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# 2013 Class Plan – Beginners Class

## Class Overview

This is a beginners level class, but not absolute beginners (dogs who have never seen equipment before). It is intended for handlers and dogs who have graduated from Foundation level or who have done some training at another club. Dogs starting in this class should at least be able to perform a flexible tunnel and go over a couple of jumps. Handlers should have an understanding of what agility is, and what all the obstacles are.

## Goals

The main goal of this class is to get the dogs proficient in all the obstacles (except the see-saw) and working at their full competition height. The goal for handlers is to get them to understand the basics of training and handling for agility. The main focus is on obstacle training with very short sequences to test understanding.

Handlers need to learn how to get themselves around a sequence or short course and how to use motion and body language properly.

Dogs need to learn the obstacles, obstacle focus (i.e., take what's in front of you), and handler focus (go where your handler goes).

## Handlers and Dogs

The composition of this class will likely change, as hopefully existing members will graduate to the Starters group, and new members may come through from Foundation. Any dogs coming from Foundation should be reasonably proficient with jumps and tunnels but will likely need a lot of help with contacts and weaves.

Some dogs have been in this class for ages. The main problem with these dogs is likely to be lack of control/running off.

Criteria for graduation to Starters group:

- Dog can work offlead for a simple sequence without running away.
- Dog can perform a minimum 5 obstacle sequence of non-contacts/weaves without the handler luring the dog with food or a toy (can be carried in pocket).
- Dog can jump their full competition height (hurdle, long jump, hoop).
- Dog can weave 4 poles in a straight line OR is working 6 – 12 channel poles off-lead with handler running beside.
- Dog is confident on lowered A-frame and dogwalk (can be on-lead).
- Handler can describe their contact criteria and knows how to train it both on and off the equipment.
- Handler understands front crosses and shows a reasonable understanding of how to get around a simple course.

If you consider a dog is nearly at the above standard, it's probably time they moved up to the Starters class. Some of the above points are flexible, except the off-lead control. It is vital that handlers have off-lead control before they move up.

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## Week-by-Week Class Plan

This is flexible, so if you have other ideas, please use them. However, it gives an idea of progression. Each week is split into 3 segments and you should spend around 15 minutes per segment. This will take you to 7.45pm, giving you 15 minutes to pack up the equipment after class. Make sure everyone stays around to help pack up!

If you end up with large numbers, consider splitting the class in two and swapping after 15 minutes. Each group will have to work on their own for half the segment. Or you could put people in pairs to work on short exercises. This prevents people standing around getting bored.

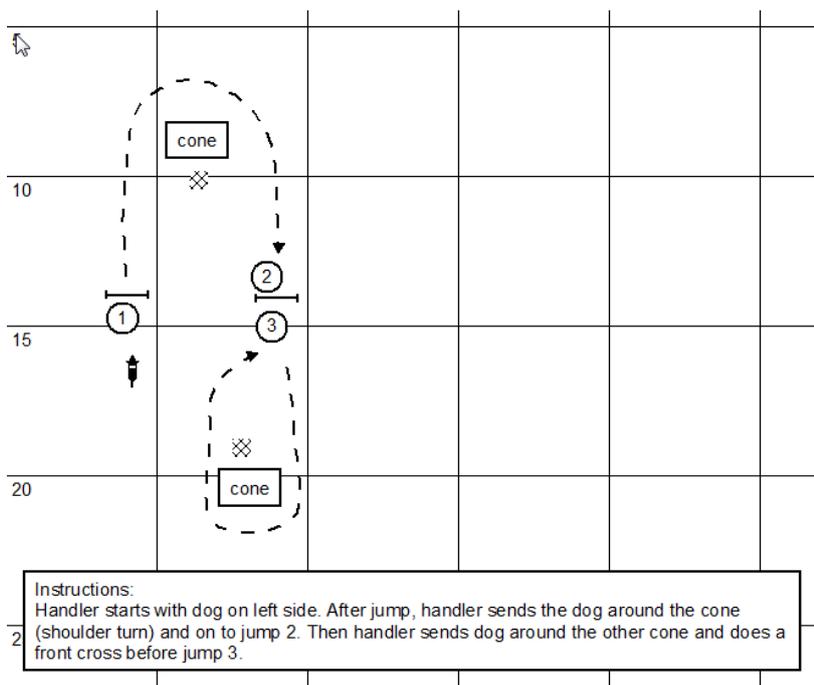
# Week 1

## 1. Refresher jumping exercise:

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5		I ④						5
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15		I ②	<p>Exercise instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have handler place a treat container (and treat) or toy on a chair or bucket in hashed area just after jump 4. Instructor should guard the treat/toy.</li> <li>2. Handler takes dog to start, removes lead, and then instructs dog over the 4 jumps. After jump 4, handler praises dog and releases dog to the treat/toy.</li> <li>3. Next go, handler changes side.</li> <li>4. If successful, encourage 'revving up' the dog for more speed. Encourage some lateral distance from handler.</li> <li>5. Swap out jump 2 for the hoop.</li> <li>6. Swap out jump 4 for a straight tunnel and put the reward after the tunnel.</li> </ol>					15
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	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	

