

# **National Beagle Club of America & American Kennel Club**

## **Hunting Performance Test**

### **Rules and Standard Procedures**



Approved by the National Beagle Club Board of Directors & the American Kennel Club

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## CHAPTER 1: Purpose and Definition of the AKC NBC Hunting Performance Test

A Licensed AKC NBC Hunting Performance Test is an event at which a Hunting Beagle Instinct (HBI), Hunting Beagle Novice (HBN), or Hunting Beagle Advanced (HBA) title may be awarded by the National Beagle Club of America (NBC) and the titles are eligible for the American Kennel Club parent club title program.

The purpose of this event is to help not only identify which beagling lines have drive and natural ability, but also to help educate those who have little to no experience running and hunting over a beagle. This test was created to help breeders and handlers identify basic instinctual abilities required to hunt over their hounds. This test is non-competitive in nature. It is set up to help identify where your line may need improvement on its hunting ability through constructive feedback and the opportunity to network with experienced field beaglers.

Field trials, like AKC conformation shows, have dogs competing against each other for points; in contrast, this title judges the dog's individual merits in the field. The reason for doing so is not to get an “easy title,” or take ANYTHING away from field trials. The idea is to improve the hunting quality in lines that may be lacking natural ability or have yet to be tested.

While field dogs are able to compete in this test, it is expected that a field champion dog would easily pass through the levels of this test. The idea is that a dog that can pass Levels 1-3 is a “functional hunting companion.” A dog who obtains an HBA title is a dog that the owner could take out in the field to run rabbits and effectively and enjoyably hunt over.

This title is meant to be a safe learning environment for people who are not familiar with hunting over their hounds to get involved OR for people who are looking to see if their line has natural abilities. The goal is to improve the breed as a whole by keeping both **form and function** within the breed. This requires understanding from all sides of beagling.

Over the past 20 years we have been without an AKC dual champion beagle. To be a dual champion beagle you MUST complete both an AKC field and show championship. The Hunting Performance Test titles herein are not intended to act as an easy “dual purpose title.” The Hunting Performance Test titles are intended to help all lovers of the breed come together and create a more “ideal” beagle in both form and function.

*“We cannot do justice to the breed if we do not first consider what beagles were designed for.”  
- Amanda “Mandy” Palmer CVT ABCDT*

## CHAPTER 2: Description of Classes, Test, and Certification/Titles

The Hunting Performance test has three levels designed to test hunting instinct and ability in beagles. All levels shall be run on wild rabbit or hare.

### Section 1: Practice Runs, Experienced Dogs, and Roll-throughs

*Practice Runs:* A practice run is a run with no score that can be offered before, during or after a Hunting Performance Test. The practice run period allows hounds and handlers to familiarize themselves with the running ground, and also may serve as an educational tool for handlers and inexperienced dogs. Hounds may be entered “for practice run only” without taking the titling test. This may be held during lunch time, before, or after the actual tests depending on entries and time availability.

Ideally, during the practice period, judges and potential mentors should be available to educate on training and basic advice on handling. This is a good opportunity to see how a dog will do off lead before level 1 testing. Experienced dogs may be released at the event committee’s discretion.

*Experienced Dogs:* Experienced dogs allowed at the test are defined as dogs that are already capable of circling a rabbit. Ideally these dogs will have earned points at an AKC licensed field trial or titled as a Field Champion. However, the event committee may deem a beagle as an “experienced dog” at their discretion if no dogs can be found that meet any of these criteria, or they may ask the administrators of NBC-HPT Committee for assistance in identifying suitable hounds.

*Roll-throughs:* A roll-through occurs when, with the authorization of the handler(s), a pack of 2-4 dogs that has passed Instinct immediately begins their Novice run without returning to the staging area. The purpose of a roll-through is to prevent a Novice dog from becoming discouraged by being leashed and pulled off a rabbit after successfully passing Instinct.

Judging for the Instinct level must be complete for all dogs in the original Instinct pack prior to the official start of judging for the Novice run. Any dog in the original pack that does not pass Instinct. Experienced dogs may *not* be used to fill a pack for a roll-through; any experienced dogs used in Instinct must be on leash prior to the official start of judging for the Novice run.

At least two dogs must advance to the Novice pack in a roll-through from the original Instinct pack; dogs who were not in the original Instinct pack may not be brought in to join a roll-through Novice pack. All dogs rolling through to Novice must be eligible for a roll-through and all handlers must authorize the roll-through for their dog. If only one dog passes Instinct, or

if the handlers of other eligible dogs opt out of a roll-through, a single dog cannot roll-through by itself and must return to the staging area to complete its Novice run as a regular subsequent entry.

Once handlers have confirmed that they want their dogs to roll through, and once any dog that has not passed Instinct and any experienced dogs have been leashed, the judges will declare Instinct judging to be complete and declare the beginning of judging for the Novice run. The marshal will assist the judges in ensuring that everyone is ready to begin Novice and in agreement.

A handler may opt out of a roll-through at any time prior to the start of the judging of the Novice run. Once judging for the Novice run has officially begun, dogs may not be withdrawn from the run without forfeiting the entry.

Judges will score all categories in Novice from a clean slate, without considering the dogs' performance in Instinct, with the exception of the searching category. The judges may either use the dogs' Instinct performance to score Novice searching, or score new searching performance in Novice, at their discretion, so that any momentum in the pursuit of a rabbit achieved during Instinct is not interrupted.

Eligibility:

- A dog is eligible for a roll-through only from Instinct to Novice. Roll-throughs are not permitted from Novice to Advanced or between Advanced Small Pack and Advanced Solo/Brace.
- A dog must have a subsequent entry (in addition to the current Instinct entry) already paid for at the time they begin their Instinct run. This subsequent entry may be for the same day or any subsequent day within the designated event. Tests included in a given event must be advertised in the event premium.
- The dog must be marked as "eligible for roll-through" by an appropriate member of the event committee and confirmed by the judge and/or marshal prior to the start of the Instinct run.

