

# Boykin Spaniel Society Retriever Hunt Test Program Guidelines

## I. Hunts

A licensed Boykin Spaniel Society (BSS) hunt may be hosted by any club approved by the Boykin Spaniel Society. The Boykin Spaniel shall be the only breed allowed to participate in a BSS approved hunt. All hunts must include Novice, Intermediate and Open classes. The BSS will only approve Retriever Hunt Tests with a minimum of 20 dogs entered. Exceptions to this will be considered by the BSS Hunt Test Committee on a case by case basis.

## II. Eligibility

Retriever Hunt Tests are open only to BSS registered Boykin Spaniels. All persons entering a dog in and/or handling a dog at a BSS sanctioned event must be a member of and in good standing with the Boykin Spaniel Society.

## III. Test standard

BSS approved clubs will conduct tests that simulate a hunting day afield. The dogs will compete not against each other but rather against specific test standards.

## IV. Passes, Points and Titles

The BSS will maintain records of each dog's achievements (passes and points earned). In order to receive BSS Title achievement points an individual dog owner must be a member of, and be in good standing with, The Boykin Spaniel Society. All dogs must be Boykin Spaniel Society registered.

### Novice:

Five (5) achievement points per hunt shall be earned for those dogs that pass a Novice Hunt. A pass in the Novice class shall be referred to as a Novice Pass. Three (3) Novice passes (15 points) are required to earn the Retriever Novice title. Once a dog has achieved the Retriever Novice title it may continue to run in the Novice Class, but additional points will not be awarded.

### Intermediate:

Ten (10) achievement points per hunt may be earned for those dogs that pass an Intermediate Hunt. Three (3) Intermediate passes (30 points) are required to earn the Retriever Intermediate title. Once a dog has achieved the Retriever Intermediate title it may continue to run in the Intermediate Class but additional points will not be awarded.

### Open:

Twenty (20) achievement points per hunt may be earned for those dogs that pass an Open Hunt. Three (3) Open passes (60 points) are required for the Retriever Open title. Once a dog has achieved its Retriever Open title it may continue to run in the Open class and accrue additional points.

### BSS National Field Trial:

Dogs that have earned the Retriever Open title will be eligible to obtain additional achievement points at the BSS National Field Trial. Retriever Open titled dogs that earn a placement in the Open stake at the BSS National Field Trial shall be awarded

points as follows: First Place 40 points, Second place 30 points, Third place 20 points and Fourth place 10 points.

### **BSS Retriever Grand Champion:**

The title of BSS Retriever Grand Champion shall be awarded to any Boykin earning 500 or more points in the Retriever Hunt Test and the National Field Trial programs.

## **V. Guidelines for scheduling an approved Licensed Hunt Test:**

A. Inaugural Test The Retriever Hunt Test Committee (RHTC) is a sub committee of the BSS Field Trial Committee. The RHTC is charged with recommending a Boykin Spaniel club to the Boykin Spaniel Society Board of Directors for approval to hold a Retriever Hunt Test. The RH shall be planned and conducted by an approved Boykin Spaniel club with initial guidance from the RHTC. The RHTC shall be comprised of no fewer than five members of the Boykin Spaniel Society and may include the Hunt Test Secretary from the approved club, but said secretary shall not be designated as the LHTC (Local Hunt Test Committee) Chairman. At least one member of the RHTC must be present during a club's initial Retriever hunt test; however in the event a member is unavailable, the Chairman of the RHTC shall appoint a BSS member in order to comply with this section. The RHTC and LHTC Chairman shall be responsible for ensuring compliance by the approved club with all applicable rules, regulations and guidelines for the Retriever Hunt test except for those under the sole jurisdiction of the judges. The RHTC shall rely upon the approved club to hold a Retriever hunt test in accordance with all rules and regulations as approved by the Boykin Spaniel Society. The approved club's inaugural Retriever hunt test shall be run under the guidance and supervision of the RHTC and such committee shall have the authority to decide upon any matter arising during the initial Retriever hunt test except for those matters under the jurisdiction of the judges. After the approved club's initial Retriever hunt test is completed the RHTC shall report its conclusion and recommendation to fully sanction the host club with the BSS. Once a club is fully sanctioned by the BSS, such sanctioned club shall be able to hold Retriever hunt tests without the representation and involvement of the BSS RHTC, except in an advisory capacity, which representation shall be at least one member of the BSS RHTC.

