



American Working Terrier Association

**Official Rulebook and Regulations
January 1, 2025**

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American Working Terrier Association Rulebook and Regulations:

OVERVIEW

History

The **American Working Terrier Association** was founded in 1971 by Patricia Adams Lent to encourage and promote through fine literature (like the *Down To Earth* newsletter, the website, and field trials) the breeding, hunting, and ownership of terriers of correct size, conformation, and character to perform as working terriers. From modest beginnings, the organization has grown to include over two hundred members and holds field trials across the country throughout the year.

In 1972, Dachshunds were accepted by the American Working Terrier Association and quickly became regulars at the trials. The Association issues Certificates of Gameness (CG) to dogs passing the Open Class at an AWTA Trial, Certificate Class Advance Award (CCA) to dogs passing the Certificate Class Five (5) times at an AWTA Trial, Hunting Certificates (HC) to dogs used regularly for hunting above ground over a period of a hunting season and Working Certificates (WC) to dogs that qualifying with work in a natural earth. A Veteran Earthdog Award is given to the dogs earning ten (10) WC and an AWTA Earthworker Award is given to a member who has accumulated ten (10) WC with ten (10) different dogs.

Objectives

The primary objective of the American Working Terriers Association (hereafter referred to as AWTA) is to encourage and preserve the natural instinct of the earth terriers and Dachshunds to enter an underground earth reacting in a positive manner when facing the quarry. The AWTA also encourages the preservation of the natural hunting abilities of all terriers in above ground varmint control.

Recognized Breeds

For the purpose of AWTA den trials an earth breed is one of the correct size and character to enter a nine-inch artificial earth. The AWTA recognizes these breeds for competition in den trials: Australian, Bedlington, Border, Cairn, Cesky, Dandie Dinmont, Fell, Fox, Glen of Imaal, Jack Russell, Jagd, Lakeland, Norwich, Norfolk, Patterdale, Scottish, Sealyham, Skye, Welsh, and West Highland White terriers, and Dachshunds. Any individual Feist, Rat terrier, terrier-cross, dachshund-cross or terrier of a breed not mentioned above who is of suitable size to fit in a nine-inch artificial earth may also be entered in den trials.

For hunting (both in natural earths and above ground) and for above ground hunting tests the AWTA recognizes all the above listed breeds and miscellaneous terriers plus the breeds of the terrier group of any of the major national all-breed kennel clubs (such as the AKC, UKC, CKC, KC, FCI) and their crosses.

Membership:

- ***Single: Cost \$20***
 1. An adult 18 years of age and older.
 2. This is a full membership with voting, working/hunting/trial certificate eligible, and can sign as a witness on WC/HCs.
 3. This membership includes a copy of the Down To Earth (DTE) newsletter.
- **Couples/Partner: Cost \$25**
 1. Two (2) adults 18 years of age and older living at the same address.
 2. This is a full membership with voting, working/hunting/trial certificate eligible, and can sign as a witness on WC/HCs.
 3. This membership includes one copy of the Down To Earth (DTE) newsletter.
- **Junior: Cost \$17 with Down To Earth (DTE) newsletter; \$10 without the newsletter**
 1. Youth 14 up to 18 years of age.
 2. Can submit a WC application on a dog they own when hunting with the supervision of an adult AWTA member and the WC is signed by an AWTA member.

Lifetime AWTA membership

- **Qualifications:** Anyone who is a current AWTA member and has been a continuous member for the past 25 years or longer and has contributed in an official capacity to the AWTA (judge, trustee, officer), can apply for a lifetime membership during the last three months of their 25th or subsequent years of membership.
- **Applying:** The application period for Lifetime membership is the last three months of each calendar year. Applications will be accepted only during this time. An application for a lifetime membership should be sent during the last three months of the calendar year in which the member qualifies or the last three months of subsequent years. An application form is available online at www.awta.org and should be filled out and sent by mail or by email to the recording secretary. Lifetime membership will be reviewed and verified.
- **Award:** The Lifetime membership Award will exempt the member from paying a yearly membership renewal fee; however, the member will still need to submit a renewal form marked *Lifetime* every year during the last 3 months of every calendar year to update any contact information and indicate they are still interested in AWTA membership.

Note: In the event that the lifetime membership involves a couple's membership for 25 years and only one partner qualifies for the lifetime, then the couple will pay the difference between a single and couple's membership. If both parties in a couple's membership qualify for the Lifetime, then there would be no fee.

Awards and Certificates:

Applications for all the following Certificates from new members will not be accepted until thirty (30) days after the membership application is received by the Recording Secretary. This will allow time for the new membership to be processed and the member's name to be added to the membership roster so that the H&WC Secretary can verify the membership status of the applicant. The same thirty (30) day processing period also applies to the witness for a WC/HC.

Witness to the Working and Hunting Certificates must be an adult AWTA member who is not the owner or co-owner of the dog, immediate family member or partner of the owner of the dog for which the WC/HC is being submitted.

Working Certificate (WC):

The WC is awarded only to dogs whose owners are AWTA Members in good standing at the time of qualifying work.

Accepted Quarry: The Certificate is issued to dogs that worked in a natural earth to the following quarry: woodchuck/groundhog, fox, raccoon, badger, aggressive opossum, nutria (coypu), armadillo and other quarry found acceptable by the Trustees on review of an application submitted by a member for earthwork done to that quarry.

- **Accepted Work:** This does not include work in a drain or otherwise man-made earth. The dog must enter the earth without assistance or encouragement from other dogs on the ground. If the dog is actively marking a restricted or impeded entrance to an earth, removing a restriction, such as a stone or root, is allowed. However, no further assistance, alteration, or enlargement of the entrance to the den is permitted. The dog must enter far enough to be completely out of sight when a person is looking down the hole. The dog must locate the quarry in the earth completely on its own without encouragement (dog or human). Simple verbal communication from the handler to the dog is allowed. Loud, frenzied, or excited verbal encouragement intended to work-up the dog is not allowed. The use of locator collars is not a requirement, but it is recommended.

