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# **WORLD HOOPERS OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP 2025**

## **Regulations**



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Hoopers is a canine sport aimed at showcasing the highest level of collaboration, communication, and confidence over longer distances between human and dog. The **World Hoopers Open Championship (WHOC)** was created with the intent of giving all types of dogs the opportunity to compete on an international stage dedicated to hoopers.

The WHOC will adhere to the following regulations, outlining the rules for participating in the event. The primary objective is the protection of the dog's health, handlers, and all participants in this global event. Organizers of each edition commit to ensuring adequate competition spaces, proper distances between equipment, and a competition surface in line with international standards.

The championships are governed by the WHOC rules as stated below, the official language is English.

## **2. WHOC ADMISSION**

1. Each National Team entry must come from one National Team Manager only. Candidates wishing to be recognized as National Team Manager should contact [info@whoc.dog](mailto:info@whoc.dog).

National Team Managers are recognized for one edition of WHOC only, new applications must be sent for each consecutive edition.

The list of recognised and candidate National Team Managers for WHOC 2025 is published on the website [whoc.dog](http://whoc.dog).

2. The National Team Manager is responsible for writing a document that explains how people in the country can become members of the WHOC National Team. Each country's team selection process must be non-discriminatory with regard to both handlers and dogs, and must be approved by the WHOC organising committee.

The approved selection processes will be published on [whoc.dog](http://whoc.dog)

3. For the Individual Championships, each participating nation can enter a maximum of 20 participants. Champions of the previous edition are not included in this quota, they can participate as an additional entry for their country's team in the height category for which the champion's title was earned.
4. For the Team Championships, each nation can enter one team for each height category. Each team will consist of maximum 4 participants plus one reserve, selected from the participants that are registered for the Individual Championships too.
5. The entry form will be provided by the WHOC organisation and must be completed before May 30, 2025. Only one entry form must be completed per nation.
6. The registration fee for WHOC 2025 is €80.00 per participant of the Individual Championships. and 200.00€ per team in the Team Championships.
7. Along with the entry form, a proof of payment of all due fees must be sent.



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The registration fees are not refundable.

8. The WHOC organising committee reserves the right to invite eligible combinations by offering a Wild Card.. Wild Cards will not represent any country, they will participate as a private individual.
9. During WHOC 2025 also an International Open Hooper Cup will be held. Participation is open for everybody, not only for members of the WHOC National Teams.  
The entry fee is € 20.00 for participating members of a WHOC National Team.  
The entry fee is € 25.00 for all other participants.
10. For any questions regarding the WHOC 2025 event and information on this regulation, please contact [info@whoc.dog](mailto:info@whoc.dog).

### **3. DOGS**

1. All types of dogs that are healthy, trained and over 15 months are eligible to participate.
2. Pregnant or lactating dogs will not be admitted.
3. Dogs in heat are allowed to compete. The Team Leader is responsible for informing the competition organization about dogs in heat.
4. Dogs that have been exposed to infectious diseases within 21 days prior to the event will not be admitted.
5. Dogs must be vaccinated according to the legislation where WHOC is organised.
6. No dog will be allowed to compete unless it is officially registered in the WHOC list of participants.

### **4. HANDLERS**

1. WHOC is open to all individuals, without discrimination, provided they recognize and respect the rules of WHOC.
2. The handler must be a citizen or long-term resident of the country they will represent.
3. Contestants aged 15 years and over are eligible to participate.
4. Participants are obligated to show absolute respect for dogs, handlers and everybody else at the event. Failure to do so may result in expulsion from the event.
5. The handler (or the caretaker) will be held responsible for all damage done by their dog.
6. While all necessary precautions are taken, WHOC and the event organizers can not be held responsible for the loss of dogs, damage or injury caused to dogs or individuals



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and/or companions, and loss of personal effects during the event.



## **5. HEIGHT CATEGORY**

1. The height categories are determined by the height at the withers:
  - Category 'S' (Small): dogs with a height at the withers of less than 43 cm;
  - Category 'L' (Large) dogs with a height at the withers equal or greater than 43 cm
2. All dogs entered in the category Small will be measured by a measuring official at the event. If a dog is measured to be over height, he will be excluded from competing in the height category entered. The dog may be moved up to a higher height division if desired.

