

Tracking and Scent Detection Academy

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1. EQUIPMENT

A. Tracking Flags

Note that the FCI Rules state that tracking flags should be made of natural substances such as wood. This is because flags inadvertently left at the field should be, to the extent possible, biodegradable and not cause harm to farm equipment.



You won't see these lawn sprinkler flags used at a National Event or a World Event.



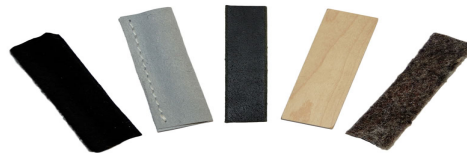
A tracking flag from a national event in the U.S. and the tracking flag for the 2015 FMBB. NOTE THAT THE FLAGS ARE DIFFERENT SO TRAIN WITH MANY AS YOU CAN.

Virtually every vendor of equipment has donated tracking flags to National Events. Ask them for past photos, etc. I guarantee you the flags will differ in terms of size and shape. I kept all flags from national events that were given to competitors and routinely used them for training.

B. (B-F)Articles (Leather, Carpet, Wood)

The rules state that the tracklayer should handle the articles for at least 30 minutes prior to laying the track.

The articles consist of Leather-Carpet-Wood, and this is the temporal order of placement for IGP 1-3.



For training purposes, it is recommended that you keep five (5) separate “categories” of articles in separate Ziploc bags:

Category 1: Articles with no scent kept in a freezer bag – used since at some national events, we do not know if the tracklayer will have time to have scented the articles for the requisite half hour.

Category 2: Articles with the handler-owner’s scent kept in a freezer bag- perfect up to the IGP 1 for the obvious reason that he or she lays the track.

Category 3: Articles with Another Person’s Scent Kept in a Freezer Bag ..since from IGP 2 on, you will not be handling the articles prior to indication.

Category 4: Articles With More Than One Person’s Scent (Meaning Articles Scented / Handled By Multiple People) in a Plastic Bag with

Marker on the Back Flight - *Article 1 Flight A Article 2*, etc. since the pungency of the marker may affect the scent presentation.

Category 5: Same as Category 4 but use the magic marker right before laying the track. Note that some markers have a strong scent so you want to introduce this scent once in a while.

G. Boots

Muck Boots seem to be the choice of IGP people but I imagine there are many different kinds of suitable boots. This is one piece of equipment you won't be able to do without. Please consider buying boots for tracking.



H. Sight Markers for Corners

Some people use large plumbing washers with a ribbon tied to them to mark corners while others use sprinkler flags thrown to the left for a right turn and right for a left turn. I believe the dog will get savvy and become reliant on this so do not use such unnatural markers. I had the great fortune of tracking many times with Beth Bradley. We would often meet at 6:30 A.M. to track. What amazed me is she could lay a track with absolutely no markers and then go to breakfast, come back and run the track perfectly, knowing where each turn and article was. John Soares was very similar but I would see him study the surrounding trees etc., for quite some time before starting training.

I. A Paper and Pen (and Clipboard)

A paper, pen and clipboard can help you to remember your track, article placement and to take notes of any observations made. For trials, it is imperative that everything be drawn out and that the Tracking Coordinator and Judge look at the plot drawn on paper and agree to the

“roll out” of the tracks. Trust me, after a few flights or even one or two, everything will start to look the same.



J. Coffee, OJ and Breakfast

A Starbucks Traveler, Cups and Breakfast will go a long way for your tracklayers, especially at National Events. KEEP IN MIND THAT MOST HOTELS OFFER BREAKFAST FROM 7:00 AM and YOUR TRACKLAYERS PROBABLY LEAVE AT 5:30 or so.

“The Hotel Breakfast Bar Opens at 7:00 AM and 9:00 on Weekends”



2. FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

A. Cut Grass Makes a Scent While Stomped Grass Stands Up (Why Do You Think Trials Are Never Held On Freshly Cut Fields?)

Cut Grass Creates a Scent But Stomped Grass Creates Less of a Scent – and eventually STANDS UP. This is the reason why dogs cannot track well when grass is freshly cut. This helps us to understand that cut grass (grass you slide into and cut the blades) makes a stronger scent impression than stomped on grass (which just stands up eventually). While in a trial, the tracklayer can only scuff, I am of the belief that in the beginning, with scent pads or the “Balabanov Circle”, cut grass meaning grass you slice with your boots, helps the dog learn as opposed to stomped or lightly scuffed grass. Starting off with light scuffing is, in my opinion, not necessary. I am sure, Royce Gracie, Floyd Mayweather, George St Pierre, Rose Namujunas or Amanda Nunes did not start learning martial arts by engaging in full no-rules combat. Rather, I am sure they learned by shadow boxing, one strike or step sparring and did not engage in a full three round sparring match till much later. Albert Einstein did not start the study of math with advanced calculus. You get the idea. Take it easy, make it easy and increase the level of difficulty as you see understanding and progress. I cannot stress this enough. I am sure most trainers don't expose a trial arm as the first protection sleeve.... Stomping in a scent pad and placing food that is "delicious but not emitting of a strong odor" under sliced grass is a valid way to introduce tracking.

B. Beware of Corporate Grass!!

While corporate grass is great for tracking since it is manufactured and plush, **there is a huge tradeoff**. The corporate lawn is pristine due to an abundant use of fertilizers, chemicals, weedkillers, etc. You are exposing your dog to potentially cancer-causing agents. Please assess diligently to determine if the corporate grass you are using is safe.



Corporate Grass Is Not Pristine Naturally. You may be exposing your dog to cancer-causing agents!

C. Food for Tracking

It would behoove you to use food for tracking that is **not** of a strong odor (does not contain a strong scent), yet is delicious. I used to boil then bake liver or boil chicken breast and freeze it. I would also cut the food into a half of a penny sized pieces. If the piece is too large, it gets too easy to detect. I hope you will not scoff at what I have written because it is obvious. I had once gone tracking with an individual who told me he wanted the strongest scented food known to man-kind and when he created his scent pad, he literally rotated in a circle since he felt that would create the most disturbance. His thinking and assumptions were just so counterproductive to success. An excellent article on this topic is written by Armin Winkler and I think it is entitled "Only the Nose Knows." I believe Armin recommends baking the liver and that is where I got it from.

D. Dirt and When To Transfer to Dirt (and other surfaces)

It is interesting to note that many titled dogs bought and imported from Europe know only or primarily dirt. When they get to the U.S. some have a hard time adjusting to grass. Personally (I train my dogs with a team and don't buy titled dogs or dogs imprinted by others) I transferred my dogs from grass to dirt after the local IGP 2 trial or after attaining the local IGP 3 title.

It is up to the handler to expose the competition dog to all kinds of surfaces from dirt to plowed soy or corn fields, planted fields, winter wheat, etc. You never know what you will encounter at a National Event.

It is also strategic to find out what you will be tracking on and to concentrate on that type of terrain (tracking condition) for at least a month out if possible. Note though that tracking conditions have changed at national or regional events due to last minute emergencies or considerations.

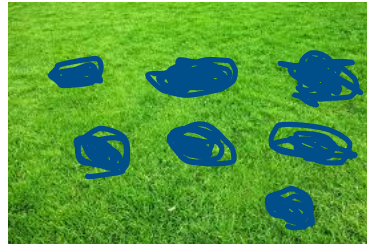
E. The Scent Pad

The scent pad is one of the most important areas of the track, obviously, and is usually one of the first things introduced to the pup or beginning dog.

The FCI Rules state that the scent pad is created by the tracklayer with his or her feet together. Since each tracklayer is built differently, it is impossible to further standardize a scent pad. The flag is to the left.

From within the scent pad you have almost infinite opportunities to place food when introducing the scent pad. Obviously, you make the disturbance and then place the food under the disturbed grass to create the association. I once trained with a person who placed the food thoughtfully on top of the scent pad like a pepperoni pizza. When I mentioned to her that this was not a test for the dog as it was merely using its eyes to eat, she came to understand the misconception in her thinking and training mode. See below. Do not place the food in plain sight because you will encourage utilization of the eyes.

Food in plain sight won't help you.



hidden.

This is the SAME SCENT PAD but the food is

F. Opening of the Window of the Scent Pad

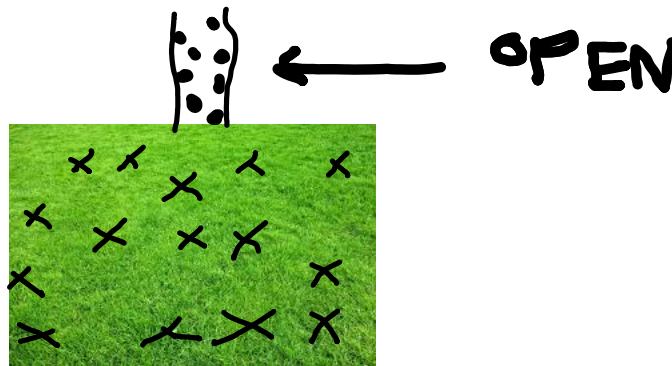
After a few weeks of the scent pad, you will want to open the window of the scent pad with food to show the dog that advancement will be necessary (progress – locomotion -movement). Please bait the opening area of the window with lots of food in the beginning.

I fully understand there is no opening of the window at trial but once the dog understands that if there is no food on the scent pad or if the food within the scent pad has run out that leaving the

scent pad is needed, the hunt drive will kick in and the dog will not need the opening of the window to leave the scent padm eventually.



A Scent Pad

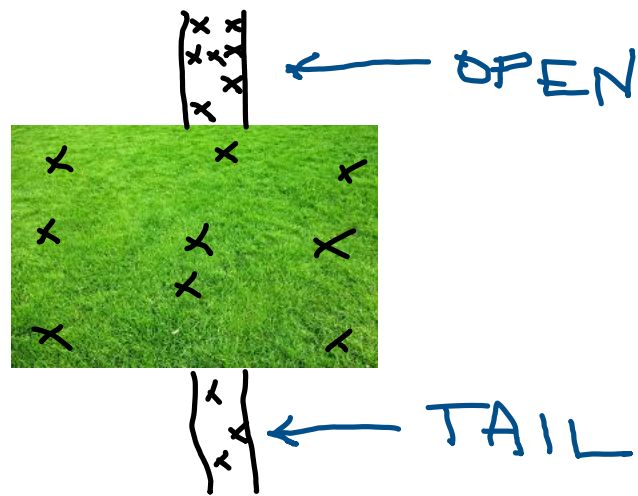


A Scent Pad With the Pad Window Opened

(Introduce This After About 3 Weeks On a Scent Pad Only)

Since we want the dog thinking tracking when the flag and scent pad are scented or seen or both, we negate the urgency to bolt to the scent pad, not only with “obedience” but also by using a baited tail to the scent pad in training. Introduce this after the IGP 1 has been attained or if you are adventurous, after about 4 to 5 months of training tracking. **Imagine that the food is hidden under the grass.**

This is a scent pad
With the Window Open Plus
A Tail.