B. Non-inaugural Tests After a club gains acceptance by the BSS to host events, the approved club may then apply for a BSS permit to host a test. New clubs must be approved by the BSS Hunt Test Committee and recommended to the BSS Board of Directors for approval at one of its scheduled board meetings before the hunt is scheduled. A new club's hunt test must be held under the observance of a Regional Hunt Test Committee Advisor approved by the BSS board. Forms for club and test approval are available on line.

## **VI. Fees**

Clubs that submit an application for a hunt must include a \$ 100.00 licensing fee per Hunt. At the conclusion of the sponsoring club's Hunt the LHTC secretary will send to the BSS a summary of all Boykin Spaniels entered and all that pass. The sponsoring club shall remit to the BSS a \$10 processing fee for each dog entered in the Retriever Hunt, except for "Scratched" dogs.

## Philosophy and Purpose

These Boykin spaniel hunt tests are designed to evaluate the natural hunting abilities of a highly versatile dog which was bred for some specific purposes. The judging of dogs is an art, not a science. The retrieving dog is appraised for the following traits:

- pay attention so as to accurately mark and remember the fall area of a dead bird
- having the desire, courage and determination to hastily proceed directly to the fall area
- use his/her nose to aid in locating the bird
- use of intelligence, perseverance and experience to efficiently complete the retrieves
- exhibiting the stylishness which distinguishes itself as having a sound work ethic
- displays training for obedience, steadiness, and response to commands in the field
- retrieves and delivers in a dutiful and kindly manner

The three levels of the Retriever Test program serve as mechanisms for the evaluation of the dog's progress as a companionable gundog. The Novice stake is intended to provide basic challenges for dogs in the early stages of their education but have mastered the minimal skills requirements. Test elements for Intermediate stake tests are meant to show a great amount of progress beyond the Novice level, particularly with regard to teamwork, desire and intelligence. Dogs in the Open stake are tasked to demonstrate the highest levels of cooperation, enthusiasm, style, and precision.

Unrealistic or devious setups are not in keeping with the objectives of this program. Evaluations will be conducted in ways which replicate actual realistic hunting conditions as much as possible, suitable for the demonstration of the abilities and training described. When the selected test sites lack the otherwise-feasible topography and cover or water conditions to appraise the retriever's determination and desire qualities, the distance to the marks or blinds may need to be increased up to but never exceeding the various maximum test distances given for each stake. Should it be necessary to incorporate longer retrieve lengths for these reasons, the judges should explain that their intention is to simulate birds who are critically wounded by the shot but manage to escape for some distance before falling.

Tests for the Novice and Intermediate stakes shall be staged to simulate the geographically particular conditions of the local area, but Open stakes tests may, and should, duplicate hunting situations which are found across the country. Duck blinds, decoys in water and fields, game calls, boats, companion hunters, and other hunting devices, implements, and distractions are encouraged to be utilized where appropriate.

The judges and representatives of the Club Hunt Test Committee will set up all tests in all stakes, and will be in agreement on the set up of each element. Dog safety shall be of utmost importance. In spite of their best efforts, however, the first several dogs to run a particular test element may reveal unforeseen flaws that warrant a change in plans. The judges may change the element in those cases; dogs who ran the test element prior to the change shall be re-run.

Whenever circumstances beyond the control of the handler or dog do result or might result in a bad performance by the dog, the judges will immediately stop the test and handlers will be instructed to leash their dog, leave the line for a while and return only after at least 3 other dogs have run that element. This is not at the handler's option. If there are not enough dogs waiting their turn, judges will allow the equivalent length of time before the re-run. Some examples of these circumstances are: no bird was launched from a winger, the launched bird flew and/or landed peculiarly, a gun malfunction, or any sort of interference by another dog or handler.

