

This is an introduction to the Agility Games of Canine Performance Events for handlers who are new to the venue. When I went to my first trial, it was clear that reading the CPE Rulebook was not going to make me understand how the games work. Listening to the judge’s briefing and asking experienced handlers was how I learned about the games. This worked, but it would have been nice to understand the games a little more ahead of time. Hopefully this guide will do that for other newbies.

Disclaimer: Nothing here is official or in any way modifies the official CPE Rulebook, which can be downloaded from the CPE website at <http://www.k9cpe.com/rcall2007.htm>. Thanks to CPE Judge Paul Stusalitus for the use of his course diagrams from the March 2010 trial at Four Seasons in Ohio.

General Hints: Some of the games will demand the ability to “think on your feet.” Consider this when you walk the courses. Listen carefully to the judge’s briefing which often contains nuances not covered in this guide or the Rulebook. If you’re not sure about a rule, ask the judge! If you have a question about strategy, ask a more experienced handler; they are always willing to help. It can be useful to use different colored pens to draw course lines on the diagrams.

COLORS

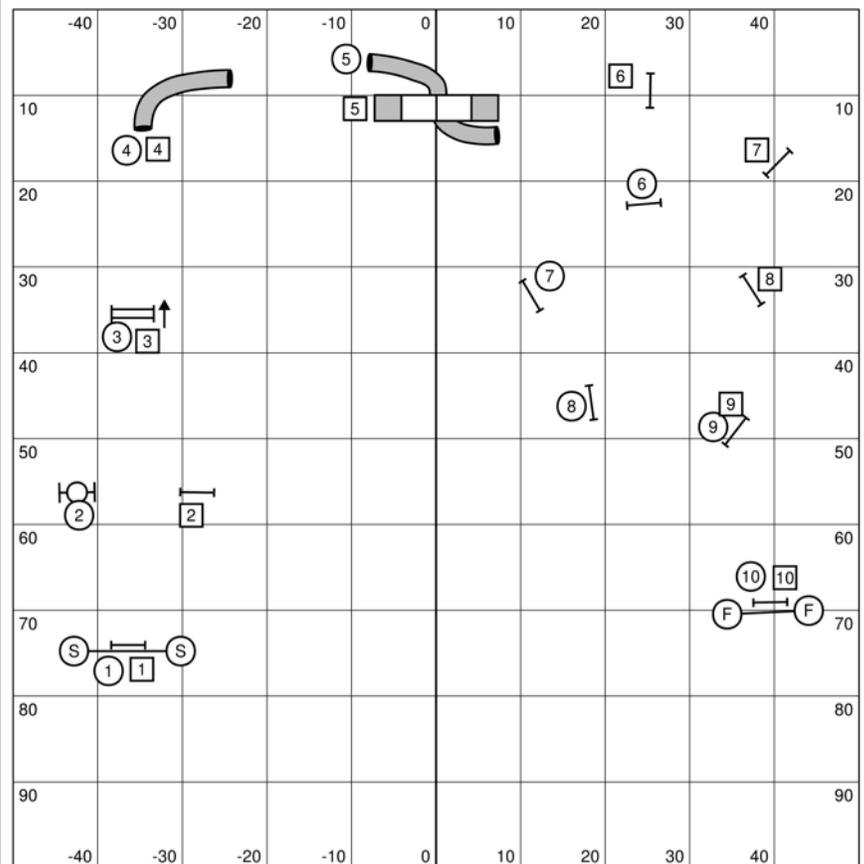
The object of Colors is to run one of two overlapping mini-agility courses of 8 to 12 obstacles. The courses will overlap or cross paths a minimum of 2 times and be fairly equal in terms of length and challenge.

Each course will be marked by differently colored cones. In the diagram at right, one course is designated by circled numbers and the other by squares. On the actual course, the circles might be marked by numbered red cones and the squares by numbered green cones, for example.

