

## Debriefing: PAFTA TD-TDX Combined Test, March 13, 2022, Morgan Hill CA

Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup>, PAFTA held its annual combined TD-TDX test at our wonderful county Coyote Creek Trailhead park in Morgan Hill CA. Weather: mild-to-warm, dry-very-very-dry, sunny except for some much-appreciated cloud cover Sunday morning, field conditions great but browning fast, with foxtails just starting to brown. Our main past problems with the park – pig wallows and milkweed/star thistle – are at a minimum, we think because the pig population is reduced (hunting? drought?) and the slashpile burn program the park has been doing. We did note much poison oak just starting to leaf out 😞. Huge thank you to our tireless judges Rita Crawford and Stuart Lease for their weekend, their patience and thorough attention to details was instructive! I love working for these guys. Thanks also to PAFTA's premium-and-catalog-person-for-life Terry Southard, she makes them perfect.

Bottom line is: TDX, two tracks offered, one pass. TD, three tracks offered, one pass. One potential new club member recruit. One new person inspired to do tracklaying at future tests. It was a GOOD day for all tracking kind!

Plotting day was 70deg shorts-weather (at least for Stuart), most of us stripping down to tshirts quickly. The TDX tracks were a half mile out from HQ and the TD tracks were all about a quarter mile out, there is a lotta walking at this park. Wouldn't it be fun if we had electric scooters or could rent a golf cart! I think I heard one person say she saw a rattlesnake – it's definitely close to snake season.

Sunday morning no one forgot to set their clocks ahead for daylight savings time, we were on-schedule for a two-person draw for the TD track order ("do you have draw article tug toy color choices besides pink? We both have boy dogs" (yes I did)).

TD track #1 went to dog T101, an 18mo GSD dog who squeaked in his certification just a month ago, congratulations to Duke Vom SentinelHarts "Duke" handled by Cindy levers on a very speedy and efficient PASS in 10 minutes. Quick start, sharp turns, you could see on the LONG final last leg/open turn that both handler and dog were saying "it must be soon, is this it? Is this it?" when finally it WAS "it" and there was a party.

TD track #2 went to dog T102, a 4-1/2yo Dalmatian dog. He had a distracted start but the very level-headed handler took good advantage of the rule allowing a restart if you haven't gone past the 30yard directional flag. At 15yards, she asked permission from the judges, then put her start article back down on the ground and had her dog indicate it, and he got to work nicely. For about a minute, poor guy. There is SO much going on in that beautiful field. Handler showed good patience working their way to the first turn, tracked down the second leg quite nicely, but continued straight at the second turn and was whistled off after a generous distance.

There was an alternate TD track run by dog T103, a 3yo Rhodesian Ridgeback bitch. I've done some training with this dog in the past and I agree with the handler that her start today was her best ever – she briskly struck off nose-down on point, it was beautiful to see. The first leg was a long one and she accurately indicated loss of scent at the turn, but had trouble committing to the new direction. The handler showed excellent patience encouraging the dog to circle, watering her, trying again, I'm sure thinking "oh god now what do I do". She finally did commit and was a serious tracking dog

through the next two legs, but on the third turn, maybe complicated by the nearby creek, she once again couldn't commit despite the handler exercising all her patience skills again, and the judges finally had to call lack-of-progress.

The TDX draw was eezy-peezy to draw since only there was only one dog: dog X201 getting TDX track #1, a 5yo poodle dog. Congratulations to Riant Once In A Blue Moon "Ziggy" and handler Hilary Ellis on a well earned PASS, nailing every turn except the third turn which wasn't listed as an obstacle but could have been – the turn was right on top of the main creekside bridle path that carries lots of traffic (although none went by during this time) plus being right next to the CREEK whose coolness sucked everything into it. Ziggy checked out every direction 5 times before finally approaching the turn from the "just right" direction and committed to it, NICE work by Hilary too. Loved that the first intermediate article was 40 yards after this turn: REWARD! The first obstacle, a turn in an open sawdust pit? No problem, no hesitation. The second obstacle, crossing a 15yard concrete slab under the long pole barn? Well, first Ziggy made note of what Stuart thought was a coyote den hole at the edge of the slab, then had to have some communication with what Rita says is the ghost that lives in that pole barn, then just charged across. The glove was 15 yards after the slab: REWARD! And then we had a party.

There was an alternate TDX track run by dog X202, a 4yo cardigan bitch, all we could see was the ears above the grasses, and then not even that. They motored quickly and successfully through the first 6 turns and the first intermediate article and two road obstacles. On the long (210 yards) second-to-last leg she ended up paralleling the track on the wrong side of the dirt road that the track paralleled, putting her on the other side of the road from the second intermediate article. We think just as she might have made the moves to cross the road to the article, a bike came down the road and then some dog walkers and then some joggers. Who knows what might have happened (isn't that our motto?), but the poor dog ended up not crossing to the correct side of the road, missing the second article, and being whistled off. Serious heartbreaker, VERY close, bodes well for next time!

Huge thanks to our tireless Chief Tracklayer Linda Knowles (who also laid all primary crosstracks and the passing TD track), to our sainted tracklayers Lynne Benson-Colbert (who also brings the ribbons and mugs!) and Dale Noble (bouncing back NICELY from a problem tracklaying experience two weeks ago) and out of townner Maria Murphy who we were delighted to help towards her TD judge qualifications! Yours truly got lay the passing TDX track, thanks to Linda for letting me! Thanks also to secondary cross tracklayers Sue McNeill and Janice Schindler-Horvot, who is now saying she feels ready to lay a full test track, YAY!

Thank you to EVERYONE for supporting us and making these tests possible. Now we start training for next season!

Respectfully submitted,  
Karey Krauter, test secretary