



OFFICIAL JUDGE RULEBOOK

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This is a dynamic document, watch for updates as necessary.

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BARN HUNT JUDGE RULEBOOK

■ Part 1: About the Judge Rulebook

This rulebook contains all of the information needed for individuals to become a Judge, understand and maintain Judging status, design fun and legal courses, and run and manage a ring during a Trial. **This rulebook does not replace the Competitor Rulebook or the Club Rulebook, and those Rulebooks contain information Judges are required to know.** Competitors and Clubs will have full access to this book and are welcome to read it to further understand course design and how Barn Hunt Events are judged.

Barn Hunt competitor rules are updated every three years, but the rules in this document may be updated more often. Judges must always check that they are using the latest version of this document. Changes and additions will be announced and posted to the main Judge forum at barnhuntforums.com.

■ Part 2: The Key Role of the Barn Hunt Judge

An efficient, capable, friendly, and supportive Judge is essential to the success of Barn Hunt. The Judge is the public face of the sport, and the person competitors most easily remember and identify with.

Judges must exhibit good course design skills. Judges must be fair and impartial. Judges must communicate with show giving Clubs/groups in a timely and courteous manner. Judges must be on time and ready to Judge in accordance to the Club's schedule.

Judges must always be cognizant that their demeanor and professionalism in public and on social media will shape the experience of spectators, Trial staff, and competitors in the sport of Barn Hunt. Even when not in an active judging role, Judges must always be above reproach in how they deal with others in connection with the sport. Judges are role models for Barn Hunt.

■ Part 3: Becoming a Judge

There are a number of steps on the path to becoming a Judge. These steps are structured to ensure Judges are fully prepared, capable, and comfortable assuming a primary role in the success of a Trial. Part of the Judge approval process is analytical and procedural (i.e., handling a dog to a certain title, passing the written test, course design), and part is subjective (friendly and welcoming, able to deal with stress and adversity, etc.).

SECTION 1. The Judge Agreement

The following statement is part of the Judge application and must be reviewed and affirmed when applying to become a Judge. All Judges are expected to abide by this agreement when acting as a representative of the sport.

I agree to adhere to all current Barn Hunt rules and regulations and judge according to those rules. I will work to continually increase my knowledge and understanding of the rules and the sport. I promise to judge in a fair and unbiased manner, treating each competitor and dog equally. I will not discriminate based on race, national origin, gender, gender identity, ability, or sexual orientation. I pledge to portray the sport of Barn Hunt and the Barn Hunt Association in a positive manner at any and all times when I am acting as a representative of the sport, including on websites and in social media. I promise to hold rat care to the highest possible standards. I understand that the ability to officiate as a judge at Barn Hunt events is a privilege, not a right. If my actions result in a negative impact for myself, a Club, or the Barn Hunt Association LLC, I understand that a range of penalties may be applied, from a written and/or verbal warning up to and including temporary or permanent suspension as a Barn Hunt Judge. I understand that my judge license may be withdrawn at any time, with or without notice, for cause as determined by the Barn Hunt Association.

SECTION 2. Application Requirements

The below qualifications must be accrued under at least three different Judges in two different locations. That does not mean each task must be undertaken in two places or under three judges, but the span of work must meet that criteria.

1. **Personally handle at least one dog to a Senior title (RATS) and show any dog at least 5 times at the Master level.** This dog does not have to be owned by the applicant, but the applicant must handle a dog for every qualifying score from Novice through Senior.
2. **Attend a Judge Workshop in a Working slot.** The workshop must be completed within the previous calendar year.

3. **Accrue a minimum of 150 points as a Fun Test Judge.** To be completed within the previous year. Judging as many dogs/hours in one Event as possible will reflect positively on the application when sent for review since it will more fully replicate the actual judging experience. Crazy 8s experience is encouraged but not required. The Fun Test point system is as follows:

FUN TEST POINTS ACCRUAL REQUIREMENTS

Class	Instinct	Novice	Open	Senior	Master	Crazy 8s	Line Drive
Minimum Number of Dogs Required in each Class	5	15	15	10	10	0	0
Points Per Dog Judged	1	1	2	3	4	3	1
Minimum Number of Points Required in each Class	5	15	30	30	40	0	0
Total Points 150 (120 from the 5 classes + 30 pts from classes and/or Crazy 8s)							

4. **Log a minimum of two Event days as an Apprentice Judge.** To be completed within the previous year. Apprentice Judges cannot take on other roles at the Event. This experience can be cumulative but optimally will consist of two, eight-hour apprentice days. Apprentices stand outside the ring and practice-judge while filling out the Apprentice Judge Scoresheet. They stay ringside and are considered "on duty," at all times the Judge is in the ring. The Judge will work directly with the apprentice offering feedback, answering questions, etc. Apprentice Judges may show up to 2 runs per day using ["Substitute Handlers" on page 7.](#)
- a) Any A-Level Judge who has been licensed for at least a year and who has been a Judge of Record for at least 4 events within the past year can take up to two apprentices per day. Apprentices are encouraged to choose an unfamiliar supervising judge and area.
5. **Log a minimum of 8 classes as a Scribe.** To be completed within the previous year. This includes scribing at least once in all Regular classes. Scribing for Crazy 8s or Line Drive is not required but may be included. Scribing experience can be cumulative.
6. **Log a minimum of 8 hours as an inside Rat Wrangler.** To be completed within the previous year. This includes acting as inside Rat Wrangler at least once in all Regular classes. Wrangling for Crazy 8s is not required but may be included and may reflect positively on the application review. This experience can be cumulative.
7. **Build (or assist in building) a minimum of 4 courses at each level/class.** To be completed within the previous year. The judge candidate does not have to actually move bales, but must be able to take the judges map and direct the build; working in the ring with oversight from the JOR and assisted by others. The course building can be done while working as an Apprentice Judge if the JOR agrees.

SECTION 3. Judge Application

The Judge application is on the Barn Hunt Register. Log in, and click on Judge Application. It should be started as soon as the Judge candidate begins to accrue experience. All required documentation must be uploaded to the application.

- The application must be complete and accurate before submission. Applications with incorrect or incomplete information will be opened a single time for candidates to correct information. A second incorrect submission will result in a denial.
 - In applications with errors, the Judge Development Chair will stop the review and return the application after the first mistake is found. It is up to the Judge candidate to find and fix any further errors prior to resubmission.

SECTION 4. Course Maps

The Judge Candidate must upload one complete set of nested course maps for a one-ring Event, Novice through Master plus Crazy 8s, for review. Maps must be designed from scratch (not previously used for a Judge Workshop or Fun Test), and be formatted as outlined in these rules. Course size is 24' x 24'. Nested classes can be in any order, but the judging program/class order must be noted.

SECTION 5. Required Forms

The following forms must be completed and uploaded with the application. They are available by logging in to the Barn Hunt Register then clicking on Resources. The Judge Candidate either completes the form or gets the form/a copy from the appropriate source.

1. **Prospective Judge Fun Test Review Form.** (Club completes)
2. **Apprentice Judge Scoresheet.** (Judge candidate completes)
3. **Apprentice Judge Trial Review.** (Judge of Record completes)
4. **Scribe Review Form.** (Judge of Record completes)
5. **Inside Rat Wrangler Review Form.** (Judge of Record completes)
6. **Prospective Judge Course Builder Review Form.** (Judge of Record completes)

SECTION 6. Written Test

After the Application is submitted, all Judge candidates must take a written test. This is an untimed, online, closed book, multiple choice and true/false test. Any score of 90% or above on the test will qualify the Judge candidate to move forward to the next step. The test may be taken a total of two times. If needed, a second test cannot be taken until a minimum of two weeks after the first test. The second test can be open-book.

1. In a very few cases a third test will be allowed based on the strength of the application and other subjective factors. Applicants who fail twice must request permission to take the test a third time. The ability to take the test a third time is not guaranteed. If allowed, the candidate must pass the test on the third try to continue as a Judge candidate.
2. Judge candidates are strongly advised to not rush through the questions as many are technical and meant to test depth of knowledge. While there is no specific deadline for submission of the test after the judge application has been submitted, keep in mind that the test must be completed before accrued experience and judge workshop attendance expires.
3. The test must be taken independently, without oversight/coaching/help from others.

SECTION 7. Publication to Judge and Club List for Commentary

After a passed test, all Judge candidates are published to the private Judge and Club Administrators lists for open commentary. Peer commenting is a very important element in the application process.

