**FEDERATION CYNOLOGIQUE INTERNATIONALE (AISBL)**

*Place Albert 1er, 13, B – 6530 Thuin (Belgique), tel : +32.71.59.12.38, Internet : http://www.fci.be*

# REGULATIONS FOR FCI INTERNATIONAL DOG DANCING COMPETITIONS

*April 15 2020*

**NB: Terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders and numbers.**

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The purpose of these rules is to encourage the owners, trainers and handlers to further develop and extend their skills by participating in the discipline of Dog Dancing. The rules are designed in such a way that all breeds are able to compete on an equal footing and the welfare of the dog is guaranteed.

The objective in Dog Dancing is for the dog and handler to devise and perform together an artistic routine combined with music and presented with obvious co-operation between a dog that is willing and working well and a supportive handler. The training involved for this discipline will increase the dogs' willingness to respond to their handlers and thus their overall behaviour in everyday life. Trained dogs will contribute to the acceptance of dogs and their owners and owners in the society in general.

These international rules are set up so that each country still conserves its own rules and own identity, but for international competitions the FCI provides a common set of rules.

These rules have been compiled to promote the sport of Dog Dancing and to support and promote competitions across national borders.

# 1. MANAGEMENT, PARTICIPANTS AND JUDGING OF FCI DOG DANCING COMPETITIONS

## 1.1 ORGANIZING OFFICIAL FCI DOG DANCING COMPETITIONS (INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS AND WORLD/SECTION CHAMPIONSHIPS)

Each FCI member country decides which clubs and organizations are allowed to organize an official FCI Dog Dancing competition. FCI International Competitions have to be approved by the FCI.

## 1.2 NATIONAL RULES CONCERNING FCI DOG DANCING COMPETITIONS

In addition to these rules the host country's rules and regulations must be abided by. However, at international competitions, the international regulations prevail. National Canine Organizations (NCO) competitions may be held under national rules.

## 1.3 ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN FCI INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Handlers must be members of a club belonging to an NCO member of the FCI, and they must be eligible to compete in their own country.

If an FCI International Dog Dancing competition is arranged in association with a dog show, there should be no requirement that the dog be entered in the dog show. This applies to both FCI World/Section Championships and FCI International Competitions.

All dogs in these competitions have to be registered with an FCI affiliated NCO or an organization with which the FCI has signed a specific letter of understanding (AKC, CKC, KC).

A dog can only be entered once in each discipline (Heelwork to Music or Freestyle) and is allowed to compete in both disciplines in the same competition.

### 1.3.1 Eligibility to Participate in FCI International Competitions (individual competition)

Eligibility (registration, club membership, etc.) to participate in regular FCI International Dog Dancing Competitions is defined by the regulations of the NCO that the dog represents and those of the country where the competition takes place.

However, a dog participating in a FCI International Competition must be at least 18 months of age. Each NCO should decide what national dog dancing classes are recognized to allow a dog to compete in an FCI International Competition. The dog and handler team should have qualified - in their home country - to compete in the highest class.

### 1.3.2 Eligibility to Participate in FCI World/Section Championships (Individual and Team competition)

The dogs are entered by their respective NCO which have the responsibility of evaluating the team's suitability to participate in the championship. By naming the team, each NCO is responsible for evaluating that the dogs in each team have sufficient experience to handle the environment of a Championship event. A dog participating in a FCI World /Section Championship must also be at least 18 months of age. The handler must be above 14 years of age to participate. Each NCO may have further restrictions on the eligibility of the handler.

A handler has to compete for the country of which he is a national or a country where he has his legal residence. Once a handler competes for a country, he is not allowed to change, unless he has the authorization from the NCO he will represent and the FCI Commission for Dog Dancing. In case of a dispute, the FCI Commission for Dog Dancing will take a final decision after hearing all the data subject to the dispute.

When a NCO does not have a Dog Dancing commission, it is allowed that another non-affiliated Dog Dancing organization participates in an FCI Championship provided that the NCO of that specific country gives its approval.

The entries for any FCI Championship have to be submitted by the NCO member of the FCI. The organizer must announce a deadline for the entries of the NCO. If the deadline is reached, and there are still places available, it is possible for the organizer to accept entries from non-affiliated "dog-handler" teams. The results of these non-affiliated teams will not be taken into consideration when establishing the final national team result.

