

**HANDS UP**

...for NZ

**Agility Judges**

Issue 2

This document is intended for Agility judges. The aim is to provide some information and stimulate some discussion, and any/all response will be welcomed!! As a result of feedback we have added a Contents box and a Quiz, so you can test yourself before you look at the articles. Also look out early next year for a new look Judges page on the website, hope you like it!!

Much of the feedback from the last info letter related to judging the dog walk, and there is a Judging question on that this month (see page 6).

The important points about judging contacts are:-

- watch the contact and not the dog
- be consistent and judge all dogs the same
- preferably design your course so the handlers will be running on the opposite side

Regards,

Karen de Wit

NZ Agility Committee (Judges)

### **This issue:-**

1. Branding Judges gear.
2. Standing orders – what are they and where do they fit in?
3. Walking the course.
4. Re-runs, how to deal with them.
5. Regulations for long jumps and spread jumps
6. Judges position and contacts.
7. Safety in agility.
8. Timers and how best to treat them.

### **Quiz to get you started, answers on the last page.**

1. Who specifies whether Elementary has lower jumps or not?
  - a. The club?
  - b. The judge?
  - c. Competitors?
  - d. Bars must always be lower than the maximum.
2. Walking the course should take place:-
  - a. at any time someone needs to
  - b. between a height break
  - c. before competition begins
3. Re-runs can take place
  - a. when the competitor is ready
  - b. immediately
  - c. at the end of the height range
  - d. at the end of the class
4. If a dog misses an obstacle during a rerun for time only the result is:-
  - a. 5 faults, in the time recorded
  - b. a clear round, in the time recorded
  - c. a disqualification
5. What distance must there be either side of a long jump and spread jump?
  - a. 6m before and 4m after
  - b. 4m before and after
  - c. 6m before and after
  - d. Any distance as long as they are not on a corner.
6. You must set the timer for two passes if the dog is going through the first obstacle twice on a course.
  - a. True
  - b. False.

# AGILITY JUDGES GEAR.

<http://www.cafepress.com/dogplay>

Do you like the idea of being able to get some Judges gear?

Perhaps a hat, and Polo shirt and vest - all with our own NZ Agility-specific branding.

We could even put up a competition to find a catchy phrase to add to the clothing. To get the ball rolling.....

Hands Up- Agility Judge

Agility-enjoy the run!

Agility- Judge in the middle

Judge – best seat on the grounds



Any/all ideas/comments to [kpde Wit@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kpde Wit@xtra.co.nz)

## STANDING ORDERS.

Have you ever read the Standing Orders? These contain a lot of information that complements the regulations. A recent example referred to having lower jumps in Elementary. This is in the Standing orders and dates back to the Zones, when Zone 3 had a longstanding tradition of putting all jumps at a lower setting for Elementary class.

*“It is up to the club on the day to specify whether there is a jump height reduction for Elementary dogs. All other regulations including judging, scoring, age of dogs, heights of dogs and anything else not otherwise included above, will be as per NZKC Agility Regulations.”*

The Standing orders are full of useful information, so next time you have a few spare moments go and take a look. You can read the **Standing Orders** on the NZAgility website

<http://www.dogagility.org.nz/information/2011%20NZKC%20Agility%20Standing%20Orders.pdf>

### **The Introduction says,**

“This handbook has been created to provide NZ Agility clubs and competitors with information related to Agility matters. It is the intention that all matters not otherwise provided for in Agility Regulations or other NZKC rules/regulations be provided for in this handbook.

### **Compliance**

Policy contained in this handbook has been passed by the NZKC Agility Committee. With this in mind, it is the intention that all clubs and individuals be required to comply with such policy. These policies have been formulated from combining and restructuring the old Zone Standing orders to enable continuity of policy wherever possible. The Agility Committee will frown upon evidence of deliberate non-compliance and may choose to raise such non-compliances with the NZKC.”

They include such things as Running of Elementary agility classes, NZDAC Team Selection Process, Zone Meetings, Interclub Competitions, Zone Awards and General Information on National Agility Calendar, Event Levies, Measuring Of Dog’s Height, Unruly Or Aggressive Dogs, Running Of AD and ADX ADVANCED TRIALS, Clear Round Milestone Awards, Competition Guidelines, Clubs Complaints Procedures, Control Of Dogs Policy, Dog Assessment Policy, Mini Assembly, Movable Show Dates. etc

# Walking the Course

## How many should there be?

The simple answer is that all competitors in a class must walk the course before the competition begins. Once the course is ready, (which is up to the Judge in combination with ring staff), competitors can walk it for the allotted time. There is no provision in the regulations for anyone to be permitted to walk the course at any other time.