Obstacles: If a teeter-totter is used, it will only be used on one of the courses in Levels 1/2. There will be no weaves or triple jump in Levels 1/2.

You are not required to declare your choice of course prior to beginning the run. The judge will determine which course you are running by observing either (1) the obstacle you start with – if the courses start with different obstacles or different directions over the same obstacle, or (2) your choice of obstacle where the courses diverge, which must occur by the third obstacle. (In the example at right, the courses diverge at the 2nd obstacle.)

Level 1/2 Colors Course



Because you do not have to declare your course in advance, there is the opportunity to recover from a mistake early in the run for courses which start on the same obstacle. For example, say you were planning to do the “circle” course above, but your dog took the bar jump (square #2) instead of the tire (circle #2). You may then change plans and continue with the square course. You would earn a Q if this course is successfully completed. Naturally, this would require thinking on your feet and is something to consider during the walk-through.

Catch Phrase: “A course of a different color.”

WILDCARD

The object of Wildcard is to run a short course that contains three “wildcards.” A wildcard is a pair of obstacles placed approximately parallel to each other, five feet apart. One obstacle of the pair is easier and one is more difficult. The easier obstacle is assigned 1 point and the more difficult obstacle is assigned 2 points.

During the briefing, the judge will point out which obstacle of each wildcard is considered the harder of the two, designated as a 2-point obstacle. (Not all dog/handler teams consider double jumps to be more difficult than tunnels, for example.) Thus, it is especially important to attend the briefing for Wildcard.

In the example at right, the 1-point obstacles are designated by the circled numbers and the 2-point obstacles by the squared numbers with “b” appended. On the actual course, the 2-point obstacles will normally have a different color cone than all the other obstacles. This will be explained at the briefing. In this example, entering the tunnel (#4) from the left end would be a 1-point wildcard and entering it from the right (#4b) would be a 2-point wildcard. For the next wildcard, the single bar jump (#5) is the 1-point obstacle and the double jump (#5b) is the 2-point obstacle. Finally, the tunnel (#10) is the 1-point obstacle and the teeter totter (#10b) is the 2-point obstacle of the third wildcard.

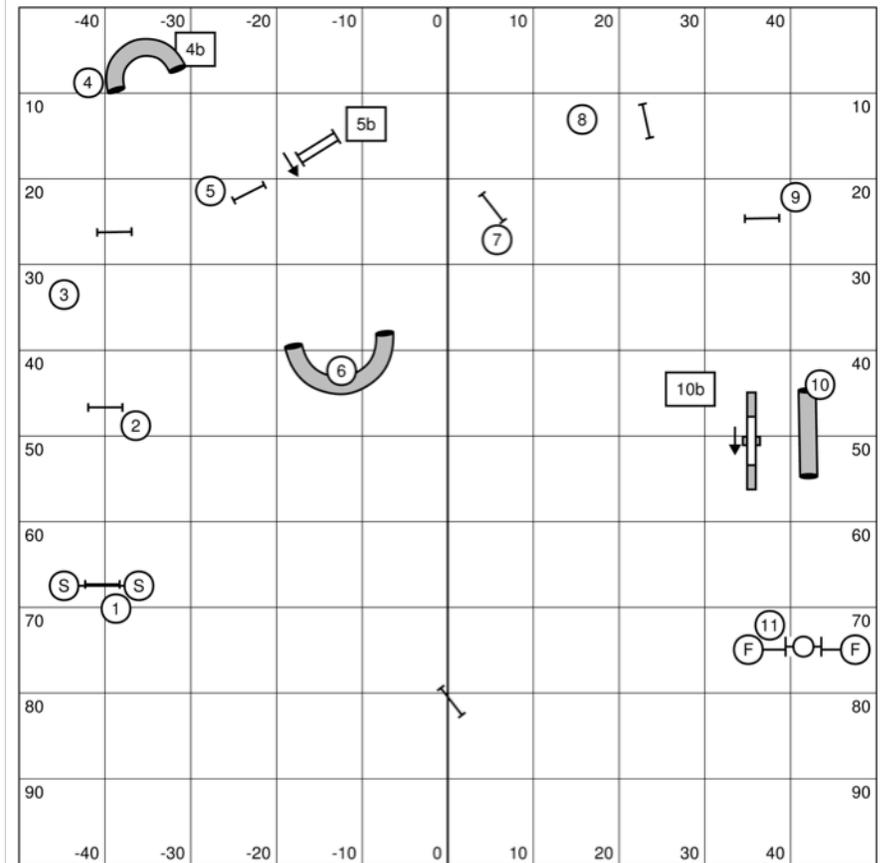
In Levels 1/2, the dog must take **exactly two** 1-point wildcards and **one** 2-point wildcard. Any other combination will result in an NQ. During the run, you will hear the judge call out “ONE” or “TWO” as you take each wildcard, designating the wildcards accumulated.

