



Australian National Kennel Council Ltd ABN 77 151 544 679 trading as Dogs Australia

# **Rules for the Conduct of Bale Seek Trials**

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**Approved by the Australian  
National Kennel Council Ltd 1965**

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## 1 History

Dogs have long assisted their humans in hunting and removing vermin to prevent damage to food storage. Smaller dogs had an advantage of going into small spaces and into dens. Larger dogs did their share of dispatching vermin that bolted.

Bale Seek allows dogs to demonstrate their abilities of searching, scenting, hunting, agility and responsive teamwork with their handler. The handler must be able to recognise when their dog indicates the find, hence it is an event that challenges both the dog and the handler.

## 2 Bale Seek Trial

- 2.1 Bale Seek is a trial at which qualifications for titles are awarded, given by a Club or Association, which is a member of Dogs Australia.
- 2.2 The event is held in a simulated bale setting and/or outdoors that involves hay or straw bales in various positions providing obstacles for dogs to climb and search. There are various levels of increasing challenges and titles to be earned.
- 2.3 Bale Seek trials are a sport, and all participants should be guided by the principles of good sportsmanship both in and outside the trial area. The element of fun for all participants should be emphasised at all Bale Seek events.
- 2.4 All of Dogs Australia Rules applying to Registration and Discipline shall apply to all Bale Seek trials held under these Rules.

## 3 Definitions

**"Affiliate"**: Any Club affiliated with a Dogs Australia Member Body.

**"Blind"**: A holding area where the next set of three (3) to five (5) exhibitors wait their turn to compete and is situated at a distance from the ring of approximately 6 metres to block the exhibitors' view of where the quarry tubes are hidden in the bales.

**"Blind Monitor"**: A person allocated to mind the Blind, to call up the next three (3) to five (5) exhibitors to wait in the Blind with their dogs for their run and oversee that no observers talk to those waiting in the Blind.

**"Clear"**: The word used by a handler in the Master class level to signify to the Judge that all quarry tubes have been found.

**"Climb"**: One of the three (3) elements required to be performed in a Bale Seek competition.

**"Dogs Australia Member Body"**: The Member Body in each State or Territory in Australia.

**"Double Handling"**: When someone outside the ring hints at the location of a quarry tube while an exhibitor is competing in that ring.

**"Fun Trial"**: A non-sanctioned and unofficial event that is used to introduce dogs and handlers to Bale Seek, its elements and Trial Day procedures.

**"Quarry Tube"**: A PVC tube of a specific size that holds the quarry items. The tube containing the non-live quarry will always include a handful of soiled bedding that matches the quarry.

**"Rat"/"Prize"/"Mark" alert**: A communication from the handler to the Judge that the dog has indicated the location of the quarry tube(s) and is one of the three (3) elements required to be performed in a Bale Seek competition.

**"Scribe"**: A person who sits outside the ring and marks the score sheet per dog as the Judge calls out each element that is performed.

**"Stalling"**: An amount of time penalty added to a run if a handler delays ten (10) seconds or more in releasing their dog from the Start Area after the Judge has requested the release, or if

a handler has not gained control of their dog within twenty (20) seconds of being requested to do so by the Judge, or if the handler does not follow the Judge's instructions. Each incident incurs a separate time penalty.

**"Start Area"**: An area marked in the competition ring where the handler and dog team must stand and be released verbally by the Judge to start their run.

**"Tube Mover"**: A person who removes the quarry tubes if requested by the handler or the Judge.

**"Tunnel"**: One of three (3) elements required to be performed in a Bale Seek competition.

#### **4 Eligibility of dogs**

- 4.1 All breeds of dogs and mixed breed dogs that are 6 months of age or older are eligible to enter Bale Seek trials provided they are registered with Dogs Australia by a Member Body.
- 4.2 Dogs will be categorised by height:
  - 4.2.1 Small - up to 330mm
  - 4.2.2 Medium - 330 to 460mm
  - 4.2.3 Large - over 460mm.
- 4.3 Dogs that are partially blind or deaf may compete as long as they are responsive to their handler.
- 4.4 No dog shall compete if it has an open wound or wears a bandage or appears to be lame.
- 4.5 Bitches in oestrus and/or showing a coloured discharge of any sort shall not be eligible to compete in a Bale Seek trial nor be in the precinct of the Trial venue.
- 4.6 A dog is not eligible to enter a trial if the Judge of that trial or any member of that Judge's family owns or co-owns the dog. The word "family" shall include a spouse, a brother or sister, a parent or a child, whether natural or adopted of the Judge in question but shall not extend to other blood or legal relations.

#### **5 Eligibility to hold Bale Seek trials**

Dogs Australia will only grant permission to clubs and associations that are affiliated with a Dogs Australia Member body to hold Bale Seek Trials.

#### **6 Risk**

Owners or handlers entering dogs in a trial do so at their own risk and agree to assume responsibility for any damage caused by them or by their dogs. They also agree to abide by all of the Rules of Dogs Australia and their Member Body.

#### **7 Bale Seek Trial Entries**

- 7.1 The closing time for entries and the location which entries shall be taken shall be printed in the schedule. Entries for a trial may close at any time prior to the start of each trial level.
- 7.2 Each entry in a trial must be made on an official Dogs Australia entry form or completed online as nominated on the schedule. Entries must be completed in full and must be signed by the owner and the information given on the form must be that which applies to the entered dog.
- 7.3 If entries are to be limited, the numerical limitation(s) must be stated in the schedule and entries will close when the numerical limits have been reached. A club or association holding a trial shall not accept any entries received after the closing date and time specified on the schedule.
- 7.4 After a Trial closing date, the Trial Secretary or Chief Steward will print out the Blind sets of grouped dogs per their size and class, and in sets of a maximum of 5 per Blind. These are also posted on a whiteboard in front of each Blind. (There will be two Blinds if running two rings simultaneously).

- 7.5 Multiple entries from the same handler should be separated when possible.
- 7.6 The Trial Committee or the Judges may modify the running order to expedite the running of the trial.
- 7.7 Clubs holding trials must utilise the standard Dogs Australia official Judges report sheets which are included in these rules as appendices.
- 7.8 Disturbances
- 7.8.1 Barking dogs outside the trial area are to be removed from the area but should not be disciplined for barking.
- 7.8.2 The Judge must promptly remove from participation any dog which cannot be controlled and may excuse any dog he or she considers unfit to participate.
- 7.8.3 The Judge must also promptly remove any handler who wilfully interferes with another dog or handler or abuses his or her dog in the trial area, or in any way displays conduct prejudicial to the sport of dogs.

## **8 Classes of Competition**

There are six (6) regular classes – Instinct, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Master and Master Excellent.

Veteran classes are also title classes but will have a “V” added to the title suffix.

Except for the Instinct Class, which only requires the completion of one element, the dog is required to do three (3) elements in all classes within a set time limit:

- climb up and onto at least one bale,
- navigate through a tunnel correctly,
- and indicate which tube(s) has/have a quarry in them.

