



## **MEETING OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 AUGUST 2021 AT 10.30 AM AT THE KENNEL CLUB BUILDING, STONELEIGH - AGENDA**

**Note:** the agenda is based on items which were included on the agenda for the meeting which was scheduled to take place on 23 June 2020, but was cancelled due to Covid-19. New items which were submitted within the required timeframe are also included.

**The Council is invited to observe a one-minute silence in memory of Mr JM Taylor, previous Chairman of the Council, who passed away in March 2021.**

### **ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **ITEM 2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2019**

The Council is requested to approve the minutes of the meeting.  
**(Annex A refers)**

### **ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE (RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS)**

The Council is invited to note the Results of Recommendations document.  
**(Annex B refers)**

### **ITEM 4. ELECTION OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE FOR THE SPANIEL AND POINTER & SETTER SUB GROUPS EFFECTIVE UNTIL MAY 2022**

At the Council's meeting on 16 May 2019, Mrs Jenkins and Mr Organ were elected to represent the Spaniel sub-group on the Field Trials Committee. Shortly afterwards, Mrs Jenkins was elected to the Committee by the Board as a Kennel Club member. Accordingly, the Council was required to elect a Spaniel representative to serve on the Committee for the duration of its current term of office i.e. until May 2022.

Mr Kean who served on the Committee as a member elected by the Council, has also been elected to the Committee by the Board, and accordingly the Council was also required to elect a Pointer & Setter representative.

It is invited to note that following consultation via email, the following were elected: Mr A Hopkins-Young for Spaniels and Mrs EF Kirk for Pointers & Setters.

Both appointments will be for the duration of the Council's current term of office i.e. until May 2022.



## **ITEM 5. HANDLERS WITH MORE THAN ONE DOG**

A number of items have been submitted in respect of this issue, and in the interests of clarity these are listed together below.

In order to aid the discussion, representatives are requested to give special consideration prior to the meeting as to whether they are in support of the principle that handlers should be limited as to the number of dogs they may handle at a trial, and if so, which of the various approaches put forward would be the most appropriate.

The Council is reminded that Regulations J7.g. and J9.b(6) relate to all sub-groups, and that consideration should be given to ensuring that any proposed amendments affect only sub-groups where the matter of handlers with more than one dog is perceived to be an issue. If necessary, consideration may be given to the introduction of separate regulations for specific sub-groups.

### Proposals

- a. Gamekeepers National Association Mr C Scott  
Handlers with more than one dog

This proposal is based on the increasing numbers of entries to Retriever societies for field trial runs and the potential consequence of multiple handling, against the current background of levels of demand for a place at a trial outstripping available supply. Many of our members are concerned with the increasing practice of an individual handling two dogs for different owners, while other members remain in the reserve list. Accordingly the Gamekeepers National Association seek to promote the one handler one dog principle, as a fairer and more equitable approach to creating balanced availability of places for a wider membership.

The existing J Regulations require to be amended to facilitate this objective. The amendment need not compromise the interests of owners.

Regulation J7.g.

**TO:**

Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible.

**Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler while reserves stand. If numerous dogs are entered by members with the stated intention of being run by one handler, in the event of being drawn in the ballot, those eligible owners should have the opportunity to substitute their handler before 7 days of the trial.**

(Insertion in bold)

- b. Moray Firth Spaniel & Retriever Club Mr J Castle  
Golden Retriever Club of Scotland  
One handler one dog

The proposal relates to the principle of 'one handler, one dog', in the context of Retriever field trial entries. The proposal seeks to amend Regulation J7.g. (Entries) as follows:

Regulation J7.g.

**TO:**

Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible.

**Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler while reserves still stand. If numerous dogs are entered by members, with the intention of being run by one handler, in the event of being drawn in the ballot, those eligible owners should have the opportunity to substitute their handler before 7 days of the trial.**

(Insertion in bold)



The Council is invited to note that Mr Castle, as the Field Trial Secretary of Scottish Field Trials Association, attended the annual February meeting of Scottish field trial societies. At that meeting, broad agreement was reached in terms of the need for the J Regulations to effectively revert to pre-2008/9 provision, when 'one handler, one dog' was an option open to societies. Mr Castle was asked by several Scottish clubs to pursue this objective and in his role as representative for the Moray Firth Spaniel Retriever Club and the Golden Retriever Club of Scotland undertook to present the above proposal on behalf of the majority of the Scottish field trial societies.

The following clubs have provided letters of support/endorsement to the proposal:

Grampian Gundog Club  
North of Scotland Gundog Association  
Gordon District Gundog Club

- c. Labrador Retriever Club Mrs H Bradley  
Proposed amendment to Regulation J7.g.  
The Club wishes to propose the following amendment:

Regulation J7.g

**TO:**

Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a Trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible.

**Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler, but all eligible owners should be given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot providing it is appropriately qualified, and while reserves stand.**

(Insertion in bold)

- d. Norfolk Gundog Club Mr P Askew  
Eastern Counties Retriever Society  
Proposed amendment to Regulation J9.b.(6)  
The above clubs wish to propose the following amendment:

Regulation J9.b.(6)

**TO:**

(6) Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than two dogs in a stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J7). **Clubs/Societies may limit the number of dogs a handler is able to run to one handler one dog in their Retriever stakes.**

(Insertion in bold)

- e. Cocker Spaniel Club Mr A Hopkins-Young  
Midland Counties Field Trial Society  
Proposed amendment to Regulation J9.b.(6)

The above clubs request the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulation. The proposal is made in light of the fact that some handlers are obtaining runs with two dogs registered in different names before another handler gets a run, which is seen as being unfair.

The clubs are of the view that there should be a restriction of one handler one dog until everyone has been offered a run. While it is noted that professionals would argue that they were unable to run their own dog and that of a client, it would be the decision of the handler to choose their preferred dog to run in that stake.

The clubs propose an amendment to the regulation as follows:

Regulation J9.b.(6)



**TO:**

- (6) Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than ~~two~~ **one** dog **until everyone has been offered a run in that draw whilst other members' qualified dogs stand dogs** in a stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or breeds that Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J7).  
(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)

- f. Midland Gundog Society Mr D Capel  
Proposed amendment to Regulation J7.g.

The Society requests that the Council consider an amendment to the above regulation, with the purpose of preventing the growing custom of the transfer of ownership of dogs into other members' names, in order to submit multiple entries to one trial, and thus gain advantage in field trial draws.

Regulation J7.g.

**TO:**

- g. Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible. **Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler, but all eligible owners should be given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot provided it is appropriately qualified.**

(Insertion in bold)

- g. Coventry & District Gundog Society Mr D Capel  
Proposed amendment to Regulation J7.e.

The Society wishes the Council to consider the following proposed amendment:

Regulation J7.e.

**TO:**

- e. If entries or nominations exceed the number of permitted runners, the right to compete in a Trial shall be decided by ballot (subject to Regulation J7.i. which relates to preference in the draw for open stakes). ~~Societies must ensure that all eligible owners/members are given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot (See J7.j)~~ **The draw will be undertaken using the names of the handlers. In the event that any handler's name appears more than once in any section of the draw all subsequent entries in that name will be rejected i.e. only one entry will be permitted per handler, with the following exception:**  
**Some handlers will be designated as 'Approved Handlers' and will be permitted more than one place in the draw, although the provisions of Regulation J9.b.(6) will apply.** The society must publish the result of this ballot in full to all applicants. Where an online system, approved by the Kennel Club, has been used to take entries, the ballot must be carried out using the same online system, and the result forwarded to the Kennel Club at the same time that competitors are notified.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

The Society proposes that 'Approved Handler' status would be registered at The Kennel Club for a period of up to one field trial year. Owners requiring an Approved Handler would apply to the committee of their local club (a club approved to run open stakes) giving the reasons why the request was necessary and the name of the handler they wished to use.