So, in levels 1/2, your goal is to hear the judge call out “ONE” twice during your run and “TWO” once during your run. Note: In Levels 3/4/5/C, the numbers are reversed, with the dog required to take two 2-point and one 1-point obstacle.

For Levels 1/2, when you walk the course, you should plan which one 2-point obstacle to take, according to the abilities of your dog. What someone else (and the judge) considers the easier obstacle may not be so for you. One possible plan, for example, would consist of taking tunnel #4 (left end), the double jump at wildcard #5 and the tunnel at wildcard #10 (and all the other numbered obstacles in order). But what if when you actually run the course, your dog accidentally enters tunnel #4b (right end)? This would require that you adjust on the fly, and send your dog over the single jump at wildcard #5 instead of the double jump. (Taking both #4b and #5b would result in an NQ due to taking TWO 2-point obstacles instead of just one.) So, during the walk-through, consider these possibilities in case your dog inadvertently takes the wrong wildcard. Finally, you cannot change a wildcard once the dog has touched or committed to the other wildcard of a pair. Doing so would result in an NQ.

Catch Phrase: “ONE 2-pointer and TWO 1-pointers.” (For Levels 1/2)

Level 1/2 Wildcard Course



SNOOKER

Snooker is a two-part point game in which you must earn a minimum number of points before time expires. In the first part, or “opening,” your dog must take a red jump followed by a numbered obstacle (color) and then a different red jump and a color and then a third, different red jump, followed by a color. In the second part, or “closing,” you run the numbered course in order, from #2 through #7 and end by touching the table at the finish line with at least one paw.

Point accumulation: For Level 1, you must earn 26 points; Level 2 requires 28 points. Each obstacle successfully completed in the required order earns points according to its number. For example, the two part tunnel #6a/b at right is worth 6 points if used in the opening, and another 6 points in the closing. Each red jump is worth 1 point.

In the opening, you must do a “red-jump-then-color combination” three times. The choice of reds and colors is up to you. You may use each red only once, but you may use the **same** color multiple times in the opening. The fourth red jump is a “spare” in case a bar is dropped on one of the others. If you knock a bar on one of the reds, you must proceed to another red before attempting a color. You may take the red jumps and colors (opening only) in either direction unless otherwise noted. You are **ONLY** permitted to take 4 reds if you drop a red jump and must use the fourth as a spare.

