

Regina Retriever Club

Beginners Retriever Class

Welcome to the Regina Retriever Club's retriever class. This class is designed give you and your dog the foundation for your dog to continue on to be a reliable hunting companion and/or to compete in working certificate and hunt tests and/or for you and your dog have fun and exercise learning to do what your retriever was bred to do. You will learn how to control your dog in the field and teach him to retrieve reliably every time. You will learn how to teach your dog to heel at your side, wait until he is sent to retrieve, return promptly and deliver to hand both on land and in water. We will also introduce your dog to decoys, whistles, gun shots and birds.

Class Description

During the first four weeks we will review and practice basic obedience commands, focusing on **sit, stay, heel and come**. We will also begin to teach a **trained retrieve**. You will learn how to teach your dog to hold an object in his/her mouth, release it on command, fetch it on command and deliver to hand. We will also begin to teach sit and come whistle commands.

The first four weeks of training is the most important part of this course.

This is your foundation.

Without this you **will not** be successful in the later lessons. Also if you have any problems with your dog in future training, either during this class or later, you will always go back to this initial foundation.

In the last 4 weeks of the class your dog can learn how to mark, line manners, to take a straight line through cover and more. You will also teach your dog to walk tractably at heel to the line, sit calmly until sent to retrieve, retrieve a bumper or bird and return promptly to heel and deliver to hand both on land and in water. **Gun shots, decoys and real birds will be introduced.**

Practice, Practice and more Practice

To be successful with your dog in this course you **must commit time each and every day to practice**. Practice the basic obedience and the hold and fetch at least twice everyday. Training sessions will be 10 - 15 minutes each at the beginning and become longer as you and your dog learn more commands. **It's not fair to your dog or your instructors if you don't put in the work in between classes.** It's not fair to your dog because each lesson we will be asking more of him and he won't know what to do if you haven't practiced the previous lesson. It's not fair to your instructors because they volunteer their time to teach you so you need to do your part too. In the later weeks, it is highly recommended that you get together with one or more your classmates a couple of times a week so you can work with throwers.

Activities for Retrievers

Working Certificate Tests - these tests are designed to test the natural ability of your retriever. Your dog needs to pass one test at each level to achieve that title. The first level (working certificate W.C.) consists of back to back single marked retrieves approximately 60 - 75 yards long on land and back to back single retrieves approximately 40 - 60 yards long on water. The dog need not be steady and can be held at the line. The second level (working certificate intermediate W.C.I.) consists of a double retrieve on land, an honor and a double retrieve on water. The dog must be steady and will be off lead during the entire test. The third and final level (working certificate excellent W.C.X.) consists of a land double and walk up with a honor, a land blind, a water double and a water blind.

This is a Canadian Kennel Club sanctioned event and is open the all Retrievers (Chesapeake, Curly-Coat, Flat-Coat, Golden and Labrador), Irish Water Spaniels, Standard Poodles and Airedale Terriers who are registered with the CKC.

Hunt Tests - these tests are usually more challenging than the working certificate tests. They are designed to determine a dog's suitability and ability as a hunting companion. Hunt tests simulate as nearly as possible the conditions met in a true hunting situation.

The first level (junior hunt J.H.) Consists of 4 single marks, 2 on land and 2 on water not to exceed 75 yards in length. The dog need not be steady and can be held at the line. The retrieves may be through decoys and your dog may be sent out of a blind or a boat. Your dog must pass three tests to achieve a junior hunt title.

The second level (senior hunt S.H.) consists of 5 tests. A land blind, a water blind, a land double, a water double and an upland hunting test (without a flush). No retrieve should normally exceed 100 yards and under no circumstances shall exceed 125 yards. The dog will be off lead and under control during the entire test. Your dog must pass four tests to achieve a senior hunt title.

The third and final level, master hunt (M.H.) consists of 5 tests. Multiple land marks (double or more), multiple water marks (double or more), an upland hunting test (with a flush), a land blind and a water blind. Diversion birds and/or shots will be used at least once. No retrieve should normally exceed 100 yards and under no circumstance shall exceed 125 yards. The difficulty level is higher than in the senior and trainability will be judged more stringently. Your dog must pass five tests to achieve a master hunt title.

Hunt tests are also sanctioned by the Canadian Kennel Club and open to all Retrievers, Irish Water Spaniels and Standard Poodles who are registered with the CKC.

