

REVISIONS to AKC POINTING BREED HUNTING TEST REGULATIONS
Passed by the AKC Board of Directors, Effective January 1, 2008

FOREWARD

New: Purpose: The purpose of the Pointing Breed Hunting Test program is to afford an opportunity for a person to demonstrate a dog's ability to perform the task for which they were originally bred. Testing gauges the dog's natural hunting ability and training against these standards of performance – Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter.

The AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test program started in April 1986.

CHAPTER 1, GENERAL REGULATIONS

Section 6. Judges' Eligibility and Approval.

Anyone in good standing with The American Kennel Club may be approved to judge a Hunting Test subject to the qualification requirements in force at the time.

In order to Apprentice Judge (after 1/1/08):

- Must attend one AKC Pointing Breed Hunt Test Seminar.
- Must handle a dog to at least one qualifying leg at the level to be judged or higher.

In order to be an approved Judge (applies to new judges after 1/1/08):

- Must apprentice judge twice at the level to be judged or higher.
- Must pass an AKC Hunting Test written test.
- Must handle a dog to at least three qualifying legs at the level to be judged or higher.
- Approved pointing breed field trial judges are exempt from the "handled in three qualifying legs" requirement, but must still apprentice judge twice and pass the written test prior to judging pointing breed hunt tests.

In order to Maintain Judging Eligibility (applies to all judges):

- By 12/31/2009 – all judges must have attended a seminar or passed a written test within the last 5 years of the date of the assignment.

Judges Panel Qualifications (after 1/1/08):

- The proposed judges of each level must have a combined record of having judged at least 8 previous licensed tests, with at least 4 assignments at the same test level or higher.

Section 7. Judges' Responsibility. A Judge of a Hunting Test shall be familiar with all the Rules, Regulations and Guidelines pertaining to the type of Test being conducted. Judges shall be thoroughly familiar with the applicable Standards, and shall be responsible for judging in compliance with the Regulations, Standards and Guidelines.

Section 9. AKC Publications. All clubs holding Hunting Tests are required to have available copies of the latest editions of these: Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds, Rules Applying to Registration and Dealing with Misconduct.

Section 13. Premium Lists. The following information shall be included in the premium list for a licensed or member club Hunting Test: name of club, location with directions and date, names and addresses of officers, time judging will commence, entry fees, Tests offered, names and addresses of Judges together with their specific assignments, name, address and telephone number of Hunting Test Secretary, date and time of closing and drawing of entries, and the official AKC entry form.

Section 15. Bye-Dogs, Change of Level, Incomplete Braces, Attacking Dog. Whenever a bracemate is not available in the same test level, the Judges must select a suitable bracemate. A suitable bracemate is one that closely matches the expectations of the testing level. Care should be taken when using a bracemate from a lower level, so as not to place the testing dog at an unfair disadvantage. If necessary, the bracemate can be a dog not entered in the event.

Section 17. Submission of Records. The Hunting Test Secretary shall forward to the American Kennel Club the Official Catalog or Judges Book marked to indicate dogs that received qualifying score. Certified and signed by the Judges and the Hunting Test Secretary. The complete Hunting Test Secretary's Report of the Hunting Test **must be sent to The American Kennel Club so as to reach its office within seven (7) days after the close of the event.** All entry forms are to be retained by the Club for a period of one year following the conclusion of the event.

CHAPTER 2, QUALIFYING SCORES, AWARDING OF TITLES

Section 3. Senior Hunter Title (SH). In order to be recorded as a Senior Hunter, a dog must be registered in the AKC *Stud Book*, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores in the Senior Hunting Test at five (5) AKC-licensed or –member club Hunting Tests, or, in the case of a dog that has been recorded by AKC as a Junior Hunter, that dog will be recorded as a Senior Hunter after having acquired Qualifying score in the Senior Hunting Test at four (4) AKC-licensed or –member club Hunting Tests. Except that a German Wirehaired Pointer shall not be recorded a Senior Hunter unless it has also been certified by two approved field trial or hunting test judges to have passed an AKC Water Test at a licensed or member field trial or hunting test.

