# RETRIEVING ABILITY TESTS 

## Rules for the conduct of

## Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs

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Approved by the Australian<br>National Kennel Council

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## Adopted by the Member Bodies of the Australian National Kennel Council Limited <br> (Australian National Kennel Council Ltd trading as Dogs Australia)

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## CONTENTS

## Page No.

1. Purpose ..... 3
2. Eligibility ..... 3
3. Titles ..... 3
4. General Regulations ..... 4
5. Procedure ..... 4
6. Rules and Exercises ..... 5
Novice ..... 6
Open ..... 8
7. Retrieves ..... 11
8. Definition of Terms ..... 11
9. Novice Score Sheet ..... 13
10. Open Score Sheet ..... 14

## RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF RETRIEVING ABILITY TESTS FOR GUNDOGS

## 1. Purpose

1.1 The Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs is a test of basic obedience and basic retrieving with the dog working off lead. The Tests provide a way for handlers to demonstrate that their Gundog has basic retrieving ability.
1.2 Directives of a Member Body shall apply to Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs in their State/Territory and to any affiliate conducting Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs, and in the event of any inconsistency the Rules of the ANKC Ltd shall apply.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1. All events shall be restricted to dogs six (6) months of age and over. The age of a dog shall be computed from its date of birth to the date on which the Trial commences. Should finalisation of the Trial be delayed, then the increase in age shall not affect the eligibility of any qualified contestant.
2.2. Main and Limited Registered Gundogs (including de-sexed registered Gundogs) and Associate Dogs of a variety accepted by a Member Body as a Gundog shall be permitted to compete in Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs in all States and/or Territories of Australia.
2.3. To be eligible to compete in a Novice Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must not have gained its title in Novice Retrieving Ability Test or gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) - DM, CM, NRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH. Or placed in any stake higher than a Novice Retrieving Trial Stake
2.4 To be eligible to compete in an Open Retrieving Ability Test a dog must have gained its Novice Retrieving Ability Test (NRA) title or gained any one of the following titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs - Qualified Novice Dog (QND) or Novice Retrieving Dog (NRD).
Dogs are ineligible to compete in an Open Retrieving Ability Test if they have have gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs: QRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH or been awarded a CM (Certificate of Merit) or DM (Diploma of Merit)
2.5 A dog which has gained its title in Novice or has gained any of the retrieving titles in 2.3 shall not be eligible to compete in Novice RATG except in a competition for which entries closed before the final pass score or retrieving title was gained. Should the handler wish to compete in the higher class (Open) then they must contact the Trial Secretary and request an upgrade, which shall be at the discretion of the Affiliate holding the RATG to allow.

## 3. TitLES

3.1 All dogs eligible to be entered in Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs in accordance with these Rules shall be eligible to receive Class Title Certificates upon qualification and application.
3.2 Applications for permission to use the letters "NRA" and "ORA" shall be lodged with the applicant's local ANKC Ltd Member Body.
'NRA' signifying Novice Retrieving Ability in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges, and one pass must have included water. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least $50 \%$ in each exercise and an overall score of not less than $75 \%$. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.
'ORA' signifying Open Retrieving Ability in connection with, and after the name of, each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges, and one pass must have included water, Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least $50 \%$ in each exercise and an overall score of not less than $75 \%$. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

## 4. General Regulations

4.1 The management of a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs shall be entrusted to the Committee of the Affiliate concerned.
4.2 All bitches shall be examined by a competent examiner before the commencement of every Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs. Bitches in oestrum shall not be permitted to compete. No preparation for concealing oestrum shall be used.
4.3 No person, other than the Judge and the Stewards, shall be permitted to accompany the handlers of the dogs competing in any Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs unless the permission of the Judge has been previously obtained. Spectators shall not be allowed to encroach on any area designated by the Trial Manager or Judge.
4.4 The Judge will select the course over which a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs shall be run.
4.5 While in competition all matters in connection with dogs shall be in the hands of the Judge, who may call Stewards for assistance, if necessary. The Judge is empowered to disqualify any dog that does not work to their satisfaction. All dogs are to be given the opportunity to complete ALL exercises of the Test, time permitting.
4.6 In each test, a dog may be handled by either its owner or a handler approved by the Stewards, but it must be one or the other. When dogs are working, an owner must not interfere with the dog if another person has been deputised to handle it.
4.7 The person handling a dog may speak, whistle and work it by hand as they deem proper, including using a hand to indicate to the dog which item of Game it is to retrieve, but may be called to order by the Judge for making any unnecessary noise or for any disorderly conduct, and if after being cautioned they persist with such noise or disorderly conduct, the Judge may disqualify the dog from the Test.
4.8 A handler who touches or physically interferes with his dog will be penalised according to the seriousness of the offence. Physical punishment of a dog during a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs or within the precincts of a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs will not be permitted. Any person who physically punishes a dog within the precincts of a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs may be ordered from the area and further dealt with at the discretion of the Member Body.
4.9 No food, toy, treat or reward is to be carried by the handler. Breach of this rule will result in disqualification from the event.
4.10 Anyone taking part in a RATG who openly impugns the actions or decisions of the Judge shall render themselves liable to be debarred from further participation in the trial and may be ordered from the grounds and further dealt with at the discretion of the Member Body.

