

Slovak club hoopers



EXAMINATION RULES

Prepared by: Club Committee, Approved by: General Meeting

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

Size Classes

L (Large) Category for dogs with a wither height from 40.01 cm

S (Small) Category for dogs with a wither height up to and including 40 cm

Performance and Special Categories

FUN Motivational category for beginner teams

H0 Preparatory category for teams before entering the H1 competitive category

H1, H2, H3 Competitive categories

HH (Hoopers Handicap) Special category for dogs with health impairments

HV (Hoopers Veteran) Special and voluntary category for dogs older than 8 years

Evaluation and Time Limits

MCT (Maximum Course Time) Maximum time limit for completing the course

TB Penalty points awarded for faults on the course

V Excellent rating with a maximum of 5 penalty points

V0 Excellent 0 rating (clean run without penalty points)

VD Very Good rating with 10–15 penalty points

D Good rating with 20–25 penalty points

DIS Disqualification from the run or event, or for penalties exceeding 25 penalty points

BO (No Rating) Evaluation for FUN, H0, HH, and HV categories when penalties exceed 25 penalty points

Other Abbreviations

GA (Guiding Area) Guiding area from which the handler remotely navigates the dog on the course

PP Pedigree certificate of the dog

SHC Slovak Hoopers Club

SR Slovak Republic

ERB Electronic Record Book of the dog

1. PREAMBLE

Hoopers is a cynological sport open to all healthy and physically fit dogs. It is based on **teamwork between the handler and the dog**, with the primary goal of building and strengthening a positive and safe relationship between them. It is founded on the core principles of fair play, safety, and ethics. The purpose of hoopers is to develop the dog's intelligence and achieve deep mutual understanding between the handler and the dog.

These rules have been created to ensure transparent and equal conditions for all participants. In all activities organized under the auspices of the **Slovak Club Hoopers** (hereinafter referred to as "the Club"), the health, natural abilities, and welfare of dogs are respected and always take priority.

The rules take into account and harmonize international FCI hoopers standards while preserving the Club's own specific categories such as FUN, H0, HH, and HV. **The Club** supports and values active members who contribute to the development of this sport in Slovakia and help build a united community based on mutual respect.

1.1. General Provisions

- **Scope of Validity:** These Trial Regulations are the official national regulations of the **Slovak Club Hoopers**. They apply to all events and trials organized under its auspices. The provisions of these regulations are binding for organizers, judges, competitors, and all event participants.
- **Purpose of the Rules:** The purpose of these rules is to establish clear conditions for organizing competitions and judging performances. The essence of the sport of hoopers is:
 - **Dog Independence:** The goal is for the dog to independently complete the obstacle course in the prescribed order.
 - **Remote Handling:** The handler guides the dog remotely from the Guiding Area (GA) using voice and visual cues, without physically accompanying the dog along the course.
 - **Absence of Jumps:** Hoopers is a sport designed to be gentle on the dog's musculoskeletal system, where the dog completes the course in flowing lines without jumping elements.

- o **Obstacle Performance:** Depending on their type, obstacles are completed either by passing through them (hoop, tunnel) or by circling around them (barrel, gate).
- o **Control and Willingness:** The dog must remain under the handler's control throughout the entire performance, demonstrate willingness to cooperate, and show joy of movement.
- o **Ethical Conduct:** The handler is obliged to maintain sportsmanlike behavior toward their dog, judges, and other participants. Any form of harsh treatment toward one's own or another person's dog is unacceptable.
- o **Animal Welfare and Safety:** The Club places the highest emphasis on preventing any suffering, stress, or injury to the dog. The course must be designed to be smooth and safe for the respective size and performance category.

2. CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN CLUB EVENTS

2.1. General Requirements for the Team

- **Handler:** No age limit is established for handlers participating in events. The handler is required to behave in a sportsmanlike manner and in accordance with cynological ethics.
- **Dog Origin:** Dogs of all breeds may participate in events, both with a pedigree certificate (PP) and without a pedigree (mixed breeds).
- **Identification:** Each dog must be permanently identified by a microchip or tattoo (applies to foreign teams). Upon request, the handler must allow verification of the dog's identity.
- **Team Registration:** A team (handler and dog) may participate in competitions only under one name and with one club registration number.
- **Health Condition and Welfare:** Only healthy and physically fit dogs may participate in events. Dogs showing signs of illness, injury, or excessive stress shall be excluded from participation.
- **Hoopers Handicap (HH):** Participation of visibly handicapped dogs is permitted exclusively in this category (dogs using wheelchairs, post-amputation dogs, partially or fully deaf dogs, partially or fully blind dogs, or dogs with chronic conditions requiring special care). The handler must submit a veterinary report confirming that the dog's health condition allows this type of activity without risk.

2.2. Dog Age Limits

The minimum age of the dog is determined as of the date of the competition:

- **FUN and H0 Categories:** minimum 15 months of age.
- **H1, H2, H3, and HH Categories:** minimum 18 months of age.
- **HV (Veteran) Category:** voluntary transfer from 8 years of age.
- **Maximum Age:** There is no maximum age limit for dogs; the priority is the dog's current condition and health status.

2.3. Handler Ethics and Conduct at the Event

- **Handler Responsibility**

- The handler is responsible for the behavior of their dog and is obliged to comply with all provisions of these Trial Regulations.
- Throughout the entire event, from entering the venue until leaving it, the handler bears full legal responsibility for their dog, including responsibility for any injuries or damage caused by the dog.
- The handler is required to keep the dog under constant direct supervision for the entire duration of the event. Except during preparation for the start and the actual run on the course, the dog must be secured in a manner that does not disturb the event or endanger other participants. The specific method of securing the dog within the venue shall comply with the organizer's instructions and the operating rules of the event location.

- **Harsh Treatment of the Dog**

- Harsh treatment of a dog is not tolerated. Harsh treatment is considered any inappropriate physical or verbal behavior that causes the dog pain, stress, or fear (for example hitting, kicking, excessive leash jerking, loud yelling intended to intimidate the dog, or excessive use of physical pressure).

- **Immediate Consequences:**

The judge has the right to **immediately disqualify** the team from the entire competition.

- **Sporting Sanctions:**

The judge is obliged to report the incident to **the Club** Committee, which shall investigate the case. Depending on the severity of the conduct, the Committee may impose sanctions on the handler in accordance with the valid disciplinary regulations of the Club.

- **Legal Consequences:**

The handler bears full legal responsibility for their actions and for criminal acts of animal cruelty in accordance with the applicable laws of the Slovak Republic.

The Club supports and promotes exclusively positive training methods based on motivation, trust, and mutual respect between the handler and the dog. Competitors should serve as role models for others and represent the sport with joy and an ethical approach.

2.4. Bitches in Heat, Pregnancy, and Docked Dogs

- **Docked Dogs** Participation of dogs with docked ears or tails is governed by the valid legislation of the Slovak Republic. **The Club** permits participation of rescue dogs (shelters, rescue stations) or in cases where docking was performed for medical reasons (supported by documentation).
- **Bitches in Heat, Pregnant, and Lactating Bitches**
 - **Bitches in Heat:** Participation is permitted. The handler is obliged to report the bitch in heat during registration. It is recommended that bitches in heat are kept separated from other dogs during the event, and their runs should take place at the end of each class (upon agreement with the judge). Starting from the handler's own mat is recommended if the course configuration allows it.
 - **Pregnancy:** Participation is strictly prohibited from the **21st day** of confirmed or presumed pregnancy. In the event of a violation, the team's results from that trial shall be annulled.
 - **Lactation:** A bitch may not compete earlier than the **52nd day** after giving birth.

3. DOG REGISTRATION AND ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF RESULTS

Participation in all categories (FUN, H0, H1, H2, H3, HH, HV) requires proper registration of the dog in the Slovak Club Hoopers database and the assignment of a registration number. The Slovak Hoopers Club does not issue physical Performance Record Books; all results are recorded exclusively electronically on the official Club website and within its registration system.

- **Registration and License**
 - **Club Members:** Dog registration and license issuance are usually completed simultaneously with obtaining Club membership.
 - **Non-members of the Club (Guests, Foreign Competitors):** Before their first start in an official category, a non-member is required to:
 - Register themselves and their dog according to the instructions of the Club Committee.
 - Pay the fee for issuing the dog's registration card according to the valid price list, after which a unique registration number will be assigned.

o **Special Rules for the FUN Category:**

- The handler does not need to be a Club member but is required to complete a free dog registration in the Club system.
- The validity of registration in the special FUN register is limited to 24 months.
- After registration, a team in the FUN category is entitled to a discounted entry fee for events organized under the auspices of the Club, equivalent to the discounted participant fee for Club members.
- If a team with an assigned FUN registration number wishes to transfer to the H0 or H1 category during the validity period of the FUN registration (24 months):
 - ★ The handler shall become a Club member, register the team in the Club registration system, and after payment of the discounted registration fee for Club members, the team will be assigned a permanent registration number.
 - ★ ...register in the Club registration system as a non-member of the Club, and after payment of the registration fee for non-members, the team will be assigned a permanent Club registration number.