The regulation states:-

### **5.4.6 Walking the Course**

*Provision must be made for competitors to walk the course before the competition begins when the judge should explain any necessary features of the course e.g. direction of negotiation for the Crossover, performance of the table in Games classes.*

Sometimes a Judge might be approached and asked if they will allow additional people to walk the course after the class has begun. The Judge does not have to say yes. There is a genuine advantage gained if a competitor watches a number of dogs run around the course and then gets to walk the course. They may be able to plan a better path, or cross the least successful one off their list of possibilities. This would be unfair to other competitors. Extra course walks could also add length to the day.

### **However in some cases should the Judge consider being a little lenient?**

For example,

1. Other officiating judges and helpers also competing. Where the people are officials and were judging or scriming in the other ring while the course walk took place, every consideration should be given.

We do not want to make our volunteers lives any tougher than they might already be! To avoid having extra course walks; perhaps a better idea is for judges to communicate with each other. The second ring could be halted for a short time to allow helpers to walk the course.

2. People competing in other activities. When a Club runs combined events such as Obedience and Agility competitions on rare occasions people may find stays conflicting with course walks. To avoid having extra course walks, those responsible for running the different events could liaise so that stays for example could be delayed until the course has been walked.

The judge is in charge of the ring, but may want to consult with Event management before either allowing or dismissing such requests.

You need to balance the rights of:-

- helpers
- agility competitors
- other competitors

# RERUNS.

Typically dogs get a re-run when the equipment fails, when another dog runs into the ring and impedes the competing dog/handler and when the round does not get a time, for whatever reason. There has even been occasion when a stray child has been found in a tunnel, causing one dog to refuse to go in – the fact that a bunch more had already charged through was interesting!!



When you design a course where the dog has to go over the finish jump more than once, make sure you set the timer for two passes. Where a dog negotiates the start obstacle multiple times the timer operation will not be affected. (Note: See the article on timer operation at the end of this issue).

When you are briefing your ring staff make sure they know about the restart button on the timer. If a drop of water or a bumblebee etc stops the timer they can hit the restart button and the dog will get an accurate time. No need for a rerun!!

The regulations state:-

## *13.10 Re-runs*

### *13.10.1 Re-runs permitted in some circumstances*

*Competitors will be allowed re-runs at the judge's discretion under the following conditions*

- (i) Failure of any obstacle.*
- (ii) Outside interference.*
- (iii) Timing failure.*
- (iv) Any other unforeseen circumstance which in the opinion of the judge has unfairly disadvantaged the chances of the dog continuing unimpeded and/or safely.*

### *13.10.2 Timing of Re-run*

*In the event of a dog being awarded a re-run the handler shall be given the option to re-run immediately or at the end of the class.*

### *13.10.3 Calculation of Faults on Re-run*

*Faults accumulated up until the point at which the incident occurred in the original round will count. No further faults for this part of the course may be incurred, except that the course must ultimately be run correctly. A missed obstacle not corrected will be penalised with elimination.*

If a person does not wish to re-run for time, they do not have a time recorded against their number and they are effectively eliminated from the competition. Another person cannot take the dog and do the re-run.

However, what if the course has been taken down before it is realised? In this case should there be the option of giving a SCT?



## LONG JUMPS & SPREAD JUMPS ON A CORNER.

The regulations for the spread jump and long jump state:-

### 13.13 Distances between Obstacles.

#### 13.13.1 Consecutive Jumping Obstacles

Consecutive jumping obstacles (other than spread and long jumps) placed so that the dog can travel in a straight line between them must have a minimum of four metres between centres. If either or both of the obstacles are a spread or long jump this distance must be increased to a minimum of six metres.

