

**FIELD TESTS  
OF THE  
NOVA SCOTIA DUCK TOLLING  
RETRIEVER CLUB (USA)**



**RULES & REGULATIONS**

BASIC RETRIEVING & TOLLING TEST

WORKING CERTIFICATE

WORKING CERTIFICATE INTERMEDIATE

WORKING CERTIFICATE EXCELLENT

***Amended to September 2015***

*Revision of these Rules & Regulations of the Field Tests of the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) approved by the Officers & Board of Directors of the club on September 14, 2015.*

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Chair - Field Events

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# I.

## **BREED HISTORY AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever was developed in the Little River region of Nova Scotia in the early 1800's to toll (or lure) and retrieve waterfowl. The tolling dog runs, jumps and plays along the shoreline in full view of a flock of ducks, occasionally disappearing from sight and then quickly reappearing, aided by the hunter, who throws small sticks or a ball for the dog. The dog's playful actions arouse the curiosity of the ducks swimming offshore and they are lured within gunshot range. The Toller is subsequently sent out to retrieve the dead or wounded birds.

The Toller is highly intelligent, easy to train and has great endurance. A strong and able swimmer, he is a natural and tenacious retriever on land and from water, setting himself for springing action the moment the slightest indication is given that retrieving is required. His strong retrieving desire and playfulness are qualities essential to his tolling ability.

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) holds the belief that sporting breed dogs, such as the Toller, should demonstrate the basic instincts and traits necessary to adequately execute the tasks for which they were bred in order to claim the title of breed champion. The founding board of directors and membership established a precedent, that to be awarded a club championship title a Toller must show that it still has these basic skills. Tollers passing a qualified hunting test administered by one of several recognized national field work groups, such as NAHRA, UKC/HRC, GRCA, etc., will have satisfactorily satisfied this part of the championship requirements.

In the late 1980's the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) instituted its own test designed to evaluate the innate working abilities of the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever (Toller). The name of this test was the Natural Instinct Test (NIT). The purpose of the test was to establish that a dog possessed retrieving instincts; "... to reveal the presence or absence of innate ability, not the strength of that ability or the dog's trainability". The test was later renamed the Basic Retrieving and Tolling (BRT) Test in order to clarify that some training was required, although the purpose of the test remained the same. Most of the entrants would be young dogs with very little training. While the BRT satisfies the field test requirement for obtaining the Champion title from NSDTRC (USA), the BRT is in itself not a breed title.

After the BRT program was placed in operation, NSDTRC (USA) elected to create a further program which included a title. This was the initial Working Certificate program. This program has now evolved into a three-step program with the titles of Working Certificate (WC), Working Certificate Intermediate (WCI), and Working Certificate Excellent (WCX) awarded to the dogs that successfully complete the requirements at the respective levels.

## **II.**

# **APPLYING TO HOLD A TEST & ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

### **APPLICATIONS TO HOLD A TEST:**

Any member in good standing of the NSDTRC (USA) wishing to hold a BRT test or a WC/I/X event must apply to the NSDTRC (USA) for approval. Application must be made at least 90 days prior to the date of the event. Those planning to host an event are encouraged to hold at least two levels of competition.

Application must be made on the approved form available from the Field Events Chairman. The Field Events Chairman must give written approval to hold the event within seven working days of receipt of the application. Copies of this approval must be sent to the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Director and Records. The Field Events Chairman will approve the judges.

If another organization in the US allows tollers to compete in their tests, a pass shall only count as an NSDTRC Club title if the rules for the test outlined in this booklet are followed and the appropriate form (WC, WCI or WCX Qualification Form) is filled out by the handler, signed by the judges and returned to Records. The judges must be qualified by the Field Events Chairman according to the rules set forth in this booklet. Judges Qualification forms must be submitted to the Field Events Chair no less than 30 calendar days prior to the event. A BRT test may only be offered by NSDTRC (USA).

If a toller passes a field test sponsored by any recognized field organization whose written field test standard meets the NSDTRC (USA) minimal requirement, the pass may be used as an alternative to fulfilling the NSDTRC Championship requirement in place of passing the Basic Retrieving and Tolling Test. In this case, the 'Alternative Field Qualification Form' must be filled out by the handler, signed by the judges and returned to Records.

### **INTERPRETATIONS:**

- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) may be referred to as the "club" or "NSDTRC (USA)."
- A Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever may be referred to as "Toller" or "dog."

### **APPOINTING A TEST COMMITTEE & OTHER OFFICIALS:**

Any person wishing to host a test must identify by name the members of a three person Test Committee, a Test Secretary, a Test Chairman and a Test

Treasurer. The Committee shall be comprised of three members of NSDTRC (USA) and may include the Test Secretary. However, the Test Chairman and the Test Secretary may not be the same person. A majority of the Committee must be present during the course of the test and in the event there is not a majority of the Committee available, the Test Chairman shall appoint sufficient additional Committee members to comply with this rule.

The Test Committee will have complete responsibility for the conduct of the test and for seeing that the rules of NSDTRC (USA) are followed except for those areas coming under the sole jurisdiction of the appointed judges. In the event of conflict or questions on the conduct of the test, the Committee shall have the authority to decide on any matter except those matters which are the jurisdiction of the judges.

While it is the responsibility of the judges to set up the tests, if a test runs contrary to the intent of the NSDTRC(USA) rules or if a test poses a safety hazard, the Committee should step in and tactfully explain the problem to ensure a safe and proper test.

The Test Secretary must ensure that a copy of the BRT, WC, WCI, and WCX rules is present at the test site.

The Test Secretary must return the official signed and marked catalog to Records within 10 working days of the test.

A complete list of the responsibilities of each test official can be obtained from the Events Chairperson.

No alcoholic beverages will be consumed at the test site or by test participants until after all tests are completed for the day.

