



Guidelines for Tolling Hunting Tests and Practical Tolling Hunting Tests

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This document constitutes guidelines associated with the applicable Hunting Test Regulations. In the event of any uncertainty, the Hunting Test Regulations shall take precedence.

These guidelines have been adopted by the Central Board of the Swedish Spaniel and Retriever Club (SSRK) and apply to all tolling hunting activities conducted within SSRK.

1. Introduction

The Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, the Toller, was developed as a specialised hunting dog for ducks and geese. Tolling hunting is a unique form of hunting in which the dog works both **before the shot**, by luring birds into shooting range, and **after the shot**, by retrieving and bringing in birds that have been shot.

In several countries around the North Atlantic, such as England, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, there have historically been hunting methods using red and red-and-white dogs to lure waterfowl. In the Canadian Atlantic provinces, this form of hunting survived into the twentieth century, and in Nova Scotia a unique dog was developed – the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever.

In traditional tolling hunting, the hunter surveys bays, lakes or other waters where natural or artificial hides have been prepared along the shoreline. When birds are observed on the water, the hunter and dog quietly approach a suitable hide. In order to lure birds within shooting range, tolling work is performed: the hunter remains concealed while repeatedly throwing a so-called tolling object along the shoreline. The dog runs along the shore to retrieve the object. The work shall be playful, energetic and focused.

The tolling work arouses the birds' curiosity and causes them to approach the shoreline and the hide. To further increase the birds' interest, the hunter alternates between playful tolling work and periods of passivity, during which the dog must remain calm and quiet in the hide. When the dog "disappears" into the hide, the birds often swim closer.

When the birds have been lured within shooting range, shots are fired and the Toller retrieves the birds that have been shot. The dog must therefore be able to switch between playful tolling retrieves and serious retrieving work after the shot.

The Toller must also be capable of working as a retriever during more traditional hunting of passing ducks and geese, with or without decoys and calls.

2. Tolling Hunting Test

All hunting tests arranged for the various gundog breeds share a common purpose: to evaluate the dogs' hunting abilities as guidance for future breeding within the breed.

This is emphasised in the Purpose Clause, which introduces all Hunting Test Regulations:

§1 Purpose

The purpose of hunting tests is, under hunting-like conditions, to assess the hunting abilities of participating dogs as guidance for breeding.

Tolling hunting tests, like all hunting tests, are arranged to allow dogs to be tested and evaluated under realistic hunting conditions. This means that the dogs are assessed in natural terrain and that conditions during the test day may change, just as they do during an actual hunt.

The first dog to start a test will not necessarily encounter the same scenting conditions during its search work as the last dog. Weather conditions may change during the day, and wind strength and direction may increase, decrease or shift. Conditions are therefore not identical for all dogs participating in the test.

In accordance with the Hunting Test Regulations, the judge may make changes to the test layout during the course of the test.

During a hunting test, the dog is evaluated in various situations that may arise during a hunt. Individual elements are not awarded separate scores. The final award the dog receives shall be based on an overall assessment of the dog's performance throughout the entire test.

A decisive factor for a successful tolling hunt is the dog's ability to perform the tolling work. The dog must therefore be able to carry out a compliant and quiet approach and thereafter work cooperatively with the hunter at and in the hide. If the tolling work fails, birds will not be lured within shooting range, and no shots can be fired.

The overall impression of the tolling work is therefore guiding for the entire assessment and decisive for the final award. A dog that performs a less convincing tolling work cannot work its way up to a higher award level, even if the work after the shot is of higher quality.

The Toller is a North American retriever that, in traditional tolling hunting, works alone together with the hunter and performs tasks both before and after the shot.

This distinguishes the Toller from the British retriever breeds, which were developed for large estate shoots where many dogs were used and where the dogs worked primarily after all shooters had fired.

A tolling hunting test is designed to evaluate the hunting abilities and skills required for traditional tolling hunting. Abilities that are not decisive for the dog's work in tolling hunting shall not be tested.

Hunting qualities that are particularly important for the Toller's ability to succeed include cooperation, water passion (willingness and ability to work in water), interest in game, and the ability to switch between activity and passivity.

A suitable test ground for a tolling hunting test includes:

- water with abundant aquatic and waterside vegetation,
- shoreline areas close to the water suitable for effective tolling work,
- opportunities for well-designed water blind retrieves (applies to Open and Elite Class),
- opportunities for test officials to throw water markings from, for example, an islet, a spit of land or a projecting point (throws from boats should be avoided if possible),
- opportunities for a search area that also includes water, reeds or wet and marshy terrain.

It is desirable that the entire test can be carried out without unnecessary and time-consuming movement.

Only luring game shall be used at tolling hunting tests, meaning all huntable species of ducks, including geese.

Note: Geese shall not be used in Beginner Class or Open Class. In exceptional cases, the judge, in consultation with the Tolling Hunting Officer of the SSRK Central Board, may decide that geese shall not be used in Elite Class either. Such exceptions may be due to insufficient quality or size of the geese, or difficulty in obtaining an adequate number of geese prior to the test.

