

## Judges' Guideline for Gamblers

### **1. Introduction:**

- 1.1. Gamblers is typically a game which tests a number of skills of the dog and the handler team. Included in these skills is a distance handling challenge which is made gradually more difficult when transitioning between Novice to Excellent and through to Masters.
- 1.2. The Gamble is always placed as the final section of the course and is completed when the final obstacle is performed.
- 1.3. To achieve a Gambler qualification, the team must achieve at least the minimum points in the 'Opening Sequence' and to successfully complete the 'Closing Sequence'. The entire test must be completed within the Standard Course Time.
- 1.4. Teams are encouraged to maximise their Opening Sequence points by determining a suitable strategy that will allow them to correctly negotiate higher scoring obstacles within the time set for the Opening Sequence. The Judge must make this strategy challenging for the team by the design of the course placing higher scoring obstacle at a distance apart from each other requiring time for the team to travel between these obstacles. Back to back obstacles are permitted providing they are only attempted in a safe manner.
- 1.5. When starting the Judge may use a (start) line to allow the team to select their place to start allowing them to maximize their score or define an obstacle on the course which the dog must perform or pass. Each team is encouraged to use their strategy to gain an advantage.
- 1.6. The team may perform each obstacle any number of times, however the dog will only be scored for successfully performing each obstacle correctly two (2) times. A dog performing an obstacle more than two (2) times will not receive points for additional attempts.
  - 1.6.1. The Judge will call the point value of each obstacle performed to the scorekeeper for the first two (2) times the team correctly negotiates an obstacle. If a dog successfully performs an obstacle more than twice (2), the Judge will not call the points but will allow the team to continue. This performance will cost the team – time – to perform without gaining any additional points.
  - 1.6.2. Performing any of the Gamble obstacle in sequence during the Opening Sequence is regarded as 'patterning the dog' for the Gamble and forms an unfair advantage. A dog which performs any two of the obstacles of the Gamble in sequence during the Opening Sequence will lose any chance of performing the Gamble, but will keep all points gained during the Opening Sequence.

- 1.6.3. The Judge will call 'No Gamble' and allow the team to continue scoring points for the Opening Sequence if they wish.
- 1.7. A team that 'loiters' near the start of the gamble waiting for the signal must lose any chance of achieving the Gamble. However It is recommended that the judge also calls 'No Gamble' to inform everyone that the Gamble has been failed and for the team to go directly to the finish to gain a time.
- 1.8. When the signal sounds to end the Opening Sequence scoring will cease. Obstacles that are not completed will not score. The team is required to go to the start of the Gamble and being the Gamble (Closing) Sequence. Any obstacles taken by the team whilst transitioning to the start of the Gamble Sequence are not scored but should be observed for safe performance. Example: a dog that mounts the Dog Walk and leaves the horizontal section directly would be classed as unsafe and the team disqualified. The dog should be guided to a down ramp to dismount safely. No requirement for the contact performance is required in this specific case.

## **2. The Closing Sequence:**

- 2.1. The intention of the Gamble Sequence is for the team to work at a distance. This test is graduated in difficulty by the handling distance, the types of obstacles used and the placement of the obstacles used at the various classes of the game.
- 2.2. During the Closing Sequence, the handler must not stand on or cross the 'Distance Handling Line' with their feet; the judge should call 'No Gamble'. No qualification will be awarded for this run. Only points gained up to this point will be awarded.

### **2.3. Example:**

- 2.3.1. In Novice the Maximum distance from the gamble line to the Dog's Path over an obstacle is three (3) metres.
- 2.3.2. If the Gamble for Novice uses say four (4) obstacles and consists of jump, jump, Flexi Tunnel then Table to finish. The first jump may be almost on the line to enable the handler to be relatively close to the dog. As the Gamble progresses the distance increases to the maximum of three (3) metres at say the Flexi tunnel and the Table when the challenge finishes.
- 2.3.3. It is not necessary for all obstacles to be at the maximum distance of the challenge; however there must be a significant part of the challenge at the distance to ensure the team achieves the distance handling challenge.

- 2.3.4. The distance is measured from the line to the track where the dog is expected to perform the obstacle i.e. from the line to the centre of the Dog Walk, Flexi tunnel etc.
- 2.3.5. As the team successfully completes each of the Gamble obstacles, the test is regarded as becoming gradually more difficult as the distance is increased or maintained and the control of the dog at a distance is tested further. To reward achievement of each obstacle successfully completed in the Gamble increases in its point values by two (2) points. Therefore starting with the first obstacle at two (2) points, the second obstacle is worth four (4) points, six (6) for the next and so on. If a dog fails to perform a Gamble obstacle, the scoring is halted at that point without the reward for the unsuccessful obstacle, but retaining all points achieved to that point. This forms a definition of the capability of the team to perform at a distance.

The distance line for the Excellent class is five (5) metres and for the Master class is seven (7) metres

### **3. Achievements are based on:**

#### **3.1. Qualifying:**

- 3.1.1. A dog must achieve a minimum of the points required for the Opening Sequence, within the Opening Sequence Time, and;
- 3.1.2. Successfully completed all obstacles in the Gamble (Closing) sequence without the handler stepping on or across the line, within the Gamble (Closing) Sequence time.

