

A Guide to the FCRSA Field Events

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The Flat-Coated Retriever: The Breed History

[Taken from "A Guide to The Flat-Coated Retriever," Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America, 1999.]

"In Great Britain, the Flat-Coated Retriever was one of the first retriever breeds developed. During the early 1800's improvements in the shotgun allowed large numbers of flying upland game and waterfowl to be shot, creating the need for this specialized gun dog. In addition to locating and delivering shot game tenderly to hand, sportsmen and market hunters required a controllable dog who would locate live game within range of the guns. Dogs used to develop the Flat-Coat, in addition to various water dogs including the St. John's Newfoundland, were spaniels and setters (for game-finding abilities), and herding dogs (to improve trainability), all available on the estates of the British landed gentry.

By the mid to late 1800's the breed had developed into a resourceful, birdy game finder and a determined, soft-mouthed retriever from land to water. As a direct result of continued development afield, the Flat-Coat today is a bright, enthusiastic, durable dog, whose character and temperament are well suited to being a responsive, versatile, and devoted companion.

History - United States - The Flat-Coated Retriever was first admitted to the American Kennel Club in 1915. A few specimens were occasionally imported, but no breeding programs were established until Homer Downing of Cleveland, Ohio, with the help of Stanley L. O'Neill and Dr. Nancy Laughton, imported an unrelated dog and bitch in the 1950's. Flat-Coats from Homer's first litter were highly successful in the field, the show ring, and obedience trial competition.

The Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America was organized in 1960 by the Downing, Moroff, and Terroux families. It was

the stated purpose of the FCRSA from the beginning to encourage the selective breeding of the Flat-Coated Retrievers and the exhibiting of Flat-Coats in the dog shows, obedience trials and field trials. The Flat-Coated Retriever in the United States is still **one** dual or multiple purpose breed. So far enthusiasts involved in field trials and hunting retriever tests have usually bred excellent specimens of the breed (frequently breed champions) in the tradition of the gamekeepers of Great Britain. Most serious breeders breed for field ability as well as soundness, temperament, and breed type. It is currently the stated goal of the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America, as well as its affiliated regional clubs, to breed for the dual-purpose or multi-purpose practical working animal in order to preserve the hardiness, longevity, and character of the breed.

Promoting the Flat-Coat's Field Abilities

To promote the working character of breed, the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America and/or its regional clubs often sponsor and organize field events throughout the year. These include Working Certificate, Working Certificate Excellent, and at the annual Specialty, the Single events.

The following includes the steps for a club to hold such tests as well as the rules and regulations governing these tests.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS OF HOLDING WC AND WCX TESTS

Directives and Eligibilities

FCRSA authorizes licensed Retriever Field Trials, Hunt Tests, and Working Certificate and Working Certificate Excellent tests at its National Specialty as well as events sponsored by FCRSA affiliated regional clubs and FCRSA members. The tests must be conducted and judged under the rules, regulations, and policies set forth here by the FCRSA.

All dogs entered:

- Must be at least 6 months of age on the day of the test, and
- Have an individual AKC registration number, foreign registration number, or an ILP number. (A dog with an AKC pending number will not receive a certification until the individual AKC registration number is acquired.), and
- Cannot be owned, co-owned, trained, or handled by the test judge or any of her/his immediate family within the last 6 months. (See exceptions under "Judges.")

It is the sole discretion of the hosting club and test committee to allow other retriever breeds to enter these tests.

WC and WCX tests are not AKC recognized and as such cannot be held at the same location on the same date of either an AKC Field Trial or Hunt Test or at least until all AKC events have concluded. They can be held at a different location/grounds simultaneously with AKC events.

If bitches "in season" are permitted to run, they should run at the end of each WC or WCX test series. In addition, if bitches "in season" are permitted to run in a WC or WCX and that WC or WCX test is being held on a day adjacent to an AKC Field Trial or Hunt Test, then the WC and WCX must be held after the completion of

the AKC events. Be aware that bitches “in season” are not permitted on the grounds during the AKC field event.

The Test Committee

TEST CHAIR

The Chair of the Test Committee must be an FCRSA member in good standing and meet the following requirements:

- Have successfully organized at least one FCRSA WC/X test, or
- Have successfully served as chair or co-chair for a FCRSA or GRCA WC/X test, or
- Have successfully served as either chair or co-chair for an AKC Licensed Retriever Field Trial or Hunting Test, or
- Have successfully served as either chair or co-chair for an AKC Sanctioned Plan “A” or Plan “B” Retriever Field Trial or Hunting Test.

It is recommended that clubs appoint co-chairs to its test Committee, thereby broadening its pool for future chairs.

TEST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There shall be a minimum of three (3) FCRSA members in good standing on the committee, any of whom may serve as co-chairs. Because at least three members of the committee shall be in attendance on the grounds during the hours of the test, the committee must be large enough to ensure minimum committee attendance on the grounds the entire time.

If for some reason the test chair is unable to procure three qualified members of the Society to serve on the committee, he/she may appeal to the FCRSA WC/WCX Subcommittee for permission to appoint non-Society members to the committee. The test chair shall submit to the WC/X Administrators a letter setting forth the reasons and the circumstances for the request and shall list the proposed appointees together with their qualifications. The WCWCX Subcommittee will promptly consider the request and advise the test

chair of its final decision.

If Golden Retrievers are invited to enter the test, there must be one additional member on the committee who is a GRCA member approved by GRCA. If one of the test judges is a GRCA member in good standing, he/she may, under unusual circumstances, also serve as the GRCA committee member, if approved by the Field Committee. Rules and policies related to the GRCA can be found at: **www.GRCA.org**.