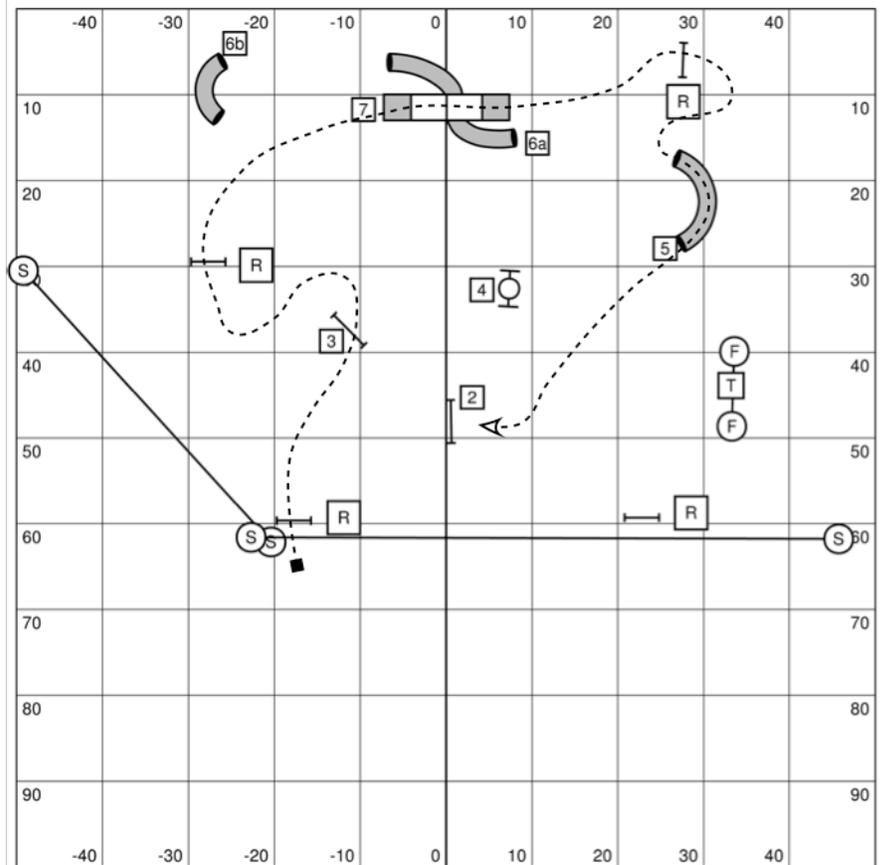
Point accumulation stops if the red/color sequence is broken (refer to the Rulebook for details), your dog goes off course in the closing, or when time expires. If a color is faulted in the opening, no points are awarded. You should proceed to another red or the closing as appropriate. When time expires (whistle blows) during the closing, you must head directly to the table to stop the clock. Directing the dog to another obstacle after the whistle blows will result in loss of the last point value earned.

In the example above, the red jumps are indicated by squared R's and the colors by the numbers 2 through 7. On the actual course, the red jumps may be indicated by red flags with the number 1. The dashed line (not part of the original diagram) represents one of many possible opening sequences. In this case, the opening would be worth 18 points (1+3+1+7+1+5). If you were able to complete the closing through tunnel #5 before time ran out, you would have earned 32 points (18+2+3+4+5), more than enough to Q in Level 1 or 2. This sample opening also puts you in a good position to begin the closing at jump #2. NOTE: If the #2 obstacle is the obstacle taken after your third red jump, you must take it again as the first obstacle of your closing sequence.

In the Snooker briefing, you will hear which obstacles are bi-directional in the opening and other nuances not covered here. When you do your walk-through, plan an opening sequence that will flow well for your dog, accumulate higher points if possible, and put you in a good position to start the closing. If you can, consider backup strategies in case a red bar is dropped. It's also not a bad idea to “do the math” to consider how far you must get in the closing to Q, based on the points you expect to earn in the opening. Finally, pay close attention to the more advanced teams that run before you. Much can be learned by watching the strategies that they employ. This is a good game to spend some time “talking strategy” with an experienced handler if possible.

Catch Phrase: “Red–Color–Red–Color–Red–Color–Run The Course.”

Level 1/2 Snooker Course with Sample Path Shown



JACKPOT

Jackpot is another 2-part point game – you must earn a minimum number of points before time expires in order to Q. Points are earned by completing any obstacles you choose (“play-time”) and also by performing one or more “gamble.” A gamble is a series of up to four obstacles that must be completed with the handler at a set distance from the dog. “Play-time” points are earned according to the obstacle being performed. Single bar jumps are worth 1 point. Tires, tunnels, spread jumps and 5-8 weaves are worth 3 points. Contacts, combos and 10-12 weaves are worth 5 points. A combo is a pair of displaceable bar jumps that must be performed “in flow.” Finally, there is a “Judge’s Choice” obstacle worth 7 points the first time it is performed only. Each obstacle may be used twice to earn points. Back-to-back obstacles are allowed if performed safely.

