

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

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RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

THE PURPOSE OF FIELD TRIALS

The purpose of a retriever field trial is to determine the relative merits of retrievers in the field.

THE PURPOSE OF HUNTING TESTS

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PRE-DEPARTURE LISTS

Telephone conversations with Chairman and Co-Judge

- Local weather forecast – telephone # of local airport/weather station
- Set up dog / bumpers / whistle – to determine running water, dog visibility, etc.
- Discourage use of a judge's dog as a test dog
- Judge's chair(s)
- Transit arrangements:
 - Airport Pick-up and Drop-off
 - At trial
 - Car phone numbers (exchange)
 - Emergency contact
- Meeting Time / Place / Directions
- Hunting License needed? (e.g. North Carolina)
- Hotel / Directions / Phone & Fax
- Car phone # exchange (co-judge, key club workers)
- Co-Judge travel plans / contact information
- Apprentice judge? Encourage
- Dead birds available to get started (local pro, prior day training?)
- Copy of premium mailed in to you advance
- Special Equipment Needs
- Someone to cut brush (retired guns/gun stands) on set up day
- Hunt Test Judge's sheets: who provides?
- Anticipated/actual number of entries
- Descriptions of grounds
- Packing / Field Bag lists
- Starting number, Dow Jones?

General Preparations

- Review AKC Videos
- Re-read / listen to rules
- Local sunrise / sunset times (angle / path of sun locally) / weather station summaries
- Judge's book with enough pre-numbered water proof sheets
- Local food / drink / points of interest (Chamber of Commerce)
- Books / tapes about local area

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL

JUDGE'S MANUAL

CLUB / COMMITTEE ISSUES

- Who are the key workers? (Names, cell phone #'s):
 - Chairman
 - Marshal / Stake Marshal
 - Bird Steward
 - Equipment / Set up crew
 - Bird Boys
- Emergency Plan: local vet, hospital, etc.
- Reality of Time (sunrise, sunset), help, other stakes
- Sun, wind, weather / temperature
- Set up dog / bumpers
- Test dogs
- Transportation
- Signing to location
- Finishing times, tailgate party?
- Cross entries?
- Accessibility / rain
- Water level change (or other nuances)?
- Misconduct review
- Signing results book, who has it?
- Brush cutting for retired guns / gun stands (set up day)
- Bad dog paths
- Dead birds to get started...local pro's?
- Ask to see **all** available grounds
- Starting times – each day / each stake
- Overnight bird care / drying arrangements

SET-UP DAY DETAILS

- Set rotation
- Equipment / resource list
- Ask to see **all** water first as water will usually be the last test
 - Consider the sides you can possibly run from
 - Light
 - Traffic
 - Wind – won't know until the last day
- Set time schedules

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Decoy's (water/land)
- Brush cutting (brush blinds)
- Weed whacker to cut diversion paths
- Range finder
- Bird Dryer / Hanger
- Waders
- Floater blinds
- Heat: wading pool / ice
- ATV's for re-birding
- Mechanical bird throwers
- Boat, anchor, paddles, rope, flotation devices, roof rack, ties downs, etc.
- Extra holding blinds to enclose retired guns and near line
- Tent / umbrella for judges

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NATURAL AND TRAINED ABILITIES

Retrievers should be judged on their natural and trained abilities.

Natural Abilities are of great importance and include:

- Marking and Memory
- Intelligence
- Attention
- Nose
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Style

Trained Abilities include:

- Steadiness
- Control
- Response to direction
- Delivery

The Ideal Retriever

- Marks the fall of a bird;
- Uses the wind;
- Follows a strong cripple (game finding ability); and
- Takes direction from the handler.

Retrievers should perform equally well on the land and in the water.

A retriever's performance should be a "FINISHED" job and pleasing to the eye.

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MARKING PRINCIPLES

Accurate marking is of primary importance!

A retriever should recognize the depth of the “area of the fall”, stay in it, then quickly and systematically “hunt it out”.

Don't expect a dog to mark what the dog cannot see.

Consider background when considering distance.

- Birds should be conspicuously visible in the air and to the ground.

There should be no “gray area” in conspicuously visible – if a gun and a thrower are necessary to insure this, they should be provided. Changing light conditions need to be considered. – Bach Doar, 5/31/02

- Field trials: guns should be conspicuously visible

“Marking is a combination of memory, lining, training and genetic G.P.S. (Global Positioning System)” - Don Erickson, Stillwater, MN 2001

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STYLE!

Style is apparent in every movement of a dog and throughout his entire performance, including:

- Gaiety of manner, approaching the line
- Alertness on line
- Eagerness and speed on retrieves (Note: speed does not necessarily equate to style. Style of older dogs: watch tail, ears, gait)
- Water entry
- Pick-up of birds
- Return with birds

Style makes for a pleasing performance, evidenced by:

- Alert and obedient attitude
- Fast determined departure, both on land and into water
- Aggressive search for the fall
- Prompt pick-up
- Reasonably fast return

Dogs that want to look at and retrieve birds

*“Style is the appearance of confidence and grace, even under pressure.”
Ernest Hemingway*

*“Style is something in the movements of a dog when working, which gives to the onlooker the impression that the dog is determined and likely to succeed in his task.”
Charles Alington, 1929*

PERSEVERANCE

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TRAINABILITY

Manners

Retrievers should sit quietly on line and in the blind, walk at heel and assume any station designated until sent to retrieve.

