



RULEBOOK

July 30, 2026

From the Founder....

Welcome to K9 Scent Games®! I hope that KSG will be a fun and challenging opportunity for you and your pup(s). I have been involved in the sport of canine scent work since 2010. As a competitor, instructor, host and trial official, I have seen the great value that scent work offers dogs of all breeds, personalities and ages. It also creates an amazing bond between the dog and their handler.

This fabulous sport has completely changed the trajectory of my life, and I have been privileged to witness it enriching the lives of many dogs and people, including my own rescue dogs. Moo, my first scent work teammate and the reason I got involved in the sport, will be honored in KSG, with the “Moo Tips Award” being named for her. This special award will contain all the swabs used in the trial. The nose print on the coveted Golden Nose Award is from my second scent work teammate and nose work dog extraordinaire, Baron. This organization exists because of those two beloved dogs; to me, they will always embody this sport.

My intentions for KSG are not to replace any scent work venue, but to complement them and to provide more opportunities for scent work enthusiasts to be able to compete and have fun with their wonderful dogs.

Let’s get ready to play!!

Rosana Dropkin, CPDT-KA, CNWI

Contents

Philosophy	1
Eligibility	1
Reactive Dogs	2
Dog and Handler Registration	2
www.K9ScentGames.Fun	2
Code of Conduct	2
Dog Guidelines and Safety.....	2
Handler Guidelines and Safety	3
Multiple Dogs	3
For Exhibition Only (FEO) Division	3
Dismissals and Disciplinary Actions	4
Hosting a Trial.....	4
Spectators.....	5
Target Scents and Preparation of Hides	5
Scent Indication Test (SIT)	5
General	6
Trial Calendar.....	6
Entering a Trial.....	6
Dog in White.....	8
During a Trial	8
During the Search	9
The Indication and the Finish Call	9
Warm Up Boxes	9
Videotaping and Photography.....	9
Search Areas	10
Search Times.....	10
Repeating a Search	11
LEVELS.....	11
Novice, Advanced and Excellent (NA&E).....	11

Level Info	11
Novice	11
Advanced	12
Excellent	12
Elements, Parameters & Divisions.....	12
Containers	12
Interiors	13
Exteriors.....	14
FastFinds.....	14
Solo	15
Divisions.....	15
Scoring, Qualifying & Titling	16
Standard Division Scoring & Titling	16
Pro Division Scoring & Titling.....	16
Point Deductions, Faults & Non-qualifying Events.....	16
Faults	16
Non-qualifying Events.....	17
Premier	17
Level Info, Parameters & Eligibility.....	17
Games.....	18
Scoring & Titling.....	19
Faults	19
Non-qualifying Events.....	20
Titles & Awards (all levels).....	20
List of K9 Scent Games® Titles:.....	21
Judges	21
Public Health Guidelines.....	22
Lightning Policy.....	22
Hold Harmless	22
Contact Us	22
Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations	23

Philosophy

It is the mission of K9 Scent Games® (KSG) to provide a venue for people to have fun with their dogs while competing in a supportive atmosphere, earning awards and titles. KSG trials are intended to support the growth of the scent work sport and to complement other scent work organizations' goals and challenges while sharpening and strengthening your skills as a scent work team.

It is the intention of KSG to be very inclusive, allowing dogs to participate regardless of disability and to welcome handlers of various skill levels ranging from pet owners who are new to dog sports to professional detection handlers.

KSG encourages individuals, clubs, groups and training centers who have knowledge of the sport to host KSG trials.

The rules included in this Rulebook will be modified as necessary for clarification, to reflect improvements or additions to KSG trial guidelines, and to acknowledge any updated thoughts on the sport. KSG welcomes input from handlers, hosts and trial officials on ways to improve KSG trials.

Eligibility

KSG trials are open to purebred and mixed breed dogs with a minimum age of 11 months on the day of the trial or Scent Indication Test (SIT). Wolves, wolf hybrids, coyotes and coyote hybrids are not allowed to participate. Dogs must be vaccinated (or titer tested to show appropriate antibodies) in accordance with your state laws.

Dogs who are sick, late in their pregnancy or lactating cannot participate in a trial. Dogs are not allowed to wear bellybands or panties unless they have a medical condition and a supportive clearance letter from their veterinarian which will be kept on file. Dogs who are being treated by a veterinarian for a temporary medical condition, wound or stitches that may or may not require bandages can participate with a letter from the veterinarian clearing the dog to participate. This letter must indicate that the dog has been cleared to participate in a scent detection trial on the specific date(s) and must be sent to the Trial Administrator at least 5 days prior to the trial.

There are no specific limitations on physical disabilities of dogs or handlers. Both team members need to be able to safely navigate to and within the search areas. Due to the variety of locations where trials may be hosted, site details and any challenges, such as stairs, uneven ground, steep hill, etc. will be listed in the premium. It is the handler's responsibility to read the premium and determine whether the site is appropriate for them. The Judge or Host has the right to stop a search if they determine that the dog is exhibiting undue stress or pain.

Females in season may participate providing they wear appropriate "panties" at all times except when pottyng. Females in season will run as the last dog(s) in each search. Handlers must notify the Host as soon as possible so run orders can be adjusted and accommodations made for potty areas, if possible.

In trials where the Novice, Advanced & Excellent (NA&E) levels are offered, a dog can be entered in a maximum of six (6) searches towards qualifying scores and placements (regardless of level) and up to four (4) SITs (2 Birch, if offered, 1 Anise and 1 Clove). At the Premier level, a dog can be entered for either a Short Trial or a Full Trial. A dog cannot be entered in any Premier level searches on the same day they have entered searches in the Novice, Advanced and/or Excellent levels.

Reactive Dogs

Dog-reactive dogs are welcome to participate in KSG trials as long as the Handler is able to control the dog. Dogs who pose any threat to humans are not allowed to participate in trials or to be at trial sites. Dogs who are shy or bark when worried are acceptable at trials but those who aggressively lunge and bark at people are not. KSG trials are to be set up and run in a way that dogs who have mild reactivity or shyness with humans are welcome to participate. While scent work is a great sport for dog-reactive and sensitive dogs, for some, the trial environment may be too great of a stressor. Trial sites vary greatly and some may be more appropriate than others for dogs with space issues. Please contact the Trial Administrator if you have specific questions about a trial site.

Dogs who need additional space are encouraged to wear a red bandana to show others that they need more space. Individuals should never touch any dog without asking its owner for permission.

Dog and Handler Registration

Dogs and their owners must be registered with KSG before entering a trial. There is a one-time fee to register your dog and registration is good for the life of the dog. There is no charge for an owner or handler to register.

Registration can be completed at www.k9scentgames.fun

www.K9ScentGames.Fun Website

The K9 Scent Games website has been designed with ease of use in mind, but questions sometimes still come up.

Please refer to the FAQ page, available right on the homepage of the site or by going to this URL:

<https://k9scentgames.fun/faq/>

Here you will find instructions on how to navigate the site. Feel free to contact us if you still have questions.

Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility for everyone involved in a KSG trial to conduct themselves in a way that reflects well on the scent work sport and that contributes to a friendly and supportive environment. It is imperative that trial sites (and hotels) are respected and that everyone cleans up after themselves and their dogs. All site-specific rules identified in the trial premium or noted in the Handlers' Briefing should be followed. Alcohol is not allowed to be consumed at a KSG trial. Smoking, if allowed, should be done only in areas designated by the Host.

