



OFFICIAL JUDGE RULEBOOK

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BARN HUNT JUDGE RULEBOOK

■ Part 1: About the Judge Rulebook

This rulebook contains all of the information needed for individuals 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.** Some items, like the definition of a Club, a Licensed Trial, a Fun Test, etc. are in the ***Competitor Rulebook***. Some information such as Ring sizes, Maximum Run Values, etc. are in the ***Club Rulebook***. Competitors and Clubs will have full access to this book and are welcome to read it to further understand how Barn Hunt Events are judged, but there is no information here that is essential for competitors who are not interested in becoming judges, though the information on judging and course design is of pertinence to all.

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 mailing list as well as to the website. The official date of this document is found at the top of each page.

■ 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.

It is the Judge's job to design and implement level-appropriate courses and run his/her ring in a professional and sportsmanlike way, reflecting well on the sport and the BHA administration.

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), and part is subjective (review of performance as a provisional, friendly and welcoming, able to deal with stress and adversity, etc.). There will be a review process at each step.

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 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 certification may be withdrawn at any time, with or without notice, for cause as determined by the Barn Hunt Association.

SECTION 2. Application Requirements

1. **Personally handle at least one dog to a Senior title (RATS).** This dog does not have to be owned by the applicant, but the applicant must handle the dog for every qualifying score from Novice through Senior. One dog titled at any time in the past counts for this requirement.
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 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
Minimum Number of Dogs Required in each Class	5	15	15	10	10	0
Points Per Dog Judged	1	1	2	3	4	3
Minimum Number of Points Required in each Class	5	15	30	30	40	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 which would conflict with watching the Judge/apprenticing. 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.
 - 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 is not required but may be included and may reflect positively on the application review. 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.** 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. Support letters and other documentation also may be attached.

1. 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. Questions about materials for the application can be directed to the Judge Development Chair.
 - a) 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 formatted as outlined in these rules. 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. Publication to Judge and Club List for Commentary

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 7. 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 and may be taken open book the second time. If needed, a second test cannot be taken until a minimum of two weeks after the first test was failed.

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 8. Review Process

Candidates can 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.

1. B Judges 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. B Judges cannot be hired for any assignment longer than two days (mentored or unmentored) without prior approval from the Judge Development Chair.
3. All B Judges will be directly supervised by a Judge Mentor (see [“Judge Mentors” on page 6](#)) at least once prior to being moved to A status. The number of Events where they will need to be directly supervised will vary depending on the application strengths and how they perform under direct supervision. The Judge Mentor will also act as a resource prior to the event through email/phone calls.
 - a) Provisional Judges cannot be mentored by any Judge who has had a substantial role in helping them fulfill their judging license requirements. Provisional Judges who are also Club owners/Admins will be not be mentored at their home Club and must be prepared to travel as needed to be mentored.

- b) Provisional Judges have up to one year from the date of their approval as a B Judge to be mentored by a Judge Mentor.
 - 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. There are very limited clubs/locations which may be allowed to hire a B Judge at an in-conjunction event.
4. In order to qualify for a Judge Mentor, 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.
 5. 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.
 6. Dogs owned by B Level Provisional judges may compete at an event where they are a Provisional judge. Provisional Judges may not accept free or comped dog runs as part of their judging fee. All regular Back Up Judge rules apply, except that B judges are only eligible to handle their own dogs for 2 runs per day, not four.
 7. B Level Provisional Judges may act as Back Up Judges at Events where they are not the Judge of Record.

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. Even at this level, candidates may be either sent back to other steps or eliminated as Judge candidates. At that point the restriction on income and showing their own dogs is lifted and no Judge Mentor is needed.

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 judge each Regular Class level as a Judge of Record at least once per calendar year.
2. Must attend a Judge Workshop in a working slot at least once every 3 years.
3. Must complete an online rules review once each year. All results will be sent to the Judge, the Judge Development Chair, and the Barn Hunt office. The review is for educational purposes only, to help Judges and the Barn Hunt office find and address any areas where rules may need to be clarified.

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 Back Up Judge if the Provisional Judge is not actively judging in the ring at that time.
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 the [B Judge Status](#) section.

Part 6: Back Up Judges

SECTION 1. The Purpose of the Back Up Judge

The use of the Back Up Judge is to allow Licensed Judges to handle their own dogs during a Trial day when they are also officiating as a Judge of Record. All Judges of Record for any Trial day must use a Back Up Judge if they wish to handle their own dogs in the ring.

1. Back Up Judges are not to be used to judge long stretches of time. They are specifically to help the Judge of Record show their own dogs and have no other role. In some circumstances a Relief Only Judge can also be used as a Back Up Judge; details on the roles of the Relief Only Judge are in the [“Splitting, Load Balancing, and Relief Only Judging” on page 10](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#).
2. Extra slots in Judge dog blinds can be filled with competitor or worker dogs, however Back Up Judges cannot be used to judge multiple blinds in a row.

SECTION 2. Showing Dogs under a Back Up Judge

1. Each 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.
2. 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.
3. Back Up judging for the Judge of Record must be scheduled for a time 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 3. Family members

For the purposes of Barn Hunt, “Family member” means an immediate family member or intimate partner, living with, or frequently cohabiting with, the Judge. When deciding whether a Back Up Judge is needed for a family member, all Judges must avoid the appearance of impropriety.

1. Family Members can use the Back Up Judge 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 a Back Up Judge, as long as their family member JOR did not design the course and is not judging on the course at that time.
2. If an immediate family member does not actually live with (or frequently 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).

