

# **BEING A HUNT TEST MARSHAL**

## **What is a Hunt Test Marshal?**

A hunt test marshal is a club member who is responsible for keeping his/her assigned hunt test stake running promptly and smoothly, which includes, but is not limited to, the following tasks. The marshal must know and understand the test rules (these are found in the AKC Rules and Regulations for Retriever Hunt Test), meet with the judges the day prior to the test for determining proper set up of equipment, set up the test equipment according to the judges' instructions, supervise the bird technicians and gunners, and maintain the running order of the dogs during the test. The marshal is expected to maintain contact with headquarters, the head marshal (if one has been assigned), the hunt test chairman, and other stakes during the test – as needed. Marshals are also responsible for making sure all workers are provided food and drinks as need (this includes the judges). Marshals should also ensure that the bird technicians and gunners have adequate hearing protection, popper shells, ammunition, etc. Once the test is finished, the marshal must make sure all test equipment is broken down, gathered, and returned to headquarters.

## **What to do before the test:**

Marshals are encouraged to contact his/her judges prior to the test for proper introduction and obtain any pre-test instructions.

It is the responsibility of the marshal to arrange for a test dog before the test and arrange for a “bye” dog, if needed during honor situations. A dog may be needed as a pick up dog as well.

Site marshals should make themselves available to meet with their judges around 2:00 PM the day prior to the test to help formulate plans. This is a very important duty as a marshal because it provides him/her the opportunity to put together a written list of equipment and workers necessary to successfully perform the test. If a marshal is not able to meet with the judges, he/she should inform the head marshal or hunt test chairman in advance so alternate plans can be made.

## **What to do the morning of the test:**

Marshals will meet at headquarters early the morning of the test. Each marshal is may be expected to provide a list of equipment and personnel needed for his/her test to the head marshal. Marshals will be equipped according to the list provided to the equipment provider. Marshals should know in advance who their live gunners are and coordinate with the Bird Steward for transportation of live birds to the field. Obtain your running order list, along with judge's books. Marshals are responsible for handing the judges books to the judges at the test site. Before departing headquarters, meet with the assigned bird technicians to review gun safety (those technicians that will be handling a gun (live or popper) must be at least 16 years of age AND have received a gun safety course) and providing directions to the test site. Usually the Hunt Test Secretary, the Head Marshal or Hunt Test Chairman will gather all the bird technicians to view a gun safety video before sending them off to their test sites. Be prepared to take the equipment and birds to the field an hour before the test is to begin.

Marshals.....do not forget to load an ice chest with soft drinks and water to server judges and test workers.

## **What to do to set-up the test:**

Marshals should make a point to be at the test site an hour before the test is to begin. Begin unloading equipment and direct the workers where to place the equipment. Do not set up equipment until judges have had the chance to evaluate morning weather conditions and made any necessary adjustments to the test. Take advantage of any down-time by meeting with the bird technicians and other works to make sure any questions are answered and everyone knows what to do. Contact headquarters if additional equipment or personnel are needed, or if any equipment or personnel can be relieved. Once the judges are ready to set things up, supervise the installation of equipment. By discussing it with the judges, decide on the best location for parking vehicles, preferably, on one side of the road. The judges will also tell the marshal where they want to set up the gallery.

Maintain a pleasant atmospheres and emphasize to all the workers to be safe, pay attention and have fun! The goal is to have the test go without incident, according to plan and on time.

## **How to run the test.**

Everything from this point is in the command of the judges. The marshal, for the most part, subordinates to them. The judges will notify the marshal when they are ready to hold the handler's meeting to discuss the test set-up, after which, the "test dog" will run the course, testing the mechanics of the test. Adjustments might be necessary, and some equipment might need to be moved. After this point, the test is ready to begin.

The running order – Marshals are provided with a running list, which provides the catalog number and name of each dog, along with the handler's name. The list can also be used to keep up with who is at the test site. As handlers start to show up, ask for their name and place a mark beside it, indicating they are present. Effort should be made to run dogs in the order they appear in the catalog. Here are some factors that will likely cause a marshal to have to modify the running order:

- Handlers running multiple dogs – If a handler needs more time between his dogs, marshals may spread them out in the order. **However, handlers running multiple dogs MUST run them in the sequence they appear in the catalog.**
- Handlers running in other tests (stakes) – Frequently, handlers will have dogs in more than one test. They are most often professional trainers and may ask if they could be moved up in order to keep from holding things up in the other test(s). The marshal may opt to insert them when they show up, placing them with as much space between their dogs as they might require.
- Miscellaneous reasons – No shows, late arrivals, scratches, no bird calls by a judge, or two dogs with the same call name being placed side-by-side for an honor.

