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**DSA Sanctioned Sport Scenting  
Competition & Titling Rulebook**

(updated April 2013)

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## **What is DSA Sport Scentwork?**

Dog Scouts of America Sport Scenting (DSA- SS) refers to an activity in which a dog has been trained to locate and indicate a specific fragrance or scented oil. It should be an uninterrupted performance by the dog and handler without direction from the Judge after being given permission to begin the search. The performance of the search should convey an image of a dog and handler having fun, showing enthusiasm and a solid working partnership. The handler is allowed unlimited verbal and visual communication with the dog, but only needing one start cue for the dog is ideal. Handlers should strive to have their dog work on a loose leash throughout the search (off leash is permitted in most tests). Each team is judged on a pass/fail basis with completion time being used for placements if offered. Each qualifying run will earn a ribbon on the day of the trial and title certificates will be mailed from DSA upon completion of a title. This program and set of titles is separate from the DSA program/titles in which the dog locates useful scents (Scent Detection Program).

Dogs are used in a myriad of ways using their sense of smell to help humans locate a specific scent or item. The DSA-SS program refers to a dog finding a scent that is hidden from view as a fun and engaging activity for people and their dogs.

### **Dog Scouts of America's Sport Scenting tests**

Because DSA believes in helping dogs learn new things and to be more helpful, the organization hosts Sport Scenting tests for any dog with a DSA Competition Registration Number. **DSA tests are open to dogs of all breeds/mixes and dogs/handlers with disabilities are welcome.** Any club or group of individuals may apply to host a sanctioned Sport Scenting trial after hosting at least 1 sanctioned "Practice" trial. A practice will allow Judges, future Judges and competitors a chance to go through a test just for practice. Hosts can hold a practice in which fun awards are given (fastest dog, youngest handler, etc.) but it is intended to be similar to a fun match or show-n-go that is offered as a trial-like practice run. Rules may be more relaxed for a practice and some training in the search area may be allowed as outlined by the host and or Judge.

DSA offers free Scent Detection training information on their website: [www.DogScouts.org](http://www.DogScouts.org)

### **Disclaimer:**

***The DSA tests and titles do not qualify you or your dog for any line of work involving scent detection.***

### **Scents:**

For the DSA Sport Scenting titles, the following scents will be used based on the level of competition:

- Birch- Novice level
- Anise- Intermediate level
- Clove- Advanced level
- Birch and Anise – Elite level
- Birch, Anise and Clove - Master level

## Alerts

Dogs may use either a passive or active trained alert to indicate the location of the hidden scent. The handler must be able to articulate the alert behavior their dog will use to indicate the find.

**Passive alerts** may include behaviors such as sit, down, stare, point and very gentle contact, such as a chin rest or very light nose/paw touch.

**Active alerts** can include barking that is directed at the hiding place, scratching and hard nose bumping. The dog may not cause damage to the hiding location with digging, biting or other destructive behavior.

It is preferred that the dog be primarily focused on the hiding location and not the handler.

## **General Rules**

The following rules are intended to enhance the safety and enjoyment of the trial or practice trial experience for everyone involved. All persons and dogs present on the grounds of a DSA event are subject to these rules and the jurisdiction of DSA and its representatives as outlined in this rulebook. In addition, jurisdiction extends off the grounds and outside event hours, provided that the misconduct is related to the event. This includes misuse of local lodging by persons attending the event. DSA reserves the right to investigate any misconduct and to impose such sanctions and penalties as deemed appropriate.

**Equipment:** All equipment and accessories used by the handler should be clean and in good condition.

**Collars/Harnesses:** Electronic training/collar devices are not allowed on the grounds at a Sport Scenting trial or practice. This includes electronic training devices worn by the dog such as, shock collars, and bark collars that shock or spray a dog. Dogs may not participate in the test with training devices/collars that would aid loose leash walking or heeling, or inflict punishment on the dog (to include choke collars.) The premium must list if a host organization does not allow other collars or leading/tethering devices. A vibration collar may only be worn by dogs deemed deaf by a veterinarian and accompanied by a letter from the veterinarian stating the dog is deaf. The remote must be kept visible to the Judge during the test and vibration may only be used to get the dog's attention in a manner that an owner might communicate to a hearing dog.

During the test, flat buckle collars are allowed. These include any collar that fastens at a stationary point rather than tightening. Properly fitted limited-slip/martingale collars are allowed (when tightened fully, the collar is only snug and does not press into the dog's neck muscle). Properly fitted harnesses are allowed as long as a stationary leash attachment is on the dog's back. No-pull type harnesses are not permitted while testing. All equipment is subject to review by the Judge and the Judge has the final say on equipment being allowed.

Anything that hangs down from the collar, such as collar tags, which could get snagged on something are prohibited. It is recommended that identification for the dog be riveted to or embroidered onto the collar, or attached to the back of the harness in a way that prevents jingling.

Training aids, such as head halters and no-pull harnesses, are permitted on competition grounds,

but not during the team's testing. Using the equipment worn by the dog in a way that aides their performance of the test is prohibited.

**Leashes:** Sport Scenting testing may be done on or off leash at the Judge's discretion. Long lines may be used unless the Judge or test hosts determine that your skills at managing such line poses a safety risk to you, your dog or others. Flexi-leads or any other retractable leads are not permitted. Leashes should remain loose as much as possible and should not be used to guide the dog (handler may use pointing, verbal cues and body movements to direct their dog to search). During the test, the dog should be on a leash at least 4' long. Outside the test area, leashes may not be longer than 6' unless the dog is about to enter the test area.

**Clickers:** Spectators and waiting competitors may not use a clicker within earshot of the dog being tested. A clicker may not be carried into the testing area by a competitor.

**Yellow Bandannas/leash ribbons/muzzles:** Dogs brought to trial sites where other people and dogs are present should be temperamentally sound enough or well managed so as to be safe for all other attendees. Each handler is responsible for managing their dog and its proximity to other dogs in order to keep that dog from feeling the need to react. In an effort to aid this, dogs that need more space may wear a yellow bandanna or a yellow ribbon(s) on their leash as a way to communicate this need to others. Dogs should be comfortable with other people within 5' or so because the Judge will need to be close enough to observe the team during the test. But dogs that are not comfortable with people getting within petting distance should also wear a yellow bandanna or use a yellow bow on their leash. Even with the bandanna and/or ribbons, it is the responsibility of the handler to make sure their dog has the space it needs to feel safe. Dogs are permitted to wear a basket or softie type muzzle while on the grounds of the test or during the test as a precautionary measure. But that does not absolve the handler of the responsibility of ensuring the dog does not try to bite a human or another dog. Dogs may not wear muzzles that prevent the dog from fully opening its mouth to pant.

**Accessories:** Accessories for dogs are allowed if they are deemed to be for the wellbeing, comfort, or safety of the dog – for example boots, jackets, sweaters or hair pins. If the Judge deems that the equipment interferes with the search, is a safety concern, or exhibits inappropriate advertising, you may be asked to remove the accessory from the dog before the search begins. Accessories that emit an odor (DAP collars for example) are not permitted in the test area.

**Handler's gear:** Handlers may wear special clothing or equipment such as a vest, hat, gloves, cargo pants, boots or sunglasses. Handlers clothing and equipment should have a neat and clean appearance. Bags and pouches otherwise known as "bait bags" may not be worn. Wheelchairs and other assistive equipment should have the minimum amount of accessories needed to safely perform the test.

**Food & rewards in and around the test area:** Attendees may not eat near the testing area and food should not be prepared near the testing area in such a way that it would pose an unnecessary distraction for Novice level dogs. Competitors may have a food reward hidden from view in a pocket during the test as long as it is in a sealed plastic bag or other sealed container and only made visible to the dog (and opened to reward the dog) after the Judge has indicated that the correct location has been indicated by the handler. Rewards may not be in the handler's mouth

or in a pouch that could be considered a “bait bag”. A toy reward may also be used in the same way- completely hidden from view in a pocket or waistband until after the Judge has indicated that the correct location has been indicated by the handler.

If the food or toy pops out accidentally before it is allowed, the run may be an NQ if the Judge felt this significantly affected the performance of the dog or soiled the test area. This is to ensure that the dog is performing the exercises as requested based on a solid working relationship with the handler and foundation skills the dog has already learned and to prevent distractions to the dogs that follow.

**Reward method:** Handlers may give food rewards directly to their dog, taking care not to drop any on the floor or touch items in the test area. Toys may be tossed for the dog to catch. Only clean, dry toys or completely sealed food containers that will not leave anything on the source location may be thrown at source as a reward. No food scent or residue should be transferred to the area of the hide or dropped on the floor. Judges may request that all toys/food containers be approved prior to the start of the test. If a handler has any question about their reward, be sure the Judge approves it before the test begins. The handler may choose to reward in the test area or outside the test area.

## **Control of dog:**

**Handler is responsible:** The handler (even a person temporarily holding the leash) must have the dog safely under control at all times, and must not allow their dog (or their dog’s vocalizations) to interfere with another dog’s performance. Each handler is responsible for their dog(s) safety and mental well being. Dogs brought to trial sites where other people and dogs are present should be temperamentally sound enough or well managed so as to be safe for all other attendees.

**Leashes required:** All dogs must remain on a leash no more than 6’ in length or in a crate while on the trial grounds unless permitted to be off-leash during testing or using a long line during testing. A dog that gets loose and causes a significant disruption may be excused from the grounds and forfeit their testing, even if the dog was competing off-leash when he/she got loose.

**No dog areas:** Exhibitors must attend the Judges briefing for their test and may not have their dog with them. Exhibitors are responsible for providing a way to contain their dog during times when they need to be without their dog. This could be a crate, another person (over 18) to hold their dog and be responsible for that dog’s actions while in their care, their car (if weather permits) or some other arrangement. Unless the dog is being judged or is next in line to enter the ring, dogs are not allowed within 20’ of the testing area. It is requested that people with Service Dogs observe this rule so as not to distract a dog being tested that needs additional space from other dogs, but it is understood that Federal Law prohibits their Service Dog from being banned from accompanying the handler into areas where the general public is allowed. Hosts may establish areas that are off limits to dogs, such as food service areas, bathroom facilities on site and the registration/check-in table where people need to pay attention to the process and may be distracted from what their dog is doing. “No Dogs” areas should be clearly posted with large signs visible from a distance and preferably high enough that they won’t be blocked by people

standing in front of them.

**Dogs that need more space:** Due to the “one-dog-at-a-time” nature of the testing and relaxed atmosphere, DSA Sport Scenting is a great activity for dogs that may not be comfortable with other dogs in close proximity. Hosts are encouraged to help handlers that express the need for assistance in getting a dog-free path to and from the testing area. This should be done as expeditiously as possible to avoid undue delays. Handlers of a dog that needs space from other dogs should notify the gate steward and be ready as close as possible to the testing area for their turn in the ring. Be sure to remind the gate steward (and if possible, the handler of the next dog) to keep the next dog away from the exit of the testing area until you and your dog are away from that area. See the “yellow bandannas” section. Dogs should be comfortable with other people in the vicinity and the Judge will need to be close enough to observe the team during the test. But dogs that are not comfortable with people getting within petting distance should also wear a yellow bandanna or use a yellow bow on their leash.

**Greetings (dogs and children):** All Sport Scenting attendees have full responsibility to have complete control over their dogs and any children they are responsible for while attending a Sport Scenting trial or practice. Handlers may not allow their dog to freely roam at the end of his/her leash and any children under 10 years old must be accompanied by an adult that is responsible for that child at all times. Attendees should not allow their dog or child to approach/greet any dog without the permission of that dog’s handler—this is both as a courtesy and in order to encourage only positive interactions between dogs and safe interactions between dogs and kids. Any attendees that may not have read this rulebook should be kindly advised of these responsibilities by the trial Chairperson. Failure to follow the rules after having been advised can result in excusal from the trial site. If any dog or child is causing problems, this should be reported to the trial Chairperson so he/she can be aware of these sorts of issues and take the appropriate action.

**Fighting/aggression:** Any Judge or host club/organization has the authority to dismiss a dog/handler from the “test area” or the grounds controlled by the host. A Judge may disqualify any dog for fighting, biting or making a serious attempt to bite another dog or any person. The Judge may disqualify a competitor for unsportsmanlike action.

**Destructiveness:** If the Judge observes a dog destroying or damaging equipment, facilities, or supplies used in the test, or engaging in unsafe behavior, the Judge will ask the handler to stop that behavior. An active alert may involve scratching but should not continue to the point of causing damage. A scratch alert should be discouraged on the vehicle search as the vehicles will likely be borrowed for the testing and should not be returned with damage. If the Judge knows in advance which dogs being tested have an active alert that may affect the hiding spot or container that is chosen.

