



2026 RULES APPLYING TO CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

**North American Sport Dog Association
Rules Applying to 2026 Championship Events**

Overview

The North American Sport Dog Association (NASDA) was established in 2016 to celebrate and test the olfactory abilities of dogs. Trials are designed to reflect both historical working scenarios and modern competitive field work. NASDA Working Dog Trials offer dogs of all breeds and backgrounds the opportunity to participate in scent-based challenges that recognize and reward their working aptitude.

At the conclusion of each calendar year, NASDA invites high-performing teams to participate in its Championship series, recognizing excellence in Trailing & Locating, Urban Locating, Lost Item Recovery, and Shed Dog.

NASDA offers three types of Championship events:

- **Showcase**
- **Regional Championship**
- **Invitational Championship**

These events are designed to celebrate performance at every level, while culminating in the recognition of National Champions, Versatility Champions, and Junior Handler Champions.

Dogs do not earn points toward regular NASDA titles at Championship events. The Regional, Showcase, and Invitational operate under a separate set of rules and scoring. Dogs compete specifically for advancement and championship titles.

All dogs at Championship events are scored under NASDA's Championship scoring system, regardless of their qualified level. This system is designed to reward teamwork, accuracy, and overall performance.

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Scoring at Championship Events is based on deductions, number of finds (where applicable), and time. Failure to finish within time does not automatically result in disqualification. Teams demonstrating strong teamwork and sportsmanship may still qualify and advance based on their overall performance.

Scoring Priorities:

Single Hide Searches:

1. Fewest deductions
2. Type and severity of deductions
3. Fastest time

Multiple Hide Searches (e.g., Lost Item, Shed Dog):

1. Fewest deductions
2. Greatest number of finds
3. Type and severity of deductions
4. Fastest time

Teams may still advance based on overall performance, even if they do not complete within time.

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Handler Limitations:

- Handlers may only handle **one dog per sport per round**.
- Owners with multiple dogs must assign additional handlers, who:
 - Are in good standing with NASDA
 - Have signed all event waivers
 - Are declared before the start of the course

Scheduling Considerations:

- Dogs from the same household or traveling together will be scheduled back-to-back whenever possible.
- If alternate handlers must be changed, officials must be notified before the course begins.

Panel Judging in Semifinal and Final Rounds:

- At least two judges are present
- Judges jointly determine hide placement, course time, and distractors
- All scoring decisions are made collaboratively
- Each judge times the runs

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Blind Running Policy: All Championship events are run blind to preserve fairness and test true teamwork. Sharing details about hide placement or search areas is strictly prohibited.

Reasons this matters:

- Prevents unintentional misdirection
- Maintains mental focus and trust in the dog-handler team
- Upholds fairness and competitive integrity

NASDA values sportsmanship, fairness, and independent skill. Blind runs ensure every team has an equal opportunity to succeed.

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Showcase

The NASDA Showcase allows teams to celebrate breed or team achievements and serves as a final opportunity to qualify for the Invitational. The Showcase is held at the same venue as the Invitational, two days prior to the main event.

Eligibility

Teams are eligible to participate in the Showcase if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Received a **Best of Breed 1–5** placement during the qualifying period
- Received a **#26–50 invitation** to the Showcase

Dogs must compete at the **highest level** they qualified in, regardless of their current competition level.

Event Format

All levels within a sport compete on the **same course** in each round. All searches are **blind**. Each handler may enter only **one dog per competition round**. Additional handlers may be used for dogs owned by the same individual.

