

**THE
CONDUCT AND JUDGING
OF
SPANIEL FIELD TRIALS**

Report of The Rules Committee of the
English Springer Spaniel
Field Trial Association, Inc.

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**ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL
FIELD TRIAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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*Report of The Rules Committee of the English Springer Spaniel
Field Trial Association issued February, 1992*

The Annual Meeting of the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association held in New York on February 14, 1950 authorized by resolution the preparation of a booklet intended to clarify the procedures and contribute to the uniformity of judging of spaniel field trials.

After careful study by a Special Committee carried on over a period of two years a preliminary report was made to the Annual Meeting of 1952, and subsequently published in booklet form.

Prior to this edition, the booklet was revised and reprinted in 1963 at which time the Committee, composed of Robert McLean, Chairman, Robert C. Bishop, James R. Dodson, B. F. Genty and Richard H. Migel, strongly recommended that contestants and observers at trials review from time to time that vitally important document "The Standard Procedure for Spaniels" reprinted in its entirety in the Appendix.

It should be restated here, as in the original report, that the explanatory material in this booklet* is not official - it is explanatory only. Nevertheless it is the result of painstaking thought of many people and should be accepted as a guide by judges and contestants.

This booklet was revised February, 1992 prior to reprinting. The Committee in 1992 reiterates the importance of familiarity with this booklet and with the "Standard Procedure for Spaniels" for those judging and attending trials.

THE COMMITTEE
Janet Christensen, Chair
William Cosgrove
C. R. Verkamp

In February 1996 the board of governors approved revisions in the water test and the size of shot to be used in trials.

* As distinguished from the official A.K.C. Registrations and Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels.

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FOREWORD

INFORMAL TRIALS

There are widely varied types of field contests carried on today in which spaniels compete. Different types of game are used, such as pheasants, domestically raised mallards, or chukar partridges; pigeons and others. Some are field events only, others water retrieving contests; some are just plainly called "pigeon shoots" or "training classes."

Where such events are wholly informal those organizing them establish their own regulations, subject, of course, to local laws as to use of game and guns. They also set their own standards of performance.

CHAMPIONSHIP TRIALS

Since 1924 formal trials have been held under American Kennel Club rules, regulations and procedures.

Member clubs of the American Kennel Club, and Nonmember clubs, which are eligible, may file application with The American Kennel Club for permission to hold sanctioned and, under certain conditions, licensed trials. One of the requirements for approval of nonmember club applications is the consent in writing of the two Parent clubs, the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association and the American Spaniel Club (if a club proposes competition for one of the breeds only, then only one parent club consent is required). Winners of Open All-Age Stakes or Amateur All-Age Stakes at member club and licensed trials (if certain requirements in respect to water tests and number of entries are met) become Field Champions or Amateur Field Champions of Record. The number of such wins and placements required for a championship is set by the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club. These requirements are listed on pages 37 and 38 of this booklet, as well as in the A.K.C. booklet on rules mentioned below.

SANCTIONED TRIALS

A sanctioned trial is one not carrying championship points held by a club sanctioned for that purpose by the A.K.C. Great latitude is allowed in the arrangement of stakes and in the application of standards of performance governing the conduct of such trials, provided these are set forth in its premium list. What follows refers almost entirely to trials that carry championship points.

THE A.K.C. BOOKLET OF RULES

There are two types of regulations in effect today; one binding, one advisory. The first set includes the General Rules of the American Kennel Club and certain extracts from its Constitution and By-Laws¹ and, in addition, the Special Rules of that organization applying to Spaniel Field Trials.²

The second set of regulations is known as Standard Procedure for Spaniel Field Trials³; this is the advisory section, but it is equally controlling because unless there be such a standard there would be no guide for judges and contestants to follow.

All the above are contained in a booklet entitled "Registration and Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels" published by The American Kennel Club.

JUDGES REQUIRED TO BE INFORMED

Judges as well as all other officials are required to be fully informed of these regulations. A careful reading will reveal many points not covered here and therefore each judge and contestant should be familiar with the regulations themselves and not depend on this outline which is of necessity only the briefest summary of the important points.

The difference between these two sets of regulations is evidenced by their titles. The rules, for example, provide that in the early series of a trial spaniels shall be run two at a time on parallel beats; they give power to a judge to turn out of a stake any dog or handler that interferes with a competing dog or handler; to bar from a stake dogs unfit to compete; to provide for the return of entry fees in some cases and their forfeit in others. It defines the powers of the Field Trial Committee, provides the procedures in cases of protest, establishes the official stakes that may be held and defines eligibility for each. It defines how a dog shall become a Field Champion or Amateur Field Champion.

The Standard Procedure, on the other hand, sets forth the nature of a trial, the qualities expected in a spaniel, and the manner in which the judges and the contestants shall proceed to determine the relative merits of the contending dogs. It sets forth in short the basis on which judgment is to be rendered.

1 See Note I in Appendix for summary.

2 Reproduced in full in Note 2-Appendix.

3 Reproduced in full in Note 3-Appendix.

These procedures have been modified from time to time as the result of experience and changing conditions, but they contain many of the early provisions adopted in 1924 at the first trial and some go back to those in force in England. They are, therefore, the result of years of experience and testing.

APPLIES ALSO TO CONTESTANTS

Spaniel trials in this country have historically been dominated by amateurs who are themselves contestants, owners, handlers and in many cases amateur trainers of their own dogs. Judges are customarily selected from among these amateurs and asked to render a decision on that day or days on the relative merits of the dogs set down before them. On another day other judges may be selected and some of the owners and handlers may be those who judged a prior trial.

When all trials were held in a general geographic area, it was easy to exchange viewpoints and discuss qualities that are desirable; for, make no mistake, no two owners or two judges will feel exactly alike about every question which arises. There must, therefore, be a mutual confidence that both judges in a trial are looking for the same qualities in the dogs and each needs to have a clear understanding of the method of evaluation by the other.

With the spread of field trials throughout the breadth of the land these personal contacts occur less readily and yet an exchange of information is important if we are to continue to provide for the development of the best spaniels. For that, after all, is the purpose of field trials.

The purpose of a spaniel field trial is to demonstrate the performance of a properly trained spaniel in the field, but it is also to determine the dog with the finest qualities among the group entered in each stake. Therefore, the judging will affect the values of the dogs put up and affect the breeding schedules of the future.

COMMENTS AND AMPLIFICATIONS OF CERTAIN RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

THE FIELD TRIAL COMMITTEE

The responsibility for a field trial and the necessary preparations for it are in the hands of the Field Trial Committee of a club. Field Trial Clubs or associations not members of the American Kennel Club are required to obtain written approval of the Parent Club and of the A.K.C. as to the date and location of the trial.

The Committee determines the stakes to be run, decides on the awards, selects the grounds, arranges for the birds, determines the entry fees, invites the judges (who must in advance be approved by the A.K.C.) and, if it be a licensed or member club trial, includes the above in its application to the A.K.C.

THE PREMIUM LIST AND CATALOG

It is the responsibility of each licensed or member field trial club to supply its own premium lists in an approved form after receiving approval from the A.K.C. The entry form when properly filled out and signed by the owner or the owner's agent and received by the Field Trial Secretary before the specified closing date constitutes the entry.

There is, as well, an approved form of listing in the catalog of the trial which the Committee is requested to follow. Since copies of the catalog, marked with absences and awards, are later to be filed with the A.K.C., along with the judges' books certifying to such awards, and become part of the official permanent record of the trial, it is important that the required data about each entry - name and registered number (or listing if unregistered), sex, age, breeding and breeder, owner and handler, owner's address - be in proper detail in the entry form and included in the catalog.

All documents concerning the trial (premium lists, catalogs, and judges' books) must carry the A.K.C. Number which is supplied by the A.K.C.

SUBSTITUTE JUDGES

In case one or both of the judges so announced are unable to officiate, the A.K.C. permits the substitution of an approved judge or judges. It allows the appointment of an additional judge or judges (providing they are available who are in good standing with the A.K.C.), should conditions suddenly confront the Committee that make such a move imperative, such as an unavoidable shortage of time and multiplicity of stakes. Nevertheless, such authority should be used sparingly as it is undesirable to have any departure from the announcements in the Premium List and nearly all other departures are forbidden.

In event of a disagreement between the judges on any question, the Field Trial Committee of the club giving the trial shall appoint a referee to cast the deciding vote, though such recourse has been so rare in spaniel trials that it would be necessary to go to the A.K.C. files to determine whether it has ever been invoked.

RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICIALS

In all matters arising at the meeting the decisions of the Field Trial Committee present are final and conclusive and binding on all parties subject to the rules of the American Kennel Club.

However, responsibility rests alike on the Field Trial Committee, the officers of the club, the judges and all other officials to see that a trial conducted under the A.K.C. is carried on in accordance with its rules and all are subject to discipline for failure to do so.

All those involved in putting on the field trial should be familiar with "Guide for Field Trial and Hunting Test Committees in Dealing with Misconduct at Field Trials and Hunting Tests" (available from the American Kennel Club).

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF JUDGE

In all cases affecting the merits of the dogs, the judges' decision is final. Full discretionary power is given to the judges to withhold any or all awards for want of merit. Occasionally, because of the lack of merit, judges have awarded no first in a stake carrying championship points though they have filled the balance of places in the stake. On at least one occasion no places at all were awarded in an important stake. Judges may call upon the Committee for as many series as seem to them necessary and may ask that such additional series be of such nature that they provide the information they need to arrive at their decision.