Control includes

- Line Manners
- Walking tractably "AT HEEL"
- Assuming and staying in position on line
- Remaining quietly beside handler after delivery
- Returning promptly when called
- Also: minimal creeping, no bird stealing

Response to Directions

Delivery

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COMPLEXITIES

- Distance (drive, fatigue and depth perception)
- Diversions / Tight or Remote
- Sloping Terrain
- Cross Wind
- Cover
 - Shorter cover (enough to hide birds) / shorter / check down birds (over run on fast surface)
 - Rough cover / long birds (tough going) > Fair to Early / Late Dogs?
- Retired Guns (depth perception)
- Live Bird attraction
- "Tightness" (or lack of): lines or falls

MAJOR TESTS

General

- Long swims / Stay in
- Cross points / Re-entries
- Demanding water entries / Re-entries

Marks

- Shorter (Retired) Guns / Selection issues
- Long (Retired) Guns

Blinds

- "Poison" Birds
- Long Blinds / Control
- Cross points / Re-entries (including scented areas on blinds)

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

NATURAL HAZARDS

Water			Land		
		Shoreline	B	*	Rolling terrain / hill side
		Up & outs	M/B	*	Heavy, Rough Cover (adjacent)
		Long / Challenging Entries	M/B	*	Ditches
B	*	Points	M	*	Corn rows
		Long Swims	M	*	Flat/cross wind
		Moving Water			Tree slots
		Channels	M/B	*	Hedge rows
		Running Water	M/B	*	Cover changes(alfalfa, corn, etc.)
		Re-entries	B	*	Bushes/stumps / bounce off
M/ B	*	Rough Water			Fences
		Sticks/lilies			Guns out of sight
		Out – to - sea			Long runs
B	*	Islands		*	Plowed ground
B	*	Sand Bars		*	Roads
		Cross-channel throws			Mounds
M/ B	*	Mud, Difficult going			Hay Bales
			M/B	*	Mud, Difficult going

B = Blinds

M = Marks

* = Cited in rule book

Refer to:

Note Book
Rule Book
Trail Grounds
Concepts

Judges must be responsible in their test designs not to endanger the safety of the dogs.

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

CLASSIC CONCEPTS / SITUATIONS

General

- Terrain: hold line vs. slope, not squaring / wanting to run up or down, add rough cover, etc.?
- Ditches / Roads: Angle and Recover
- Super Long: Perseverance / Control (sits/casts)
- Obstacles/Mounds midway / up front
- Super contrary factors
- Bad Paths
- Double obstacles (e.g. jump tree then shoreline entry)... extend distance between obstacles
- Way-up-and-out

Difficult Throws/ Bird Placement

- Apart from gun location:
 - Across channel or to an island
 - Down hill, with square hill behind gun tendency
 - Base of hill (tend to drive to top)
 - In water vs. on bank (tend to exit and hunt)
 - Way-up-and-out
 - Throw across road / ditch / logs / hedgerow - retire?
- Throw / Angle into cover
- Mama-Poppa
- Long Marks, throw into a strong cross-wind? (Quartering away?)
- Short Marks, throw with wind quartering away
- Angle back throw with wind? (Quartering away)
- Intermediate-distance - far enough to get into full run, with hazards and other falls beyond
 - Land spit, water in front/beyond
 - Run around space deep
 - Check down after obstacle, with longer gun out
 - Longer gun out / beyond
- Go-bird past shorter memory bird (especially difficult on water)
- Punch through hedgerow, ravine, rough / high cover, standing corn, etc.
- Against tree line
- Over stone wall / log jumps
- From / onto mounds: on top, at base
- Boat marks with land beyond / behind boat

Apply each to bird throws and separately to line / in route hazards:

- Losing sight of guns
- Angle across road, ditch, channel, cover strips
- Over stone walls / logs
- Angle into / out of cover / water

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

CLASSIC CONCEPTS / SITUATIONS

Consider throws / relativity to cover, etc:

- Into
- In front of
- Over
- Across
- Apart from gun

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

VARIETY IN TEST

General

- Walk-up / Modified walk-up*
- Cold honor *
- Bulldog *
- Field decoys
- Bird calls *
- Moving water
- Delayed / Interrupted throws
- Wipe-outs
- Mixed bag (Duck and pheasant)

Marks

- Can't go straight marks
- Retire go bird, "key off" birds
- Pop-up mark: no cueing
- Winger, long throws

Blinds

- Dry shot (invisible, in route) *
- No picture blinds
- Remote cast
- Out to sea blinds
- Multiple blinds
- Poison blinds
- Various types (consider fairness of wind shifts)
 - Thrown
 - Planted

* Cited in Rule Book

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

TEST DESIGN

General Thoughts

- Birds people cannot easily get themselves:
 - Cover, water, distance (hard to get to/ hard to find)
- No time-wasters: meaningless marks, etc.
 - 1 minute per dog x 60 dogs = 1 hour
- Do not ignore: Sun / Wind / Temperature / Forecast
- Try to “defend” all birds from **ALL** sides
- Balance
- Land / water
- Natural / trained abilities
- Short / long
- What is / should be the nature of each test (what must we be testing for)

Line / Holding blind position

- Opportunity for next handler to study test
- Tall blind to obscure next handler
- Opportunity to quickly evaluate heeling / manners
- Traffic pattern to / from line – avoid “face-off” between working and honoring dogs
- Shade – consider ice / water when hot
- Sufficient area for dogs and handlers to maneuver
- Starting point fair and obvious
- Note position of:
 - Bird piles / dryer / other equipment – avoid confusion
 - Marshall
 - Gallery
 - Judges chairs, etc.
 - Shadows caused by judges and signaling for falls

Time

- Number of starters
- Available day light / helper schedules
- Minutes / dog
- Early quitting time (tailgate party, workers, airplanes, etc.)
- Leave room for scrapped test
- Plan quick back up test (short, running water)

Poor Test Design

- Pheasants in / through water (wastes birds)

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MARKING TEST DESIGN

Good Test Design

- Dog can see birds in flight and as they land – get down to dog height to evaluate
- Judges and handler can see dog in fall area and all sides of it
- No “gimmies” - try for at least 2 tough marks per test (hunt potential on every bird)
- Avoid “traffic” if possible in test background
- Face North (for maximum lighting all day), particularly during short daylight days
- Do not ignore sun, wind, temperature or forecast
- Depth perception, not just lines
- Balance short / long
- Balance lining / hunting
- Leave some space for out of area hunts
- Dogs that cheat can't wind the fall area
- Hide gun stand or transport it to holding blind each time

