HOOPERS TOGETHER

Hoopers Together Competition Rules

Rules as at 4 November 2026

> These are the competition rules for Hoopers Together. Members agree to them when they register on Hoopers Ringside.

1. Grade Structure

Nursery (optional) → Grade 1 → Grade 2 → Grade 3 → Grade 4.

- Grade 4 is currently the top competitive grade.
- Dogs do not have to start in Nursery.
- Grades cannot be skipped.
- The minimum age to compete is 15 months (12 months for the non-competitive Nursery class).

At which grade do I enter?

Dogs coming from CHUK or BK9 enter at the comparable grade:

Hoopers Together	CHUK	BK9
Grade 1	Starters	K1/K2
Grade 2	Novice	K3/K4
Grade 3	Intermediate	K5/K6
Grade 4	Advanced / Masters	K7/K8

- When first joining Hoopers Together, a dog may instead enter one grade lower than its comparable grade, to consolidate skills or build confidence. Grade 1 is the lowest grade a transferring dog can enter; it cannot drop into Nursery.
- A dog may not enter above its current grade without committee approval.

2. Leagues and Height Categories

Leagues and results are placed separately within each height category at each grade. The season runs from 1 January to 31 December of each calendar year.

- **Tie-break:** where two dogs finish a league on the same total points, the dog with more bonus points (Skill Line and Skill Box) is placed higher.
- **Height categories:** each dog competes as small, medium or large, according to the length of its forearm (see table below).
- **Measuring:** the forearm (ulna), from the wrist (carpal joint) to the point of the elbow, is measured using fixed brackets set to the lengths in the table below. A dog that does not fit within the medium bracket is large; there is no upper limit for large. Measuring will be carried out by qualified instructors or judges.
- **Veterans:** there is no Veterans league. Veterans earn awards instead.
- **Juniors:** the Junior League, a single league combining all height categories, runs alongside this structure.

Category	Forearm length
Small	130 mm or less
Medium	130.5 mm to 170 mm
Large	170.5 mm or more

Finals

Two finals are held each year at the championship show: the cup final and the league final. Names for each will be announced. Finals awards are provided by the show organisers.

Cup

- Cup qualifiers are held at shows throughout the year.
- Qualifier courses are set at Grade 2 level.
- A dog that qualifies goes through to the cup final at the championship show.
- All dogs in the cup final run the same course. Awards are split by height category.

League final

- League points are earned at shows throughout the year.
- A dog's league placing on the closing date decides whether it earns a place in the league final. The closing date is set each year from the date of the championship show. The number of places will be announced.
- There is a Grade 1 final and a combined final for Grades 2, 3 and 4.
- A dog in Grade 1 at the start of the year runs in the Grade 1 final, even if it moves up a grade before the final.
- Awards are split by height category.

3. Nursery

Nursery Class

Our Nursery Class offers a fun, supportive introduction to the competition environment for dogs aged 12 months and over.

At Hoopers Together, we feel this is a valuable opportunity for partnerships to run smaller, pre-rehearsed sequences in a show ring.

These opportunities can also benefit older dogs who struggle to settle in the show environment.

The Exercises are designed to help dogs and handlers build confidence, develop useful skills and enjoy their show experiences.

Non-competing partnerships (those with dogs who do not also compete at Grade 1 or above) can be tested and earn an award for each successfully completed Exercise. See the rules below.

Please check the schedules of the shows you wish to attend for Nursery class availability and details.

- Open to dogs aged 12 months and over.
- Suitable for partnerships new to the show environment, as well as those seeking confidence-building and warm-up opportunities.
- There are sixteen different Exercise sequences; available to everyone on the Hoopers Together website and Facebook page.
- Up to 10 pieces of equipment in the ring.
- Equipment placed 5m apart.
- Up to four Exercises will be offered at each show running a Nursery class.
- On entering the ring, the handler must inform the judge whether they are running for training/warm-up purposes or wish to be tested for the Exercise.
- Each Exercise must be completed within 90 seconds. The Judge will inform the handler when their time limit has been reached.
- The timer starts when the dog takes its first piece of equipment, regardless of equipment number. This allows part of a sequence to be run before attempting the full Exercise.
- Each Exercise includes a Skill Box or Skill Line. If the handler wishes to complete the Exercise, they must remain within the Skill area while the dog runs from the start piece of equipment to the finish piece of equipment of the sequence.
- Handlers may carry and use a silent toy to reward their dog in the ring. For an Exercise to count as complete, the dog must not receive a toy reward between the start and finish pieces of equipment of the sequence. For Exercises run in both directions, the toy reward may be given between directions.
- Food is not permitted in the ring.

