



OFFICIAL COMPETITOR RULEBOOK

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BARN HUNT ASSOCIATION® COMPETITOR RULEBOOK

Part 1: About This Rulebook

This rulebook contains all rules that competitors should need to know to enter and successfully compete in Barn Hunt Association (BHA) Events. For more information about Club formation, how events are run, descriptions of tasks including how to be a Rat Wrangler, and detailed rat care rules, refer to the [Club Rulebook](#). Guidelines on how to become a Judge as well as course design specifics are found in the [Judge Rulebook](#). All Barn Hunt Rulebooks are available on the website (barnhunt.com) under Rules and Resources, and all competitors are encouraged to read all three documents.

Part 2: Overview of Barn Hunt

SECTION 1. History

Barn Hunt® is based on the hunting and teamwork skills historically used by Ratcatchers and their dogs who traveled the countryside ridding farms of vermin, thus helping to conserve and preserve food grains and protect inhabitants from disease. Ratcatchers used a variety of terriers and go-to-ground breeds (small dogs bred to go under the earth after prey), but also non go-to-ground breeds such as Manchester Terriers, Schnauzers, Pinschers, farm and collie breeds, and a variety of other breeds and mixes. These working dogs and breeds have never had an officially licensed test which truly simulates their traditional task. The sport of Barn Hunt fills that role.

SECTION 2. Purpose

The purpose of Barn Hunt is to demonstrate a dog's vermin hunting ability in finding and marking rats in a "barn-like" setting, using straw/hay bales to introduce climbing and tunneling obstacles in the dog's path.

The sport tests speed, agility, hunt drive, scenting ability, surefootedness, and control and responsiveness to handler direction. While Barn Hunt has roots and origins as a way to test working drives in dogs bred to hunt vermin, Barn Hunt is for any domestic dog and handler who wish to play the game, including large dogs, pet dogs, altered dogs, and dogs of breeds or mixes of breeds with or without a vermin-hunting history.

Barn Hunt is a sporting event, and as such there are levels of difficulty, placements, titles, and championships. The sport tests the dog's ability to hunt and the handler's ability to read the dog's communication as they work as a team.

SECTION 3. Code of Good Sportsmanship

All participants and spectators attending Barn Hunt Events are required to operate as good sportsmen and sportswomen. Good sportsmanship includes honesty, courtesy, respect, and graciousness in both victory and defeat. No harsh, punitive or corrective training is allowed on Trial grounds. Any handler who displays poor sportsmanship and/or who verbally or physically abuses his or her dog either in or out of the ring can face discipline ranging from a verbal warning, dismissal from class, dismissal from show grounds and up to expulsion from future Events, depending on the severity of the infraction. Handlers and spectators must show good sportsmanship toward the Judge, show committee, stewards and competitors. The BHA empowers the Trial Chair and Committee to make disciplinary decisions on behalf of the BHA, and all decisions made at a Trial are considered official BHA rulings for that Event. The BHA reviews all rulings. Parties may appeal permanent bans to the BHA who will make a final decision on whether or not the person(s) involved will be able to return to any Barn Hunt Event.

Barn Hunt is a family-friendly sport. Actions which, for example, would cause a family with young children to conclude the sport is inappropriate will result in disciplinary action.

Part 3: Definitions

1. **Back Up Judge (BUJ).** A licensed Barn Hunt Judge who attends an Event and agrees to judge the dogs of a Judge of Record for the Trial.
2. **Blinds.** A blinded area/enclosure available for each Barn Hunt ring to stage the next 5 competitors getting ready to show (or 4 or 5 in Master/Championship). The blind is constructed or located such that occupants of the blind cannot see the ring or, in Master, rats being exchanged/prepared for the ring.
3. **Club.** A Club is any organization or group of a minimum of 5 individuals who wish to hold any Event using BHA rules. A Club can be a commercial entity (such as a for-profit dog training facility), a group/Club that is licensed by another organization, or a group of individuals. For the purposes of this document, the word "Club" will be used to denote any/all of the allowed combinations above.

4. **Clinic.** Training Events/Clinics/Workshops/seminars/rat-n-gos which use Barn Hunt rules as a teaching/training guide are not considered officially licensed BHA Events. The BHA takes no responsibility for any incident at any unofficial training Clinic/Workshop/seminar. For the purposes of this document and all official listings, all of these non-licensed Events held by BHA Clubs are categorized as “Clinics.”
5. **Event.** An Event is a collection of Trials or Fun Tests over a contiguous series of days. For an example, a two day weekend holding four Trials is a single Event.
6. **Fun Test.** A Fun Test is an official, licensed, practice Event for Barn Hunt. Fun Tests are a way to introduce new competitors to the sport and a way for new Clubs to work to become licensed to hold official Barn Hunt Trials.
7. **Judge of Record (JOR).** A licensed Barn Hunt Judge who is contracted by a Club as an official Judge for a Trial or Trials. The Judge of Record is listed in the Premium and is responsible for designing courses and judging entrants into the Trial.
8. **Licensed Trial (Trial).** A Licensed Barn Hunt Trial is a collection of classes at various levels of difficulty from Instinct through Master, and optionally, the Non-Regular Crazy 8s class, licensed by the BHA, where competitor/dog teams have an opportunity to earn qualifying scores/legs toward Barn Hunt titles.
9. **Provisional Judge.** A licensed B-Level Judge supervised by a Judge Mentor.
10. **Relief Only Judge (ROJ).** A judge who is hired solely to step in to other rings as needed and relieve other Judges of Record for lunches, breaks, overflow, load balancing, etc. The ROJ is listed as an official Judge of Record.
11. **Ring Enclosures.** The secure fenced/walled enclosed area where competition takes place. Descriptions of fencing specifications can be found in [“Ring Enclosures” on page 21](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#).
12. **Spectator areas.** Barn Hunt is a spectator sport, and spectators/exhibitors (other than those in the blind) must be able to view the dogs working in the ring and are not required to be a specific minimum distance away. Clubs may specify the distance spectators can be from the ring depending on conditions, but never so far away that spectators cannot view dogs working in the ring.
13. **Trial Grounds.** The geographical area in which the Barn Hunt Event will be held, including any and all buildings, parking lots, rings, dog walking/exercise areas, and surroundings encompassed by the Event. Hotels associated with the events may be considered Trial Grounds in cases of misconduct.
14. **Tube.** The safe enclosure used for the rat during their time on the course. All tubes are constructed as specified in the [“Guides and Resources:” on page 26](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#) and will either be empty, have used rat litter in them, or have clean litter and a single rat in them (a gerbil if the event is held in an area where rats are illegal).

Part 4: Rats in Barn Hunt

In Barn Hunt, domestic rats (gerbils in areas where rats are outlawed) are considered our working partners, and are critical to the success of competition dogs and the sport. At all times the health, welfare, and safety of our pet rat partners is of utmost importance. A knowledgeable Chief Rat Wrangler is required at all Events to monitor the health and safety of rats. Rat Wranglers, working under the Chief Rat Wrangler, ensure safe handling in and out of the ring. All competitors in the sport are strongly encouraged to read the detailed information on rat care on [page 5](#) in the [Club Rulebook](#).

Rats are never to be harmed before, during, or after any Licensed Event or any Clinic/workshop/training day held by any Club representing the BHA. Any person or Club found abusing rats or advocating their abuse in training or at any event or location associated with the sport will be permanently banned from Barn Hunt.

1. **Rat safe resting area.** Handlers may not enter or have dogs within 10 feet of the rat safe rest area. Only authorized personnel may enter that area.
2. **Rats on Barn Hunt grounds.** Only rats authorized by the club to be on Barn Hunt grounds are allowed. No training with rats is allowed on Trial grounds or at hotels associated with the Event, and persons found with unauthorized rats or training with rats will be asked to leave, all qualifying scores forfeited, and may face further censure.
3. **In the ring.** Handlers cannot allow their dogs to excessively kick, pull, tug, roll, shake, or bite at tubes, whether live, litter, or empty. Judges may intervene at any time if they feel a rat is in danger due to rough handling (see Stalling and Lack of Control, see [“Penalties” on page 19](#)). Handlers should very strongly discourage dogs from carrying tubes.
4. **Picking up the tube.** Handlers who choose to pick up a tube in the ring after calling rat must keep that tube level and stable, and ensure the Rat Wrangler has a good hold before letting go. If it is difficult to both pick up a tube and restrain the dog, handlers must restrain the dog and let the RW pick up the tube (see the section on how to restrain).

Part 5: Registering Dogs and Accessing Records

SECTION 1. Registering Your Dog

All dogs must be registered with the Barn Hunt Association prior to competing in any Licensed Trial (see special Fun Test Rules on [page 11](#)). This registration is a one-time, lifetime fee for each dog.

1. **Age.** A dog may be registered at any age, but may not compete in either a Fun Test or a Licensed Trial until on or after their six month birth date. For example, a dog born on January 1 may be shown in Barn Hunt on or after July 1.

SECTION 2. Height Divisions

Height divisions are to equalize efforts for dogs of the same general size.

- Small: Dogs 13" and under
- Medium: Dogs 13.1 to 18"
- Large: Dogs over 18"

SECTION 3. Keeping Track Using The Barn Hunt Register

The Barn Hunt Register is available when a competitor has created a log in/registered a dog. The Register is a free service which allows owners to:

1. Find your Registration number, required to enter Events.
2. Search for Events.
3. Find and view/download Premiums.
4. Use the Create Mail In Entry form to pre-fill entry forms.
5. View and edit your dog's information.
6. Keep track of qualifying scores.
7. Find and print title certificates.

Competitors have one year from the date of an Event to report issues or mistakes with their dog's record by contacting the Trial Secretary of the Event and info@barnhunt.com.

Part 6: Entering Events

All Events are listed on the Barn Hunt Calendar. In order to compete in a Fun Test or Licensed Trial all competitors must fill out an entry form with complete and accurate information and send it to the Trial Secretary for the Event, after the opening date and prior to the closing date for the Event.

SECTION 1. Late and Day of Show (DOS) Entries

Clubs may elect to accept Late and/or Day of Show entries but are not required to do so.

1. Late entries are those received after the closing date of the Trial but prior to the Trial date.
2. Late entry confirmations are optional for Clubs.
3. Trials may fill with Late entries. If DOS entries are also being accepted, persons with Late entries must show up during the DOS entry open period to confirm their presence. Clubs who are accepting both Late and DOS entries may designate a certain time limit for Late Entry arrival and after that time may release that entry to a waiting DOS competitor.
4. If a draw is needed for the DOS entries, that draw will take place at a time designated by the Club at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the Class entered.
5. DOS entries are first-come, first-served during the published time frame for acceptance on the same day of a Trial of any Event, and can only be taken up to the total limit of entries for the Trial, based on a judging time limits.
6. Any Late or DOS entries which exceed the total number of entries published, or the total time allowed for each Judge for the Trial must be rejected.