Poor Test Design

- Can't see dogs in / near hunt area (all sides)
- Can't see birds thrown or as they land due to background, sharp angle back throws, throws into valleys, throws over crest of a hill
- Key birds thrown out of order
- Too long: visibility / time
- Early / late visibility handicaps
- Can't see marks at dog level - cover in face
- Flyer guns mounting guns before their turn
- Quick signaling between birds
- Ambiguous walk-up / inconsistent time limits to watch
- Pathing / cover breaks-down / excessive “drag back” scent for later dogs
- Retiring guns conspicuously moving in sight during throws or retrieves
- Retired guns moving too far - trails, sight distractions at remote locale
- Smell / trail blinds when running marks
- Birds thrown toward line
- Birds thrown in front of water
- Boxed - in fall area
- Retired guns visible from side or rear
- Smell a memory bird in route to go bird
- Forced primary selection
- Two birds thrown in same fall area
- Two marks thrown simultaneously
- Dry shot mixed with marks

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MARKING TEST DESIGN

MAKING THE "Go-Bird significant	
As a mark itself	Effect on subsequent marks
Obstacles in route	Water / cover / obstacle avoidance
Risk over-run to other birds	Go-long, before shorter bird
Immediate retire	Subsequent retire
Subsequent retire – unfair to primary selector	
Hunt potential / cover	
Flyer thrown long or away from gun	
Thrown off or down hill	
Thrown onto mound	
Lose sight of guns in route to	

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL

JUDGE'S MANUAL

BLINDS

- Dog visible if on line - shorter or disabled handlers
- Avoid artificial “commandments”, i.e. must be left of ribbon, bush, etc.
- Judging from left, dog appears to be right
- Judging from right, dog appears to be left
- Judges’ attire, positions, moves not distracting to dog
- Stylish dogs not disadvantaged
- “No go”?
- Avoid footpath to blind planter, prefer down wind
- Smooth work vs. “hack” to stay on line (yet challenged jeopardy, hazards)
- Poison bird, a “mark” if retrieved
- Paths and drag back
- Dog visible in dark water, glare, light colored cover
- Handler visible: Glare? Path of sun behind handler?
- Destination well marked by natural markers at location of bird
- Whistle audible (especially in hazards - changing wind / cover...waivers? (older handlers)
- Recall / Attrition - when permissible? (prefer not)
- Pick-up area
- “We are judging you from the initial line”
- Handler movement: restrictions, timing, how to enforce “get back in place”
- Is blind planted? Backup system (post note in holding blind - “Did we plant your blind?”)
- Bird planted at marker, not “off-set”
- Disabled handlers? (sight, physical impairments)
- Make first 10 yards tough to stay on line, yet safe
- Beginning / middle / end hazards
- Hazards obvious with respect to the true line
- Scented area, points, shorelines
- Use a remote holding blind for side corridor
- Before test dog runs disclose relative position of blind, not so obvious hazards, location of running water, etc.

Standard Evaluation of Dog Work on Blinds

- Take and hold initial line
- Prompt stops
- Take and hold casts
- Smooth work vs. “hack” to stay on line (yet challenge jeopardy hazards)
- Perseverance
- Style
- Pops – when, where, why?
- How well did the team navigate the hazards?

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

BLINDS

Good Test Design

- Clear corridors, visible 'fairway', yet jeopardy out of sight potential on both sides
- Add / accent trees, cover, terrain
- Clear picture to handlers of expectations

Poor Test Design

- Smell / Trail blind trails when running marks
- "Hot" planted blinds while running marks
- Difficulty in dog hearing due to:
 - Corn or crunchy cover
 - Low humidity
 - Running water

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

UNEQUAL INFLUENCES ON EARLY RUNNING DOGS

- No Paths – obstacles intact
- Little scent bird / dog / thrower
- Low light
- Cooler water temperature in morning
- The wind the judges wanted
- Poor mechanics
 - Shooting
 - No Birds
- Excited dog
- Little observation / learning time
 - Order to select birds not yet clear
 - Hazards and severity not yet disclosed
 - When to handle not yet clear
- Fresh wild game scent from overnight resting areas
- Unsettled gallery interference
- Summer months unfairness:
 - Lush cover
 - Morning dew
- Winter months unfairness:
 - Low light shadows
 - Temperature extremes

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

UNEQUAL INFLUENCES ON EARLY RUNNING DOGS

Equalizing efforts

- Avoid cover / Entry points likely to “path-up”
Pathing areas:
 - within 30 yards of line
 - shorelines
 - mid-distance cover
 - water surface weeds
 - lush coverMid-way cover patch okay
- Well pre-scented areas – consider using a dog carrying a bird to provide both bird scent and foot scent, including in and out of water
- Good lighting all day
- Anticipate wind shifts
- Create multiple bad dog paths at start, mow area close to line, up front brush piles (avoids subsequent “funnels”)
- Work hard on early smooth mechanics
- Practice mechanics before test dog
- Avoid surprise hazards, be informed about the not so obvious – walk the field prior to starting
- Keep guns away from early and late day shadow areas
- Non-contestants running capable test dogs
- Attention to re-birding routes - minimize “field trips”
- Factors that test perseverance all day: terrain, water, diversions, multiples, distance (cover and wind may break down and/or change)
- Don't rush

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

GENERAL TEST DESIGN LOGIC

Reality of Time (how much, leave time for errors)

