



Ducks Unlimited Retriever of the Year

Regional Hunt Test Rules

Eligibility Criteria:

1. The following purebred retrievers are eligible: Airedale Terriers, American Water Spaniels, Barbet, Boykin Spaniels, Chesapeake Retrievers, Curly-Coated Retrievers, Drentsche Patrijshond, English Springer Spaniels, Flat-Coated Retrievers, German Shorthaired Pointer, German Wirehaired Pointer, Golden Retrievers, Irish Water Spaniels, Labrador Retrievers, Miniature Poodles, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers, small and large Munsterlander, Spinone Italiano, Standard Poodles, Vizsla, Weimaraner, Wirehaired Griffon and Wirehaired Vizsla are eligible.
2. The dog entered must be over one year of age.
3. The region shall consist of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland or Delaware.
4. The dog and their owner shall be a resident of any of the 5 states. If a dog is trained out of the region by a professional trainer for more than 6 months or 180 days out of a rolling calendar year, the dog or dogs are not eligible.
5. If the dog is co-owned, the dog's owner who resides in one of the 5 states must be the handler.
6. The event committee and the event chairman will have jurisdiction over the event. The event committee will decide the eligibility of the dogs and their handlers. All decisions made by the judges are final. Any disputes regarding judging must be addressed through the test committee.

Attire:

1. All handlers, workers and judges must wear field-appropriate hunting attire. Camouflage is preferred but not required. No white or light-colored clothing is allowed. This includes white or light hats. Anyone with white or gray hair must wear a hat. Dark or black gloves are acceptable.

Game Birds:

1. Ducks, pheasants or chukar can be used. A mixed bag is permitted.

Test Format:

1. The test will consist of a land series, a water series, and a final series.
2. The final series will consist of the top 5 dogs only.
3. Each dog-handler will start with 100 points.
4. The land and water series will have a maximum of 30 points each.
5. The final series will have a maximum of 40 points.

General Rules:

1. The test will consist of three series: land series, water series and a final series. The final series may consist of land, water, or a combination of land or water. Each dog will start with 100 points. Points that are deducted can be broken into ½ points. For example, a deduction for refusals on a blind could be – 2.5 points.
2. If at any point the test element is given a -15, the dog is out of contention.
3. Collars are not permitted.
4. Judges may use a test dog at their discretion.
5. If a dog is handled on more than one mark in any series, deductions will be more severe than if handled on only one.
6. Repeated handling on marks can result in elimination.
7. Bitches in season are not permitted on the grounds of the test site.
8. Test Distance:
 - Maximum land test distance – 175 yds
 - Maximum water test distance – 150 yds
 - Maximum land blind retrieve – 150 yds the final series 200 yds max
 - Maximum water blind retrieve – 100 yds
9. Commands:
 - Only hand signals or whistles are permitted.
 - No touching or talking to your dog once the first bird is thrown.
10. Steadiness and control at the line
 - The dog must be quiet and steady at point of origin. (No barking or excessive noise)
 - The handler may touch the dog to steady it. However, no rough handling will be permitted.
 - Leads shall not be visible to the dog.
 - The handler/dog are under judgement after the judges call the handler/dog to come to the line.
 - A controlled break will score a -5. A second controlled break, excessive creeping or consistent creeping will eliminate the dog.
 - Honoring another dog's work will be required on at least one series.
 - An uncontrolled break where the dog does not return quickly or if the dog interferes with the working dog will result in elimination.
 - The dog may be commanded to retrieve only once from the point of origin unless the judges deem there was confusion or interference from another dog.
11. Delivery:
 - The bird must be delivered to hand. Excessive mouthing or damage to the bird will result in elimination.

12. Test Features:

- Each series may have double or triple marks.
- A minimum of one blind retrieve for each series.
- Up to two marks may be thrown simultaneously to simulate a real hunting scenario. The birds must land no more than 40-50 yds. from each other when thrown simultaneously.
- Live fliers cannot be part of the simultaneously thrown birds.
- Live fliers are permitted on any series.
- Walk-ups can be used in any series.

13. Honoring another dog:

- Honoring another dog working is crucial in hunting, the dog must not interfere with the working dog at any point.
- A controlled break is permitted.
- Only one controlled break is allowed for the entire test.
- If the honoring dog breaks and interferes with the working dog, the breaking dog is eliminated. If eliminated, the dog must be placed on lead.
- A remote honor of 10' max can be used.
- The honoring dog's view of the birds must not be obstructed.

14. Diversionary Bird:

- A diversionary bird may be in any series.
- If the dog switches and attempts to retrieve the diversionary bird, the dog will be eliminated.

15. Blind Retrieves:

- The dog must demonstrate the ability to take an initial straight line when sent.
- The dog must respond crisply to whistles and hand signals.
- The dog may be cast from the point of origin only once.

16. Handler Gun Safety:

- Handling a firearm correctly is of the highest importance and if not done correctly will result in elimination. The firearm must be opened and emptied before handing the firearm to anyone.
- Handlers will need to shoot a shotgun from the point of origin on at least one series.
- After shooting, the handler will hand the unloaded shotgun to another person or place the shotgun in a holder after the dog is sent and before handling their dog.
- Judges may give a warning with a deduction for subpar handling of the firearm to the handler at their discretion but not more than once.

17. Scratch Policy:

- The entry fee includes the dinner fee, Entry Express fee of \$6.85 and a \$35 Ducks Unlimited membership. The cost of the Entry Express fee and the Ducks Unlimited membership is non-refundable. The handler must provide a veterinarian document to the test chairman 24 hours prior to the test. The document must include the date, the veterinarian address, phone number and signature.

