



Jagdgebrauchshundverband e.V.

VPGO and

JGHV Performance Awards:

Questions and Answers

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in coordination with
the Stud Book Commission and
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Chapter A

Organization and Test Execution

The Following Applies to all Association Tests:

Test Director Function and Judging Activity

VZPO: §§ 6(2), 9, 10(3), 35(7)(g), 49(1), 51(2), 56, 59(1-3), 60(1), 65, 67, 68, 69, 70(d-e);

VGPO: §§ 8, 10(2 and 4), 68(7), 103(2), 107, 108, 112(1-3), 113, 114, 116, 119(1), 121(1-3), 122(2), 124(4), 128;

VPSO: §§ 8, 9(2-3), 10(2 and 4), 21(7), 67(7), 91(2), 95, 96, 100(1-3), 101, 102(1-3), 104, 107(1), 109(1-3), 110(2), 112, 114(4), 115;

VSwPO: §§ 6(4 and 6), 7(1-2), 21(1-3), 23(2 and 4), 24(4).

Question:

May a test director be a judge at the same test?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The sections cited above govern the test director's activities. These are essentially of an organizational nature and pertain to the periods before, during and after the test. All test regulations stipulate that a test director may not run a dog at a test he is directing. Nothing, however, is said about judging being prohibited.

There are no legal restrictions prohibiting a judging activity by the test director, including regular judging assignments.

Please refer to § 106 of VGPO.

The Following Applies to all Association Tests:

Trainer and Handler Functions

VZPO, VGPO, VPSO: § 10; VSwPO: § 6

Question:

Who is trainer? Who is handler?

The dog is entered showing on *Formblatt 1* the same name for the trainer and handler when in fact the dog has been trained by a professional trainer.

Is this permissible?

Answer:

The answer is definitely negative.

It may well be of significance, for example for the appointment of an apprentice judge, to know whether the handler himself trained the dog or whether another party assumed all or parts of the dog's training.

The Following Applies to all Association Tests:

Rights and Responsibilities of a Test Director During the Test

VZPO: §§ 6(2), 9, 10(3), 35(7)(g), 49(1), 51(2), 56, 59(1-3), 60(1), 65, 67, 68, 69, 70 (d-e);

VGPO: §§ 8, 10(2 and 4), 68(7), 103(2), 107, 108, 112(1-3), 113, 114, 116, 119(1), 121(1-3), 122(2), 124(4), 128;

VPSO: §§ 8, 9(2-3), 10(2 and 4), 21(7), 67(7), 91(2), 95, 96, 100(1-3), 101, 102(1-3), 104, 107(1), 109(1-3), 110(2), 112, 114(4), 115;

VSwoPO: §§ 6(4 and 6), 7(1-2), 21(1-3), 23(2 and 4), 24(4).

Question:

During the VGP, the test director who is quite familiar with the hunting grounds, suggests to the judging group that they make use of a slope with very good cover for a downwind search. The senior judge ignores the suggestion. When the test director repeats his suggestion several times, he is advised by one of the judges in the group that the senior judge alone decides how the hunts will proceed.

Does the test director have the right to intervene during a test?

Answer:

The answer is negative for the above case.

The rights and responsibilities of a test director are outlined in many sections of the Test Regulations (see page 2 of Organization and Test Execution). In the above case, the test director was in a position to advise the judging group on how the grounds could be best hunted. The decision on whether to follow his advice lay alone with the judging group.

On the other hand, the test director has the right – and the responsibility – to intervene when test regulations are violated. He may also intervene when the orderly conduct of the test is in jeopardy by actions of the judges, handlers or spectators.

The test director is not the superior of the judges. He may certainly advise the judges when questions arise to the interpretation of the Test Regulations, or make suggestions for the course of the hunts. However, the decisions on such matters are the province of the judging group.

The Following Applies to all Association Tests:

Observations by Non-Officiating Judges

Question:

At a VJP, the test director, a judge, who was not officiating, and the secretary of the organizing club approach a handler who is standing off to the side. During their conversation, they see a hare sitting in cover which eventually gets up and runs off. The test director has the handler work the track with his dog. Started at the track, the dog takes up scent with passion, works it for a distance of 450 m with two sharp changes of direction, flushes the hare at that point and chases it for a long distance.

The work is described by the observers to the officiating judges who refuse to take the work into consideration for the dog's evaluation.

Was this decision correct?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

Judgment can only be based on what the officiating judges themselves are able to observe. To decide otherwise, would open the floodgates to all kinds of discrepancies.

Chapter B

Blood Tracking: General Questions

Special Blood Tracking Judges in Specialty Judging Groups

VGPO: §§ 20, 21(7), 103(2)

Question:

Is it permissible at a VGP where judging is conducted in specialty judging groups that a special blood tracking judge participate in the evaluation of the dog's work on lead?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative, as long as the special blood tracking judge has been assigned by the test director as a voting judge.

Moreover, it makes sense to assign the special blood tracking judge to a specialty judging group at tests with exclusively overnight tracks.

Blood Tracking Work and Time Elapsed

VGPO: § 30 (TF = Day Track)

Question:

At the VGP, the dog is started on a blood track that has aged approximately 5 hours. Wild boar had invaded the terrain during the previous night and disturbed the soil. Strong winds from various directions and people walking the trails caused further intervention. During the blood tracking work, the handler frequently puts his dog into a down stay position to search for signs of blood. Handler and dog arrive at the game without any corrections. The dog never veered off the track for more than 5 m, but took a long time to finish the work which in total lasted 50 minutes including the dead game baying at the end.

How should this blood tracking work be evaluated?

Answer:

The "long" time alone factor does not justify that the predicate be lowered.

It is unfortunate that the above scenario was submitted without attaching a quantity to the "frequent" down stay positions. If, for example, this handler action had occurred ten times or more it would have indicated that handler and dog are insecure. Such interpretation might have resulted in a lower predicate.

Otherwise, working a roe deer blood track slowly, with down stay positions and stops, and consequently a greater use of time, must be evaluated positively. The faster the dog finishes the blood track at a test, the more critical its evaluation should be. It is not without purpose that § 30(1) VGPO demands a calm and concentrated behavior.

The handler is not in violation of swift work as required by the test regulation when he puts his dog into a down stay position 3 or 4 times in order to check the track or to slow down a hasty dog. When it is not apparent that the handler is insecure and therefore frequently puts the dog into a down stay position, the score of "very good" is appropriate in this case. At any rate, the duration of the blood tracking work by itself may not result in a lower predicate.

Blood Tracking Work, Evaluation of On-Lead Work When Dog Eats From Carcass

VGPO: §§ 29(1), 31, 126

Question:

Must the on-lead work be scored even when the dog later eats from the carcass ?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The dog's behavior at the carcass is an integral part of the entire blood tracking work. For that reason, the symbol of a successful track, the broken twig, shall not be given until the dog has passed the tracking work. However, the on-lead work presents the principal part of the blood tracking work and is finished when the dog arrives at the carcass; it must be evaluated. Naturally, the game eating excludes the dog from the test.

Blood Tracking Work: Which Predicate When Dog Finds Game Without Judges' Intervention ?

VGPO: § 30

Question:

A female dog works the roe deer blood track in a somewhat indifferent and insecure manner. The handler takes her back on the wound track several times. However, the dog finds the carcass without any intervention by the judges. Afterwards, the judges have a thorough discussion about the dog's performance. They inform the handler that his dog will be scored "deficient" for the on-lead work which disqualifies the dog for a prize.

1. Were the judges obligated to recall the dog when they realized that dog and handler had deviated from the track ?
2. Is it permissible to score as "deficient" a performance that succeeded in finding the carcass without judges' intervention ?

Answer:

Ad 1: The answer is negative.

The judges are obligated to recall the dog only when the dog has deviated far from the track, in excess of 60 m. Such was not the case according to the above description.

Ad 2: The answer is negative; the work is to be at least "sufficient".

The determining aspect in the evaluation is first of all the quality of the on-lead work; any recall might possibly lower the score. The task is deemed fulfilled when handler and dog find the carcass without any intervention by the judges. The working team's insecurity will lower the predicate, but the performance is sufficient for a prize.

Blood Tracking Work, Repeatedly Putting Dog in a Down Stay Position

VGPO: § 30(3-4)

Question:

When the handler repeatedly puts his dog in a down stay position during the on-lead tracking work, does such action equate to repeated, necessary handler corrections ?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The last sentence of § 30(4) VGPO states that repeated, necessary handler corrections lower the predicate as they are an indication of the dog's lacking reliability.

This definition primarily applies to situations when the handler realizes that his dog has gone off track. When the handler is forced repeatedly to take back his dog when it has gone off track, it shows the dog's lacking reliability and, hence, must result in a lower predicate. The handler is explicitly permitted to put his dog in a down stay position so that he himself can search for proof of blood or to let his dog rest, or calm it down. None of these reasons for putting the dog in a down stay are signs of insecurity; quite the opposite, they reflect proper dog handling.

It may be, however, that repeatedly putting the dog in a down stay position enables the handler to search and find blood himself and thereby guide the dog to the carcass. Such behavior would definitely have to be noted by the judges with the appropriate score.

Blood Tracking Work, Defective Blood Tracking Lead

VGPO: § 29(2)

Question:

At the VGP, the handler starts his dog on the blood track with a new broad chrome leather blood tracking collar with swivel and a new blood tracking lead of only 3 m length. The senior judge advises the handler that the use of a lead this short will automatically result in a score not better than "sufficient". The handler is indignant. His attempts to borrow proper equipment from one of the other handlers are unsuccessful. In the end, the judges allow the handler the use of a regular training lead of approximately 20 m length. The very energetic dog gets caught several times in and by the training lead. After having worked the track for about 60 m and having been tangled up in the lead several times, the dog can no longer be enticed to work the blood track. The judges score the blood tracking work with "insufficient". The handler threatens to launch a protest and complaint with the test director.

Where were mistakes made, if any?

Answer:

The dog should not have been permitted to work with such "equipment".

§ 29 mandates the obligatory use of a blood tracking lead of at least 6 m in length. It further states as a requirement that the dog must be given this entire minimum length while working the blood track; otherwise, the on-lead tracking work can be scored not better than “sufficient”. Hence, the use of a blood tracking lead of only 3 m in length is not permissible. Likewise, the use of a training lead is prohibited. When in doubt, one never errs by adhering to the rules of the test regulations. A compromise often gives rise to conflict afterwards.

Blood Tracking Work, Drawing of Tracks

VGPO: § 21

Question:

Six dogs have been entered into the VGP. Two of the dogs are entered for the blood tracking portion as dead game guides. As two highways, one *Autobahn*, and railroad tracks cross the hunting grounds, the special blood tracking judge decides that the guide tracks for the two dead game guide dogs will be laid such that they end away from the traffic, and will be drawn separately. The other four blood tracks will be drawn separately.

In the judges’ conference, the special blood tracking judge is accused of manipulation and violation of the test regulations because of his decision.

Did the special blood tracking judge act correctly ?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

It is not mandated that the blood tracks be drawn. However, the drawing of the tracks is not a violation and there is no reason for concern when the drawing procedure is such that the tracks for the on-lead work and those for dead game guiding are drawn separately.

Blood Tracking Work, Handler Correction

VGPO: § 30

Question:

The dog shows very good tracking work, but once goes off the track in excess of 60 m. The handler notices his dog’s error and independently casts back to the last blood marker, without the judges making a recall. From this point forward, the dog tracks to the carcass in a very confident and excellent manner. The work on-leash is scored as “good”. The handler expresses the opinion that the dog deserves a “very good” because it was not recalled and not restarted.

Is his opinion correct?

Answer:

This question cannot easily be answered with yes or no.

It is evident from the facts presented that the dog deviated from the track in excess of 60 m. Here, the judges had the opportunity to recall the dog and let the handler restart it. Such action would have resulted in a lower predicate. Additionally, the dog would have had just one restart left for the remaining track. The question itself does not reveal why

the judges did not make use of the recall. It is also not clear whether the handler correctly interpreted his dog's demeanor and concluded the deviation, or whether he himself interpreted other obvious signs, such as the direction leading to a public road or similar indicators. Several situations are possible during the tracking work that would necessitate lowering the score, even if the judges never recalled the dog (see § 29[2], 30[1 and 4]).

In the case at hand, it is a singular handler correction. As such, it is within the judges' discretion whether they deem this mistake severe enough to warrant a lower predicate. If, however, the judges at the time already knew that the mistake made was of a severe nature, they should have recalled the handler at that point and restarted him. When the handler recognizes the deviation based on his dog's demeanor and corrects his dog, the score "very good" is still justified.

Blood Tracking Work, Aging Period of Day Track Exceeds 5 Hours

VGPO: § 26

Question:

Testing is delayed for one judging team due to heavy rain. Consequently, the handlers cannot be started on the roe deer blood track until after an aging time of 7 and 7.5 hours, respectively. Because of the heavy rain, the blood on the tracks is no longer visible. One of the dogs goes off the track three times; the other dog is frequently placed into a down stay position while its handler tries to locate blood. At this point, the testing director decides that both dogs will get a replacement track on the following day because § 26(1) could not be complied with. Some handlers and judges express the opinion that a VGP dog must be able to master difficult tracks, including extended aging times.

Is the decision of the testing director, which was made in agreement with the respective judging team, correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative. There is no objection to longer aged tracks. However, there are more aspects to this answer that need to be pointed out. The testing director was not authorized to grant the dogs a replacement blood track, even if this was done in agreement with the judging team. The testing director may advise a judging team when questions arise. The authority to make decisions on scoring, replacement tracks etc. lies exclusively with the judging team. If the judging team was of the opinion that the blood tracks did not meet the requirements of the testing regulations, they should not have allowed these tracks to be worked (after all, the aging times of the tracks were known before the dogs began to work). A task that has been worked must be scored.

By accepting the track, the handler also accepted the aging time of the track, even if he was not pleased. The handler is allowed to refuse to put his dog to the task and make use of his right to protest when he is aware of mistakes being made in the test execution before he starts his dog on the respective task. When the handler chooses not to make use of this right, he cannot raise objections after his dog has finished the task. Additionally, there exists no right to the visibility of the blood on the VGP track. As an example, the following situation may be present where immediately after the track has been laid, the blood becomes so washed out from heavy rain that it is no longer visible to the handler even though the track is being worked as soon as the 2 hour minimum aging time has elapsed.

Blood Tracking Work, Dragging of Tracking Lead

VGPO: §§ 29 and 30

Question:

During the tracking portion on lead at the VGP, the handler lets the tracking lead drag on the ground instead of holding the lead in his hand. When questioned by the judges, the handler states that his dog has been trained with this method and that the testing regulations do not specify that the tracking lead must be held by the handler.

Is the handler correct?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

With the above method, still all requirements of §§ 29 and 30 VGPO must be fully met. For a score of “very good”, the performance must be such that the handler remains behind his dog at a minimum distance of 6 m (see § 29[2] VGPO).

§ 30 describes how the tracking work on lead should be conducted: in a calm and concentrated manner and at a good speed but never hasty. The handler who does not hold the lead in his hand must be able to follow his dog at a brisk pace and stop the dog at any moment. If the dog leaves the handler's control during this method, the blood tracking portion on lead must be scored as “insufficient”.