#### **3.2. Then placing:**

- 3.2.1. Placement of the dogs is determined by:
- 3.2.1.1. Ranking qualifying dogs above non-qualifying dogs.
- 3.2.1.2. Ranking the higher scoring dogs above lower scoring dogs in the point score.

### **4. Maximising the score:**

- 4.1. The opportunity to improve the team's score exists in the Opening Sequence and somewhat in the speed that the Closing Sequence is performed. Therefore the strategy that the Handler employs for the Opening Sequence becomes important to improve the team's positioning in the places. The accuracy, speed and confidence that the distance handling requirement is performed, provides an opportunity to gain time during the Gamble (Closing) Sequence.

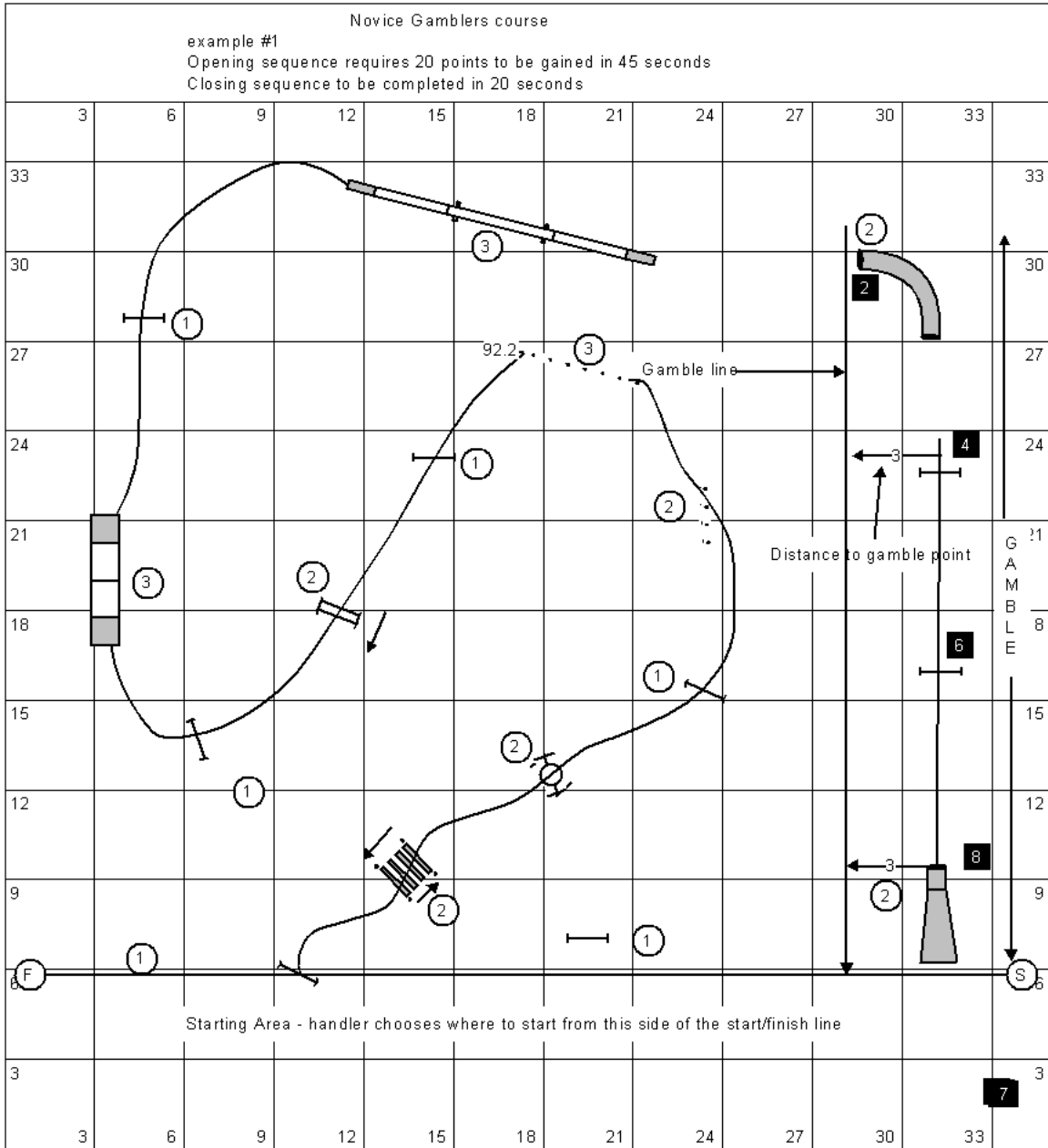
## **5. The Course:**

- 5.1. When designing the course an understanding of the challenge level of achievement is required.
  - 5.1.1. The Opening Sequence should be designed by defining a path for the dog to be able to achieve a minimum of the required score for the opening Sequence.
  - 5.1.2. The approach to the Gamble (Closing) Sequence should be flowing to allow the team to gain momentum toward the start of the Gamble. *Example:* The placement of say a flexi tunnel or hurdle will maintain the dynamics of the dog on the course and encourage the dog to flow to the Gamble. A contact obstacle before the start of the Gamble is considerably more difficult for a Handler to get a dog to start to work away.

