

Shady Acres Stock Dog Trial (SASDT)

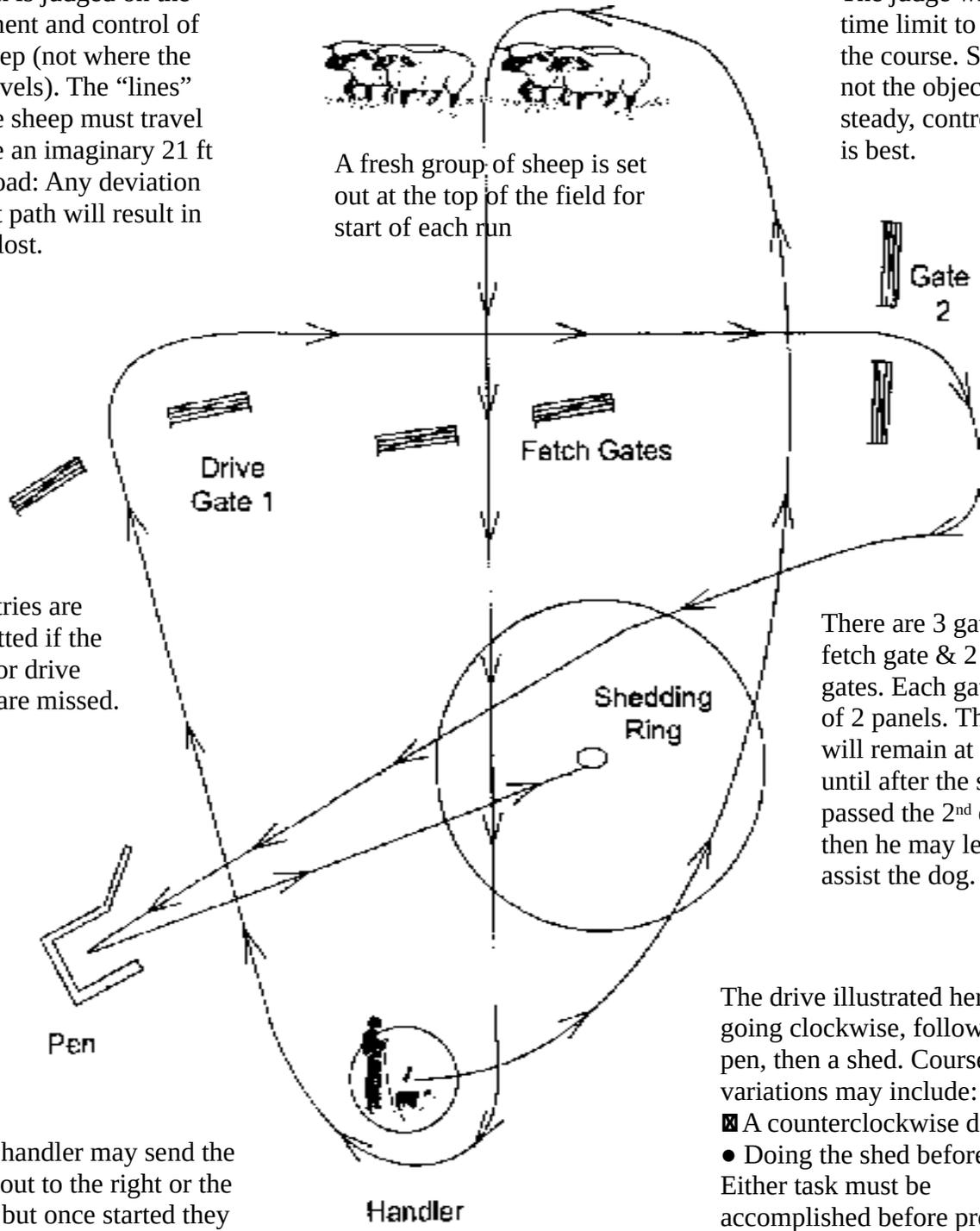
Sheep Herding and Trials Explained

The run is judged on the movement and control of the sheep (not where the dog travels). The “lines” that the sheep must travel are like an imaginary 21 ft wide road: Any deviation off that path will result in points lost.

The judge will set a time limit to complete the course. Speed is not the object. A steady, controlled run is best.



A fresh group of sheep is set out at the top of the field for start of each run



No retries are permitted if the fetch or drive gates are missed.

There are 3 gates: One fetch gate & 2 drive gates. Each gate is made of 2 panels. The handler will remain at the post until after the sheep have passed the 2nd drive gate, then he may leave to assist the dog.

The handler may send the dog out to the right or the left, but once started they should not switch.

The drive illustrated here is going clockwise, followed by a pen, then a shed. Course variations may include:

- ☒ A counterclockwise drive
- Doing the shed before the pen.

Either task must be accomplished before proceeding to the next.

So What's a Sheepdog Trial?

A sheepdog trial is a contest with a course that tests a dog's ability to do the various jobs a sheepdog will perform on a farm or ranch. Sheep may need to be gathered from the pasture, moved, sorted or penned. The trial is a competition where each handler attempts to show that their dog is tops in breeding, ability and training. Trials have proved of fundamental importance in directing the development and breeding of the Border Collie over the centuries - a breed relied on for its performance.

