



**WORKING GUNDOGS
SPANIEL FIELD TRIALS
OFFICIAL NATIONAL RULES**

Revised Aug 2023

No. 5

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	4
1.1 <i>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....</i>	4
SECTION 2: SSAA STANDARD RULES.....	4
SECTION 3: SPANIEL TRIALS: A GUIDE FOR JUDGES AND COMPETITORS .	6
3.1 <i>INTRODUCTION</i>	6
3.2 <i>HUNTING.....</i>	6
3.3 <i>RETRIEVING.....</i>	7
3.4 <i>SCORING.....</i>	8
3.5 <i>SUMMARY OF POINTS.....</i>	9
SECTION 4: CONDUCT OF TRIALS.....	9
4.1 <i>GENERAL.....</i>	9
4.2 <i>ELIGIBILITY.....</i>	9
4.3 <i>TYPES OF TRIALS.....</i>	9
4.4 <i>SCHEDULES.....</i>	10
4.5 <i>CARDS.....</i>	10
4.6 <i>AWARDS AND TITLES.....</i>	11
4.7 <i>JUDGES.....</i>	11
4.8 <i>DRAW</i>	13
4.9 <i>CONTROL OF DOGS, HANDLERS AND GALLERY.....</i>	13
SECTION 5: JUDGING TRIALS	14
5.1 <i>SUMMARY.....</i>	14
SECTION 6: SCORE SHEET	16
SECTION 7: RULEBOOK REVIEW	17
SECTION 8: DEFINITIONS.....	17
8.1. <i>ACTION & STYLE.....</i>	17
8.2. <i>BLIND RETRIEVE.....</i>	17
8.3. <i>BLINKING</i>	17
8.4. <i>COVER.....</i>	17
8.5. <i>DELIVERY.....</i>	17
8.6. <i>DOG.....</i>	17
8.7. <i>DRIVE & THRUST</i>	17
8.8. <i>EYE WIPE.....</i>	17
8.9. <i>FIND</i>	17
8.10. <i>FLUSH.....</i>	18
8.11. <i>GAME</i>	18
8.12. <i>GROUND TREATMENT</i>	18
8.13. <i>HARD MOUTH.....</i>	18
8.14. <i>LINE.....</i>	18
8.15. <i>MISSING GAME.....</i>	18
8.16. <i>NOSE</i>	18
8.17. <i>QUARTERING.....</i>	18
8.18. <i>RANGE.....</i>	18
8.19. <i>RETRIEVING.....</i>	18
8.20. <i>RUNNING IN & CHASING.....</i>	19
8.21. <i>STEALING</i>	19
8.22. <i>VETTING</i>	19

APPENDIX 1: SUPPLEMENTRY EVENT	20
SPANIEL WORKING TESTS	20
A.1 INTRODUCTION	20
A.2 DEFINITION OF SPANIEL WORKING TESTS (SWT)	20
A.3 ORGANISATION OF SPANIEL WORKING TESTS	21
A.4 CONDUCT OF SPANIEL WORKING TESTS.....	22
A.5 JUDGING	23
A.6 RUNNING THE TEST.....	24
A.7 CREDIT POINTS.....	24
A.8 SERIOUS FAULTS	24

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

SSAA WORKING GUNDOGS

SPANIEL FIELD TRIALS

NATIONAL RULES

REVISED AUG 2023

No. 5

SECTION 1: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To conduct Spaniel Field Trials according to the Official Rules for Competition to make awards and issue certificates that recognise excellence in the field.

- 1.1.2** To conduct Spaniel field trials that are as near as possible to a normal day's shooting

SECTION 2: SSAA STANDARD RULES

Note: In this SSAA Working Gundogs Spaniel Field Trial 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

2.4.1.1 Competitors and Firearms Licence

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 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

2.9.1 Disruption to Competition

2.9.2 National Championships and Other Shooting Events

2.9.3 Supplementary Events

SECTION 3: SPANIEL TRIALS: A GUIDE FOR JUDGES AND COMPETITORS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1** A field trial should be run as nearly as possible to an ordinary day's shooting. The purpose of a Field Trial is to assess each dog on that day, previous performances should be disregarded.

