

So You Want to Host a Sheepdog Trial?

A Trial Planning Packet From The Northern California Working Sheepdog Association, Inc.

9/10/2004

Select a location

First question - arena or ISDS-style? For an ISDS-style trial, 10 acres is the absolute minimum.

Inspect the site for hazardous vegetation which may be present at the time of the trial, like foxtails, star thistle, etc. Look for other potential hazards in the terrain, like badger holes, irrigation ditches etc.

Select the dates

Aim for 6 months in advance, to insure that you won't conflict with other events.

Consult with NCWSA Officers, websites and magazines for conflicts. Plan for USBCHA sanctioning (information Included in Trial Packet).

Locate, confirm and inspect your sheep

Sheep should not be run more than three times in a day, so plan for a sufficient number of sheep depending on your anticipated entries.

Plan to visit the supplier in advance to inspect the sheep. Look for limpers, blind sheep, and general overall condition.

Transportation of the sheep: how will they arrive and depart? Plan to feed them during the entire trial.

Set the trial budget

Big-ticket items: field, sheep and sheep transport, judge(s), portable toilets, awards and prize money. Arrange sponsorship: local businesses, motels, restaurants, etc.

Line up your crew

You will need MANY helpers, before, during and after the trial. Positions include:

- * Course Director
- * Trial Secretary
- * Set-up and take-down crew
- * Let-out and exhaust crew
- * a timekeeper and clerk for each judge
- * a safety committee
- * someone to order and organize awards
- * a Program Chairperson
- * someone to stay with the sheep if they are pastured overnight.

This is a partial list! You must be prepared to request help, from complete strangers if necessary. Each job description is contained within the Trial Packet, which you must request from the NCWSA Event Coordinator, usually the club Vice- President.

Still want to do it?

Hosting a trial with NCWSA sponsorship enables you to purchase insurance for the event through the club. If you follow the guidelines outlined in the Trial Packet, you can take advantage of this benefit.

You will receive support and encouragement from experienced people, and you will gain a greater understanding of the behind-the-scenes aspects of trialing. Be aware of the magnitude of the project, but don't be intimidated by the obstacles: many hands lighten the load, and helping to promote these events forms the basis of this club.

TRIAL DIRECTOR

The Trial Director is personally responsible for the following things getting done. Don't overload yourself - appoint people to help then follow up, ask for reports.

6 months to 1 year prior:

- * Locate a potential site. If you have doubts ask someone to look at it with you.
- * Select a date, check with other club schedules that may be in conflict.
- * Get commitments/costs for stock, use of grounds and judge.
- * Select Trial Secretary, Course Director and Safety/Hospitality Committee Chairman.
- * File NCWSA planning form/budget for board approval.

3 to 6 months prior:

- * Send Trial Secretary, Course Director and Safety/Hospitality committee chairman their respective information sheets and have them select their crews and report back to you.
- * Decide if you will have a program and ask for sponsors. If so ask for help with selling advertising. Tell your trial secretary to plan on doing a program.
- * Decide if you will have a raffle. If so start looking for donations.
- * If the landowner wishes, a certificate of insurance can be issued. The landowner can be listed as an additional insured upon request. Contact NCWSA president for insurance forms. You will need to accurately describe the area used for the event (parcel number, etc.) to have a landowner listed as an additional insured.
- * Decide if you will seek USBCHA sanctioning. Contact USBCHA Secretary, Francis Raley, 2915 Anderson Lane, Crawford, TX 76638, email f.rale@worldnet.att.net. Be sure to order a current rule book (on the web at www.usbcha.com/Rules.htm).
- * Read and know the rules.
- * Locate motels and campgrounds in the area that will allow dogs and be sure that the person doing the entry forms has this information.
 - Dog-friendly motels:
 - Motel 6 (www.motel6.com)
 - La Quinta Inn (www.lq.com)
 - Red Roof Inn (www.redroof.com)
 - Howard Johnson (www.hojo.com)
- * Find out if it is OK for people to stay at the trial site.

2 to 3 months prior:

- * Check on the sheep. This is a good time to go "visit" them. See if they are in good shape and on good feed. If you have any doubts ask a sheep expert to go with you. If you don't have healthy sheep you don't have a trial and it is not too late to back out or try to find other sheep.
- * Order ribbons and awards. If you are planning to use hand made items be sure to allow plenty of time.
- * Decide if you want an organization to offer concessions.
- * Continue working with your donations chairman for sponsorships.

