



July 1, 2023 Addendum to Master Handbook

Effective July 1, 2023 v1.0

Updates to Brace

The purpose of the Brace Levels in Trailing and Locating is to more accurately simulate dogs working in the hunt field, where dogs are expected to work over long distance to locate and mark active quarry. Brace is not a race between two dogs nor is brace competition between two dogs. As such, the brace class is a pass or fail class where no points for best of breed or high in trial are awarded but points are awarded in accordance with the brace rules.

In the ideal world, the brace class would not have a time limit. In a working trial environment, this is not practical and thus a time limit is assigned to help maintain the efficiency of trials and workload of judges. Effectively immediately, each brace class will receive 30 additional seconds to course time. There is no longer a time limit between the two dogs at the quarry. Both teams will receive the same time on the score sheet for record keeping purposes. Once the first team has been restrained, the judge shall cue the second handler to call their dog to the quarry one time. The second dog may continue to search for the quarry until course time or until they have exceeded the maximum point deductions. The first team may still receive deductions for interfering with the second brace, such as interacting with their dog in a manner that distracts the second dog.

Additionally, we are implementing the “walking start” where the judge meets the teams away from a single start line cone. Please see the “Brace Start Line” section for clarification. We understand that this is new and expect that more verbiage will be introduced to further clarify and explain. The walking start allows handlers to pause and release their dogs in a natural manner that works best for each dog so as not to encourage racing, running or high arousal activity which may lead to interference.

Additions to the rules are highlighted in bold. Sections that have been removed have been struck through.

If you have questions or need assistance, please email us at admin@nasda.dog

For judging related questions, please email us at judging@nasda.dog

Brace Class

The purpose of the Brace Levels in Trailing and Locating is to more accurately simulate dogs working in the hunt field, where dogs are expected to work over long distance to locate and mark active quarry.

For Brace level, two dogs and handlers must be utilized in the trailing test. Both dogs may be housemates or owned by the same handler, but each dog must have an independent handler for the purpose of the test. Exhibitors are responsible for having a bracemate at the time of entry. A dog with a higher level title is eligible to run as a bye dog. The bye dog may only run once per trial, per class.

Brace courses must be independent of standard courses - as such, hosts must make sure they have sufficient space to offer both brace and standard when applying for events.

Brace courses must be completed off-lead.

Brace Performance Guidelines

Dogs are judged individually for working style and efficiency at the brace level. As such, deductions will be incurred at an individual level. Should one brace member NQ for a simple fault - for example pottying in the ring without a bag to clean up - it may be possible for the second teammate to still complete their run for a qualifying score.

Brace team dogs are expected to work together during the test without interference or aggression. Any dog which shows a lack of control due to the presence of their bracedmates shall be excused from the test and that run will NQ. "Lack of Control" is defined as any significant interference with the other brace team - whether playful or aggressive. Interference is determined as behavior which prevents a bracedmate from completing the task efficiently and safely, including but not limited to:

- **Excessive staring**
- **Bumping / body slamming**
- **Cutting in front of the other dog either at a distance or close proximity in a manner where the bracedmate appears uncomfortable**
- **Playing or attempting to play**
- **Barking at the bracedmate**

Any lack of control incident which includes aggression toward a bracedmate must be reported to NASDA and that brace team will be excused from further brace participation in that trial. Dogs showing aggression may be further barred from future NASDA events. Any brace team which is the victim of dog aggression on the part of their partner may choose to re-run the course with a bye-team. Teams excused for lack of control ~~on the basis of playfulness~~ will not receive a rerun.

The judge sets the pace for all brace runs. The handlers must remain with the judge unless the judge directs them otherwise. Both dogs must alert on quarry in order to achieve a qualifying score. After the "yes" call, the first dog to reach and indicate the quarry must be leashed and removed from the quarry by the handler. The handler may touch and leash the first dog to indicate after the judges call of "yes". The handler may not reward the dog at the hide until the second dog has indicated the quarry or the judge ends the run. The team should move at least twenty feet from the hide as quickly as possible to allow the bracedmate to work. **The restrained dog should not interfere with the second dog, such as growling, barking or excessive staring. The judge may request the handler move their dog farther away or turn them away from the quarry.**

After the first dog alert is called by the judge, the judge may cue the second handler to call their dog towards the quarry one time. The second dog should continue working toward the quarry and shall have the opportunity to work to course time or until the maximum deductions have been exceeded. The second team has to successfully make their way to the quarry within a set amount of time. That time is 30 seconds for TB-I runs, 20 seconds in TB-II, and 15 seconds in TB-III. In the event both dogs do not reach the quarry at approximately the same time, this time does not start until the first dog has been removed from the quarry. Time stops when the second alert is called - that call shall be "finished". If the second dog fails to indicate the quarry within course time, that dog is given a non-qualifying score. All levels of brace must be completed off-lead. Brace requires two timers.

Brace Start Line

The brace start line for all levels shall consist of one cone or marker. The judge will meet the brace no closer than 20 feet and no further than 40 feet from the cone and begin the walk up. The judge will cue the handlers to release their dogs when ready as the judge and teams approach the cone at a natural pace. Handlers may pause to release their dogs. Dogs may be released one at a time or at the same time provided they are off lead prior to passing the cone.

Trailing Brace Level I (TB-I)

Maximum course time: **2:30**

Hides: 1 (known)

Course Size: 7,500 to 10,000 square feet

Minimum Qualifying Score: 20

Title: Teams earning 100 points from Level I class will earn the Trailing Brace Level I (TB-I) title.

Distractions: Naturally occurring distractions may be present.

All levels of brace must be completed off-lead.

Hide Placement: Hides should not be readily visible to the dogs from the start line. The hide will be placed no closer than 25 feet from the start and may be partially covered by brush. The hide may be elevated no higher than 24" from ground level.

