

**AKC Retriever Hunting Test Advisory Committee (RHTAC) Report**  
**Master National Retriever Club's Annual Event**  
**September 29, 2022**  
**Roseburg, Oregon**

**Submitted by Jack Combs, Chair RHTAC**

On behalf of this committee, I express our thanks to MNRC Board and the American Kennel Club for the opportunity to make this report. There are copies of the charge, responsibility and authority for the committee, its membership and this report available online at the Master National web site. It is not designed to be a 'gripe' session but rather tries to look at the overall benefits of any potential change to the entire program. The committee has operated mostly by e-mail and conference calls this year and has received an abundance of submissions. I know this info is "old hat" to some of you but it is included here for new participants in the sport that might be here for the first time.

At this time, I'm honored to introduce **the committee members who are here today**. I'm asking each of those in attendance to stand. (Introduce each as listed on the July, 2022 Roster)

You'll note this committee is annually appointed by the ***AKC's Executive Vice President for Sports & Events, Mr. Doug Ljungren*** in consultation with ***AKC Field Director, Retrievers Sporting Group, Mr. Russ Reavis***. The AKC has also appointed additional field representatives: ***Jerry Mann, David Christianson, Kevin Bunnell, Trish Jagoda, and Greg Lister***, so the good news is that we'll be seeing more AKC reps in the field at our events. We applaud these appointments and welcome each of our friends from the AKC.

The committee will address submissions by any individual involved in the retriever hunting test program, any club that holds licensed AKC events or from the AKC. *Only written submissions to the committee are accepted to reduce the chance of misinterpretations.*

The submissions are discussed in detail and a committee decision is reached. The decision may be by 'consensus' (all five agree) or by 'majority' (4-1, or 3-2 vote). Once the committee has agreed on a recommendation, it is sent to AKC. AKC can accept, reject, or modify the recommendations. Additionally, the AKC can implement changes in the regulations and guidelines without consulting the committee. The committee has operated openly and sincerely appreciated each submission.

**I know our time on the program is limited, so if you have questions, any member of the committee will be happy to discuss them with you later.**

***Since our report last year, the Committee has reviewed multiple submissions and recommended only three changes in the Regulations.***

**NOTE: It is expected the regulations will be used in good faith, good sportsmanship, with the intent of the regulation fulfilled and not abused or used as not intended.**

Since our last report (September 29, 2021) the committee has reviewed or is reviewing many issues submitted that requested the regulations be reviewed and/or revised. Samplings of issues include:

- Judges are only allowed to judge a limited number of times in one region. Perhaps no more than 2 events at a particular level in a region, and perhaps a limit on the total number of times a judge is allowed to judge in a year, perhaps 5 times per level. (Committee will not recommended this suggestion to the AKC.)
- Mid-Week events within 5 days on either side of any weekend event observe the same 150-mile rule as events that happen coinciding dates. (Committee will not recommended this suggestion to the AKC at this time but will continue to monitor these tests.)
- Hunt test stake must be shut down for the day at sunset. They can shut down earlier, but no later than sunset. (Committee will not recommended this suggestion to the AKC.)

- A dog is not eligible to be entered in any Hunting Test level (Junior, Senior or Master) at a licensed or member Hunting Test if a Judge of that test level or any member of his family has owned, sold, held under lease, boarded, given or taken instruction from the handler. trained or handled the dog within one year of the start-ing date of the Hunting Test. (Committee will not recommended this suggestion to the AKC.)
- A person shall be considered an Amateur who during the period of **one** year preceding the trial in question has not received compensation in any form for the 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 systematic personal instructions of other individuals regarding the above pursuits. (Committee has recommended the adoption of this change.)
- Amend the Rules & Guidelines to allow the host club to have the option to charge a reasonable fee for each female dog entered to cover the costs associated with conducting the estrus female dog check. (Committee will not recommended this suggestion to the AKC.)
- Failure to go on a blind - A dog sent on a blind retrieve shall at once proceed in the general direction of the line given by the handler. A dog that fails to do so shall, in the absence of unusual extenuating circumstances, is eliminated from the stake. (Committee has recommended the adoption of this change.)
- No talking to honor dog at Master (Committee has recommended the adoption of this change. AKC has decided not to implement this change)
- Concern over excessive passing rates & quality of judging on master dogs at hunting tests (Committee concurs & is working on it as is AKC)
- Change handlers with more than three dogs in a Master test a higher entry fee. (Committee will not recommended this suggestion to the AKC.)

**Please note that with the exceptions noted above, these are samples of *issues submitted* to the committee, so please don't leave here saying they are new regulations. Each is being reviewed and is being discussed but they are not rule changes at this time!**

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each of my colleagues on the committee. They have diligently addressed each submission with the goal of improving the retriever hunting test program, and I'm honored to serve with them.

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I would like to thank each of the **submitters** for their interest in improving the retriever hunting test program; the vast majority were well thought out and presented well. We also express our deep appreciation to **Doug Ljungren, Russ Reavis and Caroline Murphy** at AKC for their superb collaboration on difficult challenges. Without exception, each has been open minded, progressive in their thoughts and strongly supportive of changes that will improve the program.

The AKC notifies the Club 'secretary of record' of AKC decisions on new/revised regulations via e-mail. Please insure your club's records are updated with the AKC. **Please insure the AKC has current contact info on your club secretary.** The committee reminds you that any regulation change implemented will be carefully monitored and, if deemed appropriate, additional recommendations will be made.

Thank you again for listening and we wish you and your dog the very best in the week ahead.

***Members of the RHTAC:***

Robert (Bob) Montler, Eastern Time Zone

Carol Hynes, Central Time Zone

Rex Gibson, Mountain Time Zone

Laura Judd, Pacific Time Zone

Jack Combs, Chairman, North Carolina

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the RHTAC by Jack Combs

JDC/ 9-29-2022