A black and white image of dogs

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Rules & Regulations

August 2024

CHA 2024 Hoopers Agility, rules and regulations revised November 2024

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# MISSION STATEMENT

# Our mission is to promote and foster a fun, inclusive, and low-impact sport where dogs and handlers can build a strong bond through agility and teamwork. We strive to create a welcoming environment for all breeds and skill levels, encouraging positive interaction, mental stimulation, and physical activity, while continually evolving to meet the needs of our community through regular updates and improvements in our rules and regulations.

# INTRODUCTION

# Hoopers is an agility-style sport designed to be low-impact and safe for dogs, focusing on maintaining their long-term well-being while providing a challenging experience for handlers. Our courses feature low-impact obstacles such as hoops, barrels, gates, and short tunnels, ensuring minimal risk of injury and promoting natural running.

# CHA competitions aim to highlight the teamwork and skills of competitors, with courses crafted to encourage natural movement and flow without tight turns, wraps, or stressful elements. While handling from a distance is the primary goal, handlers have the option to run with their dogs if desired, fostering both flexibility and teamwork.

# MEMBERSHIP – DOGS & HANDLERS

To participate in a CHA trial, all dogs and handlers must complete their registration through our website. Please visit [Welcome to Canine Hoopers of America](https://caninehoopersamerica.com) to register and find more information.

To enter a CHA trial, all Handler and Dog teams must be registered with CHA. The annual registration fee is $45 per team, and each registered team will receive a unique ID number for trial entry.

Handlers who are CHA members can register additional dogs for $10 per year per dog. Each registered dog will receive a unique ID number

All handlers registered with CHA agree to abide by CHA rules and regulations. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in disciplinary action

## ELIGILIBILITY FOR ENTRY

* + 1. Dogs must be at least 15 months old to compete in a CHA trial.
    2. Any dog, regardless of breed, that is fit, healthy, and trained is eligible to compete in a CHA trial. Female dogs in heat are allowed to compete in events but will be the last to compete in each category. Pregnant dogs are not allowed to participate.
    3. All CHA trials are open to everyone registered with CHA who agrees to adhere to CHA’s rules and regulations. CHA reserves the right to refuse membership, trial permits, and entry fees at its discretion.
    4. Competitors and all attendees at CHA trials are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and sportsmanlike manner towards others and their dogs. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
    5. Judges have the authority to dismiss dogs and handlers from their rings, and their decisions are final. Trial hosts also have the authority to remove any dog or person from the trial venue without a refund. The trial host's decision is final.
    6. All dogs and individuals entered in CHA trials do so at their own risk. While every effort will be made to ensure the health and safety of competitors and spectators, CHA and any trial hosts will not be held responsible for any loss, damage, or injury to dogs, individuals, or property occurring at its events.

## SIZE DIVISIONS

1. CHA has 2 size divisions for competition. Dogs must be measured to ensure they compete in the correct size category. Measurement is taken from the carpal joint (wrist) up to the elbow, using the foreleg between the wrist and elbow (ulna). Accurate measurement is essential to place dogs in the appropriate size division.
2. Dogs must be at least 15 months old for their initial measurement. Dogs that measure on the borderline between two sizes will require an additional measurement at 2 years of age to confirm their size division.
3. It is the handler’s responsibility to ensure their dog is entered in the correct height category. Any disputes or uncertainties regarding height will be resolved by a trial official.

**Ulna Length** **Size Category**

6 inches and Under Small

Over 6 inches Large

A dog with a foot and a measuring tape

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# CLASS TYPES

There are three class types in CHA trials. Each class offers different challenges and emphasizes various skills, allowing competitors to showcase their dogs' agility and teamwork.

**Hoopers (H) –** Courses in this class use only hoops as obstacles. Hoopers and Hoopers Plus points are combined in Starters and Novice to level up.

**Hoopers Plus (H+) –** Courses designed using hoops, barrels, tunnels and gates. Must have a hoop as a start and finish obstacle. Hoopers and Hoopers Plus points are combined in Starters and Novice to level up.

**Pairs (P) –** Courses can include hoops, barrels, tunnels and gates. Must have a hoop as a start and finish obstacle. Points earned in Pairs (P) courses will accumulate until 12/1/25 to determine best overall Pair.