● **Registration Number:** After payment of the registration fee, the team is assigned a permanent registration number. This number serves as the unique identifier of the team for entries to all events organized under the auspices of **the Club** and for matching achieved results within the database.

● **Electronic Performance Record Book (ERB)**

o The Electronic Performance Record Book replaces the physical performance booklet and serves as the official record of achieved results and fulfilled requirements for progression to higher categories.

o **Recording of Results:** The event organizer is obliged to send the official results list to **the Club** database administrator (or upload it into the system) no later than 24 hours after the end of the event.

o **Recorded Data:** The following data must be recorded in the electronic ERB:

- Date and name of the event.
- Name of the judge.
- Performance category.

- Number of penalty points (PP).
- Achieved net run time.
- Achieved rating (**V0, V, VD, D, DIS**).
- Team placement.

- **Result Verification and Complaints**

- o **Handler Responsibility:** The handler is obliged to check the accuracy of the recorded data in their electronic profile.
- o **Complaint Procedure:** Any discrepancies in the recorded results must be reported by the handler to the organizer or the Club database administrator no later than 14 days after the publication of the results on the website. Later complaints will not be considered. When submitting a complaint, the handler must provide credible evidence (e.g., a photograph of the run results or the official result list from the competition day).
- o **Transfer Status:** Transfers between categories must be announced by the handler to the Club Committee via email. The Committee shall verify the team's status and authorize entry into the higher category after the progression requirements have been fulfilled (e.g., obtaining 6x V0 in the H2 category).

- **Verification of Identity at Competitions**

- o During registration at an event, the handler is not required to present a physical Performance Record Book but may be asked to verify the dog's identity (microchip check) and confirm the registration number in the list of entered competitors.
- o The organizer has online access to verify the team's current performance category.

- **Participation of Members of Other Organizations and Foreign Participants**

- o **Guest Participation:** Teams that are members of other national or foreign cynological organizations may participate in Club events as guests.
- o **Verification of Performance Category:** Before registering for a competition, a guest team is required to register in the Club registration system by completing **the Team Registration Form for non-members of the Club**. Based on the submitted documentation, the Club Committee shall assign the team a unique registration number and place the team into the appropriate performance category. Since guest teams do not have regularly updated ERBs, they must again provide proof of eligibility when transferring to another performance category.

The Club Committee shall record these changes in the electronic ERB maintained within the Club system.

o **Principle of Reciprocity:**

- Recognition of trials and category transfers between **the Club** and other organizations is governed by the **principle of reciprocity**.
- The Club fully recognizes results achieved under other organizations, provided that the respective organization reciprocally recognizes results and trials achieved under the auspices **of the Club**.
- In cases where no reciprocity agreement exists between organizations, recognition of foreign trials for the purpose of category progression within **the Club** shall be decided individually by the Club Committee.

4. DOCUMENTATION, HANDLER CHANGE, AND GUEST TEAMS

4.1. Documentation and Registration

- **Performance Record Book (ERB):** Every team (except for the motivational FUN category) must have an electronic ERB issued under the auspices of **the Club** before their first start.
- **Veterinary Documents:** The handler is required to present a valid vaccination certificate or pet passport confirming mandatory vaccination (rabies).
- **Reciprocity:** Recognition of results and categories from other national organizations is governed by the current agreements of **the Club**.
- **Competition Documentation**
 - o Every team (handler and dog) competing in the H0, H1, H2, H3, HV, and HH categories must have a valid electronic **Club** ERB. The only exception applies to the FUN category.
 - o Upon request by the judge or organizer, the handler is obliged to present proof of the dog's valid vaccination.

4.2. Team Composition and Handler Change

- **Definition of a Team:** During one competition day, a dog and a handler form one team. A dog may not compete with two different handlers on the same day.
- **Maximum Number of Runs:** The maximum number of runs per trial day is 4. This limit includes the total number of runs completed by the team, regardless of whether they are trial runs or open runs.
- **Transfer in Case of Handler Change:** If a dog has trials recorded in a higher category (H2, H3) in its Electronic Performance Record Book (ERB), the new handler may not begin competing with that dog in the highest category previously achieved. The new team must start at least one level lower (for example, if the dog previously competed in H3, the new handler must start in H2) in order to verify their mutual cooperation and communication.

4.3. Participation of Guests and Foreign Teams

Within these regulations, a guest is defined as any event participant (handler) who is not a regular member of **the Club** (including members of other cynological organizations and clubs operating within the Slovak Republic).

- **Conditions for Participation:** Guests and foreign teams may participate in Club events if they fulfill the general veterinary requirements (for foreign participants, including the requirements for entering the Slovak Republic with an animal) and the specific conditions stated in the propositions of the respective event. Participation of a guest is conditional upon respecting these Trial Regulations.
- **Registration:** To participate in official competitive runs and trials, a guest or foreign participant is required to register in **the Club's** electronic system (through the Club Committee) and pay the registration fee according to the valid price list.
- **Placements and Titles:** Guests and foreign participants may place in the rankings of individual open competitions and trials. However, they compete without entitlement to titles and awards in national championships, Club championships, and point-based qualifications for national titles (e.g., Champion of the Slovak Republic), which are reserved exclusively for regular **Club** members, unless the propositions of a specific event expressly state otherwise.
- **Financial Obligations:** Guest (non-member) status establishes the obligation to pay entry and registration fees designated for non-members of the Club.

4.4. Financial Matters

- The organizer has the authority to determine the amount of the entry fee for a specific event; however, they are obliged to respect and apply **the Club's** pricing policy, which significantly favors regular Club members.
- Discounted entry fees apply to handlers with valid **Club** membership at the time of the entry deadline.

4.5. Reciprocity and Recognition of Trials

Recognition of trials and performance categories of teams that are not members of the Club is conducted on the basis of one of the following two forms:

- **Reciprocity Agreement:** Results are recognized automatically in accordance with a valid agreement on the recognition of trials between **the Club** and the handler's parent cynological organization.
- **Individual Assessment:** In the absence of a reciprocity agreement, recognition of results (both domestic and foreign) shall be decided individually by the Club Committee. A written application from the handler is required, supported by an extract from a results database or a Performance Record Book clearly describing the achieved results.
- **General Conditions for Recognition:** The content and technical difficulty of the completed trials must be comparable to **the Club's** rules.

The trials must have been judged by an official judge licensed by a national cynological authority.

- **Recognition of Slovak Hoopers Club Results Abroad:**

Upon request, the Club Committee shall confirm results achieved under its auspices for the purposes of external organizations. The handler bears full responsibility for verifying whether the respective organization accepts the **Club's** results.

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND SPECIAL CATEGORIES

5.1. Equipment and Aids on the Course

- **Dog Safety:** During the run, the dog must not wear a collar, harness, scarf, or any other items. Exceptions apply to dogs in the HH category or dogs handled by visually impaired handlers (upon agreement with the judge).
- **Grooming and Protection:** For long-haired dogs, elastics or clips above the eyes are permitted. Orthopedic aids (bandages, braces) are permitted only in the HH category and only with veterinary confirmation of the necessity of such aids.

5.2. Hoopers Handicap (HH) Category and Dog Health Restrictions

This category is intended for dogs with permanent or temporary health impairments (dogs using wheelchairs, post-amputation dogs, partially or fully deaf dogs, partially or fully blind dogs, or dogs with chronic conditions requiring special care).

- **Permitted Equipment and Aids in HH**

In the HH category (unlike regular categories), the following aids are permitted:

- **Orthopedic Aids:** Braces, bandages, prosthetics, or protective boots.
- **Cold Protection:** Dog coats for dogs that must not get cold due to medical reasons.
- **Handling Aids:** A collar or harness (without an attached leash) for better handler control of the dog before the start and after the finish.
- **Hygiene Aids:** Incontinence diapers or belly bands (the dog must still be able to move without soiling the course).
- **Goggles:** Protective goggles for dogs with visual impairment.

- **Special Guiding Aids**

- **Hearing/Vision Impairment of the Dog:** The handler is permitted to use sound aids (whistle, bell, clicker, clapping) or a vibration collar (strictly without electric impulse!) if the dog suffers from hearing loss.
- **Silence on the Course:** During the run of a team with a visually impaired or deaf dog, all other participants are obliged to maintain maximum calm and silence and must not use sound toys near the course in order to prevent the dog from becoming disoriented.

