

Regulations for AKC® Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds

Including Guidelines for
Pointing Breed Hunting Tests

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AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

The American Kennel Club® is a not-for-profit organization 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.

PERFORMANCE EVENTS

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www.akc.org/sports/pointing-breeds/hunt-tests/

**Clubs are encouraged to send their results by email to:
performanceresults@akc.org**

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Forward

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

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

Chapter 1

General Regulations

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 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 or association 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 or association is not a member of The American Kennel Club, it shall pay a license fee for the privilege of holding such an event, the amount of which shall be determined by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club. Applications for AKC licensed and member club Pointing Breed Hunting Tests must be received at least three (3) months prior to the closing date or the AKC will impose a late fee. *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.*

The Board of Directors will not approve applications for Hunting Tests where Qualifying scores toward titles can be awarded when dates conflict with one or more Hunting Tests of the same type unless it can be shown that the granting of such permission will not work to the detriment of the clubs applying to hold the Hunting Tests. *For Pointing Breed Hunting Tests, events held on the same date that are within 75 miles of each other are considered in conflict.*

A local club or regional association is permitted to hold up to eight (8) licensed hunting tests within a calendar year.

A club or regional association may hold up to two Master Hunter Excellent test per year. A stand-alone Master Hunter Excellent Test does not count against

the annual limited number of events. A stand-alone MHX test requires its own event number and the standard event application fee will apply.

Section 3A. Test Levels to be Offered. A club may offer Junior, Senior, Master, and Master Excellent (MHX) test levels but shall not offer more than one of each test level at licensed and member events. A club may hold up to two MHX tests per calendar year. Test levels at licensed and member events 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 or brace determined by the Committee.

A minimum of two test levels must be offered except a club may hold a stand-alone MHX test. A club may be approved to offer other single test level at a licensed or member event provided that such approval is requested in writing, and provided further that the reasons for the request are satisfactory to AKC.

Section 3B. Amateur Walking Puppy Stake. Clubs licensed to hold Pointing Breed Hunting Tests may, at their option, offer an Amateur Walking Puppy Stake to be held in conjunction with their hunting test. The AWP Stake is a field trial stake and is to be judged to the same standard of performance as if the stake were held at a field trial. Birds may, but are not required, to be released in an AWP stake.

Dogs eligible to participate in an AWP stake must be 6 months of age and under 15 months of age on the day of the hunting test.

Standard of Performance for an Amateur Walking Puppy Stake. Puppies must show a desire to hunt, boldness, and initiative in covering ground and in searching likely cover. They should indicate the presence of game if the opportunity is presented. Puppies should not be given additional credit to pointing staunchly. Puppies should show reasonable obedience to their handler's commands. Each dog shall be judged on its actual performance as indicating its future as a high-class bird dog. The premium list shall state whether or not blanks are to be fired in an AWP stake. If blanks are to be fired, every dog that makes game contact shall be fired over if the handler is within reasonable gun range. At least 15 minutes and not more than 30 minutes shall be allowed for each brace. Championship points will be withheld if a dog has not run for the required time.

The following provisions apply to an AWP stake held in conjunction with a Pointing Breed hunting test.

1. If judges at the hunting test are riding ATVs/UTVs, the judges of an AWP stake are allowed to ride ATVs/UTVs.

2. Individuals approved to judge PBHTs are allowed to judge an AWP stake held in conjunction with a PBHT.

3. If birds are not released for every brace in the AWP stake, the AWP course may not include a bird field.

4. The AWP stake is run under the PBHT event application. (No field trial application is required.)

5. Clubs licensed to hold PBHTs that apply to hold an AWP stake in conjunction with their hunting test will automatically be assigned their license to hold Pointing Breed field trials by the Performance Events Department.

6. The conflict mileage restriction between similar events will not apply to an AWP stake held at a hunt test and a field trial for Pointing Breeds.

Section 3C. Sanctioned Events. *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.*

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.

Sanctioned Hunting Tests shall be governed by such simple Regulations as from time to time shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Club Licensing. *Active licensed Pointing Breed Field Trial clubs that desire to hold Pointing Breed hunt tests should contact the Performance Events Department at performanceclublicenses@akc.org in order to become licensed for Pointing Breed hunt tests.*

Section 3D. Special Events. Clubs may apply for “Special Event” hunting tests in order to celebrate/honor special occasions or for unique purposes. A Special Event test is where the host club proposes a unique mix of regular AKC classes or a unique eligibility requirement. The AKC Performance Events Department may grant permission to modify the hunting test regulations provided it is consistent with the purpose of the Special Event. Examples – a licensed club or regional association of clubs may want to offer a Regional Master Hunter Invitational test limited to dogs that have earned the MH title. Special Events may be used as a fund-raising activity for a cause unique to the area. Special events are licensed events which are recorded and count toward titles.

The application for a special event test can be done online using the fillable PDF form called the Pointing Breed Hunt Test Special Event Application found at:

<https://www.akc.org/sports/pointing-breeds/hunt-tests/title-applications/>. This application must be submitted to the Performance Events Department with sufficient lead time for it to be properly reviewed. Permission to hold a Special Event hunting test is granted on a onetime basis. Clubs need to request permission for every special event. The Special Event shall count as one of the club's annual events.

Section 4. Entry Requirements. Hunting tests shall be open to all Pointing Breeds 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 or domestic registry organization whose pedigrees are acceptable for AKC registration. A dog with an AKC Limited Registration shall be eligible to be entered in licensed or member Field Trials and/or Hunting Tests. *A dog can only enter a given testing level (Junior, Senior, and Master, and Master Hunter Excellent) one time per event.*

A dog must have previously earned the Master Hunter (MH) title to be eligible to enter the Master Hunter Excellent test. This can be based on the owner's records.

A dog that is individually registered with a foreign or domestic 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 AKC litter registration number of 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.

Hunting Tests are also open to pointing breeds enrolled in the Foundation Stock Services (FSS) program that have been granted approval to participate in Pointing Breed Hunting Tests.

Dogs from eligible breeds that have been granted Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL, formerly known as ILP), limited registration, conditional registration and spayed or neutered dogs, shall be eligible to enter in Pointing Breed Hunting Tests.

A national specialty club can apply to hold a hunting test open only to its own breed in conjunction with its national specialty show.

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 judgment at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test attacks another dog, and 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. *A visible physical injury is not required for the Judges to decide to disqualify a dog.* (For further clarification, refer to Chapter 5, Section 1-D)

Section 5. Bitches in Season. Allowing bitches in season to enter is up to the discretion of the host club. The premium must specify whether or not bitches in season are eligible to enter. (If not allowed, the premium shall state “Bitches in season are not eligible to enter.”) If allowed by the club, they are only eligible to enter the last test of the day on a given course and the premium shall specify these test levels. They shall run immediately after all other entries in the test. Males shall not be run until the following day on the course or any part of the course where bitches in season have been run. A female that comes into season after the drawing who is entered in a test level where females in season are allowed shall be moved down to run at the end of the day with another female. If the last brace is an incomplete brace with a female, the female in season moves down to this brace. If the last brace is complete or is incomplete with a male, the event committee has a number of options for finding a female to run with the female in season. It is the responsibility of the event committee to decide which option to use. Their decision should be guided by being the least disruptive to the overall event.

- If the original bracemate of the female in season is a female, the entire brace can be moved to the end of the test.
- The event committee can select a suitable volunteer female bracemate that they know is qualified to run at this testing level.
- If the original bracemate of the female in season is a male, the club can “break” the last brace of the test in which a female is entered in order to find a female to run with the female in season. The original male bracemate for the female in season shall be moved down to run in the next incomplete brace.

Entry fees paid for a bitch withdrawn because of coming in season when not allowed to enter shall be refunded in full by the test-giving club. (Prior to refunding entry fees, a club may require appropriate veterinary certification.)

Section 6. Judges' Eligibility and Approval.

Anyone at least 18 years old and in good standing with The American Kennel Club may be approved to judge a Hunting Test subject to the qualification requirements in force at the time.

In order to be an Apprentice Judge:

- Must handle a dog to at least one qualifying leg at the level to be judged or higher.

In order to be an Approved Judge:

- Must apprentice judge at least twice at the level to be judged or higher. Must apprentice judge a minimum of 12 dogs in total.
- Must attend one AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test Seminar.
- Must pass an AKC Hunting Test written test.
- Must handle a dog to at least three qualifying legs at the level to be judged or higher.
- Approved pointing breed field trial Judges are exempt from the "handled in three qualifying legs" requirement, but must pass the written test prior to judging Pointing Breed Hunting Tests.

In order to maintain Judging Eligibility (applies to all Judges):

- All Judges must have attended a seminar or passed a written test within the last 5 years of the date of the assignment.

Judges Panel Qualifications:

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

Master Hunter Excellent Judges

- A MHX judge must have previously judged a minimum of five MH level tests, must view an online MHX seminar, and must pass the online MHX judges' test. It is expected that MHX test judges will judge appropriately in order to maintain the standard of performance expected for this testing level. The Performance Events Department reserves the right to rescind an individuals' privilege to judge if, after discussions and suggestions from the Performance Events staff, a lack of correct judgement persists.

No person acting in the capacity of Hunting Test Secretary, Chairman or member of the Event Committee may judge at that event.

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.

A dog is not eligible to be entered in a Test (Junior, Senior, Master, and Master Hunter Excellent) at a licensed or member Hunting Test if an actual or advertised 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 or her family” shall include a spouse, domestic partner, sibling, parent, or child, whether natural or adopted, of the Judge in question, but shall not extend to other blood or legal relationships. *Note: This restriction does not apply to parents and adult children or adult siblings living in their own separate households.*

In addition, a dog is ineligible to be entered under a judge if the owner or handler of the dog is a person cohabiting in the same household as the judge.

Each Test (Junior, Senior, Master, and Master Hunter Excellent) or division of a test level shall be judged by two Judges. One of the two Judges may judge the same test level on consecutive days or consecutive back-to-back events. The same team of Judges will not be approved to judge the same test level on consecutive days or consecutive back-to-back events.

Two teams of Judges may be used in any test level and alternate on the same course. *This is usually done when the Judges walk.*

Judges shall not handle a dog in the test level division they are judging but may enter a different division of that test level or other test levels they are not judging provided there is no interference with their judging assignment.

Substitute Judges: A substitute Judge may be appointed by the Hunt Test Committee holding the test if it is impossible for an advertised Judge to fulfill or complete his assignment. Such substitute or additional Judges shall be persons who are in good standing with The American Kennel Club. Prompt notification shall be sent to the AKC, in advance of the test if possible, of any substitute or additional Judges officiating at a licensed or member test, and of the reasons for the change.

Apprentice Judges: Only two apprentice Judges are permitted in any test level with one apprentice working with each Judge. The apprentice Judge is a non-scoring Judge and must judge the entire test level to receive credit for the apprentice assignment. All of the foregoing restrictions apply to apprentice Judges.

Section 7. Judges' Responsibility. It is strongly recommended that clubs select as Judges individuals with broad and extensive background experience in handling and working with Pointing Breeds in the field.

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

Section 8. Ribbons and Rosettes. A club holding a licensed or member Hunting Test shall offer prize ribbons or rosettes. Dogs passing the MHX test shall receive a rosette. In addition, dogs shall receive a rosette for each series passed in the MHX test. 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 name of the Test (Junior, Senior or Master, Master Hunter Excellent Hunting Test).

For a dog receiving a passing score toward an “Advanced” title, the club, at its option, may offer a ribbon or rosette where one streamer is a color other than orange. The color of the non-orange streamer is up to the club.

If ribbons or rosettes are given at sanctioned Hunting Tests, they shall be rose in color, but need not otherwise 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 these: *Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds* and *Dealing with Misconduct*.

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. 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 licensed or member club Hunting Tests shall designate the Hunting Test Secretary as receiving entries.

Section 12. Hunting Test Committee. A club that has been granted permission by The American Kennel Club to hold a licensed or member 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.

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 latest editions of these books.