In general no person would be granted Approved Handler status for an owner from the same address although an exception may be granted in extenuating circumstances.

A quorum of not less than six members of that committee would consider the applications and if satisfied forward the details to The Kennel Club for registration. Substitution of handlers would



only be allowed at the discretion of the individual clubs in exceptional circumstances but an owner could elect to run their own dog if they so wished.

For the purposes of the draw, the approved handlers' names would appear with the owner's name appended viz. F Smith (R Brown). In the event that F Smith had also entered his own dog he would be shown simply as F Smith.

The entry fee for any dog to be handled by an Approved Handler would be double that of other competitors.

#### Rationale

The main purpose of this proposal is to prevent owners obtaining an unfair advantage in the draw by entering several dogs in the names of people who have no intention of running.

This has proved impossible to achieve without some consideration of those owners, who for whatever reason, find it impossible to run their own dogs. Those owners are entitled to have the same opportunity of the offer of a run as any other owner.

It is anticipated that the number of owners who would apply and be granted an approved handler would be less than ten, and the number of approved handlers less than eight. The approval system would prove a chore in the first year but thereafter most applications would hopefully be a rubber stamping exercise.

Guidance on the criteria to be applied when considering applications from owners and also what might be deemed exceptional circumstances should be given to the clubs by the Field Trials Committee to ensure a uniform approach, and it is suggested that a Working Party should be formed to deal with this matter.

If the practice of multiple entering is not prevented now, the situation will deteriorate as more owners will enter dogs in names other than their own.

- h. Coventry & District Gundog Society Mr D Capel  
Proposed New Regulation J7.g.

Should the above proposal (agenda item 5.g.) be recommended for approval, the Society also wishes the Council to consider a further proposed new regulation as follows:

New Regulation J7.g.

**TO:**

- g. No owner is allowed to run more than one dog on any one day and no approved handler is allowed to have a dog owned by them handled by any other person on the same day other than in exceptional circumstances approved by the club.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

#### Rationale

The Society hopes to provide all owners with as many runs as possible within the framework of the ballot system.

#### Discussion items

- i. Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria Mrs J Hay  
Handling for other competitors

The Club wishes the Council to discuss a suggested amendment to Regulation J9.b.(6), as follows:

Regulation J9.b.(6)



**TO:**

- (6) Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than ~~two~~ **one** dogs in a stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J7).  
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Rationale

More and more members are handling dogs for other competitors.

The Club notes that amateur competitors contribute a great deal to the discipline, and is keen to ensure that they have every opportunity to participate in trials as, without them, there would be no helpers, and no guns, and no field trials. It is anxious to avoid the potential scenario of 12 handlers running in a 24 dog stake, and the views of the Council are sought as to how this issue may be managed.

j. Yellow Labrador Club

Mr G Bird

One dog one handler

The Club notes that it has become an increasing situation within the Retriever field trial community, for one handler to represent a number of members. When it comes to a draw for a trial, one handler may have several dogs in the draw (all owned by different members). This of course means that handler has a higher chance of getting one or two runs in each draw. This is not how many clubs want trials to proceed, they want each handler to have an equal opportunity in the draw, the majority of members also being the handler.

The Club suggests that Retriever trials (all breeds) are now limited to one dog, one handler to ensure more members then have the opportunity to run their dog. Taking into account the above situation, this would mean a slight change to terms and conditions for entering a dog in a trial. This change will also need to be added into the J regulations – see below. A handler may handle a second dog, so long as this dog comes from the second preference draw (e.g. after all other members with a first preference dog have firstly been offered a run), or if a stake is undersubscribed.

At the time of entering the trial, each owner will have to nominate **one handler** (as currently stated on the form). Where a handler has been nominated to handle more than one dog, he/she must select which dog they wish to handle as their first preference dog owned by another member. For those handlers who run for a number of owners, they would need to discuss preference of dog/member for each trial. The paper entry forms and online processes already have a handler section, so this would not entail any changes required to the procedure.

