

## Hunt Test Summary

### Started Dog (may be gently restrained)

- flush and retrieve a planted bird
- single marked retrieve (up to 40 yards)
- single marked retrieve (up to 40 yards) from open water

### *Working Dog (deliver to hand, may be gently restrained)*

- flush and retrieve two planted birds
- single marked land retrieve (up to 50 yards)
- single marked water retrieve (up to 50) with a diversion.

### *Working Dog Excellent (delivery to hand, line steady)*

- flush and retrieve two planted birds
- double marked land retrieve (up to 60) yards with a diversion
- land blind at a distance (up to 50 yards)
- double marked water retrieve (up to 50 yards)

### *Working Dog Superior (delivery to hand, line steady, steady to wing and shot)*

- flush three and retrieve two planted birds with one flyaway
- triple marked land retrieve (up to 60 yards distance) with possible diversion
- triple marked water retrieve, or a double of (up to 60 yards) with a diversion
- blind retrieve, water or land/water combination, (up to 60 yards)
- honor

Passing italicized series qualifies the dog for RCT

# *American Water Spaniel Club, Inc.*

*(The Parent Club)*



AWSC  
HUNT TEST  
REGULATIONS

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to see an AWS that handles the hunt dead more like a true blind. Some, if not most, AWS running in tests will likely be handled more on the hunt dead than other spaniel breeds. This is likely due to the fact that the haphazard way in which many of the spaniels run the hunt dead does not really fit the nature and historic perspective of the AWS.

To summarize: The American Water Spaniel is a methodical hunting dog that covers the field at a steady and deliberate pace utilizing a sweeping pattern. The breed normally employs a soft flush and often hesitates just prior to putting the bird to flight. The American Water Spaniel should demonstrate excellent use of its nose and persistence to work a scent trail. When it comes to retrieving from water, the breed should show willingness to enter the water with entries varying from cautious and deliberate to powerful and bold.

dropping a bird and picking up the diversion bird.

**tracking:** A dog's ability to use his nose to find lost game.

**triple mark:** A marking test in which three birds are thrown or shot individually, so that the dog can watch each fall. He is expected to remember each mark, and to retrieve each one separately when commanded to do so.

## **Chapter 6 - Field Working Qualities of the American Water Spaniel**

The American Water Spaniel Club, Inc. has developed and approved the following description of the breed's hunting characteristics. This description is provided to AKC judges and clubs to identify and assist in preserving the breed's most common and desirable field characteristics. Because training and field experience can affect the degree to which an individual dog exhibits these characteristics the description is only an overview of the average American Water Spaniel.

The AWS is a methodical hunter equipped with an excellent nose and strong drive. It does not work the field with the speed and flash of a field bred English Springer Spaniel (ESS) but neither does it work slowly and casually like the Clumber or Sussex. Typically the AWS will work a field at a steady and deliberate pace moving side to side in a sweeping fashion. Windshield wiper patterns are not the norm for the AWS even when trained to develop such. Rather than waste its time in unproductive areas of the field, the AWS, especially if they are truly hunted, may tend to seek out cover that will hold birds. If properly trained to respond to whistle, they may be guided to hunt the unproductive areas.

It is not too unusual to find AWS that are hard flushing dogs but they are not the norm. Just before putting a bird to flight the dog will often hesitate and try to locate the bird through the use of its nose or by sight. The AKC Spaniel Hunt Test Regulations state, "Section 5. The Flushing Spaniel should be rated highest for a bold flush. However, a soft flush or momentary stopping is acceptable if the dog, within a very brief period, forces the bird into flight." This description of a soft flush found in these regulations is precisely how many of the AWS put a bird up before the gun.

The AWS, especially one that is trained well, will generally work within gun range. Being a spaniel that is probably more often used as a truly versatile dog (i.e. used for waterfowl and for upland) by its owners, it may occasionally work closer to its handler than will other spaniels seen at AKC hunt tests. The average AWS is not likely to have the broad sweeping pattern of an ESS but neither should it be too close underfoot like a Sussex.

The AWS is truly an all-purpose dog and most that are trained are probably cross trained (flushing and non-slip retrieving) to one extent or the other. Therefore, it should not be unusual

## **Chapter 1 General Regulations**

The word "dog" wherever used in these regulations refers to a male or female dog. Minor changes and clarification of these rules may be made from time to time as recommended by the Hunting Events Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. Major changes (such as elements, distances, scoring, etc.) must be voted on by the members.

### **Section 1. Eligibility of Clubs to Hold Hunt Tests.**

Either the AWSC Board of Directors or the Hunting Events Committee may grant, licensed AKC Spaniel or Retriever hunt test clubs, permission to hold AWSC Hunt Tests governed by the rules of the AWSC Inc.

### **Section 2. Making Applications.**

A club that meets all the requirements of the American Water Spaniel Club and wishes to hold an AWSC hunt test at which qualifying scores toward AWSC titles may be awarded must make application to the American Water Spaniel Club on the form provided for permission to hold a hunt test for the AWS. An additional fee may be imposed for each dog entered in the hunt test to cover costs of ribbons, rosettes and certificates.

Any eligible club, member, or owner wishing to hold an AWSC hunt test, at which qualifying scores will be awarded, must make application to the AWSC on the form provided when requesting permission to hold AWSC Hunt Tests. The application must be received by the AWSC Hunting Events Committee a minimum of 90 days prior to the requested date. The AWSC Hunting Events Committee shall take no longer than fourteen (14) days to approve or deny an application to hold the event. Notification of the Hunting Events Committee's approval or denial of the request shall be made in writing by letter, e-mail, or fax and must be received by the applicant no later than seven (7) days following approval. Should the AWSC Hunting Events Committee fail to act within the designated time frame, the application will automatically be approved pending final action taken by the Board of Directors of the AWSC, Inc. if any.

All test levels (Started Dog, Working Dog, Working Dog Excellent, and Working Dog Superior) must be offered at all Club and Club-sanctioned events unless special permission is granted by either the AWSC Board of Directors or Hunting Events Committee.

The Board of Directors will not approve applications for hunt tests where qualifying scores can be awarded when dates conflict with one or more hunt tests, unless it can be shown that the granting of such permission will not work to the detriment of the clubs making application to hold the hunt tests.

A club that meets all of the requirements of the American

Water Spaniel Club may be approved to hold a sanctioned hunt test by applying to hold a sanctioned hunt test on a form provided by the American Water Spaniel Club

All of these regulations shall govern AWSC sanctioned hunt tests. The board may allow exceptions to these rules as deemed necessary.

All sponsors must have a veterinary facility located and available to handlers in the case of an emergency.

**Section 3. Entry and Test Fees.** Entry fees charged shall be determined by the AKC club or test sponsor and should be developed to cover all costs incurred for holding an AWSC hunt test. AWSC members who sponsor a test must submit all contracts, if any, to the AWSC Hunting Events Committee for review and approval and must seek the committee's approval of entry fees charged. No AWSC member is authorized to sign any contract without written approval of the AWSC Board of Directors. AWSC representatives who are liaisons with AKC clubs or other test sponsors shall counsel the test sponsors regarding the costs in an effort to keep fees reasonable.

Owners or handlers may enter an AWS in an AWSC hunt test for the sole purpose of meeting the requirements of the Retrieving Certification Tests (RCT) program and earning qualifying RCT passes. When this is done, the dog shall be required and permitted to only perform the water series of the specific level(s) entered. Entry fees for dogs entered in this manner shall be reduced.

Dogs entered in the AWSC Hunt Test levels Started Dog, Working Dog Excellent or Working Dog Superior may earn qualifying RCT passes provided that they successfully complete the water series for the level entered. When entering the AWSC hunt test, it must be noted that the handler intends to also qualify the dog for an RCT pass. A dog so entered, shall be allowed to run the water series regardless of whether or not it qualified in the land series for the test level entered. The dog must run and pass all series on the same day to qualify for an AWSC Hunt Test title leg.

The AWSC will not charge recording or other fees to any AKC club or other sponsor holding AWSC hunt tests.

**Section 4. Entry Requirements.** Any person in good standing with the American Water Spaniel Club and the AKC may enter a dog of any breed in a hunt test. Only American Water Spaniels registered or having an ILP number with the American Kennel Club, Canadian Kennel Club or United Kennel Club may earn an AWSC title. Only American Water Spaniels registered or having an ILP number with the American Kennel Club at the time of the test may receive RCT credit.

then the other. He is expected to retrieve first one and then the other, remembering each fall.

**flushing:** The act of putting a bird to flight.

**freezing on the whistle:** When a dog working on a blind retrieve stops and sits to the whistle and refuses to take a cast - refuses to move at all, but just sits there - he is said to be freezing on the whistle.

**handling:** Once the dog has left the line, any direction given to a dog by voice/hand/whistle signals, the purpose of which is to improve the dog's line to the bird.

**honoring:** The act of sitting quietly and steadily on line while another dog works.

**line:** 1. The line at a hunting test is the spot from which the dog and handler work. A dog is "on line" when he takes his turn to work. 2. To line, used as a verb, is to send a dog out on a straight line on a retrieve or blind. 3. The path that a dog takes to a mark or blind.

**line manners:** A dog's behavior approaching the line, on line, while delivering to the line, while honoring and while leaving the line. A dog is expected to be well mannered.

