



## **Irish Water Spaniel Club of America**

### **Working Dog and Working Dog Excellent Rules and Regulations**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Scope. The IWSCA's purpose in establishing and making available a Working Dog certificate [WD] and Working Dog Excellent certificate [WDX] to all owners of Irish Water Spaniels is to encourage the use of and maintain the natural hunting abilities of the IWS for upland work. This is not an AKC licensed event.

In establishing the criteria for a WD the IWSCA realizes that most IWS will not be as thoroughly trained as those who compete in hunt tests. Therefore simple land and water tests have been created to evaluate the abilities expected of a hunting companion with the intent of testing for basic instincts and usefulness in the field. Their purpose is to hunt, find game, flush and retrieve birds in a pleasing and efficient manner.

The purpose of the WDX is to encourage the development of the IWS's natural hunting ability through additional training. The WDX is designed to demonstrate the development of bird finding ability, trainability, memory, intelligence, perseverance and retrieving desire.

2. Requirements for the Test Giving Club. WD and WDX 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 WD/WDX Coordinator will send information to the Committee Chairman including the WD/WDX Rules and Regulations, official test entry forms, instructions, guidelines and additional related material. Pre-entries may be required to accommodate ordering sufficient game birds for the tests. Any spaniel club holding WD/WDX Tests and willing to accommodate Irish Water Spaniels must receive approval in advance from the IWSCA WD/WDX Coordinator. Due to basic similarity of test requirements, IWS owners are encouraged to participate in tests given by other spaniel clubs. 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.

## **INFORMATION FOR CLUBS**

1. The Committee. The WD and the WDX Tests are intended to be self-regulating. To accomplish this objective, when the IWSCA holds a test, the club will appoint a WD/WDX 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 WD/WDX Committee shall have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the test. The host Committee shall be held responsible for 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 WD/WDX Rules and Regulations. All individuals who agree to serve on a WD/WDX Committee should be prepared to carry out these duties creditably and exercise these powers fairly, firmly, and impartially.

It is the responsibility of the Committee to set up the tests. The Committee shall ensure that the judges receive copies of the WD/WDX Rules and Regulations 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 Application. To obtain approval submit a written request to the IWSCA WD/WDX 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 or by email, in an emergency the WD/WDX 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 test-giving club is aware of the request and is willing to accommodate Irish Water Spaniels. The WD/WDX 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 WD/WDX Coordinator.

3. Other Spaniel breeds and Retriever Breeds approved to run Spaniel Upland tests by the AKC. The IWSCA will allow other spaniel breeds and Retriever Breeds approved by the AKC to run Spaniel Upland tests whose WD/WDX rules comply with the IWSCA WD/WDX 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 WD/WDX 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 WD/WDX 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 (WD/WDX) 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 WD/WDX Test-giving club, the date, and the location of the event.

6. Birds. Upland game birds are defined as pheasants, pigeons or chukars. In the Land test if all birds flushed are either fly-aways or are missed and a retrieve of a dead bird has to be used or in the retrieve in the Water test, the birds must be freshly killed or are dispatched immediately before the test by the people in charge of the game. No birds should be killed prior to the morning of the test.

The humane care and treatment of birds is the responsibility of the host 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 one of the following:

- a. The WD or WDX test
- b. An AKC Spaniel Hunt test
- c. Earned an AKC Upland title.

Completing an AKC Spaniel Hunt test. A WD certificate will be issued on completion with a passing score [as defined by the AKC for a qualifying leg] on

an AKC Spaniel Junior Hunt Test. A WDX certificate will be issued on completion with passing score [as defined by the AKC for a qualifying leg] on an AKC spaniel Senior Hunt Test or an AKC Spaniel Master Hunt Test. Should the owner of an IWS choose to qualify for a WD or WDX certificate by completing and passing with a qualifying score an AKC Spaniel Hunt Test, the owner must submit to the WD/WDX Chairman a catalogue from the event signed by the judges and the Secretary of the club giving the AKC Hunt Test.

