



Irish Water Spaniel Club of America
Working Certificate and Working Certificate Excellent
Rules and Regulations

INTRODUCTION

1. Scope. IWSCA's purpose in establishing and making available a Working Certificate (WC) and Working Certificate Excellent (WCX) to all owners of Irish Water Spaniels is to encourage the use of and maintain the natural hunting and retrieving abilities that are genetically vital to the breed. This is not an AKC licensed event.

In establishing the criteria for the WC, the IWSCA realizes that most Irish Water Spaniels will not be as thoroughly trained as those who compete in field trials or hunting tests and, therefore, has devised simple land and water tests using ducks, game birds, or pigeons. These tests are designed to demonstrate the following natural abilities of a retriever as stated in the AKC Retriever Advisory Committee Supplement: accurate marking and memory of falls, intelligence, attention, style, good nose, perseverance, desire and trainability.

The purpose of the Working Certificate Excellent test is to encourage the development of the Irish Water Spaniel's natural hunting and retrieving abilities through additional training. In preparing the criteria for the WCX, the IWSCA realizes there are many people who do not wish to compete in AKC filed trials or hunting tests, but who do want to train their dogs beyond the level of the WC. The WCX is designed to demonstrate the development of marking ability, memory, intelligence, perseverance, and retrieving desire through training.

2. Requirements for the Test Giving Club. WC and WCX tests may be held in conjunction with IWSCA sponsored events or independently with approval. The tests are to be conducted and judged under the requirements of the Rules and Regulations. The WC/WCX Coordinator will send information to the Committee Chairman including the WC/WCX Rules and Regulations, official test entry forms, instructions, guidelines and additional related material. Pre-entries will be required to accommodate ordering sufficient game birds for the tests. Any retriever club holding WC/WCX Tests and willing to accommodate Irish Water Spaniels must receive approval in advance from the IWSCA WC/WCX Coordinator. Due to basic similarity of test requirements, IWS owners are encouraged to participate in tests offered by the Golden Retriever Club of America and the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America, Inc. Participation includes helping in the organization and production of tests as well as competing in these tests. Failure of an individual to obtain pre-approval for the IWSCA Coordinator before running in a test not sponsored by the IWSCA will result in denial of certification.

Irish Water Spaniels which meet the requirements set forth in the rules and complete the designated tests at one of these events are eligible to receive an IWSCA WC or WCX Certificate.

All dogs entering must be at least six months of age, and have an individual AKC registration number, foreign registration number, or an ILP number. A dog with an AKC pending number will not receive a certificate until the individual number is acquired and presented. A fee may be charged for entering the test. The entry fee and the type of birds to be used shall be included in the announcement of the test.

The WC test shall be conducted and judged under the AKC Derby rules as described by the AKC in Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers, with a few exceptions.

The WCX test shall be conducted and judged under the AKC Qualifying rules as described by AKC in Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers, with a few exceptions.

INFORMATION FOR CLUBS

1. The Committee. The WC and the WCX Tests are intended to be self-regulating. To accomplish this objective, the host club shall appoint a WC/WCX Committee of at least five members. Three of these Committee members must be IWSCA members, including the Chair, and must be present during the test. No one serving as a judge for either of the tests shall serve on the Committee. The host WC/WCX Committee shall have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the test. The host Committee shall be held responsible for the compliance with all of the rules and procedures. Additionally, the Committee has the authority to decide upon any and all matters arising during the running of the test, except a matter coming within the jurisdiction of the judges. Such Committee decisions must be made in accordance with the WC/WCX Rules and Regulations and the AKC Derby/Qualifying Rules and Standard Procedures. All individuals who agree to serve on a WC/WCX Committee should be prepared to carry out these duties creditably and exercise these powers fairly, firmly, and impartially.

While it is the responsibility of the judges to set up the tests, if the tests run contrary to the intent of the IWSCA Rules, the Committee should step in and tactfully explain the problem to ensure a proper test.

The Committee shall ensure that the judges receive copies of the WC/WCX Rules and Regulations and the AKC Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures for Retrievers, in advance of the test, with particular emphasis on familiarizing themselves with the intent of the test. The Committee shall make the Rules available to all participants. The premium list shall state how copies of the rules may be obtained.

2. IWSCA Approval. IWSCA grants permission to member and non-member clubs to hold WC/WCX Tests under its Rules and Regulations. Irish Water Spaniels meeting the requirements set forward in the rules and which complete the designated tests at one of these events are eligible to receive an IWSCA WC/WCX Certificate. The club holding the test is the sponsor, not IWSCA. There is no limit to the number of tests a club may hold as long as they are conducted properly.

