

Jumpers – Judges Guide

Jumpers events will officially become standard classes as of 1 January 2009.

For judges, this will require some new skills in course designing and judging.

This guide has been designed to give judges information on jumpers events prior to judging them.

The guide is divided into two sections:

Section One covers items that have been regulated; Setting the SCT and who can judge Jumpers events.

Section Two covers the standard for courses in Jumpers Grades A, B and C.

If there are any questions or concerns you have regarding the judging of jumpers classes, please contact the NZKC Agility Committee

Section One: Regulated Items

The Jumpers Judges Panel

- All current members on the Agility Judges Panel may judge C and B grades only at championship jumpers events.
- All current members on the Senior Agility Judges Panel may judge all three jumpers grades.
- All judges are eligible to judge all jumpers grades at ribbon competition level.

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Calculating the Standard Course Time

The Jumpers Dog (JD) and Jumpers Dog Excellent (JDX) titles are based on the accumulation of clear rounds in jumpers classes, it is of great importance that standard course times are appropriate for their level.

The NZKC Agility Committee has determined that standard course times *must* be within a set rate of travel. This ensures a high level of consistency throughout the country for the achievement of clear rounds in jumpers classes and makes the JD and JDX titles as equitable as possible.

The rate of travel for jumpers courses are laid out in the table below

Grade	Minimum rate of travel (metres/second)	Maximum rate of travel (metres/second)
C	2.75	3.25
B	3.25	3.75
A	3.75	4.25

Recommended Method:

STEP 1: Calculate the longest allowed SCT.

The longest allowed SCT = “course length” divided by “Min Rate of travel”
This is rounded DOWN to whole seconds.

STEP 2: Calculate the shortest allowed SCT.

The shortest allowed SCT = “course length” divided by “Max Rate of travel”
This is rounded UP to whole seconds.

STEP 3: The judge then chooses at SCT between min and the maximum allowable SCTs.

Sample Calculation

Scenario: Grade C course that is 105m long.

STEP 1: Calculate the longest allowed SCT.

Longest allowed SCT = $105 \div 2.75 = 38.18$ seconds.
This is rounded down to 38 seconds.

STEP 2: Calculate the shortest allowed SCT

Shortest allowed SCT = $105 \div 3.25 = 32.31$ seconds.
This is rounded UP to 33 seconds.

STEP 3: The judge then chooses at SCT between 33 and 38 seconds.

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Section Two: Guideline for Jumpers Course Standards

Introduction

While course standards are needed to assure qualitative standards were being met, we equally share the concern that such guidelines must be carefully presented so that the creative element in course design would not be lost. As a result, this document is issued as “**Course Guidelines**” rather than “**Rules** for Course Design”.

In presenting these Guidelines, it is our desire that creativity be the starting point in any course design and that the Guideline principles be found present within the course elements. Further, another important aspect of these guidelines is to provide guidance to training instructors and competitors as to the expectations in performance at the various levels and classes of competition at events. With so many newcomers to the Judges Panel each year, understanding these Guidelines should prove beneficial in formulating sound and realistic training curriculum.

Jumpers courses will encourage dogs to move faster, and as such, safety is of particular concern. While it is important that courses are of the correct degree of difficulty for their grade, it is also essential that courses are not overly tight and inviting for dogs to attempt equipment at dangerous angles. Judges are reminded that the safety of dogs is paramount, and this rule applies to jumpers courses as well.

Jumpers courses should be designed such that a clear round is achievable by a significant proportion of the class within the SCT that is set by the Judge within the relevant maximum and minimum rates for the grade.

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Course Design Standards– Grade C

Course design at this level shall take the inexperience of the dog into account when designing obstacle placement.

There should be no attempt at trick distances between jumps and the correct obstacle should be the one most obvious to the dog from the previous one.

Courses should be flowing and invite the dogs to move at speed with good distances between obstacles.