Section 4. Master Hunter Title (MH). In order to be recorded as a Master Hunter, a dog must be registered in the AKC *Stud Book*, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores at the Master Hunting Test at six (6) AKC-licensed or –member club Hunting Tests, or, in the case of a dog that has been recorded by AKC as a Senior Hunter, that dog will be recorded as a Master Hunter after having acquired Qualifying score in the Master Hunting Test at five (5) AKC-licensed or –member club Hunting Tests. Except that a German Wirehaired Pointer shall not be recorded a Master Hunter unless it has also been certified by two approved field trial or hunting test judges to have passed an AKC Water Test at a licensed or member field trial or hunting test.

WATER TEST

If a club wished to hold a Water Test in conjunction with its licensed or member field trial, hunting test or as a “stand alone” event, request for approval of the Water Test must be included on the application for the event. If approved, the Water Test must be specified on the questionnaire form and announced in the premium list. The Water Test shall be judged by two approved field trial or hunting test Judges. The dog shall retrieve a dead game bird from the water after a swim of about 20 yards to the bird. The handler shall stand (6) six feet from the water, and the dog must demonstrate its willingness to enter the water, to swim, and to retrieve, at the direction of its handler without being touched or intimidated. Style shall not be considered. The dogs shall not be placed, but shall either pass or fail. The Judges shall certify on the judging sheets the particulars of each dog that passed the test.

The “stand alone” test will not count against the number of annual field trials/hunting tests that a club is allowed to hold.

CHAPTER 3, INSTRUCTIONS FOR HUNTING TEST COMMITTEE

Section 2. Courses. Dogs shall be tested on a single course with or without a bird field. A bird field must not be less than five acres, and larger than five acres is strongly recommended. A bird field must have sufficient cover to hold birds and must be of adequate size to permit a dog to hunt naturally without excessive hacking. If a bird field is used, a minimum of 6 minutes in the bird field is required for the junior hunting test and a minimum of 8 minutes is required for the senior and master hunting test.

No one shall be permitted in the bird field at anytime during the running of the dogs except for the Judges, the Apprentice Judges, the handlers of the working dogs, the Official Guns and AKC Field Representatives.

Section 3. Birds. Birds should, if possible, be released in natural cover rather than in artificially created cover. They should not be placed in holes nor in such cover as will impede their ability to fly or run. Birds may be rocked or dizzied but not to such an extent as to affect their ability to fly. Game Stewards and bird planters should wear gloves and should not hold birds against their bodies.

In all test levels, a minimum of two birds shall be released for each brace, either before the start of, or during the running of each brace.

In a Test run on a single course without a bird field, the birds must be released at suitable places along the course. Whenever a bird field is used (either alone or with a course), the minimum of two birds per brace must be released in the bird field.

Regardless of which course or bird field option might be used, it is mandatory to plant the back course and to maintain a consistent number of birds both there and in the bird field throughout the event.

Birds may be liberated from horseback and/or All Terrain Vehicles on the back course, as long as it can be done without interference to the working dogs. With the exception of ATV's, motorized vehicles are prohibited. ATV's may be used for the sole purpose of liberating birds on course. ATV's must meet all applicable state and federal government requirements. ATV's are not allowed in bird fields, but may be driven around their perimeters.

Section 4. Running Time. A minimum of 15 minutes is required for each brace in the Junior Hunting Test, and at least 30 minutes allowed for each brace in Senior and Master Hunting Tests. Failure to meet the required times will result in no qualification being awarded.

A Test-giving club may extend the minimum time allowed for braces (but not to exceed 30 minutes in Junior or 45 minutes in Senior and Master) provided the extended running time is published in the premium list. If extended time is advertised it must be adhered to.