The dog must work alone (only one dog in the earth), must work down to the quarry and cause it to bolt, or draw it from the earth. If the quarry does not bolt or is not drawn, the terrier or dachshund must work in a manner sufficient to allow diggers to locate and dig to the quarry. There is to be no doubt that the dog is/was right up to the quarry while marking or causing the quarry to bolt. A visual positive identification of the quarry is required. The terrier or dachshund must work by the above rules and another AWTA member must witness the dog's work.

- **Applying for the WC:** A WC application; which includes a written, detailed report of the hunt, bearing the signatures of the owner(s) who were present and at least one (1) witness (who must be a member at the time of work), along with the filing fee (\$10.00) must be sent to the Hunting and Working Certificate Secretary. The application must be submitted within one (1) year of the hunt. If the applicant wants an award flask, an additional \$10.00 should be included with the application. Permission to publish should be included in the application if the member wants the hunt details to be published in DTE. The application may be sent electronically to the H&WC Secretary but a signed hard copy must also be sent.

- **Approval of the WC:** The H&WC Secretary will send a copy of the report to each of the Trustees for their review and approval. A unanimous approval is required to award the Working Certificate. Reason(s) for disapproval will be sent to the person requesting the evaluation.
- **Issuing Of The WC:** The Certificate will be mailed by the H&WC Secretary upon approval of the Trustees to the applicant. When more than one person owns a dog, the only name(s) that will appear on the Certificate are the owner(s) who were present when the Certificate was earned.

Hunting Certificate (HC):

The HC is awarded only to dogs whose owner(s) are AWTA members in good standing during the entire period of qualifying work.

The purpose of the Hunting Certificate is to recognize that the dog possesses the control, instincts and courage to confront a quarry animal in non-traditional situations. There are parts of the country where traditional below ground earthwork is virtually impossible due to geographic factors. Some traditional dogs of earth-working breeds may be too large for underground work but are regularly used as draw dogs in a team effort.

There is no limit to the number of Hunting Certificates that a dog can earn.

- **Accepted Quarry:** The certificate is issued to dogs used for ABOVE GROUND hunting to such quarry as: woodchuck/groundhog/marmot, fox, raccoon, badger, nutria (coypu), armadillo, rabbit, squirrel, opossum, rat, muskrat, mongoose, feral pig or for flushing and/or retrieving upland birds and other quarry found acceptable by the Trustees on review of an application submitted by a member for hunting above ground done to that quarry. Certificates will be awarded to either a specific quarry or multiple quarries.
- **Accepted Work:** Some examples of acceptable hunting which would qualify are; retrieving waterfowl, treeing/spotting squirrels for the gun, drawing quarry from dens having been located and dug to, locating and killing rats or clearing a barn of raccoons, opossum or other pests. The quarry must be purposefully sought, and the object should be to take the game for food or fur, to kill or capture the animals considered to be vermin or to collect animals for scientific study. The dog must locate the quarry for the hunter and make it possible for the hunter to take the game by legal hunting methods. Alternately the dog should be able to take the game by itself where appropriate.
- **Qualifying Hunting Season:** A dog must spend one full season hunting or at least six (6) hunts within a period of no more than six (6) consecutive months depending on the quarry or quarries worked before the Certificate is issued. A season is whatever time is allowed by state hunting regulations when the species is controlled by state game laws or no more than six (6) months from the first qualifying hunt if the species is not controlled by game laws. When a combination of quarry (controlled and not controlled) is hunted to qualify for a HC, the time allowed is within six (6) months from the first qualifying hunt (controlled and/or not controlled).
- **Witnesses:** An AWTA member or combination of members must have witnessed the dog hunting on at least six (6) occasions and attest that it is used regularly for hunting.

- **Applying for the HC:** A HC application includes a written, detailed narrative of the dog's hunting experience, bearing the signatures of the owner(s) who hunted the dog and at least one (1) witness (an AWTA member or combination of members) who have witnessed the dog hunting on at least six (6) occasions and attest that it is used regularly for hunting. A filing fee (\$10.00) must be sent to the Hunting and Working Certificate Secretary. If the applicant wants an award flask, an additional \$10.00 should be included with the application. The application must be sent within six (6) months of the end of the hunting season or from the last hunt within the end of the six (6) month qualifying period, which ever applies. Permission to publish should be included in the application if the member wants the hunting details to be published in DTE. The application may be sent electronically to the H&WC Secretary, but a signed hard copy must also be sent.
- **Approval of the HC:** The H&WC Secretary will send a copy of the application to each of the Trustees for their review and approval. A unanimous approval is required to award the Hunting Certificate. Reason(s) for disapproval will be sent to the person requesting the evaluation.
- **Issuing of the HC:** The Certificate will be mailed by the H&WC Secretary upon approval of the Trustees to the applicant. When more than one person owns a dog, the only name(s) that will appear on the Certificate are the owner(s) who hunted with the dog.

Veteran Earthdog Award:

The Veteran Earthdog title is awarded to dogs whose owner(s) are AWTA members in good standing during the entire period of qualifying work.

- **Qualification:** When applied for by the owner(s), this award is for the earthdog that has completed the following requirements:
 1. A single terrier must earn ten (10) WCs (a HC can count as one WC) .
 2. WCs must include work to at least three (3) different quarries (only two (2) armadillo WCs can be applied).
 3. WCs must be witnessed by at least three (3) different witnesses.
- **Applying:** When the above qualifications are met the dog owner/AWTA member will contact the H&WC Secretary.
- **Issuing of the Veteran Earthdog Award:** The award will be a special frame with mat and title engraved that will be appropriate for the documentation Award but could also be used for a picture of the earthdog.

Veteran Hunting Terrier or Dachshund Award:

The Veteran Hunting Terrier/Dachshund Award is awarded to dogs whose owners are members in good standing of the AWTA during the entire period of qualifying work.