Handlers should be respectful of volunteers, judges, and other competitors. Any decisions or requests made by a Judge or Host should be accepted graciously.

Handlers should not discuss a particular search or post information about the search on social media until that search has been completed by all teams. A Handler cannot set hides to practice or warm up for themselves or for others on trial grounds.

Dog Guidelines and Safety

Safety of dogs and humans is a priority for KSG. These guidelines have been developed with safety in mind and must be followed by everyone participating in a KSG trial. Electronic and spray collars are prohibited at the trial site. Retractable leashes may not be used at the trial site except during a search. During an on-leash search, the leash must be attached to either a flat buckle, martingale or limited slip collar or the back clip of a harness. Tags or

any other objects hanging from a collar, harness, or leash should be removed prior to searching so there is no danger for something getting caught during the search. As long as they don't impede the dog's ability to move about the search area or interfere with the search area in any way, dog accessories such as hair ties, bandanas, and coats can be worn. Unnecessary clothing, costumes or accessories should be removed prior to a search. Dogs cannot wear recording devices while searching.

Dogs must be on leash at all times except during a designated off-leash search if offered by the Judge. Dogs must be kept secure at the trial site, either crated or in a secured ex-pen or vehicle. Dogs should be kept at least 6 feet apart from unknown dogs at all times. Two or more dogs that are known to each other can be in close proximity providing the handlers expressly agree and carefully supervise their dogs.

Handler Guidelines and Safety

Handlers must be at least 12 years old to handle a dog during a trial. Handlers under the age of 16 must have a parent or appointed guardian at the trial site. All handlers must have control of their dogs at all times.

Multiple Dogs

A Handler may run one dog per search or SIT. If the Handler wishes to run additional dogs on the same search or SIT, the additional dogs must be entered in the For Exhibition Only (FEO) division. A dog may be handled by someone other than their owner, but a Handler can only compete with one dog per search or SIT.

For Exhibition Only (FEO) Division

A dog may enter any search in the For Exhibition Only (FEO) division. The search will be the same search as the Standard (or Pro) division, but will not qualify for Qs, points, titles, placements or awards. This allows for a Handler to run more than one dog in the same search. The first dog runs for a qualifying score and placements while each additional dog will run as FEO. In addition, FEO allows for a Handler to enter a search for the purpose of a practice or a warm-up.

At this time, dogs will be allowed to enter any level, even one not qualified for, as FEO providing the following requirements are met:

Novice level:

- A dog will need to have passed a Birch SIT or Birch ORT in order to enter an FEO search at the Novice level
- A dog will need to have passed all 3 SITs (Birch, Anise and Clove) or have earned an ORT title with NACSW in order to enter an FEO search at the Advanced or higher levels.

Additional information:

- Accepting FEO entries will be at the discretion of the Host.
 - For example, a Host may choose to only accept FEO entries after all Standard/Pro entries have been processed OR a Host may choose to allow FEO entries along with Standard/Pro.
- If a dog is struggling with a search, the Handler has the option to ask the Judge to tell/show them where the hide is. At this point, the search would be changed to FEO, allowing the dog to finish the search successfully.
- If a dog is entered in any searches as FEO, those searches must remain FEO and cannot be changed to Standard/Pro (or qualifying) searches.

- There are two exceptions to this rule at this time:
 1. A dog can enter Novice level searches before passing the required SIT. Those searches must be entered as FEO. Once the dog passes their Birch SIT, the searches will be converted to Standard. If the dog does not pass the Birch SIT, the team can still run the searches but they would remain FEO.
 2. A dog may enter a search as FEO in anticipation of titling on the previous day, providing move ups are allowed. If the dog does earn a title, the search can be converted to Standard. If the dog does not pass, the search will remain as FEO.

Dismissals and Disciplinary Actions

While it is certainly the hope of all Judges, Hosts, and KSG that no disciplinary actions would ever have to be taken, these exist to assure the safety of all participants (two and four legged), the integrity of the trial, and the preservation of trial site property.

Anyone, including handlers, spectators, volunteers and trial personnel who reveal the location of a hide or the number of hides for a search where the number is supposed to be unknown to the handler will be told to leave the trial and may lose all qualifying scores earned on that day. KSG will follow up that dismissal with a warning. If two warnings are received, the person is banned from participation in a KSG event for one year. If three such warnings are received the person is expelled permanently.

If a Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damages anything in a search area or at the trial site property, a warning will be issued. Anyone being disrespectful and arguing with Judges, Hosts or Volunteers and/or otherwise demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior will be issued a warning. Three of these types of warnings will result in the Handler being expelled permanently from KSG.

Hosts and/or Judges may dismiss Handlers who are treating other people or dogs harshly, either verbally or physically. A Handler may be dismissed for not following rules in the premium or Handler's Briefing. If a dog is behaving in a manner that could endanger another dog or human or is acting aggressively and/or bites another dog or human, they will be dismissed. If a bite breaks the skin, the dog will not be allowed to participate in any KSG events for at least one year. The Handler can ask KSG to review the suspension after six months for possible reinstatement. Any dog who bites a person or dog for a second time is permanently expelled from participating in KSG events.

Dogs that nip excitedly at their owner or Handler will not be dismissed but may receive a non-qualifying score for the search where the nipping occurred.

If a dismissal is issued, the Handler and dog must leave the trial site immediately. Any disciplinary actions, including dismissals, must be reported to KSG on the approved KSG Incident Report within seven days of the incident.

Hosting a Trial

Any group, club or individual who is interested in hosting a KSG trial and has access to an appropriate trial site should read the Hosting Manual and submit an application to KSG for approval.

Hosts can choose which elements/games and levels to offer at a trial based on the trial site, average weather conditions for the proposed trial dates, and needs of the local/regional scent work community. Trial sites cannot be used for any training, practices, or events containing odor for a minimum of 4 weeks prior to a trial.

Once approved to host a trial and the trial application was been accepted, the host must submit a Trial Premium for approval. The Trial Premium will include information specific for their trial as well as general trial information. A Trial Premium Template will be available to the host for their use.

No hot containers will ever be reused for another trial.

If you are interested in hosting a KSG trial, please contact us for more information.

Spectators

The trial premium will provide details about whether spectators are allowed. It is the Host's determination as to whether the trial site is conducive to having spectators. Even if a Host is allowing for spectators, the Judge may determine that a particular search area does not lend itself to having spectators. Handlers have the ability to determine whether a spectator (not including trial workers) can be present during their specific searches. Spectators must remain neutral and quiet during a search. Spectators may video a search with the permission of the handler. Handlers can watch searches they are not entered in. They can also watch a search they've entered after they have run the search.

Target Scents and Preparation of Hides

The target scents used at KSG trials are Birch, Anise, and Clove. Only Birch is used for Novice level searches. Any of the three odors, singularly or in any combination, will be used in the Advanced level and above.

Typically, three half swabs will be used in a vessel, although it will be up to the discretion of the Judge exactly how many are used for a specific hide. The preparation of the swabs will be consistent with the preparation guidelines for NACSW's K9 Nose Work®, resulting in a similar odor strength/profile.

Scent Indication Test (SIT)

In order to compete for a qualifying score in a search (Q), the dog must have successfully completed a SIT for the odors relevant to the level of the search.

At the Novice level, the only test required to be passed in order participate is the test for Birch. A dog may enter additional elements on the same trial day along with the Birch SIT; however, those elements must initially be entered as FEO (For Exhibition Only).