3. IWSCA Application. To obtain approval submit a written request to the IWSCA WC/WCX Coordinator listing the following:

1. The name of the club holding the test
2. The date and location of the test
3. The name and mailing address of the test secretary or other responsible person
4. The names and mailing addresses of all the judges
5. The expected number of IWS entries (the number of blank certificates required)

While this request would normally be made in writing, in an emergency the WC/WCX Coordinator will accept a telephone request. Be sure to have all the necessary information available.

The request may either be made by an official of the hosting club (usually the secretary) or by an interested member of the IWSCA who is willing to handle the details. In the case of the latter, be sure the trial giving club is aware of the request and is willing to accommodate Irish Water Spaniels. The WC/WCX Coordinator will send a supply of blank certificates to the requestor in time for the test. It is the responsibility of the requestor to return all unused certificates and the club copies of all certificates awarded to the WC/WCX Coordinator.

4. Other Retriever Breeds. IWSCA allows other breeds of dogs whose WC/WCX Rules comply with IWSCA WC/WCX requirements, to run the tests hosted by IWSCA member clubs. If the other breeds have the same requirements, they shall be included in the random draw for the running order. When limiting entries at a WC/WCX Test it is strongly recommended that preference be given to non-titled Irish Water Spaniels. If openings remain, fill them first with titled Irish Water Spaniels, then with other breeds. Non-IWS owners are responsible for handling the necessary paperwork for certificates and approval from the specific parent breed club.

5. Catalogs. An Official Catalog may be provided for WC/WCX Test. The Official Catalog, if prepared, should be printed, and shall conform to the official size of not less than 5 1/2"x 8 1/2", but not exceed 8 1/2" x 11".

The Official Catalog shall list all dogs entered in each Test (WC/WCX) in the order in which the dogs were drawn with all identifying information called for on the entry form (dog's name, registration number, breed, date of birth, and name of owner and handler, if different from owner). The Official Catalog shall also state the name of the WC/WCX Test-giving club, the date, and the location of the event.

6. Birds. Upland game birds are defined as pheasants, pigeons, chukhars, or guinea hens. Ducks must be GAME birds; most commonly used are Mallard or English Call Ducks. Barnyard ducks are unacceptable due to size, color, and lack of sufficient oil in their feathers to keep them afloat.

The Rules provide for the use of freshly killed birds in both tests. This means the birds are either shot as fliers or are dispatched immediately before the test by the people in charge of the game. Frozen birds are not acceptable. No birds should be killed prior to the morning of the test.

For the land work in the WCX you will need eight more birds than there are dogs entered in the stake. This allows for the birds required for test-dog, several shots before the test to gain a supply of birds for the dead bird stations and for a couple of fly-aways. Assuming the judges elect to shoot a live flyer for the WC land work, the same

formula (eight more birds) can be used for this stake as well.

If the judges decide to shoot a live flying duck for the water work in the WCX you will need at least six more ducks than there are dogs entered in that stake. For the WC water work most judges will use dead ducks exclusively. In this case one duck for every two dogs is sufficient. It should be emphasized that these recommendations are minimums and assume good gunners and throwers. It does not hurt to have extra birds "just in case."

The humane care and treatment of birds is the responsibility of the hosting club. Crated birds must be sheltered from inclement weather, may not be overcrowded, and must have feed and water available. As the birds are retrieved, they should be sacked at once and not allowed to pile up on the ground. A crippled bird should be put out of its misery immediately instead of being put in a sack or on the ground to struggle until death.

7. Certificates. A Certificate shall be awarded to the owners of those dogs that, in the opinion of the judges, have satisfactorily completed the prescribed test.

8. Complaints. The decision of the judges shall be final in all matters relating to the test performance of the dogs. Full discretionary power is given to the judges to withhold any certificate award for lack of merit.

Each participant is expected to do his part to keep up the standards of the WC/WCX Tests and to report to the Committee any incident that might be detrimental to the purpose of the WC/WCX. No person shall make complaints freely to the judges, but shall work through the Committee that is held directly responsible for the conduct of the tests.

Upon receipt of a complaint, members of the Committee are expected to take appropriate action. If the complaint is deemed detrimental to the purpose of the WC/WCX Test, the entire Committee should convene immediately to hear the charges. After duly hearing the evidence in a fair, orderly, and impartial manner, the WC/WCX Committee should determine if the WC/WCX Rules have been violated. The reasons for withholding any WC/WCX Certificate based on a detrimental incident shall be submitted to the WC/WCX Coordinator within thirty days of the incident.