Requirements

DEADLINES

At least sixty (60) days prior to the test, the chair (or a committee member) shall complete and submit the following to the WC/WCX Administrators:

- Application Form to Host a FCRSA-Sponsored WC/WCX Test
- Insurance Information Form for FCRSA-Sponsored WC/WCX Test
- WC/WCX proposed income/expenses report or budget

See the FCRSA website (www.FCRSA.org) for forms and information or contact the WC/WCX Administrators listed in the FCRSA newsletter.

After reviewing the test request from the Test Chair(s), the WC/X Administrators shall submit the test information, with his/her recommendation, to the FCRSA Recording Secretary for approval. Once approved the WC/X Administrators will notify the Test Chair(s) as well as the FCRSA Insurance Officer.

If Golden Retrievers will be invited to enter the test, the test chair must also apply to Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) at least 90 days prior to the test date to secure its approval of the test. (Also, see the GRCA website for test forms and information.) GRCA will send forms to be completed that must be returned at least 60 days prior to test date. Golden Retrievers passing the test will not

receive credit if the test has not been approved by GRCA. Note: GRCA may impose a fine if its deadlines are not met.

PREMIUMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Until the test chair(s) have been notified by the WC/X Administrators that the test has been approved by the WC/WCX Subcommittee, any advertising or information about the test **must** include the phrase, "Pending FCRSA approval." Once approval is granted, the phrase "FCRSA-Sponsored" or "Sponsored by FCRSA" shall be used in the premium list, the catalog, and all references to the test.

Notice of the upcoming FCRSA-sponsored test (pending or approved) should be published, whenever publication dates permit, in at least one issue of the FCRSA newsletter.

The entry information or premium list should include the following:

- The scope of the test (WC and/or WCX) including fees
- Exact location of the test
- Date(s) on which test(s) will be held
- Starting time of the event
- Judges' names
- Name and location of where entries will be received
- Closing date, time, and location
- Names of committee members including the chair(s) and test secretary
- Allowances of other retriever breeds entering the test(s)
- List of ribbons and prizes
- Type of birds used
- Allowances for bitches in season running in test (This is especially important if Golden Retrievers are permitted to enter this event. GRCA does not permit bitches in-season to run in a WC/X test.)

Entries for each dog should be submitted on a standard entry form

that contains:

- the name of the dog,
- its registration number,
- the names of the sire and dam,
- the name(s) and addresses of the owner(s),
- the name of the handler, and
- the test(s) entered.

JUDGES

Two judges are required for each test. (An additional set of judges will be needed if a large number of entries warrant splitting the test.) The requirements for each set of judges shall be an aggregate of three (3) qualification points. One (1) point will be earned for each of the following:

- Any judging assignment at an AKC Licensed Field Trial,
- Any judging assignment of an Open or Amateur All-Age stake at a Sanctioned Plan "A" trial,
- Any judging assignment at an AKC Licensed Hunting Retriever Test at the Senior or Master level,
- Any two (2) judging assignments at a FCRSA or GRCA WC/X test (except only one point may come from this category for each set of judges).

To ensure qualified judges, the judges selected by the WC/X Test Committee must have the minimum number of points between them, i.e. 3-point minimum total between both judges. If their points, as shown in the AKC's "Directories for Retriever Field Trial and Hunting Test Judges," are insufficient, the test chair shall provide the needed information: Judge's AKC number, stakes/trials/tests judged, dates, names of clubs, etc. to substantiate each judge's qualifications.

The test chair or secretary should provide each judge with a set of WC and WCX requirements. It is expected that the judges shall become completely familiar with the requirements of the WC/X tests prior to the test date. In addition, a review of AKC's "Regulations and Guidelines for AKC Hunting Tests" and "Retriever

Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure" is required, with special attention to the sections pertaining to the Derby and Qualifying stakes.

Note: At times, a judge may request permission to enter and handle his/her dog in the test. If the test committee wishes to honor the request, they shall submit to the WC/X Administrators the name of a qualified judge as a substitute judge for that particular dog and owner. The WC/WCX Subcommittee will consider the request and advise the test chair of its decision.

BIRDS

For number of birds needed for the test, the following estimates may be helpful:

- WC land series: 1 bird per dog (1.5 birds if using a flyer)
- WC water series: 1 bird per dog
- WCX land series: 1.5 birds per dog
- WCX water series: 1 bird per dog

Birds used in the land series shall be pigeons, ducks, upland game birds (pheasants, chukhars, or guinea hens). All birds used must be of the same species in a given series. If Golden Retrievers are entered in the test, pigeons or upland birds must be used on land, except in an emergency situation with notification to the GRCA.

Birds used in the water series must be ducks.

[Also, see each test explanation for specific guidelines on the use of the birds.]

