

## DRAFT REVISION No 2

# RETRIEVING TRIALS FOR GUNDOGS

## Guidelines for Judges

### Preamble

Directives issued by a Member Body shall apply to a Retrieving Trial in that State/Territory and to any affiliate conducting Retrieving Trials, with the exception of the National Trial, but in the event of any inconsistency, the Rules of the ANKC shall apply. At a National Retrieving Trial Championship only the ANKC Rules shall apply. Consequently, nothing contained in these Guidelines shall be considered as altering and/or amending the ANKC Rules in any way whatsoever.

Recommendations relating to the interpretation and application of the Rules are therefore for guidance purposes aimed at promoting increased uniformity in the conduct of Retrieving Trials and the impartial assessment of the competitors.

The objectives of these Guidelines are twofold:

Firstly, to promote greater uniformity in the conduct of Retrieving Trials, including the standard of Runs set in the various Stakes; and

Secondly, to facilitate greater uniformity in how Judge's assess the relative merits of dogs competing in Retrieving Trials. In respect to *evaluating a dog's performance*, these Guidelines include a set of recommendations for grading the performance of dogs so that there will be greater uniformity in the penalties imposed for various faults.

### Recommendations

**ANKC Rule No 1** states;

*A Retrieving Trial is an event at which competitions for the working of registered Gundogs are conducted, both on land and in or through water, to determine their relative merits in the field under conditions which emulate as closely as possible those which would be found whilst shooting, but at the same time bring the work of each dog within an ambit of equality where assessment may be fairly made.*

The phrase, "*conditions which emulate as closely as possible to those which would be found whilst shooting*" should be interpreted for the purposes of the Rules as "*natural hunting conditions*". At all times Judges should be mindful of the requirement to "*bring the work of each dog within an ambit of equality where assessment may be fairly made.*" This includes, as far as is practical, ensuring that there are no significant changes in the colour of game especially that used for "marked retrieves". Judges are encouraged to oversee the sorting of game in order to circumvent any difficulties that may arise and to maximize the "ambit of equality".

**ANKC Rule No 2** states;

*The function of a Retriever is to seek and retrieve fallen game, when ordered to do so. It should sit quietly with the handler or in the hide, walk at heel, or assume any station designated by its handler until sent to retrieve. When ordered, a dog should*

*retrieve quickly and briskly without unduly disturbing too much ground, and should deliver, tenderly to hand. It should then await further orders.*

**ANKC Rule No 3** states;

*Accurate marking or memory of falls is of paramount importance. However, this does not imply that dogs that excel in marking should not be penalised for other faults. Ability to mark does not necessarily imply pinpointing the fall. A dog that misses the fall on the cast but recognises the depth of the area of the fall, stays in it, and quickly and systematically hunts it out has done a creditable and intelligent job of marking.*

**ANKC Rule No 4** states;

*A dog that marks the fall of a bird, used the wind, and will take direction from his handler is of great value.*

**ANKC Rule No 26** states;

*On Marked Retrieves the dog should be able to see a bird in the air and as it falls. A dog on a Marked Retrieve should not need direction from its handler.*

Perhaps more than any others, Rule Nos 2 and 4 encapsulate the necessity for team work between handler and dog. A dog that has marked the fall of game and been sent to retrieve should, in general terms, require no further direction from the handler (ref ANKC Rule No 26). Deductions from a perfect score should be commensurate with the deficiencies shown in marking and memory.

Judges should be discouraged from setting Runs which are aimed at discounting the need for teamwork by consciously locating handlers in positions where they cannot help their dog. "Natural hunting conditions" are subject to great variation across the length and breadth of Australia, the work expected of dogs should not be subject to similar wide variations. In most instances, there should be little doubt in anyone's mind as to the type of work that constitutes a perfect performance on any given Run. Nevertheless, there are unlimited opportunities for honest difference-of-opinion on the severity of the penalty to be applied to any given infraction or deviation from perfect work.

The possibility therefore exists for handlers to become confused and/or dismayed when their dog is not included in the placings due to faults, which a Judge in another Trial did not penalise so severely. However, this should be minimized, as everyone has the right to know which particular faults will be penalised severely, moderately, or only to a minor degree. It therefore follows that some clarification and/or guidance is required; hence, a variety of faults and their suggested classifications may be found at the back of this Guide.

**ANKC Rule 8 (a)** states;

*Action and Style - These are both seen in a fearless, well-trained dog that covers its ground with good free movement.*

The style and capabilities of each particular breed should be taken into account when making an assessment. Action and Style do not relate to speed alone. The assessment should take into account factors such as; how keen and willing is the dog to work with its handler and to promptly accept commands, how keen and willing is the dog to perform the act of retrieving.

**ANKC Rule 8 (b)** states;

***Blinking*** - Any dog that finds and deliberately passes by the game, either through nervousness or bad training is a "blinker".

A dog that blinks game and then begins to hunt in the wrong area should be penalized 1 - 5 points. Indicators such as the dog pausing over game and looking back toward the handler should be used by the Judge to confirm that game has been ignored. The Judge must be certain in his/her mind that blinking has in fact occurred before applying the penalty and it is not simply a case of misjudgement by the dog or the Judge.

**ANKC Rule 8 (d)** states;

***Breaking from the Hide*** - A dog will be deemed to have broken from the hide if he moves outside the area designated by the Judge as the hide. Any movement by the dog within the area of the hide shall be classed as unsteadiness only.

