

# NSTRA

Scoring is 0-100 & 0-75

Dogs are judged on:

The find	obedience	the retrieve	the back	Ground coverage
	(0-100)		(0-75)	

The Find (scored 0-100)

## PLUS FACTORS:

Exceptional style remains steady regardless of interference, extreme intensity, hard slam point, remains high and intent during long difficult flush attempt, good game location and works scent intelligently.

## MINUS FACTORS:

Flagging, lack of intensity, creeping, low tail, down in front and lying down.

We are looking for a dog who works the scent intelligently, aggressively, but carefully. Who points the bird with style and intensity without endangering the flush.

There are two parts to a find, scent contact and the point.

## Scent Contact

You want to see a dog work the scent in an intelligent manner and point at a reasonable distance from the bird. Reasonable distance will depend on the scenting conditions at the time. We want to see a dog give a handler good location on the bird so the handler is not searching too large an area. Roading up on a bird is when the dog advances past the point where you feel he should stop so as not to endanger the flush.

## The Point

Style on point is very important. High head, high tail and high intensity are the basis for a stylish point. High head is a head above the level of the back. A high tail is between 10:00 and 2:00. High intensity is a dog totally focused on the work at hand and not being distracted by his surroundings.

Creeping, Walking and Steps: Creeping is defined as advancement with the intent to flush the bird or get closer after point has been established, with no reason. Creeping happens after the bird has been pointed and the dog is greedy and unbroken. he wants to flush the bird for himself. Steps can happen if the dog is off balance or a bird has run off and he relocated himself slightly. Both these are downgrades but creeping is penalized more heavily.

Lying down: Lying down should be down scored severely as well as sitting down. If a dog hits point so hard it falls and points on its belly and stays there, that should not be scored down.

Head movement: Continual looking around shows a lack of intensity and should be down scored severely. Turning the head slowly to see the handler coming and then back to the bird, with all other intensity good, should be a slight downgrade.

Lack of intensity: Dog is not focused; looking around and loose shows a lack of intensity and should be downgraded severely.

Steadiness or intensity: No movement always deserves the highest score.

Flush anticipation: The dog may crouch in anticipation of the point. The dog should be cut slightly if he crouches in anticipation when the handler goes to flush the bird.

### The Flush

The flush must be accomplished by the handler using his foot or his presence to cause the bird to leave its resting place. At times the bird may flush on its own. No objects may be used to cause the bird to flush i.e. using a gun barrel, throwing an object. When the bird flushes the dog must not be in motion. Under certain circumstances the judge may request the handler throw the bird. The bird must be alive when the handler throws it. The judge may check to see if the bird is alive. If the bird is walking around when the dog points, it is not considered a flush until there is a change of direction or the bird flies.

### Scenarios & What If's

1. Dog A is hunting in front of dog B. Dog A slams to a point ahead of Dog B. Both dogs are on point and Dog B did not have an opportunity to back (so there will be no backing score). Handler of Dog A attempts to flush unseen bird. Judge has told handler of Dog B to hold his dog. Dog A handler continues to attempt to flush unsuccessfully. Handler A tells judge he wishes to relocate, which he does. Dog A runs around in general area and points. (All this time, handler of Dog B is holding his dog.) Handler A is still unable to produce the bird. Handler A asks to relocate again, which he does. (This could - but should not - go on the entire brace.)

### Three possibilities here:

A. The handler of Dog B holds their Dog for up to 3 minutes. The handler of Dog A is asked to relocate after 2 minutes unless the dog was relocated before 2 minutes were up. After one additional minute, if Dog A is still on point, give handler B the option to leave the area or continue to hold his dog.

B. If Dog A relocates on his own at any time and/or Dog A is moving when the time on Dog B is up, turn Dog B loose: open bird for either dog.

C. If Handler B leads Dog B off 50 yards or a reasonable distance, releases him and Dog B immediately returns to situation and:

1. Dog A is relocating and Dog B goes on point, the find belongs to dog B.

2. Dog A is on point and Dog B backs score Dog B for back.

2. The dog is lying down on point, the handler picks dog up and styles up the dog. The point should be scored but very low. The handler should be advised not to do it again because next time, the find will not be scored and he will be required to remove the bird for no score.

3. Dog A makes scent contact and is working a bird when Dog B comes into the area and begins working the same bird and steadies up on point before Dog A. A few seconds later Dog A establishes point. The handler of Dog A says that his dog made scent contact first therefore the find belongs to them. The handler of Dog B says his dog established point first therefore the find should be scored in their favor. Who's find is it?

A. The find belongs to Dog B because it established point first. It is true that the scoring of a find begins with scent contact, but there are two parts to a find, which are scent contact and the point. A dog that completes both parts is scored after the bird is produced.

4. Dogs A and B are working the same scent and Dog A establishes point just ahead of Dog B. After three seconds Dog A breaks point and leaves the area. The handlers have not yet arrived in the area and no flush has occurred. Who's find is it?

