Judges' Spotlight

By Kenneth Tatsch

This issue focuses on the principles for Masters Challenge course design and how to transform a Masters titling course to Masters Challenge. Understanding a bit of history and what we are attempting to achieve with the Masters Challenge program may help in clarifying these principles.

What is often thought as International, is actually "European", reflecting the evolution of sport on the European continent. When USDAA was in its infancy (late eighties and early nineties), I flew to England regularly to participate in training seminars, judging seminars and to attend events, visiting with the sports competitors and innovators of the day, as did others from around the globe. We all sought to learn all we could about this relatively new sport.

Without question, the most enlightening trips surrounded the judging seminars, which were held at the Royal Veterinary College on the north side of London, where seminars were done in residency. There was much interaction among participants and instructors, involving long days and nights for study, as well as social occasions. These seminars were limited to 36 people, including of course a fair share from across the European continent. It provided a great opportunity for the sport to spread globally with a common set of regulations.

Furthering this hope, Peter Lewis, John Gilbert and others from the Agility Club of Great Britain frequently traveled to countries throughout Europe. What they found in Europe, was a politically-bound environment, where the canine world was heavily controlled by kennel clubs who resisted letting a new sport enter their realm without controlling it. The majority of kennel clubs insisted that only kennel club judges could judge it. Never mind that these judges did not participate in dog agility, or even understand it. The kennel clubs assigned obedience judges to design courses and officiate at events, which immediately put a distinctive slant on dog agility, emphasizing it as a control sport, rather than featuring "the agility of the dog" on a more fluid style course. Further, they used the breed rings that were built for the rest of the show in setting up their courses, which tended to be longer and narrower. Even at outdoor shows where space was not generally an issue, they followed the same designs. Obedience, would have lasting impact on the definition of the sport in Europe, distinctly different from what the British originally envisioned.

Notably, most, if not all, visitors from Europe to the British clinics in those early years told horror stories of obedience-style maneuvers with tight spacing on course involving all sorts of contorted approaches, with some across the ring from the previous obstacles, weaving in and out of other obstacles to avoid running the wrong course. They expressed their disappointment (putting it politely) that they couldn't get kennel clubs to open their eyes to a different kind of sport and see agility as they saw it in the U.K., which they viewed as more fun and exciting. By contrast the courses in the U.K. did not have these strong obedience-style influences, as the people who evolved the sport there were more into field trials and spectator demonstrations, so they sought to demonstrate the agility of the dog through the obstacles on somewhat flowing courses, yet under control, in the equestrian-style, rather than as a strict handler control sport. (See USDAA.com news articles (in the archives for November 2008) on the thirty-year anniversary of the sport and a look at the early days of the sport.)

All that said, this conflict of agility and control still exists today. And that's not necessarily bad. It offers variety. What may be a surprise to some is that the European control style is not new to the United States.

While USDAA grew agility throughout North America in the 1990s, though we sought to remain true to the original British vision, we introduced more handler managed control (European style) with tighter, varied spacing in our Team tournament courses by bringing judges from Europe to judge at the Fair Hill International, where USDAA held for a number of years our Dog Agility Steeplechase® and Dog Agility Masters® team tournament finals.

These overseas judges were given total latitude to expose foreign concepts to the America agility community through the team tournament. Competitors looked forward to the new challenges, and it had a favorable result

in that it leveled the playing field between small and large dogs. The varied spacing and managed control elements were prevalent enough to slow down the big dogs at strategic points on courses while the small dogs could still work with greater relative speed, providing a natural handicap for smaller dogs. As the sport continued to grow in North America, we utilized more home grown judges in Team, which unintentionally steered toward the more fluid designs in all that we did, while Europe continued to evolve their more controlled style.

On the global scene, clearly a blend of the European and American/British styles has evolved, with other countries around the world adopting one method or the other, or a sampling of both. Certainly when competing in Europe, one best be skilled in the more controlled maneuvers, though at any event, a variety of styles can be seen. As Europeans have had the opportunity to come to the U.S. beginning in 2001, they have realized they too must learn to perform the more fluid and open style as well, if they wanted to be successful on foreign soil. Today, both styles and their hybrids define the international community.

I find it interesting to note that it was in 1996 that an all-mini-dog team last won the Team Championship. There were no allegations of unfairness on the European-style courses, as the courses were quite balanced. Competition was tight (as it should be), and had the small dog team made even one mistake, they would have fallen in the standings to large dog teams. One has to give credit to the competitors themselves, who saw no limitations in their abilities because of their dogs' sizes. To give credit, the team was The Little Rascals from Houston, Texas, with Elizabeth Blanchard, Deborah Williams, and Laura Yarbrough, with the Shetland Sheepdog Duncan, Jack Russell Ruffus and Pomeranian Cody. (Articles about these events can be found on USDAA.com in the Forms and Documents Library. Courses from the era can be found there too in the archived Dog Agility Report publications.)

With dog agility's rapid growth through the 1990s and into the 2000s, some of the novelty and distinctiveness in our Team tournament was lost. The Masters Challenge classes and tournament have been introduced to fill that void and provide once again the styling for the sport seen in Europe. The Team tournament is being retooled to reinstitute varied spacing and some managed control, though perhaps not quite to the level of the Masters Challenge classes, to once again level the playing field between large and small dogs.

Finally, looking at the global picture, we in the United States tend to be highly analytical (some would say to a fault) by seeking to define processes such as course design in great detail. The rest of the world—not so much. Standardization is not always present abroad, as others do not have the detailed, voluminous set of written guidelines or standards we have grown accustomed to and are not subjected to our type of formal review. This is not to say it is good or bad, but just different. I for one contend a volume of regulations stifles creativity to some degree, but it provides some ideas of expectations. That is why we call our volume "guidelines", not regulations. There is no doubt something both sides can learn from the other. But the common philosophy should be that a higher degree of training has its place and is rewarded and that the courses at any level be challenging, fun and safe.

I would like to emphasize that good judgment must be exercised in employing varied spacing and a balance of challenge-types on all courses in Masters Challenge for them to be sound. Should we ignore this and think that Masters Challenge is nothing more than a series of traps that we force into the course, we are likely to see injuries. The U.K. and Europeans have experienced that in the past, and it would appear they have learned from it and moved past that point. Safety concerns are as vital as ever in evaluating the final design for a Masters Challenge course. Balance should continue to reign.

I hope this historical perspective helps to better understand our goals for Masters Challenge and course design in general. It is not unlike understanding different cultures around the globe in the general society. By looking beyond one's own personal experiences and knowledge, and seeking to understand that of others, one can begin to see the more subtle, yet critically important differences that exist, leading to fuller enjoyment and a more rewarding experience.

Janet Gauntt does a great job in her article of discussing different elements to be used in Masters Challenge courses, to reflect the European-style and how to use them. She provides guidance in making a course distinguishable from others while being fair in presenting challenges in the process. She points out there really are no new course design elements, and very simply shows how the elements are used and ganged together to achieve the Masters Challenge. She very realistically takes you step by step through the design process, pointing out considerations and tweaks along the way, as she transitions a Masters course to a Masters Challenge course, resulting in a fun, challenging, yet safe, course.

I highly recommend after reading Janet's article that you revisit the article on "Course Challenges: Masters Challenge to Masters", which focuses on spacing and element presentation in the February 2013 issue of the "Judge's Briefing". And then return to Janet's article and read a second time.

Designing a Masters Challenge Course
By J.L. Gauntt

The Masters Challenge class started off as the International Handlers Challenge (IHC) class, which was originally used to prepare and select candidates suitable for a World Team to be fielded at the 2012 IFCS World Agility Competition. Why not just select team members out of our usual tournaments and titling classes, you might ask?

Other countries playing agility around the world have different trends in course design than we might typically see in North America. When we send teams to these other countries or bring their judges to our country, we need our competitors to be prepared for a variety of design patterns and be able to demonstrate mastery of these patterns in a trial setting.

So a class was needed that would require our judges to produce designs that included some of the design trends seen elsewhere. To create and keep such a class going, it was necessary to figure out what some of these different design trends are and why some of those very different design trends emerged elsewhere.

Unlike the rectangular, nearly square, areas we primarily design for in this country, many countries (particularly the central European ones) favor sports facilities highly suited to soccer use that have long narrow fields.

A course area with a long and narrow form factor produces one very striking effect when the designing judge makes the decision not to place the dogwalk and weave poles in a position close to and/or parallel to the side of the ring. The large footprint of those obstacles causes the judge to quickly find that he/she has to design clumps and clusters of obstacles elsewhere on the course in order to make everything fit all around the dogwalk and/or weave poles and still have some areas of speed and flow.