The Hunting Test Committee may decline entries or may remove any dog from its event for cause, but in each instance the club must notify the AKC Performance Events Department in a timely manner regarding the good and sufficient reason for its actions.

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.

The Event Secretary must certify that all Official Gunners have viewed the AKC Gun Safety video within 12 months prior to the start date of the event.

The Hunting Test Committee shall insure that the Emergency Plan is posted or printed in a conspicuous location.

Section 13. Entry Fees/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.

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 with directions and date, names and city, state of officers, time judging will commence, entry fees, Tests offered, names and city, state of Judges together with their specific assignments, name, mailing address and telephone number of Hunting Test Secretary, date, if Judges will be riding ATVs/UTVs and time of closing and drawing of entries, and the official AKC entry form. Premium lists shall also specify type or types of birds and courses to be used and entry limitations, if any, as well as the name and city, state of the Chairman and the names of all members of the Hunting Test Committee. Premium Lists shall conform to the official size of from 5½" x 8½" to 6" x 9".

At least one copy of the premium list must be mailed or e-mailed (huntingtest@akc.org) to AKC at the time that they are distributed to prospective entrants.

Section 15. Closing and Drawing of Entries, Entry Limitations, Running Order. 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.

Waiting List. A club holding a limited entry Hunting Test may, at its option, create a waiting list for entries that are received after the test has filled but prior to the published closing date. If, after closing and up to the day of the event, there are entries that are known will not be participating, dogs may be taken from the waiting list to run in the position of the absent dogs. Owners/handlers must agree to have their dog placed on the waiting list.

A club utilizing a waitlist may either add dogs across all test levels (a senior hunter scratch could result in a dog being added to the master level test) or the waitlist can be test level specific (a senior hunter scratch can only result in a dog being added to the senior level test). The decision between these two options is up to the event committee. If a club decides to utilize a waitlist, it must be explained in the premium.

If the waitlist applies across all test levels, the decision to add dogs from the waitlist shall be made up to the start of the event. If the waitlist applies to a specific test level, the decision to add dogs shall be made up to the start of that test level. Dogs called from the waiting list shall be prioritized in the order the entries were received.

Dogs selected from the waiting list shall pay the published entry fee. Dogs that were on the waiting list but were not able to run shall have their entry fee refunded in full. For dogs that have scratched and been replaced, it is up to the club to determine the refund policy. The refund policy must be explained in the premium and must be the same for all dogs.

If a club using an entry service wishes to use a waitlist as explained above, it is up to the club and entry service to work out how this will be achieved. Neither the club nor the entry service may charge potential entrants a fee for placing their dogs on a waitlist.

Each entry form must be completed in full and the information given on the form must be that which applies to the entered dog. Each entry form must be signed by the owner or his agent duly authorized to make the entry. *For the orderly running of the test, every effort should be made to list the true handler. However, a different handler may be used if conditions warrant.*

A club holding an AKC-licensed or -member club Hunting Test shall not accept any entries received after the closing time and date specified in the premium list. Dogs that have completed the requirements for the test level they have entered may move up to a higher level if approved by the event secretary.

At the option of the Hunting Test-giving club, entries in any or all Tests (Junior, Senior, and/or Master, Master Hunter Excellent) may be limited to the number of dogs that can be run in the daylight hours available on the date(s) of the event. If entries are to be limited, the limitation(s) must be stated in the premium list and entries will close when the limit or limits have been reached.

Running Order. Dogs shall be run two at a time (braces) except in the MHX test. The order of running shall be decided by lot at the draw, dogs worked by the same person or belonging to the same owner being separated. Each dog in a brace must have a separate handler. If an odd number of dogs are entered in the MHX test, the dog in the last brace shall run by itself. If a scratch occurs in the MHX test, the remaining dog (bye dog) in the brace shall be dropped down to run in the next incomplete brace. If there are no incomplete braces in the MHX test, the bye dog shall run by itself in its drawn brace.

The Buddy Hunt. At the handler's option in the Junior Hunter level test, the handler may be accompanied by one person. The purpose of the buddy is to engage new people in the sport and to familiarize new owners about what to expect prior to running their own dog. The buddy must not assist in handling the dog or in flushing birds. The buddy is there only to observe. During the flush, the buddy must stand back and not interfere with the dog or handler. The judge should instruct the buddy where to stand if there is uncertainty.

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. This provision does not apply to late arrivals.

Judges shall have the authority to disqualify a dog that is not present within five minutes after it is called to run by the Judges.

Section 16. Bye-Dogs, Change of Level, Incomplete Braces, Attacking Dog. If a dog is drawn to run last (the bye-dog) in any Hunting Test category (Junior, Senior or Master), the Judges shall select a bracemate preferably from among the dogs that have run in that Test category, the selection to be made following the running of all complete braces in the category.

In any Test category, should one or more incomplete braces occur (as the result of a scratch, or a bitch in season, etc.), the bracemate of the absent dog shall be moved down and run with the dog in the next known incomplete brace. If a single dog remains after rebracing, the Judges shall select a bracemate preferably from a higher level, or among those dogs already run in that Test category.

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

The dog selected by the Judges to run with the bye-dog shall not be scored. If it attacks its bracemate without reasonable cause, the attacking dog shall not (if entered) receive a Qualifying score and shall be reported to AKC in accord with Section 4 (paragraph 2) of this Chapter.

The dog which was attacked shall be afforded opportunity to have its hunting abilities retested, but it may not be run alone. The Judges shall determine a reasonable time for re-testing such a dog, and decide whether or not to cancel the scoring on the initial run.

A dog may change level originally entered up to the next level after entries have closed when, according to the owner's records, the dog has met the title requirements for the test in which it is entered and provided the next level is available. Requests for change of level must be approved by the Hunting Test Secretary at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the event.

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.

Section 17. Catalogs. An Official Catalog may be provided for a licensed or member club Hunting Test. The Official Catalog, if prepared, must be printed, or typed and shall conform to the official size of not less than 5¹/₂" x 8¹/₂", but not to exceed 8¹/₂" x 11".

The Official Catalog shall list all dogs entered in each Test (Junior, Senior, Master, and Master Hunter Excellent) 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 dog, registration number, breed, date of birth and name of owner and handler, if different from owner).

The Official Catalog shall state the name of the Hunting Test giving club, the date and location of the event and shall state 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 following the last dog listed in each test:

JUDGES CERTIFICATION

I certify that _____ dogs received Qualifying scores in this Hunting Test and that the above information identifying these dogs was entered prior to my signing this page.

Judge's Signature

Judge's Signature

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 mark the Official Catalog with the word "Qualifying" 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.

If a club chooses not to prepare an Official Catalog (conforming to the official size of not less than 5½" x 8½" but not to exceed 8½" x 11"), it must utilize the standard AKC Official Judges book for Hunting Tests which will be automatically supplied to the Hunting Test Secretary following approval of premium list copy. When a club chooses this option, it may prepare a catalog, but the catalog need not conform to the size and content requirements stated above.

Only official AKC titles may appear in catalogs or running orders. For a complete list of AKC titles and abbreviations, please see: www.akc.org/events/titles.cfm.

Section 18. Submission of Records. The Hunting Test Secretary shall forward to the American Kennel Club the Official Catalog or Judges Book marked to indicate dogs that received qualifying score, certified and signed by the Judges and the Hunting Test Secretary. The complete Hunting Test and the complete Hunting Test Secretary's Report of the Hunting Test **must be sent to The American Kennel Club so as to reach its office within seven (7) days after the close of the event.** All entry forms are to be retained by the Club for a period of one year following the conclusion of the event.

Penalty for noncompliance twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and five dollars (\$5.00) for each day's delay beyond the deadline, and other such penalties as may be imposed by the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club.

AKC will collect a \$4.50 AKC Event Service Fee for each entry in all AKC licensed and member hunting tests. 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 the amount of the service fee.

When a club chooses not to prepare an Official Catalog that conforms to the size requirements stated earlier, it must forward to AKC an Official Judges book, signed and certified as above, and a complete Hunting Test Secretary's Report, along with a catalog, if one was prepared.

A club holding a licensed or member club Hunting Test shall retain either an Official Catalog or a copy of the Official Judges book.

Section 19. Injured Dog. 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), 101 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10178, 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.

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 4 categories of ability in Junior Hunting Tests and 6 categories of ability in 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 score of not less than five (5) on each of the categories of abilities (4 categories in Junior, 6 categories in Senior and Master) listed on the Score Card, with an overall average score of not less than 7.0. In the Master Hunter Excellent test, a dog must receive a passing score of 8.0 or greater in each series to pass the MHX test.

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 five (5) on each of the categories of

abilities (4 categories in Junior, 6 categories in Senior and Master) listed on the Score Card, with an overall average score of not less than 8.0. For every series passed in the MHX test, a dog receives one pass toward its Master Hunter Advanced (MHA) title. e.g. A dog that fails the MHX test but passes one series will receive one pass toward its MHA title.

Section 2. Junior Hunter Title (JH). In order to be recorded as a Junior Hunter, a dog must be registered in the AKC *Stud Book (except ILP dogs)*, 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 (*Advanced Title tracking form can be found at: [www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/pointing_breeds/.](http://www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/pointing_breeds/)*)

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 in the AKC *Stud Book (except ILP dogs)*, 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. Except that a German Wirehaired Pointer and a Spinone Italiano, shall not be recorded a Senior Hunter unless it has also been certified by two approved field trial or hunting test Judges to have passed an AKC Water Test at a licensed or member field trial or hunting test.

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.

A dog that has acquired a Senior Hunter title is eligible to enter the Junior Hunting Test.

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 (*Advanced Title tracking form can be found at: www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/pointing_breeds/*.)

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.

In order for GWPs and Spinones to earn a SH title, they must have passed a Water Test. Another Water Test does not need to be passed to be awarded the SHA title.

Section 4. Master Hunter Title (MH). In order to be recorded as a Master Hunter, a dog must be registered in the AKC *Stud Book (except ILP dogs)*, 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. Except that a German Wirehaired Pointer and a Spinone Italiano shall not be recorded a Master Hunter unless it has also been certified by two approved field trial or hunting test Judges to have passed an AKC Water Test at a licensed or member field trial or hunting test. *(Please refer to Water Test and Virtual Water Test found at the end of this chapter.)*

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.

A dog that has acquired a Master Hunter title is eligible to enter Junior or Senior Hunting Tests. No further Junior or Senior Hunter certificates will be issued.

A dog is not required to earn any title as a prerequisite for earning a higher title.

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 *(Advanced Title tracking form can be found at: https://images.akc.org/pdf/PBHT_Advanced_Title_Application.pdf)*

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.

In order for GWPs and Spinones to earn aMH title, they must have passed a Water Test. Another Water Test does not need to be passed to be awarded the MHA title.

Section 5. Master Hunter Lifetime Achievement Title. A dog that has passed the Master Hunter test

twelve or more times is eligible to be awarded a Master Hunter Lifetime Achievement Title. The title is designated by the letters MH followed by a number indicating the number of times the dog has passed the MH test.

The title is awarded at the request of the owner. A form provided by the Performance Events Department must be completed and submitted with a processing fee. The owner may request this title at any time and the title can be updated as often as requested. Upon verification, the title will be included on the dog's record and a title certificate will be issued. The title will appear on the dog's AKC pedigree. A MH# title will supersede a MH title or a lower numbered MH# title on the dog's record.

The Master Hunter Lifetime Achievement Title application form can be found on the AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Test website: <https://images.akc.org/pdf/MHLifetimeAchievTitle.App.pdf>.

Section 6. Master Hunter Excellent (MHX) Title.
A dog must have earned the Master Hunter (MH) title to be eligible to enter the MHX test. This can be based on the owner's records. The MHX test is a two series test. A dog must receive a passing score of 8.0 or greater in each series to pass the MHX test. The MHX title is a suffix title.

In order to be recorded as a Master Hunter Excellent, a dog must acquire qualifying scores in three MHX tests. Upon completion of this requirement, an AKC Master Hunter Excellent (MHX) certificate will be issued.