An example of the Tail and Opening the Window of the Scent Pad
Imagine that the food is hidden under the grass.

G. The Tail (What is It)

The tail comes before the scent pad and is something I utilize to make the dog want to track before the scent pad. I don't want the dog bolting to the scent pad in his or her mind. I want the dog to think of tracking **before** the scent pad. That is why in training, I more often than not, use a tail. I fully understand obedience should be the primary factor to get to the scent pad without bolting but the tail is a useful training tool.

H. The Footprint and Baiting

One of the greatest and inspirational instructors I ever trained with stated that compulsion is not force and that anyone who thinks of compulsion in that manner has a primeval and unsophisticated/undeveloped understanding. Compulsion is the forming **of a state of mind** that the next step might reap the reward. So just as the gambling addict wants to hit the slots when eating at a diner and hearing the cook ring the bell that an order is ready or vice versa, a person who just loves to eat, hears the bell at the hotel or medical officer counter and thinks that the order at the diner is forthcoming, the dog taught with compulsion keeps going for love of (and hunger/thirst/desire) of the reward. Some may call this food drive, hunt drive, prey drive, etc.

The point is you must be random and unpredictable in the placement of your food or the dog will quickly learn where in the footprint to go to, etc.

You will start to bore the dog. For example, for my IGP 3 dog, I would sometimes place a lot of food in the scent pad, sometimes a little, sometimes none at all to keep the dog guessing. I have seen at national trials, the dog go to the scent pad and spend not even a millisecond since the trainer trained only for trial and never put food in the scent pad after the titles were attained.

Some trainers approach the scent pad from a different angle to build interest in or curiosity and caution (unpredictability) for the scent pad.

For my IGP 3 dogs, during training, I have placed an **article** buried in the scent pad to keep the element of surprise and respect for the difficulty of the art, in the dog's mind.

One of the best trainers I know, at a seminar recommended heel or toe baiting. **Personally, I like to be very random, and sometimes place the food in the heel, sometimes the toe, sometimes, the arch, sometimes in the middle, sometimes many small pieces of food in the same foot print all over the place to keep the dog guessing. I feel the baiting has to be like snowflakes or stars –never the same (never in the same place) and I will place it according to behavior of the previous track. If the dog is taking right turns to tight and quick, I will place food on the left side of the footstep where the turn to the right is made, etc.**



Within these footsteps, you have so many ways to place the food drops and to not place the food drops to ALWAYS keep your dog guessing. You can also place articles within a footprint, obviously. I have even placed an article within the scent pad. If people can go to the scent pad at an angle, I can place an article in the scent pad to keep the dog guessing.

Design the placement of food randomly so your dog will never be able to predict where within the footprint the food or article is and treat each footstep with care and respect.

I. Your Next Track Is Dependent on Your Last Track

Anyone who tells you there is a set formula to attain an IGP 3 dog that Vs tracking may be mistaken. I am of the opinion that you cannot possibly know what kind of track you will lay the next time, until you gauge (assess) your present performance. Perhaps the only exception to this is the puppy stage when you will work on circles to the left and circles to the right for a defined period of time (until you feel that the dog is ready for a scent pad and beyond). Please research the Ivan Balabanov Circle on the internet to see what Ivan does with puppies via circles.

For the Ivan Balabanov circle, I personally, like to gently pull the dog off towards the end or the middle. This is analogous to the helper running away with the sleeve in developmental protection. If I pull the dog gently off the track the dog will think “hey I am not done yet. What the heck. Boy, I wish I could keep on tracking. When will be track next, boss?” This is the behavior I want. This is compulsion in the true sense of the word.

If my dog exhibits weakness with left turns, I will work on left turns the next time emphatically....

Handling of the Leash is NOT Insignificant (It Can Mean The Difference Between Passing and Failing: Handling of the Leash is An Art Within Itself). Imagine trying to teach your dog a dumbbell retrieve and when the dog goes to grab the dumbbell in zest, the dog instead hits the end of the leash and gets corrected (I have actually seen that happen). The entire goal of the training exercise has not only been defeated, but you may have caused long-term damage. Imagine being slapped in the face, back or rear-end (like back in the day when such shows as Kung Fu or Dynasty were on tv) and compare that with a slap on the shoulder or back from a friend you have not seen in years. The impact is the same but the intent and effect are cogently different! The same goes for leash handling. Leash handling is an art. You can use the leash in protection via checks to make frustration or you can inadvertently jerk the dog to disrupt the training or cause the dog to perceive a correction was administered. The point is you need to train with an experienced handler or instructor to learn how to handle the leash for every phase of IGP. Noted tracking coach Lars Lentz checks his pup on puppy tracks. A voracious student of the art will contact him and ask for an explanation of the check.

The Dog Is Myopic: The dog's life is centered around the dog. So this means if you come home from work in a good mood, the dog claims responsibility. If you come home in a foul mood, the dog believes it has caused this sad state of affairs. The dog is emotional. So there will be

times when you can train all three phases but there will be times when you will only train one phase since you are working on a certain behavior. Only an expert can help you decipher when that is.

Analogously, for protection, we have the luxury of effectuating a display of displeasure due to undesired behavior from a distance (e.g. the sleeve is attached to a leash and the helper is physically far away and looks away meaning is not engaged in eye contact with the dog) but in tracking everything is much more proximate (closer physically) and personal.

Be that as it may, there are ways to demarcate (split) tracking behavior. Teaching articles on pavement, in a garage or training room on concrete or carpet, or on a platform (aka table) are methods utilized by many *see below).

J. Article Indication

I teach articles separate from (distinct from the track) and once it is fully reliable and the dog likes indicating for a reward, I later introduce it as part of a track, sometimes replacing food.

For me, articles are taught by lining up ten to twelve articles on pavement or the carpeted garage floor. I let the dog loose and he can sniff them, etc., and even down (later when he knows the game) but there is no reward unless the leash is on and I am part of the equation. In this manner, the dog learns tracking is a team sport and to be dependent on or at least cognizant of my role.

Basically this is the such platz method and as I mentioned it is later incorporated as part of the regular track. Some people introduce this on the table via one article at a time. I like to teach it on the pavement or carpeted garage floor due to the forward movement, the picking up of the article, the resultant reward, etc.

In the beginning when the dog indicates, I quickly praise, reinforce good such platz, reward, verbally praise, then say such platz again and let him go to the next article. I guide the dog to the article and help it to indicate correctly. I make a human bridge, like a proud warrior yoga pause so he has no where to go but the next article. I place the article horizontally, vertically, and in between cause the tracklayer tosses the article on the ground and we don't know how it will fall so we don't know its orientation.

One famous trainer, after the article indication, pets the dog and covers the eyes, and places the next article just in front or places food in front

at that time (otherwise if the food was after the article already, the dog might blow by the article) or within the chest area so the dog kicks back when told to such (search). The day of trial, the handler pets the dogs near the eyes but of course does not place the food. We place the food after the article indication and as part of the training, to slow the dog down (make the dog check). Remember, at a competition you cannot praise the dog as you pick up the article. That is a point loss. You must pick up the article and then show it and then ask for permission to lightly praise. Then praise, Then stand up and restart the dog. A lot to think about:>

I once saw someone say show me and had the dog touch the article with the nose. That made absolutely no sense to me since touching the article is a point deduction. I once saw a Dave Kroyer video where the dog backs up after realizing he has overshot the article. That is some good tracking training.

- I. Turns (Corners) –You can bait these corners with food in a zillion different patterns depending on how your dog tracked the last time.



Within these footsteps, you have so many ways to place the food drops and to not place the food drops to ALWAYS keep your dog guessing. You can also place articles within a footprint, obviously. I have even placed an article within the scent pad. If people can go to the scent pad at an angle, I can place an article in the scent pad to keep the dog guessing.



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If you have incorporated the Ivan Balabanov Circle (search it on youtube) in your training turns should come easy, especially if you initially kick them in and bait with food sometimes on the right side of the turn sometimes the left, sometimes the middle. You must vary your food placement on turns, and never be predictable. You must also, in time, not always place food in turns lest the dog become dependent on food fore turns and think that no food means wrong turn.

As you progress, you can incorporate serpentines and v turns into your training. Your Training Director is your best bet to determine when this can be done. Note that serpentines, v turns, varying the placement of food..all teach the dog to respect the track due to the unpredictability and hence will slow the dog down.

I once trained with a noted trainer in Pittstown, NJ who soon thereafter, when into PSA but he taught turns and indeed tracking by going to the local school, and making increasingly long straight lines on the grass towards the shrubs. In time, he would make a left turn or a right turn and the dog would have no choice but to turn due to the shrub. He of course initially baited the turns, varying the food, and decreased it and put no food when the dog was advanced. He also introduced article turns meaning soon after the dog turned, the dog was rewarded with the article (since upon indication it was given praise and a snack).

K. Scent Loss

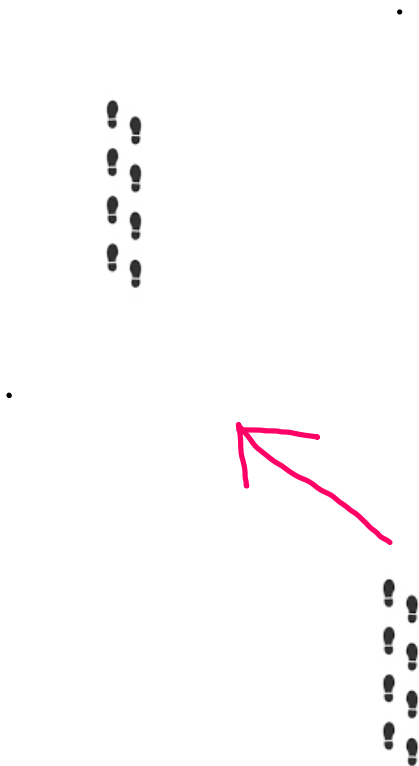
World Champion Fabian Robison talks about loss of source. I have won a regionals and a national championship and was vice champion 2x in a row for the AWDF, high HOT, but never a worlds so cannot and will not fathom to nor attempt to explain that concept.

