



Judging Criteria
2014

Introduction

A competent, efficient and impartial judge is the best way to assure that Canada Barn Hunts are carried out with the fullest professionalism and fun for all those involved.

Qualification

Canada Barn Hunts' judges operate a systematic approach to scoring and evaluating competitors. Live rats that are found by the dog are not judged on based their quality; only quantity and the time takes to make the find(s). It is the dog handler's responsibility to notify the judge of their find(s).

Judges do not need to be breed or confirmation experts regarding the judging criteria at Canada Barn Hunts. They must possess leadership and authority when recording scores and announcing grounds for non-qualifying runs and other rules to competitors.

A judge is must be qualified to mark down completed course criteria and correct rat tube finds on the competitors corresponding scorecard. They must also be competent to spot aggression and unsportsmanlike behaviour in both, human and dog.

Creation of Canada Barn Hunts courses is probably one of the most rewarding undertakings that a judge gets to do. They're responsible for creating unique layouts while incrementally increasing the challenge for competitors as the difficulty levels rise. Judges must keep courses fresh and unique. Judges cannot allow for duplicate courses to be held in close timing within the same geographical area. Judges must adhere to official rules regarding the course layout and avoiding the construction of illegal courses.

Any AKC, UKC, CKC, JRTCA, AWTA Earthdog or Noseworks judge may be sanctioned in as a Canada Barn Hunts judge upon successful completion the Canada Barn Hunts written exam.

Qualified judges in any event (agility, obedience, rally, etc.) can be considered as potential judges for Canada Barn Hunts. These applicants will be considered on an individual case by case basis.

Experienced competitors, will be considered as potential judges on an individual case by case basis.

Dress Code

Clothing worn is to be neat, professional and yet comfortable. Tired, torn or otherwise stained clothing is not acceptable for judging. Advertisements, logos or sponsorships are not allowed to be worn. Judges must not wear any clothing that may imply an impartiality to any specific breed(s) of dog(s). Footwear should be professional yet suitable for the ground in which the games are being hosted.

Agility



All judges must be able to efficiently move freely throughout the course at any time. Judges must be able to climb on obstacles (straw bales) to place [replace] rat tube targets or quickly reset or repair a fallen bale. Judges are allowed to opt for the use of a stool during the runs. The stool must be placed in an area where the entire course can be seen clearly and without physical interference to any critical areas of the course. As a stool is not mandatory for the judge, it is recommended that they request one for the games in advance, and that if needed, space is made within the course design to accommodate it.

Conflict of Interest

Close family of a judge may not compete on the specific course where said judge is scoring. Dogs owned by the judge, or close family may not compete on the specific course where said judge is scoring. Dogs that are being boarded/house (even temporarily) with a judge may not compete on the specific course receive where said judge is scoring.

Judges will not discuss any course configuration with *any* person until after said course has been run through and deemed finished/closed.

A judge will not practice or test their courses with any Canada Barn Hunts participant that may be entering competition in that same season. It is permissible for a judge to practice or test their courses with potential participants in so long as that specific course is intended to be used outside of the competitor's geographical area.

Backup Judges & Apprentices

Clubs are allowed to offer the chance for their main judge and/or those affected by conflict of interest to compete by introducing a backup judge for a portion of the games. The backup judge serves the club and the hosted games only at the capacity to allow the conflict of interest participants a chance to compete. All other competitors, to whom the conflict of interest does not affect, must be scored by the primary judge.

Backup judges must be approved Canada Barn Hunts judges.

Apprentices are judges in training. They are not approved Canada Barn Hunts judges. They are not to be paid for their attendance and/or assistance. Apprentices must work under the guidance and knowledge of approved Canada Barn Hunts judges only.

Consumption

Judges are not allowed to smoke, eat or consume alcoholic beverages while building courses or scoring competitors. Judges are permitted to have a bottle of water or other similar beverage that is not breakable, that can be securely closed, and stored in a discreet location from spectators and competitors. Smoking at the games is permitted only at the discretion of the host and club. There is no smoking allowed within at least 50ft (15.25m) from the course perimeter.



