



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL LTD

**RETRIEVING ABILITY TEST**

**Rules for the conduct of  
Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs**

(Effective from 1st January 2014)

**Approved by the Australian  
National Kennel Council**

**17/10/2010**

**20/10/2013**

**Adopted by the Member Bodies of the  
Australian National Kennel Council Ltd**

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

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs will primarily be undertaken at Obedience Trials or Show events to promote retrieving. It 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 received three passes in Novice Retrieving Ability Tests under at least two Judges 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, QND, NRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH.
- 2.4. To be eligible to compete in an Open Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must have received three passes in Novice Retrieving Ability Tests or have 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, QND, NRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH.

### **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. 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. 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 oestrus shall not be permitted to compete. No preparation for concealing oestrus 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.
- 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.

#### **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 at the control Point/Pegs 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 and return collar and lead to the handler who will place it on the dog. The 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 or more 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.

## **NOVICE CLASS**

**ELIGIBILITY** A Novice Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs is for Gundogs that have not previously received three passes in Novice Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs under at least two Judges, subject also to Rules 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

**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 is removed 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:  
a. Is under control.  
b. Walks in a position where it is close to the handler, aware and responsive to any movement of the handler.  
c. Takes the pace of the handler.

**Points Awarded** 10 points.

**EXERCISE 2** 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.

**Procedure** Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead is removed and the dog is then in competition. The judge will give the instruction for the handler to leave their dog. The handler gives the dog a command to stay and walks to the indicated peg which will be approximately 20 metres away. The handler turns to face the dog, and waits for the Judge's instruction to call their dog. When handlers call their dog it should go promptly to them and remain steady until the Judge declares 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.

**Points Awarded** 15 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 is removed 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 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:  
a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.  
b. Marks the fall of the Game.  
c. Does not retrieve until instructed.  
d. Does not need direction from the handler.  
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 entire performance by the gaiety of its manner, its alertness and attention to the handler, its eagerness and speed on retrieves, its pickup of game and its return with it.

Assessment The essentials of Style and Action include;  
a. An alert and obedient attitude.  
b. A determined departure to retrieve.  
c. An aggressive search for the fall.  
d. A prompt pickup of Game and a reasonably fast return.

Points Awarded 10 points.



## **OPEN CLASS**

**ELIGIBILITY** Open Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs is for Gundogs that have received three passes in Novice Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs, subject also to Rules 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4

**EXERCISE 1** Dog to walk to heel for 30 metres to 50 metres approximately. The exercise is to include at least 3 turns at the Judge's discretion.

**Procedure** As for Exercise 1 in Novice, except that the handler and dog will make turns as directed by the Judge.

**Assessment** As for Exercise 1 in Novice.

**Points Awarded** 10 points.

**EXERCISE 2** Dog is put in the sit, stand or drop position and is required to remain in that position for one minute 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.

**Procedure** Dog is brought to the Control Point on a lead. The collar and lead is removed 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 approximately 30 to 40 metres away. The handler turns to face the dog. After the minute has elapsed (calculated from the time the handler leaves the dog) 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:

- Remains steady when the handler walks away.
- Goes to the handler promptly when called.
- Obeys commands at a distance to stop.
- Does not need excessive commands.

**Points Awarded** 20 points.

**EXERCISE 3** This exercise shall consist of a Walk-Up Retrieve of approximately 50 metres.

**Procedure** Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead is removed 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 the dog at heel. Upon instruction from the handler the dog is to retrieve the Game. The handler then moves to the Starting Pegs to take delivery of the game from

the dog. Game is to be delivered cleanly and tenderly to hand. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs. The Steward shall take the Game and the lead is placed on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

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

25 points

EXERCISE 4

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 Mark Retrieve

In this Exercise one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 50 metres and one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 80 metres. Viewed from the Starting Pegs there must be between 45 and 60 degrees of separation between the lines to where to each of the items of Game land.

Procedure

Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead is removed 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 handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower.