- **Qualification:** When applied for by the owner(s), this award is for the hunting terrier/Dachshund that has been awarded Hunting Certificates in 2 different hunting seasons or qualifying periods.
- **Applying:** When the above is met the dog owner/AWTA member will contact the H&WC Secretary
- **Issuing of the Veteran Hunting Terrier or Dachshund Award:** The award will be a frame with mat and title engraved that will be appropriate for the Award document or a picture of the dog.

AWTA Earthworker Award:

The Earthworker Award title is awarded to AWTA members in good standing during the entire period of qualifying work.

- **Qualification:** Members who have accumulated ten (10) WC (one (1) HC can be substituted for a WC) on ten (10) different earthdogs.
- **Applying for the Award:** When the above qualifications are met the AWTA member will contact the H&WC Secretary
- **Issuing of the Award:** The award for the AWTA Earthworker will be an English digging shovel.

Certificate of Gameness (CG):

The CG is awarded to a dog whose owner(s) are AWTA members in good standing and that qualifies with a score of 100% in an Open Class at an AWTA sanctioned trial.

- **Scoring:** The dog is required to travel a thirty (30) foot earth and reaching the quarry within thirty (30) seconds. This will produce a score of 50%. The dog must then work the quarry, as defined on the Judge's score sheet, continuously for a full sixty (60) seconds. This will produce a score of 50%. The two combining scores will total the 100% passing score.
- **Handler Guidelines:** The handler may give one command on release and then must stand quietly at the release point throughout the test. Time in the Open Class is started when the dog is released.
- **Accepted Work:** The dog may enter the earth, come out, and reenter providing he does not go all the way to the quarry. The dog is not penalized as long as he reaches the quarry within thirty (30) seconds from time of release. Once the dog reaches the quarry, he must not leave it; if he does, he receives no score for working even though he may return to the quarry. If the dog reaches the quarry within thirty (30) seconds and works the quarry continuously for a full minute, he earns the CG.
- **Issuing of the CG:** The dog owner(s) will send the dog's score sheet along with the \$10 Certificate Fee to the AWTA Trial Secretary who will issue and mail the Certificate. A dog owner(s) has thirty (30) days from the day of the trial to become an AWTA member and be eligible for the CG.

Certificate Class Advanced Award (CCAA):

The CCAA title is awarded to a dog whose owner(s) are AWTA members in good standing during the entire period of obtaining the passing scores. *Note:* The starting date for the Award is for passing scores on or after January 1, 2012.

- **Qualification:** The Certificate is issued to dogs that have accumulated five (5) passing scores in the Certificate Class.
- **Applying for the CCAA:** A CCAA application submitted by the dog owner(s) indicating the trial name, location, and date of the qualifying trials along with the \$25 Certificate Fee must be sent to the Trial Secretary for verification. *Note:* It is the responsibility of the owner(s) to keep track of the qualifying information.
- **Issuing of the CCAA:** The Certificate Class Advanced Award will be a special frame with the title engraved that will be appropriate to display the documentation or photo of the dog.

JUDGES/REPRESENTATIVES:

It is the objective of the AWTA Judging Approval Process to provide participants at AWTA Trials with judges who are well versed in conducting den trials and other sanctioned events and are experienced in hunting with working terriers and dachshunds and who can apply that experience in evaluating dogs entered under them.

Judges will be able to act as a field representative of the AWTA at Trials and to serve as a mentor and liaison with the Trial Chairperson.

Judge Approval Process:

- **Minimum Requirements:**

1. At least five (5) years of verifiable experience in hunting with working terriers and/or Dachshunds in the field against natural quarry.
2. The attainment of a Working Certificate (WC) issued by the AWTA to a dog owned and handled by the Applicant.
3. Been a member of the AWTA for at least two (2) consecutive years.
4. Have recommendations from two (2) AWTA members in good standing, who are not residents of the same household.
5. Possess the physical ability to carry out a judging assignment.
6. Serve as an Apprentice Judge at two (2) AWTA Trials with two (2) different approved judges who have held that status for at least three (3) years and obtain a favorable report from the judges on their performance. **Note:** The Trustees may, at their discretion, approve an applicant who has served as an Apprentice only one (1) time.

- **Additional Requirements:**

The Applicant should have at least two (2) of the following qualifications:

1. Served as a Chairperson or Secretary at an AWTA event or demonstrate by other means an in-depth knowledge of event administration, record keeping and reporting.
2. Judging approval from another organization recognized by AWTA that sponsors similar events.
3. Have significant experience as a handler at working terrier/Dachshund events, verifiable through titles and/or certificates earned, documented experience with the working characteristics of multiple breeds of dogs eligible to compete at AWTA events (such experience need not include ownership of those breeds).
4. Participate in an interview with a Trustee or other person designated by the Trustees regarding their knowledge of the AWTA Rules.

- **Applying for Judgeship:** When, according to the Applicant's records, they have met the above requirements, he or she shall submit a request in writing to the Trial Secretary requesting approval as an AWTA Judge. If the Trial Secretary finds the letter to be in order, it will be forwarded to the Trustees.
- **Final Approval:** A unanimous vote of the Trustees is required. Thereafter, the Applicant will be notified of such acceptance and their name along with their contact information will be added to the list of judges that is published in the Down To Earth.

DEN TRIAL INFORMATION:

General Information:

Waivers to these rules: The Trustees' approval must be received in advance of any planned deviations. Under no circumstances may the judge impose additional requirements for any AWTA Den Trial classes.