- An Exercise is complete when the dog runs it without fault within the time allowance and the handler remains in the Skill area throughout the run.
- Non-competing dogs (those dogs who do not also compete at Grade 1 or above) will receive an award for each successfully completed Exercise.
- Partnerships may collect awards for all sixteen Exercises across multiple shows.
- Progress is recorded on Hoopers Ringside, ticked off as each exercise is completed.

4. Veterans

- Veterans run Grade 1 courses for clear rounds only.
- A dog may enter veterans from 7 years old.
- Dogs with disabilities are welcome to run in any of our classes, including veteran regardless of their age.
- Veterans is a fixed category, not a progression grade.
- Once entered, a dog stays in veterans and cannot return to standard competition.
- There is no veterans league and progression points do not apply.
- Dogs earn veterans milestone award rosettes. Bronze for 15 clear rounds, Silver for 30 and Gold for 50.

5. Junior Handlers

- Junior handlers follow the same grades, courses, scoring and progression as adults.
- A junior is a handler under 16 on the 1st of January of that year. A handler who turns 16 during the year stays a junior until the year ends.
- There is a single junior age group.
- Juniors compete within their normal grade and are also listed in the Junior League, a single league that combines all height categories.

6. Show Site, Attendance and Conduct

Dogs

- Minimum age to compete: 15 months.
- Minimum age for the non-competitive Nursery class: 12 months.
- Dogs must be clear of contagious or infectious disease for 21 days before the show.
- Bitches in season may compete but must run last in their class.

- A yellow dog is a dog that needs space. Outside the ring, handlers are encouraged, but not required, to use a yellow harness, lead or jacket. Handlers tell the show manager, who mentions yellow dogs in the briefing.
- Competitors are responsible for making sure their dogs are trained to a safe standard and must always be under control, across the whole site.
- Competitors are responsible for being available when their class runs.

Site rules

- Parents or guardians must supervise their children at all times.
- No smoking or vaping at the ringside or in the ring. No eating or drinking in the ring other than medical reason.
- No skateboards, roller skates, bicycles, e-bikes, e-scooters or noisy toys near the rings.
- Site vehicle speed limit: 5 mph. Anyone breaking it may be asked to leave the venue.
- Drones must not be flown while dogs are competing.
- Handlers must remove any food dropped by them or their dog.

Registration and membership

- Dogs and handlers register through the Hoopers Ringside website **hoopersringside.co.uk**
- When registering, members must tick a box confirming they have read and agree to these rules.
- Members who helped test the system at the fun shows receive free membership.
- Membership fees fund the website and server, with a share set aside for equipment.
- Membership is £5 per handler for life and £5 per dog for life.
- Introductory offer: until 31 December 2026, membership is £2.50 per handler and £2.50 per dog.

7. Dog Equipment and Handler Dress

Dog

- Dogs run with no collar, or a close-fitting flat collar only, with nothing dangling.
- Trackers are permitted.
- Harnesses are not permitted in the ring.
- No coats, jumpers or fleeces are permitted to be worn whilst dogs are running in the ring.
- Boots, wraps or similar must be cleared with show organisers before the dog competes. The owner is responsible for the dog's fitness to run.
- Dogs using mobility aids, such as wheels for a permanent disability, may compete in any class.

Handler

- Bum bags, waist bags and treat bags must be removed before the run.
- Clothing with pockets, such as waistcoats and jackets, is permitted, provided everything in the pockets is secure and out of sight while competing.

8. Toys, Leads and Food

Toys, leads and Food

- At Nursery and Grade 1 only, a silent toy may be carried in the hand.
- At Grade 2 and above, a toy may be used to position the dog at the start. After that, it must be put away in a pocket or left outside the ring.
- No interaction with the toy is allowed until the dog has finished the course.
- Toys may be played with on entry to and exit from the ring.
- A toy thrown at the end of the run must not contain food; doing so is an Elimination.
- The judge may ask handlers to show that a toy is empty of food before running.
- Leads should be left outside the ring. If a handler chooses, they may keep the lead around their neck, in a pocket, or in the designated area in the exit chute. It must not be placed anywhere it could lure or guide the dog to the finish.
- A handler may ask their own nominated person to bring the dog to the start line on the lead.
- Toys and other belongings must not be left in the ring or close to the ring where they could distract a running dog. They may be left in the designated area in the exit chute.