If a dog breaks from the hide to a position where it would be able to see the game placed, cast, or the handler firing at the game and is then replaced before the shot is fired – apply 5 point penalty.

Breaking to Shot from a Hide - if a dog breaks from the hide before a shot is fired, it should be seen as being less steady than a dog that waits in the hide until it hears a shot (or two in the case of a Double Blind) and then breaks. It would therefore seem inconsistent to increase the penalty for this infraction over that discussed immediately above. By definition, there has been no attempt to retrieve (only to rejoin the handler) – apply a 5 point penalty.

If a dog moves from the hide, but stops in an area not insight of the handler or of game being cast or placed – may be returned to the hide and a deduction for unsteadiness would be applied – apply a penalty of 3 Points.

A dog moving from hide position before the shot is fired may be repositioned once only.

If a dog comes out of the hide and sees the blind being placed or game cast and is deemed to have gained an unfair advantage, it should be disqualified.

**ANKC Rule 8 (e)** states;

***Breaking to Shot*** - If a dog makes a forward movement which in the opinion of the Judge indicates a deliberate attempt to retrieve without being ordered to do so, that dog shall be deemed to have broken. If a dog makes a slight break and is brought immediately under control it shall be penalised for unsteadiness.

Controlled Break - up to 5 points deduction (dog stopped in the field and redirected).

If the dog breaks and continues to retrieve – 10 point deduction.

**ANKC Rules 8 (f), ((g) and (j)** collectively state;

**(f) Control Area** - is that area encompassed by the control point markers and the firing point markers.

**(g) Control Point** - is the point at which a dog and handler come into the control of the Judge and Field Steward for the purpose of commencing a run. This point shall be between the two markers set in position by direction of the Judge.

**(j) Firing Point** - is the point from which the handler will fire a gun and direct the dog to retrieve.

*Note: Terrain permitting, the distance between the Control Point and the Firing Point shall be not less than ten metres and the distance between the two marker pegs at the Firing Point shall be not less than 1.5 metres.*

Judges are encouraged to be very specific in their briefing to handlers on where they are to control their dog.

Handlers moving either forward or backward from the Firing Point should be penalized, accordingly, and this may even lead to receiving a zero score (No Score) – if it is deemed to be an attempt to gain an unfair advantage.

A dog that picks up a previously retrieved item of game prior to being sent for the next leg of a retrieve – 5 point penalty

N.B. A previously retrieved item of game refers to game retrieved by the dog in the current Run and not items of game that have been retrieved in other Runs and that have inadvertently been left where the dog may be tempted to retrieve them.

**ANKC Rule No 8 (p)** states;

**Hard Mouth** - A dog is deemed to be hard-mouthed when there is unmistakable evidence of any markings or damage on game retrieved due to biting or crunching by the dog. The penalty as defined on the score sheet should be relative to the marking or damage. Where there is deliberate squeezing of game so that the bones break and the Judge considers that the game is unfit for the table, the Judge may apply Rule 68 and disqualify the dog.

*Note: Game can be marked when thrown and this should be considered.*

A dog should be penalised for hard-mouth (damaging game), but, before doing so, the Judge should inspect the bird and be satisfied that the dog alone is responsible for the damage.

"Hard-mouth" is one of the most severely penalized faults in a retriever; furthermore, once a dog has been charged with this fault, it carries that stigma for life. Therefore, "hard-mouth" should become the Judges' verdict only when there is incontrovertible proof of it. In most cases, torn skin or flesh, alone, is not sufficient since damage of this type may be caused in a variety of ways, such as by sharp sticks and stones, etc., in the cover. Usually crushed bone structure can be accepted as trustworthy and sufficient evidence of "hard-mouth". Pigeons with broken backs may not be a case of "hard mouth" since this type of damage may occur when the bird falls on hard or stony ground. Various types of inconclusive evidence should merely be recorded by the Judge pending the manner in which the dog handles game in subsequent Runs.

If a dog is found to have demonstrated “extreme hard-mouth” it should be eliminated from the Stake. For damage to game not amounting to “extreme hard mouth”, a deduction of up to 10 points per incident may be applied. A cumulative penalty should be applied where damage to more than one item of game has occurred. When a dog has reached a total of 20 points for damage to game over the course of a trial, ANKC Rule No 68 should be applied, and the dog disqualified.

Other faults are frequently confused with "hard-mouth," although, in reality, they are entirely separate and distinct from it. "Freezing," in particular, falls into this category. A hard-mouthed dog may be gentle at delivery and, certainly, a sticky delivery does not imply hard-mouth. "Rolling-a-bird" or "mouthing" it, while making the retrieve, may be erroneously associated with "hard-mouth" in the opinion of some, even though the bird is not damaged. . If such "mouthing" is a fault at all, then it is of only minor importance.

**ANKC Rule 8 (u)** states;

***Obedience** - The spontaneous action of obeying all commands. Dogs should act readily and not cower or cringe at their handler's signs, sounds or commands.*

Judges should look for obedience and steadiness not only between the pegs, but throughout the complete Run. The 5 point allocation for steadiness, obedience and walking to heel should be limited to behaviour “between the pegs”.

**ANKC Rule 7 (r)** states;

***Retrieving** - The retrieving covers the performance of the dog from when ordered to retrieve until it delivers the game to its handler.*

Judges should be looking for eagerness both on the way out and on the return, directness on the way out and on the return, marking ability, and use of nose, ears and eyes.

