



WORKING GUNDOGS

RETRIEVING TRIALS

OFFICIAL NATIONAL RULES

Revised 2016

No. 4

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These Rules, for the conduct of National Championships, have been compiled by the Discipline Subcommittee, with amendments by the SSAA National Discipline Chairmans' Conference and approved and ratified by the SSAA Inc National Board

SSAA WORKING GUNDOGS

RETRIEVING TRIALS NATIONAL RULES

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SECTION 1: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1** The aim of a WGAA retrieving trial is for the trial to be run under conditions as close as possible to those in natural field shooting, the difference being, as well as game, artificial game can be used as the items of game to be retrieved.

SECTION 2: SSAA STANDARD RULES

Note: In this SSAA Working Gundogs Retrieving Trials Rule Book the term "Range Officer" shall refer to "Trial Manager; "firing range", "firing line" and "range" shall refer to "trial site"; "Target scorer" shall refer to "Judge"; and "shooting competitions" shall refer to "trials".

The SSAA Standard Rules cover common rules, including the protest and appeals process that apply to all disciplines.

The current edition of the Standard Rules is available on the SSAA website at www.ssaa.org.au/standard-rules

These Standard Rules should be used with each disciplines current rule book and they take precedence over any standard rule that may be in a discipline's rule book.

The Rules covered are shown as heading and subheadings in this Rule Book.

2.1 COMPETITOR'S ELIGIBILITY

2.2 JUNIOR COMPETITORS

2.3 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

2.3.1 Authorisation

2.3.2 Substitute position

2.3.3 Awards, trophies, records, etc.

2.3.4 Protests

2.4 COMPETITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

2.4.1 Competitors and Officials to be familiar with the Rules

2.4.2 Sportsmanship

2.4.3 Behaviour

2.4.4 Range Safety Rules

2.4.5 Safety Equipment

2.4.6 Clothing

2.5 STUCK LIVE ROUND: MANDATORY RULE

2.6 RULE INFRINGEMENTS

2.7 DISCIPLINE CHAIRMAN'S AUTHORITY

2.8 PROTEST AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

2.9 SUPPLEMENTARY EVENTS

SECTION 3: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 In a WGAA retrieving trial the dog / bitch (hereinafter referred to as dog) shall be any pure breed or associate gundog and will be required to:
- be under control and quiet at all times
 - walk at heel
 - stay on command, until released
 - mark and retrieve thrown items of game, and under direction seek and retrieve hidden items of game
 - when ordered to retrieve, it should be done quickly and directly without disturbing too much ground
 - retrieve on land, across water, and in water
 - return the item of game to the handler and gently deliver to the hand.
- 3.2 Runs will be set to allow a fair assessment of the working ability of all competing dogs.
- 3.3 The shooting and game laws of all states and territories must be observed, and will govern the conduct of all trials in conjunctions with WGAA Retrieving Trial Rules.
- 3.4 Every competitor must be a member of SSAA or affiliated body member. Competitors by invitation cannot receive awards, except in State and National Championship Trials.
- 3.5 All competitors have the right to attempt all set runs.

SECTION 4: JUDGING RETRIEVING TRIALS

- 4.1 The judge will judge the dog on the following:
- 4.1.1 **Natural ability including:** memory, intelligence, attention, nose, courage, perseverance, style and eagerness.
- 4.1.2 **Abilities acquired through training, including:** marking, steadiness, obedience, controlled response to direction, presentation of delivery, steadiness to shot and should not be gun shy.
- 4.2 A dog should not retrieve without being ordered to do so.
- 4.3 Where a dog has not completed a retrieve the dog will be marked no score. However, the dog can continue in the stake, but will not be placed.

- 4.4 Competing dogs shall be kept in a marshalling area where they cannot see the trial in progress.
- 4.5 The judges have complete control of the stakes.
- 4.6 Prior to the run the judge will give directions to the handler on all procedures of the run and each direction must be obeyed.
- 4.7 The judge's decision is final. Any protest or appeal must be conducted by the Protest and Appeals Committee.

