

September 1, 2012

The Retriever Advisory Committee Subcommittee 2012 Report

During 2011, since there were no new rules proposed we endeavored to elicit more discussion at our meetings in June and November. It became clear during those discussions that there were several points of concern from the field trial community. The Subcommittee has tried to address some of these concerns in this report.

CONCERN

We are continuing to experience confusion as to the interpretation of the rule defining the difference between an Amateur handler and a Professional handler.

DISCUSSION

Over the past years there have been a number of enterprising individuals who have used their skills in various ways which has allowed them to produce some income from the sport of Retriever Field Trials. Many of these efforts have gone a long way in educating amateur trainers in methods of training their dogs for field trials. The subcommittee feels that people partaking in these educational tools should not be considered professionals; therefore, writing books, making videos and taking part in seminars would not classify a person as a professional. The committee believes that the clearest line that can be drawn between the amateur and the professional is the real life handling of a dog for compensation.

That being said, we recognize that someone who instructs an individual on the handling and training of their dog(s), and is compensated for that instruction, is acting as a professional.

Proposal No. 1

Under STANDING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RETRIEVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE page 36

Under 3. Amateur Definition ;(a.) after the words "the trial in question has not" delete (a) in its entirety and insert the following:

"received compensation from the direct training of a dog for hunting, hunting tests or field trials and/or the handling of a dog in the same, and/or the regular and systematic personal instruction of other individuals regarding the above pursuits at any level."

Compensation as provided above is defined as money, goods or services to a person or any member of their household.

Insert the following paragraphs for clarification:

Any person participating in an occasional organized seminar or workshop to improve the training and handling of field trial, hunting test or hunting dogs will be exempt from the above provisions as will a person who receives payment for providing educational material, (such as books, videos, etc.), to the public on the training and handling of field trial, hunting test or hunting dogs.

So that 3 (a.) in its entirety will now read:

3. Amateur Definition: The following definitions and standards should be followed in determining the status of any person to be an Amateur:

(a.) For purposes of eligibility to judge under Section 3 of Chapter 14 of the Rules for Retriever trials, a person shall be considered an Amateur who, during the period of two years preceding the trial in question, has not received compensation from the direct training of a dog for hunting, hunting tests or field trials and/or the handling of a dog in the same, and/or the regular and systematic personal instruction of other individuals regarding the above pursuits at any level.

Compensation as provided above is defined as money, goods or services to a person or any member of their household.

Any person participating in an occasional organized seminar or workshop to improve the training and handling of field trial, hunting test or hunting dogs will be exempt from the above provisions as will a person who receives payment for providing educational material, (such as books, videos, etc.), to the public on the training and handling of field trial, hunting test or hunting dogs.

Proposal No. 2

CONCERN

In recent years uncertainty has arisen over amateur status of persons who are living with a professional as family members or who have a virtual spousal relationship with a professional although they are not legally married. Also, some individuals have expressed concern that their very close friendship with a professional might invalidate their amateur status under the present rule.

The subcommittee thus believes that a more definitive description of the family and other relationships which cause the loss of amateur status is needed.

Under 3. (c.) After the words "No person shall be entitled to status as an Amateur" delete the completion of the sentence and insert "who is residing with a professional as part of his or her immediate family or who has an ongoing intimate personal relationship with a professional beyond that of a friend or client."

So that paragraph (c.) in its entirety will read:

"No person shall be entitled to status as an Amateur who is residing with a professional as part of his or her immediate family or who has an ongoing intimate personal relationship with a professional beyond that of a friend or client."

The time periods for any disqualification from Amateur status under this section shall be the same as those fixed by paragraphs (a.) and (b.) above."

CONCERN

The effect of a field Trial Committee refusing an entry in the Amateur stake.

DISCUSSION

In order to clarify a Field Trial Committee's position in declining an entry in the Amateur stake, (where there is no protest), but because the Field Trial Committee feels the individual lacks Amateur status, we felt some explanatory language was necessary.