Dog Aggression

It is critical that a judge be able to differentiate between obvious aggression versus breed temperament when assessing and deciding on the course of action of discipline (if any) during a Canada Barn Hunts games. It should also be considered that mixed breeds are allowed deemed eligible to compete in Canada Barn Hunts. Breed specific discrimination and stereotyping is not allowed.

Dangerous dogs are not allowed at Canada Barn Hunts.

A dog can be dismissed from the games if a judge feels that it is an imminent threat to other dogs and/or people. Judges cannot dismiss dogs from competition based on hearsay information. Judges can dismiss a dog if they are firsthand witnesses to an incident. An Event Official can dismiss a dog if they are firsthand witnesses to an incident. Witness statements can also be taken and logged if deemed necessary to do so by the club.

A judge can dismiss a dog from an entire course, difficulty level or from the entire games. Dismissals must be logged accordingly and submitted to the Event Secretary who will forward it to Canada Barn Hunts as protocol dictates regarding the Event Secretary's Protocol and the Games Summary package.

Trial Preparation

While engaged as a registered judge; clubs, event hosts and event secretaries will be in contact with them regularly to acquire their expertise and credentials at Canada Barn Hunts Events. As both the highest authority on the course and through correspondence, it is the judge's duty to represent and uphold all the policies and principles when dealing with existing/potential clients. Professionalism is key to the success of Canada Barn Hunts and positive notoriety of the judge.

The judge must communicate with the club to assess the course space available and to distinguish other variables to incorporate into the games; such as, difficulty levels and anticipated amount participants.

Fees

Judging fees are determined between negotiation of the club and judge(s). Fees are meant to stay affordable as not to retard the volume of participants, size and popularity of the games. Canada Barn Hunts wants as many people as possible to enjoy the games whilst still upholding the maximum runs allowed per trial rule.

Judges may charge for all expenses incurred for the games (excluding alcohol). A judge may charge a "per run" or "per participant" fee. This is to be negotiated between the club and judge whilst still maintaining affordability for all.



Designing a Canada Barn Hunts Course

Creating a well-planned course is of the utmost importance to ensuring the success of a Canada Barn Hunts Games.

Judges should design a unique course for every round of games. Courses should be enclosed and have properties reminiscent to that of an authentic hay loft. Straw bales are recommended over hay bales. For safety reasons, bales should be double bound with twine, not wire. Standard bale dimensions are: 18" x 22" (46 x 59cm). The judge; regarding final bale counts, needs to take into consideration the use of approximately 2 extra bales that will be used as loose cover for the rat tubes during the runs.

To save time and energy during a Canada Barn Hunts Event, it is recommended that courses are built/designed in such a way that bales can 'be added to' the course in order to increase difficulty levels without having to destroy and recreate a brand new course and subsequent design.

It is the responsibility of the club to provide the bales for the judge's course. The club can specify to the judge the number of bales that it can acquire, and the judge can build a course from this. Or, the judge may have a documented course to use and thus specify to the club how many total bales are required. Generally, levels 2 – 3 require 30 bales and 4 -5 require 50+ bales. Level 1 Beginner rat-catcher requires about 20 bales.

The judge must be able to see and hear both competitors (handler and dog). The judge must be able to replace and/or switch rat tubes quickly and effectively in between runs.

Tunnels must be the equivalent of one bale WxH dimensions, which is approximately (18" x 20" or 46 x 50cm). Exact tunnel parameters are specified in each difficulty level.

The start gate is where the handlers will release their dog. It is a 4' x 4' (1.2 x 1.2m) area inside the enclosed course. The perimeter and/or corners of the start gate must be clearly marked. Items used to mark the start gate must not pose a tripping hazard. Bales are not allowed to act as the Start Gate (box) perimeter. One official tunnel must be no less than 3' (0.9 m) and not more than 4' (1.2m) from the enclosed area of the Start Gate. The judge must, on verbal command, release the competitor from the start box.

Concrete blocks may be used on the course to aid short-legged dogs.

