

Spaniel "Grouse Hunt" Fun Trial

Official Rules and Regulations

Open to all breeds of flushing Spaniels, six months of age or older.

Game

Chukar partridge will be used for all series in all stakes.

Course

All series will be run in wooded cover (typical grouse hunting cover). A visible item of blaze orange must be worn by all people on the course -- no exceptions. Snag-proof/thorn-proof clothing and safety glasses are strongly recommended.

Format

There will be four Stakes with varying levels of competition: Un-steady Puppy, Steady Puppy, Gun Dog, and Open. Each stake will consist of two series; each series will consist of a minimum of two contacts (additional contacts will be at the Judges' discretion). Call-backs for the second series will be at the Judges' discretion. Each dog will be run singularly with two official gunners.

Prizes

Rosettes will be awarded to the first four placing dogs in each stake. A small trophy, for permanent possession, will be awarded to the first place dog in each stake.

Performance Standard

General

The Spaniel serves two primary purposes in the grouse covert: (1) find game within appropriate shooting range, and (2) recover all shot game for the bag. The dog should be under control and handle kindly if he is to contribute to a pleasurable and productive hunt. The dog should show no fear of cover and briskly investigate all likely game-holding spots.

As typical grouse cover is thick and difficult to shoot through, the spaniel will be expected to adjust its range and hunting pattern according to the wind direction and cover density therefore affording cleaner shooting opportunities. Any dog that requires constant, excessive "hacking" from the handler is considered to be out of control and therefore will be penalized. A dog that efficiently covers its beat with minimal handling, and responds correctly to commands, when given, is to be considered a great asset for a successful hunt. Judges should not place too much emphasis on speed and flashy running, but rather on efficient course coverage and efficient game production within appropriate shooting range.

The dog is responsible for all planted game in its beat and should not leave any game un-found on the course.

A dog that accurately marks the fall of shot game and works up the retrieve on his own is vital for the conservation of game. Due to the thick cover typically encountered on a grouse hunt, not all shot game will be accurately marked by the dog. The dog, in most cases, will be responsible for recovering all shot game (except as noted below), however, he will not be penalized for requiring handling to complete the retrieve if it is done cleanly (i.e., a minimal amount of productive handling, with the dog correctly responding to all commands).

All retrieves are to be completed to hand as quickly as possible. Any dog that damages the game for the table, thus demonstrating evidence of hard mouth, will be severely penalized.

A dog will be automatically disqualified for any of the following infractions:

- constant running out of control with repeated production of game out of gun range,
- passed bird,
- failed retrieve,
- indisputable evidence of hard mouth,
- failure to demonstrate absolute steadiness (for Steady Puppy and Open only).

All dogs are expected to demonstrate the above performance standard, with the specific exceptions/provisions for each stake as listed below.

Puppy (Steady and Un-steady)

These stakes are for all dogs less than two-years of age (on the date of the event). Both steady and un-steady puppies will be run together on the same course; the handler will declare whether the dog is steady or not at the line prior to casting off. Un-steady Puppies do not have to be steady to wing and shot; Steady Puppies must be absolutely steady to wing and shot and not retrieve game until commanded to do so. Puppies are not expected to work like a "finished" dog, however, the dog should respond reasonably well to commands and exhibit a degree of control that will result in an enjoyable hunt. Puppies will not be expected to complete difficult "blind" fall retrieves that may require a lot of handling.

Gun Dog

This stake is for all dogs that have never placed in an all-age stake in a licensed trial. These dogs are not required to be steady, however, they should not give excessive chase on a missed bird thereby unnecessarily disturbing the cover. The dog should return to the handler with minimal effort. The Gun Dog is expected to demonstrate a moderate to high degree of control and recover all shot game, including reasonable "blind" falls.

Open

This stake is for any steady dog. These dogs must be absolutely steady to wing and shot and not retrieve game until commanded to do so. The Open dog should display a truly finished performance with a high degree of control and precise response to all commands. The Open dog should also demonstrate hunting intelligence and proficiency at finding game and recovering all shot game, including all "blind" falls. An attempt will be made to provide the Open dog with a double flush on every-other contact in the second series. The Open dog will be required to retrieve both birds if both are shot.

Mid-Atlantic Hunting Spaniel Club
Performance Event Rules

Endorsement by the M-AHSC Board of Directors:

President: Chuck Urland
Vice-President: Patty Hauer Valente
Secretary: Cindy Sites
Treasurer: Ned Cummings
Board Member: Jeff Brooks
Board Member: Julie Hogan
Board Member: Trish Jackson
Board Member: George Kaufman
Board Member: Vera Montgomery