

# Regulations & Guidelines for AKC® Hunting Tests for Retrievers

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AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

## AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

The American Kennel Club® is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC® and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

### THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB:

Records the parentage of dogs but is not itself involved in the sale of dogs and cannot therefore guarantee the health and quality of dogs in its registry.

Sponsors more than 15,000 dog competitions each year held by licensed and member clubs. Only dog clubs may be AKC members.

Supports and promotes the sport of purebred dogs.

Customer Service	(919) 816-3908
Fax	(919) 816-3905
AKC Web site	<a href="http://www.akc.org">www.akc.org</a>
E-mail	<a href="mailto:huntingtest@akc.org">huntingtest@akc.org</a>

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# Chapter 1

## General Regulations

The word “dog” wherever used in these Regulations includes both sexes.

**Section 1. Eligibility of Clubs to Hold Hunting Tests.** The Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club may, at its discretion, grant permission to clubs representing eligible breeds to hold Hunting Tests, which Hunting Tests shall be governed by such Rules and Regulations as from time to time shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Rules Applying To Registration and Discipline.** All of AKC’s Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline shall apply to all AKC sanctioned, licensed and member club hunting tests.

**Section 3. Making Application.** A licensed or member club that meets all the requirements of the American Kennel Club® and wishes to hold a Hunting Test at which Qualifying scores toward titles may be awarded, must make application to The American Kennel Club on the form provided for permission to hold a Hunting Test. If the club is not a member of The American Kennel Club, it shall pay a license fee for the privilege of holding such event, the amount of which shall be determined by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club. Applications for AKC licensed and member club Retriever Hunting Tests must be received at least three (3) months prior to the closing date. *At present, the license fee for a Hunting Test is \$35.00. No fee is required of an AKC member club for the first Hunting Test held within a calendar year, but an application for a second Hunting Test within that calendar year must be accompanied by a fee of \$15.00.*

Each club making application to the American Kennel Club to hold either a member or licensed Hunting Test must submit, as part of the application, a “Disaster and Emergency Plan.”

Approval for licensed or member club Hunting Tests may be issued to clubs formed for the improvement of the several eligible breeds or to clubs formed for the improvement of a single eligible breed.

Clubs licensed to hold Retriever Hunting Tests may offer Junior, Senior and Master level tests for all eligible breeds, but may not offer more than one of the same testing levels at any event at which qualifying scores toward titles are earned.

A local club is permitted to hold up to six licensed or member club events per calendar year. At the club’s option, their 5th and 6th events of the year are allowed to be Master level only tests provided the club has offered each of the test levels at least once at the first four hunting tests it offered in the calendar year.

If a club holds two or less events per calendar year, the club may offer Junior and/or Senior level tests only.

If a club holds more than two events per calendar year, at least two test levels must be offered at all licensed or member club events, except a club holding its first licensed or member event may offer only one testing level.

Clubs that sponsor more than two hunting tests in a calendar year shall be required to offer each of the test levels at least once during the year.

Due to the requirements and complexity of hunting situations at the different testing levels, running priority should be given to the highest level (Master), working downward to the lowest (Senior and Junior) being offered by the event giving club.

Whenever offered, a Master Test will be scheduled to run over a minimum of two days.

No Monday events shall be approved unless Monday is a national holiday. Exception: Tests sponsored by Parent Clubs held with National Specialties.

At the election of the event-giving club, an Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake (open to breeds eligible to compete in Retriever Field Trials) may be run in conjunction with a Hunting Test event that includes a Master Hunt Stake. *To run an Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake the club must be licensed to hold field trials. For information on how to become licensed please contact the Performance Events Department at [fieldtrials@akc.org](mailto:fieldtrials@akc.org).*

**Limiting Entries to Master Hunter Tests:** Clubs may at their option limit the number of entries in their Master Hunter test to either 60, 90, 120 or 180 entries. Clubs may run unlimited entry Master level tests if they choose. If entries are limited, the number must be stated in the premium and announcements for the event. Entries shall be accepted on a first come, first served basis. The regulation regarding days required for testing and the splitting of test levels remains the same as explained in Chapter 1, Section 18.

Clubs that limit the number of entries in the Master Hunter test must advertise an opening date for its hunting test. In order for there to be transparency for all participants, the opening date for public entries shall be the Wednesday closest to three weeks prior to the first date of the event. The opening time shall be 8:00 pm in the time zone where the event is being held. The entries reserved for worker's dogs shall open on Tuesday.

Clubs that limit the number of entries in the Master Hunter test must establish a waiting list in order that entries that scratch prior to the closing date and time can be replaced. The waiting list shall utilize a "first in – first out" approach.

A club will not be approved for a licensed or member

test if the proposed date(s) coincides with an approved licensed or member test(s), and the distance between the events is 200 miles or less. An exception may be made if a club receives clearance from the club(s) holding the established licensed or member test(s).

**Sanctioned Events:** A club that meets all of the requirements of the American Kennel Club may be approved to hold a sanctioned Hunting Test by applying to hold a sanctioned Hunting Test on a form provided by the American Kennel Club.

Sanctioned Hunting Tests shall be governed by such simple Regulations as from time to time shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

*All of these Regulations shall govern AKC sanctioned Hunting Tests except those which state specifically that they apply to licensed and member club Hunting Tests.*

**Section 4. Entry Requirements.** Hunting Tests shall be open to dogs six months of age or over on the first day of the event that have been individually registered with AKC or individually registered with a foreign or domestic registry organization whose pedigrees are acceptable for AKC registration. Hunting tests must be open to all eligible breeds. For a list of eligible breeds, please see [www.akc.org/events/hunting-tests/retriever-hunting-test/eligible-breeds/](http://www.akc.org/events/hunting-tests/retriever-hunting-test/eligible-breeds/). A dog with an AKC Limited Registration or Conditional Registration shall be eligible to be entered in licensed or member Hunting Tests.

A dog that is individually registered with a foreign or domestic registry organization whose pedigrees are acceptable for AKC registration may be entered in licensed or member hunting tests that are held not later than 30 days after the date of the first licensed or member hunting test in which the dog was entered, but only provided that the individual foreign registration number and the name of the country of birth are shown on the entry form, and provided further that the same name, which in the case of an imported dog must be the name on the foreign registration, is used for the dog each time.

A specialty club formed for any one of the eligible breeds may be approved to hold a Hunting Test in which only that breed may participate when the event is held in conjunction with special national events. When a specialty club elects to restrict entry to its own breed, the premium list must specify that the event is open only to that breed.

Dogs from eligible breeds that have been granted Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL/ILP) are eligible to participate in Hunting Tests.

Hunting Tests are also open to breeds enrolled in the Foundation Stock Services (FSS) program that have been granted approval to participate in Retriever Hunting Tests.

**No Special Inducements.** A hunt test-giving club

shall not accept an entry fee other than that published in its premium list or entry form, or in any way discriminate between entrants. Except a club with a limited entry Master test may set aside up to 15% of the Master entries for event workers. No club or member of any club shall give or offer to give any owner or handler any special inducements, such as reduced entry fees, allowances for board or transportation or other incentive of value for a certain number of entries or shall give or offer to give in consideration of entering a certain number of dogs, any prizes or prize money, except the officially advertised prizes or prize money, which prize money shall be for a stated sum or a portion of the entry fees. Except a club, at its discretion, may allow for a reduced entry fee for dogs handled by juniors. A junior handler is someone less than 18 years of age on the first day of the test.

**Definition of an Amateur:** For the purpose of qualifying and handling a dog in the Master Amateur Invitational Hunting Test:

A person shall be considered an Amateur who during the period of two years preceding the trial in question has not received compensation in any form for the training of a dog for hunting, hunting tests or field trials and/or the handling of a dog in the same, and/or the regular systematic personal instructions of other individuals regarding the above pursuits.

Compensation is defined as money, goods or services to a person or any member of their household. No member of the household of a person who does not qualify as an amateur under this definition can qualify as an amateur.

Any person participating in an occasional organized seminar or workshop to improve the training and handling of field trial, hunting test or hunting dogs will be exempt from the above provision as will a person who receives payment for providing educational material (such as books, videos, etc.) to the public on the training and handling of field trial, hunting test or hunting dogs.

The dog must be handled by an amateur during all series in a given test in order to qualify as being handled by an amateur.

Should a question arise at the Master Amateur Invitational test regarding a person's amateur status, the Event Committee shall decide.

**DQ by Judges:** A dog is not eligible to be entered or run in any licensed or member club Hunting Test in any category if the dog has on two occasions been made the subject of the following report: If a dog, while under judgment at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test attacks another dog, and if the Judges are unanimously of the opinion that such attack was without reasonable cause, the Judges shall identify the offending dog on the judging sheet or in the Official Catalog and the

name of the offending dog shall be listed in the report of the Hunting Test sent to The American Kennel Club.

**Section 5. Bitches In Season.** Bitches in season shall not be eligible for entry in any Hunting Test and shall not be allowed on the grounds. Entry fees paid for a bitch withdrawn because of coming in season or for a dog withdrawn because of an injury or illness, or for a dog that dies, shall be refunded in full by the test-giving club. Prior to paying such refund, the club may require an appropriate veterinary certificate. In the event a dog is withdrawn for other reasons, the test-giving club is free to formulate its own policy with reference to refunds provided that said policy shall be fixed in advance of the mailing of the premium list for any particular Test.

**Section 6. Judges' Eligibility.** Anyone at least 21 years of age and in good standing with the American Kennel Club may be approved to judge a Hunting Test subject to the eligibility requirements in force at the time. While the AKC approves individuals to judge based on eligibility requirements, it is the responsibility of the clubs to determine the "qualifications" of each prospective judge by researching experience accumulated through training, actual hunting over dogs, handling dogs in field events and prior judging activities. Clubs may at their discretion develop a questionnaire in order to request background information on prospective judges.

**Prior to Becoming an Approved Judge.** For new judges after January 1, 2012:

(1) Seminar: Attend an AKC Retriever Hunting Test seminar. This first seminar allows an individual to judge for three years assuming the apprenticeship requirement is met.

(2) Apprenticeship: Individuals that have not judged prior to January 1, 2012 must successfully apprentice at least once at the level being judged. (Club's responsibility to monitor.)

**Prior to Becoming Eligible to Judge the Senior/Master Test.** Individuals that have not judged Senior or Master tests prior to January 1, 2012 must first have judged at least twice at the testing level immediately below before they are eligible to judge a Senior or Master tests. (Club's responsibility to monitor.)

**Maintaining One's Ability to Judge:**

(1) Second Seminar: If an individual has judged within three years of attending the first seminar, that individual is required to attend a second seminar to maintain the ability to continue to judge. If an individual has not judged within three years of attending the first seminar, another "first" seminar is required prior to being allowed to judge. However, if you have earned six (6) points at the Master level, you do not need to take the second seminar. Anyone that has attended two or more seminars (one prior to

judging and one after having judged) is exempt from any further seminar attendance.

(2) Written Test: After the second seminar (one prior to judging and one after having judged), an individual must complete a written self-administered AKC test every four years *and pass the test with a score of 90% or better.*

(3) Must remain an Active Judge: An individual must judge at any level at least once every four (4) years to maintain eligibility. Individuals who have not judged within the four-year period of the mandatory written examination will be required to attend the Seminar.

(4) Must Remain an Active Handler: An individual must have handled a qualifying dog at the level to be judged or higher within seven (7) years of the date of the event. (Club's responsibility to monitor.)

### **Judges Panel Qualifications:**

(1) The combined number of points required for the two Judges in any division or level shall be six (6) at that level or higher. Judges accumulate points for each level judged at the completion of an assignment.

(2) Handling Experience: *At the Master test level and each division thereof, one Judge shall have qualified a dog or dogs (5) times at the Master level. At the Senior and Junior test levels and each division thereof, one Judge shall have qualified a dog or dogs four (4) times either at the level being judged or at a higher test level. Monitoring the qualifications of judges is the responsibility of the event-giving club.*

Neither the Hunting Test Secretary nor any member of the Hunting Test Committee will be approved to be published in the premium list as a Judge of an event where they serve in that capacity.

A dog is not eligible to be entered in any Hunting Test level (Junior, Senior or Master) at a licensed or member Hunting Test if a Judge of that test level or any member of his family has owned, sold, held under lease, boarded, trained or handled the dog within one year of the starting date of the Hunting Test. *Except, if the test level has multiple divisions (Master A and Master B for example) and the dog is entered in the division not being judged by this individual, then the dog may participate provided the judges of each division lay out the tests independently. If the judges of the divisions lay out the tests together, then the dog may not be entered in any division.*

For purposes of this Section, the words "any member of his family" shall include a spouse, a sibling, a parent or a child, whether natural or adopted, of the Judge in question, but shall not extend to other blood or legal relationships.

Each test or division of a test shall be judged by at least two qualified Judges. The same judge will not be approved to undertake identical assignments on consecutive days or consecutive back-to-back events.

If a club must substitute or use additional Judges for any reason the substitute or additional Judges shall fulfill the requirements to judge, as previously stated. Prompt notification with the reasons for any changes shall be sent to The American Kennel Club in advance of the Hunting Test.

**Section 7. Judges' Responsibility.** It is strongly recommended that clubs select as Judges individuals with broad and extensive background experience in handling and working with Retrievers in the field.

Judges must officiate over all series in their respective assignments.

A Judge shall not handle a dog in another test until the test level (or division of a test level) that he or she is judging is fully completed. The intent of this Regulation is that a test may not be stopped for a judge to run a dog in another test.

Judges need not set up identical tests when test levels are divided.

A Judge of a Hunting Test shall be familiar with all Rules, Regulations and Procedures pertaining to the type of Test being conducted. Judges shall be thoroughly familiar with the applicable Standards, and shall be responsible for judging in compliance with the Rules, Regulations, and Standards.