Two Judges will officiate, and two dogs should run simultaneously, one dog under each Judge. Dogs should hunt separately, but ideally not too far apart, and only hunt the same ground (or right next to each other) during a run off. In the first round, odd numbers will run under the right-hand Judge and, unless eliminated, will run in the second round under the left-hand Judge and vice versa.

- 3.1.2** Before starting a trial, Judges should ask the Trial Manager what the game situation is likely to be, and conduct the trial accordingly.
- 3.1.3** Handlers may shoot over their own dogs. Anyone nominated to shoot over a dog must conduct themselves in a safe manner. The Judges' decision regarding safety is final. A handler may be disqualified from the trial if, in the opinion of the Judges, the handler is not conducting themselves in a safe manner.
- 3.1.4** If supporting guns are deemed necessary, it is the responsibility of the Trial Manager to ensure the safe conduct of said guns. It should be noted that supporting guns might have to comply with Judges' requirements, which would override the Trial Manager's instructions.
- 3.1.5** Where handlers choose not to shoot over their dog, or the Judge feels it would improve the day if the handler has a nominated gun, the Judge may then approve a nominated gun to shoot for that handler.

3.2 HUNTING

- 3.2.1** A spaniel should at all times hunt within range of the handler (approx. 20 metres) with good ground treatment. A spaniel's first job is to find and flush game within range of the handler. The direction of the wind has a considerable influence on the way a dog will work ground. With a head-on wind, the dog should quarter the ground systematically left to right and vice versa, making good all likely game-holding cover, but keeping within gunshot of the handler. With a following wind the dog will usually wish to punch well out then work back into the wind towards the handler. Judges should regulate the pace of the line to allow the dog time to do this and make good its ground.
- 3.2.2** A spaniel should have drive and thrust and face cover well, and, at the same time, should be a pleasure to watch. It should show good treatment of ground with the minimum of help from its handler. Noisy handling should be penalised. All things being equal, the stylish dog should be given the credit. Judges should, however, be satisfied that the fast stylish dog is also the best game finder. A good game-finder should be given full credit.

- 3.2.3** Game moved by the presence of the competing dog may be shot and utilised by the Judge in assessing the dog's performance.
- 3.2.4** A dog which catches unshot game may be discarded, unless in the opinion of the Judges there are extenuating circumstances (i.e. kittens, milky does or wounded game).
- 3.2.5** A dog should not be run for an excessive length of time whilst under a Judge. If game is scarce, the Judge may, at their discretion, recall the dog at any time to look at any aspect of its work before moving on to the next round or stage of the competition. A dog may be called back as often as required by the Judge.
- 3.2.6** If a Judge wishes to change over their dog the Trial Manager should discretely inform the co-judge so their competing dog can be halted whilst the changeover takes place.
- 3.2.7** A dog must have completed a minimum of one find and retrieve during any round before it can be considered for the awards.

3.3 RETRIEVING

- 3.3.1** A spaniel should stop to game and shot, but if a dog moves a little in order to mark the fall, if this is obscured, the dog should not necessarily be penalised. The dog should remain steady to flush until the Judge instructs the handler to send their dog.
- 3.3.2** Good marking should always be looked for and given credit.
- 3.3.3** If a dog shows ability by acknowledging the fall, or line, and makes a workman-like job of the line, it should not automatically be disqualified from the awards by failing to produce the quarry, provided the Judges have satisfied themselves that the quarry is no longer in the area.
- 3.3.4** A dog should pick up cleanly, return quickly and deliver well up to hand, but if the dog has had a long gruelling hunt up to the time of flushing, this must be taken into consideration. A good game finding dog should not have to rely on the handler to find the game. It should, however, be obedient and should respond to its handler's signals where necessary. Dogs showing ability and initiative in retrieving the quarry should be placed above those that have to be handled to their quarry. If a dog fails on a retrieve it should not necessarily be downgraded. Circumstances such as game going to ground or being lightly pricked need to be taken into consideration when making an assessment of the dog.
- 3.3.5** Once one dog has had game shot over it, the other should wait and remain steady until the first dog has completed its work. If it is the case that game is found and shot simultaneously, then the Judges will instruct which dog will complete the retrieve first; wounded game should be tried for first. No game should be shot whilst dogs are out on a retrieve.