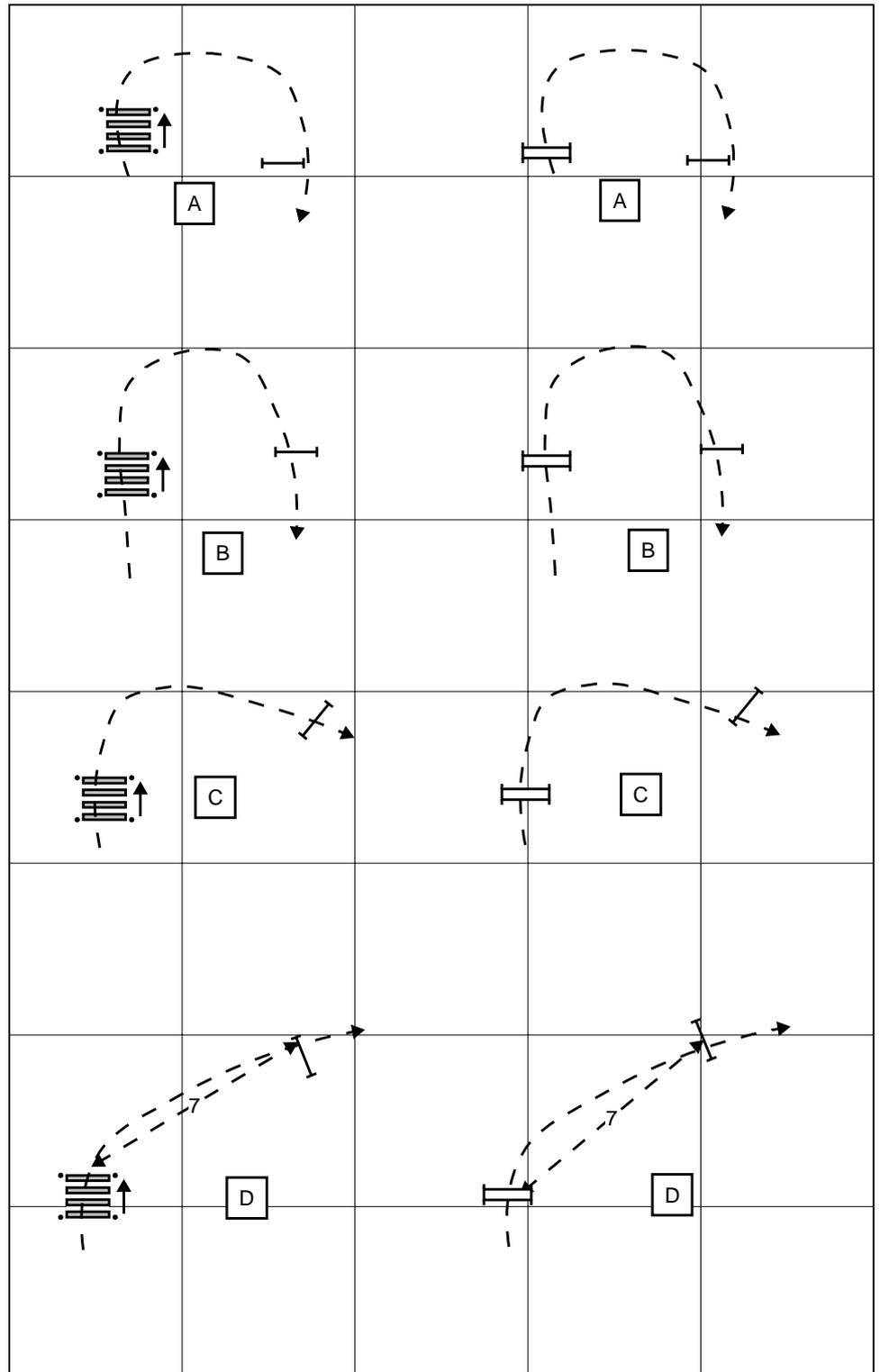
#### 13.13.2 Unimpeded Run Up

There must be a minimum of four metre unimpeded run up before and after jumping obstacles. For long and spread jumps this distance must be a minimum of six metres.

#### 12.4.1 Asymmetrical Spread Jump Consists of ....

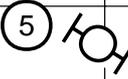
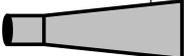
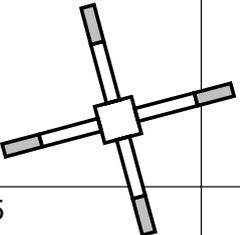
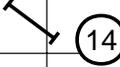
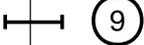
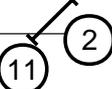
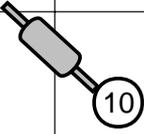
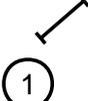
Asymmetrical spread jumps must not be situated on a corner or with a tight turn required either before or after it.