Consider Figure 1. This is a diagram in which the required obstacles have simply been dropped into the course area to be used. If you try putting each obstacle in its own little circular space with a 16'-18' diameter (a very American design habit), you can see how the field gets filled up very quickly. Unless you want to just create a very uninteresting course that simply crisscrosses back and forth the long way with perhaps a tunnel snaking under the dogwalk to provide mobility, it's going to be difficult to build long flowing S curves without clearing off some room in which to do that.
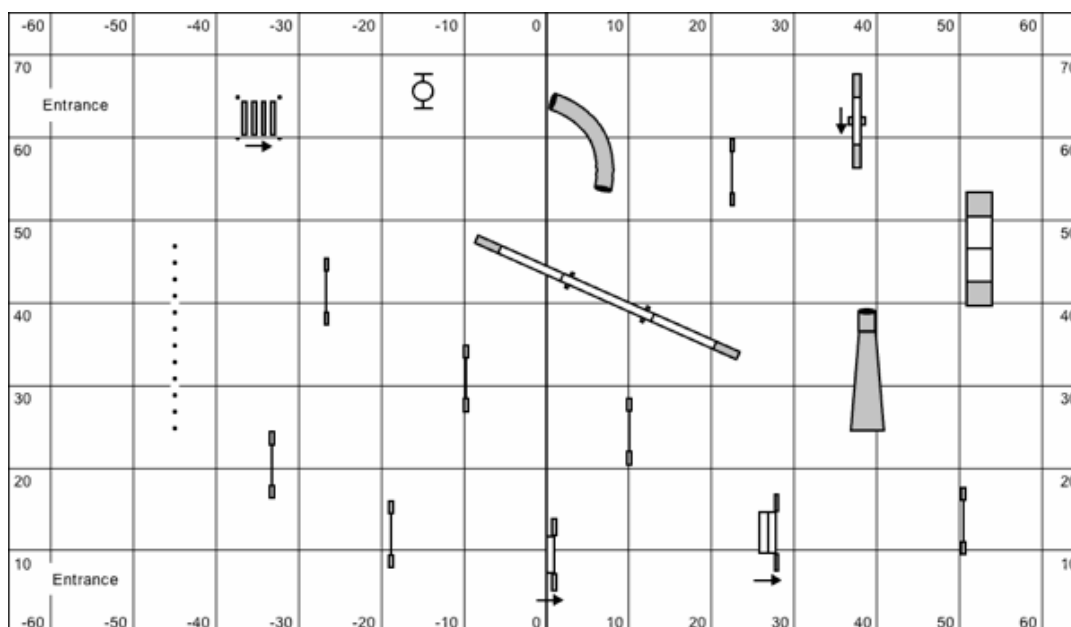

Figure 1. A long, narrow arena.

One very American solution to that kind of problem has been to re-use jumps (and tunnels) as a space saving technique so that it's not unusual to see an American course design using three, four, or even five jumps or tunnels multiple times so that, while 17-20 obstacles are being performed, there are actually only 13-16 physical obstacles in the course area.

In other countries however, re-use of a jump on the design is discouraged so heavily that it's rarely done. There are many reasons for this, but it is often because points can be accumulated across several rounds for placements and it's important that the random factor of a downed jump bar getting reset correctly for one dog and not for another not becomes a factor in the final rankings. This leaves the designer with the problem of making sure 17 to 20 obstacles (or more) will fit into the space provided.

One easy way to make all those obstacles fit is to create a very tight crossing pattern or two out of four, five or even six obstacles as shown in Figures 2-7 below. That concentrates several obstacles into one or more fairly small areas leaving the designer free to create some longer high speed course segments elsewhere.

That one practical solution has a great influence on the challenges that will occur on the course. Take a look at nearly any central European course design and you'll see that fundamental design preference in course after course after course, even on those occasions where the judge is given a wider area to work with. It usually manifests as at least one five-sided crossing pattern concentrated in an area no wider than 24'. Occasionally on wide course form factors, the choice is made to create two or even three four-sided crossing patterns elsewhere, but that decision is not the usual choice. (Note that two such crossing patterns are common enough on American, Canadian, and British courses of high difficulty level.) This gives the courses a certain "rhythm" to how they run: high speed segments take the dogs into a congested crossing pattern, then back into a high speed segment, then brakes on again for some control in a crossing pattern. Rinse and repeat before opening up for a nice, fast finish.

So the next time you look at a central European course design, don't think "Wow - look at all those managed approaches (aka backsides)" or get distracted by things like wings placed end to end or use of 6 tunnels or whatever the fad design trend is lately. Instead, play a game of "Find the Crossing Patterns." (It's just as much fun as looking through all those Internet pictures where you have to find hidden faces and cats).

So this year, anyway, creation of a Masters Challenge course starts with that first requirement:

MC Requirement #1: A Masters Challenge design must at a minimum contain a five-sided crossing pattern or two four-sided crossing patterns no wider than 24'. A "side" is an accessible entrance to an obstacle.

More than two such crossing patterns at this point in time will probably be rejected due to the amount of control required to negotiate such a course.

One interesting side-effect of that requirement is that just the presence of that crossing pattern on the design ensures plenty of wrong course potential without the judge even trying particularly hard to place any additional challenges of that nature elsewhere on the course.

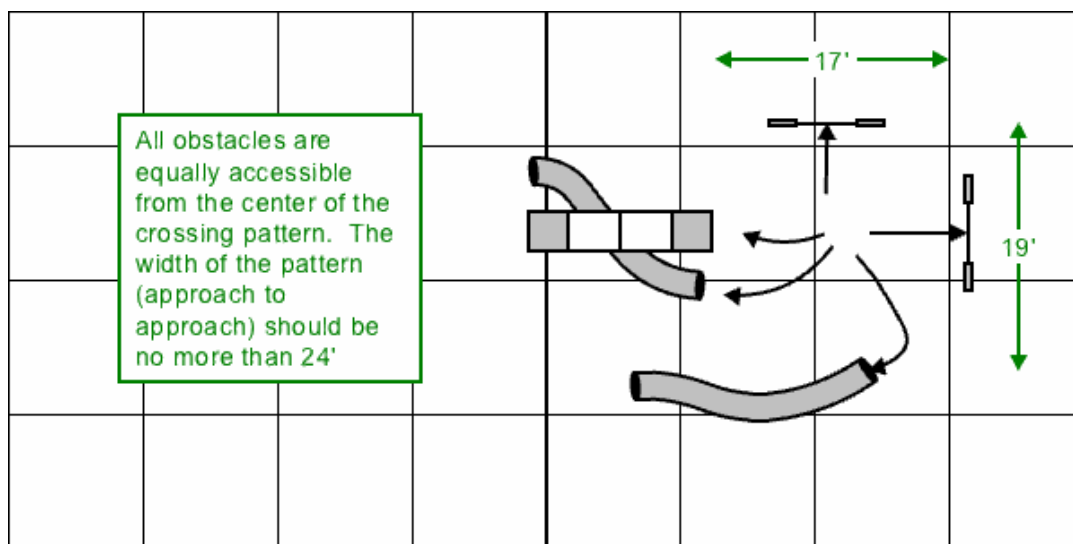The following annotated examples are taken from courses used in competition.

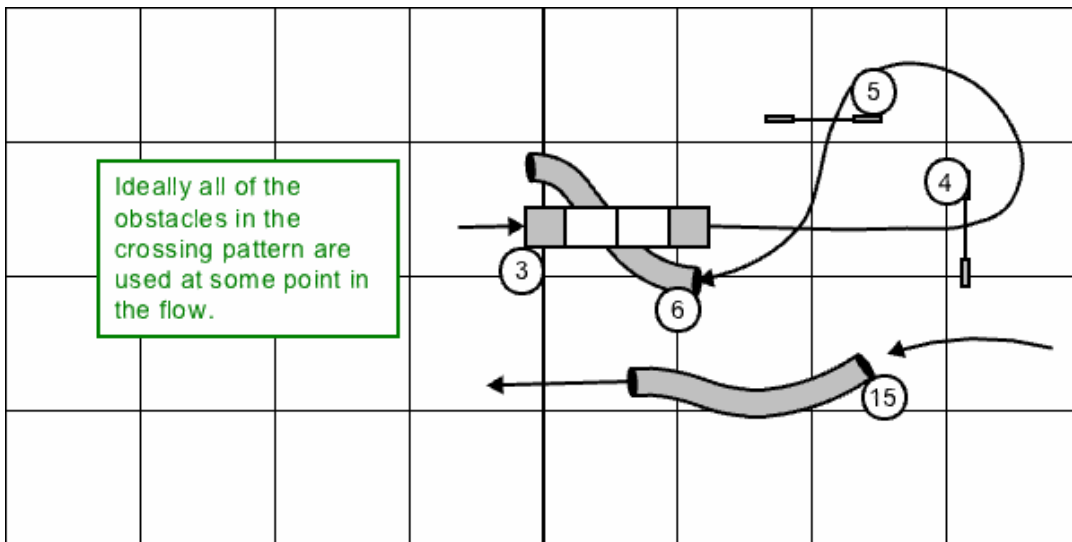*Figure 2 Example #1 of five-sided crossing pattern showing span and accessibility*
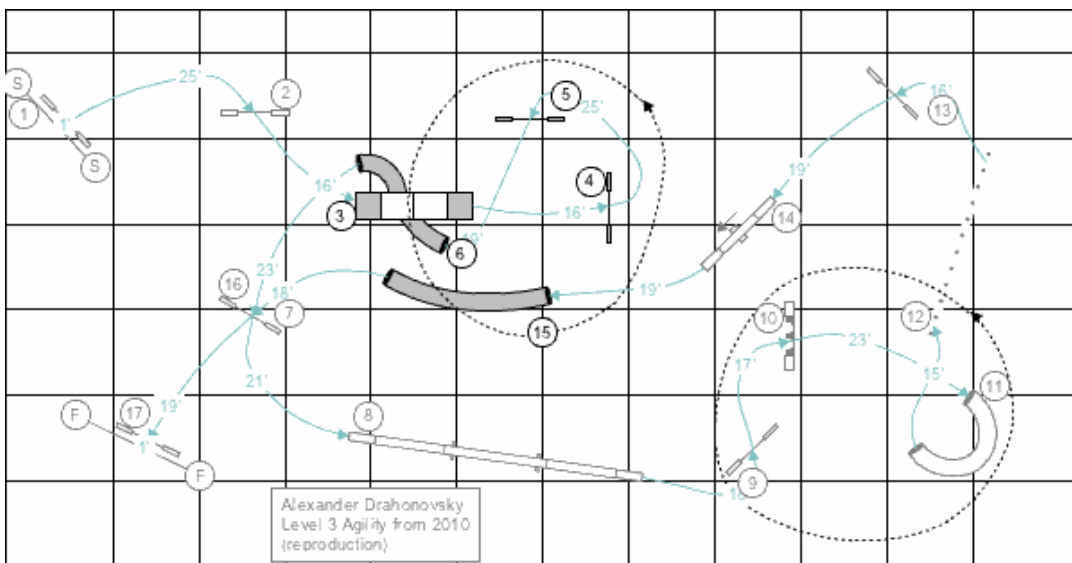
Ideally all of the obstacles in the crossing pattern are used at some point in the flow.