SECTION 8. Review Process

Candidates may be reviewed at any time, but there are several key review timeframes prior to being fully approved as A-Level judges. The final decision on Judge status is determined by the Judge Development Chair with input from the Advisory Committee as needed, and that decision is based on both analytical and subjective factors.

1. After the Application submission.
2. After commentary.
3. After the Test.
4. After being mentored as a B-Level Judge.

SECTION 9. B Judge Status

Judge candidates moving forward from the application and initial review process are approved as Provisional, B-Level Judges. B/Provisional status may last for one Event or several Events, depending on the individual and locations of judging. B Judges:

1. Are required to inform, and get prior approval from, the Judge Development Chair before taking any assignments. The Judge Development Chair and the Barn Hunt office, with feedback from the Judge Mentor, will determine how many assignments they can take prior to being mentored.
2. Cannot be hired for any assignment (mentored or unmentored) without prior approval from the Judge Development Chair.
3. Must submit courses to their mentor and the Judge Development Chair at least 45 days ahead of each Event where they will be Judge of Record. The current Judge Development Chair is Colin Ratcliffe, colin@barnhunt.com.
4. Will be directly supervised by a Judge Mentor (see [“Judge Mentors” on page 6](#)) at least once prior to being moved to A status.
 - a) B Judges cannot be officially mentored by any Judge who has a personal friendship/relationship with the B-Judge, or who has had a substantial role in helping them fulfill their judging license requirements. They will not be mentored at their home club and must be prepared to travel as needed.
 - b) Provisional Judges have up to one year from the date of their approval as a B Judge to be mentored.
 - c) Provisional Judging assignments cannot be taken at events which are held in conjunction with AKC, UKC, or other events without special permission from the BHA, which must be requested prior to agreeing to judge.

5. To be mentored, the Provisional judge must judge each Regular class at least once during a 2-day, four-trial weekend; with a cumulative minimum over the two days of 15 entries each in Novice and Open, and 20 entries each in Senior and Master. Instinct must be judged at least once but no minimum cumulative entry is required. Up to 20 Crazy 8s entries can be substituted for regular class entries if needed, but are not required. If the entry is not going to meet those standards, the Provisional judge will not be mentored at that event.
6. Clubs pay B-Level Provisional Judges a fixed fee. The maximum amount a B-Level Provisional Judge can request for payment is 50¢ per run plus travel expenses.
7. B-Level Provisional Judges may enter their dog(s) in up to two runs per day at events where they are a Provisional Judge. The dogs must be run by a [“Substitute Handlers” on page 7](#). B Judges may not accept free or comped dog runs as part of their judging fee. All regular Back Up Judge rules apply.

SECTION 10. Final Step: Moving to A-Level Judge Status

After completion of the required Provisional Assignment(s), a final judging status is then determined by the BHA and the Judge Mentor, with input from the Judge Development Chair and the Advisory Committee. If all agree, A-Level status is granted.

SECTION 11. Barn Hunt Forums

Licensed Judges must subscribe to the Barn Hunt Forums and request to be added to the private BHA Judge section, in order to keep up with critical Judge announcements and changes. To subscribe:

1. Go to barnhuntforums.com and create a login, password, and user name.
2. Set the account to stay logged in and receive notifications.
3. Email info@barnhunt.com with your username and email, to be added to the Judge section.

Part 4: Maintaining Judge Status

In order to remain in good standing as an A-Level Barn Hunt Judge the following criteria must be met.

1. Must design courses for and act as a Judge of Record at least once a year for each Regular Class level.
2. Must attend a Judge Workshop in a working slot at least once every 3 years.
3. Must complete any other required yearly criteria set by the BHA.

Part 5: Judge Mentors

Judge Mentors are A-Level Judges appointed by the BHA and the Judge Development Chair to guide and assist B-Level Provisional Judges for their two-day assignment. They also may be asked to step in to assist other A-Level Judges who are struggling with specific aspects or concepts, and/or step forward to correct critical rule misunderstandings at Events where they are not specifically assigned as a Judge Mentor.

1. The Judge Mentor will stay ringside with the Provisional Judge while they are judging. They may work as Inside RWs or scribes, but cannot take any other major roles or take an Apprentice Judge at the event as their primary job is to observe and advise the Provisional Judge.
 - a) The Judge Mentor may act as a Relief/Back Up Judge when the B-Judge ring is idle.
1. Judge Mentors are arranged for, sent, and paid by the BHA. The Club incurs no expense for Judge Mentors.
2. Judge mentors can personally handle a dog for up to two runs under the B judge (if they have dogs competing at the class level being judged by the B Judge) and if so, should be first dog in the Blind. They can also show any number of dogs in other classes if those classes take place when the B judge's ring is idle, or they can have them tended and shown by others. See details in [“B Judge Status” on page 5](#) and [“Substitute Handlers” on page 7](#).

Part 6: Relief/Back Up Judges (RBJ)

All Judges of Record for any Trial day must use a Relief/Back Up Judge if they wish to handle their own dogs on any course they designed or are actively judging. See [“Judge Assignments and Paperwork” on page 15](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#).

SECTION 1. Showing Dogs using a Relief/Back Up Judge

1. Each A-Level Judge of Record may personally handle their own dogs for a cumulative total of up to 4 runs per day. Any number of their dogs may be shown at the Event if that dog is not handled by them and the dog is not showing on a course they designed or are actively judging, (see [“Substitute Handlers” on page 7](#)).

2. If there are two or more Judges of Record for an Event day, they may act as RBJ for each other. Judges may not leave an active ring to act as an RBJ for another Judge.
3. Judges of Record handling their own dogs must be scheduled when it will be least disruptive to the rest of the competitors at a Trial and may occur prior to the official trial start or just after the trial has ended.

SECTION 2. Family Members

For the purposes of Barn Hunt, “Family member” means an immediate family member, partner or friend, living with, and/or frequently traveling/cohabiting with the Judge.

1. Family Members can use the RBJ to show their dog(s) on any course the Judge designed, and are included in the Judge’s allowed 4 total runs per day.
 - a) Family members of the JOR can show any dogs on any other Judge’s course without need for an RBJ, as long as their family member JOR did not design the course and is not judging on the course at that time.
2. If a family member does not actually live with (or frequently travel/cohabit with) the JOR, the JOR and the family member can decide whether or not showing under the JOR would cause an appearance of impropriety. (i.e., a family member who lives hours away and comes to an event may be fine showing under the JOR whereas a family member who lives a block away and is very frequently in the JOR’s presence may not be).
3. When family members are both JOR, they must use a separate RBJ and cannot judge each other.

SECTION 3. Co-owned Dogs

Whether a co-owned dog needs to be judged by an RBJ depends on the circumstance. If the dog lives part or most of the time with the Judge or the Judge interacts with the dog on a regular basis, an RBJ will be needed. If the dog is never in residence with the Judge and lives in a different part of the country, no RBJ will be required.

■ Part 7: Substitute Handlers

A-Level Judges may use a Substitute Handler for any dog they own on any course they are not judging and did not design, without need for a Relief/Back Up Judge. Dogs meeting the criteria to be run by a substitute handler are not included in the Judge’s 4-run limit for handling their own dogs.

B-Level Judges, Apprentice Judges who wish to show their own dogs, and Judge Mentors wanting to show more than 2 runs per day must use a substitute handler, with the following additional restrictions:

- Substitute handler runs are limited to two per day.
- The substitute handler is responsible for all aspects of the dog(s) care, including exercising, pre and post run management, and competing with the dog in the ring.
- The Apprentice/B-Level Provisional judge cannot leave their assigned ring to attend to any dog except in the case of an emergency.

■ Part 8: Judging Basics

SECTION 1. Contracts

All Judges must have a written contract with the Club for which they will judge which outlines costs, fees, actions in case of emergencies, a cancellation clause and expectations. See [“Cancellation of Events” on page 22](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#) for more information.

SECTION 2. Deadlines

Be aware of all deadlines. See [“Required Information for Judges” on page 16](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#). A Judging Assignment Checklist is also available under Judge Functions, Resources in the Barn Hunt Register.

SECTION 3. Dress Code

Clothes must be clean, neat, in good repair, and comfortable. Clothing should be suitable for the climate and grounds. Judges cannot wear any type of dog advertising on their clothing, including items with a specific dog’s name, kennel name, etc. Small pieces of breed-specific jewelry, ties, etc. are acceptable. Judges must avoid the appearance of favoring a specific breed over other breeds. Judges cannot wear competing Club or rat hunting organization gear. Footwear must be close toed for safety and suitable for the surface on which the Judge will be standing.

