



WORKING GUNDOGS

HUNT, POINT & RETRIEVE FIELD TRIALS

OFFICIAL NATIONAL RULES

To be Revised 2024

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| SECTION 1: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES..... | 5 |
| SECTION 2: SSAA STANDARD RULES..... | 5 |
| SECTION 3: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS | 7 |
| 3.1 AUTHORITY | 7 |
| 3.2 ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE..... | 7 |
| 3.3 GAME LAWS..... | 7 |
| 3.4 RECOGNISED GAME | 7 |
| 3.5 SCHEDULES | 8 |
| 3.6 COMPETITOR NUMBERS..... | 8 |
| 3.7 SCORE SHEETS (JUDGE'S CARD) | 8 |
| 3.8 RULE BOOK REVIEW..... | 8 |
| SECTION 4: TYPES OF TRIALS | 8 |
| 4.1 NOVICE FIELD TRIAL..... | 8 |
| 4.2 OPEN FIELD TRIAL..... | 9 |
| 4.3 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TRIAL | 9 |
| 4.4 NATIONAL FIELD TRIAL | 9 |
| 4.5 CLOSED SEASON (CS) FIELD TRIALS | 9 |
| 4.6 NON-INDIGENOUS GAME BIRD (NI) FIELD TRIALS..... | 9 |
| 4.7 OTHER TRIALS | 10 |
| 4.8 CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS | 10 |
| 4.9 AWARDS AND TITLES..... | 10 |
| 4.10 JUDGE..... | 10 |
| 4.11 JUDGE'S STEWARD | 10 |
| 4.12 PLACINGS..... | 10 |
| 4.13 THE DRAW | 11 |
| 4.14 BYE DOG..... | 11 |
| 4.15 VETTING..... | 11 |
| 4.16 COLLARS..... | 11 |
| 4.17 COMPLETION OF A TRIAL..... | 11 |
| SECTION 5: FIELD ASSESSMENT CRITERIA..... | 12 |
| 5.1 ROUNDS..... | 12 |
| 5.2 FIELD ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES | 12 |
| 5.3 SAMPLE SCORE SHEET..... | 13 |
| 5.4 MAJOR CREDITS..... | 14 |
| 5.5 MAJOR FAULTS..... | 14 |
| 5.6 ELIMINATING FAULTS..... | 15 |
| SECTION 6: WATER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA | 15 |
| SECTION 7: DEFINITION OF TERMS | 16 |
| 7.1 BACKING (HONOURING THE POINT)..... | 16 |
| 7.2 BLINKING..... | 16 |
| 7.3 BREAKING FENCE..... | 16 |
| 7.4 BREAKING TO SHOT..... | 16 |
| 7.5 BUMPING GAME | 16 |

| | | |
|------|--|----|
| 7.6 | <i>BEAT</i> | 17 |
| 7.7 | <i>CHASING</i> | 17 |
| 7.8 | <i>DRAWING ON</i> | 17 |
| 7.9 | <i>FALSE POINT</i> | 17 |
| 7.10 | <i>FLUSHING ON COMMAND</i> | 17 |
| 7.11 | <i>GROUND TREATMENT (QUARTERING)</i> | 17 |
| 7.12 | <i>HARD MOUTH</i> | 17 |
| 7.13 | <i>HPR FIELD TRIAL</i> | 18 |
| 7.14 | <i>HPR CLOSED SEASON (CS) FIELD TRIAL</i> | 18 |
| 7.15 | <i>HPR NON-INDIGENOUS GAME BIRD (NI) FIELD TRIAL</i> | 18 |
| 7.16 | <i>OBEDIENCE</i> | 18 |
| 7.17 | <i>POTTERING</i> | 18 |
| 7.18 | <i>POINTING</i> | 18 |
| 7.19 | <i>RAKING</i> | 18 |
| 7.20 | <i>RETRIEVE - LAND & WATER</i> | 18 |
| 7.21 | <i>ROADING</i> | 18 |
| 7.22 | <i>STEADINESS</i> | 19 |
| 7.23 | <i>STEALING</i> | 19 |
| 7.24 | <i>STICKINESS</i> | 19 |
| 7.25 | <i>STYLE AND EAGERNESS</i> | 19 |
| 7.26 | <i>WORKING FUR AND FEATHER</i> | 19 |

These Rules for the conduct of National Championships have been compiled by the Discipline Subcommittee, with amendments by the SSAA National Discipline Chairman's Conference and approved and ratified for printing by the SSAA Inc National Board.

