

Working Gundog Association of Australia (SSAA)

**Hunt Point & Retrieve
Field Trial
Rules and Regulations**



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Working Gundog Association of Australia (SSAA)

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1. THE AIM OF HPR GUNDOG FIELD TRIALS.

The aim of a Hunt Point & Retrieve (HPR) Field Trial is, under conditions as similar as possible to a normal day's hunting, to test handlers & their dogs in competition against each other in order to determine the dog that best fulfils the role of a HPR gundog on the day of the trial. Competitors must at all times act in a responsible & sportsman like manner and observe the WGAA rules.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2.1. Authority.

The WGAA HPR Sub-Discipline committee shall sanction Field Trials in accordance with these rules. The HPR Sub-Discipline committee shall appoint a Trial Management committee and a Protest and Appeals committee for each trial.

These Trials will be held under the constitution and by – laws of the Working Gundog Association of Australia (SSAA)

2.2. Breeds Eligible To Compete.

Dogs of the following breeds:

- Epagneul Breton (Brittany/Brittany Spaniel)
- German Shorthaired Pointer
- German Wirehaired Pointer (Deutsche Drahthaar)
- Italian Spinone
- Large Munsterlander
- Visla
- Weimaraner

which are registered with the Working Gundog Association of Australia (SSAA) are eligible to compete.

Where specifically scheduled any other pointing dog with the ability to fulfil the requirements, as stated in these rules, will also be eligible, but will not be eligible for any HPR titles or Championship points.

2.3. Game Laws.

The Shooting and Game Laws of the State/Territory in which the Field Trial is being held must be observed and will govern the conduct of all trials. The Judge's Steward can ask any handler of a firearm to produce an applicable game or shooters licence before commencement of a trial. Failure to provide such documentation will deem the handler ineligible to enter.

2.4. Recognised Game.

Recognised game are Stubble Quail, Rabbit, Hare, and any exotic game that complies with the Game Laws of the State/Territory in which the Field Trial is being conducted.

For the water work aspect of these Trials, pigeons or any artificial item approved by the trial committee may be used for retrieving.

2.5. Schedules.

Details of each event conducted under these rules will be published in a schedule that will include information relating to date, time, Judge, Judge's Steward, entry fees, closing date, approximate trial location, and any other relevant information. The Field Trial Committee shall endeavour to ensure that all interested members are given the opportunity to enter.

2.6. Competitor Numbers.

No Field Trial can be conducted unless there are at least six (6) competing dogs and at least four (4) different handlers. Wins & other qualifications shall count as from the time the Judge informs the Trial Committee of the respective placings.

2.7. Score Sheets (Judge's Card).

The Judge shall maintain a score sheet of each dog's performance in each round.

It is at the Judge's discretion to decide whether to show Judging sheets to competitors, although the practice of informing competitors of their performance is to be encouraged. The Judge must mark the Trial Catalogue with his/her signature, including date, prior to award presentation. Once the Judge signs the Catalogue, all placings are final pending any appeals or protests. The authorised Catalogue must be forwarded to & retained by the Trial Manager.

2.8. Stuck Live Round (Mandatory SSAA Rule).

If a firearm malfunction results in a stuck live round which cannot be simply removed from the breech end of the barrel, the firearm is to be made safe and removed from the trials site to a competent person. Under no circumstances is an attempt to be made to remove the round by insertion of a cleaning rod or similar, from the muzzle or front of the cylinder end of the firearm barrel.

2.9. Rule Book Review

2.9.1 Rulebook reviews shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements set out in the SSAA NDC Handbook. Participation in the rulebook review shall be open to WGAA HPR participants who have been actively involved in WGAA HPR trials.

2.9.2 "Actively involved" means a WGAA member who has competed in or officiated at a WGAA National Discipline HPR field trial in the year preceding the review. It does not include handlers of other pointing breed dogs who may have participated in a WGAA HPR Field trial open to other pointing breeds.

2.9.3 An attendance register shall be kept at all WGAA National Discipline HPR events. This register shall be the responsibility of the host State and shall record all details, including a copy of the catalogue.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1. Field Trial.

A Field Trial is a meeting for the purpose of holding competition between dogs in the hunting field, & will contain a water element at the completion of the field event.

3.2. Novice Trial.

A WGAA Novice Trial is open to all HPR dogs, with the following exclusions:

- Any dog that has previously won 2 Restricted Trials or Novice Field Trials.
- Any dog that has previously won an Open Field Trial.
- Any dog that has placed in any Championship Field Trial.