3. Components of the Tolling Hunting Test

In a tolling hunting test, the dog is evaluated both in the tolling work performed before the shot and in the work performed after shots have been fired.

3.1 Tolling Work

The tolling work consists of the quiet approach, during which handler and dog carefully move down to the shoreline and the hide without disturbing birds on the water, and the work at and in the hide, where the dog alternates between playful, energetic tolling retrieves and calm passivity.

The tolling work shall always initiate a tolling hunting test. The tolling work shall always conclude with shots and water work.

3.1.1 The Approach

The approach initiates the tolling hunting test. At a location designated by the judge, the handler removes the dog's lead. The dog shall thereafter remain off lead for the remainder of the test. Handler and dog shall quietly approach the hide together.

The approach shall be carried out carefully and quietly enough that, in a real hunting situation, birds would not be disturbed, become suspicious or take flight. In tolling hunting, a route to the hide is chosen that utilises the terrain to minimise visibility to the birds. In a tolling hunting test, the judge shall normally specify the route to be taken.

When the approach begins, the shooter shall already be in position, for example in a separate hide by the water. The shooter shall not take part in the approach.

The dog shall not rush ahead to the hide or the water's edge, and loud commands or whistle signals that could alarm birds shall be avoided.

3.1.2 Tolling Work and Passivity

The hide used during tolling hunting or a tolling hunting test may consist of a camouflage net or a natural hide, such as bushes. The hide shall be placed at the shoreline. To ensure that birds can observe the dog's tolling work, there shall be open shoreline stretches of approximately 10–20 metres on one or both sides of the hide.

At the hide, the dog shall alternate between playful, energetic tolling work, during which the handler throws a tolling object along the shoreline and the dog retrieves it, and calm passivity inside the hide. The handler chooses which tolling objects to use; noisy or excessively large objects shall be avoided.

As in real tolling hunting, the handler shall be seated watching the water with the dog positioned between the handler and the hide. During the test, the judge shall instruct the handler when to work and when to wait.

During passivity, the dog shall remain calm and quiet. The handler shall not touch or hold the dog. If commands are necessary, they shall be given quietly.

The tolling work shall be focused and energetic. The dog shall focus on retrieving and returning the object. Brief scanning of the surroundings or the water during the work shall not be considered a disadvantage. It is desirable that the dog works playfully and is clearly visible along the shoreline, as this increases the birds' interest during hunting. The work shall be performed with as few commands as possible.

During the tolling work, steadiness and retrieving grip shall not be assessed. The dog shall not interrupt the tolling work by entering the water or leaving the shoreline.

A successful tolling work during hunting results in birds being lured within shooting range and the hunter being able to shoot. In a tolling hunting test, the tolling work at the hide in Beginner Class and Open Class shall always conclude with shots and water markings.

3.2 Water Work

Tolling hunting always takes place by water, and it is therefore natural that large parts of a tolling hunting test also take place on and near water. A Toller is expected to show strong water passion.

The dog shall enter water promptly and without hesitation, regardless of whether the test takes place in shallow water, along stony or rocky shores, in reeds, along marshy banks or at bog edges. The dog shall be an efficient and enduring swimmer.

3.3 Work After the Shot

In the tolling hunting test, the dog is evaluated after the shot in the same types of tasks as other retrievers. The following situations may occur during a hunt with a Toller:

- the dog sees the bird fall, memorises the fall area and, on the hunter's command, quickly goes to the fall area on land or water, picks up the bird and returns promptly to the hunter. This is referred to as a **marking**.
- neither dog nor hunter has seen where the bird or birds fell, but the hunter knows the general area. The dog shall then be sent into the area to conduct a free search, covering different parts of the area and using its scenting ability to locate fallen birds. When game is found, the dog shall promptly pick it up and return it to the hunter. The dog shall continue working until all game has been retrieved. In a tolling hunting test, the designated search area shall always include both water and land. This task is referred to as a **free search**.
- the dog has not seen where the bird fell, but the hunter has. The hunter shall then be able to direct the dog to the fall area on land or water using commands, hand signals and whistle signals. The dog retrieves the bird and returns promptly to the hunter. This is referred to as a **blind retrieve**.

Throughout the test, it is preferable for the handler to support a young or inexperienced dog if it hesitates, rather than not acting at all. If, for example, the dog hesitates or appears about to leave a found bird, it is better to encourage and support the dog so that the task is completed, rather than risk the dog leaving the bird and committing game refusal.

4. Classes

4.1 Beginner Class (Nkl)

To start in Beginner Class, the dog shall be at least twelve (12) months of age on the first day of the test. A dog that has been awarded **Excellent** in Beginner Class may thereafter start in Open Class. It is also permitted to continue starting in Beginner Class during the current calendar year; however, if there are more entered dogs than available starting places, the dog shall relinquish its place in favour of a dog that has not yet been awarded Excellent (or a 1st prize prior to 1 January 2022). A dog that has started in Open Class may not thereafter start in Beginner Class.

