

“Design and Construction of Field Trial Marks”

A discussion with Jerry Patopea and Dennis Voigt

Edited by Terry Rotschafer and Ted Shih

Illustration by Jean Wu; Photo by Molly Schlachter

FOR YEARS, we have discussed with one another and our friends (Robbie Bickley, Northrup Larson, Dave Rorem, Bill Eckett, Kenny Trott among others) how to improve judging.

Our discussions began with a focus on the Rule Book and then moved into a consideration of how to construct fair and effective tests - both marks and blinds - for competition. We have often heard people say that you can teach a person how to read and understand the Rule Book - and thereby evaluate dogs - but, that you cannot teach a person how to set up tests, particularly marks. We disagree and believe that you can teach a willing student the principles behind setting good marks. This series of articles is intended to accomplish just that.

We have enlisted four experienced field trial competitors: Pat Burns, Don Driggers, Jerry Patopea, and Dennis Voigt to assist us in exploring the design and construction of marking tests. In each of the articles in this series, two of our contributors, will explore overall test philosophy,

practical considerations, and actual test design. Each article will begin with a description of the general weather conditions, size of the entries, and a diagram and photograph of the field.

We hope you find this series interesting and educational.

~Terry Rotschafer & Ted Shih

The conditions presented to our judges represents a typical summer Open All-Age field trial in the Pacific Northwest. The temperatures will rise to the mid-80's with a southerly breeze, bringing in hot-humid conditions. In addition, the cover in the field is medium height and relatively thick.

Our judges are tasked with building a safe, yet competitive, marking test for the 70 competing dogs. The following discussion represents a conversation between two experienced judges and their apprentice.

Jerry:

Hi Dennis, I'm glad you're here. I'm a little bit late but still in time for dinner. I'm looking forward to spending some time with you just talking about our ideas of the trial. This is our apprentice, Sheldon, who will be joining us this weekend.

Dennis:

Jerry, great to see you again and looking forward to the weekend. It will be great to chat about fundamentals before we go out tomorrow and see the grounds.

Sheldon, nice to meet you. Sheldon, I find that if I discuss the fundamentals with my co-judge, even someone as experienced as Jerry, it makes things go much smoother when we get in the field.

Jerry:

I heard our field is an old pasture with some pretty thick cover and little water anywhere in the field. It may trail up pretty good after a few dogs run. We should walk it pretty well in the morning and see if we can find a way that it won't trail up. We will have to monitor the

ATV use also, to be sure they don't make trails in the wrong places and ruin our test.

Dennis:

Do you think they will have any cutting equipment so that we could cut an area in front of the line to at least avoid early route trails? If not, we could use the ATV to make some tracks.

Jerry:

Good idea. They should definitely have a good string trimmer handy tomorrow. We can't wait around on Friday morning to groom the area. They may even have a tractor to mow in front of the line.

The weather could be a problem because the forecast is for 80 degrees on Friday, and with a south wind forecast, the humidity will be pretty high. Also, at this altitude the sun feels really harsh to me. It's also still early in the summer season and the dogs are not fully conditioned to running in the heat.

I don't want to set a test where we might have a dog overheating in the field, so I'm thinking about a test where the dogs will ei-

ther get the birds quickly or will need to be handled. I just don't want some handler letting their dog run around too long thinking they might be called back while the dog is overheating in the field. I think we should talk to the handlers in the morning about not leaving their dogs hunting in the field too long. If they don't handle in a timely manner, we can always tell them to handle or pick up. Then we can just have the guns help the dog. They may not like us but they will like us even less if their dog keels over from heat.

Dennis:

Dog safety is always a huge concern for me, too. We can do four things. Firstly, shortening up the test like you suggest, Jerry, helps us reduce our over-heating concern. After all, we don't really want to be reliant on that swimming pool cool down or gunners telling us dogs are in trouble! Secondly, we can advise the handler to pick up the dog. Thirdly, let's ask the club to get some cheap kid's wading pools and fill them with water and ice bags. We can also ask for some tents to place over

the holding blinds. Finally, let's honor later so we don't have hot dogs waiting after they work

Jerry:

Yes, I agree. The holding blinds should have some shade for the dogs, and a cool water pool near the line could stop a big problem before it's too late. A cooler full of ice would also be helpful, but I hope we can avoid that necessity. I'd like the participants to feel comfortable and challenged by our test and not scared their dog might die.