1 to 2 months prior:

- * Contact a veterinarian in the area for on-call emergencies during the event. Don't use the phone book for this; contact dog people in the area for references. Have directions and phone number printed and ready to be given out if necessary.
- * Order Porta-potties.

- * Thank the businesses that have opted to sponsor your trial. Invite them out to see the trial.

1 month prior:

- * Check with your crew bosses and committee chairmen. They should come up with a schedule soon. It is helpful if the person accepting entries will send a list of entrants to them so they will know who will be there. This way they know who to ask to help out.
- * Check on your Porta-Potty reservation.
- * Work with the Trial Secretary on the programs.
- * Check with your chosen food vendor.
- * Pick up the club trailer and check all of the equipment. Don't assume that it is all there and in workable condition - check it out!
- * Get on the phone and get as much set-up help as you can for the day before the trial.
- * Ask someone to be in charge of setting up raffle table, selling tickets and holding the drawings.
- * Determine about how much you are going to be able to pay in prize money. How much and how you will structure your payback will depend on your total available purse and the number of entrants.

A day or two before the trial:

- * Build the course, ask the judge for guidance.
- * Arrange the rest of the grounds for parking (separate competitors' from spectators' if at all possible), vendors, check-in/awards, judge's stand, potties etc. (have your potties delivered today-NOT tomorrow.)
- * Post signs to the trial site. Make them visible in the dark. A lot of people arrive rather late and it is no fun getting lost at 1 :00 a.m. after a 7-hour drive. Do not try to make the signs cute or they will get stolen.
- * If the sheep are delivered today get some GOOD dogs that are not running the trial to move them QUIETLY around the trial field. Arrange for someone to feed and water the sheep. Do not leave the sheep overnight without someone to look after them. This person should be responsible for putting the sheep in the let-out pen at a pre-determined time in the morning.
- * Go through the information handouts for each position with the person in charge and be sure everything is done.
- * Tryout the PA system, charge the batteries in the radios.
- * Check and re-check your trial grounds before you release your set-up crew.

Day of the trial:

- * Meet with your Directors, Crew bosses and Chairmen. Everything is ready to roll and on time too!
- * During the trial do what you need to do to keep things going quickly and smoothly.
- * Meet with trial secretary and club treasurer to write checks for prize money, judges fees, sheep fees etc.
- * Hand out awards and thank everybody profusely.

After the trial:

- * Keep as many bodies as you can after the trial for tear-down. Clean the grounds so that they are as clean or cleaner than before you got there.
- * Help the sheep supplier remove the animals from the site.
- * Put all the equipment back in the trailer. If anything is in need of repair or replacement do it yourself or be sure to have it done.
- * Get the financial report from the, trial secretary and be sure the club treasurer has it.
- * See that the judge, livestock owner, property owner etc. are paid.

COURSE DIRECTOR

You are responsible for designing and setting up the course. You must be available during the event to answer questions and settle disputes. You are responsible for interpreting NCWSA policy and USBCHA trial rules. It is up to you to see that let-out and exhaust crews are doing a great job. It is your job to see that crews are fed, watered and given breaks. You must see to it that no animals are abused. See to it that each competing team has an equal chance at success.

Prior to trial:

- * Obtain a copy of the USBCHA rule book. Contact USBCHA Secretary, Francis Raley, 2915 Anderson Lane, Crawford, TX 76638, email f.rale@worldnet.att.net. Rule book on the web at www.usbcha.com/Rules.htm.
- * Work with Trial Director to arrange for crews: set-up, let-out, exhaust and tear-down. If this is a trial with more than one field and classes are run concurrently, you must assign an official for the other area(s).

Day before the trial:

- * Build let-out pens. If you are not sure about this, ask a sheep expert. If the sheep are not happy with the design you will overwork your crew and make the sheep grumpy. Try to have this sheep expert also be your let-out crew boss.
- * Build exhaust pens. The above suggestion applies here, too. Provide shade, feed and water at both areas. Sheep that are kept off feed all day will get really grumpy. Your afternoon runs will not go well. Do not use plastic tarps draped over the fence for shade. This just makes it hotter.
- * Set up course. It helps if the judge can be there to direct you. As a guide, allow at least 60 yards of open area around the sheep for completion of outrun and the lift. Have at least 30 yards of clear area around the drive panels and pen. The opening between all 3 sets of panels is 21 feet. The shedding ring is 40 yards in diameter, that means you need a cord 60 feet long to mark your circle.
- * Set up judge's stand. Remember to have protection from the weather.
- * Set up a "hide" for the on-deck dog & handler to wait.
- * Have water available for dogs coming off the field and for let-out and exhaust dogs. Do not expect them to jump in the sheep watering troughs. Sheep do not like dirty water.