Chapter CD

Dead Game Baying

Dead Game Baying, Multiple Starts at the Second Wound Bed

VGPO: § 32(5)

Question:

After the dog has successfully completed the blood tracking portion on lead, it is taken off lead at the second wound bed for the free search in the additional test portion “Dead Game Baying”. The dog does not find the carcass within 10 minutes – most likely gone off the track because of the distraction by other game scent. The dog does not return to the second wound bed location. Shortly thereafter, the handler finds his dog waiting in a down position at the starting point of the already worked blood track. When the dog is re-started at the second wound bed for the free search, it works the track correctly and finds the carcass where it then bays correctly.

Does the performance qualify for the dead game baying portion to be scored?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The VGPO does not specify the time period within which the dead game bayer (or the dead game guide) must find the carcass after being started at the second wound bed. If the dog does not find the carcass after the initial start at the second wound bed, it may be started a second and even a third time at the second wound bed. Normally, the dog will return to the handler waiting at the wound bed. If the dog, going off the track

because of game presence, or fresh game scent or tracks or alike distractions, waits for its handler at the starting point of the blood track, it does not constitute an error so grave that it could not receive a positive predicate for the dead game baying portion. If the dog in trailing passed by the vicinity of the starting point, where it may have been previously waiting for the tracking work to begin or where the handler's car may be parked, its behavior is not only understandable but also forgivable, though not desirable. At any rate, up to this point the dog cannot yet be considered refusing the task at hand, i.e. the additional test for dead game baying. The judges were correct in allowing the dog to be started again at the second wound bed. The dog's performance in dead game baying can be scored.

It would have been a different judgment call if the dog had rendered the continuation of the test practically impossible by remaining absent for an extended period (running home or hunting for itself). No test rule or guidance can define with precision the fine line between an acceptable and unacceptable period of absence. The decision lies within the judges' discretion.

Blood Tracking, Dead Game Bayer Turns Into Loud Dead Game Guide

VGPO: §§ 10(3), 33 and 34

Question:

The dog has been entered to test additionally for dead game baying. Instead, the dog performs perfectly as a loud dead game guide. The handler requests that his dog be evaluated as a loud dead game guide. The judges decline his request because the dog had been entered as a dead game bayer and as such cannot be considered tested as a loud dead game guide.

Is this correct?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The dog failed as a dead game bayer because he left the carcass. The dog must be entered as a dead game guide or loud dead game guide if it is to be evaluated as such.

Dead Game Baying, Duration of Baying

VGPO: §§ 13(4) and 33

Question:

Is it permissible to award the predicates "sufficient" or "good" to a dead game bayer that has bayed less than 10 minutes at the VGP (approximately between 5 and 7 minutes)? Or must the baying have lasted at least 10 minutes continuously for the dog to be scored?

Answer:

The performance can be scored with the predicates "sufficient" or "good".

The above description suggests that the dog commenced baying within 10 minutes after finding the carcass (a "must" requirement). After finding the carcass, the dog should bay for his handler for 10 minutes continuously (a "should" requirement). When the dog does not meet a "should" requirement, a lower predicate is warranted at the judges' discretion.

Dead Game Baying, Three (3) Starts

VGPO: § 32(5)

Question:

The dog has been entered in the VPG as a dead game bayer. The dog is taken off lead at the second wound bed after it successfully completed the blood tracking portion on lead. The judge and his assistant, who together placed the carcass, observe that a jogger crossed the additional test track. The dog is started from the second wound bed and is distracted by the jogger's track which it follows for approximately 5 to 7 minutes. When the dog is started a second time, it follows the jogger's track backwards and returns to its handler after approximately 5 minutes. The handler starts the dog again. This time, the dog finds the carcass where it bays continuously for 11 minutes.

Which predicate should be awarded for the baying?

Answer:

The baying portion is to be scored as "sufficient".

Dead game bayer and dead game guide may be started a total of three times for the off lead test portion. Not only dead game bayers and guides may be started as many as 3 times. There are more subjects for which the VGPO allows three starts: tracking work on lead, all drags, and retrieve of fox over obstacle. The VGPO is very clear in that the predicate must be lowered for tracking work on lead when the dog is restarted. In all other subjects, any restart will also affect the predicate downward. The dog in the above case took to the distraction twice, at the first and second start although a VPG dog is expected to work and finish the track from start to end, despite distractions from other tracks. Even though the dog behaved and bayed correctly when it arrived at the carcass, the score must be "sufficient" due to three starts.

Dead Game Baying, Leaving the Carcass

VGPO: § 33(1-2)

Question:

The dog has been entered in the VGP as a dead game bayer. The dog is released at the second wound bed. It finds the carcass, scents it and returns toward the handler on the same track. The dog stops after 50 to 60 m and begins to bay continuously and intensely for approximately 12 minutes. When the handler and judges approach, the dog returns to the carcass where it continues to bay.

How should the baying test portion be scored?

Answer:

The baying portion must be scored as "insufficient".

The dog may not leave the carcass after it has found it. The predicate will not be lowered if the dog keeps a distance of not more than 10 steps from the carcass while baying. If the dog further increases the distance to the carcass while maintaining eye contact with the game, the predicate must be lowered.

The above description does not indicate whether the dog still had eye contact with the carcass. At a distance of 50 to 60 m, the dog most likely had lost sight of the carcass. For that reason, the test portion dead game baying must be scored as "insufficient".

Dead Game Baying, Dog Leaves the Area

VGPO: §§ 32, 33, 90(3)

Question:

The dog is entered in the VGP as a dead game bayer. After the dog has successfully completed the tracking work on lead, it is released at the second wound bed for the dead game baying test. The dog is distracted by another track which it follows. The dog returns to the handler after approximately 8 to 10 minutes. The dog is restarted, finds the carcass and bays correctly.

Does the dog's performance qualify as dead game baying or must the dog fail because it was gone too long?

Answer:

The dead game baying must be scored.

It is stated in § 32(2) that handler and judges must wait for ten minutes after the dog has been released to see whether the tracking dog engages in baying or guiding.

In the above case, the dog returned to the handler within 10 minutes. Hence, the dog was allowed the restart.

Naturally, the second start lowers the predicate, but the dog did not make another mistake. There is absolutely no ground for failing this dog.

§ 90(2) states that a dog which remains outside the handler's control for an extended period of time, thereby removing itself from the continuation of the test, shall not be entitled to further testing when its behavior disrupts the test so severely that a proper test execution is jeopardized. Although it is at the judges' discretion to declare that conditions are such that proper test execution is no longer guaranteed. A 10 minute absence, however, is insufficient to apply such rule.

Chapter E

Dead Game Guiding

Dead Game Guiding, Dog Takes Bringsel Prematurely Upon Scenting the Carcass

VGPO: §§ 32 and 33

Question:

The dog has been entered in the VGP as a dead game guide. The dog is released at the second wound bed. For as long as the accompanying judges are able to see the dog, it follows the track correctly. After a reasonable amount of time has passed, the dog returns carrying the Bringsel and from there leads the handler enthusiastically to the game.

The judge remaining with the carcass reports that the dog had followed the blood track upwind in a distance of approximately 10 to 15 steps from the actual track when it winded the scent of the freshly shot buck from about the same distance and immediately turned around toward the handler's position.

The reporting judge's view was somewhat obstructed by a fern and he was not able to see whether the dog took the Bringsel upon making the turn or shortly thereafter. The dog did not carry the Bringsel prior to making the turn.

Which predicate is appropriate?

Answer:

If the judges were convinced that the dog found the carcass, the dead game guiding must be scored as "very good".

Only those people that observed the dog can verify whether the dog actually found the carcass. The fact that dog arrived at the carcass within 10 to 15 steps of the drifting scent from there not only makes it possible but likely that the dog had found the game at that point. The dog is an animal that finds with its nose not its eyes. On the other hand, a dog will often approach the dead game closely to get better scent. It can be assumed that, after finding the dead game by scent, the dog picked up the Bringsel because it did not carry the Bringsel before it turned around.

The judges must be convinced that the dog found the dead game. That alone is the decisive factor for the evaluation. If the judges are not convinced that the dog has found the dead game, that portion of the test must be scored as "insufficient".

Dead Game Baying and Dead Game Guiding; Dog Does Not Find Second Wound Bed

VGPO: §§ 30 and 32

Question:

The dog has been entered as a dead game bayer or guide. The dog overruns the second wound bed where it was to be released for the off-lead work.

1. Are the judges allowed to show the second wound bed to the dog?
2. Will the overrunning of the second wound bed lower the predicate fore the on-lead tracking work?

Answer:

Ad 1: The answer is affirmative. Test regulations do not require that the dog find the wound bed.

It is not rated as a mistake when the dog overruns a wound bed. The dog that is conscious of the task at hand does not need to stay within decimeters of the track. As long as the dog corrects itself after going off by a few meters, such behavior is not reason for concern. When the dog is casting, it can easily fail to find a wound bed by tracking the sides of it. This does not adversely affect the dog's overall performance. The decisive factor is that the dog stays on the track within reasonable proximity. The same applies to the dog that overruns the second wound bed.

Ad 2: See above explanation. The answer is negative.

Dead Game Guiding, Handler Influence, Dog Fails to Guide After Finding the Carcass

VGPO: §§ 32(2 and 5) and 34

Question:

The dog is entered in the VPG as a dead game guide. The dog arrives at the carcass carrying the Bringsel. The dog briefly scents the game and then starts on the return. The handler and the judges waiting at the second wound bed see the dog approach within 70 to 80 steps among tall trees with dense cover sideways from the track. The dog does not carry the Bringsel and appears to be frightened. The handler whistles the dog in and restarts it. The dog now follows the track and finds the carcass where it correctly picks up the Bringsel and carries it back to the handler. The dog then correctly retraces back to the carcass until handler and judges arrive.

The judges determine that the handler did not influence the dog when making use of the whistle – as defined by § 32(2).

Are the judges correct?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative regarding handler influence. However, the dog's guiding performance must be scored as "insufficient".

It states in § 32(2) that the handler cannot influence the dog by voice, whistle or other signals. This rule relates to the dog's behavior at the carcass and specifically to dead game bayers which are often coached into baying when they hear a prompt by the handler. In the above case, the handler's use of the whistle was not an influence as defined in § 32(2).

The dead game guiding portion of the test had to be scored as "insufficient" because the dog did not engage in guiding behavior after finding the carcass for the first time. It can be assumed that the judge at the carcass was not able to alert the handler and judges waiting at the second wound bed in time that the dog had already found the game after the initial start. If the judges had known this, the restart would not have been permissible. In any event, it must not affect the score.

Dead Game Guiding, Dog's Behavior During the Free Search**VGPO: §§ 32 and 34****Question:**

The dog has been entered as a dead game guide in the VGP. After being released at the second wound bed, the dog passes the carcass at a distance of approximately 20 m and does not give any sign of acknowledgment. The dog continues to search for another 60 m and then encounters a ditch at which time it takes the Bringsel and turns around. On the return, the dog encounters the carcass, scents it twice, drops the Bringsel and then takes it again. The dog returns to the handler and guides him flawlessly to the carcass.

Which predicate is appropriate?

Answer:

The dogs' performance can be scored as "sufficient".

The dog initially "cheated" by taking the Bringsel at the ditch. The dog did not, however, lie to the handler because it had found the carcass when it returned to the handler carrying the Bringsel. The task had been correctly fulfilled from the moment of finding the carcass. The score "sufficient" is appropriate because of the obviously still existing deficiencies in the dog's behavior.

Dead Game Guiding, Retracing Method

VGPO: §§ 28(1-2) and 34

Question:

The dog has been entered as a dead game guide and retracer in the VGP. The dog quickly finds the carcass, takes the Bringsel and returns to the handler. Carrying the Bringsel, the dog then retraces back and forth 3 times between the handler and the carcass until both have arrived at the carcass.

The dog's guiding work is scored only as "good". The judges justify the score by stating that dead game guiding means that the handler removes the Bringsel from the dog's mouth when the dog initially returns from finding the carcass and sends the dog again to the carcass where the dog then takes the Bringsel again and returns to the handler and so forth until the handler has arrived at the carcass.

Is this correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision of § 28(2) states that the handler of a dead game guide dog must describe in detail to the senior judge before the tracking work begins how he recognizes that his dog has found the carcass and how his dog is to guide him to the carcass. The handler's description is binding; changes after the fact are not allowed. The description "Free Guiding or Retracing Method" is not definitive enough in that there are overlapping areas between both methods.

Test regulations do not credit more value to one or the other method. It is entirely the handler's decision how he wants to train his dog and in what capacity he wants to enter the dog in the VGP. All test requirements were fully met by the dog in the above case. The work must be scored as "very good".

Dead Game Guiding; Specifically, Guiding with Tracking Lead

VGPO: § 34

Question:

The dog has been entered in the VGP as a dead game guide carrying the blood tracking lead. Is the handler allowed to place the tracking collar in the dog's mouth instead of the end of the tracking lead after the dog has correctly completed the on-lead tracking work?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

It is of no significance for the task of guiding with the tracking lead whether the dog takes the back end of the lead or the tracking collar at the front end. The dog is allowed to take any section of the tracking lead. The only point of significance is whether the dog leads the handler to the carcass carrying the lead and whether the method used concurs with the handler's earlier description in accordance with § 28(2) VGPO.

Dead Game Guiding, Replacement Track

VGPO: §§ 21(6), 29(1), 32 and 34

Question:

The dog has completed very good blood tracking work on lead in the VPG. The judges and handler who remain at the second wound bed observe the laying of the additional track and the placement of the carcass. Without communicating with each other, they already have the impression that the additional track does not cover the required minimum length of 200 m.

After the track laying judge gives the signal to commence, the dog is released for the additional guide work. The dog finds the carcass without delay and attempts to take the Bringsel which the observing judge later expressly confirms. When the dog is unable to take the Bringsel, it returns to the handler displaying an obviously insecure demeanor. The dog is sent twice more, each time with the same result. The additional tracking test is then declared ended, and it is noted that the dog no longer has the Bringsel. Upon further investigation, it is determined that not only was the track insufficiently long but also that the Bringsel and some hair hang from a fence running parallel to the track. This suggests that the dog was already without the Bringsel when it found the carcass the first time. As the first additional track for the guiding work did not comply with the length required under the VGPO, the judges inform the handler that he may elect to work his dog a second time. They also tell the handler that the dog's additional tracking as a dead game guide can only be evaluated in conjunction with the on lead tracking work. They further state that, if the handler decided to work his dog again, the dog's previous on lead work would not be scored and instead the dog would be given a new on lead track and a new additional track for guiding – similar to the procedure for a replacement drag.

Were the judges correct?

Answer:

The guiding work had to be repeated; the on lead work was completed and had to be evaluated individually.

Again, the general principle applies that the preparation of a test subject which is not in compliance with the test regulations must not be to the disadvantage of the handler.

Regardless of the length of the additional track - the Bringsel most likely would have been lost even if the track length had been correct under the VGPO – the judges acted correctly by offering the handler a replacement track. The replacement track, however, can only be for the guiding work. The test subject is divided into two separate portions, the first being the tracking work on lead, which was completed upon arrival at the second wound bed, and had to be scored at that time. The replacement track for the guiding work must be laid anew with a wound bed at its beginning. It is allowed to let the dog track on lead a short distance to the new wound bed and release the dog from there. This short, on lead tracking to the wound bed, however, may not be considered for evaluation of the previous on lead tracking work which must have been scored already at this point.

