

National Subcommittee Working Trials (Classic)

Annual Convenor's Report 2021

Provincial representatives

The status of the provinces is as follows:

- Eastern Cape & Border – It is with regret that Mr Wessie Westra has resigned from Working Trials (WT) in its entirety. Despite communication with the province, no replacement has been appointed as yet.
- Western Cape – Mr Richard Davis has been elected in place of Mr Vincent Fry.
- Northern Areas Provincial Council (NAPC) – Ms Christine King took over from Mrs Trina Richardson for NAPC.
- District of Gauteng and Surrounds (DOGS PC) – Mrs Claire Patterson-Abrolat remains the representative.
- KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) – We are pleased that KZN has reconstituted their Subcommittee and welcome Mrs Di Turner back to the National Subcommittee.

Members

It was with great sadness that Working Trials noted the passing of Mr Sid Chuter, a well-liked and respected judge. His presence at shows will be greatly missed.

Mr Vincent Fry, Western Province representative and Convenor, emigrated to the UK at the end of August 2021. He will be greatly missed but is willing to stay involved wherever possible.

We also welcomed several new people into the Working Trials community and wish them all the best with their dogs and their tracking careers.

Sadly, the attitude of fault finding by certain handlers persisted this year. Schedule 1 and the revised Schedule 9 were discussed at the judges meeting (see Judges) and Judges and show organisers are now taking a hard stand against unfounded complaining. Handlers are encouraged to politely raise any issues with the judge on the day of the show or to use the formal channels laid out in Schedule 1 to lodge a complaint. Other channels of complaints will be dealt with as per Schedule 9 and Schedule 1 if necessary.

Judges

The loss of Sid Chuter and Vincent Fry as judges has put increasing strain on the existing senior judges. It is currently not possible for handlers in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape or KZN to make their dogs Champions without traveling or the clubs bringing in a judge from another province. Gauteng is slightly more fortunate in that it has three senior judges. However, two of these judges have young, upcoming dogs that they will not be able to make Champions without either traveling or the clubs bringing in a judge from another province. The financial hardships experienced by many in terms of the pandemic make this extremely concerning.

Mrs Yvonne Taentzer and Mr Wessie Westra both retired as judges.

Ms Christine King is currently in the process of completing her learner Tracker Dog 3 (TD3) reports, and Mr Eddie Ryan has expressed interest in becoming a TD3 judge. Both are Gauteng-based.

The loss of Sid Chuter and Vincent Fry also means that there are now only two judges qualified for the Police Dog stake making the title of Champion unobtainable at present. This matter will be addressed should any handler be interested in competing in this stake.

We welcomed two new judges and one returning judge to the fold:

- Dr Helen Ramsay (new)
- Mrs Louise Stone (new)
- Mrs Sue Woodiwiss (renewal)

A national judges meeting was held via Zoom in June 2021 to discuss new rules and any matters arising. The idea of a judges meeting was well received, and we hope to hold them twice a year going forward.

Shows

Despite lockdown, most of the shows in Gauteng still went ahead and it was pleasing to see the way handlers conformed to the COVID-19 restrictions in terms of numbers, social distancing, sanitising and the wearing of masks.

The Western Cape was not so lucky as their shows are mostly confined to the winter months which have coincided with stringent lockdown regulations. The effect has been that they have not been able to progress with the training of judges and have not been able to grow their membership numbers. They saw several of the older dogs retire which has caused an imbalance in their numbers as there are no dogs competing at TD3 level and few newcomers to the Companion Dog stake.

KwaZulu-Natal has held a few Companion Dog stakes but has no dogs above this grade. They will be holding another two shows on 18 October.

Gauteng will be hosting its last two shows for the year at the end of October, the 2nd of which will also include their annual prize giving. This event was not held last year due to the limited number of shows held.

Training sessions

KZN held a successful training session in early 2021.

KUSA Nationals

The KUSA Nationals were held in Gauteng this year and the winners were as follows:

- Tracker Dog 3 – Claire Patterson-Abrolat & Jill
- Police Dog – no entries
- Working Utility Dog – Sue Redlinghuys and Domino (qualified)

Grounds

The finding of grounds remains a challenge for all provinces as industrial and housing developments use up available space. Land availability and accessibility (i.e. travel distance) will be one of the biggest challenges facing all provinces going forward and WT show organisers may be forced to look at altering the way shows are run, i.e. over multiple days, , multiple venues, limiting entries, offering of certain classes only etc.

Despite all the challenges faced this year, the handlers are still dedicated to the discipline and look forward to the 2022 season.



Claire Patterson-Abrolat

Convenor: National Working Trials (Classic) Sub Committee