

Judges Email Blast

From the Judging & Testing Committee

June 2021

UPT Steadiness by Blind

At the virtual 2021 Judges Workshop we discussed whether the steadiness by blind criteria should be changed to allow the UPT dog to break on the shot. The Judging & Testing Committee has recommended to the EC that this rule should not be changed. The EC has concurred, so there will be no rule change. As a reminder our rules for UPT Steadiness by Blind are, and will remain.... "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 (1), the dog must stay at least until the duck is thrown.

UT Field Steadiness

At the Judges Workshop we also discussed whether there should be a shot in the air for a wild flush, bumped bird or stop to flush situation. The Judging & Testing Committee discussed this at length and decided that at this time there would be no rule change and a shot is not required on a wild flush, bumped bird or stop to flush. The EC has also concurred. We looked at this from purely a safety factor. Some chapters have very experienced, well-seasoned gunners, and some do not. We determined that this may put too much pressure on a gunner which could result in a safety issue. There are however, certain circumstances that the judging team may request a gunner to shoot a bird in a wild flush, bumped or stop to flush situation so they can judge retrieve of shot bird. These instances are rare and at the discretion of the judging team and should only be administered with a great deal of caution and safety.

UPT and UT Retrieve

In the 2019 and 2020 Judges Seminars the number/type of commands (encouragement) that may be given on a retrieve were discussed. On a retrieve in the field, at the pickup, a SINGLE encouragement, e.g., "good dog" may be given. Similarly, in the retrieve of the duck, a SINGLE encouragement, e.g., "good dog" may be given. The rules for the retrieve on the drag have not changed and remain as stated in the AIMS. Once the dog is sent, it is on its own to retrieve to hand without additional commands or encouragement.

Heeling

We have received a few reports from the field that handlers are either walking at a "snail's pace" through the gates or going through so fast they are trotting. Both are unacceptable and should be judged accordingly. Clear and concise instructions should be given to handlers to

walk at a normal pace through the gates. In addition, we tell handlers that judgement will begin when you give your first command or go through the first gate. Therefore, heeling instructions should be given in close proximity to the gates. Please remember, as in all testing, verbal and non-verbal commands should be scored accordingly.

NA Pointing “Weighted Birds”

Birds found and pointed in the field for the NA dog should not be “weighted” differently in pointing than a bird that judges must call for and plant. Planted birds are weighted the same as birds found naturally in the field. Additionally, the pointing score for the NA dog should give the most weight to the best (overall) performance. Unproductive points do not necessarily reduce the pointing score on a one-to-one basis. (i.e one unproductive point reduces the pointing score one point.) If the NA dog points several birds well but has an unproductive point or two, judges should consider the overall pointing performance. Other factors such as “hot spots” where several birds have been planted should also be considered when evaluating how much an unproductive point may or may not lower the pointing score.

Answering Handler Questions

We judge dogs as a team. At the conclusion of the test please answer each individual handler’s questions as a team and not individually. Please also give handlers ample time to come up to you and have a conversation before finishing up paperwork and departing.

UT Duck Search

If a duck is produced on the duck search and needs to be dispatched, only a judge or designated gunner should shoot the duck and NOT the handler.

Want to become a Clinic Leader?

The process and criteria for current Senior Judges to become Clinic Leaders has changed. If you are a Senior Judge and you have interest in becoming an Aims & Rules Clinic Leader, please visit the NAVHDA homepage and click on the Aims & Rules Clinic tab. At the bottom of the page there is a link that will illustrate the criteria and process to become a Clinic Leader.

Checking Physical Attributes

We check physical attributes as a courtesy to the handler. If you encounter a dog who is obviously agitated by checking the coat, teeth or testicles, please do not put yourself in a dangerous situation and possibly be bitten. Stop the attributes check, circle sensitive or shy as appropriate and add notes to the comments section of the card to reflect why the attributes check could not be completed.

Judges Failing to Return Phone Calls & Emails

We have addressed this many times in the past, but it still seems to be a significant issue. We have received many communications from Test Secretaries who have become frustrated that Judges fail to return phone calls and emails requesting them to Judge. Quite frankly this is unacceptable and unprofessional. Two days should be ample time for you to check your calendar to look at your professional and personal commitments and get back to the Test Secretaries with a yes or no answer.

Judging & Testing Committee Phone Numbers

If there is a problem at a test, or the team needs a rule clarification, please call Mark Whalen, Director of Judge Development, or another member of the Judging & Testing Committee. Please add these contacts to your phones for future reference.

Mark Whalen (240-888-5826) Director of Judge Development

Dan Wittman (623-237-2790) Director of Testing

Phil Swain (503-329-7943) Apprentice Judge Program Manager

Brian Thoman (303-807-3335) Acting Senior Judge Program Manager

Peter Wade (207-491-1122) Apprentice Mentor

Tom Swezey (970-215-1271) Apprentice Mentor

Ruth Weiss (760-207-4108) Apprentice Mentor

Roy Ames (262-818-7718) Member at Large

Steve Kosmicki (847-652-0454) Member at Large