Judges are empowered to turn out of any stake a dog that does not obey its handler or any handler who willfully interferes with another competitor or his dog and to exclude from competition any dog they may consider unfit to compete; including the duty to require the removal from the field trial grounds of bitches in heat and, of course, their exclusion from any stake.

Thus it will be seen that the authority of the judges is considerable and, in addition to rendering judgment, their responsibility is broad. Incidentally, they are required to reduce to writing, or see that the Field Trial Secretary does so, all of their awards, including Awards of Merit, Water Test Awards, and to sign each page of the judges' book certifying to those awards.

PROCEDURE AT THE TRIAL

The spaniel field trial for at least the first two series (except in Puppy Stakes) is carried on by two dogs running simultaneously on parallel beats each under one of the two judges. The order of running is determined in advance by lot and should be adhered to as far as possible since thus the variations in terrain and cover are resolved to be a matter of fortune, not choice.

The dogs are put down under the two judges in some regular order, such as numerical order to fill each vacancy as dogs are taken up by one or the other of the judges. Such procedure is usually determined by consultation between the judges and the chief steward. It is undesirable to alter the order of running, thus determined, except when no other solution presents itself such as when one handler is performing on one beat and another dog of his is called up in order on the parallel beat. Dogs not in line when called may in the discretion of the judges be eliminated or run last in order in the stake

At the conclusion of the first series each judge selects the dogs from among those who have performed under him that he considers worthy of continuing in the stake and they are put down in sequence under the other judge. These procedures are followed through successive series until the judges are satisfied that they are prepared to make the awards. However, after each dog has been down separately under both judges, the latter may, if they desire, either continue to run the dogs on parallel beats or run one at a time on a single beat under the observation of both judges. This applies only to the third and successive series and is optional with the judges. A dog to receive an award must compete in all series and the water test, if any be held.

In the National Championship Stake and the National Amateur Championship Stake it has been established that dogs should run on parallel beats for at least four series so that each dog is down twice under each judge.

THE STEWARD OF THE BEAT

The Steward of the Beat is in charge of the course and of the placing of birds when birds are planted. Judges will, as a rule, find the Steward of the Beat amenable to suggestions and responsive to their requests so long as such requests are reasonable and within the steward's power to grant.

THE OFFICIAL GUNS

The shooting is done by the official guns that may be two, three or more in number according to the conditions. Since the gun is for the moment the good right arm of the handler, presumably one gun per dog and handler is enough. That gun should guide himself on the handler, moving forward when he moves, stopping when he stops, and keeping himself in position to shoot without danger to those around him, including the handler whose attention is centered on his dog.

With the present price of birds and occasionally because of the size of the entry judges may wish to avoid passing up shots. To meet this problem it has become customary in many stakes to have a third or center gun who takes shots not available to the outer guns. Where courses diverge because of terrain, two guns may be assigned to each beat though this is a matter of discretion.

It is part of the function of the judges to see that guns conduct themselves in a manner not dangerous to others, including the gallery, to advise the guns as to the wishes of the judges for the best trial of the dogs, and to caution a gun who gets out of position or interferes with the handler or shoots dangerously. A judge is entitled to ask that a gun be relieved for any cause and another substituted.

WHAT STANDARD OF JUDGMENT?

This then is a very general outline of the powers, duties and responsibilities of judges at a spaniel trial. In addition there is the question of what standard of judgment to apply.

It would appear that the simplest approach is to take the successive paragraphs of the Standard Procedure in order and attempt to throw light on their long accepted meaning and the customs that have prevailed in applying them.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR SPANIEL FIELD TRIALS

In the following pages the eleven numbered Paragraphs printed in italics constitute the standard procedure for spaniel field trials which is a part of the "Registration and Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels" of the American Kennel Club.

Paragraph 1. The purpose of a spaniel field trial is to demonstrate the performance of a properly trained spaniel in the field. The performance should not differ from that in any ordinary day's shooting, except that in the trials a dog should do his work in a more nearly perfect way.

The above is not a complete statement since a trial has as well the very definite purpose of determining which are the better dogs among those entered in the event; which possess those qualities which will contribute most to the development of the breed.

QUALITIES OF A HUNTING SPANIEL

What then are the qualities to be emphasized?

A spaniel is a hunting dog who is also a retriever. His first job is to seek, find and flush game. This he should do with great desire, eagerness and the necessary drive. His second job is to bring the game to bag. Hence, he should be able to mark well the fall of game, to persevere on wounded game, and to retrieve promptly to hand.

Thus hunting and game finding are his primary requisites. To do this within gun range is an absolute requirement. This and the change from a hunting dog to a retriever demands discipline of a high order. Hence, those qualities instilled by training - control, steadiness and responsiveness - are of great importance.

However, if hunting and game finding are primary, natural ability is clearly the most important quality - and this includes nose and brains - if the breed is going to improve. This plus training produces the capable dog.

In a stake judges, while seeking the information with which to make their placements, must balance all factors of differing terrain, varying cover and wind. It is a difficult job. There are judges who would like to reproduce as nearly as possible the same conditions and tests for each dog since that indeed would simplify their job. But this is in the nature of things impossible, and if attempted would result in artificial rather than natural conditions.

THE PERFORMANCE BEFORE YOU

It, therefore, depends on the judge to make such comparisons as he can. He can judge only by what occurs before him on that day and under those conditions. He must obliterate from his mind all past performances, all factors of what might-have-been and base his decision on what he saw and can testify to in discussion with his fellow judge to whom he is beholden for a clear report.

He should not seek the advice of handlers or guns or others, but reach his conclusions solely on his own. Truly he can ask a gun to indicate the point of fall of a bird, but he should be slow to accept the evidence of others on any questions such as whether a bird was a dead bird or a runner. He is free to move to any position that he feels is warranted; he can search the ground for a fallen bird; he may, in his discretion, disregard any evidence not conclusive to him and proceed to a further test of the dog. It is, however, his own judgment and his duty to his fellow judge which must govern.

SECOND AND OTHER SERIES

On the completion of the first series judges consult and each selects the dogs he wishes to bring back for a second series under the other judge. Dogs which have committed an unforgivable fault such as breaking or chasing are obviously out of consideration for any award and are, therefore, eliminated. If time permits and the number of spaniels are not too great, all can be brought back that have shown merit and have not disqualified themselves. When in doubt, it is not out of order to give the dog the benefit of that doubt since there will be opportunity to demonstrate ability or the lack of it in the next and if desired in subsequent series.

However, when the number of dogs is large, a more difficult problem arises, for both judges should insofar as possible follow the same standards of selection. One should not condemn for the faults the other overlooks. There will be occasions when better performances seem to be all on one side and poorer performances occur under the other judge. Under such conditions an unbalanced second series cannot be helped in a stake with a small entry, but with a large entry some equitable basis of selection can usually be agreed upon by the judges.

Owners have often come long distances, spent months in training their dogs and all have paid the same entry fee. It helps an owner to accept the result if his dog is given ample opportunity to demonstrate clearly, his good or weak qualities.

Nevertheless, it were better to spend the time testing thoroughly the abilities of the better dogs in successive series than to dwell overlong out of a kind heart on a dog that cannot possibly enter in the final placing.

BALANCING OF TIME AND DISTANCE

In this connection it is to be noted that some judges feel equal opportunity has been given a series if, say, each dog has the opportunity to complete two retrieves. When a long, birdless beat is encountered, they will in this effort keep one dog down for a far greater time than the others and thus place a greater burden on his strength.

Granted that under such circumstances the dog that keeps trying should receive credit therefore, it were, nevertheless, better to attempt a balance of time and distance. Guns will miss, birds will flush back toward the gallery, and birds will run off the course. These troubles sometimes seem to happen all at once to the one poor victim of mischance. A judge should bear in mind that there will be further opportunities to test the dog in later series when, because of the reduced number of dogs, each may be given more time and attention and more retrieves.

Taking a dog up too quickly is another error into which judges occasionally fall. A dog may quickly demonstrate to a judge all the qualities he is looking for, have the good fortune to promptly flush game and retrieve the fall. Nevertheless, it is well to carry on a ways to see if the ground work continues well and to study the dog's responses. If this results in one or even more additional finds, the judge has additional evidence on which to base his judgment. At any moment suitable to the judge the testing may be ended by taking the dog up though it were better not to do so at a moment when the dog gives evidence that game is in the immediate vicinity.

Paragraph 2. The function of a hunting spaniel is to seek, find and flush game in an eager, brisk, quiet manner and when game is shot, to mark the fall or direction thereof and retrieve to hand. The dog should walk at heel or on a leash until ordered to seek game and should then thoroughly hunt the designated cover, within gunshot, in line of quest, without unnecessarily covering the ground twice, and should flush game boldly and without urging. When game is flushed, a dog should be steady to flush or command, and, if game is shot should retrieve at command only, but not until the judge has instructed the handler. Dogs should retrieve quickly when ordered to do so and deliver tenderly to hand. They should then sit or 'hup' until given further orders. Spaniels which bark and give tongue while questing are objectionable and should be severely penalized.

There are differences of view between judges on the meaning of this paragraph but they arise largely from the different kinds of terrain in different parts of the country.

