

# The HRA's Wagon Dog Field Trial System

## **I. Purpose**

The versatile wagon has arisen during several periods of history and on several different continents, but the result has been the same each time. Whether in the individual breed's ancient or more modern histories, these dogs have been called upon by wagon bound nomads and settlers including the Roma Gypsies, the Voortrekkers, the Pioneers of North America, and others, to drive livestock, provide security to farm, family and property, and assist in securing food for the larder. The purpose of the Wagon Dog Field Trial system then is to promote and encourage the development and maintenance of certain functional characteristics of the Rhodesian Ridgeback as a versatile working Wagon Dog.

## **II. Standard of Perfection** - the central guiding principle for judges.

In almost every case, both the breed itself and the function of the breed, predates the written standard for the breed. Breed standards were/are conceived as an articulated summary of the dog's ideal construction, pursuant to that dog's physical fitness-for-purpose. However, the best judge of the pure bred dog always has been, and always will be, the work itself. The real work. Both conformation shows and field trials are exercises in artifice... but in so many cases, the real work isn't available to us, so these contrivances are the next best thing we have available to us. So as a canine judge (of any stripe) one should be judging how well that dog works under its native conditions. The working trial should judge how well that dog works "between its ears" - its instinctive and intellectual fitness-for-purpose. The conformation exhibition should judge how well that dog works where those instincts and intellect touch the ground - where bone meets bone and sinew, and sinew meets flesh. Field trial or conformation ring, it should all be about judging Fitness-for-Purpose.

The goal of the Wagon Dog Qualifier/Trial judge then should be to maintain at all times a mental picture of the theoretically perfect performance (relative to breed-specific nuance) in each work area and then score against this visualized standard. Lack of willingness or enjoyment on the part of the dog must be penalized, as must lack of precision in the dog's performance, aggression by the dog, and/or roughness in handling or commands by the handler.

## **III. Eligibility**

The HRA's Wagon Dog Trials are designed around the working style and functional breed type of the Rhodesian Ridgeback. However, the HRA welcomes and encourages entries from registered dogs of similar/related functional types from the following breeds: Black Mouth Cur, Dalmatian, and Louisiana Catahoula Leopard Dog.

## **IV. Work Areas**

Wagon Dog Trials evaluate the dogs' instincts and tractability in the following areas:

- \* Stock work – dogs must demonstrate skill in droving large livestock.
- \* Carriage work – dogs must demonstrate a willingness carriage to the traveling handler (preferably by coach/wagon) with sobriety and utility.
- \* Feathered game work – dogs must demonstrate skill in tracking, flushing and marking feathered game.

- \* Furred game work – dogs must demonstrate skill in tracking, flushing/chasing, and marking or holding furred game at bay in two different size/weight classes.
- \* Game recovery work – dogs must demonstrate skill in blood trailing downed/wounded game.

## **V. Wagon Dog Titling**

### **V-A. Junior Titling**

A dog must qualify in given work area before being allowed to trial. Junior qualifiers are based on evaluating the instincts of a green dog. Finished performances should not be expected. Junior/Qualifier suffixes in the seven work areas are as follows:

JSD – Junior Stock Dog  
 JCD – Junior Carriage Dog  
 JHB – Junior Hunter Birds  
 JHSG – Junior Hunter Small Game  
 JHLG – Junior Hunter Large Game  
 JGRD – Junior Game Recovery Dog

### **V-B. Trial Titling**

Once qualified in a given work area, a dog may trial for title legs. A dog must earn two legs to qualify for a Senior title. A dog is not eligible to compete for a Master title until it has qualified as a Senior in the same class. A dog must qualify 3 *additional* times with a score of over 75% of the available points for a Master title.

Finished performances should be expected in both Senior and Master contenders.

Wagon Dog Trial suffix titles are as follows:

#### **Senior Titles:**

SSD – Senior Stock Dog  
 SCD – Senior Carriage Dog  
 SHB – Senior Hunter Birds  
 SHSG – Senior Hunter Small Game  
 SHLG – Senior Hunter Large Game  
 SGRD – Senior Game Recovery Dog

#### **Master Titles:**

MSD – Master Stock Dog  
 MCD – Master Carriage Dog  
 MHB – Master Hunter Birds  
 MHSG – Master Hunter Small Game  
 MHLG – Master Hunter Large Game  
 MGRD – Master Game Recovery Dog