- AWTA Sanctioning of a trial will be discontinued, either temporarily or permanently, if the trial committee fails to follow AWTA rules explicitly.
- Judges/Representatives and the Chairperson will be held responsible for any infraction of the AWTA rules as stated in this book. When Judges/Representatives and the Chairperson are at fault for not upholding the rules or are found guilty of misconduct by the Trustees, they will not be sanctioned to act as judges/representatives or chairperson for a minimum period of one (1) year. The exact length of probation will be at the discretion of the Trustees.
- AWTA trials must always be open to all eligible breeds. Trials are never to be held for a specific breed.
- AWTA trials may be held concurrently with other events provided that the approval of the Trustees has been obtained in advance.
- Concurrent events must not interfere with the smooth running of the AWTA trial.
- Saturday/Sunday (back-to-back) trials may be held. In that event, the earths must be in different locations and preferably at separate sites. The same judge may not judge the same class at both trials.
- Judges/Representatives and the Trial Chairperson must have the official AWTA Rule Book at trials where they are officiating. The Rule Book is available online at www.awta.org.
- No bitch in season may be entered.
- Judge's dogs or co-owned dogs may be entered at the trial, if another AWTA approved judge is available to judge them.
- Judges may not chair trials at which they are judging.
- Seniority rights for long-standing trial dates by region will persist from year to year and new groups will have to honor these dates.

AWTA Den Trial Sanctioning:

AWTA trials may be held wherever enough support is indicated. Interested parties must have a chairperson who is an AWTA member in good standing.

- **Applying for a Trial:** Persons/Groups who want AWTA sanctioning for a trial must provide the AWTA Trial Secretary with a completed application at least three (3) months prior to the planned date of the trial. The application must be accompanied with the \$60 application fee and documentation that the AWTA has been included as an additional insured on a liability insurance policy obtained by the organizer(s) for the trial (see Insurance section below).

Note: If this is the first-time trial for sponsoring Person/Group the application must be made six (6) months prior to the trial date and must include a map of the site. First time trials will have a judge appointed by the Trustees. The judge's expenses will be agreed upon in advance and the AWTA will pay any of the approved judge's expenses that are not covered by trial revenue (see section on allowed judge's expenses). This will only be done for a first-time trial.

Insurance:

The AWTA does not provide liability insurance to AWTA sanctioned trials. The insurance requirements for sanction are given below. The Certificate of Insurance **MUST** accompany the application for sanctioning.

- The local club/individual/organization putting on a trial sanctioned by the AWTA must have a Comprehensive General Liability insurance policy that covers the event.
- The local club, organization or individual putting on the trial must provide the AWTA with a Certificate of Insurance before the AWTA sanctions the event.
- The policy must have a minimum of \$1 million coverage.
- The Certificate of Insurance must list the American Working Terrier Association, Inc. as an additional insured.
- The Certificate of Insurance should show the date/s of coverage for the policy.

Once the Trial is approved the AWTA will provide:

- AWTA Official Score Sheets (substitutes not allowed).
- Blank entry forms (Trial sponsor will make as many copies as are needed.)
- Appropriate AWTA forms for documenting the trial results. These forms must be filled out by the Trial Chairperson and the Judge the day of the trial and returned to the AWTA Trial Secretary within seven (7) days following the trial.
- Ribbons for Novice A, Novice B, Open, and Certificate classes.
- Trophies for each dog receiving its Certificate of Gameness.
- Trophies will be shipped to the Chairperson and must be requested several weeks prior to the trial. The Chairperson will return unused trophies.
- **Note:** Canadian groups are responsible for customs charges and are encouraged to find alternative ways for trophy distribution.

Trial Entry Fees:

The sponsoring group may charge any fee per class they feel is appropriate to include \$5 per dog entry that will be owed to the AWTA (i.e. \$5 per dog, per entry). When a dog moves up to Open from a Novice class, or up to Certificate from Open, the AWTA will again be owed \$5 from that entry fee. The AWTA will be owed \$5 per dog entered directly in the Certificate Class. Pre-entries absent from the trial are still subject to the \$5 per dog owed the AWTA.

Trial Committee/Judges/Representatives:

Required Committee Members and Responsibilities:

A committee made up of at least the following people shall be responsible for the trial's organization and operation:

- **Trial Chairperson** - An AWTA member in good standing who will be held responsible for strict adherence to the AWTA Rules and Regulations as set forth in this Rule Book.
 1. File the Trial Request Form and deposit with the AWTA
 2. Appoint the Committee Members
 3. Oversee production of Trial Flyer/Premium List
 4. Coordinate digging of the earth
 5. Facilitate laying and scenting of the den under the Judge's supervision
- **Secretary** – may need assistants at large trials
 1. Receive pre-entries and gate entries
 2. Distribute identifying badges for the Trial Committee and workers
 3. Prepare lists of entries for the various classes for the Gate Steward
 4. Prepare the Score Sheets in numerical order for the judge
 5. Prepare Trial Reports at the end of the event and send to the AWTA Trial Secretary within seven (7) days
- **Den/Gate Steward**
 1. Post running order of entries in holding area
 2. Inform the judge of the entry number or other identification for each dog before it is judged
 3. Keep the flow of participants evenly and timely
- **Den Master**
 1. Responsible for the welfare of the quarry
 2. Responsible for having adequate scent prepared and ready for use during the judging(the scent should be prepared the day before the trial by mixing water with rat litter)
 3. May scent the den during the trial only at the direction of the judge and will otherwise remain at a discreet distance from the den
 4. May be asked to conduct a training session that immediately follows the trial
 5. May be approved by the AWTA to act as an apprentice to the Judge (which must not interfere with the smooth operation of the judging procedure)
- **Judge's Steward** – Optional
 1. Quietly stay beside the Judge and record the time given by the Judge for each part of the test on the score sheet
 2. Provide the score sheet to the judge for review, completion and their signature.
 3. Signal the Den Steward to call the next entry to the judging area
 4. There should not be other communication with the Judge unless the Judge directs comments to the Steward. It is the Judge's prerogative to confer with the Steward at any point.
 5. The Steward stays out of the way but ready to assist the Judge if asked
 6. May be asked to conduct a training session that immediately follows the trial
 7. May be approved by the AWTA to act as an apprentice to the Judge (which must not interfere with the smooth operation of the judging procedure)

Choosing a Judge for the Trial:

These officials must be on the AWTA approved list of Judges (list is on Website and in the quarterly DTE). The Trial Chairperson will select a Judge except when this is the Chairperson's/Sponsoring Group's first trial, or the Chairperson has previously been on suspension. In such cases, the AWTA may make the appointment.