Day of the trial:

- * Meet with your crews. Give crew bosses their radios or arrange for flag signals.
- * Post the running order in a conspicuous place.
- * Keep after judge, secretary, sheep handlers etc. to start on time. Calling the handlers' meeting will usually light the fire. Conduct the handlers' meeting. Introduce the judge. Explain the course requirement, where to enter and exit the field, policy on livestock abuse, and whether handlers will be exhausting their own sheep.
- * Arrange with hospitality person for crew lunches and drinks.
- * Tour the entire grounds for last minute check then stay alert all day for things that could be done better. Watch as much of the action on the field as possible and be quick to make changes to your crews if needed.

The time between runs is VERY important. For this reason the following suggestions are given: Novice should never be allowed to exhaust their own sheep. If time is critical the Novice handlers should be asked to leash their dog after penning the sheep, then open the gate and release the sheep, close the pen gate and exit the field.

Pro/Nov and Open should exhaust their own sheep only if there is a way for them to exit the field at the exhaust pen. Make sure people don't exhaust injured or unfit sheep without seeing that they are marked or taken care of.

Exhaust and let-out is not the place for training pups. Discourage people from doing this and try to use only "open" level dogs.

When arranging the grounds keep in mind that it could be raining. Will you be allowed to have vehicles on the field if it is wet? Are we going to get stuck in the parking lot? Check with the land owner before dumping sawdust, lime, flour etc. on the field to mark your shed ring.

Try to get the names and addresses of all crew members for thank-you notes. Give these to trial secretary or send them yourself.

TRIAL SECRETARY

You are responsible for timely placement of announcements in publications, mailing of entry forms, production of programs or running orders and keeping accurate accounting of finances. At the trial you will check and post scores, keep the running order current and help to have handlers in the waiting area on time. You will design and set up the check-in area, awards table and scoreboard.

3 to 6 months prior to the trial:

Send the trial announcement to:

NCWSA Newsletter: *The Shepherd's Whistle*

president@norcalsheepdog.org & secretary@norcalsheepdog.org

Oregon Sheepdog Society

www.osds.org

Current Secretary:

Amy Coapman, acoapman@karuk.us

The Working Border Collie magazine

www.working-border-collie.com

14933 Kirkwood Road

Sidney, OH 45365

wbc@bright.net

American Border Collie Magazine Inc.

www.americanbordercolliemagazine.com

editor@americanbordercolliemagazine.com

Other area stock dog clubs, radio stations, local newspapers, email lists etc.

At least two months prior to the trial:

* Decide if there are to be programs. If so, ads will need to be sold.

* Prepare and send out the entry forms (you may be able to get a motel or fuel station to sponsor this in return for a small ad on the form. The entry form will need to have the following information:

- 1) Date, starting time, and order of classes. Sanctioning status.
- 2) Dates that entries will be accepted. i.e. "No entries will be accepted before Nov. 10 or after Dec. 1".
- 3) Restrictions on class sizes, numbers of dogs per handler etc.
- 4) Description of event/courses.
- 5) Name of judge(s). Host, or special sponsor.
- 6) Contact person phone and e-mail address.
- 7) Directions and map. Availability of shade, water and food.
- 8) Entry fees (a contestant is not entered and will not be put in the running order until all fees are paid and liability release is signed.)
- 9) Include spaces for Name of competitor and dog(s), address, phone number.
- 10) "Make checks payable to NCWSA" No Refunds After (select date).
- 11) Address to send entry and fees to.
- 12) Liability release and abuse rule, space for signature and date.

(I certify that I am the owner of the above dog(s) or the duly authorized agent of the actual owner whose name I have entered above. I certify that the dog(s) entered is not a hazard to persons, livestock or other dogs. I agree to hold the NCWSA, inc.

its members, officers, directors, trial committee, agents, any employees, and the owners of the property where this event is held, harmless from claim. I further agree to hold the aforementioned parties harmless from any claim for damage or injury to the dog(s) incurred due to negligence of the club or any of the aforementioned parties, or by negligence of any other person or any other cause or causes. In case of injury to any stock by the dog(s) entered, I will pay the full market value of any animal killed or seriously injured, or the veterinarian bill if so required.