For foreign-registered dogs, see section 4.4.

In the tolling work, at least ten (10) tolling retrieves and at least one (1) period of passivity of approximately thirty (30) seconds shall be included.

In Beginner Class, the dog shall be offered at least six (6) retrieving opportunities during the test. At least two (2) of the retrieves shall be on swimming-depth water.

At least three (3) shots shall be fired for the dog.

The length of markings shall not exceed approximately twenty (20) metres. The shooter shall be positioned at a suitable distance from the dog and be clearly visible to the dog. The dog shall be able to see both the throw and the fall area. The handler shall send the dog from the hide but may, if necessary, take one or two steps forward to meet the dog as it exits the water with the game.

The dog shall be tested in free search. The search area shall consist of easily accessible terrain close to water, as well as open water and/or water with vegetation, reeds or marshy areas. In Beginner Class, game may be placed at a distance of up to approximately fifty (50) metres from the starting point, depending on terrain. The number of game items in the search area shall be at least four (4).

In Beginner Class, it is desirable that all game is delivered to the handler's hand. An occasional delivery in the handler's immediate vicinity may be accepted.

The test in Beginner Class shall comprise tolling work (approach, tolling work and passivity in the hide) and work after the shot (markings and free search).

The test may include a directed search. During the marking task that concludes the tolling work, the handler may be instructed to remain seated in the hide, with the dog positioned outside the hide.

In Beginner Class, divided tolling work shall not occur, meaning that the dog shall not perform a new tolling work after the first marking task. Double marking or blind retrieves

shall not occur. Geese shall not be used as retrieving game. No other dog shall be present at the test site.

4.2 Open Class (Ökl)

A dog that has been awarded **Excellent** (or a 1st prize prior to 1 January 2022) in Beginner Class at an official tolling hunting test may start in Open Class.

A dog that has been awarded two (2) **Excellent** awards (or 1st prizes prior to 1 January 2022) in Open Class may not remain in the class. A dog that has started in Elite Class may not thereafter start in Open Class.

For foreign-registered dogs, see section 4.4.

In the tolling work, at least twenty (20) tolling retrieves and two (2) periods of passivity of thirty (30) to sixty (60) seconds shall be included.

In Open Class, the dog shall be offered at least nine (9) retrieving opportunities during the test. At least four (4) retrieves shall be on water, of which at least two (2) shall be on swimming-depth water.

At least four (4) shots shall be fired for the dog.

The length of markings shall be approximately thirty (30) to forty (40) metres. A majority of the markings shall be water markings, and at least one (1) double marking shall be included. During the first marking task of the test, which concludes the tolling work, the handler shall remain in the hide. The dog may be positioned outside the hide.

The dog shall be tested in free search. The search area shall be more difficult to traverse than in Beginner Class and shall include open water and/or water with vegetation, reeds or marshy areas. In Open Class, game may be placed at a distance of up to approximately sixty (60) metres from the starting point, depending on terrain. The number of game items in the search area shall be at least five (5).

In Open Class, at least one (1) blind retrieve of up to approximately seventy (70) metres shall be included. The blind retrieve shall be carried out on water.

In Open Class, all game shall be delivered to the handler's hand.

The test in Open Class shall comprise tolling work (approach, tolling work and passivity in the hide) and work after the shot (markings, blind retrieves and free search).

Markings with a hidden thrower, double markings with two throwers, and shots for blind retrieves while the dog is returning with game may occur. Geese shall not be used as retrieving game in Open Class.

In Open Class, disturbances during the approach or tolling work as described for Elite Class shall not occur. No other dog shall be present at the test site.

4.3 Elite Class (Ekl)

A dog that has been awarded two (2) **Excellent** awards (or 1st prizes prior to 1 January 2022) in Open Class may start in Elite Class. One of these awards may have been obtained in a class corresponding to Open Class at an official tolling hunting test with game in another country. A dog may continue to start in Elite Class after being awarded three (3) Excellent awards or 1st prizes; however, if the test is fully booked, priority shall be given to dogs that have not yet been awarded three Excellent awards or 1st prizes.

For foreign-registered dogs, see section 4.4.

In the tolling work, twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) tolling retrieves and two (2) to three (3) periods of passivity of approximately one (1) to two (2) minutes each shall be included.

One (1) or two (2) hides may be used for the dog's tolling work. During the approach, disturbances may occur, such as the approach being interrupted or repeated, or the approach first being made to a hide where the shooter is positioned and thereafter to the hide where the tolling work is to take place. During work at the hide, disturbances may occur, such as splashing water. A quiet relocation between two hides may also occur. Shots and throws may occur during ongoing tolling work. In such cases, the dog shall interrupt the tolling work, mark the fallen game and, on the handler's command, retrieve the game.

In Elite Class, the dog shall be offered at least nine (9) retrieving opportunities during the test. At least four (4) retrieves shall be on water, of which at least two (2) shall be on swimming-depth water.

