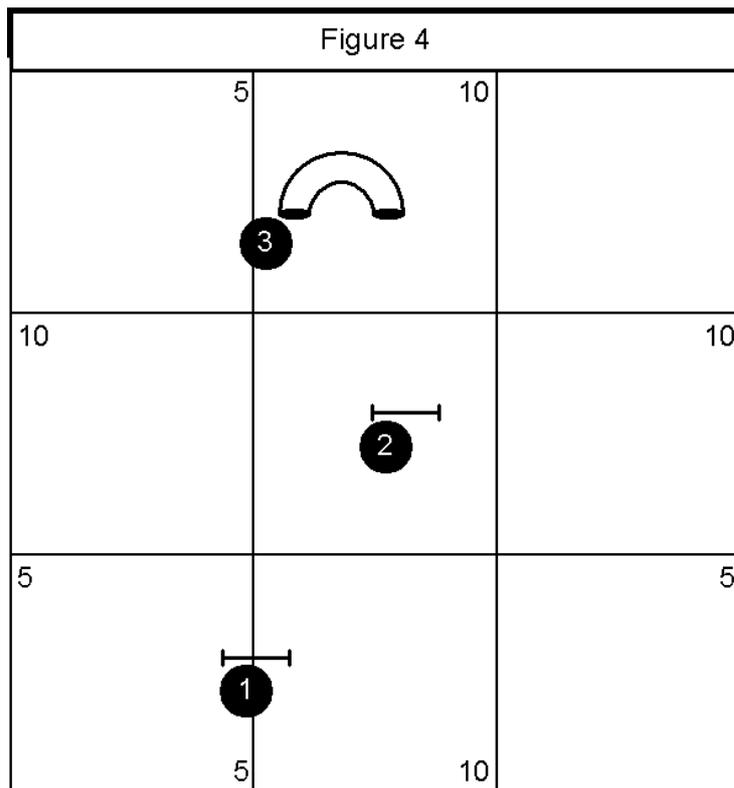


What if we now swap hurdle 3 in Figure 3 for a tunnel entrance (see Figure 4). This gives a really graphic view as to how the placement of hurdle 1 affects the correct and efficient negotiation of the tunnel at 3. Look back at Figure 1 and 2 and see how the position of hurdle 1 affects the sequence if you swap No. 3 to a tunnel.



Recognising how the angle and speed of approach affects the performance of a given sequence, allows the handler the option of changing the angle perhaps an obstacle prior to the problem area, rather than practicing emergency handling at the last minute. Alternatively it allows the handler to be ready to straighten the dog's approach to the correct obstacle on landing from the previous one.

Consider Figure 5 which shows the natural line of approach to the weave taking the dog past the entrance. Of course it is desirable that we train our dogs to pick up on the first pole and work hard to find the correct entrance themselves. This figure is however, a good illustration of how the approach which is defined by the first hurdle in the sequence, can affect the speed and direction of the dog into the obstacle.

From a judge's perspective the alteration in positioning of hurdle 1 has a dramatic effect on the difficulty of this sequence and the amount of handling required to complete it correctly.

By moving hurdle 1 and making no further alterations to the sequence, it is easy to alter it from a Novice to Senior type challenge.

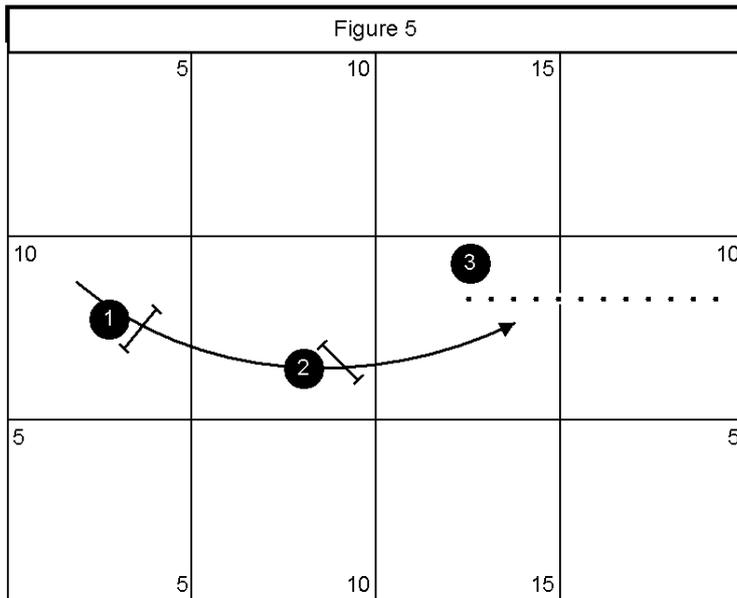
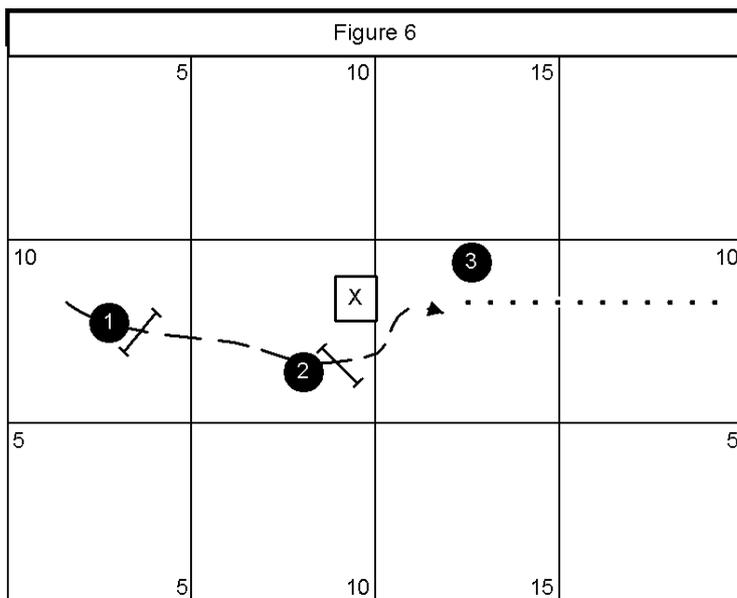