**Section 8. Apprentice Judges.** Anyone wishing to apprentice Judge must first make the request to the Event Chairperson. If the event committee decides to entertain the request, the committee must obtain the agreement of the judges before authorizing an apprentice judge. Just as with Judges, it is strongly recommended that Apprentice Judges be individuals with broad and extensive background experience in handling and working with Retrievers in the field. All such individuals are encouraged to educate themselves by reading the Regulations and Guidelines, and prior to their apprenticeship, they shall have qualified a dog at the level that they intend to apprentice before participating as an Apprentice Judge. *(It is the club's responsibility to ensure this requirement has been met.)* Apprentice Judges shall diagram and score dogs while under the supervision of the Judges, but their scores and opinions as to the dogs' abilities shall not be considered in any way by the Judges as part of their official evaluation in determining whether or not dogs qualify. The Judges shall from time to time invite the Apprentice Judge to become involved in conversation with them such as the Judges discussing how and/or why the Apprentice scored a dog the way that he or she did.

Judges shall involve the Apprentice Judge in the setting up of the Hunting Test, and shall instruct them in all aspects of judging Hunting Tests. However, Apprentice Judges shall not advise handlers, signal for birds, take birds from handlers or otherwise be involved in the mechanics of the Hunting Test.

*Apprentice Judges must be available and on the grounds for the entire time the test level they are apprenticing is in progress, including setup time, through the completion of the tests, tallying of scores and discussion by the judges of those dogs that are to qualify. As with the assigned Judges, the Apprentice Judge may not serve either on the Event Committee or as the Event Secretary. Apprentice Judges are subject to the same restrictions as the approved judges (see Chapter 1, Section 6). There shall be no more than one apprentice judge assigned to any one set of approved judges at any test level or division of a test level.*

*Assigned Judges must sign the Apprentice Judge form included in the event kit if they are in agreement that the individual has successfully completed his/her assignment at the conclusion of testing.*

**Section 9. Ribbons and Rosettes.** A club holding a licensed or member Hunting Test shall offer prize ribbons or rosettes. Each ribbon or rosette shall be at least two inches wide and eight inches long and orange in color, and shall bear on its face a facsimile of the seal of The American Kennel Club, the words "Qualifying Score," the name of the test-giving club and the name of the test (Junior, Senior or Master Hunting Test).

If ribbons or rosettes are given at sanctioned Hunting Tests, they shall be rose in color, but need not otherwise conform to the requirements for ribbons at licensed or member Hunting Tests.

All ribbons or rosettes shall be offered for outright award.

**Section 10. AKC Publications.** All clubs holding Hunting Tests are required to have available copies of the latest Hunting Test Regulations, and AKC publications regarding misconduct at events held under AKC Rules and Regulations.

**Section 11. Advertising.** Clubs may only advertise corresponding dates, locations and stakes, plus club contact information, prior to an event receiving AKC approval. Clubs may not advertise an event prior to AKC approval if the dates or location differ from the previous year's corresponding event. Premium lists cannot be made available nor can entries be accepted until the event and judges panel has been approved by the AKC.

**Section 12. Training.** There shall be no training of dogs on the grounds of a hunting test, either within 24 hours of the commencement of the event, or at any time during the event. Training for the purpose of this section shall be defined as any activity intended to strengthen or improve a dog's abilities, skills or knowledge. The test grounds shall be defined in advance by the Hunting Test Committee.

Special training devices that are used to control and train dogs, including but not limited to, collars with prongs,

electronic collars used with transmitters, muzzles and head collars may not be used on dogs at AKC events.

**Section 13. Hunting Test Secretary.** Any club holding a Hunting Test shall name a Hunting Test Secretary who shall be a member of the club. The premium list for licensed or member club Hunting Tests shall designate the Hunting Test Secretary as receiving entries.

However clubs have the option of using an electronic entry service. Online entries are subject to the same requirements as mail entries. Additional requirements or conditions may be imposed by the online service. Such service or club shall accept paper entries from those not wishing to enter electronically. A club using an online service to accept entries must so stipulate in the premium list and must provide an address for paper entries as well as the website address for online entries. There should be only one address for paper entries, and that address may be that of the entry service company. Any service fee imposed by the online entry service must be clearly stated in the premium list. All online entry instructions should be clearly written.

**Section 14. Hunting Test Committee.** A club that has been granted permission by The American Kennel Club to hold a licensed or member Hunting Test shall appoint a Hunting Test Committee which will have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the event. The Committee shall be comprised of at least five members of the club and may include the Hunting Test Secretary, but the Hunting Test Secretary shall not be designated as the Hunting Test Committee Chairman. A majority of the Hunting Test Committee must be present during an AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Test. In the event of absence of Hunting Test Committee Members, the Chairman or an officiating officer shall appoint sufficient Committee Members in order to insure compliance with this Section.

The Hunting Test Committee and Hunting Test Secretary shall be held responsible for compliance with all of the applicable Regulations for Hunting Tests, except those coming under the sole jurisdiction of the Judges, and must provide themselves with copies of the latest edition.

When a dog is seriously injured or dies in connection with an event, the Event Committee must conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if negligence or the willful conduct of an individual caused the injury or death. If the preliminary investigation determines that there was no negligence or willful conduct causing the injury or death, then a written report of the findings of the preliminary investigation must be submitted to the AKC (Attn: Executive Secretary), 260 Madison Avenue, Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10016 within five (5) days. If the Event Committee determines that negligence or willful conduct may have caused the death or serious injury, the Event Committee must hold an Event Hearing.

The Hunting Test Committee of a club holding a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall have the authority to decide upon any matter arising during the running of the Hunting Test, except a matter coming within the jurisdiction of the Judges.

**Section 15. Premium Lists.** A premium list shall be provided for licensed or member club Hunting Tests. The premium list for a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall be printed (any printing or copying process is acceptable), and shall state whether the event is "Licensed by The American Kennel Club" or held by an "AKC Member Club."

The following information shall be included in the premium list for a licensed or member club Hunting Test: name of club, location and date, names and addresses of officers, time judging will commence, entry fees, Tests offered, names and addresses of Judges together with their specific assignments, name, address and telephone number of Hunting Test Secretary, date and time of closing and drawing of entries, and the official AKC entry form. Premium lists shall also specify type or types of birds to be used. Premium lists shall conform to the official size of from 5½" x 8½" to 6" x 9".

Premium lists shall also contain the name and address of the Hunting Test Committee Chairman and the names of the Hunting Test Committee members.

Before the Premium list is printed, a Judges Panel, containing the names and addresses of the Judges and their assignments, must be submitted to AKC: Attention, Performance Events at least three months prior to the closing date of the event. Fines may be imposed for late submission of the Judges Panel.

At least one copy of the Premium list (along with any directional maps, if provided) must be mailed or e-mailed (huntingtest@akc.org) to AKC at the time they are mailed to prospective entrants. Failure to submit the required premium lists will result in a fine in the amount of \$50.00 being assessed the event-giving club.

**Section 16. Closing And Drawing Of Entries, Running Order.** Entries for an AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Test may close at any time prior to the Hunting Test, but shall not close later than the third day preceding the start of the Hunting Test.

Each entry form must be completed in full and the information given on the entry form must be that which applies to the entered dog.

A club holding an AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Test shall not accept any entries received after the closing time and date specified in the premium list.

The order of running shall be decided by lot at the draw, dogs worked by the same person or belonging to the same owner being separated when possible.

Dogs may be run in an order different from the order in which they are drawn:

(a) When in the opinion of the Judges or the Hunting Test Committee such will result in a reasonable and desirable saving of time in the conduct of the event;

(b) When in the opinion of the Judges such will avoid unfairness or prejudice to any dog resulting from an event which has occurred in the particular Test; and/or

(c) When a system of rotation has been imposed (refer to Chapter 3, Section 3).

Once by request of a Marshal, a handler has been notified to get a dog ready, and the dog is in a holding blind, no other dog shall be rearranged in front of the dog that was already called.

After entries have closed a dog may be moved up to the next level in a test in which it is entered when, according to the owner's records, the dog has met the title requirements for the test level for which it was entered. Notification must be made to the Test Secretary at least one-half hour before the start of the event. The owner/handler of the dog will be required to pay any additional entry fee(s) necessary to participate in the higher test level.

**Section 17. Declining Entries.** The Hunting Test Committee may decline any entries or may remove any dog from its event for cause, but in each such instance shall file in a timely manner, good and sufficient reason for doing so with the AKC Performance Events Department.

**Section 18. Split Test Levels.** At the discretion of the Hunting Test Committee any or all test levels may be run in more than one division, but dogs shall not be entered in more than one division of the same test level.

Whenever test levels are divided, they shall be divided equally with placement of the odd dog determined by the Committee.

When test levels are split into divisions, the Judges of each division within each level may elect to cooperatively design each series, or they may opt to design separate tests for their divisions. Each set of Judges in each division, in conjunction with the Hunting Test Committee, has the authority to make this determination before or during the event.

When test levels are split into divisions, dogs handled by the same person shall be placed in the same division to avoid delays.

When test levels are split into separate divisions, dogs shall be judged by the same set of Judges for the entire test.

When entries exceed a total of sixty (60) dogs at the Master level during a two (2) day event, the Master level must be split to run in two or more divisions. When entries exceed a total of ninety (90) dogs at the Master level during a three (3) day event, the Master level must be split

in two or more divisions. When entries exceed a total of fifty (50) dogs at the Senior level and the test is scheduled to run only one day, then the test must be split in two or more divisions.

*Unless a conflict, as described in Chapter 1, Section 6 exists, handlers may not request to run in a particular division of a test or level under a particular set of judges.*

*Whenever test levels are to be split, the decision must be made prior to the drawing of the running order.*

#### **Section 19. Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake.**

An Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake (open to breeds eligible to compete in Retriever Field Trials) may be run in conjunction with a Hunting Test event that includes at least two levels of testing, one of which must be a Master stake. An Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake at a Retriever test shall be for dogs which have never won first, second, third, or fourth place or a Judges' Award of Merit in an Open All-Age, Limited All-Age, Special All-Age, or Restricted All-Age Stake, or won first, second, third or fourth place in an Amateur All-Age Stake, or Owner-Handler Amateur All-Age Stake, or won two first places in Qualifying Stakes at licensed or member trials. In determining whether a dog is eligible for the Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake, no award received after the date of closing of entries shall be counted.

**Section 20. Catalogs.** An Official Catalog may be provided for a licensed or member club Hunting Test. The Official Catalog, if prepared, must be printed, and shall conform to the official size of not less than 5½" x 8½", but not to exceed 8½" x 11".

The Official Catalog shall list all dogs entered in each Test (Junior, Senior and Master) in the order in which the dogs were drawn with all identifying information called for on the entry form (at least, but not limited to full name of dog, registration number, breed, date of birth, and name of owner and handler, if different from owner). Only official AKC titles may be printed in the event catalog. A complete list of AKC titles can be found at [www.akc.org/events/titles.cfm](http://www.akc.org/events/titles.cfm).

The Official Catalog shall state the name of the Hunting Test-giving club, the date and location of the event and shall state whether the Hunting Test is "Licensed by the American Kennel Club" or held by a "AKC Member Club."

The following certification must appear in the Official Catalog following the last dog listed in each Test (Junior, Senior and Master):

## JUDGE'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that \_\_\_\_\_ dogs received Qualifying scores in this Hunting Test and that the above information identifying these dogs was entered prior to my signing this page.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judge's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judge's Signature

## HUNTING TEST SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATION

I certify that the Judges have verified the above information and signed this page. Number of dogs entered \_\_\_\_\_ Total Starters \_\_\_\_\_  
Total number of Qualifying scores \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Hunting Test Secretary

Following completion of judging in each test, the Hunting Test Secretary shall mark the Official Catalog with the word "Qualifying" next to the names of all dogs that received Qualifying scores. The Judges shall then certify the accuracy of the marked awards, and both the Hunting Test Secretary and the Judges shall complete their appropriate certifications.

*Qualifying dogs shall not be announced nor shall Qualifying ribbons be awarded until the Official Catalog has been marked by the Event Secretary and both assigned Judges for each individual test level or division thereof have certified the accuracy of the Secretary's Certification at the conclusion of each testing level and/or division.*

If a club chooses not to prepare an Official Catalog (conforming to the official size of not less than 5½" x 8½" but not to exceed 8½" x 11"), it must utilize the standard AKC Official Judges book for Hunting Tests which will automatically be supplied to the Hunting Test Secretary following approval of premium list copy. When a club chooses this option, it may prepare a catalog, but the catalog need not conform to the size and content requirements stated above.

**Section 21. Submission of Records.** The Hunting Test Secretary shall, within seven (7) days of the completion of a licensed or member club Hunting Test, forward to The American Kennel Club, the Official Catalog, marked to indicate dogs that received Qualifying scores and signed and certified by the Judges and the Hunting Test Secretary (evaluation forms need not be submitted to AKC), and the complete Hunting Test Secretary's Report of the Hunting Test.

A club holding a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall retain either an Official Catalog or a copy of the Official Judges book.

AKC will collect a \$3.50 AKC Event Entry Service Fee

for each entry of a dog in all AKC licensed and member Retriever Hunting Tests. The event service fee is to help defray expenses involved in maintaining the records and administering the events.

The Board of Directors shall determine, from time to time, the amount of the service fee required.

Penalty for noncompliance is twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and five dollars (\$5.00) for each day's delay beyond the deadline and other penalties as may be imposed by the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club.

**Section 22. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** (A) It shall be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct if a person during the running of or in connection with an event abuses or harasses a Judge or official or any other person present in any capacity at the event. The Hunting Test Committee shall act in accord with paragraph (D) of this Section.

