

# Notice of Changes in the Invitational Test

**A**fter a good deal of discussion, scenario testing and review, follow-up meetings and discussions, then more scenario trials and modifications, the Executive Council is happy to announce their unanimous approval to remove the 'Shackled Duck Retrieve' from the Invitational Test and replace it with a 'Double Mark Retrieve'.

Year after year the Test Committee is bombarded with justifiable criticism over the unpredictability of the Shackle Duck Test; "no two dogs are tested equally, one duck takes off for the unknown while the next may swim right to the dog", "the Shackled Duck Test simply isn't fair, one dog to the next", "it's a crap shoot", are the comments.

So shortly after this year's Invitational, guidelines were handed to the Judge and Test Committee, asking that they explore other concepts, these are those guidelines:

- A repeatable test in keeping with NAVHDA's standards.
- A water test that supports a 'well rounded' Invitational.
- A test designed around realistic hunting scenarios.
- A test with clearly standardized and challenging objectives.
- A test that is doable yet supporting the value of a VC title.
- A test that can be set up on a variety of water sites.
- A test that we'll all be happy with and proud of.

From those guidelines the committee went to work, and after several different variations were tested, tweaked and retested, the following test scenario was presented and accepted.

## Elements

- Double marked retrieve.
- Heel to the blind area, stakes optional.
- Incorporate a small decoy spread.
- 1st duck thrown 'memory bird' longer, 40 to 60 yds.
- 2nd duck thrown, approx. 20 yds.
- Diversion shot after pickup, 2nd bird.

## Execution

- 1st mark, dead duck, handler fires at top of arch.
- 2nd mark, dead duck, handler fires at top of arch.
- Arch of 2nd bird 'wipes', or crosses line to the 1st mark and passes over head close to handler and test dog.
- 2nd mark, closer of the two, is retrieved first.
- A diversion shot will be fired just after the dog picks up and is returning with the 1st duck.
- Handling on long mark will be allowed.

There will be a good deal more information following, including a session during the Annual Meeting, presentations on the web, at our upcoming Judge's Workshop, etc.

Folks, we realize this is coming to you as a surprise, but believe us, a great deal of thought and preparation have gone into this decision. From the start our goal was to design a realistic test, involving repeatable standards in keeping with NAVHDA's values and objectives.



*Typical test setup.*