

BARN HUNT NOTES

Barn Hunt is a sport that asks dogs to find live rats (in a tube) that's hidden in a maze of hay bales.

Depending on the level, the time allowed to find the rats will vary.

Also there are tubes hidden in the hay that do not contain a live rat. Those tubes can either be empty or contain rat litter but not a live rat. This is designed to fool the handler or the dog or both. The number of 'fake' tubes is dependent on the dog's competition level.

In addition to finding the rats, the dog must also get all 4 legs up on a bale of hay (4 off the floor) and must also traverse a tunnel, the difficulty of which is, again, determined by the level at which the dog is competing.

The number of rats the dog must find is based on the level that the dog has attained.

Instinct - Must find a rat from among 3 tubes that are lined up in a row in plain sight.

You need just 1 'Q' (Qualifying run) for your instinct designation (RATI)

They have 1 minute to choose which tube contains the live rat. There is no requirement to get 4 off the floor or traverse a tunnel

Novice – Team has 2 minutes to find 1 rat, 4 off the floor and traverse a straight through tunnel. There is one empty tube and one litter tube hidden as well. You need 3 'Qs' to get your Novice title (RATN). The dog must traverse a short straight through tunnel

Open – Team has 2:30 to find the 2 rats. You need 3 'Qs' to get your Open title. (RATO). There is 1 empty tube, 2 litter tubes and 2 rat

tubes. The dog must traverse a single turn tunnel and get 4 off the floor

Senior – Team has 3:30 to find 4 rats. You need 3 ‘Qs’ to get your Senior title (RATS) There is 1 empty tube, 3 litter tubes and 4 rats tubes. The dog must traverse a minimum of a double turn tunnel, but it may be a triple turn tunnel. Dog must also do a 4 off the floor.

Master – You have 4:30 to find the rats. There is 1 empty tube, 3 litter tubes and somewhere between 1 and 5 rat tubes (but you have no idea how many there are.) You need 5 ‘Qs’ to get your Masters title (RATM)

Each tunnel turn is a 90° angle and each level requires ‘4 off the floor’.

You needn’t worry about the safety of the rats. They are raised for this purpose and the tubes are hard plastic with plenty of breathing holes for the animal.

In order to compete in a barn hunt trial, your dog must be registered with the Barn Hunt Association:

<http://barnhunt.com>. The cost to register a dog is \$35.00. At this website, you can find a list of barnhunt competitor rules as well as a nationwide list of upcoming barnhunt trials you can enter.

While some barn hunt trials offer Day of Show entry, most in this area are so popular, they are filled up long before the day of the show.

During the competition, there are several hard and fast rules.

Once you let your dog off leash and the timer begins, you can only touch your dog after he’s found a rat and you need to move him away from the area to allow the rat wrangler (an official) to remove the rat from the competition area.

The handler may not step over and stand on any hay bales. Automatic DQ (disqualify).

You may not bait your dog in any way while in the ring. In fact, you must empty your pockets (bait, phones etc.) prior to entering the ring.

When your dog finds a rat, the handler must raise their hand and yell 'RAT'. At this point, the handler may pick up the tube and hand it to the rat wrangler or he may choose to restrain his dog while the rat wrangler removes the tube from the ring. Should you choose to restrain, you must do so by placing both arms around the dog's neck and pulling him backwards. If you grab him by the nape of his neck or restrain him in any other fashion, you may be DQ'd.

In any contest, if you call 'RAT' and the tube does not contain a rat, the team is DQ'd.

Barn hunt trials are separated into heats with each heat having 5 dogs who are at the same competitive level.

While 1 dog is hunting, the other dogs who have not 'run' must sit in a blind that completely obscures the ring from your sight.

In short, barn hunt is an absolute blast. Any dog can compete. Size does not matter !!