## 5. Procedure

5.1 The handler, with dog on lead, shall advance to the Control Point/Pegs for the purpose of commencing the Test. The dog and handler are under the control of the Judge from the time the lead and collar are removed until the lead and collar are placed back on the dog. Any lack of control will be penalised accordingly by the Judge. To undertake the retrieve exercises the
handler will proceed forward approximately 10 metres from the Control Pegs to the Starting Pegs with the dog at heel. The handler is not to proceed beyond the Starting Pegs and dogs are required to deliver the Game to the handler between the Starting Pegs. When the dog has retrieved the Game the handler will return with dog at heel to the Control Pegs, where the steward will take the Game. The lead and collar will be placed back on the dog exercise is then finished.
5.2 While under the control of the Judge, a dog that misbehaves shall be penalised for each occurrence. Each penalty is to be separately recorded as "Penalties for Misbehaviour" and the sum of all penalties deducted from the total score.
5.3 The dog shall retrieve the Game cleanly and without delay shall return directly to the front of the handler. It should deliver gently to the hand from a standing or sitting position. The dog shall be stationary at delivery.
5.4 The handler shall take the Game from the mouth of the dog. It is important that the dog shall deliver tenderly i.e. with a "soft mouth". Where more than one object of Game is to be retrieved, the handler must carry all Game or place Game gently on the ground while waiting for second item of Game to be delivered by the dog.
5.5 All Game must be inspected by the Judge or his authorised delegate immediately the dog completes the retrieve and the handler will be advised by the Judge of any deductions made for Hard Mouth. Where a dummy is used as Game, any dog observed by the Judge to be biting, chewing or excessively mouthing the dummy during the exercise may be considered to have Hard Mouth and will be penalised according to the seriousness of the offence.
5.6 An Affiliate may give awards at its discretion. In the event of tied scores, a Judge may set any Test within the Rules of a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs, at their discretion to decide the order of awards.

## 6. Rules and Exercises

6.1 All dogs must do all Tests with leads and collars removed and no dogs may be held or restrained in any way.
6.2 To attain a Pass in a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs, a score of at least $50 \%$ in each exercise and an overall score of not less than $75 \%$ must be achieved.
6.3 The handler may control the dog by voice, whistle and hand signals, either singularly or combined.
6.4 The ground for a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs should preferably be a grassed area of sufficient size to allow for retrieves of 80 metres or more. Retrieving exercises should be conducted on an area that preferably is not closely mown. Water may be used.
6.5 Game shall be either pigeons or dummies. Pigeons and dummies can be provided by the club conducting the event. If the club conducting the event does not provide dummies then competitors must provide their own dummies, however all dummies are to be approved by the Judge prior to judging. Tests may be conducted on pigeons or dummies, but not both in the same class. See Rule 8.6 for addition detail.

EXERCISE 1 Dog to walk to heel for between 20 metres and 30 metres.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Point on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the Steward and the dog is then in competition. On the command from the Judge, the handler, with or without commanding the dog to heel, walks forward to the designated peg at a normal and steady pace with the dog at heel. The handler should stop at the peg and the dog should automatically stop at heel. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

| Assessment | The essentials of the test are that the dog: <br> a. Is under control. <br> b. $\quad$Walks in a position where it is close to the handler, aware and responsive <br> to any movement of the handler. <br> P. Takes the pace of the handler. |
| :--- | :--- |
| Points Awarded |  |
| EXERCISE 2 points. |  |$\quad$| The dog is to be put in a sit, stand or drop position. The handler is to walk away |
| :--- |
| for a distance of approximately 20 metres. Then, on instruction from the Judge, |
| the handler is to call the dog to hand. As the handler walks away the dog may |
| change position e.g. move from a sit to a stand or drop. Movement of more than |
| one body length is deemed a fail. Movement of less than one body length may |
| be penalised with a deduction of up to 5 points. |

