

General Procedures, Regulations and Field Procedures and Judging Guidelines For NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests

PLEASE NOTE: The information in this document applies to all Approved and Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Tests held after January 1, 2009.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROCEDURES

A. INTRODUCTION

The North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc., (NAHRA), is a not for profit corporation existing by virtue of the laws of the State of Delaware with its principal office at P.O. Box 5159, Fredericksburg, VA 22403. NAHRA was created in 1983 to preserve the hunting instincts of our retriever breeds. For years, small groups throughout the country conducted gun dog stakes and tested dogs, one against another, to find the top dog. NAHRA revolutionized the retriever world by testing dogs against a written hunting standard. Today, NAHRA has clubs throughout North America and continues to test and reward the hunting retriever and to maintain computerized records of those dogs and their working accomplishments.

The principal purpose of the corporation is to educate the public in the use of purebred hunting retrievers as conservation animals and to promote the field-testing of retrievers in simulated hunting situations.

NAHRA's purpose in establishing this concept is to discover and reward dogs that can fulfill the hunter's needs in the field by performing in a manner consistent with the demands of actual hunting conditions. The purpose is not to confront the dog with trick problems, but rather to test the dog's natural ability and acquired training. NAHRA Field Tests utilize duck blinds, numerous decoys, boats, calls and other hunting implements in a manner simulating normal hunting. Under the NAHRA concept, the objective is to recover the bird as quickly and efficiently as possible, to create the least amount of disturbance in the marsh and upland and to give the hunter the maximum amount of time to actually take game.

Dogs are placed in five categories based on ability not age: Beginner, Started, Hunter, Intermediate and Senior. Dogs do not compete against one another for placements, but rather their performances are judged individually against a "standard."

B. CLUB INFORMATION

The North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc., acting through its Board of Directors, may, at its discretion, grant permission to clubs affiliated with it to hold Approved or Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Tests. The following General Procedures, Regulations, Field Procedures and Judging Guidelines govern these Hunting Retriever Field Tests. The North American Hunting Retriever Association Board of Directors reserves the right to waive or change any of the following without prior notice.

A Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test is a formal field test at which points toward the titles. Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion (GMHRCH), Grand Master Hunting Retriever (GMHR), Master Hunting Retriever (MHR), Working Retriever (WR), Hunting Retriever (HR), or Started Hunting Retriever (SR) may be awarded.

An Approved NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test is an informal field test at which dogs may participate but at which points toward the titles Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion (GMHRCH), Grand Master Hunting Retriever (GMHR), Master Hunting Retriever (MHR), Working Retriever (WR), Hunting Retriever (HR) or Started Hunting Retriever (SR) shall not be awarded.

To affiliate with NAHRA a club must make application on a form prescribed by the Board of Directors, available from NAHRA's principal office, and must pay the prescribed annual club fee. Additionally, all affiliated clubs or associations which hold Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests are required to pay the prescribed fee per dog per category (currently \$5.00 per dog in Started, Hunter, Intermediate and Senior for NAHRA members and \$10.00 per dog per entry for non NAHRA members). All fees are set by the NAHRA Board of Directors and are subject to change by them without prior notice. No fee is charged to a club for filing the official application to hold an Approved or Licensed event.

Each affiliated club or association, if so licensed, may hold an unlimited number of Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests each year. Approval for both Licensed and Approved NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests is granted solely by the NAHRA Board of Directors. Application for such events must be made upon a form available from NAHRA's principal office. Unless waived by an officer of the corporation, clubs must file official application forms for Approved or Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Tests with NAHRA at least eight (8) weeks before the date of the Field Test.

All approvals or licenses are non transferable and are valid only for the dates indicated thereon.

In order to avoid conflicts, clubs must schedule dates through their Regional Director well in advance of filing official applications for Field Tests. An annual regional calendar of events for the coming year is prepared by the Regional Director to coordinate activities within each Region, to promote cooperation between affiliated clubs and to provide information to members. An official Field Test application must also be filed by clubs with NAHRA's principal office (as described below.)

Tests MAY be held on the same date for clubs in the same geographical region, however every effort should be made to avoid such conflicts and Regional Directors should cooperate to minimize such occurrences.

Copies of the latest edition of this booklet for all Judges and Field Test Committee Members should be available at all NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests.

Any club holding a NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test must name a Field Test Secretary who

must be a member of the club. The name, address and phone number of the Field Test Secretary will be provided to NAHRA at the time official application is made for an Approved or Licensed Field Test. A club that has been granted permission by NAHRA to hold an Approved or Licensed Field Test must appoint a Field Test Committee which will have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the test. This committee must be composed of at least five members of the club, including the Field Test Secretary. A majority of the Field Test Committee must be present on the Field Test grounds during an Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test.

The Field Test Committee and Field Test Secretary are responsible for compliance with all General Procedures and General Regulations contained in Chapters I and II of this booklet. Clubs are required to carry liability insurance for the Field Test. All Field Tests should be reviewed by a Field Test Committee member(s) to insure NAHRA standards are observed.

The judges are responsible for compliance with the General Procedures, Regulations for Hunting Retriever Field Tests, Chapter I & II and the Regulations and Field Procedures and Guidelines for Judging NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests, Chapters III through VII.

The Field Test Committee of a club holding an Approved or Licensed Field Test has the authority to decide by its majority vote any matter arising during the running of the test, except matters concerning the judging of a dog's performance which is within the sole jurisdiction of the judges. All such decisions may be reviewed by NAHRA and canceled or amended.

C. SELECTION OF JUDGES

To be eligible to judge a Licensed NAHRA Field Test, candidates are required to have fulfilled the latest policy requirements as designated by the Board of Directors. The latest policy and list of eligible judges can be obtained from the NAHRA Office or from the NAHRA Web Site. NAHRA will maintain and update these documents as warranted.

It is the club's responsibility to select the people most experienced, who are accomplished and unbiased, to be judges, for by their verdicts, they are in direct control of the future breeding stock of the hunting retriever. The decision of the judges is final in all matters concerning the field performance of the dogs under judgment.

NAHRA uses a point system for its judges. Each time an individual judges a Licensed field test he/she is awarded one point in that particular category. A point earned for judging a given stake will count toward that stake and all stakes below. For example points earned for judging Intermediate are points that count toward Intermediate, Hunter and Started but *not* toward Senior.

There must be a combined total of five (5) or more points, in a specific judging category, between the two judges, in order for the category to be approved as a point bearing event.

A judge cannot handle or enter a dog in the categories in which he has been assigned to judge. A judge cannot handle a dog in any other category until the category he has been assigned to judge has been completed.

A substitute “principal” judge may be appointed by the club holding an Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test if it is impossible for the judge shown on the Field Test Application to fulfill or complete his or her assignment. A substitute judge must be a NAHRA certified judge and a member in good standing (dues paid and not currently under disciplinary action by NAHRA) with the North American Hunting Retriever Association.

In a Field Test, an additional pair of “principal” judges may be approved to officiate the category if the entries exceed 40 Started dogs, 20 Intermediate dogs or 20 Senior dogs. Such additional judges must be members who are in good standing (dues paid and not currently under disciplinary action by NAHRA) with NAHRA and currently approved to judge by NAHRA.

Prompt notification will be sent to NAHRA and the Regional Director in advance of the Field Test if possible, of any substitute or additional judges officiating at a Licensed Field Test, and of the reasons for the change.

“Apprentice” judges may be invited to judge along with the “principal” judges, however, they will not be awarded any points for judging nor will their scoring points be averaged in with the two principal judges' scores.

Neither a Field Test Secretary nor a member of the Field Test Committee may judge at any Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test while they are also acting as Field Test Secretary or as a Field Test Committee member

No judge may officiate in the same category more than five times in a Region within a calendar year, nor may an individual judge the same category more than once on any given weekend.

Upon request, NAHRA will mail an updated Judges' List that contains the name, address and point totals of all judges in good standing with NAHRA. It is then the responsibility of the Field Test Committee to select and invite the best judges that are available.

D. ELIGIBILITY

All purebred Labrador Retrievers, Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Curly-Coated Retrievers, Flat-Coated Retrievers, Irish Water Spaniels, Boykin Spaniels, American Water Spaniels, English Springer Spaniels, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers, Barbet, and Poodles registered with the American Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club, United Kennel Club, Boykin Spaniel Society, American Field Dog Stud Book or America’s Pet Registry are eligible to enter and participate in Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field tests. Other purebred breeds and other breed registries may also be approved by the Board of Directors.

A dog who is unregistered or registered with an unapproved registry or is from an ineligible breed may participate in Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests if it has been issued a Field Test Number (FTN) by the NAHRA Board of Directors. The Field Test Number must be shown on each entry form. A Field Test Number may be issued by the NAHRA Board of Directors upon receipt of the designated form accompanied by such supporting information and fees as the Board may require (currently \$5.00). Dogs holding Field Test Numbers are not eligible for the titles Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion (GMHRCH), Grand Master Hunting Retriever (GMHR), Master Hunting Retriever (MHR), Working Retriever (WR), Hunting Retriever (HR), and Started Hunting Retriever (SR). Dogs holding Field Test Numbers are eligible for the Brass Band program for Started, Hunter and Intermediate dogs and are eligible to participate in the Regional Field Tests.

A dog is not eligible to be entered in a testing category at a Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test if a judge of that category or any member of the judge's immediate family or household has owned, leased, trained or handled the dog within one year of the starting date of the Hunting Retriever Field Test. The words "immediate family" means spouse, children (natural or adopted), parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings and any other person residing in the same household or who has so resided within one year next preceding the date of the Hunting Retriever Field Test.

The word "person" as used in this booklet includes any individuals, partnership, firm, corporation, joint venture, association or organization of any kind. The words "Board of Directors" refer to the Board of Directors of the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. The word "dog" as used in this booklet, unless otherwise specified, includes a dog of any age and either sex.

Every person who owns a dog or dogs, who are entered in an Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test, must keep for at least seven years complete and correct records concerning the animal or animals. The Board of Directors of NAHRA may, by regulation, designate the specific information which must be included in such records. However, every person who owns a dog or dogs who are entered in an Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test must follow such practices and keep such records as will eliminate all possibility of error in identification or registration of any individual dog. All records and the dog must be furnished or exhibited to an authorized representative of NAHRA upon demand.

