Working Gundogs

SSAA Working Gundogs is a shotgun discipline that utilises trained gundogs for hunting and retrieving in the field. Responsible hunters ensure that game is quickly despatched and retrieved over land or water. The gundog has been fulfilling this role for centuries.

Training

An intensive training program is normally undertaken from the puppy stage. The discipline conducts training, trials and competitions at various levels to improve the abilities of dogs. Novice dogs carry out easier trials, while experienced dogs complete more testing runs.

Subdisciplines

There are four subdisciplines. The Retrieving discipline encourages handlers to work closely to ensure their dog will retrieve game on command. Popular breeds include the labrador and golden retriever. The dogs are trained to be steady to the shot and to the fall of game, and are tested over land and water.

The Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPR) discipline caters for utility gundogs. Breeds include the German shorthaired pointer, Epagneul Breton (Brittany) and wirehaired pointer. The aim of HPR field trials are to test handlers and their dogs in competition against each other.

The Spaniel discipline field trials are all action, with the trial being conducted under conditions that reflect a normal day's shooting. Hunting within range of the handler, the spaniel's job is to find and flush game, normally rabbits. The competing spaniel must retrieve shot game for its handler, the most common breed being the working English springer spaniel.

The Pointer and Setter discipline requires working with speed and style in the quest for game birds, specifically stubble quail in Australia. Dogs include the Irish setter, English setter and Pointer. The dogs are expected to back another dog on point and retrieve or point shot game. Dogs may work at a distance from their handlers, but are expected to be under control at all times.