

WCA “Retrieve” Polling

In our ongoing efforts to improve the events and competitive performance of the field bred Weimaraner the FAC is reviewing rules/regulations concerning the “callback to retrieve” in the National & Regional Events. Even though the questions/polling represents all of the rules related to “retrieving” at these events, the FAC is inclined to support incremental changes but remain open to critical review of the results of those changes. The goal is to provide for the betterment of the breed and always strive for positive results and if changes don’t provide expected results then this provides good feedback for review and further modification.

Below is some of the feedback from several of our past judges to provide context of why we are reviewing these rules.

➤ **Joe Vicari ('07 NFC & NFF)**

Mr. Vicari was pleased with the event and how he was taken care of. He was less pleased with our broke dogs. The Gun dogs lacked the performance, style and desire which he saw in the younger dogs. He was curious to why this was but was pleased with the performance, style and desire of the Futurity dogs. He thought we had 6 solid contenders in the Futurity which could have won.

Why the deficiencies in the Gun dog? Joe wondered if it was due to the breaking process or why the desire seemed to be lacking. He even thought of trying to break one out to see if the method would have anything to do with it.

➤ **Jim Cipponeri ('07 NFC)**

Mr. Cipponeri really enjoyed his stay at Nationals. The dogs all demonstrated good hunting desire and birdiness. He liked that most of the dogs ran to objectives and stayed off of the horse path. The difficulty he saw across all of the performances, except for the National Champion, was staunchness, steadiness and style on their bird-work. He was disappointed at the quantity of dogs that were “clean” and the ones that were called back, all but the Champion, had at least one problem with their bird-work. Creeping, moving, flagging, low or no tail and staunchness on point were words he used to describe the “holes” in those performances. He speculated that this may be attributed to the fact that we also expect the retrieve which is a “reward” for pointing and may be over-emphasized in the Weimaraner. Jim offered that what he saw in the Brittany and Vizsla 20 years ago was a similar issue. He believed they focused on steadiness on point and less on retrieve. His opinion was that the tail can be brought back through breeding/genetics but flat-footed steadiness on bird contact is **critical** for all-breed competition success. Jim also thought that more people in the breed should participate in all-breed competition which would promote those attributes necessary to be competitive with the other breeds.

➤ **Lawrence Sandusky ('08 Western OAA, FF & OGD)**

Mr. Sandusky was very candid about his disappointment in judging our broke dogs. He stated, “we rode all day in adverse conditions and ended up with only 3 dogs to call back and 1 (that won the event) who made it through the retrieve. Not a very rewarding time for a judge”. His despair was from the lack of good bird-work for our gun dogs. Dogs moved and crept once establishing point and they pointed the birds so close that several were taken out when the bird flushed. He thought more people in the breed need to participate in all-breed competition to

understand the standards which the continental breeds are competing at and not set a low bar for the Weimaraner. He thought Pros and Amateurs alike would benefit in not only seeing how the other breed performances differ but get a better perspective on good handling of your dog in competition. Mr. Sandusky was critical because he believed the only way to change the result was to give a frank feedback.

➤ **Ellis Herz ('09 Western OAA & FF)**

Mr. Herz was pleased with the event and how he was taken care of. He commented that there weren't any performances which were All Age but was pleased with the few that ran well. Mr. Herz thought that the breed hurts itself by closing stakes to only Weimaraners. He believed we dilute the breed quality by putting titles on dogs which may not achieve them in all-breed competition. He referred to actions that the Vizsla club took 20 years ago and how this had a noticeable improvement in the offspring quality, even though today they are back to closing stakes.

A well explained note from one of our FAC members:

Retrieve? There are a lot of variables with this topic. I'll break it up on how I see it, and the affects it has on our breed -- specifically the "Field Trial" Weimaraner.

Let's start off by discussing the breed.

I think it's safe to say that most trainers would agree that the Weimaraner is the most difficult pointing breed to break. Why, simple, "lack of point". More point, less the retrieve-more retrieve, less point. It's that simple. Do "Pointers" make great retrievers, no...more reason to point. Do the best ones ever retrieve...no, by design. We've all seen the Derby dog that caught way to many birds, and the result was...less reason to point. It's not that you can't have both, but common sense says that if we focus only on point, setting aside the retrieve, over a period of time we will absolutely improve the trait of point, along with style and intensity. It works with any focused trait...simple evolution. The question is what we "really" want out of our breed, and are we willing to sacrifice one trait for another, that's where we stumble. I like the idea of our Continental breed retrieving, but not at the expense of a dog with little or no style, and folks that's where we're at per judges' comments.