Dead Game Guiding, Dog is Distracted by Hedgehog

VGPO: §§ 32 and 34

Question:

The dog has been entered as a dead game guide in the VGP. The dog is released at the second wound bed for the dead game guiding work. The dog does not find the carcass during the free search, instead, he returns to the handler with a hedgehog. The dog is started a second and third time, and refuses each time to work the additional guide track.

1. How should this work be scored?
2. Is the dog entitled to a replacement track?

Answer:

Ad 1: The dog's work is to be scored as "insufficient".

Ad 2: The dog is not entitled to a replacement track.

The dog's task in dead game guiding is to search and find the carcass by working the additional track, return to the handler and signal to the handler that it has found the carcass and then guide the handler to the carcass.

Clearly, this dog did not fulfill the task. The VGP dog is supposed to be a finished dog and as such will not be distracted from the task at hand. The dog did not find the carcass during the first free search and was therefore allowed two more starts. The dog still had the opportunity to fulfill the task. Since the third start also failed to bring a result, the test was completed and the work had to be scored as "insufficient".

Dead Game Guiding, Dog Does Not Find the Carcass**VGPO: §§ 13, 29, 31 and 32****Question:**

The dog has been entered as a dead game guide in the VGP. The dog has successfully completed the on lead tracking work. The dog is started three times for the dead game guiding and does not find the carcass during the free search.

The judges are of the opinion that the dog must be excluded from further testing as it did not fulfill a "must" requirement. They cite § 32(1) which states that during the free search the dog must find the hoofed carcass placed at the third wound bed.

Are the judges correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision of § 13(3) states that the dog's work in the particular subject will be scored as "insufficient" when the dog did not fulfill a must requirement. Nowhere does it state in this Section that the dog may not continue with the test. It is possible - although the question does not indicate such - that the judges intended to score the guiding work in conjunction with the on lead tracking work, reaching an overall score of 'Insufficient' which would have rendered the entire tracking work insufficient and consequently would have excluded the dog from further testing under § 126(1).

According to § 29(1), the on lead tracking work must be scored separately and not in conjunction with any additional off lead tracking work. The dog met the requirements for the on lead tracking work and would still qualify for a prize provided that it fulfills the

minimum requirements with the minimum points in the other forest subjects and the remaining subject categories.

The predicate for the test subject "Dead Game Guiding" is "insufficient" and must be entered in the score sheet. According to § 31, the dog is still to be tested on behavior at the carcass because it did not find the carcass.

Dead Game Guiding, Dog Does Not Find the Carcass

VGPO: § 32

Question:

The dog has been entered as a dead game guide in the VGP. After completing a very good on lead tracking work, the dog is released at the second wound bed. The dog goes off the track approximately 75 m from the carcass, searches and finds the track again. At the time that the dog finds the track again, it takes the Bringsel and returns to the handler without having been at the carcass. The dog guides the handler to the carcass in the method previously described by the handler. The judge who remained at the carcass reports what has occurred.

The judges score the guiding work as "deficient" since the dog did in fact succeed in bringing its handler to the carcass, without actually having met the requirements for the guiding work.

Was the score correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The dog did not fulfill the must requirement as stated in § 32(1) (finding the carcass). Hence, the work can only be scored as "insufficient".

Chapter F

Fox Over Obstacle

Retrieve of Fox Over Obstacle

VGPO: § 35

Question:

At the VGP, a male dog is called as the tenth dog to be tested for retrieve of fox over obstacle after nine dogs have been tested already (male and female dogs). Upon a single command, the male dog takes the 80 cm high obstacle. Once inside, he pees against the left inside post, then against the right inside post, jumps out of the box, pees against the left outside post, then against the right outside post. With absolute silence surrounding him, he jumps back over the obstacle, picks up the fox and delivers correctly.

How should the work be scored?

Answer:

The work must be scored as “very good”.

The dog fulfilled all essential requirements of § 35. The provision of § 35 states that the dog should pick up the fox without a prolonged delay and given this wording, one might tend to judge that the dog stayed longer than necessary and therefore should be given a lower score. It can be safely assumed, however, that the phrase “prolonged delay” refers to a demeanor displaying the reluctance to pick up and retrieve the fox. Such reluctance was not present with above dog. It is canine nature, especially with a self-confident male dog, to mark areas that have the scent of other dogs. The dog that, despite such scent distraction which prompt him to mark the area, does not forget the task at hand and then continues to pick up and deliver the fox without additional commands by the handler, is a more valuable dog in this subject than a dog which under the pressure of the task or being little self-confident ignores the scent distraction.

Retrieve of Fox Over Obstacle

VGPO: § 35

Question:

At the VGP, the dog is sent at the 5 m mark with the command “Over Fetch” (original German: *Hopp Apport*) to retrieve the fox over obstacle. The dog jumps over the obstacle, picks up the fox without delay, carries and delivers correctly. The judges score the dog’s work as “good” stating that two commands had been given.

Is this decision correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The handler did use two words; however, they were used in immediate sequence merging them into one command, similar to the “*Verloren-Apport*” (Fetch Dead) command for the drag.

The above scenario is different from the dog being sent to retrieve with the command “Over” and when it has arrived at the fox, a second command “Fetch” is given, or when there is a noticeable time passage between the first and the second command.

Following the above description, the predicate “very good” is appropriate.

Chapter G

Drag Work

Drag, Apprentice Judge Lays Drag

VGPO: § 37(5)

Question:

Is it permissible that an apprentice judge alone lay a drag at the VGP?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

According to the provisions of § 37(5) VGPO, the drags must be prepared by a judge. There is good reason for this requirement. If a person who is inexperienced in this area were to prepare the drags there would be far too great a danger of incompetent work (preparing the starting point, direction, bends, length, placement of the game etc.)

On the other hand, we must ensure that an apprentice judge is capable of applying the proper technique and knows the rules for laying a drag before the apprentice is appointed an Association Judge. Allowing an apprentice judge to perform the mechanical portion of the drag under the supervision of a judge does not constitute a violation of the intent of § 37(5).

The apprentice judge attaches the drag game to the drag rope, places the starting point and from here begins to drag the game following directly behind the judge.

At the end of the drag, the apprentice judge lays down the retrieve game, again under direct supervision of the judge, lifts up the drag game and proceeds with the judge to the hiding place, places the drag game without the drag rope on the ground and hides together with the judge.

Where necessary, the judge apprentice may walk the drag route in front of the judge who guides the apprentice directly from behind. In this scenario, the judge must be the person dragging the game. Note: **The person with the drag game must always be the last one to walk in the line.**

Drag; Drag is Prepared by Two and More Persons

VGPO: § 37

Question:

At the VGP, the furred game drags are prepared by the following persons:

1. The test director who is familiar with the hunting grounds; and
2. One judge; and
3. One apprentice judge who carries the fox; and
4. One apprentice judge who drags the fox.

Preparation in the above order.

The female dog works the fox drag correctly. However, half way between drag laying group and the gallery, the dog buries the fox. There is agreement among the judges that the dog has failed under § 126(2) and is excluded from further testing. The concern, however, is expressed that the dog may have been confused because of the unusual presence of multiple human scent and may have felt threatened by the large number of people standing near the game. The opinion is expressed that such voluminous staffing is inappropriate.

Is this opinion correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The participation of three or more people in the preparation of a drag may not be ideal, but such voluminous staffing might be necessary for the training of apprentice judges. Of course, all others must be hiding in such a manner that the dog is not able to see people from the place where the drag game has been left.

Drags; Replacement Drag after Incorrect Drag Preparation

VGPO: §§ 37(2) and 44(2)

Question:

The handler sends his dog to retrieve the fox during the drag with fox at the VGP. The dog returns without the game. Started a second time, the dog again returns without the game. While the dog is being sent a third time – and takes off speedily – the drag laying judges return with the foxes on a parallel path. They report that the dog came to the fox only once after it had been sent the first time. The dog did not pick up the fox. The judges had placed the retrieve fox at the end of the drag although the handler had explicitly requested that the drag fox be placed at the end of the drag. The handler is told that he would get a replacement drag in a different area after the lunch break. Before sending his dog on the replacement drag, the handler is told that he may send his dog only once.

Were the judges' decisions correct?

Answer:

The first drag was incorrectly prepared. The handler was entitled to the replacement drag. The dog's work on the first drag will not be considered.

The judges' decision to grant a replacement drag was correct, as the judges erred twice during the first drag. Once, in that they did not place the fox at the end of the drag that the handler had requested; a request to which he was entitled according to § 37(2) VGPO. Twice, in that the drag laying judges did not wait until after the dog had been sent a third time, but instead left their position and took the foxes with them.

When a replacement drag is granted, no aspect of the first drag may be considered for evaluation. With regard to the execution and evaluation of the replacement drag, the first drag is deemed non-existent. For this reason, it was not permissible to limit the dog to one start.

Drag; Handler Draws Attention to Self Through Praise

VGPO: § 43(1)

Question:

During the furred game drag with rabbit at the VGP, the dog can be seen returning and carrying the rabbit. During the last 50 m in front of the handler, the handler begins clapping his flat hand against his thigh for a total of 8 times while at the same time walking back and forth. One of the judges objects to the thigh clapping.

Is his objection justified?

Answer:

The answer is most definitely negative.

When a game carrying dog approaches its handler, and the handler does not somehow draw the dog's attention to himself by hand clapping or praise or walking back and forth, he shows little understanding of a dog's psyche. The dog considers the game not "his" quarry but "our" quarry. When the dog sees strangers and other dogs, and maybe does not even see his handler among the crowd, the dog rightfully fears for "our" game. For this reason, it is not only permissible but appropriate that the handler shows himself to the dog with praise by hand or verbal signals. This is different from the situation where the dog does not work correctly, for example by dropping the game or stopping midway with the game in its fang. When, in such a case, the handler attempts to influence the dog by hand or verbal signals – even without a verbal fetch command – it is considered an intervention which will result in the predicate "insufficient" for furred and feathered game drags and the manner of retrieve.

Drag; Dog Retrieves Game Other Than Drag Game

VGPO: §§ 37 and 44(1)

Question:

During the furred game drag, the dog works the drag well and finds a dead cat a few meters in front of the drag end and approximately 2 m to the side of and downwind from the drag trail. The dog picks up the cat and returns to the handler where it delivers correctly.

How should this case be judged?

Answer:

The dog gets a replacement drag.

The dog cannot be faulted for the retrieve of the cat. At the same time, the dog did not fulfill the task of the furred game drag.

Drag; Dog is Allowed "Choice" of Drag Specimen

VGPO: §§ 42(1) and 44

Question:

The dog has completed the test subject "Retrieve of Fox Over Obstacle" with a score of "very good" during the VGP. The dog is then tested on the fox drag which it begins swiftly and confidently. The dog overruns the retrieve fox and arrives at the drag fox which it picks up without delay. Inbound, the dog passes the retrieve fox, drops the drag fox, scents the retrieve fox, and then immediately picks up the drag fox again and returns toward the handler as swiftly as it had gone out. The dog arrives at the handler without the fox and is started a second time. The dog disappears down the drag, returns correctly with the fox and delivers correctly. The fox drag work is scored as "insufficient", the manner of retrieve is scored as "sufficient".

Are the scores correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The dog had worked without mistakes up to the point of dropping the game or laying it down. According to § 44(1), the dog is allowed to find one of the specimen and retrieve the other. This still applies if the dog ends up bringing the first specimen. When the dog

arrived at the handler without the fox, the dog had to be started a second time. This reduced the predicate for the drag work. Not picking up the fox further reduces the score for the manner of fox retrieve on the drag.

In the absence of any other visible negative behavior, the score “good” would have been appropriate for the dog’s work on the drag and the manner of retrieve.

Drag; Handler Draws Attention to Self When Dog Returns

VGPO: § 42(1)

Question:

The fox drag is prepared in a forest with pole trees and an abundance of fallen and cut timber. The dog returns briskly with the fox on a grassy path parallel to the drag. Because the dog has chosen the grassy path inbound, it arrives on the main path with a distance of 50 to 60 m from the starting point. The dog’s pace is so brisk that it overruns the intersecting path where the handler is in wait. Further down, the path makes a steep descend. The handler calls to the dog which then stops and upon hand clapping and praise by the handler, the dog turns and briskly approaches the handler detouring around piles of timber. The dog delivers correctly.

The judges are of the opinion that the handler’s influences on the dog must reduce the predicate and award the following scores: “good” for the fox drag; “very good” for the manner of retrieve.

Are the scores appropriate?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The dog does not make a mistake in choosing a less difficult terrain for the inbound route with the fox. The test regulations do not specify provisions for the inbound route on the drag. It is easily possible that the dog arrives on the inbound route in some distance from the “starting point”. It would be a totally unrealistic hunting situation if the handler were prohibited from drawing the dog’s attention to himself by clapping his hands and/or calling the dog. The score for the drag may not be reduced on grounds of drawing attention to one self provided that the dog fulfills the task correctly and with enthusiasm.

Drag; Drag Layer Returns Before Dog Has Completed the Work

VGPO: §§ 38(2) and 90(3)

Question:

During the VGP, the dog is started at the starting point of the rabbit drag. As far as can be observed (approximately 150 m), the dog works the drag correctly. After seven minutes, the dog is seen at a distance of 150 m returning without the game on the previously prepared drag. The dog acts in the same fashion again, no handler influence is present. When the dog again returns without game on the previous drag, the senior judge tells the handler to whistle for the dog and restart it. The handler whistles at which time the dog without further handler influence works the drag, arrives at the game, picks it up and disappears toward the handler. The drag layer leaves his post and starts walking back to the starting point where he arrives before the dog does. After 10 to 15 minutes have elapsed, the senior judge tells the handler to whistle for his dog. The handler whistles and within one minute, the dog appears with the rabbit intact and

delivers correctly. The duration of this test subject was approximately 40 minutes from the time of the initial start to the retrieve.

Following a long deliberation, the judging team announces that the rabbit drag is scored as “sufficient” and the manner of retrieve as “very good”. The dog remains in the test.

In the final judges’ conference, the above scores are rescinded. The judges now declare that the dog failed the test because it did not pass in the subject furred game drag.

1. Was the judgment by the judging team correct?
2. Is it permissible for the final judges’ conference to alter the evaluation of one judging team after it has already been announced without reservations to the handler ?

Answer:

Ad 1: The answer is affirmative, however, with some reservations.

The judging team made a mistake during the execution of the drag. The provision of § 38(2) states that the drag layer may not leave his hiding place until the judges remaining at the starting point have signaled the completion of the test or when the drag layer himself recognizes that the test has been completed.

In the case at hand, the drag layer did not comply with the above provision; instead, he left his post after the dog had picked up the rabbit and disappeared toward the handler.

The provision of § 90(3) states that the dog which removes itself from the handler’s control for an extended period of time and thereby makes itself unavailable for the continued testing in the subject, which in turn jeopardizes the orderly execution of the test, is not entitled to further testing.

The judges obviously did not apply above provision of § 90(3) or they would not have continued testing the dog.

In summary, a replacement drag would have been the appropriate action since a mistake was made during the execution of the drag. Since a replacement drag was not offered, the judges cannot fault the dog for their mistake. To this end, the judges’ evaluation is correct.

The case at hand demonstrates clearly how minor mistakes during the drag execution can have major consequences, especially since the performance in this subject control whether the dog will pass the test or not.

