



TRACKLAYING GUIDELINES

Thank you for your interest in becoming a tracklayer! This is an awesome responsibility and a two day commitment. It is also a lot of fun and a unique learning opportunity. When else does one get to spend two days with a tracking judge? You will find that all of our judges are very appreciative of your help and eager to talk to you about tracking. This handout is written to give you an idea ahead of time as to what the procedure will be for those two days. It is meant as a procedural guide rather than an explanation of the philosophy of tracklaying. For the later there are books written on the subject. We do request that you familiarize yourself with the basic requirements of a TD track by reading the AKC Rules and Regulations on the AKC web site. Attached to this guide is a typical TD track as drawn by a judge.

Equipment:

Clipboard and pencil, plastic bag in case of rain

2 personal articles- usually a glove and a sock- for the beginning and end of the track. A spare start article is also required. Please bring these on Saturday. Judges will look at your articles either before or after plotting your track. Make sure you take them home and add your scent to them.

Be prepared for any kind of weather

DAY ONE: PLOTTING DAY

Plotting typically starts at 9:00AM You will be assigned a track number by the chief tracklayer and, if this is your first time tracklaying, you will probably lay only one track. Be prepared to sit around while other tracks are being laid. There are usually other tracklayers and officials doing the same. When it is your turn the procedure will be something like this:

1. A judge will ask you to get flags from the trailer. Take the whole bunch of any color. (TDX tracklayers will also take two red and white checked article flags) Also take with you a clipboard and paper on which to draw your own map of the track. (Have a plastic cover of some sort in case it's raining!)
2. You will give a judge a flag to place at the start. Then you will go out in single file in order not to disperse scent all over the place. For a TD test a second flag will be placed 30 yards from the start. You will walk behind the two judges and listen to what they say as they plot their own maps. Note on your map the landmarks that they are using (stop sign, tree, telephone pole, wildflowers, clump of grass or hay, etc) especially at turns. Don't worry about the yardage as yours will be different from theirs- see below! Be sure not to veer off the straight track that is being plotted. If you lack confidence in your ability as a mapmaker peak over the judges' shoulders to see the basic configuration! Scale is not important. Also feel free to ask them questions.
3. The judges will ask you to give them a flag at each turn. There may be open turns as well as 90 degrees. Note as many landmarks as possible at the turns, both near and distant. Do not use as a landmark anything that might move or look totally different at a different time of day. The judges might also put out an additional flag as an intermediate marker if the next flag cannot be easily seen because of distance or terrain. Be sure to note this carefully on your map so that you won't think later that it marks a turn.
4. When you come to the end of the track note where your article will be placed and then walk out straight ahead for at least 30 yards.

5. NOW! You get to rewalk all that! Alone. Just be careful to stay exactly on the track but take your time to modify or redraw your map. Most of us now also count our own paces and note the number of paces between flags. This will probably be quite different from the judges' yardage, but this is only for your own purpose of knowing exactly where the track goes.

6. Lunch! This will be provided by the club. At this time the judges may ask to see your articles- usually a glove, sock, hat- that you will place at the beginning and end of your track on Sunday. Tracks are usually all plotted by early afternoon. The chief tracklayer will tell you what time your track will go in on Sunday and what time to arrive.

DAY TWO

1. You arrive, hoping that it is not rainy or foggy or cold ☺ A judge will go with you to your track at the appointed time.

2. Survey your track. Off you go! The judge will watch you lay the track. You probably don't need your map at this time since you know where the flags are and will need your hands free to pick them up. Have your map in your pocket just in case! Be sure to LEAVE your sock at the start, and to LEAVE the two start flags in the ground!

3. Walk at a normal pace and try not to stop at the flags. Just hesitate and pull them out of the ground as you keep walking. Be sure to leave your glove at the end and continue walking in the same direction 30 yards. Your articles should be well scented by your hands, but do not try to conceal them on the ground, just drop them.

4. Pray that the exhibitor who draws your track passes!!!

5. When he/she doesn't (Well, the national pass rate for a TD is only 50%) be prepared to immediately go out to the team when you hear the whistle. The judges will get the dog and handler back to the track, make sure you and the team are ready to go on and will probably now leave for the next track, so it is your responsibility to assist the team through the rest of the track.

6. You are not expected to give advice or any sort of interpretation. Your job is simply to know where the track goes. Ask your exhibitor how much help he/she wants. Some may want you to tell them exactly where the track goes. Most will probably prefer coaching when needed.

7. Enjoy lunch, especially if your team passed!

CROSSTRACKLAYERS FOR TDX

One cross-track layer only will need to be at the site for Plotting Day. The start and end of the crosstracks will be marked with white flags.

On Test Day two tracklayers will walk the crosstracks approximately 1 ½ hour after the tracklayer has started laying the actual track. The chief tracklayer will give the exact time to the cross-track layers. The cross-track layers will walk side by side at a normal pace, pick up the white flags, and go straight ahead at the end for 50 yards before exiting the field.

We hope that you will find tracklaying fun, fascinating, and a great tracking education.

Anne A. Smith, Training Director