Course Designing Do’s and Don’ts

Do’s

1. Variation of challenges on the courses is the key to a successful set. Pinwheels, discriminations, multiple change of directions, serpentines, wraps, speed to a contact or set of weaves are great challenges. A serpentine in Regular is awesome but try to avoid testing it on every course in the set, it gets boring if you repeat the same test, or sequence, over and over again, especially in the same course.
2. Check your judging position. If you put a contact in the middle of the course, can you see all the obstacles clearly from your judging position, especially your weave poles!
3. Check your handling paths. Does your obstacle placement block handlers from working a sequence successfully? Weave poles, dogwalk and the aframe can create a huge barrier on a course when set in the middle. Does the placement block the handler from moving from one side to the other, especially if there is a test requiring the handler on the other side. Be cognizant that slow dog handlers and fast dog handlers do not handler from the same place.
4. For Chances lines, please use Blue for Novice, Red for Open and Black for Elite.

Don’ts

1. Do not put tunnels under the up or down ramp of the dogwalk. This is a safety issue because dogs could push the tunnel into the stanchions of the ramp.
2. Do not use the ‘start’ obstacle within the last 5 obstacles of your course. This will avoid the delay of the start line dogs coming into the ring.
3. Do not have the start line obstacle an off course during the finish sequence. This will avoid the delay of start line dogs coming into the ring.
4. While a variety of tests are what makes a good course, try to avoid overdoing the amount of challenges or the same challenges on a course. The amount of challenges should reflect the level of the course. Too many challenges creates frustration for the handlers.
5. When designing, do not move the contacts between levels or the other courses with contacts in your set. Nesting is very important for an efficient trial. Keep your course builders happy. It is sometimes faster and more efficient to simply renumber a course rather than moving obstacles. Especially when going from Tunnelers to Intro Tunnelers!
6. Do not use a barrel on any course but Grounders.