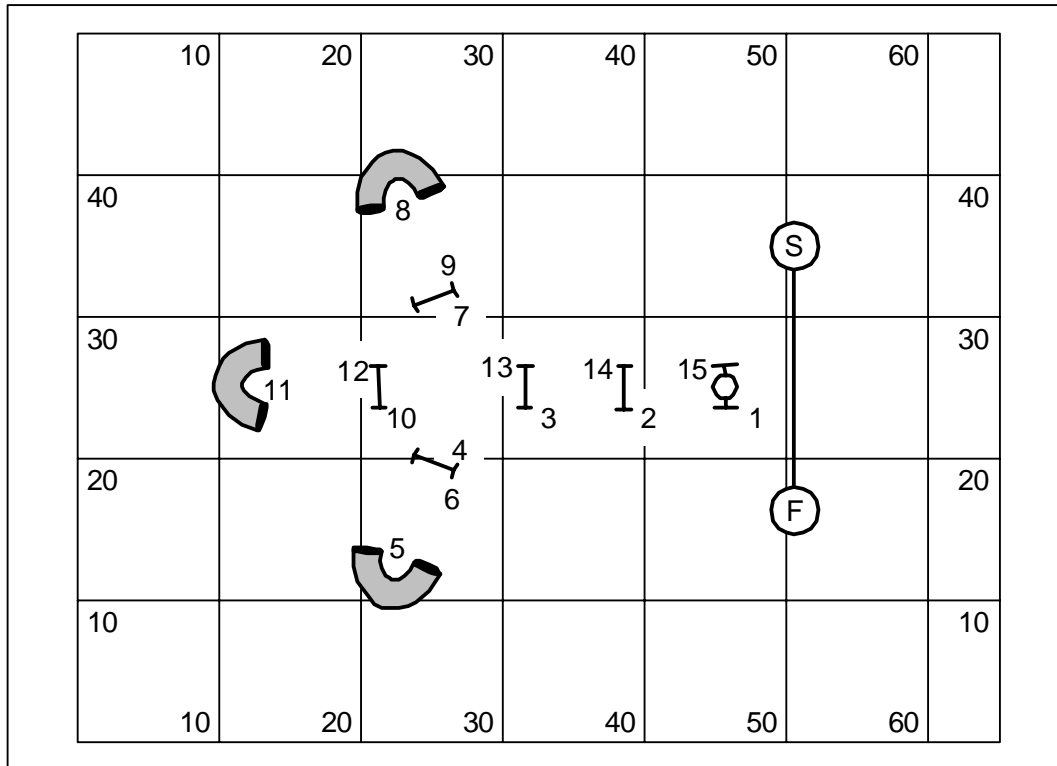


Four Leaf Clover

Games I



This is a delightful training game concocted by Canada's M.J. Thuot. This is a directional game mostly intended for Novice dogs and handlers. It can be played individually or in teams of two or three. This is just the ticket for tunnel enthusiastic dogs. Perfect for a Corgi, eh?

Briefing

The dog performs a numbered sequence. The dog must first perform the weave poles (the stem of the 4-leaf clover) and then perform each of the leaves of the clover. The handler can earn bonuses for remaining in the containment area that is bounded by the jumps. The sequence ends when the dog makes his way back down the stem to the finish line.

Note that the tunnels all can be performed with the dog going in either entry. At the judge's discretion a specific entry could be specified, which would have serious consequences in terms of handling at a distance.

The standard course time is 40 seconds. When the whistle blows to indicate the end of time, handler and dog must leave the course. Otherwise, if time has not yet expired, the handler and dog must cross the finish line or get to the finish line to stop time.

Scoring

Four-Leaf Clover is scored points then time. Each handler starts with 100 points. The judge will call out all point deductions. Points lost will be deducted; bonuses earned added.

Deductions

- Stepping out of the containment area to help the dog perform the proper tunnel entrance carries a 5-point deduction for each occurrence.
- Knocked bars and wrong courses carry a 5-point deduction.
- The handler who has to leave the course because of expired time will earn an additional 25-point deduction. The team's time will be recorded as 40 seconds.

