

NA FIELD MARSHAL



Job Description:

The NA Field Marshal is responsible for making sure the Field phase is conducted in a timely and orderly fashion. The Field Marshal is responsible for communicating with the handlers and making sure they are ready to go when he/she calls them to the field. This person should also be capable of mitigating any problems that may arise throughout the Field phase.

The NA Field Marshal should take direction from both the Judging Team the Test Marshal to ensure the Field phase is run as quickly and smoothly as possible.

The Field Marshal should have radio access to communicate with the judges, the Test Marshal, and relevant volunteers.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Running order sheet
- ☐ List of volunteers and their roles
- ☐ Contact info sheet for all handlers
- ☐ Aerial map of location
- ☐ Radio

Please make sure the judges' tent has been setup near the breakaway and that necessary items are available:

At the Breakaway:

- ☐ Judges' tent
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Table
- ☐ Poppers for distraction gunner (2 per dog)

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.

NA WATER MARSHAL



Job Description:

The NA Water Marshal shall manage the water portion of the test. Be sure to have the water setup ready well before handlers and judges begin arriving at the location. Handlers should wait in the parking area until called to an "on deck" location and eventually to the water. Use a radio to communicate with your Assistant Water Marshal so that handlers and dogs are called in an orderly fashion, and without unnecessary delays.

For each dog, have bumper pile and rocks/stones setup at the water where the judges have instructed. Have fresh-killed chukar available, but not so near as to affect each dogs' performance – and definitely NOT in a location that dogs must pass on their way to the water. After each dog, clear the water of bumpers either with kayak or pickup dog, or both...whichever is quickest. Setup for next dog, and call next handler when directed by the judges.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Canopy or large tent
- ☐ Bumpers
- ☐ Fresh-killed chukar
- ☐ Stones or small rocks
- ☐ Kayak and paddle and/or pickup dog
- ☐ Radio

NA Water Phase (page 13)

A truly versatile hunting dog must possess the desire and confidence to swim. The water test should take place at a spot offering easy, gradual access to deep water. The handler will be provided a selection of training dummies. The handler will be instructed to throw a dummy into water of sufficient depth for the dog to swim. The dog is expected to make a forward moving entry into the water and swim twice. For a complete and fair evaluation, the Judges may ask for the dog to be sent into the water more than twice.

The dog's swimming speed and style are of little importance. A dog that leaps into the water will not be scored any higher than the dog that enters without hesitation in a more deliberate manner.

Dogs that retrieve the thrown object will not receive higher scores. The retrieve is immaterial - the importance here is whether or not the dog has the desire and self-confidence to swim twice.

Dogs requiring game as an enticement to swim will be moved to the end of the line and called back after all other dogs are tested. If game must be used to entice the dog, the game must be dead. When dead game is used, the maximum attainable score will be a "2."

The Judgement of Physical Characteristics will take place after the judges have asked the handler to leash their dog.

The following items are judged during the water test:

- Water Entry
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation

NA ASSISTANT WATER MARSHAL



Job Description:

The NA Assistant Water Marshal shall provide assistance to the Water Marshal, who is charged with managing the water portion of the test. Be sure to have the water setup ready well before handlers and judges begin arriving at the location. Handlers should wait in the parking area until called to an "on deck" location and eventually to the water. Use a radio to communicate with your Water Marshal so that handlers and dogs are called in an orderly fashion, and without unnecessary delays.

For each dog, have bumper pile and rocks/stones setup at the water where the judges have instructed. Have fresh-killed chukar available, but not so near as to affect each dogs' performance – and definitely NOT in a location that dogs must pass on their way to the water. After each dog, clear the water of bumpers either with kayak or pickup dog, or both...whichever is quickest. Setup for next dog, and call next handler when directed by the judges.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Canopy or large tent
- ☐ Bumpers
- ☐ Fresh-killed chukar
- ☐ Stones or small rocks
- ☐ Kayak and paddle and/or pickup dog
- ☐ Radio

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The Judgement of Physical Characteristics will take place after the judges have asked the handler to leash their dog.

The following items are judged during the water test:

- Water Entry
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation

NA WATER ASSISTANT

Job Description:

The Water Assistants should be available to assist the Water Marshal for the Water phase of the test. Duties may include setting up at the water location, staging handlers/dogs, operating the kayak, managing the pickup dog, and cleaning up the water location at the end of the day.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Canopy or large tent
- ☐ Bumpers
- ☐ Stones or small rocks
- ☐ Fresh-killed chukar
- ☐ Kayak and paddle and/or pickup dog
- ☐ Net
- ☐ Radio

NA Water Phase (page 13)

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The Judgement of Physical Characteristics will take place after the judges have asked the handler to leash their dog.

NA TEST MARSHAL



Job Description:

The NA Test Marshal is responsible for overseeing and making sure the test runs smoothly. The Test Marshal should manage volunteers and make sure they understand their jobs and responsibilities. This person should also be capable of mitigating any problems that may arise throughout the day. The Marshal will identify and hand out running orders to the handlers before the opening remarks.

The Test Marshal must read and understand all aspects of the NAVHDA Aims Programs Test Rules book prior to test day. All overall test decisions and changes from the Judging Team are directed to the Test Marshal who in turn will communicate with the respective volunteers. The Test Marshal directly supervises both the Field and Water Events.

He or she is responsible for participants and dogs being ready to test in the proper order and must ensure that all gallery members stay at a distance where they are not a disturbance to the dog. The Test Marshal should have radio access to the judges and answers directly to the Judging Team.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Running order sheets
- ☐ List of volunteers and their roles
- ☐ Contact info sheet for all handlers
- ☐ Aerial map of location
- ☐ Radio

Importance (page 11)

The Natural Ability Test measures seven hereditary characteristics which are fundamental to the makeup of a good, reliable versatile hunting dog. The importance of this test cannot be overemphasized.

The natural, inherited abilities of a hunting dog usually manifest themselves at an early age, and it is desirable to take advantage of this fact by testing dogs while they are still young. By so doing, the owner or trainer gets an impartial evaluation of the dog's strengths and weaknesses and thus is better able to map out a future training program for the animal. If the dog displays serious deficiencies, the owner may wish to obtain a new prospect. The conscientious breeder will study the dog's record in the Natural Ability Test, along with the records of its litter mates, with a view in making any changes in his breeding program.

Although the Natural Ability Test is of extreme importance, it should not be regarded as an infallible gauge of a dog's future worth. Obviously, deficient dogs aside, there is the case of the "late bloomer," or dog that does not display its potential as early as some others. There is also the precocious youngster that does well in the beginning, but later on reveals some inherited character fault or physical disability that makes it a less than desirable gun dog. It is for this reason that NAVHDA strongly urges that dogs be tested at various stages of development.

Organization and Scope

The Natural Ability Test is organized into four main segments, or phases, as follows:

- 1) Field Phase
- 2) Tracking Phase
- 3) Water Phase
- 4) Judgment of Physical Characteristics.

NA BIRD CAPTAIN



Job Description:

NA Bird Captain is responsible for assembling and managing the Bird Planters, and typically helps plant birds as well. You and your team are to plant birds throughout the field/s and in a manner AS INSTRUCTED by the senior judge. You will typically plant 4/5 birds for the first run of the day, and 3/4 birds for each subsequent run...however, please TAKE INSTRUCTION from the senior judge. Use numbered flags to mark the plant locations determined by the senior judge. **MAKE SURE ALL ARE REMOVED** from the field before the first run.

Setup the bird tent and remain there throughout the entirety of the field phase. Have birds loaded in bird bags IN ADVANCE of each run. Wait for radio instructions before planting the field. Utilize a 4-wheeler or UTV to hasten the bird-planting process. Please DO NOT run the 4-wheeler directly to every plant location, but instead drive along the mowed "lanes" and walk on foot to the plant location. After your birds have been planted return immediately to the bird tent. Once all bird planters have returned to the bird tent, radio to the judges to let them know **BIRDS HAVE BEEN PLANTED**. Remain at the bird tent and restock your bird bags in preparation for the next run. Have your radio readily available so you receive instructions when needed. **BE PREPARED** to run a bird (or two) to the judges should they call for a bird during the current run.

See additional info on the back of this card →

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Bird tent
- ☐ Bird crates (if boxes take utility knife)
- ☐ 4-wheelers and/or UTVs
- ☐ Bird bags
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Aerial map and 5 numbered flags
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Orange shirt and hat
- ☐ Cooler for dead birds

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.

Each dog is hunted for a minimum of 20 minutes and is scored or evaluated on:

- Use of Nose
- Search
- Pointing
- Desire
- Cooperation
- Gun Shyness

THROUGHOUT THE TEST WEEKEND

Make sure the birds are well cared for, have plenty of shade, and are kept dry in rainy conditions.