3.3. Open Trial.

An Open Trial is a trial open to all registered HPR gundogs, without restriction to age or previous performance.

3.4. Championship Trial - State/National.

A Championship Trial is a trial confined to gundogs that have been placed first or second in any Novice or Open HPR Field Trial. All dogs entered in a Championship Trial must have previously won at least one HPR Championship point.

In each year there will not be more than one (1) Championship trial for HPR gundogs within each state or Territory or two (2) if one of those trials is a National Trial.

On the day of a HPR Championship Trial, no other HPR field trial carrying championship points may be held within the same state.

3.5. Other Trials.

The State HPR Sub-Discipline Committee may schedule other trials of varying formats from time to time. These trials shall not carry championship points.

3.6. Placings

The Judge shall inform the Field Trial Committee of all the dogs that have completed all Field Trial criteria (filled their card without elimination). The three (3) highest scoring of these dogs shall be awarded first (1st), second (2nd), & third (3rd) place respectively. In the event of a tie, the dogs with equal points shall be given another run.

3.7. The Draw.

The draw is the selection by ballot of the order in which the dogs entered in a trial are required to compete. A trial steward or a neutral party must make the draw, in public, at the trial site or meeting place on the morning of the trial. Dogs that are to be run by the same handler may not be drawn together.

3.8. Bye Dog.

If there is an uneven number of dogs in any round, the Judge shall nominate a dog to run with the 'bye dog' at the end of the round. The dog to run with the bye dog shall be chosen on its ability to give the bye dog its best chance of filling its card. The Judge may, at his/her discretion run the 'bye dog' in place of a dog that has eliminated itself in the early part of the round.

3.9. Vetting.

A suitably experienced person appointed by the Field Trial Committee shall inspect any dog for sexual or other causes, which may interfere with the performance of its opponents. Such dogs shall not be eligible to compete during that trial & must be removed from the trial site.

3.10. Collars

All dogs when called upon to compete, shall wear collars to distinguish them in the Field. Red for the first dog drawn and either white or blue for the second dog in each brace.

No other collar or device may be worn.

3.11. Completion of a Trial

Both Field & Water testing should conclude on the same day if possible. If not finalised on that day, then the Trials shall be concluded on the first available day as determined by the Field Trial Committee.

4. FIELD ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The procedure for judging is divided across two separate rounds, and the performance of each dog is judged in all categories of the work required. In order for a dog to compete in the second round it must not be eliminated during its first round. At the end of each run, the Judge's assessment of a dog's performance is totalled in points. The respective score sheets for each round are then combined to give a total score of the dog's performance in the field.

If there is more than one Judge, the Judges may confer if they wish on any aspect of the trial. Each Judge must make his individual assessment on the merits of the dog's work and Judges must not judge in conjunction.

4.1. Categories for which the Judge must assess dogs in the field.

- Ground Treatment max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Pointing max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Steadiness max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Retrieve (Land) max 15 points for each of the two rounds.
- Backing max 20 points for both rounds.
- Game Finding Ability max 15 points for each of the two rounds.
- Style & Eagerness max 15 points for each of the two rounds.
- Handling & Control max 10 points for each of the two rounds.
- Facing Cover max 5 points for each of the two rounds

Maximum points accruable for each round shall be 100 points.

4.2. Sample Score Sheet

Competitor Number _____	Round 1	Round 2	Deciding Round
Ground Treatment Max 10 points for each of the two rounds.			
Pointing Max 10 points for each of the two rounds			
Steadiness Max 10 points for each of the two rounds			
Retrieve (Land) Max 15 points for each of the two rounds			
Backing Max 20 points for both rounds			
Game Finding Ability Max 15 points for each of the two rounds			
Style & Eagerness Max 15 points for each of the two rounds			
Handling & Control Max 10 points for each of the two rounds			
Facing Cover Max 5 points for each of the two rounds			
Totals			

4.3. Major Faults for which a Judge may deduct points.

4.3.1. Pointing

- Stickiness on point.
- False pointing.
- Inconclusive point.

4.3.2. Retrieving (Land)

- Failure to find game.
- Slow, Pottering work.
- Poor Delivery.
- Changing game on return.

4.3.3. General

- Poor control.
- Unduly noisy handling.
- Unsteadiness to flush shot or fall of game.
- Breaking to shot or fall of game.
- Chasing and subsequently being brought under control by the handler.
- Failure to back.
- Failure to face cover.
- Bumping game.
- Failure to obey commands & directions.
- Working outside of acceptable distance limits.
- Missing game.

