

KENNEL CLUB REGULATIONS FOR GUNDOG WORKING TESTS

These Regulations should be read alongside and assume a familiarity with, Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations. A copy of these Regulations must be available at all Gundog Working Tests (GWTs.)

1. Introduction

- a. GWTs are competitions which, by artificially simulating shooting day conditions, seek to assess, without game being shot, the working abilities of the various breeds of Gundog. Cold game and dummies may be used at the discretion of the organisers.
- b. No title used to describe the winners of GWTs will be associated with such competition which is best understood as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.
- c. The Kennel Club authorises registered societies to hold competitive gundog working tests.
- d. Scurries, Pick-Ups, and other similar events are exempt, as are non-competitive club training assessments where no places are on offer. The Kennel Club also recognises that events involving unregistered dogs do sometimes take place. Such events cannot, however, be considered to be GWTs under these Regulations.
- e. Application for authority to hold GWTs must be made annually to The Kennel Club and, on the form provided, applicants should indicate the number of GWTs they propose to hold in the forthcoming year.
- f. Unaffiliated societies or individuals may also be accorded annual authority to organise GWTs, subject to 1.e. above, and these must be run in accordance with the J(G) Regulations.
- g. The GWT year will run from 2 February to 1 February.
- h. (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of these Regulations, certain events which are not authorised by The Kennel Club may from time to time be recognised by the Board of The Kennel Club. The Board is able to grant permission for Kennel Club registered dogs to be entered for such events.
(2) A judge, competitor or promoter will not be prejudiced by participation in such unauthorised events.

2. Definition of Gundog Working Tests (GWT)

- a. GWTs may be run for any of the three sub-groups of Gundogs recognised by The Kennel Club as detailed below:
 - (1) Retrievers and Irish Water Spaniels.
 - (2) Sporting Spaniels other than Irish Water Spaniels.
 - (3) Breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve.

- b. The following classes of competition are recognised by The Kennel Club:
- (1) OPEN. Open to all dogs of a specified breed or breeds, although preference may be given to dogs which have gained a place or certificate of merit at a field trial, been placed first, second or third in an open GWT, or won a Novice GWT.
 - (2) NOVICE. Confined to dogs which have not gained a place or certificate of merit at a field trial, been placed first, second or third in an Open GWT or first in a Novice GWT held in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Field Trial Regulations.
 - (3) PUPPY. Confined to dogs of specific breed or breeds less than eighteen months of age on the date of the test.
 - (4) UNCLASSIFIED. Open to all dogs of a specified breed or breeds, but may be restricted by conditions as determined by the society. To include water and team tests. A water test can include dogs of any sub-group competing together. However, if dogs of more than one sub-group are competing as a team, each sub-group will compete and be judged in accordance with The Kennel Club Gundog Working Test Regulations relating to that group.

3. Organisation of Gundog Working Tests

- a. The organisation shall agree to hold and conduct the tests within the Rules and Regulations of The Kennel Club.
- b. Control of dogs. The owner, competitor, handler or other person in charge of a dog at Kennel Club authorised events must, at all times, ensure that the dog is kept under proper control whilst at the venue including its environs, car and caravan parks and approaches.
- c. GWTs should be organised by a person or persons with experience of dog work under shooting field conditions. Each dog or team of dogs should have, as near as possible, an equal opportunity with any variability in circumstances, as far as possible, minimised.
- d. The organisers of GWTs will try, wherever possible, to simulate the circumstances of a shooting day. They must also ensure the tests are designed to further good Gundog work, and not inhibit dogs from marking or showing natural working ability. It is important, for instance, that guns and dummy throwers are positioned with such considerations in mind.
- e. The organisers must ensure that competitors are aware of the initial running order, and whether the GWT is to be conducted on cold game or dummies.
- f. Final decisions regarding the acceptability of tests lie with the judge or judges.
- g. Only dummies and dead game acceptable to the judges, will be used for retrieves in GWTs.
- h. When dummies are thrown in association with gunfire in retrieving tests, the shot must always precede the thrown dummy and the gun should be positioned a plausible distance from the retrieve. With unseen retrieves gunfire is optional.
- i. A dog, when retrieving, must not be required to pass too close to another retrieve.

- j. Organisers and judges must be careful for the safety of dogs and must not require them to negotiate dangerous obstacles. Whilst judges should take reasonable precautions for the safety of competing dogs, it is the duty of the handler to satisfy himself or herself that the dog is suitably trained, physically fit and prepared to undertake the work allocated by the judges before directing his or her dog to undertake the allotted task.

4. Conduct of Gundog Working Tests

- a. The organisers must ensure all competitors and judges are informed that the event is being held under Kennel Club Rules and Field Trial Regulations.
- b. The Code of Conduct expected at GWTs is the same as that for Field Trials.
- c. Those taking part in GWTs shall not openly impugn the decision of the judges or criticise the host, ground, or helpers. Any cases of alleged misconduct must be reported to The Kennel Club in accordance with Regulation J14 (Fraudulent and Discreditable Conduct at Trials). In particular the provisions of Field Trial Regulations J12 (Objections), J13 (Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards) and J15 (Fines and Penalties) shall apply.
- d. All dogs must be registered with The Kennel Club. Each dog to be of a breed included within the relevant sub-group as previously defined.
- e. The organisers have the power to exclude dogs from the competition and will have the right to refuse an entry.
- f. The organisers may restrict the numbers in a GWT, in which case the right to compete shall be decided by ballot.
- g. All judges must have experience of dog-work under shooting field conditions.
- h. In an Open GWT, each sub-group must have at least one Kennel Club Field Trial Panel Judge officiating.
- i. All handlers must carry out the instructions of the judges. The judges are empowered to remove from the test any dog whose handler does not follow their instructions or whose handler wilfully interferes with another competitor or his dog.
- j. No person attending a GWT may allow a bitch in season to be on the test ground or foul any ground to be used by competing dogs.
- k. If, after consultation with the judges, members of the committee present consider a dog unfit to compete by reason of contagious disease or physical condition such a dog shall be required to be removed immediately from the ground. Any such case is liable to be reported to The Kennel Club.
- l. No dog shall wear a collar whilst competing.
- m. No person shall carry out punitive correction or harsh handling at a GWT.
- n. No competitor may withdraw their dog and leave the GWT ground without informing the chief steward.