**Barking:** Within reason, dogs may bark or otherwise vocalize while participating in the test or practice. However, if the Judge determines that the dog has ceased working and is continually barking in frustration or for other reasons or doing some other disruptive behavior; the Judge will give the competitor a warning. If the handler is unable to get the dog to stop the disruptive behavior and/or get back to work within 10 seconds of the warning, the test will be Judged as an NQ.

**Leaving the working area:** If a dog leaves the working area and will not immediately return to the handler the test will be scored as non-qualifying. A handler may request to withdraw themselves from a test for any reason before completion of the allowed time. A handler that withdraws his/her dog from the test after crossing the start line will be marked as “withdrawn”.

**Out of control:** The Judge must excuse a dog whose behavior in the testing area is so unruly (not under the handler’s control) that it indicates to the Judge it poses a risk to itself, others and/or the test equipment. After 3 excusals for out of control behavior, the dog will be suspended from competition until such time as a Judge deems the dog under control as observed at a practice test.

## **Other Rules:**

**Clean Up:** Dog owners are responsible for cleaning up anything that comes out of their dog. Trial hosts are responsible for providing means to clean and disinfect surfaces from odors. Failure to responsibly clean up after your dog while at the event will result in excusal from the trial or match without any refunding of entry fees. While it is certainly preferable that dogs do not urinate on any belongings or test items, whenever possible the items in a Novice or Intermediate test that have been urinated on by a dog will be removed and/or the area cleaned prior to the next dog being tested. If this is not possible (in grass/dirt) then the hiding location may need to be moved at the Judge’s discretion. For dogs above the Intermediate levels, the area will be cleaned as much as possible, but these dogs should be expected to work around the distraction.

**Age/ in-season:** Canines under 16 weeks of age may not compete. Bitches in season may compete in a level that will not be used again for another level as long as they go last and are contained at the test facility/grounds in such a way as to not cause a scent distraction to the other dogs (such as; in a vehicle (if safe temperature to do so) well away from the test/warm-up area or in a closed room well away from the test/warm-up area). Handlers of a bitch in season must take every precaution when moving their dog around the test site that they do not cause a distraction to the other working dogs. They must notify the test secretary of their dog’s condition upon arrival and before taking their dog out of their vehicle so they can be advised of where they will need to contain their dog and have their dog relieve herself. They must also be sure their dog wears “panties” at all times while at the test site. Owners have the option of pulling bitches in season from the trial if they provide a note from their veterinarian verifying that the female came into season after the closing date for entries. The host has the option of refunding the entire fee or retaining up to 50% of the fee as a processing fee. The letter from the vet may be mailed (to arrive prior to the start of the trial) or hand delivered to the trial secretary prior to the start of the trial.

**Vaccinations:** All dogs on the grounds of the event must be vaccinated or have titers showing immunity from Distemper, Parvo, and Rabies.

**Who may be the exhibitor:** DSA and Sport Scenting are about the bond between a dog and its family. To promote that, dogs should only be handled by a member of the dog's household or

their immediate family members during the test. The dog may be handled by different family members at different trials or practices but must be handled by only one person during each trial. A Judge may excuse a dog at any time if he/she believes the handler is unable to control the dog and the Judge's decision is final. Children (under 18 years of age) that compete must be able to adhere to the rules set forth in these guidelines without additional aid from an adult. A trial official may insist that an adult take over the handling of a dog outside the trial area if he/she believes the junior handler is unable to control the dog.

**Exhibitors and Spectators:** Exhibitors and spectators are expected to display good behavior and good sportsmanship in and out of the ring. Judges may excuse from their test area any exhibitor in violation of these rules or for conduct that interferes with the event and/or participants and/or the spectators. The Trial Secretary or trial Chairperson may excuse from the grounds any exhibitor or attendee in violation of these rules or for conduct that interferes with the event and/or participants and/or the spectators.

**Handicapped handlers:** DSA encourages those with handicaps or debilitating diseases to participate in this sport. Handlers may use a wheelchair, scooter, crutches, cane, walker or other assistive equipment in the search area, but must be able to move around without assistance from others. The Judge may modify the exercise to the extent that it assists the handler, provided that no modification may give any advantage to that handler's dog or that changes the dog's portion of the required exercise in any way. Only handlers with a disability that does not allow them to speak may use noise making devices to give their dog directional cues in a manner similar to the verbal cue of the other handlers. The Judge may use a visual means of communication with handlers who are unable to hear. Visually impaired handlers may participate if they are able to locate the specific area their dog is indicating. Blind handlers may be allowed to use light touch to find their dog and point to the location of the hide as their indication.

**Multiple dogs:** If a handler has multiple dogs to enter, a separate entry form is needed for each dog. It is recommended that person's with multiple dogs have their dogs in different levels, but not required. Run order is set by the host and the order in which a person's dogs are run for a particular level may not be changed. Adjustments may be made to allow additional time between the dogs if needed. If a competitor is competing with multiple dogs or at more than one level in the same test area, they may have an advantage when they enter the test area again. The Judge will put extra scrutiny on any cues they may try to give their dog as to the potential hiding place. If there is any question about a potential cue helping the dog (even if unintentional) the Judge may call a halt to the test. The Judge may excuse the handler and not pass the dog or has the option to send the handler out of sight until all other competitors have gone and then change the location of the hide, with previous containers removed as needed, and the handler/dog called back in to complete a new test with the hiding place unknown to the handler and in a way that would not aid that dog's search time. If the Judge feels the handler helped the dog make the find in any way, the test may be marked as NQ.

**No alcohol or illegal drugs:** The use or display of alcohol or illegal drugs on the trial site during trial hours is prohibited. Smoking may only be in areas designated by the host. All butts must be disposed of properly. Chewing tobacco may not be spit on the ground and containers used as spittoons must be properly disposed of in a waste receptacle. Violators may be excused from the ring or trial/practice site by the Judge, Chairperson, Trial Secretary or any person with authority

to enforce the rules of the property. Decision of any of these officials is final. The Chairperson must notify DSA in writing of any Judge who is in violation of this rule.

**Participate at your own risk:** Competitors entering tests that are not held in completely indoor locations do so with the understanding that wind, rain, snow, heat, humidity levels, etc. can all affect the dog's ability to find the scent. Even while indoors, the air currents of the HVAC or from the movement of individuals within the space can affect the scent. Testing will take place regardless of the weather unless conditions are unsafe. Test areas are intended to simulate a real life area search. Search areas may not be perfect or pristine and there may be hazards unknown to the host or Judge. It is the responsibility of the handler to determine if the area is safe for their dog. No refunds will be issued if the handler chooses to withdraw from the test or trial on the day of the trial.

**Test area off-limits:** No exhibitor, spectator, or their children and/or dog may be in a testing area, which is currently not in use, for any reason, without the host club or Judge's permission. Any such instance will result in an excusal from the balance of the trial without refund of any fees; spectators may be warned or excused from the trial site. Dogs not entered in the test or practice may not use any equipment on site without the host club/organization's permission and the owner signing a liability release form. Allowing a competing dog to sniff the containers to be used or to be in the actual testing area once it is mostly set-up for the trial prior to that dog's test is not allowed and can result in the dog being excused from the test. The Judge may opt to have their briefing in or within view of the testing area at the start of the test. Entry of participants (without their dogs) into the test area for familiarization and safety checks prior to the start of the test is at the Judge's discretion.

Once a test area has been prepared for use, ONLY the Judge, current competitor and any helpers the Judge deems as needed may enter the test area until all testing of the level(s) using that area is complete.

**No dogs near test site:** Dogs may not be within 20' of the testing area while it is in use. This is in order to accommodate dogs that might need extra space from other dogs and to reduce distractions for lower level tests. Dogs may be closer than 20' if completely out of view of the dog in the test area. The next dog to go into the ring may be within 20' if the dog being tested does not need space from other dogs.

**Photos/Video of tests:** One "competitor's assistant", if willing and available, may do video/photos for any handler that brings handheld equipment to be used by the assistant. The assistant is NOT responsible for any damage to the equipment or for poor quality of the photos/video. If the equipment is more complicated than they feel comfortable with, the assistant may refuse to use said equipment. This assistant may not be inside the test area, but may be just outside the designated area. Hosts may also choose to have a photographer and/or videographer on site instead of offering the competitor's assistant for this task. Only one photographer and/or one videographer at a time may be just outside the test area to get photos/videos where space allows. Handlers may choose to have that person or persons not take photos and/or not be within 20' of the ring. Handlers will not be allowed to do their own recording/photos. Anyone may do photos/videos from the spectator zones unless the handler requests no photos/video (as some

dogs are very nervous about that sort of equipment being pointed at them or hearing a shutter or seeing a camera flash).

## **Exhibitor Guidelines**

An exhibitor's behavior and attitude while attending a trial should not cause anyone to think badly of their experience of the event. Your attitude and behavior should be a good example for others. DSA Sport Scenting trials are family friendly events and the atmosphere should be friendly and relaxed.

**Disclosing the location of the hide:** Exhibitors and spectators are prohibited from discussing or communicating in any way regarding the set-up or layout of the area used for the testing, the location of the hide or anything that might provide any advantage to competitors. Violations of this policy can range from verbal warning, to excusal from the site, to suspension of trial privileges for any exhibitor involved. This rule should not prevent the celebration of qualifying runs of your fellow competitors, but discussion of the details of their search/test need to wait till after the testing of all competitors in that area is complete.

**Double Handling:** Persons outside the test area and any volunteers inside the test area are prohibited from any intentional actions designed to positively or negatively affect the performance of the dog being judged. The Trial Secretary or designee may expel from the property any person they reasonably believe is in violation of this rule. The Trial Secretary must be able to articulate what caused this action to be needed. Judges may excuse exhibitors whose dogs they reasonably believe have benefitted from double handling.

**Interference:** No person may interfere with the Judge in any way that affects his/her ability to fairly judge all competitors. No person may interfere with the trial committee members in any way that affects their ability to smoothly host the trial or practice.

**Excusal:** The Judge may excuse any handler who exhibits poor sportsmanship. That person's dog will not be allowed to compete in the trial with a substitute handler. If the competitor has already qualified, their score may be changed to "excused" prior to the completion of the trial day. The Judge's decision in these matters is final. This could occur for:

- a. Handler misconduct- A handler who abuses his/her dog shall be immediately excused. The Judge must mark the Judge's sheet with "excused" for that handler along with the reason for excusal.
- b. Poor Sportsmanship- Poor sportsmanship that rises to the level of misconduct is unacceptable. The Judge must mark the Judge's sheet with "excused" for that handler along with the reason for excusal.

Any handler or exhibitor that is excused from the grounds for misconduct must be reported to DSA by the Trial Secretary with a detailed written report of the incident. Depending on the severity of the incident, the handler may be prohibited from competition for a defined period of time and would be notified in writing should that occur.

**Accept the Judge's decision gracefully:** There will be no snatching of ribbons, loud negative comments, or a display of disagreement of the Judge or his/her decisions, either in the ring or

out. Exhibitors should not appear confrontational when discussing events or the judging. By entering any event, the owner and handler of any dog agree to accept the decision of the Judge as final. If an error has been made, an exhibitor may calmly discuss this with the trial Chairperson who will involve the Judge and/or Trial Secretary if needed. This should take place before the end of the trial. Once the results are submitted to DSA, they may not be changed in favor of the exhibitor.

**Exhibitors clothing should be neat and clean:** Exhibitor's apparel shows the respect that they have for the sport, the event and its proceedings. Exhibitors are not required to be in their best dress but what they wear should be neat and clean.

**Dogs should be clean:** Dogs should be clean and present a neat appearance without tracking dirt or mud into the trial area (weather and trial site conditions permitting). Dogs should be brushed and excess loose hair removed prior to arriving on the grounds. Any accessories worn by the dog should be clean and in good condition.

**Help your fellow exhibitors:** Everyone was new to the sport at one time. Help new competitors learn the sport and set a good example for them to follow. If you are able, lend a hand wherever you see that it is needed and welcomed.

**Keep the site clean:** Exhibitors should always leave the trial site as clean and tidy or more so than how they found it. Putting on a trial is hard work and no one wants to have to clean up messes at the end of a long day. If you make a mess, clean it up. If you have trash, throw it away properly. If anything comes out of your dog, clean it up. Exhibitors are at the trial because of the hosts being willing to volunteer their time and energy to promote the sport. In order to ensure future trials, exhibitors should do whatever they can to assist the host in promoting and running the trials.