A .A dog may not relocate on its own. Dog B remained on point and is therefore credited with the find.

B. A dog that takes steps should not be confused with one that has relocated. A relocation is when a dog breaks point and goes into hunting mode.

5. Dog A points. Dog B sees him, comes into the area and moves ahead of him and points. Dog A leaves the find (breaks point). Who's find is it?

A .Neither dog receives credit for the find. Take the bird out and credit no find. Dog B will also receive zero on a back. Dog B should receive a warning for interference and the handler advised that the dog will be picked up if it interferes one more time. If the interference is the second for Dog B the brace should be stopped, Dog B picked up and replaced by a standby dog.

### **The Retrieve (scored 0-100)**

PLUS FACTORS: Quick location, quick pickup, blind retrieve, snappy return, easy release, water retrieve, length of retrieve, tender mouth, interference.

MINUS FACTORS: Trouble locating bird, slow pickup, hard mouth, indirect return, unwilling release, unwilling to search for dead bird, rolling bird in mouth, loose mouth, and drops bird.

We are looking for a dog that marks the bird well, aggressively runs to pick up the bird, picks it up quickly with a tender mouth and returns to the handler quickly and directly with a willing release. The handler has to stay in place once he has shot the bird or shot at the bird and the dog has gone to retrieve it. The handler may move only one of his feet, the other must stay planted. The dog must retrieve within three feet of the handler. If the handler moves more than one foot he forfeits the retrieve. The handler may request to step out of heavy cover, once given permission by the judge the handler may step sideways or backwards but not forwards. The dog that locates the downed bird quickly, picks it up quickly, returns to the handler quickly and with style then releases the bird to hand deserves the highest score.

### **Retrieve - Average, Slash or Score?**

If at the time of flushing the bird a "safety" is called the dog will be given an average of his other retrieves as a score for that retrieve. If a safety is called and the dog goes to retrieve the bird and brings it back, that retrieve will be scored. A bird that moves only a few inches on the flush should be thrown for a scored retrieve. If at the end of a brace a dog doesn't have any scored retrieves to average, a bird can be thrown for a scored retrieve.

If the dog has no opportunity to retrieve the bird (the handler misses the bird, the dog could not see the bird drop, the bird is not dead when dog goes to retrieve or some unusual situation occurs) the dog will receive a slash. A slash is not a number and will not be figured into an average score.

A zero is given when a dog refuses to retrieve the bird or refuses to bring to within three feet (one step) of the handler.

### **Scenarios & What If's**

1. The dog goes for a retrieve and starts back with the bird. Points another bird on the way back with the retrieved bird in his mouth. The handler cannot get the dog to break point to bring back the bird he has in his mouth. Handler goes over to flush the bird, kills the bird, and dog retrieves the bird (or both at the same time.)

The dog will receive an average for the first retrieve and a scored retrieve for the second. The handler could have requested permission from the fudge to remove the first bird retrieved before flushing the second.

2. A crippled bird is pointed by the retrieving dog after the find has been scored. The bird is considered dead once it has been scored on. There should be no score for this bird; it was dead for the brace.

3. A dog is on established point. Gunner flushed two birds, shoot one dead, but the dog begins chasing unshot bird. The dog catches unshot bird and makes a retrieve. The dog should be scored for the retrieve.

4. What if a bird won't fly. After making an adequate attempt to flush the bird, and with permission from the judge, the bird can be picked up and thrown for a retrieve. The handler may not intentionally kill the bird prior to throwing it.

Backs (scored 0-75)

PLUS FACTORS: Backs immediately upon sight of pointing dog, intense style, and remains intent until handler reaches him, high head and tail.

MINUS FACTORS: Lack of intensity, flags, lays down, low tail, low in front, looking around, roading or creeping on back, breaks and relocates, takes steps.

We are looking for a dog that backs immediately upon seeing a dog on point, has high intensity and good style. The dog should look just like he would on point. Scoring starts as soon as the backing dog sees the pointing dog. If the dog clearly has seen the pointing dog and does not back he is given a zero and does not receive another chance to back. If the dog backs and then chooses to move and takes the bird out, it is scored a zero. If the dog backs, then moves and sees his handler behind him and stops again, it is zeroed because the second time the dog only stopped because of the handler's presence. The backing dog's score gets cut for the above minus factors and scored up for the above plus factors. If the dog receives a zero from one judge it is zeroed for the brace. Be aware that there can be situation backs where the dog is actually backing the ATV, a water bucket etc. In this situation the back will not be scored and the dog given another opportunity to back provided it has not already received another zero for a previous backing situation.

