

The AKC Spaniel Hunting Test Program



...“I wish I could spend more time in the field with my dog.”

...“She’s a good dog. She would love to spend more time doing what she was bred to do.”

Many Spaniel enthusiasts have had these same thoughts. The American Kennel Club Spaniel Hunting Test Program will provide you this opportunity. Whether you are a diehard hunter or a person who happened to fall in love with a breed that can hunt, you will enjoy watching your dog’s instincts come alive through preparation for and participation in Hunting Tests. They will help keep your dog physically fit, keep your hunting companion sharp between hunting seasons, and challenge you to more thoroughly train your dog should you decide to progress to higher levels of performance. Furthermore, Hunt Tests will provide you the



opportunity to associate with like-minded dog owners in a healthy, family-friendly, outdoor environment.

So what do you need to know in order to get started?

This brochure will provide you with a brief overview of the AKC Spaniel Hunting Test program.



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®**

The AKC Spaniel



Purpose and General Overview

The purpose of the AKC Hunting Test program is to provide an opportunity for a dog to demonstrate its field abilities in a manner as consistent as possible with the demands of actual hunting conditions. The following applies to all three levels of testing:

- Hunting Tests are open to all AKC registered Spaniels over six months of age. There is no maximum age for any of the test levels. Regulations pertaining to eligibility can be found at www.akc.org/events/hunting_tests/spaniels/eligibility_breeds.cfm.
- The dog's natural hunting ability and training are scored against a standard of performance. The standard varies by test level. The basic attributes of the test allow the dog to demonstrate its hunting abilities: "how to find 'em," "how to flush 'em," and "how to bring 'em back."
- There are three test levels—Junior, Senior and Master.
- Hunting Tests are pass/fail events. Dogs are scored on their own merit. There are no placements and no ranking of the dogs.
- If in the opinion of the judges, a dog meets the minimum requirements for the test entered, the dog will receive a passing score, thereby earning a "leg" toward a Junior (JH), Senior (SH), or Master (MH) title.
- An AKC title certificate is awarded when a dog receives the required number of passing scores. The title will appear on the dog's official AKC pedigree.
- Dogs are run one at a time.
- Gunning is involved at all test levels. All gunning is done by designated gunners.

- Females in season are not allowed to enter.
- Many participants attend an event just to watch prior to entering. Tests are hosted by AKC licensed clubs. To find Hunting Tests in your area, including event secretary contact information, visit the AKC web site www.akc.org/events/search/. Select the State(s), event type (hunting test) and time period.

Junior Hunting Test

A Junior dog must show a desire to hunt in an enthusiastic manner and the ability to retrieve. It is not necessary that a dog be steady to wing and shot. The dog should show no fear of cover, a reasonable response to commands and maintain a reasonable working distance from its handler.

Junior dogs must find, flush and have an opportunity to retrieve two birds on land and a water retrieve at a reasonable distance. Junior dogs should complete their retrieves to close proximity to the handler, but need not retrieve completely to hand.

A Junior dog must achieve four qualifying scores to receive a Junior Hunter (JH) title (*the scoring system is explained below*).

Senior Hunting Test

A Senior dog must show all of the attributes of a Junior dog. In addition, the dog must show true boldness to cover, a pattern addressing the course objectives and an intense desire to hunt. A proper working distance and independent hunting sense must be maintained. The dog need not be steady to wing and shot on land but should not show uncontrollable chasing in a missed bird situation. The dog must be line steady at water, must retrieve eagerly to hand, and exhibit the ability to "hunt dead" on a blind retrieve.

A Senior dog must achieve five qualifying scores to receive a Senior Hunter (SH) title, except that if the dog has earned a JH title, then it will receive a SH title once it has achieved four qualifying scores.