The NAHRA Board of Directors may refuse to allow entry of any dog, without hearing, in any Approved or Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test or to record the points acquired by any dog in any such event, for any failure to abide by any of the requirements set forth herein.

Without hearing, any person or club who fails to abide by any of the requirements set forth herein may be suspended from all privileges of the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. by the Board of Directors.

The North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. assumes no liability whatsoever concerning any of its services, certificates or titles. All dogs are entered in any Approved or

Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test solely at the risk of their owner, and the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. assumes no risk or liability whatsoever therefore.

E. CODE OF CONDUCT

The North American Hunting Retriever Association's clubs and members, The Field Test Committee of a NAHRA Approved or Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test, NAHRA Judges, and all participants in such events, must without any reservation whatsoever follow and abide by all rules, procedures and regulations of the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc., and in addition will not condone, tolerate, or allow on the Field Test Grounds or otherwise participate therein:

1. Any unruly, and/or unsportsmanlike behavior or conduct, or foul or offensive language.
2. The possession of an open container of alcoholic beverages, or the drinking of alcoholic beverages or the use or possession of substances, without valid prescription, which are controlled or regulated by federal, state, or local statutes or regulations during the conduct of a Field Test.
3. Any unsafe or careless conduct that could endanger other persons or their property.
4. Any activity, which is not in the best interest of, or discredits, the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc., or its Licensed or Approved Field Tests.
5. Any illegal activity prohibited by any federal, state, or local statute, ordinance or regulation.

Any person found to be in violation of the foregoing must immediately be removed from the venue.

The Field Test Committee for an Approved or Licensed Field Test has the authority to decide by its majority vote any matter that may arise during the planning or running of the test. All such decisions may be reviewed by NAHRA and cancelled or amended. The Field Test Secretary must submit to NAHRA a complete report of any action taken by either the Field Test Committee or the Judges. Any club, organization, or individual hosting a NAHRA Approved or Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test and found to be in violation of the foregoing may be subject to disciplinary measures from NAHRA.

In addition, hosting clubs may by vote of their officers preclude from participation persons whose conduct has been demonstrated to be in violation of the above.

Misconduct by entered dogs to include excessive aggression or fighting will be reported by the Field Test Committee to the NAHRA office for resolution. See current NAHRA policy for specific information.

NAHRA reserves the right to take any additional measures it deems appropriate, which may include but shall not be limited to expulsion from and/or denial of the benefits of NAHRA.

F. ENTRIES

A premium list printed or typed on good quality paper must be provided for Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests. The premium list for a Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test will be printed or typed (any printing or copying process is acceptable) and must bear on its cover the words "Licensed by North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc." and include an official entry form as prescribed by the Board of Directors.

All service marks, trademarks and copyrights of The North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. shall be respected and correctly used.

In addition to the official entry form, the following information must be included on the premium list for a Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test: Name of club, location, date, names of officers with address of Club Secretary, time of judging, entry fees, categories to be tested, names and addresses of judges together with their judging assignments, name and address of Field Test Secretary, date and time of closing and drawing of entries. Premium lists must also specify the type or types of birds to be used. Printed premium lists will be 8 ½" x 11" in size. A copy of the premium list must be provided to NAHRA. For its convenience, a club may fold the premium list in half to reduce the size to 8 ½" x 5 ½".

For a Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test, entries must close at least one day prior to the day of the Hunting Retriever Field Test but may not close earlier than the fourteenth day preceding the start of the event. A club holding a Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test cannot accept any entries received after the specified closing time and date.

It is the club's sole decision in determining the required entry fees for each category for both Approved and Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Tests. However, in the event a dog is scratched, prior to the time of the stated draw, a full refund shall be given to the owner of the dog. If a dog is scratched after the drawing is held, NAHRA recommends that all monies be refunded with the exception of a minimal scratch fee (\$10.00 to \$20.00) to cover costs incurred by the Field Test giving club.

At the option of the Field Test giving club, a numerical limit may be imposed on entries in any or all testing categories offered at a particular event. If entries are to be limited, the numerical limitation must be stated in the premium list and the following will be complied with:

1. The host club shall mail a premium and entry form to their normal mailing list. At the discretion of the club, the premium may also be posted on the NAHRA web page.
2. Premiums and entry forms must also be mailed to all other individuals that contact the club requesting information.

3. On the closing date, all entries will be put into a lottery.
4. Dogs will be drawn at random, one at a time, until the numerical limit has been reached.
5. The remainder of the entries are to be drawn, one at a time, to establish alternates.
6. In the event that a dog is “scratched,” a substitute must be selected from the alternate list. The first name on the alternate list will be contacted and given the opportunity to run and so on down the list of alternates until a replacement is found.
7. In the event the same category is being judged more than once, and they are limited entry stakes, after the lottery takes place for the first Field Test, all entries will be put into the drawing for the next event and steps 3, 4, 5 and 6 above will be repeated.
8. The handler or owner of each dog that has been drawn to actually participate in the event will be contacted within 72 hours of the drawing by phone or mail.

For unlimited entry Field Tests, the order of running will be decided by random drawing. When, in the opinion of the judges, time would be saved, dogs may be run in an order different from the order in which they were drawn. In the case of multiple stakes being run concurrently the Field Test Committee via its marshals may manipulate the order in the interest of efficiency.

A typed or printed catalog is not required for Approved or Licensed Field Tests. However, a Field Test Secretary, upon completion of the draw, will type, in order of the draw, a list of all dogs and handlers participating in each category. This list will be posted at the Field Test headquarters and made available to all handlers.

Upon completion of the Field Test, the Field Test Secretary must have all judges for each category initial the appropriate space on the official entry form for all participating dogs. Additionally, the Field Test Secretary will provide NAHRA with a separate typed list of all participating dogs in each category and identify them as having passed or not. The typed list must include all information listed on the official entry form, for each qualifying dog, together with the name of the Club, date of the Field Test and names of all persons who judged in each category. The Field Test Secretary will, within nineteen (19) working days of the end of the Field Test, forward an original typed list of participating dogs indicating their qualifying status, which will include all the information that appears on the official entry form (catalogs are unacceptable), together with the official entry form for each qualified dog, initialed by the judges, the original Field Test Report form (yellow sheet) and all appropriate fees (currently \$5.00 for NAHRA members per dog per run in Started, Hunter, Intermediate and Senior and \$10.00 per dog per run for non-NAHRA members for each dog run in Started, Hunter, Intermediate and Senior) to NAHRA headquarters.

Any incomplete or incorrect reports, and the results thereof, will not be processed by NAHRA and will be returned to the Field Test Secretary for correction. All such reports or lists will be immediately corrected and returned to NAHRA within fifteen (15) days of receipt of notice that they are incorrect or incomplete.

Without hearing, an affiliate club whose Field Test Secretary is late filing all such information and fees may be suspended from holding Approved or Licensed NAHRA Field Tests and such other penalties may be imposed as the Board of Directors may prescribe. The club must retain copies of all documents for its records for seven (7) years.

Each official individual entry form must be completed in full and the information given on the form must be that which applies to the entered dog. Each entry form must be signed by the owner (who is responsible for all errors) or the owner's agent duly authorized to make the entry. The Board of Directors shall prescribe the official entry form.

No entry will be accepted from any person who is not in good standing with the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. on the day of closing of the entries. In the case of entry by a partnership, every member of the partnership must be in good standing with NAHRA before the entry will be accepted; and in the case of any infraction of these procedures, all the partners will be held equally responsible.

No dog will be entered or run in any Field Test and, if brought onto the Field Test grounds, will be immediately removed if it shows any symptoms of, and is known to have been in contact with, any communicable disease within the 30 days next preceding the first date of the Field Test.

No Field Test giving club will in any way discriminate between entrants on the basis of race, sex or national origin. No prize money may be offered or awarded. Without hearing, any club guilty of violating this procedure may be barred by the NAHRA Board of Directors from holding Licensed or Approved Field Tests, and may be expelled from NAHRA affiliation. All persons in violation of the foregoing may be disciplined by the NAHRA Board of Directors without hearing and may be deprived of all privileges of NAHRA for a specified Period or indefinitely.

If an ineligible dog has been entered and run in any category at a Licensed Field Test, or if the person or persons named as owner or owners on the entry form are not the person or persons who actually owned the dog at the time entries closed, or if a dog is run in a category for which it has not been entered, or if its entry form is deemed invalid by NAHRA under these procedures, all resulting awards, titles or certificates may, without hearing, be canceled by NAHRA, and such dog shall be deemed not to have participated. In cases where cancellation occurs, all prizes, certificates or titles shall be returned to NAHRA within ten (10) days of the time notice from NAHRA of said cancellation is sent to the last known address of the owner.

G. POINTS, AWARDS, CERTIFICATES AND TITLES

The total number of points required for certification in each test category, eligibility for any national event and for the issuance of the Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion, Grand Master Hunting Retriever, Master Hunting Retriever, Working Retriever, Hunting Retriever and Started Hunting Retriever titles shall be established by the Board of Directors of the North

American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and may be changed without notice at any time. Additionally, the Board of Directors requires that the owners of all dogs attaining all titles and certificates of eligibility in any national event be members in good standing of NAHRA.

In order to attain a Qualifying score in any testing category, a dog must, in the opinion of the judges, pass all tests in that category and attain a final average score of not less than eighty percent (80%).

A dog receiving a Qualifying score in the Started testing category at a Licensed NAHRA Field Test will be credited with two and one half (2.5) points toward the title Started Hunting Retriever (SR). The title Started Hunting Retriever (SR) will be issued to the owner of a dog acquiring ten (10) points in the Started testing category at Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests. In order to be recorded as a Started Hunting Retriever a dog must be an approved purebred breed registered with an approved breed registry. Upon completion of these requirements, a dog will be recorded as a Started Hunting Retriever (SR) by the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and, where appropriate, may display the title Started Hunting Retriever or the initials SR before its name.

A dog that qualifies in four Licensed NAHRA Started Field Tests within a regionally determined qualifying year will receive the Started Brass Band Award. A dog will be allowed to receive the Started Brass Band Award each and every year that it qualifies in four or more Licensed Started Field Tests within a regionally determined qualifying year and will be eligible to participate in the NAHRA Regional Field Test Program.