### **5.2. Novice:**

- 5.2.1. As in most cases a Novice Dog/Handler Team is usually capable of performing obstacles whilst the handler is with the dog and expending a considerable amount of personal influence of the dog's performance.
- 5.2.2. The Opening Sequence test is set at an achievable level and providing the dog can perform the obstacles correctly and at a reasonable rate, the opening sequence score should be achievable. A dog that makes many mistakes will run out of time and fail to achieve.
- 5.2.3. The Gamble sequence should be designed to lead the dog to a naturally flowing course that provides the dog with confidence to follow an intuitive course. Say a course that starts with a Flexi tunnel to lead the dog away from the Handler and to the distance section.
- 5.2.4. A dog working at Novice level would be expected to travel at approximately 2 Metres per Second (MPS). The opening sequence time is 45 seconds, therefore the distance that a Novice dog could be expected to travel is a minimum of 90 metres (45 X 2). During this time they need to accumulate a minimum of 20 points.
- 5.2.5. Obstacles that can allow a Novice dog to achieve 20 points should be available within a path of approximately 90 metres.

### **Novice Gamblers course 1.**



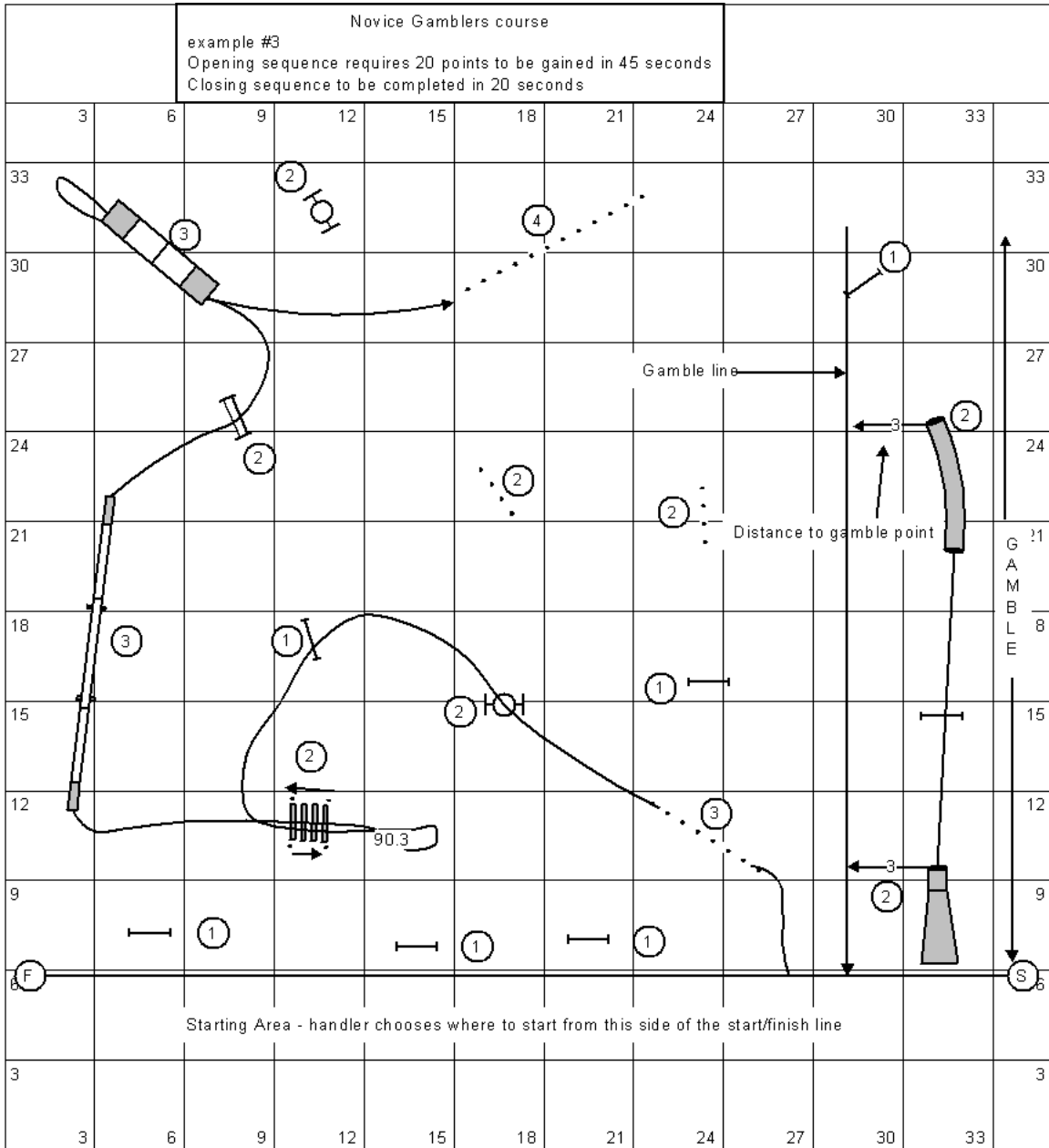
This Novice course is simplistic in the form that it has been designed with a possible course in mind. The 90 metres of the course – if followed by the Handler – would provide the bare minimum on 20 points. Please notice that none of the obstacles have been negotiated more than once therefore leaving the option to improve the score if time is available. The normal progression of the dog is to complete the dog walk and then to the Gamble – if the timing is appropriate. Thus is presented the ‘Gamble’ of time and performance on the course.