SSAA WORKING GUNDOGS
HUNT, POINT & RETRIEVE (HPR)
FIELD TRIALS
NATIONAL RULES

REVISED 2023

No. 4

SECTION 1: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1.1 The aim of a Hunt, Point & Retrieve (HPR) Field Trial is, under conditions as similar as possible to a normal day's hunting, to test handlers and their dogs in competition against each other, both in the field and in water, in order to determine the dog that best fulfils the role of a HPR gundog on the day of the trial.

SECTION 2: SSAA STANDARD RULES

Note: In this SSAA Working Gundogs Hunt, Point & Retrieve Field Trial Rule Book the term "Range Officer" shall refer to "Trial Manager"; "firing range", "firing line" and "range" shall refer to "trial site"; "Target scorer" shall refer to "Judge"; and "shooting competitions" shall refer to "trials".

The SSAA Standard Rules cover common rules, including the protest and appeals process that apply to all disciplines.

The current edition of the Standard Rules is available on the SSAA website at www.ssaa.org.au/standard-rules

These Standard Rules should be used with each disciplines current rule book, and they take precedence over any standard rule that may be in a discipline's rule book.

The Rules covered are shown as heading and subheadings in this Rule Book.

- 2.1 COMPETITOR'S ELIGIBILITY**
- 2.2 JUNIOR COMPETITORS**
- 2.3 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**
 - 2.3.1 Authorisation
 - 2.3.2 Substitute position
 - 2.3.3 Awards, trophies, records, etc.
 - 2.3.4 Protests
- 2.4 COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY**
 - 2.4.1 Competitors and Officials to be familiar with the Rules.
 - 2.4.2 Sportsmanship
 - 2.4.3 Behaviour
 - 2.4.4 Range Safety Rules
 - 2.4.5 Safety Equipment
 - 2.4.6 Clothing
- 2.5 STUCK LIVE ROUND: MANDATORY RULE**
- 2.6 RULE INFRINGEMENTS**
- 2.7 DISCIPLINE CHAIRMAN'S AUTHORITY**
- 2.8 PROTEST AND APPEALS COMMITTEE**
- 2.9 SUPPLEMENTARY EVENTS**

SECTION 3: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

3.1 AUTHORITY

The WGAA HPR Sub-discipline committee in each State or Territory shall sanction Field Trials in accordance with these rules. The HPR Sub-discipline shall appoint a Trial Management committee and a Protest and Appeals committee for each trial.

3.2 ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE

3.2.1 The following breeds are eligible to compete:

- Bracco Italiano
- Brittany
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer
- Hungarian Vizsla
- Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla
- Italian Spinone
- Large Munsterlander
- Weimaraner
- Weimaraner (Long Hair)
- Wirehaired Slovakian Pointer
- And other HPR/Continental Pointing Dog breeds as defined by the Federation Cynologique Internationale (FCI)

3.2.2 Only dogs that are registered with the SSAA Working Gundog Association of Australia (WGAA) are eligible to compete.

3.2.3 Where specifically scheduled any other pointing dog with the ability to fulfil the requirements, as stated in these rules, will also be eligible.

3.3 GAME LAWS

The Shooting and Game Laws of the State / Territory in which the field trial is being held must be observed and will govern the conduct of all trials. The Judge's Steward can ask any handler of a firearm to produce an applicable game or shooter's licence before commencement of a trial. Failure to provide such documentation upon request will deem the handler ineligible to enter.

