



# Trans-Tasman Sheep Dog Trial Test

## Course & Rules

Revised – February 2026

The course should be set-up so that both drives are either across or away from sheep release area. Course should be Gap to Maltese Cross to Bridge to Pen.

When setting up obstacles on the course, there should be an equal distance between them. e.g. 40 to 50 metres, with 80 metres being a better distance.

Cast - 100 metres plus if possible and dogs should have equal opportunity to cast either left or right. The inside of the set should be 2 metres from the closest point of the obstacle (at the gap & pen).

### General Rules

**Course Time:** 15 minutes

<b>Judges:</b> <b>Tests: Two (2) – one (1) from Australia and one (1) from New Zealand.</b> <b>Ted Gaby Interstate Challenge: two (2)</b>
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- Sectionalised course Trans-Tasman/Reworking of illegally gained section**  
Retain the points for sections completed, no matter how the trial ends.  
Recall – 7 points – rework obstacle legally (time penalty)  
E.g. Recall, where blatant moves are made by the competitor to clear the obstacle illegally and therefore progressing their cause gaining another section.
- Dog Crossing between competitor & sheep in any section of trial** – Loss of Section Points. **Except** if a dog is forcing the sheep in the correct manner at an obstacle and sheep cause a cross, points may be deducted at judge's discretion.
- Loss of Sheep** – New sheep at judge's discretion.
- Animal Welfare** – A competitors run can be terminated by judges if the welfare of the Dog or sheep is being adversely affected.
- Severe Bite** - Loss of Section
- Sections between Casting Peg to Gap and Bridge to Pen** – must be continuous walk. Competitor to leave on the right-hand side of the peg. Competitor to walk over or inside the markers. Breaching will be deduction of points at judge's discretion.
- Points:** All points lost will be a minimum of one (1) in Australian Sections, half (½) in New Zealand Sections. Points mentioned as deductions are minimum.



## Trial Conditions

### 1. Obstacles

- a) Should sheep enter any obstacle before competitor reaches the circle or free working area, the competitor may step into the circle or free working area and complete the obstacle. However, if all sheep have **cleared** the obstacle under the same circumstances, such obstacles must be reworked excepting the pen, in which case the competitor must step into the circle, then shut the gate.
- b) If the competitor leaves the circle before having negotiated an obstacle the competitor must be called back and the obstacle must be reworked. **PENALTY: 7 points.**

### 2. Cast or Outrun to Head

- a) The competitor must be in the ring or at the peg before starting.
- b) The dog may be cast out to the right or left and should run purposefully to head the sheep.
- c) Heading shall be completed when the dog has cast and is in a position from where it could be expected to control them

### 3. Draw or Pull

- a) The dog should lift the sheep and pull them steadily and evenly, in as direct line as possible, to the competitor.
- b) If a drift occurs, the sheep should be pulled directly towards the delivery area from the point where the drift is corrected and should generally not be returned to the line from where the drift began. The course is 9 metres wide. If a drift occurs outside the 9 metres: **PENALTY: 1 point for every 9 metres or part thereof.**
- c) Sheep are considered delivered when they have passed on the competitor's left-hand side and negotiated the point of balance which is the line between casting peg and marker. If the competitor leaves the peg before delivery is completed, they must be called back to the point of delivery to finish delivery. **PENALTY: 7 points**

### 4. Unwinding at the Casting Peg

- a) If the sheep pass the competitor on the right-hand side, they must be unwound, anticlockwise, back onto the original course and brought around the left-hand side of the peg before the competitor can move on. **PENALTY: 3 points**
- b) The sheep only need to be unwound once. When the competitor has negotiated the peg from the left, competitor is free to proceed to the first obstacle (Gap).



## 5. Carry to Gap and Pen

- a) Any competitor who, by action or sound or unfair manoeuvre, stops or turns sheep at any time in carry or at obstacle shall have points deducted. **PENALTY: 1 point minimum**
- b) The dog should maintain an active interest in their work and at all times have full control of the sheep. It is dog work the judge will be looking for in these two sections. (course approx. 9 metres).
- c) Competitor must walk on the line. If the competitor walks off course or varies their pace. **PENALTY: 1 point**
- d) If sheep go outside 9 metre course: **PENALTY: 1 point for every 9 metres off course or part thereof.**

## 6. Gap

**Dimensions** – 2.4m to 3.0m panels with 1.5m gap

- a) Competitor **MUST** walk through gap and may crossover to take up position to drive without loss of points.
- b) Drive and section commence once sheep have cleared the Gap, competitor must walk through the Gap.
- c) Should competitor not walk through the gap, **JUDGE MUST TELL COMPETITOR TO COME BACK AND WALK THROUGH. PENALTY: 7 points (taken from Drive section)**
- d) If competitor assists dog at obstacle: **PENALTY: 3 points**

## 7. Drive

**Dimensions** – 15m course

- A clearly defined 15-metre-wide course including the free working area and to a line 10 metres in front of the obstacles, measured from horizontal line of cross (see diagram).
  - The free working area should be defined by markers clearly different from those identifying the boundaries of the drives.
- a) Competitor takes up position to drive as appropriate when they have walked through the Gap.
  - b) Competitor must walk inside the marked drive. **PENALTY: 4 points – for going outside the marked area**
  - c) Sheep beginning on either side of drive should be driven directly to centre of next obstacle and kept on as straight a line as possible.
  - d) The sheep should be primarily worked by the dog and although the competitor may assist the dog, excessive running or other over-assisting will be penalised in a similar manner to other imperfect work.



