

Nose to the Ground

TrackWest Newsletter – June 2014

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Hill opposite old base camp on Trainer Road. 2005

President's Report



Hope you are all enjoying your training and being back in the wonderful Gnangara Pine Plantation. Firstly a huge thank you to all that came and helped at the Open Day in Whiteman Park and to all that are helping with training on a Saturday or Wednesday or both.

Don't forget to make your training fun and sometimes just do specific exercises i.e. hill work or starts or articles don't get bogged down just doing tracks and always remember the thrill of the chase of a runaway to get that enthusiasm back in your dogs and never be afraid to go back and do shorter delays to keep things fun and easy for the dogs. We can't do tracking without the dogs they are the only ones that can do this fantastic sport with us handling.

We are always looking for tracklayers and stewards so don't be shy we will take your tracklaying skills with open arms not just at tracking trials but also Track and Search trial bush and urban (i.e. streets).

Don't forget to come and participate in our Christmas in July and mark down in your diaries the AGM and our Presentation Dinner, even if you have not gained a title still come and help celebrate those that have done.

If there is anything you don't understand please ask sometimes we forget and don't explain enough so don't feel silly, just ask the question, as I have said before the only silly question is the one you don't ask.

Enjoy your tracking season

Gerry

Secretary's Report



And so begins another season.

Welcome to all the new members, you've made a great choice. Xmas in July is fast approaching; you will want to save the date, 12th July 2014, flyer attached. After the trial and yummy roast lunch there will be games, raffles and fancy dress. We look forward to seeing you there, friends and family welcome.

Our first trial was held 17 May, congratulations to all who participated. Please remember to thank your tracklayer; a great way to do this is to pay the \$5 for their roast lunch. For the new members who are not ready to enter themselves, laying a track or following up is a great way to learn. Judges are always willing to answer questions after the trial is finished.

Please do not stop just inside the gate on trial days, go directly to the morning tea area and check in with the Chief Steward. Training is conducted on trial days, however trainers and areas may be limited, the Chief Steward will advise you where to go.

I'll leave you with a very funny, very informative You Tube clip called Ray Tracking - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dG2rZicSQWk> In honour of Ray; remember to bring the food.

From the Editor's desk



An Important Note: There are two different Trial Secretaries, Judy is the Tracking Trial Secretary and Valeta is the Track & Search Trial Secretary. So bear this mind when sending your entries in.

Please send me that juicy gossip or exciting photos of your tracking experiences.

Lynne Jooste
jooste@iinet.net.au

DISCLAIMER

The information in this publication is of a general nature. The articles contained herein are not intended to provide a complete discussion on each subject and or issues canvassed. TrackWest Magazine does not accept any liability for any statements or any opinion.

**Please note the front gate
will be
dummy locked at 8.00am on
training days.**

**Please leave the gate closed
with the
padlock in position but not
“clicked” to lock.**



**Please send all Tracking Trial
entries to:**

**Judy Tsakalos
Trial Secretary
27 Nyunda Drive
Wanneroo, WA 6065**

Or put in Trial box at training

**Please send all Track & Search
Trial entries to:**

**Valeta Pethrick
47 Quarkum Street
Wanneroo, WA 6065**



Judging Jitters for an Urban Track & Search Trial



I couldn't believe my jitters when I judged the Urban Track & Search Trial for TrackWest on Saturday 24th May. It all seemed to go well until the butterflies started. I have put it down to the unusual environment – my own backyard, the streets of Ocean Reef? Could that be it?

Yes that was it. I had been so used to judging in the tall pines, dirt ground and wild bush beneath my feet. Days before the trial I had in my mind planned the tracks, knowing exactly where I have walked countless of times with my dog by my side. So on the Thursday I walked the tracks this time with my little two year old girl, my Dad, who was the tracklayer for two of the tracks and Ozzie my adopted dog. This was a leisurely stroll with great laughs at Haley all while checking the distances.