### **8.1 Bale Seek Instinct Class and Certificate (BSIC)**

The BSIC title is not a prerequisite to enter the Novice class, it is optional. Exhibitors may bypass entering the Instinct class and earn their first Bale Seek qualifying passes in the Novice class or may enter both Instinct and Novice at the same Trial.

- 8.1.1 Instinct introduces newcomers to the three (3) elements, with three (3) tubes set out in the open on the ground, spaced approximately 45cm between each tube.
- 8.1.2 One tube contains a non-live quarry with soiled bedding. The other two (2) tubes are empty.
- 8.1.3 In the Instinct class, the handler and dog team need only indicate the correct tube that holds the quarry; no Climb or Tunnel is required.
- 8.1.4 The Instinct bale course pattern uses seven (7) bales (see diagrams).
- 8.1.5 The time limit is one (1) minute.
- 8.1.6 One pass qualifies for the Bale Seek Instinct Certificate (BSIC) title.
- 8.1.7 On completion of class requirements a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Instinct (BSIC) certificate will be issued to the owner upon application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as Bale Seek Instinct in Dogs Australia records by the suffix title (BSIC).

### **8.2 Bale Seek Novice Class and Title (BSN)**

- 8.2.1 There are three (3) tubes, one contains a non-live quarry with soiled bedding. All tubes are hidden between the bales. At least one tube must be elevated to at least one bale height.

- 8.2.2 The course will have 25 - 30 bales. Bale height will be a maximum of two (2) bales high.
- 8.2.3 The tunnel is short and straight, measuring two (2) bales long with one (1) or two (2) bales set on top crossways (see diagrams).
- 8.2.4 Time limit is two (2) minutes.
- 8.2.5 A Bale Seek Novice (BSN) title is earned when a dog has received three (3) qualifying scores under one or more Judges. The title will be BSN.
- 8.2.6 On completion of class requirements, a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Novice (BSN) certificate will be issued to the owner on application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as Bale Seek Novice in Dogs Australia records by the suffix title (BSN), which shall supersede the BSIC title.

### **8.3 Bale Seek Intermediate Class and Title (BSI)**

- 8.3.1 The course will have 25 - 35 bales. Maximum bale height is two (2) high, but one area may be three (3) bales high.
- 8.3.2 There are four (4) tubes. Two (2) tubes contain a non-live quarry with soiled bedding. At least one tube must be elevated to at least one bale height.
- 8.3.3 There will be one tunnel. The tunnel must have one (1) right-angled turn (no more, no less).
- 8.3.4 Time limit is two (2) minutes and 30 seconds.
- 8.3.5 A Bale Seek Intermediate (BSI) title is earned when a dog has received three (3) qualifying scores under one or more Judges. The title will be BSI.
- 8.3.6 On completion of class requirements, a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Intermediate (BSI) certificate will be issued to the owner upon application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as Bale Seek Intermediate in Dogs Australia records by the suffix title (BSI), which shall supersede the BSN title.

### **8.4 Bale Seek Advanced Class and Title (BSA)**

- 8.4.1 There are six (6) tubes. Four (4) tubes contain a non-live quarry with soiled bedding. At least one tube must be elevated to at least one bale height but also, all tubes may be elevated.
- 8.4.2 The course will have 35 - 45 bales. Bale height should be three (3) high in one area with an optional one area maximum of four (4) high.
- 8.4.3 The official tunnel has a minimum of two (2) right-angled turns and a maximum of three (3) right-angled turns. The course may contain another incidental straight tunnel of shorter length. The dog must go through the official tunnel in order for the Judge to mark the tunnel element completed on the score sheet.
- 8.4.4 Time limit is three (3) minutes and 30 seconds.
- 8.4.5 A Bale Seek Advanced (BSA) title is earned when a dog has received four (4) qualifying scores under two or more Judges. The title will be BSA.
- 8.4.6 Upon completion of class requirements, a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Advanced (BSA) certificate will be issued to the owner upon application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as Bale Seek Advanced in all Dogs Australia records by the suffix title (BSA), which shall supersede the BSI title.

## **8.5 Bale Seek Master Class and Title (BSM)**

- 8.5.1 There will be eight (8) tubes. Two (2) to five (5) tubes contain a non-live quarry with soiled bedding. At least one tube must be elevated to at least one bale height but also, all tubes may be elevated.
- 8.5.2 The course will have 50 to 60 bales. Bale height should be three (3) high in one area with an optional one area a maximum of four (4) high.
- 8.5.3 The tunnel has a minimum of three (3) right-angled turns and a maximum of four (4) right angled turns. The course may contain another incidental straight tunnel of shorter length. The dog must go through the official tunnel in order for the Judge to mark the tunnel element completed on the score sheet.
- 8.5.4 Time limit is four (4) minutes 30 seconds.
- 8.5.5 A Bale Seek Master (BSM) title is earned when a dog has received five (5) qualifying scores under two or more Judges. The title will be BSM. Each competitor's score sheet for the Judge will be marked with a number of quarry tubes randomly drawn before the start of the trial. For example, if the number of quarry tubes drawn is three (3) there will be five (5) empty tubes also on the course to equal eight (8) tubes in total.
- 8.5.6 On completion of class requirements, a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Master (BSM) certificate will be issued to the owner upon application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as a Bale Seek Master in Dogs Australia records by the suffix title (BSM), which shall supersede the BSA title.

## **8.6 Bale Seek Master Excellent Title BS CH**

- 8.6.1 Bale Seek Master Excellent Title is earned when a further ten (10) passes are achieved in the Master class under two or more Judges.
- 8.6.2 On completion of class requirements, a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Master Excellent BS CH certificate will be issued to the owner upon application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as a Bale Seek Master Excellent in Dogs Australia records by the prefix title BS CH, which shall supersede the BSM title.

## **8.7 Veteran Classes and titles**

- 8.7.1 These classes will be for dogs aged seven (7) and older. Proof of age will be required to be sighted by a Bale Seek committee member before the start of the first trial on the day. A copy of the dog's registration may be sent to the trial secretary before the trial dates.
- 8.7.2 Veterans will be able to compete in all levels of competition with some specified exemptions and will have the word Veteran included in their title. For example, "Bale Seek Master Veteran (BSMV)".
- 8.7.3 Veteran class is optional, at the discretion of the dog owner. Once started in a Veteran class, all passes must be obtained in this same class designation in order to qualify for the title of that level. Owners cannot interchange passes between Veteran and Regular classes when earning passes towards a title. However, an owner has the option to enter a Regular class AND a Veteran class at the same trial, provided they pay the required fee for each class.
- 8.7.4 All Veteran classes will be run at one bale height except large breeds will have a modified tunnel. If an owner/handler wants a higher bale height for the Climb element, then they must enter one of the regular classes.
- 8.7.5 Veteran class entrants will not be required to perform the climb element, but they are expected to do the tunnel/s. Dogs in the large height category will be given a modified tunnel of two (2) bales high for the walls to provide a higher ceiling, so the large dog does not have to constrict its body to pass through.

