

# Regulations for AKC® Hunting Tests for Spaniels

Including Guidelines for  
Spaniel Hunting Tests

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AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

## AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

The American Kennel Club is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

Information regarding AKC Spaniel Hunting Tests is also available on our Web site located at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1

General Regulations .....	3
---------------------------	---

### CHAPTER 2

Qualifying Scores, Awarding of Titles .....	14
---	----

### CHAPTER 3

Instructions for Hunting Test Committees .....	17
--	----

### CHAPTER 4

Standards of Performance .....	21
--------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER 5

Test Requirements and Instructions for Judges .....	23
--	----

## GUIDELINES FOR SPANIEL HUNTING TESTS

<b>Part I. Introduction</b> .....	28
-----------------------------------	----

Purpose .....	29
---------------	----

<b>Part II. Committee Responsibilities</b> .....	29
--	----

Judges' Responsibilities .....	29
--------------------------------	----

<b>Part III. Standards of Performance</b> .....	31
---	----

Junior Hunter Standard .....	31
------------------------------	----

Junior Test Elements .....	32
----------------------------	----

Senior Hunting Dog.....	32
-------------------------	----

Senior Test Elements.....	33
---------------------------	----

Master Hunting Dog.....	34
-------------------------	----

Master Test Elements.....	36
---------------------------	----

Additional Judging Considerations.....	36
--	----

<b>Part IV. Scoring</b> .....	39
-------------------------------	----

The Basics of Scoring .....	39
-----------------------------	----

Ability Categories, Disqualifying Traits and Definitions .....	40
---	----

General Considerations .....	42
------------------------------	----

<b>Part V. Critical Elements</b> .....	43
--	----

Courses .....	43
---------------	----

Birds .....	44
-------------	----

Bird Planting .....	45
---------------------	----

Guns and Gunning .....	46
------------------------	----

Conclusion.....	48
-----------------	----

## **Purpose of Spaniel Hunting Test Program**

A number of hunting dog breeds have been developed to hunt, find game, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and efficient manner. The objective of the hunting test program is to help the hunter develop a useful hunting companion by providing a means to gauge a dog's abilities against three standards of accomplishment—Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter.

## Chapter 1

### General Regulations

The word “dog” wherever used in these Regulations includes both sexes.

**Section 1. Eligibility of Clubs to Hold Hunting Tests.** The Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club may, in its discretion, grant permission to clubs to hold Hunting Tests, which Hunting Tests shall be governed by such Rules and Regulations as from time to time shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 2. Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline.** All of AKC’s Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline shall apply to all AKC sanctioned, licensed and member club hunting tests.

**Section 3. Making Application.** A club that meets all the requirements of The American Kennel Club and wishes to hold a Hunting Test at which Qualifying scores toward titles may be awarded, must make application to The American Kennel Club on the form provided for permission to hold a Hunting Test. If the club is not a member of The American Kennel Club, it shall pay a license fee for the privilege of holding such event, the amount of which shall be determined by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club.

A licensed club may hold up to four (4) hunting tests per calendar year.

Applications for AKC licensed and member club Spaniel Hunting Tests must be received at least three (3) months prior to the closing date. Fines may be imposed for late submission of applications.

A Hunting Test Judges Panel form, containing the names and addresses of the proposed Judges together with their assignments, must be submitted to AKC at least three (3) months in advance of the event. Fines may be imposed for late submission of the Judges Panel.

At present the license fee for a Hunting Test is \$35.00. No fee is required of an AKC member club for the first Hunting Test held within a calendar year, but an application for a second Hunting Test within that calendar year must be accompanied by a fee of \$15.00.

A club that meets all of the requirements of The American Kennel Club may be approved to hold a sanctioned Hunting Test by applying to hold a

sanctioned Hunting Test on a form provided by the American Kennel Club®.

All of these Regulations shall govern AKC sanctioned Hunting Tests except those which state specifically that they apply to licensed and member club Hunting Tests.

**Section 4. Tests Offered, Entry Requirements.** Clubs may offer Junior and/or Senior and/or Master Hunting Tests for all AKC eligible breeds, but may not offer more than one of the same category at any event at which Qualifying scores toward titles might be earned.

A complete list of eligible breeds can be found on the AKC website: [www.akc.org/events/hunting\\_tests/spaniels/eligible\\_breeds.cfm](http://www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/spaniels/eligible_breeds.cfm).

Tests shall be open to dogs from eligible breeds that are six months of age or over on the first day of the event that have been individually registered with AKC or individually registered with a foreign registry organization whose pedigrees are acceptable for AKC registration. A dog with an AKC Limited or Conditional Registration shall be eligible to be entered in licensed or member Hunting Tests.

A dog that is individually registered with a foreign registry organization whose pedigrees are acceptable for AKC registration may be entered in licensed or member hunting tests that are held not later than 30 days after the date of the first licensed or member hunting test in which the dog was entered, but only provided that the individual foreign registration number and the name of the country of birth are shown on the entry form, and provided further that the same name, which in the case of an imported dog must be the name on the foreign registration, is used for the dog each time.

Dogs of eligible breeds that are enrolled with the FSS are eligible to participate in Hunting Tests.

Eligible breeds that have been granted Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL/ILP) are eligible to participate in hunting tests. Neutered dogs and spayed bitches are eligible for entry in Hunting Tests.

At the option of the Hunting Test-giving club, a numerical limit may be imposed on entries in any or all testing categories (Junior, Senior and/or Master). 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.

**Prioritizing Entries.** If entries are limited to a specific number as stated in the premium, a Spaniel Club may, at its option, prioritize the entries for its Hunting Test to the Spaniel breeds (except the Irish Water Spaniel) plus Airedales. If at the time of closing the limit has not been reached, the Club must accept entries from other eligible breeds up to the event limit. If entries are to be prioritized to the Spaniel breeds (except the Irish Water Spaniel) and Airedales, this must be stated in the premium.

If entries are limited to a specific number as stated in the premium, a Retriever Club may, at its option, prioritize the entries for its Hunting Test to the Retriever breeds plus the Irish Water Spaniel. If at the time of closing the limit has not been reached, the Club must accept entries from other eligible breeds up to the event limit. If entries are to be prioritized to the Retriever breeds and Irish Water Spaniels, this must be stated in the premium.

All-breed hunting clubs and Airedale clubs may not prioritize their entries (except in the case of a test held in conjunction with their National Specialty Show).

A Spaniel Club is defined by the club having "Spaniel" in its name (except for Irish Water Spaniel clubs). A Retriever Club is defined by the club having "Retriever" in its name plus Irish Water Spaniel clubs.

A National Specialty Club may be approved to hold a Hunting Test open to its own breed, in conjunction with its National Specialty Show. The premium list must state that the event is open only to that Club's breed.

**No Special Inducements.** A Hunting Test giving club shall not accept an entry fee other than that published in its premium list or entry form, or in any way discriminate between entrants. Except a club, at its discretion, may allow for a reduced entry fee for dogs handled by juniors. A junior handler is someone less than 18 years of age on the first day of the test.

### **Disqualification by Judges**

A dog is not eligible to be entered or run in any licensed or member club Hunting Test in any category if the dog has on two occasions been made the subject of the following report: If a dog, while under judgement at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting 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 and the name of the offending dog shall be listed in the report of the Hunting Test sent to The American Kennel Club. (See also Ch. 5, Sec. 2).

**Section 5. Bitches in Season.** Bitches in season shall not be eligible for entry in any Hunting Test and shall not be allowed on the grounds. Entry fees 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 which dies, shall be refunded in full by the test-giving club. Prior to paying such refund, the club may require an appropriate veterinary certificate. In the event a dog is withdrawn for 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 And Approval.** Anyone in good standing with The American Kennel Club may be approved to judge a Hunting Test, but extensive background experience in handling, working and hunting with Spaniels in the field is essential. All new judges must meet the following requirements. For continued eligibility current judges must meet these requirements as of July 1, 2011.

Panel Experience – The judging pair must have a combined point total of eight (8) points at the level assigned to be judged or higher. One point to be awarded for each completed judging assignment at the level being judged.

Handling Experience – At the Master test level and each division thereof, the two judges together shall have qualified a dog or dogs five (5) times at the Master level. At the Senior and Junior test levels and each division thereof, the two judges together shall have qualified a dog or dogs four (4) times, either at the level being judged or at a higher test level. Monitoring the qualifications of the Judges is the responsibility of the event-giving club.

Apprenticeship – For all new judges after July 1, 2007: Judges must have apprenticed successfully two times at each level to be judged under different Judges in licensed hunting tests. For an apprenticeship to count toward judging eligibility, there must be a minimum of five dogs starting at the test level being apprenticed on that day. Approved Judges must be willing to work with an apprentice

and must be advised prior to the beginning of the event of the club's plan to assign an apprentice Judge. Apprentice Judges must observe and score the dog work and be party to discussions between the Judges; however, their scores will not be considered when determining the dogs that qualify. An apprentice must serve through the duration of the test level, and is subject to the same constraints as the approved Judges.

