

PROPOSAL TO THE 2006 NATIONAL OPEN & NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP MEETINGS

Statement of Intention:

As stated in the AKC's **Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels** (amended in January 2006), the American Kennel club was formed principally for the *protection* and *advancement* of purebred dogs. In the foreword of this document it is stated "... and generally to do everything to advance the study, breeding, exhibiting, running, and maintenance of the purity of thoroughbred dogs." It goes on to say "Competition in conformation and performance events can best demonstrate the progress that has been made in breeding for type and quality, and/or practical use, stamina and obedience."

The intention of this proposal is to further the protection and the advancement of our field-bred English Springer Spaniels first through the recognition of current problems in club field trials and in the two National Championships and second, to offer a workable solution to these issues.

Current Issues:

A. Protection of the Dog

Dependent on geographical location, some club field trials are being held in high temperature conditions that will put the dogs into extreme distress in a period of time shorter than required to display adequate performance to a judge. Although some of this can be attributed to changes in long term weather patterns or just a one-time freak occurrence of nature, we have seen trials start earlier in the fall and go later into the spring. Judges are complaining about judging survivors instead of contenders, clubs have to put water tanks at the beginning and end of courses and many handlers now have electrolytes, syrups and glucose pastes at their fingertips.

B. Advancement of the Breed

Competition in performance events, or what we call field trials, give the breeders of our dogs the opportunity to make better, more qualified decisions with regards to improving the hunting characteristics, trainability, conformation, and a number of other important factors. Inherent to this advancement is the viability of the field tests in allowing the dogs to perform to their optimum level and to allow the judges the proper information to make the correct decisions in their judgments:

1. Dogs running in good spaniel cover in extreme temperatures are affected negatively within a few minutes, should the dog encounter a difficult retrieve, a long runner, trapped birds so gets additional contacts, etc., its performance will move off into a meaningless survival mode. For those of us that hunt these dogs, we know that they do not "sprint" as they do in trials and very typically, the hunting seasons for the birds spaniels are bred to hunt are in the cooler parts of the year.

2. To adequately judge the performance of our spaniels often times requires more than 2 contacts per series and contacts that are in excess of 60-80 yards apart. To "finish" a 60 dog Open and a 60 dog Amateur in two days can be done and it has been done on a regular basis; however, the question is – did the dogs get tested adequately to be judged properly?

3. Mostly a “spring” concern, but cover and bird quality can and has been poor in some field trials thereby not allowing the dogs to perform to their optimum level.

C. Organizational / Logistical Issues

1. Costs have continued to rise above the entry fee requiring intense fundraising and large charitable gifts.
2. Time must be allotted for catalog preparation and communications to the qualified dogs’ handlers and owners.
3. Entry size must be held within limits to allow the judges adequate time to judge the dogs that represent the best performances of the past year. All sports require a qualification system to bring the best to their Championships.

Proposal:

The authors of this proposal would ask the Parent Club, the local Clubs, the Delegates of the National Championship meetings and each Participant in the English Springer Spaniel Field Trials to consider, understand and adopt the following rule changes in the National Championships to protect our dogs and continue the advancement of the breed. The authors strongly suggest the proposal be accepted as written as each component of the proposal is important to the whole of the proposal and our dogs:

A. The first National Championship of each year cannot start earlier than November 30th. The National Open Championship and the National Amateur Championship Associations will determine the actual start dates and order of each event.

Because of outside influences on each Championship such as hunting seasons, weather, geographical location, etc., we did not propose a specific date or an order in which the Championships would be held. We would expect the Associations to work in a cooperative manner as the conditions warrant.

B. Geographically, the National Championships’ will need to be held in locations with typical weather conditions conducive to the running of our dogs. Our local clubs and the Interclubs will need to work together to host and support Nationals that may not be any one club’s area. This proposal is not considering a permanent location for the Championships’ although this is a valid concept that was implemented for many years some time ago.

Although not part of this proposal, the authors would like consideration given to the reduction or elimination of September field trials and to the increased use of double dating within the Interclubs.

C. Qualification points will be determined from the previous year’s respective National qualifiers. The point level of the 125th dog for the previous year will set the qualifying point level for the next year’s National qualifiers. In 2005, the 125th high point dog in the Open **and** in the Amateur had 2 points, therefore a dog to be qualified in the next year’s National Open and the National Amateur Championships will be required to have at least two points.

The *high point dog* awards will be determined by total points earned in trials that qualify for entry in the National(s) under the qualification deadline proposed in D. below.

D. Qualification deadline for both Championships will be the July 1st preceding each year's Championships. All points accumulated after July 1st of a given year will be used for qualification in the Championships for the following year. The point qualification period will be from July 1st to June 30th of the next year. For example, qualification points will begin accumulating July 1, 2006 with June 30, 2007 being the last qualifying day for the 2007 National Championships.

The Open dogs qualified for the 2006 National will be qualified (grandfathered) into the 2007 National to complete the transition. This will not be necessary for the Amateur dogs as the July 1st deadline was made effective in the 2005 meeting and the 2005 qualifying dogs were grandfathered into the 2006 National Amateur Championship.

E. The entry deadline for each National Championship will be 45 days before the start of each respective event.

F. The entry fee will be twenty-five dollars (\$25) over the per entry cost of the average of the last three (3) years' National Open Championships and twenty-five dollars (\$25) over the per entry cost of the average of the last three (3) years' National Amateur Championships, respectively. The changes in our financial accounting system 4 years ago have standardized our cost structure and budgeting procedures such that we can now determine actual costs. The 3 year average cost per entry in the National Open was \$203 and the 3 year average cost per entry in the National Amateur was \$196 so the entry fees would have been \$228 & \$221, respectively, in 2006. The cost per entry of each National Championship is the total income (not including fundraising dollars) less the total expenses divided by the total number of entries. The Purina contribution to the Nationals has been included in the total income.

By acceptance of this proposal by the Parent Club, the local Clubs, the Delegates of the National Championship meetings and each Participant in the English Springer Spaniel Field Trials, the authors would further ask that these new guidelines remain in place for some adequate period of time to prove their effectiveness in addressing the many issues mentioned above.