THE ARTIFICIAL PATTERN

When flat, level fields abound and a handler can observe his dog at all times, there is a tendency to make quartering of the ground in a regular pattern like a 'windshield-wiper' the criterion. This includes exactness of response to the whistle at the end of the beat. As discussed later, such a pattern is not a fault if it is dictated by the direction of the wind. On the other hand, if the progress forward of each traverse

of the course is limited to a few feet regardless of wind and terrain, a dog can hardly fail to flush game in his course and there is less evidence of 'bird-sense,' scenting ability and use of wind.

NATURAL ABILITY

Where terrain is irregular and there is much cover of varied character, there are frequent occasions when a dog and handler cannot see each other. Under such conditions the dog must be constantly relating himself to the handler. In addition he must work his cover out on a somewhat irregular pattern seeking always to pass downwind of likely cover in the line of quest. Resourcefulness in search is clearly more important than exactness in performance.

For if it is the function of a spaniel to hunt out game, the manner in which he does should be directed to the finding of game rather than to pleasing the eye. In other words, the effectiveness of his search is a combination of thoroughness and bird sense rather than pattern, provided only he does not neglect any area that might be productive.

Judges will have to decide what they are looking for in a dog. Certainly one that can be effective only in one type of cover or the other is of less value than a dog that can take the terrain as it comes and solve all problems even when his handler can give him little help. Hence a tendency on the part of the handler to over direct or over handle should be looked upon as evidence of weakness in the dog no matter how perfect the result, and correspondingly greater value should be placed on the performance of a dog that requires a minimum of handling and direction.

EFFECT OF THE WIND

The manner of ground covering will depend not alone on the terrain and the cover, but as well on the direction and force of the wind. A dog working upwind may cast right and left to the limit of his range in a fairly regular manner without risk of missing game. Downwind a dog will of necessity range out ahead of his handler at times to the limit of range, turning back to test out cover since he cannot well scent game until downwind to it unless perchance he strikes a trail.

A crosswind presents another variation to the problem, and a dog that is using the wind and hunting out his cover will vary his method accordingly. Judges should look with some doubt on the dog which follows a set pattern regardless of the variations in such conditions. Natural hunting ability in a dog is evidenced by adaptation to conditions and the automaton by the maintenance of a set pattern regardless of such variations. It is as essential to use the wind in hunting as it is in locating shot game, and the dog is less able to 'read' the evidence when the scent is blown away rather than toward him, except as it is left on the ground or hangs in the air in the cover over which he is searching, as when wet, heavy scenting conditions exist.

THE JUDGE'S VOICE

Both in this paragraph and in several other portions of the Standard Procedure emphasis is placed on the necessity for steadiness to flush and command. The whole basis of training and control is involved, and without control the best qualities in the world avail little.

Steadiness means, of course, that the dog be governed only by his handler regardless of other distractions or sounds. For example, dogs have in the tension of a field trial been known to go on the sound of the judge's voice. This is a fault subject to penalty. Hence, handlers prefer a judge to issue instructions to retrieve merely by speaking the number of the dog, saying "send" or tapping the handler on the back.

THE 'POINTING' SPANIEL

The words 'flush game boldly and without urging' were included to clarify the problem of the 'pointing spaniel'. Unless care is taken in training with planted birds a spaniel can form the habit of hesitating on game, which is only one step from 'blinking', hence undesirable and to be discouraged. Were all training carried out on wild birds and all trials run on game roaming the fields at will, as in the earlier days, this problem would seldom arise. The only caution to the judge is that he should recognize the poorness of the scent given out by a deeply planted bird that has not moved and the difficulty of quickly locating it and hence make allowances as his judgment dictates. The brief pause when a dog that has located a bird by nose attempts to verify its position in order to pick it up or force it into the air cannot be described as pointing, but such hesitation should not be prolonged.

Paragraph 3. If a dog, following the line of a bird, is getting too far out he should be called off the line and later he should again be cast back on it. A dog which causes his handler and gun to run after him while line running is out of control. Handlers may control their dogs by hand, voice or whistle, but only in the quiet manner that would be used in the field. Any loud shouting or whistling is evidence that the dog is hard to handle, and, in addition, is disturbing to the game.

THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN JUDGING

A summation of the important qualifications of a hunting spaniel will be found Under Paragraph 7 Here it is well to emphasize that good judging requires a positive attitude - a search for the good qualities of every dog - in contrast to a negative attitude in which the judge could, if he were so inclined, be primarily interested in emphasizing those faults which penalize or disqualify contestants.

Field trials were designed as a test to discover the best dogs, not as contests to discover individuals that have made no mistakes. A negative approach will not necessarily eliminate all the good dogs, but there is no trial in which fine, energetic dogs will not have committed some fault of perhaps only minor proportion. Judging

on faults rather than positive qualities can result in a set of placements that fail to possess class and hunting drive so necessary if the breed is to improve - or even hold its own.

Nevertheless, all good qualities are useless if control is lacking. The above paragraph of the Standard Procedure is so clear that it requires no interpretation except perhaps to point out that the spaniel "in touch" with his handler requires a minimum of handling. A dog's hearing is ordinarily highly acute and the whistle or voice should be no louder than the dog can hear.

Paragraph 4. A dog should work to his handler and gun at all times. A dog which marks the fall of a bird, uses the wind, follows a strong runner which has been wounded, and will take direction from his handler is of great value.

WORKING TO THE HANDLER

Even at the danger of reiteration it cannot be stated too often that the dog is expected not only to work to his handler but to keep some sort of track of him. The handler can aid him in this by keeping as much in the open as possible and moving up when a dog is obviously on a strong scent and likely to flush game. This should not be penalized unless it results in leaving some part of the course unsearched.

Working downwind a dog will naturally reach out and work back upwind on occasion. This can be faulted only if it results in game flushed out of range or ground unsearched.

The second sentence of Paragraph 4 is a statement of four positive qualifications to be look for: marking the fall, use of wind, effectiveness on a runner, and willingness to take direction. Obviously the reference here is to the job of retrieving shot game.

MARKING AND RETRIEVING

Marking the fall or the direction thereof is one of the essential qualities of a good spaniel. However, the eye level of a dog is but a short distance above the ground and some four or five feet lower than that of the handler, gun and judge. Often all the dog can observe, even if heavy cover does not intervene, is the line of flight of the bird. Only under favorable conditions can he be expected to see the actual fall itself. Hence, the importance of the use of the wind cannot be overestimated. If the dog shall go somewhat downwind to the fall whether it be a crosswind or behind him, he assures himself the best opportunity to locate the bird promptly. Certainly under such circumstances a dog cannot be penalized for failure to instantly locate the exact spot.

SEARCHING AND HAND SIGNALS

Should he miss the fall entirely, he should continue his search in the area until successful. If a bird shall have turned in its flight beyond the observation of the dog,

it can of course only be located by searching a gradually widening area of ground. When his search becomes aimless and it is evident it cannot be fruitful, he must of necessity be taken up, provided it can be determined that the bird actually fell in the area.

Should, on the other hand, a dog be unable to observe either the line of flight or the bird falling in the air, that is, have a blind fall, the handler should direct the dog thereto by hand, voice or whistle, as quietly as possible. A dog should be credited for willingness, ability and speed in accepting such directions.

If a bird proves to be a runner, acknowledgment of the fall is the first requirement from whence the dog should be able to seek out and follow the line to a successful conclusion. More difficult is the problem when a dog misses the fall and in his search may even bring in another bud. The obvious answer is that the dog should be sent out again, as would be done in the field, and if he then fails to bring in the bird, and its presence can be verified, his failure is a fault of very real proportion.

Paragraph 5. When the judge gives a line to a handler and dog to follow, this must be followed and the dog not allowed to interfere with the other contestant running parallel to him.

THE HANDLER AND THE BEAT

Poaching on the other beat is a difficult subject, especially when there is a cross wind. It has the very grave objection of upsetting the other dog. Yet the line between courses is often a varying line of poor definition that the dog himself cannot observe and the handler is not always sure of. Minor infractions are not important and should be overlooked. The primary fault is the interference with the other dog's work which is out of order whether it is the fault of the dog or of the handler. There will, nevertheless, be difficulties when a bird from one beat has obviously moved over onto the other and the dog has followed on the line of scent. No one can advise a judge in advance how to appraise such a situation, but a dog that responds when called off such a line should receive full credit therefore. A dog that is constantly and recurrently over on the other beat and fails to respond to his handler's commands must be considered out of control.

A word of caution is here in order. Handlers intent on their dogs vary in their ability to keep to a line even when it is clearly marked. When working on planted birds, wandering around the course can be wasteful and reduce the chances of promptly finding game. Obviously a judge should from time to time warn a handler who strays from the course and acquaint him if necessary.

However, a judge who constantly directs the handler and instructs him to put his dog 'in here' or 'in there' can cause a handler to 'hack' his dog and upset both dog and handler. The general practice is to give the handler the fullest instructions at the start, to assume he knows what he is doing and, aside from obvious and unintended

departures from those instructions, to let the handler run his dog his own way. Only when this way is unproductive over a long beat and the judge has knowledge of the presence of game in a neglected area is it wise to interfere.