3.4 RECOGNISED GAME

Recognised game includes Australian native quail, snipe, rabbit, hare, native hen (Tasmania), duck and any non-indigenous game bird including, for example, pheasant, partridge, quail, and pigeons. A dog shall be credited with a find on any game, even though the handler shall not shoot game for which no open season exists at the time.

For the water work aspect of these trials, pigeons or any artificial item of game approved by the trial committee may be used for retrieving.

3.5 SCHEDULES

Details of each event conducted under these rules will be published in a schedule that will include information relating to date, time, Judge, Judge's Steward, entry fees, closing date, approximate trial location, and any other relevant information. The HPR Field Trial Committee shall endeavour to ensure that all interested members are given the opportunity to enter.

3.6 COMPETITOR NUMBERS

No HPR field trial can be conducted unless there are at least five (5) competing dogs and at least four (4) different handlers. Wins and other qualifications shall count as from the time the Judge informs the HPR Field Trial Committee of the respective placings.

3.7 SCORE SHEETS (JUDGE'S CARD)

The Judge shall maintain a score sheet of each dog's performance in each round.

It is at the Judge's discretion to decide whether to show judging sheets to competitors, although the practice of informing competitors of their performance is to be encouraged. The Judge must mark the trial catalogue with their signature, including date, prior to award presentation.

Once the Judge signs the catalogue, all placings are final pending any appeals or protests. The authorised catalogue must be forwarded to and retained by the Trial Manager.

3.8 RULE BOOK REVIEW

Rule book reviews shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in the SSAA NDC Handbook. Participation in the Rule Book review shall be open to WGAA HPR participants who have been actively involved in SSAA WGAA HPR trials.

SECTION 4: TYPES OF TRIALS

4.1 NOVICE FIELD TRIAL

A WGAA Novice Field Trial is open to all HPR dogs, with the following exclusions:

- Any dog that has previously won 2 WGAA Novice Field Trials.
- Any dog that has previously won a WGAA Open Field Trial.
- Any dog that has placed in a WGAA State Championship Field Trial.
- Any dog that has placed in a WGAA National Field Trial.

4.2 OPEN FIELD TRIAL

A WGAA Open Field Trial is a trial open to all WGAA registered HPR gundogs, without restriction to age or previous performance.

4.3 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TRIAL

A WGAA State Championship Field Trial shall be open to all WGAA registered HPR gundogs without restriction to age or previous performance. On the day of a HPR State Championship Field Trial no other HPR field trial carrying championship points may be held in that State.

4.4 NATIONAL FIELD TRIAL

A WGAA National Field Trial shall be open to all WGAA registered HPR gundogs without restriction to age or previous performance. On the day of a HPR National Field Trial, no other HPR field trial carrying championship points may be held in any State or Territory.

4.5 CLOSED SEASON (CS) FIELD TRIALS

4.5.1 Closed Season (CS) Field Trials may be conducted under these Rules. No game is shot in a HPR CS field trial. Handlers must carry a shotgun loaded with blank ammunition and shoot at the game as in a normal day's shooting.

4.5.2 Retrieving Land: In a closed season field trial a suitable dead bird will be cast at normal game shooting range. The handler will fire a blank from a shotgun when the bird is at its apex, with the dog off lead at the handler's side or, alternatively, immediately after game has been flushed and the dead bird has been thrown. After the bird has hit the ground, the dog will be sent to retrieve the bird.

4.5.3 Retrieving Water: See Section 6

4.6 NON-INDIGENOUS GAME BIRD (NI) FIELD TRIALS

4.6.1 Non-Indigenous Game Bird (NI) Field Trials may be conducted under these Rules.

4.7 OTHER TRIALS

The State HPR Sub-Discipline Committee may schedule other trials of varying formats from time to time. These trials shall not carry championship points.

4.8 CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

Points awarded for placings at WGAA HPR Field Trials shall be:

Novice Trial 1st – 2 points, 2nd – 1 point.