Competitors will attend a briefing and have 5 minutes to walk the course before each class begins.

# PERFORMANCE LEVELS

1. **Starters (starting point for all dogs new to CHA)**
2. **Novice**
3. **Open**
4. **Masters**

**Veterans:** Dogs older than 8 years are eligible to register as Veterans. They will run courses with Starter guidelines. Certificates will be awarded when the dog reaches points milestones that, in official progression classes, would have resulted in progression.

## HOW TO PROGRESS UP THE LEVELS

Points are earned at licensed CHA competitions from Hoopers, Hoopers Plus and Pairs. The points from these classes are combined in Starters and Novice, and a dog progresses to the next level when the following total points are achieved:

To earn the title and level up from **Starters** to the Novice level, a dog must accumulate 100 points in Starters classes.

To earn the title and level up from **Novice** to the Open level, a dog must accumulate 200 points in Novice classes.

To earn the title and level up from **Open** to the Masters level, a dog must accumulate 300 points in Hoopers and 300 points in Hoopers Plus classes.

To earn the **CHAM** (Canine Hoopers of America Master) title, a dog must accumulate 600 points in Hoopers and 600 points in Hoopers Plus Masters classes.

*Ensure you keep track of the points earned in each class to monitor your progress toward the next level.*

## **Regardless of the level your dog begins at in a trial, they must complete all runs at that level. It is not permitted to Level Up to a higher level during the trial.**

## HOW POINTS ARE EARNED

**Starters and Novice**

Points are earned by completing a clean run at competitions, which is referred to as a 'Q' (qualifying score). Only runs that meet the criteria for a clean run will contribute to the accumulation of points.

*In Starters and Novice levels, a Handler Line (HL) will be marked across the ring, either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. The judge expects the handler to remain within this marked area for the duration of the run to demonstrate distance handling skills. Extra points are awarded for not crossing the Handler Line (HL) during the run.*

**Starters:** Clean run within standard course time (35 seconds)10 points

**Novice:** Clean run within standard course time (30 seconds) 10 points

**Starters/Novice:** Clean run behind Handler Line + 10 points

**Open**

Points are earned by completing a clean run at competitions, which is referred to as a 'Q' (qualifying score). Only runs that meet the criteria for a clean run will contribute to the accumulation of points.

*In the Open level, the judge will designate a Distance Handling Area. The handler must remain within this circle for the duration of the run to achieve a clean run and earn 30 points.*

*Extra points are awarded for successfully remaining within the Distance Handling Area (DHA) during a run where a qualifying score (Q) is obtained.*

Clean run within standard course time (25 seconds)10 points

Clean run and remain in Distance Handling Area + 20 points

**Masters**

In the Masters level, the judge will designate a Distance Handling Area. The handler must remain within this circle for the duration of the run, which must be completed within the course time of 25 seconds, to achieve a clean run and earn 30 points.

**Handlers who step out of the Handlers Area will receive no points and will earn a Non-Qualifying (NQ) score.**

**Pairs**

Points are earned by running a dedicated Pairs course. Only runs that meet the criteria for a clean run will contribute to the accumulation of points.

*Both teams will run the course, time from both runs is rounded DOWN and added together. No time limit for Pairs. No distance challenge for Pairs. Only clean runs earn points.*

Best PAIR will be announced 12/01/25

Pair with 1st fastest time – must be clean – Both teams earn 30 points each

Pair with 2nd fastest time – must be clean – Both teams earn 20 points each

Each remaining team that ran a clean run – each team 10 points each

# BONUS POINTS

## HANDLER LINES (HL)

Handler Lines are used in Starters and Novice levels to divide the ring area. The Handler Line runs across the entire ring, either horizontally or vertically, allowing the handler full freedom of movement on either side of the line. To earn the HL points, the handler must remain behind the Handler Line for the entire course.

Handler Line points are awarded only for clean runs.

## DISTANCE HANDLING Area (DHA)

The Distance Handling Area (DHA) is a circle with a diameter of 2 meters for all Classes. The DHA is delimited by a raised edge (2 cm to 4 cm in diameter) that allows the handler to clearly perceive any crossing. It must not deform in the event of impact or trampling by the handler. The position of the DHA is decided by the judge on each course.