SECTION 4. Mobility

Judges must be physically capable of efficiently moving around the entire course area. Bending, lifting and, climbing on the bale structure to position or reposition a rat tube and/or move a bale/bales will also be necessary. Judges must be capable of being on their feet for several hours at a time. Sitting in the ring is not permitted.

SECTION 5. Timeliness

Judges are expected to arrive at the Event a minimum of 60 minutes prior to the published start time. Pre-trial tasks include:

1. Provide written briefing to Club
2. Provide map copies for competitors and course builders
3. Supervise build and/or adjustments to course
4. Run any dogs under the Relief/Back Up Judge (if applicable)
5. Hold a class briefing for Instinct (if applicable)

If possible, the Judge should arrive the evening prior, to check the grounds and build courses (see [“Building Courses Prior to the Event” on page 19](#) in the [Club Rulebook](#)).

SECTION 6. Conflict of Interest

1. Judges cannot discuss actual courses with any potential competitors prior to the Trial, nor may a Judge “practice” a specific course/rat locations with someone he or she will judge within the next 3 months. It IS permissible for a Judge to, as an example, practice courses in one location that he/she will use in a different area of the country where local competitors are unlikely to attend.
2. There is no time limit constraint on Judges training with or instructing potential competitors, only on practicing specific course configurations with those potential competitors within three months of a Trial.

SECTION 7. Class Placements

1. Judges of Record are not eligible for and cannot accept class placements or High in Class ribbons on any Trial day they are Judge of Record but may accept New Title or Championship ribbons if offered by the Club.

SECTION 8. Smoking, Eating and Drinking

Judges cannot drink alcoholic beverages during Event hours or eat in the ring at any time. Judges may request and have just outside the ring non-alcoholic beverages such as water, soda, etc. in a bottle/cup that can be capped. Open bottles cannot be carried while the Judge is actively judging a dog. See [“Smoking/Vaping” on page 8](#) of the [Competitor Rulebook](#) for smoking/vaping regulations.

SECTION 9. Dog Aggression and Breed Discrimination

1. A Judge must never show breed bias, or use the dog’s breed to either excuse or justify its behavior.
2. Judges must report any aggressive incidents they witness, either inside or outside the ring.

SECTION 10. Judging Limits

Judging efforts are based on judging time of 8 hours not including a lunch but including course builds and blind changes. Details, including Maximum Run Values, are found in [“Total Entries Allowed per Judge” on page 15](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#).

SECTION 11. Communication

Judges must communicate promptly and courteously with potential show giving Clubs, with email the preferred method so a paper trail can be maintained. Even if turning down a Trial judging opportunity, Judges must do so promptly so the Club can continue their search. Failure to communicate promptly on a regular or continuing basis may be grounds for administrative action up to and including suspension/retirement as a Judge.

SECTION 12. Judging Assignments/Expenses

See [“Judge Assignments and Paperwork” on page 15](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#).

■ Part 9: Prior to Judging

SECTION 1. Pre-Marking Course Maps

For Senior, Master, and Crazy 8s classes, the Judge must have all tube locations for all blinds to be judged marked on course maps prior to the General Briefing at the start of the Event. These marked maps must be kept in a secure location and cannot be shared with any competitor at any time, up until the Judge is delegating to the Rat Wrangler(s) before and between blinds.

1. At least 1 pre-marked map is required for each blind. Extra pre-marked maps must be included to accommodate move-ups and extra blinds and should be available for Rat Wranglers.
2. Unmarked maps must be available for any Relief/Back Up Judges.
3. Pre-marking is encouraged, but not required, for all other classes.

SECTION 2. Randomizing Rat Numbers for Master

Prior to arriving at the Event the Judge must generate a list of random numbers from 1 to 5 and mark those numbers on each blind's course map in accordance with the number decided for each blind. The random numbers must be assigned using a random number generator or other completely unbiased method.

SECTION 3. Briefings and Course Map Copies

1. **Written Briefings.** Judges are required to bring and post in a prominent position a written briefing. A sample written briefing is available on the Register under Judge Functions, Resources. This written briefing covers the basics of what is expected in the ring such as removing collars and leashes, calling rat declaratively, etc. The written briefing may be altered by Judges prior to posting as long as the items listed are within the scope of the rules.
2. **Class Briefings.** Prior to Instinct, Novice, and Line Drive, the judge must hold a Class Briefing at Ringside. This class briefing covers only the following:
 - a) Level/name of class.
 - b) Entry and exit gate (line) locations.
 - c) Location and number of official tunnels.
 - d) Location of start box.
 - e) Reminder of where the Rules document and written briefing are posted/located.
 - f) For Instinct and Novice courses built in a larger ring, the dead area of the ring which will not be used.
3. **Maps.** For any course containing a tunnel for Senior/Crazy 8s or Master a base level map must be provided. Master maps must show any tunnels and distance challenge areas. Maps must be posted in a prominent place.

SECTION 4. Measuring Dogs

Judges are to measure dogs if they are requested to do so, or if they feel a dog may be in the wrong height. If allowed by the Judge, a Club Official may also measure a dog. If a measurement is called for, make every effort to be calm, quiet, and non-threatening to the dog. Bring the wicket up from the rear, not over the head. Have the handler stand the dog with head in a natural position and feet four-square. The wicket should rest on the top of the shoulder, not the back of the neck or the back behind the wither.

■ Part 10: Judging and Scoring

Judging begins when the team enters the ring enclosure. Judging ends when the team exits the ring enclosure.

SECTION 1. Timing

1. The Judge is required to time all runs with a hand-held stopwatch.

SECTION 2. Calls to the Scribe

1. The following calls are directed to the Scribe.
 - a) Tunnel.
 - b) Climb.
 - c) Rat 1, etc. Each rat call has a number attached at all levels. So in Novice, it is Rat 1. In Master, even if there are five rats, the Judge still calls Rat 5.

- d) Bonus and/or Super Bonus for Crazy 8s.
 - e) REM
 - f)
 - g) X Qualifying score.
2. **End of class.** It is suggested that Judges avoid the use of the word “time” when a competitor has exceeded time limits for the class. Something that does not rhyme with the word Climb is preferred; “I’m sorry,” works well.
 3. **Speaking audibly.** Judges must speak the elements clearly and loudly so that not only the Scribe but the competitor can hear their call.
 4. **Hand signals.** In noisy conditions and/or if the Judge wishes, they may use hand signals as well as voice to indicate the various elements. If using hand signals the Judge must review those signals with the Scribe prior to the start of the class.

SECTION 3. Self-scribing

Judges are not allowed to self-scribe other than the Line Drive class. There are a number of mnemonic cues Judges can use to help remember their calls. Those are discussed in depth on the Judge’s forum at barnhuntforums.com.

SECTION 4. Coaching/Prompting

Trials are a test of the knowledge, skills, and ability of the competitor and dog. The Judge does not coach the team in any way during the run (i.e., “you still need to do the tunnel,” “you still have two rats to find.”) If the handler directly asks the Judge if they have found all rats, the Judge must stay silent. The judge never volunteers training or handling advice or critique before, during, or after the handler’s run. If the handler requests advice from the judge, the judge may meet with the handler outside the ring during a break or at the conclusion of their judging tasks.

SECTION 5. Accidental Hinting

Judges sometimes inadvertently hint at elements and locations. To avoid inadvertently giving away elements, Judges should:

1. Keep voice inflections steady and the same through the course.
2. Keep the team in sight even when the team is hunting in an area without rats or has found all rats in Master.
3. Avoid smiling or frowning as the team nears or just before they call a rat tube.
4. Be especially careful between competitors; point and gesture, do not speak.

SECTION 6. Confirming Scores

1. After each run, the Judge reviews the scoresheet and marks if the dog passed or failed then initials the sheet. At the end of each run the Judge shows or hands the stopwatch to the Scribe or writes the time on the scoresheet. Optimally two hand-held stopwatches are used, with the Judge handing a just used stopwatch to the Scribe and picking up a reset stopwatch to use with the next dog. The Scribe writes down the time then resets this stopwatch for the next competitor.
 - a) The Judge cannot turn his/her back on an exiting team to go to the Scribe.