SECTION 5: DEFINITION OF TERMS

5.1 ARTIFICIAL GAME / ITEMS OF GAME

These are the items of game to be retrieved by dogs. They may include any recognised game, scented duck or similar bird, dummies which may be covered by rabbit fur and/or any other artificial item of game introduced from time to time.

5.2 BREAKING TO SHOT

If at the firing point or in a hide, or any position as directed by the judge, and if, in the opinion of the judge, a dog makes a deliberate attempt to retrieve on or after the shot has been fired, without being ordered to do so, the dog shall be deemed to have broken to shot.

5.3 BREAKING TO CAST OR FALL OF GAME

If at the firing point or in a hide, or any position as directed by the judge, and if in the opinion of the judge, a dog makes a deliberate attempt to retrieve on or after the cast or fall of game, without a shot being fired, the dog shall be deemed to have broken to cast or fall of game.

5.4 CARRIAGE AND DELIVERY

The dog should hold game tenderly without mouthing it. For a perfect delivery the dog will be stationary, in front of the handler at the firing point, and in the standing or sitting position, enabling the handler to accept the item of game easily and cleanly up to hand. The handler must not step forward of the pegs to take delivery.

5.5 CONTROL POINT

Is the area where the run begins. It is identified with coloured pegs as markers. This is the area where the handler and dog come under the control of judge and steward.

5.6 DROPPING GAME

A dog should at no time drop game during a retrieve. Any dog doing so shall be penalised accordingly to the seriousness of the offence. It should be taken into consideration that a dog could unintentionally drop the item of game.

The retrieve is completed when the dog has delivered the item of game to the handler. The handler cannot step forward of the pegs. If the game is dropped during an attempt to deliver, the competitor will be penalised accordingly.

5.7 FAILING TO OBEY HANDLER'S COMMANDS AND DIRECTIONS

A well-trained gundog should respond to all commands and directions given by the handler, any dog that disobeys shall be penalized accordingly.

5.8 FAILING TO OBEY JUDGE'S COMMANDS AND DIRECTIONS

All instructions given by the judge to the handler must be obeyed; failure to do so will be penalised accordingly.

5.9 FIRING POINT

Is the position from which the handler will fire at game, give directions and commands if needed, and take delivery to hand. The distance between the marker pegs at the firing point shall not be less than 1.5 metres. The distance between the control point and firing point is to be no less than 10 metres, terrain permitting.

5.10 GIVING TONGUE

Once the dog's lead and collar are removed the dog is required to be quiet throughout the retrieve until the lead and collar are replaced on the dog. Any barking or yapping is unacceptable and will be penalised accordingly.

5.11 HIDE

Is an area clearly defined by the judge in which to leave the dog.

5.12 HUNTING ABILITY

Is where a dog demonstrates to the judge its use of nose to locate fallen or hidden items of game, using the wind and scenting conditions. The handler should attempt to let the dog persevere, and show his natural ability when hunting.

5.13 MAXIMUM DISTANCE

For Intermediate Retrieves the position of the thrower shall be no more than 60 metres from the firing point, and the item of game can be thrown in any direction, terrain permitting.

5.14 NO SCORE

This is the term used when a dog fails to:

5.14.1 retrieve the game required as instructed by the judge, or fails to deliver within reach of the handler, or

5.14.1 switches game in multiple retrieves.

5.15 NOT FIRING THE GUN FROM THE SHOULDER

The handler or gun steward shall, while the game is in the air, and as near as possible to the apex of its flight, aim at the object and fire the gun from the shoulder in a natural shooting posture (butt neatly tucked into the shoulder), or as directed by the judge.

5.16 OBEDIENCE

Is where a dog responds immediately to all commands and directions issued by the handler, without being held or restrained by the handler.

5.17 STYLE AND EAGERNESS

Assessment should be given to a dog which shows grace of movement and demonstrates willingness, competency and happiness in what it is doing.

5.18 UNSTEADINESS

Where a dog is placed in a hide or at the firing point, or in any position directed by the judge, and makes any movement from the designated position before or after the shot is fired, without being ordered to do so, the dog will be deemed to be unsteady.

5.19 WALKING TO HEEL

In demonstrating walking to heel, the dog will be required to walk calmly beside the handler. The dog's shoulder should be level with the handler's leg, and be no more than a body width to the side of the handler, terrain permitting.

