

THROWER DUTIES

WC/WCX throwers shall be dressed white or light colored clothing. The club provides a popper shotgun, blank ammunition, a gun stand and ear protection, and has a limited quantity of white clothing items for gunners. Plan to bring a white coat or shirt to wear while in the field. You should provide a chair, gloves and any other gear you feel you need.

Arrive at the test grounds at the time designated by the Chief Marshal. Report to the Chief Marshal, who will tell you where the test you are working is set up. Go to the site and report to the Stake Marshal who will show you your station and answer any questions you have.

You will either throw the bird by hand, or use a winger, as directed by the judges.. The winger is a sling shot for birds. Wingers may only be used for WCX tests. Instruction on using the popper guns and wingers will be provided one-half hour prior to the time designated for meeting with the Chief Marshal.

Prior to the beginning of the test, the Judge may ask you to throw a few practice throws. Usually, the place where the bird should land is marked with a small piece of tape or ribbon. Wingers will normally consistently place the bird correctly. If you are throwing by hand, practice several times to develop a consistent throw. You may switch positions with the popper gunner if you begin to get tired and inconsistent.

You will normally be working as a team with a Popper. The location of your station, which has been determined by the Judges, is called a "mark." Before the test starts, you will be told the sequence of the various marks. If, for example, you are mark number 1, then yours will be the first blank shot fired/dead bird thrown. If you are mark number 2, another team of popper and thrower will have fired/thrown before the judge signals your team.

Before a dog and handler come to the line to do their retriever test, you should get ready. Usually, the Judge will call out, "Guns Up." You should at that point have a bird out of the bird bag and ready to throw. Even if the judge doesn't call out, you should be attentive to what is going on at the line, and when you see a new dog and handler approach the line, be ready. At the judge's signal (a raised hat, hand, clipboard, or similar signal), your teammate fires the blank round ("popper"). After the shot the thrower tosses the dead bird or releases the bird from the winger to the spot predestinated by the judges.

In some circumstances, one person will fire the shotgun and throw the bird. We try to provide two persons at each station, but at times there are not enough workers. The station procedures are the same. The shotgun, and winger, if used, are positioned to permit the gunner to shoot the gun, and then release or throw the bird. If you are at a one person station there should be an extra chair at the station, draped with white clothing, positioned in the view of the working dog.

Once you have thrown the bird, remain visible, motionless and quiet. Do not move around while the dog is working. Do not talk. Do not go into the bird bag until the working dog has picked up all the birds and is returning to the handler. Then quietly get out another bird, load the winger, if used, and wait for the next dog and handler to come to the line. Other than the bird that is next to be thrown, keep all other birds in the bag, keep the bag closed, and keep the bag close to your feet. Should a working dog approach the gun station, quietly step on the bag so there is no chance of him "stealing" a bird from the bag.

Keep track of the approximate number of birds left in the bird bag. When you get down to two remaining birds, let the judge know, "Two Birds Left!" Do this between dogs, and not when a dog and handler are at the line working. The Judge and Stake Marshal will arrange to rebird. Someone will come to your station (or you should meet them halfway) with a new bag of birds. You give them your empty bag. Any time you are carrying a bag of birds, or an empty bird bag, hold it well above the vegetation. This is to prevent bird scent from adhering to the vegetation and perhaps "fooling" a later running dog that a bird has run through the area.

If you take a bird from the bird bag, and it is badly damaged, (bloody, "meat" exposed), put it back in the bag. Do not include it in your bird count. Take out another bird to throw. When it's time to rebird, point out the bad bird to the bird bagger, who will let the Judge decide if it should be discarded.

Do not have any food with you at your position. If you have water or a soft drink, keep it tucked away under your chair. . Sometimes lunch is provided in the field while the test is still going on. If this is the case, police up and secure all residual food, napkins and bags before any dog runs.

During the tests, respond to the requests and directions of the Judges. Safety of people and dogs are paramount. If at any time for any reason, the Judge is not comfortable with the pop or throw, or there is some other unforeseen event (a loose dog, for example, runs into the test area), the Judge will call a "no bird." The test stops at this point. The bird, if already thrown, is picked up in the direction of the judges, and the dog and handler who have been at the line will get another chance, starting over. Watch the judges, not the dog. Occasionally a dog may break before all marks are thrown. The judge will continue to call for the birds to be thrown, so be alert.

At the conclusion of the series make certain that the area around your station is cleaned up, and that all equipment, birds and unused blank ammunition is accounted for and returned to the Stake Marshal.