At least four (4) shots shall be fired for the dog.

The length of markings may be up to approximately forty (40) to fifty (50) metres. A majority of the markings shall be water markings, and double markings shall be included. During marking tasks that conclude the tolling work, the handler shall remain in the hide. The dog may be positioned outside the hide.

The dog shall be tested in free search. The search area shall be more difficult to traverse and work than in Open Class and shall include open water and/or water with vegetation, reeds or marshy areas. In Elite Class, game may be placed at a distance of up to approximately sixty (60) metres from the starting point, depending on terrain. The number of game items in the search area shall be at least five (5).

In Elite Class, at least one (1) blind retrieve shall be included. The blind retrieve may be up to approximately one hundred (100) metres. Shorter setups that effectively test the dog's ability to run blinds are preferred. The blind retrieve shall be carried out wholly or partly on water.

In Elite Class, all game shall be delivered to the handler's hand.

The test in Elite Class shall comprise tolling work (approach, tolling work and passivity in the hide) and work after the shot (markings, blind retrieves and free search). Geese shall be used as retrieving game in Elite Class unless special reasons apply, such as game quality.

The test may include disturbances during the approach or tolling work. Tolling work at two hides may occur. Decoys may be placed further from shore. Triple markings and/or double markings with a hidden thrower, two throwers, or where the thrower changes position for the second marking may occur. Shots and throws may occur during tolling work. Missed shots may occur, or shots and throws may occur while the dog is out in the field or on water. In such cases, the dog shall memorise the fall area and complete the ongoing task.

In Elite Class, no other dog shall be present as a disturbance at the test site.

4.4 Foreign-Registered Dog

Beginner Class

The same conditions for starting and for remaining in the class during the calendar year apply to foreign-registered dogs.

Open Class

The same conditions for starting apply for merits obtained on game in Beginner Class. For merits obtained at official tolling hunting tests with dummies, such merits may be counted if tests with game are not arranged in the country where the dog is registered.

The same conditions for remaining in the class during the calendar year apply to foreign-registered dogs with equivalent awards in Open Class at official tests with game. A dog that has started in an equivalent Open Class with game in another country shall start in Open Class in Sweden.

Elite Class

The same conditions for starting and for remaining in the class apply to foreign-registered dogs with equivalent awards in Open Class at official tests with game. This means that at least one (1) **Excellent** award in Open Class in Sweden is required in order to start in Elite Class.

For merits obtained at official tolling hunting tests with dummies, one (1) such merit may be counted if tests with game are not arranged in the country where the dog is registered. A dog that has started in an equivalent Elite Class with game in another country shall start in Elite Class in Sweden.

5. Assessment and Conduct

5.1 Diversity and Conduct

SSRK's diversity and conduct policy shall permeate all club activities. All members of SSRK are entitled to be treated in a correct and respectful manner.

Further information is available in SSRK's Diversity and Conduct Policy.

5.2 Oral and Written Critique

Handlers participating in tolling hunting tests shall receive both an oral and a written critique. Immediately after the test, an oral critique shall be given, during which the judge summarises the dog's performance and all those present may listen. The written critique shall be available in SKK Start no later than seven (7) days after the test.

It is considered good conduct that the judge's assessment is not criticised or questioned, either during the oral critique or at any other time during the test. This applies to both participants and spectators.

The judge's assessment and the final award shall be based on the dog's performance on the day in question.

Arguments such as the handler not having trained a particular element, having trained it too infrequently, or having made mistakes or handler errors during the test shall not constitute grounds for a higher award. A handler who wishes to ask the judge questions regarding the dog's performance during the test, or regarding what should be worked on in future training, shall do so after the awards ceremony.

5.3 Awards

Decisive for the award shall be the overall impression the judge has of the dog's performance and abilities, the dog's general efficiency, and its capacity as a hunting dog in varying situations.

In the judge's assessment, greatest weight shall be placed on the approach and the tolling work at the hide, as these elements are specific to the breed and differ fundamentally from ordinary retriever work. In accordance with the applicable Hunting Test Regulations, the approach and tolling work shall therefore be decisive for the highest award the dog may receive at the test.

In all classes at tolling hunting tests, quality assessment is applied. Several dogs may therefore receive the same award, and no ranking of participating dogs shall be carried out, except where the organiser chooses to designate Best Dog of Test or where challenge trophies or championship titles are awarded.

Dogs may be awarded **Excellent** (prior to 1 January 2022: 1st prize), **Very Good** (prior to 1 January 2022: 2nd prize), **Good** (prior to 1 January 2022: 3rd prize), or **Not Sufficient** (prior to 1 January 2022: 0 prize). In order to be awarded Excellent or Very Good, the dog shall be at least approved in all assessed qualities. A dog that performs particularly outstanding work may be awarded **Excellent with honours** (prior to 1 January 2022: 1st prize with Honour). This applies to all classes.

