SUBMISSION FOR RULE REVIEW FOR RATG

**Current Rule**

3 TITLES

3.1 All dogs eligible to be entered in Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs in accordance with these Rules shall be eligible to receive Class Title Certificates upon qualification and application.

3.2 Applications for permission to use the letters “NRA” and “ORA” shall be lodged with the applicant’s local ANKC Ltd Member Body. ‘NRA’ signifying Novice Retrieving Ability in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges, and one pass must have included water. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

 ‘ORA’ signifying Open Retrieving Ability in connection with, and after the name of, each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges, and one pass must have included water, Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

**Amendment is to remove “and one pass must have included water”**

3 TITLES

3.1 All dogs eligible to be entered in Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs in accordance with these Rules shall be eligible to receive Class Title Certificates upon qualification and application.

3.2 Applications for permission to use the letters “NRA” and “ORA” shall be lodged with the applicant’s local ANKC Ltd Member Body. ‘NRA’ signifying Novice Retrieving Ability in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

 ‘ORA’ signifying Open Retrieving Ability in connection with, and after the name of, each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

**Rationale**

Rationale for removing mandatory water pass is due to intermittent drought problems (not a current problem, but certain to be one in the future), also some clubs not having availability of water. As an example, the DogsNSW grounds were used frequently for water runs until the weed infestation which made it dangerous to use for the dogs. I suggest that the mandatory requirement for water be removed. Further, the ability to use water is already in the rules:

**Rule 6. Rules and exercises**,

6.4 The ground for a Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs should preferably be a grassed area of sufficient size to allow for retrieves of 80 metres or more. Retrieving exercises should be conducted on an area that preferably is not closely mown. **Water may be used**.

6.4 states that water MAY be used. This makes it optional, not mandatory.

SUBMISSION FOR RULE REVIEW FOR RATG

OLD RULE:

*5.1 The handler, with dog on lead, shall advance to the Control Point/Pegs for the purpose of commencing the Test. The dog and handler are under the control of the Judge from the time the lead and collar are removed and handed to the steward at the control Point/Pegs until the lead and collar are placed back on the dog.*

*5.1 continued….. When the dog has retrieved the Game the handler will return with dog at heel to the Control Pegs, where the steward will take the Game and return collar and lead to the handler who will place it on the dog. The exercise is then finished.*

NEW RULE:

5.1 The handler, with dog on lead, shall advance to the Control Point/Pegs for the purpose of commencing the Test. The dog and handler are under the control of the Judge from the time the lead and collar are removed and handed to the steward **or judge or retained on the person of the handler** at the control Point/Pegs until the lead and collar are placed back on the dog.

5.1 continued….. When the dog has retrieved the Game the handler will return with dog at heel to the Control Pegs, where the steward **or judge** will take the Game and return collar and lead to the handler, **if held by the steward or judge**, who will place it on the dog. The exercise is then finished.

RATIONALE:

It is not always possible or necessary to have a steward in this role so the judge, if they so choose, may perform these tasks.

To reduce the possible transmission of COVID or other diseases, the affiliate or judge may choose to elect that the collar and lead are retained by the handler, as has been brought in by some other dog sports such as obedience and rally.

OLD RULE:

3.2 Applications for permission to use the letters “NRA” and “ORA” shall be lodged with the applicant’s local ANKC Ltd Member Body.

‘NRA’ signifying Novice Retrieving Ability in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges**, and one pass must have included water**. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

NEW RULE:

3.2 Applications for permission to use the letters “NRA” and “ORA” shall be lodged with the applicant’s local ANKC Ltd Member Body.

‘NRA’ signifying Novice Retrieving Ability in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges**.** Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

RATIONALE:

1. the rule is very vague -“ including water” can mean anything from a long swim to splash through a puddle.
2. Not all gundog breeds have a history of being required to retrieve from/through water and this rule unfairly disadvantages those breeds of gundog.
3. Not all clubs have access to water and many competitors have no access to water for training. These trials often attract fewer entries reducing the viability of the club running the trial leading to fewer trials. Competitors with no access to water for training are disadvantaged by this rule.

SUBMISSION FOR RULE REVIEW FOR RATG

**New class to be ADDED**

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to compete in an Advanced Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must have gained its title in an Open Retrieving Ability test.

A dog which has gained its title in Open or has gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) – DM, CM, QND, NRD shall be eligible to compete in Open and/or Advanced RATG. Titles of AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH shall be ineligible.

TITLES

Applications for permission to use the letters “NRA” , “ORA” and “ARA” shall be lodged with the applicant’s local ANKC Ltd Member Body.