## **PREMIUMS:**

Premium lists must include the following: date and time of the start of the test, location, judges, test levels being offered, double entry stakes offered, time and date of closing of entries, entry fees, type of game to be used, name and address of Test Secretary, if late entries will not be accepted, and how the running order will be decided. The premium must also include the NSDTRC (USA) approved entry form (obtainable from the Field Events Chairman) and the following paragraph:

*“A dog must be registered with the American Kennel Club and documentation of AKC registration must be on file with Records to be eligible for Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) titles. For dogs registered with AKC after May 1, 2000 that earn AKC titles and registration information is published in the AKC New Titles of Record Report, no copy of the AKC registration is necessary for club titles to be recorded; for dogs that earn a club field test title prior to any AKC titles, a copy of the AKC registration Certificate must be sent to Records for the title to be recorded”*

A copy of the premium must be sent to the Field Events Chairman and to Records.

Availability of birds and number of dogs pre-entered are of prime importance. Pre-entered dogs/handlers should not be penalized by poor conditions of game due to overuse or an overly long test day due to late entries. If late entries absolutely will not be accepted, this must be stated in the premium list.

Until further notice, entry fees should be designed to cover costs. Any moneys in excess of costs become the property of the NSDTRC (USA) except when such tests are held and sponsored by a club other than the NSDTRC (USA) (e.g. Golden Retriever Club, etc.).

### **CATALOGS/RUNNING ORDER/JUDGE'S SHEETS:**

Running order will be determined by the Test Secretary by a draw at closing. A running list or catalog will be available for all participants on the day of the test. The list must include the dog's registered name and number, the owner's name, the handler's name, and the order in which the dogs are to be run. Only NSDTRC (USA) and AKC titles may be listed with the dog's name.

An official copy of the running order/catalog shall be maintained by the Test Secretary. The following certification must appear in the official catalog following the last dog listed in each test:

<b>JUDGES CERTIFICATION</b>
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: _____
<b>TEST SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATION</b>
I certify that the Judges have verified the above information and signed this page.
Number of Dogs Entered: _____ Total Starters: _____
Number of Qualifying Scores: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Test Secretary _____

Following completion of judging in each Test, the 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 Test Secretary and the Judges shall complete their appropriate certifications.

The Test Secretary will keep the judge's sheets for a period of one year.

## **ELIGIBILITY:**

- ◆ A dog must be registered with the American Kennel Club and documentation of AKC registration must be on file with Records to be eligible for Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) titles. For dogs registered with AKC after May 1, 2000 that earn AKC titles and registration information is published in the AKC New Titles of Record Report, no copy of the AKC registration is necessary for club titles to be recorded; for dogs that earn a club field test title prior to any AKC titles, a copy of the AKC registration Certificate must be sent to Records for the title to be recorded.
- ◆ Unregistered Dogs: Owners of unregistered dogs must register their dog with the American Kennel Club within 30 days of their dog passing a BRT, WC, WCI or WCX test (as described in the AKC Rules Applying to Dog Shows) and a copy of the AKC certificate must reach Records within 60 days of their dog passing the test or the pass will be forfeited. (Extensions as outlined in the AKC Rules Applying to Dog Shows shall be honored by the NSDTRC (USA) if documentation of such extensions is forwarded to Records).
- ◆ To participate in the WC/WCI/WCX, a dog must be at least six (6) months of age on the day of the test. There is no minimum age limit to be tested in the BRT.
- ◆ No bitches in season will be allowed in competition.
- ◆ Any dog may compete at the WC or WCI level. Only Tollers with a WCI may compete at the WCX level.
- ◆ At the sole discretion of the Test Committee, other retriever breeds are allowed to compete at all levels under the following conditions:
  - The dog must be at least six months of age.
  - No pre-entered Toller shall be excluded from competition if a large entry is received.
- ◆ A dog may be entered in more than one stake or level IF that option is listed in the premium. The lower stake must be run prior to the more advanced stake and an entirely different field location must be used.
- ◆ A dog is not eligible to receive a qualifying score in a test if a judge of that test or any member of the judge's immediate family has owned or trained the dog within six(6) months of the day of the test.
- ◆ Judges may not compete with their own dogs in a test on the day they are judging.
- ◆ No dog may be used as a test dog that is running in contention in a different stake.
- ◆ There shall be no training of dogs on the grounds of a hunting test, either within 24 hours of the commencement of the event, or at any time during the event. Training for the purpose of this section shall be defined as any activity intended to strengthen or improve a dog's abilities, skills or knowledge. The test grounds shall be defined in advance by the Field Test Committee.

## TITLES:

- ◆ The Basic Retrieving and Tolling Test (BRT) satisfies the field test requirement for obtaining the Champion title from NSDTRC (USA), the BRT is in itself not a breed title.
- ◆ Any eligible toller that passes the Working Certificate Test will receive the title WC.
- ◆ Any eligible toller that passes the Working Certificate Intermediate Test will receive the title WCI.
- ◆ Any eligible toller that passes the Working Certificate Excellent Test and has the title of NSDTRC (USA) WCI will receive the title WCX.

## RIBBONS:

A ribbon or rosette shall be awarded to each dog deemed to have qualified. These shall be at least 2 inches wide and 8 inches long and shall bear a likeness of the seal of the NSDTRC (USA), the words “Qualifying Score” and the name of the stake and the name of the club. The colors of the ribbon or rosette and shall be:

- ◆ **BRT:** Forest green strip ribbon with gold lettering.
- ◆ **WC:** Forest green rosette with gold lettering.
- ◆ **WCI:** Forest green rosette with gold lettering.
- ◆ **WCX:** Forest green double rosette with gold lettering.

## JUDGE QUALIFICATIONS:

There will be two judges for each test. Both must be familiar with the rules and actively involved with retrievers in hunt tests, WC tests or field trials within the last three years.