A person who has judged prior to July 1, 2007 is not required to apprentice judge up to the level previously judged. Two apprentice judging assignments are required to judge at a higher level than previously judged.

Seminar Requirements – Attendance at an AKC Spaniel Hunting Test seminar, within five years of the beginning date of the event to be judged is mandatory.

A dog is not eligible to be entered in a Test (Junior, Senior or Master) at a licensed or member Hunting Test if a Judge or Apprentice 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 Hunting Test.

For purposes of this Section, the words “any member of his family” shall include a spouse, a sibling, a parent or a child, whether natural or adopted, of the Judge in question; but shall not extend to other blood or legal relationships.

Neither the Hunting Test Secretary nor any member of the Hunting Test Committee will be approved to be published in the premium list as a Judge of an event where they serve in that capacity.

Each Test level (Junior, Senior and Master) or division of a Test level shall be judged by two Judges.

Judges or Apprentice Judges shall not enter the Test level or a division of the Test level that they are judging, but may enter different Test level(s) provided there is no interference with the judging assignment.

**Section 7. Judges' Responsibility.** Clubs should select as Judges, individuals with broad and extensive background experience in handling, working and hunting with Spaniels in the field.

A Hunting Test Judge must be familiar with all Rules, Regulations pertaining to the type and

level of testing being conducted. Judges must be thoroughly familiar with each breed's "hunting style description" and judge in strict accordance with such description.

**Section 8. Ribbons and Rosettes.** A club holding a licensed or member Hunting Test shall offer prize ribbons or rosettes. Each ribbon or rosette shall be at least two inches wide and eight inches long and orange in color, and shall bear on its face a facsimile of the seal of The American Kennel Club, the words "Qualifying Score", the name of the test-giving club and the Test (Junior, Senior or Master Hunting Test).

If ribbons or rosettes are given at sanctioned Hunting Tests, they shall be rose in color, and need not conform to the requirements for ribbons at licensed or member Hunting Tests.

**Section 9. AKC Publications.** All clubs holding Hunting Tests are required to have available copies of the latest editions of the Hunting Tests Regulations, the Rules Applying to Registration and Field Trials for Spaniels as well as AKC publications regarding misconduct at events held under AKC Rules and Regulations.

**Section 10. Advertising.** Clubs may only advertise corresponding dates, locations and stakes, plus club contact information, prior to an event receiving AKC approval. Clubs may not advertise an event prior to AKC approval if the dates or location differ from the previous year's corresponding event. Premium lists cannot be made available nor can entries be accepted until the event and judges panel has been approved by the AKC.

**Section 11. Training or Correction.** The Hunting Test Committee and the Judges shall not permit training, severe correcting or disciplining of dogs on any part of the grounds. It is recommended that a designated exercise area be provided.

**Section 12. Hunting Test Secretary.** Any club holding a Hunting Test must name a Hunting Test Secretary who must be a member of the club. The premium list for a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall designate the Hunting Test Secretary as receiving entries.

However, clubs have the option of using an electronic entry service. Online entries are subject to the same requirements as mail entries. Additional requirements or conditions may be imposed by the

online service. Such service or club shall accept paper entries from those not wishing to enter electronically. A club using an online service to accept entries must so stipulate in the premium list and must provide an address for paper entries as well as the website address for online entries. There should be only one address for paper entries, and that address may be that of the entry service company. Any service fee imposed by the online entry service must be clearly stated in the premium list. All online entry instructions should be clearly written.

**Section 13. Hunting Test Committee.** A club that has been granted permission by The American Kennel Club to hold a licensed or member club Hunting Test must appoint a Hunting Test Committee which will have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the event. The Committee shall be comprised of at least five members of the club and may include the Hunting Test Secretary, but the Hunting Test Secretary shall not be designated as the Hunting Test Committee Chairman. A majority of the Hunting Test Committee must be present during an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test. In the event of absence of Hunting Test Committee members, the Chairman or an officiating officer shall appoint sufficient Committee members in order to insure compliance with this Section.

When a dog is seriously injured or dies in connection with an event, the Event Committee must conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if negligence or the willful conduct of an individual caused the injury or death. If the preliminary investigation determines that there was no negligence or willful conduct causing the injury or death, then a written report of the findings of the preliminary investigation must be submitted to the AKC (Attn: Executive Secretary), 260 Madison Avenue, Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10016 within five (5) days. If the Event Committee determines that negligence or willful conduct may have caused the death or serious injury, the Event Committee must hold an Event Hearing.

The Hunting Test Committee and Hunting Test Secretary shall be held responsible for compliance with all of the applicable Rules and Regulations for Hunting Tests, except those coming under the sole jurisdiction of the Judges, and must provide themselves with copies of the publications specified

in Section 9 of this Chapter.

The Hunting Test Committee of a club holding a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall have the authority to decide upon any matter arising during the running of the Hunting Test, except a matter coming within the jurisdiction of the Judges.

**Section 14. Premium Lists.** A premium list must be provided for licensed or member club Hunting Tests. The premium list for a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall be printed (any printing or copying process is acceptable), and shall state whether the event is "Licensed by The American Kennel Club" or held by an "AKC Member Club."

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

Premium lists shall also specify type or types of birds to be used, and shall conform to the official size of from 5½" x 8½" to 6" x 9".

At least one copy of the premium list (along with any directional maps, if provided) must be mailed or emailed to AKC at the time that they are distributed to prospective entrants.

**Section 15. Closing and Drawing of Entries, Entry Limits, Move-ups.** Entries for an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test may close at any time prior to the Hunting Test, but shall not close later than the day preceding the start of the Hunting Test.

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 Hunting Test-giving club, a numerical limit may be imposed on entries in any or all testing categories (Junior, Senior and/or Master). 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 (Junior, Senior and Master) 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.

The Hunting Test Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the conduct of the draw is public and the place assigned to each competing dog is determined by random chance insofar as possible.

Dogs may be run in an order different from the order in which they are drawn when, in the opinion of the Judges or the Hunting Test Committee, such will result in a reasonable and desirable saving of time in the conduct of the event.

Move Ups – Dogs may be moved up to a higher Test level (in a second event) if a title is acquired after entries have closed in the second Test, subject to the approval of the Hunting Test Committee of the second event, the availability of birds, payment of the difference, if any, in entry fees, and provided also that the dog is moved up at least one-half hour prior to the start of the second Test. Dogs so moved up will be placed at the end of the drawn running order.

**Section 16. Split Test Levels.** Test levels may be run in more than one division, but dogs shall not be entered in more than one division of the same Test level. Whenever Test levels are split, they shall be split equally with placement of the odd dog determined by the Hunting Test Committee.

**Section 17. Catalogs.** An Official Catalog must be provided for a licensed or member club Hunting Test. The Official Catalog must be printed or typed, and shall conform to the official size of not less than 5½" x 8½", but not to exceed 8½" x 11".

The Official Catalog shall list all dogs entered in each Test (Junior, Senior and Master) in the order in which the dogs were drawn with all identifying information called for on the entry form, at least, but not limited to full name of the dog, breed, date of birth, registration number, and name of owner and handler, if different from owner. Only official AKC titles may appear in the catalog.

The Official Catalog shall state the name of the Hunting Test giving club, the date and location of the event and whether the hunting test is "Licensed by the American Kennel Club" or held by an "AKC Member Club".

The following certifications must appear in the Official Catalog either on the first page, inside front cover, inside back cover, or following the last dog listed in the last test:

### Judges Certification

We certify that \_\_\_\_\_ (number) dogs qualified in Junior, \_\_\_\_\_ (number) qualified in Senior, and \_\_\_\_\_ (number) qualified in Master, and that the above information identifying these dogs was entered prior to our signing this certification.

---

Judge's Sign./Test Level    Judge's Sign./Test Level  
(Note: Provide a signature line for each Judge.)

### Hunting Test Secretary's Certification

I certify that the Judges have verified the above information and signed this page. Number of dogs entered \_\_\_\_\_. Total Starters \_\_\_\_\_. Total Number of Qualifying scores \_\_\_\_\_.

---

Date                      Signature of Hunting Test Secretary

Following completion of judging in each Test, the Hunting Test Secretary shall clearly mark the Official Catalog (e.g. with Qualifying, Qual or Q) next to the names of all dogs that received Qualifying scores. The judges shall then certify the accuracy of the marked awards, and both the Hunting Test Secretary and the Judges shall complete their appropriate certifications. A club holding a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall retain a duplicate marked catalog.

**Section 18. Submission of Records.** At the conclusion of the judging of each Test, a club holding a licensed or member Hunting Test shall provide for the Judges' signature, a marked catalog of the Test judged, showing full particulars of all dogs receiving Qualifying scores. The Hunting Test Secretary shall then certify to the Judges' signatures and shall certify to the number of entries and starters in each Test.

The marked catalog, together with all entry forms (score cards need not be submitted) and a full report of the Test, shall be sent to The American Kennel Club so as to reach The American Kennel

Club no later than seven days after the conclusion of the event. Penalty for non-compliance twenty five dollars (\$25.00) and five dollars (\$5.00) for each days delay beyond the deadline, and other such penalties as may be imposed by the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club.