**ANKC Rule 12** states;

*A **Blind Find Retrieve** shall be a retrieve where a dog is in such a position that the flight, fall or placement of the game cannot be seen. **The Judge may direct the dog to be placed behind a Hide in close proximity to the Firing Point.** Where possible it is recommended that the Hide be part of the natural terrain or be constructed of natural materials*

Attention is drawn to the requirements outlined in the second sentence of this Rule.

**ANKC Rule 15** states;

***Double Rise Retrieve** shall consist of a retrieve where one item of game is cast as for a Mark Retrieve at which two shots are fired in succession and before the dog i Double Rise Retrieve shall consist of a retrieve where one item of game is cast as for a Mark Retrieve at which two shots are fired in succession and before the dog is sent to retrieve. While the dog is returning with the first item of game, a second item of*

*game is cast or placed no further than ten (10) metres from the fall of the first item of game, but at a greater distance from the Firing Point. The second item of game shall be retrieved immediately after the first item of game is delivered to hand. On the second leg, a handler may cue the dog using hand and voice to return to the area of fall of the first item of game. Having sent the dog for the second item of game, the retrieve should not be treated as a Blind Find Retrieve. While the dog is returning with the first item of game, a second item of game is cast or placed no further than ten (10) metres from the fall of the first item of game, but at a greater distance from the Firing Point. The second item of game shall be retrieved immediately after the first item of game is delivered to hand. On the second leg, a handler may cue the dog using hand and voice to return to the area of fall of the first item of game. Having sent the dog for the second item of game, the retrieve should not be treated as a Blind Find Retrieve.*

This test seeks to simulate a situation that regularly occurs in duck shooting where the dog sees one item of game fall, yet the handler knows that other game has fallen in the same general area that the dog must hunt on its own in order to find it/them.

Judges should be mindful that the Rule stipulates that the second item of game is cast or placed no further than ten (10) metres **from the fall of the first item of game**, but at a greater distance from the Firing Point. The use of a common location for the second item of game for all dogs is unlikely to satisfy the 10 metre constraint given likely variations in the cast of the first item of game due to wind, size of the game etc. In other words, the location of the second item of game should be customised to suit the cast of the first item of game.

**ANKC Rule No 17** states;

***Double Fall Retrieve.** The first game is cast as a mark from concealed cover and one shot fired, dog is sent to retrieve game. While the dog is on the way out to retrieve, the second game is cast and a shot fired so the dog may mark or hear the fall of the game. The first game cast must be retrieved before the second. The second game must be cast to land not less than twenty metres from the line of the first and not less than forty metres from the firing point. This retrieve is restricted to "All Age" and "Championship Stakes".*

This test is seeking to simulate a natural hunting situation wherein a dog marks the fall of game and is sent to make the retrieve. As the dog is making its way towards the fallen game, other game lurking nearby flushes and is shot by the handler. The well trained dog should stop and acknowledge the fall of the second item of game before returning to its original task, with or without a command from its handler. Judges are reminded of the requirements listed in ANKC Rule 17, and especially that the first item of game to be retrieved, must be a cast as a Mark. Furthermore, for this retrieve to “work”, the dog must be in a position to see the second item of game cast or to hear it fall. When a dog’s attention is focused on retrieving the first item of game, its ability to see the second item of game cast will be severely constrained, especially if it must solely rely on its peripheral vision. It is therefore desirable that, relative to the line from the Firing Point to the first item of game and the position of the dog, the angle to the second item of game should not exceed 60 degrees. Casting the second item of game while dogs are descending a hill should also be avoided. The use of a duck call a precursor to casting the second item of **game is worthy of serious**

consideration as it introduces an ambit of equality for all dogs as does conducting this test in water.

**ANKC Rule 23** states;

*In multiple Retrieves the Judge may stipulate the order in which items of game shall be retrieved. Any reasonable combination of the listed Retrieves shall be permissible, provided that a dog shall not be required to pick up more than three (3) items of game in any Run.*

**Rules 9 through 22** describe the format for the range of retrieves permitted in any Run. **Rule 23** allows for any reasonable combination of the prescribed retrieves, provided always that no more than three items of game shall be picked up in any one Run. When a Judge uses **Rule 23** to build a so called “triple”, Judges are encouraged to describe the test in terms of the specific Retrieves used to construct the Run e.g. A Single Mark Retrieve coupled with a Double Blind Retrieve.

**ANKC Rule 25** states;

*(a) In All Age and Championship Stakes, a Judge may order that one (1) additional item of game be placed or cast as a diversion and this item of game shall not be retrieved by the competing dog. An item of game used as a diversion shall not be located either “in line” with or less than 20m from an item of game that is to be retrieved. See Rule 8 (r) for the definition of “in line”.*

*(b) While in competition, if a dog picks up an item of game used in connection with the Run, other than the nominated item of game, it shall be eliminated from further competition. In the event of a dog picking up an item of game not being used in connection with the Run, it shall be given a re-run and the Judge will take into consideration the performance of the dog prior to its picking up this item of game.*

The circumstances applicable to the use of a “Diversionary Bird” or “No-No Bird” (see **Rule 25 (a)** above) are open to a wide range of interpretations. Accordingly, Judges shall ensure that situations surrounding its use complies with the criteria that it “emulates as closely as possible those which would be found whilst shooting”. A Diversionary or No-No Bird should not be placed in line with game that is to be retrieved or within 15m of that game and/or the line to it.

