

## IRO Expert Talk

First online Q&A session from 27.02.2021

### Experts

- Walter Hoffmann, IRO Judge Instructor
- Rolf Häusermann, IRO Lead Trainer

### **Why, is a Bringsel dog with a refind, wrong?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** This is a question of principle. It has been shown in the past that a mixture of the different alert types can only be safely implemented by very few dogs, so this is not allowed at the present time.

### **Why can a Bringsel dog not run back and forth, if the D presents the Bringsel to the DH every time, until the DH gets to the VP? Or why can't a D be classed as a Free Indication Dog, if it runs back and forth between the VP and DH, but instead of jumping up or bumping the DH, barking at the DH, or giving eye contact, it presents a Bringsel instead? (IPO-R 3.4.4. Alert)**

**Walter Hoffmann:** Each type of alerting is based on fundamental basic training and is also adapted to the dog's nature and talents. In the rules for rescue dog sport, clear demarcations between different types of indication are required. In training, the dog associates the delivery of the Bringsel with positive confirmation (reward) from the handler, and with the handler's approach to the VP, the dog expects further confirmation.

The execution of the Bringsel is divided into two parts.

1. Pick up the Bringsel with the link "VP found".
2. Handing over the Bringsel to the dog handler to the VP.

Without the clear separation, a correct evaluation in the sporting field is not possible!

### **How should the heelwork be shown? Does the H have to show correct heeling when crossing the material? (IPO-R 3.3.12)**

**Walter Hoffmann:** The dog's attention is focused on its handler and on the unstable and uncertain ground. In this way, the dog follows the handler at the heel, but does not have to show the same correctness as in Free Heeling. Only evasion, insecurity or even avoidance behaviour is faulty.

**What should the H show after the dog handler has helped to uncover the person? The dog handler lets the dog approach the person and then the dog should show what exactly?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** “Nothing”, because then the exercise is finished for the PR!  
(The H should conclude the exercise positively and above all show a neutral behaviour towards the VP).

**Question about the admission to level B: Are two passed A-local group tests (e.g., Tyrol Rescue Dog Cup) judged according to IRO-IPO with a minimum overall qualification of “good” sufficient?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** Yes!

**Is it allowed to use a HZ for jumping up and a HZ for pausing, i.e., <hop> and <wait>? (this is sometimes considered incorrect) (IPO-R 3.3.16)**

**Walter Hoffmann:** With the expression “One HZ/SZ each for jumping up and pausing ...” the HZ/SZ for pausing is not incorrect (the word “each” has unfortunately not been deleted).

**How do you get a young dog to bark? He does not bark even in private.**

**Rolf Häusermann:** The easiest method is still through food, i.e., irritate the dog with food until he makes some sound and immediately reward it with marker and food. Again, and again - every dog barks at some point. I support the barking verbally with e.g., “good”, “loud”, “show” or similar, so that he can link the barking with marking words.

**Dog partly runs off when he got air scent after first alert, recircles the alert site and then continues barking in another location, he may repeat this. How could this be “contained”?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** A proven method is the motivation circle (food circle) in the open field. There you can observe the reactions of the dog and he always has success only with the person he first accepted.

**Dog sometimes “pees” after the display, ignore or intervene?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** This cannot be answered in general, because it depends very much on the individual dog. For example, some dogs reduce stress in this way, in which case a correction could be wrong. I tend to correct when I am sure that it is not a stress reaction. But that requires figurants that are good because they are part of the intervention.

### **Why is the dog required to search in the dark (without illumination)?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Whether this is good or bad, I will not judge. It helps the dog to rely on his nose and to follow only the scent. The important thing is that he cannot hurt himself in this situation.

### **Why is the dog often sent into the building alone during a building search? What is the idea behind this?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** The basic idea behind it was probably once on the mission. If it is dangerous (e.g., instability of the building, but probably cavities exist, in which people could have survived) and one does not know whether a missing person is still in the building, the dog is sent alone, to bring as few as possible rescuers in danger. If the dog makes an alert, you must judge it again, because with the alert of the dog, the probability of being able to rescue people who are still alive has increased.

