

## **Results of AKC Pointing Breed FT Survey**

The AKC Performance Events Department sent a survey to owners of dogs that had placed in PBFTs during 2013 to 2017 plus all currently active PBFT judges. The survey was open from June 15 through June 30. It was received by 3,695 individuals with valid email addresses; 1,264 (34%) of the individuals responded to the survey.

### **Background of survey participants**

- Owners of 12 different pointing breeds responded. GSP and Brits were 55%.
- 70% participate in both horseback and walking stakes.
- 83% are members of local pointing breed clubs.
- 75% are members of Parent clubs.
- All regions of the country were represented, with the Mid-West being the largest at 30%.
- 58% own a breed that is required to retrieve. (Q11) *Owners of non-retrieving breeds were asked to skip questions concerning retrieving – Q12 thru Q16.*

**Response to Survey Questions** (The percent that neither agreed or disagreed with the question is not shown below.)

Q7 – Novice Gun Dog Stake. The Novice Gun Dog stake is meant to ease the transition into broke dog competition. It is a broke dog stake judged to gun dog standards. It is open to dogs that have not previously place first in a broke dog stake. The winning dog would earn 1 point toward it FC title provided there are a minimum of 4 starters. Once a dog has won a Novice Gun Dog Stake, it cannot run in another one.

Do you believe offering a Novice Gun Dog stake would be good for the sport?

Strongly Agree / Agree	57%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	27%

Q8 – Allowing Judges to Ride ATVs. Taken as a whole, do you believe it would be beneficial for the sport to allow judges to ride ATVs in walking stakes at the option of the host club?

Strongly Agree / Agree	41%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	45%

Q9 – Walking All-Age Stakes. Do you believe a walking all-age stake is a contradiction and should not be allowed?

Strongly Agree / Agree	58%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	22%

Q10 – Retrieving Stakes. Do you believe that retrieving stakes restricts entries since non-retrieving breeds tend to avoid entering retrieving stakes?

Strongly Agree / Agree	63%
Strongly Disagree / Disagree	17%

Q12 – Retrieving - The current method to measure the retrieving ability of a dog requires a placement high enough in a broke dog stake to earn championship points. Do you believe the current method is fair and no new alternative methods should be explored?

Strongly Agree / Agree                      25%  
 Strongly Disagree / Disagree              50%

Q13 – Retrieving Credits Earned by Placing in Retrieving Stakes – Allow any placement in a retrieving stake to count as one retrieving credit. To finish, a dog must earn 10 championship points in field trial competition (same as currently the case) plus earn 4 retrieving credits.

Strongly Agree / Agree                      67%  
 Strongly Disagree / Disagree              14%

Q14 – Retrieving Credits Earned by Passing a Stand-Alone Retrieving Test – The retrieving test is a separate pass-fail test that is handled like a callback. This separates the retrieve from the normal field trial stake. Dog still must earn 10 championship points in field trial competition (same as currently the case) plus earn 4 retrieving credits. Should a dog be allowed to earn retrieving credits by passing a stand-alone retrieving test?

Strongly Agree / Agree                      51%  
 Strongly Disagree / Disagree              30%

Q15 – Retrieving Credits Earned by Passing the Retrieving Junior Hunter Test –A dog must earn 10 championship points in field trial competition (same as currently the case) plus earn 4 retrieving credits. Should a dog be allowed to earn retrieving credits by passing the Retriever JH Test?

Strongly Agree / Agree                      42%  
 Strongly Disagree / Disagree              30%

Q16 – Retrieving Credits Earned by Passing the Pointing Breed Master Hunter Test – A dog must earn 10 championship points in field trial competition (same as currently the case) plus earn 4 retrieving credits. Should a dog be allowed to earn one retrieving credit for each pass of the PB MH Test?

Strongly Agree / Agree                      58%  
 Strongly Disagree / Disagree              24%

**Summary – Response to Survey Questions**

	Agree - <u>Strongly Agree</u>	Disagree - <u>Strongly Disagree</u>
Q7 – Would a Novice Gun Dog stake be good for the sport?	57%	27%
Q8 – Allow judges to ride ATVs in walking stakes?	41%	45%
Q9 – Should Walking All-Age stakes not be allowed?	58%	22%
Q10 - Do retrieving stakes restrict entries?	63%	17%
Q12 - The current method of assessing retrieving ability is fair?	25%	50%
Q13 – Allow retrieving credits by placing in retrieving stakes?	67%	14%
Q14 – Allow retrieving credits by passing a stand-alone retrieving test?	51%	30%
Q15 – Allow retrieving credits by passing the Retrieving JH test?	42%	30%
Q16 – Allow retrieving credits by passing the Pointing Breed MH test?	58%	24%

**Common Themes Frequently Mentioned in Responses to Q17** - Please provide comments you feel are relevant regarding enhancing the sport. 604 comments were received.

1. The sport is experiencing a decline due to social and demographic trends.
2. Need to have more qualified judges. Judges should periodically attend seminars/take tests.
3. Clubs need to be more welcoming. Encourage mentoring and fun days.
4. Encourage clubs to offer non-regular stakes (judging ceases at the flush) to attract new participants.
5. The Novice Gun Dog might be a good idea but it will not be offered at many trials due to time limitations. If offered, it should be limited to amateur handlers.
6. Encourage clubs to offer walking stakes in conjunction with their horseback trial.
7. The requirement that Brittanys must obtain a major win in a stake held by a Brittany club is outdated and a hinderance to owners of this breed getting involved in the sport.
8. Judges on ATVs. Pros: Hard to find judges with horses, would enlarge the judging pool. Cons: Judges can't see as well, noisy, changes the whole nature of the sport.
9. Allow clubs to brace walking handlers together in horseback trials.
10. The current method of earning retrieving points is not a fair way to assess a dog's ability to retrieve. Many deserving dogs with more than enough championship points that are good retrievers never finish because they can't "hit it right" with their placements.

### **Next Steps**

Based on the findings of the survey, the Performance Events Department will begin the process to make the following changes:

1. An all-age stake of any type must allow both horseback and walking handlers. An all-age stake cannot be designated for walking handlers only. (Q #9) *Add wording to Standard Procedure 1-D, page 40.*
2. Allow walking handlers in horseback stakes to be braced together. *Modify wording to Standard Procedure 6-V, page 52 and add new Standard Procedure 4-G, page 45.*
3. Share the pertinent survey results with the Parent Clubs of the four retrieving breeds. Based on the results of the survey, propose that a retrieving credit be earned by placing in a retrieving stake if the placement is below where championship points are awarded. If the placement is high enough to be awarded championship points, the dog will earn retrieving credits equal to the championship points awarded. To finish, a dog must earn 10 championship points in field trial competition (same as currently the case) plus earn 4 retrieving credits. (Q#13) *Modify wording under FC and AFC requirements to state retrieving credits rather than retrieving points and change won to earned, pages 26 & 28, and add description of retrieving credits, page 29.*