**mark:** 1. A bird which the dog sees fall. He is expected to remember the location of the fall and go to the area of the fall when commanded to do so. 2. A command often given to the dog to look at or watch for a bird before the shot.

**popping:** Stopping to look at the handler for direction without having been commanded to do so by the whistle.

**quartering:** A dog's manner of hunting game back and forth in front of the handler within reasonable gun range seeking to find game.

**re-cast:** To send a dog on a retrieve for a second time. If a dog begins a retrieve, returns to his handler, and is resent, he is said to be re-cast. In addition, if a dog is called back and sent again, he is said to be re-cast.

**refusal:** A situation in which the dog fails to follow a command from the handler (whistle, voice and/or hand signal)

**repositioning:** To stand up momentarily to turn in the direction of the mark to better visualize the fall.

**single mark:** A marking test with only one bird to be retrieved.

**steady, staunch:** A dog is staunch or steady when he does not move to retrieve until commanded to do so.

**style:** The dog's body language indicates that he enjoys his work.

**switch:** 1. To leave an area of one bird, having hunted for it without finding it, and go to the area of another bird. 2.

trapped, a dead bird should be thrown and a shotgun fired for the dog to make its retrieve(s) in order that Retrieving Ability may be evaluated. In WDS a flush is required to test steadiness. If this flush results in a flyaway or no bird and the remaining 2 birds are trapped, then a bird will be thrown as in the other testing levels.

**Section 9.** All birds retrieved shall be examined by one of the judges. A dog that renders a bird unfit for consumption cannot receive a qualifying score, but the judges must agree that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.

**Section 10.** Distance should not exceed those normally encountered in hunting.

**Section 11.** Duck calls, duck decoys, duck boats and duck blinds should be used where appropriate and should be provided by the test giving club.

## Chapter 5 Glossary

**bird boy:** The person who throws the bird or dummy for the dogs to retrieve. As nearly as possible, his throw should reach the height and distance of a live bird, which is thrown and shot.

**blind:** 1. A “blind retrieve” is one in which the dog does not know the location of the bird but the handler does. The dog is sent out and controlled by the handler’s signals. Sometimes the word “blind” is used to refer to the bird or dummy used on a blind retrieve. 2. A “blind” is also an object behind which the dog and handler stand while waiting to go on line in a test. It prevents the waiting dog from seeing any of the falls or the work of the dog working ahead of him.

**break:** To leave on a retrieve before being instructed to do so. In a hunting test, a dog is said to break if he leaves to retrieve before the handler gives the command to retrieve. **controlled break:** occurs when a dog begins to break but is called back to the line by the handler.

**cast:** The directions given a dog working on a blind retrieve or being handled to a mark after he has stopped for direction. The handler gives the signal with his arm and voice.

**cover:** The natural growth covering a land or water area, such as grass, grain stubble, bush, etc.

**creeping:** When a dog who is meant to be sitting quietly and steadily at his handler’s side while the birds are being shot moves forward, or in any way leaves his position without actually breaking, he is said to be creeping.

**diversion:** A mark that is thrown while a dog is returning from a longer retrieve, the purpose of which is to determine whether a dog will switch.

**double mark:** A marking test in which two birds are thrown or shot individually, so that the dog can watch for one and

A dog may be entered and run in more than one level on the same day but may only be run once at a given level.

A dog is not eligible to be entered or run in any sanctioned hunt test in any category if the dog has on two occasions been made the subject of the following report: if a dog, while under judgment at an AWSC or AKC sanctioned hunt test, attacks another dog, and if the judges are unanimously of the opinion that such attack was without reasonable cause, the judges shall identify the offending dog on the judging sheet or in the official catalog and the name of the offending dog shall be listed in the report of the hunt test sent to the American Water Spaniel Club.

An attacking dog cannot receive a qualifying score at the event in which the attack occurred.

No dog shall be entered or run in any hunt test, and if brought on to the test ground, shall be immediately removed, if it shows any symptoms of or is known to have been in contact with any communicable diseases within the 30 days immediately preceding the date of the hunt test.

Dogs of any age may enter and receive an AWSC title but dogs must be at least 6 months of age or older on the day of the test to qualify for RCT credit.

**Section 5. Bitches in Season.** Bitches in season shall not be eligible for entry in any hunt test and shall not be allowed on the grounds. A bitch check will be conducted by a member of the local Hunt Test Committee prior to the start of the tests each day. All bitches will be checked and those found to be in season will not be allowed to run and must be removed from the test grounds.

Entry fee paid for a bitch withdrawn because of coming in season or for a dog withdrawn because of an injury or illness, or for a dog that dies, may be refunded by the test-giving club. Prior to paying such refund, the club may require an appropriate veterinary certificate except in the case of a bitch failing a bitch check. In the event a dog is withdrawn for these or any other reasons, the test-giving club is free to formulate its own policy with reference to refunds provided that said policy shall be fixed in advance of the mailing of the premium list for any particular test.

**Section 6. Judges’ Eligibility.** Any person in good standing with the American Water Spaniel Club, the American Kennel Club and is an AKC licensed spaniel or retriever judge may be approved to judge a hunt test.

It is strongly recommended that clubs select as judges individuals with broad and extensive background experience in handling and working with American Water Spaniels in the field. Ideally a test would be judged, if not by judges with

experience with American Water Spaniels, by one retriever person and one spaniel person. Preference shall be given to AKC judges who have trained and successfully qualified their own dogs in hunt tests at the same level or higher than the tests they are asked to judge.

A dog is not eligible to be entered in a test if a judge of that test or any member of his family has owned, sold, held under lease, boarded, trained, or handled the dog within one year of the starting date of the test. (Family is defined as - spouse, sibling, a parent or child whether natural or adopted but shall not extend to other blood or legal relationships.)

Neither the hunt test secretary nor the hunt test chair will be approved to judge an event where they serve in that capacity.

Each test or division of a test shall be judged by two judges with a strong preference for one being licensed to judge AKC spaniel tests and the other being licensed to judge AKC retriever tests.

**Section 7. Judge Substitution.** Sponsors may substitute judges only in the case of an emergency (i.e. judge fails to attend, judge falls ill, judge is injured, etc.). When a substitute is used, the sponsor must report to the AWSC Hunting Events Committee, at the time of filing the test report, the reason for the substitution, the steps taken to locate a qualified judge, and a list of those individuals asked to fulfill the judging assignment. The following order of preference should be used when seeking an emergency replacement judge.

1. AKC licensed spaniel or retriever judge.
2. AKC apprentice spaniel or retriever judge. (Such an individual has attended judging seminars but has not yet become fully licensed to judge AKC field events.)
3. Experienced AKC hunt test participant that the sponsor believes is qualified to fairly evaluate a dog's performance and to carry out the requirements of the AWSC Hunt Tests regulations.

**Section 8. Judges' Responsibility.** Judges must officiate over all series in their respective assignments.

The judges are responsible for setting up each series of the level they are judging. Final approval of each series is the responsibility of the local Hunt Test Committee and a member of the committee must sign the "Test Approval Form" before any dog is run. The use of test dogs is highly recommended. The test dog shall not have titled at a higher level than the test in which it is being utilized. If such a dog is not available no test dog shall be used. In the event that no test dog is available and the judges find that the test is too difficult or unfair, the judges are encouraged to redesign the test and re-run dogs that failed.

(3) *Response* is the ability of the dog to take directions (commands) given by the handler.

(4) *Delivery* is the dog's willingness to give up the bird to the handler after the retrieve is made.

Hard mouth is described as rendering game unfit for consumption. It is sufficient grounds to score the retrieving ability as a "0". Hard mouth is one of the most undesirable traits, but judges must exercise caution before failing a dog for this fault. Hard mouth should only become the verdict when proven. Torn skin or flesh is usually not sufficient proof. Damage may be caused in several ways, such as by sharp sticks and stones, etc. Dogs can unintentionally damage birds when retrieving from heavy cover and by their fast positive pickup. At certain times of the year, birds are particularly susceptible to such damage. Crushed bone structure usually can be accepted as evidence of hard mouth and the only such proof, in the absence of obvious, flagrant, and unjustified tearing of flesh.

**Section 3.** If a dog, while under judgment at a sanctioned test, attacks another dog, and the judges are unanimously of the opinion that the attack was without reasonable cause, that dog cannot receive a qualifying score in the test in which the attack occurred. The offending dog must be reported to the AWSC hunt test committee.

**Section 4.** If there is an occurrence which makes for an unfair test of a dog's abilities the judges shall exercise their discretion in determining how to score the dog's abilities. In doing so, the judges may decide whether or not it is necessary to re-run the dog.

**Section 5.** A judge who has started to judge a hunting test shall not handle a dog in another testing level until the testing level that he or she is judging has been fully completed.

**Section 6.** The American Water Spaniel should flush enthusiastically. However, a soft flush or momentary stopping is acceptable if the dog, within a very brief period, forces the bird into flight.

Passed birds are not grounds for a score of fail or less than 5 on Bird Finding Ability unless it becomes evident that the dog is blinking or ignoring game.

Dogs shall not be scored on birds that have been inadvertently flushed except after the flush (Trained Abilities) unless the dog is obviously avoiding or ignoring game (Bird Finding Ability).