## **6. RING AND COURSE PARAMETERS**

1. The competition ring will be a rectangular area of no less than 1200 m<sup>2</sup>, with the shortest side of no less than 30 m. (minimum area 30 X 40).
2. The exact measurements of the competition ring, as well as the layout of the entrances, must be communicated to the Judge in advance to facilitate the design of the course, considering appropriate distances between the obstacles and any perimeter fencing.
3. The surface of the competition ring must be horizontal, even, flat, free of holes or irregularities that could compromise the movement of the dog. In addition, the surface must ensure good grip for both handler and dogs (artificial grass, natural grass or sand).
4. During the competition, there must be no materials or obstacle inside the competition ring (for example, unused equipment stored at the back of the ring)
5. Course parameters:

<b>NUMBER OF OBSTACLES</b>	<b>DISTANCE BETWEEN OBSTACLES</b>	<b>MCT (Maximum Course Time)</b>	<b>MOST DISTANT OBSTACLE FROM DHA</b>
15-22	S: 7 - 10 m L: 10 - 15 m	1 minute and 30 seconds	18 <DHA<25



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## **7. EQUIPMENT**

1. Basic equipment set for WHOC courses: 20 hoops, 4 gates, 4 barrels, 4 tunnels.
2. A series of numbers, from 1 to 22, to indicate the sequence of the course and 3 letters to indicate the sequence of the wave.
3. Automatic timing system with photocells

### **7.1 Hoop**

Hoops are made of lightweight material but must remain intact in the event of an accidental impact. The upright elements must have a circular section, smooth and free of sharp edges, so as not to injure the dog in the event of an impact. Hoops are colored to be easily distinguishable in the surrounding environment. This obstacle must never be anchored to the ground but must be able to move easily in the event of an impact. There must not be a ground connection between the two sides of the hoop

Measures:

- Width: 80 cm – 90 cm
- Height: 90 cm – 110 cm
- Sides: 40cm – 50cm
- Supports: 30cm – 40cm
- Frame diameter: 2.5cm – 3.5cm

### **7.2 Gate**

Gates are made of lightweight material but must remain intact in the event of an accidental impact. All components have a circular section, are smooth and have no sharp edges so as not to injure the dog in the event of an impact. The filling (uniform color) must allow constant visual contact between the dog and the handler.

Measures:

- Width: 120cm – 130cm
- Height: 80cm – 90cm
- Supports: 35cm – 40cm



The dog must pass the gate at the opposite side of the position of the number posted on the gate..

### 7.3 Barrel

The barrels must be flexible and have colors that allow them to be easily identified by the dog. Colored stripes (different from the body color) can be applied transversally to facilitate recognition. They must not be anchored to the ground but kept stable using sandbags or similar solutions that do not alter the circular shape of the obstacle and do not constitute obstacles or dangers for the dog.

**Measures:**

- Diameter: 50 cm – 70 cm
- Height: 55 cm – 100 cm

The dog must initiate the passing of the barrel on the opposite side of the position of the number posted on the barrel.

### 7.4 Tunnel

Two type of tunnels are allowed:

- a. **O-shaped** tunnels: they must be flexible and made out of non-slip material. They must not be anchored to the ground, but held in place by straps and heavy sandbags that do not alter the circular shape of the obstacle.

**Measures :**

- Diameter : 80 cm
- Length: 100 cm

- b. **U-shaped** tunnels: they must be rigid and bottomless. They should not be anchored to the ground or held in place with straps or heavy sandbags. They should have sufficient mass to remain stationary in normal wind conditions but not to resist being struck by a dog.

**Measures:**

- Diameter : 80 cm
- Length : 100 cm





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## 7.5 Distance Handling Area (DHA)

The Distance Handling Area (DHA) is a circle with a diameter of 2 meters for all Classes. The DHA is delimited by a raised edge (2 cm to 4 cm in diameter) that allows the handler to clearly perceive any crossing. It must not deform in the event of impact or trampling by the handler. The position of the DHA is decided by the judge on each course. The DHA circle may be anchored to the surface.

## 8. ADVANCED CONFIGURATIONS

1. **WAVE:** this is a sequence of three hoops aligned perpendicular to the crossing direction. The wave is considered a single obstacle that the dog must perform, undulating, from beginning to end. The beginning is indicated with the number of the obstacle sequence in the course. Additionally the beginning may be indicated with the letter A, the central hoop with the letter B and the end with the letter C. The distance between the hoops is 5 m for the small category and 7 m for the large category.  
When positioning the wave in a course, the judge will make sure to leave an adequate distance from the outer perimeter of the competition ring and from other obstacles in the course. The two outer hoops of the wave may be used for additional passages during the course. This is not permitted for the central hoop, which remains for exclusive use in this wave
2. **INSIDE PASSAGE OF BARREL AND GATE :** The position of the number will indicate if the dog has to pass the obstacle on respectively the outside or the inside of the barrel and gate.

## 9. JUDGING

1. The judge designs the competition course with the aim of ensuring that the dog can complete it in a harmonious and fluid way, avoiding dangerous discontinuities or incongruous sequences.
2. To ensure accurate timing of the course, the first and last obstacle must always be hoops.
3. The starting and finishing hoops can never be used for intermediate course passages.
4. Before the start of the runs, the judge invites the handlers to attend a briefing, the purpose of which is to remind them of the rules of the runs and to provide any clarifications regarding the course. At the end of the briefing, the judge starts the coursewalk and specifies its duration.



