

# USCA Championships

## Helpful Handler Tips and Reminders

First we want to begin by congratulating you for competing at one of the United Schutzhund Clubs of Americas' yearly national events with your dog. You have already accomplished a great deal by training and entering an event at the Championship Level, Congratulations!

As it is a championship all handlers are held to and expected to present themselves at the "highest standard", the judging and evaluations are also presented and held to the highest level. This may seem more strict /stringent and sometimes overwhelming to a newer competitor, but you are now competing at championship level.

As a competitor at a National Event please be professional and sportsmanlike at all times and remember you are representing the organization to your peers and the public once you enter the event.

In an effort to help ease any apprehension, confusion or questions prior to the event we have put together the following helpful tips and reminders to be aware of as a handler to give you the best opportunity for success at this level of competition.

Commonly used canine training equipment (compulsion devices, ie: choke, pinch, e collars, heeling sticks) are allowed to be used in their approved method and in a safe-fair-humane way on the trial grounds during practice until the official start of the event (draw). At any time during practice a trial representative may determine improper use of the method and not allow it to be used in that situation, the handler must comply. No correction (compulsion devices) are allowed on the trial grounds or areas directly associated with the event after draw.

Motivational methods (toy, food) are allowed during the event and may be used up to the edge of the "Official Trial Field" for Obedience and Protection and only in the "Designated Parking Area" at Tracking before entering the official trial field and before reporting in during any phase of the trial. Dogs must be shown in correctly fitting "Fur Saver / Large Link Collars", collars that are tight or if the handler is seen changing the collar immediately prior to reporting in for a phase may be considered to be unsportsmanlike behavior.

Any dog leaving the trial fields and out of control during competition will be Disqualified (DQ).

Any temperament issues at any time during the event (aggression, dog fight, etc.) will lead to DQ.

At the event "Draw" there will also be an opportunity to ask any additional questions of the judges.

(The official USCA Rulebook can be found at the following location;

<http://www.germanshepherddog.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-USCA-Rule-Book-Final-ver-1.2.pdf> )

## Tracking

1. The handler and dog should report-in in basic position with the dog prepared to track and the tracking line laid out.
2. At no time may the handler hold the dog by the collar or the team will be DQ and all points removed.
3. The dog must be lead to the start using the leash as it is intended (example; not wrapped around collar, harness or dog ).
4. The handler should be alongside the dog while approaching the scent pad, behind the dog with the dog pulling is faulty.
5. Tracking command must be given at the scent pad or start is faulty.
6. Handler may not step past the scent pad until the line is completely out 10 meters and through the remainder of the track the handler must remain at the end of the line and follow the judges commands.
7. When the handler steps onto the scent pad the track has been started and no restarts are allowed (except FH).
8. Handler may approach the dog to show article from either side but must restart the dog from the side they showed article, the handler should be facing the direction of the track and standing up[right to restart the dog.
9. If a dog is tangled in the line and the Judge allows the handler to platz / down their dog to untangle the line the handler must restart the dog from the end of the line / 10 meters behind the dog.
10. Handler may swing off the track to keep the line tight or from tangling after the dog has committed to the corner.
11. If the dog stops working the track, the handler has three (3) commands to get the dog working again or the team is terminated.
12. After completion of the track, the articles are to be shown to the judge. Reporting out must be done with the dog in basic position.
13. During the critique the handler should remain standing and attentive to the judge with the dog calm in a sit or down

## OBEDIENCE

1. If you hold /touch the collar during obedience for any reason you will be disqualified at that point.
2. There will be a long down apprentice judge to maintain the teams on the long down. The presiding judge will assign the official points and deductions based on the description from the L/D Judge. Handlers will be signaled by the L/D Judge to proceed out to pick up their dog from the Long Down when the dog team in motion is completing the "Retrieve over the Scaling Wall" exercise.
3. You must wait for the judge after each exercise to signal beginning the next exercise.
4. Basic Position – The handlers' hands must be at their side in a natural position or over the dog if it's required due to the size or position of the dog. The hand placement must not influence or affect the dog's behavior.