8.7.6 On completion of class requirements, a Dogs Australia Bale Seek Veteran certificate will be issued to the owner upon application to the Member Body and the dog shall be identified as a Bale Seek Veteran in Dogs Australia records by the suffix title (BS"x"V), "x" being substituted as the Class they have qualified for.

8.7.7 As in all Classes, Titles shall be superseded as they are earned.

## **8.8 Super Seven Snuffle Class (Unofficial Class)**

8.8.1 The Club may choose to offer this non-titling class. However, Clubs may offer separate prizes and ribbons for first place winners of their size divisions respectively.

8.8.2 If the Club is running one (1) or two (2) trials per day the Super Seven Snuffle class may be offered once per day.

8.8.3 It will be conducted on an Advanced course, and the time limit will be two (2) minutes.

8.8.4 There will be eight (8) tubes hidden on the course of which seven (7) will contain a non-live quarry with soiled bedding. The eighth tube will be empty.

8.8.5 For every quarry tube indicated correctly, the dog and handler team earn twenty (20) points.

8.8.6 For every tunnel effort completed, the team earns ten (10) points, to a maximum of thirty (30) points in total for tunnelling.

8.8.7 If the team finds all seven (7) quarry tubes in under 1 minute 30 seconds, they will earn a bonus of twenty (20) points. The Judge will call out "bonus".

8.8.8 The dog does not earn any points for however many times it climbs or does not climb.

8.8.9 If a handler calls an incorrect quarry tube or touches a quarry tube before calling "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark", the Judge will call "No find" and the team will incur a twenty (20) point deduction.

8.8.10 If the dog does not tunnel at all, the team will incur a ten (10) point deduction.

8.8.11 If the dog and handler choose to complete a "Stop on the Mark" element, they will earn a thirty (30) point bonus. The element will be a rubber mat, carpet, or artificial grass, that will be approximately 120cm square and as level as possible. The dog will be required to go to the square mark and pause in either a stand, sit, or down position on the mark for at least three (3) seconds. At least half the dog is to be in the square (that is, at least two [2] of its feet must be inside the square). Once complete, the dog is released to continue to hunt if there are still quarry tubes to locate. If this is the last element, the time ends after the dog has stayed the three (3) seconds.

The Judge will ultimately decide if the dog held the position correctly and for the correct time.

## **9 Application for Titles and Awards**

9.1 When a dog has gained the required number of Qualifying Certificates for a title, an application for a title shall be submitted to the Member Body on the appropriate form, accompanied by the prescribed fee.

9.2 Upon approval by the Member Body, a Dogs Australia title certificate authorising the use of the relevant title letters after the dog's name will be issued to the applicant.

9.3 As dogs progress through and are awarded class titles, titles previously won are superseded.

9.4 Ribbons and Qualifying Certificates will be given for each qualifying run.

9.5 The Club may offer ribbons for 1st to 3rd placings based on fastest times in each size division (small, medium, and large).

## **10 Organisation of a Bale Seek Trial**

### **10.1 Competition Ring Sizes and Fencing**

- 10.1.1 Ring size - for Instinct, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Master, and Veteran levels the ring size will be a minimum seven (7) metres by seven (7) metres and maximum of nine (9) metres by nine (9) metres. Ring shape can be an approximate square, rectangle, oval, or circular shape. Having one to two solid walls from floor to ceiling allows for more creative bale courses but is not mandatory.
- 10.1.2 For the Advanced and Master levels Clubs may increase the ring size to a maximum of ten (10) metres x ten (10) metres.
- 10.1.3 Fencing - should be a sturdy lattice type (preferred) with PVC pipe (or similar) framework, and a minimum height of 120cm for official and unofficial trials. Any space at the bottom of the fencing to the ground must not be more than 5cm.
- 10.1.4 Clubs may use temporary plastic fencing for training days as long as it can be secured with stakes at the bottom and a cord running along and through the top of the fencing to keep it taut, to prevent dogs trying to go under or over the fencing.
- 10.1.5 Clubs may choose to have one or two gates per ring, and they must be wide enough to allow for a large dog to pass through and for the replacing of hay / straw bales. Where sides of the gate are attached, the space must not be wider than 5cm. The gate should have some form of secure latch or stretchy cord to close it.
- 10.1.6 The official competition rings should have a reasonably level ground surface that is either dirt, sand, gravel, grass, paved, or concrete. On hard surfaces rubber mats are recommended but not mandatory.
- 10.1.7 Clubs will need to notify Judges of any posts, overhanging beams, pipes, and cords in the ring area, at least two (2) weeks prior to trials and fun days so bale courses can be mapped accordingly. This is required planning so that no dog nor handler accidentally comes in contact with any of these during their course run.

*\*Note - If air conditioners and/or fans are used they must stay on for all runs in a particular class level so that all exhibitors of that class level experience the same conditions.*

### **10.2 Quarry Tubes, Non-live Quarry options and Tube Mover**

- 10.2.1 Quarry Tubes will be constructed of PVC pipes (strong class 9 type to endure a large dog biting it).
- 10.2.2 The Quarry Tubes will be approximately 25cm - 30cm in length and 5cm in diameter.
- 10.2.3 One end of the tube has a glued cap, and the other end has a screw on cap to allow placement of the quarry and soiled bedding.
- 10.2.4 At least 16 holes should be drilled along the tube length. The holes are to be 5 to 8mm in diameter, placed evenly along and around the tube length and one extra 5 to 8mm hole drilled at each end so that the quarry odour can escape. (See diagram/photos).
- 10.2.5 Tubes that contain the quarry shall also contain approximately 125ml of soiled rat or mouse bedding (obtained from a pet supply store - must not be from a wild source) no matter which type of quarry item is chosen from the list (see Sec 7.15).
- 10.2.6 In all levels no tube will be closer than 60cm from the Start Area.
- 10.2.7 No tube will be hidden more than 25cm deep between bales.
- 10.2.8 The tubes may be painted with non-toxic paint.
- 10.2.9 Tubes will be placed horizontally or as close as possible to horizontal.