**Which, if any of the layouts of long jump and spread illustrated fails to meet the regulations?**



# SAFETY.

Take a look at the course below and decide if the Judge has set a safe course or not. Why not? How could you improve it?

	5	10	15	20	25	
	<p>LIST the unsafe aspects that you can see on this course.</p> <p>Then decide how you would make the course safer.</p>					
30		(5) 		(13)  (6)	(7) 	30
	(4) 					
25						(8) 
		(3)  (12)		(14) 		
20			(15) 		(9) 	20
15						15
			(11)  (2)	(16)  (10)		
10				(1) 	(17) 	10
5						5
	5	10	15	20	25	

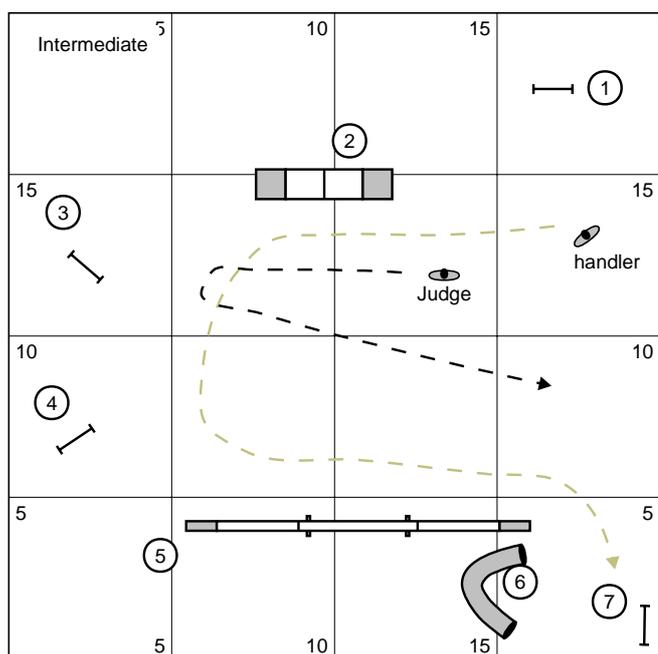
## DISCUSSION.

### Judges Position A.

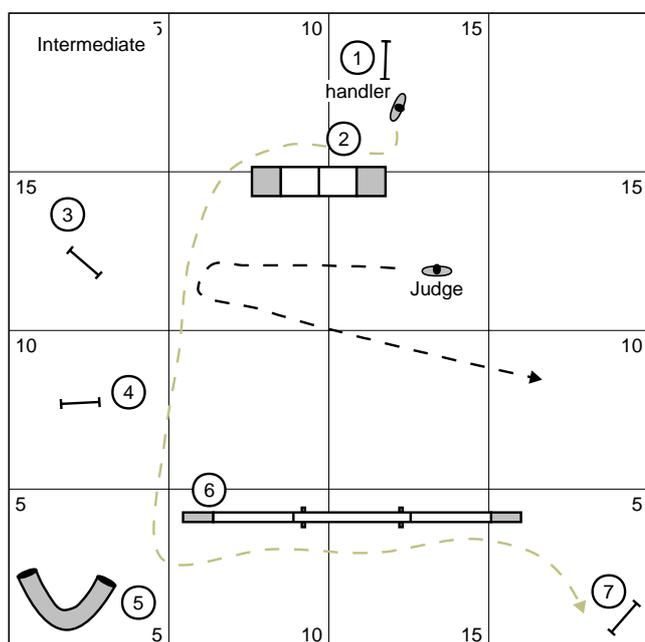
The design shown made it difficult for the Judge to see the A-frame and dog-walk contacts because

1. the handler was in the way
2. the tunnel was in the way of the dog-walk
3. the judge was behind and far away.

Some suggestions below – what did yours look like?



An alternative where the tunnel does not block the Judges view of the dog-walk, but the handler still does. The A-frame is unchanged.



This alternative encourages the handler to run on the opposite side of both contacts, giving the judge an unobstructed view of all the obstacles.