- 3.3.6** If game is shot too close to a dog the retrieve would be of no value to that dog and may be offered to a dog under the other Judge. During the first round of a stake dogs should, whenever possible, have the opportunity to retrieve game shot by their own handler.
- 3.3.7** It is unwise to try more than two dogs on any one retrieve. If both dogs are tried and fail to complete the retrieve, and the Judges are satisfied that the quarry is no longer in the area, the line should continue to move forward. Should any subsequent dog find dead or wounded game, this cannot be considered to be an 'eye-wipe', thus the two dogs should not necessarily be eliminated, but Judges should make a note of their failure.
- 3.3.8** In the case of a blind retrieve, the dog should be taken to within a reasonable distance of the fall, conditions being borne in mind.
- 3.3.9** All game should be examined for 'hard mouth'. There is seldom visible evidence of hardness. One side, or both sides, of the ribs will be crushed. Blowing up the feathers on a bird will not disclose the damage. Place the game on the palm of the hand, breast upwards, head forward, and feel the ribs with finger and thumb, they should be round and firm. If they are caved in or flat this is evidence of 'hard mouth'. Judges must always satisfy themselves that the damage done has been caused by the dog, not by the shot or fall. If there is a suspicion of 'hard mouth' the co-judge must be consulted before a decision is taken, and in cases of doubt, the benefit should be given to the dog. At times the rump of a strong runner may be gashed and care should be taken here, as it may be the result of a difficult capture.

3.4 SCORING

- 3.4.1** When a dog has been under two Judges and they both agree, and feel certain that this is their best dog, they are quite in order in putting it on one side and running off for the remaining places.
- 3.4.2** Judges are to place each dog in a category A, B & C according to the work done at the end of each run, and usually they will have little difficulty in getting down to the placings. It is advisable to take short notes and not rely on memory. A score sheet may be used to assist with this assessment.

An overall score at the end of each run as follows:

- i. A+ for the outstanding dog
- ii. A or A- for a good dog
- iii. B+, B or B- for an average dog
- iv. C for a poor dog

At the conclusion of the trial the judges compare notes and scores and if necessary, run offs may be called for.

- 3.4.3** In the case of a run-off, dogs can be divided by running them as a pair. The main consideration should now be style, pace, ground treatment and the dog's response to its handler. The Judges should walk side by side and confer.

3.4.4 A Judge should refrain from talking to anyone while the dog is actively competing under him, other than to instruct the handler. From the moment the dog commences its run the Judge should make every effort to keep that dog in view and so place himself when the dog is sent out for a retrieve to enable him to observe every move of the dog until the game is delivered to hand.

3.5 SUMMARY OF POINTS

3.5.1 Credit Points: Natural game-finding ability – Nose – Drive – Marking ability – Style – Control – Quickness in gathering game – Quietness – Retrieving & delivery.

Major Faults: Missing game – Blinking – Stealing – Not quartering and making ground good – Not stopping to shot and game – Disturbing ground – Noisy handling – Poor control – Failing to retrieve.

Eliminating Faults: Hard mouth – Whining or barking – Running in and chasing – Out of control – Failing to enter water – Deliberately catching.

SECTION 4: CONDUCT OF TRIALS

4.1 GENERAL

4.1.1 A field trial is a meeting for the purpose of holding competitions to assess the work of spaniels in the field, working on live game that may be shot. Trials shall comply with the shooting and game laws of the relevant State or Territory of Australia.

4.2 ELIGIBILITY

4.2.1 Trials shall be open to any variety of sporting spaniel, of either sex, other than Irish Water Spaniel and Epagneul Breton (Brittany Spaniel) registered with the (SSAA) Working Gundog Association of Australia (WGAA).

4.3 TYPES OF TRIALS

4.3.1 The WGAA may conduct the following events for Spaniel Field trials.

4.3.1.1 National Stake: (to be held not more than once a year)

A stake in which competing dogs may gain the title of National Field Champion. Dogs may also gain qualifications towards the title of Field Champion – no maximum number of entries, minimum 6.