Allowable Judge Expenses:

Judges must estimate their expenses when contacted about the assignment. The Chairperson should verify the estimate.

1. Per mile expenses for travel to and from the trial on a direct route at the rate currently approved from the IRS Private Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement
2. Tolls
3. Public transportation charges should be the most reasonable form of transportation based on time and cost factors
4. Time missed from work (must provide verification of wages lost)

Note: The Trial Chairperson is to provide lodging and meals to the judge, at no cost to the AWTA.

Judge's Responsibility:

The Judge, in addition to their judging assignment, will officially represent the AWTA.

The following are the Judge's responsibilities:

1. Judges should hold an orientation, just prior to judging, with first-time handlers and interested spectators at the judging area. Rules and procedures should be explained and questions answered.
2. Following the judging, the Judge (or someone appointed by the Judge) should hold a training clinic for novice dogs and their handlers.
3. Final decisions are the responsibility of the Judge/Representative who will see that all AWTA rules are enforced at trials.
4. At the end of the trial the Judge/Representative will meet with the trial committee to discuss the operation of the trial, give an evaluation of the trial, and review in a positive manner any aspect of the trial that might be improved in the future.
5. The Judge will count all entries and submit a full report to the AWTA Trial Secretary on the Judge's Report form within seven (7) days following the trial.

Notes:

- The Judge must refuse to allow the trial to proceed unless all AWTA rules and procedures are properly enforced. If the Judge finds any infractions of the AWTA rules or procedures, the Trial Chairperson will be held responsible for correcting the infraction and the Trustees will take disciplinary action.
- If a Judge/Representative is in violation of any AWTA rule, it is the responsibility of the Trial Chairman to report it to the Trustees within two weeks following the trial. Any AWTA member may report to the Trustees any violations or misconduct of the Judge or Chairman within two weeks following the trial.

Preparing For The AWTA Den Trial:

1. Arrange for use of a site
2. Arrange for restrooms or port-a-johns at the Sponsoring Group's expense
3. Prepare & circulate a flyer for the trial using the class descriptions listed in the Rule Book. Remember to include entry fees, closing date for pre-entries, if gate or post entries are allowed, and the starting time of the trial.

The Day Before The Trial:

1. Dig earth to place liners
2. Check that liners are correct dimensions. If a permanent earth is to be used the dimension should also be checked, any game driven off and the openings blocked until the next day.
3. Mark off the judging area with fencing or ropes and stakes
4. Post holding area and parking signs

Obtaining Quarry For The Trial: The quarry, for all classes at an AWTA sanctioned den trial, is caged rats. Rats may be purchased through most pet stores (allow plenty of time in case they have to be ordered). Do not order young rats and specify the need for fully mature rats and use males, if possible. Two rats are required. Humane treatment of the quarry is mandatory. After the trial the rats can sometimes be returned to the place of purchase.

Note: Trials held in the Province of Alberta have official AWTA approval to use two male gerbils.

Equipment Needed The Day Of The Trial:

1. Quarry (see above)
2. Food and water for the quarry
3. Two (2) shovels for each den or a shovel and a trowel for each den
4. Bottle of scent for each den and method of application of scent
5. Clipboard, pen and pencil for each judge
6. Water or other beverages for each judge

Preparing The Earths For The Trial:

- The location of both the Novice and Open/Certificate judging areas should be selected to reasonably minimize distractions
- There will be two (2) separate earths where the dog's access to entrances is at least 40-foot apart (one earth will be for the Novice Classes and the other for the Open and Certificate Classes)
- Earths are to be dug in the ground
- The Den Steward or the Judge will scent the earths with the Trial Chairperson observing the morning of the Trial
- It is also recommended that the Judge and anyone assisting in the den area be camouflaged or hidden and fenced off from dogs
- The judging area will be roped off from spectators and should be large enough to insure that no part of the Earth is less than 20 feet from the perimeter of the roped area.
- A holding area will be set up that is at least 100 feet from the perimeter of the judging area will be provided for contestants to stay with their dogs while waiting to be called into the judging area.
- The quarry will be placed into the den just before the judging begins on the morning of the Trial

Scenting of The Earths:

One scenting procedure is to lightly soak a small cloth rag with rat scent and drag it through the tunnels so it touches the ground from the entrance to the end. Care must be taken to keep scent from being applied to any other place outside or around the tunnels. The use of alternate scenting procedures (such as using a squirt or spray bottle) is at the discretion of the Judge. Care should be taken to not over scent the tunnels which will cause the dogs to dwell on the scent.

Note: Once prepared every precaution should be taken to keep all dogs away from the earths. No pre-trial practice is to take place at the trial site

Construction Of The Liners: are built to fit a nine-inch by nine-inch (inside dimension) square tunnel (construction diagrams are provided in the appendix section)

1. The Novice Earth when fully constructed will be approximately ten (10) feet long with one (1) right angle (90 degree) turn. No deviation is allowed
2. The Open and Certificate Earth when fully constructed will be approximately thirty (30) feet long with three (3) right angle (90 degree) turns. No deviation is allowed. **Note:** The Certificate Class Earth may be longer and include additional challenges such as simple obstacles, blind tunnels, and false entrances.
3. At the end of each Earth an area is prepared to hold the caged quarry as follows:
 - Across the end of the liner and facing the quarry, insert three or four evenly spaced vertical 1” diameter wooden dowels.
 - The liner must be constructed so that the dowels can be easily removed and replaced during the course of the trial. **Note:** Wooden dowels **ARE** required on newly constructed liners and preferred on liners built prior to June 2007. However, 1/4 or 3/8 inch diameter smooth iron rods either vertical or horizontal, may be used on older liners. These iron rods **MUST BE** covered with 1/2 or 3/4 inch PVC pipe and placed so that there is approximately 1” or less of space between the PVC covered rods. Dowels or PVC covered rods are mandatory to protect the quarry. A Trial **CANNOT** proceed without them
 - A solid box around the quarry cage, open only to the bars at the end of the liner, will help prevent dogs from picking up the scent of the quarry. The den area over the caged quarry must be covered.
 - The tops of the liners must not be visible after being placed into the Earth and covered with dirt. The earth should look as natural as possible. The entrance should not be too heavily covered with brush or other materials, which might deter the dog from entering. The entrance should be inviting to the dog.

