



## GERMAN SHORTHAIRED POINTER CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

### WATER TEST RATING STANDARDS

Jan. 1, 2019

#### 1. Overview

- 1.1. The German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America (GSPCA) offers ratings titles to its members and their German Shorthaired Pointers to provide evidence of a dog's ability and training to act as a reliable hunting companion in a water environment.
- 1.2. The tests and titles offered are, in order of difficulty:
  - Novice Retrieving Dog (NRD)
  - Retrieving Dog (RD)
  - Retrieving Dog Excellent (RDX)
- 1.3. Eligibility
  - 1.3.1. Any AKC recognized German Shorthaired Pointer Club recognized by and registered with the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America shall be eligible to conduct ratings tests provided that the club complies with all portions of these rating standards.
  - 1.3.2. Ratings tests are open to all German Shorthaired Pointers with an AKC individual registration, "limited registration" and/or a Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) number<sup>1</sup> and have attained the age of six (6) months on the day of the test and whose owners and co-owners, if any, are members of the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America.
    - 1.3.2.1. Spayed bitches and neutered males may attempt and receive ratings.
    - 1.3.2.2. Dogs may be entered in multiple tests on the same date.
    - 1.3.2.3. All scoring is on a pass/fail basis. A ratings test is not a competition.
    - 1.3.2.4. Dogs *failing* a test may be re-entered as many times as desired subject to limitations, such as lack of birds, available daylight, etc. as determined by the sponsoring club.
    - 1.3.2.5. Dogs and/or handlers *disqualified* for cause may not re-enter.
    - 1.3.2.6. All AKC breeds are allowed. If they pass, a qualification certificate will be issued.

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<sup>1</sup> Before 2008, the AKC PAL number was called an "Indefinite Listing Privilege" (ILP)

## **2. Administration and Organization**

### **2.1. Test Officials**

#### **2.1.1. GSPCA representative**

- 2.1.1.1. The sponsoring club shall recommend one or more individuals to represent the GSPCA for the purpose of witnessing the tests.
- 2.1.1.2. The GSPCA representative must be a member of the GSPCA in good standing.
- 2.1.1.3. The duty of the GSPCA representative is to witness all tests and ensure that the tests are conducted in accordance with these standards.
- 2.1.1.4. The GSPCA representative is responsible for reviewing these standards with the judges and Ratings Test Committee prior to the tests.
- 2.1.1.5. The GSCPA reserves the right to appoint the GSPCA representative.

#### **2.1.2. Ratings test chairperson**

- 2.1.2.1. The ratings test chairperson must be a member of the GSPCA in good standing.
- 2.1.2.2. The ratings test chairperson of the sponsoring club is responsible to the GSPCA representative.

#### **2.1.3. Ratings test secretary**

- 2.1.3.1. The ratings test secretary:
  - Must be a member of the GSPCA in good standing.
  - Submits the application to conduct a ratings test with the GSPCA.
  - Submits result forms and fees to the GSPCA.
  - Maintains records of the tests.

#### **2.1.4. Ratings Test Committee**

- 2.1.4.1. The Ratings Test Committee consists of the ratings test chairperson, the ratings test secretary and three other persons, selected by the sponsoring club.
- 2.1.4.2. The sponsoring club's Ratings Test Committee and GSPCA representative are the final authority on any issues arising during the tests. These decisions must be made in accordance with the current revision of the GSCPA Water Test Ratings Standards

#### **2.1.5. Judges**

- 2.1.5.1. The sponsoring club appoints two judges in good standing with the AKC for each of the ratings test.
- 2.1.5.2. Both judges must judge all the dogs entered in a particular test level (NRD, RD, RDX).
- 2.1.5.3. Sponsoring club members may judge a ratings test for their club only if they have previously judged GSPCA ratings tests, AKC field trials or AKC hunt tests, NAVHDA, or if at least one judge qualifies as above.

2.1.5.4. Judges may not judge dogs owned or co-owned by them, owned by immediate members of their family or any member of their immediate household.

2.1.5.5. Any change in judging from the original application requires notification to the GSPCA Water Test Coordinator.

#### 2.1.6. **Gunners**

2.1.6.1. ***Firearm safety is paramount.*** Gunners should at all times be aware of the location of judges, handlers, bird throwers, spectators, helpers and each other.

2.1.6.2. Gunners should be chosen based upon shooting ability and the ability to remain composed and aware of their surroundings.

2.1.6.3. Shotguns should not be loaded until the last minute before the bird is thrown.

### 2.2. **Ratings test authorization**

2.2.1. The ratings secretary of each GSP club desiring to conduct a ratings test must submit a request to the GSPCA Water Test Coordinator on the form supplied by him/her or taken from the GSPCA web page. The forms may be sent via the U.S. Postal Service, other carrier or electronically (if available).