**Section 7.** Nothing shall be thrown in any hunting test to encourage a dog to enter the water or direct a dog to the fall. Violation of this provision is to be considered sufficient cause for the dog not to receive a qualifying score.

**Section 8.** In SD, WD or WDX testing levels, if, after 2-3 attempts birds are missed or cannot be shot safely or are

Retrieving Ability, which includes marking, memory, enthusiasm, and mouth.

Style – the dog's body language indicates that he/she enjoys his work

Bird Finding Ability, which includes bird sense, response to wind and scenting conditions, and use of nose.

Flushing Ability, which includes enthusiasm.

The judges of any hunting test shall not rank dogs in order of the dogs' relative numerical scores and dogs shall not be "run-off" in order to separate scores.

The following traits are grounds for scoring the indicated ability as fail or less than 5, according to the severity of the trait(s): blinking (Bird Finding Ability); refusal to flush (Flushing Ability); viciousness, gun shyness, lack of control (Trained Ability); hard mouth, stickiness, refusal to retrieve (Retrieving Ability).

Blinking is described as locating but avoiding or ignoring a bird. Stickiness is described as not releasing the bird on command.

A refused retrieve is described as a retrieve that does not produce a bird to hand (in WD, WDX, and WDS) or to the close proximity of the handler (in Started Dog). Retrieves should not require extensive and continual coaxing or take so long that it would be easier for the handler to get the bird.

*Style.* The dog's body language indicates that he/she enjoys his work.

*Marking.* Ability to mark does not necessarily imply pinpointing the fall. A dog that misses the fall on the first cast, but recognizes the depth of the area of the fall, stays in it, then quickly and systematically hunts-it-out, has done both a creditable and an intelligent job of marking.

*Perseverance/courage/hunting* is shown by a dog's determination to stick-at-it and complete the task at hand, to search for and find the bird it has been sent to retrieve. It is also displayed by a willingness to face rough cover, cold or rough water, ice, mud, or other similar conditions that make the going tough.

*Trainability*, or the abilities acquired through training, is generally understood to be composed of four components—steadiness, control, response and delivery. A discussion of each of the elements which characterize Trainability follows.

(1) *Steadiness.* The dog will remain at the line, without creeping or breaking, until ordered to make the retrieve. Repositioning, in order to better see a mark, is not an example of a dog being unsteady. Steadiness is a very important element in evaluating trainability.

(2) *Control* is the dog's response to direction, but it also includes obedience and line manners.

A judge shall not handle a dog in another test level until the test level (or division of a test level) that he or she is judging is fully completed.

If entry numbers are significantly large in any one class, that class may be split. Judges need not set up identical tests when test levels are divided.

A judge of a hunt test shall be familiar with all the rules, regulations, and procedures 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 rules, regulations, and standards.

The judges are representatives of the AWSC and shall abide by the Regulations herein.

### **Section 9. Judges - Agreements, Notification, etc.**

Sponsors must have a written agreement with each judge hired to judge an AWSC event. This agreement, sometimes referred to as a "Judge's Affirmation", shall contain the sponsors responsibility concerning expenses incurred by the judge that are eligible for reimbursement including, but not limited to, meals, transportation and hotel expenses, the date(s) and time(s) of the judging assignment, and the test levels being judged. Such sponsors must provide a copy of all judging agreements to the AWSC Hunting Events committee upon request.

All sponsors are required to provide the following information to each judge no later than three days prior to the assignment:

- Date and time of the tests.
- Location of the tests and driving directions.
- Test levels offered and which level(s) the judge will be judging.
- Names, addresses, phone number and, if possible, e-mail addresses of the other judge(s) hired to officiate at the test event, as well as, the name of the individual's co-judge.
- The time at which the judge must report for the assignment and who to report to.
- Total number of dogs entered, the number of entries per test level and the order that the tests will be run in.
- The running order of the dogs entered including the names of the owner(s), handler, and dog.

## Section 10. Scores/Titles Qualifying Scores.

**Titles.** A dog is not required to earn any title as a prerequisite for earning a higher title. A dog that has earned a title at any level may run at a lower level. However, a dog may not receive more than one AWSC title at each level.

**Started Dog title.** In order to be recorded as a Started Dog a dog must have a record of having acquired a qualifying score in the Started Dog test in 2 American Water Spaniel sanctioned tests. Upon completion of these requirements an American Water Spaniel Club Started Dog Certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Started Dog in all American Water Spaniel Club records by the suffix title SD.

**Working Dog title.** In order to be recorded as a Working Dog a dog must have a record of having acquired a qualifying score in the Working Dog test in 2 American Water Spaniel sanctioned tests. Upon completion of these requirements an American Water Spaniel Club Working Dog Certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Working Dog in all American Water Spaniel Club records by the suffix title WD.

**Working Dog Excellent title.** In order to be recorded as a Working Dog Excellent a dog must have a record of having acquired a qualifying score in the Working Dog Excellent test in 2 American Water Spaniel sanctioned tests. Upon completion of these requirements an American Water Spaniel Club Working Dog Excellent Certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Working Dog Excellent in all American Water Spaniel Club records by the suffix title WDX.

**Working Dog Superior title.** In order to be recorded as a Working Dog Superior a dog must have a record of having acquired a qualifying score in the Working Dog Superior test in 2 American Water Spaniel sanctioned tests. Upon completion of these requirements an American Water Spaniel Club Working Dog Superior Certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Working Dog Superior in all American Water Spaniel Club records by the suffix title WDS

**Section 11. Ribbons and Rosettes.** All ribbons, rosettes, bands and certificates will be provided by the American Water Spaniel Club.

**Section 12. AWSC Publications.** All clubs holding hunt tests are required to have available copies of the latest editions of these Hunt Test Regulations.

## Chapter 4 - Test Requirements and Instructions for Judges

**Section 1. Foreword.** The evaluation of a dog's abilities can never be precise; it is not an exact science. However, the primary purpose of the American Water Spaniel is to hunt, find, flush, and retrieve game from land and water in a pleasing and efficient manner; whether a dog accomplishes its primary purpose is determined by its possession of a unique set of both natural abilities and abilities acquired through training. Refer to the Field Working Qualities of the American Water Spaniel found in Chapter 6 for more information on the working qualities of the AWS.

Judges must keep in mind the fact that they are evaluating a defined set of six categories of hunting ability in Started Dog, Working Dog, WD Excellent, and WD Superior hunting tests, and not judging a dog in relation to the performances or merits of the other dogs entered.

A dog's hunting abilities are scored against the established standards in Chapter 2.

The judge observes and records in what respects and to what degree the hunting abilities of individual dogs have either exceeded or fallen short of the established standard.

In evaluating a dog's hunting abilities in a test, the judges assign a numerical score from "0" to "10" for SD, WD, WDX and WDS that reflects their estimation of demonstrated hunting ability. In order to receive a qualifying score a dog must acquire a minimum average of not less than 5 in each of the categories of abilities listed on the score sheet, with an overall average score of not less than 7.

There will always be occasions when some aspect of an ability is viewed differently and when judges might not agree on a specific numerical value; it is perfectly acceptable to compromise by averaging their scores. At the conclusion of their evaluation, however, judges must agree on those dogs which will and will not receive qualifying scores.

A judge's responsibility is to determine through the evaluation of hunting abilities whether or not a dog demonstrates a sufficient level of abilities to be entitled to official recognition of those abilities by the awarding of Started Dog, Working Dog, Working Dog Excellent, or Working Dog Superior titles.

**Section 2.** In evaluating the abilities of a dog, the judges shall assign a numerical score from "0" to "10" (depending on the test level) in each of the following categories where ability has been exhibited:

Hunting Ability, which includes desire, courage, perseverance, independence, and intelligence.

Trained Abilities, which include range, pattern, gun response, and response to commands, control, delivery, steadiness.

dog and handler. When a dog makes a retrieve, no other birds or game should be shot unless ordered by the judge for special reasons. The guns must also keep themselves in the correct position to the handler and others.

**Section 6. Marshals.** The local hunt test committee shall appoint a marshal whose duty it shall be to assist the judges and to carry out their instructions, including regulating and controlling the gallery, and seeing to it that the gallery is kept separate from and behind the judges, and that no one in the gallery talk to the judges while a dog is working. The marshal shall also advise the handlers and judges as to the boundaries of the course.

The marshal shall ensure that until called to be tested, a dog is kept where it cannot see the location of fall for another dog, or see the planting or retrieve of a blind, unless it is in compliance with instructions of the judge in a hunting situation. A handler has the right to appeal to the judge or judges if the gallery is interfering with his or her work in any way and the judge may, if he believes that the dog has been interfered with, allow the dog to be re-run at a later time.

Other marshals may be appointed by the hunting test committee to supervise the immediate and humane disposal of game, and assist in all other matters necessary for the smooth and expeditious running of the test.

**Section 7. Evaluation forms.** The local hunt test committee shall supply each judge with an evaluation form for every dog entered under that judge.

In scoring the dogs, the numerical method will be used. A dog must get an average of five (5) or higher in any of six ability categories (four if RCT only) and its average total score must be seven (7) or higher in order to pass.