If the WC/WCX Committee of the test club fails to fulfill its obligation with respect to the planning and conduct of the WC/WCX Test, permission to hold future events, including independent specialties, may be denied by IWSCA.

JUDGES

The IWSCA qualifications for WC/WCX Judges provide individuals with a good working knowledge of AKC Field Trial Rules. Combining that knowledge with IWSCA WC/WCX Rules promotes good judgment on all questions arising during the tests. It is the responsibility of the Judges, not the Committee, to set up tests.

There may be two or four judges determined by the number of dogs entered. If there are a large number of entries anticipated, a set of judges doing land and another set doing water will greatly facilitate the event. In a trial in which the entry is not limited either numerically or by the amount of available daylight hours; additional

judges can be appointed by the club if the number of entries would otherwise prevent completion of the trial during the days listed in the premium list.

The requirements for each set of judges for the WC shall be an aggregate of three qualification points. One point may be earned for each of the following:

1. Any judging assignment at an AKC licensed field trial or AKC sanctioned Open or Amateur assignment.
2. Any judging assignment at an AKC licensed hunting retriever test.
3. Any TWO judging assignments at an IWSCA, GRCA, and/or FCRSA WC/WCX Test. Only one point may come from this category.

The requirements for each set of judges for the WCX shall be an aggregate of three qualification points. One point may be earned for each of the following:

1. Any judging assignment at an AKC licensed field trial or AKC sanctioned Open or Amateur assignment.
2. Any judging assignment in the Senior or Master stake at an AKC hunting retriever test.
3. Any TWO judging assignments at an IWSCA, GRCA, and/or FCRSA WC/WCX Test. Only one point may come from this category.

To assure qualified judges, IWSCA requires that judges not listed on the AKC Licensed Trial Point Judges List must have their specific qualifications stated in the application to the IWSCA, including date and location of judged trials.

TESTS

Dogs may run in any or all levels of the tests. It is not necessary to have a WC title in order to run in or qualify for a WCX Test.

Tests for the WC shall be as follows:

1. Land Double. The retrieving of two UPLAND game birds or ducks (not a mixed bag) on land in moderate cover with the birds approximately 40-50 yards from the line and the falls at least 90 degrees apart. For uniformity in the land double, both birds may be shot and killed prior to the start of the test. At the discretion of the judges, the diversion bird may be a shot flier. Bird throwers and gunners shall be in light colored shirts or jackets. The use of "wingers" or other mechanical devices is to be determined by the WC/WCX Committee.
2. Back to Back Water Singles. The retrieving of two freshly killed ducks at least one of which is in swimming water in light cover

with the ducks approximately 25-35 yards from the line. Bird throwers should be in light colored shirts or jackets. Each dog should retrieve at least one "new" duck. Previously used birds are to be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

The WC Test is not intended to test the degree of training, but, rather, to demonstrate the natural ability of the dog to perform normal hunting tasks. The double on land demonstrates the ability to mark, retrieve two birds, and tests the memory of the dog. The back to back water singles demonstrate the ability to swim, to retrieve waterfowl, and a willingness to re-enter the water. There is no competition between dogs in either test.

RULES

The handler is expected to come to the line quietly with his dog under control at his side. The dog may be brought on a leash or slip cord, but these must be removed during the test. The dog may run with a collar and may be held with the leash or slip cord until he is sent by the handler. After the judge has called the dog's number and the dog has been sent, the handler should stand quietly on line while the dog is working. No voice commands (including any encouragement to hunt and/or pick up a bird) or hand signals are allowed while the dog is working. These are marking tests; handling is not permitted.

When the dog has returned with his first bird on the land double, the handler may pat his side or speak to his dog by name, telling him to heel, sit, stay, etc., thereby getting the dog ready and lined up to go for the second bird. The handler may not take his dog by the scruff of the neck and pull him into position before sending him for the second bird. He may gently guide the dog by the collar to get his attention and steady him before sending him to retrieve the second bird.

AUTOMATIC ELIMINATION:

1. Sending the dog before the judge calls his number.
2. Switching: a dog gives up his hunt after searching, leaves the area of the fall and goes for another bird.
3. Recasting: definite refusal to go out for the retrieve, except in cases of confusion.
4. Handling, as defined in the AKC rules for blind retrieves.
5. Manhandling the dog between retrieves.
6. Use of any device designated to prod the dog into action, such as throwing something into the water or hollering from the field to get his attention.
7. Loud or prolonged whining or barking while on the line, in a blind, or while retrieving.