A board or boards of at least 3/4" thickness, of a minimum size of 24" x 36" and a maximum size of 48" x 48", with a non-slip surface and may be used as a step aid or as a bridge from one section of the course to another. Boards may also be used to help reinforce tunnel turns and other engineering obstacles. The board must be stable for the heaviest competing dogs. It is recommended that two 4" to 6" blunt-ended bolts be drilled through the board(s) to help anchor the wood securely into the bales. It is the judge's decision to accept or decline boards that he/she may deem inadequate for their intended purpose.

Level 2: Junior Rat-Catcher – JRC Course Parameters

- Course can appear random in bale height, but nowhere is it to exceed 3 bales high.



- There is to be 1 official tunnel, 3ft (0.92m) deep and with a straight line of sight; constructed using 2 bales laid sideways
- Any stacked bales that form a tunnel-like obstacle are valid as long as they do not exceed the length of the official tunnel
- Course should be designed in that it is fully visible to the dog from most angles of attack

Level 3: Veteran at-Catcher – VRC Course Parameters

- Course can appear to have random bale heights, but must reach to total at least 4 bales high.
- Official tunnel must have a turn incorporated into it and be more than 3ft (0.92m) in length. The exit should not be visible from the entrance point. There can be more than 1 official tunnel
- Incidental tunnels are permitted as long as they do not exceed the length of the official tunnel(s).

Level 4: Level 4: Master Rat-Catcher – MRC Course Parameters

- Course can appear to have random bale heights, but should have multiple places where bales exceed at least 5 levels high.
- Official tunnel must have at least a double turn incorporated into it. There can be more than 1 official tunnel.
- There can be multiple incidental tunnels on the course

Level 5: Champion Rat- Catcher - CRC

- Course can appear to have random bale heights, but should have multiple places where the bales exceed 5 levels, and where 5 or 6 bales in height may appear.
- Official tunnel must have at least a triple turn incorporated into it. There can be more than 1 official tunnel
- There can be multiple incidental tunnels on the course
- Level 5: Champion Rat-Catcher is to be designed as to plainly demonstrate an increased level of difficulty and complexity

Rat Tubes

The judge may hide any of the tubes (live, bedding or empty) anywhere on the course after taking the following into consideration;

Use the entire course to place rat tubes. The judge should not worry if one tube seems easier or more difficult to find than another, especially during a full swap of tubes between heats. Target locations are meant to be random and thus no insinuation for favouritism can be placed upon the judge toward competitors regarding this circumstance.

Rat Tubes cannot be placed within 2' (0.6m) of the start gate.

Level 2: JRC requires at least one Rat Tube (Live, Bedding only or Empty) to be placed in a raised location where a climbing effort is involved.



Level 3: VRC requires at least one Live Rat Tube to be placed in a raised location where a climbing effort is involved.

The judge may place all Rat Tubes in a raised location, but may not place all Rat Tubes on the ground.

Rat Tube Locations must be switched in a random fashion after every 5th dog. The repositioned Rat Tube location does not constitute an official change in difficulty level irrespective of the tubes' previous locations.

Rat Tubes are to be covered with a loose pile of straw/hay to visually hide them from the handler and the dog. A heavy layer of straw may result in reducing the scent trail for the dog and possibly suffocating the rat.

The tubes must not be placed in inaccessible area where the handler cannot get a visual cue for the dog's signal, or where the course forces the dog to leave the handlers line of sight.

A Rat Tube may be buried no more than the depth of one bale.

Rat Tubes for disabled handlers must be placed in areas of the course accessible to them and where the dog does not leave their line of sight.

The Judge's Briefing

The following information should be addressed to the competitors before the start of the games and corresponding difficulty levels. The judge may use their better judgement when deciding exactly which information and how in-depth they wish to cover the material. It is recommended that every topic be covered as to minimise confusion and also allow for any questions from participants to arise and be settled.

