

## NAVHDA Monthly Judge & Apprentice Update

May 2019

I recently received a phone call from the President of NAVHDA Dave Trahan asking for my response to a complaint he had received from a Natural Ability handler. At the water, his dog did not swim for a bumper. The handler asked if he could throw a stick or stone. The judging team said NO!

I vehemently disagreed with that judging team's decision, as did Mr. Trahan. The use of a stick or stone if picked up from the shore or a rock(s) provided by the chapter is allowed. This topic has been discussed at length during NAVHDA Judge's Workshops. Provided below is a reprint from a section of the 2019 Judges Workshop notes. This topic has been discussed and noted as far back as 1993 in Judges Workshops.

**Judges Workshop Notes:** 1993 Buffalo (Bob West, Vic Connors, Larry Reese)  
Handler walks up with a stick instead of the chapter supplied dummy. If the handler provides the stick NO. If the judges pick the stick up from the bank OK.

1997 Bloomington, MN (Joe Dolejsi, Bob West)  
Handler after throwing several dummies asked to throw a stone. After receiving an OK from the judging team handler reached into his pocket and threw a Milkbone. The group noted that the purpose of this segment of the test is to see the dog swim twice and whether a **dummy, rock or stick** (all provided by the chapter or found on the shore to avoid lacing the object with some scent) is used is not really important. Milkbone unacceptable. Dog brought back at end to redo.

2003 Minneapolis, MN (Joe Dolejsi, Dir. of Judge Dev. and Bob West) The dummy is the preferred tool for this part of the test. **If another object (i.e. sticks, stones, etc.)** is used, this can be taken into consideration in the scoring of the water test. The object is to get the dog to swim.

The Natural Ability test in question was in the Pine Hills area of North Carolina...millions of pine cones on the ground. The handler asked if she could throw a pine cone (versus a stick or stone). The dog did swim with great enthusiasm after the pine cones (3 times) after first refusing to go for two bumpers. The water score, desire and cooperation all were adjusted downward.

9. If a pine cone is OK to use to entice a puppy to swim (with reduced score) why can't we use a Dokken or winged/flagged dummy?

[Dokken's looks to much like a duck? The winged/flagged dummy and the Dokken are added inducements to enter the water initially.](#)

I don't know what else to say. I have copies of all the NAVHDA Judges Workshop Notes from 1990 to the present. Once again, the Aims Program Test Rules, The Judge's Handbook and the NAVHDA Judges Workshop Notes are all trying to promote consistency of NAVHDA Judging across the country. Judges should read and follow each of these documents to establish and maintain consistency of judging.

The latest version of the Judges Handbook was published in 12/2016. I am respectfully asking that each of you reread the section **General Comments to Judges**, pgs. 4-7. Within the past year the Executive Council has had to remove three judges for their inappropriate behaviors while either running dogs, judging dogs or personal conduct related to our dog world. Remember as a NAVHDA Judge you are always seen as an ambassador for NAVHDA. Your behavior while judging, running a dog, working at or observing a test is always seen in the light of "a NAVHDA Judge".

Thank you.

Chip Bonde

Director of Judge Development