- 10.2.10 Tubes will not be placed inside any tunnels.
- 10.2.11 Any two (2) tubes may be hidden close to each other but must not be closer than 60cm to each other.
- 10.2.12 Tubes will be covered fully but lightly with loose hay/straw to allow for air passage and scent to escape. Helpers must not pile excessive loose hay/straw on top of the tubes.
- 10.2.13 No Tube will be placed under a bale that would require lifting the whole bale in order to retrieve the tube.
- 10.2.14 In Instinct all tubes are placed at ground level but in all other classes at least one tube must be elevated to at least one bale height. In the Advanced and Master classes, all tubes may be elevated.
- 10.2.15 The non-live quarry will consist of approximately 125ml of soiled rat or mouse bedding obtained from a pet supply store or breeder, along with one of the following items also obtained from a pet supply store: first choice is a partly thawed (previously frozen) domestic rat or pelt. Second choice is half a venison ear or half a pig ear or half a cow ear. A further quarry option may be a cooked sausage or cooked chunk of beef steak.
- 10.2.16 In Novice level and above there will be a "Tube Mover" who is positioned inside the ring to assist in removing tubes once the competitor has called the word "Rat", "Prize", or "Mark". There will be a "quarry tube holding tub" placed just outside of the ring at least 60cm from the ringside, away from competitors (preferably at the opposite side of the ring from where the gate is) behind a fence or partition. Any quarry tubes that are removed by the Tube Mover will be placed in the designated quarry tube holding tub outside of the ring.

### **10.3 Hay / Straw Bales**

- 10.3.1 Bales should be rectangular in shape, approximately one (1) metre long by 450mm wide by 370mm high. They may be faded but must not be mouldy or smelly. Sugar cane bales may be used if they are of a similar dimension to the average hay or straw bale stated above.
- 10.3.2 The Tube Mover will be required to re-position any fallen or dislodged bales should a dog on the course cause that to happen during its run. Such re-positioning is to occur after the run has finished.
- 10.3.3 Competitors should not touch any bales but should use their voice and hand signals to direct their dogs. In the Novice level only, if the dog has not done the climb element and time is running out the competitor may tap the top of a bale to encourage the climb. This will not cause a Fail/Non-Qualifying (NQ) score except if the bale is moved or dislodged by the competitor.
- 10.3.4 If a dog knocks a bale out of position it will be left as is until the run is over. This will not cause a Fail unless it blocks the tunnel and prevents the dog from completing that element.
- 10.3.5 If a handler accidentally touches a bale with their foot, hand or body in the case of a stumble or fall, that is acceptable and will be at the Judge's discretion if questionable.

### **10.4 Tunnels and Ramps / Step Ups**

- 10.4.1 All tunnels in all course levels will have an approximate inner width of 45cm (18 inches) and all tunnels in course levels of Novice and higher shall have support boards placed between the bottom bale layers and those positioned above that form the roof of the tunnel. All bales used to create the base shape of the tunnel in all levels will be turned up on their narrow long side to give a reasonable bale height to each tunnel. (See diagram).
- 10.4.2 The Novice tunnel will be straight.
- 10.4.3 The Intermediate tunnel must have one right-angled turn only.

- 10.4.4 The Advanced tunnel must have at least two (2) turns and up to three (3) turns maximum.
- 10.4.5 The Master tunnel must have at least three (3) turns and may have up to four (4) turns maximum.
- 10.4.6 One ramp or step up should be available in all courses except Instinct. If a ramp is used, it should measure approximately 100cm long by 30 - 40cm wide and have a slightly rough surface to prevent slipping.
- 10.4.7 The ramp will be placed leaning against one (1) bale from the ground up to one (1) bale height. This is to allow small or older dogs an aid in performing the Climb element.
- 10.4.8 If a ramp is not available, the Club may use partial bales to create a "step up" in one or more areas of the course.

## **10.5 Start Area and Release**

- 10.5.1 The Start Area should be a square measuring approximately 120cm by 120cm. It should be marked by small visible discs to avoid a tripping hazard or can be marked by tape on the floor if the ground surface is smooth. The discs need not be secured to the ground as the Start Area location will change with different course designs.
- 10.5.2 In Instinct the Start Area will be directly in front of the tunnel opening.
- 10.5.3 In Novice and Intermediate the Start Area will be in front of the tunnel but should be positioned back approximately 60cm from the tunnel opening.
- 10.5.4 In Advanced and Master levels the Start Area can be anywhere in the ring, as long as two sides are open and not blocked by the ringside or a bale.
- 10.5.5 Once in the Start Area, the handler will remove the collar and leash from their dog. They may drop it on the ground, pocket the leash or hand it to the Tube Mover who can hang it on the fence for later. Dogs are to run naked except for one or two hair ties to hold back excess hair from covering the dog's eyes.
- 10.5.6 When the Judge is ready to commence the run, they will say "Release when ready".
- 10.5.7 Time starts when any part of the dog or handler leaves the Start Area, whichever occurs first.
- 10.5.8 If the handler delays in releasing their dog from the Start Area after the Judge has said "Release when ready", the Judge will prompt by saying "Start now." If the handler delays much further, they will incur a stalling penalty, that is ten (10) seconds will be added to their finish time.

## **11 General Competition Rules**

- 11.1 No electronic devices (including smart watches) are to be worn in the Blind or in the ring during competition.
- 11.2 The handler and dog teams will enter the Blind according to the run order that will be posted next to the Blind. The Club will choose which size order they will run on the day, that is: small dogs first, then medium, then large or vice versa. No more than five (5) handler and dog teams will be required to wait in the Blind prior to their competition run. Chairs may be used in the blind. Once the Judge or Gate Steward calls "next dog", the next listed competitor will proceed to the ring with their dog.
- 11.3 While waiting to be released from the Start Area, the handler must not be holding their dog by the scruff (the hair and/or skin around the dog's neck) nor throw or push their dog in any direction upon releasing. The best method to release is to stand behind the dog with its four (4) feet on the ground, cup hands/arms around the dog's chest and open the arms outwards to the side when releasing to start the run.

- 11.4 The handler should walk around the course pointing and encouraging their dog to find the quarry tube and ask the dog for the Climb element and Tunnel element, which may be done in any order.
- 11.5 Handlers are not to touch any bales before calling the find, or else it will be an NQ score. The exception is in the Novice level (see Sec 8.3).
- 11.6 Handlers are not to block their dog with any part of their body in order to get the dog to do the Tunnel element. Any blocking will result in an NQ score. Handlers are also not allowed to put the dog on a stay command and then go to the other end of the tunnel and call the dog through. However, using words such as "wait", "easy", "slowly", are all reasonable directives to the dog, as well as commanding a sit or down in order to catch the dog once the run has ended.
- 11.7 When a handler thinks their dog has found the quarry tube, the handler must not touch it until AFTER calling "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark". They may briefly praise their dog verbally and/or physically, but that time will be included in the run time, then once further searching has commenced, no other touch to the dog, a tube, or bale is allowed if there is still an element to complete.
- 11.8 In Intermediate level and above, there is more than one quarry tube. After calling "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark" the handler will need to decide if they themselves want to remove the quarry tube and hand it to the Tube Mover OR to hold their dog physically (at least 60cm from the tube) and allow the Tube Mover to remove the tube and place it outside the ring in a container OR the handler leaves the tube in place and continues to send their dog to hunt for the next tube(s). Once the decision has been made to leave the tube in place it cannot be changed.
- 11.9 The Tube Mover will NOT reach for the tube until the dog is restrained either physically or is verbally under control.
- 11.10 In Master Class when the handler is of the opinion that they found all the quarry tubes, the handler must call out "Clear" to indicate their run is complete.
- 11.11 If there is a tie for first place, there will be a runoff. The number of quarry tubes will match the level being competed. The tied teams will run separately and be timed to see who finds the quarry tube(s) in the fastest time. No tunnel or climb will be required; however, no penalty is incurred if the dog chooses to do either during its runoff.
- 11.12 At the end of the run, the collar and leash must be put back on the dog BEFORE leaving the ring or it will be an NQ.

