



**Poodle Club of America, Inc.**

**Rules and Guidelines for UWC/UWCX Tests**

*For Judges and Participants*

**Poodle Club of America, Inc.**  
**Rules and Guidelines for UWC/UWCX Tests**

**Rules:** The Poodle Club of America, Inc. allows qualified AKC registered Poodles over 6 months of age who meet the performance requirements to receive the Upland Working Certificate and the Upland Working Certificate Excellent. The Poodle is a versatile, all-purpose hunting dog, adept at finding, flushing and retrieving upland game birds on both land and water. In upland hunting, the dog is an active member of the hunting team. The purpose of the

UWC/UWCX tests is to evaluate:

- Natural Hunting Ability - desire, courage, perseverance, pattern
- Bird Finding Ability - response to wind and scent conditions, use of nose
- Flushing - enthusiasm, determination to put the bird to flight
- Trainability - range, pattern, gun response, response to commands
- Retrieve - marking, enthusiasm, mouth, delivery

**It is imperative that the handler be familiar with the Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels including Guidelines for Spaniel Hunting Tests.**

**All UWC/UWCX tests shall be pass/fail.**

No Titles or Designations are awarded for test passes.

Only one certificate will be issued for a UWC or UWCX pass to the same poodle

The purpose of the PCA Upland Certificate Program is to test the Poodles natural abilities as an upland hunting companion. Hunting instincts and abilities are evaluated as the Poodle finds, flushes and retrieves upland birds on land and from water. Teamwork, eagerness to challenge cover in search of birds, ability to scent and locate birds, tolerance of gunfire and willingness to return when called back to the handler are all taken into consideration. The Poodle should have a soft mouth to deliver birds “fit for the table”.

**The Upland Working Certificate** tests the skills of Poodles which make them a good upland hunting companion. They are birdy, natural hunters, who are not afraid of gunfire. This includes poodles with limited field experience who have, with training, demonstrated these same abilities.

**Rules for this test are the same as the AKC Hunting Test for Spaniels, Junior Hunter, with differences noted in the PCA guidelines.**

**The Upland Working Certificate Excellent** tests the abilities and skills of Poodles who are accomplished upland hunting companions, demonstrating trainability and teamwork.

**Rules for this test are the same as the AKC Hunting Test for Spaniels, Senior Hunter, with differences noted in the PCA guidelines.**

The UWC test includes:

1. Land - Quartering, flushing, retrieve
2. Water - Retrieve

The UWCX test includes:

1. Land - Quartering, flushing, retrieve
2. Hunt Dead
3. Water - Retrieve

**Bitches in heat are not eligible to compete and are not allowed on the grounds.**

**Practice days and/or seminars** may be held the day prior to the test on the same land, but at different locations from the site where the tests will be conducted.

### **Guidelines:**

#### **1. PCA Approval**

The Poodle Club of America grants permission to Affiliate Clubs and other AKC-licensed clubs to hold Upland Working Certificate and Upland Working Certificate Excellent Tests under the PCA Rules and Guidelines. Poodles meeting the requirements set forward in the Rules and Guidelines and which complete the designated tests at one of these events are eligible to receive a PCA UWC or UWCX Certificate. The club holding the test is the sponsor, not PCA. There is no limit to the number of tests a given club may hold as long as they are conducted properly.

#### **2. PCA Application**

Clubs applying for permission to hold a PCA Upland Working Certificate or Upland Working Certificate Excellent Test must do so on the official PCA application. Applications may be obtained from the PCA website or from the PCA Affiliate Club Council Chair. You will find the name and address of this person on the Poodle Club of America web site under “PCA The Club.” Send your completed application to the PCA Affiliate Council Chair at least 60 days prior to the test date.

To avoid a delay in approval, make sure the applications are filled out properly. When filling in the judge’s qualifications (see #7 below), be sure to be specific.

