FCI-Agility-Committee

Guidelines for Agility-Judges

Introduction

- These guidelines are meant to help judges in all countries who are members of the FCI come to the same understanding/interpretation of the rules.
- They are not intended to change or add anything to the rules.
- Different interpretations can be caused by the translation in different languages.
- These guidelines are compiled in such a way, that new proposals can be added on.
- Proposals can be sent in 6 weeks before the next FCI-agility committee meeting.
- Therefore, judges should always use the latest version of these guidelines.

1. Judge's criteria

An agility judge should always take into account that agility should be fun for the dog, the handler and the spectators.

An agility judge should be able to design a course with the correct level of difficulty. An agility judge should have worked a dog her/himself so he can appreciate what it is like being an agility competitor.

An agility judge should always be fair and just. Personal feelings should not interfere with her/his decisions.

An agility judge should be unwavering, confident and courteous.

An agility judge should be able to make quick and reliable decisions.

An agility judge must be capable of adjusting her/his course design at a moment's notice, for example due to the weather conditions or the condition of the floor surface.

2. Judging ethics

While officiating the judge is strict but fair and always courteous.

The judge should be competent, act impartially and without theatrics.

The judge should not try to pick fault in every detail and where there is doubt, the benefit should be given to the dog and handler.

An agility judge should judge all the competitors the same way.

The judge should always concentrate and make her/his decisions without any hesitation. S/He always sticks to his decisions.

The judge keeps strictly to the Rules and Regulations.

A judge should not get into a conversation with a competitor in the ring. If need be s/he can briefly tell a handler why s/he has been eliminated.

The judge may discuss her/his decisions or course design with the competitors only when s/he has finished judging.

A judge does not criticise decisions and behaviour of a colleague openly, but tries to speak to her/him privately.

A judge is always aware that he should lead by example, even when s/he is not officiating.

A judge should under no circumstance solicit for a judging appointment.

3. Appearance

An agility judge should wear suitable attire, which distinguishes her/him from the competitors.

An agility judge should always conduct her/himself properly and behave as a worthy agility representative.

An agility judge must indicate faults and refusals with hand signals. The arm should be clearly raised above the head. Eliminations should be signalled clearly so that neither the handlers nor the spectators are in doubt about the decision. Do not get into discussions with competitors or spectators about any judging decision.

4. Personal items

It is advisable for an agility judge to have the following items with her/him:

> ➢ Whistle (2 – one as a replacement)
> ➢ Stop watch (in case the stop watch of the timer breaks down)
> ➢ Measuring wheel
> ➢ Rules and Regulations that apply in the country where the show is held
> ➢ Measuring tape
> ➢ Personal equipment to measure dogs (Small and Medium)
> ➢ Judging pads and pencil
> ➢ Score sheets
> ➢ Adhesive tape

5. Preparing the competition

The agility judge should communicate with the show representative to ascertain the following:

Layout and size of the ring in which the competition is going to be held. The location of the show secretariat and where they are expecting the majority of the spectators (perhaps even a stand).

A list of the available obstacles, and confirmation that all the obstacles comply with the rules.

Which categories and classes are to be judged. How many competitors s/he has to judge in each class

How many people will be helping in the ring.

Timetable.

Whether timekeeping is manual or electronic.

Whether start and finish are separate.

In addition: whether copies of the course plans should be made available by the judge.

The course plan should only be given to the helpers one hour before the competition.

6. Course building and briefing the ring stewards

The agility judge always supervises course building personally.

After the briefing and after the course has been walked, no changes are allowed to the course or the course time (Maximum Course Time as well as the Standard Course Time) once this has been announced by the judge.

The stewards and helpers should be fully briefed as to what is required of them. The briefing can be less elaborate or even left up to the organisation if the organisers and helpers are experienced.

Important:
The scribe or the timekeeper cannot be replaced until the class is finished.

The ring stewards and show officials should be briefed about the following:

1. Scribe
   - How the judge will indicate faults, refusals and eliminations.
   - How a judging slip should be filled in.
   - Always to watch the judge never the dog and continue to watch until the judge stops judging the dog.
   - Where the judge will be positioned on the course during the runs.
   - Where the scribe should be positioned so s/he can always see the judge – move if necessary.
   - How s/he will indicate to the judge that there have been three refusals.

2. Show secretariat (scorer)
   - How the score sheet should be filled in.
   - That the agility judge will check the scoring during the competition.
   - That during the competition the score sheet must always show the latest results.
   - That judging slips should be kept in the running order.
   - That the judge must be informed immediately should a problem arise.

3. Collecting ring steward
   - That s/he is responsible for insuring that the running order is respected.
   - That there should always be 3 to 5 dogs and handlers near the start.
   - That s/he should indicate non-starters on his list next to the names of the competitors.
   - The judge will explain precisely when s/he wants the next dog and handler to enter the ring.

4. Time keeper
   - Explain when the time should be started and stopped.
   - Explain that the time must start even if the dog is passing the first obstacle and crossing the starting line. - in case of a run by then the refusal line automatically becomes the start line.
   - That the time should **never** be stopped before the dog has crossed the finish line (except when the dog has been eliminated).
   - What to do when the dog does not pass between the poles that mark the finish line.
   - That time given to the scribe should always be to the $1/100^{th}$ of a second.
   - That s/he can release the dog from the start line after the judge's signal.
   - If a dog exceeds the Maximum Course Time then the second timekeeper should blow a whistle.
   - Both timekeepers should stay in the same place during the competition.
   - That s/he should only reset the stopwatch after he's made sure that the scribe has noted the time (show the scribe the watch so s/he can copy the time down on the judging slip).

5. Ring steward
   - Should straighten the collapsible tunnel after each dog has run.
   - Ensure that the assigned obstacles are checked so they are exactly the same for each dog.
   - That the height of the jumps is the same for each dog.
   - That they cannot give up their allocated assignment before the class is finished.

7. *Briefing the competitors*

The judge should:

➢ Ascertain if any translation is necessary.

➢ Tell the handlers what the length of the course is and also the Standard and Maximum Course Time.

➢ Indicate how the start signal will be given.

➢ Indicate how faults, refusals and eliminations will be indicated and what happens after elimination.

➢ Remind handlers that they must continue their run unless the judge tells them to stop.

