



## **RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FORWARDED TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE FROM THE FIELD TRIAL LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT THE KENNEL CLUB BUILDING, STONELEIGH ON 18 AUGUST 2021**

### **Proposals from Societies**

1. Handlers with more than one dog.

Gamekeepers National Association, Moray Firth Spaniel & Retriever Club, Golden Retriever Club of Scotland, Labrador Retriever Club, Norfolk Gundog Club, Eastern Counties Retriever Society, Midland Counties Field Trial Society, Midland Gundog Society, Coventry & District Gundog Society.

Note: discussion items on the same topic were also received from the following clubs -Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria and Yellow Labrador Club.

The Council confirmed that the issue was only relevant to Retrievers, and all subsequent discussion had been made on that basis. Due to the increasing amount of entries in Retriever trials, societies wished to ensure all handlers had equal opportunities to run in a trial. The main issue raised by the Council was the situation where one handler may handle dogs for more than one owner, and as a result that handler may be seen as having an unfair advantage in a draw over an owner/handler with only one dog. The Council was also of the view that the practice of transferring ownership into the names of family or friends, with the purpose of obtaining more runs, was disrespectful. It was also keen to ensure that owner/handlers, who made up the majority of competitors, were not disadvantaged in any way. Accordingly, it had recommended an amendment to Regulation J9.b(6), to allow for societies to have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler while there were reserves available.

The Field Trials Committee discussed the recommendation, noting that the issue was a complex one. It was not of the view that a single regulation amendment would address the matter in a fair and effective manner.

After careful consideration, the Committee acknowledged that there was a growing issue in relation to handlers with more than one dog. However it was unclear as to the extent of the issue, as no statistical evidence had been presented.

Accordingly, it was suggested that such evidence, based on draws for Open stakes, should be gathered for further discussion by the Committee. An update will be provided to the Council in due course.

2. Proposed amendments to Regulations J6.c.(5)(i) and J6.c.(5)(ii) in relation to HPRs.

Brittany Club of Great Britain and German Longhaired Pointer Club

The Council proposed that the number of HPR field trial judging appointments required to qualify for appointment to an HPR judging panel was increased.

The Committee was in agreement that this proposed amendment would help to improve the standard of judging at HPR trials by ensuring that new judges were able to gain greater experience.



The following amendment has now been approved by the Board and is effective from 2 February 2022.

Regulation J5.c.(5)(i)

**TO:**

Before a judge can be added to a panel he must have judged:

(i) B Panel: over a minimum period of 36 months, and a maximum period of 60 months immediately preceding the date of the application:

HPRs – a minimum of ~~4~~**6** stakes with at least ~~4~~**5** different judges.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold).

Regulation J5.c.(5)(ii)

**TO:**

Before a judge can be added to a panel he must have judged:

(ii) A Panel: over a minimum period of 36 months, and a maximum period of 60 months, subsequent to their appointment to the B Panel:

HPRs – a minimum of ~~6~~**8** stakes of which at least ~~one~~**three** must have been open. Reports must be available from at least ~~4~~**5** different A Panel co-judges.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold).

## Discussion Items

### 3. Unwelcome competitors.

#### Cambridge Field Trial Society

The Council discussed the situation where a competitor was present at a field trial, having been previously advised by the host that they were not welcome at the ground, and where the organising club was not aware beforehand that this was the case. The Council suggested that guidance should be sought from the Committee and published in the field trials newsletter.

The Committee noted the Council's concern with this matter, although it was acknowledged that it was not possible to give simple guidance on such a complex matter, but that clubs should deal with such situations with extreme caution.

The Committee noted that all applicants for membership may be reminded of the provisions of Regulations J8.b.(13) with regard to behaviour of those taking part in competitive gundog work. This reads as follows:

'The Kennel Club's Codes of Conduct specify the sort of behaviour expected of those who take part in competitive gundog work. All participants should be aware of the Codes of Conduct and must abide by them, and by Kennel Club Regulations, and, in particular, should never publicly impugn decisions of the judge or judges. Neither should they criticise the host, ground or guns.'

Also the provisions of Regulation J8.a. which made it clear that responsibility for dealing with such matters arising at a trial lay with the Chief Steward. This reads as follows:

'Control of dogs and competitors under trial

(1) A chief steward, who should be present throughout the trial, must be appointed by the committee of the society and shall be responsible for ensuring the regulations are observed. The chief steward must not interfere with the judges' decisions which are final but should, however, decide upon any matter not related to judging which is not provided for in the rules



and regulations. The chief steward may call upon the judges to assist with such a decision and that decision shall be final.'