The duty of having a dog ready in place when required for judging rests solely with its handler or owner. All dogs should be ready on the grounds well in advance of the scheduled times for their braces so that the Judges will not be held up in case of an absent brace. If a dog is not present at the place where it is to start within 5 minutes after it is called for by the Judges to run in any test, it should be disqualified. The Judges are responsible for keeping the time.

Section 5. Horses. In testing for Junior, Senior, Master Hunting Tests, all handling must be on foot. Horses may be used only by the Judges, Apprentice Judge, the Judge's Marshall and the bird liberator.

CHAPTER 4, INSTRUCTIONS FOR HUNTING TEST COMMITTEES

Section 1. Junior Hunting Test. A Junior hunting dog must show a keen desire to hunt, be bold and independent, have a fast, yet attractive, manner of hunting, and demonstrate not only intelligence in seeking objectives, but also the ability to find game. A Junior hunting dog must establish point on at least fifty (50) percent of the birds it encounters, but no additional credit shall be given for steadiness to wing and shot. If the handler is within reasonable gun range of a bird which has been flushed after a point, a blank cartridge must be fired by the handler. Junior hunting dogs must hold point until the handler gets within normal gunshot range. This requirement should be tempered by practical considerations such as the dog's distance from the handler when it finds a bird. Junior hunting dogs must also show reasonable obedience to their handler's commands.

Section 2. Senior Hunting Test. A Senior hunting dog must show all of the attributes of a Junior hunting dog. In addition, the Senior hunting dog must be steady to wing on all pointed birds and must remain in position until the shot or they are released. A Senior hunting dog must retrieve. All birds that are pointed by the Senior dog in a bird field must be shot where safety allows. If gunning is being done on course, all birds pointed on course must be shot where safety allows. A legitimate attempt to retrieve all downed birds must be made. Conditions such as the type of cover where the bird landed, the terrain, and the condition of the downed bird, sometimes make a retrieve impossible and this should not reflect negatively on the score of the Senior dog. Whenever it encounters its brace mate on point, it must honor. A dog that steals its brace mate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score.

Section 3. Master Hunting Test. A Master hunting dog must positively demonstrate its steadiness to wing and shot. All birds that are pointed by the Master dog in a bird field must be shot where safety allows. If gunning is being done on course, all birds pointed on course must be shot where safety allows. Gunning must be done by Official Guns only. A legitimate attempt to retrieve all downed birds must be made. Conditions such as the type of cover, where the birds landed, the terrain, and the condition of the downed bird, sometimes make a retrieve impossible and this should not reflect negatively on the score of the Master dog. All killed birds must be retrieved promptly, tenderly and absolutely to hand. The handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until positive steadiness has been demonstrated.

CHAPTER 5, TEST REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGES

Section 1. General Requirements and Instructions. (F) Belled collars are permissible. Electronic devices, including beeper or dummy electronic devices, as well as pinch or choke-type collars shall not be worn by a dog while it is being run in a Hunting Test.

(G) Special Training Collars used to control and train dogs including but not limited to collars with prongs, electronic collars used with transmitters, muzzles and head collars may not be used on dogs at AKC events, except as allowed in the AKC Rules, Regulations, and Policies.

New Paragraph (H): The use of tracking collars at recognized hunting tests are at the sole discretion of the host club. The hunting test premium list shall state if tracking collars are allowed. If the premium list does not specifically state tracking collars are allowed, they are then prohibited.

(H) Moves to (I): A handler is permitted to pick up his or her dog during the running of a brace in any test level, but may do so only with the permission of the Judges.

(I) Moves to (J): It is the prerogative of the Judges to order up a dog at any time.

Section 2. Instructions and Test Requirements for Junior Hunting Test. (1) HUNTING: A dog is scored from "0" to "10" on the basis of whether or not it evidences a keen desire to hunt, boldness and independence, and a fast, yet useful pattern of running. A dog that lacks independence to the extent that it seldom leaves its handler's side, needs constant direction as to where to hunt or is directed into a bird(s) has not demonstrated adequate hunting ability and cannot receive a qualifying score.