Distance Handling Area points are awarded only for clean runs.

# PLACINGS

At CHA competitions, placements are determined first by the highest points earned, and then by the fastest time. Teams are recognized for First, Second, and Third placements in each class.

# NOT FOR COMPETITION (NFC)

Dogs can be entered NFC (Not for Competition) for various reasons. When entered NFC, dogs will run Starters courses regardless of their usual competition level, and no points will be awarded. The handler must inform the scribe that the run is NFC when entering the ring and before starting the run. Once entered as NFC, the dog must remain NFC for the entire competition. NFC runs are allotted a time of 60 seconds. Dogs cannot be entered as NFC in regular classes. Training treats are **NOT** allowed in the ring, but handlers may carry a silent toy if desired while running NFC.

# “YELLOW DOGS”

Yellow Dogs are welcome at CHA Hoopers trials. Our queuing system and ring setup are designed to accommodate dogs who need extra space, whether they are fear reactive, nervous, or anxious. We ask that these dogs, like all others at the show, are kept under control at all times. Trial organizers, judges, and competitors are expected to be helpful and understanding towards Yellow Dogs to ensure a positive experience for everyone. However, dogs known to seek out conflict, jump ring fences, or exhibit uncontrollable behavior should not be brought to a competition without prior rehabilitative training.

Yellow Dogs will be given adequate space before, during, and after their run to ensure they can participate comfortably and enjoy the event. Our setup is designed to support their needs and help them join in the fun safely

***‘Yellow Dogs’ must wear a yellow bandana that is clearly visible at all times while at the trial, to inform those around them and allow for appropriate adjustments. The bandana should be removed during their run.***

# EQUIPMENT

## CHA obstacles include hoops (both based and baseless), barrels, tunnels (bottomless and traditional), and gates.

## HOOPS

**Height** of the Hoop should be 36 or 38 inches.

**Width** of the base should be 34 or 36 inches.

**Support feet** should extend at least 12 inches on one side or both sides.

**Uprights** 16 or 18 inches tall.

The Hoop may have a crossbar between the feet. Or can be the “baseless” type.

Hoops can be constructed from various materials, provided they are safe and free of sharp edges that could injure a dog. Weighted hoop bases are permissible, but obstacles should not be pegged or difficult to move to minimize the risk of injury in case of impact.

## BASELESS HOOPS

Same height and width, without a bar between the feet.

**Width** between the supporting feet: 34 or 36 inches.

**Height** of the hoop 36 or 38 inches

**Support feet** at least 12 inches in each direction.

**Uprights**: 16 or 18 inches tall.

## BARRELS

The height of the Barrel should be 20 to 27 inches.

The diameter of the Barrel should be 20 to 28 inches tall.

Barrels can be made of plastic, vinyl, or fabric. They should not be securely fastened in place but can be stabilized with internal weights to prevent rocking or easy movement. Any internal weights must be used in a way that does not compromise the safety of the dogs.

## TUNNELS

The tunnel is made of a flexible material that is damage-resistant and has no sharp edges.

* + - * + The color of the tunnel must be clearly visible to dogs
        + The color must also contrast (to a dog) with its surroundings
        + Tunnel must always be pulled out to full length
        + 4-inch or 6-inch pitch
        + 24 – 32 inches in diameter
        + 3 – 6.5 feet long
        + Tunnels must be secured at all times with tunnel bags.
        + Bottomless tunnels, which have no material across the bottom, need to be secured from outside if weather conditions require it.
        + Additionally, entrances to tunnels should be straight.

## GATES

Gates are made of a lightweight material that is damage-resistant and has no sharp edges. Aluminum, PVC, or safe synthetic materials are allowed.

A gate must be designed to:

* + - * + Allow eye contact between dogs and handlers
        + Prevent dogs from going through it
        + Avoid impeding the expected path of the dog
        + Always maintain a secure and stable position
        + Be difficult to knock over

A gate must be designed to:

Width: 3 to 4 ft

Height: 3 to 4 ft

Support Feet: 2 ft

# RING LAYOUT

All level rings: a minimum of 60 feet x 65 feet.

The surface must be suitable for the safe running of dogs and handlers and must allow all obstacles to sit level.

