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Foreword

The specific and primary purposes for which this corporation is formed are:

1. To educate all interested persons in the techniques of training versatile hunting dogs, to conduct tests of versatile hunting dog breeds in North America and maintain records of such tests for all interested persons, and to promote selective breeding and population control of versatile hunting dog breeds.

2. To prevent cruelty to animals by the use of properly trained hunting dogs.

3. No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not intervene in any political campaign.

4. The corporation shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, religion, or any legally proscribed classification, in its programs, activities, or employment practices.

The primary purpose of this booklet is to provide a reference guide for owners, handlers and judges of versatile hunting dogs in preparing for and participating in North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association tests. Of particular interest in this respect are the discussions of test standards which constitute the basis for evaluating dog performance. This booklet also provides guidelines for local chapters of NAVHDA in developing plans and selecting locations appropriate for NAVHDA tests and other activities.

This booklet also covers the aims, philosophies and programs of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association. It includes a brief introduction to the various versatile breeds and a summarized history of the versatile hunting dog.

Finally, as a salute to the very best of hunting companions, this booklet is dedicated to versatile hunting dogs everywhere. May they all enjoy many successful days afield with good masters.

~ The Editors

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Introduction

The North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA) is a legally recognized non-profit organization dedicated to fostering, improving, promoting, and protecting the versatile hunting dog in North America.

Underlying these aims is the desire to serve the interests of game conservation, the prevention of cruelty to animals, and good sportsmanship by encouraging hunters to use dogs that are well trained in work before and after the shot, on land and in the water. To this end, many of the discussions in this book are framed in the context of a hunting situation. Experience as a hunter, while not essential, is highly desirable and will aid in understanding many of the rules and guidelines discussed here.

It is not the intent of NAVHDA to dilute or replace any other system of evaluating the performance of hunting dogs, nor does NAVHDA desire to interfere in any way with the prerogatives and activities of any breed club. Rather, NAVHDA is meant to supplement the activities of the several versatile breed clubs by providing a proven, standard method of evaluating the performance of all versatile hunting dogs, regardless of breed.

NAVHDA operates under by-laws approved by the membership. These by-laws provide for officers elected by popular vote who, together with certain appointed officials, constitute an Executive Council charged with furnishing

The Versatile Breeds

There are several breeds of versatile dogs common in continental Europe, and with four exceptions, all were developed during the last decades of the 19th century. The four exceptions are much older breeds that provided a base for some of the others. These are the Weimaraner, the Vizsla, the Brittany, and its German cousin, the Small Munsterlander.

The tracking hound, pointer and waterpudel were the basic breeding stocks most widely used to develop the short and wirehaired groups. The longhaired group evolved from the Small Munsterlander and flat-coated retriever.

Currently NAVHDA recognizes and maintains studbooks for the following breeds:

BP	Blue Picardy Spaniel
BI	Bracco Italiano
BA	Braque D'auvergne
BB	Braque Du Bourbonnais
BF	Braque Francais
BS	Brittany
CF	Cesky Fousek
DP	Drentsche Patrijshond
ES	English Setter
FS	French Spaniel
GL	German Longhaired Pointer
GS	German Shorthaired Pointer
GW	German Wirehaired Pointer
GO	Gordon Setter
IR	Irish Red & White Setter
IS	Irish Setter
LM	Large Munsterlander
PB	Perdiguero de Burgos
PS	Picardy Spaniel
PT	Pointer
PO	Portuguese Pointer
PP	Pudelpointer
SH	Slovakian Wirehaired Pointer
SM	Small Munsterlander
SP	Spinone
ST	Stichelhaar
VI	Vizsla
WM	Weimaraner
GR	Wirehaired Pointing Griffon
WV	Wirehaired Vizsla

direction and guidance to NAVHDA programs. Most sanctioned NAVHDA activities in the field are sponsored by similarly organized local chapters of NAVHDA. Each local chapter is composed of men and women who represent a cross section of supporters of a number of the various versatile breeds.

Although sanctioned tests for versatile hunting dogs represent the backbone of the NAVHDA program, other complementary and supporting activities are conducted. Included are training clinics, Handler Clinics, Judge's Workshops, and a monthly magazine.

The NAVHDA Dog Registry

The registration of all tested dogs allows NAVHDA to provide vital test results to breeders and prospective buyers. These test results are available by dog, sire or dam and are also listed for all generations on the pedigree.

Each dog registered with NAVHDA receives a certified three generation pedigree showing test results, color of dogs and hip dysplasia certification of parents and grandparents where available.

Kennel Registration

A record of protected kennel names for NAVHDA members is maintained by the Registrar.

Test Information Service

The test information service maintains a record of test scores for all NAVHDA tested dogs. This information is valuable for selective breeding, using dogs with proven ability for breeding, and to assist in puppy selection. Detailed reports on individual dogs, sires and dams are available to members or interested persons on the NAVHDA website. See Foreword for further information.

1 The Versatile Hunting Dog

Definitions

Within the context of the NAVHDA philosophy, the description "versatile hunting dog" is a generic term applied to a dog that is bred and trained to dependably hunt and point game, to retrieve on both land and water, and to track wounded game on both land and water.

The versatile breeds, as we know them today, are products of Europe. No distinctive breed of versatile dog has been developed in North America. For this reason, breeds with versatile hunting characteristics are sometimes loosely referred to as the "Continental Breeds."

Early History

In feudal times, hunting was the exclusive privilege of wealthy landowners. They held a monopoly on hunting for centuries and created a very cultivated sport, complete with strict dictates and customs. Their reputations and wealth demanded the very highest standards in everything associated with the hunt.

Each type of game called for dogs developed for the particular game. Large kennels were maintained with large staffs to handle and train the dogs. Many specialized hunting breeds still used today owe their existence to these men and times.

The Industrial Revolution changed all this. New classes evolved in society. A greatly elevated standard of living created interest in many pursuits which before were restricted to the landed gentry. Hunting was one such pursuit.

Intense interest and the pressure of new wealth gave rise to new hunting laws which made the sport available to a much broader element of the populace. Most of these new hunters came from the middle classes - doctors, lawyers, judges, teachers, and all varieties of merchants and businessmen. They lived in cities and towns and had neither the space nor the time to maintain large kennels of specialized hunting dogs.

The pointer, among others, has been recognized for over 400 years as a superb hunting dog, but during most of this period has been used as a pure field specialist. These dogs were superior field specialists, but they were difficult to train and handle for anything but field work.

As hunting increased in popularity in the latter half of the 19th century, the need for a dog with more versatile characteristics became increasingly apparent. Using the existing breeds of hunting dogs, dedicated men set out to produce the various versatile breeds. Most of the breeds were produced in approximately the same time frame. There were some differences in physical characteristics, but the hunting characteristics were closely allied.

What were the breeders trying to develop? They wanted breeds that would handle a variety of game, both feather and fur, before and after the shot. A dog has to possess a keen nose and strong pointing instinct, a lively temperament, eagerness to retrieve from both land and water, stamina, and a durable coat and hide that would not hamper his work in cold water and heavy brush. The dogs also had to be intelligent, relatively easy to train and have a character compatible with protecting, and living in or at their masters' dwellings.

Many breeders kept good records of their programs, but others did not. Pedigrees, as we know them, were unheard of in those days. Practical breeding experience, patience, and finally, a better understanding of genetic laws, established pure breeds.

These pioneering efforts have paid off handsomely for the European hunter. Standards are high and the dogs perform superbly in their native lands. The reason for this is quite evident. In Europe, versatile breeds receive support from enthusiastic clubs, dedicated to the improvement of the breeds. True versatile tests cover every aspect of the dogs' ability, and only dogs with proven ability are used in breeding programs.

The Versatile Breeds in North America

No significant influx of the versatile breeds occurred in North America until well into the 20th century. Some breeds did not arrive until after World War II. The situation facing these new arrivals was less than favorable. On a continent where hunters were traditionally wed to the concept of the "specialist, or one-purpose dog, there were few people with the knowledge, insight, and understanding necessary to place the versatile dog in proper perspective and thus make full use of its inherent potential.

Prior to the formation of NAVHDA in 1969, there were few strong versatile gun dog clubs. Tests tailored for versatile breeds were rare. If the owner sought some comparative measure of the usefulness of his dog, he had little choice but to compete against the pure specialist and under the other fellow's rules. There was no standard rule book for judging of versatile hunting dogs, and there were little or no written materials available on training and handling these fine gun dogs.

The examples of dedication and hard work set by NAVHDA members during the formative years continue to be followed. As a result, since 1969, a substantial number of *proven* versatile gun dogs have been developed, and the number is growing at a healthy rate. However, much work remains to be done in the fields of public understanding and continued improvement of the versatile breeds in North America.

The Versatile Hunting Dog in Perspective

Fundamental to any program to improve the versatile breeds is the requirement to put into perspective the role played by the versatile dogs in the North American hunting scene.

It must be understood that *the versatile dog was not developed to replace or improve upon any other hunting breed.* Rather, it was developed to provide the on-foot hunter who, for one reason or another, chooses not to maintain a kennel of specialists, with a dog that will serve as a dependable hunting companion in the pursuit of a variety of game in a variety of environments.

Constructive dialogue between hunting dog enthusiasts, regardless of personal preferences, is healthy. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that versatile hunting dogs as a group are bred and trained for essentially different purposes than those comprising the several groups of "specialty" hunting dogs. It follows that systems of evaluating performance will differ between groups, with the proponents of each group using a system deemed best suited for determining the ability of dogs within that group to perform the tasks for which they were bred and trained.

It is the privilege of any owner to enter his dog in any test or competition for which the dog is eligible. He should shed no tears at the result, if the rules and standards are not his dog's "cup of tea." This is not to say that some unique specimens within any group cannot enter the arena of another and turn in a creditable performance.

No useful purpose is served by comparing the performance of one school of hunting dogs against the rules and standards of another. Such comparisons make

about as much sense as comparing the performance of a good football quarterback against that of a good baseball pitcher. It is the NAVHDA position that such comparison should be discouraged.

Improving the Versatile Breeds

"Breed the best to the best" is a time-honored and proven axiom among animal breeders whether they be dog fanciers, horsemen, cattlemen or whatever.

In the case of the North American versatile hunting dog, just as it is in Europe, comprehensive tests that truly consider versatility in the field are the foundation upon which we must build. Only dogs of proven ability should be used in breeding programs.

In practice, this requires cooperation and a shared sense of responsibility between buyers and breeders, whether the latter be full-time professionals or occasional breeders. The breeder should be extremely selective and use only dogs of proven ability as breeding stock. Buyers should cooperate by seeing to it that the new dogs are prepared, and exposed to, true tests of versatility during appropriate stages of their development. The optimum is to test every dog in every litter.

It is only through this spirit of cooperation and shared responsibility that continuing improvement can be made. Unscrupulous and irresponsible breeders, who place other considerations ahead of improving the breeds, can be exposed for what they are.

---

2 Introduction to NAVHDA Tests

Test Criteria

To be truly meaningful, tests for versatile hunting dogs must meet certain criteria. They must be conducted in an environment that reflects actual hunting conditions and situations. They must test all characteristics required of a good versatile dog. Judges must be knowledgeable, consistent, and objective. Accurate and complete records of test performance must be kept on each dog tested. All testing and evaluation are to be within the context of judging dogs as useful, productive hunting companions. NAVHDA tests have been designed with these requirements in mind.

Handling of Game Birds

The testing of versatile hunting dogs requires the use of pen raised game birds throughout all levels of NAVHDA's testing program. Local chapters are held to the highest level in the ethical treatment and care of all game. All game birds are expected to replicate, as nearly as possible, those in the wild and receive proper care at all times to ensure they are fresh and healthy.

