

Crossing Fundamentals

The “NASCAR Rule”: Where there is a curve in the course, you will want to be on the inside of the curve. Dogs have four legs, you have two. The outside of the curve is the greater distance to travel, so the four-legged creature should do it.

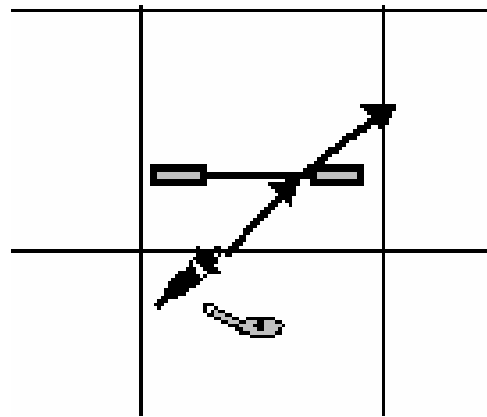
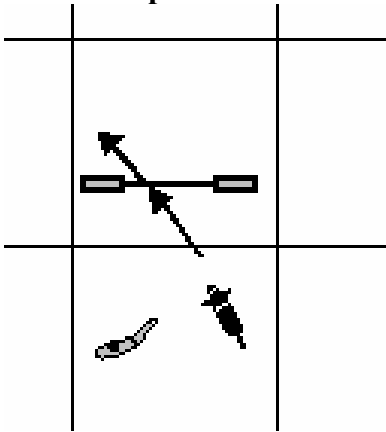
1. Dogs naturally will turn their heads to look at you, as they do, their bodies will follow. Being on the inside of the curve will cause the dog to curve its path in toward you.
2. Where there is a change in curve on course, you will need a cross to change sides.

Why Do A Cross?

1. To get your dog on your other side.
2. To signal to the dog that you are changing directions.
3. To get the dog to change the lead leg (at the change in curve).
4. To run the most efficient path.
5. To make sure you don't bump into your dog, confuse your dog, or demotivate your dog.

Golden Rules of Crosses:

1. Always use the hand closest to the dog to signal.
 - Your dog will always have a better view of that hand.
 - Being consistent will allow you to perform the more complicated crossing patterns later on.