**According to the PO, the dog is picked up by the dog handler after the alert and placed approx. 3 m from the location, the dog handler helps to uncover the person. As soon as the opening is large enough, he picks up the downed dog and allows him to proceed to the person.**

#### **1. Who does the dog handler help to uncover the person?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** In general, it is quite simple, because the VP is uncovered by helpers and the dog handler is supposed to support them. The dog remains at a distance of approximately 3 m during this time. By the way > The PR pays more attention to the dog's behaviour during this time

#### **2. What does open large enough mean? For what?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** Large enough for the dog to enter without danger.

#### **3. How can/should the dog advance if the opening is large enough to be uncovered by the dog handler?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** This is up to the D. Ultimately, it is about the behaviour of the dog towards the VP.

**I would like to ask you about the direction ability during the search. Some dogs have a problem that when you start to navigate them during the search, they lose their independence and switch to “obedience” mode. They shift their focus from the search to the dog handler. What do you think is the proper way of training, so you finally have a dog that you can navigate during search (right, left, straight, up, etc.) and he fluently continues in the independent search afterwards?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** The distinctive will to find motivates the dog to find a hiding person as quickly as possible. A basic training adapted to this is one of the most important prerequisites. A PR quickly recognizes who is searching more intensively, the dog handler or the dog.

The directability is within a test the recognition of the given tactics and should positively influence the work of the dog.

**Rolf Häusermann:** The only thing that helps is a balanced method of working that is tailored to the individual dog. Directability can be built up and trained separately from the training for working out the scent. I always separate them until the dog is well trained in both areas, and only then do I put them together. I do bucket work in open terrain where the dog can always see me, so I always turn the body with my front in the direction the dog should run. I then transfer that to pure directability exercises with people. Only when this works well, I build the individual training elements together for the search.

**I have a young dog of almost one year which I would like to train in Area, Rubble and Avalanche. I have heard of an Area training with buckets but have not yet seen the setup. Can I build this alone? Are there documents for a build-up? Possibly videos?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Bucket work can be used to build up directability. IRO will provide video material on bucket work in the foreseeable future, as it is a good tool when training alone.

**In the case of one dog from our team, we almost did not manage to get the dog to bark at the helpers, and when it did bark, it was only under quite a lot of stress.**

**I got my young dog only 3 weeks ago, so far, she hardly barks on her own. How to structure that without being stressful for the dog?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** I always confirm the young dog when he barks voluntarily with the command “Brav, gib Laut”. I use this command later to make him bark. That means to animate him with food or toys, but deny until he starts to whine or barks, then immediately say “brav, gib Laut” and let him play or eat. As soon as he starts barking on command, I

extend the time until I confirm him. He only receives the confirmation with a marker (yes) etc.

**Lying person - dog comes and first always wants to cuddle - how do you build that correctly that the dog immediately does his job? (barks at a proper distance).**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Here it is important to train the barking indication and the different helper positions separately and only put them together when the individual elements are consolidated. There are different possibilities, but they all must be adapted to the individual dog. It is not possible to give a general answer here.

**Dog comes to the hiding person and sniffs first at the person whether he probably has something good for him - ergo body contact - what can the helper do to stop this?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Work with several cans that are visible to the dog. The dog must never know from which he can get the confirmation. In addition, a marker word should be introduced, without it the dog is not confirmed.

**How do you teach a young dog the distance when barking at the person from the handler's point of view?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** The dog should already know the distance before working with other helpers - this is part of the basic training, which is built up by self-displays. In addition, it is important that new helpers consistently use the marker word and only confirm when the dog withdraws itself.

**How can the handler motivate the dog during the search, if the dog stops searching after a certain number, the dog stops the search independently before all hiding persons have been found, this can happen after two or after three - also sometimes after one person has been found - maintaining importance and interest in the work?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Fixed starting rituals should be established, and many motivational circles should be worked with a changing number of people.

**Special question: can I set my dog on a targeted person in the Area using a scent article?  
If so, how is this built?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Area dogs are not MT dogs, they do not seek individual scent. If the dog is to respond only to a specific scent, it would have to run most of the time without any scent at all, which is almost impossible. The mantrailer trails from a departure scent and follows it in a line. Area search is a rummage search, which basically works differently.

**What to do if the dog works very independently and simply does not need/heed the handler in the search?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** This is basically very good, so only the directability must be worked on. The right balance between independence and leadership is always a balancing act that must be adapted to the individual dog.