EQUIPMENT

The following is a suggested list of equipment that may be needed for successfully holding a WC and/or WCX test:

- Single shot shotguns or popper guns, 1 per station. (It is a good idea to have at least one extra popper gun in case of a gun failure.)
- Shotgun stands (to hold the shotguns in a safe, firing position)

- Popper shells
- Live shotgun shells (clearly identified)
- Wingers or mechanical throwing device (WCX only); only a manual release winger is permitted and a foot-release winger is recommended
- White jacket, shirts, coats, etc. for "bird boys" at each station
- Buckets or bags for holding and carrying the birds
- Duck drying rack
- Chairs for the judges and "bird boys"
- Holding blinds
- Marking (survey) ribbon
- Orange spray marking paint
- Refreshments for judges and workers
- Directional signs
- Decoys (WCX test)
- Judges' scoring books
- Ear protection for "bird boys"
- Boat with all state regulated safety equipment
- Test dog
- "Pick-up" dog

ENTRY FEES, TEST BUDGETS, ACCOUNTING

The test committee shall prepare a budget outlining its estimated income and expenses and submit it with the application to host a test. Test entry fees (plus any other sources of income) should be calculated to cover all anticipated expenses. The test committee shall be diligent in planning its budget to avoid a loss from the test.

The local hosting club will handle all accounting. Checks for entry fees shall be payable to the hosting club and all expenses shall be paid from its treasury. Any profit will go to the hosting club. Any loss will be assumed by the FCRSA.

Following the test, two copies of a detailed Income/Expense report shall be submitted promptly to the WC/X Administrators. The

WC/X Administrators shall forward one copy to the FCRSA Treasurer for the record and for reimbursement in the case of a loss.

THE DRAW

The Test Secretary shall be in charge of conducting a draw to determine the order of running as set forth in the AKC's "Retriever Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure."

The running order shall not segregate dogs based on their breed.

REPORT TO WC/X ADMINISTRATORS

Following the test, the test chair or his appointee shall, in timely fashion, send to the WC/X Administrators the following:

1. A marked catalog of those dogs that qualified,
2. All entry forms for those Flat-Coats passing the test,
3. The judges' signed verification of the clearly identified passes (see "Judges Certification" form below), and
4. Two copies of a detailed Income/Expense report. (See "Test Budgets" section.)
5. Any other information requested by the WC/X Administrators or the FCRSA Field Committee.

The following certification should appear in the official catalog following the last dog listed in each test:

JUDGES' CERTIFICATION	
I certify that _____ dogs received Qualifying scores in this WC/WCX test and that the above information identifying these dogs was entered prior to my signing this page.	
Judge's Signature _____	
Judge's Signature _____	
TEST SECRETARY'S CERTIFICATION	
I certify that the Judges have verified the above information and signed this page.	
Number of Dogs Entered _____	Total Starters: _____
Number of Qualifying Scores _____	
Signature of Test Secretary _____	Date _____

AWARDS

Although encouraged, it is at the discretion of each hosting club and test committee to provide awards such as ribbons or other prizes for qualifying dogs and handlers.

If ribbons are awarded to each dog deemed to have qualified, each ribbon can be any color or color scheme except solid orange and should include the following information:

- Logo of the FCRSA
- Name of the stake
- Name of the hosting club
- The words "Qualifying Score"

Once the verified information is received and processed, the FCRSA's WC/X Administrators will send a certificate to each qualifying Flat-Coated Retriever owner within 60-90 days.

TITLES

The titles for Working Certificate and Working Certificate Excellent tests are recognized by the FCRSA only and are not recognized by the AKC.

- Any eligible Flat-Coated Retriever that passes the Working Certificate test will receive the title WC.
- Any eligible Flat-Coated Retriever that passes the Working Certificate Excellent test will receive the title WCX.

DISPUTES AND PROTESTS

The test committee shall be governed by the rules and regulations set forth in "Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers" and "Regulations and Guidelines for AKC Hunting Tests for Retrievers". Except as specifically stated otherwise, all regulations that govern those events shall apply to FCRSA-sponsored WC/X tests.

If a dispute or incident should occur during the test, the test

secretary shall, within five (5) days, submit a report of the incident and the action taken to the FCRSA's WC/X Administrators who shall submit the matter to the Field Committee for review and, if need be, a recommendation to the FCRSA Board of Directors for further action.

The Working Certificate Test (WC)

Purpose:

In 1975, the FCRSA established the Working Certificate test (WC) primarily to encourage the use and maintenance of the natural working and retrieving abilities of the Flat-Coated Retriever and as a useful aid in the selection of breeding stock.

The WC test is designed to test the natural abilities of the Flat-Coat including its memory, intelligence, attention, nose, marking ability, courage, perseverance, and style.

In addition to the following WC requirements, judges and contestants should be familiar with AKC's "Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers" and "Regulations and Guideline for AKC Hunting Tests for Retrievers." Except as specifically stated herein, all regulations that govern those events shall apply to the WC test.

Description of the Test:

1. A double marked retrieve on land-
 - a. Moderate cover (i.e. bird cannot be seen from a distance of more than a foot)
 - b. Falls approximately 40-50 yards
 - c. Throws slightly angled back at approximately a 45 degree angle, and at least a 90 degree angle between adjacent falls
 - d. The falls should not be converging, i.e. thrown toward each other.
 - e. Birds should not be thrown into the wind, if practical.
 - f. Birds shall be pigeons or upland game birds, or if no golden retrievers are entered, ducks maybe used. Birds shall not be mixed species in the same series.
 - g. All dead birds may be used; a live flyer is recommended on the diversion mark at the discretion of the judges and test committee

2. Two single marked retrieves on water (back-to-back)-
 - a. One retrieve is into light cover in the water or at the edge of the shore in cover if there is no cover in the water
 - b. The other retrieve can be in open water
 - c. Falls are approximately 25-30 yards away
 - d. Birds shall be dead ducks

WC Test Rules:

1. Bird throwers and the guns should be in white or light-colored shirts or jacket to be clearly visible to the dogs in both land and water tests.
2. Handlers and/or judges may wear light or dark clothing.
3. Birds should not be thrown into the wind and should be clearly visible throws.
4. Throws must not be converging or thrown towards each other.
5. Shotguns must be used. Popper loads shall be used for all dead birds. Steel or non-toxic shot shall be used where required. Safety and gun safety education should be of the utmost consideration when setting up the test and assigning workers.
6. Wingers, Strong-Arms, or other mechanical bird-throwing devices shall not be used.
7. Birds must be in good condition; ducks shall not be water-logged or damaged.
8. Dogs may retrieve the birds in any order without penalty.
9. A shot must be fired for each mark without a duck call or other attention getting devices. The shot can be immediately before the throw or while the bird is in the air.
10. Both water retrieves should be from swimming water, if grounds allow, but swimming water is a mandatory requirement for one, preferably for the longer retrieve.
11. Decoys may not be used on land or water.
12. Handlers will not be required to handle a gun.

13. A test dog must be used for each test. The test dog should be working at the level of the test, or have obtained that level's title, but no higher.
14. The dog may be brought to the line on lead and gently held on line by a flat buckle collar without tags or a slip cord. (No choke, pinch, prong, "British slipcord", or other training collars are permitted.)
15. The dog must not be released to retrieve before its number or "dog" is called by the judge.
16. The dog need not deliver to hand, but must bring the bird within a clearly defined area that is not more than 6 feet from the line. Should the line for a water test be at the water's edge, the dog shall bring the duck out of the water so the handler does not have to wade after the bird.
17. Handlers may not handle a dog to a mark or do anything to encourage a dog in its hunt. But, once the dog has found the bird, the handler may use voice, whistle, and/or gesture to encourage its prompt return.
18. The dog may be gently guided by its collar (no manhandling) into position for the second retrieve.
19. A dog may be recast from the line on a mark, but only if, in the opinion of the judges, the dog was confused as to whether it was sent. Generally, the dog will make a start towards a marked fall, but then stop a very short distance from the line and return or is recalled by the handler. The judges will agree upon a distance from the line after which a recast is not allowed.
20. Once the dog has picked up the bird, it should return promptly to the handler.
21. When the dog has completed its retrieves or is "picked up" in the case of a "no-bird," the handler may immediately take the dog by its collar or put it on lead before leaving the line.
22. The judge's decision is final.

WC Judging/Handling Guidelines

The tests should be fairly straight forward, yet difficult enough to enable a dog to display its natural marking abilities, desire to

retrieve, desire to work, and willingness to re-enter the water.

Tests must not be tight or tricky or set up to intentionally confuse the dog.

A basic level of training is essential, but abilities acquired through training should not be given precedence.

The suggested guidelines for distance are maximum, but terrain, cover, and conditions of the day must be taken into account when setting up the test. For example, maximum distances would be used in lighter cover with level terrain.

In general, the test should be run and judged along the lines of a Derby test, except for the following:

- Dogs may be brought to the line on lead and gently held until released to retrieve by the judge
- Dogs need not deliver to hand
- Dogs may be gently guided by the collar into position for the second retrieve
- The test is non-competitive and simply judged on a pass/fail basis

The judges will score each dog as *PASS* or *FAIL*. A dog that fails any one series will not qualify at the test. A dog must receive a passing score from each judge to qualify at the test.

A list of the total number of qualifiers and each qualifying dog number will be submitted to the test secretary. Both judges must sign the officially marked catalog/running list. (See "Report to the WC/X Administrators.")

Mandatory Elimination or Failure of the WC Test

1. Releasing the dog to retrieve before the dog's number/"dog" is called or dog is released by the judge.
2. Letting a competing dog watch the location of a fall for another dog before its turn to run. This will be a mandatory elimination of the dog, and possibly an elimination of the

handler from the test if the judges or test committee believe the violation to have been deliberate.

3. Manhandling the dog between birds of a double, e.g. unusual physical handling and/or excessive "helping" the dog to remember the second (memory) bird.
4. Noisily or frequently restraining a dog from breaking, except in extraordinary circumstances, from the time the handler signals the judge until the dog's number/"dog" is called.
5. Loud or prolonged barking or whining.
6. "Breaking," i.e. dog leaves the line to retrieve before the dog's number is called by the judge. (Note: a dog will not be eliminated for a "controlled break," when the dog leaves to retrieve before being sent and is quickly brought under control by a verbal command or whistle without manhandling and promptly returns to the line.
7. Using a signal, a vocal command, or throwing anything to direct the dog to a fall or to persuade it to enter the water.
8. The dog returning to the handler, either without the bird or without having been called in, except when the dog is obviously confused as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve.
9. The dog stopping its hunt.
10. Giving up after a search for one bird and going to the area of another fallen bird, or dropping a bird the dog is retrieving and going for another, i.e. "switching birds"
11. Ignoring a bird when found and leaving it, i.e. "blinking the bird."
12. Failing to find a bird that the dog should have been found
13. "Hard mouth" or badly damaging game which, in the opinion of the judges, was caused entirely and solely by the dog, without justification.
14. Extreme "freeze," or unwillingness to release a bird on delivery until compelled to do so by severe means.

The Working Certificate Excellent Test (WCX)

Purpose:

In 1980, the Working Certificate Excellent test (WCX) was established by the FCRSA to encourage the further use and development, through training, of the natural working and retrieving abilities of the Flat-Coated Retriever, and as a useful aid in the selection of breeding stock.