The Closing Sequence (Gamble) begins with the flexi tunnel leading the Dog away from the Handler to gain a distance between Dog and Handler. The following obstacles are relatively in line to provide a natural flow and target for the Dog to perform at a distance.



perform obstacles twice whilst working their way toward the start of the Gamble to take advantage of a short transition time between the end of the Opening Sequence and the start of the Gamble.

### Novice Gamblers course 3.



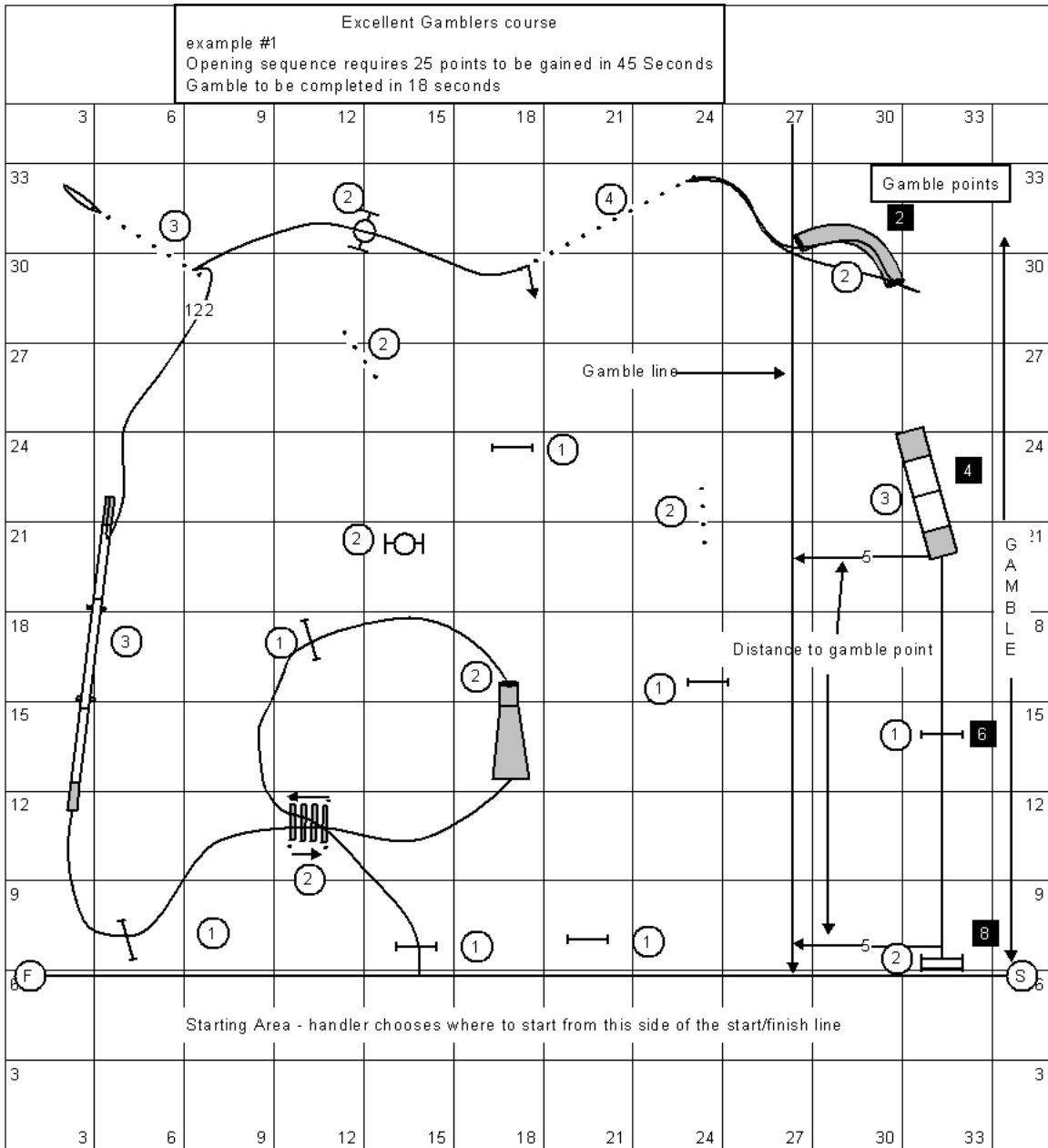
Novice Gamblers course 3 gains the minimum points required to qualify whilst working toward the Gamble. This course selection leaves the Handler with additional options if there is excess time when the weave poles are completed to avoid being penalized for 'loitering' near the Gamble. The additional obstacles have been left available near the

beginning of the Gamble to ensure the transition time between end of Opening and Gamble is minimal.

