

Guide to Gear - by Carrie Hamilton

Gear for You

Dachshund Field Trials can take place in almost any type of weather, often all on the same day. I attended a trial one spring that began in 4 inches of snow, by noon the snow had stopped. After lunch most of the snow had melted and the afternoon was spent in light jackets under a bright sun. There are also the trials that are spent in the rain, six to twelve hours walking around in precipitation varying from mist to driving rain. Trials can also be spent in t-shirts under a blazing sun.

Regardless of the weather, the Trial will go on. I can only think of one trial that was stopped, and that was during a heavy driving rain on a flat field under Air Force communication towers with a thunderstorm rushing at us. The raindrops felt like they were an inch in diameter. The Dachshunds, among them some Minis, had a look on their faces that seemed to ask, "What have I done wrong to deserve this?" The human handlers, beaters, and Judges had a similar look. Of course, these are the extremes being described, most trials are spent in weather that makes you glad you had the opportunity to be outside.

Good, well-fitting boots are absolutely necessary; you are going to spend at least three hours walking. Jogging shoes can also be worn on dry days, but keep in mind the trial grounds can be on bottom land with some swampy areas.

Brush pants or chaps are recommended in some areas of the country. The grounds can have areas of green barbed wire and multi flora roses. In the North-west you can look forward to thorn bushes with inch long spikes. Brush pants will protect your legs fairly well.

A sturdy field jacket to protect your upper body from all those thorns and the cold, and a hat to keep the sun and rain off your head are also needed. It is best to layer your clothes so you can adjust to the changes of the day.

Rain gear, preferably a hooded rain jacket and pants, offers the best protection from wet weather. A raincoat or poncho will keep your upper body dry, but your lower body will get wet. Wet pants and high rubber boots can lead to some real discomfort. It is possible to get a rash from the friction of wet pants on your legs. It is also possible to develop blisters from the friction of wet pants and boot tops. Well-fitting rain boots will save your feet from blisters and keep them dry.

Sunscreen is also necessary; even on overcast days you can get a good burn. Insect repellent is not usually necessary and is not considered effective against the deer tick that carries Lyme disease. A pyrethrum spray is considered the most effective repellent for the deer tick. You may want to use your dog's flea and tick spray on your boot tops and pant cuffs. It is prudent to bring a change of clothes and shoes. You never know what you may need. Extras: lip protection, like Chapstick, a lotion like Tecnu Poison Oak'n Ivy Cleanser for possible poison ivy/oak exposure.

Check List:

- Walking shoes or Boots
- Pyrethrum spray
- Rain Gear (jacket, pants, boots)
- Brush pants
- Field Jacket
- Layered clothing
- Hat Sunscreen
- Lip protection
- Skin lotion for poison ivy

Gear for Your Dog

Now that you are dressed for any possibility, what will your Dachshund need at a Field Trial? Remarkably little. A well-fitting collar. (You may see Dachshunds at trials wearing an O-ring or safety collar) with one or two tags. A leash to take your dog into and out of the field. A release line, - a length of rope about 8-12 feet long. The release line is passed through the O-ring, or D-ring of the collar. The two ends of the line are held in your hand, and when the dog is released to track the rabbit, you drop the rope from one hand and the dog is smoothly released from the rope.

Your Dachshund may need water in the field. Some of the things you may see are leather water bags, (botas), hiking water belts, bicycle bottles, and reusable plastic juice bottles. Your dog does not need a raincoat, boots, or sweater in the field, but in the rain a mini might be more comfortable wrapped in a towel and carried inside your raincoat. You will also want towels for wet days, and a flea comb and a flea and tick spray with a pyrethrum base in areas where deer ticks are present.

Check List:

- Collar
- Towels
- Leash
- Pyrethrum Flea/Tick Spray
- Release Line
- Flea Comb
- Water Container