Saturday morning started with an early rise and the fear of walking a track in the five o'clock morning light – well it gave a great sense of what a walking a night track would feel like. The streets look and feel very different on an early autumn morning. A couple of hours passed and then it hit me again. That nervous feeling. Each of the three tracks ended in a busy park – especially busy on a Saturday morning. Aus Kick - an oval filled with five year old boys kicking footies. Grass Hopper Soccer – more five year old boys kicking a soccer ball and then the skate park.....luckily it was a rainy morning and there was no one on the slippery skate park. A few more hours and then off to judge decked in fluoro vests. There was a briefing for the safety steward on those busy road crossings and parks. Then the nerves had gone.....

The familiar feeling of watching a handler and dog team work the track. Then the joyous feeling and the excitement of letting the handler know they have passed. I was fortunate enough to experience that feeling and all three dogs passed. Congratulations to Valeta & Caddy, Carol & Indie on TSDX Ch. Test 7 and Louise & Basil on TSDX Test 5.





Christmas In July

12th July 2014

After Trial held on that day
(approx 12.30)



Come and join us for lots of fun!

Christmas Fancy Dress Parade

(dog and handler)

Games and Raffles

CATERED ROAST LUNCH

BYO - Please Drink Responsibly

\$12 per person

RSVP: Annette annette@perthtrainingcentre.com.au
Corinne corinne@fiv.com.au



TrackWest invites members to spend an evening with Tracking judge Miss Tikki Friezer whilst enjoying dinner at the Kingsway Bar & Bistro.



Date: 8th June

Time: 7.30pm

Address: 211 Kingsway, Darch

RSVP: Natasha n.sherman@bigpond.com

TRACKING'S LINE OF COMMUNICATION

By G D Murray

Most dog handlers think of their long line as a piece of equipment. But it is more than that.

I can't tell you how many times I have seen dog handlers snap on their long line to their dogs harness and went along for the ride. They fail to realize that the line is a physical link between the dog and their hand. Other than the length of the line it is no different than rubbing your dog's ear while doing obedience.

The long line can be a very strong communication tool between the dog and handler. With proper use the communication flows back and forth all the time during the track. It uses a language that is only known by the dog and handler which both learn and grow with from the first training track. It is refined throughout the years but all too often I see only the dog using it and the handler blindly following.

Let's start at the beginning and see if we cannot develop a greater understanding of the long line, its purpose and how to communicate with our dogs through it.

The first step is to choose the right line. Like all tools of the trade there are personal preferences. I have seen all types of lines used for tracking, rope, climbing rope, leather, and all types of webbing. They all have some good points and some bad. I personally stay away from any form of rope as it has a tendency to burn your hands as it slides through. Yet it is strong, easy to obtain and inexpensive. Leather is costly but has the most natural feel and spring to it. The down side is that when you buy a 20 foot line after a number of tracks you soon have a 30 foot line and as time wears on a 40 foot line which can break as the line pulls thinner and thinner.

The line used by most handlers these days is webbing about 3/8" to 1/2" is width. It is strong, inexpensive and long lasting. Be sure to buy a quality webbing which is supple so it won't be too hard on your hands.

Line length is something there will always be a lot of discussion about. I have seen handlers track with lines from as short as 6 feet all the way up to 30-40 feet in length. Personally I feel that 20 feet is about the right length. This puts you far enough back to see your dog and read his body language. It also allows you when your dog indicates track loss to stop, circle the dog and be standing right on the corner. This should insure that the dog will re-locate the track somewhere in the arch of the line and therefore you don't blow a corner. Another point for those of you who are doing criminal work the 20 feet gives you some distance if your dog tracks right up on a suspect and you need time and distance to react.

No matter what line you choose there will be numerous times when your dog comes in close to you and you pull in the slack. Just as you have the line down to 6 to 8 feet the dog hits the track, pulls hard into the harness and the line pulls through your hand causing friction burn. Occupational hazard I guess! Some handlers wear gloves while they are tracking.

Personally I don't. I feel that bare hands listen a lot better to the line and what it is saying.