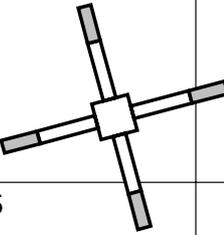
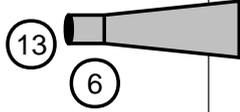
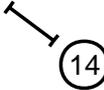
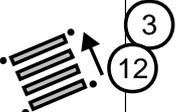
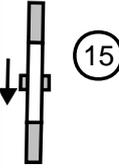
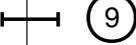
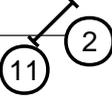
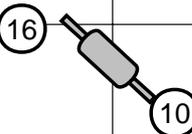
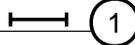
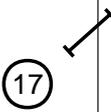
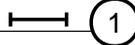
## Did you identify all the unsafe areas on the course?

	LIST the unsafe aspects that you can see on this course.						
	Then decide how you would make the course safer.						
30		5		13	7	30	
	4	3	12	15	14	8	
25						9	
20							
15							
10		11	2	16	10	17	
				1		5	
				20	25		

1. angle of 1 and 17 creates a problem at start/finish with dogs running towards each other.
2. angle from long jump to crossover could be a hazard if wet
3. angle through tyre is unsafe
4. Collapsible tunnel too close to flexi, dogs cant see as they come out and could bang into tunnel.
5. Jump 1 in landing area for Jump 10/16
6. Jump 14 creates horrible angle to seesaw

Some possibilities for making the course safer.... What ones did you get?

	<p>LIST the unsafe aspects that you can see on this course.</p> <p>Then decide how you would make the course safer.</p>	20	25	
30				30
25				25
20				20
15				15
10	<p>Some ideas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move jump 1</li> <li>2. Move and change angle of long jump</li> <li>3. Change angle of tyre</li> <li>4. Move tunnel</li> <li>5. Move jump 14</li> <li>6. Move or change angle of Jump 17</li> </ol>			10
5				5
5	10	15	20	25

# The Art of Electronic Timing

By Mark Kuznitz

Photos courtesy of Mark Kuznitz except where noted

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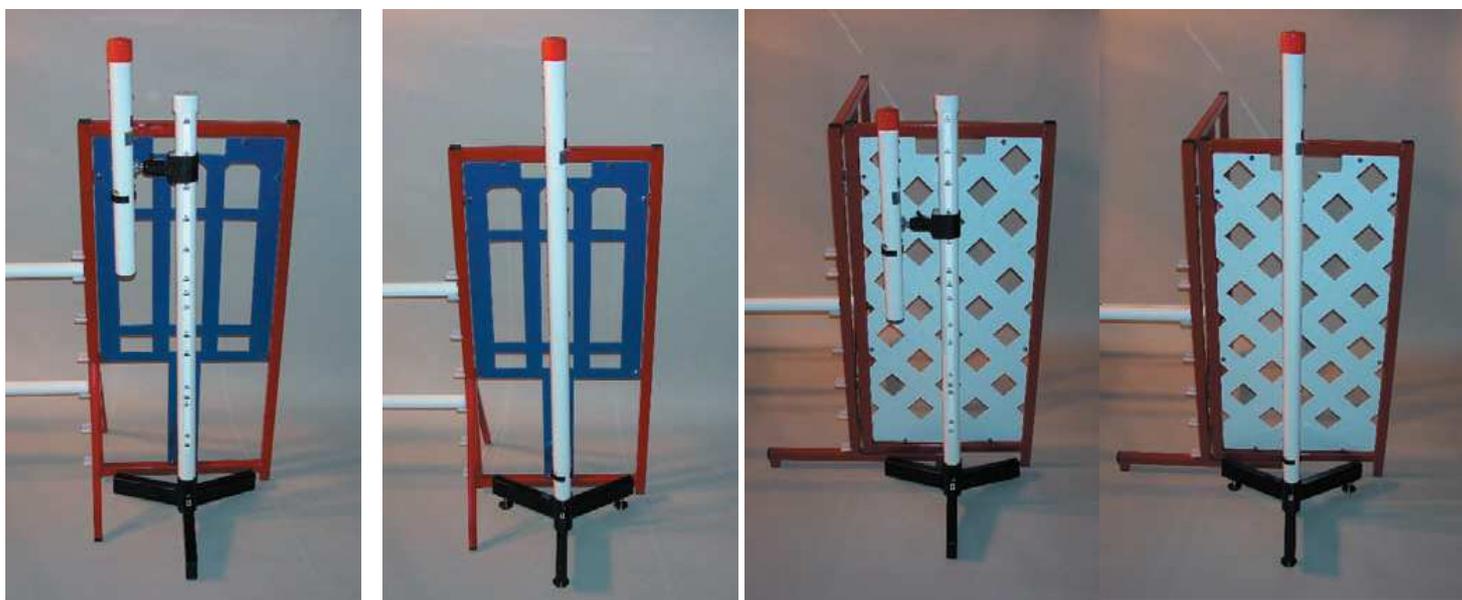
With the proliferation of electronic timing since its introduction some 4 1/2 years ago, numerous theories have been employed in the way it is used. I would like to review the practical side of using the timing systems here. Instructions for programming the controller specific to each agility venue are available in the operating manual that comes with each system so we won't deal with programming problems. We will start with placement of the electronic eyes on course, follow that with some common misconceptions, and finish with some suggestions for more efficient use of the timing equipment.