At every licensed or member club field trial held under the Rules of The American Kennel Club, an event service fee of \$3.50 per entry is required. The event service fee is to help defray expenses involved in maintaining the records and administrating the events.

The Board of Directors shall determine, from time to time, whether a recording fee/event service fee shall be required and the amount of it.

The Hunting Test report shall contain a list of the names of all members of the Hunting Test Committee who were present, the names and complete addresses of all the Judges, and the name and address of the Hunting Test Secretary.

A club holding a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall retain a copy of the marked catalog.

**Section 19. Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** (A) It shall be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct 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 Hunting Test Committee shall act in accord with paragraph (D) of this Section.

(B) Any person who displays unsportsmanlike conduct or who is seen to kick, strike, or otherwise roughly manhandle a dog while on the grounds of a Hunting Test at any time during the holding of the event, may be expelled from the test by the Hunting Test Committee, which shall act in accord with paragraph (D) of this Section.

(C) The Judges shall also have the authority to expel a person if they observe unsportsmanlike conduct, or see a person kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog while the event is in progress, It will be the duty of the Judges to promptly report such expulsion to the Hunting Test Committee and the Hunting Test Committee shall act in accord with paragraph (D) of this Section.

(D) The Hunting Test Committee shall investigate, at once, any instance of alleged unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any person or handler, or any report that a person or handler

has been observed kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog. If a Hunting Test Committee, after investigation, determines that a person or handler is in violation of this Section, and that the incident, if proven, would constitute conduct prejudicial to the sport or The American Kennel Club, it shall exercise its authority in accord with Chapter 15, Section 2 of the Field Trial Rules and with the Guide for Dealing with Misconduct at Field Trials & Hunting Tests.

(E) The Hunting Test Secretary shall submit within seven days to The American Kennel Club a complete report of any action taken under this Section.

**Note:** The power conferred to suspend a person from all privileges of The American Kennel Club applies only to Committees at licensed or member events. At a sanctioned event, the Committee collects evidence, holds a hearing, and reports its findings and conclusions to The American Kennel Club.

**Section 20. Disqualification by Event Committee.** Any dog, that in the opinion of the Event Committee or the American Kennel Club, attacks a person or a dog at an AKC event, resulting in injury, and is believed by that Event Committee or the American Kennel Club to present a hazard to persons or other dogs shall be disqualified. When the dog is disqualified by the Event Committee pursuant to this section a report shall be filed immediately with the Executive Secretary of the American Kennel Club. The disqualified dog may not again compete at any AKC event nor be on the grounds of an AKC event unless and until, following application for reinstatement by the owner to the American Kennel Club, the owner receives official notification in writing from the AKC that the dog's eligibility has been reinstated.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Qualifying Scores, Awarding of Titles**

**Section 1. Qualifying Scores.** The total number of Qualifying scores required for the issuance of the titles Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter shall be established by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club.

The 5 categories of ability in Junior, Senior and Master Hunting Tests must be graded on a scale of 0-10.

At present, in order to receive a Qualifying score in Junior, Senior and Master Hunting Tests, a dog must acquire a minimum average of not less than 5 on each of the categories of abilities listed on the Score Card, with an overall average score of not less than 7.

In order to receive a Qualifying score in Junior Advanced, Senior Advanced and Master Advanced Hunting Tests, a dog must acquire a minimum score of not less than 5 on each of the categories of abilities listed on the Score Card, with an overall average score of not less than 8.0.

**Section 2. Junior Hunter Title (JH).** In order to be recorded as a Junior Hunter, a dog must be registered with the AKC, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores in the Junior Hunting Test in four (4) AKC licensed or member club Hunting Tests.

Upon completion of these requirements, an AKC Junior Hunter (JH) certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Junior Hunter in all official AKC records by the suffix title JH.

A dog that has been recorded as a Junior Hunter may continue to enter the Junior Hunting Test, but no further Junior Hunter certificates will be issued.

**Section 2A. Junior Hunter Advanced Title (JHA).** A dog must have previously earned a Junior Hunter title to be eligible to earn qualifying legs towards a Junior Hunter Advanced title. In order to be recorded as a Junior Hunter Advanced, a dog must have a record of having acquired five (5) JHA qualifying scores in the Junior Hunting Test.

Upon completion of these requirements, the owner of the dog must complete the Advanced Title tracking form and submit it to the Performance Events Department. Upon verification, the dog shall be identified as a Junior Hunter Advanced in all official AKC records by the suffix title JHA. The JHA title will supersede the JH title on a dog's records.

A JHA title certificate will not be issued unless ordered by the owner. The Advanced Title tracking form will include title certificate ordering information. There will be a fee for the title certificate. The fee shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 3. Senior Hunter Title (SH).** In order to be recorded as a Senior Hunter, a dog must be

registered with the AKC, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores in the Senior Hunting Test at five (5) AKC licensed or member club Hunting Tests, or, in the case of a dog that has been recorded by AKC as a Junior Hunter, that dog will be recorded as a Senior Hunter after having acquired Qualifying scores in the Senior Hunting Test at four (4) AKC licensed or member club Hunting Tests.

Upon completion of these requirements, an AKC Senior Hunter (SH) certificate will be issued to the owner, and the dog shall be identified as a Senior Hunter in all official AKC records by the suffix title SH, which title shall supersede the Junior Hunter title when the Junior Hunter title has been previously earned. A dog that has been recorded as a Senior Hunter may continue to enter the Senior Hunting Test, but no further Senior Hunter certificates will be issued.

Dogs that have acquired a Senior Hunter title at an AKC licensed or member Hunting Test are eligible to enter Junior Hunting Tests. No JH title will be issued.

**Section 3A. Senior Hunter Advanced Title (SHA).** A dog must have previously earned a Senior Hunter title to be eligible to earn qualifying legs towards a Senior Hunter Advanced title. In order to be recorded as a Senior Hunter Advanced, a dog must have a record of having acquired five (5) SHA qualifying scores in the Senior Hunting Test.

Upon completion of these requirements, the owner of the dog must complete the Advanced Title tracking form and submit it to the Performance Events Department. Upon verification, the dog shall be identified as a Senior Hunter Advanced in all official AKC records by the suffix title SHA. The SHA title will supersede the SH title on a dog's records.

A SHA title certificate will not be issued unless ordered by the owner. The Advanced Title tracking form will include title certificate ordering information. There will be a fee for the title certificate. The fee shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

**Section 4. Master Hunter Title (MH).** In order to be recorded as a Master Hunter, a dog must be registered with the AKC, and must have a record of having acquired Qualifying scores in the Master Hunting Test at six (6) AKC licensed or member

club Hunting Tests, or, in the case of a dog that has been recorded by AKC as a Senior Hunter, that dog will be recorded as a Master Hunter after having acquired Qualifying scores in the Master Hunting Test at five (5) AKC licensed or member club Hunting Tests.

Upon completion of these requirements, an AKC Master Hunter (MH) certificate will be issued to the owner and the dog will be identified as a Master Hunter in all official AKC records by the suffix title MH, which title shall supersede any AKC Hunting Test title that may have been previously earned.

A dog that has been recorded as a Master Hunter may continue to enter the Master Hunting Test but no further Master Hunter certificates will be issued.

Dogs that have acquired a Master Hunter title at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test are eligible to enter Junior and Senior Hunting Tests. No JH or SH titles will be issued.

**Section 4A. Master Hunter Advanced Title (MHA).** A dog must have previously earned a Master Hunter title to be eligible to earn qualifying legs towards a Master Hunter Advanced title. In order to be recorded as a Master Hunter Advanced, a dog must have a record of having acquired five (5) MHA qualifying scores in the Master Hunting Test.

Upon completion of these requirements, the owner of the dog must complete the Advanced Title tracking form and submit it to the Performance Events Department. Upon verification, the dog shall be identified as a Master Hunter Advanced in all official AKC records by the suffix title MHA. The MHA title will supersede the MH title on a dog's records.

A MHA title certificate will not be issued unless ordered by the owner. The Advanced Title tracking form will include title certificate ordering information. There will be a fee for the title certificate. The fee shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Instructions to Hunting Test Committees**

##### **—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 Hunting Tests for Spaniels, and second, greater uniformity in evaluating the hunting abilities and characteristics of Spaniels at those Hunting Tests.

In order that Hunting Tests may be conducted as uniformly as practicable, standardization of objectives is essential and, therefore, all Judges, Guns, entrants and officials who have a part in conducting Hunting Tests must be familiar with and be governed so far as possible by the following Regulations:

**Section 1. Purpose.** The purpose of a Hunting Test for flushing breeds is to test the merits of, and evaluate their abilities in the field in order to determine their suitability and ability as hunting companions. Hunting Tests must, therefore, simulate as nearly 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. 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.

