

Boykin Spaniel Society Upland Field Trial

General Rules and Regulations

Revised March 2026

I. Purpose

A spaniel's purpose in an upland trial is to hunt, find game, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasant manner. The objective of the trial is to help the handler develop a useful hunting companion by providing a means to gauge a dog's ability in the Novice, Intermediate and Open stakes. Dogs in all stakes must hunt enthusiastically and retrieve. Dogs should show no fear in questing or entering cover and must be under reasonable control. They must work at a reasonable distance from their handlers, neither too close (which is dangerous and inefficient) nor too far (which presents a difficulty for gunners in bringing down birds). Dogs are rated highest for a bold flush; however a soft flush or momentary stopping is acceptable if the dog, within a very brief period, forces the bird into flight.

The BSS Upland field trial is held to primarily judge the ability and style of the Boykin spaniel to find and flush upland game. The Boykin Spaniel is prized due to its versatility so the incorporated water work is also important and should be judged accordingly.

II. Eligibility

- (A.) Entry in this sportsmanlike competition is open to any Boykin Spaniel registered with the Boykin spaniel Society and owned by a BSS member in good standing.
- (B.) The Novice class is for young and inexperienced dogs. Experienced hunting dogs, though not excluded from the Novice class should consider entry into either the Intermediate or Open classes. Dogs that have earned a passing score at an upland event whose stake has any requirement judging control (I.E. United Kennel Club (UKC/HRC) Upland hunt test, American Kennel Club (AKC) Master hunt test, or the North American Hunting Retriever Association (NAHRA) Senior hunt test), may not be entered in the Novice stake. In addition to the above, dogs that have acquired titles in organized sports that utilize regulations similar to the BSS intermediate class must apply in a higher class. One example of this would be an SH title in the American Kennel Club's spaniel hunt test program.

The purpose of the Intermediate field trial test is to bring working dogs to a higher standard of performance. Dogs that have acquired titles in organized sports that utilize regulations similar to the BSS open class must apply in the open stake. One example of this would be an MH title in the American Kennel Club's spaniel hunt test program.

- (C.) Dogs may be entered in more than one (1) stake.
- (D.) Minors (under 18) handling dogs in the Intermediate or Open stake are required to submit a copy of their Hunter Safety Certificate with their entry form.
- (E.) Novice and Intermediate dogs will be scored under a 5,4,3,2,1 plan, five points for first place, 4 points for second, etc.1 point for a JAM. Any dog with an aggregate score of 5 or better must graduate to the next higher stake. Dogs with a placement in any stake may not enter in any lower stake.

- (F.) The handler must be a BSS member in good standing, or a resident of a BSS member in good standing's household. All handlers are obliged to uphold and abide by the Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and Rules and Regulations of the BSS.

III. Field Trial Committee

The Upland Field Trial Committee (UFTC) has complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the trial. The UFTC shall be comprised of no fewer than five members of the Boykin Spaniel Society and may include the Field Trial Secretary, but said secretary shall not be designated as the UFTC Chairman. A majority of the UFTC must be present during the trial; however, in the event of an absence of such majority, the Chairman shall appoint sufficient members in order to comply with this section. The UFTC and UFTC Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, and guidelines for the field trial except for those under the sole jurisdiction of the judges. The UFTC shall have the authority to decide upon any matter arising during the trial except for those matters under the jurisdiction of the judges.

IV. Judges

- (A.) Each stake shall be judged by two (2) experienced judges.
- (B.) One (1) apprentice judge per stake may be appointed by the UFTC. The primary function of the apprentice judge is to learn and gain experience from the experienced judges.
- (C.) Judges are representatives of the BSS and shall abide by the rules, regulations and guidelines as set forth herein.
- (D.) Judges shall place dogs in the order of finish (1st through 4th with four (4) Judges Award of Merit (JAMS) where earned. Completion ribbons, at the discretion of the judges, may be awarded in the Novice stake.
- (E.) Prior to the start of each stake, judges shall be required to go over all safety measures with handlers, marshals, gunners, bird planters, etc.
- (F.) Judges' decisions are final.

V. Courses

All courses shall consist of sufficient cover to hold birds and be of adequate size to permit a dog to hunt naturally. Courses should be fairly level or moderately undulating. Cover should be natural and the judges should be able to see the dogs the majority of the time. Courses may be staked to indicate the path of the field and must be utilized just as they would be in hunting. Only one dog shall be permitted to run at a time, but stakes may be run simultaneously provided that there is no interference. Mechanical vehicles, not to include ATVs that may be used by bird planters, should be kept off of marked courses.

VI. Safety

Safety is to always be at the forefront of any and all Boykin Spaniel Society Field Trials. An item of blaze orange must be worn by judges, marshals, handlers, gunners, bird planters and gallery. Bird planters should use protective eye wear. The use of hearing protection is suggested.