If a dog rolls through from Instinct to Novice, the subsequent entry fee will be used to pay for the roll-through run whether or not the dog passes Novice on the roll-through. The dog may be entered again in the next test for a regular subsequent Novice run, with an additional entry fee paid, at the event committee's discretion.

The handler may use any subsequent entry to pay for the roll-through; for example if a dog rolls through to Novice during Saturday Test #1 and the dog is entered in four tests over the next two days, the handler can choose any of the three remaining test entries to pay for the roll-through Novice run.

The event committee reserves the right to deny roll-throughs for any reason. Roll-throughs will not be permitted for the last test of the designated event.

Section 2: Level 1 - Hunting Beagle Instinct (HBI).

The Hunting Beagle Instinct level tests the hounds for basic instinctual behaviors characteristic of a rabbit hound. These behaviors must distinguish the dog as a rabbit hound, as opposed to being a simple display of generic canine prey drive. Although the behaviors are essentially instinctual, it should not be assumed that a dog can pass level 1 without any prior experience.

Dogs will be cast in packs of 2-4. Handlers may request that specific dogs be cast together. All remaining entries will be assigned to casts at the discretion of the event committee. Cast assignment is not required to be random; the event committee may factor in any number of considerations when assigning casts.

To earn a qualifying score in the Instinct level, dogs must receive a total score of at least 10 points across the four scoring categories, with no minimum score in any category. Dogs are only required to earn a single qualifying score to earn the HBI title. This title does not mean a dog is a functioning hunting companion; it means the dog shows sufficient promise to merit additional training and evaluation towards that goal.

A dog does **not** have to actually run a rabbit to pass the Instinct level. The goal of the level is to identify behaviors that are commonly associated with a trainable hunting hound. Handlers that have good control over hounds that also display excellent searching ability may pass the Instinct level without any further indication of ability. Instinct level helps identify dogs that can be trained and worked with, not necessarily a hound that is fully started.

It is recommended that 1-2 experienced hounds that are not themselves entered in Instinct are cast with the pack. These dogs will not count towards the 2-4 dogs that make up the Instinct pack. An experienced dog may be used to help guide the less experienced dogs to a line, to find and/or flush a rabbit, and to confirm the validity of an otherwise unproven scent. The judges may request that the handler(s) of the experienced hound(s) direct the hounds in any way deemed helpful towards assessing the entered dogs' behaviors, including asking the handler(s) to leash the experienced hound(s). The experienced hound(s) should be considered a tool for the judges to use at their discretion.

Judges are not responsible for handling the experienced hounds. If the experienced hound belongs to a judge, someone else should be assigned to handle the dog so that the judge can focus on judging the entered dogs in the pack. Although it isn't recommended that marshals handle the experienced dog, it is allowed.

Handlers/owners of entered dogs may request the use of their own experienced hounds. The test committee will verify that the hounds in question qualify as "experienced hounds". Any other handler with a dog assigned to that pack can reject these experienced hounds and request ones provided by the test committee. Experienced hounds provided by the handler/owner of entered dogs may be used by the judges as described above for the benefit of any entered dog assigned to the pack, not just the dogs belonging to the same owner/handler.

### Section 3: Level 2 - Hunting Beagle Novice (HBN).

The Hunting Beagle Novice level tests the hounds for intermediate hunting abilities that could be expected from a newly started dog or puppy, with the potential to make progress towards becoming a viable hunting companion. Desirable traits (defined in Appendix A) should be present, but not necessarily refined. Display of assets is worth more at this level than an absence of faults, although the balance of faults and assets contribute to the overall score in each scoring category.

Dogs will be cast in packs of 2-4. Handlers may request that specific dogs be cast together, however, final pack composition is ultimately determined by the event committee. All remaining entries will be assigned to casts at the discretion of the event committee. If the judge determines that the pack needs assistance for any reason after some length of time, the gallery may assist in getting a rabbit up. One experienced hound may be used in Novice to fill a pack to the minimum size of two dogs **only** if no other dogs are entered in Novice for that test that are eligible to run under the judges appointed for that pack. If an experienced hound is used to fill a pack, it is imperative that the judges ensure that the entered dog is scored according to its own merits and not simply being led through the motions by the experienced hound.

To earn a qualifying score, dogs must receive a minimum score of 2 in each scoring category, with a total score of 14 or more points. Dogs are required to earn two qualifying runs to earn the HBN title.

### Section 4: Level 3 - Hunting Beagle Advanced (HBA).

The Hunting Beagle Advanced level certifies that a dog is competent as a viable hunting companion. A dog can pass level 3 without being field trial quality; level 3 simply represents a dog that could be enjoyably and effectively hunted over. There are two parts to Level 3 certification: the solo or brace, and the small pack.

Solo or brace: Dogs will be cast either solo or in a brace with one other dog. If a brace is used, neither dog can already have obtained the level 3 title or have earned points at an AKC licensed field trial. A dog with AKC field points may still run solo in order to earn the HBA title. To earn a qualifying score, dogs must receive a score of 3 in each scoring category, with a total score of 13 or more points.

Small pack: Dogs will be cast in packs of 4-6 hounds. If an insufficient number of dogs are entered in level 3 to form a small pack, experienced hounds (as defined in Section 1) may be used to fill the pack. To earn a qualifying score, dogs must receive a score of 3 in each scoring category, with a total score of 17 or more points.

Dogs must earn at least one qualifying score in Solo or Brace and at least one qualifying score in Small Pack to earn the HBA title.





