



United States Canine Scent Sports™

Official Rulebook

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Thank you for your interest in United States Canine Scent Sports (USCSS™) where we strive to keep the activity and game of Scent Work fun for all involved, including the dogs, competitors, officials, volunteers and trial hosts. Our rules and regulations are designed to be clear, concise and as simple as possible, and our sanctioned events should be inviting, relaxing and fair yet challenging while promoting a safe and enjoyable atmosphere for the dogs, handlers and spectators. Let's get to sniffing!

Mission Statement

The goal of United States Canine Scent Sports (USCSS™) is to provide a user-friendly organization committed to promoting Scent Work events that are fun for the dog, the handler and the event hosts. USCSS™ strives to allow any dog to participate in Scent Work while fostering and encouraging the bond between dog and handler. We are dedicated to growing this amazing sport while maintaining our standards.

Who We Are

USCSS™ was founded by Julie Sandoval and Daneen Fox, both lifelong dog sport enthusiasts, trainers and avid Scent Work competitors. After seeing firsthand the huge demand for more trials and fun competition options for the sport of Scent Work, USCSS™ was born. Under their watchful eye and steady hand, USCSS™ is poised to address this need while keeping competitions challenging, fair and exciting for canine and human alike.

Building a Community

USCSS™ seeks to facilitate the building of friendships and a supportive community. Trials should be a social event for people to share their passion and love for their dogs! In this vein competitors are permitted to crate out of their cars or, when space permits, create a tented area outside of their cars, and non-reactive dogs may be set-up in a crating style community similar to those seen at agility trials. It is the owner's responsibility to know their dog and what is best to set them up to succeed; approved Affiliates/Trial Hosts may choose to offer a Reactive Dog Area at USCSS™ sanctioned events. Food is a great way to bring people together and build a level of comradery. We encourage all Affiliates/Trial Hosts to offer food for sale or to assign a potluck coordinator. Affiliates/Trial Hosts are also required to display an American flag and begin each day of the trial with the playing of the National Anthem for the United States of America.

Sportsmanship Code

USCSS™ expects all competitors, participants and spectators to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. This includes being courteous to fellow competitors, spectators, Judges, CSDs and volunteers and being both a good winner and gracious loser. Any and all verbal or physical



abuse toward a dog will not be tolerated under any circumstances and may result in a competitor being dismissed from a class, trial or prevented from participating in future USCSS™ events.

Maintaining Integrity of the Trial

USCSS™ encourages competitors to run multiple dogs (first dog for a titling run, all other dogs For Exhibition Only), watch other searches of their fellow competitors once their titling dog has run and welcomes spectators in all search areas where they can be safely accommodated. However, USCSS™ also expects any and all individuals who participate in any sanctioned USCSS™ trial to maintain the integrity of the trial at all times. As such, it is ***mandatory*** that all participants, be it a competitor, volunteer, trial organizer, trial official, trial staff member or spectator, to refrain from discussing any and all details related to the search areas, hide placements or the specifics of any Class or Game until the conclusion of the trial. When a competitor has finished a Class or Game, they may share a simple thumbs up or thumbs down. Any individual who breaks this rule and ***does*** discuss any of the Classes, Games, hide placements or search areas during the trial will first receive a verbal warning. A second infraction will result in this individual, and any person they are speaking to, to receive a NQ for that Class or Game. Should this happen a third time, USCSS™ reserves the right to dismiss this individual from the trial where this third infraction occurred. Fairness is paramount and USCSS™ will not tolerate the level of disrespect toward the organization, trial officials, staff, volunteers and competitors shown by those who would discuss these specifics at a trial.

Who May Participate

Eligible Dogs

All dogs over 6-months of age may compete in Scent Work. USCSS™ welcomes both mixed breed and purebred dogs and encourages the participation of dogs who are deaf, blind or may have limited ambulatory capabilities, amputations or use ambulatory carts but are otherwise in good health. Bitches in season are eligible to compete but must wear panties and will run at the end of the class run order. Reactive dogs are welcome to participate in USCSS™ events; USCSS™ suggests reactive dogs wear red bandanas to assist other competitors in keeping their distance.



In summary, the following dogs are *eligible* to compete in USCSS™ events:

- Dogs 6-months of age or older
- Dogs of any breed, purebred or mixed breed
- Blind, deaf or dogs with amputations or who use ambulatory carts
- Bitches in season but they must wear panties
- Reactive dogs, and USCSS™ suggests they wear red bandannas

Eligible Handlers

Handlers must be at least 10 years old in order to compete. All minors attending a sanctioned USCSS™ event must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at all times.

Handlers with Multiple Dogs Participating in Scent Work

USCSS™ allows competitors to switch dogs of equal level in Variable Trials or to enter multiple dogs in trials where multiple levels are offered. Additionally in a Variable Trial, a competitor may run multiple dogs in the same Class. The first dog a competitor runs is the only dog that will earn a score. Any subsequent dog the competitor runs in the same Class will be For Exhibition Only. Affiliates who host multi-level trials must list on the Premium whether separate or nested search areas will be used for the various level searches. If completely separate search areas are used for each class Level, then a handler with multiple dogs competing in two different Levels could title both dogs, one in each level. If the trial site does ***not*** allow for separate search areas to be used for each Level, and hides will be nested or added to a lower-level Class to allow the upper-level competitors to run, a competitor with multiple dogs at two-different levels would only be able to run one dog for a titling run and all other dogs would need to run For Exhibition Only. If the lower level dog is run as titling, then all other dogs run will be FEO. If the higher level dog is run as titling, then the lower level dog will be run FEO in the higher level AFTER the titling dog has run.