**Section 2. Safety.** An item of blaze orange clothing must be worn by marshals, bird planters, handlers, gunners and Judges. A cap by itself is not sufficient to meet this requirement. As to how much orange is required, clubs should follow the hunting regulations of the State where the event is being held. Bird planters should wear protective glasses or eyewear. *Note: Blaze orange is not required during water retrieves or during the "hunt dead" exercise.*

**Section 3. Birds, Bird Stewards.** Only Pheasants and/or chukars and/or partridge shall be used in the land series of Senior and Master Hunting Tests. Pheasants and/or chukars and/or partridge and/or ducks shall be used in the water series in Senior and Master Hunting Tests. Pigeons may be used in all series in Junior Hunting Tests.

The premium list for a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall specify the species of game to be used in each test.

A club holding a Hunting Test shall appoint one or more Bird Stewards who shall be responsible for the care of all live and dead birds.

No live 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, licensed or member club Hunting Test for 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.** All courses shall consist of sufficient cover to hold birds and be of adequate size to permit a dog to hunt naturally. 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, but tests may be run simultaneously or in divisions (split classes) provided that there is no interference.

Mechanical vehicles should be kept off the course.

**Section 5. Guns.** The dogs shall be shot over only by Official Guns appointed by the Hunting Test Committee. It is strongly recommended that 20 to 12 gauge double barreled shotguns be used.

Semi-automatic shotguns and pump shotguns are prohibited. Safe gunning practices must be adhered to at all times.

In the Master Hunting Test and the Senior Water Test, the handler must carry an empty shotgun. If the shotgun being carried is functional, it must be a breaking type shotgun; if the handler's shotgun is non-functional, it may be of any type. Whether on land or water in Master test or water in Senior test, 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. Handlers must follow safe gun handling practices at all times. Failure to handle the gun as previously described during a land flush or at the water, or handling the gun in an unsafe manner must be severely penalized, even to the point of disqualification under trained abilities.

Handlers at the Junior level are not to be required to handle a gun at any time during any part of the testing. Handlers in the Senior land test are not required to handle a gun.

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 if functional is unloaded.

There shall be no more than two Official Guns per dog in any testing category, and Judges shall have complete authority over the gunners and all shooting. The Guns represent the handler and must attempt to follow the handler's movements. All gunners must be 21 years of age or older. The AKC recommends that all gunners wear hearing and eye protection.

The Judges determine the positioning of the gunners, keeping them close enough to the handler so that they are not used by the dog as a quartering guide.

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 work or that of the working dog. They are, if possible, or unless otherwise directed, to down cleanly and consistently the game flushed by the Spaniels, 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.

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 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 Hunting 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 talks to the Judges while a dog is working. The Marshal shall also advise the handlers and Judges as to the boundaries of the course.

The Marshal has the authority to control the

gallery and may excuse anyone who does not comply with his or her instructions.

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. Scorecards.** The Hunting Test Committee shall supply each Judge with a scorecard for every dog entered under that Judge.

When the Judges' scorecards are not in agreement on the score of one or more abilities, the Judges may average the scores that are not in agreement. However, both Judges must agree on which dogs will qualify and which dogs will not qualify. In the event of a disagreement, the dog cannot receive a Qualifying score.

The scorecards shall be available for owner/handler inspection at the conclusion of the test level.

**Section 8. Weather.** Weather is an important consideration for the hunting test event committee. The safety of participants and animals is of utmost importance. Extreme weather such as lightening, strong winds, heat or cold, snow or heavy rain can create hazardous conditions. The hunting test event committee, in consultation with the judges, has the responsibility to decide if an event should be halted due to weather and at what point the event shall resume.

If a weather delay results in an entrant being unable to participate, the refund of entry fees, in whole or in part, will be at the discretion of the event committee.

If an entire event or part of an event is cancelled due to weather, the refund of entry fees, in whole or in part, will be at the discretion of the event committee.

**Section 9. Sanctioned Hunting Tests.** In sanctioned Hunting Tests, any Sections of these Regulations except those pertaining to guns and gun safety may be relaxed or eliminated, but all entrants should be advised in what respects this is true.

## Chapter 4

### Standards of Performance

**Section 1. Junior Hunting Test.** A Junior hunting dog must show a desire to hunt in an

enthusiastic manner and an ability to flush and to retrieve. It is not necessary that a dog be steady to wing and shot. The dog should show no fear of cover, a reasonable response to commands (whistle, hand, or verbal), and maintain a reasonable working distance from its handler. A junior hunting dog must retrieve a bird from water.

Junior hunting dogs should complete their retrieves to close proximity of handler, but need not retrieve completely to hand. Handlers may control their dogs by hand, whistle, and/or verbal signals but only in the quiet manner that would be used in the field.

A Junior hunting dog may be restrained gently on the line at water.

**Section 2. Senior Hunting Dog.** A Senior hunting dog must show all of the attributes of a Junior hunting dog. In addition the dog must show true boldness to cover, a pattern addressing the course objectives and an intense desire to hunt. A proper working distance and independent hunting sense must be maintained. The dog need not be steady to wing and shot on land but should not show uncontrollable chasing in a missed bird situation. It must retrieve eagerly to hand. A senior hunting dog must retrieve a bird from water and exhibit the ability to "hunt dead" on a blind retrieve. The dog must be linesteady at water.

**Section 3. Master Hunting Dog.** A Master hunting dog must show all of the attributes of Senior hunting dogs, but must also give a finished performance and demonstrate clearly that it deserves to be qualified as such. It must be under the handler's control at all times, and must handle kindly, with an absolute minimum of noise and hacking by the handler. A Master hunting dog must show a keen enthusiasm to hunt, must have a bold and attractive manner of running, and must demonstrate not only intelligence in seeking objectives, but also excellent ability to find game. The dog must hunt for its handler at all times at a suitable gun range, showing a fine Spaniel pattern and experienced hunting independence. The dog must locate game, flush well and must be absolutely steady to wing and shot without excessive handling in both land and water testing. A Master dog may show steadiness to wing and shot by response to a whistle or verbal command provided that neither is excessive. Intelligent use of the wind and terrain

in locating game, accurate nose, and intensity are essential. After the shot, a Master hunting dog must positively demonstrate its steadiness to wing and shot. The handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated. A master hunter must retrieve a bird from water plus demonstrate its ability to perform a blind water retrieve.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Test Requirements and Instructions for Judges**

The evaluation of a dog's abilities can never be precise; it is not an exact science. However, the primary purpose of the flushing breeds is to hunt, find, flush and return birds to hand as quickly as possible in a pleasing and obedient 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.

Judges must keep in mind the fact that they are evaluating numerically, a defined set of 5 categories of hunting ability in Junior, Senior and Master 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 4.

The Judge observes and records in what respects and to what degrees 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 must assign a numerical score from "0" to "10" that reflects their estimation of each hunting ability that they have seen demonstrated.

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. In the event of a disagreement, the dog cannot receive a Qualifying score.

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 AKC recognition of those abilities by the awarding of Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter or Master Hunter titles.

**Section 1. Judging Categories.** In evaluating the abilities of a dog, the Judges shall assign a numerical score from “0” to “10” in each of the following categories where ability has been exhibited:

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

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

3. Flushing Ability (produces birds with the appropriate hunting style).

4. Trained Abilities (which include range, pattern, gun response, response to commands).

5. Retrieving Ability (which includes marking, enthusiasm and mouth).

The Judges of any Hunting Test shall not rank dogs in the order of the dog’s 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 at less than 5, according to the severity of the trait(s): failure to find birds (Bird Finding Ability); blinking (Bird Finding Ability); refusal to flush (Flushing Ability); viciousness, gunshyness, out of control (Trained Abilities); hard mouth, refused retrieve (Retrieving Ability).

*Blinking is described as locating but avoiding or ignoring a bird.*

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

*Hard mouth is described as rendering game unfit for consumption.*

**Section 2. Disqualification by Judges.** If a dog, while under judgement at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting 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 AKC in accord with Chapter 1, Section 4 of these Regulations.

**Section 3.** 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 4.** In any Test level, at the handler's option, a dog may be run with a flat collar only. Special Training devices that are used to control and train dogs, including but not limited to, collars with prongs, electronic collars used with transmitters, muzzles, vests of any kind, and head collars may not be used on dogs at AKC events.

**Section 5.** The primary consideration is that the flush should produce birds for the gun. Spaniels have a broad range of hunting styles. The flush should be in accordance with the breed's overall hunting style. Each type of flush is of equal value provided that it is consistent with the breed's overall hunting style description (see Judges' Responsibility, Chapter 1, Section 7).

Passed birds are not grounds for scores of 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) and, except further, unless the dog is obviously avoiding or ignoring game (Bird Finding Ability).

Trailing, judged under Bird Finding Ability, should be judged at all levels whenever the opportunity occurs. In Master, when a dog is trailing a bird, the handler must be able to stop the dog before it trails it out of gun range. Failure to stop the dog will result in a lower score.

**Section 6.** Nothing shall be thrown in any Hunting Test (Junior, Senior, and Master) 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 Qualifying score.