The WCX test is designed to test the Flat-Coat's trainability in addition to natural abilities including memory, intelligence, attention, nose, marking ability, courage, perseverance, and style.

Description of the Test:

1. A triple marked retrieve on land -
 - a. Moderate cover (i.e. bird cannot be seen from a distance of more than a foot away)
 - b. Marks fall approximately 60 - 100 yards away
 - c. Throws should be angled back at approximately a 45 degree angle and at least 60 degrees apart from an adjacent fall. The falls for the complete test should not be more than 180 degrees apart.
 - d. The birds should not be thrown into the wind, if practical.
 - e. The sequence in which the birds are thrown shall be either clockwise (left to right) or counter-clockwise (right to left).
 - f. The marks should not be converging, i.e. thrown toward each other.
 - g. Two of the birds thrown shall be dead birds while the last bird thrown shall be a "flyer."
 - h. Birds shall be pigeons, upland game birds, or ducks. Mixed species are not permitted in the same series. Note: If Golden Retrievers are entered, ducks may not be used in the land series.
 - i. Decoys may not be used on land

2. A double marked retrieve on water with an honor -
 - a. While both retrieves should be in swimming water, if the grounds allow, swimming water is a mandatory requirement for one of the retrieves (preferably the longer one).
 - b. Falls should be between 45 and 60 yards in length and should fall at least 60 degrees apart.
 - c. The memory bird, which may be either the longer or the shorter bird, shall be in moderate cover and not visible from the line. If there is no cover in the water, the bird may be thrown at the edge of the shore in cover. The other bird (diversion bird) may be visible from the line in open water, but must not be in anything more than very light cover.
 - d. The dog may retrieve the birds in any order without penalty.
 - e. Decoys must be used; there should be 2-4 decoys clearly visible from the line, but not in line with either fall.
 - f. There shall be an honor in the water series.
 - g. Birds shall be ducks and be in good condition - not water logged or damaged. Of the two ducks thrown, one may be a shot flyer, if it is no closer than 50 yards from the working and honoring lines. A shot flyer should be shot as the diversion bird.

WCX Test Rules:

1. Bird throwers and the guns should be in white or light-colored shirts or jacket to be clearly visible to the dogs in both land and water tests.
2. Handlers and/or judges may wear light or dark clothing.
3. Birds should not be thrown into the wind and should be clearly visible throws.
4. Throws must not be converging or thrown towards each other.
5. A mechanical throwing device, such as a "winger" used to throw the birds, either live flyers or freshly killed birds, is

permitted for use in the WCX test at the discretion and agreement of the judges and test committee. The possible use of the wingers must be announced in the premium. The mechanical throwing device must be manned by workers wearing white (as described previously) and who are clearly visible from the line. Proper instructions must be given for its safe and correct use in order to avoid serious injury. Foot-release wingers are strongly recommended. (If Golden Retrievers are entered in the test, the test committee must abide by the GRCA winger policy in order for Golden Retrievers to receive credit for their qualification.)

6. Shotguns must be used. Popper loads shall be used for all dead birds. Steel or non-toxic shot shall be used where required. Safety should be of the utmost consideration when setting up the test and assigning workers.
7. Birds must be in good condition; ducks shall not be water-logged or damaged.
8. Dogs may retrieve the birds in any order without penalty.
9. A shot must be fired for each mark without a duck call or other attention getting devices. The shot can be immediately before the throw or while the bird is in the air.
10. Decoys will be used in the water series.
11. Handlers will not be required to handle a gun.
12. A test dog must be used for each test. The test dog should be working at the level of the test, or have obtained that level's title, but no higher.
13. The handler shall bring the dog quietly to line off-lead and without a collar.
14. The dog should be steady on the line, but a controlled break shall not eliminate the dog if it is quickly brought under control by a verbal command or whistle, and it promptly returns to the handler.
15. The handler shall not touch the dog at any time during the test.
16. The handler of the working dog may not talk to his/her dog from the time he/she signals for the birds until the judge releases the dog with its number or by saying "dog."

17. The dogs must not be released to retrieve before its number or the word "dog" is called by the judge.
18. A dog may be recast from the line on a mark, but only if in the opinion of the judges, the dog was confused as to whether it was sent or not. It is the judges' discretion as to whether the handler may recast the dog.
19. Once the dog has been sent to retrieve, the handler may not handle or do anything to encourage the dog in its hunt. When the dog has found the bird, the handler may encourage its return by voice, whistle, and/or gesture.
20. Once the dog has picked up the bird, it should return promptly to the handler.
21. The dog will deliver each bird to hand and relinquish it easily.
22. The honor dog may be asked to honor on-lead, if, in the opinion of the judges, the dog failed its water marks.
23. During the honor, a Flat-Coat handler may speak quietly to his/her dog provided his/her voice does not interfere with the running/working dog, its handler, or judges. Golden handlers shall remain silent while honoring in accordance with GRCA rules.
24. Both the running and honoring dogs shall leave the line off-lead and under control. However, the honoring dog shall not leave the line until released by the judges upon completion of the honor. A running or honoring dog is considered under judgment until dog and handler are behind the judges after leaving the line.
25. Multiple controlled breaks may be cause for elimination.
26. The judge's decision is final.

WCX Judging/Handling Guidelines:

The test must not be tight, tricky, or set-up to intentionally confuse the dog.

