sadder dog without fly. I have had vets look at him, look at his x-rays, then send for another vet to show them the benefits of exercise and strong muscles.

So you can compete in Nala Flygility and get lovely ribbons.

Happy competition flygilityers

Flygility course – June/July



Nala June/July 2019

Author : W Turner

Length : 0 Meter(s)

www.AgilityMaps.com

Your Dog Needs To Be Spayed Or Neutered – Right?



By: [Will Falconer, DVM](#) -

You need to neuter your animal, right? I mean, that's just basic: there are too many unplanned pregnancies, too many euthanasias because of that, and you need to be responsible and just do this. Right?

Not Black and White

What was once a very stock recommendation to all my puppy and kitty owners has evolved as new research findings have emerged of late. And, in fairness, as I've dug more into the seriousness of the outcome of neutering, I had to leave the comfort of "one size fits all."

Damn inconvenient, grumble mumble... why can't biology be more like auto mechanics?

My newer recommendation goes something like this now:

If you can prevent unplanned pregnancies, (and if you have a female and don't mind living through heat cycles) you may want to keep your animal intact and not neuter.

Emphasis on "if" on the pregnancy question — I'm not wanting unplanned pups or kitties any more than those on the front lines in shelters and rescue groups who see way too many of them. Oops is not an option.

It's interesting to note, however, "Everybody Must Get Neutered!" is a uniquely American notion. Probably born in the last 20 years, would be my guess.

Europeans don't buy this idea. A Swedish study of 461 dogs revealed 99% were intact, not neutered. A Hungarian study showed 57% intact dogs, and a British survey found 46% intact dogs. Hmm. Do they know something we don't?

What Happens When We Neuter?

I like to call it “instant menopause.” You know how rough life can be in peri-menopausal or menopausal times, either from your own experience or from your mom’s or wife’s? Imagine that all being condensed into the flip of a switch. I know in my mom’s life, a hysterectomy was the beginning of a very significant downward spiral in her health when she was in her 50s.

Sex hormone production is mostly in the testes or ovaries, though a smaller amount is produced elsewhere, for example in the adrenal glands.

When spaying or castration (collectively called neutering) takes place, we shut off the major source of the sex hormones testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone. While neutering prevents pregnancy, you have to evaluate the risks against the benefits to decide where the balance point is for you and your animals.

Clear Benefits

The good that comes from neutering is:

- Birth control
- Cessation of heat or estrus cycles
- Absence of behavior that goes with the sexually intact animal

Birth control is the main reason neutering is pushed. Once the male loses his testicles to the surgeon’s knife or the female her ovaries and uterus, neither can create offspring from that point forward.

Estrus cycles are those periods of time when the female is in heat, surging with sex hormones, and both attractive to and receptive to the male. Heats come typically every six months in dogs, seasonally in cats (usually spring and fall), throughout the year in cattle, and seasonally in early spring in the horse. This all goes away when a female is spayed.

Behavior accompanying heat cycles can be both annoying and downright dangerous. Annoying is the female cat who comes mmmrOOWWWwwwing at all hours, keeping you up at night with her chorus of lust. Worse yet is the tom cat's constant urge to leave his scent everywhere with a spritz of urine on doorways, furniture, or your shoes! Intact female cats will also "soil" your house with urine while going through their heats.

I was recently visiting my [network chiropractor's](#) farm while her intact Dachsund was just going out of heat and her intact male Airedale was beside himself with desire, but locked up behind impenetrable fencing. Poor Lionheart! He didn't even recognize me when I came up to rub him and say hello. It was like I wasn't there, and I was told he'd missed eating for several days, he was so taken with the lusty hormones he was smelling from Frieda!

The **dangerous side of behavior** in this instance comes from running out into traffic in "hot pursuit" of a female or, like Lionheart, running through a barbed wire fence, lacerating his penis, and bleeding for days! Ouch. There's data out there on animals hit by cars: far more are intact than neutered. And yep, it's usually the guys.

Another danger is male aggression, though this is largely a cat issue, and in my experience much less likely in intact male dogs. Tom cats are prone to getting into serious fights when they are intact, and this can make for wounds, abscesses, and disease transmission, if they are wounded by a cat carrying FeLV, for example.

All of this behavior, the heat cycles, and the possibility of pregnancy are gone once you neuter. (I cannot personally imagine living with unneutered cats, unless you relish the scent of cat urine!)

Downsides and Risks

What's become of greater interest to me of late are several studies showing the ill effects of surgical gonadectomy, or instant hormone-pause.

[A study done in UC Davis](#) and published in February 2013 revealed some startling health consequences of neutered animals, both male and female. The research tracked 759 Golden Retrievers, and looked at early neuter (less than one year of age) vs later neuter (12 months or older) vs intact dogs and five common diseases:

1. Hip dysplasia (HD), the arthritis of the hip joint common to dogs
2. Cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) damage, the “football injury” of dogs’ knees
3. Hemangiosarcoma (HSA), a type of cancer that can be fatal
4. Lymphosarcoma (LSA), immune system cancer, usually fatal
5. Mast cell tumors (MCT), yet another cancer that can kill dogs

To summarize the researchers’ findings:

- Neutered animals fared significantly worse in all five diseases.
- Early neuter of males doubled the rate of hip dysplasia compared to intact males.
- None of the intact animals had cruciate ligament disease. Zero. It only appeared in the neutered animals.
- Early neutered males had three times more LSA than the intact males, while late neutered males had no LSA.
- The percentage of HSA was four times higher in late neutered females than in either intact or early neutered females.
- MCT was absent in intact females but present in neutered females. In males, neutering status made no difference.

