



Our guest columnist is Tom Golcher.

Fun Runs for your Sighthound Club

I'm a newcomer to the GAZETTE, but only in the sense of becoming one of its many guest authors—I've read and enjoyed other people's articles in this magazine for many years. My subject area and expertise are focused on sighthound performance. The fact that I discovered my life's passion is strictly due to my first hound. If he had preferred the couch to the field and track, my life would be utterly different.

I think this "fun run" concept would work for other types of events as well. My wife KC and I began holding monthly fun runs under the sponsorship of the Rocky Mountain Borzoi Club, basing our concept on 10 years of experience in the sport in Europe.

Training is essential for hounds, just as it is for people, so I thought the subject would serve me well.

Sponsoring fun runs offers clubs an income source and a gentle first step toward holding a sanctioned event. "Fun runs" mimic a sanctioned sighthound event without the requisite sanctioning organization's paperwork and compliance requirements.

We limit participation in our fun runs to friendly, healthy dogs of all types.

Here's what you'll need: a lure motor and stand to pull the lure, a spare sole-noid, a 12-volt battery (or as I did for my first fun runs, a van with jumper cables

attached from the van battery to the lure motor), cables that run from the battery to the lure motor with an emergency-disconnect switch, one take-up reel to retrieve and store your string (the take-up reel can also be used for a drag-lure operation), one drive wheel to pull the string and lure through the pulleys in a continuous-loop set-up, at least eight corner pulleys and four hold-down pulleys, eight-inch nails (two each for the corner pulleys, and three each for the hold-downs, plus some extras to account for loss), and a 1,000-yard spool of string (dacron polyester is the best choice).

Also needed are extra nuts and bolts for holding on the drive wheel and the take-up wheel, a pocket knife, wrenches that fit every size nut and bolt used on the motor, battery cables, a claw hammer for installing and removing the pulleys, white and black trash bags (not the cheapest ones, as these need to be replaced too often), and a six-foot ladder for the lure operator, two starter switches on an electric cord for operating the lure.

You'll also need a vehicle or trailer to store and move your equipment to and from the site, adequate land to hold the event (preferably fenced)—and, last but not least, liability insurance to cover your club and the property owner.

Make up some flyers to advertise your event, and post them in your local pet-supply stores, veterinary offices, and supermarkets.

Set up your course plan as simply as possible. It should include a nice straight section to work young dogs or to retrain those who have begun to cut corners, offer a couple of nice easy turns, and have one more nice, long straight to finish off the run.

Fun runs offer many benefits. They offer people a safe place to have fun with their pets while introducing them to the wonderful world of the purebred sighthound fancy. They also provide a venue to train new lure operators, hunt masters, and paddock masters. —T.G.

Thank you, Tom.

—Jon Titus Steele, Hemlock, Mich.;
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