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THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB ANNOUNCES SCENT WORK AS NEW SPORT

New York, N.Y. – The American Kennel Club, the leading authority on dogs, is pleased to announce the launch of its newest sport, AKC Scent Work. Scent Work is a sport that mimics the task of working Detection Dogs - such as narcotics dogs or explosives dogs - to find a specific scent and communicate to the handler that the scent has been found. It is a positive, challenging activity that allows dogs the opportunity to use their strongest natural sense in a way that is fun, engaging, and that builds and strengthens a foundation of trust between the handler and the dog.

In AKC Scent Work the dog is searching in a pre-defined search area for the hidden odor, which is either an essential oil or handler scent, depending on the class. Searches take place in a variety of environments, including an area with Containers, Interior, Exterior, and Buried. There are four difficulty levels for each element—Novice, Advanced, Excellent, and Master—and factors such as the size of the search area, the number of hides, whether the number of hides is known or unknown to the handler, and the maximum height of the hides will change with the difficulty level. The most accomplished dogs will also be eligible for The Detective Class, which contains many hides in a variety of environments.

All dogs (purebred and mixed breeds) can participate provided they are AKC-registered, enrolled with AKC Canine Partners, listed in the Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) program or recorded in the Foundation Stock Service (FSS) program.

“We have already received significant interest from clubs, participants, and potential judges,” said Stephanie Kennerley, Sports and Events Project Coordinator in charge of Scent Work. “Scent Work provides a stimulating activity for dogs. Owners will enjoy watching their dogs use their nose to solve these unique puzzles. We are excited to make this activity a new AKC sport.”

Because of the tremendous interest, the sport will be ramped up in phases. The AKC is currently accepting applications from existing and new clubs seeking to become licensed to hold Scent Work trials. Approved clubs are being notified and Scent Work will be added to their club profiles beginning May 1. Applications are also being accepted for Scent Work judges. A judge’s education class is under development and is tentatively scheduled to be available by
May 1. A list of approved judges will be available on the AKC website after June 1. Processing of event applications will begin on August 1. Scent Work trials can be held on or after October 1, 2017.

“AKC Scent Work is a modern day performance event in which bred-for traits like working drive, concentration and response to distractions are redeployed into roles relevant for the twenty-first century,” said Doug Ljungren, Vice President of Sports and Events. “While the sport of Scent Work will not prepare your dog to be a working detection dog, we hope it serves to demonstrate to the public the value that these purpose-bred dogs can provide to the security of our nation.”

To learn more about AKC Scent Work or to find the appropriate applications, please visit www.akc.org/events/scent-work/.

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**About the American Kennel Club**

Founded in 1884, the American Kennel Club is a not-for-profit organization, which maintains the largest registry of purebred dogs in the world and oversees the sport of purebred dogs in the United States. The AKC is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Along with its more than 5,000 licensed and member clubs and its affiliated organizations, the AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. More than 22,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dogs are held under AKC rules and regulations each year including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earthdog tests. Affiliate AKC organizations include the AKC Humane Fund, AKC Canine Health Foundation, AKC Reunite and the AKC Museum of the Dog. For more information, visit www.akc.org.

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