Open Trial 1st – 5 points, 2nd – 3 points, 3rd – 1 point

Championship Trial 1st – 5 points, 2nd – 3 points, 3rd – 1 point

National Trial 1st – 5 points, 2nd – 3 points, 3rd – 1 point

4.9 AWARDS AND TITLES

4.9.1 A dog that obtains 15 points in WGAA HPR Field Trials of any variety, including a minimum of two first place awards shall be awarded the title *WGAA Field Champion*. 'FCH' shall be added as a prefix to the dog's registered name. Note: Where a dog has gained a majority of the '15 points' in either 'Closed Season' or 'Non-Indigenous Game Bird' Field Trials the letters (CS) or (NI), respectively, shall be added as a suffix to the FCH title.

4.9.2 A dog that wins 10 WGAA HPR Field Trials of any variety, shall be awarded the title *WGAA Grand Field Champion*. 'GRFCH' shall be added as a prefix to the dog's registered name. Note: Where a dog has won a majority of the '10' 'wins' in either 'Closed Season' or 'Non-Indigenous Game Bird' Field Trials the letters (CS) or (NI), respectively, shall be added as a suffix to the GRFCH title.

4.9.3 In the event that a dog who has qualified for a 'FCH (CS)' or 'FCH (NI)' title, later gains a majority of '15 points' in 'HPR Field Trials' (shooting), the suffix (CS) or (NI) may be removed from the FCH title.

4.9.4 In the event that a dog who has qualified for a 'GRFCH (CS)' or 'GRFCH (NI)' title, later gains a majority of the '10' 'wins' in 'HPR Field Trials' (shooting), the suffix (CS) or (NI) may be removed from the FCH title.

4.9.5 A dog that wins a National Field Trial shall be entitled to have the initials NFTW (National Field Trial Winner) added as a suffix to its registered name.

4.9.6 A dog that wins two Novice Field Trials of any variety shall be awarded the title *WGAA Novice Field Dog*. 'NFD' shall be added as a suffix to its registered name.

4.9.7 A dog that successfully completes a Novice Field Trial of any variety may be awarded a Qualifying Novice Dog Certificate (QND). Note: A dog may only be awarded one QND Certificate.

4.10 JUDGE

The Trial Committee will appoint a person to judge a trial who has trained a dog to a winning standard, has acted as a Steward and is fully conversant with all aspects of HPR work as outlined in this Rule Book.

4.11 JUDGE'S STEWARD

4.11.1 The Trial Committee will appoint as Steward a person who is conversant in matters relating to HPR field trials, as outlined in this Rule Book.

4.11.2 The Steward will assist the Judge in the running of the trial and may be instructed to take the place of the Judge and report to him results when, for example, two dogs come on point at the same time.

4.12 PLACINGS

The Judge shall inform the Field Trial Committee of all the dogs that have completed all field trial criteria (filled their card without elimination).

The three highest scoring of the dogs shall be awarded first, second, & third place respectively. In the event of a tie, the dogs with equal points shall be given another run.

4.13 THE DRAW

The draw is the selection by ballot of the order in which the dogs entered in a trial are required to compete. A Trial Steward or a neutral party must make the draw, in public, at the trial site or meeting place on the morning of the trial. Dogs that are to be run by the same handler may not be drawn together. After the first round the Judge may work the dogs in any order.

4.14 BYE DOG

If there is an uneven number of dogs in any round, the Judge shall nominate a dog to run with the 'bye dog' at the end of the round. The dog to run with the bye dog shall be chosen on its ability to give the bye dog its best chance of filling its card. The Judge may run the 'bye dog' in place of a dog that has eliminated itself in the early part of the round.

4.15 VETTING

A suitably experienced person appointed by the Field Trial Committee shall inspect any dog for causes which may interfere with the performance of its opponents. Such dogs shall not be eligible to compete during that trial and must be removed from the trial site.

Bitches in oestrus shall not be allowed to compete, nor are they allowed on the trial site.