# AKC NBC Hunting Performance Test Rules & Standard Procedures

TABLE: NBC Hunting Performance Test Title Requirements

	# of passes required	Size of pack	Number of standards	Scoring scale	Minimum score	Comments
Hunting Beagle Instinct (level 1)	1	2-4	4	0-5	10 points - no minimum in each category	This level is a test of very basic instinctual behaviors and should typically take no more than 30 minutes per pack to evaluate. Dogs can pass or fail in a shorter length of time at judges' discretion. Dogs in Instinct are not fired over.
Hunting Beagle Novice (level 2)	2	2-4	5	0-5	14 points, with at least 2 points in each category	Level 2 & 3 use an identical rubric. Dogs in Novice are not fired over. A dog must pass level 1 to run in level 2 packs.
Hunting Beagle Advanced (level 3)	2	1-2	4 - pack work not counted	0-5	13 points, with at least 3 points in each category	To obtain the Level 3 title dogs must have one pass in solo/brace and one pass in a small pack. These are separate classes so a dog can enter both classes in the same test. In solo/brace, dogs are NOT judged in the "pack work" category.  Dogs in Advanced Small Pack are fired over. Dogs in Advanced Solo/brace are not.  A dog must have obtained two passing scores in level 2 to run in level 3 packs.
		4-6	5	0-5	17 points, with at least 3 points in each category	

## CHAPTER 3: Entry Requirements and Eligibility

The minimum age to enter a dog is 4 months.

Packs will **not** be separated by height/size, or by sex, except to accommodate a bitch in season.

Intact, spayed or neutered beagles are eligible to enter and earn titles in a hunting performance test.

Bitches in season may run in the test. Owners are expected to notify the event committee prior to roll call so that a bitch in season can be packed only with other bitches. If possible, bitches in season should run at the end of the day; if multiple tests are offered in a single day a bitch in season may run all tests at the end of the day; ie, a bitch in season may run as a test #1 candidate after judging of test #2, and then run again for test #2. Dogs entered in different tests may be packed together at a given level to accommodate a bitch in season; for example a bitch in season may be running for test #1 but be packed with another female running for test #2. Handlers of dogs packed with bitches in season must be notified in the staging area - preferably as early as possible - and are not required to accept the pack assignment. If needed, experienced female dogs may be used to fill a pack to accommodate a bitch in season.

Determining if a bitch is in season should always err on the side of caution as dogs will be off-leash and may be out of sight of the handlers and judges during the test. A handler may declare a bitch in season if they believe she is close to being in season or recently came out of season. The event committee may also require a bitch to be run as a bitch in season if they reasonably believe her to be in season, even if the owner has not declared her as such.

Handlers may request that specific dogs be cast together; however, if the requested dogs are not all under the same ownership, all handlers must agree to run those dogs together. Final pack composition is ultimately determined by the event committee. Style and speed may be specified on the entry form if known in order to be put with like running mates.

No hound shall be eligible to compete, no hound shall be brought into the grounds or premises of any test, and any hound which may have been brought into the grounds or premises of a test shall immediately be removed, if it

- a) shows clinical symptoms of distemper, infectious hepatitis, leptospirosis or other communicable disease, or
- b) is known to have been in contact with distemper, infectious hepatitis, leptospirosis or other communicable disease within 30 days prior to the opening of the trial, or
- c) has been kenneled within 30 days prior to the opening of the trial on premises on which there existed distemper, infectious hepatitis, leptospirosis or other communicable disease.

AKC registered beagles or beagles that are registered with the AKC Purebred Alternative listing are eligible to enter. In order to apply for an AKC title that is approved and part of the AKC Parent Club Title Recognition Program, the dog must have an AKC registration number; however dogs registered by UKC, ARHA, and other non-AKC affiliated registries may participate without the ability to officially gain the title through the AKC Parent Club Title Recognition Program.

If a dog's AKC number is not on the entry form at the time of entry they may not apply for the AKC title upon passing each level unless the owner has received from the American Kennel Club an extension notice authorizing further entries of the hound for the specified time with its litter number or foreign registration number. A copy of this letter must be attached to the entry form.

Each entry in a licensed Hunting Performance Test must be made on an official Hunting Performance Test entry form. Each entry form must be completed in full and must be signed by the owner or his agent duly authorized to make the entry, and the information given on the form must be that which applies to the entered hound. Pre-entries may not be changed after the closing is announced except for move-ups, if move-ups are authorized in the premium.

Owners are responsible for errors made on entry forms regardless of who may have made such errors. No entry shall be accepted from any person who stands suspended from the privileges of The American Kennel Club or the National Beagle Club.

In the case of an entry by a partnership, every member of the partnership shall be in good standing with The American Kennel Club and the NBC before the entry will be accepted; and in case of any infraction of these rules, all the partners shall be held equally responsible.

A hound is not eligible to compete in a pack when the actual Judge of that pack or any member of his immediate family or household has owned, sold, held under lease, boarded, trained, or handled the hound within one year prior to the date of the test. Immediate family means husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister.

Transporting a hound is not considered handling.

An event committee may decline any entries or may remove any hound from its test for any cause determined by said committee, but in each such instance shall file good and sufficient reasons for doing so with the NBC (for example: sick dogs, injured dogs, aggressive dogs, handler offenses, etc.).

A dog can be entered in multiple classes at a single test; however a dog shall not be permitted to run in a class unless it has earned the appropriate prerequisite title in lower classes. If a dog fails to earn the prerequisite title, the additional entry fee may be applied to a second attempted run at the same test at the discretion of the event committee, if time permits.

“Experienced hounds” do not have to pass any levels to qualify as experienced (see Chapter 2, Section 1 for definition of experienced hound).

