

Urban Rat Race: Competitors Handbook

Revised April 2025



**Oxford Dog Sports Incorporated &
All Breed International Dog Shows**

ABIDS

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Section 1 - Overview

1.1 History

Country Rat Race (CRR) was developed by All Breed International Dog Shows (ABIDS) in 2021 to provide a sport for all breeds of dogs who may enjoy a rat sport in a rural environment. The development of Urban Rat Race (URR) quickly followed in 2022 to provide a rat sport which could be enjoyed year-round, with the goal to replicate an urban city environment where rats may typically be located. Both CRR and URR are scent-based sports which are inspired by elements of Barn Hunt, Earth Dog, Trailing & Locating, as well as tracking.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of URR is to demonstrate a canine's ability to locate vermin in an urban environment. It tests the dog's drive, combined with the ability to work effectively with their handler as a team.

1.3 The Rats

URR prioritizes the safety of the rats used at the forefront of the sport. All rats are contained in secure bite-proof tubes which are then secured onto boards or contained in a safe location. Dogs are permitted to “work” the tubes, however any dog that is overly rough with the tube (i.e. picking up the tube) will be given a fault, with further instances resulting in a disqualification. The care and well-being of the rats is prioritized, with the rats rotated so that they are not being worked for the entire duration of the trial.

Section 2 - General Rules

2.1 Competitors

- Competitors may touch objects to draw the dog's attention to areas, but may not lift up or otherwise move objects to help the dog search.
- Handlers can compete with more than one dog within the same level/element, **except for the Detective and Investigator levels, Junkyard Extreme, and team events.** For scenarios in which running more than one dog is permitted, the judge should be notified beforehand such that a hide change is performed prior to the handler running their second dog.
- Handlers may reward their dog in the ring after each find. However, must be careful not to drop food on the floor, or they will incur a fault.
- **Handlers are not to discuss the details of a run with other handlers until after all dogs within that class and trial have completed their runs.**

2.2 Dogs

- Bitches in season may not compete.
- Dogs who mark in the ring will be disqualified.
- When possible, an inspector dog will run the course first to ensure **that the course is fair,** and that the hides are findable. The inspector dog will be an experienced dog assigned by the judge. **However, occasionally an inspector dog may not be available.**

Section 3 - Elements

3.1 Tubes

- Tubes are placed in one or more rows **or shapes.**
- **The tubes will not be obstructed in any way, and no props will be used within the search area.**
- **Tubes will be placed on the floor, not on, in, or under items.**

3.2 Unobstructed

- **The Unobstructed element serves as a transition between the Tubes and Obstructed elements.**
- **The tubes are randomly placed in an area with props. The props will not obstruct any tubes. The tubes are not to be under, in, or on top of any item. All sides of the tube should be accessible.**

3.3 Obstructed

- Tubes are placed randomly throughout a search area, and may be hidden under, on, or within items.
- Obstructed searches at all levels will be given an additional 30 seconds in time to complete the search than other elements.

Section 4 - Levels

- There are 6 levels within Urban Rat Race: Rookie, Clever, Adventurer, Explorer, Detective, and Investigator. In all levels, distractions may be food, toys, or a false den (a used rat tube with bedding).
- Within all levels, an additional 30 seconds is given for obstructed searches.
- Handlers are permitted to ask for the elapsed or remaining time during their run. Warnings for the amount of time remaining may be provided by the judge as a courtesy.

4.1 Rookie

Rats: 2

Distractions: None

Height Limit: On the floor

Time: 1.5 minutes (2 minutes for obstructed searches)

Tubes: 8 (up to 4 may be obstructed)

Area: Approximately 100-200 sq ft.

Leash: On leash

4.2 Clever

Rats: 3

Distractions: Up to 1

Height Limit: No higher than on a chair (up to 2 ft)

Time: 2 minutes (2.5 minutes for obstructed searches)

Tubes: 10-12 (up to 8 may be obstructed)

Area: Approximately 200-300 sq ft.