The ring area must have fencing or a barrier no less than 30 inches high and incorporates both an entrance and an exit.

# COURSE LAYOUT

**Obstacle Spacing Guidelines**

**Minimum Distance Between Obstacles**:

* + Ensure there is at least 15 feet between obstacles as a starting point. This provides enough space for dogs to maneuver between obstacles.
  + If necessary, adjust the spacing to provide a smoother transition to the next obstacle. This adjustment should consider the dog's ability to line up and prepare for the next challenge.

**Hoop-Tunnel-Hoop Sequences**:

* + When measuring the distance between obstacles in a hoop-tunnel-hoop sequence, do not count the length of the tunnel in the measurement. Only measure the distance from the end of the first hoop to the entrance of the tunnel, and from the exit of the tunnel to the beginning of the second hoop.

**Barrel Width**:

* + The width of a barrel should not be included in the measurement of distances between obstacles. This means the space between obstacles is measured from the outer edges of the barrels, but the width itself does not contribute to the distance.

**Maximum Distance Between Obstacles**:

* + The maximum allowable distance between any two obstacles should not exceed 26 feet. This ensures that dogs have enough space to navigate the course without being too spread out, which could make it challenging or unsafe.

**Design Principles for Smooth and Flowing Courses**

1. **Curved Lines and Smooth Turns**:
   * Incorporate gentle curves rather than sharp angles to facilitate smoother transitions. This approach helps dogs maintain their speed and reduces the risk of them becoming disoriented or stressed.
   * Use the natural flow of the course to guide dogs from one obstacle to the next, minimizing abrupt changes in direction.
2. **Use of Barrels and Gates**:
   * **Barrels**: Place barrels strategically to help dogs make smoother turns. Barrels can act as visual cues and physical guides, helping dogs navigate more acute turns with less stress.
   * **Gates**: Use gates to help direct dogs into the proper alignment for the next obstacle. Gates can also help in managing the dog's approach and exit, ensuring a more fluid transition.
3. **Obstacle Count**:
   * **Minimum of 10 Obstacles/Maximum of 25 Obstacles**: To ensure a challenging yet manageable course for lower levels, keeping in mind that the complexity should still allow for smooth flow and avoid overwhelming the dogs.
4. **Restrictions on Specific Maneuvers**:
   * **Pull-throughs, Backsides, Sharp Turns, and Wraps on Hoops**: These maneuvers should be avoided to prevent creating overly complex or stressful segments in the course. Instead, design turns and transitions that are more gradual and straightforward.

**Practical Tips for Implementation**

1. **Visual and Physical Cues**:
   * Utilize barrels and gates as visual and physical guides to help dogs understand the course layout and manage turns more effectively.
2. **Course Layout and Testing**:
   * Design the course with a focus on fluid movement. Test the layout to ensure that the spacing and arrangement of obstacles promote a natural flow.
   * Adjust the course based on testing feedback to address any potential issues with turns or transitions.
3. **Handler Considerations**:
   * Ensure that the course layout accommodates handlers’ movements and allows them to guide their dogs effectively through the course.
4. **Safety and Comfort**:
   * Prioritize the safety and comfort of the dogs by avoiding sharp angles and ensuring that all obstacles are positioned in a way that promotes a smooth and enjoyable experience.

By focusing on these principles, you can create agility courses that are engaging, challenging, and enjoyable for dogs, while also ensuring that transitions between obstacles are as smooth and stress-free as possible.

**Numbering and Directional Placement**

1. **Number Placement**:
   * **Center of Obstacles**: When a number is placed in the center of an obstacle, it indicates that the obstacle can be taken in either direction. This approach is useful for obstacles like tunnels or hoops where the direction is not inherently restricted.
   * **Directional Numbers**: For obstacles where the direction of approach matters, place the number in a way that clearly indicates the required direction.
2. **Barrel Numbering**:
   * **Side Placement**: Number barrels on the floor out to the side where the dog must pass. This ensures that handlers and dogs can easily see the number as they approach the barrel, helping them navigate the course accurately.
   * **Top Placement**: If placing numbers on the side of barrels is not feasible (e.g., due to visibility issues), numbers can be placed on top of the barrels. Ensure the numbers are clearly visible and indicate the direction the dog should travel. This might involve using large, clear numbers or directional arrows.

