

The latest from the JGHV Director of Testing

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Verbandsjugendprüfung (VJP) – the Breeding Foundation of Many Pointing Dog Breeds in the JGHV

When you read these lines, many handlers are already preparing their young dogs for the VJP. Every handler tries to optimally prepare their dogs, to awaken and encourage their natural abilities. This happens, due to the game conditions, not always under optimal conditions. Still, each one gives everything they have to bring their dog through the test as well as possible. First there is registration for a test, then everything is in the hands of the testing and breed clubs, as to how they organize and execute the test. How are the testing grounds? How much game is present? Which Verbandsrichter will be there?

Day X determines the future of the dog. Can the dog summon its natural abilities on this day? Will it get an opportunity to show its natural abilities? Will it be evaluated by the Verbandsrichter in accordance with its natural abilities?

Yes, my dear hunting dog friends, you cannot always understand every result, although the armchair evaluation of such a test is almost impossible. You should keep quiet about everything you haven't seen in person.

Still, I would like to briefly touch upon a VJP test result. VJP passed with 21 points, gun stable. Obedience: very good. Temperament: impassive/phlegmatic and jumpy/insecure, socially compatible.

How does one come to 21 points? All subjects evaluated with “sufficient – 3 points”. Track work 3 points, pointing 3 points, use of nose 3 points. Why? The dog worked one or several hare tracks, though not very far, but was evaluated with “sufficient”. And for this it used its nose / use of nose. The dog found game, pointed it and was also evaluated with “sufficient”. And for this it used its nose. Apparently, what was missing was the will to track and the natural ability to point, which in this case was indeed evaluated correctly, but the use of nose could not actually have been evaluated correctly.

The testing of gun stability is tested during the search, if one follows the VZPO. Under §11 (6) testing of gun stability, it is clear: at least two shots from a shotgun are to be fired by the handler during the dog's search when it is close to the handler (distance of a shot from a shotgun).

The distance of a shot from a shotgun means that during the search the dog was at least 20-30 meters away from its handler. In this search it must also be evident that the dog wants to find game, otherwise, the search would have been evaluated with "insufficient – 0 points". Everything else is no search, because search means: ...the main value is to be placed on the will to find. In doing this, the search should be industrious, spacious, brisk and persistent.

Of course, all searches are to be evaluated, but the search during which gun stability is tested, must also comply with the requirements of the PO, otherwise, the test of gun stability should never have been conducted.

My dear Verbandsrichter, at this point I don't want to deal any further with the result, but one thing is certain, it wasn't easy testing this dog. In the end, the Verbandsrichter came to the decision: everything "sufficient – 3 points" and the dog passed the VJP. It would probably have been better: "Dog cannot be tested".

With this I come to the real subject, the execution of the VJP. In most cases, each group is assigned 3 – 4 dogs. Different handlers, different dogs and thereby differing performances.

The old saying "The good dog makes its own game" often becomes apparent very quickly. Even now in the first search some dogs already show their abilities and the Verbandsrichter gain a positive impression of these dogs. Also, with further work (track, pointing, use of nose) the dogs perform convincingly very quickly and are evaluated positively. After this, another quick search with the testing of gun stability and then the result is settled. For now, the dog does not get another opportunity to show its abilities.

Now the judges devote themselves solely to the remaining 1-2 "problem children" in the group. Now one seeks to take advantage of every situation in the fields in order to bring these dogs to a respectable result too. Every dog certainly deserves a chance, and it is often the case that a dog learns during the test, as it is only here that it gets an opportunity to show its real abilities. With this I only want to say or write that we should treat each dog the same as much as possible, because it may be that the very good dog would have shown a noticeably better performance with additional opportunities. My request to all Verbandsrichter. Look at all dogs with the same view, give all dogs, if possible, the same opportunities to show their natural abilities. Keep in mind, the test is no training day on which we must also still try to get the weaker ones on the podium. We Verbandsrichter must always keep the purpose of the breed tests before our eyes: "To showcase the true performance animals, which will subsequently shape our breeding."

Also, always think about our testing fields and our game. Sometimes it would be better to say: "Dog cannot be tested today." Just as it is at the water sometimes, if the dog does not enter the water, instead of running for hours through the fields to find game.

I always think of the words of a field marshal on the occasion of a select breeding test in the fall of 2019, who presented the handlers and Verbandsrichter of the group with an excellent testing ground. "I thought we're testing today and not just training", after the dog ran over birds six times with the best possible wind conditions.

Purpose of the Breed Tests:

The task of the breed tests is the determination of the natural abilities of the hunting dog with a view to its suitability and future use in versatile hunting and as a breed dog. The breed tests further serve to recognize the breeding values of the parent animals, the determination of which is made easier by the testing of as many littermates as possible.

The requirements of ethical hunting make the hunting dog's primary task the work after the shot. For this reason the judges must direct their particular attention to the natural abilities and qualities, which distinguish the dependable retriever of lost game, namely, very good use of nose, coupled with the will to find and track, and a strong temperament, which shows itself in the calmness, concentration and perseverance in its work.

The chief task of the judges must be recognizing and highlighting the dogs, which are particularly valuable for breeding as expressed in their natural abilities.

I wish all handlers, Verbandsrichter and the indispensable land owners and field marshals a successful and harmonious testing season with lots of small game, on which our hunting dogs can show their natural abilities. We have excellent dogs and handlers, we have very good dogs and handlers, but unfortunately also some, who do not understand their craft (dogs and handlers). Here it is our task to separate the wheat from the chaff, because the hunt demands dog work that meets the highest standards every day.

Hunting requires animal welfare everywhere and this works only with the best hunting dogs, and we have to find these at our tests and showcase them accordingly.

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(translation by Ken Bremer)