EXERCISE 3 This exercise will comprise of a Single Mark Retrieve of approximately 50 metres. The retrieve may include land and water.

| Procedure | Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the Steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The dog will sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower. Once the Game has landed the handler will command the dog to retrieve the cast Game. The Game will be retrieved by the dog and delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The handler shall then heel the dog back to the Control Pegs where the Steward will take the Game and the handler will place the collar and lead on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished. |
| :---: | :---: |
| Assessment | The essential elements of this test are that the dog: <br> a. Remains steady when the Game is cast. <br> b. Marks the fall of the Game. <br> c. Does not retrieve until instructed. <br> d. Does not need direction from the handler. <br> e. Returns directly to the handler with the Game. |
| Points Awarded | 30 points. |
| EXERCISE 4 | This exercise will comprise of a Single Mark Retrieve of approximately 70 metres in an area different to the fall of Game in Exercise 3. The retrieve may include land and water. |
| Procedure | The procedure will be identical to Exercise 3. |
| Assessment | The assessment will be identical to Exercise 3. |
| Points Awarded | 35 points. |

## ACTION and STYLE

| Procedure | Action and Style are apparent in every movement of a dog and throughout its <br> entire performance by its alertness and attention to the handler, working with <br> purpose and enthusiasm, its eagerness on retrieves, including the pickup and <br> return with Game. |
| :--- | :--- |
| Assessment | The essentials of Style and Action include; <br> a. An alert and obedient attitude. |
| b. A determined departure to retrieve. |  |
| Points Awarded | c. An aggressive search for the fall. <br> d. A prompt pickup of Game and a reasonably fast return. |

## OPEN CLASS

ELIGIBILITY

EXERCISE 1

| Procedure | As for Exercise 1 in Novice, except that the handler and dog will make turns as <br> directed by the Judge. |
| :--- | :--- |
| Assessment | As for Exercise 1 in Novice. |
| Points Awarded | 10 points. |

EXERCISE $2 \quad$ Dog is put in the sit, stand or drop position and is required to remain in that location during which time the handler walks away from the dog. On instruction the handler will call the dog. During the recall the dog will be required to stop on command.
As the handler walks away the dog may change position e.g. move from a sit to a stand or drop. Movement of more than one body length is deemed a fail. Movement of less than one body length may be penalised with a deduction of up to 5 points.

Procedure $\quad$ Dog is brought to the Control Point on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the steward and the dog is then in competition. Upon instruction from the judge the handler instructs the dog to stay, and walks to a designated peg which is 30 to 40 metres away. The handler turns to face the dog and the Judge will instruct the handler to recall the dog. During the recall, on instruction from the Judge to stop the dog the handler instructs the dog to stop. The dog may stop in the stand, sit or drop position, but should obey the command by stopping immediately without the need for additional commands. Points will be deducted for additional commands. The Judge then gives the instruction to call the dog. The handler then calls the dog, which should go directly to the front of the handler and remain steady. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment The essentials of the test are that the dog:
a. Remains steady when the handler walks away.
b. Goes to the handler promptly when called.
c. Obeys commands at a distance to stop.
d. Does not need excessive commands.

Points Awarded 20 points.

EXERCISE 3 This exercise shall consist of a Walk-Up Retrieve of approximately 50 metres. It may include land and water.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the steward and the dog is then in competition. Upon instruction from the Judge the handler shall proceed with dog at heel from the Control Pegs in a straight line towards the Starting Pegs. While the dog is walking at heel the Judge will direct the Game to be cast to land approximately 50 metres directly in front of the dog and handler. When the Game is cast the handler is to stop with
Assessment
The essentials of this test are that the dog:
a. Is under control and takes the pace of the handler.
b. Remains steady when the Game is cast.
c. Marks the fall of the Game.
d. Does not retrieve until instructed.
e. Does not need direction from the handler.
f. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.
Points Awarded
EXERCISE 4

