

AMERICAN BLOOD TRACKERS ASSOCIATION TESTING PROGRAM

2/19/2024

INTRODUCTION:

Our testing program is in place to assess both the handler and dog. Our knowledgeable judges will not only evaluate, they will also give advice to further progress your team.

GENERAL PROVISIONS:

Both the handler and dog must be capable of working with others. The handler must be humble and respectful. The dog must not be aggressive to anyone involved in the testing.

The handler is expected to control the track, and must give directions as they would on a real track.

The on lead Started, Seasoned, and Finished must be performed on lead. The handler must maintain control of the lead at all times. If the lead must be dropped, the handler must pick it back up as quickly as possible. The dog must remain in sight of the judge at all times. The handler must give the dog enough distance ahead that the judge can watch the dog work. The judge must have the ability to place a tracking collar on the dog to record the track of the dog.

The off lead must be performed using a track/train system. The judge must be able to access the collar, or place their own collar on the dog. The handler must have full control of the dog with the e collar.

An off lead test may not be administered without written consent of the landowner/leaseholder.

Lines must be laid in natural tracking conditions, which may include: woods, water, mud, snow, ice, roads, and gravel etc.

All tests will be laid with approved tracking shoes and 2 ounces of blood, which must be spread equally throughout the track. Blood should be placed in areas where the handler can see it.

Anyone appointed by the judge may lay the lines to be evaluated by a certified judge, as long as they are supervised by a certified judge.

All test lines must be recorded tracked on two platforms, with one required to be a Garmin tracking system, with a tracking collar placed on the dog. All challenges must be marked on both devices/apps.

The test must be ended and handler briefed as soon as it is determined that failure criteria has been met. The judge may allow the team to continue on for practice, if they choose. If the judge decides not to allow the team to finish, it is their prerogative.

AMERICAN BLOOD TRACKERS ASSOCIATION TESTING PROGRAM

There is a maximum of 2 callbacks by the judge. When called back, it is the handler's responsibility to return back to a point of their choosing. The call back distance is, 40 yards for on lead test, and 75 yards for off lead test, from last contact with the line. A team can receive a call back for lack of forward progression after 10 min of no forward progress.

A 1 sq ft piece of hide, to represent the deer, will be placed at the end of the trail to mark its completion.

Started and Seasoned tests may only be conducted privately by a certified judge. All Finished level tests must be conducted at ABTA approved events.

The amount of judges on a test line is at the discretion of the ABTA.

All requests for testing must go through the judge coordinator, even for private testing.

Certificates will be issued by the board once all supportive documents are reviewed.

The handler assumes all liability for participation in ABTA testing and events.

A team must begin testing at the started level test, and complete testing sequentially i.e. started, seasoned, finished.

In the event that a test line lays longer than the allotted time, the handler may choose to run the test.

A dog is not eligible to be evaluated by someone which has bred, owned, boarded, trained, or handled the dog within 1 year of the test date.

PASS/FAIL:

The dog is expected to positively follow the track. Once the handler identifies the hide it is considered a recovery.

"Positively follow the track" means that the dog will engage in all components of the test, such as turns, obstacles, "challenges" and the majority of the length of line. Simply finding or indicating the deer part at the end of the trail is not sufficient to pass. Dogs that run circles throughout the test zone, wander randomly, or find game solely by using the winding method may not be considered for a pass.

AMERICAN BLOOD TRACKERS ASSOCIATION TESTING PROGRAM

For the OL test, the handler must be able to communicate to the judge when the dog is on track, off track, in search mode, and when the game has been located. The dog must demonstrate the ability to follow commands from the handler given through the use of a hand held device.

There is a maximum of 2 callbacks by the judge. When called back, it is the handler's responsibility to return back to a point of their choosing. The call back distance is, 40 yards for on lead test, and 75 yards for off lead test, from last contact with the line. A team can receive a call back for lack of forward progression after 10 min of no forward progress.

The testing guide must be filled out properly to determine pass/fail.

Started Level Test

TRACK DETAILS:

A minimum of 400 yards and maximum of 500 yards in total length, to include one wound bed

A minimum of 2 hours and maximum of 6 hours lay time

DOG CHALLENGES:

Two 90 degree turns

HANDLER CHALLENGES:

Hunter interview prior to test

Property line marker (just identify it and ask if you have permission to cross)

PREPARATION AND EXECUTION:

2 ounces of blood with the use of tracking shoes will be used over the course of the track. The handler will be shown the hit site and direction of the test line. Maximum of 30 min to run the test.

AMERICAN BLOOD TRACKERS ASSOCIATION TESTING PROGRAM

Seasoned level test:

Distance & Lay Time:

A minimum of 800 yards and maximum of 1000 yards in total length, with 2 wound beds

This test must lay for no less than 8 hours old and max of 12 hours old

DOG CHALLENGES:

No directional marker from hit site

Three 90 degree turns

5 min wait at property line

30 yard scent challenge with a random exit

(circle, spiral, star, zig zag)

HANDLER CHALLENGES:

Hit site analysis with feedback as to shot placement and proper wait times

2 wound beds, which at least one must be investigated by the handler to discuss details & strategy

PREPARATION AND EXECUTION:

2 ounces of blood with the use of tracking shoes will be used over the course of the track. The handler will be shown the hit site, but not the direction. Maximum of 60 min to run the test.

AMERICAN BLOOD TRACKERS ASSOCIATION TESTING PROGRAM

Finished level test

Distance & Lay Time:

The test must be a minimum of 1000 yards and a maximum of 1200 yards, with 2 wound beds

The test line must lay overnight at a minimum of 12 hours and maximum of 16 hours.

This is an elite test in which you may be faced with many realistic challenges such as dogs barking, gun shots, obnoxious people, and more. You must demonstrate the ability to handle these situations.

DOG CHALLENGES:

Another dog used to track on a portion of the test line (75-100 yards)

A grid searched area by 2 people on a portion of the test line (75-100 yards total)

5 turns, which may be any degree of angle

50-60 yard scent gap with random exit

Other animal distractions along the test line on 2 random spots

Terrain challenges (water, mud, snow, and/or gravel)

Test line will cross a field, food plot, and/or road

HANDLER CHALLENGES:

Hit site and direction not shown (you will be shown a 30 yard square area where it is)

Property line with 10 min wait

Scent gap with random exit

PREPARATION AND EXECUTION:

2 ounces of blood with the use of tracking shoes will be used over the course of the track. This is part of the handler test. Maximum of 10 min to locate the line and progress forward. Maximum total time of 90 min total to run the test.