When the judges' evaluations are not in agreement on the score of one or more abilities of a SD, WD, WDX or WDS, the judges or a scorekeeper appointed by the club shall average the scores that are not in agreement and that average shall become the official score for those abilities. (For example, a dog is scored 5 on Bird Finding Ability by one judge while the second judge has scored this ability as a 7. The scorekeeper averages the two scores for the official score, or average of 6.)

The evaluation forms shall be available for inspection at the completion of the test by the handler. Each handler may inspect only his or her own evaluation form.

**Section 13. Advertising.** No club may advertise the dates of a hunt test as being AWSC approved until after the club has received notification from the American Water Spaniel Club that the hunt test has been approved.

**Section 14. Premium Lists.** A premium list must be provided for sanctioned hunt tests. The premium list for a sanctioned hunt test shall be printed (any printing or copying process is acceptable).

The following information shall be included in the premium list for a hunt test: name of club; location and date of hunt test; names and addresses of officers; time judging will commence; entry fees; entry forms; tests offered; names and addresses of judges together with their specific assignments; name, address, and telephone number of the hunt test secretary, and date and time of closing and drawing of entries. Premium lists shall also specify type or types of birds to be used.

Premium lists must also contain the name and address of the hunt test committee chair and the names of the hunt test committee members.

If the AWSC is providing the premium list, the information must be sent to the Hunt Test Statistician 60 days before the scheduled event.

**Section 15. Hunt Test Secretary.** Any club holding an AWSC hunt test must name a hunt test secretary who must be a member of the testing club. The premium list for sanctioned club hunt tests shall designate the hunt test secretary as receiving entries.

**Section 16. Hunt Test Committee.** A club that has been granted permission by the American Water Spaniel Club to hold a hunt test must appoint a hunt test committee which will have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the event. The committee shall be comprised of at least three members of the testing club and may include the hunt test secretary, but the hunt test secretary shall not be designated as the hunt test committee chair.

The hunt test committee and hunt test secretary shall be held responsible for compliance with all of the applicable AWSC rules and regulations for the hunt tests, except those coming under the sole jurisdiction of the judges, and must provide themselves with copies of the latest editions of these books.

The hunt test committee of a club holding a sanctioned hunt test shall have the authority according to AWSC hunt test rules and regulations to decide upon any matter arising during the running of the hunt test, except a matter coming within the jurisdiction of the judges.

**Section 17. Closing and Drawing of Entries and Running Order.** Entries for an AWSC-sanctioned hunt test may close

at any time prior to the hunt test, but it is not recommended that they close later than the third day preceding the start of the hunt test to ensure an adequate supply of judges and birds.

Although gate entries are discouraged, they may be allowed by the club running the test when adequate supplies (of birds, etc.) exist. Gate entry must be listed on the premium. Additional fees may be imposed for gate entries.

Each entry form must be completed in full and the information given on the entry form must be that which applies to the entered dog.

At the option of the club holding the hunt test, a numerical limit may be imposed on entries in any or all testing categories. If entries are limited, the numerical limitations must be stated in the premium list and entries will close when the numerical limit or limits have been reached.

Dogs shall be worked singly in all test levels with the order of running decided by lot at the draw. Dogs worked by the same person or belonging to the same owner shall be separated when possible.

Dogs may be run in an order different from the order in which they were drawn only when, in the opinion of the judges or the hunt test committee, such will result in a reasonable and desirable saving of time in the conduct of the event.

**Section 18. Submission of Records.** At the conclusion of the judging of each test, a club holding sanctioned hunt test shall provide for the judges' signature a judging sheet of the test judged, showing full particulars of all dogs receiving qualifying scores. The hunt test secretary shall then certify to the number of entries and starters in each test.

The judging sheets, inserted in the covers of the judging book, together with all entry forms and evaluation forms and a full report of the test shall be sent to the American Water Spaniel Club statistician within fifteen (15) days after the event.

The hunt test report shall contain a list of the names of all members of the hunt test committee who were present, the names and complete addresses of all the judges, and the name and address of the hunt test secretary.

A club holding a sanctioned hunt test shall retain a copy of the official judges' book.

For Required Forms and Records for RCT see RCT Rule Book, Section 20

**Section 19. Misconduct.** Some types of conduct that are specifically prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

**Section 5. Guns.** The dogs shall be shot over only by the gunners appointed by the hunting test committee. Ammunition for the water series will be twelve (12) or twenty (20) gauge popper or primer loads. Twelve (12), sixteen (16) or twenty (20) gauge shotguns may be used for the land series. It is preferred that break action shotguns be used in these tests but pump or semi-automatic shotguns may be substituted.

In Working Dog Excellent and Working Dog Superior tests the handlers must carry an empty shotgun or dummy gun and shoulder it in the shooting position, following the flight of the birds.

It shall be the responsibility of the test-giving club to provide an empty shotgun for the handler and it shall further be the responsibility of the marshal to ensure that the shotgun is unloaded.

There shall be no more than two official guns per dog in any flushing test category, and judges shall have complete authority over all shooting. The guns represent the handler and must attempt to follow the handler's movements.

The sponsors shall provide ammunition and poppers. No live ammunition will be used on any marked retrieves or blinds. Live ammunition will only be used in the flushing portion of the tests.

The official guns should shoot their game in a sportsmanlike manner, as they would in a day's shoot. The proper functioning of the official guns is of the utmost importance. The guns represent the handler up to the time the game is shot, and may not interfere in any manner with his or her work or that of the working dog. They are, if possible, or unless otherwise directed by the judges (as in a no bird or intentional miss), to down cleanly and consistently the game flushed by the dog, at a point most advantageous to a fair and natural test of the dog's abilities, with due regard to the dogs, handlers, judges, gallery, and other contingencies.

Furthermore, Judges shall have the ability to replace any gunner who they feel is not handling the gun in a safe manner.

Gunners shall be chosen that are safe, responsible and familiar with the training and testing of dogs. It is preferable that they have a Hunter Safety Certificate from their state or province and a current hunting license from their state or province. (Please check with your state for any requirements in handling a gun.) Unsafe and inappropriate gun handling on the part of the handler shall be cause for the Judges to not award a qualifying score in any level.

Care should be taken not to shoot so that the game falls too close to the dog. If this is done it does not afford a chance for the dog to show any good retrieving ability and often results in a bird being destroyed. The guns should stand perfectly quiet after the shot, for otherwise they may interfere with the

as possible the conditions met in hunting situations found in the region of the country in which a hunting test is held. Testing in this manner is to gauge the dog's natural hunting ability and training. During the hours of the tests, there shall be no training on the test grounds as defined by the hunt test committee. Short tosses of a bumper for the purpose of airing or cooling the dog shall not be considered training. In keeping with the aim of simulated hunting conditions, handlers, judges, workers, and other participants shall be attired as they would be in a hunting environment. As a safety precaution, it is required that an item of blaze orange clothing be worn by all judges, handlers, gunners, and bird planters during the flushing test. People not in compliance with this rule will be required to change their clothing or leave the area of the test.

**Section 3. Birds.** Pigeons may be used in all land series in Started Dog and Working Dog hunting tests with upland game birds being preferred. Only upland game birds shall be used in the land series of Working Dog Excellent and Working Dog Superior tests. Ducks shall be used in the water series in all tests, unless a waiver is granted by the AWSC Hunting Events Committee. Approval will be granted only for special extenuating circumstances. Live fliers shall not be allowed for the water series. It is recommended that ducks be used for the land marks in WDX and WDS.

The premium list for a sanctioned hunting test shall specify the species of game to be used in each test.

No live game bird, or any other species of bird or fowl, shall be used in a test while under any form of restraint or physical impairment at any sanctioned hunting test for American Water Spaniels.

Birds should be released in natural cover sufficient to hold birds. They should not be placed in holes nor in such cover as will impede their ability to fly or run.

**Section 4. Courses.** Courses should be fairly level or moderately undulating, but small hills and valleys can also be useful. All courses shall consist of sufficient cover to hold birds and be of adequate size to permit a dog to hunt naturally. Cover will not always be ideal. Courses may be staked only to indicate the perimeter of the field and courses must be utilized just as they would be in hunting.

Only one dog shall be permitted to run at a time on a course. Tests may be run simultaneously or in divisions (split classes due to large numbers of entrants) provided there is no interference.

Demonstration of or dissatisfaction with a judge's decision

Altercations with hunt test officials or exhibitors

Abusive and foul language in public

Mistreatment of a dog

Behavior that intentionally disrupts the running of the hunt tests.

Smoking on the test grounds will only be allowed in areas designated by the hunt test committee. At no time will smoking be allowed in the field.

The consumption of alcohol or being impaired by alcohol or drugs prior to the completion of the days hunting events at any AWSC Inc. hunting event is strictly prohibited.

Any person found consuming alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol on the test grounds, during testing hours must leave the site for the day. If that individual is a handler, on that day, any dog handled by him/her will be disqualified regardless of whether or not the dog has already run and/or qualified in the tests. Any person found to be in violation of this rule at two separate hunting events would be suspended from running in any AWSC. Inc. sanctioned hunting event for a period of three months. Any person found to be in violation of this rule on three occasions would be barred from further participation in any AWSC Inc. hunting event.

**Illegal Substances:** The use or possession of illegal substances on the grounds of any AWSC. Inc hunting event is strictly prohibited and will result in the immediate removal from the hunting event grounds and barred from further participation in any AWSC Inc. hunting event. Any person found to be in violation of this rule may be subject to additional sanctions by the AWSC Inc.

The AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee) is responsible for the enforcement of the rules of misconduct that pertain to any AWSC INC. sanctioned hunting event. At all AWSC INC. hunting events sponsored by a licensed AKC spaniel or retriever club, that club's hunt test committee shall have jurisdiction over all questions of misconduct and shall supersede the authority of the AWSC Hunting Events committee whether or not it is in attendance at the event. The procedures found in the American Kennel Club's booklet, "Dealing with Misconduct," shall guide the committee or its representative in determining the outcome of misconduct charges.

Judges are advised to report any abusive language directed at them or any refusal to follow their instructions as well as any improper suggestions or request they might receive to favor a particular dog.

Other concerns regarding misconduct include:

- A) It shall be deemed misconduct if a person during the running of or in connection with an event abuses or harasses a judge or official or any other person present in any capacity at the event. The AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee) shall act in accord with paragraph (d) of this section.
- B) Any handler who displays unsportsmanlike conduct or who is seen to kick, strike or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog while on the grounds of a hunt test at any time during the holding of the event may be expelled from the test by the AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee), which shall also act in accord with paragraph (D) of this section.
- C) The judges shall have the authority to expel a handler if they observe unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the handler or see the handler kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog while the event is in progress. It will be the duty of the judges to report promptly to the hunt test committee the expulsion of a handler and the AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee) shall then proceed in accord with paragraph (D) of this section.
- D) The AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee) shall investigate, at once, any instance of alleged unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the handler, or any report that a handler has been observed kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog. If a hunt test committee, after investigation, determines that a handler is in violation of this section, and that the incident, if proven, would constitute conduct prejudicial to the sport, it shall exercise its authority to disqualify the handler from running the dog.
- E) If any information on any entry form is found either immediately or at a later date to be deliberately false, misleading or otherwise misrepresents the truth, then the dog and handler shall be disqualified from running in that test and the AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee) will have discretion to impose further penalties, such as suspension from future tests.
- F) If a dog is seen to be vicious and/or attacks another dog and this activity interrupts or prevents the running of a test, that dog may be disqualified.

dismissed from its work prior to the working dog being sent to retrieve its second bird.

The honoring dog will be placed at a location indicated by the judge at approximately 10 feet from the working dog. The specific position the honoring dog is placed in shall be determined by the dog's handler but must afford the dog the ability to see all marks thrown and to observe the working dog perform its retrieve. The honoring dog will be kept in position off-lead unless otherwise directed by the judge. If there is not another WDS dog available at the test, the dog may be asked to honor a dog from another level with the stipulation that every Master level dog must honor three (3) falls and two (2) sends of another dog. After one full retrieve the honor dog may be excused after the working dog is sent for the second retrieve.

If an honoring dog is eliminated by the judges just prior to honoring or while honoring the working dog, it will be expected to complete the honor if requested by the judges. However, a dog that is eliminated and is required to honor will do so on-lead rather than off.

Once released from its honor by the judges, the honor dog is to be led away from the test area by its handler who may, at his or her discretion, do so by placing the honor dog on lead.

### Chapter 3 - Instructions to Hunt Test Committees

**Section 1. Foreword.** The hunting test regulations have been formulated in such a manner that the officials of a test-giving club and the judges have latitude in the conduct of a test. This is desirable to allow for variations in hunting conditions that are peculiar to various parts of the country. The regulations are not intended to be restrictive, either to officials or judges.

The objectives of the regulations are twofold: First, greater uniformity in the conduct of AWSC hunt tests, and second, greater uniformity in evaluating the hunting abilities and characteristics of American Water Spaniels at those hunting tests. In order that these hunt tests may be conducted as uniformly as practicable, standardization of objectives is essential therefore, all judges, guns, entrants, and officials who have a part in conducting these hunt tests must be familiar with and be governed, so far as possible, by the following regulations.

**Section 2. Purpose.** The purpose of a hunting test for American Water Spaniels is to test the merits of and evaluate the abilities of American Water Spaniels in the field in order to determine their suitability and ability as hunting companions. Hunting tests must, therefore, simulate as nearly

## Chapter 2 - Hunt Test Standards

### General Regulations

**Section 1.** All persons participating in or observing any hunt test are expected to maintain reasonable silence and display good manners. Any person who interferes with the orderly process of any test may be requested by the judges or the local hunt test committee to leave the hunt test grounds.

In keeping with the aim of simulated hunting conditions and situations it is required that handlers, judges, workers and other test participants be attired in dark or customary hunting attire that adequately reflect a waterfowling hunting environment. The gallery is encouraged to dress in waterfowl hunting clothing or colors. When observing the upper levels where handling is a factor, anyone dressed in white or light colored clothing must position themselves to be out of sight of the dog as it works. Blaze orange is required for the upland portion of the tests.

A handler has the right to appeal to the Judges if the gallery is interfering with the work of his or her dog in any way, and the Judges in their discretion may, if they believe that dog has been interfered with, allow the dog to be re-run at a later time.

Dogs not being tested or standing in the holding blind will not be allowed in the gallery.

**Section 2.** Dogs participating in SD and WD may wear a flat collar as long as there are no items or tags hanging from it. Dogs participating in WDX and WDS are not allowed to wear any type of collar while under judgment unless required by state or local ordinances. A leash or line dragging in any series is prohibited. (The intent of these Regulations is to protect the dogs rather than restrict their handlers.) Collars must properly fit the dog and be approved by the judges. Fancy, studded, slip chain, pinch, or harnesses (head or body), electronic training collars or any type of special training aids shall not be allowed to be used on the test grounds as defined by the hunt test committee. This regulation does not prohibit the use of electronic bark collars if used only while the dog is confined.

There will be no training anywhere on the hunt test grounds 48 hours prior to the date of the hunt test except that training will be permitted within an area designed by the AWSC Hunting Events Committee or its designated representative (i.e. the assigned local Hunt Test Committee). No training aids (i.e. electronic collars, check cords, whips, etc.), other than bumpers shall be allowed to be used within the designated training area.

**Water triple marking test.** A WDS dog must successfully complete a triple marked water retrieve of three dead birds, or a double of up to sixty (60) yards distance from the line with a diversion bird. If a diversion bird is used as one of the marks in this test that bird should be appropriately shorter but should not be less than forty (40) yards distance from the line. The dog must complete the retrieve without switching.

**Land triple marking test.** A WDS dog must successfully complete a triple marked land retrieve of three dead birds, up to sixty (60) yards distance from the line. There should be adequate separation between the marks to prevent in-line marks. If a diversion is not used as one of the water marks, it will be used as a short (less than 20 yards) land mark when the dog is returning from the third retrieve.

**Blind.** The WDS dog must successfully complete a blind retrieve (water or land/water combination) up to sixty (60) yards distance from the line. As the dog is returning from the last mark, a shot will be fired from the line by an official gun to indicate to the dog that a bird is down.

On blind retrieves, wherever possible, the Judges shall plan their hunting situations taking advantage of hazards, such as islands, decoys, points of land, reeds/cattails, and sandbars. When natural hazards such as those listed here are not readily available, judges are encouraged to attempt to setup tests that incorporate combinations of water and land that sufficiently challenge a dog of this working level. Judges have the option of running the blind retrieve from the same line as the marks or of moving the handler and dog to a different line for the blind. Judges are discouraged from placing the blind in line with one of the marked retrieves. A "hot" (pre-planted) blind shall not be used.

Judges are discouraged from setting up a blind retrieve that places the bird in open water with little or no hazards to test the dog's handling ability.

Distances can be up to 60 yards. Despite natural distractions, it shall be possible for a dog to find a well-planned blind-retrieve on the initial line from its handler; that it will do so is highly improbable because of those natural hazards, so it must be handled to the blind. The hunting situation shall be planned so that the dog shall be continuously in sight. A blind retrieve is a test of Trainability. A dog that is out-of-sight for a considerable period cannot be said to be under control. The dog should be handled as little as necessary but a dog that takes each cast and makes progress toward the blind shall not be marked down.

**Honor test.** The WDS level dog shall fully honor one retrieve of the WDS working dog's triple retrieve and will not be

**Section 3.** Firearm safety must be discussed by the judges with the handlers before any tests are started. All firearms are assumed to be loaded with live ammunition and must be handled accordingly. The handler must hold the firearm in a safe hunting position. A dummy firearm may be substituted for an authentic firearm but is to be treated as if it were an authentic firearm. When using the shotgun, the handler shall shoulder the gun in a shooting position pointing it in the direction of the bird and in the flushing test, follow the flight of the bird. Mishandling of firearms will result in a warning. A subsequent violation will result in immediate disqualification. It shall be the duty of the judges to promptly report to the hunt test committee the expulsion of a handler from a test. The hunt test committee may then expel the handler from all other tests at the event if in the committee's opinion, such further action is warranted. Whenever a handler is expelled from a test or from participation at a hunt test under this section, the dog or dogs that he is handling may continue to be tested with another handler. The local hunt test committee shall submit in writing to the Board of Directors a complete report of any action taken under this section.

