



Field Spaniel Society of America, Inc.

Working Certificate Test

PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

PHILOSOPHY

This program is designed to:

1. Encourage Field Spaniels to achieve a high level of hunting skills.
2. Encourage a broad base of support for field work with many owners training their Field Spaniels to a companion hunting level, measured by attaining working titles.
3. Encourage the breeding of versatile as well as beautiful Field Spaniels that are as at home in the field as they are in the conformation or obedience rings.

PROCEDURES

Offering Working Tests:

1. A working test for Field Spaniels may be offered by any flushing spaniel club or by a group of flushing spaniel owners.
2. Permission to hold a test must be obtained from the Chairman of the FSSA Hunting/Working Test Committee and notification must be sent to the appropriate club secretary for the other flushing spaniel breeds. The Chairman of the FSSA Hunting /Working Test Committee shall notify the FSSA Board of such approval. In addition, the Chairman of the FSSA Hunting /Working Test Committee shall arrange for publicity of the event to FSSA members via the FSSA newsletter or web site if such notification can be done in a timely matter.
3. The working test chairman must state the date and the site of the test and names of the proposed judges. The judges must be thoroughly familiar with the work of Field Spaniels in the field. The judges' qualifications should be briefly listed on the test application.
4. FSSA, Inc. Working Test Rules/Entry Form/Judging Sheets must be used if a FSSA working certificate is to be formally issued.
5. The judging score sheets are to be sent to the FSSA Hunting/Working Test Chairman by the working test secretary.

Participation in Working Tests not formally approved:

1. Field Spaniel owners may participate in a working test for flushing spaniels that is offered by any flushing spaniel club or by a group of flushing spaniel owners.
2. Permission to participate in a test must be obtained from the Chairman of the FSSA Hunting/Working Test Committee if such test does not have prior approval as an approved test for Field Spaniels. If the test itself is already approved, there is no further need for approval. This step is necessary to assure that FSSA Working Test Rules/Entry Form/Judging Sheets are used.
3. The date, site of the test, and names of the judges must be forwarded to the FSSA Hunting/Working Test Chairman.
4. FSSA, Inc. Working Test Rules/Entry Form/Judging Sheets must be used if a FSSA working certificate is to be formally issued.
5. The judging score sheets are to be sent to the FSSA Hunting/Working Test Chairman by the working test secretary.



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Paperwork:

1. Information on dogs to be tested should be entered on the most current Entry Form/Judging Sheet obtained from FSSA Hunting/Working Test Chairman. All information on form must be complete, with the signatures of two (2) judges affixed or FSSA WD/WDX Certificates will not be conferred.
2. Two copies of the form are necessary for each Field Spaniel entered - one to be sent into the FSSA Hunting/Working Test Chairman - one copy for the owner of the dog.
3. The FSSA Hunting/Working Test Chairman shall keep permanent record of every dog that qualifies for a WD or WDX title.
4. The owner of the dog receiving a WD or WDX shall receive a certificate. Only one WD and one WDX certificate allowed for each dog.

How Working Certificates Are Earned:

1. Working tests are NOT competitive events. There should be no placements.
2. Three (3) flushing spaniels must run to constitute a valid test.
3. A dog must receive SATISFACTORY ratings in ALL CATEGORIES to receive a working dog certificate.
4. A dog must receive EXCELLENT ratings in ALL CATEGORIES to receive a working dog excellent certificate.
5. The judges shall determine what title a dog receives following FSSA Guidelines for such award.
6. A DOG THAT DAMAGES A BIRD SHALL NOT RECEIVE EITHER CERTIFICATE. A hard-mouthed spaniel is an unacceptable hunting companion or field event competitor.

Site Specifications:

There should be suitable cover, such as stubble, brush, grass, etc. high enough to hide the birds used in the test. The area must be far enough away from houses, etc. so that birds can be shot.

Birds:

Each Field Spaniel should work at least TWO live birds, with two bird contacts required unless field conditions make this overly difficult. More may be used if circumstances require it to give the judge information on the dog's abilities since it is important that at least one flush be seen. Pigeons or other game birds may be used and should be planted a minimum of 60 to 80 feet ahead of the starting line, and well apart from each other.

Gun Safety:

The established safe gunning rules must be followed. An item of blaze orange clothing must be worn in the field. If a bird flies over the gallery, or where any person might be in the line of flight, it should NOT be shot and judges should issue a "No bird" command. Another bird should be put down for the dog. As many birds as necessary may be put down to give the dog a chance to flush a bird and complete a retrieve. If a dog has demonstrated that it can find and flush birds, but the bird can't be shot, a bird may be released by hand and shot to allow the dog to make a retrieve.



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Stewards:

At least one steward should be appointed to keep spectators, other handlers and dogs in a close group behind the judges or in an assigned place. This is to prevent interference with the work of the dog being tested, to give the gunners a chance to shoot, and to ensure the safety of everyone.

Water Test Procedure:

A dead bird is thrown into the water from shore or from a boat, at a distance great enough (20 yards) to cause a dog to swim to make the retrieve. As the bird is thrown, a shot is fired. However, the distance of the retrieve is not as important as making sure the dog has to prove it can swim and retrieve in water. Birds should be thrown in such a manner as to discourage bank running.