Dogs That May Not Participate

Ineligible Dogs

While we understand some dogs may be reactive, those dogs who are **aggressive to humans or other dogs** are ***not*** eligible to participate USCSS™ events. Should a dog behave aggressively by lunging, snapping and any other dangerous actions toward another competitor, be it human or canine, the Judge, CSD, trial secretary, trial worker, volunteer or any other person attending a sanctioned USCSS™ event, this dog will be immediately dismissed from the event and barred from attending any future USCSS™ events. Dogs who are lame, have stitches, open wounds or are ill are ineligible to compete. Lactating bitches are ineligible to compete.



In summary, the following dogs are *ineligible* to compete in USCSS™ events:

- Dogs aggressive toward people or other dogs
- Dogs who are lame, have stitches, open wounds or are ill
- Lactating bitches

Dog Registration

In order to enter USCSS™ sanctioned events, each dog must be registered. [This one-time registration fee is for a lifetime membership and includes the eligibility to enter USCSS™ sanctioned events and the monitoring of the dog's annual and lifetime scores.](#) Registration costs \$25.00 per dog.

Odor Used in Trials

USCSS™ sanctioned events will use the following three odors:

- **Birch** ("Sweet Birch" aka *Betula Lenta*)
- **Anise** ("Aniseed" aka *Pimpinella Anisum*)
- **Clove** ("Clove Bud" aka *Eugenia Caryophyllata*)

Trial Elements

- **Interior:** Odor is placed inside any structure with a roof and a minimum of 4 walls.
- **Exterior:** Odor is placed anywhere outdoors, preferably in an area without a roof. Covered areas must have a maximum of 2 walls.
- **Vehicle:** Odor is placed on any vehicle or item used for transportation. Odor will ***not*** be placed inside or on the undercarriage of any vehicle. Vehicles or items used for transportation of people, animals or things may be used and these include, but are not limited to, cars, trucks, SUVs, tractors, boats, buses, forklifts, wheelbarrows, etc.
- **Containers:** Odor is placed inside any type of container.



Trial Levels

USCSS™ offers five (5) Levels of Classes. Affiliates/Trial Hosts may choose to offer single or multi-level trials.

- **Novice A:** Open to ***inexperienced*** competitors, the competitor and not the dog, who have never titled in Scent Work.
- **Novice B:** Open to ***experienced*** competitors, the competitor and not the dog, who have earned a NW1, equivalent or higher in Scent Work.
- **Intermediate:** Competitors must have completed the Novice A or B requirements.
- **Advanced:** Competitors must have completed the Intermediate requirements.
- **Senior:** Competitors must have completed the Advanced requirements.
- **Master:** Competitors must have completed the Senior requirements.

Hide Elevation

USCSS™ believes in maintaining standards for each Level and this includes increasing the potential height limit for the hides as competitors advance through the Levels.

- **Novice A and B:** Hides will be no higher than 2’
- **Intermediate:** Hides will be no higher than 2’.
- **Advanced:** Hides will be no higher than 3’.
- **Senior:** Hides will be no higher than 4’.
- **Master:** Hides will be no higher than 5’.

Hide Accessibility

In maintaining standards for each Level of competition, USSCS™ believes newer dogs should have access to the hide, whereas higher level teams should be able to detect inaccessible hides.

- **Novice A and B:** Hides must be accessible to the dog.
- **Intermediate:** Hides must be accessible to the dog.
- **Advanced:** Hides may be inaccessible to the dog.
- **Senior:** Hides may be inaccessible to the dog.
- **Master:** Hides may be inaccessible to the dog.



Distractors

In maintaining standards for each Level of competition, USCSS™ believes it is necessary to introduce distractors in searches at the higher Levels. These distractors can be used in Container, Interior and Exterior searches, but will **not** be used in Vehicle searches.

- **Novice A and B:** No distractors will be in the search area.
- **Intermediate:** No distractors will be in the search area.
- **Advanced:** No distractors will be in the search area.
- **Senior:** Up to 2 distractors will be in the search area (toys or novel odor but **no** food).
- **Master:** Up to 3 distractors will be in the search area (toys or novel odor but **no** food).

Items that are **not** permitted to be used as distractors at USCSS™ trials: food of any kind, other essential oils (e.g. lavender, myrrh, etc.), noxious chemicals (e.g. bleach), and critter litter (e.g. rat litter).

Trial Types

USCSS™ offers two types of trials: **Classic** and **Variable**. Affiliates/Trial Hosts may choose from offering either type when hosting a sanctioned USCSS™ event, and Affiliates/Trial Hosts can decide whether to offer single or multi-level trials.