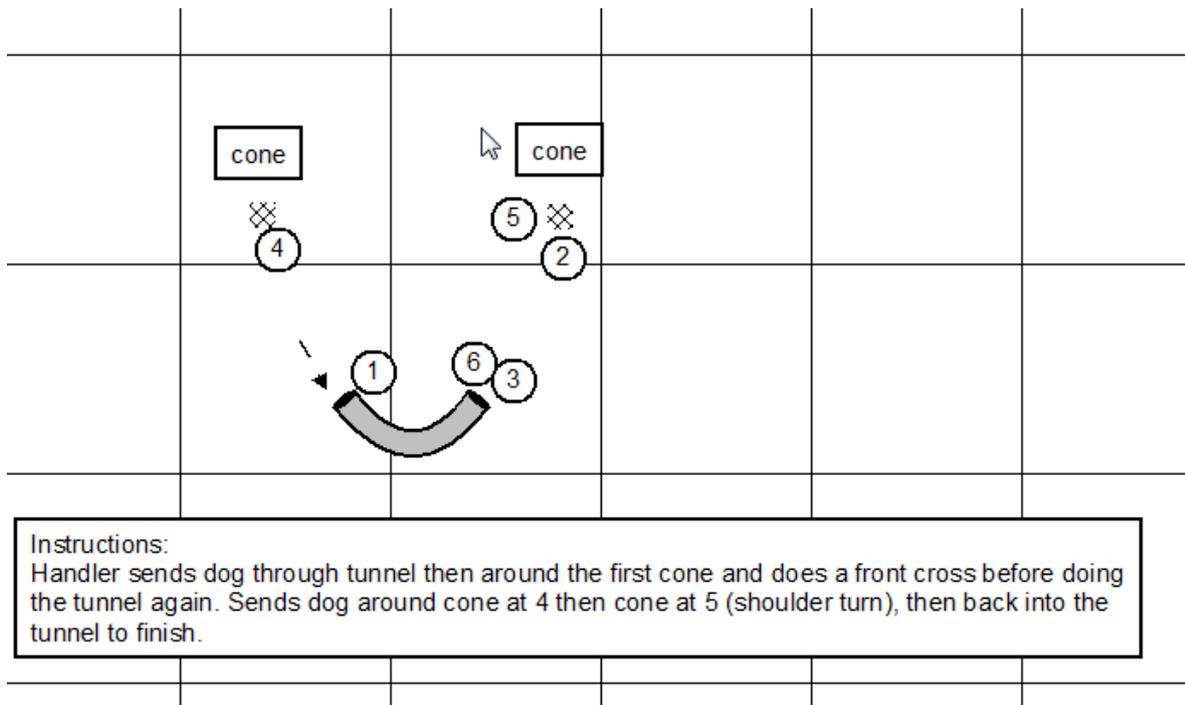
2. Collapsible tunnel and long jump practice. If you have dogs in the group who can do these obstacles well, those people could work on building more speed and more lateral distance and/or sending to the obstacles.

3. See sequence below:

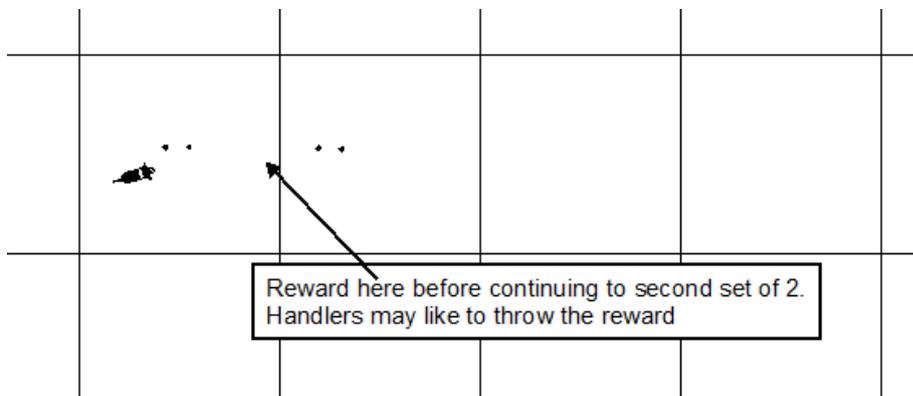


## Week 2

1. Warm up handling practice:



2. Weave practice: Have enough sets of 4 poles for people to work in pairs. Keep a gap between the 2 sets of 2 poles and tell handlers to reward dogs between the 2 sets. Make sure they work off the left and right. If handlers and dogs are new to this they may need to use some luring.