- **Technical Allowances and Course Adjustments**

- **Movement in the GA:** In the HH category, the handler leaving the Guiding Area (GA) is not penalized by disqualification.
- **Penalty Outside the Area:** Each obstacle completed by the dog while the handler is outside the GA is penalized as a **fault (5 Penalty Points (PP))**. Every missed obstacle during this time is penalized in the same manner.
- **Contact:** For dogs with hearing or vision impairments, physical contact between the handler and the dog on the course is not penalized, provided it is not used as a physical push toward an obstacle.

5.3. Conditions for Disabled Handlers (Parahoopers)

If a handler has a disability that prevents full movement or communication, the following rules apply:

- **Handler Using a Wheelchair**

- o **Movement in the GA:** If the handler exits the Guiding Area (GA) with a wheel or part of the wheelchair, this is not penalized by disqualification.

- o **Penalty:** Each obstacle (both completed and missed) while the handler is outside the GA is penalized as a **fault (5 PP)**.

- **Handler Using Compensatory Aids (Crutches, Sticks)**

- o A handler using one crutch or stick may not use it as an extended arm to guide the dog.

- o **Exception:** A handler using two forearm (French) crutches may use **one of them** to guide the dog (as a directional aid) if it is necessary to maintain their stability.

5.4. Common Provisions for HH and Parahoopers

- **Veterinary Control:** The judge has the right to inspect the aids being used at any time in order to prevent their misuse for unnatural motivation of the dog (e.g., hidden stimuli encouraging the dog to run against its will).

- **Starting Order:** Teams requiring course adjustments (wheelchair users) shall start either at the beginning or at the end of the starting list of the respective category (upon agreement with the judge and organizer).

- **Responsibility:** Participation is always at the full responsibility of the dog owner. The veterinary certificate confirming fitness for sport must not be older than 12 months.

6. SIZE CLASSES AND PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES

6.1. Dog Size Classes

- All categories are mandatorily divided into two classes according to the dog's wither height:

- o **Small (S):** dogs with a height of **40.00 cm** or less.

- o **Large (L):** dogs with a height **exceeding 40.00 cm**.

Classification into a size class is based on an official measurement recorded in the Electronic Performance Record Book (ERB). See section *Dog Measurement*.

- **Dog Measurement**

- o Measurement of the dog's wither height is performed by a judge.

- o **Recognition of Measurements:** If the handler presents an official document (Agility ERB, breeding assessment record, show critique), the dog's height may be recognized and recorded without re-measurement.

The first official measurement of the dog may be performed no earlier than at 15 months of age.

o **Approach to Measurement:** For dogs showing obvious fear of the measuring device, the handler is permitted to measure the dog under the direct supervision of the judge.

6.2. Category Overview by Type and Difficulty

Categories within **the Club** are divided into three main branches (A, B, and C), each reflecting a different objective (development, competition, inclusion, and senior dog welfare).

A. Preparatory and Motivational Categories (FUN and H0)

These categories are **optional and non-progressive**. Results are not recorded in the ERB for progression purposes; however, they are officially announced and evaluated at events.

- **FUN:** This category is open to any team participating in a competition where the FUN category is offered. If a handler from any performance category chooses to compete in this category, they may not compete in another category on the same day. A team from a competitive (H) category may also enter FUN (for example, due to returning to the sport after a long break, illness of the dog, or loss of form). Such participation is considered a voluntary downgrade for that day, and the team competes for placements according to the standard FUN rules. Participation in the FUN category is not considered a permanent downgrade to a lower competitive category.

- **Organizer Competencies:** The method of judging (e.g., run without a judge, run with trainer assistance) and the evaluation system (e.g., time measurement only or pass/fail evaluation) are fully within the organizer's authority and must be stated in the event propositions. The Trial Regulations define only the minimum safety requirements (see sections 7. COURSE and 8. GUIDING AREA (GA)).

- **H0:** Verification of the basic competence of the dog and handler before entering H1.

o The H0 category is intended exclusively for beginner teams that have not yet competed in any competitive category (H1, H2, H3). **Once a team completes its first start in the H1 category, it loses the right to return to the H0 category.**

Parameter	FUN	H0
Dog Age	min. 15 months	min. 15 months

Parameter	FUN	H0
GA (Guiding Area)	5 × 5 meters	5 × 5 meters
Distances Between Obstacles Small / Large	3–6 meters	4–7 meters
Maximum Distance from GA	up to 10 meters	up to 12 meters
Number of Obstacles	10–12	12–15
Leaving the GA	0 PP	0 PP

B. Competitive Categories (H1, H2, H3)

These are the standard progressive categories in which results are recorded in the ERB and serve for the team's performance advancement. A team begins competing at the H1 level.

- **H1:** Beginners – basic technical lines.
- **H2:** Advanced – more complex courses and greater distances.
- **H3:** Masters – high level of dog independence and technical difficulty.

Parameter	H1	H2	H3
Dog Age	min. 18 months	min. 18 months	min. 18 months
GA (Guiding Area)	2 × 2 m, Ø 2 m	2 × 2 m, Ø 2 m	2 × 2 m, Ø 2 m
Distances Between Obstacles Small / Large	5–8 meters	6–10 meters	7–12 meters
Maximum Distance from GA	S max. 12 meters L max. 15 meters	S max. 18 meters L max. 20 meters	S max. 25 meters / L max. 30 meters
Number of Obstacles	12–18	16–22	20–26
Leaving the GA	DIS	DIS	DIS

C. Special Categories (Hoopers Handicap and Hoopers Veteran)

- These categories are intended for teams with specific needs. The technical difficulty of the courses corresponds to the levels of the competitive categories; however, specific judging rules and technical course adjustments are applied

in order to allow handicapped and veteran dogs to complete the course smoothly.

- **Hoopers Handicap (HH) – non-progressive:** This category is intended for teams with handicapped dogs. See section 5.2.

- **Hoopers Veteran (HV) – non-progressive:** Category for senior dogs.

- o **Transfer Rule:** A dog may enter the HV category upon reaching 8 years of age no later than the day of the competition.

Returning from the HV category to a competitive category is not permitted.

- o **Technical Allowances (HH and HV):** GA 5 × 5 meters, adjusted time limits, elimination of sharp directional changes on the course, circling around barrels, elimination of extreme distances, and other modifications that the judge considers necessary for maximum safety.

Parameter	HH	HV
Dog Age	min. 18 months	voluntary after 8 years of age
GA (Guiding Area)	5 × 5 meters	5 × 5 meters
Distances Between Obstacles Small / Large	according to H1 category	according to H1 category
Maximum Distance from GA	up to 12 meters	up to 12 meters
Number of Obstacles	12–18	12–18
Leaving the GA	0 PP	0 PP

The minimum criterion for designing HH and HV courses is the H1 level, while the judge shall take into account the allowances applicable to these categories (GA 5 × 5 meters, adjusted time limits, elimination of sharp directional changes on the course, circling around barrels, elimination of extreme distances, and other modifications that the judge considers necessary for maximum safety).

- When registering for an event in the HH and HV categories, the handler shall indicate in the entry form the level (H1, H2, H3) at which they wish to complete their runs. The organizer and the judge are not obliged to take this request into consideration.

D. Open Runs

- Open runs are open to all teams regardless of the performance category in which the teams compete in official competition categories.
- The minimum age of the dog for participation in an Open run is 18 months.
- Courses designed for Open runs are built at the technical difficulty level of the H2 performance category. For the H0, HH, and HV categories, the judge may, upon agreement with the organizer, also design an Open run with the difficulty level of the H1 category.
- Teams competing in the FUN category are excluded from participation in Open runs.
- Results from Open runs are not recorded in the electronic ERB.

6.3. Category Transfer System

Progression to a higher category is based on the principle of eligibility, not obligation. The decision to transfer is entirely at the discretion of the handler.

• Conditions for Eligibility for Transfer

A qualifying trial consists of one run.

A team may transfer to a higher category (e.g., H1 → H2) after fulfilling the following conditions:

o **H1 → H2:** minimum of 5 successfully completed H1 trials with an “Excellent” (V) rating (maximum 5 PP/run).

o **H2 → H3:**
minimum of 6 successfully completed H2 trials with an “Excellent 0” (V0) rating (0 PP/run).

o The required number of qualifying trials for progression to a higher category must be confirmed by at least **two different judges**.

o A team may remain in its current category for an unlimited period even after becoming eligible for progression.

