



# TRACK STAR

## Rules & Regulations **2024**

TrackStar is a progressive scheme aiming to promote teamwork and encourage people to have fun whilst earning titles with their dog. As such, the levels are designed to develop skills and build confidence as a team with each advancement.

TrackStar can be a great way to build confidence and strengthen your bond by working together and allowing your dog to lead the way. Please help us keep this a positive experience for everyone; be kind, be supportive, and have fun with your dog.

### 1.0 General Rules

#### 2.0 TITLES

2.1 Level One (TS1)

2.2 Level Two (TS2)

2.3 Level Three (TS3)

#### 3.0 BADGES

3.1 Urban Tracker Badge

3.2 All Terrain Badge

3.3 All Weather Badge

3.4 Water Badge

3.5 1KM Badge

3.6 2KM Badge

3.7 3KM Badge

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX B: Video Submission Criteria

APPENDIX C: Water Depth for Water Badge

## 1.0 General Rules

1. TrackStar is a combination of tracking and trailing skills, so dogs are expected to utilise both ground scenting and air scenting when working. As such, small deviations from the laid track may be expected when working.
2. All track lengths are for **laid tracks**, not as worked by the dog.
3. When there is significant deviation from the laid track, Scent & Track UK Assessors will discuss together to make a final decision on whether the track should be considered a Qualifying assessment, taking into account weather conditions, track age, and terrain.
4. The Team (**one specified handler and one dog**) should work together to follow the laid track, with the dog working ahead of the handler as much as possible.
  - a. **The same handler should work the same dog for all Qualifying assessments.**
5. All articles must be found for a Qualifying assessment.
6. Dogs are required to indicate every placed article on the laid track
  - a. An indication is considered a distinct, visible behaviour change that alerts the handler to the presence of an article. This may be a passive indication such as down with the article between the front paws, a stare and freeze, a stare and await handler, or an active indication such as picking up the article
  - b. There is no expected set behaviour, and teams should not be penalised providing the indication is clear and safe
7. The safety, welfare, and wellbeing of the team should be a priority at all times. Handlers, helpers, Scent and Track UK Assessors, Tracklayers, and any spectators **must** bear this in mind throughout training and assessment.
8. Tracks for assessment must be completed with the dog wearing a close-fitting harness, with long-line attached to the back of the harness. If there is a valid medical or behavioural reason that a harness cannot be worn, this must be discussed with Scent and Track UK prior to starting training.
9. TrackStar sessions may be held at a private venue or in a public space. Dogs must be under control at all times.
10. Laid tracks must not go through livestock, crops, or horses. If livestock or horses are moved on to a laid track prior to the laid track being worked by a Team, the track must be aborted and re-laid elsewhere.
11. Laid tracks must not be laid on private land without express permission **from the landowner.**

## 2.0 TITLES

1. Three (3) individual tracks at each level must be assessed as Qualifying to achieve the relevant title and certificate. Non-Qualifying tracks do not count toward achieving the relevant title and certificate.

2. Titles and certificates must be attempted in order. **Successfully working a track for a higher level will only count as a Qualifying track for the lowest title the Team is working toward.**
3. Attempting Titles and certificates is *optional* for each Team participating in the TrackStar training scheme
4. Titles and certificates may be earned within the TrackStar scheme alongside or separate from Badges
5. Achieving a Title allows **the Title** to be displayed alongside the dog's name on Certificates and recognition in the format "[DogName] [Title]". ie. "Jenga TS3"

## 2.1 Level One (TS1)

To achieve Level One and the TS1 title, the Team must complete 3 separate tracks of 250m each.

All 3 tracks must be:

- 250m laid track
- **Minimum 90%** Single Terrain (grass)
- Be 30-45min old prior to beginning the track
- Include 2 turns
- Include 2 articles; 1 placed on a turn, 1 at the end of the track.

1 track may be an owner scent track.

2 tracks must be Blind to handler on a Different Scent.

2 tracks may be completed by video submission (details for video submission below), and at least 1 track must be done in person with an Scent & Track UK Assessors.

Tracks done in person must be Blind and Different Scent. Some assistance is allowed from the Scent & Track UK Assessors and/or Tracklayer, but time should be given for the Team to work out the track for themselves.

A start point and start direction will be given at the beginning of each Blind track.

Articles must be fabric and no bigger than 10cm x 5cm x 3cm.

## 2.2 Level Two (TS2)

To achieve Level Two and the TS2 title, the Team must complete 3 separate tracks of 500m each.

All 3 tracks must be:

- 500m laid track

- Two Terrain changes, which may include returning to original terrain, or using three different terrains. Terrains may include short grass, tall grass, mud, woodland, tarmac, sand, dry dirt, gravel, moorland, water, or concrete.
- Be 60min old prior to beginning the track
- Include 3 turns
- Include 3 articles; 2 articles prior to the final turn but at least 100m apart, 1 at the end of the track
- Blind to dog and handler
- Each on a Different **Non-Household** Scent

Tracks done in person may allow some minimal assistance from the Scent & Track UK Assessors and/or Tracklayer, but must not guide or indicate the articles. There will be no pre-emptive guidance.

Articles must be fabric and no bigger than 10cm x 5cm x 3cm.

### **2.3 Level Three (TS3)**

To achieve Level Three and the TS3 title, the Team must complete 3 separate tracks, 2 of which must be 700m.

2 tracks must:

- Be a 700m laid track
- Include at least 3 Terrain changes; terrains may include short grass, tall grass, mud, woodland, tarmac, sand, dry dirt, gravel, moorland, water, or concrete.
- Be 120min old prior to beginning the track
- Include at least 3 turns
- Include 2 articles; 1 article at least 200m prior to the end of the track, 1 at the end of the track.
- Include 1 Physical Boundary Crossing
- Blind to dog and handler
- Each on a Different non-Household Scent

At least 1x 700m track must be done in person with a Scent & Track UK Assessor.

Tracks done in person may allow some minimal assistance from the Scent & Track UK Assessors and/or Tracklayer, but must not guide or indicate the articles. There will be no pre-emptive guidance.

Articles should be no bigger than 10cm x 3cm x 0.5cm and must be leather, metal, or plastic. The Scent & Track UK Assessor will choose the articles when the track is done in person.

1 track must:

- Be a 350m laid track
- Double Blind
- Include at least 1 Terrain change
- Include at least 1 turn
- Include 1 article at the end of the track
- Be 45mins old prior to beginning the track
- Be a non-Household Scent
- must be done in person with a Scent & Track UK Assessor

The article description and start direction will be given to the handler at the beginning of the track. No further assistance will be given.

Articles will be no larger than 8cm x 8cm x 5cm, and must be leather, metal, plastic, or fabric. The Scent & Track UK Assessor will choose the article(s).

### 3.0 BADGES

1. Badges may be earned within the TrackStar scheme alongside or separate from Titles
2. Badges are standalone and optional
3. For all badges, only a start point and direction should be given as guidance on the laid track
4. All articles should be no larger than 8cm x 8cm x 2cm
5. Each badge has individual qualifying criteria. Providing all criteria are met, a single worked track may count for up to 2 badges
6. Worked tracks for badges may not count toward levels and titling

#### 3.1 Urban Tracker Badge

The qualifying Team must successfully complete **3** individual tracks to earn this badge.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 600m (laid track)
- include 2 articles, placed at minimum 250m apart, with one at the end of the track
- include a minimum of 3 turns
- Be 45min old prior to beginning the track
- Be laid in an urban environment (housing or industrial landscape) on a hard surface (asphalt, concrete, paving) for the majority of the laid track. Up to 100m may be on an alternative surface to account for crossings etc within the environment
- Be Blind to dog and handler

At least one track must be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor on a Different Non-Household Scent.

Teams, Helpers, and Tracklayers **must** consider the safety of the Team at all times, particularly when working in the vicinity of potential vehicular movement.

Helpers/Tracklayers should assist as spotters if working near traffic, and **the Team is** expected to work under safe control.