8. Course design

1. The course plan should be drawn to scale and must be available, possibly with copies, on the day of the competition.

2. The distance between the obstacles should be 5 to 7 metres.
The distances should be measured along the line most dogs will take, not the line the judge would prefer the dogs to take in order to keep the distances according to the rules (between 5-7 m.)
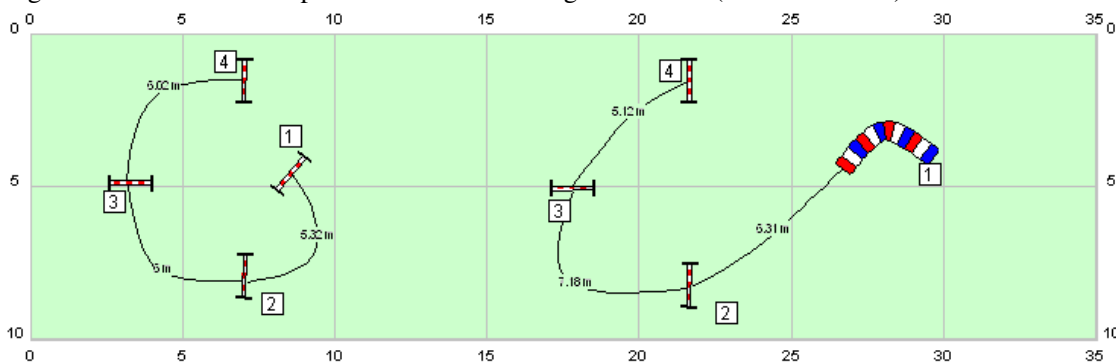
The sequence 2-3-4 is exactly the same in both situations, but because of another approach to number 2 and the speed of the dog being higher, the distance between 2-3 and 3-4 isn't the same. The difference in speed and approach changes the line of the dog about one metre between 2-3 and 3-4.
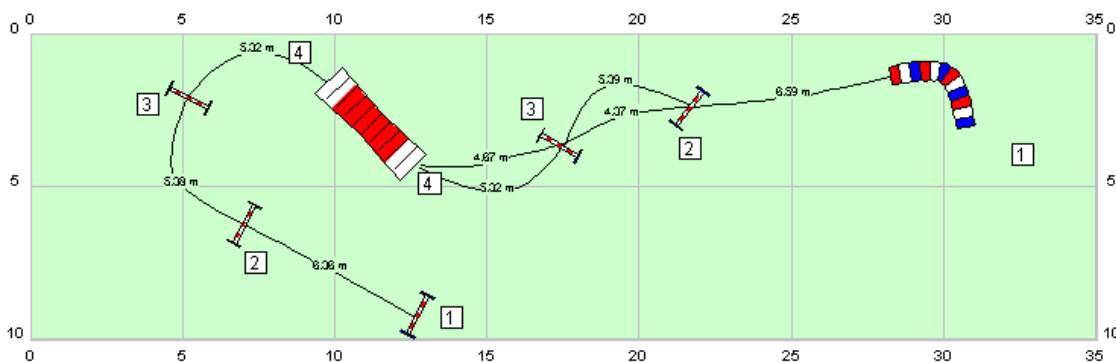
The sequence 3-4 is exactly the same from the left as from the right. The distance and angle 2-3 is the same.
Starting on the left, the distance between all obstacles is according to the rules.
Starting on the right, the judge could measure the distances - and stay within the rules - if s/he follows the same line he followed when starting on the left. Most dogs however, will follow a line where the distances are shorter than stipulated in the rules. The situation is possibly dangerous because the dogs will attempt the A-frame with great speed and only a short distance to prepare for the A-frame (A-frame in an angled approach).

3. The first and last obstacle should always be a hurdle.

4. For safety, the dog should have a straight approach to the long jump, tyre and spread jump. The approach and the speed of the dog should also be taken into consideration with the contact obstacles.

5. Be aware that combinations can cause problems.

6. Be aware that handler must have the possibility to pass each obstacle on both sides
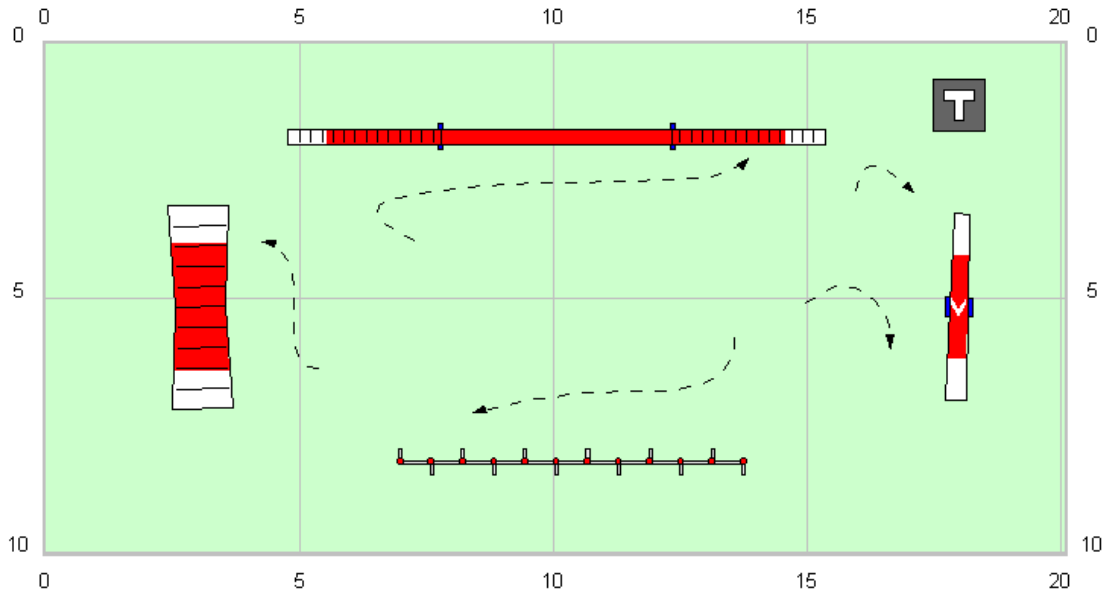
7. Classifying the obstacles as:

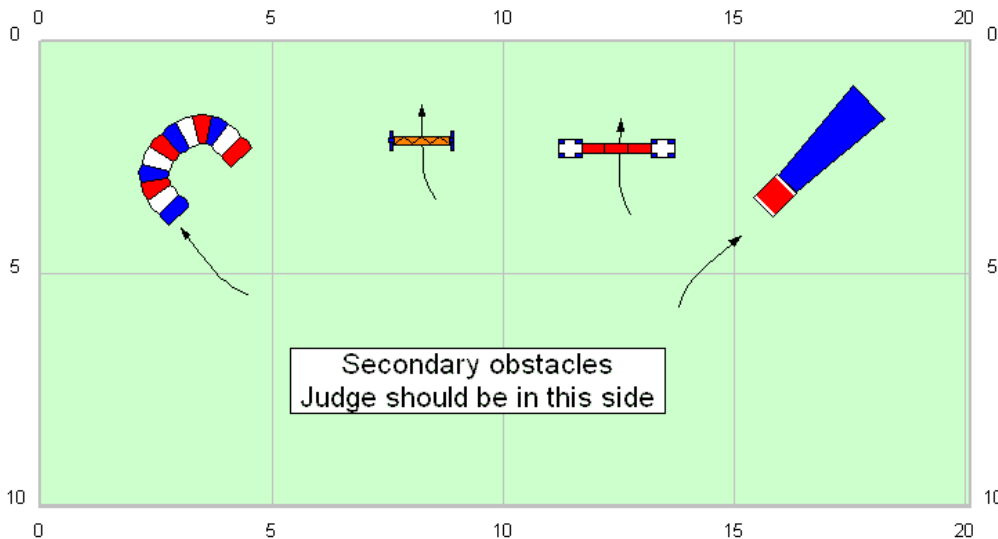**Prime obstacles**
A-ramp - Dog walk - See Saw – Weave – Table
The judge should always try to be close enough to the dog as it negotiates these obstacles (without being in the way of the handler).

Agility Blues

Secondary obstacles
Tube tunnel - Collapsible tunnel - Tyre - Long jump - Brush fence - Wall - Fence with a solid panel
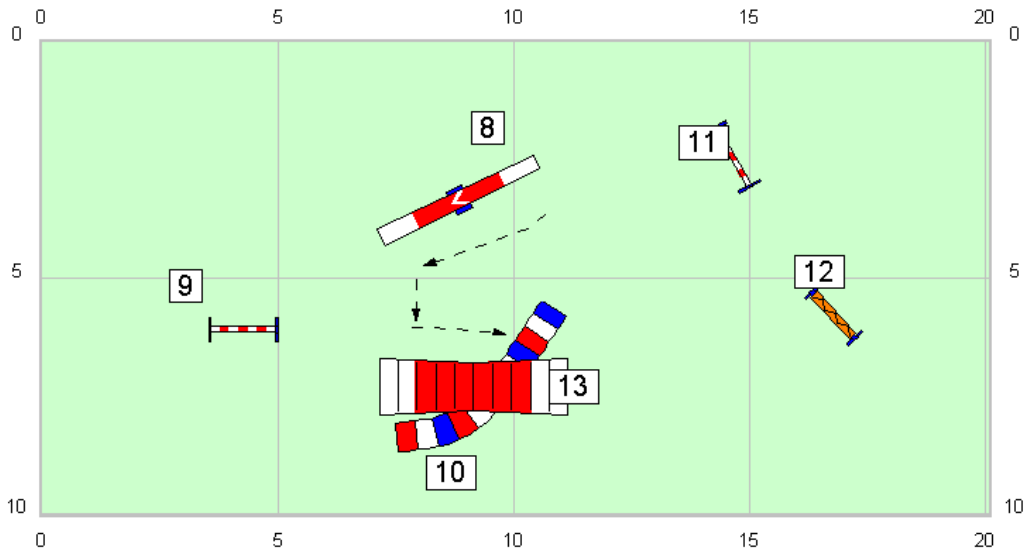

Secondary obstacles
Judge should be in this side

Agility Blues

With these obstacles, the judge should make sure that s/he is in the correct position to see any run by, run out or incorrect entry.

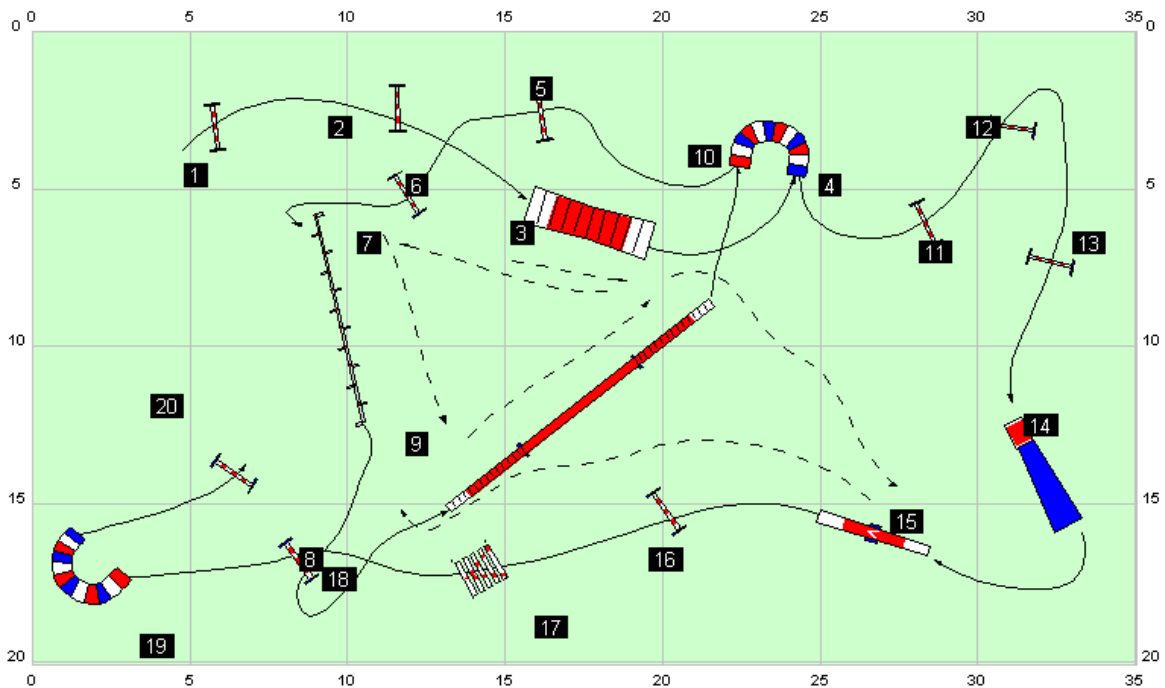Difficulty with secondary obstacles in the course

Agility Blues

Judge can't see the tunnel entry, can't see the refusal at the brush jump 12

Other obstacles

Single hurdles or spread jumps do not pose particular problems for the judge. The judge should be <u>aware</u> to be on a slight angle to these obstacles so s/he can see the poles knocked down or possible refusals.

Agility Blues

Judge waits along the primary obstacle 3, seeing the contacts, waits till the dog enters the tunnel, moves to the correct angle to see the weave entry, follows the dog to the dog walk, waits at the up contact and moves with the dog to the down contact.

Judge waits till the dog enters the tunnel and moves (while the dog is negotiating 11-14) to 14-15(checking the collapsible tunnel entry) and looks at the last primary obstacle 15, moves slowly to the triangle 7-9 and sees the dog entering the tunnel 19.

