“City Rat, Country Rat” Games League Judges’ Briefings

2026 Chicago Version



General Info

General Briefing Highlights

- Dog must enter/exit ring on leash but run "naked' **OR with just a flat buckle or snap collar (no dangling attachments)** - put leash in bucket, on ground
- Time starts when handler or dog breaks plane of start box
- No intentional touching of dog/course/equipment
- No treats in ring
- Can't push/shove/force dog into tunnel
- Eliminating in ring = NQ & dismissed
- If NQd but not dismissed, judge can show a RAT tube if desired
- Must call RAT before pick up tube (but OK if pick up before judge confirms)
- If tube is Litter and the game allows faults, can remove tube after fault and continue
- Tube removal = Remove/Restrain (2 feet from wrangler)/Redirect (same as Barn Hunt)
- Praise period - after correct call, can touch dog, can pick dog up (if replace same spot)
- Handler can end run with no penalty: stops time and team keeps accumulated points

General Briefing Highlights

- Dog must enter/exit ring on leash but run "naked' **OR with just a flat buckle or snap collar (no dangling attachments)** - put leash in bucket, on ground, carry, or put in pocket
- Time starts when ALL dog's feet leave start box/line (dog leaves first OR with handler)
- No intentional touching of dog/equipment (except where judge permission rule applies)
- Can treat & use toys in ring (start, rat, B/B, recall) but may NOT use treats to lure
- Can't push/shove/force dog in/onto burrow or bridge
- Eliminating in ring = NQ & dismissed
- If NQd but not dismissed, judge can show a RAT tube if desired
- Must call RAT before reward dog or touch tube (but OK if pick up before judge confirms)
- If tube is Litter and game allows faults, can remove tube after fault and continue
- Tube removal = Remove/Restrain (4 feet from wrangler)/Redirect (same as Barn Hunt)
- Praise period - after correct call, can touch dog, can pick dog up (if replace same spot)
- Handler can end run with no penalty: stops time and team keeps accumulated points

Month 1 Games

Road Rage Rats

Object of Game:

- Show dog's ability to find rats in a wheeled toy vehicle, wagon, dolly, or cart where every item has a VISIBLE tube (all non-rat tubes are clean/empty, no litter tubes)

Key Facts:

- Level 1: 1 rat, 10-12 total items (3:00)
- Level 2: 2 rats, 12-15 total items (3:00)
- Level 3: 3 rats, 14-17 total items (3:30)
- Level 4: 4 rats, 17-20 total items (4:00)
- Level 5: 1-5 rats, 17-20 total items (4:30) - bonus points for calling "Clear" correctly
- 30 second warning before time expires (in all but Level 5)

Faults: two allowed in L1; 1 allowed in L2-L3; none allowed in L4-L5

Penalties: 10 point fault if tube rolled out of tie-down or container

To Q:

- Find at least one rat within time (and have positive score)

100 points available per run, divided by # of rats; subtract faults to determine total awarded towards Road Rage Rat title (300 pts to title)

CITY RAT GAME - MONTH 1

Village Rats **new game**

Object of Game:

- Show dog's ability to differentiate clean vs. rat tubes in course created entirely of pop-up fabric play tents and plastic playhouses (all non-rat tubes are clean/empty, no litter tubes)

Key Facts:

- Level 1: 1 rat, 2 clean tubes, 5-6 houses (2:30)
- Level 2: 2 rats, 2 clean tubes, 6-7 houses (3:00)
- Level 3: 3 rats, 3 clean tubes, 7-8 houses (3:30)
- Level 4: 4 rats, 4 clean tubes, 8-9 houses (4:00)
- Level 5: 1-5 rats, 4 clean tubes, 9-10+ houses (4:30) - bonus points for calling "Clear" correctly
- 30 second warning before time expires (in all but Level 5)

Faults: two allowed in L1-L2; 1 allowed in L3-L4, none allowed in L5

Penalties: 10 point fault if tube rolled out of container

To Q:

- Find at least one rat within time (and have positive score)

100 points available per run, divided by # of rats; subtract faults to determine total awarded towards Village Rats title (300 pts to title)

COUNTRY RAT GAME - MONTH 1

Ups & Downs

Senior/Master Dogs:	Time: 3:00	Rats: 4	Litter: 2
Novice/Open Dogs:	Time: 2:30	Rats: 2	Litter: 1

Object of the Game:

- Dog finds rats at varying height placements

Key Facts:

- Half of tubes on ground
- Half of tubes elevated
- Higher rats worth more points

How It Ends:

- Run out of time (no penalty) OR
- When all rats found

Scoring:

- 4 points per rat found elevated
- 2 points per rat found on ground
- 1 point for tunnel
- Max score: 13 for S/M or 7 for N/O

Faults:

- One false alert allowed: -1 point penalty
- 2nd false alert: NQ

To Q: Find at least one rat

Month 2 Games

A-Maze-ing Rat

Object of Game:

- Dog demonstrate puzzle solving skills to get to rat

Levels:

- Level 1 = 1 rat (2:00)
- Level 2 = 1 rat, 1 empty (2:30)
- Level 3 = 1 rat, 1 empty, 1 litter (3:00)
- Level 4 = 1 rat, 2 litters (3:30)
- Level 5 = 1 rat, 2 litters, 1 dead end (4:00)

Key Facts:

- X-pens arranged in spiral formation with rat at center
- Judge calls "rat"; can call if dog commits to tube from wrong side of fence
- See level specifics for handler limits/allowances

Faults: no false alerts possible (judge calling!); 1 fault allowed in L1 & L2 (luring with food, rolling rat out, touching dog in maze if directing from perimeter); no faults allowed in L3-L5

Penalties: 10 point fault if tube rolled out of container; no penalty for dog coming out of maze, unlimited restarts within time; NQ if handler enters maze/leaves start box before "rat" call

To Q:

- Find & call rat within time

Qualifying Run earns 100 points towards A-Maze-ing Rat title (300 pts to title at each level)

CITY RAT GAME - MONTH 2

Dump Hunter

Time: 2:00 Rats: 1 Litter: 0

Object of Game:

- Dog hunts independently and works at a distance; handler reads dog at a distance

Key Facts:

- Just 1 rat at all 3 levels, no other tubes
- No bridge or burrow
- 3 levels with increasing distance to rat:
  - Level 1 = 5'
  - Level 2 = 10'
  - Level 3 = 15'
- 30 second warning before time expires

Faults: no faults allowed

Penalties: NQ if handler crosses the start line or leaves the start box before calling "rat"

To Q:

- Find & call rat within time and with handler staying behind line or in start box

Qualifying Run earns 100 points towards Dump Hunter title (300 pts to title at each level)

CITY RAT GAME - MONTH 2

Ultimate Distance

Time: 2:00 Rats: 1 Litter: 0

Object of Game:

- Dog hunts independently and works at a distance *while handler sits in chair*

Key Facts:

- Just 1 rat at all 3 levels: not visible but not buried deeply
- No bridge or burrow
- 3 levels with increasing distance to rat:
  - Level 1 = 5'
  - Level 2 = 10'
  - Level 3 = 15'
- 30 second warning before time expires

Faults: no faults allowed

Penalties: n/a

To Q:

- Find & call rat within time and with handler staying in chair

Qualifying Run earns 100 points towards Ultimate Distance title (300 pts to title at each level)

COUNTRY RAT GAME - MONTH 2

Flip A Coin

Senior/Master Dogs:	Time: 3:00	Rats: 4	Litter: 2
Novice/Open Dogs:	Time: 2:30	Rats: 2	Litter: 1

Object of the Game:

- Dog finds rats at a limited distance from handler

Key Facts:

- Course split in half = one side is heads; other is tails
- Half tubes hidden on each side
- Handler has to stay on side chosen by coin flip until correct call is made
- After correct call can go in for praise/removal…
- But then must go directly back to designated side

How It Ends:

- Run out of time (no penalty) OR
- When all rats found

Scoring:

- 2 points per rat found on handler side
- 4 points per rat found on opposite side
- 1 point for tunnel
- Max score: 13 for S/M or 7 for N/O

Faults:

- One false alert allowed: -1 point penalty
- 2nd false alert: NQ

Other Penalties:

- NQ if handler crosses line before rat is called
- NQ if hander does not return to designated side immediately after praise/removal

To Q: Find at least one rat

Week 3 Games

Silent Hunt

Object of Game:

- Show dog's ability to find rat/s without handler motion or verbal assistance (handler focuses on observing)

Levels:

- Level 1 = 1 rat (2:00)
- Level 2 = 2 rats (3:00)
- Level 3 = 3 rats (3:30)

Key Facts:

- No litter tubes, bridge or burrow
- Judge calls "Rat"
- Handler must remain "perfectly still & silent" after releasing/cuing dog
- Keep points accumulated when game ends

Faults: no false alerts possible (judge calling!); if Handler calls "Rat":

- 10 point fault (L1 only)
- Ends game in L2 & L3

Penalties: handler moves/speaks when not allowed, game ends but keep points accumulated

To Q:

- Dog finds rat; handler does not move/speak (except if call "Rat" in L1 as stated above)

100 points available per run, divided by # of rats; subtract faults to determine total awarded towards Silent Hunt title (300 pts to title)

Rat Trap

Object of Game:

- Test dog's ability to find rat in ring full of many tubes (all non-rat tubes are clean/empty, no litter tubes)

Key Facts:

- Level 1: 1 rat, 12-20 total tubes (2:00)
- Level 2: 2 rats, 12-25 total tubes (2:30)
- Level 3: 3 rats, 12-25 total tubes (3:00)
- Level 4: 4 rats, 15-30 total tubes (3:30)
- Level 5: 2-10 rats, 15-30 total tubes (4:00) - bonus points for calling "Clear" correctly
- 30 second warning before time expires (in all but Level 5)
- Can run on or off leash

Faults: two allowed in L1-L3; 1 allowed in L4, none allowed in L5

Penalties: 10 point fault if tube rolled out of container

To Q:

- Find at least one rat within time (and have positive score)

100 points available per run, divided by # of rats; subtract faults to determine total awarded towards Rat Trap title (300 pts to title)

COUNTRY RAT GAME - MONTH 3

Burrow Bonanza

Time: 2:00 Rats: 1 Litter: 0

Object of the Game:

- Do as many unique tunnels as possible (up to 8 options available!)

Key Facts:

- Tunnels can be taken once each direction for points
- Rats can be called & removed but have no value
- If your dog finds a tube, best to just call it because no litters out!

How It Ends:

- Run out of time (no penalty) OR
- When all tunnels completed

Scoring:

- 1 point for doing a unique tunnel + 1 point for each turn:
  - Straight tunnels = 1 pt
  - 1 turn tunnel = 2 pt
  - 2 turn tunnel = 3 pt…..

Faults: n/a; judge notifies & run continues

To Q: Complete at least one tunnel

Optional/Extra Game

COUNTRY RAT GAME - OPTIONAL

Madd Ratter

Time: 2:00 Rats: 8 Litter: 4

Object of the Game:

- Score as many points as possible

Key Facts:

- Points earned mostly by finding rats
- But tunneling also matters…
- And faults are costly!

How It Ends:

- Run out of time (no penalty) OR
- When all rats found & tunnel complete

Scoring:

- 2 points per rat found
- 1 point for tunnel
- Perfect run doubles score (find all rats + tunnel)!
- Max score: 17 (34 if doubled)

Faults:

- Two false alerts allowed: -1 point penalty each
- 3rd false alert: NQ (three strike rule)

Other Penalties:

- -2 points for not tunneling

To Q: Find at least one rat (and have positive score)