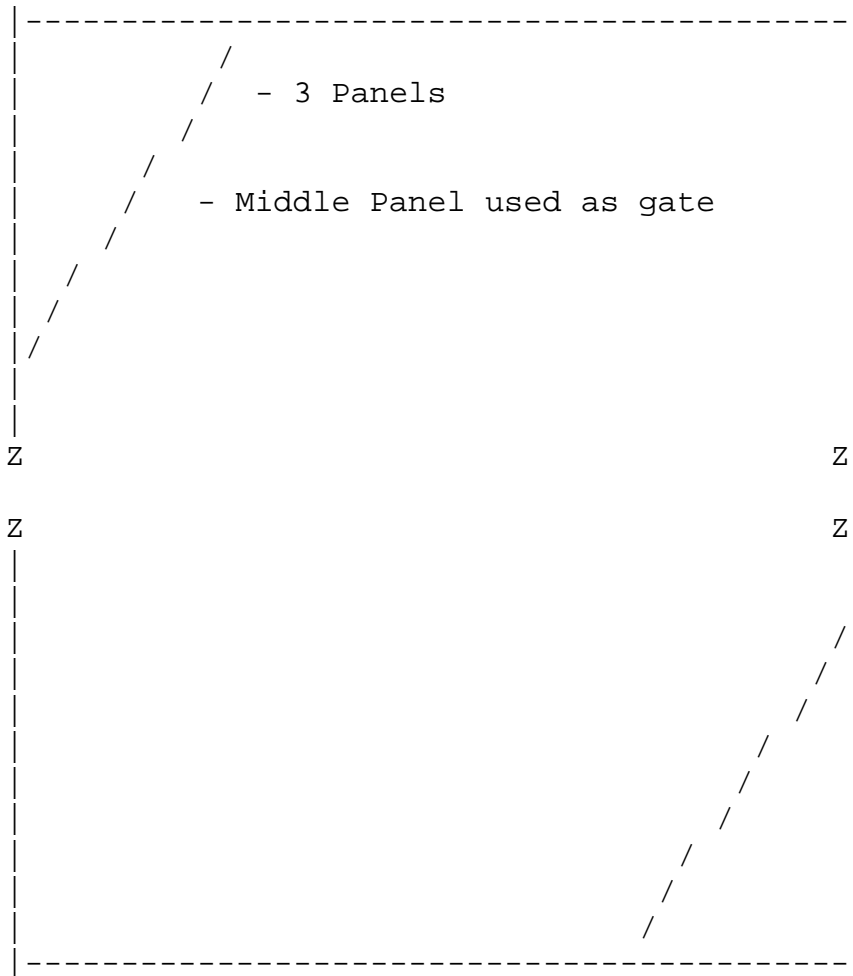
#### **Wagon Dog Trial prefix titles are as follows:**

CHWD – Champion Wagon Dog – has earned three Senior Titles only two of which may be hunting titles.  
 GrCHWD – Grand Champion Wagon Dog – has earned three Master Titles only two of which may be hunting titles.

## VI. Stock work

### VI-A Junior level Qualifier

2-3 steers (may be substituted with 4-6 large sheep, but cattle are generally preferred) in large arena or small fenced pasture with make-shift end-pens made of panel on two opposite corners. 1 dog. Handler may be on horseback or on foot. Qualifier begins with stock in an end-pen in one corner. The end-pen panels are then removed (swung back to fence line) leaving the steers exposed in the corner, the dog is then brought into the pasture/arena at which time the dog is allowed ten minutes. The dog should be encouraged to contain/control the stock so as to facilitate the handler's attempts to move the stock to the intact end-pen in the opposite (furthest) corner. 100 points possible. 20 points for interest in stock, 20 points for time with a point lost for each 30 seconds elapsed, 50 points for controlled bay and movement, 10 points for handle. Dogs receiving a score of 65 or higher will be qualified for Stock Trials.



## VI-B Stock Trial

Minimum 5-acre pasture with 5 head of cattle. One handler on horseback can enter one or two dogs to be run together. The handler does not need to be the owner of any of the dogs. Each dog will wear a different color collar for the benefit of the judge. Each run is allowed 20 minutes. The goal of the entrant(s) is not to pen the cattle with the fastest time. Rather, time is allowed to demonstrate the dog(s) working ability. Bay-up is 2-minutes, and begins any time the entrant signals the judge when his/her bay up is to begin. Center pen with a wing. Points will be given per cow depending on how many cows are penned. No gate to open or close in the center pen. End pen with a gate. The gate steward will open the gate when the handler signals for the steward to do so. However, the handler must close the end pen's gate after the cows are put in at the end of the run. The handler's goal is to show that his/her dogs can work, bunch and be in control before and during the time the cattle are being driven. The handler should be primarily moving/driving the cattle, while the dog(s) should be keeping the herd together.

### VI-B-1 Critique and Procedural Guidelines for Stock Trial Judges

The first order of business is to gather the cattle into a tighter group. If the cattle are unruly, it is important to provide sufficient time for the dogs to settle the cattle. Both gathering, and if necessary settling, cattle are accomplished by means of the bay up. The handler will initiate time by announcing the start of the bay-up, at which time the dog will be allowed to actively work the cattle.

The dog(s) will bark and circle the herd in order to accomplish this; if the herd runs, they will go to the front and stop them, perhaps even biting lead animals to pressure them to halt if needed. Any biting or gripping done in the course of proper stock work of this type is done quickly and briefly without extended hanging on so that pressure is exerted on the cattle but they are allowed to stop and/or return to the herd. The handler/stewards/riders will maintain sufficient distance so as not to put any pressure on the herd; in some cases this might mean considerable distance or even placing one's self upwind of the herd. Once the herd is bayed/settled, i.e. not moving and individual cattle have decided to remain in the herd, the bay-up will be considered concluded, and it is time to move the herd.

This is to be done quietly and carefully and the first pressure from riders that the cattle perceive will likely be on the side of the herd directly opposite from the desired direction of movement, so that if the cattle move sharply away from the riders, it will likely be in the appropriate direction (toward the pens). Also, the riders will exert only sufficient pressure to move the cattle at a walk; simultaneously, the handler may command the dogs to "lead out" or "get back" and perhaps crack a whip to break dogs' concentration and reinforce the command. The dogs will remain on the side of the herd opposite the riders, which would be the front. If the cattle attempt to escape, the riders will back off and let the dogs settle them; if the cattle move well but not wildly then the drive will proceed to the pens. The dogs will cover, moving and barking, the front quarter to half of the herd with medium to light pressure during the drive. If cattle attempt to leave the rear of the herd, riders stop and the handler sends the dogs to bring the cattle back and the settling process may need repeating. Obviously the cattle are being trained/conditioned to handle in this fashion. Often, some cows will attempt to attack the dogs at the front of the herd and as the dogs give ground, the rest of the herd follows/is driven behind the leaders and "lead dogs".

