

Barn Hunt: Basic Rules & Trial Levels for Beginners

Barn Hunt is a fun, instinct-based sport where dogs search for safely enclosed rats hidden in a straw bale course. Handlers must read their dog's signals and correctly call 'RAT!' when the dog finds the hidden tube.

Basic Rules for Barn Hunt

- **The Goal:** Your dog must find the rat, go through a tunnel, and climb on a bale within a set time.
- **The Course:** A straw bale maze with hidden rat tubes, empty tubes, and bedding-only tubes.
- **The Handler's Role:** You must not touch your dog or physically direct them. You cannot touch or kneel on the floor during the search. Dogs must run naked - no collars, harnesses, or leashes are allowed on your dog while they run.
- **Time Limits:** Each class has a specific time limit (see below).
- **Rat Safety:** Rats are secure in ventilated tubes and must never be harmed. Tubes must stay as horizontally as possible when being retrieved.

Barn Hunt Trial Levels & Time Limits

Instinct Test (Optional Entry Level) (RATI)

- Find: the 1 rat tube (no tunnel/climb required)
Secured in a cradle 1 Rat tube
1 Empty, 1 Litter tube, Covered lightly with straw
- Time Limit: 1 minute
- Pass/Fail: No placements, just qualifications.

Novice Level (RATN)

- Find: 1 rat
- Also placed in the ring will be 1 Empty and 1 Litter tube
- Tunnel: 1 straight tunnel (at least 2 bales long)
- Climb: Required
- Time Limit: 2 minutes
- Qualifying Runs for Title: 3

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Open Level RATO

- Find: 2 rat tubes
- Also placed in the ring will be 1 Empty and 2 Litter tubes
- Tunnel: 1 turn (L or U shape)
- Climb: Required
- Time Limit: 2 minutes, 30 seconds
- Qualifying Runs for Title: 3

Senior Level (RATS)

- Find: 4 rat tubes
- Also placed in the ring will be 1 empty tube, and 3 Litter tubes
- Tunnel: Longer, 2-turn tunnel
- Climb: Required
- Time Limit: 3 minutes, 30 seconds
- Qualifying Runs for Title: 3

Master Level (A) (RATM)

- Find: 1 to 5 rat Tubes (judge decides; handler doesn't know how many)
- No Empty Tubes
- Litter tube is random up to 7 depending on how many rats, total 8 tubes in the ring during each run including rat tubes
- Tunnel: Complex, 3+ turns
- Climb: Required
- Time Limit: 4 minutes, 30 seconds
- Qualifying Runs for Title: 5 Under 2 different judges
- Possible distance Challenge

Common Disqualifications (NQs)

- Calling 'RAT!' on the wrong tube.
- Touching your dog after the run starts.
- Touching bales of straw after the run starts.
- Not completing all required elements (missed tunnel or climb).
- The handler walks around the ring with collar & leash after the run starts.
- Running out of time.
- Dog peeing or pooping in the ring

Crazy 8s

- Open to all dog levels
- 2 Minutes
- 8 rats total and 4 litter tubes
- To Score you must find at least 1 rat
- 10 points are given for each rat found
- 10 points for one climb (you do not receive additional points for multiple climbs)
- 10 points a tunnel (you do not receive additional points for multiple tunnels)
- -20 points for no Climb
- -20 points for no tunnel
- -20 points incorrect rat call 1 incorrect call per run
- Titles are accumulated by points