4.16 COLLARS

All dogs when called upon to compete, shall wear collars provided by the Club to distinguish them in the field. Red for the first dog drawn and either white or blue for the second dog in each brace. No other collar or device may be worn.

4.17 COMPLETION OF A TRIAL

Both field and water testing should conclude on the same day if possible. If not finalised on that day, then the trial shall be concluded on the first available day as determined by the Field Trial Committee.

SECTION 5: FIELD ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

5.1 ROUNDS

The procedure for judging is divided across two separate rounds, and the performance of each dog is judged in all categories of the work required. In order for a dog to compete in the second round it must not be eliminated during its first round. At the end of each run, the Judge's assessment of a dog's performance is totalled in points. The respective score sheets for each round are then combined to give a total score of the dog's performance in the field.

At the end of each round the judge will give a summation of the trial to that point, commenting on the performance of each dog and informing the competitors of the reasons why dogs have been eliminated or retained.

5.2 FIELD ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

- Ground Treatment max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Pointing max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Steadiness max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Retrieve (Land) max 15 points for each of the two rounds.
- Backing max 10 points for both rounds.
- Game Finding Ability max 15 points for each of the two rounds.
- Style & Eagerness max 15 points for each of the two rounds.
- Handling & Control max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Facing Cover max 5 points for each of the two rounds.

Maximum points accruable for each round shall be 100 points.

To receive championship points a dog must demonstrate hunting ability, point, be shot over, not be gun-shy, retrieve game in the field, back of its own accord and complete a water retrieve.

5.3 SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

| Competitor Number _____ | Round 1 | Round 2 | Deciding Round |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| Field Work | | | |
| Ground Treatment Max 10 points for each of the two rounds. | | | |
| Pointing Max 10 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| Steadiness Max 10 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| Retrieve (Land) Max 15 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| Backing Max 10 points for both rounds | | | |
| Game Finding Ability Max 15 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| Style & Eagerness Max 15 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| Handling & Control Max 10 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| Facing Cover Max 5 points for each of the two rounds | | | |
| TOTALS | | | |
| Water Retrieve | | | |
| Heeling, Obedience, Steadiness Max 10 Points | | | |
| Style, Eagerness, Action Max 10 Points | | | |
| Retrieving Max 30 Points | | | |
| TOTAL | | | |

Deciding round

In the event of a tie to determine the placing both dogs must be given another run either in the field or water.

5.4 MAJOR CREDITS

5.4.1 Pointing

Staunch, stylish, and upstanding point

5.4.2 Game Handling

Intelligent, non-sticky and economical work-out of game to flush
High headed roading on body scent

5.4.3 Treatment of Ground

Good quartering (a reasonable beat is 70 – 120 metres either side depending on type of ground and cover)
Acknowledgement of bumped game

5.4.4 Retrieving

Marking ability and speed in gathering game
Polished delivery
Trailing of runners
Finding unmarked game

5.4.5 Water Work

Keeness for water
Strong swimming

5.4.6 General

Game finding and game handling ability
Style and eagerness
Good control
Quiet handling
Backing

5.5 MAJOR FAULTS

5.5.1 Pointing

False pointing
Inconclusive point
Lack of staunchness

5.5.2 Game Handling

Stickiness
Raking - Ground scenting

5.5.2 Treatment of Ground

Poor ground treatment
Working excessively beyond allotted beat
Missing game

5.5.3 Retrieving

Failure to find game
Slow and unbusinesslike work
Poor delivery
Changing game on return

5.5.4 Water Work

Indecisive entry to water

5.5.5 General

Poor control
Noisy handling
Unsteadiness to flush or fall of game
Breaking to shot
Failure to back
Failure to face cover
Deliberate flushing
Disobedience

5.6 ELIMINATING FAULTS

The following shall constitute grounds for elimination (in land or water where applicable):

Whining or barking (excessive)
Repeated flushing of game upwind
Chasing fur or feather
Out of control
Failure to go out to retrieve or pick-up game
Severe hard mouth
Failure to enter water and swim
Blinking
Deliberate stealing
Lack of working ability

SECTION 6: WATER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

6.1 The water retrieve in a HPR Field Trial shall be conducted in accordance with these Rules.

6.2 Each dog that has completed all aspects of the field trial testing criteria (filled its card without elimination) shall be tested with at least one retrieve in or across swimming water.

