

Sub Committee on Rules  
Retriever Advisory Committee

## 2005 Report and Recommendations

The most important and difficult issue considered by the Rules Committee this year dealt with the management of large entries, primarily in open all-age stakes, and to a lesser degree in amateur all-age stakes.

A review of entries in the past three years disclosed 3 open stakes over 100 in 2002, 3 over 100 in 2003, and 9 over 100 in 2004. Inquiry at Field Trial News discloses 6 open entries out of 19 trials reported through March 11, '05 which exceeded 100. The problem is rapidly getting worse. The very best judges with the best mechanics and excellent grounds cannot put on fair tests with reasonable call backs when the numbers are this large. The negative effect of such large entries lies in the dissatisfaction felt by the participants. We fear that these entries will ultimately drive away current participants and chill whatever appetite newcomers may have to enter our sport.

We all have a responsibility for addressing and correcting the problems that come with overly large entries, The following proposals, if adopted, may help alleviate the problems. Other steps including new clubs, conflicting dates, better grounds, better mechanics and better judging all have a role to play.

### Proposal 1. Introduction

This Section states the long established policy that the AKC Board will not approve applications for field trials on conflicting dates unless it can be shown that such a conflict will not be a detriment either club. The amendment is intended to make clear that conflicts will be welcomed if they serve to reduce the entry size in the all age stakes of the conflicting trials.

### Proposal 1. Vote

Amend Section 8 of Chapter 3 of the Rules by deleting the language in the first paragraph that follows the word "conflict" in line 3 and inserting the following language: "unless it appears likely that the conflict in dates will cause the entry size in the all-age stakes of each trial to be reduced, or better balanced, and will not otherwise cause a serious detriment to either field trial club

### Proposal 2. Introduction

This proposal is intended to encourage both the formation of new licensed retriever clubs and the scheduling of retriever trials on conflicting dates at reasonably close locations in order to divide and reduce the overly large entry.

Some years ago the AKC Board of Directors adopted a policy intended to extend certain protections from competition to a club that had been granted a particular date and location for its trial. This policy provided: "Generally, trial conflicts can occur at distances of up to 500 miles. Clubs are generally required to secure clearance from other clubs within a 350 mile radius." We believe this policy has become an obstacle to the formation of new clubs and to the scheduling of trials on conflicting dates with the goal of a reduction in the entry size of the all-age stakes.

Because this policy was adopted by the AKC Board, a change must come by vote of that Board. To secure such action by the Board we urge an affirmative vote on the following proposal:

### Proposal 2. Vote

To request that the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club amend the current policy that protects a member or licensed retriever field trial club from competition on its assigned trial date, by replacing the 500 mile distance and the 350 mile radius with a 200 mile radius. The purpose and grounds for this request is to encourage the formation of new retriever field trial clubs and the establishment of additional field trial events on conflicting dates within closer distances.

### Proposal 2. Comment

We recognize that some field trial clubs have a very small number of members and are considering giving up trials they have run for many years. Proposal 2 may put a greater burden on these clubs. We regret the stress this proposal may be on such clubs, and we hope these affected clubs will find new resources to deal with their difficulties. Programs that attract new and younger members should be pursued including affiliation or merger with hunting test clubs, seminars, training sessions, and so forth. Obviously we can't enjoy our sport without trials. We need to make them good trials.

### Proposal 3. Introduction

We believe the existing provisions establishing a Restricted All-Age Stake as found in Chapter 14, Section 10 and treated in Paragraph 5 of the Standing Recommendations should be amended and adopted as a mandatory rule in Chapter 14 to address the problems created by the overly large Open All-Age Stake.

#### 3A Vote

Insert a new Section 11 in Chapter 14, which will read as follows:

Any club which, on the corresponding dates in the preceding year, held an Open, Limited or Special All-Age Stakes in which there were more than 80 dogs started, shall in the following year hold a Restricted All-Age Stake. Such club shall continue to hold a Restricted All-Age Stake in each year thereafter unless, and until, the total starters in such stake number less than 65.

Renumber existing Section 11 as Section 12 and so forth through existing Section 17, which will become Section 18.