SECTION 2. Wait Lists

Clubs which fill all available entries before their closing date may choose to maintain a before and/or after closing waiting list.

SECTION 3. Random Draws

Clubs who regularly fill Trials quickly may choose to offer a Random Draw entry system. Trials choosing Random Draw may also maintain Wait Lists. If choosing a Random Draw entry system:

1. An Opening date is mandated for the Trial.
2. A Random Draw date is mandated for the Trial.
 - a) The Random Draw date must be at least two weeks after the opening date and at least two weeks prior to the closing date.
3. On the date of the Random Draw, the Secretary and at least one other Trial Committee member must be present. Envelopes are picked/drawn in random order.
4. All dogs in one envelope must be processed/entered before going on to the next envelope.

SECTION 4. Invalid and Conditional Entries

1. No entry into any Barn Hunt Trial or Fun Test can be conditional. A conditional entry is one in which the competitor attaches conditions to the entry, such as requesting the Club wait a certain amount of time to cash a check, indicating that payment will follow, indicating they will only enter if a friend's dog also is entered, etc.
2. Entry forms must be submitted with correct information and accompanied by valid payment.
3. Entries received prior to the Opening date will be returned or shredded. Entries received after Closing will also be returned/shredded unless the Club is accepting late/DOS entries.
4. Barn Hunt Licensed Trial entry forms submitted without a correct Barn Hunt Registration number and a signature are not considered valid entries.
5. Competitors are responsible for carefully checking their Trial confirmations and bringing errors to the attention of the Trial Secretary.
6. Barn Hunt Numbers entered on Trial entry forms which are illegible by the Trial Secretary are considered invalid. The Trial Secretary may contact the owner for clarification but is not required to do so.
7. A returned check does not constitute a valid entry into any Barn Hunt Trial or Fun Test. If a check is returned to the Club after the Trial, and the exhibitor does not pay for the check and any associated fees within a time limit set by the Club, the entry is not valid and any qualifying scores from that Event will be voided. If the competitor has received qualifying scores in an A-Level class at a higher level of competition after failing to pay for the check within the time limit set by the club who received the returned check, those qualifying scores will be voided.

SECTION 5. Withdrawals and Refunds

1. Competitors who withdraw any or all entries from a Fun Test, Trial or Trials prior to the pre-entry closing date must receive a refund of all entry fees, minus any non-refundable credit card/PayPal transaction fees if applicable. "Courtesy fees" cannot be assessed for entry fees withdrawn prior to closing.
2. If the trial is full and there's a wait list, competitors who withdraw any or all entries from a Fun Test, Trial or Trials after the pre-entry closing date receive a refund if a new entry replaces the withdrawn entry. .

SECTION 6. Assumption of Risk

All persons attending and/or entering a Barn Hunt Association LLC Trial or Fun Test in any capacity do so at their own risk and agree to assume responsibility for damage caused by them, or by their dogs and hold the Trial Club and Barn Hunt Association harmless for any injury sustained by their dog or by a dog or person during the Trial. By entering a Trial, owners attest that they have read, understand, and will abide by, all Barn Hunt Rules and Regulations.

Part 7: Overall Competition Rules

SECTION 1. Dogs Eligible to Compete

All dogs competing in Barn Hunt must be able to travel through an 18" wide by bale-height tall "tunnel" made of straw/hay bales. Dogs allowed to compete include:

1. **Bitches in season (BIS).** The rules on Bitches in Season apply to both intact bitches and those bitches who have received an Ovary Spaying (OSS) and who are in season.
 - a) BIS must compete in clean, dry, well-fitted panties specifically designed for the purpose of preventing/containing seasonal discharges. The interior of the panties must be lined with an absorbent pad. Panties with shoulder/harness straps are not allowed.

- b) BIS must be crated separately from other dogs in an isolated area. If possible, she must be securely crated in a vehicle. A “Bitch In Season” sign must be affixed to the crate or displayed close by the crating area.
 - c) Owners of BIS must inform the Trial Chair of their status as soon as possible; prior to the Event if known, or immediately if the BIS comes into season that day, so that run orders can be adjusted.
 - d) Failure to inform the Trial committee of a BIS is grounds for an NQ for all runs the BIS is entered in on that Trial day. The BIS must be removed from Trial grounds for that day.
 - e) BIS must wear their panties at all times when out of their crates except when being pottied.
 - f) BIS must be pottied separately from the other dogs at the Trial and kept as separate as possible from other dogs.
 - g) BIS must be blinded separately from other dogs unless the owners of all the dogs who would be in the blind with the BIS agree to allow the BIS to blind with them (e.g. all other dogs are altered and not likely to be affected)
 - h) In most cases, the BIS is to be run last in each class. Clubs can make an exception to run a BIS prior to a Judge of Record dog depending on schedule and with the permission of all involved.
2. **Deaf dogs.** Dogs with partial or complete hearing loss.
 3. **Dogs with limited or partial vision.** That includes dogs missing or blind in one eye as well as dogs with partial vision in one or both eyes.
 4. **Dogs with missing or partial limbs.** Dogs missing a limb or with a short withered limb are not automatically to be considered lame and are eligible to compete as long as they can negotiate the course safely and without showing signs of pain. Dogs must be sound on the number of limbs they have which are capable of being used. See the information on dogs with a full length non-functioning limb below.

SECTION 2. Dogs Ineligible to Compete

1. **Wolves, wolf-hybrids, or any other mix of domestic dog with wild canid.**
2. **Blind dogs.** Blindness means without useful vision.
3. **Dogs with open wounds.** Dogs with minor scrapes may be eligible to compete. The determination for eligibility is to be decided by the Judge.
4. **Dogs in wheeled carts.**
5. **Lame dogs.**
 - a) The Judge must dismiss from the ring a lame dog, or any dog the Judge considers unable to safely complete the course due to a physical issue.
 - b) Veterinary notes are not accepted as evidence of soundness.
 - c) A dog with a full length limb that dangles part or all of the time is considered lame and is ineligible to compete.

SECTION 3. Bandages, Wraps, Dyes

1. Dogs may not compete if they have visible stitches or bandages, protective items/wraps or other attachments.
 - a) A single tie or wrap may be used to secure hair away from the dog’s eyes. No more than one tie can be used.
2. Dogs may be dyed, painted, or colored.

SECTION 4. Handler Age and Accommodations

1. There is no specific minimum age for handlers to compete in Barn Hunt. All able handlers of any age must be able to safely handle the dog without assistance while on the way to the blind, waiting in the blind, on the way to the ring, in the ring, and exiting the ring and surrounding area. If, in the opinion of the Trial Chair and/or Judge the dog can not be safely handled due to an otherwise able handler’s young age, the Club may ask for a substitute handler. If a substitute handler is not available, the dog may not compete.
2. Some handlers will need special accommodation due to a disability. Those accommodations will be tailored to that handler’s specific needs. Special accommodations may include assistance getting to the blind or holding a dog in the blind (two persons in blind for that one dog), assisting the handler to the ring or even inside the ring taking the collar and leash off and replacing the collar/leash at the end of the run. If an assistant is used inside the ring to aid in unleashing and leashing the dog, the assistant remains standing at the gate in the ring while the dog is run, with his or her back to the ring. The assistant cannot interact with the handler, restrain the dog during the run, or accept a rat tube.

SECTION 5. Special Considerations

1. In Barn Hunt, all dogs are expected to compete in each class with the same general conditions. No special considerations such as asking for special or specific Rat Wranglers, asking that the Rat Wrangler(s) or Judge to turn their backs, not move, leave the ring, or only stand in specific places, etc. are allowed. That includes asking for a Rat Wrangler who is a friend to step out of the ring.
 - a) Other special considerations not allowed include such actions as asking spectators or a photographer to move back for an individual dog, asking for the tub with extra rats to be moved further from the ring for a single dog, etc. It is impossible to describe all possible special consideration scenarios within the scope of these rules, but the intent is to strive for A-Level playing field for all competitors within a class.

SECTION 6. Smoking/Vaping

For fire safety, no smoking (regular tobacco, e-cigarettes/vapor cigarettes, or legal cannabis) of any kind can occur in any building containing any ring or bale of straw, and/or within 50' of any **outdoor** bale of straw, or within 20' of any outdoor blind at any Barn Hunt Event. **Clubs may further constrain non-smoking areas and may ban smoking on the property at the Club's discretion.**

SECTION 7. Dog Aggression

Handlers wishing to know more information about how Dog Aggression is handled should refer to the Misconduct and Dog Aggression Guide, available on the website.

1. Dog aggression results in a Disqualification (DQ) Owners/handlers must immediately confine the dog safely, and wait for the Trial Committee to meet. Competitors who do not attend the hearing waive all of their rights to speak on their own behalf.
2. Dog Aggression is an overt threat from a dog against another dog or a person and/or an attack with contact against another dog or a person with the intent to harm.
 - a) Overt threat is the judgment that if a person or dog was not very quickly removed from the immediate vicinity a bite or attack would certainly have taken place.
3. Injury does not have to occur for a dog to be deemed aggressive. For example, a dog who jumps another dog but does not actually puncture skin can still be ruled aggressive.
4. Dogs who rumble (a quiet growl) or posture are not necessarily deemed aggressive.
5. Dogs jumping on or bumping into a Judge or Rat Wrangler with no mouth contact or intent to harm are not deemed aggressive. See the [“Important General Rat Removal Rules” on page 17](#) for more information.
 - a) A dog accidentally nipping the handler (including hands, gloved or not, while the handler attempts to remove the tube) Judge, or Rat Wrangler (prey drive nip) receives a non-qualifying (NQ) score and is dismissed from the ring but is not necessarily considered aggressive or overtly threatening. Nipping is defined as teeth coming in contact with and closing on skin or clothing/glove(s) but quickly withdrawn. See the grip information below. A dog who nips repeatedly may be deemed aggressive by the judge and disqualified (DQ).
 - b) A displacement bite (not an accidental nip directed toward the tube, but rather a deliberate nip or bite to the handler/judge/RW on another area of their body/clothing through frustration) is dog aggression. The dog is immediately dismissed from the ring and safely confined (see number 1 in this section), and a Dog Aggression hearing held (see the [Club Rules](#) and the Misconduct and Dog Aggression booklet)
6. Dogs responding defensively to another dog's aggressive action are not necessarily deemed aggressive.
7. Dogs gripping (grabbing and not letting go with mouth/teeth) other dogs or people are deemed aggressive.
8. All dog sizes, breeds and types are to be judged equally in terms of dog aggression. Breeds or breed types are not to be considered in any decision on dog aggression.
9. Sparring or other intentional pitting of one dog against another is not allowed.
10. All dogs must be able to work in a ring with the Judge, handler, and one or more Rat Wranglers.
11. Judge and/or Trial Committee decisions on dog aggression are considered final for that Event.
12. Dogs who are dismissed after the Trial hearing due to dog aggression are required to leave the Trial grounds immediately and are not allowed to return to any Trial grounds at any Barn Hunt Trial or Barn Hunt Fun Test without express written permission of the BHA office [Section 13. Appeals Process on page 10](#).
13. Dogs who have a written record of aggression where proof of damage to a person or to another dog can be substantiated beyond a reasonable doubt (i.e. police report, photographic and/or video evidence, admittance of guilt by owner) may be pro-actively dismissed from Barn Hunt at the discretion of the BHA administration, and are not guaranteed a right to compete or to be present on Barn Hunt grounds.