When returning from the field, gunners are expected to see that retrieved birds are properly cared for and not left in view of the gallery.

Chapters are evaluated on the quality of game birds they supply for their tests, both dead and alive. Quality dead birds are equally important to lend consistency and fairness to all tests. Dead birds required for UPT, UT and Invitational Tests should not be dispatched more than 12 hours prior to each testing day. Ideally, these birds

should be dispatched early on the morning of each test day and kept cool and dry throughout the day. Dead birds cannot be used for more than one day of testing and at no time will previously frozen birds be used.

Eligibility

- Only NAVHDA registered dogs are eligible to participate in NAVHDA tests. NAVHDA tests are open to eligible dogs from the International publication date of the test announcement.

- With the exception of the Invitational Test, membership in NAVHDA is not a prerequisite for entering a dog in a NAVHDA test. However, members may be afforded reduced rates on entry fees.

- Dogs are eligible for a Natural Ability Test up until, and including, the day they reach 16 months of age. Dogs over 16 months may be run for evaluation only. Dogs over 16 months may only be run if space is available. No prize classification can be awarded the dog run for evaluation.

- There are no age restrictions on dogs entered in the Utility Preparatory Test, Utility Test or the Invitational Test. Only invited dogs are eligible to participate in the Invitational Test.

- No restrictions are placed on the number of times a dog may be tested, provided eligibility requirements are met. Repeated tests are encouraged throughout the dog's development.

- Dogs run in the Invitational Test must have DNA on file with NAVHDA or DNA applied for, through NAVHDA, prior to the closing date of entry and the primary owner of each entry must be a NAVHDA International member.

- Bitches "in season" may be run in NAVHDA tests. These dogs will be run last at each phase of testing. (Note: "In season" bitches will be run last at each phase of testing, on the last day of Invitational testing.)

Types of Tests

NAVHDA conducts four levels of tests. As the description implies, the *Natural Ability Test* is designed to evaluate young dogs on their inherent natural abilities with a view to gaining an insight into their possible future value as versatile gun dogs (see NA Chapter). The *Utility Preparatory Test* is designed to evaluate the dog midway in its training towards becoming a reliable versatile gun dog (see UPT Chapter). The *Utility Test* is designated for more experienced dogs in an advanced state of training. It evaluates their ability to perform as reliable versatile gun dogs and demonstrates their physical and mental capability to take training (see UT Chapter). The *Invitational Test* is the flagship of NAVHDA tests. Only those exceptional animals that have demonstrated superior skill and obedience in Utility Tests are eligible to participate (see Invitational Chapter).

Prize Classifications and Awards

In NAVHDA, the words "prize" or "pass" do not relate to placement as in a race or competition. Dogs compete against an established standard rather than each other.

Prizes are awarded on the basis of numerical scores achieved in the test. Each dog that meets or exceeds minimum standards is placed in one of three categories, i.e., Prize I, II, or III, with Prize I being the highest. Several dogs being tested at the same time might be awarded the same prize classification.

Each dog qualifying for a prize is eligible for a simple, standardized

plaque engraved with essential information, such as name, date, type test, etc. The only thing that distinguishes a Prize I plaque from a Prize III plaque is the score and prize classification inscribed thereon. Any other award or trophy, including cash awards, is specifically forbidden.

Dogs achieving a passing score in the NAVHDA Invitational are awarded the title of "Versatile Champion."

Scoring System

Throughout this booklet, the word "test" is used instead of the word "trial." The reason for this is that under the NAVHDA system, each dog's performance is measured against a definitive standard rather than against the performance of other dogs being tested. All NAVHDA tests are scored on a point-index system. Each task that the dog must perform and each category on which it is scored during the test is allotted a fixed index number which indicates its relative importance. The dog's performance in each part of the test is given an achievement score based on a scale of Zero (Failure) to 4 (Excellent).

The fixed index number is multiplied by the achievement score to arrive at the score attained in that part of the test. For example: The fixed index number assigned the search phase is 5. Assume that the Judges' consensus for this phase of the test awards the dog a performance score of 3 on the zero to 4 scale. The dog's score for the search phase thus becomes 15 (5 x 3 = 15).

The sum total of the scores determines the placement of the dog in a first, second, or third prize classification, provided it has earned the minimal acceptable scores required in each part of the test. Every dog entered in a test is permitted to complete the entire test, even though it might have failed at some point during the test.

The above scoring system is illustrated in detail for NA in Chapter 4, p. 13, UPT in Chapter 5, p. 18, UT in Chapter 6, p. 28 and INV Chapter 7, p. 33.

A Judge will record the test results on NAVHDA pedigrees presented at the conclusion of a test. The detailed score of each dog tested is made a matter of permanent record. These records are available from the NAVHDA Test Information Service. Printouts of test information are available by breed, sire, dam and progeny. NAVHDA encourages breeders and buyers to avail themselves of this service when considering breeding or purchasing a dog.

Judges and Judging

NAVHDA realizes that careless or biased judging would not only be unfair to the dogs but would also defeat any attempts by NAVHDA to improve the versatile hunting breeds. The length of time available to a Judge to observe an individual dog during a test is relatively limited and only a thoroughly competent Judge can assimilate all the many facets of the dog's performance and express a fair and accurate opinion. For these reasons, NAVHDA exercises great care in the training and selection of its Judges. They are selected from among

Requirements

A person desiring to become an approved NAVHDA Apprentice Judge must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Meet the requirements for becoming an Apprentice Judge in accordance with current policy.
- Make application to the Director of Judge Development to become an Approved Apprentice.

Prospective Judges Must:

- Successfully complete the Apprentice Judge program.

- Successfully handle a dog, he or she has trained, in a Utility or Invitational Test in accordance with current policy.

- Make application to the Director of Judge Development in accordance with current policy.

- Be approved by the NAVHDA Executive Council.

Judges Are Required To:

- Qualify a dog he/she has trained and handled in a NA, UPT, UT or Invitational Test within the previous three years. Further, each judge is required to qualify a dog he/she has trained and handled in a UPT, UT or Invitational Test within the previous six years.

- Attend a NAVHDA Judges Workshop every third year.

- All NAVHDA judges are reviewed by the Executive Council annually and qualified persons are reappointed for the following year.

experienced hunters who possess character and integrity and have also trained and handled versatile hunting dogs.

In a further effort to achieve fairness and objectivity, it is required that each NAVHDA sanctioned test be judged by three Judges. In the case of a last minute illness or emergency, two Judges may be used, but only when all possible means of finding a replacement have been exhausted.

One of the three Judges will be designated as the Senior Judge. The Senior Judge acts as team captain and rules on procedural matters. The Senior Judge, in consultation with the judging team, has the responsibility to assure the test is conducted according to NAVHDA rules. In an extreme case, where adverse conditions exist which can not be corrected, the judging team may cancel the test.

At least one of the three Judges must be from outside the sponsoring chapter or club. NAVHDA judges serve without pay or honorariums, but are reimbursed for all expenses.

Judges are not allowed to test dogs on the day they are judging. A Judge may not judge a dog that he or she or any member of his or her family owns,

Safety

- *Hinged frame (break-open) shotguns of conventional gauge will be used in NAVHDA tests*. Autoloaders and pump action guns are strictly forbidden, whether loaded with blank ammunition or not. All guns will be carried in the open position until just before the shot.

- When blank ammunition is called for, it must be 12 gauge, professional factory manufactured, smokeless powder, blank ammunition (field trial poppers).

- Field marshals will ensure that the gallery remains at a safe distance in a position away from the line of fire. All persons in the field, while live ammunition is being used, must wear one or a combination of the following blaze orange garments: hat, vest or jacket.

- Individuals may accompany the handler, the gunners, and the Judges in the field during a test with prior permission of the Senior Judge after consultation with the handler.

- Loose and unattended dogs are prohibited.

or has any ownership interest. In addition, a Judge may not judge a dog handled by any member of his or her family ("member of the family" is defined as spouse, sibling, parent or child, whether natural or adopted, but shall not extend to other blood or legal relationships). A judge may not at any time during a test be a part of a judging team that judges his/her own dog(s) or dog(s) owned or handled by his/her family members or any member(s) of the same household. Spouses and domestic partners may not judge together on the same judging team.

Apprentice Judges

Apprentice Judges work in the field under the tutelage and supervision of the test's Judges and specifically the Senior Judge. The evaluations made by Apprentice Judges are not considered in determining the official scores of dogs being tested. They are, however, used in evaluating the accuracy of the Apprentice Judge. This system is used to increase the Apprentice's experience and knowledge. At the end of the test, all Judges provide an evaluation of the Apprentice Judges' performance to the Director of Judge Development. All rules and restrictions that apply to NAVHDA Judges also apply to Apprentice Judges.

Publication of Test Results

Somewhat unique in dog tests or trials is the NAVHDA practice of announcing scores. It is our belief that an owner, who shows the necessary interest and is willing to spend the time and money involved in testing a dog, has the right to know exactly how the dog was evaluated and why.

With this in mind, NAVHDA provides that at the end of each testing day, the judging team will publicly read the detailed scores of each dog tested. Further, the judging team makes itself available to discuss the scores awarded with a view to assisting the owner in further development of the dog.

The owner will be sent a copy of the official score sheet from NAVHDA.

Sportsmanship

It is expected that all persons involved in conducting, participating in, or observing a NAVHDA test will adhere to accepted principles of good sportsmanship. No hard and fast rules are considered necessary among ladies and gentlemen, but as an example, a handler who loses his head and administers cruel and unnecessary punishment to a dog in the field will be excused with no refund. The dog, however, may be permitted to complete the course under a different handler.

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3 Common Areas of Evaluation

Application

The areas of evaluation discussed in this chapter are common to all NAVHDA tests and are discussed here as a group. These areas are not discussed again in Chapter 4, *The Natural Ability Test*; Chapter 5, *The Utility Preparatory Test*; Chapter 6, *The Utility Test* and Chapter 7, *The Invitational Test* as that would be repetitive.

Application of these standards during a specific test varies only in the matter of degree. For example, it is not expected that a young dog undergoing a Natural Ability Test will display the same finesse and workmanship expected of an older, more experienced dog in a Utility Test. The basic principles, however, apply generally across the board. Where significant exceptions are made, they are noted.

These common areas of evaluation and their related performance standards should be approached with the knowledge that each area relates in some way to each of the others. For this reason, no one area can be considered in isolation in arriving at an evaluation of the whole dog. For instance, of what use is a good nose if the dog is totally independent and uncooperative? What sort of search can one expect of a dog lacking in desire?

Use of Nose

The quality of a dog's nose, more than any other single factor, determines its usefulness as a versatile hunting dog and for this reason is assigned a higher fixed index number (6) than any other factor in the NAVHDA evaluation system. However, quality of nose is not in itself sufficient. As the dog develops, it must learn to use its nose if maximum effectiveness is to be achieved.

A dog that finds game rapidly and repeatedly, under various conditions, has a good nose. Conversely, a dog that must search for a long time to find game where game is present probably has a poor nose. Short checks of scent spots where game has been without pointing indicates a good nose as well as the ability to discriminate between scents. Consistent "nonproductive" points, i.e., assuming the pointing stance without producing game, is an indication that the dog may have only a fair nose.

A dog that will quickly locate a shot bird in high cover, particularly where the fall was obscured from the dog's vision, certainly displays a good nose.