SECTION 7. Hiding Rat Tubes

See [“Rat Tube Locations” on page 16](#) of the **Competitor Rulebook**. Additional Judge notes:

1. Tubes can’t be hidden where a dog could easily push, roll, or shove the tube into any tunnel. Tubes may be hidden in Novice tunnels including Novice tunnels used as incidental tunnels at higher levels.
2. Tubes cannot be hidden on any 6” ledge, the minimum ledge width for a tube is 12”.
3. Tubes cannot be hidden in such a way that an entire bale would have to be lifted off the tube to remove the tube or wedged so tightly into a gap that the handler or Rat Wrangler would physically struggle to remove the tube.
4. Tubes cannot be hidden in such a way that if the dog pushes at the tube it could drop down the vertical distance of more than one bale.
5. Tube cannot be hidden in any part of the dead space of a ring.
6. Tubes cannot be so heavily covered or packed down as to cut off air to the rat or hinder the ability of the dog to scent through the hay/straw.

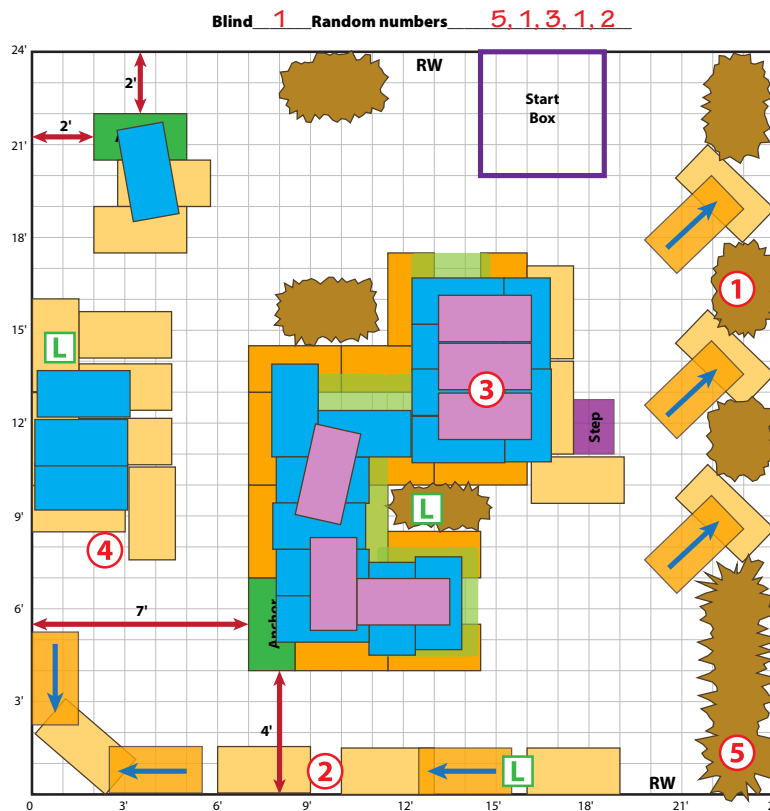
7. Tubes cannot be hidden in any place the handler cannot see even very small dogs indicate. Special attention should be paid to small dogs disappearing into pits at upper levels.

SECTION 8. Efficiently Placing and Switching Tubes

Quick and efficient tube placement is critical to smooth and efficient trials.

1. **Rat Wranglers.** As the Judge finishes judging each team and confirms the score and time with the Scribe, the Rat Wranglers handle switch outs, referring to the map as necessary. Care should be taken that rat numbers are only communicated to the Rat Wranglers, not to spectators. Assigning each RW a specific area of the ring will help keep things moving quickly as they can more easily keep up with just one side of the ring. The Judge should finish with the Scribe, non-verbally confirm with the RW(s) that tubes are properly placed and covered, then call the next dog.
2. **Master Rat Locations.** Each numbered Rat Tube location is kept consistent from dog to dog within the blind. Using this system, the Rat 1 slot in each blind always contains a rat. If there are two rats, slots 1 and 2 are filled, etc.

SAMPLE PRE-MARKED MASTER COURSE



This illustration does not include all course map requirements, see the map design section.

Pre-marking does not have to be done on the computer, hand writing is acceptable. It is suggested that judges use different colored ink to differentiate between litter (green), empty (blue) and rats (red).

Part 11: Falling Bales and Tunnel Fails

Sometimes dogs dislodge bales as they navigate the course. How that is handled depends on the specific circumstances. Sometimes dogs exit tunnels in unorthodox ways.

1. **Bale falls and blocks tunnel.** At all Class levels, if a bale is dislodged and it blocks the tunnel entrance completely, and if the dog has not yet tunneled, the ring is stopped and the dog is run in a later blind.
2. **Bale falls and does not block tunnel.** If a bale falls and does not block the tunnel it is generally left where it falls. If it has fallen in such a way that it completely blocks a passage way (handler cannot pass without touching the bale); in Novice, Open, Senior, or Crazy 8s, the ring is stopped and the dog is run in a later blind. In Master, the bale lays where it is and the handler must navigate around the new challenge.

3. **Bale falls and opens up a Distance Challenge.** If a bale falls or rotates so that it opens up a Distance Challenge area, the Distance Challenge remains. Handlers crossing into that Distance Challenge without calling rat are NQd.
4. **Dog destroys tunnel.** If a dog exits a tunnel by making his own path (not using the designated path) or otherwise interferes with the tunnel and the tunnel is disarranged in such a way that it can't be used (board falls, etc.) the run is stopped and the dog is assessed an NQ score.
5. **Dog exits the side of a tunnel and tunnel can still be used.** If the dog exits in an unorthodox way and the tunnel is still viable, the dog may continue to hunt, but must complete the tunnel correctly to receive a qualifying score. The tunnel is not fixed until the dog exits the ring. The only exception to this rule would be if the tunnel was poorly constructed so as to make the side of the tunnel inviting and seem like a viable exit.

■ Part 12: Re-Judging

There are several scenarios in which a team may need to be re-judged. Judges are human and make mistakes, and re-judging will happen. Videotapes are not allowed to be used as evidence for re-judging.

SECTION 1. Re-judging, General

1. If a dog has failed on a portion of the course because of unusual circumstances in which the dog/handler are not at fault, or if the Judge realizes they made an error, the team must be re-judged. Unusual circumstances could include things like an unexpected extremely loud noise that badly startles a dog, a ring gate falling, etc.

SECTION 2. Re-judging, Judge errors

1. If a dog has Qualified on a course but there has been a judge error which did not in any way make the course easier or give an advantage to the dog, (both tubes on the ground in Open, extra litter tube on the course, etc.) the handler may choose whether to be re-judged or to accept their course time and receive a qualifying score.
2. If a dog has Qualified on a course set up or design that does not meet the basic requirements for that level the error must be corrected as soon as it is found.
 - a) If the error has made the course easier than a legal course would be (too few rats, tubes left uncovered, only one place in Master 3-high, etc.) all affected dogs must be re-judged.
 - b) If the error has made the course harder than a legal course (more than the allowed number of areas at 2 high, an illegal tunnel that is too long or too many turns for the level, etc.) then all dogs who have Qualified on the course may keep their scores or choose to re-run on the corrected course. All dogs who have not Qualified on that course must be re-run unless they were dismissed for a reason unrelated to finding rats or going over time, such as misconduct, elimination on the course, etc.

SECTION 3. Re-judging, Timer Failures

1. If there is a timer failure and the handler has not yet completed any of the course elements, the handler should be stopped and restarted immediately.
2. If there is a timer failure and the handler has successfully completed some but not all of the course elements, the handler should be stopped and allowed to run again in a later blind.
3. If there is a timer failure and the handler has successfully completed all elements before the timer malfunction was discovered, the Judge should ask if the team wants to re-run for time or accept maximum course time for a qualifying score. If re-running, the handler must be in a later blind. The dog must complete all elements including finding all rats on the re-run. If the team does not successfully complete the course on the second run, they are NQd.
4. Teams who have been NQd due to faults on any part of the course are not eligible for re-judging based on timer failure.

■ Part 13: Course Design

SECTION 1. Design Overview

Barn Hunt courses must be handler accessible and level-appropriate. See [“Ring dimensions and supplies by Class/Level” on page 11](#) in the [Club Rulebook](#) for bale numbers.

1. Each Judge must design a unique course for each class level.
2. Courses must be nested if at all possible. If working with a multiple Judges, Judges should work together to nest courses for maximum building efficiency (see Nesting on [page 17](#).)
3. Courses must be designed prior to the Event, and course maps for the first day of the event may be sent to the club

up to 24 hours prior to the start time of the first day of the Event. Courses may be built the day prior to the event, see [“Building Courses Prior to the Event” on page 19](#) in the **Club Rulebook**.