4.3.1.2 Open Stake: A Stake in which dogs have the opportunity of gaining qualification towards the title of Field Champion – maximum entries 18, minimum 6.

4.3.1.3 Novice Stake: A Stake confined to dogs which have not gained a place in a field trial – maximum entries 18, minimum 4.

4.3.1.4 Non-Qualifier: A Stake open to all spaniels but which does not give qualification towards Field Champion – maximum entries 18, minimum 4.

4.4 SCHEDULES

4.4.1 A Branch / Club holding a field trial must issue a schedule which must contain the following, and be sent to interested members.

4.4.2 The definition of the stake to be held.

4.4.3 The date and venue of the field trial and details of the time and place of meeting.

4.4.4 The names of the Judges.

4.4.5 The details of entry fees and of awards offered.

4.4.6 The latest date for receiving applications for entry.

4.4.7 The date, time and place of the draw.

4.4.8 Veterinary support, i.e. the name and telephone number of the nearest veterinary surgeon to the trial venue.

4.5 CARDS

4.5.1 A Branch / Club holding a field trial must publish a card that must include the following:

- The name of the Branch / Club.
- The type of stake.
- The date of the trial.
- The names of the judges.
- The name of the trial manager.
- The venue of the trial.
- The awards offered.
- Entries numbered according to the draw and listed as follows:
 - Registered name of dog.
 - Sex of dog.
 - Date of birth of dog.
 - Registered name of sire and dam.
 - Name and address of owner (s).
 - Name of breeder.
 - A statement that the field trial is held under the SSAA and WGAA regulations.
 - A statement that no person shall revisit the trial venue without express permission from the property owner and the Trial Manager.

4.6 AWARDS AND TITLES

- 4.6.1** Championship points awarded for a placing at WGAA National Field Trials shall be 10 points for first place, 5 points for second place and 3 points for third place. Points awarded for a placing at WGAA Open Field Trials shall be 5 points for first place, 3 points for second place and 1 point for third place. Points are only awarded at the Judge's discretion.
- 4.6.2** A dog that obtains a total of 10 points including one first place award with points in WGAA Open Field Trials, or one first place award with points in a WGAA Open Field Trial in conjunction with one second place award in a WGAA National Field Trial, or wins a National Field Trial, shall be awarded the title "WGAA Field Champion". F.Ch. shall be added as a prefix to the dog's registered name.
- 4.6.3** A dog that wins a national trial shall be entitled to have the initials NFTW (National Field Trial Winner) added as a suffix to its registered name.
- 4.6.4** If a novice dog wins a trial it shall cease to be a novice dog for future trials.
- 4.6.5** Before a dog can be awarded its field trial title it must have successfully completed a water test. The object of the test is to prove that the dog will swim and retrieve from water. The retrieve must be a simple marked retrieve of approximately 20 metres, and cold game may be utilised. A qualified Judge will oversee a water test, which will be at a chosen venue during the year. Dogs that have successfully completed the exercise shall receive a certificate. If a dog retrieves from water during a trial it can be credited with its water test at the Judges' discretion.
- 4.6.6** A dog that the judges feel has performed well, having been seen to carry out all the aspects of its work without fault, but has not gained a place in the awards may be given a Diploma of Merit at a Championship Stake or a Certificate of Merit at an Open Stake.
- 4.6.7** Gundog Working Certificate - a certificate that may be presented when at a trial, a dog has game shot over it, which is subsequently retrieved to hand to the satisfaction of the presiding judges.

4.7 JUDGES

4.7.1 Qualifications

- 4.7.1.1** WGAA National shall issue to WGAA Clubs the official lists of Qualified Judges for Spaniels.
- 4.7.1.2** Before a Judge can be considered for addition as a Qualified Judge, they must be recommended by a WGAA Club which is approved to hold Open Stakes for Spaniels and for which they have judged as an Aspiring judge within the previous five years.

Before considering the addition of any candidate as a Qualified Judge, the WGAA National will seek reports from all 'A' Panel judges with whom the candidate has judged during the last 5 calendar years and all 'B' Panel judges with whom the candidate has judged during the last five calendar years.