A national team entered in the "team competition" must consist of at least three and a maximum of four dog and handler - teams. The result of the national team will be defined by the points of the three highest scoring "dog and handler teams" added together. If at this stage two teams share the same points, their fourth member's scores will be taken into account to define the order of these teams. If the teams still remain tied, the rules for resolving a tie (p.13.) are applied.

If the Champion of the previous FCI World/Section Championship in each discipline (Heelwork to Music or Freestyle) is not included in his national team, he is allowed to participate with his dog in the "individual competition" unless he has been suspended by his NCO. His score will not be included in his national team's score. It will count only for the "individual competition". This does not apply if he has been selected to participate for his national team.

### 1.3.3 Health

Dogs which suffer from contagious diseases or infections or have hookworms, scabies or any other vermin, may not participate in FCI International Dog Dancing competitions. Dogs that are taped, stitched or bandaged are also not allowed to participate.

### 1.3.4 Anti-doping and vaccination regulations

The national vaccination regulations and anti-doping regulations must be followed according to the country that the dog represents and those of the country where the competition takes place. These should be published on the website of the country in which the competition takes place.

### 1.3.5 Aggression

Aggressive dogs are not allowed to enter the competition premises. If a dog at any time during the competition (before, during or after its own performance) bites, tries to bite, attacks or tries to attack people or other dogs, the head judge will disqualify the dog from the competition. The incident is noted in the dog's working book (if provided in its country) and all points will be lost even if the performance has already been completed. In a several-day event the disqualification is also valid for the other days, and thus the dog cannot compete.

The incident will be noted in the final results and a report must be sent to the NCO that the dog represents and the NCO of the organizing country. In addition to the actions mentioned above, national regulations should be followed.

### 1.3.6 Harsh handling

It is forbidden to punish the dog at any time during the competition (before, during or after its own performance). Physical punishment is forbidden as is punishment by shouting at the dog in an aggressive manner. The judges are the ones to make the decision whether the handler is verbally or physically abusing his dog. In case this happens during the routine, the judges may discontinue the performance. A handler punishing his dog should be disqualified. Suspected mistreatment of a dog should be reported to the head steward who will inform the judges of the situation.

### 1.3.7 Bitches in season and breeding bitches

Bitches in season are allowed to compete in FCI International Competitions and World/Section Championships but compete at the end of the competition. They must be kept off of the competition premises and nearby surroundings until all other dogs have completed their routines. The organizers must be notified that a bitch is in season as soon as possible and no later than at the morning briefing.

Pregnant bitches are not allowed to compete in FCI International Competitions and World/Section Championships.

Bitches that have given birth less than 75 days before the competition date must also be excluded.

In unclear cases the handler may be asked to provide a veterinary certificate. Each NCO may have further restrictions on the eligibility of the bitch.

### 1.3.8 Changes in appearance

Dogs with docked tails or cropped ears, or dogs that have had some other changes in appearance done for cosmetic reasons, are admitted only in accordance with the legal regulations of the country that the dog represents and those of the country where the competition is arranged. All restrictions due to changes in appearance of the dog should be stated in the national rules and should be posted on the website of the country.

### 1.3.9 Spayed or neutered dogs

Spayed and neutered dogs are allowed to compete.

### 1.3.10 Examining the dogs

If necessary, the head judge should check the dogs outside the ring before the start of the competition. If deemed necessary, he may demand an additional veterinary evaluation.

National rules might require that all dogs be checked by a veterinarian. If it is decided that the dog's health could be jeopardized by competing, the head judge should not allow the dog to participate.

### 1.3.11 FCI judges

Three or five judges form the panel for all FCI International Competitions and Championships. ***For World Championships preferably 5 judges should be active.*** All results from the judges count. ***O***ne of ***the judges of the judges panel*** is appointed as the head judge. The head judge functions as the chairman of the judging team.

If incidents occur during the competition which are not dealt with in these regulations, the head judge decides how to proceed or how to evaluate the incident. The head judge may negotiate the matter with his panel of judges before making a decision. The judge's decision is final, and no competitor shall impugn the decisions of the judge.

Judges for FCI International Dog Dancing competitions should have sufficient training in judging Dog Dancing and be licensed by the NCO of their own country.

For an FCI International Dog Dancing Competition the judges are required at least two years or fifteen competitions of judging experience and for judging FCI World/Section Championships at least three years of judging experience is required.

Each NCO Club will have its own list of judges meeting these requirements. The club hosting an FCI International Competition should verify each judge's qualifications from the NCO's listing of the country from which the judge depends. The international judges should be able to communicate in one of the 4 FCI official languages if not specifically stated otherwise. This info must also be available through the NCO from which the judge depends.