4. Dogs registered as 'Colour not recognised' being entered in field trials.

Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club and Yellow Labrador Club

The Council wished to raise concerns regarding dogs such as Labrador Retrievers and Weimaraners which may be registered as 'colour not recognised' and which were eligible to enter field trials and subsequently gain awards to be eligible for The Kennel Club Stud Book. The Council was of the view that dogs of non-standard colours should not be permitted to run in field trials.

The Committee was reminded that its Policy Document stated that judges could not disqualify dogs for being of a non-standard colour but should assess the dog's overall quality and withhold placings if appropriate. It acknowledged the concerns expressed by the Council, but noted that the issue of non-standard colour, and its wider implications, was currently under discussion by the Board and accordingly could not be considered further at this stage.

The Board has approved a formation of a new working group to tackle the issue of non-standard colours across several breeds, with the relevant breed clubs invited to a meeting. More information can be found in the following press release: [New non-breed standard colours working group | Kennel Club \(thekennelclub.org.uk\)](#)

5. Water/Drive Certificates

Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria

The Council proposed that Regulation K2.c.(3) be amended to state that a special water test may be conducted by two Panel judges, at least one of which must be an A Panel judge, rather than by two A Panel judges as was currently the case, such certificates should only be available at Open stakes.

The Committee expressed its support for the Council's suggestion. The following amendment has now been approved by the Board and is effective from 2 February 2022.

Regulation K2.c.(3)

**TO:**

(2) Proviso for all Retrievers Before any Retriever is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have a Water and Drive Certificate. The Water Certificate may, but not necessarily, be gained at a special water test. The special water test must have been conducted before two Panel A judges, **one of whom must be an A Panel**, at one of the following: the Retriever Championship, a Field Trial **Open** Stake, or at a subsequent special test. (J(A)2 refers.) **The Drive Certificate must be conducted before two Panel judges, one of whom must be an A Panel, at the Retriever Championship or a Field Trial Open Stake.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold)

(Effective 2 February 2022)]

6. Searching for birds at the end of a trial

Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society

The Council discussed concerns regarding handlers at trials refusing to help look for birds at the end of a drive/trial when requested to do so and wished to recommend that suitable guidance be included in the Code of Best Practice for Competitors at Retriever Trials.



The Committee accepted that as a general rule it was hoped that competitors would comply with such requests, however highlighted that handlers may have genuine reasons for not wishing to do so. It agreed that guidance may be included in the Code of Best Practice document but with the proviso that the words 'where possible' or 'where feasible' be added.

7. First Dog Down  
Labrador Retriever Club

The Council discussed concerns that the 'first dog down' regulation was being inconsistently applied, with some judges at a trial putting out every first dog down whilst others at the same trial did not do so, even where the circumstances appeared identical. It had noted that very clear guidance on the matter was available within the seminar script for Retrievers and wished to recommend that the relevant extract should be published within the field trials newsletter.

The Committee was in agreement with the Council, noting that this would be a positive step. It was agreed that the scripts should be signposted within the winter edition of the newsletter and that judges should be encouraged to read them.

8. Grandfather rights for judges  
Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria

Regulation J5.c.(6) granted grandfather rights to those appointed to the 'A' Panel prior to 1 January 2010, and/or were involved in the pilot scheme for the judges training programme and/or those who are, or have been a Kennel Club Approved Presenter. The Council was of the view that there were a number of very experienced 'B' Panel judges and therefore wished to suggest that the provisions of Regulation J5.c.(6) should be extended to include them.

The Committee had previously discussed a similar suggestion, however on reconsidering the matter it accepted that these judges may have considerable experience and it therefore agreed with the Council's recommendation.

The following amendment has now been approved by the Board and is effective from 2 February 2023.

Regulation J5.c.(6)

**TO:**

(Note: Judges deemed to have "Grandfather rights" and who are therefore exempt from Regulation J5.c.(6) are: judges who were appointed to the 'A' Panel **or the 'B' Panel** prior to 1 January 2010, and/or were involved in the pilot scheme for the judges training programme and/or those who are, or have been a Kennel Club Approved Presenter).'

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 2 February 2023)

9. Dogs entered at more than one trial on the same day.  
Coventry & District Gundog Society

The Council discussed the practice whereby an owner would enter and accept a run for two dogs on the same day at two different trials, in order to maximise their chance of getting a run. Some owners had reciprocal arrangements with others, in which one owner would run their own dog as well as a dog belonging to the other, at the same trial. It was of the view that this was not considered to be within the spirit of the discipline and wished to refer this matter to the Committee for its views on how this matter may be addressed.



The Committee suggested that this matter be considered together with the issue of handlers with more than one dog and agreed that it would be examined further at such time as the statistical evidence was available. An update will be provided to the Council in due course.