

The Latest from the JGHV Director of Testing - Predicates and points at natural ability tests for pointing dogs

Dear friends of the German Hunting Dog,

At the last Annual Meeting of the Jagdgebrauchshundverband (JGHV) on 24.07.2022 in Fulda, the President Mr. Karl Walch addressed, among other things, the following topic under the heading "77 - the new 70". Many years ago, a dog that achieved 70 or 72 points at the JGHV youth test could be celebrated as the best dog (*Suchensieger*), but this is now a thing of the past. But the question we have to ask ourselves today is, "Have our dogs become better or what is the real reason for the flood of test points?"

Many complain that in some cases there is very little or almost no small game in the fields and hunts for small game are not feasible due to the small game population, but tests are conducted here too. Are we deceiving ourselves, are we not telling the truth when reporting the prevalence of game on the JGHV Form 2. How can it be that dogs are scored with the predicate "excellent 12 points" and pointing with the predicate "very good 11 points" at an International Breed Selection Test, which didn't find / see a single bird or pheasant in the whole course of the test. I do not want to elaborate on this any further at this point, but rather, at the beginning of the 2023 natural ability tests, I would simply like to once again highlight the most important aspects for awarding predicates and points from the VZPO.

At present, we are damaging ourselves, the hunt, the hunting dog and the breed. Thus a few of the most important issues with short explanations to clarify the topic.

Important notes for the evaluation of the test subjects with the predicate "excellent 12 points" or "very good 11 points" at the Verbandjugendprüfung (VJP).

Predicates and working points

- The Association Judges must first determine the predicate for each dog's work.
- Since the natural abilities of young dogs often show themselves differently on different occasions, the overall impression gained, taking into account the age and training level of the dog, is decisive for the final judgement.
- Rules for the uniform awarding of 11 and 12 points at Association Breed Tests. *(Personal note! **These are rules** and not recommendations - it used to be that way).* The purpose of the 12-point system is to achieve a meaningful, credible test result by means of differentiated scoring, which is as uniform as possible, and to highlight the dogs which are particularly suited for breeding.
- The predicates "excellent" (= 12 points), which are important for breeding and genetic values, and 11 points, which are in the predicate range "very good", may, in the sense of the VZPO and in the sense of breeding and breeding value estimates, only be awarded for truly excellent or above-average "very good" natural abilities.

The predicate "excellent" 12 points may only be awarded:

- if in addition at least one further piece of work has been shown in the "very good" range with at least 10 points.
- If the dog shows one or more pieces of work with a lower score during the test before or after, 12 points may not be awarded.
- If 11 points are awarded, a dog must demonstrate behavior that exceeds the required level.
- For this, the dog must have shown at least one more performance rated "very good" at this test.
- If during the course of the test the dog is judged on another occasion with less than "very good", it may not receive 11 points.

It is not permissible to upgrade a performance rated 10 points more than once to 11 points. Tracking work:

Before we now come to the individual test subjects of the VJP, everyone should first become aware of what we do when judging a dog, and what we judge, and this especially when judging the track or the use of nose. We presume, we judge something that none of us is able to do personally with our own organs (in this case with the eye and the nose). None of us can smell or work out the track of a fox or a hare, none of us can perceive the scent of a bird or a pheasant that is sitting several meters in front of us. We do not even know how a track smells, but we judge the work of a dog within a few hours, within a few shown natural abilities.

Yes, we Association Judges have to do this, because only in this way we can document the natural abilities of our dogs and therewith provide good dogs for hunting/breeding. The value of Association tests stands and falls with the performance, the hunting experience, the expertise and the objectivity of the Association Judges. Judging at natural ability tests (VJP, Derby, etc.) has always been the most difficult and responsible task of an Association Judge and therefore it is important, especially when judging natural abilities, to always be on the ball, to always be with the dog, to always be up to date with the latest Test Regulations and to hunt the appropriate type of game and to ensure a fair judgement through experience.

"excellent -12 points" well above the required standard".

"excellent -12 points" the highest predicate - it doesn't get any better than this !

To award the predicate "excellent 12 points" or "very good 11 points" everything has to be right on the day of the test. Once the dog, which is particularly gifted in its natural abilities, gets the opportunity to show its natural abilities and the Association Judges, who are capable of judging this with a trained eye and expert knowledge.

In cases where there is little game in the field and the dog cannot show or confirm its natural abilities, the predicate "excellent 12 points" or "very good 11 points" may not be awarded.

However, before awarding the predicate "excellent 12 points" or "very good 11 points" for an individual performance is considered, thought should be given to what kind of

difficult conditions the performance was made under.

Was it really an extraordinary natural ability, or was it normal work, which is expected from every hunting dog, or could be expected from every hunting dog.

"excellent 12 points" or "very good 11 points".

"excellent 12 points" only for tracking and the use of nose.