SECTION 4. Co-owned Dogs

Whether a co-owned dog needs to be judged by a Back Up Judge 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, a Back Up judge will be needed. If the dog is never in residence with the Judge and lives in a different part of the country, no Back Up Judge will be required as with family members, all Judges must avoid the appearance of impropriety with co-owned dogs.

■ Part 7: 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 23](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#) for more information.

SECTION 2. 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 should be close toed for safety and suitable for the surface on which the Judge will be standing.

SECTION 3. 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 4. Timeliness

Judges are expected to arrive at the Event a minimum of 60 minutes prior to the published start time in order to provide a written briefing to be posted, course maps for the course builders (if not previously provided), have time to adjust the course, run any dogs under a Back Up judge prior to start (if applicable) and hold the first class briefing. 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 21](#) in the [Club Rulebook](#)). Trials must begin promptly at the designated start time listed in the premium with the first team stepping into the ring at that posted time.

SECTION 5. 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 6. Smoking, Eating and Drinking

Judges cannot drink alcoholic beverages or eat in the ring at any time. Judges may request and have in the ring or just outside the ring non-alcoholic beverages such as water, soda, etc. in a bottle that can be capped. Such beverages should be kept in an inconspicuous place. Open bottles cannot be carried while the Judge is actively judging a dog. Smoking, including vapor cigarette smoking, is not allowed within 50 feet of any bale or in any building on the Trial grounds. Clubs set any alternative smoking locations (or whether smoking is allowed at all) for their facility.

SECTION 7. Dog Aggression and Breed Discrimination

Judges must have an understanding of general temperament and allow for the wide variety of breeds who will participate in Barn Hunt. Judges must be very careful to not practice breed or breed-type discrimination in any way. However, dangerous dogs are not allowed in Barn Hunt and must be dealt with in accordance with the rules on dog aggression.

1. A Judge must never disqualify a dog based on hearsay, but only due to directly witnessed accounts. Incidents not witnessed by the Judge should be addressed to the Trial Chair/Secretary. If a dog commits an aggressive act outside the view of the Judge and is dismissed, the Judge should be informed of the dismissal and the circumstances.
2. Judges must report any aggressive incidents they witness, either inside or outside the ring.

SECTION 8. 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 in the [Club Rulebook](#) in [“Total Entries Allowed per Judge” on page 11](#).

SECTION 9. 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 10. Judging Fees

Judging fees for A Level Judges are between the Judge and the show giving Club.

■ Part 8: 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 Back Up Judges.
3. Pre-marking is encouraged, but not required, for Instinct, Novice, and Open.

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. Written and Class Briefings

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 added to or altered by Judges prior to posting as long as the items listed are within the scope of the rules.
2. **General Briefings.** At the start of each Event day the Club gives a general briefing on overall issues related to the Trial. The general briefing may be given by a Trial Chair or Secretary and details are outlined in the [Club Rulebook](#) on [page 22](#). The Judge does not give the general briefing.
3. **Class Briefings.** Prior to each level class, the judge must hold a Class Briefing at Ringside. This class briefing covers only the following:
 - a) Level/name of class (i.e., this is the Senior class briefing).
 - b) Entry and exit gate 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, Novice, and Open courses built in a larger ring, the dead area of the ring which will not be used.
 - g) For Master, any Distance Challenge.

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 9: 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. At the end of each run the Judge shows or hands the stopwatch to the Scribe or writes the time on the scoresheet. The Judge never announces the time, as the competitor is not allowed to know his/her time until the end of the class. 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) All times are to be recorded to the nearest 100th of a second.

SECTION 2. Calls to the Scribe

Judges call the various achieved elements to the Scribe. The Scribe does not instruct the Judge that a particular element has been completed, though the Judge may ask the Scribe "did you hear me say tunnel," etc.

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.

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. Coaching/Prompting

Trials are a test of the knowledge, skills, and ability of the competitor and dog. The Judge welcomes the team to the ring, verbally releases them (preferably with “Go when ready,”) makes calls when elements are complete, then marks the end of the run with congratulations or condolences. 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 offers training or handling advice to the handler in the ring or in any way offers critique. 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 4. 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.

SECTION 5. When to End the Run for Handlers who have NQd

Dog and Handler must Leave the Ring

1. If a handler or dog takes any action in the ring which would result in that handler or dog written up for misconduct (dog aggression, handler aggression or unsportsmanlike behavior), the team is instantly dismissed from the ring.
2. If the handler curses in the ring or the dog eliminates in the ring they are dismissed immediately.
3. If the Judge notices a collar on the dog the team should be stopped and dismissed (safety hazard) but may be shown a rat for praise and reward.
4. If the dog has destroyed the tunnel they must leave the ring (see Fallen Bales and Tunnel Fails).

Dog and Handler Stay and Complete their Run, are told of their NQ at the end.

1. In some situations, Judges will witness an action by the competitor which will cause that handler to have a non-qualifying score but it is not grounds for instant dismissal. Some examples would be bowling the dog, handler touching or stepping over a bale when not allowed, incorrect leash, etc. When this occurs, the team can continue to hunt, and the Judge informs the team of the non-qualifying score at the end of the run. If the team gets a non-qualifying score for another reason (calling the wrong rat, time, etc.) the team can be shown the location of the rat nearest the dog for praise and reward prior to exiting the ring. The Judge must still inform the team that they would have received a non-qualifying score, and why.