Bonuses

- The dog performing a leaf or the stem of the clover while the handler remains in the containment area earns 5 bonus points. All tunnels are bi-directional.
- The dog performing the entire course while the handler remains in the containment box will earn an additional 50 bonus points. Note that *only* by staying inside the box for the entire sequence does the team qualify for the 50-point bonus. Thus a team may have bars down, missed poles and so forth, and still qualify for the 50-points.

Strategies

When working a dog at a distance, even a modest send into a U-shaped tunnel, the handler should keep the focus of his body on the end obstacle as the dog is sent away. "Focus" implies that the handler's toes and shoulders are facing the desired obstacle and that he is providing some movement toward it, however modest.

In the transitions between clover leafs, the handler should take care to create a square approach to the jump leading to the tunnel that lines the performance up nicely for the dog. If the handler is indifferent to these corners, then the dog might not be well directed.

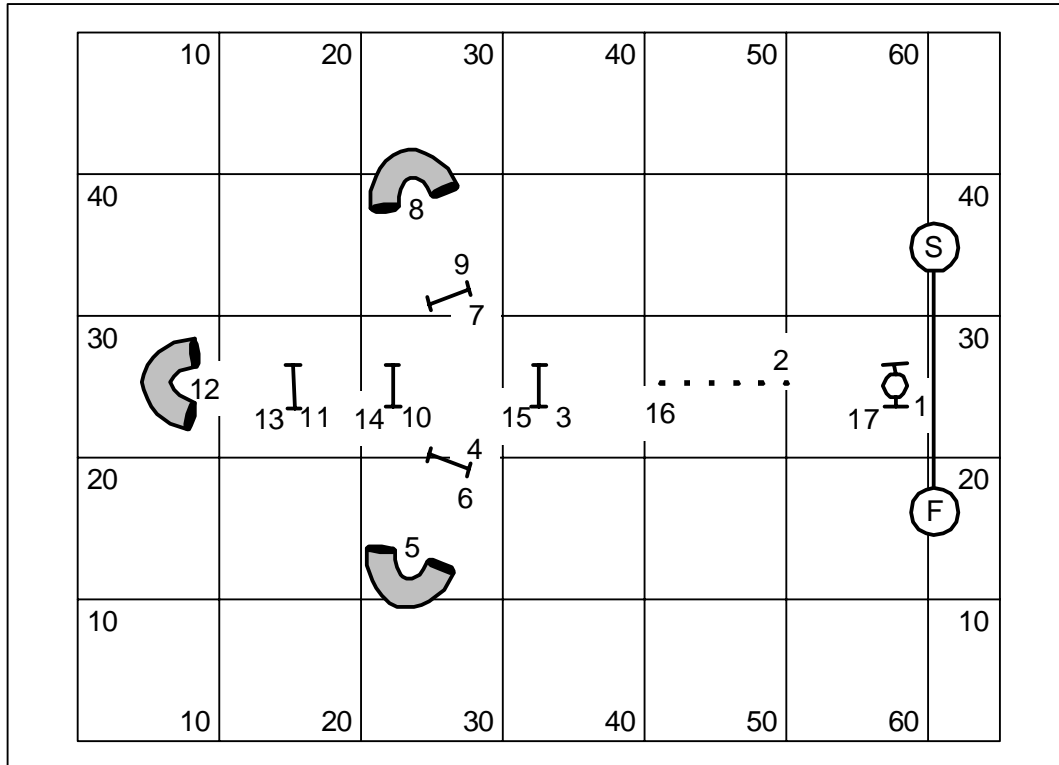
Qualifying and Titles

Four-Leaf Clover and Three-Leaf Clover is a titling game in the TDAA. To earn a qualifying score, the dog and handler team will have to earn more bonuses than penalties and perform the entire sequence in less than the allotted time.

Following is a schedule of points that is adapted from the sample course. Note that the course can be run by all levels of competitors. Some allowances have been made to allow qualification appropriate to the level of the competitor.

- Games I – A score of 95 or better
- Games II – A score of 100 or better
- Games III – A score of 110 or better

Games III



The sample course at the top of this document is probably a bit too simple for more advanced teams, especially those who've proved their mettle as distance workers in the USDAA, in NADAC and in CPE. For Games III (and possibly even Games II) the judge might specify a more advanced call and send for the stem, as shown in this course map.

Note that the judge might also allow the handler to perform the leaves of the clover in the order of their own choosing, so that the handler can approach the solution in his own fashion.