AWTA Classes offered at a Den Trial:

1. **Novice A:** Open to dogs and bitches under 12 months of age that have not earned 100% in the Novice Class or worked in a similar artificial earth.
2. **Novice B:** Open to dogs and bitches 12 months of age and over that have not earned 100% in the Novice Class or worked in a similar artificial earth or have worked to ground in a natural earth.
3. **Open:** Open to dogs and bitches that have scored 100% in the Novice Class or worked in a similar artificial earth or have worked to ground in a natural earth. When a dog scores 100% in the Open Class, he earns the *Certificate of Gameness*. The AWTA keeps a record of every dog that earns a *Certificate of Gameness*. After being issued the *Certificate of Gameness* a dog is eligible for the Certificate Class **only** and cannot be entered in any other class. **Note:** AWTA Membership is required for receipt of the CG. If the owner of the dog is not a member they have thirty (30) days from the trial date to submit the membership application. If the owner does not become an AWTA Member within thirty (30) days the CG is invalid and at a subsequent trial the dog must again enter and pass the Open Class to obtain a valid score sheet but they should not be awarded a ribbon or flask.
4. **Certificate:** Open to dogs and bitches that **have earned** the *Certificate of Gameness*. This class is provided for dogs that live in areas where natural quarry is limited or nonexistent. The dogs will compete for High Scoring in Breed against each other in a miscellaneous category. The miscellaneous category may be divided into short-legged (12" and under) and long-legged (over 12") at the discretion of the Trial Chairperson.

Judging of all AWTA Classes:

- The Den Steward will call individual entries into the Holding Area shortly before it is time for them to be judged. Approximately three (3) entries should be in the Holding Area at any given time
- The Den Steward will call the dog that is to be judged from the Holding Area into the judging area.
- The handler will remove the dog's collar and leash at the entrance, and then proceed to the starting point carrying the dog.
- The starting point is ten (10) feet from and directly in front of the den entrance.
- The handler may give the dog verbal encouragement during this time.
- The judge briefly goes over what the handler must do, and then tells the handler to release the dog.
- The dog must be released at or below the handler's waist. The dog may be placed on the ground before being released. Throwing the dog in the direction of the entrance will not be permitted and will result in no score.
- At the time of release the handler may give one short command, after which the handler must remain silent unless otherwise instructed by the judge. Further encouragement results in point deductions.
- At the completion of the test, the handler will retrieve the dog from the end of the den and carry the dog away from the judging area.

Judging of both the Novice A & B Class:

- Time is started when the dog ENTERS the tunnel.
- The dog may enter the earth, come out, and reenter providing he does not go all the way to the quarry.
- The dog is NOT penalized as long as he reaches the quarry within sixty (60) seconds.
- Once the dog reaches the quarry he must NOT leave it; if he does, this marks his working.
- The handler may walk to the entrance and stand quietly without losing points.
- The dog receives 50 points if it reaches the quarry within one (1) minute and 25 points if it reaches the quarry within two (2) minutes. No score after two (2) minutes.
- The dog must then work, without a break, for thirty (30) seconds to receive fifty (50) points. If the dog does not work a full thirty (30) seconds then he receives no score.

Judging of the Open Class:

- Time is started when the dog is RELEASED.
- After releasing the dog, the handler must remain at the release point, silently and without moving. Any further encouragement will result in no score.
- The dog must reach the quarry within thirty (30) seconds to receive fifty (50) points. If the dog fails to reach the quarry within thirty (30) seconds then he receives no score.
- The dog must then work, without a break, for sixty (60) seconds to receive fifty (50) points. If the dog does not work a full sixty (60) seconds then he receives no score.
- No help can be given the dog either by the handler or the judge.
- When a dog scores 100% in the Open Class, he earns the *Certificate of Gameness*.

Judging of the Certificate Class:

- Time is started when the dog is RELEASED.
- After releasing the dog, the handler must remain at the release point, silently and without moving. Any further encouragement will result in no score.
- The dog must reach the quarry within thirty (30) seconds to receive fifty (50) points. If the dog fails to reach the quarry within thirty (30) seconds then he receives no score.
- The dog must then work, without a break, for sixty (60) seconds to receive fifty (50) points. If the dog does not work a full sixty (60) seconds then he receives no score.

- The tube of the tunnel can be lengthened and/or obstacles, blind tubes, or false entrances can be added; however, additional time to reach the quarry is allowed. The time to quarry is at the discretion of the judge and should give a dog a reasonable chance to reach the quarry if actively trying to sort out the path to the rats.
- No help can be given the dog either by the handler or the judge.

*****In all classes the acceptable “work” is defined on the judge’s score sheet as barking, growling, whining, digging, biting at the cage, lunging at the cage, and/or a frozen, concentrated, focused stare. **Note for Judges:** when a terrier is doing concentrated staring, the focus of the terrier must be tested by moving the rat cage which should result in a favorable reaction from the terrier, if it is working. Any definite break in work marks the dog’s time, even though he starts up again, this does not mean a natural change from one type of work to another.*****

Awards for AWTA Classes:

A score of 100% is required to qualify in any class. In addition to these awards, which are offered by the AWTA, individuals, breed clubs, or sponsoring groups may offer prizes. It is important not to label the Certificate Class award as “high scoring” since all qualifiers in the class must earn 100%.