Essential tools – time piece, compass and weather radio

- Will light be a factor - sunny or overcast during hours on location)
 - Sunrise / sunset times
 - Early or late hillside or tree line shadows?
 - Sun position for dogs, handlers, guns and judges
- Wind - consider variability (direction and intensity)
- Traffic - safety and efficiency for vehicle movement to and from the test, parking and airing space. Avoid peripheral movement as distraction.
- Vantage point (line) considering the above – can the dog, handler, judge see the work?
- Bird and Gun stations visible – will lighting change?
 - Shadows?
 - Fog? – likely when temperature meets dew point
 - Background – white/black coats?
 - Judge can see the dog in the fall area? Deep?
- Ease of moving guns in/out (re-birding, etc.)
- Given above where can the flyer be, not be?
- Will another test be run here?
 - Relative impact?
 - Cross entries?
- Place other birds
- Can whistle be heard...
 - If wind picks-up?
 - If cover dries-out?
 - Locate running water
- Handler disadvantages: Age / Mobility / Height
- Background - Looking back at line from blind / falls
 - Gallery
 - Sun
 - Shadows – consider time change
- Dog Safety
 - Ditches or holes
 - Under water hazards
 - Public Roads
 - Fences
 - Rocks, trash
 - Steep drops, banks
- Gallery
 - Safety first – be aware of live guns, public roads, etc.
 - Vantage to watch
 - Efficiency of traffic patterns
- Before going with a test, ask yourself and your co-judge, “What’s potentially wrong with this test?” Spend a little time to adjust against concerns.

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

GENERAL TEST DESIGN LOGIC

- Cross stake interference
 - Gun / whistle noise
 - Traffic patterns
- Back-up Plans
 - Alternative wind direction / Flooded access
 - Scrapped test
 - Quick test alternative
 - ◆ Shorter birds
 - ◆ Sudden death blinds
 - ◆ Running water marks
- Consider the reality of time
 - Distance between stakes
 - Running vs. swimming water
 - Using “some” water in early series to comply with rules in case of subsequent day “disaster”

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MEASURES OF A SUCCESSFULLY JUDGED TRIAL / TEST

- No rule book / technical / mechanical problems
- Fair tests to all?
- Clear winner / clear qualifier(s)
- Clear separation between all places / JAMs (Finished > 4 dogs) – trial only
- Callbacks were clear, allowing many to play, yet clear separation between those not back
- All series achieved significant separation and contribution to the win / qualification
- Good balance between Land / Water, Marks / Blinds, Style / Control
- Would you be invited back to judge again?

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

TEST SPECIFICS

- Gallery, Traffic and Safety
- Expectations for each bird
- “No bird” boundaries / area of fall / hunt (good mark, switch)
- Corridor of blind
- Instructions to Handlers, Marshall, Guns
- Receiving locations / Paths? Drag-back?
- Bird handling
 - Judges take and examine every bird
 - Humane treatment of birds / public image (shade, cover from rain, food, water)

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

JUDGING PHILOSOPHY QUESTIONS - FROM CHARLES ALINGTON BOOK, 1929

- Looking for retrievers the average person could handle?
- Emphasis: Judge the dog or judge the dog / handler team?
- Judging a dog "using" (sinking) the wind vs. breaking down to wind
 - How to distinguish? (loops behind guns / area of hunt)
- What is a reasonable distance for marks / blinds?
 - Hearing Standard
 - Sight Standard (Dog and/or Handler)
- Point at which dogs should be eliminated for slowness / lack of style
- Test run directly into the wind proper / fair?
- Are style / perseverance the only natural abilities a judge can evaluate?
- Is "trainability" a natural ability?
- Clever dogs may not be the best dogs?

MORE QUESTIONS

- How important should "lining ability" be?
- Should water work out weigh land work?
- Use of flyer station / dead bird contrast legitimate?
- Elimination for:
 - Noise
 - Sticking on birds
 - Wild line manners

POINTS OF VIEW - FROM CHARLES ALINGTON BOOK, 1929

- Utility of the dog: to gather game we cannot easily get ourselves
- Bird Placement – hard to find / hard to get to
 - Birds concealed by cover
 - Birds in inaccessible places – in or across water / distance
 - Where dogs go on the conviction of their marking or in compliance with directions vs. easy destinations or training pictures
 - ◆ Climbing a hill
 - ◆ Swimming a channel
- Greater control = quicker gathering of game
- Test ability to put dog where you want him
- Bottom line = pleasing performance
- Judge what you see
- Hunting / Game Finding Independent dogs vs. Controlled / Responsive "Sheep dogs". Balance both – your emphasis?
- Marking is a combination of natural and trained abilities

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

IDEAL RETRIEVER DOGS

- Balance
 - Cool temperament
 - Full of keenness
 - Good Memory
 - Adaptability
 - Game finding ability
 - Control
 - ◆ Cooperates with the handler
 - Pleasing to the eye, fun to watch
 - Dog that has a “presence” on line

Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

- Safety
- Mechanics
- Test design
- Re-runs
- Fairness calls
- Callbacks
- JAMs

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

CALL BACKS / PLACEMENTS

During each series / Following each dog's performance, maintain records on:

- "Fail" list
 - "Trouble" list – if time permits call all back, if not, don't waste time scrutinizing callbacks
 - A / B / C / D Ranking each series
 - Generally tolerate one "poor" bird for callbacks
 - Cumulative faults to be considered for later series callbacks
 - Short notes of remarkable (Excellent / Poor): marking, style, control (these will be key when deciding placements)
 - Lists will expedite callback
 - Review of rankings and notes before and during last series will facilitate placements
 - Quickly compare books with Co-Judge before last series to identify emerging likes / dislikes –avoids surprises.
 - "Report Card" list of dogs still in as they finish last test
- Example:

Dog	Series 1	Series 2	Series 3	Series 4
1	B+	C-	C	
9	A	B-	B+	
14	A	C+	A	
17	C	B-	B+	

- Fill in final "grades" on long swims / returns
- Start a ranking list as each dog completes: compare to peers

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

DETERMINATION OF PLACEMENTS

Each Series

- Recording of faults which themselves or cumulatively could result in penalties (cumulative penalties can also effect late series call backs)
- Recording of exceptional performances / exhibitions of qualities

After last series

- CLEAR WINNER?!
- Separate non-placement / on JAM's
- Dogs dropped for two poor birds or one failure
- Order sheets by rough order of report card
- Check / re-order by series by series comparison
- Cross check books for call backs
 - ◆ Review lists or trouble pages for "outs"
 - ◆ Quick review of all pages to develop call back list from one judge's book
 - ◆ Check the list against other judge's book

Basis of Comparisons / Balance

- Each series and cumulative, dog vs. dog
- Total marks (Land & Water), dog vs. dog
- Total land (Marks & Blinds) ~ Total water (Marks & Blinds)
- Key birds in the trial (marks?), dog vs. dog
- Adequate style to win?
- Adequate control to win?
- Perseverance / Hunting ability evident?
- Overall pleasing performance?

