

# Pudelpointer Club of North America

The oldest recognized authority for the breed

## **NATURAL ABILITY EVALUATION (NAE)**

### *OFFICIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS*

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#### **Overview**

Those hereditary characteristics, which are essential to the dog if it is to become a truly versatile hunting dog, have been selected for hundreds of Pudelpointer generations. The Natural Ability Evaluation (NAE) is an examination of these heritable characteristics. The purpose of the evaluation is to examine the results of breeding as demonstrated by the dog's innate abilities in the field, on a track, and in water.

#### **Eligibility**

Pudelpointers are eligible for the NAE from 6 months of age to 26 months of age. Dogs older than 26 months of age may be entered for judges' observation only on a space-available basis. Other versatile breeds may be eligible on a limited, space-available basis, provided that they are registered in a recognized Breed Club Registry. Bitches in heat require special approval from the Field Chairperson to be admitted. The Field Chairperson and the judges are responsible to ensure that the presence of a bitch in heat does not adversely affect the performance of the other dogs.

#### **Judges**

Three judges should officiate. One judge will be designated as Senior Judge for the evaluation and will be responsible for adherence to NAE guidelines. A judge may not judge his own dog.

#### **Physical Attributes**

All dogs will be evaluated and scored on coat and conformation.

#### **Temperament**

Temperament and shyness, including aggression, gun-shyness and gun sensitivity, will be determined and noted on the scorecard.

**Gun Sensitivity** is present when a dog is temporarily inhibited from its task by a gunshot and is able to quickly regain its work rhythm.

**Gun Shyness** is present when a gunshot disables the dog from completion of its task. Examples of this include Signs of fright and disorientation, a dog which looks to it's handler or other people for protection, or it runs away, making evaluation difficult, or impossible.

**Note:** *A dog judged to be Gun Sensitive or Gun-shy may be allowed to complete the NAE if it is able.*

*Any sign of mental instability that is unmistakably noticed throughout the testing day, (for example: environmental, hyper nervousness, fear of live game, aggression etc.) will be recorded since it will exclude the dog from any breeding program*

*Severe Punishment inflicted on a dog in an evaluation will disqualify the handler from the event, hence the dog is also disqualified. Burying of game by a dog will also result in disqualification of the dog.*

Throughout all the evaluations the judges have the prerogative of recalling any dog to repeat a sequence in any category. Usually this is done after all other dogs have been evaluated. The handler/owner of each dog entered in a NAE will receive an official score record from the PCNA at the evaluation. NAE records will be filed in the PCNA Studbook according to Studbook number.

### **Affinity for Water**

The truly useful versatile hunting dog should show comfort in water and exhibit no fear or hesitancy when entering it. The evaluation is set up beside a body of water in a place that permits easy entry into water, which deepens gradually to swimming depth. Sudden drop-offs into deep water are not desirable. The handler will bring the dog to the edge of the water and remove both leash and collar. A retrieving dummy, supplied by the NAE field marshal, is tossed into swimming depth water by the handler. The dummy is just an inducement to the dog to enter the water and need not be retrieved. The dog may be released into the water as soon as the dummy is tossed, with or without any command. If the dog enters the water willingly and swims on its first attempt, the sequence is repeated and again the dog must enter the water willingly, and swim without hesitation. Should the dog show hesitancy on either entry, additional entries may be ordered by the judges to determine either a building or a declining performance. The dog that refuses to enter the water entirely or refuses to swim will be recalled and tested with a dead gamebird used as the tossed object. Dogs requiring game to be tossed before entering water may not earn more than 6 points for this sequence. To receive 6 points the dog must enter the water and swim twice, without hesitation.

### **Field Search**

Since the NAE is open to dogs from 6 to 26 months of age, judging considerations will reflect higher expectations of maturity and purpose from dogs aged 16 months and older. (Scorecards will be color coded to reflect the 2 age groups). Examples of this include mature use of wind, search of likely cover and focus on the task at hand. The field search will be a minimum of 30 minutes over typical hunting terrain. The search must be productive and the dog must show enthusiasm, interest in finding game and stamina. The dog must cover more area than it's handler and must do it in an efficient manner. The dog should adapt his pace and range to suit the conditions and cover. A dog that

repeatedly passes likely cover and is not searching with purpose will be penalized. Similarly, the dog that stays at his handler's feet and does not actively cover the search area with its nose and body will be penalized.

The **ideal search** of a mature dog should be active and forward and the dog should quarter the cover, turning into the wind and crossing it to best advantage. During off-wind searching, the dog should go out and work in a quartering fashion back towards the handler. No specific search pattern is required of a dog under 16 months of age. Each dog will be evaluated for gun shyness during the search. On a signal from one of the judges, a blank shell is fired from a shotgun of conventional gauge. This sequence is repeated during the evaluation. Additional shots may be fired at the judge's discretion. The shots will only be fired when the dog is searching away from the handler.

## **Pointing**

Intense, Convincing and Productive are the watchwords for evaluating a dog's scent pointing instinct. If a young dog has several opportunities to point game, and has done so, the judges should score the dog on his best performance. Similarly, pointing evaluation scores should be lowered for dogs that fail to take advantage of clear opportunities to point. The dog, which independently relocates to maintain contact with a moving bird, without chasing, should be highly rewarded. Accurate evaluation of pointing instinct is best accomplished with no handler influence as the dog establishes point. Sometimes a young dog has an opportunity to point a gamebird at the end of the tracking test when he locates the bird. The judges will include this pointing opportunity when assigning a pointing score. The young dog should not be faulted if he breaks his point and chases the game after it is flushed.

