



UPPER SNAKE RIVER VALLEY DOG TRAINING CLUB NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2020

CONTACT INFORMATION

President

Nicki Bowden
208.709.7914
nedwob88@gmail.com

Vice President

Layla Johnson
262.247.5151
lvjohnsn@gmail.com

Treasurer

Suzanne Belger
208.542.6552 or 208.521.8872
desertmtmalinois@gmail.com

Secretary

Shel Williams
208.403.4644
shel@cuzs-soccer.net

Board Members

Lucien Frederick (1 year)
208.403.6977
Lucienjr2@msn.com

Marilynne Manguba (2 year)
208.221.5142
marilynnem@gmail.com

Melissa Meyers (3 year)
208.520.8481
melissameyers@cableone.net

Newsletter Editor

Nicki Bowden
nedwob88@gmail.com

www.USRVDTC.org



January Meeting

Thursday, January 16, 2020 @ 7:00 pm
The Zone

Obedience, Agility Foundation & Scent Work Classes begin in February

Space is limited – sign up at USRVDTC.ORG

**For your viewing pleasure – a collection of photos of club
events taken by Marilynne.**

<https://www.magcloud.com/browse/issue/1700998?r=2190612>

2020 Membership Dues

Need to be paid by January 31, 2020.

Club Member of the Year 2019



Charlie Urbanski

**Thank you Charlie for all your hard work
and dedication to the Upper Snake River
Valley Dog Training Club!**

Upcoming Opportunities

Attention all Club Members,

Starting at the end of January, we will have the amazing opportunity to have practices at the new 4-H building on Sundays for 3 HOURS (possibly 10-1 but we can work this out later)!!!! This will be for 8 weeks. Practices are for anyone who wants to work on obedience, scent work, agility, or just getting out with their dog(s) and spending time with club friends. It is also a must that if you participate, you are there to help set up and take down so we can all enjoy the full amount of time.

Are you ready to come and have a great time? If so, we need a strong commitment from at least 10 club members. We will also have to pay up front for the open practices. The more people the lower the cost, but we are looking at about 10-20 dollars a session. Once we get committed members, we can hash out the details. Please consider this great opportunity to learn and grow with your dog!

If you are in, and haven't let anyone know yet, please email Nicki @ nedwob88@gmail.com or text me @ 208.709.7914.



Working Away From Reinforcement:

While I don't believe we should ever stop reinforcing the behaviours we want with high value reinforcers, like food (or toys for those dogs that love toys), it is important for the training process to be able to get the behaviours we want without necessarily having the reinforcer in our hands for the following reasons:

1. For some dogs food in the hand can lead to over-arousal and lack of clear thinking in the training process.
2. Food in the hand tends to make the behaviour permanently dependant on luring rather than verbal or visual cues.
3. Food in the hand can interfere with the trainer's mechanics and lead to "sloppy" training rather than "cleaner" training.
4. If the dog only engages when the food reward is visible on their human, they are unlikely to respond to cues when there is something potentially reinforcing in the environment, unless their person can whip out a treat really quickly to dangle in front of them in a real life situation.*(see note below)
5. In most competitions, food and toys are not allowed in the ring during the competition, so to have any chance of competing, dogs have to be able to focus and work without seeing "food in hand".

Here is a great way to start teaching the idea of working away from reinforcement. It works as follows:

1. Set up a "reinforcement station" with treats in a container (I'm just using some of Rosie's supper) out of reach and a mat on the ground. I've just used a towel here, but snuffle mats work nicely for this too.
2. Drop a few treats onto the mat and stand next to it waiting until your dog has finished eating and turns to look at you. Click for this orientation away from the food station and to you and reward with a few treats scattered on the mat from the container.
3. Repeat step two and if it's going smoothly, start gradually moving away from the feeding station and only clicking when your dog walks away from it and towards you and stands calmly looking at you (if you have a dog that is eager and offers behaviours quickly, be quick with your click and don't wait for them to try things other than approaching or you will accidentally shape a default sit or down or something you actually don't want in this context).
4. Once your dog understands that she needs to come quickly to you after finishing the food on the mat, start cueing an easy behaviour once they reach you, before clicking and running back to the mat to scatter the food reward on it.

5. Gradually ask for more complex behaviours before clicking and returning to the feeding station for the reward. Over time you can build up to working on longer training sequences in this context.

Ideally you should change position and move to different spots away from the reinforcement station to ask for the behaviours. You can even go to another room and expect your dog to find you and work with you there. This exercise is a great way to teach working away from reinforcement and have fun 😊.

*Please note that wanting our dogs to be able to respond to cues in "real life" situations out and about, without seeing food first (or a toy, if your dog ticks that way) does NOT equate to failing to take food on walks or any other other outings with our dogs. It is not a hardship to get into the habit of carrying treats with you ALWAYS -

The value of a trained behavior at source

by Julie Symons | Dec 11, 2019 | Dogs Sports | 12 comments



Yep, that's right, I'm talking about a trained indication!!! For many dogs and handlers, teaching a clear behavior at source – otherwise known as an indication or final response – can be very useful for our dog's understanding and for handlers to read their dogs.

Recently I've heard from many people through my classes, workshops, seminars and on Facebook about their struggles reading their dog at source and would really like to teach a clear indication but were taught to only learn how to read their dog.

It's time we start looking at this more closely and realize it is OK to train a final response at source. Or at a minimum ensure a strong stay at source behavior.