I like a dog with a lot of punch, but with these conditions I think the dogs need to have a lot of self-discipline. On top of the weather we have hen pheasants as our birds. They won't have a lot of scent and will tend to scatter some dog sense anyway when dogs have to put their heads in the cover to find them.

I'm thinking two or three birds in the first series, and maybe in the second series too, just as a safety factor. Definitely not a quad in the first series.

Dennis:

I love those hen pheasants but we don't have to put them in the heavy cover. A triple is fine but until I see the field, I doubt we can get away with a double unless it's combined with a blind which I'd rather not do.

Sheldon:

Why is that?

Dennis:

I'd prefer the blind separate so we can adjust based on first series results. We can make our second series more or less demanding based on how this particular field of dogs did on our first series. This gives us the flexibility of adjusting the blind test and not be locked into it like in a combo set-up.

Jerry:

Plus, with the heat I would rather bring the dogs to the line more times than have more birds to pick up at one time.

We will want to have our Marshal all set tomorrow so we can get going at 8 sharp. I know they like to quit around 6 every night. If we get started on time with good mechanics, including dead birds to start, I think we can get this done in two days. We don't have to be hatchet men if things go right. It will probably depend a lot on what we have for water. I hope they will have some good fresh dead birds to get us started, but with pheasants I don't know. It's especially important because

pheasants don't last too well in the heat, and re-birding can take a lot of extra time.

Dennis:

I sure hope they have some dead birds to start. Back east, the best clubs always ask the Pros to shoot their required birds the day before and then they give them back fresh shot birds after the trial. Often the stake gets started with 20 or more birds. It's a huge time-saver and maybe something we should have suggested before.

Jerry:

The well-organized clubs do that out here too. Is there any chance you made it out to the grounds this afternoon to see what it really looks like there?

Dennis:

No, I didn't and this is the first time I will have been on these grounds. I heard it was a National site so I was hoping you had seen it or run there and you knew the grounds and how it has been used. I like to ask our marshal about recent tests on the site as I don't like to have the same birds if possible. Do you know if our marshal will be showing us the grounds? I like to find out about club mechanics and also provide all of our needs on set-up day. Can we get out there early tomorrow so we can see the sun and lighting the way it will be? How often have you seen judges set up in the afternoon and then get blown out Friday morning by the terrible lighting and shadows!

Jerry:

Let's get out there before 7:30 am. I really want to see where the sun comes up and what it will be like for setup. Also I want to be out there later in the day tomorrow to see if any shadows are effecting the visibility. I'm going to call the marshal right away and if anyone can show us around and talk a little about these concerns.

Dennis:

For years I had my own list of set-up considerations in addition to my judge's bag checklist. Sheldon, have a look at this Checklist. Jerry will recall that a few years ago a group of us put together "A Retriever Field Trial Judging Fundamentals and Checklist". It was widely distributed by Retriever News and my Retrievers ONLINE. I am not entirely sure how much of an impact it had but I am a huge fan of it. It is an excellent reference during set-up and during the event. Let's reference it

tomorrow during and after test design. There's a lot to consider and I think even very experienced judges let alone apprentices should use it as a tool. I'll have a copy in my Judges book.

Sheldon:

Do, you have an extra copy of the Checklist? I would love to read it tonight.

Dennis:

Sheldon, here you go. Jerry, do you think we need to talk more tonight or just get to the grounds early? If you have any absolute nosos or pet peeves, we ought to talk before the trial starts. I like to talk a bit with my co-judge about area of fall, line manners, style, as well as Callbacks. Once the trial starts, I hope you will agree we don't want to waste time.