Handlers with any kind of physical disability will be accommodated in every way possible, so long as the accommodation replicates what might be done in a true hunting situation.

# General Rules and Regulations

## I. Purpose

The purpose of a Boykin Spaniel in a Retriever Hunt (RH) is to find and retrieve all types of game birds in a pleasant manner under hunting conditions. The objective of the RH is to help the handler develop a useful hunting companion by providing a means to gauge a Boykin Spaniel's relative merits in the Novice, Intermediate and Open stakes. Dogs in all stakes must walk politely, sit quietly wherever placed, hunt enthusiastically and retrieve efficiently and deliver kindly. Dogs should show no fear in questing or entering water or cover and must be under reasonable control at all times.

## II. Eligibility

- (A.) Only Boykin Spaniel Society (BSS) registered dogs may be entered.
- (B.) All entered dog owners and dog handlers must be current members in good standing with the Boykin Spaniel Society.
- (C.) Club eligibility is described in the previous Guidelines section.
- (D.) Dogs may be entered in only one (1) stake.
- (E.) Minors (under 18) handling dogs in the Intermediate or Open stake, or performing as a designated gunner in any stake, are required to submit a copy of their Hunter Safety Certificate to the Hunt Test Marshal.

## III. Hunt Test Committee

The test hosting club shall form and operate a Local Hunt Test Committee according to their own Bylaws.

## IV. Judges

(A.) Each stake shall be judged by two (2) judges. Judges may be assigned to multiple stakes on the same day. Each pair of judges will evaluate the same dogs in all series within that stake.

(B) The BSS RHTC must approve all judges at least 30 days prior to the scheduled event. The RHTC will give consideration to any experienced Retriever judges. Priority will be given to judges with experience, such as the HRC Retriever program, or other similar judging experience. Judges must be knowledgeable in the unique styles and characteristics of the Boykin spaniel.

(C.) One (1) apprentice judge per stake may be appointed by the BSS RHTC. The primary function of the apprentice judge is to learn and gain experience from the experienced judges. Apprentice judges must have trained and handled a dog to a Pass in the class they are requesting to apprentice in. Earning a ribbon at a BSS Retriever national field trial would also qualify an individual for apprentice judging. An apprentice judge will be considered fully trained after judging 4 events with at least two different judges. All individuals applying to apprentice must have passed and possess a state certified Hunters Safety Course and be a member in good standing of the BSS..

(D.) Judges are representatives of the BSS and shall abide by the rules, regulations and guidelines as set forth herein.

(E.) Prior to the start of each stake, judges shall be required to review all safety measures with handlers, marshals, gunners, bird boys, etc.

(F.) Judges shall describe each test scenario, the object of the test and performance expectations to the handlers. A non-contending dog of comparable ability level shall demonstrate the test prior to the first dog's running of the test.

(G.) Judges decisions are final. Judges are encouraged to inform the handler if the dog has obviously failed a test before the handler leaves the line. A dog who has failed a part of the test may participate in any remainder of the test, at the discretion of the handler. Both judges must be in agreement to fail any dog. Only after the conclusion of the test and announcement of all passes may a handler confer with judges about the performance of their dog, but judges will only discuss that handler's dog(s).

## **V. Test Grounds and Water Considerations**

Safety of the dogs is a paramount consideration. Land series and water series shall be of adequate size to permit a dog to hunt naturally. Actual typical hunting conditions for the geographic area should be duplicated. Land series should be staged on fairly level ground with cover sufficiently short such that dogs are visible at all times, yet challenging enough to judge desire and determination. Moderate undulation is allowable so long as dogs under control remain visible to the handler and judges at all times. Obstacles such as logs and brush piles must not be in the dog's working area, and water must be free of submerged or protruding dangers. Water may have light weed growth in the water. The judges must preview their test setups with the LHTC, and the LHTC must require changes be made if there is any question about the safety of dogs.

## **VI. Attire**

Handlers, judges, marshals, bird boys and gallery members must wear typical hunting attire: camouflaged clothing is preferred. Light colored clothing is not allowed. Bird boys and designated gunners should use protective eye wear and hearing protection. Handlers must have a duck call and a whistle.