(B) Any person who displays unsportsmanlike conduct or who is seen to kick, strike, or otherwise roughly manhandle a dog while on the grounds of a Hunting Test at any time during the holding of the event, shall be expelled from the test by the Hunting Test Committee, which shall also act in accord with paragraph (D) of this Section.

(C) The Judges shall also have the authority to expel a handler if they observe unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the handler or see the handler kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog while the event is in progress. It will be the duty of the Judges to promptly report to the Hunting Test Committee the expulsion of a handler and the Hunting Test Committee shall then proceed in accord with paragraph (D) of this Section.

(D) The Hunting Test Committee shall investigate, at once, any instance of alleged unsportsmanlike conduct. A Hunting Test Committee, after a preliminary investigation, determines that the incident, if proven, would constitute conduct prejudicial to the sport or The American Kennel Club, it shall exercise its authority in accord with the *Guide for Dealing with Misconduct*.

In order to ensure an impartial hearing, no person who would gain or lose as a result of the outcome, or anyone with a substantive business or personal relationship with the accused, may serve on the Committee hearing the misconduct charge. The Committee may vote to excuse anyone from the Committee if there are unique situations that cause the Committee to question an individual's ability to be impartial.

**Note:** The power conferred to suspend a person from all privileges of The American Kennel Club applies only to Committees at licensed or member events. At a sanctioned event, the Committee collects evidence, holds a hearing, and reports its findings and conclusions to The American Kennel Club.

(E) The Hunting Test Secretary shall submit within

seven (7) days to the American Kennel Club a complete report of any action taken under this Section.

**Section 23. Conduct of Dogs.** Any dog that presents an unprovoked and obvious threat, or an uncontrollable clear and present danger to other dogs or people, either by attacking or through continued exceedingly aggressive behavior, may be ejected from the hunting test grounds. Expulsion of dogs may be the individual act of any assigned Judge who observes the aforementioned behavior, or by the Hunting Test Committee, following a corroborated report. Spectators and participants should report such incidents to the Hunting Test Committee, or to a marshal. Any dog that is ejected by a Judge or by the Hunting Test Committee shall forfeit the privilege to run in any test or series that day, and shall not receive a qualifying score at the event in which the attack occurred. While an actual attack need not be observed by an official to bring about a dog's ejection, a report alone is not sufficient proof to justify such drastic action. There shall be sufficient evidence, which may entirely include reports from reliable eyewitnesses, of an attack or aggressive behavior before officials eject any dog.

**DQ by Event Committee:** Any dog, that in the opinion of the Event Committee or the American Kennel Club, attacks a person or a dog at an AKC event, resulting in injury, and is believed by that Event Committee or the American Kennel Club to present a hazard to persons or other dogs shall be disqualified. When the dog is disqualified by the Event Committee pursuant to this section a report shall be filed immediately with the Executive Secretary of the American Kennel Club. The disqualified dog may not again compete at any AKC event nor be on the grounds of an AKC event unless and until, following application for reinstatement by the owner to the American Kennel Club, the owner receives official notification in writing from the AKC that the dog's eligibility has been reinstated.

**Section 24. Cell Phones, Pagers and Electronic Devices.** In order not to distract dogs, handlers and judges from their work, no cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices which emit a sound shall be allowed in the immediate vicinity of the line or in the field. These devices shall be turned off or set on vibrate mode.

Clubs should post signs if they feel it is necessary. It is the job of the marshal to enforce this regulation. Out of courtesy to the working dog and handler, judges shall not accept calls or send messages while a dog is under judgement.

A handler has the right to appeal to the judges if he believes the sound from an electronic device has interfered with his dog's performance. It is the decision of the judges to determine if the sound had a material impact on the dog's performance. If they believe meaningful interference has occurred, they may allow the dog to be re-run at a later time.

This regulation is not meant to hinder the ability of the marshal to keep in contact with event officials in order to expedite the running of the event; however the marshal shall maintain consideration for the working dog and handler.

## Chapter 2

### Qualifying Scores, Awarding of Titles

**Section 1. Qualifying Scores.** The total number of Qualifying Scores required for the issuance of the titles Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter shall be established by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club.

The ability categories in a series must be graded on a scale of 0-10.

In order to receive a Qualifying score in **Junior** Retriever Hunting Tests, a dog must acquire a minimum average of not less than five (5) in each of the abilities listed on the Evaluation Form, with an overall average score for the entire test of not less than seven (7). In order to receive a Qualifying score in **Senior and Master** Retriever Hunting Tests, not only must a dog receive an overall average of not less than seven (7.0) for the entire test, but it must also receive separate, independent average scores of not less than five (5.0) in each ability category related to **Marking**, as well as separate, independent average scores of not less than five (5.0) in each ability category related to **Blinds**.

If, at any time during testing, a dog is graded zero (0) by two Judges for the same ability, the dog cannot receive a Qualifying score and the handler must be informed that the dog cannot receive a Qualifying score.

A judge must record on the *Evaluation Form* (score sheet) the score assigned for each ability being evaluated in each series. A judge may not simply note that the dog qualified or did not qualify. The form must be completed with the dog's numeric scores prior to determining if the dog qualified. The *Evaluation Form* must be retained by the judge for at least 60 days following the end of the test.

The decision of the judges shall be final in all matters relating to the performance of the dogs.

**Section 2. Qualifying Performances.** The Judge's certification of a Qualifying score for any particular dog constitutes certification to The American Kennel Club that the dog on this particular occasion has evidenced abilities at least in accordance with minimum standards and that the abilities evidenced on this occasion would justify the awarding of the title associated with the particular test category. A Qualifying score must never be awarded a dog which exhibits abilities that do not meet minimum requirements.

**Section 3. Junior Hunter Title (JH).** In order to be recorded as a Junior Hunter, a dog must be registered with the AKC, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores in the Junior Hunting Test at four (4) AKC licensed or member club Hunting Tests.

Upon completion of these requirements, an AKC Junior Hunter (JH) certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Junior Hunter in all official AKC records by the suffix title JH.

A dog that has been recorded as a Junior Hunter may continue to enter the Junior Hunting Test, but no further Junior Hunter certificates will be issued.

**Section 4. Senior Hunter Title (SH).** In order to be recorded as a Senior Hunter, a dog must be registered with the AKC, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores in the Senior Hunting test at five (5) AKC licensed or member club Hunting Tests, or, in the case of a dog that has been recorded as a Junior Hunter, that dog will be recorded as a Senior Hunter after having acquired Qualifying scores in the Senior Hunting Test at four (4) AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Tests.

Upon completion of these requirements, an AKC Senior Hunter (SH) certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Senior Hunter in all official AKC records by the suffix title SH, which title shall supersede the Junior Hunter title when the Junior Hunter title has been previously awarded. A dog that has been recorded as a Senior Hunter may continue to enter the Senior Hunting Test, but no further Senior Hunter Certificates will be issued.

Dogs that have acquired a Senior Hunter title at an AKC licensed or member Hunting Test are eligible to enter Junior Hunting Tests. No JH title will be issued.

**Section 5. Master Hunter Title (MH).** In order to be recorded as a Master Hunter, a dog must be registered with the AKC, and must have a record of having acquired a Qualifying score in the Master Hunting Test at six (6) AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Tests, or, in the case of a dog that has been recorded by AKC as a Senior Hunter, that dog will be recorded as a Master Hunter after having acquired Qualifying scores in the Master Hunting Test at five (5) AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Tests.

Upon completion of these requirements, an AKC Master Hunter (MH) certificate will be issued to the owner and the dog will be identified as a Master Hunter in all official AKC records by the suffix title MH, which shall supersede any AKC Hunting Test title that may have been previously earned. A dog that has been recorded as a Master Hunter may continue to enter the Master Hunting Test but no further Master Hunter certificates will be issued.

A dog is not required to earn any title as a prerequisite for earning a higher title.

Dogs that have acquired a Master Hunter title at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test are eligible to enter Junior and Senior Hunting Tests. No JH or SH titles will be issued.

### **Section 6. Master National Hunter Title (MNH).**

In order to be recorded as a Master National Hunter, a dog must have passed the Master National Hunting Test three times. Dogs passing the Master National Hunting Test more than three times will have this accomplishment recorded by a numeric designation behind the title. For example, a dog passing the test six times would earn the title MNH6. The MNH title will be in addition to a dog's MH title. A higher level MNH title will supersede a previous MNH title. For example, a MNH4 title will supersede a MNH title.

The Master National Retriever Club will notify the AKC Performance Events Department when a dog has passed the Master National Hunting Test three or more times. Upon verification of the accomplishments, the title will be placed on the dog's record. The MNH title will appear after the dog's name. Once the title has been placed on a dog's record, it will appear on pedigrees and registration certificates.

An AKC title certificate will be issued at the request of the owner. A form provided by the Performance Events Department must be completed and submitted along with a fee. Upon receipt, a MNH title certificate will be issued. MNH application forms can be downloaded at [www.akc.org/pdfs/events/hunting\\_tests/retrievers/MNH\\_Title\\_Order\\_Form.pdf](http://www.akc.org/pdfs/events/hunting_tests/retrievers/MNH_Title_Order_Form.pdf).

**Section 7. Master Hunter Lifetime Achievement Title.** A dog that has passed the Master Hunter test twelve or more times is eligible to be awarded a Master Hunter Lifetime Achievement Title. The title is designated by the letters MH followed by a number indicating the number of times the dog has passed the MH test.

The title is awarded at the request of the owner. A form provided by the Performance Events Department must be completed and submitted with a processing fee. The owner may request this title at any time and the title can be updated as often as requested. Upon verification, the title will be included on the dog's record and a title certificate will be issued. The title will appear on the dog's AKC pedigree.

A MH# title will supersede a MH title or a lower numbered MH# title on the dog's record. The MH# title will be in addition to the MNH title. A qualifying score at the Master National Hunting Test will count as one pass of the MH test.

The Master Hunter Lifetime Achievement Title application form can be found on the AKC Retriever Hunting Test website:

[www.akc.org/events/hunting\\_tests/retrievers/](http://www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/retrievers/)

### Chapter 3

#### Instructions to Judges and Hunting Test Committees

**The Hunting Test Regulations** have been formulated in such a manner that the officials of a Test-giving club and the Judges have considerable latitude in the conduct of a Test. This is desirable to allow for variations in conditions that are peculiar to various parts of the country, and also to grant Judges unlimited opportunities for ingenuity in planning Tests. The Regulations are not intended to be restrictive, either to Officials or Judges.

The *objectives* of the Regulations are twofold: *First*, greater uniformity in the conduct of Hunting Tests for Retrievers; and *second*, greater uniformity in evaluating the abilities and characteristics of Retrievers at those Hunting Tests.

In order that Hunting Tests may be conducted as uniformly as practicable, standardization of objectives is essential and, therefore, all Judges, Guns, entrants and officials who have a part in conducting Hunting Tests must be familiar with and be governed by the following Regulations:

**Section 1. Purpose.** The purpose of a Hunting Test for Retrievers is to test the merits of and evaluate the abilities of Retrievers in the field in order to determine their suitability and ability as hunting companions. Hunting Tests must, therefore, simulate as nearly as possible the conditions met in a true hunting situation.

Dogs are expected to retrieve any type of game bird under all conditions and the Judges and the Hunting Test Committee have complete control over the mechanics and requirements of each test.

**Section 2. Game.** Pheasants and/or ducks and/or chukars may be used in AKC-licensed or member club Hunting Tests, as may any other species of game bird that might be unique to a specific region. Clubs shall specify in the premium list the exact species of birds to be used in their hunting tests.

A minimum of two live birds per entry must be made available for use at the discretion of the Judges in all test levels. Only birds shot as flyers during the event or euthanized within 24 hours of the event start time as stated in the premium may be used at an event.

At least one live flyer must be used in a Senior or Master level test unless the use of live ammunition

is prohibited by law or policy of the land managing organization at the testing location.

No live bird, or any species of fowl, shall be used in a test while under any form of restraint or physical impairment at any sanctioned, licensed, or member club event for Retrievers.

**Section 3. Rotation.** The Hunting Test Committee and Judges may impose a system of rotation that will be applicable to all entrants in that division or at that level. If imposed, the system of rotation will be designed by the Judges, take effect upon completion of the first series, and will be publicly announced in advance of the testing and between each series. If a system of rotation is imposed at one level or division, it shall not be compulsory upon the Judges at other levels and divisions in the same test.

**Section 4. Test Set-Up.** The Judges, with paramount regard to Section 1 of this Chapter, shall determine the tests to be given and shall design those tests in order to approximate as nearly as possible the conditions met in true hunting situations. In keeping with this aim, the Judges shall design and enhance hunting situations by utilizing, as naturally as possible, the equipment that would be found in a true upland game or waterfowl hunting situation. Strategic placement of numerous decoys, use of camouflaged blinds to conceal guns and throwers, duck boats, duck and goose calls, etc., are necessary adjuncts to Hunting Tests for Retrievers.

*It is strongly recommended that Judges inspect the grounds with representatives of the Hunting Test Committee at least one full day in advance of the event, in order to select and determine the nature and objectives of each hunting situation, preferably for their entire assignment. The Committee and Judges must be alert for hazardous conditions that are present on the grounds.*

Judges shall attempt to use a test dog in each series of all test levels.

Judges must explain the test set-up to the handler, and further explain the objectives or scenarios as they relate to a specific hunting situation.

Judges may discontinue testing in a hunting situation before all dogs have been run in that situation, provided that another hunting situation is substituted. The score of a dog in a hunting situation which has been discontinued shall not be considered for any purpose in the evaluation of the abilities of that dog.

Judges shall have the authority to disqualify a dog that is not present within 15 minutes after it is called to run by the Judges.