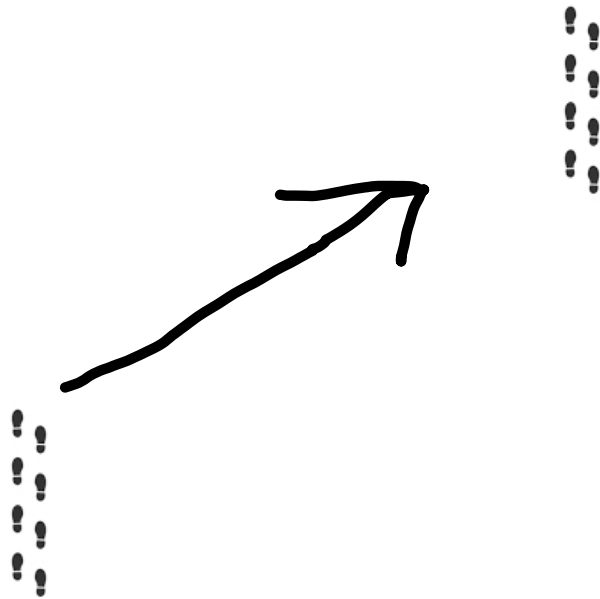
What I do is teach scent loss by **step offs** both during the track and after an article indication.

When you step off, **make sure you kick in the recovery area so the dog does not overly stress and to help the dog build confidence**. Also, make sure you do not always go left or always go right. When I do step offs I alternate between the left and right. When I do an article turn meaning after the article indication, instead of going straight I will start the track to my left or right, I kick it in more than the preceding track to be fair to the dog, especially initially.

The limitations of my computer skills ...see the step off concept to the left and the right..the recovery area, meaning where step off to, should be kicked in at first but later, the same as the previous track..... BE FAIR TO YOUR DOG, PLEASE.

The step off below is about six inches to the left or right.

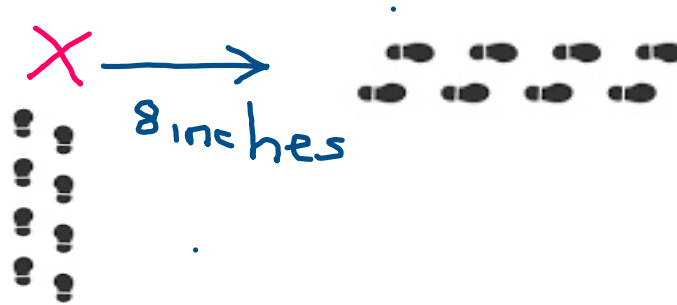




“Hop” to about six inches to you left and about three inches to six inches ahead of you for the step off. Hold the leash tight so the dog does not go too far off but make sure there is no whiplash effect. Leash handling is an art.

Article Indication..then lay the track right or left after the article but hold the leash so the dog cannot go far and kick it in so the dog loses scent but recovers quickly and gains confidence. You virtually help him the first few times. This will also inhibit, bolting straight forward after an article indication from stress(see below).

This is called an article turn. The X is the article in the drawing below. Of course you won’t see this at trial but it can be incorporated into training to teach care after the restart, scent loss-recovery and attentiveness.



- L. Take Your Time: Dogs that are trained with an impatient handler exhibit fake tracking to please the handler. In other words, rather than have faith and trust that the handler will be patient, the dog pretends everything is ok and keeps the nose to the ground to avoid the handler's being disappointed. At some point, the tracklayer will inform the judge that the dog is off the track and the exercise will be terminated. Or the dog won't start on the scent pad or after an article indication or the dog will just down on the track. This is a sign that the trainer was impatient during training and should be avoided at all costs. Trust your training director and be patient.

Laying Tracks for Trials

Necessary Equipment, Elements & Facts

- Articles (3 Per Competitor – Leather Carpet Wood – numbered per draw order)
- Flags (Numbered so the draw for order at the tracking field can be transparent).
- Paper and Pens For Tracklayers, Tracking Coordinator and Spotter
- Judge's Sheets for Each Competitor (Separate from the Obedience and Protection Judges' Sheets)
- A drone shot or google earth of the area would be ideal to scope out potential designs for the actual tracks
- Coordination between the Tracking Coordinator, Tracklayers, Spotter and the JUDGE who is in charge. At trials we host, we do NOT have a judge's dinner since we view that as a waste of time. Instead, we have the helpers and the protection judge dine together each evening and SEPARATELY, the tracklayers, tracking coordinator and spotter dine with the tracking judge each evening. This promotes communication and teamwork. It is more important to work towards and focus on quality than socialization.
- Each IGP 3 Track Requires 3 Acres
- Each IGP 2 Track About 2 Acres
- A Marker that is at least a leash and a half if not two leashes in length so you can ensure proper distance between tracks (we don't want a dog going on to the next track and the rules allow up to one leash length's distance from the leg but no more).

Necessary Individuals

- The Judge -evaluates the performances on the track
- The Tracking Coordinator –oversees and designs the individual tracks so the tracks do not interfere one with another. The primary contact person with the judge and the one who evaluates the tracking grounds provided by the host club if the judge cannot (sometimes the judge resides abroad, etc).
- Tracklayers-lay the tracks at the direction of the Judge and Tracking Coordinator
- Spotter (Optional But Very Helpful) –obtains the written layout of the tracks and marks the articles on a master document for the tracklayer and judge when disputes arise. Helps the tracklayer keep their bearings and may possibly use discrete, hard to detect end markers at the end of the track (the tracklayer puts the final article down and WALKS STRAIGHT to the end marker) upon which a track and a half or two tracks lengths line is used to mark the distance to the next track since the rule is the dog cannot go more

than one leash length away from the track and we don't want one dog causing spoliation of the next track. We also don't want a dog picking up the scent of a previous track. This is why we create this distance using the one and one half or two leash tracking line marker.

Tracks must be laid and timed to allow THE TRACK TO BE RUN and FOR THE CRITIQUE TO BE GIVEN and for the Handler-K9 to Exit the Field and the Next Team to Enter the Field. Thus, it is prudent to lay a track **and then wait between 10 and 15 minutes** until the next track is laid. At a recent national trial, a tracklayer just grabbed a bag of articles and laid track after track without waiting so some of the tracks for the trial were over three hours old! This was totally unnecessary and would not have happened if there was communication and courtesy (and concern for the competitors).

In other words, if you lay a track at 10:15 finish at 10:25 and then lay another track immediately to "get it over with" how can each track be properly aged by the time you lay 6 tracks? Your tracks will lag more and more behind, and the 6th track might be aged 2 hours or more since you did not account for the running of the track or the critique or the judge needing to use the restroom or take a coffee break!

The draw for order within a tracking flight MUST take place at the tracking field and not at the parking lot whereupon a drive takes place to get to the tracking field. That and having the opening draw (Draw Night) for tracking, obedience and protection determined by gift bags MUST be a thing of the past. It is possible that people entered a trial early so they could draw first, and then picked gift bags from the corners or some predetermined location to get Sunday in the stadium. The only way to have a proper draw is to use a bingo roller or shoebox with numbers therein. Unfortunately, this is the reality we live in and compete within. I know of a case where money was refunded (trial fee) since the draw was at the parking lot before the drive to the fields (come on, man! shame on you).

Suggested Rule for Tracklayers: After you are finished laying the track, meaning the last article has been placed, **PLEASE keep walking straight for at least 15 yards**. I was at one national event where 80% of the dogs, many of them top competitors, for two flights swerved to the left and missed the LAST article. What probably happened, according to a top competitor, is the track layer, needing to or wanting to finish, tossed the last article in front but walked to the left to get to the next track to be laid. 99% of the people there, attributed it to the wind, but I threw grass up in the air (after listening to that expert's explanation) and the grass did not blow towards the left.

Once you put down that last article, walk straight and coordinate with the tracking coordinator or spotter to put a discrete marker that only you two can decipher. From that spot, use a leash and a half or two leash marker to start the next track since you want to allow a leash length distance since that is the DQ parameter

meaning if a dog is a leash length off the track, it is called off as a failure. This prevents one dog from spoiling the track of another dog.

Finally, if possible, always lay one extra track per flight in the event of a retrack or one extra track every other flight for the retrack.

The experienced tracklayer will quash (scratch) a track if he or she comes upon something unexpected like a deer carcass or a ravine or a huge hole, etc.

Author's Preface & General Comments For Those Who Have Not Yet Attained an IGP Title:

This manual was written with the hope that it would prove informative to new or aspiring IGP trainers that plan to compete at a National event, etc. Related to that thought, if you find yourself with a draw that has you tracking at noon or after, CONGRATULATIONS, because in all likelihood that will mean you are at a National or a World Event where there are so many entries (about 100 or more) that tracking flights take place at 1:00 P.M. or later. Obviously, that is not analogous to your normal local club trial where tracking begins at dawn:> The latest I tracked was at the WUSV in Slovenia and it was past 3:00 P.M. and Mr. Juergen Ritzi was kind enough to give my dog and I a ride on the golf cart since the track was about a mile and a half walk. I waited for the return ride but it never came;>

It is imperative that you know the value you of your source: I am not T Floyd, Wallace Payne, Fabian Robinson, Ivan Balabanov, Beth Bradley or Debbie Zappia but I have tracked with all of them and when I did have such opportunities to, I made sure to pay close attention to learn from such great competitors. As far as I go, my highest score in tracking at a world event was 95, at a local trial 99 for an IGP title and 96 for an FH1, all with my GSD. I also received High in Tracking at the 2014 Working Dog Championship with my Belgian Malinois. Although I worked as the General Counsel of publicly-traded companies, meaning I put in 70-hour weeks and travelled 100k miles a year, I was able to make 6 world teams with a H.O.T. GSD (4 Teams – WUSV once for the GSDCA WDA, and once for the USCA; FCI 2x-Recused Due to Work) and an H.O.T. Belgian Malinois (DVG Global Meisterschaft and FMBB). Again, I mention this only so that you can gauge the source of information. It is not coming from the world's best but it is not coming from the worst either.

You can agree or disagree. It is not my intent to be argumentative but rather to offer you a school of thought. I also offer thoughts on Tracking and Trials with the hope that three (3) hour old tracks at a national event

for IGP 3 and pathetic excuses from “management” that “the rules state minimum of one hour but not a maximum” can be avoided.

For Those Who Have Not Attained An IGP 1 Yet

The Ivan Balabanov Circle + The Scent Pad + Opening The Scent Pad Window

+ The Tail + The Concept of Placing Food Randomly Within The Footstep Meaning Never In The Same Place and Placing It Based on Your Last Track (if he veers right, maybe put the food on the left side of the footprint more, etc.)

