

WORKING TEST GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

OVERVIEW

The WD test is a test which allows participants' dogs the opportunity to demonstrate the abilities expected of a companion hunting dog. While no portion of the test may be failed in order to qualify for the WD or WDX title, the judge should consider the overall performance of the dog to be of greater importance than minor flaws in any one aspect of the test.

STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE

The dog is expected to demonstrate the ability to hunt and locate game, flush it from cover, and to retrieve it to the handler. The dog need not be steady to wing and shot but should be in reasonable control by the handler. The dog should not demonstrate fear of cover or game and should maintain a reasonable working distance. Retrieves do not need to be made to hand.

The dog is expected to be steady at the line, be it land or water; the dog may be restrained gently by the collar or lead. Excessive leaping, lunging, or vocalizing by the dog is undesirable but not grounds for failure.

Handling is ideally done quietly. Dogs that require excessive coaxing to perform any aspect of the test are demonstrating a lack of those abilities required on a hunt.

Dogs will be given the opportunity to find, flush, and retrieve two birds from land and to make one marked retrieve from the water.

Demonstration of natural abilities is to be regarded with greater importance than trained abilities for the WD.

A dog worthy of a WDX should demonstrate a level of enthusiasm, skill and control as would be expected of a dog with a greater degree of experience and training.

WD/WDX TEST ELEMENTS

HUNTING

The dog is expected to stand quietly on the line and may be gently restrained.

Upon instruction from the judge, the handler may cast his dog, which will then begin hunting. The handler walks behind the dog and may direct the dog along the course.

The manner in which the dog covers ground is less important than his ability to find the birds. Hunting may be done in sections or in a zigzag quartering pattern. Boldness to cover and use of wind is more important than pattern, though the dog should cover the ground as thoroughly as possible. Occasional back casting is not to be failed so long as the dog can be directed back to the front of the handler.

A dog that runs wildly out of control, that remains behind the handler, that refuses to range out to hunt, that does not show any attempt to hunt or does not show any interest in birds when they are encountered or shows any evidence of gun-shyness should be marked as FAILED.

A dog that demonstrates confidence in the cover, enthusiasm, intelligent use of scent/wind, thoroughly covers ground and shows good response to command/direction should be marked EXCELLENT.

FINDS AND FLUSHES BIRD

Upon locating game, the dog should demonstrate determination to put the bird to flight. The dog may drive directly in for the flush or hesitate momentarily before attempting to flush. The dog should not require excessive encouragement from the handler to flush.

In the event that both birds found by the dog fail to fly and are picked up and retrieved to the handler, this will satisfy the Flush requirement of the Test.

Complete failure to flush (or pickup a non-flyer), dogs that are observed to locate a bird and then turn away and ignore it, or that do not produce birds despite favorable conditions should be marked as Failed.

A dog that demonstrates the ability to efficiently locate and flush game (or pick it up and retrieve it to the handler) with confidence and within reasonable gun range should be marked EXCELLENT.

MARK AND RETRIEVE ON LAND

Upon the shot, the dog should mark where the bird has fallen, go to that location and recover the bird. The pick-up and return of the dog should be reasonably prompt with consideration for conditions.

In the event of a particularly long retrieve or difficult conditions, the judge may allow the handler to advance toward the dog for a short distance.

In the event that the guns fail to down a bird for the dog to retrieve, the judge or gunner should throw a dead bird into the air for the dog to mark and retrieve. This should be done with a simultaneous gunshot.

A dog that fails to mark a fall should be given another opportunity to mark and retrieve. If he is clearly not marking despite favorable conditions he should be marked FAILED.

In the event that the dog completely fails to recover the bird, fails to return to close proximity of the handler, or the bird is crushed or damaged by the dog as to be unfit for consumption, the dog should be marked FAILED.

A dog that marks, recovers, and returns with their bird undamaged in a brisk and direct manner should be marked EXCELLENT.

RETRIEVES FROM WATER

The dog may be gently restrained. A bird is thrown approximately 20-30 feet into the water and a shot is fired. The dog is released for the retrieve at the handler's discretion once the bird hits the water.

The dog should enter the water without excessive coaxing, swim to the bird and return with it.

Dropping the bird within the handler's reach from the water's edge is sufficient. Handler may kneel or back up the bank a few feet to encourage the dog to exit the water, but may not enter the water themselves.

A dog that must be physically forced into the water that fails to return to the handler with the bird, that refuses to come out of the water, or that leaves the bird in the water well out of reach of the handler should be marked Failed.

A dog that enters the water with minimal hesitation, swims directly to the bird, and returns directly with it to the handler and releases the bird at least to the water's edge should be marked EXCELLENT.

AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES

A dog which completes all parts of the test in a creditable manner may be awarded the WORKING DOG (W.D.) certificate.

A dog which completes all parts of the test with excellent scores should be awarded the WORKING DOG EXCELLENT (W.D.X.) certificate.

Signed : _____ (JUDGE)

Date: _____

Approved ECSCA _____ Revised 12/20/07