Ineligibility due to the likelihood of bias: national regulations define ineligibility due to the likelihood of bias.

At FCI International Competitions and Championships the FCI ineligibility rules should be followed.

The judges should be invited to judge the FCI International Competitions and Championships by the host country at least a year in advance if possible.

### 1.3.12 Stewards

A chief steward must be appointed for the competition. The chief steward is responsible for all the requirements to arrange the competition (for the ring, judge paper etc.).

## 1.4 INSURANCE

The FCI is not liable for any damages caused by the application of these Dog Dancing regulations.

Competition organizers must prepare for possible damages in the competition by acquiring an insurance policy, or through other means.

Organizers must have group insurance for judges and competition officials, and liability insurance to cover personal or property damages to audience, officials or outsiders.

The handler must have a valid insurance, covering sports injuries. Handler and/or dog's owner are responsible for the damage they or their dog causes.

## 1.5 HANDLER'S OBLIGATIONS

A handler's obligations begin when he enters the competition premises and end when he leaves the venue after the prize giving.

All handlers must follow the rules, regulations and chief steward's instructions.

The handlers are expected to be on their best behaviour and appropriately dressed.

The handler may be disqualified if he does not abide by the rules or behaves in an inappropriate manner.

Whilst the competition ring is being built and after it has been built for the competition, a handler is not allowed to enter the competition ring together with his dog unless an authorized person (the chief steward or head judge. has given permission, except during the training time specified for his country.

### 1.6 ACCESSORIES FOR THE DOGS AND PROPS.

Dogs are very welcome to perform without any collar in the ring. Only a collar is allowed in the ring. It can be decorated, but the size of the collar should never exceed the dog's shoulders.

Harnesses, coats, muzzles etc. may be worn outside the ring when necessary, but if a muzzle is ever used, it must be one that allows the dog to drink and breathe freely.

Prong or electric collars and other similar constraining devices or means are forbidden. This restriction begins at the start of the competition until the finish.

A rubber hair band (on the head) for long coated dogs is allowed in order to allow the dog to see clearly. The purpose is primarily to improve visibility of the dog, and the hairband should not be considered decoration.

Decorating the dog with glitter or hair dye is forbidden.

Dressing the dog is forbidden.

If the handler is not placing or removing his props himself, it is the handler's responsibility to bring a helper that will place and/or remove the prop(s) in the ring. Every prop presented in the arena should be essential for the performance of the routine and they must be used by the dog. The main focus in the routine should always be on the dog and neither the props nor the handler's costume should ever overshadow the dog.

# 2. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

### 2.1 SIZE OF THE COMPETITION RING

World/Section Championship competitions should always be held indoors.

International competitions may be organized outdoors if allowed by the organizing country.

The size of the ring should be at least 20 m x 20 m and marked. This can be done with a solid "board" or a border of some type e.g. rope, tape etc. The ring size and placement must remain constant throughout the whole competition.

The exercises should be performed in an area that is free of hindrance. The competition ring should also be accessible to handlers with disabilities or restricted mobility.

### *2.2 VIDEOING AND PUBLICATION OF THE DRAWING OF THE RUNNING ORDERS*

***The drawing of the running orders of the qualification round (day 1 HTM, day 2 Freestyle) and the finals (day 3) should be videoed and then published in a form that all participants have easy access to (like YouTube or Vimeo or a video on the competition website).***

***For competitors with two starts on the same day (e.g. 2 dogs in the qualifications or one dog in both finals or other possible combinations of this) a break of at least 5 dogs in the running orders must be guaranteed.***

### *2.3 SCORE SHEETS*

***The score sheets shall be handed to the competitors.***

# 3. GENERAL RULES, DISQUALIFICATIONS, SCORE SHEETS

## 3.1 GENERAL RULES FOR HANDLERS

The participants will always be polite towards the judges, the helpers and other participants. Inappropriate language or inappropriate behaviour before, during or after the competition will lead to disqualification and/or being banned from the venue.

The handler can enter the ring after permission from the head judge.

### 3.1.1 Music

The duration of the music should not exceed 4 minutes. When the maximum time is exceeded, points will be deducted. When the time exceeded is over 15 seconds, the music will be turned off and the competitor will be disqualified.