## **VII. Guns and Gunners**

(A.) Shotguns loaded with primer poppers are used in all classes and in all series. All persons holding and operating any gun must practice due regard to the judges, handlers, marshals, bird planters, gallery and other contingencies. Unsafe gun handling shall be grounds for immediate failure of the test, and handler disqualification by the judges. If the individual is handling other dogs that day, those other dogs may be tested with another handler.

(B.) Handlers will obtain only enough poppers to conduct the test before them, and will only load them into the gun when told to do so by the judges. Prior to the test(s), the judges will explain the safe gun handling rules which they expect to see by handlers, and may warn or disqualify any handler who violates the rules. Handlers must always treat the gun as if it were loaded with live ammunition. The LHTC will assign a companion gunner for all handlers in the Novice class, and in other classes should a handler's physical disability warrant such a substitution.

(C.) The LHTC shall furnish a 12 gauge pump style shotgun and primer popper loads for use by handlers and any designated gunners. Any person may furnish their own gun: they must deliver their encased gun to the Hunt Test Marshal, who will carry and deliver the gun to the test judges. If the gauge of the self-provided gun is not 12 gauge, the person must furnish their own primer poppers.

(D.) Judges shall have complete authority over gun safety in all classes, at all times.

## **VIII. Birds**

(A.) Novice Retriever stakes: Pigeons and/or ducks may be used in the land series of the Novice Retriever stake. Quail or chukar may be used in place of pigeons only if

stated on the BSS HTC-approved test entry form (premium). If pigeons or upland game birds are used, a fresh bird will be used for each mark for each individual dog.

(B.) Intermediate Retriever and Open Retriever stakes: mallard ducks or pigeons or upland game birds shall be used. If pigeons or upland game birds are used, a fresh bird will be used for each mark for each individual dog.

(C.) The LHTC shall appoint one or more Game Stewards to oversee the humane treatment and dispatch of birds used in the tests. The Game Steward will be responsible for the birds once they arrive on the test grounds, but not responsible for providing birds for the tests. The proper handling, processing and disposal of all birds used in the tests will be a major determinant in the BSS RH club approval process.

#### **IX. Marshals**

The LHTC shall appoint a marshal for each stake whose duty it shall be to assist the judges and to carry out their instructions, including regulating and controlling the gallery, and seeing that the gallery is kept separate from and behind the judges and that no one converses or interferes with the judges, handler, dog or gunners while a dog is working. The marshal has the authority to control the gallery and may excuse anyone who does not comply with his/her instructions.

The marshal shall inspect any handler-furnished guns, and shall inspect the Hunter Safety Certificate (card) of any person under the age of 18 who may be handling a gun.

#### **X. Additional Regulations**

(A.) At the handler's option, in the Novice stake, a dog may run with a flat collar only. Dogs in the Intermediate and Open stakes shall not wear any collar. Choke, pinch, prong, spike collars and electric or dummy collars shall not be worn by any entered dog on the hunt test grounds.

(B.) Bitches in season shall not be eligible for entry and shall not be allowed on the grounds. Entry fees paid for a bitch withdrawn because of coming into season, or for a dog withdrawn because of illness or injury, or for a dog that dies, shall be refunded in full provided such a request is received by the LHTC Secretary within five (5) days of the completion of the trial. All refund requests must be accompanied by a written veterinarian certification.

(C.) The LHTC will designate an exercise/airing area. Tossing of "happy bumpers" is permitted in this designated area only. No training, severe correction or disciplining of dogs is permitted on any part of the hunt test grounds. If such serious training is observed by another competitor or attendee at the event then a complaint must be filed immediately with the LHTC for review and dissemination for appropriate action. Such action could be expulsion of the offending party from the Retriever hunt test.

(D.) Handlers are responsible for controlling their dogs at all times. Except for dogs being tested or exercised, all dogs must be kept on a leash. Any dog or handler interfering with the testing of another dog in any manner will be disqualified.