**Section 4.** Prior to the start of each test, the judges shall explain to the handlers the hunting scenario and the object of each test and expected performance of the dogs. Even though it is not encouraged, under extremely harsh or unusual conditions a handler may petition the hunt test committee for his/her dog to wear protective gear that might be worn in a true hunting situation.

Until called to be tested, a dog shall be kept where it cannot see the location of a fall for another dog, or see the planting or retrieve of a blind, unless doing so is in compliance with instructions of the Judges as in a hunting situation in which the dog is required to honor before being run.

When coming to the line to be tested, and while on the line, the dog and handler shall assume such locations as may be directed by the Judges. Whenever used within the above context, the word "line" is understood to mean the point that a dog will commence its retrieve. Dogs shall be considered under judgment from the time they are called to the line until the handler is told by the judge that the testing is completed.

Prior to calling for the bird(s) to be thrown, the Judges shall come to agreement with the handler regarding which type of signal will be used to tell the handler that the dog may be released to retrieve.

Duck calls shall be used as a signal to start all marking tests at Working Dog and higher testing levels (both land and water). The handler will indicate his/her readiness to begin the test by blowing a duck call. This will signal the judges and bird

then leaves the area to hunt for another fall, or that drops a bird it is retrieving and goes to another, shall be considered to have switched. If a dog, having dropped one bird and in going for another, is able to be handled back to the original bird before picking up the second bird, that dog shall be scored low but not to the point of "0". Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that switches shall be scored "0" in Perseverance.

A dog that returns to the area of a fall that it has previously retrieved and establishes another hunt shall be considered to have returned to an old fall. Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that returns to an old fall shall be scored low in Perseverance and/or Marking, even to the extent of awarding a grade of "0".

In WDS level tests, failure to enter either rough cover, water, ice, mud, or any other situation involving unpleasant or difficult going for the dog, after having been ordered to do so several times, is sufficient cause to grade the dog "0" in Perseverance. A dog shall not disturb too much ground or area and should respond quickly and obediently to any further directions its handler might give.

These tests shall make use of natural obstacles and realistic hunting situations in as far as it is practicable to do so. Decoys are required at the WDS level and shall consist of a minimum of six decoys up to a maximum of twenty-four when used. The decoys shall be placed so as to be a definite distraction or obstacle for the dog. A WDS dog shall be expected to swim through the center of a decoy spread to retrieve the bird.

Dogs will be steady to wing and shot. All retrieves must be to hand. Handler will be asked to carry an unloaded gun in all series (gun provided by the club). When a game bird is flushed, the handler must shoulder the empty shotgun to a shooting position and, with both hands on the gun, follow the flight of the bird as if a shot were to be fired.

**Flushing test.** A WDS dog must successfully complete the flush of three and retrieve of two planted bird. WDS dogs must be steady to wing and shot. The WDS dog must exhibit steadiness on one flyaway and any missed bird is considered a flyaway regardless of the succession in the flushing order. The handler must be in control of the dog at all times. For each bird flushed the dog must sit or stand steady. After the bird is shot the dog will retrieve on the command of the handler (after being signaled by the judge) and must deliver to hand. After the retrieve the judge will examine the bird. The judge then gives the command to hunt on. In the case of a flyaway, the dog must return directly to the handler after being commanded to do so. If the judge calls no bird, the gunner closest to the flush bird will fire a shot in a safe direction so that the bird may count as the flyaway.

Unless instructed by the judges or otherwise noted in these rules, a handler may not touch the dog being tested from the time it is called to the line until it is no longer being tested or under judgment.

The handler shall not hold, touch, or otherwise intimidate a dog to keep it steady at the line. The Judges shall have sole discretion in determining what is intimidating or reprimanding and need not qualify this with the handler prior to the running of the test. Violation of this paragraph is sufficient cause to justify a grade of "0" in Trainability.

Unless otherwise noted, the handler is allowed to talk to the dog in a quiet manner throughout the running of the test as a means of directing, reinforcing, or supporting the dog's actions. It is important to remember that this test is an attempt to simulate a hunting situation and, as in a hunting situation, all verbal communication with the dog should be done in a manner that would not disturb a normal day's hunt.

On the marked retrieves (including diversions), before each bird is thrown a duck call is blown from the area near the bird's point of origin and a shot fired in the direction of the bird either from the bird's point of origin or from a gunner positioned near but no closer than five yards from the handler and/or dog. Guns may be requested to shoot twice at every bird.

The judges may, at their discretion, utilize either hidden and/or visible guns, but in doing so shall give paramount consideration to the simulation of hunting situations. Visible gun stations shall be kept to a minimum in WDS level tests.

Retrieves must be to hand and failure to retrieve to hand will result in a score of "0" in Trainability. Handlers shall remain in place when receiving the bird.

The dog must mark the falls and retrieve them in the order designated by the handler. Any reasonable degree of separation is allowed. In-line marks are to be avoided.

Dogs may be handled on marks, but excessive handling requires a lower score in Perseverance and/or marking. A dog that goes to the area of the fall and finds the bird unaided must be scored appreciably higher than a dog that must be handled to a bird. Handling on the first bird should be marked down severely. Handling on the second and third bird will have an effect on the final score and failure to complete the retrieve in reasonable time will result in failure.

WDS level dogs that require excessive handling on marks and blinds, that refuse voice or whistle commands, or appear unwilling to perform their work must be viewed in a different light than WDX level dogs where a degree of tolerance is necessary for those not-so-seasoned WDX dogs. WDS level dogs must exhibit those qualities expected in a truly finished and experienced hunting companion.

A dog that goes to the area of a fall, hunts, fails to find, and

boys to start the test. Started Dog handlers shall signal to the judges his/her readiness with an agreed upon signal.

Handlers may sit, kneel or stand at their discretion. Unless otherwise noted, the handler is allowed to talk to the dog in a quiet manner throughout the running of the test as a means of directing, reinforcing, or supporting the dog's actions. It is important to remember that this test is an attempt to simulate a hunting situation and, as in a hunting situation, all verbal communication with the dog should be done in a manner that would not disturb a normal day's hunt.

Only the handler will talk or give a command to the dog. The handler alone directs the dog and the direction of the guns and judges.

Handlers may control their dogs by hand, whistle, and/or verbal signals but only in a quiet manner that would be used in the field.

When possible, the cover should be lighter at the lower testing levels and become progressively heavier at the higher testing levels. Cover should not be so thick that you cannot see your dog most of the time.

#### **A. Marked Retrieves**

On the marked retrieves (including diversions), before each bird is thrown a duck call is blown from the area near the bird's point of origin and a shot fired in the direction of the bird either from the bird's point of origin or from a gunner positioned near but no closer than five yards from the handler and/or dog. Guns may be requested to shoot twice at every bird.

Dogs shall be sent to retrieve by handlers only when released by the Judges, who shall then score each retrieve accordingly. On multiple marks, the judge will tell the handler when to release the dog for the first retrieve only. For all subsequent retrieves, the handler may send the dog at his/her discretion.

When ordered to retrieve, a dog shall proceed willingly on land or into the water to the area of the fall or blind. An enthusiastic performance by a dog, taking a clearly defined and purposeful path to the area of the fall or blind, quickly finding the downed game and returning by the most direct route to the handler's position shall be scored the highest. The dog must return to the handler whether on land, in a blind, or boat with the bird. Any hesitation by the dog to enter the water should be marked down. If the dog does not enter the water after a brief period and continues to show hesitancy, fear, or unwillingness to retrieve, the dog shall be failed. A dog that runs the bank to enter the water shall be marked down except that the use of the bank upon returning to the handler is of less concern with the Started and Working

Dog. The higher the level the more severely the dog should be marked down.

Nothing shall be thrown to encourage a dog to enter the water or direct a dog to a fall. Violation of this provision is to be considered sufficient cause for the dog not to receive a passing score.

Judges, in keeping with simulation of realistic hunting situations, must remember the use of numerous decoys, islands, points of land, cover, wind direction, etc. are important factors to consider when designing test scenarios to evaluate the dogs as capable hunting companions.

## **B. Diversion Birds**

Diversion birds shall be utilized at the WD, WDX (land series only) and WDS level tests. Diversion birds shall always be initiated in front and to the side of the dog when it is returning from a retrieve. Diversion birds shall be thrown when the dog is in a location that it should be able to see the bird as it goes up into the air and as it falls. It shall be thrown to one side or the other of the line the dog is taking back to the handler and no closer than 10 feet from that line. The retrieve shall be no longer than 20 yards and may be shorter for WD and WDX and approximately 40 yards for WDS. The diversion bird shall be clearly marked so as to be easily identifiable. Before the bird is thrown, a duck call will be blown followed by a shot as the bird reaches the peak of the throw.

## **C. Flushing**

In the flushing tests, the dogs shall cover the field in an efficient manner, hunting the areas where birds would normally be found.

Dogs shall work within gun range. A dog that moves out of gun range shall quickly return when directed to do so by the handler.

Gunners shall keep pace with the handler and move at the handler's direction.

A dog shall flush the bird enthusiastically, without pointing. Hesitation in order to locate or in an attempt to trap the bird is not considered pointing.

Clearly blinking a bird is grounds for failure. The judges must see that a bird was present and that the dog clearly avoided it. Passing a bird is not necessarily grounds for failure.