### **Basic Retrieving and Tolling Test (BRT):**

In order to be qualified to judge the BRT test, a judge must have **one** of the following qualifications:

- a) Judged at least two *retriever* hunt tests or sanctioned *retriever* trials administered by an organized field test group (NAHRA, HRC, AKC, etc.)
- b) Handled a dog or dogs that have earned a recognized title at least twice in a sanctioned *retriever* hunt test or trial (NAHRA, HRC, AKC, breed club WC.)
- c) Placed at least two NSDTRC titles on a dog or dogs and participated in or been involved with the organization and execution (as a committee member) of at least two test events sanctioned by the NSDTR Club (USA) or other organized *retriever* field test group (NAHRA, HRC, AKC, etc.)

### **Working Certificate Test (WC):**

One or both judges must have **one** of the following qualifications:

- a) Judged two breed club tests equivalent to the NSDTRC(USA) WC level or higher.
- b) Approved to judge at least the started level of HRC or NAHRA.
- c) Qualified to judge AKC *retriever* Hunt Tests with a minimum of 2 points at the Junior level or higher and a current seminar.
- d) Judged two CKC *retriever* Hunt Tests or *retriever* Field Trials at the Junior level or higher.
- e) Judged two AKC or CKC *retriever* Field Trials at any level.

The other judge must meet the following requirement:

- a) Trained and handled two dogs to a pass at any test equivalent to the NSDTRC (USA) WC or at any level of an HRC, NAHRA, AKC or CKC *retriever* Hunt Test.

**Working Certificate Intermediate (WCI):**

One or both judges must have **one** of the following qualifications:

- a) Judged two NSDTRC (USA) WCI or judged two equivalent tests with another retriever organization.
- b) Approved to judge at least the started level of HRC or NAHRA.
- c) Qualified to judge AKC *retriever* Hunt Tests with a minimum of 2 points at the Junior level or higher and a current seminar.
- d) Judged two CKC *retriever* Hunt Tests at the Junior level or higher.
- e) Judged two AKC or CKC *retriever* field trials at any level.

The other judge must meet **one** of the following requirements:

- a) Trained and titled two dogs at an NSDTRC (USA) WC and one dog at the WCI level, or achieved equivalent titles with another retriever organization.
- b) Trained and titled two dogs at an AKC or CKC *retriever* Hunt Test at the Junior level, and one at the Senior level.
- c) Trained and titled two dogs at a NAHRA hunt test at the Started level and one at the Intermediate level.
- d) Trained and passed two dogs at an HRC hunt test at the Started level and trained and titled one at the Seasoned level.

**Working Certificate Excellent (WCX):**

One or both judges must have **one** of the following qualifications:

- a) Judged two NSDTRC (USA) WCX, or judged two equivalent tests with another *retriever* organization.
- b) Approved to judge at least the Seasoned level of HRC or the Intermediate level of NAHRA.
- c) Qualified to judge AKC *retriever* Hunt Tests with a minimum of 2 points at the Senior level or higher and a current seminar.
- d) Judged two AKC or CKC *retriever* Field Trials at any level.

The other judge must meet **one** of the following requirements:

- a) Trained and titled two dogs at an NSDTRC (USA) WCI and one dog at the WCX level, or achieved equivalent titles with another retriever organization.

- b) Trained and titled two dogs at an AKC or CKC retriever Hunt Test at the Junior level and one at the Senior level.
- c) Trained and titled two dogs at a NAHRA hunt test at the Started level and one at the Intermediate level.
- d) Trained and passed two dogs at an HRC hunt test at the Started level and trained and titled one at the Seasoned level.

## **PROTESTS:**

NSDTRC (USA) intends for these tests to be essentially self-regulating. To accomplish this objective, a Test Committee is appointed and given complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the test. The Test Committee is held responsible for compliance with all of the rules and procedures and has the authority to decide upon any matter arising during the running of the test except a matter coming within the jurisdiction of the judges. No person should agree to serve on a Test Committee unless he/she is prepared to carry out these duties creditably and exercise these powers fairly, firmly and impartially.

The decision of the judges shall be final in all matters relating to the test performance of the dogs. Full discretionary power is given to the judges to withhold any certificate award for want of merit.

While NSDTRC (USA) is always prepared to back up a Test Committee that properly exercises its powers as described herein, it is the duty of the Committee and not of the NSDTRC (USA) to deal initially with any matter which may occur during the conduct of the test.

Each participant is expected to do his part to keep up the standards of the tests and to report to the Committee any incident which may be detrimental to the purpose or the rules of the test. No person shall make complaints directly to the judges but shall work through the Committee which is held directly responsible for the conduct of the tests.

Complaints or protests must be made in writing and delivered to the Test Secretary or Test Chairperson. If a complaint or protest is received, the Test Committee shall convene immediately to hear the charges. After duly hearing the evidence in a fair, orderly and impartial manner, the Committee may decide to withhold the issuance of a qualifying score and a NSDTRC (USA) Certificate provided that the Committee did determine that the rules and regulations had been violated.

All written complaints/protests entertained by a Test Committee shall be reported to the Field Events Chair and NSDTRC (USA) Secretary within 14 days of the event. A copy of the complaint and a written report describing the incident and the reasons for making their judgment shall be submitted by the Test Committee.

A participant who is dissatisfied with the actions taken by the Test Committee of the host club may submit an appeal in writing to the Secretary of the NSDTRC (USA) within thirty (30) days. Such appeal should describe the nature of the incident and set forth the grounds on which the appeal is made.

Upon receipt of a written appeal involving the test, the written records from the Test Committee and from the complainant will be submitted to the NSDTRC (USA) Board of Directors for final action. The NSDTRC (USA) Board of Directors shall have the power to withhold or rescind any or all Certificates and titles.

### III.

## BASIC RETRIEVING & TOLLING TEST(BRT)

The BRT is a test unique to the NSDTRC (USA). No other retriever club has developed or implemented any similar test. While it does not confer a title on dogs that pass, it does fulfill the field requirement in order to achieve a club championship in that, "...a Toller must achieve not only the required conformation points, but also demonstrate the basic instincts and traits necessary to adequately execute the tasks for which it was bred."