In some cases it will be appropriate for the dog(s) to be called behind the horses to begin the drive. Then, if the herd starts to run, the dogs are sent to stop them and also to bring back animals trying to leave the herd. However, the time a dog(s) spends to the rear of the herd should be kept to a minimum. The dogs should spend most of the drive on the flanks and head of the herd so as to remain in the best position to slow the herd during the drive.

When the herd gets to the pens, dogs may lead the herd into the pens (dog must then be recalled to handler on opposite side of gate) or they may be called to the back of the herd to hold the herd in place until the cattle escape into the pen. Time stops when the gate is closed separating the dog(s) from the herd.

### VI-B-2 Noteworthy Faults

The judge should have in mind a vision of how every step should occur in a cattle handling scenario as described in VI-B-1. The judge should also have in their mind a list of dog faults, some less acceptable than others. Each judge will have their own list, but some of the more noteworthy are related here for consistency in judging. A Ridgeback working stock should have plenty of stay, heart, interest, desire or whatever is required for the dog to work as long as it is physically able; quitting by a dog is not acceptable. One of the more commonly encountered faults is barking behind the herd; the ridgeback is generally considered a “head-dog” and should be at or near the front of the herd and/or looking a cow in the face when barking. While minor vocalizations to the rear are not to be faulted, related to this is the expectation that a Ridgeback go to at least the flank, and preferably the front of the leading animal in a running group before barking with strong conviction, working or attempting to stop the animal and herd. The dog is expected to understand the difference between play and working stock; herd-busting and/or cutting in to work animals behind the front runner is unacceptable. The dog is expected to understand the difference between hunting game animals and working stock; vigorous vocalization to the rear and/or predatory chasing usually indicates a dog which is “hunting” the stock and is unacceptable. Although the use of heifer/calf pairs should generally be avoided in a trial setting, it may be unavoidable in certain circumstances so special consideration must be given to calf-handling faults. Most handlers want a dog to work the cow and ignore her calf as long as it stays at her side; “calf catchers” are severely frowned upon. While a young dog may follow a runaway back to the herd and sometimes into the herd, the dog is expected to learn quickly to allow the animal to go back into the herd and then bay the herd.

### VI-B-3 Stock Trial Scoring

200 possible points are as follows:

2-minute bay up = 0-50 points

Center pen = 25 points (5 per cow)

Overall working ability = 0-120 points (each dog scored independently - includes teamwork between dog (if paired), control of cattle by dog(s), and interest in stock) (Points will be deducted from overall working ability if the judge determines the cattle are being contained by the horse and rider rather than the dog(s).)

End pen = 0 or 5 (all cows in end pen with entrant closing gate)

Dogs receiving a score of 120 or higher will earn a leg toward titling.

## **VII. Carriage work**

### **VII-A Junior level Carriage Qualifier**

The main object of this qualifier is to test the off-lead ability of the dog to remain with the handler's conveyance when required. The Junior level Carriage Qualifier shall be at a trot over a distance of 500 meters, in as straight a line as is possible, if the terrain permits. Judging is pass/fail. Judge will focus evaluation on the dog's willingness to carriage off lead and the exhibition of sound/stable temperament while doing so.

### **VII-B Carriage Trial**

The main object of this trial is to test the ability of the dog to stay with the conveyance within a utilitarian proximity and with a minimum of distraction from the task at hand. The Carriage Trial shall be at a walk with brief trots, as specified for each section of the course, over a distance of at least 5,000 meters. The course may span any number of ground/terrain types, but no more than 25% of the total course length may be on tarmac. Unlike the Junior level qualifier in which every accommodation is made to assist the dog in remaining focused (speed, direction, etc) the wagon trial is a slower course over a significantly greater distance requiring more deliberate action and focus by the dog. The overall course is paced at a walk. Twice during the course the pace will increase to a trot for 200 meters. These two gait changes will be clearly marked on the course and will not be contiguous. The course must also include at least three turns. While generally not preferred, where necessitated by the landscape, a single figure eight may be executed in lieu of the three turns. Judging will focus on the dog's ability to deal with variability in terrain and course direction and the dog's ability to maintain the requisite proximity and focus.

### **VII-C Positioning and Faults**

The dog must remain with the conveyance (flank/rear within ~30 yard radius) or must "scout" for the conveyance. Scouting is a behavior which is easy to recognize on the ground, but difficult to describe in words, though it is often referred to as "following from the front". Whether at the flank, rear or scouting, a dog which is not mindful of the location and direction of the conveyance must be severely penalized. Dogs which are not alert to their handler/conveyance and their surroundings must be severely penalized. Conversely, dogs which are hyper-active/hyper-alert/distracted or unfocused to the point of hindrance or liability on the trail must also be severely penalized.

### **VII-D Conveyance**

Acceptable conveyances include bicycles, mounts, ATVs or drawn cart/wagon. Wagons may be drawn by oxen, mule, pony, horse, or tractor, as long as said draw is capable of the prolonged walk and short trots required of the trial course. Because the judge must remain with the handler during the trial, if the conveyance is not a cart/wagon which can carry both the handler and the judge, then the judge must be provided with an ATV or mount of his/her own for the trial, with which he/she can accompany the handler.

### **VII-E Carriage Trial Scoring**

50 points for positioning.

50 points for directional/gait change awareness.

50 points for sobriety/focus.

90 points or more constitutes a leg-earning score for titling.

Disqualifications:

- Continuing to demonstrate a tendency to harass the horses, oxen, etc. even after redirection from the handler.
- Showing debilitating fear of horses, oxen, or mechanized conveyances.
- Going off course and refusing to recall.

## VIII. Feathered Game Work

### VIII-A Junior level Game Bird Qualifier

For this qualifier the lowest possible score for a non-DQ'd run is 58 points, the highest possible score is 110 points.