VII. Guns/Gunners

(A.) Dogs shall be shot over by official gunners appointed by the UFTC. The official gunners should shoot their game in a sportsman like manner, as they would in a days shoot. The official gunners represent the handler up to the time the game is shot, and may not interfere in any manner with his work (handler) or the working of the dog. The gunners, if possible, or unless otherwise directed by the judges, are to down cleanly, efficiently and consistently the game flushed by the dog, at a point most advantageously to a fair and natural test of the dogs abilities, with due regard to the judges, handlers, marshals, bird planters, gallery and other contingencies

(B.) Care should be taken not to shoot so that game falls too close to the dog. If this is done it does not afford a chance for the dog to show any good retrieving ability and often results in a bird being destroyed. The gunners should stand perfectly quiet after the shot or otherwise they may interfere with the dog and/or handler. When a dog makes a retrieve, no other birds or game should be shot unless ordered by the judges for special reasons. The gunners must also keep themselves in the correct position relative to the handlers and/or others.

(C.) Official gunners MUST utilize double guns (over/under or side by side) no smaller than 20 gauge in the upland portion of the trial.

(D.) Judges shall have complete authority over the official gunners as outlined in Section IV (D.).

VIII. Birds

(A.) Pigeons, chukar, quail, or pheasants may be used in the land series of the Novice stake.

(B.) Only pheasant, quail, or chukar may be used in the land series of the Intermediate and Open stakes.

(C.) Mallard ducks or upland game birds shall be used in the water series of all stakes. Pigeons may be used in the water in the Novice class only if fresh Mallards are not available. If pigeons or game birds are used, a fresh bird will be used for each mark for each individual dog.

(D.) No live bird shall be used in any stake while under any form of restraint or physical impairment during the trial.

(E.) The UFTC shall appoint one or more game stewards to care for all live birds. It shall be the steward's primary job to ensure that all game birds are properly cleaned and processed.

IX. Marshals

The UFTC 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 talks to the judges while a dog is working.

The marshal shall also advise the handlers and judges as to the boundaries of the course. The marshal has the authority to control the gallery and may excuse anyone who does not comply with his/her instructions.

X. Additional Guidelines

(A.) At the handler's option, in any stake, a dog may run with a flat collar. Choke, pinch, prong, spike collars and electric or dummy collars shall not be worn by a dog on the field trial grounds. During the water work, dogs may wear neoprene vests. These vests may not include any flotation inserts.

(B.) In all stakes on land, if flushed birds are missed or cannot be shot safely, dead birds should be thrown and a shotgun fired for the dog to make its retrieve(s) so that retrieving ability may be judged.

(C.) 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 UFT Secretary within five (5) days of the completion of the trial.

(D.) The UFTC will designate an exercise/airing area. Serious training, severe correction, or disciplining of dogs is not permitted on any part of the field trial grounds.

(E.) Handlers are responsible for controlling their dogs at all times. Any dog or handler interfering with the testing of another dog may be subject to disqualification at the judges' discretion.

(F.) 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 obliged by the judges, marshal or UFTC to leave the trial grounds.

(G.) Unless otherwise instructed by the judges, dogs are being tested from the time that they are called to the line until they have left same and are behind the judges and on leash/lead.

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

(I.) Handlers must not allow their dog to view the water series test of the class(es) in which they are entered. Violation of this section is grounds for elimination.

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

(K.) Dogs that require help from bird boys/bird throwers will be disqualified; Stone or object throwing is not permissible.

(L.) Dogs will be eliminated 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 UFTC the expulsion of a dog under this section. The UFTC may then expel the dog from all other stakes at the event, if in their opinion, such action is warranted. The UFTC Secretary shall submit to the Board of Directors of the BSS a complete report of any action taken under this section.

(M.) A re-run may be granted if, in the opinion of the judges, an unfair or unforeseen circumstance occurs during the trial. 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.

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

(O.) Dogs shall be worked singly in all stakes with the order of running decided by lot at the draw for all stakes. Such draw shall be determined by the UFTC in advance. 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 UFTC such running order change will result in a reasonable and desirable saving of time in the conduct of the event.

(P.) Trapped birds shall not count as flushed birds. Birds are considered flushed when they take wing.

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

(R.) Open, Intermediate and Novice dogs should be sent on all reasonable retrieves as long as they are safe (no fences, roads, etc.). On long falls, the handler may, after sending the dog, move up to within reasonable proximity of the fall in order to handle the dog.

(S.) Disqualifying traits, Refusal to hunt, Blinking birds, Failure to find birds, Viciousness, gun shyness, out of control, Hard mouth, Retrieve refusal, Abandoning game to pursue other interests,

(T.) Mechanical wingers may be used in the Water series.

(U.) Unsportsmanlike Conduct

(1.) 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 event in accordance with paragraph (4.) of this section.