Grade C handlers should be able to demonstrate “basic” or “fundamental” handling techniques only. The Grade C handler should be given plenty of manoeuvring room around and between the obstacles.

Note that a **handler who has previously titled another dog (or this dog in another venue) may excel** at this or a higher level because of their past experience. This possibility should not influence the design of a course.

The course designer should take into consideration that a delayed response by the dog to a handler command may risk injury to the dog on approach to some of the obstacles. The orientation of the obstacles should be such that the flow of the course shall present the dog with Open Approaches to the entry plane of the obstacles.

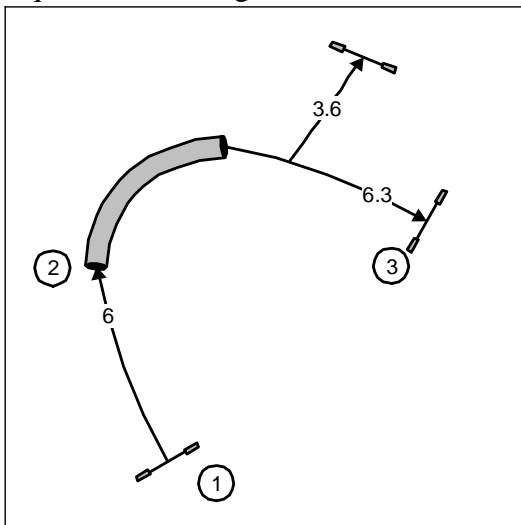
Grade C may include **leading out at the start, switching sides of the dog while moving or sending the dog ahead**. Other challenges may be employed in a limited way, but care should be taken not to place handling capabilities above the goal of testing basic obstacle performance.

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Course Challenges: *Grade C should include 2-3 challenges.*

Obstacle Discrimination - the placement of two or more obstacles in close proximity such that to the dog either obstacle may appear to be the next correct obstacle, is permitted, but this should be set no closer than 2m from closest edge of one obstacle to the closest edge of the other. The intent of this minimum distance requirement is to permit a starter handler some **reaction time to issue a command** to direct the dog to the correct obstacle, given the “loose control” of the starter dog.

Wrong Course Potential – (Crossing Patterns), – the placement of two or more obstacles such that either obstacle appears to be in flow, or the wrong obstacle appears to be in flow, where used, should be loosely spaced. Wrong Course obstacles should generally require that the dog deviate more than 3m off the course flow.



Changes of Sides are permitted and encouraged

These challenges are especially useful in demonstrating that obstacles can be successfully performed regardless of which side the handler is handling from. Changes of Side should not generally be combined with other challenge types such that a Timing Sequence challenge is inadvertently created.

Wraps – the positioning of a single obstacle such that a dog must be directed around the exit plane of the obstacle immediately after performing it.

The obstacle to be wrapped should not be so close to another obstacle that a pull through type challenge is inadvertently created.

Other Challenges

All other challenges are NOT encouraged. However, any course may include a challenge type that might normally be indicative of challenges from the next higher level in order to educate and prepare competitors for the next level.

When this is done however, the challenge should be presented in such a way that skills learned in the present level could be utilized to successfully accomplish the challenge, even though a more advanced handling strategy might enable the challenge to be performed more readily.

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Course Design Standards– Grade B

Course design at this level shall begin to shift emphasise toward Directional Control through utilisation of fundamental handling skills to progress fluidly through the course while working with greater speed than at the previous level. Better Response Control is more apparent, but still not necessarily strong.

Dogs should be able to demonstrate increased confidence and speed on the obstacles without incurring a fault while moving within the natural flow of a course which utilises moderate-length flowing lines between challenges.

As with the Grade C courses, it may happen that a handler who has previously titled another dog (or this dog in another venue) may excel at this or a higher level because of their past experience. This possibility shall not influence the design of courses for this level.

Course Challenges: Grade B should include 3-4 challenges.