Leash: On leash

4.3 Adventurer

Rats: 4

Distractions: Up to 2

Height Limit: No higher than on a chair (up to 2 ft)

Time: 3 minutes (3.5 minutes for obstructed searches)

Tubes: 12-14 (up to 10 may be obstructed)

Area: Approximately 400-600 sq ft.

Leash: Optional, if running as Excellent

4.4 Explorer

Rats: 6

Distractions: Up to 3

Height Limit: No higher than on a table* (up to 3 ft)

Time: 4 minutes (4.5 minutes for obstructed searches)

Tubes: 14-16 (up to 12 may be obstructed)

Area: Approximately 600-800 sq ft.

Leash: Optional, if running as Excellent

**An accessible path is required for small dogs to be able to access high tubes without needing to be lifted up. Handlers can still lift their dogs up if they can/wish to do so.*

- Handlers can **not** compete with more than one dog within the following two levels:

4.5 Detective

Rats: Unknown - up to 4

Distractions: Up to 4

Height Limit: No higher than on a table* (up to 3 ft)

Time: 4 minutes (4.5 minutes for obstructed searches)

Tubes: 16-18 (up to 14 may be obstructed)

Area: Up to 1000 sq ft.

Leash: Optional, if running as Excellent

**An accessible path is required for small dogs to be able to access high tubes without needing to be lifted up. Handlers can still lift their dogs up if they can/wish to do so.*

4.6 Investigator

Rats: Unknown - up to 6

Distractions: Up to 4

Height Limit: No higher than on a table* (up to 3 ft)

Time: 4.5 minutes (5 minutes for obstructed searches)

Tubes: 18-20 (any number/all may be obstructed)

Area: Up to 1000 sq ft.

Leash: Optional, if running as Excellent

**An accessible path is required for small dogs to be able to access high tubes without needing to be lifted up. Handlers can still lift their dogs up if they can/wish to do so.*

Section 5 - Titles and Distinctions

5.1 Element Titles

- An Element title is earned after completing 2 successful runs in any order within each level.
- Element titles are to be earned consecutively as follows:
 - **Tubes:** Rookie Tubes (URR-RT), Clever Tubes (URR-CT), Adventurer Tubes (URR-AT), Explorer Tubes (URR-ET), Detective Tubes (URR-DT), Investigator Tubes (URR-IT)
 - **Unobstructed:** Rookie Unobstructed (URR-RU), Clever Unobstructed (URR-CU), Adventurer Unobstructed (URR-AU), Explorer Unobstructed (URR-EU), Detective Unobstructed (URR-DU), Investigator Unobstructed (URR-IU)
 - **Obstructed:** Rookie Obstructed (URR-RO), Clever Obstructed (URR-CO), Adventurer Obstructed (URR-AO), Explorer Obstructed (URR-EO), Detective Obstructed (URR-DO), Investigator Obstructed (URR-IO)

5.2 Rat Dog Titles

- Once a dog has earned all three element titles (Tubes, Unobstructed, and Obstructed) within a level, they earn the Rat Dog title for that level. These titles must be earned in the following order:
 - Urban Rat Race Rookie Rat Dog (URR-RRD)
 - Urban Rat Race Clever Rat Dog (URR-CRD)

- Urban Rat Race Adventurer Rat Dog (URR-ARD)
- Urban Rat Race Explorer Rat Dog (URR-ERD)
- Urban Rat Race Detective Rat Dog (URR-DRD)
- Urban Rat Race Investigator Rat Dog (URR-IRD)
- Once a Rat Dog title has been earned for the given level, dogs may then begin earning runs towards a Championship title for that level.
- Dogs who have obtained a title in another rat sport such as Barn Hunt, Earth Dog, or Trailing & Locating, may skip the Rookie level and go directly into the Clever level. If they do so, they will not be able to earn the Rookie Rat Dog title, or any of the Rookie element titles.
- At no time will dogs be required to complete their run off lead. All titles can be earned on a leash at all levels of competition. Running dogs off leash is optional only for the Excellent distinction.