## CHAPTER 4: Holding an NBC Hunting Performance Test

### SECTION 1: Hunting Performance Test Event Committee

The NBC Hunting Performance Test Committee (NBC-HPT Committee) is the governing body for the NBC Hunting Performance Test overall program and all Hunting Performance Test events.

The Hunting Performance Test Event Committee (event committee) is a committee formed by at least four persons, each of whom is affiliated with the AKC through membership in one or more AKC clubs of any discipline (conformation/all-breed, field trial, performance events, etc.). Such a committee can apply to the NBC to hold a test by sending an application to the NBC-HPT Committee for approval.

Every Hunting Performance Test Event Committee shall have an appointed event chair to ensure the test is run smoothly and according to the Hunting Performance Test rules and regulations.

Every Hunting Performance Test Event Committee shall have an appointed test secretary who is in charge of ensuring entry forms are properly filled out, fees are collected, and paperwork and fees are submitted to the NBC-HPT Committee at the end of the event. The Secretary must also provide a report of the number of entries in each class and number of dogs passing each class.

The Hunting Performance Test Event Committee is responsible for ensuring proper paperwork is available for handlers to submit to AKC for their title upon completion of each level.

### SECTION 2: Application to Hold a Hunting Performance Test

The application to hold an NBC Hunting Performance Test must include the following information:

- Location of test
  - 911 address
  - BE SPECIFIC on location directions
- Affirm that the entire location is fenced with reasonable security
- Event committee members and contact info
  - Name chairman and secretary of committee
- Proposed judges

- Date(s) of event
- Number of tests per day
- Emergency plan
  - Hospital
  - Veterinary contacts

The application form can be found in the Hunting Performance Test Event Guide.

### SECTION 3: Premium Lists

Premium lists cannot be made available nor can entries be accepted until the event and judges panel have been approved by the NBC-HPT Committee.

Events may take entries ahead of time, especially if limited spots are available. If not all spots are filled, or the entry is unlimited, it is recommended to keep entries open until the day of the event, right before the start of the first test.

### SECTION 4: Hunting Performance Test Documentation, Reports, and Fees

The NBC-HPT Committee may require a per-entry fee to pay for title certificates, ribbons, and other hunting test related expenses.

A post trial report must be filed with the NBC-HPT Committee at the conclusion of each event. The report will include:

- Number of entries per class (including practice runs)
  - Number entered
  - Number started
- Number of passes per class
- Identifying info on each dog - owner/handler name, dog name & AKC number, owner/handler address, sire and dam name if known
- Any incidents that occurred
- Check for recording fee

### SECTION 5: Ribbons

The host club or event committee must have ribbons available for qualifying scores and/or new titles. The host club or event committee may purchase these or ask the NBC-HPT Committee to assist with ribbons.

## SECTION 6: General Procedures

It is highly recommended that a marshal is utilized for each pack released. Two judges per class are required (see Ch 5 for a more detailed description).

Equipment requirements:

- If level 3 is offered then a blank pistol with blank rounds is required.
- The event committee must check to ensure state and local requirements are met. Examples of state requirements may be applying for a field trial license or requiring individual hunting licenses for handlers.
- At least one set of AKC field trial collars or the equivalent with at least six distinct colors. If multiple packs will run at the same time a corresponding number of collar sets are required.
- GPS collars are recommended and may be passively referenced by the handlers or marshals at any time during the test; dogs may not be given any correction or guidance through the collar during judging. GPS collars must meet any requirements specified in the current AKC field trial rules and regulations.

Classes may be run in order, concurrently, or in rotation (running classes as dogs and handlers are available) at the discretion of the event committee.

- It is recommended that the event committee have at least three experienced dogs as defined in Chapter 2 present to run with dogs during the warm-up period, level 1, and/or to fill a pack for level 3. Three experienced dogs ensure that level 3 pack can be run if there is only 1 entry.
- Clubs may charge a separate fee for dogs entered in the warm-up period only. The amount of the fee shall be at the discretion of the event committee

## CHAPTER 5: Judges and Their Decisions

### Section 1: Selecting Judges / Judging Criteria

Before any advertised judge shall be eligible to judge a hunting performance test, they must first sign an agreement certifying that he or she has a thorough knowledge of the Rules, Regulations, and Procedures, and will judge in strict accordance with them.

When selecting judges, two NBC Committee approved judges are required; AKC licensed beagle field trial judges are preferred. All judges - AKC licensed and otherwise - shall read the judging standards and sign the form (located in the NBC-HPT Judges' Guide) saying that they understand the rules and goals of the test and agree to judge according to the NBC-HPT Committee's criteria.

If the advertised judge is unavailable on the day of the hunting test, and finding an AKC approved judge is impossible, the committee holding the trial may appoint anyone 18 years or older who is in good standing with AKC and believed to have a solid understanding of the test and requirements to pass. This substitute judge will hold equal status as a judge for said trial. A

member of the event committee may be a substitute judge if no other qualified individuals are available. If the substitute judge has dogs entered in the event and another qualified individual is available, the substitute judge's dogs may be judged by the other qualified individual. NBC-HPT Committee will be promptly notified of the reasons for appointing a substitute or additional judges.

## Section 2: General duties, responsibilities, and authority of judges.

When in the field, judges have the authority to pull dogs at any time for any reason from the hunt. It is the responsibility of the judges to ensure the dogs are safe and able to properly display their capabilities without interference from the gallery and/or disruptive dogs. Judges may use marshals to enforce their will. All decisions of the judges shall be final in all matters relating to the merits of the hounds and the participation of the gallery. Judges can dismiss a handler and DQ a hound if warranted. The judge will have to provide a written DQ form saying why said dog was removed. This test has a 2 strike rule for aggressive dogs. If a complaint is filed against a judge, the NBC-HPT Committee will have final say after reviewing evidence and said complaint.

