
Tracking at DCA

by Pat Sayles

Response to adding a tracking test to the DCA National Specialty in 1987 has been great! I've had calls and letters from across the country telling of teams working toward their Tracking Dog title. I'm excited; so many seem to have taken up the challenge. Here's where we stand now.

The judges and a tracking site have been selected. The tracks will be laid at Rim Rock Ranch, outside Ft. Collins, Colorado: a beautiful, private ranch and an ideal site. Judges will be Craig Green of Colorado and DCA's own member Mike Pumilia of Georgia. The date selected is 14 August 1987, a Friday, the off-day between the specialty and the two all breed shows on the weekend. This day was chosen to allow tracking enthusiasts, prospective trackers, and spectators to come and enjoy without having to make a choice between other scheduled classes and events.

Thoughts to keep in mind and on your calendar:

The number of entries is limited to eight (8). Should more than eight entries be received, selection of entrants will be random drawing as provided for by the AKC. The first eight entries drawn will be the dogs to run a track. Each entry after eight will be placed on an "alternate" list in the order which they are drawn. Should any one of the first eight entries withdraw or be absent on the day of the test, the first alternate will run in the place of the withdrawn/absent dog. Should the first alternate not be available, one would proceed down the list of alternates.

NOTE: Dogs who do not have their Tracking Dog or Tracking Dog Excellent title have first preference in the drawing. After the drawing of non-titled dogs, dogs holding any "T" title will be drawn in the manner above and placed on the alternate list.

For those who have not been involved with tracking before, **IMPORTANT:** A "certification form" **MUST** accompany the entry form and fee. Unlike conformation and obedience, a novice tracking dog must be certified as to tracking ability by a licensed tracking judge (have run a practice track in a test-type situation). On successful completion of a "certification track," the judge will issue a certification form and affix his/her signature. Entry of an untitled (tracking) dog is not valid without this form. Dogs with any "T" title are exempt from this certification. **CORRECTED INFORMATION:** The certification form may be as old as one (1) year and is valid for as many as four (4) tests. Where to find a licensed tracking judge? Ask your obedience clubs; chances are someone is involved in tracking. If all else fails, drop me (Pat Sayles, 10524 Toltec NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87111) a post card. I'll see if I might be able to find someone in your area to help you with a certification track.

All information concerning the tracking portion of DCA 1987 will come with the premium list from Onofrio (licensed superintendent). On the entry form, in the box marked obedience class, fill in **TRACKING**.

Tracking is a good time to be had by all. I have yet to go to a tracking event where the level of camaraderie has not been high. There is no competitiveness, only entrants, spectators, and judges all pulling for the team working the track. We are anticipating having coffee and doughnut/sweet rolls available for early morning and a smorgasbord after the last track and, hopefully, the awarding of eight qualifying ribbons and trophies.

This tracking test will be a first for the DCA. We are working very hard at making a memorable event for participants and spectators. We also need to make it a self-supporting event. Some fund raising for the test has been done; however, more monies need to be raised. No amount is too small; no amount will go unnoticed. I hope to be able to cover the cost of the tracking test through the donations/generosity and support of Dalmatian fanciers.

My encouragement and best wishes to all those working toward this event. Complete rules and regulations relating to tracking are available in the "Obedience Regulations" from the AKC, 51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010; single copies are available at no charge. As with all regulations, some can be confusing. Please contact me if you have any questions; I will try my best to help. At the very least, attend any tracking test in your area to become acquainted. I'm sure you will be welcomed.

See you in Colorado at the starting flag.