#### **3. Other Breeds**

PCA has no objections to non-Poodles running in the tests. The test giving club may require that non-Poodles run after all Poodles. PCA does not award certificates to non-Poodles. Each breed club has rules and regulations, and some will send certificates to the host club to give out to owners of the dogs of their breed passing the test. This should be arranged by the owners of

the non-Poodles requesting to run in a Poodle test. It would also be good to remind the judges when they are making out their evaluation sheets that the PCA is only interested in the performance of the Poodles running. Other retriever breeds are allowed to run out of courtesy. The PCA does not want the performances of the breeds compared to each other. Only Poodles shall be allowed to run at tests that are associated with a National or Regional Specialty. These are “Poodles only” events and all aspects of them should be for Poodles.

#### **4. Purpose**

The purpose of the UWC/UWCX tests is to demonstrate the natural ability of a Poodle as a versatile, all-purpose hunting dog, adept at finding, flushing and retrieving upland game birds on land and in water. The dog should be an active member of the hunting team.

#### **5. Philosophy**

Attention to fairness and an attempt to carefully answer the questions of handlers and spectators should be undertaken. It is the intent of PCA to encourage the entrance of dogs into these tests and the participation of Poodle owners and handlers in all aspects of field work. To that end, an attitude of helping and educating those in attendance is sought from judges and committee members alike.

#### **6. Handler Knowledge and Dog Work**

It is the handler’s responsibility to familiarize themselves with the UWC/UWCX Rules and Guidelines. If possible, attending several spaniel hunt test events is encouraged prior to entering a UWC/UWCX test. The committee can help by making copies of the Rules and Guidelines available to all participants before the running of the tests. The UWC/UWCX rules are available on the PCA website.

#### **7. Judges**

PCA requires 2 judges. One judge must be **licensed** and should have judged at least one licensed AKC Senior Test or higher. The other judge must either be licensed (JH or higher) **OR** must have titled a dog in Senior or higher. In a test in which the entry is not limited, 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.

**It should be noted if other breeds are invited that qualified AKC judges will be required.**

Judges should be receptive to the UWC/UWCX Committee. Any complaints from handlers will be directed to the Committee and the Committee or designated representative will approach the judges if there is a legitimate complaint, according to the majority of committee members.

Should the judges have questions prior to a judging assignment, they may contact the test committee of the club for answers.

Call back of dogs failing the first series may be allowed (and is encouraged) at the discretion of the judges. This encourages the full participation of dogs and handlers and can be used as a learning experience. Note that these dogs are to run after all qualifiers have run in each test level.

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 pass for want of merit.

## **8. UWC - Field**

This is the heart of upland hunting. Upland hunting requires more independent work from the dog. His nose, eyes and ears are all focused on working the field to scent, find, flush and retrieve birds. He should eagerly go into cover in search of game while still maintaining a proper working distance from his handler. He should not continually look to the handler for directions or appear to be led to the birds.

### **UWC Field Set up and Testing Elements**

- The beginning and end of the field course shall be marked by flags. The general path, or centerline, will be specified by the judges. Cover should be light to moderate.
- Chukar, Pheasant, and Dove are allowed. Chukar or Pheasant are the preferred gamebird and effort should be made to obtain these over Dove. Dove can fly sporadically and be more uncooperative. For other allowed game birds, see #11 below.
- Each dog is given the opportunity to flush 2 birds and make at least 1 retrieve. Three birds are planted per dog. The dog and handler must not see where the birds are being planted. The first bird will be planted between 25 and 35 yards from the start. The remainder of the 2 birds at approximately 30 to 40 yard increments.
- The handler, Poodle, and judges will enter the field. One gunner will be on either side of the handler and stay approximately in line with the handler as they move down the field. A Shagger will walk behind the Judges to take used birds. The dog is working in front of the handler.
- While no specific pattern is called for, the dog should naturally try to cover both sides of the field in an efficient manner. The handler may quietly use whistles, commands and/or hand signals to keep the dog working in the appropriate area, as long as it is not disruptive to the hunt. The handler may not yell or scream commands excessively. The natural hunting ability of the dog is of importance.
- Ideally, the dog finds the bird and flushes it; the bird flies; the gunners shoot the bird. The handler may not move up to the dog once the bird is shot unless otherwise specified by the judges. The dog is to find the downed bird and retrieve it to the handler within 2 steps/close proximity of the handler.