4.4. Eliminating Faults.

These are infractions for which a Judge may put any dog out of competition.

- Excessive whining or barking.
- Repeated breaking
- Repeated flushing of game up wind.
- Chasing without being brought under control by the handler.
- Out of control
- Refusal to retrieve or pick up game.
- Hard mouth.
- Blinking game.
- Deliberate stealing of game.

5. WATER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The water element of a HPR Field Trial shall be conducted in accordance with WGAA Retrieving Trial Rules.

Each dog that has completed all aspects of the Field Trial testing criteria (filled its card without elimination) shall be tested with at least one retrieve in or across water.

The water retrieves that the competing dogs shall be required to undergo are as listed below:

- Novice Trial - Single Marked Retrieve in or across water.
- Open Trial - Double Marked Retrieve or Single Blind Retrieve in or across water. At least one leg of the Doubled Marked Retrieve must be either in or across water.
- Championship Trial - Any combination of the above retrieves, in or across water, may be employed. At least one Blind Retrieve must be included in a Championship Stake.

6. DEFINITION OF TERMS

6.1. Backing (Honouring The Point).

When a dog comes on point, the other dog should 'Honour' the pointing dog, at the earliest possible opportunity, by stationary acknowledgement of the first dog's point

6.2. Blinking.

Any dog that finds & deliberately passes the point, either through nervousness or lack of training, shall be said to have 'Blinked' that game. A dog that finds, stands for a few moments, and then leaves the point is also said to have 'blinked' the game. Finding and then moving on - backwards or forwards searching for the bird that has moved on should not be confused with blinking.

Dogs can also be said to 'Blink' the retrieve.

6.3. Breaking Fence.

Is the act on the part of the dog of going through, over, or under a fence without command. A dog must remain steady at both sides of the fence through or over which its handler is crossing.

6.4. Breaking to Shot.

If, when the handler takes his shot at game, a dog makes a forward movement, which in the opinion of the Judge indicates a deliberate attempt to retrieve without being commanded to do so, that dog shall be deemed to have broken to shot.

If a dog makes a slight break and is brought immediately under control, it shall be deemed to be unsteady to shot.

6.5. Bumping game.

A dog that finds, and gets too close to game, so forcing it to fly or run before being ordered to flush, is said to have 'bumped game'. A dog that is working up wind has little excuse for bumping game, but a dog working down wind should not be penalised for the sudden flushing of game that it (the dog) has had no opportunity to scent.

6.6. Beat.

Is the direction the Judge has indicated he requires the dogs to work and encompasses an area of approx 70 – 150 metres to each side and to the front of the handler.

6.7. Chasing.

This is the deliberate attempt to catch game that is on the move, whether or not it has been shot at. A dog may retrieve only on command from its handler.

6.8. Drawing On.

When a dog points and the game moves on, the dog, to retain contact, may at times also move on. This may be at the command of, or sign from the handler and is generally a series of quick, stealthy steps. A dog should

not be penalised for drawing on of its own accord providing that it will remain firm on point and that it does not bump the game.

6.9. False Point.

When a dog points and there is no game at the location of its point, the dog is said to have false pointed. However, care must be taken to ensure that no game is present or that the game has not just moved on before deciding that the point is false.

6.10. Flushing on Command

Flushing on Command is the deliberate action of the dog, on command from the handler, to put the game to flight, so enabling the handler to take his shot. No attempt must be made by the handler to flush the game by any other method. The dog should remain steady to the flush of game.

6.11. Ground Treatment (Quartering).

The dog should cover the beat over which he is hunting, in a methodical & orderly manner according to the wind and the terrain over which it is working. Whilst quartering, dogs should be thoroughly under control. The dog should make intelligent use of the wind.

6.12. Hard Mouth.

When there is unmistakable evidence of any marking of retrieved game, caused by biting, crunching or squeezing, the dog may be said to have committed 'hard mouth'.

The judge or steward be bound to inspect all game retrieved and if evidence of hard mouth is found, the handler shall be informed at that time.

6.13. Obedience.

The spontaneous action of obeying all commands from the handler.

6.14. Pottering.

A dog that hunts in a confined area, covering ground that has already been worked, or one that lingers on old scent, leaves it and then comes back to it is said to be 'pottering'.

6.15. Pointing.

Upon finding game, a dog should indicate the presence of that game to the handler & should remain staunchly in a rigid position.

6.16. Retrieve (Land).

The 'Retrieve' covers the performance of the dog from when it is commanded to retrieve until it delivers the game to its handler.