**How can chasing be prevented in the search? – How does the build-up process work here so that this does not happen? – When walking, it happens quickly that he goes off hunting.**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Hunting behaviour is always difficult to redirect into search motivation. The figurant must always be the most important goal from the beginning, it should be trained absolutely figurant related. Motivational circles are a good tool here. During the daily walk, a hunting dog must always be kept on a leash, as this behaviour is self-rewarding.

**Dog triggers only when he has eye contact in the face, or he sniffs around food/food cans/toys – what can the helper do to motivate the dog to trigger immediately without these mentioned aids?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** The only thing that helps here is to go back to the beginning, to build up the alert on sight, to develop victim profiles step by step – beyond the search.

**A dog, 3-4 years old - led in the Area - Why should he make a feeding circle after 2 years?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Because the food circle/play circle is pure fun and keeps the motivation up – even with the advanced or “finished dog”. The dog learns that it is always worthwhile to search, even if he does not receive a command.

**How should a hidden person react when a dog runs away? Before the alert? After the first indication? (I mean that the dog barked two times and then ran away)**

**Rolf Häusermann:** Train barking as a self-display and increase to 2 minutes without interruption. Then work with outside helpers – first openly on a meadow or similar, where there is nothing that could distract the dog.

**Should I push a dog if it does not like the ground or the density of the forest?**

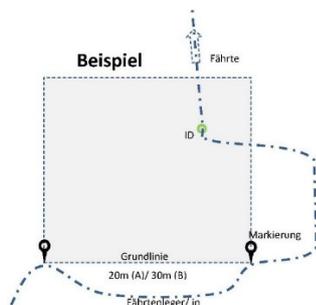
**Rolf Häusermann:** Terrain ability is a matter of practice. This can be developed in the backward set-up, or by letting the dog work out of the terrain that is unpleasant for him towards the figurant that is in the pleasant terrain.

**Examples of scenarios and tactics based on these scenarios in FL, T and L tests.**

**Rolf Häusermann:** There are ready-made catalogues of questions available at some NROs. However, this is not useful, because the dog handler must think for himself, adapted to the respective scenario, which information he must generate to be able to carry out his work. Surely there are some elements that are asked by default (what happened? when did it happen? dangers? number of missing persons? search area? contact person? means of communication?), but there is more to grasping the situation. In addition, the weather conditions must be considered. Since the examples here go into infinity, I refrain from schematic checklists.

**Tracking A level: Can you explain different possibilities how the start of the track can be laid in the starting square? When the track comes either from left or right side of the square, does it make then a 90-degree angle in the square at the place where the tracking object/item is placed?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** Yes! In both Level A and B, the track layer enters the square from the side, places the ID item and enters the track at right angles to the baseline. Here is a sketch:



**Regarding rubble search, how important is it to train in places where you have clothes, old food, human remains, and such smells hidden under rubble for dog to learn not alerting them but only live victims? Why is this not measured in IRO rubble tests?**

**Rolf Häusermann:** The test is not a mission test; therefore, certain things are not asked at the test. Attention must be paid to ensuring that everyone always finds the same conditions as far as possible, which is difficult in rubble search anyway because of changing weather conditions during the day. Walter Hoffmann agrees.

**About false alerts in rubble, some dogs may in a stressful situation under the pressure of the DH make a false alert in a place where there is no human scent. On the other hand, sometimes a dog gets a very small scent of a hidden victim in a place where the dog is not supposed to alert, i.e., too far away from the victim. If the judge can distinguish these two situations, are they judged differently, i.e., how is it judged when the dog alerts too far away from the victim but clearly points that the smell is coming from there? What should the DH do in this situation, should he call the dog away and ask the dog to find a better place for alerting where the scent is stronger?**

**Walter Hoffmann:** First, stressful situations should be basically avoided during the dog's work. Also, the influences of pressure significantly reduce a dog's concentration when searching for a VP.

If human scent is not present, the dog's indication is a clear failure.

The dog must recognize by specific training how the indication can be optimized.

Admittedly, the indication behaviour in the evaluation is influenced by it. In any case, the decisive factor is that the dog has found the person and the handler recognizes the situation. In this case, I would not exert any influence on the dog and complete the alert if the dog does not try to get closer to the VP on its own.

**Is it allowed to lift the dog on the shoulders when “carrying and handing over”? (IPO-R 3.3.10)**

**Walter Hoffmann:** Yes, but I would not recommend it because the handover process of the dog is very difficult.