Transfers between performance categories (H1, H2, H3), as well as transfers into special categories (HH, HV) or downgrades to a lower category, are governed by the principle of the completed event.

- **Principle of the Completed Event:** If multiple trials or competition runs take place within one calendar day, the team may not transfer to a higher category during that day. This also applies if the team fulfills all qualification requirements for progression already in the first run of the day.

- **Multi-Day Events:** For events lasting several consecutive days (e.g., two-day competitions), transfers between categories during the course of the event are not permitted. The team must complete the entire event in the category in which it originally entered.
- **Timing of the Transfer:** A team may transfer to a higher competitive category only at the next separate event for which it registers after fulfilling the required qualifications.
- **Downgrades and Special Categories:** The same rules regarding the impossibility of category transfers during an ongoing event also apply to voluntary or mandatory downgrades to a lower category and to transfers into the Hoopers Handicap (HH) and Hoopers Veteran (HV) categories.
- **Exception for the FUN Category:** The only exception to these rules is transfer into the FUN category, which is governed by the special conditions defined in section 6.2.A of these regulations.

6.4. Voluntary Downgrade to a Lower Category and Change of Team Status

A team has the right to request a voluntary downgrade to any lower competitive category from **the Club** Committee at any time, but not lower than the H1 level (a direct downgrade from H3 to H1 is also permitted). Returning to the preparatory H0 category after completing the first start in any competitive category (H1, H2, H3) is no longer possible.

- **Consequences and Conditions of Downgrade:**
 - **Cancellation of Results:**
By completing the first start in a lower category, all previously obtained qualifying results in the original category are cancelled.
 - **Repeated Progression:**
For any future return to a higher category, the team must again fulfill all progression requirements established for that level according to section 4.3.
 - **Non-Competitive Status:**
If the handler prefers a return to non-competitive participation without eligibility for performance progression, they may use the FUN category or the special HV (Veteran) or HH (Handicap) categories, provided that the specific conditions for those categories are fulfilled.

6.5. Titles and Awards

The Slovak Hoopers Club awards prestigious titles for long-term and consistent performance in the highest H3 category. Only results achieved at official trials and events organized under the auspices of **the Club** are counted toward these titles.

- **Champion of the Slovak Hoopers Club**

This title confirms a high technical level and consistency of the team.

- **Conditions:** Obtaining 10 trials with an Excellent 0 (V0) rating.
- **Diversity Requirement:** The trials must be achieved under at least 3 different judges at 3 different events.

- **Grand Champion of the Slovak Hoopers Club**

The highest award of the Club, following the Champion title.

- **Conditions:** Obtaining 20 trials with an Excellent 0 (V0) rating (achieved only after being awarded the Champion title).
- **Diversity Requirement:** The trials must be achieved under at least 3 different judges at 6 different events over a minimum period of 24 months.

Applications for titles must be submitted by the handler after fulfilling the prescribed conditions by sending a written request to the Club Committee.

7. COURSE

7.1. General Information and Course Design

A hoopers course consists of a sequence of obstacles arranged to test teamwork, remote handling control, and the smoothness of the dog's movement ("flow").

- **Judge's Responsibility:** The arrangement of the course depends exclusively on the professional judgment and creativity of the judge. The judge designs the course to be technically appropriate for the respective performance category and balanced in terms of controllability, speed, and fault prevention.
- **Safety and Control:** Before the start of the competition, the judge shall inspect the available obstacles. If they meet the required standards, the judge, with the assistance of the organizer, shall build the course, number it, and measure its length (if necessary). No obstacles that are not part of the current run may remain on the course.
- **Movement on the Course:**
During the competition, only the judge, assistants, the competing team, and the team leaving the course area are permitted to move on the course.

7.2. Technical Parameters of the Area and Surface

- **Course Dimensions:** The minimum course area is 600 m², with the shortest side measuring at least 20 meters. The recommended course size is 20 × 40 m.
- **Fencing:** The area must be clearly enclosed (with tape, netting, etc.), and only the judge, assistants, and the competing team may be present on the course during a run.
- **Surface:** The surface must be level, safe, and non-slip for both the dog and the handler (grass, sand, sand with geotextile, artificial turf). In the event of adverse weather conditions, the judge decides on the safety of the surface and has the right to cancel the event due to force majeure.
- **Specifications for Indoor Arenas and Indoor Spaces:**
 - **Safe Distance:** Obstacles must be placed at least 2 meters away from perimeter walls or arena barriers in order to prevent the dog from colliding with the wall.
 - **Floor Quality:** The surface must be non-slip and safe. Surfaces such as concrete, linoleum, or other hard and slippery surfaces are prohibited.
 - **Exceptions:** If the event is held indoors due to adverse weather conditions (rain, extreme heat, snow, etc.) or logistical reasons, and it is not possible to ensure the prescribed minimum course area, the judge has full authority to grant an exception. A condition for granting the exception is maintaining the minimum safe distances between obstacles and respecting the 2-meter distance from perimeter walls.

7.3. Course Design and Obstacle Arrangement

- **Obstacle Composition:** At least 50% of the obstacles completed by the dog on the course must consist of hoops.
- **Flow:** The course must be designed to allow the dog smooth movement in curves without sharp directional changes that could compromise safety.
- **Start and Finish:** The first and the last obstacle on the course must always be a hoop.
- **Distances Between Consecutive Obstacles:** Distances are determined according to the respective performance category.
- **Distances Between Non-Consecutive Obstacles:** Obstacles that do not directly follow one another in the course sequence must be placed at least 3.2 meters apart. This rule ensures safety in the event that the dog deviates from the intended line.

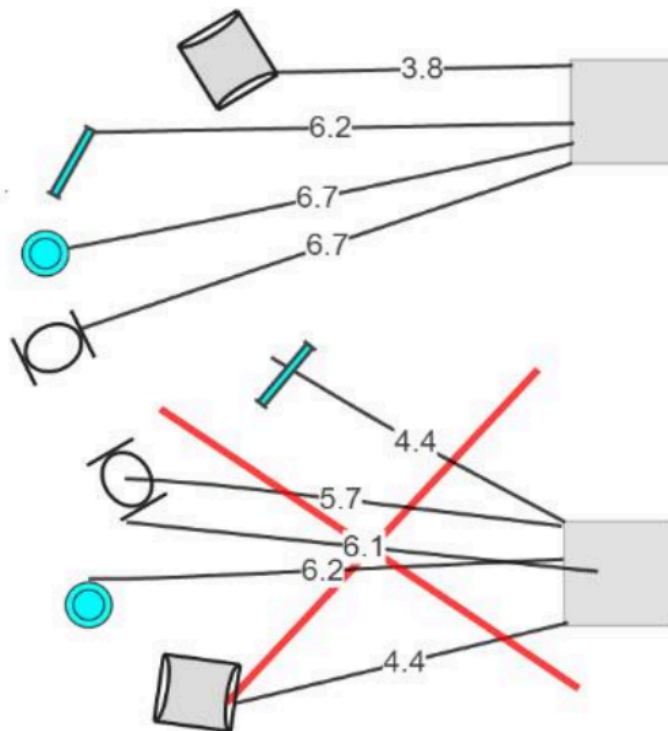
- **Run-Out Area:** The course must be designed so that, after the finish hoop, the dog has sufficient space for a safe run-out without the risk of collision with people, dogs, or barriers.
- **Timing System:** The timing starts when the dog completes the first obstacle and stops when the dog completes the last obstacle or when the team is disqualified.
- **Electronic Timing:** Both the start and finish lines are defined by the timing system structure positioned in close proximity to the first and last hoop.

7.4. Distance Measurement and Spacing Specifications

- **Measurement Methodology:**

- o **Working Distance:**

- Measured from the boundary of the GA to the part of the obstacle that is closest to the GA.



- o **Distance Between Obstacles:** The distance between obstacles is measured in a straight line from the center of one obstacle to the center of the next obstacle. The judge shall ensure that the spacing is set toward the upper limit of the interval specified for the respective category.



- **Guiding Area (GA) and Obstacles:**

- o **Competitive Categories (H1, H2, H3):** No obstacle may be placed inside the GA. The nearest obstacle must be positioned at least 2 meters from the outer boundary of the GA (measured to the nearest edge of the obstacle). No ideal running line of the dog may pass through the GA.

- o **Other Categories (FUN, H0, HH, HV):**

- o A maximum of one obstacle is permitted inside the GA. The rule requiring a 2-meter distance from the boundary of the GA does not apply in these categories.