***Paragraph 6.** The judges must judge their dogs for game finding ability, steadiness and retrieving. In game finding the dog should cover all his ground on the beat, leaving no game in his territory and showing courage in facing cover. Dogs must be steady to wing and shot and obey all commands. When ordered to retrieve they should do this tenderly and with speed. No trials for spaniels can possibly be run without retrieving, as that is one of the main purposes for which a spaniel is used.*

The words 'be steady' are interpreted to mean that a dog will either sit or 'hup' to wing and shot or at the very least will cease all forward motion. Occasionally a dog will stand on its hind legs, better to mark the line and see the fall. If he does this and remains in position, or if he merely stands rather than sits, it is not considered a fault. The old English word 'hup' is presumed to have meant 'the bird is up' and that the dog should remain in place, presumably in a sitting or 'humped' position.

BRINGING GAME TO THE BAG

A failure to retrieve is a serious fault. And yet many times conditions exist which make decisive judgment difficult. The recollection of many trials is full of incidents that could not be explained by the limited evidence available.

Granted that a judge feels that a failure to retrieve is not wholly the dog's fault, he can hardly overlook the fact that game was not brought to hand. Nevertheless, judges may well be a shade more tolerant when some special conditions are encountered. For example, heavy green grass recently exposed to a hard frost gives out a rank odor that kills scent; dry leaves in woods will hold little scent and make trailing difficult; people off the course and behind a hill have been known to interfere with a dog which was trailing a runner. Handlers of long experience have noted that occasionally a bird will be instantly killed, fall in the open perhaps in a slight depression, wings and feathers closely held, head upwind and prove a difficult bird to locate. This appears to happen more frequently with a hen than a cock and some observers who have watched a dog with a known good nose actually step on such a bird have wondered whether a particular condition was created such as quick paralysis of all functions so that the hen gave out little scent much as a setting hen pheasant is known to do on the nest.

No matter what the cause, the purpose of a dog afield is to bring game to the bag and a failure is a fault that can hardly be overlooked except in the most unusual circumstances. A judge under such conditions would be well advised to make the minutest inspection of the ground at the point of fall. Certainly, if the game is found there, all excuses are of no avail. A dog that failed to 'honor' the fall can, of course, have no defense of any kind unless the bird be lodged in a tree or fall beyond an

impossible barrier such as a closely meshed wire fence; or if the fall be honored and the bird have made good his escape through a fence that denies passage to the dog.

GAME FINDING

Game finding ability is an interesting quality and difficult to define except in terms of results. It is a combination of nose, bird sense, thoroughness and intelligence. Some dogs seldom have a long, blank beat; they appear to be able to convert such a beat into a productive one. Such dogs seem to find more game in a given territory than others and to find more quickly. Where there is recurrent evidence of this in a trial judges cannot fail to place this to the credit of the dog.

On the other hand, a dog that on a considerable beat covers thoroughly territory where game is known to have been and who fails to give evidence that game has recently been there must be looked upon as deficient in nose, at least on that day. Under those circumstances a judge is justified in consulting with the Steward of the Beat. Should he confirm the presence of game such a dog can be taken up and much time saved that could be better spent on those dogs that are still under consideration.

Most trials today are run over a set course with planted birds. Delays occur and this, on occasion, permits birds to move off the course. Under such circumstances if a dog trails a strong-running bird to the right or left, it is up to the judge to decide how far off course a dog should be permitted to work. If a bird is followed off course for a long distance - even though a flush and fall be eventually accomplished - this can unnecessarily delay the trial. Hence if the judge decides further pursuit is not necessary, the dog should not be penalized if he has failed to flush the bird, provided he has exhibited drive and nose, and he should be given credit for being under control when ordered to leave the line.

WHAT IS A 'BREAK'?

Steadiness is a term of varying meaning to different people, including judges, and has been the cause of much discussion. Those who expect exact performance feel that a dog should instantly sit to wing and shot and will have no less. Others recognize that though a dog may instantly sit or 'hup' to shot (unless himself in the very act of flushing game) it is his duty in flushing to push game out and into full flight. They are, therefore, less prone to criticize a dog that traveling at full speed, or driving in to flush, is less exact in sitting to flush provided he gives equally prompt indication that he is prepared to stop as soon as the bird is in flight.

There is the equally difficult problem of the dog that moves to the edge of cover or around a bush or up a slope to verify the flight, observe the line and see the fall. It may be a highly intelligent thing to do if observation is the sole 'intent' of the dog. If the dog has to be stopped by whistle or voice, the judge can only assume the handler believed he was in process of breaking and score it accordingly.

The problem can, therefore, best be resolved by the judge if he be guided in his appraisal by the way the handler dealt with it. If the handler ordered the dog to stop and the dog didn't stop, it is a break. Once stopped, any vigorous forward movement without command is equally a break.

WHAT IS 'CHASING'?

All of this changes when the dog is sent on retrieve. Then his sole duty is to complete the retrieve as promptly and as expeditiously as possible, disregarding all other sights and scents that are not related to the duty assigned to him. This is expecting a good deal. The ability to distinguish between a fresh scent and that of a wounded bird is the result of considerable experience, and it is his duty to be sure he is not passing up the bird he was sent for. If while on retrieve a dog flushes a bird in the direction or area of the fall, it is but natural for the dog to determine whether it is the bird he was sent for before turning away. If the bird fly off low, he could well assume that it could be wounded game, at least until it assumes full winged flight when he should turn away and continue his search in the area of the fall.

When another bird is thus flushed during a retrieve, many handlers prefer a dog to stop or hup in accord with his training. This presents no problem if the dog be where the handler can see him since the dog may then be directed by voice, whistle or hand signal to continue his search for the dead bird.

However, the ideal conduct on the part of the dog would be to disregard the newly-flushed bud and continue his search of the wounded or dead bird which is his duty to recover. A moment's reflection will disclose the reasons for this. If the fall be a long way off or in heavy cover, the handler cannot see his dog. Shall the dog remain hopped or leave his hopped position without command? To leave would be a violation of the first principles of discipline and training. For the handler to attempt to whistle at or give commands to an unseen dog may upset the dog's whole endeavor, particularly if he shall be following a vigorous runner.

The same general principle applies to a dog that is retrieving with a bird in his mouth. If the dog flushes game and in surprise, or in accordance with his training temporarily stops, he cannot be criticized. In either case, however, a dog should be given credit if he disregard entirely the flushed bird or, having stopped momentarily, continue his search or in the case of a retrieve continue on in to deliver the one in his mouth.

Paragraph 7. In judging a spaniel's work judges should give attention to the following points, taking them as a whole throughout the entire performance rather than giving too much credit to a flashy bit of work;

Control at all times, and under all conditions.

Scenting ability and use of wind.

Manner of covering ground and briskness of questing.

Perseverance and courage in facing cover.

Steadiness to flush, shot and command.

Aptitude in marking fall of game and ability to find it.

Ability and willingness to take hand signals.

Promptness and style of retrieve and delivery.

Proof of tender mouth.

Where facilities exist and water tests are held in conjunction with a stake, the manner and quality of the performance therein shall be given consideration by the judges in making their awards. Such tests should not exceed in their requirements the conditions met in an ordinary day's rough shoot adjoining water.

Land work is the primary function of a spaniel, but where a water test is given, any dog that does not complete the water test shall not be entitled to any award.

POSITIVE QUALITIES

This paragraph is a recapitulation. There are ten points. All are not of equal value, but all are to be considered in a well-rounded performance. Again the judge will have to strike a balance. It has been truly said no dog is perfect in all departments. Few dogs excel all others in the stake in every phase of the work - at least such is very rare, indeed.

Hunting and game finding are the first and basic functions of a spaniel in the field. These should be done with sufficient speed to get the game into the air. Keeness, enthusiasm, and eagerness and that indefinable thing called class all contribute to it. The hunting should be productive, and the game should be brought to hand.

Hence, by positive qualities are meant: intelligent ground covering, a 'positive' nose, use of wind, concentration on marking, directness in going to a well observed fall, perseverance in search, self-confidence on a runner, drive and pace despite difficult cover, a prompt and attractive retrieve, a good carry and, as a matter of course, control, steadiness and willingness to take direction from his handler.

TENDER MOUTH

Probably no subject has caused more discussion than the question of what constitutes a 'tender mouth'. With a dead bird the best carry is preferably by the back, weight of bird on lower jaw, dog's head up so that the bud is carried easily and is not readily caught by briers or low cover. Yet birds do not fall in a way that enables dogs to pick them up promptly and still have an ideal hold. The result is either a less perfect hold or a less prompt pickup.

However, the real problem arises on a hard runner or a flapping bird that requires the dog to seize the bird, sometimes in mid-air, sometimes even dragging it from briers or heavy cover, and hold it with sufficient grip to prevent its escape. If the skin be

broken at times, it is not surprising, or can the dog be wholly blamed if he is doing his duty by making a prompt retrieve.

The rule of long-standing endorsement by experienced judges is that 'any doubt must be resolved in favor of the dog.' Judges would do well to be guided by this rule.

THE CRUSHED BIRD

When birds are weak, have been crated for several days, are carried in burlap bags and are planted with head under wing, they will occasionally smother. Some times a closely-shot bird will be damaged by the force of the charge or even the manner of fall on hard ground. All these considerations suggest that judges should be slow to mark a dog for minor damage.