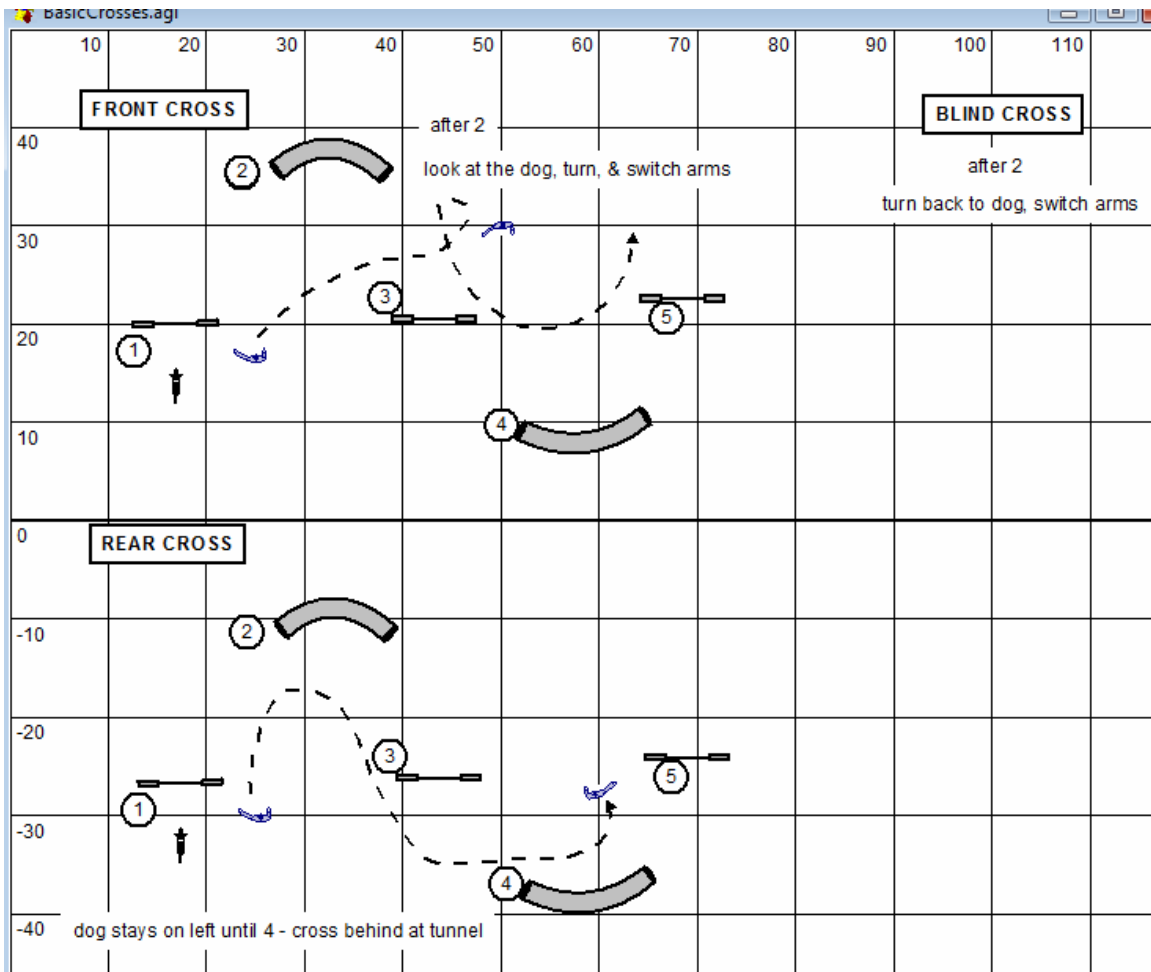
2. Keep your eye on your dog.
3. Keep your arm extended and finger pointed until the dog commits to the obstacle.
4. Stay out of the dog's path!

Basic Crosses:

FRONT CROSS (FC): Cross in front of the dog's path before he takes an obstacle, facing the dog's head. You will be doing some backwards walking to keep your eyes on the dog the whole time.