**Practical Tips for Numbering**

1. **Visibility**:
   * Ensure all numbers are placed in a location that is easily visible from the approach path of the obstacle. This reduces confusion and helps maintain the flow of the course.
2. **Consistency**:
   * Use a consistent numbering format and placement strategy throughout the course. This consistency helps competitors quickly understand and follow the numbering system without having to decipher different styles or placements.
3. **Testing and Adjustments**:
   * Test the course layout with the numbering system in place to ensure that all numbers are clearly visible and provide the necessary guidance. Make adjustments as needed based on visibility and clarity.
4. **Communication**:
   * Clearly communicate the numbering and direction rules to competitors before they run the course. Provide diagrams or course maps if necessary to illustrate the correct order and direction for each obstacle.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your agility course is well-organized and that competitors have a clear understanding of how to navigate the obstacles in the correct order and direction.

**Distance Handling Area Placement**

1. **Proximity to the Dog’s Path**:
   * **Close Placement**: The distance handling area can be placed close to the dog's path to make it more accessible for handlers. This placement helps handlers position themselves effectively to give cues or commands during the run.
   * **Accessibility**: Ensure that the distance area is positioned so that handlers can easily move between obstacles and the distance area without obstructing the dog's path or causing confusion.
2. **Allowing the Dog’s Path to Cross Part of the Distance Area**:
   * **Crossing the Distance Area**: In some cases, it might be necessary or beneficial for the dog’s path to cross part of the distance handling area. This can be done by positioning the distance area in such a way that it does not interfere with the dog’s ability to navigate the course smoothly.
   * **Clear Markings**: Clearly mark the boundaries of the handling circle to avoid any confusion. The circle should be large enough to accommodate the necessary handling while not disrupting the flow of the course.

## COURSE DESIGN

Judges are responsible for the design of their courses. When designing a course, the judge must always consider the safety of the dog and handler. Care should be taken to make sure the course is smooth and flows from one obstacle to another, and avoids wraps, sharp/tight turns or stops. This must include safe entry and exit angles to tunnels. When designing a course, a good practice is to create a course with similar spacing throughout, to encourage a regular pace from the dog. If there are competitors with mobility issues entered, the judge will be informed in advance to make any course adjustments.

Barrels will be numbered according to the line the judge wishes the dog to take. If the judge allows a turn on either side of a barrel, the obstacle’s number will be centered.

## START AND FINISH

All courses must be numbered. Numbering is positioned on, or by, the obstacle to clearly show the handler the required route for each dog around a course.

## TURNS AROUND A BARREL

Acceptable ways to use a barrel to allow for a smooth path:

* Using the barrel to go straight on e.g. #1
* Using the barrel to take a curved turn e.g. #1 to #4
* Using the barrel for a right or left turn e.g. #2 to #4
* Using the barrel for a complete turn (dog goes all the way round) e.g. #3

The blue line (#5) would not be recommended for use in lower levels of competition.

A diagram of a diagram of a line

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## ACCEPTED WAYS TO USE THE GATE

* Using the gate to go straight on e.g. #1
* Using the gate to take a curved turn e.g. #1 to # 4
* Using the gate for a right or left turn e.g. #2 to #4

Using the gate for a complete turn (#3) or the blue line (#5) would not be recommended for use in lower levels of competition.

Position of the gate: The gate is ideally placed so the handler would be in a position level with its flat side, and able to direct the dog not to take the obstacle (e.g. standing at position #1)

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## OBSTACLE PLACEMENT & HANDLING

Courses contain a minimum of 10 obstacles (Beginners and Novice) and a maximum of 25 obstacles (Intermediate, Advanced and Masters). Pull-throughs and wraps on hoops are not permitted. This includes wrapping the first obstacle. Dogs must start from the numbered side of the first obstacle and cannot be sent around from the wrong side. Courses can start and finish in the same place depending on circumstances.

Obstacles are numbered and must be taken in the correct order. The placement of the number for an obstacle determines the direction in which it should be taken and the expected line of travel of the dog. Where a number is placed in the center of an obstacle, competitors may take the obstacle in either direction.