SEPARATELY, Teaching Articles on the Pavement or the Basement Floor

Then Introducing Articles on the Track

Teaching Scent Loss

The dog goes from eating on the track (positive association) to scenting for food (hunting), to scenting for articles (hunting for articles which means reward) to tracking to track IN TIME.

Tracking for IGP:

It would be very interesting to gauge, via some sort of odometer device for boots, the miles put in for tracking for any of the individuals I mention above. Surely the mileage will vary but CERTAINLY, many a mile laying and running tracks are amassed because in tracking, one has to work smart and work hard.

I do not know if this is done or not because I have never had the luxury of training with a large (numerous member club) due to my time constraints, but it would be so beneficial for beginners to be able to just hold the line of an experienced tracking dog (even if food is on the track), for the handling experience. As one developed, running a track blindfolded with the training director steadying you and holding the shoulders to prevent falls, etc., would also surely enhance handling skills.

POINT 1:

To attain regularity in performance, you must be irregular and unpredictable during training to make the dog respect tracking. A dog is smarter than you can imagine so if you only teach scent loss and then go left, you will inadvertently teach your dog to always go left if lost.

I will address this irregularity and unpredictability in more detail, later.

POINT 2

There is no way you can plan your tracking for the week in detail. You can plan how many times and the days you will track but the design of your next track will ALWAYS be dependent on the performance and what you observe on the most recent track. Teaching tracking is not like the CPA or Bar Exam. It is a day-to-day tactical and strategic endeavor.

Thus, if you are predictable and lay the bait at the heel at the footstep, the dog will scent only at the heel rather than the whole footprint. If, on the other hand, you are random in re food placement within the footprint, the dog will scent the entire footprint.

If a dog spends a millisecond at the scent pad it is because he knows where to look and if there is no food there, the dog takes off due to the predictability. This is why sometimes the scent pad is baited with food in various places within the scent pad and sometimes it is not. Sometimes there is one piece of food and sometimes there are up to 8 small pieces of food. This promotes a slow and deliberate search of the scent pad.

POINT 3 – Leash handling for any phase is important, It is for tracking. You always want the dog knowing you are part of the equation. The tension on the line might be similar to tension on a fishing pole. You just cannot let the dog bolt out like a thunderbolt. Let the leash slide through your hands.

I once laid an FH1 track at a club trial for Fabian Robinson who tracked it off leash and got a 100. I had heard of Wallace Payne tracking an FH1 off leash too at a nationals. Wallace had entered that trial and did not want to enter Sch 3 so entered the FH1 and just decided to let the dog track off leash. The level of expertise and training needed to attain this level of mastery is unthinkable.

Mission Statement: To provide a functional paradigm of training a dog to track; to create a system by which people in the sport are ranked in

accordance to tracking knowledge and accomplishments; to codify or memorialize what equipment is needed and what steps should be taken to ensure competitors are provided with a fair track to promote FAIR COMPETITION which is the only way we can hope that this sport sustains itself into the 22nd Century. At this time, the number of BHs and IGP titles in Europe has decreased significantly. This is before the pandemic. It is not a good sign. Only by increasing knowledge and reducing the chances of failures and discouragement, can we hope this sport flourishes.

The second purpose of this exercise is to identify Faculty who can serve as a source of reference to beginners and above who have questions about tracking. As this is a yet to be fully developed area, we classify our faculty from Level 1 to 5.

Level	Requirement	Comment
1	Aspiring TR or IGP 1	
2	Attained TR 1 or IGP 1	
3	Attained TR 2 or IGP 2	
4	Attained TR 3 or IGP 3	Qualified to lay tracks for others and at a Club Trial
5	Attained FH1, FH 2 or IGP FH	Qualified To Lay Tracks at Regional Events or Above

I have left this as the last component because I notice that many are not discriminate in who they rely on for training. Advice is sought on the internet! Club training is missed to train someplace else! Please be judicious and good luck to you and I hope this helped. Thank you.

ATTACHMENT A

A – Tracking (IGP 1)

Name of Dog:	
Time Track Laid:	Time Track Worked:
Track (79)	Articles (7+7+7)

Score: _____ Grade: _____

Tracking a min. 300 pace long, own track, min. 20 minutes old, 3 legs, 2 corners (90°), 23 articles belonging to handler (tracking time 15 minutes).

Sample Verbiage From a Judge's Sheet and the Numbers (Articles, Turns, Hours Aged, Etc.)

Tracking IGP 2

Tracking a min. 400 pace long, strange track, min. 30 minutes old, 3 legs, 2 corners (ca.90°), **3** articles (tracking time 15 minutes).

Name of Dog:	
Time Track Laid:	Time Track Worked:
Track (79)	Articles (7+7+7)

IPG 3

Tracking a min. 600 pace long, strange track, min. 60 minutes old, 5 legs, 4 corners (90°), 3 articles (tracking time 20 minutes).

Name of Dog:	
Time Track Laid:	Time Track Worked:
Track (79)	Articles (7+7+7)

96- 100 V
 90-95 SG
 80-89 G
 70-79 B
 0-69 M

FH 1 – 18 months old minimum age, 1200 paces, 3 hours old, 3 articles at 5 points each and 1 at 6 points (last one), 6 corners 7 legs

FH 2 -20 months minimum age, 1800 paces, 3 hours old 7 articles at 3 points each and one at 6 points no cross track on first or last leg and cross tracks within 30 minutes of running of the track; 7 corners and 8 legs

IGP FH –this is two FH2s on consecutive days with a different judge (at the world level) and different tracklayers ON THE SECOND DAY (at the world level)

BH = 15 months minimum age

IGP 1 – 18 Months Minimum Age

IGP2 = 19 Months Minimum Age

IGP 3 – 20 Months Minimum Age

ATTACHMENT B

This is part of the Tracklayer's Book and a part of The Helper Academy organization.

Tracking and Tracklayer Program Evaluation Form

Name of Host Club:_____

Date:_____

Address:_____

Tracking Academy Faculty:_____ or

Judge:_____

Seminar Topics Covered (If Applicable):

Comments About Student:_____

Or

of Tracks Laid: ____ (IGP 1 or Tr 1) ____ (IGP2 or Tr 2) ____ (IGP 3 or Tr3)

____ (FH1)

____ (FH2)

____ (IGP FH)

Comments From Judge:_____

_____ Initials of Judge (or If Applicable Faculty)

Attachment C

Written Test for Seminar

1. Manicured grass is the only acceptable terrain for IGP tracking.

True

False

2. The FCI Rules for IGP state that an IGP 3 or TR 3 is aged for:

- a) 3 hours
- b) 2 hours
- c) depends on the judge
- d) one hour

3. The FCI rules state that the articles should be handled by the tracklayer for:

- a) no requirement
- b) 30 minutes
- c) 1 hour
- d) 2 hours

4. The TR1 or IGP 1 tracking portion utilizes how many articles

- a) one and that is why it is called IGP 1
- b) 2
- c) depends on the judge
- d) 3

5. A re-track is given at the discretion of the:

- a) Executive Board for Special People
- b) trial secretary
- c) Tracking Coordinator, Tracklayer and Competitor
- d) Judge

6. Manicured grass is the only acceptable terrain for IGP tracking.

True

False

7. The FCI Rules for IGP state that an IGP 3 or TR 3 is aged for:

- e) 3 hours
- f) 2 hours
- g) depends on the judge
- h) one hour

8. The FCI rules state that the articles should be handled by the tracklayer for:

- e) no requirement
- f) 30 minutes
- g) 1 hour
- h) 2 hours

9. The TR1 or IGP 1 tracking portion utilizes how many articles

- a) one and that is why it is called IGP 1
- b) 2
- c) depends on the judge
- d) 3

10. A re-track is given at the discretion of the:

- e) Executive Board for Special People
- f) trial secretary
- g) Tracking Coordinator, Tracklayer and Competitor
- h) Judge

Attachment D

The following document was found on the internet without naming the author. No copyright is claimed and if the owner desires that it not be attached here, it will be removed upon request. We do appreciate the contents and deem it extremely helpful, invaluable and thank the author and wish his or her name were affixed.

TRACKING



“General Provisions”

- The tracking terrain must meet the conditions given in the FCI IGP trial rules. **All natural soils may be used.**
- The judge or tracking coordinator determines the layout of the tracks.
- The layout should be adapted to the terrain.
- The different tracks must have different layouts.

“General Provisions”

**Regarding motivational
objects:**

**No motivation objects can be
in the handler's possession at
any time on the tracking field.**

“General Provisions”

- **The scent pad is to be marked by a “start flag”.**
- **The “start flag” is to be put immediately to the left of the scent pad, next to the tracklayer.**
- **The order in which the participants track is to be determined by drawing lots. The judge must see to this**

IGP 1 - 3 Phase "A"