SECTION 6. Inadvertent Lead Outs

If a handler deliberately leads out it is an NQ score. However, a handler may inadvertently lead out. An example would be when the handler called the dog and left the box, but the dog did not come with the handler. Once the handler has left the start box time starts. The handler cannot touch the dog, but can return to the dog and urge it verbally to get up and move.

SECTION 7. False Starts

1. If a handler releases the dog before the Judge has verbally released them, it is a false start and a 20 second penalty. If the handler false starts again, an NQ score is assessed.

SECTION 8. Confirming Scores

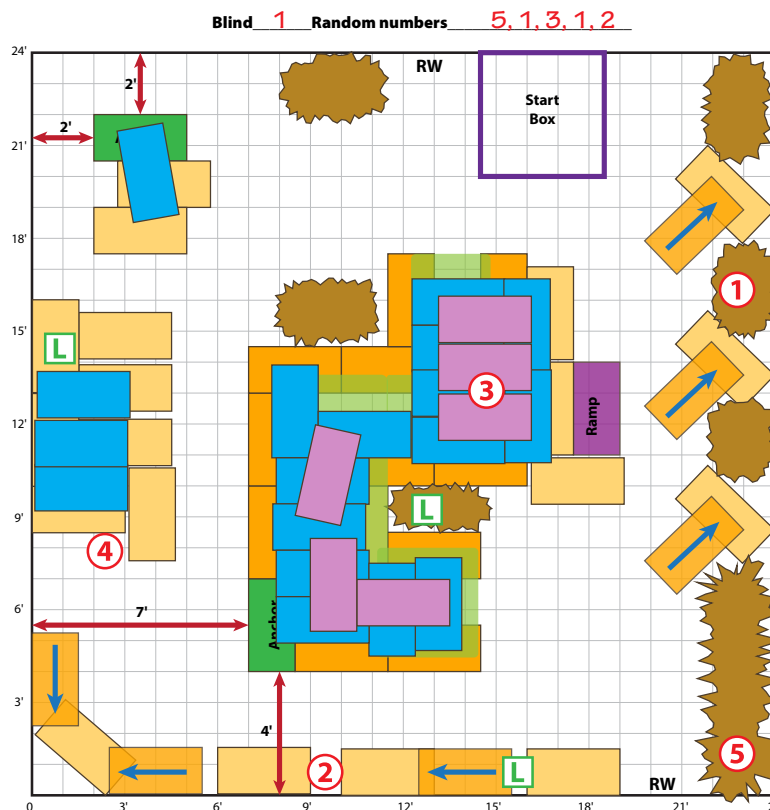
1. After each run, the Judge reviews the scoresheet and marks if the dog passed or failed then initials the sheet. The Judge shows or gives the timer to the Scribe or, alternately, records the time then returns to the course to judge the next dog.
2. The Judge cannot turn his/her back on an exiting team to go to the Scribe.

SECTION 9. Efficiently Placing and Switching Tubes

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

- 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. 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.
- Rat Location in relation to the ring.** The rat holding area must be close enough for quick accessibility (see [“Safe Rat Areas”](#) on page 5 of the [Club Rulebook](#)).
- Using pre-marked maps.** 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. Exchanges of rat for litter only happen in slots 2 through five, with rats placed by number; a two rat blind would have rats in slots 1 and 2, and a four rat blind would have rats in slots 1, 2, 3, and 4.

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 10: 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 (See [“Dos and Dont’s While In the Ring”](#) on page 14 in the [Competitor Rulebook](#) for information on handlers dislodging bales).

- 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.
- 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, and Crazy 8s the ring is stopped and the dog is run in a later blind. In Master/Championship, 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, the Distance Challenge remains. Handlers crossing into that Distance Challenge without calling rat are NQd.
4. **Dog exits the side of a tunnel and tunnel is destroyed.** If a dog exits a tunnel by making his own path (not using the designated path) 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 11: 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. A Judge may never attempt to hide a mistake. 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 there was an error on the Judge's part, the team must be re-judged.
 - a) 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 (not enough rats, tubes uncovered and visible, course itself not legal) 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, only one place in Master 3-high, etc.) all 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 12: Course Design

SECTION 1. Design Overview

Barn Hunt courses must be handler accessible and level-appropriate. They must be designed in such a way that the handler enters the securely fenced course and proceeds to a specific designated release area.

1. Each Judge must design a unique course for each class level. Events with two Trials per day require a different course for each class at each level (i.e., both Novice courses cannot be identical and must be different enough that the handler and dog are presented with unique challenges from course to course.) In Senior and Master, the tunnel

entry path, turns, and or portal location or number must vary from Trial 1 to Trial 2 of that level:

- a) Senior Trial 1 must differ from Senior Trial 2 (Master T1 from Master T2) but Senior and Master may share elements (same tunnel for Senior and Master for instance).
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.
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 21 in the [Club Rulebook](#).
4. On all courses, after the bottom level is built, the Judge must inspect the placement of bales and measure the width and length of the tunnel throughout the tunnel path. The Judge then again inspects the course after the course builders have completed the course and adjusts as necessary. While short stretches of the tunnel may be wider than 18" (i.e., an internal jog on a Senior tunnel), the majority, including the entries, must be 18".
5. Judges may reuse courses in 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.
6. 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 two-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.