So, in dogs of both sexes, neutering had significant ill effects in this large study, though it wasn’t uniform across the board.

The clearest loser: early neutering, which has always made holistic veterinarians cringe. (But, in fairness to how facts aren’t always clear cut [damn them!], you noticed how early neutered

female Golden Retrievers had less HSA? Still not a good reason for early neutering, as you'll see below).

Here's an earlier study (2004) on cranial cruciate ligament injury that also showed an increased prevalence in the neutered dogs, male or female. [1](#)

Early Spay: No Way!

We've known for many years that it takes intact sex hormones to grow naturally, with skeleton and ligaments and tendons all in harmony. The proponents of spaying or castration at a very young age, long before maturity, have ignored that in favor of some desperate "get 'em while we've got 'em" mentality.



This is somewhat akin to what I call "steer in the chute" medicine.

Oh oh. You're gonna do how many things to me at once?

If you're a rancher and you only work your cattle

infrequently, due to handling stress, manpower, weather, etc., you tend to do as many things to that captured animal at the moment he's caught in your chute as possible. So, steers are commonly castrated, branded, vaccinated for multiple things, ear tagged, and fly treated before they are released. It's convenience medicine, in other words. "We might not see him again for months, let's get 'er done now!"

So, shelters and humane societies got the bright idea some 20 years ago to start neutering dogs and cats when they were 8 weeks old. Imagine giving your 9 month old daughter a hysterectomy, and you'll cringe appropriately.

And yes, [giving vaccinations](#) while under anesthesia is a common practice. No chance of struggle. Never mind that the immune system and all its defenses are asleep as well. “She’s in the chute, let’s do this!”

Crooked and Crazy

[This study](#) showed the disastrous effects early neuter had on development, when it occurred in either of the ages studied: 7 weeks or 7 months, vs intact. Bone conformation was distorted (radius to ulnar length), genitals and urinary tracts failed to develop properly, and both groups of neutered animals were “more active”, with the 7 week neuter group judged more “excitable” than the intact group.

Wait. What?

Ever see an ADD dog? One who can’t stay on task, easily distracted, over excited by most anything? This isn’t the only study that hints at behavioral effects like ADD in neutered animals. [Here’s another](#), showing even aggression far more in neutered vs intact dogs in a large population study.

Among the findings, neutered dogs were more aggressive, fearful, excitable, and less trainable than intact dogs.

Damn. And clients are asking me regularly if keeping their male dogs *intact* risks them being aggressive. These data suggest the complete opposite.

The researchers above also measured bone lengths and found abnormalities in the neutered.

[Now, in fairness, a variable was not factored in here, one I see as significantly important in creating the excitable, ADD-like dogs who regularly grace my practice: [vaccination](#). I asked the chief author of the last paper if vaccine status was taken into account. It was not.]

More Fuel for the Risk Fire

An [earlier study on osteosarcoma](#) showed twice the incidence of this deadly bone cancer in neutered vs intact dogs.

A study of dogs spanning nearly 40 years and *over a million dogs* (!) confirmed that [female hormones are protective against lymphoma](#), a cancer that takes over the immune system. Their working hypothesis came from the observation that women don't get this disease until after menopause. And yes, that's the state we induce immediately after spaying. Bye bye, female hormones.

Hypothyroidism in Dogs — Highest Risk: Neutering

[Here's a study from 1994](#) of 66 dogs studied over five years, and the researchers found neutering was the “most significant ... risk factor” in the dogs becoming hypothyroid. Vaccines are another, per Dr. Jean Dodds.

Leakers

We've known for many years that spayed female dogs develop urinary incontinence later in life. Until it was taken off the market for safety reasons, the standard treatment was giving estrogen replacement. Remember, ovaries are the main estrogen producers.

Obesity

The neutered animals tend to get obese more easily than their intact cohorts. This has been [studied in cats](#) as well as dogs. This has also been commonly seen in practice over many generations of dogs. I strongly suspect that this is due to carbohydrate laden foods (i.e. [kibble](#)) being fed to carnivores, especially the cat. You can have a big influence here by making [good feeding choices](#) in both species.

Beware: Red Herring

You'll hear this argument in favor of spaying that's based on real life observations by Dr. WhiteCoat:

Unspayed females (dogs) are more likely to get breast tumors than spayed females.

But wait. I'd ask you to put this in the only context that will shine a light on it: the wild model. Look to [the closest cousins, genetically](#), to verify this.

Are intact wolf bitches succumbing to breast cancer? Coyotes? Dingos? I seriously doubt it. This is a disease of man's interventions, like every other chronic disease you can name in domestic animals.