6.3 The water retrieves that the competing dogs shall be required to undergo are as listed below:

- Novice Trial – A Single Marked Retrieve, at a maximum distance of 60 metres, in or across swimming water
- Open Trial – A Double Marked Retrieve, or alternatively a Single Blind Find Retrieve, at maximum distance(s) of 80 metres, including at least one retrieve in or across swimming water.

- Championship or National Trials – A Single Marked Retrieve or Double Marked Retrieve, in combination with a Blind Find Retrieve, including at least one retrieve in or across swimming water. The maximum distance for any retrieve shall be 100 metres.
- 6.4** Note: There must be a minimum of 60 degrees of separation between the lines to any retrieves. The Judge may stipulate the order of pick up for multiple retrieves.

SECTION 7: DEFINITION OF TERMS

7.1 BACKING (HONOURING THE POINT)

When a dog comes on point, the other dog should, of its own accord, 'Honour' the pointing dog, at the earliest possible opportunity, by stationary acknowledgement of the first dog's point. In the event that, after completion of the 2nd Field Round, a dog has not had an opportunity to 'back', the Judge may take steps to provide the dog with an opportunity to 'back' of its own accord.

7.2 BLINKING

Any dog that finds and deliberately passes the point, either through nervousness or lack of training, shall be said to have 'blinked' that game. A dog that finds, stands for a few moments, and then leaves the point is also said to have 'blinked' the game. Finding and then moving on - backwards or forwards searching for the bird that has moved on should not be confused with blinking.

Dogs can also be said to 'blink' the retrieve.

7.3 BREAKING FENCE

Is the act on the part of the dog of going through, over, or under a fence without command. A dog must remain steady at both sides of the fence through or over which its handler is crossing.

7.4 BREAKING TO SHOT

If, when the handler takes his shot at game, a dog makes a forward movement, which in the opinion of the Judge indicates a deliberate attempt to retrieve without being commanded to do so, that dog shall be deemed to have broken to shot.

If a dog makes a slight break and is brought immediately under control, it shall be deemed to be unsteady to shot.

7.5 BUMPING GAME

A dog that finds, and gets too close to game, so forcing it to fly or run before being ordered to flush, is said to have 'bumped game'. A dog that

is working up wind has little excuse for bumping game, but a dog working downwind should not be penalised for the sudden flushing of game that it (the dog) has had no opportunity to scent. A dog should remain steady to any bumped game.

7.6 BEAT

Is the direction the Judge has indicated they require the dogs to work and encompasses an area of approximately 70 – 150 metres to each side and to the front of the handler.

7.7 CATCHING GAME (Non-Indigenous Game Bird Trials)

In Non-Indigenous Game Bird Trials when a dog is instructed to flush after going on point there will be occasions when the bird fails to fly, and the dog picks up the bird on the ground. A dog catching game may lose points according to the seriousness of the offence. Repeated catching of game will result in elimination. A dog that picks up a bird without pointing first will be eliminated.

7.8 CHASING

This is the deliberate attempt to catch game that is on the move, whether or not it has been shot at. A dog may retrieve only on command from its handler.

7.9 DRAWING ON

When a dog points and the game moves on, the dog, to retain contact, may at times also move on. This may be at the command of, or sign from the handler and is generally a series of quick, stealthy steps. A dog should not be penalised for drawing on of its own accord providing that it will remain firm on point and that it does not bump the game.

7.10 FALSE POINT

When a dog points and there is no game at the location of its point, the dog is said to have false pointed. However, care must be taken to ensure that no game is present or that the game has not just moved on before deciding that the point is false.