7.5. Course Walkthrough and Organization

- **Course Walkthrough:** Handlers are entitled to a walkthrough without dogs lasting 8–10 minutes. A handler with multiple dogs is entitled to a maximum of two walkthroughs of the same course. In the case of a large number of participants, the organizer may divide competitors into groups and shorten the walkthrough time to a minimum of 6 minutes for each group.

- **Assistance:** During the walkthrough, the handler may be accompanied by a third person (e.g., a trainer). During the walkthrough, the judge shall answer only questions concerning the course route and technical specifics of the course.

- **Logistics and Preparation:**

- o **Entrance/Exit:** The course must have clearly marked entrance and exit points and a designated area for judge assistants and scorekeepers.

- o **Warm-Up Area:** The organizer is recommended to provide a designated area for teams preparing for their start, where warm-up obstacles may be placed.

- o **Simultaneous Courses:** If competitions are held on multiple courses simultaneously, the courses must be separated by an opaque barrier or positioned at least 10 meters apart.
- **Prohibited Activities:** Touching obstacles, manipulating them, or training on the course is prohibited. Violation of this prohibition shall result in the disqualification of the team from the respective run.

8. GUIDING AREA (GA)

- **Definition and Purpose**

- o **The Guiding Area** for the handler (**GA**) is a marked area on the course in which the handler must remain throughout the entire run of the dog (from the moment the dog completes the first obstacle until the completion of the final obstacle).

- o **Dog Handling:** From this area, the handler guides the dog exclusively by voice and visual commands.

- o Only one **GA** may be placed on the course for each category.

- **GA Dimensions by Category**

- o **FUN, H0, HH, and HV:** Square measuring **5 × 5 meters**.

- o **H1, H2, and H3:** Square measuring **2 × 2 meters** or a circle with a diameter of **2 meters**.

- **Technical Parameters and Marking**

- o **Construction:** The GA (square/circle) may be marked using stretch or foldable tape. It must be designed so that it can be securely attached to the course surface.

- o **Square Specifications:** The width of the colored strip (tape) must be 30–60 mm. The outer side length of the square is 5 meters or 2 meters (depending on the category).

- o **Circle Specifications:** The circle with an outer diameter of 2 meters may be made from a plastic pipe or hose with a diameter of 20–50 mm.

- o **Visibility and Safety:** The marking must be clearly visible to both the handler and the judge and must not create a tripping hazard.

- **Evaluation of Leaving the Guiding Area**

- o **H1, H2, and H3 Categories:** Leaving the GA with at least one entire foot (touching the ground outside the marked square) results in disqualification (DIS) of the team.

- o **FUN, H0, HH, and HV Categories:** Leaving the GA with both feet is not penalized. Each obstacle completed by the dog while the handler is outside the GA is penalized with 5 PP.
- o **GA Boundary Line:** Stepping on the marking (tape/line) or touching the GA boundary line is permitted and is not considered leaving the GA.

9. OBSTACLES AND NUMBERING

Standard obstacles are used on the course, while their number and placement are determined by the judge. All obstacles must be stable, safe, free of sharp edges, and must comply with applicable standards.

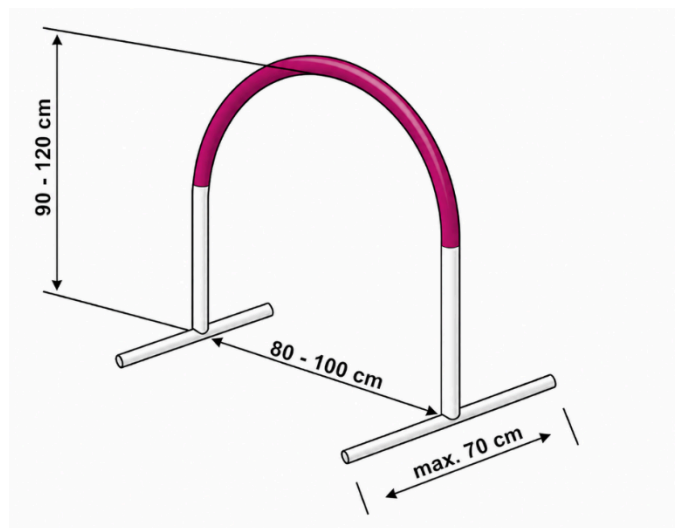
All obstacles used on the course must be of the same style.

- **Recommended Set of Obstacles:** 16 hoops, 6 barrels, 2 tunnels, 4 gates.

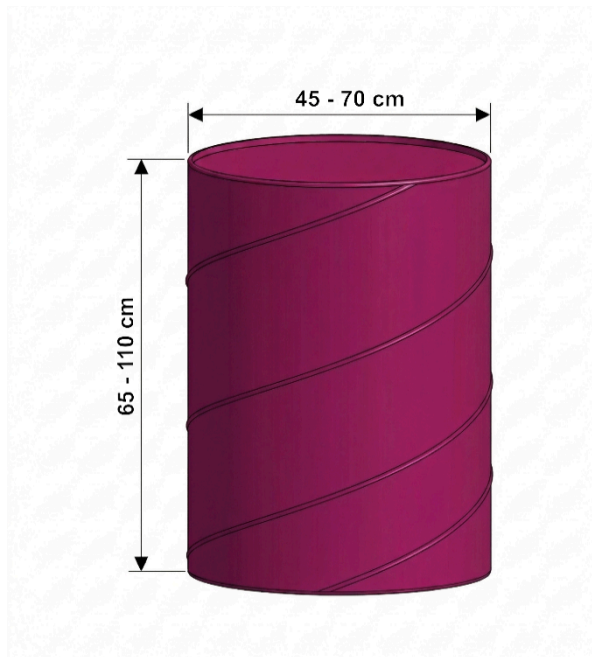
9.1. Obstacles

- **Hoop (Arch):** The dog completes this obstacle in the direction determined by the judge by fully running through it. The obstacle consists of upright supports with a stable base and a circular arch. The support base may have a maximum length of 70 cm.

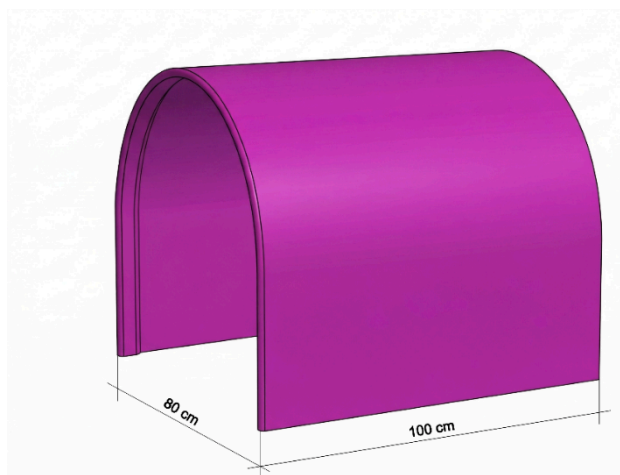
Dimensions: Width: **80–100 cm**, Height: **90–120 cm**. The pole diameter may not exceed **2.5 cm**. The hoop must be made of lightweight, non-shattering material (plastic or aluminum), and the lower half of the obstacle must be clearly visible to the dog and have a contrasting color relative to the surroundings. The hoop must be without a **solid base frame**. The support bases (legs) must be designed to ensure stable positioning of the obstacle. The ends of the legs must be covered (closed pipe ends). The hoop must not have sharp points that could injure the dog. In adverse weather conditions, hoops may be secured using small sandbags.



- **Barrel:** Barrels serve as guiding points for changes of direction or for circling around them. The dog circles the barrel in the direction determined by the judge. Barrels must be stable and safe in order to prevent injuries during circling. They must be closed on both sides. Their internal diameter must be at **least 40 cm**, the external diameter **45–70 cm**, and the height **65–110 cm**. The barrel must be made of soft material (metal is not permitted). If the barrel does not have a contrasting color relative to the surroundings, it must be supplemented with contrasting stripes. For safety reasons, barrels may not be fixed to the ground. They should be weighted internally with weights without sharp edges.