At the end of Day 1

Make sure that the remaining birds are picked up at the end of the day, provided with food (bird feed, oranges, watermelon, etc.) and water, and are housed adequately (and safe from predators) and dry overnight.

NA BIRD PLANTER

Job Description:

NA Bird Planters are to plant birds throughout the field/s and in a manner AS INSTRUCTED by the senior judge. Gather this information from your Bird Captain as they will have received instructions from the senior judge. It is recommended that bird planters use gloves while planting the birds.

Setup the bird tent and remain there throughout the entirety of the field phase. Have birds loaded in bird bags IN ADVANCE of each run. Wait for radio instructions before planting the field. Utilize a 4-wheeler or UTV to hasten the bird-planting process. Please DO NOT run the 4-wheeler directly to every plant location, but instead drive along the mowed "lanes" and walk on foot to the plant location. After your birds have been planted return immediately to the bird tent. Once all bird planters have returned to the bird tent, have the Bird Captain radio to the judges to let them know BIRDS HAVE BEEN PLANTED. Restock your bird bags in preparation for the next run. Listen to the radio so you receive instructions when needed. BE PREPARED to run a bird (or two) to the judges should they call for a bird during the current run.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ 4-wheeler or UTV
- ☐ Bird bags
- ☐ Aerial map of test location
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Orange shirt and hat
- ☐ Bird tent
- ☐ Bird crates/boxes (utility knife)
- ☐ Cooler for dead birds

THROUGHOUT THE TEST WEEKEND

Make sure the birds are well cared for with food and water, have plenty of shade, are stored safe from predators, and are kept dry in rainy conditions.

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.

Each dog is hunted for a minimum of 20 minutes and is scored or evaluated on:

- Use of Nose
- Search
- Pointing
- Desire
- Cooperation
- Gun Shyness

Search (page 8)

The search of the Natural Ability dog is expected to differ from that of the experienced Utility dog. A pup should show enthusiasm, sufficient independence to move away from the handler, and a willingness to investigate likely cover. He may be forgiven a slow start if bird contact generates an improved performance. From start to finish, the search should indicate but one purpose—to produce game for the gun. The good dog will leave the impression that in the terrain covered by the search, no game has been missed. No time should be wasted in searching obviously barren ground or by returning to cover that has already been thoroughly searched.

Pointing (page 9)

The instinct to point must be clearly evident in the dog. Pointing and searching are the two major aspects of the dog's work "before the shot." When game is located the dog must establish point naturally. The handler is strictly prohibited from giving any commands or gestures which may induce the dog to point. The pointing stance must be intense, convincing, and unmistakable as a point and, in the end, the point must be productive.

NA PHEASANT HANDLER

Job Description:

The Pheasant Handler needs to make sure pheasants are available and ready to go for the Tracking phase of the NA test. ALL pheasants must be banded prior to being released. If any of the birds have blinders/peepers they should be removed. Do these things in the morning – but only for that day's birds. In the morning, ask the senior judge how they would like the pheasant prepared (if at all) prior to handing it them in the field. When the judges are ready to begin the Tracking phase, have a pheasant ready in a bird bag and take it to the judge. Have a backup pheasant ready to go in a separate bird bag. This will be done for ALL NA dogs participating that day.

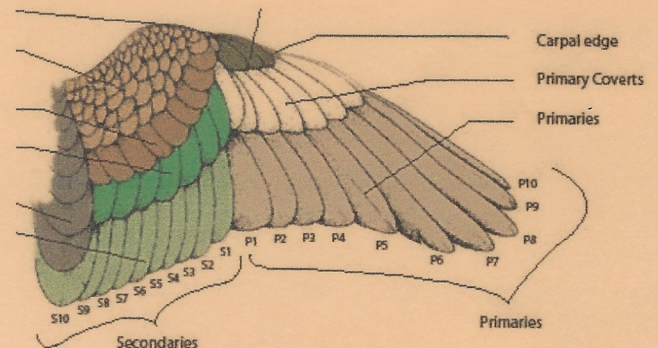
Please DO NOT handle pheasants near participating dogs (unless they have requested to see the bird) and DO NOT leave ANY birds, crates, feathers, or bird scent in an area in which a dog must pass to get to the tracking field.

