

## What is Flyball ?

Flyball Racing is a race between two teams of dogs. There are two parallel lanes for two teams of dogs to race each other. Each lane has four low hurdles spaced ten inches apart. At each end there is a contraption called a box which holds a tennis ball.

Each team has its own lane and each team comprises of a maximum of six dogs. Two dogs are substitutes that can be changed for subsequent races. Only four dogs can run at a time in relay over the four hurdles. They have to trigger the box and catch the ball before returning to the finish line.

The handlers remain behind the start and release their dogs in turn and collect them at the end of the run.

Each team has one person whose job it is to load the box for each dog in the team. These are known as boxloaders who stand behind the box which is at the opposite end to the start. They are allowed to shout encouragement to each of their team dogs to collect the ball from the box as quickly as possible.

Tennis balls are used for most dogs. Smaller dogs use mini tennis ball

When all four dogs have finished the course - and have brought the balls back - a winner is decided by the judge.

During the race if any dog fails to return with their ball, or crosses the line, too soon - that is before the previous dog returns - then a fault is committed and the offending dog must run again at the end of the race.

## Flyball History

Flyball started in the USA in the 1970's. Someone invented a contraption whereby a dog could press the pedal and toss the ball to itself. A row of low hurdles was added then people formed their own teams and took part in tournaments. This has grown to be an international event.

There are competitions in N. America & Canada, Europe, Japan, Australia and of course the UK.

In the early years of flyball the emphasis of the sport used to be Catching The Ball – today speed is the most important thing. There is in fact a world rankings list for team speeds which can be found on the BFA site.

The best recorded time in the UK is 16.75 sec's -  
WORLD BEST – under 16 sec's.

The best times are to be found America and Canada but Britain is currently the third rated flyball nation in the world.

## UK Competitions

Flyball is the fastest growing dog sport in the UK. Our National Association is called the British Flyball Association (BFA) which was formed in 1993. There are over 80 clubs (making up to 50 or more teams) and these are growing in number year by year.

About twenty BFA registered CLUBS organise what are called SANCTIONED COMPETITIONS and invite all other UK clubs to participate. These OPEN competitions take place up & down the country and are held over a weekend. LIVE WIRES hold 2 competitions in May and September at Sutton Fields each year. At the last competition there were over 60 teams competing from various parts of the UK.

The large majority of competitions take place outdoors between April and September. In winter a few clubs arrange events indoors and the dogs run on rubber matting. There are far fewer winter competitions.

Competitions are organised so that teams are put into leagues (of 5 or 6) according to their best time. [At the BFA site is a current seeding list for all UK clubs]. Each team will race against all the other teams in their league.

### Beginner Competitions

Are also arranged in the summer months. usually the same weekend as the OPEN competitions. Clubs enter their beginner dogs in what are called 'STARTER' teams. Like open events the teams are placed in divisions and they usually run against all the other teams (round robin) in their division.

The difference between the open and Starters is that in the latter the hurdles are lower in height and they have either netting from the start line, placed down each side of the hurdles and round the 'box' or barriers at both sides of each hurdle. This gives the dogs the racing atmosphere experience yet helps to keep each team in its own lane and not to miss out jumps.