If injury prevents the dog or handler from completing the test, the result **Cannot be judged** (prior to 1 January 2022: KEP – Cannot be awarded) shall be recorded.

5.4 The Score Sheet – Assessment Guidelines

SKK Start shall be used for the written critique. The judge is responsible for ensuring that digital score sheets are completed in the SKK Start application and submitted digitally to SKK immediately after the test, and no later than seven (7) days after the test has been conducted. Once submission has taken place, participants may access the written critiques.

Score sheets constitute public documents and may be used in breeding evaluation within the breed.

Tolling Work

5.4.1 Approach

The approach shall be carried out in all classes with the dog off lead. The dog shall be compliant and quiet and require as little handling as possible; however, if guidance is necessary, it shall be discreet. The dog shall not rush ahead to the hide, the water, or towards officials or the shooter.

In Beginner Class, the handler may show the tolling object to the dog before removing the lead and starting the approach. If movement between two hides is required in Elite Class, this relocation shall be carried out as discreetly as the initial approach.

5.4.2 Tolling Work / Style

The tolling work shall be energetic and focused. The dog shall be handled with as few commands and signals as possible. The dog shall immediately and voluntarily retrieve and return with the tolling object. The dog may work playfully and with bounding movement. Playfulness that does not affect speed or efficiency shall be considered an advantage.

Retrieving grip shall not be assessed during tolling work. The work should take place along the water's edge, and the dog may pass between the hide and the water. A dog that briefly scans its surroundings or takes a short drink and then resumes work shall not be penalised.

The handler should bring several tolling objects to the hide and make full use of the shoreline or tolling path in order to expose the dog during the tolling work.

If the dog shows no interest in tolling work or tolling objects, or if it leaves the handler's control and departs from the hide to, for example, enter the water and swim, this constitutes a serious fault giving the judge the right to terminate the test.

5.4.3 Passivity

During passivity, the dog shall remain calm and quiet in the hide.

5.4.4 Movement and Disturbance (Elite Class only)

Section 4.3 describes disturbances that may occur during the approach, tolling work or passivity. These disturbances are intended to simulate situations where birds are unsettled or where passing waterfowl land on the water near the dog.

Work After the Shot

5.4.5 Reaction to Shot

In Beginner Class, particular attention shall be paid to whether the dog shows any negative reaction to shots. In accordance with a recommendation from SKK, the shooter should be positioned at a distance of at least fifteen (15) metres from the dog.

Gun shyness or uncontrollable excitement at the shot constitutes a serious fault giving the judge the right to terminate the test.

5.4.6 Steadiness

The dog shall demonstrate good steadiness at shots and throws, as well as during any movement at the test site.

5.4.7 Water Work and Swimming Technique

The dog shall be able to move efficiently and confidently in water and through aquatic vegetation. In Beginner Class, some tolerance may be shown towards an inexperienced dog that displays a splashing swimming style when heading out to retrieve game.

The dog shall enter water without hesitation, even without direct stimulation. Total reluctance to enter water gives the judge the right to terminate the test.

5.4.8 Marking Ability

The shooter's position in relation to the thrower and the direction of the gun barrel are of great importance in providing the dog with optimal conditions to observe the thrower, the throw and the fall area. The judge shall ensure that dog and handler are prepared for marking tasks. In Open and Elite Class, game should preferably fall concealed in aquatic or shoreline vegetation.

5.4.9 Free Search

In all classes, the dog shall demonstrate efficiency, motivation and a positive attitude towards locating and retrieving game. The search area shall be laid out adjacent to water, and parts of the search area shall consist of water and/or wet terrain.

In Beginner Class, the search area shall be easily surveyed, with consideration given to the dog's limited experience. In Open Class, the search area shall be larger and contain greater difficulty than in Beginner Class. In Open and Elite Class, the dog shall spontaneously search water and waterside vegetation. In Elite Class, the search area may be the same as in Open Class but with increased difficulty.

Inefficient search shall be considered a disadvantage. Completely inadequate search gives the judge the right to terminate the test.

5.4.10 Ability to Run Blinds

In Open and Elite Class, the ability to run blinds is a measure of the dog's willingness to cooperate with the handler. Differences between classes concern both degree of difficulty and performance requirements.

Commands shall be low-key and used sparingly. The dog shall respond to the handler's commands and directions. Shots shall be fired prior to blind retrieves in Open Class.

5.4.11 Desire to Retrieve

Located game shall be retrieved spontaneously and delivered directly to the handler. The dog shall not continue searching while holding game.

Double retrieving or switching game constitutes faults that shall be assessed in context. An otherwise eager and spontaneous dog in Beginner Class that switches one item at delivery shall not be penalised severely.

Clear refusal to retrieve located game constitutes a serious fault giving the judge the right to terminate the test.

5.4.12 Retrieving Grip

Game shall be carried in a manner that prevents it from slipping, does not unnecessarily impede the dog's movement, and does not damage the game.