### **5.3. Excellent:**

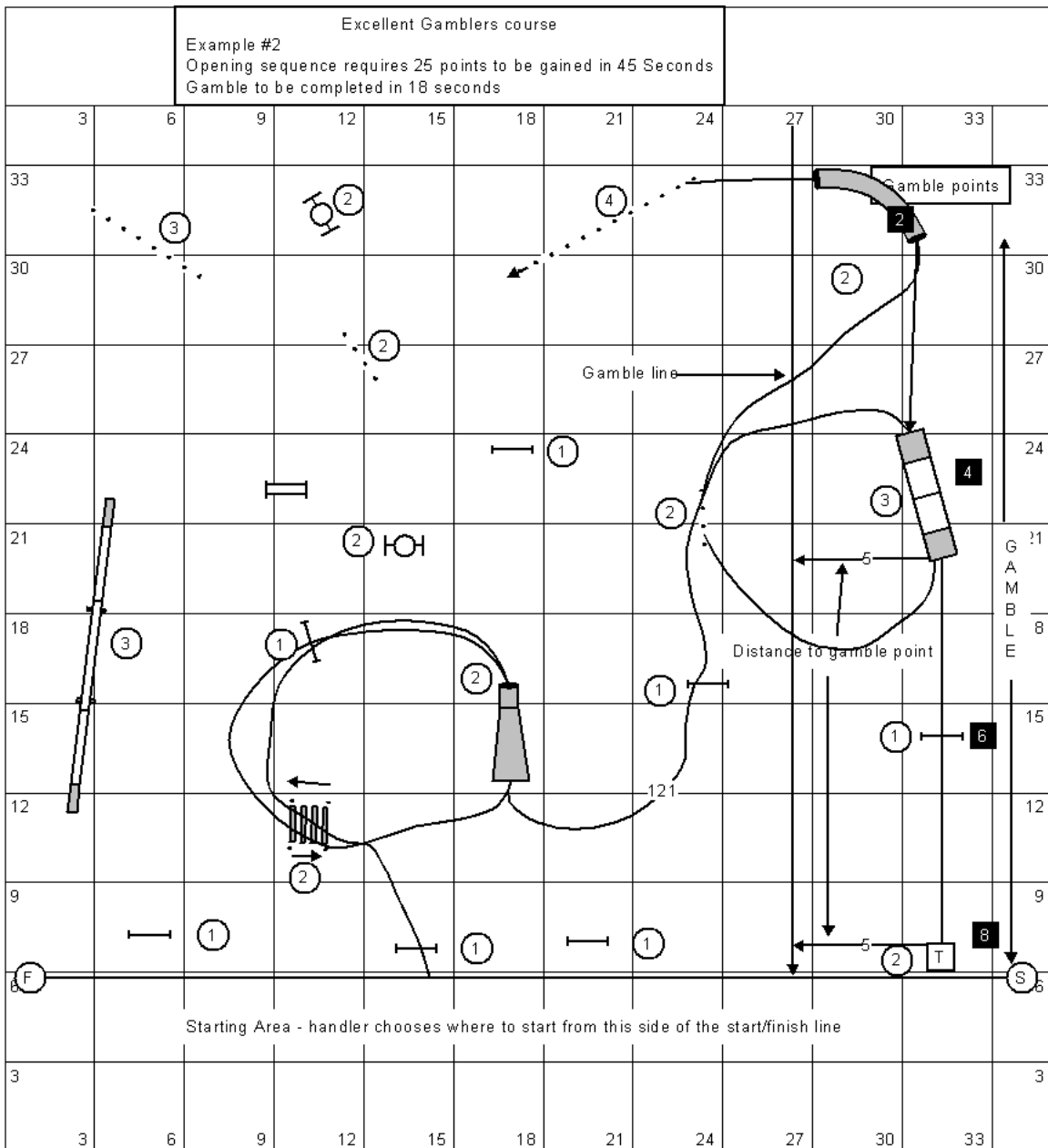
- 5.3.1. Following the same principles of Excellent Agility, the challenges provided for the gamble are increased by distance and the types of obstacles in the challenge.
- 5.3.2. As with the Novice, the dog can be lead into the Gamble by graduating the progression into the Gamble by placing the first of the obstacles relatively close to the handler line, then progressing the distance to the required five (5) metres.
- 5.3.3. The obstacles used to lead the dog to the Gamble might include obstacles where the Handler remains in view of the dog, thus increasing the difficulty level from the blind approach used in a flexi' tunnel.
- 5.3.4. The challenges of the course are contained in:
  - 5.3.4.1. A higher challenge level in the Opening Sequence is achieved by increasing the Opening Sequence score required and by reducing the time allowed to gain this score, and;
  - 5.3.4.2. Increasing the Gamble challenge to five (5) metres distance and the type of obstacles in the challenge.
- 5.3.5. A dog working at Excellent level would be expected to travel at approximately 2.7 MPS. Excellent has an Opening Sequence time of 45 seconds. The distance that an Excellent level dog could be expected to travel is 121 (2.7 X 45) metres. During this time the minimum of 25 points needs to be achieved.
- 5.3.6. 25 points should be available for a dog at Excellent level within 121 metres.

### Excellent Gamblers course 1.



Excellent Gamblers course 1 provides available points within the minimum course length providing the dog is working at approximately the required Rate of Travel (2.7 MPS). The course selected here leaves the dog at the weave poles near the start of the Gamble. If the Dog has performed at a faster rate than required, there are still options available to maximize the Opening Sequence score before beginning the Gamble. The Gamble in this case is set with the maximum distance to the Gamble at five (5) metres. The Gamble begins with a soft start of a flexi tunnel leading the dog away from the Handler to the Scramble, also leading away from the Handler to the final two obstacles at the required distance.

