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UKC

# NOSEWORK NEWSLETTER

featuring rule changes & more

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# HELLO, UKC NOSEWORK JUDGES AND EXHIBITORS!

We hope 2020 is off to a good start for you! We are excited that the 2020 Nosework rules are now effective. There were many changes made to the program, both small and large. All changes in the rulebook appear in bold and italicized text. Please be sure to pay special attention to these areas, and please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Below are some highlights and explanations of the new rule changes:

## Hide Locations Limits:

- Limits have been placed on how many items can be placed in search area.
- For clarify, an item has been defined as one whole object to be searched.
  - For example, a desk or bookshelf would be considered one item, even though they contain multiple hiding places.
  - To continue the example, two chairs would be considered two items.

## Distractions:

- All distractions must be hidden – they cannot be considered a distraction if they are out in the open. Objects placed out in the open will be considered search items rather than distractions.
  - Handlers should not know if the dog is interested in a distraction or an actual hide – therefore, the hide should always be hidden.
- For example, a large stuffed toy placed in a corner could not be used as a distraction.
  - If a dog scratches, digs, or purposefully plays with or picks up a distraction, the dog should receive a non-qualifying score. In situations where the hide is exposed accidentally, there should be no penalty to the dog.

## Vehicle Hides:

- All hides on regular vehicles will be placed no higher than 3 feet.
  - This applies to vehicles such as cars, trucks, or vans that normally have a painted finish and would be driven for personal use.
- All vehicles designated as other, such as trailers, golf carts, or tractors, are typically more resistant to scratching and may have hides placed on them at the heights outlined in the rulebook.
- Dogs with a tendency to use their feet or paw for alerts must wear booties to protect the vehicle. Acceptable footwear includes booties or socks that covers the dog's paws to protect the vehicle from damage. This does not include Soft Paws or other types of nail caps.

**Small Dogs** – Please pay special attention to these changes:

- Small dogs can be picked up during a search. However, the dog must have exhibited a noticeable and readable physical change in behavior that an official could

recognize prior to being picked up.

- Small dogs competing in Master and Elite must still exhibit their required alert behavior in order to qualify.
  - To clarify, a dog that is picked up to investigate and whose alert behavior is a sit should perform the sit as close to the source as possible when they are set back down prior to the handler calling alert.

**A Section versus B Section** – These sections are based on the experience of both the dog and the handler. Requirements for the A and B sections have not changed.

- All dogs handled by someone other than the owner of record must enter the B section.
- All dogs handled by a professional or amateur Nosework or K9 detection instructor must compete in the B section, regardless of the experience of the dog.
  - Individuals instructing classes and are, in most cases, receiving compensation are considered professional or amateur Nosework instructors. This does not include individuals that have helped instruct a class once or twice.
- All dogs handled by a person without experience as an instructor or Nosework judge may enter the A section, if the dog has not yet earned the element title for that class.
- Once the dog has earned a title in that element and level, they may continue to compete in the class but must enter the B section.

## Faults:

- Any dog with a fault cannot place above a dog without a fault, even if their time was faster.
- Any team receiving more than 1 fault in any single class will receive a non-qualifying score.

## Alerts:

- In all classes, officials must be able to recognize when a dog has communicated to the handler, through a trained or natural response, that a target odor is present.
  - A handler that calls an alert even though the dog did not display a recognizable change of behavior should not receive a qualifying score.
  - Handlers concerned that their dog's response may be too subtle for recognition should discuss this with the official during the handler's briefing.
- In any case when the alert location is not clear to the official, the official may ask "where." The handler must be able to identify the location of the hide without giving the dog any additional commands or signals.
  - To clarify, if an official were to ask "where" after the alert is called, the handler may not give the dog another search command to verify the location.
- Beginning in the Superior class, the handler must be able to identify up to three possible alert behaviors if asked by the official prior to searching.
  - Acceptable alert behaviors include, but are not limited to, sit, down,



stand, focus on source, focus on source and look back at handler, freeze, and tail wagging.