## **12 Judges**

- 12.1 Judges shall be fair, impartial, and behave in a professional manner. Judges shall be on time, arriving at least one hour prior to the scheduled start time, ready to judge according to the trial schedule and be in timely communication with Clubs. Judges need to be capable, efficient role models for Bale Seek events. Judges will need to be able to stand for long periods and have the stamina to be able to judge a full day of Bale Seek runs. They shall be able to move quickly around the course in order to see what each dog and handler team is doing during their run.
- 12.2 Judges shall supply their own stopwatch, small measuring tape, pens, pen light, clipboard and paper. Whether at a practice or an official trial, Judges are responsible for providing course maps to the Club the day before the first Trial starts and overseeing that the bale courses are built safely.
- 12.3 At the ring, Judges will:
  - 12.3.1 Brief handlers prior to commencement of each level.
  - 12.3.2 Show each competitor where the Start Area is and tell the competitor to "release when ready".

- 12.3.3 Mark their score sheets OR have a designated Scribe outside the ring mark the score sheet per dog, when the dog does a Climb, the Tunnel, and when the competitor calls out "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark" to indicate a found quarry tube.
- 12.3.4 Call out the completed elements right after they happen so that the competitor knows it was seen by the Judge.
- 12.3.5 If the Judge does not call out the completed element, it indicates that the element was not seen by the Judge and that element will need to be completed again.

### **13 Completed Runs**

- 13.1 The Judge will say "Course Complete" - "Qualified Run" or "NQ/No Run".
- 13.2 If time expires, the Judge will show the competitor the nearest quarry tube, to show their dog, and praise it before leaving the ring. No other elements are to be done or used as training during an official trial.
- 13.3 Judges' decisions are final and must be respected. If an exhibitor wishes clarification, they are to wait until the end of the class level that is being judged.
- 13.4 If a Judge feels there was an unfair circumstance that interfered with the dog's run, the Judge may allow a re-run for that dog and handler team.

### **14 Non-Qualifying Runs (NQ)**

Non-qualifying runs are incurred under the following circumstances:

- 14.1 When the dog and handler team run out of time but still have an element to complete
- 14.2 The handler calls on an empty quarry tube
- 14.3 The dog has relieved itself in the ring
- 14.4 The handler uses food in the ring
- 14.5 The dog escapes the ring
- 14.6 Where double handling has been identified
- 14.7 Rough handling or forceful corrections are used on the dog
- 14.8 The dog competing injures someone
- 14.9 The dog was injured during the competition
- 14.10 The handler has touched a tube before calling "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark". This applies to all tubes regardless of if it contains the quarry or not
- 14.11 The handler touches the dog before calling "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark"
- 14.12 The handler touches a bale before calling "Rat" or "Prize" or "Mark" in Intermediate level and above except in the prevention of a fall.

### **15 Stalling**

A ten (10) second penalty is added to the final score for each incident if the handler:

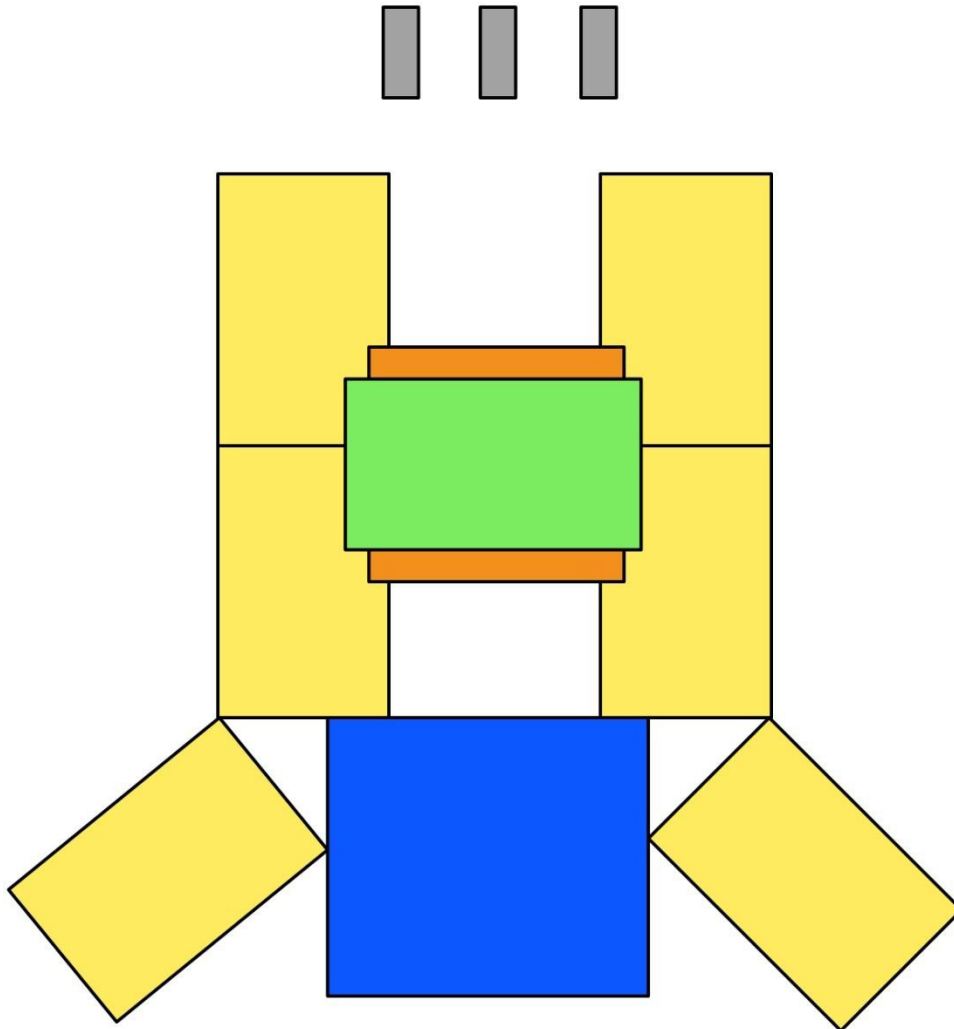
- 15.1 Fails to release their dog when instructed at the start of a run by more than ten (10) seconds
- 15.2 Takes too long to gain control of their dog within twenty (20) seconds of being requested to do so by the Judge
- 15.3 Does not follow the Judge's instructions.