Occasionally during a stake a dog will have the misfortune to pick up one or more live birds which may have failed to flush for any one of several reasons and deliver them dead or dying. This is occasionally the result of finding previously wounded or damaged birds. The repeated recurrence with the same dog or the evidence provided by a damaged bird is the criteria by which the judge will have to be guided.

Certainly a badly crushed bird is undeniable evidence of hard mouth and warrant for elimination of the dog from further consideration.

THE WATER TEST

The water test is a subject of much discussion. A spaniel, as the Standard Procedure states, is primarily a land dog. However, in many parts of the country he is used to retrieve water fowl, and in an ordinary day's shoot there are occasions when the only way of gathering shot game is after a swim or from a stream, pond or lake.

Any dog that warrants the title of Field Champion should be at home in the water, should swim willingly and adequately, and if necessary, take directions to game fallen in water or across it. There has been much discussion of the type and conformation of a dog that swims easily and thus has confidence in the water. Since Field Champions are much sought after as stud and as brood bitches they should possess these qualities or the breed will not continue to develop as it should.

Therefore, the successful completion of a water test is not only a very logical essential but a positive requirement. Because adequate facilities do not always exist near a field trial ground, the water tests can be held at a separate location and time. If held with a trial, dogs competing must, if required by the judges to do so, take such a test and refusal by an owner or handler to let his dog take a water test disqualifies the dog in the stake in which he is competing.

Judges in making their awards are required to give due weight to the manner and quality of the performance in the water tests (no "pass/fail"). It is specifically

provided that such tests should not exceed in their requirements the conditions ordinarily met in a day's rough shoot adjoining water.

Since a fall in water or a series of such falls is difficult to obtain with game without elaborate preparations, it is customary to place the dog several strides back from the shoreline and have a gun and man placed at a point where, upon the discharge of the gun, the dog may observe the fall of a single thrown dead pheasant or mallard duck at a distance from the dog and handler not exceeding an ordinary fall, but sufficiently long for the dog to demonstrate his ability in the water. The current test consists of two, back to back, open water, 30-40 yard retrieves with the dog backed up 10 to 15 yards from the bank. Use of a boat is permissible if it is necessary to get the desired length of retrieve.

Conditions of light and background should be taken into consideration, particularly at the eye level of the dog, and it were better to send the dog away rather than toward the group of spectators.

EVALUATING THE WATER PERFORMANCE

There has been much discussion of the weight to be given to the performance of the dog in the water test. Since only a portion of the above ten points are displayed in the water test--it is an act of marking and retrieving only--it is generally held that the test should not be called another "series" and that it should play a far lesser part than any of the land series in the evaluation of the judges, presumably only such a part as the points relating to steadiness, marking and retrieving a single fall play in relation to the whole performance of the dog in the field.

The very artificiality of the test also supports this. It has to be borne in mind that the spaniel is primarily a hunting dog that is expected also to retrieve the game shot over him. Though retrieving is an essential part of his duties, he is not trained solely as a retriever as are some of the larger breeds and can hardly be expected to develop along with his other abilities the perfection of work found or developed in those used for retrieving only.

Nevertheless, the dog should in a water test be staunch to shot, be sent only on the instruction of the judge, mark well the fall of game, enter the water willingly, take direction when necessary and deliver promptly to hand as on land. A dog which repeatedly "runs the bank" in an effort to avoid entering the water should be severely penalized even if he eventually retrieves the bird.

Paragraph 8. The guns should shoot their game in a sportsmanlike manner, as they would in a day's shoot. The proper functioning of the official guns is of the utmost importance. The guns are supposed to represent the handler up to the time the game is shot, although not interfering in any manner with his work or that of the down dogs. They are supposed if possible, unless otherwise directed, to kill cleanly and consistently, the game flushed by the spaniels at a point most advantageous to a fair

trial of the dogs' abilities, with due regard to the dogs, handlers, judges, gallery and other contingencies.

GOOD GUNNING ESSENTIAL

Judges should not hesitate to assemble the guns at the beginning of a trial or a stake and give them any instructions the judges feel appropriate or interpret to them the above paragraph or either of the two succeeding paragraphs relating to the guns. If preferred, such instructions may be given to the Gun Captain to be transmitted by him to the others. In addition there should be no hesitation on the part of a judge to give further counsel or advice to a gun during the course of a stake. Such clarification will help provide 'a fair trial of the dogs' abilities.'

The safety of all concerned - the handlers, the judges themselves, the dogs, the gallery and spectators - is involved. It is customary to instruct guns not to shoot at buds that fly back over the gallery. In addition to the danger involved, a bird that falls among or beyond the crowd provides confusing conditions for a retrieve.

Guns should, therefore, feel that they will not be criticized for passing up shots that entail the slightest element of danger or those shots which would be in conflict in any way with the provisions of these paragraphs or the instructions of the judges.

***Paragraph 9.** Care should be taken not to shoot so that the game falls too close to the dog. If this is done it does not afford a chance for the dog to show any good retrieving ability and often results in a bird being destroyed. The guns should stand perfectly quiet after the shot, for otherwise they may interfere with the dog and handler. When a dog makes a retrieve no other birds or game should be shot unless ordered by the judge for special reasons. The gun must also keep himself in the correct position to the handler and others.*

***Paragraph 10.** It has been repeatedly proven that the most efficient gun and load for this work, in all fairness to the dogs, handlers and those responsible for the trial, is a well-choked twelve gauge double gun, and a load of not less than three and one fourth drams of smokeless powder or equivalent, and one and one-eighth ounces of No. 5, No. 6, No. 7 or No. 7-1/2 shot. In 'steel shot only' areas a comparable size and load of steel or other permissible shot shall be used.*

THE GUN IS THE 'SILENT' PARTNER

What should be the position of the gun? If he is the 'good right arm' of the handler, he should be reasonably close to him, though not so close that he interferes with him or the dog. The gun should not crowd after the dog, which only encourages the latter to move out, but should guide on the handler alone. Nor should wing guns be placed too far out on a flank. This is unnatural and often affects the dog in his beat and the type of fall he receives.

After a fall, the gun should stand quietly until the dog has been sent on retrieve when the gunner may break his gun and step quietly aside to leave a clear and unobstructed view of the handler. Needless to say, guns are to be seen and not heard except their shots. They should volunteer nothing to handler or judge, speak only when spoken to by the judge and give aid to the handler only as the judge authorizes it. They are the silent partner of the judge in providing the test required - and of the handler in producing the result

***Paragraph 11.** All field trial-giving clubs should clearly recognize that Championship Stakes are of the first importance and that all other stakes are of relatively lesser importance and that an entire day should be reserved for the running of a Championship Stake unless there is a very small entry.*

KEEP THE TRIAL MOVING

This paragraph obviously needs no clarification except to point out that judges have often wished in vain for more time and more daylight toward the end of a trial. It were well, therefore, when the entry is large, and even when it is not too large, to avoid spending too much time on early series that might later be devoted to more thorough testing of those dogs that warrant considering for awards.

Many such situations can be avoided if judges will plan their time and keep 'on top' of the trial, forcing its progress in accord with their schedules. The benefits are many. All dogs will receive more nearly equal attention and much embarrassment will be avoided as the remaining daylight wanes far sooner than anyone expected.

However, even this is not possible unless the Field Trial Committee shall have set the time early enough, assured the early arrival of strong, full-winged birds in good condition, provided for the presence of bird carriers, planters and guns at the time specified; in other words, had everything in order for a prompt start at an early hour.

Three or more series are usually essential to disclose the abilities of good dogs in an all-age stake. Two series are required by the rule that each dog should be down at least once under each judge. Final determination is in the hands of the judges.

It is, however, to be borne in mind that with a large entry it is difficult to complete even a two- or three-series stake without these few tests being hurried and inadequate. Since it is better to test eighteen dogs well than thirty or forty skimpily, the Qualified Open was established. Time and experience alone will tell whether this will help solve the problem.

A FEW WORDS IN CONCLUSION

Few judges can remember every performance without making adequate notes for reference in conference with a fellow judge. This is more particularly true in stakes with large entries. Some judges have found it valuable to rate the performance of each dog on some simple scale; others have developed a check system based on the Standard Procedure. Each must develop his own system. Nevertheless, the retention of notes for a reasonable time after the trial provides a ready and quick reference in case any questions arise and is less fallible than memory.

THE CONDUCT OF THE HANDLER

What should a judge require of a handler? It is generally considered that a handler should run his dog as appears most likely to provide a display of his abilities. When game is flushed by either dog, the handler should in hupping his dog remain in such position as he finds himself unless otherwise instructed by the judge. He should, of course send his dog on retrieves only when so instructed and the judge may wish to assure himself that the dog is steady. In doing so the judge should move quietly and make every effort not to make any sudden movement which the dog might mistake for a command of his handler to retrieve.

STEADINESS WHILE HUPPED

Handlers who assume the privilege of calling their dog to them without instructions from the judge (when the dog on the other beat is retrieving) run the risk of having the judge assume, with some justice, that the handler lacks confidence that the dog is perfectly steady. The same thing applies to a handler who moves closer to his dog without orders to do so. This differs from the case of a dog that is in the general area of a fall or the line of retrieve when a judge may well use his discretion in instructing the handler to move his dog away in order not to interfere with the work of the brace mate.