Dog must begin in a start position in front of the first hoop (Handlers must be in the distance handler's area (DHA) or behind the Handler Line before releasing their dog), but they cannot bring their dog into the circle or behind the handler line.

The judge’s decision is final in all competition.

Judges have the option of using an assistant judge to observe the handler at positions on the course where it may be difficult to assess the dog’s movements, e.g. when the handler is in the Handling Area or behind the Handler Line. This allows the judge to give full attention to correctly scoring the dog as it completes the course.

# SCORING

Ensuring that handler and dog teams approach the course in a sportsmanlike manner and adhere to the correct order of obstacles is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the competition. Here’s a detailed guide on how to promote sportsmanship and adherence to course rules:

**Sportsmanship and Course Adherence**

1. Sportsmanship Expectations:
   * Positive Attitude: Encourage competitors to maintain a positive and respectful attitude towards fellow competitors, judges, and event staff. Sportsmanship includes respecting the rules, the judging process, and the spirit of the competition.
   * Respectful Behavior: Competitors should avoid disruptive behavior, including excessive coaching or shouting from the sidelines, and should not interfere with other teams running the course.
2. Correct Order of Obstacles:
   * Course Familiarization: Ensure that all competitors have the opportunity to walk the course and understand the correct order of obstacles before their runs. This helps prevent unintentional mistakes and promotes fair competition.
   * Adherence to Sequence: Teams must make every effort to take obstacles in the correct order. Judges should monitor this closely and enforce rules consistently.

**Enforcement and Monitoring**

1. Judge’s Role:
   * Course Inspection: Judges should thoroughly inspect the course layout to ensure that it is clearly marked and easy to follow. They must be familiar with the course design and able to address any issues or questions from competitors.
   * Monitoring Runs: Judges need to closely observe each run to ensure that the teams are following the course as intended. This includes verifying that obstacles are taken in the correct sequence.
2. Penalties for Rule Violations:
   * Incorrect Sequence: If a team takes an obstacle out of order, they should be penalized according to the competition rules. Common penalties include time penalties or disqualification, depending on the severity and the rules of the event.
   * Sportsmanship Violations: Any behavior that disrupts the competition or shows a lack of respect should be addressed promptly. Judges should apply appropriate penalties or warnings for such violations.

**Communication and Support**

1. Pre-Competition Briefing:
   * Rules and Expectations: Provide a clear briefing to all competitors before the competition begins. Outline the rules regarding course navigation, sportsmanship, and penalties for infractions.
   * Clarification: Make sure competitors understand the importance of taking obstacles in the correct order and the consequences of not adhering to the rules.
2. Support and Guidance:
   * Assistance for Competitors: Offer assistance or clarification to competitors who may be uncertain about any aspect of the course or rules. This helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures fair competition.

## ELIMINATION (ZERO POINTS)

* + - Dog takes an obstacle in the wrong direction
    - Dog misses an obstacle
    - Dog takes an off-course obstacle
    - Dog runs out of the ring before completing the course
    - Dog fouls in the ring
    - Dog wears collar, halter etc. when competing
    - Handler feeds dog while in the ring
    - Handler carrying anything other than a mobility aid in their hand while competing
    - Handler uses harsh handling or exhibits unsportsmanlike behavior
    - Starting before being told to do so by the judge or scribe
    - Dog showing signs of aggression towards handler or any other person inside or outside the ring (this includes the dog biting the handler)
    - Dog showing aggression towards a dog outside the ring
    - Handler throwing a toy before the dog completes the course
    - Handler deliberately makes contact with the dog or any piece of equipment after start
    - Harsh handling – this MUST also be reported to the trial host immediately
    - Double handling

