

Course Design - Part 5

Level 4 The design criteria change dramatically at this level. We no longer need to worry about thirds, as in fractions, but now we have a less stringent minimum to maximum range of exercises we can use from L3 & L4; namely 1-4 from L3 & 1-4 from L4. Thus, we can have a L4 course with just 1 L3 & 1 L4 exercise or at the other end of the scale 4 exercises from both levels. It is a matter of choice, namely the Judges choice.

We must take into consideration that, the 15-17 exercises permitted at this level can only have a maximum of 12 static positions, so often exercise 50 and exercise 51 (Moving send around) are used in L4 courses. At L4 the judge has the option to use jump exercises, if we feel so inclined: the ring working surface is suitable and the ring is sufficiently large enough. A jump needs 8 metres, so a standard 12M X 12M can prove to be a little tight as it only allows a turn into the jump and another exercise to turn away from the jump, along another side of the ring. Ideally, a larger than 12M x 12M is preferable if room allows. 15M x 15M is my preference.

As previously stated, judges may have a maximum number of statics, but not a minimum. This is the case for all the levels in Rally, but I have never seen a course with no statics. On average, I would estimate that in general, courses use the maximum number of statics, give, or take one or two. The lack of moving exercises without any static positions makes it a challenging exercise to design courses with only a few static positions. However, it can be done and to illustrate this, I have designed a L4 course with no statics and minimum exercises from L3 & L4. I have not had to resort to using change of pace, which I personally consider to be a soft option at this level and above.

So let us go back to the static position free course. Would I use it? – yes as a course to practice duration of heel work position. Having recently judged a L1, it was quite clear that many handler and dog partnerships don't practice this, so that when they reach a static exercise, the dog has not been cued in time to prepare for the Sit; that is if the dog was paying attention to the handler in the first place. Sadly, not in most cases and the handler is losing points left, right and centre, by trying to get the dogs attention after it has gone past the stopped handler. Extra cues, extended signals, tight leads, handlers moving off the spot, need I say more. At L4 this would be most undesirable.

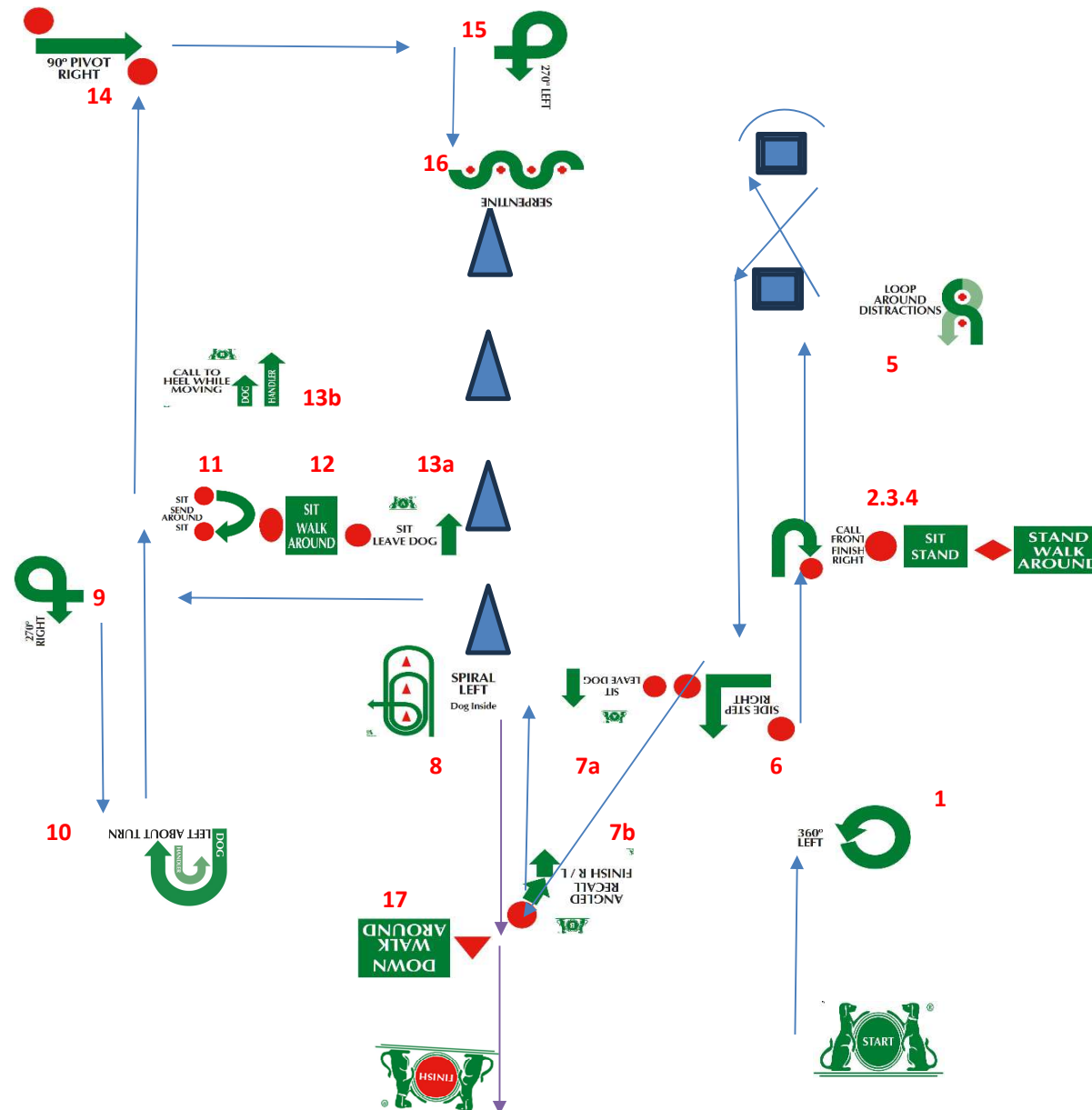
Some dogs need a few static positions to keep focusing on their handler; others need a static exercise for a reassuring stroke. In the past, I have popped static exercises in my courses, but with no hard and fast rule as to where they are placed on the course. Just every 3rd or 4th exercise, sometimes not that, with batches of linked signs along a flowing course. However, one of my current dogs, a sensitive collie, has shown me the need to have a static exercise not static position, early in the course and at least in another couple of places along the course. Likewise, my small mixed breed rescue needs that little reassurance in the ring that she has got the position correct. So as a Judge, I am very much guided in my course design by what I want to see and what I observe and learn on my judging journey.

