



ASK THE PRO

retired guns do's and don'ts

WHEN I TEACH RETIRED GUNS I train differently for short then long.

Here's the Difference

On a long retired gun I tend to handle to the correct line but let the dog hunt once he gets to the fall area. If the dog holds the line and keeps on going I have the gunner help the dog out. (If using mechanical throwers you can hang a radio on it to help the dog).

On a short retired gun I tend to have the gunner help the dog and not handle. This helps the dog to comeback instead of getting deep and popping when handled.

When you are teaching retired guns never start in a field full of hay bails. Pick out a single object, such as a tree or bush and hide the gun behind it. I don't see anything wrong with having the gun hid and having the dogs

see the gun when they get to the area of the fall. Once you start having success then add the other guns. EXAMPLE: Off the back of the flyer, short or long of the flyer.

Try not to have the gun retire very far from where they threw from. You can start some of them as early as one year old depending on the dog. I try and start their retired gun training just after they finish their basics.

Take your time in stretching the memory of the dog by doing singles then advancing to doubles, triples and then quads. A dog has to learn where not to go before they learn where to go – which would be not to go back to another one of those guns or back to a standout gun when there's a shorter bird.

For instance, put four guns in the field and do two doubles starting with

one short or long but not with both.

Eventually when you have had success with this add both but keep the balance between short and long.

Sometimes leaving the gun out for older dogs in training will give them confidence and set them up for success at the field trial.

Conclusion

When training retired guns always set the dog up for success, success breeds success and builds confidence in your dog. It's just a continuous learning experience and it never ends. ■

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