



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

Performance Events Department

Date: July 2026

To: Clubs Licensed to Hold Pointing Breed Field Trials and Active Judges

Subject: **Retrieving Test Held at Pointing Breed Field Trials**

This communication is to inform you of a change to the *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures for Pointing Breeds* which will become effective **November 1, 2026**.

This change brings the addition of a Retrieving Test that can be held at Pointing Breed Field Trials at the option of the host club. This is a pass-fail test where dogs that pass earn one retrieving credit which counts toward their Field Championship and/or Amateur Field Championship titles.

There are four breeds (GSP, GWP, Vizsla, Weimaraner) that are required to earn four retrieving credits to be awarded their FC or AFC titles. Currently, handlers of these breeds must enter a retrieving stake in hopes of placing and earning their retrieving credits. All other breeds participating in PBFTs are not required to retrieve to earn their field titles. This structure serves as a barrier to entry since many non-retrieving breeds will not enter a retrieving stake. The Retrieving Test will also help All-Age dogs from the retrieving breeds that currently have difficulty earning their retrieving credits in All-Age Stakes.

Background

In March of 2025, the Performance Events Department conducted a survey of the primary owner of dogs that had placed in Pointing Breed Field Trials and all currently active judges. One of the questions was – should dogs be allowed to earn retrieving credits by passing a stand-alone retrieving test?

From the owners of the four breeds that are required to retrieve to earn their field titles, 60% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed while 25% disagreed/strongly disagreed. The remaining percentage said they were uncertain or neutral.

The following specifications for the Retrieving Test will appear as a new procedure in the *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures for Pointing Breeds* after the current Procedure 7. Retrieving Stakes.

(new) **Procedure 8. Retrieving Test.** The Retrieving Test is a pass-fail test offered at a field trial at the option of the host club. It may not be held as the only test in the trial. Clubs may offer traditional retrieving stakes if they desire. Dogs that pass the Retrieving Test are awarded one retrieving credit. If a dog successfully passes the Retrieving Test and is handled by an amateur handler, the credit counts toward both the FC and AFC titles. If a dog successfully passes the Retrieving Test and is handled by a professional handler, the credit counts toward the FC title only. Entering the Retrieving Test is not contingent upon entering another stake in the field trial. Clubs offering the Retrieving Test shall include this in the event premium in the same manner as any stake in the trial. Clubs may charge an entry fee for the Retrieving Test. Dogs entering the Retrieving Test will count as an entry in the trial on the Secretary's Report that is submitted to AKC along with the trial results. Dogs that pass the Retrieving Test shall receive a dark green ribbon or rosette. A club may offer only one Retrieving Test per trial and a dog may

enter the retrieving test only once per trial. Results are submitted on a form provided by the AKC along with the other results from the trial.

The following procedures shall apply to Retrieving Tests:

- The retrieving test is judged by two individuals that are approved to judge AKC pointing breed field trials. Both judges must agree that the dog deserves to pass the test.
- A live bird is released in likely cover. The handler may watch where the bird is released. The dog is released off leash to find and point the bird.
- Two official gunners shall accompany the handler into the field.
- Everyone involved in the retrieving test must wear blaze orange. This included the handler, gunners, judges, and gallery. It is advised that the handler and gunners wear hearing protection.
- The handler must flush the bird. In cases where the bird will not fly, the judges can instruct the handler to catch and throw the bird or the judges can instruct the gunners to shoot the bird on the ground.
- The dog must demonstrate steadiness to wing, shot, and fall. A dog may move slightly to better see the fall of the bird. It is up to the judges to determine how much movement is allowed given the specifics of the situation.
- The bird must be on the ground before the dog is sent to retrieve.
- The dog must retrieve the bird to within one step of the handler, as determined by the judges.
- The dog must be soft mouthed (not damage the bird) as determined by the judges. Consideration should be given to how hard the bird was shot.
- If the bird is not able to be shot for safety reasons or is missed, the dog must be collared or heeled away. Another bird will be released and the dog must repeat the procedure. After two attempts, if the bird is not shot, a dead bird may be thrown. In this case, the handler shall whoa the dog into position. One gunner throws the dead bird and the other gunner shoots into the air (not at the bird). Once the bird is on the ground, the dog is sent to retrieve.
- Unusual situations do occur. It is up to the judges to decide how to handle unusual situations, however, the judge's discretion must be consistent with the retrieving procedures.