**ANKC Rule 26** states;

*For any Mark Retrieve the dog should be able to see a bird in the air and as it falls and where possible the cast bird should break open skyline when viewed by the dog. A dog on a Mark Retrieve should not need direction from the handler once the dog has been sent for the Retrieve.*

Dogs cannot mark the fall of game it cannot or did not see. In setting “Marks”, Judges should be mindful of the need for equality for all competitors and should take into account such factors as; the nature and contrast of the background against which the flight of the bird is visualized, the prevailing light conditions, as well as the height to which the birds are thrown. The position of the sun relative to the line of sight of a mark should be considered where a Run may take several hours to complete as is often the case with a large number of competitors. If cover, or any other obstacle, is present in the immediate foreground, the stature of the competing breeds should also

be taken into consideration. The duration for which the flight can be observed is another key factor and Judges are encouraged to ensure that dogs are afforded a reasonable time in which to “see” the bird. In the case of multiple Marks, it is recommended that the delay between the first Mark hitting the ground and the start of the cast of the second Mark should not be less than 2 seconds.

**ANKC Rule 3** states;

*Accurate marking or memory of falls is of paramount importance. However, this does not imply that dogs that excel in marking should not be penalised for other faults. Ability to mark does not necessarily imply pinpointing the fall. A dog that misses the fall on the cast but recognises the depth of the area of the fall, stays in it, and quickly and systematically hunts it out has done a creditable and intelligent job of marking.*

Even with “Marks” a handler may be able to render great assistance to the dog by giving it a “clear indication” in the direction of the fall and this is especially so in the case of multiple retrieves. However, there is nothing a competitor can do short of handling, to aid the dog in recognising the “depth of the fall”. Often a dog gives a definite indication of memory and of its marking ability, at or after the delivery of the first bird, by aligning itself toward, or by looking eagerly in the direction of an un-retrieved “fall”; at times leaving on command but without the benefit of a “clear indication” to the fall being given to it by the handler. There is no invariable method by which the relative merits of such perfect completions can be judged; the dog trained to come to heel and briskly given a “clear indication” in the same manner for each and every retrieve, including the first, should not be penalised for such work – not even relatively, in comparison with a more spontaneous style of work. See also **ANKC Rule 27 and 73** for further clarification. The observant Judge will be able to distinguish between the dog being given a “clear indication” to the item of game to next be retrieved, and a dog that is being “lined” toward game it has forgotten or did not see to mark its fall and the difference should be assessed appropriately.

What precisely defines the “area of the fall” defies accurate description; yet, before the start of every Run the Judge must assign boundaries for each and every “fall” so that a decision can be made as to whether the dog has remained within the “area of the fall”, or alternatively how far it has wandered away from “the area” and how much cover it has un-necessarily disturbed. In determining these arbitrary boundaries for the “area of the fall”, due consideration should be given to a range of factors such as; 1) the type, height and uniformity of the cover, 2) the prevailing light conditions, 3) the direction and strength of the prevailing wind, 4) the length of the specific retrieve, 5) the speed and hunting style of each individual dog. Finally and most importantly, 6) there should be a separate “area of fall” for each and every bird and their size will depend on whether the Judge is considering the “area of fall” for a single mark retrieve, or the first bird a dog is sent for in a multiple retrieve, or for the second and/or third bird, since each of these “areas” should differ each from one another.

In general, the “area of the fall” for a Single Mark Retrieve should be relatively small; the area for the first bird to be retrieved in a “double” should be smaller than for the second bird, and both of these should be larger in a “triple” and larger still for the third bird in the triple. Also, “the area” for short retrieves should certainly be smaller than for long retrieves. Deductions applied should vary depending on the distance an individual dog wanders out of the “area”, the frequency of such wanderings, the

number of mismarked birds in any given Run, and by the amount of cover disturbed by these meanderings.

Dogs that disturb cover unnecessarily and are clearly well out of the area of the “fall”, either by not going directly to the “area”, or by leaving it, even though they eventually find the bird without being handled, should be penalized more severely than those handled quickly and obediently to the game. In general, the handler that recognises that the dog has failed the primary feature of the test i.e. to mark the fall of game and seeks to recover the situation with a few quick handles should be deemed to have done a better job than a dog that is left to find the bird by the so called “paddock method”.

**ANKC Rule 27** states;

*On Mark Retrieves, where more than one bird is to be retrieved, the order may be specified by the Judge. The handler is permitted to indicate clearly to the dog by hand and/or by voice which bird it is being sent for. However, further handling once the dog has left the handler’s side will be penalised accordingly.*

Dogs that require handler intervention to locate the game should not score as highly as those who accurately mark and remember the “area of the fall”.

**ANKC Rule 28** states;

*On Blind Retrieves, where possible, the course should be planned in such a way that advantage is taken of natural hazards. It should be possible, at least in theory, for a dog to find a well-planned Blind Retrieve on the initial line from his handler. The test should be so planned that the dog should be in sight at least until directed into the area of the fall, as a Blind Retrieve is a test of control and a dog that is out of sight for a considerable period cannot be said to be under control.*

Utilising natural hazards should obviate the need for Judges to issue special instructions about the manner in which a Blind Retrieve should be completed, other than get the game by the shortest or most direct route.