8. Guidelines

> ➢ While judging the dog, the course design should allow the judge to do this at a normal pace.
> ➢ It should never look like the agility judge cannot cope with the speed of the dog.
> ➢ The course should have the right degree of difficulty. A course should be fluent and traps are to be avoided.

Trap = the obstacle the dog is not supposed to take is too close to the one the dog has to negotiate

9. The following should be avoided:

> ➢ Using the table early on in the course or near the end; ideal is placing the table halfway around the course.
> ➢ Placing 2 prime obstacles one after the other (except for the table).
> ➢ Using fences more than once if there is no time to put them back up when they are knocked down.
> ➢ Sharp turns in the course, which turn the handler into the judge's path – particularly after contact obstacles and weave.
> ➢ Spread jumps used more than once in a course.

9. Course building

1. Only use obstacles described in the Rules (also in non official classes).

2. For the safety of the dog the judge should inspect the obstacles to make sure they are not dangerous. Faulty obstacles must not be used.

3. The hurdles should have as little poles as possible. The spread jump should have one or max. two poles at the front and one at the back.

4. The poles marking the corners of the long jump are placed in such a way that they can be put back in exactly the same position if they are knocked down.

5. The numbers should be placed so that they do not hinder dog or handler during their run

6. Before the briefing the agility judge makes sure that:
   - ➢ The course is what s/he expected
   - ➢ It does resemble the design
   - ➢ All the obstacles are firmly placed and pegged down

7. Before the first dog starts, the agility judge makes sure that:
   - ➢ All the helpers are correctly briefed and that they are where they are supposed to be
   - ➢ All the obstacles are put up correctly

8. Poles that mark the start and finish should be placed in such a way that the dog has no other choice than to pass between them.

9. A course should be designed and built so that:
   - ➢ It contains no traps
   - ➢ It is fun to watch for the spectators
   - ➢ It can be judged without problems
   - ➢ The course flows fluently, even for the more advanced classes (the course time can also be a degree of difficulty)

10. Time is saved when:
    - ➢ The table is not used
    - ➢ The course is shortened
    - ➢ The exit is used optimally so the next dog can start sooner
    - ➢ There is a separate start and finish (have someone place the lead near the end)
    - ➢ The scribe and time keeper are positioned near each other

10. Standard Course Time and Maximum Course Time

1. To work out the Standard Course Time, the agility judge must first know the exact length of the course. A measuring wheel is recommended to determine the length of the course (the most precise method).

The judge should measure the ideal line the dog will use when it negotiates the course. This means that alternately the inside and the outside line is measured. Ideally measurement would be from the centre of each obstacle.

2. When assessing the Standard Course Time the following should be taken in to consideration:
    ➢ The nature of the competition.
    ➢ The degree of difficulty
    ➢ The weather conditions
    ➢ The condition of the floor

11. Judging

The judge is responsible for what happens in his ring and s/he should make sure that everything goes as smoothly as possible.

The performance of each dog should be judged correctly – in order to do so the judge must always move into the right position on the course. However, the judge's position should not interfere with the dog or the handler.

It is always a good idea to go over your judging path a few times before the start of the competition.

Make sure you do not cross in front of the dog or the handler as they are coming toward you.

The position of the scribe should allow her/him to see the judge at all times. However the scribe can be told to move if necessary. If the judge should temporary be out of sight of the scribe because of an obstacle such as the A-frame, then the judge should hold up her/his arm up long enough to make sure that the scribe has seen the signal.

The judge should never take her/his eyes off the dog as long as it's in the ring, even after it's been eliminated.

12. Judging specific obstacles

Hurdle:
  ➢ It is a fault when the dog displaces a pole so that it is no longer at the original height (a pole does not have to fall to the ground to be faulted).
  ➢ When a hurdle is disturbed by the handler or a dog in such a way that the pole is not at the original height before the dog has negotiated the jump, the dog should be eliminated.

Dog knocks 4, just a fault

Handler knocks 16, while dog is jumping 6, elimination
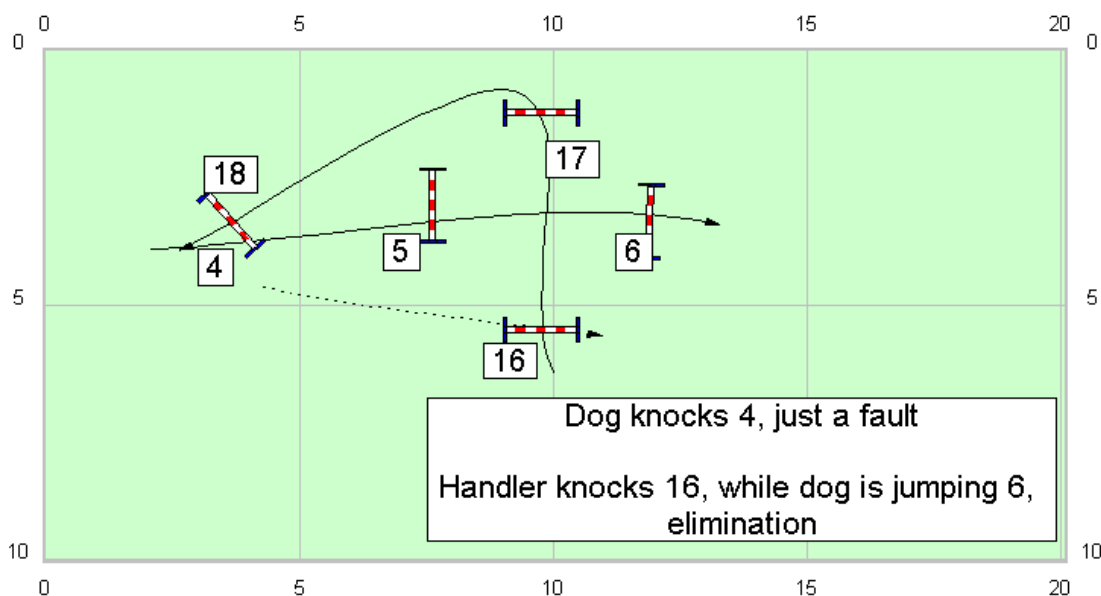
Agility Blues

Contact obstacles:
  ➢ A judge should concentrate on the contact zone to assess whether the dog put a paw on it. This method is better than concentrating on the dog, where a back paw in the contact zone could be missed as the dog alights from the obstacle.
  ➢ A dog is considered to have left the obstacle when all 4 paws are on the ground.
  ➢ A dog cannot be faulted for stopping, backing up, turning or going in the wrong direction as long as the dog is on the obstacle. The dog must, of course, complete the obstacle correctly.
  ➢ A dog can be stopped in the contact zone, even partially on the ground and partially on the obstacle.
  ➢ Once the dog has left the obstacle, i.e. touching the ground with all 4 paws, it is eliminated if it puts a paw back on the obstacle.

