

## CHAPTER 12 COURSE DESIGN GUIDELINES

*These guidelines are provided to APDT Rally judges, representatives, course designers, and show committees in order to insure consistent course quality for all APDT Rally competitors regardless of trial location. Please contact APDT Rally if you have any questions.*

With the spirit of APDT Rally Obedience being a sport for all dogs, courses should be designed to be fun, flowing, yet still testing the dog/handler team's abilities to negotiate a variety of the skills that Rally tests.

When designing courses, please strive to balance the number and location of stationary and moving exercises to avoid a choppy course.

- Stationary / moving exercises: Ideally, a strictly stationary exercise should be followed by a moving exercise. However, it is permissible to group one or more stationary exercises together that are “complementary”, i.e. share a common sit, down or stand. Stationary exercises should never account for more than 1/3 (one third) of the total exercises on a course. A well balanced and flowing course intersperses stationary exercises among moving exercises.
  - Stationary exercises require the dog to stop moving at completion.
  - Moving exercises require the dog to continue moving at completion
  - Call Front Exercises combine both moving and stationary exercises and are an excellent way to judge both elements simultaneously.
- Courses should be creative and challenging yet comfortable for first time exhibitors.
- Courses are not required to be consistently laid out at 90 degree angles.
- Consider the use of diagonals to create an interesting course.
- Provide ample spacing at the start, finish and in between exercises for all sizes and types of dogs to comfortably negotiate the course.
- Pre-trial: Verify ring size **with trial host**. Also, please verify that the ring provides sure footing for both dogs and handlers: grass, packed dirt, fully matted concrete/wood or any other non-skid surface.
- Trial courses are to be reviewed by trial judges two weeks prior to trial date. In the event there is only one judge for a trial, course(s) can be reviewed by any other approved judge for that Level or the APDT Rally Representative for the trial. When designing multiple courses for a multiple trial day/weekend, consider utilizing a wide variety of the available exercises.
  - The minimum space between exercise signs should be no less than 10 feet unless otherwise noted in the exercise descriptions or judging guidelines.
    - Some exercises require a larger minimum spacing: Fast Pace, Halt, 1,2,3 Steps Forward, Call Front 1,2,3 Steps Back, Send Over Jumps, the obstacle exercises, the recall exercises, Fast Forward From Sit and more. Unless otherwise noted in the exercise descriptions or judging guidelines, please allow a minimum of fifteen feet to complete these exercises.
    - Courses should be designed to take full advantage of the extra room.
- Sight Line: The Start Line and Finish Line should be an easily viewable sight line. This is to prevent the Timing Steward from having to move in order to see the team cross the Finish Line. While on the same sight line, the flow can be to and from a different

- direction, i.e.: after crossing the start line the team proceeds north, as they cross the finish line they cross the same sight line but are heading east.
- Bonus Exercise Layout: The Bonus Exercises are performed after the team crosses the finish line and timing stops. Some Bonus Exercises require more than one sign. Courses may be designed to include an extra turn/change of direction sign after the finish line so that the team's approach to the Bonus Exercise sign(s) is continuous and smooth.
  - Nesting courses: Judges are encouraged to nest courses whenever possible; particularly when a trial has a large entry. Nesting courses minimizes the time required to change courses between levels. Trial hosts may request that judges nest courses and should stipulate this in their Judge's Contract.

## **Rally Level 1 Course Design Guidelines**

Courses must consist of 18 - 20 exercises plus the Bonus Exercise, not including the Start/Finish lines.

Choose a selection of exercises from #1 - #30 from the APDT Rally Exercise Station List.

The Bonus Exercise is performed after the team crosses the Finish Line and is not considered one of the 18 – 20 exercises that must be included on a Level 1 course.

All guidelines on page 1 apply.

### **New Judge Test Courses Only:**

- Please submit two courses, drawn to scale and with a legend clearly marked.
- Each course submitted must consist of 20 exercises plus the Bonus Exercise, not including a Start and Finish Line.
- Collectively, all the Level 1 exercises must be represented.
- Courses must be neat and legible and include a “legend”.
- The legend must agree with the numbered exercises on the course diagram.
- The exercises and legend must name the exercises as they are identified in the APDT Exercise Description.
- The courses must be drawn to scale with the scale noted on the course.
- Course design is 50% of the score on the Judge’s Test.

## **Rally Level 2 Course Design Guidelines**

Courses must consist of 20 - 22 exercises plus the Bonus Exercise, not including Start/Finish signs.

Choose a selection of exercises from #1 - #48 from the APDT Rally Exercise Station List.

The Bonus Exercise is performed after the team crosses the Finish Line and is not considered one of the 18 – 20 exercises that must be included on a Level 2 course.

All guidelines on page 1 apply.

*Level 2 courses must contain one exercise from each of the following exercise groups:*

1. At least 1 Independent stay exercise chosen from the following list of exercise groupings
  - Stand for Exam
  - The Halt - Leave - Call dog while running with a finish
  - The Halt Leave Dog Recall
  
2. At least 1 obstacle orientated exercise
  - Straight Figure 8
  - Off set figure 8
  - Spiral
  - Send over jump handler runs by
  - Serpentine
  
3. At least 1 of the Level 2 about turns
  
4. Any of the exercises from #38 - 41 or #48

*Additionally, Level 2 courses must have at least 4 additional level 2 exercises for a minimum of 7.*

Please note that some exercises require more time to negotiate than others (for instance, the Stand for Exam, the Halt 1-2-3 Steps Forwards/Backwards and the Straight Figure 8 or the Spiraling exercises). Including a number of these exercises may make it difficult for all handlers to complete the course within the 4 minute time limit.

### ***New Judge Test Courses Only (submit 2)***

- Courses must have 22 exercises plus the Bonus Exercise, exclusive of Start/ Finish signs
- Collectively, all the Level 2 exercises must be represented.
- Courses must be neat and legible and include a "legend".
- The legend must agree with the numbered exercises on the course diagram.
- The exercises and legend must name the exercises as they are identified in the APDT Exercise Description.
- The courses must be drawn to scale with the scale noted on the course.
- Course design is 50% of the score on the Judge's Test

## Rally 3 Course Design Guidelines

Courses must consist of 20 - 22 exercise signs, plus the Bonus Exercise, not including the Start and Finish signs.

Choose a selection of exercises from #1 - #59 from the APDT RallyO Exercise Station List.

The Bonus Exercise is performed after the team crosses the Finish Line and is not considered one of the 18 – 20 exercises that must be included on a Level 3 course.

All guidelines on page 1 apply.

*Level 3 courses must include:*

- Two jumps – any combination from Levels 2 & 3
- One recall exercise from Level 3 (either Recall Over Jump – this can be used as a jump exercise and a recall exercise simultaneously- or Down on Recall)
- One Moving Stand exercise
- One Level 2 turn
- One Level 3 turn

### **New Judge Test Courses Only**

- Each course submitted must consist of 22 exercise signs plus the Bonus Exercise, not including a Start and Finish Line.
- Collectively, all the Level 3 exercises must be represented.
- Courses must be neat and legible and include a “legend”.
- The legend must agree with the numbered exercises on the course diagram.
- The exercises and legend must name the exercises as they are identified in the APDT Exercise Description.
- The courses must be drawn to scale with the scale noted on the course.

Course design is 50% of the score on the Judge’s Test