- Judges may reuse courses in a different part of the country but should make every effort to build courses that are varied and unique. A Judge should not constantly use the same 3 or 4 courses; courses will vary by Judge and Trial. Competitors should not encounter the same courses again and again; they should be faced with unique challenges at every Trial. It is natural that most Judges will develop a “style” over time.
- The diagrams and guidelines in this section of the rules are based on two-stringer bales. Judges must adjust course design for 3 stringer bales to ensure safety and sight lines for small dogs, as well as the ability of small dogs to get in and out of wells created with the taller three-stringer bales.

SECTION 2. Maps

Maps must be clear and detailed enough for non-experienced volunteers to be able to easily understand and interpret the map for building. At least one copy of each map must be kept for a year. Maps are subject to review.

- Each Event’s courses should be a single document, with a page for each map, saved as a pdf. A Word template for course design and guides on how to save to pdf are on the Barn Hunt Register under Resources.

The following elements are required on each page of the map document:

- Course title.** Judge name, class level, trial, and date (e.g., Jane Smith, Novice T2, Jan 1, 2020).
- Map key.** A key to the elements on the map.
- Grids.** The course must be drawn/built on a visible grid with lines marked at every 6” to 1 foot. Grid measurement numbers should be placed at least every 4-5’.
- Layers.** Each map above the Open level must have a separate base layer. A base layer for Instinct, Novice, and Open is required if upper level tunnels are included, or if needed to clarify course elements for the ring crew.
- Anchor Bales.** Anchor bales are required for all freestanding stacks of 5 or more bales not against a wall, fence, or other permanent structure. This anchor bale is noted on the map diagram for the bottom layer and shows a specific measurement to the two nearest sides of the ring so that course builders can accurately place the stack(s).
- Walls, fencing, gates, obstructions.** Ring borders must be marked as solid wall or fencing, with gates properly placed. Any obstructions or unusual areas must be indicated. Those could include pillars, windows, outlets, or any other item which requiring design adjustment.
- Leaner bales.** Leaners must be clearly marked including the direction of the lean.
- Bale numbers.** List the total number of bales needed, numbers for the bottom layer, and when nesting, the total number of new bales or bales being taken away. (e.g., Senior, 40 bales on base, 55 bales total. Open from Senior, -15 bales, 30 on base, 40 bales total).
- Start box.** The Start box location must be indicated.
- Tunnel Length.** This is a centerline measurement from each portal to the next portal (can be in the key).
- Boards/board edges.** Board edge locations must be marked. Individual boards do not have to be placed; an overall shape encompassing the area to be covered by boards and/or board end locations are sufficient. Board end locations are to be shown on the bottom layer map.
- Suggested map elements.** Judging path, Rat Wrangler locations, fluff.

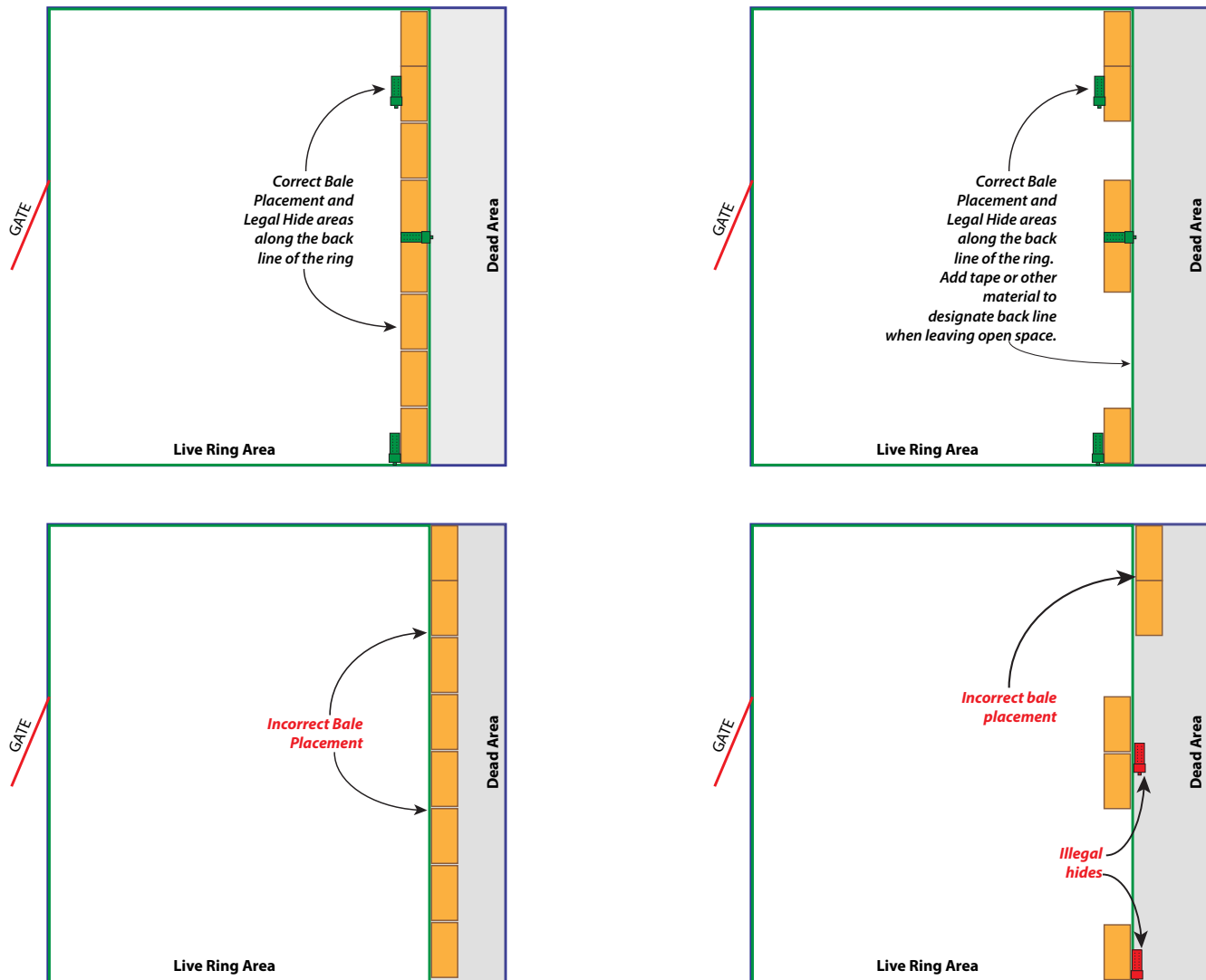
SECTION 3. Building Instinct/Novice/Open in a Larger Ring

See the [“Briefings and Course Map Copies” on page 9](#) for how to Brief when you have a small ring in a larger space. See [“Building a Lower Level Class in an Upper Level Ring” on page 12](#) in the **Club Rulebook** for layout notes and diagrams. When designing the course and placing tubes:

- Tubes can never be hidden on the side of any bale facing the open/dead area. It is not in play.
- Judges and Rat Wranglers are not to be posted inside the dead area. They may use the area briefly to follow the dog, but not linger.
- There can be no sheer faces on the side of the course facing the empty area; all rules on safe step downs, etc. apply.
- Dogs may cross into the blank space without penalty. All rules for handlers stepping on/over bales apply as they

would in any regular ring.

BUILDING BALES AGAINST THE DEAD AREA LINE



Part 14: Sheer Faces and Climb Up/Downs

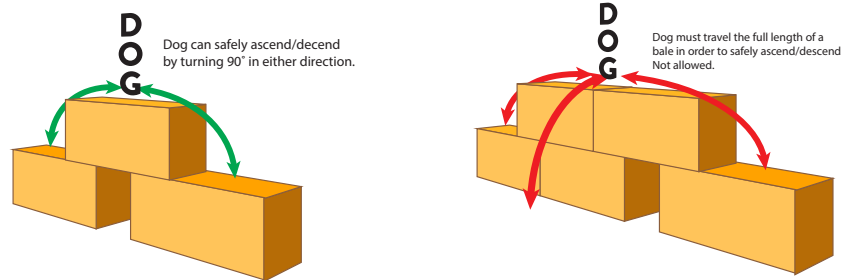
SECTION 1. Sheer faces.

Sheer faces are formed when bales are stacked two or more high in such a way that there are no readily available safe step up or down areas for the dog. Dogs must be able to safely ascend/descend a stack of bales without having to turn more than 90° in any direction and without having to travel more than the length of half a bale in any direction.

SECTION 2. Safe ledges.