Jackpot games can be structured in two ways: Traditional and Non-traditional. In a Traditional Jackpot, there is a single gamble at the end of the run which terminates at the finish line. The obstacles that comprise the gamble may be used during play-time, but unless the judge states otherwise in the briefing, no two may be taken in a row. If a gamble jump bar is knocked during play-time, it will not be reset and the gamble will be failed. At the end of play-time, the whistle will blow, indicating that it’s time to run the gamble. You must direct your dog through the gamble while remaining outside the line. If the second, final whistle blows before your dog crosses the finish line, you will receive an NQ. The judge will brief the time allowed for play-time and for the gamble. In Level 1, you must earn 12 points in play-time and you earn 20 points for the gamble, for a total of 32 points needed to Q.

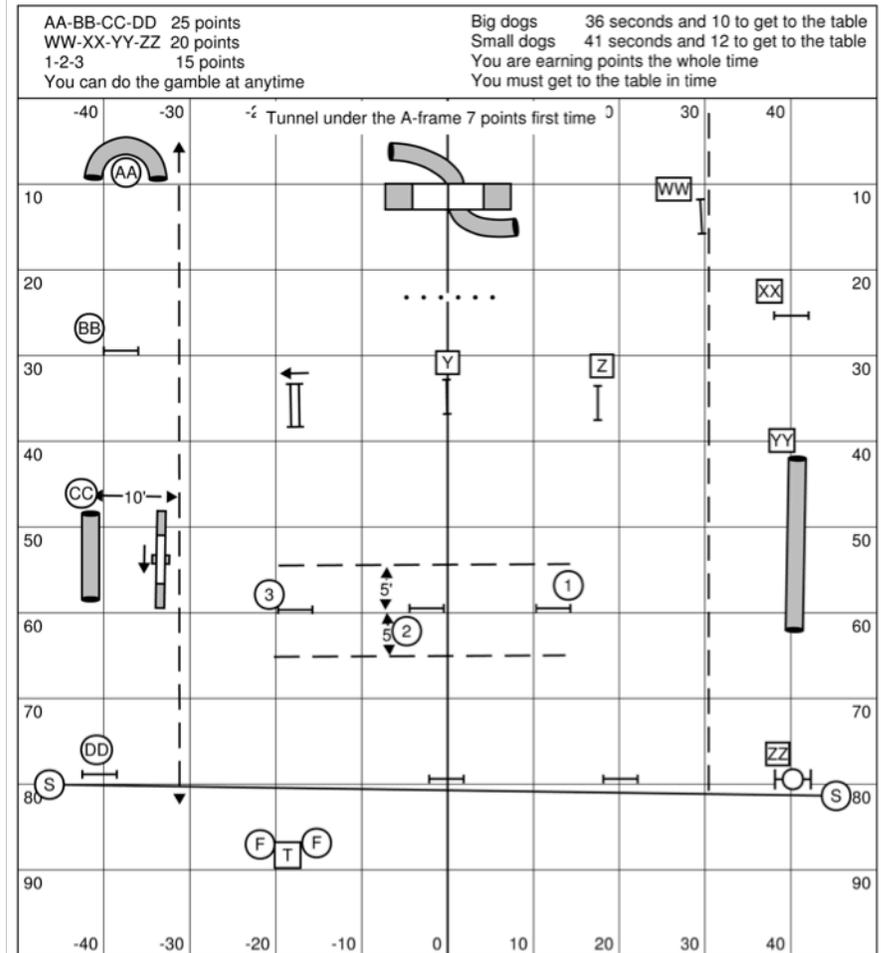
In a Non-traditional Jackpot, there may be more than one gamble, each with its own point value. The gambles are available throughout play-time. In Level 1, you must earn 32 points in any combination in order to Q. The Judge will brief whether you may use a gamble’s obstacles when not attempting as a gamble, whether gambles may be attempted multiple times, and the direction in which the gambles may be run. The Judge will explain the criteria for deciding whether you are attempting a gamble or just using its obstacles for points. When the first whistle blows, you have a specified time to get one paw on the finish table before time expires. If the second whistle blows before your dog reaches the table, you will NQ. If briefed by the judge, once you’ve earned enough points, you may go to the table to stop the clock without waiting for the first whistle.