Suggested wording for the J regulations is as follows:

New Regulation J7.e: Entries

**TO:**

- e. **For Retriever stakes, each member must nominate one handler on their entry. Where a handler has been nominated to handle more than one dog, they must be requested to select which dog they wish to handle as their first preference dog. A handler may only handle a second dog where this dog comes from the second preference draw (after all other members with a first preference dog have been offered a run), or if a stake is undersubscribed.**

(Insertion in bold. Subsequent paragraphs to renumbered)

Regulation J9.b(6)

**TO:**

Control of dogs and competitors under trial

Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than two dogs in a stake for ~~Retrievers~~, Spaniels or breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J7). **For Retrievers, except in the championship,**



**where a trial is undersubscribed or members with second preference dogs are offered a run, no handler may handle more than one dog in a stake.**  
(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold)

- k. Mr S Capstick Mr D Capel  
Use of handlers

Mr Capstick, an individual, wishes the Council to consider a suggestion to address concerns regarding the use of handlers.

Mr Capstick is of the view that the current rules may be subject to potential abuse by some handlers, in order to obtain an additional chance of obtaining runs by putting their own dogs in the names of friends and family members, which is not in the spirit of the discipline. However, by creating a blanket ban on multiple handling, many genuine owners will be discriminated against and may be severely and negatively impacted both financially and emotionally, to the detriment of the retriever breeds.

In order to be fair and transparent to all in the discipline, it may be argued that a change is required, and if that is the case, one option in place of a blanket ban of multiple handling that could be considered is as follows:

Genuine owners who are unable to handle their own dogs would apply to The Kennel Club for a 'permit' to enable a chosen handler to handle their dogs for them. This would be conducted on a season-to-season basis and in order to maintain fairness and reduce potential abuse of the system, the handler could not be changed mid-season.

The application would be made to The Kennel Club with an appropriate fee to be agreed which would cover the administration expenses.

The application would be evaluated by a quorum of people suitably qualified, such as a spectrum of A Panel judges who know a good number of handlers in the discipline. The owner would need to prove that they are genuine bona fide owners. A stipulation could be that they need to have had a genuine interest in the discipline over several years, they may need to have helped out with trials, maybe previously run in several trials or have been involved in the discipline by other means.

This would stop abuse and manipulation of the current J Regulation ruling. Again, in the interest of fairness, grandfather rights may have to be applied with a cut-off date at say the end of the 2020 season whereby if an owner has had his/her current dogs handled by others before this time, the owner could continue with that particular handler and that particular dog. This would stop a sudden rush of owners/handlers registering and running dogs in others' names.

The Kennel Club will have records to be able to police this item, putting the onus on the owner/handler for compliance, with strong sanctions if it is abused or broken. It could be agreed whereby all future dogs of said owners which are to be trialled who intend to use handlers have to meet the required criteria in obtaining a permit.

The rationale is that this will stop the manipulation of the system from handlers putting their dogs in another person's name so they increase their chance of being successful in the draw, to maintain fairness in the draw for all, whilst not discriminating against genuine owners.

Note: Mr Capstick's submission was originally much longer but it has been necessary for it to be reduced in length for the purposes of the agenda; however the points raised also apply to Item 5.g. on the agenda and would be covered by Mr Capel whilst presenting this item.



## ITEM 6. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

- a. English Springer Spaniel Club Mr R Proctor

Proposed amendment to Regulation J9.b.(7)

The English Springer Spaniel Club would like to propose an amendment to the above regulation as follows:

Regulation J9.b.(7)

**TO:**

(7) An owner, having deputed the handling of a dog to another, may be in the line while the dog is working, but must take no part in the working of the dog, **or be part of the day's proceedings i.e. as steward, gun, picker up, etc.**

(Insertion in bold)

Rationale

Due to a perception that a steward, gun, or picker up may potentially influence the outcome of a trial, the Club is of the view that it is not acceptable for the owner of a competing dog to undertake any of these roles.