Reasons this test may be repeated:

- The planted bird was a runaway (left the course) and couldn't be found.
- The bird is accidentally kicked up by a person in the field.
- The bird is a wild flush (flew off on its own.)
- No birds were shot due to “flyaways” in which case the Judges will call “No Bird.” A “flyaway” is a bird flying in a direction, manner, or range that is not safe to shoot and/or the bird flew out of course. This is at the Judges' discretion to call No Bird. The Judges decide if it is a retrievable bird if it flies and lands outside of the course.

### **Objectives**

- The dog must have the opportunity to flush and retrieve two birds. The key word here is opportunity. If the dog finds and traps the first bird(s) it is not to be penalized. Game birds will sometimes not fly straight up as we like due to field and/or wind conditions, etc.
  - At least one bird must be shot at.
  - At least one bird must be retrieved.
- The bird is retrieved within 2 steps/close proximity of the handler in an acceptable time frame.
  - Being steady (having the dog sit) to wing or shot is not required.
- After two bird contacts by the dog, if the dog has not had the opportunity for at least one shot bird and retrieve, any of the following may happen at the Judges' discretion:
  - ❖ Another live bird is to be planted, hunted, flushed and hopefully shot and retrieved.
  - ❖ A dead bird is to be thrown as a shot is fired. This will give the dog the opportunity to be successful in completing a retrieve.
- Failure of the dog to mark a shot/downed bird is not to be penalized. If the dog does not see the bird fall and the rest of the work is deemed acceptable by the Judges, a dead bird may be thrown and shot for the dog to retrieve.
- The natural ability of the Poodle to hunt and retrieve gamebird should be apparent without over handling of the dog.

### **Disqualifications**

- The dog should show no shyness of cover and stay within a reasonable distance of the handler.
- A dog that runs out of control, remains only behind the handler, shows extreme gun-shyness, shows no interest in game when encountered, shows no interest to hunt, does not bring a downed bird within 2 steps/close proximity of the handler, or does not return to the handler when called in a reasonable time determined by the Judges, the dog should be marked as failed.
- Excessive barking, vocalizing, lunging/leaping, etc. of the dog should be marked as failed.
- Failure to find and flush at least one bird in deemed favorable conditions with strong flyers deemed by the Judges, and/or turn away from and leave a non-flyer should be marked as failed.
- If the dog returns a bird with severe damage to the bird caused by the dog, the dog should be marked as failed.

### **The UWCX - Land**

The UWCX Land portion is the same as the UWC Land portion, including Disqualifications, except for the following:

- The test should include moderate to heavy cover.
- The dog must make two retrieves.
- The dog must retrieve to hand.
- The dog should be able to clearly and efficiently scent and locate birds using the wind to its advantage and covering the field.
- The dog should demonstrate enthusiasm, courage in heavier cover, and confidence in itself to complete the task at hand. It should show eagerness to return to its handler in quick fashion with bird in mouth.

### **UWCX - Hunt Dead**

The purpose of the Hunt Dead is to recreate a scenario. Imagine a bird has been shot and fallen, and while you did not see exactly where it came down nor was your dog able to mark it, you saw the general area in which it landed. The dog would be sent into the general area to find the dead game and retrieve it to the handler.

### **Set up and Testing Element**

- A flag will mark the start of the find area.
- A dead bird is placed (planted) in moderate cover 35 yards away.
- The handler is told the general direction of the bird but not exact location by the Judges. The Judges will know where the bird is planted.
- There is no gunshot for this test.
- The handler and dog go to the edge of the find area. Judges will remain behind the handler.
- The dog may be lightly restrained by the collar. Leash shall be removed by the handler.
- The dog will be sent to find the dead bird from the side of the handler.
- After sending the dog, the handler may move forward half of the distance to the find area and also laterally as needed. Judges may help guide this.
- If the dog leaves the area, it may be called or handled back to the area. Encouragement is permitted.
- The dog should find the bird in a reasonable time, with a 5-minute time limit.
- The bird must be retrieved to the area of the handler to hand.

### **Objectives**

- The dog should be willing to leave the handler and eagerly search for dead game.
- The bird is returned to hand.
- While handling and encouragement when needed is permitted, a dog that quickly and efficiently scents and locates dead game using its natural abilities and instincts is favored.