As soon as a dog backs the handler of the pointing dog needs to wait to flush the bird until the backing dog is held by either the handler or the judge. A backing dog is only required to back for a total of three minutes. After the dog has backed for two minutes the judge needs to have the handler of the pointing dog relocate. The backing dog is required to then back for another minute. The backing dog is only released once the pointing dog has completed it's work (has retrieved the bird to the handler), or is released by the judge.

### Scenarios & What If's

1. Dog A scents and points a bird. The bird is flushed by the handler but goes marked for one reason or another. Example: handler whoaed his dog. Dog broke prior to flush. Dog A points a bush in the vicinity of marked bird with only 2 minutes elapsed. Judge tells Handler A to take the bird out. Dog B backs. Handler of dog A attempts to flush, but cannot locate the bird. Three minuter are now up. Dog A breaks point without being relocated by his handler and moves in and points the bird.

Dog B scores a back. Dog A does not score a find. The bird was declared dead for the brace when Dog A pointed the marked bird before it opened up, before the three minutes had elapsed.

2. Dog A points. Dog B sees him, comes to the area and moves ahead and points. Dog A leaves the find (breaks point). What should happen?

The bird should be taken out for no score and Dog B should be zeroed on a back.

3. Dog A is on point, Dog B is backing. Handler cannot flush bird in two minutes. Handler is holding backing dog. Handler of pointing dog relocates after one minute - cannot flush bird, but pointing dog does not move. Backing dog is released after the three minutes are up and points the bird in front of pointing dog, which has not moved. Who's find is it?

It is Dog A's find since it never moved. If Dog A had been relocating when three minutes were up and Dog B was released from backing it would have been an open bird for either dog.

4. A dog appears to back his brace mate. After pointing dog's bird is flushed, backing dog is released, steps forward three or four feet and goes on point. In this case the dog would not score a back because the dog was pointing a bird.

5. A dog is running in a trial with side by side fields. He backs a dog in the adjoining field. He will not be scored on the back because all scoreable work must take place between the two dogs in competition with each other in their field.

6. Dog goes on point. Brace mate backs. Pointing dog breaks point and goes on immediately. Does the backing dog get credit? Yes. The back just has to be long enough for the judge to consider that a back was established.

7. A dog is in the process of making a retrieve and spots its brace mate on point. The dog backs it's brace mate before completing the retrieve. The judge should allow the handler of the backing dog to advance and hold their dog and score the retrieve by awarding an average.

8. Assume Dog A is pointing and there is no Dog B around, it can be relocated for the entire brace on the same bird. If Dog A is relocating and Dog B shows up and points, it's Dog B's bird.

### **Obedience (scored 0-75)**

**PLUS FACTORS:** Comes when called, stops to flush on command, whoas on command, works in front of the handler, works well on dead bird command, works well on marked bird, moves out when commanded, and checks back with handler.

**MINUS FACTORS:** Fails to back, fails to whoa, does not work in front, chases meadowlarks, chases other dogs, fails to check with handler, gets busy when called, and spending time out of bounds.

We are looking for a dog that works with and for the handler, not for himself. He should respond quickly to the each command given. No abusive corrections are allowed. It is permissible for a handler to grab a hold of a dog collar to calm him down. This will lower the obedience score, but is better than having an out of control dog disrupting the brace. Abusive correction is never allowed. If the dog squeals, the handler and dog will be disqualified from the trial.

### **Ground Coverage (scored 0-100)**

**PLUS FACTORS:** Quick and thorough search for birds, quartering the wind, sharp, classy movements, working in front of handler.

**MINUS FACTORS:** Pottering ground scent, running - not hunting, out of bounds, no enthusiasm/slow pace, not covering field thoroughly, continually urinating, continual return to handler.

We are looking for a fast, snappy dog that aggressively covers the ground and does not leave too many holes in his pattern. The dog needs to be busy looking for birds all the time, not continually returning to the handler every few minutes, stopping to relieve himself frequently, and generally fiddling around between spurts of hunting. The dog needs to maintain a good, steady gait and stay busy hunting the entire brace.

### **Non-competitive Dogs**

If a dog is non-competitive (i.e. "boot licking," playing, attempting to play with brace mate, etc.) it should be removed from the field and replaced by a stand-by dog brought in after 10 minutes of accumulated time of the non-competitive behavior.

### Definitions:

Marked Bird - This is a bird that may have been flushed by a judge, handler, dog, etc., and cannot be pointed for three minutes as a scoreable find. Should a dog point a marked bird in less than three minutes, the gunner must shoot the bird for a non scoreable find and/or retrieve. A marked bird is marked to both handlers and both should be notified immediately if possible. The dog cannot be led off a marked bird by the handler.

Dead for the Brace or Two Bird Area - A bird that has been previously scored on, but for whatever reason has not been removed from the field is considered Dead for the Brace. An area that has a previously scored on bird in it becomes a Two Bird Area. In a Two Bird Area two birds have to be removed to get a score for one. The first bird is removed without a score, which opens up to area for a scoreable find.