SUPER SCENTER LEAGUE

RULEBOOK

MAY 2025
V.2.4

Super Scenter League (SSL)

MASTER RULEBOOK

Version 2.4 | May 2025

Table of Contents

Introduction

PURPOSE

To emphasize a sense of FUN in the growing community of canine scent detection sports through themed events. Super Scenter League (SSL) aims to create a positive atmosphere where handlers can engage in relaxed yet challenging searches. Events provide opportunities for teams to put their training to the test and for the handlers to gain a deeper appreciation for the incredible power of a dog's sniffing ability. Whether celebrating a successful find or learning from a miss, each event serves as both a milestone and a learning opportunity, deepening the bond between handlers and their four-legged partners.

CODE OF ETHICS

All Members and Participants of Super Scenter League shall:

➜ treat all dogs and fellow humans with respect.
➜ make positive methods an integral part of their training methods
➜ always take into consideration the physical and psychological well-being of the dog
➜ practice good sportsmanship both in and out of search areas and event grounds
➜ never practice any cruel procedures causing physical or mental harm to the dog which are inconsistent with humane dog training such as choking, leash popping, pinching, hanging, striking, kicking, yelling, or pinning. These methods represent a serious violation of ethical conduct and will not be tolerated.
Members/Participants found guilty of these or similar practices will have their membership revoked and will be banned from participating in SSL events.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of the rules set forth in this book, the following interpretations shall apply:

Alert means a Handler calling "Alert" in response to their dog's indication to the location of a hide.

Aversive means any equipment used on or treatment of a dog by a person that may cause pain or discomfort to the dog or may be intimidating or fear inducing. This includes, but is not limited to, equipment such as pinch/prong and electronic collars.

Dog means a dog/canine of either sex.

Dismiss means to ask a participant to remove themselves and their dog from the event grounds. An incident will be submitted to SSL and the membership status reviewed.

Distractor means anything deliberately placed by the Search Official that would be expected to be distracting for the dogs such as food or toys.

Excuse means to ask a participant to remove themselves and their dog from the search area. The team may be permitted to participate in any entered runs later in the event.

False, or "False Alert", means a Handler calling "ALERT" and receiving a "No" from the Judge signifying there is no hide in the location being indicated to at the time of the call.

Find means successful identification by the participating team of a hide's location and includes both the dog's indication and the handler's "Alert" call.

For Education/Enjoyment Only (FEO) means a team entered in an event that is not eligible to earn credit towards any titles. Teams entered FEO may ask the judge to reveal the location(s) of any hide(s) or ask the judge other questions pertaining to the location(s) of any hide(s) and/or distractors. A team may still be excused from the search area for any non-qualifying behaviour.

Guest means any person on event grounds who is accompanying a participant.

Handler means any person that is responsible for a dog on eventl grounds. There may be only one handler per dog per run.

Hide means a vessel containing target odor that has been placed by a Search Official for the purpose of a participant team to locate it.

Immediate Family means spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents and significant other

Inaccessible Hide means a hide where the dog is unable to place their nose on the hide (not including container hides).

Indication means any observable change in behaviour that the dog demonstrates when making a decision regarding the location of a hide, like a freeze, lingering, or look back to

handler. In 4SL a dog's indication to odor does not need to be a formally trained specific behaviour.

Offering means the unique search(es) of a given Skill/Challenge that is available to be entered at an event.

Participant means a person that is entered in an event.

Participating Team, or simply 'team', means a person and their dog that is entered in an event.

Run means a search attempt made by a participating team for a specific offering.

Search Area means a defined space that contains all hides for a run. The boundaries of a search area may be defined by walls, barriers, cones, or similar.

Target Odor means the scent of the essential oils used in SSL which includes Wintergreen (gaultheria procumbens), Clove (syzygium aromaticum), and Anise (pimpinella anisum).

Team Number means the number assigned to a person and their dog that uniquely identifies that team. All qualifying results/scores are tied to a team by their Team Number.

ROLES

Host

A person, or team of people, organizing and running a SSL event. The host is responsible for such things as securing a venue, officials, and volunteers as well as providing appropriate items to be used in the search area(s) and selecting a Dog in White. The host will work with the event's Search Official(s) to ensure the appropriateness of these details.

Judge

A person certified by SSL for the purposes of evaluating a participating team's performance in a search area.

Search Official (SO)

A person certified by SSL for the purposes of setting up a search area and placing the hides in a given search area. The search official is responsible for determining the parameters of a successful "find" (the area surrounding a hide that will receive a "Yes" from the judge after an "Alert" call aka 'Yes Zone').

General Rules & Guidelines

PARTICIPATING TEAM ELIGIBILITY

Every team entered in a SSL event must meet the following criteria:

➔ Dog must be at least 6 months of age.

➔ Dog may be of any breed or mix of breeds.

➔ Dog must be in good health without any signs of illness or any injury that could be aggravated through their participation in the event.
  ↪ The Judge shall dismiss any dog that appears in pain or discomfort.
  ↪ A Judge's decision is final.

➔ Dog must not have tape or bandages that may impair its working ability

➔ Bitches in heat may participate if the event host is notified prior to the commencement of the event. The female must wear clean pants in the search area and on the event grounds and should be walked off-site for the purposes of toileting.

➔ Both dogs and handlers with disabilities are encouraged to participate. Any modifications that may be required to a search area to accommodate a disability must be provided in writing to the event host at time of entry and must be approved by the SO.

➔ Participant must not have a revoked or suspended SSL membership

➔ Dog must not pose any danger to any humans or other dogs on the event grounds. Any dog deemed by any municipality as "aggressive", "dangerous", "vicious", or any similar designation (except where such label is based solely on breed) is ineligible to participate.

➔ No person may possess aversive equipment or use aversive training methods on event grounds which includes, but is not limited to, pinch, prong, or shock collars.

To receive a qualifying result (credit towards SSL titles) a team must meet the following criteria:

➔ Participant must be a member in good standing with SSL

➔ Dog must be registered to the participant through SSL

- ➜ Participant must provide the correct "Team Number" to the event host
- ➜ Dog must be handled by the participant or an immediate family member of the participant
- ➜ The dog or handler will receive credit only once per offering even if part of a different team.

Judges and SOs may enter at an event they are officiating, but may not enter their own offering(s). Hosts may enter offerings at an event they are hosting, but must not have any knowledge of hide locations in an offering they are entered in.

FOR EDUCATION/ENJOYMENT ONLY (FEO)

Non-member participants and non-registered dogs may enter offerings at an event as FEO provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. A handler or dog that is already entered in an offering may enter FEO as part of a different team (eg. same handler with a different dog or same dog with a different handler).

A team that is entered regularly in an offering may call "FEO" during their run and ask the judge for help locating the hide(s).

A handler running FEO may request the judge to reveal the location of a hide or ask for hints about the location. The judge may use their discretion to reveal only one or more hide locations to the handler. A handler running FEO may also ask about the location of distractors (if any are present in the Skill/Challenge).

A team running FEO is still limited to the maximum allotted time for the offering.

JUNIOR HANDLER PROGRAM

The Super Scenter League encourages younger handlers to take interest in their dog. Junior Handler refers to any handlers aged 10 - 17 on the day of the event. All Junior Handlers must have an adult present on event grounds; those under 14 must be accompanied by their adult guardian at all time they are handling the dog.

Junior Handlers must be entered under their own Team Number with SSL and cannot run under the Team Number of a dog that is registered with an adult handler. Qualifying results are tracked separately for Junior Handler teams than for regular teams and titles are earned exclusively from one another.

Junior Handler teams will run after all regular teams and are permitted one additional Minor Fault. Judge's may use their discretion to not assign the same fault multiple times. Junior Handler teams will receive an additional 25% extra time for each offering they are entered in.

Participation awards in the form of ribbons and/or prizes are encouraged to be provided to all Junior Handler teams.

GENERAL EVENT GUIDELINES

A SSL event should be an inclusive space that provides a fun environment for participants to connect and share their love of their dogs and the sport. As such:

→ All participants and their guests are expected to treat the judges, SO, hosts, their canine partner, and all other participants and their dogs with respect.

→ All judges, SOs, and hosts are expected to show respect to all participants.

→ The handler has complete responsibility to maintain control of their dog on the event grounds and surrounding areas.

  ↪ dogs must be leashed at all times on the event grounds (unless during a run where an off-leash option has been expressly given by the Judge or SO prior to the run)

  ↪ participants must maintain a minimum distance of 15 feet between their dog and all other dogs at all times when the dog is outside of their vehicle (to search area or dog toileting area)

→ Participants shall contain their dog safely inside their vehicle unless they are escorting their dog to or from the search area or dog toileting area.

  ↪ participants will ensure that they provide the needed equipment to keep their dog comfortable and warm/cool in and out of their vehicle (as the weather and season requires)

  ↪ dogs shall not be able to hang their head or body outside of open windows or tailgates while in the vehicle

→ Participants are responsible for the conduct of their children and guests on the show grounds.

➔ Participants are expected to be familiar with the rules for the organization and the skills/challenges that they enter.

➔ There will be a handler's briefing to review general rules and guidelines for the offering as well as hide numbers where applicable. Participants may also ask for any clarification of the rules at this time.

➔ A walk-through of the search area may be provided at the sole discretion of the Search Official.

➔ Participants must not discuss the details of their run on event grounds following their search until the offering is complete. This includes the location of any hides or clear areas, but also any potential distractors present or whether or not their dog incurred any faults.

➔ Judges and SOs have the authority to dismiss any dog or handler from an event due to aggression towards a dog or person or unsportsmanlike behavior. This includes:
  ↪ handler-delivered harsh corrections to their dog in or out of the search area. A warning is optional.
  ↪ disrespectful or abusive treatment of any person or dog on event grounds
  ↪ discussing the details of their run in an offering before the completion of that offering.

➔ The decision to dismiss a dog and/or handler from the event grounds is final for that event.
  ↪ a report must be submitted to SSL by the judge, SO, and host and shall include any witness reports (such as that from volunteers or other participants).
  ↪ a review by SSL will determine if the dog/handler may have their membership temporarily suspended or permanently revoked.

➔ No target odor is permitted on event grounds except that which is for official event use.

➔ An event host may offer photography and/or videography services provided that the participant may opt-out.

- ➜ Exhibitors may have video taken (or Go-Pro type camera may be worn by handler) of their search but may not share or post to any social media until the offering is completed. Violation will result in any qualifying results/score of that offering being disqualified.

- ➜ Participants may request to be excused during their run. Judges must honor any such request.

- ➜ A team running order shall be posted for all participants to review near the check-in and/or staging area.
    - ↪ Dogs should be judged in scheduled order as much as possible. Possible conflicts should be brought to the attention of the Judge or SO before the offering's runs begin, at which time movement within the run order may be made.
    - ↪ Judges are not required to wait for any team that is not ready when it is their turn, but may choose to allow a team that missed their turn to run later or at the end of the run order.

- ➜ Teams may participate in multiple skill tests/challenges at different levels at the same event while working on the title for those skill tests/challenges or while working towards championship titles.

- ➜ Search Areas may be inside and/or outside, but must not be on grass or any area commonly used by dogs for the purpose of elimination (toileting area). The event premium must specify if any search area will be in an outdoor environment.

- ➜ Although not required, themed events (eg. holiday, seasonal, time period) are encouraged to increase the "fun" element of SSL events

- ➜ Search Area may include atmospheric sounds/music and/or lighting to set a mood and promote a theme for a search area provided that the participant may opt-out of these additions to the search area.
    - ↪ sounds/music may not contain animal noises, sudden noises (like fireworks or thunder), sirens, or any other sounds that may be reasonably understood to be a noise trigger to dogs
    - ↪ lighting may not include flashing or strobing lights or other kind of lighting that may be reasonably understood to induce seizures or discomfort in humans or dogs

- use of atmospheric sounds and/or lighting must be included in the event premium and participants that wish to opt-out must indicate their request in writing at the time of entry
- to ensure the events runs swiftly it is encouraged that hosts group all opted-out teams together in the run order (at the beginning or end)

➜ Qualifying ribbons shall be provided to all qualifying participants

➜ Scoresheets must be provided for all challenges and may be provided in hard copy upon completion of the challenge or electronically within 72 hours.

EQUIPMENT IN SEARCHES AND ON GROUNDS

➜ Dogs must be on leash and under control at all times on event grounds:
- The SO may allow dogs to be off leash within the search area(s) during their run if the overall area is secure.
- Flexi-leads/retractable leashes are prohibited on event grounds unless special permission has been granted in writing by the SO to accommodate a handler's disability.
- Long lines/leashes must be no longer than 20 feet in length.

➜ Collars: the dog must wear a buckle, snap or martingale collar and/or non-tightening body harness in the search area.
- nothing may be hanging from the collar or harness (such as tags) nor shall any bulky items be attached to the collar/harness (such as GPS/tracking device).
- harnesses must have the leash attached to the back.
- head halters may be worn on event grounds provided the dog does not appear distressed, but not may not be worn in the search area.
- pinch/prong collars and electronic/shock collars are not permitted on the event grounds and possession of such will result in dismissal.

➜ Dogs may wear accessories such as sweaters/coats, thundershirts/wraps, paw covers/boots, hair bows/ties, neck scarf, within reason, provided that they are not scented and do not create a safety hazard nor cause any signs of discomfort to the dog. The judge has final say on whether an item creates a safety concern or appears to cause discomfort to the dog.

- ↪ any accessories must be on the dog prior to entering the staging/gate area.
- ↪ if the Judge deems any accessory to be a safety concern or to be causing discomfort to the dog they may use their discretion to request the handler remove the item during the search or excuse the team.
- ↪ if an accessory is removed during the search then a Minor Fault shall be recorded for disrupting the dog's search and the time for the run shall remain running with no additional time added.
- ↪ bitches in heat must wear clean pants; the same requirements in regards to safety and comfort of the dog still apply.
- ➔ Bait bags/treat pouches and toys are permitted in the search area
  - ↪ teams will incur a Minor Fault for any instance where their toy or food comes in contact with the ground.

Skills and Challenges Guidelines

Super Scenter League offers "Challenges" and "Skills" (aka "Skill Tests") at Events. Both Skills and Challenges will follow the same general guidelines as defined in this section.

TARGET ODOR

A hide will consist of 2-4 cotton swabs that have been infused with essential oil target odor and entirely contained within an appropriate vented scent vessel (eg. metal tin with holes, shrink tubing, lip balm tube). Scented swabs must *never* come in contact with the environment.

Odor is prepared using approximately 4-5 drops of essential oil per approximately 30-40 cotton swabs in a glass jar. Combination or "cocktail" odors are not used by SSL.

Each individual hide will contain one of the following scents:

➜ Wintergreen (gaultheria procumbens),

➜ Clove (syzygium aromaticum)

➜ Anise (pimpinella anisum)

Further odor specifications are defined for each Skill level or Challenge.

ALERTS/INDICATIONS

The goal of all Skills in SSL is for the team to find all hides that have been placed in the search area before their time runs out. The goal in some Challenges, such as the Triple Triple Challenge may be for the team to find the most hides possible before the maximum time is reached rather than expecting all of the hides to be found.

When a handler believes that their dog is indicating the location of a hide they must clearly announce "ALERT!" ✝. It is the handler's responsibility to ensure that they make their call clear and audible for the judge to hear. The handler may also choose to raise their hand when they make their call, however, the judge must clearly hear the word "ALERT" in order to respond.

Following the handler's "ALERT!" call ✝, if the Judge deems that the team has identified the correct location of a hide then the Judge will respond "YES!".

✝ The handler is not required to call "ALERT!" in Pre-Novice Skills. See "Pre-Novice" under the SSL Skills Guidelines.

If the Judge deems that the team has *not* correctly identified the location of a hide then the Judge will respond "No." This will incur a Major Fault. If this is the team's first Major Fault for the run then the team may continue searching (see "Major Faults"); if this situation the Judge may also say "keep searching".

If the Judge is unclear if the team has correctly identified the location of a hide then the Judge will respond "Where?" and the handler must immediately reply by way of **pointing** or **gesturing** to the specific location they believe the hide to be.

If the handler delays their response to "Where?" or is too vague, therefore allowing the dog to continue working or repeat their indication, a Major Fault will be incurred. If the handler verbally names or describes the location of the hide a Major Fault will be incurred. Once the handler has adequately identified (through gesture/pointing) where they believe the hide is located the Judge will respond with "YES!" or "No."

The dog is not required to have a formal indication behaviour (AKA "trained final response"), however, a judge may ask the handler how the dog indicated the hide location if they have not observed an apparent change of behaviour.

Handlers may not call "ALERT" after the fact (eg. on an item that the dog may have shown prior interest in but is not actively investigating).

Handlers that call "ALERT" to a hide they have already located will *not* incur a fault; the judge will respond "you found that one".

SEARCH AREA BOUNDARIES

The perimeter of a search area may be defined by the walls of a room, barriers, cones, soccer dots, tape, or similar items used for delineation. Hides may not be placed inside of cones or similar items used as boundary markers.

Dogs and handlers may step outside the boundaries of a search area during their run without incurring a fault provided that the dog is still working.

START BOX

Every Search Area will have a designated Start Box which must be no less than 4 feet in width and 4 feet in length. The Start Box must be clearly defined by use of barriers, cones, tape, and/or matting. Teams must begin their search from within the Start Box.

REWARDS IN THE SEARCH AREA

Upon receiving a "YES!" from the Judge after a successful find, a handler may reward their dog with food, briefly pet/touch, or play with the dog as a reward.

Any rewards being delivered near the hide must not be given directly above the hide location (eg. rewards for containers shall be delivered *beside* the container not over it). Food or toys that are dropped on the floor deliberately *or accidentally* will incur a Minor Fault.

DOG IN WHITE

After the SO has set the hide(s) and waited a *minimum* of 10 minutes the Dog In White (DIW) will run the search area witnessed by the Search Official and Judge. The DIW should be of similar skill or experience to that expected of the participants of the Skill/Challenge they are running.

The purpose of the DIW is to allow the SO to verify that the hides are behaving as intended and are set to an appropriate challenge level for the offering. The DIW's performance also helps the SO to determine the search time limit in an offering where there are time limit variances.

The handler of the Dog in White must not have knowledge of the hide location(s) prior to or during the search.

The Dog in White team will have their performance recorded like a regular entry and, shall they receive a qualifying result *and no changes are made to the search area before the official entries begin,* the team may receive credit towards SSL titles as if running a regular entry.

If the SO makes any changes to the search area after the DIW team has run they will be ineligible to receive credit for a qualifying run.

CONSISTENCY

Judges are expected to apply judging criteria consistently from team to team.

To the extent possible, an offering's search area should be consistent for all participants. Scent, location of scent, and controlled distractions should be the same for all teams entered. If an item is damaged during a run, the item should be replaced with as similar an item as possible. The host should have a reasonable number of replacement items available.

SCORESHEETS

Every run in SSL will be accompanied by a scoresheet. A scoresheet provides a team with feedback from the Judge based on their performance in a particular run. While there are certain values all SSL Judges should share, every Judge will have their own unique perspective on a given team's performance.

TIME LIMIT

Each offering of a Skill or Challenge will have a maximum time limit as specified in the rules for that Skill/Challenge or as set by the SO (in the instance where a particular Skill/Challenge allows for a variance).

The Team's time will start when the dog or handler exits the Start Box.

When a Team's maximum time has been reached the Timer will announce "TIME!" and the run will end.

Timers are encouraged to give a 30 second warning to teams by clearly announcing "30 seconds", or, if the 30 second warning was missed, announcing however many seconds remain (eg. "20 seconds"). A 30 second warning is a courtesy and while the timer will make their best effort to give the warning it is not guaranteed.