Jerry:

Absolutely not! We don't want our stake taking an extra day to judge because we haven't talked specifics on Thursday! As for line manners I think a dog should be well behaved, and the handler and dog should look like a team. I don't like to hear the handler screaming at the dog or the dog barking at any time. If the dog is barking while the birds are being shot, I will mark him down for that. The book calls this a minor fault, and it is. But repetition makes it a major fault. To me, every time a dog barks is a repetition. It's not whether he barks on two or three series, but if he barks more than once in any series. Like a whistle refusal. If a dog skips three or four whistles on a blind, I don't have to see him skip whistles on a different blind to know its repetition of a minor fault, as long as I think he should be hearing the whistle. (Editors: see Minor Fault, no. 6, "Not stopping on a whistle that should have been heard, but stopping at the second or third.")

The same is true of the dog in the holding blind, or the dog on honor. I don't want my attention drawn to the dog behind me, and I don't want to think the running dog is disturbed by him either. I want the running dog to be able to be with his handler totally. (Editors: see Serious Fault, no. 11, "Loud and prolonged whining or barking," Moderate Fault, no. 9 "Moderate whining of short duration;" Minor Fault, no. 10 "Short whining or one bark, on being sent to retrieve.")

I have a lot of room for style, but there are two ends to a stylish dog. On the slow end, I don't want to see a dog spending too much time walking. There may be times when a dog

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is thinking hard about making the right move, but that should be a small amount of time. I sure don't want to see them walk all the way to the bird. At the other end of the spectrum is a dog dragging its handler around and controlling the situation. I don't find that stylish. Stylish is a dog who looks like he is enjoying his work and his teammate. It's not really a matter of speed to me.

On blinds, I usually have a corridor in my mind and maybe certain obstacles I think the dog should negotiate. I like the contestants to know what these are, and I don't mind telling them. I sometimes put a sketch in the holding blind just to be sure everyone knows what the test really is. I like to have the handlers well aware.

On the marks, I don't think we can identify an area of fall before we see our test, but I will say that most of the time around here, the winning dogs don't have much of a hunt, no matter how hard the test seems.

I do my basic Callbacks as each dog runs. I mark a page in the back of my book whether they are back, not back, or questionable to me. We can talk about them as we go along and at the end. If either one of us wants to see a dog again, I think we should see them again. I don't have a number, or a percentage to call back.

Dennis:

I think we're basically on the same page regarding both Callback process and dog work, at least until we see some situations together. I think noise is all too often ignored despite the Rule Book. A few small whines of excitement are OK but the barking and loud screaming has to be penalized.

Regarding style, the Rule Book describes its importance in several places. For sure the dog should have a 'pleasing performance.' I don't like a dog that acts like it doesn't want to be there and do the work so I look for that tail between the legs, the pinned back ears and the slinky attitude. I don't like a dog walking on the way to a blind or a mark. They can be thinking all they want but they have to show some 'pace.' Style isn't just speed as you say but the dog's whole attitude and posture. I think a dog walking on the way to a bird is just not showing much desire or its training has it too worried about making mistakes. The training these days has proven you that dogs don't need to walk to do the work and be under

control. And, yes, the crazy hooligans are just as bad!

I just had another thought. It's always helpful to know something about your water and what's coming as you design the land set-ups. However, I agree we need to be out there early to see morning conditions. Do you have any idea about our water?

Jerry:

I don't really know what we have for water here this year. We will need to look at that before we get too serious about setting up the first test so we can adjust it to make it more difficult or easier. We can talk a little more in the morning. How about breakfast at 6:00?

Dennis:

See you tomorrow and let's be sure to see the lighting at the same time as the trial will start. We can set up our basic land marks and blinds and then scope out our water.

Sheldon:

I've learned a lot tonight and am really looking forward to seeing the two of you work in the field.

Next morning at the grounds. The judges are again joined by Sheldon, an Apprentice who will try to learn during the set-up and also during the judging of the trial.

Dennis:

Looks like the lighting is going to be fine for this field all day! Facing northerly is a best bet when the grounds and wind allow it.

Sheldon:

Why is that?

Dennis:

Facing North gives you the best visibility of the gunners through-out the day as the sun moves from East to West. I find so many times that when you are facing to the SE to SW that the gunners at some point get back-lit and almost disappear. It often doesn't matter if the sun is high. Basically, if the gunner can see his shadow in front of him, he is back-lit and in shadow. The dogs have trouble seeing them. In contrast, when facing North the gunners are front-lit and much more consistently visible all day. I don't have to tell you the sun rises in the east (actually NE in summer and SE in winter) but it seems a lot of judges forget this! It also looks like lighting and conditions tomorrow will be like today. Hot and humid!