Guidelines:

Recasting: Occasionally a dog may become confused as to whether or not he was sent. He may run out a few feet, stop and return to handler. If it is the opinion of the judges that the dog was confused, they may allow the handler to send the dog again without penalty. However, definite refusal to go out indicates lack of memory, perseverance, and attention, and should result in elimination. There is a difference between confusion and refusal for lack of memory.

Touching the Dog Between Birds in WC Test: The WC Rules state that a handler may not grab the dog by the collar or neck between birds on the land double. The handler may, however, gently guide the dog by the collar between birds to get his attention before sending him for the second bird. While some judges may elect to let the handler put one or two fingers in the dog's collar to gently steady him before sending him for the next bird, any attempt, no matter how slight, to pull the dog into place shall be a disqualification. The difference between manhandling or grabbing the dog and gently touching the dog is easily defined by properly qualified judges. Prior to the test, handlers should ask the judges for their definition and a demonstration of "gently touching."

The WC Test is run under AKC Derby Rules with the following exceptions:

1. Dogs are not expected to be steady but somewhat well-mannered.
2. Decoys are not used.
3. Delivery to the area of the line, as defined by the judges, rather than to hand is required.
4. There is no upper age limit on the dogs running.

Tests for the WCX shall be as follows:

1. Land Triple. The retrieving of three UPLAND game birds or ducks (not a mixed bag) on land as a triple in moderate cover. Two shall be dead and the last bird shall be a flier. The falls shall not be less than 60 yards nor greater than 100 yards. They shall not be less than 60 degrees apart and shall fall at a 45 degree angle back from the guns, thus eliminating the possibility of "square" or incoming falls. The order shall be from right to left or vice versa with the shot flier as the last bird down. Bird throwers and gunners shall be in light colored shirts or jackets. The ideal situation would be for the first bird (dead) to be approximately 80 yards from the line, the second bird (dead) approximately 100 yards, and the third bird (live flier) approximately 60 yards. The use of "wingers" or other mechanical devices is to be determined by the WC/WCX Committee.

2. Water Double. The retrieving of two freshly killed ducks from the water as a double retrieve with an honor. Swimming water is preferred for both retrieves but is a definite requirement for one. The falls shall not be less than 45 yards nor greater than 60 yards. They shall not be less than 60 degrees apart and shall fall at a 45 degree angle back from the guns. Bird throwers should be in light colored jackets or shirts. One bird shall be in natural, moderate cover not visible from the line as the memory bird and the other shall be fully visible from the line in open swimming water. At the discretion of the judges, the diversion bird may be a shot flier. Ideally, the first bird should fall approximately 45 yards in the cover and the second bird approximately 60 yards in open water. The handler may not speak to or touch their honoring dogs. Two to four artificial decoys shall be used, but not in a direct line with either fall.

RULES

The handler shall bring the dog quietly to the line off leash and

without a collar. There shall be NO touching of the dog by the handler at any time during the tests. The dog should be steady on the line until the judges give the handler his number, at which time the handler shall send his dog. The dog shall deliver each bird to hand and relinquish it easily.

The dog shall leave the line off leash and under control. In the water double, the dog shall leave the line when released by the judge upon completion of the honor.

AUTOMATIC ELIMINATION:

1. Sending the dog before the judge calls his number.
2. Switching: a dog gives up his hunt after searching, leaves the area of the fall and goes for another bird.
3. Recasting: definite refusal to go out for the retrieve.
4. Handling, as defined in the AKC rules for blind retrieves.
5. Manhandling the dog between retrieves.

1. Use of any device designated to prod the dog into action, such as throwing something into the water or hollering from the field to get his attention.

2. Retrieving a decoy: i.e. returning to land with it.

8. Loud or prolonged whining or barking while on the line, in a blind, or while retrieving.

INFORMATION FOR HANDLERS

1. No dog shall run with bandages or tape of any kind;

2. Over the years WC/WCX Judges have consistently commented that handler knowledge and dog work needs improvement. Two things would help improve the passing rates and the judges' evaluations:

- a. Handlers should be familiar with the IWSCA WC/WCX Rules as well as the AKC Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers.
- b. Train the dog to a level of reliability.

1. There shall be no training of dogs on the grounds of a WC/WCX, either within 24 hours of the commencement of the event, or at any time during the event.

