



Webinar 2 - Ring Stress

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

dog, transports, warm, kennel, moving, panting, ring, run, stress, obstacles, stretch, crate, handler, warmup, cooldown, jump, part, routine, pretty, pinwheel

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Hey, everybody, we are only a couple minutes late this time and I think we we've got some of the technical issues more sorted out. So you should be able to watch this live stream on the Facebook page or at the website. And I have my assistant in case you have any questions you can comment either on the website using the chat feature that's under the video or on the Facebook page. So hopefully you guys can see and hopefully the stream quality is okay. And I got some new big fat markers that we can write things down with and today's topics. Let's see if we can make these markers work. how big that is.

00:57

Oh my god. Can you read that? Okay, you see that? Okay, Maddie. All right. So we're gonna talk about mid course stress today, these markers are almost so big, I can't even hold on to it. And transports. I did not bring a dog with me. So I'm just going to be talking about this and warmups. So I'll probably just be talking, for the most part, well, it definitely will be talking for the most part because I don't have a dog to demonstrate with. So the first thing I want to talk about, which was requested by some of you from last week, when I asked for topics is mid course ring stress. And usually this is actually a little bit easier



problem to solve than a dog that goes into the ring stressed or goes into the building stressed. If you have a dog that seems like it's interested in playing and interested in going into the ring and interested in working, and then at some point during the middle of the course, it takes off on you and, and goes to greet the ring crew or sniffs or seems to lose connection. Quite often. What has happened with in that case, and in the case of mid course ring stress is that some small disconnect happened on your part that you might not have even been aware of. So for example, and again, let's see if we can make a marker work. If you have a pinwheel, hopefully the blue shows up. So this is the sequence. And it's just a simple pinwheel. So the dog goes from one to two to three. So let's say that you're not really thinking anything of this. But for especially for an inexperienced dog or a dog that lacks confidence. If you queue the number two jumps to one, and you queue the number to jump and then leave thinking alright, well, I can just queue this jump and get out of here the dog, the dog has this covered, they know their job, and you turn your head away or you blink even a little bit, then you that may be a situation where just a couple obstacles later, the dog checks out. And you're not sure why things seemed like they were going smoothly. The dog took all the jumps in the pinwheel. And then for some reason, you're not sure why the dog has checked out and you've got your mid course ring stress. But quite often, especially if you watch your video very closely, if you took video of the run, what you'll see is that a couple obstacles back before the the actual midcourse ring stress happened, you went to send your dog over this middle jump of the pinwheel, which your dog took. But there was a tiny bit of uncertainty on the part of the dog. So yes, the dog took the jump, but they maybe weren't sure if they were supposed to because you weren't running past the jump, which does make it pretty obvious to most dogs that they should take it. You just maybe said over and put your arm up and then moved away. So there were some questions in the dog's mind whether or not they were supposed to take an obstacle. And in this case, it's a send. So you sent the dog to two so that you could try and get ahead. And you were maybe in a little bit of your own panic or stress took your eye off the dog assumed the dog would take it. And so the dog took it but they weren't sure about it. And instead of getting some feedback from you, in terms of Yes, good job,



you should have taken that job. That was great. Now let's continue on. Because they didn't have much support for this jump and they weren't sure if they were supposed to take it. They're kind of running along thinking well, I don't know if I should have taken that job. I didn't really get any confirmation if I should have taken that jump. I don't know about this. This seems a little overwhelming. That was pretty tough for me because you didn't run past the jump but you wave your arms around and expected me to take it and then two or three obstacles later, they just kind of get overwhelmed by those thoughts and the run falls apart they take off sniffing. So quite often when we have this mid core stress the because we're thinking that the source of the stress must have occurred immediately before the signs of the stress. We can't Think of any signs and so we can't find any explanation. But if you have a video of it and you watch, usually two, three, maybe four obstacles back from when the signs of the stress appeared, you'll see the source of the stress. And it's often just a tiny little head check like, Was I supposed to take this job, I'm not really sure. Or you'll, you'll see that it's a situation like this, where there's a jump that you're trying to send the dog to, that you're not running past yourself, you're leaving while you're asking the dog to take the jump. It could also be as simple as could be a one ad, where you are sending the dog over the first jump and then heading out and expecting the dog to take the second jump on their own. It can be very simple, small things. And in both these cases, it's a send, where you're asking the dog to take an obstacle that your motion didn't really support, in fact that you were moving away from the obstacle. And maybe the dogs not really experienced or real confident their obstacle commitment is low. And then on top of that they did it, they didn't get any feedback that that was the correct thing to do. And then it usually takes two or three obstacles for that to overwhelm them and and then it falls apart. So quite often, if it's mid core stress, the thing to do is to get the if you've got a dog that's got mid course ring stress, you've got to get those runs on video, because you've got to watch for what was the little disconnect that happened 234, maybe even five obstacles before the sign of the stress. So the source of the stress is very likely not occurring just before you see signs of the stress, the source of the stress probably happened, three, four or five obstacles 5678 seconds prior to