FAULTS

SSL separates faults into two categories: "Minor Faults" and "Major Faults". While a team may incur multiple Minor Faults before receiving a non-qualifying result they may only receive one Major Fault. A second Major Fault will receive a non-qualifying result.

Minor Faults

A team may incur multiple Minor Faults during their run before receiving a non-qualifying result. The total number of allowable Minor Faults is 2 in Skills and may vary between individual Challenges. The same fault may be incurred multiple times.

Minor Faults include the following:

➔ **Dog Physical with items (DP).** A team may incur this fault if the dog is intentionally physical with any items in the search area through mouthing, pawing, or otherwise (even if part of an indication behaviour).

➔ **Dog Stops Working (DSW).** A team may incur this fault if the dog is not working for a *prolonged period* which includes instances such as, but is not limited to, visiting with volunteers/officials, leaving the search area, playing with a distractor toy, attempting to break into a container containing a distractor, and excessive barking *(leeway is given in instances such that the dog may sniff people while working odor, stir up odor with "zoomies", leave the search area while working odor, or be only momentarily distracted)*. A team may also incur this fault if the dog seems unduly stressed or confused during their search.

➔ **Handler Disruptive (HD).** A team may incur this fault if the handler is disruptive to the dog's search by means of excessive cues, body pressure, or excessive leash pressure. See "Cues and Presentation" for more details.

➔ **Handler, Poor Leash Control (HL).** A team may incur this fault if a handler allows the leash to continuously drag on the ground or repeatedly tangles the leash around items, objects, and their dog (leeway is given for instances where a dog may run around or under an item and a handler may be required to drop the leash).

➔ **Alert at Distance (AAD).** A team may incur this fault when a dog's indication behaviour is within the accepted parameters for a correct find ('Yes'), but more than a few inches from source and/or near the edge of the 'Yes' Zone. This fault is not applicable in a container search or for inaccessible hides.

➔ **Dropped Food/Dropped Toy (DF/DT).** A team may incur this fault if the handler drops food or a toy on the ground whether intentional or accidental. This is a handler fault and a team will not be faulted if the dog drops a treat from their mouth after taking it from their handler.

Major Faults

A team may incur one Major Fault before receiving a non-qualifying result. A second Major Fault will result in a non-qualifying result.

Major Faults include the following:

- ➔ **Crossed Line (CL).** In "Independent Investigator" a team may incur this fault if they cross into the buffer zone before the judge says "Yes!"
- ➔ **Destructiveness (D).** A team may incur this fault if any damage is caused by either the dog or handler to any part of the search area.
- ➔ **Incorrect (aka 'False') ALERT (F).** A team may incur this fault if they call "ALERT" and receive a "No." reply from the Judge.
- ➔ **Vague or Delayed Response to "Where?" (W).** A team may incur this fault if, after receiving a "Where?" reply from the Judge, the handler delays their response or is too vague thus allowing their dog to continue working or to repeat their indication.
- ➔ **Verbally Naming Hide Location (VN).** A team may incur this fault if they name or verbally describe the location of a hide.

NON-QUALIFYING RESULTS

Receiving a non-qualifying result (NQ) ends a team's run disqualifying the team from earning any credit towards a title for that run. This may also be thought of as "Not Quite". A team's run may receive an NQ under the following circumstances:

- ➔ **Exceed Maximum Number of Minor Faults.**
- ➔ **Incur Second Major Fault.**
- ➔ **Dog Eliminates in Search Area (DE).** If the dog toilets within the search area they will be immediately excused. It is the handler's responsibility to pick up any solid waste and take it with them upon exiting the search area.
- ➔ **Time Out (TO)**. Exceed maximum time allowable for the run.
- ➔ **Incorrect Finish (IF)**. "Finished" called before all hides in the search are located.
- ➔ **Excused by judge (Ex)**. The Judge may use their discretion to excuse a team for any number of reasons including disrespectful or abusive treatment of any person or dog, unsportsmanlike conduct, prohibited equipment, or if the dog appears unduly stressed and the Judge believes the dog is unlikely to search/continue searching.

➜ **Zero (0).** If the total score earned in a Challenge is 0 then the result will be considered non-qualifying.

OUTSTANDING RESULTS

A team that incurs no faults in Skills may receive an **Outstanding** result. In the Triple Triple Challenge a team that receives no Major Faults and no more than one Minor Fault will receive this designation. This designation is used to provide recognition to teams for an outstanding performance.

Earning some higher level titles may require Outstanding results.

COMMENDATIONS

Judge's may make note of any particular strengths they recognize in a team in the commendations section of the scoresheet. Commendations are a recognition of areas where a team may have excelled in their performance in a particular run.

CUES, PROMPTING, AND PRESENTATION

SSL encourages independent searching; the dog leads the team with the handler taking a support role.

Cues given at the beginning and end of the run and immediately following a find or false indication shall never be faulted.

Cues given during a dog's search may receive a "Handler Disruptive" fault if the Judge deems that the handler has disrupted the dog's search (eg. pulling the dog away from working a hide). The same fault may be assigned if the Judge deems the cues are excessive (repeating cues multiple times when the dog is still working).

Handlers are permitted to use prompting or subtle presentation such as encouraging their dog to cover a search area through their body position. Repeatedly pointing and gesturing at items, using strong body pressure, or using the leash to steer or otherwise heavily control the dog (eg. handler pulling on the leash) will incur a "Handler Disruptive" fault at the judge's discretion. Using the dog's leash or equipment to pull the dog off of a distraction will also incur a "Handler Disruptive" fault.

PLACEMENTS

A host may choose to offer placement ribbons or prizes at their discretion, but the method for determining placements is standardized across all events for fairness and consistency.

Criteria for Placements

Teams with qualifying results are ranked based on the following criteria, in order of importance:

➔ **Challenges:** Score, Number of Faults, Time
➔ **Skills:** Number of Faults, Time

Awarding Placements

Placements should be ranked in the following order:

➔ **Teams with the Highest Score** (for Challenges).
➔ **Teams with Zero Faults**: Teams that have flawlessly completed the search
➔ **Teams with Outstanding Results**: Outstanding performance
➔ **Teams with No Major Faults**: Ranked by the least number of minor faults.
➔ **Teams with Major Faults**: Ranked by the least number of minor faults.

Teams within each group may be further ranked by time.

Ribbons and Prizes

The host may choose to offer ribbons, trophies, or other prizes to honor teams' achievements. This is optional and may vary from event to event.

END OF THE RUN

A run ends immediately and the team will be asked to exit the search area if the dog has eliminated during their run or the team is excused by the judge. In the event that the dog leaves any solid waste in the search area the Handle shall be responsible for picking up any solid waste and taking it with them.