**ANKC Rule 30** states;

*The maximum distance for any retrieve will be 150 metres. It is desirable in a Novice Stake that runs are not more than 100 metres.*

Of primary importance, retrieves should approximate “natural hunting conditions”. Nevertheless, “falls” which are long and out of gun range for the handler are appropriate and proper; they can be justified on the basis that a bird can fly a considerable distance after it has been shot, or has been shot by a hunting companion. Judges should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the specified distances are not exceeded. When significant doubt exists the length of retrieves can be paced out or a measuring tape, laser binoculars and/or GPS instruments may also be used. The length of any retrieve should be proportional to the difficulty presented by the terrain.

**ANKC Rule 32** states;

*Retrieves involving a relocation of a dog from an original Firing Point must not involve a relocation of more than twenty (20) metres. The relocated Firing Point should not unduly disadvantage the dog or handler and the area of fall must remain*

*able to be observed by both dog and handler from the new Firing Point. Relocated retrieves are permitted when they enable better sighted retrieves to be included in the Run.*

Apart from the distance limitations invoked by this Rule Judges should also take into consideration (quote) “The relocated Firing Point should not unduly disadvantage the dog or handler and the area of fall must remain able to be observed by both dog and handler from the new Firing Point”. (unquote)

**ANKC Rule 59** states;

*The area over which a Stake shall be conducted will be decided by the Trial Committee conducting the Trial and indicated to the Judge by the appointed Trial Manager. Where possible, two (2) members of the Trial Committee will be made available to assist the Judge. The Judge shall select his/her own Runs. The Committee has the right to intervene only if the selected Runs contravene the ANKC Ltd Rules, are logistically unsound or the dogs' safety is in serious question*

Planning of tests is foremost the responsibility of the Judge; it is also one of their most important tasks. With good tests, it is far easier to assess the quality of the performances by the various dogs, than could be said if the Runs are so simple and so easy that most competitors turn in near perfect performances. Similarly, tests that are at the other extreme should be avoided. Tests that are too difficult and time consuming, or are too “tricky” and so produce many failures, fall into the ‘extreme’ category.

Ingenuity on the part of the Judge should be encouraged, not only in planning regular tests, but also in devising some which are unusual and quite different from those customarily set at Retrieving Trials. Nevertheless, all such unusual tests should conform to “those which would be found whilst shooting” and be underpinned by **ANKC Rules 9 through 22** or combinations permitted under **ANKC Rule 23**.

In order to minimise possible problems with the mechanics of Runs, Judges should encourage Trial Managers to view the runs prior to commencement of the Trial.

Viewing grounds, selecting areas and presetting and testing Runs before a Trial (wherever possible) is recommended. If this is not possible, Judges should make themselves available for a suitable period prior to the commencement of their Stake.

**ANKC Rule 82** states;

*At the Control Point, after removing the lead and collar, the handler shall place the dog at the "sit", "drop" or "stand" position - **and will be handed the gun and approved inserts by the Gun Steward.***

At the time the wording of this Rule was accepted by the ANKC it was intended that the gun and the approved inserts would be handed to the Handler separately. In so doing the Handler would be responsible for insuring that the inserts were ready for their intended use. The background to the change stemmed from an incident where inserts used by a prewise competitor was left in the gun resulting in a No Score as game not shot at cannot be retrieved. Perhaps amending the wording to “and then approved” would clarify the situation.

**ANKC Rule 84** states;

*The Game Steward shall when directed by the judge, cast the game in the area and in such manner as previously directed by the Judge, and where applicable from a position out of sight of the handler and in a way that does not distract the dog.*

**ANKC Rule 84** should be read in conjunction with **ANKC Rule 59 (e)** which states;  
*The Game Stewards will at all times, endeavour to be hidden from sight of both the handler and dog. The Game and Gun Stewards will refrain from unnecessary movement and the Gun Steward will ensure that the gun is broken at all times when not actually in use. Game to be retrieved must be at least ten (10) metres from the Game Steward.*

It is general it is accepted that Game Stewards will be hidden from sight of both handler and dog when the game is cast.

Maintaining an ambit of equality for all competitors is of paramount importance. In the event of a mis-cast, or any other untoward occurrence, it is preferable that only the Judge should call NO BIRDS. Nevertheless, situations do arise where the Judge may not be in a position to precisely observe whether or not game falls within the area designated by the Judge. In such situations and if minor deviations in the fall of game are likely to impact on the “ambit of equality”, the Judge should appoint a Steward to monitor the situation and if necessary call NO BIRD.- **ANKC Rule 84** refers.

In a Restricted or an All Age Stake, if a dog proceeds to retrieve a NO BIRD, then the dog shall be deemed to be out of control and the dog shall be marked with a “No Score”.

If the dog has been sent prior to the Judge, or Steward, calling "NO BIRD" and the dog proceeds to retrieve the game, the dog shall not necessarily be deemed to be out of control. In this or similar circumstances, the final determination shall be at the Judge's discretion.

