

MHSA News

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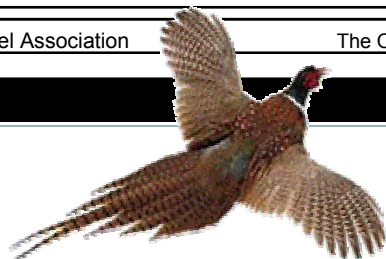
The Only American Kennel Club Licensed All Spaniel Hunting Dog Club

June/July 2011

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Officers &
Board of
Directors



From the President...

Big-Running Dogs That Are Under Control

There clearly are differences of opinion among spaniel enthusiasts regarding the subjects of pace, style and control. Some people prefer big-running dogs that are fast and flashy and cover a lot of ground in a hurry. Other control-oriented handlers want slower, closer-working dogs that are extremely responsive to every command.

First, I'd like to point out that running style and control are two separate issues. I've heard the comments of some people who assume that fast, big-running dogs are out of control. That simply isn't the case. Pace and bigness of pattern are easy to visually evaluate. But control really just comes down to one question: "Does the dog quickly and correctly respond to whistle and verbal commands?" Spaniels possess many different combinations of pace and control. Just as there are flashy, big-running dogs that are under control, there are also slow, close-running dogs that aren't in control. Quite simply, a dog that isn't under control is out doing its own thing and not responding to the handler and working as a team.

I personally have disagreements with both of the speed freaks and the control freaks when their style preferences are overemphasized to the point that they lose sight of the purpose of a hunting spaniel.

The Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels states that the purpose of a flushing spaniel "*is to hunt, find game, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and efficient manner.*"

The publication The Conduct and Judging of Spaniel Field Trials states that: "*The purpose of a spaniel field trial is to demonstrate the performance of a properly trained spaniel in the field. The performance should not differ from that in any ordinary day's shooting, except that in the trials a dog should do his work in a more nearly perfect way.*"

Dogs that are fast and flashy and cover ground very quickly certainly are efficient at finding game *if* they cover the ground in a pattern that makes good use of the prevailing wind, and assuming that they stay within gun range and are responsive to commands. Therefore, if all elements of two dogs' performances are equal, the edge *should* go to the dog that works at a faster pace, because faster ground coverage makes for more efficient game production.

A problem can arise, however, when pace and style are allowed to trump the control and teamwork that a properly trained spaniel is supposed to exhibit. When fast, big-running dogs are rewarded with placements or qualifications even when they work

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out of gun range or when they fail to respond to commands in a reasonable manner then I'd argue that our game's standards aren't being followed. A dog that frequently runs beyond gun range certainly is not working in a pleasing and efficient manner. Likewise, a dog that hunts on its own and fails to obey commands certainly is not demonstrating the performance of a properly trained spaniel.

While some people just love fast, flashy dogs, there also are some people seem to favor control above all else. They want their dogs to immediately respond to every command, and some appear to me as if they would like to possess a joystick to control their dog's every move. I would argue that an insistence on extreme control clearly works against the stated purpose of allowing the dog to show its innate intelligence and demonstrate its natural game finding abilities. If the handler tries to direct the dog's every move the element of teamwork between dog and handler is lost. The dog is simply going where it's guided until it happens across game.

Sometimes handlers force their dogs to work in so closely that they prevent their dogs from being able to demonstrate outstanding scenting ability, even if the dog has an excellent nose. Many of these control-oriented handlers never let their dogs run the wind properly or reach out anywhere close to the edge of gun range. Assuming the dog is working the wind correctly (such as when running downwind or straight across the wind) there is nothing wrong with a dog being 35 to 40 yards in front of the handler at the outermost reach of its pattern. Yet many control-oriented handlers would never let their dog get that far away from them. Most new handlers tend to land on this control end of the spectrum. They are often fearful that their dog is getting too far away from them even if the dog is running a perfect pattern for the wind conditions. I would advise these handlers to put more trust in their dogs, and urge them to let the dog contribute its half to the team performance. I've yet to meet a handler who has a better nose than his or her dog.

In the field trial world, there are breed differences in regard to the preference for pace versus control. Most cocker handlers tend to lean more toward control and working close to the handler, while more (although certainly not all) springer handlers tend to favor faster-working and bigger-running dogs. I would argue that the breed of a spaniel shouldn't really matter. The ultimate goal of hunting with a springer or cocker is the same. Namely, the most effective dog is one that produces the most birds by covering a lot of ground in a rapid manner while using the wind correctly, staying within gun range, and quickly responding to the handler's commands.

There also is a geographical component to the preference for pace versus control. Back across the pond, where our breeds originated, there is a decided preference for control. That's not surprising given the history of driven hunts and smaller, private grounds. However, the control-oriented, short-running English or European style of running is poorly suited for most American hunting conditions where we generally traverse large tracts of land in pursuit of wild and highly mobile pheasants. I've seen some slow, plodding spaniels that I swear would never catch up to a South Dakota rooster.

The best handlers are very good at reading their dogs. They know when to let the dog do its own thing so that it can display its natural abilities, and when to provide some direction to keep the dog directed on task. These handlers read the body language of their dog, and they know when the dog is "birdy" or has scented game. The cardinal sin in regard to reading your dog is calling it off of a bird. Once your dog indicates that it smells a bird, or if it is trailing a runner, you should never call it off the bird (unless it is running in a brace and is going to cross onto the other dog's course). If a dog is quickly trailing a runner and is reaching the outer limit of gun range you should stop the dog, allow the handler and guns to catch up, and then release the dog to continue the pursuit.

When it comes to pace and control I admit that I want it all. I want my dogs to run big (when dictated by the wind) and fast while promptly responding to all of my whistle and verbal commands. This combination of both pace and control is what I demand when hunting, and it's the same standard that I hold as the ideal for hunt test and field trial dogs.

Club Training

The events will be held at

Major Ave Hunt Club

Glencoe, MN

Sunday, July 17th

Club Training - 8:00-1:00

(\$5.00 plus birds)



Pheasants will be used for club training

Pheasants are \$6.00

Please Bethann know how many birds you would like for the day by

Thursday, July 14th.

80 pheasants are available, first come first serve. If you have questions or need help with anything let us know that as well. The ponds will be also be available for water work.

Remember to bring blaze orange, water for humans and dogs, a whistle and leash. Rain gear, boots, insect repellent, and sun screen would also be a good idea.

The club will provide certified guns to shoot over the dogs and anyone interested in bringing home dead birds for training or dinner should bring a cooler.

We look forward to seeing everyone and remember to send us your bird order or ask any questions,

Kim and Bethann Wiley

651-351-0049

bethannwiley@yahoo.com

At the request of several members of the Minnesota Hunting Spaniel Association, the Board has reviewed the subject of awarding chevrons on the club plaques for AKC Field Trial placements. The concern was that a field trial placement is significantly more difficult to achieve than a Working Dog title and some hunt test titles and therefore should be a recognized accomplishment on the plaque.

After review and discussion, the Board has decided that any dog that is currently running in AKC field trials may request chevrons for any placements in AKC field trials that they have earned. The request needs to be submitted to Kathy Patregnani by July 15, 2011. Information submitted must include the placement earned, Open or Amateur stake and the year that the placement was earned.

Printing on the field trial chevrons will consist of:

3-6 digits describing the trial type

OPENFT = OPEN FT

AMATFT = AMATEUR FT

NCC = NAT'L COCKER CHAMPIONSHIP

NOC = NAT'L OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

NAC = NAT'L AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

1 space

3 DIGITS DESCRIBING THE PLACEMENT (1ST, 2ND, 3RD, 4TH)

A CERTIFICATE OF MERIT IN A NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IS ALSO ELIGIBLE FOR A CHEVRON.