A dog receiving a Qualifying score in the Hunter testing category at a Licensed NAHRA Field Test will be credited with two and a half (2.5) points toward the title Hunting Retriever (HR). The title Hunting Retriever (HR) will be issued to the owner of a dog acquiring ten (10) points in the Hunter testing category at Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests. In order to be recorded as a Hunting Retriever a dog must be an approved purebred breed registered with an approved breed registry. Upon completion of these requirements, a dog will be recorded as a Hunting Retriever (HR) by the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and, where appropriate, may display the title Hunting Retriever or the initials HR before its name.

A dog that qualifies in four Licensed NAHRA Hunter Field Tests within a regionally determined qualifying year, will receive the Hunter Brass Band Award. A dog will be allowed to receive the Brass Band Award each and every year that it qualifies in four or more Licensed Field Tests at the respective level within a regionally determined qualifying year and will be eligible to participate in the NAHRA Regional Field Test program.

A dog receiving a Qualifying score in the Intermediate testing category at a Licensed NAHRA Field Test will be credited with five (5) points toward the title Working Retriever (WR). The title Working Retriever (WR) will be issued to the owner of a dog acquiring twenty (20) points in the Intermediate testing category at Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests. In order to be recorded as a Working Retriever a dog must be an approved purebred breed registered with an approved breed registry. Upon completion of these requirements, a dog will be recorded as a

Working Retriever (WR) by the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and, where appropriate, may display the title Working Retriever or the initials WR before its name.

A dog that qualifies in four Licensed NAHRA Intermediate Field Tests within a regionally determined qualifying year, will receive the Intermediate Brass Band Award. A dog will be allowed to receive the Brass Band Award each and every year that it qualifies in four or more Licensed Field Tests at the respective level within a regionally determined qualifying year and will be eligible to participate in the NAHRA Regional Field Test program.

A dog receiving a Qualifying score in the Senior testing category at a Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test will be credited with twenty (20) points toward the title of Master Hunting Retriever (MHR). Dogs that have acquired points in the Senior testing category at Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests may continue to enter either the Started, Hunter or Intermediate testing categories. In order to be recorded as a Master Hunting Retriever (MHR) a dog must be an approved purebred breed registered with an approved breed registry and must have a record of having accumulated at least one hundred (100) points in the Senior testing category in Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests or have accumulated twenty (20) Intermediate points and eighty (80) Senior points in Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests. Upon completion of these requirements a dog will be recorded as a Master Hunting Retriever (MHR) by the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and, where appropriate, may display the title Master Hunting Retriever or the initials MHR before its name.

A Master Hunting Retriever that goes on to accumulate 300 or more points in the Senior testing category at Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests will be recorded as a Grand Master Hunting Retriever (GMHR) by the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and, where appropriate, may display the title Grand Master Hunting Retriever or the initials GMHR before its name. A Master Hunting Retriever that goes on to accumulate 1000 or more points in the Senior testing category at Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests will be recorded as a Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion (GMHRCH) by the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. and, where appropriate, may display the title Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion or the initials GMHRCH before its name.

The owners of all dogs who have acquired the title Grand Master Hunting Retriever Champion, Grand Master Hunting Retriever, Master Hunting Retriever, Working Retriever, Hunting Retriever or Started Hunting Retriever will immediately send to NAHRA a copy of the registration papers, certified by the owner, as being the papers for that particular dog. The award of all titles may be withheld pending receipt by NAHRA of these papers and this certification. Only one title certificate may be issued for each dog attaining a title, although a duplicate may be obtained upon certification by the owner that the original has been lost or destroyed and paying NAHRA a fee of \$20.00.

A dog that has acquired Licensed points in a higher category, may be run in a lower category and acquire the Licensed points available in that category.

A club holding a Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test will offer prize ribbons for

outright award.

The ribbons must at a minimum consist of:

- three (3) streamers with a center button and at least one row of rosettes
- the rosette will have “**NAHRA**” on the center button
- each center streamer must be at least two inches wide and eight inches long
- the two side streamers must be similar in length and width
- the color and/or pattern of the ribbon and streamers shall be chosen by the club
- the center streamer will be inscribed with the words “Qualifying Score”, the name of the club giving the test and the test category, as well as the words “Licensed Hunting Retriever Field Test”
- a tab can also be attached with additional information, such as date or location or title, if desired
- Invitational ribbons will be red, white and blue in color and regions may adopt a red, white and blue color scheme for Regional Field Tests. No other Approved or Licensed test may use these colors in combination.

H. Richard A. Wolters/NORTH AMERICAN HUNTING RETRIEVER ASSOCIATION, INC. “INVITATIONAL FIELD TEST”

At its discretion, the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. may hold an invitational field test called the “Richard A. Wolters/NAHRA INVITATIONAL.” The procedures governing the running of this Field Test shall be determined by the National Invitational Committee and currently are as follows:

1. Qualification and selection of participants for the Invitational shall be determined by the NAHRA Board of Directors. At present, senior dogs earning 100 or more points for the previous calendar year, first time Master Hunting Retrievers (MHR), GMHRCH and GMHR titled dogs are selected by NAHRA to run in a yearly Invitational Field Test.
2. Points are defined as only those points received for passing the Senior standard at a Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test.
3. Points for the Invitational will be accumulated during the period proposed by the Invitational Committee and subsequently approved by the Board of Directors. This period will be approximately one calendar year.
4. Unless otherwise designated by the Invitational Committee, the Invitational will be a four-day Field Test. If a threshold of 60 entries is achieved a fifth day may be added to the event at the discretion of the Field Test Committee.

5. There will be strict adherence to the NAHRA Regulations and Field Procedures for Senior Hunting Retriever Field Tests, as well as the Guidelines for Judging NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests.
6. The Invitational Committee will propose a field of judges for the approval of the BOD.
7. The Invitational Committee will propose the location and dates for the Invitational for BOD approval.
8. All dogs that pass the Invitational Field Test shall have the honor of being named to the NAHRA HUNTING RETRIEVER TEAM for that particular year.
9. All dogs qualifying at the Richard A. Wolters /NAHRA Invitational shall be entitled to have a Roman numeral following its title to indicate the number of qualifications it has achieved at this event. For example an MHR completing its first Invitational Qualification would appear MHR I and a GMHR completing its 4th Invitational Qualification would appear GMHR IV.
10. All dogs receiving a qualifying score at the Invitational shall receive a total of 40 points for the event.
11. Participation in the Invitational may be limited to five dogs per handler and will be determined by the National Invitational Committee.

I. NORTH AMERICAN HUNTING RETRIEVER ASSOCIATION, INC. "REGIONAL FIELD TESTS"

Annually, at its discretion, the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. may hold the North American Hunting Retriever Association, Inc. "Regional Field Tests." The procedures governing the running of this Field Test shall be determined by NAHRA and currently are as follows:

1. Dogs with 10 or more annual points in the Started category, 10 or more annual points in the Hunter category, and dogs with 20 or more annual points in the Intermediate category will be selected by NAHRA to run in a yearly Field Test called the NORTH AMERICAN HUNTING RETRIEVER ASSOCIATION "REGIONAL."
2. Points are defined as only those points received for passing the Started, Hunter or Intermediate standard at a Licensed NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Test.
3. Points for the Regional Field Tests will be accumulated within a regionally determined qualifying year.
4. Selection of participants for the Regional Field Tests are described above in Chapter I, Section G, as set forth by the NAHRA Board of Directors.
5. There will be strict adherence to the NAHRA Regulations and Field Procedures for Started, Hunter and Intermediate Hunting Retriever Field Tests, as well as the Guidelines

for judging NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests.

6. Judges shall be approved by NAHRA to officiate at the events.
7. NAHRA shall approve the location and dates for the Regional Field Tests.
8. All dogs that pass the Regional Field Test shall have the honor of being named to the NAHRA HUNTING RETRIEVER TEAM for that particular year.

CHAPTER II: GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR HUNTING RETRIEVER FIELD TESTS

SECTION 1: The term “dog” herein includes males and females.

SECTION 2: Eligibility of a dog is determined by Chapter 1, Section D, not by the age of a dog.

SECTION 3: All tests will be judged by at least two judges.

- a. The judges are representatives of the NAHRA hunting retriever program and its “standards” and will abide by the Regulations and Field Procedures and the Guidelines for Judging Hunting Retriever Field Tests.
- b. The judges will set up all tests within the prescribed guidelines set forth in these Regulations and Field Procedures and must give paramount consideration to the simulation of actual hunting conditions.
- c. All tests will be set up within the prescribed distance and cover limitations of each particular category.
- d. Duck blinds, numerous decoys, boats, calls, and other hunting implements should be utilized in a manner simulating normal hunting.
- e. Judges shall decide on the placement of gunners and bird boys.
- f. Handlers, bird boys, gunners, judges and others shall be required to wear camouflaged or appropriate clothing. Clubs hosting Licensed Field Tests should be prepared to provide an appropriate covering for participating persons who do not come to the event with such clothing.
- g. Events will utilize live or dead pheasants, pigeons, ducks or other game birds. Clubs must make every effort to supply humanely cared for birds in good condition. NAHRA’s website has a valuable document referencing bird procurement and care.
- h. Shackled birds will not be used. However, live birds may be released for the trailing test.

SECTION 4: Moderate voice or whistle commands will be allowed to steady the dog at the point of origin. However, voice or whistle commands that are excessive, in the opinion of the judges, will be marked down. Intimidating or repeated use of excessive commands may be grounds for

elimination.

SECTION 5: A dog is to be released by the handler on the judges' command unless the judges otherwise direct the handler.

SECTION 6: While on the test grounds, a handler may not possess any exposed training aid that might intimidate a dog (including, but not limited to whip, quirt, cane, prod or similar implements). No dog may wear a collar while under judgment. A Started dog only may have a leash, line or slip lead around its neck or may be held by one hand to assist in achieving steadiness. Dogs in the Hunter category may be brought to the line on lead but the handler must discard or conceal it before signaling ready. No dog may be permitted to make a retrieve wearing a collar, leash, line or similar device.

SECTION 7: The judges of a particular category or the Field Test Committee has the authority to expel a handler from any further participation in a category if the handler possesses any exposed training aid or if unsportsmanlike conduct is observed on the part of the handler or the handler kicks, strikes, or otherwise manhandles or intimidates a dog while on the Field Test grounds. It is the duty of the judges or marshal of a category to promptly report to the Field Test Committee the expulsion of a handler from a category, and the Field Test Committee may then expel the handler from all other categories at that event, if in the Committee's opinion, such further action is warranted. Whenever a handler is expelled from a category or from participation at a Field Test, under this Section, the dog or dogs that he is handling may continue to be tested with another handler. The judges also have the authority to remove from further participation a dog who is a danger by fighting or excessive aggression to other dogs or participants. Again, the Field Test Committee must be notified and must document the incident and report it to the NAHRA office.