*It should be noted that the BRT test stands alone and is not the "first step" or a "beginning" part of the club's Working Certificate 3-step program.*

#### **PURPOSE:**

The Basic Retrieving and Tolling (BRT) Test consists of three parts; the land test, the tolling test, and the water test. The test is not a test of attributes acquired through field training, but is a test of, in so far as possible, natural instincts. The objectives of the test are four fold. First, the test is to determine whether a dog possesses the innate desire to repeatedly go out, retrieve, and return birds to a handler. The second objective of the test is to determine if a Toller has the innate desire to toll (defined as the repeated retrieve of an object thrown by a handler.) The third objective is to determine if the dog has the innate desire to repeatedly enter the water, swim, and retrieve ducks to a handler. The fourth objective is to determine a lack of gunshyness.

The test should be set up by the Judges in such a manner as to minimize difficulties and obstacles. Every effort should be made to ensure that the primary reason any dog fails the BRT test is a lack of innate retrieving desire and not the lack of training in hunting skills.

## DESCRIPTION:

- 1) Two single marked retrieves on land.
  - a) Light cover.
  - b) 30 yards or less.
  - c) The angle between the falls will not be less than 90 degrees.
- 2) Tolling Test
  - a) 6 tolling retrieves.
  - b) 10 to 20 feet in length.
  - c) Parallel to the shore.
  - d) The tolling test is a separate series which is run before the water series. It should not be incorporated into the water tests as is expected in the WC/WCI/WCX.
- 3) Two single marked retrieves on water.
  - a) Open cover, in swimming water.
  - b) 25 yards or less.
  - c) The angle between the falls will not be less than 90 degrees.
  - d) The marks should be set up so as to discourage bank running.
  - e) The dog may start each mark from a common location or the initial point may be moved to accommodate problems of terrain.

## RULES:

- 1) The dog must come to the line on leash and leave on leash. No English style slip leads may be used.
- 2) An attention getting aid, such as a duck call, must be used before each mark.
- 3) A shot must be fired for each mark. The shot can be immediately before the throw or while the bird is in the air. The shots will be fired by the bird throwers or gunners located at the throwing site.
- 4) Bird throwers, gunners, and judges must wear dark clothing. Handlers may wear light color clothing to help reduce confusion in inexperienced dogs.
- 5) Ducks must be used on water. Game birds or pigeons may be used on land. No live birds will be used.
- 6) Gun safety is of utmost importance. No live shells are permitted in the tests. Shotguns with popper loads or blank pistols are to be used.
- 7) Handlers will not be required to handle a gun.
- 8) Decoys can not be used.
- 9) A test dog must be used for each test. The test dog should be working at the level of the test or have obtained that level's title but no higher.
- 10) No dog that is running a test may view the test before it runs.
- 11) Judges will score each series as Pass, Marginal or Fail. A dog that passes all series will pass the test and be awarded the BRT Test certificate. A dog that fails any one series will fail the test. A dog with two or more marginal series will pass or fail at the judge's discretion based on the overall performance. A dog must receive a passing score from both judges to qualify at that test. A list of the numbers of the dogs that passed will be submitted to the Test Secretary. Both judges must sign the officially marked catalog/running list.

- 12) Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.
- 13) The judges' decisions are final.
- 14) The tolling retrieves should be done parallel to the shoreline. The judges will designate a line parallel to the shoreline of a body of water, and an area in which the dog must return. The handler may assume any position from which to throw the tolling object, and does not have to be in a blind. All distractions, such as bird throwers, bird buckets, should be removed from the area before running the test. It is the Toller's playful and rushing actions that attract the waterfowl. The tolling retrieve is not necessarily a direct retrieve, and the dog may momentarily stop and play with the tolling object. Occasionally the dog may lose the object, which is acceptable, and the handler may throw a different object but the handler must not leave the area designated by the judges. It is equally acceptable for the dog to make a more conventional direct retrieve without penalty. There shall be no excessive delays between throws, and any lack of interest or desire after a few throws is cause for failure.
- 15) During the tolling test, verbal encouragement may be used to send or call the dog to come in, however loud voice commands, excessive cajoling and whistles may not be used, as in a real tolling situation this would startle the ducks being tolled. No more than three tolling objects can be brought to the line. The tolling object may be a bumper, ball or stick. The dog may leave with the throw, and hand delivery is not required. The dog must return with the tolling object to the area designated by the judges six times.
- 16) The judges will designate an area of delivery for the retrieved bird. The dog does not have to deliver to hand, but is expected to return to the area of delivery with the bird. The water retrieves are to be designed so that the area of delivery is the shoreline or the area immediately in front of the shoreline if there is wading water. The handler may use a whistle, verbal encouragement, and animation to get the dog to return to the area of delivery with the bird.
- 17) The dog may be physically restrained at the line, and the handler may physically assist the dog in pointing its head in the direction of the fall on each of the retrieves. Line manners and steadiness at the line are not being tested. No manhandling with excessive force or excessive correction is allowed. The dog may wear a flat collar with buckle or clasp fastener but with no tags.
- 18) The retrieves are marked retrieves and no handling is allowed, however, once the dog reaches the area of the fall, the handler may encourage the dog to hunt for the bird and retrieve it.
- 19) Dogs will not be required to work from a boat.
- 20) Bird throwers and gunners will be visible in the field.
- 21) The handler may release the dog any time after the bird has hit the ground or water.
- 22) The handler will signal to the judge when ready, and may quietly talk to the dog after signaling ready.
- 23) A dog may be recast (sent to retrieve more than once) from the line on marks, but **only** in cases of confusion described as follows: when a dog

makes a start toward a marked fall, but stops within a short distance of the line (the distance is usually limited to 15 feet and should be agreed upon between the judges) and returns or is recalled to the handler. The dog is then sent to retrieve again. This is most often attributed to confusion on the part of the dog as to whether it was sent to retrieve the first time. It is **not** considered a recast when a dog goes to the area of the fall, fails to find the bird and returns (or is recalled) to the handler. This shall be evaluated as a lack of perseverance and grounds for failure.

