

HPR FIELD TRIAL JUDGING – NEW SYSTEM FOR MARKING A JUDGES' BOOK

Introduction

The current KC Field Trial Regulation **J(A)3.n (Judging)** states:

“At the end of each retrieve or run, Judges are advised to place each dog in a category such as A or B (+ or -) according to the work done. Such gradings may, quite properly, be supplemented on occasion by additional notation for reference purposes when judges are going through their books. It is, however, imperative to appreciate that gradings must never be retrospectively adjusted. Neither should there ever be any attempt to sum sequences of grades to produce a single letter grading of a dog. When all dogs have been seen by a Judge, or Judges, they will wish to confer to determine which dogs they wish to discard or retain; it is vitally important for Judges to make short notes of each dog’s work. Judges should never expect to be able to trust to memory.”

The current system recommended for marking HPR trials is in conflict with this Regulation since it calls for judges to give marks out of ten on a Score Sheet for four categories of work, Hunting, Gamefinding, Pointing and Retrieving, to be averaged at the end of the day. The Gamefinding marks are to be averaged and multiplied by two, and marks out of five for Style and Water are to be added.

This system is complicated and even though the marks on the Score Sheet may be corroborated by notes made for each round, they can at the end of a long eventful day be misleading. For instance a judge may not feel he can award a very high mark to a dog which completes a retrieve absolutely perfectly because the retrieve was very easy; a dog which hunts enthusiastically and thoroughly may be given a low mark because it produced no game from a beat which appeared to be promising; a dog with very high marks for retrieving could end up placed higher than one which had been consistently very good in all aspects of HPR work. It is recognised that some Judges do not work strictly to this system and use the Score Sheet simply as an aid to memory.

It is felt that HPRs should adopt a more simple system whereby a single grading is given for each round which will reflect the overall performance in that round. Each grading will be supported by written notes on a separate page for each dog which will detail how that dog performed the different aspects of HPR work it was able to exhibit. The grading will be entered on a chart similar to the Score Sheet which will form the centre of the Judges' Book. This chart will also have boxes for each dog which can be ticked when the dog has achieved a point, a retrieve and been shot over, and there will be two boxes after the third round, one for a Water Test Grading and one labelled 'Awards'. The chart will thereby enable judges to see at a glance which aspects of its work a dog needs to fulfil in later rounds to complete the 'Basic Requirements'. Even if a dog does not have the opportunity to point or retrieve in a particular run, its attitude to its work, its treatment of the ground allotted to it and its behaviour will allow the judges to make an assessment and grade it accordingly for those aspects it has fulfilled. Judges may like to tick the retrieving and pointing boxes each time a dog has a point or a retrieve. They could also mark the retrieving box with a question mark to remind them if a dog is suspected of hard mouth.

The Kennel Club Regulation suggests using letter gradings and the letters 'A' to 'C' can be used to cover runs where dogs have not committed an eliminating fault, whilst 'D' can mean *Discarded* and 'E' *Eliminated*. The 'A' to 'C' gradings can be augmented by + or – thus giving scope for more distinction between the work of different dogs.

Marking the Judges' Book

Judges must have in their minds the category of the stake and the good standard of work required of a dog if it is to be worthy of progression to the next round and be in line for an award, and the dog must achieve this standard in all aspects of HPR work. Such work should be graded 'A' (+ or -). A grading of 'B' should be given if a dog has run for the most part to a good standard but may have fallen slightly below this standard in perhaps one aspect of HPR work. After consultation the judges may agree to run the dog again and at the end of the day may include it in their awards. A grading of 'C' should be given for below standard performances which will have exhibited Major Faults.

After each dog's run the judges should confer with each other and discuss its work noting anything that has been seen by one judge and not another. Having formed an opinion on the dog they should make notes on the page provided adding a grading and then enter that grading on the chart for that particular run. The judges should aim to agree on a grading at this stage and there should be no retrospective adjustment of marks. Consistency in their approach is important as is developing a rapport with their co-judge.

At the end of the first round the judges will need to decide which dogs they wish to see again in the second round and will be able to determine at a glance, those which, from the grading given and their notes, have performed to a high enough standard to deserve a second run. During the second round if there are spare retrieves available, judges may bring back dogs out of draw order to make these retrieves. These spare retrieves do not count as a 'run' but are supplemental to a run in which a dog may not have had a retrieve, or where judges wish to see a dog or dogs make additional retrieves and, of course, they should be assessed and noted. At the end of the second round judges will again have to decide which dogs they would like to see in a third round. It will not be necessary to see again dogs which have had the opportunity to exhibit all the 'basic requirements' within the first two runs. There may well be dogs which have worked to a good standard and achieved high gradings but have still not had the opportunity to either point and/or retrieve. The 'tick' boxes for pointing and retrieving will confirm this at a glance. These dogs can be given a further chance to complete the basic requirements. There may also be dogs which need to be tested again for retrieving in order to confirm that they are not hard mouthed, or for some other aspect of HPR work which the judges have not been able to assess sufficiently.

After the third round the judges will need to confer with each other and, using the notes and the gradings they have allocated, will be able to see which dogs have pleased them most and are in line for an award, subject to completion of the water test. It is very seldom in HPR trials that two or more dogs are exactly equal in the quality of their performances but if, after comparison of their notes and discussion the judges fail to agree on the order of possible awards, they may wish to run certain dogs again in a run off to determine this.

To receive an award HPRs also have to successfully complete a water retrieve. This test can be conducted at any time during the course of the trial but usually takes place at

the end after the judges have decided which dogs are in line for an award. The dogs should be graded in the same way as for the previous rounds in accordance with the standard required for receiving an award.

Following the completion of the Water Test the judges will be able to come to a final decision as to which dogs shall receive awards and Certificates of Merit and in what order.

A summary of how work should be graded is as follows:

Grade 'A' + or -	The dog has worked to a standard worthy of an award.
Grade 'B' + or -	The dog has worked a little below award winning standard. An award may be considered if other runs have been up to 'A' standard.
Grade 'C'	The standard of work is below an award winning standard and the dog may have committed Major Faults.
Grade 'D'	The standard of work is well below award winning standard; the dog has committed Major Faults and will be discarded.
Grade 'E'	The dog has committed an Eliminating Fault and is, therefore, eliminated.

The following illustrates the chart which will form the centre pages of the Judges Book with some examples of grades given. This can be printed on an A5 Sheet (half A4) and folded. A further four folded A5 sheets will be required to form the note pages for each dog, the front page and some spare pages for other notes such as the names of the Steward of the Beat, the guns and the Chief Steward.

This chart can also easily be used by the Chief Steward to keep abreast of which dogs will be required next in line and for noting which dogs the judges will require for a third run or for the water test. They will also be able to finally make a note of the awards the Judges wish to make.

Dog No.	Detail	Point	Shot	Retrieve	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Water	AWARD
1	<i>HV</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>A</i>	<i>A+</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	
2	<i>GSP</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>A+</i>	<i>A-</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	
3	<i>GWP</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>B+</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>A</i>	
4	<i>GSP</i>	✓	✓		<i>E</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	
5	<i>GSP</i>	✓	✓	✓	<i>C</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

Dog No.	Detail	Point	Shot	Retrieve	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Water	AWARD
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

RESULTS:

First **No.**
Second **No.**
Third **No.**
Fourth **No.**

Certificates of Merit

No.
No.
No.
No.
No.

HPR FIELD TRIAL JUDGING BOOK

Society
Date
Venue
Stake

Judges

Steward of the Beat
Chief Steward
Guns