Jerry, I know you are familiar with this field and have seen several tests here over the years.

Jerry:

I will tell you that this can be a tough field, so we want the dogs to see the guns well all day long. There are no trees near our gun stations so shadows on the gun stations won't be a problem. The cover is thick enough that the dogs can have trouble digging out the birds. Remember, we have hen pheasants so you know how difficult finding them can be.

Dennis:

We have 70 dogs so we can't afford to have many monster hunts time-wise-let alone because of the heat. Given that this is supposed to be a two day Open, we should plan on getting in two series tomorrow and not having a split test overnight. There's always a risk for changes in condition, especially wind and lighting on a split test.

Sheldon:

I don't know where to begin in looking at this field.

Dennis:

When I first look at a field I never have a configuration in mind. Instead, I look at the cover and terrain and the other factors that are present. Wind is huge, both direction and intensity but so is water, terrain and the changes in cover. I usually try to find birds that are either difficult to get to or difficult to find. Often, I look for both. plus, I try to put the factors in concert.

Sheldon:

What do you mean by that "factors in concert"?

Dennis:

Factors are elements that influence a dog's route to the bird. Factors like wind and terrain and water should all cause deviations in the same direction and thus become "in concert". I try to make it as difficult as possible for a dog to be able to negotiate a straight line from the mat to the bird. I want to minimize the possibility of a handler lining a dog that did not mark the bird to the area of the fall.

When factors oppose themselves they cancel out. For example, I see tests where the attractive shoreline pulls a dog to shore, while the wind is pushing the dog away from shore. Because the factors are opposite, the dogs often master those retrieves.

Jerry:

What do you see in this field?

Dennis:

Ok, first, I am attracted to the big patch of

cover towards the end of the field. It has a big open area behind it to the left. A bird in front of it as a long retired mark would be challenging. Often, dogs don't like to run into a wall of cover. Plus, if we tuck that bird up against the cover, the dogs will have to get right in there to smell it. The drawback here is that if they do go in the cover, we can't see them hunting. We won't know what they are doing. It's like when you throw a bird at the top of the hill. They go over the hill-where are they?

Sheldon:

So how do you resolve that dilemma? Make the bird easier or make seeing the dog hunt easier?

Dennis:

You can't always resolve it, but here I'd move it out just enough so that a dog hunting in the area of the fall is visible. Sometimes all you can do is be able to see the dog when he is not in the area such as wrong-side or too deep. Just be aware of it and try to put the birds in a place where you can see the hunts. That doesn't mean you make it easier:

You just try to find a better spot. I certainly don't mind dogs out of sight for a bit on the way to a mark but I want to be able to see the dog in the area of the fall.

Another thing I like about that bird is that there is a big opening behind the guns. Give dogs room to run around and they will. Many will naturally just want to drive up there. On non-retired guns especially, I try to avoid having gunners backed up against a wall like a tree line. If the gunner throws out into the field, the dogs are not likely to go into the trees, wrong-side. But if you had the gunner out 50 yards from the tree line dogs would hunt the area behind the gunner if they didn't have a positive mark.

Jerry:

I can see why you like that area. It's been used before but I am concerned about the distance and the heavy cover. What shorter birds do you like?

Dennis:

I think that short birds are difficult when they are easy to overrun. If the dogs go long first, they are more prone to go long again and overrun those so-called short "easy" birds. If there is a visible gunner station beyond, they are really prone to drive deep and not check down. It's always tricky to place that short bird where they won't be looking to stop or where they won't stay and hunt. Downwind birds or where the route takes then up-wind after they have run longer is what I'm looking for.

I think that shrubby clump off to the left can camouflage a retired gunner blind well. To make it effective we could put our flyer as last bird down and deeper, say off to the right in the middle. I think if they go get that flyer and have a hunt, it will be really tough to come back and dig out that short bird after going longer and with the flyer tempting them again beyond

Sheldon:

A number of the people I train with really don't care where the flyer is placed. They just view it as a distraction or an opportunity to allow the other guns to retire. Why is placement of the flyer important to you?