Generally speaking, although the test will not be as demanding, the WCX should be run and judged under the same rules as those

governing the Qualifying Stake as set forth in AKC's "Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers." Exceptions are:

- Handling a dog to a mark by signal, whistle, or voice is not permitted.
- The honor, required in the WCX test, must be held in the water series. During the honor, Flat-Coat handlers may speak quietly to the dog to restrain it from breaking provided his/her voice does not interfere with the running/working dog, its handler, or judges. Note: In accordance with GRCA rules, Golden handlers shall remain silent while honoring.
- The "honor box" shall be clearly identified. Any movement by the dog forward out of the "box" except under extraordinary conditions shall constitute a break, resulting in mandatory elimination.

The judges will score each dog as *PASS* or *FAIL*. A dog that fails any one series will not qualify at the test. A dog must receive a passing score from each judge to qualify at the test.

A list of the total number of qualifiers and each qualifying dog number will be submitted to the test secretary. Both judges must sign the officially marked catalog/running list. (See "Report to the WC/X Administrator.")

Mandatory Elimination or Failure of the WCX Test

1. Releasing the dog to retrieve before the dog's number/"dog" is called or dog is released by the judge.
2. Letting a competing dog watch the location of a fall for another dog before its turn to run. This will be a mandatory elimination of the dog, and possibly an elimination of the handler from the test if the Judges or test committee believes the violation to have been deliberate.
3. Restraining a dog by touching or by carrying exposed training equipment (except whistles), or by using any equipment or making any threatening gestures in such a manner that they

are an aid or threat in steadying or controlling the working or honoring dog.

4. Deliberate blocking of a dog's view by handler so that the dog will not see all birds thrown. This applies to both to the working and the honoring dog.
5. Loud or prolonged barking or whining
6. Noisy or frequent vocal commands to restrain the running dog from breaking, except in extraordinary circumstances, from the time the handler signals the judge until the dog's number/"dog" is called.
7. "Breaking," i.e. dog leaves the line to retrieve before the dog's number is called by the judge. (Note: a dog will not be eliminated for a "controlled break," when the dog leaves to retrieve before being sent and is quickly brought under control by a verbal command or whistle without manhandling, does not go beyond a point designated by the judges, and promptly returns to the line.)
8. Breaking the honor, i.e. leaving the honor box in an attempt to retrieve; there is no controlled break allowed on the honor.
9. Using a signal, a vocal command, or throwing anything to direct the dog to a fall or to persuade it to enter the water.
10. Dog returning to the handler, either without the bird or without having been called in, except when the dog is obviously confused as to whether it was ordered to retrieve.
11. The dog stopping its hunt.
12. Giving up after a search for one bird and going to the area of another fallen bird, or dropping a bird the dog is retrieving and going for another, i.e. "switching birds."
13. Ignoring a bird when found and leaving it, i.e. "blinking the bird."
14. Failing to find a bird that should have been found.
15. Retrieving a decoy.
16. "Hard mouth" or badly damaging game which, in the opinion of the judges, was caused entirely and solely by the dog, without justification.

17. Extreme “freeze,” i.e. unwillingness to release a bird on delivery until compelled to do so by severe means.

FCRSA'S Specialty Singles Events

Purpose:

At the National Specialty, the FCRSA hosts a fun and friendly yet competitive field event for owners of Flat-Coated Retrievers. The purpose of the Singles tests is to test the dogs' natural marking ability. The Singles tests are divided into two different tests:

- The Steady Singles Championship
- The Unsteady Singles Stakes

Each test will have specific requirements, eligibilities, and provisions important to both handlers and judges.

THE STEADY SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP (SS)

The Steady Singles Championship was first started in 1984 as a friendly field competition for any Flat-Coated Retriever at the annual National Specialty. The Steady Singles Championship stakes will include dogs with a wide range of field experience, from those barely steadied to seasoned competitors.

Being a championship stake there shall be one winner, the Steady Singles Champion. That year's Steady Single Champion will have the dogs name and year engraved on the FCRSA Steady Singles award and hold it for one year. All other finalists shall be awarded without ranking, “Judges Award of Merit” (JAM) ribbons.

Eligibility

This event is open to any Flat-Coated Retriever:

- At least 6 months of age on the day of the test, and
- With an individual AKC registration number, foreign registration number, or an ILP number.

Description of the SS test:

1. Land Series
 - a. 2-3 single marked retrieves

- b. Moderate cover (ideally)
 - c. Falls generally not more than 200 yards depending on terrain
 - d. Birds shall be dead ducks
2. Water Series
- a. 2-3 Single marked retrieves
 - b. Cover to open water
 - c. Falls are generally under 200 yards depending on the water and terrain
 - d. Birds shall be dead ducks
3. Optional third series may be held at the discretion of judges
- a. Upon completion of the land and water tests, ties shall be broken by a third series runoff.
 - b. May be land and/or water
 - c. 1-2 single marked retrieves

SS Test Rules:

1. Depending on the number of entries, this test maybe split into 2 flights/sections. (See "Judges Guidelines.")
2. Bird throwers should be in white
3. Handlers and/or judges may wear light or dark clothing.
4. Birds should be clearly visible throws.
5. Shotguns must be used; popper loads shall be used for all dead birds
6. Wingers, Strong-Arms, or other mechanical bird throwing devices are permitted.
7. A shot must be fired prior to each throw.
8. Decoys may be used on the water and/or land series.
9. A test dog shall be used for each test/series.
10. Dogs must come to the line off lead and without a collar.
11. Dogs must be steady on the line throughout the marks.
12. Dogs must deliver each bird to the hand of the handler.
13. All dogs are guaranteed two retrieves unless the dog is out of control in the field or with respect to its handling of the birds.
14. There will be one winner, the Steady Singles Championship. All other finalists who have successfully and honestly

completed all of the series shall be awarded JAMs without ranking.