#### 3B. Vote

Amend Section 10 of Chapter 14 by deleting the seventh paragraph of this section in its entirety and substituting the following paragraph in place of thereof:

A Restricted All-Age Stake at a Retriever trial shall be for dogs that have been previously placed in an Open All-Age Stake, a Limited All-Age Stake, a Special All-Age Stake, a Restricted All-Age Stake, an Amateur All-Age Stake or an Owner-Handler Amateur All-Age Stake, in each case carrying championship points.

#### 3C. Vote

Amend the Standing Recommendations of the Retriever Advisory Committee by deleting paragraph 5 in its entirety and substituting the following paragraph in place thereof:

"5. Any club which, in the preceding field trial year, held a trial in which there were more than 65 starters in the Open, Limited, Special or Restricted stakes may, at its option, apply to hold a Limited, Special or Restricted All-Age stake, the choice being governed by the extent of the reduction needed."

### 3D. Vote

The Rules (proposed new Section 11 of Chapter 14) mandate that a restricted All-Age Stake be held whenever the entry in the Open, Limited or Special held on the corresponding date of the preceding year was larger than 80 starters. Anytime a club holds a Restricted All-Age stake, whether pursuant to the option of the club or the mandate of Section 11, the premium giving notice of the Restricted Stake shall prominently flag the Restricted nature of the stake and describe the qualifications for entry in such stake. This should be done in a separate paragraph in full capital letters.

## Proposal 4. Introduction

A number of editorial changes need to be made in various paragraphs of Section 10 as well as in Section 9 and Paragraph 20 of the Standard Procedure to insure the correct identification of the various stakes involved. The changes are technical, not substantive.

### 4A. Vote

Amend Section 10 of Chapter 14 by inserting in paragraph 2 immediately after the words "Qualifying Stake" each time those words appear in that paragraph, the words "or an Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake".

### 4B. Vote

Amend Section 10 of Chapter 14 by deleting from paragraph 3 beginning on line 3 the words "shall be open to dogs eligible to run a Qualifying Stake" and inserting in place thereof the following: "shall have all the attributes of a Qualifying Stake".

### 4C. Vote

Amend Section 10 of Chapter 14 by inserting in paragraph 5, third line, immediately after the words, "Open All-Age Stake", the words "Limited All-Age Stake, Special All-Age Stake, Restricted All-Age Stake,"

### 4D. Vote

Amend Section 10 of Chapter 14 by inserting in paragraph 6, line six, immediately after the words "Special All-Age" the words "Restricted All-Age Stake"

### 4E. Vote

Amend Section 9 of Chapter 14 by inserting after the word "Qualifying" on line two the words "Owner-Handler Qualifying"

### 4F. Vote

Amend Paragraph 20 of Standard Procedure for Non-Slip Retriever Trials by inserting after words "Qualifying Stake" in line two the words "or an Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake".

## Proposal 5. Introduction

This proposal deals with the issue of overly large entries in an Amateur All-Age Stake or an

Owner- Handler Amateur All-Age Stake, and is intended to provide authorization for an earlier start and therefore additional time to complete the stake.

#### Proposal 5. Vote

Insert in existing Section 11 (to be renumbered as Section 12 under Proposal 3A above) as a new paragraph at the end of the existing language, the following:

"Anytime a trial giving club finds that the probable number of starters in its Amateur All-Age Stake or its Owner -Handler Amateur All-Age Stake is likely to exceed 65 in number, the club may elect, at its option, to move the starting time of the stake to not earlier than 9:00 AM of the first day of the trial, provided that any handler who cannot for whatever reason be present at the trial until the starting time announced in the original premium shall be permitted to run after the starting time stated in the premium. Notice of the decision to begin the Amateur All-Age Stake or the Owner-Handler Amateur All-Age Stake at the earlier time shall be given to all entrants as soon as possible by the most expeditious practical way available. To the extent that utilization of this procedure will require departures from the run in order to comply with the mandate of Section 4 of Chapter 14, such departures shall be treated as "a reasonable or desirable saving of time in the conduct of the trial...". The earliest numbered dog available, (whether by draw or by Dow Jones), will run first at the earlier starting time, and all dogs available for the earlier start will run in order to the extent possible, provided that obvious unfairness, due to the overlapping running of a first series in two All-Age Stakes, should be avoided.

#### Proposal 6. Introduction

Two years ago the Rules Committee was asked to consider including special provisions that would enable junior handlers, defined as persons under 18 years of age, to handle retrievers in licensed field trials under special conditions that would provide both experience and encouragement for interested young persons. We propose that the following provisions governing junior handlers be added as a new Section 19 to Chapter 14 - Rules for Retriever Trials.