Ad 2: The answer is negative.

The judges’ conference after the test is not authorized to alter a judging team’s discretionary decisions after the fact.

Drag; Handler Interferes During Rabbit Drag

VGPO: § 43(1)

Question:

During the drag work, the dog returns briskly carrying the game within 25 m of the handler at which point it puts the rabbit down. The handler claps his hands loudly

multiple times whereupon the dog picks up the rabbit up, adjusting its grip twice, retrieves and delivers correctly.

1. The judges award “very good” for the drag work and “very good” for the manner of retrieve.
2. Another judging team with whom the matter is discussed holds the position that the drag work and the manner of retrieve each must be scored as “insufficient”, as the handler influenced the dog after the dog had picked up the game.
3. The handler declares in response that the game merely slipped out of the dog’s mouth which is not a fault, and therefore his hand clapping was not an intervention but merely drawing attention to himself.

Which viewpoint is correct?

Answer:

The viewpoint of judging team 2 is correct.

The handler is permitted to draw his dog’s attention to himself with words of praise. Such drawing of attention presupposes correct work and is intended to show the dog where the handler is, and that the handler is pleased by the correct work. It should in no way be confused with exerting influence. Such influence is always present when the dog makes a mistake on its return route and the handler then uses visual or verbal signals in an attempt to cause the dog to perform the task. Dropping the game is always a fault; whereas laying it down is not a fault when it serves to improve the grip and the dog then picks up and delivers without any intervention by the handler.

Drag; Dog is Started Twice

VGPO: § 43(1)

Question:

The dog is put on the drag track and returns without having been at the game. Once the dog is near, the handler takes a few steps toward the dog with outstretched arms whereupon the dog takes up the drag again, finds and retrieves.

A discussion arises among the judging team whether this constitutes a second start. One judge is of the opinion that the handler had only given one retrieve command whereas the other two judges are of the opinion that the handler influenced the dog when it returned “empty-handed” and such influence must be considered a second start.

Which decision is the correct one?

Answer:

The dog was started two times.

The applicable provisions state that any influence on the dog by the handler following the initial retrieve command (see § 43[1] VGPO) is to be considered a restart. Our dogs are trained such that they obey verbal and visual signals. Intervention by means of a visual signal is equivalent to that of a verbal signal.

It is not considered a restart when the dog returns empty-handed and without any handler intervention takes up the drag track again.

Drag; Dog Picks up Fox But Does Not Retrieve

VGPO: §§ 36 - 45

Question:

At the VGP during the retrieve of fox over obstacle, the dog receives a score of “very good” for the retrieve of fox over obstacle and “very good” for the manner of retrieve in accordance with § 35 VGPO. The fox drag has been properly laid, and the dog is started properly on the drag track. The dog works the drag in proper “nose-to-scent” conjunction, in as much as this can be observed in a forest. The dog arrives within minutes at the retrieve fox, picks up the game without any delay and disappears in seconds from the judge’s view in the direction of the handler. Within 2 or 3 minutes at most, the dog enthusiastically returns on the drag track without the fox to the handler. The dog is started two more times and does not retrieve the fox. The drag area is searched carefully by all persons present, including two dogs. The drag fox is not produced. There is no visible indication that the dog buried the fox. The handler claims that a mushroom collector might have taken the fox from his dog as persons collecting mushrooms in the forest were observed on several occasions while the test was ongoing.

The judging team cannot agree on one evaluation. One judge is of the opinion that the dog’s work must be awarded the score “good” in accordance with § 42 as the outbound route and at least part of the inbound route had been worked correctly by the dog. Another judge refers to § 42(1) and insists on “insufficient” as the correct score for the dog’s work. The handler asserts that a replacement drag must be offered.

Which mistakes were made in the execution of the drag and in the evaluation?

Answer:

Drag work and manner of retrieve of fox on drag must be scored as “insufficient”.

The dog’s work during the retrieve of fox over obstacle is of no significance to scoring the subject “Retrieve of Fox on the Drag”. For the retrieve over obstacle, only that retrieve is evaluated, not the subject “Manner of Retrieve”. The judging team for the subject “Retrieve Over Obstacle” was incorrect in awarding a predicate for the subject “Manner of Retrieve on Fox Drag”.

Anybody with experience in this matter knows that the dog buried the fox. The burying is done with unbelievable speed and efficiency. Only those who have witnessed the act have an understanding of the matter. Finding the burial site is next to impossible. Still, the dog may not be excluded from continued testing (see §§ 45 and 126) as there is no proof of the burying. The story with the mushroom collectors, however, sounds somewhat adventurous.

The opinion expressed by the first judge that the fox drag must receive a “good” because the dog worked a major part of the task correctly is not correct as the dog did not carry the game to the handler. This aspect of “carrying the game to the handler” is an essential component for a positive evaluation of the subject according to § 42(1). If the dog fails to carry the game to the handler, the drag work must be scored as “insufficient”. The second judge made the correct evaluation.

The dog cannot be excluded from further testing on grounds of failing the fox drag, because it was awarded the score “very good” for the retrieve of fox over obstacle (§ 35).

Drag; Dogs Does Not Pick Up after First Find

VGPO: § 42(1)

Question:

The dog works the fox drag track briskly, returns after a short while without the fox. At a distance of approximately 50 m from the handler, the dog takes on the drag track again without any handler influence, and thereafter retrieves and delivers the fox correctly.

The judge at the retrieve fox reports that the dog had found the fox when it worked the drag track the first time, but did not pick up the fox until it returned the second time.

Which score is appropriate?

Answer:

The fox drag must be scored as “good”.

In any of the drag subjects (§ 42[1]), the dog is to be scored not only on the aspect of working the track but also on its will to find and retrieve. In the case at hand, there was a deficit in the dog’s will to retrieve.

Drag; Dogs Puts Down Fox 30 m in front of Handler

VGPO: § 42(1)

Question:

The handler starts the dog on the drag. The dog works the drag correctly, arrives at the fox, picks up the fox and carries it to within 30 m in front of the handler where the dog lays down the fox. Despite several commands by the handler, the dog does not pick up the fox.

The judges award the following scores: “insufficient” (0) for fox drag work; “insufficient” (0) for manner of retrieve of fox on drag.

A long debate ensues during which other judges support the score “good” (3) for the drag work, “sufficient” (2) for manner of retrieve with the added language of “in favor of the dog”, or “good” (3) for the drag work and “deficient” (1) for the manner of retrieve with the added language of “applying a very strict standard”.

What scores are correct for the dog’s work as described above?

Answer:

Both, the drag work and the manner of retrieve on the fox drag must be scored as “insufficient”.

The judges recognized correctly that the score for the drag not only includes the outbound path from the starting point to the game (will to find) but also the inbound path from the game back to the handler (will to deliver). The judges applied this concept to their scores. The prerequisite for any positive score is the delivery of the game, that is the carrying of the game as far as to the handler. It is obvious from the above description that the handler very positively believed - and rightfully so – that his dog had not delivered. Why else would he have given several fetch commands? The dog has not fulfilled the task of delivery as required by the test when the handler is forced to pick up the game himself after the dog has dropped the game or laid it down (in this case the

dog's action happened to be observed). If this case had occurred in a real hunting situation, the judgment would still be the same. The game is most definitely lost should this dog be on the return to the hunter and find the path intersected by a narrow strip of corn stalks or should the dog have to travel through a fallow with high weeds or from a thicket or forest with dense undergrowth.

The above is different from the dog that delivers the game as far as the handler but then drops it at the handler's feet. This behavior results in a reduced score for manner of retrieve.

Drag; Dog is Started Twice

VGPO: § 43(1)

Question:

The dog is sent on the fox drag which it takes on enthusiastically, arrives at the fox, picks up the fox and turns back toward the handler. The dog comes within 80 to 100 m of the handler, who has not yet sighted his dog, when one of the spectators yells: "He is coming; he's got the fox". The handler claps his hands to draw attention to himself. The dog appears without the fox. The handler sends the dog back. The dog promptly complies with the command and returns after a very brief absence with the fox which it now delivers correctly. The judges award the predicate "good" for the drag work and "good" for the manner of retrieve. The handler is of the opinion that the dog's performance has not been scored correctly and believes that both should have been awarded the score "very good".

Is the handler's opinion correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The dog's will to deliver left something to be desired. The dog's (unknown) motives for dropping the game and letting it lay are of no significance for the evaluation. The judges' score of "good" for the drag work is not too harsh, especially in light of the handler having to restart his dog.

The predicate "good" for the retrieve of the fox on the drag is appropriate.

Drag; Manner of Retrieve of Fox on Furred Game Drag

VGPO: §§ 42(1), 46 and 47

Question:

The dog works the fox drag correctly. However, on the inbound route, the dog lays down the game several times while approaching the handler from the front within a few meters. The handler signals a sit command by raising his index finger. The dog lays down the fox one more time; the handler steps back a few steps which prompts the dog to pick up the fox without an additional command and deliver correctly.

Which score is appropriate for the manner of retrieve?

Answer:

It is not possible to determine the one appropriate predicate.

This case cannot be evaluated without having witnessed it. Definitely, laying down the game multiple times reduces the score in the subject "Manner of Retrieve" on the fox drag. The dog's will to retrieve should be the principal factor in deciding how much the score ought to be reduced. When the dog lays down the game multiple times due to unfinished training and exercising, or, worse, absent enthusiasm for the retrieve, the score "sufficient" (even "deficient" may be warranted) is appropriate. However, if the dog is physically weak and despite engaging all of its strength is forced to lay down the game, the predicate "good" could be appropriate. It must be noted that the dog's will is of great significance for the evaluation, not only during the work on the drag but also during the retrieve portion.

Drag; Quick Burying and Digging Out, Dog Picks up again and Delivers

VGPO: §§ 42(1) and 45

Question:

The dog under evaluation at the VGP works the fox drag briskly and returns with the fox within 20 steps of the handler. The dog then completely buries the fox in a matter of seconds. The dog then digs out the fox at the same speed without any influence on part of the handler, picks up the fox and delivers correctly.

How should this be evaluated?

Answer:

The dog may continue the test.

The case foremost raises the question how we define the dead game burier. The dead game burier does not deliver the game to the handler but hides it. There are varying causes for such behavior; most of them have a deeply rooted psychological reason as the result of a dysfunctional or absent pack order between human and canine.

The facts as they are presented do not in themselves explain what may have caused the sudden and extremely brief moment of dysfunction. At any rate, this case is not one of typical dead game burying as the dog itself dug out the game and delivered it after it had only temporarily hidden the game away from the handler. The dog was not influenced by the handler to ultimately perform the correct delivery.

Drag work: "good"; manner of retrieve: "good".

Drag; Before Picking up the Fox, Dog Stands Quietly and Scents the Fox

VGPO: §§ 46 and 47

Question:

The dog works the drag swiftly and arrives at the fox where it stands quietly, then scents the fox, picks up, carries and delivers correctly. Evaluation: The manner of retrieve is scored as "good".

Is the score correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision of § 46 states that the dog's performance of the retrieve must be evaluated by its manner of picking up the game, carrying it and delivering it. The retrieve

begins with the pick-up and ends with the delivery. No mistake in the retrieve is evident from above description. The score “very good” would have been appropriate. That the dog stood quietly and winded the scent has nothing to do with evaluating the retrieve. When the dog stands quietly and scents for longer than a brief moment, one might conclude that the dog is deficient in its desire to retrieve. This inadequacy can be considered when evaluating “drag work” in general. Scenting the fox for a brief moment does not affect the score for the drag. If this moment, however, lasts longer it is within the judges’ discretion to decide whether the drag score should be reduced.

Drag; Dog is Started Multiple Times on the Drag after it Laid Down the Fox

VGPO: §§ 42(1), 46 and 47

Question:

The dog starts swiftly on the fox drag during the VGP. The dog appears shortly thereafter carrying the fox. The dog comes within 80 m in front of the handler where it stops and remains undecided. The dog lays down the fox, relieves itself against a tree and returns to handler without the fox. The handler sends the dog a second time. The dog goes off toward the fox for about 20 m and then turns back toward the handler.

Now the handler takes a few steps with the dog toward the fox. The dog then goes to the fox and retrieves it correctly.

The judges are in agreement on these scores: Fox drag “sufficient”, manner of retrieve “sufficient”.

The handler is of the opinion that only the drag work showed inadequacies and that the retrieve was correct.

Is the handler’s opinion correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision of § 46 states that the aspects to be evaluated in the manner of retrieve are: the picking-up, **the carrying** and the delivery of the game. When the dog lays down the fox after the picking-up and only picks it up again and delivers after the handler has intervened, demonstrates deficiencies in carrying, which is one aspect in the manner of retrieve. This still applies to the dog that lays down the fox and leaves it, and then proceeds to correctly pick up, carry and deliver.

As a marginal note: The predicate for the drag work was correct. The dog was, after all, started three times.

Chapter IJ

Furred Game Drag

Drag; Distractions During Rabbit Drag

VGPO: § 44(1)

Question:

The dog starts briskly on the rabbit drag. At a short distance from the placed rabbit, the dog gives tongue. The dog's behavior and action lead to the conclusion that the drag layer most likely flushed game of which the dog caught scent. Working the fresh track, the dog arrives at the rabbit, scents it briefly and continues to work the track loud. At some point, the dog comes off the track, and during casting, gets back to the retrieve rabbit. The dog then works the fresh track loud for several hundred meters. After the dog has returned on its own track, it picks up the retrieve rabbit and delivers swiftly and flawlessly to the handler.

Which scores should be awarded for the drag work and the manner of retrieve?

Answer:

The drag work must be scored as "good", the manner of retrieve as "very good".

Let's address general principles first: The dog's performance is positive. The provision of § 44(1) states that "the dog that does not retrieve small game after it has found it the first time may not continue the test."

The case at hand raises the question what precisely constitutes the act of first finding.

Is it a) a moment in time at which the dog positively notices the game for the first time
 or
 b) a period of time during which the dog is granted a certain grace period?

What we require of our dogs has to be sensible. To that end, the granting of a period of time is the proper interpretation, with the understanding, however, that the dog works entirely alone without any direct or indirect influence by the handler or another person. Starting the dog two or three times on drags, as is stated in § 43, can only be permitted when the dog has not yet found the game. In the case at hand, the dog may continue to be tested since the dog, by strict interpretation, has only "found" one time. When the dog returned to the rabbit after working the fresh track, it did not "find" again, but rather remembered its original task after it succumbed to the greater stimulation of a fresh track.

The more difficult score to award is the one for the drag work. The work on the drag is scored based on if and how the dog keeps connection with the scent, and if it wants to find and retrieve. The latter was lacking; to what extent can only be adequately evaluated by the judges who observed the dog.

Any evaluation must take into account what type of distraction the dog has encountered and how strong it is. For example, the score "deficient" seems more appropriate for a dog that can be distracted for a while by sighting a human spectator, than it would be for a dog that encounters the much stronger stimulation of a flushed hare or a fresh rabbit track. The score awarded appears appropriate for the case described.

The manner of retrieve (picking-up, carrying and delivering) was flawless.