14. Dogs who are dismissed for dog aggression from another organization may also be dismissed from Barn Hunt depending on infraction and circumstance.
15. All final decisions on a dog's status are solely determined by BHA. Discipline can range from suspension, to additional training, to dismissal from the sport, depending on the infraction.

SECTION 8. Misconduct/Lack of Sportsmanship

All competitors, Club members, Judges, and spectators in Barn Hunt are expected to act within the Code of Good Sportsmanship outlined in these rules. Loud arguments, fighting, cheating, or disrespect toward spectators, competitors, Judges, Club members, or Trial committee members, may be grounds for dismissal from a Barn Hunt Trial. See the Misconduct and Dog Aggression guide, available on the website, for more detailed information.

1. Competitors accused of Lack of Sportsmanship/Misconduct will be allowed to speak at a Trial Hearing, usually the same day as the event but occasionally after the event at a mutually agreed time. Competitors who do not attend the hearing waive all of their rights to speak on their own behalf.
2. Judge and/or Trial Committee decisions on misconduct are considered final for that Event.
3. Persons who are dismissed due to misconduct/lack of sportsmanship are required to leave the Trial grounds immediately after the Trial hearing (if present). The person and any/all dogs owned or co-owned by the person and living in residence with the person at the time of the misconduct are not allowed to attend, compete (Judge/serve on committees) at any future Events. The BHA office will make a final decision on the person's ability to return to Barn Hunt (see [Section 13. Appeals Process on page 10](#)).
4. Persons who have been banned from other dog sport organizations may be pro-actively dismissed from Barn Hunt at the discretion of the BHA, and are not guaranteed a right to compete or to be present on Barn Hunt grounds.

SECTION 9. Double Handling

Double handling is aiding the competitor inside the ring from outside the ring. It includes telling the Judge "Climb" or "Tunnel" when the Judge has not so indicated, talking about rat locations, or even something as innocuous as dramatically increasing the number of audible camera clicks as a team nears a live rat hide or making sure a camera is always near the live rat hide.

1. Most incidences of double handling are accidental/inadvertent.
 - a) If the Judge feels the inadvertent double handling aided the handler and/or dog in the ring, the Judge must re-run the team in a later blind.
 - b) If the Judge feels the inadvertent double handling did not aid the handler and/or dog in the ring, a verbal warning is sufficient for the first offense. Any person who repeatedly gives inadvertent cues to the handler in the ring may, at the discretion of the Judge, be dismissed from the area around the ring or from the event grounds for the duration of the day. If dismissed from the event grounds, the person, if entered, would not be allowed to run in any classes they have not yet competed in that day.
 - The competitor in the ring will not be rejudged and their score is unaffected.
2. Persons who are dismissed due to deliberate double handling are required to leave the Trial grounds immediately after the Trial hearing and are not allowed to return to any Trial grounds at any Barn Hunt Trial or Barn Hunt Fun Test without express written permission of the BHA office.

SECTION 10. Loud/Disruptive dogs

1. Dogs that are loud and disruptive on the grounds or in the crating area may be asked to locate/crate away from the rings/regular crating area.
2. Dogs/handlers who are so disruptive in the blind that they disturb other dogs to the extent that the other dog's performance will be adversely affected are dismissed from the blind by a Trial official and/or the Judge of Record. If the dog cannot be brought under control, the dog may be dismissed from the class and/or Trial/Event.

SECTION 11. Proximity to the Ring

1. Other than dogs in the blind and dogs entering the ring, working, and exiting the ring, no dog may be within 10' of any fenced/gated side of any ring or on any side of the ring or area around the ring which will be crossed by dogs traveling between the blind and the ring. Dogs may be walked past the other side of a fully walled ring but cannot be crated against a shared non-masonry wall which is used as part of the ring enclosure on the other side.

SECTION 12. Judge Decisions

If a competitor has a question about a call or action of the Judge of Record, the competitor may politely address the question to the Judge after their run. Impolite or angry inquiries may be grounds for a Misconduct hearing. Videotaped evidence cannot be used during an Event to change a Judge's call. The Judge may decide to uphold their decision or reverse it. All Judge decisions during a Trial are considered final. No Judge call can be reversed after the Trial is concluded and scores recorded by the Trial Secretary.

SECTION 13. Appeals Process

1. **Appealing Judge Decisions.** If the competitor feels a Judge's final decision on a call was in error, the competitor may contact the Barn Hunt office at info@barnhunt.com with a written explanation of the incident. The Barn Hunt office will investigate. Results of that investigation may or may not be reported to the competitor. A video link may be provided to the barn Hunt Office. It will not change the Judge's decision on the day, but may be used for review and general follow up with the Judge.
2. **Appealing Misconduct or Dog Aggression.** The competitor who is accused of Misconduct or Dog Aggression may appeal the Club's decision through email to the Barn Hunt office, however, decisions made by the Barn Hunt office are final.

SECTION 14. Collars and Leashes

1. **Disallowed collars and attachments.** The following are not allowed to be used on Barn Hunt grounds. Electronic collars, bark collars (including citronella), head halters, and muzzles.
2. **Allowed collars and attachments.** All other collar, lead, and harness types and combinations are allowed to be used on Trial grounds. Pinch/prong collars are allowed. All allowed collars/restraints must be well fitted.
3. **Tying out/leash or line dragging.** At no time can dogs be tied out or otherwise left attached to anything other than a human when outside a crate, car, or other secure enclosed confinement. Leashes cannot be left dangling or dragging. Standing or stepping on a leash is not allowed as a form of restraint (but may be used in an emergency to help secure a loose dog.) Accommodations to this rule may be made for differently-abled handlers as determined by the Club.
4. **Car confinement.** Dogs kept in cars must be secure and have adequate ventilation. Windows must be high enough that a loose dog will not jump out.
5. **In the blind and going to the ring.** Dogs cannot be brought to the blind or the ring on flexi-leads. Dogs should be brought into the ring with collars/harnesses/slip-leads which can be easily and quickly removed and replaced. Covered pinch/prong collars with a quick release snap/buckle may be used in the blind and on the way/into to the ring, but collars which require a prong to be uncoupled are not. Handlers may choose to use one collar/restraint in the blind and a different one to enter the ring. If that is the case, the dog must enter and wear both collars/leashes in the blind, with one being removed prior to arriving at the ring. In no circumstance can a dog ever be without a secure collar/leash in the blind.

SECTION 15. Training on Trial Grounds

1. Dogs cannot be trained on Trial grounds before or during any Licensed Trial held that same date (see ["Clinics" on page 7](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#) for information on Clinics held on Trial days). That includes training outside the ring with rats, tubes, bales, or practice tunnels. Photographer setups with straw are not training areas.
2. Competitors cannot enter any unattended ring enclosure unless authorized, with the exception of course builders. Dogs are not allowed on any course except when competing on that course. No training is allowed on partially or wholly built courses. Handlers who practice on courses in violation of the rules will be brought up on Misconduct for Lack of Sportsmanship. See the Dog Aggression and Misconduct guide.

SECTION 16. Measuring Dogs

It is the responsibility of the person registering the dog and entering the Trial to correctly measure their dog and enter the correct height. Judges will measure any dog(s) they feel may be in the incorrect height. Competitors may also request that a dog be measured; either their own dog or any other dog entered in the Trial.

1. If a dog measures out of a height division, the dog may be moved to the correct height division at that Trial at the discretion of the Trial Secretary. Trial secretaries/Clubs are not required to move dogs into a different height division. If the secretary/Club does not allow the dog to move that dog is ineligible for competition at that show.

Part 8: Special Fun Test Rules

- Competitors may enter any level they wish at a Fun Test, and may enter more than one level and/or multiple times at the same level if allowed by the Club (i.e., Clubs may allow competitors to enter Novice multiple times with the same dog and/or may allow the competitor to enter the same dog in Novice, Open, Senior, and Master).
- Clubs may choose to allow training in the ring, and if allowing training, whether or not treats will be allowed in the ring. All regular ring and rat safety and handling rules apply. Training must be completed within the time allowed for the class entered. As soon as the Judge confirms training is occurring, the Judge calls TRAINING to the Scribe, who marks an X on the Scribe sheet. The Judge monitors but does not aid or assist any training activities other than pointing out a rat location on request. Dogs being trained in the ring do not qualify for any offered class awards. If training:
 - Dogs may remain on a collar/harness and leash if no tunneling effort is to be attempted, and/or the handler may openly carry a collar/leash. All dogs wearing a collar/harness must also be restrained by a leash to prevent an attempt at a tunnel. A collar/leash may never be used punitively in the ring or to pull a dog through a tunnel or up onto a bale. A collar/leash may be used to steady a dog and prevent the rat tube from being roughed. No dangling tags or other dangling items are allowed.
 - Handlers may carry and use toys in the ring.
 - All treats, if allowed, must be kept in a pocket or waist pack and cannot be placed directly on a tube or a bale, but may be fed to the dog next to a tube or bale. Any dropped treats must be completely removed by the competitor.
- Handlers may train in the ring in other ways, but no punitive/harsh training is allowed and no training which could/would harm the rat is allowed. Punitive/harsh training is grounds for dismissal from the Fun Test grounds.
- All other rules pertaining to holding Licensed Trials also pertain to Fun Tests.
- Competitors do not earn qualifying scores toward any Barn Hunt title when participating a Fun Test.

Part 9: Ring Information & Materials

SECTION 1. Ring Construction and Sizes

- All rings are to be designed according to the specifications for each class level (see [Part 15: Regular Classes on page 20](#)).
- The majority of each ring must be physically accessible by the handler without the handler having to climb or jump over bales or bridges (see Master ring Distance Challenge description [page 23](#)). Any part of the ring (other than some parts of the tunnel) not physically accessible must be visible to the handler.
 - The area from the blind to the entrance gate, the entrance gate itself, and the area inside the ring from the entrance gate to the start box must be handicapped/wheelchair accessible.
- The course is identical for all dog heights within each class level, and must be designed with all dog heights in mind.

RING SIZES BY CLASS TYPE

	Instinct*	Novice*	Open*	Senior	Master	Crazy 8s
Ring Enclosure Size	Min 15' x 20' Max 20' x 24' (300-480 sf)	Min 20' x 20' Max 20' x 24'* (400-480 sf)		Min 24' x 24' Max 24' x 32' (576-768 sf)		
Number of bales	10 or 12 (see page 21 of the Judge Rulebook)	20-30	25-40	35-55	Min 50	Min 35

*Instinct/Novice/Open courses can be built inside a Senior/Master sized ring.