#### Proposal 6. Vote

Adopt a new Section 19 to Chapter 14 of the Rules, to follow renumbered Section 18, to be titled and read as follows:

#### **SECTION 19 - Provisions Governing Junior Handlers**

A junior handler is defined as any person who has not reached 18 years of age as of the first day of the licensed trial in issue. Such junior handler may, with proper authority, enter and handle a non-competing retriever over six months of age in a Derby and/or a Qualifying stake regardless of the age or level of ability of the dog or other restrictions on entry that may be set forth in other provisions of these Rules. Such a junior handler entry shall be tested in the same manner and under the same provisions governing performance that apply to all other competing dogs and handlers in the stake. Any dog handled by a junior handler under these provisions, who completes all tests in the stake in a manner satisfactory to the judges shall be awarded a JHE, (Junior Handled Excellent), applying the general standards of performance that would result in a Judges' Award of Merit for a dog not competing under these junior handler provisions. A JHE ribbon shall be given to the successful junior handler and the award shall be certified by the judges and reported to the AKC as part of the official results of the trial.

## Proposal 7. Introduction

Some concern has been expressed that the availability of electronic, mechanically operated, or wind-activated decoys may lead to the use of such decoys in field trial tests. While the "Robo Duck" may provide the duck hunter with increased ability to decoy birds, the use of such devices in field trial tests will very likely distract the running dog from marking and interfere with control in a blind. The Rules Committee believes that the use of such devices should not be viewed as a condition met in an ordinary day of shooting and should be precluded by the rules.

## Proposal 7. Vote

Amend paragraph 17 of the Standard Procedure for Non-Slip Retriever Trials so that said paragraph would read:

17. During at least one water test in all stakes, dogs should be worked over artificial decoys, anchored separately. The use of electronic, mechanically operated, or wind powered decoys is not permitted.

## Proposal 8. Introduction

The AKC has had a policy that requires a club to run a Qualifying or an Owner Handler Qualifying only in conjunction with a Derby stake. The Committee believes that allowing the Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake to be run by a licensed or member club in conjunction with a hunt test that includes a Master Hunter Stake without requiring that a Derby Stake also be run, will encourage interested hunting test competitors to enter and compete in licensed field trials.

## Proposal 8. Vote

Insert at the end of the third paragraph of Section 10 of the Rules the following:

"At the election of the trial giving club an Owner-Handler Qualifying Stake may be run without a companion Derby Stake when it is run in conjunction with a Hunting Test event that includes a Master Hunter Stake."

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In addition to votes on the foregoing proposals, the Rules Committee would like the Retriever Advisory Committee member clubs to express an opinion and comment on the following questions about other and further approaches to the large entry issues.

### Question A.

Would you support a rule change permitting a club to conduct a third licensed trial during a single year provided that such trial included both an Open and an Amateur Stake, was scheduled to run on dates that conflicted with a trial that had attracted 80 or more starters in the preceding year, and at a location within less than 400 miles of the large entry trial?

### Question B.

Would you support a rule change that permitted a club that received more than 80 entries for any category of an open stake to split that open stake into two separate stakes that ran simultaneously?

Does your club have resources and grounds to split such an open entry and run two opens simultaneously?

Question C.

Would you favor a change in the procedure for entering a licensed open stake of any type that would provide any professional entering 6 or more dogs in such an open stake a period of a week, or more, after entries close to scratch those entries, and the entries of any other dogs entered in the amateur, qualifying and derby by the professional or a client of the professional, and receive full refund of entry fees paid? This would permit professionals to enter two or more trials for a given weekend and scratch after the total entry size of each trial is known to avoid an overly large entry created by a concentration of professionals entered in one trial.

Question D.

If a club received more than 80 entries for its Open stake, would you support a rule change that permitted the club, after entries have closed, to convert the Open into a Limited, Special or Restricted All-Age stake so as to reduce the number of prospective starters? Such club would be required to notify all entrants of the change as expeditiously as possible and each affected entrant would have the right to scratch all dogs entered and receive a full refund of all entry fees.

Submitted by the Sub Committee on Rules

Marshall Simonds - Chairman

William Daley            John Goettl

Robert Kennon           Nelson Sills