**Section 5. The Line.** When coming to the line to be tested, and while on the line, the dog and handler shall assume such locations as may be directed by the Judges.

Whenever used within the above context, the word "line" is understood to mean the point that a dog will commence its retrieve or the designated area for an honoring dog.

Leashes and collars shall be used as follows: In Senior and Master Tests, dogs shall be brought to the line and taken from the line off-lead and without collars. Collars and leashes may be put on the dogs after they leave the line and are in back of all the Judges. Dogs shall be considered under judgment from the time that they are called to come to the line until they have left the line and are in back of all judges.

**Section 6. Honoring.** In Senior and Master Tests, every dog shall honor in at least one hunting situation involving the retrieve of a marked fall(s) by remaining on the line off-lead while the working dog retrieves, unless otherwise directed or until dismissed by the Judges.

Only one dog at a time may be required to honor the retrieve of the working dog. The honoring dog must be in an area designated by the judges. The specific positions (sitting, lying down, etc.) of the honoring dog will be determined by the handler provided the honoring dog is positioned to clearly see all the marks without having to reposition itself.

Judges should be careful in establishing the honoring scenario to maintain adequate distance between dogs.

In Senior and Master Tests, a dog that is eliminated by the Judges in a series that includes an honor, just prior to or while honoring, will be expected to complete the honor, if requested by the Judges. A dog that is eliminated by the Judges, and is requested to complete the honor, must be held on-lead by its handler.

**Section 7. Injured Dogs.** No dog shall run with bandages or tape of any kind without the approval of the Hunting Test Committee. The Committee shall inspect the injury for which the bandage or tape is being used unless, of their own knowledge, they already possess such information, or unless they are furnished with a veterinarian's certificate setting forth this information to their satisfaction.

Judges shall have the power to exclude any dog which they may consider unfit to run. The entry fee of all such dogs will be forfeited.

**Section 8. Gunning.** Shooting, whether live or blank ammunition is used, shall be done only by official Guns approved and designated by the Hunting Test Committee.

Handlers while running their dogs, and Judges while acting in their official capacities judging dogs, shall not fire guns with live or blank ammunition.

It is recommended that all gunning be accomplished with breaking type shotguns, and that the guns be broken (or cased) when not in use. Host clubs must be aware of government regulations on the type of shot allowed at the test location. It is recommended that gunners wear ear and eye protecting devices.

Either shotguns or shotgun simulators may be used. If a shotgun is used, it must be a 20, 16 or 12 gauge shotgun. Gunners firing live ammunition must be 21 years of age or older. Gunners firing popper loads or shotgun simulators must be a minimum of 16 years of age and if less than 21, must have successfully completed a Hunter/Gun Safety course.

**Shouldering the Gun** In Senior and Master Tests, handlers shall always carry and shoulder an empty shotgun except when honoring the working dog or when running a blind. The gun shall not be used as a pointing device to direct the dog's attention to the bird.

It shall be the responsibility of the test-giving club to provide an empty shotgun and it shall further be the responsibility of the Marshal to ensure that the shotgun is unloaded.

In gunning stations it is recommended that non-break open guns be placed in gun stands when not in use.

**Section 9. Marked Retrieves.** On marked retrieves, all dogs on the line must be located in a position that enables them to see the birds in marking situations.

Guns may be requested to shoot twice at every bird. After birds have been shot, all Guns shall remain quiet and only move their positions in accordance with specific instructions by Judges. When Guns are visible, the Judges may request the Guns to disappear from sight after the bird is down, but they shall not have them move to another position to deliberately mislead the dogs in their marking. On marked retrieves, the order in which birds are to be retrieved shall not be specified by the Judges: the handler is free to select the order in which he directs his dog to retrieve the birds provided that such selection shall be accomplished quietly and promptly.

In any Junior, Senior, or Master Hunting Tests, the Judges may, at their discretion, utilize either hidden and/or visible Guns, but in doing so shall give paramount consideration to the simulation of hunting situations. Visible gun stations shall be kept to a minimum in Senior and Master Hunting Tests, but may be utilized to a greater extent in Junior Hunting Tests.

**Section 10. Send to Retrieve.** Dogs shall be sent to retrieve by handlers only when released by the Judges, who shall then score each retrieve accordingly.

Judges shall call the number of the dog ordered to retrieve rather than the name of the handler of the dog.

**Section 11. Interference.** In a Senior or Master Hunting Test, when a dog is ordered by the Judge to retrieve a fall, and another dog breaks for the same fall and interferes with the working dog to the extent of causing it in any way to make a faulty performance, the dog interfered with shall be considered as not having been tested and given another evaluation.

**Section 12. Unfair Tests.** If there is an occurrence which makes for a relatively unfair test of a dog's abilities, the Judges shall exercise their discretion in determining how to score the abilities of the dog in that series. In doing so, the Judges may decide that it is necessary or unnecessary to re-run the dog. When a dog is granted a re-run under this section, the entire series, including all testing elements, ie, walk-ups, diversion birds, marks, blinds, etc. must be repeated.

The re-run of a mark or blind which was not previously completed shall be scored by taking into consideration the abilities exhibited by the dog prior to the point of unfairness in the initial run, and after the point of unfairness in the re-run.

*If, during the re-run of a mark or blind not previously completed, a dog commits an infraction that would have resulted in it's automatic elimination in the initial run, the dog cannot receive a qualifying score.*

*The handler of the working dog must attempt to pick the birds up in the same order in the re-run as was completed in the initial running of the tests.*

**Section 13. Position.** When ordered to retrieve, the handler shall direct his dog from any position designated by the Judges.

**Section 14. Assistance Finding Game.** Official Guns, blind planters, game stewards or Test participants shall not assist a dog in finding game. Doing so may, at the discretion of the Judges, result in either a re-run of the dog interfered with, or that dog not receiving a Qualifying score.

Nothing shall be thrown in any Hunting Test (Junior, Senior and Master) to encourage a dog to enter the water or direct a dog to a fall. Violation of this provision is to be considered sufficient cause for the dog not to receive a Qualifying score.

Until called to be tested, a dog shall be kept where it cannot see the location of a fall for another dog, or see the planting or retrieve of a blind, unless such be in compliance with instructions of the Judges as in a hunting situation in which the dog is required to honor

before being run. Violation of this Section shall cause the dog not to receive a Qualifying score. If the Judges or the Hunting Test Committee believe the violation to have been deliberate, the occurrence shall be deemed to have been a display of unsportsmanlike conduct by the handler and the provisions of Chapter 1, Section 22, of these Regulations shall also be applicable. If the incident occurs while the dog's abilities are being evaluated, the Judges shall decide whether or not there has been a violation of this Section and whether or not it was deliberate, otherwise these decisions shall be made by the Hunting Test Committee.

**Section 15. Attire.** In keeping with the aim of simulated hunting conditions and situations, handlers, Judges, workers and other test participants shall be attired in dark or customary hunting attire that is appropriate for the hunting scenario.

**Section 16. Neoprene Vests.** The use of a neoprene vest on a dog in Hunting Tests is prohibited.

**Section 17. Equipment.** No handler shall carry any exposed training equipment (except whistle) or use any other equipment or threatening gestures in such a manner that they may be an aid or threat in steadying or controlling a dog. Violation of this paragraph is sufficient to cause the dog not to receive a Qualifying score.

**Section 18. Walk Ups.** In Senior and Master hunting tests, a walk up is used to test a dog's steadiness. The birds represent a surprise situation therefore gunning stations must be well concealed, utilizing natural cover when possible so that only the bird may be seen when launched. Birds shall be presented at a distance ranging from 35 to 45 yards of the dog with no attention getting devices utilized.

As the first bird is thrown in a walk up situation, the handler may give either a verbal or whistle command to steady the dog once the bird is in the air. Judges shall tell handlers in advance of the start of judging when it is appropriate to give the steadying commend or whistle.

There shall be no walk up test situations in Junior level tests.

**Section 19. Failure to Obey.** Judges shall have the power to turn out of a test any dog which does not obey its handler and any handler who interferes willfully with another handler or his dog.

**Section 20. Qualifying Score.** No dog shall be given a Qualifying score in Junior, Senior or Master Hunting Tests unless the dog has completed all series held for any dog in the event except a series that has been discontinued.

**Section 21. Call Backs.** At the end of the first series in each category (Junior, Senior and Master), and every series thereafter, the Judges will call back all dogs which they wish to evaluate further, and will score them in additional hunting situations until the testing category has been concluded.

Whenever a dog is graded "0" by two judges on the same ability, or whenever it is evident that a dog can not receive a Qualifying score, it shall not be called back to run in subsequent series.

**Note:** A score of 5.0 or less on a given ability during a series does not necessarily mean that the dog cannot receive a qualifying score, unless both Judges score that ability as a zero.

**Section 22. Gallery Location.** It is essential that all spectators attending a Hunting Test be kept far enough from the line to enable the dog whose abilities are being evaluated to clearly discern its handler, and nothing shall be done to distract the dog's attention from its work. A handler has the right to appeal to the Judges if the gallery is interfering with his work in any way, and the Judges in their discretion may, if they believe that dog has been interfered with, allow the dog to be re-run at a later time.

**Section 23. Sanctioned HT.** In sanctioned Hunting Tests, any Sections of these Regulations except those pertaining to gun safety may be relaxed or eliminated, but all entrants shall be advised in what respects this is true.

**Section 24. Scoring.** The Judges of any Hunting Test shall not rank dogs in the order of the dog's relative numerical scores, nor shall Judges be obliged to divulge any information with respect to the relative standing of numerical scores. Dogs shall not be "run-off" in order to separate scores.

Handlers and owners shall be permitted to review their own dog's evaluation sheets at the conclusion of the test or when, in the judgment of the Test Secretary, it will not interfere with the computation of scores. Judges are not required to rationalize their scores for handlers.

**Section 25. Diversion Birds and Shots.** A diversion shot is a shot in which no bird is thrown, and shall only be fired in Senior and Master Tests.

Diversion birds may appear on a blind retrieve either after the dog has been sent for, or when a dog is returning from the blind retrieve; however, diversion birds shall only appear on marks when the dog is returning from a retrieve.

Diversion birds shall always be initiated in front of the working dog. The diversion bird is not a mark but constitutes a trainability situation. It is always retrieved by the working dog. Diversion birds shall be shot or thrown when the working dog is in a location that it should be able to see the bird as it goes up into the air and as it falls.

**Section 26. Weather.** Weather is an important consideration for the hunting test event committee. The safety of participants and animals is of utmost importance. Extreme weather such as lightening, strong winds, heat or cold, snow or heavy rain can create hazardous conditions. The hunting test event committee, in consultation with the judges, has the responsibility to decide if an event should be halted due to weather and at what point the event shall resume. If a weather delay results in an entrant being unable to participate, the refund of entry fees, in whole or in part, will be at the discretion of the event committee. If an entire event or part of an event is cancelled due to weather, the refund of entry fees, in whole or in part, will be at the discretion of the event committee.

## Chapter 4

### Standards for Junior, Senior and Master Hunting Tests

**Section 1.** Retrievers shall perform equally well on the land and in the water, and shall be thoroughly tested on both in accord with the testing requirements established in Chapter 5 of these Regulations.

**Section 2.** The Judges shall score the dogs on (a) their natural abilities including Marking (memory), Style, Perseverance/courage/hunting, and (b) to relatively greater degrees in Senior and Master Hunting Tests their Trainability as evidenced in steadiness, control, response and delivery.

Decisions to award a Qualifying score must be the consensus of the Judges.

**Section 3.** The ability to mark accurately is of primary importance. A dog which marks the fall of a bird, uses the wind, follows a strong cripple, and takes direction from its handler is of great value.

**Section 4.** After delivering a bird to its handler, a dog shall stand or sit close to its handler until given further orders.

**Section 5.** When ordered to retrieve, a dog shall proceed quickly and eagerly on land or into the water to marked falls, or on the line given it by its handler on falls it has not seen. A dog shall not disturb too much ground or area and should respond quickly and obediently to any further directions its handler might give.

A dog that pays no attention to many whistles and/or directions by its handler can be assumed to be weak in response, and unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, the dog shall be graded low or receive a grade of "0" in Trainability.

**Section 6.** In marking situations, a handler shall not line a dog in the direction of any fall or gun station until all falls are down.

Once all marks are down and the handler/dog has been released by the judges, a handler may give the dog a line in the direction of any or all falls, provided that such lining is accomplished briskly and precisely. Conspicuously intensive lining suggests a weak marking ability and the dog must be scored low in Marking.

The handler of the working dog shall remain silent from the time handler signals for the first bird to be thrown until the Judges release the dog.

The handler of the honoring dog may speak quietly to the honoring dog provided the handler does not interfere with other handlers, the working dog(s) or the Judges.

**Note:** While speaking quietly to the honoring dog is allowed, threatening gestures or any form of intimidation is not acceptable and shall not be allowed by the Judges.

**Section 7.** In marked retrieves, if a dog, after having been sent to retrieve, (1) returns to its handler before finding the bird, with or without having been called in, except in those cases of confusion of the dog as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve; (2) stops its hunt; or (3) fails to pick the bird up, actually leaving it after finding it, it shall be sufficient cause, unless there exist in the opinion of the Judges valid mitigating circumstances, to grade the dog "0" in Marking or Perseverance.

A recast occurs when a dog makes a start toward a marked fall, but stops within a short distance of the line (the distance is usually limited to 15 feet, and should be agreed upon between the Judges) and returns or is recalled to the handler. The dog is then sent to retrieve again. This is most often attributed to confusion on the part of the dog as to whether it was sent to retrieve the first time. It is not considered a recast when a dog goes to the area of the fall, fails to find the bird and returns (or is recalled) to the handler. This shall be evaluated as a lack of perseverance and a score of "0" will be required.