Earning an AKC Spaniel Hunting Upland Title. A WD certificate will be issued if the dog has earned a Junior Hunting Upland title [JHU] in the AKC. A WDX certificate will be issued if the dog has earned either a Senior Hunting Upland title [SHU] or Master Hunting Upland title [MHU] in the AKC. Copies of the AKC Upland title earned should be forwarded to the WD/WDX Coordinator to satisfy this requirement.

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 WD/WDX Tests and to report to the Committee any incident that might be detrimental to the purpose of the WD/WDX. 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 WD/WDX Test, the entire Committee should convene immediately to hear the charges. After duly hearing the evidence in a fair, orderly, and impartial manner, the WD/WDX Committee should determine if the WD/WDX Rules have been violated. The reasons for withholding any WD/WCX Certificate based on a detrimental incident shall be submitted to the WD/WDX Coordinator within thirty days of the incident.

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

## **JUDGES**

The IWSCA qualifications for WD/WDX Judges provide individuals with a good working knowledge of AKC Spaniel Field Trial Rules and/or AKC Spaniel Hunt Test Rules. Combining that knowledge with IWSCA WD/WDX Rules promotes good judgment on all questions arising during the tests. It is the responsibility of the Committee to set up the tests.

There may be two or four judges determined by the number of dogs entered. Additional judges can be appointed by the club if the number of entries would otherwise prevent completion of the test during the days listed in the premium list.

The requirements for each set of judges for the WD 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 spaniel field trial or sanctioned field trial Open, Amateur or Puppy Stake assignment.
2. Any judging assignment at an AKC licensed hunting spaniel test.
3. Any TWO judging assignments at an IWSCA or Spaniel WD/WDX Test. Only one point may come from this category.

The requirements for each set of judges for the WDX 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 spaniel field trial or sanctioned field trial Open, Amateur or Puppy Stake assignment.
2. Any judging assignment in the Senior or Master stake at an AKC hunting spaniel test.
3. Any TWO judging assignments at an IWSCA or Spaniel WD/WDX Test. Only one point may come from this category.

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

## **TESTS**

**The working test for the WD/WDX will be run as a single test. The certificate/degree earned will be determined by the criteria passed at each respective level. At each level, both the land and water portions must be passed for that respective level. For example, for the land portion a field will be planted, the dog will run the field. If the dog performs in a manner that meets the requirements for the WD, a WD certificate will be awarded. If the dog performs and meets the requirements for a WDX, a WDX will be awarded. In the case of the water portion, the dog must perform and meet the requirements specified for that degree.**

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WD TEST**

### **1. Land test**

Dogs are to be run singly. Each dog should work and find at least two live birds and complete two retrieves. At the judges' discretion one find and flush will be

sufficient coupled with two marked retrieves.

The land test has three major elements: a) hunting, b) finding and flushing the bird and c) mark and retrieve on land.

a. **Hunting:** The dog is expected to stand quietly on the line and may be gently restrained. The dog may be brought on a leash or slip cord. The dog may run with a collar and may be held with the leash or slip cord until the handler sends him. Upon instruction from the judge, the handler may cast his dog, which will then begin hunting. The handler walks behind the dog and may direct the dog along the course. The dog should show fairly reasonable, not necessarily immediate, response to whistle and/or command.

The manner in which the dog covers ground is less important than his ability to find the birds. Hunting may be done in sections or in a zig-zag quartering pattern. Boldness to cover and use of wind is more important than pattern, though the dog should cover the ground as thoroughly as possible. Occasional back casting is not to be failed so long as the dog can be directed back to the front of the handler.

#### **b. Finds and Flushes Bird**

Upon locating game, the dog should have sufficient hunting and scenting ability (nose) to independently find and put up game without undue urging. The dog should demonstrate determination to put the bird to flight. The dog may drive directly in for the flush or hesitate momentarily before attempting to flush. The dog should not require excessive encouragement from the handler to flush.

In the event that both birds found by the dog fail to fly and are picked up and retrieved to the handler, this will satisfy the Flush requirement of the Test.