Dennis:

WOW! The flyer is critical for me. I trial and judge in Canada where we have no flyers. Trust me, many tests revolve around the flyer.

Yes, it's a distraction but it is also a diversion on route to other birds, Dogs love the flyer and they are tempted to return there. My dogs still in the truck, know there is a flyer immediately when they hear those guns!

Jerry:

When the dog comes out of the holding blind, their attention is immediately drawn to the collection of people standing next to a stack of bird crates. It is a test of a dog's compliance to have it acknowledge a flyer station and then move to a less visible, less attractive dead bird station at a longer distance.

Finding a streaking hen pheasant that is thrown by an experienced thrower and guns who can ride the bird out, is a great test of a dog's eyesight and memory. Unlike duck flyers or dead bird stations, finding a gun station does not mean that the dog will find a bird.

Dennis:

Finding flyers also requires great scent discrimination. Can you imagine distinguishing between 50 hot falls and one really hot fall! Dogs have to learn to hunt and dig out birds. Here, we have a hen pheasant in cover-a tough bird to find. Usually flyers are further away from the guns than dead birds, so you can't just run to the gun and find the bird. Of course, we get flyers all over the place so the dog has to mark and find their bird.

Sheldon another thing I should mention is what direction that you shoot the flyer. This is a rather tight test so it's real important to shoot the flyer "out of the test". By that I mean, not "in toward other birds". When you do that you create a very different test for the dogs or a lot of no-birds depending on how far the flyer goes. You can imagine if we shot

that flyer right to left towards the short retired how variable the test could be. Controlling the flyer is difficult and a key consideration.

Jerry:

Yes! the flyer is critical and the work here tomorrow will show you why.

A lot of dogs are so overwhelmed by the flyer that they don't really mark it. We have the flyer thrown flat out into a good sized area of even cover, so it should be as fair as can be for each dog. The bird won't land in the cover for some dogs and in the open for others, nor will it land on one side of a ditch or another. That would make it easier for some and harder for others. The flyer won't land in the same place for each dog, but it should land in an area that is not different from the other falls.

Sheldon:

What if the dog smelled that short bird on the way to the flyer?

Dennis:

For me, that's something I don't want to have happen. If it does it forces the handler to do primary selection. That means that the handler has to try and get a bird that wasn't thrown last. If the go-bird is a flyer that can be extremely tough.

Our forecast is for consistent winds tomorrow and because the marks are mostly downwind, this also means there is little chance of winding the short bird on the way to a longer one. It also means that they shouldn't smell the short bird even if they over run behind the flyer. When I see a forecast for variable winds, I tend to try to design a more open test with birds thrown in opposite ways. An easy bird with one wind may become a difficult bird with another wind.

Jerry:

I think you will find the dogs will have a very tough time digging out the birds with this test. You'll see when we walk out there. I am really concerned about the heat and big hunts. I don't think we need a triple and we can drop that long bird and tweak the shorter ones. Let's keep the flyer where it is, shot to the right.

Move that short bird over a little tighter to that other clump and also throw it to the right. This tightens it up just enough to have the flyer station visible to them as they approach the short bird area of fall.

The cover clumps should obscure the true line to the birds and make the dog maneuver through the field. Those clumps of cover look small but they make it more difficult for the dog to hold his focus on the destination. It's an