## **JUDGES/HANDLERS GUIDELINES:**

Dogs at this level are typically young dogs or puppies with very little training. The test is not a test of attributes acquired through field training, but of retrieving instinct.

The suggested guidelines for distances are maximums. The terrain, cover and conditions of the day must be taken into account when setting up a test. Maximum distances would be used for extremely light cover and level terrain, whereas moderate cover and hilly terrain would suggest using shorter marks.

Young dogs frequently squirm on the line. It is acceptable for the handler to physically restrain the dog and to point its head in the direction of the fall to aid in marking. The handler may talk to the dog after signaling ready.

Handlers may encourage the dog to hunt or retrieve once it has reached the area of the fall. The handler may encourage the dog to come in by running backwards, whistling and encouraging the dog.

In marked retrieves, if a dog, after having been sent to retrieve, (1) returns to its handler before finding the bird, with or without having been called in (except in those cases of confusion of the dog as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve); (2) stops its hunt; or (3) fails to pick the bird up, actually leaving it after finding it, it shall be sufficient cause, unless there exist in the opinion of the Judges valid mitigating circumstances, to fail the dog.

Inexperienced dogs occasionally drop birds on the return, especially in wading water. It is acceptable for the handler to move backward from the line designated by the judges to encourage the dog to come across the line with the bird. The water retrieves must be designed to discourage bank running. The area of delivery should either be the shoreline or immediately in front of the shoreline (in the water) if there is wading water on exit. An acceptable method of determining this area would be if the handler could get the bird without getting his/her feet wet.

A controlled break is allowed. Continued controlled breaks could be cause for failure.

Judges should take all of the above into consideration when scoring the dog as Passed, Marginal, or Failed. Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of

the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.

### **IMMEDIATE FAILURES:**

- A dog that attacks another dog or person while on the test grounds.
- Use of excessive force by a handler to control his/her dog.
- A handler who possesses any training device, other than whistle and leash, while under judgment at the line.
- A dog that is helped by the thrower, gunner or any other person.
- A dog that fails to bring the bird or object used for tolling across the line into the area designated by the judge.
- A dog that lacks retrieving desire, as demonstrated by its actions, such as running without working and showing no desire to return to the handler with the bird or tolling objects. This is not to be confused with the natural tendency for inexperienced dogs to 'trophy parade' or circle with the bird prior to relinquishing it to the handler.

## **IV. WORKING CERTIFICATE TEST (WC)**

### **PURPOSE:**

The Working Certificate Test is designed for beginning retrievers and their handlers. The test is designed to evaluate marking ability and desire to retrieve on both land and water. The dog should exhibit a level of training and control which would enable it to participate in a simple upland or waterfowl hunt.

### **DESCRIPTION:**

- 1) Two single marked retrieves on land
  - a) Light to moderate cover
  - b) 70 yards or less
  - c) The angle between the falls will not be less than 90 degrees.
- 2) Two single marked retrieves in water
  - a) Open cover
  - b) 50 yards or less
  - c) The angle between the falls will not be less than 90 degrees.
  - d) The marks should be set up so as to discourage bank running.
- 3) A tolling test before each water mark
  - a) 4 tolling retrieves

- b) 20 to 30 feet in length
- c) Parallel to the shore

## **RULES:**

- 1) The dog must come to the line on leash and leave on leash. No English style slip leads may be used.
- 2) An attention getting aid, such as a duck call, must be used before each mark.
- 3) A shot must be fired for each mark. The shot can be immediately before the throw or while the bird is in the air. The shots will be fired by the bird throwers or gunners located at the throwing station.
- 4) Bird throwers, Gunners, Judges, and Handlers must wear dark clothing.
- 5) Ducks must be used on water. Game birds or pigeons may be used on land. No live birds will be used.
- 6) Gun safety is of utmost importance. No live shells are permitted in the test.
- 7) Handlers will not be required to handle a gun.
- 8) Decoys can not be used.
- 9) A scenario of the test will be given by the judges before each test is run.
- 10) A test dog must be used for each test. The test dog should be working at the level of the test, or have obtained that level's title but no higher.
- 11) No dog that is running a test may view the test before it runs.
- 12) Judges will score each series as Pass, Marginal, or Fail. A dog that passes all series will pass the test. A dog that fails any one series will fail the test. A dog with two or more marginal series will pass or fail at the judge's discretion based on the overall performance. A dog must receive a passing score from both judges to qualify at that test. A list of the numbers of the dogs that passed each level will be submitted to the Test Secretary. Both Judges must sign the officially marked catalog/running list. Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.
- 13) The judge's decision is final.
- 14) The tolling retrieves require the handler to work from a blind, either man-made or natural. It is the Toller's playful and rushing actions that attract the waterfowl. The tolling retrieve is not necessarily a direct retrieve, and the dog may momentarily stop and play with the tolling object. Occasionally the dog may lose the object, which is acceptable, and the handler may throw a different object but the handler must not leave the blind. It is equally acceptable for the dog to make a more conventional direct retrieve without penalty. There shall be no excessive delays between throws, and any lack of interest or desire after a few throws is cause for failure.
- 15) During the tolling test, no whistles or loud voice commands may be used to send or encourage the dog to come in, as in a real tolling situation this would startle the ducks being tolled. No more than three tolling objects can be brought to the line. The tolling object may be a bumper, ball, or stick. The dog may leave with the throw, and hand delivery is not

required. The dog must return with the tolling object to the area of the blind four times before each water mark.

