

The Nose Knows

Fun facts about a dog's olfactory sense:

Dogs have 50 scent receptors for every 1 of ours

A dog's sense of smell is between 10,000 and 100,000 times stronger than a humans

Longer nosed dogs smell better

The best nose award belongs to the bloodhound

Dogs have been trained to detect bombs, drugs, low blood sugar, cancer, bed bugs, dead bodies under water and even the covid-19 virus.

There are 5 main types of sports where dogs use their noses.

Tracking

A person walks a pre-planned path outdoors and drops an article(s) at the end and the dog must follow the track and find the article(s). The dog is on a harness with 20-40 ft lead where the handler follows.

There is no time limit (as long as the dog is working). The difficulty level increases with the length of aging, number of articles, length of track, number and angle of turns, and different surfaces

Nosework (aka Scentwork)

Q-tips scented with an essential oil (birch, clove, anise, others) are hidden in different environments: in a room, outside, on a vehicle, in a container (boxes, luggage etc), or buried (in a box filled w/sand). The dog must find the "hide(s)" in a certain amount of time. Most searches are done with the dog on leash. The handler learns to read the dog and/or train a response so that they know when to call "alert" when the dog has found the hide. The difficulty level increases with the number of hides, different scents, size of search area, height of hide and distractions.

Barn Hunt

Rats in PVC tubes in hidden in bales of straw. The dog must locate the tube(s) containing the rat in a specified amount of time. Dogs are off leash in an enclosed area. The handler must call "rat" for each find. The dog must not alert on a tube holding the litter from the rats cage or an empty tube. The difficulty level increases with the number of bales, shape of tunnels, and the number of rat tubes to be found.

Trailing and Locating

A trail(s) will be set by the judge using prepared commercial wildlife scent, rat scent, or a drag trail (dragging a cage with the animal in it) to just below the location of the quarry. Quarry is usually a rat, or other small rodent(s) held safely in a container. The dog must follow a trail that leads to the "quarry" held safely in a container. The dog works on or off leash and must complete the find within a specified amount of time. The judge "marks" the find by the dog. The difficulty level increases with distractions, distance, difficulty of hide and multiple trails. Another related class is urban locating in which the dog has to find the "quarry" in a specific area, such as a barn, without a specific trail.

Shed Hunt

The dog must search for shed deer antlers (or "regionally appropriate ungulates" of a size so that the dog can retrieve the peice) without a trail. Artificial "shed odor" is placed on the antler. The dog works on or off leash and must complete the find within a specified amount of time. The difficulty level increases with distractions, distance, more difficult hides and multiple finds.