Drag; Dog Has Choice of Retrieve Game On Furred Game Drag**VGPO: § 44(1)**

Question:

At the VGP, the drag laying judge accidentally places the retrieve rabbit at the end of the drag and places the drag rabbit in front of himself. The handler had explicitly requested the opposite. The dog has worked the drag correctly, and picks up the retrieve rabbit which it carries to within approximately 50 m the handler. The dog lays down the rabbit and scents around. The dog thereby crosses the drag, takes it on again and works back to almost as far as the drag layer where it finds the drag rabbit, picks it up and delivers to the handler correctly.

How should this work be evaluated?

Answer:

Rabbit drag and manner of retrieve must be scored as “very good”.

The judges are faced with a rather difficult situation. If the language of § 44(1; sentence 1) were to be applied, the dog would have to fail the test and would not be tested further because it did not retrieve the game on the drag after it found it for the first time. This provision does not concur with sentence 2 of the same section where it states that the dog has a choice between retrieving the drag rabbit or the retrieve rabbit. If the above dog had found the retrieve rabbit at the end of the drag and had not picked it up but instead had retrieved and delivered the second, meaning the drag rabbit, the score for the drag work and the manner of retrieve had each without doubt been “very good”. To make it clear, the provision in sentence 2 of § 44(1) prevails and limits the application of the provision in sentence 1 of the same section.

Does the content of sentence 2 still prevail in the situation where the dog picked up the rabbit at the end of the drag and had begun to carry it over a distance of 50 m? The judges certainly would not have been criticized if they had decided in the negative, especially in light of the ambiguous situation. To clarify this case, the decision is in favor of sentence 2 of § 44(1) in that it sustains prevalence. The argument for this decision is that a dog that applies the nuance of tracking an individual scent is most valuable for any tracking task. It is obvious in the case described that the handler explicitly asked for the drag rabbit to be placed at the end of the drag because his dog has learnt to track individual scents.

Chapter K

Manner of Retrieve

Manner of Retrieve; Dog Does Not Release Game

VGPO: §§ 46, 47 and 59

Question:

The dog works the drags correctly, picks up the game, returns to the handler, sits but does not release the game. The handler uses persuasive words and strict commands, neither of which rendered any success in the dog releasing the game. Finally, the dog releases the game after the handler had walked to his vehicle and removed another piece of game. The same scenario occurs with this dog during all drags.

Can this dog pass the test?

Answer:

This dog cannot pass the test.

The provision in § 59 VGPO requires at least “sufficient” performances in all subjects as the minimal requirement for a Prize III. The exceptions are furred game drag with fox and the retrieve of fox on the furred game drag, and the retrieve of fox over obstacle. Although the dog enabled the handler to come into possession of the game, the work itself does not warrant a score higher than “sufficient”. With this score, the dog does not meet the minimal requirements for the retrieving subjects.

Chapter L

Independent Search

Independent Search; Manner of Hunting: *Laut* (loud) and *Spurlaut* (loud on track)

VGPO: § 52

Question:

During the independent search in a tall and dense thicket, one dog is loud while flushing a hare and is thereafter observed to be loud on sight. The dog is soon heard hunting loud again; a feral cat is flushed from the thicket. Shortly afterwards, the dog leaves the thicket and follows the feral track hunting loud.

In another case, one dog clearly hunts loud on the track of a roe deer.

Should these dogs be marked as hunting “*lt*” or “*sp!t*”?

Answer:

Both dogs have earned the certification “*lt*”.

All of the test regulations are clear on what loud hunting constitutes “*sp!*”: only when the dog hunts loud on the track of a hare or a fox, is the dog considered “*sp!*”. The same applies to the track loud during the independent search in the VGP (see § 52[4]). Hunting loud on sight or hunting loud on the tracks of other small or big furred game is considered “*lt*” and the dog’s score sheet is to be marked as such (see § 52[1] VGPO).

Independent Search; Handler Leaves His Position

VGPO: § 51

Question:

During the independent search, the handler walks along the thicket in between two judges and sends his dog into the thicket with a finger signal. According to the senior judge, the dog’s search through the thicket is “very good”. The dog’s work, however, is scored only as “good” on grounds that the handler left his (assigned) position to send the dog into the thicket.

Is this evaluation correct?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The mission behind the independent search is for the dog to drive the game from the thicket to the hunter. Game is not likely to leave the thicket in front of a hunter, or handler, who keeps walking back and forth along the thicket. Such behavior might even cause a disturbance to the hunters on either side. A dog that can only be prompted into a thorough search of the thicket when its handler leaves his assigned position cannot receive the same high score as the dog that methodically searches the thicket after it was sent by a handler who remains in his assigned position,.

The score “very good” for the independent search requires that the handler remain in place while his dog is searching.

Independent Search; Only Judges Surround the Search Grounds

VGPO: § 50

Question:

Is it sufficient that the judges surround the thicket (dimension: 100 x 150 m) which is located within a large wooded area during the independent search? Or is it required that several persons surround the area to be searched so that the dog knows the range of its search?

Answer:

It is sufficient when the judges surround the thicket during the independent search.

The provision in § 50 stipulates that the independent search has to be conducted such that the judges can arrive at a concluding evaluation of the dog’s work. § 50(2) specifies that the judges should distribute themselves well in a given area (or surround a thicket) to be able to clearly evaluate the performance of the dog.

In order to be able to evaluate the dog’s independent search, the thicket must be of a certain size. An evaluation in very large thickets is difficult, if not impossible. If the thicket is too small, the dog cannot demonstrate the kind of independent search as is required by the VGPO. In a thicket with a dimension of 100 x 150 m, three judges can most certainly render a definitive evaluation, particularly when one judge remains with the handler on one side of the thicket while the other two judges each take the opposite corner of the thicket.

From their respective positions, they are able to observe the dog work the thicket while, at the same time, they can determine whether the dog hunts out of bounds, chases into other hunting areas etc.

The engagement of other persons in this subject is not provided for in the testing regulations. The dog’s work can only be evaluated by officiating judges based on their observations.

Independent Search; Silent Chase of Roe Deer

VGPO: § 52(2)

Question:

During the independent search at the VGP, two roe deer flee from the wooded area to be searched by the dog. The dog chases one of the roe deer for about 60 m without giving tongue. The otherwise “very good” independent search is now downgraded to a “good”, as the dog’s manner of hunting was silent on visible game. The handler is of the

opinion that the silent chase of visible game should not lower the score, as a dog that is absolutely steady on roe deer will never be loud behind visible roe deer.

Do you agree with the judges?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The provision in § 52(2) stipulates that the dog's score sheet must be marked "st" (silent) when there is evidence that the dog has searched silent behind visible game. A dog that searches silent behind visible game cannot receive a score better than "good".

The test regulation uses the language visible game without a distinction between various species of game. The dog's task during the independent search is to flush from the thicket any game that it encounters. When the dog is loud in doing so, the dog will be awarded the loud hunter certification regardless of the type of game (hare, rabbit, predator or hoofed game) the dog hunted.

Hunting loud is a desired behavior from a hunter's point of view even if we expect absolute obedience from the dog when sighting game in other test subjects.

The judges' decision is correct.

Independent Search

VGPO: § 52(2)

Question:

At the VGP, the dog is sent to independently search. The dog thoroughly searches the thicket casting widely. It is deemed a very good performance. During its search, the dog reaches the edge of the thicket where the handler remained. Here, a hare flushed in front of the dog which begins to chase the hare without being loud. The handler observes this and blows his whistle whereupon the dog ceases the chase and returns to the handler. The chase covered a distance of approximately 20 m.

Judges' evaluation: The dog chased silent, hence the score for the independent search is "good" and the dog is marked "st" (silent).

Is the judges' evaluation correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

Whether a dog is loud on the chase can only be determined conclusively when the dog has had sufficient opportunity to become loud. Some dogs, especially the very confident ones, do not develop tongue until they have had a chance to chase for a while. In the above case, the handler intervened immediately and thereby stopped the chase which did not give his dog ample chance to demonstrate loud.

The evaluation should have been: independent search "very good"; loud "frg" (questionable).

Chapter M

Dense Cover Search

Independent Search; Obedience Subjects During Dense Cover Search

VGPO: § 58

Question:

At the VGP, the dog is tested on the dense cover search, which is conducted in a very suitable, low tamarack cultivation with good game presence. While the dog's work in this subject is scored, preliminary scores are also given for the dog's field subjects, specifically "Steadiness to Shot", "Steadiness to Wing" and "Steadiness to Furred Game". The handlers are informed of their dogs' respective scores at this time, i.e. after the dogs' work has been completed (open judging).

A dispute ensues over the scores being prematurely awarded since the field subjects are not due for testing until the following day.

Which decision is correct?

Answer:

The judging team in the field subjects determines the final predicates for steadiness to shot, steadiness to wing and steadiness to furred game.

The provision of § 58 VGPO states that when there are opportunities during the dense cover search to observe the dog perform field subjects, these are to be considered for the final judgment. The prerequisite for such consideration is that the judging team for the dense cover search discuss their observations with the judging team for the field subjects. It is permissible to inform the handler of his dog's score after the dense cover search has been completed. However, the quoted score cannot be considered a binding statement towards the final judgment.

Independent Search; Dense Cover Search and Obedience

VGPO: §§ 57, 58 and 98

Question:

During the forest subject "Dense Cover Search", the dog encounters a roe deer and, despite the handler's blow on the whistle, starts chasing it. The dog returns shortly thereafter and resumes the dense cover search. When the shot is fired, the dog runs toward the direction of the shot from which it soon returns and resumes the search under the gun. The following scores were awarded: "deficient" for dense cover search, "good" for steadiness to shot.

Are the above scores justified?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The dog made two mistakes during the dense cover search. The first mistake was the chase of the roe deer. This observation does not affect the score for the dense cover

search, but must be conveyed to the judging team for the field subjects as a consideration for the subject “Steadiness to Furred Game”. The dog’s breaking away as a reaction to the shot lowers the predicate for the dense cover search in proportion to how strong the judges deem the reaction to have been. It is within the judges’ discretion whether they consider “good” or “deficient” the appropriate score. At any rate, the predicate “insufficient” would be too harsh.

The subject “Steadiness to Shot” was not under evaluation. This subject is evaluated in the field when a shot is fired upon flushed game or birds flying off (see § 98). This situation was not present. Of course, preliminary notes on steadiness to shot can be made during the dense cover search provided that game is shot dead, or shots are fired when game is flushed or birds are flying off. Such observations must be conveyed to the judging team for the field subjects during the judges’ conference.

Chapter N

Water Work

Water Work; Blind Retrieve From Dense Cover, Multiple Handler Interventions

VGPO: § 71

Question:

During the blind retrieve from dense cover at the VGP, the dog leaves the water four times after having been sent initially. The dog is sent anew each time. It finally finds and retrieves the duck. The blind retrieve was scored as “very good” on grounds that it does not lower the performance rating when the dog leaves the water repeatedly and has to be resent with a command. According to § 71(4), the score is lowered only when the dog is directed by firing a shot or throwing a stone to where the dead duck has been placed.

Is this opinion correct?

Answer:

The answer is most definitely negative.

The decisive aspect in this subject is whether and how the dog conducts the search and retrieve in the water; whether the dog has the will to find and retrieve, and whether the dog ultimately delivers the duck to the handler. The emphasis in this subject is on the search and the will to find. The intensity of the search is to be evaluated. When the dog under evaluation leaves the water four times and has to be resent each time, it shows that the dog’s intensity to search the water is extremely weak. Such performance deserves no better than a predicate of “sufficient”. Firing a shot or throwing stones will lower the predicate.

Water Work; Blind Retrieve From Dense Cover, Handler Gives Two Commands

VGPO: § 71

Question:

In the blind retrieve from dense cover, the handler gives two “*Verlorenapport*” commands (Fetch Dead!). With the second command, the dog enters the water immediately, finds

and retrieves the duck correctly. The work is scored as “good” on grounds that the dog did not enter the water until the second command had been given.

Is the score correct?

Answer:

There is no clear yes or no answer to this question.

The decisive aspect in the blind retrieve from dense cover is the will to search and find. The dog should not simply swim in the water, but search the water by visibly using its nose. This requires a certain amount of affinity of the water which, however, is secondary to the will to search.

Even the dog that does not enter the water until a second command had been given, can still conduct its task with a score of “very good”. It is next to impossible to answer above question without having observed the dog during its work. The question does not describe in sufficient detail “how” the dog performed the task by simply stating that two commands had been given. One can easily imagine that the dog was somewhat distracted or not focused enough to fully incorporate the initial command. But then took to the water rapidly after the second command and conducted a focused search. If the latter was the case, the dog deserved the score of “very good”.

On the other hand, one can also imagine that this dog had a lower affinity to the water and required strict handler intervention which finally prompted the dog to enter the water. Then the dog by sheer luck found the duck quickly without having to conduct a long search. In this case, the predicate “good” would have been okay. The double command by itself is not grounds enough for a score of “good”.

Water Work; Blind Retrieve from Dense Cover, Handler Intervenes After the Dog Picked Up the Duck

VGPO: § 72(7)

Question:

During the blind retrieve from dense cover, the dog finds the duck immediately, seizes it and returns toward the handler. As the dog approaches within 2 to 3 m and sees the handler, it makes a turn. Upon a sharp command by the handler, the dog comes to the handler. Without waiting for a command or making motions to sit, the dog throws the duck on the ground in front of the handler.

How should the blind retrieve from dense cover and the manner of retrieve be evaluated?

Answer:

The blind retrieve from dense cover and the manner of retrieve must be scored as “insufficient”.

The provision of § 72(7) states that a dog that does not independently retrieve the duck after first finding it, may not continue with the test. When such is the case, the subject “Blind Retrieve from Dense Cover” is also deemed failed. The handler intervened by giving a sharp command. Hence, the dog cannot pass the test.

Water Work; Blind Retrieve from Dense Cover, When is a Duck Considered Freshly Shot?

VGPO: §§ 71(3), 72(7) and 118(4)

Question:

The judges take a cold duck from the trunk of a vehicle to be used for the blind retrieve from dense cover. The dog sent to find and retrieve this duck finds it, but does not seize it, instead pushes it away three times.

The handler invites the judges' attention to the provision in § 71(2) VGPO where it says that freshly shot ducks must be used for this subject.

The dog is then given another duck which has been freshly shot. The dog finds again and retrieves it correctly.

The above case leads to a discussion in the judges' conference with the question when is a duck deemed freshly shot in accordance with the test regulations?

Answer:

The provision that freshly shot ducks must be used for the blind retrieve in dense cover does not include that the ducks must be warm. In most cases, the ducks that are thrown into cover have been shot and killed previously. When the test takes place on cold days, it is very likely that the ducks have cooled down. A duck is deemed freshly shot in accordance with the test regulations if it has been shot on the day of the test. Your attention is invited to § 118(4) VGPO which states that all game must be transported such that it cannot take on the odor of a different species. If these test conditions were met, the dog had to retrieve the duck when it first found it; otherwise, it failed the test.

Water Work; Game Shyness During Water Work

VGPO: §§ 68(2) and 126(2)

Question:

At the VGP, the dog conducts the independent search without duck in densely vegetated water with little enthusiasm. During the search behind the duck in densely vegetated water, the same dog does not follow the duck's trail on the water nor does it search the reeds. The handler ultimately leads the dog to the duck which the dog then follows silently for about 50 m into open water. Safety reasons prohibited that the duck be shot at this point. The dog then ceases the chase of the visible duck without obvious reasons. The judges then declare the test terminated. The judges hold a brief deliberation after which the senior judge announces that the dog has failed the test and will not be tested further on grounds of game shyness in accordance with § 68(2) VGPO.