Next, let's discuss the almighty "callback".

I think a majority of what we're discussing in regards to the retrieve is really the imperfection of the "callback". It has a lot of impact and creates a mighty facade.

This is a continental breed, and again I like the idea of dog that retrieves. With that being said let's look at the impact that callbacks have on our breed. We've all seen that "really bad" call back -- running birds, novice bird planters, birds that can't fly, gunners that can't shoot, judges that care "too much" about the retrieve, judges that really couldn't "give a crap" about the retrieve, and so and so on.... you get the picture. Callbacks have a huge affect on placements

and placements have a huge affect on who gets bred. If all callbacks were orchestrated perfectly every time and every dog had a "true and even" opportunity to perform equally. It wouldn't be near the issue, but that's not the case. It's imperfect. Here lies the problem, unfortunate circumstances in the callback can take out that dog which displayed the best back course" traits" and hand points, titles, and notoriety over to a lesser back course dog. Which traits are most important to us, that is up to us to decide.

Finally, and to me most importantly, breeding.

Breeding comes down to what kind of dog you like. All of us have a little (or in some cases a lot) different vision of the perfect grey dog. Some like a fast snappy medium ranging gun dog with the utmost in manners. Some like that wild eyed renegade that eats up the countryside. Is one right, one wrong, hell no just different. Just like people - different personalities, different sets of traits.

Concerned breeders strive with each generation to enhance and solidify particular desired traits that are most important to them. Breeding is evolution. Take a minute and write down, in priority, the 10 most important "traits" for your perfect Weim. How did you rate them? Was retrieving instinct one of those "most" concerned traits? I personally see it as a bonus, not a focus at this point in the "Field Trial" Weimaraner evolution and my breeding program. Individuals who participate in "Hunt Tests" and the average Joe "Hunter" will rate the "retrieving instinct" trait much higher on their list. Concentration and loading up on specific traits usually creates breed differences, here lies our problem and our never ending disagreement. Truly, it's no different than a field dog versus a show dog in a much more macro way.

The question is whether there is a propensity for us to support **compromise** in favor of trying to improve the "point" trait. The method to achieve this will always be a challenging discussion but in a constant effort to improve we are posing these rule change questions to you for your input.

For clarity, the basis of this review is not to modify the AKC requirements for achieving a Field Champion/Amateur Field Champion title.

Below are questions/rules which the FAC would like your input:

WCA National Field Trial

4. Courses and Stakes

a. National Weimaraner Field Championship

1. This is a mandatory stake.
2. Shall be conducted in one (1) hour braces.
3. A continuous course is required.
4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.
5. Will be a money stake. (See prizes paragraph this section.)
6. Open to any Weimaraner which, at the time entries close for this stake, is a Field

Champion or an Amateur Field Champion, or has placed first, second, third or fourth in any AKC broke dog stake such as an Open or Amateur All-Age stake or an Open or Amateur Gun Dog stake. The event, stake and placement that qualified the dog to be entered shall be submitted with the entry.

1. Should the item be removed? : 4. a. 4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.

Yes _____

No _____

c. National Amateur Weimaraner Field Championship

1. This is a mandatory stake.
2. Shall be conducted in one (1) hour braces.
3. Continuous course is required.
4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.
5. Open to any Weimaraner which at the time entries close for this stake, while being owned by an amateur, has earned its Field Championship or Amateur Field Championship, or has placed first, second, third or fourth in any AKC broke dog stake such as an Open or Amateur All-Age stake or an Open or Amateur Gun Dog stake. The event, stake and placement that qualified the dog to be entered shall be submitted with the entry. Only persons who, in the judgment of the Field Trial Committee, are qualified as amateurs, as defined in Chapter 14, Section 2 of the AKC Rules for Pointing Breed Field Trials may serve as a scout in the National Amateur Championship Stake.

2. Should the item be removed? : 4. c. 4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.

Yes _____

No _____

WCA Classic Field Events

5. Courses and Stakes

a. Western or Eastern or Mid-America Open All Age Classic

1. This is a mandatory stake.
2. Must be conducted in one (1) hour braces.
3. Single Course is acceptable, but a Continuous Course is preferred.
4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.
5. Will be a money stake (see prizes paragraph this section).

3. Should the item be removed? : 5.a. 4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.

Yes _____

No _____

c. Western or Eastern or Mid-America Amateur Gun Dog Classic

1. This is a mandatory stake.
2. Conducted in 30 minute braces.
3. Single Course is acceptable but a continuous course is preferred.
4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.

4. Should the item be removed? : 5.c. 4. Dogs in contention will be called back to retrieve.

Yes _____

No _____