Figure 3 Example #1 showing the flow

Alexander Drahonovsky
Level 3 Agility from 2010
(reproduction)

Figure 4 Example #1 situated in the full course

All of the obstacles do not necessarily have to present an Open Approach, they just have to be equally accessible within the 24' span.
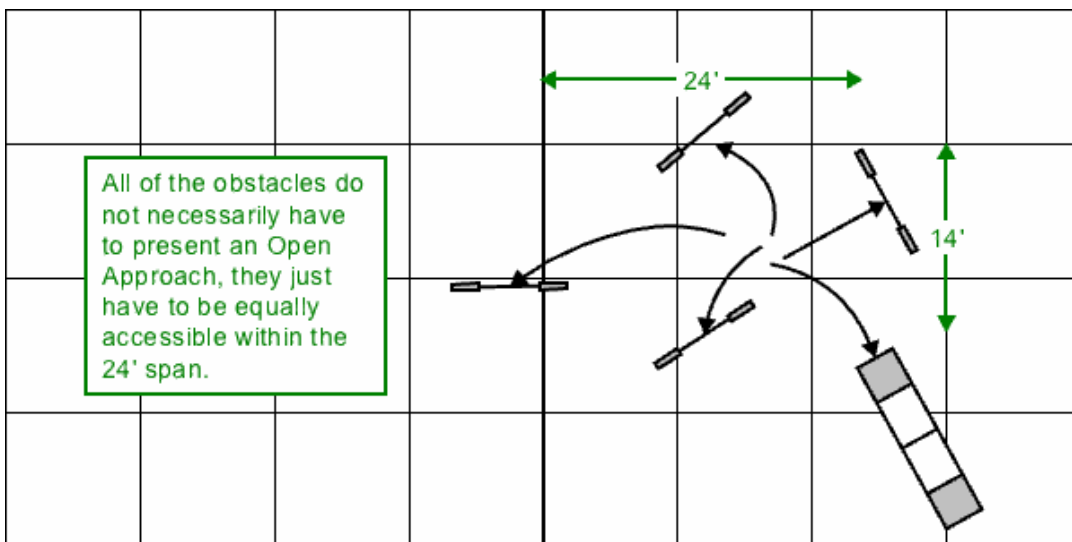
Figure 5 Example #2 showing span and accessibility
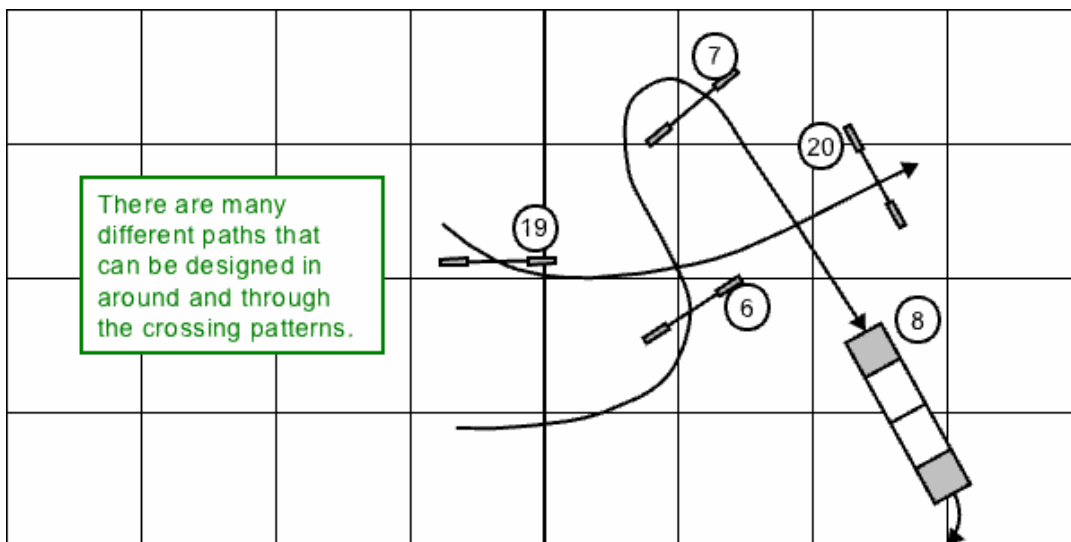
Figure 6 Example #2 showing the course flow

There are many different paths that can be designed in around and through the crossing patterns.
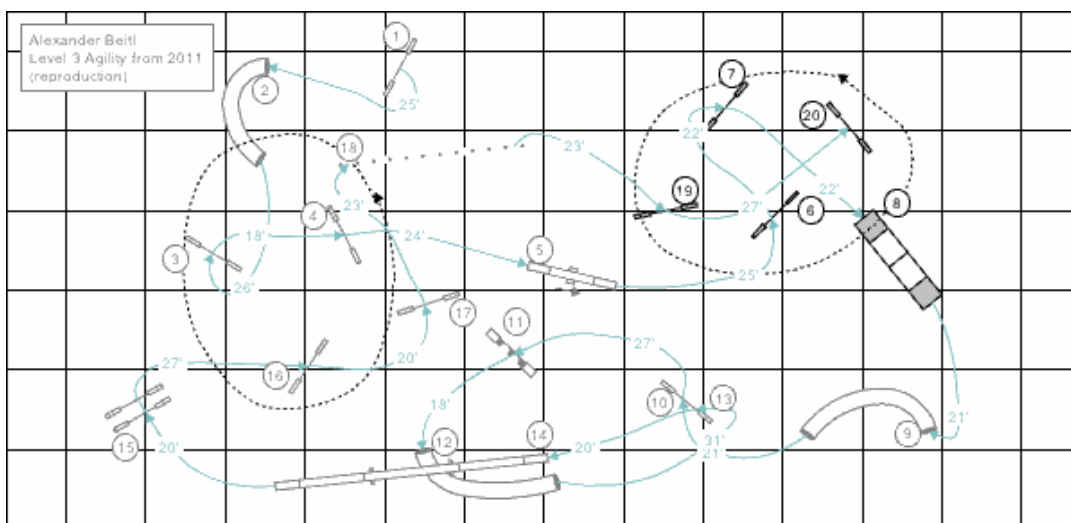
Figure 7 Example #2 situated in the full course

Alexander Beitl
Level 3 Agility from 2011
(reproduction)

Many of the individual challenges used in design patterns that we see in other countries' courses are nothing new to our competitors or judges.

- Wraps: yup - been doing them since the beginning.
- Discriminations: check.
- Managed approaches: eh... some judges like 'em, some don't (but competitors have certainly been doing them in Snooker and Gamblers for years).
- Serpentines: yawn.
- Refusal potential: can't get a Masters course by a reviewer without at least one.
- Crossing patterns: sure (but wow - they really do like to make them tight and small to fit in those narrow arenas!).
- By-passes: we have an entire game - Snooker - based around the concept.

What is done differently in many other countries' designs is that the challenges are stacked up so that they come relentlessly one right after another. Many of our judges have been content to use a challenge in isolation so that if the competitor kind of gets the job done but is sloppy about it (let's say the dog goes wide on a wrap), the only real penalty to the competitor is the time they lost. That's fine for a titling class, but for a tournament class or a class that is being used to pick World Team members or Regional or National Champions, the ante should be upped a bit.

Enter compound challenges. Having challenges immediately following one another ups the difficulty level not only for the first challenge in the sequence but also for the obstacle immediately following (as well as sometimes one or two obstacles later in a sequence). And that is because if the first challenge is not correctly and efficiently done, the handler and/or dog is now slightly out of position for the challenge that follows. Because they are now out of position, the dog is not on a tight, direct course path to the next obstacle. Alternately, it may be the handler rather than the dog at a bad position. In that case, because they dallied long enough to help the dog, the handler is now positioned beside or even behind the dog and is at a disadvantage now for the footrace to the next obstacle (particularly if they're heading into a crossing pattern).

Regardless, slight errors then accumulate until the competitor either actually faults or incurs enough time penalties that they drop in the placements.

And from that concept, you have the next requirement of a Masters Challenge design:

MC Requirement #2: There must be a minimum of three compound challenges.

More is OK. Four compound challenges still provide a fast achievable course. Currently though, a reviewer in this country is likely to consider that the course design starts to bow under the weight of the amount of control required to work through five compound challenges and up.

Judges have a very large palette to choose from when deciding to create compound challenges. Here's how I like to think about the five categories of challenges that are available:

Course Flow Challenges
- Wrong course potential where there is at least one off-course obstacle that is 10' or less off the path where the dog is expected to be working at speed.
- "Bypass" where wrong course potential is increased such that the direct dog path takes the dog within 8' or less of an open approach to an incorrect obstacle.
- Discrimination where there are two or more adjacent entrances with open approaches.

Approach/Exit Challenges
- Refusal potential in the form of highly angled closed approaches to an open tunnel, jump, or weaves.
- Wrap.
- Managed approach to a tunnel, jump, or weaves.
- "Back-to-Back" where the dog performs an obstacle and then immediately re-engages the obstacle from the original exit side (not currently seen much internationally because of the multi-jump usage).
- "Double Performance" where the dog performs an obstacle and then immediately re-engages the obstacle from the original approach side (not currently seen much internationally because of the multi-jump usage).

