

Duties of the VHDF Lead Judge

1. Make sure the test is a go before you purchase airline tickets and schedule your travel early enough to arrive in time to go over the grounds and water if you have not judged there before. Make sure the grounds and water are adequate.
2. Arrive on or before the first day of the test early enough to meet with the Test Coordinator to go over test procedures and answer any questions they might have. View the Test Coordinator records and entries to make sure they are all complete along with registration documents.
3. Formulate a plan for test setup, logistics, and test sequence for the weekend. Try to be efficient and be aware of time management, but do not compromise your ability to properly evaluate each dog.
4. Also arrive early enough on test days to meet with other local affiliate organizers and fellow judges so you can get started as scheduled. Especially take care to talk to the field marshal and the bird planters. Make sure they understand who needs to be where and when. Make sure you have a way to communicate with bird planters as to when and where you will need birds. If you will use radios, make sure they are turned on and they are working.
5. Meet with fellow judges and go over your plan for the weekend. Make sure everyone agrees with your plan, or revise your plan as necessary with input from fellow judges. Also cover how you will handle any apprentices and make sure they are aware that everyone is to participate in any post-test evaluations. Make sure the entire judging team including apprentices will be available immediately following the test to address any handler questions or concerns. Now is the time to cover any unique circumstances that need to be addressed such as challenging logistics, bad weather, and so on.
6. Present opening remarks to the gallery.
 - Greet participants and others assembled.
 - Introduce judges, apprentices, and any dignitaries.
 - Ask if there are any female dogs in season. Run them last or so as not to interfere with the other dogs.
 - Read the running order and identify the field marshal
 - Describe VERY BRIEFLY the judging and testing philosophy, and the apprentice program. (DO NOT give specific test subject directions at this time. The handlers will not remember them and it will be a waste of time.
 - Assure handlers, especially first time handlers that the judges are there to help. There are no secrets. We want to see your dog in its best possible performance.
 - Describe test sequence: who needs to be where and when and cover any lunch and dinner arrangements.
 - Ask for any questions from handlers and then wish everyone good luck and get started with the test.
7. Work with the judging team to see that all can agree to a scoring category of good, very good, etc. Remember that all three judges must agree to the same category of performance. It is the lead judge's responsibility to make sure the correct number is recorded for the final score. In the 3 point categories, the final number is an average. For example, if you are all in the good category and there is a 6, 7, and 8, the final number is 7. If there is a 7 and two 8's, fractions are rounded to whole numbers, so the final number is an 8. Once you get to the 10 plus categories of 11 and 12, recognize that one judge effectively has some veto power here since 11 and 12 are in a higher category. While it is not a written rule, it is generally accepted that all 3 judges must agree to an 11 or a 12. The same could be said of lower scores of 1 or zero. Scores like zero or 12 make a very bold and final statement, so all judges should be very sure of their evaluation.
8. Be prepared to make rapid decisions regarding grounds and weather. Things can change during the day. Don't let problems continue on, make the appropriate adjustments as necessary and then move on. Also be prepared to jump in and take over with a difficult handler if an apprentice is having trouble. Some handlers are nearly impossible to work with or please, and we do not want to put our apprentices in that situation.

9. While your opinion should carry some weight in discussions while trying to reach a consensus among the judging team, remember that you have no more authority than any of the other judges. You are the "Team Leader" not the boss so keep that in mind.

10. If you are running any of the advanced tests, gun safety is paramount. Cover gun safety with all gunners even if they have been a gunner for 50 years. Stress the fact several times that no one cares if the birds are shot or not, we will shoot only the absolutely safe birds.

- Use only break open guns.
- Carry guns in open position until ready for the shot.
- The handler may carry a gun; however he may not use live or blank ammo. The handler is not to shoot his own birds.
- Gunners need to follow instructions from handlers regarding how and where to position themselves before and after the shot.
- Be prepared to call SAFTEY in the event of a potentially unsafe shot.
- Be aware of the gallery or any one lingering in the field.
- All persons in the field should wear blaze orange for safety.
- Any non-essential gallery members must have permission from the handler and the judging team.

11. Closing Remarks to the gallery.

- Comment on the day and anything special or notable.
- Thank the judging team and congratulate the handlers and their dogs. Thank them for bringing their dogs.
- Thanks to major workers by name.
- Thanks to sponsor: Gun Dog Supply Gift Certificates.
- Handlers will receive score sheets in about a month. There will also be a printable certificate online in the test results section of the website.
- Let the handlers know that judges will be available to answer questions for a brief time immediately following the conclusion of the reading of the scores.
- You or another judge should read the scores. Remark on any highlights or exceptional performances and be gentle with the dogs and handlers that did not do as well.
- Go over any dinner arrangements or fund raisers or any other club announcements.

12. After the closing remarks and addressing any handler questions, gather the judging team and the apprentices to go over any paperwork as needed. You should be given a post-test packet from the test coordinator that will include:

- A TEST INFORMATION FORM that you and the other judges must fill out and sign.
- An APPRENTICE JUDGE EVALUATION FORM that you and the other judges must complete and go over with the apprentice. Have the apprentice take a picture of his or her scorebooks and the Apprentice Judge Evaluation Form. The apprentice is to email a brief report about his or her day of judging along with the pictures to the Director of Judging.
- A JUDGES TEST REPORT that you and the other judges must fill out and discuss with the local club if the grounds are new or being used for the first time or are in some way unacceptable. Good grounds and repeat grounds that are acceptable do not need a report.
- ONE PREPAID, PREAMBLED PRIORITY MAIL ENVELOPE for each day of testing.
- The TEST ENTRIES and REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS.

13. Place the Judge scorebooks, the Apprentice Scorebooks, the Test Information Form, The Apprentice Judge Evaluation form, the Judges Test Report, and the Test Entries and Registration Documents in one envelope and mail to John G. Smith, , 2625 44th Street West, Webster MN 55088-4400.

14. Always be mindful to portray yourself as conscientious representative of VHDF even after the actual day's events have concluded.