A properly trained spaniel will remain where hupped until called off, and a dog which gives evidence of such control is entitled to a higher rating than one which the handler feels he must call back to him. At least in championship stakes it were well for judges not to be in a great hurry to deprive themselves of the evidence of steadiness thus obtained, provided only the dog is not in a position to interfere with the other dog's work or retrieve.

THE LONG FALL

Inasmuch as a championship stake is completed in one day, or at most a day and a half, judges should seize every opportunity to learn all they can about a dog.

Because of shortage of time, judges are reluctant at times to send a dog for a long fall or one well off the course. If information about the dog is sought, this is a lost

opportunity. Probably the best rule in a championship stake is that any practical retrieve should be attempted which will not unduly disturb game planted ahead on either course. In a minor stake such falls may well be disregarded since a young or inexperienced dog may miss the fall badly, encounter and flush other bird and generally disturb game on the course for a considerable distance ahead.

OWNERS AND OTHERS - KEEP BACK

In an advisory resolution passed a number of years ago it was pointed out that no one except the judges (and an apprentice judge, if any), the handlers and the guns should be forward of the Field Steward. This gives a better opportunity for the gallery to see and makes it easier to keep them in order. This applies equally to owners eager to watch their dogs, to guns not in line, stewards not presently charged with a duty and to all other officials. Any conversation, no matter how trivial, of owners with judges, handlers and guns should be avoided if only for the sake of appearance.

THE JUDGE - LIKE CAESAR'S WIFE

What about the judge at a trial? During the course of a trial he is probably better off to keep his own counsel, thus avoiding even the appearance of being influenced by the views, the opinions or even the knowledge of others. Certainly any discussion with owners or others (except his fellow judge) of the performance of a dog still under judgment would be in shocking bad taste on the part of both.

The judge must base his awards on what he has himself observed of the performance on that particular day. When he was invited to judge, it was because the committee had confidence in his judgment, his powers of observation and his capacity to be objective, which is another way of saying he is expected to put his emotions and his sentiments under lock and key. He has a personal responsibility to his fellow judge to inform him clearly and to appraise jointly with him the several performances. Each has an obligation to render fair judgment.

PROVIDE STRONG BIRDS

One word about the problem created by the inability to run trials on natural game as in former years; birds recently removed from pens vary somewhat from wild birds in the character and strength of the scent they give out. When closely planted in a grass bed or clump of cover without opportunity to move, there is a greatly reduced opportunity for the wind to carry their scent on the surrounding ground or cover. When in addition they show a reluctance to fly or are weak-winged and incapable of prompt escape, trials are run under an additional disadvantage. Birds are retrieved from their 'beds' or are pulled from heavy cover by force. If weak, they sometimes suffocate from being carried in bags or from the manner of planting or the dog's grip required to hold them, or from a combination of all three.

Hence field trial committees should make every effort to provide strong-winged, healthy, vigorous birds, and employ skilled planters. Too great an anxiety not to waste birds can in effect be wasteful since deeply planted birds will be more readily caught by the dogs. Birds planted well ahead of the dogs, even if they move off the course will at least give the judge an opportunity to observe the ability of the dog on a recent scent.

There are a number of breeders throughout the country who raise birds on the 'open range' procedure. Others who buy young birds continue to keep them in large pens and exercise them daily. Some even use dogs to make them fly so that they develop some fear of people and dogs. Such birds, if strong and full winged, will provide a far better trial than the run-of-the-mill. There is no real excuse for not providing such birds in a licensed or member trial in stakes that require game birds even if the regulations prescribe only that they be full-winged. They should as well be full-tailed, healthy, vigorous and eager to escape by flight.

SUMMATION

In conclusion certain points can well be repeated and some additional observations added to the discussion of field trials.

The purpose of field trials is to emphasize the qualities of breeding and of training that produce the best dog afield. Certain qualities such as scenting ability, game finding, stamina, and responsiveness to the handler are highly to be desired along with that eagerness and spaniel quality which is so attractive and adds so much to the pleasure of a day in the open.

Tendencies in these and other directions are inheritable traits. If the breed is to improve, bad tendencies should not be rewarded. These include barking while questing, hard mouth, extreme willfulness and others that will occur to each reader.

The degree of training is a matter of both the ability of the dog and of the trainer. Training cannot put into a dog the natural qualities; it can take them out. And yet natural qualities are not useful unless accompanied by a degree of control that makes a team of dog and man.

Therefore, the purpose of training is to produce control while at the same time fostering and encouraging the natural qualities of the hunting dog.

INFORMAL AND SANCTIONED TRIALS

The hosts of informal trials that are held throughout the year are a valuable contribution to the experience of both dog and handler. The stakes can be varied to suit the local conditions, pigeons used to save expense, and many other details varied to encourage participation of the inexperienced. Particularly in Puppy Stakes, Prospect Stakes and Field Dog Stakes the requirements are relaxed as to steadiness

and control in order that handlers may not feel it necessary to force the training of young dogs. These stakes are 'experience' stakes; they are intended to give an owner the opportunity to compare his puppy with others, much as the novice stake is helpful to handlers in determining their own capacities.

Much of the above applies to sanctioned trials, particularly as to the choice of stakes and the application of standards. Errors and faults that would be grievous in a championship stake are overlooked if the contender otherwise displays desirable qualities. However, judges should bear in mind that, though the requirements be relaxed to the extent that the dog is forgiven much and hence not eliminated from the stake, the performance of a dog that is steady to wing and shot and gives other evidences of control is entitled, other things being equal, to a higher rating.

THE WORKING CERTIFICATE

There has been a continuous effort to keep the working qualities foremost in the minds of breeders of Spaniels - particularly those interested primarily in bench shows; hence the Working Certificate announced in June, 1960 by the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (Parent Club of the breed).

Information on the working certificate is available from the E.S.S.F.T.A. The name and address of the current secretary of the E.S.S.F.T.A. can be obtained from the American Kennel Club.

THE HUNTING TEST

The Hunting Test was set up by the A.K.C. in January, 1988 to provide a noncompetitive performance test for all spaniel breeds. Successful completion of a number of tests results in degrees (junior hunter, senior hunter, master hunter). More information and the rules are available from the A.K.C. in the booklet "Regulations for A.K.C. Hunting Tests for Spaniels."

MORE ABOUT INFORMAL STAKES

The official stakes in A.K.C. licensed and member club trials are Puppy, Novice, Limit, Amateur All-Age, Open All-Age and Qualified Open All-Age.

In such trials the important stakes are the Open All-Age and the Amateur All Age. Whenever possible a full day or more should be given to the Open so that full justice is done the dogs contending. So crowded were some Open Stakes that the A.K.C. rules pertaining to championship trials have been modified to permit a Qualified Open All-Age Stake when desired (as an alternate to the Open All-Age) in which qualification is earned by placing in a minor stake in a licensed trial.

Since the Amateur All-Age Stake carries championship points toward the title of Amateur Field Champion adequate time should be allotted to this stake to assure the thorough testing of the dogs entered.

Though there is no official recognition of member stakes and amateur slakes and a number of similar stakes, these are frequently held at trials and give beginners opportunity to compete with less experienced handlers. So long as the stake in a licensed or member club trial is listed in the entry form, dogs placing in such stakes (puppy stakes accepted) qualify for entry in a Qualified Open All-Age.

In prospect and other stakes held at sanctioned trials the beginner has his heyday and the Parent Club and the A.K.C. grant a very free rein indeed to the local committee in prescribing the conditions and the stakes. It is here that the proving ground exists for the future Field Champion.

More and more amateurs are raising, training and running their own dogs. If this booklet clarifies in any degree the procedures approved by experience, it will do its part in helping to develop the best type of spaniel for hunting in the field.

APPENDIX

The following publications may be obtained by addressing a request to the American Kennel Club, 51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010:

"Registration and Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels" (contains the 'Field Trial Regulations' and 'Extracts from By-Laws' referred to in Note 1 below as well as the 'Special Rules Applying to Spaniels'.)

"Guide for Field Trial and Hunting Test Committees in Dealing with Misconduct at Field Trials and Hunting Tests"

"Regulations for A.K.C. Hunting Tests for Spaniels"

NOTE 1. SUMMARY OF REGULATIONS GOVERNING TRIALS

The governing body of law of the American Kennel Club is embodied in the Constitution, By-Laws and Rules of that body and in the Special Rules and Regulations for particular breeds and events, such as field trials. The last classification differs for each breed and, of course, we are here interested only in spaniel trials. The provisions we are interested in fall into three general categories:

1. a. *The General Rules applying to all field trials:* These include who may judge; entries; entry fees; entry forms; judges' books, reports and decisions, and the obligations and responsibilities of field trial committees.

b. *The Extracts from the Constitution and By-Laws:* These define the disciplinary power of Field Trial and Bench Show Committees, provide the procedures for preferment of charges and establish the basis therefore, the hearing of cases and appeals to the A.K.C. and their disposition thereafter. The procedures are elaborate and are not of interest in this discussion, except to emphasize the authority and responsibilities vested in the Field Trial Committee and other Officials, including judges, at any trial held under the auspices of the A.K.C.

[The above provisions under (a) and (b) are included in full in the booklet "Registration and Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels".]

2. *Special Rules Applying to Spaniel Field Trials* (set forth in full in Note 2).