SECTION 6: DEFINITION OF RETRIEVES

6.1 RETRIEVING

Is to assess the performance of a dog for steadiness, to retrieve on command and delivery. The retrieve may be on land, in water, or over water.

To simulate actual shooting conditions any article of game which is to be retrieved will have a shot fired in its direction.

On multiple retrieves the judge may stipulate the order of retrieving. Any reasonable combination of the listed retrieves shall be permissible, provided that a dog shall not be required to pick up more than three items of game in any retrieve.

Accurate marking or memory of falls is of paramount importance. However, this does not imply that dogs that excel in marking should not be penalised for other faults. Ability to mark does not necessarily imply pinpointing the fall. A dog that misses the fall on the cast item of game, recognises the depth of the area of a fall, stays in it, and quickly and systematically hunts it out, has done a creditable and intelligent job of marking.

6.2 BLIND RETRIEVES

Where possible the course for blind retrieves should be planned in such a way that advantage is taken of natural hazards. It should be possible, at least in theory, for a dog to find a well-planned blind retrieve on the initial line from his handler. The test should be so planned that the dog should be in sight at least until directed into the area of the fall, as a blind retrieve is a test of control, and a dog that is out of sight for a considerable period cannot be said to be under control.

6.3 SINGLE MARK RETRIEVE

Shall consist of a single, well-sighted item of game cast to enable the dog to see either the flight or fall of the game. The dog should not require direction from the handler.

6.4 A WALK-UP RETRIEVE

Where the dog is walking at heel, the game is cast within 50 metres, and is shot at, (preferably, straight ahead). Immediately the handler pauses to fire, the dog shall sit, drop or stand steady until ordered by the handler to retrieve.

6.5 A BLIND RETRIEVE

Shall be a retrieve where the dog is in such a position that the flight or fall of the game cannot be seen. The judge may direct the dog to be placed in or behind a hide in close proximity to the firing point. Where possible, it is recommended that the hide be part of the natural terrain, or be constructed of natural materials.

6.6 A DOUBLE MARK RETRIEVE

Shall consist of two (2) marked retrieves and may include land and water. Game shall not be cast simultaneously and there shall be a reasonable delay between the casts.

6.7 A DOUBLE BLIND RETRIEVE

Shall consist of two (2) blind retrieves, and may include land and water.

6.8 A TWO BIRD RETRIEVE

The first item of game shall be cast from concealed cover; one shot will be fired and the dog sent to retrieve the game. Whilst the dog is returning to handler with the game, the second item of game shall be cast, and a shot fired so that the dog may mark or hear the fall of the game. The second game item should be at least twenty metres from the first game item, and not less than forty metres from the firing point.

6.9 DOUBLE FALL RETRIEVE

The first item of game shall be cast from concealed cover; one shot will be fired and the dog sent to retrieve the game. Whilst the dog is on the way out to retrieve, the second item of game shall be cast and a shot fired so the dog may mark or hear the fall of the game. The first game item must be retrieved before the second. The second game item must be cast to land not less than twenty metres from the line of the first, and not less than forty metres from the firing point.

6.10 A MARK AND BLIND RETRIEVE

Shall consist of one marked retrieve and one blind retrieve, and may include land and water.

6.11 A TRIPLE MARK RETRIEVE

Shall consist of three marked retrieves. The game items may be thrown at different angles and must be at least twenty metres apart, and include land and water, terrain permitting. One retrieve should be at a fairly short distance. Game shall not be cast simultaneously and there shall be a reasonable delay between the casts.

6.12 A TRIPLE RETRIEVE WITH TWO BLIND AND ONE MARKED RETRIEVE

Shall consist of two blind retrieves as for a double-blind retrieve and one marked retrieve.

6.13 A SIMILTANEOUS DOUBLE MARK RETRIEVE

Where two items of game are cast simultaneously, preferably one on land and one in to water, and land in a common area with a reasonable distance between them. Two successive shots will be fired without delay.

6.14 A DOUBLE RISE RETRIEVE

Where one item of game is cast and two successive shots are fired without delay. While the dog is returning with that item of game, a second

item of game, unsighted by the dog, is placed behind and within 10 metres of the fall of the first item of game.