15. The judge's decision is final.

Judging Guidelines

The Specialty Field Events Committee should select seasoned judges who are familiar with AKC Field Trial requirements and are capable of creative use of the terrain, cover change, wind, distance, and previous marks.

Judges for this Steady Singles Championship will see a wide range of training and experience of the dogs and handlers. Some dogs may have limited experience while other dogs may be experienced competitors in field trials and/or hunt tests. However, if judges set up good test series, they should perceive that Flat-Coats are enthusiastic workers and have fine natural marking abilities.

Judges are encouraged to be generous with their callbacks and not to eliminate dogs solely because of poor lines, hunts in the area of the bird, brief hunts behind a gun, etc.

Judges should plan and time their tests so dogs are tested as equally as possible on land and water.

Because this is a fun field event to challenge the dogs' natural marking abilities, judges should avoid:

- Trick marks
- Marks set up to intentionally confuse the dog
- Marks where avoiding cheating is the main criteria
- Continual use of retired guns

It is suggested that judges set up at least (3) land series marks and (2) water series marks of graduated difficulty that will ultimately determine the most successful marking Flat-Coats in this test.

The guidelines for distance are suggested. Creative use of terrain, cover, cover change, wind, and weather conditions should be taken into account when setting up the test.

Depending on the number of entries, this stake may be split into two flights with a set of two judges for each flight. If the SS is split, both sets of judges must agree to the test set-ups in all of the series without changes. In one flight, the judges will start with the land series, while the judges in the other flight will start with the water series. "Call backs" from the land test will proceed to the water test and vice versa. Judges will move with their original flight.

The Singles Champion shall then be determined by a runoff between the winner of each flight and will be judged by all judges eligible to judge the runoff, i.e. owners or co-owners may not judge their own dogs. The winner of the runoff should be by unanimous decision of the judges.

All other finalists who have successfully and honestly completed each series shall be awarded JAMs without ranking. The Specialty Field Events Committee will not limit the number of JAMs awarded in the Steady Singles Championship test.

Mandatory Elimination or Failure of the SS Test:

1. Letting a competing dog watch the location of a fall for another dog before its turn to run. This will be a mandatory elimination of the dog, and possibly an elimination of the handler from the test if the Judges or test committee believes the violation to have been deliberate.
2. Dog that does not deliver to hand.
3. Dog returns to handler either without the bird or without having been called in, except when the dog is obviously confused as to whether it was really ordered to retrieve
4. Dogs must be steady. "Breaking," i.e. dog leaves the line to retrieve before the judge calls the dog's number. Breaks or controlled breaks shall result in mandatory elimination. If a dog creeps or jumps forward slightly as birds are

shot/thrown, and the handler makes no effort to stop or restrain him, it shall not be considered a controlled break unless the dog goes beyond a point acceptable to the judges. If the handler makes any effort to stop or restrain the dog, the judges shall consider the dog to have broken and eliminate him. The judges may require a dog that has crept or jumped forward within the acceptable distance to be brought back to heel position before being sent to retrieve.

5. Dog stops the hunt.
6. Dog gives up after a search for one bird and going to the area of another fallen bird.
7. Dog ignores a bird when found and leaving it, i.e. "blinking the bird."
8. Dog fails to find a bird that should have been found.
9. Dog has "hard mouth," or badly damages the game which, in the opinion of the judges, was caused entirely and solely by the dog without justification.
10. Dog has extreme "freeze," i.e. unwillingness to release a bird on delivery until compelled to do so by severe means.

UNSTEADY SINGLES STAKE (USS)

Purpose:

The purpose of this stake is to introduce novice dogs and their handlers to field work. FCRSA hopes that once owners who are new to this activity see how much their dogs enjoy the sport, they will become interested in pursuing fieldwork and utilize the natural and intended purpose of this breed.

The Unsteady Singles tests will have a 1st Place Winner as well as 2nd-4th Placements and JAMs in each section. JAMs are awarded to those dogs that have successfully and honestly completed all of series.

Eligibility:

- Dog must be at least 6 months old on the day of the test, and

- Have an individual AKC registration number, foreign registration number, or ILP number, and
- Dog has not previously passed or qualified in any test or event requiring steadiness, i.e. Steady Singles, WCX, Senior test, Master test, or any other field test where steadiness is required, and
- A dog may not be entered in the USS stake at this Specialty if it is also entered in any stake or test that requires steadiness.
- Owners must enter their dog in the appropriate USS section as outlined in the "Sections in the Unsteady Singles Stake."

Sections in the Unsteady Singles Stake:

1. Section A (Novice Handlers and Novice Dogs)
 - a. Handlers who have not previously placed any field title on a dog, and
 - b. Dogs who have never run a field event requiring steadiness, and
 - c. Dogs that have never received "considerable professional training." (Those dogs that have spent nights away from their home and owner for the purpose of being trained by a person other than the dog's owner shall be considered to have received considerable professional training.)
2. Section B (Experienced Handlers and Novice Dogs)
 - a) Dogs who have never run in a field event requiring steadiness, and
 - b) Handlers who have previously placed any field title on a dog, or
 - c) Dogs that have received "considerable professional training." (Those dogs that have spent nights away from their home and owner for the purpose of being trained by a person other than the dog's owner shall be considered to have received considerable professional training.)