 ‘NRA’ signifying Novice Retrieving Ability in connection with and after the name of each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

 ‘ORA’ signifying Open Retrieving Ability in connection with, and after the name of, each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

‘ARA’ signifying Advanced Retrieving Ability in connection with, and after the name of, each dog, which shall be certified to have received three relevant passes, achieved under at least two Judges. Maximum points will be 100. To attain a pass, a dog must receive at least 50% in each exercise and an overall score of not less than 75%. All passing dogs will receive a Pass Certificate.

ADVANCED CLASS ELIGIBILITY

Advanced Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs is for Gundogs that have received three passes in Open Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs, subject also to Rules 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 , 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7

EXERCISE 1

Dog to walk to heel for 30 metres to 50 metres. The exercise is to include at least 2 turns at the Judge’s discretion.

Procedure

As for Exercise 1 in Novice, except that the handler and dog will make turns as directed by the Judge and exercise will finish with the dog placed in a “hide”.

Assessment

As for Exercise 1 in Novice.

Points Awarded 10 points.

EXERCISE 2

Dog is put in the sit, stand or drop position in the “hide” and is required to remain in that location during which time the handler walks away from the dog. The handler proceeds to the Control area which is out of sight of the dog. The thrower is activated so as to duplicate the noise of a gunshot (with or without game at the Judge’s discretion) while the dog remains steady in the hide.

On instruction, the handler will call the dog to the heel position. As the handler walks away from the hide, the dog may change position e.g. move from a sit to a stand or drop. Any movement by the dog within the area of the Hide shall be classed as unsteadiness only. A dog will be deemed to have broken from the hide if it moves outside the area designated by the Judge as the Hide.

Procedure

Dog is in the hide. Upon instruction from the judge the handler instructs the dog to stay, and walks to the Control Area 10 to 20 metres away. The Judge will instruct the handler to call up the dog. The handler then calls the dog, which should go to the heel position. The Judge will then declare that the part exercise is finished and Handler and dog proceed to the Firing point.

Assessment

The essentials of the test are that the dog:

a. Remains steady when the handler walks away.

b. Goes to the handler promptly when called.

c. Does not break to the sound of the thrower

d. Does not need excessive commands.

Points Awarded 10 points.

Breaking from the hide deductions up to 5 points for each offence

EXERCISE 3

Blind Find Retrieve

A Blind Find Retrieve shall be a retrieve where a dog is in such a position that the flight, fall or placement of the game cannot be seen. In this exercise the single item of Game is located no more than 50 metres from the Firing Point. It should be possible for a dog to find a Blind Find Retrieve on the initial line from its handler. The Game is either placed in the desired location before Exercise 1or, at the Judge’s discretion, fired from the thrower whilst the dog is in the hide.

Procedure

Dog is at Firing Point (finish point of previous Exercise) The Handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand and direct the dog to the site of the game. The dog will be sent for the item to be retrieved. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled to the Control Point where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment

The essentials of this test are that the dog:

1. Does not retrieve until instructed.
2. Goes directly to the area of the fall of Game.

C. Responds obediently to the direction of the handler.

D. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded 35 points.

EXERCISE 4

A Two-Bird Retrieve. The first item of game shall be cast as for a Mark Retrieve. In accordance with instructions from the Judge, the dog shall be sent to recover this item of game. While dog is returning to the handler with the first item of game, a second item of game shall be cast so that the dog may mark or hear its fall. The second item of game should be at least twenty metres from first item of game.

In this Exercise one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 60 metres and one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 80 metres.

Procedure

Dog is brought to the Control Point on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower. The dog will be sent for the item to be retrieved. After the first item of Game has been retrieved and delivered, the handler will send the dog for the second item of Game. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Point where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment

The essentials of this test are that the dog:

a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.

b. Marks the fall of the Game.

c. Does not retrieve until instructed.

d. On the second bird, goes directly to the area of the fall of Game.

e. Does not need direction from the handler.

f. Returns directly to the handler with the Game

. Points Awarded 35 points.

ACTION and STYLE Procedure

Action and Style are apparent in every movement of a dog and throughout it entire performance by its alertness and attention to the handler, working with purpose and enthusiasm, its eagerness on retrieves, including the pickup and return with Game.

Assessment

The essentials of Style and Action include;

a. An alert and obedient attitude.

b. A determined departure to retrieve.

c. An aggressive search for the fall.

d. A prompt pickup of Game and a reasonably fast return

Points Awarded 10 points

Definitions

Hide - An area clearly defined by the Judge in which to leave the dog. Where possible it is recommended that the Hide be part of the natural terrain or be constructed of natural materials.

