

# Open

- Any dog of any age may compete in the NCA Open class.
- Any handler may compete in the NCA Open class.
- A handler who has competed in any Open cattle class is no longer eligible to compete in the NCA Intermediate or NCA Novice class.

# Nursery

**For the 2023-2024 qualifying year, Nursery eligible dogs must have been born after October 1, 2020.**

- Eligibility for the NCA Nursery class is determined by the age of the dog. Only dogs that are younger than 30 months at the start of the qualifying year (April 1) are eligible to compete in the Nursery class for that year.
- To compete in the 2024 NCA Regional Finals and the 2024 NCA National Finals, Nursery eligible dogs must have been born after October 1, 2020.
- Any handler may compete in the NCA Nursery class.

# Intermediate

- Dogs of any age may compete in the NCA Intermediate class.
- An Intermediate handler/dog team may compete in any class, except Open, for which the dog is eligible.
- NCA Intermediate class points are awarded to the handler/dog team.
- An NCA Intermediate handler may acquire a dog of any level at any time during the qualifying year and make that dog part of his/her Intermediate team.

- Because any NCA Intermediate points earned are assigned only to that handler/dog team, any NCA Intermediate points earned by a dog in the NCA Intermediate class are not transferable to another Intermediate handler.
- A dog that is part of an intermediate team may not be run in any class by an Open handler or by another Intermediate handler. However, that dog may be run in a Novice class by any Novice handler without penalty to the Intermediate team.
- If an NCA Intermediate handler allows an Open handler or another Intermediate handler to run a dog in their team in ANY class during the qualifying year, then the following will apply:
  - The team will forfeit any NCA Intermediate points earned up to that date.
  - The Intermediate team is disqualified from earnings points for the remainder of the qualifying year.
  - The Intermediate team is no longer eligible to compete in the Intermediate class at that year's NCA Regional Finals or NCA National Finals.
- Intermediate handlers may move up from Intermediate to Open at any time during the qualifying year. If they elect to do so, the following will apply:
  - Once they have run in an Open cattle class, they may not move back down to earn NCA Intermediate points.
  - Any NCA Intermediate points earned up to that date will be forfeited and that handler may not earn any further NCA Intermediate points.
  - They are no longer eligible to compete in the Intermediate class at that year's NCA Regional Finals or NCA National Finals.
- At the end of a qualifying year, the top two NCA Intermediate point earning handlers are no longer eligible for the NCA Intermediate class.
- At the conclusion of the NCA National Finals, that year's Champion and Reserve Champion Intermediate handlers are no longer eligible for the NCA Intermediate class.
- Beginning in the 2022 NCA National Finals, any Intermediate handler who qualifies for the final round of the NCA Finals Nursery class is no longer eligible for the NCA Intermediate class.

- If an Intermediate handler is moved out of Intermediate by rule in a local association, the NCA will honor that move-up. At that time, that handler will no longer be eligible for the NCA Intermediate class.
- If it is determined that a handler has run in an NCA Intermediate class who is not eligible for that class, that handler will be removed from the class results and not counted in the points calculation for that Intermediate class.

## Novice

- The NCA Novice class is limited to handlers who are not competing in the Open or Intermediate cattle class.
- NCA Novice class points are awarded to the handler/dog team.
- Any dog with any eligible handler may compete in the NCA Novice class.
- More than one handler may run the same dog in the NCA Novice class at the same trial without penalty to either handler.
- Handlers will earn NCA Novice points and are eligible to compete in both the NCA Regional Finals and the NCA National Finals at the end of the qualifying year.
- Handlers may not earn points in both NCA Novice and NCA Intermediate classes in the same qualifying year.
- A Novice handler may run up a class non-compete without jeopardizing their Novice status.
- If a trial host allows handlers to run in both Novice and Intermediate classes, the handler will only earn NCA points for the class they currently have declared with the NCA office.
- It is the handler's responsibility to ensure that their information on file with the NCA office is current and correct before they run at a trial
- A Novice handler may move up to Intermediate or Open at any time during the qualifying year. If they elect to do so, the following will apply:
  - They will forfeit any NCA Novice points earned up to that date.
  - The team is disqualified from earning NCA Novice points for the remainder of the qualifying year.