Withholding placements, JAM's

BOOK MANAGEMENT

- Number pages the night before start
- Keep book dry and out of the wind
- Use waterproof sheets
- Keep copy of callback lists
- Remove, but save pages of eliminated dogs
- Double check / cross check your callbacks list against both judges' books before handing in the list.

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

DIAGRAMMING TESTS

- Basic Template
 - ◆ Important physical features
 - Boundary of fall area
 - Blind fairway
 - Negotiable obstacles
 - Gun and bird positions
 - Shoreline
 - ◆ Graph paper (square lined paper) renders consistent scale from dog to dog
 - ◆ Use a line on the paper as the straight line to the blind
 - ◆ All four diagrams on the same side of the page
 - Top third – land marks
 - Middle third – land and water blinds (draw horizontally)
 - Bottom third – water marks

- Two color pencils (red and blue tips)
 - ◆ Distinguish lines
 - ◆ Doubles blinds
 - ◆ Overlapping hunt patterns to separate birds
 - ◆ Before vs. after re-run work
 - ◆ Fall area vs. dog's hunt pattern
 - ◆ Straight line to blind vs. dog's actual line

- Distinguish actual flyer fall (x) from the ideal fall (·)

F
X

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

DEFINE AREA OF FALL / AGREE WITH CO-JUDGE

- Did dog show an indication of mark?
- When has the dog “left” the “area”?
- Did the dog hunt the “fall area” before moving-on (to switch)?
- Did the dog hunt an old fall before moving on?
- “No-bird” boundaries?
- Other boundaries: safety, wasting time (ask handler to pick up)

GOOD HUNT CRITERIA

- Reasonably accurate mark – depth and line
- Effort / intelligent / systematic hunt
- “Use” of the wind (nose)
- “Owning” the fall area (perseverance)
- Not disturbing cover – out of the area of fall / lines to and from birds
- Distinguish a long, but intelligent, hunt in the fall area from wide, out of area line / hunts that disturb cover

SWITCHING

- Attempted and prevented vs just prevented
- Do fall areas overlap?
- Avoid temptations for “bird exchange” type switch
- Consider possible wind shifts

MARKING ACCURACY

- Where a dog goes to and starts hunting is the area he has “marked” – don’t confuse with a quick check of drag back scent

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

GENERAL APPEARANCE OF RETRIEVER DOGS (From Breed Standards)

Muscular, strong, athletic, powerful in water, endurance, stamina,
Efficient, active, free movement, stride, reach, agile, quick, flexible
Intelligent, versatile
Good temperament, stable
Eager, alert, confident, keen, willing to work, desire
Tender hold of game
Quiet
Hunting ability, innate ability, covers ground well, "birdy"
Balance: power/strong but elegant, smooth, coordinated
Responsive, trainable, tractable
Style, determined
Courage, Perseverance
Nose

WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR RETRIEVER DOGS

Waterfowl, Upland (land / water, balance)
Long time in action, test stamina
Weather, rugged conditions (ice, snow)
Water, ice, cold, tide, long swims
Multiple retrieves
Wind
Rugged / difficult conditions
Heavy punishing cover
Game variety (ducks and pheasants)
Dog safety must be considered in all test designs

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

TEST DESIGN RISK MANAGEMENT

- Heat / Humidity
 - Shade at line / holding blind
 - Shorter tests
 - Include water
 - Request a handle if you are concerned
 - Cooler and ice

- Terrain / Cover
 - Walk lines to birds
 - Check for eye hazards in fall area
 - Ditches / holes safe and visible
 - Avoid “blind leaps”
 - Avoid “sticky” ground
 - Frozen corn stalks

- Water
 - Remove entry debris
 - Avoid heavy mud and/or muck
 - Avoid possible slipping on ice

- Other
 - Wire or stone fences
 - Public roads
 - Steep drop-offs or banks
 - Rocks, stumps, trash
 - Call “time out” if dogs doesn't look right
 - Know local vet contact

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

HUNTING TEST SPECIFICS

- **Scenario**
 - Mechanics of what will happen (who, what, when, where, why)
 - Basis of evaluation: "M, S, P & T" (marking, style, perseverance, trainability)
 - Hunting rationalization
 - Expectations of test
 - When birds will be called for (be ready)

- **Mechanics**
 - Gun handling instructions (safety, barrel and breach / public image)
 - "Sit" command on walk-up: agree on timing
 - Diversion shots vs. orientation shots/calls - Marks?
 - ◆ Diversion birds are **NOT** judged as marks
 - Bulldog (diversion bird/shot: review definitions, discuss fairness)
 - Remote watching / honoring
 - ◆ Sending expectations?
 - Hunting attire: put camo coat and handlers gun in holding blind

- **Co-Judge Philosophies**
 - Honor: discuss "intimidation" vs. "talking to" (was this rule changed?)
 - Calls – behind line / unfair?
 - Bulldog can be unfair if dog has wing over eyes during "mark" when returning
 - Co-judge philosophies
 - ◆ Not scoring each "bird", score each ability "M, S, P & T"
 - ◆ Switch attempted vs. prevented?
 - ◆ Rotation: All stakes?
 - ◆ Restraint on line in Junior (penalty?)
 - ◆ Water vest?
 - Discuss passing score criteria
 - ◆ Average "7" (category minimums)
 - ◆ What constitutes a "zero out", (M, S, T & P)
 - Judging sheets available for inspection, draw your diagrams accordingly
 - Carry a calculator for close calls
 - Consider adjusting tests if unfairness develops (visibility, etc.)
 - Avoid too complex / handler skill oriented participation (blowing calls, extensive gun handling, tippy boats, lay-out hunts, climbing mounds, etc.)