During a trial, each dog starts its run with a full set of points (usually from 90 to 110 depending on the class and the course). The judge deducts points as they deem appropriate when mistakes or imperfections occur. Each part of a run is individually pointed. Judges consider all relevant circumstances, e.g., the behavior of the sheep and their reaction to their surroundings; and score according to their knowledge of sheep and dog behavior.

If a dog grips (bites) a sheep, the judge will decide whether the grip was warranted (e.g., very challenging sheep) or whether it was from the loss of the dog's self-control. In the latter case, the dog is subject to be disqualified.

The dog should be in firm command of the sheep from the moment he "lifts" them, moving them with a quiet, smooth flowing "method". Because sheep successfully negotiate the fetch and drive obstacles does not necessarily mean full points are granted. That depends also on straight lines from one obstacle to another, and any deviation from these straight lines is penalized. Sheep should ideally be moved around the course at a steady pace--stops and starts are penalized and any rash or slack work by the dog can also mean losing points.

The SASDT trial course has 6 parts, with a "perfect-score" possible, and is judged on the following:

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|-----------|----|---|
| 1. Outrun | 20 | Dog runs out wide and deep to get behind sheep |
| 2. Lift | 10 | Dog makes contact and starts the sheep moving |
| 3. Fetch | 20 | Bring the sheep straight down the field, through the fetch gates and turn them around behind the handler's post |
| 4. Drive | 30 | Take the sheep in a triangular path from the post, through two sets of gates and back to the pen |
| 5. Pen | 10 | Dog puts the sheep in the pen and handler shuts the gate |
| 6. Shed | 10 | From the pen, the dog brings the sheep to the shedding ring and splits off one or more sheep from the rest |

The first three (Outrun, Lift & Fetch) tests the dog's ability to find, gather and retrieve (to the handler) a group of sheep in a controlled direct manner. The Drive tests the dog's ability to move stock away from and under control of the shepherd. The Pen and Shed test the dog's ability to do close-in work cooperatively with the shepherd. A dog that can complete the course is one that can do most any job on the farm.

The Shady Acre Sheepdog Trial has 5 different classes:

Open The most advanced class. The outrun will be approx. 225 – 250 yards. The course will consist of an Outrun (225 – 250 yards), Lift, Fetch, Drive, Cross Drive, Shed and Pen. Total points = 100

Nursery Same as the Open except with no shed. This is for young dogs under 30 months of age. Total points = 90

Open Ranch Same as the Open except with no shed. This is preparation for the dog to move up to Open. Total points = 90

Pro Novice Shortened Outrun (approx. 150 yards), Lift, Fetch, Drive, Shortened Cross Drive, Pen. Total points – 90

Novice This is the beginner class. Shortened Outrun (100 – 125 yards), Lift, Fetch, Drive and Pen. During the Drive the handler may leave the post to assist the dog around the obstacles. Total points = 80

Common Herding / Sheepdog Commands

Come-Bye

Move around (*circle*) the sheep in a clockwise direction (*unfortunately, in some areas it's the opposite way*)! **C** is for **C**ome-Bye - **C**lockwise. From facing the sheep, the dog should turn squarely and keep at a constant distance from the sheep while flanking.

Away / Away to Me

Move around (*circle*) the sheep in an counter-clockwise direction (*unfortunately, in some areas it's the opposite way*)! **A** is for **A**way - **A**nti-clockwise. From facing the sheep, the dog should turn squarely and keep at a constant distance from the sheep while flanking.

Stand

Confusing, this one - it can mean stop, or sometimes, just slow down! The dog must learn that with a sharp command, the handler wants it to actually stop but with a soft command it should just check its speed or allow the sheep to go further ahead of him.

Get Back / Get Out

The dog is working too close and likely to cause stress to the sheep. The command is used to send the dog further out and give the sheep more room.

In Here

Used during shedding. When a gap has been created between the sheep, the handler uses "in here" to command the dog to move from its position on the opposite side of the sheep, through the gap to separate them. The dog will then be expected to drive one bunch of the separated sheep away.

Lie Down / Stand / Stop

Stop, lie down, slow down or just stand still - but often used to slow the dog down. *Intelligent things Border Collies - good ones can usually tell which the handler means by the tone of voice.*

Look Back

The dog must leave the sheep it's working and turn around to look for more sheep. An advanced "look back" can be done in such a way as to indicate to the dog which direction the new sheep are located.

Take Time

The dog should slow down - usually used to put more distance between dog and sheep when the dog's eagerness is likely to panic or stress the sheep.

That'll Do

The dog must stop what its doing and return directly to the handler. This command can be a great help when training a dog to drive. Use "That'll Do" to keep the dog between you and the sheep.

There

Used by some handlers to tell the dog it has completed the required flanking maneuver (*circling*) and should turn squarely back towards the sheep.

Walk Up / Walk On

Requires the dog to move straight towards the sheep in a calm, steady fashion without spooking or stressing them