5. Judging

- a. Judges must agree a common scoring system. All competitors should be informed of the scoring system at the commencement of a GWT. But, whatever the system adopted, failure to complete an individual test will result in a mark of zero. A multiple retrieve constitutes one test. If a dog fails or commits a serious fault in any part of a multiple exercise this will result in a mark of zero for that exercise.
- b. GWTs will typically be judged on a points system with individual tests marked out of 20 though, on occasion, when their organisation is more akin to that of a field trial, letter gradings may be used.
- c. Judges must ensure that spectators are a reasonable distance from competitors in line.
- d. Judges should give dogs every opportunity to work well by seeing that conditions are, as far as possible, in their favour. They will be looking for dogs, which need the least handling and please them most from a shooting point of view.
- e. In all retrieving breeds good marking is essential with a quick pick-up and a fast return. Judges will not penalise a dog too heavily for putting down a retrieve to get a firmer grip, but this must not be confused with sloppy retrieving.
- f. Any serious fault or failure in an individual test or tests will disqualify a dog from gaining an individual award and may lead to elimination. In team tests, however, one dog's serious fault or failure will not disqualify a team from the awards. If two or more teams finish on equal points a run-off will be necessary to determine the result.
- g. The judges are empowered to withhold any prize or award if in their opinion competing dogs have not shown sufficient merit.

6. Instructions for specific sub-group tests

- a. **Retrievers.**
 - (1) At the start of a GWT, judges must ensure they have the correct dogs in the line, lowest number placed on the right.
 - (2) A Retriever must be steady to shot and fall and must retrieve only on command. Also, whenever possible, all dogs should be tested at a simulated drive, walking up and in water. A dog must walk steadily at heel.
 - (3) Good marking is essential with a quick pick-up and a fast return. Dogs should be credited for showing marking ability and initiative.
 - (4) If a dog fails a retrieve in the run-offs, it may still feature in the awards.
 - (5) **Credit points.**

Natural marking and hunting ability.	
Quickness in gathering retrieve and delivery.	
Nose.	Drive and style.
Quiet handling.	Control.
 - (6) **Serious faults.**

Refusing to retrieve.	Whining or barking.
Running in or chasing.	Out of control.
Failing to enter water.	Changing retrieve.
Poor heel work.	

b. **Spaniels**

- (1) At the start of a GWT, judges must ensure they have the correct dogs in the line. Dogs must be run either singly or in pairs, with the lowest number on the right.
- (2) A Spaniel's primary task is to find game and flush within range of the handler. In GWTs it should at all times work within that range and demonstrate thorough ground treatment. The direction of the wind has a considerable influence on the way a dog works its ground. With a head-wind the dog should quarter the ground systematically, making good all likely game-holding cover yet keeping within gunshot distance. With a following wind, the dog will often want to pull well out and then work back towards the handler. Judges must regulate the pace of the line to allow the dog to do this so that it can make good its ground. The judge will assess the handling ability of the dog and also its pace, style, drive, courage and the quality of its ground treatment.
- (3) A Spaniel must be steady to flush, shot and fall and retrieve on command from land or water.
- (4) When dummies are thrown and gunfire used, the gun and dummy thrower must walk at the edge of the beat the dog is working in line with the handler.
- (5) If a dog fails to retrieve in the run-offs, it may still feature in the awards.
- (6) If live pigeons are released this must be treated as a separate exercise and not occur as part of an exercise involving a retrieve.
- (7) **Credit Points.**

Natural hunting ability.	Nose.
Good marking.	Drive.
Style.	Control.
Speed in gathering retrieve.	Delivery.
Quiet handling.	
- (8) **Serious Faults.**

Refusing to retrieve.	Whining or barking.
Running in or chasing.	Out of control.
Failing to enter water.	Changing retrieve.

c. **Breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve**

- (1) Organisers must be aware of the limitations and possible problems when using game for pointing exercises.
- (2) Dogs should quarter the beat across the wind hunting systematically and regulating their pace to suit the ground and cover. In novice tests dogs should not normally be required to work down wind.
- (3) Judges must assess quartering, by observing the way the dog works its beat in relation to the wind. They should consider how the dog covers any possible game holding pockets and its drive and style, especially as indicated by its response to the presence of scent.
- (4) Retrieving tests must be set as naturally as possible and close distractions must be avoided.

- (5) If a dog fails a retrieve in the run-offs, it may still feature in the awards.
- (6) Dogs must be steady to shot and fall and retrieve on command.
- (7) If live pigeons are released this must be treated as a separate exercise and not occur as part of an exercise involving a retrieve.
- (8) **Credit Points.**
 Natural quartering and pointing ability.
 Drive. Style.
 Good marking. Control.
 Quickness in gathering retrieve and delivery.
 Quiet handling.
- (9) **Serious Faults.**
 Refusing to retrieve. Whining or barking.
 Out of control. Chasing.
 Failing to enter water. Changing retrieve.