A dog will sometimes scent game at a great distance and while checking the scent, will move up on the game as if being pulled to the spot by an invisible string attached to the nose. The relative distance from the point the scent is first detected, to the point where the game is found, can determine the quality of the nose. However, one must determine if the dog was following body scent carried by air currents, as opposed to ground scent left by tracks and contact with low vegetation.

The manner and course of a natural track can also demonstrate the quality of a dog's nose.

Another indication of a good nose is when a dog crosses a fresh track and immediately acknowledges the scent and direction of the track.

A dog is said to "bump" a bird when it runs into it and causes the bird to flush without giving any indication that the dog was aware of the bird's presence. This is more apt to happen when the dog is running with the wind and under these conditions it is not considered a fault. To bump a bird while working into the wind without showing any awareness that game is present is a strong indication of a poor nose.

Weather, the condition of ground and cover, the kind of game, even air pollution near industrial areas are all factors to be considered while judging a dog. These elements have an important influence on a dog's scenting ability.

The pointing instinct must not be equated with the quality of the nose. An intense point is not a manifestation of nose. The distance between the dog on point and the game, however, can be an indicator of the quality of the nose.

Search

The search of the Natural Ability dog is expected to differ from that of the experienced Utility dog. A pup should show enthusiasm, sufficient independence to move away from the handler, and a willingness to investigate likely cover. He may be forgiven a slow start if bird contact generates an improved performance.

From start to finish, the search should indicate but one purpose—to produce game for the gun. The good dog will leave the impression that in the terrain covered by the search, no game has been missed. No time should be wasted in searching obviously barren ground or by returning to cover that has already been thoroughly searched.

An eager, cooperative dog will readily adapt to the terrain and cover over which it is being hunted, regardless of its "home ground" experience, and it will not hesitate to search rough cover if the situation demands it.

Throughout the search, the dog should display eagerness, interest, and stamina. The dog that must be pushed raises doubts about desire and basic stamina.

Apparent use of the eyes rather than the nose to search for game is a serious fault; however, use of the eyes to maintain cooperative contact with the handler is a natural result of the dog's desire to please.

The dog should conduct its search at a practical distance from the gun. Terrain, cover, and other variables make it impossible to measure practical range in yards. Rather, it must be measured in terms of covering the maximum amount of likely game cover without loss of control or sacrificing the all important cooperation that must exist between the hunter and the dog. Suffice it to say, that the uncontrolled dog running the far horizons is of little use to the on-foot hunter, as is the one that remains so close to the gun that is constitutes an underfoot nuisance.

A dog that consistently and successfully works body scent must not be faulted because the head is carried somewhat higher or lower than some preconceived notion of an optimum "style." The dog's search must take advantage of the air currents. The general pattern of the search should be in a forward direction; however, "back casting" should not be faulted unless done too often. Tireless efforts are to be rewarded more highly than eye-catching style combined with unproductive casts.

During the search or any other part of the test, the dog is not allowed to wear an electronic beeper collar or any other type of electronic device or imitation thereof.

Pointing

The instinct to point must be clearly evident in the dog. Pointing and searching are the two major aspects of the dog's work "before the shot." When game is located the dog must establish point naturally. The handler is strictly prohibited from giving any commands or gestures which may induce the dog to point.

The pointing stance must be intense, convincing, and unmistakable as a point and, in the end, the point must be productive. Higher points are not awarded for a certain style of pointing as long as these criteria are met.

The dog must demonstrate an instinct to point scent as opposed to merely pointing on sight. The pointing instinct must not be equated with the quality of the nose.

The dog is rewarded for relocation on a moving bird. "Blinking," i.e., deliberately avoiding birds or pointing and then leaving the game for any reason, is to be severely penalized. A young dog undergoing the Natural Ability Test may break and chase after clearly establishing point without being penalized.

Desire to Work

The desire to work is the hallmark of a good versatile hunting dog, and this desire is expressed in every phase of work on land and water, from beginning to end. The dog must demonstrate that it wants to find game and is willing to work hard to that end.

Desire, or lack thereof, provides a clear index of the dog's character and usefulness. A dog with proper desire will manifest it as an attitude, a force, a compulsion as it were, and the dog's work will reflect determination and a strong sense of purpose.

Aimless running must not be confused with desire, nor should speed alone be equated with desire. Dogs that go to heel after running for a short time and have to be coaxed repeatedly to continue their work must be scored very low.

Cooperation

Cooperation can be defined as an inherent willingness on the part of the dog to apply its own initiative and special talents while working with the handler in pursuit of a common goal, producing game.

When both handler and dog know their tasks, cooperation is an invisible bond cemented with mutual knowledge and trust.

Over-dependence on the handler must not be confused with cooperation. The cooperative dog is self assured, and its work displays a purpose.

The intelligent cooperative dog seems to sense his handler's wishes and movements. Even while on a solid point, the versatile dog may slowly turn his head to make sure the handler is moving up. A cooperative young dog will maintain contact with his handler. For example, when a young dog chases a bird and then returns of his own volition, he demonstrates cooperation.

An older dog with more field experience on game should display a higher degree of cooperation than a young dog. For this reason, NAVHDA assigns an index number of 3 for cooperation in the Utility Test and an index number of 2 in the Natural Ability Test.

Physical Attributes

Recognizing the fact that a long useful life and ease of performance are enhanced by a sound body and protective coat, dogs should be evaluated for physical soundness. The dogs should be sound representatives of their breeds and meet standards. A dog's physical attributes are evaluated in the context of how they will help or hinder the dog in the hunting environment. The pleasure that comes from coupling good hunting ability with functional conformation should be recognized especially since a sound animal will generally live and hunt longer.

While physical attributes may affect performance, they are not considered in awarding prizes. As indicated in the scoring systems described on pages 13, 18 and 28, prize classifications are based solely on performance.

NAVHDA recognizes that establishing and monitoring physical standards for a given breed are the sole prerogative and responsibility of the breed club concerned. Therefore, evaluation of coat and conformation by NAVHDA Judges should be regarded as a courtesy service to assist owners and breeders by pointing out any apparent defects that might hinder a dog or its progeny from attaining maximum efficiency in the field.

Conformation judging in the Utility Test may be more meaningful than in the Natural Ability Test. The conformation of young dogs will change as they mature. Detailed examination of the dog is made with the animal on lead after the water test,

while the coat is wet. Judges will observe the dog in the field for obvious physical defects that handicap hunting ability.

4 The Natural Ability Test

Importance

The Natural Ability Test measures seven hereditary characteristics which are fundamental to the makeup of a good, reliable versatile hunting dog. The importance of this test cannot be overemphasized.

The natural, inherited abilities of a hunting dog usually manifest themselves at an early age, and it is desirable to take advantage of this fact by testing dogs while they are still young. By so doing, the owner or trainer gets an impartial evaluation of the dog's strengths and weaknesses and thus is better able to map out a future training program for the animal. If the dog displays serious deficiencies, the owner may wish to obtain a new prospect. The conscientious breeder will study the dog's record in the Natural Ability Test, along with the records of its litter mates, with a view in making any changes in his breeding program.

Although the Natural Ability Test is of extreme importance, it should not be regarded as an infallible gauge of a dog's future worth. Obviously, deficient dogs aside, there is the case of the "late bloomer," or dog that does not display its potential as early as some others. There is also the precocious youngster that does well in the beginning, but later on reveals some inherited character fault or physical disability that makes it a less than desirable gun dog. It is for this reason that NAVHDA strongly urges that dogs be tested at various stages of development.

Preparing for the Test

Owners should not fall into the trap of telling themselves that because the Natural Ability Test emphasizes inherited abilities, preparation of the dog is not necessary because it will stand or fall on "doing what comes naturally." Such a mistake would

Organization and Scope

The Natural Ability Test is organized into four main segments, or phases, as follows:

1) Field Phase - The dog is hunted in cover where the presence of game has been assured by the releasing of game birds.

2) Tracking Phase - The dog is given an opportunity to track a flightless running pheasant or chukar.

3) Water Phase - The dog is tested for its willingness to swim.

4) Judgment of Physical Characteristics.

No game is shot, and no retrieves are required during the Natural Ability Test.

There is no set sequence for conducting the four general phases. It is desirable, though not necessary, to test the young dog on tracking after it completes the field test because usually by then the dog has settled down and is better able to concentrate. Also, it is desirable to evaluate the coat immediately after the dog completes the water test.

be grossly unfair to the dog. It would indeed be a most unusual specimen that could make the transition from whelping box to an acceptable performance in the Natural Ability Test without proper exposure. As a very minimum, it is desirable that the dog should already have been exposed to water and to game in the field.

Conversely, overtraining a dog with the mistaken idea that the Judges are looking for a finished versatile hunting dog in this test, is also an injustice to the dog. Remember we are dealing with young dogs in a formative stage and, by and large, they are not yet equipped to handle the pressures of really intensive training without possible suppression of desirable characteristics.

Field Phase

Each dog is hunted for a minimum of 20 minutes and is scored or evaluated on:

- Use of Nose
- Search
- Pointing
- Desire
- Cooperation
- Gun Shyness

At two random points along the course, a Judge will signal a gunner to fire one round of blank ammunition from a shotgun in order to watch the dog's reaction to gunfire. The dog will then be marked as "Not Gun Shy," "Gun Sensitive," or "Gun Shy" as the case may be. A gun sensitive dog is one who, although obviously disturbed by the shots, is willing to continue the search without undue delay or loss of interest. This is a clue to the owner to use caution and judgment in further introducing the dog to the gun and may also impact future breeding plans. A dog is considered to be gun shy if it leaves the area in fright or returns to the handler and then refuses to hunt. Leaping into the air to locate the source of the shot, or checking with the handler for the same purpose are not judged as faults as long as the dog immediately continues the search. Dogs judged as being gun shy may not qualify for a prize classification, but are permitted to complete the remaining tests. Breeding of gun shy dogs is to be discouraged.

Tracking Phase

Each dog is judged on the following items:

- Use of Nose
- Tracking
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation

The ability to concentrate on a track is an important trait of the versatile hunting dog. It is this ability that permits the prompt recovery of cripples that are still capable of running long distances. This exercise is primarily a test of the dog's ability to use its nose and to concentrate on the track. Desire and cooperation are also factors which are noted by the Judges during the course of the test.

A flightless pheasant or chukar is released in an area reserved for the tracking. The area should be sufficiently wide to avoid the tracks being too close to one another. Tracks must be laid down-wind or cross-wind, never into the wind. Ideally, the cover should be about 8-10 inches high. This should not hinder the running bird and will retain the scent, while at the same time giving the Judges an opportunity to see the path taken by the bird and to closely observe the dog as it works the track. The track should end in cover that takes advantage of the bird's instinct to hide.

At the discretion of the handler the dog may or may not be shown the game bird before the bird is released. If a handler has any question about the advisability of his dog seeing the bird, he or she should confer with a Judge on the matter. Whether or not the dog is shown the bird makes no difference in the scoring. After the decision is

Scoring System for the Natural Ability Test

Test	Index Number	Max. Points Attainable	Prize I	Prize II	Prize III
Nose	6	24	24(4)	18(3)	18(3)
Search	5	20	20(4)	15(3)	10(2)
Water	5	20	15(3)	15(3)	10(2)
Pointing	4	16	12(3)	12(3)	8(2)
Tracking	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
Desire to Work	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
Cooperation	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
TOTAL		112	99	80	58

Minimum score for each prize classification is indicated in parentheses.

made and carried out, the dog and handler are directed to go behind some natural cover or a portable blind from where neither can see the bird being released.