Please send your information by July 15, 2011 to:

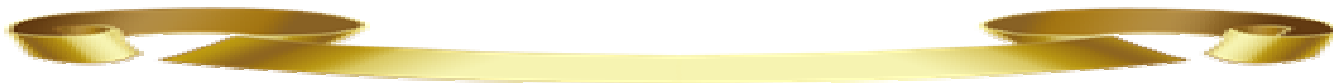
Kathy Patregnani

7317 Vinewood Ct.

Maple Grove, MN 55311

Or email at:

vinewoodess@hotmail.com





2011 Minnesota Hunting Spaniel Association

Spaniel Fun Trial Stakes and Rules

Dates: June 26, July 24, & August 21, 2011

The Fun Trials will start at 9 AM sharp, rain or shine!

All Fun Trials will be held at Major Avenue Hunt Club, Glencoe – MN

Entry Fee - \$15/per dog for each stake

Purpose: A fun, non-threatening way to learn and participate in Field Trial-style events. For all stakes except Hunting and Shooting, gunners will be provided by the MHSA Club. Ribbons will be awarded to all placing Handlers/Dogs.

Puppy Stake: Steady/Unsteady spaniel less than 15 months old at the time of the first Fun Trial. Open to any Handler. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel

Junior Stake: Handler age 16 or younger. Dog may be steady or unsteady. Handler and Dog are judged 50% each. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel. Age and titles of dog do not matter.

Derby Stake: Steady dog less than 2 years at the time of the first Fun Trial. Open to any Handler. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel.

Novice Stake: This stake is for the new dog and new handler. Dog does not need to be steady. Handler and Dog are judged 50% each. Dog or handler may not have any field trial placements. First place and High Point handler/dogs of previous years Novice Stake should retire from this category. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel.

Open Stake: Open to any Handler. Open to any all age steady dog. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel.

Hunting Dog Stake: Open to any unsteady dog. Open to any Handler. Handler does his/her own shooting. Handler and Dog are judged 50% each. Limited to 2 shells per bird. Break open action shotgun preferred but not required. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel.

Shooting Dog Stake: Open to any steady spaniel. Handler does his/her own shooting. Handler and Dog are judged 50% each. Limited to 2 shells per bird. Break open action shotgun preferred but not required. Open to any breed of flushing spaniel

RULES

All participants must wear one piece of blaze orange clothing above the waist while out in the field, preferably a vest. Eye protection is strongly recommended.

- No dog in season allowed on grounds. All dogs must be on a leash, except when participating. Spaniels are not allowed to wear a collar of any type when participating.
- Unless otherwise indicated, gunners will be provided for each stake by the MHSA Club.
- Open to any breed of flushing spaniel.
- A steady dog is one that stops at the flush of the bird, and/or sound of a shot, and waits for the command to retrieve, heel, or carry on.
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- The Fun Trials will use Pigeons in all stakes.