### **Disqualifications**

- A dog with no willingness to leave the handler and/or showing no willingness to hunt shall fail.
- A dog that cannot be lightly restrained by the collar and instead causes excessive noise, barking, lunging, jumping etc. shall fail.
- Crushing or destroying of the bird caused by the dog shall fail.



- If the dog finds the dead bird and with encouragement will still not pick up and retrieve the bird, instead turning away or leaving the bird etc., the dog should be marked failed.
- A dog that is running wildly out of control should be marked failed.
- If the handler cannot handle or encourage the dog back to the find area to hunt in a reasonable time frame the dog should be marked failed.
- If the dog cannot find the dead bird within 5 minutes the dog should be marked failed.
- Excessive yelling, shouting, and commanding of an uncooperative dog should be marked failed.
- Re-casting from the side of the handler.

### **Water - Retrieve – UWC**

The water retrieve is to recreate the scenario of retrieving a shot bird to the handler from a body of water often encountered in upland hunting.

#### **Set up and Testing Element**

- The Judges will determine where the entry point to the water shall be.
- The dog and handler will approach the designated area.
- The dog may be lightly restrained by the collar at the side of the handler.
- A dead bird will be hand-thrown by a volunteer or club member into the water between 20-25 yards. It may not be thrown less than 20 yards. The toss will be from the same side of water that the entry point is for the dog. The bird must land in the water.
- When the bird is tossed, a gun shall be fired by a gunner in the direction of the thrown bird. A popper may be used instead of a shotgun. A bird call may be used but is not required.
- When the bird hits the water, the dog is to be released to enter the water to retrieve the bird.
- The dog should enter the water retrieving the bird back to land within 2 steps/close proximity of the handler.

#### **Objectives**

- The dog is willing to enter the water for the bird.
- The dog eagerly returns to the handler with the bird.

- The dog should ideally swim straight to the tossed bird. It is not required to swim in a straight line back to the handler after obtaining the bird.
- The dog is not required to exit the water the same place it entered.
- If the dog does exit a different place than it entered, it should continue to retrieve the bird to the handler in a reasonable amount of time determined by the judges.
- The bird is returned within 2 steps/close proximity of the handler.
- If the dog drops the bird on land while returning to the handler, it will not be disqualified so long as it picks it back up quickly and returns to the handler.
- The handler is not allowed to move more than 2 steps once the dog has been sent unless otherwise specified by the Judges.
- Encouragement, hand signals/commands are allowed but may not be excessive or disruptive.

### **Disqualifications**

- A dog shy, nervous or unwilling to enter the water even with light encouragement/commands should be marked failed.
- A dog unwilling to leave its handler should be marked failed.
- A dog that demonstrates gun-shyness and/or fear should be marked failed.
- A dog that enters the water but fails to get the bird, given fair attempts in good conditions deemed by the judges, should be marked failed.
- A dog that is running out of control, causing excessive noise/barking, lunging or jumping should be marked failed.
- A dog that exits the water with the bird in mouth but does not return within close proximity to the handler should be marked failed.
- A dog that returns a bird crushed or damaged by the dog should be marked failed.
- A dog that repeatedly or excessively drops and/or plays with the bird failing to return to the handler after exiting the water should be marked failed.
- The handler entering the water will be marked failed.
- Re-casting from the side of the handler.

## **Water - Retrieve - UWCX**

The UWCX Water portion shall be the same as the UWC Water portion, including Disqualifications, except for the following:

- The dead bird shall be hand tossed 30-35 yards. It may not be thrown less than 30 yards. It can be thrown at a distance from the dog so that the bird falls directly in front of the dog at the line.
- The dog shall be steady (sitting at the side of the handler with no restraint on the collar) at the water line. The dog will remain in position until the Judge taps the handlers back. The Judge will tap the handlers back quickly after the bird hits the water. The dog may then be released by the handler to make the retrieve.
- The bird must be retrieved to hand.
- The dog should return eagerly in quick fashion to the handler after exiting the water.