Sticking with minimal L3 & L4 exercises, but popping in a few static exercises, at exercise 2,5, 8, & 12, and moving exercises around a little, I have created handler options, as well as being able to look at the execution of some statics, and the movement of dog and handler together from static positions.

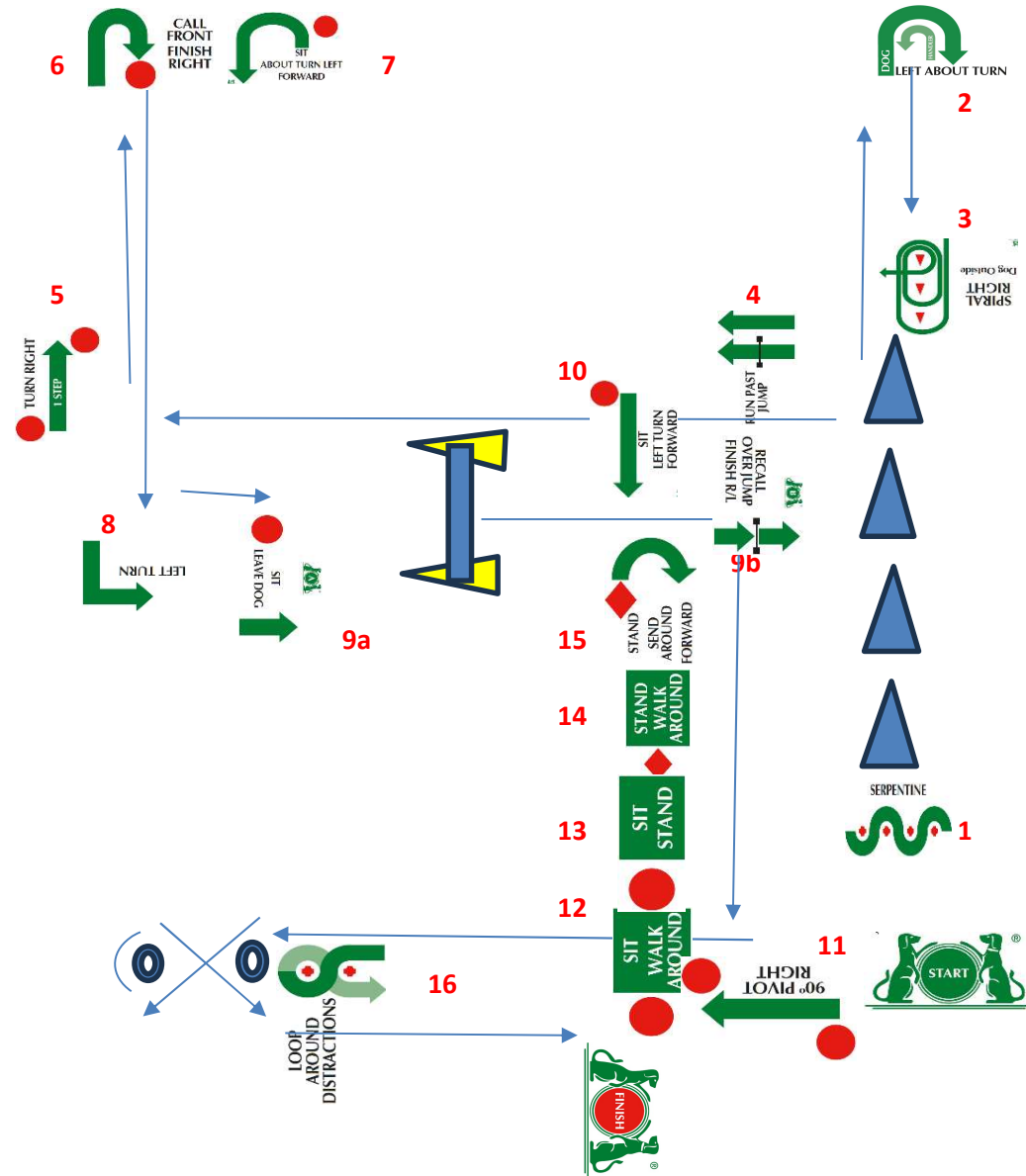
Likewise, the centrefold of the magazine has two further L4 courses: one with two jumps and one without a jump. In these courses, there

are linked exercises, from 2 to 5 exercises being linked. Yes, we now have no limitation on the number of exercises we can link. Exercises on the courses are not numbered but should be easy enough to follow.

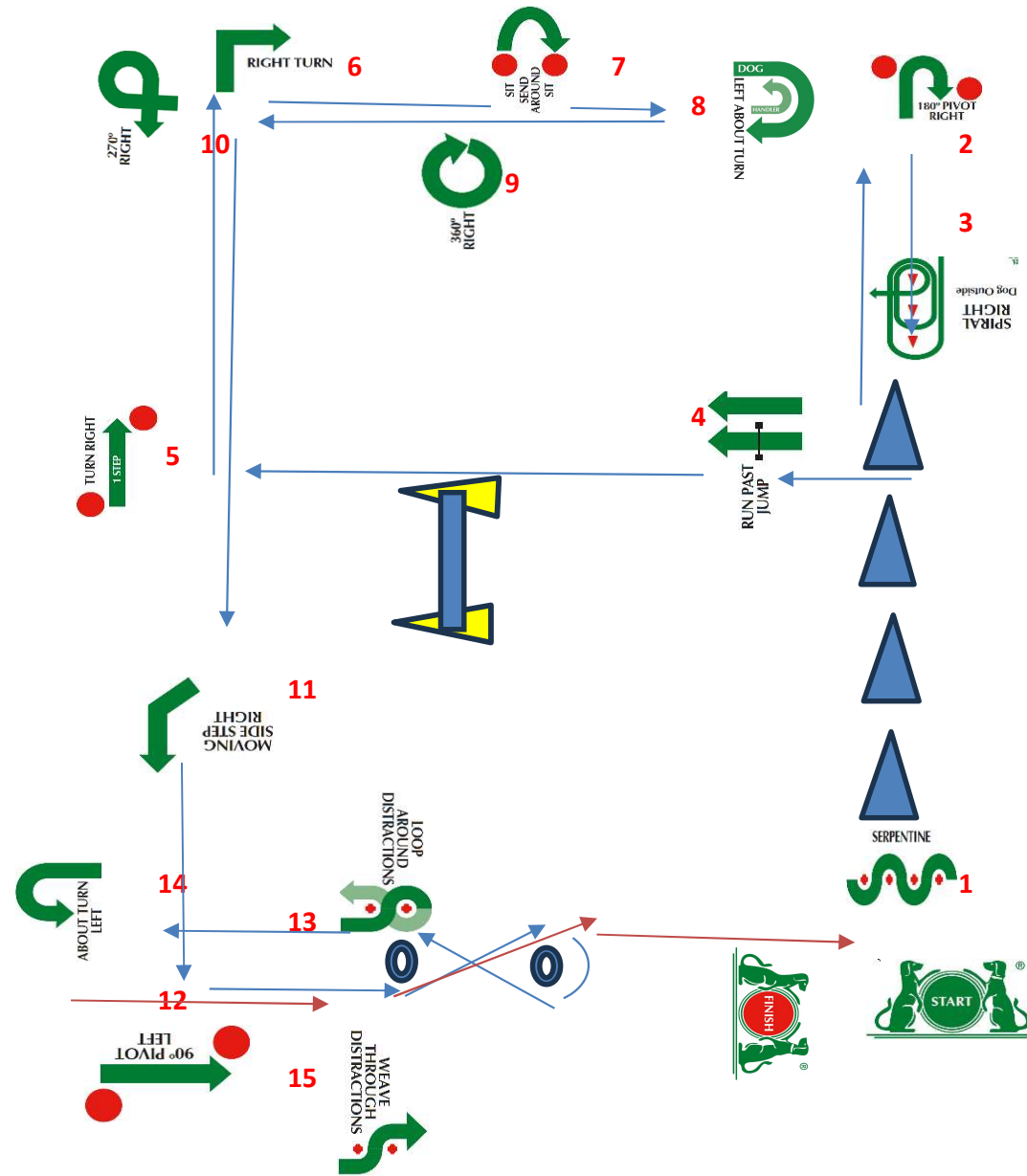
Enjoy.



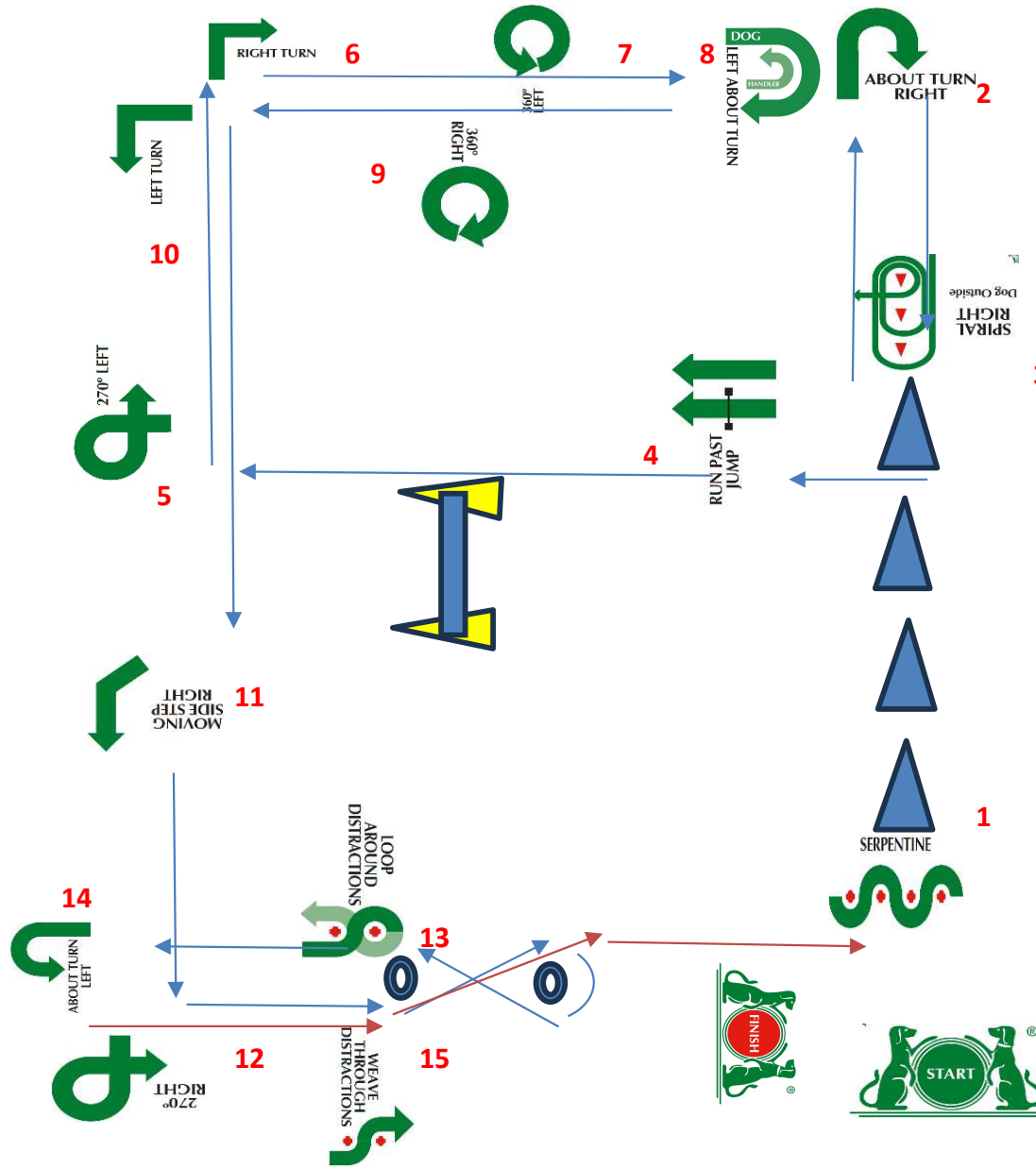
Start	Ex no.	Exercise	Linked
Start			
1	26	360 left	no
2	13	Call front finish right	yes
3	2	Sit - stand	yes
4	52	Stand - walk around	yes
5	45	Loop around distractions	no
6	49	Sit- Side Step Right - sit	no
7	46	Sit - Leave Dog - Angle Recall - Finish right/left	no
8	34	Spiral left - dog inside	no
9	9	270 Right	no
10	40	Left about turn - dog outside	no
11	31	Sit - send around - sit	yes
12	23	Sit - walk around	yes
13	44	Sit - leave dog - call to heel while moving	yes
14	27	Sit - 90 Pivot right - sit	no
15	25	270 Left	no
16	22	Serpentine	no
17	53	Down - walk around	no
Finish			
End	n/a		



Station	Ex no.	Exercise	Linked
Start			
1	22	Serpentine	no
2	40	Left about turn - dog outside	no
3	33	Spiral right - dog outside	no
4	55	Run past jump	no
5	29	Sit - turn tight - 1 step -sit	no
6	13	Call front - finish right - sit	no
7	39	Sit - about turn left - forward	no
8	6	Left turn	no
9	56	Sit - leave dog - recall over jump - finish right/left	no
10	20	Sit - left turn - forward	no
11	27	Sit - 90 Pivot right - sit	no
12	23	Sit - walk around	yes
13	2	Sit - Stand	yes
14	52	Stand - Walk around	yes
15	50	Stand - send around - forward	yes
16	45	Loop around distratcions	no
Finish			
Bonus	n/a		



Station	Ex no.	Exercise	Linked
Start			
1	22	Serpentine	no
2	47	Sit-180 Pivot right - sit	no
3	33	Spiral right - dog outside	no
4	55	Run past jump	no
5	29	Sit-Turn Right 1 step - sit	no
6	5	Right turn	no
7	31	Sit - send around - sit	no
8	40	Left about turn - dog outside	no
9	10	360 right	no
10	9	270 right	no
11	18	Moving side step right	no
12	28	Sit - 90 pivot left - sit	no
13	45	Loop around distractions	no
14	8	About turn left	no
15	35	Weave through distractions	no
Finish			
Bonus	n/a		



Station	Ex no.	Exercise	Linked
Start			
1	22	Serpentine	no
2	7	About turn tight	no
3	33	Spiral right - dog outside	no
4	55	Run past jump	no
5	25	270 Left	no
6	5	Right turn	no
7	26	360 left	no
8	40	Left about turn - dog outside	no
9	10	360 right	no
10	6	Left turn	no
11	18	Moving side step right	no
12	9	270 right	no
13	45	Loop around distractions	no
14	8	About turn left	no
15	35	Weave through distractions	no
Finish			
Bonus	n/a		