



GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP AND JUDGING CCRCA UPLAND WORKING TEST

Final Draft 1-18-07

1. General: It is desirable to use one type of bird for all four tests. Upland birds (quail, chukkar, or pheasant) are preferable, but ducks or pigeons may be used with a launcher if no other birds are available.

The judge(s) shall keep in mind that the purpose of the test is to judge the dog's natural ability, not training. An enthusiastic dog shall be given every opportunity to pass the test, at the same time the dog must demonstrate basic obedience, i.e. coming when called.

2. Walk-up: The Judge should look for the dog that walks attentively with the handler and does not have to be loudly reminded to stay in position. Remember, the hunter is trying to walk up or sneak up on sitting birds to get a flush and a shot. A dog that runs ahead or has to be loudly controlled will most likely scare off the birds before the hunter can get within gun range.

It is not necessary for the dog to be steady when the bird is flushed or released. The handler may release the dog or the dog may break on its own.

The main purpose of the walk up is to check dogs for gun shyness. Any dog that demonstrates shyness or refuses to leave the handlers side shall be excused from the test.

3. Quartering: The Upland Hunting retriever should hunt the available cover on its own, without continual coaxing by the handler. In general, the dog should use its nose to hunt the cover with eyes attentive, ears erect and tail up. The judge should reward dogs that quarter in a natural manner, focusing on promising cover within the range of the gunners at an appropriate pace. Hand, voice or whistle commands are acceptable to begin the dog hunting, change the dog's direction or hunt areas or keep the dog in gun range. However, a markdown should occur and the test may be failed if the dog is directed by the handler for every change of direction and to every patch of cover or if the dog avoids cover or water or if the dog works out of gun range and requires constant correction to bring it back into range or if the dog walks at the handlers side.

The Upland Hunting dog is expected to flush the bird. It is suggested that the location of the plant, trap or launcher be flagged to assist the handler, guns and judge to be ready. The Handler may direct the dog to the area of the bird, but not directly to the bird.

After the flush is made, it is desirable, but not necessary, for the dog to come to a stop on its own or on the command of the handler. If the dog breaks or the bird flies towards the gallery and the gunners cannot get a clean and safe shot, they shall allow the bird to fly off. A dog that does not return on the handlers whistle or voice command to chase a fly away bird shall be assessed a markdown for a refusal, the severity of which will be determined by the conditions of the test. If it is clear that the dog has no intension of listening to the handler and is disturbing significant cover after its break, the dog may be failed. Repeated incidents of lack of control can be grounds to fail the test. The Judge should instruct gunners to let the bird fly off a short distance (i.e. 20 to 30 yards) before shooting.

The dog is expected to mark the area of the fall of the bird, find and retrieve the bird. If the bird happens to fall in an area of extreme cover requiring an effort beyond the intended scope of the test, the judge may allow the handler to move to the area of the fall to encourage the dog in its effort.

4. Blind: Wherever possible each blind shall be thrown in a unique patch of cover for each dog. In no case, shall the same patch be used for more than three dogs and never in consecutive order. The over

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should be thick enough that the bird will be well hidden from sight, but not so high as to prevent the handler from knowing where the dog is located. The dog need not be visible to the hunter but its movement must be detectable by sound or movement of grass.

The bird must be thrown into the cover to avoid creating a scent trail.

5. Tracking: The dog should be evaluated on its ability to find a scent trail and follow it to the bird. The dog is not required to stay exactly on the scent trail, but should demonstrate progress along the drag-scented path to the dead bird or along the route of a running bird.

Voice or whistle commands may be used to encourage the dog to hunt, but hand signals should not be used once the dog is set on the beginning of the trail. Voice commands such as “back” or “over” would not be acceptable, but commands such as “hunt ‘em up” or “find the bird” are acceptable. Sufficient time should be given for the dog to work out the scent trail as long as it is making progress along the trail. If a dog strays completely out of the tracking area, it may be called in and set again on the beginning of the trail. However, if the dog aimlessly hunts with no direction along the scent trail and has to continually be reset on the track, the test may be failed. Once the bird is found, it should be retrieved and delivered to within 5 feet of the handler.

It is important to not over scent the trail. If the trail is too heavily scented, it can confuse the dog. If the same trail is to be used for a number of dogs, it should be dragged again, but usually not more than once for every three or four dogs. Even such trails may “wear out” from over scenting after a number of uses, in which case a second, but similar trail shall be set up for the remaining dogs. Do not drag the trail for each dog.

It is best to use a live bird to drag the trail. The start of the trail should be well scented. A fresh killed bird shall be left at the terminus of the trail. The trail shall have at least one distinct turn to see how the dog will recover and follow the scent. Don’t expect the dog to make a precise turn that was put into the drag. It will take the dog sometime to realize that it has lost the trail and correct itself back into the location of the scent.

Fresh ground should be utilized when possible to achieve optimum results and give the dogs a fair opportunity. Every dog could thus receive its own fresh trail. However, this method requires a large amount of land with similar cover in order to set trails in non-overlapping areas. A compromise that still avoids over scented trails would be to run three dogs per trail until you run out of area and then return to and re-drag the first trail.

The drag shall be set up so the dog does not accidentally locate the bird while just running about and not actually following the trail. The initial direction of the drag should have a long leg with the wind so the dog cannot possibly “wind” the bird prior to reaching the end of the trail. (About 30 – 50 yards for the initial leg in typical conditions) It is often easier to evaluate a long trail than a short one. A dog actually working air scent off a short initial cross wind may wind a bird before you determine whether or not it is actually trailing, so don’t start with a cross wind leg.

Have the dragger exit away from the trail; drag the bird in your footsteps to avoid laying two trails; a bird trail and a foot trail. A trail should be dragged in one direction, not out and back. Released live bird trails can work well but only if the birds are good runners and you have ample amount of grounds needed to release new birds in fresh areas.

The trailing test is best run when there is moisture (early morning or late afternoon) Slough areas or damp grass provide the best locations. Shaded woods can also work well. Keep in mind the conditions when evaluating each dog. Do not hesitate resetting the test if multiple dogs are not able to complete the trail.

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It is recommended that the test be run in an area where the dog remains in view of the judge. The dog should find the bird by trailing, not stumbling upon it. If the judge cannot be sure which is the case, then a second trail may be set up and the dog ran again.