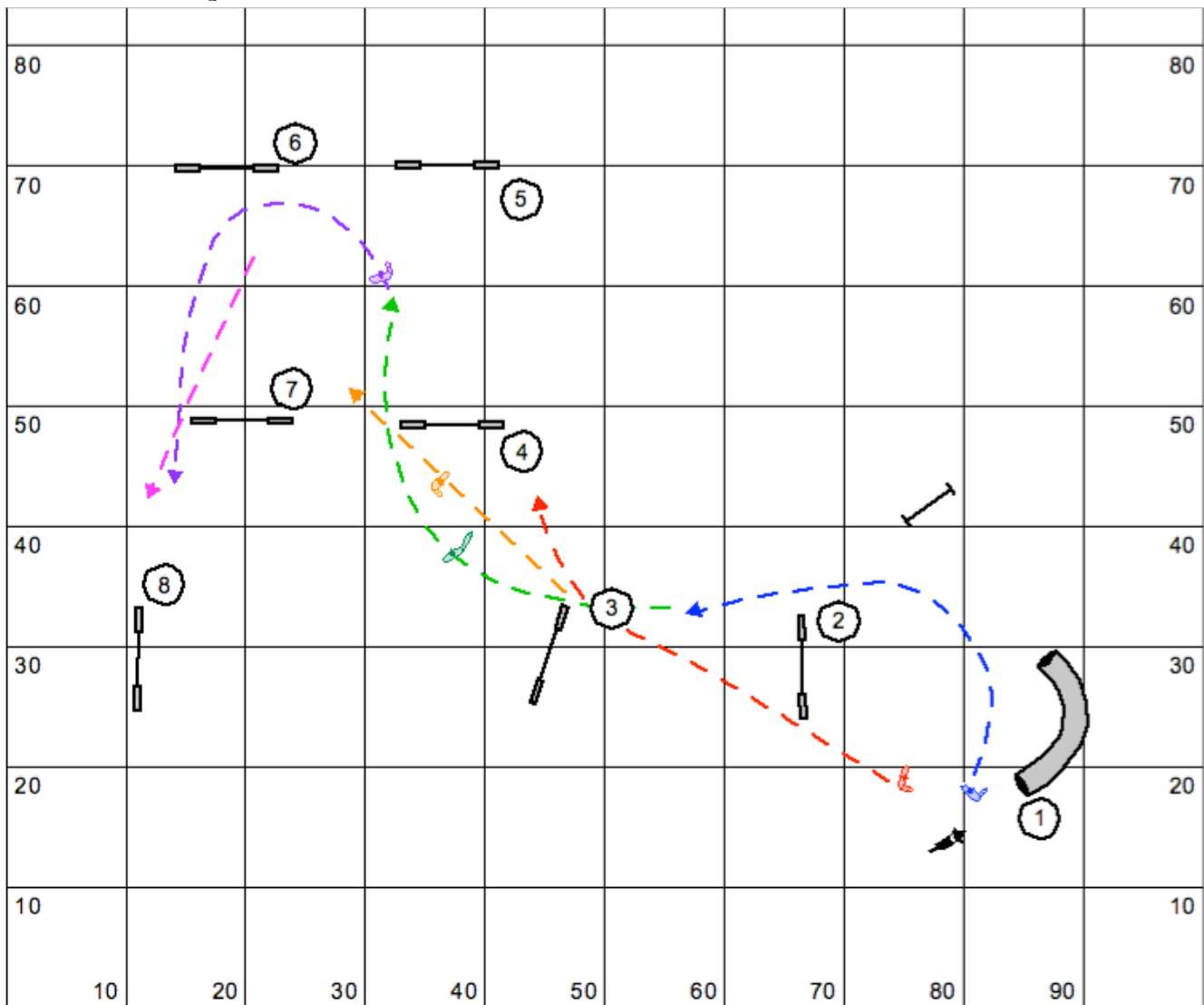


Front cross vs. blind cross

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Here are some things to know about blind crosses vs front crosses that will help you think about the pros and cons of each.



Difference number 1: the line that you communicate

Scenario 1: Handling obstacles 1,2 and 3

Option 1) Blue handler does a blind cross 1-2. Because the handler swings out and around #2 in a "U" shaped path - they can then push in and support jump #3. Good news: you get a nice line 1-2-3. Bad news: you also present the off course wingless jump if you aren't careful. Blind crosses in the presence of a choice can be risky.