If the Birch SIT is passed, any FEO element entries will be converted to Standard and will count toward titles, placements and awards. If the Birch SIT is not passed, the element entries will remain FEO.

Note that a Host may choose to allow a team that has missed the Birch SIT to take it a second time that same day and the fee would be the day-of entry fee. This option is for the Birch SIT only. If the Host chooses to offer this option, it will be stated in the Premium.

Furthermore, a dog must successfully pass the SITs for **all three odors BEFORE they can enter any trials at the Advanced or higher levels**. SITs will be available at the beginning of every trial day when Novice level searches are being offered. The Trial Host will have the discretion to offer SITs on trial days where the Novice level is not offered. The premium will state when SITs will be offered.

A Handler can choose which SIT to enter. They can be entered individually- it is not a requirement to enter all three on the same day. Additionally, Handlers can enter dogs in one or more SITs as FEO for warm-up purposes.

Test Parameters

The Scent Indication Test consists of 12 plastic shoeboxes, one of which will contain the target odor for that test. The shoeboxes must be identical in style and shape and be vented with 2 holes in the center of the lid. Shoeboxes may be clear, but the lids must be opaque. If the shoeboxes are clear, tissue paper will be used to fill the shoeboxes. Weights may be added to the shoeboxes per the discretion of the Judge. The shoeboxes will be spaced at least 30 inches apart from each other and at least 36 inches away from walls and the start line. The Lead Judge may make adjustments to the spacing between the shoeboxes if space is limited. The shoeboxes will be arranged in rows in a configuration that fits within the space (could be 1 row of 12 shoeboxes, 2 rows of 6 shoeboxes, 3 rows of 4 shoeboxes, 4 rows of three shoeboxes, etc.). The start line will be clearly indicated by tape and/or cones.

The team will have 3 minutes to complete the test. The time will start when any part of the dog crosses the start line. The test is completed when the dog makes an indication and the Handler calls "Alert". It is acceptable for the Handler to raise their hand instead of, or in addition to, calling "Alert". The dog must show a clear change of behavior when indicating at a shoebox. The Handler should call "Alert" loudly and clearly and/or raise their hand. The Judge will answer with a "Yes" or "No". If the Judge's response is "Yes", the Handler can reward the dog next to the shoebox with the odor so as not to contaminate the shoebox if food is dropped. If the response is "No", the Judge will indicate the correct shoebox to the Handler. The Handler may take their dog to that shoebox and reward. This is not an opportunity for the dog to continue searching but for the dog to be rewarded at the shoebox with the odor. During the test the Handler cannot touch or move the shoeboxes.

If a dog does not pass the Birch test, the Host has the option to let the team re-run the test one time with a different hide placement. This applies only to the Birch test. There will be an additional charge to complete the second test.

The Host determines the order that the SITs will be run, but if there will be a second test for Birch, the second test will be run right after the first Birch test.

Dogs who have passed an ORT from NACSW will not be required to enter a SIT for that odor. A PDF of the ORT certificate must be emailed to either KSG or the Trial Administrator listed on the Premium at least one week before the trial opens for entries to give us time to update your dog's records for a smooth entry process.

TRIALS

General

Trial Calendar

A Trial Calendar can be found at www.K9ScentGames.fun. Trials that have been approved will be posted here. Included in the Trial Calendar will be the trial open and close dates for online entries as well as the changes cutoff date and the Trial Premium.

Entering a Trial

An event can consist of one or more levels per day and one or more days.

Any combination of elements can be offered at an event. At the NA&E levels, if a Host decides that one or more elements are not appropriate for a particular event due to site limitations or weather conditions, the Host may choose to not offer that element or elements and offer duplicate elements instead. If duplicate elements are offered, any duplicate search after the first will be numbered to differentiate the searches. For example, if two Solo searches are offered during the same trial, they will be named Solo and Solo 2.

On occasion, a host may be approved to add a “Bonus” search to their trial. A **Bonus search** is a search that has been added after the trial has closed for entries. Qs earned in a Bonus search will still count towards earning titles and will have placements as in any other search, but will not count towards a Golden Nose Award.

NA&E Levels

The NA&E levels offer 3 divisions- Standard, Pro and FEO. *See Divisions section below for more details.*

A dog can be entered in a **maximum of 6 searches that count towards qualifying scores or placements per trial day**. SITs or FEO searches are excluded from the 6 search maximum.

The competitor will need to choose each element they’d like to enter in as well as the appropriate division.

A dog can only enter searches they have qualified for unless entered as FEO.

For example, a dog that has 2 Qs in Novice Solo (no title) cannot enter Advanced Solo since they are not qualified yet. They can be entered in Advanced Solo as FEO since that does not count towards qualifying scores or placements.

If a dog is entered in searches in any of these three levels, they cannot enter in Premier searches on the same trial day.

Example 1: *A Host is offering 6 searches at the Novice level and 6 at the Advanced level: Interiors, Interiors 2, FastFinds, Solo, Solo 2 and Containers at each level. The trial will be held in August in the South, so the Host had chosen to not offer exterior searches at either level. Spanky has earned his Novice titles in all but the Solo level. Spanky can enter up to 6 searches at this trial, so his owner will enter him in Solo at the Novice level and the other 5 searches at the Advanced level.*

Example 2: *In the trial above, Spanky CAN NOT enter Novice Solo and Advanced Solo 2 since Spanky has not yet qualified for Solo at the Advanced level. Spanky CAN enter Novice Solo Standard and Advanced Solo FEO. Since Spanky has already earned his title in Novice Interiors, Spanky CAN enter Novice Interiors Pro and Advanced Interiors 2 Standard.*

Example 3: *This will be Brandy’s first trial. The Host is offering all 5 elements at the Novice level. Brandy can be entered in all 3 SITs as well as all 5 Novice searches. The Novice searches must be entered as FEO but can be converted to Standard if Brandy passes her Birch SIT.*

Example 4: *A Host is offering all 5 elements at the Advanced level. Buster tires easily these days, so his handler is only entering him in 3 of the elements. Not entering all the elements is perfectly acceptable.*

Example 5: *A Host has offered 5 searches at the Novice level. There is a very long waitlist for Novice Containers. Upon review, KSG approved the Host to add a “Bonus Containers” search at the Novice level. Bella is entered in all 5 Novice searches and also enters the Bonus Containers search. Ella Qs in all 5 original searches and earns a Golden Nose Award. If Ella would have Q’d in 4 of the original searches, she would not qualify for a Golden Nose Award regardless of whether she Q’d in the Bonus search or not.*

Premier level

This level consists of either 4 or 5 searches.

You can choose to enter a Full trial (all the searches offered) or a Short trial (only the first two searches).

Divisions offered are Standard and FEO.

Online Entry System

Trials will be entered through the online entry system. This can be found by logging into your dashboard, clicking on the trial that is open for entries and then clicking on the “Enter Trial” button.

Each trial will open for entries on the **Open Date** posted on the Trial Calendar. Trials will remain open for entries until the end of day on the date posted as the **Closing Date**. The entry window is usually 3-8 days, allowing plenty of time for you to submit your entries. Once the trial closes, entries will be chosen via a random draw. Possible adjustments may be made to the draw results to fine-tune entry thresholds per search and level as well as to accommodate key trial personnel. After the random draw is generated, everyone entered will receive a confirmation email stating whether they were drawn or whether they are on the waitlist. The email will also contain instructions on submitting payment **to the host**.