As far as the friction burns go I feel that if I get one I deserve one. I should of been paying attention, getting off my butt and going with the dog if he has indicated the track. A number of friction burns can teach a handler a whole lot.

A handler's primary job in line work is to keep the line from distracting the dog. Keep it out of the dog's way and not let it get tangled. All the time this little rope ballet is going on you must keep a steady tension on the line constantly.

This is where the communication through the line begins, at the constant tension. Any change in the tension, increased, or decreased is telling you something. This change in tension can be produced by the dog or the handler. No matter who changes the tension for whatever reason it should be telling the other something.

The proper tension on the line will keep it straight in the air from the dogs harness to your hand. I keep the line between my index finger and thumb letting the last foot or so fall down through my hand so I can grab it with the whole of my hand if I have to. This allows me to change the tension on the line from as little as a couple lbs. pressure (finger and thumb only) to pulling the dog to a complete stop (the whole hand).

Let's start from the middle and work up and down with the amount of tension on the line.

You are on the track, the dog is tracking well, and everything is going just fine. The tension on the line is enough to keep the line straight from the harness to your hand. At this point you know everything is O.K. and so does the dog. Any change in that tension and something is being said. Keep in mind that all this communication is in conjunction with you reading the dog's body language.

As you track along the dog starts to lift his head and move it from side to side as if looking for the track. The second he does this you start to increase tension on the line. This increase is a question to the dog. Are you on the track? If his head goes back to the ground and he increases tension back into the harness and the line he is saying "yeah I'm on track and here it is". The handler then eases off the tension until it is back to the point where everything is normal (straight line from harness to hand) If as you put tension on, the dog lifts his head, relieving tension you keep adding tension quickly but evenly until a point where you have the dog stopped and starting to turn into a circle at the end of the line. At this point your dog has given you a track loss and most likely a corner. As the dog swings through the arch of the long line you should be standing on the corner. Somewhere in the circle he now is searching for the track in he should hit the track.

When the dog hits the track he will give you a head turn that will show you where the track is going and then follow it with his body. This will increase the tension on the line. He is now saying to you through the line "here it is let's go". While training a new dog each and every time this happens your response would be "Good Boy" and the second you praise him you let the tension off the line and go with the dog. This conditions the dog how to communicate through the line back to you and as time goes on the dog will give stronger and stronger track relocations. It also gives him physical praise through the release of tension in the line.

In time this increase and decrease of tension through the line becomes a language between dog and handler. More can be said through that line than you could ever imagine.

So the basics in line communication are. Increase tension from the handler-Are you on track? Increase tension from the dog-I'm on track or here is the track. Decrease tension from the handler-Good Boy I'm following you. Decrease tension from the dog-I've lost the track and I'm looking.

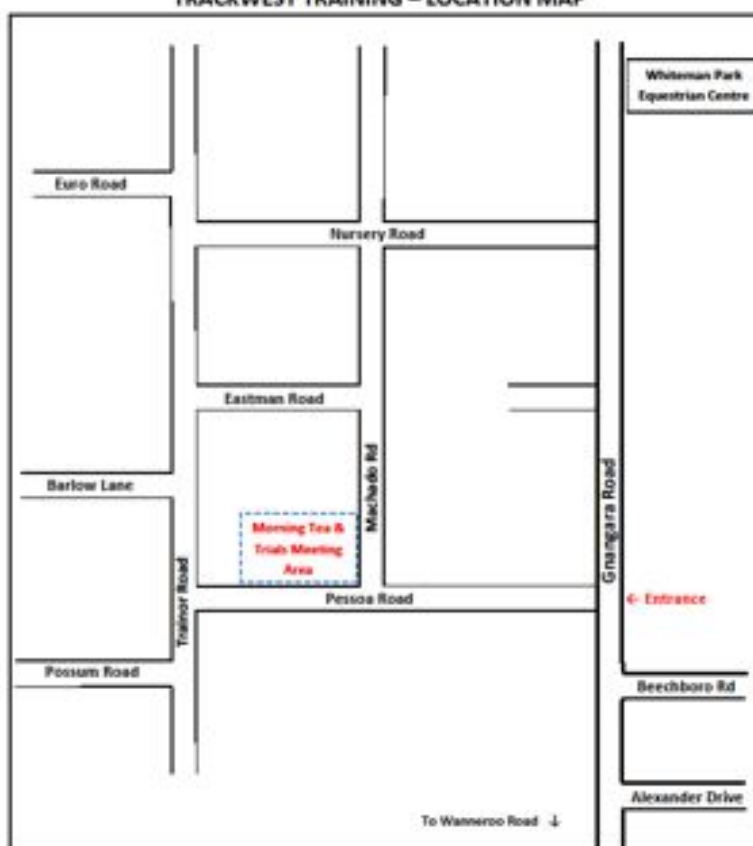
Proper line work is more than just snapping the long line to the harness and following your dog on a track. So let's stop being dead weight on the end of the line for our dogs to drag around. Let's use our lines, ourselves and our dogs to the fullest, communicate he may be trying to tell you something!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

