



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

## October Tracking Judges' Newsletter

### **National Tracking Invitational**

The 2007 National Tracking Invitational was held September 22-23 in Asheville, North Carolina. Please visit [http://www.akc.org/events/tracking/national\\_invitational/2007/index.cfm](http://www.akc.org/events/tracking/national_invitational/2007/index.cfm) for results and photos from the event.

### **VST Test Limits and Alternate Tracks**

When planning a VST, the maximum number of tracks for which a site is approved cannot be exceeded. If an alternate track is plotted, the track is counted towards the site limit. If a site is approved for six (6) tracks and six (6) tracks are plotted, an alternate is **not** allowed.

### **Specialty Clubs Opening Tests to Other Breeds**

Recently, specialty clubs have opened tests to other breeds and have had questions regarding the substitution policy if one test does not fill. The policy below should help with these situations. Please remember that in order for there to be substitutions, it **must** be stated in the premium list.

### **Guidelines for Specialty Clubs' Tracking Tests**

Entries for each test (TD, TDX, VST) shall be grouped according to Chapter 1, Section 13 of the *Tracking Regulations*. The draw for available tracks in each test shall be conducted beginning with the highest priority group until the available tracks in each test have been filled.

The following procedure should be use for Specialty Clubs open to all breeds:

- Draw (1) Specialty breed without a title
- Draw (2) Specialty breed with a title
- Draw (3) Other breeds without a title
- Draw (4) Other breeds with a title

An alternate list of the remaining entries will be prepared according to Chapter 1, Section 13. If there are available tracks after all Specialty entries have been drawn for a given test, those remaining tracks will be held open in the event an exchange can be made. If the exchange policy has been so stated in the premium list, available tracks are to be filled from **Specialty entries** making up the alternate list for that test.

When no further exchanges can be made, available tracks for each test will be filled from an alternate list made up of the remaining entries on the alternate list established according to Chapter 1, Section 13.

If in a combined TD, TDX, VST test, two (2) TD tracks are available for exchange to a TDX or VST track and they are available, a random draw shall be conducted to determine which test will accept the exchange. If there are Specialty entries available for only one of the tests (TDX or VST), that test will have the exchanged track.

### **Exercise areas at tracking tests**

The AKC recently notified all clubs that exercise areas must be designated and clean-up equipment and receptacles must be available. This **does** apply to AKC Tracking tests. To comply, clubs should designate an exercise area with signage and have equipment and a receptacle available. An exercise pen is not required but an area must be designated.

### **Catalog requirements**

Tracking tests are conducted a little less formally than many AKC events; however, some of the required elements are not being included in the catalogs. Some of these include the AKC logo, directions to the test site, and a cell phone number of a committee member present at the test site on both the day of plotting and the day of the test. The judging program mailed to the exhibitors and judges contains this information and since the judging program must be printed in the catalog, the catalog should include the very same information (*Tracking Regulations*, Chapter 1, Section 14 “Judging Program”).

### **Site maps needed**

Site maps are readily available from several websites and can be extremely helpful to a judge who is judging at a site for the first time. It provides judges with an overview of the site and can facilitate efficient plotting. Clubs should remember that judges are to be sent site maps sixty days prior to the events.

### **Spectators**

AKC *Tracking Regulations* require judges to see that spectators remain at least fifty yards from the start flag until the dog, handler, and judges have moved out of the starting area (Chapter 2, Section 13). Please keep in mind that while it is great to see the dog find the article, the location of the spectators should not be a distraction to the dog.

### **Introductory VST title**

Earlier this year, we sent letters to clubs asking that they try the proposed Introductory VST. The parameters of the proposed test were supposed to be included in the Tracking Judges' Newsletter to be sent out a week later. It was delayed. Since we have had several judges ask about the program, we would like for all of our tracking judges to be aware of the proposed test.

There are areas where people want to get involved in tracking but there is no TD land available. In addition, many areas are losing TD land for various reasons and must forgo holding TD tests. There are VST areas available in the majority of these situations. The proposed Introductory VST test would allow clubs to still hold tracking tests when TD land is not available.

The title would be an introductory title equivalent to the TD. As of this date, we have not decided what to call it. It would require a certification. Once earned, the dog could be entered in a TDX or VST test. It would also serve as a certification to enter a TD test. A dog with a TD would be eligible to enter this new test.

We would like any clubs offering tracking tests to evaluate the proposed program over the next six months by holding matches and providing feed back for the 2008 Tracking Advisory Committee to review. Fun matches held for club members only do not have to be approved. Tracking "A" and "B" matches must be applied for and the test requirements published in a premium list. We would like information on the level of the entered dogs, a site map showing the tracks used, changes you feel would improve the test, and any additional comments you care to make. The parameters for this test are listed below:

### **Proposed Introductory VST title**

All VST regulations (*Tracking Regulations*, Chapter 5, and "Tracking Test and Judging Guidelines") will be in effect except as indicated below.

#### **Parameters:**

- Length: 350-400 yds, at least 1/3 and not more than 1/2 on non-vegetative surface. No part of a track shall be within 50 yards of another track or 40 yards from the same track. While not required, tracks may be plotted to include buildings, fences, breezeways, ramps, stairs, shelters, roofed parking garages, courtyards, and buildings with two or more openings.
- Age: 1-2 hrs
- Start: The start and the first 20 yards will be on a vegetated surface.
- Length of Legs The length of the legs of the track shall be at least 40 yards.
- Turns: 3-5, at least one of which shall be on a non-vegetated surface and must be plotted to allow at least 30 yards after the turn before crossing or returning to a vegetated surface. Both left and right 90-degree turns shall be used. Acute turns shall be avoided.
- Obstacles: None

Articles: One article at the start made of cloth or leather and one article (metal or plastic) at the end of the track. The track may end on a vegetated or non-vegetated surface. Articles must be placed at least 20 yards from a turn and not clearly visible from the required turn on a non-vegetated surface.

Test limit: 8 dogs per 2 judges

Sites: Currently approved VST sites

Should an animal, pedestrian, or vehicular traffic appear or move across the track, the team will continue to work the track, as incidents such as these are considered a normal occurrence for this test.

The tracks are to be judged by approved or provisional VST judges (or an approved TDX with an approved or provisional VST judge).

All required documentation for the test should be sent to:  
Introductory VST Program  
Companion Events Department  
American Kennel Club  
PO Box 37930  
Raleigh, NC 27627