

Grade Guide Lines for Course Design

The following is a very rough guide to the type of courses that would be suitable for the different grades. Remember there should be a gradual progression through the grades.

Grade 1 –Elementary

The aim of the class is to encourage newcomers to the sport and help with the development of handlers and dogs. This should be taken into account when planning the course. Courses should be open and flowing, without any tight turns. Some turns are acceptable, with possible two changes of side. Difficult handling points should be avoided. It has been the practise for double poles to be used at the judges discretion.

Grade 2 - Starters

Again a reasonable, smooth flowing course, with up to three changes of side and turns included. Pull throughs and difficult handling points should be excluded.

Grade 3 - Graduate

With some young and inexperienced dogs included, a course may start to contain some tighter turns, and changes of side. 'Degree of difficulty' handling point(s) may be taken into consideration.

Grade 4 - Novice

More experienced dogs – tighter turns, serpentines and an easy pull through may be included. More difficult handling points may be included.

Grade 5 - Intermediate

Turns may be tightened, and changes of side increased. Angles of approach to jumps may get tighter, and pull throughs included. Consideration may also be given to have options in the route a sequence is taken – easier one available, but harder one quicker.

Grade 6 - Senior

With experienced dogs, tight turns, pull throughs and traps may be permissible. But remember that competitors pay good money to run their dog. There should be control sections together with free running sections designed to demonstrate the full potential of the dog and handler.

Grade 7 - Advanced

Again all options should be open, but remember the safety of the dog, and the need to demonstrate speed and control, but not heelwork.

General

You should also consider what other classes are available to handlers / dogs at that show. Will there be qualifiers? Quite often dogs are restricted to the number of runs so therefore there may be a choice of classes. Also that classes may contain more than one grade, in which case what level is the course aimed at?