Section 3. Instructions and Test Requirements for Senior Hunting Test. (3) POINTING: A Senior hunting dog must be steady to wing on all pointed birds and remain until the shot or they are released.

(4) RETRIEVING: The Judges shall call back any dog that did not have an opportunity to retrieve during the running of its brace in order to score the dog's Retrieving ability. The call backs to demonstrate Retrieving ability shall be limited to those dogs whose scores in the other abilities would otherwise enable them to receive a Qualifying score.

(6) HONORING: In order to receive a Qualifying score, a Senior hunting dog must honor; a handler may give a dog a verbal command to honor. In order to receive a Qualifying score, a Senior hunting dog must

see or acknowledge that its brace mate is on point before it has been cautioned to honor. A dog that steals its brace mate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score.

Section 4. Instructions and Test Requirements for Master Hunting Test. (3) POINTING: It is permissible for the handler to caution a master hunting dog on point. Cautioning, if any, is expected to be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or physical restraint shall be permitted.

(4) RETRIEVING: As in the Senior Hunting Test, a Master hunting dog must be given the opportunity to demonstrate Retrieving ability, either during the time its brace is running, or in a call back situation. The Judges may call back only those dogs whose scores in the other abilities would otherwise permit them to receive a Qualifying score.

(5) TRAINABILITY: Both handlers shall carry an empty shotgun or an "imitation" long barreled gun at all times during the running of the brace. In those instances where the use of live ammunition is not permitted on the back course, blank pistols must be fired.

A Master hunting dog must stop on a wild flushed bird without being given a command to do so. A dog that fails to do so, or a dog requiring a command to stop cannot receive a qualifying score. A blank shall be fired on a stop-to-flush bird.

When a game bird is flushed, following a point, the handler of the pointing dog must shoulder an empty shotgun or an "imitation" long barreled gun, and with both hands on the gun, follow the flight of the bird as if a shot were to be fired at it.

(6) HONORING: A Master hunting dog must honor but shall not be commanded to do so. A dog requiring restraint, either physical or verbal, while establishing an honor cannot receive a Qualifying score. A dog that steals its brace mate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score.

A Master dog may be called into the vicinity of the pointing dog to demonstrate an honor.

Once a dog has established an honor, the handler is permitted to give a quiet verbal caution, but may not use loud vocal or physical restraint. Cautioning, if any, is expected to be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or physical restraint shall be permitted.

As in the Senior Hunting Test, a Master hunting dog must be given an opportunity to honor, either during the time its brace is running, or in a callback situation. The Judges may call back only those dogs whose scores in the other abilities would otherwise permit them to receive a Qualifying score.

GUIDELINES FOR POINTING BREED HUNTING TESTS

PART 1, INTRODUCTION

Shooting: Only blank pistols are permitted, except for the empty shotguns or "imitation" long barreled guns that are carried by handlers in Master. All live shooting in Senior and Master is done only by Official Guns. A blank pistol is clearly defined in Chapter 3, Section 6 of the Regulations as being one that is incapable of discharging live ammunition.

PART II, HUNTING TEST CATEGORIES

3. Pointing: Flagging (lack of staunchness) on game is generally a fault and should be reflected in the score of any dog. This could be a dog which has only stopped with a soft stance on a bird. A dog with a low stance should not be scored lower than a dog with a high stance if it demonstrates staunchness and intensity, particularly in difficult pointing situations. Some breeds may not carry as high a head and tail as others, and this should be weighed in determining a score.

A flash point is generally a point in which the dog stops only momentarily before chasing the bird. The question arises as to how much longer than “momentarily” the dog must remain on point. The Regulations state that a Junior dog must hold point until the handler gets within normal gunshot range.

This requirement should be tempered by practical considerations such as the dogs distance from the handler when it finds a bird.