If the music stops during a routine the competitor must be given the opportunity to complete the routine. The handler's back up music may be used, if this was the reason for failure. The judges will continue marking from the point at which the music stopped.

If the music stops during a routine, the handler can choose not to complete the routine and be judged solely on the part of the routine performed prior to the music stopping.

If the technical difficulties take excessively long to solve, the judges may decide on having the handler exit the ring and re-enter at a later point. In this case judges will inform the competitor how to proceed.

The judges may also send the team back out if there is an issue with the music not starting at all.

The handler indicates clearly when the music can start.

The routine starts when the music starts and ends when the music ends. Both the dog and the handler have to be inside the ring during the complete routine.

The routine in FCI international competitions and World/Section Championships should not exceed 4 minutes.

### 3.1.2 Preparation and removal of props

Preparing and removing props/accessories may only take 3 minutes in total (2 x 1,5 minutes). If this time is exceeded, this will lead to disqualification. The time is controlled by a ring steward, who informs the judges in case of delays.

### 3.1.3 Leash

The use of a leash in the ring is never allowed.

If possible, the organizer should provide a separate waiting area, where the next dog to perform can prepare alone.

The leash is given to the ring steward before entering the ring.

### 3.1.4 Cues

Cues may be given with the voice, a gesture and/or body language. The dog should be responsive to the handler at all times. The amount of signals is not essential as long as the seamless teamwork of the dog and the handler is maintained throughout the routine.

#### *3.1.5 Carrying the dog into and out of the ring*

***While entering and/or leaving the ring, the handler may carry the dog in his or her arms. Carrying the dog in a prop is not permitted. Before starting the routine, the dog has to be put on the ground and take the starting position voluntarily. When ending the routine and the ending position is on the handler's (arms, back, legs etc.) then, before carrying the dog out of the ring, it must be on the ground.***

## 3.2 DISQUALIFICATION

The following items will lead to disqualification:

- A different handler or dog participating
- An attempt to mislead the judges
- Cheating
- Not obeying doping rules
- ***Bringing food or other motivational objects into the ring (these can be e.g. toys, clickers etc.)***
- Bringing food into the ring
- If the dog is out of control and leaves the ring. If the dog accidentally steps outside of the ring while continuously working, points will be deducted.
- If the dog urinates or defecates in the ring.
- If the handler explicitly turns the routine into a training round (the music will continue until the end)
- Any form of harsh handling (verbal or physical) is never tolerated
- If the dog attacks another dog or person in the venue or on the show grounds.
- The dog being on the leash in the ring during the competition.
- Double handling – assistance from outside the ring
- Touching the dog in order to control it. The handler is not allowed to initiate the touch. This should be done by the dog.

Any other violation of these rules may lead to disqualification.

The head judge, after discussing with the other judges, will indicate a disqualification. If the routine is not finished the music will be stopped. The handler will be asked to come to the judges table to hear their decision of any further proceedings. The decision will be announced to the handler by the head judge.

## 3.3 SCORING

These rules have to be applied at FCI International Dog Dancing competitions as well as at FCI World/Section Championships.

### 3.3.1 Presentation

| **Presentation** |
|---|
| **maximum 9 points** |
| Cooperation |
| Flow |
| Responsiveness |
| Commands/signalling |
| Presentation on the day |
| Correct execution of moves |

Deductions in this section could be: Excessive barking

### 3.3.2 Content

| **Content** |
|---|
| **maximum 9 points** |
| Focus on the dog |
| Structure of the routine |
| Evenly balanced use of the ring |
| Comprehensive use of the ring (dependent on the size of the dog) |
| Balanced amount of moves so the routine is interesting but not too packed. |
| Variety of moves |
| Difficulty of individual moves |
| Transitions/Links between moves/not a series of disjointed moves |

Deductions in this section could be: Correct amount of freestyle moves or heelwork, too long music, dressing the dog, little and/or unused prop.

### 3.3.3 Artistic Interpretation

| **Artistic Interpretation** |
|---|
| **maximum 9 points** |
| Visualization of concept |
| The music suits the dog's pace and movement pattern |
| Punctuating (notation in the music) |
| Appropriate handler movement. The handlers' movement should enhance the dogs' performance. |
| The routine reflects the emotions of the music |
| Proper usage of the Music |

Deductions in this section could be: Prop not connected to theme, the routine not suitable for family audience.