Classic Trials

In these trials, competitors will search all four (4) Elements: Interior, Exterior, Vehicle, and Container Classes in a single day and at the same Level. This is the only trial in which a “Classic” title can be earned. However, if a competitor does not earn their title at a Classic trial, any and all Q’s earned will count toward the general USCSS™ title requirements. Affiliates/Trial Hosts have the choice to offer single or multi-level trials.



CLASSIC TRIAL LEVELS & TITLES

LEVELS	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	REQUIREMENTS
Novice	DDCN	Detection Dog Classic Novice	Birch	1 hide in each Element and a Q in each Element in one day.
Intermediate	DDCI	Detection Dog Classic Intermediate	Birch and Anise	2 hides in each Element and a Q in each Element in one day.
Advanced	DDCA	Detection Dog Classic Advanced	Birch, Anise and Clove	3 hides in each Element and a Q in each Element in one day.
Senior	DDCS	Detection Dog Classic Senior	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	1-3 hides in each Element and a Q in each Element in one day.
Master	DDCM	Detection Dog Classic Master	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	0-4 hides in each Element (any Element can be clear) and a Q in each Element in one day.

Variable Trials

These trials offer both the Affiliate/Trial Host and competitor the most flexibility as any combination of the nine (9) **Classic** or **Games Classes** are offered. Any and all Q's earned at a Variable Trial are counted toward a competitor's title requirements.



Class Type

USCSS™ offers a total of nine (9) Classes: four (4) **Classic Classes** and five (5) **Game Classes**. Official USSCS™ Variable trials may contain any combination of these nine (9) class types.

Classic Classes

Classic Classes are based on traditional competitions and dovetail nicely with other organizations.

- **Interior:** Odor is placed inside any structure with a roof and a minimum of 4 walls.
- **Exterior:** Odor is placed anywhere outdoors, preferably in an area without a roof. Covered areas must have a maximum of 2 walls.
- **Vehicle:** Odor is placed on any vehicle or item used for transportation. Odor will ***not*** be placed inside or on the undercarriage of any vehicle. Vehicles or items used for transportation of people, animals or things may be used and these include, but are not limited to, cars, trucks, SUVs, tractors, boats, buses, forklifts, wheelbarrows, etc.
- **Containers:** Odor is placed inside any type of container.

VARIABLE TRIAL LEVELS & TITLES				
LEVEL	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	REQUIREMENTS
Novice	DDN	Detection Dog Novice	Birch	1 hide, 3 Q's for each Element
Novice-X	DDNX	Detection Dog Novice X	Birch	1 hide, 3 Q's for each Element
Intermediate	DDI	Detection Dog Intermediate	Birch and Anise	2 hides, 3 Q's for each Element
Intermediate-X	DDIX	Detection Dog Intermediate X	Birch and Anise	2 hides, 3 Q's for each Element
Advanced	DDA	Detection Dog Advanced	Birch, Anise and Clove	3 hides, 3 Q's for each Element
Advanced-X	DDAX	Detection Dog Advanced X	Birch, Anise and Clove	3 hides, 3 Q's for each Element
Senior	DDS	Detection Dog Senior	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	1-3 hides, 3 Q's for each Element
Senior-X	DDSX	Detection Dog Senior X	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	1-3 hides, 3 Q's for each Element
Master	DDM	Detection Dog Master	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	0-4 hides, 3 Q's for each Element and any Element can be clear
Master #	DDM#	Detection Dog Master #	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	0-4 hides, 3 Q's for each Element and any Element can be clear



Point Requirements Per Level

In order to earn a Q, competitors must earn a minimum of the following points:

- **Novice A or B:** 85 points
- **Intermediate:** 85 points
- **Advanced:** 90 points
- **Senior:** 100 points
- **Master:** 100 points

This system allows flexibility for beginner competitors and dogs, while also pushing teams to further perfect their craft and tighten their skills.

Progression Through Variable Trial Class Levels

USCSS™ believes competitors should choose to progress at a rate that they are comfortable with and what is in the best interest of their dogs. With this in mind, competitors may follow the traditional progression of **Novice-Intermediate-Advanced-Senior-Master** or they may remain at any given Level as long as they choose. Once a competitor has earned their 3 Q's for a given Level, all Q's earned in the same Level will count toward their "X" title. However the competitor will ***not*** be eligible for placements in these trials. Upon earning their 3 Q's in a given Level, all additional Q's at the same Level will count toward their X2 title and so on.

Element Titles

Competitors may also earn titles in each individual Element. To do so, competitors must earn 3 Q's in an Element (Interior, Exterior, Vehicle or Container). For instance, if a competitor earned 3 Q's in Novice Interior, they would earn a Novice Interior title (IN). Furthermore, competitors are permitted to remain in any given Level they choose. Once a competitor has earned their 3 Q's for a given Level, all Q's earned in the same Level will count toward their "X" title. However the competitor will ***not*** be eligible for placements in these trials. Upon earning their 3 Q's in a given Level, all additional Q's at the same Level will count toward their X2 title and so on.