18. Recommended Entry Level of Dogs:

- Master Hunter- AKC
- Senior Hunter – NAHRA
- Master Hunter – HRC
- AFC – AKC
- FC – AKC
- QAA - AKC

Series Guidelines

Land Series:

The Land Series shall simulate a day hunting in the field. Description in the Test Features section shall apply. It will consist of 5 birds/marks and at least one blind. The handler will handle a shotgun and discharge the firearm from the point of origin in the direction of the birds. As in real life, more than one bird can fall at the same time. They can also fall all around the hunter. With that in mind, the test can also consist of multi-birds thrown simultaneously. If multi-birds are used, the maximum distance is 100 yds. They must be in front of the dog. No more than two birds can be thrown at the same time. Multi-birds can only be used on land series. The handler can handle the dog on only one of the multi-birds thrown. For other birds/marks thrown, the maximum distance is 175 yds. Diversion birds can be used but only once in any one of the series. One bird shall be a live flyer but cannot be thrown with the multi birds. The use of layout blinds and dog blinds are recommended.

An Honor is also required. If a dog breaks and is called back without interfering with the working dog, the dog can remain in contention. However, if the dog interferes with the working dog, the breaking dog must be put on lead and is eliminated. Only one controlled break is allowed. The honor dog must be between 5' and 10' away from the working dog. The handler cannot block the view of the working dog or the marks. Remote sending of the dog can be used.

The top 50% of the dogs will be called back to the water series.

Water Series:

The Water Series shall simulate waterfowl hunting on the water, pond or marsh. Descriptions in the Test Features section shall apply. The handler will handle a shotgun and discharge the firearm from the line in the direction of the birds. The water series will consist of 5 birds/marks being thrown and at least 1 blind retrieve, maximum distance of 150yds. A water series must have swimming water of at least 25 yds. The dog may work from a boat, with the handler receiving the bird in the boat or on the shore. The dog shall sit quietly in the boat with the handler and be sent from there, after which the handler will receive the birds from land next to the boat. The handler can remain in the boat until the dog returns or exit the boat at any time after the dog is sent.

An honor is required. If a dog breaks and is called back without interfering with the working dog, the dog is not eliminated. However, if the dog interferes with the working dog, the breaking dog must be put on lead and is eliminated. Only one controlled break is allowed in the test. The honor dog must be between 5' and 10' away from the working dog. The handler cannot block the view of the working dog or the marks. Remote sending of the dog can be used.

Final Series:

The final series will consist of the dogs with the five highest scores. The series may be water, land or combination of land or water. The series will consist of 5 retrieves of 150 yds max and a blind retrieve of 200 yds max. The marks/birds can be any of the land or water series explained earlier. The blind should be planted after each dog runs and will be judged the same as the other blinds. Diversion birds can be used at any time before, during or after a retrieve and/or blind. The judges may require the handler to run a blind after the diversion bird is thrown. Due to weather, day light or an unforeseen circumstance, this series may be altered or eliminated.

After the final blind retrieve, the judges will tally the scores and the dog with the highest score will be the winner. The other dog's scores will be in order of greatest to least. The judges' scores are final.

Point Deductions

2 Point Deduction:

- Poor blind lining,
- Popping,
- Slight Vocalization,

5 Point Deduction

- Not walking at Heel,
- Creeping up at the point of origin, before or after a bird is thrown,
- Cast or Whistle Refusals - except a come-in whistle.
- Excessive Verbal Commands - Handler speaks in an intimidating manner towards the retriever.
- Excessive Vocalization from the dog.

- Dropping or Refusal to Deliver to Hand
- The dog is out of sight for an extended period.

10 Point Deduction:

- Avoidance -Not challenging the test set forth by the judges. Penalties may be deemed higher at judge's discretion.
- Controlled Break.
- Unsafe Gun Handling – If a second warning is issued the dog and handler are disqualified.
- Handle to the Area of the Fall.

Disqualification:

- Uncontrolled break.
- A retrieve of a poison bird out of order.
- Switching, the dog must establish a hunt in the old fall.
- Re-Send – If a dog is sent from the point of origin and refuses or returns once sent. Unless the judges deem there was confusion,
- A handler may be disqualified for interfering in the test either verbally or physically with dogs, judges, marshals, bird boys, or spectators.
- Physical abuse of a retriever will result in immediate disqualification for both the handler and all his/her dogs entered for that event.
- A retriever will be disqualified for fighting or attacking another dog or person. The handler is not disqualified and may run other dogs.
- Excessive hard mouth or failure to deliver to hand.
- A second warning for gun safety.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct. - If at any time, anyone exhibits behavior that the judges, test chairman or test marshal consider unsportsmanlike that person will be asked to leave the test and test grounds. If the person is running in the hunt test, he/she will be disqualified. This includes swearing, loud talking, after given a warning and any type of derogatory comments.

Awards:

First place – DU over/under shotgun, Tristar 12/20 gauge Setter St, a set of 28” barrels with a Turkish Walnut semi-gloss finish, three silver chokes per barrel, case color receiver with DU logo

Second place – DU shotgun 12 gauge ATA Venza semi-auto, 3” chamber, choke tubes, walnut stock

Third place – DU shotgun ATA ETRO semi-auto 3” chamber, 28” barrel, synthetic black stock, DU logo

Fourth place – DU Consultation TBD

Fifth place – DU Consultation TBD

Note:

All New Jersey winners must have a valid New Jersey purchasers firearms ID card. All firearms must be picked up in Edison NJ. Firearms can be shipped out of state at the winner’s expense.

Prizes are subject to availability and may be replaced with like items.