Long jump:
  ➢ The marker poles at the four corners of the long jump are only a judging aid. They help determine whether the dog has negotiated the obstacle correctly. It is therefore not faulted when a dog or the handler touches or knocks down one of these poles, even when this causes one of the units to fall down.

Table
  ➢ The dog should be on the table with four paws. While it is on the table the table should only support it.
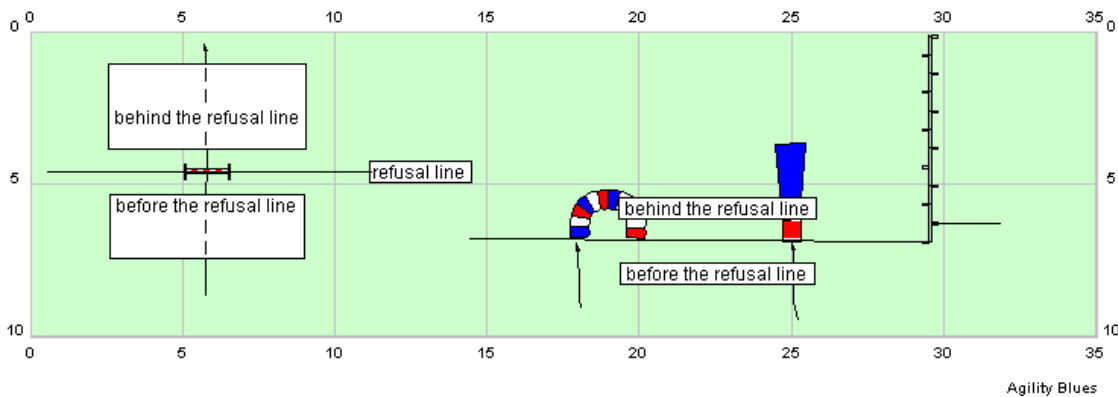
Refusal:
  ➢ A dog that is faulted with a refusal for standing still on the course should not be faulted with another refusal until it has taken at least another step.

13. Faults on specific obstacles

**Refusals and subsequent marking**

Definitions

Agility Blues

You can separate the area around an obstacle:
Split them into two areas by a line, the refusal line (RL) following a straight line from the approach side of the obstacle. The side from where the dog should approach the obstacle is called 'before the refusal line'. The other side is called 'behind the refusal line'.
If the dog starts before the refusal line (RL), it is not allowed to pass this refusal line (RL) or it will be faulted with a refusal.
If the dog starts behind the refusal line (RL), it has to pass the refusal line (RL) once. The dog will be faulted with a refusal if it passes this line more than once without negotiating the obstacle.

A judge has to be careful when designing her/his course and not take the dog too close to the RL while it is negotiating the course. It only makes it more difficult to decide whether or not it is a refusal.


Agility Blues
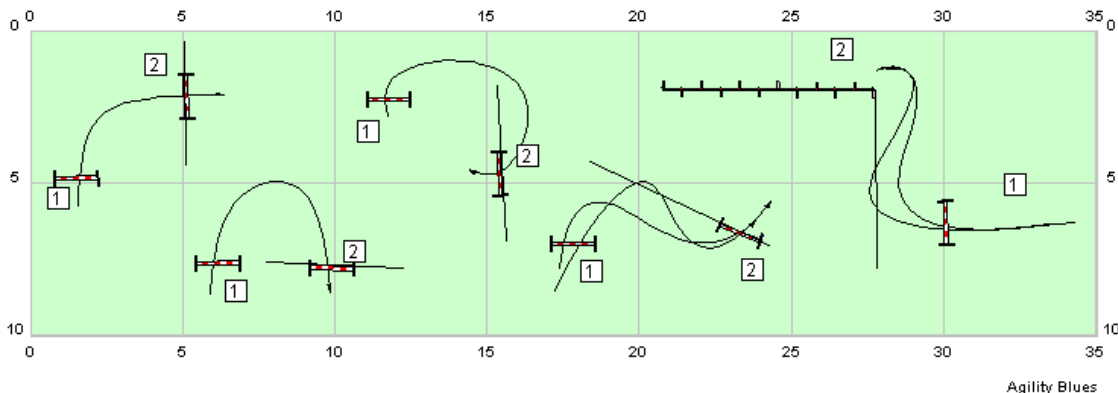
Examples:
1 and 2. All dogs will land before the RL line of the next obstacle.
3. All dogs will land behind the RL of the next obstacle.
4 and 5. Short striding dogs and slow dogs will land before the RL of the next obstacle and can turn toward 2, long striding dogs and very fast dogs can land before the RL of the next obstacle but because of there body shape or speed they cannot turn without passing the RL.

Agility Blues
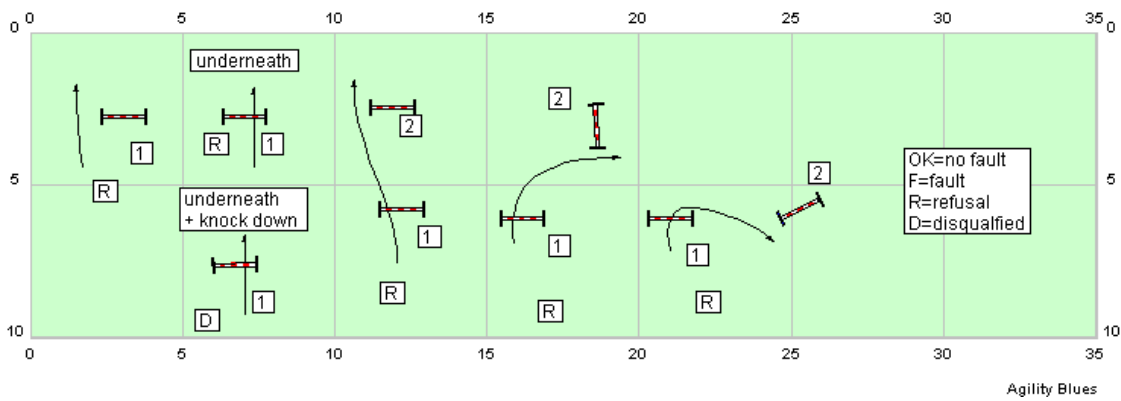
Examples:
1. Dog is running passed the hurdle 1 = R
2. Dog is going underneath = R
3. Dog is going underneath, knocking down the bar = disturbing the obstacle = D
4,5 and 6. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this once = R
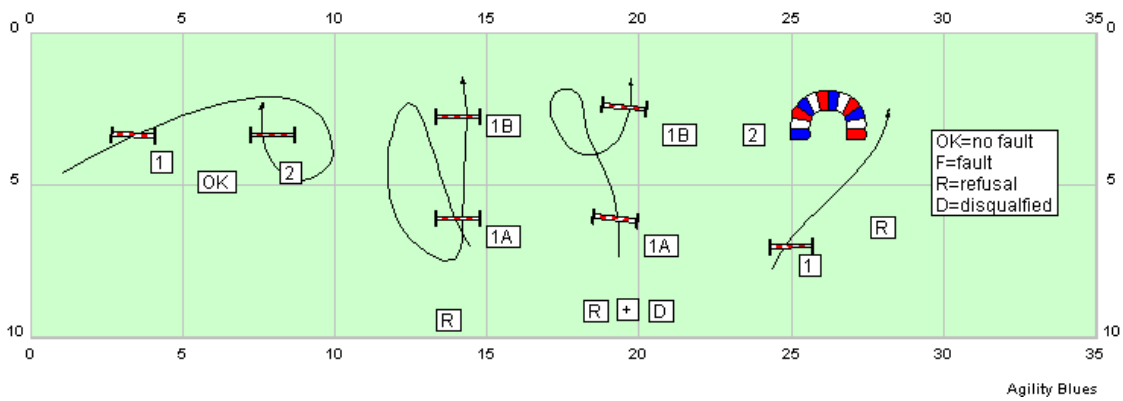