(E.) All persons participating in or observing any event are expected to maintain reasonable silence and display good manners. Persons who interfere with the orderly process of any stake may be instructed by the judges, marshal or LHTC to leave the hunt test grounds.

(F.) Unless otherwise directed by the judges, dogs are being judged from the time that they are called to the point of origin until they have left the same, and are behind the judges and on leash/lead.

(G.) Unless otherwise instructed, a dog is to be released by the handler on the handler's command.

(H.) Handlers must not allow their dog to preview any part of the test of the class in which they are entered. Violation of this section is grounds for disqualification.

(I.) All water series in all stakes should allow the dog to be cast from as close to the waters edge as feasible.

(J.) Dogs that require help from bird boys/bird throwers will be failed.

(K.) Dogs will be disqualified for unprovoked fighting or attacking handlers, spectators, judges, etc. Dogs that are disqualified under this section must immediately be confined. It shall be the duty of the marshal and/or judges to immediately report to the LHTC the expulsion of a dog under this section. The LHTC Secretary shall submit to the Board of Directors of the BSS a complete report of any action taken under this section.

(L.) A re-run may be granted if, in the opinion of the judges an unfair or unforeseen circumstance occurs during the test. It shall be the option of the handler to immediately re-run the dog or to wait three (3) dogs, if that number remains, down the line.

(M) Additional re-casts may be awarded by the judges without penalty if in the judges' opinion the dog has been distracted by outside interference.

(N.) Dogs shall be worked singly in all stakes with the order of running decided by lot at the draw for all stakes. Such draw may be determined by the LHTC in advance of the event. Dogs worked by the same handler shall be separated when possible. Dogs may be run in an order different from the order in which they are drawn when, in the opinion of the judges and the LHTC such running order change will result is a reasonable and desirable saving of time in the conduct of the event.

(O.) All birds retrieved shall be examined by one of the judges. A dog that renders a bird unfit for consumption shall be disqualified, but the judges must agree that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.

(S.) Failing traits

- (1) Refusal to hunt
- (2) Blinking birds
- (3) Failure to find birds
- (4) Gun shyness
- (5) Hard mouth (destruction of breast meat, bird now unfit for consumption, but both judges must agree that the dog alone caused the damage)
- (6) Lack of demonstrated control where required
- (7) Retrieve refusal, or discarding game for other interests
- (8) Viciousness
- (9) Any sort of intimidation of a dog by a handler

(T.) Mechanical wingers may be used in the series involving only retrieving. Wingers, bird boys, and any gunners-in-the-field will be concealed from view at all times, unless

otherwise stated in the test rules. If a winger fails to properly present its bird, the judges and only the judges shall call a "no bird" and stop the affected dog's test.

(U.) When at the point of origin, the handler shall not possess any exposed training aid that might intimidate the dog (including but not limited to leash, lead, whip, quirt, cane, prod or similar implements) or indulge in any behavior that may in any way intimidate the dog.

(V.) Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- (1) It shall be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct if the handler interferes with another handler and/or that handler's dog, or permits his/her dog to view any part of the test of the class in which they are entered, or points out the location of the bird boys or gunners prior to the bird being thrown.
- (2) It shall be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct if a person during the running of or in conjunction with an event abuses or harasses a judge, official, or any other person present in any capacity at the hunt test.
- (3) Any person who displays unsportsmanlike conduct, or is seen to kick, strike, or otherwise roughly treat a dog while on the grounds of the hunt test at any time during the running of such event, may be expelled from the hunt by the LHTC.
- (4) The judges shall also have the authority to expel a person if they observe unsportsmanlike conduct, or see a person kicking, striking, or otherwise roughly treating a dog while the event is in progress. It will be the duty of the judges to promptly report such expulsion to the LHTC.
- (5) The LHTC shall investigate at once any instance of alleged unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any person or handler, or any report that a person or handler has been observed kicking, striking or otherwise roughly treating a dog.
- (6) Improper behavior such as excessive alcohol consumption which leads to belligerence with others in attendance or to physical confrontations with others will not be tolerated and will lead to immediate dismissal from the event and immediate expulsion from the hunt test and disqualification of all dogs receiving a pass run by that handler, trainer or owner involved.
- (7) If the LHTC, after investigation, determines that a person or handler is in violation of this section and that the incident, if proven, would constitute conduct prejudicial to the sport or the Boykin Spaniel Society, then said LHTC shall within thirty (30) days file a report with the Board of Directors of the Boykin Spaniel Society for review with further possible disciplinary action from the BSS.