**ANKC Rule 85** states;

*The handler or Gun Steward shall, while the game is in the air and as near as possible to the apex of its flight, aim at the game and fire his gun from the shoulder and in the normal shooting posture. Unless otherwise directed by the Judge, the normal shooting posture will mean the handler or steward will be standing.*

When making an assessment, the Judge should take note of the following:

- |                  |    |   |
|------------------|----|---|
| That the handler | 1. | Fires with the stock at the shoulder (Up to 5 point deduction for non-compliance) |
|                  | 2. | Fires at the apex of flight   |
|                  | 3. | Fires at the nominated game   |
|                  | 4. | Fires in a standing (“normal shooting”) position (unless instructed otherwise).   |

Deductions for failure to comply with (2, 3, or 4 above) should be commensurate with any advantage sought or gained by the handler.

Before an item of game can be retrieved a shot must be fired in the general direction of the game (except for misfires). In the event of deliberate non-compliance in order to gain an advantage the dog shall be disqualified – **ANKC Rule 60** - Failure to obey a Judge's instruction refers. If the Judge considers that by reminding the handler of the need to "fire" the gun no material advantage has been gained, a 5 point penalty should apply.

**ANKC Rule 86** states;

*After firing at the game, the gun must be broken before or immediately after the dog has been sent to retrieve.*

**ANKC Rule 87** states;

*The handler must not wave the gun about unnecessarily before or after it has been fired and must carry the gun at all times during a retrieve unless otherwise instructed by the Judge.*

**ANKC Rules 85, 86 and 87** focus on the manner in which the gun should be handled. Given that the overriding intent of the Rules is simulate real shooting conditions, the practise by some handlers to wave the gun about in order to encourage their dog to focus in a specific direction prior to game being cast should also be taken into consideration in the overall assessment of the dog's performance.

**ANKC Rule 90** states;

*The dog shall retrieve the game cleanly and without delay shall return direct to the handler and shall deliver straight to hand in front of the handler from standing or sitting position, and as instructed by the Judge. The dog shall be stationary at delivery.*

Judges are reminded of the requirement for dogs to be stationary at delivery. Refusing to deliver (e.g. sticky delivery, not releasing the bird immediately on command), should be penalised according to the severity of the offence and in extreme cases, may result in a zero score.

**ANKC Rule 93** states;

*The dog should at no time drop the game during a retrieve until ordered to deliver by the handler. Any dog doing so shall be penalised according to the seriousness of the offence. The dog will have completed the retrieve when the game is brought within reach of the handler and an attempt is made to deliver without the handler stepping towards the dog. If the game is dropped during an attempt to deliver within reach of the handler, the penalty is for dropping game.*

In the event of a dog deliberately dropping an item of game- maximum deduction 5 points

Game accidentally dislodged from dogs mouth - deduction 1 - 5 points

Note: The repositioning of game without releasing it should not be penalized.

**ANKC Rule 97 (a)** states;

*On completion of the Trial the Judge shall complete and sign a Judge's Certificate or official catalogue of the event indicating:*

*(a) Placegetters. Only dogs worthy of the award of Championship points may be shown as first, second or third placegetters in Stakes carrying Championship points.*

In All Age or Championship Stakes placings should only be awarded if the performances of the dogs are worthy of championship points.

If, in the opinion of the Judge, the appropriate standard is not maintained, the Judge must then inform the handler that their dog is out of competition - no score, and at the discretion of the Judge may continue in the Stake.

Judges should familiarize themselves with the standard of work required at every level and they should not vary this because of up-coming events such as State or National Championships.

### **General**

No Score or Disqualification and two situations that may arise during the course of a Trial. Judges should ensure that they are conversant with the circumstances relative to the application of these two penalties. Put simply, when a dog receives a No Score it becomes Non Competitive but may continue in the Stake at the discretion of the Judge. A dog that is disqualified must immediately retire from the Stake. See **ANKC Rules 8(p), 56, 62, 63, 71, and 73.**

**Giving Tongue** is a fault listed on the Score Sheet that is included within the ANKC Rules. Nevertheless, there is no specific Rule that addresses this issue. Dogs that give any audible sound - to be penalized 1 - 5 points depending on the severity of the offence.

**Marking Territory** is a fault and points should be deducted from the retrieve, e.g. 1 - 5 points for each offence depending on the circumstances. Marking on the way out to make a retrieve is considered more serious than marking on the return, or covering the spot where a bitch may have previously urinated. Defecating is also a fault, usually stemming from the lack of opportunity to properly "air" or a nervous disposition. Because of its random and less frequent nature, it is seen as less important than Marking Territory.

**Scoring Multiple Retrieves:** Throughout Australia several methods of scoring multiple retrieves have been adopted. The two most widely accepted involve either: a) Apportioning the total number of points available depending on the perceived difficulty of each leg of the Run, or b) Allocating full points for each leg of a Run, then the total number of points is averaged after taking account of "below the line deductions" as they relate to each leg of the Run. At this time there is no universal agreement, nevertheless, it is important that individual Judges are consistent in their approach.

**Restricted Stakes:** If the Run chosen incorporates a Mark and a Blind Retrieve it is preferable that the Mark should be retrieved first. If the Blind is to be retrieved first,

then Judges should ensure that the angle separating the Blind and the Mark is not less than 45 degrees.

**Sending a Dog Twice:** Restricted or All Age Stakes - if a dog returns to its handler without game and receives a second “send” from the Firing Point, and the judge considers that the offence of “Failure to complete the Retrieve” has been committed, it shall be given No Score. If a dog has taken an incorrect line and in only a few metres, the handler stops the dog, brings it back to make an adjustment to its line and re-sends the dog; then the dog has incurred an infraction and must be penalised accordingly.

