



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB™

Performance Events Department

November 17, 2011

Changes to the Regulations for AKC Spaniel Hunting Tests

At its November meeting, the AKC Board of Directors passed a number of changes to the Regulations for AKC Spaniel Hunting Tests that become effective January 1, 2012. They are as follows:

1. CHAPTER 1, SECTION 4. TESTS OFFERED, ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, NO SPECIAL INDUCEMENTS. A Hunting Test giving club shall not accept an entry fee other than that published in its premium list or entry form, or in any way discriminates between entrants. Except a club, at its discretion, may allow for a reduced entry fee for dogs handled by juniors. A junior handler is someone less than 18 years of age on the first day of the test.

The inclusion of the “no special inducements” clause means the entry fee for everyone wishing to enter a testing level must be the same. (No special deals for select individuals.) Except a club may offer at its discretion a lower entry fee for junior handlers as a way to promote youth involvement in the sport.

2a. CHAPTER 2, SECTION 3. SENIOR HUNTER TITLE (SH).

Dogs that have acquired a Senior Hunter title at an AKC licensed or member Hunting Test are eligible to enter Junior Hunting Tests. No JH title will be issued.

2b. CHAPTER 2, SECTION 4. MASTER HUNTER TITLE (MH).

Dogs that have acquired a Master Hunter title at an AKC licensed or member club Hunting Test are eligible to enter Junior and Senior Hunting Tests. No JH or SH titles will be issued.

This modifies the current Regulation that says once a dog has earned a title at a higher level, it may not enter lower level tests. The AKC has received requests from owners with elderly dogs that are no longer capable of performing at a high level but the owner would like to run the dog for the enjoyment of the dog and owner. This change may also find application with a professionally handled dog whose owner would like to try handling but does not feel comfortable entering a high level test.

3. CHAPTER 1, SECTION 13. HUNTING TEST COMMITTEE.

Weather. Weather is an important consideration for the hunting test event committee. The safety of participants and animals is of utmost importance. Extreme weather such as lightening, strong winds, heat or cold, snow or heavy rain can create hazardous conditions. The hunting test event committee, in consultation with the judges, has the responsibility to decide if an event should be halted due to weather and at what point the event shall resume. If a weather delay results in an entrant being unable to participate, the refund of entry fees, in whole or in part, will be at the discretion of the event committee. If an entire event or part of an event is cancelled due to weather, the refund of entry fees, in whole or in part, will be at the discretion of the event committee.

This addition is meant to clarify that the event committee has the responsibility of deciding when an event should be stopped/started due to weather conditions. The event committee also has the right to decide what to do with entry fees when weather causes delay or cancelation.

4. CHAPTER 3, SECTION 5. GUNS.

In the Master Hunting Test and the Senior level water test the handler must carry an empty shotgun. If the shotgun being carried is functional, it must be a breaking type shotgun; if the handler's shotgun is non-functional, it may be of any type. Whether on land or water in Master or water in Senior, the handler must shoulder the empty shotgun and, with both hands on the gun, follow the flight of the bird as if a shot were to be fired. Handlers must follow safe gun handling practices at all times. Failure to handle the gun as previously described during a land flush or at the water, or handling the gun in an unsafe manner must be severely penalized, event to the point of disqualification under trained abilities.

Handlers at the Junior level are not to be required to handle a gun at any time during any part of the testing. Handlers in the Senior land test are not required to handle a gun.

This change eliminates the need to handle a gun in the Senior land test. In all cases except the Senior land test the dog is required to be steady as the handler aims the gun at the bird. In part the purpose of shouldering the gun is to divide the handler's attention between handling the dog and aiming the gun, thus providing a better test of the dog's steadiness. Since a Senior dog in a land test is not required to be steady, this purpose does not apply. Many participants and clubs have approached the AKC inquiring about eliminating gun handling in the Senior land test. Field observations by staff have confirmed the awkwardness of the situation, with many guns being laid down by handlers in the field and temporarily lost.

5. NEW BREEDS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SPANIEL HUNTING TESTS

The AKC Board approved the Curly-Coated Retriever and the Flat-Coated Retriever to be eligible to participate in the Spaniel Hunting Test Program effective January 1, 2012.

AKC Performance Events are meant to test the skills for which a breed was originally developed. The history of both the Curly-Coated and Flat-Coated Retrievers indicates they were developed to be versatile hunting dogs, proficient in both upland and waterfowl hunting. The testing standards are not being changed due to their inclusion. There is no intent to change the name of the test.

6. EVENT APPLICATION FEE

The AKC Board passed an increase in the event application fees to \$35.00 (previously \$25.00) for all events to be held on or after April 1, 2012, unless the event has been applied for prior to December 12, 2011. The current Hunt Test Application fee has been in effective since the beginning of the program in the mid-80s.