**Section 7. Live Flyers.** At Junior and Senior levels, after demonstrating the ability to find and flush, if a bird cannot be shot after the flush, a live bird should be thrown and shot at an appropriate

distance to demonstrate marking and retrieving ability. At the Master level, after demonstrating steadiness to flush and shot, if a bird is unable to be shot or is missed, a live bird should be thrown and shot to demonstrate marking and retrieving ability. *If a dog has flushed two birds but cannot make a retrieve because birds could not be shot, the Judges should direct that a live bird be thrown and shot at an appropriate distance for the dog to make a retrieve. In this situation, only one retrieve is necessary; the dog is scored on how it retrieves that bird.*

Live fliers are permitted in all water testing. Fresh (recently killed) birds may be used for each retrieve from water.

**Section 8.** Until called to be tested, a dog must be kept where it cannot see a water retrieve, a hunt dead, or the planting or retrieve of a blind.

**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. Junior Test Elements.** The Junior hunting dog must find, flush, and have an opportunity to retrieve two birds on land. In addition, one bird must be retrieved from water with a shot fired. The retrieve should not normally exceed a distance of twenty-five yards nor should it be shortened by more than five yards. Distances over water should not exceed those normally encountered in hunting.

A Junior hunting dog may be restrained gently on the line at water.

*NOTE: for the following Sections 11 and 12, refer to Chapter 3, Section 5, third and fourth paragraphs for the requirement that handlers must carry and shoulder an empty shotgun.*

**Section 11. Senior Test Elements.** A Senior hunting dog must find, flush and retrieve two birds to hand on land. In addition the dog must be line-steady at water and retrieve one bird to hand from water with a shot fired. The retrieve should not normally exceed a distance of thirty-five yards nor should it be shortened by more than five yards. (Distances over water should not exceed those normally encountered in hunting.) A Senior hunting dog must also exhibit the ability to complete a "hunt dead" situation on land.

## Description of “**Hunt Dead**” Test

*“**Hunt dead**” is described as a situation in which a dead bird, unseen to the dog, lies in the general area of the hunter/handler who does not know the exact location of the bird, and wants the dog to hunt the area carefully and thoroughly in order to retrieve the bird. A shot is not fired in hunt dead situations.*

*The hunt dead situation may be set up to run on course or it may be run separately. Markers, including flags, ribbons, tape, etc., shall not be used to indicate the location of the bird.*

## Judging Criteria for Senior Hunt Dead Test

- Distance should be 35-40 yards.
- After the handler casts the dog, the handler may assist the dog by moving forward up to one-half the distance to the objective.
- Casting the dog must be done in a quiet manner.
- Dogs may be handled. Excessive noise shall be interpreted as lack of trainability.
- Dogs that require a “recast” as defined in the “Guidelines for Spaniel Hunting Tests,” Part IV (B) shall not receive a qualifying score.
- A dog that takes the most direct line to the general area of the fallen bird shall be scored the highest.
- A senior Hunting dog should require no more than 5 minutes to find the bird and return it to hand.

**Section 12. Master Test Elements.** A Master hunting dog must find, flush and retrieve two birds to hand on land; it must be line-steady at water and retrieve one bird to hand from water with a shot fired. The distance should be at least forty yards but should not normally exceed forty-five yards.

In addition, a Master hunting dog must be tested on a water blind (a shot is not fired). The “water blind” in the Master is defined as a test designed to exhibit a dog’s ability to take not only a line across a body of water but also to take direction at a long distance across a body of water. Further, a dog that obediently stops on command then looks back and takes direction from the handler should be scored highly as this is the intent of this test. The water blind should not normally exceed forty yards but shall be at least thirty yards in distance.

The Master dog must also exhibit the ability to

“hunt dead” on land. See Section 11 for description of “Hunt Dead” test.

### **Judging Criteria for Master Hunt Dead Test**

- Distance should be 55-60 yards.
- The Master Hunting Dog in the “hunt dead” test is expected to demonstrate a truly polished and finished performance. Accordingly, the highest score in trained abilities is earned when the handler does not assist the dog by moving in the direction of the bird. If necessary, the handler may move forward, but the dog’s score will be lowered in proportion to the distance moved toward the bird. If the handler is required to move further than one-half the distance to the bird, the dog shall receive a score of zero.
- Casting the dog must be done in a quiet manner.
- Dogs may be handled. Excessive noise shall be interpreted as lack of trainability.
- Dogs that require a “recast” as defined in the “Guidelines for Spaniel Hunting Tests,” Part IV (B) shall not receive a qualifying score.
- A dog that takes the most direct line to the general area of the fallen bird shall be scored the highest.
- A Master Hunting dog should require no more than 5 minutes to find the bird and return it to hand.

A Master hunting dog must positively demonstrate its steadiness to wing and shot, and the handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated.

Distances should not exceed those normally encountered in hunting.

## **Guidelines for Spaniel**

### **Hunting Tests**

#### **Part I**

#### **Introduction**

These Guidelines are a supplement to the Regulations and are intended to insure consistency in conducting and judging these events and to provide basic guidance to handlers.

Questions on Regulations, procedures and performance standards always arise, but for tests

to be consistent there must be a high degree of uniformity in how the Regulations and Standards are viewed. This Guide was prepared to provide a clear understanding of the Regulations, performance standards and the procedures necessary for conducting successful events.

### **Purpose:**

A number of hunting breeds have been developed to hunt, find game, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and efficient manner. The objective of the hunting test program is to help the hunter develop a useful hunting companion by providing a means to gauge a dog's abilities against three standards of accomplishment—Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter.

The procedures for running a hunting test are contained in the Regulations. Committees are responsible for providing sufficient help to conduct good events, securing good grounds of sufficient size and cover, obtaining healthy flying birds, and securing experienced, safe gunners. The Committee is also responsible for selecting knowledgeable Judges who are thoroughly familiar with the Regulations.

All of these elements form the basic groundwork for a successful event. Attention to these important details insures the long-term integrity of the program.

## **Part II**

### **Committee Responsibilities**

#### **Judges' Responsibilities:**

For tests and titles to be meaningful, Judges cannot be overly lenient or overly severe. In arriving at any decision, the Judges must always be fair to the dogs, the handlers and the sport.

Always remember the difference between a test and a trial. In tests, a dog's performance is evaluated against a standard, without competition—placements are not awarded—to determine if it qualifies (meets the standard). In a trial, a dog's performance is evaluated against a standard, and compared with the performances of other dogs in competition for placements.

Judges must also remember that various flushing breeds perform differently. Some breeds are not as large and fast as others, but they were developed

for the same purpose—to find, flush and retrieve birds. The manner in which they do it varies, but a dog's performance must meet the standard to qualify. Some breeds may not cover as much ground as rapidly as others but they must find, flush and retrieve birds and do so in a pleasing and efficient manner. Regardless of the breed, a useful hunting pattern is still a useful hunting pattern. The key is efficient accomplishment . . . a dog must perform efficiently for the handler in covering ground, finding, flushing and retrieving game. Judges must be familiar with each breed's overall hunting style description and judge in accordance with such description.

Judges must be professional and impartial, and remember that the future of the breed lies in their hands. If they are overly lenient, they will destroy the integrity of the program. Overly severe evaluations will discourage people from entering their dogs. In either case, they do a disservice to Spaniels.

The Judges and the Committees must work in harmony. The Committee is responsible for laying out the course, and the Judges are responsible for evaluating the dogs on that course. The Judges control everything on the course from the time a dog comes to the line until it leaves the course.

The Committee is responsible for all test elements and has the authority to decide all matters, except those under the Judges' jurisdiction. The Judges have jurisdiction over the testing and scoring from the time a dog is put down until it is picked up, unless a situation occurs that requires Committee action.

Dogs are worked singly in tests, as opposed to two at a time in trials. The Judges and/or the Committee may authorize dogs to be run in an order different from the drawn order when the result is a reasonable and desirable saving of time. However, Judges should generally refrain from this unless some unusual situation threatens scheduled completion of the event.

At the conclusion of judging, each Judge must sign a certification stating that the awards shown in the catalog are correct. The catalog becomes a part of AKC's official records and the Judges' signatures attest that the qualifying dogs performed in accord with the standards.

Sound judgment and common sense are excellent tools for judging and running a hunting test.

Remember, the purpose of testing is to evaluate the abilities of flushing dogs to determine their suitability and ability as hunting companions. Judges and officials have certain latitude to allow for variations, but tests must simulate hunting conditions. Hunting tests must never be so formalized or overly demanding that they represent other than normal conditions; neither should they be so loosely structured or relaxed in judging that they become meaningless.

### **Part III**

#### **Standards of Performance**

##### **Test Element Requirements**

###### **A. Standards of Performance & Test Elements:**

The standards of performance describe the expected performance of a dog at the three levels—Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter.

###### **1. Junior Hunter Standard:**

The first part of the Junior Hunter standard states:

“A Junior hunting dog must show a desire to hunt in an enthusiastic manner and the ability to retrieve. It is not necessary that a dog be steady to wing and shot. The dog should show no fear of cover, a reasonable response to commands (whistle, hand or verbal) and maintain a reasonable working distance from its handler.”