4.7.1.3 Before being added to the list of Qualified judges, candidates for the B Panel must have handled a dog to attain Championship points in at least one Field Trial Stake and have considerable Field Trial experience. Before being added to the A Panel, candidates must have handled a dog to win at least one Open Stake and, since being added to the B Panel, have substantially increased their Field Trial experience.

4.7.1.4 Prospective Judges should have some experience in judging ground game, quail and released game trials before being added to the list of Qualified judges.

4.7.1.5 Before a Judge can be added to the list of Qualified judges they must have judged:

4.7.1.5.1 *B Panel:* over a minimum period of 24 months, and a maximum period of 60 months immediately preceding the date of the application a minimum of 3 Stakes with at least 3 different A or B panel Judges, with at least one stake being with an A panel judge.

4.7.1.5.2 *A Panel:* over a minimum period of 24 months, and a maximum period of 60 months, subsequent to their appointment to the B Panel a minimum of 4 Stakes of which 2 must have been Open Stakes, with reports must available from at least 3 different A Panel Co-Judges.

4.7.1.6 Before an Aspiring judge can be added to the list of Qualified Judges they must have attended a WGAA Judges' Training Programme seminar on WGAA rules for Spaniels and have passed the examination.

4.7.2 Judges Qualification for various stakes

4.7.2.1 Championship – All A panel

4.7.2.2 Open - At least one A panel, the second being either A panel or B panel

4.7.2.3 Novice - At least one A panel, the second being either A panel or B panel

4.7.3 Appointment

4.7.3.1 The Branch / Club Committee holding the trial shall appoint two judges.

4.7.3.2 The Judges shall be appointed by the Branch / Club holding the Trial which must satisfy itself that the persons being invited to judge have practical experience of both Field Trials and the shooting field.

4.7.3.3 Judges may not shoot at a Stake which they are judging.

4.7.3.4 Judges may not enter a dog for competition at a Stake at which they are judging.

4.7.3.5 Judging appointments should be confirmed in writing by both the Branch / Club and the Judge. When confirming an appointment the Branch / Club should include the following wording:

'In accepting this invitation you agree to be bound by WGAA rules and the WGAA Code of Best Practice for Judges. In doing so you also recognise that you are obliged to notify us in writing of any change in personal circumstances which will affect your ability to fulfil this judging appointment. You should also note that we reserve the right to cancel the contract before the date of the appointment if there is a change in your circumstances, which in our reasonable opinion would adversely affect your ability to fulfil the appointment'.

4.7.3.6 All judging contracts are subject to cancellation at the discretion of the WGAA Branch / Club in the event of the judge being subject to relevant disciplinary action.

4.7.3.7 Judges are empowered to withhold any awards if, in their opinion, the dogs competing do not show sufficient merit.

4.7.3.8 The judge's decision is final.

4.8 DRAW

4.8.1 The draw shall take place at a selected venue a week prior to the trial.

4.8.2 A WGAA representative must be present and any paid up member has the right to be present.

4.8.3 A competition card will then be printed, and the numbers will stand throughout the trial.

4.8.4 If a person is handling more than one dog, and that handler's dogs are drawn consecutively, the second dog drawn will automatically go to the next number, thus eliminating a handler from being put in the position of handling two dogs simultaneously.

4.8.5 Odd numbers shall run under the right-hand Judge in the first round of the trial, and, unless eliminated, shall run under the left-hand Judge in the second round, and vice versa.

4.9 CONTROL OF DOGS, HANDLERS AND GALLERY

4.9.1 A Trial Manager shall be appointed who shall be responsible for the organisation of the trial on the day. The Manager must have with them on the day of the trial a copy of the W.G.A.A. Spaniel Field Trials Rules & Regulations.