**No gossip:** Exhibitors should not promote or spread rumors or negative comments about dogs or any person.

## **Registering with DSA**

**Registration with DSA required:** All dogs entering in a Sport Scenting test must be registered with DSA prior to the host club's closing date for that trial. If the trial has Day of Show (DOS) entries, a printed email or online registration confirmation from DSA with the assigned DSA Competition Registration Number (CRN), must be presented at the trial. See the Forms section in the rulebook for a DSA Competition Registration Number (CRN) Request Form, or the Sport Scenting page on the DSA website.

**Mailing CRN forms:** Initial DSA Competition Registration Number (CRN) Request Forms must be mailed with the proper fee payment, or if available, purchased and submitted online. Allow at least 2-3 weeks for the form to reach DSA and to be processed.

**Notification of your CRN:** DSA CRN numbers are emailed to legible email addresses for all

forms, after being processed. If there are any questions regarding filling out DSA CRN forms, contact DSA (See the Contact Us page on the DSA website for CRN department contact info.)

**Eligibility for registration:** Any healthy dog, 16 weeks or older on the day of the trial, may enter a Sport Scenting test or practice—and thus is eligible for a DSA CRN. Mixed-breeds, purebred dogs, deaf and/or blind dogs and dogs missing limbs are equally eligible for entry. Wolves or wolf-hybrids and Coyote hybrids are not eligible for CRN registration. Dogs brought to trial sites where other people and dogs are present should be temperamentally sound enough or well managed so as to be safe for all other attendees.

**Updating Your DSA Registration Information:**

Send address, phone, email, or other changes to DSA by mail or email. **See the Contact Us page on the DSA website to find contact information for the staff handling CRN and Sport Scenting inquiries.**

## **Trial Entries**

**Eligibility for entry:** Dogs that appear to have not recuperated from surgery or medical procedures may not participate in a trial or practice. Dogs that are limping or appear to be in any pain must be excused. If a dog has a permanent limp, a copy of a letter signed by their veterinarian, on official letterhead, clearing the dog for sport scenting activities may be sent/presented with the entry form as a waiver. The original letter should be brought to each trial/practice by the handler and must be presented for review if requested.

DSA respects a Judge's ability to be fair and impartial in determining if a dog/handler have or have not made a find. For this reason, there are no restrictions on who may enter a trial under a specific Judge.

**Qualifying under same Judge:** All qualifying searches may be obtained under the same Judge.

**Official Entry Form:** All trial entries must be submitted using the most current official DSA Sport Scenting Entry Form. Entries must be complete and legible and must include a valid CRN. Incomplete, unsigned, and/or illegible forms and/or forms not accompanied by proper entry fees are invalid and must be refused by the trial secretary. If a person has submitted the proper form and payment to DSA for CRN registration, but has not yet gotten their CRN number, a note may accompany the registration form advising the secretary that the CRN is pending and the date the form/payment was submitted to DSA.

**Liability Waiver:** A general liability waiver will be a standard part of the official entry forms for DSA-sanctioned Sport Scenting tests. It is highly encouraged that organizations and groups holding practice tests also require participants to sign a general liability waiver in order to protect those organizing and hosting the practice, and to encourage participants to be responsible for their own, and their dog's behavior throughout the practice.

**Entry form submission/bounced checks:** The entry form must be completed, signed and

mailed or otherwise conveyed to the Event Secretary for the event. The host will determine if day of show entries may be accepted and set a specific time for those entries to be collected. The Secretary will create a running order once all entries have been received. If an entry has been accepted by the host group and a payment rejected by the bank, the competitor shall be required to pay a \$40 rejected payment processing fee to the host through the Trial Secretary. Entry is considered complete only after proper entry forms are submitted and full payment is made; if the trial fills before that happens, the person loses their spot in the trial.

**Cut off for entries:** A host must state in the premium the acceptance dates for entries, if the show will be pre-entry only or if day of show entries will also be accepted and if the entries will be on a first received basis or random draw. No Judge may judge more than 45 dogs per day and a Judge or host may set lower daily limits (must accept at least 20 dogs). If the maximum number of entries is received, the host has the option to return the overflow entries or start a wait list.

**Wait listed shows:** If the host has elected to do a wait list, handlers on that list may be used to fill cancellations of no-shows. An entry may be marked as a “no show” if the handler or owner has not checked in at the designated location at the show site within 15 minutes of the start of that level. No show entries forfeit their entry fee and search time and may be replaced with the next available person on the waiting list.

**Day of show entries** (if offered) may fill any open spots on a first come, first entered basis until the cut-off time is reached.

**Refunds:** Refunds are the responsibility of the trial or practice host.

For additional details, see the “Hosting a trial” section

**What level to enter:** All dogs, regardless of titles from DSA or other venues, will begin at the Novice level Sport Scenting.

- Once a dog earns the Novice level title (as recorded by DSA) that dog is eligible to compete in Intermediate. The dog may also continue to enter Novice level to work on their Pro title.
- Once a dog has earned the Intermediate level title (as recorded by DSA) that dog is eligible to compete in Advanced. The dog may also continue to enter Novice and/or Intermediate to work on their Pro level titles.
- Once a dog has earned the Advanced level title (as recorded by DSA) that dog is eligible to compete at the Elite level. The dog may continue to enter lower levels to work on their Pro titles.
- Once a dog has earned the Elite title (as recorded by DSA) that dog is eligible to compete at the Master level. The dog may continue to enter lower levels to work on their Pro titles. A dog may continue to enter at the Master level to work toward their first or multiple Sport Scenting Champion titles.

NOTE: No dog may enter more than 2 levels per trial. No dog may be entered more than once in the same level.

**Alert noted on entry form:** The entry form must be marked appropriately to indicate the type of alert your dog will perform in response to the odor and the handler has the duty to be certain the score sheet (prepared by the trial secretary or designee on the day of the test) has the correct info including the correct specific alert on it before the test.

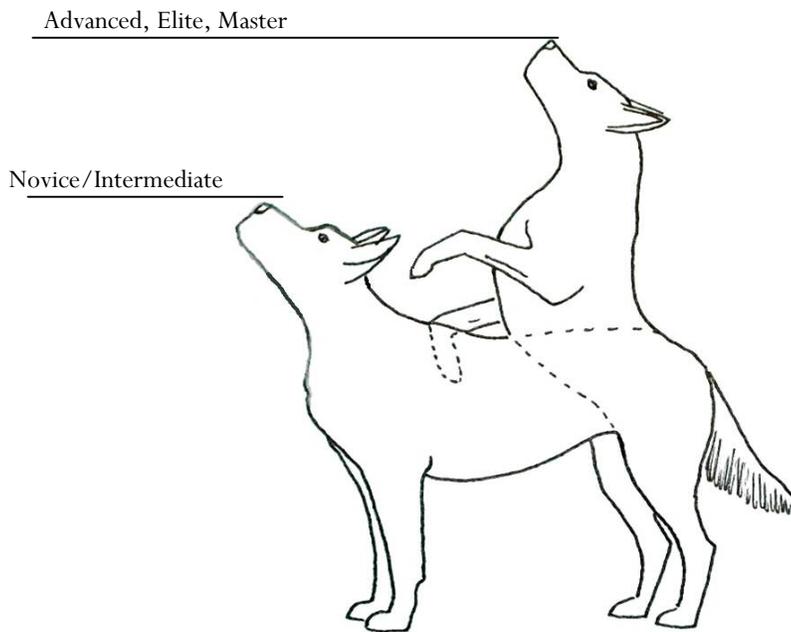
***Dogs that do not perform their specified alert - without help or cues from the handler- will be marked as an NQ.*** The alert signal from the dog should be in response to the odor (the odor is the cue) not in response to the handler. The alert should also be well practiced enough to be consistent. Anything in the handler's actions that might be construed as a cue or signal for the proper alert may cause the score to be an NQ. If the dog does an alert other than the specified alert, the handler may wait to see if the dog will do the proper alert, or may call the dog away from the hide and cue the dog to search again, careful not to cue the proper alert.

**Dog's nose reach:** The dog's nose reach heights will need to be noted on the entry form. To aid the Judge in placing the scent in such a way as to be within reach of the dog being tested, the highest height the dog is able to reach with its nose needs to be noted on the entry form. At this time, DSA will be allowing exhibitors to obtain and record these measurements on their own assuming that in the comfort of their own home, dogs will be more likely to reach as high as possible. Higher heights allows for more hiding options and fewer delays for equipment and hiding location changes. If owner obtained heights becomes a fairness issue, or heights are frequently being reported too low, official heights obtained in front of a Judge may be required.

For Novice and Intermediate, the measurement can be accomplished by holding a yard stick or tape measure vertically, then luring the dog with a treat higher and higher. The dog should be fully stretching its neck up to get its nose as high as possible without its front feet coming off the ground. The owner may also use other objects the dog may be more comfortable with in place of the tape measure (such as the dog's leash) to see how high the dog can reach and then measure that object. For Advanced and above, the same process can be used, except that the dog should stand on its hind legs and fully stretch its neck and body to get its nose as high as possible. It may be easier to put the yardstick or tape measure against a wall so the dog can balance itself by touching the wall.

If this height is questioned by the Judge or Trial Secretary, the dog will need to be measured with a Trial Official as witness. Dogs that are unable to fully stretch due to old age, injury or defect that is not immediately obvious will need a letter from their vet specifying the heights the dog CAN reach.

Novice and Intermediate dogs will not have the scent hidden higher than the height the dog can reach without their front feet coming off the ground. Advanced, Elite and Master level dogs may have the scent hidden up to the height the dog can reach with its nose while standing with its hind legs on the ground.



## **At the trial**

**BE ON TIME:** Out of respect for the hard working Judge and trial hosts and your fellow competitors who arrive on time, it is the handler's responsibility to ensure they leave plenty of time to get to the trial site prior to the cut off time for check in. Upon arrival, the exhibitor should check in, get their dog's number and any pertinent information from the Trial Secretary and if available, view the order of judging. **Any handler not present at the trial site and checked in with the designated person at least 15 minutes prior to the start of their level may be marked as absent and will forfeit their entry/entries and fee(s) for that level. Exhibitors may NOT be checked in until they physically arrive at the trial site.** If the trial is wait listed, their spot may be assigned to the next person on the wait list that is present on site. Exhibitors are responsible for knowing the scheduled start time of their level and being prepared to attend the briefing.

**Move ups:** Owners who move their dogs to the next level of competition prior to receiving their title certificate do so at their own risk. If the owner's records are incorrect, all qualifying scores earned while showing at the higher level shall be invalid.

**Ring conflicts:** Any exhibitor handling more than 1 dog must notify the ring steward of possible conflicts BEFORE the test starts so that accommodations may be arranged. The Judge may allow the person to show out of order, however, Judges are not required to wait for dogs/handlers that are not ready for their turn. A reasonable amount of time will be allowed for moving a dog that needs space directly from their crate to the testing area without stops.

**Substitutions by an owner/handler:** An owner or handler may not substitute any dog for a dog already entered. The handler may be changed to another eligible family member if the secretary is notified at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the trial (waiting till the start of a test/level is not acceptable).

**Judge's briefing- attendance required!** The Judge will hold a short briefing session prior to the start of the test, but no more than 5 minutes prior to the start time for the test. This will allow the Judge to review the rules and/or explain any variables in the search area, state the maximum course time and point out the start line and area boundaries and other important information. The Judge will also allow time for questions and will address any concerns the exhibitors may have about the test or area. Every handler in that test must attend the briefing in person without their dog. It is the Judge's discretion if he/she chooses to allow handlers into the testing area (without their dogs) to more closely view the search area. Once the test has begun, any questions must be directed to the stewards. Judges may clarify answers between dogs if needed. Exhibitors are not permitted to touch any containers or items within the search area at any time, but may ask the Judge to test a surface for stability or safety.

**No peeking:** Exhibitors may NOT observe other participants runs in any area they will be using for their own test(s). Any exhibitor viewing the testing area while in use (including viewing a recording) prior to the completion of all their runs in that area may be excused from the testing for that level and/or trial.

## **Details about the tests**

**Order of levels at a trial:** Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Elite, Masters. Levels may take place simultaneously if more than 1 Judge is available, or may be on different days.

**The testing area** may be indoors or outdoors (based on level and areas available). It must have sufficient hiding places at different levels/heights to test the dog's skills and be safe for dogs of all sizes and handlers of all mobility levels. Hiding places must be large enough to accommodate a 1 oz. scent tin or smaller container in such a way as to hide this item from the view of the dog and handler. The dog should not be able move something to uncover the hidden container as a way to visually verify that he/she found it. Drawers, closed boxes, opaque containers, zipped suitcases, behind immovable objects, etc. are examples of good hiding places. With the exception of the container search, the hiding places/objects used to hide the scent tin should blend in and not look out of place in the surroundings. Hosts will need to ensure they have enough containers and hiding places for the trial.