Inhumane treatment of a dog or livestock in any manner on the event field or grounds is prohibited. If the event management discovers inhumane treatment of a dog or livestock, it may immediately bar the responsible party and dog from any further participation in the event. Any participant who harasses the livestock inhumanely because they do not have proper control of their dog may be excused and may be barred from any further participation in the event. Entry fees, or any part thereof, will not be refunded.)

13) Motel and campground phone #'s and if camping on-site will be allowed.

- * Keep careful note of the order in which entries come in so you can make a waiting list. Order USBCHA score sheets and results sheets or make up some for club trials. Pull the running order; if this is USBCHA sanctioned you must follow the rules.
- * Mail running order to participants. You may be able to get a motel or fuel station to sponsor this in return for placing a small ad on the order.

The day before the trial:

- * Set up the check-in and awards tables. Set up the scoreboard. Be sure you have running orders or programs, score sheets, pens, pencils, marker for board, timers and P.A. system. Have NCWSA membership forms available. Vet On Call information should be posted.

Day of the trial:

- * Give entry forms, pens and stopwatches to the scribe.
- * Check the math on the score sheets.
- * Keep the scoreboard current.
- * Call the next team and see that they are in the waiting area at the appropriate time.
- * Keep the running order current in regards to who has run and who did not show up. If someone from the waiting list is to be allowed to fill an empty spot round 'em up.
- * Double check the scores and help the judge assign placings and give awards.
- * Return all club items to the trailer.
- * Get names and addresses from Course Director of all the crews.
- * Clean up the area.
- * Give financial records & money to the Trial Director or the club treasurer.

After the trial:

Send results to all clubs, publications, USBCHA (with fees) and email lists.

You may delegate any of these jobs to another volunteer but you are still responsible for them getting done.

SAFETY --COURTESY --HOSPITALITY

Your job is to help prevent injury to any spectator, competitor, dog or sheep. You also will help promote good etiquette so that we do not offend our host. You will keep workers fed and watered.

The day or two before the trial:

- * Tour the entire grounds and look for hazards such as badger holes, old wire, rattlesnake dens etc. Remove/fill in what you can and flag the rest (this includes the trial course). Check with the landowner before removing anything.
- * Check the let-out and exhaust pens for wires sticking out, loose nails, panels not wired up that could fall on a dog etc. Use your imagination and remember Murphy's Law.
- * Set up parking lots that separate the competitors from the spectators if at all possible. Ribbon off the competitor's parking area. Post signs making it off limits to non- competitors.
- * Check with the landowner about dogs getting in the livestock water tanks. If he does not want dogs in them, cover them and see that they stay covered.
- * If it is raining or has rained and is muddy check with the land owner to see if it is OK to drive on the course. If it is not OK tell the course and trial directors. Ribbon off areas that he does not want any vehicles on.

The Day of the trial:

- * Direct traffic to the appropriate parking areas.
- * Tour the grounds almost constantly looking for problems. Be especially watchful of unattended children and dogs tied on lines that are too long. If a parent or owner ignores your warning you have the authority to ask them to be removed from the grounds. Cranky dogs **MUST** be crated or removed from the grounds.
- * Keep an ear open for people calling or whistling to their dogs while the trial is in progress. Remind them that interfering with someone's run by doing that is grounds for dismissal from the trial.
- * Locate the owners of barking dogs and ask them to attend to the problem. Keep spectators well away from any barriers around the trial course.
- * Dog chains and cables should not be clipped to fence wires. This bends and eventually breaks them.
- * Dogs should not be allowed to lift their legs on livestock feed.
- * Dogs should not be tied where they will interfere with the normal operation of the property, such as water faucets and haystacks.
- * Dogs should not be allowed to harass resident livestock.
- * Hospitality will need to see that the judge and crews have cold or hot drinks and lunches. Keep receipts for the expense records.
- * After the trial check for gates left open, garbage, dog waste in high traffic areas etc. Check with the land owner to see if anything is amiss and try to make it right.

Last, but not least – **HAVE A GREAT TRIAL!!**