



GARY CLAGGETT

OUT OF THE BOX

STRAIGHT & OVAL TRACK RACING

BY PARRY TALLMADGE

Your Basenji is fast, keen on the lure, and likely an ASFA and AKC Lure Coursing champion. However, if they have grown so familiar with local fields that they anticipate the lure and essentially run their own course—straight down the middle, a quick look left and right to see where the lure actually is, cut the field, and nab the lure (or maybe they stop and stalk)—you might consider straightline (LGRA) and oval track (NOTRA) racing.

Straight-line and oval courses do not zig-zag across an open field. The courses at both events have boundaries, implied by the direction of the lure or made explicit with plastic fencing. A medium oval course is 300 to 400 yards and begins and ends at approximately the same spot. A straightline or sprint course is 200 yards, straight out to the finish. As in lure coursing the dogs chase a lure; typically plastic bags for oval and a heavier furry and squawking lure for straight line.

Hounds are released from boxes and run muzzled (unlike lure coursing where muzzles are optional). Jackets are numbered (one through four: red, blue, white, and green, respectively). Hounds preferably run in quads, but may also run trios, braces or alone, depending on how many competitors there are.

Speed is the sole criteria in oval track and sprint racing; the first dog across the finish line wins, as long as the hound stays on-course and does not interfere with another hound. If a hound runs off-course it forfeits any chance of earning points at that meet. Unlike lure coursing, hounds only compete with their own breed. There is nothing similar to the Best in Field competition of lure coursing.

RACE FORMAT

Every hound at a meet will run the course three times. One complete set of races for all the dogs entered is called a *program*—in other words, your hound will compete in three programs unless scratched or disqualified.

The race Secretary divides the program into numbered *races*. If there are enough hounds entered there is usually a high-point and a low-point race for your breed. Which race your hound is in depends upon their scores at their last race meet. If your hound is a first-time entry (FTE), it is automatically placed in the low-point race.

The points for the identical placement in the high and low point races are different: the dog who came in first in the high point race might get eight points, and the dog who came in first in the low point race might earn five points. The winner of a low point race usually moves up to the high point race in the next program, and the loser of the high point race moves down. This procedure ensures that the highest-ranked dogs will always run with each other. The blanket colors will be random within a race,

but dogs run according to their ranking. It really shows who is the fastest, by running the best against the best.

After all hounds have run all three programs, the points earned in the three races at that meet are totaled, and placements are awarded. Dogs are also awarded championship points (if they are not yet a champion), and National points (awarded to all eligible point recipients, champion or not). How many dogs earn points and the number of points earned are based on the total number of entries. For example, if two to four Basenjis are entered, the first place finisher would get one point and second place finisher would get a half point; with five to seven Basenjis entered, the first place finisher would get two points and the second place finisher would get one point.

NOTRA AND LGRA

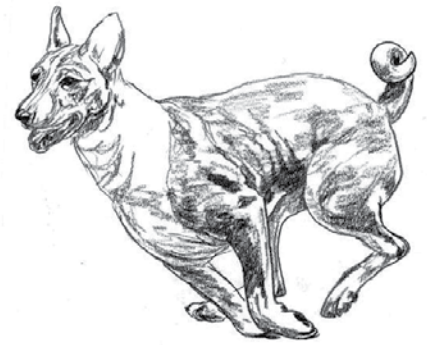
The National Oval Track Racing Association (NOTRA) oversees oval track racing for all the sighthound breeds. The Large Gazehound Racing Association (LGRA)—and yes, the Basenji is considered a large gazehound—oversees sprint racing for all sighthounds other than Whippets. Whippets have their own separate racing organization. These organizations are responsible for setting and maintaining the rules governing their race meets, maintaining a registry of hounds competing, tracking points, awarding titles, and tracking those dogs who lose eligibility to compete (usually due to aggression against other dogs during competition).

REGISTERING WITH LGRA OR NOTRA

Before competing, hounds must be registered with the appropriate governing bodies. Separate registrations are required for LGRA and NOTRA. Both organizations require a copy of the dog's AKC certificate, your current address (if different from that on the certificate), the dog's call name. Both charge a two dollar fee.

TITLES AND AWARDS

LGRA awards the Gazehound Racing Championship (GRC) upon accumulation of 12 championship points and the Supreme GRC (SGRC) after earning 30 national points. NOTRA awards the Oval Racing Championship (ORC) upon accumulation of 12 championship points and the Supreme ORC (SORC) after earning 30 National points. The LGRA and NOTRA titles are separate and points for one title do not count toward the other title. 🐾



Racing and Lure Coursing are two different sports, recognized by all sight hound breeds, as well as the Italian Greyhound (toy breed).

Not all Basenjis excel at both racing and coursing. There are excellent resources online that will help you to understand the different sports and help prepare your hound to race or course (search with the key words "dog" or "canine" and LGRA, NOTRA, ASFA and AKC Lure coursing). An additional resource is *Running Sight hounds, a Guide for Beginners* by Denise Como.

Basenjis who race or course well will be rewarded not only by having a great time running the fields, but will also earn titles from the various organizations which count towards the coveted Versatile Basenji award offered by the BCOA.

The ideal Basenji is bred for form, function and temperament. Both racing and coursing feature the performance/function in different ways, with different rules and award criteria.

Many of us live over 100 miles away from any type of formalized training facility for obedience or agility and will never have the opportunity to try those sports. Racing and coursing offer practices, normally on the first day of the event, so you can train your dogs with the help of experienced club members.

As Race Secretary for two racing clubs, I see owners drive 12-14 hours to attend our events, the hounds love it that much. Come out and join the fun this year.

Lisa Stewart