**Moving outside the test area:** All hides must be within the designated test area, but handlers/dogs may choose to briefly move outside the designated area as part of their search pattern.

**Maximum search time:** Maximum search time will be determined by the Judge taking in factors that include, but are not limited to, weather conditions, size of the area, difficulty and distractions. A Judge may use a dog and handler that are not entered in that level or using that area for a test of their own to do a practice search to help set a maximum test time.

**Safety:** The Judges will always strive to present test areas that are safe for the average, under-control dog to participate in. However, due to the variability of hiding locations and possible set-ups, and the variability of canine behavior, it would be impossible to predict all outcomes. The

dog's handler is responsible for the safety of, and control of, their individual dog. If there is an item or action within the test/practice's exercises that would present a safety issue due to the behavior or lack of control of that particular dog, the handler must not allow the dog to perform that task, or must stop the dog from continuing any unsafe behavior. The leash or voice controls may be used to prevent a dog from doing something that poses a risk to himself or others, but it cannot be used as a correction, only prevention/management.

**Areas used for levels:** Variation in the competition area contributes to the varied contexts in which the dog-handler team should be able to perform the test. It is expected that different areas will be used for Novice vs. Intermediate/Advanced, but all test areas should be on the same property and readily accessible.

**General Search Area:** It is preferred that the area(s) used for general searches be equivalent to a large cluttered room of a house or office (between 10' x 10' or 100 sq ft. and 30' x 30' or 900 sq ft) depending on level. Areas with excessive distractions are discouraged for Novice and Intermediate. Ring gates and/or fenced areas are encouraged (but not required) as a safety measure for outdoor areas and to delineate the test area from the spectator areas and the competitor waiting areas. Search areas may be the combination of two adjoining rooms if more square footage is needed.

**Container Search Area:** It is preferred if the area is set-up for the container search on a clean floor, in a low distraction environment, with a series of 15-40 normal household containers (depending on level) which may be arranged in a pattern (lines, circle or square) or scattered. This pattern/scatter should be 15' - 25' across or in diameter or the equivalent depending on level. Examples of acceptable containers include, but are not limited to, boxes, plastic bins with holes, zippered cloth sided suitcases, zippered cloth or leather shoulder bags and briefcases. Items should be at least 4" x 4" x 4" (or 64 cu inches) and no larger than 24" x 18" x 16" (or 6912 cubic inches) such as a standard plastic storage bin. Dogs may walk on or paw at a container, but the Judge may ask the handler to stop a dog that they feel is compromising the equipment or exhibiting an aggressive alert. Replacement containers of the same size and shape as the ones being used for the testing should be available in case of damage, fouling or other contamination.

**Vehicle Search:** Vehicle search will consist of three to seven vehicles. At the higher levels, some vehicles may be modes of transportation other than automobiles (motorcycles, trailers, semi-trucks, boats, ski-doo's, etc.). Vehicles at lower levels must be set in a defined pattern. At Elite and Masters level, vehicles may be scattered and may face front, back, or sideways. All vehicles must be at least 3 to 6 feet apart. Any area except the interior may be utilized on the vehicle with the height of the hides taking the height of the dog into account. The surface the vehicles are parked on is defined by level.

**Outdoor Search:** This can be any area that is outside or under a cover at least 8' high and open on at least 3 sides and has sufficient hiding places at various heights. If the cover is a temporary structure such as a tarp or pop-up tent set to at least 8' high, such temporary structure needs to be properly secured so it cannot loudly flap and cannot lift off the ground. If winds get too high for such temporary structure to be safe, the structure will need to be removed. Dogs will be required to search in all weather conditions (if unsafe, the test will be postponed or cancelled). The Judge may determine that the area is not safe for off-leash searches or for a certain dog to be tested off-

leash. The area will be identified by visual markers or barriers. Grass in areas used for testing or areas commonly crossed by competitors should be mowed short.

**Host provides scents and odor containers:**

Each competitor will use the scents provided by the host. A few drops of the scented oil or fragrance will be placed on one end of a Q-tip. Approved odor containers to keep the scented Q-tip from coming into contact with the container where it is hidden include 1 oz scent tins, a piece of drinking straw or tubing closed at one end to keep the Q-tip from falling out, or any means of containing the Q-tip equivalent to or smaller than a 1oz scent tin. The odor container must have a means of allowing the scent to escape without risk of the contents spilling, even if the odor container is jostled or accidentally dropped. When hidden for the test, the odor container will not be visible to the dog or handler. The odor container will be hidden in such a way that the dog cannot move something to visually verify the find.

**After the alert:**

Once the dog indicates, the handler's body language and tone (if speaking) should not change for a moment. If the handler has been pointing and encouraging, they should continue to do so as if they haven't seen the dog. If the handler has been quiet and relatively still, they should remain that way for a moment. The Judge wants to see that the dog commits to the alert and that the dog is 100% certain before the handler goes in to try to locate the scent item. If the handler chooses to encourage the alert (mostly in the case of an active alert) they may then do so for a few moments (within reason). It should be very clear by the dog's alert exactly where the scent article is located. After the dog has committed to the alert, the handler may ask the dog to put their nose on or close to the hiding location using a cue or phrase. Then the handler will need to verbalize the detailed location or point to the hiding spot without touching. An example would be "Behind the wheel in the 4 o'clock position" or "Behind the dictionary" (if using a book shelf). Saying "behind the wheel" or "on the second shelf" would not be detailed enough. If the dog truly understands his job and how to alert, even a non-dog person should be able to tell exactly where the item is hidden.

**NOVICE LEVEL** birch- (2 tests)

The dog will need to find the scent of birch on a Q-tip that is placed inside a small odor container. The odor container is hidden in such a way as to be hidden from view of both the dog and handler. Handler will not know the location of the hide. No distraction odors are added and unintentional distraction odors should be minimized as much as possible. The dog must perform a clear passive or active alert (as specified on the entry form) in a way that allows the handler to locate the hidden scent. Dog must not give any false alerts.

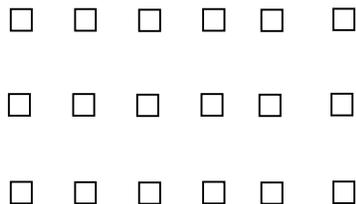
The handler may place a reward item just outside the test area or choose to carry it hidden on their body as stated in the rules. Handler may have a ½ oz aerated tin, with 1 Q-tip scented with the target odor, inside an airtight container and briefly open the airtight container to have the dog sniff the tin prior to crossing the start line. The airtight container with the tin inside must be closed and placed outside the test area before crossing the start line and the handler may not "re-scent" the dog during the test.

When the Judge is ready, the handler will enter the test area and may cue/signal the dog to search. Time starts when the dog crosses the start line. Within the maximum search time (set by the Judge and announced during the Judge’s briefing), the dog needs to perform a clear alert that matches the alert the handler stated on the entry form. If there is any doubt about whether or not the dog performed the behavior clearly, the Judge may indicate with a shake or nod of the head to the handler. If the dog does an alert other than the specified alert, the handler may wait to see if the dog will do the proper alert, or may call the dog away from the hide and cue the dog to search again, careful not to cue the proper alert. It is up to the handler to be sure the Judge accepts the alert before proceeding further. Once accepted, the handler may ask the dog to put their nose on or close to the hiding location using a cue or phrase and/or the handler will verbally (and/or with pointing) identify the exact hiding location to the Judge. If the handler IDs the hide location but the Judge did not feel the dog performed a clear alert, the test may be scored as an NQ. When the Judge acknowledges that the location is correct, the dog/handler will cross finish line where time will end. Handler may choose to reward the dog at the hide or before crossing the finish line. Search times may be used to determine placements for awards if desired by the host. If a team exceeds the maximum time allowance, the timer will call “Time!” (or otherwise indicate the time limit has been reached) loudly enough for the Judge to hear and the Judge will excuse the competitor.

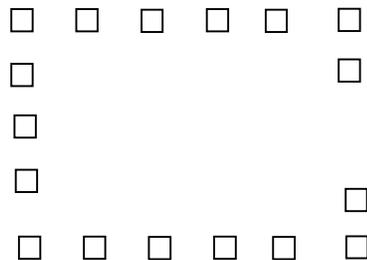
**Interior Container Search-** 15-20 similar containers placed approximately 3’ apart, in a designated search area up to 15’ across/diameter, with the containers arranged in some sort of pattern (lines, square or circle). All dogs entered should be able to sniff the entire container without needing to stand on hind legs or put their feet on the containers. A different set of similar containers may be used for different height dogs if desired, with the test order arranged by dog height. Or all the containers may be selected based on the height of the smallest dog entered. Each container should have at least 1 hole or gap so scent can escape. “Similar containers” would be all cardboard boxes, or all plastic bins, or all cloth bags, etc. but they do not need to be identical.

Allowable patterns for containers:

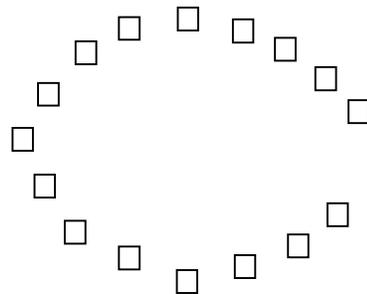
Lines (with at least 4’ between rows and 4’ between barriers and the nearest container for handler/dog to navigate, even if using a wheelchair or scooter)



Square (with 4' opening on one side for handler/dog to enter pattern if they choose without disturbing the containers. Dogs should be able to search all sides of each container, but the handler having access to the outside of the pattern is optional.)



Circle (with 4' opening on one side for handler/dog to enter pattern if they choose without disturbing the containers. Dogs should be able to search all sides of each container, but the handler having access to the outside of the pattern is optional.)



**Interior Search-** This will be the search of a typical room with multiple potential locations for hides. This could be a storage room, kitchen (without exposed food), office, etc. The defined search area should be at least 10x10 (100 sq ft), but no larger than 14x14 (196 sq ft). Items can be added to the space to hold the odor container, but should not look out of place. If adding an item for this purpose that might be out of context for the room, additional items of the same general size/type should also be added without scent. This could include sturdy boxes, theme containers, clean cookie/storage tins, sets of drawers, etc.

- All tests will be designed with compliance to the rules and guidelines in this rulebook
- Hide locations will be determined by the heights of the dogs entered so that the hide is reachable by each dog's nose without needing to stand on their hind legs. Dogs will be run tall to small and may be grouped by height. Containers that previously held the scent at a different height will be removed
- Dog does not need to stand on his/her hind feet to locate the hide
- Judge or host may determine if the tests will be run back to back for each handler (with time to reward the dog between tests), or if all handlers will complete 1 test before attempting the next test in the same running order. This does not need to be stated in the premium and may be determined the day of the trial.
- Handler may not touch anything but the dog's leash after crossing the start line and until crossing the finish line.

- The hiding locations should not have previously been used (within 1 month of the trial) for training or as hiding places for any of the approved scents or distraction odors.
- Note: if 2 Judges are available, interior and exterior searches/levels may be run concurrently
- Each dog needs to qualify on all tests in the level for a Q to be recorded for the level.

Non-Qualifying:

- If the dog exceeds the max. allowed time or stops working for over 20 consecutive seconds (Judge will signal the timer to begin tracking “non-working” time and timer will notify the Judge if 20 seconds has been reached before the dog goes back to work)
- Failure to perform the indication behavior the handler noted on the entry form
- Giving the alert behavior on the wrong location
- Handler cueing/signaling the dog to do the alert behavior
- Handler not able to describe or point to the proper location on the first try (Judge may ask for clarification or more detail if handler is close)
- Failure to locate the target odor
- The handler helps the dog make the find
- Any harsh or abusive handling or verbalizations are used during the test (the dog’s body language may be used to determine if something was too harsh for that dog)
- Dog leaves the test area cannot be immediately called back.

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL** - Anise (2 tests)

The dog will need to find the scent of Anise on a Q-tip that is placed inside a small odor container. The odor container is hidden in such a way as to be hidden from view of both the dog and handler. Handler will not know the location of the hide. No distraction odors are added and unintentional distraction odors should be minimized as much as possible. The dog must perform a clear passive or active alert (as specified on the entry form) in a way that allows the handler to locate the hidden scent. Dog must not give any false alerts.