- b. Brittany Club of Great Britain Mr R Major

and German Longhaired Pointer Club

Proposed amendment to Regulations J6c(5)(i) and J6c(5)(ii) in relation to HPR's

The Brittany Club of Great Britain wishes the Council to consider a proposal to increase the number of HPR field trial judging appointments required to qualify for the HPR Judging Panels. The proposal is seconded by the German Longhaired Pointer Club, and is made with the objective of improving the standard of judging at HPR field trials by ensuring that new judges gain greater experience, exposure and feedback before progressing.

It proposes the following amendments to the above regulations, whereby the number of stakes required for judges to become either a B Panel or subsequently an A Panel judge would be increased as follows.

Regulation J6.c.(5)(i)

**TO:**

Before a judge can be added to a panel he must have judged:

(i) B Panel: over a minimum period of 36 months, and a maximum period of 60 months immediately preceding the date of the application:

HPRs – a minimum of **4 6** stakes with at least 4 different judges.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold).

Regulation J6.c.(5)(ii)

**TO:**

Before a judge can be added to a panel he must have judged:

(ii) A Panel: over a minimum period of 36 months, and a maximum period of 60 months, subsequent to their appointment to the B Panel:

HPRs – a minimum of **6 8** stakes of which at least one must have been open. Reports must be available from at least 4 different A Panel co-judges.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold).

Rationale

It is intended that this amendment would provide additional educational opportunities for both non-Panel and B Panel judges, enabling them to gain more experience before being promoted. It is anticipated that the additional stakes will provide the judges with more diverse opportunities for observing the different HPR breeds, leading to improved standards of judging.





It is accepted that reports are made on judges by the 'A' Panel and that these should already be discussed with new judges to ensure that they receive feedback.

It is acknowledged that if this proposal is accepted some non-Panel or B Panel may never progress. For reference, last year 9 B Panels covered 14 field trials and 27 non-Panel covered 48 field trials.

## **ITEM 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

a. Mrs S Harris

HPRs competing in working tests

Mrs Harris notes that individual gundog breeds were designed using the ethos of 'form follows function' and the HPR sub group is no exception. The HPRs are highly intelligent, bored easily and are often driven hunters, and as a result a number of dogs find themselves in rescue or in need of a more experienced home. Often the best advice for the new owner is to join a gundog training club and give them what they need. A great many HPR owners that reach a level of training are encouraged to try their hand at a working test or two and this is where the problem lies. Only Kennel Club registered HPRs can enter a working test, but even though the rescue dog might clearly be a purebred HPR in looks and behaviour and can do everything its registered cousin can do, possibly even better, however it is unable to enter a Kennel Club working test.

Bearing in mind all gundogs are 'form follows function' and no working test award offers inclusion into the stud book so there is no conflict in any way with the pedigree side of purebred dogs. These days The Kennel Club is all about inclusivity and encouraging healthy active dog ownership and what better way to move forward than to allow healthy, well trained dogs with responsible owners to have their moment after months and sometimes years of training their dogs to a level whereby they can compete and be rewarded for their efforts?

Therefore it is suggested that:

- Kennel Club Regulation J(G)4.d. be amended to allow HPR Gundog societies to accept unregistered HPRs as an AV HPR and be allowed to compete in the same way as every other HPR dog  
OR
- Kennel Club Regulation J(G)4.d.be amended to allow HPR Gundog societies to accept unregistered HPRs to register on The Kennel Club Activity register and compete in working tests in the same way as every other HPR dog

b. Cambridge Field Trial Society

Mr K Byron

Unwelcome competitors

The Society requests guidance from The Kennel Club as to what action should be taken in the situation where a competitor is present at a field trial, having been previously advised by the host that they are not welcome at the ground, and where the organising club was not aware beforehand that this was the case.

c. Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria

Mrs J Hay

Reserves withdrawing within 7 days

The Club seeks the Council's views on a suggested amendment to Regulation J7.f., as follows:



Regulation J7.f.