Awarded entries can be viewed through your account dashboard. You will also be able to make changes and cancellations via your dashboard. A **Cutoff Date** will also be listed on the Trial Calendar. This is the date where no more changes will be allowed to be made online. Any changes or cancellation after the cutoff date must be emailed directly to the Trial Administrator.

Dog in White

A Dog in White will be run prior to the first competing team on the run order. The Dog in White will help the Judge determine if there are any unforeseen circumstances in the search area. A Dog in White is not required for SITs or FastFinds at the Novice and Advanced levels.

During a Trial

The Host will create and post a run order for each search or combination of searches. There is no set order for elements or searches and the Host, with input from the Judge, will determine the best order for a specific trial based on the trial site, number of entries and the most efficient flow. The Host will also determine when breaks in searches will occur. The schedule for the day will be communicated in the Handlers’ Briefing.

It is important for Handlers to be aware of their placement in the run order and have their dog ready to search when it is their turn. However, if something happens and a Team is not ready when it is their turn, the next Team on the run order can be called. The skipped Team will be added back into the run order at a better time for them. If a Handler is running multiple dogs and there is a conflict or additional time is needed between dogs, one of the trial staff will rearrange the run order to accommodate the conflicts and assure that everyone makes it to their searches.

All dogs entered in a given element will perform the same search or game at the same level, regardless of division (Standard, Pro, or FEO).

A Handlers’ Briefing will either be held at the beginning of the trial, posted on the event’s Facebook group, and/or emailed before the trial. The Briefing will discuss logistics of the trial site and the schedule for the day. It is each Handler’s responsibility to review the rules and guidelines and become familiar with them before the trial.

During the Search

Handlers may praise, touch, encourage or talk to their dogs during the search. Handlers may not touch or move anything within the search area without permission from the Judge. If the dog moves an item in the search area, Handlers are to leave the item alone. It will be reset by the Judge or a trial worker. Handlers may not use clickers during the search.

Handlers may use food or toys to reward their dog once a hide is found. If using food, Handlers must be careful to not drop food. When rewarding at a container, the Handler should reward off to the side of the container so as not to potentially contaminate the container if food is dropped on it. If using a toy as a reward, Handlers must not use a toy that squeaks or makes noise. Toy rewards must be held by the Handler at all times and should not be allowed to drop on the floor, on a container or disrupt the search area. Neither food nor toy rewards can be thrown as throwing them could disrupt the search area. Dropping food or toy rewards could contaminate the search area, hide location, or container. Contamination with food or toy rewards may result in point deductions.

The Indication and the Finish Call

When the Handler believes the dog has found a hide during a search, the Handler can indicate to the Judge that the hide has been found by either calling “Alert” or by raising their hand above their head. The dog must exhibit a change of behavior without the Handler cueing them to alert. Once an Alert has been called, a Handler cannot retract it. The dog must either be at or in close proximity of the hide in order for the handler to call the Alert. The one exception is during an off-leash Solo search. During this search, the dog does not have to be in close proximity to the hide for the Handler to call Alert, but the Handler will need to clearly specify the location of the hide verbally if asked by the Judge.

The Finish call is what stops the clock. The Handler is required to say “Finish” when they feel they have completed the search. This call is required for all searches at the Advanced and higher levels. The Finish call can be made at any time, even if the Handler has left the search area, providing the time has not run out for the search. If the handler forgets to call Finish, the time will continue until the maximum time for the search has been reached resulting in a Time Out.

A Judge may ask “Where?” for a Handler to clarify the location of the hide. This may be asked due to the Judge’s view being obstructed at the time the Handler called Alert or if the Judge would like more clarification from the Handler as to the location of the hide. If the Judge asks “Where?”, the handler may not re-cue the dog to confirm or clarify the location of the hide.

Warm Up Boxes

A set of two blank boxes and one box with odor, the hot box, will be set up for the dogs to have a warm up run before their search, if desired. The odor used for the hot box will be the same odor as the SIT being given at that time. Once all SITs are completed, the odor of the hot box will be at the discretion of the Judge or Host and may contain a combination of all 3 odors. The next dog to search is to be given priority use of the warm up boxes.

Videotaping and Photography

The premium will note whether or not videotaping will be allowed during searches. It is possible that, once on site, the Judge may opt to prohibit videotaping of a specific search or searches due to the nature of that search area.

If videotaping is allowed, the Handler may bring someone who is not entered or who has already completed that search to video their searches. Alternatively, a handler can choose to wear a recording device. Dogs may not wear a recording device. Posting videos or photos of any search on social media prior to all teams completing that search will result in dismissal from the trial.

The host may hire a professional photographer and/or videographer. If so, the photos and/or videos will be available for purchase after the trial.

Search Areas

Search area perimeters will be clearly marked with cones, flags or tape so that the boundaries for the search are clear to the Handlers. If a fence, wall, or other pre-existing boundary is marking the edge of a search area, no markers will be needed. Boundaries of the search area indicate that a hide will not be placed outside those boundaries. There will be no penalty or point deductions for dogs working outside of the boundaries.

The start line for each search will be clearly marked with cones or tape. Time will start when any part of the dog crosses that line regardless of whether the handler has cued them to search or not. Not crossing the start line could result in point deductions or an NQ for the search. It will be the Judge's decision as to whether the reason for missing the start line was related to the dog working odor and any decision related to penalties will be at their discretion.

Dogs must arrive at the search area on leash and be maintained on leash throughout the search unless the Judge has offered an off-leash option for a specific search. If a handler chooses to begin a search off-leash, the leash should be removed before starting the search. The handler must maintain control of the dog by holding on to the collar or harness until crossing the start line and releasing the dog.

For searches where an off-leash option is offered, handlers may start the search with their dog either on- or off-leash. Handlers may transition between on- and off-leash as often as they feel is necessary during a search.

Dogs must be put back on leash before leaving the search area.

Search areas cannot be closer than 30 feet from each other unless separated by walls.

Search Times

The Judge will establish a maximum time for a search. Failure to complete the search successfully within the maximum time will result in an NQ. Failure to call "Finish" will cause the time to run out resulting in an NQ. The timer will start the time when the any part of the dog crosses the start line. For searches with any time over one minute, every effort will be made to give Handlers a 30 second warning. There will be no 30 second warnings given for searches with a time limit of one minute or less, or for any FastFinds searches. Failure for the warning to be given is not an appealable action and if the search exceeds the maximum time, it will be scored as an NQ regardless of whether a warning was given or not.

A Handler may not ask how much time is left during a search. If a search consists of more than one area with a transition from one area to another, the Judge will decide if the time will be stopped during the transition. The Judge will decide if the time can or cannot be read out to the Handler before time starts again at the start of the search in the next area of the search.

Timers can be worn by handlers at any level.

Repeating a Search

A Judge may allow a team to repeat a search if there is an extreme or unexpected circumstance that may unfairly impact the dog's performance. Repeating a search is up to the Judge's discretion.

LEVELS

KSG has four levels of difficulty: Novice, Advanced, Excellent, and Premier. Within the first three levels, there are three divisions: Standard, Pro and FEO.

The first three levels, Novice, Advanced and Excellent (NA&E), are very similar in the way points, titles and faults are earned. The Premier level changes things up with how the searches are set up, how points are accrued and titling requirements.

Due to this, this next portion of the Rulebook will be divided into two sections: the first section will discuss the NA&E levels and the second section will focus on Premier.