SECTION 7: REGULATIONS FOR CONDUCTING WGAA RETRIEVING TRIALS

- 7.1** Dogs are expected to retrieve under all natural working conditions. The judges and Retrieving Trial Committee have complete control over the mechanics and requirements of each trial. This latitude is permitted in order to allow for the difference of conditions in various places.
- 7.2** Any handler who behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner may be excluded from the trial.
- 7.3** All dogs shall be under the control of the stewards and must be brought on leads to participate without delay in their proper turn.
- 7.4** No person other than the judge or stewards shall be permitted to accompany the dog / handler on any run unless the permission of the judge is first obtained. Spectators shall not be permitted to encroach on the trial ground used for each run.
- 7.5** All matters in connection with dogs actually under trial shall be in the hands of the judge. He may call the stewards to his assistance if he considers it necessary. The judge is empowered to withdraw out of a stake any dog that fails to retrieve or that does not work to his satisfaction. Where a dog has received a no score, the judge will immediately inform the handler of the situation.
- 7.6** The judge is empowered to withdraw out of a stake any dog whose handler does not obey him or who willfully interferes with another competitor or his dog.
- 7.7** Before the commencement of every trial a competent examiner shall examine all bitches. Bitches in oestrus shall not be permitted on or near the trial grounds. No preparation for concealing oestrus shall be used.
- 7.8** Anyone taking part in a trial that demonstrates unsportsmanlike conduct must be cautioned by the chief steward or other trial official; and if thereafter he further offends he shall render himself liable to be debarred from further participation in the trial and may be ordered from the ground, and further dealt with at the discretion of the trial committee.
- 7.9** Physical punishment of a dog during a trial or on the trial grounds will not be permitted. Any person who physically punishes a dog on the trial

grounds may be ordered from the grounds and further dealt with at the discretion of the trial committee.

7.10 A handler handling a dog may speak, whistle and work it by hand directions, as he may deem proper. A handler who touches or physically interferes with his dog will be penalised according to the seriousness of the offence.

7.10.1 No handler may proceed beyond the firing point into the area of a retrieve without the direction of the judge.

7.11 The judge shall give the direction in which the dogs shall work and each direction must be obeyed. Competing dogs shall be kept in a marshalling area from which they cannot see retrieves in progress.

7.11.1 During a retrieve, a judge must not advise a competing handler of the location of his dog.

7.12 In the event of a tie, a separate run-off shall be arranged by the retrieving trial committee entrusted with the management of the trial in co-operation with the judge. The judge will select his own test. The order in which the contestants will run is to be decided by the toss of a coin.

SECTION 8: PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING WGAA RETRIEVING TRIALS

8.1 In order that trials are conducted as uniformly as practicable, standardisation of objectives are essential, and therefore, all judges, contestants and officials who have a part in conducting trials should be familiar with the following:

8.1.1 On the day of the trial management will instruct all competitors of the exercise area for the dogs. A catalogue will be issued, showing the dogs running order. Vetting will be conducted. Judges will be introduced and competitors will be directed to the location of their runs.

8.1.2 Before commencement of a trial, all handlers will be informed of the procedure for the running of the trial. They will be taken to all runs, the judges will show all handlers the run and will give instructions, and then the trial will proceed.

8.1.3 In running catalogue order the handler, with the dog on lead, will advance to the control point to commence the run. At the control point the handler shall place the dog in a sit, drop or stand position.