There should be a reasonable delay between the two casts. Once both items of Game have been cast from the thrower, the dog will be sent for the first item to be retrieved. The Judge may stipulate the order in which Game is to 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 to which it is being sent. However, once the dog has left the handler further handling will be penalised accordingly. 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 is put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment

The essentials of this test are that the dog:

- a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.
- b. Marks the fall of the Game.
- c. Does not retrieve until instructed.
- d. Retrieves the correct item of Game.
- e. Does not swap Game.
- f. Picks up only one item of Game at a time.
- g. Does not need direction from the handler.
- h. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded

35 points

## Double Rise Retrieve

In this exercise one item of Game is cast to land at approximately 70 metres. As the dog is returning to the handler another item of Game is thrown or placed no more than 10 metres behind where the first item landed. The dog should not see this Item being placed.

**Procedure** Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead is removed 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 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 is put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

**Assessment** The essentials of this test are that the dog:

- a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.
- b. Marks the fall of the Game.
- c. Does not retrieve until instructed.
- d. On the second bird, goes directly to the area of the fall of Game.
- e. Does not need direction from the handler.
- f. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

**Points Awarded** 35 points.

## ACTION and STYLE

**Procedure** Action and Style are apparent in every movement of a dog and throughout its entire performance by the gaiety of its manner, its alertness and attention to the handler, its eagerness and speed on retrieves, its pickup of game and its return with it.

**Assessment** The essentials of Style and Action include;

- a. An alert and obedient attitude.
- b. A determined departure to retrieve.
- c. An aggressive search for the fall.
- d. A prompt pickup of Game and a reasonably fast return.

**Points Awarded** 10 points.

## 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** – Any dog that finds or is seen to acknowledge the presence of Game but deliberately passes by the Game is a “blinker”.
- 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 can 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 25cm to 30cm, with a circumference of between 20cm and 30cm and have a weight of between 300gms and 450gms and must be free of all feather and fur. White pigeons and white dummies shall not be used.

- 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.
- 8.10 **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

Competitor Number																	
MAXIMUM POINTS																	
<b>EXERCISE 1</b>	HEELING 20-30 METRES	10															
<b>EXERCISE 2</b>	RECALL	15															
<b>EXERCISE 3</b>	RETRIEVE 50 METRES	30															
<b>EXERCISE 4</b>	RETRIEVE 70 METRES	35															
<b>ACTION AND STYLE</b>		10															
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		100															
<b>WORKSHEET Deductions For misbehaviour</b>																	
Total Failure to STAY		NO SCORE															
Extreme Hard Mouth		NO SCORE															
Total Failure to Retrieve		NO SCORE															
Hard Mouth		Up to 10 points															
Pottering		Up to 5 points															
Fouling the Test area		Up to 5 points															
Blinking		Up to 5 points															
Giving Tongue		Up to 5 points															
Unsteadiness		Up to 10 points															
Dropping Game		Up to 5 points															
Touching Dog		Up to 5 points															

**Notes:** *Deductions may apply to each exercise*

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# OPEN

## RETRIEVING ABILITY TEST FOR GUNDOGS

Competitor Number																			
MAXIMUM POINTS																			
<b>EXERCISE 1</b>	HEELING 20-30 METRES	10																	
<b>EXERCISE 2</b>	1min STAY/RECALL/STOP	20																	
<b>EXERCISE 3</b>	WALK UP RETRIEVE	25																	
<b>EXERCISE 4</b>	DOUBLE RISE or DOUBLE MARK	35																	
<b>ACTION AND STYLE</b>		10																	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>		100																	
<b>WORKSHEET - Deductions For Misbehaviour</b>																			
Total Failure to STAY	NO SCORE																		
Total Failure to STOP	NO SCORE																		
Extreme Hard Mouth	NO SCORE																		
Switching Game	NO SCORE																		
Total Failure to Retrieve	NO SCORE																		
Additional Commands	Up to 10 points																		
Hard Mouth	Up to 10 points																		
Pottering	Up to 5 points																		
Fouling the Test area	Up to 5 points																		
Blinking	Up to 5 points																		
Giving Tongue	Up to 5 points																		
Unsteadiness	Up to 10 points																		
Dropping Game	Up to 5 points																		
Touching Dog	Up to 5 points																		

**Notes:** *Deductions may apply to each exercise/retrieve.*

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