Retrieving grip shall be assessed only when working with game. When assessing softness and balance of grip, consideration shall be given to the condition of the game. If uncertainty exists as to whether damage was caused by the dog or occurred during throwing or impact, the dog shall be given the benefit of the doubt.

Delivery shall be willing and secure to the handler's hand without the handler needing to move. Even in Beginner Class, it is desirable that all deliveries are made to the handler's hand.

A retrieving grip that damages the game gives the judge the right to terminate the test.

Summary

5.4.13 Endurance

The dog shall maintain an even pace and shall not tire during the test. In the assessment, consideration shall be given to whether the test is conducted in warm weather or in particularly heavy, waterlogged or difficult terrain.

5.4.14 Cooperation

Throughout the test, the dog shall demonstrate willingness to cooperate with the handler. A Toller is expected to attentively and compliantly follow its handler through the terrain.

5.4.15 Vocalisation

In tolling hunting, minor sounds that do not affect the outcome of the tolling work or the hunt may be tolerated. A dog that, for example, emits a minor sound out of working enthusiasm while swimming out to retrieve fallen game, or that is not entirely silent out of anticipation prior to a search task, shall not be penalised.

A dog that works completely silently throughout the test is advantaged by this and this shall be noted.

5.4.16 Overall Critique

This section shall contain a summary of the dog's performance during the combined hunting evaluation before and after the shot.

5.5 Disqualifying Faults

If the dog performs entirely unsatisfactorily, the judge has the right to terminate the test. Disqualifying faults include, but are not limited to:

- entirely unsatisfactory tolling work,
- entirely unsatisfactory search,
- the dog being completely out of control,
- gun shyness,
- uncontrollable excitement,
- clear refusal to retrieve game,
- retrieving grip that damages game,
- total reluctance to enter water,
- aggression towards another dog.

5.6 Judge, Participants and Spectators

The judge has sole responsibility for the final layout of the test, the order of events during the test, and for ensuring that other officials perform their duties correctly.

The judge shall be well acquainted with the Hunting Test Regulations for tolling hunting tests established by SKK and with these guidelines adopted by the SSRK Central Board. The judge is considered a representative of the Swedish Spaniel and Retriever Club (SSRK) and shall strive to act correctly in all respects. The judge shall evaluate participating dogs in an established, confidence-inspiring and convincing manner and promote a positive atmosphere during the assessment. The main principle of assessment shall be that it is a balanced evaluation of the dog's merits and any faults or shortcomings.

Judges authorised by DKK to judge toller hunting tests in Denmark, judges authorised by DRC to judge official tolling tests in Germany (and who meet the criteria established by the SSRK Central Board), and judges authorised by NRK to judge official tolling hunting tests in Norway may be granted temporary authorisation to judge tolling hunting tests in Sweden. Applications shall be submitted for each test occasion. Responsibility for ensuring that the judge is familiar with Swedish regulations and these guidelines rests with the organiser in consultation with SSRK's Tolling Hunting Committee.

The judge shall not travel to the test or stay overnight prior to the test with a person who will be handling a dog under that judge at the test.

In other respects, reference is made to SKK's Judges' Ethical Rules.

If a judge trainee or judge aspirant is serving at the test, they shall be afforded the same respectful treatment as the officiating judge by officials, participants and spectators.

Handlers shall be familiar with the applicable Hunting Test Regulations and these guidelines. Handlers may ask the judge questions regarding the test.

It is considered good conduct not to train on the test site in the days preceding the test. It is also considered good conduct not to discuss judgments with the officiating judge during the test, nor to publicly criticise the assessment during or after the test. Handlers shall strive to handle their dogs in a manner that promotes joy and willingness to work. Commands and signals shall be balanced and preferably used sparingly.

Physical contact with the dog for the purpose of calming or correcting it is not permitted. Training aids that the dog may associate with discomfort or punishment are not permitted. Handlers may be permitted to use aids such as a stick, poles, crutches or similar upon presentation of a medical certificate. It is forbidden to punish the dog. If this occurs, the handler shall be excluded from the test and the incident reported to SKK's Disciplinary Committee.

Spectators shall not disturb the handler, the dog or the test officials while dogs are working. Conversations during the dog's work shall be kept low. Spectators shall not discuss judgments or criticise the assessment or test layout during the test. Spectators shall follow

the instructions of the test management and officials. Spectators who fail to comply may be asked to leave the test site.

6. Practical Tolling Hunting Test

A dog that has been awarded at least two (2) **Excellent** awards (or 1st prizes prior to 1 January 2022) in **Elite Class** may be entered in a practical tolling hunting test. One (1) of these awards may have been obtained in a class corresponding to Open Class or Elite Class at an official tolling hunting test with game in another country.

To obtain the Swedish title **Tolling Hunting Champion**, all Excellent awards (or 1st prizes prior to 1 January 2022) shall have been obtained in Sweden.

The practical tolling hunting test shall be conducted during the hunting season. The purpose of the practical test is to evaluate the dog's ability to perform successful tolling work on waterfowl and to retrieve freshly shot game under real hunting conditions.