Cultural Fog

I recently learned of the term “cultural fog” by Dr. Susan Friedman. It means something has no bearing on facts but is a condition of the culture. That is how I feel about the resistance to training an indication at source. It's how we first learned about Nosework – that it was better to learn how to read our dogs at source and let the dog pick their natural indication. The truth of it is – not all dogs are that clear at source and not all handlers can read the subtle (or clear) signs dogs give when in odor and at source.

I'm not really sure why people are against a trained indication at this point in the sport. I know the sport started with shelter and pet dogs in mind but the sport has evolved into much more and appeals to all kinds of dogs and handlers!

I've heard that we can't know what odor is doing so we can't use a marker event in Nosework. I can surely mark a find and duration at source!

I've heard a trained indication causes more false alerts. I don't buy it! I just don't! I see enough false indications with dogs who don't have a trained indication – because people struggle reading their dogs or there are foundation issues.

I believe the main reason people aren't in favor of a trained response is that it's just what they learned first and what we learn first, like dogs, we know and learn best.

We have many savvy dog trainers in the sport who are capable of training an indication at source. There are also progressive training methods available to help new handlers learn as well. We should NOT be afraid to actually train a behavior as we do in any sport.

Reading your dog at source

This method refers to reading a combination of behaviors our dogs offer when working odor and finding source. This would also include their natural indication. These are commonly referred to as Change of Behaviors (COBs).

Changes can be a head snap, change in foot fall – slows down/smaller steps, speeds up and is on a mission, stops, sniffs more, zig zags, tail wags, tail stops wagging ... as well as pawing, biting, retrieving, etc.

If we solely use the method to “read the dog”, I find that can be hard for many teams. Some dogs are not as easy to “read” as others and may struggle on how to communicate they found source. Many factors may lead to a dog's subtle behavior – confidence, security, lack of understanding/foundations ... that's when we need to up our game as

trainers and find the solution for that team's unique situation – to find a way for the dog to have clarity and the handler to have more information.

A dog whose natural indication is interactive with the hide or worse, destructive – that's a real problem. So whether or not your dog is soft/subtle or monstrous/clear – both benefit with some criteria and clarity!

A Trained Response

So let's take a look at what a trained response is and the foundations around training one.

First, you will need to decide what criteria you want at source with your dog. Your dog's indication at source is driven either by your criteria or what you end up reinforcing.

There are 2 kinds of a trained response at source.

1. A **reinforced** trained response (RTR) – a behavior that we have consistently reinforced to the point that the dog offers it consistently and we can read it well.
 - Examples are stay at source, nose freeze, a down, a sit, a look back.
 - This can also be one we incorrectly reinforce and is not what we want! For example pawing, perching on a box, mouthing, and maybe even a sit or look back.
2. A **final** trained response (FTR) – a behavior we specifically train/shape like a nose freeze, sit or down.
 - Fewer sport teams use this approach. Taught extensively with professional detection dogs. By having clear criteria we can avoid or minimize unwanted antics at source that can cause damage (scratches) and faults that are increasing in the sport. One of the reasons that a trained behavior may be associated with a false alert is that we reward the indication over finding odor. Odor trumps all – reward the find, then cue/reward the position. For dogs with box antics, teaching a down at containers can be a good option – by rewarding the find first then cuing the down to reward more. Be consistent with that and your dog will anticipate the down cue at source. Once my dog is conditioned on odor, I shape a nose freeze as the final response. I like this method as all finds are led by the nose! But I will always read all the other signs as I know I may not always get that solid freeze.

Best of both worlds

You absolutely need to read your dog working odor and finding source! It's part of the whole picture. We can have both! We can teach a final response and learn to read our dogs! We all know our dogs may not offer a trained response in a trial/novel environment or that it won't be exactly like training. Therefore their natural behavior at source will always trump a trained indication and may be easier to read.

Here's a video of my young dog with a trained nose freeze at source. You'll also see other COBs of her at source – she stops, plants all feet, and her tail totally relaxes!

Building the foundations for a trained response

The first thing we need is COMMITMENT to source. Also referred to as Obedience to Odor. I love the clarity on what earns reinforcement – being at source!

Here are a few ways to build a better response to odor:

1. Build value for odor by associating it with high value reinforcement.
2. Pay heavily **at source**. Often people can be stingy with treats and/or feed too far off source. I'm known to reward for up to 1 minute at source! Rewarding for position (at source) is very powerful, especially in the early stages of training.
3. Have criteria at source and use an event marker to mark desired behavior and ignore unwanted behavior. I like a nose freeze at source as that's how we start conditioning dogs to odor and finding source is always led by the nose.
4. Reinforcement doesn't come unless nose is at source. I don't lure my dog back to source and they quickly learn to stay as close to source to earn reinforcement. That includes when I'm coming in to reinforce.
5. Be clear and consistent with good mechanics. Staying neutral until you have marked their find at source or until you reward.

6. Give ZERO handler clues as to where the hide is. The #1 issue with dogs being unclear with their response is that they learn to read the handler when reinforcement may come.
7. Build duration in small increments so your dog will reliably stay and insist at source. We can't always mark their find immediately since without duration you will have issues reading your dog on blind hides. We can't lump when building duration – remember to build up in small increments and vary your timing with immediate, your dogs normal find and “tell” and then some insisting duration.
Here's a very early training session with Moxie where I built up to some duration at source with a nose freeze. Whether you decide to train a final response or not, if you follow some of the steps above with payment, clarity and duration – you'll be well on your way to having a better read on your dog!