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Sport-Specific Rules

All classes in each sport will follow these requirements:

- **Lost Item Recovery:**
 - Round 1: Handler Odor – 2 items, elevated up to 24"
 - Round 2: Non-Handler Odor – 2 items, elevated up to 24", Handler makes the call
 - At least 3 distraction items per round
- **Shed Dog:**
 - Round 1 & 2: Single shed retrieve within 24" of the handler
 - On-lead allowed at handler's discretion
- **Trailing & Locating:**
 - Round 1 & 2: Elevated up to 48"
 - At least 3 distractions per round
 - On-lead allowed at handler's discretion
- **Urban Locating:**
 - Round 1: Elevated up to 48", Judge makes the call
 - Round 2: Elevated up to 48", Handler makes the call
 - At least 3 distractions per round

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Advancing to the Invitational

Teams will compete in two rounds per event. The **top 20%** of each class, based on combined scores, will earn a **free invitation** to compete in the first two rounds of the Invitational. For example:

- 20 dogs entered = Top 4 advance
- 5 dogs entered = Top 1 advances

Regional Eligibility

Handlers may choose to enter either the Showcase **or** the Regional Championship in a specific class/level with an eligible dog, but may not compete in both for that class/level. See the Regional section for additional rules.

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Regional Championship

The Regional Championship recognizes the achievements of teams across North America, with consideration for those unable to travel internationally. When the Invitational is held in the United States, a Regional Championship will be held in Canada, and vice versa.

Eligibility

Any dog eligible to compete in the Showcase or Invitational is also eligible to enter the Regional Championship.

Note: Dogs may not compete in both the Regional and the Invitational in the **same sport/level**, unless they earn a **bye**. However, a dog may enter the Regional in one sport and the Invitational in another. Versatility invitees must choose **one event** (either the Invitational or the Regional) in which to compete across all four sports.

Event Format

Showcase and Invitational qualifiers will compete together in all levels and classes. All levels within a sport will run on the **same course** for each round. All searches will be **blind**. Handlers may only compete with **one dog per competition round**. Additional handlers may be used for dogs owned by the same individual.

Rounds 1 & 2: Teams compete in two rounds. Placements 1st through 4th are awarded in each class based on combined scores. These teams advance to the Semifinal.

Semifinal: The top two (2) scoring teams from each class in the Semifinal round will advance to the Regional Championship round. If no teams qualify, the judging panel may select two dogs to advance based on Round 1/2 performance and the lowest or least severe deductions.

Regional Championship Round: Semifinal winners will run a single course. The top scoring team is awarded the Regional Champion title.

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Sport-Specific Rules

Lost Item Recovery

- **Rounds 1 & 2:**
 - Handler Odor and Non-Handler Odor
 - 2 hides per round, elevated up to 24"
 - Handler calls the find in Round 2
 - At least 3 distractions per round
- **Semifinal:**
 - Random draw for odor
 - 1–5 hides, elevated up to 36"
- **Championship Round:**
 - Non-Handler Odor
 - 1 Search Area, 1–8 hides total, Number is unknown to handler
 - Elevated up to 48"
 - Handler must call the find and finish

Shed Dog

- **Rounds 1 & 2:**
 - Single shed placed within 24" of the handler
 - On-lead allowed at handler's discretion
- **Semifinal:**
 - 3 sheds
 - Retrieve to hand
 - Off-lead required
- **Championship Round:**
 - 5 sheds
 - Retrieve to hand
 - Off-lead required

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Trailing & Locating

- **Rounds 1 & 2:**
 - Elevated up to 48"
 - At least 3 distractions
 - On-lead allowed at handler's discretion
- **Semifinal:**
 - Elevated up to 72"
 - Off-lead required
- **Championship Round:**
 - Elevated up to 96"
 - One search area, which may be blank
 - Handler must call the find or finish
 - Off-lead required

Urban Locating

- **Round 1:**
 - Elevated up to 48", Judge makes the call
- **Round 2:**
 - Elevated up to 48", Handler makes the call
- **Semifinal:**
 - Elevated up to 72", Judge makes the call
- **Championship Round:**
 - 3 separate search areas (1,000–1,500 sq ft each)
 - Areas may be blank
 - Elevated up to 108"
 - Handler must call the find or finish for each area

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Advancement to the Invitational

- Teams placing **1st through 4th** in a class at the Regional Championship receive a **bye into the Semifinal Round** of the Invitational Championship for that sport.
- The **Regional Champion** for each sport receives a **bye into the Championship Round** of the Invitational Championship.
- The **Versatility Champion** at the Regional is eligible to compete in the **Championship Round** of all four sports at the Invitational.