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For the same height category, a separate coursewalk session will be scheduled in groups of maximum 15 handlers.

After the coursewalk, the participants will perform their run according to the published starting order.

5. When entering the ring, the dog may be kept on a leash until positioned at the start. The handler must leave any leash at the starting point before moving towards the distance handling area (DHA)

The dog must not wear any item (fixed collar, harness, flea collar, bandana, etc.) from the moment the handler starts moving towards the DHA until the participant (dog and handler) are leaving the ring

6. Once left at the starting point, the dog can wait in for the start of the run in any position. (stand, sit, lay down, ...)
7. Once the handler has started moving towards the DHA, any attempt to reposition the dog results in a penalty. If the handler decides to give a verbal command, stop or return to correct the dog's position at the start, It will be considered a repositioning.
8. Only the handler is allowed to give commands. Any command or interaction from outside the ring is strictly prohibited.
9. Crossing the plane line of the first obstacle by the dog (either crossing correctly or or by crossing it aside) while the handler is not yet inside the DHA is a false start  
The plane line of the first hoop is considered crossed when the dog crosses it with any part of its body.  
In the event of a false start, the handler is required to reposition the dog correctly at the start and has up to two attempts and a Maximum Repositioning Time (MRT) of 1 minute. A penalty will be given for each repositioning attempt. A third false start or reaching the MRT will result in disqualification.
10. Once inside the DHA, the handler cannot leave it (under penalty of disqualification) until the end of the run.
11. Once the handler is inside the DHA, the dog may start. If the dog crosses the plane line of the first obstacle in the correct direction, either by passing through it correctly or passing next to it, the run is considered started, course time measuring starts and handling must continue according to the course numbering.
12. The first hoop must always be performed correctly. In the event that the dog crosses the plane line of the first hoop by avoiding or going around it, while the handler is inside the DHA, the handler should reposition or send the dog **at a distance** (without leaving the DHA) through the first hoop in the correct direction, provided that this does not cause, in the judge's opinion, a situation of significant stress for the dog and, in any case, until the Maximum Course Time (MCT) is reached



13. Performing the last hoop correctly and within the TPM will end the run and stop the course time measuring.
14. The handler may guide the dog in completing the course using vocal and/or gestural signals.
15. The dog must perform each obstacle of the course in the order and direction indicated by the placed numbers. Numbers should be placed on the appropriate side of the obstacle to indicate the direction the obstacle should be taken.
16. If the dog discards one or more obstacles in the numbered sequence and performs a subsequent obstacle in the numbered order, it should not go back and perform any of the previously discarded obstacles, but must continue to the next obstacle in the numbered order. (for example: if the dog correctly performs obstacles No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3, but continues with obstacle No. 8, then obstacle Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7 are considered discarded, each with its own penalty, and the dog should continue from obstacle No. 9).
17. When the dog crosses the plane line of the next obstacle in the sequence, without performing it correctly, it results in a penalty. The handler then is allowed to return the dog to one obstacle preceding this obstacle, to restore the dog's correct trajectory with respect to the continuation of the course. Performing additional previous obstacles will incur a penalty for each performed obstacle  
(if the dog refuses obstacle no. 7 to and goes back to re-perform No 6 and 7 will not get a penalty for No 6. If the dogs goes back to No 4, 5, and 6, penalties will be given for 4 and 5, not for 6.).
18. If, at the end of the Maximum Course Time (MCT), the dog has not yet completed the course, the judge will invite the handler, by means of an audible signal, to recall the dog and interrupt the run.
19. It is permitted to reward the dog with food or a toy only outside the competition ring.
20. The judge's decision is final and is not disputable.



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## **10. STARTING ORDER**

### 1. Individual Round:

- a. For Run 1 the starting order is decided by the WHOC organisation. Handlers with more than one dog in one round will be assigned reasonable time between two runs.
- b. Run 2 will be in the reversed ranking order of Run 1. Handlers with more than one dog in one round will be assigned reasonable time between two runs.

### 2. Team Round:

- a. For Run 1 the running order of the countries is decided by the WHOC organisation. For Run 2 the running order of the countries is the reversed ranking order of Run 1
- b. The running order of the participants within the team is in sequence of the dorsal number by default. Until 5 minutes after the coursewalk of the respective group, the Team Leader can hand in another running order at the secretary.

## **11. SCORING**

1. All participants start from 200 initial points for each run (200 points for RUN 1 and 200 points for RUN 2).

Faults incur penalties of 15 or 10 points, depending on their nature.