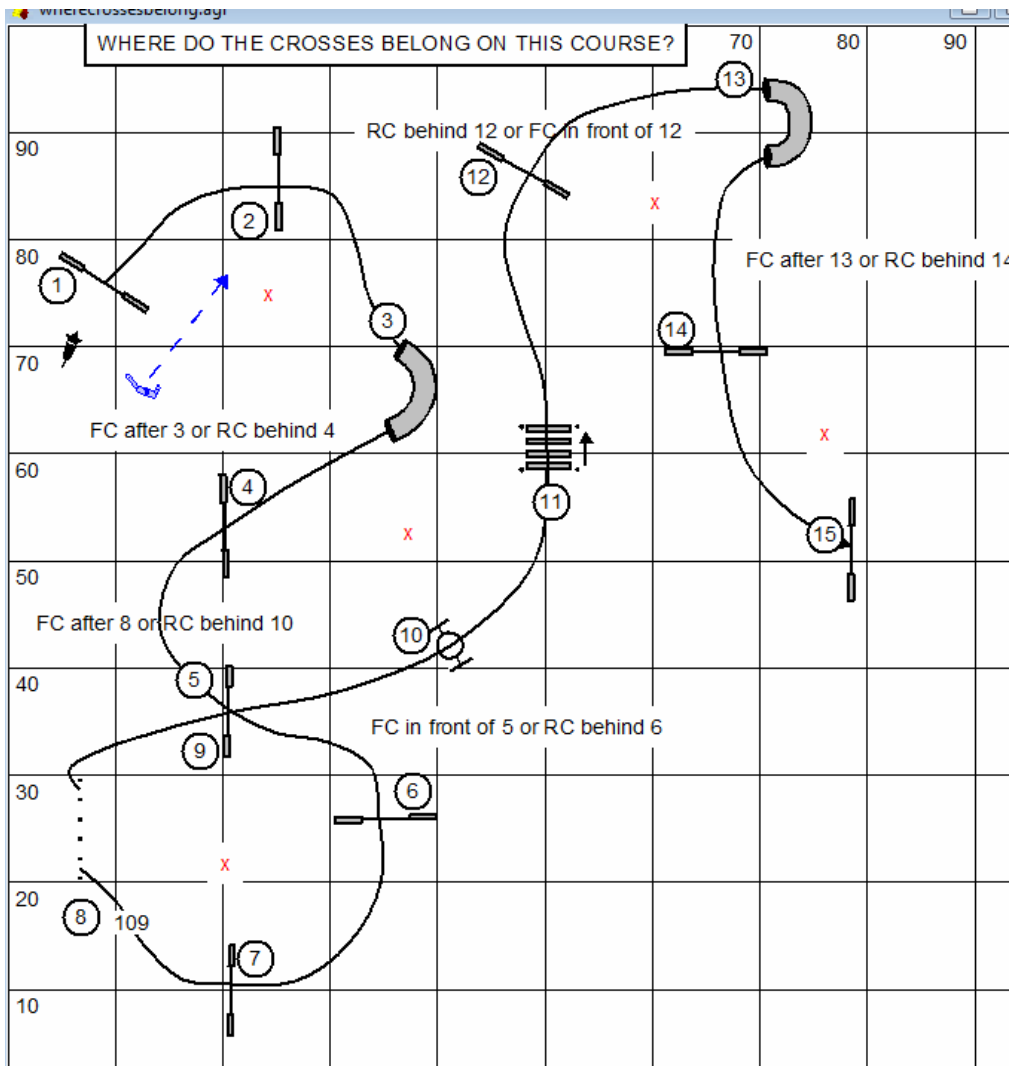
REAR CROSS (RC): Cross behind the dog's path as he takes an obstacle, facing the dog's tail. You will be waiting for the dog to commit to the obstacle before you do your cross.

BLIND CROSS (BC): Done in the same place a front cross would be, but instead of looking at the dog's head, you first look where you are going, and then turn your head around to your other side to look at your dog. This cross is slightly risky since you take your eyes off the dog for a split second. Blind crosses are best used at a tunnel or a contact (obstacles of complete and long-duration commitment). Front crosses are probably a better choice when there is an obstacle discrimination (two obstacle choices in the dog's path).



Where Do Crosses Belong?

1. Draw a line tracing the dog's path through the obstacles.
2. Find all of the arcs in the dog's path.
3. Place an "x" inside the arcs.
4. Draw the handler's path.
5. Where the handler's path crosses the dog's path, there should be a cross. This is where a cross should be placed. It may occur before or after an obstacle. Which cross and where to place it depends on four things:
 - Where the dog is coming from
 - Where the dog is going to
 - The shorter distance the dog will travel
 - The cross the dog and the handler are most comfortable with



START LINE STAYS: Place your dog in front of his very favorite obstacle in a sit-stay. Go back and reward him (with a treat) without releasing him or petting him. Do this two more times before ever releasing to the obstacle. Proof the stay by taking a deep breath, scratching your face, saying a word other than your release word, etc. Your dog should learn to relax on the start line and wait for your release word. Be sure to be consistent about always using a release word to end a stay. You should reward your dog back at the start line (without releasing) 65% of the time. You should release and do the first obstacle (or the entire course) 35% of the time.

JUMPING CHUTE WARM-UP: Place series of jumps in a row, gradually increasing the spacing in between each one. For small dogs, you can try 3ft, 4ft, 5ft, 6ft, 8ft For medium dogs, you can try 4 ft, 6ft, 8ft, 10ft, 15ft. For large dogs, you can try 6ft, 8ft, 10ft, 12ft, 15ft. There is no magic formula, but the idea is to create a series of jumps where the dog goes from compression (tightly spaced jumps) to extension (widely spaced jumps). If the dog can keep the bars up in the direction of compression to extension, try to set the dog at the other end of the jump chute and jump him from extension to compression.