- 16) The bird must be delivered to the immediate area of the handler as designated by the judges. It is not necessary to deliver to hand.
- 17) Dogs may be lightly restrained at the line and may run with a flat collar with buckle or clasp fastener but with no tags.
- 18) The dog may be lightly guided between marks. No man-handling is allowed.
- 19) The handler will signal to the judge when ready.
- 20) This is a marking test and no handling is allowed. A dog may be encouraged to hunt and/or retrieve once it has reached the area of the fall. Handlers should refrain from excessive noise while at the line. Commands, encouragement or running backward in excess by the handler to encourage the dog to come in should be penalized accordingly.
- 21) Dogs will not be required to work from a boat.
- 22) Bird throwers and gunners will be visible in the field.
- 23) Judges can call for the dog to be released or instruct the handler to release the dog any time after the bird has hit the ground or water.
- 24) A dog may be recast (sent to retrieve more than once) from the line on marks, but **only** in cases of confusion described as follows: when a dog makes a start toward a marked fall, but stops within a short distance of the line (the distance is usually limited to 15 feet and should be agreed upon between the judges) and returns or is recalled to the handler. The dog is then sent to retrieve again. This is most often attributed to confusion on the part of the dog as to whether it was sent to retrieve the first time. It is **not** considered a recast when a dog goes to the area of the fall, fails to find the bird and returns (or is recalled) to the handler. This shall be evaluated as a lack of perseverance and grounds for failure.

## **JUDGES/HANDLERS GUIDELINES**

Dogs at this level should exhibit basic marking ability, desire to retrieve on land and water, and a willingness to work. The dog should exhibit reasonably good line manners. A basic level of training is essential, however abilities acquired through training should not be overly emphasized. During the tolling portions of the test, distractions in the field should be minimized, i.e. gunners/throwers should be instructed to not talk or move about; if feasible gunners/throwers may be hidden.

The suggested guidelines for distances are maximums. The terrain, cover, and conditions of the day must be taken into account when setting up a test. Maximum distances would be used for light cover and level terrain, whereas moderate cover and hilly terrain would suggest using shorter marks. Marks should be of varying distance to better show marking ability.

A dog that continually requires heavy physical restraint or vocalizes excessively at the line should be penalized accordingly and could be grounds for failure.

Handlers may encourage the dog to hunt or retrieve once it has reached the

area of the fall. Excessive commands, encouragement or running backwards to encourage the dog to come in should be penalized accordingly. Once the dog has picked up the bird, it should return promptly to the handler. A dog that does not return to the promptly should be penalized.

In marked retrieves, if a dog, after having been sent to retrieve, (1) returns to its handler before finding the bird, with or without having been called in (except in those cases of confusion of the dog as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve); (2) stops its hunt; or (3) fails to pick the bird up, actually leaving it after finding it, it shall be sufficient cause, unless there exist in the opinion of the Judges valid mitigating circumstances, to fail the dog.

A controlled break is allowed. Continued controlled breaks could be cause for failure.

Judges should take all of the above into consideration when scoring the dog as Passed, Marginal, or Failed. Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.

#### **IMMEDIATE FAILURES:**

- Returning to an old fall
- Uncontrolled breaking
- If a thrower or gunner is required to help or assist in any way
- A bird unfit for the table due to hardmouth
- Gunshyness
- Aggression towards any dog or person
- Any abuse of the dog at any time including intimidation.

## **V.**

# **WORKING CERTIFICATE INTERMEDIATE TEST (WCI)**

#### **PURPOSE:**

The Working Certificate Intermediate Test is for dogs that have achieved a higher level of training and their handlers. The test is designed to evaluate the dog's memory, and a higher degree of control and trainability. The dog should exhibit a level of training and control which would enable it to participate in a typical upland or waterfowl hunt.

## **DESCRIPTION:**

- 1) Double marked retrieve on land
  - a) light to moderate cover
  - b) 80 yards or less
  - c) The angle between the falls will not be less than 60 degrees.
- 2) Double marked retrieve on water
  - a) open to light cover
  - b) 60 yards or less
  - c) The angle between the falls will not be less than 60 degrees.
- 3) A diversion on land or water on the return from the second bird picked up.
- 4) A tolling test
  - a) The tolling test will be run immediately before the water double.
  - b) The tolling test will be run from a blind.
  - c) The handler must be seated in the blind.
  - d) The dog must come into the blind to return the tolling object.
  - e) At least 6 tolling retrieves
  - f) 20 to 30 feet in length
  - g) parallel to the shore

## **RULES:**

- 1) The dog may come to the line off leash and leave off leash at the handler's discretion. No English style slip leads may be used.
- 2) An attention getting aid, such as a duck call, must be used before each mark.
- 3) A shot must be fired for each mark. The shot can be immediately before the throw or while the bird is in the air.
- 4) Bird throwers, Gunners, Judges, and Handlers must wear dark clothing
- 5) Ducks must be used on water. Game birds or pigeons may be used on land. No live birds will be used.
- 6) Gun safety is of utmost importance. No live shells are permitted in the test.
- 7) Handlers will not be required to handle a gun.
- 8) Decoys may be used.
- 9) A scenario of the test will be given by the judges before each test is run
- 10) A test dog must be used for each test. The test dog should be working at the level of the test, or have obtained that level's title but no higher.
- 11) No dog that is running a test may view the test before it runs.
- 12) Judges will score each series as Pass, Marginal, or Fail. A dog that passes all series will pass the test. A dog that fails any one series will fail the test. A dog with two or more marginal series will pass or fail at the judge's discretion based on the overall performance. A dog must receive a passing score from both judges to qualify at that test. A list of the numbers of the dogs that passed each level will be submitted to the Test Secretary. Both Judges must sign the officially marked catalog/running list. Even though a

dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.