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

HUNTING TEST SPECIFICS

- **Junior Stake Specifics**
 - Flat buckle collar allowed on land and in water, no choke collars
 - Can handle on only one mark
 - Encouragement during the hunt, when does it constitute a handle?

- **Senior Stake Specifics**
 - Should one walk-up on marks
 - Diversion shot
 - Blinds run outside of marks
 - Honor, consider safety and lower level of steadiness
 - Controlled break allowed
 - Expectations of control on blinds

- **Master Stake Specifics**
 - At least one walk-up on marks
 - Double blind
 - Blind can be between marks
 - No controlled breaks

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

TEST SCENARIO DESCRIPTIONS

- Introduce judges and key workers
- Review expectations for gun handling and safety
- Scenario:
 - Mechanics of what will happen (who, what, when, where, why)
 - Basis of evaluation: “M, S, P & T” (marking, style, perseverance, trainability)
 - Expectations of test
 - When birds will be called for - be ready, especially for delayed birds / shots
- “Sit” command on walk-up
 - Timing
 - Verbal command and/or whistle?
- Avoid too complex / handler skill oriented participation
- Respond to specific questions after the test dog runs – repeat questions and give answers to all
- Prior to subsequent tests, mention faults / conduct from earlier series that may be leading to significant penalties
- Instructions to handlers about completing tests
 - Blinds
 - ◆ How emphatic
 - ◆ How to articulate the line relative to hazards – points, etc.

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

CO-JUDGE PHILOSOPHIES

Compare and discuss before the trial / test starts:

Mechanics

- Write down and remember the names of all club members and workers
- Dry run the mechanics before running test dogs
- Running Order: important?
 - Rotation system – fairness to early dogs (1,4,2,3 Quartiles),
 - Re-runs (come back after 3 dogs, but be practical)
 - Scrapped test
 - Fifth series
 - Dow Jones applied to minor stakes
 - No dogs run first in more than one series
 - Extra series starting dog – return to first running dog still in the trial, start with the sixth number still in
- Failures, Test, and Bye dogs honor on lead?
- When is honor satisfied? Re-runs, gun changes / down time (release?)
- Runners / Wild Game
- Compare books before last series
- Avoid prior blind influence on marks
- “Wipe-out” birds (inconsistent falls?)
- Natural blind markers
- Dog visible the entire route to blind (shorter / older handlers)
- Guns face line vs. bird
- Distance gunners move to retire ...unfair diversion/foot path (prefer down wind)
- Dilemma: Protect against primary selection before the gun retires, minimal / immediate movement?
- Blind planter path (prefer down wind)
- Tie breaker test (allow time, what would it be?)
- Mixed bag
- Pathing-up, anticipate / counter?
- Handler conduct after signal
- No unilateral decisions
- Communication to individual handlers done via the marshal
- Avoid advice to handler during the test
- Division of Duties:
 - Call guns up / signal / release / ask to pick up
 - Honor dog / receive and examine birds
- “No Bird”: either may call
- Only one judge should give release numbers and request re-heel, but both judges should agree on parameters
- Order of throws and cadence to encourage marking
- Tobacco smoke and engine fumes affect dogs' noses
- Dry shots

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

Co-JUDGE PHILOSOPHIES

Compare and discuss before the trial / test starts:

Mechanics

- Sluicing birds: fair vs. unfair, deception, safety
- Hidden “no-no” birds on blinds
- Putting handlers “on the clock”: when / how, no shows
- Talking with contestants: when / what is excessive?
- Small trial or test – allow dropped dogs to run “non-contention”?
- Creeping: No more than the length of a shotgun barrel or require to re-heel, apply the muzzle blast standard
- Line mats: rules of usage
- “Golden Rule” standard
- Walk all possible lines to birds for a safety check
- Handler running dogs out of order: justification for elimination? If so, which dog(s) are eliminated? Field trial committee vs. judges’ decision? Grounds for “ineligibility” protest?
- Check in / return all equipment
- Attend awards ceremony
- Inform marshal as soon as you have a winner – trial is done
- Placement / JAM list order
 - Placements
 - Reserve JAM
 - JAM’s in number order

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

CO-JUDGE PHILOSOPHIES / EVALUATION OF DOG WORK

- **General**

- ◆ Steadiness / creeping and controlled breaks penalties (Derby / Qualifying or Junior / Senior)
- ◆ Re-heeling standards on creeping
- ◆ Sticky mouth
- ◆ Noise
- ◆ Intimidation / interference (honor, etc.): what constitutes?
 - Did "both dogs" break?
- ◆ Birds we cannot retrieve easily ourselves
 - Cover, water, distance (hard to get to, hard to find)
- ◆ Poison birds are "Marks"?
- ◆ Honoring nose: pop / check / continues on (marks vs. blinds)
- ◆ Dog fights
- ◆ Outlandish obedience to line / around honor dog
- ◆ Noisy in holding blind, under judgement?
- ◆ Handler intimidation in the holding blind
- ◆ Compare books before last series
- ◆ Penalty for breaking down to sent?
- ◆ Liberal call backs?
 - What constitutes failure?
 - Reality of time
- ◆ Disregard information about dog performance offered by non-judges
- ◆ Calling back marginal dogs: if time permits, run them
- ◆ Extent to which call back standards change from small trial to large trial?
- ◆ Withholding of placements / JAM's? (vs. relative merits)
- ◆ Extra series: marks? What has not yet been thoroughly tested?
- ◆ How much talking with handler is excessive?
 - About test
 - About dogs
 - Who owns?
 - How many points does it have?