If a Participating Team has not located all of the hides in the search area before "TIME!" is called or the team has exceeded the maximum allowable faults the Judge may disclose the location of the nearest or most accessible hide that was not found by the team. The handler may choose to bring their dog to the hide and promptly reward the dog. The team

will be given a maximum of 15 seconds or their remaining time, whichever is greater, to allow the dog an opportunity to indicate to the hide.

If the dog is demonstrating destructive behaviour the judge may excuse the team without disclosing the location of any unfound hide(s) to prevent further disruption/destruction to the search area.

SSL Skills Overview

Skill Tests, or simply Skills, make up the regular titling class in SSL.

SKILLS

Each SSL Skill gives scent detection teams the opportunity to demonstrate their ability in a different skillset.

There are 5 different Skills tested:

➜ **Package Patroller**: skill in efficiently searching containers
➜ **Mystery Marvels**: handler's ability to correctly call "Finish" with unknown total # of hides
➜ **Super Sourcer**: skill identifying source of pooling/trapping odor
➜ **Focused Finder**: ability to work through distractions
➜ **Independent Investigator**: dog's ability to work at a distance from handler

LEVELS

There are currently 4 levels included for each Skill in the SSL rulebook: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert. Novice Skills may also be entered as Pre-Novice (see rules below).

A team must play at Novice or Pre-Novice level in any Skills that they have not previously earned a qualifying result in. Qualifying at the Pre-Novice level is *optional* before entering Novice Skills.

Before a team can enter a Skill at a higher level they must earn a qualifying results in the preceding level of that Skill (eg. must earn a Q in Novice Package Patroller before advancing to Intermediate Package Patroller). Teams do not need to earn their level title to move up within a single Skill.

Leveling up is never mandatory. Teams may continue to play at lower levels to earn a Pro or Master title. Currently there are no titles awarded after Master, however all results will be recorded and teams may be eligible to apply for further titles in the future if additional titles are added to the program.

PRE-NOVICE

Pre-Novice is an alternate entry designation for Novice Skills. A Pre-Novice qualifying result is NOT required before entering a Skill at Novice level.

In Pre-Novice the handler is not required to call "ALERT!".

If a team is entered as Pre-Novice the judge will call "YES!" when they observe a change of behaviour in the dog at the box or chair containing the hide.

Pre-Novice Skills follow the same rules and guidelines as Novice Skills and are not offered separately from Novice Skills. Teams may enter any Novice Skills with a Pre-Novice entry designation. A host offering Novice Skills at an event is required to accept Pre-Novice entries.

In Mystery Marvel the handler is still required to call "Finished".

The handler of a Pre-Novice team may choose to call "ALERT!" if they believe their dog is indicating to the location of a hide before the judge calls "YES!". If the handler's call is incorrect the Major Fault for an Incorrect/False Alert is recorded as it would be any at any other level.

QUALIFYING

Results for Skills are based on a pass/fail. Teams that find all hides (and correctly call "Finish" in Skills with an unknown number of hides) before the total maximum time elapses without incurring more than 2 minor faults and/or more than 1 major fault will earn a Qualifying result for that run.

A passing result with zero faults will be recorded as "Outstanding"; a certain number of Outstanding Qs are required when titling at the highest levels (see "Outstanding" under Skills & Challenges Guidelines).

TITLING

Scent Skills Title

Teams may earn a title at each level through accumulating a qualifying result in at least 4 different Skills at that level (eg. Scent Skills Novice, SSN).

Scent Skills Pro

Teams may earn a Pro title in each level by demonstrating their **pro**ficiency at that level. A Pro Title is earned at Novice level and higher by accumulating a total of 3 qualifying results in all five Skills at that level. At least 1 qualifying result must be Outstanding in each Skill.

A team that has earned their "Pro" may add a "-P" suffix to their level title (eg. Scent Skills Novice Pro, SSN-P).

Teams may also earn a Pro title in each individual Skill by demonstrating their **pro**ficiency in that Skill at the highest level. A Skill Pro Title may be earned by accumulating 5 qualifying results at the Expert level with at least 3 of the results being Outstanding in that Skill.

An example of the Skill Pro title would be Scent Skill Pro Focused Finder, SSP-FF.

Scent Skills Master

Teams may earn a "Master" title in each level by demonstrating their mastery at that level. A Master Title is earned at Novice level and higher by accumulating a total of 5 qualifying results in all five Skills where at least 3 of the qualifying results are Outstanding. A "-M" suffix may then be added to their title (eg. Scent Skills Novice Master, SSN-M).

Teams may also earn a "Master" title in each individual Skill by demonstrating their mastery of that Skill at the highest level. A Skill Master Title is earned by accumulating a total of 10 qualifying results at the Expert level where at least half (5) of the qualifying results are Outstanding.

"SSM" will replace the "SSP" for the Skill title (eg. Scent Skill Master Focused Finder, SSM-FF).

Scent Skills Champion

Teams may earn a Champion title by accumulating a Skill Pro title in all 5 Skills. The "SSCh" title will be a suffix title.

Scent Skills Master Champion

Teams may earn a Master Champion title by accumulating a Skill Master title in all 5 Skills. The "SSMCh" title will be a suffix title.

Skills Titles Overview Table

This table is provided to help visualize the titles available in SSL Skills.

	Pre-Novice	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert
Level Title Q in 4 Skills	SSPN	SSN	SSI	SSA	SSE
	Scent Skills Pre-Novice	Scent Skills Novice	Scent Skills Intermediate	Scent Skills Advanced	Scent Skills Expert
Level Proficiency 3* Qs in 5 Skills *min 1 Outstanding each skill		SSN-P	SSI-P	SSA-P	SSE-P
		Scent Skills Novice Pro	Scent Skills Intermediate Pro	Scent Skills Advanced Pro	Scent Skills Expert Pro
Level Mastery 5* Qs in 5 Skills *min 3 Outstanding each skill		SSN-M	SSI-M	SSA-M	SSE-M
		Scent Skills Novice Master	Scent Skills Intermediate Master	Scent Skills Advanced Master	Scent Skills Expert Master
				Skill Pro Expert Qs x5*	Skill Master Expert Qs x10*
Skills	Package Patroller			SSP-PP	SSM-PP
	Mystery Marvel			SSP-MM	SSM-MM
	Super Sourcer			SSP-SS	SSM-SS
	Focused Finder			SSP-FF	SSM-FF
	Independent Investigator			SSP-II	SSM-II
				*min 3 Outstanding	*min 5 Outstanding
Champion Titles	*Skill Pro in all 5 Skills*		SSCh	Scent Skills Champion	
	Skill Master in all 5 Skills		SSMCh	Scent Skills Master Champion	

Skills Guidelines

A quick overview of each of the 5 SSL Skills.