In the flushing tests, after the retrieve is made, the bird is then handed to the judges, who, if the bird was caught by the dog before it flushed, may throw the bird to be shot by a gunner and retrieved by the dog. The judge will also check the condition of the bird.

those natural hazards, so it must be handled to the blind. The hunting situation shall be planned that the dog shall be continuously in sight. A blind retrieve is a test of Trainability. A dog that is out-of-sight for a considerable period cannot be said to be under control.

**Water marking double test** A WDX dog must successfully complete a double marked water retrieve of two dead birds, up to 50 yards distance from the line and with an approximate 90 degree separation between birds. While the term "up to fifty (50) yards" is used, it is the intent that the distance of the retrieve is as close to fifty (50) yards as is practical without exceeding this distance. In the case of small bodies of water, the line can be moved away from the shore in order to achieve the total distance required, preferably no further than ten (10) yards from the water's edge.

## **Working Dog Superior (WDS) Requirements**

In WDS level tests, a dog must come to the line off lead and at heel and sit promptly at the point designated by its handler and remain quietly where placed until given further commands. WDS dogs may not be restrained at the line. No collar may be worn by the WDS dog from the time it is called to the line until the judge has notified the handler that the testing of that dog is completed. No handler may openly display a lead, slip lead or line while under judgment. Failure to adhere to this rule is grounds for disqualification. Dogs that bark or whine, on the line, in a blind, or while retrieving shall be scored low in Trainability. Loud and prolonged barking or whining is sufficient cause to justify grading a dog "0" in Trainability.

Dogs shall be steady at the line. A WDS dog that creeps at the line shall be scored lower for creeping than a WDX level dog. Controlled breaks shall result in a score of "0" in trainability. Repositioning to better see the fall is not considered a break.

Handlers must always carry and shoulder an empty shotgun. The handler shall shoulder the gun to a shooting position and hold it with both hands, as in a typical hunting situation, for each mark that is thrown. When a game bird is flushed, the handler must shoulder the empty shotgun and, with both hands on the gun, follow the flight of the bird as if a shot were to be fired.

Distances on marking tests, land and water, will be up to sixty (60) yards. While the term "up to sixty (60) yards" is used, it is the intent that the distance of the retrieve is as close to sixty (60) yards as is practical without exceeding this distance. The marks shall be at any reasonable degree of separation.

Diversion shots, calls and birds may be used during the marked retrieve portion of the test.

Diversion shots and calls may be used during the marked water retrieve portions of the test and, in addition, a diversion bird will be used in the marked land double.

**Flushing test.** A WDX dog must successfully flush and retrieve two planted birds. The dog need not be steady to wing and shot but control is very important. The dog may break as the bird flushes or as the shot is fired and the handler must be able to call the dog back within a reasonable period of time and in such a way as to not disturb the hunt. He must retrieve the bird to hand. The judge will check the condition of the bird and then give the command to hunt on. The handler then resumes charge of the field and hunts to the flush and retrieve of the second bird.

**Land marking double test with diversion.** A WDX dog must successfully complete a double marked land retrieve of two dead birds, up to 60 yards distance from the line and with an approximate 90 degree separation between birds. While the term “up to sixty (60) yards” is used, it is the intent that the distance of the retrieve is as close to sixty (60) yards as is practical without exceeding this distance. In addition, the WDX dog must complete the retrieve of a diversion bird of not more than 20 yards without switching. The diversion bird shall be thrown when the dog is returning with the second bird of the double no closer than 10 feet from the dog. Set up of the test should take into consideration cover changes, terrain and background.

**Land blind test.** A WDX dog must successfully complete a land blind at a distance of up to fifty (50) yards. A shot will be fired by an official gunner from the line where the blind is to be run in the direction of the blind. The dog should be handled as little as necessary but a dog that takes each cast and makes progress toward the blind shall not be marked down. Dogs may be recast from the line once. If the dog fails to respond to most of the directions of the handler, he shall be judged to have failed the test. The location of the blind can be marked by natural elements in the field, a small piece of surveyor’s tape, or other such material, but this material must be inconspicuous to the dog. If natural markers are used they must be easily understood and recognized by the handler.

The blind shall not be run in the same area as the flushing test and, in addition, the area where the blind is run should be free of birds that could cause a distraction to the dog running the blind. The blind must not be run from the same line as the marks.

Despite natural distractions, it shall be possible for a dog to find a well-planned blind-retrieve on the initial line from its handler; that it will do so is highly improbable because of

**Section 5.** The location of the blind and the fall of the marks can be marked by natural elements in the field, a small piece of surveyor’s tape, or other such material, but this material must be inconspicuous to the dog. If natural markers are used they must be easily understood and recognized by the handler.

Handlers shall not point out the location of a gunner and bird boys to the dog prior to the time the first bird is thrown but the aiming of the gun shall not be construed as pointing out said location. A violation of this section will result in a mark down in SD and elimination in WD, WDX and WDS.

Official guns, game stewards, bird boys or test participants shall not assist a dog in finding game. Doing so may, at the discretion of the judges, result in a re-run of the dog interfered with.

**Section 6.** In marking series 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. Handling on marks regardless of category shall be the handler’s option but to do so shall require a mark down.

Any command given to the dog must be followed by the dog. Refusal(s) will result in a lower score, with the possibility of failure. Started and Working Dogs levels should be judged less severely than Working Dog Excellent and Working Dog Superior.

Retrieves should not require extensive and continual coaxing or take so long that it would be easier for the handler to get the bird. A Started dog shall be judged more leniently than would be the case for the other levels.

A dog that is unwilling to release a bird on delivery must be scored low in Trainability. A Started dog shall be judged more leniently than would be the case for the other levels. A dog cannot receive a qualifying score if it renders a bird unfit for human consumption. A dog shall be eliminated for hard mouth or badly damaged game but before doing so, both judges should inspect the bird and agree that the dog alone was responsible for the damage. Killing a trapped bird is not grounds for failure if the dead bird is not mangled or unfit for the table.

**Section 7.** The Judges shall score the dogs on (a) their natural abilities with emphasis on marking ability, style, perseverance/ courage/hunting, and (b) their trainability as evidenced in steadiness, control, response and delivery.

If there is an occurrence which makes for a relatively unfair test of a dog’s abilities, the Judges shall exercise their discretion in determining how to score the abilities of the dog. In doing

so, the Judges may decide that it is necessary or unnecessary to re-run the dog.

The judges shall make themselves available to discuss his or her judging evaluations of a particular dog with its owner and/or handler after the conclusion of the test and awarding of the ribbons. The decision of the judges shall be final.

**Section 8.** Dogs will be eliminated for unprovoked fighting or attacking handlers, participants, spectators, judges or AWSC officers. Dogs that are disqualified under this section must be immediately confined or removed from the hunt test grounds. It shall be the duty of the judges to promptly report to the hunt test committee the expulsion of a dog from a test. The local hunt test committee may then expel the dog from all other levels at that event if, in the committee's opinion, such further action is warranted. The local hunt test committee shall submit in writing to the Board of Directors a complete report of any action taken under this section.

An attacking dog cannot receive a qualifying score at the test in which the attack occurred

### **Started Dog (SD) Requirements**

Started dogs must come to the line on lead and may be gently restrained with a slip cord or gently held by a flat buckle collar at the line. Leads, including short tabs, shall be removed before dogs are run. This equipment must be quickly concealed or placed on the ground in a non-intimidating fashion following the release of the dog to retrieve and should not be visible to the dog upon its return to the handler. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in a warning. A subsequent violation is grounds for disqualification.

Started dogs must be still and attentive at the line but may be restrained gently with a slip cord or held gently by a flat buckle collar until sent to retrieve.

In Started tests, the handler has the option to carry an empty shotgun and, if deciding to do so, the handler shall shoulder the gun to a shooting position and hold it with both hands, as in a typical hunting situation, as the mark is thrown or bird is flushed. If the handler is restraining the dog, the shotgun is not used.

All dogs on the line must have a clear view of the fall. Dogs should be able to handle minor or limited variations in cover and terrain change, but not significant changes. Background should make seeing the flight and fall of the marked retrieve evident. The line of sight is to be free of obstruction.

On the marked retrieves, before each bird is thrown a duck call is blown from the area near the bird's point of origin and a shot fired in the direction of the bird either from the bird's point of origin or from a gunner positioned near but no

the area near the bird's point of origin and a shot fired in the direction of the bird either from the bird's point of origin or from a gunner positioned near but no closer than five yards from the handler and/or dog. Guns may be requested to shoot twice at every bird.

The judges may, at their discretion, utilize either hidden and/or visible guns, but in doing so shall give paramount consideration to the simulation of hunting situations. Visible gun stations shall be kept to a minimum in WDX level tests.

Retrieves must be to hand and failure to retrieve to hand will result in a score of "0" in Trainability. Handler shall remain in place when receiving the bird.

The dog must mark the falls and retrieve them in the order designated by the handler.

Dogs may be handled on marks, but excessive handling requires a lower score in perseverance and/or marking. A dog that goes to the area of the fall and finds the bird unaided must be scored appreciably higher than a dog that must be handled to a bird. Handling on the first bird should be marked down severely.

A dog that goes to the area of a fall, hunts, fails to find the bird, and then leaves the area to hunt for another fall, or that drops a bird it is retrieving and goes to another, shall be considered to have switched. If a dog, having dropped one bird and in going for another, is able to be handled back to the original bird before picking up the second bird, that dog shall be scored low but not to the point of "0". Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that switches shall be scored "0" in Perseverance.