The example above shows a Non-traditional Jackpot. The Y-Z jumps are the combo worth 5 points. The tunnel under the A-frame is the Judge’s Choice, worth 7 points the first time it is done. There are three gambles worth 15, 20 and 25 points.

With all of the variations possible for Traditional and Non-traditional Jackpots, it is imperative to listen carefully to the Judge’s briefing and ask questions if there’s anything you don’t understand. As in all games, watching more experienced handlers’ strategies will be invaluable.

Catch Phrase: “Stay outside the lines and don’t be late.”

Level 1/2/3 Jackpot Course



FULLHOUSE

Fullhouse is a timed point game. The object is to accumulate the required points and required sets of obstacles within the time allowed. You must complete at least three Jumps, two Circles, and one Joker. Like Jackpot, it is a game in which you make up your own course through the obstacles.

The point values and types of obstacles are as follows:

Jumps – 1 point – single bar/panel jumps.

Circles – 3 points – tunnel, chute and tire.

Jokers – 5 points – Contacts, weaves, and broad, double, triple & combo jumps.

In order to Q, you need to do three Jumps, two Circles and one Joker and accumulate a total of 19 to 25 points, depending on your Level.

The total time allowed is 35 seconds for dogs jumping 16" and over and 40 seconds for smaller dogs. This includes a 5 second allowance after the whistle blows in order to get one paw on the table to stop the clock. One point is deducted for each full second over the allowable game time. If you have earned enough points and completed the required sets, you may proceed to the table at any time to stop the clock (even before the warning whistle). However, placement is based first on points, then time.

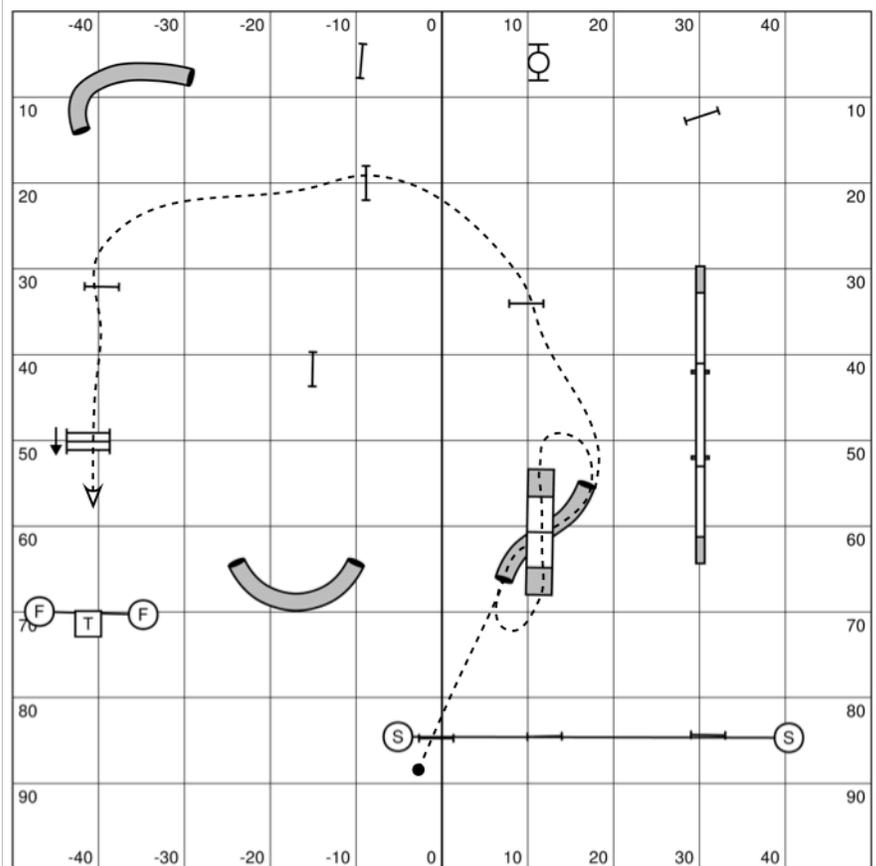
Back-to-back obstacles are allowed if done safely. Each obstacle may be used at most two times. All obstacles may be taken in either direction, except the teeter-totter, chute, triple jump, and ascending broad and double jumps. The table is "live" all the time, so if your dog inadvertently touches the table, you are done.