More specific parameters of each Skill follow this section organized by level.

RUNNING ORDER

A host may run each Skill individually or 2 Skills as a pair (aka 'Back to Back') where the team will run one Skill and immediately run the next skill.

The host may work with their SO to run Skills in a different order. Skills are organized within the rulebook by their suggested running order: Package Patroller + Mystery Marvel, Super Sourcer + Focused Finder, Independent Investigator.

PACKAGE PATROLLER

Evaluates a team's skill in efficiently searching a line up of containers.

The line up of containers may be placed in a straight line or curve, including "L", "U", "O", and "S" like patterns. Containers within the line must be spaced at the specific distance defined by the level. As the levels progress the number of containers increases and the distance between containers decreases to further test the dog's ability to hone in on the precise container(s) concealing a hide.

MYSTERY MARVELS

Evaluates a handler's skill in identifying when their dog has found everything in a search area and calling "Finish".

In Pre-Novice the handler must call "Finish" although an "Alert" call is not necessary.

The handler must call "Finish" before the maximum time allowed is reached to receive a qualifying result.

SUPER SOURCER

Evaluates a dog's ability to pinpoint the source of odor in a search area with a high potential to contain pooling/trapping odor.

The SO will utilize careful placement of chairs and/or tables in proximity to one another and to structures in the environment to create a search area with a high likelihood to cause pooling/trapping odor.

FOCUSED FINDER

Evaluates the dog's skill at working past distractions.

As the levels progress the number of distractors and estimated challenge level of the distractors will increase. See "Distractor Guidelines".

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR

Evaluates the dog's ability to work away from their handler.

An Independent Investigator search includes 3 defined areas: Handler Zone, Buffer Zone, and Search Area.

The distance between the Search Area and the Handler Zone is the Buffer Zone. The Handler Zone will be located on 1, 2, 3, or all 4 sides of the Search Area as defined by the rules at each level (see "Independent Investigator Map Examples").

The handler may leave the Handler Zone and enter the Buffer Zone/Search Area to reward their dog when the judge responds "Yes!" to an "Alert" call. In a search with more than one hide the handler must return to the handler zone promptly upon rewarding their dog in a direct path and must not walk through the search area unnecessarily.

The Handler Zone must not be narrower than 36". The start box will be located within the Handler Zone.

A handler that crosses into the Buffer Zone will receive a CL (Crossed Line) Minor Fault; the judge will remind the team to remain in the Handler Zone. A repeat infraction or a handler that enters the Search Area will receive a Non-Qualifying result (except to reward the dog following the judge's "Yes!" to an "Alert!" call) .

Novice Skills Rules

TARGET ODORS

All Novice level Skills will exclusively utilize Wintergreen odor.

PACKAGE PATROLLER: NOVICE

The team must correctly identify which box contains a hide.

Prerequisite: None	
Time limit: 90 seconds	**# of hides:** 1 hide
Search area size: 250 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 12 cardboard boxes in 1 or 2 lines or groupings.	
Hide locations: A single hide will be located within a box placed on the ground.	
Max hide height: N/A	**Distance between items:** 22" (+/- 2")
Distractors: None.	

MYSTERY MARVELS: NOVICE

The handler must correctly call "Finish" before their total time elapses.

Prerequisite: None	
Time limit: 90 seconds	**# of hides:** 1 - 2 hides (unknown to handler)
Search area size: 250 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 10 cardboard boxes divided into 2 distinct groups of 5 boxes	
Min. distance between search groups: 6 feet	
Hide locations: The hide(s) will be located within a box placed on the ground. *No more than 1 hide will be placed within the same group of items.*	
Max hide height: N/A	**Min. distance between items:** 24"
Min. distance between hides: 10 feet	
Distractors: None.	

SUPER SOURCER: NOVICE

The team must correctly identify which chair contains a hide. Each chair will have at least one other chair within 24" distance.

Prerequisite: None	
Time limit: 90 seconds	**# of hides:** 1 hide
Search area size: 250 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 8 chairs	
Hide locations: A single hide will be located under the seat of a chair.	
Max hide height: N/A	**Min. distance between items:** 12"
Max distance between items: 24"	

FOCUSED FINDER: NOVICE

The handler must identify which box contains a hide while working past an animal odor distractor (see "Distractor Guidelines").

Prerequisite: None	
Time limit: 90 seconds	**# of hides:** 1 hide
Search area size: 250 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 10 containers	
Hide locations: Hide will be located within a container placed on the ground.	
Max hide height: N/A	**Min. distance between items:** 24"
Distractors: 1 Accessible Animal Odor Distraction placed between the start line and boxes	
Min. distance between hide and distractor: 6 feet	

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR: NOVICE

The handler remains in the "handler zone" while the dog works the search area independently. Handlers are permitted to leave the handler zone to reward their dog after receiving a "Yes!" from the judge.

Prerequisite: None	
Time limit: 90 seconds	**# of hides:** 1 hide
Search area size: 70 - 120 sq ft; no less than 8' in any direction	
Buffer Zone: 4 feet	
Handler Zone: 3 sides of the search area	
Search area setup: 10 containers	
Hide locations: Hide will be located within a container placed on the ground.	
Max hide height: N/A	**Min. distance between items:** 24"
Distractors: None.	

Intermediate Skills Rules

TARGET ODORS

All Intermediate level Skills may utilize Wintergreen, Clove, and Anise odor. Where more than 1 hide is placed they will be of differing odors.

PACKAGE PATROLLER: INTERMEDIATE

The team must correctly identify which boxes contain a hide.

Prerequisite: Qualifying result in Package Patroller: Novice	
Time limit: 90 seconds	**# of hides:** 2 hides
Search area size: 300 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 16 - 18 containers in 1 - 3 lines or groupings.	
Hide locations: Each hide will be located within a box placed on the ground.	
Max hide height: N/A	**Distance between items:** 22" (+/- 2")
Min. distance between hides: 5 feet	
Distractors: None.	

MYSTERY MARVELS: INTERMEDIATE

The handler must correctly call "Finish" before their total time elapses.

Prerequisite: Qualifying result in Mystery Marvels: Novice	
Time limit: 2 - 3 minutes	**# of hides:** 1 - 3 hides (unknown to handler)
Search area size: 400 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 18 - 21 items divided into 3 distinct groups of 6 - 7 items	
Min. distance between search groups: 6 feet	
Hide locations: The hide(s) will be located on/in an item/items. *No more than 1 hide will be placed within the same group of items.*	
Max hide height: 20"	**Min. distance between items:** 24"
Min. distance between hides: 12 feet	
Distractors: None.	