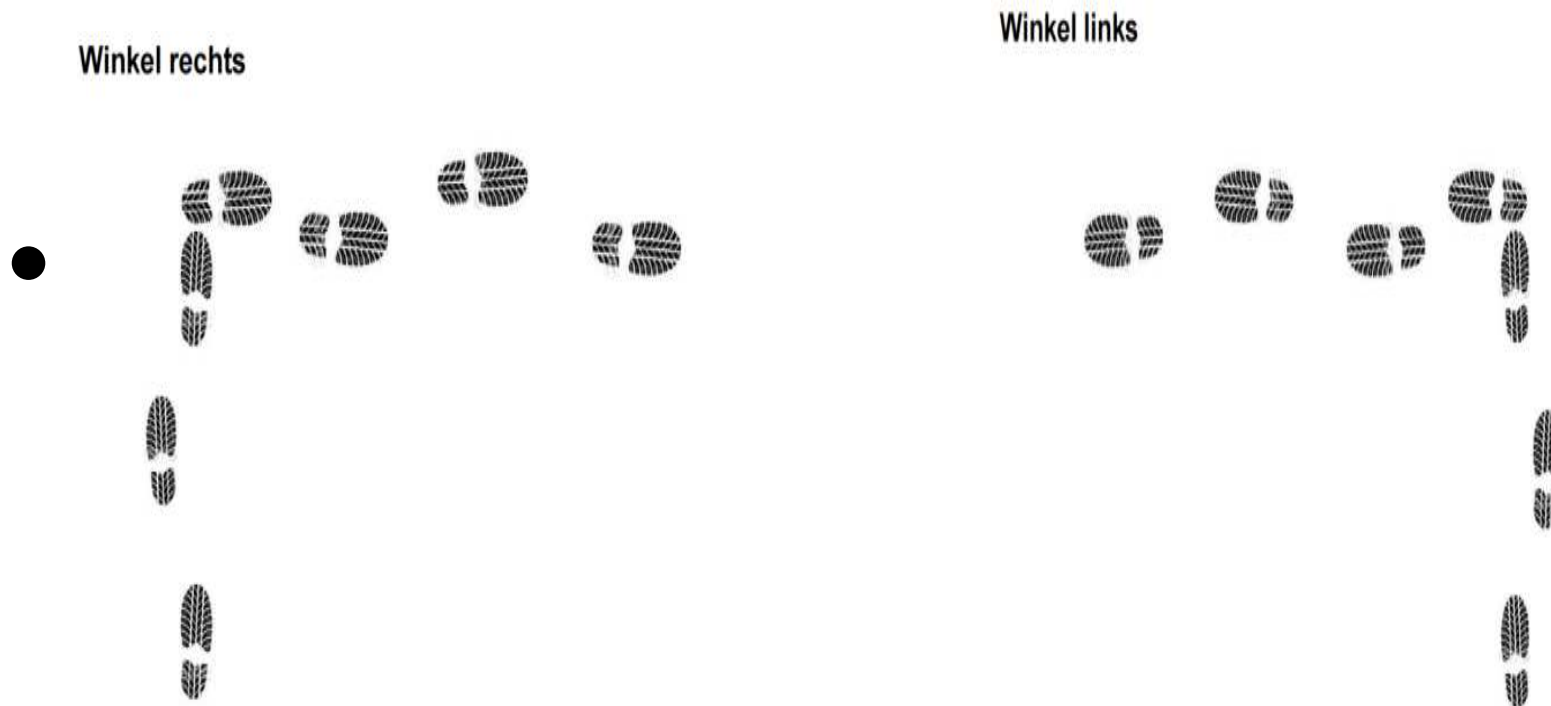
"Laying the tracks"

- Prior to laying the tracks the tracklayer/dog handler must show the articles to the judge or the tracking coordinator.
- The tracklayer must linger briefly at the start of the track.
- The track is to be laid in *normal paces* in the specified direction.
- *The corners are also to be laid in normal paces.*

IGP 1 - 3 Phase "A"

"Laying the tracks"

- The corners has to be **"closed corners"**. (in the regulations)



"Laying the tracks"

- While the IGP 1 – tracks are being laid, **the dog** must be out of sight.
- While the IGP 2 + 3 – tracks are being laid, **the dog handler and dog** must be out of sight.
- Articles are not to be laid within 20 paces before or 20 paces after a corner.

REPORT IN

- **Must be done in the basic position.**
- **The dog is allowed to be reported in on a short leash.**
- **The dog must be ready to track.**
- **Report the way of indicating or retrieving.**
- **Report out must be done in the basic position.**

Requirements IGP 1

Handler-laid, minimum 300 paces, 3 legs, with 2 corners (about 90°), 3 articles, aged at least 20 minutes. On judge instruction: 1st article on the first leg, 2nd article on the 2nd leg, 3th article at the end of the track.

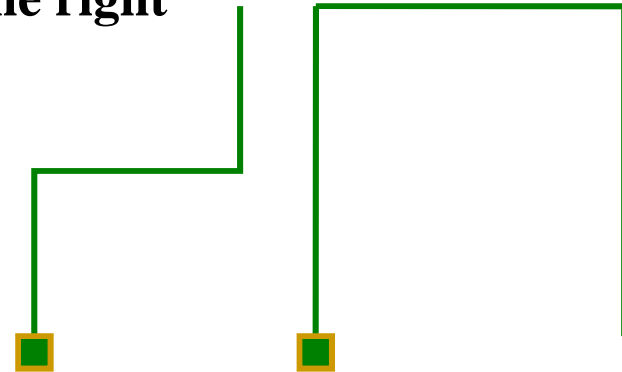
Tracking must be completed in 15 minutes.

Distribution of points:

Following the track	79 Points
Articles (3 x 7)	21 Points
Total	100 Points

Possible layouts of tracks

Each may be to the left or to the right



Requirements IGP 2

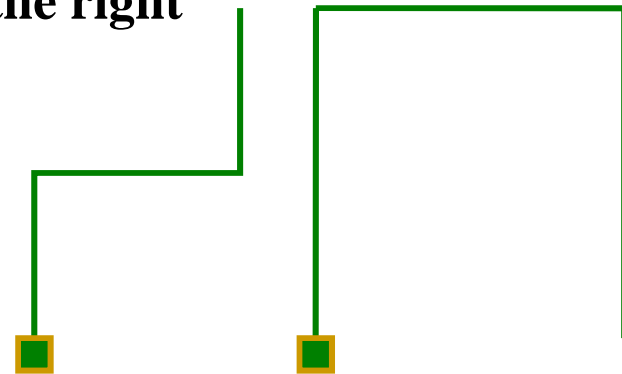
Laid by a tracklayer, **minimum 400 paces**, 3 legs, with 2 corners (about 90°), 3 articles, aged at least 30 minutes. **1st article after min. 100 paces, 2nd article on the 2nd leg and 3th article at the end of the track.** Track must be completed in **15 minutes**.

Distribution of points:

Following the track	79 Points
Articles (3 x 7)	21 Points
Total	100 Points

Possible layouts of tracks

Each may be to the left or to the right



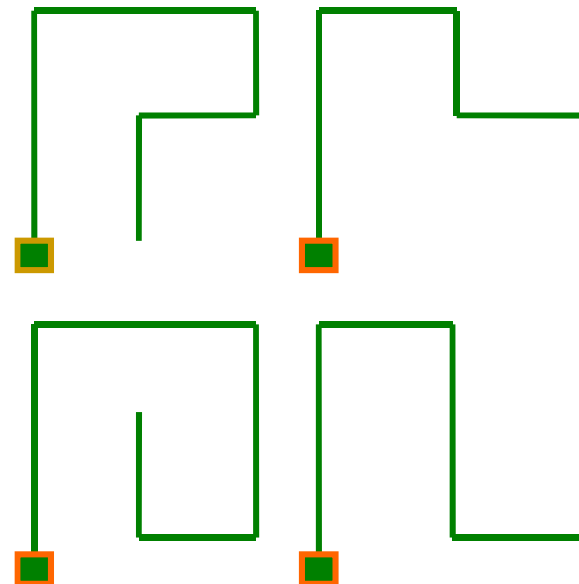
Requirements IGP 3

Laid by a tracklayer, minimum 600 paces, 5 legs, with 4 corners (about 90°), 3 articles, aged at least 60 minutes. 1st article after min. 100 paces, 2nd article on the 2nd OR 3TH leg and 3th article at the end of the track.

Track must be completed in 20 minutes.

Possible layouts of tracks

Each may be to the left or to the right



Distribution of points:

Following the track	79 Points
Articles (73 x 7)	21 Points
Total	100 Points

IPO 1 - 3 Phase "A"

Handler help through unnatural motion

- in the entire area of the track, in particular, near corners,**
- near change of terrain,**
- before placing the articles (IGP 1)**

Will lead to deduction of the score

“Starting the track”

It is not faulty at the start of the track for the dog to be slightly ahead of the handler as they approach the track as long as the dog is calm.

Evaluation of tracking, begins at the start of the track!

This is at the starting flag!!

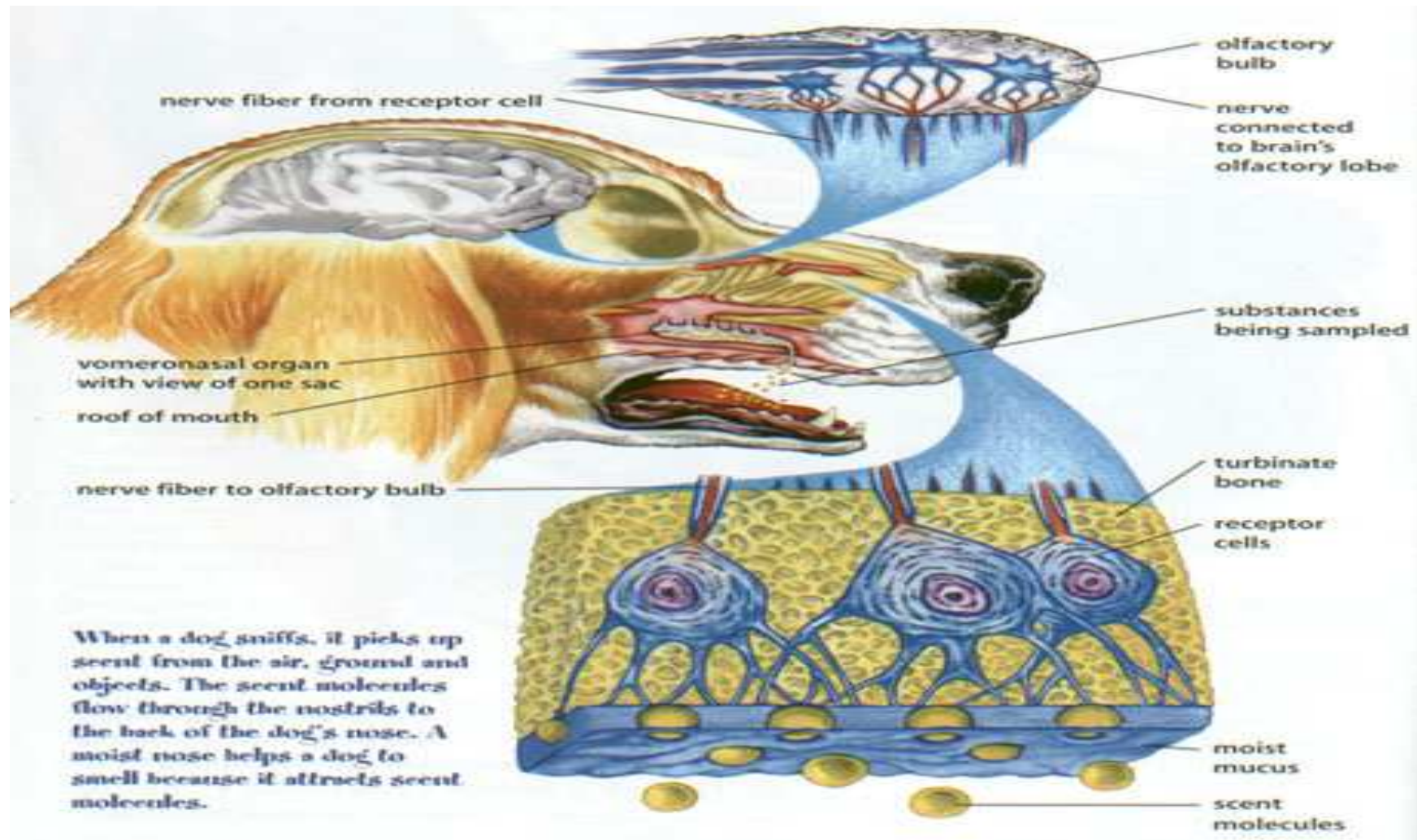
Tracking

- If, with the permission of the judge, the dog is downed by the handler during the track for wild game or to untangle line around the legs:
- The restart is done with the handler **at the END of the line.**
- If downed for game, the handler stays at the end of the line.
- If downed to untangle, the handler goes to the dog, untangles the line **then returns to the end of the line to restart from there.**

Tracking

- In certain situations the dog will track with an open muzzle.
- **This is not faulty**, because in some situations the dog will use also the special place in the palate of the dogs mouth.
- This special place is connected to the so called “Jacobson organ” and helps the dog in difficult situations to identify the scent.