**Note:** There is no allowance for confusion on blind retrieves.

**Section 8.** A dog that fails to find a bird which, in the opinion of the Judges, it should have found, shall be graded "0" in Marking.

**Section 9.** Upon finding the game, a dog shall quickly pick it up and return briskly to its handler. A dog

retrieving a decoy shall be graded "0" on Trainability.

A dog shall not drop its game on the ground, but distinction shall be made between deliberately dropping a bird, and readjusting a bad hold or losing its grip because of a struggling bird or running over uneven terrain.

Upon returning to the line, a dog shall deliver the bird promptly and tenderly to its handler. A dog that is unwilling to release a bird on delivery must be scored low in Trainability, and if compelled to do so by severe methods, it shall be graded "0" in Trainability, unless in the opinion of the Judges there exists valid mitigating circumstances.

A dog cannot receive a Qualifying score if it renders a bird unfit for human consumption. Both Judges are responsible for inspecting the bird and agreeing that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.

**Section 10.** In Junior, Senior and Master Hunting Tests, a dog shall come tractably at heel and sit promptly at the point designated by its handler and remain quietly where placed until given further orders. Dogs that bark or whine on line, in a blind or while retrieving shall be scored low in Trainability. Loud and prolonged barking or whining is sufficient cause to justify grading a dog "0" in Trainability.

**Section 11.** In Senior and Master Hunting Tests, a handler shall not hold or touch a dog to keep it steady, or verbally restrain a dog on line, except in extraordinary circumstances, from the time the first bird is being thrown until the dog's number is called. Violation of any of the provisions of this paragraph is sufficient cause to justify a grade of "0" in Trainability.

**Section 12.** In Senior and Master Hunting Tests a dog that goes to the area of a fall, hunts, fails to find, and then leaves the area to hunt for another fall, or that drops a bird it is retrieving and goes for another, shall be considered to have switched. Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that switches shall be scored "0" in Perseverance in Senior and Master Hunting Tests.

A dog that returns to the area of a fall or a blind that it has previously retrieved and establishes another hunt shall be considered to have returned to an old fall. Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that returns to an old fall shall be scored low in Perseverance and/or Marking, even to the extent of awarding a grade of "zero."

**Section 13.** In Senior and Master Hunting Tests, failure to enter either rough cover, water, ice, mud, or any other situation involving unpleasant or difficult going for the dog, after having been ordered to do so several times, is sufficient cause to grade the dog "0" in Perseverance.

## Chapter 5

### Test Requirements for Junior, Senior and Master Hunting Tests

**Section 1.** Test distances on land and water in Junior and Senior level tests should not normally exceed 100 yards. Test distances on land and water in Master level tests should not normally exceed 150 yards. *Clubs may not state in the event premium that retrieves may be in excess of the "should not normally exceed" clause.*

**Section 2.** When placing birds for blind retrieves, no more than one bird shall be placed at each blind location for the working dog to retrieve.

**Section 3.** In Senior and Master level tests, at least one live flyer must be used unless the use of live ammunition is prohibited by law or policy of the land managing organization at the testing location. How live flyers are used in testing situations is up to the discretion of the judges.

**Section 4. Marking and Memory of Birds.** In Junior, Senior and Master Tests, marking and memory of birds are of primary importance. While dogs may be handled in all three levels of testing, this is undesirable in marking tests and should be utilized only as a last recourse to get a bird out of the field. A dog that goes to the area of the fall, establishes a hunt and finds the bird unaided must be scored appreciably higher than a dog that has to be handled to the bird.

**Section 5. Junior Hunting Tests.** Dogs shall be tested on a minimum of four single marks, two on land and two on water. No more than two marks may be thrown in a series.

Judges in keeping with simulation of realistic and natural hunting conditions must remember the use of numerous decoys, islands, points of land, rolling terrain, cover, ditch lines, wind direction, etc. are important factors to consider when designing test scenarios to evaluate Junior dogs as capable hunting companions.

(1) Dogs may be sent to retrieve more than once, but only in cases of confusion as described in Chapter 4, Section 7.

(2) Dogs shall be steady but may be brought to the line on leash with a flat buckle collar. The dog is under judgment when it leaves the holding blind. A Junior dog that is not under control when brought to the line (jumping, strongly tugging, etc.) even though it is on a leash shall risk receiving a lower score in trainability including zero in extreme cases. Dogs may be restrained gently with a slipcord *looped through the flat buckle collar*, or held gently by the flat buckle collar until sent to retrieve.

(3) A dog must retrieve to hand. Failure to do so merits a grade of "0" in Trainability.

(4) A dog may be encouraged to hunt, but excessive noise in encouraging the dog suggests a lack of hunting desire and a low grade in Perseverance is required.

**Section 6. Senior Hunting Test.** Dogs shall be tested in a minimum of four hunting situations that shall include one land blind, one water blind (that may be run as a double blind on land and water), one double land mark, and one double water mark. There shall be at least one diversion shot and at least one of the hunting situations shall include a walk-up. In Senior tests, a double mark is defined as two marks presented before the dog is sent to retrieve. Blinds shall not be run between marks in Senior Hunting Tests.

(1) Hunting situations shall, to the extent that it is practical and realistic, make use of the natural hazards, numerous decoys, hunting equipment and obstacles that are encountered in true hunting.

(2) Dogs shall be steady on the line, but a controlled break or creeping shall result in a relatively lower score in Trainability, than a controlled break or creeping would in a Junior Hunting Test.

(3) A Senior Hunting dog must retrieve to hand. Failure to do so merits a grade of "0" in Trainability.

(4) Dogs may be sent to retrieve more than once, but only in cases of confusion as described in Chapter 4, Section 7.

(5) Dogs may be handled on marks, but excessive handling requires a lower score in Perseverance and/or marking. A dog that goes to the area of the fall and finds the bird unaided must be scored appreciably higher than a dog that must be handled to a bird.

(6) A dog shall be required to honor a working dog at least once, but Judges must allow greater leeway in scoring the Senior Hunting dog on its Trainability than would be allowed a Master Hunting dog.

(7) While diversion shot(s) shall be used, diversion bird(s) may be used. Such diversions may also consist of, or be incorporated with the use of one or more hidden duck or goose calls.

(8) Dogs that switch shall be scored "0" in Perseverance and cannot receive a Qualifying score.

**Section 7. Master Hunting Test.** Dogs shall be tested in a minimum of five hunting situations as follows: multiple land marks, multiple water marks, multiple marks on water and land, a land blind and a water blind (at least one that shall be a double blind in any combination). There shall be at least three series. At least one of the series shall include a walk-up. Diversion

birds and/or diversion shots such as described in Chapter 3, Section 24, must be used at least once. In Master tests, in at least two multiple marking situations the dog's marking/memory will be tested with at least (3) falls before the dog is sent to retrieve. The (3) falls must be presented before a dog is sent to retrieve any mark or blind. During a double set of marks (2 falls) Master judges shall include additional elements of testing, i.e. walkup, diversion bird, diversion shot, blind/s etc. in testing the dog's abilities.

(1) Natural hazards, obstacles, numerous decoys, hunting equipment and implements shall be utilized to a somewhat greater degree than in the Senior Hunting Test.

(2) A Master Hunting dog shall honor and at least one opportunity to honor must be provided. Trainability must be evaluated more stringently than in Senior Hunting Tests.

(3) Dogs that switch shall be scored "0" in Perseverance and cannot receive a Qualifying score.

(4) As in Junior and Senior, situations must simulate natural and realistic hunting situations. While distance is not crucial, Master Hunting situations are more severe and difficult than Senior Hunting situations.

(5) A Master Hunting dog must be steady and must deliver to hand. Failure to do so must be graded "0" in Trainability.

(6) A Master dog that creeps shall be scored relatively lower than creeping in Senior. A controlled break in Master must be scored "0" in Trainability.

(7) Dogs may be sent to retrieve only once except in the case of confusion (see Chapter 4, Section 7). A dog that displays unwillingness must be scored relatively lower on Marking and Perseverance than in the Senior Hunting Test.

(8) Dogs may be handled on marks but must be scored with greater stringency than Senior Hunting dogs in Marking and/or Perseverance.

**A dog that goes to the area of the fall and finds the bird unaided shall be scored appreciably higher than a dog that must be handled to a bird.**

(9) Master Hunting dogs that require excessive handling on marks and blinds, that refuse voice or whistle commands, or appear unwilling to perform their work must be viewed in a different light than Senior Hunting dogs where a degree of tolerance is necessary for those not-so-seasoned Senior dogs. Master Hunting dogs must exhibit those qualities expected in a truly finished and experienced hunting companion.

## Guidelines for the Hunting Test Regulations for Retrievers

### Chapter 3, Section 1, of the Regulations states:

“The purpose of a Hunting Test for Retrievers is to test the merits of, and evaluate the abilities of Retrievers in the field in order to determine their suitability and ability as hunting companions. Hunting Tests must, therefore, simulate as nearly as possible the conditions met in a true hunting situation.”

“Dogs are expected to retrieve any type of game bird under all conditions, and the Judges and the Hunting Test Committee have complete control over the mechanics and requirements of each Test.”

The final phrase in the first paragraph above, “**a true hunting situation,**” must be interpreted for application to Hunting Tests as “**natural hunting conditions.**”

While natural hunting conditions are subject to great variations in different parts of the country, Retrievers are expected to possess a defined set of abilities that enable them to serve as hunting companions. In most instances, there shall be little doubt in a Judge’s mind as to the abilities expected of dogs in a given hunting situation. However, there is unlimited opportunity for an honest difference of opinion on abilities that range from just above average to just below average.

Hunting Tests provide a mechanism for identifying, through the evaluation of the abilities of Retrievers, those dogs that possess abilities that set them apart as accomplished hunting companions.

The information provided here is intended as a guide, not only for Judges, but for all concerned with the welfare and development of Retrievers as superb hunting companions.

## PART I

### Hunting Test Planning, Mechanics and Setup

**Apportioning Time.** This is a first and most important consideration in planning the mechanics of an event and is the joint responsibility of the Judges and the Hunting Test Committee. The premium list scheduled the days of the Hunting Test and the hour when judging will start. Those are fixed, definite factors in planning the mechanics of an event.

The following factors shall be considered in apportioning time: (1) the number of entries in each of the various Tests, (2) the quality and quantity of the facilities available at the grounds, (3) the weather, (4) the proximity of sites for the various tests, (5) the ease of moving, and

the time involved in moving from one site to another (here one must not forget about the importance of the size of the gallery).

**Inspection of Test Grounds.** It is extremely important that Judges inspect the grounds with representatives of the Hunting Test Committee at least one full day in advance of the event.

The Judges must seek the Committee's counsel regarding any peculiarities of the grounds not readily apparent. At that time, the Judges shall select and determine the nature and objectives of each hunting situation, preferably for their entire assignment. The club must provide an efficient organization to conduct the event; this will do much to reduce to a minimum delays in starting — providing, of course, that the Judges have previously planned and have instructed the Hunting Test Committee about the location of the hunting situations, and the requirements for game, guns, blinds, bird boys, boats, decoys, etc.

On set-up day always inspect the routes to your falls and blinds for unseen hazards.

**Planning Hunting Situations.** This is one of the most important responsibilities of the Judges. With natural hunting situations, it is much easier to score the abilities of a dog than would be true with situations that are very easy, or with situations that are too difficult and time-consuming, or too tricky. Of primary importance is the simulation of natural hunting conditions in as realistic a manner as possible, while keeping in mind the fact that retrieves should not normally exceed 100 yards for Junior and Senior level tests and 150 yards for the Master level test.

Be sure instructions to bird throwers are clear about when and how to throw, and to remain quiet and not move while a dog is working. Bird throwers shall also be old enough and strong enough for the task.

In order to evaluate a dog's marking ability, dogs must be able to see the bird as it goes up into the air and as it falls. Many factors contribute to the dog's ability to see marked falls. In setting up Hunting Tests, Judges should consider the natural lighting conditions, the background against which the birds are visualized in flight, the height and length of throws, and the distance from the line.

On blind retrieves, wherever possible, the Judges shall plan their hunting situations taking advantage of hazards, such as islands, decoys, points of land, sandbars, ditches, hedges, small bushes, adjacent heavy cover, and rolling terrain. Despite such natural distractions, it shall be possible for a dog to find a well-planned blind-retrieve on the initial line from its handler; that it will do so is highly improbable because of those natural hazards, so it must

be handled to the blind. The hunting situation should be planned so that the dog should be in sight continuously. A blind retrieve is a test of Trainability (control, response). A dog that is out-of-sight for a considerable period cannot be said to be under control. Utilizing natural hazards provides better opportunity to evaluate the abilities required of a superb Retriever.

Each Test shall have a specific purpose that calls for the use of specific abilities. This makes scoring easier and your objectives more clearly known to handlers. Tests shall never be overly complex or elaborate or anything other than reasonable (but imaginative and natural) situations.

Ingenuity on the part of the Judges is always encouraged not only in planning natural hunting situations, but also in devising some that are unusual, while practical and realistic and that would be encountered “in a true hunting situation.” These situations might take the form of a type of hunting unique to the region that the event is held, but remember, complicated or unnatural tests very often prove nothing and consume great amounts of time and expense.

The Judges shall think of the handler as a hunting companion. Handlers can ask questions, but this does not relieve them of the responsibility for knowing where the birds fall and knowing generally where the blinds are located. Clarity in explaining test objectives shall minimize questions.

Never set up tests that are designed to trick the dog. Visible gun stations shall never be moved to another area to mislead the dog.