Was this decision correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

Game shyness is present when the dog abruptly stops its actions upon sighting game. The cessation of a chase, even one of short duration, does not constitute game shyness.

The dog did chase the duck for a distance of 50 m into open water; such behavior does not constitute game shyness.

The dog did not pass the test because it did not achieve the minimum score of “sufficient” for the independent search behind duck in densely vegetated water. It is within the discretion of the judges who observed the dog to give a score of “deficient” or “insufficient” for the above performance.

Water Work; Dog Does Not Retrieve the Shot Duck

VGPO: §§ 44(1), 72(5) and (7)

Question:

At the VGP, the dog seizes the duck that was shot in front of it and instead of returning to the handler, who keeps giving harsh commands, the dog steadfastly continues to swim toward a belt of reeds on the opposite shore in a distance of approximately 20 m. After approximately 5 minutes, the dog appears at the handler’s side without the duck. The judging team decides that the dog is excluded from the test in accordance with §§ 44(1) and 75(5) VGPO. The handler expresses the opinion that the duck might still have been alive and managed to get away from his dog in which case, he, the handler, would be allowed to send his dog again. The duck is retrieved dead about one hour later by a different dog. The duck shows signs of having been shoved into the reeds. The latter no longer affects the evaluation of the judging team.

1. Was the judges’ decision correct?
2. Can or must the dog be tested further if the handler so desires?

Answer:

Ad 1: The answer is affirmative.

The dog failed to retrieve a freshly shot small game animal at the first encounter, see § 44(1). With the failed retrieve, the dog also failed to meet the requirements of § 72(5) in that it did not independently retrieve the duck shot in front of it.

Whether the duck is still alive when the dog seizes it is of no relevance in the VGP. The dog must retrieve the duck either way independently. This requirement was not met in the dog’s early work when it did not respond to the handler’s strict commands after it had seized the duck.

Ad 2: The answer is negative.

According to § 126(2), the dog must be excluded from further testing on grounds of failing in the small game animal category.

Water Work; Hardmouth, Extreme Hardmouth

VGPO: §§ 47(3) and 126(2)

Question:

During the water work, the judges notice that the breast of the duck retrieved by the dog is badly torn open. There ensues a discussion as to whether the dog must fail the test due to extreme hardmouth (§ 47[3]) or should be excluded from the test (§ 126[2]). The handler asserts that his dog never before damaged a duck during the retrieve.

Can the dog be given an opportunity to retrieve another duck to ensure the correctness of the score?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

Such an opportunity would result in significant undermining of the test regulations. With the exception of the field work, where the dog should be given several opportunities, the test regulations generally do not provide for opportunities to repeat in the other categories with the exception of errors on the part of the judges in the execution.

It certainly does happen that a dog makes a mistake, or even fails entirely, during the course of a test even though the dog has never before shown such behavior. At all times, the judges can only evaluate what they see on the day of the test itself. Such events are among the imponderables of every test, and we must live with them no matter how harsh they may seem in the individual case. The other question in this case is whether the condition of the retrieved duck should be judged as extreme hardmouth. Such injuries can also occur, for example, when the dog pursues a crippled duck and grabs it hard just in the last instant before it dives away, or when it seizes a duck in the reeds, catching reed stalks along with it and then pulls the duck out in order to retrieve it. The injury alone does not constitute hardmouthing. Hardmouthing is a repeated, sometimes even playful and frequent hard grasping (the piece of game is thoroughly chewed).

At the same time, the game is squashed, sometimes so severely that it is no longer fit for human use. In the first case, it is hardmouthing, and in the last case it is extreme hardmouthing. Thus the judges must observe the dog closely during the entire retrieving process in order to arrive at a correct judgment.

Chapter OP

Field Work

Field Work; Evaluation of Search

VGPO: § 78

Question:

At the VGP, the dog searches a relatively large field with cover. The dog finds a pheasant which it points well. The pheasant runs off. While tracking, the dog encounters a second pheasant which freezes and which it points for a fairly long time until the handlers flushes it. Immediately thereafter, the dog takes up a track (probably of the first pheasant which ran off) and works it until shortly before the end of the cover at which point the pheasant flies off.

The next dog is called and released immediately after the above work, and searches the same field again and finds three more pheasants.

There is a debate in the judging group whether the first dog which demonstrated a very good search, has earned the score very good in search as it had not found the three pheasants during the search.

Which decision is correct?

Answer:

The search must be scored as “very good”.

As long as our actual test game was the partridge, the applicable provisions did not present a cause for difficulty. They fully and completely corresponded to the demands that we had to place on the field dogs. Uncertainty did not arise until the pheasant, with its increasing numbers, gradually became at least as common a test game species, and in some places even the primary test game species. Because of the pheasant's differing behaviors and habits, the search for this game bird places different demands on the dog than the search for partridge. The pheasant tends to seek out relatively dense cover in which the scent of a single stationary bird does not spread far. The likelihood that even an efficiently searching dog with a keen nose who is not 100% focused on pheasant will run past pheasants in heavy cover is extremely high, and certainly many times higher than is the case with partridges. Every judge ought to be aware of such likelihood. With regard to the above scenario, however, the question is whether there is such a thing as overrunning the game when the dog, who is working on a particular piece of game, does not find additional game located nearby. The answer to this question is a resounding No.

When the dog's nose has made contact with the scent of game, it will track such scent until it has found the game or until it flushes, regardless of how much additional game may be present in the vicinity of the scent tracking dog.

We would be making nonsensical and excessive demands on the dog if we were to require it to abandon the initial scent and start searching for new scent.

The dog has earned a very good in search.

Field Work; Disobedience During Search

VGPO: § 78

Question:

During the search, the dog demonstrates a strong will to find and searches the areas it has been given with great determination. The handler has difficulties directing his dog; he is constantly intervening; on two occasions, the dog by far leaves the handler's control. The dog perfectly points game that it finds. Will the dog's behavior affect the predicate for the search?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The provision in § 78(2) states that the evaluation must take into account how easily or difficult the dog can be directed and whether it complies with the handler's commands. The predicate “good” is appropriate for the search in this case, as the dog displayed severe deficits.

Field Work; Pointing Various Game Species

VGPO: § 79

Question:

On the second test day of the VGP, a dog, which has thus far been evaluated as being a Prize I candidate, has four opportunities for pointing during the field work. Twice, the dog

points and is steady on a hare until the handler arrives and flushes the hare at which time the dog obeys the handler's whistle command for halt. On one occasion, the dog encounters partridge which he intentionally flushes without pointing. Later, the same dog finds a pheasant in a beet field which it points steadily until the handler approaches calmly from approximately 50 m away and flushes the bird. The dog's pointing is scored as "deficient" which renders it unqualified for a prize.

Was this decision correct?

Answer:

The pointing must be scored as "good".

As a basic rule, we expect to see finished dogs at VGP's. However, to qualify for a prize at this extremely versatile test, the dog does not have to show record performances in all subject categories. The field search is tested under conditions which are almost identical to those of realistic hunting. The provision of § 79 VGPO states that pointing deserves a high score when the dog has found tight sitting game which it staunchly points (in an upright or down position) for as long as it takes the handler to arrive walking at a normal pace, place himself next to the dog and fire his gun at the game without haste. According to above description, the dog demonstrated flawless pointing on hare and pheasant in this manner three times. If this dog had not encountered the partridge – a game species which is no longer our predominant game bird and has been replaced by the pheasant in both test and real hunting conditions – the predicate for pointing would have had to be "very good". A singular demonstration of "insufficient" pointing of partridges naturally will lower the score. However, the overall predicate of "deficient" does not appear to be appropriate. The predicate "good" is appropriate.

Field Work; Pointing of Roe Deer

VGPO: § 79

Question:

During the field search portion of the VGP, the dog points staunchly a cover until the handler has arrived at a calm pace. The handler moves a few steps in front of his dog at which time two roe deer run off from the cover.

Must this demonstration be evaluated for pointing?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

Nowhere in the VGPO does it state that pointing can only be evaluated when demonstrated on certain game species. In this context, § 79 only mentions the term "tightly sitting" game. Although it is true that we seek to observe pointing on feathered game during the field work and must continue to that end, it is not always possible to provide the dogs with such game. If the latter is the case, we can evaluate pointing exclusively on furred game.

Field Work; Pointing

VGPO: § 79

Question:

At the VGP, the dog encounters feathered game three times, as described below.

1. The judges give the handler the approximate location of a covey of partridge in a potato field. The handler is instructed to send his dog on a search. The dog swiftly quarters deep into the potato field toward the location of the partridge. As if hit by lightning, the dog suddenly goes into a point laying down. The handler approaches within a few steps of his dog when the covey of partridge flies off approximately 3 to 5 m in front of the dog.
2. The dog runs into a pheasant hen under adverse wind conditions.
3. A short while later, the handler is instructed to send his dog to search a 3 m narrow strip of corn stalks in an otherwise harvested corn field where a rooster was seen landing. The dog initially points at the edge of this strip for a brief moment and then enters the strip of corn stalks. It is evident from the motion of the stalks that the dog gains distance at increasing speed. As the handler blows his whistle, a rooster flies off from a ditch at the end of the corn strip. No additional game is encountered.

The judges award the predicate “sufficient” for the dog’s pointing. The pointing in a laying down position described in 1) above is excluded from the evaluation; an apprentice judge is of the opinion that the dog must point in an upright position and may not lay down. In 2) above, the dog flushed the hen and in 3) above, the whistle was the only reason that the dog did not proceed to flush the rooster.

How should the dog’s pointing be evaluated?

Answer:

The pointing must be scored as “very good”.

The provision of § 79 states that pointing deserves a high score when the dog has found tightly sitting game which it staunchly points (in an upright or down position) as long as it takes the handler to arrive at a calm manner, place himself next to his dog and fire his gun at the game without haste. It is clear from this language that pointing upright or laying down is of equal quality. In 1) above, the dog earned without a doubt a “very good” for pointing. It is not clear from the facts presented whether the dog came so close to the partridge because it conducted a wide ranging search or whether its nose is not that keen.

Whatever the cause might be for running into a pheasant under adverse wind conditions – see 2) above – whether it might have been the manner of the search or the nose (if the search was okay), the dog would not have been able to come into a point. Hence, no deduction must be made.

The dog’s behavior in 3) above cannot be used either to justify a lower score in pointing. This is especially true since the dog actually pointed for a brief moment, moved forward and then possibly caught sight of the rooster. The behavior in the presence of a visible pheasant is not a question of pointing; it must be evaluated under the category behavior in the presence of visible game.

Field Work; Retrieve of Small Game, VGPO: § 44 (1)
Blind Retrieve of Feathered Game, VGPO: § 82 - 84
Retrieve of Feathered Game, VGPO: § 85

Question:

During the field search at the VGP, a rooster continues to fly off for approximately 300 m after being shot in one leg. Its landing is not visible. The handler and his dog find this rooster which the dog points. As the rooster takes off, the handler shoots the bird which subsequently falls into a clover field. This is not visible to the dog. The dog finds and retrieves the rooster without command and delivers flawlessly.

1. Must this dog still work a feathered game drag? If the answer is affirmative:
2. Envision the following case: The dog finds and picks up the game on the drag, but then drops it due to some distraction; picks up the game again without handler influence and delivers. What evaluation is appropriate?
3. What score should be awarded given the same scenario as in 2) except that the dog requires handler influence to pick up the game again?

Answer:

Ad 1: The dog still has to work a feathered game drag.

According to the VGPO, the dog is required to complete two tasks in the subject category Blind Retrieve of Feathered Game. The dog at hand accomplished the task required in § 83 b(sentence 1 [Blind Retrieve of Freshly Shot Feathered Game]) VGPO.

Ad 2: It is within the judges' discretion to award the score of "very good" or "good" for the manner of retrieve of feathered game.

Every single retrieve of feathered game (and its manner) must be evaluated in the test category feathered game. Dropping the game during the retrieve is always considered a fault. In this case, however, it does not affect the score for the drag work as the dog independently picked up the game again and delivered. It is within the judges' discretion whether they award the score of "very good" or "good" for the manner of retrieve of feathered game. In this case, one can only give the appropriate score if one observed both retrieves.

Ad 3: The drag work and the manner of retrieve must be scored as "insufficient", as the handler influenced his dog.

The provision of § 44(1) VGPO states that the dog must retrieve independently (no handler intervention when the dog makes a mistake) any small, freshly shot game animal that it picked up or which it found during the drag after it first encountered it.

Field Work; Dog Does Not Find Freshly Shot Game Bird

VGPO: § 83

Question:

Does the handler have a right that his dog be tested in the subject "Blind Retrieve of a Placed Game Bird" after his dog did not find the freshly shot partridge the fall of which the dog did not see? Another dog found the freshly shot partridge.

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The provision of § 83(6) states that the dog must be tested in the subject “Free Search and Retrieve of a Placed Game Bird” if the dog did not find a freshly shot game bird. The same applies if the freshly shot game bird is later found by another dog.

Field Work; Dog Does Not Find Winged Bird

VGPO: § 82

Question:

The dog has an opportunity to work the track of a winged bird. The dog does not find the bird although another dog finds the bird. Is the handler entitled to a “Feathered Game Drag”?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

According to the VGPO, the work on a winged bird provides only one aspect in scoring the subject. When there are opportunities for winged bird work and the dog makes positive use of such opportunities, the feathered game drag will not be necessary. If the dog, however, fails to find the winged bird, the dog – according to § 82 – is entitled to a feathered game drag. The same still applies even if the unsuccessfully searched winged bird was later found by another dog.

Please note that the dog’s failure to find the winged bird may not result in a lower score for the drag work.

Field Work; Dog Seizes Young Hare and Fails to Retrieve

VGPO: § 44(1)

Question:

During the search at the VGP, the dog finds a young hare which it chases and seizes.

On the return route to the handler, the dog is forced to go through a corn field which it exits without the hare and returns to the handler.

Must the dog be excluded from the VGP after this incident?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The provision in § 44(1) VGPO very clearly states that a dog that fails to retrieve independently at the first encounter any small game animal that was captured live, freshly shot, placed or found at the end of a drag, must be excluded from the test. It is a reasonable expectation of a finished dog to independently retrieve all small game animals regardless of whether it is warm, cold or captured live.

Field Work; Dog Fails to Retrieve Hare That Has Died Naturally

VGPO: § 44(1)

Question:

During the search in a field of tall beets, the dog finds a dead hare. The dog comes to a brief stop and then continues the search. Is this reason to exclude the dog from the test?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision in § 44 (1) states that a dog that fails to retrieve independently at the first encounter any small game animal that was captured live, freshly shot, placed or found at the end of a drag, must be excluded from the test. This provision does not include the retrieve of game that has died naturally.

Field Work; Dog Seizes Live Roe Deer and Eats From Game

VGPO: §§ 45 and 126

Question:

During the field search at the VGP, the dog encounters roe deer. The dog is not obedient and seizes a fawn. The fawn is taken from the dog. The search is resumed and the dog, despite the handler's whistle blows and calls, starts working the roe deer track, encounters the fawn again, dispatches it and finally eats from the fawn.

Can this dog pass the VGP?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

A game eater can never meet our requirements for a useful hunting dog. Hence it is of no significance whether the dog eats from test game or game that was incidentally seized during the test.