The Field Test Secretary must submit to NAHRA and the Regional Director a complete report of any action taken under this Section by either the Field Test Committee or the judges.

SECTION 8: Dogs requiring help from the bird boys will be disqualified. Stone or object throwing will not be allowed.

SECTION 9: Incidents of intentional hard-mouth resulting, in the opinion of the judges, in a bird unfit for the table is grounds for failing a test. The dog should pick up a bird tenderly but firmly and without delay. (A dog will be eliminated for hard-mouth or badly damaging game, but, before doing so, both judges should inspect the bird and be satisfied that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.)

SECTION 10: A dog unwilling to release a bird ("Sticking" or "Freezing") will be marked down. Repeated evidence is grounds for elimination.

SECTION 11: Bitches in season are not permitted on the test grounds.

SECTION 12: All persons participating in or observing any event are expected to maintain

reasonable silence and display good manners. Any person who interferes with the orderly process of any test may be obliged by the judges or the Field Test Committee to leave the test grounds.

SECTION 13: Prior to the start of each test, the judges will explain to the handlers the hunting scenario and the object of each test and expected performance of the dogs. (NAHRA's purpose in establishing these General Regulations and Field Procedures is to discover and reward dogs that can fulfill the hunter's needs in the field while performing in a manner consistent with the demands of actual hunting conditions. Tests will be designed to simulate a day's hunting afield. The purpose is not to confront the dog with trick problems, but rather to test the dog's natural ability and training.)

SECTION 14: A "test" shall be defined for these purposes as: The evaluation of a dog as required by the Regulations and Field Procedures and during which the dog is being scored.

SECTION 15: A judge will not place dogs in order of finish, nor will judges be requested to place dogs in order of finish for any purpose whatsoever.

SECTION 16: A judge is not required to discuss his or her judging evaluations with any participant. The decision of the judges is final. In the interest of improving performance NAHRA strongly encourages Judges to make time available to discuss their evaluation at the end of testing. This is not an opportunity for handlers to dispute or argue but rather gain insight to improving their performance. As part of the event the code of conduct applies during any such discussions.

SECTION 17: A dog should be cast from the point of origin only once, however, another attempt may be granted if, in the opinion of the judges, a dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin. If "recasts" are unsuccessful, the judges must fail the dog. If an initial misdirection is taken by a dog in the Started category and the handler immediately brings the dog back to heel, it may be given a "recast." A "recast" will never be granted to a Started dog that goes out into the field, establishes a hunt, does not find the bird and returns to its handler. This is grounds for elimination rather than another chance. ("No-goes" should be treated as a recast under this section.)

SECTION 18: A "No Bird" will be determined solely by the judges of the testing category, e.g. a flyer that is unintentionally missed by the gunners, or a bird that sinks during a water test, etc.

SECTION 19: A "Rerun" may be granted, if in the opinion of the judges, an unfair or unforeseen circumstance occurs during the test.

SECTION 20: The "Point of Origin" is the area in which the dog is located when the first bird becomes visible in a marking test or upland hunt, or the area designated by the judges as the starting point for the blind retrieve or trail.

SECTION 21: A "Controlled Break" occurs as soon as a dog leaves the point of origin and

manifests an intent to make the retrieve without being so ordered and is immediately stopped and brought under control. A “Controlled Break” occurs in the Senior upland hunting test when the dog has been steady to shot, but manifests an intent to retrieve after the shot. (See Chapter VI, Section 12.h.)

SECTION 22: “Creeping” should not be considered as a dog manifesting an intent to retrieve. Therefore, creeping will not be considered a break. However, if the creeping is excessive where it takes the dog out of the area of the point of origin, then it must be considered a controlled break and the handler will be required to control his/her dog, but the judges will not instruct the handler to re-heel the dog.

SECTION 23: Any dog who “interferes” with the working dog while under judgment and causes him to be unfairly evaluated will be eliminated from further testing. (This shall include but is not limited to honor dogs, brace mates in upland hunting, dogs in holding blinds and dogs in the gallery. Any dog that has been interfered with may, at the discretion of the judges, be granted a rerun.)

SECTION 24: Any dog that goes to the area of a fallen bird during a marking test and establishes a hunt, then leaves that area and establishes a hunt in the area of another fall will be eliminated (“switches its hunt”). This applies whether the area the dog has switched to contains a bird or is an old fall where the bird has already been retrieved. Similarly, on a multiple mark, a dog that returns to an old fall from the point of origin and establishes a hunt will be eliminated.

SECTION 25: In all categories hidden gunners and/or bird boys should be used in marking tests unless they are at the point of origin or unless a specific hunting scenario such as dove or pheasant hunting is presented. When hidden gunners or bird boys are used, an attention getting attraction shot or shots will be fired or a game call will be blown or a verbal attraction given prior to each bird being thrown and additionally, a shot will be fired when each bird is at the top of its arc.

Marks that are in excess of 35 yards will have a shot fired from the general location of the thrower. (It is the intent of these Regulations to provide the dog with adequate opportunity to focus its attention on the area of the fall and to simulate as closely as possible natural hunting conditions.)

SECTION 26: The handler will not point out the location of the gunners and bird boys to the dog prior to the time the first bird is thrown. (A violation of this Section is a major infraction and may result in elimination.)

SECTION 27: No participating dog may be trained on the designated Field Test grounds within two days prior to the start of the Field Test and until the Field Test has been completed. However, this shall not be construed to prohibit the Field Test Committee from establishing a training clinic which may be run in conjunction with an Approved or Licensed Field Test or an exercise area being designated on the test grounds during an event.

SECTION 28: Upon receipt of an application, NAHRA may license or approve its properly affiliated clubs to hold Beginner events for all dogs. Such events must be held in conjunction with Licensed or Approved NAHRA Hunting Retriever Field Tests.

Entries may not be limited and any dog may participate. NAHRA will keep no records of the events. Judges for the Beginner event need not be certified or accredited by NAHRA.

Each club shall establish its own rules by which dogs shall be judged in this informal event. However, under no circumstances will the rules be as restrictive as the requirements or the regulations governing the Started Hunting Retrievers, nor will they exceed those requirements.

Dogs successfully completing a NAHRA Beginner event shall be awarded a NAHRA Certificate of Merit. Certificates of Merit will be furnished to clubs by NAHRA upon request.

SECTION 29: All participants at Field Tests are individually responsible for safe gun handling, even for safely handling mock handler's guns. This is not a responsibility of NAHRA. The Field Test Committee is responsible for selection and training of live and popper gunners and should make every effort to ensure safe gun handling by all participants. Judges have special responsibilities in setting up tests to help the club assure gun safety. Judges may remind handlers to practice safe gun handling and in extreme cases, expel a handler for unsportsmanlike conduct for willfully unsafe gun handling. (In these cases, the dog can continue with a different handler. See Section 7 above in this Chapter.) Handlers will not be required to fire a gun at any time during an approved or licensed field test.

CHAPTER III: FIELD TEST REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE STARTED CATEGORY

NOTE: The passages enclosed in parentheses are additional guidelines for judges.

SECTION 1: A Started Hunting Retriever Field Test will consist of only (5) single bird marking tests at least two of which shall be marked water retrieves and at least two of which shall be marked land retrieves. The fifth marked retrieve may be either land or water.

(The purpose of the Started Hunting Retriever Field Test is to bring started dogs along as hunters. Desire and cooperation with the handler are important factors. It should consist of basic tests to evaluate the dog's natural and basic trained abilities.)

(The judges must 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 will be marked down. Repeated evidence is justification for elimination.)

SECTION 2: A 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 one hand only, to assist in achieving steadiness. No dog will be permitted to make a retrieve wearing a collar, leash, line or similar device. A controlled break will not fail a dog but will be marked down. If a dog is immediately brought under control, a controlled break is a minor infraction. (As soon as the dog leaves the point of origin and manifests an intent to make the retrieve, without being so ordered, it must be stopped.)

SECTION 3: A Started dog is not required to deliver to hand. However, the dog must 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. (The dog should return to the handler without delay. Moderate voice or whistle commands may be used. Repeated evidence of delayed return or excessive voice and whistle commands may be grounds for elimination.)

SECTION 4: A Started dog will usually be cast from the point of origin only once. However, a second attempt or "recast" may be granted if, in the opinion of the judges, a dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin. Also, if a Started dog who takes an initial misdirection and the handler immediately brings the dog back to heel, it may be given a "recast". A "recast" will never be granted to a dog that goes out into the field, establishes a hunt and does not find the bird and returns to the handler. This is grounds for elimination rather than a second chance. After two unsuccessful attempts the judges must fail the dog. (See Chapter II, Section 17 for "no-goes.")

SECTION 5: A Started dog may be handled on marked retrieves with voice/whistle/hand signals, if, in the opinion of the handler, the dog cannot find or has missed the mark. (The dog is being tested for its marking ability, not handling, however, a crisp cast is preferable to a long hunt. Repeated evidence of lack of marking ability or lack of control may be grounds for elimination.)

SECTION 6: Tests for this event must be held in appropriate cover.

- a. Maximum test distance on land will not exceed 75 yards.
- b. Maximum test distance on water will not exceed 50 yards.
- c. Dogs will not be required to honor another dog in this event.
- d. Diversions and dry shots (i.e. shots for which no bird appears or falls) are not allowed.

SECTION 7: Walkups will not be used in this category.

SECTION 8: Started handlers will not be required to handle a shotgun or similar device at any time.

CHAPTER IV: FIELD TEST REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE HUNTER CATEGORY

NOTE: The passages enclosed in parentheses are additional guidelines for judges.

SECTION 1: The Hunter Level Field Test will consist of three (3) tests, which will include the following: a double marked land retrieve; a double marked water retrieve; and a trailing test.

(The purpose of the Hunter Field Test is to bridge the gap between the Started and Intermediate Retriever levels. This is the level of performance where teamwork becomes an increasingly important quality in the handler and their dog. At a level just below Intermediate, the expectation of this level is a retriever that can meet many of the basic needs of the hunter as well as stay within the NAHRA concept of a conservation tool.)