7 th /11 th June	Tracking Trial
21 st /22 nd /25 th June	Track & Search Trial
28 th June/2 nd July	Tracking Trial
12 th /16 th July	Tracking Trial (Christmas in July)
26 th /27 th /30 th July	Track & Search Trial
9 th /13 th August	Tracking Trial
16 th /17 th /20 th August	Track & Search Trial
30 th August/3 rd September	Tracking Trial
13 th /17 th September	Tracking Trial
20 th September	End of year breakfast
15 th October	Annual General Meeting
15 th November	Presentation Dinner



TRACKWEST TRAINING – LOCATION MAP



TRACKWEST DOG CLUB (INC)

NEW MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL FORM - 2014

Please send to:
The Secretary
Natasha Douglas
54 Mulligan Drive
Greenwood WA 6024



DATE OF JOINING: /...../.....
(AS RECEIPTED BY THE SECRETARY OR TREASURER)

<i>Memberships for 1st September 2013 - 31st August 2014</i>		<i>Ticket</i>
SINGLE (NEW) <i>Including Nomination Fee \$10</i> <i>Payable by new members on joining, or for members rejoining after a lapse in membership.</i>	\$45	
FAMILY (NEW) <i>Including Nomination Fee \$10</i> <i>Payable by new members on joining, or for members rejoining after a lapse in membership.</i>	\$60	
RENEWAL SINGLE	\$35	
RENEWAL FAMILY	\$50	

Membership No:

[illegible]

(please print neatly)

NAME _____

Phone (Home) _____

Mobile:

Member's CAWA No: (if applicable) _____

ADDRESS

P/C

E-mail Address

I/We hereby apply for membership and agree to be bound by TrackWest Dog Club (Inc) Rules and Regulations.

initial

PTO for adding your Dog/s information and signature.

1.
DOG'S PEDIGREE NAME _____
PET NAME _____
DOG'S REG No _____ BREED _____
DATE OF BIRTH ____ / ____ / ____ SEX _____
Dog's CAWA NUMBER _____ Sterilized? YES NO (circle)

2.
DOG'S PEDIGREE NAME _____
PET NAME _____
DOG'S REG No _____ BREED _____
DATE OF BIRTH ____ / ____ / ____ SEX _____
Dog's CAWA NUMBER _____ Sterilized? YES NO (circle)

DO YOU HOLD A CURRENT FIRST AID CERTIFICATE? YES NO

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS:

Name:

Relationship:

Phone: Mobile:

In case of Emergency do you have any relevant medical issues/allergies? (optional)

I/We hereby apply for membership and agree to be bound by TrackWest Dog Club (Inc) Rules and Regulations.

Applicant's Signature(s).

Date

IMPORTANT

**YOU AND YOUR DOG MUST BE A FINANCIAL MEMBER OF CAWA,
BEFORE YOU ARE PERMITTED, TO ENTER A TRIAL.**