- e) Competitor must not get in front of the lead sheep during the drive. **PENALTY: 4 points**
- f) If the sheep break back: **PENALTY at Judges discretion**
- g) The competitor must make the dog bring them forward again and competitor may not go back to assist (except in free working area). **PENALTY: 4 points - if competitor does step backwards**
- h) During the drive, should the competitor pause and dog and sheep moving: **NO PENALTY**
- i) Excessive stop (competitor, sheep, dog). **PENALTY: 1 point**
- j) Sheep must be kept inside the marked drive. **PENALTY: Sheep outside drive corridor - 2 points. PENALTY: Every further 15 metres - 2 points**
- k) Dogs must not head sheep during the drive. **PENALTY: Dog past point of balance - 1 point**
- l) If dog and competitor are on same side, it is usually recommended to cross over but not necessary. **PENALTY: 1 point for crossover**
- m) The drive shall end at the line (see diagram) identified by distinctive markers on each side of the drive and in the centre.
- n) All three sheep **must be** clear of the marked line before the competitor is permitted to cross it, however after the last sheep crosses this line, the competitor must go forward into the free working area. **PENALTY: 4 points**  
**\*Free flowing work will be expected by judges.**

#### **8. Free Working Area**

- a) All sheep must be completely in the free working area, clear of the '10 metre line which extends both sides of the free working area to the edge of the trial ground' before competitor crosses it, however after the last sheep crosses this line, the competitor must go forward into the Free Working area.
- b) Within this area the competitor may move about to assist and work their dog.
- c) A competitor who gets in front of the lead sheep or who moves backwards in these areas is not contravening the rules. **Open to penalty compared to the competitor who doesn't move backward or forward in the free working area.**
- d) Free working area is not free of loss of points. Judge is looking for free flowing effect from both competitor and dog.



## 9. Maltese Cross

**Dimensions:** Use 2.4 or 3.0m panels – see diagram

- a) The Maltese Cross must first be entered & exited from the direction of the Gap, then entered & exited in the direction of the Bridge.
- b) The competitor has the freedom of movement at the Maltese Cross but must not walk through or follow the sheep into the obstacle.
- c) A free working area 15m wide (7.5m either side of the centre mark) x 10m is in front of first entrance of cross and up to panels at end of the first entrance.
- d) Competitor can take up any position they desire within the working areas. The judge is looking for free-flowing effect from both competitor and dog. This area is not free of loss of points.
- e) Sheep going past entrance of cross: **PENALTY: 1 point**
- f) Sheep going right around cross: **PENALTY: 3 points**  
**PENALTY: Competitor stepping outside free working area 4 points**
- g) Once sheep have entered obstacle, the competitor can assist sheep through obstacle with an extended arm movement (arms cannot not move in and out of obstacle).
- h) Competitor cannot leave this area until all sheep have cleared the second exit. Competitor must leave from free working area on completion of the obstacle within the drive confines.
- i) If the sheep deviate in the centre of the obstacle and exit from the wrong side, the competitor has the option to turn the sheep around and re-enter the obstacle from where the sheep exited, or to take the sheep back to the entrance of the obstacle and re-work it.  
**PENALTY: 1 point if sheep can be cleanly turned back and put back in where they exited, 3 points if sheep taken back to entrance of obstacle & re-worked.**
- j) A marker to be placed 7.5m from centre of the cross – in line with free working area line.
- k) Competitor may take up a position on either side of the drive, provided they do so before the marker.

## 10. Bridge (Association Size)

A free working area 15m wide (7.5m either side of the centre mark) x 10m from face of obstacle, in front of bridge.

- a) The free working area ceases at entry line – across the wings of the bridge and competitor cannot proceed further than that line.
- b) Dog must clear sheep over the bridge not the competitor. If competitor over assists there will be a loss of points. **PENALTY: 3 points**
- c) **If competitor crosses dog when the dog is on the confines of the bridge. PENALTY: 4 points**



- d) Competitor cannot leave the area until all sheep have cleared the bridge. **PENALTY: 7 points**
- e) **Competitor must not walk over bridge.**
- f) Once the sheep have cleared the bridge, the carry to the pen commences. The competitor may remain still and set the sheep up for the carry, once the competitor takes their first step they must continue to the pen. **PENALTY: for stopping 2 points**

**11. Pen** (Approximately 3.0m square)

- a) If any sheep escape from the pen over the line of the gate after the competitor has left the circle and is in the act of shutting the gate, in an orderly fashion, they may re-pen the sheep but must not stop walking. Trial is completed only after the gate is shut. **PENALTY: 1 point for every 9 metres**
- b) If all the sheep are not then penned, the trial terminates and the competitor forfeits 20 points for the pen.
- c) The dog must hold the sheep in the pen while competitor shuts the gate. Should the dog leave this position (e.g. going behind the competitor or around the pen) there will be a loss of points. **PENALTY: 2 points**
- d) Competitor must be in the set at the pen to retain any portion of the ten points for the carry to the pen.
- e) If sheep are not completely over the front line of the pen when competitor leaves the set: **PENALTY: 20 points (i.e. pen)**

## Scale of Points

<b>Cast/Draw</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Peg to Gap</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Gap to Cross</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Cross to Bridge</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Bridge to Pen</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Pen</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>20</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

**Competitors may only lose maximum points allowed for each section.**



## GUIDELINES FOR TRANS-TASMAN COURSE