SECTION 2: A dog will be steady at the point of origin (see subparagraph c of this Section. For marks, the point of origin is the point at which the dog is located at the time the first bird becomes visible.)

- a. A dog may be brought to the point of origin on lead but must be off lead before signaling ready. (How the dog is brought to the line is at the discretion of the handler. Judges may not require otherwise.)
- b. Moderate commands will be allowed to steady a dog at the point of origin.
- c. A dog will not be touched or patted at the point of origin.
- d. A controlled break will not fail a dog, but it must be considered a fault. (As soon as the dog leaves the point of origin and manifests the intent to make the retrieve without being so ordered, it must be stopped. If a dog is immediately brought under control, it will be considered a minor infraction. Repeated evidence of this fault may be considered serious and, in the opinion of the judges, an eliminating factor.)

SECTION 3: A dog will deliver all birds to hand. (The dog will return to the handler without delay.)

SECTION 4: A dog may be handled on marked retrieves with voice/whistle/hand signals, if, in the opinion of the handler, the dog cannot 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 elimination.)

SECTION 5: A dog may be cast from the point of origin only once. (If the attempt is unsuccessful, the judges must fail the dog unless, in the judge's opinion, the dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin, the judges may allow a recast. After a second unsuccessful attempt, the judges must fail the dog. See Chapter II, Section 17 for "no-goes.")

SECTION 6: The handler may be required to handle (but not carry) an empty shotgun with both

hands on the firearm and in the firing position.

SECTION 7: Tests for this event will be held in appropriate cover on land and water.

- a. Maximum test distance on land for double marked retrieves will not exceed 75 yards.
- b. Maximum test distance on water double marked retrieves will not exceed 50 yards.
- c. Minimum degree of separation for double marks will be no less than 45 degrees.

(At this level, it is our intent to test the dog's ability to perform introductory multiple marks. Concepts that require a higher level of training such as "in line" or "wipe out" birds are prohibited. The intent of subparagraph c is to keep the presentation of marks at the introductory level and prevent the use of complex concepts reducing the number of skill concepts required to meet the standard.)

SECTION 8: Tests for this event will consist of double marked retrieves on both land and water.

- a. Both birds must be down before the dog is released to retrieve.
- b. Triple marks will not be used.
- c. Dogs will not be required to honor another dog.
- d. Simultaneous falls of birds will not be used.
- e. Judges cannot determine the order and sequence ("selection") of the retrieves.
- f. Dogs will not be placed at a point of origin at a distance from the handler.
- g. The trailing test will not be used off of marks.

SECTION 9: No diversions of any kind will be utilized. (Again, it is the intent of this level to test the introductory multiple marking skills of retrievers. More diverse hunting situations will be added at the higher levels of testing. The amount of control that a handler possesses at this level is a step below the Intermediate.)

SECTION 10: Walkups to simulate jump shooting will not be used at this level. (Because the dogs may be brought to line on lead, this test is not appropriate.)

SECTION 11: Blind retrieves will not be used in this event. (This is the largest difference between the Hunter and the Intermediate levels. The standard at the Hunter Level is by design lower than the expectation of the Intermediate dog. The intent is to reduce the total number of skills a dog must master before reaching the Intermediate Level.)

SECTION 12: No upland hunting test will be used at this level.

SECTION 13: A trailing test will be used.

- a. The dog will be required to trail, locate a bird and deliver it to hand.
- b. The dog will be scored on its natural ability and the use of its nose to locate and follow

the trail.

- c. It does not matter in what manner the dog follows the trail.. The dog may stay precisely on the trail with nose down, or close quarter back and forth across the trail with head up, or run a few yards downwind of the trail with his head held high. It is the intent of this test to have a dog indicate scent, follow the trail and locate the bird in a natural hunting manner.
- d. A dog may be urged to hunt by moderate voice or whistle commands.
- e. Judges may restrict entry of the handlers into the area of the trail.
- f. Hand signals are inappropriate and may not be used other than to put the dog onto the beginning of the trail.
- g. Dogs must be required to trail a minimum distance of 30 yards and will not exceed 50 yards. (Judges are urged to create a trail that simulates a realistic scenario and not to simply go through the motions with a straight-line drag.)

CHAPTER V: FIELD TEST REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE INTERMEDIATE CATEGORY

NOTE: The passages enclosed in parentheses are additional guidelines for judges.

SECTION 1: An Intermediate Field Test will consist of six (6) tests which will include the following: An upland hunting test; a blind retrieve on land, a blind retrieve on water; a double marked land retrieve; a doubled marked water retrieve; and a trailing test. (The purpose of the Intermediate Hunting Retriever Test is to bring working dogs to a higher standard of performance. Desire and teamwork with the handler are important factors. They shall consist of tests that enable the judges to evaluate natural ability and handler control.)

SECTION 2: A dog will be steady at the point of origin (see subparagraph c of this Section. For marks, the point of origin is the point at which the dog is located at the time the first bird becomes visible.)

- a. Moderate commands may be allowed to steady a dog at the point of origin.
- b. A dog will not be touched or patted at the point of origin.
- c. A controlled break will not fail a dog, but it must be considered a fault. (As soon as the dog leaves the point of origin and manifests the intent to make the retrieve without being so ordered, it must be stopped. If a dog is immediately brought under control, it will be considered a minor infraction. Repeated evidence of this fault may be considered serious and, in the opinion of the judges, an eliminating factor.)

SECTION 3: A dog must deliver all birds to hand. (The dog will return to the handler without

delay.)

SECTION 4: A dog may be handled on marked retrieves with voice/whistle/hand signals, if, in the opinion of the handler, the dog cannot 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 elimination.)

SECTION 5: A dog may be cast from the point of origin only once. (If the attempt is unsuccessful, the judges will step in and direct the handler to pick up his/her dog. However, if in the judge's opinion, the dog exhibits confusion at the point of origin, the judges may allow a recast. After two unsuccessful attempts the judges will step in and direct the handler to pick up his/her dog. See Chapter II, Section 17 for "no-goes.")

SECTION 6: The handler may be required to handle an empty shotgun with both hands on the firearm and in the firing position.

SECTION 7: Tests for this event shall be held in appropriate cover on land and water.

- a. Maximum test distance on land marks will not exceed 100 yards.
- b. Maximum distance for the land blind will not exceed 75 yards.
- c. Maximum test distance on water marks will not exceed 75 yards.
- d. Maximum test distance for the water blind will not exceed 50 yards.

SECTION 8: Tests for this event will consist of double marked retrieves on both land and water.

- a. Both birds must be down before the dog is released to retrieve.
- b. Triple marks will not be used.
- c. Dogs are not required to honor another dog.
- d. Simultaneous falls of birds will not be used.
- e. The order and sequence ("selection") of the retrieves will not be determined by the judges.
- f. Dogs may be required to be placed at a point of origin at a distance from the handler.
- g. The trailing test will not be used off of marks.

SECTION 9: Dry shots, game calls or additional bird(s), used as diversions, will not be utilized between the first and second retrieve of the double or as the dog is on its way out for any retrieve. (A dry shot is defined as a shot for which no bird is thrown or appears.) A dog will be eliminated if a diversion bird is thrown as the dog returns with its second bird and the dog drops its bird and retrieves the diversion ("switches birds"). (Extreme diversion birds, such as a bird thrown in the dog's face, are not appropriate in Intermediate.)

SECTION 10: Walkups to simulate jump shooting may be used in this event. The dog shall be brought to an area designated as the point of origin at heel or under control within ten (10) feet of its handler. Section 2 shall be in effect. The judges may signal for the bird while the handler and dog are walking.

SECTION 11: Blind retrieves on land and water will be used in this event, but will not exceed fifty (50) yards in length for water and seventy-five (75) yards for land through appropriate cover. Dogs may be cast from the point of origin only once (see Section 5 above regarding confusion and Chapter II, Section 17 for “no-goes.”)

- a. The water blind will not be included with the water marking test.
- b. The land blind will not be included with the land marking test.
- c. The general area of the point of origin for the water marking and land marking test will not be used for the point of origin for the water and land blinds. (Judges should set up land and water blinds to insure the dog is not influenced by the marks it has previously picked up or will pick up. Under no circumstances will the land or water blind be placed inside the marks. The point of origin selected for the marks and blinds should be sufficiently different to provide the dog a different “picture” of the test.)
- d. The trailing test will not be used at the end of the land or water blind retrieve.
- e. The land blind will not be used at the end or during the upland hunt.

SECTION 12: An upland hunting test will be conducted with no flush.

- a. The dog shall be required to seek birds as in upland hunting within gun range of its handler.
- b. A dog may be urged to hunt with moderate hand, voice or whistle commands.
- c. At the discretion of the judges, the dog may or may not be required to locate dead birds.
- d. If the dog locates a bird, it must be retrieved and delivered to hand.
- e. The retrieve will not be scored but must be delivered to hand.
- f. Two dogs may be required to hunt together providing there is adequate room for both dogs to work without interfering with each other.
- g. If two dogs are being worked together during the upland test, scented areas will be allowed but planted (dead) birds will not be utilized.
- h. Fly-aways will not be used in the Intermediate upland test.

SECTION 13: A trailing test will be used.

- a. The dog will be required to trail, locate a bird and deliver it to hand.
- b. The dog will be scored on its natural ability and the use of its nose to locate and follow the trail.

- c. It does not matter in what manner the dog follows the trail, e.g. The dog may stay precisely on the trail with nose down, or close quarter back and forth across the trail with head up, or run a few yards downwind of the trail with his head held high. It is the intent of this test to have a dog indicate scent, follow the trail and locate the bird in a natural hunting manner.
- d. A dog may be urged to hunt by moderate voice or whistle commands.
- e. Judges may restrict entry of the handlers into the area of the trail.
- f. Hand signals or any other effort to cast the dog in a specific direction are inappropriate and will not be used other than to put the dog onto the beginning of the trail.

CHAPTER VI: FIELD TEST REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE SENIOR CATEGORY

NOTE: The passages enclosed in parentheses are additional guidelines for judges.