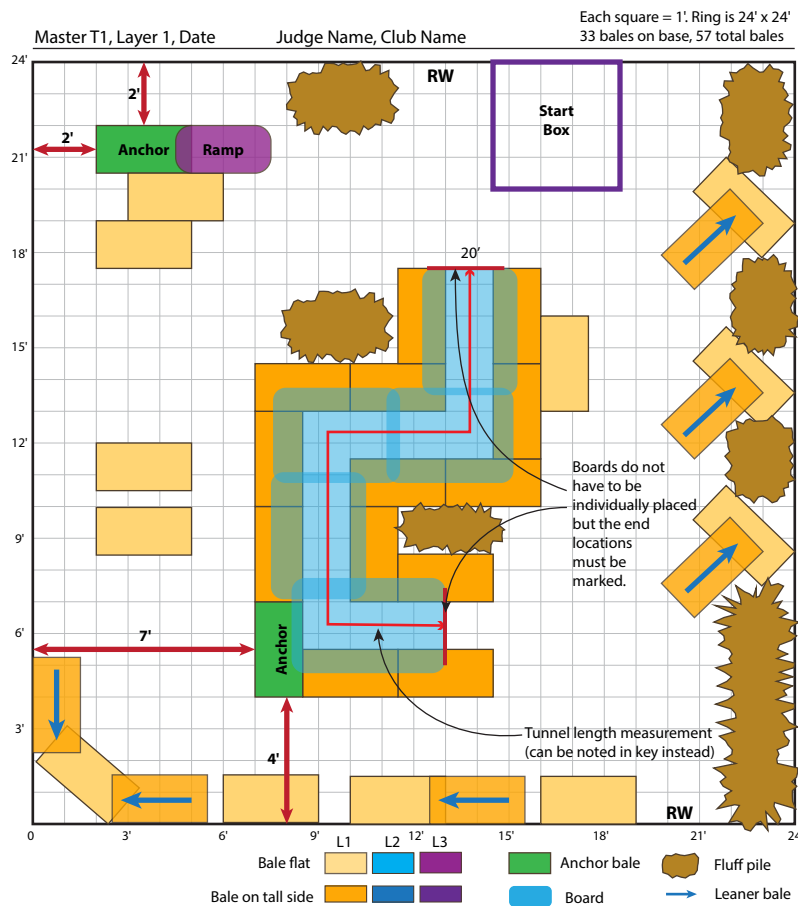
The following map elements are required:

1. **Course title.** Judge name, class level, trial, and date (e.g., Jane Smith, Novice T2, Jan 1, 2020).
2. **Map key.** A key to the elements on the map.
3. **Grids.** The course must be drawn/built on a visible grid with lines marked at every 6" to 1 foot.
4. **Layers.** Each map must have a separate bottom layer. A separate map for each layer is suggested but not required. At a minimum, there must be a bottom layer, then a map showing all layers.
5. **Anchor Bales.** Anchor bales are required for all freestanding (not against a wall or fence) stacks of 5 or more bales. 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).
6. **Leaner bales.** Leaners must be clearly marked including the direction of the lean.
7. **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).
8. **Start box.** The Start box location must be indicated.
9. **Tunnel Length.** This is a centerline measurement from each portal to the next portal (can be in the key).

The following map elements are suggested:

1. Fluff.
2. Rat Wrangler locations.
3. Judging path.
4. Gate entry.

SAMPLE ILLUSTRATION FOR BASE LAYER DETAILS



(Note: The fluff and RW locations shown are optional, not required.)

SECTION 3. Materials

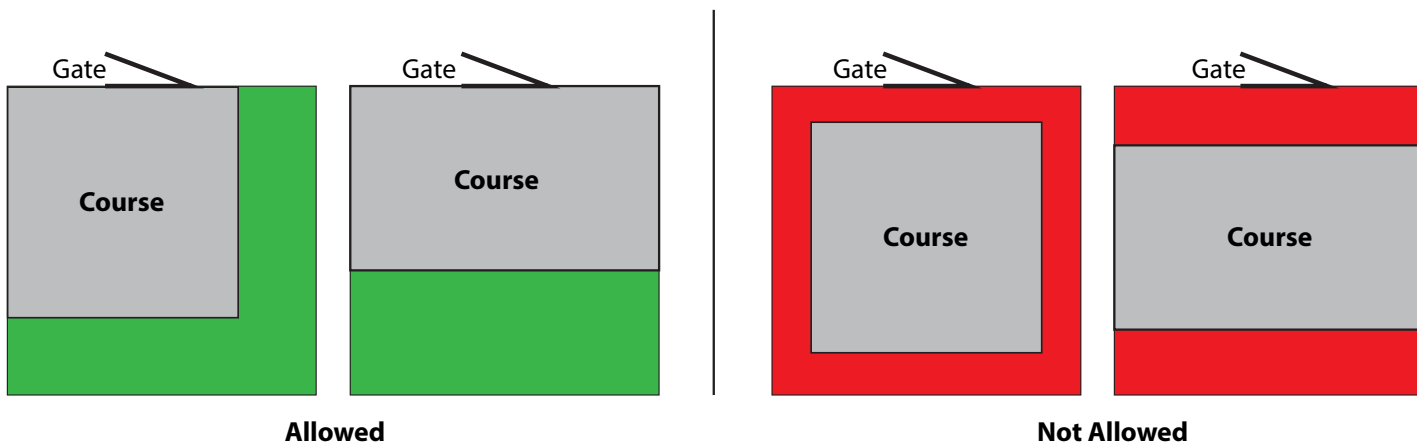
Courses consist of bales, fluff, boards, and a step/ramp, with optional bridges. See the [Competitor Rulebook](#) for the description of the ramp, boards, and bridges.