*Whenever a blind is placed prior to a mark going down and it is to be run after the mark is retrieved, the blind shall never be placed in the same area of the fall or near enough to the gun station as to intentionally mislead the dog on its mark. This does not apply, however, to a bird that is thrown while a dog is running on a blind. Such a bird is not a trick, but a diversion bird for the dog on the blind and as such it is judged as a control situation, not as a mark.*

Tests must be set up to evaluate the abilities of dogs. Judges should not feel that if most dogs do well on the first test, the next test must be more difficult — elimination is not the point of testing.

Judges are encouraged to incorporate elements and conditions that lend realism to their hunting situations. For example, a test that requires a dog and handler to work from a boat is realistic but caution must always be exercised.

Consider, also, the amount of time consumed by these elements, and ask yourself what they are testing, and whether they allow you to efficiently test multiple abilities.

Judges shall avoid setting up a too clearly defined line

(i.e., a departure point that would be unnatural when hunting). While consistent and similar tests for each dog are desirable and generally necessary, this does not mean that each bird must drop in the identical location for each dog, or that all dogs must work from the same line or point of departure.

For example, a dog and handler can walk along a hedge-row and a bird or birds can be released from different areas along the row. In a test such as this, more than one dog can be taken on a hunt at the same time. In Senior and Master, one can honor while the other retrieves, and the roles can be reversed as you walk further down the row.

Blind retrieves must also have a scenario. On several occasions during a day's testing (except in Junior), a dog will be sent to retrieve a bird it has not seen fall. A shot can be used to indicate a downed bird while a dog is out retrieving another bird.

All birds shot for a dog in a blind do not have to be seen by the dog while it is in the blind. All birds should be within gun range so the Judges will be able to see and evaluate the dogs under normal hunting conditions.

When setting up your test, remember the following factors:

- Lighting and conditions over the course of a day
- Water configuration
- Terrain
- Wind
- Hillsides
- Cover and changes in cover
- Background against which birds are seen
- Height and distance that birds are thrown or that they fly

**Test Dogs.** Changing a hunting situation after a series has been started should be avoided if at all possible. One way of avoiding this, and of avoiding unforeseen and unpredictable situations that would weaken a sound hunting situation, is the practice of running a test dog, in every series before any of the entered dogs are run. Use of a test dog is usual practice by some Judges, when they may entertain doubts about the exact way that the hunting situation may actually go. Use of a test dog is very often a time-saving device.

The test dog shall not be entered in that test, shall not be over qualified and should be able to accomplish the test.

When a series is discontinued after one or more dogs have run, the Judges shall exercise care to locate the new series in an area different from that which the original series was held. By doing so, they can fairly re-evaluate the abilities of the dog or dogs that have already run in the area used for the discontinued hunting situation.

**Unusual Circumstances, “No Birds.”** If unusual and unplanned circumstances occur during the course of a marking test, the Judges can ask the handler to handle the dog, or otherwise compensate for the unanticipated occurrence. The absence of competition allows more flexibility for judges.

Because dogs are evaluated against a standard, a test need not be exactly the same for every dog; however, it is highly desirable that they run in similar tests. Dissimilar tests can inadequately test some abilities. For example, a double mark and blind that becomes a single mark and blind because of a missed bird, does not test a dog’s memory as adequately as it was intended.

Each Judge shall be at liberty to call a “no-bird,” and independently, when, in their opinion, a hazard or an element of danger exists, or the test conditions are altered to the point that the test becomes something else. Ask yourself whether the altered situation still presents a reasonable opportunity to evaluate other abilities.

Many situations will occur that cannot be specifically addressed in the Regulations or Guidelines. In these instances, Judges must draw on their experience to arrive at fair decisions.

**Judges’ Responsibilities.** Before Judges can begin evaluating the abilities of the entered dogs, they must reach certain decisions among themselves about various details, such as:

(1) Instructions to the handler regarding the position to be taken, the explanation of the test set-up and the explanation of the objectives as they relate to a specific hunting situation.

Great care must be exercised so that each handler receives the same instructions. This can be accomplished by summoning all handlers to the line, before the series is started, and then providing the explanations to the group. If it is not possible to assemble all handlers for such a single announcement, the Judges can explain the set-up and objectives to the handlers individually, before they run their dogs.

(2) Signaling for birds to be thrown. Each set of Official Guns shall be signaled separately. This prevents additional birds being shot if a fall is unsatisfactory to the Judges. The signaling Judge should be careful that neither his signaling nor the shadow of it might be an unwanted distraction.

(3) Calling the dog’s number as a signal for the handler to send the dog is proper, it is not proper to call the dog’s name or the handler’s name for this purpose.

(4) Every bird retrieved, and delivered to the handler,

shall be inspected by one of the Judges. Failure to inspect retrieved birds must be catalogued as carelessness, and as an undesirable practice. It is unfair to the dog whose abilities are being evaluated — not only in respect to the question of “hard-mouth,” but more particularly, since it may furnish the explanation for a slow pick-up or some other oddity in the dog’s pick-up. Any unusual condition of a bird shall be brought to the attention of the Judges.

(5) When a dog can no longer receive a Qualifying score, instructions to that effect may be given through the Marshal.

(6) Running crippled birds, or “runners.” Dogs should be able to follow and find a runner. Since dogs are being evaluated based upon their abilities as hunting companions, the Judges shall evaluate a dog’s abilities when confronted with a runner since the dog should find the birds shot for it. Based on the circumstances and set-up of the situation the Judges may elect not to score a dog on a “runner,” but, in any case, the Judges shall discuss in advance how they might deal with the possibility.

(7) When encountering wild birds, rabbits, or other game, the working dog should ignore such distractions or be sufficiently under control to be handled to the fall. Judges shall decide, in advance, how they will deal with this situation.

(8) The Judges shall agree in advance as to the extent of movement which shall be considered creeping, short of breaking, and whether working dogs that do “creep” should be brought to heel before being sent to retrieve.

The Judges shall reach an agreement about the degree they will consider a controlled break and shall be in agreement on scoring a Junior and Senior dog’s Trainability for various degrees of controlled breaks. (Note: A “0” is required in Master.)

A Guide for dealing with these and other interpretational issues appears in Part V of these Guidelines.

(9) Instructions given to the Marshal and the Official Guns should be by agreement of the Judges; of course, these will vary from series to series.

Unless otherwise instructed by the Judges, the Official Guns shall remain quiet and not move their position after their bird is down. They should volunteer information to the Judges only (a) if they suspect that their bird may be a runner; (b) if a dog is returning with a bird other than the one that had been shot for it, and to which it was sent; and (c) if there is some significant occurrence in the area, that may not be apparent to the Judges.

(10) The Marshal shall call the dogs to the line, and announce to the Judges the number of the dog whose

abilities are to be evaluated; call back any dog that is to be reevaluated at a later time. How long such a dog shall be allowed to wait before re-running shall be by prearrangement with the Judges, and the handler shall be told when he or she is to run again at the time he is advised that he will rerun. The Marshal shall also announce the location of the next series.

The Marshal is responsible for enforcement of Chapter 3, Section 21, of the Regulations, which states in part: "It is essential that all spectators attending a Hunting Test must be kept far enough from the line to enable the dog whose abilities are being evaluated to clearly discern its handler. . ."

(11) To the extent that time permits, Judges shall be generous in calling back those dogs whose abilities they wish to evaluate further.

**Judges' Authority.** The Judges and the Hunting Test Committee are in total control of the mechanics within the framework of the Regulations. The Judges, and *the Judges alone*, determine and design the tests to be given.

Judges have complete authority to require a person to remove from any area of a test, or to eject from the hunting test grounds entirely, any dog that presents an unprovoked and obvious threat or clearly endangers another dog or person, or that causes such disorder that it makes it impossible to continue or conduct the testing.

The Judges have complete jurisdiction over the gunners, and must be particularly aware of gun safety. They can have the gunners replaced if performance is not satisfactory or safe. This right, however, shall not be abused for minor matters since it presents a hardship for the club. On the other hand, the club shall have more than an adequate number of gunners to ensure the smooth flow of the test.

It is recommended that breaking-type shotguns, from 20 gauge to 12 gauge be used. While it is not a specific responsibility of the Judges, all non-adult gunners (those who use popper loads or shotgun simulators) shall have successfully completed a Hunter/Gun Safety course, and be a minimum of 16 years of age. All live gunning must be by adults, aged 21 or older.

In gunning stations, it is recommended that non-break open guns be placed in gun stands when not in use.

*Hunting Tests are a team effort between dog and handler. Except when specifically prohibited by the Regulations, handlers are required to handle shotguns at the Master and Senior levels. However, when in the opinion of the judges it can be done safely, the handler may put the gun down in a manner directed by the judges after he or she has sent the dog for the first bird to be picked up.*

*Continued unsafe and inappropriate gun handling after being so advised by the Judges shall be, in and of itself, sufficient cause for Judges to score the dog/handler team a zero (0) in trainability at all levels of testing.*

Judges have the authority, under Chapter 3, Section 4, to disqualify a dog that is not present within 15 minutes after it is called to run. If a dog is absent after the fifteen minute period, it cannot be allowed to run even if it shows up later, unless some previous arrangement had been made through or with the Marshall.

## **PART II**

### **Evaluation and Scoring of a Dog's Abilities**

The evaluation of a dog's abilities can never be precise; it is not an exact science. However, the primary purpose of a Retriever is to get the birds to hand as quickly as possible in a pleasing, obedient manner; whether a dog accomplishes its primary purpose is determined by its possession of a unique set of both natural abilities, and abilities acquired through training. Part III of these Guidelines is a discussion of the natural and acquired abilities of Retrievers.

Chapter 3, Section 1, of the Hunting Test Regulations clearly defines the responsibility of Judges "to test the merits of and evaluate the abilities of Retrievers in the field" and, further, to evaluate those abilities under conditions that "simulate as nearly as possible the conditions met in true hunting situations."

The first paragraph of Chapter 4, Section 2, of the Hunting Test Regulations states:

"The Judges shall score the dogs on (a) their natural abilities, including their Marking (memory), Style, Perseverance/courage/hunting and (b) to relatively greater degrees in Senior and Master Hunting Tests, their Trainability as evidenced in steadiness, control, response and delivery."

From the standpoint of a breeder or a person considering a breeding, natural abilities are of great importance while abilities acquired through training are of relatively less importance.

A Judge must keep in mind the fact that he is evaluating numerically, a defined set of abilities and not judging a dog in relation to the performances or merits of the other dogs entered. A dog's abilities are scored against an established standard.

The Judge observes and records in what respects and to what degrees the abilities have either exceeded or fallen short of that established standard.

In scoring a dog's abilities in a Test, the Judges must assign a numerical score from "0" to "10" that reflects their estimation of each ability that they have seen demonstrated. When a dog's abilities are evaluated over multiple series the average score shall be calculated to a tenth of a point. If the average score is less than 7.0, the dog shall not qualify.

To Qualify in Junior Hunting Tests, a dog must receive an *overall average* of at least seven (7.0) for the entire test and must not have an *average score in any one ability* category below five (5.0). For example, a dog could score 7s, 8s or even 9s in some ability categories and fail to qualify if the *average* score in another category was below five.

To Qualify in Senior and Master Hunting Tests, a dog must receive an overall average of at least seven (7.0) for the entire test. Furthermore, it must receive a separate, independent average score of at least five (5.0) in each ability category related to Marking, and a separate, independent average score of at least five (5.0) in each ability category related to Blinds. For example, a dog could score 7s, 8s or even 9s in all ability categories for Marking and fail to qualify if it has an average score below 5 in an ability category for Blinds. Calculating the average ability scores for Marks shall not be enhanced or augmented by the ability scores for Blinds, and vice versa.

All blinds shall be scored; and, to that end, each blind of any double blind shall be scored separately. For example, at the Master level where the present requirements call for a land blind and a water blind (at least one of which shall be a double blind in any combination), three (3) separate blinds shall be scored by the judges.

A frequently asked question is how to determine what score—from 0 to 10—should be given in any one ability category. One method is to determine whether the dog should qualify in that ability category, that might mean a minimum score of five. Knowing the dog must have an overall average of seven, the Judge considers whether other abilities deserve a seven or higher. With a five or less (but not with a zero by both Judges), the dog would have to score higher in that ability and other abilities to acquire the 7.0 overall average. A score of 5.0 or less on a given ability during a series does not necessarily mean that the dog cannot receive a qualifying score, unless both Judges score that ability as a zero.

A Judge might want to compare the scores to grades received in school. For example, a five, six or seven might be comparable to a passing grade of "C." An eight would be a "B," a nine would be an "A" and a 10 would be an "A+."

Another scoring method could begin with a perfect score of 10 and progress downward. If not exactly 10, how

close did the dog come to what you expect in a hunting companion?

If a particular ability did not merit a five, it shall be scored lower, and possibly the dog will fail to qualify. The Judges might determine that the dog showed promise in some ability categories, but just barely, and score accordingly. How much lower depends on individual judgment.

A zero means that the dog did not perform minimally. For example, it would be difficult to assign a score other than zero in Perseverance when a Senior or Master dog failed to enter water after having been ordered to do so several times.

A zero score is very different from a “nonscore.” A zero is computed into the dog’s average for that ability while a non-score is not. The zero indicates that the dog had an opportunity to exhibit an ability, but failed to do so. The non-score says that such an opportunity did not present itself. An “X” should be entered on the scoresheet for non-scores.

When both Judges grade a dog zero on the same ability, the dog can no longer receive a Qualifying score. Keep in mind that moderate to serious faults in an ability will often become more apparent through the series of tests. In questionable instances, give the dog the benefit of the doubt.

It is important to score a dog as accurately and consistently as possible in all test series. This provides handlers with information that can be used to plan future training.