SECTION 1: A Senior Field Test consists of six (6) tests which will include the following: a triple marked water retrieve; a triple marked land retrieve; an upland hunting test (which will not be considered a marked retrieve); a trailing test; and a water blind retrieve and a land blind retrieve, at least one of which will be incorporated within one of the required multiple marked retrieves. (The Senior Hunting Retriever Field Test is for the finished dog. The Senior Field Test must consist of serious tests worthy of the hunter's retriever. The making of a Master Hunting Retriever (MHR) is a serious responsibility. Dogs should be tested on their natural ability and training accomplishments. A Senior dog should be under control at all times.)

SECTION 2: A dog must be steady at the point of origin (see subparagraph c of this Section). (For marks, the point of origin is the point at which the dog is located at the time the first bird becomes visible.)

- a. Moderate commands are allowed to steady a dog at the point of origin.
- b. A dog will not be touched or patted at the point of origin.
- c. A controlled break in the marking test will not fail a dog, but it shall be considered a serious fault. (As soon as the dog leaves the point of origin and manifests the intent to make the retrieve without being so ordered, it must be stopped. See Section 12.h below for controlled breaks in upland hunting.)

SECTION 3: A dog must deliver all birds to hand. (The dog shall return to the handler without delay.)

SECTION 4: 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 elimination.)

SECTION 5: A dog may be cast from the point of origin, by its handler, only once. (See Chapter II, Section 17 for “no-goes.”)

SECTION 6: The handler may be required to handle an empty shotgun with both hands on the firearm and in the firing position.

SECTION 7: Maximum test distance for land or water marks shall not exceed one hundred (100) yards.

SECTION 8: Marking tests for this event will consist of triple marks on both land and water.

- a. Quadruple marks will not be used.
- b. The order and sequence (“selection”) of marked retrieves will not be determined by the judges.
- c. Dogs may be required to be placed at a point of origin at a distance from the handler.
- d. Simultaneous falls of birds will not be used.
- e. Delayed marks or falls may be used.
- f. Dogs may be required to honor another dog.
- g. Each mark is to have a separate and clearly defined area. (General Procedures, Chapter II, Section 26 shall be in effect.)
- h. Trails off marked retrieves will not be used.

SECTION 9: Dry shots may be fired. (A dry shot is defined as a shot for which no bird is thrown or appears.) Game calls and additional birds with or without shots may also be used as diversions as a dog returns from a retrieve. (A dog that drops and leaves its bird (“switches birds”) and retrieves the diversion bird shall be failed.)

SECTION 10: Walkups to simulate jump shooting may be used in this event. The dog shall be brought to an area designated as the point of origin at heel or under control within ten (10) feet of its handler. Section 2c shall be in effect. The judges may signal for the bird while the handler and dog are walking.

SECTION 11: Blind retrieves on water and land will be used. Maximum test distances will not exceed one hundred (100) yards. (Handling in these tests must be done with precision. The dog must stop on the whistle and take a cast. Failing to stop on the whistle or to take a cast is a serious infraction. The judges must decide on the seriousness of the refusal by taking into account the conditions and situation at hand.)

- a. At least one of the blinds must be incorporated within one of the required triple marked

retrieves.

- b. Both blind retrieves may be incorporated with the required triple marked retrieves.
- c. Trails off blind retrieves will not be used.

SECTION 12: An upland hunting test, with flush, must be used.

- a. The dog shall be required to seek birds as in upland hunting within gun range of the handler.
- b. A dog may be urged to hunt or handled by moderate commands.
- c. At least one bird must be located and flushed. (Birds may be dizzied and placed in the field, released from a mechanical trap or hand thrown for the flush. Additional dead birds or scent areas may also be used at the discretion of the judges. If located, the dog must pick up and deliver these additional birds to hand.)
- d. The use of wing clips, shackled or dead birds, for the flush, is not allowed.
- e. Fly-aways may be used for the flush. (A shot must still be fired, see the Judging Guidelines below.)
- f. If a flushed bird is downed within a reasonable retrieving distance, the dog should be required to locate it and deliver to hand. (The retrieve shall not be scored as a mark but must be delivered to hand.)
- g. A dog must be steady to shot and fall and will be disqualified if it is not. The handler has until the first shot is fired or, in the opinion of the judges, should have been fired, to have the dog under control. The dog may be sitting or may be standing with limited movement. (A dog that is not under control at the time of the shot shall be disqualified.)
- h. If the dog is steady to shot but then breaks at the fall and manifests an intent to retrieve without being so ordered, it must be stopped. If a dog is immediately brought under control, it shall be considered a controlled break and will be considered a minor fault.
- i. A rerun shall be granted if, in the opinion of the judges, a poor flush or short fall has caused the dog to be unfairly evaluated.

SECTION 13: A trailing test will be used.

- a. The dog is required to trail, locate a bird and deliver it to hand.
- b. The dog shall be scored on its natural ability and the use of its nose to locate and follow the trail.
- c. It shall not matter in what manner the dog follows the trail, e.g., The dog may stay precisely on the trail with nose down, or close quarter back and forth across the trail with head up, or run a few yards downwind of the trail with his head held high. It is the intent of this test to have a dog indicate scent, follow the trail and locate the bird in a natural hunting manner.

- d. A dog may be urged to hunt by moderate voice or whistle commands.
- e. Judges may restrict entry of the handlers into the area of the trail.
- f. Hand signals or any other effort to cast the dog in a specific direction are inappropriate and shall not be used other than to put the dog onto the beginning of the trail.
- g. Trails off of marks or blinds shall not be used.

CHAPTER VII: JUDGING GUIDELINES

The NAHRA concept is based solely on simulating real hunting situations, both upland hunting and waterfowling. Tests are designed to simulate a day's hunting afield. Each test must be carefully thought out with a specific goal in mind, based upon a hunting scenario. It must be realized that some participants may not be experienced hunters; consequently, the judge shall explain in detail the hunting scenario, the object of each test and the expected performance of the dogs. NAHRA's purpose in establishing this concept is to discover and reward dogs that can fulfill the hunter's needs in the field by performing in a manner consistent with the demands of actual hunting conditions. The purpose is not to confront the dog with trick problems, but rather to test the dog's natural ability and acquired training. Under the NAHRA concept, the objective is to recover the bird as quickly and efficiently as possible, to create the least amount of disturbance in the marsh and upland and to give the hunter the maximum amount of time to actually take game.

Dogs are placed in five categories based on ability not age: Beginner, Started, Hunter, Intermediate and Senior. Dogs do not compete against one another for placements, but rather their performances are judged individually against a "standard." Thus, the dog should be scored on its hunting Performance as stated for each category.

BEGINNER

The Beginner category is for inexperienced dogs and/or inexperienced handlers. Tests should consist of straight forward, short single retrieves. Each club shall establish its own rules by which dogs shall be judged in this informal event. However, under no circumstances shall the rules be as restrictive as the requirements of the regulations governing the Started Hunting Retrievers, nor shall they exceed those requirements. Judges should be helpful, courteous and respectful of inexperienced handlers and dogs.

STARTED

The purpose of the Started Hunting Retriever Field Test is to bring started dogs along as hunters.

Desire and cooperation with the handler are important factors.

In the Started category, instinct is more in evidence than obedience. This is a chance for a dog to be evaluated without the high expectations of a finished retriever and it should be given a little leeway in obedience. By the same token, he should show signs of trying to behave, understanding basic commands, as well as the ability to perform basic marked retrieves.

There are many things to see in a single retrieve. “DOES HE WANT TO DO IT?” is one of the most important questions at this stage. Is he a “High Flying Go Getter” or does he mope around sniffing, urinating and eating the grass? Does he snatch up the bird, or does he nose it, mouth it, drop it and urinate on the next tree?

How is he marking? There are different meanings in missing a mark. If a dog hunts short of a fall it probably indicates lack of training as much as poor marking. Chances are, he is hunting where he thought he saw it fall, without knowledge of high cover or practice at depth perception. If a dog blows right through a mark and hunts high and wide leagues beyond the fall, his marking could be suspect. Or maybe he just did not see it. How is the line of sight at the dog's level? A judge who is setting up a marking test must make sure the dog viewing the scene can see the fall, and this includes working out problems with the background and the sun. A Started dog should hunt the area of the fall until he finds the bird. The area of the fall expands with the difficulty of the mark.

In evaluating Started dogs, a judge should start with a relatively simple mark and work towards increasing the difficulty with each series of tests. This is not to say the first test should be less than “the standard” or the last test harder than “the standard,” but a dog and his handler should be given a chance to work into the academic situation of a Field Test. Even a good dog, cold out of a crate, will not perform up to his capabilities. Give him a chance to wake up and show his stuff.

In the Started event, look primarily for instinct, and enough obedience to get by in a hunting situation. Also look for courage but do not confuse desire or lack of training with lack of courage. If a dog runs around the edge of a cold water pond, he may be trying to get to the fall faster rather than avoiding the water.

Started dogs should be introduced to guns, boats, decoys and any equipment or situations they might encounter during a day afield.

The Started event ribbon (passing the standard) proves basic desire, tractability, instinct, control and marking ability in a hunting situation.

HUNTER

This level of testing was developed to bridge the gap between the Started and Intermediate

categories. Because it is likely that this dog will soon accompany his owner on the hunt, it is also intended to produce a dog that can fulfill some of the basic needs of the hunter.

In many hunting situations, a dog that can remain quiet and steady, complete a basic double retrieve and trail and recover a crippled bird is a valuable conservation tool. Therefore, judges should focus their evaluation on this dog's ability to remain steady and under control sufficient to mark and complete an introductory doubles and not interfere with the hunt. The dog should show focus and memory sufficient to complete the retrieves in an efficient manner and deliver all birds to hand without delay.

It is the intent of the Hunter category to produce dogs with a strong obedience foundation in simulated hunting conditions and provide sound marking abilities in varying conditions. Judges should use varying cover types and terrain in constructing marks, not the complex concepts expected in Intermediate and Senior. These dogs will likely be tested for the first time without restraint so the obedience training they receive will play heavily into their ability to and focus and complete the retrieves.

This dog should enter and work any cover or obstacle presented. This dog should display a good nose in locating and recovering crippled game. They should perform all tasks with intent and purpose and show strong desire in doing it. These dogs, as determined by the judges, will be those that show great potential to move up in the program.

