



Guidelines for Running

*A full set of our rules can be found on our website at
<http://ashridgecanicrossers.org.uk/club-info/club-documentation/>*

We run in the beautiful Ashridge Estate and wish to continue to do so. Please respect other users of the Estate, a smile and a thank you go a long way.



Canicross is cross country running with your dog. You wear a belt and are connected to your dog via a bungee line to absorb any snatch, the dog wears a special pulling harness.

Cross Country running is on typically on uneven, wet, muddy, rooty, slippery ground. Ashridge has a real mix of paths and you will often come back wet and muddy. Trail shoes with good grip are recommended for canicross, fell type shoes typically have the levels of grip required. Shoes are always a hot topic.

On Hot topics when the weather gets warmer we may well meet up and just go for a walk, dogs are more sensitive than us to both heat and humidity so we will not run if there is a risk of dogs overheating.

On overheating, you will warm up running (and more so cross country) so it's best not to start the run in a down alpine jacket as you'll be carrying it soon enough.

DOGS

Your dog should be at least a year old to start, we recognise that this will vary on a dog by dog basis as dogs mature at different speeds. For the younger dogs it takes a while to build up to the longer runs. Most competitions stipulate a year for shorter races (5km) and 18 months for longer races (10+km). We like to encourage people to start running and having fun with their dogs but the dog's welfare comes first. We therefore may well suggest you let your dog mature further before starting.

Don't feed your dog right before or right after intense exercise. This may predispose the dog's stomach to bloat or twist, especially for large breed or deep-chested dogs. A general rule of thumb is to not feed dogs at least hour before or after exercising, ideally 2-3 hours before and an hour after.

If your dog has any issues let us know before, it is better to let everyone know how a dog reacts to others rather than having a situation. Respect Other people's requests for Space.

If you Dog has a Contagious Disease please stay away. If they come down with Kennel Cough Please let a Committee member know and stay away for at least 2 weeks post cough.

Please do not bring Bitches in season to the Club Runs - it's unfair on entire males. Pregnant and nursing bitches are not suited to running in harness.

Not all dogs are suitable for canicross. Please always check with your veterinarian if you have any concerns. The club reserves the right to advise you if it is believed your dog is not suitable for canicross. Examples of dogs who are not suitable would be extremely brachiocephalic breeds, or dogs with confirmation issues such as hip problems, among other issues.

If you run with a Muzzle, the open basket / greyhound type ones are acceptable as they permit dog to pant and drink.

Ashridge has guidance on Dogs and ours being attached are recognised as being under control. Please pick up after your dog. There are bins around the monument and along the drive, but you'll need to carry your 'present' with you if your dog does his business out on a run.

The commands used to control your dog are entirely your choice, just be consistent. Even if you are following, using the commands when you turn helps the dog understand for when they are out front. Some people will use Left left, Right right, on on and steady. You will hear people using gee and haw (mushers terms for directions). Use whatever is comfortable for you.

YOU

On the runs, it is about fun, enjoying others company and the Environment, the runs are not races. Always be polite and respect other users. Always follow the countryside Code when out, be careful around livestock.

Carry water for your own dog - don't rely on others. Puddles dry up quickly at Ashridge so don't count on them either. Runs will be cancelled if it is considered too warm.

Prior to the run

At the meet keep your dog under close control, be aware that the dogs will get excited and often quite vocal, sometimes walking them around will help settle them.

Dogs to be always either on a Lead or Line.

Be aware other users of Ashridge may well not appreciate the noise and enthusiasm of the dogs, walking them around can help calm them.

Please have your dog ready to move off when the run starts, we will try to give notice it's about to happen.

On Runs

The paths are used by Families, Cyclists, Walkers, Runners and Riders.

If we meet oncoming forest users bring your dog alongside (to heel). This is to allow safe passing.

When catching up other forest users, ask politely to pass, ensure you give the user space and your dog cannot interfere with them.

Most forest users will let us pass if asked politely, bring your dog under close control (heel) when passing. It is best to have the dog on the opposite side to the forest user.

If we meet a horse and rider, we need to give them space and pull over as to not spook the horse, if we catch up with a horse liaise with rider to find a safe place to pass. Again most important to shorten line to your dog.

If you are going to overtake another canicrosser, let the person in front know and respect their response, overtaking downhill can cause people to lose their balance so please avoid.

We regroup often during runs especially on direction changes. When Regrouping bring your dog under close control, allow each dog its own space. It may not be practical to wait in a group so with some regroups the run leader may ask you to walk while the regroup occurs. Please wait for the run leader to indicate that it's okay to continue before running.

If you or your dog have any difficulties on a run let the run leader know, we will adjust / abort runs to safeguard the health of dogs and humans alike.

Please make run leader aware of any medical conditions and any medication that may put you at risk out running.

Post Runs

Allow your dog to have a drink but not too much.

It is useful to have a portable shower to wash mud off the dog though a sponge would work and then dry your dog. Take time now to check the dog for any injuries such as cut pads which may

not have shown on the run. If run has been hard then walking dog around will help cool it down and then they can have a bit more water.

We use Facebook to advise on run start location, time and type of run. Please respond to the poll to let us know that you plan to attend as it gives the run leader detail on who is attending.

We encourage members to download the app WhatThreeWords as we might use this to specify start locations. It is also useful if an emergency arises.

Club runs are Saturday morning and Wednesday evenings. New canicrossers must attend our Saturday morning runs to be briefed and kitted out. Wednesday night runs are more technical and have a higher risk, and are therefore not suited to new runners. No kit is available for borrowing on Wednesday runs.

Equipment

The club has a wide range of equipment that you may borrow on Saturday runs (Kit will not be available on Wednesday Night runs) Please arrive 30 minutes early for fitting.

We encourage runners to try different harnesses, belts and lines so that when you buy your own you know that it is something that suits you and your dog.

When borrowing club equipment use the time to assess which belt suits you and which harness your dog. We will help and advise you in what you and your dog require to get going.

Please ensure you return any loan equipment post run.

We encourage runners to carry their phone with them in the event of getting lost or injured when out running.

JOINING THE CLUB

Our Constitution allows you to run 3 times as our guest before you become a member. To join, please visit <http://ashridgecanicrossers.org.uk/club-info/membership/> .

Cost of membership is £15 for the year. This covers our third-party liability club insurance, webhosting, loan equipment and other club expenses.