These rules, for example, define the official stakes, eligibility rules as to competing dogs, requirements as to game, requirements for the draw, and the method of running on parallel beats or singly. They define as well the authority of the Field Trial Committee and of judges, make provision for disagreement between judges, guns to be used, and define how a dog shall become a Field Champion of Record.

These rules have from time to time been modified or changed. When such change is suggested, the A.K.C looks to the Parent Club for advice and counsel. It is to be noted that changes have been few and proposed changes have been made only after careful discussion and analysis.

3. *Standard Procedure for Spaniel Trials* (set forth in full in Note 3).

This is, of course, an effort to guide both judges and contestants. It is the result of many years of experience in this country and in England and Scotland. It is also subject to change but such a change should be, equally with the rules, the result of careful consideration and consultation. When in doubt, it is better to leave it as is rather than fly to some ill we know not of; for the effect of change is not always apparent until a new provision is in effect for some little time.

NOTE 2. RULES FOR SPANIEL TRIALS from "Registration and Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels" - A.K.C.

RULES FOR SPANIEL TRIALS (Except Irish Water Spaniels)

Section 1. Field trial clubs or specialty clubs formed for the improvement of any one of the several breeds of hunting Spaniels recognized by The American Kennel Club may give field trial stakes in which one of the said breeds only may compete or in which more than one of said breeds may compete together. No championship points, however, shall be awarded where two or more breeds of hunting Spaniels (excepting English Cocker Spaniels and Cocker Spaniels) compete together in a mixed stake.

Section 2. In single stakes for Spaniels the order of running in pairs shall be decided by lot at the draw, dogs worked by the same person or belonging to the same owner being separated when possible. The Judges will carry on the trial of two dogs simultaneously, working parallel beats as far as possible and not requiring any cooperation in quartering. At the end of the first series, the Judges will call up any dogs they require further to be run in additional series. In Championship Stakes dogs should be run in pairs for at least the first two series, but it is required that each dog competing must be paired with another dog in at least one of these series, in both if possible. In no event may a dog not under judgment be used to create a pair. After the second series the Judges, at their discretion, may elect to run additional series with the dogs running singly under both Judges. At National Championship trials, and at the National Amateur Championship trial for English Springer Spaniels, the dogs should run in pairs for at least four land series, but it is required that each dog competing must be paired with another dog in at least two of these series, in all four if possible. In no event may a dog not under judgment be used to create a pair. They may thereafter be run singly under both Judges, at their discretion, in additional land series. All dogs that are awarded places or a Judges' Award of Merit shall have been

down for one performance under each of the two officiating Judges. A dog to receive any award must compete in all land series, and all water tests if any be held.

Section 3. A dog is not eligible to be entered or to compete in any field trial in any stake in which championship points are given, if a Judge of that stake or any member of his family has owned, sold, held under lease, boarded, trained, or handled the dog, within one year prior to the date of the field trial.

Section 4. No Judge of an Open All-Age, a Qualified Open All-Age or an Amateur All-Age Stake at a Spaniel Trial shall enter or run a dog or allow any dog that he owns to be entered or run, in any stake at that trial.

A Judge of any stake, other than an Open All-Age, a Qualified Open All-Age or an Amateur All-Age Stake at a Spaniel Trial may enter or run a dog or allow any dog that he owns to be entered or run in any stake at that trial that he is not judging.

Section 5. In Brace or Team Stakes the order of running in the first series shall be decided by draw, and the dogs composing a brace or team must belong to the same owner. No dogs shall form part of more than one brace or team at the same meeting and each brace or team shall have but one handler. A brace consists of two dogs and a team consists of three or more dogs. Dogs will be expected to work their ground harmoniously together, performing as in a single stake.

When a retrieve is to be made, the Judge shall designate the dog.

Section 6. In all stakes the Spaniels shall be regularly shot over in the customary sporting manner, and may be worked up and down wind, as well as in water when possible. No handler shall carry any training or other handling equipment (except whistle) exposed or in such manner that it may be used as a steady aid or threat.

Section 7. Only stakes which in their land series are run on live full-winged game birds shall be permitted to carry championship points.

Section 8. The use of any trap or contrivance from which game can be released is prohibited in any Open All-Age Stake carrying championship points.

Section 9. The Judges are empowered to turn out of the stake any dog that does not obey its handler, or any handler who willfully interferes with another competitor, or his dog, or any dog they may consider unfit to compete. Bitches in season shall not be eligible for competition in any stake and shall not be allowed on the field trial grounds. The entry fee of all such dogs will be forfeited except in cases of bitches in season.

Section 10. The owner or agent entering a dog in a trial does so at his own risk, and agrees to abide by the Rules of The American Kennel Club.

Section 11. In the event of the weather proving unsuitable for holding the trials, it shall be in the power of the Field Trial Committee to postpone the meeting from day to day for a maximum of three days following the last advertised day, provided said postponement does not conflict with any other Spaniel field trial. After postponements for three days the provisions of Section 12 of this Chapter shall come into operation.

Section 12. In the event of the weather still proving unsuitable after postponements for three days, the Field Trial Committee may then abandon the meeting at any time, on returning the entry fees to the competitors. If, through unforeseen circumstances, the Field Trial Committee shall deem it advisable to alter the date of the meeting after the closing of the entries, this may be done with the consent of The American Kennel Club and by sending formal notices to all competitors who may exercise the option of cancelling their entries within four (4) days from the date of such notice, in which event their entry fees will be returned to them. All entries, however, in regard to which no such option is exercised, will stand good for the meeting at its altered date.

Section 13. The regular official stakes at a Spaniel field trial shall be Puppy, Novice, Limit, Open All-Age, Qualified Open All-Age, and Amateur All-Age.

Section 14. Only one Open All-Age Stake may be run at any trial. When an Open All-Age Stake is referred to, it shall be understood to mean either an Open All-Age or a Qualified Open All-Age Stake.

An Amateur All-Age Stake, when offered for English Springer Spaniels, will be a championship stake.

Section 15. A Puppy Stake at a Spaniel field trial shall be for dogs that have not reached their second birthday on the first day of the trial in which the Puppy Stake is included.

Section 16. A Novice Stake at a Spaniel field trial shall be for dogs that have never won first, second, third or fourth in an Open All-Age Stake, a Qualified Open All-Age or an Amateur All-Age Stake or first in any other regular stake (Puppy Stake excepted) in a licensed or member Spaniel trial.

Section 17. A Novice Handler Stake at a Spaniel field trial shall be for novice handlers only and only for dogs that qualify for a Novice Stake as set forth in Section 16. A Novice handler is one who has never handled a dog placed first, second, third or fourth in an Open All-Age Stake, a Qualified Open All-Age Stake or an Amateur All-Age Stake or a dog placed first in any other regular stake (Puppy Stake excepted) in a licensed or member Spaniel trial.

Section 18. A Limit Stake at a Spaniel field trial shall be for dogs that have never won first place in an Open All-Age Stake, or two firsts in any regular official stake

(Puppy Stake excepted), at a licensed or member club Spaniel trial in the United States or at any Spaniel trial in any other country.

Section 19. An Open All-Age or Qualified Open All-Age Stake at a Spaniel field trial shall be for all dogs over six months of age.

Section 20. A Qualified Open All-Age Stake at a Spaniel field trial shall be for dogs over six months of age that have placed first, second, third or fourth in any stake (Puppy Stake excepted), at a licensed or member club Spaniel field trial. A dog imported from Canada or the United Kingdom may be admitted to such stake on presentation of evidence of such dog having placed in an equivalent stake in either of those countries.

Section 21. An Amateur All-Age Stake shall be for dogs over six months of age that are handled by amateurs. The status of the handler is to be determined by the Field Trial Committee of the club holding the trial.

Definition of a Professional

A professional shall be defined as any person who accepts, or has accepted, money, or other compensation (defined as anything that has a monetary value), for the field training or field trial handling of any breed hunting dog.

Once a person performs as a professional for a one year period, they cannot run in Amateur stakes thereafter. If they have not run as a professional for a full year, and they want to reclaim their amateur status, they can do so after a one year waiting period.

The determination of amateur status under these directives for the purpose of any particular field trial shall be made by the Field Trial Committee for that trial.

Section 22. A National Championship Stake at English Springer Spaniel field trials shall be for dogs over six months of age, which by reason of wins previously made qualify under special rules approved by the Board of Directors. This stake shall be run not more than once in any calendar year by the Parent Association of the breed or by a Club or Association formed for this purpose and duly licensed by The American Kennel Club. The winner of such stake shall become a Field Champion of Record and shall be entitled to be designated "National Springer Spaniel Field Champion of 20_."

Section 23. A National Amateur Championship Stake for English Springer Spaniels shall be for dogs over six months of age, which by reason of wins previously made qualify under special regulations adopted by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club. This stake shall be run not more than once in any calendar year by the Parent Association of the breed or by a Club or Association formed for this purpose and duly licensed by The American Kennel Club, under procedures approved by The American Kennel Club. The winner of such stake shall become an Amateur Field

Champion of Record and shall be entitled to be designated "National Amateur Springer Spaniel Field Champion of 20_."