Handler Path Challenges
- "Constrained handler path" where the shortest handler path requires the handler to negotiate a passage of 8' or less as defined by obstacle placement.
- "Turn back" (a strong convergence of dog/handler path followed immediately by a strong divergence where the dog must turn away from the handler by more than 90 degrees).
- Layering where the shortest handler path 8'-10' parallel to the dog path places an obstacle between the handler and dog.
- "Restricted handler path" where placement of one or more obstacles require the handler to work from a distance of 15'-25' in order to remain parallel to the dog path.
- Side changes. These are of course particularly demanding of a competitor when they have to be performed at speed in the immediate vicinity of the approach plane or exit plane of an obstacle.
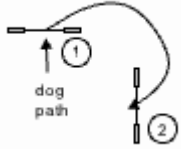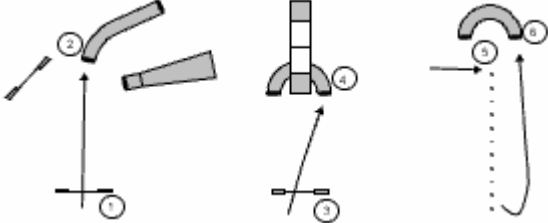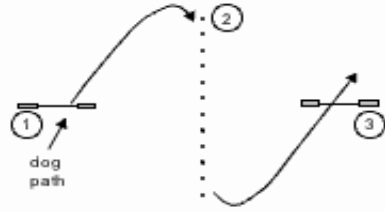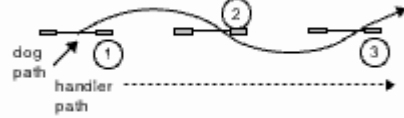
Spacing Challenges
- Use of minimum jump approach distances (12'-15').
- Extended obstacle spacing (30' or more) between obstacles.
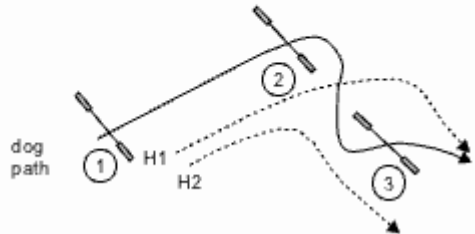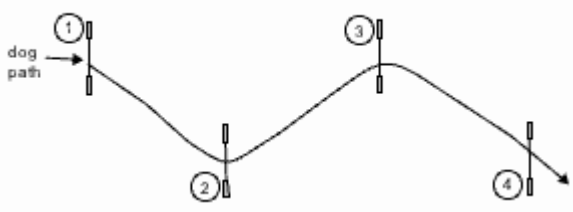
Quantitative Challenges
- Use of four rather than the minimum three contact obstacles (unusual in any country).
- Combinations of obstacles (used to increase the max number of obstacles to be performed beyond 20).

All of these challenges except the quantitative ones can be creatively combined with another challenge to produce a compound challenge. For example, a wrap to a discrimination is a compound challenge.

There are certain common design patterns that are currently automatically being counted as compound challenges.

Design Pattern	Description
270° Arc	This is a compound challenge of dog path (discrimination) and approach challenges (managed approach) consisting of two obstacles where the efficient dog path resembles an arc of 270° degrees
Discrimination cluster	This is a compound challenge to the dog path created by the placement of three or more obstacle entrances in close proximity (within a 15' diameter area). Typically, at least one of these obstacles needs to be a tunnel to keep the challenge tightly clustered. Multiple examples appear in the figure below.
N Pattern	This pattern of approach challenges is a compound challenge consisting of three obstacles set so that the central obstacle requires a managed approach and a wrap at its exit. The efficient dog path when viewed from above resembles the letter 'N'. Difficulty is affected by factors such as the speed, angle and size of the central obstacle of the 'N'.
Serpentine	The approach challenges of obstacles placed in this pattern form a compound challenge when there is a change of direction in the dog path both before and after the central obstacle such that there are acute closed approaches to the second and third obstacles. The efficient dog path resembles a flattened letter "S" when viewed from above.

Threadle	Also known as a "pull-through" or "push-through," these approach/exit challenges create a compound challenge that combines a wrap around an obstacle to an acute closed approach to an obstacle in close proximity. If the dog is to stay on the most efficient path, the dog must be directed between these obstacles in order to perform the adjacent obstacle.
	Multiple handler paths (H1 & H2) are possible depending if the handler wants to "pull" the dog through the gap or "push" the dog through.
Zig-Zag	These approach challenges form a compound challenge consisting of three or more obstacles with rapid changes of direction causing sequential acute closed approach challenges and possible refusal potential challenges.

Let's consider an example (Figure 8) of a series of compound challenges from a segment from a central European course (FCI Level 3) offered a few years ago:
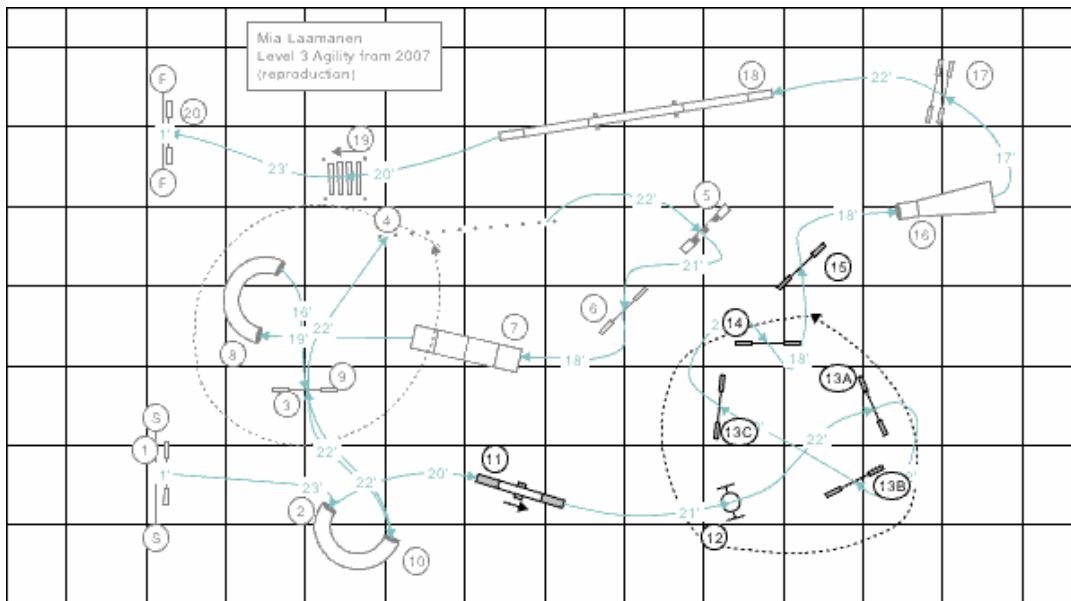

Figure 8 Example of compound challenges used in a crossing pattern

The particular course featured two five-sided crossing patterns and two four-sided crossing patterns with high speed flow into several of the crossing patterns with no less than five compound challenges overall. In the course segment consisting of just one of the five-sided crossing patterns, we can observe the following:

- Compound challenge #1: The 270° arc from #13A to #13B. 270s are always automatically counted as compound challenges because of the discrimination factor in the presentation of the two obstacles forming the arc and the managed approach required for the second obstacle in the arc.
- Compound challenge #2: The 270° arc from #13C to #14.
- Compound challenge #3: The wrap and side change occurring from #14-#15.

Side note: The rather interesting "combination" challenge present in the previous example has been very underused in this country to date outside of the Snooker class. For the designer, it has the pleasant benefit of giving you a few extra obstacles to creatively work with so that you can compensate for some increased control at one point in the course with a nice high speed segment elsewhere. For the competitor, it offers an unusual opportunity to train in the ring when a sequence or handling maneuver hasn't gone as planned since to fix any refusal that occurs in the combination, the competitor must return to the beginning of the combination, thereby getting a mulligan (albeit one that is penalized 5 faults). You could use any completely different combinations depending on the compound challenge you think your competitors might have difficulty with (Figure 9 & Figure 10).
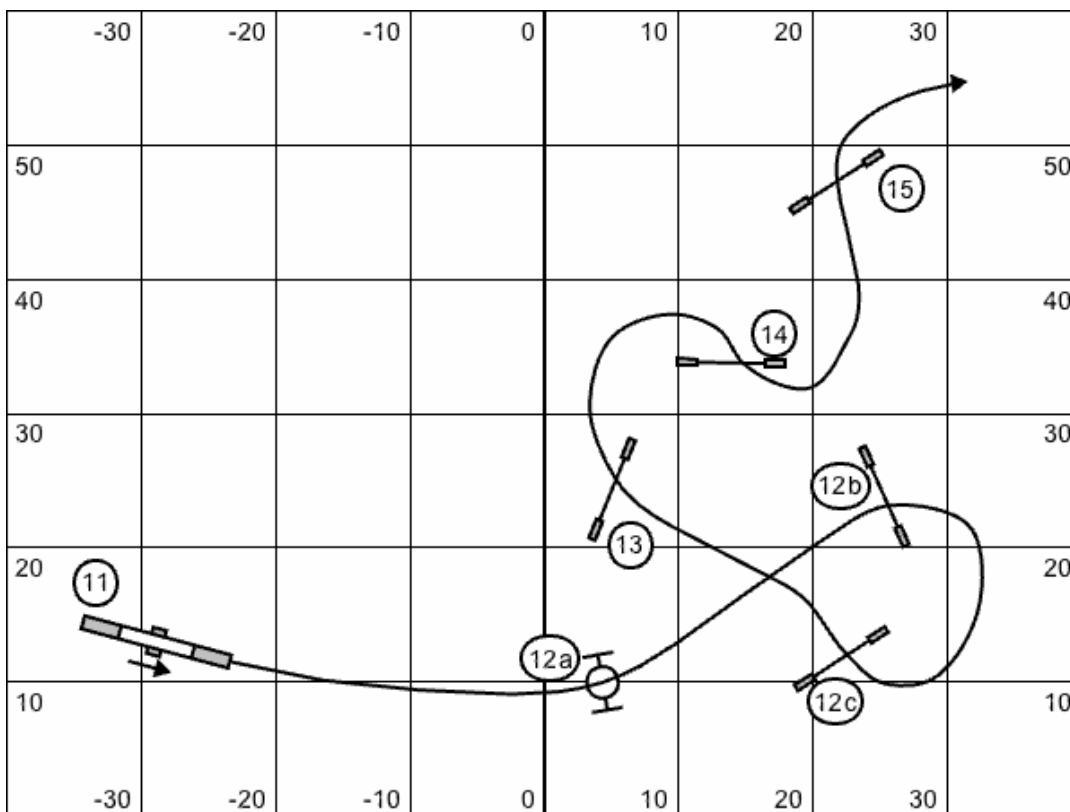