## Regulations and Test Requirements

### NOVICE STAKE

1. A Novice Retriever stake shall consist of four single bird marking tests, two of which shall be marked water retrieves and two of which shall be marked land retrieves.
2. Maximum test distances are as follows: land retrieves are not to exceed 75 yards and water retrieves are not to exceed 60 yards.
3. Dogs shall not be required to honor another dog in this stake. Walk-ups to simulate jump shooting may not be used in this stake. Diversions may not be used in this stake.
4. When back-to-back marks are thrown from the same retrieving line, judges should make every effort to assure wide separation between the falls.
5. At the option of the handler, a dog may be walked from the holding blind to the retrieving line off lead.
6. Dogs shall be placed at a point of origin next to and within easy reach of the handler.
7. A dog should be steady at the point of origin; however, it may have a flat buckle collar and/or slip line around its neck and/or may be held by one hand to assist in achieving steadiness.
8. An attention-getting shot or shots shall be fired or a game call blown from the area which the bird is to appear prior to the bird being thrown in order to provide the dog with adequate opportunity to focus its attention toward the area of the fall. At the discretion of the judges, but not more than once per stake, the gunners and bird boys may be visible in order to simulate specific hunting situations such as dove hunting.
9. A shot shall be fired when the bird is at the top of its arc. This shot may be at the line by the judges or a designated gunner or the handler, if the judges so allow. A shotgun with blanks loads (poppers or primers) or a blank pistol shall be used at the discretion of the judges. No shots shall ever be fired from behind the dog and handler.
10. A Novice dog may be cast from the point of origin no more than twice. A recast shall not be allowed if the dog proceeded to the area of the fall but did not retrieve.
11. A dog may be urged to hunt by voice, whistle or hand signals, but shall be penalized if, in the opinion of the judges, the voice, whistle or hand signals are excessive and/or disruptive.
12. A controlled break shall not fail a dog. One single occurrence of an uncontrolled break shall not fail a dog. The judges should evaluate the dog's temperament as displayed in its spontaneous behavior in order to assess its suitability as a hunting companion. Hyperactivity, wildness, jumping about, barking, excessive disobedience, lethargy or lack of interest shall be penalized and may result in failure. Creeping and/or repositioning is not a break.
13. A Novice dog should collect the bird and return to its handler without delay. The dog is not required to deliver to hand, but is required to deliver the bird within a reasonable radius of the point of origin which is easily accessible to the handler. Therefore, it is not appropriate to require the dog to deliver the bird into a boat or blind.