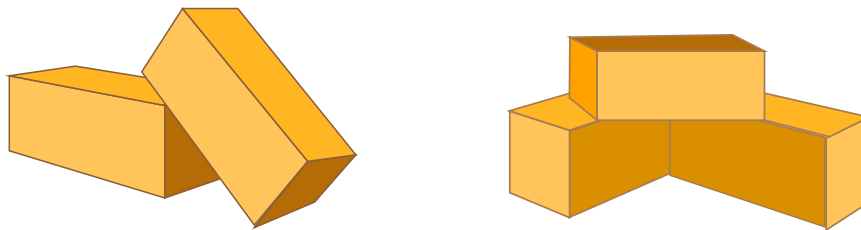
A safe ledge is defined as a ledge not less than 6" in depth for the dog to securely place a foot. In Senior and Master in locations where bales are stacked three-high there can be no more than one 6" ledge per total vertical drop. If using a 6" ledge, the ledges above and below the 6" ledge must be a minimum of ½ bale wide or approximately 12" or wider.

SAFE AND UNSAFE CLIMBS



Note: Only the front sides of these elements are shown in the illustrations above. In a real ring, these elements would need safe steps on all sides.

COMMON ALLOWED ELEMENTS



SECTION 3. Other Safety Considerations

Courses must be designed to maximize safety for competitors, Judges, dogs, and rats.

- Steps.** The step must be placed so there is no tripping hazard for handlers, and there is adequate room for the dog to both get on and get off. At least one step must be outside of any Master Distance Challenge. See [“Steps” on page 10](#) of the [Competitor Rulebook](#).
- Fluff and gaps.** There must be numerous areas on the course with loose, fluffed straw for tube hides. However, dogs need to be able to see edges where they can safely step down. Narrow gaps unsuitable for tube placement should be tightly packed with straw to within 1-2” of the top so that dogs can see the gap but have a surface to step on. Wider gaps should also be clearly visible to the dog. Fluff piles, with or without tubes, cannot be placed in the middle of the floor.
- Escape hazards.** Bales can be stacked no more than 1 bale high against any fenced area of the ring to prevent dogs from using a stack to jump out of the ring. Single leaner bales placed diagonally from the floor to the second level are allowed. Any flat second level of bales must be placed at least one bale-width away from the fence and a third level at least two feet away from the fence. Two-stringer leaner bales may be used as part of a single-bale height area against a fence. Facilities which only have access to three-stringer bales may not use leaner bales against a fence and must increase the horizontal distance away from the fence as the stack rises accordingly. (See [“Line Drive Class” on page 23](#) of the [Competitor Rulebook](#) for specific line drive fencing rules.)
- Stability.** Courses must be designed to be as stable as possible. It is impossible to eliminate all rocking of bales, but all structures should be as sturdy as possible. Bales that would be very easily dislodged by an enthusiastic dog and/or bales that rock so much that they could easily roll off a structure are prohibited.
- Walking paths.** Walking paths between bales must be a minimum of 12” wide with 18” preferred.

Part 15: Heights, Spacing, Leaners

SECTION 1. Bale Height Requirements

Bale height requirements are described in various class descriptions of the [Competitor Rulebook](#). In order to qualify as a legal 2-high or 3-high area, the bales at that height must be grouped together in such a way that a rat tube can be safely hidden at the top of them. To split upper level bales into two or more different places, bales at that height must be placed at least 18” apart at their nearest edges/corners.

CORRECT AND INCORRECT GROUPINGS

Top (map) view of bales



These bales touch but no tube could be hidden on top.



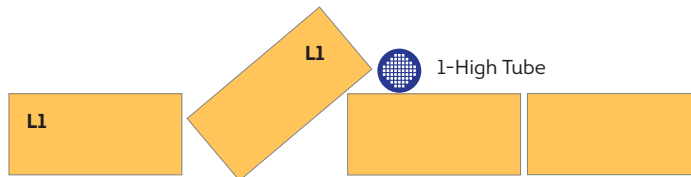
These bales provide safe tube placement.

SECTION 2. Leaners

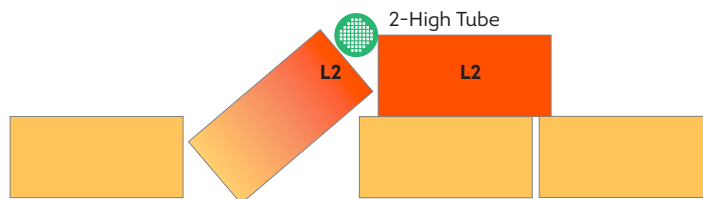
When building courses with leaner bales, it can be difficult to know when a bale can be counted as a higher level bale. This illustration should help Judges determine whether or not their structure is a legal 2- or 3-high level.

ASSIGNING LEANER BALES TO LEVELS

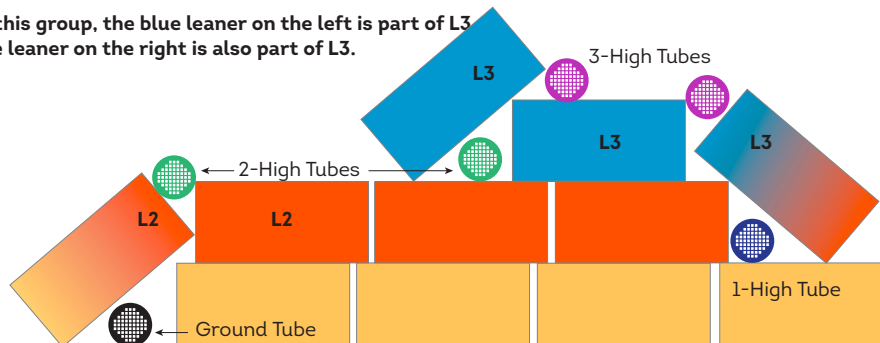
All bales in this group considered at the same level



In this group, the leaner bale becomes part of Level 2



In this group, the blue leaner on the left is part of L3. The leaner on the right is also part of L3.

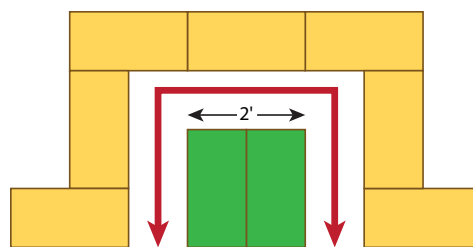


Part 16: Tunnel-Specific Definitions

Tunnels start and end where they become a tunnel; at the front edge of the leading board of an entry/exit portal. Illustrations in this section that don't show boards as part of the illustration are assumed to have boards covering the entire length shown as a tunnel unless noted otherwise on the illustration. See the Class descriptions in the [Competitor Rulebook](#) for tunnel level specifications.

- Turns.** To be a legal turn, the dog must turn 90 degrees. Angles/turns greater than 90° are not allowed in tunnels.
- Distance.** The minimum distance a dog travels after a 90° turn is 2 feet as designed.
- Jogs.** A jog is a turn that is only the width of a single bale. Jogs are only allowed at the entry/exit of tunnels in Senior, Master, and Crazy 8, not in the body of the tunnel. Jogs do not count as turns.
- Total Length.** This is the total length of the tunnel, measured down the center line, from one entry portal to the next nearest entry portal. Length is "as designed." Variance of up to a foot or so based on bale lengths is expected and allowed.
- Pathways/Alleys.** Pathways/Alleys to tunnels cannot be less than 18" wide.
- Nesting.** Events with two Trials per day may have the same tunnel structure from T1 to T2 of a Class level with minor rearrangements of floor elements between each Trial. If using a two-turn tunnel, the tunnel structure can be identical in Senior and Master. Crazy 8s tunnels may have the same base bales but the top elements must change. Tunnels must change from day to day (the same tunnel structure cannot be used for an entire Event.) Lower level courses may contain higher level tunnels. See "[Official and Incidental Tunnels](#)" on page 10 of the [Competitor Rulebook](#).
- Drop-Ins.** Drop-in tunnels are not allowed. A Drop-in tunnel is constructed such that a dog would have to climb over one or more bales then immediately down into (or climb up out of) the tunnel. Dogs of all sizes must be able to enter/exit the tunnel without encountering a blocking bale or bales (see [Sample Crossing Bale on page 21](#)).
- U Turns.** A turn wrapping around a single bale is a 180° U turn which exceeds the 90° maximum and is not allowed.
- Dark.** In Open, Senior, Master and Crazy 8s, the tunnel must appear dark. Dark means that the dog is presented with a picture of darkness as he enters the tunnel. The opposite opening of the tunnel should not be readily visible to the dog.
- Elevated.** In Senior and Master, an official and/or unofficial tunnel may be elevated to the second level.

MINIMUM INSIDE TURN



Minimum distance a dog must travel after a turn is 2 feet.
This is a two-turn tunnel.