ELEMENT CLASSES AND TITLES

ELEMENT	NOVICE	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED	SENIOR	MASTER
Interior (3 Q's required)	Novice Interior (IN)	Intermediate Interior (II)	Advanced Interior (IA)	Senior Interior (IS)	Master Interior (IM)
Interior-X (3 Q's required)	Novice Interior X (INX)	Intermediate Interior X (IIX)	Advanced Interior X (IAX)	Senior Interior X (ISX)	Master Interior X (IMX)
Exterior (3 Q's required)	Novice Exterior (EN)	Intermediate Exterior (EI)	Advanced Exterior (EA)	Senior Exterior (ES)	Master Exterior (EM)
Exterior-X (3 Q's required)	Novice Exterior X (ENX)	Intermediate Exterior X (EIX)	Advanced Exterior X (EAX)	Senior Exterior X (ESX)	Master Exterior X (EMX)
Container (3 Q's required)	Novice Container (CN)	Intermediate Container (CI)	Advanced Container (CA)	Senior Container (CS)	Master Container (CM)
Container-X (3 Q's required)	Novice Container X (CNX)	Intermediate Container X (CIX)	Advanced Container X (CAX)	Senior Container X (CSX)	Master Container X (CMX)
Vehicle (3 Q's required)	Novice Vehicle (VN)	Intermediate Vehicle (VI)	Advanced Vehicle (VA)	Senior Vehicle (VS)	Master Vehicle (VM)
Vehicle-X (3 Q's required)	Novice Vehicle X (VNX)	Intermediate Vehicle X (VIX)	Advanced Vehicle X (VAX)	Senior Vehicle X (VSX)	Master Vehicle X (VMX)

Element Title Awards

Affiliates will determine the colors of the ribbons awarded to a competitor who earns an Element title. USCSS™ urges Affiliates to order ribbons that have at least a 6” sized streamer and which read “New Title”.



Game Classes

Game Classes focus on a specific skill needed to be an outstanding Scent Work team and are a fantastic way to hone your skills in a fun and competitive manner. Games are ***not*** Level-dependent and offer the CSD more flexibility in designing the search area.

Game Class # 1: Team Spirit:

- **Concept:** Competitors work in teams of four (4) to locate a total of four (4) hides.
- **Search area:** May consist of any Element.
- **Rules:** Teams assign their running order. Teammate #1 must go to the start line, begin their search, locate one hide and call “Alert”. When the Judge responds with “Yes” or “Sorry, no”, this competitor will reward their dog and exit the search area. Teammate #2 will then begin their search and so on. Any Teammate who calls a false alert will leave the search area and cycle back in, if time remains, in an attempt to locate their hide. Teammates are permitted to “pass” if they believe their dog is struggling and then cycle back into the run order. All four (4) hides must be found for the Team to earn a Q. Searches must be conducted on-leash.
- **Scoring:** Points + Time.

GAME	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	# OF Q'S
Team Spirit	DDTW	Detection Dog Teamwork	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	3

Game Class # 2: Heap O’Hides:

- **Concept:** An endurance search where the search area can contain 1-10 hides.
- **Search area:** May consist of any Element.
- **Rules:** Competitors must find as many hides as they possible within the allotted time. Each false alert deducts 5 points. Three (3) or more false alerts are an automatic NQ. Any negative scores are scored as zero (0). Time will stop when the competitor calls “Finish”, times out or accumulates too many faults. On- or off-leash searches are permitted, as long as the area is safe and secure for the dog.
- **Scoring:** Points + Time.

GAME	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	# OF Q'S
Heap O’Hides	DDE	Detection Dog Endurance	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	3



Game Class # 3: Go the Distance:

- **Concept:** A test of whether a dog can successfully search away from their handler.
- **Search area:** May consist of any Element.
- **Rules:** Dog must successfully find the one (1) hide in the search area while the competitor works behind a line placed 10' from the search area. This line may be on 1-4 sides of the search area. After calling "Alert", and upon hearing the Judge's call, the competitor may cross the line to reward their dog. NQ's include the competitor crossing the line prior to calling "Alert" or false alerting. On- or off-leash searches are permitted, as long as the area is safe and secure for the dog.
- **Scoring:** Points + Time.

GAME	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	# OF Q'S
Go the Distance	DDD	Detection Dog Distance	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	3

Game Class # 4: LudicrouSpeed:

- **Concept:** This game tests how quickly a dog/handler team can find multiple hides.
- **Search area:** May consist of any Element.
- **Rules:** Search area will contain an unknown number of hides (at least 5 and no more than 10). There is an overall time accrued and a time given to find each individual hide. Competitors start with an individual hide time of 45 seconds. Upon locating a hide and calling "Alert", the competitor's individual hide time is reset and they are given 30 seconds to find their next hide; the 30-second time limit will begin once the competitor has resumed their search. This process will continue until either time runs out or the competitor calls "Finish"; competitor must call "Finish" when they believe they have found all the hides or when they want the clock to stop. Three (3) or more false alerts are an automatic NQ. This Game requires 2 timers: the first timer to record the overall time and the second timer to keep track of the individual hide time. The secondary timer, who is setting the 45-second and then 30-second time limits, should restart their stopwatch when the team has moved to resume their search after finding a hide. On- or off-leash searches are permitted, as long as the area is safe and secure for the dog.
- **Scoring:** Points + Time.