A dog that has been recorded a MHX may continue to enter the MHX test. Each time the dog passes the MHX test after earning the MHX title, the dog is eligible to earn the MHX# title. The number (#) indicates the number of time the dog has passed the MHX test starting with the number 4. The MHX# title is issued upon the request of the owner by submitting a MHX title application form [please insert hyperlink to: https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn-origin-etr.akc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02121348/MHXLifetimeAchievTitle.App_1.24v2.pdf]. Typically an owner will apply for the MHX# title at the time the dog is retired or prior to being bred so the title appears on the dog's pedigree.

For every series passed in the MHX test, a dog receives one pass toward its Master Hunter Advanced (MHA) title. e.g.

A dog that fails the MHX test but passes one series will receive one pass toward its MHA title. A dog that has earned the MHX title may continue to enter lower level tests. No further JH, SH or MH certificates will be issued.

WATER TEST

If a club wished to hold a Water Test in conjunction with its licensed or member field trial, hunting test or as a "stand-alone" event, request for approval of the Water Test must be included on the date application for the event. If approved, the Water Test must be specified on the questionnaire form and announced in the premium list. It shall be open to all pointing breeds six months of age or over on the first day of the event. The Water Test shall be judged by two approved field trial or hunting test Judges. The dog shall retrieve a dead game bird or pigeon from the water after a swim of about 20 yards to the bird. A blank pistol shall be fired while the bird is in the air. The handler shall stand (6) six feet from the water and the dog may be restrained by holding its collar. The dog must demonstrate its willingness to enter the water, to swim, and to retrieve, at the direction of its handler without being touched or intimidated. The dog shall retrieve the bird to within two steps of the handler. The handler may give multiple commands. However, at some point the Judges must conclude the dog is unwilling to enter the water and the dog shall fail. Style shall not be considered. The dogs shall not be placed, but shall either pass or fail. The Judges shall certify on the judging sheets the particulars of each dog that passed the test. The "stand-alone" test will not count against the number of annual field trials/hunting tests that a club is allowed to hold.

Any qualifying water test pass earned at a self-administered Virtual Water Test will be recorded and count the same as a water test pass earned at a stand-alone water test or water test held at a field trial or hunt test. Information about Virtual Water Tests can be found at: <https://www.akc.org/sports/pointing-breeds/virtual-water-test/>

Chapter 3 Instructions for Hunting Test Committees

The Hunting Test Regulations have been formulated in such a manner that the officials of a Test-giving club have latitude in the conduct of a Test. This is desirable to allow for variations in conditions that are peculiar to various parts of the country.

The *objectives* of the Regulations are twofold: *First*, greater uniformity in the conduct of Hunting Tests; and *second*, greater uniformity in evaluating the hunting abilities and characteristics of Pointing Breeds 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 Hunting Tests for dogs of the Pointing Breeds is to afford an opportunity for a person to demonstrate a dog's ability to perform in a manner consistent with the demands of actual hunting conditions. Testing gauges the dog's natural hunting ability and training.

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

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

Game Stewards can enter the bird field only to release game.

The premium list shall specify whether a single course or bird field will be used, and if a single course is to be used, whether it will be with or without a bird field.

Section 3. Birds. If an odd number of dogs are entered in the MHX test, the dog in the last brace shall run by itself. If a scratch occurs in the MHX test, the remaining dog (bye dog) in the brace shall be dropped down to run in the next incomplete brace. If there are no incomplete braces in the MHX test, the bye dog shall run by itself in its drawn brace. Pheasants and/or chukars, and/or quail, and/or pigeons may be used in AKC-licensed or -member club Hunting Tests, as may any other species of upland game bird that might be unique to a specific region.

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

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

At Junior, Senior, Master and Master Hunter Excellent test levels, a minimum of two birds shall be released for each brace, either before the start of, or during the running of each brace.

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

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

Section 4. Motorized Vehicles. Birds may be liberated from horseback and/or All Terrain Vehicles or Utility Task Vehicles on the back course, as long as it can be done without interference to the working dogs. If the stake calls for gunning on course, ATVs/UTVs may be used by the gunners. Judges may ride ATVs/UTVs at the discretion of the host club. If Judges will be using ATVs/UTVs it must be clearly stated in the event premium. ATVs/UTVs must be turned off while a Judge observes a dog's bird work. If one Judge uses an ATV/UTV the other judge must use an ATV/UTV or walk. For safety reasons the mixing of ATVs/UTVs and horses for the Judges is not allowed. ATVs/UTVs must meet all applicable state and federal government requirements. ATVs/UTVs are not allowed in bird fields but may be driven around their perimeters. Operators of motorized vehicles must be aware of their impact on horses and must not endanger mounted participants.

Section 5. Running Time. A minimum of 15 minutes shall be allowed for each brace in the Junior Hunting Test, and at least 30 minutes allowed for each brace in Senior and Master Hunting Tests. Failure to meet the required times will result in no qualification being awarded.

A Test-giving club may extend the minimum time allowed for braces (but not to exceed 30 minutes in Junior or 45 minutes in Senior and Master) provided the extended running time is published in the premium list. If extended time is advertised, it must be adhered to. The running time selected by the Event Committee must be uniformly applied to all braces. (All braces must run the same length of time.)

The duty of having a dog ready in place when required for judging rests solely with its handler or owner. All dogs should be ready on the grounds well in advance of the scheduled times for their braces so that the Judges will not be held up in case of an absent brace. If a dog is not present at the place where it is to start

within 5 minutes after it is called for by the Judges to run in any test, it should be disqualified. The Judges are responsible for keeping the time.

Out of Judgment. A dog that is out of judgement for a continuous period of more than 5 minutes shall fail the test unless it is seen on point by a judge or unless, in the opinion of the judges, the dog's absence was due to unusual circumstances. At the end of the brace, if the clock has started due to the dog's absence, the handler shall be given the remaining time to show the dog. A dog gone for more than 5 minutes shall receive a failing score in trainability.

Section 6. Horses. In testing for Junior, Senior, Master and Master Hunter Excellent Hunting Tests, all handling must be on foot. Horses may be used only by the Judges, Apprentice Judge, the Judge's Marshall and the bird liberator.

Judges may ride horses, walk or ride ATVs at the club's discretion. For safety reasons, one may not be riding an ATV and the other Judge riding a horse.

Section 7. Gun/Gunning. Only blank pistols may be used by handlers in Pointing Breed Hunting Tests. Blank pistols used to fire a blank cartridge must have a solid barrel incapable of discharging live ammunition. Handlers should be aware of the potentially harmful impact the repeated discharge of a blank pistol can have on the hearing of people, dogs and horses. The following regulations apply to the use of blank guns/ammunition.

The .22 caliber (6mm) blanks are preferred but all calibers up to .32 are acceptable. Blank pistols that fire shotgun 209 primers are also acceptable. The .22 caliber "acorn" crimps may be used. For .22 caliber blanks produced for other purposes (not specifically for blank pistols), handlers should be guided by the recommendation of the manufacturer with regard to the safety of their use in blank pistols.

Promiscuous firing of guns or blank pistols on the grounds is prohibited. Handlers in Hunting Tests shall fire one blank and no more for each flush of one or more birds provided the bird is not being shot at by official gunners.

Handlers should not hold the blank pistol against their body when firing as there is a discharge of gases which may burn or otherwise harm. In Senior and Master tests, only the handlers of the working dogs shall fire a blank pistol.

All live shooting at any test shall be done by Official Guns only and the Judges shall have complete authority over all such shooting. They may require a change of Official Guns at any time, and may bar from further

shooting any Official Gun who does not abide strictly by safe gunning rules.

When gunning is involved, it is mandatory that everyone in the field wear a blaze orange outer garment. As to how much orange is required, clubs should follow the hunting regulations of the State where the event is being held.

Only double-barreled shotguns of at least 20 gauge, but not greater than 12 guage are to be used by Official Guns. Host clubs should be aware of government regulations on the type of shot allowed at the test location.

Semi-automatic and pump shotguns are prohibited. Gunners should wear a game bag. The AKC strongly recommends that gunners wear appropriate hearing and eye protection.

Two Official Guns are required for each brace in Senior and Master Hunting Tests, one to accompany each handler, either at the beginning of the course, or as the handler enters the bird field. Provisions must also be made for alternate or stand-by Guns in case they should be required. *Gunner shall be at least 21 years of age.*

The Official Guns must always keep themselves in the correct position for safety of dogs and persons.

Gunners shall not tell handlers where birds were released or flush a bird for a handler. However, after a dog has established point, if the gunner sees the bird while the handler is searching for it, the gunner may point the bird out to the handler.

In Senior, Master, and Master Hunter Excellent Hunting Tests game should be shot cleanly, in a sportsmanlike manner, in full flight, at a distance that will give the dog a reasonable retrieve. An Official Gun represents the handler up to the time that game is shot, but must not interfere or assist in any manner with his work nor direct the work of the dog.

Game flushed by a free-running dog or birds that flush wild shall not be shot except on instructions from a Judge. If a bird does not fly after an attempt to flush by a handler, it shall not be shot on the ground except on instruction from a Judge.

Section 8. Marshals. The Hunting Test Committee shall appoint a field marshal when there is a gallery and whenever there is live shooting. It shall be the duty of the field marshal 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 the dogs are down. The field marshal shall also advise the handlers and

Judges as to the direction and limits of the course. The line marshal shall see to it that braces are ready when called, and assist the Hunting Test Committee in all other matters necessary for the smooth and expeditious running of the Test.

Marshals shall not plant birds and shall not run a dog in a test level that he or she is marshaling.

Section 9. Training. There shall be no training on the grounds of a Hunting Test on the day of the event prior to its start or during the running of the event. The definition of "the grounds" shall include any area used for the course(s) plus the parking area. Beyond that, the exact determination of "the grounds" is left to the determination of the event committee given the specifics of the location. Once an event has concluded, training is allowed provided it is allowed by the host club and the landowner/managing agency. Exceptions may be granted by the Performance Events Department under special circumstances Mock tests occurring the same day prior to a licensed hunt test as part of a seminar, are exempt from this regulation.

Section 10. 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 also 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 on the part of the person or see the person kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog while the event is in progress. It will be the duty of the Judges to report promptly to the Hunting Test Committee the expulsion of a person and the Hunting Test Committee shall then proceed 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 has been observed kicking, striking or otherwise roughly manhandling a dog. If a Hunting Test Committee, after investigation, determines that a person 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 *Field Trial Rules* and with the *Guide for Dealing with Misconduct at Field Trials & Hunting Tests*.

- (E) The Hunting Test Secretary shall submit within 7 days to The American Kennel Club a complete report of any action taken under this Section.

Note: The power conferred by the “Dealing with Misconduct” guidelines, 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 11. Scorecards, Control Sheets. The Hunting Test Committee shall supply each Judge with an evaluation form (score card) for every dog entered under that Judge.

The Committee shall also appoint an official score keeper who shall have charge of the Control Sheet and shall be responsible for receiving the completed score cards and posting scores to the Control Sheet. (Note that the Judges must agree on which dogs will qualify and will not qualify before the scores are turned in.)

Section 12. Weather. Weather is an important consideration for the hunt test committee. The safety of participants and animals is of utmost importance. Extreme weather such as lightening, strong winds, sleet or heavy snow or 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.

Chapter 4

Standards for Junior, Senior, Master, and Formats for Master Hunter Excellent Hunting Tests

Section 1. Junior Hunting Test. A Junior hunting dog must show a keen desire to hunt, be bold and independent, have a fast, attractive, manner of hunting, and demonstrate intelligence in seeking objectives, and also the ability to find game. A Junior hunting dog must establish point on at least fifty (50) percent of the pointable birds it encounters. It is up to the Judge to determine if a bird is pointable given the specifics of the situation. No additional credit shall be given for steadiness to wing and shot. If the handler is within reasonable gun range of a bird which has been flushed after a point, a blank cartridge must be fired by the handler. Junior hunting dogs must hold point until the handler gets within normal gunshot range. *This requirement should be tempered by practical considerations such as the dog's distance from the handler when it finds a bird.* Junior hunting dogs must also show reasonable cooperation to their handler's commands.

