



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

Lisa A Carroll
Manager of Performance Events

NOTICE

June 7, 2006

TO: Presidents & Secretaries of Retriever Field Trial Clubs

Re: 2006 Sub-Committee Interim Report

Attached is the 2006 report of the Sub-Committee on Rules of the Retriever Advisory Committee (RAC) concerning various revisions to the Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers, including Standing Recommendations of the Retriever Advisory Committee and the Supplement to the Standard Procedure. These suggested revisions will be discussed at the interim meeting of the RAC, held in conjunction with the National Amateur Championship in Klamath Falls, OR Saturday June 17, 2006.

Lisa A. Carroll

**Marshall Simonds
627 Bliss Hill Road
Morrisville, Vermont 05661**

William Speck
Assistant Vice President
American Kennel Club
Performance Events Dept.
P.O. Box 37929
Raleigh, NC 27627-7929

Dear Mr. Speck:

I enclose the 2006 Report of the Subcommittee on Rules of the Retriever Advisory Council. This should be mailed to all clubs as usual and sufficient copies should be brought to the National Amateur at Klamath Falls for the Rules Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Marshall Simonds – Chairman

cc: Members of the Rules Committee

RETRIEVER ADVISORY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON RULES

Report and Proposals for 2006

In 2006 the Rules Committee has continued to consider steps to reduce entry size – particularly in Open All-Age stakes. All of the proposals made in '05 were approved by ballot, have been approved by the AKC Board and will be voted on by the delegates in September '06. Those that require a delegate vote will not become effective until January of 2007. When implemented these proposals should lead to an increase in conflicting trials and a consequent reduction in entry size.

The Rules Committee believes that an increase in conflicting trials is the best long term approach to reducing large entries. The alternative approaches of imposing a fixed limit on the number of dogs a single handler can run or a limit on the number of trials in which a dog can be entered in a year, which would also reduce entry size, involve a number of difficult issues that should, we believe, be deferred until the present efforts have had a chance to work.

Our first proposal for a rule change in 2006, addressing the control of entry size, will permit any club with a large Open All-Age entry to elect, after the entry has closed, to reduce the entry size by imposing a Limited, Special, or Restricted category. After the total size of the Open entry is known, each club would have the option to reduce the entry by varying degrees, applying standards that are stated in the Rules, clear to everyone, and dependent on clearly defined performance records.

Proposal One –relates to and follows an addition to Paragraph 5 of the Standing Recommendations as adopted by '05 vote and due to take effect on Jan. 1, '07.

The new paragraph 5 of the Standing Recommendations adopted by the '05 vote of the Retriever Advisory Committee and likely to take effect on Jan. 1, 2007 provides:

"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 club's view of the reduction needed."

We now propose to add after this paragraph 5 the following provisions to become a part of the Standing Recommendations:

Anytime a trial giving club receives in excess of 75 entries in an Open or higher

qualification All-Age stake, it may, at its option and within 48 hours of the close of entries, convert the stake into either a Limited, Special or Restricted All-Age stake.

The club shall apply the qualification requirements of a Limited, Special and Restricted All-Age stake in that order and thereafter shall select the first higher qualification stake which will reduce entries to less than 75 dogs. If entries are such that a Restricted is applied and more than 75 dogs remain, that shall be the final number entered.

Entry forms shall be the standard AKC form or a form modeled thereon stating whether the dog entered is qualified for a Limited, Special or Restricted All-Age stake. The determination of each dog's qualification for the above stakes shall be made based solely on such completed entry form and any omission or erroneous qualification designation shall entitle the club to reject the entry.

A club exercising such option shall, during the above 48 hour period, or as soon thereafter as possible, notify all affected entrants by the most expeditious means available, utilizing information listed on the bottom of the entry form including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses; and all such entrants shall have the right within 24 hours of receipt of such notice to withdraw any and all dogs previously entered and receive a full refund of all such dogs' entry fees.

Comment: These provisions give a club the option to reduce its Open entry to the number 75 or below by designating the trial as a Limited, Special or Restricted All-Age Stake. The club must notify all entrants of the decision and permit any handler so notified to withdraw any or all of the dogs entered by that handler with a refund of entry fees. The proposal contemplates prompt action for this to happen. Notice by phone or e-mail should be practical. It would also appear that use of an electronic entry service would speed the process contemplated. For example, the reduction to be achieved by adopting a Limited, Special or Restricted stake could be calculated and displayed on line as soon as the entries closed and notice of the level chosen could promptly posted on the line. In instances where a large Open entry is anticipated, it would be wise to schedule an entry closing date at least three to four days earlier than normal to provide adequate time for the notice required by this option. Such an earlier closing date may also provide time for withdrawal of an entry and resubmission of the entry in a later closing trial with a smaller field. The proposed rule does not, however, require designation of an early closing to make the option available. Thus the option would be available to clubs who are totally surprised by a large entry as is sometimes the case.