GAME	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	# OF Q'S
LudicrouSpeed	DDL	Detection Dog Speed	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	3



Game Class # 5: Scenting Sweepstakes:

- **Concept:** Winner and top 4 placements divide a percentage of the money pot from entry fees for this Game at that trial.
- **Search area:** May consist of any Element.
- **Rules:** Search area will contain an unknown number of hides (between 1-5 hides are possible). CSD sets the amount of hides and the time allotted for the search and will announce this at the start of the Game. Each competitor is scored on the total number of hides found and their overall time. Competitor must call “Finish” when they believe they have found all the hides. False alerts are an automatic NQ. On- or off-leash searches are permitted, as long as the area is safe and secure for the dog.
- **Scoring:** Points + Time.

GAME	TITLE	TITLE NAME	ODOR	# OF Q'S
Scenting Sweepstakes	DDSW	Detection Dog Sweepstakes	Birch, Anise and/or Clove	3

Point Requirements Per Game

All Games have 100 possible points to earn. In order to earn a Q, competitors must earn a minimum of the following points:

- **Team Spirit:** 90 points (minimum points required to be earned by the entire Team)
- **Heap O' Hides:** 50 points
- **Go the Distance:** 95 points
- **LudicrousSpeed:** 50 points
- **Scenting Sweepstakes:** 75 points

Championship Title

This title is earned by those dogs and competitors who qualify in the Master Level of the Classes and earn 3 Q's in the Games.

TITLE	TITLE NAME	REQUIREMENTS
DDCH	Detection Dog Champion	Must earn a DDM title and 3 Q's in each Game.

Qualification for the USCSS™ Annual National Scent Work Championship

USCSS™ believes national events are a time to celebrate the accomplishments of dogs at all levels. As such, all levels of Classes will be available at the USCSS™ Annual National Scent



Work Championship. More details regarding this national event, including requirements, how to qualify and scoring information, will be released soon.



Trial Awards & Ribbons

All **Classic** and **Variable Trials** shall provide the following awards for each level, except where noted:

- **1st-4th place for each Class and Game.** For the Novice level trials, placements will be awarded separately to Novice A & Novice B competitors;
- **High in Trial Eligibility:** Competitor must be entered in a minimum of four (4) classes. Competitors with the highest number of Q's, points and fastest times will be eligible. High in Trial awards to given out per level (e.g. in a Novice/Intermediate level trial, there would be a Novice High in Trial dog and an Intermediate High in Trial dog).
- **2nd-4th Place Overall per level of trial.** Judged highest points, highest Q's, fastest time and no faults.
 - If no HiT is offered, only 1st-4th place for each Class and Game will be offered
- **High Rescue Dog Trial:** Judged fastest time with at least 2 Classes with no faults. This is an award based on the overall trial, regardless of whether it is a single or multi-level trial.
- **High Champion of Record:** Judged fastest time with at least 2 Classes with no faults (proof must be sent in of Championship. e.g. conformation, obedience, agility, etc.). This is an award based on the overall trial, regardless of whether it is a single or multi-level trial.
- **Qualifying Ribbons:** For each competitor who Q'd in each Class.
- ***Please Note:*** Affiliates may opt to forgo awarding HiT, HiT Champion and HiT Rescue ribbons in those trials where less than 25 dogs are entered, or less than 125 runs occur. ***This language must be included in the Premium.***



TRIAL AWARDS & RIBBONS

AWARD TYPE	COLOR	RIBBON SIZE
New title: DDN	Purple and white	12" 3-streamer rosette
New title: DDI	Purple and cream	12" 3-streamer rosette
New title: DDA	Purple and pink	12" 3-streamer rosette
New title: DDS	Purple and lavender	12" 3-streamer rosette
New title: DDM	Purple and medium blue	12" 3-streamer rosette
New title: DDCH	Host chooses color	16" 3-streamer rosette
New title (Elements and Games)	Hosts chooses color	6" 3-streamer rosette
All 1st place Class awards	Blue	6" 3-streamer rosette
All 2nd place Class awards	Red	6" 3-streamer rosette
All 3rd place Class awards	Yellow	6" 3-streamer rosette
All 4th place Class awards	White	6" 3-streamer rosette
High In Trial Award	Red, white and blue	14" minimum with HIT 3-streamer rosette *USCSS HIT T-shirt
2nd Place Overall in Trial Award	Red and black	12" minimum 3-streamer rosette
3rd Place Overall in Trial Award	Yellow and black	12" minimum 3-streamer rosette
4th Place Overall in Trial Award	White and black	12" minimum 3-streamer rosette
High Rescue Dog Award	Pink and green	8" minimum 3-streamer rosette
High Champion of Record Award	Purple and yellow gold	8" minimum 3-streamer rosette
Qualifying Ribbons	Lavender	Single flat



General Rules

Dog Safety

All exhibitors, participants and volunteers must ***always*** be mindful of every dog, whether they are reactive or not. To ensure the safety of everyone, both human and canine, there is a 6' rule in place at all USCSS™ events. This means every dog must maintain a minimum of 6' distance from all other dogs at all times. When dogs are not participating in a Class they must be on-leash with their leash being no longer than 6' long; flexi/retractable leashes are ***not*** permitted on USCSS™ sanctioned trial grounds. When a dog is not on-leash, they must always be secured within a crate or pen. Affiliates/Trial Hosts may opt to provide a Reactive Dog Area for those dogs who need more space. USCSS™ suggests reactive dogs wear a red bandana to help indicate that they may need more space.