For the purposes of our discussion we will assume that the eyes at the start of every course are placed in front of the first obstacle and that the eyes at the finish of every course are behind the finish obstacle since that format is required at most trials. Because contact obstacles and weave poles are not allowed as the first or last obstacles on course, we will ignore those and concentrate on jumps, tires, open and closed tunnels, and broad or long jumps.

## Placing the Electronic Eyes

The most important thing to remember at a jump, or any obstacle for that matter, is that the eyes should be as close as possible to the top of the dog's arc as he jumps over the obstacle. There are two primary reasons to place the eyes as close to the obstacle as practical: First, because the height of the eyes for each jump height indicated on the timer standards is based on the apex of the dog's effort. For example, if the eyes are set 12" in front of a first jump, it is possible that one or more dogs could jump under the bottom beam of the light curtain on the way to passing over the jump, resulting in a missed start time. If the eyes at the finish are set 12" behind the last obstacle, a dog could jump over the last obstacle and come down under the bottom beam of the light curtain. This may not happen with a flat-jumping dog but is very likely with a dog that jumps with a round style.

The standards for both the adjustable light curtains and the full-height light curtains are designed to blend into the environment. As such, they look very much like jump standards and can give the appearance of the front or back element of a spread jump. At the beginning of a course, the result of the look-alike condition of the light curtain can be having a dog jump early, and possibly hit a bar or get hung up on a tyre. At the end of a course, this can lead to having a dog jump late and not reach the apex of his jump as soon as necessary to clear the bar. This is especially true for the adjustable light curtains since they do not present as "clean" an image to the dog as the full-height curtains.