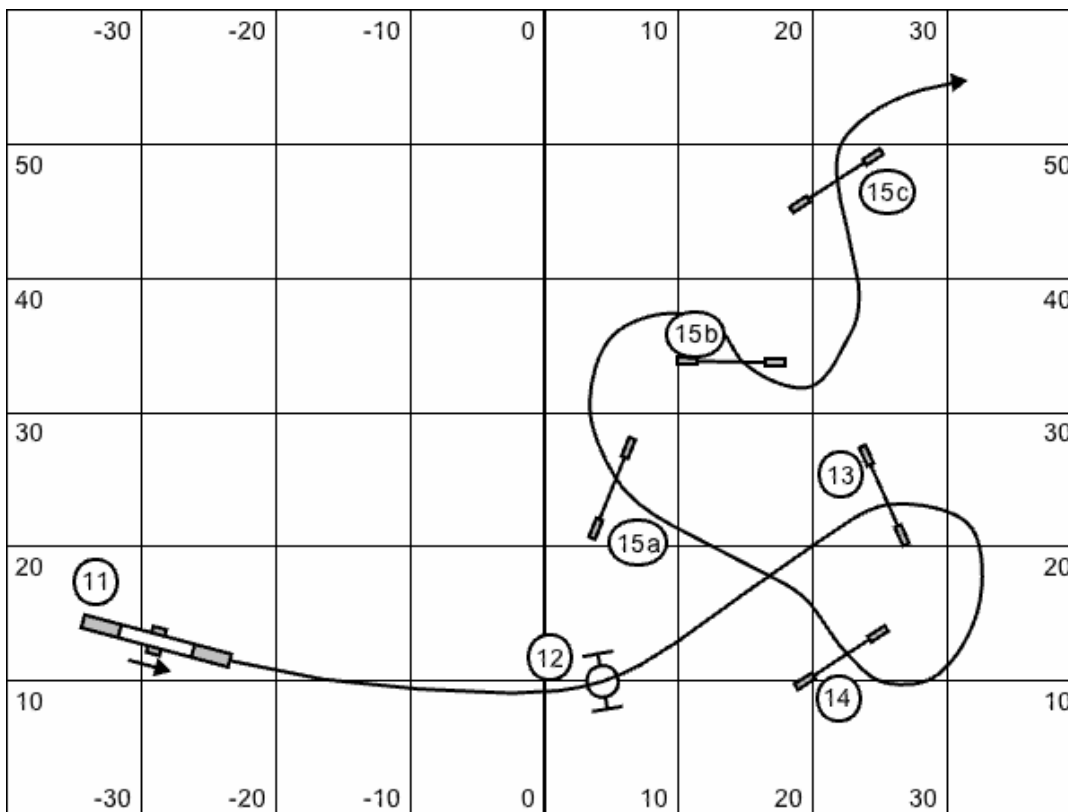*Figure 9 Combination leading into the crossing pattern*

Figure 10 Combination exiting the crossing pattern

Returning back to the discussion of overall requirements for a good Masters Challenge design, your reviewer will be looking for the other concrete criteria besides just crossing patterns and compound challenges.

These are:

MC Requirement #3: The course must have the correct number (up to 22 obstacles if combinations are used) and correct type of obstacles. For Standard, that means all the obstacles except the table. For Jumpers, you must have weave poles and three spreads, one of which is extended. The use of long jumps and viaduct/wall jumps is heavily encouraged.

MC Requirement #4: The course should have somewhere between 8 and 11 challenges overall. At least three of these must be side-changes. With the exception of side-changes, no single challenge type may be used more than three times to ensure a balanced design that tests multiple skills.

MC Requirement #5: The dog must be able to perform the majority of the course in extension. Extension is defined as follows:

"A term used to describe the continuation of speed as a dog approaches an obstacle. An obstacle allows extension when a dog would normally be approaching at speed and there is little-to-no turning at the exit of the obstacle such that the dog can remain at approximately the same speed while continuing on the most efficient dog path."

So - if you picked collection-oriented challenges and patterns (wraps, managed approaches, turn-backs, threadles, or N patterns) for all your designs, you'll have a hard time meeting this requirement. (Not to say it can't be done - you just have to compensate with judicious use of combinations and high speed flowing lines).

Let's wrap up with a demonstration of a MC design.

Here's the scenario: You're a Masters judge and the club has just emailed you and told you that they want to work a MC standard class into the schedule for that trial you're judging next month and oh by the way can you make sure it nests well?

Good thing you had the dogwalk in the center of the ring, you think. It's always easier to create a good MC design when the dogwalk and/or the weaves aren't tucked off to one side. Figure 11 shows your starting point.
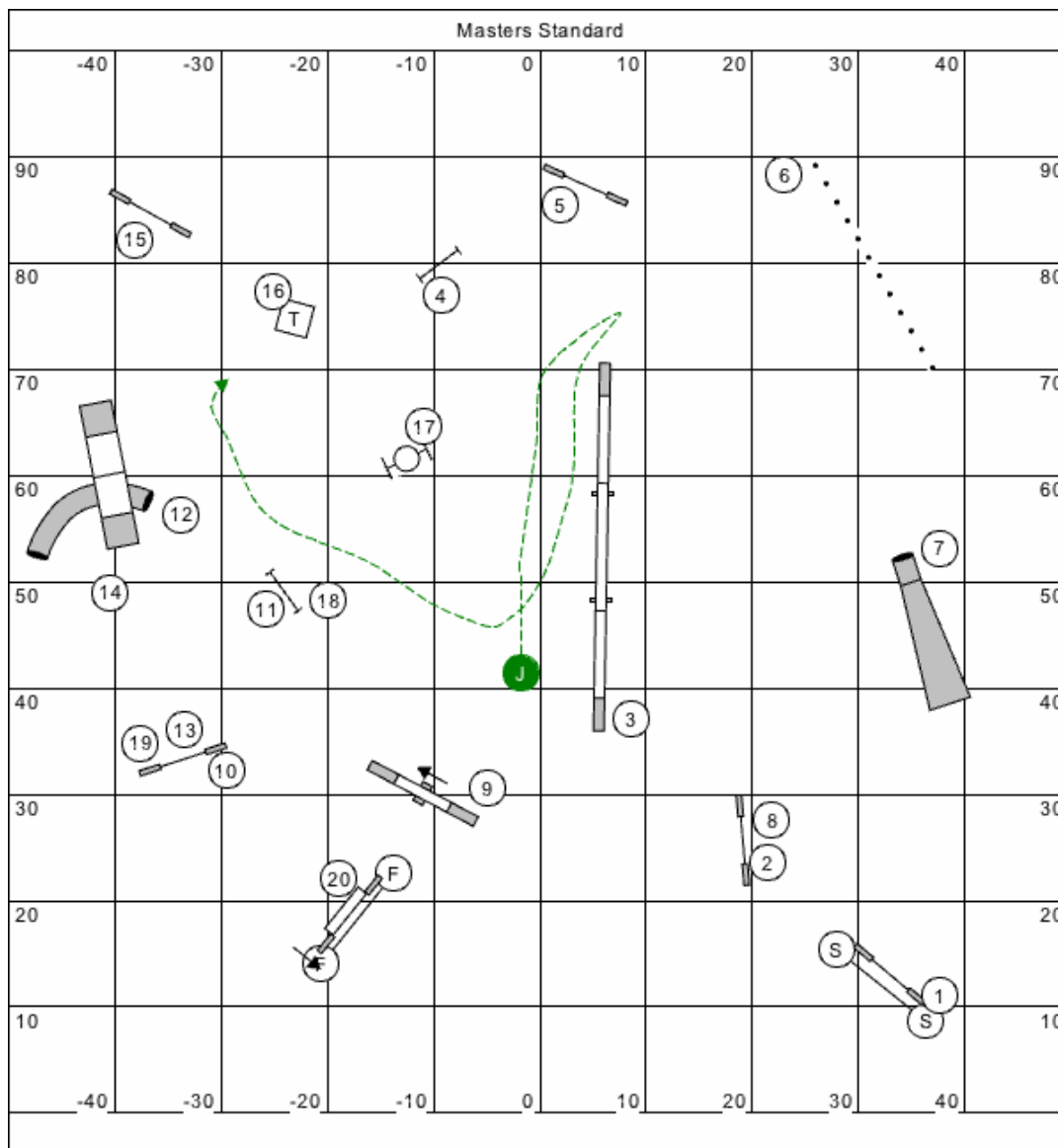

Figure 11 The unaltered Masters Standard course

This is a nice balanced Masters course, you think. Flowing and has a nice set of challenges as follows:

> (1) Serpentine from #1-#3. Hard to really think of that as a compound challenge, though, since the handler can lead out.
> (2) Side change somewhere on the #2-#3-#4 sequence
> (3) Minor refusal potential at #5
> (4) Major refusal potential at #10
> (5) Side change on the #9-#10-#11 sequence
> (6) Wrap at #13
> (7) Wrap at #15
> (8) Side change on the #17-#18-#19 sequence

You idly note that it has no real compound challenge anywhere since the serpentine from #1-3 allows the handler to lead out and the exit for tunnel #12 is far enough away from the #14 A-frame that you can't really consider that to be a Masters level discrimination following the wrap at #13.

And three of the jumps out on the course are used multiple times, so the first thing you realize you need to do is add some jumps and/or tunnels and of course, ditch the table. Let's see... the area currently around the A-frame presents possibilities as a good place to start constructing a tight crossing pattern. But it is awfully close to the edge of the ring, which means problems with having enough landing room for any jumps placed there, and you've already used it as a wide-open crossing pattern in the previous course.

It's probably better to build up the crossing patterns elsewhere. You can see two blank and/or fairly open areas on the course (Figure 12) which look like a great place to construct some crossing patterns.
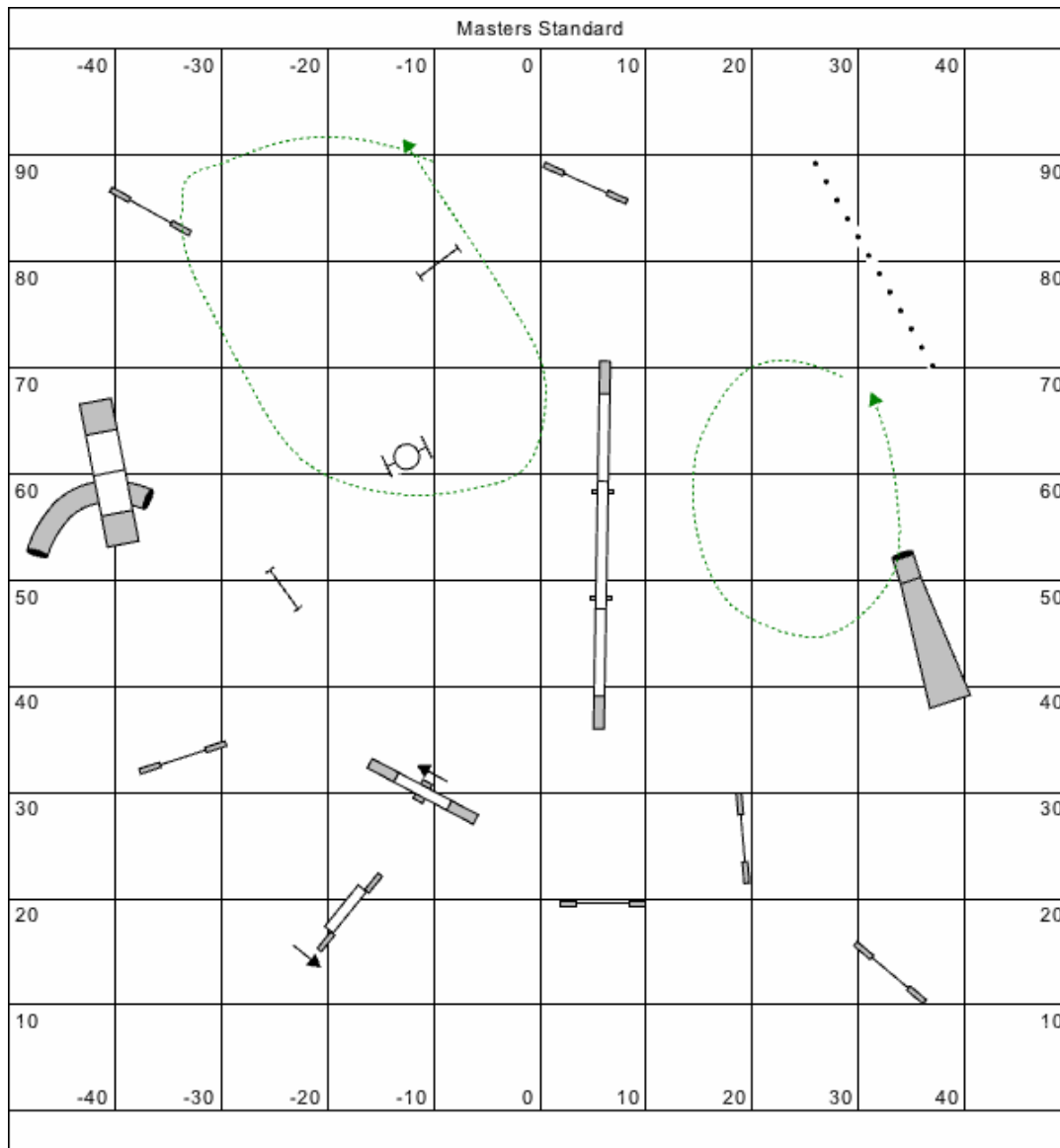

Figure 12 Potential locations for crossing patterns

You take a quick look at your equipment list. "Good," you think, "I've got 10 jumps and two tunnels plus two spreads and a long jump to work with." So with that in mind, you move the tunnel out from under the A-frame where it's been for the last couple of classes, and you drop three jumps, a tunnel, a long jump, and a spread into the blank areas you noted in Figure 12. Now your canvas is no longer sparse, but beginning to have the appearance (Figure 13) of a Masters Challenge course.
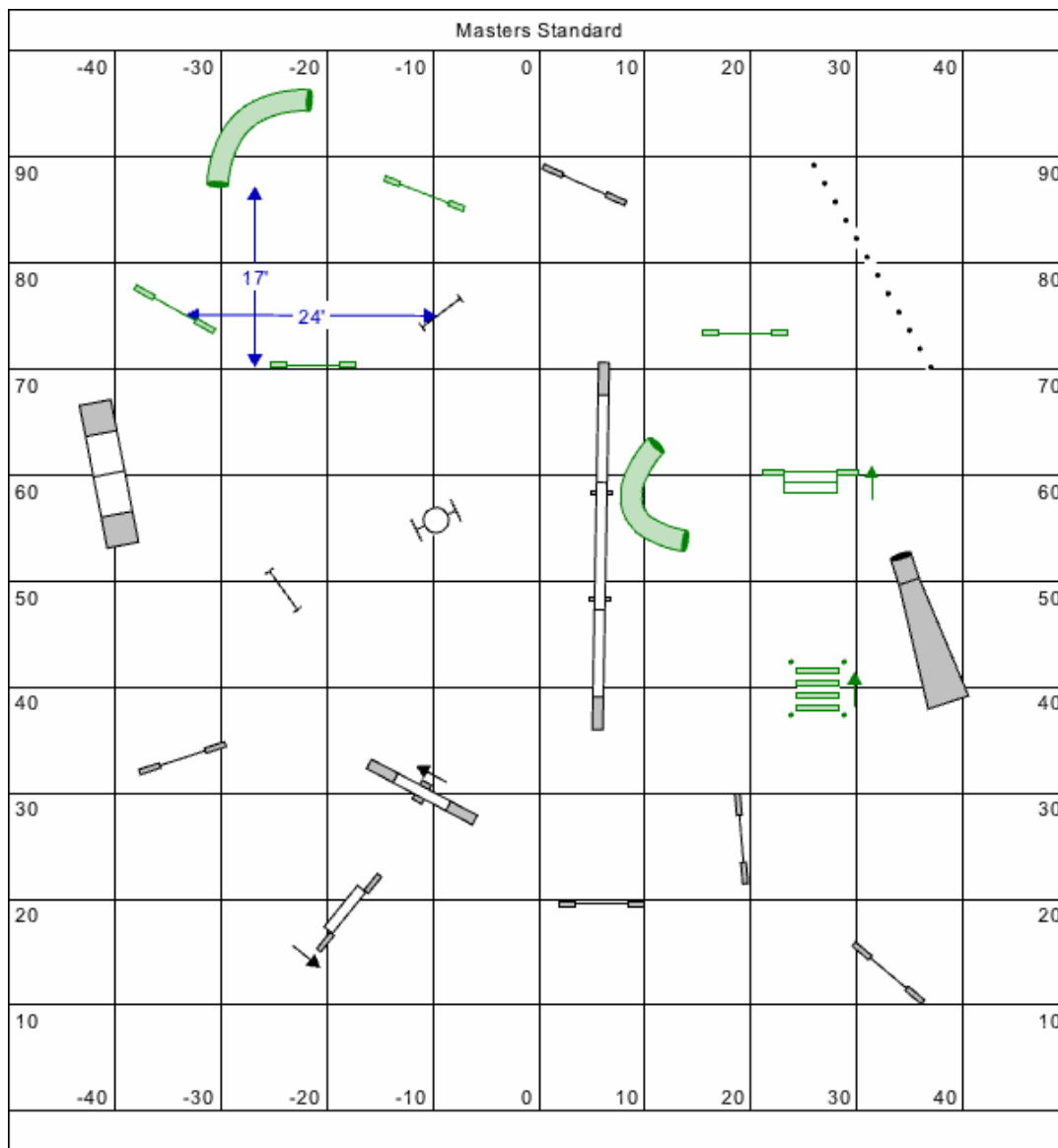
Figure 13 The emerging Masters Challenge course

You definitely have the makings of a five-sided crossing pattern in the upper left corner as well as your four-sided crossing pattern at the bottom end of the dogwalk. The obstacles between the dogwalk and weaves are another good place to work in a crossing pattern, although the spread will probably need to be swapped out with something else since extended spreads and crossing patterns rarely mix well safety-wise.