## **9. Other General Information**

- ❖ **Training Devices** – Electronic collars, choke collars, prong collars and other training devices are not allowed on the grounds.
- ❖ **Leashes** - dogs should remain on leash (long lines permitted) and under control on the grounds unless actively testing or otherwise deemed permissible by the Club. The dog remains on leash when going to the start line in any portion of the test for both UWC and UWCX.
- ❖ **Hair tie back policy** – A dog may have its hair tied back with rubber bands. Wraps, bandages, canine vests and any type of dog “clothing” are prohibited.
- ❖ **Popper shells - Field blank loads or primer hulls** may be used for all portions of the tests not requiring live loads.
- ❖ **Blaze orange** – All handlers, judges, gunners and anyone else on the grounds shall wear blaze orange that is covering the shoulders at a minimum. Only an orange hat is not allowed.
- ❖ **Gallery** - The judges will decide where the (spectators) gallery is to be located. If possible, the gallery should be allowed to follow the hunters into the field, always staying behind the marshal or designated official.
- ❖ **Severe weather** or dangerous conditions may be reason to cancel or delay a test. This will be decided by the Judges and Committee in mutual consultation.

## **10. Touching the Dog**

For UWC, handlers may touch their dogs during the test, including taking hold of the collar before taking the bird from the dog. Intimidation is not allowed. For UWCX, the handler may not touch the dog during the test. Incidental touching while the handler is taking the bird from the dog will not be faulted, unless it is attempted intimidation or abuse.

## **11. Birds**

Upland game birds are defined as pheasant, pigeon, chukar, quail, and doves, or any other species of game bird that might be unique to a specific region. The type of bird to be used must be stated in the Premium List for the tests. Chukar and Pheasant are preferred.

## **12. Delivery Of Birds**

For UWC, the dog must deliver the bird to the area of the handler (within 2 steps/close proximity.) Then the handler may move up to take the bird either from the dog or off the ground, taking a hold of the collar if necessary.

For UWCX, the delivery to the hand is required. With live birds, the dog must maintain control of the bird until the handler takes it.

## **13. Cover**

For the UWC, the birds should be in light to moderate hunting cover, dense enough to hold a bird and tall enough so the birds are not seen by dog and handler.

For UWCX, the birds should be in moderate to heavy hunting cover. Height of the cover is not nearly as important as the density of the cover and the ability of the cover to hold and conceal the birds. It should be realistic hunting cover.

## **14. Steadiness at the line**

For UWC, steadiness is not required. The dog may be lightly restrained by the collar. Leash must be removed before the test begins.

For UWCX, Steadiness to shot and flush / Sit to flush is not required. Leash must be removed before any portion of test begins.

## **15. Recasts**

For the UWC, casting at a sit position at the side of the handler is not allowed. You may use hand signals/commands otherwise.

For the UWCX, casting at a sit position at the side of the handler is not allowed. You may use hand signals otherwise.

## **16. Controlled Breaks and Other Problems**

*Refer to the AKC Spaniel Hunt Test Rules / Guidelines for Spaniel Hunting Tests / Scoring / Ability Categories/ Disqualifying Traits for definitions and interpretational issues.*

These include blinking a bird, failure to find birds, refusal to flush, recast, gun shyness, viciousness and out of control, hard mouth, and refused retrieve.

Running order will be determined by draw as described in the AKC Regulations & Guidelines for Hunt Tests. Handlers entering multiple dogs will be given time between dogs in each test.

Severe weather or dangerous conditions may be reason to cancel or delay a test. This may be decided by the judges and Committee in mutual consultation.

## **17. Limited Entries**

It is strongly recommended that when limiting entries at a UWC/UWCX tests, preference should be given to Poodles. Any Poodle that has already passed one of the tests should run first followed by first time Poodle entrants and then other breeds. This allows new Poodles and/or handlers the fairest chance. Day of entries may be taken at the host club's discretion.

## **18. Record Keeping and Consideration to Qualifiers**

It is required that all clubs use a catalog and keep a marked catalog from their UWC/UWCX tests. Have the judges annotate pass/or fail and sign the catalog. Mail a copy of the marked and signed catalog to the PCA UWC/UWCX Test Chair and keep a copy for your records.