Section 24. A National Championship Stake for Cocker Spaniels including English Cocker Spaniels shall be for dogs over six months of age, which by reason of wins previously made qualify under special rules approved by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club. This stake shall be run not more than once in any calendar year by the Parent Club or Association of the breed or by a Club or Association formed for this purpose and duly licensed by The American Kennel Club. The winner of such stake shall become a Field Champion of Record and shall be entitled to be designated "National Cocker Spaniel or English Cocker Spaniel Field Champion of 20_."

Section 25. Before a dog shall receive its Field or Amateur Championship, it must have shown its ability to retrieve game from water, after a swim. The holding of Water Tests during a field trial will be left to the discretion of the Field Trial Committee of the club conducting the trial. Dogs competing must take such a test. Refusal by an owner or handler to let his dog take such tests will disqualify the dog in the stake in which it is competing and for the remainder of the trial. It is the responsibility of the Field Trial Secretary or Committee to submit the results properly signed by the Judges so that they will carry championship credit.

Once a dog has been certified by the Judges as having passed a water test at a licensed or member club trial, the certification will apply toward both the Field and Amateur Field Championship titles (a dog needs only to be certified on one occasion). A dog need not be entered in a licensed or member trial in order to receive its Water Certification. Refer to Procedure 13 for specific provisions governing water tests for English Springer Spaniels.

Section 26. Two Judges only shall officiate at one time. Both Judges of a stake are required to examine game before a decision is made as to hard mouth.

Section 27. Splitting of prizes and/or places at Spaniel field trials is prohibited.

Section 28. In the event of a disagreement between the Judges on any question, the Field Trial Committee of the club giving the trial shall appoint a referee to cast the deciding vote.

Section 29. The gun to be used in a Spaniel field trial shall be a double barrel, hammerless, 12 gauge. No load less than 3 1/4 drams of powder and 1 1/8 ozs. of No. 5, No. 6, No. 7 or No. 7 1/2 shot may be used. All shooting shall be done by Guns appointed by the Committee.

Section 30. A Spaniel shall become a Field Champion of Record, if registered in The American Kennel Club Stud Book, by virtue of wins and placements in Open All-Age or Qualified Open All-Age Stakes (limited to its own breed of Spaniel excepting in the case of Cocker Spaniels and English Cocker Spaniels, both of which may compete in the same stake) at field trials of member clubs of The American Kennel Club or at field trials of non-member clubs licensed by The American Kennel Club to hold field trials.

Section 31. The number of wins and placements in Open All-Age or Qualified Open All-Age Stakes required of a dog in order to become a Field Champion, and the number of starters necessary in each Open All-Age or Qualified Open All-Age Stake, shall be fixed and determined by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club.

At present, to acquire a Field Championship an English Springer Spaniel, Cocker Spaniel or an English Cocker Spaniel must win

- (1) a National Championship Stake or
- (2) two Open All-Age Stakes or two Qualified Open All-Age Stakes or one Open All-Age Stake and one Qualified Open All-Age Stake at different trials with at least 10 starters in either stake or
- (3) one Open All-Age Stake or one Qualified Open All-Age Stake and 10 Championship points which shall be credited to dogs placed 2nd, 3rd or 4th in Open All-Age or Qualified Open All-Age Stakes, with at least 10 starters in each stake, in accordance with the following schedule:

2nd Place - 3 points
3rd Place - 2 points
4th Place - 1 point

Double points shall be awarded for 2nd, 3rd and 4th placements in the National Championship Stake.

Section 32. The number of wins and placements required of an English Springer in Amateur All-Age Stakes in order to become an Amateur Field Champion, and the number of starters necessary in each Amateur All-Age Stake, shall be fixed and determined by the Board of Directors of The American Kennel Club. No English Springer Spaniel shall be recorded an Amateur Field Champion unless it has been registered in the American Kennel Club Stud Book.

NOTE 3. STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR SPANIEL FIELD TRIALS

1. A blaze orange outer garment or item of clothing shall be mandatory at all AKC member, licensed and sanctioned field trials (and Working Certificate Tests) for all persons in the gallery and in the field, including but not limited to handlers, owners, gunners, bird planters and stewards, Judges, club members, visitors, etc. The blaze orange item must be visible and be worn above the waist, with a hat or sash as a minimum.
2. The purpose of a Spaniel field trial is to demonstrate the performance of a properly trained Spaniel in the field. The performance should not differ from that in any ordinary day's shooting, except that in the trials a dog should do his work in a more nearly perfect way.
3. The function of a hunting Spaniel is to seek, find and flush game in an eager, brisk, quiet manner and when game is shot, to mark the fall or direction thereof and retrieve to hand. The dog should walk at heel or on a leash until ordered to seek game and should then thoroughly hunt the designated cover, within gunshot, in line of quest, without unnecessarily covering the ground twice, and should flush game boldly and without urging. When game is flushed, a dog should be steady to flush or command, and, if game is shot should retrieve at command only, but not until the Judge has instructed the handler. Dogs should retrieve quickly and briskly when ordered to do so and deliver tenderly to hand. They should then sit or "hup" until given further orders. Spaniels which bark and give tongue while questing are objectionable and should be severely penalized.
4. If a dog, following the line of a bird, is getting too far out he should be called off the line and later he should again be cast back on it. A dog which causes his handler and gun to run after him while line running, is out of control. Handlers may control their dogs by hand, voice or whistle, but only in the quiet manner that would be used in the field. Any loud shouting or whistling is evidence that the dog is hard to handle, and, in addition, is disturbing to the game.
5. A dog should work to his handler and gun at all times. A dog which marks the fall of a bird, uses the wind, follows a strong runner which has been wounded, and will take direction from his handler is of great value.
6. When the Judge gives a line to a handler and dog to follow, this must be followed and the dog not allowed to interfere with the other contestant running parallel to him.
7. The Judges must judge their dogs for game-finding ability, steadiness, and retrieving. In game-finding the dog should cover all his ground on the beat, leaving no game in his territory and showing courage in facing cover. Dogs must be steady to wing and shot and obey all commands. When ordered to retrieve they should do this tenderly and with speed. No trials for Spaniels can possibly be run without retrieving, as that is one of the main purposes for which a Spaniel is used.

8. In judging a Spaniel's work Judges should give attention to the following points, taking them as a whole throughout the entire performance rather than giving too much credit to a flashy bit of work:

- Control at all times, and under all conditions.
- Scenting ability and use of wind.
- Manner of covering ground and briskness of questing.
- Perseverance and courage in facing cover.
- Steadiness to flush, shot and command.
- Aptitude in marking fall of game and ability to find it.
- Ability and willingness to take hand signals.
- Promptness and style of retrieve and delivery.
- Proof of tender mouth.

Where facilities exist and Water Tests are held in conjunction with a stake, the manner and quality of the performance therein shall be given consideration by the Judges in making their awards. Such tests should not exceed in their requirements the conditions met in an ordinary day's rough shoot adjoining water. Land work is the primary function of a Spaniel but where a Water Test is given, any dog that does not complete the Water Test shall not be entitled to any award.

9. The dogs shall be shot over by Official Guns appointed by the Field Trial Committee. The Guns should shoot their game in a sportsmanlike manner, as they would in a day's shoot. The proper functioning of the Guns is of the utmost importance. The Guns are supposed to represent the handler up to the time the game is shot, although not interfering in any manner with his work or that of the down dogs. They are supposed, if possible, unless otherwise directed, to kill cleanly and consistently the game flushed by the Spaniels, at a point most advantageous to a fair trial of the dog's abilities, with due regard to the dogs, handlers, Judges, gallery and other contingencies.

10. Care should be taken not to shoot so that the game falls too close to the dog. If this is done it does not afford a chance for the dog to show any good retrieving ability and often results in a bird being destroyed. The Guns should stand perfectly quiet after the shot, for otherwise they may interfere with the dog and handler. When a dog makes a retrieve no other birds or game should be shot unless ordered by the Judge for special reasons. The Gun must also keep himself in the correct position to the handler and others.

11. It has been repeatedly proven that the most efficient gun and load for this work, in all fairness to the dogs, handlers and those responsible for the trial, is a well-choked twelve gauge double gun, and a load of not less than three and one-fourth drams of smokeless powder or equivalent, and one and one-eighth ounces of No.5, No.6, No.7 or No.7 1/2 shot.

12. All field trial-giving clubs should clearly recognize that Open All-Age Stakes are of the first importance and that all other stakes are of relatively lesser importance and that an entire day should be reserved for the running of an Open All-Age Stake unless there is a very small entry.

13. Before an English Springer Spaniel shall receive its Field or Amateur Field Championship, it must have shown its ability to retrieve game from water, after a swim. The water test shall consist of two back-to-back, open water, 30-40 yard retrieves of dead ducks or dead pheasants, with gunshot. The dog is to be backed up to 10 to 15 yards from the bank for its entry. A water test can be held as a completely separate event, licensed by the American Kennel Club, or in conjunction with an AKC licensed or member field trial. The holding of a water test during a field trial will be left to the discretion of the Field Trial Committee of the club conducting the trial, but such a possibility must be announced in the premium list. It is the responsibility of the Field Trial Secretary or Committee to submit the results, properly signed by the judges, so they will carry championship credit.

Once a dog has been certified by the judges as having passed a water test at a licensed or member club trial, or at a separate water test licensed by the AKC, the certification will apply toward both the Field and Amateur Field Championship titles (a dog needs only to be certified on one occasion). A dog need not be entered in a licensed or member field trial to receive its water certification.