The Committee's decision to propose this option, including the choice of a Restricted Stake, reflects our view-and the evidence-that a Restricted Stake will, in fact, have a substantial impact on entry size. The Limited and Special All-Age stakes provide some limits on entry size. The Restricted does more. Criticism of the Restricted stake in the past has often involved a complaint that is unfair to amateurs and unpopular with them. It may be that amateurs find the Restricted stake less appealing because the qualifications require a higher standard of past performance. Under any circumstances today the Open All-Age in any iteration is a challenging stake for most amateurs. The Open is in fact our most competitive stake calling for the very best of performances by the competing dogs.

If the level of competition is somewhat less when the stake is a simple Open, rather than a Limited, Special or Restricted, it seems to the Committee this is counter balanced by the fact that the larger entry likely in the simple Open will too often result in badly conceived tests with punitive callbacks that decimate the field. We believe that most amateurs would prefer to compete in a moderate sized entry with enough time to run sound tests and have reasonable call backs. Proposal 1 will give clubs a chance to move toward this goal.

Proposal 2.

Delete Section 5 of Chapter 14 of the Field Trial Rules and replace it with the following new Section 5.:

"Section 5. Only stakes which are run on game birds and on both land and water shall be permitted in licensed retriever field trials. Premium lists should specify the kind of game to be used in each stake and, unless otherwise specified in the premium list, only pheasants and/or ducks may be used."

Comment: This change is intended to eliminate pigeons as a permitted choice of birds for use in the minor stakes and to make requirements for game birds uniform for all licensed field trial stakes.

Proposal 3. Delete Section 12 of Chapter 8 of the Field Trial Rules and substitute the following new Section 12:

"Any dog entered and present at a field trial may be withdrawn from Competition by its handler upon notification to the stake marshal without loss of the dog's eligibility to compete in any other stake in which the dog was entered. The entry fee for the stake entered and withdrawn shall be forfeit."

ISSUE FOR DISCUSSION

One of the troubling problems visited on field trials by large entries, and in particular, large strings of dogs entered by a professional handler, occurs because the professional with a large number of open dogs will not infrequently also have entries in the Derby and/or Qualifying Stakes. Running in order and without delays in the Open stake often results in delays in the Derby and Qualifying stakes – waiting for dogs from the Open. Such delays are an inconvenience and an annoyance for the judges and the workers. Indeed, sometimes these delays adversely impact the quality of the minor stakes – such as a three series Derby or a meaningless Qualifying mark or blind because of lack of time.

The root cause of these problems are the professional trainers with large numbers of entries that include Open, Derby and Qualifying. The following proposal, which is for preliminary discussion only this year is a possible approach to dealing with this problem.

As a practical matter retriever field trials are run by amateurs and paid for by amateurs. Professionals earn a living training and handling retrievers owned by amateurs. To date the Rules Committee has consciously avoided proposing rules to restrict or regulate how many retrievers a professional can enter and run in a trial. We've done this because we believe the professionals contribute greatly to the training of our dogs, to the development of new and better training methods and to improvement in handling techniques.

We do not, of course, try to tell the professional how to run their business activities or what to charge for their services. Nor, as noted above, have we sought to limit the number of dogs they enter and run in trials – a limitation that would directly and adversely impact their income. The issue is the adverse impact on the quality of our field trials related to the delays that occur in the Open and in the minor stakes because various professionals are running such large numbers of dogs in these stakes. These delays are unfair to the Judges, unfair to the workers and often limit the ability of the club to put on a good trial – especially in the minor stakes.

This proposal for corrective action would put the responsibility for corrective action on the professionals. In its simplest form this proposal would say to the professionals – “Enter and run as many dogs as you like in the Open and the minor stakes, but make arrangements to insure that you or someone acting on your behalf is available to run the dogs you have entered in the minor stakes in order and without disrupting the running order in the Open.”

The suggested rule, if adopted, would provide in a new paragraph in the Standing Recommendations as follows:

“To minimize delays in the conduct of field trials caused by a single handler with multiple entries in the Open All-Age stakes and the minor stakes, any trial giving club or organization may, at its option, by notice in it’s premium adopt the following policy:

Any handler with six or more dogs entered in the Open, Limited, Special or Restricted stake and with one or more dogs entered in the Derby and/or Qualifying shall run in order all such dogs. Any delay in running such dogs of longer than ten minutes will result in the delayed dog being involuntarily dropped from competition.”

This rule would have no application to delays caused by dogs entered in the Open and the Amateur stakes or delays caused by conflicts between dogs running in Open and/or Amateur stakes and the minor stakes when handled by a person running fewer than six dogs in the Open.