

# The AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test Program



*The start of a Junior Hunter brace*



Many pointing breed dog owners are looking for field activities that will allow their dog to perform the function for which it was bred. The American Kennel Club Pointing Breed Hunting Test program will provide this opportunity. Whether you are a diehard hunter or a person who happened to fall in love with a breed that can hunt, you will enjoy watching your dog's instincts come alive through his preparation for and participation in Hunting Tests. If you are an experienced hunter, the Hunting Test program will keep your hunting companion sharp and physically fit between hunting seasons. It will challenge you to more thoroughly train your dog should you decide to progress to higher levels of performance. Furthermore, it

provides an opportunity to associate with like-minded dog owners in a healthy, family-friendly, outdoor environment.



## ***So what do you need to know in order to get started?***

This brochure will provide you with a brief overview of the AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test program.



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# The AKC Pointing Breed



- Tests are hosted by AKC licensed clubs. To find Hunting Tests in your area, including event secretary contact information, visit the AKC Web site, [www.akc.org/events/search/](http://www.akc.org/events/search/). Select the State(s), event type (Hunting Tests) and time period.

## Junior Hunting Test

Junior hunting dogs are expected to show a keen desire to hunt, be bold and independent, and have a fast, attractive manner of hunting. They should demonstrate intelligence in seeking objectives and the ability to locate game. A Junior dog must establish point, but no additional credit shall be given for steadiness to wing and shot. A “flash” point does not qualify as a point. A blank cartridge shall be fired by the handler. Junior dogs are expected to show reasonable obedience to their handler’s commands.

A Junior hunting dog must achieve four qualifying scores to receive a Junior Hunter (JH) title. (The scoring system is explained below.)

## Senior Hunting Test

Senior hunting dogs must show all the attributes of a Junior dog. In addition, they must be steady to wing, staying in position until the bird is shot or they are released. A senior dog must retrieve, but the retrieve need not be perfectly to hand. Whenever it encounters its brace mate on point, a Senior dog is expected to honor (stop and acknowledge a dog on point), but it may be given a verbal command to do so. A Senior dog is expected to stop on a wild-bird flush but it may be commanded to do so. A dog that renders a bird unfit for the table or that steals its brace mate’s point shall not receive a qualifying score.

A Senior hunting dog must achieve five qualifying scores to receive a Senior Hunter (SH) title, except that if the dog has earned a JH title—then it will receive a SH title once it has achieved four qualifying scores.

## Purpose and General Overview

The purpose of the AKC Hunting Test program is to provide an opportunity for a dog to demonstrate its field abilities in a manner as consistent as possible with the demands of actual hunting conditions. The following applies to all three levels of testing:

- Hunting Tests are open to all AKC registered Pointing Breeds over six months of age. There are no maximum age restrictions for any of the test levels.
- The dog’s natural hunting ability and training are scored against a standard of performance. The standard varies by test level.
- There are three test levels—Junior, Senior and Master.
- Hunting Tests are pass/fail events. Each dog is scored on the merit of its own performance. There are no placements and no ranking of the dogs entered in the test.
- If in the opinion of the judges a dog meets the minimum requirements for the test entered, the dog will receive a passing score, thereby earning a “leg” toward a Junior (JH), Senior (SH) or Master (MH) title.
- An AKC title certificate is awarded when a dog receives the required number of passing scores. The title will appear on the dog’s official AKC pedigree.
- All handlers must walk. Judges are allowed to ride horses.
- Dogs are run two at a time (a brace) on the same course.
- Gunning is involved in the Senior and Master tests. All gunning is done by designated gunners.
- Females in season are not allowed to enter.
- Many new participants attend an event just to watch prior to entering.





# Hunting Test Program

## Master Hunting Test

A Master hunting dog is expected to be a finished and experienced hunting companion. It must show a keen desire to hunt at a range suitable for a handler on foot. It must cover ground and intelligently hunt the objectives without ranging out of sight for a length of time that would detract from its usefulness as a practical hunting dog. It must handle kindly with a minimum of noise from its handler. Intelligent use of the wind and terrain, accurate nose and intensity on point are essential. A Master dog must locate game, point staunchly, and must be steady to wing and shot on all birds. The handler shall not command the dog to retrieve until positive steadiness has been demonstrated. The dog must retrieve promptly, tenderly and absolutely to hand. Whenever a Master dog encounters its brace mate on point it must honor on its own. All commands to the dog while it is on point or while it is honoring are expected to be quiet and infrequent.

A Master hunting dog must achieve six qualifying scores to receive a Master Hunter (MH) title, except that if the dog has earned a SH title—then it will receive a MH title once it has achieved five qualifying scores.



## The Scoring System

Judges assign a score from 0 to 10 for each category of performance. Junior dogs are judged in four categories: (1) Hunting, (2) Bird-finding ability, (3) Pointing and (4) Trainability. Senior and Master dogs are judged in these same four categories plus (5) Retrieving and (6) Honoring. As dogs advance, their performance is expected to be more finished; therefore, they are judged with less tolerance. In order to receive a passing score a dog must average 7 across all categories and cannot receive a score less than 5 in any one category.





## More Information

The AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test program began in 1986 and has steadily grown. There are roughly 500 Hunting Tests held annually across all regions of the United States. To find one in your area, visit [www.akc.org/events/search/](http://www.akc.org/events/search/), pick “Hunting Tests—Pointing Breeds” and select your state.



The AKC offers Hunting Test seminars, which are a good way to better understand the program and what is expected of your dog. A list of seminars can be found online at [www.akc.org/clubs/seminars/seminars.cfm](http://www.akc.org/clubs/seminars/seminars.cfm). The Hunting Test Regulations are available online at [www.akc.org/rules/index.cfm](http://www.akc.org/rules/index.cfm). If you want a bound booklet, “Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds” can be ordered at a cost of \$5.00 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling by calling the AKC Order Desk at (919) 233-9767 or e-mailing [orderdesk@akc.org](mailto:orderdesk@akc.org). General questions about the Hunting Test program can be e-mailed to [huntingtest@akc.org](mailto:huntingtest@akc.org).

Most pointing breed owners enjoy watching their dog work in the field. The thrill of the first point is something you will never forget. The AKC Hunting Test program will provide this opportunity—your dog will enjoy it and so will you!!



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