The handler may place a reward item just outside the test area or choose to carry it hidden on their body as stated in the rules. Handler may have a ½ oz aerated tin, with 1 Q-tip scented with the target odor, inside an airtight container and briefly open the airtight container to have the dog sniff the tin prior to crossing the start line. The airtight container with the tin inside must be closed and placed outside the test area before crossing the start line and the handler may not “re-scent” the dog during the test.

When the Judge is ready, the handler will enter the test area and may cue/signal the dog to search. Time starts when the dog crosses the start line. Within the maximum search time (set by the Judge and announced during the Judge’s briefing), the dog needs to perform a clear alert that matches the alert the handler stated on the entry form. If there is any doubt about whether or not the dog performed the behavior clearly, the Judge may indicate with a shake or nod of the head to the handler. If the dog does an alert other than the specified alert, the handler may wait to see if the dog will do the proper alert, or may call the dog away from the hide and cue the dog to search again, careful not to cue the proper alert. It is up to the handler to be sure the Judge

accepts the alert before proceeding further. Once accepted, the handler may ask the dog to put their nose on or close to the hiding location using a cue or phrase and/or the handler will verbally (and/or with pointing) identify the exact hiding location to the Judge. If the handler IDs the hide location but the Judge did not feel the dog performed a clear alert, the test may be scored as an NQ. When the Judge acknowledges that the location is correct, the dog/handler will cross finish line where time will end. Handler may choose to reward the dog at the hide or before crossing the finish line. Search times may be used to determine placements for awards if desired by the host. If a team exceeds the maximum time allowance, the timer will call "Time!" (or otherwise indicate the time limit has been reached) loudly enough for the Judge to hear and the Judge will excuse the competitor.

**Exterior Search-** The search of a typical outdoor area with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a court yard, outdoor storage area, or other area outside where sufficient hiding places are located where the small odor container can be completely hidden from view of the dog and handler. Area may be covered by a roof at least 8' high, but must be open on at least 3 sides. A mock storage area may be created using various items (gardening equipment, agility equipment, construction equipment, multi-compartment storage items, etc.) Defined search area should be at least 12x12 (144 square feet) or 48 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only one side is accessible, but no larger than 20x20 (400 square feet) or 80 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only 1 side is accessible.

**Vehicle Search-** A search of 3 vehicles spaced 6' apart. Vehicles should be in a line all facing the same direction (with 6' between front bumper of one vehicle and the back bumper of the one in front of it). The search area should be located on a solid surface. Area around the vehicles should be open, such as in a large parking lot and should not have other vehicle traffic or unnecessary foot traffic through the area at least 20 min. prior to the start of the test. Vehicles should be road worthy, passenger type vehicles (cars or pick-up trucks).

- All tests will be designed with compliance to the rules and guidelines in this rulebook
- Hide locations will be determined by the heights of the dogs entered so that the hide is reachable by each dog's nose without needing to stand on their hind legs. Dogs will be run tall to small and may be grouped by height. Containers that previously held the scent at a different height will be removed or lower height hides will be located directly below the locations used for higher height hides.
- Dog does not need to stand on his/her hind feet to locate the hide
- Interior of the vehicles will not be used, but gas cap area, bumpers, wheels/wheel areas and exterior edge of the lower frame may be used. Dog should not have to stick more than it's snout under the vehicle to locate the odor source hidden from view. Wide tape, such a colored duct tape, may be used to cover the odor container from view as long as other pieces of the same type/color of tape are used to cover 5-10 other odor containers of the same type without scent in them (dummy hides) at least 1 of which the dog will likely pass by first. This helps determine that the dog is hitting on the proper odor and not the scent of the tape or visual of a taped container that might look out of place. These dummy hides may be used to provide a greater number of possible hiding locations even if the scent is not hidden in that manner.

- Judge or host may determine if the tests will be run back to back for each handler (with time to reward the dog between tests), or if all handlers will complete 1 test before attempting the next test in the same running order. This does not need to be stated in the premium and may be determined the day of the trial.
- Handler may not touch anything but the dog's leash after crossing the start line and until crossing the finish line.
- The hiding locations should not have previously been used (within 1 month of the trial) for training or as hiding places for any of the approved scents or distraction odors.
- If 2 Judges are available, interior and exterior searches/levels may be run concurrently
- Each dog needs to qualify on all tests in the level for a Q to be recorded for the level

#### Non-Qualifying:

- If the dog exceeds the max. allowed time or stops working for over 20 consecutive seconds (Judge will signal the timer to begin tracking "non-working" time and timer will notify the Judge if 20 seconds has been reached before the dog goes back to work)
- Failure to perform the indication behavior the handler noted on the entry form
- Giving the alert behavior on the wrong location
- Handler cueing/signaling the dog to do the alert behavior
- Handler not able to describe or point to the proper location on the first try (Judge may ask for clarification or more detail if handler is close)
- Failure to locate the target odor
- The handler helps the dog make the find
- Any harsh or abusive handling or verbalizations are used during the test (the dog's body language may be used to determine if something was too harsh for that dog)
- Dog leaves the test area cannot be immediately called back.

### **ADVANCED LEVEL** Clove (4 tests)

The dog will need to find the scent of clove on a Q-tip that is placed inside a small odor container. The odor container is hidden in such a way as to be hidden from view of both the dog and handler. Handler will not know the location of the hide. No distraction odors are added. The dog must perform a clear passive or active alert (as specified on the entry form) in a way that allows the handler to locate the hidden scent. Dog must not give any false alerts.

The handler may place a reward item just outside the test area or choose to carry it hidden on their body as stated in the rules. Handler may have a ½ oz aerated tin, with 1 Q-tip scented with the target odor, inside an airtight container and briefly open the airtight container to have the dog sniff the tin prior to crossing the start line. The airtight container with the tin inside must be closed and placed outside the test area before crossing the start line and the handler may not "re-scent" the dog during the test.

When the Judge is ready, the handler will enter the test area and may cue/signal the dog to search. Time starts when the dog crosses the start line. Within the maximum search time (set by the Judge and announced during the Judge's briefing), the dog needs to perform a clear alert that

matches the alert the handler stated on the entry form. If there is any doubt about whether or not the dog performed the behavior clearly, the Judge may indicate with a shake or nod of the head to the handler. If the dog does an alert other than the specified alert, the handler may wait to see if the dog will do the proper alert, or may call the dog away from the hide and cue the dog to search again, careful not to cue the proper alert. It is up to the handler to be sure the Judge accepts the alert before proceeding further. Once accepted, the handler may ask the dog to put their nose on or close to the hiding location using a cue or phrase and/or the handler will verbally (and/or with pointing) identify the exact hiding location to the Judge. If the handler IDs the hide location but the Judge did not feel the dog performed a clear alert, the test may be scored as an NQ. When the Judge acknowledges that the location is correct, the dog/handler will cross finish line where time will end. Handler may choose to reward the dog at the hide or before crossing the finish line. Search times may be used to determine placements for awards if desired by the host. If a team exceeds the maximum time allowance, the timer will call "Time!" (or otherwise indicate the time limit has been reached) loudly enough for the Judge to hear and the Judge will excuse the competitor.

**Adv. Level Container Search-** May be located outside (on solid surface or short grass) or inside a structure, 20-30 similar containers (with 5 being different from the rest), placed approximately 2' apart, in a designated search area up to 20' across/diameter, with the containers arranged in some sort of order (lines, square or circle). All dogs entered should be able to sniff the entire container, but may need to stand on hind legs or put their front feet on the container to do so. A different set of similar containers may be used for different height dogs if desired, with the test order arranged by dog height. Or all the containers may be selected based on the height of the smallest dog entered. Each container should have at least 1 hole or gap so scent can escape. "Similar containers" would be all cardboard boxes, or all plastic bins, or all cloth bags, etc. but they do not need to be identical.

**Adv. Level Interior Search-** This will be the search of a typical room with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a storage room, kitchen (without exposed food), office, etc. The defined search area should be at least 14x14 (196 sq ft), but no larger than 25x25 (625 sq ft). Items can be added to the space to hold the odor container, but should not look out of place. If adding an item for this purpose that might be out of context for the room, additional items of the same general size/type should also be added without scent. This could include sturdy boxes, theme containers, clean cookie/storage tins, storage bins, etc.

**Adv. Level Exterior Search-** This will be the search of a typical outdoor area with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a court yard, outdoor storage area, or other area outside where sufficient hiding places are located where the small odor container can be completely hidden from view of the dog and handler. Area may be covered by a roof at least 8' high, but must be open on at least 3 sides. A mock storage area may be created using various items (gardening equipment, agility equipment, construction equipment, multi-compartment storage items, etc.)

Defined search area should be at least 20x20 (400 square feet) or 80 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only one side is accessible, but no larger than 30x30 (900 square feet) or 120 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only 1 side is accessible.

**Adv. Level Vehicle Search-** A search of 5 vehicles spaced 5' apart. Vehicles may be in any configuration. The search area should be located on a solid surface. Area around the vehicles should be open, such as in a large parking lot and should not have other vehicle traffic or unnecessary foot traffic through the area at least 20 min. prior to the start of the test. Vehicles should be road worthy, passenger type vehicles (cars or pick-up trucks).

- All tests will be designed with compliance to the rules and guidelines in this rulebook
- Hides will be determined by the heights of the dogs entered so that the hide is reachable by each dog's nose even if the dog needs to stand on their hind legs. Dogs will be run tall to small and may be grouped by height. It is acceptable that while some dogs may need to stand on their hind legs, others may not for the same hiding location. If possible, containers that previously held the scent at a different height will be removed or lower height hides will be directly below the locations used for higher height hides.
- Interior of the vehicles will not be used, but gas cap area, bumpers, wheels/wheel areas and exterior edge of the lower frame may be used. Dog should not have to stick more than it's snout under the vehicle to locate the odor source hidden from view. Wide tape, such a colored duct tape, may be used to cover the odor container from view as long as other pieces of the same type/color of tape are used to cover 5-10 other odor containers of the same type without scent in them (dummy hides) at least 1 of which the dog will likely pass by first. This helps determine that the dog is hitting on the proper odor and not the scent of the tape or visual of a taped container that might look out of place. These dummy hides may be used to provide a greater number of possible hiding locations even if the scent is not hidden in that manner.
- Judge or host may determine if the tests will be run back to back for each handler (with time to reward the dog between tests), or if each handler will complete 1 test before attempting the next test in the same running order. This does not need to be stated in the premium and may be determined the day of the trial.
- Handler may not touch anything but the dog's leash after crossing the start line and until crossing the finish line.
- The hiding locations should not have previously been used (within 1 month of the trial) for training or as hiding places for any of the approved scents or distraction odors.
- If 2 Judges are available, interior and exterior searches/levels may be run concurrently
- Each dog needs to qualify on all tests in the level for a Q to be recorded for the level

Non-Qualifying:

- If the dog exceeds the max. allowed time or stops working for over 20 consecutive seconds (Judge will signal the timer to begin tracking "non-working" time and timer will notify the Judge if 20 seconds has been reached before the dog goes back to work)
- Failure to perform the indication behavior the handler noted on the entry form
- Giving the alert behavior on the wrong location
- Handler cueing/signaling the dog to do the alert behavior
- Handler not able to describe or point to the proper location on the first try (Judge may ask for clarification or more detail if handler is close)
- Failure to locate the target odor
- The handler helps the dog make the find

- Any harsh or abusive handling or verbalizations are used during the test (the dog's body language may be used to determine if something was too harsh for that dog)
- Dog leaves the test area cannot be immediately called back.

### **ELITE LEVEL** Birch and Anise plus 1 distraction odor (food or toy) (6 tests)

The dog will need to find the scent indicated by the Judge that is on a Q-tip that is placed inside a small odor container. The odor container is hidden in such a way as to be hidden from view of both the dog and handler. Handler will not know the location of the hide. One distraction odor is added to one of the tests. The dog must perform a clear passive or active alert (as specified on the entry form) in a way that allows the handler to locate the hidden scent. Dog must not give any false alerts.

The handler may place a reward item just outside the test area or choose to carry it hidden on their body as stated in the rules. Handler may have a ½ oz aerated tin, with 1 Q-tip scented with the target odor, inside an airtight container and briefly open the airtight container to have the dog sniff the tin prior to crossing the start line. The airtight container with the tin inside must be closed and placed outside the test area before crossing the start line and the handler may not “re-scent” the dog during the test.