The Junior dog must hunt enthusiastically and retrieve, but it need not be steady to wing and shot. It should show no fear in questing or entering cover and must be under reasonable control. It must also work at a reasonable distance from its handler—neither too close (which is dangerous, inefficient and results in short retrieves), nor too far (which presents difficulty for gunners in bringing down birds).

The Junior standard also states:

“Junior hunting dogs should complete their retrieves to close proximity of the handler, but need not retrieve completely to hand. Handlers may control their dogs by hand, whistle and/or verbal signals but only in the quiet manner that would be used in the field.”

A dog should return the bird to within “close proximity”—generally within two steps of the

handler. Excessive yelling, signaling or whistling should be reflected in the Trained Abilities score, by scoring a 5 or less, if warranted.

Finally, the standard states that the Junior, “. . . may be restrained gently on the line at water.”

A dog can be held with a lead or a finger under the collar as long as it is not leaping into the air and/or pulling strenuously against the handler. If a dog is fighting to get to the bird to the extent that the handler has to forcefully hold it, the Trained Abilities category should be scored less than 5.

The Junior category is not based on age, but is merely a level of experience. Dogs of any age (provided they are six months or older) may participate in Junior.

### Junior Test Elements:

Junior dogs must find, flush and have an opportunity to retrieve two birds on land. Generally, not more than ten minutes should be required to find birds.

A third bird must be retrieved from water at a distance of 20-25 yards with a shot fired. Twenty yards is the minimum distance, but distances over water should never exceed those normally encountered in hunting.

### 2. Senior Hunting Dog:

The Senior hunting dog standard states that the Senior must:

“. . . show all the attributes of a Junior hunting dog. In addition, a dog must show true boldness to cover, a pattern addressing the course objectives and an intense desire to hunt. A proper working distance and independent hunting sense must be maintained.”

Juniors may be a little less systematic in covering ground but the Seniors must exhibit a pattern addressing the objectives—places where birds are likely to be. The pattern should be distinct—a dog should thoroughly hunt the cover, at a brisk pace, without unnecessarily covering ground twice. Remember that wind plays an important role in how deeply the dog extends or comes back on a cast.

Seniors should not be afraid to enter cover and should hit the spots likely to hold birds regardless of how difficult. It must also maintain the proper

working distance, far enough out to find birds for the hunter, and not the other way around. "Independent hunting sense" means that the dog should not constantly look to the handler for directions and not give the appearance of being led to the birds; the hunter would have no precise idea where birds are.

The Senior standard continues:

"The dog need not be steady to wing and shot on land, but should not show uncontrollable chasing in a missed bird situation."

If a dog chases a bird that was missed or flushes wild, the handler should be able to recall the dog within a reasonable amount of time, with a reasonable amount of persuasion. If it takes a long time to get the dog back, or requires excessive yelling or whistling, or if the handler has to go after the dog, it should be scored with much less tolerance than a Junior, to the point of scoring Trained Abilities less than 5.

The Senior standard concludes by stating that:

"The dog must be line steady at water, must retrieve eagerly to hand, and exhibit the ability to 'hunt dead' on a blind retrieve."

When a dog is brought to the line for a water retrieve, it must remain steady without any physical or excessive verbal restraint. When sent to retrieve, it must enter the water eagerly, swim to the bird and retrieve to hand without constantly stopping and dropping the bird.

The Senior standard also intends that all birds, whether on land or water, must be retrieved to hand.

### Senior Test Elements:

A Senior hunting dog must find, flush and retrieve two birds to hand on land. As in the Junior, not more than ten minutes should be required to find birds.

A dog must also be line steady at water and retrieve one bird to hand from water with a shot fired at a distance which should not normally exceed thirty-five yards but no less than thirty yards. A Senior dog must also complete a "hunt dead" on land at a distance that does not normally exceed forty yards but is at least thirty-five yards.

In the hunt dead test, a dead bird is placed in cover at a spot unseen to the dog and handler. No shot is fired to alert the dog to the location. This

can be described as a situation where another hunter at a distance has a bird down (unseen to your dog) at a distance of approximately thirty-five to forty yards, and needs your dog to find it. You send your dog into the general vicinity of the downed bird, but cannot direct the dog to the bird because you do not know exactly where it is.

Before running this test, dogs must be kept where they cannot see the bird being planted. The Judge instructs the handler to send the dog to the area of the downed bird to hunt for and retrieve the bird. The dog works the area for a reasonable time, finds and returns the bird to hand. Generally, it should not require more than five minutes for a dog to complete this test.

Judges may elect to have bird planter(s) place multiple dead birds at suitable distances from one another. In this way, a dog could work one area for the first bird, the next dog could work another area, and so forth, without waiting for individual birds to be planted.

The distances are minimal distances, but should never exceed distances normally encountered in hunting.

### 3. Master Hunting Dog:

The Master standard states that a dog:

“. . . must show all of the attributes of Senior hunting dogs, but must also give a finished performance and demonstrate clearly that it deserves to be qualified as such. It must be under the handler's control at all times, and must handle kindly with an absolute minimum of noise and hacking by the handler.”

This means the Master hunting dog must give a truly polished and finished performance. While allowances for less than polished performances can be made in Junior and Senior, real perfection is expected in Master. The Master must always be under the handler's control and must handle kindly, with only the quiet commands and signals that would be used when hunting.

The Master standard also calls for:

“. . . a keen enthusiasm to hunt . . . a bold and attractive manner of running and . . . not only intelligence in seeking objectives, but

also excellent ability to find game.”

Judges must determine if the dog is systematically hunting the objectives, using intelligence and the wind in seeking game and proving its ability by actually finding and flushing birds. The dog should be able to find a bird in a relatively short period of time, if it is productively and efficiently covering ground.

The Master standard continues:

“The dog must hunt for its handler at all times at a suitable gun range, showing a logical pattern and experienced hunting independence.”

A Master dog must never be underfoot and seeking directions from its handler, unless it runs into a situation where conditions require it to seek direction.

“Suitable gun range” means that dogs should never be further from the handler than effective and normal shotgun range, about 30 to 40 yards. Occasionally a dog may be slightly farther out, but this is generally due to large expanses of bare ground or when a dog is in pursuit of a running bird. However, the dog should never show uncontrolled chasing on any bird.

The Master standard concludes:

“The dog must locate game, flush well and must be absolutely steady to wing and shot without excessive handling in both land and water testing. Intelligent use of the wind and terrain in locating game, accurate nose and intensity are essential. After the shot, a Master hunting dog must positively demonstrate its steadiness to wing and shot. The handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated.”

The Master dog must exhibit manners; if a dog has to be excessively restrained or controlled by verbal commands or whistling, this must be reflected in its Trained Abilities score, to the point of scoring that category less than 5.

The standard states that the handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated. The dog should not be sent until the bird has hit the ground. The Judges should pause slightly after the bird has hit

the ground, before ordering the handler to send the dog to retrieve. The handler should never hesitate more than briefly when ordered to send the dog because this makes it more difficult for the dog to remember the location of the bird. It also creates complications if the bird is wounded and moving. It can also result in a lowered score.

#### Master Test Elements:

A Master hunting dog must find, flush and retrieve two birds to hand on land. As in Junior and Senior, not more than ten minutes should be required to find birds.

It must also be line steady at water and retrieve one bird to hand from water at a distance which should not normally exceed forty-five yards but is at least forty yards.

A Master hunting dog must also be tested on a blind water retrieve (a shot is not fired) at a distance of approximately 30 to 40 yards, and must also "hunt dead" on land at a distance of approximately 55 to 60 yards, which should be completed in no more than about five minutes. A Master dog must be steady to wing and shot, and is never sent to retrieve until steadiness is demonstrated. In the blind water retrieve, the bird and the bird thrower should not be visible to the dog. Dogs can be handled on blinds.

The distances given are either minimal or approximate, but distances should never exceed normal hunting distances.

#### B. Additional Judging Considerations:

##### 1. Water Retrieves:

When encountering a shot bird on water, the Spaniel must make the retrieve. The dog must enter the water to retrieve the bird and may be cast from any appropriate position, most often at the water's edge. During marked water retrieves, a shot must be fired by a winger, blank pistol or a shotgun firing a popper load.

Whenever possible, tests should be laid out to avoid bank running and to avoid an angle entry into the water. Water entry should be perpendicular.

Water retrieves should be laid out to simulate normal hunting conditions. Perfect entries and line of swim are not required as long as the dog efficiently retrieves the bird. Dogs must enter the

water and should return through the water.

Unnecessary coaxing to make the dog enter the water should be scored low in Trained Abilities. Master dogs must be scored with greater stringency than Seniors and Juniors.

## 2. Casting On The Hunt Dead And On The Water:

Casting a dog for a hunt dead bird or for a bird in the water must be done in a quiet manner that would not disturb the day's hunt. Excessive coaxing in the Master Level should not be tolerated. Senior should be scored with more tolerance than the Master.

## 3. Handler Noise:

In all hunting situations, it is preferable to have little or no noise from the handler. As a dog advances from Junior, to Senior to Master, less noise is expected at each level. However, it should be remembered that hunting tests are a simulation of hunting, and some noise is part of that. It is nice to have your dog "hup" on no whistle or on one whistle, but we should never get to the point of saying, "One whistle is okay, but two whistles and you fail."