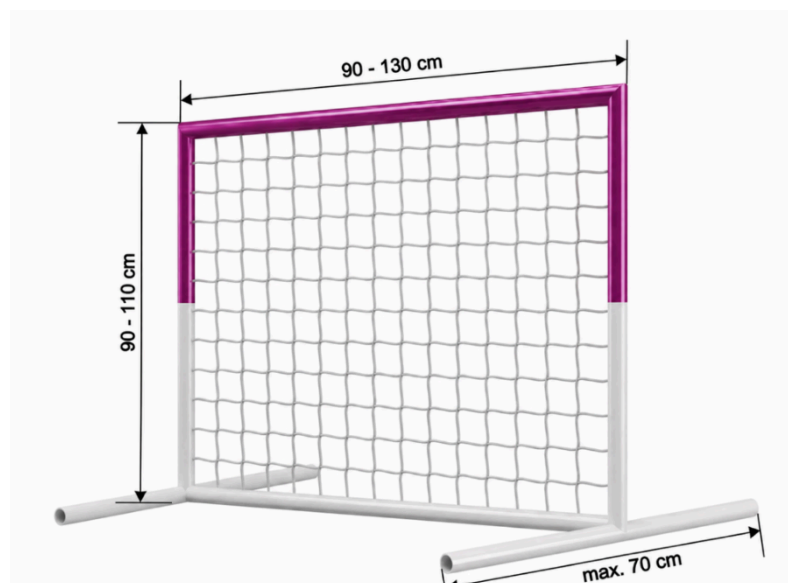


- **Tunnel:** The tunnel is a solid, curved obstacle in the shape of an arch. The dog runs through it. It must be safe and made of non-toxic material. The tunnel is made of flexible material and a frame that ensures shape stability. In adverse weather conditions, sandbags may be used to ensure stability. Dimensions: Diameter: **80 cm**, Length: **100 cm**. The tunnel must be without a bottom.



- **Gate:** The dog circles the gate in the manner determined by the judge, but only in the direction of the obstacle. Circling around the short side of the gate is not permitted. The gate is made of lightweight, non-shattering material without sharp edges. The gate dimensions are: Height: **90–110 cm**, Width: **90–130 cm**, Support base: maximum 70 cm. The pole diameter may not exceed **2.5 cm**. The gate must be made of safe material (plastic or aluminum). The gate filling must be transparent, and the mesh openings may not exceed 5×5 cm. Solid filling is not permitted. To prevent injuries, no parts of the gate may detach in the event of a collision with the dog. The gap between the frame/netting and the ground may not exceed 5 cm.

The gates must be constructed to resist tipping over and secured in the lower part with supports on one or both sides. In adverse weather conditions, small sandbags may be used to ensure stability.



9.2. Course Numbering

Obstacles on the course must be numbered in the order in which they are to be completed. Number plates shall be positioned so that they do not obstruct the dog's path while remaining clearly visible to the handler from the GA.

- **The number plates must have the following characteristics:**
 - **Size:** minimum 12×12 cm.
 - **Numbers:** The numbers must be displayed in large print so that they are clearly readable from a distance.
 - **Color:** Black numbers on a white or yellow background are recommended (high contrast).

- o **Placement:** The number plate is generally placed on, in front of, or beside the obstacle (on the side from which the dog is intended to complete it).
- The numbers must be positioned so that they do not present a risk of injury to the dog and do not affect the dog's running line.

10. COMPETITION PROCEEDINGS

10.1. Competition Structure

- **Run Structure:** Competitions usually consist of multiple competitive runs (depending on the event propositions).
- **Evaluation:** The most important parameter of performance on the course is not speed, but a clean and fluent run. Overall placement is determined by combined evaluation. The results of individual runs are added together, with the decisive criterion being the total number of penalty points, followed by the combined total time achieved. Open runs are evaluated separately from official trial runs.

10.2. Entering the Course and Start Preparation

- **Entering the Course:** The handler and dog enter the course upon the judge's instruction. If the handler enters with the dog on a leash, the dog must be handled using a flat collar or harness (depending on the category and specific medical exceptions). The dog may also be carried onto the course. If the dog is on a leash, both the leash and collar must be removed before the dog is left at the start position.
- **Equipment on the Course:** The leash, collar, harness, toy, or treat pouch may remain with the handler, but they must be hidden from the dog's sight before the handler enters the Guiding Area (GA).
- **Prohibitions:** The use of choke collars and prong collars is prohibited. The use of motivational aids (toys, rewards) in the start area and on the course is strictly prohibited. Violation of this prohibition results in disqualification of the team from the respective run. During the run, the handler must not hold any objects in their hands. The handler may reward the dog directly on the course only after the dog has completed the final hoop. If rewarding with a toy, the toy must not be thrown but handed directly from the handler's hand. Rewarding with food is prohibited on the course at any time.
- **Dog Equipment During the Run:** The handler removes the dog's leash and places it in a designated location (e.g., in a pocket or hands it to an assistant). During the run, the dog must not wear any equipment (collar, harness, scarf, etc.), except in specifically designated categories (see section 5.2.).

10.3. Start Sequence

- **Dog Positioning:** The handler places the dog in the starting position in front of the first obstacle. At the start, the dog may not be positioned inside the GA (except in FUN, H0, HH, and HV categories).

- **Handler Movement:** After positioning the dog at the start, the handler moves to the GA. If the handler leaves the dog before the judge gives the starting signal, the team is disqualified.

- **Correction Before Entering the GA:** During the movement to the GA (while the handler has not yet entered the GA with both feet), the handler may return to the dog and adjust its position without penalty, provided that the dog has not yet crossed the start line.

- **Correction After Entering the GA:** If the handler is already standing in the GA with both feet and leaves it in order to reposition the dog, a fault (5 PP) is given. A maximum of two such corrections is permitted (see chapter on start faults).

- **Correction if the First Obstacle Is Not Completed:** If the dog starts the course without completing the first hoop or passes through it only partially, the handler must leave the GA to correct the dog's starting position (fault). If the dog meanwhile completes another obstacle, the team shall be disqualified. If the handler sends the dog onward without leaving the GA to correct the start, the team shall be disqualified.

- **Start of the Run:** The run begins when the dog correctly completes the first obstacle in the proper direction (activation of the timing system).

10.4. Finish

The run ends when the dog completely passes through the final hoop in the correct direction. If the dog misses the final hoop, the error must be corrected. If the final hoop is not completed and the error is not corrected, the team shall be disqualified.

10.5. Start / Finish of the Run and Time Limits

- **Start of Timing:** The timing system starts at the moment the dog completes the first obstacle. Completion of the first obstacle is mandatory.

- **End of Timing:** Run time measurement stops at the moment the dog crosses the finish line (final obstacle). Completion of the final obstacle is mandatory.

- **False Start:** If the dog starts and completely completes the first obstacle before the handler has taken position inside the GA with both feet, the team is disqualified (DIS) (except in FUN, H0, HH, and HV categories).

- **Maximum Course Time (MCT):** The maximum time for each run is **3 minutes**. This limit starts to be measured from the moment the judge gives the starting signal. If the team does not complete the final obstacle within this limit, the run is terminated and the team is scored as DIS.

10.6. Repetition of the Run (Unforeseen Events)

- **Right to Repeat the Run:** Upon the judge's instruction, a team may repeat the run in the event of an unforeseen circumstance (e.g., technical failure, another dog entering the course, obstacle collapse caused by wind).
- **Rules for Repeating the Run:** All faults and penalty points received by the team before the occurrence of the incident remain valid.
 - The team must restart with a new time measurement and complete the entire course again in the prescribed order.
 - The judge resumes judging (awarding new points) from the obstacle at which the unforeseen event occurred.

11. JUDGING

General Definition: The purpose of judging is to objectively evaluate the quality, accuracy, and smoothness ("flow") of the team's performance on the course. The final evaluation is based on the number of awarded Penalty Points (PP), which the judge assigns for technical faults (errors). In the event of a serious violation of the rules, failure to meet limits, or unsportsmanlike conduct, disqualification (DIS) shall be imposed. Technically clean execution of the course always takes priority over running speed. The team's performance is evaluated in three basic areas:

- **Faults**
- **Disqualification**
- **Time Measurement**

11.1. Faults

General Definition: A fault is a technical deficiency of the team or a disruption of the smoothness of the run. Each fault is penalized with **5 Penalty Points (PP)**. Faults are cumulative throughout the run. In accordance with the principle **of flow**, faults on the course do not have to be corrected, and the team may continue smoothly to the next obstacle in sequence.

- **Start Faults**
 - **Start Correction:** If the handler is already standing in the GA with both feet and leaves it in order to reposition the dog. A maximum of 2

corrections is permitted in one run, and each correction is penalized as a fault. Corrections count toward the MCT (3 minutes).

Note: Corrections of the dog at the start while the handler is not yet standing in the GA with both feet are not penalized. The correction time still counts toward the MCT (3 minutes).