The Dogs mouth



IGP 1 - 3 Phase "A"

"Starting the track"

- The start of the track:

Inspection by the dog of the scent path does *not depend on duration.*

It is **not** a criteria for a negative evaluation.

IGP 1 - 3 Phase "A"

"Starting the track"

- Desirable is ...
 - A calm and confident start
 - Picking up scent intensively and follows it convincingly.
- Faults are ...
 - Taking insufficient scent
 - Hectic and panicky start
 - Being under pressure at the start
 - Under force at the start
 - Avoidance at the start and when beginning to track

HOW TO JUDGE

The start runs into the evaluation of the 1st leg.

IGP 1 and 2 = 1 x 27 (first leg)

2 x 26 points (second and third leg)

IGP 3 = 4 X 16 points (first four legs)

1 X 15 points (last leg)

After judgement of the work in qualification,
the conversion in points has to follow

IFH-V

Handler laid track: Min. 600 paces.

5 legs and 4 corners. **1 of the 4 corners is a sharp corner (between 30-60 degrees)**

Distance between corners at least 50 paces.

3 own articles: **1th article** after at least 100 on 1th or 2nd leg. 2nd article on 2nd or 3th leg.

3th article at the end of the track. **Points 3x5 + 1x6.**

Ageing time of track=90minutes.

Working time max. 20 minutes.

Pre-requisite: BH/VT

IFH-1

Strange track, at least 1200 paces.

Legs: 7 **Corners: 6** about 90 degrees.

Distance between corners at least 50 paces.

Stranger's articles: 4 strangs:

3x 5 points + 1x 6 points

1st article after a minimum of 100 paces from the start, 2nd and 3rd according to the track Layer sketch, 4th at the end.

Ageing Time: 180 minutes.

Working Time: Maximum 45 minutes

Prerequisite: **BH/VT**

IFH-2

Strange track, at least 1800 paces

Legs: 8, of which 1 is a semicircle with 30mtr Radius.

Corners: 7 of which **at least 2 acute/ sharp corners (30-60 degrees).**

Distance between corners at least 50 paces.

Stranger's articles 7: 7x 3 points

1st article after a minimum of 100 paces from the start, 2nd – 6th according to the Track layer sketch (2 articles on one leg is permissible), 7th at the end.

IFH-2

Ageing Time: 180 minutes.

Working Time Maximum: 45 minutes.

Cross track timing: 30 minutes before the start.

Prerequisite: BH/VT or IFH -1

IGP-FH

2 X IFH-2, on 2 different days in one trial.

2 x 1800 Paces,

2 different places,

2 different track layers,

(2 different Judges.)???

Cross tracks

- **Cross tracks shall not be laid within 40 paces before or 40 paces after a corner.**
- **Cross tracks may not be laid in the first or in the last leg.**
- **Cross track may not cross a leg 2 times.**
- **Cross tracks shall not be laid in an angle under 60 degrees.**

IGP-V

- Handler laid track. At least 200 paces
- Legs: 2. Corners: 1 about 90 degrees.
- Articles: **2 own articles.**
- Articles are to be placed on the track on Judge's instruction.
- Ageing time: **no**
- Working time maximum: **10 minutes**
- Working the track: **79 Points**
- Articles: **21 Points**
- Prerequisite: **BH/VT**

IGP-ZTP

- Handler laid track. At least 300 paces.
- Legs: 3 Corners 2 about 90 degrees.
- Articles: **3 own articles**
- Articles are to be placed on the track on Judges instruction.
- Ageing time: **20 minutes**
- Working Time Maximum. **20 minutes**
- Working the track: **79 points**
- Articles: $3 \times 7 =$ **21 points**
- Prerequisite **BH/VT**

“The legs”

The legs are to be worked out with positive tracking behavior, intensive, with concentration and convincingly, with a deep nose and a uniform tracking tempo.

It is not faulty if ...

- The dog checks without leaving the track.**

“The legs”

- **Faults include ...**
 - **Partially high to high nose in parts or during the entire track**
 - **Circling**
 - **Insufficient intensity**
 - **Lack of concentration due to environmental influences**
 - **Under pressure and/or listless tracking**
 - **panicky and hectic tracking**
 - **Uncertainty und panicky behavior when solving problems**

Behaviour on the legs

The determining factor for a positive, high evaluation in the overall behaviour on the legs is: **intensive, active yet calm tracking.**

You should “feel” the dog’s “desire to track”. Hunting dog judges speak of so-called: “will to find” .

“The corners”

- **What is the corner?**
- **The corner is the point where two legs, in different directions, are connected.**
- **How to judge the corner?**

“The corners”

- **The corners are to be worked out confidentially and with a “deep nose”.**
- **It is not faulty if ...**
 - **The dog checks to the left or right, without circling or leaving the track, when the direction changes, i.e. near an corner.**
 - **Over-running an corner by one pace**

“The corners”

- **Faults include ...**
 - **Large or small circles**
 - **Over-running corners by more than a pace**
 - **Faulty intensity at and after an corner**
 - **Lack of concentration due to environmental influences**
 - **Uncertainty and panicky behaviour when solving problems**
 - **Uncertainty in committing to the next leg**

CORNERS

- **For all trial levels:** The evaluation of the corner runs into the next leg

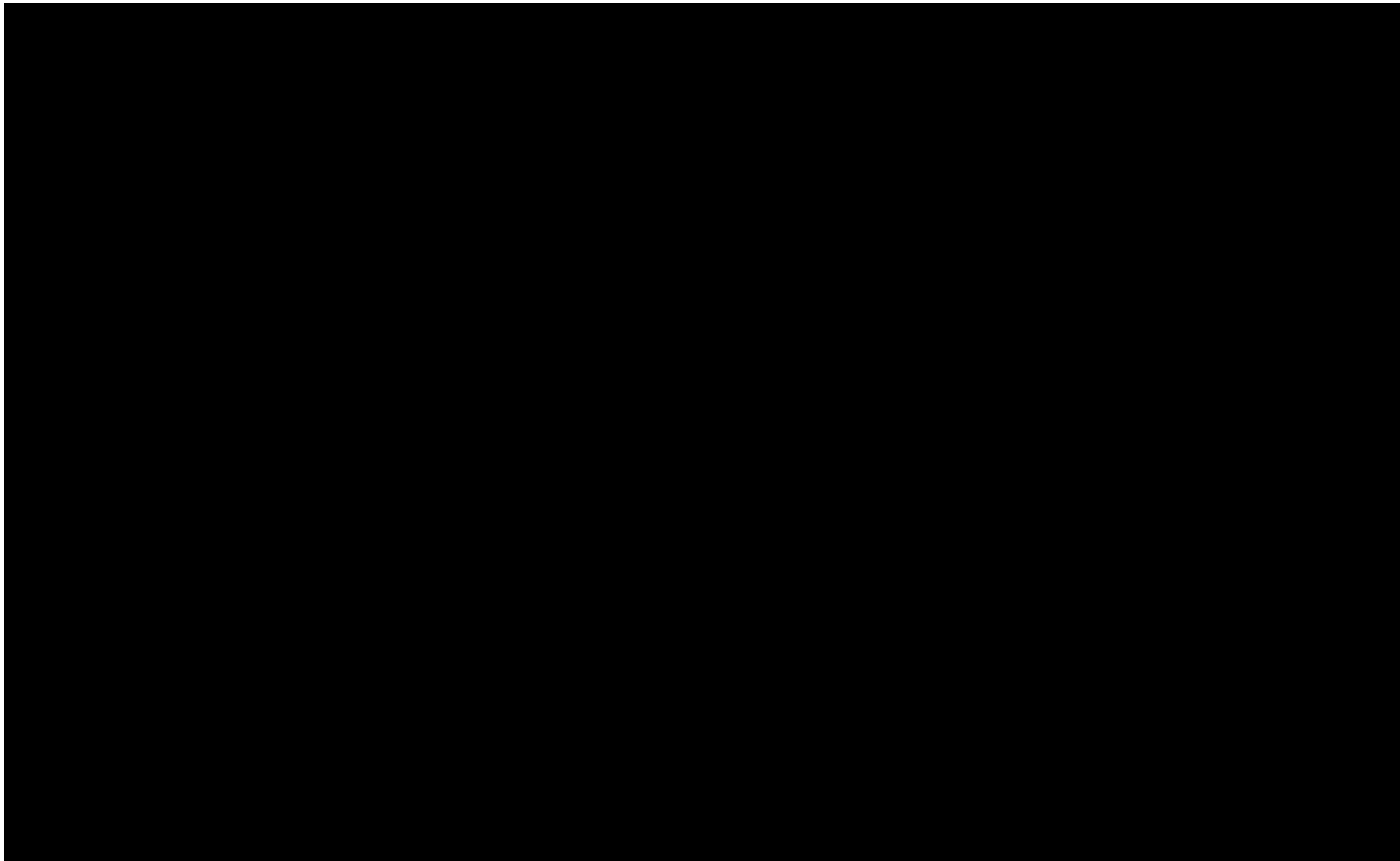
IGP 1 und 2:

1. Start and 1th leg = 26 Points
1th Corner and 2nd leg = 26 Points.
2nd Corner and 3rd leg = 27 Points.
79 Points

IGP 3:

Firts leg (including the start) = 15 Points
Each corner and the following leg= 16 Points. (4x)
79 Points

Corners



“The articles”

- **Articles may not differ significantly in color from the terrain.**
- **Articles must shown to the judge before laying the track.**
- **In case of championships/ FH examinations the articles must be numbered according to the track number.**

“The articles”

- Indicating the articles

The indication of the articles must be convincing. The speed with which a dog indicates is not necessarily a criterion for evaluation, it must be **consistent with the tracking tempo**.