2.2.2. Each request must be submitted a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the proposed tests.

2.2.3. Each request shall include:

- Dates with the starting time of the first event.
- Exact location. (Geographic coordinates are recommended in addition to whatever other information is provided)
- Names of judges and brief qualifications.
- Species of birds to be used.
- Names of club ratings test chairperson, ratings test secretary and proposed GSPCA representative.

### 2.3. **Ratings test Announcements**

2.3.1. Sponsoring clubs should prepare a ratings test announcement (also called a “premium”) including time, date and location of the tests; description of the tests offered, including entry fees; entry form and Ratings Test Secretary contact information.

### 2.4. **Results submission**

2.4.1. All result forms, both pass and fail, must be returned to the GSPCA Water Test Coordinator, and the sponsoring club shall retain photocopies

2.4.2. A \$5.00 *per entry* fee to the GSPCA is charged sponsoring clubs. Proceeds go to the general fund to defray the expenses associated with the ratings test program. The fees must be received before result forms are processed and Certificates issued.

## 3. **Testing**

3.1. No dog is permitted to practice on the rating test grounds, as defined by the sponsoring club, *prior to the testing* the day of the tests.

- 3.2. Recognized game birds, ducks or pigeons may be used for NRD, RD, and RDX tests. Game birds must be of an appropriate size. Whichever species is selected must be used throughout the test for all dogs entered in that test level (NRD, RD, RDX). A freshly killed bird should be used in NRD tests.
- 3.3. Ducks are recommended for RD and RDX tests. Shackled<sup>2</sup> birds are permitted but if they are used this must be stated in the announcement (premium).
- 3.4. Species of birds and their usage is left to the discretion of the sponsoring club.
- 3.5. One live bird per dog must be shot in each RD and RDX test.
- 3.6. At each station where a live bird is shot, the bird thrower should be backed by at least two gunners. The judges are to arrange the gunners' stations depending on the test. On double or triple retrieves, the birds are to be thrown from separate stations.
- 3.7. Novice dogs may be worked upwind. RD or RDX dogs should be worked across or downwind to show ability to work and hunt.
- 3.8. If the judges declare a bird to be out of bounds (drifted too far from the testing area or too close to shore to require a swimming retrieve) the test must be re-run. Conditions permitting, the handler may opt to wait until one or more dogs have run before reattempting the test.
- 3.9. Handling by voice, whistle or hand signals are permissible in all tests. Handlers may touch the dog to release it for a retrieve.
- 3.10. Handlers may not threaten or intimidate a dog with a stick, lead or other potentially punishing object.
- 3.11. Dogs may wear flat, buckled, collars with a ring. Choke collars, pinch collars, dummy or real electronic collars, locator collars, etc., **are expressly forbidden**. Judges may prohibit any device deemed in conflict with the above.
- 3.12. Flotation devices for the dog are not allowed. Neoprene or wet suits may be used, if approved by judges, for specific reasons, such as weather, water temperature, currents, or extenuating circumstances.
- 3.13. A dog may make intelligent use of land to shorten the retrieve.
- 3.14. 20 gauge or larger shotguns or .22 caliber blank cartridges or primers shall be used in all tests.. At least one shotgun must be fired in the RD and RDX tests.
- 3.15. Objects may **not** be thrown to encourage a dog to enter the water or direct the dog. This is an automatic failure in any test.
- 3.16. No dog may be sent to retrieve until the bird has hit the water. All shots are to be fired when the bird is in the air in all tests.
- 3.17. Hard-mouthing is an automatic failure in all tests. (Both judges must declare the bird unfit for human consumption.)
- 3.18. Playing with the bird, instead of trying or attempting to retrieve may result in disqualification. This can include tossing in air, as an example. Dog may be disqualified after 5 minutes of this behavior as witnessed by the two judges.
- 3.19. **Disqualifications**
  - 3.19.1. A handler that mistreats a dog in the opinion of both judges will be disqualified.

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<sup>2</sup> A "shackled" bird is one that has its wings and feet immobilized so it cannot fly and has limited swimming ability.

3.19.2. A handler or owner engaging in poor sportsmanship, including making threats or other disruption of the event will be disqualified.

3.19.3. A dog that attacks another dog or bites a human without provocation will be disqualified.

3.20. **Appeals**

3.20.1. Decisions of the judges or other test officials may be appealed to the Ratings Test Committee.

**4. Tests**

4.1. **General site preparation**

4.1.1. A circle of rope, hose, or other material is to be laid out with a radius of six (6') feet (12' diameter) no closer than three feet (3') from water's edge. **Handler must remain within the circle until the retrieve is complete.**

4.1.2. Wingers (slingshot catapults that can control the direction and distance a duck is hurled) are recommended to ensure that all dogs in a test have similar retrieves.

4.1.3. Wingers should be hidden behind blinds or vegetation so as not to stand out on the water's edge.

4.1.4. A reliable "pickup" dog or other means of retrieving birds left by a dog must be provided. If a pickup dog is used, it need not be a GSP, but cannot be entered in the any of the current tests unless it has already run and passed.