Here are the most important text passages (partially abbreviated) of the VZPO and the VJP and the regulations for awarding the predicate:

Tracking work

Beurteilung „Spurarbeit“ mit dem Prädikat „hervorragend“ = 12 Punkte

12 Punkte dürfen nur dann vergeben werden, wenn ein Hund eine Spur, die wegen vorhandener Schwierigkeiten unter Berücksichtigung der Stehzeit schwer zu arbeiten ist, auf einer den Schwierigkeiten angepassten Länge konzentriert arbeitet und diese Arbeit mindestens noch einmal durch eine Spurarbeit bestätigt, die mit 10 oder mehr Punkten bewertet wird. Werden im Prüfungsverlauf bewertbare Spurarbeiten mit weniger als 10 Punkten beurteilt, muss die Vergabe von 12 Punkten unterbleiben.

Beurteilung „Spurarbeit“ mit dem Prädikat „sehr gut“ = 11 Punkte

11 Punkte dürfen nur vergeben werden für eine wirklich konzentrierte, durch Spurwillen und Spursicherheit geprägte, über wechselnde Bodenverhältnisse führende Spurarbeit, deren Länge den vorhandenen Schwierigkeiten angepasst sein muss. Die Vergabe von 11 Punkten erfordert die Bestätigung dieser überdurchschnittlichen Anlage durch mindestens eine weitere Arbeit auf der Spur, die nicht unter dem Prädikat „sehr gut“ beurteilt wird. Geringere Beurteilungen im Prüfungsverlauf schließen die Vergabe von 11 Punkten aus.

Hinweise zur Beurteilung: Somit ist sicher dass für die Vergabe von 12 oder 11 Punkten mindestens zwei Spuren gearbeitet werden müssen mit der entsprechenden Beurteilung. Ansonsten darf weder die 12 noch die 11 vergeben werden. Bei der Beurteilung sollten die Spuren auch einen gewissen Schwierigkeitsgrad (Hecke-Graben-Straße–unterschiedlicher Bewuchs usw.) enthalten. Bei der Vergabe dieser Prädikate/ Punkte sollte alles passen.

Spurwille- Spursicherheit- Wesensfestigkeit –Ruhe- Konzentration- Durchhaltewillen

Damit, die Hunde herausstellen, die durch ihre Anlagen für die Zucht besonders wertvoll sind.

Use of Nose

Text VZPO: A fine nose is most evident in the search by frequently finding game, by being attracted to game from a distance, by briefly marking the scent of game, and occasionally marking small bird scent. On the track, special attention should be paid to the reaction in losing, crossing, and re-finding it. From these observations an overall judgement of the demonstrated nose work is formed.

Judging "use of nose" with the predicate "excellent" = 12 points

12 points may only be awarded for exceptional, outstanding use of nose. Perception of various game species, birds, old tracks, etc. with its nose at great distances can provide valuable input. The dog must demonstrate its outstanding use of nose several times.

Judging "use of nose" with the predicate "very good" = 11 points may only be awarded if the dog has shown convincing use of nose several times in the field.

Tips for judging: Judging the use of nose is certainly the most difficult thing to do, although I would like to point out once again that it is the use and not the quality of the nose that is being judged. In the use of nose, the dog should show that he has found the game with his nose. This is shown in a free, broad and independent search in the field. Special attention should be paid to the dog's head posture, how the dog turns into the wind, how it takes advantage of the wind, and how it tries to perceive any fine scent by its predominantly horizontal head posture. Pointing at a distance, even if the dog does not point perfectly, is an expression of a fine nose. For judging with 12 or 11 points, the dog must show this convincingly several times, if possible on different types of game.

"very good 11 points" for search, pointing and cooperation is the highest – it cannot be better!

Search

Text VZPO: In the search, the main emphasis is to be placed on the will to find. In addition, the search should be diligent, spacious, brisk, persistent and adapted to the terrain.

A systematic search is not yet expected at the VJP.

Judging Search" with the predicate "very good" = 11 points

11 points may only be awarded if the dog searches diligently, under control, systematically (HZP) and with **perseverance** and, in particular, expressly shows that it wants to find game. It must show this ability **consistently** in **several** searches, also over an appropriate period of time.

Notes on judging:

Especially the search in the field is a test subject which has to be tested sufficiently and in several searches at every natural ability test. We should give all dogs the opportunity to search in different vegetation. Especially when awarding the predicate "very good with 11

points" (**the highest in this subject**), the dog should show its natural abilities in search in several different field searches, over a reasonable or longer period of time, with consistent performance, regardless of the time of day and the type of vegetation. The dog with the real will to find will search at any time of day and will search even where there is little or no game.

Game must be searched for!

Pointing

Text VZPO: The ability to point is demonstrated by the dog pointing or lying down before game that it finds. Steadiness is not required in this case. The special difficulties with game that is not sitting tightly must be taken into consideration. Dogs that are found to be blinking cannot pass the test. Pointing on furred or feathered game is of equal value. Pointing on **small bird scent** may be included in the evaluation in exceptional cases.