Above all else, when judging a Ridgeback on game birds, remember the overriding goal is to have a dog that uses its nose to get the hunter on birds within practical shooting distance – everything else comes second. Answer this question... **Does the dog use its nose to wind birds in such a way that the hunter can harvest them?**

### Orientation

The judge should orient the dog to feathers and birds before beginning the official qualifier run. The judge should use their own discretion in the ultimate means and methodology of this orientation. No two orientations will be exactly the same as the judge should attempt to remain sensitive to the needs of each individual dog. The following is offered as a suggested general guideline only:

Offering the dog a wing or winged bumper.

Encourage dog to hold. Drag and toss to increase interest.

Place bird bag on ground to increase interest.

Remove one harnessed or 'socked' bird from the bag allow dog to inspect the bird in your hand.

Place bird on the ground to increase interest.

Place a free-bird in front of the dog – Do NOT allow: the bird to flap in the dogs face; the dog get on top of the bird; the dog catch the bird!!!

Allow bird to flush. – Repeat as needed until dog runs to the end of the check cord.

Begin introductory track by dragging or tossing harnessed bird in the grass, in plain sight of the dog - encourage dog to follow it up.

Repeat if needed - introductory tracks may be as short as a few feet, but make them longer each time if repeated.

Determine shot-readiness. The judge should note which dogs she deems as shot-ready, and which she does not so that the qualifier can be performed accordingly for the individual dog.

The dog that has now shown an acceptable interest in birds, and has been determined to be shot-ready/not-ready, can now begin the qualifier.

**Junior Level Bird Qualifier Scoring Sheet: Compulsory Characteristics (0-10 points each)** 110 total points possible. A minimum of 58 points is needed to qualify for a leg towards a title. A dog scoring zero in any category must fail.

**Track**

Field Requirements: A single scored track aged 2 to 4 minutes; at least 10 meters in length, with at least one turn (real or artificial) will be laid oriented so that the dog is working upwind or crosswind, leading to a socked/harnessed live bird.

**Scoring: Max - 50, Min Qualifying Score – 26**

Dog must locate and acknowledge track.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Dog must maintain an interest in the track

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Dog must track through dominant bird cover without refusal.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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**Dog should ideally work both air scent and ground scent**

Ground Scents

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Air Scents

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Scoring considerations:

The single 10-meter long track will constitute the bulk of the scoring decisions the Judge will base her Track scores on. However, throughout the Qualifier, the dog decidedly will be tracking each individual bird. If the dog’s tracking impulse increases as it is exposed to subsequent birds, this should have an overall additive effect on the dog’s Track score. Dog may exclusively wind-scent without penalty, point on track without penalty, drift track without penalty, may (and should) quarter track without penalty.

## Flush

Field Requirements: Two birds must be placed in the field upwind or crosswind. Birds may be launched (with great sensitivity to individual temperaments), head-tucked, or placed in kick-cages. However, there must be one 'free-bird' dizzied and then placed, free to run and spontaneously flush. The placement location of each of the birds must be marked in such a way as to be obvious to the Judge and Handler, but likely to go unnoticed by the dog.

**Scoring: Maximum available Points - 40, Min Qualifying Score – 21**

Dog indicates presence of game – becomes “birdy”

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Dog Points: flash point to steady point

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Dog appropriately pressures the bird & flushes within shooting range (or holds bird for handler flush)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Dog should be steady to flush/wing

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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### Scoring considerations:

Dog may drift and/or flank course without penalty

## Mark

### Field Requirements

Many dogs will not be shot ready. If a dog is deemed not shot ready by the judge, the gunner should stand well away from the dog and handler and fire a blank pistol on flush. For dogs that are not shot ready a dead bird will be thrown in the direction of the flush by the Steward or Judge immediately after the blank shot. For shot ready dogs, dead birds will also be used in the event that the Gunner misses.

### Scoring

**Max - 20 Min Qualifying Score - 11**

Dog must demonstrate willingness to follow-up downed game

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Dog should mark downed game: Sliding Scale- Find & return 5 pts, Stand over 6-7 Pts, Short Retrieve 8-9 pts, Retrieve to hand 10 pts.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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### Scoring considerations:

Follow-up scoring should be an overall composite of the dog's behavior on both birds; dogs should be only *slightly* penalized for claiming a bird. Dogs should be penalized for consuming a bird.

Judges Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## VIII-B Game Bird Trial

A minimum of a five acre field with suitable game bird cover is needed for a trial. Cover should range between light and heavy if possible. It is suggested that Chukar Partridge or Pheasant be used in preference to quail whenever financially feasible. Prior to running the first dog five game birds should be planted or released in the field. Three additional birds should be released/planted for each additional dog or brace run. Dogs may be run singly or in pairs. When run in pairs, dogs should be collared or blanketed in different bright colors to be easily distinguishable by the judge. Dogs have 15 minutes to find and work birds. A designated gunner will shoot flushed birds for the dogs. Great care must be taken to assure the gunner only shoots when offered a clean shot that does not endanger handlers, judge gallery (if any) or the dogs. A handler may choose to shoot for his/her own dog. If the dog has worked birds but circumstances offer no downed bird, a blank may be fired and a dead bird thrown for an opportunity to mark and retrieve. At the judge's discretion a dog may be picked up when the judge has seen enough to mark the dog. Dogs may also be picked up for gunshyness. ***Under no circumstances will an overtly gunshy dog pass.***

Scoring sheet:

**Compulsory Characteristics (0-10 points each)**

230 total pts possible. 150 pts, (incl. no more than 20 bonus pts) needed to qualify brace towards a title.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Handles well, including sufficient general recall
- \_\_\_\_\_ Handles well, including sufficient general casting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates awareness of handler in the field
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quarters field
- \_\_\_\_\_ Works at appropriate range
- \_\_\_\_\_ Works cooperatively with hunter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates continuous drive/desire to work/hunt
- \_\_\_\_\_ Willingly explores dominant cover
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates physical agility
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses eyes and ears to best advantage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ground Scents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Air Scents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indicates interest in game
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indicates presence of game – becomes “birdy”
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flash Points scent trail or bird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Actively flushes when not pointing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Marks game (stand over, recall/return, etc)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Steady to wing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soft Mouthed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Might acknowledge shot, but not gun-shy

**Non-compulsory Characteristics ('bonus' points, 0-10 points each)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hard Points Bird
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honors Hunter to flush
- \_\_\_\_\_ Retrieves To Hand

Judges Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## **IX Furred Game Work**

### **IX- A Junior Level Small Game Qualifier**

#### **Requirements:**

#### **Equipment:**

Lure coursing setup: machine, batteries, generator, line, pulleys

2 bumpers covered with rabbit pelts

Rabbit Scent

1 live rabbit per entered dog *plus* 4 live rabbits per orientation group

Blind to hide lure operator

.410 Shot gun or blank pistol

Shells or blanks, with a minimum of 1 round per dog & 3 rounds per orientation group

Quick release lead

#### **People:**

Lure operator & bumper tosser,

Line Marshal,

Gunner,

Judge

#### **Field:**

Orientation and qualifier runs will need two separate areas – one for orientation & flush evaluation and one for the track chase & mark phase.

#### **Field Requirements, Orientation & Flush:**

Course should be located in or near dominant rabbit cover, upwind or crosswind., Gunner must be able to see rabbit releases during orientation, to coordinate shots. Whenever possible live rabbit release area should be out of sight of the track, chase & mark area to avoid distraction by live game. Live rabbits should be encouraged to run AWAY from the track & mark location to avoid distraction from the drag scent trail.

#### **Field Requirements, Track, Chase & Mark:**

A single track aged 2-4 minutes and at least 10 meters in length, with at least one turn (real or artificial) will be laid in appropriate rabbit cover oriented so that the dog is working upwind or crosswind, leading to a scented lure. The lure will make a short run from the end of the scent track into a blind concealing the lure operator. As the lure (bumper) disappears into the blind a second bumper will be tossed perpendicular to the line and a shot will be fired by a gunner no closer than 50 feet from the blind.

#### **Orientation**

Wherever possible dogs should be divided into mixed sex groups, preferably two bitches and one dog.

Bitches in season may be oriented and run at the discretion of the judge, but always *after* all males have completed their run.

All dogs will be muzzled & placed on lead. If the handler does not believe they will be able to sufficiently restrain the dog, a secure tie out will also be offered.

The gunner will be placed 100 feet from the line.

A single rabbit will be introduced to the dogs and released in such a manner as to incite the dogs to chase. No shot will be fired on the first release.

The judge will call on the handlers to control their dogs & the rabbit will be retrieved if possible or allowed to run off the course into cover.

A second rabbit will be released and the gunner will fire at 100 feet. Two more rabbits will be released with the gunner firing at 75 and 50 feet.

Once the 50 foot mark has been reached, the judge will make their recommendations as to which dogs have sufficient game focus and gun tolerance to make a qualifier run. **The judge has sole discretion as to which dogs may move on to the qualifier run. The judge may remove any dog at any time from orientations**

**or qualifier runs.** If the handler wants to pull a dog contrary to the judge's recommendation that is their prerogative.

## **Qualifier Run**

Dogs will be brought back individually for the Qualifier runs.

### **Flush**

The dog will start the qualifier on leash and muzzled. One live rabbit will be placed in the open or in light cover and the muzzled dog will be encouraged to flush and chase the rabbit. Enthusiasm for flushing & chasing should be rewarded!

### **Track**

The muzzle will be removed and the dog will proceed on lead to the track.

#### **Scoring considerations:**

The single 10-meter long track will constitute the bulk of the scoring decisions the Judge will base the Track scores on. However, throughout the Qualifier, the dog will be tracking the rabbit proxies. If the dog's tracking impulse increases as it is exposed to subsequent proxies, this should have an overall additive effect on the dog's track score. Dogs may exclusively wind-scent without penalty, point on track without penalty, drift track without penalty, may (and should) quarter track without penalty.

### **Chase**

#### **Field Requirements:**

The Lure must be placed in the dominant rabbit cover, upwind or crosswind. The placement location of the lure must be marked in such a way as to be obvious to the Judge and Handler, but likely to go unnoticed by the dog. The course should be short, and if possible should simulate the natural "circling back" behaviour of a rabbit. If this is not possible a straight line course is acceptable.

#### **Scoring considerations:**

The dog may drift and/or flank the course without penalty.

## **Mark**

### **Field Requirements:**

At the end of the course the lure operator should stop the lure as it enters the ground blind. From within the blind the lure operator or steward in the blind should launch the rabbit pelted bumper across the ground and the gunner should fire upon launch. The gunner should be no closer than 50 feet from the dog/blind.

### **Scoring considerations:**

The dog must demonstrate willingness to follow-up downed game.

The dog should mark downed game.

The dog may mark by:

Finding the bumper & returning to the handler.

Standing over the bumper = Short Mark

Standing over the bumper until the handler reaches it = Long Mark

Picking up the bumper and coming toward the handler = Short Retrieve

Picking up the bumper & retrieving to the handler = Retrieve to Hand

The dog should only be *very* slightly penalized for claiming the bumper, or slightly penalized for attempting to consume the bumper.