**Beginner’s Tests:** See **ANKC Rule 36** – It is recommended that Judges start the dog and Handler from the Firing Point and that the Run should be from 20 to 50m in length.

**The ANKC Code of Practice for Field and Retrieving Trial Judges** states;

1. A Judge shall act with professional decorum at all times.
2. A Judge shall give every entry and handler a fair and equal opportunity.
3. Judges shall show courtesy whilst carrying out each judging appointment.
4. Judges shall be punctual in fulfilling their judging appointment.
5. A Judge shall present himself/herself in attire that is appropriate and comfortable for each judging appointment.
6. If an entry displays an obvious physical impediment that, in the Judge's opinion would be detrimental to the entry's health or is unable to be handled or is deemed to be savage or vicious (or aggressive), the entry should be excused from the trial and reported as per the Regulations.
7. A Judge shall not enter any dog at any Stake at which he/she is appointed to judge.
8. No member of a Judge's household (i.e. any person who resides at the same address) shall enter or handle a dog in any Stake at which the Judge officiates.
9. A Judge shall not solicit a judging appointment.
10. A Judge shall not solicit or seek the entry of any particular dog or dogs at a Trial at which the Judge is officiating.
11. A Judge shall not allow entries for a Trial, at which that person is judging, to be received at the Judge's address and/or be processed at the Judge's address.
12. Judges shall promptly complete all requirements of the Judging Contract. Any verbal acceptance of an appointment by a Judge shall be subject to the receipt of the contract within fourteen (14) days.

13. At the time of completing a contract the Judge shall inform the inviting body of any disability or limitation that would restrict him or help in carrying out the appointment.
14. A Judge shall honor each contract and is not free to accept an alternative contract that will affect his/her availability to fulfill the original contract, except with the written dispensation of the contracting body.
15. Accommodation provided to the Judge to fulfill an appointment is for the Judge only, except where prior mutual agreement has been reached with the contracting body for variation.
16. A Judge shall be responsible for the cost of all personal telephone calls, alcoholic beverages and any personal laundering except where mutual agreement has been reached with the contracting body at the time the contract is accepted.
17. A Judge who withdraws from a contracted appointment shall not be permitted to judge at any other trial wherever held on a date which would prevent him/her from attending the original contracted event.
18. Judges shall judge the Trial in accordance with the current ANKC Rules.
19. Judges shall not openly discuss with any other person the decision of any other Judge.

**Judges' Obligations:** Judges are expected to stay for presentations. It is recommended that their dress and behaviour should be that befitting an adjudicator. Judges are encouraged to constrain their critique to positive comments. At all times Judges should speak to Stewards, other officials, the gallery and competitors in a courteous and respectful manner. In selecting Runs, Judges should be mindful on the need to allocate a "hide" area sufficient for the number of entries, including the provision for handlers to "air" their dogs, without having to invade the personal space of other dogs within the "hide". Judges should also be mindful that they owe a "duty of care" to both the handlers and their competing dogs and therefore not expose handlers or dogs to unnecessary physical danger.

The location of galleries and their view of the Trial is another important consideration. Nevertheless, galleries should not be located behind and in line with a handler working a dog.

Judges are reminded of their obligation in regard to maintaining an ambit of equality in all aspects of a Trial. Each dog should be given the same opportunity to complete each run. For example; the practice of giving more time, or allowing more disobeyed commands to a dog just because it is leading on points going in to the last run is not considered acceptable. Judges should be mindful of the truism, "It ain't over until the fat lady sings" and provide all dogs with the same opportunity on all Runs.

**PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING PROTESTS and DISPUTES AT TRIALS:**

Judges, Trial Managers and other Officials should familiarize themselves with the procedures required to deal with disputes and protests.

The Protest Committee shall consist of the Trial Manager and 2 judges each with at least 3 years' judging experience.

Immediately a verbal complaint is lodged with the Trial Manager, the judge shall be notified by the Trial Manager.

If no satisfactory conclusion can be reached between the Trial Manager and the judge, then the Trial Manager shall instigate formal proceedings.

The protest must be lodged in writing to the Trial Manager with the appropriate fee.

The judge shall be immediately notified that a written protest has been received and the Stake will be halted while the formal procedure takes place.

The Protest Committee shall convene and consider written reports from the Judge, the Judge's Steward, and the competitor stating their versions of the events.

After consultation and if no immediate solution can be reached, the Protest Committee shall proceed with a full and complete investigation into the matter.

The Protest Committee will finalise a conclusive decision in accordance with the Rules of the ANKC and those of the Member Body.

The Trial Manager will then inform the Judge and the competitor of the Committee's decision. In the event of the protest being deemed frivolous, or vexatious, the protest fee shall be forfeited.

### **Classification of Faults**

The task of classifying the many faults that may surface during the course of a trial is onerous; they have therefore been listed in general terms only. The various infractions have been classified as; SERIOUS FAULTS, MAJOR FAULTS or MINOR FAULTS. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that an infraction may be so minor in degree that it barely warrants the implied penalty. Conversely, the degree of a given instance may be so significant that it merits a penalty greater than that implied, even to the point of the dog being given a No Score and/or disqualified from the Stake. Furthermore, in each of the three categories, the listed faults should not be given equal weight, since they are not of equal gravity or importance.