## Excellent Gamblers course 2.



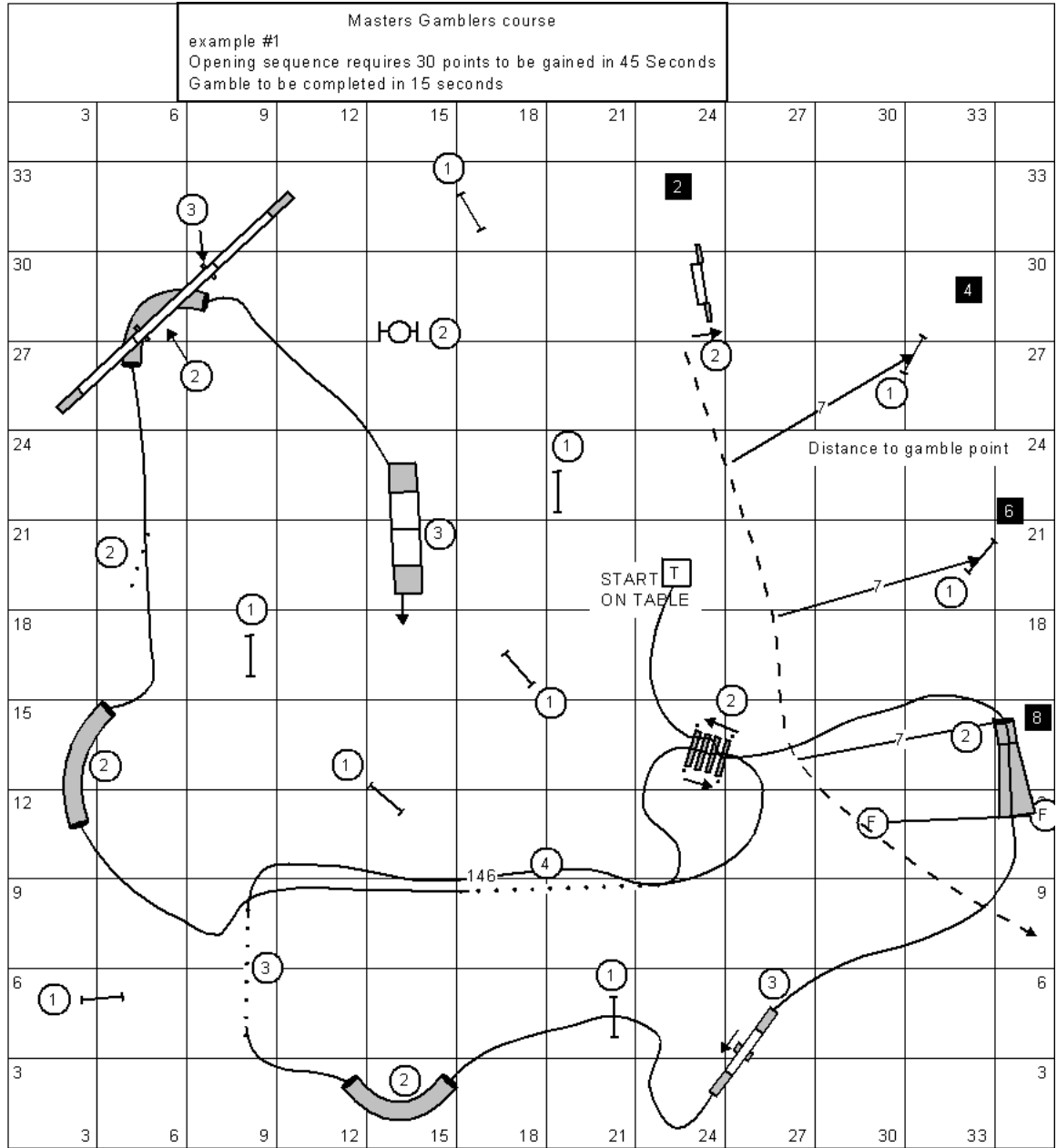
Excellent Gamblers course 2 selects a sequence of obstacle that have been performed a number of times. Additionally the course uses the Gamble obstacles but is careful to avoid using any sequence of the obstacles in the Gamble and avoids using Gamble obstacles that can be faulted and may prevent a Gamble being performed. E.g. A jump in the Gamble where a bar is dropped will prevent the Gamble being performed. The Gamble in this case completes when the Dog touches the surface of the Table.

### 5.4. Masters:

5.4.1. Masters class again follows the same theory of increasing the challenges by:

- 5.4.1.1. Increasing the score required in the Opening Sequence and reducing the time available to achieve this score.
- 5.4.1.2. Increasing the distance to seven (7) metres The Gamble Sequence, and;
- 5.4.1.3. Selecting more difficult obstacles to be included in the Gamble challenge.
- 5.4.2. A dog working at Master's Level is expected to be able to work at an average of say 3.3 MPS. The distance that a Master dog should need to complete to gain the points required is approx 150 metres. Masters dogs have an Opening Sequence time of 45 seconds in which they must accumulate a minimum of 30 points.
- 5.4.3. This requires 30 points to be available within the 150 metres.
- 5.5. The above discussion needs to be moderated with the understanding that the rules allow a dog to perform each obstacle twice for a score. This being the case, the distance that a dog needs to travel can be minimised by the handler's strategies and the dog's capabilities.
- 5.6. The path that the Judge defines for each of the levels is not broadcast to the triallers. The determination of the appropriate and effective course is left entirely to the handler and their understanding of the dog's capabilities.
- 5.7. The actual distance that a dog travels may be shorter than indicated here but usually not longer. However a dog that does achieve the minimum score within the time has an opportunity to maximise their score and must not loiter near the Gamble.