Figure 6 shows the same sequence but with the line of the dog into the weave having been altered with an RFP (or front cross) by the handler executed as the dog lands over hurdle 2. This is only one method of handling this sequence to success. Another would be to alter the line after 1 rather than 2.



In being able to walk a course and recognise the affect of an approach into a sequence, the handler opens up a great many more handling possibilities and is also much less likely to be surprised by the line of the dog around the course.

Obviously the next step along is to look at where you are going next and to chain your handling decisions around a course based on the requirements placed on your handling by the course as a whole.

A good tip: Once you are good at recognising most of the major components of decision-making on course, is that if you have several decisions to make about your handling and positioning, always back-chain them making the choice for the last challenge on the course first and working your planning back from there.

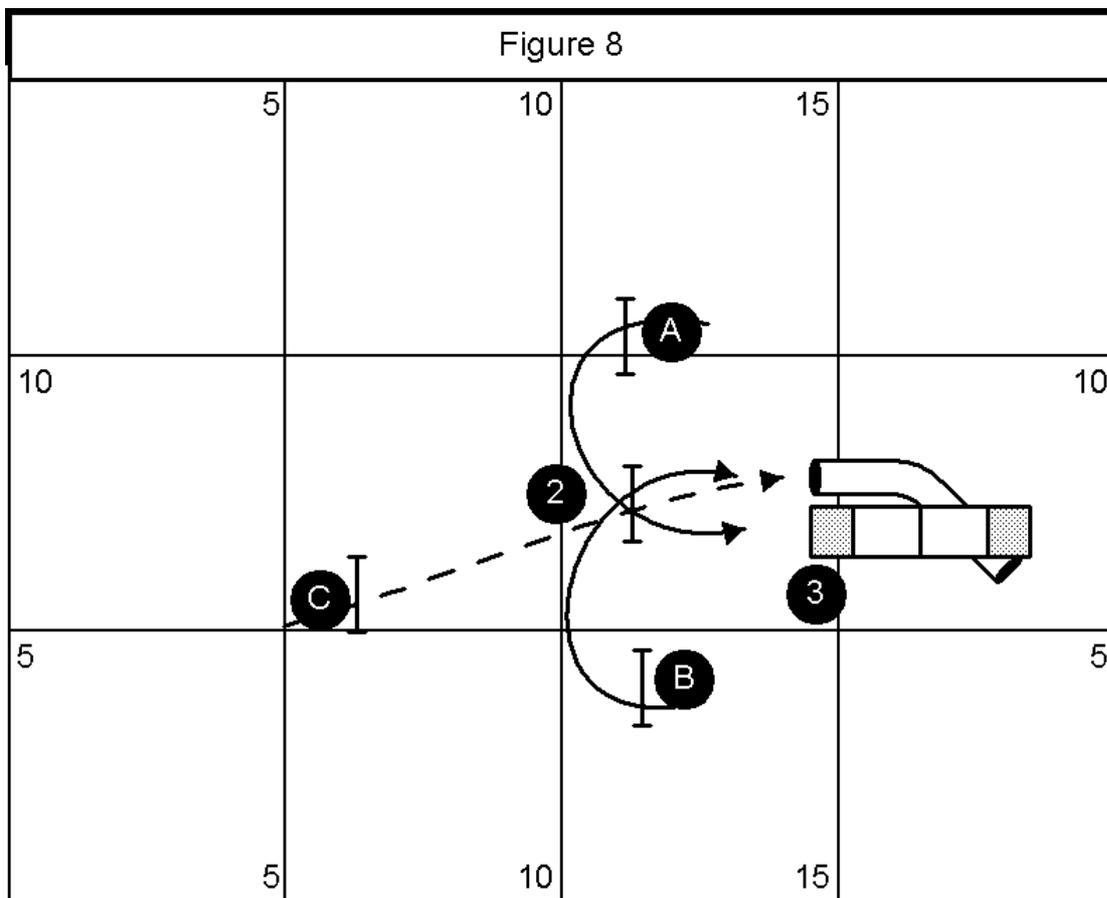
Finally here is a sequence showing an even more dramatic influence from the placement of the first obstacle in the sequence.

Options A, B, and C offer totally different speeds and angles of approach into the following obstacles.

Look at each Option and decide:

- 1) Which is the easiest?
- 2) Which will have the dog coming over 2 the fastest?
- 3) Which is the hardest and why?

To take the investigation even further, look at Option C and imagine the placement of another obstacle prior to this hurdle. Dependant on where you put it and what type of obstacle it is, you can influence the ability of the handler to be in a good position to handle the A-frame approach.



Next time you are walking a course check behind you all the way around and give yourself the advantage of knowing where you have come from!