Obstacle Discrimination is permitted but should be set no closer than 1.5m from closest edge of one obstacle to the closest edge of the other

The intent of the reduction of the minimum distance requirement is to reflect the expected improvement in handler's reactions, as well as improved training to achieve better Response Control and the dog's recognition of the obstacles.

Wrong Course Potential is permitted and encouraged - wrong course obstacles should generally require that the dog deviate more than 3m off the course flow.

Changes of Side are encouraged - the course design should include multiple changes of side while moving, including some changes of direction within Crossing Patterns.

Spacing Variations are permitted - the space between obstacles throughout the majority of the course should be in the range of 5m to 7m. Unusually short or long approach distances outside of this range can create a challenge of their own both in the performance of individual obstacles, speed and in the timing and control of other challenge types.

This challenge should appear at this level primarily to test single obstacle performance. The design should avoid the use of spacing variations to create issues involving Timing Sequences and Refusal Potential.

Serpentines are permitted - Obstacles used in a serpentine at this level should have no more than moderately-closed approaches.

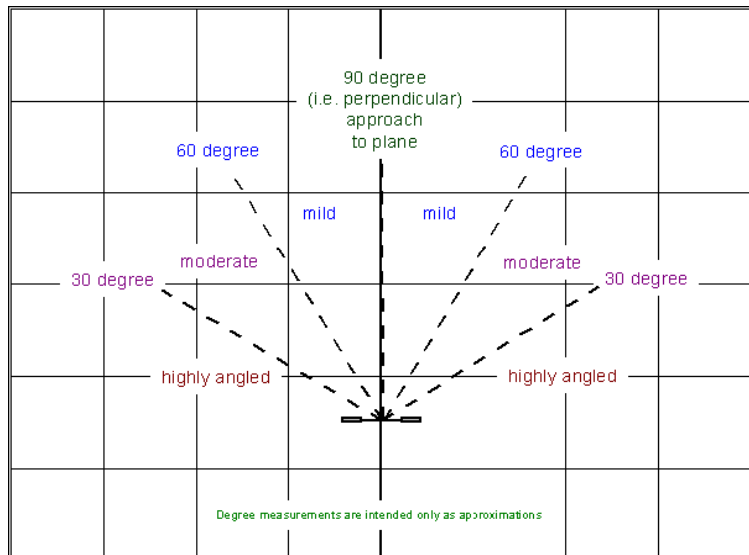
Pull Throughs - this challenge is a type of wrap where an adjacent obstacle is in close proximity. The dog must then be directed around or between these obstacles in order to perform the next obstacle in sequence. Pull Throughs with a moderate gap between the obstacles are permitted.

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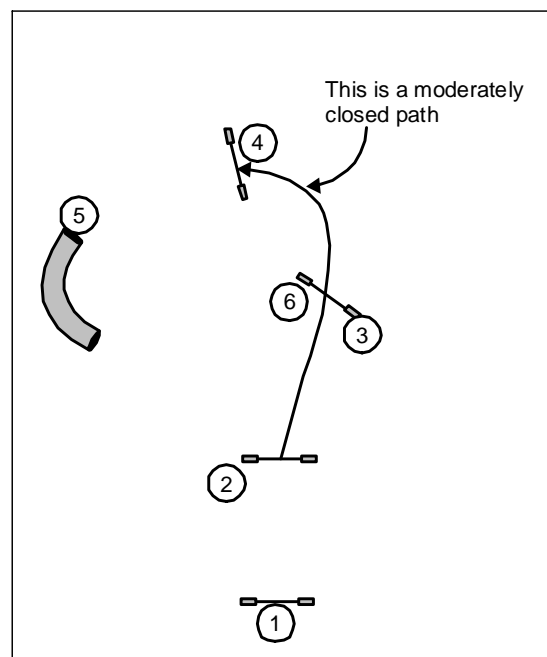
Layering – the placement of an obstacle such that the handler path is separated from the dog’s path, is permitted.