Judges are permitted and encouraged to give a pre-release briefing to handlers explaining what they expect during the test.

It is the judge's responsibility at roll call to ensure they are not judging a dog they have owned, trained, or boarded in the past 6 months. It is also their responsibility to keep score on each dog clearly so handlers are able to review their scores to understand how their dog performed. Judges are permitted and encouraged to answer questions to the best of their ability to handlers as an educational tool AFTER scoring is complete. It is understood that answering everyone's questions can be time consuming, so the scoring sheet should answer most questions.

## Section 3: Standards for judging.

**No particular style or speed of dog will be preferred.** Requests to run dogs together will be considered and approved if possible. Committee will try to group hounds with similar speeds and styles if known, but judges are urged to be understanding with slower or faster styles as long as the dog is functional.

Judges should score a dog in every category, even for a non-qualifying hound, so that the handler can better understand the dog's strengths and weaknesses. If a dog's performance in a category cannot be assessed, a judge may choose to mark the scorecard "NS" rather than 0. An "NS" indicates that the dog did not explicitly fail at the task, but rather that the task could not be assessed. For example, in the Instinct level, if the game is hard to find, it may be difficult to determine if the dog had adequate opportunity to show desire or indicate scent. If an experienced hound and one or more entered hounds indicate a good line, a dog who fails to indicate on the same line may receive a score of 0 for scent indication. However, if the line is weak even for the experienced hound, or if no dogs show indication of a line after a reasonable period of time, this may be due to lack of game rather than fault of the dog and may be marked

“NS” rather than zero. For the purposes of calculating total score, an “NS” will have the numerical value of zero.

### ***Hunting Beagle Instinct (Level 1) - Judging Rubric***

- Dogs are scored between 0-5 points in 4 categories
  - Score of 5 being the highest/best
- Must have an overall score of 10 to pass level 1
  - No minimum in each category required
- Dogs will not be fired over in level 1.
- Level 1 only requires 1 pass to get the Hunting Beagle Instinct title
- If the dog passes, paperwork to send to the AKC parent club title program will be provided. The Parent Club Program charges a title application fee to add the title to the official AKC name.

Definitions of Level 1 Rubric: (4 categories)

#### Searching: (category 1 for level 1)

A dog's ability to recognize and be eager to search and explore the area regardless of the discomfort or hazard. The dog will search independently in sufficient range. Dogs must remain within reasonable control of the handler at the judge's discretion. Handler must keep the dog working appropriately within the pack. Handler is encouraged to talk to the dog and may touch or pick up the dog as necessary; however, ideally the dog will hunt with minimal physical contact with the handler.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

- 0-1. Owner has very little to no control over the dog and the dog spends little to no time searching for game in the brush. More often the dog is on its own or right beside the owner.
2. Owner has little to some control over the dog. The dog spends some time in the brush searching for game; the dog may follow other dogs more than independently searching.
3. The dog is in and out of the brush and the owner has moderate control of the dog. The dog may spend some of the time with the owner or follow other dogs to some extent.
4. The dog goes into the brush and searches for the game. The dog searches independently but responds to the owner's commands.
5. The dog eagerly enters and searches in brush and does not spend much time on the path or beside the owners other than to check in. Dogs are not simply following other dogs, but may cue off of other dogs' interest in a particular area. The owner has good control over their dog.



Desire- (category 2 for level 1)

Dog will try against all odds to overcome and not let frustration slow him. The dog must stay with the problem, trying to overcome it as long as there is a possibility to achieve success. The dog does not leave work undone or quit when it is difficult. Dogs last well during the duration of the hunt. The dog makes an effort to solve problems and try to find game. The dog doesn't stop and lie down from inability to work and shows some degree of wanting to continue to problem solve. Inexperienced or young dogs may check in with their owner more often or show slightly less commitment.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

- 0-1. The dog does not show interest in rabbit scent more than any other scent. The dog makes little effort to figure out the source of the scent. Dogs may be too tired from running or too distracted to care.
2. The dog recognizes the rabbit scent and makes some effort to follow the scent but is easily distracted. The dog may tire periodically, but does return to the hunt.
3. The dog gets excited at the scent of a rabbit and tries to figure out where the line goes.
4. The dog recognizes rabbit scent, stays with and tries to solve the problem, and may sometimes correctly identify the direction of the line.
5. The dog will stick with the scent and stay with the line/problem until it is solved or the owner removes them from it. The dog can often identify the general direction of the line and attempts to stay near the line.

Handling- (category 3 for level 1)

The beagle and its handler should work as a team, each with a role. The beagle should generally follow its handlers commands and check in areas indicated by the handler. While searching independently, the dog stays within a reasonable distance of the handler so that it can be recalled when appropriate unless it is actively pursuing a rabbit. Dogs are not expected to recall or respond to handler attempts to pull them off legitimate game.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

- 0-1. The dog does not listen to the handler at all and runs around with little to no attempt to find game.
2. The owner has minimal control over the dog. The dog may check in with the pack rarely, but does not consistently move in the same general direction as the pack and handlers.
3. The handler has moderate control of the dog and keeps it with the pack more often than not. The dog makes an attempt to listen to the owner and searches in appropriate areas, not ranging too far.

4. The dog listens well to the owner and doesn't range too far from the pack. The dog will usually enter and begin searching an area at the handler's instruction.
5. The dog is very attentive to handler instructions, searching areas and entering the brush as indicated by the handler. The dog stays in range while also keeping to the brush.