### **SERIOUS FAULTS**

1. Repeated evidence of "poor nose" or lack of use of the ears and/or eyes.
2. Reluctance to enter either rough cover, water, mud, or any other situation involving unpleasant or difficult "going" for the dog, after having been ordered to do so on several occasions.
3. Returning to the handler, either without the game or without having been called in.
4. Stopping its hunt.

5. “Switching birds” i.e. giving up after a search for one bird, and going to “the area” of another “fall”, or dropping the bird it had retrieved and going for another.
6. “Blinking the Bird” i.e. ignoring game that it has found and leaving it.
7. Restraint by holding or touching the dog.
8. “Out of Control” i.e. paying little or no attention to repeated whistles, commands and/or directions from the handler.
9. Extreme “freeze”, i.e. a stubborn and prolonged unwillingness to release game on delivery.
10. Retrieving a decoy – a mandatory No Score, ANKC Rules 21 and 112 refer.
11. Breaking to Shot.
12. “Hard mouth”, or badly damaging game, which in the opinion of the judge, was entirely and solely caused by the dog.
13. Loud and prolonged whining or barking.
14. Failure to find game which it should have located.
15. Deliberate blocking by the handler so that the dog will not see all birds and/or “falls”

### **MAJOR FAULTS**

Infractions in this category may be so slight as to warrant their consideration as only “minor faults”, or they may be so severe as to warrant their consideration as “serious faults”. Also, repetitions of “major faults” or a combination of several faults, may readily convert the total infraction into the “serious fault” category.

1. Failure to mark the “area of the fall”, requiring the dog to be handled to it; worse on a “single” or first bird of a “double” or “triple” than on the second or the third bird the dog is sent to retrieve.
2. Leaving “the area” or not going to it, and disturbing too much cover.
3. Reluctance to enter rough cover, water, mud or other situations involving unpleasant “going” for the dog.

4. Hunting in a slow, disinterested or lackadaisical manner, either at once or after a short hunt.
5. Poor style, including a disinterested attitude, a slow or reluctant departure, quest for game, or return with it.
6. “Popping on a Mark” i.e. looking back for directions on a “marked” bird before an extensive search has been undertaken.
7. Not stopping for a direction, after two or three whistles it should have heard.
8. Deliberate failure to take lines and various directions given to it; failure to hold lines and directions for more than a short distance.
9. Moderate whining or barking of short duration.
10. Going out of its way by land to a “fall”, without certainty of purpose to avoid going into water in a water retrieve
11. Noisy Handling – excessive shouting or prolonged use of very loud whistling.
12. Breaking out of the Hide either before or after the Shot is fired.

### **MINOR FAULTS**

Minor faults may be either severe, repeated, or combinations of these minor infractions may amalgamate to become “major faults”, or even “serious faults”. On the other hand, they may be so slight as to not warrant any penalty at all.

1. Going out of its way by land on the return from a water retrieve.
2. Lack of attention.

3. Poor line-manners; “heeling” poorly; not immediately taking and staying in the position designated by the handler; dropping game on delivery; jumping after the game after delivery; not remaining in position after delivery.
4. Slow pick-up of game; dropping game; handling game in a sloppy manner.
5. Marking territory especially on the way out to locate the game.
6. Unsteadiness at the Firing Point, including creeping.
7. Not stopping at the first whistle it should have heard, but stopping on the second or third.
8. “Popping on a Blind”, that is looking back for direction on a blind retrieve before taking the line or cast for a reasonable distance.
9. Occasional failure to take the handlers’ directions.
10. Occasional failure to hold the line, or directions given, for more than a few metres.
11. Slight “freezing” or reluctance to give up the game.
12. Slight short whining or one bark, on being sent.
13. Handling game roughly but without incurring any damage.
14. Moving in the Hide.

### **General Guidance for Setting Runs**

- Do not have dogs facing the sun on marked retrieves.
- Keep runs within the distance requirements of the Rules, i.e. the max distance is 150 metres and in Novice Stakes it is desirable that Runs not exceed 100 metres.
- If terrain permits, the distance between the Control Point and Firing Point should exceed 10 metres.
- If terrain permits, make sure there is at least 1.5 metres between the pegs at the Firing Point.
- In setting a Run, ensure that you as judge can see the dog for most of the Run and especially as the dog picks up the bird/s. You cannot assess the performance of a dog that is out of sight.

- Put sufficient obstacles in a Run so that the dogs will differentiate themselves during the course of the test and not necessarily between the pegs.
- Do not put too many obstacles in the retrieve that are designed to specifically eliminate dogs from the competition.
- Make sure that tests include both land and in or through water.
- In water retrieves make sure dogs can enter and exit the water safely by avoiding hazards in the water that may cause injury the dog.
- Make sure the area of the fall is large enough to accommodate some variation in the cast.
- Try to avoid casting birds onto stony ground or where there may be hard objects that may damage the bird.
- Try to include an amount of sky line in the cast (for at least 50% of cast) of the bird especially as it falls.
- Avoid casting birds into heavy cover where it becomes a raffle if the dog finds the bird.
- Where practical design a Run to test the dog's ability to judge the distance from the cast of the bird, not from the fall of the bird onto the ground. An obstacle such as a channel bank, ridge or reeds at thirty to forty metres will test this if the bird is cast at a distance behind the obstacle.
- If a walk up retrieve is used make sure the retrieve is not too long (say 60 metres) and that the dog is generally facing the bird as it is cast.