Excessive noise, whether by voice or by whistle, on the part of the handler shall be interpreted as lack of trainability on the part of the dog and should be penalized in direct relation to the extent of the offense.

Judges should caution handlers that excessive and/or noisy handling is unacceptable. Master dogs must be severely penalized, but more tolerance should be shown with Seniors and Juniors.

## 4. Trailing:

The Regulations state that trailing should be judged at all levels whenever the opportunity occurs. Judging trailing should be based upon the speed and style of trailing—generally, a determined and direct method being ideal. Handlers, gunners and Judges should walk quickly after the trailing dog and should never run.

Senior and Junior dogs that trail and flush out of gun range should not be penalized so as to receive a failing score. However, both Senior and Junior dogs should be scored on Hunting Ability, Bird Finding Ability and Flushing Ability. In Master, the handler must be able to stop the dog before it trails the bird out of gun range.

#### 5. Flushed Birds/Trapped Birds:

Senior and Master dogs must flush and retrieve two (2) birds to hand. The degree of tolerance in scoring is lower for Senior and Master than Junior.

Birds are considered flushed when they take wing. Trapped birds are not considered flushed birds. If conditions are poor or extreme (rain, snow), at the Judges' discretion, one flush and retrieve could be sufficient.

#### 6. Master Water Blind:

The Master water blind should be set up so that the bird is not visible (laying in open water) to the dog and handler at a distance of 30-40 yards. The dog must have no idea where the bird is, and water entry should be as nearly perpendicular as possible. The water blind should be completed in no more than five minutes.

#### 7. Pick Up Dogs:

It is generally recommended that a pick-up dog be available to retrieve birds that are not returned by participating dogs. The pick-up dog must be able to make blind retrieves.

#### 8. Planting Birds/Cover:

Where possible in Master, at least one bird should be planted in heavy/rough cover so the dog's willingness and ability to flush in accordance with the breed's overall "hunting style description" can be tested. The degree of difficulty can be lessened, working down to the Junior dog, but all levels should have some challenging cover.

Dogs that repeatedly avoid and skirt heavy cover should receive a low score in Hunting Ability.

#### 9. Retrieving:

Senior and Master dogs should be sent on all reasonable retrieves as long as they are safe (no fences, roads, etc.). On long falls (over 80 yards), the handler can, after sending the dog, move up to within reasonable proximity of the fall to help the dog with signals. Handling is permissible.

Master dogs must handle quickly and quietly and must respond to the handler's directions. Senior dogs must be scored with more tolerance.

Senior and Master dogs that refuse to retrieve cannot receive a qualifying score unless some mitigating circumstances exist.

## Part IV

### Scoring

#### A. The Basics of Scoring:

Some of the most frequently asked questions about judging concern scoring. To qualify, a dog must receive an overall average of seven for the entire test with no score in any one ability category below five. For example, a Junior dog could score perfect 10's in four categories and fail to qualify if a score in the remaining category was below five.

Another frequently asked question is how do you determine what score from 0 to 10 you should give in any one category. One method is to determine whether you think the dog should qualify in that category, which means a minimum score of at least five. The Judge then determines whether the ability falls short of or exceeds five, progressing toward a perfect ten. Knowing the dog must have an average of seven, the Judge considers whether it earned a seven or higher. With a five, the dog would have to make up the average of seven by scoring higher than seven in other categories.

Scores could also be compared to grades received in school. In that instance, a seven would be comparable to a passing grade of "C." An eight would be a "B," a nine would be an "A" and a ten would be an "A+."

A zero means that the dog did not perform even minimally in an ability category. If a dog found no birds, it would be difficult to assign a score, other than zero, in Bird Finding Ability. It must be clearly understood that a dog cannot be called back to find birds after it has run and not found birds, unless some very unusual circumstance occurred (i.e. birds weren't planted, or, due to a delay, planted birds left the course).

If a dog fails to qualify in a particular ability, it is important to score as accurately as possible in all other abilities to provide the handler with information to plan future training.

Judges should never artificially elevate any scores just to enable a dog to qualify. However, scoring is highly subjective and there will be some circumstances under which a given score might be raised or lowered.

When some aspect of an ability is viewed differently, or when Judges cannot agree on a

specific numerical value, they can compromise by averaging their scores. However, the Judges must always concur on whether or not a dog qualifies regardless of how they arrive at their final scores. If they cannot agree, the dog cannot receive a qualifying score. Good communication, reason and compromise, when necessary, are the keys to successful judging. With this in mind, Judges should never face a situation where they are unable to arrive at a conclusion.

Scorecards should also be available for owner/handler inspection at the completion of the test level.

#### B. Ability Categories, Disqualifying Traits:

The Regulations state, “The evaluation of a dog’s abilities can never be precise; it is not an exact science.” However, keeping in mind that the purpose of a flushing dog is to hunt, find, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and obedient manner, it is a relatively simple process to assign a numerical score that reflects an estimation of how well or how poorly a given ability meets the performance standard. The ability categories are:

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

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

3. Flushing Ability (produces birds with the appropriate hunting style).

4. Trained Abilities (which includes range, pattern, gun response, response to commands).

5. Retrieving Abilities (which includes marking, enthusiasm and mouth).

Aside from instances when a dog displays a complete absence of a given ability, there are certain specific traits or behaviors that automatically result in a non-qualifying score. These traits or behaviors call for a score of “0” on the indicated ability, and are categorized as follows:

**Blinking** is defined as locating but avoiding or ignoring a bird. Dogs that blink birds are scored “0” in Bird Finding Ability.

**Failure to Find Birds.** Dogs at all levels must find birds. Failure to find birds requires a “0” in Bird Finding Ability.

**Refusal to Flush** is evidenced when a dog indicates the presence of game but shows great hesitation, reluctance or refusal to put a bird into flight. It is grounds for scoring Flushing Ability as a "0."

**Recast.** A recast occurs when a dog is sent to make a retrieve, but stops within a short distance of the castaway point or goes to the area of the downed bird and then returns or is recalled to the handler's side. The dog is then realigned and sent again to make the retrieve.

Senior dogs requiring a recast on the execution of the hunt dead, or Master dogs requiring a recast on either the water mark, hunt dead or the water blind shall not receive a qualifying score.

**Viciousness, gun-shyness and out of control** are taken together as they all have a bearing on the Trained Abilities score. These are obvious behaviors that should result in a "0" score. Note also that if a dog, while under judgment, attacks another dog, the offending dog must be reported to AKC (Chapter 5, Section 2). See also the third paragraph of Chapter 1, Section 4 under which dogs become permanently ineligible for entry if they are the subject of two "attack" reports.

**Hard Mouth** is reflected in a dog's Retrieving Ability score, and is described as rendering game unfit for consumption. It is sufficient grounds to score that 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 hardmouth, and the only such proof, in the absence of obvious, flagrant, and unjustified tearing of flesh.

Other behaviors are frequently confused with hardmouth, although they are entirely separate and distinct from it, even though the dog may actually be hardmouthed. A hardmouthed dog may have a gentle delivery. A reluctant or "sticky" delivery does not necessarily imply hardmouth. Rolling a bird

or mouthing it, while making the retrieve, may be erroneously associated with hardmouth even though the bird may not be damaged. Such mouthing does not necessarily call for lowering a Retrieving Ability score.

Judges should remember that a dog either does or does not have a hardmouth, and, if it does, its Retrieving Ability is scored “0,” and the dog cannot qualify.

**Refused Retrieve** is described as a retrieve that does not produce a bird to hand (in Senior and Master) or to close proximity of the handler (in Junior). Retrieves should not require extensive and continual coaxing or take so long that it would be easier for the handler to get the bird. Refused retrieves are grounds for scoring Retrieving Ability as a “0.”

### C. General Considerations:

The Regulations state that the primary consideration is that the flush should produce birds for the gunner. The various Spaniel breeds have a broad range of hunting styles. Each type of flush is of equal value provided that it is consistent and in accordance with the breed’s overall “hunting style description.”

Passing a bird is generally not sufficient cause to score Bird Finding at less than five, unless the behavior is repeated or if the dog is perceived to be blinking. In these cases, the Judges most likely would score this ability less than five. If a dog is leaving a lot of birds on the course (it should be finding them), the Judges should lower substantially the Bird Finding Ability score even to the point of not awarding a qualifying score.

When dogs take an overly long time to find birds, it should also be reflected in a lowered Bird Finding score. When the Judges know there are birds on the course, a dog that doesn’t find birds should not be tested longer than ten minutes. Remember, a dog must find birds; almost any dog, given enough time, will stumble over a bird.

The Regulations do not permit a Judge to handle a dog in another testing level unless there is no interference with the judging assignment. To do otherwise taxes the mechanics for the host club and is unfair to entrants.

The Regulations state that the Flushing Spaniel

should be rated highest in accordance with the breed's overall "hunting style description". Depending on the test level, dogs that play around the edge of the bird without attempting to get it into the air, should be scored low in Flushing ability, even to the point of scoring "0" for refusal to flush.