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

Section 3. Master Hunting Test. A Master hunting dog must give a finished performance and demonstrate clearly that it deserves to be qualified as such. This is the complete hunting companion that any hunter would be proud to own. It must be under its handler's control at all times, and handle kindly, with an absolute minimum of noise and hacking by the handler. A Master hunting dog must show a keen desire to hunt, must have a bold and attractive manner of running, and must demonstrate not only intelligence

in seeking objectives, but also the ability to find game. The dog must hunt for its handler at all times at a range suitable for a handler on foot, and should show or check in front of its handler frequently. It must cover adequate ground but never range out-of-sight for a length of time that would detract from its usefulness as a practical hunting companion. The dog must locate game, must point staunchly, and must be steady to wing and shot on all birds and if it breaks, it cannot receive a Qualifying score. Intelligent use of the wind and terrain in locating game, accurate nose, and intensity on point are essential. Whenever it encounters its braced mate on point, it must honor. A dog that steals its braced mate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score. *A Master hunting dog is not allowed to be collared while honoring unless the Judge deems the situation to be so unusual as to instruct the handler to collar the dog. Collaring should not be confused with touching the dog. Touching the dog is allowed in all testing levels for practical reasons, such as when a dog is watered.*

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

Format of the Master Hunter Excellent Test.

1. The MH Excellent Test consists of two 30-minute series. A dog must receive a passing score in both series to pass the MHX Test. Dogs that do not pass series #1 may run in series #2 but shall not pass the MHX Test. After the conclusion of series #1, all dogs desiring to run in series #2 shall be redrawn to determine the running order for series #2.

2. Clubs may hold the MHX Test over two days (one series each day) or they may hold one series in the morning and one in the afternoon depending on the number of entries, the weather, and how this fits into the club's overall event schedule. If a club chooses to run the MHX test over two days, then all dogs must run once on each day. If the club chooses to run the MHX test in one day, then all dogs must run twice on the same day.

3. Clubs with approved grounds may hold two MHX tests per calendar year. The MHX test may be a stand-alone test if the club desires. If it is held as a stand-alone test, it will not count as one of the club's normal number of tests.

4. Clubs may limit the entry in the MHX Test but in no case shall the limit be less than 20 entries.

5. Handlers are not required to carry and shoulder a long-barreled gun in the MHX test.

6. The Course. A club may use a single course with or without a bird field. The back course must be of adequate length, shall not cover the same ground twice, and consist of logical hunting cover. The adequacy of the grounds are important since it is key for evaluating the dog's hunting ability. MHX grounds must be approved by the AKC Performance Events Department prior to a club being approved to hold a MHX test. The Performance Events Department reserves the right to rescind approval should conditions change.

Back Course with Bird Field. If a bird field is utilized, the standard format shall be 22 minutes in the back course and 8 minutes in the bird field. This is a minimum of a 1.0 mile back course. It is expected that all MHX dogs will find birds in the back course. In the bird field, the first shootable bird shall be retrieved.

What to do if the dog takes longer than 22 minutes on the back course? The MHX test shall be a total of 30 minutes. If a dog takes longer than 22 minutes to get to the bird field, it shall be given the remainder of its 30 minutes in the bird field. For example, if the dog gets to the bird field in 26 minutes, it shall be given 4 minutes in the bird field.

If the dog fails to find a bird in the bird field in its remaining time, but the dog has had finds on the back course, the dog shall be called back for a retrieve, provided the scores for the four categories evaluated on the back course are sufficient that the dog could possibly average an 8.0 after the retrieve. This means the total score for the four categories evaluated on course must be 30 or greater. Dogs with scores of less than 30 shall not be called back for a retrieve.

No Bird Field – Call Back for Retrieve. If the format of the test is “no bird field – call back for retrieve,” the course shall be a minimum of 1.35 miles. Dogs must have bird work on course. Dogs that complete the 30-minute course with bird work will be called back for a retrieve, provided the scores for the four categories evaluated on course are sufficient that the dog could possibly average an 8.0 after the retrieve. This means the total score for the four categories evaluated on course must be 30 or greater. Dogs with scores of less than 30 shall not be called back for a retrieve.

No Bird Field – Gunning on Course. If the format of the test is “no bird field – gunning on course,” the 30-minute course shall be a minimum of 1.35 miles. Dogs must have bird work on course. The first shootable bird shall be retrieved. If birds are found but a retrieve is not possible, the dog will be called back for a retrieve, provided the scores for the four categories evaluated on course are sufficient that the dog could possibly average an 8.0 after the retrieve. This means the total score for the four categories evaluated on course must be 30 or greater. Dogs with scores of less than 30 shall not be called back for a retrieve.

7. Bird Planting – Back Course. It is expected that all MHX dogs will find birds on the back course. Clubs have the responsibility to evaluate the nature of the back course when determining the number of birds to release. At a minimum, six birds (separate locations) shall be released on the back course prior to the first brace. After the first brace, a minimum of three birds shall be released on the back course prior to every brace. As the event proceeds, bird planters/judges should monitor the amount of bird work. The number of birds may need to be increased or decreased depending on conditions in order to provide every dog a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate its bird work on the back course without providing so many birds that a dog’s hunting ability cannot be properly evaluated.

Bird Planting – Bird Field. Bird planters/gunners should monitor the bird field to ensure there is a minimum of three birds in the bird field for every brace.

The Bird Planter – To properly provide dogs an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to find birds, the bird planter must be knowledgeable with regard to bird placement, taking into consideration logical cover and wind direction.

Chapter 5

Test Requirements and Instructions for Judges Foreword

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

A Judge must keep in mind the fact that he is evaluating numerically, a defined set of 4 categories of hunting ability in Junior and 6 categories of hunting

ability in both 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 qualify and will not qualify before the scores are turned in.

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. Judges should ask themselves, given the expectations of the level being judged, would they be proud to go hunting with this dog.

Section 1. General Requirements and Instructions.

(A) A Judge who has started to judge a Hunting Test may not handle a dog in another Test until the Test that he is judging has been fully completed.

(B) 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.

(C) Judges must agree on which dogs will qualify and which dogs will not qualify before the scores are turned in. Judges are not obligated to discuss scores with handlers, but if they elect to do so, such discussions shall be held only at the completion of the test.

(D) If a dog, while under judgment 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. The offending dog must be reported to AKC in accord with Chapter 1, Section 4, of these Regulations.

The non-offending brace mate shall be moved down to run with the bye-dog, if a bye-dog was drawn, otherwise

the Judges shall select a bracemate to run with the non-offending dog. (Refer to Chapter 1, Section 15)

An attack should be distinguished from interference, bumping and playing. The Judges should clearly distinguish between the dog defending itself and the attacking dog.

If interference occurs within the first five minutes the dog that was interfered with shall be re-run for the full time of the brace with another bracemate selected by the Judges.

(E) A dog cannot receive a Qualifying score in any test level if it renders a bird unfit for consumption. Both Judges are responsible for inspecting the bird and agreeing that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.

Collars

(F) Belled collars are permissible.

(G) Electronic devices, including beeper units, and dummy electronic devices, as well choke-type collars shall not be worn by a dog while it is being run in a Hunting Test or while being led to the starting line.

(H) Training Collars used to control and train dogs including but not limited to collars with prongs, electronic collars used with transmitters, muzzles and head collars may not be used on dogs while on the grounds at AKC events.

(I) The use of tracking collars at recognized Hunting Tests are at the sole discretion of the host club. The Hunting Test premium list shall state if tracking collars are allowed. If the premium list does not specifically state tracking collars are not allowed, they will be permitted. *Regulations governing the use of tracking collars can be found on page 44.*

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

(K) It is the prerogative of the Judges to order up a dog at any time.

(L) A dog may wear no more than two collars except one flea/tick collar may be worn in addition to the two collars. All collars shall be worn on the dogs neck.

Vests/Harness

(M) Vests/Harnesses are not to be worn by dogs while under judgement except vests may be worn in cases of lactating females or for medical reasons.

(N) Courtesy to One's Bracemate. When two dogs are working in the bird field, the handlers, judges and gunners should be generally aware of the location and actions of the bracemate so as not to interfere with each other. When both dogs are on point in close proximity to each other, the judges should take control of the situation in order to ensure safety and minimize

interference. Usually the dog that goes on point last should be asked to hold up until the other dog has completed its bird work. If the first dog is having difficulty, it is up to the judge to decide when the second dog may proceed with its bird work.

Section 2. Instructions and Test Requirements for Junior Hunting Test. The Judges of a Junior Hunting Test must score the dogs on the basis of the following four categories of hunting ability:

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

(2) BIRD FINDING ABILITY: A dog must find and point birds in order to receive a Qualifying score. Dogs are scored from “0” to “10” based upon demonstration of intelligence in seeking objectives, use of the wind, and the ability to find birds.

(3) POINTING: A dog is scored from “0” to “10” in this category on the basis of the intensity of its point, as well as its ability to locate (pinpoint) birds under difficult scenting conditions and/or confusing scent patterns. A “flash” point cannot be counted as a point, however, and a dog’s score in this category shall not be influenced by its steadiness to wing and shot.

(4) TRAINABILITY: A dog is scored from “0” to “10” in this category on the basis of its willingness to be handled, its reasonable obedience to commands and its gun response. If the handler is within reasonable gun range of a bird which has been flushed after a point, a blank pistol must be fired.

Gun response is included under Trainability in Junior, Senior, Master and Master Hunter Excellent for purposes of scoring since some degree of training is often involved. “Gun-shyness,” a component of gun response, cannot be tolerated in the make-up of any dog that is being evaluated as a hunting companion.

If a Junior dog catches a bird and proceeds to mouth it excessively, the dog shall receive a lower score in trainability depending on the extent of the fault. Note: This fault is scored under Retrieving in Senior and Master level tests.

A dog may be restrained (collared) to prevent interference with the dog on point.

Section 3. Instructions and Test Requirements for Senior Hunting Test. A Senior hunting dog

must show all of the attributes expected of a Junior hunting dog in (1) HUNTING and (2) BIRD FINDING ABILITY, but must be scored in these two categories with less tolerance than would be accorded to the Junior hunting dog.

Senior hunting dogs must also be scored on the basis of the following four additional categories of ability:

(3) POINTING: A dog is scored from “0” to “10” in this category on the basis of the intensity of its point as well as its ability to locate (pinpoint) birds under difficult scenting conditions and/or confusing scenting patterns. A Senior hunting dog must be steady to wing and remain until the shot. Steadiness is considered a trained ability and should be scored in the Trainability category.

(4) RETRIEVING: A dog is scored from “0” to “10” based upon the level of Retrieving ability demonstrated by the Senior hunting dog.

A Senior hunting dog must retrieve, but a dog need not deliver to hand in order to receive a Qualifying score.

If the handler of the retrieving dog assists that dog by walking towards the fallen bird, the handler will run the risk of having the dog’s Retrieving ability scored less than 5.0.

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

When a dog is called back to demonstrate its ability to retrieve in the Senior Test, it must remain steady until the shot.

Two Official Guns must be used whenever a dog is called back to demonstrate a retrieve.

(5) TRAINABILITY: As in the Junior Hunting Test, a Senior hunting dog is scored based upon its willingness to handle, obedience to commands and gun response, but the Senior hunting dog must be scored with less tolerance than a Junior hunting dog. Additionally, the Senior dog must remain steady to wing and remain until the shot on all pointed birds. The Senior dog must have adequately demonstrated steadiness to wing before the handler is permitted to fire. A senior hunting dog maybe collared away from all bird situations

A Senior hunting dog must stop on a wild flushed bird and may be commanded to do so without receiving a failing score. The firing of a blank gun for a stop to flush is at the option of the handler. The dog must adequately display its steadiness to wing before the optional shot can be fired. A Senior dog may be collared away from a stop to flush.