- The desirable indication is if the dog ...

- indicates the article convincingly.
- indicates the article in a straight line to the track. **Indicating a little crooked is not faulty.**
- The article is indicated without hesitation.
- Remains calmly at the article until being restarted.
- **- Restart must be done on the side where the article was picked up.**

“The articles”

- The **indication** is faulty if the dog ...
 - Doesn't indicate the article convincingly.
 - Indicates the article too early.
 - Indicates to the side of the article.
 - Lies on top of the article.
 - Is restless at the article.
 - Picks up the article, (**some dogs do so because of stress**) when otherwise reported to the judge.
 - Receives verbal “help” or “help” with the leash.
 - Anticipates the restart.

“The articles”

- **Retrieve / Picking up the articles:**

Picking up the article must be done immediately.

- Desirable “picking up” is, if the dog:

- Picks up the article immediately.

- Holds the article calmly and firmly in its mouth.

- Brings the article directly to the handler.
(**retrieve**)

- remains calm until the restart.

- **Restart must be done at the place where the article is taken.**

“The articles”

- **“Picking up” is faulty if the dog...**
 - Picks up the article reluctantly and uncertainly.
 - Doesn't hold the article calmly in its mouth.
 - Drops the article.
 - Downs with the article. (**permitted is; stay, sit or retrieve**)
 - Goes forward with the article.
 - Doesn't want to give up the article. (3 comm allowed)
 - Receiving help, verbal or with the leash.
 - Anticipates the restart.

“The articles”

- The handler may approach the dog from either side to pick up the article, **BUT they must then restart the dog from the SAME side they showed the article.**
- Praise is only allowed before or after picking up the article, not both.
- The dog must release / give the article with 3 or fewer commands or it will be DQ.

The Articles

- **If an article that is not found by the dog and the Tracklayer can not find it, there will be no deduction.**
- **If several articles are not found, there will be a re-track.**
- **If a re-track is not accepted, the not found articles will be deducted.**
- **This is not the case in the tracks where the dog handler laid the tracks.**

ARTICLES

- For all examination levels:

If the dog stops tracking by falsely indicating an article and the dog handler (HF) does **not go to the dog** but gives an extra command at the end of the tracking line “SEARCH”: **Deduction is -2 points.**

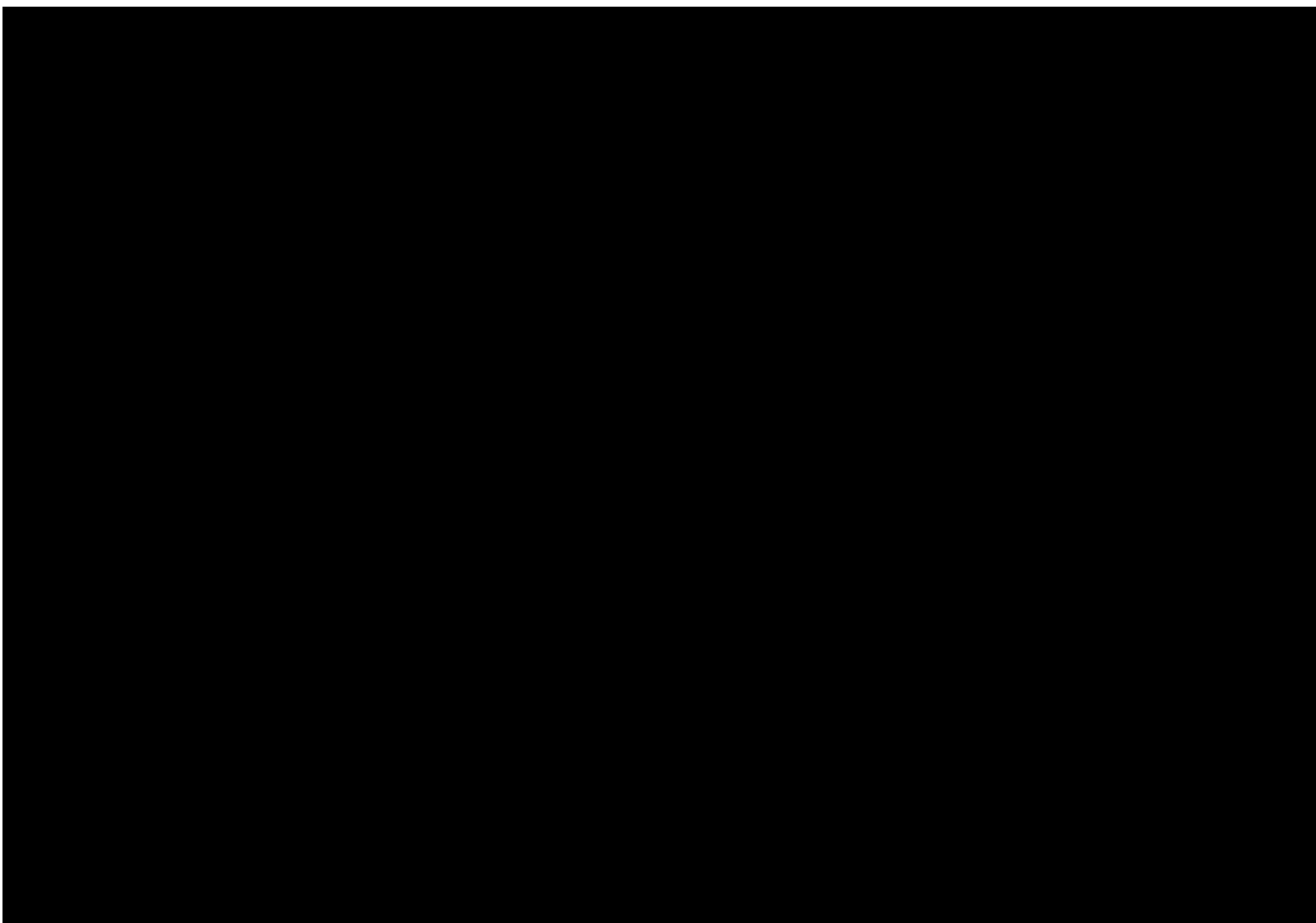
In IFH-2 / IGP-FH - 1 point

Articles

- If the dog stops tracking by falsely indicating an article and the dog handler (HF) **does go to the dog**, and gives the tracking command at the side of the dog "Search" :

Deduction is -4 points.

In IFH-2 / IGP-FH - 2 points



“Tracking speed”

The tracking tempo is not a criterion for evaluation if the dog ...

- Works out **the entire track with the same tempo.**
- It is faulty if ...
 - The tracking tempo changes during portions^{*)} of the track
- In particular if ...
 - The tracking speed changes after a corner
 - The tracking speed changes after the start/restarts
 - The dog gallops

^{*)} Comment: Doesn't apply if the difficulty of the terrain changes during the course of the track.

Additional criteria for evaluation

Differences in tracking grounds

Nature of the soil

Disruption of the soil

Height of vegetation

Change of terrain

Cross-tracks (due to people or animals)

Influence of the weather (Rain, Snow)

Air pressure, humidity

High temperature

Heavy wind

Dampness of the ground

Tracking

In Phase A a dog must have learned during training, that in the ideal case it must be responsible for **100%** of the decisions.

The dog must lead.

The level of training can be seen in particular in the behavior at the start, at the corners, in committing to the legs following corners, and at the restarts after the indication of the articles.

Superficial behavior, long periods of inactivity as well as help of diverse forms must result in appropriate deductions.

The overall impression must be the deciding factor.