When the Judge is ready, the handler will enter the test area and may cue/signal the dog to search. Time starts when the dog crosses the start line. Within the maximum search time (set by the Judge and announced during the Judge's briefing), the dog needs to perform a clear alert that matches the alert the handler stated on the entry form. If there is any doubt about whether or not the dog performed the behavior clearly, the Judge may indicate with a shake or nod of the head to the handler. If the dog does an alert other than the specified alert, the handler may wait to see if the dog will do the proper alert, or may call the dog away from the hide and cue the dog to search again, careful not to cue the proper alert. It is up to the handler to be sure the Judge accepts the alert before proceeding further. Once accepted, the handler may ask the dog to put their nose on or close to the hiding location using a cue or phrase and/or the handler will verbally (and/or with pointing) identify the exact hiding location to the Judge. If the handler IDs the hide location but the Judge did not feel the dog performed a clear alert, the test may be scored as an NQ. When the Judge acknowledges that the location is correct, the dog/handler will cross finish line where time will end. Handler may choose to reward the dog at the hide or before crossing the finish line. Search times may be used to determine placements for awards if desired by the host. If a team exceeds the maximum time allowance, the timer will call “Time!” (or otherwise indicate the time limit has been reached) loudly enough for the Judge to hear and the Judge will excuse the competitor.

Judge will determine the scent to be used for each test (birch or anise) and announce that in the Judge's briefing just prior to each test. The Judge will announce which 2 tests will be repeated during the Judge's briefing for the first test of the level. One of the tests will include either a bit of hidden food (meat based dog treat) or a hidden toy (tennis ball or rubber toy) but the Judge does not need to announce which distraction odor is being used or which test has the distraction odor. All dogs in the level will have the same distraction item on the same test.

**Elite Level Container Search-** May be located outside (on solid surface or short grass) or inside a structure, 30-40 varied containers, placed approximately 1' apart, in a designated search area up to 25' across/diameter, with the containers arranged in a random/scattered pattern. All dogs entered should be able to sniff the entire container, but may need to stand on hind legs or put their front feet on the container to do so. A different set of varied containers may be used for different height dogs if desired, with the test order arranged by dog height. Or all the containers may be selected based on the height of the smallest dog entered. Each container should have at least 1 hole or gap so scent can escape.

**Elite Level Interior Search-** This will be the search of a typical room with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a storage room, kitchen (without exposed food), office, etc. The defined search area should be at least 14x14 (196 sq ft), but no larger than 25x25 (625 sq ft). Items can be added to the space to hold the odor container, but should not look out of place. If adding an item for this purpose that might be out of context for the room, additional items of the same general size/type should also be added without scent. This could include sturdy boxes, theme containers, clean cookie/storage tins, storage containers, etc.

**Elite Level Exterior Search-** This will be the search of a typical outdoor area with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a court yard, outdoor storage area, or other area outside where sufficient hiding places are located where the small odor container can be completely hidden from view of the dog and handler. Area may be covered by a roof at least 8' high, but must be open on at least 3 sides. A mock storage area may be created using various items (gardening equipment, agility equipment, construction equipment, multi-compartment storage items, etc.)

Defined search area should be at least 20x20 (400 square feet) or 80 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only one side is accessible, but no larger than 30x30 (900 square feet) or 120 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only 1 side is accessible.

**Elite Level Vehicle Search-** A search of 7 vehicles spaced approximately 3' apart. Vehicles may be in any configuration. The search area may be located on a solid surface or short/level natural surface such as gravel, dirt or mowed grass. Vehicles may be parked as in a typical parking lot, against a wall on one side or may be in the open. Vehicles may include modes of transportation other than automobiles (motorcycles, trailers, semi-trucks, boats, ski-doo's, etc.)

- All tests will be designed with compliance to the rules and guidelines in this rulebook
- Hides will be determined by the heights of the dogs entered so that the hide is reachable by each dog's nose even if the dog needs to stand on their hind legs. Dogs will be run tall to small and may be grouped by height. It is acceptable that while some dogs may need to stand on their hind legs, others may not for the same hiding location. If possible, containers that previously held the scent at a different height will be removed or lower height hides will be directly below the locations used for higher height hides.
- Interior of the vehicles will not be used, but gas cap area, bumpers, wheels/wheel areas and exterior edge of the lower frame may be used. Dog should not have to stick more than it's snout under the vehicle to locate the odor source hidden from view. Wide tape, such a colored duct tape, may be used to cover the odor container from view as long as other pieces of the same type/color of tape are used to cover 5-10 other odor containers of

the same type without scent in them (dummy hides) at least 1 of which the dog will likely pass by first. This helps determine that the dog is hitting on the proper odor and not the scent of the tape or visual of a taped container that might look out of place. These dummy hides may be used to provide a greater number of possible hiding locations even if the scent is not hidden in that manner.

- Judge or host may determine if the tests will be run back to back for each handler (with time to reward the dog between tests), or if each handler will complete 1 test before attempting the next test in the same running order. This does not need to be stated in the premium and may be determined the day of the trial.
- Handler may not touch anything but the dog's leash after crossing the start line and until crossing the finish line.
- The hiding locations should not have previously been used (within 1 month of the trial) for training or as hiding places for any of the approved scents or distraction odors.
- If 2 Judges are available, interior and exterior searches/levels may be run concurrently
- Each dog needs to qualify on all tests in the level for a Q to be recorded for the level

#### Non-Qualifying:

- If the dog exceeds the max. allowed time or stops working for over 20 consecutive seconds (Judge will signal the timer to begin tracking "non-working" time and timer will notify the Judge if 20 seconds has been reached before the dog goes back to work)
- Failure to perform the indication behavior the handler noted on the entry form
- Giving the alert behavior on the wrong location
- Handler cueing/signaling the dog to do the alert behavior
- Handler not able to describe or point to the proper location on the first try (Judge may ask for clarification or more detail if handler is close)
- Failure to locate the target odor
- The handler helps the dog make the find
- Any harsh or abusive handling or verbalizations are used during the test (the dog's body language may be used to determine if something was too harsh for that dog)
- Dog leaves the test area cannot be immediately called back.

**MASTER LEVEL** (birch, anise, and/or clove) Plus 2 distraction odors (food or toy) and 1 "blank" area (no target odor) (8 tests)

The dog will need to find the scent indicated by the Judge that is on a Q-tip that is placed inside a small odor container. The odor container is hidden in such a way as to be hidden from view of both the dog and handler. Handler will not know the location of the hide. Two of the tests will include either a bit of hidden food (meat based dog treat) or a hidden toy (tennis ball or rubber toy). The dog must perform a clear passive or active alert (as specified on the entry form) in a way that allows the handler to locate the hidden scent. Dog must not give any false alerts. One of the tests will not have any hidden scent and the handler must tell the Judge when they have determined the area is blank. The blank area will be an area not previously used for hiding target odors (within 1 month prior to the trial) to avoid a dog alerting on a very faint trace of residual odor.

The handler may place a reward item just outside the test area or choose to carry it hidden on their body as stated in the rules. Handler may have a ½ oz aerated tin, with 1 Q-tip scented with the target odor, inside an airtight container and briefly open the airtight container to have the dog sniff the tin prior to crossing the start line. The airtight container with the tin inside must be closed and placed outside the test area before crossing the start line and the handler may not “re-scent” the dog during the test.

When the Judge is ready, the handler will enter the test area and may cue/signal the dog to search. Time starts when the dog crosses the start line. Within the maximum search time (set by the Judge and announced during the Judge’s briefing), the dog needs to perform a clear alert that matches the alert the handler stated on the entry form. If there is any doubt about whether or not the dog performed the behavior clearly, the Judge may indicate with a shake or nod of the head to the handler. If the dog does an alert other than the specified alert, the handler may wait to see if the dog will do the proper alert, or may call the dog away from the hide and cue the dog to search again, careful not to cue the proper alert. It is up to the handler to be sure the Judge accepts the alert before proceeding further. Once accepted, the handler may ask the dog to put their nose on or close to the hiding location using a cue or phrase and/or the handler will verbally (and/or with pointing) identify the exact hiding location to the Judge. If the handler IDs the hide location but the Judge did not feel the dog performed a clear alert, the test may be scored as an NQ. When the Judge acknowledges that the location is correct, the dog/handler will cross finish line where time will end. Handler may choose to reward the dog at the hide or before crossing the finish line. Search times may be used to determine placements for awards if desired by the host. If a team exceeds the maximum time allowance, the timer will call “Time!” (or otherwise indicate the time limit has been reached) loudly enough for the Judge to hear and the Judge will excuse the competitor.

Judge will determine the scent to be used for each test (birch, anise, clove or myrrh) and announce that in the Judge’s briefing just prior to that test. Each test type will be run twice for a total of 8 tests. Two of the tests will include a bit of hidden food (meat based dog treat) and a hidden toy (tennis ball or rubber toy) hidden at least 10’ apart. Judge does not need to disclose which tests have the distraction odors. All dogs in the level will have the same distraction items on the same tests.

**Master Level Container Search-** May be located outside (on solid surface or short grass) or inside a structure, 30-40 varied containers, placed approximately 1’ apart, in a designated search area up to 25’ across/diameter, with the containers arranged in random/scattered pattern. All dogs entered should be able to sniff the entire container, but may need to stand on hind legs to do so. A different set of similar containers may be used for different height dogs if desired, with the test order arranged by dog height. Or all the containers may be selected based on the height of the smallest dog entered. Each container should have at least 1 hole or gap so scent can escape.

**Master Level Interior Search-** The search of a typical room with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a storage room, kitchen (without exposed food), office, etc. The defined search area should be at least 14x14 (196 sq ft), but no larger than 25x25 (625 sq ft). Items can be added to the space to hold the odor container, but should not look out of place. If adding an item for this purpose that might be out of context for the room, additional items of the same

general size/type should also be added without scent. This could include sturdy boxes, theme containers, clean cookie/storage tins, etc.

**Master Level Exterior Search-** The search of a typical outdoor area with multiple potential hide locations. This could be a court yard, outdoor storage area, or other area outside where sufficient hiding places are located where the small odor container can be completely hidden from view of the dog and handler. Area may be covered by a roof at least 8' high, but must be open on at least 3 sides. A mock storage area may be created using various items (gardening equipment, agility equipment, construction equipment, multi-compartment storage items, etc.)

Defined search area should be at least 20x20 (400 square feet) or 80 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only one side is accessible, but no larger than 30x30 (900 square feet) or 120 linear feet if along a wall or other barrier so only 1 side is accessible.

**Master Level Vehicle Search-** A search of 7 vehicles spaced approximately 3' apart. Vehicles may be in any configuration. The search area may be located on a solid surface or short/flat natural surface such as gravel, dirt or mowed grass. Vehicles may be parked as in a typical parking lot, against a wall on one side or may be in the open. Vehicles may include modes of transportation other than automobiles (motorcycles, trailers, semi-trucks, boats, ski-doo's, etc.)

- All tests will be designed with compliance to the other rules and guidelines in this rulebook
- Hides will be determined by the heights of the dogs entered so that the hide is reachable by each dog's nose even if the dog needs to stand on their hind legs. Dogs will be run tall to small and may be grouped by height. It is acceptable that while some dogs may need to stand on their hind legs, others may not for the same hiding location. If possible, containers that previously held the scent at a different height will be removed or lower height hides will be directly below the locations used for higher height hides.
- Interior of the vehicles will not be used, but gas cap area, bumpers, wheels/wheel areas and exterior edge of the lower frame may be used. Dog should not have to stick more than it's snout under the vehicle to locate the odor source hidden from view. Wide tape, such a colored duct tape, may be used to cover the odor container from view as long as other pieces of the same type/color of tape are used to cover 5-10 other odor containers of the same type without scent in them (dummy hides) at least 1 of which the dog will likely pass by first. This helps determine that the dog is hitting on the proper odor and not the scent of the tape or visual of a taped container that might look out of place. These dummy hides may be used to provide a greater number of possible hiding locations even if the scent is not hidden in that type of manner.
- Judge or host may determine if the tests will be run back to back for each handler (with time to reward the dog between tests), or if each handler will complete 1 test before attempting the next test in the same running order. This does not need to be stated in the premium and may be determined the day of the trial.
- Handler may not touch anything but the dog's leash during the test
- Each dog needs to run all 8 searches correctly per trial for a Q

Note: if 2 Judges are available, interior and exterior searches may be run concurrently starting 30 min. apart to allow for same run order for each search.

#### Non-Qualifying:

- If the dog exceeds the max. allowed time or stops working for over 20 consecutive seconds (Judge will signal the timer to begin tracking “non-working” time and timer will notify the Judge if 20 seconds has been reached before the dog goes back to work)
- Failure to perform the indication behavior the handler noted on the entry form
- Giving the alert behavior on the wrong location
- Handler cueing/signaling the dog to do the alert behavior
- Handler not able to describe or point to the proper location on the first try (Judge may ask for clarification or more detail if handler is close)
- Failure to locate the target odor
- The handler helps the dog make the find
- Any harsh or abusive handling or verbalizations are used during the test (the dog’s body language may be used to determine if something was too harsh for that dog)
- Dog leaves the test area cannot be immediately called back.

