

31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 - It's a Dog's World, Sumner WA

## Scentsational with Steve White

Stop thinking of movement of scent as a cone – it implies defined edges. Think of it as a **plume**

Many different areas where scent dogs are used:

- Explosives
- Narcotics
- Accelerant
- Cancer
- SAR (live and HR)
- Termites
- Bed bugs
- Mold
- Mushrooms / truffles
- Wildlife (scat, conservation)
- Service
- Gas leak
- Water
- Electronics detection

SWGDOG recommends replacing training aids every 6 months to avoid too much human contamination (\*note – I look through some of the guidelines and cannot find a reference to support this, it only says that the aids need to be handled and stored in such a way as to avoid contamination)

## Scent Rules

- Dogs always do things for a reason.
- The dog is always right – they perform to the level you train.
- It's not practice makes perfect but rather, *perfect practice* makes perfect. Design of the exercise is key!
- Behavioral principles still apply
- Know the science
- *If it ain't fun, it ain't done*
- Forget force
  - You don't know what the dog smells (combinations, specifics)
  - Adverse associates are easily formed
  - Forced work becomes context dependent (collapse under pressure of stress)
  - Dogs will fake it!
- Check your assumptions. You can never truly know what your dog is smelling

- Beware of reinforcing sudden leaps in progress. They tend to create fluency gaps.
- There is no failure, just unexpected outcomes. Hardness the information!

### **Build the fundamental chain**

- Search
  - Any whiff of odor
- Locate
  - The strongest concentration available
- Report
  - The location of the strongest concentration

### **Backchain correctly!**

The most common scent work fault is teaching the report behavior after the search behavior (\*note – he is open to free shaping the locate and report if done carefully)

- Antecedents
- Behavior
- Consequences
- If behavior is murky, either the antecedents or consequences are murky. Or both!

### **Core behaviors to teaching report behavior for odor detection**

- Attention
- Eating
  - Prefer food for training this because you can regulate how much. Little for some reinforcement and jackpot for solid behavior
- Nose targeting
  - 10:1 schedule (can do 10 targets for each “paycheck”), any object, anywhere, anytime
- Sit or Down
  - Short latency, resistant to distraction and tugs (will continue to do behavior even is tugging on leash)
- Wait
- Recall
- Retrieve (optional)

### **Baselining**

- Ask yourself what and why
- Build a matrix
  - Core behaviors
  - Criteria
  - Environment
  - Reinforcers
  - Cues
  - Contexts

- YAWYA (You Are Where You Are)

### The Elements of Fluency (proficiency)

- Accuracy
- Latency
- Speed (Power, Volume, or Intensity)
- Distance
- Duration
- Distraction
- Environment

In a matrix, list the behaviors that are needed for the chain. Be a splitter, not a lumper! These behaviors are your column headings. Put different levels of criteria (what does it look like when the behavior is proficient, when it's shaky, when the dog doesn't know it well). Need to be proficient / bulletproof in all before chaining!



### Pavlov vs Skinner

#### Operant

- Get the behavior
- Introduce scent as the cue
- Build the search last

#### Classical

- Let the scent be in the background
- During the high POO behavior
- Construct the chain later

## Food vs Toys

### Food

- High rep count
- Lowest common denominator approach
- All food through training?

### Toys

- Rep velocity slower but more kinetic
- Game or possession?
- The Holy of Holies

## Thousand Hour Eyes (Video-based analysis)

Know Mackenzie's scent work indicators

Build your own scentwork indicator database

### Mackenzie's scent work indicators

*Changes in:*

#### **Pull (on leash)**

- Intensity (how hard)
- Frequency (stop/go)
- Duration
- Vector

#### **Nose Height**

- In relation to:
  - Body
  - Ground
  - Vertical surface
  - Previous carriage

#### **Tail Carriage**

- In relation to
  - Top line
  - Previous carriage
- Wagging
- Frequency
- Amplitude
- Curl

#### **Breathing**

- Sound
  - Sniffing
  - Turbinate Pop

- Mouth closure
- Rate
- Depth
  - Look at rib cage

**Cadence**

- Forward speed
- Stride count
- Zigzag
- Inch-worm back

**Circling**

- Diameter
- Relation to wind
- Recovery
- Comparison
- Re-assessment

**Crabbing**

- Oblique forward movement
- Head drag
  - Internal conflict
    - Body says, “Go”
    - Nose says, “Whoa!”

**Head Swing**

- Nose anchor
- Suddenness
- Perpendicularity
- Head pop
- Wind direction
- Follow-up

**Harness video’s power**

View it at least three times

- Once for overall impression
- Once for the dog
- Once for the handler

Subsequent viewings

- Interaction between dog & handler
- Relationship between chained behaviors

***Use the video assessment sheet to determine if your dog does the following category items:***

	<b>ON</b>	<b>OFF</b>
Pull		

Nose		
Tail		
Breathing		
Cadence		
Circling		
Crabbing		
Head Swing		

### Build a database

- Do an assessment sheet for each training search
- Count how often an indicator appears
- Divide by number of searches
- Result is indicator of reliability quotient

### Doing the Math (examples)

“Closed mouth” while in scent appears 18 out of 20 times.  $18 \div 20 = 90\%$

“Low, wide sweeping tail” while in scent appears 15 out of 20 times.  $15 \div 20 = 75\%$

“Critttering” never appears while in scent. 100% reliable “negative” indicator. If he’s critttering, he doesn’t have scent.

### Pareto’s Law

20% of the indicators yield 80% of the info

Pick the most frequently occurring

Negatives as important as positives (especially for trailing teams)