

Hosting your first BSS Retriever Hunt Test (Some do's and don'ts learned from a new regional club.)

The Gulf Coast Boykin Spaniel Club was founded in early 2020 by a group of Boykin enthusiasts along the Gulf Coast that wanted to have local events without driving 5 hours or more to the next club for training days, socials, etc. Of course, having a mission for your club is most important. One very important objective for us was hosting our very own hunt test. Initially we had planned to do this by fall 2020, but when the rubber met the road, there was much more in store than we had planned. Here's what we learned from a year of trying to put this thing together. I'd like to pass this knowledge along as I have been asked... "How'd you pull it off?" Here ya go...

1. The date:
 - a. Find a date that does not conflict with:
 - i. Other HRC and AKC test in your immediate area.
 - ii. Other BSS test anywhere.
 - iii. Keep in mind that with fewer dogs per event than an HRC or AKC test, both days of testing can be done in one day. (This will become more attractive by saving money, time, and resources needed.)
2. The money:
 - a. Fundraise: raffles, T-shirt sales, membership dues, etc. You have to hustle in the beginning to make it work.
 - b. The BSS: the BSS has been an AWESOME supporter and has provided some supplemental monies to assist.
 - c. Keep your two tests on one day. This limits expenses for a second night/day.
 - d. Cut corners where you can: time, location, judges, bird boys, etc.
3. The location:
 - a. Pick out your grounds and book it early.
 - b. Local kennel/trainers that are involved with your club are an awesome resource.
 - c. Ensure your team is working the grounds in preparation and getting it ready.
4. The equipment:
 - a. Borrowing! This will likely require having access to another club's blinds, wingers, chairs, tables, tents.
 - b. Borrowing! Find items from trainers and club members that have the items necessary to piece it together.
 - c. Piece it together from borrowing. It can be done.
5. The judges:
 - a. Keep it local! Do not get into paying judges to come in from all over the country. Do not get into hotels, travel expenses, meals, etc. Obviously, the less you do of this, the easier on the budget.
 - b. Judges only need be approved by the BSS based on resume'. They DO NOT have to be registered AKC or HRC judges. Of course, this helps but not required.

- c. Let your judges know upfront: “We are a new club on a budget. We will take care of you, but we are limited.”
- d. Get your club members to do pot luck or “throw in” for a judges’ dinner. Don’t get into your test budget for catering food or going overboard.
- e. Use your contacts. BSS will provide a judge for your first test and refer more.
- f. Get your bird boys to be volunteers from your club.

Good luck everyone trying to get the first one off the ground. If we can do it, you can do it. Myself and the GCBSC are always a resource for direction and assistance if you need. We will gladly help out.

Thank you,
Joel B. Harvey, GCBSC President