the signs of the stress. So those are my thoughts on mid course stress. And that's actually an easier topic to address than a dog that's just stressed going into the ring that doesn't really want to be there in the first place. Dogs that are suffering from mid core stress are usually dogs that really want to get it right. But they're lacking in confidence or they're lacking in experience. And then they're working really hard to get things right for you and some teeny, weeny little disconnect happens. And they just they can't handle it, they feel like they were left on their own. It's almost like they think that that you disappeared for 10 seconds or two seconds or whatever. And it happens a lot. Even. We had some sequences in the classes that I teach yesterday here in the arena where the handlers running along, and four, and the dog is beside them. And they're really connected and the handler looks away to see where the next obstacle is and looks back. And in the time it takes the handler to do that. The dog can behave as though the handler just completely disappeared. Even though you're right there, you're still moving along with them, you just had to check to see where you were going. So some dogs are really sensitive to that. They seem to almost behave as they're offended, like they're offended, that you turned away to look where you were going. They read it as a cue, like she turned away, did she want me to do something? What does that mean? I don't, I don't understand, really, you're just trying to not fall over the next obstacle and see where you're going. So this is this is a little bit easier topic to address. Because quite often, it's just a very small disconnect on the part of you as a handler, or a failure to praise the dog for something that they weren't sure about, but went ahead and did. And you might not think that it's this is such a complicated thing, or that the middle jump of a pinwheel is such a complicated thing. But it can be it's simple, but not easy. It can be pretty stressful for the dog, if they don't get any feedback, or they feel like the connection is not real strong. So get those runs on video and start looking at the video where the signs of the stress happened. But then back up and keep backing up through the video to watch to see if you can find the source of the stress. And it can be really, really small. Just maybe you turned your head away. Maybe you tripped and stumbled. Maybe a loud noise happened in the background and you didn't notice it. But the dog did. And if you had noticed



that you could have said hey, it's totally okay, let's keep going. Maybe the dogs having trouble with weave poles, and at the end of the polls, you could have said yea really good. Let's keep going and you didn't and they're used to that and training. And so absent that praise, they were like, Well, did I do these polls correctly, I don't know I didn't do this contact correctly, I don't know. And then three or four obstacles later you see the stress. So look at your videos and see where the signs of the stress started and then back up and see if you can find the source of the stress and really, really scrutinize that because it's quite often some sort of connection failure. Okay, next thing we're gonna do is talk about transports. And for that one, I have a list. And I'll post a URL to this book that I'm referencing, because now I can't even remember the name of it. But it was a book that these two Swedish girls wrote. And the title is called agility foundations right from the start. So I'll post a link to it after the live stream, but they have some really great ideas on something that they call transport. In the request was, let's talk about transporting the dog or transitioning the dog from the crate to the ring from the ring to the crate when you're at a show. And so they had this idea of transports. And the cool thing about it is that they wrote down a list of the different kinds of transports that you might use. But the the main thing about transports is that they have to be easy to use. How's that blue showing up? Is that okay? Isn't it my the audios low internet connection? Okay. That might, that's about all we can do, though. I know, I figured it