- 4.9.2** The Trial Manager shall be responsible for the administration and safety of supporting guns. It must be noted that supporting guns shall comply with the Judges' requirements, which may override the Trial Manager's instructions.
- 4.9.3** The Trial Manager shall inspect any dog for sexual or other causes that may interfere with the safety or performance of its opponents.
- 4.9.4** Dogs may be assessed at different rates by each of the Judges during a trial. The Trial Manager should be positioned so they can inform the co-judge to halt their competing dog during the changeover.
- 4.9.5** No bitches in season may be on the trial ground.
- 4.9.6** Vicious dogs will be asked to leave the trial ground.
- 4.9.7** If any dog is unfit by reason of contagious disease or physical condition, such a dog will be required to be removed immediately from the ground, and from the trial.
- 4.9.8** No competitor may withdraw their dog without permission of the Judges or the Trial Manager.
- 4.9.9** No person shall carry out punitive or harsh handling whilst within the boundaries of the trial. If, after being cautioned, a handler persists in any such behaviour, the Judge may eliminate the offending handler and that handler's dog.
- 4.9.10** Competitors and spectators attend a field trial at their own risk. The Association takes no responsibility for damage to persons or their property.
- 4.9.11** Current Firearms Licences and Hunting Permits must be shown to the Trial Manager by all those handling firearms.
- 4.9.12** An opponent's dog must not be interfered with in any way. If, after being cautioned, a handler persists in any such behaviour, the Judge may eliminate the offending handler and that handler's dog.

SECTION 5: JUDGING TRIALS

5.1 SUMMARY

- 5.1.1** A Judge must at all times and in all circumstances be capable of making decisions without reference to any other person, other than their co-judge. The Judge should be capable of assessing the overall work of the dog and handler, arriving at a mark that reflects a balanced overview, and which takes into account both good and bad aspects of the work. The Judge should not mark a dog down harshly for some small infringement, nor mark it well up on one aspect of the run.

- 5.1.2** All aspects must be weighed and balanced and a considered view expressed. The view should be recorded in reasonable notes in the Judge's book.
- 5.1.3** Judges should be honest and unbiased, acting at all times with equality and integrity. Judges should clear their minds of all previous knowledge of the dogs or the handlers, making decisions purely on the work performed on the day. Judges should be courteous to host, handlers and spectators at all times. They should assist the handlers to show their dogs to the best advantage, and they should be positive in their decisions and instructions to the handler. If eliminating a handler, Judges should be capable of stating the reason to the handler without giving offence. Each Judge should, as far as possible, try to keep aware of everything that is happening with their co-judge on the other side of the line.
- 5.1.4** The Judge should be aware of the quantity of game produced by the dog, and, in particular, should mark the fall of game in order to ensure a speedy recovery. Judges should be knowledgeable enough to know if game is dead, and, if not dead, should make every effort to assist in the speedy retrieval of such game. Once the Judges take control of the day, they are in total charge of events; the Trial Manager's responsibilities lie elsewhere.

SECTION 6: SCORE SHEET

A score sheet or notes shall be maintained by the judge during competition as an aid in assessing the dog for its final score, as per rule 3.4.2.

Example Score Sheet:

	Round 1	Round 2	RUN-OFF
Ground treatment			
Game finding			
Flushing Game			
Steadiness			
Style			
Location of shot game			
Retrieving and delivery			
Handling			
Overall performance			

Comments

Credit Points

Natural game finding ability, Nose, Drive, Style, Marking ability, Quickness of gathering game, Retrieving and delivery, Control, Quietness

Major faults

Missing game, Blinking, Stealing, Not quartering and making ground good, not stopping to shot game, Disturbing ground, Noisy handling, Poor control, Failing to retrieve

Elimination Faults

Hard mouth, Whining or barking, Running in and chasing, Out of control, Failing to enter water, Deliberately catching game

SECTION 7: RULEBOOK REVIEW

- 7.1** A rulebook review shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements set by SSAA Inc. Participation in the rulebook review shall be open to spaniel owners who have been actively involved in WGAA spaniel trials.
- 7.2** "Actively involved" means the owner of a spaniel who has competed in or officiated at a WGAA National Discipline spaniel field trial in their home State in the 5 years prior to the review taking place.
- 7.3** An attendance register shall be kept at all WGAA National Discipline spaniel events. This register shall be the responsibility of the host State and shall record all details, including a copy of the catalogue.

SECTION 8: DEFINITIONS

8.1. ACTION & STYLE

These are seen in a fast moving and lively dog, which must also have courage when entering cover. It is an outward sign of keenness and game finding capacity. It should be exciting and a pleasure to watch at all times. Any lethargic movement is contrary to good action and style.