- They are no longer eligible to compete in the NCA Novice class at that year's NCA Regional Finals or NCA National Finals.
- If a Novice handler elects to move up to the NCA Intermediate class at any time during the qualifying year, it is their responsibility to declare their intent BEFORE going to the post in order to award any NCA Intermediate points.
- At the end of a qualifying year, the top two NCA Novice point earning handlers are no longer eligible for the NCA Novice class.
- At the conclusion of the NCA National Finals, that year's Champion and Reserve Champion Novice handlers are no longer eligible for the NCA Novice class.
- Beginning with the 2022 NCA National Finals, any Novice handler who qualifies for the final round of the NCA Nursery Finals class is no longer eligible for the NCA Novice or NCA Intermediate class.
- If a Novice handler is moved out of Novice by rule in a local association, the NCA will honor that move-up. At that time, that handler will no longer be eligible for the NCA Novice class.
- If it is determined that a handler has run in an NCA Novice class who is not eligible for that class, that handler will be removed from the class results and not counted in the points calculation for that NCA Novice class.

## 1st Year Novice

In addition to rules in the 'Novice' section, the following rules apply to first year Novice handlers:

- Handlers in their first year of competition in the NCA Novice class receive a one-year free membership in the NCA.
- After the end of their first qualifying year, a membership must be purchased in order for the handler to continue to earn NCA Novice points, to compete in an NCA Regional Final, or to compete in the NCA National Finals.
- If a first year Novice handler elects to compete in the Intermediate class and wishes to earn NCA Intermediate points, they must purchase a membership before NCA Intermediate points will be awarded.

- If a first year Novice handler elects to move up to the Intermediate class, it is their responsibility to declare their intent to move to the NCA Intermediate class **BEFORE** going to the post in order to award any NCA Intermediate points.

## Futurity/Maturity

### **NCA Futurity**

- The NCA Futurity was initiated in the spring of 2018 and is designed to showcase young dogs in a three day competition of their own.
- In order to be eligible for the 2024 NCA Futurity, dogs must have been born after April 1, 2022.
- Champion and Reserve Champion dogs in the NCA Futurity will receive an automatic qualification into the 2024 and 2025 NCA National Finals Nursery class.
- Any level of handler may compete in the NCA Futurity
- All handlers competing in the Futurity must be current NCA members.
- Any and all breeds of dog are eligible to compete in the NCA Futurity
- Dogs do not need to be registered in order to compete in the NCA Futurity. However, unregistered dogs may be asked to provide a veterinary certificate of age verification.
- The course is on a points and time trial in both the arena and the field, which may include up to a 350-yard outrun.
- Competition will consist of three full rounds with cumulative scoring based on points and time.
- The NCA sponsors trophy buckles for both Champion and Reserve in the NCA Futurity.
- There are no NCA sanctioning fees for the NCA Futurity.

### **NCA Maturity**

- In order to be eligible for the 2024 NCA Maturity, dogs must have been born after April 1, 2021.

- Champion and Reserve Champion dogs in the NCA Maturity will receive an automatic qualification into the 2024 NCA National Finals Nursery class.
- Any level of handler may compete in the NCA Maturity.
- All handlers competing in the NCA Maturity must be current NCA members.
- Any and all breeds of dog are eligible to compete in the NCA Maturity.
- Dogs do not need to be registered in order to compete in the NCA Maturity. However, unregistered dogs may be asked to provide a veterinary certificate of age verification.
- The course is on a points and time trial in the field, with up to 350-yard outrun.
- Competition will consist of three full rounds with cumulative scoring based on points and time.
- The NCA sponsors buckles for both Champion and Reserve in the NCA Maturity.
- There are no NCA sanctioning fees for the NCA Maturity.