Remember, Judges need not fear rating a dog’s abilities very high in early series if they have exhibited excellent abilities. They do not have to leave “room” to score another dog relatively higher in a later series. The only thing they are scoring is a dog’s abilities against the standard. **THEY ARE NOT PLACING THE DOGS.**

An important note—Judges should take time to review and check their scores with each other before the scores become “final.” It is easy to unknowingly fail a dog that they might have intended to qualify.

A key element to successful judging is good ongoing communication between Judges. This shall not include discussion of the dog work and scoring within hearing of handlers while a test is underway.

There will always be occasions when some aspect of an ability is viewed differently and Judges might not agree on a specific numerical value; it is perfectly acceptable to compromise or average their scores. At the conclusion of their evaluation, however, Judges must agree on those dogs that will receive a Qualifying score.

A Judge's responsibility is to determine, through the evaluation of abilities, whether or not a dog possesses sufficient abilities to be entitled to official AKC recognition of those abilities in the form of Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter or Master Hunter titles.

Much can be achieved in attaining greater uniformity in evaluating the abilities of Retrievers through uniformity in defining and cataloging those abilities. Part III discusses both the natural and acquired abilities of Retrievers.

## PART III

### The Abilities of Retrievers

*I. Marking, or memory of falls, is of paramount importance.* However, this does not imply that dogs which excel in Marking shall not be scored lower, even to the extent of not receiving a Qualifying score, for deficiencies in, or a lack of the other required abilities.

Ability to mark does not necessarily imply pinpointing the fall. A dog that misses the fall on the first cast, but recognizes the depth of the area of the fall, stays in it, then quickly and systematically hunts-it-out, has done both a creditable and an intelligent job of marking.

Even with marked birds, a handler may be able to render great assistance to the dog by giving it a line in the direction of the fall; however, there is nothing he or she can do, short of handling, to aid the dog in recognizing the depth of the fall. (Reference is made to Section 6 of Chapter 4 with respect to the undesirability of conspicuously intensive lining.)

Often a dog gives definite indication of Marking ability at or after delivery of a first bird by aligning itself toward, or by looking eagerly in the exact direction of an unretrieved fall; at times, even leaving at once or leaving on command, but without benefit of a precise line to the fall given to it by the handler. There is no invariable method by which Marking can be evaluated.

What precisely constitutes the area of the fall defies accurate definition; yet, at the outset of every marking situation, each Judge must arbitrarily define its hypothetical boundaries for himself, and for each bird, so that he can determine whether dogs have remained within his own concept of the area of the fall, as well as how far they have wandered and how much cover they have disturbed unnecessarily. In determining these arbitrary and hypothetical boundaries, due consideration should be given to various factors: (1) the type, the height and the uniformity of the cover, (2) light conditions, (3) direction of the prevailing wind and its intensity, (4) length of the various falls, (5) whether there is a change in cover (as from stubble to plowed ground, or

to ripe alfalfa, or to machine-picked corn, etc.) or whether the fall is beyond a hedge, across a road, or over a ditch, etc., and, finally, and most important, (6) whether one is establishing the area of the fall for a single, or for the first bird a dog goes for in multiple retrieves, or for the second or the third bird; since each of these should differ from the others.

Since there are so many conditions and variables to be taken into consideration, it is obvious that each Judge must attempt to define for himself a hypothetical area of the fall for each bird, and then numerically evaluate the dog's Marking ability according to that definition. Individual evaluations shall take into consideration the distance a dog wanders out of the area, the frequency of such wandering, the number of birds mismarked and the amount of cover disturbed in these wanderings.

A dog that disturbs cover unnecessarily, clearly well out of the area of a fall, either by not going directly to the area, or by leaving it, even though it eventually finds the bird without being handled, must be scored low in Perseverance or receive no credit in Marking on that particular bird. **No credit in Marking shall be given if the dog fails to go to the area, establish a hunt and find the bird;** a low score in Perseverance shall be given if the dog goes to the area, establishes a hunt then leaves to hunt elsewhere. If it becomes necessary in either situation to handle a dog, handling must be done crisply and cleanly with full control being demonstrated by handling the dog to the bird.

*II. Style* is apparent in every movement of a dog by the gaiety of its manner, by its alertness, by its eagerness and speed on retrieves, by its water-entry, by its pick-up of birds, and by its return with them. Style makes for a pleasing performance. Style and Marking constitute the most important abilities of Retrievers, but this does not imply that a dog which excels in Marking and Style should not be scored lower on other abilities, even to the extent of not receiving a Qualifying score for lack of or serious deficiencies in those required abilities.

In any hunting situation Style includes: (a) an alert and obedient attitude, (b) a fast, determined departure both on land and into the water, (c) an aggressive search for the fall, (d) a prompt pick-up, and (e) a reasonably fast return. The absence of these components of Style shall be reflected in a dog's score, even to the point of scoring a dog zero (0) on Style.

*III. Perseverance/courage/hunting* is shown by a dog's determination to stick-at-it and complete the task at hand, i.e., systematically, aggressively, and without faltering, to search for and find the bird it has been sent to retrieve.

It is also displayed by a willingness to face without hesitation, and repeatedly, rough cover, cold or rough water, ice, mud, or other similar conditions that make the going tough.

A lack of Perseverance may become apparent whenever: (1) a dog returns to the handler, voluntarily, and before finding the bird; (2) a dog either stops its hunt, or continues it in a slow, lackadaisical, disinterested manner; (3) the dog pops-up or looks back to its handler for directions on a marked fall and before it has hunted for a considerable time; (4) it switches birds; and (5) it “blinks” a bird, i.e., fails to pick it up, and leaves it after making the find.

Switching birds implies that a dog gives up in its hunt after a search, leaves the area, and goes for another bird, or when it drops a bird it is retrieving and goes for another. Except in the latter case, a dog shall not be scored for lack of Perseverance unless it goes to the area of a fall, hunts, fails to find, and then leaves that area to hunt for another fall. It shall not be considered as a lack of Perseverance, if, while on the way to one fall, the dog sees or finds another bird and retrieves it first; or, if on the way to one fall but long before it reaches the area of the fall, it changes its direction and goes for another bird.

On being sent for a marked fall, a dog may be confused as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve and may then return after a few steps, thus requiring a recast or direction to continue. In such cases the dog may not have displayed a lack of Perseverance or Marking ability (Chapter 4, Section 7).

IV. The final attribute to be evaluated by Judges is *Trainability*, that includes those abilities dogs acquire through training (steadiness, control, response and delivery). While not to be underestimated, acquired abilities must be viewed in a different perspective, being of somewhat lesser importance than natural abilities even though a Master Hunter must exhibit all that is desirable in a finished Retriever. The level that acquired abilities are developed will vary in different Test categories; for example, a reasonable degree of steadiness and general obedience are the requirements in the Junior Hunting Test. A greater degree of steadiness and some degree of the other qualities are expected in the Senior Hunting Test. There shall be expectation of full refinement in acquired attributes in Master Hunting Tests.

Trainability, or the abilities acquired through training, is generally understood to be composed of four components—steadiness, control, response and delivery. A discussion of each of the elements which characterize Trainability follows.

(1) *Steadiness*. Dogs on line sometimes make various types of movements when game is in the air (and/or when it is shot). These movements may be interpreted as efforts by the dogs to improve their view of the fall, and some occur through sheer excitement. Except for an occasional change in position in order to better see a fall, all such movements could be viewed as unsteadiness—with Trainability scored depending on the Test being judged and the extent and the frequency of the unsteadiness. The requirement of steadiness is a very important factor in evaluating the Trainability of a Retriever.

(2) *Control* is closely allied to the dog's response to direction, but it also includes obedience and line manners. Control in the Senior and Master Tests also includes walking tractably at heel, off lead, assuming and staying in any designated position on-line, as well as remaining quietly on-line beside the handler after delivery of the bird. When called, a dog shall return promptly to its handler. Failure to do so is sufficient cause to justify a grade of "zero" in Trainability/Control.

Chapter 4, Section 11, provides that holding or touching a dog to keep it steady, or verbally restraining a dog on line by its handler, except in extraordinary circumstances, is sufficient cause to justify a grade of "0" in Trainability.

(3) *Response* is all-important in handling tests, and in situations where a dog must be brought back to the area of the fall when it has mismarked. A dog that responds to direction should take the original direction given to it by its handler and continue on it until it either makes the find, or until stopped by the handler and given a new direction. The dog shall then continue in this new direction until it finds, or is given further directions.

Lower scores, even to the extent of grading a dog zero (0) on Trainability based on a lack of response, may be the result of the following: (a) not taking the direction originally given by the handler, (b) not continuing in that direction for a considerable distance, (c) failure to stop promptly and popping-up and looking back for directions, (d) failure to stop promptly and look to the handler when signaled, (e) failure to take a new direction, i.e., a new cast, when given and (f) failure to continue in that new direction for a considerable distance.

The Trainability score for any or all of the foregoing will vary with both the Test being scored and the extent that a dog might be unresponsive. Before scoring a dog lower on Trainability for its failure to stop promptly at a whistle, Judges shall determine whether the wind, the cover, or the distance seriously interfered with the dog's ability to hear its handler. In general, the response displayed shall be considered in its entirety; an occasional failure to take and hold a direction may affect a Trainability score only

slightly, if offset by several other very good responses. To the extent that a dog might not receive a Qualifying score, a Trainability score must reflect repeated and willful disobedience of the handler's orders. In addition, but to a lesser extent, a Trainability score must show that, after taking the proper direction, the dog did not continue on it as far as the handler desired. Stopping voluntarily to look back for directions in an isolated instance may warrant a moderate or slight lowering of a Trainability score, but frequent stopping can result in a zero (0) score.

(4) *Delivery* of the bird in each level of Hunting Tests must be made to the handler directly, upon return from the retrieve; in any Test it should be given up willingly. A dog shall not drop the bird before delivering it, freeze, or be unwilling to give it up. It shall not jump after the bird once the handler has taken it. A faulty delivery may, depending on the Test, range from a slight lowering of the Trainability score for an isolated offense, to the withholding of a Qualifying score for a severe freeze or "hardmouth."

Chapter 4, Section 9, of the Hunting Test Regulations states in part that:

"A dog cannot receive a Qualifying score if it renders a bird unfit for human consumption. Both Judges are responsible for inspecting the bird and agreeing that the dog alone was responsible for the damage."

"Hardmouth" is one of the most undesirable traits in a Retriever. Once a dog has been charged with this trait, it carries that stigma for life. Hardmouth shall only become the Judges' verdict when there is incontrovertible proof of it. Torn skin or flesh, alone, is not sufficient evidence, in almost all cases, to constitute proof of hardmouth. Damage of that type may be caused in a variety of ways, such as by sharp sticks and stones, etc., in the cover. Dogs can unintentionally damage birds when making retrieves from heavy cover, as well as by their fast, positive pick-up. Furthermore, at certain times of the year, birds are particularly susceptible to such damage. Crushed bone structure usually can be accepted as trustworthy and sufficient evidence of hardmouth. This is the only evidence offering such proof in the absence of a particularly obvious, flagrant, and unjustified tearing of flesh.

Other undesirable traits are frequently confused with hardmouth although in reality entirely separate and distinct from it, even though the dog may actually be hardmouthed. Freezing, in particular, falls into this category. A hardmouthed dog may have a gentle delivery and, certainly, a reluctant or sticky delivery does not imply hardmouth. Rolling a bird or mouthing it while making the retrieve may be erroneously associated with hardmouth even though the bird may not be damaged. Such mouthing may not necessarily call for lowering a Trainability score.

**Note:** Handlers shall hand retrieved birds directly to the Judges for inspection and proper disposal. Judges shall inspect all retrieved birds before proper disposal.

While not required, it is a considerate gesture on the part of the Judges to keep separate any bird that formed the basis for their decision that the dog could not receive a Qualifying score, in order that it might be inspected by the handler at a later time.

## PART IV

### Other Important Considerations for Judges

1. Always arrange to be at the grounds at least a day before the event. Always use set-up dogs to design your tests. Always inspect the routes to your falls and blinds for hazards.

2. Coordinate with the Marshal or Hunting Test Chairman the day before to be sure that the proper equipment is on hand (see paragraph “m” in Section 33 and paragraph “g” in Section 3-6 of the Hunting Test Procedure Manual).

3. Be at the grounds at least one hour before starting time. Workers and officials should do the same.

4. Be sure instructions to bird throwers and gunners are clear.

5. If you score a dog zero on any attribute, let your co-Judge know. If both Judges give the dog a zero, the handler must be informed that the dog can no longer qualify.

6. If a handler is doing something unusual (for example, giving a line to a dog before a bird is thrown) that might indicate weak marking ability, do not hesitate to advise him or her that the actions can adversely affect the dog’s scores.

7. On marked retrieves, the dog should be able to see birds in the air *and* as they fall, since marking can only be evaluated when a dog has seen the falls. Keep in mind, also, that you can’t evaluate the dogs if you can’t see them.

8. Make sure the gallery is safely positioned with respect to the guns, and that its position does not interfere with dogs or handlers. If possible, position the gallery so that they can see the dogs work.

9. Be sure that birds are not left lying around the line. Marshals should keep them out of sight in bags or other containers.

10. *Always* use a test dog before the start of every series. A good test dog:

- is not entered in your test;

- can reasonably be expected to complete the test, but is not overqualified;
- accomplishes the test.

11. Always be aware that on the day of a hunting test, you, as a Judge, do not merely represent yourself as an individual. You represent the entire sport and, particularly, The American Kennel Club.