Details on course building can be found in ["Course Design" on page 13](#) of the **Judge Rulebook**.

SECTION 2. The Start Box

The start box is a 4' x 4' square area inside the enclosed ring area from which all teams will release their dog. Teams must be able to exit at least 2 sides of the box without encountering a bale.

- Teams which dislodge a corner marker/cone are not to be penalized.

SECTION 3. Official and Incidental Tunnels

- Official tunnels are 18" wide by the height of the sidewall bales used in their construction, set on their taller horizontal sides, and covered by boards.

2. All courses include at least one Official Tunnel. All tunnels which meet the standards for the Official Tunnel for the class level are automatically deemed Official Tunnels.
3. Tunnel location, configuration, length, number of openings, and turns vary by class level
4. Any gap between bales which does not meet the specifications described above, and any tunnel which is not correct for the class level, is an Incidental tunnel (i.e., two bales angled together with a gap, etc.). Dogs may complete any number of Incidental tunnels but those tunnels do not count toward the official tunneling effort. Incidental tunnels do not have to be covered by boards.
5. All Official tunnels include a minimum 6" wide bare board step down over each portal opening which is not covered by bales or straw.

SECTION 4. Ramps and Steps

Ramps and Steps are used as climbing aids. They are to be placed where they are not a tripping hazard, and such that a dog using the ramp or step is able to exit onto a landing area large enough for a large dog to place all four feet. Information on the construction materials of ramps and steps is in the ["Ramps/Steps and Boards" on page 19](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#). A single ramp or one or more steps are required on all courses other than Instinct.

1. **Ramps.** A single ramp made of wood or other suitable material and set on an angle may be used on the ground level of each course, leading to the top of a one-high bale. Straw bales placed on an angle are not acceptable replacements for ramps. **Ramps cannot be placed inside a Master Distance Challenge.**
2. **Steps.** In place of, or in addition to, a ramp, a step or steps are allowed. **More than one Step may be used, and they can be placed at any level. A ground-level Step is allowed inside a Master Distance Challenge as long as there also a ground-level Step outside the Distance Challenge.**

SECTION 5. Bridges

Bridges are an optional tool for Judges to add variety to a course. Bridges are boards spanning an open space in such a way that the dog could walk from one bale to another across the bridge.

1. Bridges must be anchored and stable.
2. Bridges must be as close to possible to horizontal and cannot go from one level of straw to a higher or lower level of straw.
3. Bridges must be fully visible and bare of straw.
4. In Novice, Open, and Senior bridges cannot block a portion of the course in such a way that a handler would have to circle around a majority of the course or step over the bridge to access the area on the other side of the bridge.
5. Dogs are never required to negotiate a bridge.

SECTION 6. Boards

Boards are used as a safe, sturdy base for straw placed on top of tunnels and for safe step up/downs. All 18" wide tunnels must be completely covered by boards.

1. Board edges and corners must not protrude into open space.
2. Boards may be mostly exposed, but must be anchored/weighted so that a large dog cannot easily displace the boards while navigating the tunnel.
3. Boards may be partially or wholly covered by straw.

Part 10: Rat Tube Locations

Rat tubes, (live, litter, and/or empty) may be hidden almost anywhere within the ring enclosure. See exceptions and special notes below.

1. All tubes must be hidden at least 24" (two feet) from any side or corner of the start box.
2. Tubes must be hidden so the average handler can see at least part of the dog.
3. Tubes can't be hidden where a dog could easily push, roll, or shove the tube into any tunnel at any level except Novice. Tubes may be hidden in Novice tunnels.
4. The drain/grate end of any tube cannot be hidden deeper than 10" from any outside surface of a bale.
5. 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.
6. 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.

7. Tubes cannot be hidden under a ramp, but may be hidden around a step.
8. In Novice and Open, tubes must be at least 18" apart. In Senior, Master, Championship, and Crazy 8s, tubes must be at least 6" apart. This rule applies to all tubes, whether rat, litter, or empty.
9. The locations of all tubes will be switched between each blind.
 - a) In some rotations the live tube may be in a more accessible place than in others. That is the "luck of the draw."
10. In Master, the number of live rat tubes will be switched between each dog within each blind. Litter tubes will stay in place for the entirety of each blind.
11. Tubes must be loosely covered with straw in such a way that they cannot be seen by handler or dog. 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.

Part 11: Blind and Ring Rules

SECTION 1. Blinded Staging Area

1. Handlers must stage in a blinded area. Every effort must be made to keep dogs calm and quiet. Food, toys, or mats may be used in the blind as long as all food/toys/mats are removed as the dog exits and use is not disruptive. Items that make noise are not permitted in the blind.
2. If seats are assigned, handlers must stay in their seat until called.
3. Handlers should avoid crossing in front of other dogs when exiting the blind.
4. Handlers cannot bring crates, x-pens, or physical dividers in the blind, or return to the blind after their run.
5. It is the handler's responsibility to get to their designated blind on a timely basis. The Blind Steward will not hold blinds for tardy handlers. Failure to enter the blind on a timely basis and/or to proceed immediately to the start line when called may result in being skipped in the order and/or up to an NQ if the delay is repeated or pronounced. The Club and/or Judge will choose whether and when to allow the handler who has missed their blind to run.
6. Each new set of handlers must wait until the last dog from the previous blind exits before entering the blind.
7. Handlers in the blind may talk freely with each other but cannot talk to persons outside the blind other than the Blind Steward, a Club Trial Chair/Secretary, or the Judge.
8. Other than Club officials who need to access the blind for a specific reason, and persons assisting the differently abled, only handlers and dogs waiting to go into the ring are allowed in the blind.
9. Cell phones, other electronic communication devices, and devices with self-timers are prohibited in the blind/staging area and the ring. If a cell phone or other communication device is found at any time (in the blind, on the way to the ring, or in the ring) the handler is NQd for that run. If in the blind or on the way to the ring, the handler will not be able to compete in that run. If noticed in the ring, the handler will be NQd at the end of the run.
 - a) Watches and fitness bands without self-timers are allowed and must be worn openly.
10. All dogs and handlers must be physically inside the boundaries of the blind including all of the dog's body and the handler's body.
11. Information about young and/or differently-abled handlers is on [page 7](#).

SECTION 2. Entering the Ring and Releasing the Dog

1. Dogs may be carried into the ring if they are of a size to be comfortably carried.
2. Dogs must run "naked," without collar/leash/harness.
3. The collar/leash may be removed at any time after the dog has entered the ring and the gate has been secured. The collar/leash can be handed to the Rat Wrangler, outside leash runner, or placed on the floor/ground. Alternately, it may be folded in a pocket so that it is not visible. The collar/leash cannot be carried in a hand or handed to the Judge. If the handler places/drops the collar/leash on the floor/ground it stays there for the duration of the run. If the dog returns to play with it, all regular rules apply (cannot touch dog until call rat, could be subject to Lack of Control).
4. Handlers must wait for the Judge to verbally instruct them with a command such as "go when ready," before releasing their dog. If a team leaves the box before being verbally released by the judge it is a False Start, see "[False Starts](#)" on [page 11](#) of the [Judge Rulebook](#). The Judge will make the choice to either call the team back to the start box or allow the team to continue. The team will be assessed a 20 second penalty, to be added to the team's overall time at the end of the run. If the handler is called back to the box and False Starts a second time, an NQ score is assessed. If a False Start requires the handler to run the course again (dog false starts and hits a rat tube before the judge is ready, etc.) the handler will be put in a later blind and the 20 second penalty will be applied to the second run.

5. After the Judge's verbal instruction to go, handlers should release the dog without delay. Handlers are allowed to take a few moments to get their dogs settled and focused after the Judge's verbal prompt to go.
 - a) If a Judge feels a competitor is hesitating too long in the start box, the Judge will prompt the handler, "Start now please." If the handler does not then release the dog promptly, the handler may be assessed a Stalling penalty.
6. All dogs must be released from inside the start box. At least two of the dog's feet must be on the floor prior to release with the exception of wheelchair bound or other differently-abled competitors who request and receive permission of the Judge to use alternate release methods (i.e., from their lap). If a very large dog does not fit completely inside the start box, the front feet and chest of the dog must be inside the start box, facing into the course.
7. Time starts when any part of the handler or dog exits the start box after the verbal instruction from the Judge (in the case of a very large dog, when any part of the dog previously contained in the box or any part of the handler leaves the start box).

SECTION 3. Dos and Dont's While In the Ring

1. Handlers may do and/or are encouraged to:

- a) Move around the course while the dog works to be able to view and call the mark of the correct live rat tube.
- b) Speak and gesture at will and verbally praise and encourage the dog to search certain areas, climb and/or tunnel through voice and/or hand gestures. See the stay/wait exception in the NQ section below.
- c) Step over (but not on) the Instinct cradle.
- d) Tip up or move a bale (such as a leaner) to access a tube for removal. If the competitor does not return the bale to its original position without delay and before moving on, the bale will remain where it falls for the duration of the run even if it blocks other parts of the course or the tunnel.
- e) Touch/Reward/praise their dog after they have called Rat and at the end of their run (see Allowed Praise)
- f) Carry their dogs into and out of the ring.
- g) Wear gloves in the ring.
- h) Touch the outer barrier or a post as a balance aid.
- i) Use bales/boards or other course equipment to catch themselves if they slip and/or as an aid to get back up if they fall.
- j) Use an obedience command such as sit or down for control.
- k) Stand in front of the tunnel opening after the dog has entered to encourage the dog to go through. However, if the dog backs out and touches the handler's body, or the handler in any way touches the side bales or the board while attempting to block the dog, it is considered a deliberate touch and will result in an NQ score.

2. Handlers cannot do the following. *The list below does not represent every scenario for an NQ score but does address some common reasons why teams do not qualify. The handler must not:*

- a) Bring food/gum or toys into the ring.
- b) Self-time in the ring.
- c) Enter the ring with bait bags, pouches, phones, timing devices, or other attachments (including cameras). Anything hanging from the handler which may be considered a training aid may also be ruled an attachment.
- d) Carry the leash in the hand or hand the leash to the judge.
- e) Deliberately lead out from the start box to get an advantage. The handler and dog should leave at approximately the same time. An inadvertent lead out (e.g., handler leaves box and dog fails to move with handler) is not penalized (see "[Inadvertent Lead Outs](#)" on page 11 of the [Judge Rulebook](#)).
- f) Bowl or Drop the dog to start. Bowling is pushing/shoving/tugging the dog forward during the release.
- g) Touch, sit on, or step on/over any bales, boards, ramps, steps, bridges, tubes, or other course equipment except as outlined above and in [Allowed Praise and Reward](#) and [Safely Handling/Removing the Rat Tubes](#) sections.
- h) Deliberately use hands or feet to sweep or shuffle through straw to try to find a hidden tube.
- i) Touch the dog at any time after the release from the start box and before the finish of the course except for during the Allowed Praise and Reward period after a live tube is correctly located. The dog brushing, touching, or jumping up on the handler will not be faulted unless the handler is attempting to body block the dog at the tunnel or pats/catches the dog as it comes in contact.
 - Body blocking, pushing, or nudging the dog with hip, knee, leg, or foot, is considered deliberate touching
- j) Berate, bully, intimidate, or otherwise verbally abuse their dog, the Judge, or any person in or around the ring or on trial grounds.
- k) Curse in the ring.