5. It is the handlers responsibility to determine when to call the dog from the front position to the basic position, a 3 second pause should be shown in each position (the judge will not signal you).
6. A "heeling command" must be used during the change of pace in the free heeling or it is faulty.
7. Motion Exercises – The motion exercises, from the "Sit Out of Motion" to the "Down Out Of Motion" will continue forward from the "Sit In Motion" position. The handler will not return to the original start (basic) position.
8. The judge will signal when to recall the dog in the Down or Stand Out of Motion with Recall to the handler.
9. Retrieves – The field is marked for all 3 retrieves. The retrieves will be thrown in the same direction as the "send out". It is the handlers responsibility to determine when to send the dog to retrieve (after the dumbbell has stopped moving) and to take the dumbbell from the dog after showing at least 3 seconds in the front position and after a 3 sec pause to command the dog to basic position (the judge will not signal you).
10. Send Out – It is faulty to excite or build up the dog prior to starting the exercise. Handler will send the dog after the development of the exercise (10-15 paces) and the judge will tell you when to down the dog (the first command). Any additional commands are up to the handler to stop and down the dog.
11. When picking up the dog, if the dog is not sitting the handler must put the dog into basic position with a "sit" command. Using the "fuss" / "heel" command to make sit is faulty.
12. After reporting out you may leash your dogs and prepare for the critiques based on the judges instruction.
13. During the critique the handler should remain standing and attentive to the judge with the dog calm in a sit or down.

## PROTECTION

1. Touching or holding the dog by the collar at any time is a Disqualification (DQ) except in the watch position during the "Attack on Dog Out of Motion" (long bite) before sending the dog.
2. The handler must wait for the judge to signal them in all exercises to return to the dog.
3. Any use of an "attack" or "bite" command is a Disqualification (DQ).
4. The down/platz may only be used to position the dog for the escape, used at any other time it is Disqualification (DQ).
5. If the handler uses more than 3 commands for the same action, it will result in termination or DQ based on the circumstance.
6. In the search for the helper the dog must remain in motion searching, additional commands are faulty but the protection will be allowed to continue as long as the dog makes it to the number 6 blind and finds the helper. If the dog does not find the helper a maximum of 2 additional attempts (commands) may be used to send the dog to the helper, if it does not find and stay with the helper it is termination of protection.
7. At all times when the handler is approaching the dog to pick it up the handler must take the most direct path to pick up the dog, going wide around the dog when picking it up is faulty.
8. When picking up the dog the handler is allowed a "sit " command, this must be given when the handler is next to the dog (basic position) , if the handler is back or behind the dog when the command is given and the dog moves (rocks0 back into a sit it is faulty.
9. At the pickup for the back transport the helper on instruction from the handler will turn around (sleeve side away from the dog) and walk out the required distance of 8 paces and stop. On the

handlers command the transport begins with the helper and handler/dog team following while maintaining the distance of 8 paces.

10. The dog must remain with the handler during the back transport or the transport will stop and the handler is allowed 1 attempt to call the dog back into position or the protection will be stopped due to loss of control (DQ). If the dog grips the helper in the back transport it is a DQ.
11. During the "side transport" if the dog gets out of position, the transport will stop and the handler is allowed 3 attempts to position the dog correctly or the protection will be stopped (out of control). If the dog grips the helper the handler is allowed 1 command (out/here/heel) to make the dog out and come back to position between the helper and handler to complete the side transport.
12. During the "side transport", when the handler picks up the dog the helper may not be asked to turn around (the helper must be in a position facing the dog until the handler moves the dog to the side transport position).
13. In the "Attack On Dog Out Of Motion" (long bite) if the dog is released or breaks away from the handler before the helper turns downfield to attack the dog it will be disqualified (DQ). The handler must remain in position until signaled by the judge to pick up the dog and then must go directly to the dog.
14. After reporting out the dog must be in basic position and the handler and dog must free heel away from the helper at least 5 paces before assuming basic position and leashing the dog, do not grab the collar before the dog is in basic position. The helper may not move away from the dog. The dog is not allowed to play / bite the leash while going to the position for the critique.
15. During the critique the handler should remain standing and attentive to the judge with the dog calm in a sit or down