(6) HONORING: In order to receive a Qualifying score, a Senior hunting dog must honor; a handler may give a dog a verbal command to honor. In order to receive a Qualifying score, a Senior hunting dog must see or acknowledge that its brace mate is on point before it has been cautioned to honor. A dog that steals its brace mate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score.

After a dog has demonstrated its ability to honor, it may be restrained (collared) by the handler in order to prevent interference with the dog on point when the bird is flushed.

If a dog has had no opportunity to demonstrate honoring during the running of its brace, it shall be called back by the Judges so that it can be scored on its Honoring ability. Callbacks to demonstrate honoring should be limited to those dogs whose scores in the other abilities would otherwise enable them to receive a Qualifying score, but the Judges may call back all dogs that did not have an opportunity to honor.

In the Senior Test, an honor on the back course fulfills the honoring requirement.

Section 4. Instructions and Test Requirements for Master Hunting Test. A Master hunting dog must show all of the attributes of a Senior hunting dog in (1) HUNTING and (2) BIRD FINDING ABILITY but must exhibit these abilities in the more exceptional manner expected of a truly finished and seasoned hunting companion.

Master hunting dogs must also possess all of the attributes of the Senior dog in (3) POINTING, (4) RETRIEVING, (5) TRAINABILITY and (6) HONORING.

The Master Hunting Test requirements for these categories are identical to those of the Senior Test, except no collaring is allowed during a stop-to-flush or honor. Judges must score the Master with full expectation of the following refinements:

(3) POINTING: A dog is scored from "0" to "10" in this category on the basis of the intensity of its point as well as its ability to locate (pinpoint) birds under difficult scenting conditions and/or confusing scenting patterns. These abilities should be scored more stringently than in the Senior test. A Master hunting dog must be steady to wing and shot on all birds. Steadiness is considered a trained ability and should be scored in the Trainability category.

It is permissible for the handler to caution a Master hunting dog on point. *Cautioning, if any, is expected to be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or physical restraint shall be permitted.*

(4) RETRIEVING: A dog cannot receive a Qualifying score if it fails to deliver promptly, tenderly and absolutely to hand.

If the handler of the retrieving dog assists that dog by walking towards the fallen bird, the handler will run the risk of having the dog's Retrieving ability scored less than 5.0.

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

When a dog is called back to demonstrate its ability to retrieve in the Master level, it must demonstrate its steadiness throughout the flush and shot.

Two Official Guns must be used whenever a dog is called back to demonstrate a retrieve.

(5) TRAINABILITY: The elements of handling and gun response are viewed more stringently in a Master hunting dog.

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

The Master dog must demonstrate that it is positively steady to wing and shot on all pointed birds and in all honoring situations. A Master dog shall not be commanded to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated. A dog that breaks cannot receive a qualifying score in trainability.

It is permissible for the handler to caution a Master hunting dog on point. *Cautioning, if any, shall be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or physical restraint shall be permitted while the dog is on point.*

A Master dog must be heeled away from all game contacts unless the judges(s) deem that the situation warrants the collaring of the dog.

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

When a game bird is flushed, following a point, the handler of the pointing dog must shoulder an empty shotgun or an "imitation" long-barreled gun, and with both hands on the gun, follow the flight of the bird as if a shot were to be fired at it. Shouldering of the gun is not required in situations where live gunning will not occur. In those instances, the handler must fire a blank pistol.

(6) HONORING: A Master hunting dog must honor, but shall not be commanded to do so. A dog requiring

restraint, either physical or verbal, while establishing an honor cannot receive a Qualifying score. A dog that steals its brace mate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score.

A Master dog may be called into the vicinity of the pointing dog to demonstrate an honor. A Master hunting dog shall not be commanded to honor.

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

A Master dog must honor throughout the entire flush, shot and retrieve. However, an honoring dog may be heeled off and sent on if the retrieving dog takes overly long, or does not make the retrieve. In such instances, this shall be considered a completed honor and a dog shall not be required to demonstrate an additional honor unless it again encounters its brace mate on point (it must honor on each occasion and cannot receive a Qualifying score if it fails to do so).

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

When a dog is called back to honor in the Master Test, it must remain steady throughout the shot and retrieve. Steadiness while honoring is considered a trained ability and should be scored under the trainability category.

If a bird is shot at and missed and the pointing dog breaks, the mannerly honoring dog shall be considered to have met the honoring requirements. In the Master Test, backcourse honors and honors where only a blank cartridge is fired shall not be considered as having met the honoring requirement, but should be considered in the trainability score, except as previously stated

For Master Hunter Excellent Test, see Guidelines, Part III. Master Hunter Excellent Test Categories..

Guidelines for Pointing Breed Hunting Tests

PART I Introduction

The most important thing Judges of Pointing Breed hunting tests should consider is the purpose of the tests. As stated in the Regulations, the tests were developed “to afford an opportunity for a person to demonstrate a dog’s ability to perform in a manner consistent with the demands of actual hunting conditions.” Hunting tests are designed to evaluate the dog’s *natural hunting abilities and training*.

Judges must never think of the dogs as being in competition with each other. Scoring is based solely on how the dog’s abilities compare to the written standards (Chapter 4 of the Regulations).

The most distinctive difference between trialing and testing is that trials evaluate overall performance on a relative or competitive basis; tests evaluate the individual components of performance in a noncompetitive scenario.

Scoring is based strictly on the written standards and not on a Judge’s perception of what he or she might like to see in a competitive situation. Judges must not be so overly severe that their scoring reflects unfairly on a dog’s abilities and not so lenient that qualifying becomes meaningless.

Hunting tests are meeting the needs of a large number of hunting dog owners. Interest has grown so rapidly that it is sometimes difficult to find qualified Judges. Many Judges have field trial experience and a wealth of knowledge. Other Judges are being developed through the program itself, by actually participating and working with test committees.

Regardless of how the Judges obtained their experience, they must have thorough knowledge of how a dog hunts and complete understanding of the Regulations and requirements. It cannot be overemphasized that this is a hunting test, and that the dog’s abilities must meet the standards if it is to qualify.

Judges need not fear rating dogs too high in the early braces if they had excellent performances because they do not have to leave room to score a dog higher in a later brace. They are simply scoring a dog’s abilities against the standard, and not placing the dogs.

A wide variety of Pointing Breed owners have found the hunting tests appealing because of the three levels of accomplishment: the basic entry level of the Junior,

the intermediate level of the Senior, and full refinement expected in the highest level, the Master hunting test.

Participation in any of these levels offers the owner both the fun of training and seeing the dog work, and pride of accomplishment in earning an AKC hunting title certification.

Clubs should recognize that Judges will make the difference in how well hunting tests serve the needs of thousands of Pointing Breed owners. It is vital that only those people familiar with field work and the purpose of these hunting tests be considered as Judges.

Tests are not mechanical. Judges will have to make interpretations based on their dog knowledge and the requirements of the tests. Situations will occur that are not specifically covered in the Regulations. In these instances, the Judges make their own interpretation based upon their experience to arrive at fair decisions.

This guide is designed to help Judges understand their duties and to assist all participants in better understanding the Regulations and Standards. It includes a number of the most frequent situations that call for individual judgment.

Scoring:

Some of the most frequently asked questions about judging concern the scoring method. Judges must remember that in order for a dog to earn a Qualifying score, it must receive an average of 7 for the entire test, with no ability category scored below 5. For example, a Junior hunting dog could score perfect 10s in three categories and not qualify if the score in the fourth category was below 5.

Another frequently asked question is how do you determine what score from 0 to 10 you should give in any category. "Guidelines for Scoring AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Tests" is provided at the end of this booklet. These Guidelines are meant to provide greater consistency in scoring.

A reasonable approach is for the Judge to determine if the dog should qualify in an ability category, which would mean a minimum score of 5. The Judge then determines whether the ability exceeds or falls short of a 5, progressing toward a perfect 10. Knowing the dog must have an average of 7, the Judge then considers whether it earned a 7 or higher. With a 5, the dog would have to make up the average of 7 by scoring higher than 7 in other categories.

A Judge might want to compare the scores to grades received in school. A 7 would then be comparable to a passing grade of "C." An 8 would be a "B," a 9 would be an "A" and 10 would be an "A+."

A 0 means that the dog did not perform minimally. If the dog was birdless, it would be difficult to assign a score other than 0 in Bird Finding Ability.

Note that a birdless dog cannot be called back after the brace is concluded to find a bird except under extenuating circumstances. Dog at all levels *must* find birds.

If a dog fails to qualify in a particular category, it is important to score a dog as accurately as possible in all other categories. This provides the handler with information that can be used to plan future training.

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 which dogs will receive a Qualifying score and which dogs will not receive a Qualifying score.*

Judges Authority:

Judges are in total control of the test once the dogs are on the line. They control the pace and the handlers. Judges also have the prerogative to order up a dog at any time and can permit a handler to pick up a dog provided the Judge's permission is sought and given. Judges have jurisdiction over gunners, and must be particularly aware of gun safety. They can have the gunners replaced if they are not satisfied with them for any reason. This right, however, should not be abused for minor matters since it could present a hardship for the club. On the other hand, the club should have more than one set of gunners.

The Regulations give the Judges the authority to disqualify dogs that are not present within five minutes of being called to run by the Judges. If a dog is absent after the five minutes the bracemate is moved down to the end of the running order, to be braced with the bye-dog if one was drawn. If there is no bye-dog the Judges select a bracemate. The disqualified dog cannot run even if it shows up later.

Horses:

One of the basic premises of hunting tests is to provide an environment that resembles actual hunting conditions. Horses detract from the desired environment. Horses are also costly and difficult to find.

These are the reasons the Regulations state that only the Judges and the Marshal shall be permitted to ride in a hunting test. If horses are not available the Judges must walk or ride ATVs/UTVs.

Shooting:

The first consideration of shooting is gun safety. Everyone in the field shall wear an outer garment, minimum of a vest or jacket, that is blaze orange in tests where gunning is involved.

The Event Secretary must certify that all Official Gunners have viewed the AKC Gun Safety video within 12 months prior to the start date of the event.

Only blank pistols are permitted, except for the empty shotguns or “imitation” long-barreled guns that are carried by handlers in Master. All live shooting in Senior and Master is done only by Official Guns. A blank pistol is clearly defined in Chapter 3, Section 7 of the Regulations as being one that is incapable of discharging live ammunition.

In the Master test, when a pointed bird is flushed in live gunning situations, the handler must shoulder an empty shotgun with both hands and follow the flight of the bird as if he or she were planning to shoot the bird. Where live shooting is permitted on the course, the Official Gunners actually shoot the bird. When shooting is not permitted on course but will take place in a birdfield, the handler is not required to shoulder the gun, however the handler must fire a blank pistol for each contact on the course. Neither the Official Gunners nor the handler should fire a blank shotgun shell.

The Judges have jurisdiction over the position of the gunners and the direction in which they are firing. Positioning requires careful consideration when birds are to be flushed and shot. The Judges may order a gunner to shoot a bird on the ground if honest attempts to flush it have been made by the handler, but a gunner shall not shoot a running bird unless directed by the Judge.

An Official Gun represents the handler up to the time that game is shot, *but must not interfere or assist in any manner* with this work nor direct the work of the dog. The Regulations specify that gunners cannot flush birds.

Alcoholic beverages are the source of many violations of safe gunning practices. Gunners and Judges must refrain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages until the completion of their assignment, or better, until the completion of the day’s activities.

Judges must remember that gun safety is of paramount importance.

Do’s and Don’ts of Judging

—A Judge who has started to judge a hunting test may not handle a dog in another test until the test that he or she is judging has been fully completed.

—A Judge shall not handle a dog in the test level that he or she is judging. This also applies when a test level is run in more than one division.

—The Judges shall not rank dogs in order of the dog’s relative numerical scores and dogs shall not be “run-off” in order to separate scores.