6.17. Roading.

'Roading' is effected in much the same manner as 'drawing on', although it is usually done at a much faster pace. i.e. The dog points, whilst the handler, some distance away, takes time to reach the dog. In the mean time, the game may have run rapidly (perhaps to the right or left across the wind). The dog will then, keeping to windward of the scent, search at speed across the wind and pick up the point some distance from the original location.

6.18. Steadiness.

The dog should remain steady to command, to shot, wing or running fur.

A dog may sit, stand, or drop in position but must not move until commanded to do so.

6.19. Style & Eagerness.

A well trained HPR gundog that covers its ground with good, free movement, a business like manner, and showing enjoyment in its work, whilst also being decisive in its actions, shall be said to be showing good style. A dog that exhibits good 'bird sense' and shows a high level of biddability to its handler shall be deemed to show exemplary style.

6.20. Stealing.

When the finding dog is drawing on after scenting game, roading or working game after indicating a find by pointing, any dog that moves in front of that dog shall be regarded as 'stealing'.

6.21. Working Fur and Feather.

A dog shall be expected to work fur as well as feather within the definition of game, and shall be awarded the same number of points for that work.

7. PROTEST AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

The rules for the Protest and Appeals Committee are common to all SSAA Disciplines and form part of each Discipline's rulebook. The rules are as follows:

Note: In the Protest and Appeals Committee of the Official Rules for Competition and Medal Awards of the Working Gundogs Association of Australia (SSAA) the term Trial Manager or Judge is interchangeable with or replaces the term Range Officer.

7.1 At all registered competitions there shall be a Protest and Appeals Committee (hereinafter called the '*Appeals Committee*'), that shall be formed by the host association or club organisers, to hear and decide, protests and appeals.

7.2 The Appeals Committee shall consist of a minimum of three people one of whom shall act as chairman, any of whom may be competitors in the competition, but in no case shall an appellant or protester be included as a member of the Appeals Committee (notwithstanding any rule or rules of law to the contrary). In championships where more than one State is represented a delegate from any of the States represented may be appointed to be a member of the said Committee and such appointments shall be at the discretion of the host association or club.

7.3 A protest may be lodged by any competitor who feels aggrieved by a decision of the Range Officer, the target scorers, or any other organisational matters or methods of conducting the competition. A competitor may protest the conduct of another competitor(s) or that another competitor(s) has not fulfilled his obligations according to these rules, or has not properly obeyed the Rules

7.4 The protest must be lodged in writing and accompanied by a fee, the amount of which shall be nominated by the Trial Management Committee. If the protest or appeal is upheld, the applicant is to be refunded the amount of the fee. If the protest is disallowed, then the fee shall be forfeited to the organisers conducting the competition.

7.5 The protest is to be lodged with the Range Officer or other persons nominated by the organisers of the competition to receive appeals. A protests may be lodged during the conduct of a competition or after the competition has been completed but not later than 30 minutes after the scores for that competition have been announced or posted. When received, the protest or appeal must be given to the Chairman of the Protest and Appeals Committee as soon as possible.

7.6 The Chairperson shall convene the Appeals Committee without undue delay and the Appeals Committee shall be empowered to hear evidence from the protester, the appellant, and person(s) involved in the protest.; to require the Range Officer, Scorers or organisers to produce targets, scoresheets, or other material relevant to the protest; to call evidence from any other person(s) who may be able to help the Appeals Committee and to do all such other things that the Appeals Committee believes will enable it to reach an unbiased and just decision.

7.7 Any accused person shall:

7.7.1 have the right to be heard before the Appeals Committee and to remain in attendance during each session of the Appeals Committee;

7.7.2 be advised of the time and place the Appeals Committee shall hear evidence of the protest or appeal;

7.7.3 be entitled to remain in attendance before the Appeals Committee until the Appeals Committee adjourns the proceedings to make its decision;

7.7.4 be informed of the evidence or allegations made;

7.7.5 be supplied the details of verbal or written statement(s) made against that person or persons;

7.7.6 be given an opportunity before the Appeals Committee to correct or contradict any accusations or allegation(s) made.

7.8 Immediately the Appeals Committee has made a decision, the Chairman shall verbally announce that decision to a gathering of competitors summoned to hear the decision; or post the decision on a notice board. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding on the matter of the protest and on all persons concerned therein.

Note: Desirably the Appeals Committee proceedings and deliberations should be conducted out of the public gaze and free from distractions of the ongoing competition.