5.3 Excellent Distinction

- Handlers may request to run their dogs off leash at the Adventurer, Explorer, Detective, and Investigator levels to earn an Excellent distinction title.
 - For example, if a dog completes the 2 required passes of Adventurer Tubes while off leash, the dog would earn the title of Urban Rat Race Adventurer Tubes Excellent (URR-ATX)
- Judges may make the decision to disallow a dog from running the course off leash based on their observations of the dog in the ring. Behaviours which may result in a dog being unable to run off leash may include, but is not limited to, how rough they are with the materials, props, and/or rat tubes.
- **The judge's ruling is always final and will not be challenged in any way.**

5.4 Championship Titles

- Championship titles are earned for each level, with a given number of successful passes within the obstructed element.
 - **Champion:** Requires the title in the same level of Obstructed element, and is earned after 4 successful passes within the level. The titles are as follows and is obtained in the following order: Rookie Champion (URR-RCH), Clever Champion (URR-CCH), Adventurer Champion (URR-ACH), Explorer Champion (URR-ECH), Detective Champion (URR-DCH), Investigator Champion (URR-ICH)
 - **Grand Champion:** Requires the title in the same level from Champion, and is earned after 4 successful passes within the level. Titles are as follows and obtained in the following order: Rookie Grand Champion (URR-RGCH), Clever Grand Champion (URR-CGCH), Adventurer Grand Champion (URR-AGCH), Explorer Grand Champion (URR-EGCH), Detective Grand Champion (URR-DGCH), Investigator Grand Champion (URR-IGCH)
 - **Supreme Champion:** Requires the title in the same level from Grand Champion, and is earned after 3 successful passes within the level. The titles are as follows and is obtained in the following order: Rookie Supreme Champion (URR-RSCH), Clever Supreme Champion (URR-CSCH), Adventurer Supreme Champion (URR-ASCH), Explorer Supreme Champion (URR-ESCH), Detective Supreme Champion (URR-DSCH), Investigator Supreme Champion (URR-ISCH)

- **Ultimate Champion:** Requires the title in the same level from Supreme Champion, and is earned after 3 successful passes within the level. The titles are as follows and is obtained in the following order: Rookie Ultimate Champion (URR-RUCH), Clever Ultimate Champion (URR-CUCH), Adventurer Ultimate Champion (URR-AUCH), Explorer Ultimate Champion (URR-EUCH), Detective Ultimate Champion (URR-DUCH), Investigator Ultimate Champion (URR-IUCH)
- **Royal Champion:** Requires the title in the same level from Ultimate Champion, and is earned after 5 successful passes within the level. The titles are as follows and is obtained in the following order: Rookie Royal Champion (URR-RRCH), Clever Royal Champion (URR-CRCH), Adventurer Royal Champion (URR-ARCH), Explorer Royal Champion (URR-ERCH), Detective Royal Champion (URR-DRCH), Investigator Royal Champion (URR-IRCH)
- **Legendary Champion:** Requires the title in the same level from Royal Champion, and is earned after 5 successful passes within the level. The titles are as follows and is obtained in the following order: Rookie Legendary Champion (URR-RLCH), Clever Legendary Champion (URR-CLCH), Adventurer Legendary Champion (URR-ALCH), Explorer Legendary Champion (URR-ELCH), Detective Legendary Champion (URR-DLCH), Investigator Legendary Champion (URR-ILCH)

Section 6 - Faults

6.1 Reasons for Faults

- Faults are given in the form of a time penalty throughout all levels and challenge games of URR. The amount of time penalty given is determined on the type of fault, level, and challenge game.
 - A false alert on a tube which does not contain a rat will be provided a time penalty per fault based on the Schedule of Faults (6.2).
 - Dogs who are overly rough with the tubes will receive a time penalty of 10 seconds for the first instance of the fault. Further instances may result in a disqualification (6.3).
 - Dropping food within the search area will result in a 5 second time penalty per instance.