- 8.1.4 On instruction from the judge or steward the handler shall remove the lead, it should be realised at this stage the dog and handler are under the control of the judge, any lack of control shall be penalised accordingly. The dog must not be restrained by the handler at any time whilst in competition.
- 8.1.5 The gun steward will hand the handler the gun and blank cartridges. The handler will have the dog remain steady until instructed by the judge, and then, with the dog at heel, will advance to the firing point.
- 8.1.6 The handler will not close the gun until he reaches the firing point unless otherwise instructed by the judge (walk-ups etc.) At the firing point the handler must not wave the gun about unnecessarily before or after it has been fired, and it must be carried at all times. Gun safety should be of paramount importance.
- 8.1.7 When the judge feels both the dog and handler are ready, the item of game will be cast or placed as previously explained by the judge.
- 8.1.8 When the object is in the air, the handler, in a normal shooting position, (firing from the shoulder), shall fire the gun at the apex of flight of the item of game unless otherwise directed by the judge.
- 8.1.9 After firing at the game the gun can be broken before or after sending the dog to retrieve, or as otherwise directed by the judge.
- 8.1.10 When sent to retrieve the dog should proceed quickly and eagerly. The handler will remain at the firing point through the entire period of the retrieve, giving directions and commands as needed to the dog, or as otherwise directed by the judge. Once the object has been located the perfect pick up should be quick with a fast return, without dropping the item of game, and the dog should deliver the object to the handler. The delivery is required at the firing point.
- 8.1.11 The retrieve is completed when the game is brought within reach of the handler, and an attempt is made to deliver without the handler stepping forward of the pegs. The dog shall be stationary in the standing or sitting position in front of the handler.
- 8.1.12 Enabling the handler to accept delivery of multiple retrieves, the handler may gently place items of game retrieved on the ground or in a game bag, and have the dog continue until all items have been retrieved.
- 8.1.13 The handler will then, holding the gun and all items of game retrieved, with the dog at heel, proceed to the gun steward at the control point. The handler will then hand over to the steward, the gun and the retrieved items

of game. The steward will hand back the dog's lead and collar, which the handler will place on the dog. This signals the completion of the exercise.

8.1.14 Handler and dog will then await further instructions from the Judge.

SECTION 9: RETRIEVING TRIAL STAKES ELIGIBILITY

9.1 TEST STAKE

9.1.1 This is a stake provided for gundogs that have never been placed in any other stake or won three test stakes. Gundogs that have won 3 test stakes must henceforth compete in intermediate stakes.

9.1.2 Test stakes shall consist of three runs, which will be single marked retrieves on land, and one in, or through water, terrain permitting with a maximum distance of forty metres.

9.2 INTERMEDIATE RETRIEVING TRIAL STAKE

9.2.1 This is a stake confined to gundogs that have not won any stakes other than two Intermediate Stakes.

9.2.2 Intermediate stake, may consist of three or more runs, which may be single marks, or a walk up retrieve (no blind retrieves to be included.)

9.2.3 A dog becomes ineligible after three Intermediate wins or one advanced stake win, and will be awarded the title, Intermediate Retrieving Trial Dog.

9.3 ADVANCED RETRIEVING TRIAL STAKE

9.3.1 This is a stake confined to gundogs that have not won four Advanced Retrieving Trials or one Open Retrieving Trial.

9.3.2 Advanced stake may consist of three or more runs, which may be multiple retrieves. Blind retrieves may be included.

9.3.3 A dog becomes ineligible after four Advanced Retrieving Trial wins or one Open Retrieving Trial win and will be awarded the title, Advanced Retrieving Trial Dog.

9.4 OPEN RETRIEVING TRIAL STAKE

9.4.1 This is a stake confined to gundogs that have been placed in an Intermediate or Advanced Stake.

9.4.2 Open Retrieving Trial Stake may consist of three or more runs which may be multiple retrieves. Blind retrieves must be included.

9.5 CHAMPIONSHIP RETRIEVING TRIAL

9.5.1 **An Open Championship Stake** is confined to Gundogs that have been placed first in an Advanced Stake or placed in an Open Stake or equivalent recognised stake.

9.5.2 **An Open Championship Stake** shall consist of not less than eight (8) runs, with at least seventeen (17) items of game to be retrieved. At least two (2) blind finds are to be included.

9.5.3 In an **Open Championship Stake**, a dog must be tested for steadiness from behind a hide at least once.

9.5.4 **An Advanced Championship Stake** is confined to Gundogs that have been placed first in an Intermediate Stake or placed in an Advanced Stake or equivalent recognised stake.

9.5.5 **An Advanced Championship Stake** shall consist of not less than six (6) runs, with at least twelve (12) items of game to be retrieved. At least two (2) blind finds are to be included.