# GENERAL RULES

* + - Competitors are expected to behave in a friendly, sportsmanlike manner and be kind to all others at the trial.
    - No person shall impugn the decision of a judge, either in person or on social media. The Judges decision is final. No video evidence will be accepted. If there are any issues they should be discussed with the trial organizers.
    - It is the handler's responsibility to ensure that they and their dog are both suitably fit, healthy and appropriately trained for the sport.
    - Dogs that are suffering from an infectious disease or have been in contact with a dog that suffers from an infectious disease in the previous 21 days prior to the competition should not attend the competition.
    - Dogs should not be allowed to lunge at the rings, other dogs or people.
    - Parents/guardians of children are solely responsible for them and their behavior.
    - No bikes or other wheeled equipment (except mobility scooters and wheelchairs) are allowed around the rings.
    - It is the competitor’s responsibility to be present for and ready to run in their class.
    - All competitors should ensure that dogs are given adequate space while queuing.
    - Handlers are allowed to play with their dogs in the queue. However, throwing toys is not allowed. If playing with any other toy such as a tug the handler must ensure that they do not impinge on the space of dogs in front of or behind them.
    - Dogs will compete without a collar. DOGS RUN NAKED
    - Dogs can NOT wear jackets, harnesses, boots etc. while competing. Bandage wrap or carpal pad/dew claw protectors are acceptable, if necessary.
    - Leads and toys may be left at the start line, finish line or handed to a leash runner.
    - If the handler chooses to have a toy during their run, it must be out of their hands, secured in a pocket or tucked away. The dog must not interact with the toy until their run is completed.
    - It is acceptable for a toy to be used as a reward after the dog has completed the course.
    - No food within the ring boundary
    - When negotiating the first obstacle the dog must start from the numbered side of the first obstacle. The dog cannot be sent around from the wrong side i.e. wrapping the obstacle.
    - Double handling or deliberate assistance given to a competitor while competing from either inside or outside the ring will result in elimination.
    - If the dog misses an obstacle, the handler may bring the dog back to complete the obstacle (as long as the dog hasn’t taken an off-course obstacle). However, after three attempts the judge will request the team move on and a missed obstacle will be called, resulting in an elimination.
    - No handler should touch or move any piece of equipment when walking the course. If there is an issue with the equipment they should politely speak to the judge or ring manager.
    - A Judge may offer a re-run if the timing equipment fails or if they deem a run to have been compromised by circumstances out of the handler’s control.
    - All dogs must be under control and on a lead while at the trial venue, i.e. around the rings, and parking lot. They may only be off lead while competing.
    - All owners/handlers MUST clean up their dog’s mess and dispose of it in bins provided by the trial organizers.
    - The use of prong collars, electric collars, choke or check chains is strictly forbidden within the trial grounds.
    - Female dogs in heat are allowed to compete in events but will be the last to compete in each category. Pregnant dogs are not allowed to participate. The mating of dogs is strictly forbidden at the trial venue.
    - Handlers must dress in appropriate clothing for the trial and wear closed-toed shoes while in the ring.

# AWARDS

All qualifying runs are eligible for a Q ribbon.

# TITLES

**HOOPERS & HOOPERS PLUS**

* Starters Hoopers Dog of America (SHDA) – must earn 100 points in the Starters Hoopers/Hoopers Plus classes
* Novice Hoopers Dog of America (NHDA) – must earn 200 points in the Novice Hoopers/Hoopers Plus classes
* Open Hoopers Dog of America (OHDA) – must earn 300 points in the Open Hoopers and 300 points in the Hoopers Plus classes
* Canine Hoopers of America Master (CHAM) – must earn 600 points in the Master Hoopers and 600 points in the Hoopers Plus classes

**Pairs**

* Pairs Dog of America (PDA) –

Certificates will be awarded for each title via email.

# JUDGING

Judges must judge in accordance with CHA rules and regulations. The judge is responsible for the design of their course and must always consider the safety of the dog and handler, while also taking weather conditions into account, if applicable.

Judges must submit course maps to CHA for approval, before sending them to the trial host. Course maps must be displayed and are either printed, posted, or emailed to all competitors. Judges must always observe the dog and handler while they are in the ring. It is the competitor’s responsibility to be available for their class so judging can stay on schedule.

Judges have the option of using an **assistant judge** to observe the handler at positions on the course where it may be difficult to assess the dog’s movements, e.g. when the handler is in the Distance Handling Area or behind the Challenge Line. This allows the judge to give full attention to observe the dog as it completes the course.

**A dog may be handled by a CHA registered person other than the dog’s registered handler and points will be given to that dog as if it had been the registered handler running the dog. A judge’s dog can run in a class while they are judging provided the handler is a CHA member. A judge may also run their own dog if another certified CHA judge steps in to judge the run. Points will be given accordingly.**