#### **c. Mark and Retrieve on Land**

Upon the shot, dogs are not required to be steady to flush or shot. The dog should mark where the bird has fallen, go to that location and recover the bird and deliver it to close proximity to the handler. "Close proximity" is within two steps of the handler. The pick-up and return of the dog should be reasonably prompt with consideration for conditions.

In the event of a particularly long retrieve or difficult conditions, the judge may allow the handler to advance toward the dog for a short distance. A dog that has to be handled to the bird should be severely faulted since this is a marking test.

In the event that the guns fail to down a bird for the dog to retrieve, the judge or gunner should throw a dead bird into the air for the dog to mark and retrieve. The mark should be around 20 – 30 yards. This should be done with a simultaneous gunshot.

## 2. Retrieve from Water

The dog may be gently restrained. A bird is thrown 20 – 25 yards into the water and a shot is fired. The dog is released when sent by the judge. The dog should enter the water without excessive coaxing, swim to the bird and return with it. The dog should **deliver the bird to within close proximity to the handler, defined as within two steps of the handler.**

A dog shall be marked as failed under the following circumstances:

1. Hunting: A dog that runs wildly out of control, that remains behind the handler, that refuses to range out to hunt, that does not show any attempt to hunt or does not show any interest in birds when they are encountered or shows any evidence of gun-shyness should be marked as *FAILED*
2. Loud or prolonged whining or barking while on the line or while retrieving should be marked *FAILED*.
3. Find and Flush: Complete failure to flush (or pickup a non-flyer), dogs that are observed to locate a bird and then turn away and ignore it, or that do not produce birds despite favorable conditions should be marked as *FAILED*.
4. Mark and retrieve on land: In the event that the dog completely fails to recover the bird, fails to deliver to hand or in the immediate area, or if the bird is crushed or damaged by the dog as to be unfit for consumption, the dog should be marked *FAILED*.
4. Retrieve from water: A dog that fails to return to the handler with the bird, that refuses to come out of the water, or that leaves the bird in the water well out of reach of the handler should be marked *FAILED*.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WDX TEST

### 1. Land

Dogs are to be run singly. Each dog should work and find at least two live birds and complete two retrieves. At the judges' discretion one find and flush will be sufficient coupled with two marked retrieves.

The land test has three major elements: a) hunting, b) finding and flushing the bird and c) mark and retrieve on land.

a. **Hunting:** At the start of the Hunting portion, the dog must be steady on line – that is the dog should sit or stay unleashed beside the handler a short time until the judge instructs the handler to proceed. The dog should stay in place quietly with a minimum of commands until released by the handler.

i. Dog under handler's control: At the judge's instruction the handler "sends" the dog and walks behind directing the dog on the course as necessary. The dog should demonstrate superlative responsiveness to the handler with a minimum of direction.

ii. Covers the ground

Again, The manner in which the dog covers ground is less important than his ability to find the birds. Hunting may be done in sections or in a zig-zag quartering pattern. Boldness to cover and use of wind is more important than pattern, though the dog should cover the ground as thoroughly as possible. Occasional back casting is not to be failed so long as the dog can be directed back to the front of the handler.

The dog in the WDX covers ground with enthusiasm and in a superlative manner.

**b. Finds and flushes birds:** The dog should demonstrate the ability to efficiently locate and flush game. The dog should demonstrate determination to put the bird to flight. The dog may drive directly in for the flush or hesitate momentarily before attempting to flush. The dog should require no encouragement from the handler to flush.

In the event that both birds found by the dog fail to fly and are picked up and retrieved to the handler, this will satisfy the Flush requirement of the Test.

**c. Mark and Retrieve on Land:** Upon the shot, the dog should mark where the bird has fallen, go to that location and recover the bird. The dog does not need to be steady to wing and shot. The retrieve should be prompt and to hand. A dog that has to be handled to the bird should be severely faulted and possibly receive a non-passing score since this is a marking test.

In the event that the guns fail to down a bird for the dog to retrieve, the judge or gunner should throw a dead bird into the air for the dog to mark and retrieve. The retrieve should be 30 – 35 yards. This should be done with a simultaneous gunshot.