Dogs are not scored on birds that inadvertently flushed, except after the flush (Trained Abilities—for its control and response to commands) and, except further, unless the dog obviously avoids or ignores birds (Bird Finding Ability).

It is improper in any hunting test for the Judges to throw or permit a participant to throw an object to encourage a dog to enter the water, or direct a dog to a fall. Violation of this provision is considered sufficient cause for the dog not to qualify.

## Part V

### Critical Elements

Three important elements are critical to the success of any hunting test. They are:

1) Good courses on which to test the dogs; 2) healthy birds that are properly planted and will fly well and 3) safe, effective gunners.

#### 1. Courses:

The Committee selects the grounds, but the ability to test dogs fairly depends on utilization of the grounds. Judges should inspect the courses before the event and request modification only if the grounds can be used more efficiently. Never make arbitrary changes and be discreet in suggesting realignment. Most often the Committee has laid out the best course, but when it comes to actual use, the Judges may see better alternatives.

Courses should be fairly level or moderately undulating, but small hills and valleys can also be useful. Cover should be natural, but the Judges should be able to see the dogs most of the time. Judges can't judge what they can't see.

Sometimes courses will run between high hedgerows. Then, Judges must determine whether impenetrable cover will cause an unfair hardship since it creates doubt about whether and where a bird fell. When hunting, a dog would be sent to retrieve if there were a chance to return the bird. If a dog is sent to retrieve in an unusually difficult situation, and does not complete the retrieve, Judges

should, in fairness to the dog, provide another more suitable retrieving opportunity.

Cover will not always be ideal; in fact, the ideal may be very rare. Look for the best possible layout, using what is available, including switch-backs on the course while utilizing terrain and cover as naturally as possible.

The ideal course would have a lot of natural cover to hold birds, and extend about 200 to 400 yards. A “U” turn at the end can join an adjacent parallel course. Flags may be planted on the edges of the course to define the hunting area, but they are not mandatory.

When the grounds allow this technique, a typical scenario would look like this: Bird planters with walkie-talkies (to keep in touch with the Judges’ Marshal) proceed on foot, well ahead of the dogs and well beyond shotgun range, and work to the end of the course. They move on to the next course and work ahead at least another 50 to 60 yards and continue in the same manner until they come back near the original start.

The handler and gunners follow the bird planters with the Judges immediately behind. Following the Judges come the Marshal and a bird steward to dispose of birds. Behind the Marshal is the gallery. The Marshal is responsible for controlling gallery movement and noise and is authorized to excuse anyone who does not follow instructions. Galleries should always be permitted on course unless prohibited by limited expanses of land or unsafe conditions.

Behind or in the gallery is the next dog or dogs to be tested. The Marshal—when notified by the Judges that they have completed testing a dog—calls for the next dog to come to the line. The Marshal also calls the next dog to the gallery to be available when needed. At the Judges’ signal, the dog to be tested is cast to hunt the course.

This type of course is not always available, but Committees have to make the best possible use of available grounds, and Judges determine how best to evaluate the dogs on those grounds. Pre-planning by the Judges is essential to providing the best possible test with the available facilities.

## 2. Birds:

### A. Quality, Health and Care:

Chapter 3, Section 3, of the Regulations cites the species of birds to be used, and contains additional provisions pertinent to use and care of birds.

While pigeons are permitted in Junior tests, clubs should use pheasants, chukars or partridge. While pigeons are inexpensive, they are erratic flyers and difficult and dangerous to shoot. Game birds occasionally are in short supply but every effort should be made to use upland game birds.

Good quality, healthy birds are an important element of hunting tests. Spaniels must flush the bird into flight. A healthy bird that will fly when flushed is essential for proper evaluation of this important trait. Unhealthy birds are difficult to flush, and will be “trapped” (picked up) by the dogs. They are also costly, monetarily, and in time spent attempting to flush them.

Committees should buy healthy birds, in advance, so that they are on hand for the test. Clubs must also appoint one or more Bird Stewards charged with the care of all birds, including watering, feeding and proper disposal. Birds should be kept in crates large enough for them to stand without being too closely confined. Place them in a well-ventilated area, out of the sun and heat in summer, and in a sheltered place in colder weather.

The Bird Steward must also care for dead birds, which will be used for hunt dead tests, water series, etc. Dead birds on the grounds are unsightly, draw flies and are offensive. They should be kept in cooling containers—out of sight—to keep for later use, either in the tests, or as food.

#### B. Bird Planting:

Bird planters must be knowledgeable about planting birds, and should learn by assisting experienced bird planters. If the club does not have experienced planters, members should observe other events where birds are properly planted.

The bird has to be put in place quietly, without rocking it, so that it is not injured or too stunned to fly when the dog flushes it. When flushed, they should fly before being caught by the dog. In wet weather, it is more difficult to get a bird to fly, so obtaining healthy birds is all the more important.

Birds should never be severely rocked or shaken. The best way to plant a bird is to hold it by the back with the wings folded, stretch out its legs and place the head under the wing, lay it on its side in

the cover and walk away. They should be placed in the most likely cover for finding them under natural hunting conditions.

Dogs in all test levels are required to find and flush a minimum of two birds. In fairness to the dogs, clubs should always plant more than two.

Some courses will not lend themselves to having the bird planters work very far in front of the handlers. In those cases they might plant birds however far they can, withdraw to a safe position until the gallery passes, and then move in and plant other birds. Alternatively, they can plant birds at a short distance behind the gallery and when all participants reach the end of the field, the course can be reversed, with the planters to the rear.

Never plant birds in the same places; utilize the entire course to provide a fair test for the dogs.

### 3. Guns and Gunning:

The gunners are the third essential element of a successful test. They must be experienced in hunting and in shooting at events, and familiar with the different safety concerns and procedures.

There must be a Gun Captain who advises the gunning team about their responsibilities and safety concerns before they enter the field.

Chapter 3, Sections 2 and 5, states in part that "Safe gunning practices must be adhered to at all times." Section 2 also requires Marshals, bird planters, handlers, gunners and Judges to wear an item of blaze orange clothing.

The safest gun to use is a shotgun that breaks, either a side by side, or an over and under. Only gauges from 20 through 12 should be used. In fact, Chapter 3, Section 5, prohibits use of semi-automatic and pump shotguns. The gun must be kept open except when the gunners are actually in position, walking the course, ready to shoot when the bird is flushed. Safeties, of course, should always be kept on until the gun is brought up to shoot. Gunners must shoot only when they have a clear shot, and never where a dog or person is in the vicinity of the shot. It is better to pass up the shot than to take a chance on hitting a dog or person.

In addition to keeping the gun open at all times when not working, the gunners must exercise caution to protect themselves and other participants. Never rest the stock or barrel end on your foot, lean

over the barrel or hold your hands over the barrel under any circumstances. Make sure that nothing is stuck in the ends of the gun. Check the barrels periodically and never rest the barrel on the ground or any other object where something could block it. When in the gallery, or while working, the gunners should never point their guns at the gallery or at any person. Always know the location of the gallery, the parking area and other areas where people might congregate.

One gunner should be to the left of the handler, and another to the right. The gunner closest to the bird shoots first. The second gunner shoots only if there is a clear path to the target.

The Judges position the gunners and are responsible for seeing that they are safely positioned and for insuring safe gunning practices. They can replace gunners at any time.

Guns should never shoot if a bird flies back over the gallery. A bird must not be shot close to a dog; shoot only when the bird has taken flight and is high enough to shoot safely. If the bird does not get enough distance from the dog, it should not be shot.

Before shooting, allow birds to get a sufficient distance from the dog to give ample opportunity for a quality retrieve. Shooting birds too close destroys them, is dangerous for the dog, and is not a fair retrieving test. On the other hand, never let a bird get out so far that it may be merely wounded or missed. The bird should be shot sufficiently far enough out that it comes down at a distance that enables the Judges to fairly score the dog.

Sometimes birds will fly into extremely heavy brush, dense tree lines or hedgerows. This makes it difficult for a dog to retrieve, and in these instances, the gunners may elect not to shoot or the Judges may tell them not to shoot.

Senior and Master handlers are required to carry and shoulder an empty shotgun, which must be provided by the test-giving club. If this shotgun is functional, it must be a breaking-type gun, and the Marshall must ensure that the gun is unloaded. If the handler's gun is non-functional, it may be any type of shotgun.

## **Conclusion**

Judges must have a thorough knowledge of the Hunting Test Regulations, how flushing dogs work, how to score and the purpose of the test. They should be fair in their evaluations and be guided by common sense in making decisions.

The official AKC scorecard can be obtained by going to our website at [www.akc.org/pdfs/masterform.cfm](http://www.akc.org/pdfs/masterform.cfm).

Hunting Style Descriptions can be found at: [www.akc.org/events/hunting\\_tests/spaniels/hunting\\_style.cfm](http://www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/spaniels/hunting_style.cfm).

## AKC Code of Sportsmanship

*PREFACE: The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.*

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.

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