## **16 Committee Responsibilities**

The Affiliate Bale Seek Committee will:

- 16.1 Provide a safe and secure Bale Seek ring.
- 16.2 Provide the Judges with ring measurements and notification of any obstructions (posts in the ring or low hanging ceiling/pipes etc.) at least two (2) weeks prior to a trial.
- 16.3 Provide at least the correct minimum amount and size of hay/straw bales required per course level.
- 16.4 Provide support boards to go between bales used to build the tunnels.
- 16.5 Provide at least one ramp 90cm to 120cm long by 25cm to 60cm wide or a quarter portion of a bale to help small dogs complete a Climb.
- 16.6 Provide foam pieces to be attached to any exposed support board edges that cover tunnel openings.
- 16.7 Provide the correct amount and size of tubes with non-live quarry and soiled bedding.
- 16.8 Provide a "Blind" such as a gazebo with at least two sides covered with a sheet, preventing waiting handlers observing the placement of quarry tubes.
- 16.8 Provide enough space to allow the Blind to be at least six (6) metres from the ring.
- 16.10 Publish Trial Schedule details at least 3 weeks prior to each trial date.
- 16.11 Provide ribbons and certificates.
- 16.12 Provide and collect all paperwork required to collate data on the entries and results, including score sheets, entry forms and running order forms.
- 16.13 Submit Trial results on time to the appropriate Dogs Australia Member Body.

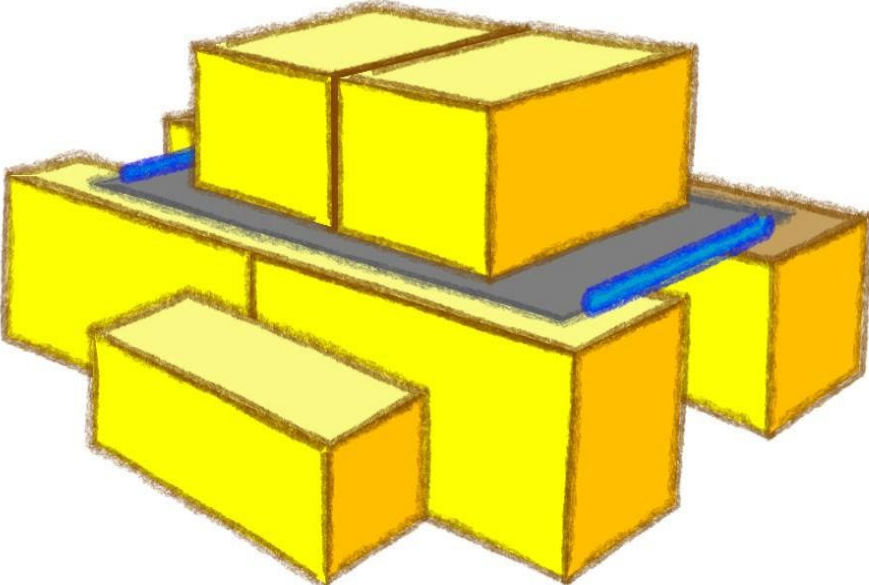
### Example of a Bale Seek Instinct Tunnel Setup



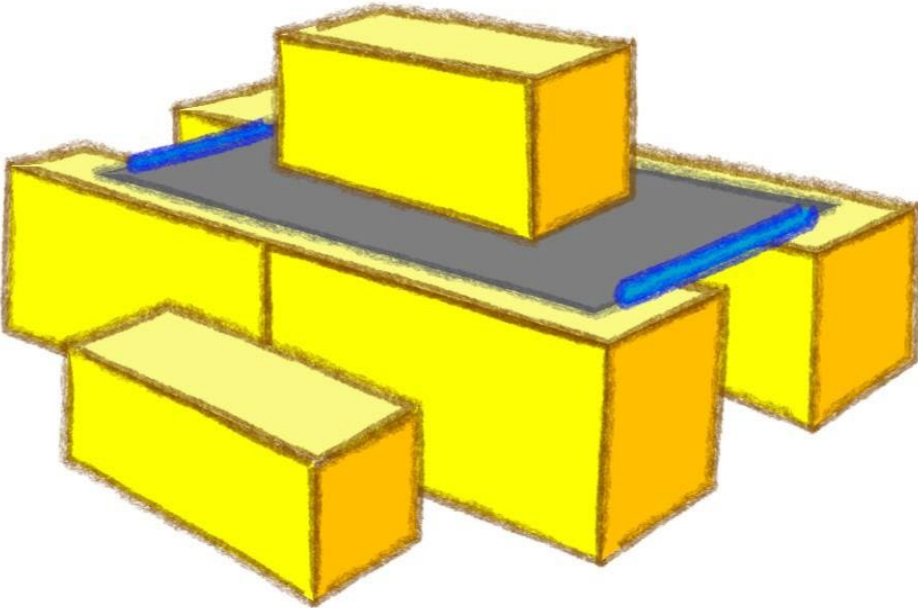
#### LEGEND

- Tube
- Board
- Start Area
- Bale on side, on ground
- Bale laying flat, second level

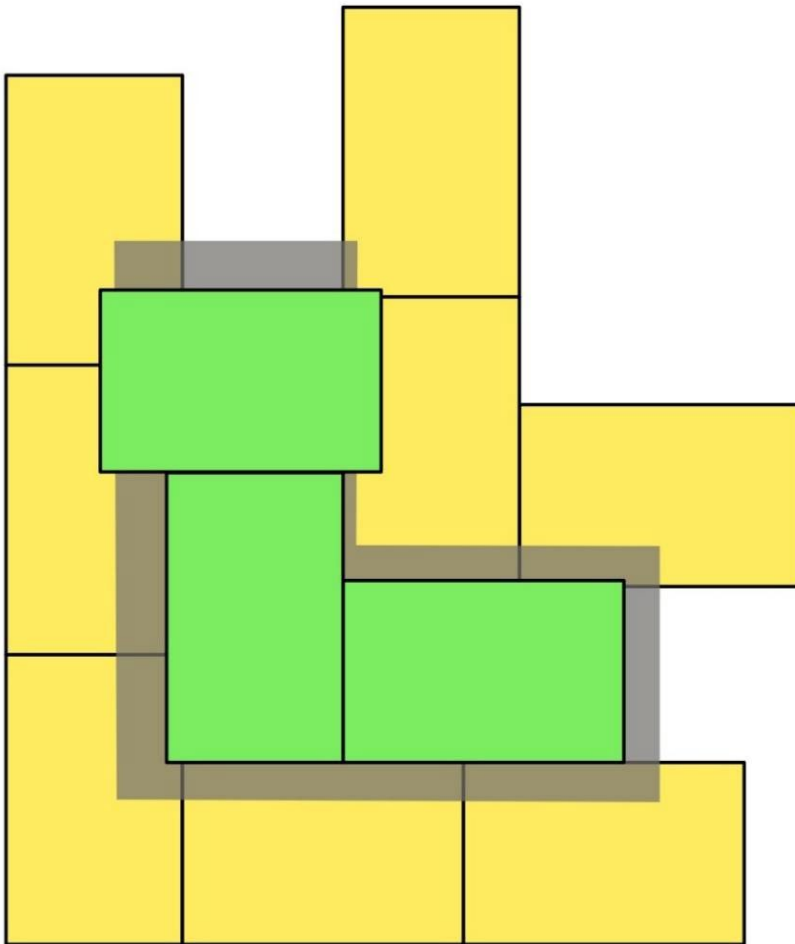
**Example of a Novice Tunnel Setup with Two Bales on Second Level**