- Beginning in the Master level, the alert(s) must be stated on the entry form and on the score sheet. The dog must be exhibiting at least one of their listed alert behaviors when competing in the Master and Elite levels.

**Aggressive Response:** Alerts must be passive. Clubs and volunteers do not need any type of property or search item damaged by allowing aggressive alerts to continue. Handlers, please be aware that faults will be issued for each occurrence for an aggressive alert.

- Any type of scratching, digging, pushing, excessive licking, or biting is considered an aggressive alert. Placing a paw on or lightly touching a box or item for investigation is not considered an aggressive alert.
- If more than one aggressive alert happens during a search, the dog should not receive a qualifying score.
- A dog that is destructive (causes irreparable damage) with any search item should be excused and not allowed to continue searching

**Calling Finish:** Handlers are only required to call "Finish" in the Elite class.

- Elite is the only level where the number of hides is unknown to the handler. One to four hides are allowed for each element at the Elite level.
- Once the handler believes they have found all the hides, they must call "Finish."
- If four hides are found, the handler will obviously know that there are no more hides but must still call "Finish." They may be faulted for failing to call "Finish," but this should not prevent them from qualifying in this situation.

**Master Handler Discrimination:** The Master Handler Discrimination class is an entirely new class with specific parameters for competition. Exhibitors now have the option to train for and compete in this class. It is a high-level class that presents specific challenges. One of the biggest challenges is training the dog to perform either a sit or down as the alert behavior.

Handlers can watch the performances in the Master class before or after they run in their class. However, the official should never specifically tell the handler where each item is. Exhibitors should not ask the official about the location of their items in the search area.

- Officials should not point out the location of specific handler items during the judges' briefing.
- Officials should not tell or remind handlers where their box is while the handler is competing.

The official is required to count down the time for the handler. This should be done at a normal voice level so as not to interfere with the performance of the dog. It should not intentionally be too quiet or too loud, unless the handler has a hearing-related disability, which the official should be made aware of prior to the run. Handlers should ensure their dogs are accustomed to the count-down.

- After the handler calls "Alert," the official must begin to

count backwards and say: "three, two, one, release."

- These are specific directions located in the rules that must be followed by the official for the exhibitor. Exhibitors should not release their dog until they hear the official say "release."

The following items should be addressed during the judges' briefing, but exhibitors are encouraged to ask for clarification when needed:

- The handler should not cue the dog with their body in any direction that would help the dog find the handler's item at any time prior to or during the search.
  - This would include purposely moving back and forth inside the designated handler area to make the dog move from one box to another or making specific body motions toward the correct box.
    - The handler cannot direct the dog to the item once the dog is searching or use additional commands or praise while the dog is working. This would be considered using a signal instead of a verbal cue and should be faulted for each occurrence.
- The handler in the box needs to remain quiet and reasonably still.
- Any dog that retrieves any item to the handler will receive a non-qualifying score. Once the dog has committed to come to the handler with an item, it must not qualify.
  - For example, a dog that picks up an item and heads towards the handler, but drops the item on the way, would not receive a qualifying score.
  - If a dog were to paw, pick up, and then drop the handler's own item in or just outside the box, it would be considered a fault if they do not act as if they are retrieving the item.
- Handlers may recall the dog if the dog is having trouble and restart them.
  - Dogs should not be called back multiple times.
  - The handler should not recall the dog to restart more than 3 times.
  - The handler also needs to remain in the handler area, but the dog does not need to be inside the handler area if the dog is inside the 10 x 10 area.
- The handler must receive a non-qualifying score if they recall a dog that is actively working or if they continue to recall the dog to start again if they are exhibiting an alert at the incorrect box.

These are just a few key things to look at in the new rules. Please do not hesitate to email or contact me directly by phone or email with any questions. Thank you for your dedication and support of UKC Nosework. We are looking forward to a fun and Nosework-filled year!



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# OHIO

# CLASSIC

## March 6-8, 2020

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Hosted By: Clermont Country Dog Training Club

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- 6 All-Breed Conformation Shows
  - 6 All-Breed Altered Conformation Shows

- 3 Obedience Trials
- 3 Rally Obedience Trials

