

TRACKING ENTHUSIASTS HURRAY!!

We have made the first 30 yards. AKC has given permission to hold a licensed tracking test. Plans are being furthered to hold a tracking test in conjunction with the 1987 DCA National Specialty at Ft. Collins, CO. Kudos to those of you who responded to our call requesting your experience and background in tracking. For those who are interested in giving it a try, I have briefly quoted AKC's obedience regulations below, with some reference material to get you started. Am still interested in hearing from people, especially those who would assist in some way.

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Passed! Receiving a "passed" at one AKC licensed tracking test is all it takes to put a TD (tracking dog) title after your dog's name.

As stated by the AKC, "The purpose of a Tracking Test is to demonstrate the dog's ability to recognize and follow human scent . . ." What does AKC require? "The Tracking Test must be performed with the dog on leash, the length of the track to be not less than 440 yards nor more than 500 yards, the scent to be not less than one half hour old nor more than two hours old and that of a stranger who will leave an inconspicuous glove or wallet . . . at the end of the track where it must be found by the dog and picked up by the dog or handler . . . The tracklayer will follow the track which has been staked out with flags a day . . . earlier, collecting all the flags on the way with the exception of one flag at the start of the track and one flag about 30 yards from the start of the track to indicate the direction of the track; then deposit the article at the end of the track and leave the course . . . The dog shall wear a harness to which is attached a leash between 20 and 40 feet in length. The handler shall follow the dog at a distance of not less than 20 feet . . ." What constitutes a track as recognized by AKC? "No part of any track shall follow along any fence or boundary within 15 yards of such boundary. The track shall include at least two right-angle turns and should include more than two such turns so that the dog may be observed working in different wind directions. No conflicting tracks shall be laid (each entrant has his own track) . . ." All excerpts were taken from the AKC "Obedience Regulations", 1 September, 1982.

Tracking is you and your dog working together as a team, relying on the dog's sense of smell. A tracking dog can be a breed dog and/or an obedience dog or neither; the dog wears a harness so there should be no confusion between the breed ring or the obedience ring if the dog is being shown in either one or both. The tracking dog is out there doing "his thing"; you are there as the interpreter of what the dog is telling you about the track. There is ample time between now and 1987 to train your dog to track; most dogs take readily to the concept. It will take some time and some patience, but what a thrill seeing the dog doing something natural. You can train alone with the guidance from books; it can and has been done. After a certain point, it does become advantageous to work with a group or at least one other person. Many local obedience clubs do have individuals interested in tracking who are only too happy to get another person "hooked" on the sport.

I have listed five publications which are either devoted to tracking or give information on tracking. I have not read them all nor do I necessarily adhere to each author's training methods in whole or in part. As in all training, take a little from here and a little from there, pick and choose what works with your particular dog.

1. **Go Find, Training Your Dog to Track** L.W. Davis
Howell Books

2. **Tracking Dog: Theory & Methods** G.R. Johnson
Arner Publications
3. **Bring Your Nose Over Here** W. Brown
6816 Carlton NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107
4. **TD Guide** The Tracking Club of Massachusetts
438 Lowell St. / Wakefield, MO 01880
(available Spring of 1986)
5. **The Koehler Method of Training Tracking Dogs** W.R. Koehler
Howell Books