SUPER SOURCER: INTERMEDIATE

The team must correctly identify which chair(s) and/or table(s) contain hides.

Prerequisite: Qualifying result in Super Sourcer: Novice	
Time limit: 2 minutes	**# of hides:** 2 hides
Search area size: 300 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 2 grouping of chairs and table(s), 6 - 10 feet apart Each grouping: 4 - 5 chairs and either 1 medium/large table (8+ sq ft) or 2 smaller tables.	
Hide locations: Each hide will be located under the seat of a chair or under a table top. *No more than 1 hide will be contained within the same group of items.*	
Min. distance between hides: 10 feet	
Max hide height: 32"	**Min. distance between items:** 6"*
Max distance between items: 24" (within a group)	

* items refers to potential hide locations; there must be at least 6" between a chair seat and a table top or between two chair seats. Chairs may be tucked under the table and may be closer than 6" to a table leg so long as there is at least 6" between the height of the table top and height of the chair seat.

FOCUSED FINDER: INTERMEDIATE

The handler must identify which boxes contain hides while working past distractors (see "Distractor Guidelines").

Prerequisite: Qualifying result in Focused Finder: Novice	
Time limit: 2 minutes	**# of hides:** 2 hides
Search area size: 300 - 600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 16 - 18 containers/boxes placed on the ground	
Hide locations: Hide will be located within a container placed on the ground.	
Max hide height: N/A	**Min. distance between items:** 24"
Min. distance between hides: 10 feet	
Distractors: 1 food distractor (known to handler), 1 toy distractor, 1 non-food* distractor	
Min. distance between hide and distractor: 4 feet	

* toy or other

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATOR: INTERMEDIATE

The handler remains in the "handler zone" while the dog works the search area independently. Handlers are permitted to leave the handler zone to reward their dog after receiving a "Yes!" from the judge.

Prerequisite: Qualifying result in Independent Investigator: Novice	
Time limit: 2 minutes	**# of hides:** 1 hide
Search area size: 120 - 160 sq ft; no less than 9' in any direction	
Buffer Zone: 5 feet	
Handler Zone: 2 sides of the search area	
Search area setup: 12 - 16 items which includes at least 4 stools/chairs*	
Hide locations: Hide will be located in/on an item	
Max hide height: 20"	**Min. distance between items:** 24"
Distractors: None.	

* similar items that may trap odor like a small table may be used instead of stool/chair

Triple Triple Challenge Rules

Triple Triple is an Intermediate to Advanced Level Challenge

Prerequisite: None	
Time limit: 5 minutes	**# of hides:** 9 hides
Target odors: Wintergreen, Anise, Clove (3 of each odor will be used)	
Search area size: 1000 - 1600 sq ft.	
Search area setup: 75 - 90 potential hide locations (some larger objects/items – eg. table – may have more than one potential hide location within reason).	
Hide locations: All hides will be located in or on an item/object/container. There will be no structural hides. Objects/items may be attached to or hung on walls or may be suspended from the ceiling.	
Max hide height: 42"	**Min. distance between items:** 0"
Min. distance between hides: 3 feet (different odor); 12 feet (same odor)	
Distractors: 3 total which must include 1 food distraction and 1 toy distraction	
Min. distance between hide and distractor: 3 feet	

Scoring:

Points are acquired until all hides are found, time is called, or the team incurs a non-qualifying result (eg. 6th Minor Fault, 2nd Major Fault, dog eliminates).

+10 points per correct find

+10 points clearing room (finding all 9 hides)

-5 points per Minor Fault, maximum 3 Minor Faults (-15pts)

-20 points 1st Major Fault

A perfect search will score 100 points.

A perfect search which is completed in 4:00 minutes or less (rounded down to the nearest second) earns a BONUS of +5 points.

A perfect search which is completed in 3:00 minutes or less earns a SUPER BONUS of an additional +5 points.

Total possible points per run are 110.

Any dog which has a cumulative score above zero when Time is called gets a Qualifying score (if they have not already received a non-qualifying result).

Zero and negative scores are not used.

Teams that choose to call "FEO" during their run will not earn further points or incur further deductions. If the team has a Qualifying result before calling "FEO" they will keep the score earned when the call was made. See "For Education/Enjoyment Only (FEO)".

A volunteer shall act as Scribe and record the time each hide is found. The time recorded on the scoresheet and used for placements will be the time that a team located their final hide. For example, if a team uses their full five minutes and finds 7 hides then the time that the team found their 7th hide will be recorded.

Super Scenter Challenge: Triple Triple Titles

Triple Triple Title (SS-TTC)	100 points accumulated
Triple Triple Adept (SS-TTCA)	Total* of 300 points
Triple Triple Pro (SS-TTCP)	Total* of 600 points
Triple Triple Master (SS-TTCM)	Total* of 900 points [†] [†] *300 points must be from Outstanding results*
Triple Triple Grand Master (SS-TTCGM)	A total* of 1200 points [†] [†] *600 points must be from Outstanding results*

* points from previous titles are counted towards total points

Distractor Guidelines

This section outlines specifics regarding intentional distractions used in SSL.

DEFINITION

Distractor means anything deliberately placed by the Search Official that would be expected to be distracting for the dogs such as food or toys. Natural distractions present in the environment are not considered "distractors", however, the SO will take the naturally occurring distractions in the environment when placing distractors.

ACCESSIBILITY

A distractor may be considered "accessible" or "inaccessible".

Food distractors will *always* be inaccessible to the dog. Toy, animal odor, and human distractions may be accessible, or open, to the dog depending on the nature of the item (eg. anything that may be consumed, even if not technically a food item, must be inaccessible).

Every effort should be made to ensure an inaccessible item is unlikely to be successfully accessed by a persistent dog through physicality such as of gentle pawing or nosing.

TYPES OF DISTRACTORS

Animal Odor

Animal odor distractors may include used bedding, clothing, or equipment used by an animal. Intentional inclusion of animal waste (urine/feces) is not permitted. Animal litter may be used where it has been cleaned of any waste and is inaccessible.

Food

Food intended for animal and/or human human consumption may be used as a distractor and must be contained. Common food distractors include: kibble, dog treats, fruit, pastries, meat, etc.

Any food items must be contained securely in a vented container that is considered to be reasonably dog proof. A secure container of food may be placed inside a less secure container (eg. a snap clip container with holes that contains food may be placed inside a cardboard box).

Human

Humans placed intentionally within the bounds of a search area may be used as a distractor. Officials, volunteers, or spectators present in the search area's perimeter are not considered to be Distractors.

Human distractors may be a person that is sitting, standing, or wandering in a set path well within the search area. Human distractors shall never make eye contact with or touch the working dog. Human distractors shall not make intentional noise.