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate dogs that pass the standard should be hunting dogs. They should be obedient and have a good knowledge of hunting situations. A good Intermediate dog will most likely have two or three seasons of hunting behind him and some good training on marks, doubles and basic retrieving problems. It is the Intermediate test that proves the dog has what it takes to become a proficient hunting dog, and from here it is up to the trainer. That is one reason why this is perhaps the most difficult test to judge. It is this test in which a judge decides whether or not this particular dog should be included in breeding programs by awarding it a Qualifying score.

A person judging any test, but most particularly Intermediate, is in a position to make serious mistakes. He can set up a test that is too hard for a good dog or a good dog that has not been trained well enough, or a test that is so simple that a completion, no matter how perfect, should not qualify a dog as a good hunting dog.

Intermediate dogs must have perseverance, ability, desire and a higher level of training. They should be steady and not be out of control. They should heel, sit, stay, come, mark and run basic blind retrieves. They should go through cover and hazards and also display a good nose. They must show concentration and desire to locate and follow the trail of a crippled bird or hunt for upland game.

Judging here becomes an art. In the Intermediate test, the judge has to decide from his tests if the dog has the ability to become great or is mediocre.

Is the dog intense at this job or lethargic or careless? Is he full of retrieving desire or is he crazy? These are questions that must be answered.

At this point, he must deliver to hand. The marked retrieves should be done with precision. If the dog does miss a mark, he should hunt with confidence and perseverance or be handled crisply and cleanly to the bird.

The dog should not hunt the whole field on each bird. Look for memory and intelligence. The dog should prove its nose without a doubt and also its eyes. He should run his blinds extremely well displaying style and control.

SENIOR

The Senior test takes an Intermediate dog and adds a lot of training and experience. A Senior Dog by definition is a finished hunting retriever.

Senior dogs should be under complete control at all times and steady under all conditions. They should handle sharply and mark precisely. They should be able to ignore diversions while returning from marks and handle off “poison birds” on blinds. They are the elite of all hunting dogs and should show it. They are the dogs that any of us would be proud to own and hunt with anywhere in the country.

These dogs should be able to work cover and water, run multiple marked retrieves and blind retrieves on water and land and be steady to shot and fall. All that you have read about the Started, Hunter and Intermediate dog is now carried on to the Senior dog. Here his work must be carried out with precision and control. You are looking for a finished dog. You must ask yourself while watching a Senior dog work, “Would I like this dog in the blind or field with me? Would I want to hunt with it?”

HUNTING SKILLS

The General Procedures, Regulations and Field Procedures for NAHRA Field Tests have been formulated in such a manner that the Officials of a Field Test giving club and the judges have considerable latitude in the conduct of the Field Test. This is desirable, allowing for variations in conditions that are peculiar to various parts of the country, and to also grant judges unlimited opportunities for ingenuity in planning tests.

It is the purpose of this chapter to present guidance to judges in grading the hunting performance of the dogs so that there will be greater uniformity in the penalties assessed for various

infractions. While “natural hunting conditions” are subject to great variations in different parts of North America, the work expected should not be subject to similar wide variations.

Judging can never be precise; it is not an exact science, merely an art, because there are so many shades of gray between black and white. At the risk of over-simplification, the primary purpose of a hunting retriever is to get birds to hand as quickly as possible in a pleasing, obedient manner and all faults or infractions are a result of deviation from this.

In most instances, there should be little doubt in anyone's mind as to the type of work which constitutes a perfect performance in a given test. However, there is unlimited opportunity for an honest difference of opinion on the severity of the penalty to assess for any given infraction or deviation from perfect work. The human element cannot be eliminated completely since each judge must determine the relative seriousness of individual infractions, repetition of infractions, or combinations of infractions which occur during the testing.

To reduce the possibility of owners and handlers being confused and dismayed because their dog is dropped from further testing or not included with the Qualifiers at the completion of the judging, we will discuss the abilities that are being judged at a Field Test. It is recommended that a judge should have clearly in mind, and for each test, precisely what type of performance he/she expects, since such work will merit high rating in his records. Then he/she should observe and record in what respects and to what degree the performance of each dog has either exceeded or fallen short of that previously established performance in each test. Hence, when the testing of a category is completed, the judges will arrive at their final decision of qualifying or not qualifying a dog.

Therefore, much of a judge's responsibility is to determine how much weight he/she shall give to certain types of exceptional performance and how much penalty to assess because of various infractions, or repetitions of the same infraction or combinations of various infractions. Some infractions in and of themselves are sufficiently serious to justify elimination from further testing (e.g., failure to find the bird, breaking, failure to deliver the bird, etc.). Other infractions may justify a moderate penalty, e.g., failing to accurately mark, lack of desire or interest, lack of obedience, etc. Minor infractions, some of which are so minor that, on occasion, they are relatively so unimportant that, for practical purposes, they can be ignored. On the other hand, minor infractions can escalate into moderate or even serious infractions, and moderate into serious, through repetition or through combinations of several types of infractions; such multiplicity of various infractions frequently indicates a failing or habitual tendency and results in a performance that is neither pleasing to the eye nor “passing.” The NAHRA concept evaluates dogs on their ability to perform four hunting skills: the marked retrieve, blind retrieve, upland hunting and trailing.

Marked Retrieve:

“Marking” or memory of fallen birds is of paramount importance. However, this does not imply

that dogs which excel in marking shall not be severely penalized or even eliminated for deficiencies in, or lack of the other required hunting “abilities.” All tests are scored on a 0-10 point basis.

The ability to “mark” does not necessarily imply “pin-pointing the fall.” A dog that does not pin-point the “fall” but recognizes the depth of the “area of the fall,” hunts tight, then quickly and systematically locates the bird, has done both a credible and an intelligent job of marking. Such work should not be appreciably out-scored by the dog that “pin-points” the marked bird.

Often a dog gives definite indication of “memory,” and of his marking ability, at or after delivery of a bird, by aligning himself toward, or by looking eagerly in the exact direction of an unretrieved “fall.” That is not to imply that a handler shouldn't give his dog a line to the fall (help his dog by indicating the direction the fall), however, excessive “lining” by the handler may be a sign that the dog does not remember where the bird has fallen.

What precisely constitutes the “area of the fall” defies uniformity of definition from test to test, yet, at the outset of each test, each judge must arbitrarily define its hypothetical boundaries for himself, and for each bird in that test, so that he can judge whether dogs have remained within his own concept of the “area of the fall,” as well as how far the dog has wandered away from “the area” and how much cover has been disturbed unnecessarily. In determining these arbitrary and hypothetical boundaries of the “area of the fall,” due consideration must be given to various factors: (1) the type, height and uniformity of the cover, (2) lighting conditions, (3) direction of the prevailing wind and its intensity, (4) distance to the “mark,” (5) the speed of the individual dogs, (6) whether there is a change of 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 the most important, (7) whether one is establishing the “area of the fall” for a single retrieve, or for the first bird a dog goes for, in multiple marks or for the second or third bird since each of these should differ from the others. In general, the “area of the fall” for a first retrieve in a “double” should be smaller than for the second bird, and both of these should be larger in a “triple,” and larger still for the third bird in it. Also, “the area” for short retrieves should certainly be smaller than for longer retrieves. Since there are many conditions and variables to be taken into consideration, it is obvious that each judge, and for every test, must attempt to define for himself a hypothetical “area of the fall” for each bird, and then judge the dogs accordingly. However, the penalties inflicted should vary in their severity, depending on the distance which individual dogs wander out of the area, the frequency of such wanderings, the number of birds mismarked in a given test, and by the amount of cover disturbed in these meanderings.

Dogs which disturb cover unnecessarily, clearly well out of the “area of the fall,” either by not going directly to that area, or by leaving it, even though they eventually find the bird without being handled, should be penalized more severely than those dogs that are handled quickly and obediently to the “fall.” However, once a handler attempts to handle on a marked retrieve, the dog must respond by stopping and casting with precision and accuracy.

Upland Hunting:

Hunting and locating birds for the gun requires a dog that will search a field aggressively, leaving little unsearched and all the while staying within gun range. A dog should neither run out of gun range nor hunt underfoot of his handler. To be effective in putting birds up for the gun, a dog must stay under control and cover a lot of ground. (Things to ask yourself in determining ground race are: Is the dog actively trying to find game, out for a run or wandering about without any real intent or purpose?)

The dog should naturally put the wind to his advantage by “quartering” into it primarily and to his handler secondarily, unless it is a bird driving scenario. (The most effective way to drive birds is with the windshield wiper pattern through the field.) He should demonstrate his “bird sense” by approaching most of the birdy objectives (clumps of cover and brush thickets) from the downwind side, putting the wind to his advantage.

Does the dog know what it's supposed to be doing or does it have to be constantly moved throughout the field with whistle, hand and voice signals?

In setting up the upland hunting tests in the Intermediate and Senior events, a small to medium sized bird field with knee-high cover with intermittent bushes or swales approximately 60 yards by 100 yards in size works well but the field and cover should fit the game to be hunted and the judges' scenario. Scent stations (wiping the ground with dead birds) or planted dead birds may be located at several points to demonstrate a dog's nose and its ability to hunt.

An electronic trap or traps can be used and should be located near the end of the bird field. It should be screened from the dog's view by low bushes or other cover and should be well scented. Ideally, a dog should find and flush its own game.

When the dog makes game and begins to rush the bird, the judges should release the trap as the dog approaches. (Be very careful not to release a bird in a dog's face and to be as uniform as possible with all dogs.) If a dog is out of control and approaches the trap out of range of the gunners and handler, the trap should still be released. At times a dog may approach the trap from the upwind side; to avoid accidents, even though it may not have scented the bird, the trap should be released as the dog approaches. The use of bird boys or hand thrown birds in upland hunting is acceptable but it should be treated in as natural a manner as possible to simulate a natural hunting situation.

Gunners should be very experienced shots who are dog-wise. Some dogs are very aggressive (as well they should be) and the gunners should beware of a low flying bird or leaping dogs. It is better to have a fly-away than an accident. If a fly-away occurs at the flush in a Licensed Field Test, the gunners should be instructed to fire a shot, in a safe direction, at the time the first shot should have or would have been fired under normal circumstances. If the safety shot is fired, a rerun should not be necessary.

If the birds used are poor flyers, the trap may be elevated a few feet for optimum results or the use of a hand thrown bird may be utilized. However, bird boys acting as throwers should be properly instructed to simulate a true upland flush.