Food

- No food is permitted in the ring, except treats in a sealed bag inside a zipped pocket for rewarding the dog after leaving the ring.
- Food tubs or containers may not be shown to the dog or used to set it up.
- Solid chews are not permitted in any run, including NFC.
- Feeding the dog in the ring is an elimination.

9. Conduct and Disciplinary Rules

Handlers are responsible for keeping their dogs under control across the whole show site. Harsh handling is not permitted.

Dog welfare

- Prong collars and electric collars are prohibited within the show grounds and training venues.
- Harsh handling includes lifting a dog by its collar, lead or scruff so that its front paws leave the ground.

- Any dog showing aggression to people or other dogs may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Dogs must be provided adequate protection from the elements and must always have fresh water available.
- Unattended dogs must be always secured in vehicles or in camping areas.
- Dogs in vehicles must have adequate protection from extremes of temperature.

Handler and visitor conduct

- No swearing or abusive language, including at your own dog.
- All attendees stay at least 2 metres back from the ringside while dogs are competing.
- Spectators must not stand in a competing dog's line, for example chatting with their dogs at the finish. Be respectful when passing a ring on the way to vehicles or camping.
- Competitors are responsible for wearing suitable clothing and footwear, and for being satisfied they can run their dog safely on each course.
- Abuse or aggressive behaviour towards judges, helpers, trainers, show organisers, competitors or visitors is not tolerated, at the show or on social media.
- Unsporting behaviour includes shouting or swearing at your dog, double handling (help from outside the ring), ridiculing someone in the ring, giving the dog treats in the ring, and deliberately interfering with another dog's run.

Children and vulnerable adults

- Parents or guardians are responsible for their dependants at all times.
- Any complaint or disciplinary discussion involving a child, young person or vulnerable adult must have a parent or responsible adult present throughout.

Complaints

- If you have a complaint on the day of the show, please speak to the show manager.
- If you feel unable to make a complaint to the show manager, complaints can be made to the following e-mail address **complaints@hooperstogether.co.uk**
- Show managers should attempt to resolve problems on the day. Where a complaint is upheld the resolution of the complaint will be recorded in the show log.
- A problem unable to be resolved on the day can be submitted as a formal complaint to the committee through the following e-mail address **complaints@hooperstogether.co.uk**
- A formal complaint carries a £20 fee paid to the show organiser; this will be refunded if the complaint is upheld.
- Feedback, suggestions and minor issues are always welcome and carry no fee.
- The committee will reply within 14 days, with either a decision or a request for more information.
- Repeated infringements may lead to a formal warning and sanctions.

Sanctions

These may include:

- A formal warning;
- Withdrawal of the dog from its remaining classes that day;
- Refusal of entry.
- A ban from shows for a set period, starting at two weeks or a set number of shows;
- An extended ban in exceptional cases;
- A report to the police.
- Behaviour that may lead to sanctions includes, but is not limited to: a dog biting another dog or a person; harsh handling, including screaming, kicking or hitting; aggression or verbal abuse toward another person; ridiculing others; interfering with another dog's run from inside or outside the ring; repeatedly giving treats in the ring; and using social media to abuse a show, show organisers, helpers, a handler or a dog.

Scope of a ban

- Where the complaint about a dog is upheld, the dog is banned. The handler may still run their other dogs.
- Where the complaint about the handler is upheld, the handler is banned. Someone else may still run their dog.
- A banned dog may not be on the showground at all during the period of the ban, including in a vehicle.
- A show is a private hire, even on public land. The organiser may refuse admission or ask anyone to leave.

Communicating decisions

- The people involved are told the outcome in writing. Outcomes are not published.
- Sanctions are shared with all show organisers before shows.

Appeals

An appeal is accepted only on new information that was not available when the decision was made, for example a new witness.

Return after a ban

Conditions for return are set when the ban is given and depend on the case.

Right to refuse entry

Individual show organisers retain the right to refuse an entry at any time.