- **Handler Faults and Faults in the Guiding Area (GA)**

- o **Unauthorized Contact:**

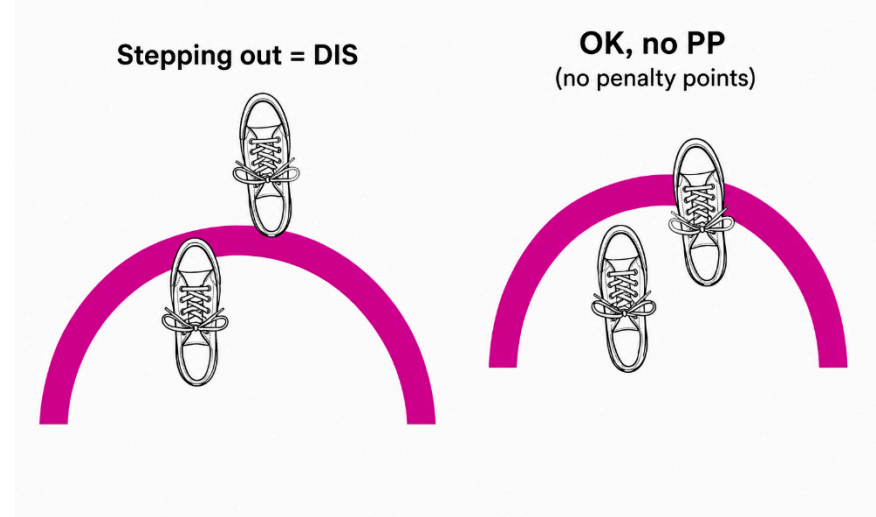
- **Intentional:** Contact between the handler and the dog or between the handler and an obstacle with the purpose of helping the dog, physically directing it, or influencing its path.

- **Accidental with Advantage:** If the dog or handler touches an obstacle in a way that makes completing the course easier for the dog (e.g., shortening the dog's path).

- o **Calling the Dog Through the GA:** The handler attempts to guide the dog by calling or directing it directly through the inner area of the GA.

- o **Working Outside the GA (FUN, H0, HH, HV only):** Each obstacle completed by the dog while the handler is outside the GA. (In H1–H3 categories, leaving the GA results in DIS.)

- o **Handler Completing an Obstacle:** If the handler completes an obstacle placed within the GA – applies to H0, HH, and HV categories (5 PP).



- **Technical Completion of Obstacles**

- o **General Rule:** An obstacle is considered completed if the dog passes it with its entire body (all paws) in the correct order and direction.

o **Missed Obstacle:** Each missed obstacle is penalized with 5 PP. If the dog is sent back to correct the mistake, no additional penalty is awarded for that same fault.

o **Incorrect Order / Incorrect Direction of Completion:** The dog completes a barrel or gate in the wrong order or in the wrong direction.

o **Missed Finish Hoop:** If the dog misses the final hoop, the error must be corrected. If the final hoop is not completed and the error is not corrected, the result is disqualification.

o **Disturbance of an Obstacle:** If the dog or handler knocks down, overturns, or significantly moves an obstacle that is no longer to be completed later in the course.

o **Jumping Over an Obstacle:** If the dog does not pass through / circle around the obstacle (hoop, gate, barrel, tunnel) but instead jumps over it.

o **Incomplete Completion (all obstacle types):**

▪ **Hoop:** The dog enters the hoop but turns back before fully exiting it with its entire body.

▪ **Barrel / Gate:** The dog moves behind the obstacle line (into its working zone) but then turns around and returns in front of the obstacle without circling it.

▪ **Tunnel (Backing Out):** The dog enters the tunnel with at least part of its body but then backs out or turns around inside the tunnel and exits through the entrance side.

• **Dog and Flow Faults**

o **Leaving the Running Line:** The running line is understood as the direct line from one obstacle to the next. If the dog leaves the intended path and must make a clear directional correction to return to the correct line, a penalty of 5 PP is awarded.

o **Stopping:** The dog comes to a complete stop (all 4 paws stationary) in front of an obstacle or on the course.

o **Spinning in Place:** The dog performs a 360° turn before an obstacle or on the course (lasting more than 2 seconds).

o **Jumping on the Handler:** The dog jumps on the handler in the GA or barks intensely at the handler (disruption of concentration).

o **Loss of Interest:** The dog visibly leaves the working line or stops focusing on the task (unless it leaves the course entirely, which results in DIS).

- **Other Faults and Unforeseen Events**

- **Knocking Down / Moving an Obstacle That Will Be Used Again:**

- If the dog knocks down or moves an obstacle that the team must later complete again in the course, the team is penalized with disqualification (DIS).

- **Force Majeure:** In the event of unforeseen circumstances (another dog entering the course, strong wind, etc.), the judge may permit a repetition of the run (previously awarded faults remain valid).

11.2. Disqualification

General Definition: Disqualification represents the highest level of penalty, resulting in the immediate and final termination of judging for the team in the current competition run. Its purpose is to identify performances that fail to meet the minimum technical, safety, or ethical requirements of the sport of hoopers.

- **Consequences of Disqualification:**

- **Termination of Timing:** The judge stops the run (usually by a long whistle signal and crossing their arms), and time measurement is stopped.

- **Cancellation of Result:** The team receives no points, and the official results and the Electronic Performance Record Book (ERB) will contain the notation “**DIS**”. This run is not counted toward the overall ranking or toward qualification requirements for progression to a higher category.

- **Leaving the Course:** After disqualification, the team must leave the course. The judge may (but is not obliged to) allow the team to complete the course for training purposes if the event schedule allows it, but without further judging.

- **Disqualification is Awarded in Three Main Areas:**

- **Technical Failure:** Exceeding fault limits or violating the rules of the Guiding Area (GA).

- **Control and Safety:** Loss of control over the dog, leaving the designated area, or hygiene issues.

- **Ethics and Welfare:** Unsportsmanlike conduct, prohibited aids, or aggression.

Overview of Offenses Resulting in DIS

Area	Specific Offense
Start and Finish Sequence	Leaving the dog at the start before the judge gives the starting signal.
Start and Finish Sequence	Uncorrected faulty start – if the handler does not leave the GA to correct the dog after an incorrect start.
Start and Finish Sequence	The dog completes another obstacle before the start hoop has been corrected.
Start and Finish Sequence	If the finish hoop is not completed and the error is not corrected.
Start and Finish Sequence	Third start correction after entering the GA.
Start and Finish Sequence	The dog completes another obstacle while approaching the start hoop.
Area	Specific Offense
Run Technique	3 faults (including different types) in direct succession (does not apply to H0, HH, HV categories).
Run Technique	Exceeding the Maximum Course Time (MCT) of 3 minutes.
Run Technique	Knocking down/moving an obstacle that will be completed again later in the course.
Run Technique	The dog completes a hoop or tunnel out of sequence.
Run Technique	The dog completes a hoop or tunnel in the wrong direction.
Run Technique	The dog completely completes any obstacle before the handler is positioned inside the GA (does not apply to FUN, H0, HH, and HV).
Guiding Area	H1–H3: The handler leaves the GA with at least one entire foot during the run.
Guiding Area	Stepping out of the GA (stepping on the marking with both feet is permitted).
Control and Safety	Loss of control: the dog does not respond to the handler and runs freely around the course.
Control and Safety	Leaving the course: the dog exits the course area with all four paws and does not return even when called.
Control and Safety	The dog relieves itself on the course area.

Area	Specific Offense
Rewards and Aids	Visibly carried rewards (treats, toys) or aids in the handler's hand.
Rewards and Aids	Giving a reward toy during the run or actively throwing it after the run on the course area.
Rewards and Aids	Rewarding with food on the course.
Rewards and Aids	Use of motivational aids (toys, rewards) in the start area and during the run.
Rewards and Aids	Loose food/rewards left on the course area.
Rewards and Aids	The dog wears a collar or harness (in categories where it is not permitted).
Conduct and Ethics	Harsh treatment of the dog.
Conduct and Ethics	Unsportsmanlike behavior (insulting the judge, assistants, or participants).
Conduct and Ethics	Changing/moving obstacles by the handler during the course walkthrough.
Conduct and Ethics	Social intolerance: excessively aggressive behavior of the dog.
Conduct and Ethics	"Double handling" – intentional verbal or visual guiding of the dog by another person outside the course.
Conduct and Ethics	The handler may voluntarily disqualify themselves by leaving the course if they perceive any discomfort on the dog's side (stress, injury, worsening health condition, etc.).
Training	Training or practicing on the course exceeding 3 obstacles (except dis)

Important Notice: The judge always has the final authority in assessing the degree of loss of control or unsportsmanlike conduct. In cases of dog aggression or harsh treatment of the dog, the team may be excluded from the entire event, not only from the current run.

11.3. Time Measurement

In hoopers, the priority is the quality and accuracy of the dog's work, meaning a run without technical faults or refusals. Speed is a secondary criterion used to determine placements in the event of equal scores. The achieved time reflects the smoothness of teamwork and the dog's motivation.