Scent Indication (category 4 for level 1)

In a perfect situation a dog is proclaiming all finds and denoting all forward progress by giving tongue. Barking on scent to indicate a find is highly encouraged and required for a score of 5 in this section; however, the barking must be used appropriately. This cannot be simple barking from excitement; it must be a direct response to a potential line of rabbit scent. Some dogs will not give voice on rabbit scent when they first start out. For level 1, nonverbal indicators that the dog has identified a promising patch of scent are acceptable. Nonverbal indicators may include small yips, whines, and other behavior such as extreme tail wagging that shows excitement but is focused on a specific area of scent. An experienced judge will know when a dog is "gamey" and can mark the score accordingly.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

- 0-1. The dog doesn't bark or mark scent. The dog may babble with no known reason. The dog shows no particular interest on the line.
2. The dog barks too little or too much, having some appropriate barks on the line. The dog shows some interest in scent but doesn't clearly identify the line in any way.
3. The dog may be tight mouthed or babble slightly but generally uses voice appropriately on game, or the dog also may show a clear distinction with body language and tail wagging on scent. The dog harks in to other dogs with interest. General excitement without focus on the line does not constitute making forward progress.
4. The dog will bark appropriately most of the time, but may be slightly tight in mouth or slightly mouthy. The dog shows marked body language or tail wagging while following the line. "Marked body language" is determined at the judges' discretion.
5. Use of voice when and only when getting scent on line and harks in appropriately.

***Hunting Beagle Novice (Level 2) & Hunting Beagle Advanced (Level 3) - Judging Rubrics***

(Level 2 and 3 have the same rubric, BUT different requirements to pass)

- Dogs are scored between 0-5 points in 5 categories (other than solo/brace in level 3)
- Blank gunfire (level 3, small pack) should happen at least 20 yards away from the pack, not in the direction of the dogs, while the dogs are actively trailing a rabbit. Judges

determine the appropriate time to fire. Blank pistol may be fired by the judge, a marshal, or any other person designated by the judge.

- If the dog passes, paperwork to send to the AKC parent club title program will be provided. The Parent Club Program charges a title application fee to add the title to the official AKC name.

### Level 2

- Must have an overall score of 14 to pass
  - Dogs must score a minimum of 2 points in each category.
- Level 2 requires 2 passes to get the Hunting Beagle Novice Title

### Level 3

- Level 3 requires 2 qualifying runs to pass the title
  - 1 run as a brace or solo - these dogs will not be judged under pack work and require a score of 13 or higher to pass
  - 1 run in a pack of 4-6 dogs achieving an overall score of 17 to pass
    - During the pack run, a blank shot will be shot and a pass in this section is required to earn a qualifying run.
- Minimum score of 3 in each category required to pass

### Categories:

#### Searching - (category 1 of 5)

This category is based on the traits of eagerness, independence, and intelligence as described in APPENDIX A.

Searching encompasses a dog's ability to recognize and be eager to search and explore the area regardless of the discomfort or hazard. Level 2 dogs may be out of the brush more often, but level 3 should be actively working the brush most of the time. The dog will search independently within an appropriate range. Dogs must remain in reasonable control of the handler at the judge's discretion. Handler cannot touch the dog except at the request of the judge, but must keep the dog working appropriately within the pack.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

To score at least 3 points out of 5 total points: The dog is in the brush at least half of the time. Dogs may check in or spend some time on paths or roads, but they are generally attempting to find a rabbit. Dogs may also range a bit too much, but the owner keeps reasonable control over the dog. Dogs may follow other dogs to a small extent; however, after cueing off of other dogs' interest in a particular area, they should show some independence in the details of their search. The dog can follow along with other dogs while searching, but must not solely rely on other dogs.

Pack work - (category 2 of 5)

This category is based on the traits of cooperation and appropriate work within the pack as described in APPENDIX A. This category is NOT judged in level 3 solo/brace.

Ideally a dog must be cooperative and work with other hounds, doing his part of the work, but aware of and honoring running mates by tonguing without showing jealousy. Dogs must concentrate on running the game more than beating other hounds, but work effectively within the pack. A dog must declare his own work honestly without disruption (see APPENDIX A for faults). Trailing or watching other hounds isn't ideal; however, ignoring other hounds is too much independence. The dog should hark in with interest.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

To score at least 3 points out of 5 total points:

The dog may be slightly independent in running a rabbit or follow other dogs to a small degree. In level 3 a dog should be working as a member of the pack and not trailing other dogs the majority of the time. When harking in, a dog will eagerly honor another dog's find, but then work independently to pick up the line and begin to make forward progress. As long as the dog is capable of doing individual work while still attempting to contribute, and not being disruptive, the overall goal of pack work is met.

Line Control-(category 3 of 5)

This category is based on the traits of pursuing ability, accuracy in trailing, and adaptability as described in APPENDIX A.

Line Control describes a dog's ability to keep consistent control of the trail while making the best possible progress. An accurate trailing hound will show a marked tendency to follow the trail with a minimum of weaving on and off, and will display an aptness to turn with the trail and to determine direction of game travel in a positive manner. Ideally the dog follows the line tightly and accurately and moves the rabbit efficiently without overrunning the line.

Dogs are able to adjust to situations quickly and pursue quarry as fast as conditions will permit or as slowly as conditions demand. The dog must work closely on the line; in level 3 the dog is able to hold the line well.

Dogs should not cut and skirt for the sole purpose of taking the lead. Dogs may pass each other, but should maintain reasonable control of the line while moving ahead of running mates. Dogs must stay as true to the line as possible. Cutting the prey off or catching the rabbit is not the intended use of the beagle. The goal is to stay true to the line and circle the game back to the handler.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

To score at least 3 points out of 5 total points:

The dog has a genuine driving interest in staying on scent lines. The dog may get off of the line temporarily, but it makes attempts to get back on. The dog is not just following other dogs, but doing its share of the work to hold the line; if the front dog was removed, the following dog would be able to continue holding the line. The dog follows the trail and stays on scent for a reasonable distance. The dog follows at a speed that allows them to both hold the line and make the best possible progress.