**2. Retrieve from Water:** The handler shall bring the dog quietly to the line on leash. The dog is unleashed. There shall be NO touching of the dog by the handler at any time during this test. The bird is thrown 30 – 35 yards into the water and a shot is fired. The dog should be steady on the line until released by the judge, at which time the handler shall send his dog. The dog shall deliver the bird to hand and relinquish it easily.

A dog shall be marked as failed under the following circumstances:

1. Hunting: A dog that runs wildly out of control, that remains behind the handler, that refuses to range out to hunt, that does not show any attempt to hunt or does not show any interest in birds when they are encountered or shows any evidence

of gun-shyness should be marked as *FAILED*

2. Loud or prolonged whining or barking while on the line or while retrieving should be marked *FAILED*.
3. Find and Flush: Complete failure to flush (or pickup a non-flyer), dogs that are observed to locate a bird and then turn away and ignore it, or that do not produce birds despite favorable conditions should be marked as *FAILED*.
4. Mark and retrieve on land: In the event that the dog completely fails to recover the bird, fails to deliver to hand, or if the bird is crushed or damaged by the dog as to be unfit for consumption, the dog should be marked *FAILED*.
4. Retrieve from water: A dog that fails to return to the handler with the bird, that refuses to come out of the water, or that will not deliver to hand should be marked *FAILED*.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Wingers. The use of "wingers" or other mechanical devices is to be determined by the WD/WDX Committee.
2. Handicapped handlers. Judges are encouraged to assist disabled individuals in participating in WD/WDX 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: 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.
3. Under NO circumstances are bitches in season to run or to be on the test grounds.

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## **WD/WDX Addendum:**

### **Mechanics of Running a Spaniel Working Test.**

#### **RUNNING A WORKING TEST**

**SITE** - For the Land Test there should be suitable cover, such as stubble, brush, grass, etc., sufficient to hide the birds and provide a test of the dog's hunting ability and willingness to search in cover. The area must be far enough away from houses, roads, etc. so the gunners may shoot safely

**BIRDS** - Pheasants, chukar partridge, or pigeons are the appropriate birds to be used for a working test. The selected type of bird shall be the only one used for all dogs entered in the test that day. The bird planters should use gloves for handling and planting birds in the field

**STEWARD** - One or two stewards should be appointed to keep the gallery of spectators, other handlers and dogs in a close group behind the judge or in some such assigned safe place. This is not only to prevent interference with the work of the dog being tested, or the gunner's chance to shoot, but an important safety measure.

**GUNNERS** - The club shall appoint a gunner, or two gunners one on either side of the handler, to accompany the handler in the field. The gunners should shoot the game flushed by the dog in a manner consistent with actual upland hunting. Only breaking type shotguns (12,16 or 20 gauge) may be used.

**LAND TEST** - Dogs are to be run singly. Each dog should work and find at least two live birds, and complete two retrieves. Birds should be planted on the course so that there is opportunity for the dog to demonstrate ground coverage, hunting ability and nose (ability to find game). Birds should be planted at least 30 to 40 yards from the starting line and also 30 to 40 yards apart from each other progressing down the field. If a dog has sufficiently demonstrated that he can find and flush game but said game isn't shot (for example, a missed bird, or a bird flying over the gallery or where any person may be in the line of flight), or he traps game before it can fly, a dead bird may be thrown with a shot fired to enable the dog to demonstrate its ability to mark and retrieve.

**WATER TEST** - A shot is fired into the air as a dead bird is thrown, either from shore or from a boat, so as to fall at a distance that requires the dog to swim in order to make the retrieve (at least approximately 15 yards from shore).

## **PARENT CLUB SAFETY REGULATIONS FOR WORKING TESTS**

The established Safe-Gunning Rules must be in effect. Birds, which fly over the gallery, or where any person might be in the line of flight, shall NOT be shot. Safety glasses must be worn by all bird planters and helpers. A total of 200 square inches of fluorescent (blaze) orange clothing visible from all sides must be worn by all bird planters, helpers, stewards, gunners, judges, handlers, and members of the gallery.