At all times it should be kept in mind by the Judge that a qualifier is designed to test the ***potential hunting ability of a green dog***. While a finished performance is not required, any indication of gun-shyness, unwillingness to acknowledge game or avoid contact should constitute grounds for failure to qualify. Handler error should **not** eliminate an otherwise qualified dog. However, as our ideal is a dog that would be a pleasure to hunt with, an unruly, unmanageable dog that refuses to respond to its handler should not qualify. A dog that fails **any** of the 4 individual scoring categories should not qualify, regardless of high scores in other categories.

## Junior Level Small Game Qualifier Scoring Sheet

Dog: \_\_\_\_\_ Handler: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Flush:

#### Locate & Flush

The dog should find the rabbit and apply appropriate pressure to the rabbit to cause it to flush from cover. Persistence and enthusiasm should be rewarded with higher scores.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
									0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

#### Pursue & present opportunity for a shot

The dog should pursue the flushed rabbit in such a way as to present a hunter with the opportunity to shoot. Higher marks are to be given to dogs presenting more opportunity for shot.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
				0					0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

### Point

Pointing is not likely to occur during the qualifier run, but can and will happen during orientation. Pointing behaviours at any time during the process should be rewarded. A flash point shall receive the lowest consideration, a hard point the highest. The distinction between the two is duration of the point, a flash point being a momentary freeze, a hard point a more prolonged pause. A stop caused by hitting the end of the leash is not to be considered a point.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
									0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

### Track:

Enthusiasm on the part of the dog should be rewarded with higher marks throughout – as this portion is on lead, allowances should be made for handler error.

The dog must locate and acknowledge the track

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
							0		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

The dog must maintain an interest in the track

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
									0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

The dog must track through dominant cover without hesitation or refusal

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
					0				0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

The dog should ideally work both air and ground scent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
				0					0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

**Chase:**

On “flush” the dog should pursue the lure/bumper without breaking off the chase

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>8</b>	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
									0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

**Mark:**

The dog must demonstrate willingness to follow-up downed game

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>8</b>	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
									0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

The dog should mark downed game: Find & return 1-2 points, Short mark 3-4 points, Long mark 5-7 points, Short retrieve 8-11 points, Retrieve to hand 12-20 points

1	<b>2</b>	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
									0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0

Minimum passing scores are indicated by bold boxes.

Flush: Minimum passing score 15

Track: Minimum passing score 29

Chase: Minimum passing score 8

Mark: Minimum passing score 10

Overall minimum passing score is 62 points

Highest possible score is 200

## IX-B Small Game Trial

### IX-B-1 Eastern Trial

Five rabbits (preferably wild trapped in season) will be released in even distribution on a suitable property. Suitable properties will have at least 5 acres and abundant internal edge cover including briar, thicket, blow downs, felled evergreens, and/or small brush piles. Dogs in eastern trials are to be run singly. Dog will begin their run on the most down wind corner, and will have 20 minutes to produce as many shot opportunities as possible. Catches are permitted, but a dog that claims or consumes the rabbit is to be severely penalized. The dog is expected to follow-up and mark downed rabbits.

### IX-B-2 Western Trial

Braces of up to four dogs may be run in western trials. For the benefit of the judge, each dog must be blanketed in a different color. The brace will be run so as to jump as many hares as possible in 20 minutes. Care must be taken by the judge (especially if they have a lure coursing background) to remember that Western trials are not a pretext for watching dogs exercise their legs – the goal is to evaluate the utility of the dog(s) as hunting companions... the goal is to secure meat. The gunner must be especially alert and adaptable. The gunner must make a sober but diligent effort to remain down/cross course of the dogs. The gunner must have the utmost locational awareness and muzzle control, and be extremely patient... shooting ONLY when the hare has sufficient lead from the pack to allow for safe shooting. Although they certainly can be fast, wagon dogs lack the unadulterated raw speed of the purpose bred coursers, so catches in a western trial will be extremely rare, but catches are none-the-less permitted and encouraged, but a dog that claims or consumes the hare is to be severely penalized. The dogs are expected to follow-up and mark downed hares.

### IX-B-3 Compliance

In many states/contexts Eastern trials constitute a form of real hunting, and will also often require real trapping, though trials held on preserves will typically have fewer (if any) compliance requirements. Any trapping/release of eastern rabbits will be done in compliance with the trapping laws of the state in which the trial is held. All trapping licensure requirements (if any) are to be met, and the trial gunner is required to have secured all small game hunting licensure (if any) required in the trial state. A western trial is also a form of real hunting. Some western states also require that the individual non-gunning dog handlers also secure small game hunting licensure to run dogs on hare, in addition to the gunner(s), these requirements (where they exist) must be met also.

IX-B-4 Small Game Trial Scoring Sheet

**Compulsory Characteristics (0-10 points each)**

230 total pts possible. 150 pts, (incl. no more than 20 bonus pts) needed to qualify brace towards a title.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Handles well, including sufficient general recall
- \_\_\_\_\_ Handles well, including sufficient general casting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates awareness of handler in the field
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quarters field
- \_\_\_\_\_ Works at appropriate range
- \_\_\_\_\_ Works cooperatively with hunter and/or brace
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates continuous drive/desire to work/hunt
- \_\_\_\_\_ Willingly explores dominant cover
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrates physical agility
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses eyes and ears to best advantage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ground Scents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Air Scents
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indicates interest in game
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indicates presence of game if scent flushing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flash Points scent trail or game
- \_\_\_\_\_ Actively flushes when not pointing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Marks game (stand over, recall/return, etc)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Steady to shot
- \_\_\_\_\_ Soft Mouthed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Might acknowledge shot, but not gun-shy

**Non-compulsory Characteristics ('bonus' points, 0-10 points each)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hard Points Game
- \_\_\_\_\_ Honors Hunter to flush on point
- \_\_\_\_\_ Retrieves To Hand

Judges Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## IX-C Junior Level Large Game Qualifier

All track/chase runs are consecutive. 100 meter track with one turn using an approved scent. Track terminates at scented animal-hide lure. At end of track shot is fired and lure “runs” 200 meter course with at least 2 turns. All track/chase runs will be consecutive, After completion of which, the bay portion will begin and all bay runs will be consecutive. Stock must be wild-trapped in the last 30 days. Bay pen must be at least 1,600 square foot, larger preferred. All cutters must be dubbed.