Check Work - (category 4 of 5)

This category is based on the traits of patience, determination, adaptability and intelligence as described in APPENDIX A.

When the line is lost the dog should make small circles close to the point of loss to regain the trail, then gradually move outward if necessary. Dogs are self-reliant and refrain from the influence of faulty hounds. Proper degree of independence is key. Dogs concentrate on recovering the line with no undue concern for running mates except to hark in. The goal of sound check work is to make positive progress on the line using intelligence and skill at or near the point of loss.

In level 3 dogs are expected to stay with the problem until solved or the owner wishes to move forward to find a new game.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

To score at least 3 points out of 5 total points:

The dog circles in an attempt to regain trail. This circle may be too large or ineffective at times, but the dog makes an honest effort and more often than not regains the line. Dogs attempt to regain line independently and don't rely on other dogs to find it for them; dogs will hark in to other dogs that correctly identify the line.

Voice - (category 5 of 5)

This category is based on the trait "proper use of voice" as described in APPENDIX A.

In a perfect situation a dog is proclaiming all finds and denoting all forward progress by giving tongue. However, the dog should not voice when not on the line.

Scoring Guide: Everything is at the judges' discretion - this is a guideline -

To score at least 3 points out of 5 total points:

The dog may be tight mouthed or babble at times, but most often will bark appropriately. Level 2 dogs may be judged with more leniency and still obtain a score of 3. However, for level 3 dogs, use of voice should have fewer flaws to obtain a score of 3. A dog scoring 5 out of 5 uses voice when and only when getting scent on the line. Ideally, the dog does not run silent when on a line of scent. Similarly, the dog does not bark if the scent is not sufficient to make progress on the trail.

## CHAPTER 6: Handlers and Spectators

Spectators are encouraged to follow along and watch any pack, as the “gallery” is a time-honored tradition in beagling and education of handlers and spectators is a primary goal of the Hunting Performance Test Program. Spectators should not interfere with dogs, handlers, marshals, or judges, and may be asked to return to the staging area if their behavior is deemed distracting or inappropriate by the judges or marshal(s).

The first thing handlers should consider is that they are to listen at all times to the Judge and the marshals and follow their instructions promptly. Spectators and handlers must respect the opinions and wishes of the Judges. Failure to comply with Judges’ wishes or instructions may result in a DQ for the dog, and the handler or spectator may be asked to leave the gallery or the test. See Training & Handling guide for more detailed trial etiquette.

Handlers are allowed to encourage, work, and talk/whistle to their dogs until dogs are on the line. Once a line is established, handlers should only work dogs if the judges approve it. In Instinct, owners should not physically put dogs on a line unless instructed by the judge. Dogs are to be handled (picked up off the ground or put on leash) only when Judges or Marshals instruct them to do so. Excessive interference by repeatedly touching dogs may result in disqualification. Judges may have handlers leash dogs to move them into a different area or gather a pack to restart if needed.

Spectators should never touch or handle an entered dog while judging is in progress unless specifically requested to do so by the judges. When judging a pack has ended, or if the judge's order a dog to be handled, spectators may assist in catching dogs and returning them to handlers or to the marshals.

Handlers and spectators are permitted to ask questions during the warm up/practice period and after judging; however, judges should not be disturbed while actively judging the dogs. It is permissible to approach the judge after judging or between packs to ask why a dog was pulled or why a dog was scored a certain way. The judging rubric is laid out in a way to help answer most questions, but may not be all-inclusive. Members of the event committee should also be knowledgeable enough to assist in education throughout the event.

The idea of this test is to educate new handlers and provide a safe space to run dogs; Judges are urged towards leniency with handlers and spectators, but are expected to help keep a safe environment for all. Spectators and handlers are expected to respect the judges’ and marshal’s time and act in a professional manner.

## APPENDIX A: Definitions of desirable and faulty qualities in a hound

The AKC Beagle Field Trial Rules should be taken as the “standard” upon which beagle field ability is based, just as the AKC written standard is the basis for judging a beagle’s conformation.

The AKC Beagle Field Trial Rules can be found at  
<https://images.akc.org/pdf/rulebooks/RF2404.pdf>

The description of beagle field ability and definitions of specific desirable and faulty actions can be found on pages 27-31.

These definitions are repeated here for reference. The most recent, updated AKC Beagle Field Trial Rules shall take precedence over the content of this appendix if any discrepancies are present.

**Desirable Qualities.** The hound that displays the following qualities would be considered the Ideal Beagle for all purposes afield, capable of serving as a field trial hound, a gun dog or a member of a pack, on either rabbit or hare.

**Searching ability** is evidenced by an aptitude to recognize promising cover and eagerness to explore it, regardless of hazards or discomfort. Hounds should search independently of each other, in an industrious manner, with sufficient range.

**Pursuing ability** is shown by a proficiency for keeping control of the trail while making the best possible progress. Game should be pursued rather than merely followed, and actions should indicate a determined effort to make forward progress in the surest, most sensible manner by adjusting speed to correspond to conditions and circumstances. Actions should be positive and controlled, portraying sound judgment and skill. Progress should be proclaimed by tonguing. No hound can be too fast, provided the trail is clearly and accurately followed. At a check, hounds should work industriously, first close to where the loss occurred, then gradually and thoroughly extending the search further afield to regain the line.

**Accuracy in trailing** is the ability to keep consistent control of the trail while making the best possible progress. An accurate trailing hound will show a marked tendency to follow the trail with a minimum of weaving on and off, and will display an aptness to turn with the trail and to determine direction of game travel in a positive manner.