## **Gamblers Masters Course 1**

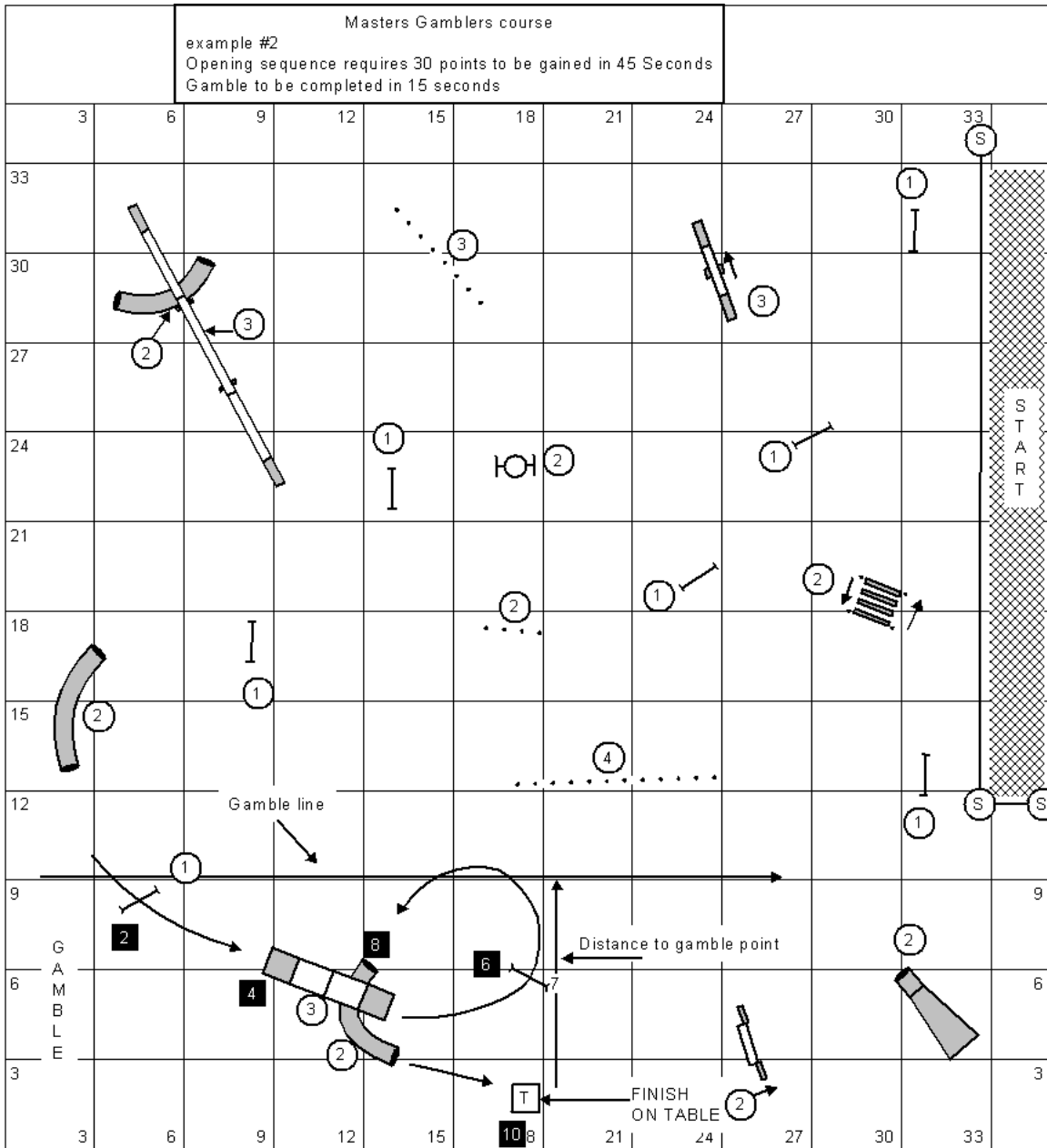


Gamblers Masters Course 1 requires the Dog to travel over a minimum distance of 150 metres at a rate of approx 3.3 Metres Per Second to achieve a minimum score of 30 points for the Opening sequence. The course indicated above displays a course length of 146 metres to gain the points required. The obstacle required to be performed will now demand to be the higher scoring obstacles.