## PART V

### Guide for Dealing with Some Interpretational Issues

Prior to a test, the Judges must agree on what constitutes creeping, controlled breaks, refusals, recasts and popping, and how these actions will be scored. In determining what constitutes these actions, Judges must remember that they are evaluating dogs for their suitability as hunting companions. While some of these traits or actions are serious and others are less so (although they become serious through repetition), it is important to retain the perspective of “suitability as a hunting companion.” *A certain tolerance must be afforded to the dog that still proves effective and accomplishes its purpose in the field.*

In keeping with the objectives of the Regulations, some standardization is necessary to ensure a greater degree of consistency and uniformity in these areas. The following general definitions are intended to be helpful guidelines for Judges in making their determinations.

**1. Break.** It is generally understood that a break occurs when a dog makes a movement, that, in the opinion of the Judges, indicates a deliberate intent to retrieve without having been ordered to do so, and cannot be brought under control by the handler.

**2. A controlled break** is generally when a dog leaves to retrieve before being sent, but is quickly brought under control by verbal command or whistle and returns to the handler. A controlled break in Master calls for a “0” score (Ch. 5, Sec. 5 [6]).

**3. Creeping** is generally considered as leaving the handler on a tentative yet excited basis, short of leaving completely to retrieve the bird, or waiting to be sent to retrieve. General unsteadiness, short of breaking.

**4. A hunting situation** is one or more retrieves set up to test at least one ability of the running dogs.

**5. Popping.** Popping is generally characterized as a voluntary stopping (without command) and looking back to the handler for direction.

**6. Recast.** A recast occurs when a dog makes a start toward a marked fall, but stops within a short distance of the line (the distance—usually limited to 15 feet—shall be agreed upon between the Judges) and returns or is recalled to the handler. The dog is then sent to retrieve again. This is most often attributed to confusion on the part of the dog as to whether it was sent to retrieve the first time. It is not considered a recast when a dog goes to the area of the fall, fails to find the bird and returns (or is recalled) to the handler. This must be evaluated as a lack of perseverance.

**7. A refusal** is disregard of a command. Failure to stop and look to the handler when signaled, failure to take a new direction when given and failure to continue in that new direction for a considerable distance constitute refusal. Not coming when called is as bad as not going when sent.

**8. A series** is defined as one or more hunting situations ending with callbacks, and an invitation by the Judges to continue, or, in the case of the last series in a test, final scores.

## Chapter 6

### Master National Hunting Test

A Master National hunting test for qualified Retrievers shall be run not more than once in any calendar year by a club or association formed for that purpose. The club shall file an application for permission to run the event under the Regulations and procedures for Retriever hunting tests subject to such modifications of these Regulations and procedures as may be considered necessary by the club. The Master National Hunting Test shall strive to achieve a level of testing equal to twice normal weekend Master level test. The event shall be run in as many divisions as the hosting organization deems necessary to achieve this end. The club or association may also make special Regulations and procedures as are deemed necessary for the conduct of the test. Modifications of the Regulations and procedures, as well as such special Regulations and procedures as may be made by the club or association are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club.

## Chapter 7

### Master Amateur Invitational Hunting Test

A Master Amateur Invitational hunting test for qualified dogs shall be run not more than once in any calendar year by a club or association formed for that purpose. All dogs must be handled by amateurs at this event. The club shall

file an application for permission to run the event under the Regulations and procedures for Retriever hunting tests. The Master Amateur Invitational Hunting Test shall represent the equivalent of two weekend Master level tests. The event shall be run in as many divisions as the hosting organization deems necessary to achieve this end. The club or association may also make special Regulations and procedures as are deemed necessary for the conduct of the test including the qualifications required to enter the test. The qualifying requirements must be achieved when the dog is handled by an amateur. Such special Regulations and procedures as may be made by the club or association are subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club.

**AKC RETRIEVER HUNTING TEST EVALUATION FORM**

Dog Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dog #: \_\_\_\_\_

Test Level: (circle one)      **JR**      **SR**      **MR**

DOGS ABILITIES	Marking Series 1	Marking Series 2	Marking Series 3	Marking Series 4	A V E R A G E	Blind Series				A V E R A G E	Average Score All Series
						1	2	3	4		
Marking (Memory)											
Style											
Perseverance Courage Hunting											
Trainability Steadiness Control Response & Delivery											
<small>Note: A dog must receive a separate, independent average score of five (5.0) or higher in each ability related to Marking and a separate, independent average score of five (5.0) or higher in each ability related to Blinds.</small>						<b>TOTAL SCORES</b>					
<small>Note: If at any time, a dog is graded zero (0) by two Judges for the same ability, the dog cannot receive a Qualifying score and the handler must be so informed by the Marshall.</small>						Divided by 4 for <b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b> (must be 7.0 or higher)					

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Performance of retrievers	4	1
Perseverance	4	7
Defined	Guide	P III (III)
Popping	Guide	P V (5)
Positioning dogs	3	5
	Guide	P I
Premium Lists	1	15
Purpose of		
Regulations	3	Intro
Hunting Tests	3	1
Retrievers	Guide	P II
Specific tests	Guide	P I
Qualifying performances	2	2
Refunds	1	5
Refusals	4	5
Defined	Guide	P V (7)
Response	Guide	P III (IV, 3)
Retiring guns	3	9
Return to old fall or blind	4	12
Ribbons and Rosettes	1	9
Rotation	1	16
	3	3
Running order	1	16
Sanctions, relaxation of	3	22
Series (Defined)	Guide	P V (8)
Scenarios (explanations) as they relate to hunting situations		
Tests set-up, objectives	3	4
Blinds	Guide	P I
Score sheet, inspection of	3	23
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Scoring Dogs		
Informing handler for doing something unusual	Guide	P IV (6)
Marking	Guide	P III
Methods of scoring	Guide	P II
“Non-score” vs. Zero Score	Guide	P II
Perseverance/courage	Guide	P III (III)
Qualifying	2	1
Style	Guide	P III (II)
Switching	Guide	P III (III)
Master	5	5 (3)
Senior	5	4 (8)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Section</b>
Tolerances in performance	Guide	P V
Zeros	2	1
Should advise co-judge	Guide	P IV (5)
How to advise the handler	Guide	P I (5)
Scratches		
Dogs (Bitch in season)	1	5
Sending dogs/orders	3	10
Speaking to the dog		
honoring dog, "quietly"	4	6
working dog after signaling for bird	4	6
Split test levels	1	18
Steadiness, defined	Guide	P III (IV, 1)
Test Dogs	Guide	P I
always use good test dog	Guide	P IV (10)
can not enter test	Guide	PI
Time, apportioning	Guide	P I
Throwing to encourage entering water, directing to fall	3	14
Tractably at heel & sit a line	4	10
Trainability		
Defined	Guide	P III (IV)
Control	Guide	P III (IV) 2
Delivery	Guide	P III (IV) 4
Response	Guide	P III (IV) 3
Steadiness	Guide	P III (IV) 1
Training on grounds (24 hr. rule)	1	12
Trickery	33	Guide P I
Under Judgment	3	5
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	1	22
Walk-ups – command to sit	3	17
Water performance	4	1

## Classification of Faults

Classification of the many faults which may be exhibited by retrievers during the course of a hunting test shall be primarily in terms of generalizations. In the lists which follow, various infractions are cataloged as I. Serious Faults, II. Moderate Faults and III. Minor Faults. Each fault should be considered as a single occurrence, and only to an average degree. However, such infraction may be so minor in degree that it scarcely merits the indicated penalty. Conversely, the degree of a given instance of infraction may be of sufficient gravity to merit a much more severe penalty that is suggested — even to the point of elimination from the stake. Also, in each of these three general categories, all of the faults listed should not be given equal weight, since they are not of equal gravity or importance.

Repetition of a fault, particularly time after time, indicates a “weakness” or a bad habit, and justifies much more penalty than in an isolated occurrence of this fault. The same holds true when there is a combination of different faults. The listing of individual faults within each category has not been made in the order of their seriousness. A Judge may be thoroughly justified in moderating a penalty or even in failing to impose one, if, in his or her opinion, there have been extenuating circumstances to justify such action.

The faults included in this classification are limited to those which are observed most often at retriever Hunting Tests. Others may occur, such as the repeated failure to exercise gun safety, and this classification may serve as a helpful guide on such occasions in determining the relative importance of such unusual offenses.

**Serious Handler Faults:** Serious faults listed cover all those instances where the Standard describes conduct of the handler which in and of itself justifies elimination from the stake.

1. Lining a dog in marking situations – in the direction of any fall or any gun station before all the falls are down.

2. Talking to the working dog – the handler must remain silent from the time the handler signals for the first bird to be thrown until the judges release the dog.

3. Talking to the honoring dog – loud enough to interfere with other handlers, the working dog(s) or the Judges.

4. Unsportsmanlike Conduct – abusing or harassing a Judge, official or any other person present in any capacity; or, kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog while the event is in progress; or, deliberately permitting a dog to see the location of a fall for another dog, or to see the planting or retrieve of a blind.

5. Willfully Interfering – with another handler or with his or her dog.

6. Carrying exposed training equipment (except whistle) – (Master and Senior levels).

7. Pulling out leash in front of Judges – (Master and Senior levels).

8. Restraining a dog on line – holding or touching a dog to keep it steady, or verbally restraining a dog (Master and Senior levels).

9. Threatening Gestures - or any form of intimidation made to the dog.

10. Blocking a dog's view of a bird - a handler placing his dog or himself so that the dog's full vision of a bird is blocked.

11. Throwing objects - to encourage water entry or direct a dog to a fall.

**I. Serious Dog Faults:** Serious faults listed cover all those instances where the Standard describes conduct of the dog which in and of itself justifies elimination from the stake.

1. Breaking - by either the working or the honoring dog is a mandatory elimination at Master (as there is no controlled break at Master).

2. Out of control - not paying attention to many whistles and/or directions by its handler . . . unless the existence of valid mitigating circumstances.

3. Failure to deliver to hand.

4. Freezing - refusal to release a bird on delivery for an unreasonable period of time or until compelled to do so by severe methods.

5. Hard Mouth - badly damaging a bird, or making it unfit for human consumption, which in the opinion of the judges was caused solely by the dog without justification.

6. Switching birds - giving up after establishing a hunt in the area of the fall for one bird and then going to the area of another fall and establishing a hunt; or, dropping the bird being retrieved and going for another.

7. Returning to an old fall - returning to the area of either a fall or a blind that the dog has previously retrieved and establishing a hunt.

8. Failure to enter - either rough cover, water, ice mud, or any other situation involving unpleasant or difficult going for the dog, after having been ordered to do so several times.

9. Failure to go on a blind - as there can be no confusion by the dog on a blind as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve.

10. Returning to the handler without the bird - before finding the bird, with or without having been called in, except on a marked retrieve where the dog was confused as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve.

11. Stops its hunt.

12. "Blinks" a bird - fails to pick the bird up, and leaves it after making the find.

13. Failure to find a bird - which the dog should have found.

14. Retrieving a decoy.

15. Loud and prolonged barking or whining.

**II. Moderate Dog Faults.** Infractions in this category may actually be so slight as to warrant their consideration as only a "minor" fault, or they may be so severe as to warrant their consideration as a "serious" fault; also, repetitions of a "moderate" fault or a combination of several of these faults may readily convert the total infraction into a "serious" fault.

1. Failure to mark the area of the fall - requiring that the dog be handled to the bird; worse on the first bird retrieved than on subsequent birds.

2. Disturbing too much cover – either by not going to the area or by leaving it.
3. Reluctance to enter – rough cover, water, ice, mud or other situations involving unpleasant “going” for the dog.
4. Hunting in a slow, lackadaisical, disinterested manner.
5. Poor style – the lack of an alert and obedient attitude, a fast, determined departure both on land and into the water, an aggressive search for the fall, a prompt pick up, and a reasonably fast return.
6. Popping on a marked retrieve – stopping and looking back to its handler for directions on a marked fall before it has hunted for a considerable time.
7. Multiple whistle refusals – not stopping for directions after two or three whistles which the dog should have heard.
8. Multiple cast refusals – failure to take lines and directions, or to hold lines and directions more than a short distance.
9. Moderate whining of short duration.
10. Excessive cheating – going out of the way by land to a “fall” to an excessive degree to avoid going into the water on a water retrieve.
11. Controlled Break – In any Senior test, a slight break after which the dog is brought immediately under control (There are no controlled breaks at the Master level).

**III. Minor Dog Faults.** Either severe or repeated or combinations of these “minor” infractions may summate into a “moderate” or even a “serious” fault. Also, they may be so slight as not to warrant any penalty at all.

1. Excessive cheating on return – going out of the way by land from a “fall” to an excessive degree to avoid going into the water on the return from a water retrieve.
2. Lack of attention.
3. Poor line-manners – heeling poorly; not immediately taking and staying in the position designated; dropping a bird at delivery; jumping after a bird; not remaining quietly on line after delivery.
4. Slow pick-up of a dead bird – (except when fluttering or badly shot-up); dropping bird; handling game in a sloppy manner.
5. Unsteadiness on-line, including creeping.
6. Whistle refusal – not stopping at the first whistle that should have been heard, but stopping at the second or third.
7. Cast Refusal – Occasional failure to hold the line or to take the handler’s directions for more than a few yards.
8. Popping on a blind retrieve – where there are no extenuating circumstances such as distance, wind, shallow (running) water or other conditions which make it difficult to hear the handler’s whistle.
9. Slight freezing – reluctance to give up a bird.
10. Slight short whining or one bark – while on the line or on being sent to retrieve.
11. Roughness with game.



## AKC Code of Sportsmanship

*PREFACE: The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.*

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.

Complete text of booklet available at: [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

To order booklet(s), contact AKC at:  
The American Kennel Club  
8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 100  
Raleigh, NC 27617  
Tel: (919) 816-3908  
E-mail: [orderdesk@akc.org](mailto:orderdesk@akc.org)

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