

# **WELSH SPRINGER SPANIEL WORKING CERTIFICATE TEST RULES AND REGULATIONS**

**(Revised February 2003)**

The purpose of the Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America in providing rules and regulations for the Working Certificate is:

- A. To provide encouragement for the numerous exhibitors and breeders who are endeavoring to keep the Welsh Springer Spaniel a hunting dog as well as a show dog of good conformation.
- B. To promote cooperation and good will within the Welsh Springer Spaniel Club community and with other flushing breeds by the holding of field tests.

In order to make the tests available to as wide a number of flushing spaniel owners as possible, Working Tests may be offered by a club or by a group of owners. Club groups desiring to hold tests must obtain permission and approval from the chairperson of the Working Certificate Committee, starting date of the test, site, and names of proposed judges. Necessarily, the judges should be qualified by experience and be approvable for the judging of Licensed Field Trials and/or Hunt Tests. If no such qualified persons live in the area where the field test is to be held, the club or group may nominate any person known to be thoroughly familiar with the work of flushing spaniels in the field, briefly stating their qualifications. Working Tests are non-competitive events. Dogs which pass these tests shall be qualified for the Working Certificate (W.D.) or Working Dog Excellent (W.D.X.).

**Entries** for dogs being tested are to be entered on Working Certificate forms, supplied, on request, by the Chairperson of the Working Certificate Committee. Dogs are to be run singly; however, a minimum of three (3) dogs of any flushing breed must be entered and present to constitute an official testing. The Working Certificate Chairperson shall be responsible for keeping a permanent record of every Welsh Springer Spaniel that qualifies and shall inscribe and mail Working Certificates to the owners of dogs that have successfully qualified.

**Rules:** For Welsh Springer Spaniels entering a Working Dog test and attempting to earn a Working Certificate, two (2) entry forms must be filled out, completed and signed by the judges for each dog entered. One copy must be sent to the Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America, Chairperson Working Dog Certificates, within one week of the test by the officiating Club or group members. The remaining copy of the completed entry form shall be given to the owner of the qualifying dog on the date of the test and it shall be the owners responsibility to send it to the parent club secretary.

**Land Test:** Live upland game birds (ducks and pigeons are optional), should be planted on the course or beat (two for each dog), at least seventy-five (75) to ninety (90) feet ahead of the starting line so that there is the opportunity for the dog to demonstrate ground coverage and hunting ability. Each dog is required to work a minimum of two (2) birds. There should be suitable ground cover at the site; stubble, brush, grass clumps, etc.

**Water Test:** At the water test, a shot is fired into the air and at the same time a dead bird is thrown; either from the shore or from a boat, so as to fall approximately 20-25 yards that requires the dog to swim in order to make the retrieve. A duck call, or similar action, should be utilized to assist with focusing the dog's attention to the vicinity from where the bird will be thrown.

In both the land and water test, the dog must retrieve the bird to a reasonable distance, but not necessarily to hand. Dogs may not be "chased down" to retrieve a bird. At the water test, both the dog and bird must be completely out of the water for completing the retrieve.

***The established Safe-Gunning rules must be in effect at all times.*** If for some reason the bird cannot be shot (for example, a bird flying over the gallery or where a person may be in the line of fire, the bird getting up wild before the dog is started,) or if the bird is missed, additional birds should be planted to allow sufficient judging of hunting, flushing, and retrieving abilities. If a dog has ***sufficiently*** demonstrated that it can find and flush game but said game cannot be shot, a dead bird may be thrown with a shot fired while the bird is in the air to enable the dog to make the retrieve. The bird should be thrown at a distance to adequately test marking and retrieving ability. In the case of a fly-away, a dead bird may be thrown immediately following the recall and control of the dog at the handler's side, in order to assist with evaluating retrieving ability as well as taking the dog's mind off of the fly-away.

As an important safety measure and to prevent possible interference with the work of the dog being tested, or the guns a chance to shoot, one (1) or two (2) Stewards should be appointed to keep spectators, other handlers and dogs in a close group BEHIND the judges or in a designated place.

## **WORKING CERTIFICATE**

**In the Land Test for the Working Certificate, the dog should:**

1. Sit or stay by the handler at the starting line, unleashed, until the judge instructs the handler to proceed. The handler "sends" his/her dog and walks behind directing the dog on the course.
2. Show reasonable, not necessarily immediate, response to the whistle and/or command, and reasonable quartering of the ground. The dog should not, for example, be completely out of control although a leniency should be allowed to give the handler time to collect his dog.
3. NOT be required to be steady to wing and shot (flush or shot).
4. Demonstrate sufficient hunting ability to find and put up game in a workmanlike manner without undo urging, and should show no evidence of "pottering".
5. Within in a reasonable time, retrieve game to hand or within reasonable distance so that the handler can pick up the bird without chasing down the dog. The dog should

retrieve the bird within one or two steps for satisfactory completion of a retrieve. The handler may direct the dog to the fall if the dog has not marked it.

6. "Hardmouth" is a serious fault. When a dog delivers a 'damaged' bird, ('damaged' meaning a bird that has been chewed or damaged by the dog making the bird unsuitable for the table or unable to be used in another training session for another dog), he will be disqualified. The disqualification occurs even if all other requirements of the Working Certificate test were completed satisfactorily.

### **In the Water Test for the Working Certificate:**

1. The dog should not be required to sit or stay on the line, unleashed. The dog may be held on lead until the handler is directed by the judge to send the dog. At the water, the dog must be line-steady, off-lead, in order to qualify for a Working Dog Excellent title.
2. The dog should retrieve to hand or within reasonable distance (one or two steps) so that the handler can take the bird without chasing the dog on land, and at the water ensure the dog and bird both are completely out of the water for delivery of the bird.
3. The dog **MUST** swim to make retrieve. Wading is not sufficient for the test.

### **PROCEDURE TO BE USED IN AWARDING CERTIFICATES BY JUDGES**

1. A dog that completes all parts of the test in a creditable manner will be awarded the Working Dog Certificate.
2. If in the opinion of the judges, the dog performs in an excellent manner in ALL (not just part) of the tests, the dog will be awarded the Working Dog Excellent Certificate. Therefore, a dog earning a W.D.X. must have all marks in the excellent column on the judges report.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**WSSCA POLICY REQUIRES THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS AND SPECTATORS AT WSSCA SPONSORED FIELD EVENTS WEAR AN ARTICLE OF BLAZE ORANGE WHILE ON TEST GROUNDS!**

For additional information, contact the WSSCA Field Committee Chairperson.: