

CPE *Wildcard*

Liven up your weekend. CPE agility games are short and fast paced. They demand special skills like working distance and obstacle discrimination. There are six games >

- **Fun Games** – Fullhouse and Jumpers
- **Strategy Games** – Snooker and Jackpot
- **Handling Games** – Colors and Wildcard

Wildcard tests your handling skills. The name, wildcard, means you have a choice. There are 3 choices or wildcards embedded in a Standard style course. As you perform a Wildcard course, with 10 – 12 obstacles, you will encounter 3 wildcards along the way. The choice you have at each wildcard is to do the A obstacle or the B obstacle (see figure 1).

- Wildcards are two agility obstacles placed close (5') and approximately parallel to one another
- It could be a Jump-Tunnel, Tunnel-Aframe, or other obstacles in combinations
- The handler must direct their dog to do A and not B or vice versa.

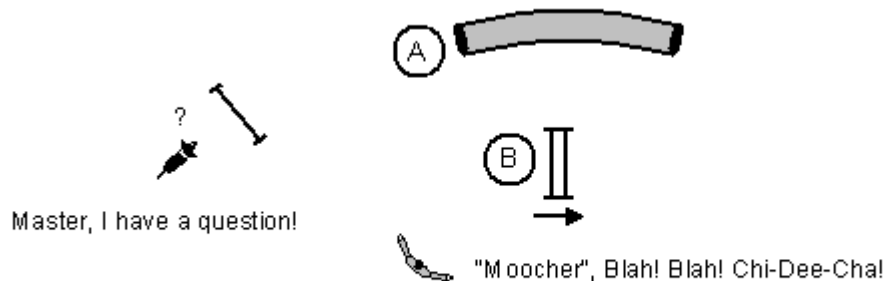


Figure 1 - Tunnel / Jump Wildcard

Points. In figure 1 the handler is trying to get little "Moocher" to do B and not A. Doing the B jump is more difficult than doing the A tunnel because you have to change the dog's path. B obstacles equal 2 points and A obstacles equal 1 point. The judge will shout "1" or "2" when you successfully complete a wildcard.

It's easy! But, there is a twist. There are 3 *wildcards* on the course. Depending on your CPE Level, you are required to do either two A and one B or two B and one A. You do not qualify by doing all A or all B. Here's how it pans out >

- In CPE Levels 1 and 2 you have to do two A and one B
- In CPE Levels 3, 4, 5, and C you have to do two B and one A

Big Questions

What do I do if my dog mistakenly does an A instead of a B?

What do I do if my dog mistakenly does a B instead of an A?

Enter the world of MacGyver. Remember that TV show? MacGyver could survive with materials on hand like making a welder out of a car battery and penny. In Wildcard you have to think on your feet. Yet, even the best improvisers will plan ahead. When things go awry, you need a contingency plan. What is the Scout motto? – Be Prepared! *BTW - my son, Sam, just earned his Eagle Scout Award.*

A Real Wildcard Course. Review the following Course Options for your Level. On the course below (figure 2), chart your options - Draw your dog's path in pencil. I've highlighted the **A** and **B** obstacles for visual clarity.

Course Options for Levels 1 and 2 require two **A** and one **B** wildcards

- Course Option 1 (AAB) – 1, 2**A**, 3, 4**A**, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**B**, 11
- Course Option 2 (ABA) – 1, 2**A**, 3, 4**B**, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**A**, 11
- Course Option 3 (BAA) - 1, 2**B**, 3, 4**A**, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**A**, 11

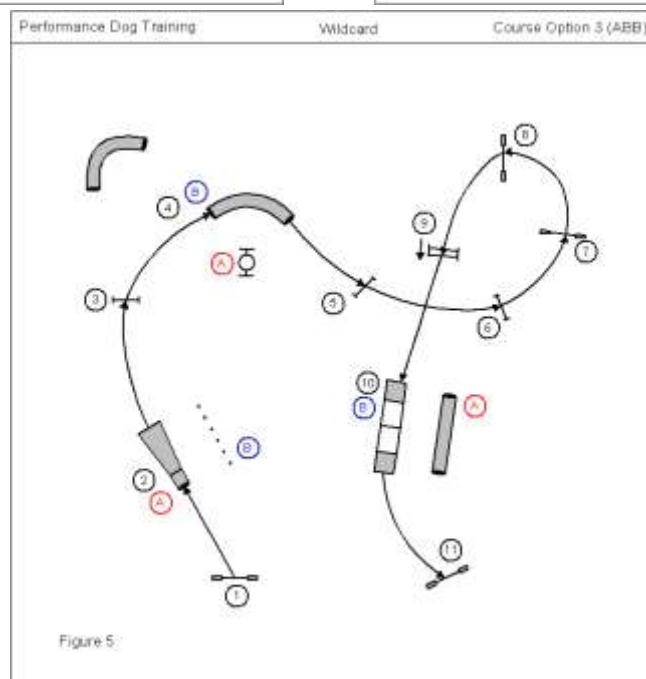
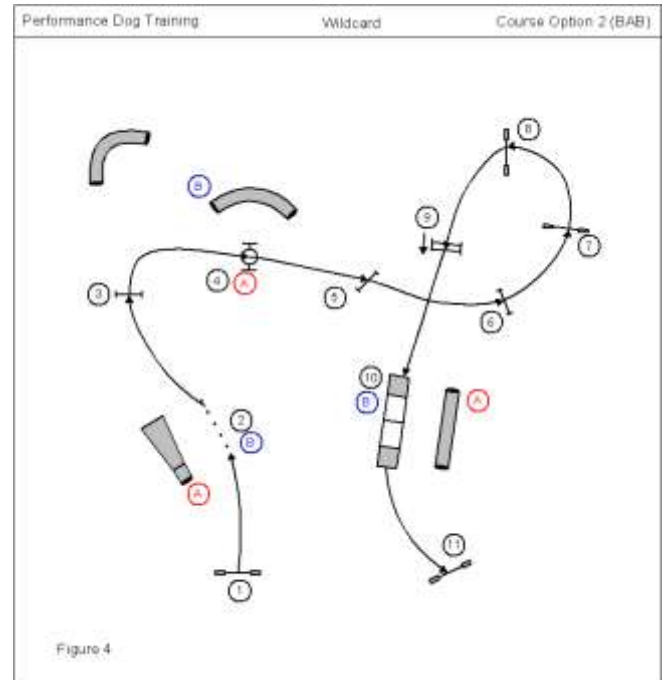
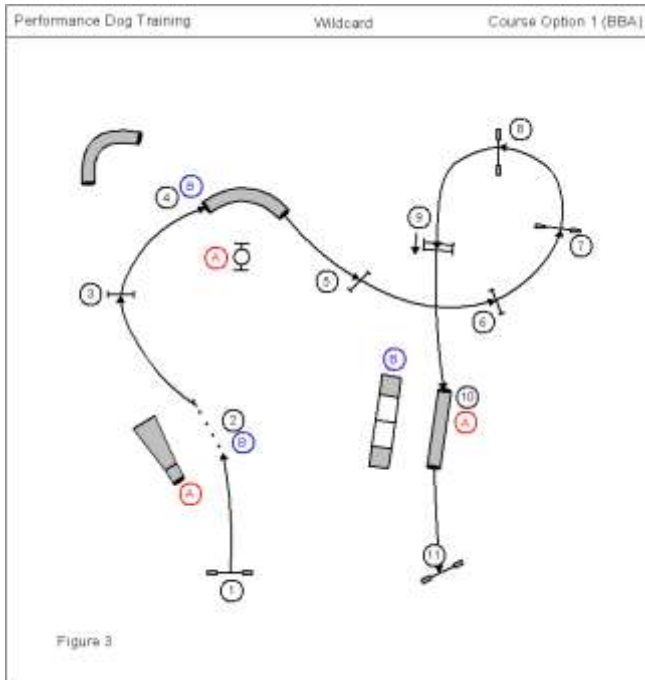
Course Options for Levels 3, 4, 5, and C require two **B** and one **A** wildcards

- Course Option 1 (BBA) – 1, 2**B**, 3, 4**B**, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**A**, 11
- Course Option 2 (BAB) - 1, 2**B**, 3, 4**A**, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**B**, 11
- Course Option 3 (ABB) - 1, 2**A**, 3, 4**B**, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10**B**, 11



Expert Advice. Be prepared for what might unexpectedly happen on a Wildcard course. Study the available options and plan accordingly. Here is how I would chart my Wildcard Level 3 >

- Determine my most difficult wildcard – 10A and 10B
- If my dog naturally prefers 10A then I should plan on doing 2B and 4B in the beginning
- I will do Course Option 1 – 2B, 4B, and 10A (figure 3)
- If my dog mistakenly does 2A then I will do Option 3 – 2A, 4B, and 10B (figure 5)
- If my dog does 2B like planned, but mistakenly does 4A then I will do Option 2 (figure 4)



Special Ops. Beyond the basics, Wildcard requires *special forces* handling skills. This is what you need >

- **Reverse Flow Pivot** (Figure 6) – Your shoulders / arms turn into the dog and then back toward the intended path. Used when you need your dog to pull in toward you. This will turn your dog from an outside path and redirect them to the inside path.
- **Out** (Figure 7) – Your arm pushes out, perpendicular to the dog’s path. Used when you need your dog to push out and take the outside obstacle.
- **Layering** (Figure 8) – With handler and dog on a parallel path, the dog ignores the obstacle(s) that the handler runs by, even though this obstacle(s) is between the handler and the dog. The dog learns to ignore this otherwise obvious obstacle and takes another on the path.

Notice the dog's intended path outward, toward the A-frame, and then the change in direction inward, toward the handler, ending on the new path into the tunnel.

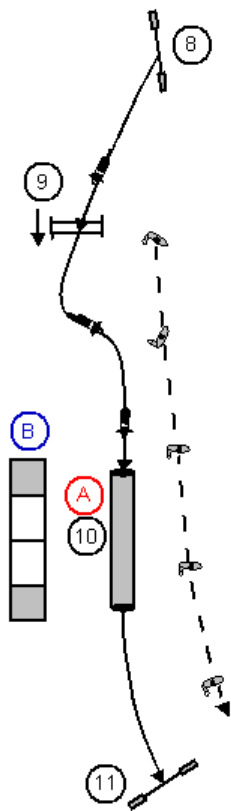


Figure 6. Reverse Flow Pivot (RFP)

Notice the dog's turn outward, toward the A-frame, away from the handler and the tunnel.

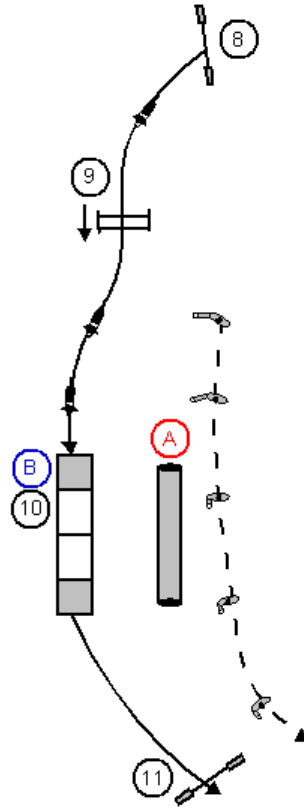


Figure 7. Out

After 8 the dog ignores 7, 6 and 10A as handler runs a parallel path

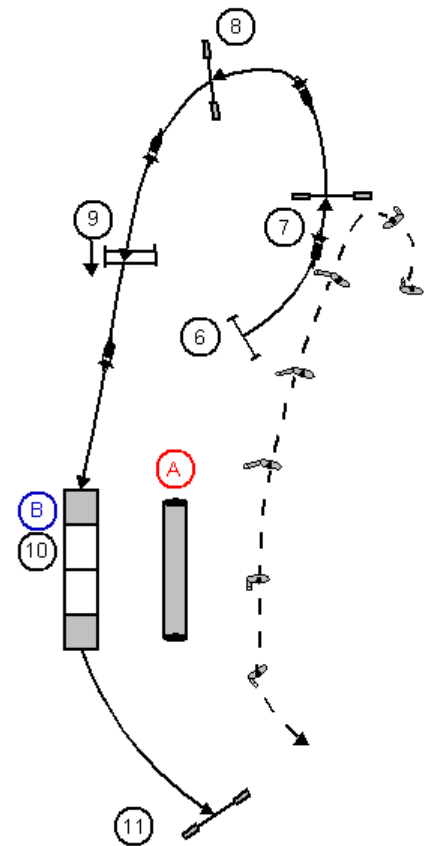


Figure 8. Layering

Dan Roy SF SPCA CTC / CPDT-KA / CGC Evaluator - Graduated with honors from the elite San Francisco SPCA Academy for Dog Trainers, earning his Certificate in Training and Counseling under the tutelage of world renowned trainers, Jean Donaldson, Janis Bradley, and John Buginas. Dan teaches and competes in agility. He owns 3 Australian Shepherds, Nala (13), Rifle (7) and Bug (3).