**Proper use of voice** is proclaiming all finds and denoting all forward progress by giving tongue, yet keeping silent when not in contact with scent that can be progressed. True tongue is honest, claiming that running mates can depend on.

**Endurance** is the ability to compete throughout the duration of the hunt and to go on as long as may be necessary.

**Adaptability** means being able to adjust quickly to changes in scenting conditions and being able to work harmoniously with a variety of running mates. An adaptable hound will pursue its quarry as fast as conditions permit or as slowly as conditions demand. At a loss, it will first work close, and then, if necessary, move out gradually to recover the line.

**Patience** is a willingness to stay with any problem encountered as long as there is a possibility of achieving success in a workmanlike manner, rather than taking a chance of making the recovery more quickly through guesswork or gambling. Patience keeps a hound from bounding off and leaving work undone, and causes it to apply itself to the surest and safest methods in difficult situations.

**Determination** is that quality which causes a hound to succeed against severe odds. A determined hound has a purpose in mind and will overcome, through sheer perseverance, many obstacles that often frustrate less determined running mates. Determination and patience are closely related qualities and are generally found in the same hound. Determination keeps a hound at its work as long as there is a possibility of achievement and quite often long after its body has passed the peak of its endurance. Determination is desire in its most intense form.

**Independence** is the ability to be self-reliant and to refrain from becoming upset or influenced by the actions of faulty hounds. The proper degree of independence is displayed by the hound that concentrates on running its game with no undue concern for its running mates except to hark to them when they proclaim a find or indicate progress by tonguing. Tailing, or watching other hounds, is an indication of lack of sufficient independence. Ignoring other hounds completely and refusing to hark to or move up with running mates is indication of too much independence.

**Cooperation** is the ability to work harmoniously with other hounds by doing as much of the work as possible in an honest, efficient manner, yet being aware of and honoring the accomplishments of running mates without jealousy or disruption of the chase.

**Competitive spirit** is the desire to outdo running mates. It is a borderline quality that is an asset only to the hound that is able to keep it under control and to concentrate on running the game rather than on beating other hounds. The overly competitive hound lacks such qualities as adaptability, patience, independence and cooperation, and in its desire to excel is seldom accurate.

**Intelligence** is that quality which influences a hound to apply its talents efficiently, in the manner of a skilled craftsman. The intelligent hound learns from experience and seldom wastes time repeating mistakes. Intelligence is indicated by ability to adapt to changes in scenting conditions, to adapt and to control its work with various types of running mates, and to apply sound working principles toward accomplishing the most under a variety of circumstances.

Faulty Actions. Faults are undesirable traits indicating lack of sound quality, and shall be penalized in proportion to the degree of commitment, the frequency of repetition, and the distractions they afford running mates, as well as for the interruptions or lack of progress they cause during the performance. Quitting, backtracking, ghost trailing and running mute are the more serious faults. Pottering, swinging, skirting, babbling, leaving checks, racing, running in hit-or-miss fashion, tightness of mouth and lack of desire or ability to find and move game shall be considered demerits.



**Quitting** is a serious fault deserving severe penalty and, in its extreme form, elimination. Quitting indicates lack of desire to hunt and succeed. It ranges from refusing to run, to such lesser forms as lack of perseverance, occasional letup of eagerness, and loafing or watching other hounds in difficult situations. Quitting is sometimes due to fatigue. Judges may temper their distaste when a hound becomes fatigued and eases off, if such a hound has been required to perform substantially longer than those with which it is running. Judges should expect hounds to be in condition to compete as long as necessary to prove their worthiness.

**Backtracking** is the fault of following the trail in the wrong direction. If persisted in for any substantial time or distance it deserves elimination. However, hounds in competition sometimes take a backline momentarily, or are led into it by faulty running mates. Under these circumstances, Judges should show leniency toward the hound that becomes aware of its mistakes and makes a credible correction. Judges should be very certain before penalizing a hound for backtracking and, if there is any doubt, take sufficient time to prove it to be either right or wrong. Backtracking indicates lack of ability to determine direction of game travel. Ghost trailing is pretending to have contact with a trail and making progress where no trail exists, by going through all the actions that indicate true trailing. Some hounds are able to do this in a very convincing manner and Judges, if suspicious, should make the hound prove its claim.

**Pottering** is a lack of effort or desire to make forward progress on the trail. Hesitating, listlessness, dawdling or lack of intent to make progress are marks of the pot-terer.

**Babbling** is excessive or unnecessary tonguing. The babbler often tongues the same trail over and over, or tongues from excitement when casting in attempting to regain the trail at losses.

**Swinging** is casting out too far and too soon from the last point of contact, without first making an attempt to regain scent near the loss. It is a gambling action, quite often indicating over-competitiveness or an attempt to gain unearned advantage over running mates.

**Skirting** is purposely leaving the trail in an attempt to gain a lead or avoid hazardous cover or hard work. It is cutting out and around true trailing mates in an attempt to intercept the trail ahead.

**Leaving checks** is failure to stay in the vicinity of a loss and attempt to work it out, bounding off in hopes of encountering the trail or new game. Leaving checks denotes lack of patience and perseverance.

**Running mute** is failure to give tongue when making progress on the line. Tightness of mouth is a failure to give sufficient tongue when making progress. This will often be evidenced by the hound tightening up when pressed or when going away from a check.

**Racing** is attempting to outfoot running mates without regard for the trail. Racing hounds overshoot the turns and generally spend more time off the trail than on it.

**Running hit or miss** is attempting to make progress without maintaining continuous contact with the trail, or gambling to hit the trail ahead.

**Lack of independence** is a common fault that is shown by watching other hounds and allowing them to determine the course of action. Any action which indicates undue concern for other hounds, except when harking in, is cause for demerit.

**Bounding off** is rushing ahead when contact with scent is made, without properly determining direction of game travel.