9.5.6 **An Intermediate Championship Stake** is confined to Gundogs that have been placed in an Intermediate Stake or Test Stake or equivalent recognised stake.

9.5.7 **An Intermediate Championship Stake** shall consist of not less than six (6) runs.

9.5.8 A minimum of eight (8) bona fide exhibits and at least six (6) different owners to compete before the event can be recognised as a Championship Stake.

9.5.9 In a Championship Retrieving Trial, a dog can be entered in only one Stake. A handler can compete with multiple dogs, but the dogs must, where possible, be available to run in their drawn order.

SECTION 10: AWARDS / TITLES

10.1 Qualifying Certificate: A dog may be awarded this title if it scores 100 or more points in an Intermediate or Advanced retrieving trial. The letters RQC shall be added as a suffix to the dog's registered name.

- 10.2 Intermediate Retrieving Dog:** A dog may be awarded this title if it wins 3 Intermediate Trials or 1 Advanced Trial. The letters IRD shall be added as a suffix to the dog's registered name. 1 point can be claimed towards that dog's Retrieving Trial Champion Dog title for each Intermediate Trial win.
- 10.3 Advanced Retrieving Dog:** A dog may be awarded this title if it wins 4 Advanced Trials. The letters ARD shall be added as a suffix to the dog's registered name. 2 points can be claimed towards that dog's Retrieving Trial Champion Dog title for each Advanced Trial win.
- 10.4 Open Retrieving Dog:** A dog may be awarded this title if it wins an Open Retrieving Trial. The letters ORD shall be added as a suffix to the dog's registered name. The following points can be claimed for placings in an Open Trial: First 10 points, second 4 points, third 3 points.
- 10.5 Retrieving Trial Champion Dog:** A dog may be awarded this title if it wins a total of 20 points in retrieving trials, including 1 Open Trial win, or wins a Championship Retrieving Trial. The letters RTCD shall be added as a suffix to the dog's registered name.

Note. When a dog is awarded a new retrieving title the letters previously added as a suffix to that dog's registered name indicating a retrieving title shall be deleted.

SECTION 11: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

11.1 AUTHORITY

While each State body may conduct supplementary events, the titles and awards prescribed in these rules can only be awarded when retrieving trials are conducted in accordance with the rules outlined herein.

11.2 GAME LAWS

The Shooting and Game Laws of each State or Territory must be observed and will govern the conduct of all Trials. The judge's steward can ask any handler of a firearm to produce applicable game or shooters' licenses, before the commencement of each trial.

11.3 SCHEDULES

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

11.4 COMPETITOR NUMBERS

No Stake at any retrieving trial can be conducted unless there are at least six bona fide runners and at least four different owners. Wins and other qualifications shall count as from and including the date they are gained.

11.5 SCORE SHEETS

The judge shall maintain a score sheet of each dog's performance in each run. At the end of a trial the judge shall place the top three dogs in order of merit. In the event of a tie, dogs shall be given another run. It is at the judge's discretion whether to show judging sheets to competitors. The judge must retain the score sheets. A marked catalogue must be forwarded to the trial committee within one month of trial completion.

11.6 THE DRAW

The draw is the selection by ballot of the order in which dogs in a stake are required to compete. The draw is to be held in a public place.

11.7 VETTING

A competent person shall inspect any dog for sexual or other causes, which may interfere with the performance of its opponents. (Refer 7.7)

SECTION 12: SCORE SHEET

	RETRIEVE	MAX POINTS	RUN 1	RUN 2	RUN 3
3	Steadiness	10			
3	Obedience				
4	Walking to heel				
	Style, eagerness, action	10			
5	Nose, ears, eyes	35			
6	Perseverance				
10	Marking				
6	Direction out				
4	Direction in				
4	Delivery				
	TOTAL AWARDED POINTS	55			
	<u>DEDUCTIONS</u>				
5	Not firing from shoulder				
10	Breaking to shot or fall of game				
5	Giving Tongue				
10	Failure to obey commands & directions				
5	Blinking & over running game				
5	Pottering				
5	Dropping game				
10	Hard mouth				
	TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	55			
	<u>FINAL SCORE</u>				

COMMENTS