10. Not For Competition (NFC)

- Handlers may declare NFC before entering the ring, to run for training rather than competition.
- NFC runs may carry a toy. No food is permitted in the ring, including solid chews.

- NFC runs are limited to 90 seconds in the ring. Handlers must leave the ring once this has elapsed.

11. Refusals and Eliminations

Refusals

A refusal is the dog passing the plane of an obstacle without taking it correctly. The following count as a refusal:

- Passing a barrel or gate on the wrong side (the number indicates which side to take);
- The handler being positioned between the dog and the barrel.
- Missing a hoop or chute or contact mat.
- Not using the entry or exit poles on a mat;
- Leaving a mat via the side, between the poles;
- Not contacting the mat with at least one paw;
- Spinning on a mat.

Effect of a refusal

- A run with one or more refusals is not a clear round and earns no clear-round points.
- Three refusals is an automatic elimination.
- After a refusal, the dog does not go back to retake the obstacle; the run continues to the next obstacle.
- A refusal on the section of the course covered by a skill box results in no award of points for that section.

Start line and resets

- A run will not commence until the judge indicates they are ready. Starting before they are ready results in an elimination.
- A handler has a maximum of two attempts to set the dog up at the start line. A third attempt results in an elimination, the handler may continue as NFC for the remainder of the 90 secs.
- The dog must be set up in front of the first obstacle, on its numbered side, and go directly into it. On its way to the first obstacle, the dog's path must not turn by more than 90°.
- If the dog starts the timer at the first obstacle, is repositioned on the start line then retakes the first obstacle, doing so results in an elimination.
- Judges may treat excessive mid-course resets as unsporting behaviour.

Grounds for elimination

A dog and handler team is eliminated for:

- Taking the wrong course.

- Starting the run before the judge is ready.
- Taking any obstacle out of sequence, including before the run starts, whether deliberate or accidental. Taking an obstacle after the dog has finished the course is not penalised.
- Sending the dog into the first obstacle on a path that turns by more than 90°, for example by sending it round the handler, round the first obstacle, or through or round another obstacle.
- Going back and re-taking an obstacle already completed or refused.
- Dog stopping on the course and not moving forwards for a period of 5 seconds.
- Fouling in the ring.
- Leaving the ring area which includes fully exiting the chute.
- The dog showing aggression toward the handler or the judge.
- Unsporting behaviour by the handler.
- Three refusals.
- Harsh handling, such as hitting, kicking or shouting at the dog, lifting the dog off its front feet by the collar, lead or scruff.
- Exceeding the maximum time of 90 seconds;
- The dog wearing equipment not permitted under the Dog Equipment and Handler Dress rules.
- The handler wearing a bum bag, waist bag or treat bag during the run.
- Food in the ring other than as permitted under the Toys, Leads and Food rules, or feeding the dog in the ring.
- Throwing a toy containing food at the end of the run.
- A reward being thrown for a dog before it completes the course.
- The handler stepping over, jumping or going through any obstacle during the run.
- Lead or toy not stored away as set out in the Toys, Leads and Food rules.

12. Run Scoring

Element	Points
Clear round in 60 seconds or less (course time)	12
Clear round over 60 seconds, up to 90 seconds (maximum time)	6
Over 90 seconds	Elimination
Skill Line (clear round only) or Skill Box	Up to 12
Maximum per run	24

13. Skill Lines

Skill Lines reward distance handling: the further the handler works from the dog, the higher the score.

- A course offers up to the number of lines shown in the table for its grade, at increasing distances from the obstacle sequence, each with a point value.
- Lines are set across the course, with the obstacle sequence beyond them, so the handler works from behind the line while the dog runs the course.
- Lines may be straight across or at an angle, but are always parallel to each other.
- The handler positions themselves freely.
- The score is the value of the furthest line the handler stays behind for the whole run, from the start until the dog completes the final obstacle.
- Stepping ahead of a line (one full foot over it) drops the score to the next line's value.
- Stepping ahead of all lines scores zero for this element, with no other penalty.
- Skill Line points require a clear round.
- Elimination at any point forfeits the Skill Line score.
- Where a course has fewer lines than the maximum, the lowest values are dropped first, so the top line is always worth 12. For example, a Grade 1 course with two lines uses 8 / 12.