8.2. BLIND RETRIEVE

See Retrieving (8.19)

8.3 BLINKING

A dog that finds and then shows hesitancy or complete refusal to flush or retrieve game. A dog that ignores scents which should be acknowledged.

8.4. COVER

White grass, tussock grass, sword grass, bracken and any thick vegetation likely to hold game.

8.5 DELIVERY

Presentation of retrieved game to the hand.

8.6 DOG

Dog refers to dogs and bitches.

8.7 DRIVE & THRUST

See Action & Style (8.1)

8.8 EYE WIPE

When a dog fails to retrieve the shot quarry and a second dog is tried on the same retrieve and is successful this is an 'eye wipe'.

8.9. FIND

The locating of game by a dog.

8.10. FLUSH

The pushing of game out of cover by a dog. Dogs should remain steady to the flush.

8.11. GAME

Rabbit, hares and any game bird complying with the shooting and game laws of the relevant State or Territory of Australia.

8.12. GROUND TREATMENT

Hunting by a dog with method and thoroughness on the ground selected by the Judge.

8.13. HARD MOUTH

Where there is unmistakable evidence of crushing or biting of retrieved game by a dog. (See Section 3 – A Guide to Judges and Competitors).

8.14. LINE

Scent left by wounded game. A dog should locate the fall when sent for a retrieve and track the blood-scent to the quarry, ignoring all other unshot game scents.

8.15. MISSING GAME

When game is present on the selected ground and a dog fails to find and flush it.

8.16. NOSE

Keeness of scenting power combined with the sense to apply it correctly.

8.17. QUARTERING

A dog should cover the ground in front of the handler in a traditional spaniel quartering pattern. It should be noted that under actual field conditions dogs are not always able to quarter in copybook fashion due to the direction of the wind. (See Section 3 – A Guide to Judges and Competitors)

8.18. RANGE

(See Section 3 – A Guide to Judges and Competitors)

8.19. RETRIEVING

Retrieving covers the performance of a dog from when it is ordered to retrieve until it delivers the game to the handler. A dog should pick up cleanly, return quickly and deliver well up to hand. Dogs that come across dead or wounded game while working shall not be penalised for retrieving it. A marked retrieve is when a dog sees the fall of shot game and is ordered to retrieve. A blind retrieve is when the fall of shot game is obscured from the dog's view, and the dog may have to be handled onto the fall. The dog should then make a workmanlike job of the line. (See Section 3 – A Guide to Judges and Competitors Retrieving)

8.20 RUNNING IN & CHASING

If a dog breaks to Flush or Shot but is brought under control within two metres, it shall be penalised for unsteadiness. If it continues and makes a deliberate attempt to catch game that is on the move, whether or not it has been shot at, this will be deemed to be chasing, and the dog should be eliminated.

8.21 STEALING

When a dog deliberately takes game from another dog whilst hunting or retrieving, or deliberately moves across onto the other dog's beat when it sees the other dog making game (i.e. about to flush). This should be penalised.

8.22 VETTING

See Section 4 – Conduct of Trials – 4.9. Control of Dogs, Handlers and Gallery.

APPENDIX 1: SUPPLEMENTARY EVENT

SPANIEL WORKING TESTS

Spaniel Working Tests assume a familiarity with the running of a Working Gundog Spaniel Field Trial. A copy of these Rules must be available at all Spaniel Working Tests (SWTs.)

A.1 Introduction

A.1.1 SWTs are competitions which, by artificially simulating shooting day conditions, seek to assess, without game being shot, the working abilities of Spaniels. Cold Game and dummies may be used at the discretion of the organisers.

A.1.2 No title used to describe the winners of SWTs will be associated with such competition which is best understood as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

A.1.3 WGAA authorises the WGAA state bodies to hold competitive Spaniel Working Tests.

A.1.4 Scurries, Pick-Ups, and other similar events are exempt, as are non-competitive Club Training Assessments where no places are on offer. WGAA also recognises that events involving unregistered dogs do sometimes take place. Such events cannot, however, be considered to be SWTs under these Regulations.