Agility Blues
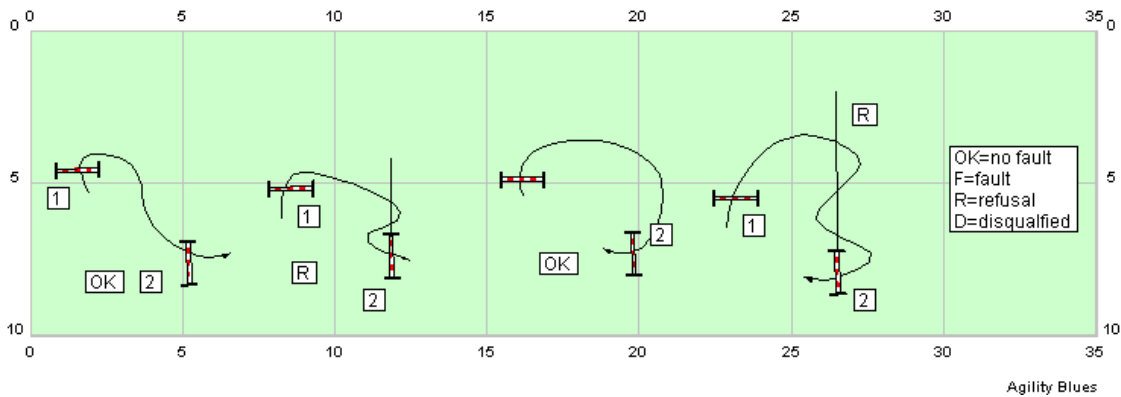
Examples:
1. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, not passing this line = OK
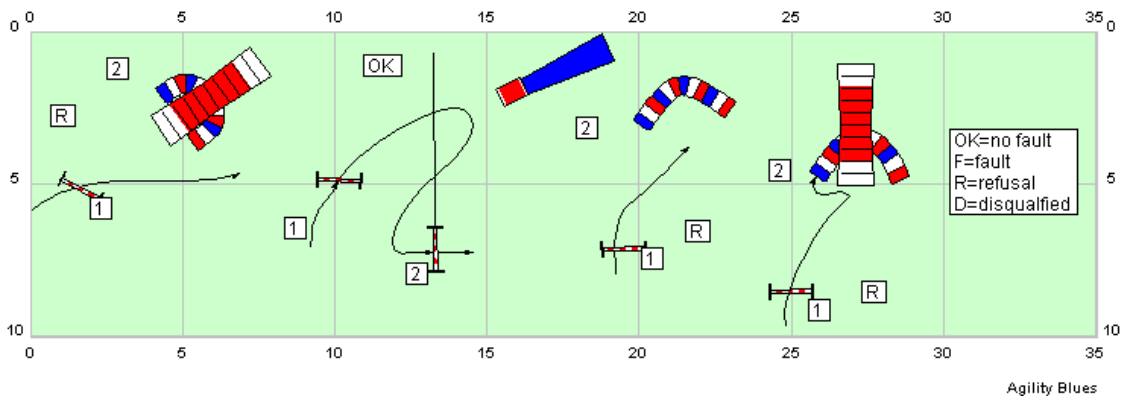2. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line twice = R
3. Dog lands behind the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line just once = OK
4. Dog lands behind the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line more than once = R
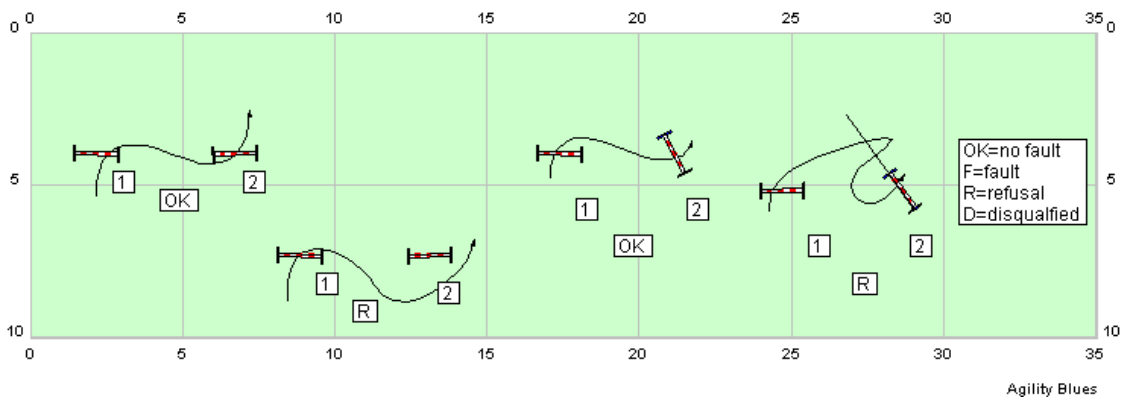
Agility Blues

