LET's GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT

by

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To bump or not to bump. That is the question, "----- and one that must be met and solved in a fair and conscientious manner if Whippet racing in North America is to continue it's present growth.

To disqualify a dog which illegally interferes with another during the running of a race is not an example of "winning at any cost" or poor sportsmanship. It must be a necessity if the standard of Whippet racing is to improve. However, it is not this point which is difficult to accept, but rather, the definition and ultimate judgement of interference itself. If greater understanding and acceptance of this latter point can be promoted then considerable grief and hurt feelings most certainly will be avoided in the future. The Official Rules and Regulations for the Whippet Racing Association under Section 4.0 state: "Any Whippet who fouls other racers based on unnecessary bumping, fighting, riding, or interfering will be disqualified from all placement on the race where the foul was committed. The Whippet or Whippets causing the intentional foul will not be allowed to race again during that particular WRA Meet." Here is the crux of the matter then, for, while some people choose to ignore all interference short of a knock-down-drag-out brawl, others consider any form of contact one dog makes with another to be a foul. Between these two extremes lies the answer to the problem at hand. To judge whether a dog fouls is to judge whether a dog is "running to the lure" or simply "running another dog." Some of the more common cases of
LEGAL BUMPING are:

Dog B runs between dogs A and C in chasing the lure and, in so doing, bumps dogs A and C. However, dog B does not turn his head but simply runs the shortest route to the lure.
THIS IS LEGAL BUMPING.

The lure bounces, as indicated in the diagram, and dog B, who was in the act of passing dog A as the time the lure moved, cuts in front of dog A, possibly hitting him in the process but still attempts to run the shortest path to the lure. THIS IS LEGAL BUMPING

Lure

B

A

Dog B tries to go over dog A.   This is a rare incident but it may be a legitimate attempt to catch the lure.   It may be caused by a sudden shift in the direction of the lure followed by dog A cutting in front of dog B who is in mid-stride.   In judging a case such as this, one should consider the collision to be "innocent" if dog B continues after the lure and ignores dog A after the collision.
THIS IS LEGAL BUMPING

What about **illegal** interference?   Some of the most common cases are:

Lure

B

A

Dog B "rides" dog A, that is, dog B makes no attempt to pass dog A but, instead, tries to force him off the track or away from the lure thus impeding dog A's speed and direction.
THIS IS A DISQUALIFYING FOUL

Lure

B

A

Dog B swerves from his path to the lure, hits dog A once or several times, then continues after the lure. This is usually obvious since   the dog committing the foul will "turn his head" or look before running at and hitting the other dog.
THIS IS A DISQUALIFYING FOUL

Lure

B

A

Dog B attempts to pass dog A.   Dog A cuts in front of B, hitting him once or repeatedly, to prevent B from reaching the lure first. Again, a head turn is usually obvious in such a situation. THIS IS A DISQUALIFYING FOUL

While these are the most common instances of "bumping", there is one further case which requires comment here.   This is the case where a dog "turns it's head" but doesn't actually interfere with the progress of another dog.   While the intent to foul may be there, the dog should not be disqualified unless it actually interferes.

Racing secretaries should, whenever possible, acquaint new Whippet owners with the aforementioned facts on interference and help them develop training programs for their novice race dogs thereby preventing such dogs from becoming possible "bumpers".

Finally, if one is judging fouls and any doubt arises as to whether a foul was committed, such a foul should not be called.   Similarly, if the judge is certain a foul was committed, he should report it to the racing secretary without hesitation.