# Regulations and Test Requirements

## INTERMEDIATE STAKE

1. An Intermediate Retriever stake shall consist of a minimum of five tests which must include the following: a double marked land retrieve, a double marked water retrieve, one blind retrieve which, at the discretion of the judges, may be on land or water, a walk-up to simulate jump shooting, and a diversionary bird.
2. Maximum test distances are as follows: land retrieves are not to exceed 100 yards, water retrieves are not to exceed 75 yards, blind retrieves are not to exceed 50 yards, walk-up retrieves are not to exceed 30 yards and shall not be less than 15 yards.
3. Intermediate dogs shall not be required to honor another dog.
4. The Intermediate dog must be walked from the holding blind to the retrieving line point of origin off lead. The point of origin shall be beside the handler. Moderate commands shall be allowed to steady a dog at the point of origin. A dog may be touched or patted at the point of origin to steady, but once the "ready" signal has been given to the judges by the handler the dog may not be touched again.
5. Handlers will be required to handle a shotgun loaded with blank loads (poppers or primers) as instructed by the judges. Proper gun handling and gun safety shall be strictly enforced.
6. The handler will signal his/her readiness by use of an appropriate game call, or otherwise as instructed by the judges.
7. An attention-getting shot or shots shall be fired or a game call blown from the area which the bird is to appear prior to the bird being thrown in order to provide the dog with adequate opportunity to focus its attention toward the area of the fall. At the discretion of the judges, but not more than once per stake, the gunners and bird boys may be visible in order to simulate specific hunting situations such as dove hunting.
8. The dog shall be released to retrieve in accordance with the instructions given by the judges, but judges shall not dictate the order in which retrieves must be made.
9. A dog shall be steady at the point of origin. If the dog leaves the point of origin and manifests intent to retrieve without being released by the handler, it must be stopped. If the dog is stopped, this controlled break will not fail a dog but may be penalized. An uncontrolled break shall result in a failure. If a dog creeps or repositions himself to or beyond the gun muzzle, thereby endangering himself, he must be reeled immediately.
10. A dog may be cast from the point of origin only once unless, in the opinion of the judges, the dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin. The judges may allow a single re-cast.
11. The Intermediate dog is expected to proceed directly to the areas of the falls and establish a hunt. A dog may be handled on marked retrieves with voice/whistle/hand signals if, in the opinion of the handler, the dog can't find or has missed the mark. The dog is being tested for its marking ability and memory, not handling; however, a crisp cast is preferable to a long hunt. Repeated evidence of lack of memory, marking ability or lack of control may be grounds for failure. Handling in the area of the fall is not penalized.
12. The dog shall return to the handler without delay and deliver all birds to hand.

13. A diversionary bird must be thrown as the dog returns from the walk-up, blind, or as the last bird of a double mark. The diversionary bird should be thrown where the dog can see it, but not directly in the return path. A dog that drops and leaves its bird and retrieves (switches) the diversionary bird shall be penalized but not failed for this reason alone.
14. Walk-up: The dog shall be brought to an area designated as the point of origin at heel or under control within ten feet of its handler. The judges may signal for the bird to be launched while the handler and dog are walking. The handler shall stop himself and the dog, shoulder a gun and shoot toward the bird when it is at the top of its arc, and release the dog to retrieve after the bird has landed. Handlers may pass the safe gun to a judge in order to collect the delivered bird.
15. A blind retrieve on land or on/across water shall be used in this class. Blind retrieves shall not be incorporated with marking tests, and the general area of the retrieving line for marks shall not be used as the retrieving line for blind retrieves. At the retrieving line with the dog at heel, the handler will fire a dry shot popper in the direction of the hidden bird, to encourage the dog to run or swim the blind. Dogs may be cast from the point of origin only once. The Intermediate dog must display a willingness to cooperate with its handler. "Handling" is a demonstration of obedience acquired through training and will be judged upon the crispness of the response. Dogs are expected to stop on a whistle and take a cast at least once while running or swimming the blind. Failure to stop on the whistle or take a cast is a serious infraction. Multiple whistle or cast refusals may be grounds for failure. The judges must decide on the seriousness of the refusal(s) by taking into account the conditions at hand. The dog is not required to run a predefined route or channel to the bird, but must take a good initial line toward it. Dogs using their nose to locate the bird shall not be penalized.