- l) Tip, flip, or drop a tube when removing it from the straw. Any angle over 45 degrees will result in an NQ.
- m) Grab, scruff, shake, or pull/hold the dog by the ear(s) or tail or skin alone. Scruffing is defined as holding on to the dog, with or without pulling, with fingers closed and gripping around hair and/or skin and hair only. Fingers buried in a long coat is not scruffing.
- n) Use a stay, wait, (or any verbal or gestural command meaning stay or wait) to leave the dog. Handlers may sit or down their dogs in front of the tunnel opening **or for control**, but any movement away from the dog while it is in the sit or down, even with just one foot, will result in an NQ.
- o) Deliberately get on hands and/or knees or lay on the ground in the ring.
- p) Peer directly into the tube to check for a rat before or after calling Rat. Handlers may ask the judge to check a tube.
- q) Carry a dog out of the ring as a punishment/corrective action and/or into the ring if carrying is physically uncomfortable for the dog.
- r) Flip a dog onto its back.
- s) Attempt to get the dog to tunnel or climb after the run is over and before exiting the ring.
- t) Pick up or carry a dog during the run.

3. Other handler notes:

- a) Teams who do not successfully find a live rat tube within course time, who indicate an incorrect tube, or who find one or more live rat tubes but do not find the next or final rat tube, are to be taken to the rat tube closest to the dog and praised as outlined in [“When Praise and Reward is Allowed” on page 16](#) before exiting the ring. Dogs are only shown one rat tube, not every remaining rat tube.
 - In Master/Championship, handlers may ask how many rats were on the course.
- b) Handlers may request to be excused from the ring at any time (e.g., dog has stopped working, is stressed, out of control, etc.). In regular classes (Instinct through Championship) an NQ score will be assessed. In Crazy 8s, the team will keep accrued points (must have found at least 1 rat and have a total score above zero).
- c) Elimination on the course is an NQ (non-qualifying) score for the dog. The dog must be immediately removed from the ring and is not allowed to continue. Elimination includes urination, defecation, and/or spitting up/throwing up. Normal slobber is not elimination. Belly bands are not allowed. If a Bitch in Season squats in the ring with the clear motion of peeing, she is to be removed and will receive an NQ score even if the urine does not escape her pants. If a male dog lifts his leg, he may be dismissed even if it is not clear that urine has reached the bale/ground.
- d) If a bitch in season loses her pants for any reason, it will be an NQ score.

SECTION 4. Tunneling

The Tunnel effort is completed when the dog enters any entry/portal of any Official Tunnel and exits any other portal of that tunnel with its entire body. The tail does not have to exit the tunnel.

1. If there is more than one Official Tunnel on the course, successful completion of any one Official Tunnel counts as the tunneling effort.

SECTION 5. Climbing

The climb is completed when the dog impacts the top of any bale or completely straw covered area of a board with all feet. If a large dog climbs up with front feet and follows with rear feet while one or more front feet come back off to go back to the ground (walking over a bale) that is acceptable as a climbing effort. Climbing only one bale high is acceptable at all class levels.

1. The following examples are not legal climbs:

- a) Putting only front feet or back feet on straw.
- b) Jumping a bale without touching the bale or with only incidental touching of the bale such as a brush with a hind foot.
- c) Putting a foot or feet on a ramp, bridge, or bare area of a board.

SECTION 6. Marking the Find of the Rat and Clearing the Course (Master/Championship)

How the dog marks the find of the correct rat tube is only relevant to the handler. The handler indicates the find of the rat clearly and unequivocally and the Judge notes that indication.

1. The general indication is the word RAT. However, if the handler forgets and uses a different call such as ALERT, there is no penalty as long as the indication is clear and unequivocal.

2. Calls must be declarative, not questioning. The handler cannot ask the Judge if the call is the correct one (i.e., “is this right?” or “rat?”). It is the handler’s responsibility to make the call in such a way that the Judge hears and understands it without question.
3. Dogs are not required to put their nose on a rat tube or be a specific minimum or maximum distance from the rat tube for the handler to call the find. It is only necessary for the dog to indicate the live rat tube to the handler in such a way that the handler understands where the live tube is, and for the handler to make the call and be capable of indicating the correct tube location to the Judge. The handler may call the tube after the dog has left it and/or when the dog is in a different area of the course.
4. If requested by the Judge, the handler must be able to indicate the exact location of the correct live rat tube.
5. In Master/Championship, the handler must declare the course “Clear” when all rats are found. The handler may say “Clear,” “Finished,” or any other unequivocal word or phrase to the judge indicating that the course is clear of all rats.

SECTION 7. Exiting the Ring

Dogs and handlers should exit the ring promptly at the end of each run.

1. The collar and leash must be attached to the dog prior to the exit gate being opened and the dog exiting the enclosure, even if the dog is being carried. The dog tugging on the leash as it is being leashed up prior to exiting the ring is not to be penalized unless the tugging is prolonged and/or so out of control that it may delay the Trial or endanger the Judge, Rat Wranglers, or damage the course. The penalty assessed in that instance would be Lack of Control, see [“Penalties” on page 19](#).
2. Once the run has concluded, no training is allowed in the ring,

Part 12: Allowed Praise and Reward

SECTION 1. When Praise and Reward is Allowed

In all Regular and Non-Regular classes in Barn Hunt, after the dog finds the correct rat tube, the handler may praise and reward the dog.

1. The handler may physically pet the dog, verbally praise the dog, point at and/or stabilize/touch the tube, move/wiggle the tube gently then follow the steps outlined in [“Safely Handling/Removing the Rat Tubes” on page 17](#).
 - a) Praise and reward is allowed and encouraged whenever a correct tube is indicated, regardless of whether any/all other elements of the course have been completed.
 - b) The handler may restrain and praise simultaneously, and may call the dog to them for praise. If the dog does not come to the handler for praise, the handler must move on but can first take the tube out of the straw and hand it to the Rat Wrangler if they wish, see [“Method 2: Removes” on page 17](#).
 - c) The dog cannot be deliberately picked up or carried during Allowed Praise and Reward but can be touched and petted or restrained as outlined in [“Method 3: Restrains” on page 18](#). At least two of the dog’s feet must remain in contact with the ground/surface while the handler is touching the dog. If the dog’s feet inadvertently leave the ground despite the handler’s best efforts there is no penalty if the handler immediately returns the feet to the ground or surface.
2. Physical praise/reward may happen before, during, or after rat removal/handoff and may last as long as the handler wishes. However, physical petting/praise happens only once during that period, prior to the dog moving on (see calling the dog to you above). Once a handler completely removes their hands from the dog during praise or praise/restraint, touching the dog again prior to another rat call or the end of the course will result in an NQ score.
3. Time does not stop during the praise/reward period.
4. Dogs who have been assessed a non-qualifying score for being over time or for the handler calling an incorrect tube will be immediately shown the nearest location of a rat and may be briefly praised before exiting the ring. The dog may be carried/touched/gently guided and either on or off leash. The handler is strongly encouraged but not required to take advantage of this opportunity to praise the dog.
 - a) Teams assessed a non-qualifying score due to dog elimination on the course, dog aggression, or handler misconduct must leave the ring immediately and cannot show their dog a rat prior to leaving.

Part 13: Safely Handling/Removing the Rat Tubes

At any class level, if a rat tube is found before all elements of the course are completed the handler may choose any of three different ways to safely interact with the rat tube. The handler may either **Redirect** their dog and leave the live tube in place (or the dog may Self-Redirect); **Remove** the live tube with or without physical restraint; or **Restrain** the dog and ask the Rat Wrangler to remove the live tube. The handler may choose any of the three options after calling rat for any or all of the live tubes on the course.

SECTION 1. Important General Rat Removal Rules

1. The Judge does not remove or handle the rat tube while the competitor is being judged.
2. The Rat Wrangler never picks the tube up out of the straw unless the dog is physically restrained with teeth at least 2' from the tube.
3. If the live tube is found as the last element of the course, every effort should be made to leave the tube in place if possible.
4. The dog running after the Rat Wrangler/tube as it is removed is not Lack of Control/aggression/grounds for an NQ unless the dog interferes with the Rat Wrangler in such a way as to put the rat or Rat Wrangler in danger (trips the wrangler, bounces off the wrangler and causing them to lose their balance, etc.) or nips the Rat Wrangler.
5. Dogs who carry and/or drop any tube and/or who resist releasing any tube to the point where the Judge feels the rat is in imminent danger may be assessed a Lack of Control penalty. Any dog who picks up and shakes any tube is immediately assessed an NQ score. A dog dropping a tube from a height that may cause potential injury to the rat is assessed an NQ.
 - a) A dog retrieving a tube immediately and gently to hand without shaking or dropping is not to be penalized.
6. **As soon as the competitor calls Rat, they may step on/over any bales to get to their dog, even before the judge confirms the call.**
7. If the rat tube is at a height where the handler must brace a hand and/or foot or climb on or step over a bale after calling rat to remove the tube, the handler may do so.

SECTION 2. Method 1: Redirects

The handler may leave the tube in place and **Redirect** the dog to other elements of the course through hand and/or voice gestures. Any tubes left in place by the handler will remain in place for the duration of the run and cannot be removed by the Rat Wrangler unless a rat is in danger, in which case the tube is removed, the run is over, and an NQ is assessed (see below).

1. The handler can still touch/stabilize the tube and praise the dog as allowed in [Allowed Praise and Reward](#) prior to Redirecting the dog, or the handler may Redirect the dog without touching the tube and can still briefly touch the dog in praise, or Redirect the dog without touching.
2. When the dog voluntarily moves away from the tube before the handler can restrain the dog, that is considered a Dog Self-Redirect. The handler may try to call the dog back to the tube for praise and/or restraint, but if the dog refuses to come promptly, the handler must move on with the dog. Before moving on the handler may either remove the tube and hand it to the Rat Wrangler (see Method 2: Removes) or leave the tube in place.
3. If the dog returns to a tube left in place after a Redirect and works it hard and vigorously in such a way that the Judge feels a rat would be in danger if there is/was a rat in the tube, the handler will be assessed a non-qualifying (NQ) score and the tube safely secured.
4. If the dog returns to a tube left in place and the handler calls Rat again, they are assessed an NQ score.