7.11 FLUSHING ON COMMAND

Flushing on Command is the deliberate action of the dog, on command from the handler, to put the game to flight, so enabling the handler to take his shot. No attempt must be made by the handler to flush the game by any other method including walking in front of their dog or stamping or kicking the ground. The dog should remain steady to the flush of game.

7.12 FLUSHING ON COMMAND (Non-Indigenous Game Bird Trials)

In Non-Indigenous Game Bird Trials if the game bird is reluctant to fly

the handler may, at the judge's direction, flush the bird.

7.13 GROUND TREATMENT (QUARTERING)

The dog should cover the beat over which it is hunting, in a methodical and orderly manner according to the wind and the terrain over which it is working. Whilst quartering, dogs should be thoroughly under control. The dog should make intelligent use of the wind.

7.14 HARD MOUTH

When there is unmistakable evidence of any marking of retrieved game, caused by biting, crunching, or squeezing, the dog may be said to have committed 'hard mouth'. Note: Judges should be aware that birds can be damaged due to being badly shot, thrown from a mechanical thrower, or being retrieved through heavy cover etc.

The Judge or Steward is bound to inspect all game retrieved and if evidence of hard mouth is found, the handler shall be informed at that time and the Judge shall make the final determination.

7.15 HPR FIELD TRIAL

A Hunt, Point & Retrieve Field Trial is a field trial as outlined in these Rules in which game is shot.

7.16 HPR CLOSED SEASON (CS) FIELD TRIAL

A Hunt, Point & Retrieve Field Trial in which no game is shot.

7.17 HPR NON-INDIGENOUS GAME BIRD (NI) FIELD TRIAL

A Hunt, Point & Retrieve Field Trial in which non-indigenous game birds that comply with relevant game laws are released. Note: A Field Trial that includes non-indigenous game birds that have established themselves in the wild shall be classified as a 'HPR Field Trial' for the purpose of awarding Championship Points.

7.18 OBEDIENCE

The spontaneous action of obeying all commands from the handler.

7.19 POTTERING

A dog that hunts in a confined area, covering ground that has already been worked, or one that lingers on old scent, leaves it, and then comes back to it is said to be 'pottering'.

7.20 POINTING

Upon finding game, a dog should indicate the presence of that game to the handler and should remain staunchly in a rigid position.

7.21 RAKING

Dogs that hunt with their noses to the ground are deemed to be raking. Hunt, point and retrieve dogs should hunt with their heads up.

7.22 RETRIEVE - LAND & WATER

The 'Retrieve' covers the performance of the dog from when it is commanded to retrieve until it delivers the game to its handler. If a dog is disadvantaged by its brace mate stealing the retrieve, then a game bird is to be placed in the approximate area and the finding dog given an opportunity to retrieve.

7.23 ROADING

'Roading' is affected in much the same manner as 'drawing on', although it is usually done at a much faster pace, i.e. the dog points, whilst the handler, some distance away, takes time to reach the dog. In the meantime, the game may have run rapidly (perhaps to the right or left across the wind). The dog will then, keeping to windward of the scent, search at speed across the wind and pick up the point some distance from the original location.

7.24 STEADINESS

The dog should remain steady to command, to shot, wing or running fur. A dog may sit, stand, or drop in position but must not move until commanded to do so.

7.25 STEALING

When the finding dog is drawing on after scenting game, roading or working game after indicating a find by pointing, any dog that deliberately moves in front of that dog shall be regarded as 'stealing'.

7.26 STICKINESS

A dog that goes on point and then is reluctant to flush game is sticky. Dogs that are excessively slow roaders are also sticky.

7.27 STYLE AND EAGERNESS

A well trained HPR gundog that covers its ground with good, free movement, a businesslike manner, and demonstrates enjoyment in its work, whilst also being decisive in its actions, shall be said to be showing good style. A dog that also exhibits good 'bird sense' and shows a high level of biddability to its handler shall be deemed to show exemplary style.

7.28 WORKING FUR AND FEATHER

A dog shall be expected to work fur as well as feather within the definition of game and shall be awarded the same number of points for that work.