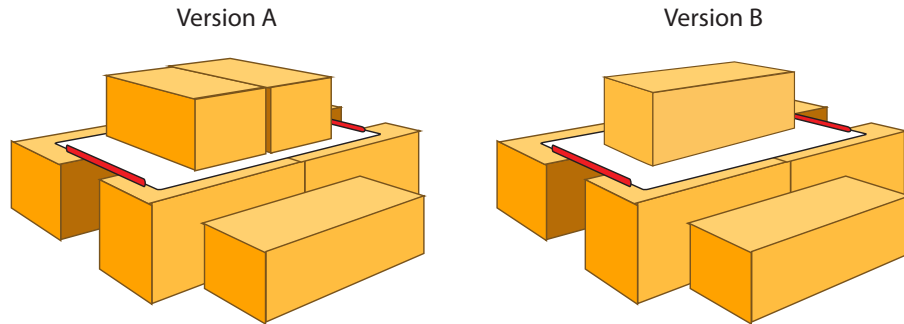
SECTION 1. Basic Design

- All tunnels consist of bales turned to their taller side, covered by boards for the entire length of the tunnel and sufficiently weighted by bales to secure the boards from popping up.
- Tunnels must have a safe step-ups/downs consisting of a minimum of 6" of exposed, foam-edged board over the top of each entry portal. The foam edging does not have to be permanently affixed. Tunnels must have safe step-downs on all sides.
- Tunnels cannot contain interior blind alleys.
- Bales in tunnels must be tightly abutted without gaps.

SECTION 2. Novice Tunnel

At least one Novice Level tunnel is to be set exactly as shown below with no variations or additions of any kind and must be set so that competitors may access all sides. If a single Novice tunnel is used, Leaners and Steps are not allowed on that tunnel. Version A is the preferred version. Version B is an option for clubs when the board would be too short to provide 6" step downs on either side of the tunnel opening. Version B does not qualify as a 2-high area of the course. Note the outside bales providing safe steps are required. Additional Official Novice tunnel(s) may be added. Additional Novice tunnels may share a single step down bale with the other Novice tunnel, be built directly against a wall, and/or have a leaner or a step.

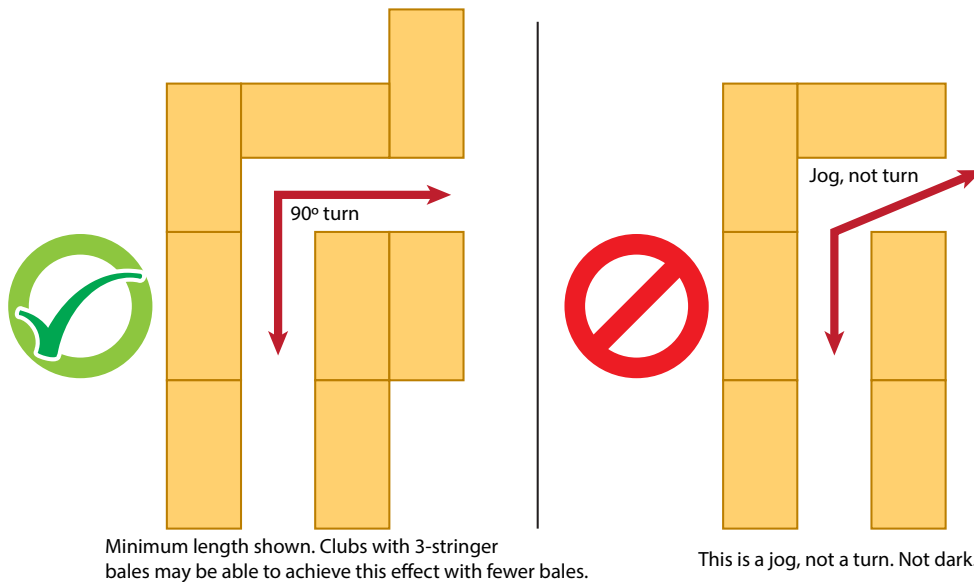
NOVICE TUNNEL CONFIGURATION



SECTION 3. Open Tunnel

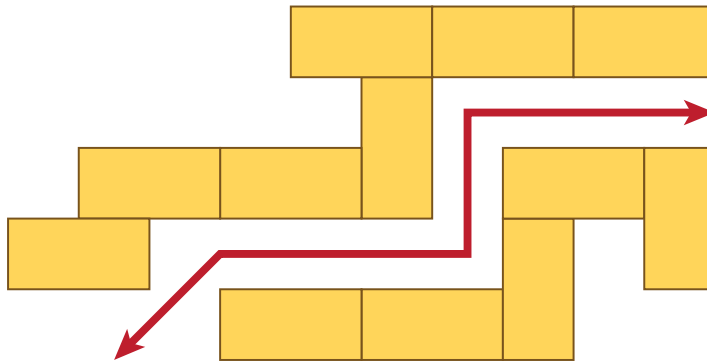
The Open Level tunnel must meet the minimum configuration shown at left below, but may be longer. Jogs are not allowed in Open tunnel configurations.

OPEN TUNNEL MINIMUM AND DISALLOWED TURNS



SECTION 4. Jogs

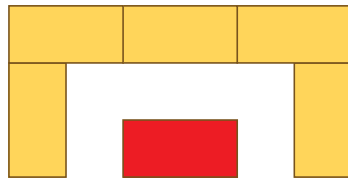
TUNNELS WITH JOGS



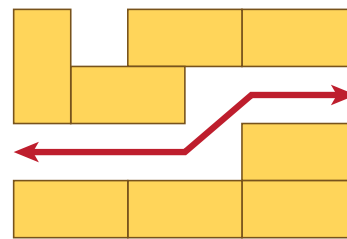
Legal 2-Turn Tunnel with a Jog on the left side.

SECTION 5. Illegal tunnel configurations

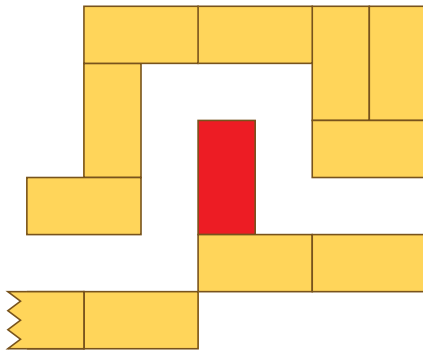
CONFIGURATIONS NOT ALLOWED IN ANY OFFICIAL TUNNEL



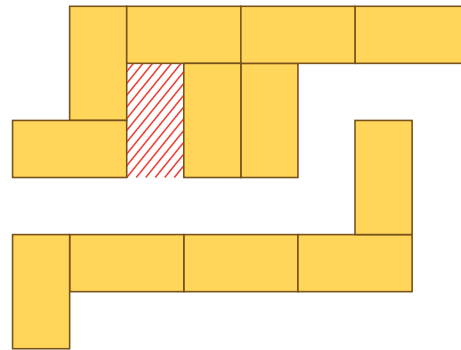
Minimum turn not met. Not dark.



Interior jog

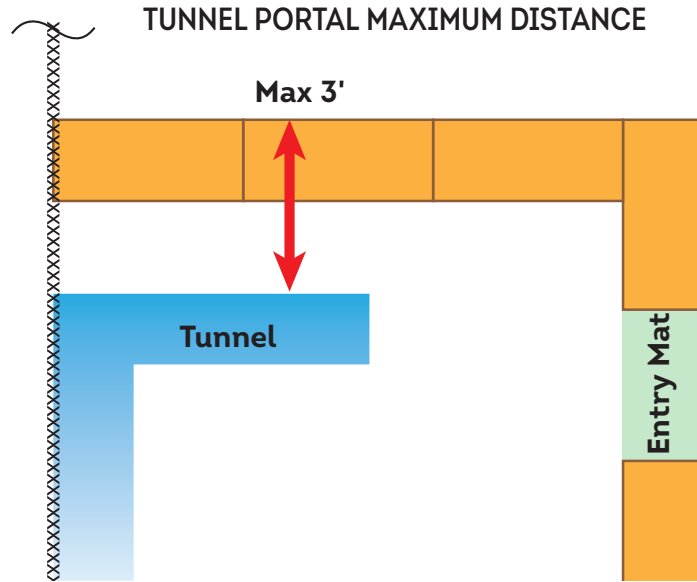


180° U turn around single bale.