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could be. But we're connected via Ethernet. So it is raining in here and it isn't metal roof. So the sound might not be great, but we'll muddle on. And I will post the replay of this if it gets too spotty. So they have to be easy to use. Obviously, the dog must like it, whatever it is. Big Fat markers. So the dog has to like your transport. And it has to prevent other activities from happening. Like sniffing, getting distracted visually by another dog. And those are the basic basic things easy to use, the dog has to like it and it has to prevent other activities. Otherwise, it's not useful transport and the transports that they listed. And again, stuff is pretty simple when you think about it. But it's something that you have to be



mindful about. So the transports that they use were what they called a treat magnet. Again, hopefully that's readable, tugging hand in the collar. And some of these are more or less useful at shows, they might be more applicable in training or in a class situation. This is a good one for the small dogs. I'll get out of the way here in a minute. Trying to write big so you guys can see lift and carry. And then there were a couple more the recall which is not going to be useful at a how to show because the dogs on leash all the time. But this one and this one came up. It's the Let's Play challenge for this month hand targeting. So hand targeting is super useful for teaching recalls. It's also super useful for teaching bypasses on course, and then it's super useful as a transport. So you're going to want to have at least these as options for getting your dog out of the crate towards the ring from the ring back to the crate or to a calmer warm up area. So the treat magnet is just a slightly sexier way of saying luring. So you could take your dog out of the crate and keep a treat in front of its face for the entire trip from the crate to where you're going to warm up the dog and yourself to the ring and then have more treats when the dog comes out of the ring and keep that dog hooked up to a treat the treat magnet, lower it back to your cooldown area and then back to the crate might take a lot of treats to do this. So it might not be the only thing that you employ as a transport at a show but it may be one of those things so it may be that you use one type of transport to get your dog from the kennel to the warm up area. Another type of transport to get your dog from the warm up area to the ring and then one more type of transport to get your dog from ringside to ring gate. So it might be that the treat magnet if your dog is really food motivated is something that you're going to save till the very end because you need something that your dog is really motivated for to keep them paying attention to you in a really distracting environment and you might not need that when you're in the warm up area where it's quieter, etc. Tog is another type of transport. If your dog is interested in tugging, you could tug with him all the way from kennel to warm up area from warm up area to ringside and ringside to ring gate and then it from finish line to ring gate from ring gate to you get the idea. And of course I do not use the same transport for the entire trip for that entire cycle from kennel warm up ring run. Exit the ring cooldown back to the kennel. I'm not



using the same transport. I'm going to use treats for part of it. I'm going to use tug for part of it. I might switch back and forth from tug to treat. I don't use hand in the collar too much. Because I think that for a lot of dogs the hand in the collar unless you've worked on it with when they're puppies they don't find it Real reinforcing. And of course, you should work on it when they're puppies so that they at least find it reasonably reinforcing. But it doesn't really do much to control their, what their brains or their eyeballs are directed at when you're at a show. You can control what where their body goes. But you can't really control what they're looking at when you've just got a hand in the collar, or what they're focusing on. So you're better I think these are these are better than handing the collar at a show. If you have a small dog lift and carry is a pretty obvious and easy solution. Just pick the dog up and carry them where you want to go. And hand targets are another transport to get the dog from point A to point B. So again, these are things that they they're all pretty easy to use. Loring is pretty easy. Tog is pretty easy. If you've put the work in to teach your dog to enjoy interacting with you in that way with a toy, hand on the collar pretty easy. If you've put the work in to teach the dog to be okay with hand in the collar, lift and carry pretty easy. If your dog weighs less than, you know, a bag of flour or something like that hand target pretty easy, you've always got your hands, you're never going to forget those. You can always do hand targets anywhere and follow it up with a toy or treat reinforcement. So they're easy to use, the dog has to like them. And that may mean that it that the dog naturally likes it, or that you've put some work into training the dog to like it and enjoy it. And again, the transports are designed to prevent other activities. So I'm not super specific about it myself. But I've been doing agility for 20 years. So I don't have a list of transports that I'm going to use at each stage of this cycle or this routine, getting my dog out of the kennel and into the ring. But you might need that you might need to sit down and map out each step of this routine. And which transport are you going to use what at each step of this routine. And there might be some transports that you can use that are not on this list. Although I think this, this is a pretty big list that covers most of the bases. And you might use different transports after the run than you do before the run. So these are some thoughts on transitioning, how do you get your dog from