Grade	Maximum lines	Line values
Grade 1	3	4 / 8 / 12
Grade 2	2	8 / 12
Grade 3	2	8 / 12
Grade 4	1	12

14. Skill Boxes

Skill Boxes reward handling from a defined area. Every box is rectangular or square and within the area limit for its grade. At Grades 1, 2 and 3 a rectangle is allowed.

Grade	Boxes	Max size	Obstacles handled from box	Points
Grade 1	Up to 2	6m × 6m	Max 9 per box	Up to 12 in total
Grade 2	Up to 2	5m × 5m	Max 12 per box	Up to 12 in total
Grade 3	1	4m × 4m	No maximum	3 sections × 4 points (max 12)
Grade 4	2	4m × 4m	Whole course	Easier box 8, harder box 12

Grades 1 and 2

- The obstacles handled from each box may be one sequence or split into groups.
- Box value reflects difficulty.
- Where a course has two boxes, the 12 points are shared between them. A handler cannot earn more than 12 Skill Box points in a run.

Grade 3

- The course is divided into 3 sections, each worth 4 points (maximum 12).
- Points are awarded for each section handled entirely from the box with no refusals in that section.
- If the handler steps out during any section, they don't earn that section's points but can still earn points in the other sections.

Grade 4

- The judge decides at course design which box is worth 8 points and which is worth 12.
- Each box is marked with a board showing its points during course walking. The boards are removed when course walking ends.
- The handler nominates their box by standing in it when they start their dog.
- To earn the box points, the whole course must be handled from the nominated box.
- The handler may step out at any point. If they then complete the course without faults, they receive a clear round only, with no box points.

All grades

- Stepping out means one full foot outside the box.
- **Faults inside a box:** a refusal or other fault on the part of the course a box covers means no points for that box (or that section at Grade 3).
- **Faults outside a box:** a refusal on part of the course not covered by a box does not affect Skill Box points.
- **Elimination:** Skill Box points earned before the point of elimination are kept. No points can be earned after it, including in the box or section where the elimination occurs.
- For every Skill Box, the judge records the obstacle range it covers and makes this available during the course walk.

15. Timing

- Electronic timing equipment must be fit for purpose.
- It must handle start, finish and multiple passes, including second passes through the start or finish.
- It must record to 3 decimal places.
- If the timer fails, a stopwatch or phone may be used. Where only 2 decimal places are shown, a 0 is added as the third.

If a run cannot be timed because the dog did not trigger the timer, they will be given the course time of 60 seconds. This can occur by missing the first or last obstacle. Also, any obstacle that requires multiple repeated passes through the timer.

16. Reruns

- Where a rerun is for time only (for example, because the timing failed), any fault from the original run, such as a refusal, still counts in the final result, even if the rerun is a clear round.
- Reruns are at the judge's discretion. A judge may offer one when there is outside interference, such as a dog or toy close to the ring distracting the running dog.
- A rerun for outside interference is a clean slate: the original run, including any faults, is disregarded.

17. Safety and Course Adjustments

- Judges may modify a course on the day for weather or safety, for example removing chutes in high wind. The class still runs and points are awarded as normal. This might include reducing the number of obstacles or challenges on the course.
- Competitors are responsible for wearing suitable clothing and footwear, and for being satisfied they can run their dog safely on each course.
- By choosing to run, the handler accepts responsibility for their dog's safety and their own safety.

18. Placings, Awards and Class Names

- Placings are decided on points, then time.
- The number of placings is at the show manager's discretion and must be stated in the schedule. There is no set minimum.
- Awards must be collected on the day, exceptions are at the discretion of the show organiser.
- There are a maximum of 4 standard class runs per dog per day.
- Classes are run by grade.

Class	Name
All-hoop course	Hoopers
Course including barrels	Barrels course
Course including mats	Contacts course
Course including chutes	Tunnels course

Any course that includes a mat is a Contacts course.

A course with barrels and chutes is defined by whichever obstacle the dog takes more repetitions of.

19. Progression

To move up a grade, a dog and handler must reach all three point totals below in their current grade. Reaching the points threshold alone is not enough: a dog that reaches it without enough clear-round points or bonus points stays in its grade until it has both. All points are counted across runs in the current grade and reset to zero on moving up.