(2.) Any person who displays unsportsmanlike conduct, or is seen to kick, strike, or otherwise roughly treat a dog while on the grounds of the field trial at any time during the running of such event, may be expelled from the trial by the UFTC, which shall act in accordance with paragraph (4.) of this section.

(3.) 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 UFTC and the UFTC shall act in accordance with paragraph (4.) of this section.

4) The UHTC 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. 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 run by that handler, trainer or owner involved. If the UHTC, 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 UHTC 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 Field Procedures for the Novice Class

Sec. 1.

The Novice Dog Field test shall consist of a minimum of four (4) series, which shall include the following: All Novice dogs will have the opportunity to run the first upland series and flush and retrieve two (2) birds. Those dogs successfully completing the first series will be invited to run a second upland series and flush and retrieve up to two (2) more birds. Scores will be totaled after the first day and carry over to the next day's tests. All dogs will be invited back to the third series. At the end of the three field series, the judges will decide which dogs have earned sufficient points to be invited to the water for a single marked water retrieve not to exceed 30 yards. Additional series (land or water) may be run should the judges deem this necessary. Time, weather, or other constraints may affect this section.

Sec. 2.

Novice dogs must find and have an opportunity to flush and retrieve two (2) birds in each of the land series. Time, weather, or other constraints may affect this section. The judges will have the final say on the number of bird contacts and retrieves.

Sec. 3.

A Novice dog must demonstrate a desire to hunt in an enthusiastic manner and demonstrate the ability to retrieve. The Novice dog should show no fear of cover, exhibit a reasonable response to commands (Whistle, hand, or verbal), and maintain a reasonable working distance from its handler. (The Novice dog does not need to be steady to wing and /or shot).

Sec. 3. A

The Novice dog should be a pleasurable hunting companion. Running out of control and clearing a field of birds is not a preferred ability. The Novice dog does not need to be steady to wing and /or shot. However, the Novice dog should show a degree of control that allows the handler to call the dog off of a flyaway, so as not to clear the field of other birds.

Sec. 4.

If the dog is unable to demonstrate its ability to retrieve on land following the second bird contact, the judges will set up a single marked retrieve test. The dog is required to be steady at the point of origin; however, it may have a leash line or slip lead around its neck and/or may be held by gently placing a hand on the chest of the dog to achieve steadiness. This test shall consist of one retrieve from a distance of no more than forty (40) yards. A designated gunner shall fire a shot when the bird is thrown, but only after receiving full instruction from a judge. Completion of this test will satisfy the requirement that the dog completes at least one marked land retrieve.

Sec. 5.

If the Novice dog finds and flushes two birds and the gunners miss both birds, then that will be considered A No-bird, and the judges will set up a single marked retrieve test. See Section 4.

Sec. 6.

A Novice dog may be restrained gently on line at the Water series by means of a slip lead or a finger under the collar as long as the dog is not leaping into the air and/or pulling strenuously against the handler.

Sec. 7.

Novice dogs are not required to deliver to hand; however, retrieves must be completed to close proximity (generally within two (2) steps) of the handler. Excessive shouting, whistling, or signaling shall be considered a moderate fault and scored accordingly.

Sec. 8.

During the Water series, bird boys shall be in clear view of the dog. Bird boys shall use an attention-getting device (duck call, voice, or a blank firearm) prior to the bird being thrown. In addition, when the bird reaches the top of its arc, a designated gunner will fire a shot from the line.

A. Should the handler opt not to restrain the dog, a controlled break shall not fail a dog but shall result in a reduction in score. If a dog is immediately steadied by non-excessive voice or whistle, a controlled break is a minor infraction.

B. Bank running, while not preferred, is permitted.

C. A novice dog may be cast two (2) times from the line.

Regulations and Field Procedures for the Intermediate Class:

Sec. 1.

The Intermediate Dog Field test shall consist of a minimum of four (4) series, which shall include the following: The first series will give each dog the opportunity to flush and retrieve two (2) birds. The second series will include the opportunity to flush and retrieve up to two (2) birds. The 3rd series will have the opportunity to flush and retrieve up to two (2) birds or a marked retrieve on land, and the 4th series will consist of two single marked water retrieves at a distance not to exceed forty (40) yards in open water. A diversionary mark may be thrown during the dog's return of the final water retrieve. Additional series (land or water) may be run should the judges deem it necessary. Time, weather or other constraints may affect this section.

Sec. 2.

Intermediate dogs must find, and have an opportunity to flush and retrieve to hand at least two (2) birds in each land series. Time, weather, or other constraints may affect this section. The judges will have the final say on the number of bird contacts and retrieves.

Sec. 3.