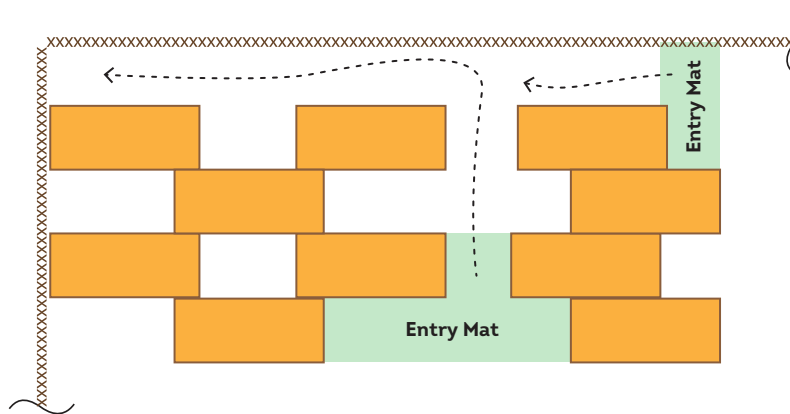


Interior blind alley

SECTION 6. Distance Challenges

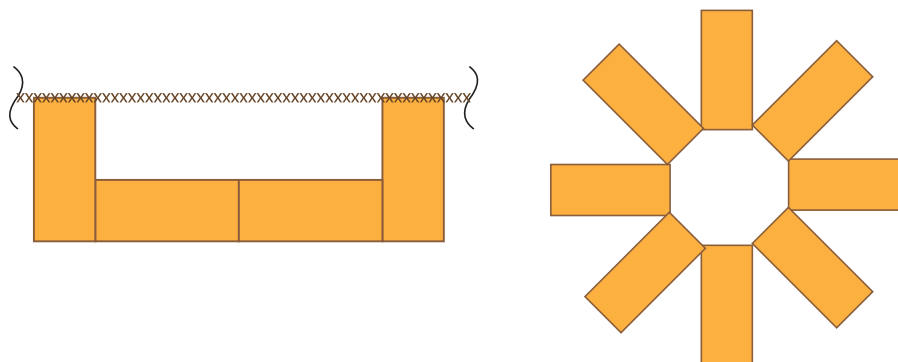


HONEYCOMBS AND OTHER FLOOR ELEMENTS WITH BALES



Honeycomb and other floor structures must have a path leading into them. The holes in the structure must be large enough for small, long dogs (e.g. dachshunds) to get in and out without becoming stuck.

FLOOR ELEMENTS THAT ARE NOT DISTANCE CHALLENGES

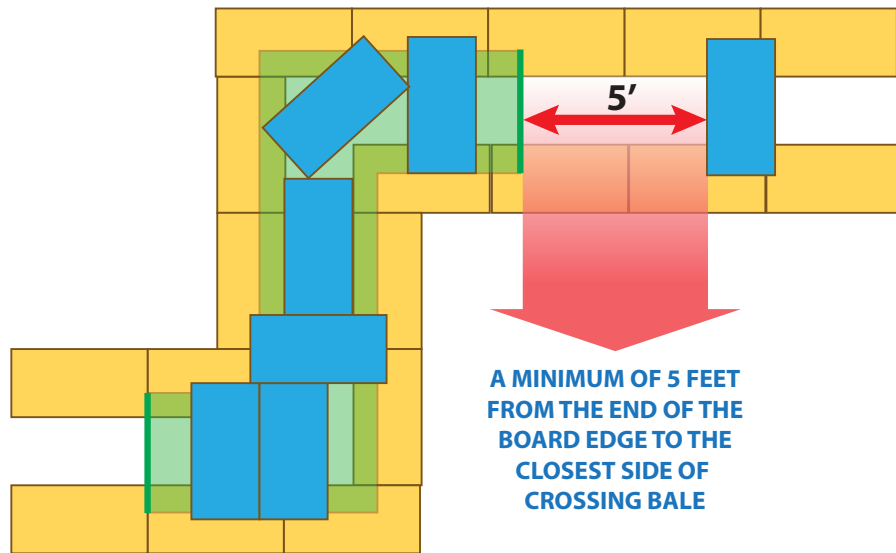


Not Distance Challenges. Handlers can easily reach out and touch a medium sized dog.

SECTION 7. Crossing Bales

A crossing bale (sometimes referred to as a skylight) is a bale added to the top of an alleyway leading to a tunnel. These bales cannot be placed such that they artificially lengthen the tunnel effort or make for a “drop in” tunnel. There can only be one Crossing bale on any alleyway leading to a tunnel, and that crossing bale must be a minimum of 5’ from the entrance portal to that tunnel. A crossing bale may be inside a Distance Challenge in Master. A crossing bale is only allowed in Senior, Master, and Crazy 8s.

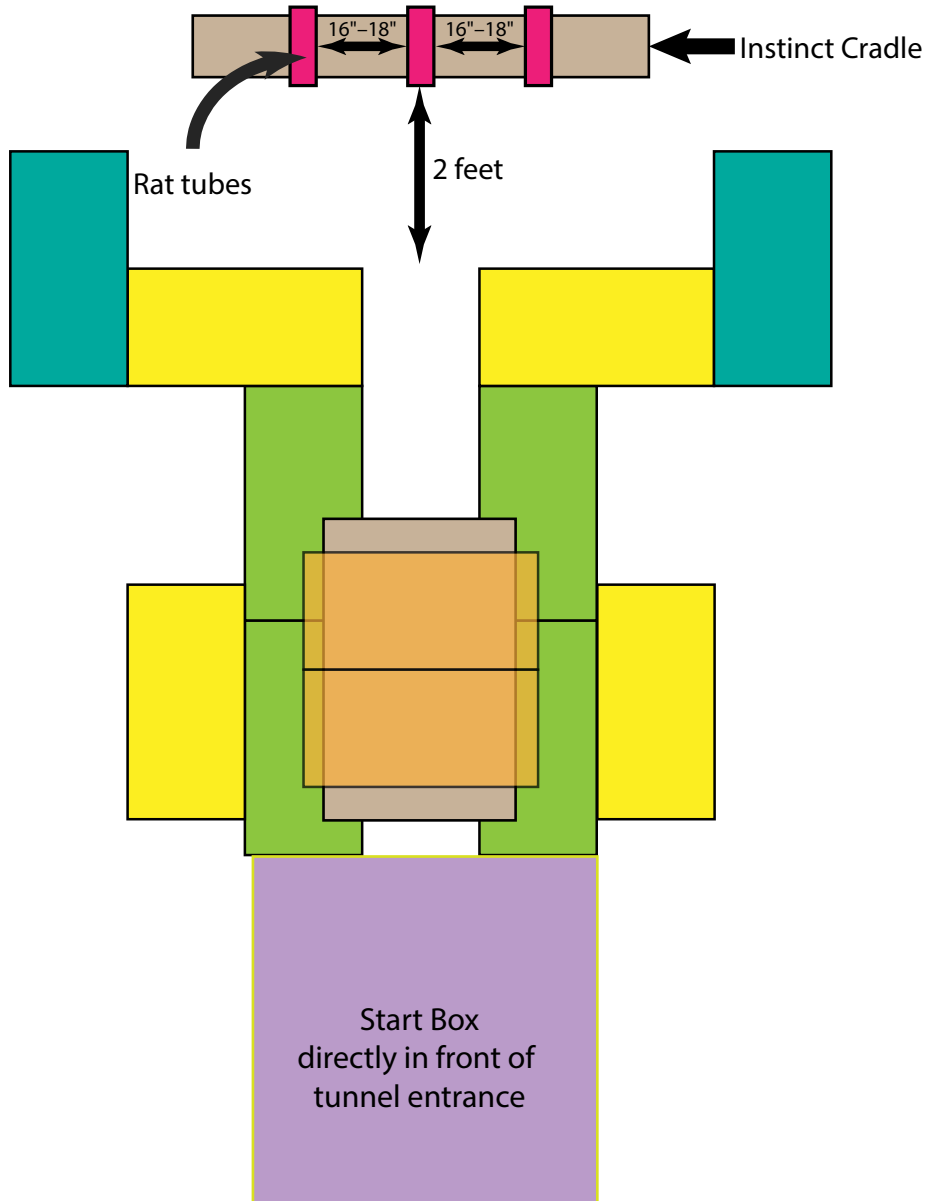
SAMPLE CROSSING BALE



Part 17: Designated Instinct Course

- Bales laid flat
- Bales laid on taller sides
- Optional bales

3 tubes, placed on ground in such a way that dog entering area can see them as soon as he clears the tunnel structure.



See "[Barn Hunt Instinct \(RATI\)](#)" on page 19 in the [Competitor Rulebook](#) for setting Instinct on a Novice Course.