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Invitational Championship

The Invitational Championship is the pinnacle of NASDA competition, recognizing the highest levels of skill, teamwork, and versatility.

Eligibility

Teams are eligible to compete in the Invitational if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Placed in the **Top 25** in a class during the qualifying period
- Placed **1st–4th** in a class at the Regional Championship (same year)
- Named **Regional Champion** for a sport (same year)
- Ranked among the **Top 50 Versatility Dogs**
- Ranked among the **Top 50 Junior Handlers**
- Placed in the **Top 20%** of a class at the Showcase

Dogs must compete at the **highest level** they qualified in, regardless of their current competition level.

- Dogs who earned 1st–4th at the Regional enter the **Semifinal Round**
- Regional Champions go directly to the **Championship Round**

Event Format

All levels within a sport compete on the **same course** in each round. All searches are **blind**. Each handler may compete with **one dog per round**, with additional handlers allowed for dogs owned by the same individual.

Rounds 1 & 2: Teams compete in their class across two rounds. Placements 1st through 4th are awarded based on combined scores. These teams advance to the Semifinal.

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Semifinal: The top four (4) placing teams from Rounds 1 & 2 will join the four Regional bye dogs in the Semifinal Round. The top two (2) scoring teams from each class advance to the Championship Round. If no teams qualify, two dogs may be selected based on prior round performance and lowest/least severe deductions.

Championship Round: Semifinal winners compete on a single course. The top scoring team will be crowned **National Champion**.

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 - Elevated up to 72", Judge makes the call
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Versatility Championship

The Versatility Champion title is awarded to the dog who best exemplifies consistent, high-level performance across all four NASDA sports at a Championship event.

Championship Titles

- The title of **NASDA Versatility National Champion** will be awarded at the **Invitational Championship**.
- The title of **NASDA Versatility Regional Champion** will be awarded at the **Regional Championship**.

Eligibility

- Any dog ranked in the **Top 50 Versatility Dogs** for the year
- Any dog who competes in **all four sports** at either the **Regional** or **Invitational** Championship

Selection Criteria

The Versatility Champion is determined based on the following:

- **Highest total number of points and qualifying scores** earned across all four sports
- Performance across the **greatest number of events**
- Achieved in the **least amount of total time**
- **Exceptional sportsmanship**, which will be scored as part of the versatility evaluation
- **Ties** will be broken by the **fastest total time** across all qualifying events

Only one Versatility Champion will be named per event (Regional and Invitational).

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Junior Handler Championship

NASDA recognizes the accomplishments of young handlers who demonstrate dedication, teamwork, and sportsmanship through its Junior Handler program. Juniors will compete and advance **within their own dedicated division**, ensuring they experience the excitement and challenge of championship events in an environment designed to encourage growth, teamwork, and success.

Eligibility

- The **Top 50 Junior Handlers** from the qualifying period receive a **direct invitation** to compete at the **Invitational Championship**.
- Handlers must compete with the **dog they qualified with**.
- Junior Handlers may choose to compete at **either** the **Invitational** or the **Regional Championship**, but **not both**.

Junior Handler Awards

To recognize excellence and encourage youth participation, NASDA will award **Gold, Silver, and Bronze podium placements** to the highest-scoring Junior Handlers in the following sports:

- **Lost Item Recovery**
- **Shed Dog**
- **Trailing & Locating**
- **Urban Locating**

These placements are determined by the **highest cumulative score earned by a Junior Handler within each individual sport at the championship event**.

Junior Handler National & Regional Champions

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NASDA will also award **Gold, Silver, and Bronze National Junior Handler Champions** at the Invitational and **Gold, Silver, and Bronze Regional Junior Handler Champions** at each Regional event.

Champion placement is determined by the **greatest number of points earned across the largest number of sports**.

- **National Champion (Gold, Silver, Bronze):** Determined based on points and sports competed at the Invitational.
- **Regional Champion (Gold, Silver, Bronze):** Determined based on points and sports competed at the Regional.

In the event of a tie, standard NASDA tie-breaking procedures will apply.