

NAVHDA Monthly Judge & Apprentice Update

September 2019

I did not write a Monthly Update for August.

I feel a giant THANK YOU needs to go out to all those who helped make the 2019 Invitational Test an overwhelming success. 136 dogs were tested during the 4 day event. Tracey Nelson, Director of the Invitational, Deb Stott, Invitational Test Secretary, Herb Christian and Jeff Rhodes from the Buckeye Chapter and the Mingo Sportsman's Club all deserve congratulations for all their work prior to and during the 2019 Invitational. All the local Buckeye Chapter members and the many volunteers from around the country who showed up to work allowed this test to run smoothly. THANK YOU.

Mari Bondi asked me to remind all judges to please send in their scorecards in a timely manner. The Central Office does not enter the data until all sets of cards (1 envelope with the senior's cards plus any apprentice cards and the chapter paperwork; the second envelope with the other two judge's cards) have arrived at the office. Please save your US mail receipt with the tracking number until you are sure your envelope has arrived.

Natural Ability Test

During the field portion of a NA test two dogs exhibited heat stress. The plan for the day was to run each dog in the field then immediately proceed with each dog to the water phase of the test due to the physical location of the field and water sites. The two dogs in question did not complete the 20 minute portion of their field phase due to their reaction to the heat. After all the other dogs in the test completed their field and water phase of the test the two dogs in question who had not completed their 20 minutes in the field were brought back to

the field to complete their field evaluation. New birds were planted. The judging team took both parts of each dog's field performance into consideration when arriving at their individual scores for nose, search, pointing, desire and cooperation.

I had never heard of this situation and shared it with the Judging and Testing Committee. 100% of the committee agreed that this should **NOT** have been the proper procedure. If a dog is adversely affected by the heat it is advisable to get the dog into nearby water, natural or a chapter provide pool/tub. If after some minutes the dog can continue you may add some additional time to the original 20 minutes to compensate for extended time in the water. You are **NOT** to, after hours of rest while the other dogs complete their events, bring the dog back to the field, plant a couple of new birds and combine the field performances to arrive at composite scores!

Utility Duck Search

When do NAVHDA Judges start timing a duck search? I received a well written report from a handler who, when he asked about his duck search score was told by the judging team that they do not start timing the duck search immediately after the shot is fired whether the dog leaves the handler's side to begin the search or remains at the handler's side and does not enter the water. A judge explained to the handler that timing is not recorded until the dog has swum across open water, reached cover and started to search. If the dog is called back from an encounter with an animal, the time spent swimming back to the handler did not count. When the dog was resent the time spent swimming out across open water to cover again did not count.

My thoughts, and I believe the appropriate procedure is to start timing the duck search after the shot is fired and the dog is released, enters the water on their own or not. If the dog remains at the handler's side and refused to enter the water this event and time is recorded. Desire, cooperation and obedience to swim across open water to reach searchable cover are components of a good duck search. If the pond is so devoid of cover that a dog has to swim an extend amount of time to reach cover maybe the host chapter needs to look for a new water sight. In any case I believe the recorded time for the duck search begins with the entry or not of the dog into the water after the shot. The dog's behavior during the next approximate ten minute time frame is to be evaluated.

UT Drag

A Western area judge came East to judge. During the drag, upon first sight of the dog returning with the duck in its mouth, the handler said good boy. The Western Judge said that was not allowed and wanted the score reduced. The Eastern Judges said that the handler could not see the dog pick up the duck (as in the correct duck drag scenario) so the good boy on first sight was OK.

The goal of all NAVHDA judging across the United States and Canada should be a fair and consistent evaluation of a dog's performance evaluated against NAVHDA's rules. On page 27 of the 2018 edition of the Aims book, the last sentence of the third paragraph states: "At this point, the dog is on his own and no signal or command is permitted."

My interpretation is that NAVHDA should **NOT** be allowing a free (unpenalized) "good boy/good girl" upon first sight of the dog returning

with the duck in its mouth during the drag. Hopefully we can correct this regional bias in our NAVHDA judging.

I will add this topic of conversation to the Judges Workshop 2020 in Portland Maine. Judges, while assisting members of your home chapters during training please emphasize this point.

Thank you.

Chip Bonde

NAVHDA Director of Judge Development