6.2 Schedule of Faults

- Rookie, Clever, and Adventurer:
 - Up to 2 faults are permitted, with a time penalty of 10 seconds per fault.
 - Disqualification is upon the 3rd fault.
- Explorer, Detective, and Investigator:
 - Only 1 fault is permitted, with a time penalty of 15 seconds added for the fault.
 - Disqualification is upon the 2nd fault.

6.3 Disqualifications

- Occasionally, a judge may indicate that a dog/handler team did not qualify when they completed their run. **The judge's ruling is final and should not be challenged in any way.**

- Reasons in which would disqualify a dog/handler team includes:
 - Dogs who are overly rough with the tubes/lifting tubes off the ground if a previous instance has occurred during that run.
 - Dogs who mark/eliminate in the ring.
 - Handlers who move/manipulate the area to make it easier for their dog to complete searches, such as lifting open boxes, moving items, etc.
 - Handlers who overly question the judge, marker, hide official, or other individuals assisting with the event within the ring.
 - Dog/handler teams who exceed the time of their run, including any time penalties given.

Section 7 - Challenge Games

Urban Rat Race Challenge Games have been designed to add a new level of challenge than the regular Urban Rat Race program. Some of the challenges may be environment or time. **Challenge games are not eligible to earn High in Trial.**

7.1 Fantastic Five

- **Criteria:** The challenge of Fantastic Five is to find a total of 5 hidden rats within 1 minute. The area will be set up either as either unobstructed or tubes. Each rat found will count as 10 points, with a total of 50 possible points being earned. 10 points are removed upon each false alert. The points are used for placement only and do not accumulate in any way. Handlers are permitted to enter more than one dog per trial in Fantastic Five.
 - Tubes:** 12-14
 - Distractions:** Up to 2
 - Area:** Approximately 400-600 sq ft.
- **Placement:** Placement is based on the highest score within the time allowed. If there is a tie, placement is prioritized based on the fastest time. Placements will count towards the end-of-year standing points.
- **Titles:** Dogs who complete the challenge 5 times, successfully finding all 5 rats within the time allowed for each, will earn the title of URR-FF. This title may be multiplied by successfully completing the event an additional 5 times, earning the title of URR-FF1, with an additional 5 successful runs earning URR-FF2, and so on.

7.2 The Ten

- **Criteria:** Within The Ten, handlers and their dogs are challenged to find a total of 10 hidden rats within a period of 2 minutes. The area will be set up either as either unobstructed or tubes. Each rat found will count as 10 points, with a total possible score of 100 points. 10 points will be removed for each false alert. The points are used for placement only and do not accumulate in any way. Handlers are permitted to enter more than one dog per trial in The Ten.
 - Tubes:** 14-16
 - Distractions:** Up to 3

Area: Approximately 600-800 sq ft.

- **Placement:** Placement is based on the highest score within the time allowed. If there is a tie, placement is prioritized based on the fastest time. Placements will count towards the end-of-year standing points.
- **Titles:** Dogs who complete the challenge 5 times, successfully finding all 10 rats within the time allowed for each, will earn the title of URR-TT. This title may be multiplied by successfully completing the event an additional 5 times, earning the title of URR-TT1, with an additional 5 successful runs earning URR-TT2, and so on.

7.3 Junkyard

- **Criteria:** Junkyard is a challenge game that is designed to replicate searching for rats in an outdoor urban environment. **All dogs are required to be run on leash.** Handlers are allowed to enter up to 2 dogs per trial. In this level of Junkyard, competitors are to find a known number of rats (3-4) within 3.5 minutes. It should be designed akin to the Adventurer level criteria:
 - **Tubes:** 12-14 (up to 10 may be obstructed)
 - **Distractions:** 2
 - **Area:** Approximately 400-600 sq ft.
 - **Time penalty per fault:** 10 seconds
 - **Number of faults permitted:** 2
- **Placement:** Placement will be based on the fastest time, and will count towards the end-of-year standing points.
- **Titles:** The URR-J title will be earned after a successful completion of 5 qualifying runs. This title may be multiplied with an additional 5 qualifying runs completed, earning URR-J2, and so on.