To progress, fade the reward between the 2 sets of 2. Then you can make the gap smaller. **MAKE SURE THEY PRACTICE FROM BOTH SIDES!!**

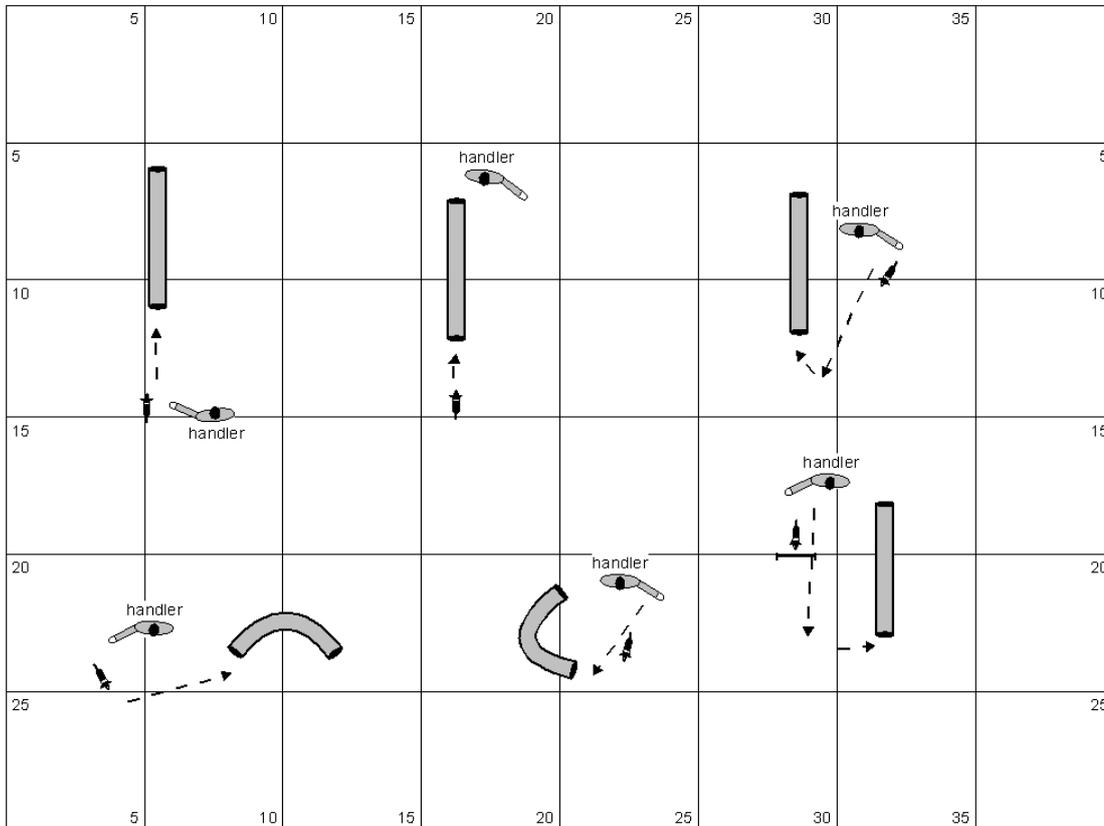
3. Contacts: Ask each handler to describe their dogs contact behaviour and criteria (you may need to help the new ones out). For the wee tiny dogs or large slow ones, a running contact is ok but tell handlers to watch out for jumping. Use 2 or 3 contact boards (e.g., crossover) propped up on bench seats and get handlers to practice getting their dogs into position then releasing with a verbal release command. Explain that it's easier to pick the dog up and put it in position then making it walk the full length of the plank. **FEED IN POSITION!** You can help by standing in front of the dog and feeding it while the handler stands to the side. Make sure handlers use a **VERBAL** release command.

Suggested contact positions are: two on two off, lie down on the end of the board, lie down just off the board, sit off the end of the board, or a stand with one or two back feet on the board.

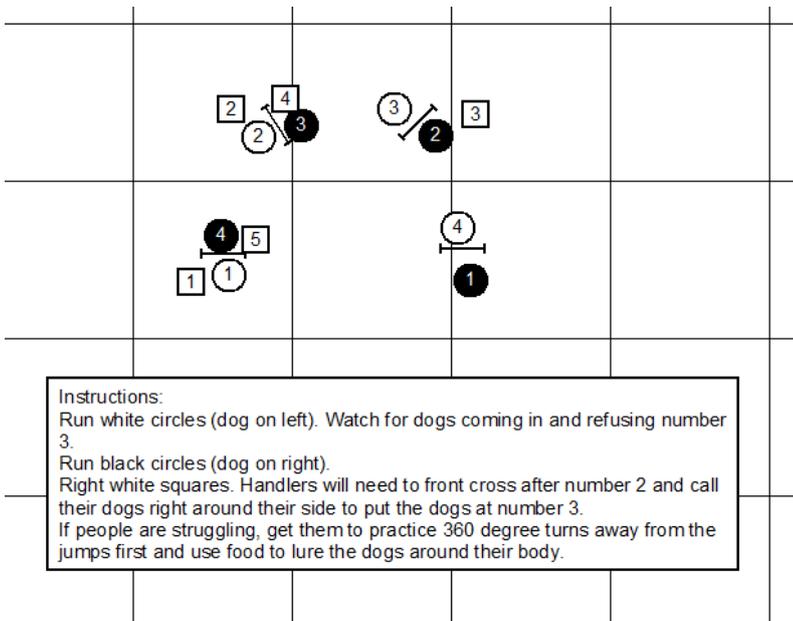
For dogs doing running contacts, get them to run the board and have the handler feed low and at the end of the board, or toss a toy long and low.

## Week 3

1. This exercise is all about getting the dogs to seek out the tunnel and do it without handler assistance. Progress all dogs through all the individual exercises below. Get handlers to be exciting and use toys if possible to add speed and drive.



