

3 THE UTILITY TEST (UT)

11.1 Purpose of the Test

The Utility Test is designed to test a hunting dog's usefulness to the on-foot hunter in all phases of hunt, both before and after the shot, in field and marsh or water, and on different species of game

While the dog that is successful in the Natural Ability or Advanced Natural Ability Tests might be likened to a promising young apprentice of varying levels and stages of completion, the dog that successfully completes the Utility Test will have demonstrated that he is a master, or at the very least a good, solid and reliable versatile hunting dog.

This test is a challenging and demanding one, as befits the aims and objectives of SAVHDA to "foster and promote excellence in versatility and hunting performance of the Versatile breeds". It is not, however, an unreasonable test with unattainable goals. The dedicated owner-handler, with guidance and a good dog, should be successful. Dogs tested in this test will have usually reached maturity and have at least a hunting season or two behind them. (Note: most of this section is identical to the NAVHDA Utility Test)

11.2 Eligibility

Any dog, irrespective of age or previous testing, is eligible for entry into the Utility Test.

However, should there be more entries than space available in the test, dogs that have not been tested in the Utility Test more than three (3) times will receive preference in entry to dogs that have been previously tested more than (3) times.

11.3 Overview

The Utility Test assesses 15 areas of performance, in a variety of groups and exercises. The performance expected requires a dog possessing not only good abilities and innate talent, along with a high degree of training, but also the physical and mental characteristics which make it possible for the dog to do the wide variety of tasks expected on any given day – in this instance, the test day.

The test is grouped into different phases, comprising the important elements crucial to each area.

Field Group

- Nose
- Search
- Pointing
- Steadiness on Game
- Retrieve of Shot Bird
- Retrieve of Dragged Gamebird

Water Group

- Search for Duck
- Heeling
- Remain at Blind
- Steadiness at Blind
- Retrieve of Duck

Judged throughout:

- Use of Nose
- Desire to Work
- Cooperation
- Stamina
- Obedience

SAVHDA UTILITY TEST SCORING SYSTEM

Grading system: Very Good/Excellent = 4; Good = 3; Satisfactory = 2;
 Poor = 1; Insufficient/Failing = 0
 In certain instances of exceptional merit (Nose, Search, Pointing, Duck Search) a score of 5 = Outstanding,
 may be given

Test Category	Index Number (multiplier)	Maximum Pts Attainable	Prize I (minimum scores required)	Prize II	Prize III
Field					
• Search	5 (x grade)	20	15(3)	15(3)	10(2)
• Pointing	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
• Steadiness on Game	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	6(2)
• Retrieve of Shot Bird	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
• Retrieve of Drag (Feathered gamebird, 150m with one blunt turn)	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Water					
• Search for a Duck	4	16	16(4)	12(3)	8(2)
• Walking at Heel	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
• Remaining in Blind	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
• Steadiness in Blind	2	8	6(3)	4(2)	2(1)
• Retrieve of Duck	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
Judged Throughout					
• Use of Nose	6	24	24(4)	18(3)	18(3)
• Desire to Work	5	20	20(4)	15(3)	10(2)
• Stamina	3	12	9(3)	9(3)	6(2)
• Cooperation	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	3(1)
• Obedience	3	12	9(3)	6(2)	6(2)
TOTAL Pts (sum of grades x multipliers)		204	172	129	90

OTHER ATTRIBUTES ASSESSED DURING THE TEST:

- Gunshyness or gun sensitivity
- Temperament
- Physical attributes
- Rabbit track, when applicable