4.1.5. A watercraft must be available to rescue dogs that run into life-threatening problems, e.g. tangling in decoy lines during the RD or RDX tests.

4.1.6. Birds must be staged out of sight and downwind of participating dogs. Ideally, they should be staged as far as possible from the spot where the dogs are released.

4.1.7. The site must allow unobstructed view by the dogs of the area where birds will fall.

4.1.8. The water entry spot for NRD dogs should be gentle and unobstructed.

4.2. **Novice Retrieving Dog (NRD)**

4.2.1. The dog is required to retrieve a single dead bird from the water with a minimum swim of 20 yards. A shot is fired when the bird is in the air. A bird drifting more than 40 yards from shore or too close to land may be declared out of bounds and re-thrown at the judges' discretion. The same applies to birds that are not dead and fly or swim away.

4.2.2. The dog is sent to retrieve after the bird hits the water.

4.2.3. The dog must deliver the bird into the circle. This requirement is met if the dog enters the circle with all four feet with the bird in its mouth, drops the bird into the circle or the handler can take the bird from the dog (without the handler leaving the circle) **No portion of the handler's body may touch the ground outside the circle.**

4.2.4. Steadiness is not required, and the dog may be restrained by holding the dog, holding the collar or leashing the dog.

- 4.2.5. A delay of two minutes or more to enter the water to a swimming depth or re-enter the water to a swimming depth is an automatic failure.
- 4.2.6. *Refusal* to acknowledge handler's commands more than six (6) times is an automatic failure.

#### 4.3. Retrieving Dog (RD)

- 4.3.1. The dog is required to retrieve a widely spaced (approximately 60 degrees angle) double through (8) decoys, with the falls being at distances of approximately 50 yards on the first fall through decoy, and 20 yards on the second fall.
- 4.3.2. The dog shall be steady on the line (controlled break allowed). Touch to release permitted, but restraint not permitted. Controlled break means "Voice and/or hand signal may be used to stop the dog; however, the dog must keep all four feet inside the circle to be defined as being under control."
- 4.3.3. The dog is sent to retrieve after the last bird has hit the water.
- 4.3.4. If the shot bird is wounded and has substantial swimming ability, the judges may order it to be shot on the water as long as it can be safely done – unless the handler advises to the contrary beforehand.
- 4.3.5. The dog must retrieve to hand, meaning that the dog must be holding the bird until the handler takes it. **No portion of the handler's body may touch the ground outside the circle.**
- 4.3.6. A delay of two minutes or more to enter the water to a swimming depth or re-enter the water to a swimming depth is an automatic failure.
- 4.3.7. *Refusal* to acknowledge handler's commands more than five (5) times is an automatic failure.

#### 4.4. Retrieving Dog Excellent (RDX)

##### 4.4.1. General (applying to both elements)

- 4.4.1.1. The dog shall give a finished performance, showing both class and style.
- 4.4.1.2. Eight Decoys are placed between 30 yards and 60 yards in water
- 4.4.1.3. When summoned by the judges, the dog and handler come to the circle with the dog off leash and **under control** at heel.
- 4.4.1.4. When sent, the dog must enter the water to swimming depth **immediately** with eagerness. A delay of more than 30 seconds is not "immediate" and is automatic failure.
- 4.4.1.5. The dog must retrieve to hand, meaning that the dog must be holding the bird until the handler takes it. **No portion of the handler's body may touch the ground outside the circle.**
- 4.4.1.6. *Refusal* to acknowledge handler's commands more than four (4) times is an automatic failure.

##### 4.4.2. Element 1 – Triple Retrieve

- 4.4.2.1. After being summoned to the circle, handler may elect to have dog stand, sit or be downed. The dog may be repositioned between birds, but may not be restrained before releasing.

- 4.4.2.2. Dog is required to retrieve three (3) birds to hand. (a triple retrieve) First fall with shot fired to be 40 yards to one side, second fall to be a minimum of 60 yards through decoys, (This is the shot bird) Third fall with shot fired to be 20 yards to the opposite side of the first fall.
- 4.4.2.3. If the shot bird is wounded and has substantial swimming ability, the judges may order it to be shot on the water as long as it can be safely done – unless the handler advises to the contrary beforehand.
- 4.4.2.4. A reasonable move of the dog to mark the fall of a bird is acceptable. The handler is not permitted to physically restrain the dog. Physically restraining the dog will result in failure.
- 4.4.2.5. The dog is sent to retrieve after the last bird has hit the water.
- 4.4.3. **Element 2 – Blind Retrieve**
  - 4.4.3.1. A bird is placed out of sight of the dog and handler, approximately 50 yards from the circle and any other shore on the far side of eight decoys.
  - 4.4.3.2. The handler is summoned to the circle with the dog at heel and **under control** and is informed of the location of the bird.
  - 4.4.3.3. The handler sends the dog for the retrieve when ready.
  - 4.4.3.4. The dog must retrieve to hand.