

MASTER AMATEUR retriever club ANNOUNCEMENT

The MASTER AMATEUR RETRIEVER CLUB (MARC)

Who We Are

The Master Amateur Retriever Club (MARC) is a new national retriever club dedicated to the amateur handler. MARC believes that amateurs are the purpose and backbone of the AKC Hunting Test for Retrievers program and will support and encourage their involvement in the sport. MARC will host an annual invitational event – The Master Amateur Invitational - for qualified amateur handled retrievers.

Who is Qualified for the Master Invitational

The Master Amateur Invitational will be open to all dogs who, when handled by an amateur, have passed 6 or more master tests during the qualifying period between March 1 and the last day of February. Dogs exclusively running tests in Alaska need four passes. MNH dogs who were amateur handled will receive automatic invitations. Dogs that exclusively run CKC events and passed the most recent CKC national event, if handled by an amateur, will also receive invitations.

How We Got Here

The concept of an amateur division for hunt tests has been discussed for some time. In early 2015 a committee was formed with members from the MNRC Board and others with extensive MN experience. The members included Jace Tramontin, Reg 2 VP – Committee Chair; Dave Kress, former MNRC President; Elaine Goodner, Secretary; Bob Montler; Frank Prendergast; Keith Winch, Reg 3 Director and Bob Swift, Reg 1 Director. The committee determined that there was sufficient support for a national amateur hunt test venue and the best approach would be to form a new club for that venture.

The conceptual program was discussed at length with representatives from AKC Performance Events prior to and during the 2015 MN event. With their support the committee proposed a Constitution and By-laws, appointed the organizing Board of Directors and MARC began the process of receiving recognition as an AKC licensed club.

Where We Are

Holding a national invitational event limited to amateur handlers requires certain modifications to the Hunt Test Regulations. Foremost of those is the authority to hold the annual event under license from the AKC. And a definition of amateur status has to be included in the Regulations. With AKC Board support the changes are expected to receive final approval at the February meeting. The next step will be recognition of MARC as an AKC club, licensed to hold the annual Invitational.

How Qualifications are Tracked

Of course a main question is “How does one identify as an amateur and qualify?” and then, “How are qualifying passes tracked?” MARC has engaged in a relationship with Entry Express and Retriever News to manage that process. The goal is to have a system that is simple and transparent. For clubs using Entry Express the process will be automatic and included in the standard event management fee structure. When a dog is entered in a master test the entry will be tagged as an amateur or pro handled entry. That designation will be noted in the EE catalog entry for that dog. When the hunt test secretary records the event's results, those dogs that passed that had been identified as an amateur handled entry in the EE catalog will have their qualification status automatically updated. Anyone will be able to view qualifying statistics on the Entry Express website.

For clubs that do not use Entry Express, the process will require – if the club wishes to participate – that the hunt test secretary input all information related to dogs and handlers for all stakes and flights into EE through its entry portal after the event is closed and running orders are set but PRIOR to the event start date. The non-EE clubs will pay a recording fee of \$4.50 per Master entry subject to a \$250 minimum charge. At the conclusion of the non-EE event, the event secretary will then use the same Entry Express portal provided to record results. The event results will then flow to the qualifying statistics summary tables and records. Non-EE clubs must also forward a copy of the event catalog to Retriever News to serve as verification of the results.

Membership

There have been a number of requests for individual as well as club memberships. Please visit the website www.MasterAmateur.com for membership information. For the 2017 inaugural event any club holding a master test will be considered a member for qualifying purposes.

The Master Amateur Invitational

The Invitational will be held between the months of April and June, beginning in the East in 2017. The Invitational will rotate across regions returning in 2021 to the East. That schedule will prevent conflict with the Master National as the Invitational will be held several months apart and two regions behind the Master National event. Clubs that are interested in hosting the 2017 inaugural are encouraged to contact us the East Regional Director.

How MARC May Impact the Hunting Test Program

THE SPORT

The AKC program for Retriever Hunting Tests was created to provide a venue for those who wished to develop, train and showcase their hunting retrievers in a non-competitive venue. MARC will continue that tradition by supporting the amateur trainer and handler. By increasing support and opportunities for amateur handlers the sport should continue to grow, and the breeds benefit, as more individuals become involved.

WEEKEND EVENTS

MARC anticipates that weekend events will experience an increase in amateur handlers but no significant increase in total dogs entered. Dogs may only run a single stake so the total number of dogs participating will increase only as the sport continues to grow irrespective of whether the handler is an amateur or professional. Clubs could see some benefit with an increase in amateur handlers who engage in and support local clubs with their volunteer effort.

NATIONAL EVENTS

The Master National will continue, unaffected directly by the MARC. The Master Amateur Invitational is scheduled to avoid conflicts with the MN in time or use of grounds. It is possible that MARC would result in fewer participants at the MNRC as amateurs who qualify for both may elect to enter only MARC.

Communication

Communication is vital in any organization and even more important in a national organization with members across four regions and 49 states in 243 local events. With thanks to our partners at Entry Express and Retriever News MARC is able to instantly send email communications to our database. That email list will be constantly refined and updated and anyone not wishing to receive the communications may opt out.