Examples:
1. Dog lands behind the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line just once = OK
2. Dog lands behind the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line more than once = R
3. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, not passing this line = OK
4. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once = R
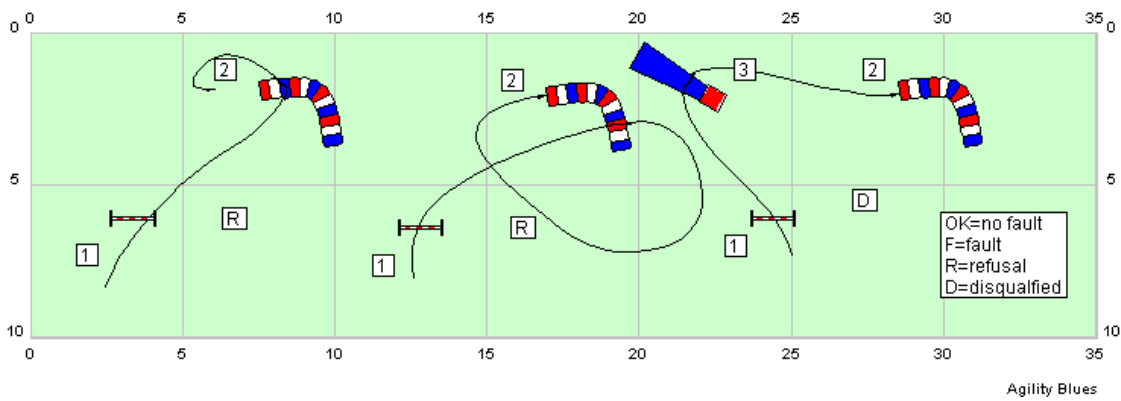
Agility Blues

Examples:
1. Dog lands behind the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line just once = OK
2. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, correcting the refusal properly by repeating A + B just = R
3. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, not correcting the refusal properly by repeating just B = R + D
4. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once = R
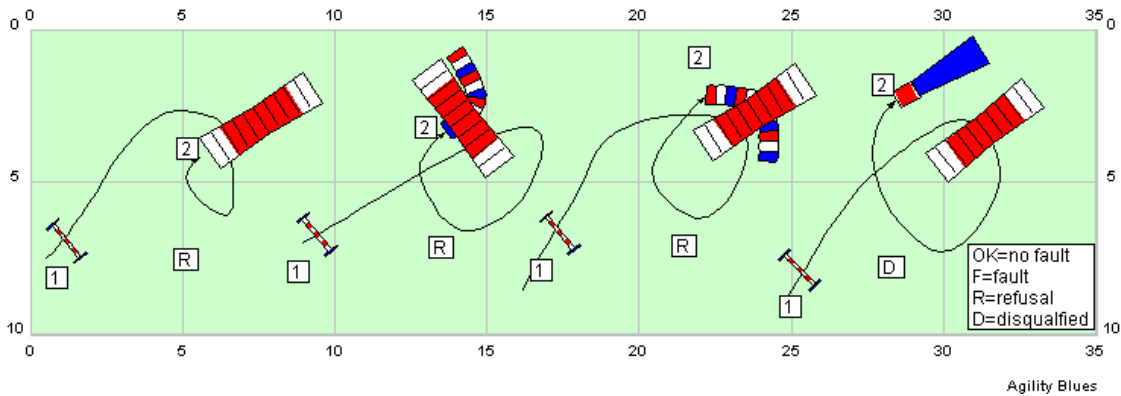

Agility Blues

Examples:
1. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once = R
2. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once by trying to go to the wrong obstacle = OK(when the dog passes the RL it has not seen the obstacle it is supposed to negotiate next)
3. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once = R
4. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once by going to the A-frame = R(The dog sees the tunnel during going to the A-frame)

Agility Blues

Examples:
1. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, jumping over the obstacle it should take = R (no D)
2. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, jumping over the obstacle it should take = R (no D)
3. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, jumping over the obstacle it is not allowed to take = D

Agility Blues

Examples:
1. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, going under the obstacle it should take = R (no D)
2. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, going under an obstacle it is not allowed to take - but in this situation, created by the judge, he cannot avoid it = R (no D)
3. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, passing this line once, going under an obstacle it is not allowed to take - but in this situation, created by the judge he can't avoid it = R (no D)
4. Dog lands before the RL of the next obstacle, going under an obstacle it is not allowed to take = D

If a dog stands still or turns around in the take off area, the dog will be faulted with a refusal.
The 'take off' area depends on the size of the dog. Short striding dogs automatically have smaller areas 'to take off' than long striding dogs. It is up to the judge to decide there and then. When the dog turns and the judge thinks "why didn't the dog take off", then it should be faulted with a refusal.

Agility Blues
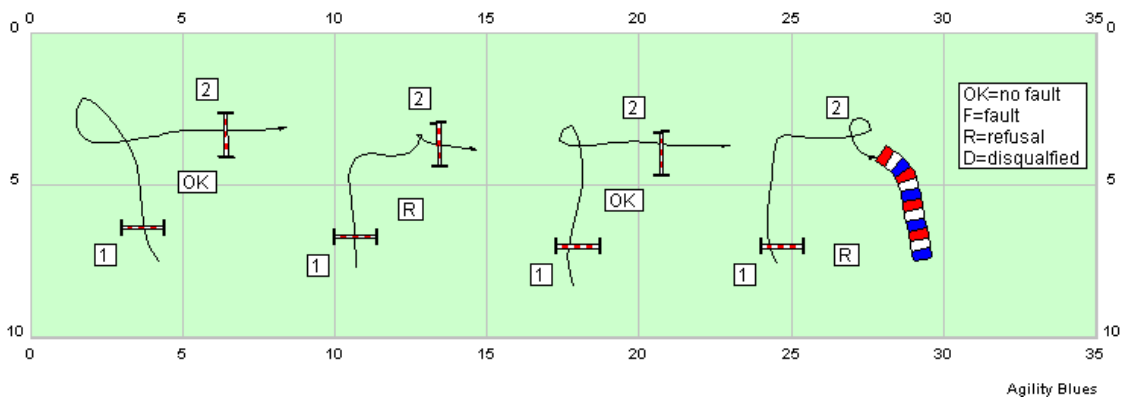
Examples:
1. The dog turns in an area where it cannot take off for hurdle 2 = OK
2. The dog turns in the area where it should take off = R
3. The dog turns in an area where it cannot take off for hurdle 2 = OK
4. The dog turns in the area where it should go into the tunnel (take off) = R

Agility Blues
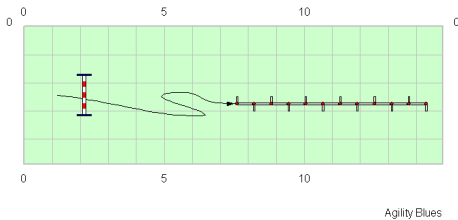
The dog turns back in the area where it should enter the weaving poles (take off) = R