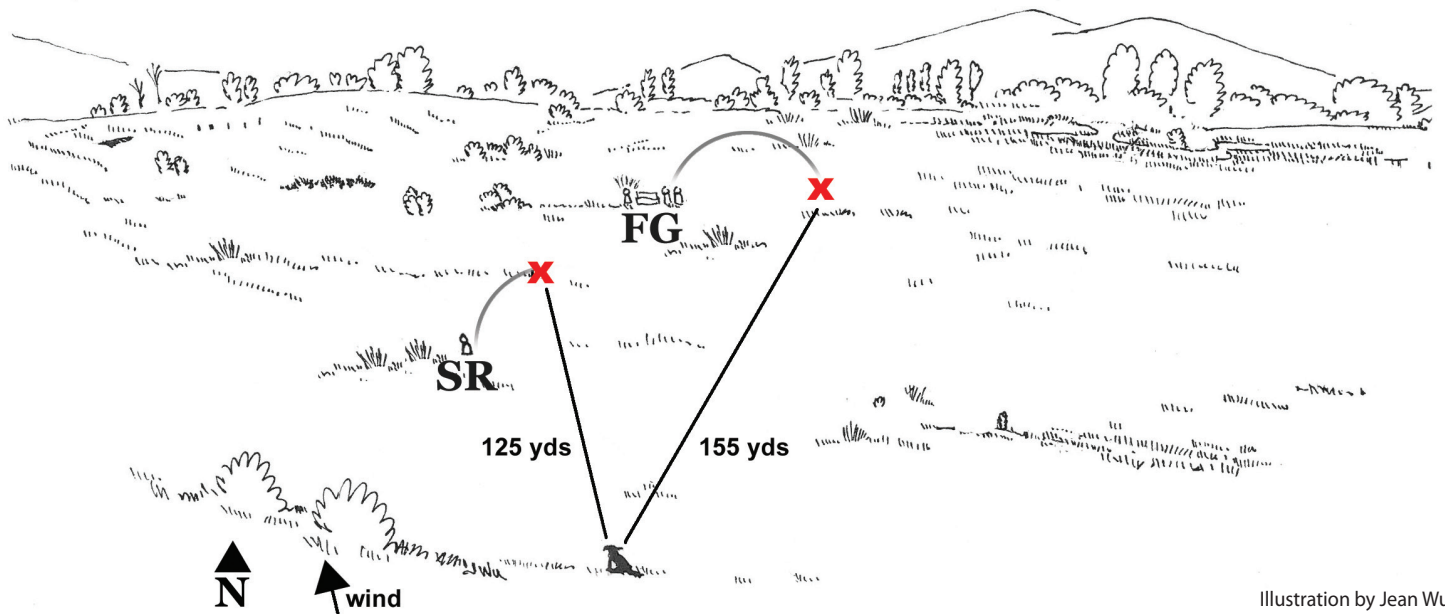


Illustration by Jean Wu

example of difficult to get to rather than difficult to find. The more dogs have to deviate the more they are likely to lose their mark—except for the great markers!!

With the temperature today, if the dog gets to the bird, I'd like them to find it quickly. We will have some very good work so people won't expect a long hunt to play into the next test, and the handlers won't be encouraged to let their dogs do extended hunts. It will be a fairly quick test. We should not heat endanger any dogs with only two birds. The wind won't give the birds away. There will probably be some significant hunts on the flyer. The short retired station should be easy to camouflage well.

Basically, I am suggesting that we don't need all three birds for the first series. I think we can get enough with just the two shorter birds. Shoot the short and then shoot the flyer as the go-bird. Leave both guns standing until a bird is picked up.

In the next test we can put a mark with the blinds that will be hard to find. You can tell I am worried about heat. I think judges set up tests which are too big for the heat to find the best dogs. They create too many problems without significant benefits. In the end they don't have any more separation than a safer test.

Dennis:

I understand what you are suggesting but I

don't want to drop dogs that have OK marks but that were "relatively" weaker. If we set up a test that is too easy and a lot of dogs do well, I don't want to penalize a dog just because he is below average but really didn't do anything wrong. I do think that if we are going to retire that shorter bird, it should not be with a distracting walk away. By not retiring the short bird right away some could select which is not what we are looking for ideally. We want to see if the dog remembers the short retired gun and check down after getting the flyer.

I do find the short bird quite tight to that flyer and it will tempt the dogs to return to the flyer. It makes it tough with that flyer so visible, so close. I think that bush at 150 yards should be OK. But, I do agree with your "heat" concern. Sometimes you can address by making a go-bird a no-brainer and thus have two memory birds. I would say generally I want all the birds to count but we have two constraints -heat and a two-day trial so I am willing to give here.