With thanks to our partners at Retriever News the MARC website is up. If you have not already done so please visit us at www.MasterAmateur.com. Questions, suggestions or offers to assist can be sent to masteramateurinfo@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you. ■

Visit www.MasterAmateur.com

Email masteramateurinfo@gmail.com

See FAQs on the next page ...



Photo by Mark Atwater

MARC Board of Directors

PRESIDENT: Bob Swift

SECRETARY / TREASURER: Dave Kress

EASTERN REGION

VICE PRESIDENT: Bob Montler

DIRECTOR: Frank Prendergast

CENTRAL REGION

VICE PRESIDENT: John Blackbird

DIRECTOR: Ed Sullivan

WEST CENTRAL REGION

VICE PRESIDENT: Paul McGinnis

DIRECTOR: Dave Christianson

WEST REGION

VICE PRESIDENT: Steve Elliott

DIRECTOR: Laura Judd

*Please direct any questions to:
masteramateurinfo@gmail.com*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MASTER AMATEUR RETRIEVER CLUB

The Club

Did the Master National Retriever Club, MNRC, create this club?

- No. While the MNRC discussed the concept, it did not create the club.

Is MARC affiliated with the MNRC?

- No, MARC is a separate club with its own constitution and by-laws.

What is MARC's primary purpose?

- To promote amateur involvement in the AKC hunt test program and conduct a quality event once a year that showcases amateur handled dogs.

How do I become a member of the MARC?

- Please visit our website for membership options and information.

Qualifying

When is the qualifying year and event?

- Qualifying starts March 1st through the end of February with the event between April and June.

How does a dog get qualified?

- The dog must pass 6 master tests when handled by an amateur within the qualifying year. For the present any club holding an AKC licensed or member Hunt Test for Retrievers and wishes its passes to be included in the MARC qualifying database is considered an MARC member for qualifying purposes.

Are there other ways to qualify?

- Any MNH titled dog, who was qualified for all qualifying events by an amateur handler and was handled at all MN events by an amateur.
- Amateur handled dogs exclusively domiciled and running tests in Alaska need only 4 passes.
- Dogs domiciled in Canada and running exclusively CKC events that pass the most recent CKC National Master if qualified for the event and handled at the event by an amateur.

What defines an Amateur?

- Amateur status is defined by the AKC. That definition is being added to the Hunting Test regulations.

Can a non-owner or co-owner run multiple dogs at the Invitational?

- No handler may run more than 3 dogs that are not wholly owned by the handler or a member of his or her immediate family.

Is there a limit to the number of dogs an amateur can run?

- No, as long as the dog is wholly owned by the handler or his/her immediate family.

How does this affect the weekend event?

- This will not change the weekend event. The weekend club will be run the same way as it has. The new club and qualification process do not change any standards from the AKC.

How will qualifications be tracked?

- Entry Express and Retriever News will track all qualifications. For events that use EE the process will be automatic. The handler will identify as an amateur when entering the event and results will automatically be tabulated.

Will another marked catalog have to be sent in?

- Not unless the club does not use EE.

What about events that do not use EE?

- For clubs that do not use Entry Express the qualification process will require – if the club wishes to participate – that the secretary use the Entry Express portal to record the event entries PRIOR to the start of the event and then within 48 hours of the conclusion of the event to record event results. Upon doing so, event information will flow to the Clubs qualifying statistics within Entry Express. The club will be charged a recording fee of \$4.50 per Master dog entered with a minimum of \$250.00 for handling the qualifying process which will be paid at the time of entry. Verification requires that the hunt test secretary also provide to Retriever News a catalog of participating dogs and designate those dogs that are amateur handled. There is no additional fee for clubs that use Entry Express.

For complete information on how the tracking and qualifying process works please visit the website: www.MasterAmateur.com.

Title

Is there a title with the new club?

- Not at present. AKC will consider a title after experiencing one or more annual Invitationals.

If there is not an AKC title why should I enter?

- Because it will be fun and any title created will be retroactive.

Miscellaneous

Can I run in both the MNRC and MARC events?

- Yes, if the handler qualifies and is able to commit the time.

Will the Invitational complete 6 series?

- Yes, with the smaller projected size, the event will have the equivalent of two weekend master tests.

How long will the event take?

- The by-laws require that the Invitational be completed within one week; for example, Saturday to Saturday inclusive.

Where will the first Invitational be held?

- The 2017 Invitational will be held in the Eastern Region. The event will rotate across regions, East to West and return to the East in 2021.

How can I apply for membership or get more information?

- Please visit our website and use the information portal.

Why does MARC use Entry Express and Retriever News as the exclusive agents for identifying and tracking qualifiers?

- MARC believes that the qualifying and tracking process must be clearly defined, transparent and easy to use. There is no other event entry system capable of providing that level of service. Entry Express provides that functionality and at no additional cost to participants. Retriever News is and has been the data repository of retriever sports from the first field trials many decades ago and continues to provide that and other services to the retriever community. MARC has full confidence that our partnership with EE and RN will provide a clearly transparent and easy to use entry and tracking process for those wishing to qualify for the Master Amateur Invitational. ■