It is natural for a dog to want to grab at the bird when flushed. Proper consideration must be given to the dog in the event of a poor flush, low flyer or short fall. A dog should be given another opportunity to flush a bird in a different location if, in the opinion of the judges, the dog has been caused to be unfairly evaluated.

A proper upland hunting test does take time. Be certain to allow enough time to adequately test all dogs. To help alleviate the time factor, two dogs may be run in a brace in either the Senior or the Intermediate tests (scented areas only, no birds for Intermediate braces).

Trailing:

“Trailing” is perhaps the most independent function of the hunting retriever. Trailing is an area of hunting that cannot be accomplished without the use of a well trained dog. Locating cripples or providing game for the gun requires a dog that not only has a good nose but knows how to use it to follow scent and find game. A good hunting retriever is a valuable game conservation tool and should bring to the bag all downed birds. Human beings simply do not have the sensory ability to evaluate scent trails on the level of a good dog; this makes trained dogs especially valuable and presents challenges to human judges.

Dogs will usually follow a scent trail in three different manners: 1) Nose down on the trail and methodically following it to the bird. 2) Head up using a short quartering pattern across the trail until the bird is found or 3) Head high following the scent on the downwind side of the trail. (A dog can do this at quite a distance from the trail if the wind is right.) Any of the three or a combination of these methods are correct when a dog is following a scent trail and, if done with accuracy, he deserves the highest possible score.

It is important to not over scent the trail. If the trail is too heavily scented, it can confuse the dog. If the same trail is to be used for a number of dogs, it should be dragged again, but usually not more than once for every three or four dogs. Even such trails may “wear out” from over-scenting after a number of uses. (Inexperienced judges may feel that dragging a trail for every dog helps the dogs, but experience shows that this practice eliminates excellent trailing dogs in unpredictable ways.)

It is best to use a live bird or a bird killed at the beginning of the trail and then dragged off. (A dead duck can be left at the end of the drag. If conditions are dry, wet the duck before you drag it. Cold dead birds or a number of dead birds tied together are not recommended for the drag as they do not provide the best scent.)

Fresh ground should be utilized, when possible, to achieve optimum results and give dogs a fair

opportunity. Every dog could thus receive its own fresh trail. However, this method requires a large amount of land with similar cover in order to set trails in non-overlapping areas. A compromise that still avoids over scented trails is to carefully mark several non-overlapping trails. First drag one trail and run three dogs. Next drag the second trail and run three more dogs. Continue with new trails until you run out of space and then return and re-drag the first trail for three more dogs and continue to the second, etc. The additional time between uses helps to prevent over scenting the trails.

The “drag” should be set up so that the dog does not accidentally locate the bird while just running about and not actually following the trail. The initial direction of the drag should have a long leg with the wind so that the dog cannot possibly “wind” the bird prior to reaching the end of the trail. (About 30 to 50 yards for the initial leg in “typical” conditions. It is often easier to evaluate a long trail than a short one. A dog actually working air scent off a short initial cross wind leg may wind the bird before you determine whether or not it is really trailing, so don't start with a cross wind leg.) After the initial downwind leg, there should be at least one cross wind leg.

Have the dragger exit away from the trail. Drag the duck in your footsteps to avoid laying two trails, a bird trail and a foot trail.

Released live bird trails with ducks and pheasants can work well, but only if the birds are good runners and you have the ample amount of ground needed to release new birds in fresh areas.

The trailing test is best run when there is moisture. (Early morning or late afternoon is the best time. Slough areas or damp grass provide the best locations. Shaded woods often work well.) Keep in mind the conditions at hand when evaluating each dog.

A trail should only be dragged in one direction, NOT OUT AND BACK! ! (One of the things a dog calculates, when on a trail, is the direction of the hottest scent. That is the dog's most accurate means of determining which way the bird went!!) Turns should be put into the drag trail to see how the dog will recover and follow the scent. (Don't expect a dog to make the precise turns in the trail that were put into the drag. It will take a dog some time to realize that it has lost the trail and correct itself back into the location of the scent.)

Remember, in all of our tests, marking, blinds, upland hunting or trailing, we are evaluating recovery of a dog and how it gets out of trouble rather than if he fell prey to it. Give a dog the opportunity to display his overall ability as a conservation tool.

The only time it is appropriate to use hand signals is to place the dog on the beginning of the trail, if the dog has worked its way out of the area. (Usually, the judge will instruct the handler to put the dog back on the beginning of the trail.)

Blind Retrieve:

When performing a blind retrieve a dog should take the original cast given to him by his handler and continue on it until he either makes the find or is stopped by the handler and given a new directional cast when commanded. The dog should then continue in this new direction until he finds the bird or is given further directions, etc. We are looking for cooperation with the handler, but not rigid straight lines; we want a dog that is kept in a good general corridor and is making improved progress toward the bird with each additional command.

When commanded, the dog should stop promptly and look to the handler for direction.

“Handling” should be a demonstration of obedience and scored on the crispness of response. However, before inflicting a severe penalty for the dog's failure to respond precisely or crisply, due consideration must be given for the conditions at hand. Judges should determine if the wind, the cover, or the distance seriously interfered with the dog's ability to hear the handler. In general, the performance in the test should be considered in its entirety: an occasional failure to stop or take or hold a direction may be considered a minor fault, if offset by several other good responses. A considerable penalty should be imposed for repeated, willful disobedience and less penalty when, after taking the proper direction, the dog does not continue as far as the handler desired. Stopping voluntarily, to look back for directions, in an isolated instance, is not a fault, but frequent repetition may convert into a serious penalty.

SCORING

A judge should instinctively, through his experience with dogs, know what excellent dog work looks like. Recognizing excellent dog work is the easier part and should need no description here. It is the same with exceedingly poor work. It is the “in between” work that requires a judge at all.

There are two levels of scoring. First the dog is judged as to whether it passed or failed the particular judging area. (e.g., the Senior has six distinctly different judging areas; upland hunting, land marks, water marks, land blind, water blind and trailing; and each area shall receive a 0-10 score.) Just picking up all of the birds is not enough to be considered passing. You must ask yourself, “Did the dog perform the test well enough to be considered a quality hunting retriever?” If it is determined that the dog didn't, then it fails and it cannot qualify. If the dog passes, it shall then be scored on a one to ten basis (1-10) for each hunting skill.

Sit back and watch - how was the job? Was it good, very good, poor, fair or excellent? Try to think of it in terms of 1 through 10; i.e., failing 0, extremely poor 1-2, poor 3-4, fair 5-6, good 7-8, very good 8-9, excellent 9-10. A dog that passes the standard for any event should have averaged “very good.” A dog needs a combined average of 80% or better to pass the NAHRA standard and achieve a qualifying score.

Started dogs are tested on five single marks, each carrying a possible 10 points for a perfect job. 50 points would be a perfect score, 40 points would be 80% or be the minimum acceptable to

qualify.

The Hunter category has a possible 30 points in its 3 testing areas. The maximum score would be 30 points and a minimum of 24 points to qualify.

The Intermediate category has six (6) separate testing areas. The maximum score would be 60 points and a minimum of 48 points is required to qualify.

The Senior category has six (6) different categories to be scored. A dog must be given a 1-10 score for each of the tests that it passes. If a dog has perfect work, he can earn 60 points. He must have a minimum 80% average throughout the testing to qualify. If a dog can earn 60 points in the Senior category, he must have at least 48 points to qualify. (It is often easier to count deductions than to add scores, so a Started dog could lose 10 points from a perfect 50, while a Senior dog could lose 12 from a perfect 60.)

Each test in a NAHRA Field Test shall carry the same weight. A blind retrieve should be evaluated on a 0-10 basis as well as the marked retrieves, trailing and upland hunting. If a marking test consists of three birds, the overall performance shall be evaluated and scored on a 0-10 basis. (Some judges score each mark 1-10 and average, while others weight a more difficult mark more heavily. Either method is acceptable and often results in similar overall scores because of the difficulty.) The trailing and upland hunting tests also must be evaluated on a 0-10 basis and not solely as pass/fail. (Steadiness to flush and shot in the Senior upland test is required, but is not a major portion of the numerical score for upland hunting.) It is extremely important that each judge give equal consideration to all areas of testing and allot equal time to the testing of each hunting ability.

Once a dog either fails or can no longer numerically achieve an 80% or minimum qualifying score by further testing, the handler should be advised directly by the judge or through the marshal that the dog is no longer in contention. If the judge does not inform the handler and the dog is allowed to continue competing, the judge will have a difficult time explaining why the dog was not qualified. This is especially difficult if the dog has perfect work the remainder of the Field Test.

Draw your lines, make your notes and confer with your co-judge. Now you have an idea of the dog's performance and if you and your co-judge want to discuss it again later, you can refer to your notes. This may happen more than you might like and usually results in an average between the judges. Respect the other judge's views as he sees the work but don't be afraid to express your views as well.

In the Intermediate and Senior tests, try to let hunting dogs prove they are hunting dogs by how well they do tests; try not to set up next to impossible tests just to see which one, two or three dogs might do it. You can learn a lot about a dog in an average hunting situation. However, a judge must score a dog on his performance in handling the particular test. If, for instance, a trailing test is established and a dog fails to take the trail, but accidentally stumbles upon the bird, he has not completed the test.

Stay simple, average and straight forward in your tests; maintain true hunting situations and score your dogs as you see them run. Let them show you how good they are, and “let the cream come to the top.” Don't let distance be your yardstick; keep retrieves to normal hunting distances.

Judges may weigh certain portions of a test more than others (e.g., a short “dump” bird may not be weighed the same as a difficult mark and need not be accorded the same number of points). Judges should agree on the number of points accorded each section or component of that test before each test is begun. In order for a dog to acquire points toward the title Master Hunting Retriever (MHR) in any Licensed event, it must have passed all tests and its average score at the completion of the Field Test must be 80% or higher. Judges should evaluate dogs on nose, memory, intelligence, attention, courage, suitability as a hunting retriever, perseverance, style, accuracy and control during all available tests. Evaluating a dog's performance relative to the objectives of the test demands a judge with hunting experience and a thorough knowledge of the standards and procedures, as well as good dog sense.

We must always remember that hunters go afield to hunt, and their dogs are valuable conservation tools, NAHRA's purpose is to educate these hunters and reward dogs that fulfill these needs.

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