Novice, Advanced and Excellent (NA&E)

At the NA&E levels, there are five elements: Containers, Exteriors, FastFinds, Interiors and Solo. At these three levels, dogs can earn an Element Title in each of the five elements. To **earn an Element Title**, the dog must earn three qualifying scores (Qs) in that element. Once a dog earns a title in an element, the dog can be moved up to the next level for that element or stay at the currently titled level, **independent of the other elements**. At any of these three levels, if the Handler decides to keep their dog at the currently titled level, they will move to the **Pro Division**. Dogs in the Pro Division will run the same search as dogs in the Standard Division, but will be competing for placements against other dogs in the Pro Division. Handlers can also choose to move a dog competing at a higher level to a lower level in the Pro Division if they feel it is in the best interest of their dog. This will allow for any dog to continue to play scent work games, particularly if age and physical impairments make it less comfortable for them to compete at a higher level.

An Overall Title is earned when a dog has earned an Element Title in all of the five elements in that level.

Once a dog has earned an overall Excellent title, they can be entered in Premier trials and earn Premier level titles. If a dog earns their Excellent Interiors and their Excellent Exteriors titles, they can enter Premier level searches and accrue points, but will not earn a title until they have earned their Overall Excellent Title.

○ Level Info

Novice

Novice is the starting level for all dogs except for those who meet the exceptions listed below. At the Novice level, Birch will be the only target odor used. Each search will have one hide and it will be accessible to the dog. The exception is FastFinds which will have two hides. The height limit of a hide at the Novice level will be approximately 36 inches. There will be no intentional distractions placed in a Novice search area.

The Handler is required to call "Alert" and/or raise their hand above their head when the hide is found. Time will stop with the "Alert" call. If the Judge gives a "Yes", the Handler may step in and reward their dog. If the

“Alert” call was incorrect, the Judge will show the handler where the hide is, giving the handler the opportunity to reward the dog at source before leaving the search area.

A dog may skip the Novice level and begin at the Advanced level if the dog has earned an NW3 title from NACSW, an Excellent Overall title from AKC or a Superior Nosework title from UKC. Retired professional detection dogs may also skip Novice and enter in Advanced provided they pass the SITs for all three odors or show proof of earning an ORT title with NACSW.

A copy of the title certificate should be sent to KSG or the Trial Administrator listed on the Premium before a trial opens for entries so the database can be updated to note the dog’s eligibility to skip the Novice level.

Advanced

At the Advanced level, all three target odors, either individually or in any combination may be used. There are between 1 to 3 hides per search based on the Element parameters. The number of hides will be known to the Handler. The hides may be accessible or inaccessible to the dog. The height limit of a hide at the Advanced level will be approximately 42 inches. Depending on the Element, there may or may not be intentional distractions at the Advanced Level (see Element descriptions below).

The Handler is required to call “Alert” and/or raise their hand above their head when a hide is found. If the Judge gives a “Yes”, the Handler may reward their dog and then continue searching if there are additional hides. The Handler calls “Finish” when the search is complete. The time stops with the “Finish” call. If on any call of “Alert” the Judge gives a “No”, the search is over. The Judge may or may not choose to reveal where a missed hide is to give the Handler the opportunity to reward the dog before leaving the search area. The Judge will not reveal more than one hide, regardless of how many hides are in the search area.

Excellent

At the Excellent level, all three target odors, either individually or in any combination, may be used. There are generally between 1 to 4 hides per search based on the Element parameters, although there can be a blank search in Interiors. The number of hides will be known to the Handler in Exteriors and Solo and unknown in Interiors, FastFinds, and Containers. The hides may be accessible or inaccessible to the dog. The height limit of a hide at the Excellent level will be approximately 48 inches. Depending on the Element, there may or may not be intentional distractions at the Excellent Level (see Element descriptions below).

The Handler is required to call “Alert” and/or raise their hand above their head when a hide is found. If the Judge gives a “Yes”, the Handler may reward their dog and then continue searching if there are additional hides. The Handler calls “Finish” when the search is complete. The time stops with the “Finish” call. If on any call of “Alert” the Judge gives a “No”, the search is over. The Judge may or may not choose to reveal where a missed hide is to give the Handler the opportunity to reward the dog before leaving the search area. The Judge will not reveal more than one hide, regardless of how many hides are in the search area.

○ Elements, Parameters & Divisions

Containers

The Containers Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in a container. Various types of containers can be used in the same search. Containers may be placed on the ground, elevated on other objects such as chairs or benches or suspended by hanging with string or hooks. If containers are elevated or suspended, they will be no higher than the height limit for the level of the search being set. The scent vessel

should not be visible in the container. If using clear containers, tissue paper will be used in all of the containers. Closed metal, plastic, or wood containers (such as metal paint cans, plastic shoeboxes or wooden boxes) will be vented or have a way for the odor to escape either through seams or holes.

Container searches may be held indoors or outdoors. The Judge can decide whether the search is on or off-leash, assuming a secure area. Handlers should never touch a container.

The number and type of containers will vary by level (see below). Food, toy and/or novel odor distractors may be used in all levels except Novice.

Dogs can step on, nudge or lightly paw the containers but the Judge may award a fault with point deductions if the dog's actions are overly aggressive or purposely damaging the containers.

- Novice: Containers will be made from cardboard, wood, metal or plastic. There will be between 12 to 20 containers placed at least 30 inches apart. There will be one hide. Time limits will range from 1:00 to 2:30 minutes. There will be no intentional distractors.
- Advanced: Containers can be any type of container, including fabric. There should be no luggage, purses or backpacks used. There will be between 12 to 25 containers with no specific spacing requirements. There will be a known number of hides ranging from 1 to 3. Time limits will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes. There will be one or two distractors.
- Excellent: Containers can be any type of container, including fabric. There will be between 20 to 35 containers with no specific spacing requirements. There will be an unknown number of hides ranging from 1 to 3. Time limits will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes. There will be anywhere from one to three distractors.

Interiors

The Interiors Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in a room or indoor area. Examples of the types of areas that may be used for interior searches include classrooms, bathrooms, offices, conference rooms, large spaces inside a building or a portion of any of the above. The size of the search area will be at the Judge's discretion. The Judge will choose a size appropriate for the level being tested. Interior searches may include multiple rooms as long as the rooms are adjoining at the Novice or Advanced level or in close proximity at the Excellent level. There may be a blank room or search area at the Excellent level. The handler will call "Finish" to indicate they have completed searching the area/rooms, even if no hides are found.

The Judge will indicate whether the search will have an on or off-leash option. Handlers should never touch anything within the search area without asking the Judge first.

There may be one intentional distractor placed in the search area for Advanced level searches and up to two intentional distractors placed in the search area for Excellent level searches. Intentional distractors can include food, toys and novel odors. Hosts and Judges will do their best to assure that there are no unintentional food or toy distractors, although there is no guarantee that an area will be clear.

Any pawing or behaviors that are excessive and damaging to any items in a search area may be awarded a fault with point deductions. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the handler to replace or repair any damage to the property, structure, furnishing or items damaged by their dog(s).

- Novice: There will be one hide in the search area with no intentional distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes.
- Advanced: There will be a known number of hides, ranging from 1 to 3. There may be one distractor. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes.

- Excellent: There will be an unknown number of hides ranging from 0 to 4. There may be up to 2 distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 5:00 minutes.

Exteriors

The Exteriors Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in an outdoor area. Examples of the types of areas that may be used for exterior searches include courtyards, sides of buildings, parking lots, playgrounds, grass areas, and patios. Vehicles may be permitted within the search area. For closed vehicles such as cars or trucks, hides will only be placed on the outside of the vehicles. Hides can be placed anywhere within an open vehicle such as golf carts or four-wheelers. The size of the search area will be at the Judge's discretion. The Judge will choose a size appropriate for the level being tested.