Chapter QR

Obedience

Obedience During Drive Hunt

VGPO: § 91(3)

Question:

In the subject category "Obedience during the Drive Hunt", the handler leashes his dog prior to the test using a shoulder lead. One of the judges informs the handler that such leashing can be scored not better than "sufficient" as it must be distinguished from the option to place a lead on one's dog without any handler contact (free on lead).

The handler is of the opinion that a flawlessly behaved dog leashed to a shoulder lead earns a score of "good".

Who is correct?

Answer:

The handler is correct.

For many decades, the VGPO only distinguished between "free" and "on lead" when testing the obedience during the drive hunt. There is no provision in the VGPO for "free on lead". The dog is considered leashed when it is on a lead regardless of whether the lead is shouldered by the handler or attached to a tree, rock or similar objects or whether

the handler steps on the lead or drops it to the ground. In any of the aforementioned lead options, the dog earns the predicate "good" if it otherwise behaves flawlessly.

Obedience; Heeling Off Lead

VGPO: § 93

Question:

During the subject "Heeling off Lead", the dog breaks away 2 – 3 m to urinate against a bush which another male dog had previously used to urinate against. The handler makes a sssh sound upon which the dog returns to its place at the side of the handler's knee. During the course of this test, the handler stops six times. Twice the dog sits, the other four times, the dog stops and remains standing.

Must the predicate lowered because of

- (1) Breaking away from handler
- (2) Remaining upright during the stops?

Answer:

Ad 1: The predicate must be lowered.

When the dog breaks away in any direction during the subject "Heeling off Lead" (including a temporary falling behind), it clearly shows that the dog is not fully focused on the handler. A finished dog should not be tempted into breaking away by distractions such as scent of game or other dogs etc. If the dog does break away, lowering the predicate is an appropriate action.

Ad 2: Not sitting is of no significance to the predicate.

Although we traditionally train the dog to sit instantly when the handler comes to a stop, the VGPO only requires that the dog stop immediately (§ 93[2]) i.e. the dog stops immediately behind or on one side of the handler when the handler stops.

Obedience; Down Stay, Distraction By Hare

VGPO: §§ 94 and 96

Question:

The dog is placed in a down stay at the VGP. The handler leaves the dog and goes to a point where he cannot be seen by the dog. The handler fires two shots. The dog behaves correctly. When the handler has walked back to the dog about half the distance, a hare flushes next to the dog. The dog briefly gives loud and chases the hare. Upon the handler's call, the dog immediately ceases the chase and goes into a down position until the handler arrives. Must the dog's behavior be rated as insufficient or may the subject be repeated?

Answer:

The dog's performance in the subject category "Down Stay" must be scored as "insufficient".

The provision in § 94(6) states that the dog must remain at its place until the handler returns and picks him up. The performance must be rated as "insufficient" when the dog either leaves its place, whines or barks. It is certainly unusual that a hare sits tightly next

to the dog while this test subject is ongoing. However, we expect a VGP dog to withstand such distractions. Live game distraction during the drags, for example, are not grounds for a replacement drag.

Had this been a real hunting situation, the dog's behavior would have affected the handler and his hunt profoundly. Especially, if the hare had flushed prior to the handler's shots. Insofar, the dog did not fulfill the task. On the other hand, the dog demonstrated absolute obedience on sighted furred game hare which must be taken into account for the related test subject. If this VGP was conducted by specialty judging groups, the field judging group was to be informed of the dog's obedience on hare, the field judging group having the final decision over the predicate.

Obedience; Steadiness to Fur

VGPO: Section 96

Question:

At the VGP, the dog encounters hare 5 times. The dog correctly assumes the halt position 4 times upon the handler's whistle blow. The dog chases the fifth hare. The inattentive handler finally notices the chase and blows the whistle, but it is too late and the dog continues the chase. The dog returns after a brief chase.

What score?

Answer:

The score "good" is appropriate.

The dog demonstrated absolute steadiness on hare 4 times. Its score for steadiness on furred game would have been "very good" if the dog could have been stopped on the fifth hare. The fact that the dog was not obedient on the fifth hare must result in a lower score.

Obedience; Steadiness to Fur

VGPO: § 96

Question:

At the VGP, the dog encounters hare 4 times. Twice, the dog chases despite the handler's whistle command. The dog stops the chase after 150 m on the first hare, and after 300 m on the second hare. The dog stops on the whistle the other two times.

Is this dog still eligible for Prize I?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The provision in § 96(2) states that a dog that is disobedient more than twice by chasing furred game cannot receive a Prize I. In the above case, the dog has been disobedient twice which in itself, of course, lowers the predicate but it does not exclude a Prize I.

Obedience; Steadiness to Fur

VGPO: § 96

Question:

At the VGP, a hare flushes in front of the dog, stops after 30 m and remains in place for a while. The hare then runs off again. The dog initially remains in the down position while the hare remains in place, but when the hare starts running off again, the dog begins the chase and cannot be stopped by the handler's whistle or voice commands. The dog chases the hare and returns to the handler after several minutes. The dog's performance is scored as "very good".

Is the score appropriate for the dog's work?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision in § 96(1) states that the handler must be able to stop the dog from chasing furred game by voice, whistle or even repetitive and sharp commands. The dog did not meet this requirement. The above description does not reveal whether the dog might have had other opportunities to demonstrate its behavior in the presence of furred game. If the described scenario was the only encounter, then the score can only be "insufficient".

Obedience; Steadiness to Wing

VGPO: § 93

Obedience; Steadiness to Fur

VGPO: § 96

Obedience; Behavior in the Presence of Game and Relocating

VGPO: § 81

Question:

At the VGP, the dog encounters a roe deer during the search in a beet field. The dog points the deer. When the roe deer runs off, the dog chases it into a nearby forest despite the handler's whistle command. The dog returns after 2 to 3 minutes. This is the dog's only encounter with furred game during the test. The dog encounters feathered game once which it points staunchly. When the pheasant flies off, the dog remains calmly in place and does not chase. The dog is given the following predicates:

Steadiness to Wing: "Very Good"

Steadiness to Fur: "Insufficient"

Behavior in the Presence of Game and Relocating: "Sufficient"

Are these scores appropriate?

Answer:

The answer is negative for the subject category "Behavior in the Presence of Game and Relocating".

The chase may not affect the score for the subject "Behavior in the Presence of Game and Relocating". This particular subject tests the dog's physical demeanor (head and body) when making scent of game and the dog's movements immediately prior to going into a point and during relocation. In the absence of encounters where the dog displayed deficient behavior in the presence of game, the predicate "very good" is appropriate.

The other predicates are appropriate.

Obedience; Steadiness to Fur

VGPO: § 96(1)

Question:

At the VGP, the dog flushes a hare during the search which it then begins to chase. After chasing the hare for approximately 30 – 40 m, the dog immediately ceases the chase when the handler blows the whistle.

Which score is appropriate for such behavior in the subject "Steadiness to Fur": "Very Good" or "Good"?

Answer:

The behavior must be scored as "very good".

The provision in § 96(1) requires that the handler must be able to stop the dog from chasing furred game by voice or whistle commands, which may be given repetitively. The dog fully met these requirements. The initial chase may not be held against the dog when the dog promptly complied with the handler's intervention.

Obedience; Steadiness to Wing and Shot

VGPO: §§ 95 and 98

Question:

At the VGP, shots are fired at game birds flying off from the field. The handler blows his whistle; the dog goes into a down position.

Which score?

Answer:

The whistle command definitely lowers the predicate.

It depends on whether the whistle command was given before or after the shot, and whether the dog might have wanted to chase after the shot was fired. If the whistle was blown before the shot, the appropriate predicates are "good" for steadiness to wing and "very good" for steadiness to shot. If the handler whistled after the shot (which is equivalent to an intervention) and the dog had thus far not displayed any signs of chasing, the appropriate predicates would appear to be "very good" for steadiness to wing" and "good" for steadiness to shot.

Obedience; Steadiness to Shot

VGPO: § 98

Question:

The dog displays flawless steadiness to shot on a pheasant that flies off from the field. During the subject "Dense Cover Search", however, the dog ranges far out of the handler's control when a shot is fired (no encounter with game).

How should this be evaluated?

Answer:

The steadiness to shot is "very good".

Since there was no game contact, the behavior during the dense cover search is unrelated to steadiness to shot. It does, however, adversely affect the predicate for the dense cover search. Steadiness to shot can be tested only in the presence of feathered game flying off or other fleeing game that the dog has seen.

Obedience; Abandoning the Fox Drag

VGPO: §§ 90(3) and 126(2)

Question:

The dog is started on the fox drag and tracks initially in the direction of the drag. The dog returns within 50 m of its handler without the fox. Upon the verbal command "Fetch", the dog turns back and does not return. After a full 10 minutes have elapsed, the senior judge instructs the apprentice judge to walk to the vehicles which are parked 400 m away. The apprentice judge reports that he found the dog waiting at the handler's vehicle. The judge instructs the handler to get his dog and start the dog on the drag a second time. The dog again starts tracking on the drag and does not return. After another full 10 minutes, it turns out that the dog is waiting again at the handler's vehicle. A debate ensues among the judges:

Is the handler entitled to starting his dog a third time or must the dog be excluded from the test?

Answer:

The dog must be excluded from the test.

The dog had already been started on the drag three times when it was picked up from the handler's vehicle the first time.

In accordance with § 126(2), the dog proves to be completely disobedient by running off again to the vehicle and therefore must be excluded from the test.

The score for the drag must be "insufficient" and "not tested (-)" in the retrieve of the fox.

Chapter S

Association Judges

Association Judges; Specialty Blood Tracking Judge and Dog From Judge's Kennel

VGPO: §§ 20 and 106

Question:

May a judge perform functions as a Specialty Blood Tracking Judge at a VGP where a dog from his kennel will be tested?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The provision in § 106 states that no judge may judge a dog from his own kennel. A specialty blood tracking judge is involved in the course of a dog's blood tracking work. Such judge has without a doubt the status of an Association Judge even when he does not perform judging duties in the judging group for blood tracking work.

Association Judges; Changing an Evaluation

VGPO: §§ 71, 104(6) and 109(1)

Question:

The dog receives the following predicates for the water work:

Independent Search without Duck in Densely Vegetated Water:	“Very Good”
Blind Retrieve from Densely Vegetated Water:	“Very Good”
Independent Search behind Duck in Densely Vegetated Water:	“Good”

The handler is informed that above predicates are of preliminary nature.

After the judges deliberate, the predicate for the independent search without duck in densely vegetated water is determined as “good”. The handler is informed of this predicate together with the other predicates.

During the subsequent judges' conference, the predicate for the blind retrieve from densely vegetated water is reduced as well, as it turns out that the handler had thrown a stone.

Are these changes permissible?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

As long as the handler had been told that the decision by the judging group was not final and subject to possible adjustment, the judging group is entitled to change an evaluation. It is better, of course, if the handler were to be given the final judgment right away. In principle, the Judges' Conference never has the right to change an evaluation once it has announced such evaluation to the handler as final and without reservation (§ 109[1]) - unless an error was made in applying the test regulations, which was the case here. The predicate had to be lowered because a stone was thrown during the blind retrieve from densely vegetated water (§ 71[3]).

Chapter Sch

Armbruster Halt Award

Armbruster Halt Award and Loud Certificate

Question:

Is it permissible to let the dog chase a hare for the purpose of acquiring the loud certificate after the same dog had already been fully tested and successfully passed the requirements for the Armbruster Halt Award at the Association test?

Some breed clubs require the loud certificate as a breeding requirement.

In general, the loud certificate is also required for a dog to be entered into an Association blood tracking test.

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The dog's manner of hunting is not determined until after the test has been completed; it cannot be entered on Form 3 or 5. The judges must verify the dog's manner of hunting on a separate form, provided that such a certification suffices for the respective breed club. The proof of loud hunting, however, is possible also during the test.

The purpose behind the Armbruster Halt test is to train the dogs to be obedient on hare without losing their passion. The dog which meets the requirements for this award has had opportunity to demonstrate loud on scent. Any subsequent loud certification can only be sight loud.

This can be accomplished as follows: If the dog has been halted on an additional hare, it can thereafter be allowed to chase and subsequently demonstrate sight loud. This does not violate the conditions of the Armbruster Halt Award which state that the dog must be obedient on every hare. The handler will be able to stop a thoroughly trained dog again on a hare after the dog was allowed to chase.

Armbruster Halt Award; Identical Requirements in all Association Tests

Question:

The question is raised during a discussion on the Armbruster Halt Award whether this particular subject should be handled differently at the varying Association tests by taking into account the different conditions, i.e. the dogs at a VJP are younger and not experienced in fresh natural wound tracking whereas VGP dogs have been hunted quite extensively.

Answer:

The requirements for the Armbruster Halt Award are the same at any of the Association tests.

When training a dog for the Armbruster Halt Award, the objective is for the dog to meet the requirements of this award without compromising the dog's performance in the other subjects. It is in the handler's discretion alone when he wants to prepare his dog for this test.

Armbruster Halt Award is Acquired After the Test

Question:

At the VGP, two handlers request that their dogs be permitted the opportunity for the Armbruster Halt Award. Such an opportunity, however, never arises during the field work. Both handlers then request that they would like to have their dogs tested for this award after the field work has been completed. The senior judge recommends against such procedure as it may jeopardize the predicate for the training subject "Steadiness to Fur" if the dog were to chase the hare.

Is this opinion correct?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The requirements for the Armbruster Halt Award are that they have to be met at an Association test. It is not possible to test for the Armbruster Halt Award after an Association test has been concluded. The test for the Armbruster Halt Award must be a phase during the course of an Association test.

When a handler desires to acquire the Armbruster Halt Award at a VGP, but finds no such opportunity during the field work, the dog can continue to be tested. In this case, all subsequent work by the dog (nose, search, pointing, manner in the presence of game, including relocating, obedience in the field, steadiness to wing and fur) will be fully included in the evaluation.

Armbruster Halt Award; Chasing the Flushed Hare

Question:

The dog is steady to the hare at an Association test. When the hare is out of sight, the dog is started on the track for the purpose of acquiring the Armbruster Halt Award. The dog works this track over a distance of approximately 500 m with a score of "very good". Then the dog flushes the hare and chases it with sight loud. A debate ensues among the judges whether this dog still meets the requirements for the award as it chased the hare. Additionally, the judges discuss the potential incident where the dog chases a hare that flushed during the tracking work or on the return at a time when the dog is outside the handler's control.

Do all of the previously described scenarios still qualify the dog for the award?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The provisions of the Armbruster Halt Award state that the dog must be obedient on every hare that it visually encounters during the free search in the field. The purpose behind the Armbruster Halt Award is that the dog be obedient on hare while maintaining the dog's passion for hare and tracking. The purpose behind tracking is defined by realistic hunting situations when the dog tracks the wounded hare, finds, chases, seizes and retrieves it.

The dog has not violated any of the Armbruster Halt Award requirements if it flushes a hare during the tracking work and chases it or if a hare flushes during the dog's tracking

work or on the return route, both situations arising outside the handler's control. As long as the dog does not chase during the free search in the field.

Armbruster Halt Award; Mandatory Early Announcement, Obedience without Handler Intervention

Question:

The dog searches approximately 10 m in front of the handler at the VJP. The handler flushes a hare which the dog begins to chase. Upon the handler's whistle command, the dog goes into a halt position approximately 8 m in front of the handler. The dog's subsequent tracking work is scored as "good" (7 points). No additional opportunity for obedience presents itself.