**TO:**

After an applicant has been successful in the draw for a place in a stake, or as a reserve has accepted an offer of a run, if the run is not taken up, the applicant may become liable for the full entry fee except:-

- (1) Where the applicant has qualified out of Novice Stakes (where applicable) or
- (2) Where the dog drawn to run has qualified for the championship after entries have closed or
- (3) On production of a veterinary certificate confirming that the dog entered for the stake is unfit to compete or
- (4) On production of a medical certificate that the applicant or the applicants nominated handler is unable to compete or
- (5) Where the dog drawn to run is withdrawn more than 7 days prior to the stake.
- (6) Where the handler has accepted a run from the reserves and withdraws within 7 days to run in another trial on the same day.**

(Insertion in bold)

Rationale

Last season there were nine Retriever trials that took place over a two day period (i.e. 6 x 2 day and 3 x Novice). This caused major headaches for all of the field trial secretaries involved. Subsequently when handlers were being offered a run closer to home from another society, they were withdrawing after accepting a run from the reserve list.

- d. Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club Miss S Whyte  
Dogs registered as 'Colour not recognised'

The committee of the above Club would like the Council to discuss taking precautions about the increasing numbers of 'dilutes' (colour not recognised i.e. Silver, Champagne etc. Labradors) which may be eligible to enter field trials after registration by The Kennel Club as Labradors.

If said dog achieved an award, it would be eligible to be entered into The Kennel Club Stud Book. This could be detrimental to the breed as such a dog does not comply with the Labrador breed standard – which states only colours: Black, Yellow, Chocolate/Liver.

The Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club committee would like the Council to discuss an additional clause to the field trial conditions of entry, which could state 'Entries will only be accepted in field trials by dogs of a colour recognised by the Kennel Club'. Also that there is provision on the field trial entry form for the 'Colour of the Dog' to be stated.

- e. Yellow Labrador Club Mr G Bird  
Labradors entered in trials that are registered as 'colour not recognised'

The recent changes to the registration of Labradors by The Kennel Club that are not either black, chocolate or yellow could mean that we will see dogs of a 'colour not recognised' or their offspring running in working tests or trials. If a dog of such colour was to be awarded a place or COM, it would gain its stud book number.

The Club does not want to encourage the breeding of 'champagne' or 'silver' Labradors for example, therefore would like to propose a simple addition to the entry form/process for Retriever working tests and trials to preclude dogs registered as 'colour not recognised' from entering such events.

It suggests that a box for colour is included on the form. Anyone entering a dog for a competition stating on the form a colour not recognised would be advised that their entry is not accepted. Anyone entering a dog stating their colour as one that is recognised but on seeing the dog, a question about its true breeding arises, as the form is signed by the owner as a declaration, there would be grounds to investigate further.



- f. Spaniel Club Mrs M Cox  
Shooting at championships

The Spaniel Club requests the Council to discuss shooting at any championship. The Spaniel Club is of the view that anyone who has qualified a dog for a championship, either as a handler or owner, should abstain from shooting at that championship that season even if their dog runs with another handler.

Rationale

The Club's view is that it is not enough for a gun to change sides when their dog comes into line, as there may be a perception that a gun could have an influence on the outcome of the trial. As a safeguard to all, it is important to ensure that there is no perception of unfairness.

- g. Spaniel Club Mrs M Cox  
Selection of judges for the Cocker Spaniel Championship and [Any Variety Spaniel except Spaniel \[Cocker\] Championship](#)

The Spaniel Club wishes the Council to discuss the way in which judges for the Cocker Spaniel Championship and [Any Variety Spaniel except Spaniel \[Cocker\] Championship](#) are selected. It is of the view that the selection process should be clear and transparent.

