

Judges Email Blast

October, 2021

Invitational Judges: We just completed the largest Invitational Test in the history of our organization. THANK YOU to the 33 Invitational Judges who judged this test. Many of them judged for several days.

Annual Meeting: The Annual meeting will be held on January 28th & 29th in Ontario, California. On Saturday the 29th there will be a Judges Breakout session at 10:15 am. All Judges and Apprentice Judges are invited to attend. Attendance is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. This session will only be open for Judges and Apprentice Judges.

At 1:00 pm on the same day there will be a Judges Q&A Session open to all attendees. All Judges and Apprentice Judges are invited to attend. This will be an opportunity for all NAVHDA members to ask Judges any questions they may have.

Judges Workshop: The Judges Workshop will be virtual again this year. The date for the workshop is Sunday, February 27th, 2022 at 3:00 pm Eastern. Please add this to your calendars. Attendance is required. Apprentice Judges are strongly encouraged to attend.

Judge Performance Standards: It has been a standard in NAVHDA since the establishment of the Association that the most important factor in determining the success of NAVHDA tests is the quality of judging. Therefore, it is essential that Judging must be uniform, objective and in accordance with NAVHDA rules at all times. Only the Judges have the ability, the power, and the opportunity to maintain standardized testing of versatile hunting dogs. Judging is a special privilege and responsibility. The conduct of Judges must show consideration for the handler and always exemplify exceptional field manners. Additionally, the reputation of the Association and the public image are, in large part, reflected by our judging and the performance of individual judges.

To maintain the high standards NAVHDA advocates and has traditionally been acclaimed for, it is mandatory that judge's performance be consistent with the following standards:

1. Under the NAVHDA Bylaws, Article II, Section 2:09 (Termination and Reinstatement), Judges will be held to a higher standard of performance and conduct regarding "a violation of the corporation's rules, misconduct, any action determined by the Executive Council to be harmful to the corporation, or any action contrary to the conduct of a sportsman who respects and conserves the natural environment."
2. Judges must know and comply with the most current edition of the Aims, Programs and Test rules book. This includes ensuring knowledge and use of updates and clarifications of rule application as specified in the notes and minutes of Judges Seminars and the quarterly "email blast's" promulgated by the Director of Judge Development.

- a. In addition to judging in accordance with NAVHDA rules, judging should demonstrate knowledge, consistency, and objectivity. Further, A judge's conduct must show consideration for the handler recognizing that he or she is our customer and is to be treated with respect.
3. A judge's personal conduct, sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity shall be consistent with the high standards expected for leadership within the Association. Being a judge is a leadership position that reflects on the entire NAVHDA membership.
4. The loyalty of a judge in adhering to NAVHDA principles and guidelines established both in writing and by tradition are essential to remain in good standing as a NAVHDA judge. When discussion of areas of improvement is needed, such discussions will be directed to the appropriate members of the NAVHDA Executive Council and should not be shared with the general public.
 - a. At no time may a handler or his or her dog be publicly vilified.

(Note: The public reading of scores after a test is not considered public praise or vilification. It is, rather, a simple statement of the dog's performance as evaluated by the judging team. After scores are read and questions answered, no further discussion of a dog's or handlers' performance should be conducted.)
5. Appointment as a judge is a special privilege and responsibility. Termination of this appointment may be made by the Executive Council if a breach of the standards stated in this document are violated.
6. If a judge's conduct does not meet the criteria established in this document, a letter or email describing the circumstances and related facts should be sent to the Director of Judge Development. The Director of Judge Development may, as he or she determines, refer the matter to the Judging and Testing committee for consideration. The Judging and Testing committee will submit a recommendation, if any is required, to the Director of Judge Development for submission to the Executive Council for consideration.

Remaining by Blind: We are still getting feedback that some judges are instructing handlers that they must place the dog in the blind. This is incorrect. Our rules state the following: Upon arrival at the blind, the handler is allowed to position the dog **in or at either side of the blind.** The handler may leave an object, such as a cap, jacket or unattached lead, with the dog without incurring a penalty (No object left may be touching the dog).

Heeling: "The course should be serpentine style using 10 pairs of stakes or trees. Gates should be place 3-4 feet apart, in a manner that allows comfortable passage for dog and handler". Please make sure when setting up the heeling course that the gates are at least 36" (3 feet) in width.

UPT Retrieve: We have received feedback from the field that judging teams are giving a lowered scores for UPT dogs that come back to handler within a step or two and drop the duck or bird. This is incorrect. We must remember that this is a UPT dog and our rules for UPT retrieving, on land or water, state “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 (1), the dog must bring the bird within a reasonable distance and easily accessible to the handler”.

Desire / Cooperation: If a dog “no go’s” (i.e. fails to enter the water for the retrieve) on a blind retrieve or retrieve of a duck this is a failure in either desire or obedience, and may be both. It is not a cooperation issue. An example would be a dog that just stands and fails to enter the water. The last sentence in the **desire** paragraph in the UT section of the Aims book is a good illustration of this.... “It (desire) is the firm, determined, yet controlled will to get on with the job that marks the dog (as) possessing this indispensable characteristic. Another great example from the Aims book in the **obedience** paragraph of the UT test is also a good illustration...”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. In elementary terms, and we’ve all heard this many times; desire takes them out, cooperation brings them back”.

Placing on the Ground: The question has come up whether it’s allowable for the handler to place the gun on the ground? Currently there is no rule against placing the gun on the ground. But, with that said, and every situation is unique, if you feel that the act of placing the gun on the ground is affecting the dog’s performance you may disallow it. As we all know anything that a handler does, whether verbal or nonverbal that affects the dogs performance is a command.

Hunting Season: It’s upon us, FINALLY! The Judging & Testing Committee wishes all of you a productive and safe hunting season.