A.1.5 The SWT year will run from 2nd February to 1st February.

A.2 Definition of Spaniel Working Tests (SWT)

A2.1 The following classes of competition are recognised by the WGAA:

A.2.2 OPEN. Open to all dogs of the 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 SWT, or won a Novice SWT.

A.2.3 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 SWT or First in a Novice SWT held in accordance with Working Gundog Spaniel Field Trials Official National Rules and Rules for Working Tests.

A.2.4 PUPPY. Confined to dogs of specific breed or breeds less than eighteen months of age on the date of the test.

A.2.5 UNCLASSIFIED. Open to all dogs of a specified breed or breeds, but may be restricted by conditions as determined by the Branch / Club. To include Water and Team Tests.

A.3 Organisation of Spaniel Working Tests

A.3.1 The organisation shall agree to hold and conduct the tests within the Rules and Regulations WGAA.

A.3.2 Control of Dogs. The owner, competitor, handler or other person in charge of a dog at WGAA 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.

A.3.3 SWTs 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.

A.3.4 The organisers of SWTs 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.

A.3.5 The organisers must ensure that competitors are aware of the initial running order, and whether the SWT is to be conducted on cold game or dummies.

A.3.6 Final decisions regarding the acceptability of tests lie with the Judge or Judges.

A.3.7 Only dummies and dead game acceptable to the Judges, will be used for retrieves in SWTs.

A.3.8 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.

A.3.9 A dog, when retrieving, must not be required to pass too close to another retrieve.

A.3.10 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 themselves that the dog is suitably trained, physically fit and prepared to undertake the work allocated by the Judges before directing their dog to undertake the allotted task.

A.4 Conduct of Spaniel Working Tests

A.4.1 The organisers must ensure all competitors and Judges are informed that the event is being held under Working Gundog Spaniel Field Trials Official National Rules for Working Tests.

A.4.2 The Code of Conduct expected at SWTs is the same as that for Field Trials.

A.4.3 Those taking part in SWTs shall not openly impugn the decision of the Judges or criticise the host, ground, or helpers.

A.4.4 All dogs must be registered with the WGAA. Each dog to be of a breed included within the relevant sub-group (Spaniels).

A.4.5 The organisers have the power to exclude dogs from the competition and will have the right to refuse an entry.

A.4.6 The organisers may restrict the numbers in a SWT, in which case the right to compete shall be decided by ballot.

A.4.7 All Judges must have experience of dog-work under shooting field conditions.

A.4.8 In an Open SWT, each sub-group must have at least one recognised Field Trial Judge officiating.

A.4.9 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 **their** dog.

A.4.10 No person attending a SWT may allow a bitch in season to be on the Test ground or foul any ground to be used by competing dogs.

A.4.11 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 WGAA (National).

A.4.12 No dog shall wear a collar whilst competing.

A.4.13 No person shall carry out punitive correction or harsh handling at a SWT

A.4.14 No competitor may withdraw their dog and leave the SWT ground without informing the Chief Steward.

A.5 Judging

A.5.1 Judges must agree on a common scoring system. All competitors should be informed of the scoring system at the commencement of a SWT. 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.

A.5.2 SWTs 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.

A.5.3 Judges must ensure that spectators are a reasonable distance from competitors in the line.

A.5.4 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.

A.5.5 In retrieving 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.

A.5.6 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.

A.5.7 The Judges are empowered to withhold any prize or award if in their opinion competing dogs have not shown sufficient merit.

A.6 Running the Test

A.6.1 At the start of a SWT, 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.

A.6.2 A Spaniel's primary task is to find game and flush within range of the handler. In SWTs 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.

A.6.3 A Spaniel must be steady to flush, shot and fall and retrieve on command from land or water.

A.6.4 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.

A.6.5 If a dog fails to retrieve in the run-offs, it may still feature in the awards.

A.6.6 If live pigeons are released this must be treated as a separate exercise and not occur as part of an exercise involving a retrieve.

A.7 Credit Points

Natural hunting ability. Good marking. Nose. Drive. Control. Delivery. Style. Speed in gathering retrieve. Quiet handling.

A.8 Serious Faults

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