Jerry:

I'm not trying to get the dogs to return to the flyer. I think an advanced dog can mark birds when other birds are tight to it. It takes practice and training and a good marking dog. I don't think it hurts a high rolling dog. I think a test like this allows them to stand out. I don't think we will have a lot of questionable call back hunts on this test. Some will pin the flyer

(it is about 175 yards and a hen pheasant in cover) but most will hunt and some will have mega hunts. Some will nail the short retired but most will not. They may return to flyer but they just came from there. I think they will flair out wide off of the old fall and hunt outside. With our option to leave the short gun up and visible until the dog picks up the first bird, some may pull to the short bird yes. But, if a dog does go get the short bird first, then they have to find a memory flyer hen pheasant in cover—interesting and difficult. Others will be interested in the short gun and lose their line to the flyer, making it harder to come up with. Also, by leaving the gun up we get rid of a lot of whining about moving gunners to retire. I'm not stuck on leaving the gun up but I think it makes the test difficult in a different way.

Heat is a great concern and judges disregard this issue and press dogs beyond reasonable safety. I don't think they need to do this. Often they just spend time and effort to make a test look bigger. But that doesn't make it tougher. Then they call back sloppy work.

We need to go out in the field and have a look. We could stumble on a ditch. That would certainly change my ideas. I recall there is an irrigation channel out there somewhere and that might help with our safety concerns about the heat. Another thought is to throw a meaningful mark in with the land blind(s), in

the same area, we will be making the whole land testing very hard, but safe.

Dennis:

Ok, I think we can fine tune the double idea and have a good second mark and blind test in this field. But first, why don't we run over to our water area and see what we have coming?

Later, after viewing the water and seeing a really challenging test, back at the land, the judges walk the field.

Dennis:

These walks into the field are critical.

Sheldon:

Why?

Dennis:

First for safety concerns-hidden obstacles, treacherous, unsafe terrain, holes and more. Plus, I always like to see what the dog will see on route. I look for those break points where a dog will deviate. As Jerry mentioned earlier, the more a dog must deviate from the straight line on the way to a mark, the more likely the dog is to lose its mark. Sometimes I even get down to see a dog's perspective to see if there are deviations at dog level that I may have missed standing up

Jerry:

There is a bit of a rise if we move up to give the dogs a better perspective plus we'll see the hunts much better. But, then the dogs will have a longer walk back to the truck, when they need to cool off. The water we found is

really out further than I want to go so without moving the birds much longer, and it will not address our heat concerns if dogs have big hunts.

So let's bring the whole test in a bit, making the short bird 120-130 yards and camouflage it like a bush. I'd like to set up the holding blind in a different way that I think is an improvement. The best thing is a turkey chair, which I brought with me in case the club doesn't have one. We can have the thrower face the line for a couple good reasons. First, he will have some air flow instead of being behind the blind and out of the wind, so he won't get so hot. If we put up an umbrella behind the chair he can also have shade all day, and it will still have a low profile. We can put a bush cutting to obscure the umbrella from behind. Second, the thrower will not be able to start spreading out as the day goes on, like so often happens, and help the dogs running later by catching sight of the scattered stuff around the holding blind. This seems to happen a lot.

On the front side of the thrower we can have the bird thrower drape a ghillie blanket over him. This one is cool and allows air flow all day long. The thrower will also be able to see, but the dogs won't be able to see him. A bush cutting in front of him will make the whole setup totally obscure from the line.

I also think we can bring the flyer in to about the distance of that bush, about 150 yards. That will make that bush equidistant

with the flyer more of a destination point for the not so good markers on the short bird, giving them a natural place to overrun to.

Dennis:

One thing about the double is that it will be quite fast and then we can go for a really tough land blind and long single and use that water this time. We should plan on finishing our land tomorrow and have lots of answers going to our water blind Saturday morning. What do you think?

Jerry:

Yes. I think we have a great combination with these two tests together. We can do this double first and then we could put a driving bird across the distant canal and make the dog drive past all these other birds to get that bird last. I'm thinking a long mark thrown, then pick up one or two blinds, then go find the long retired gun mark as the second series in the afternoon.

Dennis:

Sheldon, I see you have been looking over the Judges Fundamentals and Check list as we go. Be sure to ask if you think we haven't addressed the major issues. We have put safety first and attempted to have all birds and gunners be visible all day. I think our time management and mechanics should be fine.

Let's go find the marshal and get the short bird set up and the area trimmed near the line. ■