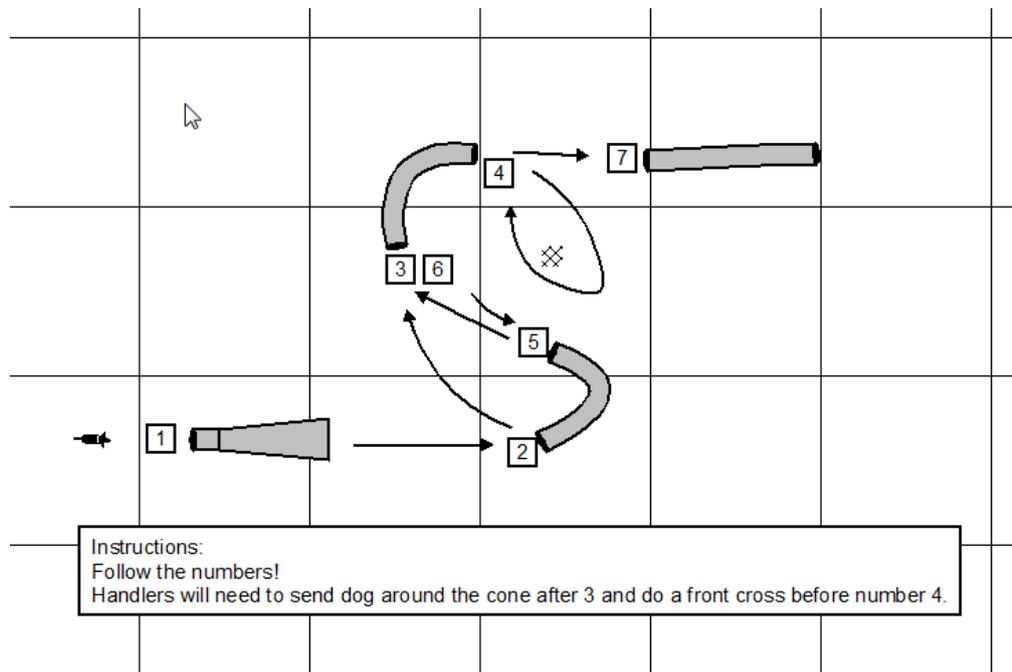
2. Jumping exercise:



3. Practice on a lowered A-frame. One at a time, get handlers to put the dog over the A-frame (ON LEAD). You need to act as a lure at the bottom. Get a piece of food off the handler and use it as a lure and feed the dog in contact position. Remind handlers to use a verbal release. Practice with handler on both sides.

## Week 4

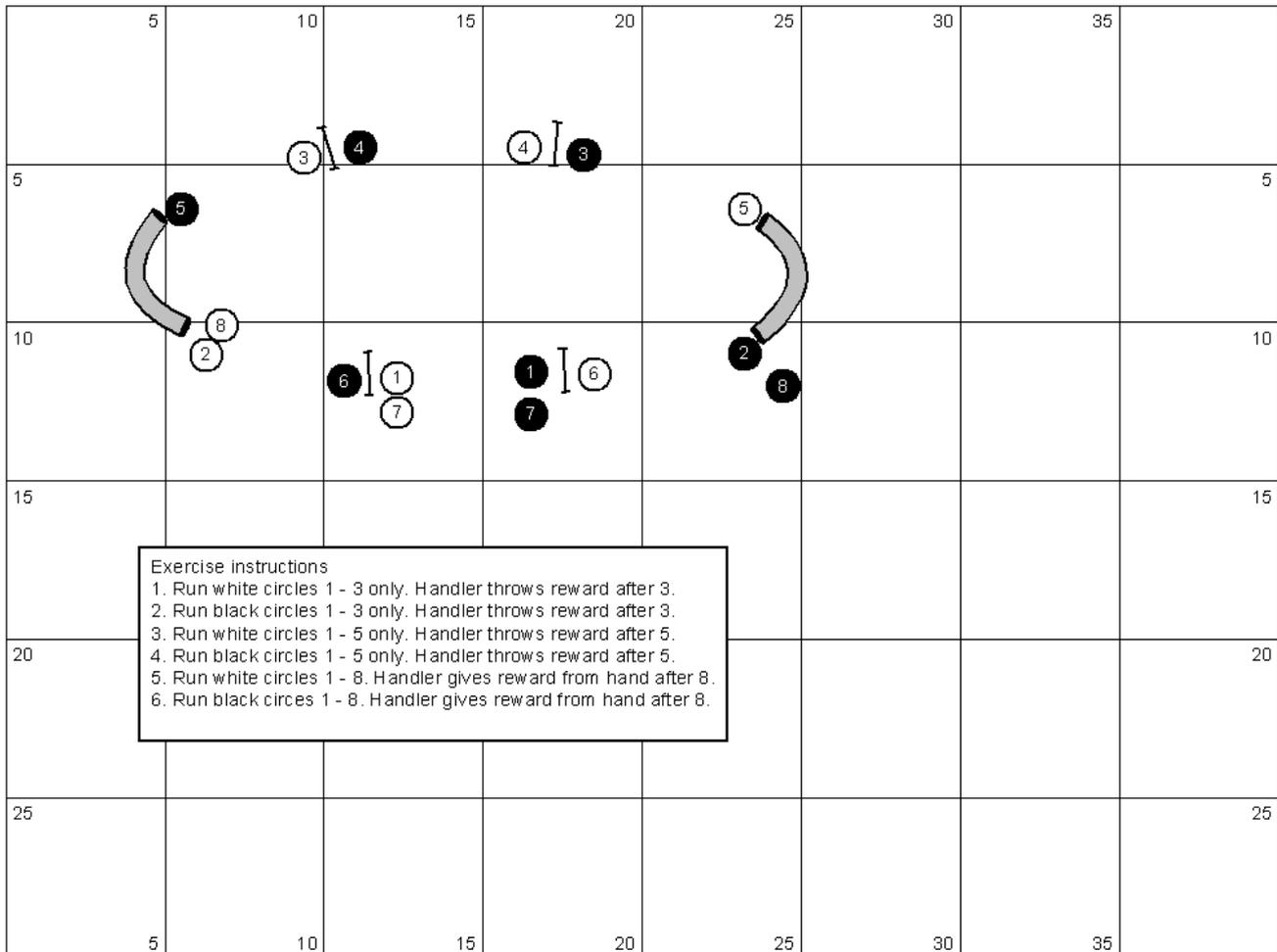
### 1. Tunnellers and handling exercise:



2. Split the class into 2 groups. One group can work on their weaves (set up a mix of straight and channel poles). The other group can work on getting their dog to take 3 jumps and a straight line with the aim of building up the height of the jumps. Remind handlers not to lure their dogs over the jumps and not to get in too close or crowd the dog. They may like to use a bucket as a lure at the end of the 3 jumps. It helps to put the jumps against the bench seats to stop dogs running around the side.
3. Long jump practice: Put a jump either side of the long jump and get handlers to complete all three. You may need to help by calling the dog or throwing a toy for the dog as they go over the long jump. You might also like to put the hoop up for people to practice with.

## Week 5

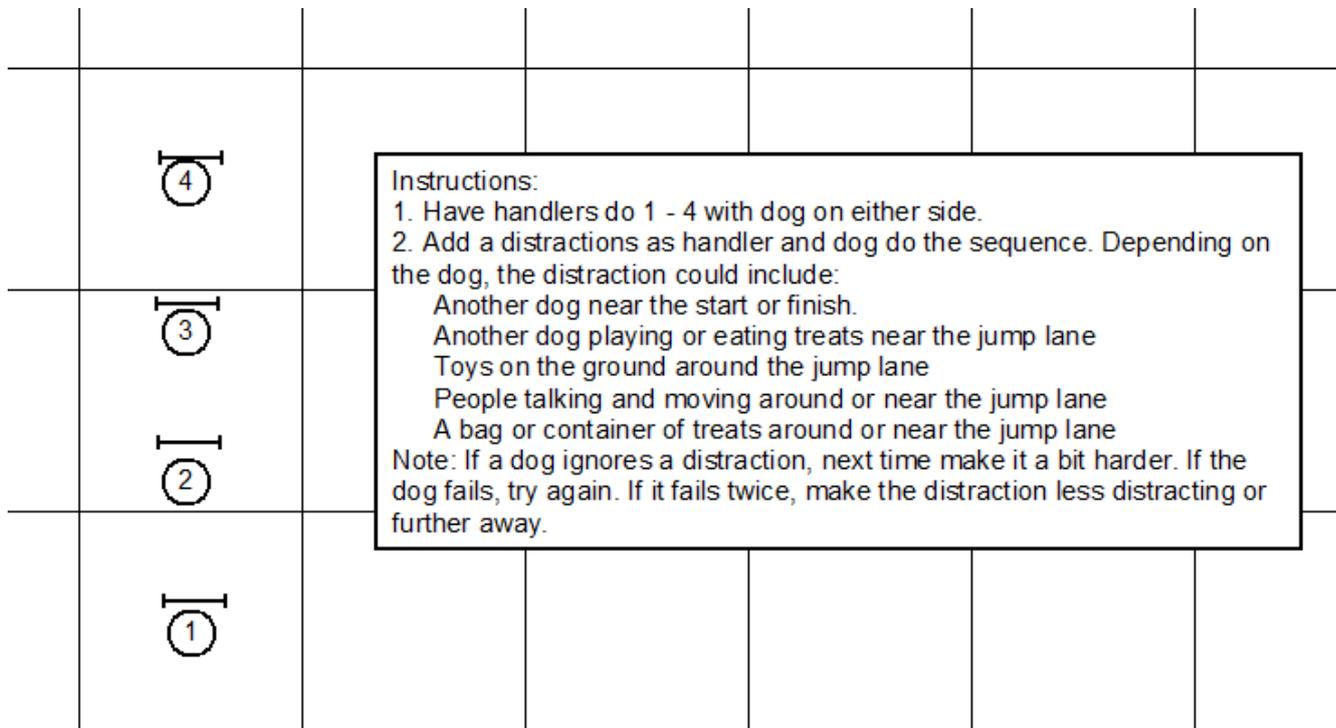
1. Sequence as below:



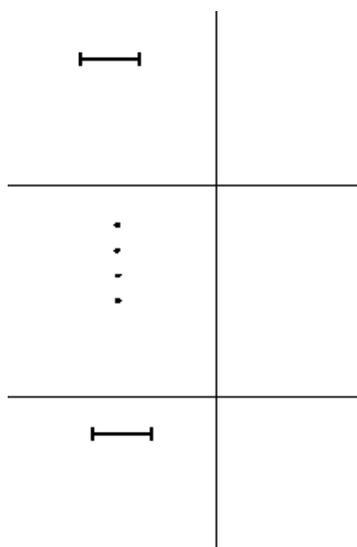
2. Get the dogwalk or the cross-over out. Get handlers to put dog over it but on lead. You can act as a lure, treating the dog in the correct contact position. Get the handlers to give a VERBAL release. For progression, try without a lead.
3. Weave practice. Split into groups according to ability and whether they are working on straight poles or channels. Give individual help.

## Week 6

1. Jump lanes with distractions. Explain to handlers how important it is that dogs can work with distractions. So you are going to test them using a simple jump lane.



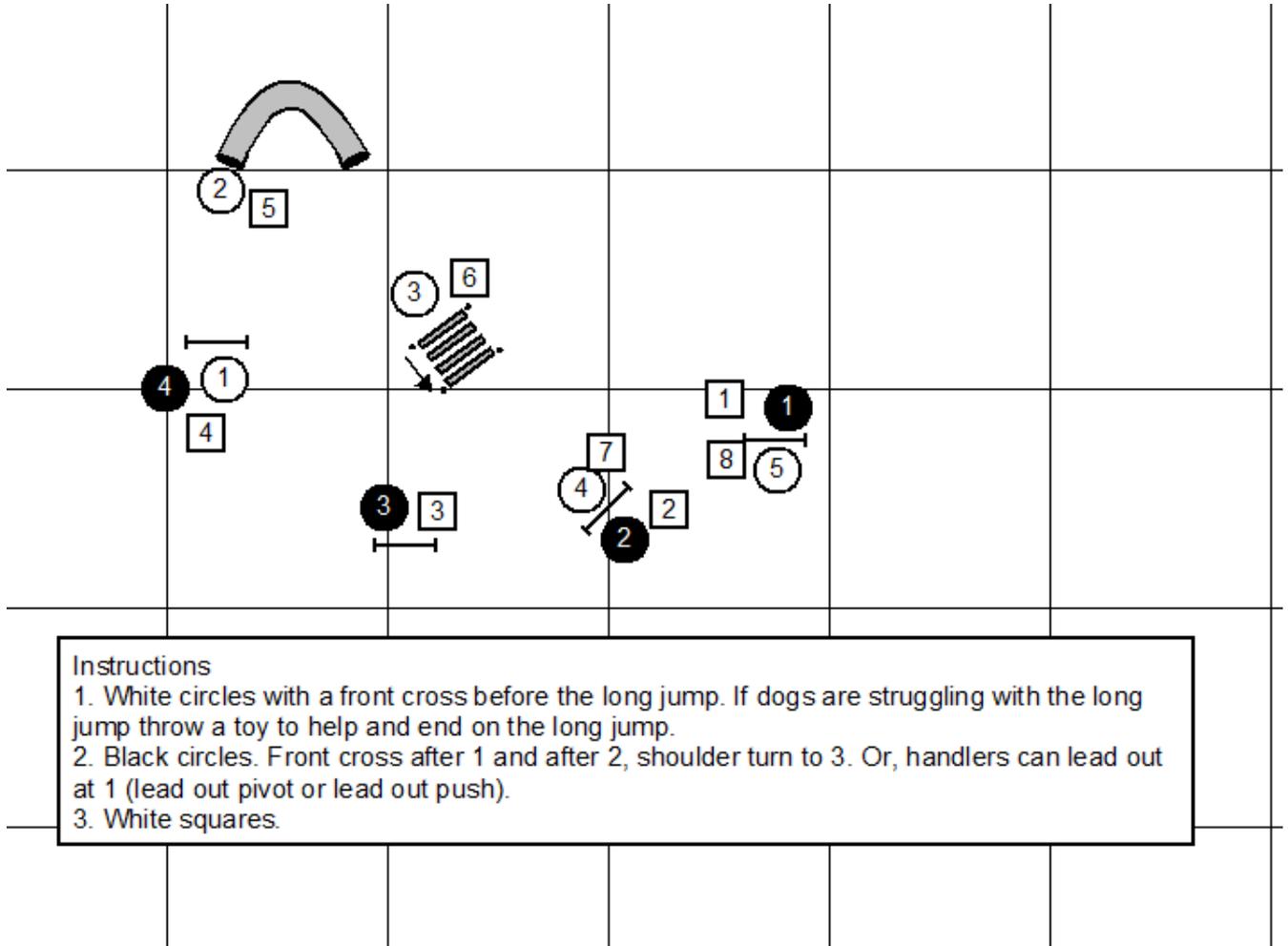
2. Weaves and Aframe practice. Try this sequence with the weaves:



3. If there's time, you could do some work on the long jump.

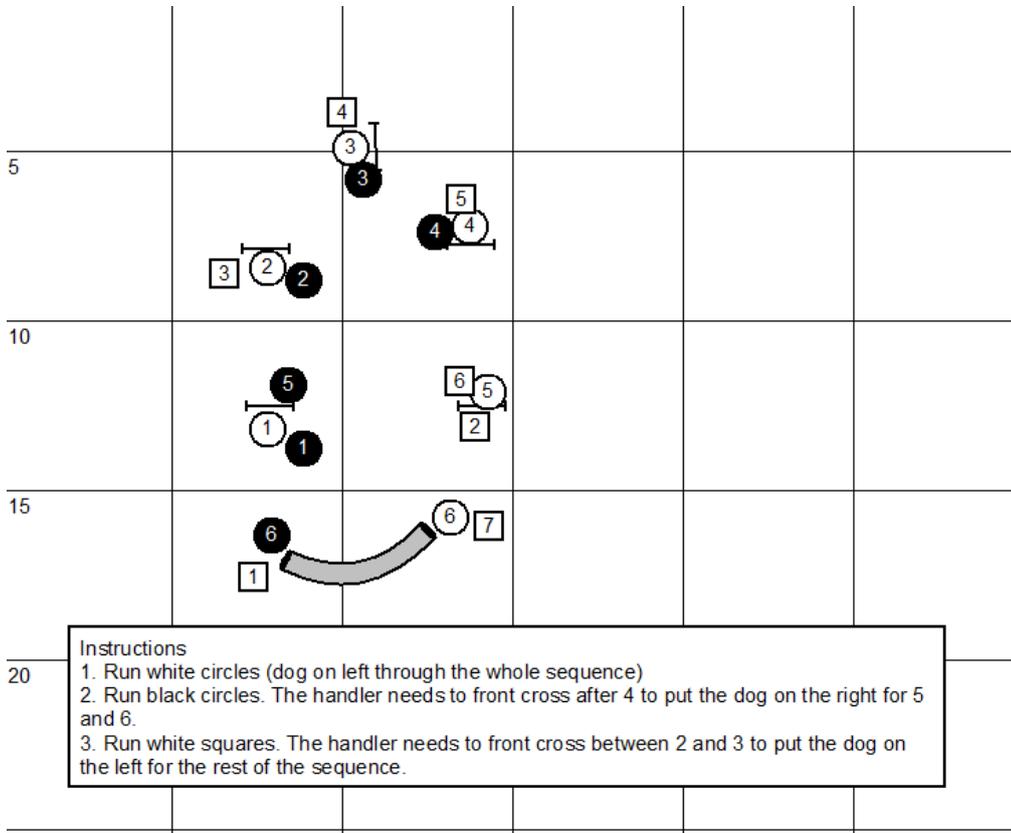
## Week 7

1. Weave practice with straight poles and channels.
2. Split into two groups. One group can work on the collapsible tunnel and the hoop. The other can do the sequence below (with instructor help). Swap after 15 minutes.

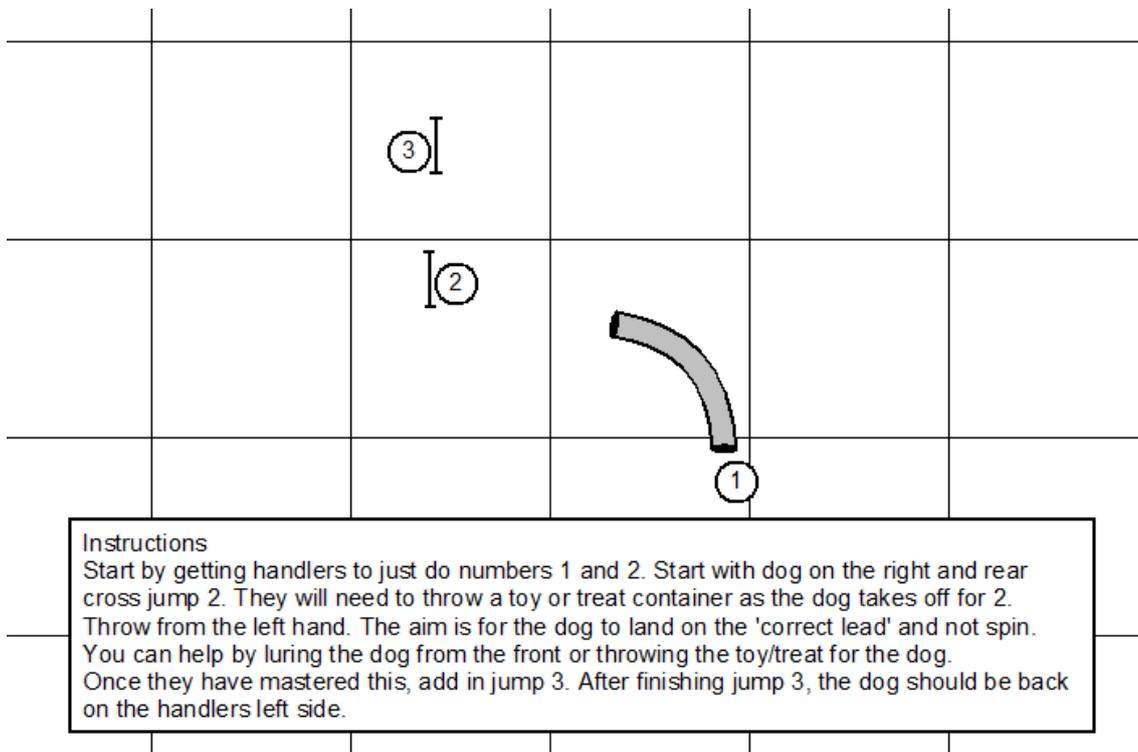


## Week 8

- Split into two groups. One group does the sequence below and the other group can practice the hoop, contacts (lowered or boards) and the weaves. Provide assistance to the group doing the sequence. Swap after 15 minutes.

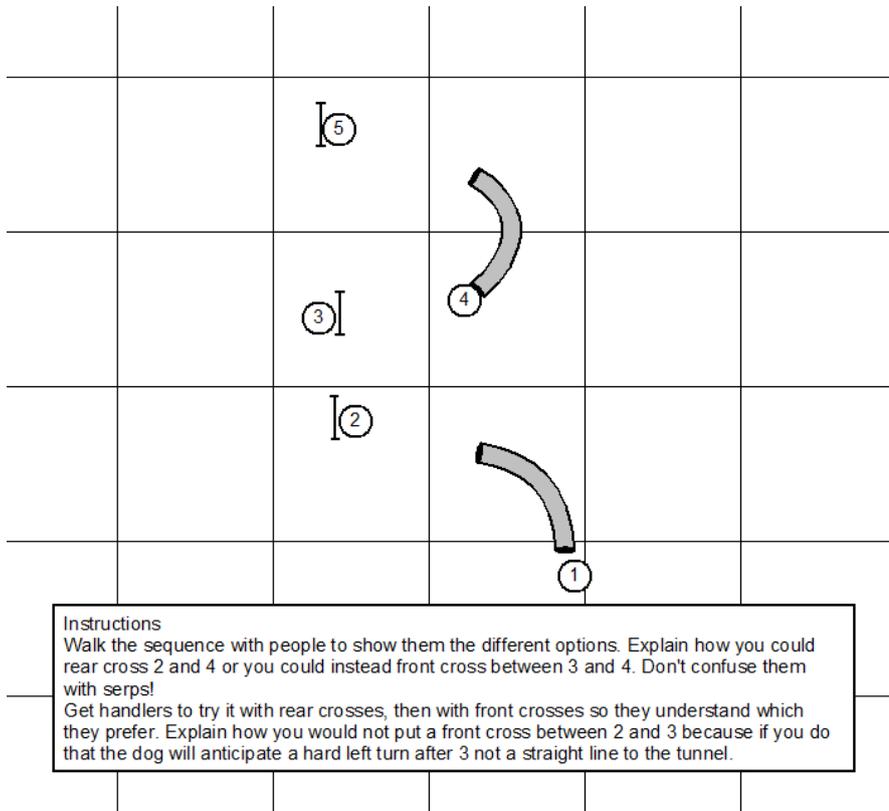


- Learning the rear cross:

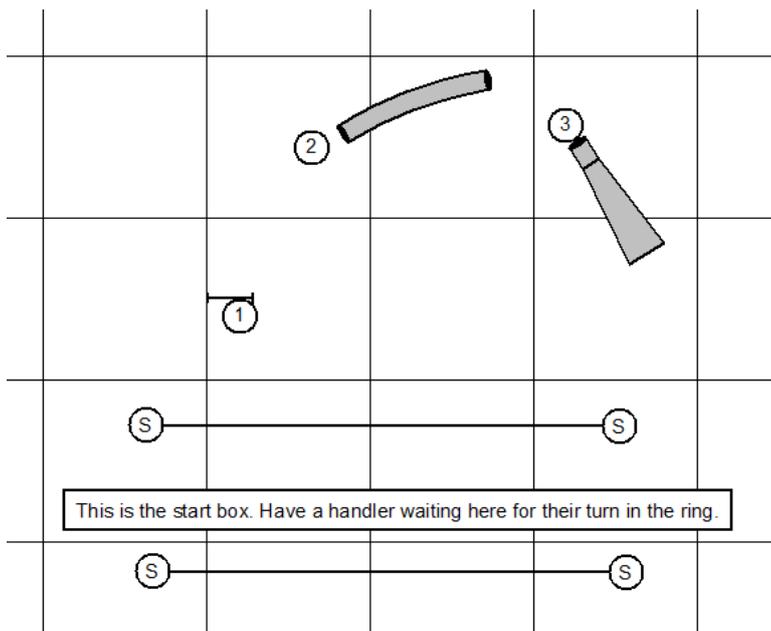


## Week 9

1. Run sequence below.



3. Practice doing starts 'competition' style. Explain to the class how you have to start inside the ring, and how you can take a collar and lead into the ring if you want (no toys or food). Then get people to practice waiting their turn and then starting. Use a pretend start box to make it more real. Encourage people to play with the dog or engage the dog while waiting their turn. They can practice a running start and a lead out.



## Week 10

1. Split into two groups for contacts and weave practice.
2. Have the class run the following 'mini course'. If time, get them to do it twice (once under competition conditions).