Each fault committed during the run results in a deduction from the initial score equal to the value associated with the specific penalty, as listed below:

#### *15 point penalty*

- Discard one (or more) hoops that are part of the wave (regardless of their position within it).

#### *10 point penalty*

- a. To knock down any obstacle.
- b. Discard an obstacle (other than a wave or a part of the wave, other than the first obstacle)
- c. Crossing the plane line of the next obstacle in the sequence, without discarding this obstacle.
- d. Performing an obstacle in the opposite direction (except the first and last hoops for which specific rules apply).
- e. Reposition the dog at the start after it has crossed the starting line besides



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the obstacle, before the handler has positioned himself inside the DHA.

- f. Reposition the dog at the start, at a distance, after the dog has crossed the plane line of the first obstacle, with the handler already positioned inside the DHA.
- g. Retrace your steps, before entering the DHA and after having already left the dog at the start position, to modify the dog's new posture.
- h. Exit the DHA with one foot, the first time.
- i. Redirecting the dog towards a refused obstacle, taking advantage of the crossing of previous obstacle (one penalty for each previous obstacle recrossed). Only the obstacle preceding the refused one will be exempt from the 10 points.

## 2. Disqualification:

The participant will be disqualified when:

- a. The dog wears a collar or any other object during the run.
- b. The handler rewards the dog inside the competition ring with a toy or food..
- c. The handler intentionally touches the dog.
- d. The handler carries food into the competition ring;
- e. The handler holds a leash, food toy or any other item in his hand or pocket.
- f. The handler repositions the dog at the start, for the third time, before the handler has entered the DHA
- g. The handler begins the run before the whistle (or other signal agreed upon at the briefing) of the Judge.
- h. The handler exits the DHA with both feet.
- i. The handler steps out of the DHA with one foot for the second time.
- j. The handler addresses the judge with inappropriate language and behavior.
- k. The handler addresses the dog with inappropriate verbal or physical attitudes.
- l. The dog barks aggressively.
- m. The dog fouls the competition ring.



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- n. The dog shows aggression.
  - o. The dog is out of control.
  - p. The dog crosses the first obstacle in any direction, after having already performed it correctly at the start, or performs the last obstacle in the opposite direction
  - q. The dog does not perform the first obstacle correctly but continues and performs another obstacle in any direction.
  - r. The dog discards 50 percent (rounded up to the next whole number) or more of the total number of obstacles of the course
  - s. Maximum Course Time (MCT) is reached;
  - t. Maximum Repositioning Time (MRT) is reached;
  - u. The handler or dog moves the DHA circle

In case of disqualification and at the judge's discretion, the participant may still complete the course until the MCT is reached.

### 3. Scoring Team rounds

The best 3 results of the Team members will be combined to determine the Team result.

## **12. DETERMINATION OF RESULTS AND AWARDS**

1. The Individual winner and the Team winner will be determined by the combined results of RUN 1 and RUN 2

The sorting order for the ranking will be:

- 1: Sum participated runs: descending order.
- 2: ties: Sum eliminations: ascending order.
- 3: ties: Sum points: descending order
- 4: ties: Sum coursetimes: ascending order

2. The winner will receive the following titles:

- a. WHOC World Champion Large
- b. WHOC World Champion Small



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- c. WHOC World Champion TEAM Large
  - d. WHOC World Champion TEAM Small
3. Medals will be awarded to the top three finishers in each Round. The combined winners will receive special medal.

### **13. VETERINARY CHECK**

1. Each dog will undergo a veterinary check before the start of the official trials.
2. Check the validity of the passport and/or veterinary certificate.
3. All vaccinations must be recorded on the passport and/or veterinary certificate.
4. Rabies vaccination certificates will be checked.
5. Microchip check.
6. The minimum age to participate in the event is 15 months.
7. Pregnant and lactating dogs will not be admitted, as well as dogs not in suitable health conditions for participation.

### **14. STAFF**

The following staff and functions are required::

1. Event judges: 2.
2. Assistant Judge who will record the score during the run.
3. Timekeeper for the automatic timing system with photocells.
4. Additional timekeeper for the manual manual backup course time.
5. DHA observer who will monitor and judge the handler's movement towards and in the DHA, verify and judge if the MRP is reached.
6. Assistant to verify and make sure all obstacles are in the correct position for the next participant.
7. Assistant to move the leashes from start to finish.
8. Steward to call the next participants into the ring and pre-ring.
9. Secretary staff to process the scores and results.
10. Operator of VAR equipment



## **15. DISPUTES**

1. In the event of a dispute, the English version of these rules shall prevail.
2. In the event where these rules are not clear, the decision of WHOC organising committee is final.





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**Changelog:**

v 1.0.1: 2.8: 'participants' replaced with 'combinations'

v 1.0.2: 4.2 re-inserted citizen/resident