The Judge will indicate whether the search will have an on or off-leash option. Off-leash options will only be offered if the area is secure, such as a fence-in playground. Handlers should never touch anything within the search area without asking the Judge first.

Dogs will have many challenges in outdoor areas as they may have to contend with scents from other animals, food and nature. They may also have to contend with any type of weather conditions on trial day such as high winds, heavy rain, snow or high heat. Therefore, there will be no intentional distractors placed in the search area.

- Novice: There will be one hide in the search area with no intentional distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes.
- Advanced: There will be a known number of hides, ranging from 1 to 3. There will be no intentional distractors and the time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes.
- Excellent: There will be a known number of hides ranging from 1 to 4. There will be no intentional distractors. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 5:00 minutes.

FastFinds

The FastFinds Element will focus on the dog finding multiple hides in containers within a short amount of time and will test Handlers being able to read their dogs under pressure. FastFinds may occur inside or outside. It is an on-leash search. The specific parameters are determined by the search level. There will be NO 30-second warning in the FastFinds element.

- Novice: The search will consist of three straight lines of either 3 or 4 containers for a total of either 9 or 12 containers. The lines can be set in any direction. Cardboard boxes will be used. The boxes will be placed at a minimum of 30 inches apart. Two of the lines will contain one hide each for a total of two hides. The time limit for the search is fixed at 45 seconds.
- Advanced: The search will consist of three groups of either 4 or 5 containers for a total of either 12 or 15 containers. The containers may be cardboard boxes, plastic toolboxes or plastic shoeboxes. The containers may be placed any distance apart, and in any configuration, as long as the groups are distinct. There will be one hide in each group for a total of 3 hides. The time limit for the search is fixed at 45 seconds.
- Excellent: The search will consist of four groups of 4-6 containers for a range of 16 to 24 containers. The containers may be cardboard boxes, plastic toolboxes or plastic shoeboxes. There is an unknown number of hides within a range of 1 to 4. More than one hide can be in a group. The maximum time for the search is 75 seconds.

Solo

The Solo Element will focus on the dog finding the target odor(s) in the designated search area independently from the handler. The search area will be clearly marked by tape, cones or flags. The size of the search area will be at the Judge's discretion. The Judge will choose a size appropriate for the level being tested. Solo searches can be held indoors or outdoors. The search area may be in the form of an interior, an exterior or a container type search. Containers may be suspended or elevated, but no higher than the limit set for the level. Searches are generally run off-leash but may be required to be run on-leash taking the safety of the dog into consideration. If the search is required to be on-leash, the Handler should be careful to not disturb the search area with the leash. If the Handler does disturb items in the search area with the leash, they may incur a fault.

The intention of the search is for the dog to work independently from the handler. This is done by the handler staying outside of the search area while the dog goes in the marked area and searches. Once the dog has found the hide, the handler may step inside the search area to reward the dog.

Handler MAY:

- guide the dog back into the search area to continue working if the dog has stepped out of the boundary.
- re-cue the dog to search if the dog is overly distracted or not searching.
- call the dog to step out of the search area and restart the dog if the dog is overly distracted or not searching.

Handler MAY NOT:

- give the dog hand signals, verbal or other types of cues to guide the dog while the dog is searching.
- move along the boundary as a cue for the dog to follow them while the dog is in the search area.
- walk back and forth along the start area excessively to decide where the dog should start the search.

The Judge will determine the boundary of the start area and if the handler is allowed to walk along the boundary of the search area. This will be communicated to the handler before the start of the search.

If given the option, the handler may choose where to start the search, but may incur a fault if the start is unduly delayed.

- Novice: There will be one hide in the search with no intentional distractors. The maximum distance the hide will be placed from the start line is 6 feet. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:00 minutes.
- Advanced: There will be one hide in the search with no intentional distractors. The maximum distance the hide will be placed from the start line is 12 feet. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 3:30 minutes.
- Excellent: There will be one hide in the search area. There will be one to three distractors. The maximum distance the hide will be placed from the start line is 18 feet. The time assigned for the search will range from 1:00 to 4:00 minutes.

○ Divisions

- **Standard**: Dogs compete in the Standard Division when they are competing for Element and Overall Titles in the NA&E levels.
- **Pro**: Once a dog has earned a title in any Element in the NA&E levels, the Handler can choose to continue trialing in that same level. The dog is then moved to the Pro division, where they compete for placements against other dogs that have also earned a title in that Element. Titles can continue to be earned indefinitely in this Division.

- **FEO:** See FEO section earlier in this Rulebook.

○ Scoring, Qualifying & Titling

Standard Division Scoring & Titling

Scoring is based on points earned, time spent during the search and number of faults given. If the dog finds all of the hides and the Handler calls “Alert” and “Finish”, as appropriate, within the maximum allowed search time, 100 points are awarded for the search. Any faults will cause deductions from the original search score. To earn a qualifying score, the maximum number of points per search indicated below must be earned:

- Novice 90 points
- Advanced 95 points
- Excellent 100 points

Placements are awarded based on the search with the highest score and the fastest time.

Three qualifying searches in an element will earn an element title.

Pro Division Scoring & Titling

Scoring for qualifying searches in the Pro Division is the same as in the Standard Division.

Five qualifying searches in an element at the Pro Division will earn a Pro Division element title.

For every 5 additional Qs in an element that the dog has titled in would add a numeral to the end of the Standard Division title.

For example: Niko titles in Novice Containers (SGN-C) but the handler decides to continue to compete at the Novice level in Containers instead of moving up to the Advanced level. The team will now be competing in the Pro Division. After earning 5 additional Novice Containers Qs, Niko would earn a Novice Containers 2 (SGN-C2). Five additional Qs would earn him an SGN-C3 and so on.

○ Point Deductions, Faults & Non-qualifying Events

Faults

Each fault is a 5-point deduction from a team’s score. Multiple faults can be accrued during one search.

Faults are assessed at the Judge’s discretion and include but are not limited to:

- Contamination of the search area by dropping food, a toy reward hitting the ground or by other means. If a handler repeatedly takes actions that result in contamination, multiple faults may be accrued
- Excessive delay at the start line
- Poor leash handling causing disruption of the search area or of the dog’s search performance
- Moving items within the search area without the Judge’s permission
- Dog not crossing the start line when entering the search in the Advanced and higher levels

There will be no point deductions for dogs that jump on and/or move things within the search area or crush containers as long as the dog is not out of control and purposefully damaging items. The dog cannot be showing aggression and the handler must gain control of the dog without corrections or harsh treatment.

Non-qualifying Events

Non-qualifying events (NQs) include but are not limited to:

- False alert.
- Handler unable to indicate where the hide is when asked “where” by the Judge.
- Handler re-cueing the dog to find the hide after calling “Alert”.
- Exceeding the maximum search time (Timing Out).
- Handler failing to call “Finish” at the Advanced or higher levels within a reasonable time after leaving the search area.
- Handler stepping into a Solo search area before calling “Alert” or “Finish”.
- Handler calling “Alert” without the dog indicating or showing a change in behavior.
- Dog eliminating during the search even if they stepped out of the search area to do so.
- Dog eliminating within 5 feet of the start line of a search area.
- Handler treating or correcting the dog harshly in the search area.
- Dog acting aggressively towards people in the search area.
- Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damaging anything in the search area or the trial site.
- Handler being disrespectful to the Judge, Hosts, or Volunteers.
- Overexcited nipping.