**NOTE:** It is not permitted to place a dog ahead of another dog that has been called to the final holding blind. Once a dog has entered that blind, his next step is the line. If at all possible, try not to place a dog in the line-up ahead of any dog that has been called 1) to the line 2) to the blind or 3) to get ready.

The marshal is responsible for making sure that every dog entered has either run, been scratched, or was a "no-show", and this should be indicated on the marshal's running order sheet. The judges should be informed if there is any dog unaccounted for. On an AKC test, the judges may choose to place the handler "on the clock" in which case, the dog must be called, an announcement must be made that the dog is "on the clock" and has fifteen (15) minutes to show up to run or be disqualified. Headquarters and all other tests must be contacted with this information. Make note of the time the dog was placed on the clock and the time the dog was recorded as disqualified.

It is important that you work out a system that works best for you enabling you to easily track who has checked in, who is running, who is in the holding blind(s) and who is preparing to hold (get ready). An example of a system is: As dog's numbers are called to get ready, go to the holding blind(s) or to the line, place a circle around that number. As the dog goes to the line, place a slash / mark through the circles. As the dog leaves the line place an opposing slash through the circle.

It's a good idea to announce the order as the test is running. For example – Number 4 to the line, Number 3 to the first holding blind, Number 23 to holding blind number 2 and Number 17 get ready. But remember, don't call a dog to the line until the judges indicate they are ready for that dog and handler.

During the test, some handlers that missed the handler's meeting will ask the marshal to describe the test, so be familiar with the sequence of events. These handlers can also observe the test from the gallery by watching a run or two.

Marshals are responsible for making sure winger stations are re-birded and workers are available to plant blind birds. Usually, the breaks to re-bird are welcome, but they must be short!

## **What to do during the first series**

Each test will have both a land and water series. The judges will determine which will be held first. At the end of a series, the judges will prepare a call-back list to determine who passed the first series and qualifies to run the 2<sup>nd</sup> series. While they are working on the list, the marshal should be breaking down the 1<sup>st</sup> series equipment and preparing the stake for movement to the site of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (or next) series; including arranging transportation for the bird boys and equipment. If things work out well, this would be a good time to break for lunch.

Lunches – Headquarters will usually contact the marshal to get a count of lunches needed for the judges and stake workers. If possible and completely at the discretion of the judges, reasonable time for lunch should be allowed.

## **What to do during the second and subsequent series**

After the judges finish scoring all the results from the 1<sup>st</sup> series, they will hand the marshal a “call-back” list. By this time, anxious handlers are waiting to hear the results, and are gathered at the test site to see whether they will have the chance to run their dog(s) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> series. Marshals will announce the call back numbers and prepare a new running order list. The sequence should be based on the original running order of the dogs. Again, marshals may use the same guideline for modifying the running order that applied to the 1<sup>st</sup> series.

The judges will notify the marshal when they are ready to hold the handler’s meeting for the 2<sup>nd</sup> series; and run the test dog, after which, the test is ready to start.

Once the last dog has run, the marshal needs to instruct his/her workers to break down the equipment and direct them as to where to place that equipment. In the event you are marshaling a Master Hunter stake, you will be moving the equipment and workers to the site of the 3<sup>rd</sup> series and announcing another list of call backs.

After the final series has been completed and the last dog has run, be sure to go over the test site thoroughly to make sure all equipment is picked up and nothing is left behind. All trash and ejected shells must be picked up and disposed of properly. Empty shell casings should be returned to Headquarters for re-loading. Remove any flagging tape or marking stakes, and directional signs. Make sure the test site is as clean as when you started, if not cleaner. Make sure the workers have transportation back to headquarters and all equipment is returned. Have your workers help unload it at the equipment staging site and you should be done for the day!

These guidelines are based on those provided by the AKC and are subject to modifications that meet a specific clubs procedures. For example, the club may have designated a person or persons to supervise the delivery and set up of equipment for each stake and the marshal is responsible only for ensuring that all has arrived and is set up to the judges’ specifications. As a marshal, you should always remain flexible while maintaining that the specific RULES as laid out by the AKC are followed.