SPECIFIC RETRIEVER FIELD TRIAL RULES

(From the Standard Procedure for Non-Slip Retriever Trials)

Trial Procedure #3: The judges, with due regard to the recommendations of the Field Trial Committee shall determine the tests to be given in each series and shall try to give all dogs approximately similar tests in the same series.

Judging #22: The judges must judge the dogs for 1) their natural abilities, including memory, intelligence, attention, nose, courage, perseverance, and style, and 2) their abilities acquired through training, including steadiness, control response to direction, and delivery. Decisions to eliminate a dog from a stake as a result of faulty performance must be the consensus of both judges.

Line Manners #26: Controlled Breaks. In any stake other than an All-Age, if a dog makes a slight break and is brought immediately under control, the dog need not be eliminated, but shall be penalized for unsteadiness.

If a dog on line creeps or jumps forward short of breaking as birds are shot and no effort is made by the handler to stop and restrain him the judges should not interpret such as a deliberate intent to retrieve, since nothing was done to stop the dog. On the other hand, if the handler does make an effort to stop the dog, the judges assume that the handler believed the dog intended to retrieve and should deal with the infraction accordingly. The judges may require that dogs which have so jumped or crept forward be brought back to heel before being sent for their birds. A handler so ordered should bring his dog to a position satisfactory to the judges and remain with him in such a position until his number is called. In tests, including honoring, care should be exercised to treat creeping on the part of either dog, in a manner not grossly unfair to the other.

In all stakes, after the judges have directed that a dog be ordered to retrieve, that dog is entitled to run in and retrieve and shall not be accused of, or penalized for, breaking, even though the judges did not see or hear the handler send the dog.

When a dog that is still in a stake, but not on line under judgment, breaks for the fall of a dog under judgment in such a manner that the dog or handler interferes, in the opinion of the judges, with the normal conduct of the stake, that dog shall be eliminated from the stake.

When the handler of a dog under judgment is ordered by the judges for any reason to pick up his dog, he is under judgment until he is back of all the judges with his dog on a leash, and all provisions of the section shall apply until that time.

The Retriever #31: Switching. A dog that goes to the area of a fall, hunts, fails to find and then leaves the area of the fall or that drops a bird he is retrieving and goes for another, shall be considered to have "switched." Unless in the opinion of the judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, this fault constitutes sufficient justification for elimination from the stake.

The Retriever #35: Dropping the Bird. Upon finding the game, the dog should quickly pick it up and return briskly to his handler. A dog should not drop his game on the ground, but distinction should be made between deliberately dropping a bird and readjusting a bad hold or losing his grip because of a struggling bird or running over uneven terrain.

The Retriever #36: Delivery. Upon returning, the dog should deliver the bird promptly and tenderly to his handler. A dog sitting to deliver should not outscore a dog making a clear delivery without sitting to do so. A dog that is unwilling to release a bird on delivery should be penalized, and if compelled to do so by severe methods should, unless in the opinion of the Judges there exist valid mitigating circumstances, be eliminated.

The Retriever #37: Hard Mouth. A dog should be eliminated for hard mouth or badly damaging game, but before doing so all judges should inspect the bird and be satisfied that the dog alone was responsible for the damage.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Role of the Test Dog. While it is nice to have a test dog of the same level of ability as the dogs running the WC/WCX Tests and while it is good to see the test dog successfully complete the test, the role of the test dog seems, at times, to be misunderstood. When the judges set up a test, they are setting it up by the rules to the best of their abilities. It should look "picture perfect" to the eye. However, since the judges are not equipped with canine eyes or noses, it is important to get the picture straight from the dog. When the test dog runs, the judges are merely looking for any hidden obstacles or strange situations which they did not anticipate when originally setting up the test. A test dog need not pass the test in order for the judges to make a good evaluation of their test. Sometimes a judge will run the test dog on singles on the three birds set up for the triple. If the tests are passable as singles, they are passable as triples.

2. Wingers. The use of "wingers" or other mechanical devices is to be determined by the WC/WCX Committee.

3. Handicapped handlers. Judges are encouraged to assist disabled individuals in participating in WC/WCX Tests so long as such assistance does not interfere with or aid the performance of the dog. Such assistance could include, but is not limited to: Touching handlers who are hearing impaired instead of calling their number; allowing those in wheelchairs to be pushed to the line if the terrain is rough; telling visually handicapped handlers when the dog has picked up the bird; permitting the use of canes or crutches for handlers who normally use them.

4. Under NO circumstances are bitches in season to run or to be on the test grounds.

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