Moderate Handler Constraint - the blockage of the direct handler path either through alignment of the obstacles. Moderate handler constraints are permitted. Obstacles placed in a manner that present a handler constraint shall be carefully considered. Handler paths through a sequence should not be constricted in such a manner to generally require an unnatural handling position.

Closed Approach - a moderate to highly angled approach to the next obstacle in sequence with the entry point to the obstacle in view, no matter how slight. Normally this means that the dog approaches the front plane of the obstacle from an acute angle, but the approach side of the obstacle is not in question. The diagram compares the range of approaches to a Jump varying from Open Approaches (perpendicular to mild) and Closed Approaches (moderate to highly angled).



Less than perpendicular approaches to the entry plane of the obstacles are appropriate for this level, however the orientation of the obstacles shall still present the dog with a natural flow to the next obstacle. Strong Closed Approach positions that deliberately encourage refusals or that require the dog to “seek out” the front plane of the obstacle should generally be avoided.



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Course Design Standards– Grade A

Course design shall emphasize accomplished training for efficient Response and Directional Control, complemented with refined handling skills to encourage faster rates of speed while progressing fluidly through the course.

Although the Grade A level is expected to contain multiple challenges, a course should never be so loaded with challenges that it creates an excessively stressful round.

The overall effect should be a balance of control and fluidity. A well handled suitable level Grade A Jumpers run should still look flowing, fluid and enjoyable for handler and dog.

A handler who has titled their dog at this level and continues to compete may excel beyond the minimum requirements of the course design due to their increasing experience. This possibility shall not influence the design of a course.

Course Challenges: Grade A should include 5-8 challenges.

All challenges defined in grade C and B are appropriate at this level. In addition the following challenges are permitted.

Managed Approach – obstacle placement such that the handler must send or escort the dog to a point that the front plane of obstacle comes into the dog's view.

Refusal Potential – A combination of obstacle placement and expected approach speed that may increase the risk of refusal. A Closed Approach to an obstacle is a typical characteristic that leads to increased Refusal Potential. These combined with design challenges involving Response Control, Wrong Course Potential or Obstacle Discrimination can further raise the level of difficulty of this form of challenge.

Timing Sequences – a sequence of the course where the handler must execute two or more commands or manoeuvres in succession or concurrently, with correct timing of each individual manoeuvre being a key element in accomplishing the full sequence. An inherent characteristic is that the level of difficulty increases dramatically with speed, which often means a higher degree of “Response Control” is also required.

Compound Challenges with Timing Sequences are encouraged

Challenges should include compound challenges, such as Changes of Side to effect a change of direction while moving through crossing patterns where the timing of command and/or movement may create a refusal or off course condition.

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Designing Courses Appropriately to the Level

Table 1 Challenge Types by Level

Challenge Type	Grade Cs	Grade B	Grade A
Obstacle Discrimination	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Wrong Course Potential	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Change of Sides	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Wrap	Yes	Yes	Yes
Closed Approach		Yes*	Yes
Spacing Variations		Yes*	Yes
Pull/Push Through		Yes	Yes
Serpentine		Yes	Yes
Handler Constraint		Yes*	Yes
Layering		Yes	Yes
Managed Approach			Yes
Refusal Potential			Yes
Timing Sequences			Yes

**Further criteria for these challenge types are discussed in the relevant sections for each Grade.*

In assessing whether or not a challenge is appropriate for a level, consider that these are only guidelines rather than a standard to be strictly adhered to. In particular, because Grade C is a “developmental” level that include both newcomers and seasoned competitors(with new dogs), the following principle applies:

Any course may include a challenge type that might normally be indicative of challenges from the next higher level in order to educate and prepare competitors for the next level.

When this is done however, the challenge should be presented in such a way that skills learned in the present level could be utilized to successfully accomplish the challenge, even though a more advanced handling strategy might enable the challenge to be performed more readily.