Contacts, refusals and faults

Dividing contact obstacles into areas before and behind the RL does not really work because the situation is somewhat different. Even when the dog is behind the RL it is still able to get on the obstacle – in which case, if the dog touches the up contact, it should not be faulted.
Here are some examples:

Agility Blues
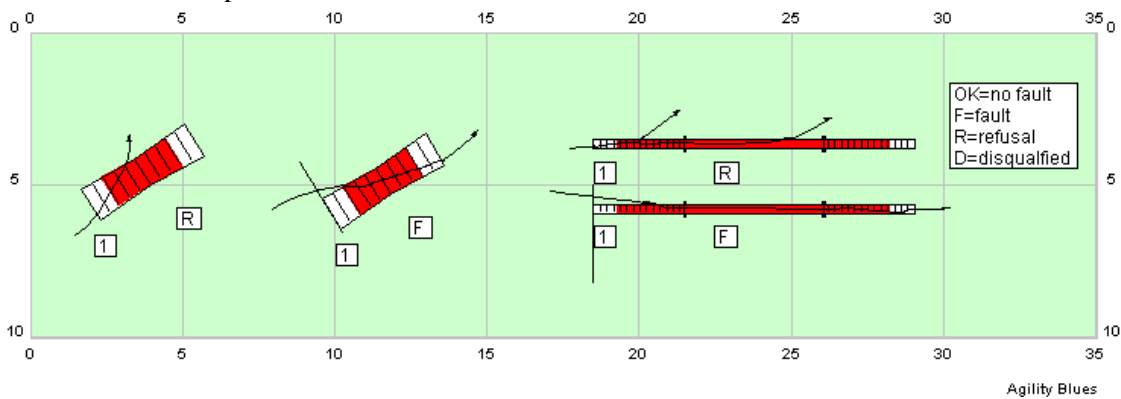
1. Touching the up contact, leaving the A-frame before the middle = R
2. Passing the RL, getting onto the A-frame but missing the up contact = F
3. Touching the up contact, leaving the dog walk on the up or horizontal plank = R
4. Passing the RL, getting onto the dog walk but missing the up contact = F

14. Changing the rules as soon as possible

blue = to be deleted
red = replace or new

Tyre (pag.6)
The base of this obstacle should be at least 2 meters long (1m. each side of the tyre). Replace by: The length of the planks that form the base of the tyre should be about 1.5x the height measured from the floor to the top edge of the tyre, in the category Large.

Note: (pag.12)
Tyre, long jump and spread jump must always be set up for a straight approach from the previous obstacle.

Start and Finish (pag.6)
The start and finish line should be placed within 50 cm. of the first and the last hurdle. The distance between the marker poles should be the length of the hurdle poles plus 50 cm. left and right. The first and last obstacle should always be a hurdle – the first always being a single hurdle.

Weaving poles (pag.6)
The height of the poles is 1 to 1,20 m and they are placed 50 to 65 cm 60 cm apart. The weaving poles at …

Elimination (pag.9)
….and the dog must leave the ring as quickly as possible. Eliminations should be signalled clearly (whistle, etc) by the judge so that neither the handlers nor the spectators are in any doubt about the decision. The judge will deal…

Long jump (pag.8)
Add: The dog or handler will not be faulted when they touch or knock down one of these poles, even when this causes one of the units to fall down.

Veterinary control (pag.14)
Add: Each dog must be tattooed or micro chipped for identification.

Elimination (pag.9)
Stopping on the course' (unless instructed by the judge) replace by 'Handler decides to stop the run' (unless….).

Refusals:
Will be faulted with a refusal: a dog that stops in front of an obstacle or a dog that stops on the course replace by: a dog that comes to a standstill in front of an obstacle or on the course.
Add: A dog that is faulted with a refusal for standing still on the course should not be faulted with a refusal again until it has taken at least another step.

Test progress (pa.4)
…anything in his hands. Add: Handlers can bring their dogs in the ring without lead and collar if the handler is in control of the dog.

Note: (pag.12)
Add: Handlers must have the possibility to pass each obstacle on both sides.

De volgende opmerkingen m.b.t. de **guidelines** zou ik graag, in overleg met de keurmeesters aan je willen doorgeven.

The following remakrs to the guidelines, I like, after discussion with the judges in the netherlands, to forward to You

pagina 10
punt 3 (The hurdles should have as little poles as possible)
De tweede zin sluit hierop niet aan. Dit zou moeten betekenen dat 'The spread jump should have only one pole at the front' (en niet 2)

Page 10
Point 3
The 2nd "line" isn't in accord to the 1st one. This should mean that: 'The spread jump should have only one pole at the front'(and not 2)

pagina 13
Het antwoord op de gestelde vraag onderaan de pagina is Neen. Volgens de Nederlandse keurmeesters is het geen weigering.

Page 13
The answer on the question at the end of the page is No. For the durch judges isn't this a refusal

pagina 14
tekening 1, situatie 3 (Dog is going underneath, knocking down the bar)
In Nederland is dit thans geen diskwalificatie.
Mocht dit een diskwalificatie blijven dan zullen de Nederlandse keurmeesters zich hieraan conformeren.

Page 14
Drawing 1, sit. 3(Dog is going underneath, knocking down the bar)
In the Netherlands isn't this at the moment a disqualifikation.
If this situation will be confirmed, then the dutch judges will judge it like it is in the guidelines.

pagina 14
tekening 2, situatie 4
Of dit wel of geen weigering is, is afhankelijk van de plaats waar de 'refusal-line' overschreden wordt.
De gepresenteerde situatie zou volgens de Nederlandse keurmeesters geen diskwalificatie zijn omdat de hond het toestel nog niet gezien heeft (kan hebben) en daardoor geen weigering kan krijgen. Je kunt tenslotte geen toestel weigeren dat je niet gezien hebt!

Page 14
Drawing 2, sit. 4
If it is a rfusal or not, depends of the spot, where the dog passes the "refusal-lone". The drawing would not be a refusal for the dutch judges, because the dog didn't see the next obstacle(couldn't see) and that's why the cog can't get a refusal. You can't refuse an obstacle you didn't see!

pagina 14
tekening 3, situatie 4
Conform pagina 14, tekening 2, situatie 4. Je kunt geen toestel weigeren dat je niet gezien hebt

Page 14
Drawing 3, sit. 4
Confrirm page 14 drawing 2, sit. 4. You can't refuse an obstacle, You didn't see.

pagina 15
tekening 2, situatie 4
In Nederland zouden we daar geen weigering voor geven. In relatie tot situatie 2 is het geven van een weigering niet goed te verklaren / beargumenteren
Page 15
Drawing 2, sit. 4
In the Netherlands we shouldn't fault it with a refusal. In relation to sit. 2 to fault it with a refusal in sit. 4 isn't good to explain/argue.