IX-C-1 Compliance: A-bay format will be followed when possible, B-bay format will be followed when required by state law.

### IX-C-2 Scoring

The minimum qualifying score for a Large Game qualifier is defined as the median possible score, less 10% of the range of possible scores.

For this qualifier the lowest possible score for a non-DQ'd run is 70 points, the highest possible score is 220 points. The range is 150 points. The median score is 145 points. 10% of the range is 15 points. So, applying the formula, the minimum qualifying score (also AOP score) is 130 points.

Above all else, when judging a Ridgeback on large game, remember the overriding goal is to have a dog that uses its nose to locate a hot track, pursuing and then holding at bay, getting the hunter on game within practical shooting distance. Answer this question... **Does the dog use its nose to track, its speed and agility to pursue and corner, and ultimately its reserved, but harrying, presence in such a way that the hunter can reasonably harvest the game?**

## Track

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### Field Requirements

A single scored track aged 5 to 25 minutes; 100 meters or more in length, at least one third of which must pass through standing timber, with at least one turn in the clear, and a minimum of two turns in the timber, will be laid oriented so that the dog is working upwind or crosswind, leading to a boar scented pelt-lure.

### Scoring

**Min/Max - 25 / 70**, Range 45, Median Score 47.5, 10% of range 4.5, **Min Qualifying Score – 43**

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must locate and acknowledge track. 10 - 20 points.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must maintain an interest in the track 5 - 30 points.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must cross timberline without refusal.

Curve scored - Blindly 5 pts ---> Acknowledges/Checks and proceeds 10 pts <--- Overly Cautious 5 pts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog should point on track and/or especially on game. 5 - 10 points.

### Scoring considerations:

Dog may drift track without penalty

Dog may quarter track without penalty

Dog may exclusively wind-scent without penalty, point on track without penalty, drift track without penalty, may (and should) quarter track without penalty.

Scoring parameters are specifically designed for green dogs. An experienced hunting dog may cross the timberline without hesitation, and receive full points.

## Chase

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### Field Requirements

Course must be at least 200 meters in length., at least 150 meters of which must pass through standing timber, with minimum of two turns in the timber, with the dog oriented upwind when ever possible. As dog approaches end of track, shot is fired and lure is put in motion.

### Scoring

**Min/Max - 10 / 40**, Range 30, Median Score 25, 10% of range 3, **Min Qualifying Score – 22**

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must maintain consistent interest in the course 5 - 30 points.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must cross timberline without refusal. 5 - 10 points

### Scoring considerations:

Dog may drift course without penalty

Dog may flank course without penalty

## Bay

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### Field Requirements

Bay pen must be at least 1,600 square foot, larger preferred. All cutters must be dubbed.

### Scoring

Min/Max - 35 / 110, Min Qual. score – 65

**Min/Max - 35 / 110**, Range 75, Median Score 72.5, 10% of range 7.5, **Min Qualifying Score – 65**

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must demonstrate either agile or vocal bay within 8 minutes. 5 - 20 points.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must demonstrate vocal bay within 12 minutes.

Sliding Scale Scored - Barking 5 pts, Intense Barking 7 Pts, Intense Persistent Barking 10 points, Chop Mouthed 15 points, Bawl Mouthed 20 points.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog must bay at appropriate average working distance.

Curve scored - 3+ feet 10 pts ---> 2-3 feet 20 pts <--- 1-2 feet 15 pts. <--- 6-12 inches 5 pts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog should progress into "settled bay". 10-30 points

\_\_\_\_\_ Dog should recall from bay. 10-20 points

### Scoring considerations:

Time begins when dog looks directly at game from 3 feet or less; or the last time the dog points on game from 3 feet or less.

In the event of any uncertainty, preference is always given to the last point for beginning the clock

Dog is automatically and immediately disqualified for *intentionally* making any contact lasting more than 3 seconds.

Agile bay should include darting, shucking, side stepping, circling, etc.

Settled bay should leave the Judge with the impression the dog has become relaxed, and that the bay would go on indefinitely.

## IX- D Large Game Trial

Total track length, 500 meters. Using an approved scent: straight-line downwind track for 100 meters, 90 degree turn into a quarter circle track for 400 meters (254 meter radius) beginning directly cross wind, and ending directly downwind of release box. Shot fired and release box activated when dog becomes sighted. If dog does not bring hog to bay within 3 minutes of release, 2 additional experienced and proven bay dogs may be slipped to assist. If boar is brought to bay, handler will choose between shooting bayed or the safety recall option, by calling "bayed" or "recall". If "bayed" is called, gunner will take hog over dog. If "recall" is called the handler(s) will recall the dog(s) and the gunner will wait until there is at least a ten foot margin between the boar and the nearest dog . While the recall option may appear attractive to the uninitiated, careful consideration should be given to using it unless the handler is highly confident in the reliability of the dog's recall in the presence of game. If the handler calls "recall" to the judge and then issues a recall command/whistle/signal to the dog, and the dog then fails to recall, the dog's scoring is to be severely penalized. Catching the hog at bay is a disqualification, but piling-on/catching the hog after the shot is permitted, at which point the judge should carefully scrutinize the degree of intelligence (vs recklessness) demonstrated in the dog's positioning/technique.