1. **Novice A & B Class:** A ribbon is to be given to each dog that qualifies
2. **Open:** A ribbon and a flask are given to each dog that qualifies. The dog will also earn the *Certificate of Gameness*. The Certificate is mailed by the AWTA Trial Secretary if the dog owner(s) is a member of the AWTA. The dog owner(s) has thirty (30) days from the date of the trial to become an AWTA member.
3. **Certificate:** A ribbon is given to the top qualifies by breed or category in the Class. **Note:** The judge should evaluate quality of work, ease of handling the dog or any other factors as he/she sees fit when selecting the top qualifier in each breed or category. The judge’s top qualifier should be the dog that most impresses the judge. If the judge has to select a dog of that breed to take hunting, then based on the day’s performance the top qualifier would be their choice.

Score Sheets for the AWTA Classes:

An AWTA approved score sheet must be used to record each dog’s performance. Official score sheets come in two styles: separate score sheets for each class or a single score sheet that can be used for all of the classes (either style may be used). **Note:** If the Certificate Class is made more challenging and the time to quarry increased, it will be necessary to alter the score sheet for the Certificate Class to reflect the time change.

OFFICIAL AWTA JUDGE'S SCORE SHEET - ALL CLASSES

Trial _____ Date _____
Judge _____
Name of Dog _____
Breed _____ Age _____
Owner _____
No. _____ Total Score _____
Entry Fee Paid: Novice _____ Open _____ Certificate _____

NOVICE CLASS: A or B (indicate)

REACHING THE QUARRY: Time dog enters earth, to reaching quarry: _____

Within 1 minute 50 points

1 to 2 minutes 25 points

Encouragement deduction: Mild, 5 points; Much, 10 points. Score: _____

WORKING THE QUARRY: Total time dog worked (without break): _____

30 seconds = 50 points; 15 to 29 seconds = 25 points

Less than 15 seconds = 10 points

Encouragement deduction: Mild, 5 points; Much, 10 points Score: _____

Judge's comments (Describe exactly how the dog "worked"): _____

Total Score: _____

OPEN CLASS

REACHING THE QUARRY: Time from dog's release to reaching quarry: _____

Within 30 seconds, 50 points Score: _____

WORKING THE QUARRY: Total time dog worked (without break): _____

If dog worked 60 seconds, 50 points. Score: _____

Judge's comments (Describe exactly how the dog "worked"): _____

Total Score: _____

CERTIFICATE CLASS

REACHING THE QUARRY: Time from dog's release to reaching quarry: _____

Within 30 seconds, 50 points Score: _____

WORKING THE QUARRY: Total time dog worked (without break): _____

If dog worked 60 seconds, 50 points. Score: _____

Judge's comments (Describe exactly how the dog "worked"): _____

Total Score: _____

OFFICIAL AWTA JUDGE'S SCORE SHEET:

NOVICE A or B (Indicate class)

Trial _____ **Date** _____

Judge _____

Name of Dog _____

Breed _____ **Age** _____

Owner _____

No. _____ **Total Score** _____

REACHING THE QUARRY:

The handler may give one command on release. After releasing the dog the handler may walk to the entrance and stand quietly. In the Novice Classes, if the judge feels the dog needs encouragement to enter then he will advise the handler to encourage the dog. Deductions will be made if encouragement is required. Time is started when the dog enters the earth. The dog has one minute to reach the quarry and during this time he may come out and re-enter several times. If the dog reaches the quarry within 1 minute and no encouragement has been given, then 50 points are earned.

TIME FROM ENTERING TO REACHING QUARRY: _____

_____ Reaches quarry before 1 minute= 50 points

_____ Reaches quarry in 1 to 2 minutes= 25 points

_____ Mild encouragement given, deduct 5 points

_____ Much encouragement given, deduct 10 points

Score _____

WORKING THE QUARRY:

Once the dog has reached the quarry, it must work for thirty seconds to earn the maximum of 50 points. If the dog leaves the quarry before it begins to work, then it receives no points. "Work" is defined as barking, whining, growling, biting at the bars or cage, lunging at the cage, digging, or a frozen concentrated focused stare. Any definite break in work marks the dog's time, even if the dog starts working again. This does not mean a natural change from one type of work to another. If the dog is not reacting to the quarry, then the judge may advise the handler to come to the opening to encourage his dog. Deductions will be made if encouragement is required.

TOTAL TIME DOG WORKS, WITHOUT BREAK: _____

_____ Works full 30 seconds= 50 points

_____ Works 15 to 29 seconds= 25 points

_____ Works less than 15 seconds= 10 points

_____ Mild encouragement, deduct 5 points

_____ Much encouragement, deduct 10 points

Judge's comments (Describe exactly how the dog "worked"):

Score _____

OFFICIAL AWTA JUDGE'S SCORE SHEET:

OPEN or CERTIFICATE (Indicate class)

Trial _____ **Date** _____

Judge _____

Name of Dog _____

Breed _____ **Age** _____

Owner _____

No. _____ **Total Score** _____ **Certificate Class ONLY- Top qualifier** _____

REACHING THE QUARRY:

The Open and Certificate Classes do not allow the handler to assist the dog. The handler may give one command on release and then must remain quietly at the release point throughout the test. Time in these classes will be started when the dog is released. In the Open and Certificate classes the dog has 30 seconds from release to reach the quarry except when the Certificate class is made more difficult, the time can be increased. The dog may enter, come out, and then re-enter. The dog is not to be discredited provided it reaches the quarry within the 30 seconds.

TIME FROM RELEASE TO REACHING QUARRY: _____

Reaches quarry within 30 seconds = 50 points.

Score _____

WORKING THE QUARRY:

Once the dog has reached the quarry, it must work continuously for one minute to earn the maximum of 50 points. If the dog leaves the quarry before beginning to work, it will receive a zero for the Work. "Work" is defined as barking, whining, growling, biting at the bars or cage, lunging at the cage, digging, or a frozen, concentrated, focused stare. Any definite break in work marks the dog's time, even if the dog starts working again. This does not mean a natural change from one type of work to another.