Judging Articles



Track

Article



Track

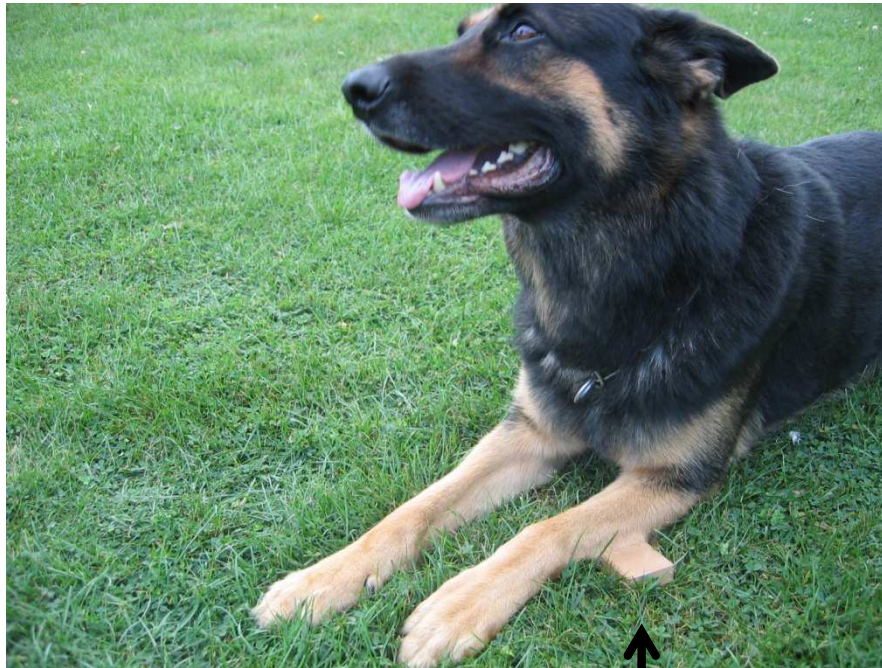
Article

Track



Article

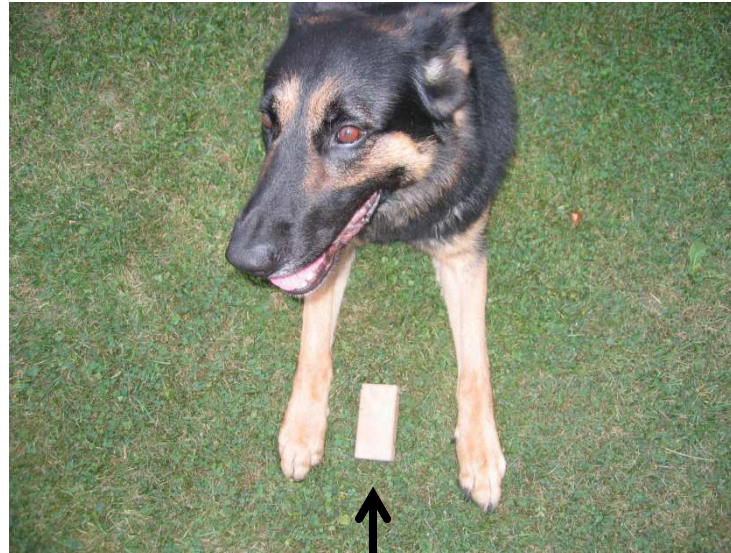
Track



Article

90° indicate

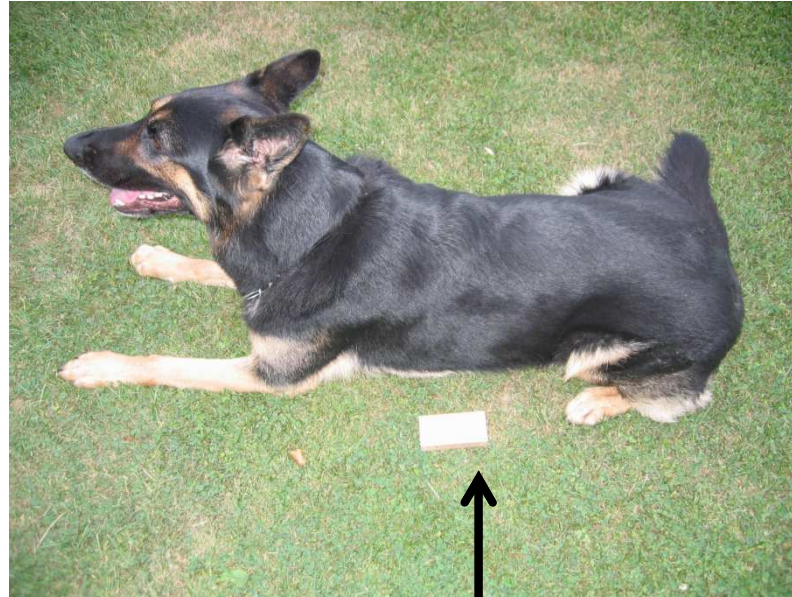
Track



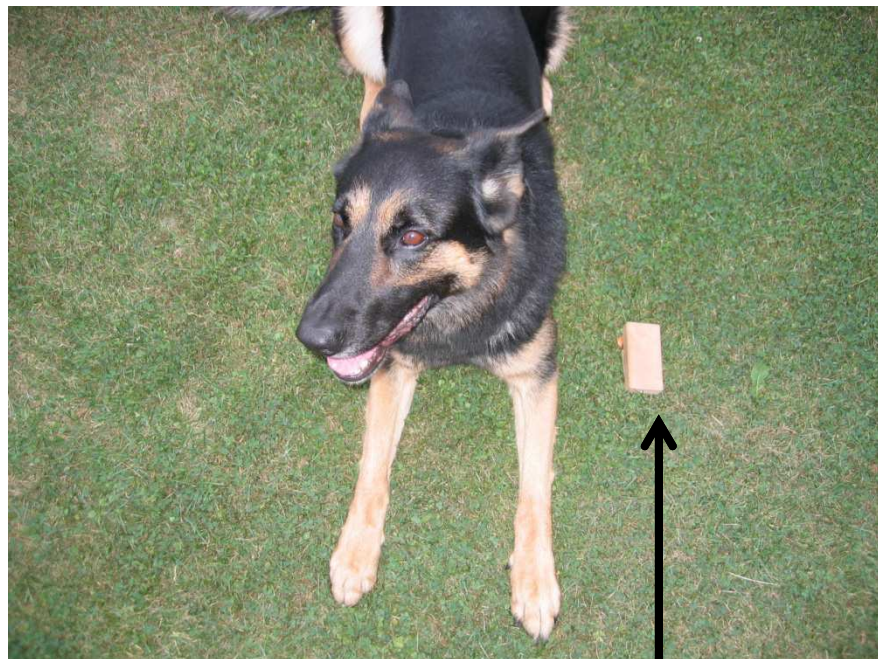
Article



Track



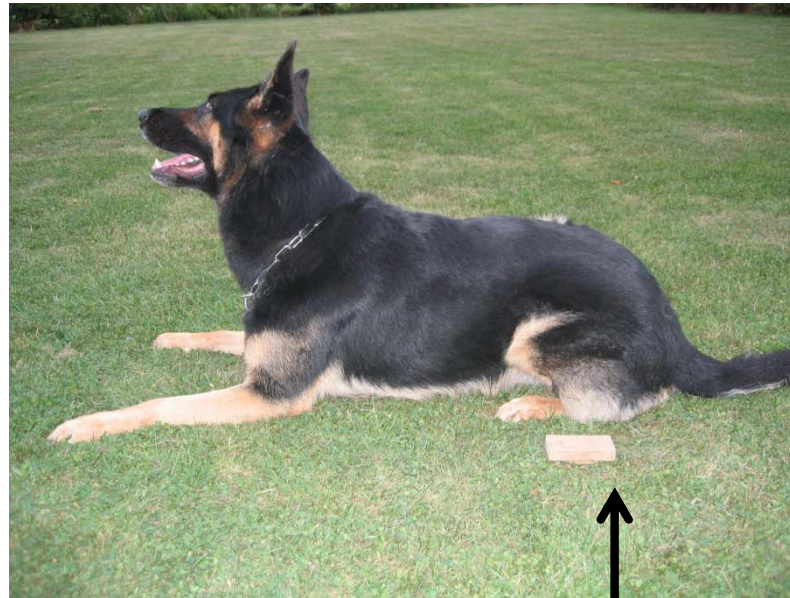
Article



Track

Article

Track



Article

Track



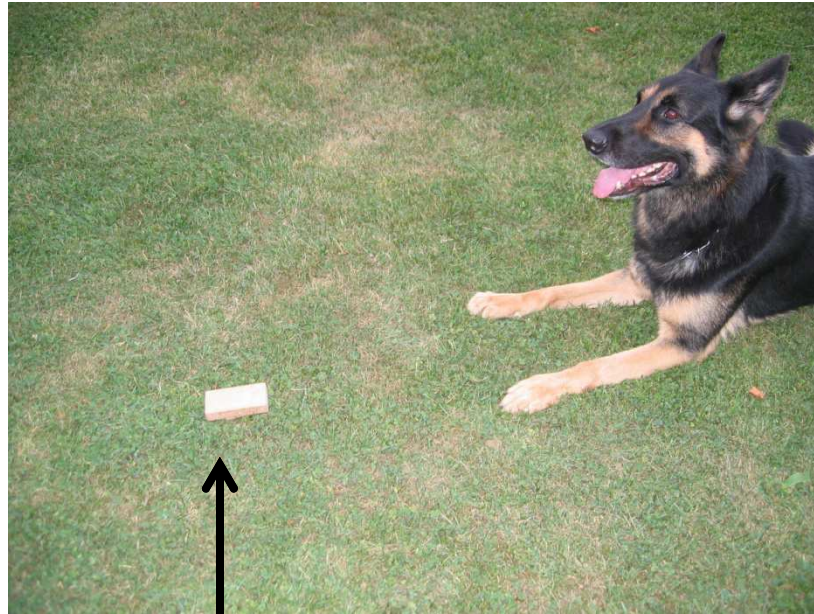
Article



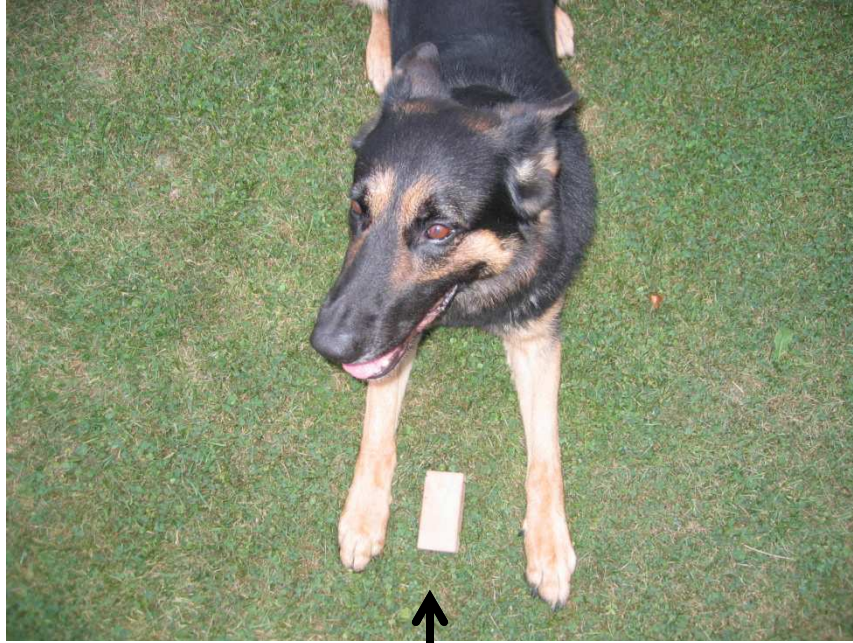
↑
Article

Track
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Track



Article



Article



Track

Judging

**How to judge tracking
according to the
FCI IGP Regulations**

JUDGING

**The FCI IGP Regulations
must be leading in the
judgement of the judge**

Judging Tracking

A Judge must know

all the

FCI IGP Tracking

Regulations

Judging tracking

A judge must **not** judge
according to **his personal**
interpretation of the
FCI IGP Regulations.

JUDGING TRACKING

To judge correctly, a Judge must know:

- what is a track.**
- how to lay a track**
- what can/will influence the track.**
- the ideal picture of indicating.**
- difficulties of different soils.**
- How to lay / work out an FH track.**

JUDGING TRACKING

- What is the moment of indicating an article?**
- What is, according to the IGP regulations, a correct indication?**

JUDGING Tracking

**A Judge must be able to
different between a local club
trial and a Championship.**

Judging Tracking

A Judge should **not**
“Kill” the dog sport **by**
his **judgement**.

He/ she must **also be a**
“Teacher” for the dog
sporter

Judging Tracking

A Judge must be able
to **“Read”** the
“body language”
of the dog.

Body language??



Judging Tracking

**A Judge must evaluate
what he/she is seeing
and not what he/she
suspects.**

Judging Tracking

Before each exam /trial every judge should read once again the regulations.

JUDGING

During the IGP Judge education seminars of the FCI, the way to judge, in an more equal way, by all judges, is discussed and agreements how to evaluate excersices are made. This must be spread to colleagues in the home countries.

THE END

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**