



Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

Up North Dog

PURPOSE: This badge is intended to show that the dog and handler can work together to complete an obstacle course built using primarily natural objects. The handler and dog must work together as a team, where they may assist one another at various points on the course. For example, the dog may need to assist the handler with balance at various points on the course, and in turn, the handler may need to provide a boost to the dog to help him over some obstacles.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must be a willing participant in conquering all of the course obstacles. The dog must complete each obstacle in the prescribed fashion, in some cases needing to move in front of or behind the handler.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: The handler must be physically capable of meeting the challenge of all obstacles, including water. The handler must know and be able to explain the safety equipment needed for this activity and must always follow the rules for safety as explained.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: All obstacles must be built for the course according to the guidelines using all-natural objects. The only exception to this would be the trampoline bed used to simulate the marsh, or the cargo net that lays atop a sand bed. Of these two obstacles, only the one most appropriate to the environment is used on the course. A detailed description with photos is included for each obstacle.

A sit atop kayak and/or stand-up paddle board, both with the appropriate paddles is required for the water challenge on the course. The handler must wear a properly fitting life jacket and must provide one for the dog to wear as well.

The handler is required to wear sturdy shoes that tie when completing any obstacle on the course. If the handler chooses to remove his shoes to complete the water challenge, he must have another suitable pair of shoes to put on after crossing the water. The handler should be aware that there is a strong likelihood that his/her shoes will get wet. Sandals, flip flops, water shoes or slip-ons of any kind are forbidden when practicing any obstacle or completing the course.

The handler should be aware that he/she will be moving through a forested environment with tree branches at head level and natural trip hazards under foot. For this reason, the handler may elect to wear a helmet and safety goggles when practicing any obstacle or completing the course and may choose to have the dog wear protective eyewear.

The dog must wear a properly fitting, nonrestrictive harness, such as the type that would be used for Parkour, when completing the course. Dogs must be leashed at all times (max. 6' leash) and may not attempt to leave the path of the course. Accidental footsteps outside of the path are not considered an attempt to leave. The leash may be held in the handler's hand or clipped onto a belt using a quick release snap.

Due to the length of the course, one person is needed at the start to release teams and one person should be at the end to record times. These two people will need to communicate with one another using walkie talkies in order to best manage participants on the course and to keep things moving efficiently. Depending on sightlines, at least one other person is needed (possibly several) to be



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positioned along the course to ensure that safety procedures are followed, and obstacles are completed as required.

PROCESS: Though there is no specific time requirement for completing the course, it is intended to be done as quickly as possible. It adds a sense of competition when individual teams are timed in completing the course. The person at the start of the course releases the team to begin while simultaneously communicating with the person at the finish via walkie talkie. The person at the finish begins timing when the starter releases the team. The clock is stopped only when the dog has two feet on the final obstacle (the Parkour Tree) while the handler is simultaneously touching the tree.

Course minders along the route report any course violations to the starter and the team will be required to complete the course again. Multiple attempts at each obstacle are allowed but should not be excessive. Course violations should be identified immediately, if possible and the team will need to restart the course.

The evaluator of record designs the course and makes sure that each obstacle is built according to the guidelines and that the overall course length meets the standards. This person must take a position at either the start or the finish of the course. The evaluator has the sole responsibility for determining if the requirements for the badge have been met, taking into consideration any information they receive from course minders, or from their partner at the start or finish line. The evaluator may decide at any point that a team needs more training, particularly if continued multiple attempts are needed at many of the obstacles.

Video evaluation requires photos and/or videos clearly showing that each obstacle is built as specified. Additionally, video must be submitted showing the dog and handler completing the entire course.

ALLOWED:

- Multiple attempts at each obstacle, providing the evaluator does not find the attempts to be excessive
- Helmet suitable for any sport
- Praise used as a reward on course
- Reward immediately upon the completion of the course
- Hiking stick or cane to help with balance (rubber tip only)

NOT ALLOWED:

- Any behavior which may be unsafe for either team member or any behavior that is determined to be harsh
- Failure to use all appropriate safety equipment
- Inappropriate footwear
- Luring the dog by using a treat or by making the dog think that you have one
- Any leash longer than 6 feet