The practical tolling hunting test shall be conducted as a hunt in which the hunter and dog quietly approach a hide along the water. Tolling work shall be carried out at the hide to lure birds resting on the water within shooting range. Shots shall be fired and shot game retrieved.

For an approved performance, **two (2) successful tolling works** shall be carried out. It is recommended that the first tolling work results in birds being lured within shooting range, after which the hunter and dog remain in the hide until the birds lose focus on the initial tolling work. A second tolling work is then carried out. At least one (1) freshly shot bird shall be retrieved.

The number of birds retrieved shall not exceed what can reasonably be shot by one (1) or two (2) hunters after a tolling work. The water area shall be sufficiently large to allow the judge to assess the dog's ability to lure birds.

The practical tolling hunting test may be arranged at different waters on the same day. For the test to be conducted, birds shall be present on the water when the approach and tolling work commence. It is therefore recommended that several alternative hunting sites are prepared.

Tolling work may be assessed at locations where hunting is not possible, while retrieving may be assessed later the same day during a duck or goose hunt.

Only in exceptional cases may the test be conducted on two separate occasions. If circumstances prevent tolling work and retrieving from being assessed on the same occasion, for example if the shooter misses the birds that have been lured, retrieving may be assessed at another time during the hunting season. The assessment shall take place within the same calendar year and, if possible, be carried out by the same judge. The judge is entitled to customary remuneration for the second occasion if it takes place on a different date.

As tolling hunting is adapted for a single dog working together with one or a small number of hunters, the judge may act as shooter. However, this should be avoided if possible. The

handler shall not act as shooter and shall be able to focus entirely on working together with the dog.

The shooter shall hold a valid firearm licence and hunting permit. All participants in the hunt, including the handler, shall hold a valid state hunting licence. All necessary hunting permits shall be in place. A picking-up dog shall be available.

The score sheet in SKK Start developed for the practical tolling hunting test shall be used.

Only the assessments **Approved** or **Not approved** shall be applied. If the test must be terminated due to injury to the dog or handler, or if the number of retrieving opportunities does not provide sufficient basis for assessment, the result **Cannot be judged (CBJ)** shall be recorded.

Planning and appointment of judges for the practical tolling hunting test shall be carried out in consultation with the **SSRK Tolling Hunting Committee**, which also acts as organiser of practical tolling hunting tests.

7. Planning of Tolling Hunting Tests

7.1 Time Restrictions

Tolling hunting tests, organized by a division within SSRK or by the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club, may be conducted throughout the year, provided that SKK has obtained dispensation from the Swedish Länsstyrelse for activities outside the off-leash period in the county where the activity takes place.

An exception applies to the period **June 1 – July 15**, during which no tolling hunting tests may be conducted anywhere in the country.

If an organizer wishes to conduct a test outside the off-leash period (**March 1 to August 20**), the organizer must first verify whether this is compatible with the dispensation issued by the relevant Länsstyrelse. Current dispensations from länsstyrelserna are available on the SKK website:

<https://www.skk.se/skk-funktionar/jakthund/lagarochregler/>

Complete the form “**Application for SSRK activities outside the off-leash period**” and send it to the person responsible for tolling hunting tests (tollingjakt@ssrk.se). You will receive a written permit. The application must be submitted as soon as the ground for the test has been determined, but no later than three weeks before the test. Otherwise, a permit cannot be granted.

A copy of the länsstyrelse dispensation for the relevant county must be brought to all tests conducted under this dispensation. A copy of SKK’s delegation as well as the permit from SSRK must also be brought.

All requirements stated in länsstyrelsens dispensation must be fulfilled in order for the activity to be carried out. Responsibility for this rests jointly with the organizing department or breed club and the test leader.

7.2 Organiser

SSRK is responsible for all tolling hunting test activities.

An SSRK division or the breed club (Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club) may act as organiser of tolling hunting tests in accordance with the applicable Hunting Test Regulations and these guidelines.

There is no restriction on the number of tolling hunting tests that may be arranged during the year. Practical tolling hunting tests may only be formally arranged through the SSRK Tolling Hunting Committee.

A tolling hunting test that has been opened for entry may only be cancelled if exceptional circumstances exist, such as unsuitable weather conditions. Cancellation shall be decided by

the Tolling Hunting Officer of the SSRK Central Board. Permission to cancel shall be obtained no later than the day before the test.

7.3 Application for Hunting Tests

SSRK uses **SKK Start** for administration of all official tolling hunting tests.

SSRK divisions and the breed club shall apply for tolling hunting tests in SKK Start. Applications for spring tests shall be submitted no later than **31 January**, and applications for autumn tests no later than **30 April**.

Additional tests may be approved provided that at least thirty (30) days elapse between publication of the test and the test date.

The Tolling Hunting Officer of the SSRK Central Board shall review and approve applications. Once approved, the test becomes publicly visible in SKK Start.