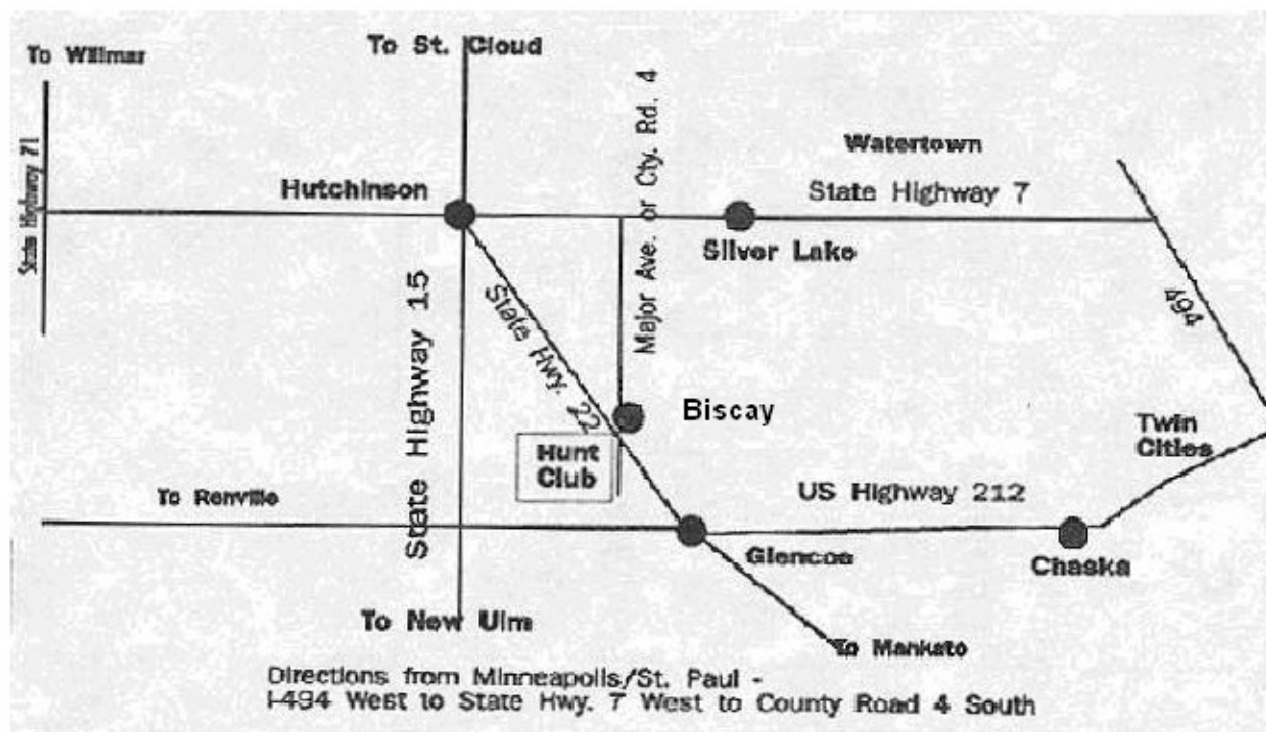
Fun Trial Stakes and Rules – continued

- You may enter as many stakes as you are qualified for.
- The order of the stakes will be as listed, however some stakes may be run simultaneous.
- The Fun Trials will start at 9 AM sharp, rain or shine!
- All Fun Trials will be held at Major Avenue Hunt Club – Glencoe, MN – Map below.

If you wish to participate, or have questions, please contact:

Linda Simon at (320)-510-1904 or email whistlestopkennel@hotmail.com.

Pre-registration is not necessary but helpful so we will have enough birds on hand.





MINNESOTA HUNTING SPANIEL ASSOCIATION

For the flushing spaniel . . . and it's family

The Minnesota Hunting Spaniel Association is an American Kennel Club licensed non-profit club organized to:

- PROVIDE: Information and education for members and the public on care, breeding, training and ability testing for purebred flushing spaniels.
- PROMOTE: Family activities and participation for owners of purebred flushing spaniels.
- CONDUCT: Training programs, hunting tests, working trials and related events to promote our breeds' abilities
- ENCOURAGE: Sportsmanship in all dog events and activities

The MHSAA is dedicated to the: American Cocker Spaniel, American Water Spaniel, Boykin Spaniel, Clumber Spaniel, English Cocker Spaniel, English Springer Spaniel, Field Spaniel, Sussex Spaniel, and Welsh Springer Spaniel.

General Membership meetings are held in the Twin Cities area. Meetings are open to all family members, guests and interested individuals. Each meeting provides an educational or informative topic as well as the opportunity for fellowship and socializing.

Regular annual events include: Club picnics, training days, holiday parties, awards banquet and election, working trials, field trails, fun trials, working dog tests and hunting tests.

We join with other dog clubs to sponsor events of interest to spaniel owners and other breed fanciers. We work with community and social service agencies to provide special services and activities to benefit animals and people.

Many of our club members are very knowledgeable in dog care, training and breeding and are willing to assist other dog owners.

The \$35.00 annual membership is for an individual or family.

Membership Application / Renewal Form

____ New Membership ____ Renewal Membership year: _____

Family Name: _____ First Name(s): _____

Home Address: _____

Home Ph: _____ Work Ph: _____ Cell/Other Ph: _____

Email address: _____

Number of Dogs in Household: _____ Breed(s): _____

What are you goals with the club? Hunting ____ Hunt Tests ____ Field Trials ____ Other ____

What skills could you contribute to the club? _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Mail Application with \$35.00 Membership Fee to:
Heidi Reinhardt, Membership Chair
406 East 5th St, New Richmond, WI 54017