Retriever Trials – The ultimate challenge for retriever owners are the field trials. These tests will challenge both the dog's ability and the owner's skills as both trainer and handler. The tests in trials are based on an elimination of dogs (similar to Olympic style hockey) through a series of both land and water tests until only the best dogs are left to award placing and judge's awards of merits to. The tests are open to all registered retriever breeds whose owners have paid the required fees to the trial hosting club. In the national and amateur national tests dogs must qualify in order to be invited to participate in the competitions. All retrieves consist of dead birds with the most common fowl being ducks, pheasant and pigeons. In the United States a live bird referred to as a flyer is used. This bird is a great distraction to dogs and can at times cause missed marks because of the intensity of which dogs focus on this particular bird.

In the stakes intended for younger dogs, puppy and junior, all birds are referred to as marks. Marks are birds that are thrown by gunners who are dressed in white. These birds are all watched and seen by the dog as they are shot (A shotgun or rim fire rifle firing blank loads is used to simulate a person actually hunting and shooting birds) The older and more advanced dogs, qualifying and open all age stakes, will pick up both marks and blinds. Blinds are birds that are planted in a location that is known to the handler but not by the dog. The dog is handled through a series of whistles, voice commands and arm and hand signals to the area that the bird is planted in.

The puppy stake is a series of tests designed for dogs that are under one year of age on the date of the test. The birds are all marks and are usually thrown as back to back singles. That means that when the first bird is thrown and the retrieve is completed and the bird is in the handler's possession then the second bird will be thrown and will have to then also be retrieved. There are usually two land tests and two water tests for a total of eight birds that will have to be retrieved.

The junior stake is for retrievers that are less than two years old on the day of the test. They will pick up eight birds in four tests with two tests being held on land and two taking place in water. These birds are thrown as doubles meaning that as the first bird is shot and thrown the dog must remember it and remain sitting. The second bird will then be shot and thrown. The dog will then be sent to retrieve the bird selected by the handler and when he completes that retrieve he will be directed by the handler to pick up the second bird.

Open all age and qualifying stakes have no upper limit on a dog's age. These dogs will have to retrieve two, three or even four birds in their marks with the most difficult tests taking place in the open all age. Retired guns (hidden gunners), trail and water crossings, dry shots and poison birds (birds that are shot in similar fashion as a mark but the dog is not to retrieve them) are a few of the distractions used by judges in these stakes to evaluate the level of training in a dog. These dogs will also be required to pick up at least two blinds, one on land and the other in water.

The amount of work required to get a dog ready to compete successfully in field trials is great but it also makes the rewards that much sweeter when you finish, place and finally win a stake.

If you are interested in competing in any of the above events we strongly recommend that you purchase a rule book. There is a separate book for each of the above tests. The can be ordered directly from the Canadian Kennel Club for a cost of \$7.00 plus tax. Order information can be found on their website at www.ckc.ca Look for the order desk.

Equipment

- six foot leash (preferably leather)
- chain training collar or a martingale collar
- long, light line (check cord) with a clip on one end (approximately 30 - 50 feet)
- a whistle with lanyard
- 4 or more training dummies (for class it's a good idea to identify them)
- a crate or be willing to put a wet, possibly dirty dog in your vehicle.

Equipment can be purchased locally at Cabelas or Wholesale Sports or ordered on line through www.gundogsupply.com, Cabelas, Canvas Back and more.

Rules For You And Your Dog To Live By

- Ask questions; that is why we are here.
- Give your dog an opportunity to relieve him/herself before class and **before** running marks.
- Consult your instructor if your female comes into season.
- Do not feed your dog within 4 hours of class or immediately prior to a training session.
- Do not proceed any further than the class lessons no matter how well your dog is doing.
- Do not take training advice on the side from others; please ask questions, we'll be glad to discuss other training methods.
- **Never** leave a chain training collar on your dog while he/she is unsupervised.
- Invest in a crate if you don't have one and **use it**. Use it to confine your dog for a hour or two before training and to transport your dog to class or practice sessions. A crate is the safest way for your dog to travel in your vehicle. You will also need a place to keep your dog between runs during the latter portion of this class. **We will ask that a maximum of 2 dogs are out at once in most situations.** The dog running and the next dog.
- If you are having trouble with any of the lessons **ask for help**. Each step in your dog's training is very important. If you have a problem near the beginning and do not address it, it **will** come back to haunt you later. If we run out of time during class to address a problem we are willing to stay and work with you after class as well.
- If you have to miss a session let your instructors know.
- When you dog does something right, **praise, praise, praise.**
- In the latter portion of the class when we have started single marks get together with a few of your class mates during the week to throw for each other. (we will discuss throwers more later)

Consistency - be consistent in your expectation, commands and corrections.

Corrections -only the corrections shown in class by your instructors will be accepted in class.

No one will be permitted to kick or hit a dog with anything during this class.

Leaving your dog to ride loose in the back of a truck which does not have a cap on it is not acceptable and will not be tolerated during this class.