Premier

○ Level Info, Parameters & Eligibility

The Premier level is structured differently than the NA&E levels. There are no specific “element” type of searches, rather, there are search areas and games. Premier level titles as well as Championship titles are earned based on points accrued during searches as opposed to the number of qualifying searches, as is the case at the first three levels.

At this time, to qualify to enter trials at the Premier level, a dog must have earned a title in both the Excellent Interiors and Exteriors elements. Once a dog has earned these two titles, they can enter Premier level searches and earn points, but the points will be deferred and titles will not be awarded until the dog has earned an Overall Excellent title. If a dog has earned their Overall Excellent Title, scoring and titling will accrue as described.

To further introduce competitors to the Premier level, KSG is allowing any dog to enter a Premier trial as FEO providing the dog has passed the SITs for all 3 odors or submits proof of earning an ORT title. This will allow competitors to “try out” the level, although they will not qualify for awards, placements nor points towards a future title.

A search area will be defined as a particular area including anything within that area. One search area may be both inside and outside. A search area may have vehicles or containers within it but the entire area is to be searched. A search area may be very large or very small. The maximum time allowed for the search may be relatively long or relatively tight. The Judge may define the search and the criteria based on more traditional “element” rules or may impose some “game” rules on the search. This level is designed to test a team’s ability to negotiate challenging searches with new rules and pressures, while making it fun for both the Handler and Dog.

There may be 4 or 5 search areas per Premier trial. The Host will recommend search areas and games to the Judge during the pre-trial walkthrough. At that time, the Judge will make the final decisions on the parameters and type of each search. Therefore, no specific information will be available in the Premium aside from the number of searches. A Handler may enter a dog for a Full Trial, which will consist of all the searches set for the day, or a Short Trial, which will consist of the first two searches set for the day.

The Lead Judge has the option of recording a virtual walkthrough for a Premier level trial, though this is not required. If a virtual walkthrough is recorded, all efforts will be made to have it available to the competitors the night before the trial, although access to the site and other considerations may cause the walkthrough to be available on the morning of the trial. Details will be posted on the Trial's Facebook page as soon as they are available.

At the Premier level, all three target odors, either individually or in any combination, may be used.

Hides at the Premier level may be accessible or inaccessible to the dog. The height limit of a hide at the Premier level will be approximately 72 inches. There may be up to 3 intentional distractions. The number of hides for the Premier searches will be determined by the Judge. There may be a known number of hides, a range of hides, an unknown number of hides or blank areas.

The Handler is required to call "Alert", and/or raise their hand above their head, when the dog has found a hide and "Finish" when they believe the dog has completed the search. If the Handler believes the search area is blank, they must call "Finish". The time stops with the "Finish" call.

○ Games

Premier searches and games may be similar to some searches that happen at the NA&E levels but with a noticeable increase in difficulty. There will also be new games that are not played at the NA&E levels such as:

- No Returns - Search Teams cannot return to an area to search after they cross a certain point designated by the Judge.
- Super Search - This game would have an unknown number of hides ranging from 1 to 12.
- Containers (Premier style) - This game would have a large number of containers with a known number of hides. There might also be distractors in some containers. Any type of container, including fabric, where a hide can be placed out of sight, can be used. Luggage, purses or backpacks are acceptable as long as they are new. Containers can be placed any distance apart, and can be elevated and/or stacked.
- Solo (Premier style) - This game would be similar to a Solo search from the NA&E levels with the hide(s) being placed up to 22 feet from the start line. There can be multiple areas and multiple hides.
- Exteriors (Premier Style) - This game would be a more difficult exterior search than those seen at lower levels. The exterior area could contain vehicles, containers, a small building and surrounding grounds, multiple areas or a blank search.
- Interiors (Premier Style) - This game would be a more difficult interior search, where multiple rooms may be used and blank areas may be present. There also could be containers present in the interior search.

It is expected that new games will be developed and added to the Premier searches.

An easily printable table summarizing the parameters of all the elements and games broken down per each of the four levels can be found at the end of this document.

○ Scoring & Titling

The maximum points that can be earned at each Premier trial is 100. The number of hides for the entire trial will be divided into 100 to determine a point value per hide. A blank search will count as one hide. Finding all of the hides, clearing a blank search if present, and making the appropriate finish calls will earn a team 100 points (assuming no faults). A team who scores 100 and has no fault deductions will be awarded a 25 point bonus. Points will accumulate for Premier titles and Championships.

Handlers may incur up to three faults during a single search, with each fault carrying a penalty equal to half the value of one hide. The team may continue searching after the first two faults, but the search ends when the third fault is called. The team will keep the points earned, minus point penalties, even if a third fault is reached.

For example: Patches was entered in all four searches offered at a Premier trial. The judge set a total of 20 hides at that trial. 100 points divided by 20 hides equals 5 points per hide. Patches found 18 of the hides earning 90 points but one false alert was called causing a deduction of ½ of hide's worth of points (-2.5). Patches earned 87.5 points for the trial.

Points earned at a Premier trial are accumulated for titles and championships. Titles are earned by accumulating points as indicated below:

SGP1.....	150 points
SGP2.....	350 points
SGP3.....	650 points
SGCH (Scent Games Champion)	1000 points

Once a dog has earned a Champion title, they can continue to earn Championships with each additional 500 points accrued in addition to their original 1000 points:

SGCH2	1500 points
SGCH3	2000 points
SGCH4	2500 points (... and so on)

○ Faults

A team is allowed three faults during a search, each fault amounts to a point penalty equal to one half of a hide's point value, with the third fault ending the search. Faults are assessed at the Judge's discretion and include but are not limited to:

- False alert
- Handler unable to indicate where the hide is when asked "where" by the Judge
- Handler re-cueing the dog to find the hide after calling "Alert"
- Contamination of the search area by dropping food, toy reward or by other means. If a handler repeatedly takes actions that result in contamination, multiple faults may be assessed
- Excessive delay at the start line
- Poor leash handling causing disruption of the search area or of the dog's search performance
- Moving items within the search area without the Judge's permission
- Dog not crossing the start line when entering the search

There will be no point deductions for dogs that jump on and/or move things within the search area or crush containers as long as the dog is not out of control and purposefully damaging items. The dog cannot be showing aggression and the handler must gain control of the dog without corrections or harsh treatment.

○ Non-qualifying (NQ) Events

Non-qualifying (NQ) events will disqualify a dog from earning a placement in a search and earning a Golden Nose Award, although any points earned up to the non-qualifying event are still accrued towards titles.

Non-qualifying events include but are not limited to:

- Exceeding the maximum search time (timing out)
- Handler failing to call “Finish” within a reasonable time after leaving the search area
- Handler stepping into a Solo search area before calling “Finish”
- Handler calling “Alert” without the dog indicating or showing a change in behavior
- Dog eliminating during the search even if they stepped out of the search area to do so
- Dog eliminating within 5 feet of the start line of a search area
- Handler treating or correcting the dog harshly in the search area
- Dog acting aggressively towards people in the search area
- Handler or dog significantly and recklessly damaging anything in the search area or the trial site
- Handler being disrespectful to Judge, Hosts, or Volunteers
- Overexcited nipping

Titles & Awards (all levels)

There are five Element Titles for NA&E levels, one for each element. A dog earns an **Element Title** by earning 3 qualifying scores (Qs) in that element at a single level. **Overall Level Titles** are awarded by earning all five Element Titles for that level. Once a dog earns an Element Title, the competitor can choose whether to move up to the next level or to stay at the currently titled level. This choice can be made for each element independent of the other elements. If the competitor chooses to stay at the level they just titled in, they will be moved to the Pro Division.

Rosettes are awarded for titles earned in the Standard and Pro Division as well as the Premier Level. Rosettes are also awarded to the 1st through 3rd placements in each search at all levels in the Standard Division. Placements in the Pro Division will be double-layered ribbons

An award of excellence, the **Golden Nose Award**, is awarded to each dog who enters the maximum allowed qualifying searches for a trial day and Qs in all of the entered searches. At the Premier level, the dog must earn a minimum of 90 points in one trial day to earn a Golden Nose Award.

A special recognition award, the **Moo Tips Award** will be presented to one dog at each trial. This award consists of a personalized jar signed by the Judge and Host containing all of the scented swabs used in that trial. If there is a Premier trial on the same day as a NA&E trial, one recipient will be chosen for each trial. Generally, the Judges will choose the recipient of the Moo Tips Award by random draw or by a unanimous vote from the dogs that earned a Golden Nose Award on that trial day. If no dog earned the Golden Nose Award, the Judges will choose the recipient by unanimous vote.

A **Championship title** can be earned by accumulating 1,000 points in the Premier level. Teams can work towards additional Championship titles by accruing additional points. At the incremental titles can be earned following the same point system as in Premier. When an additional 1,000 points are reached, a new Championship title will be

earned. These titles will be noted by a number following the Championship title, e.g. SGCH2, SGCH3. The team will earn a large rosette ribbon with each championship title.

List of K9 Scent Games® Titles:

Novice*

Scent Games Novice Containers..... SGN-C
 Scent Games Novice ExteriorsSGN-E
 Scent Games Novice FastFindsSGN-F
 Scent Games Novice Interiors..... SGN-I
 Scent Games Novice SoloSGN-S

Overall Scent Games Novice Title SGN

Advanced*

Scent Games Advanced ContainersSGA-C
 Scent Games Advanced ExteriorsSGA-E
 Scent Games Advanced FastFinds SGA-F
 Scent Games Advanced Interiors..... SGA-I
 Scent Games Advanced Solo SGA-S
 Overall Scent Games Advanced Title SGA

Excellent*

Scent Games Excellent Containers SGE-C

Scent Games Excellent Exteriors SGE-E
 Scent Games Excellent FastFindsSGE-F
 Scent Games Excellent Interiors..... SGE-I
 Scent Games Excellent Solo.....SGE-S
 Overall Scent Games Excellent TitleSGE

Premier

Scent Games Premier 1 SGP1
 Scent Games Premier 2 SGP2
 Scent Games Premier 3 SGP3

Championship**

Scent Games Champion..... SGCH
 Scent Games Champion 2..... SGCH2
 Scent Games Champion 3..... SGCH3 , etc

Championship titles should precede dog's name

** - Titles in the Pro division for these levels will be indicated by adding a numeral at the end of the corresponding Standard Division title.*

For example, after earning her title in Advanced Solo, Ziggy continued to trial at the Advanced level at the Pro division. So far, she has earned 10 Qs in the Pro Division and a title of SGA-S2.

*** - Further Championships can be earned with each additional 500 points accrued in addition to their original 1000 points.*

For example, Kodiak earned his SGCH title last year. He has continued to trial at the Premier level and has earned an additional 500 points. He has now earned a title of SGCH2.

Judges

KSG has an approved panel of judges who have been selected based on their understanding of scent work detection and scent work sports. They are able to place appropriate hides based on the search level, element, and environment. They have the ability to read the changes of behaviors in a wide variety of dogs. They have good people skills, time management skills and the ability to pivot when the unexpected occurs and changes need to be made quickly. KSG Judges have received appropriate training on the specific rules of KSG and are able to implement those rules at trials.

Each KSG trial has a Lead Judge. Depending on the size of the trial and the number of elements and levels offered there may be additional judges. Judges are responsible for setting hides, determining the time limit for each search, determining whether there is an off-leash option and scoring each team's run. The Judge observes a Dog in White when applicable.

Anyone interested in becoming a KSG Judge, should contact KSG for an application to begin the approval process.

Public Health Guidelines

In the face of a public health issue, KSG and/or KSG trial hosts may implement public health strategies recommended at the time of a trial, to provide as much protection to participants, volunteers, and officials as possible. This could include, but not be limited to: limiting spectators, requiring the wearing of masks, and requiring social distancing. When possible, the premium will outline any potential public health strategies that will be employed. However, since these issues may be dynamic, additional restrictions may be announced after the premium has been published. Hosts will do their best to keep competitors updated.

Lightning Policy

In the interest of participant and spectator safety, all event activities must be suspended immediately upon the sight of lightning or sound of thunder in the area. Activities may not resume until at least thirty (30) minutes have passed since the last observed lightning strike or audible thunder.

Several lighting monitoring apps are available, such as My Lightning Tracker & Alerts, which will inform you of real time lightning strikes. Look on your device's app store for options.

Hold Harmless

Anyone registering, entering, handling, volunteering, or attending a trial or sanctioned K9 Scent Games® (KSG) activity in any capacity does so at their own risk and agrees to hold harmless KSG, its board members, the host or hosting club, judges, volunteer workers, and trial site owners. Furthermore, all participants—including competitors, staff, and handlers—acknowledge that they have read and understood the rulebook and agree to uphold all rules, regulations, and the Code of Conduct.

Contact Us

K9 Scent Games can be reached the following ways:

- Email: K9ScentGames@gmail.com
- Website: www.K9ScentGames.Fun
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/k9scentgamesgroup

Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

Bonus Search: A search that was not mentioned in the Premium and added after the trial closed for entries. This provides a method for the host to increase entry numbers if they are low.

Close Date: The date where you can no longer enter a trial online

Cutoff Date: The date where you can no longer make changes or cancellations to your entries online. Any changes or cancellations that you need to make after this date will need to be emailed directly to the Trial Administrator.

Element: A specific type of search offered at the Novice, Advanced and Excellent levels. “Interiors” and “Containers” are examples of an element.

Event: The overall competition conducted at one location. An event may consist of one or multiple trial days, with each day considered a separate trial.

Host: The term “Host” is used to represent a person, group, club or organization responsible for coordinating an event. "Host" is used throughout this Handbook interchangeably to refer to these person(s) responsible for carrying out the task described.

NA&E: An abbreviation for Novice, Advanced and Excellent levels.

NQ: Non-qualifying score.

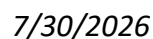
Open Date: The date when you can enter a trial online via your dashboard

Premium: The official event announcement and information packet that provides details for a specific event, including dates, location, trial offerings, entry procedures, fees, rules, and other pertinent information.

Q: Qualifying score.

Search: A generic term for any type of search at any level.

Trial: One individual day of competition within an event. Each trial day may offer specific elements, searches or levels as outlined in the premium.



PREMIER	
- Birch, Anise, Clove, Combo	- No Elements, just search areas and games
- Max Height: 72"	- 4-5 searches per trial
- Finish call required	- Type of search will be determined by Host/Judge
	- Scoring is based on the number of hides found during the trial
	- Max 100 points per trial; bonus 25 points for teams that find all hides with no faults
	- Searches may be a known number, range of hides, unknown number or blank
	- There may be up to 3 distractors in a search area