The tracking of the game bird is done in the following manner. Strong healthy birds are used for laying a track. The seven primary feathers on one wing of the bird are removed (pulled out, not cut), thereby rendering the bird flightless. A few soft feathers are pulled from the bird and used to mark the spot where the bird is released. The bird is released, and the Judges observe the track. After the bird has gone a sufficient distance and is out of sight, the dog is brought to the release spot and the handler sets the dog on the track. After releasing the dog, the handler will stand quietly, facing forward and allow the dog to track on his own. It is important to calm the dog for this test. The handler should ensure the dog is concentrating on the track before release. A NAVHDA Judge may help a handler start the dog properly.

The distance the dog works the track is not as important as the concentration and intensity displayed by the dog when following the track. A dog that follows a track a short distance over ground with little or no vegetation and slowly and deliberately "spells" his way forward should be scored higher than the dog that speeds longer distances with little accuracy, especially under favorable conditions of wind, moisture, vegetation, etc.

The young dog must display eagerness and perseverance on a track. His future use as a retriever of crippled game is dependent on this characteristic. Some dogs will track well with the nose close to the ground, while others may carry their head higher and also track well. Some dogs follow the track closely while others will track several yards downwind of the track. Some dogs track slowly and deliberately while some run full out. The score is dependent upon the quality of the dog's performance, not the method used.

In this test the dog is not required to retrieve the bird, simply to follow the track. The handler will be allowed to assist the dog for a short distance. The Judges have the prerogative of recalling any dog for retesting. In this case, the dog is recalled after all other dogs have been tested.

Water Phase

A truly versatile hunting dog must possess the desire and confidence to swim. The water test should take place at a spot offering easy, gradual access to deep water.

The handler will be provided a selection of training dummies. The handler will be instructed to throw a dummy into water of sufficient depth for the dog to swim. The dog is expected to make a forward moving entry into the water and swim twice. For a complete and fair evaluation, the Judges may ask for the dog to be sent into the water more than twice.

The following items are judged during the water test:

- Water Entry
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation

The dog's swimming speed and style are of little importance. A dog that leaps into the water will not be scored any higher than the dog that enters without hesitation in a more deliberate manner. Dogs that retrieve the thrown object will not receive

Judges' Scorecard for Natural Ability Test

PURINA

NAVHDA
NATURAL ABILITY TEST

CHAPTER:
DATE OF TEST:
NAME OF DOG:
AGE ON TEST DATE:
BREED: **SEX:**
OWNER:
HANDLER:

GUN SHY TEST:

☐ Not Gun Shy ☐ Gun Sensitive ☐ Gun Shy

WATER	TRACK	FIELD	TEST	SCORE		POINTS
			Use of Nose 4 3 3		6	
			Search 4 3 2		5	
			Water 3 3 2		5	
			Pointing 3 3 2		4	
			Tracking 3 2 1		2	
			Desire to Work 4 3 2		4	
			Cooperation 3 2 1		2	

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES:

1._____ Eyes (ectropic, entropic, other defects.)

2._____ Bite and teeth.

3._____ Testes.

COAT:

Density	**Harshness**
Dense	Harsh
Medium Dense	Medium Harsh
Open	Soft

COMMENTS:

TEMPERAMENT:

NORMAL	SENSITIVE "Recovers Fast"	SHY "Recovers Slow"

COMMENTS:

PRIZE CLASSIFICATION _____ TOTAL_____

JUDGE'S NAME _____
(Print Name)

SIGNATURE _____

JUDGE #_____

☐ **Check here if this is an Apprentice Card**
☐ **Check here if this is the Senior Judge's Card**

Primary — Secondary — Where Applicable — A=Judge's Score B= Consensus (if different from A)

higher scores. The retrieve is immaterial - the importance here is whether or not the dog has the desire and self confidence to swim twice.

Dogs requiring game as an enticement to swim will be moved to the end of the line and called back after all other dogs are tested. If game must be used to entice the dog, the game must be dead. When dead game is used, the maximum attainable score will be a "2."

Judgement of Physical Characteristics

This phase of the test is described in Chapter 3, page 10.

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5 The Utility Preparatory Test

Purpose and Scope

The Utility Preparatory Test (UPT) is just what the name implies. It is a test midway between the Natural Ability Test and the Utility Test. The dog's level of obedience and training should demonstrate that it is on its way to becoming a Utility dog.

The Utility Preparatory Test is intended to help the hunter/trainer measure progress of his or her hunting companion on route to being a complete hunting dog. The test is intended to measure progress toward qualification in the NAVHDA Utility Test. Since the Utility Preparatory Test is measuring progress towards the Utility Test, it has less stringent levels of performance. Utility judging standards fully apply in the Utility Preparatory Test up to the UPT performance limits. A handler will get a better understanding of the UPT Test and enhance their training preparation by reading through the Utility Test rules. Also, the handler and dog gain experience and appreciation of the hunting team concept through exposure to the UPT test.

The results of a Natural Ability Test, a Utility Preparatory Test, and a Utility Test combined, give a strong indication of a dog's breeding potential.

The Utility Preparatory Test is divided into two groups:

Water
- Water Search
- Walking at Heel
- Steadiness by Blind
- Retrieve of a Duck

Field
- Search
- Pointing
- Steadiness on Game
- Retrieve of Shot Bird
- Retrieve by Drag

There is no set sequence for conducting the two groups of tests or for individual tests within a group. The decision on this matter is the responsibility of the Judging Team.

The following are judged throughout the Utility Preparatory Test:

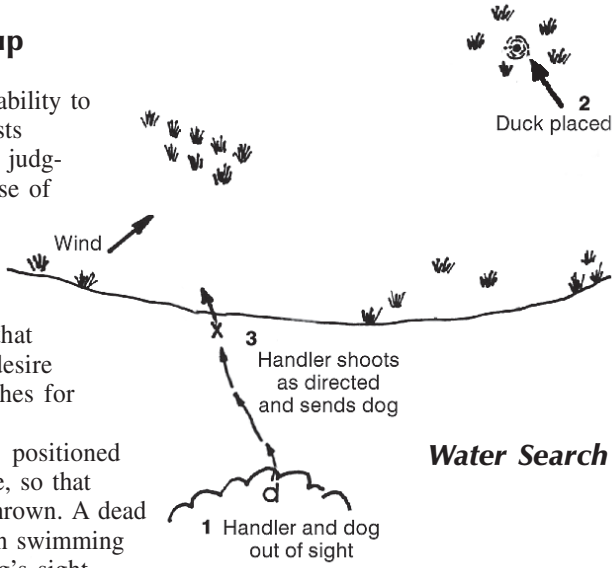
- Use of Nose
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation
- Obedience
- Physical Attributes

Water Group

Water Search

This is a test of the dog's ability to locate downed game. It tests primarily desire and allows judgment of cooperation and use of nose.

The ideal marsh will have swimming depth water and a substantial amount of vegetation, so that the dog can demonstrate desire and persistence as it searches for downed game.



Water Search

The dog and handler are positioned back from the water's edge, so that neither can see the duck thrown. A dead duck is placed into cover in swimming depth water, out of the dog's sight, either thrown from shore or placed using a boat (See diagram: UPT Water Search). It is sometimes more efficient to place the duck using a boat. Once the duck is placed, the handler is signaled to bring the dog to the starting area. The dog need not be positioned at the handler's side. It may be a few yards back to prevent being directly under the gun. The handler is given a gun with one blank shell. The judge then tells the handler which direction to shoot. Since the object of this exercise is to see the dog's willingness and ability to search the water for a "lost" duck, the shot will not be in the direction of the duck. The dog can leave with the shot and still receive a high score.

The dog is expected to intelligently and diligently search the area for the duck. The dog is given sufficient time to allow for evaluation, generally 10 minutes or less is enough time. The retrieve is not necessary unless the dog makes contact with the duck. If the dog locates the duck, a prompt retrieve is required. If the dog retrieves the duck in too short a time to make a proper judgment, he will be asked to continue the search. The handler is given another blank shell, and asked to shoot and send his dog again. The total search sequence is considered in the overall score. Refer to Chapter 6, Utility "Search for a Duck" for additional information and judging standards.

Walking at Heel

This is a test of practical obedience. It is useful when hunting and also in situations not related to hunting.

The dog is to be walked at heel, on or off lead, for approximately 25 yards to a position by a blind set up on the shore. The heeling course should contain a bend preferably around some natural object. The handler will carry a gun. The use of a chain, choke collar or any other slip type lead will not be allowed while the dog is under judgment.

Excessive pulling of the lead by dog or handler will lower the score. The dog that walks beside the handler, off lead or on a loose lead and requires no command receives the highest score. Refer to Chapter 6, Utility "Walking at Heel."

Steadiness by Blind

This is a test of the dog's reliability in the presence of game while in the exciting atmosphere of gun fire. The handler will position his dog by the blind, remove the lead and load his gun with a blank shell. He will signal the Judge that he is ready.

The Judge will then signal the duck thrower. When the duck is in the air, the handler will aim at the duck and fire a blank. After a pause, the handler sends the dog for the retrieve. There should be a distinct time interval between the fall of the duck and the handler's command to fetch. The dog is expected to stay until sent for the retrieve. To achieve a minimal passing score, the dog must stay at least until the duck is thrown. Refer to Chapter 6, Utility "Steadiness by Blind."

Retrieve of Duck

The dog is expected to mark the fall of the duck and complete his task with desire and enthusiasm.

A body of water large enough to allow a retrieve (approximately 40 yards) and sufficiently deep to require the dog to swim for most of the retrieve is required. The duck should not be thrown into cover. No decoys or distraction shots are used.

The handler must stand back from the water's edge so that the dog has to carry the duck out of the water. The dog should pick the bird up and return it directly to its handler, with a minimum of commands. For the UPT retrieve the dog should bring the bird within reach of the handler to receive a (4), it does not have to bring the bird to the hand. Although, in order to receive a passing score, the dog must bring the bird within a reasonable distance and easily accessible to the handler. The dog is expected to carry the bird, with a firm but gentle, balanced grip. A dog that willfully mutilates the bird as to render it unfit for the table, can not receive any prize. Refer to Chapter 6, Utility "Retrieve of Duck."

Field Group

Field Search

Each dog will be hunted for 25 minutes over typical hunting terrain. During the search, the handler will carry an unloaded, break-open shotgun. On flushed birds, the handler will close and swing the gun as if shooting the bird. Strong flying game birds will be released in the field under the direction of the Senior Judge. The search should show some maturity and purpose at this stage of development. As always, desire is critical to the productive hunting dog. The dog must apply itself in an enthusiastic manner, leaving no doubt that it is in search of game. Objectives should be checked and the wind should be used to advantage. Refer to "Search" Chapter 3, page 9.

The requirements for gunners are the same as those for the Utility Test (See page 25 under "Search"). Dogs in the UPT are not required to be steady to shot, so great care must be taken to shoot birds safely. Since the UPT dog is not expected to be steady to shot, it is not necessary to fire in the air if the bird cannot be safely shot. If there is no opportunity for a retrieve during the search, the dog may be held while a bird is shot for judgment of retrieve before he leaves the field.

Pointing

Judgment of pointing begins when a convincing point is established and ends when the dog is aware of the handler's presence. Points must be intense and productive. See general description of pointing, Chapter 3, page 9.

Steadiness

The highest score in steadiness requires that there be quiet confident teamwork between dog and handler through steady to wing (See diagram, page 25). As a minimum, the dog must permit his handler to move in front to begin the flush. The dog must show a willingness to let the handler move ahead to flush the bird without excessive commands. Refer to Chapter 6, page 26, Utility "Steadiness on Game."