A Senior hunting dog must be steady to wing on all pointed birds and remain until the shot or they are released. A dog which breaks before the shot cannot receive a Qualifying score. A Senior dog must be steady to flush, but not to shot.

A Master hunting dog must demonstrate steadiness to wing and shot on all birds and cannot receive a Qualifying score if it breaks. The handler may caution a Master dog after it has established point. *Cautioning, if any, is expected to be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or physical restraint shall be permitted.* The dog cannot be commanded to retrieve until positive steadiness has been demonstrated. A handler may send his dog to retrieve after the bird has hit the ground and the dog is seen to remain in position. A dog that breaks at any time before it is commanded to retrieve cannot receive a Qualifying score....

5. Retrieving: Some unusual situations can occur in the retrieve. For instance, the gunner fires a shot and the bird goes down. When the dog is sent for the retrieve, the bird flies away. Some Judges say that if a command is given to retrieve, the dog must come back with the bird or the Retrieving score will be 0. In this circumstance, the attempt should not be scored and the Judges should give a dog a chance to retrieve another bird. The dog can continue on course for another find, or a callback could be used. Two Official Gunners must be used whenever a dog is called back to retrieve. Tracking collars are not allowed to be used in a call back situation.

6. Honoring: If a dog is given an opportunity to honor and refuses, it cannot receive a Qualifying score. If the dog does not have an opportunity to honor, it should be called back at the conclusion of the brace or the end of the test to demonstrate its willingness to honor and its style. Style can be compared to that discussed under the Pointing category. Tracking collars are not allowed to be used in a call back situation.

In Senior, the Regulations state that the handler may give a dog a verbal command to honor but the dog must see or acknowledge that its braced mate is on point before it has been cautioned to honor. A dog cannot be heeled into its honor. Once the dog has established its honor, the handler may collar the dog to prevent interference with the pointing dog when the bird is flushed. But, remember, the dog must clearly demonstrate its honoring before it can be collared.

In Master hunting tests, the Regulations state that “a dog requiring restraint, either physical or verbal, while establishing an honor cannot receive a Qualifying score.”

In a callback for an honor, the Judges should also make every effort to use as the pointing dog one which was entered in the test being judged. Ideally, a dog that requires a retrieve in order to complete the test level should be used to point and retrieve in front of another dog that requires an honor. In the event there is no dog that requires a retrieve, a “set up dog” must be selected to point and retrieve. This dog shall not be considered under judgment. This may not always be possible and, in those cases where it is impossible, the Judges must select a suitable dog.

APPENDIX, TRACKING COLLARS

New Page 38. The use of the tracking collar at a recognized hunting test at the sole discretion of the host club. The hunting test premium shall state if tracking collars are allowed. If the premium list does not specifically state tracking collars are allowed, they are then prohibited.

Only AKC – approved models may be used. The owner/handler is responsible for providing the tracking collar if he or she wishes to use a tracking device.

The regulations for the use of a tracking collar are as follows:

- The radio transmitter placed on the dog is to weigh no more than five (5) ounces.
- If a handler elects to use the transmitting collar on his or her dog, only one other identification – type collar is permitted to be on the dog. The tracking collar shall remain on the dog during the entire heat; if a handler elects to remove the tracking collar, that dog shall be considered out of judgment.
- The handheld receiver shall be kept in the possession of the judges or the marshall only.
- The handheld locating receiver can only be used after the dog is determined to be out of judgment.
- The use of the tracking collar is elective and for no reason should the running be held up due to the lack of available equipment.
- Tracking collars are not allowed in a call back for a retrieve or honor.
- Any person using a locating receiver to locate a dog currently in judgment and prior to official authorization of its use by one of the judges, shall disqualify the dog in that stake and the offenders shall be disqualified from that hunting test.
- Special Training Collars used to control and train dogs including but not limited to collars with prongs, electronic collars used with transmitters, muzzles and head collars may not be used on dogs at AKC events, except as allowed in the AKC Rules, Regulations, and Policies.