

UT Field Group (page 25)

Two experienced gunners are required during the search. Gunners must be International NAVHDA members. Gunners must be at least 18 years of age and all gunners born after 1975 must have successfully completed a state/provincial firearms safety course.

The sponsoring organization will require that the gunners read the safety instructions before the start of the test and the Judging Team will verbally review the instructions with the gunners and judging group before the first dog is called to the starting line.

The Judging team will ensure that members of the gallery are in a safe position and in case of noncompliance, will suspend all test activities until safety is restored.

GUN SAFETY REMINDERS

- Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction
- The firearm should always be unloaded when not in use
- Don't rely solely on the gun's safety
- Be sure of your target and what's beyond it
- Be certain the barrel is clear of obstructions

UT GUNNER

Job Description:

The gunners will carry their guns in the open position until just before the shot. They will position themselves one to either side and just behind the handler with a reasonable distance between gunners. When the dog points, the gunners will move up on a general line: gunner-handler-gunner and ready their guns for firing. No shots will be fired parallel to or behind the line: gunner-handler-gunner. In other words, the gunner on the right confines his shots to the Right Safe Sector and the one on the left to the Left Safe Sector. Shots at birds that flush and fly behind the above-mentioned line or unsafe area will not be attempted. Gunners must also be alert to the dangerous combination of a low flying bird and a dog that has broken and is chasing. If the bird cannot be shot, the gunner will fire in the air to simulate shooting the bird.

Be sure to read through the **Traits of a Test Gunner** card in its entirety.

See SAFETY reminders on the back of this card →

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Hinged frame (break-open) shotgun of conventional gauge (12 or 20-gauge)
- ☐ Appropriate 12 or 20-gauge, professional factory manufactured shells. No reloads of any kind are permitted. (the chapter typically provides shells for test days gunners)
- ☐ Orange shirt and hat

NA GUNNER

Job Description:

The NA gunner is to walk out into the field with the judges, handler, and NA dog. You should follow closely enough to see the judge's signal, but not so close as to interfere with the dog. A judge will signal when you are to fire one round, usually by holding a hat in the air. Your timing is critical, so please BE FOCUSED on the judge (not the dog) and be prepared to fire immediately upon the judge's signal. After the first shot, immediately reload. At some point after the first shot, the judge will signal for a second shot. Again, BE PREPARED for the judge's signal. After the second shot, you can carefully exit the field and return to the judges' tent. Prepare for the next dog by making sure you have the necessary equipment ready to go.

The NA Gunners should have experience and must meet the criteria established by the Keystone Chapter Executive Council. Gunners must be International NAVHDA members, be at least 18 years of age, and all gunners born after 1975 must have successfully completed a state/provincial firearms safety course. Gunners will bring their own break-open shotguns to the field. 12-gauge BLANKS will be provided by the Chapter. Gunners will answer directly to the Judging Team and the Test Marshal.

See SAFETY info on the back of this card →

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Break-action shotgun (12-gauge)
- ☐ 2 blanks (per dog), plus a couple extra - must be 12-gauge, professional factory manufactured, smokeless powder, blank . ammunition (field trial poppers). DO NOT use anything other than what is provided by the chapter.
- ☐ Orange shirt and hat

NA Field Phase (page 12)

During the field phase dogs will be evaluated on their use of nose, search, pointing, desire and cooperation. **At two random points along the course, a Judge will signal a gunner to fire one round of blank ammunition from a shotgun** in order to watch the dog's reaction to gunfire.

The dog will then be marked as "Not Gun Shy," "Gun Sensitive," or "Gun Shy" as the case may be. A gun sensitive dog is one who, although obviously disturbed by the shots, is willing to continue the search without undue delay or loss of interest. This is a clue to the owner to use caution and judgment in further introducing the dog to the gun and may also impact future breeding plans. A dog is considered to be gun shy if it leaves the area in fright or returns to the handler and then refuses to hunt. Leaping into the air to locate the source of the shot, or checking with the handler for the same purpose are not judged as faults as long as the dog immediately continues the search. **Two shots must be fired** or the dog will be marked as gun shy. Dogs judged as being gun shy may not qualify for a prize classification, but are permitted to complete the remaining tests. Breeding of gun shy dogs is to be discouraged.

GUN SAFETY REMINDERS

- Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction
- The firearm should always be unloaded when not in use
- Don't rely solely on the gun's safety
- Be sure of your target and what's beyond it
- Be certain the barrel is clear of obstructions

They must be a good sportsperson in every sense of the word; from the time they arrive at the test until their last contact with test participants. The gunner must have considerable self-control.

Under no circumstance may a gunner consume any alcohol or mind-altering substance.

They should not comment on the dog/handler performance to any party after leaving the field.

They should not repeat anything heard or offer personal opinions.

All persons in the field must wear one of the following or a combination of the following blaze orange garments: hat, vest, or jacket.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Hinged frame (break-open) shotgun of conventional gauge (12 or 20-gauge)
- ☐ Appropriate 12 or 20-gauge, professional factory manufactured shells. No reloads of any kind are permitted. (the chapter typically provides shells for test days gunners)
- ☐ Orange shirt and hat

NAVHDA UT GUNNER

Traits of a Test Gunner

They must be at least 18 years of age and all gunners born after 1975 must have successfully completed a state/provincial firearms safety course.

They must be alert, calm, level headed and responsible. There are a lot of people in the area at a test. The safety of the participants and spectators, as well as the dogs, is of paramount importance.

They must be accustomed to shooting over pointing dogs and realize that it is the dog's performance that is under judgment.

The gunner's role is to assist the dog through timely and safe shooting.

They must understand the rules of the test and be capable of accepting instructions. There are times when safety dictates a bird not be shot even though the rules require a shot to be fired to test for steadiness. There are other times when Judges make requests of the gunner regarding shooting or positioning to ensure a correct and fair judgment. These requests must be followed efficiently.

They must be physically capable of walking on rough ground at a reasonably fast pace. They must possess the physical agility to put them into the best position to shoot safely without interfering with the performance of the dog.

They must concentrate on their task and take it seriously even if the dog or handler is having a bad day. All dogs and handlers must be treated with the same consideration and respect.

They must be a good shot with a "break-open" gun on birds, not just on clay pigeons, and they must be knowledgeable enough to hold their fire until the bird is at a suitable distance to allow a clean shot and a good retrieve.

Continued on the back of this card →