A UWC/UWCX test held by a PCA Affiliate Club should submit a marked and signed catalog to the PCA Test Chair. The catalog must be signed by both judges. The results for passing poodles will be forwarded to the PCA Certificate Chair for review and handling. Handlers of dogs who pass a UWC/UWCX test held by a licensed AKC club may submit evidence of their pass to the PCA Certificate Chair. Please fill out the certification form at the test and have the judges sign it. A copy of the certification is available on the PCA web site.

It is a nice gesture, although not required, for the host club to give some sort of token prize, rosette, congratulatory card, etc., to the handlers of dogs passing on the test day (qualifiers). This also gives the handler additional tangible proof that their dog qualified.

## **19. Collars and Neoprene Vests at the UWC/UWCX Test**

If a dog runs with a collar, a flat or rolled buckle collar shall be used. Pinch/choke or prong collars are prohibited while the dog is running because of potential danger to the dog. Electronic collars and pinch or prong collars are not allowed on the grounds at a UWC/UWCX test. Neoprene, floatation, or other types of canine vests are Not allowed in UWC/UWCX Tests.

## **20. After the Test**

Judges are required to submit an evaluation form to the PCA Test Chair within 7 days of the test. The host club is responsible for completing and submitting paperwork to the PCA Test Chair within 7 days of a test. This will assist PCA in the future development and refinement of guidelines and suggestions for test giving clubs and handlers.

## **21. The Committee**

The UWC/UWCX tests are intended to be essentially self-regulating. To accomplish this, the host club shall appoint a test committee. It is recommended that the Test Chairperson be a member of the sponsoring Club. At least three members of the Committee, including the Chairman, must be available during the test. The Committee shall have complete responsibility for the planning and conducting of the test. The Committee shall be held responsible for compliance with all of the rules and procedures and the authority to decide upon any matter 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 general PCA Rules and Guidelines for UWC/UWCX Tests and the Regulations and Guidelines for AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels. No person should agree to serve on a Test Committee unless he/she is prepared to carry out these duties creditably and exercise these powers fairly, firmly and impartially. A club member serving as a judge for a test should not serve on the Committee. The Committee should be familiar with the PCA Rules and Guidelines for UWC/UWCX Tests. Although the judges set up the tests, it is important for the Committee to know that if the judges set up a test that is contrary to the intent of the PCA rules, the Committee should step in and tactfully explain the problem. In this way you can ensure a proper test for those participating.

While PCA is always prepared to back up a Test Committee that properly exercises its powers as described herein, it is the duty of the committee and not the PCA to deal initially with any matter which may occur during the tests.

The UWC/UWCX Test Chairperson should also have a copy of the AKC Regulations and Guidelines for AKC Hunting Tests for Spaniels available.

## **22. Complaints**

Each participant is expected to do his part to keep up the standards of the UWC/UWCX tests and to report to the Committee any incident which may be detrimental to the purpose or the rules of the tests. No person shall make complaints directly to the judges but shall work through the Committee which is held solely responsible for the conduct of the tests.

Upon receipt of a complaint or suggestion, the member or members of the Committee is/are expected to take appropriate action. If the complaint is of a serious nature which may be detrimental to the purpose of the rules of the UWC/UWCX test, the entire Committee should convene immediately to hear the complaint. After duly hearing the evidence in a fair, orderly and impartial manner, the Test Committee may decide to withhold the issuance of any UWC/UWCX Certificate provided that the Committee did determine that the UWC/UWCX

Rules and Regulations had been violated.

If the Committee does withhold a certificate based on a detrimental incident, then the reasons for withholding it must be submitted to the PCA Test Chair within 30 days.

A participant who is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Test Committee of the host club may submit an appeal in writing to the PCA Test Chair within 30 days. Such appeal should describe the nature of the incident and set forth the grounds on which the appeal is made.

Upon receipt of a written appeal involving the UWC/UWCX test, the written records from the Test Committee of the host club and from the complainant will be submitted to the PCA Affiliate Club Council Chair, who will investigate the incident and submit a recommendation to the PCA Board of Directors for final action. The PCA Board of Directors shall have the power to withhold or rescind any or all UWC/UWCX Certificates.

If the Test Committee of a host club fails to fulfill its obligation with respect to the planning and conduct of the UWC/UWCX test, the question may arise as to whether the club will be entrusted with future PCA Certificate events.