Retrieve of Shot Bird

A good versatile dog happily and promptly retrieves shot game. The dog should pick the bird up and return it directly to his handler with the minimum of commands. The standards for the retrieve are the same as stated in UPT "Retrieve of Duck," page 17.

Retrieve by Drag

A versatile hunting dog is expected to be a reliable retriever under all hunting conditions. He should retrieve game as directed by his handler. Because the game is placed out of sight of the handler, where the dog is on his own, with no urging or control, the drag primarily demonstrates the dog's cooperation and allows judgment of obedience. If the game is not retrieved, the score is 0 no matter how precisely the track is followed.

A cold game bird (chukar, pheasant or duck) will be provided for the drag. If the handler prefers fur, he must provide the cold furred animal.

The track laid by a judge dragging dead game is simply a means of getting the dog from the handler to the game, it is such an obvious track that it is not a test of nose. The drag will be approximately 50 yards and will end with the game out of sight of the handler.

Scoring System for the Utility Preparatory Test

Test	Index Number	Max. Points Attainable	Prize I	Prize II	Prize III
Water					
Water Search	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
Walking at Heel	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
Steadiness by Blind	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
Retrieve of a Duck	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Field					
Search	5	20	15(3)	15(3)	10(2)
Pointing	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
Steadiness on Game	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Retrieve of Shot Bird	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Retrieve by Drag	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Judged Throughout					
Use of Nose	6	24	24(4)	18(3)	18(3)
Desire to Work	5	20	20(4)	15(3)	10(2)
Cooperation	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Obedience	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	6(2)
TOTAL		184	157	116	79

Minimum score for each prize classification is indicated in parentheses.

Performance should be consistent with the Utility drag. The standards for the retrieve are the same as stated in the UPT Retrieve of Duck. Refer to Chapter 6, page 26, Utility "Retrieve of Dragged Game" for additional information and judging standards.

Judged Throughout

Physical Attributes

Evaluation of physical attributes will take place immediately after one of the water retrieves, when the dog's coat is wet.

Judges' Scorecard for Utility Preparatory Test

PURINA

NAVHDA
UTILITY PREPARATORY TEST

NOSE	DESIRE	COOP	OBED	TEST	SCORE		POINTS
				Search for Duck 4 3 2		4	
				Walking at Heel 3 2 1		2	
				Steadiness by Blind 3 2 1		2	
				Retrieve of Duck 3 2 1		3	
				Search 3 3 2		5	
				Pointing 4 3 2		4	
				Steadiness to Flush			
				Steadiness to Wing			
				Steadiness Total 3 2 1		3	
				Retrieve of Shot Bird 3 2 1		3	
				Retrieve by Drag 3 2 1		3	
				Nose 4 3 3		6	
				Desire to Work 4 3 2		5	
				Cooperation 3 2 1		3	
				Obedience 3 2 2		3	

CHAPTER:

DATE OF TEST:

NAME OF DOG:

AGE ON TEST DATE:

BREED: **SEX:**

OWNER:

HANDLER:

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES:

1._____ Eyes (ectropic, entropic, other defects.)

2._____ Bite and teeth.

3._____ Testes.

COAT:

Density	**Harshness**
Dense	Harsh
Medium Dense	Medium Harsh
Open	Soft

COMMENTS:

TEMPERAMENT:

NORMAL	SENSITIVE "Recovers Fast"	SHY "Recovers Slow"

COMMENTS:

PRIZE CLASSIFICATION _____ TOTAL_____

JUDGE'S NAME _____
(Print Name)

SIGNATURE _____

JUDGE #_____

☐ **Check here if this is an Apprentice Card**

☐ **Check here if this is the Senior Judge's Card**

Primary | Secondary | Where Applicable | A/B A=Judge's Score B= Consensus (if different from A)

Use of Nose

During the Utility Preparatory Test, the dog must demonstrate not only that he has a good nose, but that he knows how to use it to find game. It should demonstrate intelligent use of the wind and the ability to positively locate birds.

Desire to Work

The desire to work must be evident throughout the Utility Preparatory Test. Desire to work is not to be equated with speed or aimless running. It is instead a mental toughness demonstrated by persistence, determination and a will to get all jobs done.

Cooperation

By the time a dog has reached the Utility Preparatory Test, it is expected to have done some hunting and had considerable training. It should by now have reached a fairly high degree of cooperation with its handler. The cooperative dog is purposeful and self assured. It should demonstrate at all times that it is hunting with and for its handler.

The intelligent, cooperative dog does not need a lot of commands in the field. It should anticipate its handler's wishes and movements. It should come around with minimal commands when its handler changes direction and should maintain contact without being overly dependent.

Obedience

A good versatile hunting dog must be controllable at all times. Obedience on the part of the dog is important to the safety of the dog, to the relationship between hunter and landowner and to the relationship between the hunter and other members of his hunting party.

The Utility Preparatory dog is not required to demonstrate obedience to the level that is expected in the Utility Test, but it is supposed to show a willingness to obey his master's commands.

6 The Utility Test

Purpose and Scope

The Utility Test is designed to test a hunting dog's usefulness to the on-foot hunter in all phases of hunting both before and after the shot, in field and marsh, and on different species of game.

While the dog that is successful in the Natural Ability Test might be likened to a promising young apprentice, the dog that successfully completes the Utility Test will have demonstrated that he is a master, or at the very least a good, solid and reliable journeyman.

This test is a challenging and demanding one, as befits the NAVHDA aim of "fostering, improving, promoting and protecting the versatile hunting dog in North America." It is not, however, an unreasonable test with unattainable goals. A very large number of fine dogs have already earned prize classifications in NAVHDA Utility Tests. It is interesting to note that the majority of these successful dogs have been owner-trained.

Serious breeders generally await results of the Utility Test before making a final evaluation of a dog's probable worth as a sire or dam. Most dogs entered in the Utility Test have reached maturity, and latent faults will probably have surfaced.

The individual tests are divided into two groups as shown below:

Water Group
- Search for a Duck
- Walking at Heel
- Remaining by Blind
- Steadiness by Blind
- Retrieve of a Duck

Field Group
- Search
- Pointing
- Steadiness on Game
- Retrieve of Shot Bird
- Retrieve of Dragged Game

There is no set sequence for conducting the two groups, or for individual tests within a group. The decision on this matter is the responsibility of the Judging team.

The following are judged throughout the Utility Test:

- Use of Nose
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation
- Stamina
- Obedience
- Physical Attributes

The Water Group

Search for a Duck

This is a test of the dog's ability to locate wounded waterfowl. It tests use of nose, cooperation, desire, perseverance, and stamina. Of significance is the fact that it places the dog in an environment where the handler often cannot physically follow the dog or even see the actual situation, thus requiring the animal to rely on its own initiative and intelligence in going about the task independently. A dog that must depend entirely on signals from the handler to locate the game is unsatisfactory.

The test is organized as follows:
A pond or marsh of at least one acre with sufficient vegetation to allow the duck to get out of sight, yet open enough to allow free

movement of the bird, is selected. Portions of the area must be of swimming depth for a dog.

With dog and handler both out of sight, a healthy pen-raised mallard or other wild species of duck is rendered flightless by pulling, not cutting, the primary feathers of one wing. One of the Judges will toss the duck out well into or past the cover at the edge of the water.

When the Judges are convinced the duck has gone sufficiently far from the point of landing and is well hidden, the handler and dog are called up and the dog is placed in position off-lead. A Judge will indicate to the handler the direction in which the dog is to be sent. The dog should remain quietly at the handler's side until commanded to retrieve. The handler will fire one blank shot over the water and send the dog. From then on it is desirable that the handler interfere as little as possible with the dog's search. Hand, whistle, or voice commands should be used only when the dog is completely off course and is obviously in serious need of help.

The capable dog will systematically search likely cover and, if conditions are appropriate, will find and follow the scent path left as the duck moves through the aquatic cover and over stretches of open water. If the scent is lost, the dog should not mill around aimlessly at the spot, but should start a systematic search to relocate the scent.

Each dog is allowed a minimum of ten minutes to search out the duck, unless it completes the task in less time. No retrieve of the duck is required. If the opportunity for a retrieve occurs, such as the duck being caught or shot, the retrieve must be successfully completed. The test is concluded when the Judges have seen enough to render fair judgment as to whether or not the dog used it's nose, desire, perseverance, intelligence and sense of cooperation to the extent that under normal hunting conditions, the game would be brought to bag. It is emphasized that this is an exercise in searching and is not a chase. If the duck is retrieved in too short of a time to make a proper judgement of the search, the handler will be asked to send the dog again without a shot being fired or another duck being released.

Walking at Heel

This is a test of practical obedience. It is useful when hunting and also in situations not related to hunting. It must be remembered that in many "one dog" families, the versatile hunting dog is also a household companion.

Any good versatile hunting dog should be able to follow its master at heel, on or off lead. Whether artificial or natural obstacles are used, they must be set up to be seen easily by the handler and dog.

A course should be zigzag style using 10 pair of stakes or trees. These should be placed about 36 inches apart, in a manner that allows comfortable passage for dog and handler. The course should lead to a blind on the shore of a lake or marsh where the remainder of the water tests will be conducted.

The dog may be on or off lead, but if on lead the lead must be loose. The use of a chain, choke collar or any other slip type lead will not be allowed while the dog is under judgment. Excessive pulling of the lead by dog or handler will lower the score. Voice or other commands given by the handler as he proceeds along the path may lower the score. The handler will carry an unloaded break open gun provided by the test sponsor. The dog that walks beside the handler, off lead or on a loose lead, misses no stakes, or trees, and requires no command receives the highest score.

Remaining by Blind

This is a test of obedience, control and calmness in the presence of gunfire when the handler is not within the dog's view.

A blind is erected at water's edge near the end of the heeling course (see "Walking at Heel," above). A rig of 6-10 decoys is set out in front of the blind.

Upon arrival at the blind, the handler is allowed to position the dog in or at either side. The handler may leave an object, such as a cap, jacket or *unattached* lead, with the dog without incurring a penalty.

The handler, after positioning the dog to his satisfaction, walks to a hidden spot designated by the Judges and fires two blank shotgun rounds at an interval of approximately 10 seconds.

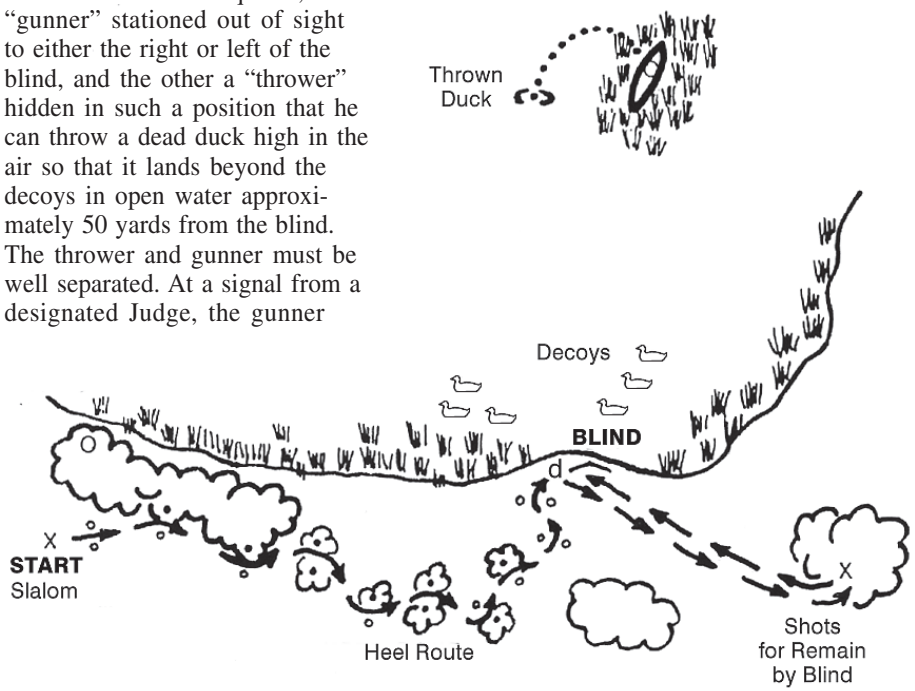
A dog under complete control will remain quietly at the blind awaiting the return of the handler. A dog who stays quietly in the blind with only minor changes in position, should not be penalized. A dog that takes only a few steps away from the original position, but remains in the immediate vicinity of the blind may receive a Prize I score, but not the maximum score. One that completely abandons the blind for any reason is deemed unsatisfactory. Whining or barking are to be penalized. This test is completed when the handler returns to the dog.