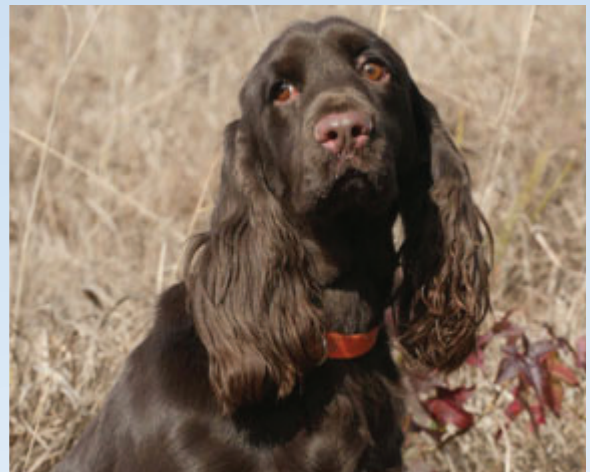


Hunting Test Program

Master Hunting Test

The Master dog is expected to be a finished and experienced hunting companion. While allowances for less than polished performances can be made at the Junior and Senior levels, real perfection is expected in Master. The Master must always be under control and must handle kindly, with only the quiet commands and signals that would be used when hunting. The dog must locate game, flush well and must be absolutely steady to wing and shot on land and at water. Intelligent use of wind and terrain in locating game, accurate nose and intensity are essential. A handler must not command a dog to retrieve until steadiness has been demonstrated. The dog must retrieve promptly, tenderly and absolutely to hand. A “water blind” of approximately forty yards must be completed in addition to a “hunt dead” on land of approximately sixty yards.

A Master dog must achieve six qualifying scores to receive a Master Hunter (MH) title, except that if the dog has earned a SH title, then it will receive a MH title once it has achieved five qualifying scores.



The Scoring System

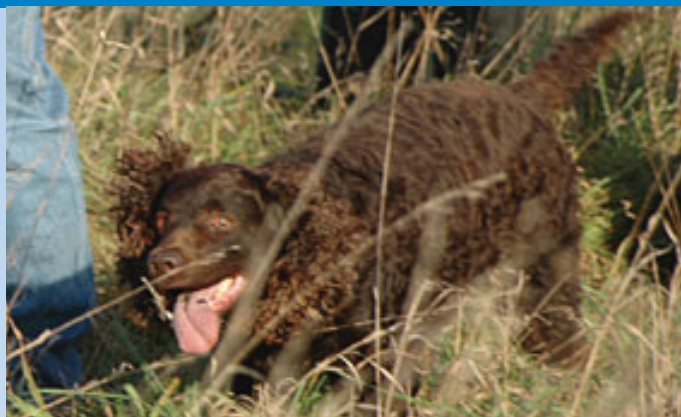
Keeping in mind that the purpose of a flushing dog is to hunt, find, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and obedient manner, the judge assigns a numerical score that reflects an estimation of how well a dog performed against an established standard for the test level under consideration. The ability categories are: (1) Hunting ability, (2) Bird finding ability (3) Flushing ability, (4) Trained abilities, (5) Retrieving abilities.

Judges assign a score from 0 to 10 for each category of performance. As dogs advance, their performance is expected to be more finished; therefore, they are judged with less tolerance. In order to receive a passing score, a dog must average 7 across all categories and cannot receive a score of less than 5 in any category.



More Information

The AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels program started in 1986 and has enjoyed steady growth. There are roughly 100 flushing dog Hunting Tests annually held across all regions of the United States. To find one in your area, visit www.akc.org/events/search then pick "Hunting Tests – Spaniels" and select your state.



The AKC® offers Hunting Test seminars which are a good way to better understand the program and what is expected of your dog. A list of seminars can be found online at www.akc.org/clubs/seminars/seminars.cfm. The Hunting Test regulations are available online at www.akc.org/rules/index/.cfm. If you want a bound booklet, Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels can be ordered at a cost of \$5.00 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling by calling the AKC order desk at (919) 233-9767 or e-mailing orderdesk@akc.org. General questions about the Hunting Test program can be e-mailed to huntingtest@akc.org.

Most Spaniel breed owners enjoy watching their dog work in the field. The excitement of that first flush is something you will never forget. The AKC Hunting Test program will provide this opportunity—your dog will enjoy it and so will you.



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