#### 3.2 All Terrain Tracker

The qualifying Team must successfully complete 5 individual tracks to earn this badge.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 600m (laid track)
- include 2 articles, placed at minimum 250m apart, with one at the end of the track
- include a minimum of 3 turns
- Be 60min old prior to beginning the track

- Be each laid in a distinct, different environment. Different terrains may include urban, moorland, natural woodland, planted forest, sand, turf, or significantly frozen ground
- Be Blind to dog and handler

Effort should be made to ensure each laid track is in a distinctly different environment. If the handler believes a terrain is sufficiently different to a previous track but may not visibly appear so on a video submission, a description and reasoning may be submitted prior to tracking so that Scent and Track UK can confirm whether it will meet criteria.

At least one track must be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor on a Different Non-Household Scent.

### 3.3 All Weather Badge

The qualifying Team must successfully complete 6 individual tracks to earn this badge.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 600m (laid track) excepting Snow conditions and Warm & Dry conditions, which may be 350m
- include 2 articles, placed at minimum 250m apart, with one at the end of the track
- include a minimum of 3 turns
- Be 60min old prior to beginning the track, excepting snow conditions, which may be 45mins old prior to beginning the track
- Be laid and worked in the following weather conditions:
  - Overcast & Dry (no rain)
  - Cold & Dry (5-12C, no rain)
  - Rain
  - Warm & Dry (18C+, no rain)
  - Snow (minimum 1cm snow settled on the ground and actively falling snow during the worked track)
  - Wind (20-25mph)
- Be Blind to dog and handler

All tracks for the All Weather badge may be done via video submission, but optionally can be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor providing this is declared beforehand.

Teams, Helpers, and Tracklayers **must** consider the safety of the Team at all times. Dogs do not regulate body temperature well, especially when working, and sufficient care must be taken to ensure their wellbeing throughout. This may include boots to protect paws from warm or ice/cold surfaces, or coats in cold or wet weather.

### 3.4 Water Badge

The qualifying Team must successfully complete 3 individual tracks to earn this badge.

The test of Skill with the Water Badge is to have a Team pick up a scent after a disturbance by a natural obstacle. At no point should any dog or handler be out of their depth/swimming in water, or tracking within water for any appreciable distance.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 600m (laid track)
- include 2 articles, with one article placed before the water's edge, and one article at the end of the track after a water crossing. Alternatively, the final article may be placed either in the water at least 15cm from the edge in the case of a land crossing (ie. footbridge)
- include a minimum of 3 turns
- Be 45min old prior to beginning the track
- Be Blind to dog and handler
- Be laid in proximity to running water
- Include at least one water crossing of at least 1m edge-to-edge over running water of a depth no greater than the hock height of the dog (see Appendix C)

All tracks for the Water badge may be done via video submission, but optionally can be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor providing this is declared beforehand.

Teams, Helpers, and Tracklayers **must** consider the safety of the Team at all times. Always check that everyone is comfortable and familiar with the area chosen, and water tracks must not be completed alone. Water levels may change quickly and unpredictably; Teams, Helpers and Tracklayers must not take any risks around water that may endanger anyone involved with the track.

### 3.4 1KM Badge

The qualifying Team must successfully complete 3 individual tracks to earn this badge.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 1000m (laid track)
- include 2 articles, placed at minimum 250m apart, with one at the end of the track
- include a minimum of 5 turns
- Be 60min old prior to beginning the track
- Be Blind to dog and handler
- Be laid in any environment or weather conditions



At least one track must be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor on a Different Non-Household Scent.

### **3.5 2KM Badge**

The qualifying Team must successfully complete 2 individual tracks to earn this badge.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 2000m (laid track)
- include 2 articles, one article placed between 100-200m of the start, the other article at the end of the track
- include a minimum of 5 turns
- Be 60min old prior to beginning the track
- Be Blind to dog and handler
- Be laid in any environment or weather conditions

At least one track must be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor on a Different Non-Household Scent.

### **3.6 3KM Badge**

The qualifying Team must successfully complete 1 individual track to earn this badge.