Toys

A toy or multiple toys may be placed in a search area as a distractor. Common toy distractors include: tennis balls, plush toys, tug toys, clean food puzzle toys, etc.

Toys with squeakers, or other toys that make noise, shall not be used at the Novice or Intermediate level.

Toy distractors may be placed out in the open or may be contained/inaccessible depending on the item and the level being tested.

Other Distractors

The SO may choose to use other distractors as appropriate for the level being tested as long as the distractor cannot reasonably be predicted to elicit fear in a dog.

As an example, a sudden sound may be used as a distractor. A sudden sound must be made/played at roughly the same place for each team (eg. when the dog sniffs a specific item in the search area that is further from the hide than the minimum allowable distance between a hide and distractor). A sudden sound could be the sound of a squeaky toy, but may *not* be the sound of fireworks or thunder.

KNOWN TO HANDLER

Distractors may be listed as "known to handler" in the rules. This means that the location of the distractor may be disclosed during a walkthrough and/or when the team enters the start box (eg. 'the toolbox in the corner contains a distractor'). The contents of the distractor does not need to be specified. A distractor's location will not be disclosed unless specifically noted as "known to handler".

Independent Investigator Map Examples

This section is meant to provide more clarity in regards to the setup used for the Independent Investigator Skill.
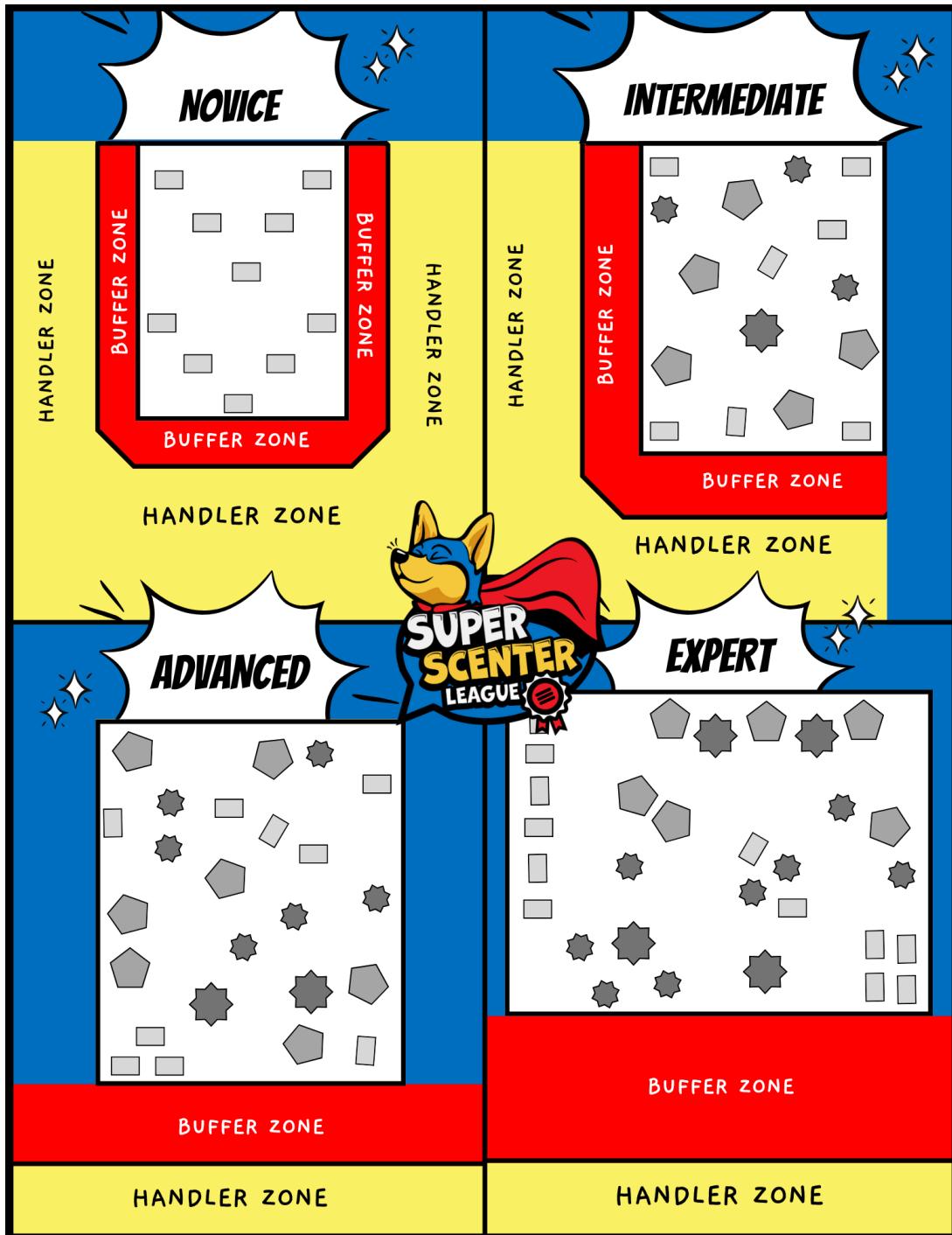
Version 2: Change Log

This section outlines any changes made to Version 2 of the rulebook.

2.4 Changes

➔ **! Independent Investigator Major Change:** Reduced number of sides for handler zone to 3 sides for Novice level and 2 sides for Intermediate level.

2.3 Changes

➔ Updated Novice Focused Finder and Novice Independent Investigator from "cardboard boxes" to "containers"
➔ Reduced minimum ring size for Triple Triple Challenge to 1000 sq ft.
➔ Reduced maximum number of minor faults for Triple Triple Challenge to 3.
➔ Added "Zero (0)" to Non-Qualifying list.
➔ Updated Package Patroller search setups to allow multiple lines/groupings.
➔ Changed BZ (Buffer Zone) Minor Fault to CL (Crossed Line) Minor Fault.
➔ Updated Independent Investigator description to elaborate on the consequences of the handler entering the Buffer Zone or Search Area.

2.2 Changes

➔ Updated Novice Mystery Marvel rules to specify that each group of 5 boxes may only contain one hide
➔ Added Minor Fault "Alert At Distance (AAD)"
➔ Added clarity to rules regarding the security of inaccessible food items.
➔ Added suggested running order for Skills
➔ Updated Skills tables and reordered the Skills from alphabetical order to suggested running order
➔ Updated "Focussed" to more common spelling "Focused"
➔ Fixed error where "Focused Finder" was referred to as "Focused Fido"
➔ Fixed error where "Mystery Marvel" was referred to as "Cooperative Clearer"

2.1 Changes

➔ Added Pre Novice to titling table
➔ Added clarity that Pro and Master titles are not offered at Pre-Novice