

Nordic FS/HTM Rules

In general:

Nordic Championships and National Teams:

- For NM to be official, at least 3 countries have to participate
- Each country can enter one HTM Team and one FS Team. Each Team consists of four competitors and a named reserve. Should a country enter less than three competitors in a discipline, they will still be able to compete, but they will have zero points for empty spaces in the team competition.
- The first round in the competition is for the Team result.
- The results from the first round count towards the Team result. The same result counts for the Individual Final qualification.
- Top 50 % from the first round qualify for the Individual Final and compete for the Individual Title.
- Nordic Team Champion is the Team that has the highest score (top 3 scores for each team count for the total).
- Nordic Individual Champion is the dog/handler that has the best combined result from the first and second round.
- For the team competition the running orders are decided by a random draw performed by the organizers and announced to the participants no later than 6 weeks prior to the first day of the competition.
- There should always be at least one dog and handler from a different country between dog and handlers from the same country. So if the random draw puts two dogs from the same country just after each other, then the next dog drawn, which come from different country should be placed between them.
- If a handler qualify more than one dog for the championship, there must be at least 20 minutes between the dogs. This time gap should be created by changing the running order. In this case the new running order will be decided by the show manager, but as little change as possible according to the above mentioned system should be made.
- The running order for the individual finals will be decided by a random draw, which will be executed on Saturday after the team rounds.
- If a handler qualify more than one dog for the final, there must be at least 20 minutes between the dogs. This time gap should be created by changing the running order. In this case the new running order will be decided by the show manager, but as little change as possible according to the above mentioned system should be made.
- The first round and the second round should be held on different days.
- An invitation, stating the date of the competition, should be sent to the respective kennel clubs no later than six months before the date of the competition.
- The organizing kennel club can put a last entry date in the invitation, but the organizers must accept changes on already entered teams up till 3 weeks prior to the competition to fill up empty spaces on a team.
- Two months before the date of the competition the practical details of the competition should be sent to respective kennel clubs.

General rules:

- Competing dogs must be at least 18 months on the competition day.

- A dog can compete in one FS class and one HTM at the competition.
- The Nordic Championship must be held indoors.
- Dogs and handlers competing at the Nordic Championship should be able to work in a Championship environment. Spectators applauding and moving in their seats, decorations in the ring/arena and other similar distractions are to be expected.
- The dog and handler teams are entered by their respective national kennel clubs, which have the responsibility of evaluating the teams' suitability to participate in the championship. By naming the team, each national kennel club is responsible for evaluating that the dogs in each team have sufficient experience to handle the environment of a Championship event.
- To make the circumstances as equal for the participants as possible any training time at the venue should be equally divided between the participating teams. No participant in the competition should be given the opportunity to give a demonstration at the venue before the team competition and no participant in the individual finals should be given the opportunity to give a demonstration at the venue between the team competition and the individual final.
- If the hosting country have a rule that is not covered in the Nordic Championship rules, but will apply to the Nordic Championship held in that country, then it should be mentioned in the invitation. If it has not been mentioned in the invitation and it is not in the Nordic Rules, then it can not be a reason for disqualification or deduction of points. If a participating country feels that a rule mentioned in an invitation conflicts with the Nordic Championship rules, then the country have to raise the issue in the Nordic Kennel Union HTM committee no later than 3 weeks prior to the championship and the committee will make a ruling no later than 10 days prior to the championship.

Judging:

- The competition will be judged by 3 judges. The judge's points will be added, then divided by 3 – in other words the average points of the 3 judges will be the final score.
- The judge's decision will be final and cannot be appealed.
- At the Nordic Championships the competition will be judged by three judges: one judge from the host country, one judge from another Nordic country and one judge from a non-Nordic country.
- At least one of the judges (including the national judge) should be replaced between the first and second rounds.
- The non-Nordic judge will be appointed head judge. This judge will have the final word when agreement cannot be reached. It is also the head judge's responsibility to decide who wins should the rules on "equal points" not clearly decide a winner.
- In any case of doubt, the head judge will have the final word.
- Results are always calculated to 2 decimal places.

Heelwork to music:

- If two dogs have equal points in the Heelwork to Music classes, the dog with the highest points in "Presentation" wins.
- If they still have equal points the dog with the highest points in "Degree of Difficulty" wins.
- If they still have equal points, the scoring of the head judge will decide the winner.

Freestyle:

- If two dogs have equal points in the Freestyle classes, the dog with the highest points in "Presentation" wins.
- If they still have equal points the dog with the highest points in "Music and Interpretation" wins.

If they still have equal points, the scoring of the head judge will decide the winner.

Competition rules:

- The ring ought to be at least 20 x 20 meters without obstacles.
- The indoor ring should be entirely covered with a non-slip surface.
- Information about ring size must be available to competitors on the entry forms.
- Information on where the judges will be seated must be available to the competitors on the entry forms.
- Before the handler and dog begin their routine, the handler must acknowledge the judges at the table by bowing, curtsying or “nodding”. The dog can do a quick trick, but this should not take more than a few seconds to complete.
- The dog is not allowed to be in costume or fancy dress. A decorated collar, such as a bow or scarf is permitted. If you are in doubt of what is allowed, ask a judge before the class begins.
- The dog must be off lead in the ring.
- No treats (food) or toys allowed in the ring.
- The handler/dog is under competition rules from the moment they enter the ring until the music stops. While the dog is in the ring it needs to be under the handler’s control. Both handler and dog leave the ring together.
- No training aids or outside help of any type will be permitted.