SECTION 3. Method 2: Removes

The handler may choose to **Remove** the tube and hand it to the Rat Wrangler for removal from the ring. The tube is never handed to the Judge.

1. The handler can still touch/stabilize the tube and praise the dog as allowed in [Allowed Praise and Reward](#).
2. The handler must be able to safely remove the tube without flipping, tipping, or dropping the tube and without an extended wrestling match/tug of war which could put the rat in danger. If the tube tips more than 45 degrees or falls, the handler will be assessed an NQ score. If handlers cannot both restrain their dog and safely remove the tube they should choose Method 3: Restrain.
 - a) If the dog has tipped the tube into an upright position, the handler should gently level the tube before handing it to the RW.

3. The handler must control the dog. The dog may be partially or wholly physically and/or verbally restrained, have moved on, or otherwise be under the handler's control. Praise, tube removal and restraint may be combined.
4. Once the handler picks up the tube after praising the dog, he/she may briefly show it to the dog but cannot tip, wave in large sweeps or move the tube around in any kind of aggressive way. The tube should be handed off to the Rat Wrangler without delay.
 - a) The Rat Wrangler will not take a tube if the dog is leaping up or otherwise interfering with the tube or Rat Wrangler. The dog's teeth must be at least two feet away from the tube for the Rat Wrangler to accept it from the handler.
5. If close to a fence or if an inside RW is not nearby, the handler may hand the tube directly out of the ring but cannot choose this method as a special consideration training aid (i.e., cannot hand all tubes out of the ring as a way of not having inside RWs move.)
 - a) Handlers who lift the tube out of the ring take responsibility for the rat during that period, ensuring the outside RW will not fumble or drop the tube.
6. If the handler does not feel confident about being able to safely remove the tube, the handler must restrain the dog and ask the Rat Wrangler to remove the tube.

SECTION 4. Method 3: Restrains

When the dog is completely physically **Restrained** by the handler, the Rat Wrangler will remove the rat tube. Handlers should choose this option even with a compliant dog if they feel they could not brace a hand/foot and/or climb on/over a bale in order to reach a higher tube for safe removal.

1. In order for the Rat Wrangler to remove any tube(s) from the straw, the dog must be restrained with its teeth a minimum of two feet from the tube, or at whatever distance is required for the Rat Wrangler to have safe, unimpeded access.
 - a) The RW will automatically step forward; the handler does not call the RW, only restrain their dog.
 - b) If the handler releases or redirects the dog before the tube has been removed from the straw, the RW will leave the tube in place.
2. Handlers may physically turn their dog away from the Rat Wrangler to facilitate safe removal and/or move/scoot the dog into a safer place on the course while restraining (i.e., to prevent the dog from being at a risk for falling when released).
 - a) Handlers cannot move-scoot the dog to a specific place on the course to get an advantage.
3. Handlers violently tackling or laying on their dogs in a way uncomfortable to the dog may be called for Lack of Control.
4. The handler may choose to call the dog to be restrained. The dog must come as directly as it safely can to the handler for restraint. If the dog instead moves away from the handler to explore other areas of the course, it is considered a Dog Self-Redirect. The handler may then choose to leave the tube or pick up the tube without delay and hand it to a RW or out of the ring, whichever is closer.
5. The handler can still touch/stabilize the tube and praise the dog as allowed in [Allowed Praise and Reward](#) prior to moving the dog back so the RW can remove the tube.
 - a) If the RW moves in to remove the tube prior to the end of the brief praise period or before the dog is properly restrained, the handler may politely tell the RW to wait.
6. The handler cannot deliberately pick up the dog, but may place one or both hands on the dog's chest area, and/or gently cupped around the forelegs at the shoulder, and/or one or both arms loosely around the neck, and/or torso, with a hand or hands on the chest. A "flyball hold" (hands cupped around the top front of the rear legs above the stifle) can be used to move the dog back from the tube, but the hold must then shift to the chest area without delay.
7. At least two of the dog's feet must remain in contact with the ground/surface at all times while the handler is touching the dog. If the dog's feet inadvertently leave the ground despite the handler's best efforts there is no penalty if the handler immediately returns the feet to the ground or surface.
8. The dog must remain restrained until the Rat Wrangler is safe. Only the handler can determine, based on the individual dog's personality, when the Rat Wrangler is safe. Neither the Rat Wrangler nor the Judge will verbally mark when the rat has left the ring.

SECTION 5. Releasing the Dog after Restraint

After praise and reward, once the handler feels the Rat Wrangler is safe, the handler may turn the dog in place to point a specific direction, but cannot scoot/walk the dog forward prior to release in order to get an advantage (i.e., closer to the tunnel). The handler cannot bowl the dog to release from restraint.

Part 14: Scoring, Ties, Penalties, Disqualifications

SECTION 1. Qualifying (Q) Scores

A team receives a qualifying score/leg toward a Barn Hunt title at a Licensed Trial when all of the requirements of the entered level/course are completed within the set standard course time for that level/course without incurring any errors which would result in an NQ. Dogs do not have to earn a placement (first through fourth place) in any class in order to receive a qualifying score.

SECTION 2. Non-Qualifying (NQ) Scores

A Non Qualifying (NQ) score will be assessed for teams who do not meet the minimum criteria for each class level and/or who do not meet the criteria of the rules as written. While most areas of these rules identify when an action will result in an NQ, competitors are advised to carefully read the rules for words such as must and cannot. Those indicate areas where failing scores could be assessed.

SECTION 3. Ties

In the event of two dogs of the same height and level completing the course in the exact same amount of time, where the outcome of the tie would result in a placement of first through fourth, there will be a tiebreaker. Crazy 8s class does not have placements and is not eligible for tie-breakers.

1. One live rat tube is hidden on any available course, with the preference of it being the same course that was used in the class where the tie occurred. The tube is hidden in the same class level appropriate location for both dogs.
2. No litter or dry tube will be on the course.
3. Each dog is brought into the course separately.
4. Time starts when any part of the handler or dog leaves the start box. No climbing or tunneling effort is required.
5. The team whose handler correctly indicates the live tube in the shortest time wins the tie. If neither team finds the tube, within 2 minutes, a random draw or coin flip is held to determine the winner of the tie.

SECTION 4. Penalties

1. **False Start.** Handlers and/or dogs who leave the start box before being directed to/released by the Judge are assessed a 20 second penalty, to be added to their time at the end of the run. A second false start in the same run is assessed an NQ score.
2. **Stalling, handler error.** If a dog is vigorously working any tube (live, litter, or empty) in such a manner that if that tube was occupied by a rat, the rat would be in danger, and if the handler fails to call Rat or, alternately, redirect the dog to search elsewhere within a reasonable amount of time, the Judge will assess a penalty of Stalling on the handler. The first incidence of Stalling is assessed a 10 second penalty. The second incidence of Stalling in the same run is assessed an NQ Score. Stalling may also be called if a handler excessively delays at the start after the judge has instructed the handler to exit the start box and begin the hunt.
 - a) Dogs may vigorously work tubes. Handlers are expected to call and restrain or redirect immediately to ensure the safety of the rat. A dog working a tube in a way that does not endanger the rat (i.e., scooting the tube in a straight line across the floor without rolling, turning or spinning) will not be called for Stalling.
 - b) The “reasonable amount of time” will vary based on how the dog is working the tube.
3. **Lack of Control.** Lack of Control can be assessed if the handler demonstrates an inability to control their dog in a timely manner. Examples include but are not limited to; if the dog refuses to be caught within a reasonable amount of time during an attempt to restrain or after a run, grabs and runs away with a tube, takes a tube into a tunnel and does not emerge without delay, will not allow the handler to remove the tube from its mouth, etc. Judges should give handlers some time to get their dog under control, but if the rat is in danger and/or if the dog refuses to be caught and is unduly delaying the Trial, the Judge will call a Lack of Control error.
 - a) For Instinct and Novice, a Lack of Control error is assessed a 10 second penalty for the first instance during a run and an NQ for a second instance.
 - b) For Open and above, and Crazy 8s any Lack of Control error is an NQ.

SECTION 5. Disqualifications

Disqualifications are actions which may result in dismissal from Trial and/or any/all upcoming Events. Please refer to the Misconduct Guide available online. These include:

1. Dog aggression.

2. Unsportsmanlike behavior or misconduct.
3. Intentional double handling or cheating.

Part 15: Regular Classes

SECTION 1. A and B Classes

Novice, Open, and Senior, are split into A and B divisions. Master is split into Master A and Championship. All competitors enter each class level in the A division until they finish the title at that level. Once a competitor finishes a title from the A division, they are no longer eligible to compete at that level in A class and must either move up, over (lateral move) or down.

SECTION 2. Entering Before the Event

When sending in an entry prior to the Event, the Class entered depends on titles previously earned. Competitors can enter their dog in any class that dog is eligible for, including B classes at a lower level (for example, a dog with a RATM can enter either Championship, Novice B, Open B, or Senior B).

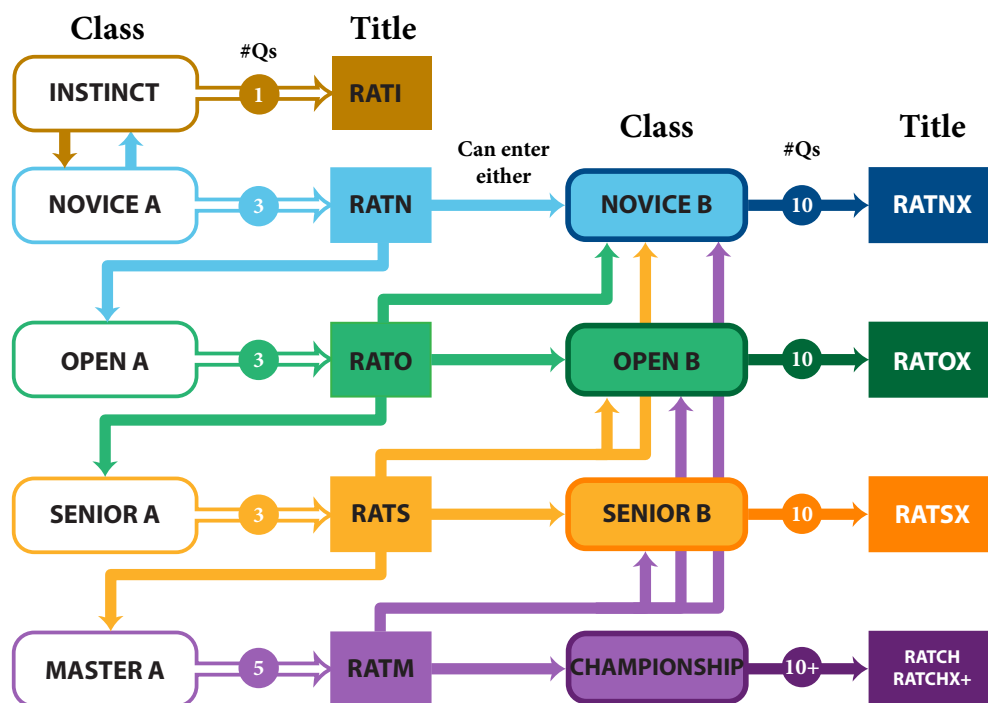
1. Competitors are entered in one Class per Event and cannot, for instance, enter Open B on Saturday and Senior A on Sunday.
2. Competitors entering any B class will stay in that B class for the event (see below).
3. Dogs cannot be entered in a class they are not yet eligible to enter.

