

Rescues 2the Rescue Evaluation

Personnel: 2 people, preferably both unfamiliar to dog, but at least an unfamiliar evaluator.

Evaluation area: Unfamiliar to dog. Enclosed. Outdoor preferred (for better traction). Area should contain obstacle(s) that can keep the toy from being readily visible and with which the dog must interact to retrieve the toy. Distractions (dog markings in area, other dogs visible or barking) are a plus, but the dog should be alone in the area for evaluation.

Supplies:

Leash	At least 2 balls or other favored toys
Buckle-collar on dog	These instructions & scoresheet or the digital evaluation
Video Camera	Bowl of water for the dog
Timer	

Set up:

Lead the dog into the evaluation area. Let him be free to move about and investigate. One person will handle the dog, the second will operate the camera and record information on the score sheet.

Evaluation exercises:

Assessing general toy interest, i.e. "fetch":

1. Get the dog's attention by showing it you have the ball (bouncing acceptable). Throw the ball away from the dog, but where the dog can see it moving and see where it lands (rolling or bouncing are good techniques). The dog is not restrained and can seek the toy immediately. DO NOT verbally encourage dog to retrieve the toy. Note: dog must see the toy being thrown.

Scoring

No Interest: Dog does not pursue the toy, **0 Points**

Minimal Interest: Dog moves toward the toy, but is distracted en route and does not return to seeking the toy, **1 Point**

Minimal Interest: Dog locates the toy, but does not interact with it (i.e. doesn't pick it up), **1 point**

Minimal Interest: Dog interacts with toy, but loses interest within a few seconds, **1 Point**

Moderate to High Interest: Dog eagerly locates and remains engaged with toy; may or may not return directly to the human but will remain in possession of the toy, **2 Points**

Extreme Interest: Dog exhibits intense fixation on pursuit and interaction with the toy, often characterized by at least some of the following: dilated pupils, quaking, rigid and fixated posture, vocalizing, rapid tail wagging, fast pursuit; may or may not return directly to the human but will remain in possession of the toy, **3 Points**

Do above 4 more times- If scoring 0 or 1 each time, stop the evaluation.

Interest in a toy that is not moving:

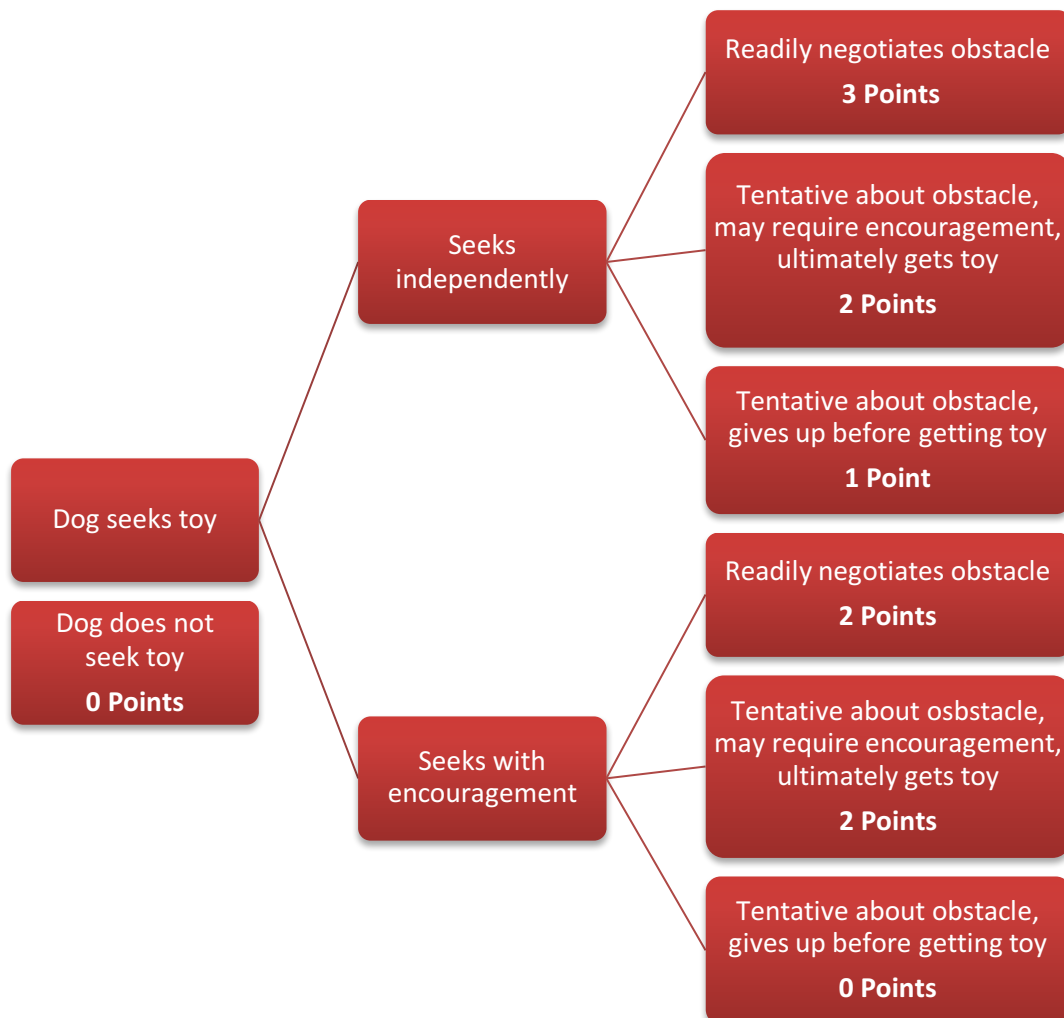
- Using the same scoring criteria as the first exercise, throw the ball while restraining the dog. Release the dog as soon as the ball/toy stops moving. Perform this test 5 times.

Willingness to search and deal with obstacles:

- Restrain the dog and throw the ball into/under an obstacle so that the dog will have to contend with the obstacle to retrieve the ball. Let him/her see you throw the ball and see where it lands but restrain the dog for 30 seconds after throwing the ball. (Getting the ball into/under the obstacle may take more than one attempt—if you have a bad throw, redo it before releasing the dog.)

If the dog does not seek the ball within 10 seconds of being released, encourage the dog verbally and with pointing.

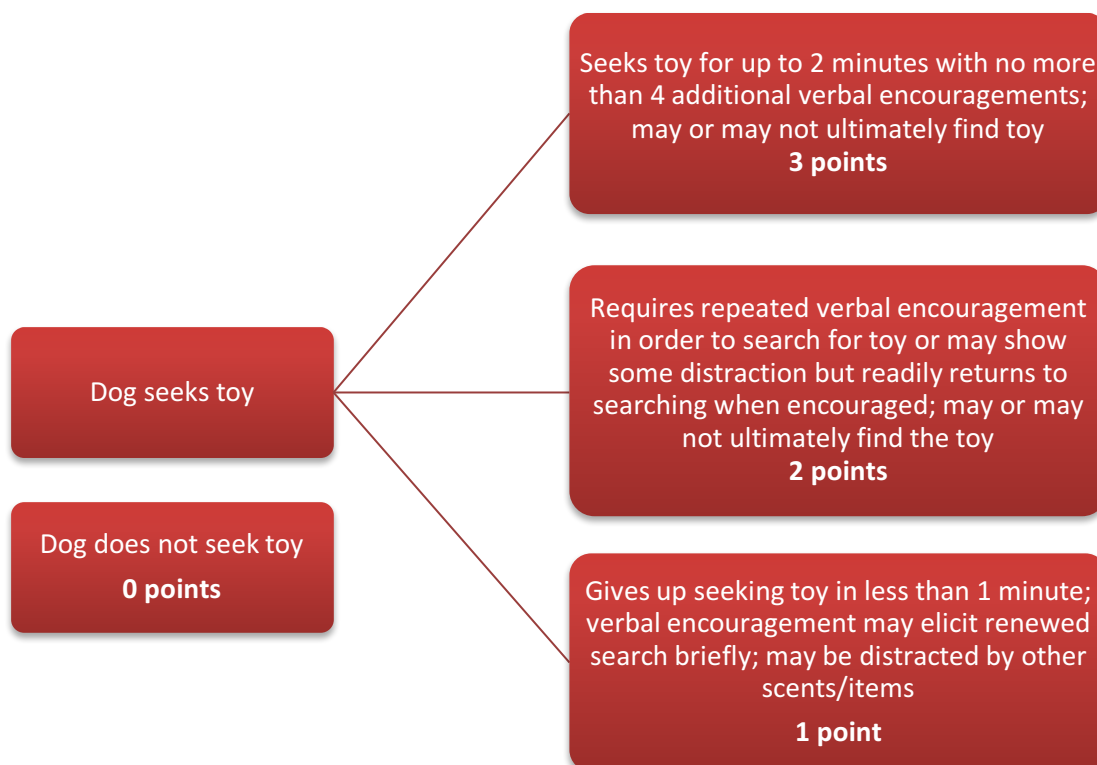
Scoring



Search endurance when the ball's location is unknown:

4. Restrain the dog and show him/her you have the ball. Cover the dog's eyes or turn him/her so that they can't see the ball being thrown. Throw the ball so it lands out of sight. Release the dog immediately. (Assistant will likely need to hold the dog and cover his/her eyes.) This time, DO verbally encourage dog to find the ball upon initial release. If the dog becomes distracted, verbally encourage him/her to keep searching. Keep track of how many times you need to encourage the dog to search. Allow the dog to search for up to 2 minutes. Note: If the dog finds the ball in less than 15 seconds, it was too easy and you should repeat the test with the ball in a more challenging location. This test is about a dog's willingness to search, not their success in actually locating the search object.

Scoring



Also note on scoresheet (this information can come from your shelter's standard intake assessment report):

- General responsiveness to unfamiliar handler
- Play style
- Nerve strength/reaction to noise
- Stranger comfort
- Food interest
- Response to unfamiliar dog

How to score

31-36 points: Strong candidate with an assertive, fast, and physical style. Dog is characterized by an intense—even manic—interest in the toy, which is maintained over time. Dog readily overcomes impediments and distractions. Will likely stay motivated through training, but may be too powerful for some novice handlers. Dog may be challenged working in close or detailed searches.

24-30 points: strong candidate with controlled intensity and focus. Dog is characterized by a consistent and enduring interest in the toy. Dog readily overcomes impediments and distractions. Dog likely to be manageable by a wide range of handler styles and experience levels.

22-23 points: potential candidate. Dog is interested in the toy and may be a candidate if the seeker is particularly drawn to other qualities described on the evaluation. Maintaining motivation and focus throughout training more likely to be a challenge with dogs scoring in this range than dogs with higher scores. Dogs posted with these scores ought to have additional descriptions written as to why the evaluator believes this dog to be a good candidate.

21 points or less: Not a strong candidate for conservation detection dog work.