In this course, the start is from a Table which limits the options somewhat for selection of starting obstacles. The Gamble starts with an obstacle as a lead but rapidly progresses to the required distance and maintains approximately the maximum distance over the Gamble. The approach to the Gamble is marginally simplified by the use of a Spread Hurdle. This form of jump requires the dog to have speed and distance which effectively encourages the dog to gain distance from the handler. Additionally the curve of the

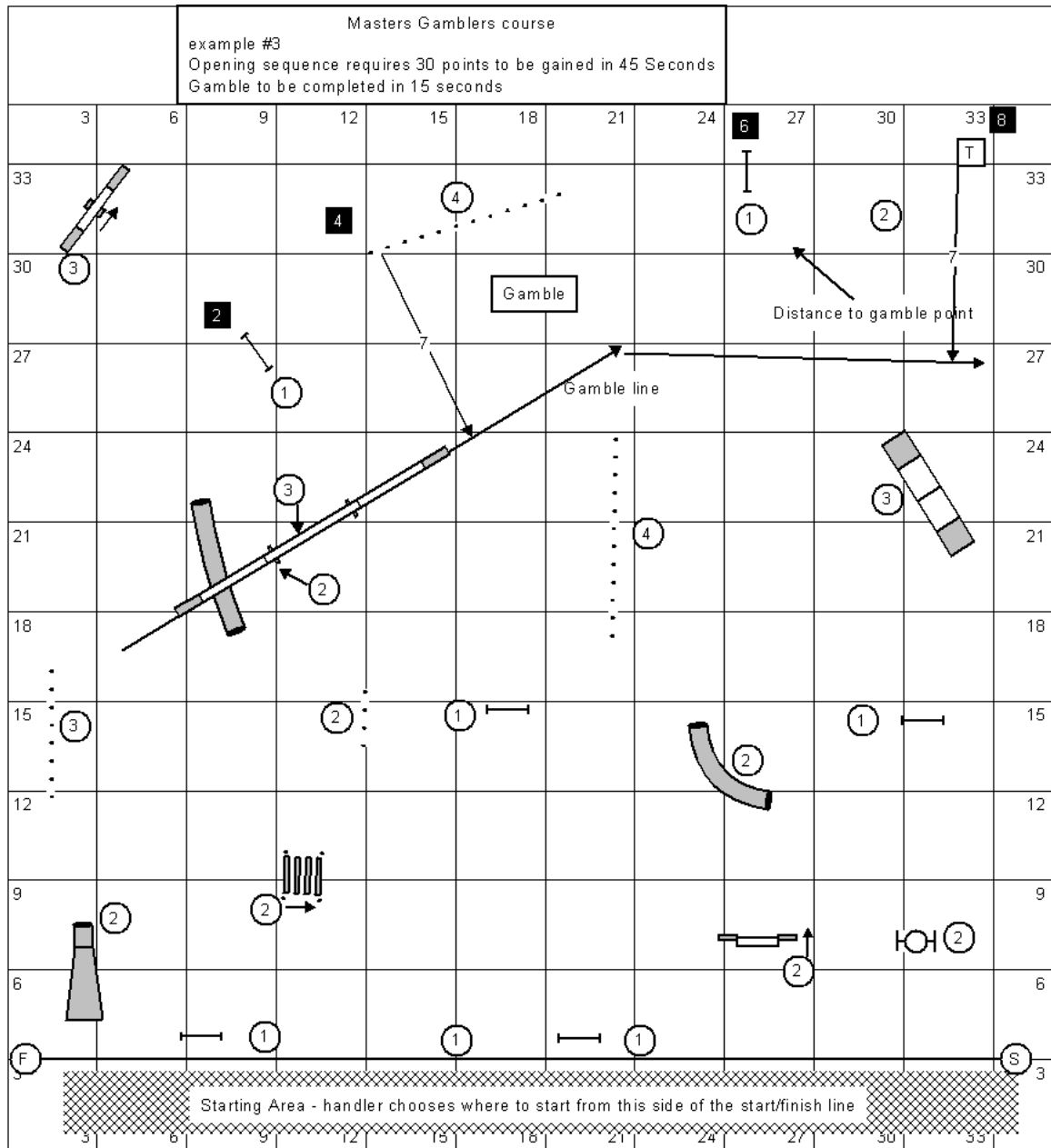
Gamble flows toward the Handler encouraging a natural flow where the dog can be maintained at a common distance.

### Gamblers Masters Course 2



Gamblers Masters Course 2 provides a demonstration of a Gamble that requires a high standard of distance handling. The Dog is required to travel away from the Handler to the Scramble, gain the Contact, come toward the Handler to perform the Hurdle and then travel away to the Flexi tunnel and finally the Table. Apart from demonstrating a high level of handling this course demonstrates the possibility of a Dog re-crossing the Distance Handling Line during the Gamble. Providing the Handler does not touch the Dog or the Line, no penalties will be gained for the Dog crossing the line.

### Gamblers Masters Course 3



Gamblers Masters Course 3 Provides a challenge of weavers at a distance with a finish on the Table. The Distance Handling section is provided behind a natural barrier of the Dog Walk. This forms an increased mental challenge than an open area challenge and requires the dog to be able to enter the Weave Poles correctly at a distance. The SeeSaw does not form a part of the Gamble but it is placed at a distance from the general equipment to ensure safety and to generate Handler's strategy to use the scoring equipment to the best advantage.

**5.8. Variations:**

- 5.8.1. As the capability of teams become more mature, the challenges can be modified from a relatively straight line approach and performance to include various transitions in the higher classes where a handler is required to work a dog away from themselves followed by calling the dog close and then to send the dog away to an obstacle. (Refer to examples).
- 5.8.2. The transition to these more complex challenges is recommended to be taken under advisement and agreement with judges Training Schemes.

Please note there is NO Open level in Gamblers