**Example of a Novice Tunnel with a Single Bale on Second Level**



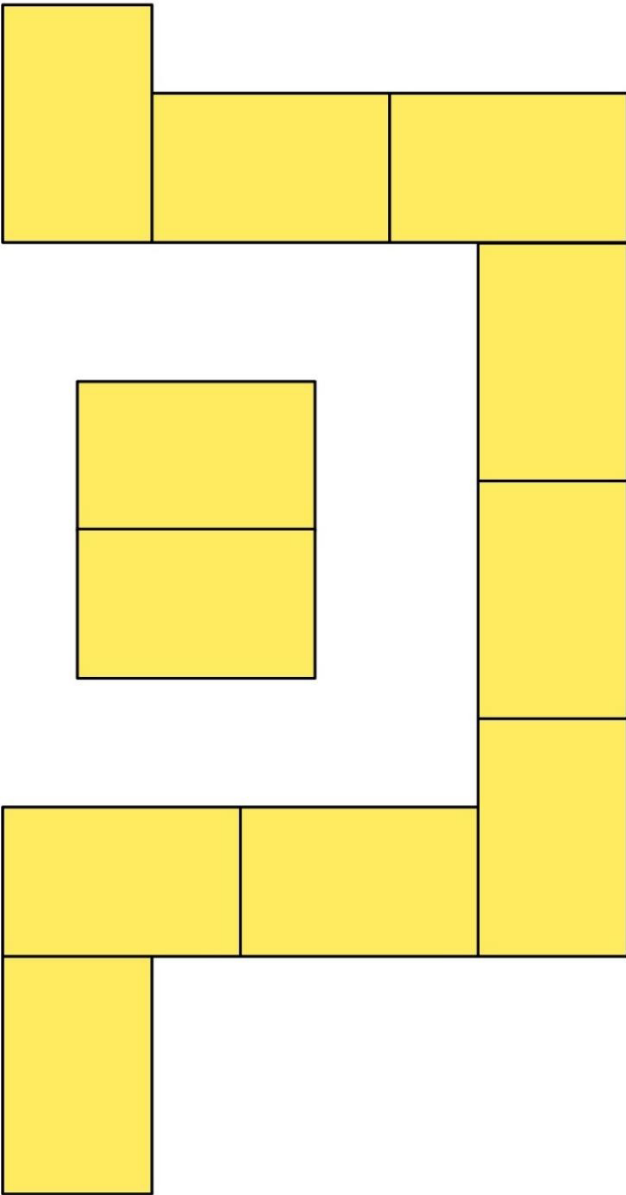
## Example of an Intermediate Tunnel Setup