7.4 Junkyard Extreme

- **Criteria:** Junkyard Extreme is the next level to Junkyard, however will be designed akin to the Detective level. **All dogs are required to be run on leash.** Handlers are only allowed to enter one dog per trial. In this additional level of Junkyard, competitors are to find a known number of rats (5-6) within a total time of 4-4.5 minutes, as decided by the judge. It should be designed akin to the Detective criteria:
 - **Tubes:** 16-18 (up to 14 may be obstructed)
 - **Distractions:** 4
 - **Area:** Up to 1000 sq ft.
 - **Time penalty per fault:** 15 seconds
 - **Number of faults permitted:** 1
- **Placement:** Placement will be based on the fastest time, and will count towards the end-of-year standing points.
- **Titles:** The URR-JX title will be earned after a successful completion of 5 qualifying runs. This title may be multiplied with an additional 5 qualifying runs completed, earning URR-JX1, with an additional 5 qualifying runs earning URR-JX2, and so on.

Section 8 - Team Events

8.1 Tag Teams

- **Criteria:** Tag Teams is a challenge for competitors with the task of collaborating and working with others. All dogs are required to be on leash. Teams are assigned through a draw on the day of the trial. Handlers are only allowed to enter one dog per trial. A total of 8 rats are to be found within 7 minutes.
 - **Number of tubes:** 20-24
 - **Area:** Up to 1000 sq ft.
 - **Distractions:** Up to 4
 - **Faults:** A time penalty of 10 seconds will be applied for each fault (false alerts, head starts prior to teammates crossing their lines, and/or tapping out).
- **Procedure:** Both handlers and their dogs will enter the ring, then go to their start lines at opposite corners of the search area. Teams will be allowed to communicate with one another in the ring, however only one handler may be searching within the ring at a time. Handlers will search the area to locate a rat or incur a fault by calling a false alert, then are to return to their designated corner. A handler may tag out after they have been searching for a minimum of 30 seconds, however will incur a fault for each instance. Handlers must wait for their teammate to return back to their start line prior to crossing their line to start their search, or will incur a fault for each instance. The run will continue until all rats are located, or until the team times out.
- **Placement:** Placement will be based on the fastest time, and will count towards the end-of-year standing points.

8.2 Mega Teams

More information to be released soon.

8.3 Junkyard Teams

More information to be released in 2026.

Section 9 - Glossary

9.1 End of Year Standing Points

- Each year, each dog participating in URR accumulates points based on placements within each trial.
- The placements accumulate points based on the following:
 - 4 or more dogs placed within that class, level, and element, per trail:
 - 1st place - 400 points
 - 2nd place - 300 points
 - 3rd place - 200 points
 - 4th place - 100 points
 - Qualifying - 50 points

- 3 dogs placed:
 - 1st place - 300 points
 - 2nd place - 200 points
 - 3rd place - 100 points
- 2 dogs placed:
 - 1st place - 200 points
 - 2nd place - 100 points
- 1 dog placed - 100 points
- High in Trial - an additional 500 points

9.2 Reference Sheet

Level	Rookie	Clever	Adventurer	Explorer	Detective	Investigator
Rats	2	3	4	6	Up to 4	Up to 6
Tubes	8	10-12	12-14	14-16	16-18	18-20
Obstructed tubes	Up to 4	Up to 8	Up to 10	Up to 12	Up to 14	Up to all
Distractions	No	Up to 1	Up to 2	Up to 3	Up to 4	
Area (approximate)	100-200 sq ft.	200-300 sq ft.	400-600 sq ft.	600-800 sq ft.	Up to 1000 sq ft.	
Height Limit*	On the floor	No higher than on a chair (up to 2 ft)		No higher than on a table* (up to 3 ft)		
Lead**	On lead		Optional, if running as Excellent			
Time	1.5 minutes	2 minutes	3 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes	4.5 minutes
Obstructed time***	2 minutes	2.5 minutes	3.5 minutes	4.5 minutes	4.5 minutes	5 minutes
# faults permitted	2			1		
Penalty per fault	10 seconds			15 seconds		
Disqualification	Upon 3rd fault			Upon 2nd fault		