A dog that returns to the area of a fall that it has previously retrieved and establishes another hunt shall be considered to have returned to an old fall. Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that returns to an old fall shall be scored low in Perseverance and/or Marking, even to the extent of awarding a grade of "0".

In WDX level tests, failure to enter either rough cover, water, ice, mud, or any other situation involving unpleasant or difficult going for the dog, after having been ordered to do so several times, is sufficient cause to grade the dog "0" in Perseverance. A dog shall not disturb too much ground or area and should respond quickly and obediently to any further directions its handler might give.

These tests shall make use of natural obstacles and realistic hunting situations in as far as it is practicable to do so. Decoys are required and shall consist of a minimum of six decoys, up to a maximum of twelve when used. The decoys shall be placed so as to be a definite distraction or obstacle for the dog. A WDX dog could be expected to swim through the edge of a decoy spread to retrieve the bird.

be no longer than 20 yards distance from the line (and may be shorter) and no closer than 10 feet from the dog. Upon completion of the first retrieve, the diversion bird is retrieved. The choice of whether it is a land or water mark will be at the discretion of the judges.

### **Working Dog Excellent (WDX) Requirements**

In WDX level tests, a dog must come to the line off lead, at heel, and sit promptly at the point designated by its handler, and remain quietly where placed until given further commands. WDX dogs may not be restrained at the line. No collar may be worn by the WDX dog (unless otherwise mandated by state or local ordinances) from the time it is called to the line until the judge has notified the handler that the testing of that dog is completed. No handler may openly display a leash, slip lead or line while under judgment. Failure to adhere to this rule is grounds for disqualification. Dogs that bark or whine, on the line, in a blind, or while retrieving shall be scored low in Trainability. Loud and prolonged barking or whining is sufficient cause to justify grading a dog "0" in Trainability.

Dogs must be steady at the line. Controlled breaks and creeping shall result in a lower score in Trainability, but will not result in a score of "0".

Handlers must always carry and shoulder an empty shotgun. The handler shall shoulder the gun to a shooting position and hold it with both hands, as in a typical hunting situation, for each mark that is thrown. When a game bird is flushed, the handler must shoulder the empty shotgun and, with both hands on the gun, follow the flight of the bird as if a shot were to be fired.

Unless instructed by the judges or otherwise noted in these rules, a handler may not touch the dog being tested from the time it is called to the line until it is no longer being tested or under judgment.

The handler shall not hold, touch, or otherwise intimidate a dog to keep it steady at the line. The Judges shall have sole discretion in determining what is intimidating or reprimanding and need not qualify this with the handler prior to the running of the test. Violation of this paragraph is sufficient cause to justify a grade of "0" in Trainability.

Unless otherwise noted, the handler is allowed to talk to the dog in a quiet manner throughout the running of the test as a means of directing, reinforcing, or supporting the dog's actions. It is important to remember that this test is an attempt to simulate a hunting situation and, as in a hunting situation, all verbal communication with the dog should be done in a manner that would not disturb a normal day's hunt.

On the marked retrieves (including diversions on the land series), before each bird is thrown a duck call is blown from

closer than five yards from the handler and/or dog. Guns may be requested to shoot twice at every bird.

The marked retrieves are to be up to forty (40) yards distance from the line. While the term "up to forty (40) yards" is used, it is intended that the distance of the retrieve is as close to forty (40) yards as is practical without exceeding that distance. For the water mark, in the case of small bodies of water, the line can be moved, preferably no further than ten (10) yards, away from the shore in order to achieve the total distance required.

No diversion of any type (i.e. birds, calls, shots) shall be allowed at the Started level after the mark is thrown.

Delivery to hand is not required at this level however birds must be brought to within at least 6 feet of the handler. The bird must be delivered within the 6 foot radius determined by the handler's original position. The handler may move about within said circle.

The judges may, at their discretion, utilize either hidden and/or visible guns, but in doing so shall give paramount consideration to the simulation of hunting situations. Visible gun stations may be utilized.

A Started dog may be handled to the mark but will receive a score lower than it would have received if it did not need to be handled. Handling at this level is not expected or encouraged. There are, however, circumstances that arise during a test that handling may be a valid means to an end. If handling is required, it must be accomplished crisply and cleanly. A dog shall not disturb too much ground or area and should respond quickly and obediently to any further directions its handler might give. A dog that pays no attention to many whistles and/or directions by its handler can be assumed to be weak in response, and unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, the dog shall be graded low or receive a grade of "0" on Trainability.

**Flushing test.** A started dog must successfully flush and retrieve a planted bird. The handler should encourage the dog to hunt the area. Idle chatter should be kept to a minimum. Avoid giving unnecessary or repetitive commands/encouragement to the dog. It is not necessary that a dog be steady to wing and shot. He must retrieve the bird back to within a six-foot radius of the handler. If the bird is not killed and flies away the dog must, when commanded, return to the handler within a reasonable period of time. A Started dog will be judged less severely than a Working dog.

**Single land marking test.** A Started dog must successfully complete a single marked retrieve of one dead bird. The retrieve is to be up to forty (40) yards distance from the line. The dog will have a clear view of the fall.

**Single water marking test.** A Started dog must successfully complete a single marked retrieve of one dead bird from open water. The retrieve is to be up to forty (40) yards distance from the line. Decoys, if used, shall be placed off to the side of the line of the retrieve so as not to interfere with the Started dog's path to the bird. The number of decoys used shall not exceed twelve (12) nor be less than three (3).

### **Working Dog (WD) Requirements**

Working dogs may come to the line on lead and may be gently restrained with a slip cord or gently held by a flat buckle collar at the line. Leads, including short tabs, shall be removed before dogs are run. This equipment must be quickly concealed or placed on the ground in a non-intimidating fashion following the release of the dog to retrieve and may not be visible to the dog upon its return to the handler. Failure to adhere to this rule is grounds for disqualification. Working dogs must be still and attentive at the line. Delivery to hand is required at this level on all retrieves.

In Working Dog tests, the handler has the option to carry an empty shotgun and, if deciding to do so, the handler shall shoulder the gun and hold it with both hands, as in a typical hunting situation, as the marks are thrown or bird is flushed. If the handler is restraining the dog, the shotgun is not to be used.

All dogs on the line should have a clear view of the fall. Dogs should be able to handle minor or limited variations in cover and terrain change. Background should make seeing the flight and fall of the marked retrieve evident. The line of sight is to be free of obstruction.

On the marked retrieves (including diversions), before each bird is thrown a duck call is blown from the area near the bird's point of origin and a shot fired in the direction of the bird either from the bird's point of origin or from a gunner positioned near but no closer than five yards from the handler and/or dog. Guns may be requested to shoot twice at every bird.

The marked retrieves are to be up to fifty (50) yards distance from the line. While the term "up to fifty (50) yards" is used, it is intended that the distance of the retrieve is as close to fifty (50) yards as is practical without exceeding that distance. For the water mark, in the case of small bodies of water, the line can be moved, preferably no further than ten (10) yards, away from the shore in order to achieve the total distance required.

A Working dog may be handled to the mark but will receive a score lower than it would have received if it did not need to be handled. There are, however, circumstances that arise during a test that handling may be a valid means to an end. If handling is required, it must be accomplished crisply and

cleanly or it will be marked down in trainability. A dog shall not disturb too much ground or area and should respond quickly and obediently to any further directions its handler might give. A dog that pays no attention to many whistles and/or directions by its handler can be assumed to be weak in response, and unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, the dog shall be graded low or receive a grade of "0" on Trainability.

A dog that drops a bird it is retrieving and goes to another, shall be considered to have switched. If a dog, having dropped one bird and in going for another, is able to be handled back to the original bird before picking up the second bird, that dog shall be scored low but not to the point of "0". Unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, a dog that switches shall be scored "0" in Perseverance.

The judges may, at their discretion, utilize either hidden and/or visible guns, but in doing so shall give paramount consideration to the simulation of hunting situations. Visible gun stations may be utilized to a greater extent in the Working Dog hunt test.

**Flushing test.** A Working dog must successfully flush and retrieve two (2) planted birds. The handler should encourage the dog to hunt the area. Idle chatter should be kept to a minimum. Avoid giving unnecessary or repetitive commands/encouragement to the dog. It is not necessary that a dog be steady to wing and shot. The dog must retrieve to hand, however the handler may take a step toward the dog. If the bird flies away or, in the judges opinion, is not retrievable the dog must, when commanded, return to the handler within a reasonable period of time.

**Single land marking test.** A Working dog must successfully complete a single marked land retrieve of one dead bird. The retrieve is to be up to fifty (50) yards distance from the line.

**Single water mark.** A Working dog must successfully complete a single marked water retrieve of up to fifty (50) yards distance from the line. Decoys, if used, shall be placed off to the side of the line of the retrieve so as not to interfere with the dog's path to the birds. The number of decoys used shall not exceed twelve (12) nor be less than six (6).

**Single land or water mark with diversion.** A Working dog must successfully complete a single land or water mark of up to fifty (50) yards distance from the line with a diversion bird without switching. This shall be incorporated into one of the two marks described above. The diversion bird shall