Proposal No. 3.

After 3. Amateur Definition (d.) as written add the following paragraph:

A Field Trial Committee's determination rejecting a person's Amateur All-Age entry for lack of Amateur status made solely on its own volition shall not affect that person's Amateur status for any future trials.

So that Paragraph 3 (d.) in its entirety will read:

(d.) The determination of amateur status under these directives for the purpose of any particular field trial shall be made by the field Trial Committee for that trial.

A Field Trial Committee's determination rejecting a person's Amateur All-Age entry for lack of Amateur status made solely on its own volition shall not affect that person's Amateur status for any future trials.

Further Discussion of 3. (d.)

A person's Amateur status may also be questioned by a person filing a protest under chapter 10, Section 1 stating the dog's ineligibility to run in the Amateur stake due to the handler's lack of Amateur status. If a protest is filed it precipitates a field trial committee misconduct hearing, with a full report of the proceedings sent to the AKC. The individual that is found to be a professional by a Field Trial Committee under these circumstances will remain a professional unless he appeals the decision to the AKC and secures a reversal, or fulfills the requirements outlined in paragraphs 3 (a.) and (b.)

CONCERN

Layout Blinds

DISCUSSION

At our meetings we have encouraged discussion about the use of layout blinds. When a straw vote has been called the results have been about equal yes and no; however, the reasons not to use these blinds seem much more compelling to the Committee than the ability to hide a bird thrower. The chances of both dogs and bird boys sustaining a serious injury when lying in these blinds is real. The temperature turning hot puts the bird boy at high risk, as well as a dog stepping on the blind being a physical danger to both the dog and the layout blind occupant.

There are a variety of camouflages designed for grass lands put out by sporting goods stores that could be used to conceal bird throwers in these situations.

Proposal No. 4 Layout blinds

Under STANDARD PROCEDURE FOR NON-SLIP RETRIEVER TRIALS, No. 8, 3rd paragraph, (page 28) to be added after the sentence ending : "the distinctive shape of the blind" and in no event shall gunners or

throwers be instructed to lay down on the ground in layout blinds or like configurations for hiding purposes”

So that No. 8, 3rd paragraph in its entirety will read:

”Retired Guns, throwers and blind planters should be concealed by a blind that provides complete coverage, adequate space, and natural camouflage to conceal the distinctive shape of the blind and in no event shall gunners or throwers be instructed to lay down on the ground in layout blinds or like configurations for hiding purposes. The blind must be so located as to minimize the development of a trail that will lead the running dog away from the area of the fall. In no circumstances should the judges have the guns move to another position to mislead dogs in their marking. No blinds shall be placed in the field in a marking test except in accordance with the provisions set forth in this paragraph or for the purpose of protecting the running dogs from injury by unseen hazards.

CONCERN

Excessive waits in minor stakes.

DISCUSSION

It has come to the subcommittee’s attention that the minor stakes are being shut down on a more frequent basis and for extended periods of time while they await dogs and handlers from the major stakes. Usually, this delay is caused by the major stakes’ marshal and/or judges’ insistence that their dogs run in order. That and the major stake handlers staying put with no one directing them to proceed to a shut down or soon to be shut down minor stake.

The above situations can be largely avoided under the existing rules by the Field Trial Marshal acting pursuant to Section 4(a) of Chapter 14 of the Retriever Rules (Page 18 in the Rule Book). This provision gives the Field Trial Marshal the authority to overrule the major stake judges and marshal whenever a change in the running order will affect two or more stakes. The Field Trial Marshal is tasked with communicating between the stakes. When he thus sees a looming delay in a minor stake he should step in and direct the needed minor stake handlers to leave the major stake and proceed to the affected minor stake despite this changing the running order in the major stake.

The subcommittee hopes that awareness of and application of these provisions of the Rule Book will substantially reduce most of the minor stake delays now being experienced.

Respectfully submitted,

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