* An accessible path is required for small dogs to be able to access high tubes without needing to be lifted up. Handlers can still lift their dogs up if they can/wish to do so.

** Running off leash in Adventurer, Explorer, Detective or Investigator is optional upon the request to run for the Excellent (URR-X) title distinction.

*** An additional 30 seconds is given for obstructed searches.

9.4 Revision History

April 2025 Changes: Formatting revisions.

March 2025 Notable Changes:

- General re-organization of the rulebook, addition of the table of contents and glossary.
- Re-wording of small details within the General Rules.
- Handlers are no longer permitted to run more than one dog in the following levels/elements/events: Detective, Investigator, Junkyard Extreme, Tag Teams, and Mega Teams.
- **Elements:** Several clarifications have been made to the definitions and conditions of each element. They are outlined as follows:
 - Within the Tubes element, tubes can be placed in one or more rows or shapes. Tubes are not to be obstructed in any way, and no props are used within the search area. The tubes are placed on the floor, and are not to be in, on, or under any items.
 - Added definition of the purpose of the Unobstructed element: "... serves as a transition between the Tubes and Obstructed elements." Within Unobstructed, tubes are not to be under, in, or on top of any item. All sides of the tube should be accessible.
- **Levels:** Several additions have been made to clarify the progression of each level. For all levels, distractions can be food, toys, or a false den. Handlers are permitted to ask for the elapsed or remaining time during their run. Judges can provide a warning for the time remaining as a courtesy. Within each level, the following clarifications have been added:
 - The height limit of tubes.
 - The allotted time to complete the searches.
 - How many tubes may be obstructed within the Obstructed element.
 - The approximate area.
 - Distractions can be up to a certain amount.
 - Accessible pathways are required for small dogs so that they may access high tubes in Explorer, Detective, and Investigator levels, without the dog needing to be lifted. Handlers can still lift their dogs up if they can and wish to do so.
- **Titles and Distinctions:** Reorganization of titles and distinctions from descriptions per level to descriptions per title/distinction.
 - **Rat Dog Titles:** Additional clarification for the Rat Dog titles.
 - **Excellent Distinction:** Additional clarification to the abbreviations of the Excellent distinction titles.
 - **Championship Titles:** Condensed into one section, per championship title. Addition of two new championship titles: Royal and Legendary.
- **Faults:** Two instances in which may get a handler disqualified are highlighted as follows:
 - Handlers who move/manipulate the area to make it easier for their dog to complete searches, such as lifting open boxes, moving items, etc.
 - Handlers who overly question the judge, marker, hide official, or other individuals assisting with the event within the ring.

○ **Challenge Games:**

- **Fantastic Five & The Ten:** The condition of an additional 30 seconds if judges present an obstructed search was removed. Moving forward, the search for Fantastic Five will be set up as either an Unobstructed or Tubes search. The number of tubes, distractions, and area size is outlined for clarification.
- **Junkyard & Junkyard Extreme:** Handlers are allowed to enter up to 2 dogs in Junkyards, and only 1 dog in Junkyard Extreme. Junkyard should be designed similar to the Adventurer criteria, while Junkyard Extreme should be designed similar to the Detective criteria, each now with the number of tubes and area outlined.
- **Team Events:** Handlers are only permitted to enter 1 dog per trial. Tag Team has been clarified to include 20-24 tubes, be an area of up to 1000 sq ft., and have up to 4 distractions.