Props:

- Props which fit the music and the choreography of the routine may be brought in the ring and used in the routine.
- The handler must be able to carry/move the prop into the ring.
- Setting up props must be done quickly.

Bitches in season:

- Bitches in season are allowed to compete but must be kept away from the competition area until all the other classes are completed.
- Bitches in season compete at the end of the competition.
- The organisers must be notified that a bitch is in season before check in for the music closes.

Music – to avoid errors and misunderstandings regarding the music, the following rules will be adhered to:

- Information about what formats music can be played must be stated on the invitation to the competition. The minimum requirement for a show organiser is that the music can be on a CD.
- If there is more than one piece of music on the CD, the cover must CLEARLY state which music the handler will use.
- If a handler wishes to compete in HTM and Freestyle, the handler must hand in a CD for each discipline (one CD for each routine).
- If a handler competes with several dogs, a CD for each dog and class must be handed in.
- If the music is longer than the routine, the music will be stopped when the handler signals the routine is completed.
- Information about when music check-in opens and closes must be stated on the invitation to the competition.

Disqualification – a handler and dog will be disqualified if:

- The dog is on lead in the ring.
- The handler has treats (food) in the ring.

- The handler has a toy in the ring
- The handler practises harsh handling in the ring or in the competition ground.
- The dog relieves itself in the ring.
- The dog is out of control in the ring.
- The dog leaves the ring before the routine is completed.
- If the rules for HTM, Freestyle or the general rules are broken.

Other faults that will result in point deduction, but not necessarily elimination:

- If the dog barks continuously or for the greater part of the routine. If the barking disturbs the presentation of the routine.
- If the handler physically holds a dog in place, or manipulates the dog to get it to perform a trick or get in a position, but not to be considered as punishment.

Freestyle:

There is no requirement to heelwork or other specific moves in the freestyle class.

The routine should consist of at least 75% Freestyle.

- The music/routine may not be longer than 4 minutes.
- Tricks are defined as anything that is not heelwork. (For a definition of heelwork, see the rules for HTM).

HTM:

Heelwork to Music is, as the name suggests, Heelwork to Music”.

The routine should consist of at least 75% Heelwork.

- The music/routine may not be longer than 4 minutes.
- The dog must stay within 2 metres of the handler at all times.
- At least 75% of the routine must consist of heelwork.

Heelwork

The following positions are considered to be heelwork in HTM:

- The dog has his right shoulder parallel with the handler’s left leg.
- The dog has his left shoulder parallel with the handler’s right leg.
- The dog has his right shoulder parallel with the handler's right leg facing opposite the handler.
- The dog has his left shoulder parallel with the handler's left leg facing opposite the handler.
- Between the handler’s legs with both shoulders parallel to the handler’s legs.
- The dog is in front of the handler, with his side to the handler. If the dog is facing right the dog’s right shoulder should be off the handlers right leg at all times, and vice versa.
- The dog is behind the handler, with his side to the handler. If the dog is facing right the dog’s left shoulder should be off the handlers right leg at all times, and vice versa.

These positions must be kept the same in movement – the dog must not jump/bounce or ”crab” to keep the position by the handler.

The dog’s body should be straight, and parallel to the handler.

The dog must not move in 2 tracks during heelwork, sideways movement is the exception to this rule.

The dog must keep the same distance in relation to the handler in all positions.

The dog must move in the same direction as the handler.
The dog must follow the handler's choice of pace.

In HTM and FS points are awarded according to:

Presentation:

Points are given according to the following:

Presentation – MAXIMUM SCORE: 10 points
Cooperation and coordination between dog and handler The routine should clearly demonstrate the dog's and handler's attentiveness to each other – so the coordination/cooperation in the routine is as fluent as possible.
Presentation The routine flows naturally without abrupt breaks/stops, the dog and handler are confident in their performance and know their routine. The handler/dog makes the performance seem easy.
Signals The signals between dog/handler are discrete or they are put into the choreography so they do not distract from the routine.
Focus on the dog The routine is performed so the focus is on the dog. It is not the handler who should attract attention.
Show quality The team has appeal and performs an excellent routine that appeals to the judges and the audience. The handler's performance is appropriate.
Any other items which may be relevant to the performance and content of the routine.

Degree of difficulty or technical merit.

Points are given according to the following:

Content (Technical Merit) - MAXIMUM SCORE: 10 points
Choreography The choreography is designed so the heelwork and tricks have no abrupt stops but are integrated smoothly – and the routine is made to suit the dog and its movement. The choreography varies so the routine is interesting.
Degree of difficulty, (for freestyle)
Amount of tricks The number of tricks is appropriate – not too many in a short period of time, or to "fill" the time.
Quality and degree of difficulty, heelwork (for heelwork) The more precise, difficult and the higher the quality of the heelwork, the higher the points.
Use of available ring space Routines should make good use of the available ring space.
Any other items which may be relevant to the content, degree of difficulty and technical merit of the routine.

Music and interpretation

Points are given according to the following:

Music and interpretation – MAXIMUM SCORE : 10 points
Interpretation of the music The music is interpreted. Steady/emotional presentation to emotional music – enthusiastic/powerful presentation to music with more power.
Is the routine suited to the music? The routine is in harmony with the music. All the tricks are based on the music and the inspiration from the music. The routine is created and presented so the dogs movement, the handlers movement and music become one.
Is the music suited to the dog? The music is suited to the dogs speed, movement and enthusiasm.
Any other items which may be relevant to music and interpretation of the routine.