



United Schutzhund Clubs of America

Full Member Club of the WUSV and the AWDF

Director of Judges

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Dear USCA Members,

Schutzhund was originally intended to be a breed suitability test for the German Shepherd Dog. It has remained that for over 100 years and become the most popular working dog "sport" in the world; so much so, that other breeds have adopted similar breeding requirements and have participated greatly in the sport. While change and evolution were inevitable, many of the changes to Schutzhund, and its eventual merger into IPO, have shifted emphasis and focus away from the original intent. While some changes (to speed up the trials or keep up with increasingly better training methods) have still preserved the original intent, we should and will be cautious when rules or changes are presented that threaten the core of what the evaluation was originally intended to do. The movement to more "sporty" activity with less emphasis on the breed suitability portion(s) of the evaluation should be evaluated with great caution.

There have always been fundamental differences in the way the performance is evaluated by judges from organizations that view Schutzhund or IPO as "breed suitability test/sport" verses organizations that view it as a "sport." Usually this is evident in the evaluation of the dogs' working temperament, grip, intensity, physical power/movement, aggression, and overall working character. This is one of the reasons that titles earned under judges from WUSV member organizations are suitable for breed survey requirements, and why, not all judges are allowed to judge at our or other WUSV/SV events. We train and hold our judges to a high standard; they are trained to not only evaluate the immediate performance of the team but the working character of the dog for breed suitability.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with using IPO as a "sport" alone, but for the United Schutzhund Clubs of America, our mission is to "preserve the working heritage of the German Shepherd Dog." It is important that we do not lose sight that our working dog trials/sport are dual-purposed to test the breed suitability of our dogs and to provide an outlet for dog sport.

Recently the FCI announced that starting with the 2014 FCI World IPO Championship the "stick contact" (hits) will be removed. This will be followed by a change to the rules in 2016 or 2017 to remove this portion of the test from the current IPO Rules. I have been in contact with Mr. Frans Jansen (President of the FCI Working Commission) and asked him for clarification and confirmation on this subject. He confirmed that the FCI will continue this direction and very

clearly explained that the FCI views IPO as a "sport." They want to keep as many of their member countries involved and participating in the "sport." At this time there are countries where the use of the stick, the gun shots, as well as other parts of IPO are under scrutiny. The FCI will attempt to make changes to make it easier to participate in all countries. While this may be good for the sport, it detracts from the original intent of Schutzhund (IPO), which was to be a means to test for "breed suitability." He assured me that at this time, countries are permitted to make variances to their "versions of IPO" as we and many other countries have already completed. Further, breed organizations should implement a "breed suitability test " of their own.

I have received assurances from Mr. Günther Diegel (Chief Judge of the WUSV), Dr. Helmut Raiser (RSV2000), and the VDH (German Kennel Club) that the WUSV, RSV2000, and VDH will not follow the FCI in removing stick hits at this time. USCA agrees with this collective wisdom.

We will not be removing the stick hits from our trials. USCA is dedicated to preserving the working heritage of the German Shepherd Dog. While Schutzhund has become a sport/showcase for our training and dogs, we must never lose sight that at its core, it is a breed suitability test. When rules are created that threaten or water down the evaluation process, we have an obligation to the breed to resist.

Best Regards

Nathaniel Roque