- Where and how to bring the dog onto the course
- Being prompt to enter the course when called
- Where the waiting area is
- Permitted collars and leads
- Where the dog should be released
- Where the course exit and dog collar/leash will be at the end of the course
- An outline of the rules as to when and how time starts and stops,

- Inform the handlers of any specific course logistics,
- Where the official tunnel (or tunnels) are located
- The height expectations regarding the climbing effort
- To callout rat finds to the judge in a clear and loud voice

- Ask about any bitches in season.
- Discourage loud barking dogs
- Discourage dropping or bowling the dogs



- Reminder of the use of praise and reward
- Where spectators may/may not stand
- Discouraging/warning about target location callouts to competitors

- It is the discretion of the judge to offer time to answer questions from the handlers during the briefing.
- Handlers are expected to have read and understand the rules of Canada Barn Hunts prior to the games.

Measuring for Height Divisions

It is the judge's discretion to measure any dog that raises doubt about its [intended] participating height division. The judge is to remain calm and collected while working in close proximity to the dog. The measuring wicket (provided by the host/club) is to be used on a flat surface. Wickets are to be brought up from the rear of the dog (avoiding going over the head) and are to be placed at the withers on the shoulder for measuring. The dog should be square and at rest.

Scoring Guidelines

Callouts

It is the responsibility of the handler to callout a rat find to the judge in a clear and unmistakable voice. The judge will not mark the find if there is any doubt in their [the judges] mind about the legitimacy/accuracy of the proposed find. The judge may prefer that competing handlers use a specific 'callout' word when marking a target. It is not mandatory for handlers to use any specific callout as long as the announcement of the target is made in a clear and loud voice. Not using the 'preferred' callout does not constitute a non-qualifying score.

Intentionally Leading Out

Handlers are not allowed to intentionally lead the way for the dog out of the start gate and onto the course. An intentional lead out occurs when a handler [using any means] puts their dog into a stay/wait position and then deliberately travels toward an area within the live course. This action will result in a non-qualifying score.

Unintentionally Leading Out

An unintentional lead out occurs when a handler proceeds to begin the course but the dog did not go into the course with them. The handler is allowed to return to the start gate in order to break the stay/wait command on the dog. The handler may gently touch the dog in order to get it going if necessary. An unintentional lead out will not result in a non-qualifying score. An unintentional lead out costs the competitor the time needed for the handler to get the dog going into the course.

False Starts

A false start occurs when a handler or dog leaves the start gate before being indicated to do so by the judge. The competitor(s) will be called back to the start gate for another attempt. A 20 second penalty will be added to the competitor's final run time. A competitor is allowed 2 false starts; therefore, 3 tries



in total. A non-qualifying score will be issued if the competitor false starts on the third attempt to complete the course.

Keeping Time

The judge may time themselves or nominate an official time keeper for the games. It is recommended that a judge inform the club in advance to make provisions for an alternative time keeper. Competitors are not permitted to 'self-time'. Time starts when the handler *or* dog leave any side of the start gate once the dog has had its collar and lead removed in preparation for the course.

Aiding Live Competitors

Aiding Live competitors occurs when anyone; spectators, other dog handlers, and/or officials deliberately communicates to competitors the locations (whether specific or not) of any rat tubes on the course. This constitutes cheating, and is contrary to the very flavour of good sportsmanship. Cases of inadvertent aid will/do occur and it is the discretion of the judge to decide the outcome. To minimise the risk of potential aid, anyone who has knowledge of the rat tube locations are strictly forbidden to reveal their whereabouts. Communications between the judge and rat handlers regarding the rat tube locations is to be kept to a minimum or conducted in private. The judge may see fit to remind/inform spectators, competitors and officials not to aid in the search for targets.

In the event that inadvertent aid occurs; the perpetrator(s) will be given a non-qualifying score on their next course/run. Repeat inadvertent aid by the same people will yield a non-qualifying course/run scores to both the perpetrator(s) and the competitor inside the course at the time. The judge has the discretion to place the non-qualifying scores on a single run, all runs within one day, or the entire span of the games at the club. Deliberately aiding competitors, as substantiated by games officials and the judge(s) will result in immediate dismissal from the games and grounds. In in such extreme cases, a full report must be submitted to the Canada Barn Hunts office. Canada Barn Hunts will make an informed decision based on the recommendations of the report as to whether ban the participant(s) temporarily or permanently. It is noted that cases can be appealed.