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

CO-JUDGE PHILOSOPHIES / EVALUATION OF DOG WORK

- **Marks**

- ◆ Handling on mark
 - Evidence of mark?
 - Timing/smooth handle to the bird?
 - Evaluation of hunt vs. handle
- ◆ Lines to marks
- ◆ Retired guns (depth, not just lines)
- ◆ What constitutes hunting an old fall?
- ◆ Switching: yes or no call? Scenting conditions? (attempted vs. prevented?)
- ◆ What constitutes confusion on send for marks?
- ◆ Winding the bird from way out of the area?
- ◆ Degree to which faster dogs are allowed a larger fall area? (disturbing cover?)
- ◆ Spontaneous "pop" vs. "stop hunt" on a mark
- ◆ Honoring: when a non-collision position / when not in the line of traffic
- ◆ Penalty for conspicuously intensive lining on marks?
- ◆ What to do about excessive showing of guns?

- **Blinds**

- ◆ "No-go" on blind
- ◆ Recall / attrition on blind (define / cause, prefer not)
- ◆ Blinds: momentum / smooth vs. strict on line
- ◆ Planted vs. thrown "poison" birds
- ◆ Pops: where, when, why?
- ◆ Handler blowing multiple "back-up"/whistles?
- ◆ In route vocal command, e.g. emphasis "back"
- ◆ Remote cast blind: Judging "no-go's"

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

DERBY SPECIFICS

- Avoid sudden death set-ups if possible
 - ◆ Look for hunt recoverability
 - ◆ Don't make marks too tight

- Controlled breaks
 - ◆ Extent of penalty – one placement cut
 - ◆ Type
 - ◆ Preventative
 - ◆ Discreet
 - ◆ Loud / lose
 - ◆ Allow only one?

- Nervous handlers – have empathy (also applicable for Junior Hunt Tests)
 - ◆ Talking during marks
 - ◆ Touching dogs
 - ◆ Exposed lead
 - ◆ Picking up dropped birds
 - ◆ Interim bird hand offs
 - ◆ Setting up on wrong bird

- Liberal call backs if possible – all dogs that get birds
- Withholding placements?
- Handles?
- Test design
 - ◆ Leave recovery room from hazards after exit
 - ◆ Test sequence: land, water, then get tougher
 - ◆ Retired gun?
 - ◆ Triple mark?
 - ◆ Simultaneous tests in same field (i.e., single, then a double)
 - Be aware of cross test influences

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MARSHAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Outline equipment / help requirements
- Gallery, traffic and safety (keep line area clear)
- Review instructions to guns and other helpers
- Post the running order: Rotation
- No-birds – after 3 (discuss exceptions)
- Test dogs (have 2 ready)
- Time test dogs to estimate finish time for series
- By-dogs (begin, end, out of dogs?)
- Pick-up dog, quickly available
- Make sure there is no “white” in the gallery
- Sorting of birds (sex, badly damaged, quantity in bags for efficient re-birding)
- Timing: re-birds, gun changes, lunch
 - ◆ Inform handlers of timing
 - Allows line viewing opportunities for handlers
 - Have next dog to run ready and in blind for after change
- Plan move to next series / clean-up / anticipate equipment / post signs, etc
- Plan lunch – timing, who to feed
- Exchange call backs with other stakes / committee and announce / post
- When / how to call dogs to line (Call number aloud for gallery / post on white board)
- Anticipate missing / cross over handlers / dogs, stay in touch with other stakes / need for by-dogs
- Guns up? Blind planted?
- Enough dead birds to get “rolling”
- Weather radio / wind, check periodically (for next test)
- Be sure all “extra” birds are picked up when a dog fails test
- Review traffic flow to / from line
- Post special instructions to handlers in holding blind
- Post rotation in the blind
- Directions / signs into your stake / out to all other stakes (pick up old signs)
- Locate: food, toilet, local vet, hospital
- Ideally two marshals at each stake
 - ◆ Work line during set up, calling dogs up, taking birds from judge
 - ◆ Getting equipment and workers into the field, line up handlers from gallery and parking area
 - ◆ Keep holding blinds full
- Trash receptacles at the line, in the gallery, and in the parking area
- Police the entire test area before departing

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MARSHAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Find a replacement for a temporary leave of duty
- Notify judges and event secretary of scratches
- All communications (questions, answers, directions) to and from judges go through marshal
- Avoid putting dogs in blind too early if re-birding is lengthy
- Try not to interrupt running order once a dog has reached the holding blind
- Plan / coordinate with other stakes the release / arrival times and running of handler from and to
- Know when and where all stakes are moving, coordinate knowledge with all stakes
- White board / chalk board to display running order
- "Guns up" by radio so guns are ready for next dog before exiting dog delivers
- Keep line clear of people while judges are setting tests
- Coordinate and communicate any special running order instructions from the club

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO WORKERS

- Explain importance of their jobs and what is at stake
- Safety / Comfort: gun safety, ears, eyes, clothing, gloves, chair, gun stand, bug spray, etc.
- Don't drag bird bag on the ground to and from station – explain scenting confusion
- Radios at all stations:
 - ◆ How to use
 - ◆ Low volume when dog is on line, hunting, etc.
 - ◆ When to / not to communicate
- Keep cell phones turned to silent / vibrate
- Don't use badly damaged / shot up birds
- Do not change chair / stance positions / white coats (anticipate hot/cold / rain / visibility)
- Special Equipment (launchers, etc... How to use)
- Give same instruction to **NEW** workers at each gun / worker change
- How / when to notify of bird/equipment shortages
- How / when to help a dog get the bird
 - ◆ Inform judges
 - ◆ Help dog if health or safety is at risk
- Dry run the mechanics at each gun / worker change
- Signaling devices clearly visible?
- No smoking
- Keep birds in bird bag
- Do not swing bird or move
- Do not cock gun until ready to fire
- Importance of "quiet"