7.4 Number of Dogs

A judge shall not judge more dogs per day than the maximum number specified in the Hunting Test Regulations.

A reduced number of dogs is recommended early and late in the season and when judge trainees or judge aspirants are serving.

7.5 Judge

Judges shall be contacted well in advance.

The judge has final responsibility for the layout and conduct of the test and shall be well acquainted with the Hunting Test Regulations and these guidelines.

8. Administration and Conduct of Tolling Hunting Tests

8.1 Administration (SKK Start)

All tolling hunting tests shall be administered through SKK Start.

The organiser is responsible for publication of information, draw, start lists, PM, result reporting and financial settlement in SKK Start.

8.2 Officials – Allocation of Roles

The **judge** is responsible for the assessment of the dogs and may alter the test layout if required.

The **test leader**, appointed and certified by the SSRK Central Board, is responsible for safety and for ensuring that the test is conducted in accordance with regulations and guidelines, in consultation with the judge.

The **steward** ensures correct administration and handles any protests in accordance with the Hunting Test Regulations.

Shooters shall hold valid firearm licences and shall follow the instructions of the judge or test leader.

Throwers and **game placers** are responsible for ensuring equal and fair conditions for all dogs.

8.3 Draw

The draw shall be conducted in SKK Start in accordance with the Hunting Test Regulations.

Priority draw shall be applied. Exemptions, reserves and withdrawals shall be handled in accordance with the applicable rules.

8.4 PM, Start Lists and Results

A PM shall be published after the draw has been completed.

Start lists and results shall be published in SKK Start.

8.5 ID Check

ID checks may be carried out in the form of spot checks. A scanner shall be available at the test.

8.6 Handler's Responsibility

The handler is responsible for entering the dog in the correct class.

If a dog is entered in an incorrect class, the result shall be annulled and the entry fee shall not be refunded.

8.7 Dogs Not Eligible to Participate

Restrictions concerning dogs that are not eligible to participate are specified in SKK's General Regulations and in the Hunting Test Regulations.

8.8 Game

Only ducks and geese may be used as retrieving game.

Geese shall not be used in Beginner Class or Open Class.

Game shall be handled respectfully and shall be of suitable quality. The judge has the right to decline to judge if the quality of the game is considered insufficient.

8.9 After the Test

The organiser is responsible for ensuring that the test site is left in good order after the test.

Any incidents that occur during the test shall be reported to the Tolling Hunting Officer of the SSRK Central Board.

APPENDICES

Appendix – Tolling Test

The purpose of the **Tolling Test** is to provide handlers with the opportunity to test their dogs in situations corresponding to those that occur in an official **Beginner Class tolling hunting test**, even if the dog lacks sufficient experience of working with game.

A Tolling Test may be arranged in conjunction with an official tolling hunting test. The Tolling Test shall be conducted after the closing date for entries to the official test and shall take place after the last official start, either before or after the awards ceremony.

The Tolling Test shall be led by a tolling hunting judge, or by a judge trainee or judge aspirant under supervision of an authorised judge.

Entries to the Tolling Test shall not be administered via SKK Start. The organiser determines the entry fee, entry procedure and maximum number of participants.

Test Layout

The layout of the Tolling Test shall correspond to the layout of a **Beginner Class tolling hunting test**.

The Tolling Test shall include:

- approach to the hide,
- tolling work and passivity in the hide,
- water work,
- markings,
- shots and throws,
- free search.

The decisive difference compared with an official Beginner Class tolling hunting test is that **dummies shall be used instead of game**.

No official awards shall be given. The Tolling Test is intended solely as an educational and preparatory activity.

Appendix – Try a Tolling Hunting Test

The purpose of **Try a Tolling Hunting Test** is to allow inexperienced dogs and handlers to experience a simulated tolling hunting test situation involving shots, game and water work, as well as judges, officials and spectators.

Guidance and support shall be provided throughout the activity. The aim is to familiarise dogs and handlers with the test format, the environment and the expectations placed on them during an official tolling hunting test.

Try a Tolling Hunting Test may be arranged as a standalone activity or in conjunction with an official tolling hunting test, normally after the awards ceremony.

The activity may be led by a tolling hunting judge, a judge trainee or judge aspirant, a test leader, or another experienced person appointed by the organiser.

Entries shall not be administered via SKK Start. The organiser determines the entry fee, entry procedure and maximum number of participants.

Suggested Layout

Moment 1 – Introduction to Game

The dog is introduced to retrieving game, normally a duck. Correct handling of game, retrieving grip and delivery are demonstrated and explained.

Moment 2 – Tolling Work and Single Water Marking

The dog and handler perform an approach to the hide, followed by up to ten (10) tolling retrieves. A shot is fired and a single water marking is carried out.

Moment 3 – Single Land Marking

A single marking on land is carried out.

Moment 4 – Conclusion

Oral feedback and guidance are provided. Participants are given the opportunity to ask questions regarding training and further development.

No official awards shall be given. The activity is intended solely as an introductory and educational experience.