At present, each club that has Open status for Cocker Spaniels or Any Variety Spaniel except Spaniel [Cocker] is required to submit four nominations for each of the above championships, but clubs receive no feedback from the Field Trials Committee, not even regarding the final choice.

It was previously the case that the Kennel Club would send back to the clubs the 'top' 8 for the clubs to put in order, but this practice has been stopped with no explanation. Some clubs no longer submit nominations as they do not consider it worthwhile due to a lack of transparency in the selection process.

- h. Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria Mrs J Hay  
Water Certificates

The Council's view is sought on the Club's suggestion that Regulation K2.c.(3) be amended as follows:

3) Proviso for all Retrievers

Before any Retriever is entitled to be described as a Field Trial Champion it must also have a Water and Drive Certificate. The Water Certificate may, but not necessarily, be gained at a special water test. The special water test must have been conducted before two Panel A judges, **at least one of which must be an A Panel judge**, at one of the following: the Retriever Championship, a Field Trial Stake, or at a subsequent special test. (J(A)2 refers.)

Rationale

If a B Panel judge can sign off on a game certificate and award certificates to make a dog up to a FT Champion, they should be equally qualified to sign off on a water/drive certificate.

- i. Award of an eye wipe at Retriever trials Mr P Smith

Mr Smith notes that there is considerable confusion about what constitutes an 'eye wipe', and seeks clarification from the Council. He is of the view that, given that the award of an eye wipe to a competing dog can significantly affect the final placings in a Trial, absolute clarity is necessary.

Mr Smith also points out that there is only one reference to the subject, as it applies to the retrieve of a runner, in the current J Regulations – Regulation J(A)4.(h). This states:

'If a dog is performing indifferently on a runner, it must be called up promptly. If more dogs are tried on the runner, the work of all these dogs must be assessed in relation to the order in



which they are tried. The handlers of the second and subsequent dogs down may be allowed to take their dogs towards the fall, as may the handler of the first dog if it has not had a chance to mark the game. Game picked by the second or a subsequent dog constitutes an 'eye wipe'. Dogs which have had their eyes wiped during the body of the stake, however it may have occurred, will be discarded. All eye wipes should be treated on their merits.'

Further information is also contained in the seminar script for Retriever field trial judges, as follows:

'Dogs should be called up promptly wherever they are performing indifferently, be it on a runner or on game thought to be dead.

There are different types of eye wipes, for example, game-finding eye wipes where a dog goes to an area previously worked by another dog and either finds the game or takes a line and picks a runner, and that where a dog picks game which other dogs have tried and failed to reach. While there are distinctions to be drawn between the game-finding eye wipe and those that are more dependent on handling, it is not correct to diminish the eye wipe on the basis that the dog picked game because it could be handled easily to hunt an area in which it found the game when others could not. This must be distinguished from over handling. There is also the technical eye wipe which is achieved behind a dog of no merit and is graded simply on the retrieve itself.

Except in a run-off, where a dog has its eye wiped by another dog sent by the judges, or by the judges themselves, it should be eliminated from the Trial. '

Whilst the example used is for Retrievers, the same confusion exists across all breeds that retrieve.

Mr Smith is of the view that there should be absolute clarity across all guidance.

- j. Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society Mrs H Bradley  
Searching for birds at the end of a trial

Mr A Thornton, via the above Society, wishes the Council to discuss the ever more prevalent issue of handlers at trials refusing to help look for birds at the end of a drive/trial.

Mr Thornton is of the view that this is disrespectful to gamekeepers, hosts and landowners, and is playing into the hands of anti-bloodsports protesters. It also goes against the Code of Good Shooting Practice.

Whilst it is appreciated that handlers cannot be forced to help look for game, it is felt that the matter should be addressed by the Council and also by clubs, and guidance issued.