Your first attempt to trace a dog path through this chaos is a bit of a mess (Figure 14). You acknowledge it has a few flaws: Jumps used multiple times, only four of the jumps in the five obstacle crossing pattern have been used, 23 obstacles are required in order to get the dog through most of the obstacles on the course, and five managed approaches exist definitely indicating an unbalanced course design. Sadly, it requires a highly athletic timer as well should the e-timing fail during the class. Oh and you used more jumps than they've given you and you forgot the tire, dummy. You console yourself with the thought that at least it's judgable.
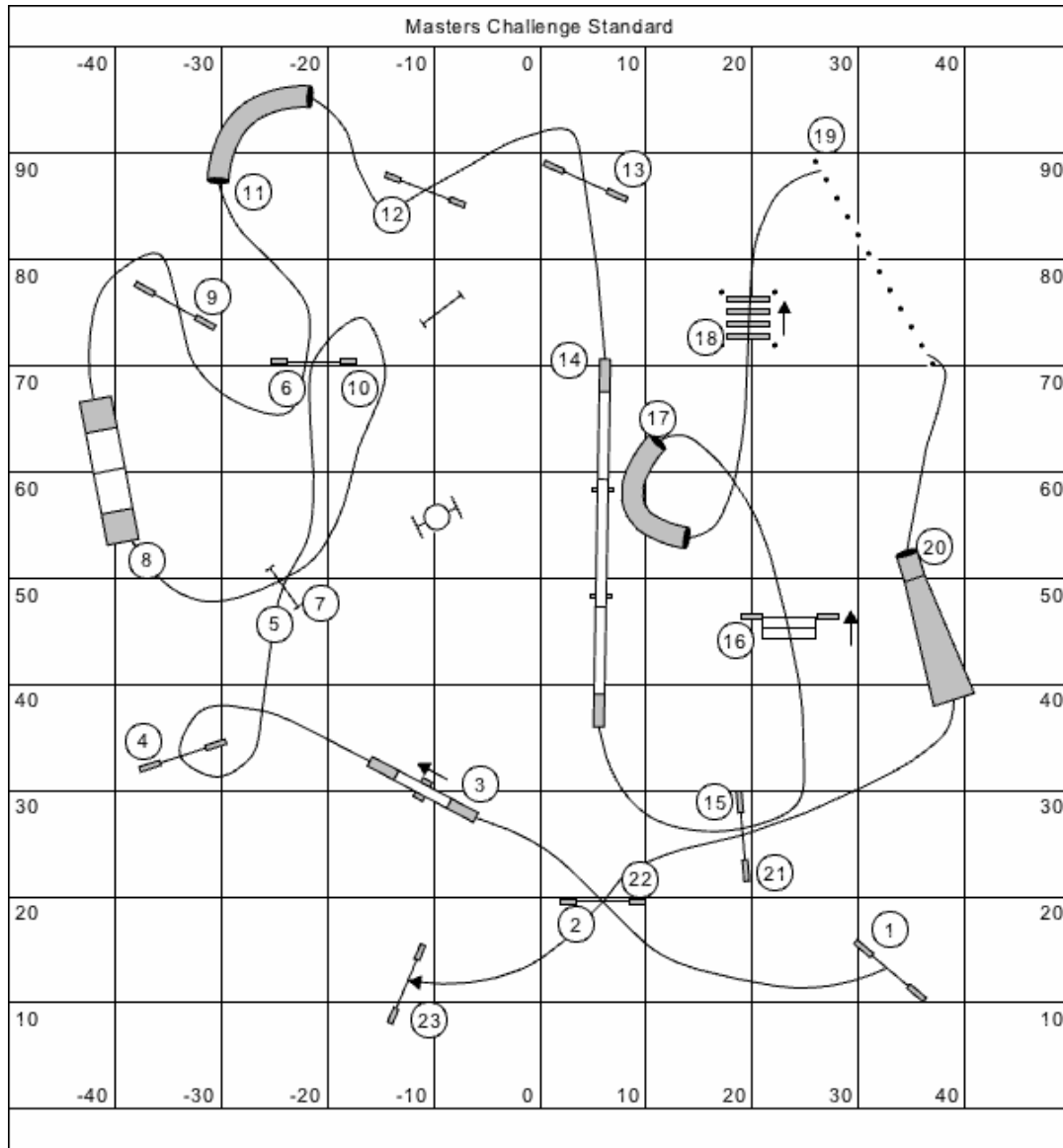
Figure 14 Attempt #1 - FAIL

You determine to get rid of the multi-use jumps and use all the jumps in the crossing pattern. The beginning and ending can be tweaked around a bit to get the number of obstacles down. The result is Figure 15.
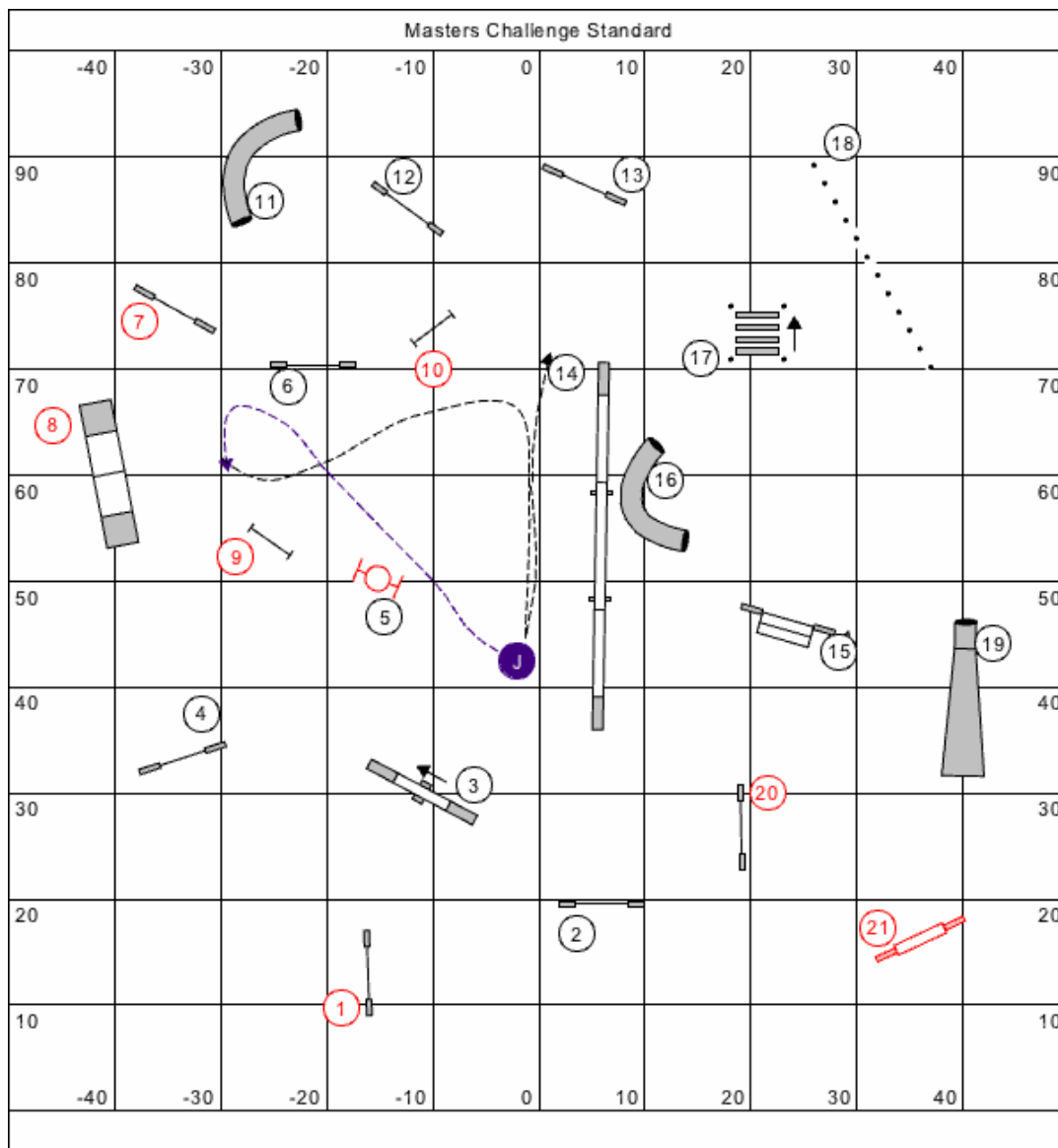
Figure 15 Attempt #2 - Getting there . . .

"All right," you think, "That's more like it". Now let's check and see if it meets muster.

- Requirement #1: Crossing patterns - check.

- Requirement #2: Compound challenges - check
    - CC #1: Threadle at #6-#7
    - CC #2: Wrap at #12 to managed approach at #13
    - CC #3: Bypass to wrong course potential at #15-#16
- Requirement #3: Correct number and type of obstacles - fail (too many obstacles).

    "Maybe," you think, "I'll just make the #11-#12-#13 sequence into a combination. Alternately, I could just drop jump #20 out of the sequence and let 'em rip to the ending spread."