Description of the Test:

1. Land Series
 - a. 2-3 single marked retrieves
 - b. Moderate cover (ideally)
 - c. Falls generally not more than 150 yards depending on terrain
 - d. Birds shall be dead ducks
2. Water Series
 - a. 2-3 Single marked retrieves
 - b. Light cover to open water
 - c. Falls are generally under 150 yards depending on the water and terrain
 - d. Birds shall be dead duck
3. Optional Land and/or Water Series will be at the discretion of the judges
 - a. Upon completion of the land and water tests, ties shall be broken by a third series runoff.
 - b. May be land and/or water
 - c. 1-2 Single marked retrieves

USS Test Rules:

1. The same judging standards and guidelines should apply for both sections of the USS. (See Judges USS Guidelines.)
2. Bird throwers should be in white. Retiring guns should not be used.
3. Handlers and/or judges may wear light or dark clothing.
4. Birds should be clearly visible throws.
5. Shotguns must be used; popper loads shall be used for all dead birds.
6. Wingers, Strong-Arms, or other mechanical bird throwing devices are permitted.
7. A shot must be fired for prior to each throw.
8. Decoys may not be used on the water and/or land series.
9. A test dog should be used for each test/series.
10. Dogs may be brought to the line on lead and run with a flat buckle collar without tags or other attachments.
11. Dogs may be held on line and shall not be sent for a bird until released by the judges.

12. Dogs need not deliver to hand, but must return to a designated area with the bird. Dogs delivering to hand shall not outscore dogs delivering to the designated area.
13. All dogs are guaranteed two retrieves unless the dog is out of control in the field or with respect to its handling of the birds.
14. There will be 1st – 4th Placements for each section. All other finalists who have successfully and honestly completed the last series shall be awarded JAMs without ranking.
15. The judge's decision is final.

Judging Guidelines

The Specialty Field Events Committee should select judges who are experienced Field Trial and/or Hunt Test judges and handlers. They should be capable of setting up a test with creative use of the terrain, cover change, wind, distance, and previous marks. Additionally, the judges should be able and willing to set up fair tests for these inexperienced dogs.

Judges for the USS tests must be able to create tests that challenge the dogs' natural abilities without penalizing them for inexperience and trained abilities.

Judges are encouraged to be generous with their callbacks and not to eliminate dogs solely because of poor lines, hunts in the area of the bird, brief hunts behind a gun, etc.

Judges should plan and time their tests so dogs are tested as equally as possible on land and water.

All judges should feel free to offer assistance to handlers. This may be the first field experience for the handler and should be a pleasant and educational experience. Help must be brief, however, since there is usually a large entry.

Because this is a fun field event to challenge the dogs' natural marking abilities, judges should avoid:

- Trick marks
- Marks set up to intentionally confuse the dog
- Marks where avoiding cheating is the main criteria
- Use of retired guns

It is suggested that judges set up at least (2-3) land series marks and (2) water series marks of graduated difficulty that would ultimately determine the most successful marking Flat-Coats in this test.

The guidelines for distance are suggested. Creative use of terrain, cover, cover change, wind, and weather conditions should be taken into account when setting up the test.

If the total entries in Section A and B are fewer than 40 dogs at the closing date, these sections may be combined and judged by one set of judges, using the same marks for all. However, the judges will separate the awarded placements and JAMs for each section.

The USS judges in one section should feel free to share land and water series set-ups with the other USS judges. This is especially valuable when land, water, and/or time are limited. If the land and water series is shared, all of the USS section judges must agree to the test set-up for in each series. Then judges of one USS section will start with the land series, while the judges in the other USS section will start with the water series. "Call backs" from the land test will proceed to the water test and vice versa. Judges stay with his or her own sections. If necessary, the final series to determine the placements will be completely set-up with all of the USS judges.

The judges will select one First Place winner, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Placements, and JAMs in each section. Jams are highly encouraged. FCRSA recommends awarding JAMs to those finalists that have successfully and honestly completed all of the series. The Specialty Field Events Committee will not limit the number of JAMs awarded.

Mandatory Elimination or Failure of the USS Tests:

1. Releasing the dog to retrieve before the dog's number is called or dog is released by the judge.
2. Letting a competing dog watch the location of a fall for another dog before its turn to run. This will be a mandatory elimination of the dog, and possibly an elimination of the handler from the test if the judges or event committee believe the violation to have been deliberate.
3. Loud or prolonged barking or whining.
4. Noisily or frequently restraining a dog from breaking, except in extraordinary circumstances, from the time the handler signals the judge until the dog's number/"dog" is called.
5. "Breaking," i.e. dog leaves the line to retrieve before the dog's number is called by the judge [Note: a dog will not be eliminated for a "controlled break" or where dog leaves to retrieve before being sent and is quickly brought under control by a verbal command or whistle without manhandling and promptly returns to the line.]
6. Using a signal, a vocal command, or throwing anything to direct the dog to a fall or to persuade it to enter the water.
7. Dog returning to the handler, either without the bird or without having been called in, except when the dog is obviously confused as to whether it was ordered to retrieve.
8. The dog stopping the hunt
9. Giving up after a search for one bird and going to the area of another fallen bird, i.e. "switching birds."
10. Ignoring a bird when found and leaving it, "blinking the bird"
11. Failing to find a bird that should have been found
12. "Hard mouth" or badly damaging game which, in the opinion of the judges, was caused entirely and solely by the dog without justification
13. Extreme "freeze," i.e. unwillingness to release a bird on delivery until compelled to do so by severe means