- 13) The judge's decision is final.
- 14) The tolling retrieves require the handler to work from a blind, either man-made or natural. It is the Toller's playful and rushing actions that attract the waterfowl. The tolling retrieve is not necessarily a direct retrieve, and the dog may momentarily stop and play with the tolling object. Occasionally the dog may lose the object, which is acceptable, and the handler may throw a different object but the handler must not leave the blind. It is equally acceptable for the dog to make a more conventional direct retrieve without penalty. There shall be no excessive delays between throws, and any lack of interest or desire after a few throws is cause for failure.
- 15) During the tolling test, no whistles or loud voice commands may be used to send or encourage the dog to come in, as in a real tolling situation this would startle the ducks being tolled. No more than three tolling objects can be brought to the line. The tolling object may be a bumper, ball, or stick. The dog may leave with the throw, and hand delivery is not required. The dog must return to the blind with the tolling object at least six times.
- 16) The dog must deliver all birds to hand.
- 17) The dog must be steady at the line.
- 18) The dog may not run with a collar.
- 19) The handler may not point out the marks to the dog before they are thrown.
- 20) The handler will signal to the judge when ready.
- 21) The handler may not touch the dog once he has signaled the judge he is ready. The handler may speak softly to the dog during the test. Failure may result from excessive noise at the line by the retriever or the handler.
- 22) The dog may be handled to a mark. If handling is used, it must be accomplished crisply and cleanly. Handling to a mark will be scored lower by the judges. All handling command and cast refusals will be scored lower by the judges and could be grounds for failure.
- 23) If a dog is run from a boat, the boat will remain on shore.
- 24) Judges can call for the dog to be released or instruct the handler to release the dog any time after the bird has hit the ground or water.
- 25) A dog may be recast (sent to retrieve more than once) from the line on marks, but **only** in cases of confusion described as follows: when a dog makes a start toward a marked fall, but stops within a short distance of the line (the distance is usually limited to 15 feet and should be agreed upon between the judges) and returns or is recalled to the handler. The dog is then sent to retrieve again. This is most often attributed to confusion on the part of the dog as to whether it was sent to retrieve the first time. It is **not** considered a recast when a dog goes to the area of the fall, fails to find the bird and returns (or is recalled) to the handler. This shall be evaluated as a lack of perseverance and grounds for failure.
- 26) Bird throwers and gunners in the field may be visible or hidden.
- 27) Gunners may be positioned at the line or with the throwers.

28) Tests may be run from a blind

## **JUDGES/HANDLERS GUIDELINES**

Dogs at this level should exhibit good marking ability, desire to retrieve on land and water, and a willingness to work. A moderate level of training is essential. The dog should exhibit good line manners. Abilities acquired through training are equally as important as the natural abilities of marking and style. Judges should take into account that these are intermediate dogs, and trained abilities should not be over-emphasized. Emphasis should be on testing straightforward abilities without resorting to tests containing trick elements.

The suggested guidelines for distances are maximums. The terrain, cover, and conditions of the day must be taken into account when setting up a test. Maximum distances would be used for light cover and level terrain, whereas moderate cover and hilly terrain would suggest using shorter marks. Marks should be of varying distance to better show marking ability.

The diversion will be thrown as the dog is returning with the second bird. The diversion should not be thrown in the dog's path. A switch to the diversion bird is an immediate failure. This is **not** a marking test, therefore a dog may be handled to the diversion bird if mis-marked, but the dog must retrieve all birds.

A dog that vocalizes excessively at the line should be penalized accordingly and could be grounds for failure.

It will be considered handling if the dog must be encouraged to hunt or retrieve once it has reached the area of the fall. A prompt return is required, and lack of such should be marked down.

In marked retrieves, if a dog, after having been sent to retrieve, (1) returns to its handler before finding the bird, with or without having been called in (except in those cases of confusion of the dog as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve); (2) stops its hunt; or (3) fails to pick the bird up, actually leaving it after finding it, it shall be sufficient cause, unless there exist in the opinion of the Judges valid mitigating circumstances, to fail the dog.

A controlled break is allowed. Continued controlled breaks could be cause for failure.

Judges should take all of the above into consideration when scoring the dog as Passed, Marginal, or Failed. Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.

## **IMMEDIATE FAILURES:**

- Switching
- Uncontrolled breaking
- If a thrower or gunner is required to help or assist in any way
- A bird unfit for the table due to hardmouth
- Gunshyness
- Aggression towards any dog or person
- Any abuse of the dog at any time including intimidation.

## **VI.**

# **WORKING CERTIFICATE EXCELLENT TEST (WCX)**

## **PURPOSE:**

The Working Certificate Excellent Test is for dogs that have achieved an advanced level of training and their handlers. The test is designed to evaluate the dog's memory, control and the ability to work as team by doing blinds. The dog will exhibit a level of training and control which would enable it to handle the vast majority of hunting situations.

**Note:** In order to earn the WCX title, a dog must already have the WCI title.

## **DESCRIPTION:**

- 1) Triple marked retrieve on land
  - a) moderate cover
  - b) 100 yards or less.
- 2) Honor on the land test. The honor dog and handler may leave the line when the working dog has reached the area of the fall as indicated by the judges.
- 3) Land blind
  - a) light to moderate cover
  - b) 50 yards or less.
- 4) Water blind
  - a) open to light cover
  - b) 50 yards or less
  - c) The bird should not be visible from the line.

- 5) A walk-up single marked retrieve on water
  - a) open to light cover
  - b) 30 yards or less
- 6) A tolling test
  - a) The tolling test will be run immediately after the walk-up.
  - b) The tolling test will be run from a blind.
  - c) The handler must be seated in the blind.
  - d) The dog must come into the blind to return the tolling object.
  - e) At least 6 tolling retrieves
  - f) 20 to 30 feet in length
  - g) parallel to the shore
- 7) Double marked retrieve on water
  - a) The double will be run immediately after the tolling test.
  - b) open to moderate cover,
  - c) 80 yards or less.