The rules of Fullhouse are fairly straight-forward, but you will want to plan in advance a course that will net you the required sets and points. One way to think about this is that the minimum set of obstacles (3 Jumps, 2 Circles, and 1 Joker) will earn you 14 points ($3 \times 1 + 2 \times 3 + 5$). So you need to plan a course that includes the minimum sets, and for Level 1, at least 5 more points. This could be one Joker or a Circle and 2 Jumps, for example. If your dog takes the wrong obstacle, or you forget where you planned to go (that never happens!), then you will have to think on your feet. But it's always best to start with a good plan in mind at the beginning.

You will notice that in the example above, there are no numbers or letters on the obstacles. You must start with one of the three jumps on the start line and finish by touching the table. Other than that, your direction on the course is totally up to you. I've added the dashed line on this example to show one of many possible courses. (This line will not appear on the diagram you get at the trial.) In this example, the tunnel under the A-frame is done twice, once before and once after the A-frame. There are four Jumps (4 points), two Circles (tunnel twice: 6 points), and two Jokers (A-frame and triple jump: 10 points). This total of 20 points is enough to Q in Level 1. If you've just done the triple jump in this example, you may proceed to the table, stop the clock, and take your Q, even if the warning whistle hasn't blown. Or, if you're trying for first place, you may want to "hang out" near the table and accumulate more points. For example, time permitting, you could do the nearby tunnel, A-frame, jump, and triple jump for 14 more points. But be ready to break off and head to the table as soon as the whistle blows.

Catch Phrase: "Three Jumps, two Circles and one Joker."

All Levels Fullhouse Course with Sample Path Shown



GLOSSARY

Q – Qualifying run.

NQ – Non-qualifying run.

Bi-directional: An obstacle may be performed in either direction.

Briefing: A meeting of the judge and handlers on the course (usually at the start of a walk-through) when the judge describes the course, rules, and procedures prior to running of each class. This is the time to ask the judge any questions you have about the rules or procedures.

Class: The term used to describe a course and the group of participants who will be running that particular course. Courses can be Standard, Jumpers or any Game. The participants are those teams who are entered in particular level(s) for that course, for example, “Levels 1/2 Colors.”

Combination (Combo): Two or more obstacles that must be performed in sequence and which count as one obstacle. In some classes, combinations can be bi-directional during the opening or “play time.” It is important to learn from the judge, during the briefing, if combinations must be taken in a designated sequence or if they are bi-directional and can be taken in any order, as long as all parts are completed before moving on.

Contacts: Obstacles with a contact zone: A-frame, Teeter-Totter and Dog Walk

In-flow: Dog must perform a combination as a sequence, moving in one direction or the other. For example, the dog cannot “figure-8” two jumps. (Other agility venues have different definitions of “in-flow”.)