## **Tracking Live Game Bird**

The assessment of a dog's usefulness as a tracker of crippled game is the object of this evaluation. Its nose, concentration, cooperation and perseverance are all brought together to track down a crippled bird. A live, healthy pheasant is appropriately prevented from flying. The young dog may be shown the bird before it is released if the handler wishes. The dog must then be hidden behind a blind or some obstruction so that the dog does not see the course taken by the bird. The handler however is encouraged to view the bird's progress. Some soft feathers are pulled from the bird to mark the release spot. The bird is then released so it can run cross wind or with the wind, never into the wind. When the bird has run far enough to satisfy the judges, and is gone from sight, the dog is brought to the starting spot and appropriately shown the release spot and feathers. The handler should then quietly and calmly command the dog to track the bird. Further assistance may lower the score. The dog should use the track with deliberate concentration. If the scent is lost, the dog should attempt to relocate the track and move forward along it. The crucial task for the dog is to progress along the track efficiently, always carrying it forward enthusiastically. Highest scores are awarded for efficient, methodical use of the track, leading the dog toward the bird. Lowest scores are given to the dog that runs wildly, completely ignoring the track. In scoring this evaluation, the dog is not required to locate or retrieve the bird, simply to follow the track and demonstrate that he has tracking ability. The dog that finds the bird by wide searching but not using

the track at all cannot receive a score for tracking. How fast the dog tracks or whether the dog holds its head high or low should not be considered. The important features are enthusiastic concentration and use of nose in efficient working along the track.

## **Judged Throughout**

### **Nose and Use of Nose**

This genetic aspect of the dog's quality as a hunting partner is evaluated during searching and during tracking a live game bird. The dog's nose and how it is used is the most important attribute of a versatile hunting dog. The quality and use of nose determines to a great extent the quality and usefulness of the dog. How well a dog can detect scent is dependent on many features of the environment as well as its innate scenting ability. Quality can be evaluated in a relative sense. How well the dog uses its nose can be judged in a more absolute sense.

### **Pointing**

Pointing is a genetically endowed reflex response to a stimulus from the dog's nose. The amount of scent stimulus required to elicit this response is a consideration in pointing evaluation, The distance at which the dog acknowledges (not points) scent of a bird in the field and the accuracy of locating the bird demonstrates quality of the nose. The dog that repeatedly overruns his nose and bumps birds with favorable wind conditions shows poor use of nose. Overrunning the nose is particularly evident on tracking the live game bird. Concentration, hard on the track, demonstrates good use of nose. Also, the dog that acknowledges spots where game has been and moves quickly on without undue sniffing at the spot shows good nose. However, the young dog should not be penalized for a flash point at a spot where game has been, if not overdone. The final score is a composite evaluation arrived at by combining nose quality and nose use as demonstrated in field search and in tracking.

**Desire to Work**At all times, during all tasks, the dog should show happiness and enthusiasm for it's part in the search for game. Aimless wild running should not be confused with desire to work or with purposeful hunting. A dog that remains underfoot and has to be coaxed to hunt also lacks desire. The dog that enters the water without hesitation or perseveres on the track of a bird shows a good attitude toward work. Desire is demonstrated in the search phase by a dog which applies itself diligently to the to the task of making game contact.

### **Cooperation**

This can be best described as teamwork between the dog and his handler. The dog that continuously shows his desire to please his handler without being commanded to do so is showing good cooperation, The dog should be aware of his handler's location and respond to a change of direction without commands and without showing over-dependence. More mature dogs should reflect this cooperation to a greater degree than dogs less than 16 months of age. The need for excessive handling to keep the desired contact, or the need to continuously coax the dog to hunt are indications of poor cooperation. A young dog that breaks and chases a flushed bird after pointing it, and returns to the handler without

a command shows good cooperation. A young dog that retrieves the dummy without direct command during the water evaluation shows good cooperation. A retrieve of the live game bird during the tracking phase is also good cooperation. Regardless of dash or style, a self-hunting and poorly responsive dog is uncooperative, as is the dog out on a "Sunday walk" which has to be led to birds. A clearly demonstrated but unspoken communication between handler and dog in their search for game is very good cooperation.

### Scoring the Natural Ability Evaluation

Each dog's performance will be scored in each area, as follows to arrive at a consensus score total

| Category           | VERY GOOD | GOOD  | SATISFACTORY | POOR  | FAIL |
|--------------------|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|------|
| NOSE & USE OF NOSE | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| SEARCH             | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| AFFINITY FOR WATER | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| POINTING           | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| TRACKING LIVE BIRD | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| DESIRE TO WORK     | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| COOPERATION        | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |
| STAMINA            | 10 - 12   | 7 - 9 | 4 - 6        | 1 - 3 | 0    |

### Physical Attributes

All dogs will be evaluated in these areas (in most cases physical attributes are examined after water work)

**Adult Coat** (head first)

**Color**

WW = Wire / Wire

DB = Dark Brown

WS = Wire / Smooth

BR = Brown

WM = Wire / Medium

DU = Durrlaub

WR = Wire / Rough

BK = Black

MM = Medium / Medium

SS = Smooth / Smooth

RW = Rough / Wire

RR = Rough / Rough

## Eyes

Normal      Ectropic      Entropic      One eye

Dark Brown      Ectropic      Entropic      Both eyes, dog fails

Brown

Yellow

## Bite & Teeth

Undershot      Light      Heavy      Dog Fails

Overshot      Light      Heavy      Dog Fails

Butt Bite      Normal

Missing Molars      Dog Fails

## Testes

Normal

Cryptorchid (Undescended testicle) Dog Fails

Monorchid (One Testicle) Dog Fails

**Body Size & Structure 1 2 3 4 5** (5 being largest size) Excessive Cowhock Loose or steep shoulders Splayed feet or other faults, except injuries, that hinder a dog's fluid motion and impair its stamina will fail the dog

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*Andy Hewett*

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