SECTION 4. Building Instinct/Novice/Open in a Larger Ring

Instinct, Novice, and Open courses may be built in rings which will also be used for Senior, Master, and/or Crazy 8s. See the ["Written and Class Briefings" on page 9](#) for how to Brief when you have a small ring in a larger space. Building in a correctly sized ring is always preferred to this option.

1. If building in a larger ring, the course must be in a corner or at one end. There cannot be two separated open spaces or an open border area around the course.
2. The edges of the live search area must be clearly visible. Bales, tape, or a combination can be used. Areas less than a bale length wide do not necessarily have to be marked if the overall border line is easy to see.
3. There can be no fluff at all in the open/dead area, it must be swept clean.
4. Rats can never be hidden on the side of any bale facing the open/dead area. It is not in play.
5. Clubs may stack a wall of bales in the open/dead area. The bale wall must be against a masonry wall or fence and separated from the nearest live course bale by at least 2' of empty, open space. The wall must be solid, go from one side to the other of the end of the ring, and be at least 4' tall. Bales from the wall cannot be taken to use on the I/N/O course (for example, if a dog eliminates and a new bale is needed). It must be sheer and uninviting.
6. There can be no sheer faces on the side of the course facing the empty area; all rules on safe step downs, etc. apply.
7. 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.

ALLOWED AND DISALLOWED COURSE CONFIGURATIONS WHEN BUILDING IN A LARGER RING



Part 13: Sheer Faces and Step Up/Downs

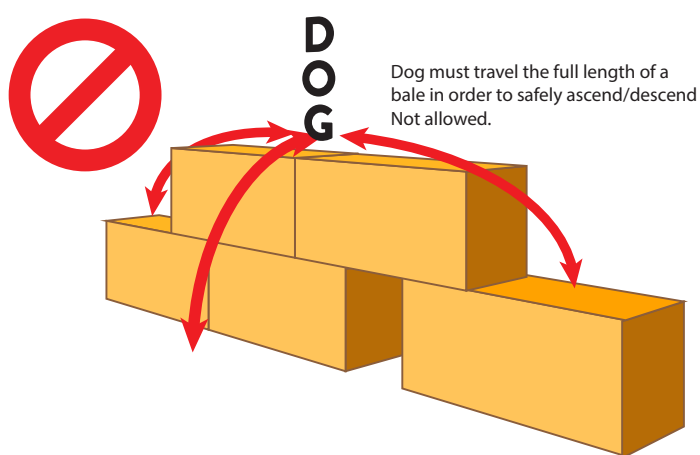
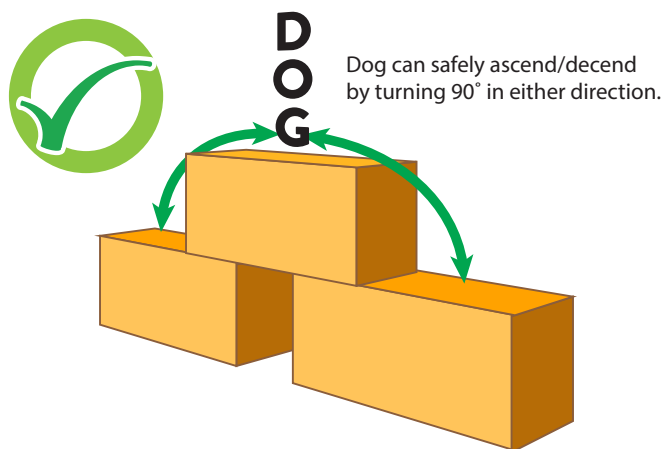
SECTION 1. Sheer faces.

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 steps.

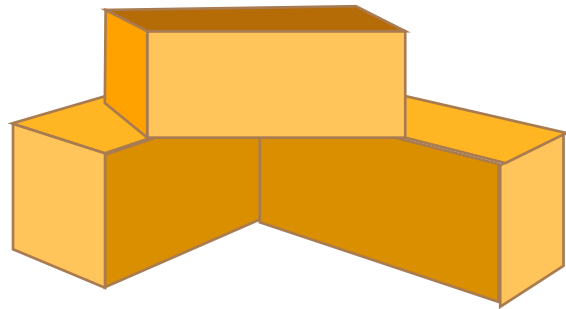
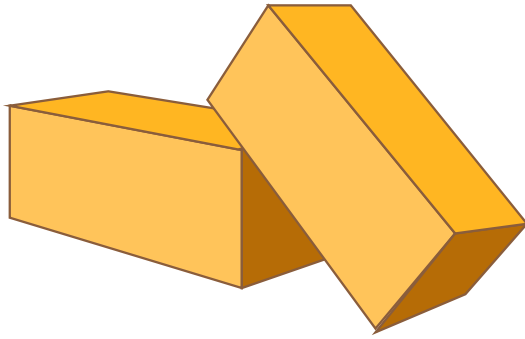
A safe step is defined as a ledge not less than 6" in depth for the dog to securely place a foot. In Senior and Master in locations where bales are stacked three-high there can be no more than one 6" step/ledge per total vertical drop. If using a 6" step/ledge, the ledges above and below the 6" step/ledge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

SAFE AND UNSAFE STEPS



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.