## **RULES:**

- 1) The dog must come to the line from the holding blind off leash.
- 2) The honoring dog will leave the line on leash.
- 3) An attention getting aid, such as a duck call, must be used before each mark.
- 4) A shot must be fired for each mark. The shot can be immediately before the throw or while the bird is in the air.
- 5) Bird throwers, Gunners, Judges, and Handlers must wear dark clothing.
- 6) Ducks must be used on water. Game birds or pigeons may be used on land. No live birds will be used.
- 7) Gun safety is of utmost importance. No live shells are permitted in the test.
- 8) Handlers will not be required to handle a gun.
- 9) Decoys may be used.
- 10) A scenario of the test will be given by the judges before each test is run.
- 11) A test dog must be used for each test. The test dog should be working at the level of the test, or have obtained that level's title but no higher.
- 12) No dog that is running a test may view the test before it runs.
- 13) Judges will score each series as Pass, Marginal, or Fail. A dog that passes all series will pass the test. A dog that fails any one series will fail the test. A dog with two or more marginal series will pass or fail at the judge's discretion based on the overall performance. A dog must receive a passing score from both judges to qualify at that test. A list of the numbers of the dogs that passed each level will be submitted to the Test Secretary. Both Judges must sign the officially marked catalog/running list. Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.
- 14) The judge's decision is final.

- 15) The tolling retrieves require the handler to work from a blind, either man-made or natural. It is the Toller's playful and rushing actions that attract the waterfowl. The tolling retrieve is not necessarily a direct retrieve, and the dog may momentarily stop and play with the tolling object.  
Occasionally the dog may lose the object, which is acceptable, and the handler may throw a different object but the handler must not leave the blind. It is equally acceptable for the dog to make a more conventional direct retrieve without penalty. There shall be no excessive delays between throws, and any lack of interest or desire after a few throws is cause for failure.
- 16) During the tolling test, no whistles or loud voice commands may be used to send or encourage the dog to come in, as in a real tolling situation this would startle the ducks being tolled. No more than three tolling objects can be brought to the line. The tolling object may be a bumper, ball, or stick. The dog may leave with the throw, and hand delivery is not required. The dog must return to the blind with the tolling object at least six times.
- 17) The dog must deliver all birds to hand.
- 18) The dog must be steady at the line.
- 19) The dog may not run with a collar.
- 20) The handler may not point out the marks to the dog before they are thrown.
- 21) The handler may not touch the dog once the handler has signaled to the judge he/she is ready. The handler may speak softly to the dog during the test. Failure may result from excessive noise at the line by the retriever or the handler. The handler of the honoring dog may speak quietly to the honoring dog, provided the handler does not interfere with the other handlers, the working dog, or judges.
- 22) The dog may be handled to a mark. If handling is used, it must be accomplished crisply and cleanly. Handling to a mark will be scored lower by the judges. All handling command and cast refusals will be scored lower by the judges and could be grounds for failure.
- 23) If a dog is run from a boat, the boat will remain on shore.
- 24) Judges can call for the dog to be released or instruct the handler to release the dog any time after the bird has hit the ground or water.
- 25) A dog may be recast (sent to retrieve more than once) from the line on marks, but **only** in cases of confusion described as follows: when a dog makes a start toward a marked fall, but stops within a short distance of the line (the distance is usually limited to 15 feet and should be agreed upon between the judges) and returns or is recalled to the handler. The dog is then sent to retrieve again. This is most often attributed to confusion on the part of the dog as to whether it was sent to retrieve the first time. It is **not** considered a recast when a dog goes to the area of the fall, fails to find the bird and returns (or is recalled) to the handler. This shall be evaluated as a lack of perseverance and grounds for failure.
  - a) Note\* There is no allowance for confusion on blind retrieves. If you attempt to handle your dog on a mark, no recasting is allowed.
- 26) Bird throwers and gunners in the field may be visible or hidden.
- 27) Gunners may be positioned at the line or with the throwers.
- 28) Tests may be run from a blind.

29) A dry shot must be fired before each blind.

## **JUDGES/HANDLERS GUIDELINES:**

Dogs at this level should exhibit good marking ability, desire to retrieve on land and water, and a willingness to work as a team.

A WCX test will be a fairly demanding test of those abilities expected in a competent working retriever. Abilities acquired through training are equally as important as the natural abilities of marking and style.

Judges should take into account that these are advanced but not finished dogs. While a higher level of training is necessary, the dogs are not expected to work at the level of HRC finished, AKC Master, or equivalent. Emphasis should be on testing straightforward abilities without resorting to tests containing trick elements (e.g. in-line marks, retired guns, switching tests etc.).

The suggested guidelines for distances are maximums. The terrain, cover, and conditions of the day must be taken into account when setting up a test. Marks should be of varying distance to better show marking ability.

In marked retrieves, if a dog, after having been sent to retrieve, (1) returns to its handler before finding the bird, with or without having been called in (except in those cases of confusion of the dog as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve); (2) stops its hunt; or (3) fails to pick the bird up, actually leaving it after finding it, it shall be sufficient cause, unless there exist in the opinion of the Judges valid mitigating circumstances, to fail the dog.

The blinds should be run from a separate line than the marks. When this is not possible, the blinds must be at least a 60 degree angle from any mark. For blind work, dogs should exhibit a reasonable willingness to stop and take casts. An out of control dog who happens to stumble on the bird should not be considered to have passed.

One controlled break is allowed. A dog that has a controlled break on the honor should be failed if it interferes with the working dog. If a dog has more than one controlled break through the entire series it should be failed.

Judges should take all of the above into consideration when scoring the dog as Passed, Marginal, or Failed. Even though a dog has successfully retrieved all of the birds, if it has two or more marginal series it can be failed overall if in the judge's opinion the dog did not exhibit the necessary qualities required at this level.

## **IMMEDIATE FAILURES:**

- Switching
- Uncontrolled breaking or more than one controlled break
- If a thrower or gunner is required to help or assist in any way

- A bird unfit for the table due to hardmouth
- Gunshyness
- Aggression towards any dog or person
- Any abuse of the dog at any time including intimidation