Steadiness by the Blind

This is a test of the dog's reliability in the presence of game while in the exciting atmosphere of repeated gun fire.

To begin the test, the handler enters the blind, leaving the dog close by, outside of the blind. Two assistants are required, one a "gunner" stationed out of sight to either the right or left of the blind, and the other a "thrower" hidden in such a position that he can throw a dead duck high in the air so that it lands beyond the decoys in open water approximately 50 yards from the blind. The thrower and gunner must be well separated. At a signal from a designated Judge, the gunner

Obedience and Duck Retrieve



fires one shot. The handler will fire one shot. On signal, the gunner fires a second shot. Next the Judge will signal the thrower to launch the dead duck. When the duck is in the air, the handler, without prompting, fires his second shot to simulate shooting the bird. In summary, the firing sequence is: (1) Gunner - (2) Handler - (3) Gunner - (4) Handler (the last simultaneously with the appearance of the duck). Blank shotgun ammunition is mandatory.

There should be a distinct time interval between the fall of the bird and the handler's command to fetch, but no specific time is prescribed, and the Judges will not signal the handler to send his dog. The highest ratings are awarded when both dog and handler are silent and the dog remains at the blind until commanded to fetch. A dog requiring many reprimands, or one that leaves the blind, or whines and barks will be severely penalized.

Retrieve of Duck

The place of entry may be a short distance on either side of the blind. A dog that leaps into the water will not be scored any higher than one with a deliberate entry that is also bold and unhesitating. The dog should swim around or through the decoys without paying undue attention to them. The dog must pick up the duck without hesitation and return it to the handler, without delay, using either a land or water route.

Because releasing the duck during the retrieve could invite the escape of a cripple, the dog should not drop the duck while en route to the handler, unless it is obvious that the hold is so insecure as to seriously impede the retrieve. In this case, the dog is permitted to put the game down in order to secure a better hold, provided it does so quickly, without loss of control and then immediately continues the retrieve. Putting the game down merely to play or tussle with it must not be confused with an intelligent effort to improve a tenuous hold. Shaking upon emerging from the water should not be penalized unless the game is dropped in the process. Upon arrival at the handler's position, the dog should sit or stand quietly close to the handler until commanded to release the duck to hand. Anticipating this command or dropping the game must be penalized. A dog that willfully mutilates the bird as to render it unfit for the table, cannot receive any prize.

Judgment of Physical Attributes

Normally, the Judges will examine the dog for physical attributes at some point during the Water Group tests in order to take advantage of the wet coat.

The Field Group

Search

Each dog is hunted for a minimum of 30 minutes over varied terrain known to contain game. Ideally, part of the course on which the test is conducted should be a wood-lot, shelter belt, or some other dense cover. On entering this cover, the dog should shorten his range to keep closer contact with his handler and search the cover thoroughly. A few experienced dogs may do this of their own accord, but others will have to be commanded to hunt close. The scoring of this phase of the search should be done solely on how well the dog performed the task. Whether a dog shortened his range of his own volition or on command is irrelevant.

During the search, the handler will carry an unloaded, break-open shotgun. On flushed birds, the handler will swing the gun as if shooting the bird. If quail are

used, one or more pheasants or chukars must be used for each dog. It is acceptable to use all chukars or all pheasants in the UT test.

Two experienced gunners are required during the search. Gunners must be at least 18 years of age and all gunners born after 1975 must have successfully completed a state/provincial firearms safety course. The gunners will carry their guns in the open position until just before the shot. They will position themselves one to either side and just behind the handler with a reasonable distance between gunners. When the dog points, the gunners will move up on a general line: *gunner-handler-gunner* - and ready their guns for firing. No shots will be fired parallel to or behind the line: *gunner-handler-gunner*. In other words, the gunner on the right confines his shots to the Right Safe Sector and the one on the left to the Left Safe Sector. Shots at birds that flush and fly behind the above mentioned line or unsafe area will not be attempted. Gunners must also be alert to the dangerous combination of a low flying bird and a dog that has broken and is chasing. If the bird cannot be shot, the gunner will fire in the air to simulate shooting the bird.

The sponsoring organization will require that the gunners read the safety instructions before the start of the test and the Judging Team will verbally review the instructions with the gunners and judging group before the first dog is called to the starting line.

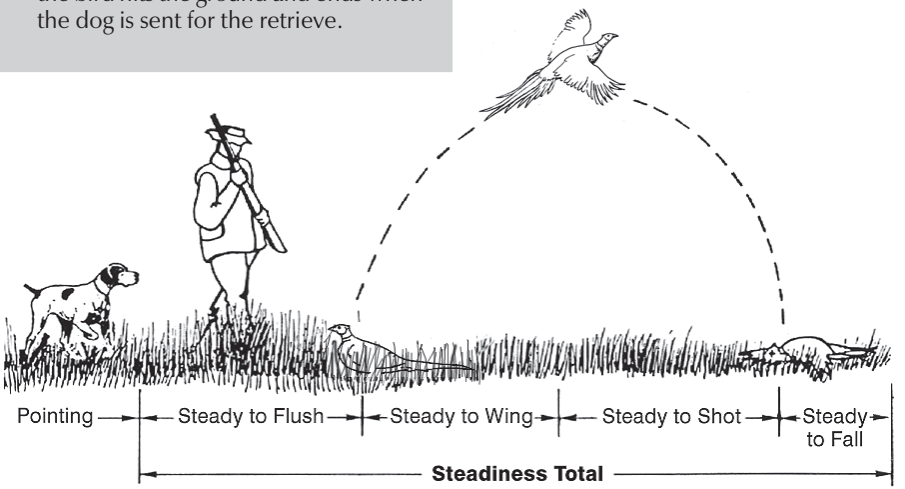
The Judging team will ensure that members of the gallery are in a safe position and in case of noncompliance, will suspend all test activities until safety is restored.

"Steady to Flush"
Judging "Steady to Flush" begins when the dog is aware of the presence of the handler. Think of "Steady to Flush" as behavior during the flushing period. The steady to flush judgment ends when the bird leaves the ground.

"Steady to Wing"
Judging "Steady to Wing" begins when the bird leaves the ground and ends when the gun is fired.

"Steady to Shot"
Judging "Steady to Shot" begins when the gun is fired and ends when the bird hits the ground.

"Steady to Fall"
Judging "Steady to Fall" begins when the bird hits the ground and ends when the dog is sent for the retrieve.



Pointing

Judgment of pointing begins when a convincing point is established. Judgment of pointing ends when the dog is aware of the presence of the handler.

Pointing is not part of steadiness; however, it is the beginning of the sequence.

Steadiness on Game

Of utmost importance is the fact that well executed steadiness gives the hunter the opportunity to concentrate on safe and skillful handling of the gun. The highest score in steadiness can only be awarded when quiet, confident and sportsmanlike team work between handler and dog is displayed during most of the bird contacts. The more this type of team work is lacking, the lower the score must be. No fast rules can be given.

Of primary importance in judging steadiness is an evaluation of the dog in the context of the hunting situation. For example, if the bird is missed by the gunner, the dog should remain steady until commanded to continue the search. A dog that takes three or four steps when the gun is fired should not be penalized, particularly when the dog's view of the falling game is obstructed.

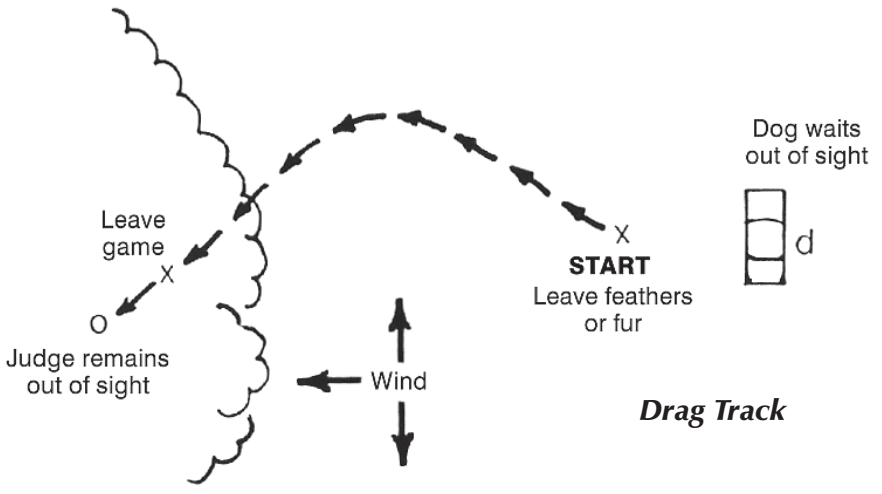
Retrieve of Shot Bird

A good versatile hunting dog will accomplish the retrieve quickly, happily and eagerly.

On command, the dog should go quickly to the fallen bird, pick it up, return directly to the handler and then wait calmly until told to release the bird to hand. Putting the bird down anywhere en route before being commanded to release it may be penalized. The dog should hold the bird gently, but firmly, with a balanced grip. Unduly damaging the bird during the retrieve may be faulted. A dog that so willfully mutilates the bird as to render it unfit for the table, cannot receive a prize. The Judges may examine retrieved birds and determine whether any significant damage was the result of shot or mishandling by the dog.

Retrieve of Dragged Game

The utility dog should be a reliable retriever of game under all hunting conditions. Since such situations cannot be exactly simulated in a test, the drag track



Drag Track

has proven to be a most satisfactory test of the versatile dog's retrieving ability. The drag is purely a mechanical means to get the dog from point A to point B, i.e. from the start of the drag to the end where the dragged dead game is left, and where the dog should find it away from any influence of the handler with the feeling of being "all on its own" with no help, no praise, no pressure. The drag is man made, and through training can be taught to any dog. It is strictly a retrieving test and demonstrates only the dog's cooperation and obedience. The dog must display its willingness to find and retrieve game without the direct influence of his handler. Since the scent of the dragged dead game and the foot scent of the person dragging the game is abundantly present, it is not a test for the quality of a dog's nose.

The drag track should be between 100 and 200 yards depending on the terrain with one bend (not a sharp hook) near the center of the course. The first part of the drag should be over fairly open cover so the dog's attitude and actions can be observed. The balance of the track should be out of sight of the handler. This is important since some dogs, when they feel they are out of sight, abandon the search or mishandle or bury the game.