Control Area - is that area encompassed by the Control Point markers and the Firing Point markers

RATIONALE

It is highlighted that this is offered as a suggestion that is not currently covered in the competition rules at this time. As that, it does not comply with the requirements covered under the rule change process (of an existing rule). The process and format, however, covering the running of a RATG trial has been followed with the addition of two parts covering eligibility (ie 2.6 and 2.7) and one part (ie 3.2) covering title description from the Rules for the conduct of Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs.

RATG Novice and Open exists as an introduction to Retrieving trials (shorter distances, yet a simpler version of what may be encountered at a Retrieving Trial).

Currently, the highest level of RATG competition is Open. Once a competitor completes this level, there is nowhere to go. Open RATG is a good precursor for Restricted, but a higher level incorporating a hide (out of sight whilst the firing off of the thrower simulating a gunshot and therefore, testing steadiness to shot) and use of the two bird run would be advantageous to a trialler wanting to advance into Restricted trialling (albeit a less complicated level ie shorter distances).

SUBMISSION FOR RULE REVIEW FOR RATG

**Existing Rule (Effective from 1st January 2019)**

Eligibility

* 1. All events shall be restricted to dogs six (6) months of age and over. The age of a dog shall be computed from its date of birth to the date on which the Trial commences. Should finalisation of the Trial be delayed, then the increase in age shall not affect the eligibility of any qualified contestant.
	2. Main and Limited Registered Gundogs (including de-sexed registered Gundogs) and Associate Dogs of a variety accepted by a Member Body as a Gundog shall be permitted to compete in Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs in all States and/or Territories of Australia.
	3. To be eligible to compete in a Novice Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must not have gained its title in Novice Retrieving Ability Test or gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) – DM, CM, QND, NRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH.
	4. To be eligible to compete in an Open Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must have gained its title in a Novice Retrieving Ability Test or have gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) – DM, CM, QND, NRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH.
	5. A dog which has gained its title in Novice or has gained any of the retrieving titles in 2.3 shall not be eligible to compete in Novice RATG except in a competition for which entries closed before the final pass score or retrieving title was gained. Should the handler wish to compete in the higher class (Open) then they must contact the Trial Secretary and request an upgrade, which shall be at the discretion of the Affiliate holding the RATG to allow.

**Proposed Rule (Effective from 1st January 2024)**

Eligibility

* 1. All events shall be restricted to dogs six (6) months of age and over. The age of a dog shall be computed from its date of birth to the date on which the Trial commences. Should finalisation of the Trial be delayed, then the increase in age shall not affect the eligibility of any qualified contestant.
	2. Main and Limited Registered Gundogs (including de-sexed registered Gundogs) and Associate Dogs of a variety accepted by a Member Body as a Gundog shall be permitted to compete in Retrieving Ability Test for Gundogs in all States and/or Territories of Australia.
	3. To be eligible to compete in a Novice Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must not have gained its title in Novice Retrieving Ability Test or gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) – DM, CM, QND, NRD, RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH.
	4. To be eligible to compete in an Open Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must have gained its title in a Novice Retrieving Ability Test or have gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) – DM, CM, QND, NRD. To be eligible to compete in an Open Retrieving Ability Test, a dog must not have gained any of the following Titles as defined in the Rules for the Conduct of Retrieving Trials for Gundogs (effective 1 Jan 2010) –RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH.
	5. A dog which has gained its title in Novice or has gained any of the retrieving titles in 2.3 shall not be eligible to compete in Novice RATG except in a competition for which entries closed before the final pass score or retrieving title was gained. Should the handler wish to compete in the higher class (Open) then they must contact the Trial Secretary and request an upgrade, which shall be at the discretion of the Affiliate holding the RATG to allow.

**Rationale**

The purpose of a RATG is to encourage competitors to compete in retrieving. Individuals that have achieved the titles of RRD, AARD, RT CH, Nat RT CH, Grand RT CH have arguably attained the highest levels of retrieving trial competition. Including these individuals in RATG competition discourages participation from new competitors and reduces the opportunities for positive feedback to new competitors.

**Retrieving Ability Tests for Gundogs**

**Existing Rule (Effective from 1st January 2019)**

OPEN CLASS:

EXERCISE 4 This Exercise may consist of either, a Double Mark Retrieve, or a Double Rise Retrieve; the actual Retrieve being declared by the Judge prior to the commencement of the exercise and will be the same for each competitor. It may include land and water. This exercise should be done in a completely different area from Exercise 3.

Double Mark Retrieve

In this Exercise one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 50 metres and one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 80 metres. Viewed from the Starting Pegs there must be at least 60 degrees of separation between the lines to where to each of the items of Game land.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower.