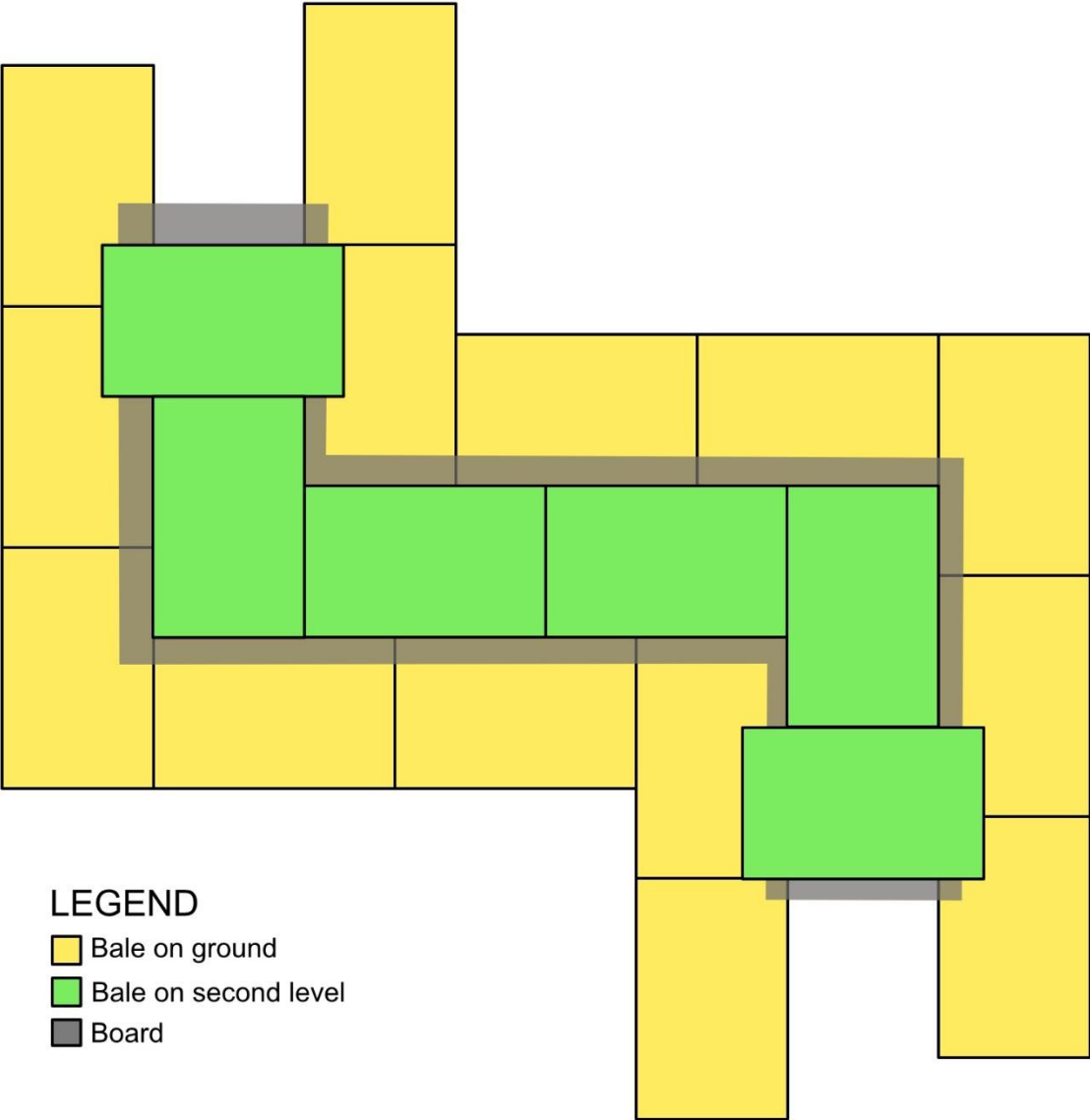
### LEGEND

-  Bale on ground
-  Bale on second level
-  Board

**Example of an Advanced Base Tunnel Setup**



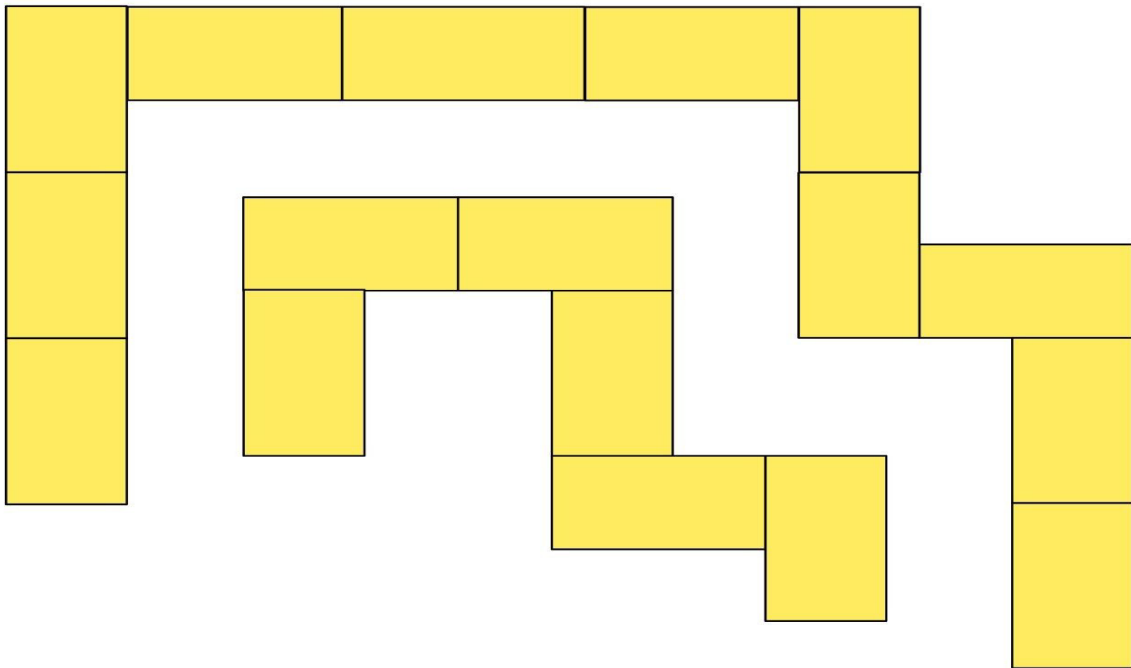
# Example of an Advanced Tunnel Setup



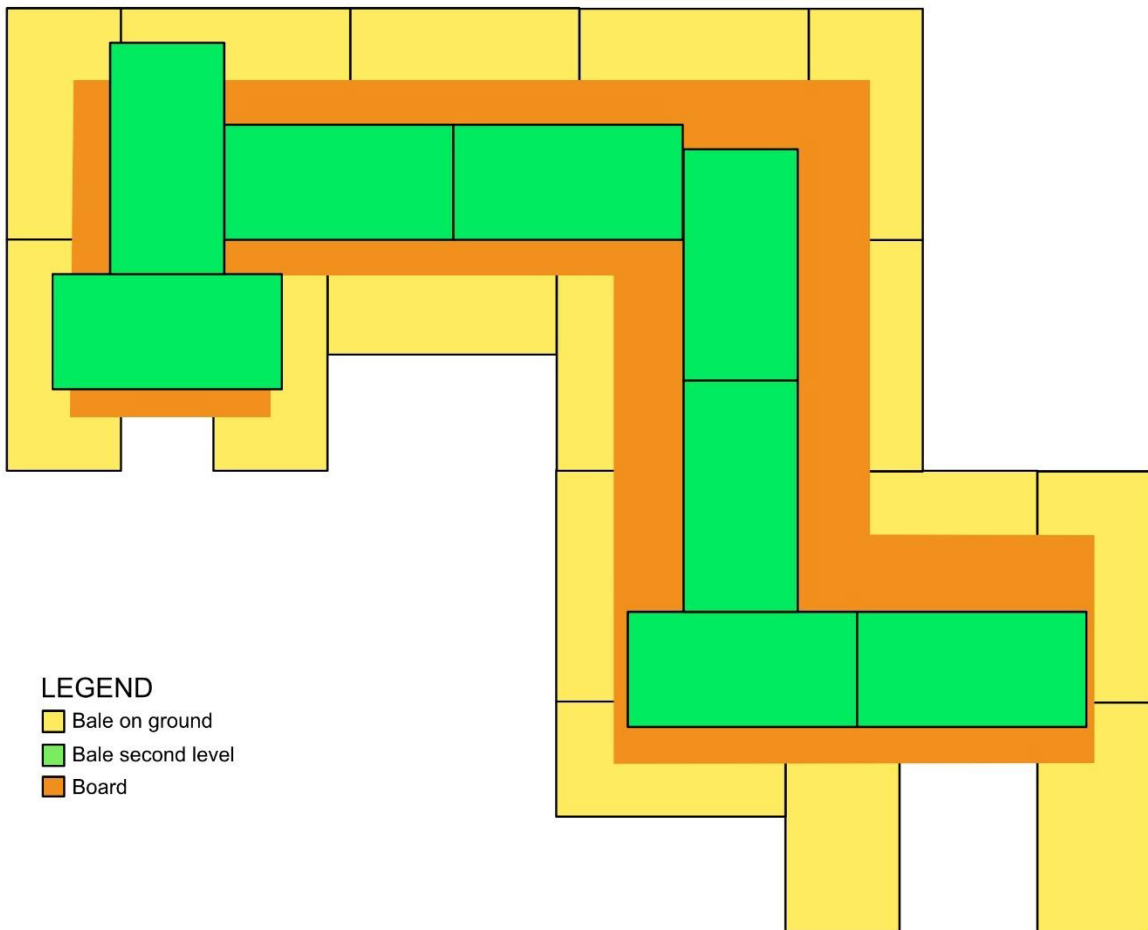
## LEGEND

- Bale on ground
- Bale on second level
- Board

### Example of a Masters Base Tunnel Setup



### Example of a Master Tunnel Setup



- LEGEND**
-  Bale on ground
  -  Bale second level
  -  Board

### Example Quarry Tube



### Example Lattice Fence Panel