## **Titles**

Titles are awarded only in DSA-sanctioned trials. Sport Scenting practice runs may be held either as “just for fun” without any pass/fail rating, or using some fun scoring rules, like “fastest time” with optional placements and prizes. Passing a practice test does not count toward a title.

Titles earned shall be placed after the dog's name.

**Novice:** DS-SSN is earned by a dog that has qualified 3 times at the Novice level.

**Novice Pro:** DS-SSNP is earned by a dog that has passed 30 Novice level tests (including the first three earned for the Novice title)

**Intermediate:** DS-SSI is earned by a dog that has qualified 3 times at the Intermediate level.

**Intermediate Pro:** DS-SSIP is earned by a dog that has passed 30 Intermediate level tests (including the first three earned for the Intermediate title)

**Advanced:** DS-SSA is earned by a dog that has qualified 3 times at the Advanced level.

**Advanced Pro:** DS-SSAP is earned by a dog that has passed 30 Advanced level tests (including the first three earned for the Advanced title)

**Elite:** DS-SSE is earned by a dog that has qualified 3 times at the Elite level.

**Elite Pro:** DS-SSEP is earned by a dog that has passed 30 Elite level tests (including the first three earned for the Elite title)

**Master:** DS-SSM is earned by a dog that has qualified 3 times at the Master level.

**Sport Scenting Champion:** DS-SSCH is earned by a dog that has passed 30 Master level tests (including the first three earned for the Master title). Dogs that repeat the Champion level, may add a number after the title indicating the number of times this has been accomplished (SSCH-1, SSCH-2, etc.)

Note about DSA titles: If a dog has multiple titles from DSA competitions, they should be listed as such DS- PDX, DSA, SD/AX, IMPROV-NCH, DX, SSCH (May be in any order after the “DS”)

## **Hosting a Sport Scenting Trial/Practice**

Practice tests may be offered by any club or group of individuals after contacting the Dog Scouts of America Scent Detection contact person for approval (see the Contact Us page on the DSA website for current contact info). If desired, dogs can compete for “fastest time” per level and placements given but passing the test or level will not be recorded by DSA for titling.

After hosting at least 1 practice for Sport Scenting, any group can apply to Dog Scouts of America to hold a sanctioned trial. Once approved, the organizing club/group (“host”) will need to follow the below guidelines for their trial. Fees will be paid to Dog Scouts of America from the host.

**Photos submitted with application:** Photos of the testing areas generally arranged as it would be set-up for a test must be sent to DSA for approval of the test spaces when applying for trial hosting. The Judge should also approve of the potential locations to be used on the grounds. Areas/property not owned by the trial host may be used if the “Property Use waiver” is signed by the property owner. This could apply to locations such as warehouses, barns, fair grounds, office buildings, etc. The location and conditions of the testing site must be stated in the premium for each level (completely indoor, climate controlled or not, under cover or exposed).

**Scheduling the trial:** If additional events will be taking place the same day as the trial in the same area used for the testing, the Sport Scenting testing must occur prior to the other event(s) in that ring or area. Clubs may use their best judgment with practice tests as to the order/area of each activity.

**Mileage conflicts:** DSA will not license two events with the same levels on the same day to be held within 100 miles of each other. Distance is calculated by the shortest driving route, not a straight line. Scheduling an event is 1<sup>st</sup> come, first reserved. Reservations for trial dates may not be made more than 1 year prior to the desired date. Only complete applications with proper payment are considered for reservation of a specific date.

**Checking availability of date:** Any person may contact the DSA Scent Detection Director or designated person by phone, email or written request to check on the availability of a certain date. Requests must include the date, levels being considered and the event site city/state.

**Deadline for applications:** Complete applications and appropriate fees to host a trial or practice must be RECEIVED by the DSA Scent Detection department no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month which is 2 months prior to the trial/practice. Incomplete or illegible applications or applications without the proper fees are not considered complete and may be rejected if not corrected by the deadline.

Month of trial/practice:	Application received by:
January	November 1st
February	December 1st
March	January 1 <sup>st</sup>
April	February 1 <sup>st</sup>
May	March 1 <sup>st</sup>
June	April 1 <sup>st</sup>
July	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
August	June 1 <sup>st</sup>
September	July 1 <sup>st</sup>
October	August 1 <sup>st</sup>
November	September 1 <sup>st</sup>
December	October 1 <sup>st</sup>

**Fees:**

PRACTICE: \$10 per level offered (paid with application) plus \$1 per entry (paid within 30 days of the completion of the practice).

TRIAL: \$20 per level offered (paid with application) plus \$2 per entry (paid with submission of Trial/practice forms after completion of the event).

**Premium List:** The host must make a premium available to prospective entrants at least 8 weeks prior to the event date. The Premium will include the following information:

- Date(s) and trial start time each day
- Location
- Host name
- Trial Secretary's name, address, phone, email
- Chairperson's name, phone, email
- DSA liability waiver all entrants will be required to sign
- Levels offered
- Running order
- Entry Fees (including DSA fees) and if pre-entry discount is offered
- Cut off date for entries and/or Day of trial option with specific hours of acceptance
- Max # of entries accepted
- Random draw or 1<sup>st</sup> received
- Wait list or firm cut off date
- Test area conditions: Interior: climate controlled? Outdoor: Under cover or fully exposed
- Crating plan/options
- Awards offered

- Addresses of nearest vet that would be open during trial, emergency medical facility and pet friendly lodging

*\* A sample premium that can be edited to fit your trial can be obtained from DSA*

Exhibitors need to contact the host club for any questions regarding the trial, do not contact DSA.

**Confirmation:** Entry confirmation must be sent to the participating exhibitors. Final confirmations must be emailed or postmarked at least 7 days prior to the first day of the trial. The confirmation must include check-in start/end time for each level, and the dog's entry information. Additional information may be included. **Exhibitors must verify their entry information and report any discrepancies to the trial secretary prior to the trial. The show secretary is not obligated to make changes at the trial if it is the exhibitor's error.**

**Opening/Closing date:** The host must clearly state in the premium the opening date and closing date/time for entry form acceptance. A discount may be offered for pre-entry. Any entry forms arriving after the cut off date/time must either be rejected or considered a “day of trial entry” (if the host is accepting day of trial entries).

**Day of trial entries:** If the host chooses to accept day of trial entries, a specific time frame with a specified cut off time must be stated in the premium for the acceptance of these entries. No new entry forms may be taken within 15 minutes of the start of the first test. A host may choose to delay the start of the trial, for a reasonable amount of time, to allow more time for day of trial entries in the event of bad weather or other emergency conditions.

**Entry limits:** Entries may be accepted on a first received basis or may be random draw, but the method must be stated in the premium. Entries are limited to a maximum total of 45 dogs per Judge per day. Hosts or Judges may limit the judging to no less than 20 dogs per day. Entry limits may not be put on any individual level unless only 1 level is offered for the trial.

**Exceeding entry limits:** If more than the stated limit of dogs is reached, the club may either bring in an additional Judge to judge an entire level or levels or the host may choose to start a “wait list” in case of cancellations or no shows. An entry may be marked as a “no show” if the handler has not checked in at the designated location within 15 minutes of the start of that level.

**Late check-in:** Anyone that has not arrived on time will forfeit their entry fee(s) and entry/entries for that level and may be replaced with the next person/dog on the waiting list that is on site and ready to compete. It is the discretion of the Trial Secretary to accept a late check-in as long as the handler is able to attend the Judge’s briefing. Once an entry has been replaced with a wait list entry or if the Judge’s briefing has begun, no late check-ins may be accepted.

**Refusing an Entry:**

A host may refuse the entry of an otherwise eligible dog and/or handler only with good reason. Clubs that choose not to accept such an entry must notify the owner/handler in writing with their reason why the entry(s) will not be accepted by the host and must immediately forward a copy to the DSA Scent Detection Director. DSA reserves the right to overturn the refusal of the entry if

just cause is not found for the refusal but will not get involved in disputes between the host and owner/handler.

**Levels to offer:** Hosts may choose from the following options when deciding what levels to offer in their trial or practice. A host is encouraged to hold a practice test at least once for each new level they chose to offer to be sure they have what they need to hold the trial and that volunteers understand their roles.

- Novice trial only
- Novice Level and Intermediate Level trial
- Novice, Intermediate and Advanced levels trial
- Advanced, Elite and Masters level trial
- All levels offered

**Awards and Ribbons:** The host club is required to award each qualifying score with a qualifying ribbon or rosette. The Qualifying ribbon or rosette shall be red. Each ribbon or rosette shall have a card attached to record score information. Each Qualifying ribbon or rosette shall be printed with the following (order may differ, Logo must be first):

- DSA Logo
- Name of the host club
- Sport Scenting Trial (or “Practice”, if ribbons are awarded at a practice trial)
- “Qualifying Score”
- City and state of trial location

Other awards may be given, which may or may not be included in the Premium List. These include but are not limited to:

- Ribbons or rosettes indicating finishing a title
- Special prizes (leashes, toys, dog treats, etc)
- Special awards – non-trophy (youngest handler, fastest time, etc)
- Champion title award

If an award is given that could be considered a Trophy (e.g.: statue, pewter, crystal, etc), that award should be listed in the Premium List. Cash awards, gift certificates and gift cards are not permitted. Awards or prizes should not be given that are inconsistent with the positive training approaches of DSA.

**Judge Changes:** If the published Judge cancels their assignment prior to the day of the event, the host must make every reasonable effort to find a new Judge and notify the pre-entered exhibitors of the Judge change and offer refunds to any entrant who submits a written request. If a replacement Judge is not available, the trial will need to be cancelled and refunds issued. On the day of the event, if a Judge is unable to start or complete his/her assignment, the event chairperson must appoint an emergency replacement Judge. If none is available, the trial will need to be cancelled or any person may take on the role of “Judge” with the trial being switched to a Practice with scores not counting toward a title. In either case, issuing partial or full refunds or applying entry fees to a new trial is at the discretion of the host.

## Show committee and officials

The following officials are required at each Sport Scenting trial:

**Judge:** The Judge shall be chosen from the approved DSA-sanctioned Sport Scenting Judges list. Each Judge is required to evaluate all competitors in the level they are assigned to judge.

The Judge's duties are as follows:

- Designing/designating test areas appropriate to each level
- Select and inspect equipment/containers to be used
- Instruct timer about timing and maximum test times
- Briefing exhibitors prior to each test
- Recording final test results in the Official Judge's book, verify all test results are correct and sign the book before awards are handed out.
- All decisions of the Judge are final.
- A Judge may enter his/her own dogs if another approved Judge is available to officiate their test(s), and the hiding place is not known to the handler. The Judge would compete after all other competitors have run in the level.

**The Chairperson** is responsible for planning and conducting the event in accordance with the rules. This person may not also be the Trial Secretary or Judge except in emergency situations.

Duties include but are not limited to:

- Event committee- The Chairperson may appoint additional committee members to assist with delegated duties.
- Trial site and equipment- The Chairperson is responsible for procuring a suitable trial site, including such duties as contracts and permits that may be required and ensuring the site and equipment meet the requirements as outlined in the rulebook.
- Hiring Judges- The Chairperson must ensure that the Judge is properly certified by DSA and in good standing. The Judge must agree to judge the trial or practice before he/she may be listed on the application sent to DSA.
- Submitting the proper forms and fees to DSA for trial sanctioning. The Chairperson will be notified if/when the application is approved and the listing of the trial or practice on the DSA website constitutes approval of the trial or practice.
- Complaints and issues- The Chairperson is the official contact person for complaints or infractions. The Chairperson is also the back up for the Show Secretary in an emergency situation.
- Volunteers- The Chairperson will ensure that the trial has sufficient volunteers to run smoothly and meet the minimum requirements.
- Veterinarian- Where local laws require a veterinarian to be in attendance, the Chairperson is responsible for ensuring the attendance of a veterinarian.
- Local lodging- The Chairperson is responsible for making sure there is a representative for the local lodging establishments and for notifying local lodging managers about how to contact the rep with complaints about exhibitors.
- Trial Premium- Ensure that the Trial Premium created by the Trial Secretary has all the required information and that all information is correct.

