

## NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM L.R.C.

The following classes of working test competitions are recognized by the Kennel Club:

- **OPEN.** Open to all dogs of a specified breed or breeds, although preference may be given to dogs which have gained a place or certificate of merit at a Field Trial, been placed First, Second or Third in an Open GWT, or won a Novice GWT.
- **NOVICE.** Confined to dogs which have **not** gained a place or certificate of merit at a Field Trial, been placed first, second or third in an Open GWT or first in a Novice GWT held in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Field Trial Regulations.
- **PUPPY.** Confined to dogs of specific breed or breeds less than eighteen months of age on the date of the test.
- **UNCLASSIFIED.** Open to all dogs of a specified breed, but may be restricted by conditions as determined by the society (i.e. NDNH, Special Puppy, Intermediate and Veteran).

NDNH working tests are not usually run in the North of England. The norm is for clubs to organise the official Puppy, Novice and Open working tests.

Most people enter working tests with their dogs as puppies at around 9 to 12 months and because of the lack of skeletal development of the dog until over 12 months; the puppy tests set should reflect this.



No jumping fences, excessive distances or complicated retrieves would be expected for young dogs.

However, it is always the handler's decision once the test is explained to them by the Judge, whether they feel their dog is ready for such an exercise. If in doubt, it may be advisable to miss out that exercise.

Novice tests stretch the dog further than puppy and can be entered from any age providing your dog is trained enough and fit enough to deal with the exercises. This is very important to young dogs as they need to succeed wherever possible for confidence.

**On a test day, it is very important that any questions you may have for the judges are kept until the end of the working test day or an appropriate time and not after every run.**

**In line with Kennel Club regulations, you are not obliged to be told your points scored (usually out of 20 per test) at the end of each exercise; this comes at the final score round up; so please do not ask your judge – if he/she volunteers any information that is their choice.**

At the end of **all the tests** and the scores are published, you may ask questions, but the judge is under no obligation to answer and they are not there as your personal trainer. You should know what is required before you enter any competition. The Kennel Club 'J' Regs state clearly that a judge does not have to explain his decision or get into detailed discussion and it is very important that you never publicly impugn the judge's decision. Their decision is final and they must be treated with respect.



You may be one of 90+ entrants on a test day and if everyone spoke to the Judge after each exercise it would make for longer days than Club's, competitors and more importantly, our gracious hosts - could manage safely; and we expect all participants to be aware.

By taking up valuable judge time after each exercise, you are making your fellow competitors wait

longer with their dogs. **Do your homework before competing and you'll already know most of the answers to your questions.**

## **WHAT DO I NEED?**

Working test days usually start between 9 and 10 am and may not finish until 4 or 5pm (depending on entries). Northumberland and Durham LRC always have large entries and have had up to 95 dogs entering the three categories being run. If every dog completes 4 exercises, as you can imagine there is limited time. It is essential to be prepared for the full day as whilst some events may give puppy scores at the lunch break, other Club's leave all scoring and award presentations until the end of the working test day.

- Water for your dog (and food if necessary), remembering dogs should not be fed when taking part in vigorous activity.
- Car/vehicle that offers them shade, comfort and good ventilation, especially when they are not competing.
- Food and drink for yourself.
- Adequate clothing and footwear – as conditions can change rapidly.
- Clothing should be in-keeping with the sport; and whilst working tests are not as formal as field trials, you wouldn't be expected to turn up in pink shell suits! Take a look at our website photos of working test days to give you an idea of clothing types. <http://www.ndlabclub.co.uk/pictures-working-tests.html>
- A slip lead and whistle.

Please also bear in mind that most events take place in open countryside where there are no toilet facilities! Luckily there are usually some trees!

Without helpers to dummy throw/place, the test days could not take place.

All club officials and judges are volunteers, who have given up their valuable time to the sport to organise events for other members.

Out of courtesy to officials, judges, fellow competitors and our hosts, you are expected to stay until the end of the competition to show appreciation to all.

If you are not competing in one of the categories, consider offering your help to the Working Test Secretary as it is unfair to rely on the same people – plus you learn invaluable lessons on dog handling and judging when helping out.

### **YOUR COMPETING DOG.**

To compete in gundog working tests, you need a steady dog and one that can heel and sit beside you off lead, as during the actual test your dog will be off lead at all times. After the exercise you are expected to put your dog straight on lead to ensure there is no disruption for other competitors.



Dummies will be thrown; shots will be fired but you will not be able to send your dog until the Judge tells you to. So it is really important that your dog is steady to dummies and shot, being around other people and won't run in, because if he/she does, that is most certainly a zero out of a possible twenty points for that test. But it happens even to the most experienced handlers!

### **The sorts of exercises you might get in novice working tests includes:**

- Dog being steady to thrown dummies/shot.
- Dog heels well off lead.
- Dog sits and stays when requested and at a distance away from the handler for any given time.
- Dog retrieves – and retrieves to hand (so doesn't spit out/drop it in front of handler) or runs circles round the handler etc.
- Dog can take directions, so handler is able to cast dog left or right, and/or line dog up for a particular retrieve and the dog runs out in the correct direction.
- Dog can stop on the stop whistle especially helpful if things go awry.

- Dog has good recall.
- Dog swims and is able to retrieve dummies from water and return them to handler's hand, without spitting the dummy out in favour of a shake.
- Dog is able to clear/jump an obstacle such as a fence to retrieve a dummy from the other side.
- Your dog is a good natural hunter and can even hunt on command if needs be.

**Eliminating faults at a working test may include:**

- Whining.
- Failing to retrieve the dummy.
- Running in.
- Handler sending the dog before requested by the Judge.
- If two dummies are thrown, the dog picking the wrong one or swapping dummies.
- Noisy handling (e.g. shouting at your dog – always use your whistle!)

**Exercises you may get in Novice working tests.**

- Long marked (seen) retrieve, sometimes with shot.
- Double retrieve with both dummies 'seen' but at a distance apart and the Judge will ask you to pick them in a particular order.
- Double retrieve: one dummy blind (unseen) and placed in a similar or different position to that where the marked dummy had been retrieved.
- A blind (unseen) dummy down a track of sorts.
- A marked (seen) retrieve from water (with or without shot).
- A marked (seen) retrieve over a fence.
- A walk up with a shot; where dog is off lead and to heel with one, two or three other dogs and handlers. Taking it in turn to retrieve a dummy thrown to shot as per the Judge's instructions.
- Retrieving 2 out of a possible 3 dummies lying hidden in deep cover – often without gunshot, out of sight to begin with.

*We hope this booklet has helped answer some questions you may have had. Above all, enjoy the day **and** your dogs.*