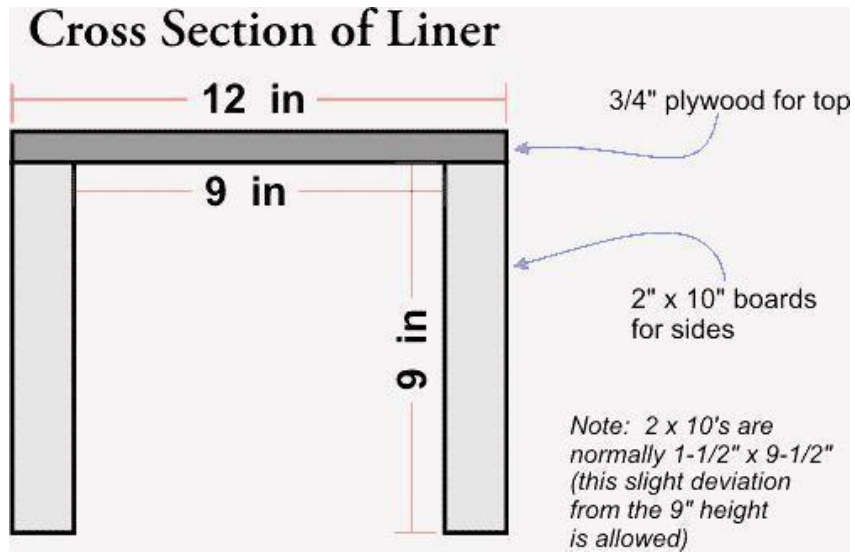
TOTAL TIME DOG WORKS WITHOUT BREAK: _____

Works full minute = 50 points. _____

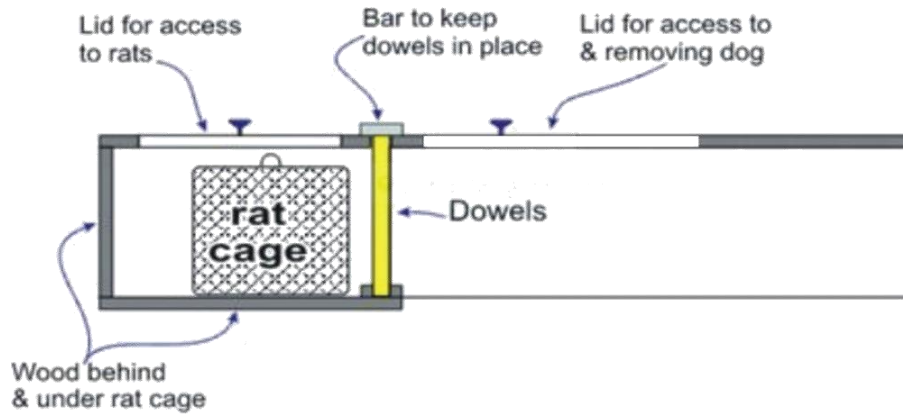
Score _____

Judge's comments (Describe exactly how the dog "worked"):

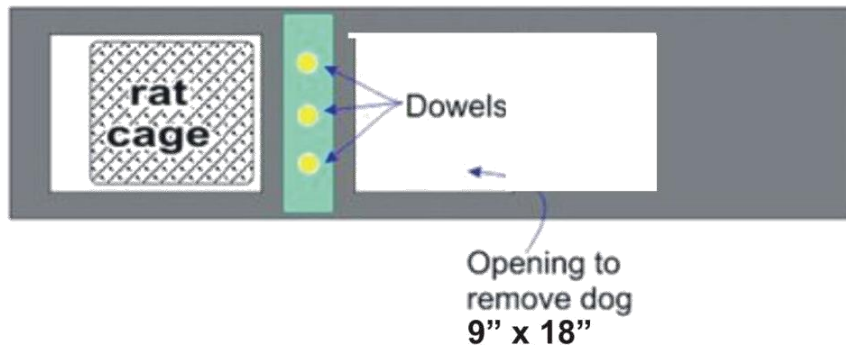
Tunnel Construction



Cross Section of Liner, (rat end)



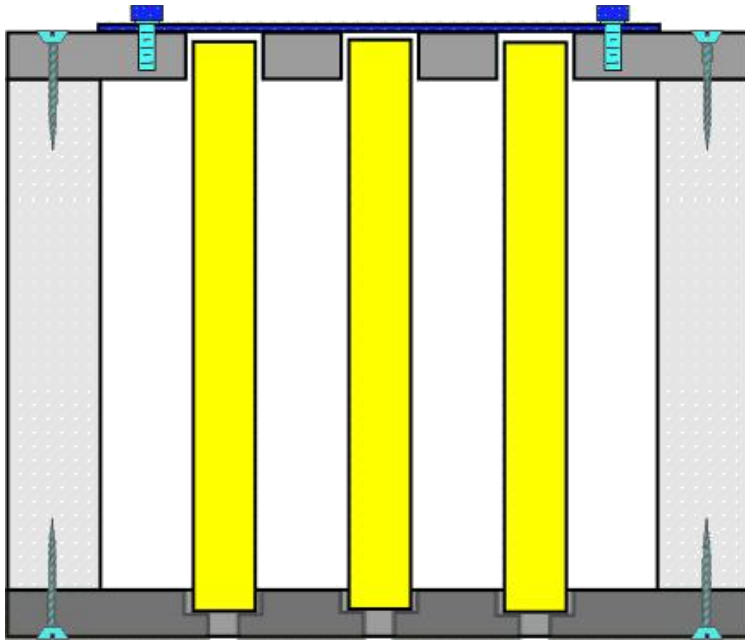
Top View of Liner, (rat end)



Note: This is one example of how the dowels can be placed. The primary concern is that the dowels are replaceable, but the dog must not be able to remove them.

Holes for 1" dowels should be 1 1/8" diameter.

Dowels set into hole in bottom of liner to anchor them. Note: Hole is 1/2 way through bottom, not completely through.



Possible layouts for 30 foot earths