See additional info on the back of this card →

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Pheasant crate/s
 - ☐ Bird bags
 - ☐ Leg bands
 - ☐ Banding tool
 - ☐ Snips (to remove blinders/peepers, if applicable)
- Blind

Location of Primary Feathers (if needed):



Tracking Phase (page 12)

A flightless pheasant or chukar is released in an area reserved for the tracking. The area should be sufficiently wide to avoid the tracks being too close to one another. Tracks must be laid down-wind or cross-wind, never into the wind. Ideally, the cover should be about 8-10 inches high. This should not hinder the running bird and will retain the scent, while at the same time giving the Judges an opportunity to see the path taken by the bird and to closely observe the dog as it works the track. The track should end in cover that takes advantage of the bird's instinct to hide.

At the discretion of the handler the dog may or may not be shown the game bird before the bird is released. If a handler has any question about the advisability of his dog seeing the bird, he or she should confer with a Judge on the matter. Whether or not the dog is shown the bird makes no difference in the scoring. After the decision is made and carried out, the dog and handler are directed to go behind some natural cover or a portable blind from where neither can see the bird being released.

Each dog is judged on the following items:

- Use of Nose
- Tracking
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation

THROUGHOUT THE TEST WEEKEND

Make sure the birds are well cared for, have plenty of shade, and are kept dry in rainy conditions.

At the end of Day 1

Make sure that the remaining birds are picked up at the end of the day, provided with food (bird feed, oranges, watermelon, etc.) and water, and are housed adequately (and safe from predators) overnight.

JUDGES' ATTENDANT



Job Description:

The Judges' Attendant should be available to the judges at all times and your primary job is to make sure the judges have what they need, when they need it. This could be a pen, a drink, a snack, or possibly even something from their vehicle. If they need it, please make every effort get it. In the early morning, setup the judges' canopy at the breakaway point. Make sure there is a chair for each judge. Make sure each judge has a cooler filled with COLD drinks, and make sure these coolers travel to each location. Restock the coolers as necessary. Clean out coolers at the end of each test day, return any unused drinks to the refrigerator (if available), and refill the coolers at the beginning of the next test day.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Canopy
- ☐ Chairs for EACH judge
- ☐ Personal cooler for EACH judge filled with ice and drinks
- ☐ Cooler with ice cold, wet cooling rags
- ☐ Baggie for collecting used cooling rags
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Lunch for EACH judge (may require order and pickup)
- ☐ Extra pens
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Hand sanitizer

Judges and Judging (page 5)

NAVHDA realizes that careless or biased judging would not only be unfair to the dogs but would also defeat any attempts by NAVHDA to improve the versatile hunting breeds. The length of time available to a Judge to observe an individual dog during a test is relatively limited and only a thoroughly competent Judge can assimilate all the many facets of the dog's performance and express a fair and accurate opinion. For these reasons, NAVHDA exercises great care in the training and selection of its Judges. They are selected from among experienced hunters who possess character and integrity and have also trained and handled versatile hunting dogs. In a further effort to achieve fairness and objectivity, it is required that each NAVHDA sanctioned test be judged by three Judges.

Judges Are Required To:

- Qualify a dog he/she has trained and handled in a NA, UPT, UT or Invitational Test within the previous three years. Further, each judge is required to qualify a dog he/she has trained and handled in a UPT, UT or Invitational Test within the previous six years.
- Attend a NAVHDA Judges Workshop every third year.
- All NAVHDA judges are reviewed by the Executive Council annually and qualified persons are reappointed for the following year.

NA PICKUP DOG

Job Description:

The Pickup Dog should be available at the water location to assist the Water Marshal during the Water phase of the test. The pickup dog will be responsible for retrieving any and all bumpers that have drifted out of reach. You and your dog should wait quietly and patiently until you are called into duty. Depending on how the day goes, you may or may not be called into action. Regardless, please wait in a location where you can quickly and easily get to the water but NOT be a distraction to any test participant.

DO NOT allow your dog to urinate near the testing location.

Required Equipment Checklist:

- ☐ Dog
- ☐ Leash and/or e-collar
- ☐ Tie out or crate (if necessary)

NA Water Phase (page 13)

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Dogs that retrieve the thrown object will not receive higher scores. The retrieve is immaterial - the importance here is whether or not the dog has the desire and self-confidence to swim twice.

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The Judgement of Physical Characteristics will take place after the judges have asked the handler to leash their dog.