

Fig. 1



ASK THE PRO

teaching multiples

By Drew Neubauer

OUR DOGS can do amazing things when they have been given the proper foundation and training. Dogs that can do complex multiples whether, doubles, triples or quads demonstrate a trained response and can be wonderful to watch. We believe in teaching singles, and then building them into multiples. This is how we go about it.

First, the dog must be through force fetch and handling drills. We then teach various concept singles. Terrain, cover, obstacles, different bird placement, water etc are taught as singles. When we throw our singles we always have multiple gun stations in the field so they see multiples but are running singles. This helps to teach them to run to the correct area, not the nearest gunner. All gun stations are

fully visible. When we have a dog running great singles then we start adding in other birds. We want a dog that is confident and strong before we move on.

Our first multiples are doubles with birds thrown away from each other. (Fig. 1) For example, left short station thrown to the left, right short station thrown to the right. Run the memory bird first as a single, and then build your double. Have the gunner help the dog if needed on the memory mark. Your gunner will be key to your success. They must be ready on your signal to help out, either with a “hey, hey” or a second shot and throw. Have the mark land in a clearly visible location. You want success. At this stage we do not handle a dog to the mark; we have the

gunner assist as needed. We want to build confidence in the dog. If they have trouble, simplify and be patient. Continue to set up this type of double until they are running strong and succeeding.

The next set up is with a short bird and long bird. (Fig. 2) Again have the birds thrown opposite directions. Have your gunner help out as needed. If the dog starts to break down short on the long bird have the gunner shoot and throw a second as the dog makes their way to the mark. Keep your dogs attitude up. They should not get worried but want it more than life itself. Repeat this concept until running strong. When they have this down start throwing long bird the same direction as the short, for example both thrown to the right. (Fig. 3) Have the gunner help if needed in the beginning. We want the dog to run to the mark, not the gun station. When the dog has this down we start to make decisions on when to help and when to handle. We handle when the dog gives in to factors. For example, a hillside, patch of cover, wind, etc. We help the dog if they hunt short, blow through the mark or have a long hunt but can't come up with the mark. If they blow a memory mark, don't be afraid of running it as a single. We think dogs see in pictures and every setup builds an album of these pictures that they learn from.

When the dog is having success with doubles, thrown in any direction, build your triples or delayed triples, working their memory. Mix things up. Here we use an 80/20 rule. 80% singles, 20% multiples. This keeps our dogs running good lines and staying focused. Too many multiples lead to head swinging, lack of focus and poor marks. As the dogs are progressing, start retiring gunners. Have them sit down and stand back up if needed to help the dog. Keep your standards up. Be patient and enjoy the process. If you see a hole in your training program, remember it, and work on it another day. It is important to have a plan on what you will train on that day. Pick your battles and if need be make adjustments. It might be that what you set up to do was a tough triple and what you really need to do is break it down to a double and a single. Read your dog and remember success breeds success and attitude is everything!

Happy training. ■

Drew Neubauer

Drew Neubauer lives and trains in Hartsville SC. He has been competing Retrievers for over 15 years in both hunt tests and trials. He and his wife Heather own Gray Oak Boarding & Training.

Fig. 2



Fig. 3

