

Del Val April 2007 News

Welcome to the 2007 Del-Val NAVHDA Training Season

With the coming of spring, we are all looking forward to another great training season. As a chapter we are lucky to have some of the best training grounds and water around, as well as many experienced trainers and an active membership. Del-Val members have had great success in preparing their dogs for testing, along with a lot of fun and camaraderie.

NAVHDA is a unique, all-volunteer organization that has grown steadily since its beginning in 1969, and its success is partly due to shared values of sportsmanship, a love of the versatile dogs, and a willingness to work together to foster the development and testing of these dogs. It is useful to periodically articulate some shared values so that all Del-Val members understand the chapter's expectations and guidelines.

Del-Val Training and Testing Guidelines:

Training Protocol:

Please make every effort to arrive early for training days. Your late arrival will make everyone late, as we need to collect money and make training assignments in order to start the day. If you are unavoidably late, please call someone on a cell phone so that we can give you instructions where to meet. Plan to come early and share a cup of coffee as we assemble for the training.

If you are late for a training day without calling, your birds may be sold. If you don't show up and your birds are not sold, you will be expected to pay for them.

Dead game should be cleaned and stored in a cooler when possible. All dead game needs to be removed at the end of the day, not placed in the garbage cans at the testing and training area. Please respect the game by handling all birds humanely.

Please speak directly with the Group Leader if you have questions or suggestions about the day's organization. Your concerns may be very helpful, but we cannot make changes if we don't hear your ideas. Positive discussion, not private "grousing", is the attitude we want to encourage in our club.

Del-Val NAVHDA is organized around the principle of helping each other train our dogs. Please be conscious of giving everyone a fair share of time in the field and water. Be sure no one is waiting for a turn in the duck search pond or the fields if you wish to take a second turn on a training day. In particular, if there are two groups rotating in the duck search pond, please let the second group complete their turns before you run your dog a second time.

Remember, we are helping each other train, but you must take responsibility for training your own dog(s). Do your homework between training days, and come prepared to the day knowing what you need to work on.

Welcome, encourage, and support newcomers to our sport and our club. We were all new at one time, and someone helped us!

Testing Protocol:

We cannot run tests without our members' help. If you aren't testing, please plan to attend at least one test a year and support your fellow members who are. If you are testing one day on a weekend, please plan to stay for the second day and offer your help.

When you volunteer to help, please be good to your word, show up on time, and do not back out at the last minute. Out of respect to the judges, test workers, and those testing their dogs, please do your part to be sure that our club demonstrates the best effort and behavior possible.

Testing slots are becoming more limited at all NAVHDA tests. If you sign up for a test and need to cancel, do so as far in advance as possible so someone else has a chance to enter. Our refund policy is that if you drop out eleven or more days prior to the test date you will receive your refund if your spot is filled. If you drop out within ten days of the test date, you will not get a refund regardless of whether or not your spot is filled.

It is very unsporting to leave a test early if you suspect your dog is doing poorly. Fortunately, this doesn't happen often, but it is entirely unacceptable. You have taken a testing slot that someone else could have used, and you have been rude to the judges and workers volunteering their time. If you demonstrate this kind of poor sportsmanship, you may not be accepted to run your dog in a future test.

If you have a problem when running a dog in our test, please speak directly to the Field Marshall about your concern. We do not want private "grousing", especially on a test day when we have judges and people from other clubs participating.

If you have questions about your score on test day, you will have an opportunity to ask the judges questions immediately after the scores are read. Once the scorecards are put away that window is closed. We do not want to make our judges uncomfortable, which might affect whether they will consider judging at our future events.

Suggestions:

Your input is always welcome, and as our chapter grows we all need to be open to new and innovative ways to keep putting our best foot forward. We encourage constructive criticism accompanied by positive suggestions and a willingness to help implement new ideas. In other words, don't be a backseat driver; be positive and be prepared to get involved.

Code of Sportsmanship:

- Show respect for all game used in testing and training by handling birds appropriately and humanely.
- Do not leave dead game lying about at any time; dead game should be kept bagged, and cleaned and stored in a cooler when possible. All dead game needs to be removed at the end of the day, not placed in the garbage cans at the testing and training area.
- Be committed to the values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and succeeding or failing with grace.
- Accept constructive criticism given in the spirit of helping you and your dog. Make sure any criticism you offer others is given in the same spirit.
- Always consider as paramount the welfare of your dog(s).
- Do not embarrass NAVHDA, the Del-Val chapter, or yourself while participating in a club activity.