Pointing: Assessment "very good" = 11 points

Pointing is to be evaluated as very good (10 points) if the dog points every piece of game (birds, hare) perceived with the nose until the handler can approach at a steady pace (HZP) in order to lead the dog away or the game leaves its cover beforehand. Only in the case of special difficulties with game that is not sitting tightly, when the dog pins the game by moving forward and re-locating, the pointing ability is to be rated higher (11 points). The dog must confirm this higher score with a "very good" at least once. If the dog is judged less than "very good" on any other occasion during the course of the test, it may not receive 11 points.

Judging Notes:

For the higher predicate of "very good 11 points", the dog should demonstrate its pointing performances preferably in the open field, in a free expansive search, without the constant intervention of the handler. Pointing at a hedge, in which the game is absolutely tight, should actually be a normal ability / performance for a pointing dog. The text of the VZPO contains the following passage. "Steadiness will not be required in this case." However, this does not refer to the awarding of 11 points, but in general. This means that if the dog is not steady, it can still pass the test subject "pointing". For the awarding of the predicate "very good 11 points" (the highest rating in the subject pointing - it doesn't get any better than that) the dog should use every opportunity to repeatedly show its natural abilities and expressive images with pointing and re-locating on all occurring game species, especially feathered game.

Cooperation

Text VZPO: Cooperation is the dog's effort to maintain a connection with its handler. It is shown, among other things, in the way the dog seeks eye contact with the handler when leashed and unleashed, when searching and when pointing, and in the way it always strives to maintain contact with the handler, even at greater distances. In addition, it is instructive how the dog behaves when pursuing game, whether it quickly seeks to rejoin the handler or takes the opportunity to hunt extensively on its own.

Cooperation: Score "very good" = 11 points

11 points may only be awarded if the dog consistently maintains very good contact with its handler during all work in the field and at the water (HZP), even at long distances, and demonstrates all the positive characteristics of cooperation.

Notes on judging:

Cooperation is often confused with obedience or thrown into the same pot. In this case it is only about the evaluation of the test subject "cooperation". The dog should show its natural ability, that the dog wants to work together with the handler, that the dog is at the service of the handler and that over the entire test day. In some cases, dogs whose search is predominantly at a trot, or which do not search expansively and quickly, are given a lower score in the cooperation test. This will be judged in the test subject "Search" and has nothing to do with cooperation. The predicate "very good 11 points" is also the highest score in this test subject and should only be awarded if the dog independently seeks a connection to the handler in all situations during the test day, even at greater distances during the search and / or after visibly pursuing the game, while working a track and / or trail.

Dear Association Judges, Judge Apprentices and Handlers. I would like to share these lines with all of you not as a schoolmaster, but simply to present everything once again in short form. In all breed clubs we have excellent dogs, which show their natural abilities, their performance all the time, if they are given the opportunity. To do this, they need a very good trainer, who awakens and shapes the natural abilities correctly, who has the possibility of field work, who recognizes the natural abilities of their dog and puts it on the right track, who does not demand too much of it, and who then has the skill to present the dog correctly on the day of the test.

- What good is the most highly talented dog if it is not properly formed in the initial development phase, in the training?
- What good is the most highly talented dog if it does not get any, or hardly any, opportunities to show its true ability in the field on the day of the test?
- What good is the most talented dog if the Association Judges do not recognize the natural abilities or are not able to judge them correctly?

I could continue these lines endlessly, but that is not the goal. The goal must be to provide the hunt and our breeding with dogs that are up to their tasks. Testing means making a selection and therewith highlighting the really excellent and very good dogs. Judging at natural ability tests means knowing the Test Regulations and experience.

Prüfungsordnungen kann man lesen- Erfahrung muss man sammeln

Alle haben bzw. sollten eine gültige PO haben, nicht alle haben bzw. können die Erfahrung haben, aber die Lehrmeister in unseren Reihen sollten ihnen dann mit Rat und Tat zur Seite stehen. Ich wünsche Ihnen allen eine schöne und Erfolgreiche Prüfungssaison.

„hervorragend 12 Punkte“ nur für Spur und Nasengebrauch
„sehr gut 11 Punkte“ für Suche , Vorstehen und Führigkeit

das höchste was erreicht werden kann,
dann sollte es auch deutlich über den geforderten Standard sein !

Test regulations can be read - experience must be gathered and collected.

All have or should have valid Test Regulations, not all have or can have the experience, but the mentors in our ranks should then help them with advice and support. I wish you all a pleasant and successful test season.

"Excellent 12 points" only for tracking and use of nose,
"Very good 11 points" for search, pointing and cooperation,

the highest that can be achieved,
then it should also be well above the required standard!

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Obmann fürs Prüfungswesen des Jagdgebrauchshundverbandes e.V. (JGHV)