SECTION 3. Moving Up or Over During an Event

Competitors can move up or over (lateral move) during any Event where move-ups are accepted. Any dog completing a RATN, RATO, or RATS title may opt to either move up to the A-division in the Class at the next level or move over/ laterally into the B-division Class at the level in which they just attained their title, and thus become eligible for Level X titles. As an example, a dog attaining a RATS may choose to move up to Master A (for RATM), laterally to Senior B (for RATSX), or, at a later Event, down to either Novice B (RATNX) or Open B (RATOX). Dogs achieving RATM from Master A must move to Championship for RATCH and RATCHX and above.

1. Move ups and lateral moves are available only from the A classes. Competitors cannot move from one B class to another B class during an Event.
2. Dogs cannot move down during an Event.

CLASS TYPE AND ELIGIBILITY FOR ENTRY FLOW CHART, REGULAR CLASSES



SECTION 4. Barn Hunt Instinct (RATI)

1. **Prerequisite:** None. Dogs may enter this class and Novice A Class in the same Trial. Dogs may continue to enter this class until the Novice title (RATN) is attained. Dogs with a RATN or above cannot enter Instinct. An Instinct pass is not required to enter Novice A. Dogs pre-entered in both Novice A and Instinct who finish the Novice title during the event can continue to show in Instinct for that event only, even if they choose to move up.
2. **Course time allowed:** One minute.
3. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** One, under one Judge.
4. **Start Box location:** Directly against the front wings of an Official tunnel.
5. **Number/Type of Tubes on the course:** One empty tube, one litter tube, one rat tube, secured in a cradle on top of the ground.
6. **Required elements within course time allowed:** Correctly indicate the tube with the rat.
7. **Summary:** RATI is an optional class for any dog without a Barn Hunt Novice (RATN) title. RATI is held either on a set course (see the Judge Guidelines) or on a Novice course. If using a Novice course, the course may be slightly altered to accommodate the Instinct cradle. The three tubes will be placed secured and uncovered in plain sight on the course. A Climb and a Tunnel are not required.
8. **Summary:** Time starts when the dog and/or handler exits the start box. Time ends when the handler indicates a rat tube.

SECTION 5. Novice Barn Hunt: (RATN, RATNX)

Novice A (RATN)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Any dog may enter Novice A if that dog has not yet attained the Novice title (RATN). Dogs entering Novice A may, but are not required to, have an Instinct title.
2. **Course time allowed:** Two minutes.
3. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** Three, under one or more Judges.
4. **Start Box location:** One flat side not less than three nor more than four feet from, and directly in front of, the opening to an Official Tunnel.
5. **Number/Type of Tubes on the course:** One empty tube, one litter tube, one rat tube. At least one tube of any type must be elevated. All tubes may be elevated.
6. **Tunnel Requirements:** The tunnel is straight and short. The Novice tunnel has a specific design. Refer to the [“Novice Tunnel Configuration” on page 19](#) of the **Judge Rulebook** for an illustration. At least one Official Tunnel is at ground level. There can be more than one Official Tunnel.
7. **Bale height requirements:** There must be at least one and not more than three different places on the course with a minimum of two touching bales at the two-high level.
8. **Required elements within course time allowed:** Execute a climb. Execute an Official Tunnel. Correctly indicate one live Rat tube. These elements can be accomplished in any order.
9. **Summary:** Time starts when the dog and/or handler exits the start box. Time stops when the dog/handler indicates the rat and has executed both a tunneling and climbing effort.

Novice B (RATNX)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Dogs may enter Novice B once they have attained a RATN or any level title above a RATN. Dogs are not required to finish the RATNX class before moving to another class and can move in and out of the RATNX class at will, retaining their qualifying scores.
2. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** 10, under a minimum of two Judges. Multiples of RATNX may be acquired. Each time a dog achieves 10 more qualifying scores from the Novice B class, a number will be appended to this title. 20 qualifying scores will be awarded RATNX2, 30 qualifying scores will be awarded RATNX3, etc.

All other rules and elements are identical to those in the Novice A class. Novice A and Novice B dogs compete on the same course though they are placed separately (see [Ribbons and Placements](#)). Novice B dogs can be blinded in the same blinds as Novice A dogs.

SECTION 6. Open Barn Hunt: (RATO, RATOX)

Open A (RATO)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Any dog may enter Open A any time after attaining the Novice title of RATN and prior to completion of the Open title, RATO.

2. **Course time allowed:** Two minutes 30 seconds.
3. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** Three, under one or more Judges.
4. **Start Box location:** Anywhere on the course.
5. **Number/Type of Tubes on the course:** One empty tube, two litter tubes, two rat tubes. At least one live rat tube must be elevated. All tubes may be elevated.
6. **Tunnel Requirements:** The tunnel must have one 90 degree turn, no jogs, and is 8' to 10' in total length as designed. The exit cannot be readily visible from the entrance; the tunnel must look dark. There can be more than one Official Tunnel.
7. **Bale height requirements:** There must be a minimum of two and a maximum of three different places on the course where at least two touching bales are stacked two-high. A group of five or more touching bales at two-high in a single location count as two places.
8. **Required elements within course time allowed:** Execute a climb. Execute an Official Tunnel. Correctly indicate two live Rat tubes. These elements can be accomplished in any order.
9. **Summary:** Time starts when the dog and/or handler exits the start box. Time stops when the dog/handler has indicated both live rat tubes and has executed both the tunneling and climbing effort.

Open B (RATOX)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Dogs may enter Open B once they have attained a RATO or any level title above a RATO. Dogs are not required to finish the RATOX class before moving to another class and can move in and out of the RATOX class at will, retaining their qualifying scores.
2. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** 10, under a minimum of two Judges. Multiples of RATOX may be acquired. Each time a dog achieves 10 more qualifying scores from the Open B class, a number will be appended to this title. 20 qualifying scores will be awarded RATOX2, 30 qualifying scores will be awarded RATOX3, etc.

All other rules and elements are identical to those in the Open A class. Open A and Open B dogs compete on the same course though they are placed separately (see [Ribbons and Placements](#)). Open B dogs can be in the same blinds as Open A dogs.

SECTION 7. Senior Barn Hunt (RATS, RATSX)

Senior A (RATS)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Dogs may enter Senior A any time after they have attained the Open title of RATO, and may compete in Senior A until they receive the Senior title, RATS.
2. **Course time allowed:** Three minutes 30 seconds.
3. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** Three, under one or more Judges.
4. **Start Box location:** Anywhere on the course.
5. **Number/Type of Tubes on the course:** One empty tube, three litter tubes, four rat tubes. Tubes may be at any level. In some blinds, tube locations will be moderately challenging.
6. **Tunnel Requirements:** The tunnel must have a minimum of one and a maximum of three 90° turns and is 12' to 20' in length as designed. The tunnel may have multiple portal openings, as long as a dog entering any opening will have completed the required number of turns and at least the minimum length of 12' prior to exiting any other portal. The tunnel must appear dark. The tunnel cannot contain "blind alleys," areas inside the tunnel which do not lead to an exit. The tunnel can contain interior jogs. The official tunnel may be either on the ground or elevated. There can be more than one Official Tunnel on the course.
7. **Bale height requirements:** There must be at least one place on the course where at least two touching bales are stacked three-high.
8. **Required elements within course time allowed:** Execute a climb. Execute an Official Tunnel. Correctly indicate four live Rat tubes. These elements can be accomplished in any order.
9. **Summary:** Time starts when the dog and/or handler exits the start box. Time stops when the dog/handler has indicated all four live rat tubes and has executed both the tunneling and climbing effort.

Senior B (RATSX)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Dogs may enter Senior B once they have attained a RATS or any level title above a RATS. Dogs are not required to finish the RATSX class before moving to another class and can move in and out of the RATSX class at will, retaining their qualifying scores.

2. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** 10, under a minimum of two Judges. Multiples of RATSX may be acquired. Each time a dog achieves 10 more qualifying scores from the Senior B class, a number will be appended to this title. 20 qualifying scores will be awarded RATSX2, 30 qualifying scores will be awarded RATSX3, etc.

All other rules and elements are identical to those in the Senior A class. Senior A and Senior B dogs compete on the same course though they are placed separately (see [Ribbons and Placements](#)). Senior B dogs can be in the same blinds as Senior A dogs.

SECTION 8. Master Barn Hunt (RATM)

Master A (RATM)

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Dogs may enter Master A any time after they have attained the Senior title of RATS, and may compete in Master A until they receive the Master title, RATM.
2. **Course time allowed:** Four minutes 30 seconds.
3. **Number of Qualifying Scores Required:** Five, under two or more different Judges.
4. **Start Box location:** Anywhere on the course.
5. **Number/Type of Tubes on the course:** 8 tubes. One to five tubes will have rats. All tubes without rats will have litter. The number of rat tubes to litter tubes will change with every competitor. Tubes may be at any level. For each blind all 8 tubes remain in the same location, with only the number of live versus litter tubes changing for each dog. Between blinds, all 8 tubes are moved. In some blinds, tube locations will be quite challenging.
6. **Distance Challenges:** Rat tubes in this class may be placed so as to pose a horizontal distance challenge in that depending on course design, the dog may need to work away from the handler, in an area the handler cannot step into or readily reach/touch the dog prior to the rat call.
 - a) A distance challenge is an open or partially open area wholly blocked by a line of bales, and/or up to two marked entryways of 1' to 2' in width.
 - b) Distance challenges with entryways will be marked off at the leading/exterior edge with contrasting tape or with mats placed on the ground and anchored by bales so they cannot shift.
 - c) Handlers stepping on or over a bale or stepping into/touching any part of the tape/mats prior to calling rat will be NQd at the end of their run.
 - d) No more than half of the total area of the ring is allowed to be in a distance challenge.
 - e) Any or all portals of the tunnel may be inside the distance challenge. If all portals are inside the DC, one tunnel portal must be less than 3 feet from the outside boundary of the distance challenge.
 - f) After calling rat, entering the DC, praising, and redirecting/restraining/removing the rat tube, the handler must exit the distance challenge without delay. If the handler is not yet out of the distance challenge and the dog finds another rat in the distance challenge, the handler may call rat again and stay in the distance challenge long enough to praise and redirect/restrain/remove again. However, if a handler lingers, asks or calls the dog back to hunt the DC, or asks or directs the dog to a tunnel portal located inside the DC, the handler must stay in the DC and handle the dog from there until they call rat again or finish the run. The handler may encourage the dog to hunt or tunnel any area outside the DC while the handler is still exiting the DC area.
7. **Tunnel requirements:** The tunnel must have a minimum of two 90° turns and may have a maximum of four 90° turns and is 15' to 25' in length as designed. The tunnel may have multiple portal openings, as long as a dog entering any opening will have completed the minimum number of turns and at least the minimum length of 15' prior to exiting any other opening. The Master tunnel must appear dark. The Official Tunnel may be either on the ground or elevated. There can be more than one Official Tunnel.
8. **Bale Height Requirements:** There must be at least two separate places on the course where a minimum of two touching bales are stacked three-high. A group of five or more touching bales at three-high in a single location can count as two places.
9. **Required elements within course time allowed:** Execute a climb. Execute an Official Tunnel. Correctly indicate to the Judge when all live rat tubes have been found by declaring the course clear of rats. Elements can be completed in any order. A handler may choose to declare the course clear of rats then ask the dog to complete another required element such as a tunnel.
10. **Special Master Blind and Rat/Litter Tube Changes:** The Club, with Judge input, determines if the optimal number of blind participants is 4 or 5 based on entries, Judge preference, etc. The number of competitors per blind must be published and/or posted and announced in the general briefing. Once published and/or posted and announced, the Master staging group size must stay the same for that entire Event, allowing for smaller blind-group sizes and blind balancing as needed to accommodate conflicts and odd numbers.