- **Definitions of Time Limits**

- **Maximum Course Time (MCT):**

- Represents the absolute time limit for completing the course.
- **Limit:** For all categories, the limit is uniformly set at 3 minutes.
- **Philosophy:** This limit serves to ensure the smooth progression of the competition and takes into account the needs of all participants without penalizing their natural speed.
- **Exception for HH, HV, and Parahoopers:** For these categories or handlers with disabilities, the judge may individually extend this limit.

- **Technical Requirements and Personnel**

- **Timekeepers:** The organizer is required to provide at least two timekeepers (or a combination of electronic timing and manual timing).

- **Primary and Backup Timing System:** Before the start of the competition, it must be determined which timing system is primary and which is backup (in case of failure). If both systems function correctly, the time from the primary timing system is considered official. In the event of a failure of the primary system, the backup time shall be recorded. Under no circumstances may times be added together or averaged.

- **Electronic Timing System:** If an electronic timing system is used, the sensors must be positioned at the level of the first and last obstacle (start and finish). In this case, one manual stopwatch serves as the backup timing system and simultaneously for measuring the Maximum Course Time (MCT).

- **Measurement of Maximum Course Time (MCT)**

- **Start of MCT measurement:** the timer for measuring the Maximum Course Time starts at the moment the judge gives the start signal.

- **End of MCT measurement:**

- At the moment the dog passes through the finish hoop.
- Upon the judge's signal to terminate the run (e.g., in case of disqualification).
- Upon exceeding the MCT limit (3 min).

- **Measurement of Net Run Time**

- **Start of time measurement:** the dog's run time starts at the moment

the dog completes the start hoop.

o **End of time measurement occurs:**

- At the moment the dog passes through the finish hoop.
- Upon the judge's signal to terminate the run (e.g., in case of disqualification).
- Upon exceeding the MCT limit (3 min).

● **Manual Timing Methodology (LAP/SPLIT Function)**

When timing manually (using a stopwatch), the lap/split function is used to record both times (MCT and net run time) by a single timekeeper:

o The timekeeper starts the stopwatch on the judge's signal (**start of MCT**).

o When the dog completes the first obstacle (start), the timekeeper records a lap time using the **LAP** button (the split time is saved while the stopwatch continues running).

o After the dog completes the finish obstacle, the stopwatch is stopped (**end of MCT**).

o **The net run time is calculated** as the difference between the total stopped time and the recorded lap time at the start.

● **Time Penalty**

o Exceeding the MCT: If the dog does not complete the finish hoop before the MCT expires (3 minutes from the judge's signal), the run is terminated and evaluated as Disqualification (DIS).

12. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION (RUN EVALUATION)

The rating achieved in a run is awarded in all categories based on the total number of points as follows:

Points	Rating	Abbreviation
100 points	Excellent 0	V0
95 points	Excellent	V
90–85 points	Very Good	VD
80–75 points	Good	D
Less than 75 points / DIS	Disqualification	DIS
Less than 75 points*	No Rating	BO

* **Applies only to non-competitive categories (H0, HH, and HV).**

The evaluation system for teams in the FUN category is determined by the organizer.

13. PLACEMENT AND RANKINGS

The placement of teams at the event is determined by their performance in the combined evaluation (sum of runs). Open runs are evaluated separately from trial runs.

- **Combined Evaluation (Sum of Runs)**

The organizer announces the overall results based on multiple runs (so-called combined results). The ranking is determined as follows:

- **Total Points:** The deciding factor is the total sum of points from all evaluated runs.

- **Total Time:** In the event of equal total points, the lower sum of net times from all runs included in the combined evaluation determines the ranking.

14. THE JUDGE

The judge is the highest authority on the course. Their role is to ensure objective, fair, and safe evaluation of performances in accordance with the philosophy of Hoopers. The judge is responsible for the regularity of the event and the technical correctness of the courses.

14.1. Delegation and Approval of Judges

- Selection of the Judge: The event organizer has the right to select a judge from the **club's** list of licensed judges. After a preliminary agreement with a specific judge, the organizer is required to inform **the Club** Committee of this selection as part of the submission of the event propositions.

- Approval of Delegation: **The Club** Committee acknowledges the agreement between the organizer and the judge without further approval.

- Judges from Other Clubs and Foreign Judges: If the organizer wishes to invite a judge from another club operating within the Slovak Republic or a foreign judge, they are required to inform **the Club** Committee in writing in advance and request approval.

- **The Club** Committee verifies and approves the participation of a judge from another club (Slovak or foreign) based on their license and professional competence and, in cooperation with the organizer, requests the relevant club to delegate the judge.

- A guest judge is required to comply with the currently valid **Club** Examination Rules during judging, unless agreed otherwise in advance (e.g., for special international events).

14.2. General Principles and Ethics (Welfare)

- **Impartiality:** The judge must treat all participants equally, regardless of their club affiliation or personal relationships.

- **Dog Welfare:** The health and well-being of the dog take precedence over the competition result. The judge is required to immediately interrupt the run if they suspect an injury to the dog, extreme exhaustion, or if the handler treats the dog harshly or unethically.
- **Conduct:** The judge must act professionally and clearly communicate their decisions. After the run, the judge may briefly explain the awarded penalty to the handler, provided the handler asks in a polite manner.

14.3. Course Construction and Approval

- **Safety:** The judge must not include sequences in the course that would force the dog into unnaturally sharp turns (circling a barrel 270° or more) or that would endanger its safety (e.g., an obstacle placed too close to the course fencing).
- **Appropriate Difficulty:** The judge adjusts the difficulty of the course (number of obstacles, technical passages) to the specific performance category.
- **Checking Distances:** The judge personally supervises compliance with the minimum and maximum obstacle spacing for the Small and Large size categories in accordance with the **club's** technical specifications.

14.4. Judging Procedure

- **Judge's Position:** The judge chooses a position on the course that provides an unobstructed view of the obstacle performance as well as the handler's work within the GA. The judge must not cross the dog's path or distract the dog.
- **Signaling Penalties:**
 - **Fault:** A fault is signaled by the judge raising one hand with an open palm.
 - **Disqualification (DIS):** The judge signals DIS with an immediate and clear whistle signal and by crossing both arms. Time measurement stops at that moment.
- **In Doubt, in Favor of the Team:** If the judge cannot determine with certainty whether a fault occurred (e.g., in the case of a borderline crossing of the working zone line), the decision is made in favor of the team (e.g., no fault is awarded).
- **Correcting the Handler Before the Start:** The judge may alert the handler to a mistake they are about to make before the run begins (e.g., incorrect position in the GA, collar, toy, etc.). During the run itself, any coaching or advising of the handler is prohibited.

15. ADMINISTRATION AND RECORDING OF RESULTS

- **Registration for Competitions:** The competition calendar is published on the Dogres platform, through which registration for individual competitions is also conducted. After completing and submitting the entry form, the handler receives a confirmation e-mail containing payment details for the specific competition. Event propositions for individual competitions are also published on Dogres. The organizer may also publish the event on social media, where additional information for interested participants may be provided.
- **Result List:** The results of individual competitions are recorded in a table shared with all registered teams participating in the competition. The organizer is responsible for delivering the final result list to **the Club Committee**.
- **Recording of Results:** **The Club Committee** maintains records and archives of results from all competitions held under the auspices of **the club** and records the results into the electronic Performance Record Books (ERB).
- **Special Reports:** In the event of gross unsportsmanlike conduct, dog aggression, or any incident occurring on or off the course, the judge shall prepare a written report and submit it to **the Club Committee**.
- **Recognition of Foreign Licenses and Licenses of Other Guest Participants:** For foreign participants and participants from other clubs within the Slovak Republic, **the Club Committee** verifies records in their home performance record books/systems and definitively confirms their eligibility to compete in the given category. Since guest teams do not have a regularly updated Performance Record Book (PRB) in the club system, they must, when transferring to a higher performance category, again provide proof of eligibility for such transfer to **the Club Committee**.

16. FINAL PROVISIONS

These Examination Rules are binding for all participants of events organized under the auspices of the Slovak Hoopers Club.

The Examination Rules come into effect on the day of approval by the General Meeting.

Changes and Revisions

Change No.	Date	Change / Correction / Replacement	Page	Approved by
01	26.03.2026	Table – alignment with the text in section 11.1. Handler Faults and Faults in the Guiding Area (GA)	16	Club Committee
		Original text (for FUN) – stepping out of the GA determined by the organizer		
		New text – 0 PP		
		Original text (for H0) – stepping out of the GA 5 PP	16	
		New text – 0 PP		
		Insertion of images	24, 25	