**The trial secretary** is responsible for the paperwork involved in a trial or practice and communications with exhibitors. This person may not also be the Chairperson or Judge except in emergency situations. Duties include but are not limited to:

- Obtaining the required forms and having plenty on hand
- Creating and distributing the Trial Premium
- Answering prospective and registered exhibitors questions
- Emailing/ mailing premium lists to prospective entrants
- Reviewing and accepting proper entry forms and entry fees
- Assign a number to each dog and ensure that number is associated with that dog on all paperwork
- Ensure that each competitor gets an armband, sticker or other means of wearing the number(s) for their dog(s)
- Email/ mailing confirmation notices
- Prepare/ post running orders for each test at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the test.
- Ensuring that each volunteer understands the procedures for the tasks they are assigned
- Having a current copy of the rulebook on hand
- Ensure that the original Judge's books get submitted to DSA with the trial records, that the Judge gets a copy of each book he/she judged, and that the host keeps a copy of said books for at least 1 year.
- Submitting all paperwork and fees associated with the trial, including submission of trial results forms, test sheets and per entry fees to DSA within 15 business days of the event. Failure to do so will result in fines of \$20 per month for late submissions.
- If trial is cancelled- The Secretary must:
  - a. Notify DSA immediately with the reason (failure to do so may result in being unable to host future trials)
  - b. Ensure scheduled Judges are reimbursed for all expenses incurred on behalf of the host
  - c. Ensure that all pre-entry fees are returned
  - d. Ensure to the best of his/her ability that a cancellation notice is sent to anyone that was known to have received any advertisement for the Trial or Practice

**Course Builders/Judge's Assistants**: The course builders are responsible for the set up of the levels as designated by the Judge. Changes are not to be made to the physical layout without authorization from the Judge. An assistant's job is to assist the Judge as needed. This may include, but is not limited to holding the leash of an off-leash competitor, moving equipment as advised, getting the next score sheet for the Judge and delivering the completed score sheet to the Table Steward. At least 1 person should be assigned to this position that is not also assigned to other duties during the test.

**Table Stewards**: The table stewards should be positioned as close to the test area as practical. Minimum of 1 person assigned to this position may not have other jobs. If more than 1 Table Steward is available, the extras may also be timers. The Table Stewards are responsible for:

- Paperwork to and from the Judge and to/from the Trial Secretary.
- Running order- ensure that the score sheet the Judge gets is for the next competitor. The table steward will check with the gate steward to be sure the next dog is ready and if not,

- make adjustments if needed.
- Bring errors to the attention of the Judge and be sure to clarify anything that is not clear. Record the test information for the score tracking sheet. Information to be recorded on the score tracking sheet must include:
  - Date
  - Location
  - Judge's name
  - Dog's name
  - Handler's name
  - Test time
 Results of the test using only these designations:
  - WD- (Withdrawn)- Handler chose not to complete the test after crossing start line
  - EX- (Excused)- Judge ended the test. The reason for excusal must be noted.
  - AB- (Absent)- Handler/dog did not arrive in time for their level.
  - NQ- (Non-Qualifying)- Test was not attempted or not completed correctly
  - Q (Qualifying)- test was completed correctly
- Upon completion of a test, the Table Steward will turn in (to the Trial Secretary) all paperwork related to that test. At the end of each level, the Table Steward will ensure the Trial Secretary has all paperwork for that level.

**Timekeeper**: A timekeeper is required for all levels to be sure no competitor goes over the maximum time or exceeds the “non-working” allowance. The Time Keeper may also be a Table Steward, or be positioned at the Steward’s table. The time keeper needs to remain in view of the Judge. Time starts when the competitor’s dog crosses the start line. If there is a problem with the stopwatch, the timekeeper shall notify the Judge and start a stand-by timer as quickly as possible and make every effort to ensure the dog does not exceed the allowed time. The timekeeper shall sound a whistle, bell, or buzzer (or other easily discernible signal) or call “time!” in a loud clear voice when handler and dog teams reach the maximum time allowed. The Timekeeper must be clear on when time starts and stops. The start/finish line location(s) will be determined by the Judge and should have some visible marker (chalk line, cones, flags, etc.). If the trial is using an electronic timer, the Timekeeper is to monitor that equipment and be ready to use a stop watch if there is any malfunction. The same timekeeper should perform this duty for an entire test to ensure consistency.

**Gate Steward**: A gate steward is responsible for keeping the test area running smoothly and ensure the Table Steward has the correct score sheet ready for the Judge. This should be his/her only job for the test, with the exception of Exhibitors Assistant. The Gate Steward has no responsibility to find dogs, however all attempts will be made to keep the waiting competitors apprised of their place in the cue since they are not allowed to watch the prior competitors. It is preferred to have at least 2 dogs ready to enter the test area at all times. The Gate Steward has authority to change the order of teams to be judged (as allowed) as long as they inform the Table Steward of such a change far enough in advance that the dog’s score sheet can be arranged in proper order. The Gate Steward may assist handlers by checking that they do not have any unauthorized equipment, but this is ultimately the handler’s responsibility.

**Exhibitor’s Assistant** (optional)- If the gate steward is not also able to assist handlers with dogs that need additional space, a volunteer should be assigned to this task. This person is responsible

for helping clear a path to/from the exhibitor's crating location and the testing area. They will walk ahead of the exhibitor to advise anyone with dogs to please step back.

## **Trial Site**

**Considerations for selecting a site:** Sites chosen for a Sport Scenting trial will need to meet the guidelines set forth in this rulebook for the levels/tests being offered. Areas used for each level should be on the same site and within walking distance (1/2 mile) of each other. Each area must have sufficient hiding places at different levels/heights to test the dog's skills and be safe for dogs of all sizes and handlers of all mobility levels.

The test area should be free of excessive distractions for the lower levels, including scent distractions like cooking food. It is preferred to have the test area enclosed by a fence, gating or ring flags to separate the test area from spectators. Areas must be provided that are large enough for all competitors to wait out of sight of the test area, it's helpful if this is also the crating area. A designated area for dogs to relieve themselves is needed out of view of the test area. When possible, a spectator area should be available, preferably away from the crating area.

**Notes on equipment (including safety considerations):** The area used for testing must be safe for dogs and handlers to navigate. Dogs must be allowed to put their feet on items in the test area to conduct a complete search. Nothing in the area should have a risk of falling on a dog, even if the dog jumps up on it or pushes it with his/her paws. Anything that "appears" to be sturdy or could be assumed by the average person to be sturdy enough for a 150 lb person to sit/stand on should not have a risk of collapsing. Judges can push on, jostle and/or sit on items to test them for their safety prior to testing and hosts should have already done this before suggesting an area or equipment for a test. Anything unsafe must be removed or completely blocked off from access.

Any hiding place used for dogs with an active, scratch alert should be sturdy enough to withstand such actions without risking harm to the dog or worry about damaging the container. Damage done by scratch alerts is not considered damage the dog owner has to pay for. It is up to the Judge and the host to determine which containers may be used for active alerts when choosing the hiding locations.

Everything should be as clean as possible, but not smell of cleaning products. Handlers should not need to worry their dog will sniff up a hairball or nose full of dust during the search. Nothing in the test area may contain strongly scented, harsh or hazardous chemicals or products. If these have been recently removed from the area, their lingering scent should not be detectible by a sensitive human nose. It is strongly recommended that areas used regularly to store items like this not be used at all for Sport Scenting tests. But if it's one small cabinet in an otherwise perfect area, these items should be removed from the area as far in advance of the test as possible. If the Judge determines the lingering odor is detectible and/or too strong and another area is not available, the test could be cancelled. The host would still owe all fees agreed upon to DSA and the Judge. And competitors would get the option of getting their entry fee back or applying it to an alternate date/site provided by the host.

Exhaust from gas motors, including cars and golf carts should be kept as far from the test area and crating area as possible. Gas engine exhaust can negatively impact the olfactory senses of a dog.

Test areas must be navigable by all participants and a handicapped assessable route from a parking area designated for handicapped handlers to the test area is required. If needed, have any participants in question check the area to be sure they can navigate with wheelchair, crutches, etc. as needed. The dog should not need to get more than 6' from the handler's path to sniff the hiding locations.

## Judge's Guidelines

Judges are the backbone of any sport and their actions and opinions influence conduct beyond the test area. A set of standards for Judges has been developed to improve the standards of adjudication. Persons meeting these qualifications may be added to the "Approved Judges List."

### Standard for Judges

Qualified individuals shall have met the following requirements before being placed on the Approved Judges List:

- Be a member of Dog Scouts of America in good standing
- Have sufficient experience to competently perform the Judge's responsibilities, as may be evidenced by active participation in the sport and/or being an active member of a training group that routinely trains using positive reinforcement based methods for scent work.
- Have satisfactory attendance, participation and completion of an approved DSA judging clinic to demonstrate sufficient understanding of Sport Scenting *and/or* Judge candidates may submit videotape of their setup and administration of Sport Scenting practice tests in which they sufficiently demonstrate all Judges' responsibilities. If pursuing certification via videotape, candidates must include the Judge's briefing in the video, at least 10 tests being judged for various size dogs and submit the resulting score sheets.
- Be of good character and in good standing with DSA

In order to maintain a position on the Approved Judges List, each Judge must:

- Be a current member of DSA (both at the time of trial application by the host and during the trial)
- When requested, periodically pass a short form examination dealing with rule changes
- Have satisfactory attendance, participation and completion of an approved DSA clinic once every three years *and/or* submit a sample of their judging via videotape if they do not judge at least 1 trial per year.
- Maintain an active role in the sport
- Be of good character, setting forth a professional image for the sport
- At all times when representing DSA or Sport Scenting, or on site at a Sport Scenting event, will utilize and promote only positive training methods that are in accordance with DSA's position on punishment, which can be found on the DSA website

### **Persons on the Approved Judges List:**

- During a trial or practice, Judges are expected to uphold an image of integrity and as a competent professional, both on and off the course. An integral part of this image is appropriate attire consisting of slacks with a coordinating shirt. A Judge shall not wear any apparel bearing business, sponsor or other organization insignia (other than DSA.)
- Shall recognize their role as a Judge is a privilege not a right
- Shall diligently fulfill all responsibilities with regard to judging assignments
- Shall seek to assist fellow Judges when needed in fulfillment of judging responsibilities when viewed in the best interest of the sport

**Disciplinary Actions:** A person on the Approved Judges List who shall violate the standards in fact or in spirit shall be subject to disciplinary action in the form of reprimand, probation, suspension and/or removal from the Approved Judges List. All disciplinary action proceedings shall be conducted by the DSA Board of Directors in “closed session” and shall remain confidential, except that the decision to suspend or remove a person from the Approved Judges List shall be published.

**Scoring Guidelines:** Sport Scenting tests are scored on a pass/fail basis. The dog should enter the test area and go to work as soon as (or even before) it is cued by the handler to do so. Judges that are adept at reading dogs will easily be able to tell when the dog is actively searching and when it is not. It is preferred that the dog be actively looking until the target scent is located. The handler may verbally encourage/direct the dog and/or point to areas where the dog should check. If the handler has been through the course before with a different dog, the Judge will need to use a keen eye to be sure the handler does not help the dog locate the scent in any way. If the handler knows the location of the scent, it is suggested that they not point at it or look at it just in case it could be perceived as a signal to the dog. But if body language and tone are consistent during the search, the handler may continue to act as though the dog has not yet found the correct spot.

**After the alert:** Once the dog indicates, the handler’s body language and tone (if speaking) should not change for a moment. If the handler has been pointing and encouraging, they should continue to do so as if they haven’t seen the dog. If the handler has been quiet and relatively still, they should remain that way for a moment. The Judge wants to see that the dog commits to the alert and that the dog is 100% certain before the handler asks the dog to better indicate an exact location and/or goes in to try to locate the scent item. If the handler chooses to encourage the alert (mostly in the case of an active alert) they may then do so for a few moments (within reason). It should be very clear by the dog’s alert exactly where the scent article is located. The handler will need to verbalize the detailed location or point to the hiding spot without touching. An example would be “Behind the wheel in the 4 o’clock position” or “Behind the dictionary” (if using a book shelf). Saying “behind the wheel” or “on the second shelf” would not be detailed enough. If the dog truly understands his job and how to alert, even a non-dog person should be able to tell exactly where the item is hidden.

### **Forms and Info available to Trial Secretaries and Judges**

Sample Judge’s Briefing

Request Form for hosting a DSA Sanctioned Trial / Practice

Standard Premium  
Competition Registration Number (CRN) Request Form  
Standard Trial Entry Form  
Score Sheets  
Score Tracking Sheets  
Trial Recap Sheet  
Trial Score Reporting Form  
Trial Entrants Information Report  
Judge Compensation Guidelines