point A to point B without losing focus? These transports are a really good way to think about it. And I'm going to be honest, my dogs are not being transported every step of the way during this routine, because part of my routine is to let the dog and myself warm up. And part of that is that I let my dogs sniff around run around. And if it's allowable by the show side of the show committee and the organization, I'll let them do that off leash ideally, so that they can stick around and stretch their legs. And then I can jog around as well and stretch my legs. So that kind of transitioned into the third topic, which was warming up which has to be part of your routine, obviously. And you're going to use transports to get your dog from the kennel to the warm up routine. And then to the ring and then to the run and then out of the ring and then the cooldown routine, and so on and so forth. So those are some thoughts on transports, you guys can leave some comments either in the Facebook group or on the website about some other transports that you might use. Or if you have taken the time to make a list of which transports you use at each step in your routine. Go ahead and share that with us. All right, the third topic is warming up. And one of the things that I that's a pet peeve of mine is watching people take their dog from the kennel to the ring and then into the ring to run. So that would be like you sitting in a tiny little sports car for a couple hours. And then getting out of the car, walking 50 feet to the start line of a sprint and being asked to sprint without being warmed up. And then to make it even worse. I'll see people at the end of the run give they take like 30 seconds to give their dog some cookies and praise. That's great. That's great. And then they take them back to the crate. So okay, you you were sitting in a tiny little sports car with really super uncomfortable sports car seats. Maybe somebody put a nice pillow underneath you. You got out walked 50 feet to the start line of sprint race you sprinted for 30 seconds. Somebody gave you some skittles because you were awesome. And then they put you back in the sports car you drove home. Imagine how you would feel after you got out of that sports car seat an hour later. Probably not great. So it's really important that you warm up yourself to prevent injury and that you warm up your dog to prevent injury and that you take the time to cool yourself down and cool your dog down to prevent injury. And I looked back through the challenges and August's Get Fit challenge.



So if you guys look back to August of this year with Kimberly Chase, the human fitness coordinator She did warm ups for August. So there's some specific ideas in August. But I'll tell you guys, because you guys were curious about my own warm up routines. I am far less structured than what Kimberly recommends. But again, I'm pretty experienced. So if you're not really experienced, you should absolutely look up the August Get Fit challenges. So here's what my warmup routine looks like. And it's pretty simple. And I've got a couple pretty simple rules that I follow. So my first rule of thumb is that my dogs should be panting lightly before they go in the ring to run. And I should be glowing, maybe not sweating, but glowing lightly before I go in the ring to run with them.

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After the run, I'm not putting my dogs back in the car or the kennel until they are panting lightly or barely panting at all. And I'm not going to stop moving until I'm done glowing, I might still be warm. But if I still feel kind of glowy, you know, not quite sweating, but kind of glowing. I'm not going to stop moving either. So that's the really easy, general rule of thumb for us to follow. And I think some people think, Well, my dog is panting when we go into the ring, he's going to be too tired to run. But come on, guys, they're only running for 30 to 50 seconds. And if your dog can, is not fit enough to be warmed up to the point of of panting lightly, if they're not fit enough to then go in the ring for 4030 to 50 seconds, they're not fit to run. So I think this is a pretty good rule of thumb that we should be moving around. And I start with so in my warm up routine, I start with slow movements. And then I progress to more movement, more rapid movement, more dynamic movement with me and the dog until I'm glowing, and they're lightly panting. Sometimes they're panting more than lightly. But again, they're fit enough that another 30 to 50 seconds of activity is not going to exhaust them. Okay, so I'm not going to go, Okay, this is going to be a ridiculous drawing, but we're going to do it anyways. So I'm not going to warm my dogs up until their tongues look like this. You guys know what I'm talking about the spatula tone. So I'm not warming them up to that point, I'm just warming them up until I see them panting. And the tongue is out.