Each track must:

- be a minimum of 3000m (laid track)
- include 2 articles, one article placed between 100-200m of the start, the other article at the end of the track
- include a minimum of 5 turns
- Be 60min old prior to beginning the track
- Be Blind to dog and handler
- Be laid in any environment or weather conditions

All tracks for the 3KM badge may be done via video submission, but optionally can be completed with a Scent and Track UK Assessor providing this is declared beforehand.

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*Last Revision: 19/01/2024*

*Please note Scent and Track UK reserve the right to revise, adapt, or edit these Rules & Regulations at any time, **but will always be done at least once per annum**. Revisions will be indicated in **red**.*

## APPENDIX A

### Glossary of Terms

<b>ARTICLE</b>	A small scent item left on the laid track to be indicated. Size and material depend on level.
<b>BLIND</b>	Details and route of the laid track are unknown to the named person's and the dog.
<b>DOUBLE BLIND</b>	Details and route of the laid track are unknown to the named person's, the dog, the Scent and Track UK Assessor, and any spectators.
<b>DIFFERENT SCENT</b>	An alternative scent to the dog's usual handler, provided by a different person or animal.
<b>DIFFERENT NON-HOUSEHOLD SCENT</b>	An alternative scent to any person or animal currently living in the same household as the dog and handler.
<b>INDICATION</b>	A distinct, visible behaviour change that alerts the handler to the presence of an article.
<b>LAID TRACK</b>	A deliberate scent route laid by a person or animal.
<b>MARKED JUNCTION</b>	A visible crossroads or convergence of worn routes, such as footpaths crossing, or multiple gateways in a small area.
<b>PHYSICAL BOUNDARY CROSSING</b>	A boundary that requires extra effort to cross, such as a wall crossing, closed gate, or footpath stile.
<b>TEAM</b>	The combination of one dog and one handler.
<b>TRACKLAYER</b>	The person or animal who deliberately laid a scent route.
<b>WORKED TRACK</b>	A route worked by the team following the laid track.

## **APPENDIX B: Video Submissions**

Videos of a worked track may be submitted for assessment with supplementary evidence, where previously outlined. Video submissions are an optional alternative, as handlers may choose to complete all assessments in person.

1. Videos may be recorded using a bodycam on the handler, or by a helper following the Team.
2. Videos must show the full track up to rewarding the end of the track/final article.
3. Videos must be a single continuous video with no editing. Slides at the end of the footage may be included with additional information.
4. Videos must include audio where handler and helper can be heard.
5. A helper can be used as a Tracklayer unless Double Blind tracks are required.
6. A Tracking App must be used, providing a final map showing the laid track and the track as worked by the dog/handler team. The app-recording device must be on either the dog or handler.
7. Ensure laid track and worked track are different colours and clearly labelled.
8. Distance must be displayed for both laid and worked track.
9. Map must be in "Satellite" view.
10. Laid and worked track may be submitted individually alongside the overlay if this makes the required information clearer.
11. If submitting evidence of a Qualifying track for a specific Badge, the terrain and/or conditions must be specified.
12. Evidence must be submitted no later than 6 weeks after the track date.

The following information must also be included: Dog's Name, Handler Surname, TrackStar Team ID, and the Level or Badge for which evidence is being submitted, Date Attempted.



## APPENDIX C: Water Depth for Water Badge

Water depth must be **no higher** than the individual dog's hock when attempting a water crossing.



The hock is defined as the *calcaneus*, the bony protrusion at the top of the tarsal bone on the hind limb. The hock height should be approximated from when the dog is stood square with the tarsal bone perpendicular to the ground.

The approximation of hock height indicates a different water depth for each individual dog depending on their size, and should always be estimated conservatively for the safety of the team.

<b>CORRECT</b> WATER DEPTH BASED ON HOCK HEIGHT	<b>INCORRECT</b> WATER DEPTH BASED ON HOCK HEIGHT
 A black silhouette of a dog wading in water. The water level is indicated by blue wavy lines and is below the hock. A red arrow points to the hock, labeled "HOCK".	 A black silhouette of a dog wading in water. The water level is indicated by blue wavy lines and is above the hock. A red arrow points to the hock, labeled "HOCK".