

# Rottweiler Carting FAQ

*Marianne Noble, Carting Chair, Medallion Rottweiler Club*

## How can my dog earn a Rottweiler Carting Title?

A Rottweiler earns a Carting title by successfully navigating all elements of a Carting Course which has been approved by the American Rottweiler Club with a score of at least 170 points out of a maximum of 200, as judged by an ARC approved judge. Only one leg is needed to earn the title at each level. The course must cover a minimum of 375 feet from beginning to end. Carting courses are similar in many ways to Rally Obedience Courses. Trials are conducted out-of-doors and proceed rain or shine.

There are three levels of competition in Rottweiler Carting:

- CS - Carting Started (on leash)
- CI - Carting Intermediate (off leash)
- CX - Carting Excellent (driving)

Dogs may compete in any of the above three categories singly and/or in a brace with one other dog. The same course is used for all three levels and by both single and brace teams.

The handler may talk to/praise the dog throughout the course and may work on either side of the dog or in front of the dog as may be advantageous for various elements. As in Obedience and Rally, it is essential to avoid a tight lead or physically guiding the dog.

## Are all breeds carting tests identical? Can a Rottweiler earn a title in another breed's test?

No, all breeds carting tests are **not** the same. Trial elements, weights and scoring may differ dramatically among various breeds' carting trials. While a Rottweiler may be allowed to compete in other breeds' trials, the only recognized Rottweiler Carting title is one earned in a test conducted under the aegis of the American Rottweiler Club.

## What are the elements of a Rottweiler Carting Test?

A Rottweiler carting course has the following mandatory and optional elements.

- a. Mandatory elements :
  - Hitch
  - Load and unload 40 pounds (provided by Test Host)
  - Gate ( open/pass through/close)
  - Serpentine (5 cones, 9 feet apart)
  - Turns (90° left, 90° right, 360° left and 360° right)
  - Halt
  - Fast
  - Slow
  - Back up 3 feet
  - Distraction (audible and/or visual)
  - Three minute down-stay
- b. Optional (2 of the following)
  - Bridge
  - Figure 8
  - Additional distraction

## Where can I find the American Rottweiler Club Carting Rules and scoring protocols

<http://tinyurl.com/gpf1ce6>

# Lead Up Activities to Get Your Dog Ready for Carting

1. Get (or borrow) a carting harness. Have your dog wear it for brief periods or for several days so he can get accustomed to it. (About carting harnesses: <http://foxii.com/carting/carting-equipment/carting-harnesses/>)
2. Next, it is necessary to get him accustomed to the fact that something will be following him everywhere he goes when he's in the harness. One way to do this is to put eye bolts in a short length of 4x4 or an old car tire and attach it to his harness straps. They will bounce, make noise and provide resistance. Use your customary lead attached to his collar and encourage him to walk with you. You may have more success facing him while walking backwards. It is not unusual for the dog to balk or be apprehensive at first. It may help to have an assistant walk beside him holding his lead while you walk backwards treating him generously. Praise, praise, praise. Lots of treats and praise will help him realize nothing horrible is happening.
3. Once he can move forward comfortably against resistance, introduce the concept of shafts. Some dogs panic initially when they feel shafts touching their sides. One way to get them accustomed to the sensation is to use two 5-foot lengths of PVC. Attach a t-connector to one end of each PVC shaft and pass the other end through the loop on the harness. The t-connector prevents the PVC shaft from pulling through the harness loop.
4. With your dog on lead, walk alongside him allowing the free end of the shafts to drag on the ground. He will occasionally feel them touch his side, but your goal is to get him accustomed to that sensation without feeling claustrophobic about it.
5. When he seems comfortable with the loose shafts, enlist the help of an accomplice to walk quietly behind the dog while holding the free ends of the PVC shafts along his sides. They should occasionally allow the shafts to lightly touch his sides.
6. When he accepts the shafts without fear, you can introduce the cart. Put him in a stand-stay and have an assistant hold his lead. Calmly and gently guide the shafts up along both sides of the dog and into the loops of his harness. Praise him quietly as you connect the traces to his harness.
7. As in all previous steps, use treats and praise to encourage him to move forward in a straight line. Walk backwards if you need to treat and praise. Start with short sessions, increasing as your dog gains confidence.
8. Stay with straight line work until your dog is comfortable. Take him on increasingly longer walks. He will relax and enjoy the outings as he spends more and more time in the shafts.
9. When you introduce turns, you will notice your dog automatically making an interesting adjustment: he will cross his feet to turn. Since the shafts interfere with his ability to twist his body during a turn, he discovers that he needs to cross one foot over the other. You don't need to teach that – he will work it out himself.
10. Gradually add weights. In a Rottweiler carting trial, he will need to pull a 40 pound weight in his cart.
11. Introduce Carting trial elements similar to a Rally Course, such as 90, 180 and 360 degree turn; stop/stand; serpentines; figure 8's, backing up; fast; slow; gates, bridges and a three minute down-stay. You can talk to and praise your dog throughout. Handlers are permitted to work on either side of the dog or in front as may be advantageous for various elements.
12. For further info and photos: <http://foxii.com/carting/getting-started/>.