Performance: Time begins when the dog or the handler cross the start line. ~~Time stops when the judge calls the mark. The call shall be "Yes." Once the judge calls the find, the teammate who alerted on the rat may be immediately touched and leashed. The second teammate then has 30 seconds to get to the rat.~~ The second dog must find his way to the rat in order to receive his qualifying score.

The dogs should work in their search independently of handler movement, however the dogs may follow each other or cue off of or follow each other as long as they are not actively distracting each other. The handler may verbally encourage and communicate with the dog provided it does not interfere with the search. Deductions will be taken for handlers who face the hide intentionally, stand near the hide, show the dog the hide, handle in a way which the judge deems is leading the dog to the hide.

~~Dogs may be rewarded in the quarry area after the judge verifies their success ("yes"). Both dogs must be given the opportunity to be shown the quarry and be rewarded at quarry if the handler chooses.~~

Trailing Brace Level II (TB-II)

Maximum Course Time: **3:30**

Hides: 1 (known)

Course Size: 10,000 to 20,000 square feet

Minimum Qualifying Score: 20

Title: Teams earning 400 points from Level II class will earn the Trailing Brace Level II (TB-II) title.

Eligibility: Teams must have earned the Trailing Brace Level I title.

Distractions: Naturally occurring distractors may be present. At least one significant distractor must be present. Acceptable distractors include false trails which do not lead to quarry, crossing over old trails, or a "false quarry" including used bedding.

Hide Placement: Hides should not be readily visible to the dog from the start line. ~~The hide will be placed no closer than 50 feet from the start and~~ may be partially covered by brush. The hide may be elevated no more than 48" off the ground.

Performance: Time begins when the dog or the handler cross the start line. Time stops when the judge calls the mark. The call shall be "Yes." ~~Once the judge calls the find, the teammate who alerted on the rat may be immediately touched and leashed. The second teammate then has 20 seconds to get to the rat.~~ The second dog must find his way to the rat in order to receive his qualifying score.

The dogs should work in their search independently of handler movement, however the dogs may follow each other as long as they are not actively distracting each other. The handler may verbally encourage and communicate with the dog provided it does not interfere with the search. Deductions will be taken for handlers who face the hide intentionally, stand near the hide, show the dog the hide, handle in a way which the judge deems is leading the dog to the hide.

~~Dogs may be rewarded in the quarry area after the judge verifies their success ("yes"). Both dogs must be given the opportunity to be shown the quarry and be rewarded at quarry if the handler chooses.~~

Trailing Brace Level III (TB-III)

Maximum Course Time: 4:30

Hides: 1 (unknown)

Course Size: 20,000 to 40,000 square feet

Minimum Qualifying Score: 20

Title: Teams earning 500 points from Level III class will earn the Trailing Brace Level III (TB-III) title.

Eligibility: Teams must have earned the Trailing Brace Level II title.

Distractions: Naturally occurring distractors may be present. Between one and three significant distractors are present. These may be contained food, toys, or human object distractors, provided by trial hosts, or may include environmental distractions that are available in the search area (i.e./ a chicken coop in distance, a pile of manure).

TB-III tests are "blind", meaning that the dog and handler teams are not able to watch the judge lay the trail and may not watch any teams compete prior to going in the ring. In TB-III tests, at least one trail will be laid by the judge and lead to a "false quarry". The False Quarry will be a scented area with dirty bedding from the quarry animal. Each dog may follow the false trail and scent the False Quarry, but must not work the area for more than 5 seconds. Working is defined the same as Trailing & Locating Level III. A team which excessively works the False Quarry will receive a non-qualifying score.

Hide Placement: Hides should not be readily visible to the dog from the start line. ~~The hide will be placed no closer than 5 feet from the start and may be covered or inaccessible.~~ The hide may be elevated no more than 72" off the ground.

In TB-III, several trails will be laid by the judge and may be of different ages OR the judge may choose to use a lower level course as a base for laying the TB-III trails.

Performance: Time begins when the dog or the handler cross the start line. Time stops when the judge calls the mark. The call shall be "Yes." ~~Once the judge calls the find, the teammate who alerted on the rat may be immediately touched and leashed. The second teammate then has 15 seconds to get to the rat.~~ The second dog must find his way to the rat in order to receive his qualifying score.

The dogs should work in their search independently of handler movement, however the dogs may follow each other or cue off of or follow each other as long as they are not actively distracting each other. The handler may verbally encourage and communicate with the dog provided it does not interfere with the search.

Trailing Brace Excellent Titles

Once a dog finishes a NASDA regular Trailing Brace class title, they have the option of continuing in that level to collect points for a Trailing Brace Excellent title.

For each additional 500 points at each Trailing and Locating level, dogs may earn the Excellent title in that level.

For example:

TB-I - 100 points at level I TB-IX - 600 points at level I

TB-IX2 - 1100 points at level I TB-IX3 - 1600 points at level I

Dogs working on their Brace Master Championship may collect points for both the TB-X and MTBCH at the same time - so points earned in the MTBCH go toward TB-IIX and TB-IIIX points, where the double Q counts toward the MTBCH.

Trailing & Locating Master Champion Titles

For working dogs to be successful in the field, it is essential that the dog is able to maintain a level of physical and mental endurance. The Master Champion titles exist to test a teams endurance skills.

In order to be eligible to earn a Master Champion Urban Locating Dog title, a dog must have already earned a TB-III title. Qualifying scores toward the MTBCH earned when a team passes both the TB-II and TB-III levels at the same trial event. If the host club is offering multiple trials, note that both Q's must be made from the same trial event, not trial day. 20 double Q's are required to achieve the prefix MTBCH title.