25 points $\quad$| This Exercise may consist of either, a Double Mark Retrieve, or a Double Rise |
| :--- |
| Retrieve; the actual Retrieve being declared by the Judge prior to the |
| commencement of the exercise and will be the same for each competitor. It may |
| include land and water. This exercise should be done in a completely different |
| area from Exercise 3. |

| Double Rise Retrieve | In this exercise one item of Game is cast to land at approximately 70 metres. <br> As the dog is returning to the handler another item of Game is thrown or placed <br> no more than 10 metres behind where the first item landed. The dog should not <br> see this Item being placed. |
| :--- | :--- |
| Procedure | Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed <br> and handed to the Steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction <br> from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. |
| The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from |  |
| the thrower. The dog will be sent for the item to be retrieved. After the first item |  |
| of Game has been retrieved and delivered, the handler will send the dog for the |  |
| second item of Game. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. |  |
| The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs where the collar and lead are |  |
| put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished. |  |

## 7. Retrieves

7.1 A Mark Retrieve is a retrieve where an item of Game is cast from a thrower. The dog should be able to see the Game in the air and as it falls and where possible the cast Game 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.
7.2 A Single Mark Retrieve shall be a retrieve where only one object of Game is cast and is to be retrieved, and as further defined in Rule 7.1.
7.3 A Walk-up Retrieve is a retrieve where the dog is walking at heel when the Game is cast. The dog shall sit, drop or stand steady until ordered by the handler to retrieve. A Walk-up Retrieve is not permitted in the Novice Test.
7.4 A Double Mark Retrieve shall consist of two (2) Mark Retrieves and may include land and water. There must be a reasonable delay between the casts. The Judge may stipulate the order in which Game can be retrieved, but it must be the same for all handlers. The handler is permitted to indicate clearly to the dog which item of Game it is being sent for. However, further handling will be penalised accordingly.
7.5 A Double Rise Retrieve shall consist of a retrieve where one item of Game is cast as for a Mark 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 Control Point. The second item of Game shall be retrieved immediately after the first item of Game is delivered to hand. Once the dog has been sent for each item of Game, it should not require further instruction.

## 8. Definition of Terms

8.1 Action and Style - These are both seen in a fearless, well-trained dog working with purpose enthusiasm and good free movement.
8.2 Blinking - Acknowledging the presence of Game but deliberately passing by it.
8.3 Breaking - 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.
8.4.1 Control Point/Pegs - Is the place where the dog and handler come into the control of the Judge for the purpose of conducting the test.
8.4.2 Starting Pegs - Is the place where the dog and handler undertake the retrieving exercises.
8.5 Dog - Shall be taken to mean a Gundog of either sex.
8.6 Game - Shall be either pigeons or dummies. Pigeons and dummies may be provided by the club conducting the event. If the club conducting the event does not provide dummies competitors must provide their own dummies, however all dummies are to be approved by the Judge prior to judging. A Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs may be conducted on either pigeons or dummies, but not both in the same Class. However a club may use pigeons in one Class and dummies in another Class. Dummies should be made of a soft material, e.g. canvas or plastic, and be of a subdued colour. Dummies length should be approximately 25 cm to 30 cm , with a circumference of between 20 cm and 30 cm and have a weight of between 300 gms and 450 gms and must be free of all feather and fur. White pigeons and white dummies shall not be used. Replica game may be used. When used, they must meet the criteria for dummies with respect to size, colour and weight.
8.7 Giving Tongue - A dog is deemed to be "giving tongue" when in the opinion of the Judge the dog barks or emits other significant noise whilst being adjudicated.
8.8 Gundog - Main and Limited Registered Gundogs (including de-sexed registered Gundogs) and Associate Dogs that have been accepted as Associate Gundogs and placed on the Associate Gundog sub-register.
8.9 Hard Mouth - A dog is deemed to be hard-mouthed when there is unmistakable evidence of any markings or damage done on Game retrieved due to squeezing, biting, or crunching by the dog. Where a dummy is used as Game, any dog observed by the Judge to be biting, chewing or excessively mouthing the dummy during the exercise may be considered to have Hard Mouth. The penalty as defined on the score sheet should be relative to the marking or damage.

Member Body - Means the Member Body of the Australian National Kennel Council Ltd which controls the canine activity in the State or Territory in which the fixture is being conducted.
8.11 Pottering - A dog that hunts around in a confined space covering ground that it has already worked, or one that lingers on an old scent, leaves it and then comes back to it is "pottering".
8.12 Retrieving - Retrieving covers the performance of the dog from when ordered to retrieve until it delivers the Game to its handler.
8.13 Walking to Heel - Dog's head to be close to the side of the knee.

NOVICE
RETRIEVING ABILITY TEST FOR GUNDOGS


Notes: Deductions may apply to each exercise

OPEN
RETRIEVING ABILITY TEST FOR GUNDOGS