- Summary:** Time starts when the dog and/or handler exits the start box. Time stops when the dog/handler has correctly indicated all live rat tubes, has declared the course clear of rats, and has executed both the Tunneling and Climbing effort. Handlers who have NQd can request to know the number of live tubes on the course.

SECTION 9. Barn Hunt Championship (RATCH, RATCHX)

- Eligibility Criteria:** All dogs working on RATCH or RATCHX titles and above must enter Championship class.
- RATCH:** 10 qualifying scores under at least two Judges are required for the RATCH.
- RATCHX:** The RATCH title and 10 qualifying scores under at least two Judges are required for the RATCHX. 20 qualifying scores will be awarded a RATCHX2, etc.

All other rules and elements are identical to those in the Master A (RATM) class. Master A and Championship Class dogs compete on the same course though they are placed separately (see Ribbons). Championship Class dogs can be in the same blinds as Master A dogs.

Part 16: Non-Regular Classes and Titles

SECTION 1. Crazy 8s Class

Crazy 8s is a Non-Regular class, and as such is not required to be offered at any Licensed Trial or Fun Match. Crazy 8s classes held at Trials are titling. Crazy 8s classes held at Fun Matches do not count toward Crazy 8s titles.

- Prerequisite:** None. Dogs do not have to have any other Barn Hunt title to enter Crazy 8s.
- Course Time:** 2 minutes.
- Course Size:** Senior/Master sized course. Judges/Clubs may opt to use an existing Senior or Master course, modified as specified below, for Crazy 8s.
- Start box:** The Start Box may be anywhere on the course. The area from the entry gate to the start box must be handicapped accessible.
- Tunnel:** Crazy 8s tunnels must conform to the Senior tunnel rules. All Crazy 8s tunnels are at ground level.
- Bales:** At least one area on the course with two touching bales at 2-high. Bales cannot be higher than 2-high. Bale numbers are to be consistent with Senior or above challenges.
- Ramps, boards, steps, and bridges:** Ramp, step, board and bridge rules are as they are for Regular Senior and Master courses.
- Number and types of Tubes on the course:** Eight live rat tubes. Four litter tubes. At least one live rat tube must be elevated.
- Distance Challenges:** Distance challenges are not allowed in Crazy 8s.

Crazy 8s Scoring

All general Regular class rules apply. Special scoring is:

- 10 points per correct rat call.
- 10 points for tunnel.
- 10 points for climb.
- Points are acquired until all rats are found and tunnel and climb are completed, or until Time is called. A Clean Run (100 points) is awarded when there is no fault called and all 8 rats are found, plus climb and tunnel executed in two minutes or less. A Clean Run which is completed in 1:45 or less (rounded down to the nearest second) earns a bonus of 5 points. The Judge will call BONUS. A Clean Run which is completed in 1:30 or less earns a second bonus of 5 points. The Judge will call SUPER BONUS. No more than 10 total bonus points per run are allowed. Total possible points per run are 110.
- Penalties (in addition to all general Barn hunt penalties) are:
 - Failure to Tunnel -20 points.
 - Failure to climb -20 points.
 - First incorrect rat call (litter or no tube) -20 points.
 - No rats found or Second incorrect rat call (litter or no tube) NQ score (dog shown a rat before exit).
- To receive a qualifying score, the dog must find at least one rat and have a cumulative score of 10 points or over. Zero and negative scores are not used.

Crazy 8s Judging and Faults

1. After calling rat on an incorrect litter tube, if the falsely-called litter tube is lifted from the straw prior to the Judge’s verbal call of FAULT, the tube is to be removed from the ring. If the tube has not yet been lifted from the straw when the Judge calls FAULT, the tube must remain in place. **If the handler has touched their dog after calling Rat and before the Judge calls FAULT, no touching penalty is assessed even if the tube remains in place.**
2. There are no tie-breakers allowed in Crazy 8s.
3. **Stalling Call.** In Crazy 8s, the first Stalling call is -20 points. A second Stalling call is an NQ.
4. **False Start.** If there is a false start and the judge is able to click the timer as the team leaves the box, time goes to 1:40. If the judge is unable to click the timer as the team leaves the box, the handler may be blinded in a later blind. The time for their second run will be 1:40. Teams who false start are not eligible for bonus points. A second false start is an NQ.

Titles

1. **CZ8B:** Crazy 8s Bronze, 500 points accumulated.
2. **CZ8S:** Crazy 8s Silver, CZ8B plus 500 points for a total of 1000 points.
3. **CZ8G:** Crazy 8s Gold, CZ8S plus 500 points for a total of 1,500 points.
4. **CZ8P:** Crazy 8s Platinum, CZ8G plus 500 points for a total of 2000 points.

After the dog reaches the Platinum level, further titles are earned in 500 point increments. A dog with 2500 for example, is awarded Crazy 8s Platinum Bronze, or CZ8PB, and so on. Double Platinum will be abbreviated as CZ8P2.

SECTION 2. National Championship Titles

The following titles are available only at the Barn Hunt National competition.

1. **RGC:** Games Champion. This title is awarded to the dog who receives the Gold Medal in Games competition at any Barn Hunt National.
2. **RVC:** Versatility Champion. This title is awarded to the dog who receives the Gold Medal in Versatility competition at any Barn Hunt National
3. **RGNC:** Grand National Champion. This title is awarded to the dog who receives the Gold Medal in the Grand National at any Barn Hunt National.

These titles are prefix titles and will appear before the dog’s registered name in the Barn Hunt record and on Barn Hunt certificates. Only three dogs per year will receive the title, and that title will always be reserved only for Gold Medal winners at the National. In the case of a dog repeating as a Gold Medal winner at the National, a number designation will be appended to the title (i.e., RGNC2).

TITLE REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY TABLE

Class	Title	# Q Scores	# Judges	SCT	Bale Height	Tunnel Turns	Tunnel Length	# Rats	# Litter	# Clean
Instinct	RATI	1	1	1:00	2	0	—	1	1	1
Novice A	RATN	3	1	2:00	2	0	—	1	1	1
Novice B	RATNX	10	2							
Open A	RATO	3	1	2:30	2	1	8' to 10'	2	2	1
Open B	RATOX	10	2							
Senior A	RATS	3	1	3:30	3	1-3	12' to 20'	4	3	1
Senior B	RATSX	10	2							
Master A	RATM	5	2	4:30	3	2-4	15' to 25'	1-5	3-7	0
Master B/Ch.	RATCH RATCHX	10								
Crazy 8s	CZ8B	500 pts	1	2:00	2	1-3	12' to 20'	8	4	0
	CZ8S	1000 pts								
	Cz8G	1500 pts								
	Cz8P	2000 pts								

Part 17: Ribbons and Placements

Ribbons are awarded to all dogs with qualifying scores at Barn Hunt Trials.

SECTION 1. Qualifying Ribbons

1. Dark brown qualifying ribbons are awarded for each qualifying score in all Regular and Non-Regular classes at Barn Hunt Trials. Placement ribbons are not awarded in Instinct. Qualifying ribbons the Barn Hunt National may vary in color.

SECTION 2. A Class Ribbons

1. In addition to Qualifying ribbons, placement Ribbons for A-Level Regular Classes are awarded to first through fourth place in each of the three height divisions for Novice, Open, Senior, and Master classes at Barn Hunt Trials. Instinct class does not get Placement ribbons.
 - First Place Ribbon: Blue
 - Second Place Ribbon: Red
 - Third Place Ribbon: Yellow
 - Fourth Place Ribbon: White
2. High in Class ribbons for A-Level classes must be awarded at for all Regular Classes at Barn Hunt Trials. The abbreviation for this designation is HIC.
 - High in Class Novice A: This shall be awarded to the fastest dog out of all heights in the RATN class
 - High in Class Open A: This shall be awarded to the fastest dog out of all heights in the RATO class
 - High in Class Senior A: This shall be awarded to the fastest dog out of all heights in the RATS class
 - High in Class Master A: This shall be awarded to the fastest dog out of all heights in the RATM class

SECTION 3. B Class/Championship Ribbons

1. Ribbons for B-Level classes are awarded as follows to first through fourth place regardless of height (one set of placement ribbons for all heights combined in the B classes; there are no placements by height).
 - First Place Ribbon: Blue
 - Second Place Ribbon: Red
 - Third Place Ribbon: Yellow
 - Fourth Place Ribbon: White
2. High in Class ribbons for B-Level classes may be awarded for some or all classes in place of or in addition to the blue First place ribbon. The abbreviation for this designation is HICB/HICC, though regular A Class HIC ribbons may be used for B classes.
3. Clubs may choose to award a Reserve High in Class B in addition to the second place ribbon from the B class. The abbreviation for this designation is RHICB.

SECTION 4. Crazy 8s Ribbons

1. Crazy 8s Classes receive Qualifying ribbons for all Qualifiers. Placement and/or High In Class ribbons are not allowed in Crazy 8s. Optional "Clean Run" and/or BONUS tokens/ribbons may be awarded.

SECTION 5. Optional Ribbons

1. New Title ribbons may be awarded to any team attaining a new title in any Regular or Non-Regular class.
2. Other ribbons/prizes may be awarded at the discretion of the Club such as High <breed> in Novice, Oldest Dog, Judges Choice, etc.
3. Fun test placement ribbons are optional. See ["Fun Tests" on page 7](#) of the [Club Rulebook](#) for more information on Fun Test ribbons.