The Intermediate dog must show true boldness to cover, a pattern addressing the course objectives and an intense desire to hunt. A proper working distance and independent hunting sense should be maintained. An Intermediate dog should not constantly look to the handler for directions and should not give the appearance of being led to the birds.

Sec. 4.

Intermediate dogs are required to be steady to flush, shot, and fall. Controlled breaks will not be penalized. The Intermediate dog is not expected to be a polished performer, and moderate voice and whistle commands are acceptable to gain compliance.

Sec. 5.

If the dog is unable to demonstrate its ability to mark and retrieve on land following the third bird contact, the judges will set up a single marked retrieve test. The dog is required to be line steady. This test shall consist of one retrieve from a distance of no more than forty yards. A designated gunner shall

fire a shot when the bird is thrown, but only after receiving full instruction from a judge. Completion of this test will satisfy the requirement that the dog completes at least one marked land retrieve.

Sec. 6.

An Intermediate dog must be line steady at the Water series and deliver all birds to hand.

- A. The judges are responsible for determining when the handler is to send the dog.
- B. Bank running, while permitted, must be kept to a minimum.
- C. The Intermediate dog should show eagerness to enter the water; the dog may be cast two (2) times and after the second refusal to enter the water shall be disqualified.

Sec.7.

Handlers will be required to fire a shotgun (loaded with blanks) at each mark during the water test. Handlers are expected to shoulder, aim, track, and fire just as they would when hunting. GUN SAFETY IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE. Mishandling of a firearm will result in immediate disqualification.

Sec. 8.

Bird boys may be hidden or in clear view of the dog. Prior to throwing each mark, bird boys must use an attention-getting device.

Sec. 9.

The water marks must be widely separated with an angle of at least forty-five (45) degrees between the two falls.

Regulations and Field Procedures for the Open Class

Sec. 1.

The Open Dog stake shall consist of a minimum of four (4) series, at least two of which shall be field tests. One series shall consist of a double mark with an honor, on water at a distance not to exceed fifty (50) yards. All marks shall be thrown in a manner that would simulate birds shot during the course of a day of upland hunting. One series shall be a blind retrieve at a distance not to exceed fifty (50) yards and may be run on land or water. Blind retrieves shall not be incorporated with marked retrieves; therefore, they **MUST** be run from a different line. Additional series (land or water) may be run should the judges deem it necessary. Time, weather, or other constraints may affect this section.

Sec. 1a.

In the Open stake only, Judges shall have the option to run the dogs in brace.

Sec. 2.

Open dogs must find, and have the opportunity to flush and retrieve to hand at least two (2) birds in each land series. Under reasonable conditions, not more than ten (10) minutes per series should be required to find birds.

Sec. 3.

An Open dog must show all of the attributes of the Intermediate dog, but must also give a finished performance clearly defining it as such. It must be under the control of the handler at all times and must be handled kindly with an absolute minimum of noise and hacking by the handler. An Open dog must show a keen desire to hunt, must have a bold and attractive manner of running, and must demonstrate not only intelligence in seeking objectives, but also excellent ability to find game. The open dog must hunt for its handler at all times at a suitable gun range, showing a fine Spaniel pattern and experienced hunting independence. The dog must locate game, flush with intent, and must be absolutely steady to wing and shot without excessive handling in both land and water testing. Intelligent use of the wind and terrain in locating game, an accurate nose, and intensity are essential.

Sec. 4.

An Open dog must be steady to wing and shot and will be disqualified for the failure to demonstrate this trained ability. A controlled break shall not necessarily fail the dog, but may be considered a serious fault. Repeated evidence of unsteadiness shall be cause for elimination.

Sec. 4a.

When running braced, a dog may be excused or not called back to a subsequent series for the following reasons: failing to honor another dog's retrieve, interfering with brace mates' hunt, failing a retrieve, passing a bird, poaching (finding a bird on the other dog's course)

Sec. 5.

If the dog is unable to demonstrate its ability to mark and retrieve on land following the third bird contact, the judges will set up a single marked retrieve test. The dog is required to be steady. This test shall consist of one retrieve from a distance of no more than sixty yards. A designated gunner shall fire a shot when the bird is thrown, but only after receiving full instruction from a judge. Completion of this test will satisfy the requirement that the dog completes at least one marked land retrieve.

Sec. 6.

An Open dog must be steady at the line in the Water series and must deliver all birds to hand. The Open dog must show eagerness to enter the water. Excessive handling, including whistle and/or cast refusals, on water marks shall be judged a moderate fault.

Sec. 7.

Handlers will be required to fire a shotgun (loaded with blanks) at each mark during the water test. Handlers are expected to shoulder, aim, track, and fire just as they would if hunting. GUN SAFETY IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE. Mishandling of a firearm will result in immediate disqualification.

Sec. 8.

Bird boys may be hidden or in clear view of the dog. Prior to throwing each mark, the bird boys must use an attention-getting device.