

Rules Committee Report

At the request of the 2016 National Amateur delegates we sent out a questionnaire in August asking the Field trial Community about concerns of Nationals being held too early in the year and the effect of that causing Club trials to be held in hot weather detrimental to dogs health. The responses of that survey are attached.

Responses favored continuing to hold National trials in each Interclub location at their discretion.

Although most favored limiting the earliest starting date, the earliest date preferred varied considerably. We did not hear of or can suggest a process better than what is now in place which allows the sponsoring Interclub to choose a date and seek approval from the delegates at the meeting the year preceding the National Trial they will run.

Like in the delegates meeting, the Committee held spirited discussion what to suggest.

In the end our consensus was that although we certainly recognize the dangers to our dogs of trials in hot weather, Field Trial Committees and Judges do have numerous options available to protect our dogs.

We do not believe that an acceptable rule change would be as effective as educating the Trial Community about the hazards involved and what can be done on a local level.

Trial Committees know when dangerous hot weather is forecast a couple of days prior to the trial. Most clubs already use water tanks on the course to cool dogs before and after they run. Committees in consultation with Judges can decide to limit contacts per series, or even not run a 3rd series when hot afternoon conditions dictate that.

Dogs struggling to find birds causing overheat will rarely place, and judges should encourage handlers to pick up those dogs early. Gunners can be encouraged to avoid long retrieves, and judges should be very selective about sending on long retrieves. Again they should dismiss dogs that appear to struggle.

These practices should be communicated early in the trial and should be accepted by responsible participants.

If everyone agrees that it is about the dogs, we need to accept decisions made to protect the dogs, remembering that a costly Vet bill or ongoing effects from overheat make the chance of a ribbon not worth it.

We want to encourage more trials, and should insist on well run trials on both a Club and National level.

Our actions of not participating in a trial regularly scheduled in hot weather, or poorly run, will do more to correct the problem than any rule we attempt to install.

Unexpected hot weather should dictate a thought out plan to safeguard our dogs health.