Move up	Points threshold	Bonus points needed	Clear-round points needed
Grade 1 → 2	1,000	400	500
Grade 2 → 3	1,300	560	650
Grade 3 → 4	1,650	760	830

> For example, a Grade 1 dog with 1,000 points but only 450 clear-round points stays in Grade 1 until it has 500 clear-round points.

- **Points threshold:** total points earned in the grade.
- **Bonus points:** the minimum number of Skill Line and Skill Box points earned in the grade.
- **Clear-round points:** the minimum number of clear-round points.

20. Special and Non-Progression Classes

- Show organisers may run special classes outside the standard grades, such as novelty or fun classes.
- These do not count toward progression.
- They may run alongside standard classes.
- They are exempt from the course design rules but must meet the equipment and safety rules.

21. Course Design by Grade

Grades are defined by the skill challenges a course includes. Skill challenges carry upwards: every challenge permitted at a grade is also permitted at every grade above it. Each course uses either Skill Lines or Skill Boxes, never both.

Judges' quick reference

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Obstacles	15–20	15–24	15–24	15–24
Distance between obstacles	6–7m	6–8m	7–9m	7–9m
Skill challenges	Max 2	Min 3	Min 4	Min 5
New skill challenges	Change of side, straight junction, Inside Barrel (not on a straight), obstacle discrimination, options.	Angled junctions (crossovers), Inside Barrel on a straight, Everything from Grade 1	Everything from the lower grades.	Inside Gate. Everything from the lower grades.
Skill boxes	Up to 2	Up to 2	1	2, but handlers choose which
Box size (max)	36m² (for example, 6×6m)	25m² (for example, 5×5m)	16m² (for example, 4×4m)	16m² each (for example, 4×4m)
Obstacles handled from box	Max 9 per box	Max 12 per box	No max	Whole course
Box points	Up to 12 in total	Up to 12 in total	3 sections × 4 pts	Easier box 8, harder box 12
Max distance between options	3m	3m	3m	3m

Definitions

- **Junction:** a point where the dog's path intersects itself (a crossover).
- **Inside Barrel:** the dog passes between the handler and the barrel.
- **Inside Gate:** the dog passes between the handler and the gate.
- **Change of Side:** the handler changes which side of the dog they work from, altering the dog's direction of travel.
- **Option:** relies on purely directional cueing, not a per-obstacle cue.
- **Obstacle discrimination:** different obstacle types together in the dog's path (for example hoop and barrel); the dog takes the correct one from its obstacle cue.

General course rules

- Gates may be used on any course and at any grade, except courses made up entirely of hoops.
- At Grades 1 to 3, gates are used only as normal run-pasts. At Grade 4, a gate may be set as an Inside Gate.
- Avoid designs where a tight turn or strong line points dogs at the ring entrance or exit.
- Where a course involves a tight turn there must be a minimum spacing of 3m from the ring boundary.
- Leave the dog space to run into the first obstacle and out of the last. Do not set them close to the ring fence. (Min obstacle spacing for the grade)

22. Distances

Grade	Distance between obstacles
Nursery	5m
Grade 1	6–7m
Grade 2	6–8m
Grade 3	7–9m
Grade 4	7–9m

- Distances are within the range stated above for each grade, rather than an exact figure for each obstacle.
- Distances may be reduced where indoor or space constraints require it, particularly on straight lines.

23. Equipment

General

- The show schedule states whether based or baseless equipment, and chutes, are in use.
- All equipment must be checked before use to make sure it is safe and in good repair.
- Loose fixings, such as strings or pegs left after equipment is moved, must be cleared so they are not a trip hazard.
- Course and line markers must not be placed in the dog's path.

Dimensions

Obstacle	Size	Other requirements
Hoop	Height 90 cm; base width 85–90 cm	Plastic with rounded edges. Based or baseless, but never mixed in the same ring. Baseless hoops must hold their form without pinning.
Chute	Length 1 m; height 80–90 cm; width 80–90 cm	Metal frames must be well padded.
Gate	Width 120–130 cm; height 80–90 cm; feet 35–40 cm	Ends covered in material so the upright is hidden. Mesh or netting centre panel. Colour must not clash with the ring fencing.
Barrel	Height at least 70 cm; diameter 55–70 cm	Fabric, fibre or plastic; no metal. Must hold its form if a dog collides with or lands on it. Must have a rigid frame, a lid and be stable in wind, and may be weighted or pinned. Pop-up barrels are not permitted but can be used for training.
Mat	Length 90 cm; width 180 cm	Two poles mark the entrance and two the exit. The mat must lie flat, with no curled ends. Poles must be a minimum of 1m in height.

