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## Good Equipment for Judging Field Trials

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By Bill McGee

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Awhile back, I had a young fellow ask me about what he might need in the field when he was judging field trials. This fellow had been doing some 1-day and puppy hunts on foot, but he was going to start using a 4-wheeler, which is good, especially in the larger pens.

I thought of this the other day as I was cleaning out my carry-all box and thought I would list the things that are in there, just in case some of our readers are interested.

First of all, I have 3 main pieces of equipment on my 4-wheeler; A bungee cord on the front bracket, a saddle bag and a carry-all box that I mount on the back.

Most places provide a cooler or two full of snacks and drinks for the judges during the hunts. Sometimes, a person picking up scores will bring snacks around. This is fine, but I like to carry a small cooler with ice that keeps my water and bottle of soft drink cold. I usually have a pack of nabs with me as well because I never know when the urge for a snack will strike. I use the bungee cord to strap my cooler down on the front of my 4-wheeler.

My saddle bags are also useful to me. The one that I have fits over the gas tank spout and is held in place by the gas cap. I use the bags to hold a couple of extra pens, but I also stick my drink bottle in it in case I have to speed off to get a crossing. I prefer a 12 ounce Diet Dr. Pepper in a plastic bottle that I can screw the cap back on after I take a sip. This way I can snack and still move around without having to worry about where to put my drink.

My carry-all box is very important because it is big enough to hold lots of different stuff that can help in the field.

One of the most handy things that I have back there are my handlebar mittens. These are large, fleece-lined nylon covers that fit over the handlebars. A person can stick his hands in them and still be able to use the throttle and the brakes. They are invaluable when the weather is cold and you are having to travel around quickly, covering the hounds.

I also carry a pair of gloves, but I seldom ever use them because I have yet to find a pair that suits my needs. I can't seem to find a pair that will truly keep my hands warm and I darn sure can't find any that will allow me to operate a digital tape recorder the way you need to. I carry a pair of leather-type gloves just in case I need to move something like a large tree limb or something that I come across in the field.

I have a Slime tire repair kit that I have never had to use. I hope that by writing this piece about it I won't jinx myself, but it never hurts to be prepared just in case.

Paper towels are always in my supply box because I will often have to wipe off the dew off the seat first thing in the morning. They can also be helpful for a wide variety of uses both during the event and when I come in from the field.

I keep a good stock of legal pads in there too because I write my speed and drive scores on them to send in to the score entry person during the hunt. I prefer them because I can write the numbers larger and there are fewer pieces of paper for the person to have to keep up with when entering the scores. This will result in them being able to enter them more quickly and efficiently.

While I use the legal pads for speed and drive, I also keep a few extra of the regular score pads to record my scratches and hunting and trailing scores on. This isn't an issue with the data entry person because we judges turn these in dur-

ing our judges' meeting at the end of the day. The Master of Hounds will put these on a legal pad and the data entry person will enter these at the same time.

There is a clipboard in there as I like to be able to help with roll call on the third day if the Master needs me to. By having a clipboard, it is a bit easier checking off the numbers on the roll call cards.

One of the most important things that I have for cold weather is a head mitten. This is different than a toboggan. A head mitten is made of warm fleece and fits over my head with a hole in the front for my eyes, nose and mouth. It also is long and goes down over my neck. This is a huge help when having to ride as it keeps the cold wind off of my neck.

I also have a pair of cheap goggles. I can put these on over my head mitten and my eyes don't water when I am going to my stand on a cold morning.

Speaking of weather related stuff, it is very important to have a good rain suit and rain hat on board. In addition to this, I have some suspenders that I use to help keep my pants up during the rain. I also keep a Ziploc baggie that I can put my recorder in in an effort to keep it dry.

During the warm weather months, I also keep a can of insect repellent because mosquitoes literally love me. If there is one mosquito in the county, he will find me and I despise the little boogers.

There is also a screw driver, adjustable wrench and duct tape in my box in case something unforeseen should arise that is of a mechanical nature.

Over the years, I have only been stuck twice on my 4-wheeler. In both instances, I was in a very innocuous place, but managed to get in a bind and needed to be pulled out. As a result, I have a good tow rope, not only for me, but in case another person should need a tow.

A flashlight is also a good thing to have and any cheap one will do as long as the batteries are fresh.

Speaking of batteries, I try and keep several AA and AAA batteries in case me or a fellow judge should need help if the 2-ways or the recorders were to get weak.

While I haven't had to use it yet, I keep my old tape recorder on hand in case I should have a need for an extra.

Binoculars can be valuable if you are in the right place to use them. I very seldom do, especially if I am on a tight, narrow path. I simply can't get them lined up correctly in a narrow place. On the other hand, if I am in an area that is wide or has a field that allows me to follow the hounds as they cross, I certainly use them and keep a pair in the box for these times.

The most recent additions to my box are a fold-up saw and a pair of snips that are useful to clear away small bushes. I have seen many a time that I could have gotten more scores if I could have done away with a small bush or been able to saw off a small limb that was across my path.

I also keep a few bungee straps in the box just in case something were to arise that I hadn't thought of before. Bungee straps and duct tape are usually good fix-alls for just about anything that might arise.

Finally, I keep a dog lead in there. I have had a couple of occasions arise that I came across a hound that was injured and needed immediate attention from it's owner. Having a lead is a good way to help the injured hound if the injury doesn't involve a leg.

I hope that these tips on what might be needed during the judging of a field trial are helpful, especially to the younger and less experienced folks as they embark on their judging careers.