Competitor Conduct

All competitors are expected to have read and understood the entirety of these Rules. Competitors are also expected to heed the requests of the Judge and respect their decisions as final. It is our goal to keep the rules at a minimum, so please be kind to your dog, respectful and courteous to people, be honorable and strive to not have a rule named after you. All competitors are expected refrain from discussing any details relating to the search areas or hide placements until the conclusion of the trial. After completing a search, a simple thumbs up or thumbs down will suffice. Discussion includes verbal discussion as well as the posting of photos and videos online and on social media.

Competitor Safety

Some class Elements may take place outdoors, in tight spaces or on uneven terrain. Competitors are expected to be mindful when taking their dog to and from and through the search area and are allowed to use training when necessary to ensure both the safety of themselves and their dog. USCSS™ suggests all competitors wear weather appropriate clothing and closed-toed shoes when competing.

Competitor Navigating Search Area

Nothing in the search area may be moved or touched unless the competitor receives explicit permission from the Judge. For instance, if a dog is working a corner and the competitor feels an item is blocking the dog from getting to source, they may ask if the Judge if they may move this item.



Spectators

To ensure the community atmosphere of our sanctioned events, USCSS™ welcomes spectators to watch all the classes, levels and searches. However, there must also be a protection of the process and to ensure no one is gaining an unfair advantage over other teams. Competitors may only watch searches after they have competed in that Class and/or Game and level. All competitors are expected to refrain from discussing the details of their run. Any attempts to double-handle or indicate to the current team where a hide is located will result in a NQ of the working team and the individual involved in the double-handling, be it a competitor, volunteer, trial worker or spectator, and both teams will be dismissed from the trial. USCSS™ will not tolerate the discussion of any search areas or hide placements during the trial; this includes verbal discussion and posting of photos and videos online and on social media.

Spectator Conduct

Spectators are requested to be quiet and respectful while the dog is working. Clapping and cheering when the team has completed their search is allowed and encouraged. Judges may ask spectators to leave an area or wait before entering. Spectators are expected to follow all of the Judge's requests.

Spectator Area

This area should be well-outlined to ensure that spectators do not accidentally wander into the search area. Dogs that are not currently competing at the moment are not allowed in this area or in close proximity to search area.

Video and Photography

While not mandatory, we encourage Affiliates/Hosts to video all searches. We feel video is a great way to monitor the progression of this sport, lends to accountability and is an invaluable learning tool. Professional videographers and photographers are welcomed and encouraged to shoot and sell their work at USCSS™ sanctioned events. All businesses must abide by local business laws. Judges decisions are final and video footage will not be used to overturn a decision. At no time may competitors, spectators or any other individual use video footage to dispute a Judge's decision, which is final.

No Walk-Throughs of Search Area

Competitors will **not** be permitted to walk-through a search area prior to running their search.

Affiliate and CSD Briefing

The Affiliate/Host will do a general briefing immediately before the trial to discuss logistics of the trial such as potty areas, where the human bathroom facilities are located, etc. The CSD will



then provide a general briefing to discuss any specific requirements they have for the Classes offered and will answer any questions competitors may have. However, competitors are expected to have read and understood the entirety of these Rules before attending the trial.

Collars/Leashes

Flexi/retractable leads are ***not*** permitted on USCSS™ sanctioned trial grounds. No choke chains, prong collars or halti/head collars are permitted during searches. Leashes of any length may be used while the dog is participating in a run during a Class, but they must be switched over to a 6' length leash when outside of the search area.

Starting the Search

Searches will officially begin once the dog's nose crosses the start line.

False Alerts

This is defined as a dog incorrectly indicating where the hide is or the handler incorrectly reading or cueing their dog and then calling, "Alert" away from the hide. In the Classes, Go the Distance Game and Scenting Sweepstakes Game, calling a false alert will be immediately end the search and the competitor will earn (0) points for this search. The Judge will respond with a "Sorry, No" and will indicate to the team where the correct hide is, so that the dog may be rewarded. In the Team Spirit Game, LudicrouSpeed Game and Heap O' Hides Game, competitors are allowed 2 false alerts, which will count as a (5) point deduction each. If a third false alert is called, the search will end and the team will not Q.

Faults

All faults will cost the dog a five (5) point deduction each. For instance, if a competitor were assessed a food fault, a reward fault and an unsafe leash handling fault during their run, they would have a total of fifteen (15) points deducted from their final score. The following are the faults competitors could potentially accrue during a search:

- Failure to properly cross the start line
- Failure to reward the dog upon calling "Alert". Reward with either food, toy or verbal.
- Food faults
- Toy faults
- Destruction of search area
- Unsafe leash/dog handling

Proper Start Line Etiquette

All competitors must cross the designated start-line to begin their run. The timer is tasked with starting the time the moment the dog's nose crosses the start line, so for consistency purposes, it is crucial that this take place. Should a dog avoid the start line or enter the search area without



crossing the start line, the team will be issued a fault. Competitors are then expected to restart their dog on the other side of the start line to try again. The timer will ***not*** start until the dog's nose crosses the actual start line.