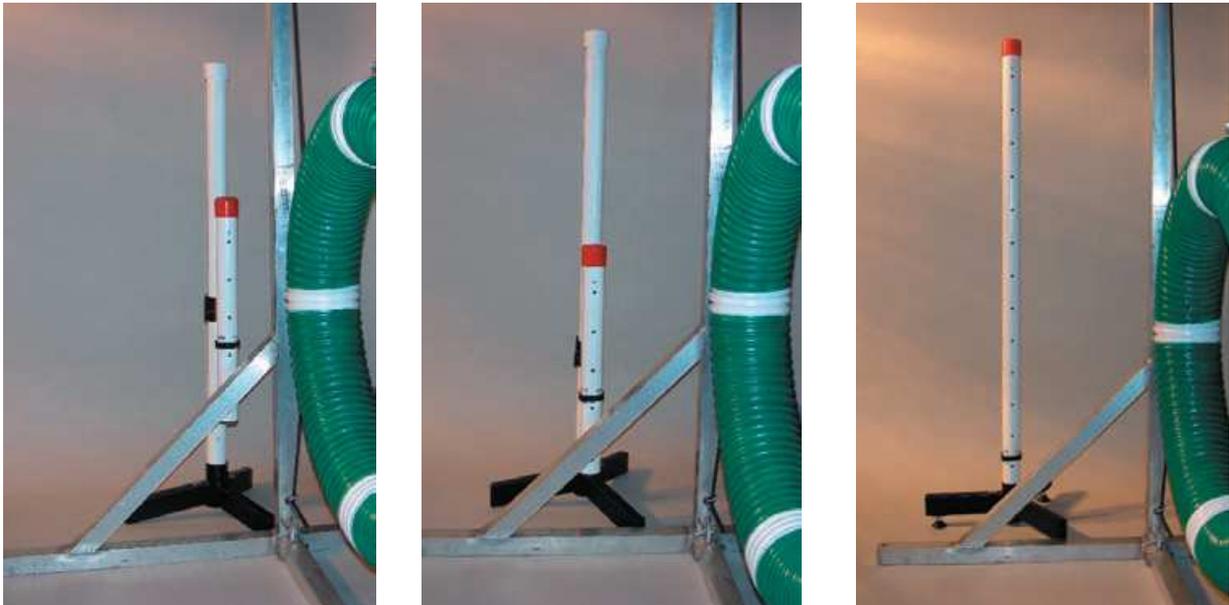
*Winged and*

## *Wingless Jumps*

Since the objective is to place the eyes as close as possible to the obstacle, let's review each type of obstacle other than contacts and weave poles, starting with winged and wingless jumps used at both the start and finish of a course. The metal bases of the timing systems are designed to be placed next to a wing with the arrow pointing away from the wing. The eyes will then be approximately 4" from the jump, creating exactly the image we want the dogs to see and giving us the best chance to capture the dog within the beams. The standard is placed in the tripod base with the jump height scale lined up with the arrow so that it faces away from the jump toward the bar setter so that ring crew can easily line up the top of the Velcro with the jump height to be run. The entire base should be within the wing so that it does not extend beyond the wing, which would create an even wider handler restriction. Figures 1 and 2 show the correct placement of both the adjustable and full-height light curtains in front of a wing jump. Be sure that the eyes themselves do not extend inside the jump and restrict the dog's path. You may have to make some adjustments to this setup should the legs of your equipment not permit this exact position. Place the eyes at a wingless jump in exactly the same manner as if a wing was there.

## *Spread Jumps*

Spread jumps are almost never used at the beginning of a course but are frequently placed at the end of a course. The positioning is exactly the same as that used for winged and wingless jumps as shown in Figures 3 and 4.



## *Tyre*

Tyres are probably handled more inconsistently than any other obstacle due to the wide variety of tyre construction. Tyres also represent the most danger to the dog and the biggest opportunity to miss the start time when the timing equipment is not set properly. The challenges are the supports that go from the legs to the vertical standards. You cannot place the eyes behind the support because it will not allow the eyes to properly align. I place the eyes next to the tyre for as many of the jump heights as possible, and as close as I can for the lower jump heights. Figures 5a and 5b show how I place the adjustable-height eyes on a MAX 200 tyre. The bottom beam of the light curtain must be above the tubing. So I place the eyes next to the tyre for all jump heights 12" and above. I move it out for the 8" dogs and move it again for the 4" dogs. This works great because the big dogs have exactly the image that I want them to have, and the small dogs seem to be much less sensitive to the placement of the eyes anyway. At all costs, I avoid putting the eyes near the end of the legs because this seems to be the placement that is most likely to confuse the big dogs and also most likely to miss a dog that goes under the beams before starting to jump. Figure 6 shows proper position for the full-height light curtains on a MAX 200 tyre. As I mentioned earlier, I have not seen the full-height light curtain cause a problem for the big dogs, probably because it is just a single pole.

## Tunnels

Open tunnels and closed tunnels (chutes) at the start of a course require you to break out accessories provided with each system. There are short standards provided with the adjustable light curtain systems to be used when a course begins with a tunnel or a chute. They are to be used so that we don't confuse the dogs with tall standards which may look to a dog like a jump rather than a tunnel. Similarly, a set of short light curtains (eye #3) are provided with the full-height light curtain systems to be used when a course begins with a tunnel or chute. When an open tunnel is used at the end of a course, there is no need to use the short standards or eyes because the dog doesn't see the tall standards because they are obscured by the tunnel walls. The chute is not suitable for use as the last obstacle on a course with electronic timing since it is not safe to place the eyes at the end of the chute for several reasons: 1) Dogs do not tend to come out of a chute straight so there is the possibility that they might run into the eyes when exiting and hurt themselves and/or the eyes; and 2) Handlers might trip over the eyes as they focus on gaining control of their dog at the end of the course.



## Broad or Long Jump

The broad or long jump is never used to start a course but has been used on occasion at the end of a course. The adjustable light curtains do not reliably capture the finish time as the heights they are calibrated to anticipate are for the dog either jumping a specific height or coming out of a tunnel. As a result, we don't recommend using a broad jump at the end of a course with the adjustable light curtains. If a club has the full-height light curtains, they can be substituted for the back two corner markers of the broad or long jump and will record the finish time as they will capture a dog at whatever height he passes through the beams.