### 3.3.4 Animal Welfare

| **Animal welfare** |
|---|
| **maximum 3 points** |
| The routine emphasizes the qualities of the dog (breed, personality, physical abilities, mental abilities etc.) |
| Health and safety of the dog |
| Partnership |

Deductions in this category could be: Improper handling, inconsiderate use of prop.

### 3.3.5 Equal points in "Individual" Competition

***For the dogs tied in the first 11 places, it is required to find a good distinction to avoid, having competitors tied in the same place. For dogs placed in lower ranks, this avoiding of being tied in the same is not required.***

If two or more dogs are tied for any place ***in the first 11 ranks***, the dog with the highest points in "Animal welfare" wins. If they still are equal, they share the place.

***If, in the finals, 2 or more dogs are tied in the first place, the head judges scores awarded during the finals count for deriving the ranking.***

### 3.3.6 Equal points in "Team" Competition

**Heelwork to music:**

If two teams have equal points in the "Heelwork to Music" competition, the team with the highest points in "Animal welfare" wins.

If they still have equal points, the team with the highest points in "Content" wins.

If they still have equal points, the team with the highest points in "Presentation" wins.

If they still have equal points, the team with the highest points in "Artistic Interpretation" wins.

**Freestyle:**

If two teams have equal points in the "Freestyle" competition, the team with the highest points in "Animal welfare" wins.

If they still have equal points, the team with the highest points in "Presentation" wins.

If they still have equal points, the team with the highest points in "Content" wins.

If they still have equal points, the team with the highest points in "Artistic Interpretation" wins.

*3.3.7* ***Scores of qualifying and final rounds***

***For those teams that manage to qualify for the finals in their respective category, both scores achieved (in the qualifying and the final round) are counted in order to determine the final placement in the ranking of their category: the scores of the qualifying and the final round are summed up together and thus used to determine the ranking.***

# 4. HEELWORK TO MUSIC & FREESTYLE

## 4.1 HEELWORK TO MUSIC

A "Heelwork to Music" (HTM) routine should include a minimum of 75 % HTM moves and a maximum of 25 % Freestyle. A dog is not allowed to go more than 2 meters away from the handler during the entire routine.

### 4.1.1 Definition of "Ideal" Heelwork Position

In an ideal HTM position the distance between dog and handler is constant and no further than 15 cm. Neither the dog nor the handler should restrict each other's movement. The dog must always adapt to the handler's pace and direction. It's desired for the dog to remain parallel in all positions and only to move in one track, unless it is sideways movement. If the distance between the dog and the handler is further than 50 cm it is considered Freestyle. The dog lagging or pushing ahead is unwanted. The distance is measured from the closest part of the handler to the closest part of the dog. The dog has to walk on all fours. The dog should be equality comfortable working on both sides of the handler. The dog should move in a natural manner.

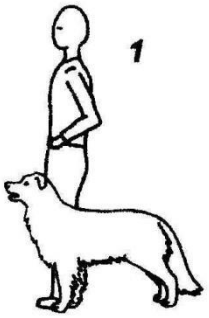
### 4.1.2 Technical Difficulty

The difficulty of the routine is not only about the amount of positions; it is also about the diversity of movement directions and changes of pace. The changing of position shows the dog's ability to find the positions independently.

### 4.1.3 Heelwork to Music Positions

The handler chooses his positions from the following list:

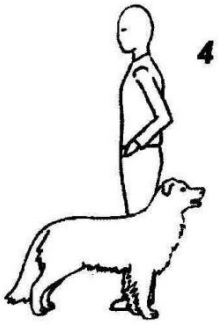
**1:** The right shoulder of the dog is situated parallel and next to the left leg of the handler (left side).



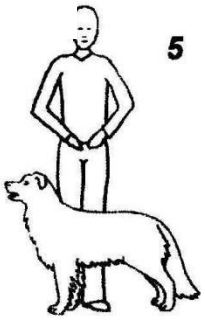
**2:** The dog is standing sideways in front of the handler, with his right side towards the front side of the handler. The right shoulder of the dog is situated at the right leg of the handler. This may be on either the inside or the outside of the handler's right leg.

**3:** The right shoulder of the dog is situated parallel to the right leg of the handler. The dog is looking towards the handler (inverted right side).

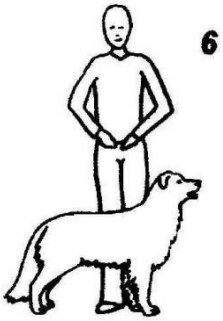
**4:** The dog is standing behind the handler, with the right shoulder of the dog at the left leg of the handler.