- k. Labrador Retriever Club Mrs H Bradley  
'First Dog Down'

Members of the Committee of the Labrador Retriever Club have become increasingly concerned over how the 'first dog down' rule seems to be inconsistently applied, with some judges at a trial putting out every first dog down whilst others at the same trial did not do so, even where the circumstances appeared identical. As a result, the outcome for the competitor depended on which side he/she was on which is not considered to be fair.

Furthermore, on a number of occasions, guns have aired their concern at what they have seen as unfair judging, particularly when it has come to the 'first dog down' rule. The Club is of the view that common sense should apply, but this does not seem to be the case.



It therefore wishes to suggest that precise guidance should be provided in respect of 'first dog down' and that this should be brought to the attention of all judges and applied universally so that there is a more level playing field than there appears to be at the moment.

I. Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria  
Grandfather rights for judges

Mrs J Hay

The views of the Council are sought on the granting of grandfather rights, as set out in Regulation J6.c.(6) which states:

'Before a judge can be added to a Panel he must have attended a Kennel Club Judges' Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and have passed the examination. With effect from 2 February 2023 to remain on a judging Panel, all judges must have attended a Kennel Club Judges' Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and must have passed the examination, unless the judge has "Grandfather rights" (see note). (Note: Judges deemed to have "Grandfather rights" and who are therefore exempt from Regulation J6.c.(6) are: judges who were appointed to the 'A' Panel prior to 1 January 2010, and/or were involved in the pilot scheme for the judges training programme and/or those who are, or have been a Kennel Club Approved Presenter).'

The Club seeks clarification as to why long serving 'A' Panel judges who have not fulfilled the previously stated requirement of passing the examination have been granted 'grandfather' rights, whilst 'B' Panel judges who have not passed the examination, but attended the pilot scheme, have not. There are a number of very experienced 'B' Panel judges who have achieved success with their dogs but who are happy to remain on the 'B' Panel.

Rationale

The Club is of the view that the above regulation discriminates against those B Panel judges who attended the pilot scheme but have not been granted grandfather rights, or judges that were appointed to the B Panel prior to 1 January 2010 and wishes the Council to consider whether Regulation J6.c.(6) should be amended to include them. The Club is concerned that there is a risk of losing some very experienced B Panel judges to the discipline.

## **ITEM 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Council is invited to note that the next meeting will take place in May 2022. The exact date will be confirmed in due course.

## **ITEM 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **THIS WILL BE TAKEN AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION**

Please give at least three weeks' advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the office if research is required.



## **NOTES:**

1. The Kennel Club will reimburse standard rail fares to all representatives attending the meeting, from their addresses as recorded at The Kennel Club. Claim forms will be available at the meeting.
2. Those resident in Northern Ireland or Scotland may apply in advance for authority to substitute shuttle air travel for standard rail fare, although it is requested that tickets are booked well in advance to take advantage of any reduction in fares.
3. Please give advance notice of matters to be raised under Any Other Business. This assists the Office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Council Chairman.
4. Kennel Club Liaison Council Regulations state that The Kennel Club will bear the cost of all reasonable and externally incurred costs connected with a Council, if agreed in advance. Therefore, representatives should apply to The Kennel Club for approval of any costs they may wish to claim prior to the expense being incurred.



### **THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

**'The Kennel Club is the national body which exists to promote the general improvement, health and well-being of all dogs through responsible breeding and ownership' *This is to be achieved through:-***

- **Promoting The Kennel Club as the leading national organisation for referral and advice regarding all canine related matters.**
- **Encouraging the responsible breeding of pedigree dogs.**
- **Encourage the responsible ownership of dogs.**
- **Facilitating the breeding of healthy dogs**
- **Promoting the positive benefits of dogs in society.**
- **Promoting and regulating canine activities and competitions.**
- **Providing opportunities for education and training through Kennel Club led initiatives.**
- **Investing in canine health and welfare.**
- **Engaging with the wider dog owning audience/fraternity.**