The description of retrieving in other sections of the *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures* will be modified to be consistent with the description of the Retrieving Test given above. See the new wording below which is underlined.

Chapter 4, Section 1. Ribbons and Prizes. A club holding a licensed or member field trial shall offer prize ribbons or rosettes of the following colors in the regular stakes. Pass of a Retrieving Test – Dark Green.

Chapter 14, Section 7. Field Championship. Second paragraph. EXCEPT that a German Shorthaired Pointer, German Wirehaired Pointer, Vizsla, or Weimaraner, shall not be recorded a Field Champion unless it has earned at least 4 retrieving credits in Retrieving Stakes and/or Retrieving Tests at licensed or member club field trials.

Chapter 14, Section 7. Open Retrieving Credits. Dogs from the four retrieving breeds must earn a minimum of four retrieving credits to be awarded the FC title. One retrieving credit is earned for each pass of a Retrieving Test, or according to the following schedule by placing in a retrieving stake.

Chapter 14, Section 7. Amateur Field Championship. Second paragraph. EXCEPT that a German Shorthaired Pointer, German Wirehaired Pointer, Vizsla, or Weimaraner, shall not be recorded a Field Champion unless it has earned at least 4 retrieving credits in Amateur Retrieving Stakes and/or Retrieving Tests when handled by an amateur at licensed or member club field trials.

Chapter 14, Section 7. Amateur Retrieving Credits. Dogs from the four retrieving breeds must earn a minimum of four retrieving credits to be awarded the AFC title. One retrieving credit is earned for each pass of a Retrieving Test when handled by an amateur, or according to the following schedule by placing in an amateur retrieving stake.

Procedure 7. Retrieving Stakes and Tests.

7-K. Retrieving is required by all dogs that are placed in Retrieving Stakes and all dogs that pass the Retrieving Test. A satisfactory retrieve is defined as follows: ~~After the shot, the handler shall not command or signal the dog to retrieve until the dog's steadiness to wing and shot has been positively demonstrated. The dog must retrieve promptly, tenderly, and absolutely to hand in all retrieving stakes.~~

- The dog must demonstrate steadiness to wing, shot, and fall. A dog may move slightly to better see the fall of the bird. It is up to the judges to determine how much movement is allowed given the specifics of the situation.
- The bird must be on the ground before the dog is sent to retrieve.
- The dog must retrieve the bird to within one step of the handler, as determined by the judges.
- The dog must be soft mouthed (not damage the bird) as determined by the judges. Consideration should be given to how hard the bird was shot.
- If the bird is not able to be shot for safety reasons or is missed, the dog must be collared or heeled away. Another bird will be released and the dog must repeat the procedure. After two attempts, if the bird is not shot, a dead bird may be thrown. In this case, the handler shall whoa the dog into position. One gunner throws the dead bird and the other gunner shoots into the air (not at the bird). Once the bird is on the ground, the dog is sent to retrieve.
- Unusual situations do occur. It is up to the judges to decide how to handle unusual situations, however, the judge's discretion must be consistent with the retrieving procedures.

A dog that demonstrates a less than satisfactory retrieve shall not be placed in a Retrieving Stake or pass a Retrieving Test. A reasonable retrieve satisfies the purpose of conserving game.

The remaining paragraph in 7-K remains unchanged.

This regulation update has been posted to the [Pointing Breed Field Trial Rule Resources](#) webpage. Please send any comments or questions to: pointingbreeds@akc.org.