# Regulations and Test Requirements

## OPEN STAKE

1. An Open Retriever stake shall consist of a minimum of six tests which must include the following: a triple marked land retrieve, a triple marked water retrieve, one blind retrieve on land, one blind retrieve on or across water, a walk-up to simulate jump shooting, a diversion and the honoring of another working dog.
2. Maximum test distances are as follows: land retrieves are not to exceed 125 yards, water retrieves are not to exceed 100 yards, blind retrieves are not to exceed 100 yards, walk-up retrieves are not to exceed 30 yards and shall not be less than 15 yards.
3. Delayed marks or falls may be used. Simultaneous falls with birds and shots originating from the same location may not be used.
4. The Open dog must be walked from the holding blind to the retrieving line point of origin off lead. The point of origin may be beside the handler or may be at a distance from the handler. Moderate commands shall be allowed to steady a dog at the point of origin. A dog may be touched or patted at the point of origin to steady, but once the "ready" signal has been given to the judges by the handler the dog may not be touched again.
5. Handlers will be required to handle a shotgun loaded with blank loads (poppers or primers) as instructed by the judges. Proper gun handling and gun safety shall be strictly enforced.
6. The handler will signal his/her readiness by use of an appropriate game call, or otherwise as instructed by the judges.
7. An attention-getting shot or shots may be fired or a game call blown from the area which the bird is to appear prior to the bird being thrown. At the discretion of the judges, but not more than once per stake, the gunners and bird boys may be visible in order to simulate specific hunting situations such as dove hunting.
8. The dog shall be released to retrieve in accordance with the instructions given by the judges, but judges shall not dictate the order in which retrieves must be made.
9. A dog shall be steady at the point of origin. If the dog leaves the point of origin and manifests intent to retrieve without being released by the handler, it must be stopped. If the dog is stopped, this controlled break will not fail a dog but may be penalized. An uncontrolled break shall result in a failure. If a dog creeps or repositions himself to or beyond the gun muzzle, thereby endangering himself, he must be reeled immediately.
10. A dog may be cast from the point of origin only once unless, in the opinion of the judges, the dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin; then the judges may allow a single re-cast.
11. The Open dog is expected to proceed directly to the areas of the falls and establish a hunt. A dog may be handled on marked retrieves with voice/whistle/hand signals if, in the opinion of the handler, the dog can't find or has missed the mark. The dog is being tested for its marking ability and memory, not handling; however, a crisp cast is preferable to a long hunt. A repeated evidence of lack of memory, marking ability or lack of control may be grounds for failure. Handling in the area of the fall is not penalized.
12. The dog shall return to the handler without delay and deliver all birds to hand.

13. Diversions:
  - a. A diversionary bird may be thrown as the dog returns from the walk-up, blind, or as the last bird of a mark. The diversionary bird should be thrown where the dog can see it, but not directly in the return path. The handler shall shoot the diversion.
  - b. Dry shots fired or game calls sounded from the point of origin or from the field, or both, may be substituted for a thrown bird.
  - c. A dog that drops and leaves its bird due to a diversion shall be failed.
14. Walk-up: The dog shall be brought to an area designated as the point of origin at heel or under control within ten feet of its handler. The judges may signal for the bird to be launched while the handler and dog are walking. The handler shall stop himself and the dog, shoulder a gun and shoot toward the bird when it is at the top of its arc, and release the dog to retrieve after the bird has landed. Handlers may pass the safe gun to a judge in order to collect the delivered bird. *The walk-up test may be incorporated with any other test element.*
15. Blind retrieves on land and on water shall be used in this class. One of the two blind retrieves shall be incorporated with the required multiple marked retrieves. The handler will fire a dry shot popper to encourage the dog to run or swim the blind. Dogs may be cast from the point of origin only once. The dog is not required to run a predefined route or channel to the bird, but must take a good initial line toward it. The Open dog must display an absolute willingness to cooperate with its handler. "Handling" is a demonstration of obedience acquired through training and will be judged upon the crispness of the response. Dogs are expected to stop on a whistle and take a cast at least once while running or swimming the blind. Failure to stop on the whistle or take a cast is a serious infraction. Multiple whistle or cast refusals shall be grounds for failure. The judges must decide on the seriousness of the refusal(s) by taking into account the conditions at hand. Dogs using their nose to locate the bird shall not be penalized.
16. The Open stake dog shall be required to honor the work of another dog. The honor shall be done in conjunction with a marking series or a walk-up. Honor dog handlers may be required to shoot in the same manner as the working dog handler. The honor dog may be placed beside his handler or may be at a moderate distance away, as may be determined by the judges for their test. The honor dog must be positioned such that he witnesses the launching and fall of the birds. Any manifested intent to retrieve by the honor dog will result in failure. The honor dog and handler shall be excused upon the commencement of the retrieves by the working dog.

**\*\*\*END OF RETRIEVER HUNT TEST BOOKLET\*\***