

Lake Country Retriever Club

CHALLENGE HUNT RULES

Full Choke Hunt (January) Chukar Mania Hunt (February) Top Dog Hunt (March)

General Information

- All Challenge Hunts will be single runs - 1 hunter and 1 dog
- All Challenge Hunt runs will have a 15-minute time limit.
- All Challenge Hunts will be a multi upland game bird set as specified by the Challenge Hunt Chair and the LCRC Board.
 - There will be two Divisions in each hunt - Open and Puppy.
 - o Puppy Division is two-fold:
 - Beginning level for hunter. (Human element)
 - Hunter's first two years of Challenge Hunt participation.
 - Can use any dog regardless of the age or experience.
 - Beginning level for dog. (Dog experience level)
 - Any dog that is under two years old on the date of the first Challenge Hunt, regardless of the experience of the Hunter.
 - If a handler and dog combination takes first place, in any field, in any event they will move into the Open division in all subsequent years after the win.
 - o Open division is
 - Any competitive combination.
 - Any competitive combination that has taken First in the puppy division the previous year.
 - Persons that have won any competition hunt in previous years must run in the Open Division.
- Two similar fields may be available for each Challenge Hunt.
- A hunter or dog can compete in each field once and only once per event.
- A hunter is allowed to hunt with different dogs in different fields, and may qualify 2 dogs for the final runoff.
- The individual Challenge Hunt Champions for the Puppy and Open Divisions will be based on the 3 best times in each division, regardless of the field.
- The top 2 or 3 placements in each division for each hunt will be recognized, dependent on the number of dogs entered in that division. If a division has less than 6 dogs, only 2 placements will be awarded.
- Hunters are not allowed to run while carrying a gun.
 - o Disqualification required at the discretion of the judge.
- No bird shall be shot on the ground.
 - o Disqualification required at the discretion of the judge.
- Blaze orange must be worn by all hunter's (blaze orange vest & hat is the minimum)
- When the hunt is completed, the dog shall be leashed, and the hunter and dog shall promptly leave the field.
- All judges and Committee rulings are final.

Scoring / Penalties

The score for each run will be determined by time only.

Penalties will be added to the run time to calculate a final score/time.

- a) Extra shot = 1 minute penalty
- b) No retrieve or incomplete retrieve = 2-minute penalty
- c) No find or Rambo = 2-minute penalty
- d) No penalty for trapped birds.

An example of scoring: If a hunter has the last bird in their hand at 8.50 minutes, and has 2 extra shots, and 1 partial retrieve; the hunter's final score/time will be 12.50 minutes.

Safety / Safeties

Any participant conducting themselves in an unsafe manner will be disqualified.

A competitor or a judge may request a safety when he/she feels that there is the probability of harm to a person, gallery, judge, building, or vehicle. The judge must respond immediately. When a safety is granted, full points shall be awarded, and shall be counted as 1 shot fired.

A dog safety may be called only in the case where the flushed bird is taking a low flight path directly above the dog's head. This does not apply to birds flying low to the side of the dog.

No safeties will be awarded in an out-of-bounds zone.

If a hunter fires a shot after the safety is called, an extra shot penalty will be assessed.

If a safety is called, the handler must bring dog back heel before proceeding.

Out-of-bounds

The boundaries of the fields will be clearly defined, and explained by the judge.

Dogs may leave the field to retrieve a bird or to flush a bird.

Hunters may not leave the field to flush a bird, and cannot shoot while out-of-bounds.

Hunters may leave the field, without their gun, to help their dog with a retrieve. The hunter must return to their original shooting position to receive the bird.

If a hunter flushes a bird when out-of-bounds, the bird may not be harvested.

Find / Flush

A find/flush is where in the judge's opinion, the dog through its action or behavior, was working the bird.

A Rambo or flush without dog work will be subject to a penalty.

A found dead bird will not be counted.

Shoot / Trap

At least one bird must be shot in a 4-bird set. (If the Hunter is not comfortable throwing a bird from hand to be shot, in the event all birds are trapped, the hunter may elect to take a one minute penalty for not shooting a bird).

A bird may be trapped by a dog, but when trapped, the bird must be retrieved to the hunter's hand. Full points will be awarded. 1 shot will be counted.

All shots taken will be counted.

Retrieve

All retrieved birds must be **delivered to hand**.

The retrieve must come to the shooter's position (the hunter's position at the time the shot was made).

The shooter may not move towards the dog to receive the retrieve.

If a dog needs help to find a shot bird, the hunter can mark their shooting position with a hat or glove, then go to help the dog find the bird, and then return to the shooting position to receive the retrieve.

Portions of a shot bird will not be counted (the bird must be whole, or enough parts must be picked up to make a whole bird).

Observing

Hunters can watch as many runs as they want prior to their hunt, but hunters may not watch the stocking or the run preceding their hunt.

Hunters must be in a containment area, during the set and run preceding their hunt, and during the time that birds for their hunt are set.

Ammunition / Gun

Hunters may use all gauges of shotguns, 12 gauge or smaller. No shell larger than 2 ¾" for 12 gauge, and no shell larger than 3" for 20 gauge. Shot size #4 or smaller.

A gun malfunction shall be considered bad luck. It is the option of the individual to leave the field and return with another gun of legal gauge. The clock will continue to run. The hunter has to leave the field, and cannot appoint someone else to leave nor enter the field in his place.

Bird Count

Judges shall count the birds while still in the field to determine that the run is complete. If the proper number is not produced, time will immediately resume.

Competition is complete when the final bird touches the hunter's hand. The judge must witness this act. The hunter must be in-bounds.

When a competitor and judge agree that there is serious confusion regarding bird count or rules interpretation, a brief time out may be taken. During the time-out, the dog must be leashed (the clock will not stop until the dog is leashed). Time resumes immediately following the discussion.

Stocking / Set

When placing a bird in the field, if the bird flies away upon setting, it should be replaced.

If the errant bird flies away after the stockers have left the field and after the hunter has left the containment area; then it shall be considered bad luck.

If a bird flies into the field while the stockers are stocking (or any other time) it is considered good luck.

If in the course of setting the field, the stockers flush a bird that flies away, that bird shall be replaced.

If a hunter or dog coming out of the field flushes a bird, the judge must rule whether the flush was accidental or purposeful:

If it was accidental - It shall be considered bad luck

If it was purposeful – The hunter will be assessed a 2-minute penalty, and the bird shall be replaced.

Judges and Planters

Judges and planters must run the event prior to starting their work.

Example: You cannot judge a run on Saturday and then run Sunday knowing the way the field is planted.

First run will be judged by the planter and will be the judge's run, then the judge will plant and judge the planters run.

Dog in Heat

Any bitch in heat must run at the end of the day.

Top Dog of the Year Runoff

The Top Dog of the Year Runoff for qualified dogs/hunters will take place on the Sunday of the last Challenge Hunt.

The dogs/hunters with the top 3 times from each field of each hunt, regardless of division, will qualify for the Top Dog of the Year Runoff.

The runoff order will be determined by drawing cards, with the highest card to run last.

The Hunter/ Dog team with the lowest time at the runoff will earn the title of "LCRC Top Dog of the Year".

Note: The rules listed here highlight most of the rules that will govern the LCRC Challenge Hunts. The Challenge Hunt Committee will decide any items not covered within these rules. Any contestant, who desires to contest a decision by the judge, may file an objection with the Challenge Hunt Committee. Their decision and ruling will be final.