—Judges shall not permit any training, correcting or disciplining of dogs on any part of the grounds.

—Judges must agree on which dogs will qualify and which dogs will not qualify before their scores are turned in.

—If a dog, while under judgment 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. *The offending dog must be reported to AKC in accord with Chapter 1, Section 4, of the Regulations.*

—The non-offending brace-mate shall be moved down to run with the bye-dog, if a bye-dog was drawn. Otherwise, the Judges shall select a suitable brace-mate to run with the non-offending dog.

—A dog cannot receive a Qualifying score in Senior and Master hunting tests if it renders a bird unfit for consumption. *Both Judges are responsible for inspecting the bird and agreeing that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.*

PART II

Hunting Test Categories in Junior, Senior and Master Level Tests

For scoring purposes, the test is divided into four categories for Junior Hunter and six for Senior and Master Hunter. These categories provide a complete review of the dog's total performance. They include 1. Hunting, 2. Bird Finding Ability, 3. Pointing, 4. Trainability, and in Senior and Master, 5. Retrieving and 6. Honoring.

1. Hunting:

Desire, boldness, independence, and a useful pattern of running are the elements of the Hunting category. Dogs must demonstrate all of these attributes to qualify. A dog that is out for a run in the field and does not seem to be hunting, or a dog that does not leave its handler's side to explore the territory, or which potters about slowly would be scored low in Hunting Ability. Junior hunting dogs are scored more leniently than Seniors and Masters which are expected to demonstrate experienced hunting ability.

In evaluating a dog's Hunting Ability, Judges should be looking for a good pattern, one that uses the wind and terrain to best advantage and searches all likely objectives. If a dog happens to cover a lot of ground in the process, so much the better, but range is not the primary concern. The dog should demonstrate independence in its search, but checking back to the handler should not adversely affect a Hunting score unless it is excessive. The dog and handler should present a picture of smooth and flowing teamwork, with the handler choosing the general direction of the hunt and the dog responsive to the handler's wishes, yet independent enough to maintain a good ground-covering pattern.

Making allowances for extreme weather conditions and terrain, the dog should maintain a fairly consistent range, not shortening toward the end of the time period. Range should be dictated by the type of ground being covered, but a dog should never range out of sight for a length of time that detracts from its usefulness as a practical hunting companion. Dogs are expected to perform for the required length of the test taking into account any extreme conditions affecting performance.

2. Bird Finding Ability:

The Regulations state that a dog must demonstrate the ability to find game. A dog which does a good job of hunting should find birds. A dog which is not hunting may stumble upon a bird by accident, but this should be apparent based upon its overall application. The number of birds a dog finds should not necessarily be considered as important as the “quality” of the finds. Scenting conditions, terrain and cover should be considered when scoring this category.

The course should have sufficient birds (no less than two per brace but more are strongly recommended) to ensure that a dog with good bird finding ability will locate them. There are no provisions in the Regulations for calling back birdless dogs. Dogs must find birds on their own. A dog that does not find birds cannot receive a Qualifying score.

A dog which shows all the desirable characteristics of Hunting and Bird Finding Abilities and yet only finds one bird should not necessarily receive a 5 or less in Bird Finding Ability. As stated before, it is the quality of the finds which counts. *Finding more birds than another dog should not necessarily result in a higher score since the dogs are not judged against one another; their abilities are being evaluated and scored numerically against the Standard.*

3. Pointing:

Pointing is more easily defined than Hunting and Bird Finding Abilities. Scoring in this category should reflect the style (intensity and staunchness) of the dog and its ability to pinpoint birds, especially with difficult or confusing scent patterns.

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

The Regulations are clear that a flash point cannot qualify in any of the three levels. What constitutes a flash point as opposed to an acceptable point is of particular concern in the Junior hunting test where the dog is allowed to break and chase after first establishing a point.

A flash point is generally a point in which the dog stops only momentarily before chasing the bird. The question arises as to how much longer than “momentarily” the dog must remain on point. The Regulations state that a Junior dog must hold point until the handler gets within normal gunshot range (Chapter 4, Section 1). If you were hunting, you would want to get close enough to shoot at the bird before the dog flushed it. *This requirement should be tempered by practical considerations such as the dog’s distance from the handler when it finds a bird.*

Only birds pointed by a freely running dog shall count. Dogs cannot be led to a bird on leash or cannot be heeled to a bird. Dogs led to a bird in this manner shall not count. This regulation applies anytime the dog is under judgment, including call back situations.

Dogs may occasionally point rabbits and other small game, but their Pointing ability should be neither credited nor discredited for doing so. Senior and Master dogs, however, are expected to be under control, with the degree of control varying depending on test level. Trainability scores would be affected by uncontrolled chasing.

4. Trainability:

In the Trainability category, a dog is judged on its willingness to be handled, its obedience to commands and its gun response. In Junior, this category is scored more leniently than in Senior and Master, where these same elements are judged with progressively less tolerance.

At the Master level, the requirements are quite specific. The dog must be under control at all times, and handle kindly with an absolute minimum of noise and hacking by the handler. In Junior, the dog must demonstrate “a reasonable willingness” to be handled. The Senior performance level requires that the dog be scored with less tolerance than the Junior. The scoring of “willingness to handle” should reflect the level of response by the dog.

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

A dog should be credited for relocating on its own when it can be demonstrated it is attempting to pin the bird. The dog may also relocate on command of its

handler, but the dog should not creep after or trail a bird that the handler is attempting to flush.

A Master hunting dog must demonstrate steadiness to wing and shot on all birds and cannot receive a Qualifying score if it breaks. The handler may caution a Master dog after it has established point. *Cautioning, if any, is expected to be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or physical restraint while the dog is on point shall be permitted.* The dog cannot be commanded to retrieve until positive steadiness has been demonstrated. A handler may send his dog to retrieve after the bird has hit the ground and the dog is seen to remain in position. A dog that breaks at any time before it is commanded to retrieve cannot receive a Qualifying score. Normally, a dog can move or turn in place to mark the fall of the bird, provided no significant forward motion is made. This allows movement if the bird should happen to fly behind the dog but, again, there should be no significant forward motion. A question, "How much forward motion is allowed?" — a few steps to mark the fall or out of enthusiasm, if the dog stops without command, would be permissible.

Blocking a dog to keep it from breaking calls for a lowered score because it prevents a demonstration of steadiness. If there is some question as to whether a handler is deliberately blocking a dog, the Judges might want to caution the handler.

A Senior dog must stop on a wild flushed bird and may be commanded to do so without receiving a failing score. A Master dog must stop on a wild flushed bird without being given a command to do so. A dog that fails to stop or a dog requiring a command to stop cannot receive a Qualifying score in Master.

Gun response is also evaluated under Trainability. The Regulations specify that gun-shyness cannot be tolerated in any dog being evaluated as a hunting companion. In the Junior test, a blank pistol must be fired if the dog is within reasonable gun range when a bird is flushed.

In the Senior and Master tests, gun response is evaluated when the bird is shot, or when a blank is fired over the dog on the backcourse.

In Master, the handler of the pointing dog is required to carry an empty shotgun and when game is flushed, in a shooting situation, follow the flight of the bird with both hands on the gun as if a shot were to be fired. Judges should never be overly critical of the handlers manner of shouldering a shotgun and otherwise deserving dogs should not fail to receive a qualifying score because of handlers error.

5. Retrieving:

The Retrieving category is applicable only in the Senior and Master levels. A good retrieve could be defined as a directness to the bird, quick location, prompt pick up, brisk, direct return to the handler, with tender delivery.

In Senior, the dog is not required to retrieve to hand, but the Regulations do not specify how close is close enough to qualify. One or two steps would be generally acceptable. *In Master, a dog must retrieve "absolutely to hand."* The Regulations clearly state that a handler may not assist the dog on the retrieve in either the Senior or Master tests by moving toward the downed bird.

There should not be excessive commands on the retrieve. Excessive hacking through the retrieve should be reflected in the score, even to the extent of scoring the ability as 0, especially in Master. In a difficult situation, handling would be allowed, but excessive commands would result in a lower score on Retrieving.

Mouthing is a serious fault in a hunting dog. A mangled bird is not fit for the table. Any dog which renders a bird unfit for consumption cannot receive a Qualifying score. Judges should ask to examine any bird which they feel may have been damaged by a dog. *Both Judges must agree the dog alone was responsible for the damage.*

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

Another situation which can occur is the appearance of a second live bird which pops up in the general vicinity of a downed bird. The dog is sent to retrieve a downed bird and either grabs or chases the second bird. Judges should not score the dog lower in Retrieving for this action and should score the dog on its retrieve if it returns with the bird. If the dog catches the bird and does not make an acceptable retrieve, it should be scored lower in Retrieving.

A dog should be able to retrieve a crippled running bird. A dog which is able to complete the retrieve of a running bird should not be scored lower for killing the bird, provided the bird is not damaged to the extent of being inedible.

Conditions such as the type of cover, where the bird landed, the terrain and the condition of the downed bird

sometimes makes a retrieve impossible. These conditions should be considered when scoring the retrieve.

In a retrieving situation when both dogs are on point in close proximity to each other, the judges should take control of the situation in order to ensure safety and minimize interference. One dog should be asked to hold up until the other dog has completed its bird work. If the first dog is having difficulty, it is up to the judge to decide when the second dog may proceed with its bird work.

A subject, indirectly related to the retrieve, is the delayed chase. A delayed chase means that after a bird has been flushed and the dog has not been ordered to retrieve, it chases after the bird when sent on in another direction. A delayed chase should detract from the score in Trainability.

One more thought on the retrieve is the matter of safety. Everyone involved in a situation where live ammunition is being used should wear an article of blaze orange clothing. For many people this is already commonplace, but the cooperation of all participants works to the benefit of everyone involved and reduces the risk of accident.

6. Honoring:

Honoring, like retrieving is a requirement in Senior and Master.

If a dog is given an opportunity to honor and refuses, it cannot receive a Qualifying score. If the dog does not have an opportunity to honor, it should be called back at the conclusion of the brace or the end of the test to demonstrate its willingness to honor and its style.

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

A dog that steals its bracemate's point cannot receive a Qualifying score. A dog that sits down or lays down while honoring shall not receive a qualifying score.

In Master hunting tests, the Regulations state that "a dog requiring restraint, either physical or verbal, while establishing an honor, cannot receive a Qualifying score." A dog cannot be heeled into its honor. Neither can a dog receive a Qualifying score if it steals its bracemate's point. Be sure it is not a divided find when both dogs hit scent and might go on point at

approximately the same time. In that case, both dogs would be pointing and neither demonstrating an honor. The Judges must determine which one flushes the bird or gets to retrieve if it is a shooting situation.

The Regulations permit a dog to be called into the vicinity of a pointing dog so it can see a brace mate on point. However, the dog cannot be commanded to honor. Once the honor is established, the Regulations also permit the handler to give a quiet verbal caution, but loud vocal or physical restraint is not permitted.

A Master dog must honor through the entire flush, shot and retrieve. However, it may be heeled off and sent on if the retrieving dog takes overly long, encounters a running bird, or does not make the retrieve. Generally, this can be considered a completed honor and the dog should not be required to demonstrate an additional honor unless it again encounters its brace mate on point. It must honor on each occasion and cannot receive a Qualifying score if it fails to do so.

Blocking of the dogs should not be allowed. The positioning of the gunners, and of the handler of the pointing dog, can pose as problem when they stand so that a dog called in for an honor cannot see the pointing dog. Whenever possible, the honor should be demonstrated on the course. If the dog does not have an opportunity to honor on course, it must be called back.

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

Whenever a dog is to be called back for any reason, the Judges should notify the handler in time to be ready. At the Judge's discretion, callbacks may be held at the completion of the test or following the running of the brace. This latter option simplifies matters as scores are then recorded for each brace at the conclusion of the brace.

Judges should use a pointing dog which is staunch and intense on point to provide the working dog with every opportunity to demonstrate an honor. Using the two dogs which originally ran the brace is acceptable if both dogs had otherwise Qualifying scores.