## Myths about Electronic Timing

There are a few myths about the use of electronic timing that may be applicable to your club.

- If the bottom display on the controller is blinking Eyes Off, the batteries need to be changed. Not true. The display blinks Eyes Off during walk-throughs and during the opening sequence of Gamblers. Blinking simply means that beam breaks are appropriately ignored at these times.
- When using the system outdoors, the position and intensity of the sun can cause the eyes to either miss a beam break or record a false beam break. Changing batteries will not fix this problem. It is imperative that the sun be behind the receiver eye. Be sure that the sun is not shining directly into the eye with the antenna on the older systems or the red capped eye on the new systems to avoid these problems.
- You can expect the batteries to last for six or more full days of use at a trial. Shutting them off during course changes and walk-throughs does very little to extend battery life; it often causes the first dog on course afterward to be missed because the eyes were not turned back on. The best way to conserve battery life is to be sure they are turned off at the end of each day and be sure that the batteries are removed before the systems are put in storage. Most importantly, be sure that the batteries are inserted with the correct polarity

because incorrect polarity will cause the batteries to overheat and expire quickly, not to mention possibly leaking acid, which can do serious damage.

□ Generally it is not necessary to change batteries during a trial unless the LED at the top of the eyes is blinking on and off signifying that the batteries will most likely expire in about two hours. The controller has a low-light indicator for the battery in the upper right corner of the lower display that will blink when the batteries are down to 5% of full capacity.

□ Second or third passes on the start eye do not require programming of the controller as subsequent passes on the start eye are not recorded by the controller. Second or third passes on the finish eye can be programmed into the controller. The controller is programmed to ignore beam breaks for 2 seconds after the finish beam is triggered to avoid false indications caused by falling bars or dog's tails. When testing the finish eye to confirm it will stop on pass 2 or 3, be sure to be patient and break the beam only after 2 seconds have elapsed.

## Getting the most from your System

To get the most efficiency from your system, be sure that the eyes are properly aligned. The most common problems that we see are drooping eyes and poor alignment. First, with the adjustable light curtains, be sure that the Velcro is tight around the standard to keep the eyes from drooping. Next, be sure that the eyes are vertical - always loosen the ball mount to adjust the eyes. Last, stand behind the eyes to be sure they are aligned so that they point directly at each other. If they are not, pick up the eye complete with the base and rotate it until it is accurately aligned—do not twist the standard in the base without loosening the thumb screw that holds it in place. When aligning the full-height light curtains, adjust them to be vertical with the adjustable glides on the bases and stand behind them to be sure they point directly at each other with the lenses dead centre. Again, be sure to pick up the eyes with the bases and rotate them—do not rotate the eyes in the base without loosening the thumb screw that holds the eyes in place. Be sure to read the operating instructions that come with your system if you encounter a problem programming your controller. Over the course of the last several years we've made many improvements in the software that operates your system. All software updates are available for every system that was ever produced by Signature Gear. The cost for updates is minimal. Contact Signature Gear either by email to [Mark@SignatureGear.com](mailto:Mark@SignatureGear.com) or by phone at (636) 584-0113 for information about updating your software. Remember to reprogram the eyes into your system after a software update.

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***Mark Kuznitz is the founder and owner of Signature Gear. Signature Gear manufactures and sells agility and flyball electronic timing systems, including wireless microphone systems. Signature Gear systems are used exclusively at virtually every major competition in the world including AKC Nationals, USDAA Nationals, AAC Nationals, CKC Nationals, CPE Nationals, NADAC Nationals, Australian Nationals, New Zealand Nationals, and FCI World Championships. Mark competes in agility with Australian Shepherds Maverick and Viper.***

### Quiz, answers.

Who specifies whether Elementary has lower jumps or not? The club?

Walking the course should take place:- before competition begins

Re-runs can take place - immediately or at the end of the class

If a dog misses an obstacle during a rerun for time only the result is:-a disqualification

What distance must there be either side of a long jump and spread jump? 6m before and after

You must set the timer for two passes if the dog is going through the first obstacle twice on a course. False.

**Please send any feedback/ideas/plans etc for the next info letter to [kpde Wit@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kpde Wit@xtra.co.nz)**