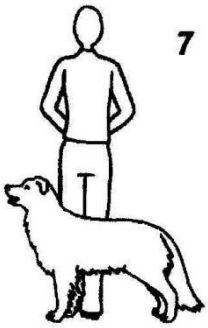
**5:** The left shoulder of the dog is situated parallel and next to the right leg of the handler (right side).



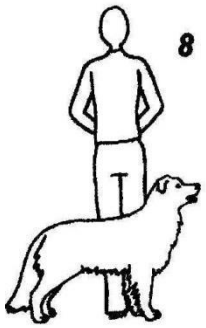

**6:** The dog is standing sideways in front of the handler, with the left side towards the front side of the handler. The left shoulder of the dog is situated at the left leg of the handler. This may be on either the inside or the outside of the handler's left leg.



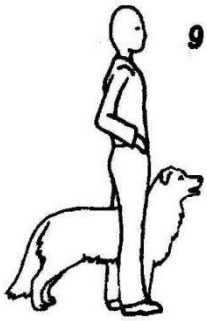

**7:** The left shoulder of the dog is situated parallel to the left leg of the handler. The dog is looking towards the handler (inverted left side).



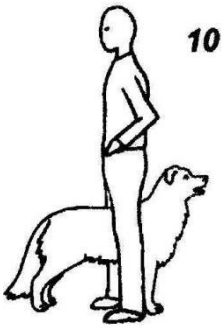
**8:** The dog is standing behind the handler, with the left shoulder of the dog at the right leg of the handler.




**9:** The dog is situated between the legs of the handler and looking in the same direction as the handler. His shoulders are at the legs of the handler.




**10:** The dog is situated between the legs of the handler and looking in the opposite direction to the handler. His shoulders are at the legs of the handler.



### 4.2 FREESTYLE

A “Freestyle” routine includes a minimum of 75 % FS moves and a maximum of 25 % HTM. All moves are allowed, unless the move jeopardizes the dog’s health.

#### 4.2.1 Technical Difficulty

“Ideal” freestyle consists of a great variety of different types of moves. The moves should be incorporated into the routine fluently, following the changes in the music.

# *5. INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION TITLES FOR DOGS*

***The eligibility for FCI International Champion Titles must be satisfied according the Regulations for the FCI international championship.***

## *5.1 INTERNATIONAL DOG DANCING FREESTYLE (FS) CERTIFICATE (CACID FREESTYLE)*

***The winning dog in the international freestyle class is awarded the CACID Freestyle, if it earns more than 75% (6,75 p / 2,25 p) of the highest possible mark in each of the 4 sections; presentation, content, artistic interpretation and animal welfare, and the second best dog is awarded the reserve CACID Freestyle, if it earns more than 75% (6,75 p / 2,25 p) of the highest possible mark in each of the 4 sections; presentation, content, artistic interpretation and animal welfare.***

***A rosette is to be given to the dog that is awarded the CACID Freestyle and the one awarded reserve CACID Freestyle. Preferably the text CACID Freestyle and reserve CACID Freestyle should be displayed on the rosette.***

## *5.2 INTERNATIONAL DOG DANCING HEELWORK TO MUSIC (HTM) CERTIFICATE (CACID HEELWORK TO MUSIC)*

***The winning dog in the international HTM class is awarded the CACID Heelwork to music if it earns more than 75% of the highest possible mark in each of the 4 sections; presentation, content, artistic interpretation and animal welfare, and the second best dog is awarded the reserve ~~C~~CACID Heelwork to music, if it earns more than 75% of the highest possible mark in each of the 4 sections; presentation, content, artistic interpretation and animal welfare.***

***A rosette is to be given to the dog that is awarded the CACID Heelwork to music and the one awarded reserve CACID Heelwork to music Preferably the text CACID Heelwork to music and reserve CACID Heelwork to music should be displayed on the rosette.***

## *5.3 FCI INTERNATIONAL DOG DANCING HEELWORK TO MUSIC CHAMPION TITLE C.I.D.(HTM) AND FCI INTERNATIONAL DOG DANCING FREESTYLE CHAMPION TITLE C.I.D. (FS)*

***(See FCI Regulations for the FCI international Championship)***

**The regulations were written in English. In case of uncertainty, the English text takes precedence over other translations.**

**The Regulations were approved by the FCI General Committee in Paris, April 2017.**

***The changes in bold and italic characters were approved by the FCI General Committee in Zurich, February 2020.***