The game used should be cold. If the handler desires fur, he must provide the furred animal. The start of the drag can easily be marked with some feathers or fur, and the game should be deposited at the exact end of the drag in cover, but not in a hole or depression. The Judge who made the drag should then continue walking in the same direction and conceal himself 15 to 20 yards (depending on the density of the cover or terrain) from the game on the down wind side to observe the dog's actions when it arrives at the game. When this Judge is concealed, he signals his colleagues to start the test.

The handler brings the dog up on a lead, and the Judge points out the start of this drag. The handler shows the dog the start of the drag and commands it to retrieve. At this point, the dog is on his own and no signal or command is permitted.

The manner in which the dog works the drag matters little. This can vary widely with the weather, experience, and temperament. If there is a side wind the dog may run the drag on the down-wind side. Some dogs work with head high, others with the nose touching the ground.

A dog performs well when it finds the game quickly, picks it up, and returns eagerly to the handler. The dog should sit or stand close to the handler and hold the bird until the handler takes it.

The dog who fails to retrieve even though he has worked the drag track well does not receive a qualifying score. The dog cannot qualify for a Prize if it willfully mutilates the game.

The following are judged throughout the Utility Test:

Use of Nose

During the Utility Test, the dog must not only demonstrate the quality of its nose but also that it is able to use its nose to maximum advantage in finding and handling game.

The dog that consistently finds game in the field with sureness under varied conditions is demonstrating a good nose. The manner in which a dog locates and follows the path of a duck in the "Search for a Duck" test may provide an excellent opportunity to judge the nose.

Desire to Work

The desire to work must be evident throughout the Utility Test. The dog that continues when the going gets rough in thick cover or cold water shows the presence of this fundamental quality in the animal.

Desire is not demonstrated by speed, nor is aimless running to be confused with desire. It is the firm, determined, yet controlled will to get on with the job that marks the dog possessing this indispensable characteristic.

Stamina

Stamina is the physical counterpart of the dog's desire to work. Without stamina, even the most willing dog cannot be fully effective for any length of time.

Owners should keep this in mind when preparing their dogs for the Utility Test because it is a reflection on the owner when an otherwise good dog is in such poor condition that it cannot perform even for the relatively short periods during which it is actually under judgment. The score achieved for stamina applies only during the test and does not imply that the dog has the stamina required for prolonged hunting conditions.

Scoring System for the Utility Test

Test	Index Number	Max. Points Attainable	Prize I	Prize II	Prize III
Water					
Search for a Duck	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
Walking at Heel	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
Remaining by Blind	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
Steadiness by Blind	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
Retrieve of a Duck	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Field					
Search	5	20	15(3)	15(3)	10(2)
Pointing	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
Steadiness on Game	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	6(2)
Retrieve of Shot Bird	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Retrieve of Dragged Game	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Judged Throughout					
Use of Nose	6	24	24(4)	18(3)	18(3)
Desire to Work	5	20	20(4)	15(3)	10(2)
Stamina	3	12	9(3)	9(3)	6(2)
Cooperation	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Obedience	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	6(2)
TOTAL		204	172	129	90

Minimum score for each prize classification is indicated in parentheses.

Cooperation

The dog should at all times demonstrate his willingness to handle and to hunt with the purpose of producing game for his master. The intelligent, cooperative dog seems to sense the handler's wishes and movements. Even while on a solid point the versatile dog will often slowly turn his head to make sure the hunter is moving up.

Judges' Scorecard for Utility Test

PURINA®

NOSE	DESIRE	STAM	COOP	OBED	TEST	SCORE		POINTS
					Search for Duck 4 3 2		4	
					Walking at Heel 3 2 1		2	
					Remaining by Blind 3 2 1		2	
					Steadiness by Blind 3 2 1		2	
					Retrieve of Duck 3 2 1		3	
					Search 3 3 2		5	
					Pointing 4 3 2		4	
					Steadiness to Flush			
					Steadiness to Wing			
					Steadiness to Shot			
					Steadiness to Fall			
					Steadiness Total 3 2 2		3	
					Retrieve of Shot Bird 3 2 1		3	
					Retrieve by Drag 3 2 1		3	
					Nose 4 3 3		6	
					Desire to Work 4 3 2		5	
					Stamina 3 3 2		3	
					Cooperation 3 2 1		3	
					Obedience 3 2 2		3	

PRIZE CLASSIFICATION _____ TOTAL_____

JUDGE'S NAME _____
(Print Name)

SIGNATURE _____

JUDGE #_____

☐ **Check here if this is an Apprentice Card**

☐ **Check here if this is the Senior Judge's Card**

NAVHDA
UTILITY TEST

CHAPTER:

DATE OF TEST:

NAME OF DOG:

AGE ON TEST DATE:

BREED: **SEX:**

OWNER:

HANDLER:

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES:

1._____ Eyes (ectropic, entropic, other defects.)

2._____ Bite and teeth.

3._____ Testes.

4._____ H.D. X-rayed

COAT:

Density	**Harshness**
Dense	Harsh
Medium Dense	Medium Harsh
Open	Soft

COMMENTS:

TEMPERAMENT:

NORMAL	SENSITIVE "Recovers Fast"	SHY "Recovers Slow"

COMMENTS:

Primary Secondary Where Applicable A=Judge's Score B= Consensus (if different from A)

Older dogs show more cooperation than younger ones, as do the dogs that have had a great deal of hunting experience. Cooperation is a silent thing and is much like an invisible bond that ties man and dog together when they both know their tasks.

Cooperation should not be mistaken for over-dependence. The cooperative dog is sure of himself and his work and displays eagerness. An overly dependent dog is suppressed and shows no spirit.

A dog that willfully mutilates game, as to render it unfit for the table, or buries game, can not receive a qualifying prize score in cooperation.

Obedience

The good versatile utility dog must be controllable at all times. Experienced hunters are aware that during any outing in the field, occasions can arise when obedience on the part of the dog must take first priority. The safety of the dog and simple "good citizenship" on the part of both dog and handler demand it.

The actual success of the hunt can hinge upon an obedient dog that will willingly suppress its natural instincts and desires and obey his handler's commands. The dog should readily take hand, voice or whistle signals as a matter of course when a change of direction by the handler or the end of the work demands it. A calm, understanding handler and an eager, obedient dog working as a team are a joy to watch.

7 The Invitational Test

Purpose and Scope

At present the "Invitational" is NAVHDA's highest level test. The Test is designed to evaluate an exceptional hunting dog in all phases of work and a variety of hunting situations.

Dogs successfully completing the Invitational Test, with a passing score, clearly demonstrate exceptional skill, ability and obedience. Qualifying dogs are awarded the title "Versatile Champion" further recognized by placing VC before their name in all records of NAVHDA Test Information Service and NAVHDA Registry. Entries to the Invitational must have DNA information on file or applied for, through NAVHDA, prior to the closing date for entry and the primary owner of each entry must be a NAVHDA International member.

Invitational Rules

The Invitational Test is not necessarily the same each time it is held, as the test may be modified for evaluation of exceptional hunting dogs in various hunting conditions or to fit the available grounds. All references to distance, size or sequence of events are very general and may be significantly different at any Invitational Test. The Invitational Test participants will be informed of the expected scenario well in advance of the test.

Dogs achieving a VC Title will not be eligible for entry in any subsequent Invitational Tests. All bitches will be inspected on the day of testing. Any bitch determined to be "in season" will be rescheduled for testing on the last day(s) of testing, after all males have run.

The Invitational Test is divided into two groups: Field and Water.

Field Work

Dogs will run in braces with handlers hunting together as a team for a minimum of sixty minutes. Dogs will be provided opportunities to find and handle game properly, which may include "stop to flush" situations. In every case dogs are expected to display steadiness through fall, as well as retrieves to hand.

In both the field and at the water, Invitational handlers are expected to remain standing throughout all retrieving sequences. Handlers may bend over to receive the bird, but kneeling, squatting or crouching while the dog is returning may lower the retrieving score.

Backing is also tested during the field search. To get a maximum score (4), a dog is expected to back without command. Judgment of backing ends when the dog is aware of the handler's presence. Commands after an established back may reduce the dog's steadiness score and when continued can result in a failing score. The backing dog must be off wind or down wind of sufficient distance, that in the opinion of the judges, the backing dog stopped as a result of seeing its bracemate rather than pointing game.

Should both dogs be on point on different birds, the dog that established point first will have its bird shot first. The second dog will be expected to remain on point and steady during this time. Handlers must carry an empty gun and swing on the bird in flight.

In the event either dog interferes with its bracemate, and in the Judges' opinion this interference is extreme, the dog may be ordered leashed during its bracemate's bird work. However, once a dog is leashed, it no longer can receive a passing score.

Any dog that leaves the field for more than 20 minutes is out of judgement and will not be allowed back in the field but will be allowed to participate in all other segments of the test.

Any dog that initiates a dog fight may be expelled from the field and cannot receive a passing score. A minor encounter with no further aggression will not be grounds for ejection.

Water Work

Double Mark

The Double Mark Retrieve test is designed as a realistic duck hunting scenario where two ducks are shot. The purpose of the test is to evaluate the dog's ability to 'Mark' and remember the location of a downed duck while remaining composed and steady during the flight, shooting and additional distraction during its retrieve of the second duck shot. The Test is then completed with an efficient retrieve of the first duck shot.

Requirements for this test are a body of water mostly of swimming depth, a minimum of 2-3 acres with no, or very little, vegetation. There will be a small six to ten decoy spread near the line, but not in line with the marks.

Test Dog: Prior to the test each day, a dog not entered in the Test will be run through the sequence. This measure provides participants a view of the test and assures Judges the marks can be seen and are positioned as intended.

The handler will heel their dog off lead, fifty to one hundred yards, on a clearly defined path to the water's edge. The handler will carry an unloaded break open shotgun. Once the dog is positioned, the handler will be given two blank shells.

On signal from a Judge, the first mark will be thrown into open water at approximately 50 yards from the dog and handler. While the duck is in mid-air, the handler will swing and fire one blank at the duck. Shortly after the first duck hits the water the second duck will be thrown, its trajectory arcing across the line to the first mark and landing approximately 20 yards from the dog and handler. While the second duck is in mid-air the handler will swing and fire one blank at the duck. Once the dog has demonstrated steadiness to fall, the handler will send the dog to retrieve the second duck down (simulated cripple). After the dog picks up that duck, a diversion shot will be fired.

Once the dog has completed the retrieve of the simulated cripple, the handler will hand the duck to the Judge. Without touching the dog, the handler will re-position the dog and send it to retrieve the first duck thrown.

'Handling', as a means of directing the dog on a correct line to the duck is allowed during these sequences. A dog that completes the retrieves with efficiency, requiring only a minimal amount of direction, may receive a high score. Beyond this, any commands by the handler may reduce the dog's score. To achieve a qualifying score, both ducks must be retrieved to hand, in the order prescribed above, with a minimum of commands.

Blind Retrieve

The blind retrieve also represents an actual hunting situation in which a crippled duck has landed approximately 100 yards across open water, near the opposite shore and crawled up the bank some distance before expiring. To replicate this scenario a short drag will be laid from the water's edge to the duck.

The test requires a dog that has not seen this duck fall or heard a shot fired to take directions from its handler to the area to locate and retrieve the duck to hand.

Test Dog: Prior to the test each day, a dog not entered in the Test will be run through the sequence. This measure provides participants a view of the test balances scenting conditions and assures Judges the setup is correct.

The test begins with the handler be instructed to heel their dog to a designated place at the water's edge from where they will direct their dog to the area of the dead duck as a means to locate and retrieve it to hand. A retrieve is required to achieve a passing score. A dog that completes the retrieve with efficiency, requiring only a reasonable amount of direction, will receive the top score. A passing score allows more hand, voice or whistle signals as well as more time. Thrown objects are not permitted.