The senior judge states that the dog must be allowed a full and uninfluenced chase for approximately 30 m in order to meet the Armbruster Halt requirements. If necessary, one might have to wait for the dog's first sight loud.

In the above case, the handler had not announced his intent to test the dog for the Armbruster Halt Award prior to test commencement.

At an HZP, the handler announces his intent to test the dog for the Armbruster Halt Award. Two hares flush during the search when the dog is approximately 50 m in front of the handler. The dog each time assumes the down position without any handler intervention. The dog is started on the track of the first flushed hare which it works with a score of "very good" (9 points).

The senior judge informs the handler that for the Armbruster Halt Award, the dog has to begin chasing the hare and then demonstrate obedience upon command.

The handler contests that the dog is completely steady to hare even without handler intervention. He continues that it is of much greater significance that the subsequent tracking work by the dog is at least of "good" rating.

1. Is the handler obligated to announce his intent to test for the Armbruster Halt Award to the test director prior to the commencement of the test, or to the judging group?
2. Is it required that the dog begin chasing the hare and, if necessary, demonstrate sight loud before the handler is allowed to intervene?
3. Are the Armbruster Halt Award requirements deemed met by a dog that is obedient even without handler intervention?

Answer:

Ad 1: The answer is negative.

The provisions for the Armbruster Halt Award do not contain the requirement that the handler announce his intent to test for the award prior to test commencement. If such a requirement were to exist it may result in the organizing club being under obligation to provide the respective dog with the opportunity to be tested for the award. Such an opportunity does not necessarily present itself during the tests. When a dog meets the Armbruster Halt Award requirements, the award can be issued even in the absence of a prior announcement.

Ad 2: The answer is negative.

The obedience on hare is regulated by § 86(1) VGPO. The provision therein states that the handler must be able to stop the dog from chasing furred game by voice, whistle or even repetitive and sharp commands. It is not required that the dog must have started a chase or demonstrate sight loud. However, at least once the dog must be at a distance of approximately 20 m from the handler.

Ad 3: The answer is affirmative.

The purpose behind the Armbruster Halt Award is that the dog be obedient on hare while maintaining the dog's passion for tracking. The dog that demonstrates such obedience without handler intervention and continues to work the track with a good rating outvalues in real hunting the dog that requires many and sharp commands to be obedient on hare.

In conclusion, we summarize as follows: The first dog did not meet the requirements as the distance from the handler was not 20 m. The second dog qualifies for the Armbruster Halt Award.

Armbruster Halt Award

Question:

The dog demonstrates obedience on each hare during the free search in the field. The dog is leashed while the group returns to the vehicles. A hare breaks off. The judges instruct the handler to put his dog on the track. The dog works the track for approximately 300 m, flushes the hare and chases it. The course of the chase leads by the handler in an approximate distance of 40 m at which time the handler whistles the dog down. When the hare is out of sight the dog is put again on the track and works it for an additional 1000 m. Following this, the judges evaluate the tracking performance with 11 points. The judging group did not award the Armbruster Halt Award because it interpreted the language of the Armbruster Halt provisions as requiring the hare track to originate during the field search.

Was their decision correct?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The requirements for the Armbruster Halt Award are that the dog must be obedient on every hare which it sees during the free search in the field. The purpose behind the Armbruster Halt Award is that the dog be obedient on hare while maintaining the dog's passion for the hare and tracking.

This dog met the requirements in that it demonstrated obedience on each hare during the free search and subsequently, after the hare was out of sight, worked its track with a predicate of at least "good".

A dog that flushes a hare during the hare tracking work, demonstrates obedience after an extensive chase and then works the track again as described above is the perfect example for meeting the requirements of this performance award.

Chapter St

Loud Certification Test

Loud Certification Test

VGPO: § 52(4)

Question:

During the test subject "Independent Search" at the VGP, the dog follows the track of three fleeing roe deer for a distance of approximately 150 m, giving loud. The judges do not qualify the dog's loud as *Spurlaut* (track loud) or *Laut* (loud). The handler protests this decision.

Is the handler's protest permissible?

Answer:

The answer is affirmative.

The protest is not warranted with respect to the denial of the *Spurlaut* (track loud). It is expressly stated in § 52(4) VGPO that *Spurlaut* (track loud) can be certified only when demonstrated on hare or fox.

The certification of *It* (loud), on the other hand, is not bound by certain game species. In many cases, it is next to impossible to determine which game the dog is tracking. The purpose behind the loud is to indicate to the shooter that the dog found game in the cover. Furthermore, the loud indicates to the shooter the direction of the fleeing game. It is inconsequential for the loud certification whether the dog sight chases or scent tracks the game. For the loud certification while searching independently, the judges must have gained the impression that the dog is chasing or tracking game either by sight or by scent over an extended distance in an effort to drive the game from the cover. A brief chase does not meet the requirements for hunting loud.

Hence, the protest with respect to the denial of the *It* (loud) certification was permissible.

Loud Hunting Certification; Loud Hunting During the Independent Search at an HZP; Proof of Hunting Loud for the VSWP

Question:

Due to the lack of suitable cover during an HZP, the dog is sent to search a scarcely populated forest with mature trees and ground cover of grass and low brush. During the search, the dog points several times followed by loud hunting on rabbits.

Does this dog qualify for the Loud Hunter Certification?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

Paragraph 1 of the Loud Hunter Certification requires that this performance award is granted 1) after loud Independent Search at a VGP, or 2) after a test only for Independent Search in accordance with § 52 VGPO, or 3) after the written statement by two Association Judges. It must be clear that such a written statement can only be based on the type of work as defined by § 52, see above. Apart from regular hunting

situations, it is, for example, possible to acquire the Loud Hunter Certification when independently searching during the Retrieve Reliability Test. At the HZP, loud must be demonstrated on hare or fox to acquire the Loud Hunter Certification.

In the above case, however, the dog was not on an independent search but simply searching. Hence, the dog does not qualify for the loud hunter certification.

The dog's performance suffices as proof to be admitted into a special blood tracking test. To that end, an informal statement is required by the judges.

Chapter T

Certificate for Retrieving on Natural Wound Track

Certificate for Retrieving on Natural Wound Track; Presentation of Award to Handler or Owner?

Question:

Since the Association introduced the *Vbr* Performance Award, it has been officially presented after the dog has "passed" the test.

Does the Award remain in the possession of the handler, or owner, or dog if ownership changes?

Answer:

Performance Awards are due the handler and presented to him.

Unless the handler has made other arrangements with the owner or breeder, it is in principle he who has earned the merit award. The handler has right to keep the *Vbr* pin in his possession as well. It is in contradiction to the traditional opinion on the usefulness of versatile hunting dogs that a performance award remain with the respective owner of the dog. The dog without a handler is useless in hunting practice. It takes a team of two to pass the *Vbr* performance test: The dog and the handler. Wearing the award symbol on his hat is without merit if the owner is incapable of handling his dog. Even the dog with the best training for the retrieve on natural wound track is likely to lose such ability when handled improperly. The dog will soon turn into a chaser (fire a shot and the dog takes off!). The *Vbr* Performance Award loses its merit as an award of excellence if any one can simply purchase it with the dog. Merit Awards are not for sale. The purpose of awards can only be that the handler is recognized for excellence.

Chapter UV

Retrieving Reliability Award

Retrieving Reliability Test: Manner of Delivery

§§1 and 11 of *Btr* Test Regulations

Question:

At the *Btr* test, the dog quickly finds the placed fox, picks it up without delay and returns toward the handler. Approximately 20 m in front of the handler, who is clapping his

hands, the dog drops the fox and playfully jumps 10 m to the side. The handler then stares at the dog and, using his right hand, points to the dropped fox. The dog picks up the fox again and delivers correctly.

1. Are the handler's actions allowed, and did the dog pass the test?
2. Is it permissible at the *Btr* Test that the handler call his dog during the last 20 or 30 m of the dog's return by clapping hands or praising the dog (i.e. good dog)?

Answer:

Ad 1: The dog passed the test.

There is little guidance in the provisions of the *Btr* Test Regulation with respect to the actual manner of retrieve. § 1 requires that the dog "retrieve cold game to its handler". Further, § 11 states that the dog "deliver the fox to the handler".

Despite the deficiencies in the actual manner of retrieve, the dog did deliver the fox to the handler.

Ad 2: The answer is affirmative.

During the retrieve of game (any game) either in regular hunting or in tests, is it not only permissible for the handler to praise his dog (with words or signals) when he sees his dog return with game (any game), but in most situations, encouraged.

In the dog's psyche, it is the pack member – the dog – that is about to deliver game to the pack leader. This behavior represents the objective in our training the dog. Therefore, such behavior must be rewarded so that it reinforces itself in the dog. And further, as the dog approaches with the game, it sees strange people and dogs; only its handler among the gallery, standing motionless, it does not see. But it is the handler to whom the dog wishes to deliver the game to be shared. It would be contrary to the dog's natural desire if the pack leader were to hide from the dog. In the dog's mind, such behavior would necessarily lead to the dog being insecure, burying the game or making other mistakes.

Retrieving Reliability Test; Placement Time for Fox

§§ 5 and 14 *Btr* Test Regulation

Question:

It states in § 5 of the *Btr* Test Regulation that the fox to be placed for the test must be placed on the test day not later than two hours prior to test commencement. Further, § 14 states that "When the dog being tested has retrieved the placed fox, the next dog to be tested must be given a new test area, and the fox placed in a different thicket".

Is it permissible for the organizing club to disregard the 2 hour placement requirement in light of the relatively difficult nature of tests involving fox, and place the fox shortly before the test commences? Or are the 2 hours between placement of fox and test commencement mandatory?

Answer:

The waiting period of at least 2 hours after placing the fox is mandatory for all dogs to be tested.

It is stipulated in § 5 that the waiting period is mandatory anywhere and for anyone, without exception.

§ 14 addresses the placement location, not the waiting period. The purpose behind this stipulation is that the fox is placed in the same thicket which could interfere with the work of the next dog to be tested.

Clubs that organize this test and/or judges who disregard the waiting period of 2 hours are in violation of the testing regulations. A test where the waiting period has been reduced cannot be recognized.

Retrieving Reliability Test: Placement Time for Fox

§ 5 *Btr* Test Regulation

Question:

One participant at the *Btr* Test objects that the foxes had been placed the day before the test.

Is his objection justified?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The language in § 5 of the *Btr* Test Regulation, where it states that the test foxes must be placed on the test day at least 2 hours prior to the commencement of the test, is misleading in that it was the intention of the authors to express the spirit of this test by conveying that there must be a minimum waiting period of 2 hours between placement of the fox and commencement of the test in order to eliminate as much as possible the scent left by the game layer. Such scent neutralization is achieved to an even greater degree when the game is placed the night before test day. Hence, such practice is not only permissible but even recommended in all cases where the test commences early the following morning.

An objection might be justified in the event of heavy snow fall during the night.

Retrieving Reliability Test: Wind Direction When Starting the Dog

§§ 4 and 6(2) *Btr* Test Regulation

Question:

During the meeting prior to the *Btr* test, the test director states that, in principle, the dogs must be started downwind only. One handler objects and insists that the dog be started upwind in order to make the find easier. He claims that the purpose of the *Btr* test is not so much a demand on the dog's independent search ability as primarily to determine whether the dog will retrieve accidentally found, cold game while outside handler's control.

Whose opinion is correct?

Answer:

Neither opinion is totally correct.

§ 4(2) and § 6(2) state that it must be ruled out that the dog scents the past presence of the judges' scent. The test regulation does not otherwise address the wind direction. The fact, however, that the locations for the fox placement and the points from where the dogs will be started are pre-determined in themselves lends the test a regulatory course. It is, for example, possible for the wind to change direction during the 2 hour minimum waiting period. When judges observe the test from tree stands, all concerns of human scent and wind direction are removed, and the test can be conducted.

Chapter WZ

Protest Regulations

Protest Regulations; Composition of Protest Panel, Proceedings

§§ 3 and 7 Protest Regulations

Question:

At the VGP, three handlers submit their written protests and fee of DM 30.00 each in due time, and designate each one judge to function as associates in accordance with § 7 of the Protest Regulation. Their protest is directed against the score "insufficient" for the nose during the field work. One handler additionally claims that the judges had not been able to properly observe his dog as they had been in a distance of 80 m from his dog.

The organizing member club designates a judge to function as an associate (see § 7). The designated associates commence the proceedings without having appointed a chairperson. They agree that the three dogs be tested again on the following days at approximately the same time and be judged by three different judges, thereby creating nearly identical conditions. Executing this the next day, two of the dogs again receive the score "insufficient" whereas the third dog receives the score "very good". These scores are entered as final score in the dogs' score sheet.

At this point, the judges whose scores were challenged leave the test and fail to appear the following test day. This forces the organizing club to locate replacements and appoint emergency judges.

Were the protests handled in accordance with the Protest Regulations?

Answer:

The handlers followed the formalities of the Protest Regulations. Considerable errors, however, were committed in all other areas.

§ 7 of the Protest Regulation mandates the appointment of a panel chairperson. As the facts of this case were described, the associates were deficient in making such appointment. This deficiency resulted in the improper staffing of the protest panel. But there is more: The factual decision was improper as well. According to § 3, the protest is limited to errors and mistakes by the organizing club, the test director, judges and assistants in the preparation and execution of the test. Objections to the discretionary freedom of the judges can never be grounds for protest, unless there is obvious abuse of discretion. Judging the dog's nose can never be anything else but a discretionary decision. Such is the case here. Any abuse of discretion must be substantiated in detail. Which is not what happened in two of the cases and only to a limited and insufficient degree in the third case. Although the continuous far distance between judge and dog is indeed a defect, it should nevertheless in itself present the obvious abuse of discretion.

The presentation of the facts raises serious concerns which might have been erased by hearing all parties involved.

In accordance with § 3 of the Protest Regulations, the protest had to be denied and the fee of DM 30.00 forfeited. On one hand, the reaction by judges' whose decisions were successfully challenged was human. On the other hand, being a sore loser is not a recommendation of one's character and in addition, jeopardized the continuation of the VGP. Personality conflicts rather than factual grounds might have been the cause for this situation, as might be suspected during other such incidents. It is counter-productive to the development of our versatile hunting dog movement.

Protest Regulations; Decision by Judges Conference

§§ 6 and 7 of the Protest Regulations

Question:

At the VGP, a handler objects to the predicate "good" for the subject "Independent Search Without Duck in Densely Vegetated Water" and submits his written protest in due time and designates one judge to function as the associate in accordance with § 7 of the Protest Regulation, and pays the required fee of DM 30.00.

During the Judges' Conference after the test, the judges discuss the protest. One judge objects to the discussion stating that the decision on the permissibility of a protest is not the responsibility of a judges' conference. He continues by saying that such responsibility lies alone with the Protest Panel. The other judges pay no attention. The judges vote on the permissibility of the protest and by majority vote rule against the protest.

Was this a proper action?

Answer:

The answer is negative.

The factual decision was correct but it was not made by the proper authority. In this case, a group of judges assumed authority where it had no such authority. § 6 of the Protest Regulations states that a Protest Panel composed of three judges must be established in accordance with § 7 and only this panel has the authority to decide on the permissibility of the protest and whether it is sustained.