If it's super, super flared, I may have overdone it. So I try not to get to that point before the run. But it's probably not going to hurt them even so unless it's really hot out. So again, rule of thumb, move around, get active, ramp it up, shouldn't take more than five or 10 minutes and get the dogs and yourself glowing or in or lightly panting before you go in the ring. Now sometimes I miss time it and I get to the ring a little bit early. And then I feel like I'm standing around and I'm like, oh my god, I'm standing around, I'm losing the warm up that I had. So we have to have to jog in place or do some tugging, or have them weave between my legs. So just keep the keep the glow as it were. And then after the run, if it's a real cool, fun run, and we ran a lot, they might be at this point, because we were sprinting. And I'm gonna then do the same thing cooling down that I did warming up. So we might do a lot of really active tugging right after the run because it was super exciting. So that's pretty dynamic movement. But then I'm going to head outside and keep myself moving around, keep the dog moving around until again, we're just barely panting and the glow is almost gone. And that may take 10 minutes or so just moving around. It could even be that you just keep the dog out on leash with you and walk around. And that can be a little tricky because if you keep the dog out with you and you catch yourself talking to people and socializing, and you've got a nice well behaved dog that will allow you to do that. Be careful because you're not moving. So yes, the dog is not in a kennel but it's also not moving around and you can get stiff standing just as easily as you can get stiff in a kennel. So that is my general warmup routine rule of thumb, we don't go to the ring until we're lightly panting and glowing a little bit and we don't stop moving after the run until the glow is basically gone and the panting is basically gone. And that can be tough. If the dogs are really aroused by the environment itself. They may not stop panting because they're just aroused. And so you're going to have to judge Alright, are they panting? Because they're aroused by the environment? Are they panting because they're still trying to bleed off some heat from having been physically active. So if you can get away from the environment to cool down and take a walk or something down the street so that you can more accurately assess whether they're you know what the panting is for because you know, the environments not arousing then that may be better. Now



if you have multiple dogs, it gets more complicated and I this just this past weekend ran multiple dogs. And so sometimes the warm up of one dog and the cooldown of another dog overlapped. And so I had to manage that a little bit more mindfully. And so quite often when I'm running multiple dogs, even if there's some time before the second dog, I'll still warm the two dogs up together at the same time and get them panting. And then at least I know that what that dog number two hasn't cooled down entirely by the time it's time for them to run. And I can do a little mini warm up to get them back up to the panting stage. And then sometimes I've run one dog, and they're cooling down, and I have the second dog with me, and they're warming up. And so those things can overlap. And then of course, I stay warmed up the whole time. So those are some quick and dirty thoughts on me from about warming up and cooling down. Now, the specifics of what you do during those warm ups and cooldowns are up to you. And again, take a look at the August challenge. So that you can decide, well, you know, am I going to do jumping jacks am I going to do lunging and I you know, what am I going to do. But I will say that I do not stretch myself at trials. And I do not stretch my dogs at trials. And part of that is that my dogs don't really they're not really relaxed enough for me to feel like it's worthwhile to stretch. I think it's dangerous, and the data doesn't support stretching dogs when they're cool. So I definitely am not going to be stretching my dogs before a run. I might if the if there's a quiet space and I the dog has quite a bit of time, I might stretch them after a run. But in general on a show day. Maybe at the end of the day, I'll do some stretching. But again, I'm not going to ever stretch myself or my dogs when we're cold. And so stretching is never a part of my warmup routine, warm up routines are about getting blood flowing, getting muscles moving, I'll do things that dynamically get range of motion going. So running myself running, letting the dog run, getting things moving, again, gradually they're not going to come out of the kennel start running full speed because that's a recipe for disaster. But the warm ups are warming up get blood flow going to all the body parts get moving gradually until you can sprint a little bit during that warm up and you're good to go. Stretching I just don't I just don't think it's appropriate. You know, that's my own personal view. But but certainly for people the data does not support stretching cold. It's a it



can be dangerous. And quite often again, I don't stretch as part of the cooldown. But I do move around for a lengthy period of time 10 minutes or so sometimes longer to make sure that the dogs don't just stop moving immediately and they get to move around as naturally as possible for some length of time. And then of course I try and kennel them in as large a kennel space as possible, which I know is can be tricky for people. Depending on where you show regularly the space might be really tight. So for me I create out of my my van as much as possible. And I have a big box in the van that the dogs all share together so they're not an individual kennels, they can move around a little bit more. And I just I try and kennel them as minimally as possible and in in as large an enclosure as possible and let them move around as naturally as possible as much of the time as possible. So those are my thoughts on warm up and cool down. Where are we at? Oh, nicely done. And I think unless you guys unless there's any specific questions, I think we'll call it good and then I'll post the replay later tonight or tomorrow and then ask you guys what you would like for a topic for next week. So hopefully, Transport's was a useful topic mid core stress and warmups and I'll see you guys next week.