Honoring

This test simulates a duck hunting scenario where two dogs are working from the same blind or position, taking turns in honoring the other's retrieve of downed ducks.

The test begins with a retrieving dog positioned near the water's edge. The handler of the honoring dog (the dog being tested) will be instructed to position their dog approximately 10 feet from the retrieving dog, at a designated spot near the shore facing the water then asked to stand to one side and behind his dog during the sequence.

On signal from a Judge, a shot will be fired, by the handler of the retrieving dog, as a dead duck is thrown into open water nearby. The honoring dog is expected to remain steady, while the retrieving dog completes this retrieve.

Scoring System for the Invitational Test

Test	Index Number	Minimum Qualifying Score	Points Max.	Points Min.
Field Work				
Search	5	3	20	15
Pointing	5	4	20	20
Backing	3	3	12	9
Field Steadiness	3	3	12	9
Field Retrieve	3	3	12	9
Water Work				
Heeling	2	3	8	6
Steadiness at Double Mark	2	3	8	6
Double Mark Retrieve	4	3	16	12
Blind Retrieve	4	3	16	12
Honoring at Blind	2	3	8	6
Overall				
Nose	6	4	24	24
Desire	5	4	20	20
Cooperation	3	3	12	9
Obedience	3	3	12	9
TOTALS			200	166

8 Education and Training Assistance

The Rewards of Training

A well-trained versatile hunting dog will warm the heart of any sportsman. So much more pleasure is derived in field, forest, and on the marsh when a dog is properly trained. Deep personal satisfaction comes to the hunter when both function as a well knit team. Of even greater importance is the fact that much less game is lost when the dog is well trained.

Training Book

In 1973 NAVHDA published the first book in North America designed specifically for training the versatile hunting dog. The authors, Sigbot Winterhelt and Edward Bailey, do not receive any monetary gain from their work. All profits from the sale of the book go to NAVHDA to help the versatile hunting dogs of North America. The book is *The Training and Care of the Versatile Hunting Dog*. Over 50,000 copies have been sold throughout North America.

With a step-by-step process, from basic obedience training to the finished product, the authors demonstrate how to train a versatile hunting dog that will find game, point it, remain steady to wing and shot, track it if crippled and retrieve it to hand from land or water. They reveal how to have a dog that will be steady in a duck blind, will hunt for the gun and will waste no crippled game.

Correlating Video/DVD

The video, *How to Train Hunting Dogs... Secrets of the Pros*, complements the training book and shows the trainer how to use the training book.

In this action-filled course, Sigbot Winterhelt teaches some of his secrets. Follow along at your own pace in this carefully designed method.

The Book

The Training and Care of the Versatile Hunting Dog includes training on:

- Whoa
- Come
- Retrieving
- Tracking
- Water work
- Steady to wing and shot
- Steady in the blind
- Correcting faults
- Care of the versatile dog in kennel and field

The Video/DVD

How to Train Hunting Dogs... Secrets of the Pros includes training on:

- Training for behavior in the home
- Walking at heel
- Whoa and come
- Retrieving on land
- Tracking
- Sitting and staying
- Searching for game
- Pointing
- Steady to flush and shot
- The down
- Flushing on command
- Care of the versatile hunting dog
- Twelve golden rules for training

The training book and video/DVD are available to the public at a nominal cost through your local chapter of NAVHDA or by contacting the sources listed on the page prior to the foreword of this book.

Training your own hunting dog can be one of life's most rewarding experiences. There is no prouder moment than watching a dog you've trained "do it right" when you are afield.

Chapter Training Sessions

Another informal way NAVHDA assists in training versatile hunting dog is through chapter training sessions. The local chapters of NAVHDA hold training sessions during the year. These training sessions are marked by camaraderie and mutual assistance between owners in attendance.

Sessions may include basic through advanced training. The chapter members assist handlers in the basic steps of "whoaing" their dog and how the "whoa" is used in various hunting situations. Assistance is available for training for an energetic and reliable retrieve, on ways to staunch a dog on point, teaching the basics of tracking for the recovery of wounded game and for getting a reluctant young dog into water.

In short, the owner of a versatile hunting dog is never far from help in training his or her dog.

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9 NAVHDA Handler Clinics

Method and Scope of Instruction

Sanctioned Handler Clinics are 2-day events sponsored by local chapters of NAVHDA and are under the leadership of designated Clinic Leaders carefully selected by the NAVHDA Executive Council.

The first part of the clinic consists of "classroom" instruction where the philosophies and the system of NAVHDA judging are presented by the Clinic Leader and discussed by the group. Included are explanations of the scoring system and the use of related documents such as Judges' Scorecards.

Following this session, the group proceeds to the field, where under the guidance of the Clinic Leader, the group assumes the roles of Judges. NA, UPT, and UT dogs are judged.

As each dog completes a portion of the overall test, group members individually arrive at and mark down their version of an appropriate score. The Clinic Leader encourages a group discussion during which he announces his score and states his reason, taking care to explain any points that may have been missed by the others.

Everything is kept on an informal level, and questions and comments can be presented at anytime without embarrassment.

Purpose

The purpose of Handler Clinics is twofold:

1. The knowledge gained will assist participants, not only in handling their dogs during NAVHDA tests, but also will help in training and actual hunting.

2. Handler Clinics serve as the first step to becoming an Apprentice Judge and to help interested people understand the philosophy of the NAVHDA testing system.

10 Physical Attributes

The Judges' Role

NAVHDA Judges are generally not skilled as "all breed" judges of coat and conformation, and we are not expected to be. As trained observers, however, we can make a valuable contribution in providing a consensus report and record of coat, conformation and temperament. The judges should point out obvious abnormalities to the handler when judging coat and conformation. The following notes and sketches are intended as an aid in remembering the terminology.

Eyes

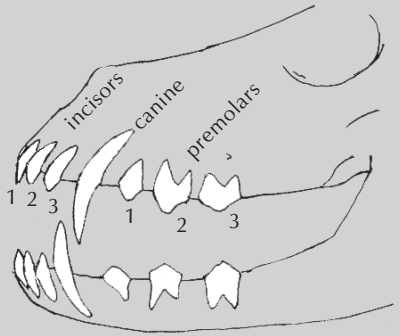
Eye defects which are field recognizable are usually abnormalities of the lids. *Entropic* lids are turned in so that the eyelashes rub on the eye. *Ectropic* lids are turned out, usually making a pouch below the eye. *Trichiasis* is facial hair growing toward the eye.

Teeth

The normal bite is usually referred to as a scissors bite and relates to the alignment of the incisors. The words tight scissors are an accurate description of teeth alignment.

Misalignment of the incisors is the most common bite fault, but all teeth should be checked for alignment. In addition, any missing or extra teeth should be noted. The diagrams will help in identification.

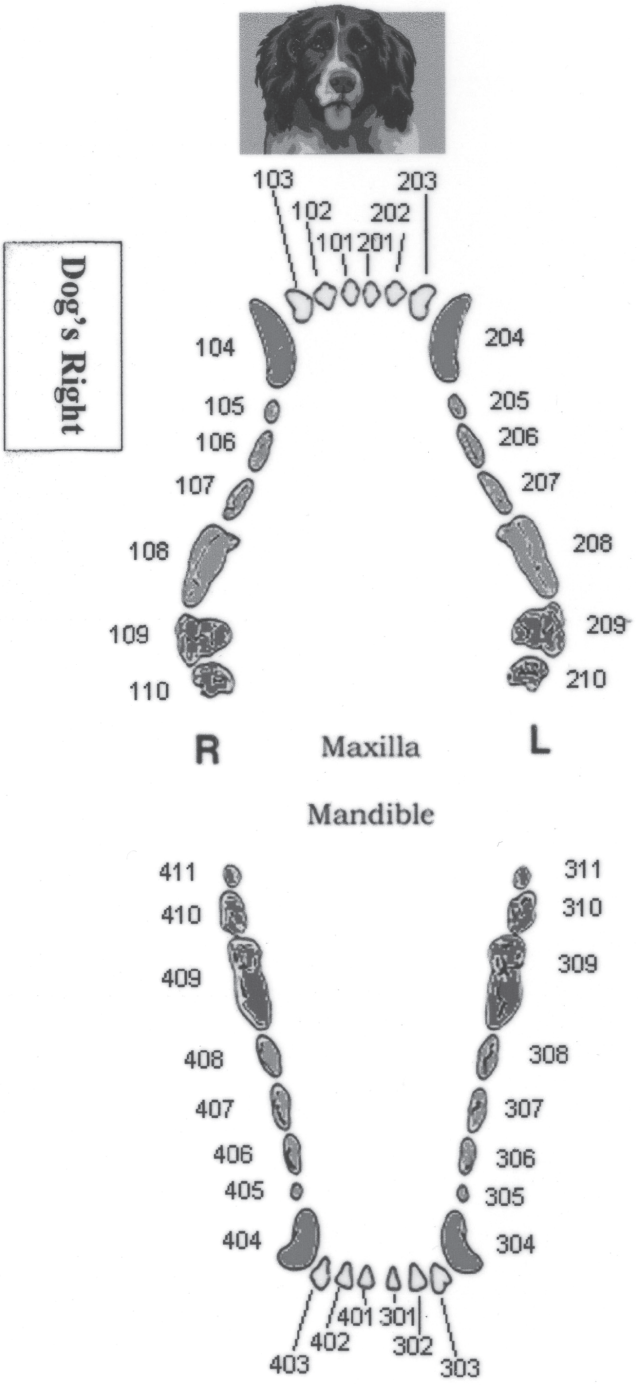
Temporary or "milk" teeth of a puppy



Teeth Alignment

Abnormalities to be identified:

Permanant Teeth of the Dog



Appendix

NAVHDA Sanctioned Test Capacity Chart

The recommended number of dogs, which may be tested in one day by a judging team, has been established to assist chapters in planning their test schedule. This schedule provides enough time for adequate discussion of test scores between the Judges. A test of a single type is the simplest to run efficiently, and conversely changing from one type test to another always takes some time. The combinations of dog numbers for a test are shown in the following table.

Recommended Number of Dogs per Judging Team

NA & UPT		UPT & UT		UT & NA	
8	0	6	0	5	0
7	0	5	1	4	1
6	1	4	1	3	1
5	2	3	2	3	2
4	2	2	3	2	3
3	3	1	4	2	4
2	4	0	5	1	5
1	5			1	6
0	6			0	7
				0	8

A maximum of two Apprentice Judges can participate per judging team.

When conducting three types of tests with one judging team, Utility Preparatory dogs are considered to be Utility dogs in your calculations of the number of dogs, which can be run. (Use UT and NA table).

Extra capacity is granted to chapters with a history of successful tests run on grounds that they are experienced with and that lend themselves to efficient operations. The maximum number of dogs, which may be run in a test and various combinations, is shown in the following table.

Maximum Number of Dogs per Judging Team

NA & UPT		UPT & UT		UT & NA	
10	0	7	0	6	0
9	0	6	1	5	1
8	1	5	2	4	2
7	2	4	2	3	3
6	2	3	3	3	4
5	3	2	4	2	5
4	4	1	5	2	6
3	4	0	6	1	7
2	5			1	8
1	6			0	9
0	7			0	10

A maximum of two Apprentice Judges can participate per judging team.

When conducting three types of tests with one judging team, Utility Preparatory dogs are considered to be Utility dogs in your calculations of the number of dogs, which can be run. (Use UT and NA table).

No NAVHDA Sanctioned Test shall exceed these maximum numbers.

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