Part III. Master Hunter Excellent Test Categories.

Introduction

The purpose of the MHX test is to recognize the most accomplished dogs in the Pointing Breed Hunting Test program. The MHX dog is expected to consistently give a finished performance. The MHX test consists of two series, and a dog demonstrates its consistency by passing both series in order to pass the MHX test.

There is a slight shift in emphasis compared to the Master Hunter. There is greater emphasis placed on the dog's hunting ability – its desire and intelligence. A MHX dog's manners around birds should be held to the highest standards. When evaluating handling for a MHX dog, the handler sets the general direction (course) and the dog should use its initiative, instincts, and intelligence within the context of the course. A dog should not repeatedly look to its handler for direction.

A MHX dog shall not pass the test due to (1) not achieving an average score of 8.0 or greater, (2) failure to find a bird, (3) interference with its bracemate, (4) being gone for more than five minutes as determined by the judge, (5) failure to honor a clear opportunity (blinks the back), or (6) the dog sits or lays down during its bird work or while honoring.

A dog in a MHX test shall be picked-up for interference or an extreme breach of manners that, in the judge's opinion, could interfere with its bracemates opportunity to demonstrates its abilities. An extreme breach of manners includes a dog that breaks and chases a bird. Interference can include aggression, ongoing harassment, ongoing playing, or stealing point. The judges decide what is "ongoing" given the nature of the interference. In a MHX test, the dog shall be picked up for sitting or laying down while honoring.

Scoring

The description of what is expected of the dog is often stated as the ideal performance. Judges may have the ideal performance in their mind. However, very few dogs achieve perfection. In assessing a dog's performance, faults shall be scored lower to the extent of the fault.

Scoring in the MHX test shall be done to the half point (for example 7.5). To pass the MHX test, a dog must not receive less than a 5.0 in any category and receive an overall average of 8.0 or greater in each of the series that together make up the MHX test.

Only experienced MH level judges are allowed to judge the MHX test. MHX judges should be prepared to assign scores based on their previous judging

experience. Their experience should mitigate concerns about scoring the first couple of dogs too high, thereby not properly acknowledging better performances that might follow.

Unique situations will occur in the field. Judges needs to apply their experience and common sense on how to handle these occurrences. When in doubt, a judges should consult with their judging partner.

Knowledgeable judges can view a dog's performance differently. It is perfectly acceptable for judges to assign different scores. The event secretary will average the scores when presenting the results to the handler. However, judges must agree on whether or not a dog will receive an overall qualifying score.

MHX Test Categories

MNX Scoresheet. The scoresheet for the MHX Test has five scored categories. Compared to the MH scoresheet, the MHX categories place more emphasis on a dogs hunting ability, treats trainability as a means to an end such as bird work and handling, and eliminates honoring as a scored activity.

1. Hunting Desire – The MHX dog shall demonstrate a keen desire to hunt, boldness, and initiative. A dog that repeatedly looks to its handler for direction is not demonstrating good initiative. The dog shall demonstrate its stamina by maintaining a reasonable, consistent pace during the full time under judgement. Speed and range should not necessarily be considered an indicator of a dog's desire to hunt. Breeds have different ways of going and this should be a consideration when evaluating a dog's desire. Desire should be evaluated in terms of the dog's enthusiasm, boldness, and the initiative it displays in hunting the course.

2. Hunting Intelligence – The MHX dog shall, by its own initiative, intelligently apply itself to the course, demonstrating a useful, generally forward pattern of hunting, and using the wind and terrain to its best advantage while searching likely objectives. A dog that repeatedly looks to its handlers for direction is not demonstrating good hunting intelligence. A MHX judge must consider and recognize the quality of the find. A dog that finds birds in off-the-path locations shall be appreciated and given extra credit for its efforts. The number of birds found is not necessarily an indicator of a dog's hunting intelligence.

Judges must maintain their focus on this important skill in order to properly evaluate a dog's application to the course. Hunting intelligence must be evaluated continuously throughout the brace.

3. Handling – When evaluating handling for a MHX dog, the handler sets the general direction (course) and the dog should use its initiative, instincts, and intelligence within the context of the course. When evaluating a dog's willingness to handle, a judge shall take into consideration the likely cover and terrain, not being too quick to fault a dog that does not immediately respond to its handler if it is hunting likely objectives.

Excessive handling detracts from a dog's ability to demonstrate its initiative and intelligence and should be penalized (scored lower) to the extent of the fault.

The MHX dog should stay reasonably to the front, and not range out-of-sight for a length of time to detract from its usefulness as a practical hunting companion. Regarding "length of time to detract," once the handler is informed that in the judge's opinion the dog is "gone," the handler has five minutes from that point to show the dog. At the end of the brace, if the clock has started due to the dog's absence, the handler shall be given the remaining time to show the show. A dog shall not pass the MHX test if it is gone for more than five minutes.

4. Bird Work – Bird work means the dog's manners around birds. It encompasses a number of behaviors. Style should be evaluated in terms of the dog's intensity and staunchness while on point.

A high head and tail should not necessarily be considered good style. Different breeds were developed to point birds with different head/tail positions. However, in all cases a dog should exhibit good intensity and staunchness while on point.

A dog should not sit down or lay down during its bird work. If this occurs, the dog shall not receive a passing score in bird work.

The handler may gently caution a MHX dog on point. Cautioning shall be quiet and infrequent. No intimidation or blocking shall be permitted. Loud and excessive handling on birds shall be scored lower to the extent of the fault.

A MHX dog must demonstrate that it is positively steady to wing and shot on all pointed birds. If the find is not a retrieving situation, the handler must fire a blank pistol. If the bird is shot, the dog shall not be sent to retrieve until the bird is on the ground and the dog has positively demonstrated its steadiness. Faults shall be scored lower to the extent of the fault.

The handler of a MHX dog has the option of collaring the dog after its bird work is complete. This must be done in a gentle manner in order to direct the dog or water the dog. In no case shall the handler lift the dog's feet off the ground while collaring. The distance the dog is collared should not be excessive. The judge shall stop

the handler if the judge feels the distance is excessive.

A MHX dog should demonstrate its ability to pinpoint birds with confidence. A dog should be scored lower if it exhibits uncertainty in locating birds, especially if this occurs repeatedly, or if the dog experiences an unusually high number of non-productives. Judges should take into consideration the weather and scenting conditions when evaluating a dogs performance.

If a handler cannot locate the bird when a dog is pointing, the dog may be relocated on command. Relocations are evaluated as part of bird work.

A MHX dog must stop on a wild flushed bird without being given a command to do so. The handler shall fire a blank on a stop-to-flush bird and the dog shall be heeled or collared off before it is cast to continue its hunt.

A MHX dog shall not delay chase a flushed bird. Faults shall be scored lower to the extent of the fault.

Handlers do not need to carry a long-barreled gun in the MHX test.

5. Retrieving – The perfect retrieve consists of a good mark, where the dog goes directly to the downed bird; quick pick up; brisk, direct return to the handler; with a tender delivery to hand. There should not be excessive commands on the retrieve, with consideration for the difficulty of the situation. Anything short of perfect shall be scored lower to the extent of the fault.

In the MHX test, only the first shootable bird is required to be retrieved. The handler or the judge may request additional retrieves at their discretion. All retrieves shall be considered when determining the score for retrieving (not just the last retrieve).

In a call back, a live bird must be planted, the dog must point the bird and demonstrate steadiness to wing and shot. In no case may a dead bird be thrown for the dog. It is preferred that two gunners be used whenever a dog is called back to retrieve.

Conditions such as the type of cover where the bird fell, the terrain and condition of the downed bird sometimes makes a retrieve difficult. If the judge determines the retrieve is extremely difficult or impossible, the dog shall be given another opportunity to retrieve.

Safety is of utmost importance. Everyone involved in situation where live ammunition is being used must wear blaze orange clothing. The amount of blaze orange required will be determined by the State hunting laws where the test is being held.

Honoring – Honoring is not a scored category, however, a dog that encounters its bracemate on point

must honor throughout the entire flush, shot, and retrieve. The honoring dog may be heeled or collared off and sent on at the discretion of the judge if the pointing/retrieving dog is taking overly long. A dog that steals point shall be picked up. A dog that totally fails to honor (blinks the back) when presented with a clear opportunity shall fail the test. A dog should not sit down or lay down while it is honoring. If this occurs, the dog shall be picked up.

All dogs that are eligible to enter the MHX have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to honor when earning the MH title. Therefore, if a dog does not have an opportunity to honor, it shall not be penalized. This will eliminate the “please remain on point while the other dog is called over here” situation. There shall be no call backs to honor.

Glossary of Terms

Acting Birdy (making game)—Demonstrating the presence of game.

Alternate Handler—A second person designated on the official entry to handle a dog in a hunting level.

Attacking Dog—A dog willfully attempting to do physical harm to another dog.

Back Course—That portion of the testing area where birds shall be planted in addition to those required in a birdfield. When no birdfield is used it is within this area that at least 2 birds must be planted for each brace of dogs.

Backing—See Honoring.

Birdfield—The portion of the testing area, no less than five acres in size, in which at least 2 or more birds must be planted for each brace of dogs.

Birdless—A dog completing its brace without finding game.

Blank Pistol—Commonly known as “Starter’s Pistol”—a pistol that is incapable of discharging live ammunition (the use of blank rounds in pistols that are capable of discharging live ammunition is prohibited).

Blinking Birds—Scenting but deliberately avoiding game.

Brace—A pair of dogs (2 dogs).

Break—Leaving before, or without having been sent.

Break Away—The point at which a course begins.

Bumping Birds—Scenting and then causing game to fly without establishing point.

Bye-Dog—A dog drawn as the last dog in a testing level without a bracemate. A bye-dog cannot be run alone, it must run with a bracemate.

Call Back—An opportunity afforded a dog by the Judges after completion of its initial run. This is done to give a dog an opportunity to demonstrate a testing level requirement, such as retrieving or honoring, but never to find birds when a dog has gone birdless.

Cast—The direction and range demonstrated by a dog while seeking game.

Collaring—When the handler moves the dog by the dog’s collar. Collaring is allowed in the Junior and Senior level test. Collaring is not allowed in the Master level test. Collaring should not be confused with touching the dog. Touching the dog or holding

the dog by its collar is allowed in all testing levels for practical reasons, such as when a dog is watered.

Course—The designated route on which the dogs will perform.

Course Objectives—Variations in the terrain and/or vegetative cover which could hold game.

Cover—The vegetation on course.

Delayed Chase—Running in the direction of flushed game after either pointing, honoring or stopping to flush instead of obeying the handler's command to cast off in a different direction.

Fetch—One of a number of commands that can be given to a dog to release it to demonstrate a retrieve.

Find—Game located when a dog is hunting.

Gallery—Observers of a hunting test.

Game—Upland birds.

Gun-shy—Afraid of gunfire.

Hacking—Verbal intimidation of a dog.

Handler—The person handling a dog in a hunting test.

Heeling Off—The act of verbally causing a dog to walk at a handler's side.

Honoring—When a dog stops immediately or within a few steps, usually in a pointing stance upon observing a brace mate on point.

Interference—When a dog willfully hinders or impedes the performance of a brace mate.

Line Running—Running in a straight away manner without quartering or seeking objectives.

Mark—The characteristic of a dog to watch, or mark, the flight and/or fall of a bird.

Order Up a Dog—The Judges' command to a handler to remove a dog from the course upon completion of judging or for interference.

Pick Up a Dog—When a dog is removed from further judgment.

Pointing—When a dog indicates the presence and position of game by standing immobile and directing its muzzle toward it.

Pointing Intensity—Same as above but with exceptional concentration, power or force.

Pointing Staunchness—The degree of intensity, loftiness or elegance a dog demonstrates while pointing.

Quartering—To laterally traverse (back and forth) an area of ground while advancing forward on course.

Release a Dog—To send a dog on.

Relocate a Dog—To release a dog from a point or honor and move the dog on, usually to relocate moving game.

