

Retriever Hunting Test Advisory Committee (RHTAC) Report
Master National Retriever Club's Annual Event
October 16, 2015
Cheraw, South Carolina

On behalf of this committee, I express our thanks to President Sam Ferguson and AKC for the opportunity to make this report. There are copies of the charge, responsibility and authority for the committee, its membership and this report available for you here today at the Check In table and we encourage you to communicate your ideas on how to ***improve the retriever hunting test program*** to any member of the committee. It is not designed to be a 'gripe' session but rather tries to look at the overall benefits of any potential change to the entire program. The committee has operated mostly by e-mail and telecoms this year and has received an abundance of submissions. I know this info is 'old hat' to some of you but include it here for some of the new participants in the sport that might be here for the first time.

At this time, I'd like to **introduce the committee members listed on the roster distributed here today** and have each of those in attendance to stand. (Introduce each as listed on the 2015 Roster)

You'll note this committee is appointed by the AKC's Vice President for Sports & Events, **Mr. Doug Ljungren** in consultation with AKC's Field Director for Sporting Breeds, **Mr. Jerry Mann**. Doug and Jerry are here today, and both these gentlemen have been very supportive and the knowledge, guidance and support they provide is most helpful. Additionally, AKC representative **Mr. Russ Reavis**, Executive Field Representative is scheduled to arrive October 20 & **Mr. Joe Reinhardt**; Contracted Field Representative will not be able to attend this year. Many of us remember Russ; he was MNRC president in 1998 and judged the 2005 event in Palestine, Texas. We welcome each of our friends from the AKC.

It's noteworthy to comment on the growth of the Retriever Hunting Test Program. In 2014, for the first time in history, the Retriever Hunting Test entries exceeded the Retriever Field Trial entries. To be specific, entries in Junior tests were up 6%; Senior tests were up 9% & entries in Master tests were up 19% for an overall increase in RHT entries of 13%. Folks, it's nice to be addressing challenges represented by the wonderful growth of a very popular program and we commend you on being a part of this historical change!

The committee will address submissions by any individual involved in the retriever hunting test program, any club that holds licensed AKC events *or* from the AKC. We've tried to keep everyone who submitted items up to speed on the results of their submissions, but if you've submitted something and haven't heard from the committee, please accept our apology and let us know; your submission will be addressed and you will get a response. *Only written submissions to the committee are accepted to reduce the chance of misinterpretations.*

The submissions are discussed in detail and a committee decision is reached. The decision may be by 'consensus' (all five agree) or by 'majority' (4-1, or 3-2 vote). Once the committee has

agreed on a recommendation, it is sent to AKC. AKC can accept, reject, or modify the recommendations. Additionally, the AKC can implement changes in the regulations and guidelines without consulting the committee.

AKC made the announcement that this committee had been reorganized and activated at this meeting in 2010. Since that time, the committee has operated openly and sincerely appreciated each submission. **I know our time on the program is limited, so if you have questions, any of the committee will be happy to discuss them with you later.**

Since our report last year, the AKC has approved and implemented numerous regulations related to clubs that use the option of 'Limited Entries' for the Master Tests that became effective March 2015 & Entry Express has implemented numerous improvements to accommodate the new regulations. These regulations and programs largely addressed the 'Equality' issue and the 'Quantity' review (finding a place for everyone that wants to enter gets entered) is still under way. Any ideas you have would be appreciated. Additionally, the AKC has approved and implemented the option for a club to use shotgun simulators or shotguns in retriever hunting tests effective April 1, 2015. The AKC reminds clubs that any entry system they use must be in full compliance with the AKC regulations.

NOTE: It is expected the systems will be used in good faith and good sportsmanship and not abused or used as not intended.

Currently, the committee has reviewed or is reviewing about twenty five (25) issues submitted by participants that requested the regulations be revised. Only those that were not covered by the new regulations and/or Entry Express are included here:

- ✓ To require no handling on at least one set of 'double' marks in a **senior** test;
- ✓ To require no handling on at least one set of 'triples' in a **master** test;
- ✓ To require at least one live flyer in every stake, i.e., one in Junior, Senior & Master;
- ✓ To require only 'fresh birds', i.e., those that were brought to the test 'live' be used throughout the tests;
- ✓ To allow only dogs without an AKC "MH Title" to enter a test for the first week the test is open;
- ✓ Eliminate 'inordinate delays' in tests, i.e., one testing level has to wait on handlers from another testing level by limiting the waiting time to 30 minutes. Any dog that did not arrive w/in 30 minutes of being called would be considered a 'no show' and could not receive a qualifying score;
- ✓ To require that a judge be the 'registered owner/co-owner' of a dog for some minimum of time (~6 months) prior to them running the dog for the purpose of qualifying the dog to maintain their eligibility to serve as a judge;
- ✓ To require some components of a judge's record (date & level of a judge's last hunt test qualifications, last seminar attended, date test last taken, date apprentices were completed, etc.) be included on the AKC Judge's Directory;
- ✓ To offer clubs the option of having an 'Amateur' master test and an 'Open' master tests on their weekend tests;

- ✓ To offer clubs the option of splitting master tests into two divisions, a “Pro” and an “Owner Handler” on their weekend tests;
- ✓ To require a dog earn a Junior title before running **Senior** tests; and a Senior title before running **Master** tests;
- ✓ To offer clubs the option of splitting dogs into tests for those that do not have the MH title and those who have an MH or MNH title;
- ✓ To restrict entries to only the ‘owner’ of a dog;
- ✓ To offer clubs the option of offering only ‘Master Tests’ as the 5th & 6th options under the new AKC regulation that offers clubs the option of having 5 or 6 Events after the basic requirements (Junior & Senior tests) are met;
- ✓ Request to review the AKC regulation on ‘opening dates’ of tests on an entry system. Specifically, the request was to modify the current ‘entry dates’ to include the “Coded Entries” being done on a Tuesday and the ‘open to the public’ entry date would be on Wednesday. Currently the ‘Coded Entries’ are included on Wednesday (the closest Wednesday to three weeks prior to the first day of the test) and Thursday is the day the ‘public’ entries are accepted.

Please note these are *issues submitted* to the committee, so please don’t leave here saying they are new regulations!

I take this opportunity to publicly express my heartfelt gratitude to each of my colleagues on the committee. They have diligently addressed each submission with the goal of improving the retriever hunting test program, and I’m honored to serve with them.

We also take this opportunity to express the committee’s appreciation to each of the **submitters** for their interest in improving the retriever hunting test program; the vast majority were well thought out and presented well. We also express our deep appreciation to **Doug Ljungren & Jerry Mann** at AKC and **John Stracka** at Entry Express for their superb collaboration on difficult challenges. Without exception, each has been open minded, progressive in their thoughts and strongly supportive of changes that will improve the program. While the committee understands AKC has no authority over Entry Express or their business programs, Entry Express has collaborated very well with AKC and those efforts are deeply appreciated.

The AKC will notify the Club ‘secretary of record’ of AKC decisions on new/revised regulations via e-mail. Please insure your club’s records are updated with the AKC. The committee reminds you that any regulation change implemented will be carefully monitored and, if deemed appropriate, additional recommendations will be made.

President Sam, thank you again for the opportunity to bring this info to the assembly and we wish you and the MNRC the very best.

Members of the RHTAC:

Robert Rascoe, Eastern Time Zone
 John Blackbird, Central Time Zone
 Keith Winch, Mountain Time Zone
 Tom Quarles, Pacific Time Zone

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the RHTAC by Bill Teague, Chairman