These animals with breast cancer were likely [multiply vaccinated](#), for years if not for life. They were likely [fed kibble](#), a very species inappropriate diet, full of toxic byproducts, preservatives, and starches. They may also have been [treated with the ever present flea pesticides](#). Add in the [risky heartworm drugs](#) given monthly, and you can imagine spaying was perhaps one small reason for their disease. Intact wild canines who live free of these influences would not be dying of breast cancer.

Pyometra, Red Herring II

You'll often hear this argument for spaying as well: spayed females don't develop pyometra, the infection of the uterus that can be life threatening.

Well, that's true: one can't get an infection in an absent organ. Duh.

But again, look at what's happening in the real world. Do lynx and wolves die of pyometra or is this another man made disease? I'll bet you can answer this yourself.

What's a Thinking Pet Owner to Do?

Let's break it down to four groups and I'll offer my take on this neuter question as a guideline for you. Ultimately you have to answer these questions for yourself, in your living situation to decide which way to go for the animals in your life.

1. MALE DOGS:

This may be the easiest for me, having grown up with one male dog at a time throughout my youth, none of whom were castrated.

Looking back, I realize now that we were careless some of the time, letting our guy out to eliminate on his own. There were a few times we'd not see Jake for the rest of the night, only to have him drag himself in, exhausted, the next morning. My dad would make a joking remark about "visiting girl friends," and we moved on after a laugh.

That meant unplanned for puppies somewhere. Not good. Irresponsible.

None of our intact male dogs were aggressive in the least. None were given to mounting or undesirable sexual behavior. N=4 (science term for the number in the study).

Q: Can you prevent your male dog from wandering the neighborhood?

Good fencing and/or leashing and supervision when he's out to eliminate would answer that seasonal wanderlust. Wandering uncontrolled not only makes puppies, it can make for auto injuries or death.

A: If you're confident you can answer yes, I'd recommend not castrating your male dog.

3. FEMALE DOGS

The data here clearly show risk from removing the ovaries, which is part of spaying. So, we're back to a couple of Q's and A's:

Q: Are you confident you can prevent pregnancy for a few weeks twice a year?

A: If yes, I would keep your bitch intact, not neutered.

Q: Are you comfortable with diapering for a couple weeks every six months to avoid blood spotting on your bed or floors?

A: If yes, not spaying may be appropriate for you.

Time Out for the Big Picture

An important BUT comes in here, however. If you aim to raise your dog [the way I advocate](#), with no vaccinations after the initial couple as a youngster, and feed a species appropriate diet, and avoid the poisons foisted on you in the name of flea and heartworm control, you're likely to avoid pyometra and breast cancer. If you go for the Dr. WhiteCoat version of "prevention" instead, you're likely better off spaying.

Like so much of biology, health and illness is usually a combination of many decisions you make for your animals, all rolled together. Hence, the need to approach health holistically.

Have you found your [holistic vet](#) yet? Or better yet, your [homeopathic vet](#)?

When to Do the Deed?

If you've decided to neuter, after weighing risks and benefits, timing is everything. Growing to maturity with one's hormones fully intact is best. I'm speaking here not of sexual maturity, but the cessation of growth and the closure of the bone growth plates.

Maturity comes at different times in different breeds. In general, the smaller the adult weight, the sooner maturity will set in. That might be 9 – 12 months in the wee breeds, and up to two years in the bigger guys, like Danes and Mastiffs. This is even true in cats, with Maine Coons thought to not reach full maturity until they are two years old.

Here's the trick: you want the hormones intact until growth to mature size is finished, but you don't want unplanned for pregnancies, either.

Sexual maturity will very likely come before bone growth is finished. You've heard of teen brides, right?

You're the Chaperone!

Once more, we're left with messy old biology to deal with. Never one size fits all, nor simple black and white decision making, living

beings are complicated! They are wired biologically to reproduce, you might say. While it's ideal to let your female's first heat (or two or three) go by before you neuter, you also don't want the surprise of pregnancy! You have to be prepared for it and protect her from getting bred.

Doggy diapers can help, but ultimately, determined males can get through about any barrier except one: YOU.

If you have a male, it's easier: don't let him wander unattended. If he needs to go out after your bedtime, that either needs to be in a well fenced area, or you need to be there with him, leashing him so he's not getting a whiff of biology from the female a mile away that sets him on a course to breed her.

I'm seeing more unneutered pets in my practice now, several of them up in years. I've cured a pyometra or two and am confident any practiced [homeopathic vet](#) can do this as well. If I were to shop for a dog at this stage of my life, it'd be a naturally raised intact male, and I'd keep him that way.

Will you choose to neuter or not? And if so, when? Hopefully you've now got more information to help you make these decisions.

1 Slauterbeck, et al "Canine Ovariohysterectomy and Orchiectomy Increases the Prevalence of ACL Injury" Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research 429 (301): 5

This article blew me away: an important read. Your Dog Needs To Be Spayed Or Neutered – Right? <http://t.co/MC5Y7I9Fuf> via [@DogsNaturally](#)

— Regina Leeds (@TheZenOrganizer) [June 16, 2013](#)

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