Rewarding Your Dog

USCSS™ believes strongly that the dog should be rewarded upon finding each individual hide once the Judge has called "Yes". This may be accomplished by either treating the dog as close to the the hide as possible without contaminating the search area or briefly playing with them with a toy. Competitors who do not reward their dog upon finding a hide, with either a treat, toy or verbal praise may be faulted by the Judge. A Judge will always direct the handler to a hide if a false alert was given. We feel that ending on a good note is the most beneficial course of action for the dog.

Toy Faults

While USSCS™ does welcome competitors to reward their dog with toys, such play cannot disturb or destroy the search area. With this in mind, toys may not be thrown around the search area or into the hide. Competitors are welcome to play tug or catch with their dogs away from the hide. Squeaker toys are not permitted. If a toy is thrown resulting in the search area being disturbed or destroyed during play, the team will be assessed a fault.

Food Faults

Should a competitor or their dog drop any piece of food or treats during the reward process or anytime during their search, they will receive a fault.

Destruction of Search Area

USCSS™ sanctioned events are oftentimes held at locations rented from outside parties. Every step should be taken to prevent the dog from excessively destroying any portion of the trial grounds. This is especially true in the search area, particularly near the hide. Should a dog exhibit an "aggressive alert" with excessive pawing, digging or disruption of the where the hide is located, they will be issued a fault.

Disqualifications

Should a dog or a competitor earn a disqualification, their search will end immediately and they will earn (0) points for that run. The following count as disqualifications:

- Eliminating in the search area
- Dog aggressive or threatening to humans during search
- Competitor harshly verbally or physically reprimanding a dog
- Unsportsmanlike conduct to Judge, other competitors, spectators or trial workers
- Double-handling



Elimination in the Search Area

This is defined as dogs who urinate, defecate or vomit in the search area. Once a dog has eliminated in the search area, the team will be assessed a (0) point score and the search will immediately stop. While we understand it can be frustrating for a competitor in this situation, any harsh verbal or physical reprimanding of the dog will cause the competitor to be dismissed from the trial.

Dog Aggressive or Threatening to Humans During Search

Should a dog behave aggressively by lunging, snapping and any other dangerous actions toward another competitor, be it human or canine, the Judge, CSD, trial secretary, trial worker, volunteer or any other person attending a sanctioned USCSS™ event, this dog will be immediately dismissed from the event and may be barred from attending any future USCSS™ events

Competitor Harshly Verbally or Physically Reprimanding a Dog

USCSS™ believes strongly that dogs should be treated with respect and will not tolerate any competitor who harshly verbally or physically reprimands their dog. Any such competitor will earn a disqualification and will be dismissed from the trial.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

All competitors are expected to practice good sportsmanship while participating in USCSS™ trials. USCSS™ is also a spectator sport, therefore cursing is not permitted. Therefore, any competitor who curses threateningly at their dog, USCSS™ official, trial host, staff, volunteer, spectator or fellow competitor will earn a unsportsmanlike conduct disqualification for that particular Class or Game.

Double-Handling

While USCSS™ is a spectator sport we must also maintain the integrity of our trials. As such, we do not tolerate double-handling of any kind and this will result in a disqualification for the team running and the person involved in double-handling.

Competitor Excusing Dog

Competitors may decide to excuse their dog from a search due to stress, illness or lack of focus. In this situation, the team will be assessed (0) points for this particular search. Competitors may opt to continue running in other Classes and Games they have signed up for in that trial, should they feel it is in the best interest of their dog.



Judge's Decision is Final

In all Classes and trials, the Judge's decision is final. Competitors are expected to respect this fact and not challenge or question the Judge's decision, in particular showing video footage after a run questioning a Judge's decision. Should a competitor have a question relating to the trial or some other procedural matter, they may touch base with the Trial Chairperson or contact USCSS™ directly at info@uscaninescentsports.com.

Staging

Affiliates/Trial Hosts are entrusted to decide the best manner in which to arrange staging areas to promote a smooth and efficient running of a Trial. USCSS™ suggests Affiliates/Trial Hosts utilize technology (e.g. walkie talkies, cell phones, text messages, etc.) to allow their Trial Workers to most efficiently communicate when a dog is ready to enter or exit the staging area. The only requirement is that all dogs and competitors maintain the required 6' distance from one another and follow all collar and leash rules and requirements.

Class Order

The Affiliate/Trial Host is in the best position to determine the order of the Classes which will produce the most efficient and smooth trial. Therefore, the Affiliate/Trial Host has the discretion to decide the order of the Classes. Affiliates/Trial Hosts are urged to touch base with the Judges and CSDs in finalizing which Classes will be offered and the order of each.

Dog in White

Prior to the running of each Class, a dog-in-white will be run to help the CSD assess potential challenges for the hides in any given search.

How to Become a Judge

The official who oversees and scores each Class and Game. [The list of qualifications and the Application to become an approved Judge may be found on the USCSS™ website.](#)

How to Become a CSD

Chief Search Designer (CSD) is an essential part to the smooth running of a Scent Work trial. They have an intricate understanding of odor, how it moves, how it is affected by the environment, temperature and other factors. [The list of qualifications and the Application to become an approved CSD can be found on the USCSS™ website.](#)

Official USCSS™ Logo and Name

The official United States Canine Scent Sports™ name, acronym (USCSS™) and logo may only be used with written permission. The official name and logo must be used on any and all



ribbons, photo areas, paperwork and in any area or item used for promotion for any official USCSS™ sanctioned event.



Definitions

Affiliate: An individual, training group or club approved by USCSS™ to host sanctioned trials and events.

Alert Behavior: This is a change of behavior the dog exhibits upon finding the hide. This is a communication between the dog and competitor and does not need to be a specific behavior. However, USCSS™ urges competitors to prevent their dogs from exhibiting aggressive and destructive alert behaviors such as excessive pawing or digging.

Calling Alert: All competitors are expected to call "Alert" in a clear and definitive tone and wait for the Judge's affirmative response before rewarding their dog. Should a competitor call "Alert" in error, the Judge will respond with a "Sorry, No", but indicate where the hide is located so the competitor may still reward their dog.

Champion of Record: Any dog that is a Champion of Record from any organization, such as AKC, UKC, USDAA, in any sport, such as conformation, obedience or agility, which recognizes and awards a Championship certificate (eg. CH, MACH). Scanned and emailed proof must be sent to USCSS™ at the time of the dog's registration or can be updated any time at least two (2) weeks prior to date of trial entered to be eligible for the High In Trial Champion of record award.

Chief Search Designer (CSD): The CSD is the person tasked with setting the odor challenges for the trial. They must have a thorough understanding of odor (how it moves, interacts with the environment, is affected by weather, temperature, etc.). They are in charge of setting all the hides, observing the Dog-in-White and making adjustments to the search area when necessary. On trial day, they should be the only person to handle the target odors.

Classic Searches: Searches where competitors will locate a set number of hides in one of the four Elements (Interior, Exterior, Vehicle or Container).

Classic Trial: Based on traditional trials, competitors must complete searches in all four (4) Elements (Interior, Exterior, Vehicles and Containers). Those competitors who qualify in all Elements in one day can earn their Classic title. Otherwise any and all Q's will apply toward their USCSS™ level-appropriate title.

Competitor: The human handler of the dog entered into a USCSS™ trial. The competitor does not need to be the owner of the dog.



Disqualification: Should a dog or a competitor earn a disqualification, their search will be ended immediately and they will earn (0) points for that run. This includes: eliminating in the search area, dog aggressive or threatening to humans during search, competitor harshly verbally or physically reprimanding a dog, unsportsmanlike conduct to Judge, other competitors, spectators or trial workers, and double-handling.

Element: These are the four (4) separate types of search areas including Interiors, Exteriors, Vehicles and Containers.

False Alert: This is defined as a dog incorrectly indicating where the hide is or the handler incorrectly reading or cueing their dog and then calling, "Alert" away from the hide. In the Classes, Go the Distance Game and Scenting Sweepstakes Game, calling a false alert will immediately end the search and the competitor will earn (0) points for this search. The Judge will respond with a "Sorry, No" and will indicate to the team where the correct hide is, so that the dog may be rewarded. In the Team Spirit Game, LudicrouSpeed Game and Heap O' Hides Game, competitors are allowed 2 false alerts, which will count as a (5) point deduction each. If a third false alert is called, the search will end and the team will not Q.

FEO: For Exhibition Only. Dogs who will run in the Classes and Games but will not earn Q's toward a title.

FLO: For Legs Only. Dogs who will run in the Classes and Games and earn Q's toward a title, but are not be eligible for placements.

Finish: Competitors do not need to call "Finish" at the Novice level or the Go the Distance Game, since there is only one hide, however they are welcome to do so to practice. Calling "Finish" is required in the Intermediate-level and up and all the Games where there is the possibility for more than one hide in the search area. The timer will only stop the time in these upper level Classes and multiple-hide Games when a competitor calls "Finish", however, failure to do so is not a fault or disqualification.

Games Classes: There are five (5) different types of Game searches competitors can choose from in Variable Trial to earn titles with their dog: Team Spirit, Heap O' Hides, Go the Distance, LudicrouSpeed and Scenting Sweepstakes.

Judge: This is the trial official who will call "Yes" or "Sorry, No" when a competitor calls "Alert" during a search. The Judge's decision is final.

Levels: For **Classic Trials**, there are five (5) different Levels: Novice Classic, Intermediate Classic, Advanced Classic, Senior Classic and Master Classic. For **Variable Trials** there are five (5) different Levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Senior and Master.



NQ: Non-qualifying score.

Odor: The three odors that are used in USCSS™ sanctioned events are **Birch** (“Sweet Birch” aka *Betula Lenta*), **Anise** (“Aniseed” aka *Pimpinella Anisum*) and **Clove** (“Clove Bud” aka *Eugenia Caryophyllata*).

Odor Recognition Tests: ORTs and/or TOTs are ***not*** required for competitors to participate in USCSS™ trials.

Q: Qualifying score.

Rescue Dog: Any dog, either purebred or mixed breed, that was acquired as a rescue.

Titling Run: Dogs who will run in a given Class or Game and all Q’s earned will count toward a title.

Variable Trial: A trial which affords the competitor and Affiliate/Host the most flexibility, as it may offer any combination of the Classic Classes and/or Games.