Option 2) Red handler using a front cross, would want to put their cross between 2-3 and would essentially recall their dog over #2 and then draw them to the right side of #3. Great line from 1 through 3, great position to pull to 4 and little risk of sending the dog off course at the wingless jump, but you have to be able to send ahead to the tunnel and get onto your FC line ahead of your dog.

Note: a front cross between the tunnel exit and jump #2 is not shown as it would tend to draw the dog to the right of jump #3 missing that jump altogether and putting the handler in a position to have to push back on the dog's path between jumps #2 and #3 and so wouldn't be a good option.

Scenario 2: Handling obstacles 3,4 and 5.

Option 1) Green handler does a blind cross 3-4. Again because they swing wide, they can set the line 4-5 but the

dog is going to go wide themselves on the turn 3-4.

Option 2) Yellow handler does a FC 3-4. The dog is going to jump the right side of #3 and the left side of #4 which

sets a line to the back side of 6. Because they get a tighter turn over #3 they are on the wrong line to #5 and even if the handler was in front of the dog, they would then be in the position of having to redirect them over #4 (ie: I know I'm running toward #6, surprise, I'm going to push into you from the outside of the arc back toward #5). Risks the bar at #4. Of course, you wouldn't put your FC here for all of these reasons - you would either FC 4-5 or RC 4-5.

Scenario 3: Handling 6,7 and 8.

Purple handler does a blind cross 6-7. Again you can see that the line of pressure is slightly different than the Pink

handler who does a regular front cross. It might be just different enough to present a better line to #8. But the price that you pay is a wider turn 5-6-7 in order to get payback on the line from 7-8.

So one primary difference between the blind front cross and the regular front cross is the change in the handling path that is naturally created as the handler performs the change of sides. This difference in the line that you move along results in different information for the dog about what line they should move along.

Difference number 2: the distance that you cover

Another by-product of a blind cross is the distance you cover during the execution of the cross. Because most handlers are comfortable using big open strides through this maneuver, they often cover more distance on course than when that same handler executes a regular front cross. Even 4 feet can sometimes make a big difference in communicating timely deceleration or supporting the next portion of the course.

Difference number 3: efficiency

In certain scenarios, the efficiency at which you can transition between working one portion of the path to the next and the clarity of transitioning between them can be influenced by the use of a blind cross.

Take a look at the sequence 1,2,3,4 below:

Envision the handler leading out next to jump #3 and releasing their dog. As the dog approaches jump #2, the handler would like to pull them onto point "A" in order to present jump #3. A typical application for a "reverse flow pivot" or threadle handling or serpentine handling or just basically switching to your right hand to show the dog not to push out to the wrong course #4. As the dog understands the cue and starts to take jump #3, the handler can now begin to work the next piece of the path by pulling the dog onto point "B".

One way to do this is a post turn, where the handler keeps the dog on their left and rotates 360 degrees – but that can be a relatively slow transition and in the process as the handler rotates, they also present (unintentionally and momentarily) the off course tunnel.

Another alternative is to commit the dog to #3 and just fast forward to working point B by sending the dog around their back over the jump. This is a VERY fast transition from working point A to point B – and never presents any other “half way points” to your dog that could be misunderstood – nor does it create any potential acceleration cues directed at jump #3 so many dogs respond with a very nice collected turn over #3.

Contrast that with the sequence 5,6,7:

In this sequence, the handler needs to transition between working point “X” and point “Y” as quickly as possible. With a regular front cross, the handler works point X and never really turns to face the direction of the weave poles until they are through their footwork (also called blended front cross, or pre-cueing the turn at #5 etc.) as shown by the little people figures. But rotating away from the dog in a blind front cross, does momentarily support a path from #5 directly to the top of the weave poles just before the handler looks back over their right shoulder and presents the right hand intended to show the line to #6 instead. In this scenario, the blind cross creates the delay transitioning between point X and Y as compared to the regular front cross. That slight delay can result in a dog slipping behind the handler to take the weaves.

OK so I think those are the main things to consider when thinking about blind vs. front crosses – hope that helps.