There should be a reasonable delay between the two casts. Once both items of Game have been cast from the thrower, the dog will be sent for the first item to be retrieved. The Judge may stipulate the order in which Game is to be retrieved, but it must be the same for all handlers. The handler is permitted to indicate clearly to the dog which item of Game to which it is being sent. However, once the dog has left the handler further handling will be penalised accordingly. After the first item of Game has been retrieved and delivered, the handler will send the dog for the second item of Game. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment The essentials of this test are that the dog:

a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.

b. Marks the fall of the Game.

c. Does not retrieve until instructed.

d. Retrieves the correct item of Game.

e. Does not swap Game.

f. Picks up only one item of Game at a time.

g. Does not need direction from the handler.

h. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded 35 points

Double Rise Retrieve

In this exercise one item of Game is cast to land at approximately 70 metres. As the dog is returning to the handler another item of Game is thrown or placed no more than 10 metres behind where the first item landed. The dog should not see this Item being placed.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the Steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower. The dog will be sent for the item to be retrieved. After the first item of Game has been retrieved and delivered, the handler will send the dog for the second item of Game. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment The essentials of this test are that the dog:

a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.

b. Marks the fall of the Game.

c. Does not retrieve until instructed.

d. On the second bird, goes directly to the area of the fall of Game.

e. Does not need direction from the handler.

f. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded 35 points.

**Proposed New Rule (Effective from 1st January 2024)**

EXERCISE 4 This Exercise may consist of either, a Double Mark Retrieve, or a Double Rise Retrieve, or a Blind Find Retrieve; the actual Retrieve being declared by the Judge prior to the commencement of the exercise and will be the same for each competitor. The Double Mark Retrieve or Double Rise Retrieve may include land and water. This exercise should be done in a completely different area from Exercise 3.

Double Mark Retrieve

In this Exercise one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 50 metres and one item of Game is to be cast at approximately 80 metres. Viewed from the Starting Pegs there must be at least 60 degrees of separation between the lines to where to each of the items of Game land.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower.

There should be a reasonable delay between the two casts. Once both items of Game have been cast from the thrower, the dog will be sent for the first item to be retrieved. The Judge may stipulate the order in which Game is to be retrieved, but it must be the same for all handlers. The handler is permitted to indicate clearly to the dog which item of Game to which it is being sent. However, once the dog has left the handler further handling will be penalised accordingly. After the first item of Game has been retrieved and delivered, the handler will send the dog for the second item of Game. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment The essentials of this test are that the dog:

a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.

b. Marks the fall of the Game.

c. Does not retrieve until instructed.

d. Retrieves the correct item of Game.

e. Does not swap Game.

f. Picks up only one item of Game at a time.

g. Does not need direction from the handler.

h. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded 35 points

Double Rise Retrieve

In this exercise one item of Game is cast to land at approximately 70 metres. As the dog is returning to the handler another item of Game is thrown or placed no more than 10 metres behind where the first item landed. The dog should not see this Item being placed.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the Steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand while the Game is cast from the thrower. The dog will be sent for the item to be retrieved. After the first item of Game has been retrieved and delivered, the handler will send the dog for the second item of Game. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment The essentials of this test are that the dog:

a. Remains steady when the Game is cast.

b. Marks the fall of the Game.

c. Does not retrieve until instructed.

d. On the second bird, goes directly to the area of the fall of Game.

e. Does not need direction from the handler.

f. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded 35 points.

Blind Find Retrieve

A Blind Find Retrieve shall be a retrieve where a dog is in such a position that the flight, fall or placement of the game cannot be seen. In this exercise the single item of Game is located no more than 50 metres from the starting pegs. It should be possible for a dog to find a Blind Find Retrieve on the initial line from its handler.

Procedure Dog is brought to the Control Pegs on a lead. The collar and lead are removed and handed to the Steward and the dog is then in competition. On instruction from the Judge the handler with dog at heel will proceed to the Starting Pegs. The handler will then instruct the dog to sit or stand and direct the dog to the site of the game. The dog will be sent for the item to be retrieved. All Game shall be delivered to hand cleanly and tenderly. The dog is then heeled back to the Control Pegs where the collar and lead are put back on the dog. The Judge will then declare that the exercise is finished.

Assessment The essentials of this test are that the dog:

a. Does not retrieve until instructed.

b. Goes directly to the area of the fall of Game.

c. Responds obediently to the direction of the handler.

d. Returns directly to the handler with the Game.

Points Awarded 35 points.

**RATIONALE:**

The addition of a blind find retrieve will assist judges to set runs in circumstances where access to terrain, stewards or throwers is limited.

The addition of a blind find retrieve will assist dogs that compete in both Retrieving Trial and RATG to better transition from novice to restricted RT.