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

MARKED BIRD STATION INSTRUCTIONS

- **Safety**
 - ◆ Keep checking for clean barrels
 - ◆ Helpers over age 16
- Keep radio with you at all times
- When to clear gun, sit down, retire, re-bird, reload, cock gun, get ready
- Define walking paths: retiring, re-birding, returning to line
- Clean-up (empty shells, etc.)
- Area of fall / no bird
- Even if a dog breaks, still look for signal (Derby / Qualifying, Junior / Senior)
- Scent area with dead bird throws (widely) note day 2 or 3 of trial / test or last series
- Enough poppers, birds, etc. to finish test?
- Keep extra blank shells in pocket
- Don't leave empty shells at retired throwing spot
- Retired gunner to be hidden from 360 degree view
- Important to shoot / throw immediately on signal, particularly on first bird down
- Use of gun stands

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

FLYER STATION INSTRUCTIONS

- **SAFETY!** – breaking type guns preferred, etc.
 - ◆ Chamber open, safety on when not shooting
 - ◆ Shot size: 5 – 7 1/2
 - ◆ Keep checking for clean barrels
 - ◆ Helpers over age 16
 - ◆ Clean line of fire – know where others are
 - ◆ Sluicing, danger / fairness?
- # of birds killed to start
- Keep birds quiet / in shade / out of rain – crate covers
- Don't hold / cramp flyers' wings
- Ask for 2 shots at each bird
- When to sluice cripples
 - ◆ Don't shoot / sluice after a dog has left the line or is in the middle of completing a test unless requested to do so
- When to clear guns, sit-down, retire
- Keep radio with you at all times
- How to inform judges of runners, wrong bird, cover change/ unfair situation, badly shot-up birds
- Clean up (empty shells, etc.)
- When to mount guns (avoid head-swinging) – no movement until your turn
- Area of fall / no bird: during set up, watch someone walk the perimeter of desired fall area
- Even if a dog breaks, still look for signal (Derby / Qualifying, Junior / Senior), b safety is primary
- Scent area with dead bird throws (widely) note day 2 or 3 of trial / test / last series
- Keep fall area clean of bird wings and other body parts
- Give dead birds to others during re-bird
- Verify ammunition supply (steel vs. lead, size, 3 1/2 dram charge, adequate supply)
- Enough birds, shells, etc. to finish test?
- Bird tags?

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

BLIND PLANTER STATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Safety
- Keep radio with you at all times
- Confirm blind is planted
- Define walking paths: blind planting, re-birding, returning to line
- Clean-up
- When to / not to communicate (stay still and hidden)
- Plant all birds breast down / in same place
- Enough birds, etc to finish test?
- Don't put two blind planters together – avoid talking

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

SYSTEM OF ROTATION

- Four Quartiles
 - ◆ Example for 100 dog stake
 - 1st series – start with 1
 - 2nd series – start with 26 (not 25)
 - 3rd series – start with 51 (not 50)
 - 4th series – start with 76 (not 75)
- Disregard scratches
- Rotate quartiles to equalize who runs early and who runs late on marks:
 - ◆ 1st
 - ◆ 4th
 - ◆ 2nd
 - ◆ 3rd

KEY CONTACTS LIST (NAMES AND CELL PHONE NUMBERS)

Contact	Telephone Number
Event chair	
Committee members	
Officers / directors (secretary,	
Head marshal	
Event secretary	
Bird steward	
Gun captain	
Helpers / equipment stewards	
All stake marshals	
Hotels / headquarters	
Emergency dispatch	
Local veterinarian	
Co-judge(s)	

RETRIEVER TEST/TRIAL JUDGE'S MANUAL

EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT AND HELP WORKSHEET

Stake		Series	Marshal's Name(s)					
Location								
Description								
Est. Start Time			Est. Finish (min./dog)					
Equipment								
# of Radios		# of Gun Stands		# of Boxes of Lead				
# Popper Guns		# of Boxes of Popper Shells		# of Boxes of Steel				
# of Holding Blinds		# of Blind Markers		# of Hearing protection				
Line mat(s)		Paint marker		# of Bird calls				
Bird dryer		# of Wingers		Other				
# of Bird Bags/Buckets		Stool/seat for handlers						
Boat, Oars, Flotation Devices, Anchor		Weighted decoys						
Trash bags for line, gallery, parking area								
Line Set-up								
# of Holding Blinds		Line Mat(s)		Radio(s)				
Tent/umbrella for judges		Chairs		Cooler				
Seat for handlers		Bird bags		Bird dryer				
Station Set-ups								
# of dead bird stations								
Station 1		Station 2		Station 3				
Bird boy's name		Bird boy's name		Bird boy's name				
Radio	Popper gun	Radio	Popper gun	Radio	Popper gun			
Chair	Gun stand	Chair	Gun stand	Chair	Gun stand			
# of boxes of poppers		# of boxes of poppers		# of boxes of poppers				
Hearing protection		Hearing protection		Hearing protection				
Holding blind(s)		Bird call	Holding blind(s)	Bird call	Holding blind(s)	Bird call		
Birds:	Ducks	Pheasants	Birds:	Ducks	Pheasants	Birds:	Ducks	Pheasants
Male			Male			Male		
Female			Female			Female		
Station 4		Live Guns		Blind Planter(s)				
Bird boy's name		Names		Name(s)				
Radio	Popper gun							
Chair	Gun stand	Radio	Chairs	Radio	Popper gun			
# of boxes of poppers		# of boxes of steel		Chair	Gun stand			
Hearing protection		# of boxes of lead		# of boxes of poppers				
Holding blind(s)		Bird call	Hearing protection	Hearing protection				
Birds:	Ducks	Pheasants	Holding blind(s)	Bird call	Holding blind(s)	Bird call		
Male			Bird bands	Pliers	Birds:	Ducks	Pheasants	
Female			Birds:	Ducks	Pheasants	Male		
			Male			Female		
			Female					
Other								