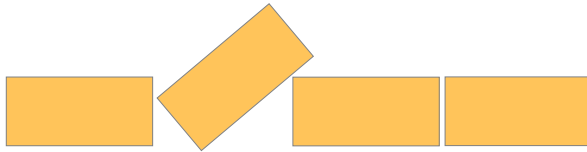
1. **Ramp/step(s).** The ramp/step must be placed so there is no tripping hazard for handlers, and there is adequate room for the dog to both get on and get off.
2. **Fluff and gaps.** There must be numerous areas on the course with loose, fluffed straw for tube hides. However, the straw should not look like a loose hay stack. Dogs need to be able to see edges where they can safely step down. Gaps are inevitable in a group of stacked bales. 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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **Walking paths.** Walking paths between bales must be a minimum of 12" wide with 18" preferred.

Part 14: Leaners and Levels

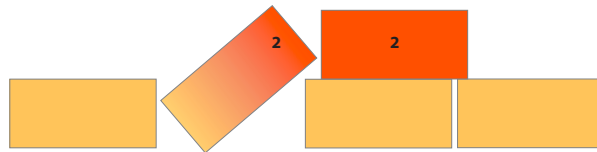
When building courses with specific 2-high and 3-high levels that also may have a number of leaner bales, it can be difficult to know when a bale can be counted as a higher level bale and what constitutes a single place or two places at that height. The Class descriptions starting on [page 19](#) of the **Competitor rulebook** state that in order for an area to count as 2-high or 3-high, there must be 2 or more "touching" bales at that height. To be called touching, bales must be 4" or less apart (actually touching preferred). More distance than that and the bales become adjacent, not touching, and do not count together as a single place/area. To split groups into two or more different places, bales must be placed at least 18" apart at that height. The intent of this rule is to provide actual searchable and safe rat hiding places at the upper levels. This illustration should help Judges determine whether or not their structure is a legal 2- or 3-high level.

ASSIGNING LEANER BALES TO LEVELS

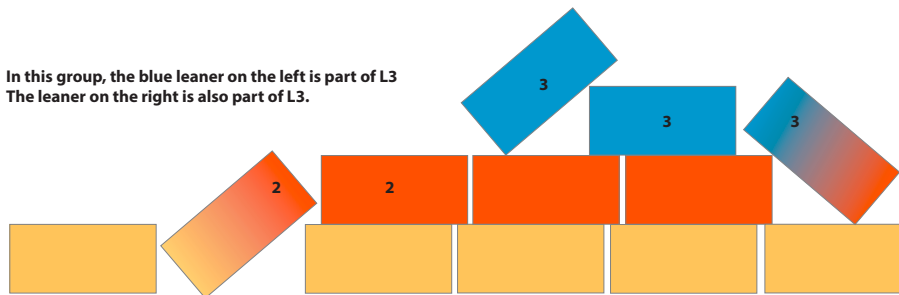
All bales in this group considered at the same level



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



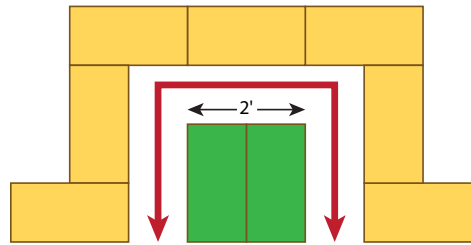
In this group, the blue leaner on the left is part of L3
The leaner on the right is also part of L3.



Part 15: 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. Any extra bales attached to the tunnel structure and leading to the portal are pathways. Illustrations in this section are assumed to have boards covering the entire length shown as a tunnel unless noted otherwise on the illustration (the exposed board and Novice tunnel illustrations).

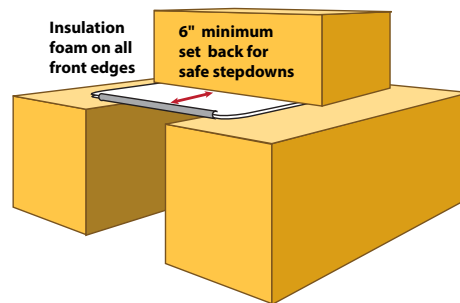
1. **Turns.** To be a legal turn, the dog must turn 90 degrees. Angles/turns greater than 90° are not allowed in tunnels.
2. **Distance.** The minimum distance a dog travels after a 90° turn is 2 feet as designed.
3. **Jogs.** The short end of a single bale does not constitute a 90° turn, does not count as a turn, and is called a jog.
4. **Length.** This is the total length of the tunnel, measured down the center line, from one entry portal to the next entry portal. In a tunnel with multiple entry portals, legal length measurements are from each portal to the next nearest portal. Length is "as designed." Variance of up to a foot or so based on bale lengths is expected and allowed.
5. **Pathways.** Pathways are uncovered alleyways leading to tunnel entrances. Pathways to tunnels cannot be less than 18" wide.
6. **Nesting.** Tunnels can be nested for efficiency, so that a base level tunnel can be expanded upon or deconstructed throughout the Trial day by adding or taking away bales around a central core or altering the pathway to the tunnel.
7. **Accessibility.** 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.
8. **U Turns.** A turn wrapping around a single bale is a 180° U turn which exceeds the 90° maximum and is not allowed.
9. **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.