Walk-through: A time period before the running of a class when the course is opened for handlers to walk the course without their dogs. This is the time to finalize your planning of strategy and memorization of the course.

Symbols Used in Sample Diagrams (not all possible symbols are used)

-  Obstacle Number Marker
-  Finish Line
-  Start Line
-  Open Tunnel
-  Ascending Double Jump (must be taken in direction shown)
-  A-Frame
-  Single Jump
-  Triple Jump (must be taken in direction shown)
-  Table
-  Dog Walk
-  Tire
-  Teeter Totter (arrow shows direction to be taken)
-  Marker indicates obstacle must be taken from left end
-  Marker indicates obstacle may be taken from either direction

CPE Reference Sheet

COLORS “A course of a different color.”

Faults Allowed	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Bar Down	0	0	0	0	0
Off Course	1	1	0	0	0
Other Faults	1	1	1	1	1
Over Time (1 fault per full second)	5	5	5	5	5
Total Faults Allowed	10	10	10	10	5

WILDCARD “ONE 2-pointer and TWO 1-pointers”. (For Levels 1/2)

Faults Allowed	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Bar Down	1	1	1	1	1
Off Course	1	1	0	0	0
Other Faults	1	1	1	1	1
Over Time (1 fault per full second)	5	5	5	5	5
Total Faults Allowed	10	10	10	10	5

Level 1/2 needs **two** 1-point wildcards and **one** 2-point wildcard.

Level 3/4/5/C needs **one** 1-point wildcard and **two** 2-point wildcards.

SNOOKER “Red–Color–Red–Color–Red–Color–Run The Course.”

Points Needed for Q	L1	L2	L3	L4/5/C
Regular / Veteran	26	28	30	32
Enthusiast / Specialist	24	26	28	30

Points awarded according to the number on the obstacle. Time determined by judge. 12” and smaller get 5 extra seconds.

TABLE is **not** live until closing has started (but may **not** be used purposely to move around the course).

When **any** WHISTLE blows, move directly to the table to stop the clock.

JACKPOT “Stay outside the lines and don’t be late.”

Total Points Needed for Q*	L1	L2	L3	L4/5/C
Regular / Veteran	32	36	40	44
Enthusiast / Specialist	30	34	38	42

*Includes 20 gamble points

Obstacle Values	(obstacles may be used twice for points, except 7-point obstacle)
1 point obstacles	Single Bar Jumps
3 point obstacles	Tire, Tunnels (open/closed), Spread Jumps, 5-8 Weaves
5 point obstacles	Contacts, Combinations, 10-12 Weaves
7 point obstacle	Judge’s Choice (only once): combination, contact, long weaves, tire, tunnel, spread

TABLE is **not** live until the gamble whistle blows (traditional). Time determined by judge.

When 2nd WHISTLE blows, the team has NQ’d. (2nd whistle sounds 5-10 seconds after maximum time.)

FULLHOUSE “Three Jumps, two Circles and one Joker.”

Points Needed for Q	L1	L2	L3	L4/5/C
Regular / Veteran	19	21	23	25
Enthusiast / Specialist	17	19	21	23

Obstacle Values	Number Required	(obstacles may be used twice for points)
1 point	At least 3	Single Bar Jumps
3 point	At least 2	“Circles” -- Tires and Tunnels (open or closed)
5 point	At least 1	Contacts, Weaves, Broad and Spread Jumps
0 points	Once	Table – Stops the Clock; Live at All Times

When WHISTLE blows, point accumulation stops and team has up to 5 seconds to reach the table to stop the clock.

TABLE is **live** throughout the game. Point Accumulation Time is 35 seconds (4 – 12”) or 30 seconds (16 – 24”).

JUMPERS and STANDARD

Faults Allowed	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Bar Down	1	1	1	1	1
Off Course	1	1	1	0	0
Other Faults	1	1	1	1	1
Over Time (1 fault per full second)	5	5	5	5	5
Total Faults Allowed	10	10	10	10	5