Obstacle numbering

- Every obstacle carries a number for each time it is taken in the course. Each number faces the side of the obstacle that the dog is to take.
- On a gate, the number goes in the centre, facing outwards towards the side the gate is taken on.
- On a barrel, the number faces outwards on the side that the barrel is taken on.
- If a number cannot be placed on top of an obstacle or cannot be placed due to weather conditions, place it on the ground where it is not a trip hazard.

Ring entrances and exits

- Every ring must have a safe entrance and exit. Enclosed chutes are not mandatory.
- Where a venue has a single shared entrance and exit, handlers must be given space to enter and leave without meeting the next dog.
- A handler may ask for the entrance or exit to be closed during their run.

24. Judges

- We warmly welcome experienced, qualified judges from CHUK and other Hoopers organisations. We recognise and value the qualifications and experience you already have, and our intention is to make joining our judging team as straightforward as possible.
- We'll offer a dedicated familiarisation session covering our competition rules, course requirements and judging procedures, together with ongoing support. Please **contact us** for further information.

- Our aim is to help existing judges feel confident and fully prepared to judge under our new structure.
- Every judge named on a show licence must be on the approved judges list.
- Experienced judges are not required to submit course plans. New judges send their course plans to an experienced judge for review before the show.
- New judges receive mentoring tailored to them; there is no formal apprentice scheme.
- Judges check their entries list so dogs do not run in the wrong grade.
- All rules are in this document.
- Practical judging and course design are taught on the judges' course and CPD days.
- Judges qualified with another organisation, or training with one, may judge for Hoopers Together after attending a CPD day covering what is different in these rules.
- After a run, a judge may speak privately to a handler about unacceptable dog control or handler behaviour.

25. Instructors

- We warmly welcome qualified CHUK Hoopers instructors who would like to become part of Hoopers Together. We value the qualifications and experience you've already gained and aim to offer a straightforward recognition process for existing trainers.
- We'll provide guidance on our training structure, awards scheme and any organisation-specific requirements, along with opportunities for continuing professional development.
- We look forward to supporting both established and newly qualified instructors as our community grows. More details to follow.
- Children training in a class have a parent or responsible adult with them at all times.

26. Show Licensing

Shows may only be held by licensed show holders. An organiser must hold a valid Hoopers Together licence before running a show under these rules.

Licence application

An application must include:

- A risk assessment. Hoopers Together provides an example template.
- Named first aiders for the show.
- A site plan including speed limits, entrances and exits.

- Confirmation that equipment is in good order and will be stored away from the rings in a designated taped off area.
- Proof of public liability and employer's liability insurance. Volunteers can count as employees for this purpose.
- Where the show offers camping, separate camping insurance may be required.
- Named judges, all of whom must be on the Hoopers Together approved judges list.
- Details of the nearest local hospital with an A and E department to be included in the schedule
- Details of an agreed on-call veterinary service to be included in the schedule.
- The license details, insurance policy details, emergency contact details, vet details and hospital details should be displayed on a board at the show managers area.
- Every show keeps a show log recording any incidents or issues on the day.

Hoopers Together publishes guidance on the insurance show holders may require. The insurance policy and cover is the responsibility of the show organiser.

Approved judges list

Hoopers Ringside holds the approved judges list, with each judge's qualification date and CPD status.

Licence fee

The licence fee is £10 per show, paid by the organiser.

Show organiser system

Show holders register as organisers on the Hoopers Ringside website. They manage their own schedule, rings, running orders, judges and levels there. If you are interested in becoming a show organiser, please use the contact form on the Hoopers Together website.

Disclaimer

Competitors, handlers and visitors take part in and attend shows at their own risk. Hoopers Together, show organisers, judges and helpers accept no liability for loss of or damage to property, or for injury or illness to any person or dog, except where caused by their negligence or where liability cannot be excluded by law.

Handlers are responsible for their dogs at all times, for their dog's fitness to run, and for deciding whether the course and ground are suitable. By entering the ring, the handler accepts the course and conditions as they are.

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