MINIMUM INSIDE TURN

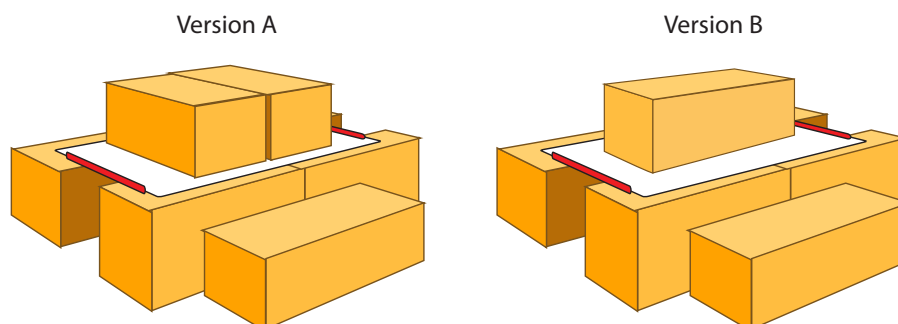
Minimum distance a dog must travel after a turn is 2 feet.
This is a two-turn tunnel.

SECTION 1. Basic Design

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

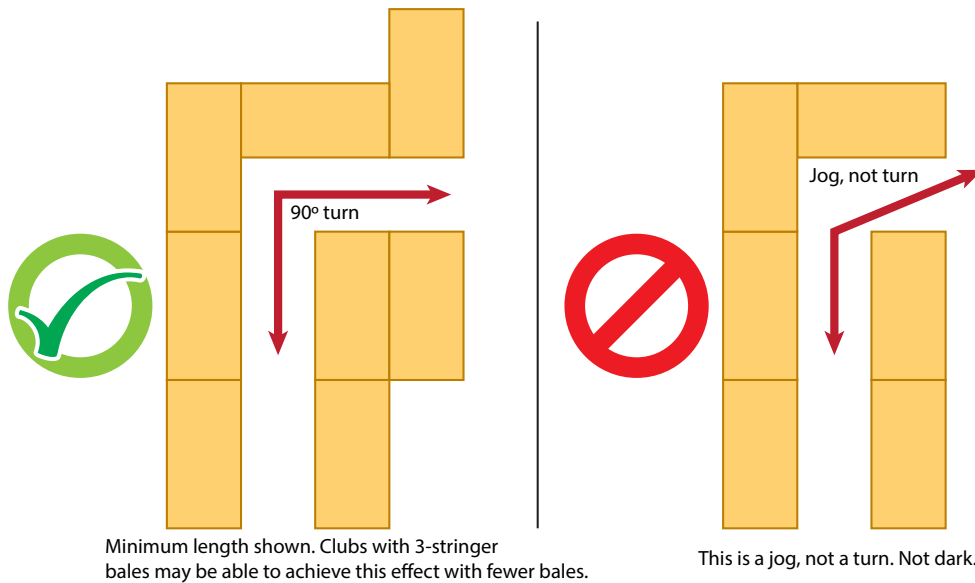
TUNNEL ENTRANCE SHOWING EXPOSED BOARD**SECTION 2. Allowed and Disallowed Turns, Jogs, and Lengths by Level**

1. 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. 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. Additional Official Novice tunnel(s) on the course will also count as the tunneling effort if the tunnel itself is a maximum of two bale-widths long plus a 6" board step-down on each end using either Version A or B. These additional tunnels may be built against a wall, side-by-side with another tunnel, with a leaner bale or a ramp, etc. All tunnels must have safe step downs.

NOVICE TUNNEL CONFIGURATION

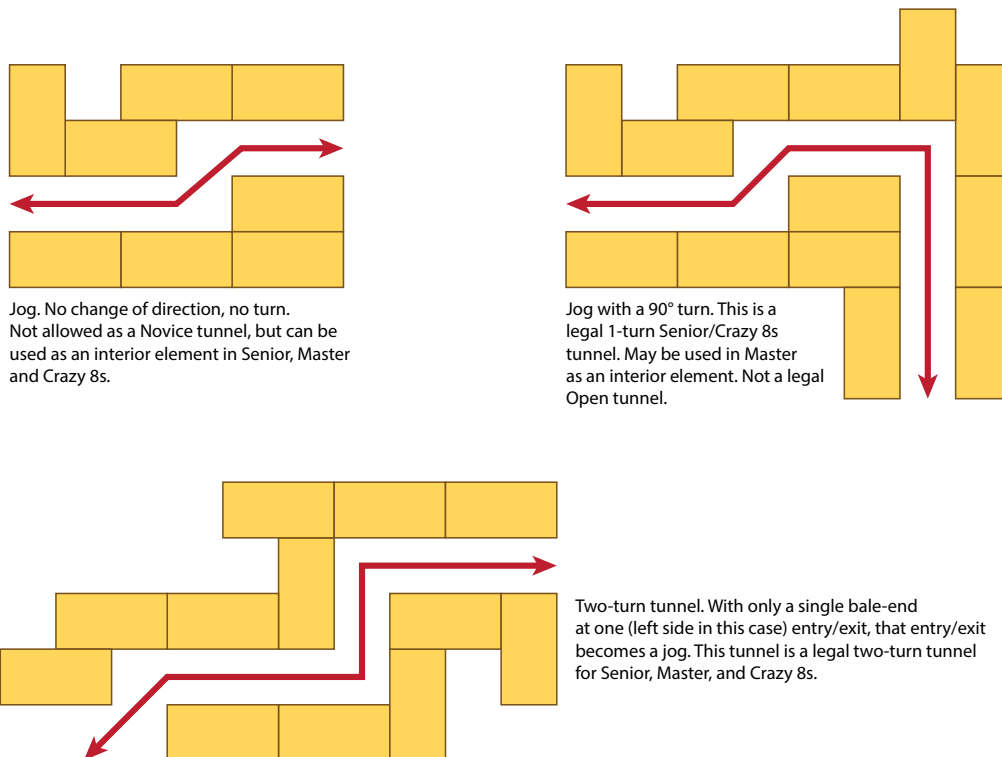
- The Open Level tunnel must meet the minimum configuration shown at left below, but may be longer. Jogs are not allowed in Open tunnel configurations.

OPEN TUNNEL MINIMUM AND UNALLOWED TURNS



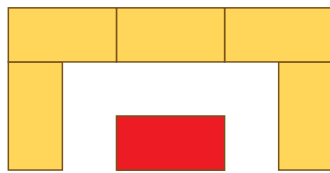
- Jogs are allowed to be used for construction in Senior and Master, but are not considered turns. The below are examples and explanations of jogs.

TUNNELS WITH JOGS

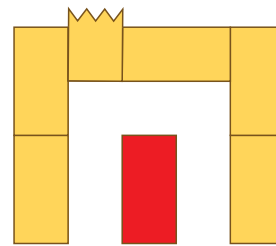


4. Other various illegal tunnel configurations are shown below.

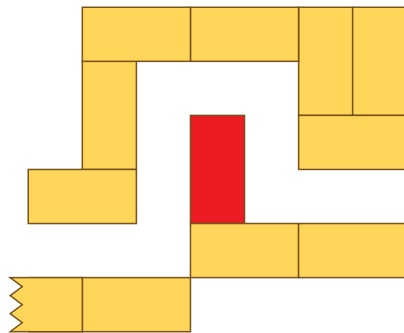
CONFIGURATIONS NOT ALLOWED IN ANY OFFICIAL TUNNEL



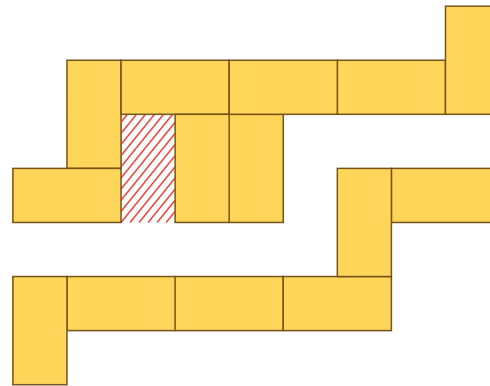
Minimum turn not met. Not dark.



180° U turn around single bale. Not dark.



180° U turn around single bale.

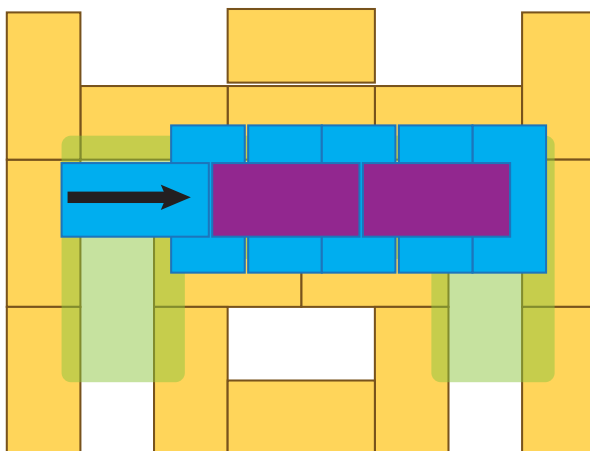


Interior blind alley

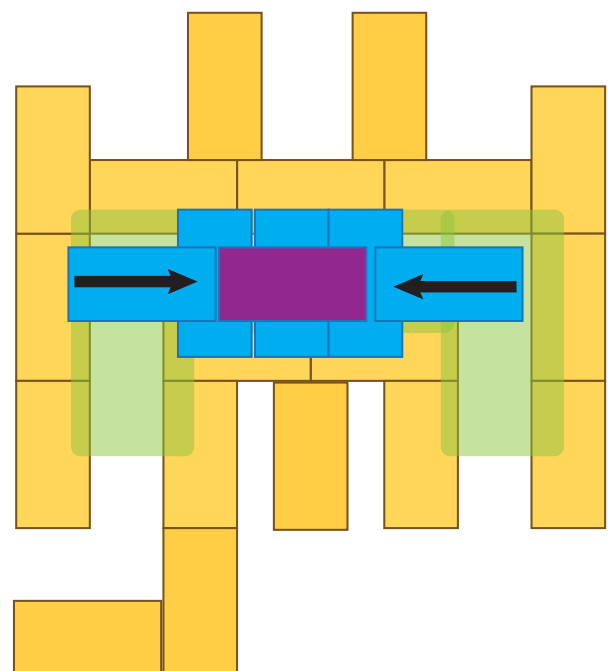
5. Tunnel entrances and pathways. From Trial 1 to Trial 2 in Senior, Master, and Crazy 8s, the tunnel must appear different. The actual tunnel turns, location, and configuration can change, or the pathway and upper level elements can change. The illustration below shows one example of a C tunnel with two different pathways, altering the look and feel of the tunnel without changing the entrances.

USING PATH AND LAYER ELEMENTS TO ALTER TUNNEL APPEARANCE

Senior Trial 1 Example



Senior Trial 2 Example



Identical C tunnels for T1 and T2. For T2, simple alterations change appearance and experience.

Part 16: 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.