- Requirement #4: Total challenges and side-change requirement - check

    You tote up the challenges as follows:
    - (1)   Managed approach at #4
    - (2)   CC #1: Threadle (Compound challenges count as a single challenge in the overall count)
    - (3)   Handler Constriction at #10
    - (4)   Wrong course potential with side change at #11

(5)   Closed approach to #12
(6)   CC #2: Wrap to managed approach
(7)   Side change at #14 or #15
(8)   CC #3: Bypass with wrong course potential
(9)   Managed approach to #18
(10)   Side-change at #18
(11)   Wrap at #20

Ok. So you've just made it without going over for challenges, but this definitely shows this is going to be a pretty challenging course. And you're still thinking about whether or not you want to drop that extra wrap at #20. I mean, it's not like this trial is a Regional or anything, but on the other hand, you hate dummy jumps sitting around on the course.

And finally,

- Requirement #5: Majority of the course in extension - check

You look at the course and see that the dog can definitely extend for the following obstacles:
#1, #3, #5, #8, #9, #11, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #21.

OK. It's time to make your last set of checks and adjustments. You modify the properties on your dog path in CRCD (Figure 16) so you can check for spacing and approach safety issues. You see a spot or two where the spacing variation hits or is getting close to 30', so you decide right then and there to drop that last wrap at #20.
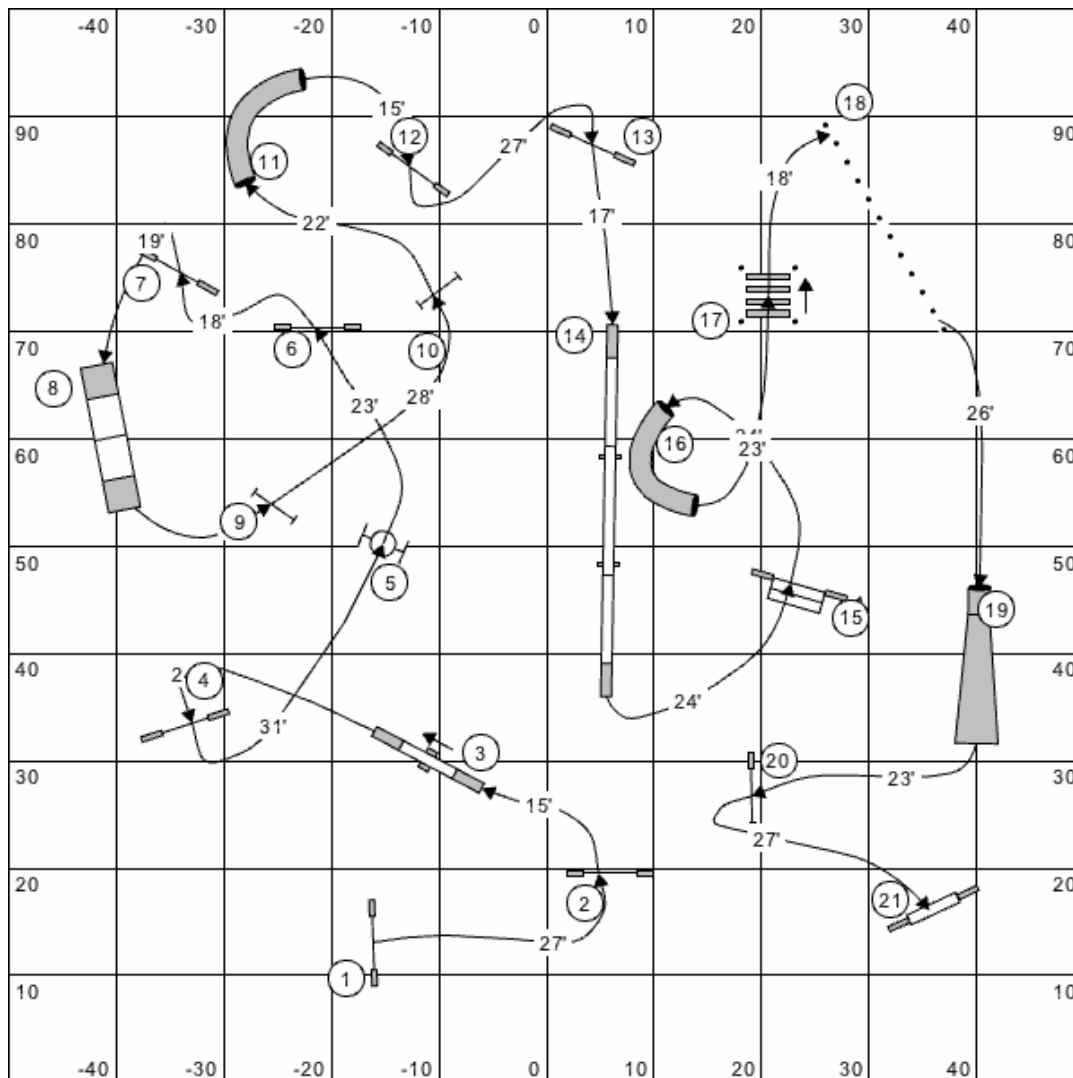

Figure 16 Checking things over for spacing and safety

As you continue to look at it from this point of view, you decide to provide a little better safety margin for the approach to teeter #3, so you reposition that a bit.

When you draw your judging path, you decide that life is just going to be a little too exciting trying to judge the A-frame while staying out of the handler's way, so you make some adjustments to jumps #9 and #5. You'll also have more trouble than you'd like trying to get to a good viewing angle for the refusal plane of tunnel #16, so you decide to reposition that as well. And you find you're less and less happy with the possible conflict points getting from the judging position for the teeter to the position for the A-frame so you decide to swap the teeter with the tire. Finally, you note that the chute needs to move a bit now that you're going straight for the last jump.

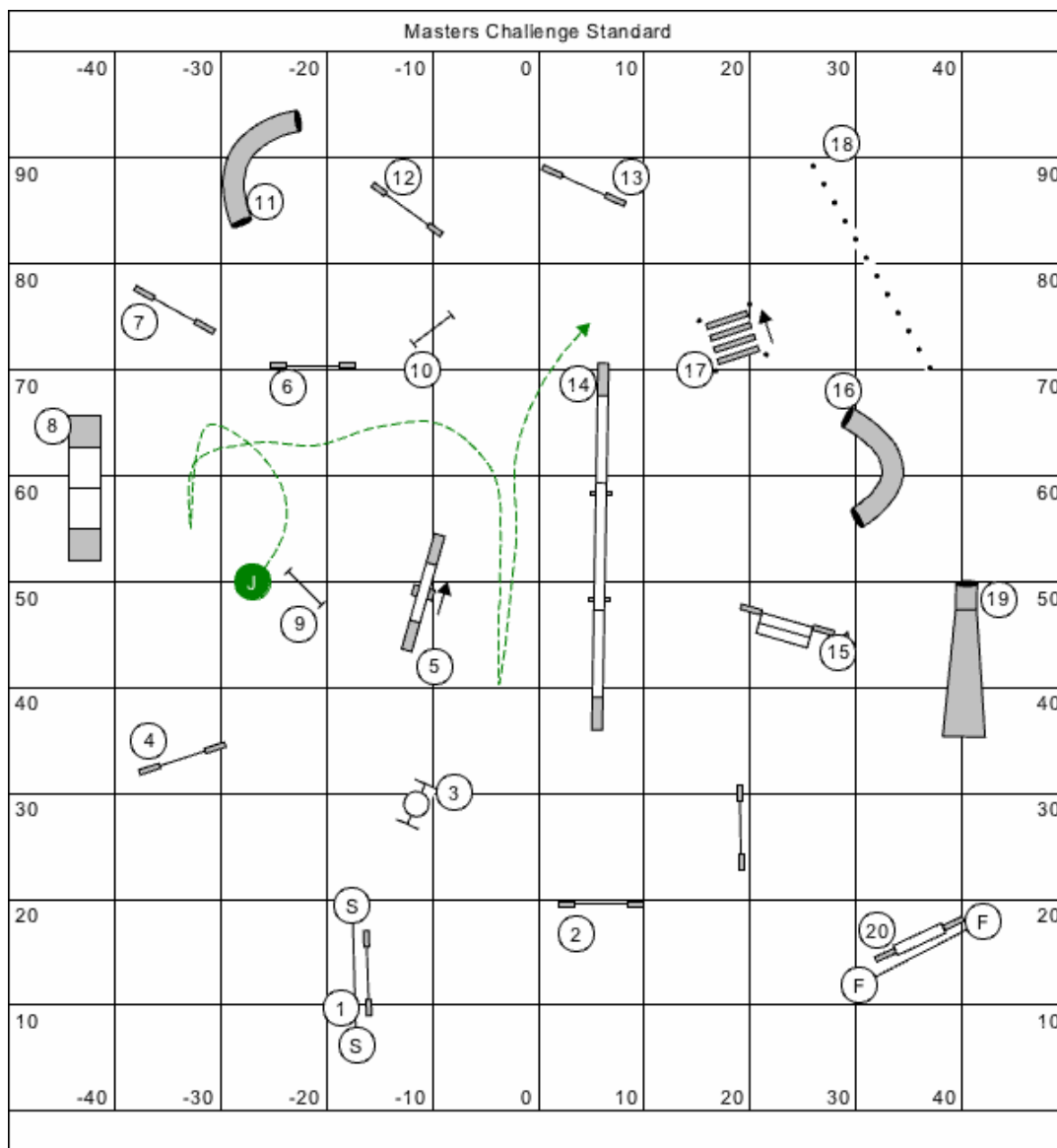All that done, you have a Masters Challenge Standard course (Figure 17) that you're ready to show a reviewer.

Figure 19: Ready to send to the reviewer.