Retrieve—To find and bring back shot game.

Roading a Bird—The repeated pointing and relocating demonstrated by a dog while following the ground scent trail of a bird.

Running Order—The order of running braces as established by the drawing. Also refers to an optional listing of the names of all dogs and handlers in all braces in the order in which they were drawn to run.

Running Style—The manner in which a dog traverses a course, including speed and efficiency in movement.

Scratch a Dog—To withdraw a dog from a hunting test after the drawing but before the running.

Shotgun Range—The effective range of a shotgun, generally about 20-50 yards.

Steady to Flush—Maintaining a point until the pointed bird is flushed.

Steady-to-Shot—Maintaining a point during the flight of, and the shot(s) for a flushed bird.

Steady-to-Wing—Maintaining a point during the flight of a flushed bird.

Stealing Point—A dog that steals a point makes continued movement into the area where the game is present after observing another dog on point, rather than honoring.

Stop-to-Flush—When a dog stops after observing the flush of a bird.

Style—The intensity and staunchness exhibited by a dog while pointing or honoring.

Testing Level—The test level in which dogs are judged against Junior Hunter, Senior Hunter and Master Hunter Standards.

Tracking—To follow using scent.

Whoa a Dog—A command used to cause a dog to stop and stand.

Regulations Governing the Use of Tracking Devices in AKC Pointing Dog Events

The use of tracking devices is solely for locating the dog once the dog is no longer under judgement. Information obtained through the use of a tracking device must not be used to aid the handler, scout or judges. If the host club allows tracking devices, the following regulations on their use will apply:

1. AKC Approved – Only tracking collars approved by the AKC Performance Events Department will be permitted. The collar must be used as received from the manufacturer. No modifications may be made other than name tags may be added. The collar surface against the dog's neck shall be flat. See approved tracking devices at <https://www.akc.org/sports/pointing-breeds/tracking-collars/>.
2. Carrying Receivers – The scout may not carry a receiver or device capable of receiving a tracking signal, wireless or hardwired, from a receiver. The handler may carry a receiver with the permission of the Judges. The receiver tracking the dog MUST be turned off while the dog is under judgment.
3. Receivers at any other locations such as the gallery, clubhouse, campsite, vehicle, trailer, etc. MUST Be Turned Off – No one in the gallery shall track the dogs while the dogs are under judgment. This includes receivers in the parking area.
4. No “Outside” Communications – No one shall communicate in any manner with the handler, scout, judges or gallery any information obtained through the use of a tracking device while the dogs are under judgment. This includes the use of cell phones.
5. Receivers May Only Be Used Once the Dog is No Longer Under Judgment – Receivers shall only be activated once judgment has concluded. If a dog is gone at time, the dog is still under judgment until the judges indicate otherwise.
6. Dogs Lost From Previous Braces – If a dog is lost from a previous brace, the handler and scout may use their receivers during the next brace solely for the purpose of locating their dog. Once the dog is located, they must immediately turn off their receivers. They must not communicate any information they obtain through the use of their receivers concerning the dogs currently under judgment.
7. Judges May Not Consider Information Obtained Through Tracking Devices – Judges are not to

- consider any information obtained through the use of a tracking device. No one shall use information from a tracking device to attempt to influence a judge or to discredit the judge's decision.
8. The use of a tracking collar is an elective and it is the handler's responsibility to furnish the device. The running of a stake shall not be held up due to the lack of a tracking device.
 9. Two-Collar Rule – A dog may wear no more than two collars, except one flea/tick collar may be worn in addition to the two collars. All collars shall be worn on the dog's neck. If the handler elects to use a tracking collar, it shall remain on the dog during the entire time the dog is under judgment. If the handler removes the tracking collar, the dog shall be considered out of judgment. *Only one of the two collars may be a tracking collar.*
 10. The use of tracking devices is at the discretion of the host club. For Hunting Tests, the premium list must state that tracking devices are not allowed, otherwise they will be allowed.
 11. Rescinding Use – Use of specific tracking devices may be rescinded at any time by the AKC Performance Events Department if the regulations pertaining to their use become overly difficult to enforce or in the case of repeated misuse.
 12. Tracking devices may be worn during call backs, including a call back for retrieve. If a dog did not wear a tracking collar during its brace, it may not wear one in a call back.

Note: Electronic flashing collars are not allowed in AKC Pointing Breed field events.

Penalty for Misuse of Tracking Devices

If an Event Committee determines a violation of these Regulations may have occurred, the accused (which includes anyone involved in the misuse of the tracking device including the act of communicating improperly obtained information) shall be charged with misconduct. An Event Committee hearing must be held. If the Event Committee determines through the hearing process that a violation did occur, the accused shall be immediately suspended from all forms of participation in AKC Pointing Breed field events. The dog shall be disqualified from the stake.



**OFFICIAL AKC SCORESHEET FOR
THE MASTER HUNTER EXCELLENT TEST
FOR POINTING BREEDS**

- In the MHX Test, a dog is evaluated on its desire, intelligence, and bird work while working cooperatively with its handler.
- Anything less than perfect should be penalized to the extent of the fault.
- Score to the half point e.g. 7.5.

Dog's Call Name: _____ Breed: _____

Brace #: _____ Handler: _____

MHX Categories

1. Hunting Desire

- A. Enthusiasm – boldness
- B. Demonstrates initiative
- C. Stamina – maintains reasonable pace

2. Hunting Intelligence

- A. Demonstrates a useful pattern of hunting thru its own initiative
- B. Uses wind and terrain to best advantage
- C. Searches likely objective – applies itself to the course
- D. Quality of the find (birds found off-the-path) should be recognized & appreciated

3. Handling

- A. Works cooperatively w handler w/o excessive handling
- B. Stays reasonably to the front
- C. Never ranges out of sight for a length of time to detract

4. Bird Work (Manners around birds)

- A. Style (intensity and staunchness)
- B. Ability to pinpoint birds with confidence
- C. Relocate on command
- D. Steady to wing and shot – sent to retrieve only after bird is on the ground
- E. Non-productive points
- F. Stop-to-flush with no command
- G. Delayed chase

5. Retrieving

- A. Marking, prompt pickup
- B. Prompt delivery to hand
- C. No excessive commands, w consideration for difficulty of the situation

Does not pass due to –

- Failed to find a bird
- Interference (includes stealing point)
- Gone more than 5 minutes
- Failure to honor a clear opportunity

TOTAL

AVERAGE

To qualify, a dog must average 8.0 or greater and not score less than 5.0 in any category.

Judges must agree if a dog qualifies prior to turning in their scores.

**OFFICIAL AKC SCORECARD
HUNTING TESTS FOR
POINTING BREEDS**

Indicate whether Junior, Senior or Master

DOG'S NAME _____

BRACE # _____

HANDLER _____

Score all categories of ability on the basis of 0-10.
Do not score Retrieving and Honoring in Junior.

1. HUNTING	
2. BIRD FINDING ABILITY	
3. POINTING	
4. TRAINABILITY	
5. RETRIEVING Not Applicable in Junior	
6. HONORING Not Applicable in Junior	
TOTAL	
AVERAGE *	

* Divide total by 4 in Junior, and divide by 6 in Senior and Master for overall average.

In order to receive a Qualifying score a dog must acquire a minimum of not less than 5 on each of the categories of ability (4 categories in Junior, 6 categories in Senior and Master) with an overall average of not less than 7. Judges must agree on which dogs will qualify and which dogs will not qualify before scores are turned in.

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Guidelines for Scoring AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Tests

Note: This guideline must be tempered by the testing level under consideration. A Senior hunting dog must be scored with less tolerance than a Junior hunting dog and a Master hunting dog is expected to perform in a more refined manner than a Senior hunting dog.

Scoring	Interpretation	Explanation	Illustrative Examples
0	Lack of Performance	Disqualification warranted by extreme departure(s) from standard or complete lack of performance.	Aggression, no find, refuses to acknowledge honor, gun shy, bird unfit for consumption, no point, extreme interference with brace-mate, etc.
1-4	Unacceptable Performance	Performance not to standard. Basic requirements not met. Significant fault(s) exhibited or major handler error(s).	Timid, does not hunt, bumps bird intentionally, flash point, out of sight too long, very disobedient, steals point, breaks point early, very ineffective retrieve, handler guides dog to bird, commands honor prior to acknowledgment, etc.

(continued)

Guidelines for Scoring AKC Pointing Breed Hunting Tests *(cont'd)*

Scoring	Interpretation	Explanation	Illustrative Examples
5-6	Basic Qualifying Performance	<p>Performance barely meets requirements.</p> <p>Performance meets essential requirements; however, there is need for improvement(s).</p>	<p>Excessive checking back, pottering, several “nonproductive” points, ignores likely cover, creeps on point or honor, point lacks intensity, repeated delayed response to commands, inefficient retrieve, etc.</p>
7	Average Qualifying Performance	<p>Performance shows promise and meets essential requirements—could have been done more effectively.</p>	<p>Useful hunting pattern, hold point just long enough, completes the retrieve but drops bird just short of handler, responds to commands but not always as quickly as desired, moves a step or two on shot, etc.</p>
8-9	Outstanding Qualifying Performance	<p>Performance exceeds essential requirements. A few minor areas for improvement may be observed.</p>	<p>Hunts intelligently with speed and stamina, shows very good intensity in difficult situations, no movement at shot, honors quickly, etc.</p>
10	Exceptional Qualifying Performance	<p>Performance that significantly exceeds all requirements and is both efficient and effective.</p>	<p>Something really exceptional, i.e., difficult blind retrieve, honors without handler present, multiple high-quality finds, extreme intensity on point, no verbal commands, etc.</p>

AKC Code of Sportsmanship and Civility

Preface: The tradition of competitive purebred dog events predates 1884—the year the American Kennel Club (AKC) was founded. Those involved in these sports share core values, including a strong commitment to sportsmanship and a welcoming, respectful culture that embraces the diverse community united by a love of dogs. These values are evident across all aspects of the sport: conformation, performance, companion, and family dog activities. Many believe that the enduring principles of sportsmanship and civility are key reasons the sport has thrived for over 140 years.

Recognizing that periodically reaffirming our shared values strengthens our community, the revised code will be shared widely to highlight the foundational values and principles that define the sport.

- Sportspeople always place the welfare of their dog above all else.
- Sportspeople prioritize the long-term health and preservation of their breed, making decisions that reflect a deep commitment to responsible breeding and ownership.
- Sportspeople respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportspeople conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the sport, the American Kennel Club, and themselves.
- Sportspeople appreciate, encourage and support all who associate with and participate in the sports by fostering an environment where respect, equity, inclusion, and courtesy are foundational.
- Sportspeople understand, uphold and abide by all AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies.
- Sportspeople contribute to a positive atmosphere at events by avoiding negative gossip, disparagement, or unsportsmanlike behavior.
- Sportspeople extend their values of civility, fairness, and respect to all digital and social media platforms.
- Sportspeople actively support the education and mentorship of newcomers, helping them learn the rules, values, and traditions of the sport in a respectful way.
- Sportspeople recognize that they are role models in the sport, and strive to lead by example through humility, kindness, and ethical conduct.
- Sportspeople treat fellow exhibitors, judges, officials, volunteers, spectators, and AKC staff with dignity and respect, regardless of experience, background, or differences in opinion.
- Sportspeople are committed to fair play, honesty, courtesy, and competition, approaching both winning and losing with grace.
- Sportspeople understand that strong competition and civility can—and should—coexist. They appreciate the quality of their competitors, and the effort put forth by others.
- Sportspeople uphold their responsibilities to the sport of purebred dogs and refuse to let personal gain or self-interest influence their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsperson judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsperson judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsperson 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 sportsperson exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- Sportspeople are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportspeople decline to exploit any positions of authority or recognition for personal advantage.
- Sportspeople appreciate those that have gone before them and realize they are responsible for maintaining and enhancing the sport for future generations.

Complete text of booklet available at:
www.akc.org

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