Compliance: Meat waste is not permitted. Offal may be left-lay or relocated for natural scavenging, but provision must be made for conscientious use and/or donation of loins and hams at minimum. Trial will be held on high-fence preserve, state licensed hound running area, or other similar type property with continuous hog-proof fencing anywhere state game law precludes wild release.

### IX- D Large Game Trial Scoring

50 points for track.

50 points for chase.

50 points for bay.

90 points or more constitutes a leg-earning score for titling.

Disqualifications:

- Refusal to engage game.
- Catching game for more than 3 seconds at any time before the shot.

## X Game Recovery Tracking Work (Blood Trailing)

### X- A Game Recovery Tracking Junior Qualifier

<b>PURPOSE</b>	Aptitude assessment.
<b>TYPE</b>	Drag trail.
<b>LENGTH</b>	About 150 yards.
<b>AGE</b>	At least ½ hour.
<b>OBSTACLES</b>	One turn.
<b>SCORING</b>	Pass / Fail
<b>JUDGE OR EVALUATOR</b>	One.
<b>PREPARATION AND EXECUTION</b>	A deer part is dragged along the course of the track. The handler will be shown the start and direction of the track.
<b>EVALUATION</b>	The dog is expected to generally follow the track and indicate the deer part at the end. A pass requires that the tracking team shows promise and that the dog shows a general interest in following the track.

### X- B Game Recovery Tracking Trial – Leg 1

<b>PURPOSE</b>	The first GRTC Trial leg one, demonstrates the basic skills necessary to track wounded game by assessing the ability of the handler/dog team to follow an artificial blood trail.
<b>TYPE</b>	Intermittent blood trail applied by any method, which may include tracking shoes.
<b>LENGTH</b>	1/4 mile (about 400 yards).
<b>AGE</b>	At least 2 hours.
<b>OBSTACLES</b>	Two turns and one wound bed.
<b>SCORING</b>	Pass / Fail
<b>JUDGE OR EVALUATOR</b>	One. HRA-approved judges must conduct the evaluations.
<b>PREPARATION AND EXECUTION</b>	Approximately 8 ounces of blood without the use of tracking shoes, or 3 ounces of blood with the use of tracking shoes, will be used over the course of the track. The handler will be shown the start and direction of the track.
<b>EVALUATION</b>	The dog is expected to positively follow the track and indicate the deer part at the end. A pass requires that the tracking team show sufficient skill to find wounded game.

X- C Game Recovery Tracking Trial – Leg 2

<b>PURPOSE</b>	The first GRTC Trial leg two, demonstrates more advanced skills necessary to track wounded game by assessing the ability of the handler/dog team to follow an artificial blood trail under more demanding conditions.
<b>TYPE</b>	Intermittent blood trail applied by any method, which may include tracking shoes.
<b>LENGTH</b>	1/2 mile (800-900 yards).
<b>AGE</b>	Overnight or not less than 8 hours.
<b>OBSTACLES</b>	Three turns. Two wound beds.
<b>SCORING</b>	Pass / Fail
<b>PREREQUISITE</b>	Successful completion of the UBT-II with an evaluator may be required prior to assessment by a judge, at the judge's discretion.
<b>JUDGE OR EVALUATOR</b>	One. HRA-approved judges must conduct the evaluations.
<b>PREPARATION AND EXECUTION</b>	Approximately 8 ounces of blood without the use of tracking shoes, or 3 ounces of blood with the use of tracking shoes, will be used over the course of the track. The handler will be shown the start and direction of the track.
<b>EVALUATION</b>	The dog is expected to positively follow the track and indicate the deer part at the end. Consideration is given to the willingness to track (interest), manner of work, accuracy, forward progress and ultimate achievement. The handler is expected to provide physical and verbal assistance to the dog, if and when necessary, and in such a manner that the search is undertaken as a team effort.

## XI Affidavit of Performance (AOP)

Owners of proven working dogs may submit AOPs to the association for judge review. A review panel consisting of 3 judges will be called to review the affidavit. None of the panel judges may have any form of ownership interest in the dog under review. The judges will determine if the Affidavit supports titling, and if so, whether it rises to the level of Qualification, Single Leg Trial Completion, or Trial titling.

AOP form:

### Affidavit Of Performance

#### Vital Info:

Circle One →	Dog / Bitch
Registration Number	
Registered Name (no titles)	
Prefix Titles	
Suffix Titles	
Date of Whelp	

#### Applying For (check only one per affidavit):

	Game Recovery Tracking	Junior Qual. / Trial				
	Game Class Trial	Specify Game Class:	Bird	Small	Large	
	Game Class Junior Qual.	Specify Game Class:	Bird	Small	Large	
	Carriage Work	Junior Qual. / Trial				
	Stock Work	Junior Qual. / Trial				

- For Game Recovery Tracking, please describe a specific example of the dog's Game Recovery Tracking skills. Please cite as many descriptive and factual details as possible, including date and location.
- For Game Class Qualification, please describe a specific example of the dog assisting a human hunter in harvesting game of the specified class. Please cite as many descriptive and factual details as possible, including date and location.
- For Game Class Titling, please describe a typical hunt over the dog for the specified game class.

In all cases provide as much detail as possible. Include any and all supporting documentation, including but not limited to: Witness statements, Photographs, Video. Please use additional pages if necessary. Mail to:

HRA, Corey Burgess, PO Box 757

Havre De Grace MD 21078 - with all supporting documentation.

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