



# Down the track

## A TDX title is an honour for you and your dog. Margaret Keast explains how to get one.

**W**hen your dog has gained passes in tracks one, two and three under at least two different judges, you can apply for the title of Tracking Dog. This title becomes part of your dog's name and is added to the end.

For example, a Main or Limited Register dog named 'Junction Magic' would become 'Junction Magic TD', while a dog without a kennel prefix in its name would change from being registered as 'Sophie' to being 'Sophie TD'.

Now you are eligible for tracks four, five and six, which you must pass to gain your TDX title.

### Track times

TDX tracks are aged longer before you are sent out on the track so you need to build up the time your tracks are aged in training. Remember that on all these tracks your dog must indicate the article by either sitting, standing or dropping – so keep working on your article indications.

Each track has a specified time span indicating the minimum and maximum time after the tracklayer has departed you will be sent on the track.

These time spans have been set, rather than set times, because circumstances can change in tracking trials. The Chief Steward may

be forced to delay the start of your track for a variety of reasons. These can include:

- Lost dogs
- Injuries
- Competitors failing their tracks at the start therefore making more time available
- Dogs that track slowly or fail at the end of a track making less time available
- The late arrival of competitors, helpers or judges

Judges have set times that they like to leave certain tracks. However, the Chief Steward's job is to ensure that you will be sent out within the nominated time span once the tracklayer has set out – so don't panic.

**“ Build your knowledge by laying tracks for others at training and by following other dogs on tracks. You can learn a lot by just watching. ”**

### Types of turns

Turns on these tracks will vary from open turns with small deviation from the current track line, to turns of approximately 90 degrees, to acute turns where the new track line forms an acute angle with the current track line.

The rules itemise which turn can be used where, and the terrain often limits the turns that can be used.

## Track four

A person unknown to the dog lays track four. The track is approximately one kilometre in length and has four turns, which should not be acute.

Three articles will be placed on the track, and your dog must find and indicate at least one to be eligible to pass.

Competitors are sent out between one and two hours after the track is laid.

## Track five

Track five is nearly the same as track four except a person known to you and nominated by you, called the 'decoy', will cross the track once.

The decoy crosses the track thirty minutes after the track is laid, and generally the decoy won't be close to a turn.

It's best not to choose your dog's best friend as a nominated decoy, or your dog might drop everything to follow the decoy track and find their friend.

Your dog will also need to indicate two of the three articles on the track.

## Track six

This track is much harder, and it gives a dog the title of Tracking Dog Excellent (TDX). It's longer, has more turns, unknown decoys, more articles and a longer wait before you go out.

The track is 1.2km long, with five turns, one of which must be an acute turn. The minimum time of ageing the track is one hour, and the maximum is three hours.

The track is crossed twice by decoys – these can be one person crossing twice, or two people crossing once. The decoys are meant to be unknown to the dog and you don't choose them.

Most Chief Stewards will use one person crossing the track twice as it's easier to manage logistically, but the rules allow for the track to be crossed by two people.

## Practice makes perfect

So, in training start practising article indications and turns. Add distance. Add turns. Increase the age of your tracks a few minutes at a time, and vary only one thing at a time so that you can pinpoint any problems.

Build your knowledge by laying tracks for others at training and by following other dogs on tracks. You can learn a lot about tracking and handling your own dog just by watching.

And remember that this is a sport, designed for you and your dog to enjoy – always make it fun for your dog. ♡

## Make tracks

The next tracking event will be held in May by the Tracking & Rescue Dog Club Inc

**When:** 1 May

**Where:** TBC

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